



## Step Into Cuba Website Coming

In a few weeks or less, <http://stepintocuba.org> will be everybody's source for latest information about the Step into Cuba project, Cuba area physical activity events, and local walkway and trail information. Many thanks to the University of New Mexico Prevention research Center for

help on development of the site. Complete information will soon be available in next month's Cuba News and Step Into Cuba displays at St. Francis Park, the US Post Office, Nacimiento Medical Foundation/Public Health Office, and the US Forest Service Office.

### Participate in Upcoming Projects to Make Cuba More Walkable Next Step Into Cuba "Steps" Identified at Trail and Walkability Workshop

The Nacimiento Medical Foundation *Step into Cuba* Alliance would like to extend a big thank you to the 45 individuals who participated in the very successful May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop held at the Eichwald Center.

Workshop participants first learned about the Step Into Cuba project and saw examples of how other communities have made changes to their roadways, trails and parks to improve physical activity opportunities for local people. Led by the Cuba walking champions, small groups then performed "walking audits" throughout Cuba and recorded - in writing and photographs - observations of positive and negative features of the walk. They also noted future opportunities for improvements, and specific challenges to safe and pleasant walking. The observations, feedback and recommendations will be compiled and provided to decision-makers to help make the Cuba area more activity friendly.

Thank you to the many individuals who signed up to help with the sub-groups that were organized to plan and carry out next steps identified at the workshop. Anyone interested is welcome to participate in the following groups:

- Park enhancements
- Sidewalk evaluations and improvements
- Highway 550 pedestrian improvements
- Identifying new trail loops in Cuba and
- Working to develop safe routes for young people to walk to school.

The primary success on May 28<sup>th</sup> was that so many Cuba area community members came together to share their ideas and discuss these important health and safety issues. Mayor Velarde actively participated and provided his insight into project next-steps. Coordinators for planning the workshop were Attila Bality of the US National Park Service, Emily Piltch and Susan DeFrancesco of the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center, and local members of the Step Into Cuba Alliance. Additionally, we were fortunate to have individuals representing a variety of state agencies participate and they are dedicated to providing their expertise as the sub-groups move forward: Loretta Tollefson, Planner with the Mid-Region Council of Governments; Jessica Frost, NM State Safe Routes to School Coordinator; Stanley Crespín and Jose Silva, NM Department of Transportation District 6 and Anna Hargreaves with the NM Department of Health. Thank you to three members of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects who sketched diagrams of possible improvements to roadways, trails and the park during the workshop.

We welcome your participation as we work on these projects. Contact the Nacimiento Medical Foundation at (575) 289-3718 and ask for Jeanette Linville, Arletta Hogan or Anna Schulte.

## St. Francis of Assisi Park Improvements New Trees, Fence Repair, and Sand Dune

Several dozen trees – pinon pine and two junipers – received a new home along the St. Francis of Assisi Park Nature Trail. They were relocated from the Sandoval County Fairgrounds where new roads and activity areas are under construction. The relocation was complicated and special thanks are due to many individuals who "made it happen." Faustino Gallegos provided critical expertise to put in new water sources that will be required by the trees during their first several seasons. Mark Hatzenbuehler provided many hours of skilled equipment operation and assistance with maneuvering the trees into their new locations. Ray Sisneros provided expert guidance, education, and a lot of hard work to ensure the trees were planted properly. Village staff provided skilled equipment operation and labor. Special thanks go to Larry Chavez, Antonio Crespín, Curtis Lopez, and Ralph Montoya. Mayor Rick Velarde generously donated a Saturday to help with the project. Thanks also go to several others who provided critical assistance: David Allen, Owen Meyers, Frank Murphy, Joel Morken, and Anna Schulte. Thanks to Dick Kozoll for coordinating the project.

The north fence at the northwest corner of the park was recently repaired. A pole barrier to provide pedestrian access was constructed as part of the project.

Many thanks to Howard Gurule who generously cut and donated the poles after hearing of need for this improvement at a Village Council meeting. Thanks to Richard Velarde Jr. for help with concrete and paint and Sally and Dick Kozoll who installed the barrier over Memorial Day weekend.

The east end of the park has a new "sand dune" under development. This is the first of many "natural" child play areas we will create along the nature trail.



There is a lot of evidence that providing young children a natural environment in this way can have lasting benefits including healthier lifestyles. We are grateful to Sandoval County for

donating the crusher fine "sand," as well as mulch for the all the new trees.

Take a walk around St. Francis Park and see the new improvements – it's just a little less than one mile.

Check <http://stepintocuba.org> for more information on the [Step into Cuba Project](#)