

## Coalition considers grant for community health plans

Written by Leah Fightmaster

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A local bike-friendly coalition is considering a potential funding source to create plans to implement wellness and safety plans and put up signs.

The Connecting Active Communities Coalition could receive a grant from WeTHRIVE!, a county-wide initiative through the public health department in Hamilton County to promote healthy lifestyles. The group approached the coalition with the potential for funding, provided it completes the requirements for it – communities perform an evaluation on their area and then form WeTHRIVE! teams, representative Jaime Love said.

With those evaluations, municipalities can create strategic plans to address health issues and create sustainable improvements. In the past, WeTHRIVE! has funded both the creation of the plans and their implementation, but Love said the group can only fund the planning portion. The coalition could receive up to \$10,000 for the project in funding, which is dependent upon how many municipalities participate. Some of that funding, if there is any left after the planning stage, could be used for signs or whatever the plans call for, Love said.

So far, the coalition voted on a resolution to show support for the project, but each community will have to finish its evaluation by Oct. 17 to qualify for funding. In addition, each community's council will have to approve the wellness resolution, with changes made if they desire, to recognize the plan. WeTHRIVE! also suggested that the coalition's members take training to become ambassadors, which Love said helps them become more familiar with the group.

Nern Ostendorf, executive director for Queen City Bike, suggested that coalition members take that ambassador training because it helps with the way people look at making communities healthier.

"It shapes the way you think," she said. "And it makes a difference without changing overnight."

If money is left after the planning stage, the coalition wants to use the rest to buy signs that alert drivers to bicyclists on the road. Coalition coordinator Michele Gottschlich said that although its a lot of work for communities who want to participate, she felt the funding for plans could be very helpful to the coalition and its members.

"This looks like a gem of an opportunity," she said.

The Connecting Active Communities Coalition plans to meet again Wednesday, Sept. 4, at the Evendale Recreation Center to discuss more about the WeTHRIVE! funding project.

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