

Women's Cycling Team Aims to Increase Ridership

PAL Executive Director Laura Ringo uses a standard user profile when she talks about trail design: "Would I," she asks, "feel comfortable putting my two-year-old in a bike trailer and riding that trail?"

Ringo is not alone in her concern. As our trail system expands, we must also cultivate an expanded ridership, one that serves users of different ages and abilities.

Many gaps exist. In 2009, only 24% of bicycle trips were made by women. Other ridership gaps exist as well among minorities and the poor for example, but the gender gap is seen as a key factor to increasing the number of riders across different demographics. League of American Bicyclists surveys led to the creation of the 5 Cs, keys to developing a women's cycling culture: Comfort, Convenience, Confidence, Consumer products and Community.



We can design trails that provide a feeling of safety, like the curb-protected lane that will cross the downtown core, or off-road trails like the Mary Black Foundation Rail Trail. The comfort that comes with protected lanes, combined with the convenience of the trail to get to community places like the Chapman Cultural Center or the library, will make the trails more effective in pro-

viding alternatives to getting around town, leading to improved community health. And lest we forget, communities around the nation are seeing significant economic development gains from having well used trail networks.

Providing excellent facilities is only part of the answer, though. There is the "Community" piece of the equation that helps provide the Confidence and adds to the Comfort necessary to increase ridership. In order to widen that community, a group of cyclists partnered with Partners for Active Living, the YMCA and the Bearden Josey Center for Breast Health to create the first women's cycling team in Spartanburg.

Rene McCurdy, who spearheaded the effort to start the team, said her goals were to provide "encouragement and role-modeling for women to get on bikes.

Sometimes you need to have somebody invite you to feel comfortable."

To support that view, the team will host informal rides for all levels once a month. "I love group riding," says McCurdy. "Where else do you get to play with a group of 25- 65 year-olds? Riding in a group is fun, and it's less effort than by yourself because you're working together."

The Bearden Josey Women's Cycling Team will host a ride for women in May as part of National Bicycle Month. The ride will be held on Mother's Day, May 10, starting at 8 am at the Thomas Hannah YMCA in Spartanburg.

McCurdy says it's important to get more women riding because "Women tend to influence the household. When the mom is doing things like [cycling], it influences the children."



About Partners for Active Living (PAL):

Partners for Active Living transforms Spartanburg County into a vibrant, healthy, connected community where we live and grow. Visit our website: www.active-living.org.

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Get Your Bike Month Schedule Right Here

May 1 **Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System 2015 Criterium**

Races start at 4 pm.

May 2 **Wofford and Converse Bike to Farmers' Market Day**

Meet at the BCycle station at Wofford or Converse.

May 3 **Free BCycle Ride Day**

Free 24-hour pass. Regular charges apply after the first hour of each ride that day.

May 6 **National Bike to School Day**

May 10 **Cyclofemme: a Mother's Day Ride**

Ride starts at 8 am at the Thomas Hannah Family YMCA

May 13 **Bike Month Art Reception at The Coffee Bar**

Bicycle-oriented art and coffee drinks? Say no more.

May 15 **Bike Valet at Jazz on the Square**

Rock-star parking, other bonuses if you ride your bike.

May 18 **The Assaults on Mt. Mitchell and Marion**

Starts at 6:30 am, Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium.

May 19 **Family Friendly Mountain Biking Ride at GOLS**

5:30 – 7 pm at the Glendale Outdoor Leadership School. Bicycles available to rent. Call 864-529-0259 for more info.

May 20 **Ride of Silence**

May 31 **Free BCycle Ride Day**

Free 24-hour pass. Regular charges apply after the first hour of each ride that day.

Healthy Schools Summit June 4

Partners for Active Living and SRHS Corporate Education are hosting a day-long conference for administrators, school board members, teachers and staff, nurses, guidance counselors, food service, interested parents and community members to discuss topics such as school wellness policies, nutrition education, employee wellness, physical education, and many more.



Sponsored by the Mary Black Foundation and the Spartanburg Community Indicators Project, our keynote speaker is Dr. David Walsh, founder of Mind Positive Parenting.

Registration is free but donations are encouraged. The conference includes light breakfast, lunch, and snack. Dress comfortably and come ready to participate!

For more information, contact Rebecca Parrish at (864)598-9638, or email rparrish@active-living.org.



Jesse Boyd Elementary School launched a walking school bus in April. The walking school bus makes it safer for kids to walk to school.



Yoga on the Square is back in April and May. Hosted by Partners for Active Living and Yogalicious Yoga Studio, sessions will take place May 13 and May 27. Donations accepted for local non-profits.



We love to explore proposed trail routes. Top, we headed upstream along the Lawson's Fork from Glendale Shoals with SPACE and Wofford College representatives and designers and engineers from Alta Planning. Bottom, we visited a section of trail between Drayton Mill and Mary Black Hospital, part of the new Drayton Mills development with Pacolet Milliken Enterprises. Join us for a walk on the Drayton Mills trail on May 19.

Partners for Active Living is planning a new community park on this seven acre lot. Working with Duke Energy and the City of Spartanburg, Partners for Active Living facilitated a lease, which will allow the community to use the space for recreation.

Funded by Mary Black Foundation, phase one of the project included clearing, grading, and grassing. This summer Partners for Active Living will engage the community to better learn what type of recreational amenities are needed and wanted. Additional funds will be raised to construct the new community park.

The MBF Rail Trail is fast becoming Spartanburg's recreational hub. The paved 2-mile rail-to-trail is a downtown destination with 65,000 annual uses. Along the corridor, there is a BCycle station, the new Thomas E. Hannah YMCA, Spartanburg's only public dog park called the Rail



Tail, the Hot Spot Skate Park, and mountain biking trails that are less than a quarter mile away in Duncan Park. Additional proposed amenities include a trail extension from its current end at Henry Street to Barnet Park and a BMX bike park next to the existing skate park.

To share your vision for this space, email info@active-living.org. To donate to the future park, visit www.active-living.org/donate.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Partners for Active Living is creating a healthier Spartanburg County by making physical activity the easy choice. We frame our work in a three pronged message: childhood obesity prevention, trails and parks development, walking and bicycling for everyone.

By the Numbers
Bicycle Commuting in
South Carolina 2011
according to the

League of American Bicyclists

of Commuters in SC
5308

% of Commuters who
are male
76%

% of Commuters who
are female
24%

Get Moving!

Opportunities to get active with PAL and our partners

Fridays at noon: Friday Lunchtime Rides

Meet at the MBF Rail Trail B-cycle station

Second Tuesdays: Second Tuesday Trail Runs, 6:00 pm

Locations change, so check our Facebook page

May 5, 2015: Spartanburg Giving Day

Love Where You Play with PAL at Henry Street BCycle Station

June 4, 2015: Healthy Schools Summit

For more information, contact rparrish@active-living.org.

Tuesdays in July: Hot Tuesday Night Trail Runs, 6:30 pm

See our website for more details on these and other events,

www.active-living.org, or call 864-598-9638.

You can now donate online by visiting our website, www.active-living.org,
or send your tax deductible gift to:

Partners for Active Living

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