

Plan4Health: Active Transportation Community of Interest

by: Liz Kaster

SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Puyallup Watershed Initiative's Active Transportation Community of Interest (AT COI) aims to increase access to safe, healthy, and affordable active transportation options and to educate the community on health, equity, and active transportation.



CHALLENGE

The Pierce County portion of the Puyallup Watershed has a population of more than 400,000 and is characterized as being more diverse, but with lower rates of education and lower median income when compared to the rest of the state. More than nine percent of families live below the poverty line and 14 percent do not carry health insurance. Pierce County ranked 21st out of 39 counties in Washington for overall health outcomes. Heart disease and cancer

are two of the top causes of death, with rates higher than state averages. Obesity and smoking rates are also elevated and African Americans experience worse health outcomes when compared to other races. Pedestrian and bicycle safety are major concerns as well. Washington scored a 28.46 on the Pedestrian Danger Index, which ranked 36th nationally. Between 2013 and 2014, 16 deaths, 80 serious injuries, and hundreds of less severe crashes occurred in Pierce County.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

To learn more about Plan4Health check out the project website (www.plan4health.us) and join the national conversation by using and following #plan4health.

"The collaboration with the City of Tacoma, Tacoma School District administrators, parents, and committed stakeholders will result in a plan that fits Tacoma's needs and the community can participate in and support."

*- Jennifer Kammerzell
City of Tacoma Public Work Traffic Engineer*

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SOLUTION

The Active Transportation Community of Interest (AT COI) will empower the community to get involved with planning and policy making through community education and training—and will educate local policymakers, community leaders, and the public on the intersections between health, equity, and active transportation. Priority jurisdictions have been identified and the coalition is working with each community to develop and implement a policy, systems, and environmental change action plan focused on improving access to safe, healthy, and affordable active transportation options.

RESULTS

Every eight days a young person in Tacoma is struck by a car while walking or bicycling [hyperlink: <http://www.pwi.org/safertoutestoschoolreport>]. As part of P4H, the Active Transportation Community of Interest (AT COI) has partnered with City of Tacoma and Tacoma Public Schools to build a comprehensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan to develop strategies to support young people to safely walk and bike to and from school. Through this planning process, the AT COI helped raise the profile of this critical safety issue and engage community members who wanted to help improve safe access to school. The unprecedented show of support by community members and local decision-makers has led to measurable impact – in the City of Tacoma's 2017-2018 budget Safe Routes to School was awarded \$1.6 million, including \$500,000 set aside specifically for the implementation of the new SRTS Plan.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The SRTS planning process has provided the opportunity to strengthen relationships with the City of Tacoma and Tacoma Public School District. The AT COI will continue to work closely with the City, District and other community stakeholders as the plan moves into the implementation phase. As a first step, partners are working to identify funding sources for different pieces of the plan and are currently applying for a grant to develop an active transportation curriculum. If awarded, this grant will fund local teachers to develop a curriculum that is tied to the Washington State K-12 Learning standards. This is the first step in bringing safety education to every student in the Tacoma Public School District.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.