

Fix-It Stations Keep Bikes Rolling in Pinellas County (FL)

Maggie Hall

Summary

PICH believes it's not enough to tell the community to get more physical activity: making the fit choice the easy choice is a part of the equation. Making it easier for cyclists to keep their bikes rolling eliminates a barrier to user acceptance of bike trails. By creating permanent Fix-It Stations on popular trails, PICH helped residents and visitors feel more confident about heading out for longer distances on their bikes. Pinellas is a prime winter visitor and tourist area that promotes attractions, restaurants and shops that can be reached by bike along the trail in its maps and promotional materials.

Challenge

Obesity is a public-health crisis that is tied to some of the nation's leading causes of death: heart disease, hypertension and diabetes among them. In Florida, 26.2 percent of adults are obese and 36 percent are overweight. Because Pinellas is the state's most densely populated county, local governments have supported the creation of urban recreation trails.



Your Involvement is Key

The Pinellas fitness community has promoted Fix-It Stations via social media and word-of-mouth and Twitter posts by PICH continue to promote them regularly. The PICH staff can serve as a resource to its partners and other municipalities in the Tampa Bay area as they choose to get involved in promoting and even installing more stations on heavily traveled parks and trails.

Solution

According to surveys, most of the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail users are recreational cyclists. They may not carry tools for basic repairs or know where air pumps are located. The Pinellas County Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) grant worked with its funded partners to add 14 Fix-It Stations to well-traveled parks and trails in 2016. Beginning in Clearwater, PICH funded stations that feature tethered bike-repair tools and air pumps any cyclist can use to repair his or her equipment.

Results

Without using paid media, news about the Fix-It Stations has spread via social media and the cycling community. The stations have received positive reviews from users who bike for fun or to train for events such as triathlons. Clearwater's Mayor, George Cretekos, has helped publicize them on his social media and city email accounts. Two of the county's leading stores for triathletes and runners have also shared the message with their customers and followers. Buy-in from other fitness enthusiasts has included public comments such as "pretty awesome" and "great use of public funds."

Contact

Maggie Hall

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County

"Fix-It Stations are a great idea and I'll keep letting my customers know about them. Anything that keeps you rolling makes you healthier." – Park Alsop, user and owner of TopGun Triathlon in Clearwater, FL"

- Park Alsop

Sustainable Success

Bike Fix-It Stations are permanent, reinforced structures that don't require maintenance other than checking for vandalism. Anyone can use them at no cost in public areas and they require a minimum of space. (Depending on the accessories that come with the models purchased, each Bike Fix-It Station costs \$1,500 to \$2,000 and can remain in use with minimal added expenses.) As the word spreads, users have asked for more locations. Other cities and agencies in the Tampa Bay area have also added them to their trails and roads.

