

## **POSSIBLE MOTION**

**I MOVE TO** approve Assembly Member Carlson as the Assembly representative on the Sitka Walkability Action Institute team.



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

**From:** Assembly Member Carlson

**Date:** April 12, 2025

**Subject:** Representative Assignment – Walkability Action Institute

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### **Background**

Assembly member Carlson has been invited to be a Sitka assembly representative on the Sitka team for the Walkability Action Institute.

The Walkability Action Institute (WAI) is a multiday “course” for interdisciplinary teams comprised of public health, transportation, planning, elected officials, and other disciplines. The WAI program is assisting Alaskan communities in 2025 through partnerships with the Alaska Department of Public Health and Alaska Department of Transportation. Alaskan communities selected for areas of focus are: Bethel, Dillingham, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula, and Sitka. Participants attend the course, develop team action plans, and implement policies, plans, projects, or system improvements to improve the design of their communities.

Over the past ten years, WAI has provided training and technical assistance to 99 interdisciplinary teams from 36 states and 2 territories. WAI is part of the Center for Advancing Healthy Communities who collaborates and receives financial support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This partnership aims to reduce chronic disease in the United States through improving access to safe and accessible walking and biking over the long term.

### **Analysis**

The Walkability Action Institute (WAI) interdisciplinary team needs a local elected official for the Sitka team. Assembly member Carlson was invited to participate in March 2025 for a program start date in April 2025. WAI runs April – July 2025.

The Sitka team proposed is:

1. Amy O'Connor, AK DOH Sitka Public Health Nurse,

- Public Health Representative, team lead
2. Alex Lawrence, AK DOT&PF Transportation Planner,  
Transportation Representative
  3. JJ Carlson, Sitka Assembly Member,  
Elected Official Representative
  4. Kaitlyn Jared, SE Conference Transportation and Special Projects,  
Transportation Representative

**Fiscal Note**

No financial expense associated with participation.

**Recommendations**

Approve Assembly Member Carlson to be the Sitka Assembly Representative on the Sitka team for the Walkability Action Institute.

Encl: WAI general information

WAI Video 1 link <https://vimeo.com/766133099>

## About the Walkability Action Institute

NACDD believes **all states and communities should be designed to support physical activity and non-motorized forms of transportation** so that people can have the policy, system, and environmental (PSE) supports needed to engage in active lifestyles, whether recreationally or through essential daily functions like commuting to and from work, to community destinations, and/or places of interest (community events, schools, shopping, etc.).

This vision would yield access and opportunity for active living through multiple community sectors, and could **reduce the behavior of physical inactivity over the long-term**, which is a main risk factor for chronic diseases and leading causes of death and debilitation like heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, and type II diabetes.

**NACDD realizes that making states and communities more walkable is not just a public health problem;** it involves public health counterparts including transportation, planning, education, elected officials, economic development, housing, transit, parks and recreation, and a variety of advocacy groups.

To this end, NACDD collaborates and receives financial support from the CDC Division of Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) to plan, implement, and evaluate a Walkability Action Institute (WAI) as a multi-day “course” for interdisciplinary teams. Each year, interdisciplinary four-to-six-member teams, comprised of public health, transportation, planning, elected officials, and other disciplines apply to receive travel assistance to attend the course, develop team action plans, and implement PSE outcomes to make their communities, regions, and states more walkable over the long term. The course combines traditional learning methods with robust activities and outdoor learning.

NACDD tracks the outcomes achieved by alumni teams semi-annually and convenes ongoing Walkability Community of Practice groups bi-monthly.

## WAI CELEBRATES A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY AND ENGAGES TWO STATES THIS YEAR

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) is excited to usher in another year of the Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup> Walkability Action Institute (WAI) project. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> birthday of the WAI project. The WAI supports states and communities in creating activity-friendly communities. Activity-friendly communities provide welcoming, safe, and convenient places to play, walk, roll, take public transit, and bike to enjoy destinations the community has to offer.

The WAI has become a flagship program of NACDD's Center for Advancing Healthy Communities. Over the past ten years, the project has provided training and technical assistance to 99 interdisciplinary teams from 36 states, in addition to the United States Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Examples of outcomes achieved include:

- More than 1,400 actions, such as the adoption of Complete Streets policies, implemented to improve walking, reaching over 60 million Americans
- \$540 million leveraged across various funding sources to support activity-friendly communities

Through the WAI, participant teams gain knowledge on walkability, movability, and community design, and explore key topics such as influencing the "3 P's":

- Helping all **people** have improved activity friendly routes to everyday destinations
- Redesigning **places** to encourage participation, gathering, and social connection
- Supporting long-term **prosperity** through economic growth and community vibrancy

This year, NACDD will convene WAIs in two states – Alaska and Michigan. In partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NACDD will engage Alaska in its first WAI. With support from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan Department of Transportation, NACDD will work with Michigan to implement its second WAI. The WAI format and content will be customized to meet each state's needs through a combination of in-person and virtual learning sessions. Each state will engage several teams, made up of local, cross-disciplinary community partners, learning from the nation's top experts and taking part in hands-on activities like outdoor walk/move audits and photovoice assignments. These

activities help WAI participants see and experience the concepts taught in the course in real-world settings. At the end of the WAI, each team will create a unified team action plan with strategies designed to impact the policies, systems, and environments within their local communities to enhance walkability and movability.

For more information, please contact [Karma Edwards](#).

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### Walkability Action Institute (WAI)

**Access This Resource:**

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**Description:**

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) collaborates and receives financial support from the CDC on a multiday “course” for interdisciplinary teams representing approximately six regional/metropolitan planning organizations, or county or municipality jurisdictions from within a State. The interdisciplinary teams are comprised of public health, transportation, planning, elected officials, and other disciplines attend the course, develop team action plans, and implement policies, plans, projects, or system improvements to improve the design of their communities, regions, and States to support safe and accessible walking and biking over the long term.

**Stakeholder Type(s):**

Local Government  
Regional/Metro Planning Orgs (MPO)

**Resource Type(s):**

Training

**Transportation Mode(s):**

Bicycle  
Pedestrian



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