



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Roads, Waistlines, Play and Community Development

By CED Guest Author

Article: <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/roads-waistlines-play-and-community-development/>

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How economic development and community well-being relate to environmental and human health is the focus of the state-level group Healthy Environments Collaborative (HEC). Local community and economic development advocates and program managers may benefit from drawing on this inter-agency resource.

The *big idea* is that there are important ways that “health” can connect across state-level and local-level work on walkable communities and environmental protection while also supporting strong economic activity and the nutrition and exercise needs for citizens of all ages.

HEC is comprised of representatives from four state agencies: Health and Human Services, Transportation, Commerce, and Environment and Natural Resources. Over the last three years, they have worked to integrate and influence interdepartmental efforts to improve the health of North Carolina’s people, environments, and economy.

HEC is a small, but growing, initiative to work systematically across agency boundaries. I believe HEC will become even more significant as budget cuts prompt state agencies and nonprofits to better coordinate in order to maintain services as effectively as possible.

HEC’s biggest projects are:

Policy Analysis: A three stage policy analysis is underway to identify policy opportunities and challenges linked to healthy environments. The analysis includes 1) review of almost 400 state policies, 2) stakeholder interviews outlining 190 policy issues, and 3) eleven local case studies.

Media Communications: *Shape Your World NC* seeks to give citizens the inspiration to see a better world, a place to come together online and in their communities, and offer tools and resources to start shaping their world today. The website www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com launched in mid-March.

Hundreds of Students from across North Carolina participated in a video contest called **Lights, Camera, Active!** The purpose of the contest is to help young people understand the vital link between their physical environments and their ability to lead healthy, active lives. Red carpet screening events are taking place around the state from March 31 – May 5 to showcase their work and have a forum for community discussion. Here is a report from the March 31st Ahoskie event featuring a young filmmaker’s success: The full schedule for **Lights, Camera, Active!** premiers is here: <http://shapeyourworldnc.com/see-student-films.html> <http://www.shapeyourworldnc.com/blog-recent-posts/entry/young-filmmakers-shine-in-ahoskie.html>

Capacity Building: Technical assistance and three trainings are being offered including

- 1) Health Impact Assessment,
- 2) Advocacy, and
- 3) the Move More Scholars Institute.



For more information – take a spin at <http://nchealthyenvironments.com/index.html>