



# HOW TO TALK ABOUT SHAPE YOUR WORLD:

## A Messaging Guide for The North Carolina Healthy Environments Initiative

FINAL

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## I. Introduction

From the legendary Smoky Mountains in the west to the rugged coastal lines in the east, there is no shortage of beautiful places to live, work and play in North Carolina. We love all that North Carolina has to offer. Thousands of miles of mountains and beaches to explore, biking and walking trails to travel on within city limits, state-of-the-art technology and research labs, leading universities and colleges, close-knit communities where people care and look out for each other, and that warm, friendly culture that is the hallmark of Southern hospitality. North Carolina is much more than a state where we live – it's a way of life and it's our home.

But sometimes our way of living is complicated by the way in which our towns and communities are being built. We want to have our kids walk safely down the street to play in our neighbors' yards, but there are no sidewalks to do so. We'd like to take advantage of the pleasant fall and spring temperatures and ride our bikes to and from work, but our work places don't offer bike racks and there's no easy or safe way for us to get there. And we'd like to drive on I-40 and not have to see neglected spaces literally going to waste on the side of the highway. These things are part of our built environments. They are the result of decisions we make – or that are made for us – that determine how the spaces and places around us are developed. How much better would it be to see a greenway or a community garden instead of that barren wasteland? Or streets that make it easier for our families to walk and bike and not have to pile in the car to go anywhere? We need to have a say in the way our neighborhoods, towns and cities are built, so they reflect what we value.

The Shape Your World campaign is a response to this desire – to improve the built environments within North Carolina. Across the country, there is a movement driven by the recognition that we have too many strip malls and not enough playgrounds. Too many parking garages and too few bike racks. Too many congested intersections and not enough easy connections to the places and people we care about.

As a catalyst to help North Carolinians take a more active role in building their communities, Shape Your World is here to provide the inspiration, connections and tools to make this possible. The built environment is more than what man has made or built around us; it's about how we connect to our family, friends, places of work and leisure, and our very own livelihoods. Every day we go outside of our homes and into our neighborhoods, and every step we take is a step we take toward something, toward someone or toward someplace.

Every day, we see things being built around us. Some things we like and others we don't. For too long, we've either been unaware that we can have a voice or haven't known where to start to get involved. That stops now. It may seem that others are responsible for designing our built environment, that we don't have control over what gets built, how it is built or even if something doesn't get built. But the reality is that we do have the opportunity to shape our world. Many North Carolinians have already gotten started. Now it's our turn.

### The Purpose of This Guide

This Messaging Guide is intended to provide internal audiences, like you, with an easy-to-understand, relatable way to talk about the North Carolina Healthy Environments Initiative and Shape Your World campaign. Informed by a formative research process, this guide contains examples of powerful and persuasive messages, phrases and terms that have been shown to be meaningful and compelling to the campaign's target audiences. These messages are empowering – to inspire this statewide movement – and can be tailored for different mediums and outlets. As such, this guide can serve to inform additional messaging for the campaign website, advertising, media kit and other campaign materials. Valuable best practices in messaging are also featured, along with examples of how they can be applied to the Shape Your World campaign.

Ultimately, this guide can be used in two ways. The first is to provide very specific examples of language and messages that you can literally lift and use in whatever external and internal

communications pieces you are creating. However, this guide is not meant to be an all-inclusive messaging document that anticipates every potential messaging need and provides the precise language for you. That's why this guide's second purpose is equally important - which is to provide you with guidelines and best practices so you can create your own messages that are consistent with the rest of the campaign and based on what we've learned to be most effective in communicating about this issue and our approach.

### **The Importance of a Consistent Message and Motivating Tone**

Well-crafted and consistently delivered messages build equity and create value. Most importantly, they can facilitate the actions necessary by citizens to begin to shape their world. When messages are incorrectly or inconsistently delivered, it can undermine their meaning and erode the believability of this campaign. For Shape Your World to take flight, it is critical that our communications are consistent and believable.

North Carolinians will come to know the Shape Your World campaign through a range of contact points: from print advertising and guerilla marketing, to media and word-of-mouth conversations with neighbors and family members, to our own interactions with the target audience. The more correctly and consistently we use the messages in this guide, the more effective our campaign will be.

Equally important as what we say is how we say it. Shape Your World is an inspirational and empowering campaign and messages should be delivered as such. In speech or written form, our messages capture a tone that is motivating and will lead citizens to believe that they have the power to create changes that will improve their built environments. While it will be critical to discuss potential issues and problems caused by our built environment, our emphasis must be on how we can create a better built environment and the role that Shape Your World can play in making it happen.

## II. How to Talk About Shape Your World

The creative concept behind Shape Your World was born from a formative research process that included focus groups, critical media analysis, phone surveys and messaging testing with involved citizens - the campaign's primary target audience. This platform has strong appeal and is equally positive, inspiring, informative and empowering. Above other platforms tested, Shape Your World has the capacity to make citizens feel like they can actually do something to improve their communities. In fact, many citizens in North Carolina are already involved in this issue and have begun to shape their world by advocating for and creating a more connected built environment.

### A New Way to Talk About the Built Environment

During the research process, it was quite clear that there was a distinct lack of awareness and understanding of the term 'built environment' among North Carolinians. In talking about this initiative, it is important to describe healthy built environments in a way that citizens can identify with it and understand that we're talking about a way of life, of doing things. In regards to the built environment, we want citizens to feel like they have the power and responsibility to take action to improve the way their communities are built. It is not enough to simply avoid using the term, but instead to provide context for it by promoting everyday examples of what it is and how it can benefit them personally. In other words, we need to stop talking about "the" built environment as something that is beyond our control and start talking about "our" built environment as something for which we need to take responsibility.

Our built environment is not some abstract way of defining what man builds in our environment, but instead a real and important way to think about how we can make our communities better. And by better we mean safer, healthier and more connected.

The term built environment implies something that's already happened. Built is a modifier in the past tense. Ours is a future-focused effort. We should be talking less about accepting the built environment we have and more about building the environment we want.

Improving our built environment is not just about designing new things like trails, greenways and parks. These are a means to return to a better way of life – and connecting to a very distinct way of life for North Carolinians. It's how we're connected to our family, friends, neighbors, church members, work, schools, businesses and the great outdoors that is North Carolina. These are things that are good for our health - from being around the people and places we love to being active and doing the things that get our hearts racing. In an era of dying Main Streets, having a more walkable community is good for business, too. It's less about what our communities look like and more about what we are able to do in them: how we get together with members of our churches, how we talk to our neighbors in the evenings, how we frequent businesses in our towns, how we pass the time with our families on the weekends, how we take our children to school and playgrounds, and how we get to work day in and day out. These are all part of our built environment. And we have the opportunity to shape it.

We want to feel safe, secure and connected in our communities. Many of us already do, which is part of the reason we love being a North Carolinian. But there is a sense that what we've been building lately has been based on a different set of values than what we're accustomed to – how do we move cars around instead of people or what's best for corporations instead of what's best for citizens? As a result we get office parks instead of playgrounds, neighborhoods with no sidewalks, more sprawl and malls and fewer walks and shops.

We feel strongly about the places where we live, work, learn and play. We want to live in neighborhoods where it's safe for our kids to walk across the street to visit a friend. On beautiful spring days, we want to ride our bikes to work and breathe in the sweet scent of magnolias in full bloom, not the gas exhaust from the morning rush hour. We want to meet up easily with our church members throughout the week and maybe even start a community

garden in a vacant lot. And we want to re-invigorate Main Street with sidewalks and walkways into our town's businesses. We can benefit from all of these things, and they are all part of a safer, healthy and more connected built environment.

What we build is a reflection of what we value. And who decides what we build is more within our power than we think.

### What is Shape Your World?

Shape Your World is a statewide movement of North Carolinians who are committed to creating a safer, healthier and more connected built environment. Our campaign mobilizes North Carolinians to get more involved by asking all North Carolinians from small towns like Boone larger cities like Charlotte to:

1. **SEE** the world around them in a new way. We want our citizens to stop and think about how our communities are designed and to realize that we have a voice in how they get built, developed or changed.
2. **CONNECT** with the issue personally. The benefits of a better involvement are many. It means a safer community for our kids, a healthier lifestyle for our families and closer relationships with the people and places we care about.
3. **ACT** to shape a better built environment in their communities. Every citizen has a voice and a stake in this issue. By speaking up at a local planning board meeting, starting or signing a petition, writing a letter to the editor or local policymakers, we can make sure that our voices are heard.

Shape Your World is here to give citizens the inspiration to see a better world, a place to come together online and in their communities, and the tools and resources to start shaping their world today.

Through an advertising campaign, we're educating citizens about how they can shape their world and encouraging them to re-imagine their communities and think creatively about how they would like to improve it. We're creating strong relationships with the media to further raise awareness and advance this issue, to help citizens see how other North Carolinians are shaping their world every day. By forming partnerships with businesses, organizations and communities, we're connecting citizens to others who want to help shape their communities. And through a comprehensive website, we're giving citizens the tools and resources necessary to begin creating changes.

**See. Connect. Act.** Powerful, yet simple words. Individually, they are single actions that involved citizens can do independently of each other. But collectively they are a way that North Carolinians can come together to make sure that how we build our communities reflects what we value and ultimately how we want to live our lives.

### Shape Your World Long-Form Messages

There will be times when we will need to communicate details about the campaign in more detailed terms. Whether in speeches or on blogs, it is important that there is a consistency in what is said and how the messages are constructed. When crafting messages for Shape Your World, it is helpful to consider using the following strategic format, with an emphasis on highlighting the benefits of creating healthier built environments:

- ❑ Open with a positive statement that connects people to North Carolina or their immediate neighborhoods.
- ❑ Then, introduce a problem or limitation of the state or neighborhood.
- ❑ Identify a solution to the problem or limitation and address the benefits of Shape Your World.
- ❑ Include three specific examples of how citizens can be a part of Shape Your World by seeing, connecting and taking action.
- ❑ Close with a reminder statement about the benefits of healthier built environments.

One way in which long-form messages will be used is in describing the actions we want citizens to take and why these actions are important to creating a better built environment.

#### See Your World:

North Carolina is a beautiful state. We all love that we have access to its beautiful mountains and sandy beaches. This is our ideal vision of North Carolina. But what do you see when you step out your door each morning? Or when you drive home each night? Increasingly, it's becoming more and more difficult to have our ideal vision of North Carolina live up to the reality of day-to-day life. Gorgeous vistas are replaced with busy intersections. A five-minute walk to the park has transformed into a twenty-minute drive through traffic to a run-down gym. Now, imagine a North Carolina that you could shape from scratch. How would your neighborhood look? Where would you put a sidewalk or stop sign? Would you build a bike path or a hiking trail? The first step to shaping your world is seeing what's possible. From sharing successful stories of other North Carolinians who have improved their built environment, to featuring more exciting projects underway, to providing tools to assess your own neighborhood's built environment, Shape Your World is helping create a vision for a better North Carolina.

#### Connect to the Movement:

We all like to feel connected. Connected to our family, our community and the other things that are important to us.

Unfortunately, we've been building and designing our communities to make it more difficult to stay connected to those things we value most. You want to be connected to your neighbors, but there are no sidewalks to walk on to go visit them. You want to be connected to nature, but you have to jump in your car and drive twenty minutes to "be in it." You want to be connected with your family and community, but going anywhere and doing anything outside of the house becomes a hassle.

If we want to shape a better world, it starts with building those connections. If you want sidewalks in your neighborhood, work with your neighbors to get them built. If you want better access to parks, get connected to the parks department and local transportation authorities. If you want to enjoy your community with your family, then work on a project together to make it more enjoyable. Shape Your World provides opportunities to connect with other involved citizens both online and in your neighborhoods, so together you can create a safer, healthier and more connected community.

#### Act Now:

If we truly invest in what we value, then we should begin putting our resources — both in terms of tax dollars and time — in those things that will make for a better life for both us and our children.

Developers and businesses have been making these decisions based on their needs, which makes sense because that's what they do, but we need to act now to make sure that our needs and values are being addressed too.

It starts by weighing in. Be counted. Playgrounds don't build themselves. If you want more playground space, say so. And then take the steps to get others to weigh in too. Do a little research to find out what it will take to make it happen. Attend a planning board meeting. Write a letter to the editor. To be honest, it requires a little heavy lifting but Shape Your World helps lighten the load by teeing up the resources and information to get you started.

## Shape Your World Short-Form Messages

The following short-form messages are intended to provide you with brief examples of how to talk about Shape Your World in the context of the issue of built environments, the benefits, and the actionable steps to become a part of Shape Your World. These are meaningful, compelling messages that resonate with the target audience and have shown the potential to inspire citizens to see, connect and act for Shape Your World.

### The Issue:

Break down the issue by setting up obvious binary choices, asking simple rhetorical questions or using common-sense statements.

For example:

- The way our communities are built can either bring everyone together or isolate us from each other.
- Look out your window; do you like what you see?
- What does what we build say about what we value?
- Playgrounds don't build themselves.
- I shouldn't have to get in my car to ride my bike.
- Wouldn't it be nice to feel comfortable letting your kid cross the street without worrying?
- Do you remember when we walked everywhere we went?

### The Benefits:

We know the primary benefits of a better, built environment are safety, health and a feeling of being more connected. And while it's fine to use these terms generally, it is also important to break it down into real world sentiments that people would actually say.

For example:

- It's nice to not have to worry when my kids are playing in the neighborhood.
- It's so much easier to go for a jog or ride my bike. I feel better and my wife tells me it shows.
- Ever since our greenway was built, I've noticed an uptick in my business.
- Who would have thought that a few trees would have made such a difference to the neighborhood?
- I tried biking to work this week. Felt great and it actually shaved 10 minutes off my commute.
- Just being able to have that walking path to our playground down the road makes it that much nicer to take my daughter there. Sure beats having to get her in and out of that car seat.

### The Calls to Action:

Motivating people to act involves giving them simple and specific recommendations, showing them that they are not alone, creating a sense of timeliness and urgency and pointing out the consequences of inaction. These call-to-action messages can be used in print advertising, matte releases, on the website and in various materials that are intended to speak directly to involved citizens.

For example:

- If you want to help shape your community, then you really need to check out your local planning board meeting. That's where the action is.
- It takes two minutes to find your local planning board meeting.
- It's not like you haven't written a letter before. Just address this one to "Dear Editor."
- An hour of your time can make a world of difference. Just ask your kids if they'd like a new park or playground.

- There are plenty of other people who'd like a bike path in the city – start an online petition and speak as one.
- Join the thousands of people across North Carolina who are taking steps to improve the safety and health of their communities.
- You're not alone. Citizens like you who care and want to get involved are fueling a statewide movement to improve their communities.
- Talk to your neighbors. They probably want to see the same changes you do.
- Shape your world or someone else will be shaping it for you.
- One of the easiest things you can do to get moving in the right direction is to start a petition.
- A good first step is to contact your local officials.
- If you want get involved, make your voice heard to those in leadership.
- If you want to shape your world, look around your neighborhood and envision how you would like to see it improved.
- Decide what you would like to see built in your neighborhood - and then tell your neighbors. Get their support too.
- Once you choose what you want to do, build a case to support your cause. Present your case at a local planning board meeting.
- Contact local business and organizations – find others in your community who want the same things you do.
- Learn what other North Carolinians are doing to shape their world.

### Powerful Terms

The following words can help empower citizens to get involved and are emblematic of the kinds of language to incorporate in our communications materials. They convey emotion, vision and a sense of belonging that are important when trying to establish a movement.

- Balance
- Build (design, create)
- Children (kids, sons, daughters, families)
- Choice
- Community (town, neighborhood, city)
- Connect
- Dream
- Future
- Healthy
- Ideal world
- Imagine
- Join
- Our (we, my)
- Play (run, jump, walk, bike, ride)
- Reclaim (restore)
- Responsibility
- Safety
- Security
- See (envision, take a look)
- Shape
- Value(s)
- Vision
- Voice

### III. Best Practices in Messaging

These seven best practices in messaging are based on years of iterative research, including interviews with thousands of Americans about issues related to health and studies of empathy and its role in stimulating people to act. As this campaign intends to inspire action and change, the messages need to be impactful and clearly communicate what it is we want citizens to do. For each of these truisms, we address how it can be applied to Shape Your World.

1. **Frame messages in context of accepted beliefs.** By priming audiences with messages that they already believe, it makes the concept more credible. For this initiative, it is important to frame messages in the contexts of beliefs that are most important to North Carolinians: health, safety and connections.

Here are a series of statements to use when opening your messages:

- North Carolina is a beautiful state, but in some places there are eyesores that need to be addressed.
- North Carolina has so much to offer – mountains, beaches, trails, bustling cities, open country and wonderful, friendly people.
- One of the best things about North Carolina is the people. We love our close-knit towns, but sometimes it’s hard to feel connected to each other when we can’t easily get to the places we need to go.

2. **Present messages in colloquial, values-driven, emotionally compelling language.**

Academic language or ‘state-speak’ is not well understood. For example, there’s a low awareness of the term ‘built environment’ among target audiences. Alternately, the term ‘community’ evoked considerable emotion from audiences. People identified with it as being a place where all people belong and should have the opportunity to be safe and active.

Here are a few examples of how you can re-frame the conversation and present messages that will resonate with involved citizens.

Instead of talking about...	Talk about....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health equity</li> <li>• Built environment</li> <li>• Isolation or transportation problems</li> <li>• Budgets and lack of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone should be able to play outdoors in a safe and secure area.</li> <li>• Our communities need to be built in a way so they are healthier and safer for everyone who lives and works in them.</li> <li>• We all like to feel connected. Connected to our family, our community, and the things that are most important to us.</li> <li>• If we truly want to invest in what we value most, then we need to begin by putting our resources in those things that will make for a better life - like safe, healthy and more connected communities for us and our kids.</li> </ul>

3. **Use one strong and compelling fact - a surprising fact that arouses interest, attention and emotion - for maximum impact.** Loading messages down with more than one or two facts tends to depress responses to them. Presenting facts in a more colloquial and relatable way, stripped of academic support, is more effective than a longer statement.

Other practices to follow when presenting facts to external audiences include:

- Make the number memorable. For example, say ‘almost 25 percent’ not ‘23.6 percent.’
- Present facts at a critical point in context.
- Break down big numbers by using specific examples; it makes the important seem more urgent. Instead of saying ‘Forty-thousand kids will get injured by a car,’ change it to ‘Every 10 minutes a student is hit by a car.’

Below is the start of an ever-expanding list where we will continually identify and add new facts and statistics to support the campaign’s initiative.

#### Facts About Our Target Audience

- Only one out of four adults and one of three children meet the doctor’s recommended daily amount of physical activity.
- About two out of three adults are willing to take action to support local policy changes that will make walking and biking easier in their neighborhoods.

#### Facts About Effective Approaches

- Between 2007-2009, nearly 20 million Americans united and worked with their neighbors to fix a problem.
- Nine out of 10 Americans are encouraged to get involved as a result of discussions at the dinner table.
- More than half of involved citizens are encouraged to get involved by talking to family and friends via the Internet.
- Nearly half of involved citizens are encouraged to get involved by talking to neighbors.

#### Facts About the Built Environment

- For every one parking space in a paved lot, we could ‘park’ up to 20 bicycles.
- One-quarter of the morning traffic congestion comes from parents driving their children to school.
- Only one out of every eight trips taken to school is done by bicycling or walking.
- Almost two-thirds of all trips are made within two miles of the home and yet nearly 80% of them are made in a car.
- More than three million children in America live in neighborhoods without any parks, recreation centers or even sidewalks.
- People are about 40% more likely to exercise when they live within one mile of a park.

4. **Begin with one and demonstrate the connection.** People respond well to stories about others, especially when people can see the individual in the story as someone being like himself. Create a personal and emotional connection by telling the story of one to help inspire citizens.

Here is an example of how to create a connection for the target audience:

- Mary, a mother in Winston-Salem, wanted her kids to be able to walk to her neighbors’ houses safely on a sidewalk. But there were no sidewalks in her neighborhood. So Mary decided to shape her world. She started by simply asking her neighbors to sign a petition to have sidewalks built in her community. Nowadays, Mary’s children – and her neighbors’ kids – are playing hopscotch on sidewalks and walking safely to and from each other’s houses.

5. **Identify the problem, but offer potential solutions.** Including specific solutions can increase acceptance of a core message. Negative messages that focus on the problem tends to repress action, while a focus on the solution often sparks action.

Problem or Limitation	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no safe places for our children to play outdoors.</li> <li>• I can't walk to my local grocery store that's a half-mile away because there are no sidewalks.</li> <li>• I would ride my bike to work more, but it's simply unsafe.</li> <li>• I'm confused by who is responsible for making the decision of what gets built in our neighborhood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to fund and build playgrounds and parks for our children to play.</li> <li>• Everyone should have the opportunity to walk on safe sidewalks and hiking trails, at any time of the day. Improved walkability will also improve business.</li> <li>• Forward-thinking cities and communities have built bike lanes for their citizens. We should do the same.</li> <li>• As citizens, we all have a voice in what does and doesn't get built in our neighborhood. We have the opportunity to shape our world.</li> </ul>

- 6. Incorporate the role of personal responsibility.** The importance of all Americans having equal opportunity to make choices that lead to good health is a message that resonates with citizens across the political spectrum. Incorporating this theme into messages can make North Carolinians more receptive to the idea that they have a personal role in shaping their world and improving the health of their communities.

Here are examples of personal responsibility statements that resonate with our target audience:

- All Americans should have the opportunity to lead a healthy and full life. While we all need to take personal responsibility for our health, sometimes the environments around us put up unnecessary barriers for us to make better, healthier choices.
- The road to better health is largely of our own making – we can shape our world. But some obstacles along the way, like unsafe neighborhoods, make the healthy choice the harder choice.
- Life is a series of choices. If you're not making them, then someone else is making them for you. When you choose to act, you can shape your world.

- 7. Create an action story.** Telling a compelling action story can help people believe that the story could be their story - that they have the power to create or do something similar. Within the story, it is important to capture the action steps for how citizens can see, connect and act to shape their world.

Here is one example of a compelling action story:

- In Black Mountain, the town's doctor wanted his patients to enjoy the fruits and vegetables from his garden. He had an idea to have the local schools help work in the garden and to use that opportunity to teach kids about nutrition and eating healthy. Working with school officials and town planners, they expanded his garden and built a satellite school garden along with a new school nutrition program. Now, kids are eating more fruits and vegetables and being more active while working and learning in the gardens.

For more gold-star examples of positive action stories, refer to the Success Stories on the campaign website [www.shapeyourworldnc.com/see-success-stories.html](http://www.shapeyourworldnc.com/see-success-stories.html).

## IV. Frequently Asked Questions

### About the Built Environment

Q: When people refer to the built environment, what are they talking about?

A: In technical terms, most people refer to the built environment as everything around us that is man-made (versus natural environment). Every day, we see things being built around us. Some things we like and others we don't.

Q: What does the built environment include?

A: Positive examples of built environments can include walking trails, greenways, baseball and soccer fields, outdoor exercise facilities, public parks, street lights, designated bike lanes, community gardens, safe crosswalks at busy intersections, and maintained sidewalk systems that encourage walking, exercise, connectivity and social interaction.

It is also important to note that sometimes improving the built environment is achieved by “not building” something. For example, stopping the construction of an interstate highway that destroys a neighborhood's ability to get around, or the building of multi-use developments that increase car traffic but do little to promote improved safety or health of the community, can be seen as examples of positive built environment initiatives.

Q: What does it mean to improve our built environment?

A: Improving our built environment is not just about designing new things like trails, greenways and parks. These are a means to return to a better way of life – and connecting to a very distinct way of life for North Carolinians. It's how we're connected to our family, friends, neighbors, church members, work, schools and the great outdoors that is North Carolina. These are things that are good for our health – from being around the people and places we love to being active and doing the things that get our hearts pumping. It's less about what our communities look like and more about what we are able to do in them: how we get together with members of our faith communities, how we talk to our neighbors in the evenings, how we pass the time with our families on the weekends, how we take our children to school and playgrounds, and how we travel to work day in and day out. These are all part of our built environment. And we have the opportunity to shape it.

Q: What is Active Transportation?

A: “Active transportation” is any form of transportation that helps us be physically active while getting from one place to another. It generally includes walking, bicycling and using public transportation.

Q: What is a Complete Street?

A: According to the definition from the National Complete Streets Coalition, a “complete street” is one that is safe for all users, specifically pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, people with disabilities, older adults, children, automobiles, trucks and other commercial vehicles. Complete streets typically feature sidewalks, wide lanes for bicyclists, curb ramps, crosswalks, prominent crossing signals at intersections and road designs that encourage slower motor vehicle speeds.

Q: What are some of the benefits to a healthy built environment?

A: Towns and cities across North Carolina have been planning and implementing improvements to their built environment and are seeing benefits:

- Greater health benefits for the community
- More opportunities for active transportation
- Less traffic congestion
- Less pollution
- Increased property values

- More attractive and safe areas to engage in physical activity
- Greater business opportunities
- A greater sense of community
- Tourism opportunities

Q: Why can't we use our local school's playgrounds and fields when school is not in session?

A: It can be frustrating to have recreational facilities close by but not have access to them. While many schools have gymnasiums, athletic field and tracks, a lot of them are hesitant to make them available to the larger community. Some are concerned about liability issues, while others are concerned with cost, staffing and upkeep. There are resources to help you address this though. Joint Use Agreements can help open doors and create a collaborative win-win relationship between schools and your community.

### About the Campaign

Q: What is the Shape Your World Campaign?

A: Shape Your World is a statewide movement of North Carolinians who are committed to creating a safer, healthier and more connected built environment in their communities. Our campaign mobilizes people across the state to get more involved by asking all North Carolinians, from small towns like Ahsokie to larger cities like Charlotte, to:

- SEE the world around them in a new way;
- CONNECT with the issue personally; and
- ACT to shape a better, built environment.

Q: What do you expect to happen as a result of the Shape Your World Campaign?

A: We hope to inspire a statewide movement among North Carolinians by encouraging people to get involved and make a difference in our communities by developing healthier built environments. Over time, we hope the local efforts lead to policy shifts at the state level.

Q: How long is the campaign expected to last?

A: The campaign is funded through 2011. It is our expectation that Shape Your World will run much longer as we explore public and private partnerships to ensure its sustainability. Most importantly, Shape Your World is created to empower citizens to take ownership and be the leaders of this movement in the years ahead.

Q: Who is the campaign trying to reach?

A: North Carolinians who want to be involved in making our environments safer, healthier and more connected over the long haul. People who care deeply about their communities and are engaged in their communities. They believe strongly enough that they can make a difference and they are willing to write a letter to the editor, attend a planning commission meeting, vote, or even just forward a blog post about important issues.

Q: How will this campaign improve the lives of North Carolinians?

A: What we build reflects what we value. As citizens, when we stand up and have our voice heard it can mean safer places for our kids to play, more opportunities for us to bike or walk from place to place, and more attractive towns for our businesses to prosper. Most importantly it means making it easier for us to connect to those people, activities and places that make living in North Carolina so special.

Q: How will this campaign change North Carolina?

A: It will make residents of the state healthier. It will allow residents to connect more easily to each other because their communities will be designed in a way that makes those connections more accessible. Ultimately, North Carolinians will become more active because we will have more opportunities and options to do so.

Q: How will this campaign help me change my neighborhood? My town?

A: Shape Your World is here to provide the inspiration, connections and tools for you to take a more active role in your community.

Q: When and where can I expect to see the campaign?

A: An interactive and comprehensive website, [www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com](http://www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com), will share campaign information with citizens, media and policy makers, and provide them with the tools and resources to start shaping their worlds. Print ads will appear primarily in local newspapers, but the campaign will also be featured in North Carolina issues of major national magazines, such as Newsweek, Sports Illustrated and Time. There will also be an online advertising component, with ads and interactive features appearing on a wide variety of news and lifestyle websites. Outside of these realms, Shape Your World will be promoted at several events throughout North Carolina. Visit the News section of [www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com](http://www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com) for details.

### Getting Involved

Q: How can I get involved?

A: Asking the question is the first big step. Shape Your World is designed as a movement for citizens of North Carolina to have a voice in how their communities are developed. When you visit [www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com](http://www.ShapeYourWorldNC.com) you will find a variety of tools and resources that make getting involved easier. If you want to see what changes in the built environment mean, we'll point you to success stories around the state; if you want to write a letter to the editor, we'll give you examples; and if you want to attend a planning board meeting, we'll show you how to find one. These are just a few ideas. There are many ways to get involved.

Q: Why should citizens get involved? What are they expected to do as a result of the campaign?

A: Playgrounds, bike paths and sidewalks don't build themselves. If we want our communities to be safer, healthier and more connected, we need to take action. We want North Carolinians to:

- SEE the world around them in a new way. We want everyone to stop and think about how our communities are designed and to realize that we have a voice in how they get built, developed or changed.
- CONNECT with the issue personally. The benefits of a better built environment are many. It means a safer community for our kids, a healthier lifestyle for our families and closer relationships with the people and places we care about.
- ACT to shape a better, built environment in their communities. Every citizen has a voice and a stake in this issue. By speaking up at a local planning board meeting, starting or signing a petition, writing a letter to the editor or local policy makers, we can make sure that our voices are heard.

Q: Who would I contact if we need sidewalks or bike lanes in my town?

A: Many communities have volunteer pedestrian and bicycle advisory committees whose role is to advise local elected officials about active transportation. These groups are often involved in transportation planning and priority-setting. Your town/city planning department (or town manager in smaller communities) can connect you with any related advisory committees. In North Carolina, only municipalities and the NC Department of Transportation build and maintain roads, so reaching out to your town's planning staff or manager about the transportation planning process is a good first step.

Q: My town doesn't have funding to make improvements. Are there places I could look to find funding to help us out?

A: There are a number of local, state, federal and private funders who support the planning, construction, right of way acquisition and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Here are just a few:

- [Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation](#)
- [Clean Water Management Trust Fund](#)

- [NC Department of Transportation](#)
- [NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund](#)
- [Parks and Recreation Trust Fund](#)
- [Small Cities Community Development Block Grants](#)

### Our Partners

Q: Who is behind this effort?

A: Shape Your World is the product of years of work by numerous partnerships and coalitions across North Carolina including: the Healthy Environments Collaborative, which includes the NC Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Environment and Natural Resources, and Health and Human Services and the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government; Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina; UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health; multiple local municipalities; Active Living by Design; Lights, Camera, Active!; and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

Q: Are political parties involved? Or politics?

A: No. While this issue does involve policy change, especially at the local level, having healthy, connected communities is something all political parties can support. We want policy makers to take a critical look at the issues involved because this will involve policy change.

Q: Where does my state representative or senator stand on this issue?

A: Visit [www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/RandR07/Representation.html](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/RandR07/Representation.html) and search for your state representative or senator. You can search for him or her by zip code, voter registration, county and district. Once you've identified your representative or senator and have their contact information, contact their office to find out where they stand on the issue.

### Our Funding

Q: How is the campaign being funded?

A: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services received start-up funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, by way of a \$3 million federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant. Of that grant, approximately \$1 million is being spent to develop, implement and evaluate Shape Your World. Future funding for Shape Your World will come from public and private partnerships. Better built environments lead to better health, safer neighborhoods and stronger communities.

Q: Are taxpayer's dollars being used to fund this campaign? If so, what makes this a good use of these resources during these difficult times?

A: Yes, our taxpayer dollars are being used to fund this campaign. But for a cost of 30 cents per North Carolina resident, we are giving all North Carolinians the tools necessary to have greater influence in how their communities are being built. This can lead to better health, safer neighborhoods and stronger communities for all of us.

Q: How will the success of the campaign be measured?

A: We want to be accountable to the resources that are being put into this campaign. As a result, we're building metrics into every aspect of our efforts so we can know what's working and why, and what's not and how we can improve it. But the ultimate measure of success will be if people have been inspired to get involved and take action. Is a woman in Cary attending her first planning board meeting? Are residents in Raleigh coming together to get bike lanes built? Can parents in Winston-Salem point to a playground and know that their kids can play there because they made it possible? This is what success will feel like.

## V. Shape Your World Writing Checklist

As you write and develop new materials for Shape Your World – like speeches, news stories, website content, collateral materials and more – we recommend using this checklist as a means to ensure your messages are on-point and reflective of the Shape Your World campaign. It is not expected that every item on this list be checked, but rather that the list as a whole serves as a guide to help you develop consistent, persuasive and empowering messages that will bring Shape Your World to life.

- Did you talk about the built environment in a colloquial way that has meaning to North Carolinians?
- Did you describe the benefits of the built environment to your target audience?
- Did you make the issue important and personal?
- Did you avoid technical jargon?
- Did you open with a positive statement that connects the audience to North Carolina and/or their community?
- Did you quickly identify the problem or limitation?
- Did you give examples of how your target audience can be a part of Shape Your World by seeing, connecting or taking action in their communities?
- Did you offer at least one potential solution to the problem or limitation?
- Did you use specific language that was recommended in this guide?
- Did you frame your message in a context that is commonly accepted by all North Carolinians?
- Did you use one surprising fact to support your argument?
- Is the fact memorable and presented at a key point in context?
- Did you create a connection to involved citizens by telling the story of one citizen or group who is making a difference to improve their built environment?
- Did you tell a compelling story of how others are taking action to improve their built environment? Did you make the target audience feel that this is something that they can do too?
- Does what you wrote make someone feel like they can indeed shape their world?