Examining How a Community Coalition Creates and Implements Policy Changes to Promote Physical Activity: The Case of Get Fit Kaua‘i
National Physical Activity Plan Congress
2015 Champion Award
Kaua‘i County

- 69,512 residents
- > 40% Asian and Pacific Islander
- 620 square miles
  - Rural: 584 mi²
  - Urban: 36 mi²
Get Fit Kauaʻi (GFK)

- Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition of Kauaʻi County
- In 2009, GFK convened four task forces
- Funded by Healthy Hawaiʻi Initiative, Dept. of Health
- Guided by Hawaiʻi State Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan objectives

www.getfitkauai.com
GFK led advocacy efforts for:

2010
- County Resolution: Complete Streets

2012
- State Bill, HB2626: Safe Routes to School

2013
- County Ordinance: Complete Streets – subdivision code
Qualitative Research Study

How did a community coalition, Get Fit Kaua‘i, create and implement policy changes that impact the built environment in Kaua‘i County?
## Methods

### Interviews
- 25 participants
- Purposeful sample
- ~ 1 hour long
- Semi-structured
- Aug. – Nov. 2013

### Analysis
- Grounded theory approach
- Transcribed verbatim
- Coded using NVivo
- Validation strategies included member checking
Participant Characteristics

**Age**
- 18-24: 4%
- 25-34: 24%
- 35-44: 8%
- 45-54: 20%
- 55-64: 36%
- 65+: 8%

**Gender**
- Female: 52%
- Male: 48%

**Sector**
- County government: 44%
- State government: 16%
- Community org.: 12%
- GFK staff: 4%
- Private citizen: 24%
Major Themes

- Capacity Building
- Leadership / People
- Community Context
- Community Events and Programs
Capacity Building

- Intentional progression of expert consultants
  - Education and trainings
  - Technical assistance

- Attending national conferences
  - Building relationships
“Get Fit Kaua‘i has given the county a lot technical assistance from the best experts, and I think that they have increased our internal capacity to understand and implement Complete Streets principles.”

“What I think is the other unmeasurable but tangible kind of greatest accomplishment is that you have people not only in my department, but you have people across many sectors talking the same language… Everyone knows what a roundabout is. Everybody knows what a road diet is.”

“[The consultants] contributed so much to just, you know, us seeing it… how it can be. The possibilities [are] what they’ve enlightened us to, and actually providing us with tools and training to be able to have the ability to apply the changes ourselves.”

“[There was a] morning conference activity, which was a bike ride through the Minneapolis routes. So, we did it two days… That got me thinking, ‘Wow, we can do this on Kauai.’”
Leadership / People

Coalition

- Coalition director, Bev Brody
- Steering Committee
- Built Environment TF
- Safe Routes to School TF

County

- Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr.
- County Department leaders and staff
- Councilmembers
“[Get Fit Kauaʻi] as an organization or an entity has become a champion, and then a number of the individuals that are associated with Get Fit Kauaʻi have become champions as well. And without that, it’s very difficult—very, very difficult—to move these kinds of initiatives forward.”
“Bev is Bev”

- Engaged the county and developed partnership
- Fearless
- High energy
- Motivates
- Follows up
- Makes it fun
Mayor Carvalho said: “Make it happen!”

Department leaders

Had to “drink the kool aid” about Complete Streets

Vision

Good relationship with Bev
Community context

- Smallness
- Political support
- Community activism
- Desire to preserve rural island character
- Ke Ala Hele Makalae Path
Community Events and Programs

- Walk to School Days
- Annual Mayor-a-thon
- Mayor’s Walking Workbus

"Get Fit Kauai, to me, is action. It’s results. It’s: let’s do a Mayor-a-thon, let’s do a Walking Work Bus... I appreciate that. They’re very goal-oriented and results-oriented."
Practice Implications

- Despite the policy successes, it will take some time to see physical changes to the built environment.
- Coalition members have learned to have patience.

"We gotta show progress in the county by putting projects out there and completing stuff to construction, not so much planning and engineering... They [community members] can come and participate in the charettes but they wanna see the rubber on the road, or the feet and the bicycle rubber on the road."
Practice Implications

- Be prepared for an evolving coalition role

“There’s two things that I think are probably [Get Fit Kauai’s] role. One is helping us [County] with **community outreach** and building their support and educating. And the other is **holding our feet to the fire** to make sure we’re actually doing what we had promised we would do at these community meetings and calling us out if we’re not.”
“[This is] my way of contributing to my community… because I’m all about leaving something behind.”
Mahalo nui loa!

Healthy Hawai‘i Initiative, Hawai‘i State Department of Health 
(*Funding Source*)

Interview participants

Get Fit Kaua‘i