

**N.C. Capital Area MPO
2007 Bicycle and Pedestrian Update
TAC Handout
January 17, 2007**

The State of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in N.C.

- N.C. is considered among the top 13 states with the highest pedestrian fatality rates
- Unhealthy diet and physical inactivity claimed 10,000 lives, 14% of all deaths in N.C. in 2000
- In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or biked to school, and 87% of the children living within one mile of their school arrived under their own power. Today, fewer than 15% of school children walk or bike to school. As much as 26% of morning rush hour traffic can be attributed to parents driving their children to school.
- In N.C. the annual economic burden for physical inactivity is \$9.7 Billion and rising!
- The N.C. Division of Public Health is encouraging the creation of Active Community Environments (ACEs) by creating a built environment with better bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Capital Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Stakeholders (BPSG) 2006 Accomplishments

- Organized first annual Bike to Work Week in the Capital Area including a Bike to Work Day Breakfast on Bicentennial Mall in downtown Raleigh
- Printed a Triangle Share the Road brochure in a combined effort with TTA, SmartCommute@RTP, and the Town of Cary
- Created and published the Capital Area MPO Bicycle Facility Planning and Engineering Guidelines (adopted by the TCC and TAC in Feb. of 2006)
- Designed and conducted first CAMPO Bicycle Survey with 500+ respondents
- Participated in the SmartCommute Challenge by holding a pledge drive in downtown Raleigh
- Sent a letter, endorsed by the TCC and TAC, to state agencies calling for increased bicycle and motorist education, including the reprinting of Streetwise Cycling

Statewide Efforts

- The N.C. Executive Committee on Highway Safety (ECHS) has created a Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Working Group to devise ways to reduce accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists. More info can be found at www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/echs/
- The Bike/Ped Working Group has received preliminary approval from the ECHS on two strategies:
 - 1. Revise and improve the DMV Handbook section on bicycling and walking
 - 2. Educate law enforcement officials on bicycle and pedestrian laws via the annual certification process
- NCDOT has recently revised and republished Streetwise Cycling—A Guide to Safe Bicycling in North Carolina. This document is meant to explain the rights and duties of bicyclists as vehicle operators on North Carolina roads and is available for download in pdf form on the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation's website

Opportunities for TAC Involvement

- Continue to support best practices in planning and engineering as well as increased bicyclist, pedestrian and motorist education efforts
- Continue dialogue with the NCDOT Div. of Bicycle and Pedestrian transportation and the ECHS Bike/Ped Working Group by making them aware of local issues and ideas
- Resolve to support the inclusion of on-road bicycle facilities in paving and resurfacing projects
- Make the senior management of NCDOT aware that bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be a statewide priority and receive more than the current \$6 million per year
- Use MPO discretionary funds to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities

Physical Activity in North Carolina Communities: Our Health Depends on It

Nearly two out of three adults in North Carolina don't get enough regular physical activity¹, which costs taxpayers approximately **\$9 billion** annually in medical care and lost productivity².

The Problem

North Carolina adults are less active than adults from other states. Being inactive increases risk for obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer. Why are we so inactive? We have engineered physical activity out of our daily lives. Since WWII, we have built sprawling cities and towns that have forced us to depend on cars to get from home to school and work. At work, more of us sit behind computers or desks, as fewer jobs require physical labor. At school, we have almost eliminated active recess and physical education classes in favor of better test scores. And very few children walk or bike to school because it's unsafe.

What are active communities? Active communities are places where people of all ages and abilities can easily enjoy walking, bicycling, or using a wheelchair for both pleasure and purpose.³

The Solution

North Carolinians need convenient, easily accessible, safe opportunities for daily physical activity as part of their everyday routine. In order to create active communities, we need to join together to educate North Carolinians about the need for improvements that promote physical activity such as:

- connected sidewalks, walking trails, and greenways
- bike lanes and wide shoulders on streets
- more crosswalks and crossing signals
- well-lit, safe streets
- street-signs that help slow traffic through neighborhoods
- neighborhoods built with sidewalks connected to stores, workplaces and schools

A recent survey indicated that **more than 50% of Americans** would rather walk than drive for the purpose of exercise or travel⁴. Three out of four trips under one mile are made by car.

The Benefits of Active Communities

- Increases regular physical activity among individuals and families, which can help prevent disease, reduce obesity and related medical costs.
- Economic growth through increased tourism and business opportunities.⁶
- Cleaner water and air.⁶
- More social interaction and greater community cohesion.
- Lower crime and reduced pedestrian traffic accidents.
- Improved quality of life, less depression and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- Greater access to restaurants, shopping, schools, and faith activities.

The Partnership

The NC Division of Public Health, Active Living by Design, and the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association have collaborated to establish the North Carolina Active Living Alliance. The mission of this partnership is to: 1) educate the public on the benefits of and opportunities for active communities, and 2) advocate for policies supportive of active living.

For more information, please contact Jimmy Newkirk at 919.733.9615.

Additional Resources

CDC Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/aces.htm

The Active Living Network, www.activeliving.org

Active Living by Design, www.activelivingbydesign.org

Rails to Trails Conservancy, www.trailsandgreenways.org

Eat Smart, Move More NC, www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs/aces/aces.htm

Fit Together NC, www.fittogethernc.org

1. CDC 2003 BRFSS Survey
2. Health Management Association
3. *Winning with ACE's!* Guide
4. *Americans' Attitudes Towards Walking and Creating Better Walking Communities*, April 2003. Belden, Russonello, and Stewart Research and Communications.
5. *Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways*. Rails to Trails Conservancy.