

## Healthy Communities Strategy E: Equitable Access to Physical Activity

Collaborate with community partners to increase and promote physical activity opportunities in historically marginalized communities by transforming public spaces to strengthen connection between people and places (i.e., placemaking) and creating/improving routes (e.g., trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) that connect to these places.

### Expected Outcomes:

- Increased number of linear miles that support active routes (i.e., walking, biking, and rolling).
- Increased number of new/enhanced destinations.

### Health Equity Planning Principals:

To address health equity in transportation, consider the unique needs of historically marginalized populations who may be dependent upon walking, biking, rolling, and public transit (e.g., low socioeconomic status (SES), elderly, homeless, persons with disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, etc.) for travel to everyday destinations. Many people live in neighborhoods with poor sidewalk and street infrastructure or few safe spaces for physical activity. Where community opportunities for physical activities exist, they may not have been developed with all potential users in mind, such as older adults or persons with disabilities.

When addressing health equity in active transportation strategies, communities should provide opportunities for members of historically marginalized populations to participate in all phases of the planning, decision-making processes, and implementation process.

Where applicable, projects should:

1. Prioritize enhancement of active transportation infrastructure in low-SES neighborhoods to everyday destinations.
2. Provide sufficient, safe, connected, and accessible spaces for all.
3. Support community-based, collaborative land use and planning processes that support health equity and public health.

### Recommended Partners:

• local planning departments (e.g., Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Rural Planning Organization (RPO), county, city/ municipal, township) • local and/or regional transportation departments (e.g., NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division, MPO/RPO, county, city, tribal, etc.), • school officials • universities • Cooperative Extension • law enforcement • non-profits • community groups/coalitions including impacted members from vulnerable populations • parks and recreation staff • health organizations (e.g., hospitals, free medical clinics, etc.) • local businesses • local civic groups • elected officials • neighborhood associations • local libraries • churches • key stakeholders representing racial and ethnic minority populations

**Intervention Examples** [Note: Examples may include construction work (e.g., paving) for which Healthy Communities funds cannot be used.]:

- A. A county approved a new pedestrian plan which contains recommendations for new and enhanced facilities that promote active transportation. Strategies to increase the



number of miles of activity-friendly routes include expanding sidewalk access, implementing ADA-compliant ramps, improving crosswalks, and adding multi-use trails, bike lanes.

- B. A city identified a need to create a walking route between destinations of cultural and economic activity. The community included this project as a goal within their adopted Active Transportation Plan.
- C. A rural community adopted a parks and recreation master plan to increase opportunities for physical activity. The plan included walk audit recommendations to improve access from a nearby residential area to the park. Signage along the route was installed and a new entrance was created to promote better access.
- D. A neighborhood worked with their local municipality to reduce traffic fatalities by reducing the average vehicle speed in a busy area serviced by four bus stops, by implementing traffic calming techniques. This created a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment, which improved access to buses and connected residents to community destinations.
- E. A city obtained grant funding to revitalize an old road connecting the middle and high schools that had been blocked off for years. This new pathway created a safe route between the schools and a physical activity opportunity for the community.
- F. A rural community worked with local partners to prevent a new highway from being developed through an underserved community by re-routing it as a byway. Partners developed a new plan to create a linear park with a trail adjacent to the byway that would connect residents to a larger trail system connecting multiple towns.
- G. A city approved a Complete Streets Policy and updated a zoning code that specifies standards (e.g., building mass and scale, type of streets or blocks, and a mix of land uses) for redevelopment and new development within the city limits that supports active community environments.
- H. A local community revitalized an overlooked alleyway to create a gathering space that enhanced social connection, celebrated local art, and provided seating for pedestrians. The site was identified during a walk audit, which aimed to promote connectivity between residences, a park, and local businesses.
- I. During COVID, many communities worked to enhance local destinations by providing outdoor seating, creating pedestrian stroll ways, and activating community spaces. Many of these changes were made permanent due to increased pedestrian activity which also helped to support local businesses.

### **Related Programs:**

The Community and Clinical Connections for Prevention and Health Branch collaborates with state and local partners to **establish activity-friendly routes that connect everyday destinations to increase safe, accessible physical activity** by:

1. Supporting partners in the planning and implementation of multi-modal transportation networks that safely accommodate access and travel for all users including, but not limited to NC Complete Streets policies, NC BikePed Plan, NC Vision Zero, and the Great Trails State Plan,
2. Supporting targeted pedestrian, bicycling, and community design improvements to increase the connectivity between where people live, learn, work, play, and pray including access to healthy food outlets and places for physical activity, and



3. Supporting the planning and implementation of county and municipal master and land use plans, and
4. Providing support to municipalities to enhance current or develop new wayfinding systems implemented into jurisdiction-wide plans or policies designed to increase walking.

### **Recommended Tools/ Resources:**

- A. The Community Guide Physical Activity: Built Environment Approaches Combining Transportation System Interventions with Land Use and Environmental Design  
[www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/physical-activity-built-environment-approaches](http://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/physical-activity-built-environment-approaches)
- B. Connecting Routes + Destinations: Implementing the Built Environment Recommendation to Increase Physical Activity  
[www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/beactive/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/beactive/index.html)
- C. CDC Active Communities Assessment Tool  
<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/resources/active-communities-tool/index.html>
- D. National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability – Resources –  
[www.nchpad.org/Select~Resources](http://www.nchpad.org/Select~Resources)
- E. A Practitioner’s Guide for Advancing Health Equity  
[cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/dch/pdf/health-equity-guide/Practitioners-Guide-section1.pdf](http://cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/dch/pdf/health-equity-guide/Practitioners-Guide-section1.pdf)
- F. Step it Up! The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities  
[www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/call-to-action-walking-and-walkable-communities.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/call-to-action-walking-and-walkable-communities.pdf)
- G. At the Intersection of Active Transportation and Equity  
[www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/At-the-Intersection-of-Active-Transportation-and-Equity.pdf](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/At-the-Intersection-of-Active-Transportation-and-Equity.pdf)
- H. The Planner’s Playbook: A Community-Centered Approach to Health Equity  
<https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/planners-playbook>
- I. AARP Pop-up Placemaking Toolkit  
<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2019/pop-up-tool-kit.html>
- J. AARP Livable Communities  
<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>
- K. CDC Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html>
- L. Rural America Placemaking Toolkit  
<https://www.ruralplacemaking.com/public-spaces-gathering-places-project-listing>
- M. Project for Public Spaces: From Bypassed Backroads to Community Crossroads  
<https://www.pps.org/category/rural-communities>
- N. Project for Public Spaces: How to Create Multi-Purpose Places  
<https://www.pps.org/article/uses-activities?utm-source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm-campaign=5f2b4b3867-New-DCTA->



[Resource-BiWeekly-Update-1.8.24&utm-medium=email&utm-term=0--d448aa2d48-%5BLIST-EMAIL-ID%5D](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/newsroom/Resource-BiWeekly-Update-1.8.24&utm-medium=email&utm-term=0--d448aa2d48-%5BLIST-EMAIL-ID%5D)

### **North Carolina Resources:**

- A. Move More Walk Now Engage Your Community  
<https://movemorewalknownc.com/engage-your-community>
- B. Eat Smart, Move More NC, Programs and Tools, Local and State Government  
[www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resources/government/](http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resources/government/)
- C. North Carolina Guide to Incorporating Health Considerations into Comprehensive Plans  
[www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resource/north-carolina-guide-to-incorporating-health-considerations-into-comprehensive-plans/](http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resource/north-carolina-guide-to-incorporating-health-considerations-into-comprehensive-plans/)
- D. North Carolina Department of Transportation Complete Streets  
<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx>
- E. NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division – Multimodal Planning & Programming  
<https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/multimodal-planning/Pages/default.aspx>
- F. Building Active Communities Through Activity-Friendly Routes Connecting Everyday Destinations: A Guide to Counting Bicyclists and Pedestrians  
<https://movemorewalknownc.com/wp-content/themes/WalkNow/downloads/GuideToCountingBicyclistsAndPedestrians.pdf>
- G. NC Vision Zero  
<https://ncvisionzero.org>
- H. North Carolina Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations  
<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/MPO-RPO.aspx>
- I. NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center  
<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/nc-main-street-rural-planning-center>
- J. North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government  
<https://www.ncarcog.com/regional-councils/>

### **Data Sources:**

- A. Social Determinants of Health by Regions  
<http://nc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=def612b7025b44eaa1e0d7af43f4702b>
- B. County Physical Activity and Nutrition Data Profiles  
[www.communityclinicalconnections.com/data](http://www.communityclinicalconnections.com/data)
- C. PLACES: Local Data for Better Health  
<https://www.cdc.gov/places/>
- D. North Carolina Community Mapping System and Environmental Justice Tool  
<https://files.nc.gov/ncdeq/EJ/nccms/DEQ-NC-CommunityMappingSystemEJ-Tool-1FINAL.pdf>



- E. NC DOT Integrated Mobility Research & Data Links  
<https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/multimodal-planning/Pages/research-data.aspx>
- F. NC Equity & Transportation Disadvantage Screening Tool  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7e3bbd00fe014a77b5f1620334209712>
- G. NC Vision Zero: Crash Query Tool  
<https://ncvisionzero.org/visualizations/crashquerytool/>
- H. NC Office of State Budget and Management: Population & Demographics  
<https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics>

