



Louisiana Rural Active Living Assessment

CDC Healthy Communities

2019-2020

Introduction

In 2018, the LSU AgCenter entered into a 5-year cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address the physical activity environments in six rural Louisiana parishes with an obesity rate over 40% (Assumption, St. Helena, Tensas, Madison, Morehouse, and East Carroll). Through the LSU AgCenter's Cooperative Extension Healthy Communities initiative, multi-level, community-driven approaches are utilized to identify and implement Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change strategies targeting physical activity, with the goal of promoting healthy behaviors among residents and improving obesity rates and quality of life.

It was determined that an audit of the physical activity environment of each community was needed to better understand the strengths and areas for improvement of each community. Utilizing the Rural Active Living Assessment, the following report provides a snapshot of the "friendliness" of each CDC Healthy Community for walking, biking, and playing (especially among youth) based on data collected in 2019 to 2020.

Methods

The Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA)¹ is a tool developed by the Maine Rural Health Research Center to help communities collect data on physical environment features, town characteristics, community programs, and community policies that could potentially influence levels of physical activity among residents in rural communities. The RALA includes three separate assessments: 1. The Town-wide Assessment (TWA), 2. The Program and Policy Assessment (PPA), and 3. The Street Segment Assessment. The three assessments are intended to be used to conduct a comprehensive active living audit of rural towns.

CDC Healthy Communities Parish Extension Agents worked with local partners and peers to complete the RALA Town-wide Assessment and Program & Policy Assessment for each CDC Healthy Communities parish. It was determined that parishes would complete the Street Segment Assessment as needed, and therefore those results are not presented here.

Communities were assessed based on physical activity amenities and facilities within a 15-mile radius of the town center of the parish seat of each CDC Healthy Communities Parish. The towns and parishes audited included Lake Providence (East Carroll Parish), Bastrop (Morehouse Parish), Tallulah (Madison Parish), St. Joseph (Tensas Parish), Greensburg (St. Helena), and Napoleonville (Assumption Parish). The town center of the parish seat (often the parish courthouse) was used as a reference point, and points were awarded based on amenities and facilities located within a 15-mile radius of that reference point. Scoring tools developed by the University of Southern Maine were used to quantify the results of the TWA

and PPA. Results from the TWA and PPA are summarized into Report Cards for each community and are presented in the following pages.

Results

CDC Healthy Communities parish and town (parish seat) characteristics were assessed as part of the Rural Active Living Assessment. Morehouse Parish had the highest land area (806 square miles), while Assumption Parish, which also had the highest population density, had the lowest land area (339 square miles). Saint Joseph (Tensas Parish Seat) reported the lowest population density with an average of just 7.4 residents per square mile. General topography of CDC parishes was found to be mostly flat (5 of 6 parishes), with the exception of St. Helena being hilly. All six communities were found to have a distinct town center and a majority grid street system.

Parish and Town Characteristics

Parish	St. Helena	Assumption	Tensas	Madison	Morehouse	East Carroll
Town	Greensburg	Napoleonville	Saint Joseph	Tallulah	Bastrop	Lake Providence
Town Population	681	598	999	6,768	10,278	3,602
Total Town Area (residents per square miles)	2.52	0.17	0.89	2.78	8.9	3.77
Town Population Density (inhabitants per square mile)	270.23	3,917.90	1,122	2,431.91	1154	987.05
Parish Population	11,203	22,300	4,462	11,161	25,398	7,126
Total Parish Area (square miles)	409	339	641	651	806	442
Parish Population Density	27.39	69	7.4	17.87	31.5	16
General Town Topography	hilly	flat	flat	flat	flat	flat
Presence of "Town Center"	yes (one distinct town center)					
General Town Street Pattern	grid	grid	grid	grid	grid	grid

Parish Characteristics

Parish	St. Helena	Assumption	Tensas	Madison	Morehouse	East Carroll
State Health Ranking (out of 64 parishes)⁴	57	21	61	64	62	63
Black/African American⁴	52.20%	29.60%	53.90%	62.50%	47.40%	67.80%
Non-Hispanic White⁴	44.20%	65.30%	42.60%	33.90%	49.50%	27.80%
Hispanic or Latino⁴	1.80%	3.10%	2.00%	2.10%	1.30%	2.50%
Female⁴	51.50%	51.50%	51.90%	50.30%	51.80%	46.00%
Male⁴	48.50%	48.50%	48.10%	49.70%	48.20%	54.00%
Under 5 years of age³	5.50%	7.10%	5.80%	6.90%	7.10%	5.2%
Below 18 years of age³	21.50%	21.90%	23.90%	23.90%	24.20%	24.50%
Over 65 and older³	18.70%	17.10%	23.70%	13.90%	18.10%	14.40%
Percentage of adults age 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity.⁴	31%	34%	33%	39%	33%	28%

Lake Providence, Bastrop, and Tallulah have the largest populations, with ranges between 3,000-10,000 residents. St. Joseph, Greensburg, and Napoleonville are comprised of just under 1,000 people. 4 of the 6 parishes have majority Black residents, and all parishes experience a poverty rate much greater than that of the state average.



St. Helena Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the Greensburg town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score **41%**

Strengths: parks and playgrounds, school location

Areas for improvement: town and school policies

School Location



There is an elementary school in my town that children can walk to.	0/6
There is a middle school in my town that children can walk to.	5/5
There is a high school in my town that children can walk to.	4/4
	9/15

Trails



There is a hiking or walking trail within 15-miles of the town center.	8/8
There is a biking path within 15-miles of the town center	0/8
There is some other type of trail within 15-miles of the town center.	0/8
	8/20

Parks and Playgrounds



Public park	8/8
Public playground	8/8
School playgrounds with shared use	0/7
Other parks or playgrounds with community access	0/2
	16/25

Water Activities



Public use swimming pools	0/4
Swimming beach	0/4
River with canoe/boat/water-sport access	0/1
Other water activity amenities and facilities	1/1
	1/10

Recreation Facilities



Town recreational center (town-owned, YMCA, etc.)	0/10
Playing field or courts	7/7
Skate park	0/7
Private fitness facility (e.g. Gold's, Curves, etc.)	2/2
Roller skating rink	0/2
Ice skating rink	0/2
Other recreation facilities or amenities	0/6
	9/36

Total Points Earned 43/106

Policy and Programs Score **18%**

Town Policies

Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. 0/10

0/10

Town Programs

Town has a public recreation department. 0/10

Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA) 4/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth. 0/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents. 0/4

There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities. 0/4

Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming. 4/4

8/30

School Policies

Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours. 0/15

Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities. 0/15

0/30

School Programs

There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school. 0/15

Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program. 0/5

Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes). 10/10

10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 18/100



Assumption Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

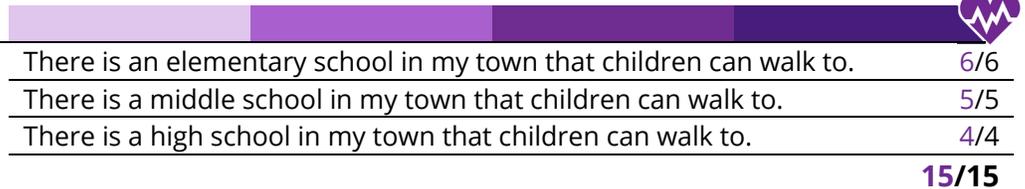
(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the Napoleonville town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score 32%

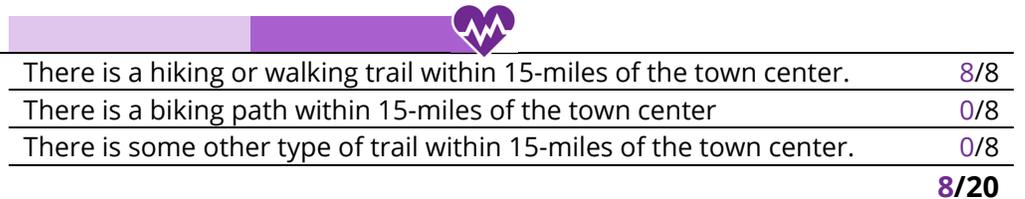
Strengths: school location, school policies

Areas for improvement: water activities, town programs, and town policies

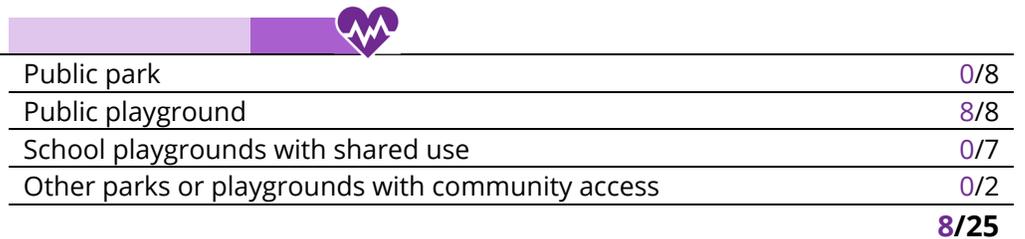
School Location



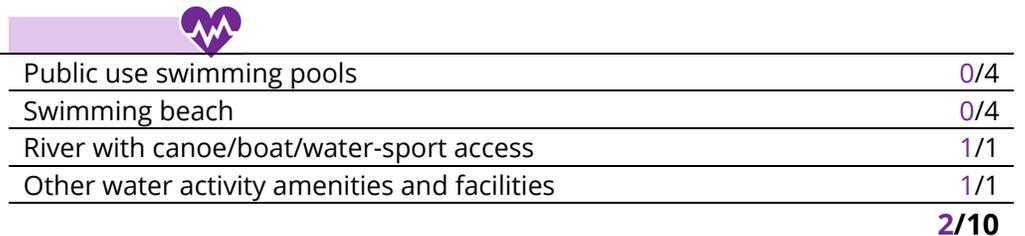
Trails



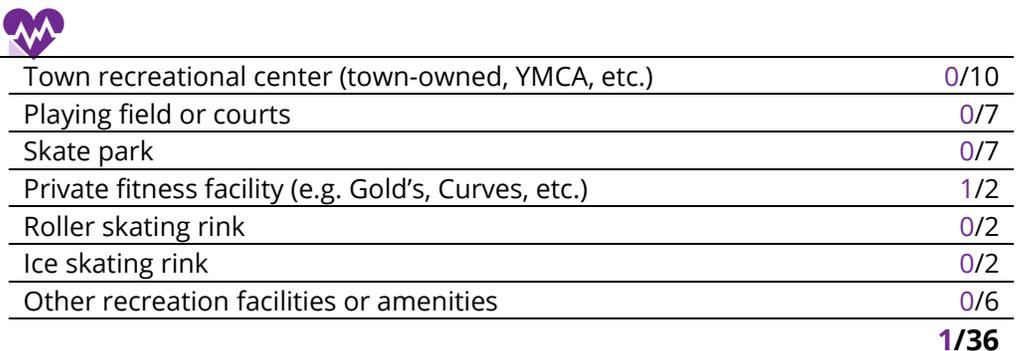
Parks and Playgrounds



Water Activities



Recreation Facilities



Total Points Earned 34/106

Policy and Programs Score **44%**

Town Policies

Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. 0/10

0/10

Town Programs

Town has a public recreation department. 0/10

Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA) 0/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth. 0/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents. 4/4

There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities. 0/4

Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming. 0/4

4/30

School Policies

Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours. 15/15

Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities. 15/15

30/30

School Programs

There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school. 0/15

Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program. 0/5

Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes). 10/10

10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 44/100



Tensas Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the St. Joseph town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score **34%**

Strengths: school location, parks and playgrounds, and water activities
Areas for improvement: trails, recreation facilities, town policies, and town programs

School Location

There is an elementary school in my town that children can walk to.	6/6
There is a middle school in my town that children can walk to.	5/5
There is a high school in my town that children can walk to.	4/4
15/15	

Trails



There is a hiking or walking trail within 15-miles of the town center.	0/8
There is a biking path within 15-miles of the town center	0/8
There is some other type of trail within 15-miles of the town center.	0/8
0/20	

Parks and Playgrounds

Public park	8/8
Public playground	8/8
School playgrounds with shared use	0/7
Other parks or playgrounds with community access	0/2
16/25	

Water Activities

Public use swimming pools	0/4
Swimming beach	4/4
River with canoe/boat/water-sport access	1/1
Other water activity amenities and facilities	0/1
5/10	

Recreation Facilities



Town recreational center (town-owned, YMCA, etc.)	0/10
Playing field or courts	0/7
Skate park	0/7
Private fitness facility (e.g. Gold's, Curves, etc.)	0/2
Roller skating rink	0/2
Ice skating rink	0/2
Other recreation facilities or amenities	0/6
0/36	

Total Points Earned 36/106

Policy and Programs Score **25%**

Town Policies



Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. 0/10

0/10

Town Programs



Town has a public recreation department. 0/10

Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA) 0/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth. 0/4

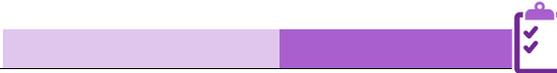
Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents. 0/4

There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities. 0/4

Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming. 0/4

0/30

School Policies



Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours. 0/15

Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities. 15/15

15/30

School Programs



There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school. 0/15

Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program. 0/5

Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes). 10/10

10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 25/100



Madison Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

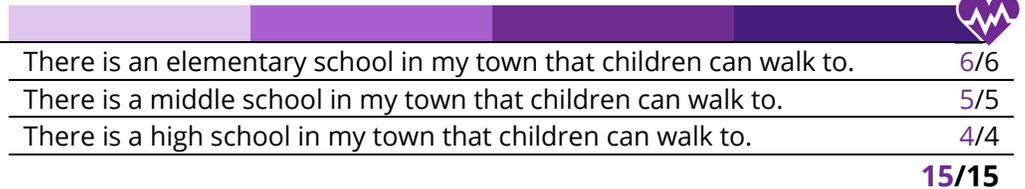
(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the Tallulah town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score **56%**

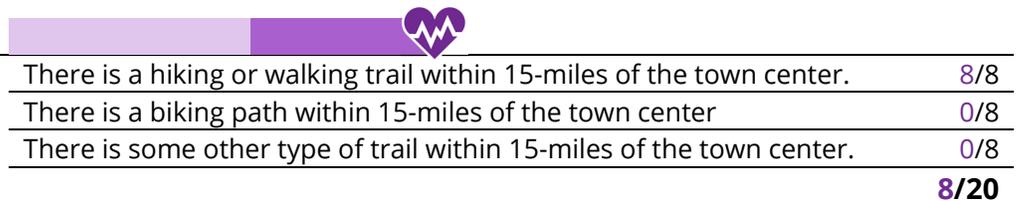
Strengths: school location, parks and playgrounds

Areas for improvement: water activities, town policies, and town programs

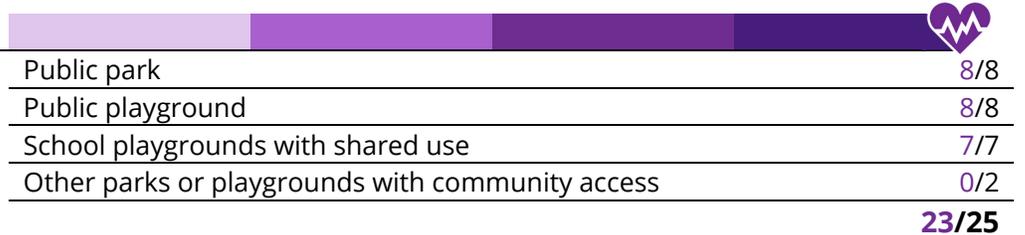
School Location



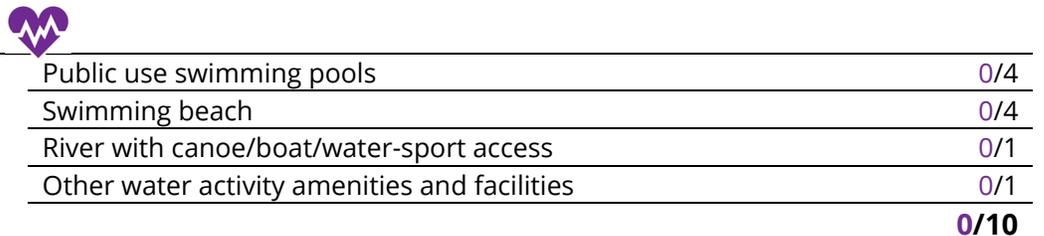
Trails



Parks and Playgrounds



Water Activities



Recreation Facilities



Total Points Earned 59/106

Policy and Programs Score **33%**

Town Policies



Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. 0/10

0/10

Town Programs



Town has a public recreation department. 0/10

Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA) 4/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth. 0/4

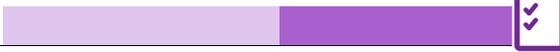
Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents. 4/4

There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities. 0/4

Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming. 0/4

8/30

School Policies



Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours. 15/15

Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities. 0/15

15/30

School Programs



There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school. 0/15

Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program. 0/5

Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes). 10/10

10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 33/100



Morehouse Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the Bastrop town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score **65%**

Strengths: school policies, parks and playgrounds, town programs

Areas for improvement: trails, town policies, and school programs

School Location



There is an elementary school in my town that children can walk to.	6/6
There is a middle school in my town that children can walk to.	0/5
There is a high school in my town that children can walk to.	4/4
10/15	

Trails



There is a hiking or walking trail within 15-miles of the town center.	5/8
There is a biking path within 15-miles of the town center	0/8
There is some other type of trail within 15-miles of the town center.	0/8
5/20	

Parks and Playgrounds



Public park	8/8
Public playground	8/8
School playgrounds with shared use	7/7
Other parks or playgrounds with community access	0/2
23/25	

Water Activities



Public use swimming pools	4/4
Swimming beach	0/4
River with canoe/boat/water-sport access	0/1
Other water activity amenities and facilities	1/1
5/10	

Recreation Facilities



Town recreational center (town-owned, YMCA, etc.)	10/10
Playing field or courts	7/7
Skate park	7/7
Private fitness facility (e.g. Gold's, Curves, etc.)	2/2
Roller skating rink	0/2
Ice skating rink	0/2
Other recreation facilities or amenities	0/6
26/36	

Total Points Earned 69/106

Policy and Programs Score **66%**

Town Policies

Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. 0/10

0/10

Town Programs

Town has a public recreation department. 10/10

Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA) 4/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth. 4/4

Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents. 4/4

There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities. 4/4

Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming. 0/4

26/30

School Policies

Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours. 15/15

Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities. 15/15

30/30

School Programs

There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school. 0/15

Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program. 0/5

Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes). 10/10

10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 66/100



East Carroll Parish Healthy Communities Rural Active Living Report Card

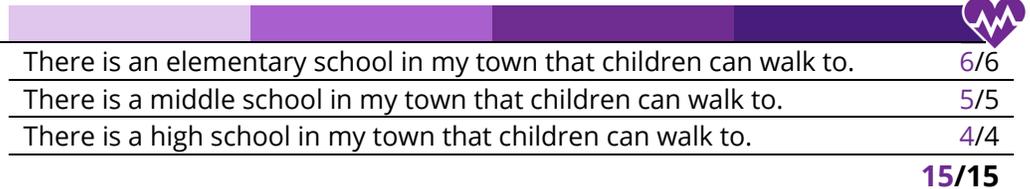
(Amenities and facilities assessed are within a 15-mile radius of the Lake Providence town center.)

Town-Wide Assessment Score **45%**

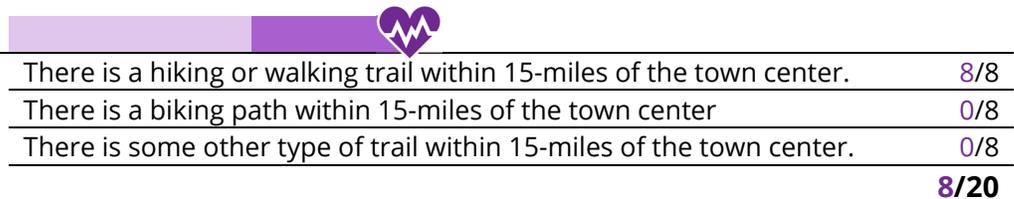
Strengths: school location, parks and playgrounds

Areas for improvement: water activities, town programs, and town policies

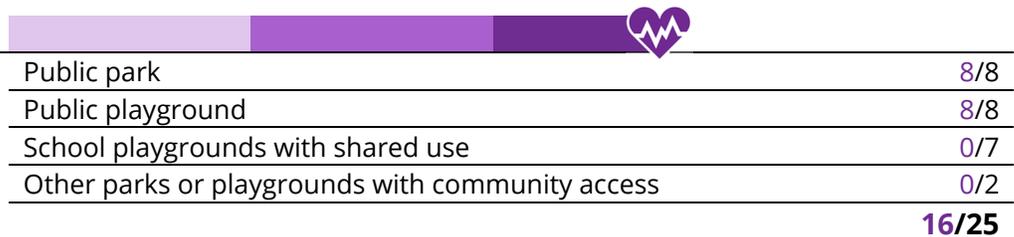
School Location



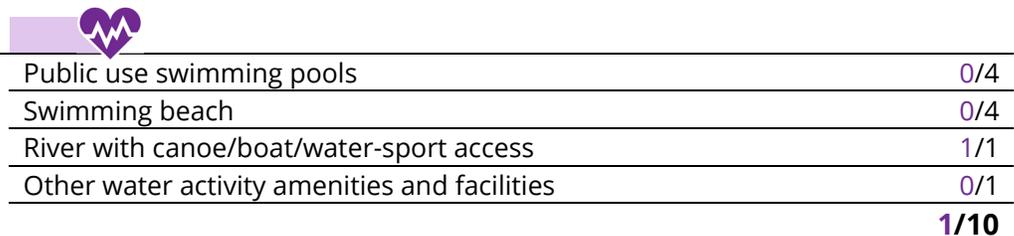
Trails



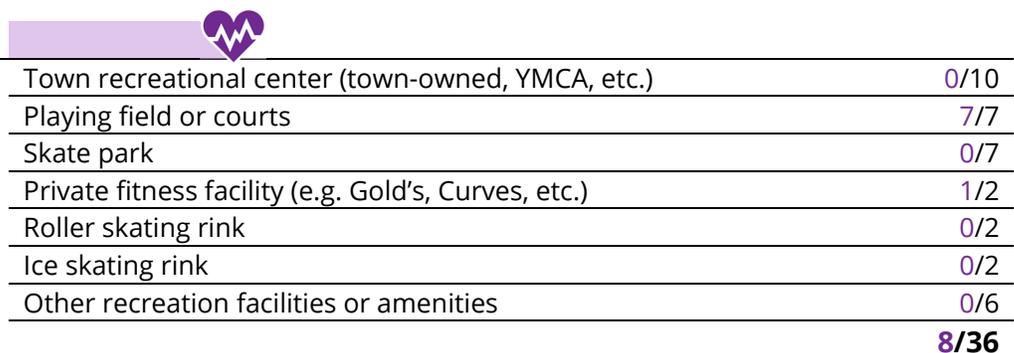
Parks and Playgrounds



Water Activities



Recreation Facilities



Total Points Earned 48/106

Policy and Programs Score **25%**

Town Policies



Town has a policy requiring bikeways/pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects.	0/10
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0/10

Town Programs



Town has a public recreation department.	0/10
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Town has a private recreation organization (e.g. YMCA)	0/4
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Either public or private department/organization (or both) offers physical activity programming for youth.	0/4
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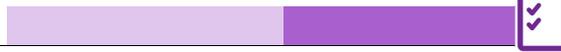
Either public or private department/organization (or both) provides scholarship/sliding fee scale for lower income residents.	0/4
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There are organized transportation options (either public or private) that help children get to/participate in physical activity opportunities.	0/4
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Public or private department/organization (or both) allows resources/facilities to be available for local resident use outside of programming.	0/4
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0/30

School Policies



Schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours.	0/15
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Public Schools offer a late-bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities.	15/15
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15/30

School Programs



There are "Walk to School" programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school.	0/15
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Schools are participating in other activities (excluding "Walk to School" programs) that are included in the National "Safe Routes to School" program.	0/5
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Schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students (do not include gym/phys-ed classes).	10/10
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10/30

Total Policy and Programs Points Earned 25/100

Summary of Scores

None of the CDC Healthy Communities parishes scored above 66% on either the Town-wide (TWA) or Program & Policy Assessment (PPA). Morehouse Parish scored the highest on both assessments (65% TWA; 66% PPA), Assumption Parish received the lowest score for the Town-wide Assessment (32% TWA), and St. Helena received the lowest score for the Program & Policy Assessment (18%). All CDC Healthy Communities parishes received a score of zero for the Town Policies sub score in the Program & Policy Assessment, indicating that no parish had a policy in place requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects.

Town-wide Assessments

	St. Helena	Assumption	Tensas	Madison	Morehouse	East Carroll	Total Possible Points
School Location	9 (60%)	15 (100%)	15 (100%)	15 (100%)	10 (67%)	15 (100%)	15
Trails	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	0 (0%)	8 (40%)	5 (40%)	8 (40%)	20
Parks and Playgrounds	16 (64%)	8 (32%)	16 (64%)	23 (92%)	23 (92%)	16 (64%)	25
Water Activities	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	5 (0%)	1 (10%)	10
Recreational Facilities	9 (25%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	13 (36%)	26 (36%)	8 (22%)	36
Total Town-wide Assessment Points	43	34	36	59	69	48	106
Town-Wide Assessment Score	41%	32%	34%	56%	65%	45%	100%

*Percentages within parentheses represent the total percent of points received within that sub score. For example, St. Helena received 9 out of 15 possible points, or 60% of possible points, in the "School Location" sub score.

Program & Policy Assessments

	St. Helena	Assumption	Tensas	Madison	Morehouse	East Carroll	Total Possible Points
Town Policies	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10
Town Programs	8 (27%)	4 (13%)	0 (0%)	8 (27%)	26 (87%)	0 (0%)	30
School Policies	0 (0%)	30 (100%)	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)	15 (50%)	30
School Programs	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	30
Total Program & Policy Points	18	44	25	33	66	25	100
Program & Policy Score	18%	44%	25%	33%	66%	25%	100%

*Percentages within parentheses represent the total percent of points received within that sub score. For example, St. Helena received 0 out of 10 possible points, or 0% of possible points, in the "Town Policies" sub score.

St. Helena Parish Assessment Summary

St. Helena Parish scored relatively low on both assessments compared to other CDC Healthy Communities parishes. St. Helena had the lowest score in the Program & Policy Assessment (18%) and only scored higher than 2 other parishes in the Town-wide Assessment (Assumption and Tensas). Availability of parks and recreation facilities and schools located within 15 miles of the town center were noted as strengths of the community. Town policies were determined to be an area for improvement due to the town not having any policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. School policies were noted as an area of improvement due to a lack of shared use policies and transit options for youth participating in after-school sponsored activities.

Assumption Parish Assessment Summary

Assumption Parish scored the lowest of all CDC parishes on the Town-wide Assessment, earning just 32% of possible points. For the recreational facility sub score they only received 3% of possible points and only 20% of points for the water activity sub score. Town policies were also determined to be an area for improvement due to the town not having any policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects, and a lack of public or private recreation entities in the parish was also noted as a physical activity weakness. School location and school policies were shown to be a strength of the community due to public access of school recreation facilities being available within 15 miles of the parish seat town center.

Tensas Parish Assessment Summary

Tensas parish received relatively low scores on both the Town-wide (34%) and Program & Policy Assessments (25%). School location was noted as a physical activity strength, however a lack of trails and recreational facilities within a 15-mile radius of the parish seat town center contributed to an overall low TWA score (34%). Town policies were determined to be an area for improvement due to a lack of policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. Town programs were also determined to be an area for improvement as very few public or private recreational entities or public/private entities providing some type of recreational service could be identified.

Madison Parish Assessment Summary

Madison Parish scored relatively high (56%) on the Town-wide Assessment compared to other CDC parishes. Based on the RALA data, it was determined that school location and parks and recreation facilities were physical activity strengths of the community. Areas for improvement included town policies due to a lack of policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. Access to water activities was also deemed an area for improvement due to a lack of public use swimming pools, swimming beaches, canoe/boat/water-sport access, and other recreational water facilities not being available.

Morehouse Parish Assessment Summary

For both the Town-wide Assessment (65%) and the Program & Policy Assessment (66%), Morehouse Parish received the highest scores of all the CDC Healthy Communities parishes.

School policies, town policies, and school programs were noted as areas of strength for the parish seat of Bastrop. Town policies were determined to be an area for improvement due to the town not having any policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects. Lack of bike facilities and other pedestrian trail types within a 15-mile radius of the parish seat town center contributed to an overall low "Trails" score.

East Carroll Parish Assessment Summary

School location (100%) and availability of parks and playgrounds (64%) were determined to be physical activity strengths of East Carroll Parish. East Carroll reported having an elementary, middle and high school all within walking distance of the parish seat town center.

Contrastingly, East Carroll Parish scored relatively low in the Program and Policy Assessment, earning just 25% of possible points. A lack of town policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure, as well as a lack of public and private recreational entities, was a major contributor to an overall low PPA score.

Discussion

Active transportation, or the transport of people, through non-motorized means, based around walking and biking, is an integral component to the building of healthy communities.² However, rural communities in Louisiana are posed with unique challenges when it comes to residents being able to engage in physical activity and active transportation within their community. Inadequate pedestrian infrastructure between everyday destinations and a lack of physical activity-directed policy and programming contribute to an environment that make it perpetually difficult for residents to be physically active. Focus groups with low-income and Black rural residents of CDC parishes revealed that residents found heat, distance, and health issues to be barriers to using active transportation to access food.⁵ However, vehicle ownership rates in these communities are among some of the lowest in the state, with East Carroll parish reporting almost 19% of its households not owning a vehicle (the state average for no vehicle ownership is 8.3%).

Town policies requiring bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects were determined to be non-existent in all six CDC Healthy Communities Parishes. Without these public infrastructure policies, new developments and investments could overlook opportunities to connect and build healthier communities utilizing pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Shared use agreements allowing public use of school recreational facilities after hours were present in 50% of parishes and noted as a strength in the parishes in which they were established. In addition, schools located within walking distance of town centers were also found to be common in all CDC communities which could be facilitative to active transportation planning and implementing "Walk to School" programs in the future. However, school program and school policy scores were overall weak, indicating a need for more public use agreements and after-school transportation options.

According to the Rural Active Living Assessment performed by the LSU AgCenter, all six CDC Healthy Communities face difficult and distinct challenges to improving the physical activity

and active transportation environments of their community. By establishing proactive policies and sustainable programming that promote equitable access to community resources, rural communities can continue to build upon their existing strengths and create strong, sustainable healthy communities.

Conclusion

Overall, CDC Healthy Communities Parishes scored low on the Rural Active Living Assessment. No parish scored higher than 66% on either the Town-wide or Program & Policy Assessment overall. Because the assessment was only performed in parishes included in the CDC Cooperative Agreement, it is unknown how rural Louisiana communities with lower obesity rates compare in terms of physical activity and active transportation environments. Each parish and town (parish seat) was determined to have unique strengths and areas for improvement according to the assessment. A lack of public policies and access to recreational facilities was determined to be barriers to all CDC communities' ability to be physically active. School location and grid street systems were determined to be facilitators to physical activity and active transportation planning.

References

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Map Images Source

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