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PENN STATE HEALTH

Better Together Summit 2026

Building Connected Communities



BIKE LEBANON
LEBANON VALLEY BICYCLE COALITION

October 1, 2026



Building Connected Communities is about more than just health, it is about individual choices and opportunities for people to connect, move, gather and participate.

A connected community is one where people can:

- **Move—walk, bike, hike, and enjoy the outdoors**
 - **Gather—parks, trails, downtowns, and public spaces**
 - **Access —schools, workplaces, healthcare, food, and other everyday needs**
 - **Participate —have a voice in shaping their community**
 - **Belong—build relationships with neighbors and local organizations**
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Laurie Crawford

- Program Manager for Food Access at Penn State Health
- Serve as the Physical Activity Lead for the Penn State College of Medicine REACH project in Lebanon County in partnership with the Community Health Council.
- Lead the Bike/Pedestrian Adversity Committee
- Vice President of the Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition and Co-Founder of the Lebanon Bicycle Recycle

Does Our Community Make It Easy to Move?

Physical Activity & the Built Environment



85%

of WellSpan CHNA respondents did not get the recommended amount of exercise in the previous week.

(2025 WellSpan CHNA)



1 in 4

Lebanon County adults report no leisure-time physical activity.

(Penn State Health CHNA)



61.4%

of Lebanon County residents said it is important or very important that people can reach schools, parks, stores, worksites and other everyday destinations without using a car.

(2023 Lebanon County Needs Assessment)



83%

of residents have adequate access to locations for physical activity.

(2025 County Health Rankings)



THE OPPORTUNITY

Make Movement the Easy Choice

Lebanon County already has strong access to places for activity. The opportunity is to turn that access into everyday movement by making routes and destinations feel connected, welcoming, and practical.

01

Connect everyday destinations

Prioritize safe, continuous walking and biking connections to parks, schools, stores, worksites, and neighborhoods.

02

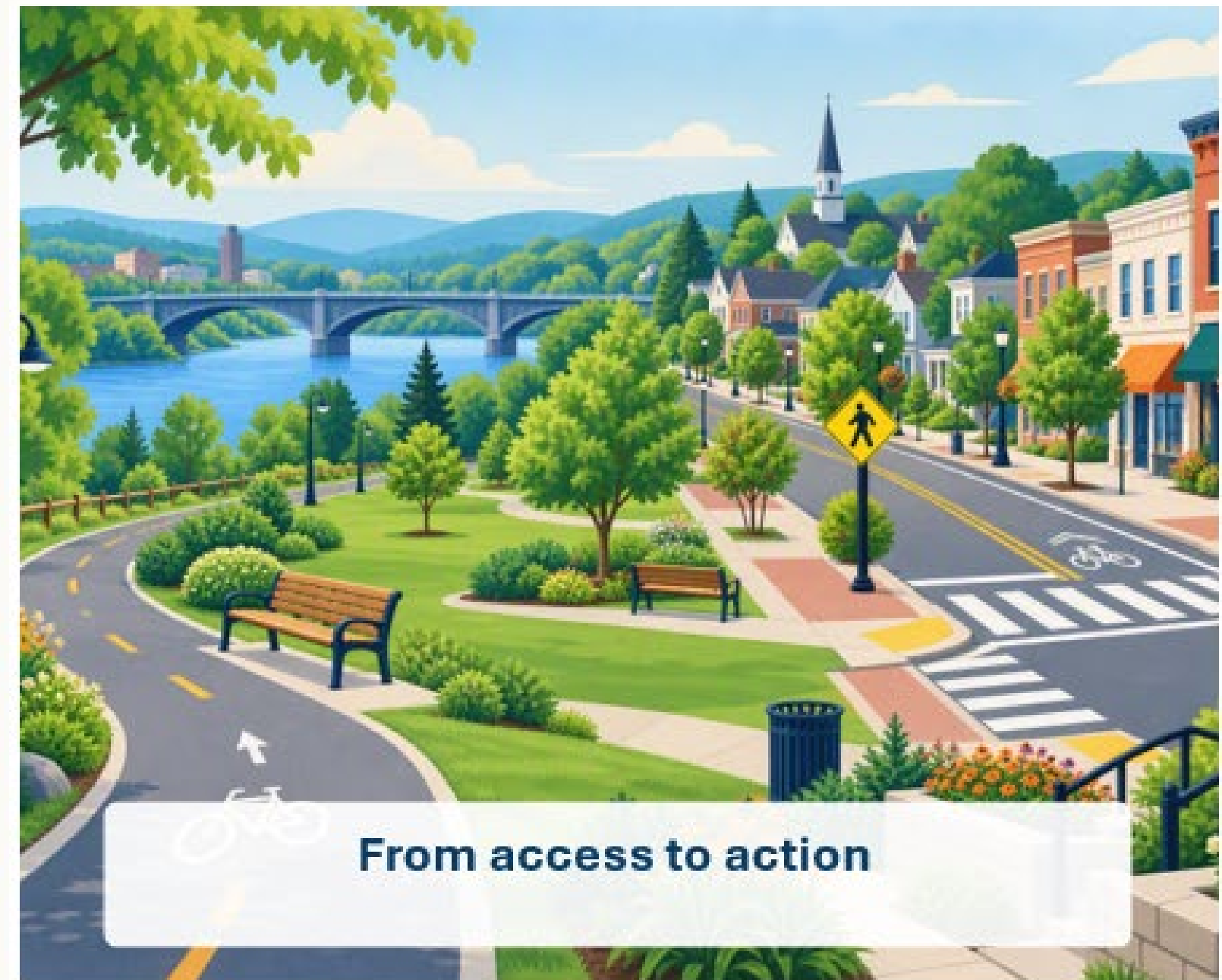
Make active spaces inviting

Pair access with shade, seating, lighting, wayfinding, and programming that helps people use public spaces more often.

03

Focus where barriers are greatest

Use resident input and local data to target gaps in connectivity, safety, affordability, and access.



From access to action

Design goal: Make the active choice the easy, safe, and appealing choice for more residents.

Over the last 10 years, community priorities and advancements included:



- Trail connections - especially to schools and downtown.
- Bike lanes and sharrows
- Feasibility studies for bike and pedestrian corridors
- 10-Minute Walk Assessment
- Trail crossings assessment, bike and pedestrian audits
- Park Improvements



Partnership with Penn State College of Medicine REACH

How REACH Works

National → Local → Community

01

National Strategies

CDC strategies + Active Community Tools

02

County-Level Action

Adapting evidence-based approaches to Lebanon County

03

Local Partnerships

Working alongside organizations already doing the work

04

Community Impact

Connecting people, resources and projects to make active living more possible



Physical Activity Action Plan and Bike/Ped Built Environment Task Force

Action Plan GOAL #1

Community Design; Create a built environment that encourages active living across the County

1:1 Collaborate with urban planners to develop safe, accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use trails throughout the City/County.

1:2 Advocate for pedestrian-friendly street crossings, traffic calming measures, and green space corridors downtown Lebanon

1:3 Integrate active transportation infrastructure into new developments and community revitalization projects



Action Plan GOAL #2



Increase access to affordable, welcoming spaces for exercise and recreation

2:1 Advance recommendations from 10 Minute Walk, Bike Transportation map and REACH map for existing parks, gyms, sports fields, and recreational facilities and prioritize projects

2:2 Improve community parks and playgrounds, focusing on safety and inclusivity.

2:3 Promote after-school programs that emphasize physical activity and collaborate with school partners to launch active transportation initiatives that encourage students to walk, bike, and move more throughout their day.



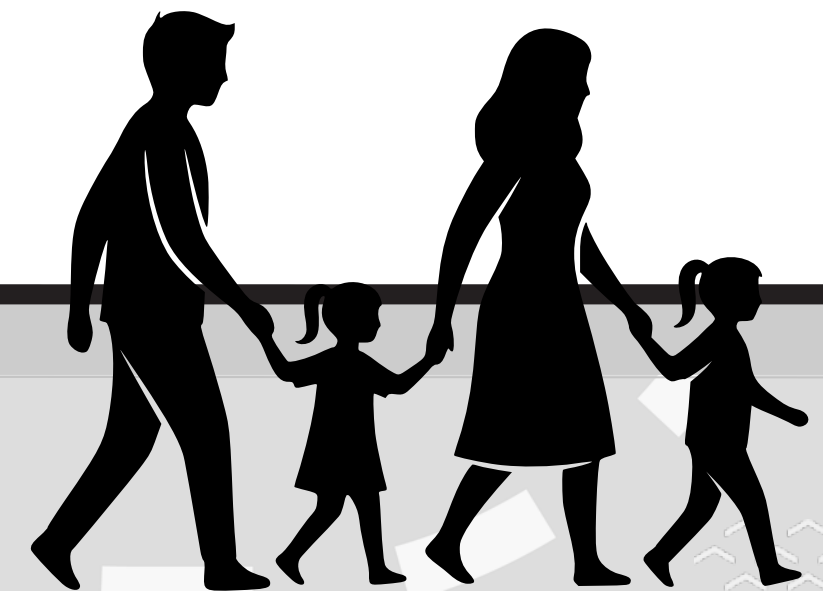
Action Plan GOAL #3



Raise awareness for community members to increase physical activity.

3:1 Develop seasonal campaigns promoting walking, biking and new physical activity corridors.

3.2 Strengthen community awareness of active transportation by promoting local success stories, new corridors, and opportunities to walk and bike together



Action Plan GOAL #4



Promote safe, equitable and accessible biking and walking through advocacy, education, and enforcement

4:1 Gather data that support pedestrian and cyclist safety.

4:2 Partner with law enforcement and transportation departments to improve traffic safety enforcement in high risk areas.



Action Plan GOAL #5



Establish dedicated leadership within Parks & Recreation to coordinate, expand, and sustain community biking and walking initiatives including parks, trails and green spaces.

5.1 Explore the idea and concept of a Parks & Recreation Director/Coordinator position focused on active transportation integration.

5.2 Establish an interdepartmental coordination framework led by the new Director.

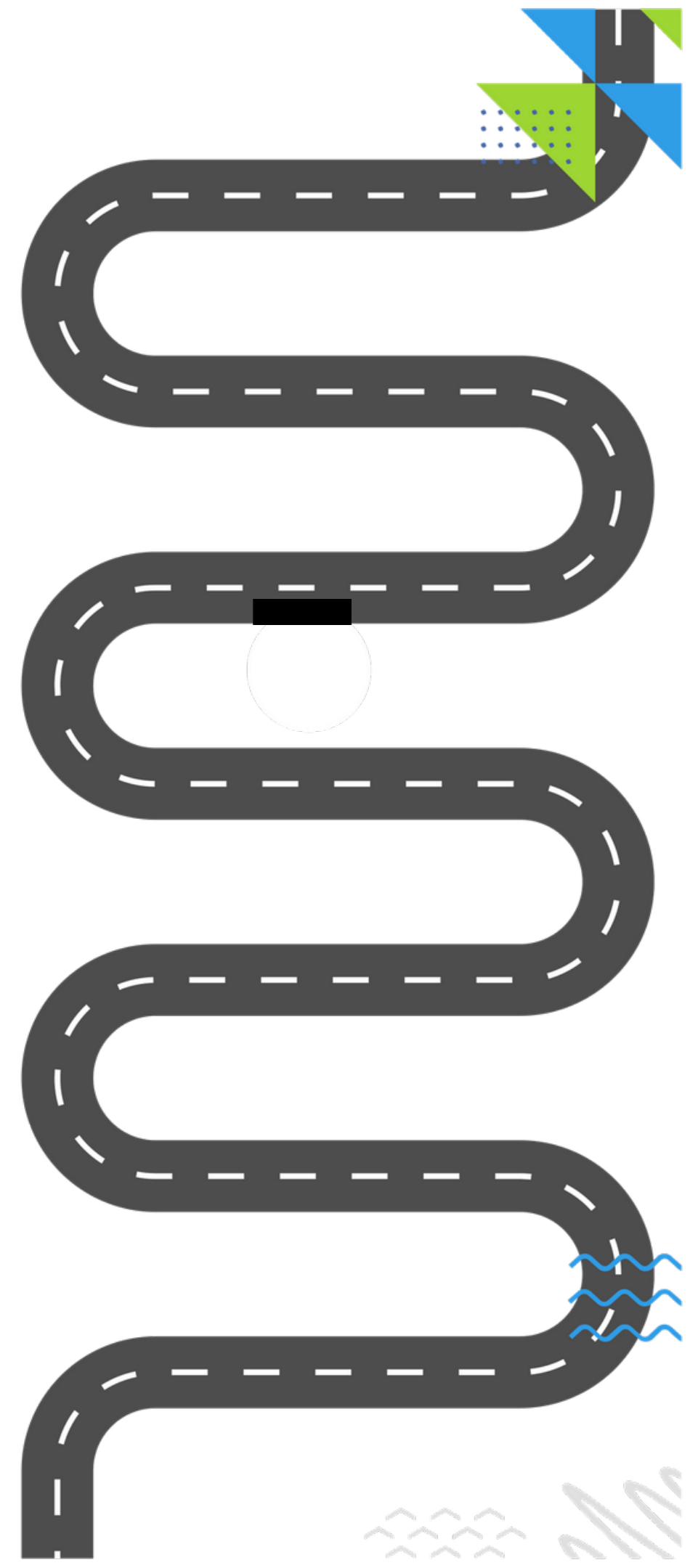




Making Connections Happen

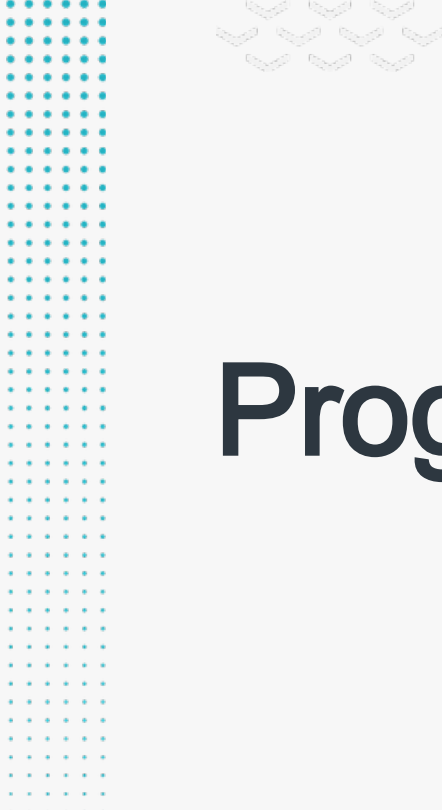
Turning partnerships and plans into action

- They help us identify gaps and opportunities.
 - Give communities data to support funding and grant applications.
 - Help municipalities and organizations work together rather than independently.
 - Allow us to think beyond individual projects and toward a connected countywide system.
 - Most importantly, they help us turn ideas into projects that people can actually use.
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Healthy People + Connected Places = Stronger Communities





Program Highlights

- Steven Negron-Candelario, Penn State College of Medicine REACH
 - Dave Funk, Coleman Memorial Park
 - Janelle Groh, Lebanon City
 - John Wengert, Lebanon Valley Rail Trail
 - Michelle Brummer, Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan
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