

Groups want to 'Complete the Streets' in Anderson

By Charmaine Smith-Miles
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ANDERSON — For those who have wished that streets could be friendlier to travelers not in vehicles, now there's a group in Anderson advocating that very cause.

A four-hour training session on how Anderson can “complete its streets” was held Friday thanks to the Palmetto Cycling Coalition, Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina, Imagine Anderson, the City of Anderson and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

In that session, a group of about 30 people talked about how the community's streets could be more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and residents with disabilities, said Misty Lee, a health educator with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

“Our streets shouldn't be just designed for vehicles,” Lee said. “They need to be designed for everyone to use.”

A core group of people, pulled from Friday's meeting, will now work with city and county planners to see how the community's streets can be designed to accommodate bikers and pedestrians.

Anderson was one of four cities to receive the free half-day training event. Cities that are already working with the “Complete the Streets” initiatives include Greenville, Spartanburg, Columbia and Summerville, Imagine Anderson member Cindy Hopkins said.

She said the benefit to repairing and building sidewalks, creating bike trails and walking trails is that more people will bike or walk to their destination. That improves the community's air quality, the health of its residents and decreases the number of vehicle crashes.

“The added benefit for communities is that it has actually created more bikers and pedestrians and fewer motorists,” Hopkins said.

The “Complete the Streets” group should meet again within the month to determine what their strategy will be to make Anderson a more pedestrian and biker friendly community. For more information on “Complete the Streets,” call Blythe Smith at 260-5800.

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