**"Community Design for Walking, Biking and Gathering"**

**Panel Discussion, April 22**

South Tonka sparked strong interest in exploring how we design our communities for better pedestrian and bike transportation, recreation, and health. Thirty-two individuals gathered on Earth Day to learn how south lake communities are improving sidewalks, trails and gathering spaces. Hennepin County Active Living began the presentation sharing strategies cities are using to increase safety and enjoyment of non-motorized transportation. Benefits of walking and biking include happier residents, less traffic and pollution and increased physical activity. Cities across Hennepin County are seeing the power of investing in the design of communities to improve the safety of crossings, add sidewalks and install bike lanes. Information was also shared about Hennepin County's new pedestrian and bike plans as well as its Complete Streets policy.

Local mayors and Three Rivers Park District's John Gunyou, had the opportunity to highlight community projects in our neighborhoods. This includes a new bridge over County Road 19 on the LRT trail as well as Vinehill bridge upgrade in Deephaven closing the LRT trail through late summer. Shorewood discussed their master trails plan and sidewalk improvements along Smithtown Road. Excelsior will be focused on street improvements starting soon with the Met Council's Force Main Sewer project. Discussion also included potential funding sources for improvements in the Commons, including expanding the sidewalk system through the park.

*To see LMCC Channel 12's taping of the event, go to the*[*LMCC website*](http://www.lmcc-tv.org/channel-12-schedule.html)*under Channel 12 listings to check listings.*

See the websites below for more information.

* [Active Living](http://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/active-living)
* [Hennepin Pedestrian/Bike Plans](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/transportation/bike-walk#pedestrian-plan)
* [Three Rivers](http://www.threeriversparks.org/news/construction/lake-minnetonka-trail-bridge.aspx)
* [City of Shorewood Trails Plan](http://www.ci.shorewood.mn.us/pages/planning/trail%20page.html)
* [City of Excelsior](http://www.ci.excelsior.mn.us/)

