



Creating Active Community Environments in South Carolina: A Grassroots Guide

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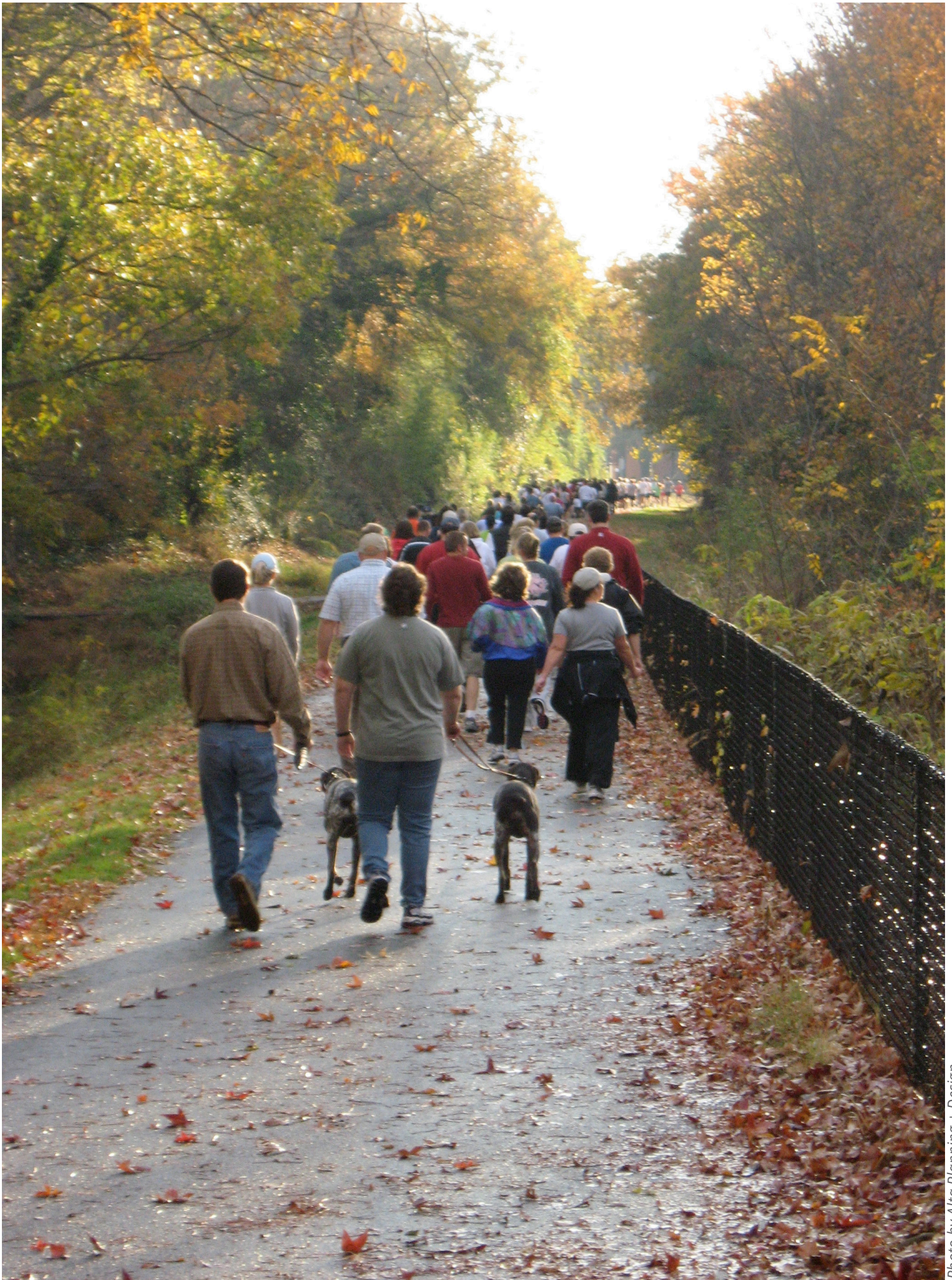


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Introduction

What is an Active Community Environment?

Active community environments are vibrant places where people of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to be physically active. This includes opportunities for both recreation and active transportation, such as walking or biking to nearby destinations. In order to achieve an active environment, communities must be thoughtfully designed and include policies, systems, and environmental supports that allow citizens to safely walk, bike, or roll on a daily basis.

Background

In South Carolina, two-thirds of adults ages 18 and over are obese or overweight¹. Physical inactivity is a contributing factor where half of South Carolina adults are not meeting the recommended amount of physical activity per week (150 minutes)¹. Safe places to be physically active are a concern as South Carolina was ranked as the 7th most dangerous state for pedestrians in 2016². Research shows that developing environments that support regular physical activity opportunities, such as active transportation, have shown to be effective strategies for increasing physical activity³. Therefore by creating safe places to walk, bike, and roll on a regular basis, South Carolina can help to increase physical activity opportunities for residents.

Active Community Environments help to support:

- Air quality
- Civic engagement
- Local economies
- Mental health
- Neighborhood safety
- Physical activity
- Public health
- Tourism
- Transportation

Fostering an active community environment is important to the health and well-being of a community. Studies have shown that physical activity can help improve mental health⁴. Communities that support walking not only promote physical activity, but can also provide opportunities for spontaneous social interaction. This can help to decrease feelings of isolation⁵, which is of particular concern with senior citizens who may have smaller social networks. Studies have also shown that walkable communities are associated with increased social capital⁶ and civic engagement⁷.

An active community environment can also promote neighborhood safety. Pedestrian elements such as crosswalks, adequate lighting, and improved streetscaping can help pedestrians feel safer in public areas. Increased pedestrian activity also puts more eyes on the street, which helps to deter neighborhood crime⁸ and makes pedestrians more visible to drivers. Increased visibility to drivers can also reduce speeding and the risk of collision.

Increasing opportunities for biking and walking as regular modes of transportation can also help to decrease motor vehicle dependence, by providing alternative options for commuters. It can also help to promote the utilization of public transportation services by providing safe access

to transit stops by foot or bike. Promoting these other transportation options not only helps to decrease motor-vehicle congestion, but can also lead to improved air quality.

As shown by Eat Smart Move More South Carolina's [*Stronger Economies through Active Communities*](#), environments that support walking and biking as regular forms of transportation also help to support local economies⁹. Tourists looking to utilize walking and biking trails and visit revitalized downtown areas help support local economies by spending money at local restaurants, hotels, and other businesses¹⁰. People who walk and bike also tend to spend more money locally than people who use other forms of transportation¹⁰. Research also shows that communities that are walk- and bike-friendly tend to have higher property values^{8,11}.

About this Guide

Starting in 2014, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity and Eat Smart Move More South Carolina worked with six local communities to self-assess their built environments and implement strategies that would promote and increase opportunities for active travel. Lessons learned from those communities have been used to help create this guide. Tips from the communities are noted throughout the guide and case studies from two of the communities are provided in Appendix B: Case Studies.

This is a beginner's guide for communities that are interested in creating an active community environment. This includes local coalitions, community groups, and interested citizens who want to improve their built environment. The intent is for communities to work collaboratively with local planners and other diverse stakeholders to assess community needs and develop policy, systems, and environmental changes that support an active community environment. Using this guide, the community will walk through a series of phases to identify, plan for, and implement best practice strategies that aim to achieve this goal.

It is important to know that the process of developing an active community environment is dynamic. Therefore, the guide can be adapted to fit each individual community's needs and the community should begin the process at the phase that is most appropriate for them. However, it is recommended that the guide be read in its entirety before using it to ensure that concepts are not overlooked.



Note: Key active community environment terms have been **bolded** throughout this guide. Their definitions can be found in the Planning Terminology Glossary in Appendix A.

Phase 1: Getting Started

This phase will cover:

- Important concepts to know before beginning the process
- How to create a steering committee
- How to identify a community and assess its readiness

Overview

The purpose of this phase is to lay the groundwork for developing an active community environment. This process requires time, resources, and commitment from the community. In order to create a lasting impact, it is important to have an understanding of basic concepts and terms that will be mentioned throughout the process and to develop a foundation from which to start.

Look for this  icon to find worksheets and other tools that can help you during this process.



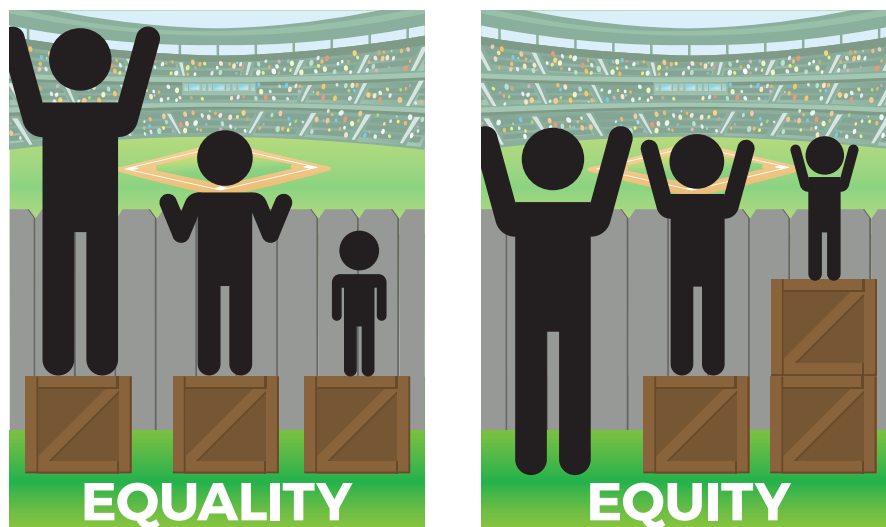
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Basic Concepts to Know

Throughout the guide, a number of concepts will be mentioned that are important to understand before moving forward. These concepts are explained below and on the following page. Additional terms that may also be helpful to review in advance can be found in Appendix A: Planning Terminology Glossary.

Community

When seeking to develop an active community environment, it is helpful to have an initial idea of a **community** or geographic area to focus efforts. Keep in mind that it may be easier to create a lasting impact when communities are narrow in scope. If you are unsure how to select a community of focus, a tool to help define your community is located at the end of this phase.



Health Equity

When creating an active community environment, it is important to address **health equity**, which is the ability for all persons to attain their highest level of health regardless of social, economic, demographic, or geographic circumstance. Disadvantages, such as living in an underserved area, can adversely affect groups of people, putting them at greater risk of poor health outcomes. Identifying and addressing these areas when working to develop a more active community environment can help improve health equity. Underserved areas and disadvantaged populations should be considered throughout each phase of the active community environment process.

Universal Design

When creating an active community environment, it is important to consider persons with disabilities. **Universal design** allows for products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. This can help to increase health equity and save resources by eliminating the need for special accommodations. It is important to remember universal design practices when engaging stakeholders and advancing through the phases of the guide.

Community Engagement

Community engagement refers to the process of involving community members and local organizations in an ongoing relationship to collectively make informed decisions. The process allows for communities to more accurately identify problems and create more effective solutions. Community engagement should occur within all phases of the active community environment process. A diverse group of community members should be included from the start of the planning process to help cultivate projects that are culturally appropriate and address specific community needs. Inviting local leadership will also help demonstrate that the community's participation is valued and that everyone's views will be considered. This can help to build trust, increase communication, and create openness for participating in the process.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people who have influence within or are influenced by the community. Stakeholders may refer to, but are not limited to residents, business owners, planners, coalition members, and local officials. It is important to identify and engage stakeholders early in the process, especially those in political or decision-making roles, such as planners or local officials, who may have significant influence within the community. To ensure project success, stakeholders should be engaged throughout the entire process, with new stakeholders added as needed. It is recommended to engage a diverse group of stakeholders to allow for different perspectives and views to be shared throughout the process. The table below provides a list of potential stakeholders to engage.

Figure 1. Potential Stakeholders to Engage

Local/State Government	Community Coalitions/Groups	Community Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Governments • Disabilities and special needs department • Government officials • Health department • Parks and recreation department • Planning department • Police department • Public safety department • Public works department • School board or district • Transportation department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups/coalitions • Chamber of Commerce • Charities and service clubs (e.g. Rotary) • Colleges and universities • Environmental organizations • Hospitals/Local health-promotion coalitions • Local YMCAs • Neighborhood associations/groups • Philanthropic organizations (e.g. United Way) • Private funders • PTAs/PTOs • Running/walking/biking groups or clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community residents • Faith-based leaders • Local business owners • Low-income populations • Minority populations • Parents • Persons with disabilities • School teachers and administrators • Senior citizens • Youth



For tips on how to engage your Department of Transportation, please visit Project for Public Spaces, Inc.'s [A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to engage your transportation agency.](#)



Create a Steering Committee

The first step to creating an active community environment is to develop a steering committee to organize and lead the process. A steering committee is a group of individuals who provide input, resources, and connections within the community that can help to achieve a common goal – in this case, an active community environment. When identifying steering committee members, it is important to include stakeholders that represent different sectors of the community. A list of potential stakeholders to consider has been provided on page 6.



Local South Carolina Tip: It is helpful to have members who can serve on the committee as part of their job or role within the community. Be thoughtful when inviting stakeholders to the table - they should be engaged at the right time during the process and understand their role as a committee member.

The following questions should be considered when identifying steering committee members:

- Does the person work or live in the community?
- Are they personally invested or interested in active community environments or other related work?
- Do they have the time to serve on the committee?
- Are they well-connected to other stakeholders within the community?
- Do they represent underserved or special populations (persons with disabilities, seniors, children, etc.) in the community?
- Are they aware of or do they have access to resources within the community that could help aid in this work?
- Are they committed to working with the group?

As the steering committee continues to move forward with the active community environment process, the committee may need to expand to include new members who are not initially represented. As the committee progresses through the phases, members should ask themselves “who else needs to be at the table in order for us to be successful?”

Once the committee is developed, a chairperson should be selected. This person should have the time, passion, and commitment to lead the process and should serve as a point of contact for the committee.



Host an Initial Meeting

Once the steering committee has been solidified, the chairperson should host an initial meeting to orient new members to their role, explain what an active community environment is, and outline the process for engaging in this work. The meeting location should be in compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. A sample outline of discussion items is provided below.

Initial Meeting Outline

- Welcome and introductions
- Discuss the purpose of the steering committee
 - ▶ Discuss roles and responsibilities of committee members
 - ▶ Clarify any commitments (e.g. length of term, time investment per month, etc.)
- Review the phases of the active community environment process
- Review basic planning terminology (see appendix)
- Brainstorm potential communities that could be candidates for developing an active community environment
 - ▶ Identify underserved areas that may greatly benefit from improved connectivity and opportunities for physical activity
- Create an anticipated timeline for beginning the active community environment process
- Identify other stakeholders who should serve on the committee
- Identify next steps
- Set next meeting date



Define the Community

Before starting the active community environment process, it is important to clearly define the community where efforts will be focused. The term “community” can be used broadly to reference a neighborhood, town, city, or county. When developing an active community environment, it is a good idea to select a well-defined geographic area in order to maximize available resources and to have a greater and more sustainable community impact.

The steering committee may already know which community they intend to focus on and where the boundaries of that community are. However, if the steering committee needs help in identifying a specific community, the following questions should be considered. Based on the responses to the questions, the steering committee should work together to select a focus community.

Have you considered:

- communities where the steering committee is interested in focusing its efforts?
- underserved communities that could largely benefit from this work?
- communities in need of **connectivity** to existing **infrastructure**?
- communities where local leaders/administrators/planners are in support of or are currently working on active community environment projects?
- communities where funding has already been allocated for community projects?
- communities that have the resources and capacity to support community projects?
- communities where local officials are supportive of active community environments?



Note: The focus community may need to be further refined in the subsequent phases as new information is gathered.



Assess Community Capacity

Once an initial community has been identified, steering committee members should talk with stakeholders in the selected area to determine if they are interested in developing an active community environment and whether that community has the **capacity** to engage in this work. To assess community capacity, a list of questions to consider can be found below. Based on question responses, the steering committee should collectively determine if the community is ready to engage in the active community environment process. If the steering committee determines the chosen community is not ready, the committee should repeat the steps within this phase until an appropriate community is selected.

Have you considered:

- whether having an active community environment is a community priority?
- whether the community perceives that barriers exist that prevent people from being physically active?
- whether current policies and/or projects exist within the community that support an active community environment?
- whether local leadership has recently or may soon change in ways that could positively or negatively impact support for an active community environment?
- whether the community is currently working on or has shown past success in implementing projects that support an active community environment?
- whether the community has already applied for or has current funding allocated to support an active community environment?



Local South Carolina Tip: Local planners may be able to assist with the active community environment process. However, depending on the capacity of your local planning departments, additional assistance may be needed. If funds are available, and if the steering committee is in need of technical expertise beyond what local planners can offer, the committee may want to consider hiring a consultant. If this is the case, consider in advance what type of consultant is needed and when they should be engaged in the process. This may help to minimize duplication of efforts or unnecessary costs.

Phase 2: Collecting Information

This phase will cover:

- Ways to gather information about the community
- How to compile findings from the information gathered
- Potential projects to consider based on findings from the information gathered

Overview

The purpose of this phase is to gather information on the focus community that will help to identify community needs and opportunities that can potentially be addressed by an active community environment project. As discussed in the previous phase, it is essential to have identified a community that has the capacity to participate in and sustain active community environment efforts. As the steering committee begins to gather information, it may find that the chosen community may not be ready or able to participate in the active community environment process as previously thought. In this case, the committee may want to revisit the previous phase to find a more suitable community. Remember, it is OK to revisit previous phases.

Look for this  icon to find worksheets and other tools that can help you during this process.



Collecting Existing Information

To avoid duplicating efforts, the steering committee should start by gathering existing information on the community. Examples of existing information include **comprehensive plans, greenways plans, pedestrian plans**, or previously conducted assessments such as **walkability** or bikeability assessments. These documents may help to provide context for the committee and identify previous recommendations for infrastructure improvements, community concerns or needs, or future projects the community is planning to implement.

When collecting information, the steering committee should consider engaging additional stakeholders with access to resources that could contribute to the process. Engaging and gaining support from local decision makers early on is also important as projects that move forward without the support of local leadership are less likely to be sustained long-term.



Figure 2. In Richland County, the Active Community Environment Committee found that a bicycle and pedestrian master plan, known as Walk Bike Columbia, had previously been adopted by the City of Columbia. Instead of creating a new plan, the committee focused on implementing a priority project from the existing plan. To learn more about Walk Bike Columbia, click [here](#).

Table 1. Sources of Existing Information

The table below provides examples of existing information the steering committee may want to consider gathering. Provided with each suggestion is a brief description, along with links for more information. It is important to note that this list is not comprehensive – the community may have additional plans or some of these examples may not exist within the community. Therefore, steering committee members are encouraged to engage local planners to help identify what information currently exists.

Information Type	Example	Description	For more information
Population Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic data Public health data Economic data Crime statistics 	Background information on the community. Most data can be found through the appropriate local government agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.census.gov/ https://communitycrimemap.com/ Contact your local planning, public health, and public safety departments
Community Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive plans Bicycle/pedestrian plans Greenways plans Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP) Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) 	Planning documents that provide goals, recommendations, and/or policies to inform community land use and design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your local planning department about comprehensive, bicycle/ pedestrian/ greenways plans within your community Contact the local public health department about Community Health Improvement Plans Contact local non-profit hospitals about Community Health Needs Assessments
Active Living Data/ Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkability information (e.g. Walk Score, Walk-Friendly Communities) 	Information on how safe and convenient it is to walk to nearby points of interest (e.g. schools, grocery stores, parks, restaurants, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.walkscore.com/ http://www.walkfriendly.org/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bikeability information (e.g. Bike-Friendly Communities) 	Information on how safe and convenient it is to bike within a community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.bikeleague.org/community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle and pedestrian safety information (e.g. accidents, fatalities, etc.) 	Provides data related to how safe an environment is for walking and biking based on information reported to local authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.scdps.gov/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Routes to School South Carolina 	Provides resources and offers technical assistance for partner South Carolina schools. Schools can register to become partners and receive technical assistance (e.g. safety assessments) at no cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.scsaferoutes.org/

Collecting New Information

After the existing information has been collected, the committee may want additional information on the community such as current needs or the quality of existing infrastructure. To gather this information, the committee should conduct new assessments. Examples include walkability and bikeability assessments, which are no-cost options that can help determine how pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly a community is. A table outlining different types of information the steering committee may want to consider collecting is provided on the next page.

It is also important to engage members of the community, such as residents, local business owners, and local leadership, when conducting new assessments. Doing so allows stakeholders an opportunity to provide input by voicing their opinions and concerns and sharing ideas for improvement. This step also helps to garner support and buy-in from the community for future active community environment projects, which can help to sustain efforts. Not only can the community provide input while conducting new assessments, but input can also be collected through surveys, interviews, small group discussions, or community meetings. The more opportunities community members have to be engaged in the project, the more likely they will be to support active community environment efforts.



Click [here](#) to access the Bikeability Checklist.

Active Neighborhood Checklist - Protocol, Version 2.0

Purpose: The Active Neighborhood Checklist is an observational tool designed to assess the street-level features of the neighborhood environment that are thought to be related to physical activity behavior. The data collected can be used to generate data for a needs assessment or research, to raise community awareness about the role of the environment in supporting or discouraging physical activity, or to mobilize community members to advocate for change. Its simple format, lay terminology, item specificity, and relatively short length were intended to make the tool user-friendly for multiple community stakeholders.

The Checklist is a product of the refinement of existing audit tools using a systematic process that weighted various forms of qualitative and quantitative feedback from residents along with photographs to complement the quantitative results obtained from the Checklist.

The tool includes some optional items. Lay use items A6, which assess specific destinations—those with the potential to generate walk trips and those associated with an unimproved corridor—should be optional because the information may be available from existing sources (e.g., online or paper-level land use data) and can be time-consuming to audit. Shoulder items E1-1-10 are optional because these items tend to be lower reliability, and Checklist may be completed in a shorter period in some communities for the.

Interventions for Use: The two-page protocol gives brief instructions on ways to conduct audits of neighborhood streets, as well as operational definitions for key concepts or terms that are not self-explanatory in the Checklist. In practice, it is recommended that the protocol be supplemented with 2-hour (approximately) training slide presentation. Training may be enhanced through another slide followed by group discussion.

Choosing an Area or Route to Audit: Begin by choosing your study route or area. Options may include 1) defined areas around a specific destination (e.g., school or group of destinations (e.g., commercial center); 2) neighborhoods defined by administrative or other boundaries; and 3) routes between destinations or groups of destinations (e.g., between an elementary school and neighborhood center).

Choosing a Sampling Approach: The Active Neighborhood Checklist is designed to collect information for street segments—the section of the road between two consecutive intersections. Options for selecting segments to be audited include, but are not limited to, auditing: 1) all segments in an area or route; 2) a random sample of segments; or 3) a stratified sample of segments, based on land use typologies (e.g., residential, commercial, mixed land use).

Identifying Segment: Using a street meter—produced by computer software, purchased or downloaded from the internet—assign all segments to be audited a unique identification number to facilitate organizing and analyzing data. The auditors should carry copies of these maps. The street meter may vary in color or content, so auditors should be trained to know how to identify new segments or check existing segments.

Routes with no intersections should be divided into two or more 100-foot segments. Short segments may be combined with adjacent segments. A street with a T-intersection may be audited as two separate segments. In this case, a reference point should be noted on the continuous side of the road adjacent to the intersection.

Segment Status for Auditing: The Active Neighborhood Checklist may be completed with paper and pencil. Other methods to take in the field include map, tablet, mobile phone, web, clipboard, smartphone.

Field Practice: The Checklist can be completed in approximately 5-10 minutes per segment. The tool is intended to be completed on foot. Auditors should wear whatever the form was completed in an accessible (e.g., in rural or urban settings). Auditors should walk the segment once while observing the street, signage, and buildings. They should also complete the form, walking back and forth as necessary.

Operational Definitions: The following selected terms are defined for items that may not be self-explanatory. A listing of all presentation provides visual examples for features that may be unfamiliar or challenging to code. The built environment is very complex, therefore, it is difficult to anticipate how to code every street type. Users are encouraged to develop strategies for documenting features that may not be defined here.

Definition of Area or Route to Audit: Only route meter information or commercial or public building is coded. Right-of-way (ROW) may be included from analysis, depending on the intent of the researcher using the audit.

Definition of Building: Includes any of the types listed in A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A23, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30, A31, A32, A33, A34, A35, A36, A37, A38, A39, A40, A41, A42, A43, A44, A45, A46, A47, A48, A49, A50, A51, A52, A53, A54, A55, A56, A57, A58, A59, A60, A61, A62, A63, A64, A65, A66, A67, A68, A69, A70, A71, A72, A73, A74, A75, A76, A77, A78, A79, A80, A81, A82, A83, A84, A85, A86, A87, A88, A89, A90, A91, A92, A93, A94, A95, A96, A97, A98, A99, A100.

A1 Commercial building, office, or industrial building: Any building that is not residential.

A16 Mixed-use building: A lot about the size of the building on the segment or nearby segment with multiple uses of function. Parking lots for retail buildings that are closed to the public do not help us qualify them as mixed-use. Grounded buildings that do not have visible signs of neglect. Does not include homes or commercial buildings that are: 1) for sale; 2) under construction; or 3) under renovation.

A2 Unimproved area: Large areas of natural space that is not maintained by public or private entities.

A3 Unimproved paved space: Large areas of natural space that is not maintained by public or private entities and open to the public.

A4 Paved or gravel parking: If pavement is unimproved, code as On-street (paved or gravel) parking only. If there are cars parked within the segment of parking

Click [here](#) to access the Active Neighborhood Checklist.



Local South Carolina Tip: When reflecting back on this phase, the communities suggested:

- Considering underserved areas that are most in need of improved connectivity to community services
- Collecting baseline information so you can measure the impact of the projects on the community and use successes to advocate for future projects
- Taking pictures when conducting assessments so that before and after pictures can be documented and shared

Table 2. Sources of New Information

The table below describes new sources of information the steering committee may want to consider gathering. Provided with each suggestion is a brief description, along with links for more information. It is important to note that this list is not comprehensive and other assessments may be needed. Therefore, steering committee members are encouraged to engage local planners in helping to determine which types of existing information may be most appropriate to collect and what additional assessments may need to be performed.

Community Assessments			
Information Type	Example	Description	For more information
Field Assessments	Walkability assessment (i.e. walk audit)	An assessment conducted by walking around a community to identify pedestrian infrastructure needs (e.g. active neighborhood checklist).	http://activelivingresearch.org/active-neighborhood-checklist
	Bikeability assessment (i.e. bike audit)	An assessment conducted by bicycling around a community to identify bicycling infrastructure needs (e.g. bikeability checklist).	http://www.pedbikeinfo.com/pdf/bikeability_checklist.pdf
	Asset Mapping	An inventory of community resources, programs, and initiatives that can be leveraged to support an active community environment.	Talk with local stakeholders to determine assets that exist within the community
	Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA)	An assessment of the built environment , town characteristics, and policies that can affect physical activity in rural communities.	http://activelivingresearch.org/rural-active-living-assessment-rala-tools
	Windshield Tours	An assessment conducted by driving around a community in a motorized vehicle to better understand its general condition and needs.	http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/windshield-walking-surveys/main
	Community Health Inclusion Index (CHII): Macro-community assessment	An assessment that determines how inclusive the built environment is for all members of the community, including persons with disabilities.	http://www.nchpad.org/fppics/CHII_Macro-Community%20Assessment.pdf
Community Input			
Field Assessments	See "Field Assessments" above	Feedback gathered informally from other local stakeholders who help to conduct field assessments.	Collaborate with local stakeholders to determine which methods may be most appropriate or to help coordinate the input process
Group Input	Community forums	An open discussion with community members to gather input.	
	Focus groups	A method of gathering feedback on a specific topic from a small, diverse sample of community stakeholders.	
Individual Input	Surveys	A method of collecting feedback from community members through online or paper-based methods.	



Summarizing the Information

After gathering information about the community, the steering committee should compile the findings into a summary. The summary should highlight key themes and identify initial recommendations for active community environment projects. When developing the summary, consider the intended audience. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the summary to be informal if used primarily for internal purposes, such as sharing with committee members. However, a more formal summary may be needed if the intent is to share with local leadership in order to justify or gain support for a project. An example summary outline is provided below. It lists the content that should be considered for inclusion.

Summary Outline:

1. Provide an overview of the process

- List the existing information that was collected or reviewed
- List each new assessment that was conducted and include:
 - ◆ Date conducted
 - ◆ Stakeholders involved
 - ◆ Purpose of the assessment
 - ◆ Description of the assessment process

2. Highlight key findings (from existing information and new assessments that were conducted):

- Community strengths
 - ◆ e.g. existing connectivity, infrastructure, or policies that support an active community environment
- Community weaknesses
 - ◆ e.g. infrastructure in need of improvement
- Opportunities within the community
 - ◆ e.g. a change in local leadership that is supportive of an active community environment
- Barriers within the community
 - ◆ e.g. having an active community environment is not a priority for local leaders

3. Provide recommendations based on the key findings



Local South Carolina Tip: Once the summary is complete, share the information with key stakeholders and community members. This will help to communicate areas of need within the community while gaining support and feedback on initial recommendations. Sharing this information may also help advocate for additional project improvements or available funding within the community.



Phase 3: Identifying Projects and Developing a Plan

This phase will cover:

- Identifying and prioritizing potential projects
- Creating an action plan
- Creating a projected budget

Overview

The purpose of this phase is to identify and prioritize potential projects based on the summary recommendations from the previous phase. Committee members should create a plan of action that includes a timeframe for when projects will be completed and a point of contact responsible for each project, and a budget with projected costs. During this phase, committee members may find that new stakeholders may need to be engaged depending on the projects selected. It is also highly recommended that planners be a part of this process as they may be able to identify projects that are feasible and provide cost estimates.

Look for this  icon to find worksheets and other tools that can help you during this process.

Identifying Potential Projects

Using the recommendations developed from the previous phase, the steering committee should identify potential projects that are appropriate for the community. When identifying potential projects, the committee should consider the following questions:

- Does the community support the project?
- Does the project address the community's needs?
- Does the community have the capacity to implement the project?
- Does the project embrace universal design concepts?
- How would vulnerable populations most in need for improved access and opportunities to be physically active be impacted by the project?
- What funding is available to implement and maintain the project?
- What long-term impact will the project have on the community?
- What best practice strategies have been successful in other communities?

Note: It is important to consider projects that address underserved areas. In some cases, special funding may be available for projects that help to support underserved communities.

Examples of best practice strategies can be found on the following two pages.

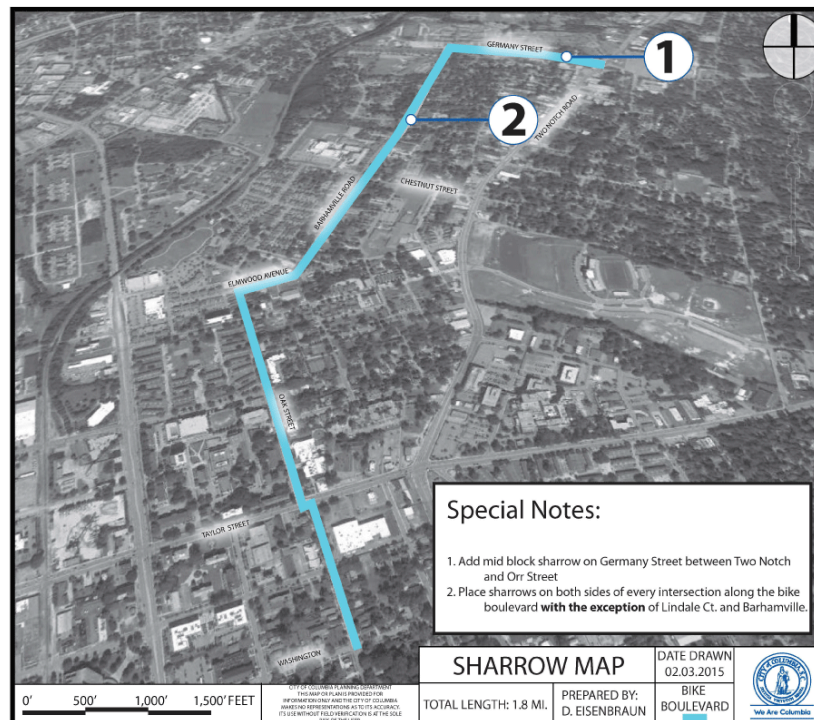


Figure 3. In 2015, the City of Columbia developed the first bike boulevard in the Midlands region. The bike boulevard was a priority project identified in the Walk Bike Columbia's Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan. Eat Smart Move More Richland County chose to implement the boulevard as an active community environment project since it connected a low-income area to three schools, two universities, a recreation center, and a local church. The boulevard route is highlighted on the map above.

Examples of Active Community Environment Projects

Active community environment projects fall into two main categories—infrastructure and non-infrastructure. Implementing these projects differ in the types and amount of resources needed. Infrastructure projects rely directly on funding whereas non-infrastructure projects may rely on funding, time, and commitment from local partners. All of these factors should be considered when selecting appropriate projects for the community.

The following tables provide examples of best practice active community environment strategies related to infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects that have shown to be successful in other communities. Projects are organized by the amount of funding or resources needed to implement them. While this list is not comprehensive, it may provide the steering committee with suggestions. Using the considerations outlined on the previous page, the steering committee should work together to identify the strategies most appropriate for the community.

1. Infrastructure Projects

The following projects are ranked by the amount of funding needed.

No/Low Funding	Medium Funding	High Funding
Create temporary infrastructure to pilot traffic calming measures	Update all sidewalks to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Implement Complete Streets with alternative transportation options
Implement tactical urbanism strategies to create public gathering spaces (e.g. parklets , open streets, temporary infrastructure, etc.)	Address pedestrian safety hazards to increase walking (i.e. lighting, sidewalk repair, re-paint crosswalks, street cleaning, etc.)	Develop mixed land-use options, with retail and commerce mixed in residential areas
Improve streetscape design	Perform regular sidewalk maintenance	Complete a Rails-to-Trails conversion
Provide adequate signage to improve pedestrian safety (i.e. pedestrian crossings)	Include bike lanes and other facilities on roads	Allocate park and recreation space evenly throughout all neighborhoods
Install way-finding signage to indicate distance to nearby locations	Implement traffic calming measures	Focus on population-dense community design to increase walking and bicycling
Provide bike racks or bike storage at recreational facilities, schools, and businesses	Improve park/recreational facilities (e.g. ADA accessibility, install lighting, bike racks, benches, safe playground equipment, etc.)	Design and construct routes connecting destinations of interest (i.e. shopping centers, businesses, community services, etc.)
Provide benches and covered shelters at transit stops	Add bike storage to public transportation vehicles	Develop multi-use recreational trails

¹²**Adapted from:** Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Chronic Disease Prevention Program. Wisconsin Active Community Toolkit. February 2016.

2. Non-infrastructure Projects

The following projects are ranked by the amount of resources needed to implement them.

No/Low Resources	Medium Resources	High Resources
Adopt a policy requiring bike storage at public buildings	Adopt a Complete Streets policy	Adopt and enforce appropriate traffic regulations to reduce safety risks
Adopt an open community use policy to allow the public to use school recreational facilities during non-school hours	Adopt land use regulations that prioritize needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users	Require sidewalks and park/recreation space in all new residential areas and subdivision development plans
Create or enhance an existing bicycling and pedestrian safety task force	Adopt zoning codes that support more walkable community design (e.g. form based codes)	Apply for a Bike- or Walk-Friendly Community designation
Promote active transportation options for employees commuting to work	Use the SC Health+Planning Toolkit to incorporate healthy eating and active living into comprehensive plans	Develop a bicycle and/or pedestrian master plan
Develop programs encouraging students to walk and bike to school (e.g. Safe Routes to School)	Create maps of community/neighborhood walking and biking routes	Provide accessible public transit options to parks and recreation facilities
Provide bike safety programs for students and adults	Develop and promote community physical activity campaigns and events	Create a Bikeshare program
Provide motorist education on sharing the road with bicyclists and pedestrians	Provide recreation programs for children, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities	Create an open streets initiative

¹²**Adapted from:** Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Chronic Disease Prevention Program. Wisconsin Active Community Toolkit. February 2016.



Prioritization Process

Once a list of potential projects has been created, the steering committee should narrow the list to a smaller number through a prioritization process. Focusing efforts on one or a few key projects at a time will help increase the chance for successful implementation.

There are many different types of prioritization methods that can be used, with one example being the prioritization matrix. The matrix allows potential projects to be compared to help determine those that are most important to the community and the most feasible to implement.

- A “*high*” rating indicates that the project is *very important* to the community or that the *community is well-abled* to implement the project.
- A “*low*” score indicates that the project is *less important* to the community or that there is *limited ability* to implement the project.

By systematically comparing potential projects, the matrix can help the steering committee narrow the list to a reasonable number. Steering committee members may then choose to focus on one or more projects based on their capacity. An example of a prioritization matrix can be found below.

Prioritization Matrix

	Feasibility	
Importance	High	Low
High		
Low		

Feasibility – When determining whether a project is **feasible**, the committee will need to consider several factors. For example, if potential funding streams currently exist for certain projects, if funding has already been allocated to specific projects, or if potential projects are estimated to be “low or no cost”, these projects may fit in the “high” feasibility section. Other items to consider may include overall community impact, current political climate, ease of implementation, and timeframes for implementation. For example, if a potential project takes 10 years to implement compared to another project that would only require six months, then the project that fits best with your community’s timeline would be considered the most feasible.

Importance – When determining whether a project is important, the committee should consider the perspective of various stakeholders, particularly community residents. Factors such as community priorities (e.g. desirability and need for each project) and buy-in from local leadership should be considered. Projects that address underserved areas within the community should also be considered as high importance.



Action Planning

Once priority project(s) have been identified, the steering committee should work together to create a written plan of action. An action plan is a guide which outlines the steps and timeframes necessary to achieve a particular goal. When developing an action plan, the steering committee should consider how projects will later be evaluated in order to measure success. Steering committee members should also consider engaging local planners, transportation officials, or a planning consultant to assist in the action planning process, particularly for projects involving infrastructure changes. The committee may also want to consider engaging local leaders who represent underserved populations within the focus community.

When developing the action plan, each project should address the following:

- The actions or steps needed to implement the project(s)
- The lead person responsible for ensuring that each step is completed
- A timeline outlining when each step will be completed
- The resources needed to carry out the steps (e.g. money, staff, etc.)

Developing an action plan is essential to sustaining the process. Not only does it provide clear steps for moving forward but it also lends credibility to the committee by indicating to stakeholders that they are well organized and dedicated to the project. This can help to leverage additional buy-in and resources from the community. Communities that have well-developed action plans also tend to be well positioned to compete for funding when it becomes available.

It is important to remember that an action plan is always a work in progress. As the steering committee changes and grows, the action plan may need to be revised to fit the changing needs of the committee and the community.



Figure 4. In order to create more active community environments, ESMM Lexington County (ESMMLC) conducted walk audits in the City of Cayce and the Town of Springdale to identify areas of need. As a result of engaging diverse community leaders in the process, the City of Cayce allocated funds within six weeks of the audit for sidewalk improvements. Learning from this experience, ESMMMLC shared lessons of their success with neighboring communities and offered to assist them with their own walk audits. This collaborative effort has led to discussions of a joint-jurisdiction bike and pedestrian plan for the City of Cayce, City of West Columbia, and the Town of Springdale. The county is also working to develop active community environment plans in the Towns of Chapin, Swansea, and Batesburg-Leesville.

Projected Budgeting

It is important for communities to budget for projects regardless of whether funding has already been secured. Many grant applications will also require a budget, so it is important to plan in advance. Projected budgets should include:

- anticipated project costs that may occur during and after implementation;
- hidden costs such as labor, installation, or maintenance costs; and
- operational costs such as the use of community venues, staff time, or the development of promotional materials.

It is recommended that local planners be engaged in the budgeting process as they may be able to provide cost estimates for projects. Local planners can also help to anticipate hidden or additional costs that are unknown to community members.

An example of a budget template is provided on page 27.

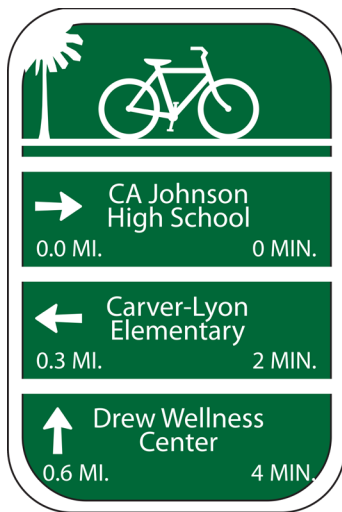


Figure 5. Way-finding signage was developed for a new bike boulevard in Columbia, SC. When developing signage, it is important to consider maintenance and installation costs in advance. Costs may differ depending on who owns the road where the sign is to be placed – state, county, city, etc.



Figure 6. Newberry, SC sought to improve ADA accessibility and connectivity in a low-income neighborhood. Signage and paint were budgeted for crosswalk improvements, which were installed by the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT). It is important to engage SCDOT staff early in the process since they know what permits are needed.

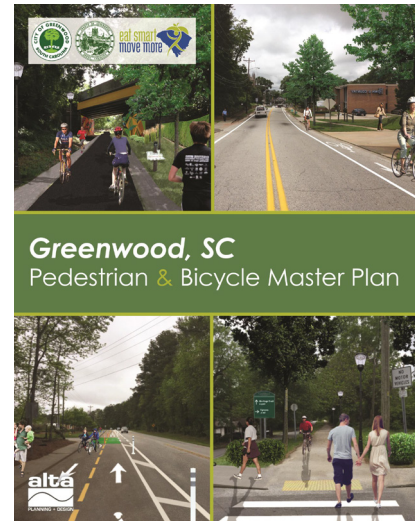


Figure 7. Greenwood, SC budgeted for a planning consultant to develop a [Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan](#). There are many different types of consultants. It is important to consider in advance what expertise is needed based on the project type.



Action Planning Template

ACTION PLAN

County: _____

Community of Focus: _____

Date: _____

Summary of Assessment Findings:

Priority/Project #1:				
Action Steps	Target Date	Resources Required	Lead Person/ Organization	Progress Notes (Complete, in progress, not started)
<i>EXAMPLE: Increase connectivity and walkability from South City neighborhood to Riverfront Park by December 2017.</i>				
<i>Add wayfinding signage to direct citizens to the Riverfront Park from South City neighborhood</i>	<i>By June 2017</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design assistance • Wayfinding signs 	<i>South City Special Project Coordinator, in partnership with South City maintenance staff</i>	<i>In progress: Working with the City to determine who owns the roads to the Riverfront Park from South City neighborhood. If it is DOT the City will need to submit encroachment permits.</i>



Budget Template

The template below provides types of costs that the steering committee should consider when budgeting for the implementation of the active community environment project(s). Again, there may be additional or hidden costs that are not listed. Therefore, it is encouraged that the committee work with local planning officials to complete the template in order to properly estimate all project costs.

		Total
I. PERSONNEL — (i.e. staff hired directly to work on the active community environment project)		
	1. [Staff Person 1]	
	2. [Staff Person 2]	
	Fringe Benefits	
	Subtotal	\$
II. OPERATIONS – (i.e. resources needed to carry out essential project functions)		
<i>Supplies</i>		
	Bike racks	
	Fencing	
	Paint (crosswalks, bike lanes, road markings, etc.)	
	Printing (maps, brochures, informational materials)	
	Signage (wayfinding, mile markers, etc.)	
	Safety equipment	
	Other supplies	
<i>Travel</i>		
	Mileage	
	Other travel	
	Subtotal	\$
III. CONTRACTS – (i.e. financially-binding agreements with organizations to provide a service)		
<i>Contract Costs</i>		
	Planning consultant	
	Design consultant	
	Other contract	
<i>Additional Costs</i>		
	Installation fee	
	Maintenance fee	
	Subtotal	\$
IV. FISCAL AGENT FEE – (i.e. an administration fee charged by the agency managing operations)		
	1.	
	Subtotal	\$
GRAND TOTAL		\$

Phase 4: Implementing the Plan

This phase will cover:

- How to implement the action plan
- Funding opportunities to help implement the plan

Overview

In this phase, the steering committee should work with the appropriate community stakeholders to implement the action plan. The length of time spent in the implementation phase will vary based on the activities or recommendations outlined in the plan and the steps needed to achieve the project goal.

Look for this  icon to find worksheets and other tools that can help you during this process.

Implement the Action Plan

Once an action plan is developed, it is essential that steering committee members remain engaged in the process. Acknowledging committee members' contributions to the group and clarifying expectations will help to re-energize members and strengthen their commitment moving forward. The committee chair can help initiate this process by hosting a meeting to:

- review the group's purpose and intended goals,
- clarify the committee members' roles and responsibilities moving forward, and
- review next steps as outlined in the action plan.

In reviewing next steps, committee members may find that new stakeholders may need to be engaged. If so, those persons should be approached at this time. Meanwhile, other committee members may no longer see their role in the group and opt to rotate off of the committee. It is important to remember that the steering committee will evolve over time. By having open conversations and setting clear expectations, committee members can better identify where they fit.

Once the steering committee is clear on the process and is re-committed to moving forward, members should begin to implement the action plan. Steering committee members should hold each other accountable for completing the steps, according to the timeline. Committee members should also have regular contact with any stakeholders or hired consultants involved, in order to address any barriers or changes that need to be made.

As work progresses, committee members should share project updates with the public to increase community support and buy-in. Communication with the public may create new partnerships, potential funding opportunities, and commitment from local leaders to take action. Project updates can be provided informally through social media and newsletters or formally through public meetings and press releases. It is important to note that action plans that include infrastructure projects that intend to use certain local, state, or federal funds for implementation, may be required to be shared for public comment and be formally adopted.



Local South Carolina Tip: “There’s no doubt in my mind that we would not be positioned to apply for and subsequently develop facilities for active living if we didn’t have a plan. That’s what it boils down to... The first question every single grant application I’ve touched, every person that you’re asking money for, ‘Well, have you done a plan?’ Because they’re not interested in giving you money if you don’t know what you’re doing.” (Colleton County)

Funding Opportunities

Depending on the complexity and type of project(s) chosen, implementation may occur with or without funding. For example, without funding, the steering committee can work with local stakeholders to adopt policies that promote **connectivity** and alternative modes of transportation. With funding, communities may be able to develop, install, and/or maintain infrastructure such as crosswalks, sidewalks, or lighting. Funding can also be used for non-infrastructure purposes such as hiring a consultant to develop a greenways plan.

Funding for active community environment projects can be found at the federal, state, and local levels through general funds, grants, and loan programs. The steering committee should talk with local government leaders first to determine if funds are currently available or are already being allocated for community improvement projects. If not, these stakeholders may be able to help search and advocate for other funding opportunities. It is important to seek out multiple funding sources in order to increase sustainability of projects.

A quick reference guide of potential funding opportunities available for South Carolina communities can be found on the following page. For more specific information on funding opportunities, visit Palmetto Cycling Coalition's [Funding Biking and Walking Infrastructure and Programs in South Carolina: Eligible Sources](#)¹³.

Suggested keywords when searching grant websites:

- active communities
- active environments
- active living
- ADA compliance
- bike facilities
- bikeways
- complete streets
- greenways
- healthy communities
- liveable communities
- parks
- pedestrian infrastructure
- recreation
- sidewalks
- sustainability
- trails



DISCLAIMER:

- The funding opportunities tool reflects organizations that currently or regularly offer funding. However, this list is not comprehensive and the availability of funding from these organizations often changes. It is important to check with each organization to determine current funding opportunities.
- Many state and federal funding sources have matching requirements.
- Although funding is available at different levels (federal, state, local), it is likely that community groups or organizations will not be eligible to directly apply. In most cases, local planning departments or Councils of Governments (COGs) will need to be the applicant. **Therefore it is important to engage your local planners in this process first to determine which grants the community is eligible for and to help apply for these funding opportunities.**

Potential Funding Opportunities for South Carolina Communities

Funding Type		Description	Funding Use	
Local	Non-Infrastructure		Infrastructure	
Public Investment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising: Funding gained through voluntary donations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Match requirement: None • Crowdsourcing: Paid or unpaid fundraising targeting a large group of people, usually online. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Match requirement: None 	X	X
Private Investment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector Contributions: Funding obtained from private companies and organizations for use on projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Examples: Local businesses, organizations, coalitions, or foundations ◆ Match requirement: None • General Funds Budget: Dedicated funding from the local municipality/county budget for community improvement projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Match requirement: None 	X	X
Municipal/County Budget		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Transportation Funds ("C" Funds): A state gas tax that is distributed to county transportation committees to be used for infrastructure projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Example uses: sidewalks, lighting, traffic signs and signals ◆ Match requirements: 25% on state maintained roads • Tax Increment Financing (TIFs): Used to improve under-developed areas by designating a portion of property tax revenues for community improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Match requirement: None 	X	X
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Accommodations Tax: A tax imposed on local sleeping accommodations by county and/or municipal governments to help fund tourism-related projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Example uses: highways, roads, streets and bridges providing access to tourist destinations ◆ Match requirement: None • Local Hospitality Tax: A tax on the sales of prepared meals and beverages sold in establishments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Example uses: highways, roads, streets, and bridges providing access to tourist destinations ◆ Match requirement: None • Capital Project Sales Act Tax: A tax to help fund capital projects within the county (e.g. penny tax). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Example uses: highways, roads, streets, bridges, and public parking garages and related facilities; cultural, recreational, or historic facilities, or any combination of these facilities. ◆ Match requirement: None • Residential Improvement District Act: Allows jurisdictions to create improvement districts where local residents fund projects through increased property taxes or other means. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Match requirement: None 	X	X

Funding Type		Description		Funding Use	
State		Non-Infrastructure	Infrastructure		
South Carolina Department of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Development Block Grants</i>: Grants to assist low and moderate income populations by providing a suitable living environment, decent housing, and economic opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Example uses: infrastructure, community revitalization, downtown development, public safety, recreation ♦ Match requirement: 20% • Funding can be accessed by local metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and the SC Regional Councils of Government (COGs). • <i>Destination Specific Tourism Marketing Grant</i>: Funding to encourage collaboration for tourism marketing and promotion between public tourism organizations and private tourism-related businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match Requirement: None 	X	X		
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Park and Recreation Development Fund</i>: Funding for local governments or special purpose districts to provide recreational opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match requirement: 20% • <i>Recreational Trails Program</i>: Funding to help provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match requirement: 20% • <i>Land & Water Conservation Fund</i>: Funding for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreational-use purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match requirement: 50% <p>Additional funding opportunities may be available through SCPRT. For more information, please visit SCPRT's website.</p>			X	X
South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant</i>: Eligible projects include pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and streetscaping projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match requirement: 20% or more <p>Additional funding opportunities may be available through SCDOT. For more information, please visit SCDOT's website.</p>				X
State Accommodations Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mandatory 2% charge applied to all accommodations statewide (e.g. hotels, resorts, campgrounds, etc.) to create funding for tourism-related projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Example uses: highways, roads, streets and bridges providing access to tourist destinations ♦ Match requirement: None 	X			X

Funding Type		Description	Funding Use	
Federal			Non-Infrastructure	Infrastructure
U.S Department of Transportation (DOT)/ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant</i>: Supports innovative projects, including multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects, which are difficult to fund through traditional federal programs. • <i>Surface Transportation Program (STP)</i>: Flexible funding that may be used by states and localities for projects that preserve and improve infrastructure conditions and performance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Example uses: recreational trails projects, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, transit capital projects • <i>Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)</i>: Outlines all federally funded improvements for which funding has been approved and is expected to be undertaken within a six-year period. This must be completed before federal funds are administered. Check with SCDOT to see if federal funding have already been allocated to projects in your area. <p>Additional funding opportunities may be available through the U.S. DOT and the FHWA. Please visit their websites for more information.</p>	X	X	
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Economic Impact Initiative Grants</i>: Provides funding to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Example uses: Funds may be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and public service ♦ Match Requirement: Varies based on project and grant amount • <i>Rural Community Development Initiative Grants</i>: Provides funding to help non-profit housing and community development organizations support housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Match Requirement: Equal to grant amount <p>Additional funding opportunities may be available through the USDA. For more information, please visit USDA's website for available programs and services.</p>	X	X	
Other Organizations to Consider	For a comprehensive list of available federal funding, and information on how to complete the process of searching for and applying for federal grants, please visit Grants.gov .	X	X	



Note: Federal funding opportunities are very competitive and have strict requirements. In many cases, federal funds (e.g. DOT) are allocated to state affiliates (e.g. SCDOT) to be administered at the state or local levels. Therefore, it is highly encouraged that the steering committee engage local planners who will have more knowledge regarding eligibility.

Phase 5: Keeping the Process Going

This phase will cover:

- Gathering support and buy-in for active community environment projects
- Reviewing the action plan and making improvements

Overview

It is important for the steering committee to continue the momentum for creating active community environment projects during and after implementation. Although this process may look different in each community, there are a number of key steps that should be considered. This phase will discuss tips on how to keep the process going.

Look for this  icon to find worksheets and other tools that can help you during this process.

Tips for Keeping the Process Going

Continue to engage the community – The steering committee should continue to communicate project efforts to the community so that stakeholders are aware of updates and potential ways to get involved. This can occur through community meetings, newsletters, email updates, social media, etc. The steering committee should also engage local planners, leaders, and foundations in active community environment efforts not only to gain further support for the projects, but also to potentially leverage available funds within the community. It is also important to identify new stakeholders who were not previously engaged and may be able to help move the projects forward.

Continue regular steering committee meetings – The steering committee should continue to meet regularly to discuss on-going implementation efforts. This will help to monitor progress and identify additional stakeholders who may need to be engaged. If action plans have been fully implemented, steering committee members may decide to repeat the active community environment process to identify new projects they wish to implement.

Continue to seek funding – The steering committee should continue to seek funds to support on-going and long-term implementation efforts. If a medium- or high-cost project was selected, it is likely that local planners, community leaders, or public works may be responsible for helping to secure funds for these projects. Be sure to check-in with these stakeholders regularly to determine what funding needs exist and how the steering committee can help to support these efforts. Refer back to the funding opportunities section for suggestions on potential funding sources.

Engage new communities – To increase support for active community environments projects, the steering committee should consider engaging nearby communities in the process. This can help to strengthen relationships between communities by leveraging resources and working collaboratively. By engaging in collaborative relationships, the steering committee can help to build capacity within neighboring communities to develop their own active community environments. The steering committee can start by contacting local leaders from nearby communities to gauge public interest and share stories of their own success.

Review the plan – Reviewing the action plan on a regular basis can help to identify items that still need to be implemented, new strategies or objectives that may need to be added to the plan, or additional stakeholders who may need to be engaged. Example action plan review questions are provided on the following page.

Review lessons learned – The steering committee should review lessons learned from the active community environment process to help improve current implementation efforts and inform future projects. Taking the time to reflect and learn from the process can help to improve the quality and sustainability of efforts.

Celebrate Successes! – Celebrating all successes, whether big or small, may help to cultivate and sustain excitement for active community environment projects. Depending on the types of projects selected, implementation could take several years so it is important to celebrate every success along the way and to share those successes with the community. The more that successes are celebrated and shared, the more likely the community will remain engaged.



Action Plan Review

It is important for the steering committee to review the action plan on a regular basis to determine what project(s) have been implemented and if changes need to be made moving forward. Taking the time to review the action plan regularly can help to improve the process and can highlight lessons learned, which will be helpful when choosing future active community environment projects. Below is a list of questions for the steering committee to consider when reviewing the action plan.

Example Action Plan Review Questions

- Which parts of the action plan have been successfully implemented?
- Which parts of the action plan were not implemented?
 - ◆ What barriers exist that are preventing the projects from being implemented as planned?
 - ◆ What, if anything, can be done to overcome these barriers?
- What steps are no longer relevant or need to be revisited?
- What new steps or activities need to be added in order to achieve our goal?
- Are the timeframes for completing the steps outlined in the action plan still relevant?
- What are the next steps for implementing the projects?
- What new projects have the potential to emerge from the current project(s)?
- Do additional stakeholders need to be engaged?
 - ◆ If so, who and what will their role be?
- What have we learned about this process so far?
 - ◆ If we repeated this process, what would we have done differently?
 - ◆ Knowing this information, how will we improve our efforts moving forward?



Photo by Alta Planning + Design

Appendices

- Appendix A: Planning Terminology Glossary
- Appendix B: Case Study – Colleton County
- Appendix C: Case Study – Barnwell County

Appendix A: Planning Terminology Glossary

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

A federal law, enacted in 1990, that ensures equal opportunities for all persons with disabilities in employment, public accommodations and services, facilities, and transportation. This is regulated and enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Active transportation:

Any form of human-powered transportation such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating, or skateboarding.

Alternative modes of transportation:

Includes all types of daily transit that do not involve the use of personal cars. This may include carpooling, public transit, walking, and bicycling.

Bike lane:

A portion of the street designated for cyclists, which is marked off with painted lines.

Bikeability assessment:

An assessment conducted by a group of community stakeholders on bicycles to determine how bicycle-friendly a community is. May also be referred to as a bike audit.

Built environment:

All buildings, spaces, and products that are created or modified by people. It impacts indoor and outdoor physical environments, as well as social environments, and subsequently our health and quality of life.

Capacity:

The ability to participate in a community process with regards to availability, resources, or other factors that may support or impede efforts.

Community:

A group of people who share some or all of the following: geographic boundaries; a sense of membership; culture and language; common norms, interests, or values; and common health risks or conditions.

Community Health Inclusion Index (CHII):

A set of survey tools that help to evaluate the level of inclusion in the community for persons with disabilities. The CHII includes three assessments – organizational, on-site, and macro-Community.

Complete streets:

Streets that are designed to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians (which includes wheelchair users), bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages.

Comprehensive plan:

A document, or series of documents, that serves as a guide for making land use changes, preparation of capital improvement programs, and the rate, timing, and location of future growth.

Connectivity:

The degree to which a road or path system is connected, and therefore the directness of travel between destinations.

Corridor study:

A planned activity that investigates current and future deficiencies in travel demand, resulting in a recommendation of alternate travel solutions to better serve and prepare for the future.

Feasibility:

The capability for something to be done or carried out.

Form-based code:

Requirements for zoning districts that regulate the way the environment looks. Form-based codes can be used to support mixed-use development and design features that encourage a more walkable community.

Green space:

Open, undeveloped land with natural vegetation designated for recreational or aesthetic purposes.

Greenways plan:

A planning document outlining how a corridor of natural, undeveloped land will be designated for recreational, active transportation, and/or environmental use. This may include off-road paths, trails, and parkways.

Health equity:

The ability for all persons to attain their highest level of health regardless of social, economic, demographic, or geographic stance.

Infrastructure:

The physical elements and supports within a community including, but not limited to, roads, bridges, transit, public housing, sidewalks, utility installations, parks, public buildings, and communications networks.

Multimodal transportation:

A network of systems that move and deliver goods by air, sea, roads, rails, and transit. Transit includes all modes of transportation such as motor vehicles, pedestrians, wheelchair users, and cyclists.

Parklet:

The conversion of on-road parking spaces into a public space or “park”.

Pedestrian:

Any person not in or on a motor vehicle or other vehicle. Pedestrians also include those on/in skateboards, non-motorized wheelchairs, roller skates, sleds, and transport devices used as equipment.

Pedestrian plan (or bike/ped plan):

A document used by professional planners to plan for the development of infrastructure that supports walking for persons of all ages and abilities. This may include sidewalks, crosswalks, trail development, and connectivity to nearby destinations. Bicycling infrastructure may also be included.

Pop-up infrastructure:

An exercise where communities use temporary materials to test-out future, planned facilities prior to investing in permanent infrastructure.

Public space:

Any space commonly open to the public, including but not limited to, areas on private property commonly open to the view by the public. This may include, but is not limited to parks, lakes, streams, athletic fields, playgrounds, school yards, streets, plazas, squares, cemeteries, and public transportation stations.

Safe Routes to School:

A federally funded program that enables and encourages children to walk and bike to school.

Shared use path:

Paths that cater to active forms of transportation and non-motorized vehicles such as pedestrians, wheelchair users, and bicyclists.

Streetscape design:

Refers to how a roadway and its surrounding areas are aesthetically engineered. This includes but is not limited to roads, adjacent buildings, pedestrian infrastructure, bike lanes, landscaping, lighting, public art, outdoor seating, etc.

Tactical urbanism:

A generic term used to describe low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment to improve local neighborhoods and community gathering places.

Traffic calming measures:

Using design measures to deliberately slow traffic as a means to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Transportation plan:

A collaborative document outlining the goals and priorities for a state or region's transportation system.

Universal design:

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. This includes persons with and without disabilities, seniors, children, and other special populations.

Walkability:

A measure of how friendly a community is for walking. This includes pedestrian safety, convenience, accessibility, and the aesthetics of the surrounding area.

Walkability assessment:

An assessment conducted on foot by a group of community stakeholders to determine how walk-friendly a community is. May also be referred to as a walk audit.

Walkable community:

A community where people of all ages and abilities can easily and safely access community facilities and services by foot or wheelchair. This is achieved through planning policies and design practices that prioritize pedestrian access in public areas.

Way-finding signage:

Signs within a community that ease navigation by communicating information regarding nearby community landmarks such as direction, distance, and walking time. Such signs may promote walking and tourism within communities.

Appendix B: Case Study – Colleton County

Introduction

In 2014, six local Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMM) chapters – local coalitions promoting healthy eating and active living – were invited to participate in a special project to develop active community environments. ESMM Colleton County was selected to participate as a result of their successful history of working collaboratively and their interest in further cultivating opportunities for active living within the community.

Getting Started

Prior to participating in the Active Community Environments Special Project, the county planner who served on the ESMM Colleton County committee identified a need for improved connectivity within the county and for additional expertise to help lead this effort. This led to a recommendation to hire a consultant to help develop a county-wide bicycle and pedestrian master plan. After leveraging available funds from the community, ESMM Colleton County hired Alta Planning + Design to lead this process.

Collecting Information

Once hired, Alta Planning + Design collected existing information on the community and gathered additional input from diverse stakeholders regarding the perceptions of walking and biking and areas in need of improved connectivity. The county planner also helped to lead several assessments, including a windshield tour, bikeability and walkability assessments, and the Rural Active Living Assessment.

During this time, ESMM Colleton County engaged different organizations that could provide insight on underserved populations within the communities. These organizations included, but were not limited to, the Citizens Advisory Group, faith-based communities, Colleton County Library, and the Board of Disabilities.

Identifying Projects and Developing a Plan

Once information was collected from the community, the county planner worked with Alta Planning + Design to draft project recommendations. The recommendations were shared at an open house to gather community feedback. This information was used to identify priority projects, which largely focused on health equity and economic development-related issues.

After the potential projects were prioritized, project costs were estimated and new stakeholders, including the Low Country Council of Governments, were engaged. The final plan was then developed and shared with the steering committee for final comments.

Implementing the Plan

The final plan was adopted by both Colleton County and Walterboro City Councils in May 2015. The implementation process is a long-term, on-going effort led by the county planner and ESMM Colleton County. The first project identified for implementation was a rails-to-trails project from the city center of Walterboro to outlying areas of the county.

Keeping the Process Going

The Active Community Environment Committee filed for tax exempt 501c3 status in order to apply for funds to help support the development of walking trails and have changed their name to “Friends of the ACE Trail”. The county planner has also helped to secure funding from several local and federal sources and continues to search for additional opportunities alongside ESMM Colleton County.



Figure 1: Photo renderings of proposed road and trail network design recommendations from the Colleton County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Appendix C: Case Study – Barnwell County

Introduction

In 2014, six Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMM) chapters – local coalitions promoting healthy eating and active living – were invited to participate in a special project to develop active community environments. ESMM Barnwell County was chosen as a result of their previous efforts within the county to plan for safer and more connected travel-ways.

Getting Started

ESMM Barnwell County, developed a sub-committee to spearhead their Active Community Environments Special Project. Known as the Active Community Environment Committee, this group included representatives from the City of Blackville, Blackville-Hilda Schools, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control. During initial conversations, the committee identified the need to engage additional partners in order to better determine an area of focus within the county. This included the City of Barnwell, Barnwell Parks and Recreation, Savannah River Rural Health Network, Barnwell County Schools, and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG). From these initial conversations, the committee identified the Town of Blackville as a community in need that should be explored further.

Collecting Information

Committee members worked with LSCOG to conduct a gap analysis of existing city and regional plans. Analysis results indicated a need to improve community areas around schools within the county. The committee determined more information was needed, so surveys were distributed to the community regarding biking and walking and a scavenger hunt-safety assessment was conducted at three local schools. The committee also considered underserved areas by looking at the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch at nearby schools, as an indicator of poverty. Based on the information gathered, the committee identified the Town of Blackville, specifically Barnwell School District 19, as a priority area most in need of improvement.

Once the focus area was identified, committee members conducted a walkability assessment to determine more specific needs regarding safe walking and biking routes to nearby schools. The school district superintendent and the Department of Transportation participated in a school safety assessment, which was facilitated by SRTS. Assessment results and recommendations were compiled, which identified safety concerns at Macedonia Elementary School, where cars were driving through the playground area.

Identifying Projects and Developing a Plan

Using the safety assessment results, SRTS developed a school travel plan to help improve pedestrian access to and from school. The plan also included a recommendation for fencing around the playground and the re-painting of crosswalks leading to the school. The need for safe outdoor play spaces was also identified which prompted the committee to work with Barnwell School District 19 to develop an open community use agreement, which would allow community members to use outdoor school facilities during non-school hours.

Implementing the Plan

To address safety concerns, a fence was installed at Macedonia Elementary School to prevent cars from driving through playground areas. Speed bumps were also installed around the school and safety equipment, such as safety vests and hand-held stop signs for staff, were purchased. Traffic and passenger safety education was also provided to parents waiting in the student pick-up line. To increase access to outdoor facilities, Barnwell School District 19 adopted the South Carolina School Boards Association's Open Community Use of School Recreational Areas model policy.

Keeping the Process Going

The committee continues to meet monthly through the local ESMM Chapter meetings. The group has replicated the process in Barnwell School District 45 and intends to expand to Barnwell School District 29 in the following years. As efforts continue, the committee has included more members from the Barnwell community to assist with their efforts.

The final school travel plan was shared with the LSCOG so that the appropriate agencies can continue to implement the recommendations, as outlined in the plan. Other community groups, such as the Barnwell Ministerial Association, are seeking funding opportunities to help support the development of physical activity-related infrastructure.



Figure 1: Tire tracks can be seen from cars driving through the playground area at Macedonia Elementary School.



Figure 2: A fence was installed at Macedonia Elementary to prevent parents from driving through the playground area.

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Additional Resources

Active Neighborhood Checklist: An observational tool designed to assess key street-level features of the neighborhood environment that are related to physical activity behavior. http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/Protocol_ActiveNeighborhoodChecklist_v2.pdf

Georgia Tech Built Environment and Public Health Clearinghouse: A source for training and information related to the intersection of community design and health. Includes a glossary of planning-related terms. <http://www.bephc.gatech.edu/glossary>

Stronger Economies through Active Communities - The Economic Impact of Walkable, Bikeable Communities in South Carolina: A report by Eat Smart Move More SC that explains the importance of walkable communities on economic impact and highlights ten local South Carolina examples. http://eatsmartmovemore.org/pdf/Economic_Impact_Report_2016.pdf

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: Provides data, tools, community support and training for pedestrian and bicycle planning. http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/collateral/PSAP%20Training/gettraining_references_walkabilitychecklist.pdf

South Carolina Safe Routes to School Resource Center: Local chapter of the National Safe Routes to School program which can offer technical assistance and resources for South Carolina communities. <http://www.scsaferoutes.org/>

National Complete Streets Coalition: Promotes the development and implementation of Complete Streets Policies. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>

Palmetto Cycling Coalition: Provides information on advocacy, education, events, and policies, and related to bicycling and bike-friendly environments. <http://pccsc.net/>

South Carolina Health + Planning Toolkit: A healthy eating and active living policy guide for planning and public health in South Carolina. <http://scaledown.org/pdf/SCHealthPlanningToolkit.pdf>

The Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA): A multi-component tool that assesses characteristics of the physical environment, community programs, and policies that affect health and physical activity in rural communities. <http://activelivingresearch.org/rural-active-living-assessment-rala-tools>

National Center for Biking and Walking: A Project for Public Spaces program dedicated to changing the way communities are planned, designed and managed to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can walk and bike easily, safely, and regularly. <http://www.bikewalk.org/links.php>

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD): A public health practice and resource center on health promotion for people with disabilities. This includes environment-level assessments. <http://www.nchpad.org/1261/6287/Environment-Assessment-Tools>

U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Bikeability Checklist: A tool to help determine how bicycle-friendly an area is. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Bikeability/checklist.htm>

