

# Mayor's Committee on the Built Environment



## Problem

Though the City had recently completed a Bike Summit to evaluate changes needed to accommodate bicyclists, little had been done to address pedestrian issues.

## Background

In 2004, Louisville's Mayor initiated the "Healthy Home Town" program to promote and support physical activity. About two years later, the Committee on the Built Environment was created to further support the program. Composed of both agency coordinators and community members, the committee was concerned with all issues of the built environment that affect physical activity.

## Solution

The Committee's first project was to create a Safe Routes to School program. Committee members worked with local schools and other agencies to evaluate current walking routes to determine which projects to submit for inclusion in the program. As a complement to the Mayor's Miles Program, which encourages residents to walk in parks that designate every 1/10 of a mile, the committee used neighborhood-specific sidewalk decals to indicate recommended walking paths. It is hoped that the unique decals will empower neighborhood residents, and that the clear walking trails will serve walkers well.

Another related project was updating the small neighborhood plans. One member of the Committee was also in charge of these small plans, and walking surveys were conducted as a part of the community process. Interested residents were given a map and an assessment checklist. The final assessments were put on a large master map for each neighborhood and evaluated for priority spots. With little funding for small pedestrian improvements, this prioritizing system gives greater clout to necessary projects.

Active Louisville, one of 25 city partnerships in the country to receive a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for an Active Living By Design program, was motivated by the Mayor's Bike Summit to provide a similar opportunity for walkers. Partnering with the Committee on the Built Environment, the two groups pursued a \$100,000 grant from the Municipal Planning Organization (MPO) to fund a Pedestrian Summit. The summit, still in the planning stages, will use this funding to hire a consultant to structure public involvement in the project. There will also be a pre-planning brainstorm session involving planners, engineers, and other stakeholders to bring them into the process early and get input on feasibility. Additionally, Mark Fenton, host of the PBS TV show *America's Walking*, will come to speak at a public event to advocate the five P's: Preparation, Promotion, Programs, Physical Improvement, and Policy. Following the summit, a draft pedestrian plan will be made that outlines the priority issues to be addressed. The summit is scheduled for spring 2008.

## Results

As of mid 2007, three neighborhoods have undergone walking surveys as a step to updating their plans and prioritizing pedestrian improvements. The summit has yet to take place, but the agency has high hopes that with the additional funding received from the MPO, the Pedestrian Summit will be able to make a great impact.

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