

Go Chapel Hill

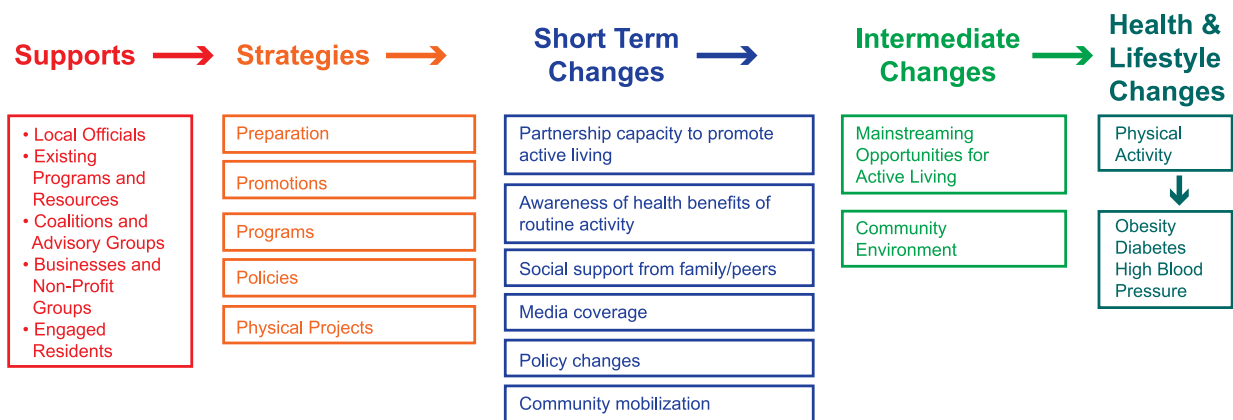
Evaluation of Active Living by Design | Chapel Hill, North Carolina | 2003-2008

A group of maintenance workers, who were contracted to paint crosswalk stripes near an elementary school in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, suddenly found themselves surrounded by curious children: What are you doing? Why are you painting the ground? Why do we need crosswalks? The principal of the elementary school recognized the teachable moment and engaged the children and workers in a discussion about how to be safe when walking to and from school. The maintenance workers were so inspired by the children’s curiosity and the efforts to encourage children to walk to school that they offered to repaint faded safety markings all around the school for free. This was another victory for active living in Chapel Hill.

“Active living” is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines in order to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. In November 2003, the Town of Chapel Hill received a five-year, \$200,000 grant as part of the Active Living by Design national program (www.activelivingbydesign.org) funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). By advocating for changes in community design, specifically land use, transportation, parks, trails, and greenways, the Active Living by Design initiative intended to make it easier for people to be active in their daily routines.

The Active Living by Design Community Action Model provided five active living strategies to influence community change: Preparation, Promotions, Programs, Policies, and Physical Projects. The 5Ps represent a comprehensive approach to increasing physical activity through short-term, intermediate, and long-term community changes. This inclusive model allowed the Town of Chapel Hill and the Go Chapel Hill partnership to create tailored strategies to engage residents, school communities, and local businesses in efforts to create a culture and environment supportive of active living.

Active Living by Design Community Action Model



¹ The Active Living by Design (ALbD) initiative was established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 2001, and its National Program Office (NPO) is part of the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Twenty-five interdisciplinary community partnerships were selected across the country to demonstrate how changing community design can impact physical activity. Transtria was funded by RWJF to work with the NPO to conduct ALbD evaluation and dissemination activities. This case report draws from Transtria’s evaluation efforts.

In Chapel Hill, the Active Living by Design (ALbD) grant reinforced the already emerging idea that infrastructure improvements could influence individuals' physical activity behaviors. The Go Chapel Hill partnership's close relationship with multiple government departments facilitated the sharing of active living-related knowledge and increased support for active living initiatives at the policy- and decision-making levels, which was essential to the success of the project.

The Go Chapel Hill partnership pursued the grant because of its focus on the connection between physical health, physical activity and the built environment. The Committee chose to focus this idea around neighborhoods, businesses and schools to participate in programs that promote physical activity and physical projects, which provide community members with the means to live an active lifestyle.

Through the leadership of the Town of Chapel Hill, the Go Chapel Hill partnership combined policy influences and physical projects with promotional and programmatic efforts to foster an increase in active transportation, create new Town policies promoting healthier lifestyles, and promote construction projects designed to support active living.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The Town of Chapel Hill is located in the Research Triangle region of central North Carolina. It covers approximately 21 square miles. The town has a population of 52,440 residents, of which 50% are ages 15 to 29. Chapel Hill is home to a University of North Carolina (UNC) campus that has over 26,000 students and employs over 10,000 people. Chapel Hill is primarily White (78%), with Asian and Hispanic populations experiencing the highest rates of growth. The Chapel Hill ALbD project chose to focus on several key groups, including school-age youth, ethnic and racial minorities, and lower income populations. Twenty-five percent of children in North Carolina, ages 5 to 11, are overweight. Moreover, the state received a failing grade for adults and children achieving recommended amounts of physical activity on the 2002 Prevention Partners North Carolina Prevention Report Card.

The Chapel Hill ALbD grant focused most of its effort on specific neighborhoods. The Northside neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods and has a large concentration of African Americans (44.7%). Thirty-six percent of the residents live below the poverty level, and nearly twenty percent of residents report that they walk to work. In recent years, the neighborhood experienced an increase in homes being used for student housing. Many of the older homes are being replaced with new condominiums and commercial spaces. The neighborhood is adjacent to the downtown center. Timberlyne is a singly-family, middle-class community that includes a shopping center. While the degree of connectivity varied by community, each demonstrated a commitment to improving infrastructure to support active living.

The Town of Chapel Hill sought to undertake a comprehensive work plan to increase active living within the community through a series of initiatives designed to improve the physical environment and to promote the health benefits of increased physical activity. The Go Chapel Hill partnership focused its efforts in three main areas: Active Schools, Active Neighborhoods, and Active Businesses. Overall, the staff and partners stressed the importance of using the success of one project to build momentum for others, building a volunteer base, and utilizing existing networks to disseminate messaging.

“In the end, people are going to do what’s in their best interest – or what they perceive to be in their best interest – for example, walking rather than driving to get to work. They’ll do that for any number of reasons – part of it could be financial, part of it could be exercise and health – that will more than overcome their reluctance because of time and convenience and all the other things that go into that equation.” -Staff

Preparation

Partnership

In Chapel Hill, the Mayor and eight Town Council Members make policy decisions with input from several appointed boards and commissions as well as various advisory committees and task forces. At the beginning of the grant, Go Chapel Hill was successful in formalizing its partnership as an officially recognized Town of Chapel Hill advisory committee. In this role, Go Chapel Hill was given the following responsibilities:

- Review local, state, and regional policies related to active living and recommend enhancements or changes that an active community needs.
- Identify physical barriers to active living in the community and inform the town of areas in need of improvements to the physical infrastructure.
- Establish Chapel Hill active living design criteria for advisory board project review.
- Review project designs pertaining to active living, including review of new proposals for subdivision and land developments.
- Provide assistance to the Town of Chapel Hill in the development of educational programs to promote active living including schools, neighborhoods, and businesses.
- Organize community-based advisory committees for selected focus areas, including Active Schools, Active Neighborhoods, and Active Businesses.
- Assist in identifying alternative funding sources for active living programs and infrastructure projects.
- Work with other town advisory boards to better coordinate planning for active living within the community

Because Go Chapel Hill was led by a government agency (Town of Chapel Hill) and reported to the Town Council, Go Chapel Hill had to be more structured and regulated to conform to standards of procedure. For example, the Town Council required that the Go Chapel Hill partnership appoint representatives from the community. To ensure proper representation, 16 members were recruited based on the three focus areas (i.e. businesses, neighborhoods, and schools). Roles were left undefined in order to allow members to think creatively about how they could be involved. Partners were able to think about their own organizational agendas in the context of the overall active living goals. The Go Chapel Hill Partnership was also flexible to allow new individuals and organizations to become involved when their specific interests meshed well with partnership projects.

“We established a partners’ committee with some very specific membership slots for different groups, and the Town Council then added to that with members of the general public who expressed an interest in the topics of active lifestyles and greater mobility with the neighborhood, and that’s how we got our first group. Now it’s evolved over the last five years, and some of the specifically delineated groups have dropped out of the process because of turnover and other things, then they become more of our implementation group.” -Staff

In order to make educated decisions, the Go Chapel Hill partnership formed several subcommittees, based on project activities and desired roles. For example, Action Committee members could be depended on to accomplish work plan activities, but were not expected to be as involved in strategic planning. The subcommittees facilitated the decision-making process, especially when decisions had to be made quickly.

Go Chapel Hill partners met monthly to discuss a pre-set agenda designed to create organized, productive, and successful interactions. At each meeting, partners determined how they would like to be involved with the items on the agenda. For example, Go Chapel Hill partners reviewed and discussed proposed plans, developed recommendations for the Town Council, and volunteered with events. A partnership liaison kept the Town of Chapel Hill staff up-to-date on Go Chapel Hill activities. Ultimately, the town staff decided which work plan items to move forward and what resources Chapel Hill could contribute.

Partners, staff, and community members identified several beneficial characteristics of the Go Chapel Hill partnership:

- Partnership members maintained good working relationships with a variety of organizations and individuals in the community, which provided a greater pool of resources for Go Chapel Hill.
- Go Chapel Hill benefited from good communications between staff and the different agencies involved.
- Partners were willing to jump in at any moment to provide for project needs, such as technical assistance, meeting space, and activity sponsorships.
- Go Chapel Hill partners and staff made a concerted effort to understand active living principles and stay up-to-date on research.
- The partners were motivated and passionate about their work and took care to provide encouragement for and acknowledgement of both Go Chapel Hill partnerships and individual successes.

Partners, staff, and community members also noted many challenges to creating and maintaining the Go Chapel Hill partnership:

- Other regional communities viewed Chapel Hill as an early adopter of active living principles, putting pressure on Go Chapel Hill to provide successful examples.
- Because the lead agency was a government agency, Go Chapel Hill activities often required detailed processes and reporting requirements.
- Partnership members felt compromised at times, when partner organization work plans diverged from Go Chapel Hill goals.
- Go Chapel Hill often struggled with the best way to communicate with the Town Council.
- Because schools had many competing priorities, Go Chapel Hill had to develop new strategies to communicate with school administration and determine the best balance between academic priorities and active living goals.

“I think the challenges have been bringing the outside agencies into the picture so they could see the umbrella, the large focus of what we’re trying to achieve and then narrowing it down to how it would actually help their particular agency.” -Staff

The Chapel Hill ALbD project formed a multi-disciplinary partnership representing expertise and experience in advocacy, design, planning, community development, communications and marketing, education, environmental science, health care, health promotion, law enforcement, public health, policy, and transportation. The original list of Go Chapel Hill partnership members includes:

Members of the Go Chapel Hill partnership	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Active North Carolina (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) • North Carolina Prevention Partners • North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Wellness Center • Orange County Department of Public Health
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Hill - Carrboro City Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culbreath - Ephesus - Este Hills - Philips - Rashkis - Scroggs
Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Commission • Chapel Hill/ Carrboro YMCA
Urban Design, Planning & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of City and Regional Planning - Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Research Center • Town of Chapel Hill* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning Department - Sustainability Committee - Transportation Board
Community Leaders, Policy- & Decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Hill Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board • Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board • Town of Chapel Hill Town Council
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce • Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership • Orange on the Move coalition
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCHL Radio
Community & Faith-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northside Neighborhood • Timberlyne Neighborhood

*Organization that served as lead agency during the ALbD grant period

Leadership and Champions

Initially, the staff person in the Town of Chapel Hill Planning Department responsible for drafting the Chapel Hill ALbD grant served as Project Director. In this capacity, he managed the development of Go Chapel Hill and authorized staff assistance. A Project Coordinator was hired, and the Project Director shifted to more of an advisory role. The Go Chapel Hill Project Coordinator was responsible for administration of the grant and served as a staff liaison between Go Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill. The Project Coordinator was very involved in the partnership, and Go Chapel Hill valued a dedicated, passionate leader who kept things on track. Partners noted that the Project Coordinator was especially talented at educating people and encouraging them to participate in Go Chapel Hill activities.

“As an employee, I can feed [individuals] all the information and walk zone charts and GIS maps that we have but then I can’t do anything past that. But on a personal level, I’m able to be involved and give advice as to the best routes to take strategically to get where they’re trying to go.” Staff

The Go Chapel Hill partnership was grateful for the support of the Town staff. By observing the diversity of Town departments addressing active living issues, partnership members realized the connections that could be made to strengthen their efforts.

Partners and staff identified several champions that supported Go Chapel Hill efforts. For example, the president of the Timberlyne Neighborhood Association was very involved in conducting surveys and facilitating community forums. Because of her work, the Timberlyne neighborhood received 37 new streetlights, fresh striping for bike lanes, and improved crosswalk markings.

Funding and Resources

Go Chapel Hill reached out to a number of local, state, and national funding sources to expand the resources available to support and nourish its active living efforts. Financial and in-kind support came from the following sources:

- Active Living by Design National Program Office
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Durham - Chapel Hill - Carrboro - Metropolitan Planning Organization Surface Transportation Direct Allocation Program
- HOPE (UNC Student Organization)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Special Opportunities grant and Sustainability grant
- North Carolina Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant
- North Carolina Department of Transportation Demand Management Grant
- Orange County Visitor’s Bureau
- Tax Revenue
- Town of Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina

Community Supports and Challenges

Prior to receiving the ALbD grant, the Town of Chapel Hill and surrounding communities showed signs of embracing active living principles, perhaps due in part to the presence of the university campus. For example, the Chapel Hill Town Council adopted a Comprehensive Plan that intended to increase mobility by promoting greater use of public transit, bicycling, and walking. In 2002, Chapel Hill, in conjunction with the Town of Carrboro and the University of North Carolina, implemented a fare-free transit policy that led to a 40% increase in ridership. In one neighborhood, walking and biking loops connected residents to a multi-use recreation complex, a school, a business village, and other regional greenways.

Because the lead agency for the ALbD grant was the Town of Chapel Hill, Go Chapel Hill received an ample amount of political support during the grant period. This support enabled Go Chapel Hill to expand the Town Council’s understanding of active living to include not just multi-modal transportation but also other strategies, such as community gardens and complete streets.

Businesses and organizations in and around Chapel Hill showed signs of support before and during the ALbD grant. For example, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce purchased a car to allow employees who took public transit to work to run errands during work hours. Another organization permitted its new employees to continue their involvement in Go Chapel Hill after they had changed employers. At the end of the grant period, the Chamber of Commerce agreed to promote recommendations to businesses for making the community more mobile during the workday.

Many Chapel Hill parents were concerned about the accessibility of several elementary and middle schools in the area. Parents noted that many of the roads near schools lacked adequate sidewalks and crossing aids. For example, one route to school required students to cross five lanes of traffic. Even though the school had crossing guards, parents remained concerned about safety. The natural environment also proved to be a challenge for both pedestrians and drivers. A road near one school had natural hills and dips that negatively affected visibility.

The level of community support and involvement in Chapel Hill and the surrounding communities was high, particularly among individuals affiliated with the university. This elevated level of involvement provided an opportunity for residents to better understand how system change occurred and provided university staff with an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with their community. Go Chapel Hill took resident opinions seriously during their planning process, and residents were very interested and willing to try the new strategies proposed by Go Chapel Hill. For example, a group of residents independently developed a committee that participated in problem solving some of the traffic safety issues in their neighborhood.

“And if [residents] don’t know anything about [active living principles], they know where to find out information about it. So yeah, that was one of the intents of the program was to engage the citizenry a little bit more. And we recognized up front that it would be inappropriate for us to go to a neighborhood and dictate what we thought was necessary.”
- Staff

Many residents had favorable perceptions of the Police Department. Law enforcement officers took extra time to build relationships with community members. In the downtown area, there were mostly foot and bike patrollers, which encouraged interaction between community members and officers. A community-oriented police department led the residents to feel safe and inspired them to protect their neighborhoods. The department also demonstrated support for active living by supporting Go Chapel Hill’s efforts to install street lighting.

Community Assessment

Assessment trainings and activities were a primary means of involving community residents in planning activities. As part of the Active Neighborhoods strategy, Go Chapel Hill encouraged partners and other interested individuals to participate in mobility audits to develop recommendations for reducing barriers to active living. Mobility studies were conducted by university students, community residents, and town staff. After analyzing the data, Go Chapel Hill conducted community forums at convenient locations and sent mass emails to receive resident feedback on the results and prioritize to share with the Town Council. This process allowed residents to come together and make specific requests and concerns to improve their community.

A number of other assessment methods were utilized by Go Chapel Hill. Neighborhood-based walking assessments identified barriers to walking. For example, residents in one community completed a walking assessment and identified a location where they saw a need for a sidewalk. Go Chapel Hill reviewed their recommendations and requested that a sidewalk be installed, which is now heavily used, especially for walking to school. In addition, the Town of Chapel Hill generated a list of infrastructure projects, using a process for assessing and prioritizing sidewalk improvements, including length of sidewalk section, density of surrounding neighborhoods, and access to schools or community spaces. Data from the walking assessments, including lighting, sidewalk, and crosswalk conditions were added to a Geographic Information System (GIS) to further inform recommendations.

“In some cases, the neighborhood assessments Active Living has done have done one of two things. Either they have reinforced the need for projects that are already on [the Town] list, or they’ve identified a new project that wasn’t on our list that we subsequently put on the list and then rank.” -Staff

For the Active Schools strategy, walk zone assessments were conducted at various schools in order to develop recommendations for policies, physical projects, programs, and promotions to increase active living. Assessment methods included facilities audits, parent surveys, classroom surveys, walk zone mapping, neighborhood walking suitability, community forums, interviews, and observations. For example, Go Chapel Hill collaborated with students from a UNC planning course to conduct comprehensive walking assessments of school walk zones, including walking audits, interviews with school administrators, direct observations of student transportation behaviors, and the creation of safe routes maps. The results from school-based assessment activities were summarized and presented to various audiences to inform the planning process and build support for school-based activities.

To inform the Active Businesses strategy, local businesses completed a survey to shape an active business transportation management plan project. A total of 358 surveys were completed and analyzed. Go Chapel Hill also conducted a mobility survey to determine transportation and physical activity patterns of employees in Chapel Hill. Go Chapel Hill received responses from nearly 4,000 individuals.

Policies and Physical Projects

Policies and physical projects, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes include the following:

► Street Design Policies and Plans



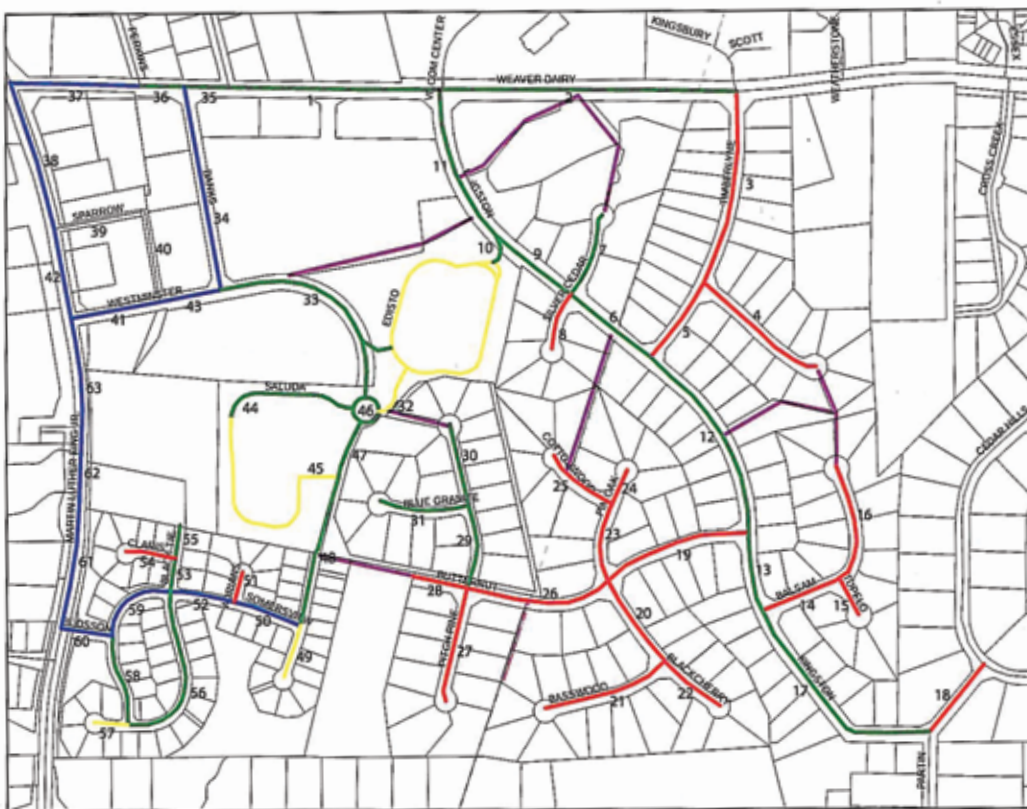
- Go Chapel Hill supported street design policies that provided bike lanes, striped lanes, designated lanes, sidewalks on both sides of the street, and overall connectivity to neighborhoods from the street or highway, rather than policies that widen roads to accommodate more vehicular lanes.
- Go Chapel Hill advised the Town Council on traffic calming policies that included the addition of crosswalks, raised pavers, and sidewalks.
- With input from Go Chapel Hill, the Town of Chapel Hill developed a long-range bicycle and pedestrian plan, a sidewalk plan, bicycle plan, message boards, and a priority rating process to aid in the decision-making processes for physical environment strategies.

“We tell people to walk in well-lit areas, and I think it’s on us to provide that.” -Community

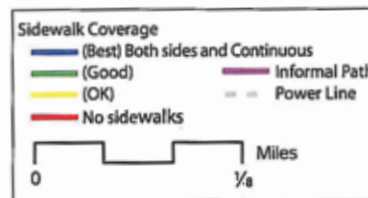
► **NC 86/Airport Road Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety**

- The UNC Highway Safety Research Center prepared an analysis of mobility and safety considerations for pedestrians and cyclists along a main corridor.
- As part of the study, a public forum was held to gather residents’ preferences on walkway and crossing designs as well as concerns about transit stop locations, vehicle speeds, road widths, and other street design elements.
- After accepting the recommendations, the Town Council directed Go Chapel Hill to develop an implementation plan and secure funding.
- Go Chapel Hill hired a contractor to generate a draft plan, which was shared with residents at a community forum for review and comment and circulated among town departments for comment.

► **Active Neighborhoods – Timberlyne**



Timberlyne Pedestrian Mobility Audit Area Results
Sidewalk Coverage Ratings
 February, 2007



- As part of a graduate course at UNC, students conducted an audit of existing pedestrian and bicycle networks and identified barriers to mobility in the area surrounding the Timberlyne Shopping center.
- The resulting report was further informed by a Walkable Communities workshop attended by residents, Town of Chapel Hill staff, and Go Chapel Hill members.
- Physical projects in Timberlyne included bike lane striping, traffic signage, crosswalk striping, Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant curb cuts, new sidewalk construction, and lighting.
- Duke Power Company planned to conduct a research and design project using LED street lights in Timberlyne, based on the community’s desire to be eco-friendly and maintain star visibility at night.

► **Active Neighborhoods – Northside**



- North Carolina Prevention Partners initiated a comprehensive Community Mobility Assessment for the Northside Neighborhood.
- A public forum was held to garner input on a draft report from residents, who expressed concerns that the recommendations to create new sidewalks might encourage loitering.
- Additional comments on the report were generated by a number of Town staff from various departments, including police, engineering, parks and recreation, and housing.
- Members of Go Chapel Hill conducted a walking tour of the community to get a better understanding of the residents' concerns.
- Go Chapel Hill made recommendations to the Town Council to further assess the area to gather additional information about lighting, safety issues, recreational opportunities, maintenance issues, connectivity, crosswalk striping, and sidewalk inadequacies.
- After the Town Council adopted the Northside Pedestrian Mobility Plan, physical improvements were made to the community, including new sidewalks, additional traffic signage, traffic calming devices (e.g., speed bumps, traffic island refuges), and new lighting.

► **Active Business Transportation Management Plans**

- Go Chapel Hill recognized an opportunity to use an existing Special Use Permit policy to create a vehicle for Active Business policy changes and physical improvements.
- Transportation Management Plans, which businesses must submit when applying for a Special Use Permit, were revised to include active living elements, including Workplace Wellness and pedestrian/bicycling amenities in new business developments.
- In order to prevent future bureaucratic conflicts, new developers were reminded to think about pedestrian and bicyclist access when developing plans, in order to fulfill the requirements of the Transportation Management Plan.
- New businesses associated with Transportation Management Plans received the designation of "Chapel Hill Active Business."

“So within the business community, we have taken something that is a natural part of town policy, which is our Transportation Management Program, and made that the Active Business Program for Active Living by Design.” -Staff

▶ **School-based Projects**

- Based on recommendations developed from assessment activities, the Town Council voted to install flashing school zone lights at a number of schools.
- Physical improvements to promote walking and biking to school included new sidewalks, bridge, cautionary signage, crosswalk and driveway striping, and countdown lights.

▶ **Complete Streets**

- Go Chapel Hill made presentations to Town Committees to gain full endorsement of the Complete Streets program by all committees; then, Go Chapel Hill presented the Complete Streets program to the Chapel Hill Town Council.
- At the end of the ALbD grant period, the Town Council formed a Multi-Departmental Task Force to make full recommendations to the Council on the development of a Complete Streets town ordinance.

▶ **Trails**

- Bolin Creek trail improvements.

▶ **Active Neighborhood Walking Loops**

- Based on resident interest, walking loops were developed and approved for Northside and Timberlyne.
- The walking loops used signage that indicated loop name, length of the loop in miles, and steps taken for designated walking paths.
- Each neighborhood established two to three loops of varying length.

▶ **Safety and Security**

- In an effort to keep students safe, UNC police issued expensive fines for jaywalking as part of a comprehensive education campaign. Crosswalks and pedestrian signs were also installed to further promote pedestrian safety on the UNC campus.

Challenges and Successes

Staff, partners, and communities members noted a number of facilitators to developing and implementing policies and physical projects:

- Although many of the policy changes made were not costly, the return on the investment was very important in terms of impact.
- The grant reinforced the already existing positive attitude in Chapel Hill about sharing the transportation network with pedestrians and cyclists and provided positive examples to support the attitude shift at the state level.



“We are able to do some things actually because our policy strongly supported them and we were also able to use operating budgets to implement these or promote mobility for pedestrians and bicycles. And they were very minor in nature but the benefit was very high.” –Staff

“We’re also being able to get the state to agree to some pedestrian features on roads whether it’s crosswalks or pedestrian islands that ten years ago they would’ve rejected.” –Staff

Staff, partners, and communities members noted a number of challenges to developing and implementing policies and physical projects:

- Some community members continued to view the amount of traffic flow as a barrier to using sidewalks.
- Chapel Hill had to compete with other municipalities to receive funding for sidewalk improvements since these projects were not funded by the state.
- The process of accomplishing projects could be time-consuming and labor-intensive due to the volume of projects to be completed.
- The fire chief raised concerns about the addition of too many traffic calming projects since they had the possibility of slowing emergency vehicles en route to the scene of an accident.
- While the end results for physical projects were rewarding, the construction phases often led to additional hardships for local residents and commuters.
- Some residents were disappointed when Go Chapel Hill could not immediately address all of the concerns captured in the neighborhood assessment period. The partnership learned to create small successes to keep up morale while aiming for larger goals.
- Some residents opposed physical changes in the environment because of the implications it would have for their personal property.

“We can build all the sidewalks we want, but if we don’t make the environment safe or reduce those other barriers, then it’s not going to do us a whole lot of good.” -Staff

Programs and Promotions

Programmatic and promotional efforts, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes are described as follows.

► Go Chapel Hill Brand and Logo

- Go Chapel Hill adopted a logo and theme (Go! Chapel Hill) to promote an active living culture by increasing public recognition of the project and providing cohesion to the various program efforts.
- The logo and name were used on shirts, project documents, a website (gochapelhill.org), posters, and flyers.
- In the second year of the grant, Go Chapel Hill adopted a tagline, “Let’s Get it Moving!” and an official image (famous mural of Chapel Hill) to be used in promotional items.

► Go Chapel Hill Kick-off Celebration

- A media kick-off event was held for the official unveiling of the Chapel Hill ALbD program.
- The event featured local government officials and business leaders.
- Speakers promoted the Chapel Hill ALbD project and Town staff attendees on a walk.
- Media coverage included two local radio station, two regional television stations, and two local newspapers.

► **Active Routes to School**

- Prior to the Chapel Hill ALbD grant, a number of schools had success encouraging students to walk to school through a program similar to Walking School Buses. The interest generated by this activity provided a strong basis of support for Go Chapel Hill's Active Routes to School efforts.
- Go Chapel Hill selected one elementary school as the pilot location for the implementation of Active Routes to School programming. Additional schools were added each year.
- Partners conducted a number of assessment activities for each school to provide data to develop programmatic and promotional strategies as well as a list of physical improvements.
- Physical improvements made at each school were publicized to the community. For example, the Mayor led ceremonies at each school to unveil newly-installed flashing school zone lights.
- To promote new crosswalks being painted near one school, a picture of parents painting the safety stripes was taken and sent to the local newspaper and television stations with the title, "Chapel Hill Parents Painting Safety Stripes for School;" When the actual safety stripes were being installed, three television stations were at the location to cover the installation.
- Students and parents from a number of schools participated in International Walk to School Day events to promote Active Routes to Schools during each year of the ALbD grant.
- A national Safe Routes to School workshop was held to assist residents in the identification of physical improvements to the surrounding streets and sidewalks.
- Go Chapel Hill's Active Routes to School program was cited by the North Carolina Department of Transportation as a model for the state.
- Go Chapel Hill hosted and coordinated the statewide kick-off event for Safe Routes to school, with involvement from local volunteers, speakers, and students. The Secretary of Transportation led the unveiling of the program.



► **Active School Walking Wednesdays**

- The eight-week Walking Wednesdays program encouraged elementary school students to walk, bike, or scooter to school instead of being dropped off by their parents.
- Students gathered at pre-determined locations to meet and walk to school together.
- Participation was recognized through stickers placed on "Go Cards."
- On the last day of the program, students received recognition for their achievements with incentives ranging from activity carry bags to special school banners.
- Over the ALbD grant period, the program grew from 152 to 468 participating students.

► **Active Schools Go! Club**

- After the first Walking Wednesday session ended, Go Chapel Hill hosted a breakfast to allow people to provide feedback.
- The Go! Club partnered with the Health Department to develop a color tri-fold calendar that included tips for active living and space to record daily physical activity.
- Classrooms in Active Schools were encouraged to track student activity using the Go! Club calendars and received incentives, including playground balls and banners.
- Teachers reported that their students logged hundreds of hours and were motivated to be more active.

▶ **Active Schools 5-4-3-2-1 Program**

- The 5-4-3-2-1 program, implemented at four middle schools, encouraged participants to consume 5 fruits and vegetables, drink 4 glasses of water, 3 dairy or other sources of calcium, 2 or less hours of television, and 1 or more hour of physical activity a day.
- A chart of everyone's participation was kept, and the classes with the highest levels of participation were awarded with fat-free ice cream as well as gym equipment.

▶ **Active Neighborhood Maps**

- The Orange County Health Department, through a Healthy Carolinians initiative, produced a map of all recreational facilities in Orange County. Go Chapel Hill advertised the map at its kick-off event.
- Go Chapel Hill, in conjunction with the Planning Department, put together a map that showed bus routes and bike/pedestrian routes to the local public library.
- Go Chapel Hill worked with Chapel Hill Public Transit, the Planning Department, the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce, and the Visitors Bureau to create a Newcomers Map showing parks, recreation facilities, greenways, and trails.
- A walking map of the downtown area of Chapel Hill showcased the murals of Michael Brown and other points of interest. The map became a popular resource for a number of organizations.
- Using the Downtown walk maps, Go Chapel Hill conducted a number of walking tours for conference attendees, Chapel Hill employees, and Active Business leaders.

▶ **Chapel Hill Walkability Workshop**

- The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization funded a Walkable Communities Workshop series run by the National Center for Biking and Walking.
- The workshops were designed to assist communities in developing realistic strategies for making communities safer and more pleasant places to walk and bike.
- The Chapel Hill Walkable Workshop focused on the Timberlyne community.

▶ **Active Business Program**

- Go Chapel Hill formed a partnership with the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce and the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership to develop a program that assists businesses in encouraging employees to lead healthier, more active lifestyles both inside and outside the workplace.
- At the end of the ALbD grant period, the program had over 300 participating businesses.
- The partners developed an Active Business toolkit that included bike/pedestrian maps, pedometers, a 10,000 steps program guide, transit guides, and a menu for healthy living daily tips as well as updated information on Chapel Hill Transit, new transit schedules and routes, and information about Chapel Hill's Alternative Commute program.
- Go Chapel Hill utilized an existing network through which district captains were asked to share the toolkit information with other businesses in their district and encourage them to sign up for the Active Businesses Program.
- Some businesses participating in the Active Business Program began to offer incentives to their customers to use alternative forms of transportation. For example, one high-end restaurant offered customers that biked, walked, or took transit a 25% discount off of their meal.

▶ **Active Business Trainings, Workshops, and Classes**

- Go Chapel Hill hosted lunchtime events for Active Businesses to promote ways for employees to become active to, from, and in the workplace.
- All workshops, classes, and trainings were designed to be completed, including travel time, within one hour to satisfy workday schedules.
- An average of 50-60 people attended each Lunch and Learn, which were used to disperse information and challenge businesses to encourage activity.
- Active Business Workshops offered training for businesses to provide information about new ways to bring activity into the workplace for both employees and patrons. Sessions covered a number of topics, including local and regional transit, bicycle hub programs, workplace policy, utilization of small spaces for exercise, sustainability, and employee outreach.
- An Active Business “Drive Less, Be Active” event provided town employees information on using alternative transportation modes to commute, including walking, running, Blue Urban Bikes, vanpooling, carpooling, and local and regional transit; savings cards were calculated showing carbon and dollar savings between each employee home and workplace.
- Other activities included an Active Businesses Award Luncheon, through which businesses were recognized for a number of achievements, such as having the most employees commuting to work.

“Well I know a lot more of the people from public works now just from going to the lunch and learns and I’ll see them out and they wave now. It’s really helped the rapport between the departments.” -Community

▶ **Active October Promotional Month**

- Go Chapel Hill conducted promotional activities during the month of October, with a focus on Active Businesses, Active Schools, and Active Neighborhoods.
- Active Businesses were promoted through a Transportation Management Plan informational mailing and breakfast event, a lunchtime launch at the Old Post Office, and recognition ceremony.
- The Active Schools activities were promoted through walking events.
- The Active Neighborhoods promotion included a series of four walks for health.
- The events were promoted through newsletters, meeting announcements, e-mail blasts, newspapers, radio, flyers, websites, postcards, cable television, and word-of-mouth.

► ***Other Promotional and Programmatic Efforts***

- Approximately 12,900 Active Business employees and other citizens participated in the Smart Commute Challenges, which encouraged participants to use alternative means of transportation at least once during a six-week period.
- The Blue Urban Bike program was a bike share program designed to encourage employees to ride bicycles for physical activity and errand-running during the workday.
- Go Chapel Hill created a website that provided information on how to become involved in partnership activities, including Active Businesses, Active Schools, and Active Neighborhoods, as well as tips and links for healthy living (www.gochapelhill.org).
- A five-minute, professionally-produced video was produced to highlight Go Chapel Hill's activities, including the NC86 project, the Northside Pedestrian Mobility Plan, and the Active Routes to School program, and aired at Trust for America's Health and the NC Division of Public Health's Healthier North Carolina Summit in 2006.
- The Crossing Carolina Challenge was a pedometer program that encouraged employees to log the number of steps they walked each day and to plot the distance walked across a map with pins.
- Go Chapel Hill, applied for and received a Fit Community Designation from NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund, which indicated that the town excels in supporting active, healthy lifestyles in the community, schools, and workplace.
- The 10,000 Steps program encouraged both students and employees to use pedometers to track their efforts to reach 10,000 steps in the workday or school week.
- Chapel Hill's Town Manager was invited to present at the International City/County Management Association National Town Managers Conference regarding Chapel Hill's ALbD program as it related to the town as a walkable community.

Challenges and Successes

Staff, partners, and community members identified a number of facilitators to implementing programs and promotions:

- Go Chapel Hill found that businesses were more responsive when Active Business messaging was sent through the Chamber of Commerce or the Downtown Partnership, both highly respected business networks in the community.
- Teachers served as good role models for the students in the participating Active Schools by walking to school and promoting active transportation.

Staff, partners, and community members identified a number of challenges to implementing programs and promotions:

- Although the schools encouraged students to use paths with crossing guards present, many students took alternative routes, including wooded paths, which made planning for safety difficult.
- Many parents had difficulty understanding why it was better for students to walk to school rather than being driven.
- Go Chapel Hill experienced difficulties implementing Safe Routes to School due to liability issues, which were mitigated by changing the name of the program to Active Routes to Schools, utilizing volunteers rather than school staff, and encouraging students to meet at gathering points to walk to school.
- Convincing employers of the benefits of increasing activity in the work environment was a challenge, but as "early adopter" companies began to adopt changes, such as installing showers, to encourage their employees to walk or bike to work, other businesses were more willing to participate.

Sustainability

Chapel Hill was awarded an 18-month sustainability grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to continue its efforts in the Active Business Program and to examine existing policies and guidelines to create one cohesive Complete Streets document. In order to accomplish its goals, the Go Chapel Hill partnership developed the following strategies:

- Hire additional part-time staff to work on the development and adoption of new Complete Streets Guidelines.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with businesses interested in implementing and incorporating Go Chapel Hill Active Business guidelines.

At the end of the ALbD grant period, Go Chapel Hill successfully petitioned the Town Council to become a permanent official advisory committee, in order to continue to influence policies and physical projects related to active living. The Go Chapel Hill partnership anticipated that the work accomplished during the grant would have a lasting impact on the active living culture in Chapel Hill. Equally important, Go Chapel Hill believed it was better prepared to apply for and receive quality funding based on the successes demonstrated during the grant. Staff and partners stated that Go Chapel Hill's future goals would combine strategies to address obesity, active living, recreational opportunities, and public art.

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