

## **ACHIEVE WICHITA: PLANNING FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES**

*Residents communicate their desire for better physical activity options*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Regular physical activity has many health benefits but many Americans don't reach recommended levels.
- The Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita commissioned a survey showing:
  - Less than half of area residents felt their neighborhoods were designed to encourage outdoor activities.
  - Many said that outdoor activity in parks and open spaces was a problem and that overall condition of parks and the condition of paths and walkways made outdoor activity difficult.
- Assessing local barriers to being active helps policymakers take steps to increase opportunities for more active, healthy lifestyles and improved quality of life for many city residents.

### **Program**

- The Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change initiative, or ACHIEVE, applies a community model using health departments & YMCAs as trusted conveners and community 'coaches.' The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and YMCA of the USA provide ACHIEVE grants and technical assistance, using funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to enhance local communities' abilities to develop and implement policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that will help prevent or manage health-risk factors for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity, and arthritis.
- ACHIEVE funding instigated policy action in Wichita by providing training to an existing coalition's leadership team at an ACHIEVE Action Institute and by facilitating development of an action plan based on successful examples of policy changes that impacts health.
- Since local policymakers were unfamiliar with "complete streets," a planning concept for transportation systems that integrates all modes of transportation and types of users into a single plan, ACHIEVE educated public works staff and residents about its importance.

### **Impact**

- The Wichita City Council passed a resolution endorsing all twelve streetscape improvement concepts recommended in a Streetscape Improvement Plan for East Douglas Avenue.
- This plan provides guidance to the City of Wichita for decision-making on public infrastructure investment in this area, including a soon-to-be-developed multi-use path connecting two parks and two additional pilot projects.
- Residents can see their participation and support positively influencing community development to meet their needs and improve their quality of life.

### **Contacts**

Mim Wilkey  
YMCA - Wichita  
316-264-4066, ext. 258  
mim@wichitaymca.org

Suzanne Ahlstrand  
Wichita Chamber of Commerce  
316-268-1135  
sahlstrand@wichitachamber.org

