

active living

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Working to Ensure a Healthy Community · 2007

an active, vibrant community



An activity-friendly environment is a place that makes it easy to choose to be physically active through planned exercise or routine daily activity.¹

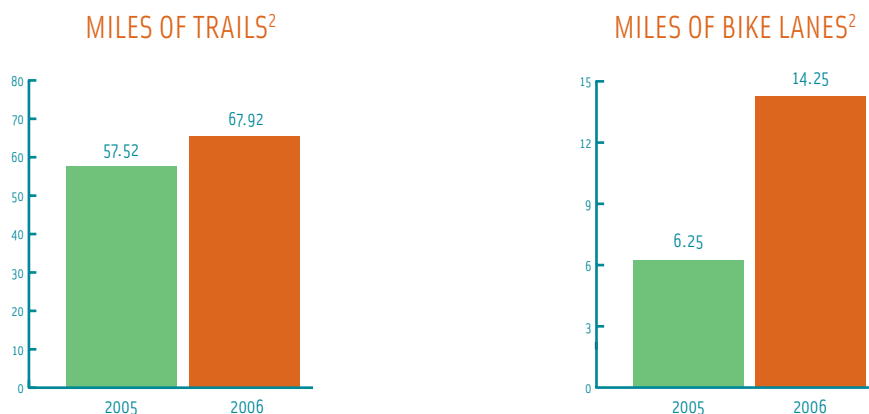
Spartanburg County is a growing, vibrant community experiencing tremendous economic growth and development. One important factor affecting future growth is the health of our community and its residents. Fortunately, numerous individuals and organizations are working to make our community more conducive to physical activity.



A walkable community offers a variety of destinations within walking distance, with safe and connected streets and pathways to get there.¹

Research proves that being physically active is more than just a matter of personal choice. A growing number of national studies show that people who live or work in activity-friendly environments are more likely to be physically active in their leisure time.¹ Planning, community design, and health behavior studies consistently find that the way communities are built influences whether people drive, take transit, walk or bicycle to get where they are going. Communities that have focused only on educating people about healthy living and changing their individual physical activity and eating behaviors have had limited success in improving health outcomes. Changing the environments in which people live is an essential strategy in fighting the obesity epidemic.¹

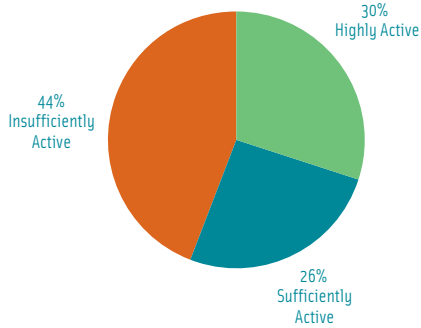
Spartanburg County is making important strides in creating a healthy community, specifically through the development of public trails and bike lanes. In 2006, the number of miles of public trails and bike lanes increased 18% and 128%, respectively.



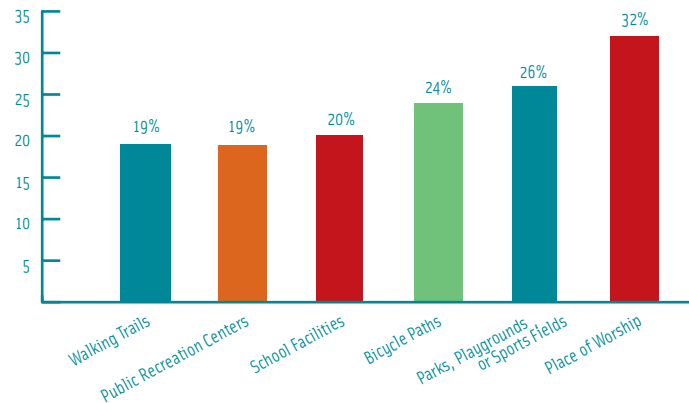
As important as physical environment changes are to increasing physical activity levels among residents, policies that support activity-friendly communities are equally essential. Spartanburg County is making progress in this area as well. A number of cities in Spartanburg County have developed policies to promote active living, especially the development of parks and playgrounds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called for the creation of more parks and playgrounds to help fight the obesity epidemic. Research studies have shown that access to public parks not only increases physical activity levels, but it is strongly correlated to decreases in crime and juvenile delinquency.¹

Unfortunately, too many Spartanburg County residents still lead sedentary lifestyles. Coupled with an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity can lead to obesity and other related illnesses, such as diabetes, stroke, hypertension, and certain cancers.

REPORTED ACTIVITY LEVEL OF SPARTANBURG COUNTY RESIDENTS



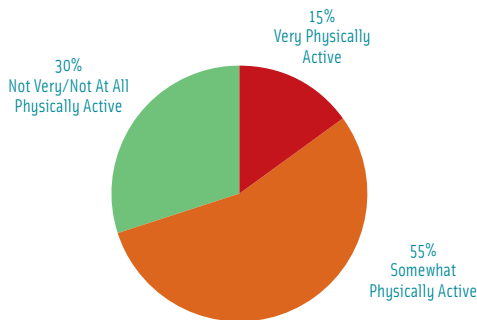
WITHIN THE LAST 7 DAYS, I HAVE USED THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



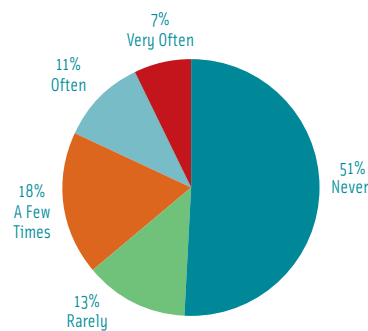
The good news is that research has proven that even small increases in daily activity levels can add up to major population-level health benefits.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 30 minutes of brisk walking at least 5 times a week.

Social and community support are important factors associated with an individual’s physical activity level. Residents of neighborhoods where many people are seen exercising or where residents perceive that they receive social support for physical activity are more likely to be active. Spartanburg County residents believe that most of their neighbors are at least somewhat physically active; however, most people claim they receive little to no social support to be physically active.

PEOPLE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD ARE:



PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO HAD FRIENDS OR FAMILY EXERCISE WITH THEM:



The cost of physical inactivity is enormous – to individual health and community well-being. In an effort to inform policy makers about the importance of investing in places that encourage physical activity, Active Living Leadership (a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) has developed the Physical Inactivity Cost Calculator. The tool looks at the annual costs of medical care, workers’ compensation, and lost productivity associated with physical inactivity as economic justification for an investment in physical activity. Using this cost calculator, the Mary Black Foundation estimates that physical inactivity costs over \$200 million each year in Spartanburg County.³

Since many intersecting factors influence physical activity, communities should implement a multi-faceted approach to increase activity levels of their residents. Changes to community environments must be combined with policy changes, health promotion activities, greater social support for physical activity, and individual interventions.



invest in active living; invest in good health

You Can Make a Difference

- Take advantage of the many local opportunities for physical activity:
 - Rent a bicycle from Hub City Cycle and go for a bike ride.
 - Shop at the Farmers' Market and walk downtown for breakfast.
 - Walk along the MBF Rail Trail or one of the other public trails in Spartanburg County.
 - Learn a new outdoor activity, such as kayaking, at the Glendale Outdoor Leadership School.
- Support and advocate for a community investment in infrastructure – sidewalks, bike lanes, parks and recreation, and walking trails – that encourages physical activity.
- Challenge a friend, colleague, or family member to exercise with you – walk during lunch breaks or after dinner, take the stairs, and park farther away.
- Talk with your employer about starting a workplace exercise program – physical activity in exchange for decreased insurance premiums or additional time off.

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Data Sources

¹ Active Living Research, www.activelivingresearch.org

² Spartanburg Area Transportation Study

³ Physical Inactivity Cost Calculator, Active Living Leadership, www.activelivingleadership.org

All other data included in this report were collected by Priority Metrics Group (Spartanburg, SC) for the Mary Black Foundation. Priority Metrics Group conducted a telephone survey of Spartanburg County residents 18 years of age or older. Approximately 200 surveys were completed each month from January - December 2006. Interviews were conducted throughout the day and evening to reach individuals who might be working or otherwise unavailable during normal business hours. Average survey time was approximately 30 minutes. Survey results presented in this report are weighted using age and income of respondents.

The sample size (n = 2,391) results in a confidence interval of ± 0.12 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\sigma = 1.0$) around an average response and $\pm 5.4\%$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, est. proportion = 25%/75%) around a percentage response.

Please contact the Foundation for more information about this report or the data collection process.

Using this Report

Please acknowledge the Mary Black Foundation when using this report to promote the importance of active living. Additional copies are available by calling the Mary Black Foundation or may be downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.maryblackfoundation.org.

Photo Credit: Mark Olenki, Spartanburg Residents Walking, pages 2 and 3.



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