

CHANGING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



AT A GLANCE

The Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) in partnership with the CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, awarded several communities grants as part of the Active Allegheny Grant Program (AAGP). The total grants of \$405K yielded an investment of \$3.5 million for communities to advance and implement funded plans and designs that will connect bikers and pedestrians to local attractions and transportation systems. The goal of the AAGP is to increase residents' opportunities for physical activity in their community by funding a variety of pre-construction activities. This helps municipalities create bicycle and pedestrian plans, identify needed improvements and programs related to active transportation, design and adopt a complete streets policy and complete engineering and design work on previously recommended bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Three REACH communities have been impacted to date with 25 miles of roadways identified for safety improvements and over 34,000 people potentially impacted.

Public Health Challenge

- In Allegheny County, Black residents are more likely to live in poverty and have poor health outcomes, therefore, our REACH coalition prioritized 6 communities.
- Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability. Although the rates in Allegheny County are not significantly different from the state or nation, the rates in our REACH priority communities are alarmingly high due to health inequities.¹
- Poverty is linked to low levels of physical activity where 24% of county residents are physically inactive while in our priority communities up to 41% of residents are physically inactive.¹

“The goal of the City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure is to facilitate residents' physical mobility in order to support their social and economic mobility. For Homewood, one of our most underserved minority areas, we built an implementation-focused plan, thanks to the REACH/Active Allegheny grant. The plan seeks to further Homewood's vision of being an African-American cultural hub, where people choose to live, work, worship, and travel, by enhancing access to healthy, inexpensive mobility options.”—Panini A. Chowdhury, Transportation Planner

APPROACH

The AAGP in partnership with the CDC REACH Program, funded projects that address major risk factors that contribute to chronic disease in Allegheny County, by providing resources for the design and integration of active, safe, walkable, and bikeable spaces in 3 of the 6 REACH neighborhoods.

HOMEWOOD

The Homewood neighborhood was selected as an AAGP grantee following the completion of its comprehensive community plan in 2018. The plan resulted in 1 million dollars of mobility improvements including speed humps, high visibility crosswalks, ADA ramps, and sidewalk replacements for 10 miles along two heavily used corridors.²

CITY OF MCKEESPORT

In 2020, the City of McKeesport sought assistance through AAGP to improve access to its many amenities, connections to schools, social services, and grocery stores among others. The mobility plan was adopted in November 2022, and it contains approximately 6 miles of infrastructure improvements, such as crosswalk visibility enhancements, streetscaping lighting, bicycle pavement markings, speed humps, and sidewalk replacements among others.³

TURTLE CREEK CONNECTOR

REACH partners completed a feasibility study for the Turtle Creek Connector Trail project. The proposed trail connector's goal is to provide an accessible, convenient, and equitable system linkage between two regional trail systems, thereby improving the connectivity of existing transportation assets. In 2022, Allegheny County committed \$2.5 million from its Trail Development Fund to complete engineering and design on the entire corridor.⁴



RESULTS

3.5 Million

Dollars of investment for communities to advance transportation plans and designs

25

Miles of roadway identified for pedestrian and bicycle and safety improvements

34,000+

People potentially impacted by new or improved active transportation and design policies or plans

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

ACED will continue to support the planning and design of active transportation connections (including persons with disabilities) and provide additional services such as scope of work development, drafting consultant requests for proposals, managing consultant contracts, and facilitating public engagement activities to sustain the successes achieved over the last 5 years.

How to get involved?

We're helping Allegheny County have the right conditions for all residents to be healthy. Learn more about the LWA REACH Coalition to be a part of this journey! www.livewellallegheny.com/REACH/

70 municipalities in Allegheny County have committed to improving health and quality of life in their communities. Connect your community to the LWA REACH Coalition— work with us! www.livewellallegheny.com/join-us/partner/

1. CDC PLACES, 2022

2. Homewood Comprehensive Community Plan, 2019

3. Walk, Bike, Ride McKeesport Mobility Plan, 2022

4. Turtle Creek Connector Trail Feasibility Study, 2022