

## **ENGAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS**

*Health department steps up to generate action on improving safety and access to physical activity*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Regular physical activity is associated with a longer, healthier life.
- There's good evidence that increasing access to walking and bike paths is an effective strategy for getting people to be more active.
- Increasing access to places for physical activity requires collaboration among government, non-profit and community agencies.

### **Program**

- The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, with funding from the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, worked to reestablish the Central Midlands Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Central Midlands Council of Governments, a governing body for four South Carolina counties.
- A health department staff member chairs this subcommittee of concerned citizens and organizations that support healthier, more livable communities through the creation of adequate walking and bike-riding facilities.
- The Subcommittee seeks to assist with implementation of the Council's Bike & Pedestrian Pathways Plan on alternative modes of transportation, including bicycling, running and walking.

### **Impact**

Results of the reestablishment of governmental support of bicycle and pedestrian access include:

- Outreach to local decision makers has led several communities to adopt the subcommittee's model resolution and endorse strategies and projects outlined in the Council's Bike & Pedestrian Pathways Plan
- Towns and cities are receiving staff assistance on designation of bike routes and location of signage, for example the city of Columbia Bicycle Friendly Community Committee
- Leaders and community members are learning more about active transportation through workshops and conferences such as the South Carolina Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Training and the South Carolina Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity's 2007 Obesity Prevention Conference
- Public initiatives, such as Bike-To-Work Day, are raising awareness of physical activity issues
- Activities such as Columbia Bicycle & Pedestrian Week are engaging community members, elected officials, business leaders, and professional staff in the transportation planning process to make areas physical activity-friendly, improve safety and educate citizens & leaders on the value and importance of biking and walking for healthy communities.

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