

5 Easy Ways to

Create Walkable/Bikeable Communities

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?

1. Understand the issues.

Creating safe ways for families to walk and bike is one important way to create healthier environments and healthier people. Making the needed changes in sidewalks, crosswalks, streets, and trails will require support and action by citizens. The **Active Living Resource Center** (www.activelivingresources.org) has background information and *how-to* strategies.

2. Speak your mind.

Local changes happen when concerned citizens 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.

3. Write a letter, send an Email message.

You can also share concerns and questions in writing. Short, personal letters and messages are best. Since pictures can have major impact, consider 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, such as dangerous crosswalks or trails that end abruptly.

4. Get involved with a local trails group.

Many communities have groups that are actively working 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 locate a local trail for walking or biking? Use the *Rails to Trail Conservancy's* free national trail map and finder at www.trailink.com/.

5. 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 and improve the fitness level of your bodies. You also have the chance to smell the lilacs, visit with your neighbors, and maybe even have a conversation with your kids!