Bike Walk **Kentucky**

Active Living Community Starter Kit

A practical guide for building safer, healthier, and more connected Kentucky communities

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Prepared for local governments, health departments, community organizations, and citizen advocates

Acknowledgement & Support

This Active Living Community Starter Kit was developed by Bike Walk Kentucky with financial support from the Kentucky State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program.

That support helped make it possible to create a practical, community-facing resource for local governments, health departments, schools, community organizations, advocates, and residents working to make walking, biking, rolling, and active living safer and more accessible across Kentucky.



Bike Walk Kentucky is grateful for the opportunity to support this work through education, outreach, storytelling, and practical tools that help communities move from ideas toward action.

This resource is intended for community education and planning support. Communities are encouraged to adapt the worksheets, examples, and next-step tools to fit their local needs, partners, and priorities.

Purpose of This Starter Kit

The Active Living Community Starter Kit is designed to help Kentucky communities take practical first steps toward safer, healthier, and more connected places to live.

Active living does not always begin with a major construction project, a full master plan, or a large grant award. Often, it begins with a local need, a community conversation, a safety concern, a missing connection, or a group of partners willing to ask: what would make it easier for people to walk, bike, roll, gather, and move through daily life?

This guide brings together simple explanations, planning prompts, worksheets, Kentucky examples, and next-step tools to help local governments, health departments, community organizations, and citizen advocates identify opportunities and move from ideas toward action.

This kit is for:

- Local governments
- Health departments
- Community organizations
- Schools and civic partners
- Citizen advocates
- Anyone working to make active living safer and more accessible

Use it to:

- Understand what active living means
- Identify local gaps and opportunities
- Bring the right partners to the table
- Document walk/bike needs
- Prioritize realistic projects
- Explore funding pathways
- Create a simple local action plan

START WHERE YOU ARE. BUILD FROM THERE.

Every community is different. Some already have trails, sidewalks, plans, and active partners. Others are just beginning the conversation. This kit is not a test and it is not a one-size-fits-all plan. It is a starting point.

Use the pages that are helpful now. Come back to the others as your work grows. Progress begins when communities identify what matters locally and take the next practical step.

What is Active Living?

Active living means making movement part of everyday life.

Active Living happens when people have safe, accessible, and welcoming places to walk, bike, roll, gather, play, and reach everyday destinations. Active living is not limited to exercise programs or recreation. It is shaped by the streets, sidewalks, trails, parks, crossings, schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces people use every day.



Everyday Movement

Walking to school, biking to work, rolling to a park, walking downtown, or choosing an active trip when possible.



Safe Places to Walk, Bike & Roll

Sidewalks, crossings, trails, shared-use paths, bike routes, lighting, signage, and accessible public spaces.



Connections to Daily Destinations

Safe routes to schools, parks, libraries, health services, grocery stores, downtowns, jobs, neighborhoods, and community gathering places.



Community Design that Supports Health

When communities make movement safer and easier, residents are more likely to be active, connected, independent, and engaged.

Key Takeaway

Active living is not just about individual choices. It is about creating communities where healthy movement is safe, practical, and built into everyday life.

Why Active Living Matters in Kentucky

Safer streets. Healthier people. Stronger communities.

Active living is about more than recreation. It is a practical community strategy that supports public health, safety, access, economic vitality, and quality of life.

When communities make it safer and easier to walk, bike, roll, and reach everyday destinations, healthy movement becomes part of daily life.



Health & Wellness

Safe places to walk and bike help residents build physical activity into everyday routines. This supports chronic disease prevention, mental wellness, healthy aging, and active family life close to home.



Safety & Access

Sidewalks, crossings, trails, bike routes, lighting, and traffic calming help people move more safely and independently. These improvements are especially important for children, older adults, people with disabilities, and residents who do not drive.



Economic & Community Vitality

Walkable downtowns, connected neighborhoods, parks, trails, and public spaces strengthen local identity and make communities more welcoming. Active living investments can support local businesses, tourism, workforce attraction, and long-term competitiveness.

The Bottom Line for Kentucky Communities

Active living helps communities become healthier, safer, more connected, and more competitive. When people can move safely and comfortably through the places they live, work, learn, and gather, quality of life improves for everyone.

Active Living + Complete Streets

Designing places where people can move safely and comfortably.

Active living and Complete Streets are closely connected. Active living focuses on helping people build movement into everyday life. Complete Streets help make that possible by designing roads, sidewalks, crossings, trails, and public spaces so people can move safely and comfortably, no matter how they travel.

Active Living
The Goal/Outcome

Communities where walking, biking, rolling, gathering, and reaching everyday destinations are safe, practical, and accessible.

→

Connected Design
The Connector

Sidewalks, crossings, trails, routes, and public spaces connect people to the places that matter in daily life.

→

Complete Streets
The Tool / Approach

A flexible planning and design approach that helps transportation networks safely serve people of all ages and abilities.

What Complete Streets May Include

- **Sidewalks**
- **Safe & Visible Crosswalks**
- **Accessible Curb Ramps**
- **Bike Lanes or Shared-Use Paths**
- **Traffic Calming**
- **Lighting & Signage**
- **Safe Connections to Schools, Parks, Downtowns, and Community Destinations**

NOT ANTI-CAR. PRO-SAFETY

Complete Streets are not one-size-fits-all. Communities choose solutions that improve safety and access based on local needs.

Key Takeaway

Active living is the outcome. Complete Streets are one way communities build the conditions that make active living possible.

How Walk & Bike Improvements Happen

From local concern to community project.

Improving walking and biking conditions is a process. A concern may begin with a missing sidewalk, an unsafe crossing, a trail gap, or a difficult route to school, work, a park, or downtown.

From there, communities can document the issue, bring the right partners together, connect the project to local or regional plans, and look for funding opportunities.

1	**Identify a Need**	Start with a specific concern: a missing sidewalk, unsafe crossing, trail gap, difficult school route, or area where people do not feel safe walking or biking.
2	**Document the Issue**	Collect photos, observations, community feedback, crash or speed concerns, accessibility barriers, and notes about who uses the area.
3	**Connect with the Right People**	Reach out to local officials, planning staff, public works, Area Development Districts, KYTC district staff, public health partners, schools, and community advocates.
4	**Get Into a Plan**	Projects are stronger when they are included in local plans, regional transportation plans, comprehensive plans, master plans, safety studies, or corridor studies.
5	**Align with Funding Opportunities**	Funding may come from local budgets, state transportation projects, federal programs, grants, or public-private partnerships. Planning and documentation help make projects more competitive.
6	**Design & Build**	Once a project is prioritized and funded, engineering, design, review, and construction move the idea toward implementation.
7	**Maintain & Improve**	Safe infrastructure needs ongoing attention. Maintenance, feedback, evaluation, and future improvements help projects continue serving the community well.

Key Takeaway

Planning leads to funding. Funding leads to projects. The more clearly a community can document the need, identify partners, and connect the idea to a plan, the easier it becomes to move from concern to action.

Community Readiness Checklist

What do you already have in place? What needs attention?

Use this checklist to quickly identify where your community is ready to begin and where more support may be needed.

People & Partners

- [ ] Local champion or staff contact identified
- [ ] City or county officials aware of the need
- [ ] Public works, planning, or parks staff identified
- [ ] Health, school, or civic partners involved
- [ ] Regional planning or ADD contact identified

Places & Priorities

- [ ] Priority destinations identified
- [ ] Sidewalk, crossing, trail, or bike route gaps known
- [ ] Safety or accessibility concerns documented
- [ ] Road ownership or jurisdiction discussed

Planning & Support

- [ ] Existing plans or studies reviewed
- [ ] Photos or community feedback collected
- [ ] Funding or grant opportunities considered
- [ ] Next meeting or action step identified

Key Takeaway

You do not need every box checked to begin. Start with what you know, gather the right people, and take the next practical step.

Readiness Reflection

Strongest starting point:

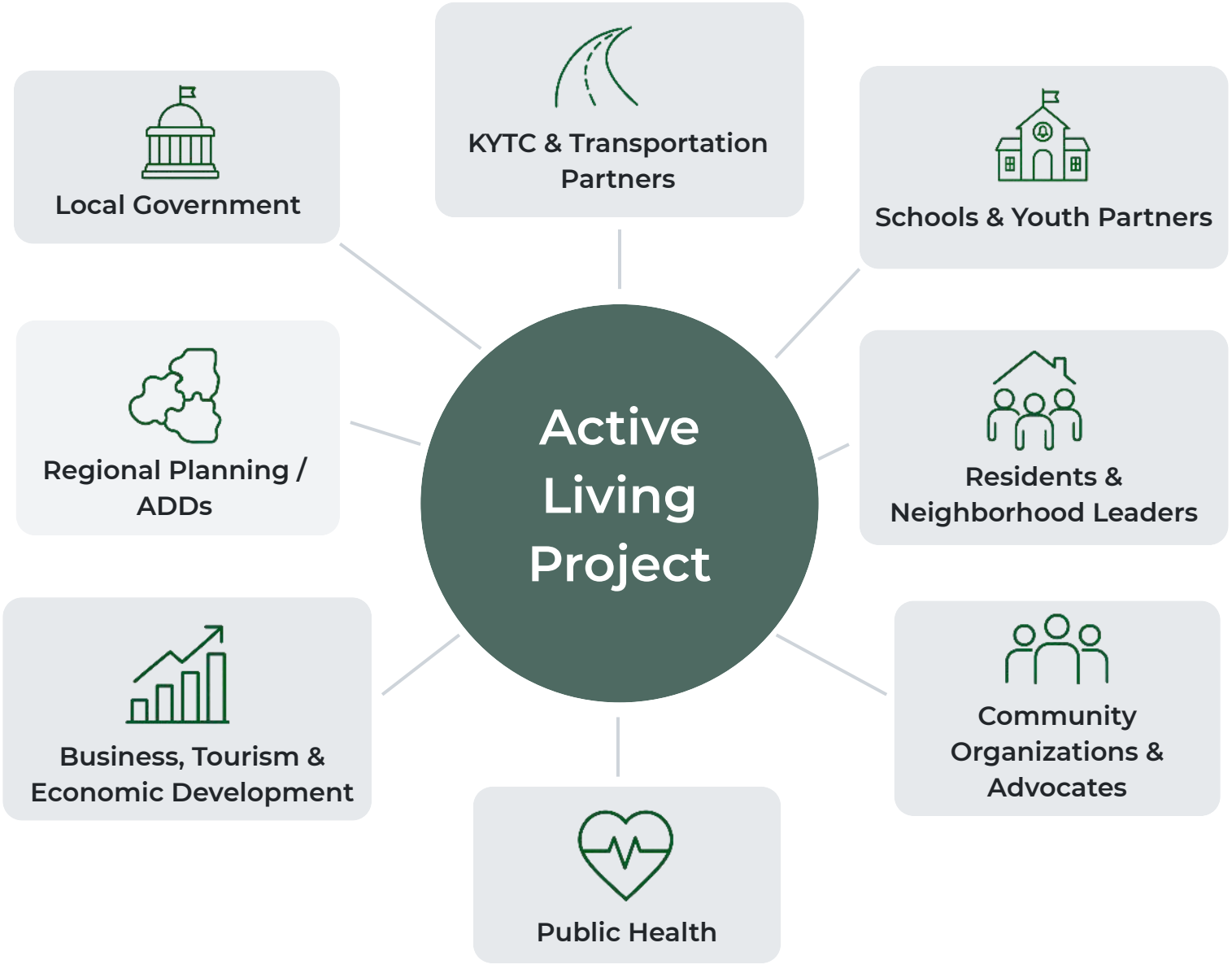
Biggest gap or barrier::

One practical next step:

Who Needs to Be Involved?

Active living progress depends on the right people at the table.

Walking, biking, and active living improvements often touch more than one department, organization, or funding source. The goal is to identify who can help define the need, document the issue, connect the project to planning, and move the work forward.



Key Takeaway

No single person or department has to carry the whole effort. The strongest projects connect local leadership, technical support, public health, and community voice.

Partnership Worksheet

Identify your partners. Build stronger projects.

Use this worksheet to identify organizations and people who can help advance your active living project. Think about who can help define the need, document the issue, connect the project to planning, and move the work forward.

Partner Category	Organization/Person	Contact Information	How They Can Help
Local Government			
Public Health			
Schools / Youth			
Regional Planning / ADDs			
KYTC & Transportation			
Community Organizations & Advocates			
Business, Tourism & Economic Development			
Residents & Neighborhood Leaders			

Walk Audit Overview

A simple way to observe how people move through a place.

A walk audit is a guided observation of a street, route, intersection, neighborhood, school area, downtown, park connection, or public space. It helps community members identify what is working, what feels unsafe, what creates barriers, and what could make walking, biking, rolling, and active living easier.

What to Look For:

- **Sidewalks and Pathways:**
  Are sidewalks present, connected, wide enough, and in good condition?
- **Crossings and Intersections:**
  Are crosswalks visible? Do people have enough time and space to cross safely?
- **Accessibility:**
  Are curb ramps, surfaces, slopes, and routes usable for people with disabilities, older adults, strollers, and mobility devices?
- **Traffic and Driver Behavior:**
  Do vehicle speeds, turning movements, visibility, or driver behavior create safety concerns?
- **Comfort and Visibility**
  Is there lighting, shade, signage, seating, or clear visibility? Does the route feel safe and welcoming?
- **Connections to Destinations:**
  Does the route connect people to schools, parks, neighborhoods, downtowns, trails, transit stops, businesses, or public spaces?

A walk audit does not have to be complicated.

It can be completed by a small group of residents, local officials, health partners, school leaders, advocates, or community organizations.

What to Bring

- ☐ A printed worksheet
- ☐ Pen or clipboard
- ☐ Phone or camera
- ☐ Map or route notes
- ☐ Comfortable shoes
- ☐ Reflective clothing

Key Takeaway

A walk audit helps turn everyday observations into useful documentation. Photos, notes, and community feedback can help identify priorities, start conversations, and support future planning or funding requests.

Walk Audit Worksheet

Document observations, concerns, and possible improvements during a walk audit.

Audit Details

Audit Location: _____ Date/Time: _____

Weather Conditions: _____

What We Observed	Notes:
Sidewalks / Pathways	
Crossings / Intersections	
Accessibility	
Traffic / Driver Behavior	
Comfort / Visibility	
Connections to Destinations	
Overall Priority Concern	
Potential Next Step	

Identifying Project Opportunities

Turn observations into possible improvements.

After a walk audit, community discussion, or review of local needs, the next step is to identify possible project opportunities. A project does not have to begin as a major construction effort. Many active living improvements start with a specific gap, safety concern, access barrier, or missing connection.



Sidewalk Gaps

Missing or incomplete sidewalk segments.



Trail or Route Connections

Gaps between neighborhoods, schools, parks, downtowns, trails, or public spaces.



Crossing Improvements

Crosswalks, curb ramps, signals, signage, or visibility improvements.



Lighting, Signage, and Comfort

Improvements that make routes feel safer, clearer, or more welcoming



Accessibility Barriers

Obstructions, missing ramps, uneven surfaces, or difficult connections.



Safe Routes to Daily Places

Better access to schools, parks, libraries, health services, jobs, transit, or downtowns.



Traffic Safety Concerns

Speed, turning, visibility, or driver behavior concerns.



Small-Scale Improvements

Striping, signage, maintenance, wayfinding, or temporary safety improvements.



Key Takeaway

A project opportunity begins when a community can clearly name the need, describe who is affected, and identify what kind of improvement could help.

Project Prioritization Worksheet

Compare possible improvements and choose where to start.

Use this worksheet to compare possible active living improvements identified through a walk audit, community discussion, or review of local needs. The goal is not to rank every idea perfectly. The goal is to identify which opportunities are most important, realistic, and ready for next steps.

Project / Location	Why it Matters	Who Can Help	Priority / Next Step

Priority Questions

- ☐ Does this project address a safety concern?
- ☐ Does it improve access to a school, park, downtown, neighborhood, trail, health service, job, transit stop, or other key place?
- ☐ Does it help children, older adults, people with disabilities, or residents who do not drive?
- ☐ Is there community support or documented need?
- ☐ Does it connect to an existing plan, study, policy, or funding opportunity?
- ☐ Are there partners who can help move it forward?

Key Takeaway

The strongest first project is not always the biggest project. Often, the best place to start is where need, support, partners, and feasibility come together.

Funding Pathways

How communities move from project ideas to resources.

Funding can come from local budgets, transportation projects, grants, regional planning, and partnerships. Small improvements may begin with maintenance, signage, striping, or local support. Larger projects often require planning, design, engineering, and funding alignment.

Common Funding Pathways

Local and Community Resources

Local Budgets

City, county, school, parks, or public works budgets may support maintenance, small improvements, matching funds, or early project work.

Public Health & Community Partners

Health departments, hospitals, schools, nonprofits, and coalitions may support education, engagement, data, or smaller projects.

Planning and Transportations Systems

State Transportation Projects

Improvements may be possible when a roadway is already scheduled for resurfacing, reconstruction, or safety review.

Regional Planning Process

ADDs, MPOs, and regional partners can help connect local needs to plans and funding opportunities.

Grants and Additional Support

Federal and State Grant Programs

Grants may support planning, safety improvements, trails, sidewalks, crossings, Safe Routes to School, or Complete Streets.

Private & Local Partnerships

Businesses, foundations, civic groups, tourism partners, and donors may support amenities, events, wayfinding, or matching funds.

Key Takeaway

Funding usually follows planning. Communities are better positioned when they can document the need, show support, identify partners, and connect the project to a larger goal.



ACTIVE LIVING IN ACTION

OVERVIEW

Calvert City shows how a small Kentucky community can use planning, partnerships, and local leadership to support safer, more connected places to walk, bike, roll, and gather.

The city's active living progress did not happen all at once. It grew through years of local investment, community support, trail development, sidewalk improvements, public spaces, and a clear commitment to quality of life.

WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES CAN LEARN

- Start with local needs.
- Connect projects to a larger vision.
- Document progress.
- Build partnerships early.
- Celebrate visible wins.
- Use recognition to keep momentum going.

CALVERT CITY, KENTUCKY

WHAT HELPED MOVE THE WORK FORWARD

Local Leadership

City leaders made walking, biking, trails, parks, and public spaces part of a broader vision for community life.

Planning & Documentation

Projects became stronger when they were connected to local plans, community priorities, and long-term goals.

Partnerships

Progress was supported by collaboration among city staff, elected officials, state partners, community members, and local organizations.

Visible Improvements

Trails, sidewalks, parks, events, and public spaces helped residents see and experience the value of active living investments.

Recognition & Momentum

In 2024, Calvert City earned Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community recognition, reflecting years of planning, partnership, and progress.

"Your leaders must be visionaries. The vision is regional."

John Ward
Calvert City Administrator

CALVERT CITY



ACTIVE LIVING IN ACTION

OVERVIEW

Bowling Green shows how community feedback, local coordination, and persistence can help move active transportation work forward

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The city's progress did not happen all at once. It grew through planning, public input, bicycle education, community events, infrastructure investments, and partnerships that helped make bicycling a safer and more visible part of community life.

WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES CAN LEARN

- Start with assessment.
- Use feedback as a work plan.
- Build partnerships across sectors.
- Connect active transportation to planning.
- Celebrate progress without treating recognition as the finish line.

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

WHAT HELPED MOVE THE WORK FORWARD

Assessment & Feedback

The Bicycle Friendly Community process helped local partners identify what was working, what was missing, and where future improvements could be focused.

Partnerships

The Bowling Green Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization and BikeWalkBG helped lead the effort, with city, county, state, and community partners contributing to the process.

Planning Connection

Local partners connected bicycle-friendly goals to transportation planning, public input, education, and community priorities.

Persistence

Earlier feedback did not stop the work. It helped create a clearer path forward and gave local partners a practical way to keep improving.

Recognition & Momentum

Bowling Green earned Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community recognition in 2025, marking an important milestone and creating a stronger platform for continued progress.

Feedback can become a work plan.
Local conversations can become action steps.
Partnerships can become progress.



ACTIVE LIVING IN ACTION

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

ASHLAND ELEMENTARY BIKE BUS

OVERVIEW

The Ashland Elementary Bike Bus shows how active living can begin with a simple yes.

What started with one child wanting to ride his bike to school grew into a joyful, visible morning routine that brings students, parents, neighbors, and community advocates together. With music, bubbles, and a shared route to school, the Bike Bus helps make biking feel normal, safe, and celebrated.

WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES CAN LEARN

- Start small.
- Make the effort visible.
- Invite families and neighbors.
- Document what riders experience.
- Use joy to open the door to safety conversations.
- Connect small actions to larger planning goals.

WHAT HELPED MOVE THE WORK FORWARD

A Simple Starting Point

The idea began with one family and one child's request to bike to school. It did not require a major project to begin.

Joy and Visibility

Music, bubbles, group riding, and community documentation helped people see what was possible and made the ride feel welcoming.

Parent and Community Leadership

Families, neighbors, and advocates helped organize the route, support students, and build confidence among riders.

Lived Experience

By riding the route regularly, parents and students became firsthand observers of street safety needs, crossing challenges, and missing connections.

Policy and Safety Momentum

The Bike Bus helped support broader conversations around Safe Routes to School, safety audits, and how community design affects children's ability to move safely.

"The bike bus opens the door to larger conversations about community design."

Griffin VanMeter
Ashland Elementary Parent & Community Advocate

Ashland Walk N Roll

Action Planning Template

Turn priorities into clear next steps.

Use this page after your group has selected a priority project or active living opportunity. Name the project, identify who can help, and choose the first few actions needed to keep the work moving.

Project Snapshot

Project / Opportunity: _____

Location: _____

Main Need: _____

Desired Outcome: _____

First 3 Action Steps

Step	Who Will Lead?	Who Can Help?	Target Date

Follow-Up

Next Meeting / Check-In Date:

_____

Additional Information Needed: _____

Person Responsible for Follow-up: _____

Key Takeaway: Action plans help turn priorities into shared responsibility and clear next steps.

Next Steps Roadmap

What to do after using this starter kit.

You do not have to do everything at once. Use this roadmap to choose a few practical next steps and keep momentum moving after the first conversation.

This Week

- [ ] Review notes, worksheets, photos, and observations.
- [ ] Choose one priority issue, route, or opportunity.
- [ ] Identify one or two people who can help.

This Month

- [ ] Share what you documented with local partners or leaders.
- [ ] Schedule a follow-up conversation.
- [ ] Look for plans, projects, or funding opportunities that connect.

Next 90 Days

- [ ] Clarify who owns or manages the road, sidewalk, trail, or space.
- [ ] Gather stronger documentation.
- [ ] Decide whether the next step is local action, technical guidance, planning, or funding.

Keep Building

- [ ] Celebrate small wins.
- [ ] Keep partners informed.
- [ ] Update your action plan.
- [ ] Connect local work to broader goals.

Key Takeaway

Progress does not require doing everything at once. Start with one clear priority, one practical next step, and partners who can help.

Resources and Contacts

Tools to help you keep moving.

Use these resources to continue learning, connect with partners, and support walking, biking, rolling, Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, and active living efforts.

Need help getting started? Bike Walk Kentucky can help connect you with resources, partners, and examples from communities across the Commonwealth.

Planning & Design

- **Complete Streets Manual**
  Guidance for planning and designing safer streets for all users.
  transportation.ky.gov/BikeWalk
- **Bike / Ped Planning Resources**
  Tools for bicycle and pedestrian planning, safety, and network needs.
  transportation.ky.gov/BikeWalk

Active Living Support

- **Kentucky SPAN Program**
  State public health resources supporting active living and physical activity.
  chfs.ky.gov
- **Bike Walk Kentucky**
  Statewide education, advocacy, outreach, and bike/walk resources.
  bikewalk.ky

School & Youth Resources

- **Bike Bus Planning Guide**
  Step-by-step guidance for organizing a bike bus.
  walkbiketoschool.org
- **Walk & Bike to School Resources**
  Ideas and tools to support active trips to school.
  walkbiketoschool.org

Who to Contact Locally

- City or county government
- Public works, planning, parks, or administration
- Area Development District or MPO
- Local health department
- School district or Safe Routes to School partners
  KYTC district office
- Community organizations, advocates, and residents

Final Note

You do not have to know every answer before you begin. Start with the need, gather partners, document what you see, and take the next practical step.

Keep the Momentum Going

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Share Your Story

Is your community working to make walking, biking, rolling, or active living safer and more accessible?

We want to hear what you're building, what you're learning, and what progress looks like where you live
.
Scan the QR code to share your story with Bike Walk Kentucky.

Follow the Journey

facebook.com/bikewalkky

Together, we can help build a healthier, safer, and more connected Kentucky.

Bike Walk **Kentucky**

For more information, visit: bikewalk.ky

Community Action Notes

Use this space to capture ideas, follow-up items, or next steps after using this starter kit.

What stood out?

Questions to explore:

People, places, or partners to remember:

Ideas worth revisiting:

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