

Asheville

Background

Asheville is a city nestled in the Appalachian Mountains with a population of nearly 86,000 and a strong tourism industry. It is also home to UNC Asheville and its approximately 4,000 students. More than 5% of trips to work are made either on foot or by bicycle, which is well above the state average. This active commuting coupled with the large number of tourists who explore the city on foot or on two wheels make it easy to see why pedestrian and cyclist safety are important issues for Asheville.

Partnerships

Since joining the Watch for Me NC program in 2015, Asheville's Department of Transportation has taken the lead role in the project but with an array of local partners in the areas of law enforcement, education, local government, public health, and cycling advocacy. These partners include:

- Asheville Police Department
- UNC Asheville Police Department
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Asheville City Schools
- Active Routes to School
- Buncombe County District Attorney
- Mountain Area Health Education Center
- Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
- Asheville on Bikes
- Western North Carolina Bicycle Dealer's Association

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

Asheville kicked off its Watch for Me NC campaign in August in conjunction with a popular 'National Night Out' event. Between August and October 2015, the Asheville Police Department enforced drivers failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks through a campaign of 10 operations. Over the course of these operations, the Police Department issued a total of 49 'failure to yield' citations. Officers also conducted 12 pedestrian-focused operations, which involved educating pedestrians about the safety risks associated with violating traffic signals. Asheville's Watch for Me NC partners issued press releases about the program through various social media channels, and distributed hundreds of campaign materials (e.g., brochures, rack cards, bumper stickers, and bike lights, etc.) at community events. Finally, to engage the public more broadly, the city created its own [educational video](#) about the program.

Key Outcomes

In December 2015, Asheville city staff reported a substantial reduction in pedestrian crashes in the past three months. They [documented](#) a citywide 27% reduction in pedestrian- and bicycle-related crashes relative to the same average time period from 2010 to 2014. In Asheville, the Watch for Me NC program is part of a broader set of initiatives to improve safety for all road users, which may also be responsible for the safety improvements observed.

Lessons Learned

A key lesson learned was the importance of getting ahead of the media and proactively shaping the story before conducting enforcement. Asheville faced some negative press coverage during the initial stages of the program due to a misunderstanding that police were targeting pedestrians for jaywalking. Thus, press releases before enforcement, and outreach to key stakeholders such as the advocacy community, may help Watch for Me NC partners avoid misconceptions about the aims of enforcement. In the future, the city plans to communicate with pedestrian advocates to foster understanding that the objective of the Watch for Me NC program is to address all road users, including motorists and cyclists, and not to solely target pedestrians. Additionally, Asheville intends to establish more partnerships before launching the next iteration of their program.

Credit

Thanks to Barb Mee, Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator for the Asheville DOT and Officer Meg Pigman of the Asheville Police Department for their dedication to WFM and for the information appearing in this profile.

Charlotte

Background

North Carolina's largest city, Charlotte, is a major city with an estimated population of 809,000 and is the core of a metropolitan area with 2.38 million inhabitants, according to the 2014 US Census. As a regional economic hub, drivers from many neighboring communities commute into Charlotte, where motorists, transit users, cyclists, and pedestrians interact. In its first year participating in the Watch for Me NC program, the City of Charlotte and its partners successfully engaged in a variety of enforcement, public outreach, and education events to improve safety for all road users.

Partnerships

Charlotte attributes much of the success of its first year with the Watch for Me NC program to the strong and supportive partnerships it has built. Included among its numerous partners are the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, the Charlotte Area Transit System, the city's two major hospitals, the county health department which operates the Safe Routes to School Program, and AARP, which have been particularly helpful in helping to get the word out about the program through its large membership network. The city has been able to leverage the existing networks of its partners to expand community outreach. Partners have also taken an active role in a variety of ways, such as making their own media appearances.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

The city and its partners endeavored to reach as many community members as possible by carrying out a wide range of outreach and education efforts. Three press conferences were held with media coverage, and the city also maintained an active social media presence on Facebook and Twitter in addition to its [website](#). Four Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were created and shared via social media and continue to air on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government channel. The city also produced inserts about WFM, which accompanied August water bills. Interviews were conducted with a number of local radio and television channels, both in English and Spanish.

Education efforts included participation in the UNC Charlotte Transportation Fair, a presentation at the Latino Community Health Ministry, distributing materials to hundreds of attendees at the annual festival in Freedom Park, and tying Watch for Me NC safety messages into Walk to School Day events at two elementary schools. Additionally, the city participated in the Charlotte Pedestrian and Bicycle Week, announcing the Watch for Me NC program in conjunction with the NC Bike Summit, the Mayor's Challenge to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety, and the AARP walkability audit. A bicycle safety demonstration was also performed with media coverage, demonstrating how to properly

use a bicycle box to make a left turn. As part of the campaign, Charlotte distributed an estimated:

- 10,000 bumper stickers;
- 5,000 rack cards;
- 1,000 posters;
- 500 reflective arm bands; and
- 200 bicycle lights

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police also reported that they conducted a total of ten enforcement events in the first year. These enforcement events resulted in more than 800 warning citations issued to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Key Outcomes

Due to Watch for Me NC partners' outreach efforts throughout Charlotte, numerous residents from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups received safety messages in a variety of ways. These community engagement strategies have contributed to the sense that Charlotte residents have a greater awareness of road user safety issues now compared to before the city's participation with Watch for Me NC. Further, the Charlotte Department of Transportation continued to install "turning vehicles yield to pedestrians" street signs in places with high turning crash rates to augment program messaging and increase safety. Given the success of its first year with Watch for Me NC, in the coming years, the city plans to grow the program and build on its successes.

Lessons Learned

Partnerships were critical to effectively implementing the Watch for Me NC program. It was especially helpful to partner with organizations whose missions related to injury prevention—such as Safe Routes to School, Safe Kids/Safe Communities, and area hospitals—even before applying to the program. This way, we could make use of these partners' social networks to more effectively spread Watch for Me NC messaging.

Credit

Thanks to Joe Mangum for his work on the Watch for Me NC program and for the information supplied for this profile.

Corolla

Background

Corolla is a small seaside community located in the Outer Banks with a permanent population of around 500 people. During peak vacation months, tourists as well as a large number of international students and workers swell the town's population considerably in the peak tourist months upwards of 60,000 visitors per week. Many walk or bike for recreation or as a means for transportation and collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrian and bicycle are frequent. Addressing safety issues for this seasonally large, transient population presents unique challenges but Corolla and its partners creatively approached the problem in their first year participating in the Watch for Me NC program.

Partnerships

Given the large and frequent turnover of visitors in Corolla, the town collaborated with partners who frequently interact with visitors. These included vacation property rental companies, local law enforcement, and around 100 local businesses that offered to display a placard with Watch for Me NC information.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

Corolla conducted outreach and education in a number of creative ways. Beyond their collaboration with rental companies and local businesses, they also made presentations to a large number of the over 2,000 international students and summer employees at an orientation event. The town also holds weekly 5Ks and they operated a table at these events with Watch for Me NC materials. Another important part of their education activities was their focus on homeowner associations, reaching out to around 10 different communities. As a result, many homeowners display placards with pedestrian and bicycle safety information on their refrigerators for visiting renters. This range of outreach efforts helped Corolla to reach a large and significant audience with the Watch for Me NC safety messages.

Key Outcomes

Due to the substantial efforts in Corolla, the Watch for Me NC message has reached thousands of residents and visitors. In spring 2016, the town will construct a 2.5-mile shared use path that will parallel Route 12 and connect residents with two shopping complexes. The Watch for Me NC program and Corolla's complementary "Corolla Fire and Rescue Cares ('CFR Cares')" initiative have instigated conversations among many partners. These conversations are credited with leading to the development of the forthcoming shared use path.

Lessons Learned

A key takeaway has been to find creative ways to address unique local challenges, such as conducting orientations for international students/employees, engaging Home Owners' Associations (HOAs), and bringing unique partners who share a common cause to the table.

Credit

Thanks to Paula Pyzik, Will Taylor, and the CFR Cares team, under the direction of Police Chief Rick Galganski, for their work on Watch for Me NC program and for the information presented in this community profile.

Davidson

Background

Davidson is a lakeside college town of around 12,500 residents to the north of Charlotte, including Davidson College and its nearly 2,000 students. A large share of work trips (over 7%) in Davidson are made by walking and its downtown with many restaurants, shops, and other businesses near the college. This creates a bustling town center with a lot of pedestrian activity and frequent interactions with motor vehicle traffic and cyclists. The Town of Davidson has seen its population nearly triple since 1990, but has maintained its commitment to fostering a welcoming and safe environment for walkers and cyclists and view this first year of involvement in the Watch for Me NC program as part of that continued commitment.

Partnerships

As the lead agency, the Davidson Police Department worked closely with a number of partners, both public and private, to disseminate information about Watch for Me NC and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. On the public side, collaboration with town planners led to the installation of flashing beacons at pedestrian crossings, offering greater visibility to crossing pedestrians. The region's Active Routes to School Coordinator and County's Safe Routes to School Coordinator were helpful in spreading safety messages in area schools; including co-sponsoring several cycling safety clinics for children and adults. An important private partner has been a local bicycle shop, *The Spirited Cyclist*, which organizes group rides for cyclists of varying skill levels. The Davidson police have assisted in these events, helping to spread safety information and materials. Davidson police, in conjunction with students from Davidson College, are creating safety webinars that focus on vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle safety for employees at several large, local companies could view at their leisure, potentially reaching over 1,000 employees.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

In addition to the education and outreach involving the local bicycle shop and large local employers, Davidson police also did substantial education at local schools. Bike and pedestrian safety education at local schools reached in excess of 300 students and focused on the five to nine-year-old age group because they hope to mold positive behavior in this group early on. With high school aged students, the outreach focused on education and awareness as operators of vehicles regarding pedestrian and bicycling issues, reaching an estimated 200 future drivers. Materials were also distributed to local hotels, businesses, community centers and Davidson College. Additionally, the Town of Davidson ran a story about the Watch for Me NC program in its October 2015 [newsletter](#).

In downtown Davidson, police have had success issuing warning tickets and creating a “good behavior” program to positively recognize safe travel behaviors observed by officers. This program is collaboration between the town’s Economic Development and Police Departments, in conjunction with Watch for Me NC; which utilizes coupons or gift certificates from town businesses to reward safe and courteous behavior by citizens. The town also reported conducting two enforcement events from mid-October through November that focused on providing educational information to drivers and pedestrians in the downtown business district.

Key Outcomes

Davidson’s Police, Planning and Public Works Departments worked with NCDOT engineers and Active Routes to School to install pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHBs) on several median-divided roadways near schools. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements, engineers observed and documented pedestrian and driver compliance before and after the installation of the beacons. The study, prepared by the NCDOT in 2015, documented a 40% increases in drivers yielding to pedestrians during activation of the pedestrian beacons. Moreover, attending the Active Routes to School conference—participation made possible through Davidson’s Watch for Me NC involvement—inspired the town’s police department to explore the possibility of establishing a walking school bus in several communities surrounding local schools.

Lessons Learned

Much of participating in the Watch for Me NC program involves community organizing. It is helpful to work with advocates that are passionate and confident speaking in front of groups and have connections with schools, businesses and community centers. It is also important to document the implementation of the program— e.g., how many materials partners distributed, as well as where and how community members were engaged with program messaging—to identify effective delivery methods.

Credit

Thanks to Officer Philip Geiger and Corporal Melvin Waller, Jr. for their work in the Watch for Me NC program and for the information appearing in this profile.

Granville County

Background

Home to nearly 60,000 residents, Granville County lies to the north of Raleigh and Durham. Its principal urban areas are the county seat, Oxford (population 8,600), the City of Creedmoor (population 4,200), and the Town of Butner (population 7,600). Oxford and Creedmoor both have historic, walkable downtowns and they have sought to improve safety and raise awareness about pedestrian and cyclist issues in their first year participating in the Watch for Me NC program.

Partnerships

Granville County partnered with the Granville Greenways, the Granville-Vance District Health Department, the County Sheriff's Department, the cities of Oxford and Creedmoor and the Town of Butner, and their police departments to spread the Watch for Me NC message and conduct enforcement operations. Greenville County heavily relied on all of these partners to help get the word out, organize events, and distribute program materials.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

Granville County has undertaken a range of public outreach activities. Local media helped to spread the word about the Watch for Me NC program with both local papers running front page stories about the effort. Staff also conducted outreach at a local school board meeting and at Walk to School events at two separate schools, at a Granville Greenways meeting, at the Creedmoor Music Festival, and at Oxford's NC Hot Sauce Festival. Pedestrian and cyclist safety also got a boost when both Safe/Active Routes to School and Watch for Me NC program were incorporated into two local Christmas parades in Butner and Creedmoor. Goodie bags with Watch for Me NC safety information were distributed at the Walk to School events. Rack cards, brochures, posters, bumper stickers, bike lights, and bracelets were given out at these events as well as at business locations and a local community college.

Two enforcement events were also carried out by police in Creedmoor in November 2015.

Key Outcomes

One key outcome from the program was a stronger desire to make more infrastructure improvements in the community. The program trainings and enforcement events helped bring professionals from police departments, public works, and planning together to learn from each other and create solutions together to address problems and concerns.

Lessons Learned

A key lesson learned was the importance of seeking partners and coming up with a plan of action early in the program. Another key lesson learned was that some partners are more engaged with the program than others and it's important to utilize their enthusiasm and drive to help motivate other partners in the community.

Credit

Thanks to Justin Jorgensen for his work on the Watch for Me NC program and for the information provided in this profile.

Jacksonville/Camp Lejeune

Background

With a population of around 69,000, Jacksonville is one of the largest cities in Eastern North Carolina. It is also the county seat of Onslow County and the site of Camp Lejeune, the largest Marine Corps base on the East Coast and home to around 47,000 marines and sailors. A high percentage of work trips, around 10%, in Jacksonville are made on foot, which speaks to the importance of pedestrian safety for the city.

Partnerships

The City of Jacksonville partnered with a range of mostly public partners including the Jacksonville Police Department (JPD), Jacksonville Transit, the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department, the Jacksonville Metropolitan Planning Organization, Onslow County and Onslow County Schools, Onslow United Transit System, and the Marine Corps Base at Camp Lejeune. They also partnered with Onslow Memorial Hospital, Coastal Carolina Community College, and a local cycling club called Down East Cyclists.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

In 2015, Jacksonville used a variety of means to get the word out about the Watch for Me NC program. The city kicked off the year at National Night Out in August. Banners were posted along roadways and the city participated in safety events such as the Old Navy Safety Day and the Fire Prevention Week Kick-Off event, both of these events were made possible with help from the JPD and JUMPO. At the Old Navy event, attendants were engaged with trivia questions whose answers could be found on the rack cards available at the table. Correct answers earned an armband. The city received excellent feedback from residents at this event. The city also took the Watch for Me NC message to Walk to School Day events at two schools, and participated in a City Wellness Event as well as Safe Kid Meetings. Materials distributed included rack cards, brochures, posters, bumper stickers, bike lights, and armbands. Finally, the city utilized social media, making a Halloween announcement on Facebook.

Jacksonville reported conducting two enforcement events in August 2015. The JPD also conducted 6 different observation periods, with a total of 19 citations given. Additionally, the JPD held a crosswalk class for a special needs class which included practical application. In the coming year, the city plans to increase school outreach and introduce “caught being good” tickets to recognize travelers’ safe behaviors.

Key Outcomes

Participation in a “Safety Day” event in September was higher than expected, and overall the public response to the Watch for Me NC program was positive in the first

year of participation. Jacksonville plans to continue involvement with the Watch for Me NC program in 2016, with the hopes of working better with the schools in the area and also surrounding communities.

Lessons Learned

It is important to keep up regular communications with program partners so that they see the Watch for Me NC program as a central part of their work. Another lesson is to learn from other cities' experiences with the program, as they are a valuable resource of information and support.

Credit

Thanks to Stephanie Kutz for her work on the Watch for Me NC program and the information presented in this profile.

Marion

Background

The City of Marion sits at the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains with a population of nearly 8,000 and is both the county seat and largest city of McDowell County. Although relatively few residents commute on foot or by bike, the city's Main Street Historic District receives considerable foot traffic from both residents and tourists, making their safety a critical issue for Marion.

Partnerships

The City of Marion partnered with the Marion Police Department, Active Routes to School, the McDowell County PTA Program, and the McDowell Health Coalition. Leveraging the existing networks of these partners allowed Marion to effectively disseminate the Watch for Me NC message. The Health Coalition and PTA Program in particular have helped Marion to reach many people. They have also worked closely with downtown businesses, some of which have heard complaints from customers that walking downtown is dangerous.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

Marion has undertaken a variety of outreach and enforcement efforts in its first year with the Watch for Me NC program. Education and enforcement was carried out in conjunction with Walk to School Days held at two area elementary schools and one middle school. City staff and elected officials were on hand to walk students to school from designated locations adjacent to high-volume intersections and educated them on skills to walk safely, while police provided enforcement. Around 160 students in total participated in the Walk to School Days. Children who participated in Walk to School Day received Safe Routes to School T-shirts, flashing lights, and bumper stickers. Marion also took advantage of high profile local events such as the town's annual Mountain Glory Festival, where more than 1,000 attendees received information from the Watch for Me NC booth the city operated. They also fit bicycles with lights at the Mountain Glory Festival and distributed reflective armbands to those participating in the Mountain Glory 5K.

The city handed out posters to businesses downtown where there is a lot of pedestrian traffic. In the coming year, Marion town staff plans to work with downtown restaurants to put Watch for Me NC information cards at tables and thereby create opportunities for conversations about pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Patrol cars carried and distributed materials to pedestrians, joggers, and cyclists who were not easily visible. Local police also carried out enforcement activities in two neighborhoods during Halloween. Families from throughout the county tend to trick-or-

treat in these neighborhoods, which brings roughly 4,000 pedestrians to the area at that time of year.

Key Outcomes

Along with the town's bike plan and area schools' involvement with Safe Routes to School, Marion's participation in the Watch for Me NC program has contributed to conversations among town council members about implementing a sidewalk ordinance.

Lessons Learned

Participating in the Watch for Me NC program has involved much of the same work associated with coordinating community engagement activities. It is helpful to start small, have a plan, draw upon existing resources, and learn from other communities as you aim to fully implement a comprehensive program.

Credit

Thanks to Heather Cotton for her work on the Watch for Me NC program and for the information presented in this community profile.

Surf City

Background

Surf City is a community that straddles the mainland and beach near Topsail Island. It is a popular destination in warmer months when its permanent population of around 2,500 can swell to around 10 times that size. Visitors and residents alike walk and bike the city either on their way to work—around 8% of trips to work are on foot or by bicycle—or for recreation. The town of Surf City joined the Watch for Me NC program as part of a commitment to create a safe environment for all of the town's road users.

Partnerships

The Town of Surf City partnered with the Surf City Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Departments, Pender County Schools, Pender County Parks and Recreation, Pender County EMS and Fire, the County Board of Commissioners, and the Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization. They also worked closely with realty companies that manage many of the town's large number of rental properties.

Education and Enforcement Activities Conducted

The town had great success collaborating with local property rental companies which agreed to put Watch for Me NC materials in all rental packets. The companies were happy to help and ask if they could make copies of the materials to continue distributing them to the town's thousands of visitors. The town has also sought to raise awareness via Facebook, placing banners, and distributing materials to local businesses and a community center.

Key Outcomes

The Watch for Me NC program inspired program organizers to engage with partners they previously hadn't engaged, such as rental property agencies. Organizers learned that these agencies held a latent desire to participate in a program like Watch for Me NC and readily volunteered to help spread campaign messaging. The town discovered synergies between developing a bicycle-pedestrian master plan and conducting Watch for Me NC outreach. Each complemented the other in terms of interacting with people to discuss road user safety.

Lessons Learned

It is beneficial to involve local law enforcement from the very beginning. Regarding outreach locations, the local farmers' market worked well for engaging people and having Watch for Me NC-oriented conversations about road user safety. The farmers' market was also a place where program organizers could interact with residents and visitors alike. Finally, social media proved to be an effective way to spread messaging quickly and to younger audiences.

Credit

Thanks to Lieutenant Phillip Vorhees and to Todd Rademacher for their work on the Watch for Me NC program and for the information provided for this community profile.