



SOUTH DAKOTA WALKABLE COMMUNITIES 2026 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT COLLABORATION

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 23rd, 2026, BY 5 p.m. (CST)

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT COLLABORATION COMMUNITY APPLICATION

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| Point of contact: Whitney Keller-Reetz Health & Community Field Specialist South Dakota State University Extension Email: whitney.reetz@sdstate.edu Phone: 605.882.5140 | Application Release: January 5 th , 2026 |
| | Application Submission Deadline: January 23 rd , 2026, by 5 p.m. (CST) |
| | Tentative Award Notification: February 23 rd , 2026 |

Background: Creating activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations such as work, school, grocery stores, and parks helping community residents be more physically active. Improving the built environment (streets, sidewalks, structures, open spaces) conducive to active transportation also improves community aesthetics, enhances the economy of a community, and improves overall community connectedness and quality of life.

Purpose: The South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH) will provide one **SD** community (or two communities as an inter-community project) with technical assistance (provided by SDSU-Landscape Architecture Students) in conducting active transportation assessments and providing recommendations for improving the built environment to increase walkability and bike-ability within that community or joint communities.

NOTE: The intent of this assessment opportunity is to provide recommendations on increasing *active travel* to destinations within the selected community to increase physical activity and is *not meant* to solely assess and recommend the placement of walking paths or recreational trails that do not connect to other community facilities and services.

Eligibility: Elected or Appointed Officials, Civic Leaders, Public Works, Parks and Rec, Transit Authority, Tribal Representatives, Planning Professionals, Landscape Architect Professionals, Engineering and Transportation Professionals, Walking/Bicycling Advocacy Groups, School Administrators, Law Enforcement, Business/Commerce Professionals, or others *working closely with city officials*.

Overview: During the 2026 spring semester, SDSU-Landscape Architecture *City Planning* students and professor(s) will 1) collect initial data and information; 2) conduct onsite visit(s) to the selected community to meet with community leaders, gather additional information, and conduct assessments; and 3) based on community assessments, students will develop recommendations and present findings to all stakeholders.

Timeline: The successful community will be selected and notified by the week of February 23rd, 2026. The assessment project period will occur March-May 2026. SDSU students' final presentation to the selected community will *most likely* occur early May 2026 -TBD by professor(s).

Deliverables to Community: Assessment results, analysis, reports, maps, diagrams, sketches, detailed drawings, and other materials for community to use toward planning and improving the built

environment. Completion of assessment also aligns the community in a better position to seek out other available funds to implement recommended plans.

Additional Benefits to Community: Access to a wealth of resources, expertise, and ongoing technical assistance. This assessment provides the catalyst for communities with an interest in implementing active transportation strategies but have lacked the expertise, staffing, or information to initiate such assessments. *The intent of this technical assistance is to provide the assessment phase of a longer-term community investment in improving active transportation.*

Costs: There are **no direct** financial costs to the selected community. The community is expected to arrange hosting facilities, provide refreshments if possible, and staff/indirect support dedicated to this project. Hosting guidance will be provided. SDSU project expenses will be supported by the DOH.

Community Specifications and Requirements:

- Submit application and optional attachments by deadline.
- An interest in improving active transportation and the built environment to increase physical activity and improve community viability and vitality.
- Complete pre & post survey provided by SD DOH to establish baseline and performance data; also participate in any future program evaluation efforts.
- An ability to pull together and sustain community leaders and stakeholders from several sectors to assist in this effort.
- An intent to complete this project and thoughtfully consider the final recommendations as resources and community commitment allows.
- Provide meeting facilities for SDSU students and professor(s).
- Ability to complete all necessary forms, compile requested community information, and review report drafts in a timely manner.
- Accommodate scheduling needs of students to conduct assessments and present final recommendations.
- Assist in the development of a final project report, follow-up, and evaluation needs by communicating successes and overall experiences with SDSU and the SD DOH.

Deadline: Interested communities should submit via email the attached two-page application, **no more than four pages** in total length when completed (plus optional attachments), to Whitney Keller-Reetz at whitney.reetz@sdstate.edu no later than **5 p.m. (CST) on January 23rd, 2026**, to be considered for selection.

Upon email receipt of your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Please call prior to the deadline if you are unable to email your application and other accommodation will be made. All communities will be notified of selection status by the week of February 23rd, 2026.

View the **16 previously selected communities & their reports [here](#).**

Point of Contact:

Whitney Keller-Reetz

Health & Community Field Specialist

South Dakota State University Extension

Email: whitney.reetz@sdstate.edu

Phone: 605.882.5140

**South Dakota Walkable Communities
2026 Active Transportation Assessment Collaboration
SD Department of Health, SDSU-LA Students,
and Selected SD Community**

Community Application (Page 1 of 2)
Applications due January 23rd, 2026 at 5 p.m. (CST)

Name of Community:

Population of Community:

Joint community application – indicate YES or NO.

If YES, list both communities:

Community Contact Name:

Your Role in Community per this Application:

Organization/Title:

Address:

Zip Code:

Phone:

Alternate Phone:

Email:

City Website:

Name of Supportive City, Tribal and Elected Official(s):

Multi-Sectoral Community Partners and Organizations:

This list should be extensive. Consider all collaborative partners with diverse backgrounds that adequately represent disproportionately affected groups. You may include as an attachment.

Community Application (Page 2 of 2)

The following five sections should be answered in narrative format within a maximum of two pages. Additional attachments such as maps, photos, tribal or municipal letters of support, and stakeholder/partner rosters are *highly encouraged*.

*Your entire application should be **no more than four pages** plus any optional attachments.*

- Describe the demographics of your community, why your community is in need of and would benefit from this collaboration. Identify any priority populations or high need populations that experience greater differences in health outcomes and lack access to opportunities that would benefit from improved walkability.
- Consider walkability in the community for this assessment to address. What challenges does your community have with regards to walkability that impedes health equity for all residents? Are these community-wide concerns? What evidence is there of these challenges? Are there neighborhoods that these concerns are greater than others?
- Describe any known sources of local data or existing policy and programs that would help establish any pedestrian activity/walkability baseline measures. (i.e., existence of complete streets policy, local mode share data, local traffic count data, ordinances that support walkability, existence of walking programs, greenspace, and parks access) *If unknown, please indicate.*
- Describe your community's existing capacity and potential future capacity and commitment to implement the proposed final recommendations from SDSU.
- Describe any other recent local, state, or federal funding or technical assistance your community has received for similar assessment work or construction projects, and how those projects would enhance or be enhanced by this collaboration.