



Community Connections and Community Projects

Background

One important aspect of the Community Health and the Built Environment project is creating connections with the community. To do this in Medicine Hat and Redcliff we partnered with a group of key community stakeholders from the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation (CAAT).

This group of representatives helped to guide the research that was conducted in the community. In addition, they have been working with the researchers to develop community projects. The projects help residents be more physically active and eat healthy food.

Through conversations, the representatives from Medicine Hat and Redcliff identified a couple of directions for community projects: (1) funding in support of the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation, and (2) evaluation of the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation's bike rack initiative.

Funding in Support of the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation

The mission of the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation is to ensure the safe integration of pedestrians, cyclists and other active users among motorized vehicles on roadways. They also strive to increase accessibility to active and alternate transportation choices for residents of Medicine Hat, Redcliff and area.

In the summer of 2009 a part-time coordinator was hired for the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation. The primary

responsibilities of the coordinator were to bring community partners together and organize initiatives identified by the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation's working group. This position was jointly funded by the Community Health and the Built Environment project and the Healthy Alberta Communities project (another community-based project out of the University of Alberta).

Evaluation of Community Bike Rack Initiative

One of the initiatives undertaken by the Coalition for Active and Alternate Transportation was the installation of bike racks at key locations in Medicine Hat and Redcliff. In total, 43 bike racks were installed throughout the communities in the spring and summer of 2010. In the fall of 2010, a survey was conducted with local business owners. Business owners from the areas surrounding the bike racks were surveyed to understand usage and perceptions of the bike racks. A summary of the evaluation results can be found on the DVD included with this package.

Next Steps

The researchers are continuing to look for opportunities to partner with the community to undertake similar projects in future years.

