



SPECIAL REPORT

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October 2017



HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING CAMPAIGN BENEFITS COLORADO CITIES & TOWNS

SINCE 2013, CML AND LIVEWELL COLORADO HAVE JOINED TOGETHER TO BRING COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign. The HEAL Cities & Town Campaign is a partnership between LiveWell Colorado and the Colorado Municipal League, supported by founding partner Kaiser Permanente. Through this partnership, municipalities that join the campaign receive recognition for their efforts to increase access to healthy eating and active living (HEAL) in their communities. LiveWell also provides free coaching and access to resources for member municipalities to support their policy, planning, and implementation efforts to create healthy communities and healthy economies.

Currently, 53 municipalities are members of the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign. Since joining the campaign, these cities and towns have adopted or implemented more than 128 policies or plans geared toward increasing access to walking, biking, recreation, healthy food, and a healthy workplace. This special report provides a few of the highlights.

PARTNERING WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PROVIDE HEALTHY SUMMER MEALS AND RECREATION

Summer break is revered as the best time of the year — carefree days without the daily grind of school. In reality, summer break can be a difficult time for many families, particularly those that rely on school meals to ensure that their children receive breakfast and lunch. And, let's face it, most kids are bored by the end of the second week off!

For the past two summers, the City of Sterling and Valley RE-1 School District have worked together to provide summer meals for local children. Starting in 2016, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program, kids under 18 were able to grab a healthy lunch at Prairie Park Snack Shack and Ayres Elementary School three days a week. While paperwork is necessary for families to participate in the free and reduced meal program offered at schools during the school year, any child can come to a summer lunch site, no matter the family's income.

While it is one thing to offer summer meals, it can be quite another to get families to participate. Obstacles such as lack of transportation and awareness of the program can cause participation rates to be low, even in areas with many low-income families. This is where a municipal-school district partnership is key. The Sterling Park, Library, and Recreation Department worked with the school district to host the lunch program at one of the municipal parks that not only has a covered picnic area for shelter, but also includes a playground and outdoor swimming pool, making it an enticing place for kids and families. The second summer meal site, the elementary school, was chosen so that it overlapped with the summer school program that took place in July.

After seeing the success of the 2016 program, Sterling and Valley RE-1 School District added a fourth day to the 2017 summer meals program. An impressive 150 to 200 kids ate lunch each day throughout the summer.

Wade Gandee, Sterling Park, Library and Recreation Department direct, said that when the school district approached them, the City was happy to partner. "I think it is a great partnership between the city and the school district," Gandee said, adding that it is nice for the kids to be able to sit and eat and then play on the playground or go to the pool.

Providing municipal resources to keep kids busy and active in a safe, supervised environment was a no-brainer for the City of Sterling and a clear step toward implementing their HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign goal of increasing access to healthy food and physical activity for youth in the community.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN SPURS MOMENTUM, UNITY, AND FUNDING

In 2016, the City of Montrose applied for and received an in-depth active transportation technical assistance grant through the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign. The resulting plan has provided forward momentum for Montrose as it strives to become a healthier community. The process of developing the plan served as a catalyst to bring together the City's planning, engineering, and public works teams to focus specifically on active transportation within the larger context of public infrastructure. This effort allowed the City to develop a shared vision for transportation infrastructure, which allows residents and visitors to enjoy a more active lifestyle when traveling through Montrose.

Also in 2016, the City of Montrose conducted a community survey that included questions seeking input on active transportation issues. Ease of pedestrian travel and availability of sidewalks saw high levels of satisfaction among respondents. However, less than a third of respondents were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the safety of travel by bicycle, availability of bike lanes, and safety of pedestrian crossings on Townsend Avenue. The availability of paved walking and biking trails that are off-street also saw lower rates of satisfaction compared to the various aspects of car travel within Montrose.

A challenge addressed in the plan was the lack of safe crossings of state highways in Montrose, which creates barriers to accessing many recreation amenities. This was one of the major driving factors that lead to the City of Montrose and the Montrose Recreation District's application to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for a Connect Initiative Grant. In September 2017, GOCO announced Montrose will receive a \$2 million grant award for this project, which will construct 2.25 miles of new trail and two bike/pedestrian underpasses to cross U.S. Highway 550 and U.S. Highway 90, creating a safer, more connected community. The existence of the active transportation plan the City of Montrose developed with the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign was a great boost to the successful GOCO application.

FREE SUMMER RECREATION AND MEALS FOR KIDS IN UNDERSERVED AREA

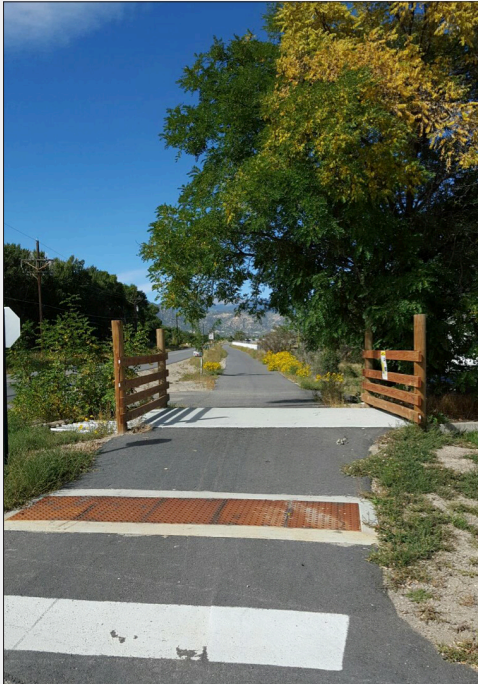
In 2016, the City of Thornton allocated budget dollars to be used for free summer youth sports and recreation programs in areas where there are no public recreation centers for miles. This is an important and meaningful move by Thornton to begin to address the gap in access to healthy living. "The southwest portion of the city has been traditionally underserved in terms of recreation," Jennie Christoffel, Thornton Preschool, Youth, and Teen coordinator, told *The Denver Post* in June.

To maximize the benefit of the program, the City of Thornton teamed up with Adams 12 Five Star Schools at two of the school district's free summer meals locations. The cooperation between the City and the school district is a great example of local governments partnering to maximize programs to keep kids healthy, active, and well fed during the summer months. Further, the addition of recreation programs means that school-aged children in Thornton have an added incentive to visit the summer meals site.

The meals and sports programming are free of charge. Additionally, for a few dollars, parents can eat with their kids.

Program officials attribute the strategic pairing of opportunities to an uptick in attendance. At one of the sites where the sports programming is offered, up to 100 kids are participating daily.

LEADING A COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT TO PROVIDE TRAIL ACCESS



Over the past 14 years, the City of Salida has worked with partners on the Chaffee County Trails Master Plan. In 2000, the nonprofit Salida-area Parks, Open-space & Trails (SPOT) formed with a mission to promote the creation, preservation, improvement, and appreciation of parks, open space, and trails in the greater Salida area. Since that time, through local and state partnerships, a 4.5-mile separated trail was built that extends from Salida to through the Town of Poncha Springs. To complete the final mile of the separated, asphalt trail, a collaborative planning and fundraising campaign took place. It began in 2016 when Chaffee County commissioners agreed to build the final portion of the trail using county employees and SPOT agreed to raise the money for paving. As the trail was being planned, fundraising began. Donations and in-kind services were offered by both municipalities, as well as organizations and individuals. It began in 2016, when the Chaffee County commissioners agreed to build the final portion of the trail using county employees and SPOT agreed to raise the money for paving. As the trail was being planned, fundraising began. Donations and in-kind services were offered by both municipalities, organizations, and individuals. Adjacent landowners moved fences and mailboxes, local businesses provided items for silent auctions, and private developers offered easements for trail access through their property.

As part of the fundraising campaign, the City of Salida applied for and received a mini-grant from the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign. The City's proposal requested money to bridge the gap of funding to finish the trail between Salida and Poncha Springs along the busy, dangerous County Road 120 thoroughfare that connects the two towns. The completion of this trail is important not only for recreation, but also as a safe, non-motorized route connecting the two communities for commuters. The trail is also important to the local economy for employees and customers to access businesses within southern Chaffee County.

This project, completed in May 2017, highlights how local governments, grassroots volunteers, businesses, agencies and individuals can partner to benefit the entire community. It also highlights the important role safe walking and biking plays in a community's economic health. Options beyond driving are not only needed in communities large and small, but are sought out by residents and businesses alike.



FRESH FOOD VIA A MOBILE MARKET

In the fall of 2016, the City of Arvada was awarded a mini-grant through the LiveWell Colorado HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign to complete a food assessment to demonstrate a variety of gaps in Arvada's foodscape. Using data collected from surveys conducted with community members, focus groups with local food producers and distributors, and data from other sources such as the 2015 American Community Survey, three recommendations were presented in the food assessment report: support fresh food access and education; minimize barriers to a mobile fresh vendor; and incorporate community agriculture into all City plan updates.

Large parts of southeastern Arvada are located in food deserts, which are defined as communities, especially communities with low-income residents, that have limited access to affordable and nutritious food. (In contrast, an area with supermarkets is termed a food oasis.) Thus the concept of a mobile market was explored to help specific housing complexes access fresh food and provide cooking education.



The Veggie Van was launched by local nonprofit Ride Provide Inc. Through a partnership with and a small grant from the city manager's office, the Veggie Van hit the streets on August 1. In addition to providing underserved areas with fresh, local produce, the van teaches customers how to prepare healthy meals and offers a new meal kit each week that provides the customer with a recipe and all the necessary ingredients to make a fresh, healthy meal.

"I think (the Veggie Van) will definitely benefit the community in terms of having affordable freshly grown food that people can access easily, but (it will) also educate adults and children on what you can grow in Arvada ... and how easy it is to prepare vegetables," stated Jessica Prosser, Arvada assistant to the city manager.

FREE ACCESS TO BIKES FOR EASIER TRAVEL AND FEWER CARS

The City of Golden is a true leader when it comes to using health as a factor when making decisions on policies and programs alike. Golden has adopted many policies to implement its HEAL Cities & Towns resolution including healthy vending standards, requiring farmers' markets to accept SNAP benefits, reducing tap fees for water fountains, and an innovative bike share program.

The Golden Bike Library offers residents and visitors a unique bike share program designed to fit the budget and challenges of a small community dominated by the hills and steep grades of its foothills location. As of autumn 2017, people can check out a bike at no cost for up to two hours (a full-day rental will cost users \$10) from one of four rental stations.

The program, which piloted in 2016 out of small shed adjacent to a popular biking trail, initially operated only during daylight hours and only in the summer. But, thanks to a federal grant, the library installed automatic, Bluetooth-enabled locking stations that allow the popular program to be operational 24 hours a day. The locks are triggered by an app on the user's phone, signaling that the bike has been returned.

Larger cities have more advanced technology to track, maintain, and operate their programs. Golden's simple app-operated technology is much more affordable for smaller municipalities, and easier on the lightweight aluminum bikes offered. Heavier models, such as those offered by Denver's B-Cycle program, make for tough rides on Golden's hilly terrain!



GETTING THE COMMUNITY WALKING AND READING

With the enthusiasm built from joining the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign in August 2016, the Town of Cedaredge promptly took advantage of a mini-grant opportunity made available from LiveWell Colorado through a request for proposals to all municipalities participating in the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign to be used to implement a HEAL policy designed to improve access to healthy eating and active living. Cedaredge submitted a proposal and was awarded funding to install a StoryWalk® along the Surface Creek Trail.

StoryWalks® have been gaining popularity in the United States since the national program began in 2007 and are now installed in communities in all 50 states and 12 different countries. The pages from a story are laminated and attached to visible posts along the length of a trail. Once a page is read, readers travel by bike or foot along the trail to the next page. StoryWalk® stories and illustrations are coordinated by the library district on a monthly basis. The district provides books and, from time to time, high school students display their stories and illustrations. The Town of Cedaredge also maintains the trail.

The StoryWalk® encourages families to utilize the existing trail network by regularly updating the story and artwork so families can read a new story each month. “The StoryWalk® really hits three important aspects of a healthy community: early childhood literacy, physical activity, and intergenerational community,” Greg Brinck, Cedaredge intern, says. “We hope that the StoryWalk® will encourage families to walk, read and enjoy our public trails together.”





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