



Taking Steps Forward in Creating a Safe, Accessible Lexington

With funding from Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH), a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) initiative, the Lafayette County Health Department worked with the BCBH Coalition and City of Lexington to create a safe, accessible community.

The Challenge

Physical activity is critical for health. Unfortunately, far too many individuals do not engage in enough physical activity to benefit their health. Creating safe and meaningful opportunities to incorporate physical activity into daily life can begin to reverse generational trends in poor health.

Walking and biking for recreation and transportation is not only great for daily physical activity, it is a cost-effective way to travel. However, persons living in rural areas typically travel long distances to reach critical services and destinations such as jobs, health care, and schools.

The Solution

Nationally, there is a movement to “complete the streets” by making them safer and welcoming to all users. By installing sidewalks, crosswalks, and other safety features, Complete Streets help residents to be more physically active, reduce roadside crashes, create local jobs, and stimulate the economy. This is especially important in downtown areas where transportation and commercial uses are concentrated. Complete Streets is a departure from the norm in small, rural communities in which people are accustomed to driving, so it can be difficult for residents to understand and support the concept.

When residents are involved in problem solving, their sense of community and power increases and they are more likely to uphold solutions.

Nationally, there is a movement to “complete the streets” by making them safer and welcoming to all users – pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.



The Outcome

The BCBH Coalition “took to the streets” to conduct a walkability audit. This activity engaged residents and identified areas for improvement in downtown Lexington, where the medical clinic, public library, county courthouse offices, license bureau, and the community food pantry are located. In addition, the BCBH Coalition reviewed prior plans to identify successful sidewalk enhancements and areas still needing improvements.



Following the audit and review, the BCBH Coalition met with the Lexington City Council to advocate for improvements, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design across the community. The City of Lexington received an \$8,000 Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP) grant to make sidewalk improvements along the Business Highway 13 corridor. Enhancements to this area helped to provide safe

Complete Streets | Success Story

access to the Lafayette County Health Department, grocery store and pharmacy, and serve as a connector to an existing Safe Routes to School (SRTS) sidewalk.

In addition, the City of Lexington was awarded a Recreation Trails Grant valued at \$244,600, which funded Phase 1 of the Lexington Pedestrian Trail, including the construction of a trailhead; ADA restrooms and parking facilities at Crystal Lake Park; and 0.74 miles of a multi-use trail from 24th Street to Business 13 on the abandoned Union Pacific railroad bed. These enhancements also helped to link all the school campuses in the community and support Safe Routes to School.

What's Next?

BCBH, and the work of many partners, helped support the City of Lexington. The Lafayette County Health Department, in collaboration with its partners and City leaders, plan to continue taking steps forward in creating a safer, more accessible county.

To learn more about our work, visit: www.lafayettecountyhealth.org or email: missy.martin@lpha.mo.gov

