



# Alamance Wellness Collaborative Strategic Plan 2016-2018



 **ACTIVE LIVING  
BY DESIGN**  
*Catalyst for a culture of health*

**!Impact**Alamance  
healthier • smarter • stronger

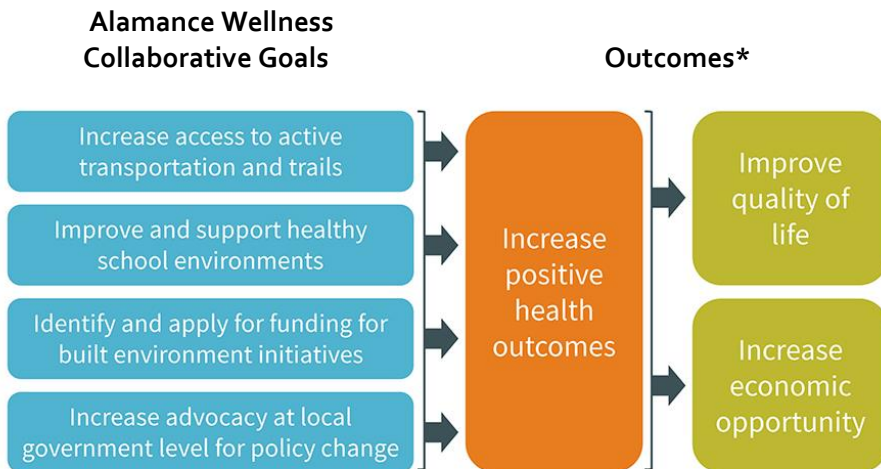
**HEALTHY  
ALAMANCE**

## OVERVIEW

Alamance County is a great place to live. It has many assets, from the Haw River, the historic carousel and train depot to its charming neighborhoods. The most important asset of all within the county is its people, those who keep Alamance County thriving. A healthy population is vital for the county to succeed, grow sustainably and allow all residents to enjoy a good quality of life.

**This Strategic Plan was created to outline goals and strategies that can positively impact health for all Alamance County residents.**

The Alamance Wellness Collaborative, formed in early 2015, understands that in order for the county to grow and prosper, it must continue to create environments where current and future residents have access to healthy opportunities—including facilities that encourage physical activity, healthy food outlets, healthy school environments and the economic base to support them.



This Strategic Plan focuses on strategies that increase access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities, beyond simply raising awareness or conducting educational campaigns and programs. The Wellness Collaborative knows that in order to improve health outcomes at the population level, it will take a multidisciplinary approach that works across sectors and jurisdictional lines and focuses on policy, systems and environmental change.

\*Additional outcomes, including increased community safety and improved air quality or other environmental enhancements, could also result from the outlined goals, and are indirect benefits of the Wellness Collaborative's goals.

## VISION

Alamance County is a healthy community, where opportunities for active living and healthy eating are accessible, easy and affordable for everyone.

## MISSION

The Alamance Wellness Collaborative promotes and advocates for the development and improvement of safe and accessible environments that support a culture of active living and healthy eating for all.

— Vision and Mission adopted May 21, 2015

## GOAL 1

# INCREASE ACCESS TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TRAILS IN ALAMANCE COUNTY

Five jurisdictions (Alamance County, Burlington, Graham, Mebane and Elon) have an approved land development plan, comprehensive plan or both. Parks and recreation master plans and pedestrian plans are also common, and two jurisdictions (Mebane and Elon) each have a combined pedestrian and bicycle master plan. Burlington and Elon have downtown master plans to guide development in and around their central business districts, and the county has the only trails master plan. The Wellness Collaborative can play a critical role in educating citizens on the importance of these plans and advocating for their full implementation.

### Strategies Identified

- Promote implementation of existing land use plans that support active transportation.
- Advocate for and develop more trails.
- Increase number of safe bike lanes.
- Provide walkable and bikeable connectivity from residences to commercial areas.

### Additional Considerations

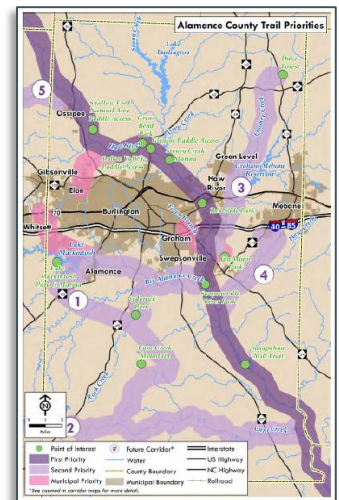
- Public awareness is needed about the benefits of active transportation.
- Education is needed to encourage motorists to respect cyclists and vice versa.
- The Wellness Collaborative should seek out and learn from successful implementation in other North Carolina counties.

### What Can You Do Now?

- Bike to work if feasible, and if not, ask local leaders to help you make it happen.
- Encourage your place of employment to add bike racks.
- Set up a weekly walking group for your coworkers with planned and mapped walking routes.



### ALAMANCE COUNTY TRAIL PRIORITIES



— Alamance County Trail Plans, 2014

ALAMANCE COUNTY HAS  
**27.8 MILES**  
OF TRAILS,  
**6.3 TIMES FEWER**  
THAN JURISDICTIONS  
OF SIMILAR SIZE.

— ICMA.org

## GOAL 2

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### IMPROVE AND SUPPORT HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

The Wellness Collaborative learned that the Alamance-Burlington School System proactively changed many of its school meal practices in anticipation of forthcoming mandatory federal nutrition standards. Actions supporting community use policy adoption can open school facilities to the public and can provide increased opportunities for physical activity by people of all ages.

#### Strategies Identified

- Promote healthy vending at school-sponsored events.
- Continue to improve healthy meal options in schools.
- Explore and formalize community use agreements with schools.

#### Additional Considerations

- Review existing procurement contracts and identify opportunities for improvement and/or provide healthier food options at games, celebrations, fundraisers and other school events.
- Increase awareness of current school menus and initiatives to improve healthy eating. Review existing procurement contracts to identify opportunities for improvement and/or provide healthier options for breakfast and lunch.
- Work with the Alamance-Burlington School System to open up school recreational facilities to the public for evening and weekend use, especially in underserved communities or play deserts.

#### What Can You Do Now?

- Review school wellness policies and advocate for policies that improve health.
- Volunteer to help establish a walking school bus at a local school or help clean up a playground.
- Explore farm-to-table options with the school system.



ALAMANCE-BURLINGTON SCHOOL SYSTEM IS MEETING AND IN SOME CASES EXCEEDING **USDA NUTRITION STANDARDS** FOR SCHOOL MEALS.



#### COMMUNITY USE

ALSO CALLED "JOINT USE," "SHARED USE" OR "OPEN USE," OCCURS WHEN GOVERNMENT ENTITIES OR SOMETIMES PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS **AGREE TO OPEN OR BROADEN ACCESS** TO THEIR FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY USE.

— CHANGELAB SOLUTIONS

## GOAL 3

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### IDENTIFY AND APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES

Because built environment changes require capital expenditures for building or improving sidewalks, trails, parks, playgrounds and street design, finding funding for these infrastructure improvements outside of jurisdictional budgets can be challenging. The Wellness Collaborative intends to work collectively to identify new sources of funding and create innovative financing opportunities to support these changes.

#### Strategies Identified

- Provide grant money to organizations who partner on built environment projects.
- Identify funds to use as a match for state and/or federal grants.

#### Additional Considerations

- Impact Alamance is providing funding in 2016 to encourage Wellness Collaborative members and Food Collaborative members to work together on built environment projects. The group will also explore other local support and funding opportunities.
- Grant writers' time is needed to help organizations and departments identify new sources and apply for funding.
- Major private employers should be approached as an additional source of funding and/or match.

#### What Can You Do Now?

- Learn how other communities have successfully funded new trails and greenway development.
- Sign up on local, state and national organizations' listservs to learn about upcoming grant opportunities.
- Explore grant opportunities and help write grants.
- Ask your employer what opportunities exist to help fund or sponsor new built environment improvements.



**FAST ACT: FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT** PROVIDES NEW AUTHORIZED FUNDING FOR **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL AND OTHER WALKING AND BIKING PROJECTS UNDER THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM.**

**\$835 MILLION**  
IS AUTHORIZED FOR 2016.



## GOAL 4

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### INCREASE ADVOCACY AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL FOR POLICY CHANGE

One of the greatest assets that the Wellness Collaborative provides to its members is the additional and mutual support for policy adoption at municipal/county boards, commissions and council meetings. The Wellness Collaborative also recognizes the need for advocacy training at the neighborhood level to help support many of the desired changes identified in this Strategic Plan.

#### Strategies Identified

- Increase advocacy at the local government level for funding and policy change.
- Advocate for bus service to community facilities (e.g., grocery stores, schools, doctor's offices, workplaces, etc.).

#### Additional Considerations

- Community surveys were suggested as one way to show resident support for policy changes suggested in this plan. Additional engagement techniques can also build capacity for community groups and residents.
- The Wellness Collaborative could benefit from learning more about how public transit and active transportation supports economic development and improves quality of life. Education such as this can support advocacy efforts for additional recommended goals and strategies.

#### What Can You Do Now?

- Attend municipal and county governmental meetings or sign up on listservs or social media sites to learn what is being discussed.
- Sign up to speak at city/town council meetings and show your support for more sidewalks, bike lanes, parks and playgrounds.
- Talk to your friends, neighbors and coworkers, and make sure they know how to get involved.
- Serve on local boards, committees or coalitions to influence key decisions that impact health.



"A TRANSPORTATION ROUTE WILL BE DISCUSSED AT TOMORROW'S CITY COUNCIL MEETING. THIS ROUTE COULD CONNECT WEST BURLINGTON TO CENTRAL BURLINGTON TO CENTRAL GRAHAM TO ALAMANCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

**WE COULD USE YOUR SUPPORT IN GETTING THIS APPROVED.**

EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SPEAK AT THE MEETING, YOUR PRESENCE COULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!"

— Alamance Wellness Collaborative Member



# ALAMANCE WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE BACKGROUND

The overall health of a community includes its social and economic well-being and the physical environment. Situated between the Triad and Triangle regions, Alamance County has a history of being a bedroom community where many residents are accustomed to lengthy commutes outside the county for work, entertainment, recreation or healthy food options. Not only is this lost revenue for the county, but also a loss of talents and skills. Therefore, addressing the county's health is broader than simply looking at what happens within healthcare systems.

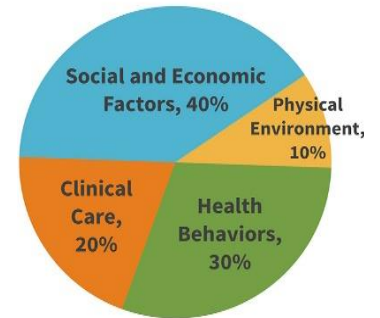
In March 2015, Impact Alamance and Healthy Alamance invited approximately 25 organizations and individuals to participate in the first meeting of what would later be named the Alamance Wellness Collaborative. Since that initial meeting, the group has met monthly and has grown to include new members. Regular meetings are attended by 20–30 participants, representing county and municipal governments and nonprofit, education, healthcare and business sectors [see a list of representatives on page 10]. Wellness Collaborative members include many professionals who work either directly or indirectly in areas that impact the health and well-being of Alamance County residents. This group is focused primarily on promoting changes to the built environment that have a lasting impact and influence the health of the community rather than focusing on individual behavior change. They make up just a handful of the many community champions who are interested in seeing a healthier Alamance County.

## IDENTIFYING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Wellness Collaborative spent most of 2015 identifying promising approaches to increase access to healthy eating and physical activity opportunities in Alamance County. In early 2016, the Wellness Collaborative will develop action plans which will provide a greater level of detail and act as roadmaps to achieving the four goals identified in this plan.

Wellness Collaborative members developed all of the goals and strategies in this plan, with Active Living By Design (ALBD) providing data analyses, case examples, best/promising practices and experience from comparable communities. Wellness Collaborative members participated in idea-generation exercises, responded to surveys, rated and prioritized strategies and filtered out less feasible ideas while lifting up those that can lead to significant changes in population health.

HEALTH INDICATORS IMPACT  
ON HEALTH OUTCOMES



— County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2015

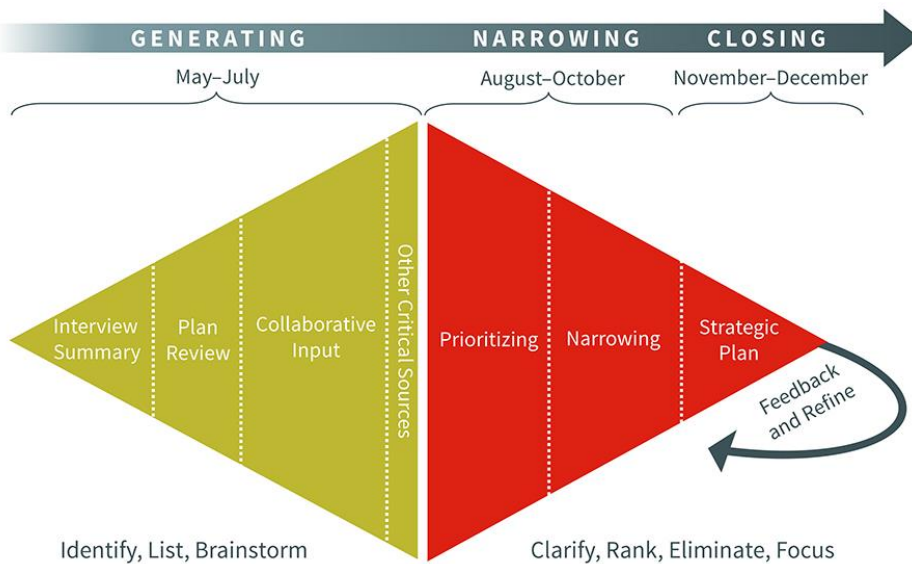
THE ALAMANCE  
WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE  
UNDERSTANDS THAT IN  
ORDER FOR THE COUNTY TO  
**GROW AND THRIVE,**  
IT MUST CONTINUE TO  
CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT  
WHERE RESIDENTS AND  
EMPLOYERS HAVE  
**ACCESS TO  
HEALTHY  
OPPORTUNITIES.**

## Alamance Wellness Collaborative Timeline



ALBD reviewed existing municipal and county land use, pedestrian, biking and trails plans that have been adopted in Alamance County and conducted 12 stakeholder interviews for additional context. ALBD then provided technical assistance and led the Wellness Collaborative through a facilitated process using different tools and methods to generate new and existing data, brainstorm feasible and impactful goals and strategies, and narrow and focus on issues where the group is most likely to see change.

## Alamance Wellness Collaborative Process



Adapted by ALBD from Interaction Associates, "Tools for Reaching Agreement," 2015

AMONG EMPLOYED  
ALAMANCE COUNTY  
RESIDENTS,  
**29%**  
COMMUTE ALONE AT LEAST  
30 MINUTES TO WORK.  
— County Health Rankings,  
2015





This Strategic Plan is flexible and dynamic enough to reflect the community's needs. It is intended to leave space for quick, opportunistic wins as well as to help provide a foundation for longer-term goals. Inevitably, leadership at multiple levels will change, and with such changes come new organizational priorities and skill sets. This can create both opportunities and barriers for the proposed strategies presented in this plan, and therefore, modifications should be expected.

The Alamance Wellness Collaborative was formed to identify and address health concerns in the county. However, it will take more than just Wellness Collaborative members and the organizations they represent to succeed in carrying out this Strategic Plan. It is intended to be a full community effort, and will require input and support from decision makers, government staff, business and other community leaders, grassroots groups and residents.

The Wellness Collaborative and the goals identified in this Strategic Plan are meant to foster collaboration and build on other countywide efforts, plans and initiatives that seek to advance the county's health status.

## NEXT STEPS

When the Alamance Wellness Collaborative launched in March 2015, the intent was to bring together key players representing public, private and nonprofit sectors to set an agenda for making improvements in Alamance County's built environment, thus making it a healthier place to live. This Strategic Plan represents the culmination of 10 months of learning, discussing, prioritizing and collectively agreeing on key priority areas, strategies and the means by which to achieve them.

A valuable outcome of the 2015 planning process was providing a forum for sharing ideas, learning of other member's initiatives, programs and policy wins and fostering collaboration between more than 30 individuals and organizations. Simultaneously, in 2015, the Alamance Food Collaborative formed and is identifying its own goals and potential strategies for improving access to healthy foods. Coordination between the two groups is anticipated and necessary. For example, "Increasing Community Access to Healthy Food" was a goal initially identified by the Wellness Collaborative, yet achieving this goal will require support and leadership from the Food Collaborative. This type of networking and relationship building is critical for continued collaboration and will serve as the basis for accomplishing more together than any single organization can accomplish alone.



### **THIS WORK CANNOT BE DONE IN ISOLATION.**

IT WILL NEED THE  
ENDORSEMENT OF LEADERS,  
RESIDENTS AND A  
GROUNDSWELL OF POLITICAL  
SUPPORT TO MAKE THE  
STRATEGIC PLAN BECOME A  
REALITY.

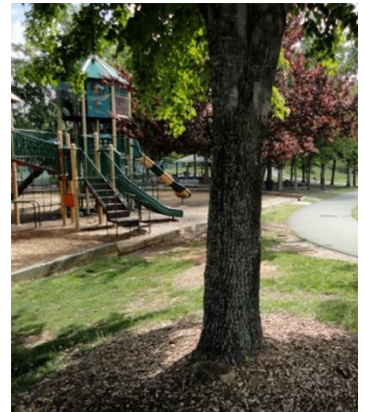
To provide an additional incentive for collaboration, in October 2015, Impact Alamance announced a new grant initiative to fund built environment improvements. *Building Healthy Environments Partnership Grants* will be awarded for equipment or structures that can increase access to healthy food and/or physical activity and that result from a collaboration between two or more organizations and where at least one organization is a member of either the Wellness Collaborative or the Food Collaborative. This funding will be awarded through a competitive process, and the selected organizations will be announced in March 2016.

The Wellness Collaborative knows that its work cannot be done in isolation. It will need endorsement from local leaders, residents and a groundswell of political support to make this Strategic Plan's goals become a reality. In early 2016, the Wellness Collaborative will develop an Action Plan, which will provide a greater level of detail for how it plans to move this process forward, developing a community roadmap for achieving these goals.

## STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTION

This three-year Strategic Plan was presented and adopted by the Wellness Collaborative in December 2015 with the intention of using it as a roadmap for implementation activities in 2016 and beyond. It is envisioned that the Wellness Collaborative will track and assess its progress toward meeting these goals and make adjustments along the way. This will enable the Collaborative to modify its agenda to respond to local conditions and changes in community priorities and leadership.

For more information on the Alamance Wellness Collaborative:  
Marcy Green, Impact Alamance - [marcy.green@conehealth.com](mailto:marcy.green@conehealth.com)  
Ann Meletzke, Healthy Alamance - [ann.meletzke@conehealth.com](mailto:ann.meletzke@conehealth.com)



THE THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2016–2018) WILL SERVE AS A **ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES IN 2016 AND BEYOND.**

THE COLLABORATIVE WILL EVALUATE PROGRESS AT THE END OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR AND MODIFY THE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

# ALAMANCE WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

- Hannah Allen - Alamance Regional Medical Center
- Brian Baker - Alamance County Parks and Recreation
- Walter Britt – YMCA
- Rebecca Brouwer - Mebane on the Move
- Tammy Cobb - Elon University
- Kathy Colville – Cone Health
- Phyllis Creech – Elon Parks and Recreation
- Mark Danieleley – NC Cooperative Extension
- Brian Faucette – Graham Parks and Recreation
- Andrea Fleming – Alamance County Chamber of Commerce
- Jay Graves – Green Level Parks and Recreation
- Marcy Green – Impact Alamance
- Kristen Herndon – Graham Parks and Recreation
- Libby Hodges – Alamance County Planning Department
- Dominique Ireland - YMCA
- Bernard Johnson – Green Level Parks and Recreation
- Christiana Kernodle – Burlington Downtown Farmer’s Market
- Tony Laws – Burlington Department of Recreation and Parks
- Glenda Linens – Alamance County Health Department
- Ellen McBane – Alamance Community College
- Ann Meletzke – Healthy Alamance
- Amy Nelson – Burlington Planning Department
- Mike Nunn – Burlington/Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nathan Page – Graham Planning Department
- Cat Palmer – Healthy Alamance
- Nikki Ratliff – Burlington Housing Authority
- Dean Ray – Mebane Parks and Recreation
- Maria Restuccio – Impact Alamance
- Carolyn Rhode – Alamance Community College
- Chris Rollins – City of Mebane
- Stacie Saunders – Alamance County Health Department
- Shelby Smith – Alamance County Health Department
- Sean Tencer – Elon Planning Department
- Todd Thorpe – Alamance-Burlington School System
- Montrena Wilson Hadley – Mebane Planning Department
- Ben Wright - Company Shops Market

## IMPACT ALAMANCE

[Impact Alamance](#) seeks to bring the community together for healthy change. To make this happen, they invest more than \$2 million annually into Alamance County, focusing especially on strengthening the systems and environments that influence our community's greatest asset: our children.

It is the foundation's goal to create a healthier and smarter community that will lead to a more prosperous future for all. The mission is to strategically invest in the County for health, hope and prosperity, with a vision to make Alamance County the best place to live and thrive.



## HEALTHY ALAMANCE

[Healthy Alamance](#) is a non-profit partnership between Cone Health–Alamance Regional and Alamance County Health Department. Guided by the community assessment priorities, the organization facilitates and creates coalitions. These coalitions build networks across the county that directly support the health of Alamance County and empower residents to advocate for themselves and their neighbor.

The mission is to mobilize resources to develop and support a healthy, nurturing community, with a vision of an Alamance County in which everyone has the opportunity to be their healthiest and happiest.



## ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN

[Active Living By Design \(ALBD\)](#) works to create healthier places by addressing policies, systems and the built environment. They focus on creating healthy communities through multidisciplinary partnerships and identifying upstream issues that influence health, beyond individual choices. Active Living By Design delivers multidisciplinary expertise in public health, public policy, urban planning and design, community development, communications, nutrition, architecture and social work. The organization's mission is to create community-led change by working with local, state and national partners to build a culture of active living and healthy eating.



Cover photo and playground photo on page 9 - courtesy of Burlington Planning Department. Photos on pages 2 and 5 - courtesy of Alamance County Department of Parks and Recreation.