



In an effort to create healthier communities, the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funded the Active Community Environments (ACE) Special Project. The project’s aim was to increase opportunities for physical activity and active transportation in six different communities. The project took place between May 2014 and June 2015. Local chapters of Eat Smart Move More South Carolina in six counties—Barnwell, Colleton, Greenwood, Lexington, Newberry, and Richland—were each provided funding and technical assistance to implement the ACE Special Project. As a part of the funding requirements, each organization was required to form a local ACE committee to work with its respective community to define the scope of the project. Other requirements of the grant included:

- Engage key decision makers in planning efforts
- Collaborate with local organizations and governments
- Identify a key geographic area that would address disparate populations
- Conduct environmental assessments within the identified area
- Develop an action plan based on priorities determined throughout the committee work sessions

To assist with the process of implementing the ACE projects and providing structural guidance, the process was divided into the following five phases:

| PHASE | STAGE                    | ACTIVITY                                                                                                                 |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Pre-Assessment           | Identify and engage necessary key decision makers in the ACE committee and geographically define the targeted community. |
| 2     | Assessment/<br>Inventory | Conduct environmental assessments within the targeted community to help prioritize a specific project.                   |
| 3     | Action Planning          | Review assessment results to develop a specific action plan.                                                             |
| 4     | Implementation           | Conduct a series of activities that carry out the action plan.                                                           |
| 5     | Sustainability           | Continue to pursue ACE-type projects within the community and expand to other communities.                               |

Each community was very different in terms of geographical scope and community engagement. As such, each selected project and approach to implementation was also significantly different. A description of each community’s ACE Special Project is outlined on the following page. Lessons learned from these communities will be used to develop tools/ resources for other communities striving to effectively plan for bike and pedestrian accommodations.

## COMMUNITIES SNAPSHOT (JUNE 2015)

**Barnwell** County assessment results identified the Town of Blackville and surrounding schools as a priority area. Data from the assessments were used to help make recommendations for improvements in Blackville's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The South Carolina Safe Routes to School program also identified safety concerns at Macedonia Elementary with cars driving through the playground area. A fence was built to prevent access, which resulted in a safer school play space. Barnwell School District 19 also adopted the South Carolina School Boards Association's Model Policy for Open Community Use of School Recreational Facilities. Barnwell County partners are now looking to expand their work to other areas of the county and other schools in the district.

**Colleton** County consulted with Alta Planning + Design to develop a comprehensive plan to promote biking and walking. The county leveraged resources to secure additional funding from the Transportation Committee and the local government. The plan was developed with multi-stakeholder support and, in May 2015, both the city and county governments adopted the Colleton County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Eat Smart Move More Colleton County is working with local partners to support plan implementation efforts.

**Greenwood** County hired Alta Planning + Design to develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the city center of Greenwood. Alta Planning + Design convened a diverse group of members for a steering committee and held a public resident forum. The forum identified a community need for safe travel-ways for bicyclists and pedestrians. Alta Planning + Design presented recommendations to the steering committee and is working on the final report. City representatives are preparing to approach city council about adopting the bicycle and pedestrian plan.

**Lexington** County identified two towns (Cayce and Springdale) based on their previously existing partnerships. Walkability assessments were conducted in both towns. Cayce is developing mile markings and way-finding signage for their riverfront trail. The group is also developing educational materials to identify trail mileage, health benefits of physical activity, and outdoor recreational opportunities for the kiosk in the riverfront area. Springdale has developed a Request for Quote to help hire a consultant for a corridor study for the Platt Springs Road area. Eat Smart Move More Lexington County is looking to expand their efforts into several other areas of the county.

**Newberry** County hired Dodd Studio to develop potential route options in the West End neighborhood. A walkability assessment was completed, and an action plan was developed. Eat Smart Move More Newberry County improved crosswalks and purchased signage to increase pedestrian accessibility and safety. The City of Newberry is working on a Request for Proposal for plans to extend the greenway trail and connect it to the school and downtown Marion Davis Park.

**Richland** County sought to implement portions of the Walk Bike Columbia's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan in areas with high rates of health disparities. Using priority area recommendations from Alta Planning + Design, the group implemented a bike boulevard complete with sharrows, signage, and crosswalks. The group hosted a celebratory event for the bike boulevard, which is the first one built in the Midlands.



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