PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE
Fighting obesity and type 2 diabetes with more ways to stay active

- Increased physical activity is critical to both the prevention and treatment of type 2 diabetes. In past surveys, **60% of adults in North Carolina believe they would be more physically active** if their communities had more accessible sidewalks for walking or bicycling.
- New research from UNC-Chapel Hill shows that **biking and pedestrian projects save public dollars in the long run by lowering health care costs**, especially in rural and urban areas.
- **Complete Streets** is a national movement to convert existing neighborhood infrastructure into pedestrian and bike-friendly roadways. North Carolina’s **Department of Transportation adopted a “Complete Streets” policy in 2009** and the Department’s mission includes supporting the health of state residents.
- Keeping communities walkable is a smart economic choice that supports property values in addition to improving community health. In Charlotte, for example, an **increase in Walk Score (a measure from 0 to 100 on how easy it is to do various errands on foot) correlates with an increase in average house price.**

What is the current state of physical activity among North Carolinians?
Compared to the national average, residents of North Carolina are less likely to meet physical activity recommendations. In 2012, **39.9% of North Carolinians with diabetes reported doing no exercise in the past month**, compared with only **23.1% of adults without diabetes.**

What are the benefits of increased physical activity?
Physical activity not only helps prevent the incidence of type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases, but also mitigates the consequences of type 2 diabetes once individuals are diagnosed with the disease. Improving the built environment by developing communities that are walkable and bikable can assist individuals in increasing their physical activity; it makes "the healthy choice the easy choice."

What should North Carolina do?
1. North Carolina can **make the community health impact of proposed transportation projects a required part of decision-making** with respect to transportation project funding.
2. The state can **collect more data on pedestrian and cycling activity** to aid researchers in more fully understanding the role of the build environment in public health and diabetes prevention.
3. The state can encourage **municipalities to require new subdivisions to construct sidewalks and bike accommodations in all new development.**

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