

# Bright Future

Working to Ensure a Healthy Community



Active Living Report

We all want Spartanburg County to be a successful and thriving place. The health of Spartanburg County's citizens is critical to our community's success. To improve the health of our community, **we all have to get out and be active.** But what does being active mean? Simply walking for 15 minutes a day can put any citizen on a track to better health. There are many places and opportunities for walking in Spartanburg, thanks to the efforts of several local organizations.

*“In a walkable community, it is easy to accumulate 30 minutes of activity or more because daily tasks, such as going to and from school or work and running errands, can be performed by walking rather than driving. Walkable communities create a culture that encourages and supports healthy lifestyles.<sup>1</sup>”*

Our environments and community support structures dictate how active we will be on a daily basis. Regular exercise is not simply a matter of personal choice: places without the necessary infrastructure for being active discourage citizens from engaging in regular activity. Likewise, community and social support play a big role in determining whether we will be active: if those around us are regularly active, their behavior will encourage us to do the same. Creating walkable communities is a key factor in improving the health of Spartanburg County's citizens.

# Why Walkable Communities?

Walkable places provide citizens with opportunities to improve their health, their environment and their community.

## ***Increased health:***

Walking regularly burns calories, lowers blood pressure and cholesterol, improves circulation and strength and combats health problems like obesity and heart disease. Walkable places make it easy for residents to exercise often and incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

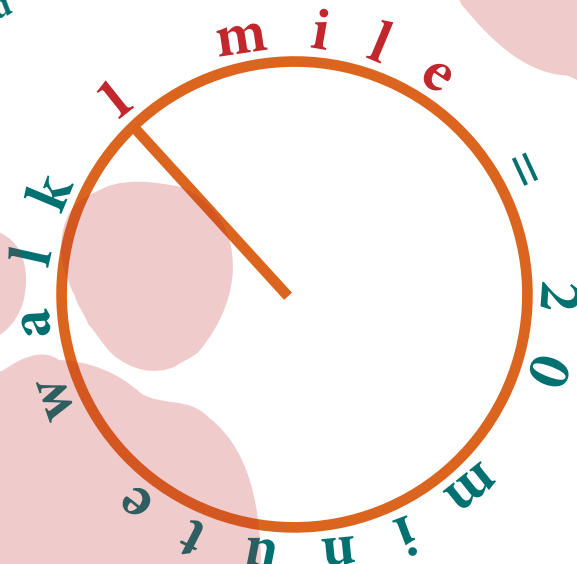
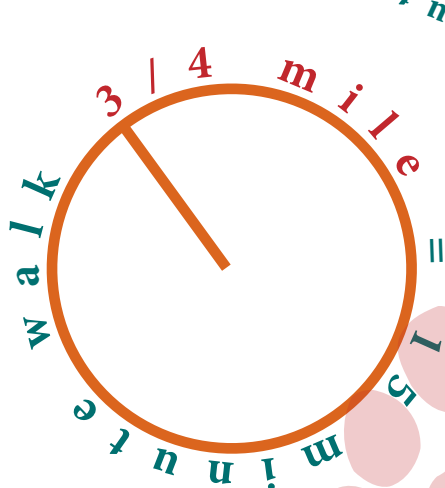
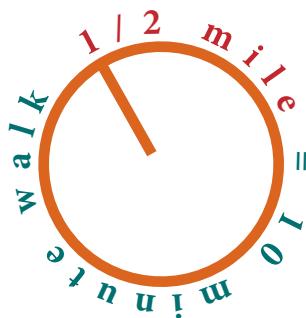
## ***Improved air quality:***

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Spartanburg County received a grade D in ozone exposure and a grade of F in particulate matter pollution exposure in 2008. Poor air quality contributes to respiratory problems, including lung disease, cancer and asthma. Improving walkability by, for example, adding sidewalks to communities, helps reduce car trips, and, therefore, air pollution.

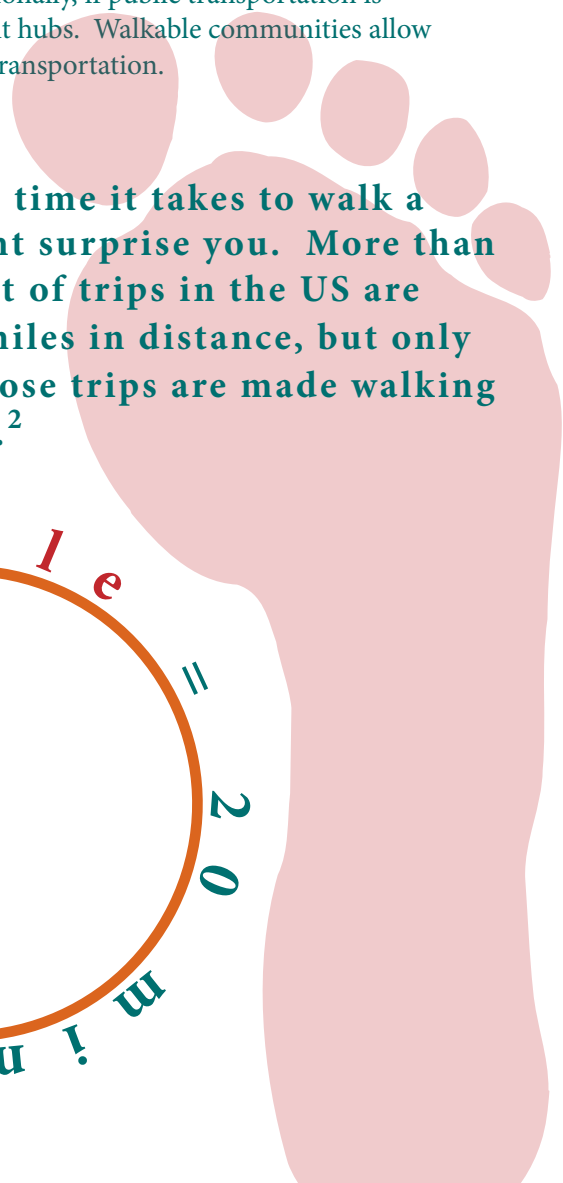
## ***Better transportation choices:***

Not everyone in our community has access to a car. For example, more than 19% of Spartanburg city residents do not have an automobile. Additionally, if public transportation is accessible, you are most likely to walk to and from transit hubs. Walkable communities allow citizens the freedom to choose to walk for services and transportation.

## *By the numbers...*



The short time it takes to walk a mile might surprise you. More than 40 percent of trips in the US are under 2 miles in distance, but only 10% of those trips are made walking or biking.<sup>2</sup>





# What Makes a Community Walkable?



**Infrastructure:** A walkable community must have an abundance of well-maintained infrastructure to create a safe and attractive environment. Infrastructure includes sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting.



**Connectivity:** This kind of connectivity encourages people to walk for both exercise and transportation. Destinations and neighborhoods should be connected by safe, accessible infrastructure to ensure walkability.

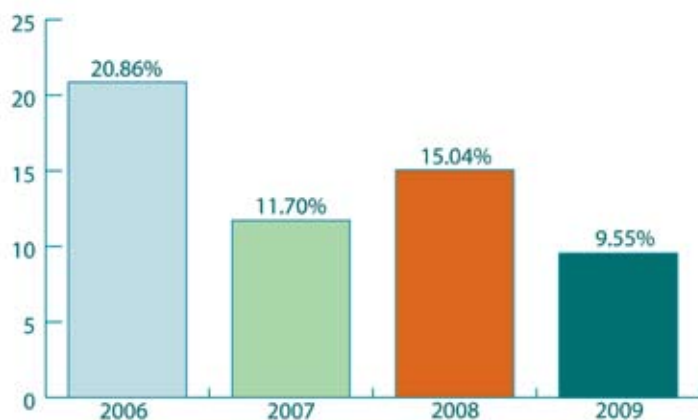


**Density:** Walkable communities require a mix of land uses and proximity of different uses. Ask yourself: are the places where I live, shop, learn, play, work, and pray close to each other? Is it safe to walk to them?

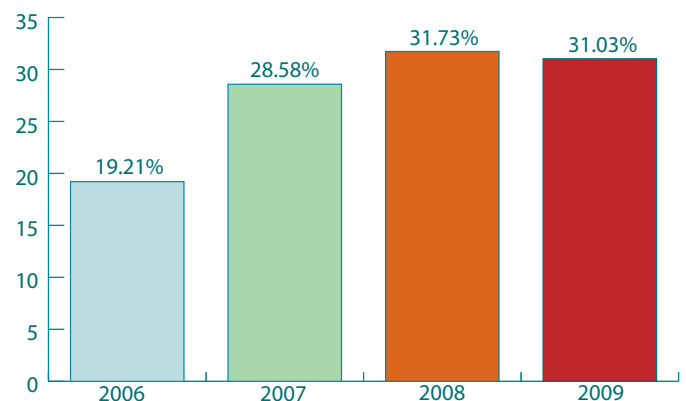


**Environment:** Activity-friendly community design, which includes greenspaces, trees and lower travel speeds, creates both a functional and inviting place to walk. If the journey from place to place is an interesting and varied experience, you are more likely to walk for both transportation and exercise.

How Many Spartanburg Residents Have Walked for Transportation in the Past 7 Days?

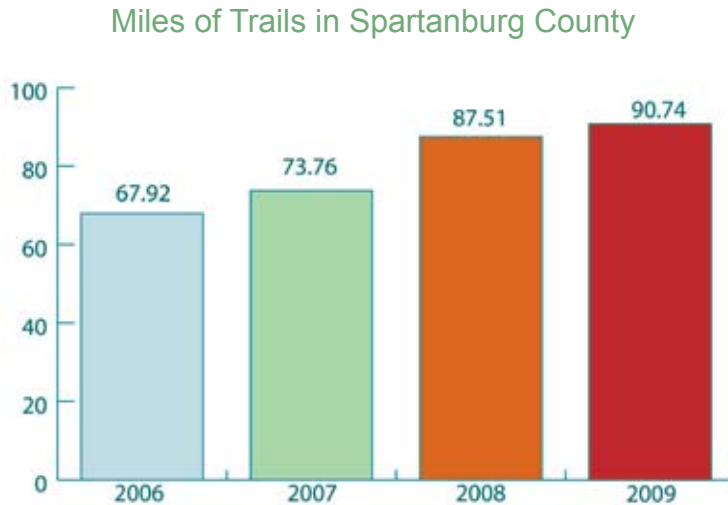


Access to Walking Trails in Spartanburg County



# How Walkable is Spartanburg County?

Spartanburg County is on its way to becoming a more walkable place: the number of miles of trails in the County has increased by over 25% in the past 4 years. In 2007 the Mary Black Foundation Rail Trail was used more than 22,000 times. With funding from the Foundation and other sources, the Westside Neighborhood Association completed a section of the 5.5-mile Wadsworth Trail to connect adjacent neighborhoods to an elementary school. As more facilities are constructed for being active, the health of Spartanburg County residents will improve.



Walk Scores <sup>3</sup>	
Spartanburg	78
Landrum	72
Woodruff	69
Chesnee	66
Inman	52
Cowpens	48
Lyman	38
Pacolet	38
Duncan	34
Welford	28
Campobello	26
Reidville	23
Central Pacolet	8
Boiling Springs	0

## How Can Spartanburg County Be More Pedestrian-Friendly?

While we have made significant progress, much work is still needed to make Spartanburg County more walkable. We must increase the opportunities for residents to walk safely for exercise and transportation. Walkability is both a health and a quality of life issue. Without a healthy community, Spartanburg County cannot prosper economically. **Investments in infrastructure, education and awareness to create a culture of walkability in Spartanburg County will lead to a healthier and more prosperous community in the long term.**

*“Design is a critical part of creating a walkable community. Your environment has a great deal to do with whether or not you walk: infrastructure, proximity of uses, safety, and easy access to walking facilities are all pieces that, functioning together, create a walkable place.”*

-Mark Fenton, host, PBS America’s Walking



## Sources

1. "Overweight and Obesity: At a Glance." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 8 Dec. 2006 <[www.surgeon-general.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact\\_glance.htm](http://www.surgeon-general.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_glance.htm)>.
2. Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, 2008.
3. Walk Scores tabulated by the website [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com). Scores are based on a scale of 0 - 100, with 100 being the best possible score. Walk Score calculates the walkability of an address by locating nearby stores, restaurants, schools, parks, etc. Walk Score measures how easy it is to live in a place with limited access to a car.

## Data Methodology

Data included in this report and not otherwise attributed were collected by Priority Metrics Group (Spartanburg, S.C.) for the Mary Black Foundation. Priority Metrics Group conducted a telephone survey of Spartanburg County households from October 2007 - September 2008. 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 15 minutes. Survey results presented in this report are weighted using age and income of respondents.

The sample size (n = 250) results in a confidence interval of + 0.12 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $\sigma = 1.0$ ) around an average response and + 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 improve the public's understanding of the importance of active living and walkable communities. Please download, save and distribute this report. The Foundation encourages readers to link to this report on websites and other social media outlets.



Photography: Carroll Foster, Hot Eye Photography

