



## 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation: Guidance for Communities

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## **Step 1: Build Your Campaign Team**

The first step in your community's 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation is to identify your campaign team. This should be a core group of knowledgeable and engaged leaders who are prepared to spearhead a campaign to establish an active transportation vision and build political support. The local leadership often includes motivated allies from bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, metropolitan planning organizations, and agencies with responsibility for bicycle, pedestrian and/or trail issues. It is also important to engage local elected officials.

Three key issues you may face in assembling your local campaign team are:

1. **Whom else do you need to succeed?** The core leadership team will need to engage others to help do the work, create public ownership of campaign objectives, and convince decision-makers that securing resources and supporting your community's active transportation vision is a priority. Think of these needs as separate challenges likely requiring involvement of different constituents. For example:
  - an advocacy group might bring volunteers and public credibility;
  - an agency might offer expertise in planning and public engagement, and;
  - local elected officials and business leaders might be critical to persuading Congressional representatives to support active transportation.

There are different ways to involve people depending on their motivation, availability and ability to contribute. Some may be engaged on a daily basis, while others need only to express support. Effective groups balance inclusiveness and efficiency based on their campaign objectives. See the *Local Campaign Strategies*<sup>1</sup> document for a brainstormed list of entities that *TrailLink 2007* participants generated to help spur creative partnership ideas.

You may choose to hold public forums to get feedback on how to improve your work and build support. Your task may be easier if you draw from plans that have already been vetted with the public, but inclusiveness is likely to help your cause in any case.

2. **Conducting team business:** There are no universal ground rules governing the conduct of campaign teams. Their charge is to be creative and effective in developing plans and executing strategies. In general, consensus-building principles will best serve a group aiming to promote enthusiastic buy-in from a broad cross-section of a community. A simple charter outlining objectives, roles and responsibilities may help keep your group on task and to minimize disruptions, but save most of your energy for the task at hand.

For general tips on establishing ground rules, choosing stakeholders, and identifying shared project objectives, see this *Environmental Sustainability Kit*<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/Local%20Campaign%20Strategies.pdf](http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/Local%20Campaign%20Strategies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/1247\\_ESK.pdf](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/1247_ESK.pdf)

Communities are using a variety of strategies to staff local campaigns. Most involve interested organizations and agencies donating professional time—the campaign is an excellent way for them to pursue their objectives. Some communities are seeking dedicated resources, such as grants, to extend their staff capacity. Others are relying on substantial volunteer effort.

RTC would like to hear your ideas and experiences in putting together your campaign teams, especially where there are lessons learned that could benefit others. Contact Kartik Srinivas at [kartik@railstotrails.org](mailto:kartik@railstotrails.org).

3. **Timing:** Many communities have their core campaign teams in place, and many of those have had meetings to define campaign strategy. If your community does not yet have a team, RTC recommends that you assemble your team and conduct an initial meeting as soon as possible. Your community needs to be positioned to act on the quick timeline noted in the sections below.