

Plan4Health: Puyallup Watershed Initiative Active Transportation COI Pierce County, WA

Summary

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Puyallup Watershed Initiative's Active Transportation Community of Interest (AT COI) aims to increase access to safe, healthy, and affordable active transportation options and to educate the community on health, equity, and active transportation.

Challenge

The Pierce County portion of the Puyallup Watershed has a population of more than 400,000 and is characterized as being more diverse, but with lower rates of education and lower median income when compared to the rest of the state. More than nine percent of families live below the poverty line and 14 percent do not carry health insurance. Pierce County ranked 21st out of 39 counties in Washington for overall health outcomes. Heart disease and cancer are two of the top causes of death, with rates higher than state averages. Obesity and smoking rates are also elevated and African Americans experience worse health outcomes when compared to other races. Pedestrian and bicycle safety are major concerns as well. Washington scored a 28.46 on the Pedestrian Danger Index, which ranked 36th nationally. Between 2013-2014, 16 deaths, 80 serious injuries, and hundreds of less severe accidents occurred in Pierce County.

Solution

The Active Transportation Community of Interest (AT COI) will empower the community to get involved with planning and policy making through community education and training—and will educate local policymakers, community leaders, and the public on the intersections between health, equity, and active transportation. Priority jurisdictions will be identified and the coalition will help each community develop and implement a policy, systems, and environmental change action plan focused on improving access to safe, healthy, and affordable active transportation options.



Your Involvement is Key

Residents of Pierce County can stay up-to-date on coalition news and events by visiting the coalition's website (www.pwi.org/collaboratives/active-transportation), Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/PuyallupWatershed) and following @PuyallupWater on Twitter.

To learn more about the Active Transportation Community of Interest and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website (www.plan4health.us).

Join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following #plan4health.

Results

The Active Transportation COI is working with their partners to engage the community in planning and policy decisions that affect their lives. One of these partners is Alchemy Skateboarding, a non-profit with a mission of “providing youth opportunities to learn and grow through skateboarding.” Alchemy is connecting young skateboarders with opportunities to get involved in local government. During a recent weekly session, students met with local planners to discuss skate park design. In preparation for their *Go Skate Day* event in June, the students are going through the process to request temporary installation of skateable art in an underutilized plaza in Downtown Tacoma. The AT COI is excited to partner with organizations like Alchemy to empower the next generation of thoughtful and engaged community members.

Contact

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"Plan4Health has enabled us to grow and strengthen partnerships around the common goal of increasing access to safe, healthy, and affordable active transportation. These partnerships are essential to addressing health disparities in our community."

- Liz Kaster, Active Transportation COI Manager

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