

Healthy Kids

Healthy Columbia

Policy
White Paper

PedNet

www.PedNet.org - April 17, 2009

CREATING A HEALTHY COLUMBIA FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Background

- Obesity is a serious and growing health threat to children and families nationwide.
- Children who are overweight or obese increase their likelihood of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, asthma and a host of other chronic illnesses.
- Researchers predict the current generation of children will have a shorter average lifespan than their parents because of obesity-related early death.
- The direct and indirect health costs associated with obesity in the United States are estimated at \$177 billion annually.
- To achieve a healthy energy balance, the same number of calories should be expended in physical activity as are consumed in food.
- The physical, economic, and social environment in which most low-income kids grow up encourages high caloric intake through cheap, fatty, sugary food and low caloric expenditure as a result of a lack of safe, public spaces for physical activity.
- Columbia's "Healthy Environment Policy Initiative," funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, seeks to change this environment through policy and systems change.
- The PedNet Coalition and Columbia/Boone Co. Dept. of Public Health & Human Services lead this initiative.

The PedNet Coalition (www.pednet.org)

Mission: To encourage active travel such as walking, bicycling, and rolling a wheelchair, and to promote the creation of a safe and attractive network of paths, trails and multi-modal streets that provides health, environmental, quality-of-life, and economic benefits to the community.

- Since 2000, PedNet has coordinated advocacy campaigns and developed programs that help to achieve this mission.
- PedNet currently has 6,625 individual members in the Columbia area.

GetAbout Columbia (www.GetAboutColumbia.com)

GetAbout Columbia is the name of the City's \$22 million federally-funded program to create and promote use of a comprehensive network of paths, trails, bike lanes and sidewalks throughout the city of Columbia.

- In 2005, Senator Kit Bond was instrumental in creating the \$100 million federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NMTTP) and in selecting Columbia to be one of just four demonstration communities.
 - Today's event celebrates the first major construction project to be completed: pedestrian safety improvements at the Stewart/Providence intersection and creation of the MKT Trail Plaza.
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FRIDAY, APRIL 17TH

HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY COLUMBIA CELEBRATION AND GETABOUT COLUMBIA RIBBON-CUTTING

Guest of Honor: Senator Christopher S. "Kit" Bond

Senator Bond has established or supported numerous public policies that promote children's health and the creation of healthy environments. Some of these initiatives include the Parents as Teachers program, University of Missouri Life Sciences research, Jefferson Farms, The YouZeum, and GetAbout Columbia.

Host: Mayor Darwin Hindman

Promoting healthy living in Columbia has been the hallmark of Mayor Hindman's five terms in office. Successful projects include the MKT and Katy Trails, an extensive system of neighborhood parks, the Mayor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health, the Mayor's Challenge: Bike Walk and Wheel Week, the Activity and Recreation Center and GetAbout Columbia.

Speaker: Kevin Mills, Vice-President for Policy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, with more than 100,000 members and supporters, is leading the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation, a national effort to build on the success of the 2005 Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program. The campaign's goal is to create a broad, federal program that would invest in dozens of communities across the country for improved mobility.

Fast Facts

- Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the last three decades.
- Whereas 50% of American children walked or biked to school in the 1960s, only 13% do so today.
- Since 2005, the PedNet Coalition's Walking School Bus program has expanded to include 435 children at 11 schools.
- The GetAbout Columbia budget includes \$12.3 million for mixed-use paths and sidewalks to make walking and biking to school and other destinations safer and more inviting.
- More than 20 miles of bicycle lanes and shared-use travel lanes have been marked, from a planned total of 62 miles.
- \$2.6 million will be spent on intersection improvements including Stewart and Providence.
- In surveys, respondents who reported walking to work increased from 6% to 10%, and those who reported bicycling occasionally to work rose from 3% to 9% between 2007 and 2008.
- In traffic measurements, average peak-hour pedestrian volumes increased 33% and bicycling volumes increased 71% between 2007 and 2008.

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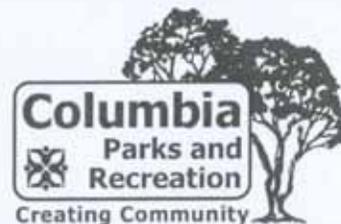
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