

Active Lifestyles

5 Easy Ways To

Create Walkable/ Bikeable Communities

Going Green:
Simple Steps for
N.C. Families

Do you wish that your children or grandchildren could safely walk or bike to school like you did? Would you like to walk or bike to work more often? Do you want a safe, neighborhood place to enjoy an evening walk with your dog or your friends? Here are five things you can do.

Understand the issues

- ▶ Having safe routes for families to walk and bike is one important way to create healthier environments. It also helps make people healthier. Sidewalks, crosswalks, streets and trails may need to be changed. This will require support and action by citizens. The **Active Living Resource Center** at www.activelivingresources.org has background information and how-to plans.

Speak your mind

- ▶ Local changes happen when concerned people speak out on issues that are important to them. When you are concerned about the safety of sidewalks, bike lanes or trails in your neighborhood, talk to the folks who make the decisions. Call the local planning department or your representative on the city council. Attend public forums or meetings on the topic.

Write a letter, send an e-mail message

- ▶ You can also share concerns and questions in writing. Short, personal letters and messages are best. Pictures can have a major impact. Think about adding a photo from your phone or digital camera. Photos are a great way to shine a light on problems that make walking or biking unsafe and unpleasant. This might include risky crosswalks or sidewalks that end all of a sudden.

Get involved with local trail groups

- ▶ Many communities have groups that work to develop and support multi-use trail systems. They usually have detailed local maps. And, they always need volunteers for trail projects and fundraising. Need to find a local trail for walking or biking? Use the **Rails to Trails Conservancy's** free national trail map and finder at www.trailink.com.

Walk and bike the talk

- ▶ The easiest and most powerful way to help create walkable/bikeable communities is to be a role model. When you and your family walk and bike more, you reduce emissions from your car. You also improve the fitness level of your bodies. You have the chance to smell the flowers. You can visit with your neighbors. You might even have the chance to talk with your kids.