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Community article

Get Active Orlando: Changing the Built Environment to Increase Physical Activity

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Background

Active Living by Design's Get Active Orlando partnership (GAO) focused on downtown Orlando's Community Redevelopment Area, including the Parramore Heritage District, home to many low-income and ethnically diverse residents, including many seniors. The area had undergone substantial development, and GAO aimed to incorporate active living considerations into the city's changing landscape.

Intervention

Get Active Orlando conducted a baseline survey of all streets, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes in the project area and identified a sequence of plans and policies in which to incorporate changes identified in the assessment. To create more immediate opportunities for active living, the partnership initiated a senior walking program, a bicycle refurbishment and giveaway program, and community bicycle-riding events, and led a social-marketing

campaign that emphasized simple lifestyle changes.

Results

Get Active Orlando influenced adoption of public policies supporting active living in Orlando, including the Downtown Transportation Plan, Streetscape Guidelines, Design Standards Review Checklist, and growth management policies. Establishment of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Active Living is testament to the heightened significance of active living in Orlando.

Lessons learned

Initial assessment data served as a strong platform for policy change. Creating connections across disciplines including land-use planning, transportation, public health, and economic development allowed GAO to secure substantial policy change to influence design of the built environment. Engaging community members, including youth, as leaders was an important factor in program success.

Conclusions

The physical environment in Orlando's Community Redevelopment Area is beginning to change as a reflection of a new policy framework designed to support active living.



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