

If you build it, they will come.

- More than 60% of Americans are not physically active enough to be considered healthy.
- When neighborhoods and rural roads offer safe places to walk and bike, the quality of life improves, health improves and physical activity increases.
- In Maine, where many rural roads do not have sidewalks or paved shoulders, it can seem that there are limited options for safe walking and biking.
- Developing and promoting safe routes increases opportunities for people who walk for exercise, as well as for cyclists, children walking to school, people pushing baby strollers and people using wheelchairs.
- Linking these routes to everyday destinations such as home, the workplace, school, the library, post office, bank or grocery store creates opportunities to fit physical activity into daily routines.
- Using trails and safe routes creates social networks that allow for improved health and active family outings.

Why this is important.

- Increasing physical activity and improving nutrition can control the epidemic of overweight and obesity, as well as decrease the risk of chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and osteoporosis.
- Environmental and policy changes favoring physical activity and nutrition make it easy for everyone to choose healthier options. By developing new trails and identifying and promoting safe routes for walking and biking, you make the active choice a convenient choice too.
- Environmental interventions include changes to economic, social or physical surroundings. Policies include written laws, regulations and rules that have the power to guide behavior. Local regulations regarding pedestrian priorities, safe sidewalks and trail routes ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be active.

For more information.

- See Section 5 for Fact Sheet, pages 32–33.
- See Section 6 for References, page 41.