Weld County Health Initiative Assessment

Where we are,
Where we want to be
And a road map to get there

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Executive Summary

May 2010

In February 2010, LiveWell Weld County and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute (WALC) conducted on-site assessments throughout the County. Dan Burden, Pam Smith, Bobbie Puckett, and Gaye Morrison (the Project Team) conducted on-site assessments, interviews and surveys to gather feedback on the County's current health programming and how well it meets the needs of users. This document will provide a synthesis of this evaluation. It is divided into five parts.

Part One discusses the built environment and its impacts on health. It documents the on-site analysis and interviews. It includes observations by Dan Burden and research gathered from relevant studies and reports. This material is supplemented with examples from appropriate community models. Because land form and transportation initiatives impact public health, communities should utilize this information as they address health programming and its supporting mechanisms.

Part Two of the assessment provides stakeholder feedback. It provides a mid-term evaluation of projects underway and makes recommendations for taking further action at community and county levels. It is apparent that significant funding investments have been made to improve health in Weld County. This section will discuss why reducing health investigations, interventions, and achievements at this point would be a mistake. The impacts from public health interventions are structured much like a multiple stage rocket. The first stage or launch overcomes a lot of inertia. The second stage propels the program and delivers the velocity to allow discovery and the identification of opportunities. It is the third stage where we begin to have our most significant and far-reaching experiences. With time, we can assess progress, recognize and solidify relationships both within and across agencies, and institutionalize public health as the cornerstone of all other policy. Thereby, we allow health interventions to take on long, sustained lives, reducing overall health care costs in Weld County. In this way, the County becomes the model whose effects ripple elsewhere.

Part Three details the on-site community evaluations conducted in Weld County. These evaluations were provided by DanBurden, and are based on multiple trips to these communities during the life of this project.

Part Four provides a series of recommendations and action steps that Weld County should consider. Weld County can learn from the teachings of places near and far. We have included throughout this document photographic project examples from numerous communities (Sitka, Alaska; San Diego, California; Vancouver, British Columbia; Durango, Colorado; Bozeman, Montana; DeSoto County and Ft. Pierce, Florida; and Birmingham, Alabama—to name a few). These places are successfully addressing development to create environments for healthy living. This includes the cooperation and collaboration required to identify, prioritize and maximize initiatives across agencies. By considering best practices relevant to Weld County, we can draw strength from what pioneers and practitioners elsewhere are doing.

Part Five reviews Weld County's Comprehensive Plan update. Recent work on the plan included input from the health community and will have a significant health and wellness impact on the County. The assessment of the language here will provide both a validation and a check point. We recognize the significance of the Plan's language and its ability to convey intent, so we have provided critical input that points to additional tweaking that might be useful to the County.

The Appendix provides additional information. You can find information on LiveWell Weld County, Dan Burden and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.

This Executive Summary captures key findings from the report. It is organized so that you can match salient information to its section header for additional information.

Health and the Built Environment

The built form impacts health. Americans are suffering from poor planning and design which has fractured activity from our daily lives. Specifically, studies show declines in significant areas: walking, social exchange, volunteerism, organized and spontaneous play, walking to school by children and access to nature. To have a healthy community, we must figure out ways to incorporate activity into our daily routines. It cannot be a separate tasked item.

The three most frequently mentioned obstacles to promoting active living are:

• A lack of funding and a lack of commitment from decision-makers—this includes local funds and partner funds.

• Better evaluation methods are needed to improve the evidence base on which actions are made—a long term analysis is needed to define healthy goals and measurable outcomes for Weld County, to assess the measures in place, the data it is generating, and to consider its interpretation.

• Future challenges include establishing integrated policy specific to active living, introducing a larger range of actions and increasing funding and capacity to make a difference at the population level.

It is essential that all communities set forth a process of political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, partnership-based planning to deliver innovative projects. For Weld County, this means the promotion of a comprehensive and systematic policy for planning with a special emphasis on inequality in health, urban poverty, the identification of the needs of vulnerable groups, and participatory governance in the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Weld County must strive to include health considerations in economic regeneration and development efforts—this is central to success—and will be underscored by the data contained in this report.

Health Impact Assessment

This review of the built environment and health programming in Weld County includes the following elements:

• An assessment of LiveWell Weld County's Programming (2005—2009)
• A summary of the site visit, including observations related to existing conditions evaluations, stakeholder interviews, trails committee meeting, staff meetings, and an evening public presentation.
• Best practices for Active Community Environments
• An outline of next steps and initiatives that LiveWell Weld County should consider.
• A prioritization of initiatives from low-cost/easy-to-implement to capital improvement projects.

Through a series of questions, LiveWell Weld County and WALC began the process of discovering whether a well designed community can provide beauty, comfort, vitality, richness of experience, diversity, charm, aesthetics and distinction, and still be affordable and authentic. The team recognized that for a place to be competitive (attract jobs and people), it must allow and encourage innovative thinking to improve lifestyles and create a healthy economy. In this report, we will look at a small sampling of similar agriburbs (rural, small town places) that are achieving success and finding solutions applicable to Weld County.

Land Form and Transportation Partnerships Determine Behavior and Human Health

Our current patterns of development are not healthy or sustainable. It is now well understood that the built environment is heavily tied to rising health care costs and the general well being of all citizens. These effects have become so pronounced that it is being projected that our children will not live as long as their parents by as much as a decade. It is also projected that the next generation will require more care in these declining years, which will become catastrophic with local economies. Changes to the built environment can prevent obesity, encourage physical activity and healthy eating.

Although we can look at the specific language of the Comprehensive Plan, we must also recognize that vision alone will not bring about change. This report details implementation strategies to bring about working models and assurances that an improved town-center focus and a protected rural environment go hand in hand. Sprawl patterns, if incentivized, will harm both town-center and rural lifestyles. It is important to keep in mind how challenging it will be to overcome sprawl tendencies. Bankers, realtors, developers, engineers and even most planners know little else. It is all that we have built for many decades.

Smart Growth and Smart Transportation Principles

Like most places in our nation, Weld County's community development practices are in transition with a reducing emphasis on strips and sprawl and an increasing focus on centers and hearts of communities. This is good news. This shift and emphasis brings about protection of open space, land preservation, affordable transportation, a sound tourism base, age-in-place neighborhoods and vibrant local and regional economies.

When communities choose walkable or smart growth strategies, they create new neighborhoods and maintain existing ones that are attractive, convenient, safe, and healthy. They can foster design that encourage social, civic, and physical activity. They can protect the environment while stimulating economic growth. Most of all, they can create more choices for residents, workers, visitors, children, families, single people, and older adults—choices in where to live, how to get around, and how to interact with the people around them. When communities do this kind of planning, they preserve the best of their past while creating a bright future for generations to come. In each of the communities we visited, we learned that these are the key issues.

Planned and targeted growth presents a tremendous opportunity for progress in Weld County. Communities around the country are looking for ways to get the most out of new development and to maximize their investments. Frustrated by development that requires residents to drive long distances between jobs and homes, many communities are challenging rules that make it impossible to put workplaces, homes, and services closer together. Many communities are questioning the fiscal wisdom of neglecting existing infrastructure while expanding new sewers, roads, and services to the fringe. In many communities where development has improved daily life, the economy, and the environment, Smart Growth principles have been key to that success.

Agriburbia

Agriburbia (a trademarked term) is being applied in a number of Front Range communities that are focused on growing food locally and maintaining a rural or agricultural lifestyle while providing amenities to attract employers and residents. The Denver Post article "Agriburbia" Sprouts on Colorado's Front Range (October 24, 2009) discusses combining housing and harvests so that we begin to convert the nation's 31 million acres of lawn to food production. In some ways, this addresses how Weld County towns become walkable and bicycle friendly without losing their small town quaintness and qualities. One of the questions we heard was, "How do we plan our communities and not become the next bedroom for Denver?"

Through sprawl patterns of development, Western Weld County has seen the most pronounced increases in sedentary lifestyles and obesity. Sprawl has isolated and stratified people and led to high dependency on cars. Land development in Weld County has greatly outpaced population growth, resulting in the loss of agricultural and rural lands (sprawl). Energizing sprawl fueled the decline of many of Weld County's smaller (and larger) towns. Such changes are particularly noted in legacy lands that can ill-afford further loss.

Study Methodology

The 2010 Health Intervention Assessment is aimed at bringing the most significant and beneficial programmatic tools to Weld County based on an assessment of the built environment and feedback from stakeholders. These findings and recommendations will be distributed to each of the seven pilot communities and throughout all regions of the County.

The study included the following elements:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- LiveWell Program Assessment
- LiveWell Staff Workshop
- Analysis of 2008 Weld County Comprehensive Plan
- On-Site Assessment of Seven Communities
- Public Presentation & Feedback

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews provided LiveWell Weld County and WALC with a frank assessment of current conditions and factors impacting health in Weld County. The team gained insight about the community values and this proved helpful for developing appropriate strategies that will increase the role of health in the growth and development of Weld County.

The following valuable feedback was received:

- Define rural community values
- Provide access to locally grown food and grocers.
- Provide varied housing opportunities
- Make community health a focus
  Identify community needs
- Address transportation issues
- Advise on overcoming bureaucratic hurdles to meeting community health needs
- Address the "To Do" list that the Comprehensive Plan created
- Working backward from your dreams, twenty years from now what will Weld County look like?
- What are the barriers to achieving the vision?
- How do we address the sense of entitlement of rural land owners to subdivide their property to earn a return on their investment? It is important to protect this investment without allowing unmitigated development to transform Weld County into a landscape of sprawl.

Evaluations

In this section, the following seven communities are evaluated:

- Hudson
- Ft. Lupton
- Windsor
- Greeley and East Greeley
- Milliken
- Severance
- Weld County

The Cost of Sprawl and Future Demographics

Sprawl patterns do not pay for themselves. Weld County (as many parts of America) was built on the premise of cheap and abundant oil. New demographic, housing and transportation studies predict that if Weld County strongly endorses and carries out at the highest thresholds the principles and practices of Land Use and Smart Growth that it so carefully built into its Comprehensive Plan, it will do well. However, if not followed at high levels, the increased cost of government to provide basic services its people want need and should have will not come easy. In such a scenario, Weld County could lose its attractiveness as a place to live, its potential for active lifestyles and wellness, and its competitive base to foster positive growth. In turn, this could price many current residents out of affordable lifestyles, causing an even further erosion of population and services. Everything is tied together. It is possible to have affordable housing, but if transportation is not efficient then the combined costs of the two (costs of living) will price many out of the market. It appears that Americans are ready for a change. Studies show that over 60% of the future American home buying public are going to prefer affordable, sustainable lifestyles.

Recommendations

Section Three provides ten recommendations for a healthier Weld County. It includes a look at best practices relevant to Weld County.

The Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

The Comprehensive Plan guides land use and transportation choices and decisions. It protects, preserves and restores quality of life, culture, buildings, nature and human health. One important feature of the Plan is that it sets the stage for walkable and livable communities, which are the most natural and timeless human settlements. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the following elements as important:

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Emphasize affordable housing in most locations and especially close to schools, parks, work centers, retail and other key places.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.

• Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, and many featured places to go to within an easy walking distance from home.

• Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

• Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.

• Provide a variety of transportation choices.

• Emphasize proper size, scale, street networks, block form, and location, making it easy to make use of feet and bicycles to get around.

• Utilize a correct size "complete streets" approach, allowing and encouraging narrower streets than called for with conventional style development.

This Health Intervention Assessment provides feedback on Chapter 22 and possible strategies for addressing areas of concern.

Appendix

Part Five, the Appendix, provides additional information. There are a number of tools and checklists for building an active community environment.

Part One

Health and the Built Environment

The built form impacts health. In order to further improvements in individual and community health, we need to recognize the health measures we are using and what they are identifying. In 1948, the World Health Organization stated, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." When we consider individual and community health, we are certainly looking at research related to individual physical health but we are also looking for measures related to social health (the degree to which there is equal opportunity for all and access to the goods and services essential to full functioning as a citizen (Russell 75)) and emotional/psychological health (our interactions with others and our environment).

It turns out that our physical, social and emotional health are heavily influenced by the built environment. When a downtown core struggles or dies, people often lose the physical benefits associated with a properly-scaled walkable community, but they also lose opportunities related to social health, and through diminishing contact with others, one's emotional/psychological health is impacted.

The problem is not small. In recent years, Americans have suffered from poor planning and design which has fractured activity from our daily lives. Specifically, studies show declines in significant areas: walking, social exchange, volunteerism, organized and spontaneous play, walking to school by children and access to nature. Seniors are grappling with places that are not age-in-place friendly and many of us cannot meet our most basic needs without hopping into a car. All around us the message is abundantly clear: health care costs will become the largest single component of many family budgets if we do not address individual and community health by providing healthy options. To have a healthy community, we must figure out ways to incorporate activity into our daily routines. It cannot be a separate tasked item.

Active community environments are places designed where walking, bicycling, transit and other efficient travel comes natural and easy. Good street connectivity (not disconnected cul-de-sacs), good placement of parks, neighborhood schools, mixed use development, higher density town cores, in combination, have proven to work in all regions of our nation, in both older towns and new.

What is the extent of the problem in Weld County? Access to programming, resources and foods that promote a healthy lifestyle should be available to all people of all ethnicities, incomes, ages, and in all regions of the County. However, in Weld County, disparities in health (through self-reporting and access to resources) exist and these disparities are further identified as we look at gender, race/ethnicity, education or income, disability, geographic locations (e.g., rural areas) and sexual orientation. Those who do not drive (too old, too young, or based on income) do not have reasonable access to services and places that encourage exercise, social engagement and nutrient-rich, affordable food choices. Since equitableness is central to health, disparity is an important step for Weld County.

Signs of the times ... people want to be active, but without facilities they struggle to find safe and comfortable locations

Access to a resource includes an assessment of the physical location of the amenity, but it also requires an assessment of its connectivity to the surrounding community—whether the environment has favorable walking or bicycling conditions, affordable and convenient transit, or whether the resource is only accessible to limited categories of people. Building siting and planning has profound and lasting implications on our day to day lives. Incorrect school siting, for example, creates nightmarish traffic situations or provides safe routes to school for students. Additionally, a new community or recreational center is a wonderful asset for a community, but if it is not located where all people can easily access it, it serves only those with automobiles or other means to get there. Thus, this assessment includes an evaluation of seven communities, their successes and further interventions that can aid in the development of a healthy community.

The three most frequently mentioned obstacles to promoting active living are:

• A lack of funding and a lack of commitment from decision-makers—this includes local funds and partner funds.

• Better evaluation methods are needed to improve the evidence base on which actions are made—a long term analysis is needed to define healthy goals and measurable outcomes for Weld County, to assess the measures in place, the data it is generating, and to consider its interpretation.

• Future challenges include establishing integrated policy specific to active living, introducing a larger range of actions and increasing funding and capacity to make a difference at the population level.

Both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are concerned with global changes in the built environment and their impact on public health. Both organizations realize the immensity of the problem and they both point out how difficult it will be to make needed changes. Yet these are changes that must be made. Thus, it is essential that all communities set forth a process of political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, partnership-based planning to deliver innovative projects. For Weld County, this means the promotion of a comprehensive and systematic policy for planning

There was once a time when all towns throughout the world had block patterns, mix of land uses, scale of streets where active transportation --walking and bicycling --came naturally. Starting in the early 1930's policies and decisions were being made that made walking and bicycling challenging, and in time nearly impossible. Then, starting in the late forties and early fifties we had the funds to build to auto-centric lifestyles. These policies drove the America we have come to know. But it is not healthy, not sustainable, and in time it could make America non-competitive in the world economy. Middle panel, getting our children (and ourselves) back in motion will not be easy. For instance, it is easier to tune into the world on a computer than it is to take a walk down a street. Our journey to a healthier nation is a complex task, and we must accept this complexity for what it is. Lower panel, the sign says no bicycling on sidewalk, but where is the bicyclist leaving this trail to go? Where is the connection? As Kermit the frog said, "It is not easy to be green."

with a special emphasis on inequality in health, urban poverty, the identification of the needs of vulnerable groups, and participatory governance in the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Weld County must strive to include health considerations in economic regeneration and development efforts—this is central to success—and will be underscored by the data contained in this report. With limited funds available to improve the built environment, Weld County must focus on future programs and efforts that have the greatest short and long term effects, while taking into consideration the opportunities to enhance earlier work and offer complementary programs to fill voids.

Health Impact Assessment

The review of the built environment and health programming in Weld County includes the following elements:

• An assessment of LiveWell Weld County's Programming (2005—2009)
• A summary of the site visit, including observations related to existing conditions evaluations, stakeholder interviews, trails committee meeting, staff meetings, and an evening public presentation.
• Best practices for Active Community Environments
• An outline of next steps and initiatives that LiveWell Weld County should consider.
• A prioritization of initiatives from low-cost/easy-to-implement to capital improvement projects.

WALC and LiveWell Weld County utilized an engaging, participatory research approach by working with community leaders and their representatives to identify proponents and barriers to health in the built environment. Our evaluation focuses on improving the health of the community overall, employing the theory that changes in the built environment to support one's health will result in changes in individual behaviors.

The following seven areas were included in the study:

- Greeley and East Greeley
- Hudson
- Ft Lupton
- Windsor
- Milliken
- Severance
- Weld County

What is a Healthy City?

A healthy city is not one that has achieved a particular health status.

Rather, it is a city that is conscious of health and striving to improve it. What is required is a commitment to health and a process and structure to achieve it.

A healthy, active city is one that is continually creating and improving opportunities in the built and social environments and expanding community resources to enable all its citizens to be physically active in day-to-day life.

(World Health Organization)

As LiveWell Weld County and WALC kicked-off this assessment, we began with a brainstorming session to narrow down what we were actually talking about when we discussed healthy, active community environments.

We generated the following questions:

• What level of healthy lifestyles is enough and for whom?
• Which regions of the county are strong and attractive for active living, and which are weak?
• What are the exemplary areas or programs?
• What can we learn from one another?
• Are some of our built environments functional as a place to sustain life, but fail to support active lifestyles?

If so, how do we change these?

• Many communities want to be closer to the top of the health index range, but can they do this and keep their agricultural and rural roots? How do we prove that investments in preventive health will pay dividends at the local level, where political and institutional leaders will see the benefits and respond? At an upper range of a healthy environment, what should we see on the ground? How will we measure these qualities, and quantify them?
• What are the most important healthy environment indicators?
• Do the changes we make to the built environment honor our heritage, culture and experience?
• Do the changes we make go the next step and offer a platform to embrace our changing demographics, our next generation of people, our next ethnicity, our rapidly growing senior populations?

These questions begin the process of discovering whether a well designed community can provide beauty, comfort, vitality, richness of experience, diversity, charm, aesthetics and distinction, and still be affordable and authentic. In recent years, many communities have taken charge of their built environment and returned to a focus on people, health and active living. There are strong indications that a reasonable investment in new land uses provides health outcomes, and raises the value of land sufficiently to justify investments. Several communities have done this in as little as ten years. A number of these communities made these changes with little or no money. Some, of these communities, such as Ft. Pierce, Florida, are agricultural towns.
These examples will be looked at in more detail in relation to Weld County.

For a place to be competitive (attract jobs and people), it must allow and encourage innovative thinking to improve lifestyles and create a healthy economy. In this report, we will look at a small sampling of similar agriburbs (rural, small town places) that are achieving success and finding solutions applicable to Weld County. First, we will look at how land use and transportation systems impact behavior and human health.

Land Form and Transportation Partnerships Determine Behavior and Human Health

Land use and resulting individual and community behaviors are tightly linked. The designated use, layout, and design of a community's physical structures including its patterns of development, variety and affordability of housing, retail life, services, street connectivity, land use mixes, transportation systems, natural systems, open spaces and recreational resources affect patterns of living (behaviors) that, in turn, influence physical, emotional, psychological and social health.

There is also the cost that communities shoulder for continuing to follow outdated land development or transportation rules and practices that have created our current health impacts. In many cases, municipalities cannot afford to maintain neighborhoods or parts of cities and towns—rendering them unattractive and sometimes unsafe. This too—the lack of care, attention and investment—determines behavior and human health.

Becoming Informed. To build and maintain an environment requires educating the community so that people can make informed decisions. Elected leaders and staff know all too well that if a city takes steps to build trails, sidewalks, parks, sitting places and other public infrastructure in hard economic times, they may get pushback from folks who do not see the immediate direct benefit. These benefits are real, substantial and vital to economic health, but these links to an improved economy—short term and long term—must be proven.

Our nation is in the midst of the most significant shift in land use policies and practices in the past eighty years. Our patterns of development, block form, street widths, use of trees in the built environment, housing density, housing product types, housing size, housing and retail mix, street types and mixes are all about to be altered. It is essential for every municipal staff member and every elected leader to learn the language and vocabulary of these new land and transportation forms and reforms. We must know that these reforms are happening, but also why they are happening, and why it is wise to be at the head of these changes to attract the greatest new jobs and other positive health outcomes.

Linking Health, Transportation and Land Use. In order to understand the link between health and land use practices, it is important to understand the relationship of transportation to both. We have become a nation heavily tied to the automobile. The more we use an auto, the less time we spend on foot or in any other form of active transportation. The amount of time we spend engaged in other active lifestyle choices, such as gardening, is reduced by how much of our day we spend transporting ourselves, typically by auto. Auto-dependency, brought upon by poor land use practices (separating everything from everything and spreading out) has put us into the car seat more minutes per day for over fifty years. Meanwhile, we should not blame the car or the industry, but our practice to simply grow this dependency to the exclusion of other, healthier choices.

"Automobiles are often conveniently tagged as the villains responsible for the ills of cities and the disappointments and futilities of city planning, but the destructive effects of automobiles are much less a cause than a symptom of our incompetence at city building."

"The simple needs of automobiles are more easily understood and satisfied than the complex needs of cities, and a growing number of planners and designers have come to believe that if they can only solve the problems of traffic, they will thereby have solved the major problems of cities."

"Cities have much more intricate economic and social concerns than automobile traffic. How can you know what to try with traffic until you know how the city itself works, and what else it needs to do with its streets? You can't."
Jane Jacobs, "*Death and Life of Great American Cities*," 1961

Far Left: A building created during the 50's 60's in the downtown of Arcadia, Florida thwarts the desire to walk. Meanwhile a new building (immediate left) in a more walkable Baldwin Park, Florida provides "eye's on the street," aesthetics, human scale, enclosure, complexity, memorableness and interest. The shape and placement of buildings, and code that sets forth good, proper, disciplined behavior of buildings does much to determine whether people will walk, or not.

Before the late 1940's townmakers understood the need to have buildings relate to streets. For more than 60 years strip centers took over much of the public realm, making walking the least favored mode of travel. Not only has the separation of land use types led to more driving due to distance, but due to the lack of a desire to travel through such places. All Weld County towns are a mix of the original urban fabric and more recent strips. When people say they want a rural form, they are not voting for strips ... which also rob from rural character.

The Built Environment

Encourages or discourages active living and social health

Access to Food

Determines our ability to eat healthy foods

Just as with cigarettes a few years ago, when we go to get gas we are reminded to come inside for some high octane calories for our bodies. Once inside we find it convenient to buy high energy drinks or snacks that produce highly processed, low food value, products. Quality foods today are sold at higher prices.

The following ideas can be performed while preserving Weld County's rural character, which will become an asset to each town. Indeed, it is the successful application of these ideas that will preserve that character. Understanding how a place works is fundamental to addressing its land use and transportation problems. Economist and writer Richard Florida (Rise of the Creative Class & Flight of the Creative Class) notes that agriculture is a declining influence on our economy. If we do not grow a new, more diverse economy, the nation will suffer and this is especially true for Weld County. Even if Weld County remains in the top ten food producing regions of the United States, there has been a movement away from small scale farming which keeps money local (which has a .60-65 multiplier effect) to mega-farms which ship most food and money away to distributors, stockholders and banking conglomerates in distant places (which has a .04-05 multiplier effect). As this happens, access to healthy locally-grown food diminishes as does quality of life. Such practices do not encourage farming and responsible land cultivation practices since the focus becomes maximizing production at all costs to have a living salary. Less access to locally grown health foods leads to less healthy outcomes. A poor diet is related to increased health care costs. This becomes cyclical.

Equitable access to resources and amenities is at the heart of social health and individual happiness. Interestingly enough, having one's materials needs met does not correlate with an increased rate of happiness (e.g. even though this has been the case, overall happiness in America has remained flat since the Great Depression (see chart on next page)). Yet, one measure of community health, as well as the health of individuals, is the self-identification of happiness. The pursuit of happiness is one of three unalienable rights found in the Declaration of Independence (...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) yet it is not linked to material possessions. Rather, access is ranked #1 in importance when it comes to happiness. This is because opportunity is central to access and humans instinctively know when they are being denied the right to thrive. Weld County must pay attention to the tension between addressing the material wants of many and the basic needs of all. Reduced access to transportation and healthy food products are indicators of inequitable practices. Once identified, we need to figure out how to address this.

Happiness is an important measure. Although happiness in America has not grown since the Great Depression, other nations have experienced growth: Happiness is tagged directly to increases or decreases in access diverse populations have to the things that they need. Numerous recent research studies that track the rise and fall of happiness show that Mexico and Canada both show increases in happiness. In both cases, increased access to healthy foods, affordable transportation, and jobs are considered central indicators. In the United States today, we know that the least healthy foods—those that produce declining physical health—are the most affordable and easy to obtain, even in public schools. Diminishing access to nutrient-rich foods is especially alarming since Weld County is one of the top ten food producers in the nation. The problems that we have created just inside the food industry alone are immense. This is a national problem, but because Weld County's success is tied to food production, what we do in this agricultural region will not only impact the physical health of all Americans but the economic health of the region. The long term growth of the region's economy goes hand in hand with active living. Improvements in the economy that lead to prosperity are tied to increasing social equity, transportation equity and other means of providing improved access to things people need—including healthy food choices and ways to access resources.

Historically, those with high incomes were able to flee cities, to "drive to where they qualify" (for mortgages). Indeed, the original post WWII model was to qualify returning GI's in newer housing out in the expanding burbs. As these investors left their former town center

Health disparities in the built environment. *Walking for those with courage is possible. But as a transportation choice, walking comes with difficulty, since in most parts of the county distances are too vast between services, and services for walking, transit or bicycling are limited.* **Below:** *The inability to pay for accessible food (food one can afford) is a growing problem. Note the highly processed, lower quality food product is sold at one-half the price of a more healthy food choice.*

While Gross National Product (GNP) has risen steadily, life satisfaction (happiness) is slightly declining. People in America are losing access to thinks they want the most (health access, education, parks, etc.)

environments, center cities ended up with reduced opportunity to provide the best services. The costs for maintaining these small towns or center cities went to those least able to finance them, those left behind with too little to qualify for more distant homes. Declining income levels and densities increased the per-unit costs for maintaining basic city services. Increased costs meant fewer services overall. Fewer services meant fewer points of access. Another cycle was created and its consequences were a diminished city/town and outlying development known as sprawl.

As with many terms in specific industries, some words have various meanings. In the field of land use and planning, no other word spurs more controversy and confusion than "sprawl." While the word is used often, it means many different things to many different individuals and groups of people.

Sprawl: v. to spread awkwardly or without a regular pattern; to take up more space than necessary. (Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd, 1983.) Sprawl is a low-density land use pattern that is automobile dependent, energy and land consumptive, and requires a very high ratio of road surface to development served. (MSPO, Patterns on the Land, Trends Future Project, final report, September 1995).

Sprawl unfolds from the edges of cities and towns. It is poorly planned, land consumptive, automobile-oriented, and designed without regard to its surrounding. (Richard Moe, National Trust for Historic Preservation, from Communities at Risk: the Consequences of Sprawl, October 1993)

This problem was compounded when large stores (big boxes) settled into low quality outer strips where land was cheap. Larger stores outcompeted small stores (most often located at the town's center where walking to amenities was easy for residents) and the cycle reinforced bigger stores being built further out as mom and pop local stores died. Those least able to afford travel found it harder to access those things they needed most, including food, since these new stores often required auto access. This pattern can be seen in Weld County where towns are struggling. Here, again, is another indicator of our success, or lack thereof. When we see decay from the center out and diminished quality of life due to lack of access to resources for lower-income persons, we are ensuring that the greatest health disparity shows up for those who have the least access to services, foods, programs and environments to keep them healthy. Although this is

true throughout the nation, Weld County health statistics describe this as a 3:1 health disparity phenomenon. This pattern is not healthy or sustainable. It is now well understood inside the health industry that the built environment is heavily tied to rising health care costs and the general well being of all citizens. These effects have become so pronounced that it is being projected that our children will not live as long as their parents by as much as a decade. It is also projected that the next generation will require more care in these declining years, which will become catastrophic with local economies. Changes to the built environment can prevent obesity, encourage physical activity and healthy eating.

Section Two of this report focuses on observations, opinions and recommendations for improving the short term and long term health of residents in Weld County by making changes to policies and practices that will lead to a healthier built environment. This is best addressed by developing a vision for more compact, planned and patterned walkable and livable neighborhoods, town centers and other places that work for people, while protecting water and air quality and the rural character that's important to each town. As we plan for where we can best place new residents, infill, higher density patterns, and better connected streets will become a higher priority. Fortunately, this health vision falls within allowances in the 2008 Weld County Comprehensive Plan which will be discussed in Section Four of this report.

Vision and Implementation. Although we will look at the specific language of the Comprehensive Plan, we must also recognize that vision alone will not bring about change. This report details implementation strategies to bring about working models and assurances that an improved town-center focus and a protected rural environment go hand in hand. Sprawl patterns, if incentivized, will harm both town-center and rural lifestyles. It is important to keep in mind how challenging it will be to overcome sprawl tendencies. Bankers, realtors, developers, engineers and even most planners know little else. It is all that we have built for many decades.

There is an important and steep learning curve in how to incentivize (lubricate) those changes we most wish to see. We discovered this in our interviews. For instance, one elected leader pointed out that his work to set the stage for growth assured that his land could be subdivided. This would allow him to retire with some comfort and assurance. I asked if there was a measure where his land could be purchased to give him the same return and to create needed open space and land development intensity. He shared that such tools are not in place. Until we have all of the needed tools, the easier path is more sprawl pattern.

Keep the County Healthy and Rural

Before leaving this introductory section it is important to emphasize that there is a popular desire to keep Weld County the Weld County people here grew up in. People do not have a full understanding of what rural means. It appears to not mean that there will be the smell of slaughter houses and high density cattle farms.

The issue that should resonate, as inevitable growth comes to Weld County, it is possible to keep the character and quality of life rural. A focus should be on planned versus unplanned growth; keeping the small town feel, where everyone knows everyone, where traffic speeds are low, kids are safe and crime is low. Achieving rural scale and character will provide the best of all possible outcomes.

Over many years town centers lost essential services like small grocers, druggists, and even gas stations. Much of this growth moved to larger, more distant towns. Now some of these centers have lost anchor stores, such as a big box Walmart. Roads were over-sized for these auto-focused uses. This made walking along or across streets difficult. Will a new marketplace be created in Weld County better scaled to the human foot?

There are many rights, duties and opportunities provided in the Weld County Comprehensive Plan that are in conflict with one another, and so competent staffing and leadership, and a very well informed public will help keep the built environment growth patterns on target. But keeping the best staff, electing the most community conscious leaders, and keeping the public informed is hard, tedious and endless work. Thomas Jefferson says it best:

"*I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves. And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.*" Thomas Jefferson - September 28, 1820

What is Rural? The term "rural" can be confusing. It has different meanings to different people. Some people feel that if they live on a large amount of acreage, whether they farm, or not, they are living in rural lands. For our purposes to help clarify discussions that lead to common agreements, we define rural areas (referred to as "the countryside") as large and isolated areas of a country, often with low population density.

There is a popular desire to keep Weld County rural. People do not have a full understanding of what rural means, and so their arguments on what they wish to protect gets confusing. Without clarity on what we want to protect, it will become lost. People are ready to protect open space, but they are uncertain as to how to fund acquisitions. People recognize that developing the next round of suburban housing stock only aggravates the taking of precious open lands and agricultural production lands. Rural environments are especially sensitive to the damaging effects of sprawl.

In the following section, we explore methods now underway to apply Smart Growth and Smart Transportation principles to Weld County. As we carefully work through what future land use, transportation and lifestyle choices we wish to protect and preserve, we can begin to honor the right choices in land development code and practice.

Creating healthy environments cannot be done in isolation by any one organization; it requires coordinated and comprehensive efforts. Successful models and shared concepts are needed in Weld County.

Sign of the times. *As is true throughout much of the nation there is an abundance of abandoned or under used strips, centers and other large and small lots. An abundance of numerous open lots are signs of an unstable/unsustainable economy. Infill and retrofit policies and incentives are needed. Some open developed land, like this new auto dealership, are in areas difficult to access by foot. Were we overzealous in thinking that our economy would absorb these spaces? Time will tell.*

Fortunately many of the answers needed to affect change are already being built in Weld County, or nearby in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region states. With more than five years of launched programs, such as Live Well Colorado and the ACE program, some of the most innovative solutions in Colorado are found here. This mid-term evaluation recognizes the outstanding efforts undertaken in Weld County to create active community environments and the realization that locating additional funding sources to maintain and extend health programming is central to the success of the region, but also to the state and nation as a whole. Weld County should be the model for a healthy America. Since it is at the center of the nation's food production, Weld County can be known for producing nutrient-rich foods and a quality lifestyle for residents and families—making it an appealing place for employers and job seekers.

Smart Growth and Smart Transportation Principles

Like most places in our nation, Weld County's community development practices are in transition with a reducing emphasis on strips and sprawl and an increasing focus on centers and hearts of communities. This shift and emphasis brings about protection of open space, land preservation, affordable transportation, a sound tourism base, age-in-place neighborhoods and vibrant local and regional economies. When communities choose walkable or smart growth strategies, they create new neighborhoods and maintain existing ones that are attractive, convenient, safe, and healthy. They can foster design that encourages social, civic, and physical activity. They can protect the environment while stimulating economic growth. Most of all, they can create more choices for residents, workers, visitors, children, families, single people, and older adults—choices in where to live, how to get around, and how to interact with the people around them. When communities do this kind of planning, they preserve the best of their past while creating a bright future for generations to come. In each of the communities we visited, we learned that these are the key issues.

Planned and targeted growth presents a tremendous opportunity for progress in Weld County. It is hard to get a full grasp on how much is changing. This report coincides with the most significant slowdown in everything we have been building in the past fifty years. It is time that we recognize that Smart Growth and Smart Transportation provide an approach to the planning and design of roadways that links transportation investments to local contexts. These include financial, community, land use, transportation and environmental contexts. A sound project arises out of a planning and design process that is sensitive to the needs of both land uses and transportation, includes input from the local stakeholders, reasonably mitigates impacts on the environment, and includes a budget that is scaled to the size of the problem.

National per capita traffic growth (measured in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)) plateau-ed in 2000. Since then, 2006 VMT is in a slight decline. This decline occurred three years before gas prices spiked and two years before the economy went into its current adjustment. Is it possible (or even likely) that we will not build our traffic in a significant fashion in the future? Healthier communities and healthier people could be one outcome if we now focus more of our limited funds on things that build communities rather than traffic.

Although this national slowdown may not be the case in Weld County yet, steps could be taken to assure that traffic does not grow further. This is best handled by focusing growth into places minimizing large capital investments. Over time, budgets can then be shifted to make way for increased transit, walking, bicycling, as well as ride sharing and van support for those not currently receiving levels of transport that they need.

In time, as better place is created, and new jobs start to flow into the community, better disbursement of funds can help improve parks, open space community centers, main street environments and trails. In our interviews and earlier visits, we heard over and over that people are ready to feature these qualities as they grow their communities. Few spoke of widening roads or investing in other high cost infrastructure that only grows their size, not their quality.

Land use, transportation and health agencies can work together collaboratively to overcome the problems associated with conventional sprawl and strip patterns, to build communities that become prosperous, as they focus on creating the kind of places where people want to live and where others want to start up innovative businesses. Southwest Weld County is well located to allow a future agreeable and attractive to many. Certain landscapes and buildings are essential to our understanding of our unique history and culture. We refer to these as heritage lands. We can and should pass on to our children heritage lands and the quaint small town living patterns that were once common place.

Communities around the country are looking for ways to get the most out of new development and to maximize their investments. Frustrated by development that requires residents to drive long distances between jobs and homes, many communities are challenging rules that make it impossible to put workplaces, homes, and services closer together. Many communities are questioning the fiscal wisdom of neglecting existing infrastructure while expanding new sewers, roads, and services to the fringe. In many communities where development has improved daily life, the economy, and the environment, Smart Growth principles have been key to that success.

Agriburbia

Agriburbia (a trademarked term) is being applied in a number of Front Range communities that are focused on growing food locally and maintaining a rural or agricultural lifestyle while providing amenities to attract employers and residents. The Denver Post article "Agriburbia" Sprouts on Colorado's Front Range (October 24, 2009) discusses combining housing and harvests so that we begin to convert the nation's 31 million acres of lawn to food production. Matthew Redmond, a proponent of urban farming and development believes golf-course greens could be redefined with herbs; sand traps could be kale traps.

Additionally, "He sees retirement homes engulfed by farms and office buildings where workers escape cubicles on farming breaks. Redmond, along with his born-on- a-farm biologist turned planner wife, Jennifer, sees an urban landscape like none before. This is where we are all going to go. We need this," said Redmond. "Everyone thinks they are so smart by crafting a 2030 plan for the future. I say we need a $180-a-barrel plan, on how our communities can be self-sufficient when oil becomes too expensive to ship food across the country."

Self-sufficient. Sustainable. Locally produced. Agriburbia incorporates all three concepts.

"Is there a better use of the land than growing your own food right where you are going to be eating it?" said Janie Lichtfuss, Mayor of Milliken, which is positioned to become the first agriburbia community. "This seems to me to be the best of both worlds, with good use of the land for development and agricultural production too."

Can Weld County towns become walkable and bicycle friendly without losing their small town quaintness and qualities? One of the questions we heard was, "How do we plan our communities and not become the next bedroom for Denver?"

People in small towns across America are in a quandary. Is there a way to plan for a future that does not make them "urban?"

What is urban, what is rural, and how can towns avoid becoming the next iteration of suburbia? Making the transition from a purely rural-agricultural set of communities to ones supporting a more settled urban economy, is a challenge facing many North American communities. How well Weld County makes this transition should be of interest to all in the health industry and in all communities. This transition must honor Weld County's past and present, while maximizing its potential. The 2008 Weld County Comprehensive Plan lays out a solid framework, but this is merely the beginning. Many efforts must be now made to set achievable targets that are so compelling that the best elements of this effort are carried out.

For towns within Weld County to make a transition from an agricultural past to become known as a set of fun, healthy, distinct villages requires collaboration and teamwork, well informed decision makers, and a grassroots team of citizens and other stakeholders who realize how much is at risk. These things are needed along with a willingness to bring about change, together.

Through sprawl patterns of development, Western Weld County has seen the most pronounced increases in sedentary lifestyles and obesity. Sprawl has isolated and stratified people and led to high dependency on cars. Land development in Weld County has greatly outpaced population growth, resulting in the loss of agricultural and rural lands (sprawl). Energizing sprawl fueled the decline of many of Weld County's smaller (and larger) towns. Such changes are particularly noted in legacy lands that can ill-afford further loss.

Can Weld County shift away from Sprawl? Earlier we mentioned that sprawl costs more to build. It also costs more to maintain. But there is even more harm. Sprawl patterns of development not only will be tougher and tougher to pencil out financially, they are proving to be unhealthy places. Lawrence Frank, Bombardier Chair in Sustainable Transportation at the University of British Columbia, studied the effects of cul-de-sacs in neighborhoods in King County, Washington. He found that residents in areas with the most interconnected streets travel 26% fewer miles by automobile than those in areas with many cul-de-sacs. Other studies reveal that sprawl leads to more car crashes and greater personal injury. It seems that much of what sprawl was meant to reduce, failed to materialize. Meanwhile, recent studies by Frank, as well as other studies by Norm Garrick and others show that the higher a neighborhood's overall walkability, the greater

More of what is on the left means more of what is on the right. As called for in the Weld County Comprehensive Plan, providing more centralize infill development can lead to thriving town centers that work to keep walking and bicycling high ... but such strategies also allow for more protection of precious open space, making way for trails.

the amount of walking and biking— which means a drop in per capita air pollution, fuel use, and body mass index.

So why did we build cul-de-sacs? The theory behind cul-de-sacs was that they lessened traffic since they change the primary function of local streets — rather than offering a way to get anywhere, now they simply provide access to private residences. The problem is that this design inherently encourages car use, even for the shortest trips. It also limits the growth of communities and transportation options. The argument that cul-de-sacs increase safety because they limit traffic is also misguided — the more empty and desolate a suburban (and often affluent) street is, the more likely crime is to occur, and the higher potential for speed as people find a need to travel more. Also, it's much harder for emergency vehicles to reach these homes if they're sequestered in the belly of a web of disconnected dead-ends.

As more and more direct evidence piles up that these dead-end developments are doing no one any good, the cul-de-sac tides are beginning to change. Last year, the Virginia legislature passed a law limiting cul-de-sacs in future developments. And if other states see the benefits for Virginia—more efficient streets that are cheaper to maintain, as well as other savings from not having to widen arterial roads that otherwise were overburdened by cul-de-sacs — perhaps they'll follow suit.

Study Methodology

The first goal of Weld County's Survey on Health, written in 2008, was to help individuals of all ages increase life expectancy and improve their quality of life. The 2010 Health Intervention Assessment is aimed at bringing the most significant and beneficial programmatic tools to Weld County based on an assessment of the built environment and feedback from stakeholders. These findings and recommendations will be distributed to each of the seven pilot communities and throughout all regions of the County.

The study included the following elements:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- LiveWell Program Assessment
- LiveWell Staff Workshop
- Analysis of 2008 Weld County Comprehensive Plan
- On-Site Assessment of Seven Communities
- Public Presentation & Feedback

In order to complete this Health Intervention Assessment, Dan Burden met with LiveWell Weld County staff and other stakeholders to gather information regarding the Steps to a Healthier Weld County Program Program goals and achievements, as well as to review LiveWell's program initiatives and goals. This

Smart Growth is a Colorado invention, and there are great models throughout the state to learn from on how to create attractive housing and land mixes that people want in order to simplify their lives and have great places to live and to have active living, healthy lives.

interview process allowed stakeholders to identify issues, assess programming initiatives, and discuss opportunities they saw based on their expertise, often gained through hard-won step-by-step victories. During these interviews, participants identified barriers and hurdles to building healthier environments.

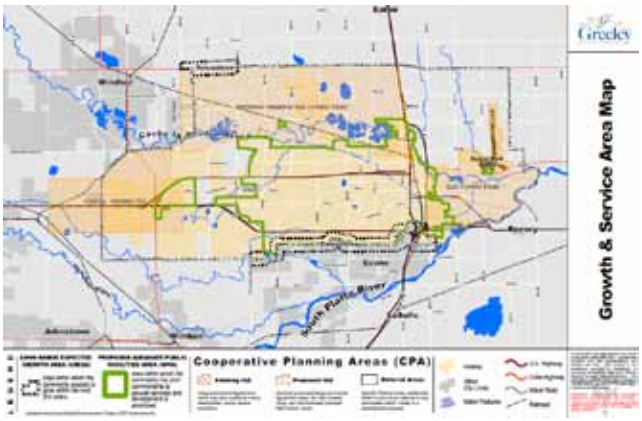
The next step was reviewing the language expressed in the 2008 Weld County Comprehensive Plan. The updated Plan has much of the language and direction needed to restore human and natural health in Weld County. In some cases, the language allows interpretations for greater flexibility, but the Plan is only as good as the individual decisions that will be made because of it. Some choices will lead to a healthier journey and a healthier, more prosperous and sustainable outcomes.

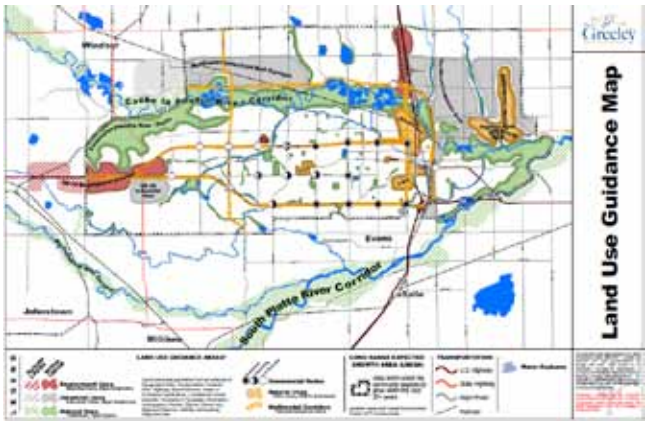
The Comprehensive Plan guides land use and transportation choices and decisions. It protects, preserves and restores quality of life, culture, buildings, nature and human health. One important feature of the Plan is that it sets the stage for walkable and livable communities, which are the most natural and timeless human settlements. In one sense, walkability not only determines whether people will continue to have walking as a viable mode of transportation and as a restorative measure for personal health; but as a means and method to provide sustainability, as well as set a scale, pace and measure for community building and eventual economic prosperity. A walkable scale forms a blueprint for what we value. When so honored, walkability principles and scale assure compact land form, and the restoration and protection of landmark buildings. These healthy scales and mixes provide a richer, more diverse mix of community parts, and create a sensible pattern, distribution and mixing of these parts. Through its time honored compact form, walkability also assures proximity to nature, protection of rural lands and open space.

The evaluation of the Weld County Comprehensive Plan included a review of Chapter 22 as it relates to a Healthy Community Initiative. The overall evaluation found the County to have adequate provisions to meet a Healthy Community Initiative. Many of the policies written are flexible enough to meet the principles that guided the evaluation. Weld County, as well as counties to the south, lack an adequate work force and affordable housing. This forces many in the working and service classes to "drive until you qualify" ever longer distances at increasing costs, or to be transported by public agencies at costs we are unwilling to fund, or to live in inadequate housing, or both. Southwest Weld County has the potential to arrest these problems by building needed infrastructure and complete towns where travel times and distances are shortened for many, where new housing product types fit into the community, naturally, and where social equity and equality are realized.

Rural Characther Rural Life

Growing Green and Smart requires the right land use tools to be in place, a good understanding by the entire community on why these tools are important, and an adherence by the all decision makers and the development community to meet these goals and objectives. Our analysis of the Weld County Comprehensive Plan shows that many of the tools that are needed are in place. Meanwhile, each decision that is reached must now follow these recommendations in order to end up with the built environment that will lead to good health.





Rural Groceries and Green Grocers

Weld County residents (with or without government) can create rural, health enterprises. These health initiatives should meet multiple objectives. These assets might include staying rural, creating places to walk to for services, social gathering places, even a small community center, all in one building. For instance, each community can provide incentives and support for all residents living near town centers to have a green grocer, or other small scale access to healthy foods and a few good shops. The photos on this page, for example are from a town of only 600 residents. Although this store attracts people from the region, not just the town, it has a scale and a model that "pencils out" (interpret pays its way). A working group in Weld County can be created to discover the specific problems associated with the startup of a small store, then find the tools to overcome these barriers. A small distributor, for example, could bulk purchase food, especially local foods, and supply fresh produce to all stores in the County.

Part Two

Stakeholder Feedback

The following is a synthesis/summary of discussions with Weld County stakeholders that occurred during a site visit in February of 2010. These discussions provided the project team with valuable guidance for both the assessment of the LiveWell program progress and identification of strategies for moving forward.

FlipVideo was used to capture many of the interviews and achievements carried out through community building and community health initiatives. Shown is Milliken's City Administrator and Police Chief, who has built one of the best community based police stations in North America

This Health Intervention Assessment also includes an on-site assessment of seven areas within the County to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the built environment and the resulting behavioral responses.

Stakeholder Feedback

The following feedback was received from the Stakeholder Interviews conducted as part of the overall Health Initiative Assessment. These discussions provided LiveWell Weld County with a frank assessment of current conditions and factors impacting health in Weld County. The team gained insight about the community values and this proved helpful for developing appropriate strategies that will increase the role of health in the growth and development of Weld County. A list of Stakeholders interviewed is found in the Appendix.

Rural Community Values

Weld County is described as having rural values, reflected by the Right to Farm policy. At the same time, the need to accommodate tremendous growth strains the balance of these values in the context of urbanizing forces. Newcomers appreciate the rural open space environment, but dislike the dust and impacts of actual farming. Farmers appreciate the security of the growing land value, but wish to hold on to the rural way of life.

Access to Grocers

The need to promote neighborhood grocery stores is identified as something appropriate for the community. However, there is also the sense that larger big-box retail uses are not appropriate for the County, and that traveling to other towns for this type of resource is more desirable.

Housing Opportunities

Future growth is being steered to more compact high density form that includes the use of impact fees to ensure quality open space and recreational trails come with new development. Accessory dwelling units are currently permitted but not encouraged. This is important as there seems to be no specific strategy for addressing affordable housing opportunities. The ability to live where you work or to age in place is impacted by the policies that govern the types of housing provided in the growing community.

Community Health

The community health focus is mostly related to providing quality recreational facilities, including paths, parks and recreation centers. Community members of all ages tend to have good participatory rates in community events including volunteering. In Weld County, about one-fifth of the population participate in about 80% of the activities, and this is described as the "80-20 rule".

Identify A Current Need: Library Services
When considering how health department grants could best be used to help meet community needs, Weld County might want to consider that library services within the County are currently lacking. There is very limited availability of a book-mobile and a small book lending/swap arrangement for seniors.

Transportation Issues

Transportation is seen as a growing area of conflict. The growing population will not be well served by the traditional rural roadways. Should roadway widths be increased to accommodate demand? Or, as cleverly suggested, "Could we limit the pipe to limit the growth?"

How to Address Bureaucratic Hurdles to Community Health Needs

County property rights often do not coincide with community interests. This could be remedied through improved cooperation and collaboration about how growth and development occur. Engage the existing residents about these developments and allow for greater input to the process.

- Intergovernmental Agreements could be of help, but we have had difficulty in encouraging communities to not enter into a recently proposed agreement.

Additional Comments

- Identifying resources for accommodating growth is important, particularly in terms of integrating transportation into the development of new community amenities.

- Growth is market driven: the County and the City may not share the same vision as developers. Good design with key attractive elements such as good streets mixed uses and diverse housing choices should make sense to developers.

- Many developers select locations two to three miles outside of the city to avoid having to annex to the city.

- There have been number of requests for more dense and mixed use development in Weld County.

- How can the County provide opportunities for "leap frog" investments and direct an "easy-track" to sustainable, healthy developments?

- Assessing healthy lifestyles will not be about forcing people or taking away from other lifestyles, but that we create the choices and make it natural for people to live healthy lives.

- The Comprehensive Plan process was thorough and is a huge transformation developed with massive amounts of public input. The result was goals, strategies and recommendation that have resulted in a "to-do" list for Weld County.

- Connectivity is a central theme. How we connect to communities and other roadways and how this relates to health is how we are starting on our transportation plan. A small facet of that is the development of a trail plan.

- Weld County is unlikely to install sidewalks along rural roads. The County should promote trail system and open space plans.

- We recognize a need for things to be better connected, as many neighborhoods have great internal walkability, but lack connection to outside destinations such as stores, schools or other neighborhoods.

- Creating a walkable community is a positive action—it is a step toward individual and community health.

- People often don't recognize the need for open space with so much farm land all around.

- If we create the built environment to work for people, we are going to have healthy people, but if we don't we will pay the penalty.

- How do you encourage people to walk more? How do we create positive incentives for walking?

- Interestingly, roads were required before the Post Office would be established. Those towns that provided for the Post Office would prosper. Before Planners, the Post Office would require that there be streets with sidewalks, street signs and house numbers to qualify for delivery. The Post Office was responsible for creating a safe work environment for letter carriers. The post office did not need planners or traffic engineers to make this work.

Working backward from your dreams, twenty years from now what will Weld County look like?

- Every neighborhood will have trails located within a block of any household that connect to larger trail network. This would function as a hierarchy not very different from our roadway network.

- There will be a transition from regional centers to neighborhood centers that will utilize existing corridors. Residents will have the ability to walk or bike for school and daily needs within the neighborhoods. These connections will integrate greenways with on street facilities to provide a network with 50% of trips able to be made by walking or biking. There will be a need to fill gaps and retrofit sidewalks that are not adequate today.

- Colorado is the utopia. There are paths and trails that I can connect for work and other needs. The community will need to provide streets with adequate widths to accommodate bikes, pedestrians and facilitate development of transit. There is not a great likelihood of zero-car households, but there will be better choices that don't rely on the automobile.

- The trails and corridors will need consistency with agreed upon standards to ensure that the biking and walking experience is predictable from community to community. Utopia is a set of connected biking and walking facilities that allow users to connect to each community.

- Connectivity will allow for transportation options within communities and from city to city.

- Trails need to be well marked all the way from New Mexico to Wyoming with a consistent quality surface. The vision will be predicated on community buy-in with political will that identifies dedicated funds.

Where is the pot of funds for the Biking and Walking Highway System? Would be ideal for a unified nationwide system.

- The emphasis should be on connectivity, accessibility and choices. There can be levels of transportation appropriate for different needs.

What are the barriers to achieving the vision?

- Lack of centralized Vision

- Significant industries (like the military) need to get behind active community environments; that was how the highways got built.

- We need to promote an economy of tourism around great trails.

- If trails make money, the funding problem is solved.

- People want to ride across Europe, France. How can this be made possible in Weld County?

- Need better engineering standards – "machines control"

- We design for Fire Engines even though humans use streets year-round

- Weld County is not a Mecca for shopping or tourism (close competition for both nearby). Perhaps Weld County is a local or regional tourism destination.

- Weld County needs to explore a new funding mechanism for trails. By allowing more compact land, the developer builds fewer lane miles of roads, provides more affordable trails and open space. This would make developments more attractive and functional, while generating a broader tourism base. Inns or hostels, summer concessions for food, and other walk-to centers for retail, social life could be part of the new mix. This is vastly different from the current way of doing things.

- Hudson was a discovery—it shows how great streets can transform a community and create a place where our children can thrive.

- The public perception will be a barrier and elected officials are closely tied to perception and are reluctant to innovate.

- A couple of example developments have been approved for platting but not yet developed.

Concluding Points

Overall, the stakeholder interviews and on-site assessment of areas within Weld County have provided valuable information on establishing active community environments in Weld County. The following comments and ideas are summarized from a variety of focus group sessions, including witht the Weld County Health Department.

- Provide a long-term health vision and prescription customized for each of ten communities. These prescriptions will improve the built environment to optimize health outcomes. Include as a base for all ten communities, food access, social engagement, equity, diversity, respect. Each program will honor cultural makeup and diversity. Each program will help achieve economic, political and transportation equity. Assure that these ten communities represent the diversity of all communities in the County.

- Achieve long-term health outcomes by using the healthy communities theme for community building change.

- By health, we mean physical, social, environmental and economic health. We are a bedroom community that is developing because of regional growth.

- At this stage of our development, we have no money to bring consultants in like Dan and no money to send our staff and community leaders to seminars, and these same staff members and community leaders are, for the most part, unfamiliar with community-building techniques, but thirsty for information. This resource was so very valuable. Can we develop webinars and other methods to engage our staff and leaders?

- There are many others, of course, that can come into Weld County and conduct health assessments. There are a number of national spokespeople that live in and work in Colorado, and others that come to the Front Range on a regular basis from other parts of the nation. It is helpful to Weld County citizens and stakeholders to learn from these visits.

- The Comprehensive Plan for the County has less of a role in building "sustainable" communities and more of a role to provide infrastructure and provide for basic needs in support of development.

- When commenting on the value of the Weld County Health Initiatives that included visits by Dan Burden to the region, the following comments and observations were made:

- Community design techniques can be applied that better handle through traffic.

- Better land use patterns can be emphasized and incentivized that reduce regional traffic growth.

- Land use changes can result in desired economic growth without compromising the community's own goals and objectives of creating a healthy, active town center, while retaining rural character.

- The Milliken Police Station was designed to be a safety anchor and provide a community gathering place where community policing takes on a new meaning.

- There is a need to educate stakeholders and staff to understand the value of good design in creating a better Weld County. Not everyone shares the same vision, but it is important to be able to provide good choices and this does not have to take away from those who value rural living.

- There is a sense of entitlement of rural land owners to subdivide their property to earn a return on their investment. It is important to protect this investment without allowing unmitigated development to transform Weld County into a landscape of sprawl. This effort is not an attack on a lifestyle, but a response to the shifting needs of our growing populations that seeks to adapt development in a way that is affordable and healthy.

- The careful responsible development of Weld County is the key to prosperity moving forward. If Weld County is not able to provide the right choices and opportunities, the result will have significant repercussions on the economic stability of the region.

Part Three
Community Evaluations

Greeley and East Greeley

Greeley and East Greeley are advancing and stitching some of the best built environment concepts together. Greeley has an enviable recovering town center, and many historic buildings, a centrally located college campus, and many miles of historic, well connected streets. A number of walkways, crossings, road diets (lane reductions) trails, parks, medians, public art, and more, show pieces and pockets of success that can be used as examples for smaller towns moving towards implementation.

Meanwhile, the number of out of scale, faceless homes, abandoned projects, walled in neighborhoods, disconnected and one way streets, outward growth, abandoned strips and malls, show there is much that can be done to concentrate on and incentivize people-focused designs. Emphasis should be on connectivity, accessibility and choices. There can be levels of transportation appropriate for different needs.

Weld County's most important food access and nutrition issues come together here, as well. It turns out that it is easier to get Pop-Tarts than bananas in Greeley and East Greeley. Weld County is addressing the "food desert" problem, which is characterized by a lack of access to health food opportunities in neighborhood convenience stores and groceries. The County is working with retailers to identify how to include healthy food options in affordable accessible locations. Additionally, there is a need to educate the public that preparing healthy food at home is not only easy and convenient, but more affordable than fast food and take-out options.

The low walk scores in Greeley and East Greeley are significant. Our focus was on major portions of town where populations are the most diverse, where health disparities are high, where mix of land uses and other indexes of walkability are low. Meanwhile we found many innovative business leaders in these neighborhoods that can be an inspiration to others and that can provide a model that can be applied throughout Weld County.

Greeley and East Greeley

Land Area:	30 Square Miles
Poulation:	98,586
Density:	2,564 sq mile

Above, old; below, new. Historic homes once provided a face and elegance to watch over streets they occupied. Newer builtforms have failed to address streets, making walking a lonely, scary experience. Getting form based or other more prescriptive code in place is critical if people are to walk. In the bottom illustration, we see an excellent series of trails. However, homes fail to watch over trails, and on the left hand side of the street, walls separate watchful eyes from people attempting to walk or bike

Hudson

Land Area:	2.3 Square Miles
Poulation:	1,565
Density:	680.4/ sq mile

The town of Hudson, lacking sidewalks and even paved streets until recently, has paved 5 miles of streets with curb, gutter and sidewalks in nine months. Using a two-cent sales tax bond, the town of Hudson is able to retrofit streets with pavement and sidewalks about a half a mile at a time.

The effort was described as challenging with some difficulty to retrofit in a community where historically there were no development controls. The public was initially resistant but grew more supportive as the streets and sidewalks were built. There are still a few folks who are concerned about the improvements changing the rural character of Hudson.

Proof that sidewalks work to create social interaction, play and transportation is demonstrated by the children in Hudson. An unexpected result occurred after the streets and sidewalks were completed, "Hudson discovered they had children." These children who now had a place to be children, took over the new sidewalks as a playground and even brought portable basketball hoops out to the street.

This quickly drew attention to other unanticipated results of the new paved streets: speeding and parking on sidewalks. These are manageable problems that do little to diminish the value of having good streets and sidewalks.

The estimate for constructing five miles of streets and sidewalks including storm sewers and drainage was originally $5 million but actual costs came in at only $3.5 million, probably due to reduced material and labor costs and the present sluggish economy.

Hudson is currently working with Colorado Department of Transportation and the Burlington Northern rail road to identify improved at-grade pedestrian crossings along the Burlington Northern railroad which runs through the center of town. Currently the crossing point for the railroad is on State Route 52, a busy state highway.

Platte Valley Airpark

West of Hudson across I-76 is the Platte Valley Airpark, a small regional airport that has potential to be developed into a regional attraction for re-enactments by historic fighter planes. This is an opportunity to provide an economic niche for Hudson, and is an opportunity to consider how to integrate a regional trail that connects the Airpark to Hudson and beyond.

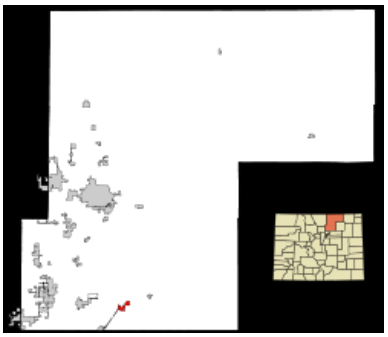
Hudson's outstanding contribution to Weld County is its achievement to bond (fund) the remake of many local streets, including drainage. Each remade street has new sidewalks, ADA ramps and other means to improve walking conditions.

The very positive response of the community to its walkways system and attention to design details is refreshing. Comments such as "we never knew we had this many children" are common and uplifting. Many people are now walking and engaging with their neighbors.

Hudson can also benefit from improved food access (grocery within walking distance), a well placed and designed civic park, new recreational facilities and significant alterations to land development practices to support traditional, well connected streets. Route 52 (Main Street) is overly wide, lacks a sense of place, and reduces the potential for investors to create needed buildings and contribute to place making.

There is more to do, of course, but this is a noteworthy achievement to be a model for many similar communities throughout Weld County. What is still missing in Hudson? Paved streets lead to higher speeds and motorists are parking over sidewalks in a number of cases (this was not possible before paving and sidewalks were added).

Hudson



Ft Lupton

Land Area:	4 Square Miles
Poulation:	6,787 (est.)
Density:	1,686/sq mile

Ft. Lupton is a pleasant size (4 square miles) for a walkable and bicycle accessible town. Walkability and active living can be enhanced by a number of strategies to support and incentivize walking and bicycling. Many of the most important streets are overly wide and stark. The added widths induce higher speeds and make crossing streets challenging. Streets lack green and are in need of street trees, specifically.

Principal roads like McKinley could be remade over time to include tree wells (inset parking). Roundabouts could be placed to slow traffic speeds and make pedestrian crossings easier and safer. Seen from an aerial map, much of the recent growth in new housing is mostly made up of isolated, disconnected, sprawl pattern, single family settlements. Narrow sidewalks are attached to curb lines. Many streets connections were never completed, forcing motorists on a limited number of roads that require wider intersections.

Over time, residents in the new disconnected neighborhoods will find it difficult to live active lifestyles. A concerted effort is needed to plan and incentivize future growth patterns respectful of active living, access to food, parks and civic activities.

Milliken

Land Area:	4 Square Miles
Poulation:	6,787 (est.)
Density:	1,686/sq mile

Milliken has recently built a new community oriented police station that marvels, and may be the best in the nation. The town is looking at designing a well located civic plaza and center that will build upon its center. A festival street built at this center can handle convenient parking. Other steps that can lead to improved walking and active living are as follows:

- Reduce speeds and improve streetscapes in all parts of town.
- Travel lanes should be 10 feet, allowing 11 or 12 foot lanes when justified (i.e. high truck volumes, unusual operation needs)
- Left turn storage lanes should have a default value of 9-10 feet
- Sidewalks should be detached, allowing planter strips of 5-6 feet
- Sidewalks should be near the street, (with planter strips) not set back 20-40 feet
- Some/most landscape areas are excessive
- Raised medians are important and should be retained
- Right-of-Way requirements are generally excessive
- Inset parking should be featured in the shopping district
- Residential local street sidewalks should be a minimum of 5 feet wide, with allowances for greater widths. A 50 foot right of way may be adequate for residential sections.
- Offer a typical section for residential "green streets"
- Current downtown bulb-outs are too thin to be effective.
- Downtown sidewalks are narrow.
- Downtown angled parking should be 60 degrees to increase parking.
- Downtown angled parking can be increased to 90 degrees on several side streets.
- Parked cars intrude into crosswalks (safety problems result)
- Urban land uses call for an abundance of on-street, not off-street parking.

Windsor

Land Area:	14.9 Square Miles
Poulation:	14,874 (est.)
Density:	664.2/sq mile

Windsor is a mix of old and new. The oldest Main Street buildings are Victorian two-story commercial structures, dating from the late 19th century. The BNSF line runs north of Main Street. The historic early grid of the town extends for roughly ten blocks south of Main, with a vibrant square green, called Main Park southeast of downtown.

Commuters to Fort Collins, Denver, Loveland, and other communities in the area helped spawn newer 1990s development on the western edge, on the bluff overlooking the Poudre River. This modern subdivision type, honors a need for open space and trails, offers a mix of housing product types and compact housing forms. Meanwhile, a walk through the areas shows a lack of understanding for detailing buildings in such a compact environment.

A new, modern community center and recreational complex is an inspiration to all Weld County communities. Meanwhile, a mix of new housing clusters, housing types, some new stores built to the street, others set back in strips, and most new properties walled off from public view, show that there are enough mistakes in creating watchful, friendly building orientations to call special attention to this omission. Even new housing built with walkways and housing orientation to watch over open space has enough visual mistakes to call special attention to the need for instruction and courses to get these features right on the next phase.

Severance

Land Area: 2.2 Square Miles
Poulation: 600 (est.)
Density: 271.1/sq mile

It is hard to imagine a small place (population 600 in 2000) more likely to change (for good or not so good) than Severance. In the 1990s, Severance began to grow through residential subdivisions in the nearby rural areas of Weld County, especially as growth spilled over from nearby Windsor. The construction of new residential communities near the town has left the original agricultural community surrounded by modern sprawl style growth and an upsurge in population. The town limits, extended through flagpole annexations, reach in tendrils nearly to Windsor and Fort Collins. Since the economic base of the town is quite limited, many of the new residents commute to jobs in Greeley, Fort Collins, Windsor, and even to Denver.

Severance is fortunate to have charming rural, historic homes, buildings, parks and other open spaces, and its opportunities for trail links make it an ideal community for future growth. However, the town currently struggles under pressures and influences of light density, disconnected growth that could generate immense traffic, and with little income to prepare quality infrastructure supportive of active lifestyles.

A focus on street connectivity, more complete and comprehensive planning, traditional layout of homes and other properties, a small grocery store and other basic services, can do much to protect and preserve the rural qualities, and active lives sought after by those fleeing larger cities.

Severance *is a study in contrast. From newer, mixed use buildings to older agricultural focused buildings with a rural/agricultural charm. From historic farm homes on quiet streets to large modern estate properties sitting back from highway speeds -- edging their way to town.*

Weld Trails Coordination Committee

Meeting with local trails community staff –
Attendees: Andy McRoberts, Ben Zomer, Erik Warrington, Dan Burden, Pam Smith, Zach Ratkai, Tom Parko, Wade Willis, EDon Thompson, Amelia Tuttle
Location: Severance Municipal offices
Date: February 18, 2010 - 2:00 PM

The project team met with Staff from several Weld County communities. The staff were asked to describe their vision of how Weld county should look 20 years into the future and how this vision will be achieved.

Dan: Working backward from your dreams, twenty years from now what will Weld County look like?

Zach - Planner, Severance
Every neighborhood will have trails located within a block of any household that connecting to larger trail connections that lead to town. This would function as a hierarchy not very different from our roadway network.

Andy – Parks &Recreation Director, Evans
There will be a transition from regional centers to neighborhood centers that will utilize existing corridors. Residents will have the ability to walk or bike for school and daily needs within the neighborhoods. These connections will integrate greenways with on street facilities to provide a network with 50% of trips able to be made by walking or biking. There will be a need to fill gaps and retrofit sidewalks that are not adequate today.

Ben – Forrester, Evans
"I think Colorado is the utopia". There are paths and trails that I can connect for work and other needs. The community will need to provide streets with adequate width to accommodate bikes pedestrians and facilitate development of transit. There is not a great likelihood of zero-car households, but there will be better choices that don't rely on the automobile.

Wade – Parks & Open Space Manager, Windsor
The trails and corridors will need consistency with agreed upon standards to ensure that the biking and walking experience is predictable from community to community. Utopia is a set of connected biking and walking facilities that allow users to connect to each community.

Erik – Weld County Youth Conservation Corp
Connectivity will allow for options within communities and from city to city. Currently Erik commutes by bicycle along a carefully selected route of low volume streets because there are not adequate facilities provided.

Don – Windsor P&R
Trails needs to be well marked all the way from NM to WY, that had a consistent quality surface. The vision will be predicated on community buy-in with political will that identifies dedicated funds. Dan – Where is the pot of funds for the Biking and Walking highway system? Would be ideal for a unified nationwide system.
Unidentified woman Came late, perhaps Dan or Pam knows?

Emphasis should be on connectivity, accessibility and choices. There can be levels of transportation appropriate for different needs.

General discussion and remarks - What are the Barriers to achieving the vision?

- Lack of centralized Vision
- What if our military went pedestrian, that was how the highways got built
- Promote an economy of tourism around great trails.
- If trails make money the funding problem is solved.
- People want to ride across Europe, France

How can this be made possible in Weld County?

- Need better engineering standards – "machines control"
- "We design for Fire Engines"
- "humans use streets year-round"
- Weld County is not a Mecca for shopping or tourism (close competition for both nearby).
- Perhaps Weld County is a local or regional tourism destination

Dan – What if a new funding mechanism trails that allowed for land dedicated with developer in context with new compact development that could appropriate for trail tourism including allowing for inns or hostels to be created to support the trails?

- This could be considered, vastly different from the current way of doing things
- Public perception will be a barrier and elected officials are closely tied to perception and are reluctant to innovate.
- A couple of example developments have been approved for platting but not yet developed.

Is Sprawl Affordable?

It is possible to have affordable housing but not an affordable lifestyle. H+T (Housing + Transportation) has been developed as a more complete measure of affordability beyond the standard method of assessing only Housing Costs. By taking into account both the cost of housing as well as the cost of transportation associated with the location of the home, H+T provides a more complete understanding of affordability. Dividing these costs by Representative Regional Incomes illustrates the Cost Burden placed on a Typical Household by H+T expenses. While housing alone is traditionally deemed affordable when consuming no more than 30% of income, the Community Technology Network (CNT) has defined an affordable range for H+T as the combined costs consuming no more than 45% of income.

For Weld County as a composite:

- Regional: Median Household Income: $42,321
- Average Household Size: 2.2
- Average Working Commuters per Household: 0.7

Annual Household Gasoline Expenses are calculated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per household, a 2008 Regional Peak Price, and an average Fuel Efficiency of 20.3 mpg. All values utilized for this calculation are based on 2000 data with the exception of the gas price. Comparing this figure to Annual Household Gasoline Expenses ($) - 2000 Gas Price illustrates the impact of fluctuating gas prices on a Typical Household's Gasoline Expenses.

Annual Household Gasoline Expenses ($) - 2008 Gas Price
Fuel Efficiency of 20.3 mpg

Above: To maintain single occupant vehicle system flow, like all other places in the nation, streets and intersection widenings are routine. Below: Greeley residents arriving at this intersection are asked to cross three legs of an intersection to continue their route of travel. This is done for the convenience of the motorist. For each leg of an intersection that a pedestrian crosses there are six vehicular conflicts, plus the delay to wait for each signal. Thus a pedestrian not given the chance to cross on their side of the street in this location must take 4-5minutes to cross, plus encounter 18 potential conflicts, versus 6. The motorist going across may have as little as 60 seconds of delay while waiting for their signal.

A person of modest income choosing to live in a location in Weld County where they can live without a car (many do) and rely on their feet, a bicycle and transit, can save $7,500 per year (AAA estimate), and thus maintain an affordable lifestyle. Meanwhile, the system was not designed to reward non-auto travel. To have health, plus an affordable lifestyle for many calls for new policies and incentives.

Weld County Action Steps for Healthy Communities

1. Provide a long-term health vision and prescription customized for each of the communities. These prescriptions will improve the built environment to optomize health outcomes. Include as a base for all communities, food access, social engagement, equity, diversity, respect. Each program will honor cultural makeup and diversity. Each program will help achieve economic, political and transportation equity. Assure that these communities represent the diversity of all communities in the County;

2. Achieve long-term health outcomes by using the healthy communities theme for community building change. Assure through this process economic, political and cultural security and resilience;

3. Recognize the intrinsic value of healthy lifestyles for each group in the community, focusing on youth, seniors, ethnic groups and various socio-economic levels;

4. Enable communities to work together to minimize their growth of non-sustainable land development, and to maximize urban infill, land mix, preservation of buildings and protected open space.

5. Build on the characteristics of each community in the development and nurturing of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.

6. Recognize and build on the distinctive characteristics of each community, including its human and cultural values, history and natural systems;

7. Empower all people and foster participation to build social capital;

8. Expand and enable co-operative networks among each of these communities to work towards a common, healthy, sustainable future;

9. Promote sustainable and healthy food production and consumption, through appropriate use of teachings, incentives appropriate technologies and effective demand management;

10. Enable continual improvement, based on measuring each step, program accountability, transparency and good governance.

Part Four

Recommendations:

Ten Steps to Better Health

Recommendations:

1. Increase health funding support

Build a "bridge" program to increase current planning and programming support, and to also broaden and customize health services to communities.

This report addresses a number of benchmarks and Weld County health intervention achievements. LiveWell Weld County is already addressing behavioral, environmental and social roots of health problems (See snapshot summaries below). Significant strategic funding investments were made through LiveWell Colorado and Steps to a Healthier Weld County grants (and other efforts). These actions opened and leveraged many health interventions in Weld County. Weld County is in a unique position as a transitioning rural/agricultural set of communities to a place of residence for many commuters. With a vision and well implemented action plan, the County can set a new model for the nation. Rural area health studies linked to land use are still rare. By more fully understanding how to bring about responsible growth in agricultural rich Weld County, we will have a model that will apply to most rural areas nationwide. To reduce or drop these early health investigations, interventions, and achievements would be a mistake, akin to a person dropping their nutrition program or fitness regimen soon after startup. Health intervention programs for a community or county are the same as for an individual. Long term personal and community health and cost containments are a lifelong program. The LiveWell Weld County staff is trained, motivated and able to act. Many county commissioners and community leaders are expecting support for positive health outcomes and they are able to act. This study urges all potential funders to act together to make Weld County an extraordinary health intervention provider success. This temporal health funding program will be phased out over five years, or shorter, as a new long term health prevention strategy and program is developed and set in place.

"address the behavioral, environmental and social roots of obesity,"

1. Advance a policy with stakeholders.

2. Reduce health disparities related to nutrition, physical activity and obesity.

3. Build leadership, capacity and synergy among stakeholders.

4. Reach every Coloradoan through a media campaign that inspires wellness.

5. Maximize investments in Colorado communities.

6. Effect change by ensuring impact and accountability.

The Weld County LiveWell initiative expanded on the experiences and successes related to chronic disease prevention during the past five years (2003-2008) through the Steps to a Healthier Weld County federal grant.

The Weld County LiveWell Initiative focused on four strategic Steps successes to drive policy and environmental changes.

1. Active Community Environment (ACE) policy work.

2. Community education, access to better nutrition, and opportunities for physical activity.

3. Integration of health and wellness into childhood education and recreation systems.

4. Creation of environments and advancement of policies that support healthy behaviors in worksites, restaurants and faith-based organizations.

Recommendations:

2. Find a Lasting Funding Source

Develop a sustainable funding mechanism tied to the health industry, state or county program that assures long term built environment and nutrition development. Decades ago, The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (a provincial Crown corporation established in 1973 to provide universal auto insurance to B.C. motorists) recognized that the long term costs of not addressing traffic safety would be in the mega-billions of dollars. This would be a deep cost to their customers who would continually pay higher and higher auto insurance premiums. A program to tie improvements in driver behaviors into auto insurance funding allowed the Province to tap into premiums for funding. A very slight added premium cost would lead to reduced long term premium costs, saving residents billions of dollars, along with reduced loss of life and long term care.

Similar programming through health insurance premiums, other health related surcharges, or a community health maintenance fund should be explored to reduce overall long term health costs. Although such a program may be best implemented at a state or national level, an early model could be applied to Weld County residents.

Rationale: Today, health care costs are nearing 20% of total personal income. There are some projections, that if we do not focus more heavily on health intervention programs (active living, community design and access to healthy foods) that this 20% figure could climb to 30% in our lifetimes. Add to this sprawl related auto dependence and transportation costs for a family are around 25% of the total family budget. This percentage of household spending (55%) leaves less for the remainder of life's needs (housing, food, entertainment, education). If health care and transportation could be reduced to European norms, Americans would have better access to those things they seek, and economies would be healthier.

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia provides this model language:

Revenue collected by the Corporation goes mostly into paying insurance benefits, while some is invested in fulfilling the Corporation's mandate to promote safe driving (the "Road Sense" campaign) and pursue other loss prevention strategies. Unanticipated profits incurred by the Corporation have been applied to lower premiums.

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia:

Revenue collected by the Corporation goes mostly into paying insurance benefits, while some is invested in fulfilling the Corporation's mandate to promote safe driving (the "RoadSense" campaign) and pursue other loss prevention strategies. Unanticipated profits incurred by the Corporation have been applied to lower premiums.

Why do we spend money on roads? Fewer crashes mean fewer injuries and wrecked cars — and fewer insurance claims. And these savings can be passed onto you. That's why our investments in road improvements are an investment in your safety. We fund road improvements based on getting back our investment — and more — in reduced claims costs. In 2009, we contributed approximately $8.1 million to road improvement around B.C., with the remainder provided by provincial and municipal road authorities.

Recommendations:

3. Build Social Capital by stitching together a series of health focused community building changes that people can mobilize around.

These changes should involve significant public participation. As public and stakeholder participation grows and is broadened, the ability to take on ever more meaningful projects will grow. The massive number of new sidewalks and streets in construction in Hudson, and the new community focused police station in Milliken are two great examples of community building achievements that have rallied and built social capital. Healthy and effective solutions depend on gaining support from the right stakeholders, not the usual stakeholders. Often, these are individuals who are not usually included in high-level decision making processes, and yet who hold a wealth of local knowledge and offer unique insights that encourage effective project and program design.

Reading through the comments of a number of stakeholder surveys, it is apparent that many people are uncertain about their future. They acknowledge that the population is shifting. They see that the economy is not only uncertain, but shifting toward a new focus. Mixed in with these emotions and uncertainties is a feeling of powerlessness among the population. In order to gain support for change, it is essential to build a broad base of social capital. By building social capital, it will be far easier to insert healthy environments at a much broader scale and at a much faster rate than seen in the past. Outcomes may include:

- Participants will feel motivated and confident to contribute to the process.
- Participants will have the same status and ability to influence the outcome regardless of their relative of power or influence.
- The process of engaging stakeholders across sectors qualifies the uneven spread of power.
- Control can be maintained over the process so that individual participants will be able to influence the direction or nature of the outcome.
- Local capacity is built, so that local ideas, expertise and capacity across sectors are brought together around a specific local issue. The premise is not to impose external solutions or expertise—rather to facilitate the development and implementation of a city specific approach that may be applied to a variety of issues and projects.

Recommendations:

4. Focus on food.

Recommendations #4-7 each address an important theme for accessing healthy foods. We must create opportunities to bring people together around the theme of "food access" in each of our seven pilot communities. This action will help catalyze and crystallize existing work for practical food access projects intended to achieve a positive identified outcome within each community. With a thousand or more mouths per community, there is a means to build quality food access.

Healthy eating must be taught and become the easy and affordable way to eat. A series of events should be planned for each town, ranging from community gardens to farmers markets to green grocers to a small community store that features healthy foods. A constant in our discussions among our seven study areas was the need to find one or more means to address food. Sadly, many farmers markets disappeared when a regional entrepreneur pulled up stakes. More needs to be learned about this situation, then corrected, working with the same individuals or finding new people to structure improved access to food. The following outcomes can be expected when we focus on locally grown food:

- Residents of all communities will feel motivated, engaged and informed on how to support local food economies, to make a shift from large chain store purchases to more convenient local stores that fully stock their daily food needs.

- Each community will have a well-trained, motivated and passionate advocate for food access. This interventionist will work with leaders in healthy food access, coordinate and train leaders in each community.

- A series of healthy food access outcomes will be established and underway in each of ten pilot communities within one year. The program will be expanded over time to include all 32 communities in Weld County.

- Each community food access outcome will be customized. In some towns, a bi-weekly or weekly food truck will be available two days a week. In others, an active farmers market will be established, and in others small, profitable grocers will be established.

Recommendations:

5. Launch Community Gardens

Community gardens not only provide food, they draw a community together, combat crime, reduce dependence on oil (bringing food closer to people). Ironically, with an abundance of commercially grown food throughout the County, it is mostly shipped off, leaving citizens here in a "food desert." Hence, a series of community gardens will help Weld County communities build precious social capital, a can-do attitude, a volunteer base, and provide access to fresh produce. Such a program also provides access to satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, a sense of community and a connection to the environment. Wow, that's a lot for a few seeds! As individuals learn to nurture young plants they are also nurturing themselves and their communities.

Gardening Approaches Can Vary: Community gardens can be as diverse as a community of gardeners. Some neighborhoods can have individual plots for personal use, while others may be equipped with raised beds for older or disabled gardeners. In arid areas, such as Weld County, community gardens can also install drip irrigation pipes. A land developer in Durango is developing a state-of-the-art system that can be modified and replicated throughout Weld County.

Other benefits: Community gardens encourage an urban community's food security, allowing citizens to grow their own food or for others to donate what they have grown. The gardens also combat two forms of alienation that plague modern urban life: they bring urban gardeners closer in touch with the source of their food and they break down isolation by creating a community. It has also been found that active communities experience less crime and vandalism.

Independence: Community garden advocates point out that locally grown food decreases a community's reliance on fossil fuels for transport of food from large agricultural areas. It also decreases the level of fossil fuels used in agricultural machinery, since more of the work is done manually. Community gardens involve a change in food systems in order to change food production.

Management: Community gardens are managed and maintained with the active participation of the gardeners themselves, rather than tended only by a professional staff. Weld County staff can help locate, train and support leaders of each community garden.

Recommendations:

6. Access Healthy Food

Today, Weld County residents have easier and better access to food that is low in nutritional value and high in calories than to healthy food. Many low-income communities in Weld county lack access to a supermarket within a reasonable walking distance. Because they often do not drive their own automobiles and public transportation is inadequate, the absence of nearby supermarkets often represents an inability to purchase nutritious, affordable food, particularly fresh fruit and vegetables and other perishables. Healthy diets therefore are compromised, contributing to a high prevalence of hunger, food insecurity and obesity.

The flight of supermarkets to the suburbs, inadequate public transportation, a car-centric culture and system, and a paucity of healthy foods at corner stores are all factors that contribute to lack of healthy food access in Weld County's low-income neighborhoods. However, recent studies and experiences indicate that this same deficiency also may represent an opportunity for development of small-scale grocery stores, designed to match specific demographics and other criteria, to provide healthy foods to residents of low-income neighborhoods and to be financially self-sustaining. Early experiences with a small core of self-motivated leaders and entrepreneurs in East Greeley is inspirational.

Although at first our efforts should be placed on food access for low-income communities, those least able to drive to access their foods, in time even the most affluent will benefit from food closer to where they live.

A variety of food access solutions can be explored. These models include farmers' markets, public markets, cooperative grocery stores, mobile stores, community supported agriculture, subscription farming, and a variety of joint ventures involving neighborhood corner stores.

Home grown and home produced food products, farmers markets, events to teach children the names of foods and how to buy food in a pretend market, are all steps that can lead to healthier lives.

Recommendations:

7. Farmer's Markets/Food Trucks

Weld County can create significant added food access by creating and helping set up management and support of farmers' markets in most neighborhoods, and certainly in all towns and cities. A calendar can be maintained and published for all residents helping them learn where to go and what they are likely to find at each market. Farmers' market produce is renowned for being locally grown and very fresh. Farmers' markets allow farmers to pick produce at the peak of flavor, preserve the nutritional content of fresh produce, and since locally grown produce does not travel as far to get to your table, the difference in mileage saves fossil fuels. Farmers' markets also create added social exchange, well beyond what happens in check out lines.

Farmers' markets can also feature produce grown naturally or organically, meats that are raised humanely on pasture, handmade farmstead cheeses, eggs and poultry from free-range fowl, as well as heirloom produce and heritage breeds of meat and fowl. In many countries with strict food safety laws, farmers' markets can be one of the few places beyond the farm gate to purchase raw food. Farmers' market advocates believe the markets help farmers stay in business as well as preserve natural resources. Food grown organically uses fewer pesticides, and therefore is less harsh to sensitive environments. Wholesale prices farmers get for their produce are very low, often near the cost of production. Farmers who sell direct to the public without going through a middle man get a better price. It can be shown that the preservation of farmland is important for the health of the environment and water supply. According to the American Farmland Trust, sustainable and managed farms conserve soil and clean water and provide a habitat for wildlife. Moreover, modern farmers' markets help maintain important social ties, linking rural and urban populations and even close neighbors in mutually rewarding exchange.

Mobile Farmers' Market. Duke University has created a Mobile Farmers Market, providing a convenient way to get fresh, local produce. This year's Spring/Summer mobile market offers fish, meat, and flowers in addition to the traditional summer vegetable fare. With such a program, food can be pre-purchased using order forms from various vendors, and then picked up weekly at convenient locations, and in some cases, delivered to homes. Mobile food markets can be created as a private enterprise, a form of community supported agriculture (CSA), a concept that encourages small farmers to sell directly to local customers.

Recommendations:

8. Active Aging Leadership

In just a few short years, nearly 25% of Americans will be over age 65. Our economy is not set up for this, our built environment will not fully support this, and our individual pocket books are now expected to fall short. In order to have health outcomes that keep our people physically active, within an easy walk to good food, affordable housing, leisure services, medical facilities and more, we will all suffer. We need a multi-faceted program to help our seniors. First priority in community design should be that all neighborhoods work for all ages. The community has defined a mission and a goal for advancing age-in-place programs and policies. The following actions should be addressed. Some are underway in Weld County, but can be strengthened.

- The community has defined goals or a mission for increasing older adult participation in active aging/physical activity.
- The community's governing body has conducted or commissioned a community assessment of older adult participation in active aging/physical programs or opportunities.
- The community has studied the feasibility, cost, impacts, time frame and leadership for creating/promoting active aging/physical activity for aging adults.
- The community is actively engaged in formulating plans and strategies for specifically linking smart growth initiatives with programs, amenities or opportunities that include active aging/physical activity for older adults.
- The community has established interagency committees, task forces, or other community partnerships with local aging organizations, service providers, and agencies to coordinate activities and programs with smart growth and active aging/physical activity components and work with community planners.
- The community has legislative, zoning, comprehensive plan initiatives and other policies in place or in consideration that include provision for both smart growth and active aging/physical activity programs or opportunities for older adults.
- The community has created pilot programs, or has existing programs for active aging/ physical activity for older adults who take advantage of the resources and environments created by local smart growth activities such as safe walking area, biking amenities, age-sensitive exercise trails, safe parks, etc.
- The community's comprehensive planning integrates smart growth principles and promotes application of these to encompass active aging/physical activity programs and opportunities for older adults.
- The community is increasing its capacity through actions such as budget allocation, staff resources, infrastructure improvement, etc. for systematically expanding age-in-place programs and policies.
- The community is reaching out to local/county/state officials and departments, land developers, and community organizations to expand age-in-place programs and policies.

Recommendations:

9. Create, inspire and retain leaders

Leaders are like plants, they must be nurtured. Weld County's health community must develop a culture that spawns, nurtures and supports great community leadership. Towns that lack leaders are doomed. The health initiatives needed to bring change with "sticking power" call for leaders (not just managers). Truly eloquent, collaborative and effective leaders will bring needed change to the county where improved land uses, improved transportation and greater access to all things for all people becomes commonplace. All money and energies (state, federal, foundation, corporate) flow to communities that demonstrate outstanding leadership. Leadership, as defined by Tom DeMarco, is the "process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task." Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen. Tom DeMarco says that leadership needs to be distinguished from posturing. Leadership remains one of the most relevant aspects of the organizational context. However, defining leadership has been challenging and definitions can vary depending on the situation. According to Ann Marie E. McSwain, Assistant Professor at Lincoln University, "leadership is about capacity: the capacity of leaders to listen and observe, to use their expertise as a starting point to encourage dialogue between all levels of decision-making, to establish processes and transparency in decision-making, to articulate their own values and visions clearly but not impose them. Leadership is about setting and not just reacting to agendas, creating the right vocabulary and language for projects and programs that are fresh and well directed. Leadership is about identifying problems, and initiating change that makes for substantial improvement rather than managing change."

In our analysis of successful communities throughout North America there is one common trait ... whether a community distinguishes itself with an outstanding trails program, a quality main street redevelopment, a recreation program, the best community police station in the world, these communities have emerged and grown their greatness by supporting top leadership. In our work in Weld County, we found outstanding leaders. By getting these leaders together, working with them, finding their common traits and inspirations, the health community can grow its potential into reality.

It will be important to grow leadership of a peculiar kind—one that taps into creative group genius. In his book on Group Genius (subtitle "The Creative Power of Collaboration"). Keith Sawyer hits the nail on the head. Creativity is collaborative. Those discoveries and revolutions, innovations and inventions that have done the most to transform life have been achieved through group collaboration. In groups where everyone contributes, truly inspiring and creative solutions are found. If we are to transform health and wellness in Weld County, only the most creative form of leadership will work.

Recommendations:

10. Build programs and projects that maximize community objectives.

Bring leaders and people together around projects that pull off more than one community objective. Almost all projects undertaken should lead to a healthier, more prosperous and sustainable community. But what about combining events and products that meet multiple objectives? For example, building a community garden in each neighborhood can take a set of unused vacant lots and make each an active use, get people to socialize, build social capital, green up a space, provide affordable food, improve street and home security.

The outcomes associated with this are incredible. As residents and other participants learn to work together, they better understand the value and fun of working collectively and collaboratively on a number of community projects.

Part Five

Weld County Comprehensive Plan Review

For Weld County to grow in a sustainable way, preserving its culture, rural and agricultural qualities, while embracing its next economy, it needs a language, a genetic code that will allow it to preserve, protect and enhance what makes it special ... and allow new growth. We review the existing comprehensive plan, sharing our insights on what makes it work... and pointing out options that leaders can consider.

Weld County Comprehensive Plan

Article I General Provisions
Division 1 Preface
Sec. 22-1-10 Introduction
Sec. 22-1-20 Overview of Weld County

Guiding Principles

Community Health not identified as a value
Of the six guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan there is nothing directly addressing health and happiness, not that there has to be, but there should be some language to address the community well-being. However, these principles appropriately capture the rural context for Weld County and identify key areas of contention that need to be considered when promoting ambitious health-oriented strategies. There will need to be significant balance of values to accommodate the massive amount of projected growth in a way that remains sensitive to these sentiments.

Division 2 General Provisions
Sec. 22-1-100 Definition and purpose of Comprehensive Plan
Sec. 22-1-110 Relationship to planning documents
Sec. 22-1-120 Comprehensive Plan guiding principles
Sec. 22-1-130 Principal plan components
Sec. 22-1-140 Planning process

Planning Process

Support for meeting Health objectives
The planning process language identifies community welfare and needs along with the use of professional judgment in the decision-making process. This is an important concept to balance in a county with strong property rights and the right to farm. This language sets a framework for establishing trade-offs and compromises, and opens the possibility to develop some incentive based strategies.

- Potential strategy – create health based incentives for developments

Sec. 22-1-150 Comprehensive Plan amendment procedure

Regional Urbanization Area

Controlling development through provision of services
The Regional Urbanization Area plays a critical role in establishing provisions for development and the extensions of services. The RUA process can be a key control for Weld County, and an opportunity to incentivize active and connected development and penalize or discourage sprawl form or poor connectivity.

- Potential strategy – Consider development of health based measures as part of the RUA process.

Caution – preliminary traffic impact analysis
The traffic impact analysis as detailed in the Comprehensive Plan only addresses motor vehicle trip generation. The emphasis on looking at motor vehicle impacts is based on the assumption of automobile-oriented development outcomes. It is important to identify and even discourage undesired increases on automobile travel.

- Potential strategy – Consider allowing development review that includes the allows for appropriately scaled, better connected design that is walking, biking and transit accessible as an offset to projected automobile trip genera-

tion. These same principles could also be applied for Sec 22-1-150 b, Modification to Land Use Class of Property already within the RUA or 22-1-150 c, Language Amendment to the RUA

Article II Types of Land Use
Sec. 22-2-10 Agriculture
Sec. 22-2-20 Agricultural goals and policies

Accessory residential quarters

Support for "age in place" and affordable worker housing
Goal 6 - "Encourage multi-generational, caretaker, guest and accessory quarters" allows for age-in-place outcomes without subdividing for development. Also there is potential to allow for affordable worker housing for small farm-based residences.

Goal 9

Encouragement for clustered development

Goal 9 – "Reduce potential conflicts between varying land uses in the conversion of traditional agricultural lands to other land uses" contains policy language that includes encouragement for development of clustered development having compact form, while at the same time identifying conservation of natural features. These policies have tremendous potential for allowing appropriate condensed rural developments or nodes and the ability to introduce transfer development rights to preserve valuable open/agricultural space if resources can be made available for this.

- Potential Strategy – Identify funding sources to facilitate purchase of transfer development rights to allow for preservation of valuable natural spaces and agriculture uses while ensuring the return on land investment for local farmers.

Sec. 22-2-30 **Urban development**
Sec. 22-2-40 Urban development goals and policies

Urban form

Encouragement of mixed-use well connected development
The goals and policies developed for urban development provide a very flexible model for good urban development. The language embraces compact, mixed-used transportation oriented form (would be even better to say multimodal).

The policies also include language encouraging efficient land use that recognizes that clustered higher density development minimizes the overall urban footprint on the county. Additionally, there is an emphasis on mixed use and housing variety, providing for some good tools to be employed that will encourage and incentivize better built form in urbanized areas, and emphasis on non-motorized connectivity.

Caution – Over built streets
One caveat, there is language that identifies the need for larger paved areas for roadways, that may not be consistent with health active built form. It is important for Weld county to identify appropriate street width standards that provide adequate space for road users but do not unnecessarily encourage higher vehicle speed that will be less inviting to walkers and bicyclists

Growth should pay for itself
This policy language first appears in relation to urban development, but is written into every section of the comprehensive plan and has great potential to establish tools for meeting community health goals. The county and communities have the ability to levy penalties on less desired development in the form of impact fees

- Potential Strategy – Health Impact fees, Heath scorecard

Develop fees for development that adds to the motorized travel and or limits to health opportunity while providing incentives for healthy outcomes. Consider development of a health checklist or scorecard that can provide allowances for development likely to improve health outcomes and penalize development that is identified to have negative health impacts.

Intergovernmental Agreements

The policy guidance identifies and encourages coordination through Intergovernmental Agreements. This is an important growth control tool, that is only valuable if there is strong support and participation in these agreements. The Intergovernmental Agreements could become the avenue for cooperative planning and growth strategies, especially if revenue or resources can be introduced to the arrangement to accommodate sharing the costs of growth. (perhaps special taxing districts with revenue sharing)

- Potential Strategy – Develop incentives to encourage participation in coordinated growth strategies

Urban Development Nodes

The Urban Development Node allows for concentrated urban development at intersecting state highway locations. This allowance for small unincorporated developments in remote locations, could be useful in promoting improved access to goods and services in a compact walkable form, but there is also potential for automobile-oriented development to prevail similar to the sprawl impacts of rural freeway exits.

Caution – Urban Development nodes should be tightly controlled to ensure that developments meet healthy outcomes that do not increase reliance on automobile to access goods and services.

Sec. 22-2-50 Unincorporated communities and historic town sites
Sec. 22-2-60 Unincorporated communities and historic town sites goals and policies
Sec. 22-2-70 Industrial development
Sec. 22-2-80 Industrial development goals and policies
Sec. 22-2-90 Commercial development
Sec. 22-2-100 Commercial development goals and policies

Access to food

The commercial development goals and policies identify neighborhood commercial uses without specifying types. The county should define what these needs are and how to connect them in a more holistic form, i.e. neighborhood grocers, farmer markets, coffee shops, dry goods, boutiques, etc.

Potential Strategy – Provide incentives to allow for, encourage small neighborhood markets, farmer's markets and food trucks.

Caution – Traffic Impacts - The policy suggests that neighborhood commercial should only be "neighborhood oriented", and identifies increased vehicle traffic as an undesirable impact. Providing certain commercial services such as grocers and restaurant will generate some traffic, but being accessible will reduce the need for vehicle trips for residents. This language, leads to development review using ITE trip generation charts to deny many commercial services from being located in a mixed residential environment.

Potential Strategy – Establish tools to incentivize walk/bike oriented commercial by allowing for a scale of use at appropriate size with limited parking to be exempt from these standards. This could include but not be limited to innovative business models such as a satellite grocer that provides home delivery, in addition to walk-friendly food access

Pay its own way commercial

More guidance is included emphasizing that commercial development is expected to pay for additional costs associated with service impacts.

Potential Strategy – Expand the scope of Pay its own way to allow for special commercial taxing districts that could finance maintenance agreements for quality public amenities like plazas and streetscapes that attract foot/bike traffic.

Mobility-oriented commercial development

The commercial policy includes support commercial development that accommodates a full range of mobility needs. This is clear guidance to encourage accessible commercial development that will increase the likelihood that Weld county residents can meet basic needs by walking and biking or transit.

Sec. 22-2-110 Residential development
Sec. 22-2-120 Residential development goals and policies
Essential residential services
The policies for residential development include requiring provision of supporting utilities, public services and related facilities. This generally is interpreted to mean government services such as police, fire, schools and infrastructure like streets and sidewalks. Could access to healthy food without reliance on an automobile be considered essential?

Potential Strategy – Develop incentives for development to provide residents with access to healthy food and retail while minimizing unnecessary automobile trips (Examples could include locating new development in locations where nonmotorized connections to existing services can be included, or encouraging small scale commercial as a desired element of residential development).

Diverse housing options
The guidance identifies the need for diverse housing options in the introduction to this section. This is a helpful policy when considering strategies to encourage live where you work, aging in place and affordable housing opportunities.

Roadway dedication/reservation in housing development

Goal 2 identifies facility needs for residential development that includes a strategy (R.2.1.a) to reserved ROW for roadways outside of the subdivision process to allow for transportation needs. There is nothing to address the types of roadway users or facility types that may be associated with growth.

Potential Strategy – Expand the definition of roadways in this section to include other connections including trails, paths and sidewalks that will merit consideration in the transportation plan. See further discussion about this in transportation section.
Healthy Urban Design Standards

Goal 8 of residential development is possibly the most health-focused goal contained in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to emphasizing parks and open space in good residential design, there is clear encouragement for mixed-use development that is not just walkable, but is likely to result in more walking. Policy 8.3. "As Appropriate, incorporate neighborhood design techniques, so that ordinary activities of daily living can occur within walking distance of most residents." This includes a recommended Strategy to develop a handbook.

Potential Strategy – Actively pursue development of the handbook as a healthy development guide that could be a catalyst for development of health scorecards for Weld county.
Accessory units

Goal 9 provides strong guidance for developing affordable housing options to encourage a wider range of housing opportunities for multi-generational quarters and caretakers, or granny flats. Additionally, the recommended strategy to review regulations for zoning of accessory units to provide for this goal to be met.

Potential Strategy – Expedite the review of the zoning regulations with the identification and removal of barriers to meeting this goal. Consider developing tools to ensure model development of accessory dwellings that reflect the values of the community and reduce potential for any absentee landlord outcomes.

Sec. 22-2-130 Regional Urbanization Areas
Sec. 22-2-140 Regional Urbanization Areas (RUA) goals and policies
See previous comments about RUA
Article III Land Use Amenities
Sec. 22-3-10 Public facilities and services
Sec. 22-3-20 Fire protection
Sec. 22-3-30 Law enforcement
Sec. 22-3-40 Public facility and services, fire protection and law enforcement goals and policies
This section is could be expanded to capture the community health goals for Weld county. The health and welfare of the community is directly tied to the ability to access healthy options including opportunities to be active.

Potential Strategy – Establish a policy to emphasize the need for development to include amenities that contribute to positive health outcomes and improved access to healthy food and services. These policies could be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan through amendment or update, but may be suited to establishing a health chapter to the comprehensive plan

Sec. 22-3-50 Transportation
Sec. 22-3-60 Transportation goals and policies
Transportation Language
There are numerous elements with the language and policies related to transportation provision in this section and throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The language and assumptions related to transportation follow much of the traditional auto-oriented practices that will need to be remedied if access to real options are to be achieved.
Marginalizing non-automobile modes
Section E of the introduction identifies that sidewalks and trails can be found on the "recreational" transportation facilities map. Including these facilities as part of a "recreational" facilities map suggests that these systems are not legitimate transportation, but rather recreational uses that are not essential when considering transportation plans and investment.

Potential Strategy – Ensure that biking and walking facilities are explicitly identified as part of the county transportation plan and develop a unified transportation map that included all mobility options.

Biased Language
Further, the goal and subsequent strategies for developing a Transportation Master Plan does not provide strong policy for achieving balanced transportation
Example text from the Transportation Goals section:

A. T.Goal 1. Maintain a Transportation Master Plan that is comprehensive, addressing the future multi-modal transportation needs of all areas of the County.
1. T.Policy 1.1. Accommodate the other transportation Goals and Policies listed in this Section in a Transportation Master Plan.
a. Recommended Strategy T.1.1.a. Develop a Transportation Master Plan with the following elements:
• Seek fiscal responsibility for the future through the Transportation Master Plan. Reduce the need and demand for infrastructure and services, when possible, and provide for them in the most cost-effective manner.
• Utilize regional road designs that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs), where possible, to decrease the per capita amount of demand for roads.

The language is very unassertive in regards to reducing unnecessary automobile travel in Weld County. The need to minimize demand for infrastructure by reducing VMT is modified by "when possible or where possible". This objective could be greatly strengthened by simply adding language that provides less opportunity for exception.
Alternative – Remove words
• Seek fiscal responsibility for the future through the Transportation Master Plan. Reduce the need and demand for infrastructure and services, and provide for them in the most cost-effective manner.

• Utilize regional road designs that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs), to decrease the per capita amount of demand for roads.

• Consider alternative modes of transportation, including trails and transit, as possible options.
• Consider the potential impacts of alternative technologies on future transportation systems.
• Attempt to maintain road service levels, without compromising other Goals and Policies.
• Coordinate all elements of the Transportation Master Plan with other federal, state and local jurisdictions, including local metropolitan planning organizations. Propose alternatives when there are discrepancies, and seek other agencies' support when alternatives are proposed. • Consider the needs of the whole population to access services such as health services, libraries, etc.
• Encourage partnerships with special districts, municipalities and private entities to provide economical transportation.

These objectives are marginalized by weak language that suggests potential impacts and alternative modes should be "considered" or"attempted". Policy language written in this manner can an often does result in routine consideration and rare occasions where actual accommodation is made.

Alternative – Remove and or modify language
• Develop alternative modes of transportation, including trails and transit, as viable options.
• Evaluate the potential impacts of alternative technologies on future transportation systems.
• Maintain road service levels, without compromising other Goals and Policies.
• Coordinate all elements of the Transportation Master Plan with other federal, state and local jurisdictions, including local metropolitan planning organizations. Propose alternatives when there are discrepancies, and seek other agencies' support when alternatives are proposed. • Consider the needs of the whole population to access services such as health services, libraries, etc.
B. T.Goal 2. Ensure that funding mechanisms for transportation are adequate to provide a sufficient level of service.
1. T.Policy 2.1. Maintain a five-year Capital Improvements Plan and road impact fees to meet the need for capacity expansion. Impose road impact fees within specified areas to assure that new development contributes its proportionate share.
a. Recommended Strategy T.2.1.a. Develop and maintain a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for the transportation needs of the County.

Presuming the need for capacity expansion undermines transportation planning principles. When presented as written, it is easy for stakeholders and decision makers to assume that capacity expansion is a foregone conclusion.

Alternative – Restate without biased assumption
Maintain a five-year Capital Improvements Plan and road impact fees to accommodate future mobility needs.

E. T.Goal 5. Promote safe corridors for walking, cycling and other similar modes of transportation in both rural and urban areas.
1. T.Policy 5.1. Utilize existing street and highway systems. Encourage off-road paths or trails for pedestrian and bicyclists.
2. T.Policy 5.2. Utilize paved shoulders, grade separation and other appropriate design considerations to enhance the safety and capacity of routes for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
3. T.Policy 5.3. Encourage the planning and construction of bikeways and pedestrian walkways, which are an inte-

gral part of the transportation system. Promote bikeways and sidewalks in new developments where warranted.

Promote bikeways to link residential and employment areas, commercial centers, recreational and open space areas and educational facilities.
G. T.Goal 7. Encourage a variety of transit options.
1. T.Policy 7.1. Encourage the use of public transit and higher vehicle occupancy rates.
2. T.Policy 7.2. Encourage effective means of transport that increase energy efficiency, as well as promote improved air quality.
3. T.Policy 7.3. Encourage the use of public transit systems by promoting convenient access points. Integrate transit services with other modes by incorporating such facilities as busways, bicycle facilities, fringe parking and terminal facilities.
4. T.Policy 7.4. Encourage private and public regional efforts to improve transit service.
5. T.Policy 7.5. Support transit-ready urban development, so that when transit is available to the urban areas of the County, existing development patterns and site design do not hinder transit service.

This section continues to offer soft guidance about alternative modes. Promoting, supporting and encouraging safe corridors is a good concept if we are speaking about outreach and education initiatives, but when the language is policy guidance for development and infrastructure investments stronger language is more appropriate.

Alternative – Modify Language
E. T.Goal 5. Establish safe corridors for walking, cycling and other similar modes of transportation in both rural and urban areas.
1. T.Policy 5.1. Utilize existing street and highway systems. Encourage off-road paths or trails for pedestrian and bicyclists.
2. T.Policy 5.2. Utilize paved shoulders, grade separation and other appropriate design considerations to enhance the safety and capacity of routes for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
3. T.Policy 5.3. Ensure the planning and construction of bikeways and pedestrian walkways, which are an integral part of the transportation system. Promote bikeways and sidewalks in new developments where warranted. Promote bikeways to link residential and employment areas, commercial centers, recreational and open space areas and educational facilities.
G. T.Goal 7. Facilitate a variety of transit options.
1. T.Policy 7.1. Encourage the use of public transit and higher vehicle occupancy rates.
2. T.Policy 7.2. Encourage effective means of transport that increase energy efficiency, as well as promote improved air quality.
3. T.Policy 7.3. Encourage the use of public transit systems by promoting convenient access points. Integrate transit services with other modes by incorporating such facilities as busways, bicycle facilities, fringe parking and terminal facilities.
4. T.Policy 7.4. Encourage private and public regional efforts to improve transit service.
5. T.Policy 7.5. Incentivize transit-ready urban development, so that when transit is available to the urban areas of the County, existing development patterns and site design do not hinder transit service.
• Potential Strategy – Develop a transportation language policy that provide clear and unbiased policy guidance. (See Ian/West Palm Beach)

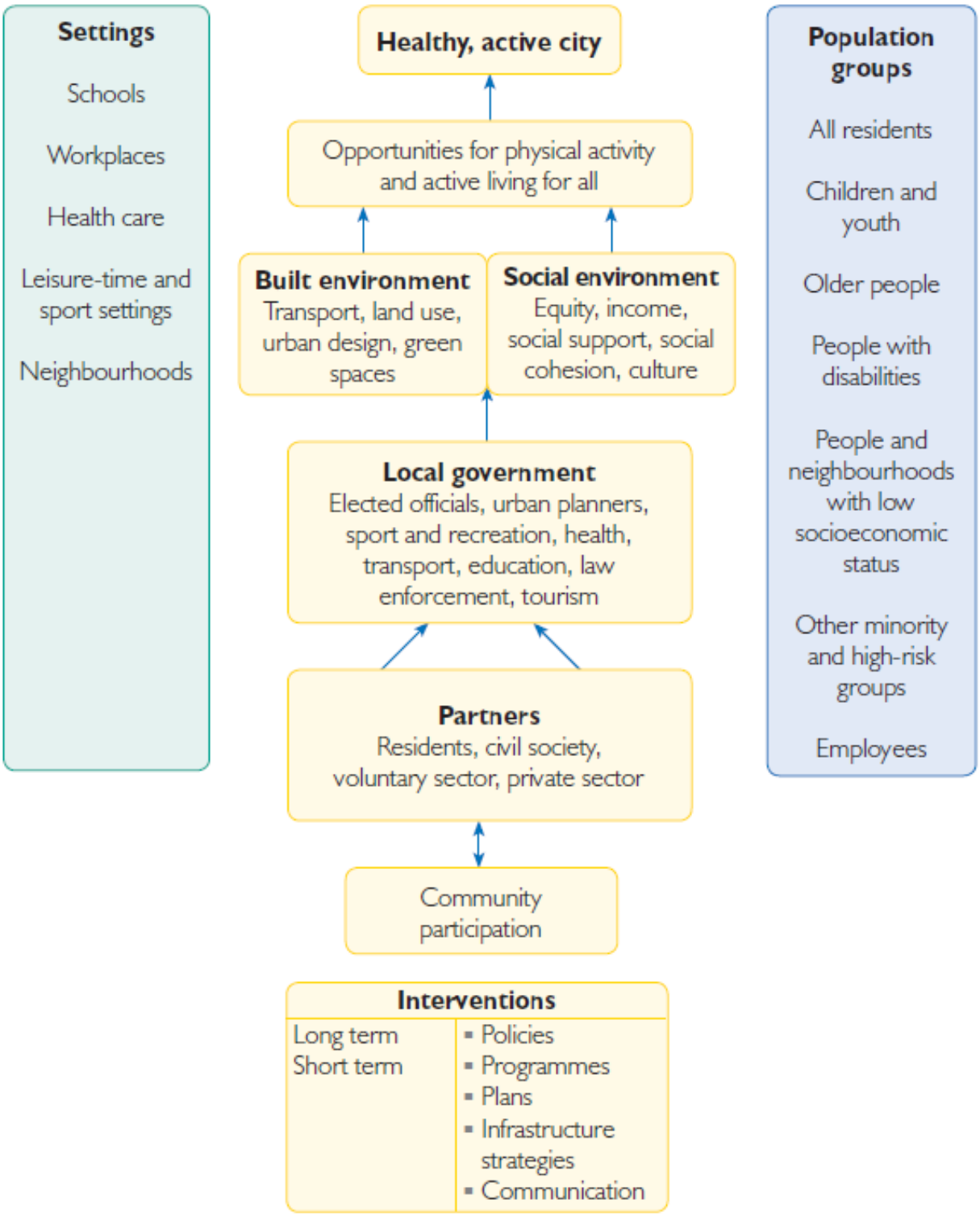
Sec. 22-3-70 Tourism goal
Article IV Environmental Resources
Sec. 22-4-10 Purpose
Sec. 22-4-20 Water
Sec. 22-4-30 Water goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-40 Air
Sec. 22-4-50 Air goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-60 Noise

Sec. 22-4-70 Noise goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-80 General waste
Sec. 22-4-90 Waste transfer, processing and diversion
Sec. 22-4-100 Waste transfer, processing and diversion goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-110 Waste final disposal
Sec. 22-4-120 Waste final disposal goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-130 Mineral resource exploration and production waste
Sec. 22-4-140 Mineral resource exploration and production waste goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-150 Biosolids and septage waste
Sec. 22-4-160 Biosolids and septage waste goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-170 Hazardous waste
Sec. 22-4-180 Hazardous waste goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-190 Agricultural waste
Sec. 22-4-200 Agricultural waste goals and policies
Sec. 22-4-210 Noxious weeds goals and policies
Article V Natural Resources
Sec. 22-5-10 Purpose
Sec. 22-5-20 Wildlife
Sec. 22-5-30 Wildlife goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-40 Open space, parks and recreation
Sec. 22-5-50 Open space, parks and recreation goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-60 General resources
Sec. 22-5-70 Commercial mineral deposits ("aggregate") and ore mineral resources
Sec. 22-5-80 General commercial mineral deposits ("aggregate") and ore mineral resources goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-90 Oil and gas deposits
Sec. 22-5-100 Oil and gas goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-110 Other natural resources
Sec. 22-5-120 Other natural resources goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-130 Alternative energy resources
Sec. 22-5-140 Alternative energy resources goals and policies
Sec. 22-5-150 Use of resources
Sec. 22-5-160 Use of resources goals and policies
Article VI Economic Development
Sec. 22-6-10 Economic development
Sec. 22-6-20 Economic development goals and policies

Sustaining local/small independent businesses?
Most of the goals and policies for economic development seem to be directed at maintaining large employment based business and attracting new industry. There is nothing in this section that values the existing small, independent business or tools to sustain these important parts of the economy. Further there are no efforts identified to encourage small business development within the community. Is there an interest in providing tools to maintain the competitiveness of local businesses and perhaps provide incubators for developing new community-scale business opportunities? There could be potential to develop small farm-based commercial tools to encourage connections between what is grown in Weld county and what Weld count eats.

Appendix

Fig. 1. A framework for creating a healthy, active city



Box 2. Some key findings from an analysis of active living in cities in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network

- Most member cities viewed active living as an important issue for urban planning, such as improving visual appeal, enhancing social cohesion, creating a more sustainable transport system and reducing inequality in public health.
- Most member cities reported action initiated to promote active living, with an emphasis on actions targeting the built and social environment to promote walking and cycling.
- Many efforts to promote active living are nested in programmes to prevent obesity among adults and children.
- Only eight cities mentioned an integrated framework specific for active living.
- The health care sector was clearly involved in 25 actions, predominantly as an arena to identify and reach sedentary individuals and to initiate disease prevention programmes.
- Frequently mentioned barriers to promoting active living included lack of funding and lack of commitment from decision-makers.
- Better evaluation methods are needed to improve the evidence base on which actions are effective to promote different types of active living among different groups, since evaluation strategies appeared to be insufficient.
- Future challenges include establishing integrated policy specific for active living, introducing a larger range of actions and increasing funding and capacity to make a difference at the population level.

Source: Faskunger JT. Active living in healthy cities. *Journal of Urban Health* (in press).

Box 3. The inactivity problem

Despite the clear benefits of active living to both individuals and communities, Europe is facing a huge inactivity problem, which is a critical factor in increased rates of chronic diseases and obesity.

- Two thirds of the people older than 15 years in the European Union are not physically active at recommended levels for health *(2)*.
- Europe-wide, less than one third of schoolchildren appear to meet recognized physical activity guidelines *(3)*.
- Physical inactivity increases the risk of many chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer *(4)*.
- Overweight affects 30–80% of adults in the countries of the WHO European Region. About 20% of the children in the European Region are overweight, and one third of these are obese *(5)*.
- Physical inactivity causes an estimated 600 000 deaths per year in the WHO European Region and leads to a loss of 5.3 million years of healthy life expectancy per year *(6)*.
- The economic consequences of physical inactivity have been shown to be substantial for health care costs but even greater on indirect costs, which include the value of economic output lost because of illness, disease-related work disability and premature death *(7,8)*.

Box 4. Key influences on physical activity in the built and social environments

- People walk and cycle more when destinations such as shops and schools are close by and are connected by pedestrian-friendly streets *(10,11)*.
- Policies that improve walkability and mixed land use also increase community cohesion and perceptions of personal security *(10)*.
- Traffic-calming measures and policy changes at the local level increase pedestrian and bicycle travel *(12)*.
- Disadvantaged populations are less likely to have easy access to the places that encourage a healthy lifestyle, such as safe streets and sidewalks, playgrounds, parks, trails and community gardens *(13)*.
- Even high-income countries have steep social class gradients in pedestrian injury rates, and the relationship between lower social class and more injuries among child pedestrians is well established *(14)*.
- Participation in physical activity differs by sex. Across all countries and regions in Europe, girls are less active than boys and the gender gap increases with age *(3)*.
- Social support interventions in community settings (such as neighbourhoods, workplaces and universities) can result in a 44% increase in the duration of time spent being physically active and a 20% increase in the frequency of physical activity *(15)*.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) summarizes the research on factors in the built and social environments that influence physical activity and findings related to specific population groups and settings.

Box 5. A three-stage planning process

Stage 1. Getting started

1. Build commitment
2. Form a leadership group
3. Create a vision
4. Profile the city, neighbourhoods and target population groups
5. Consult with residents and stakeholders
6. Identify opportunities and constraints
7. Identify funds and resources
8. Set goals and objectives

Stage 2. Preparing a plan

1. Develop key interventions
   - Policies
   - Programmes
   - Plans
   - Infrastructure strategy
   - Communication
2. Set priorities for intervention options in the built environment
3. Set priorities for intervention options in the social environment
4. Set priorities for intervention options in specific settings
5. Strengthen individual intentions

Stage 3. Implementing the plan and measuring success

1. Stage implementation
2. Evaluate your progress
3. Share your results
4. Review and update your plan

Source: adapted from *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual (16).*

Box 6. Partners in physical activity planning: the public sector, civil society and the voluntary sector and the private sector

Public sector

Elected officials

Sport and recreation

Health

Transport

Urban planning

Education

Law enforcement

Tourism

Civil society and the voluntary sector

Voluntary organizations in sport, culture, nature and health

Representatives of residents and special groups

Informal groups

Private sector

Employers

Employees

Fitness clubs and dance schools

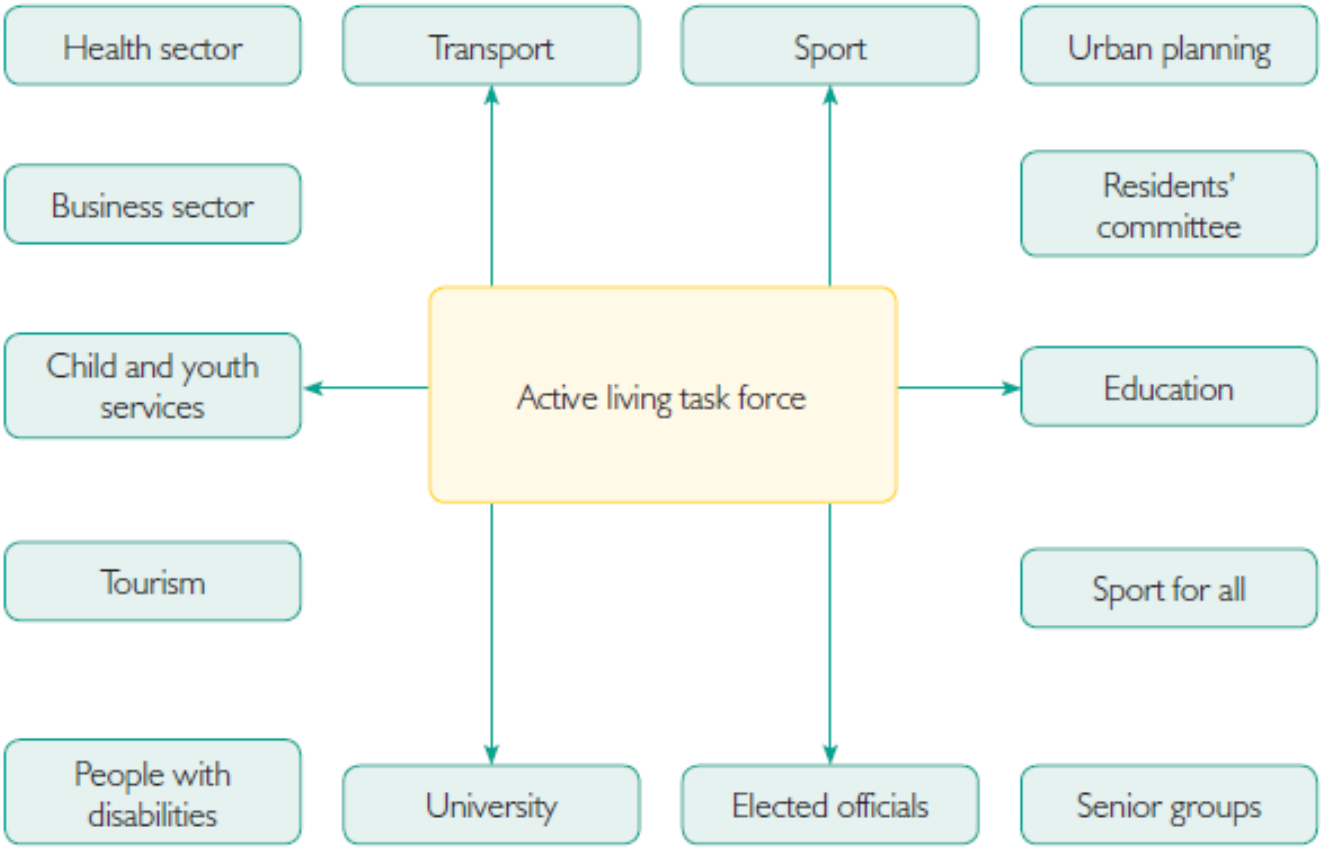
Corporate sponsors

Mass media

Box 7. The social and economic benefits of sport and physical activity

- The provision of recreation and sport activities for children, as part of a package to help sole-support parents on social assistance, can contribute to moving more families off social assistance *(17)*.
- Involvement in sport and physical activity can result in greater community ownership and care of local facilities and resources and can build capacity, skills and confidence in communities, enabling them to tackle wider community issues *(18)*.
- A United States study showed that physically active people have lower annual direct health care costs than inactive people and that increasing regular moderate physical activity among inactive adults might reduce the annual national direct health care costs by many billions of dollars *(19)*.
- Employers also benefit, since having a physically active workforce can lead to reductions in absenteeism and increased productivity *(20)*.
- Sport can be useful in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour if programmes are designed to address specific factors *(21)*.
- Medium- or high-density towns and cities in which trips are already being made mainly using public transport, walking and cycling spend the least on providing transport for their inhabitants *(22)*.
- The economic benefits of hosting major sporting events such as the Olympics have been shown to be negligible, but political, development and sociocultural benefits can occur *(23)*. Events such as marathon running and cycling attract participants and tourists and increase the prestige and recognition of the host city.
- Cities can also devise urban regeneration strategies around sporting events. For example, development for the 2012 Olympics will centre in Stratford, Borough of Newham, East London – one of the capital's most diverse and economically deprived areas. The redevelopment of brownfield sites and a transport hub will significantly improve the face of this neighbourhood *(24)*.

Fig. 2. Sample physical activity task force or leadership group



Box 8. Ideas for creating a shared vision for active living

1. Look into the future

"It is 10 years from now and our city has just won a national award for being a healthy, active city that enables all its citizens to be physically active on a daily basis."

"Imagine you are in a hot-air balloon floating over our city 15 years from today. Our city is known to be an ideal place for active living by all."

2. Describe what you see.

Observe the total scene – people, places and happenings. Cruise down streets and visit parks, workplaces, health care facilities and schools. Check out modes of transport and city council meetings. Listen to what the mass media are covering. Observe what older people and people with disabilities are doing. Smell the air, plants and green spaces; listen for laughter and road traffic noises. Draw what you see or write it down in short descriptive sentences.

3. Look backwards.

"If this were the future, and this vision has happened, what was done?"

"How did we get this outcome?"

Box 9. Information to consider when profiling target populations and neighbourhoods

Demographics: age, sex, race and ethnicity, marital status, presence of children in the home

Socioeconomic status: income status, social status, education level, housing status, employment status and occupation level, social exclusion and inclusion

Geographical information: clustered or scattered, characteristics of neighbourhoods: what places are shared: schools, workplaces, shops, community health centres places of worship, etc.?

Current behaviours and lifestyle: how physically active are they? What competes with being physically active? What kinds of activities do they like to do? What are their current modes of transport?

Awareness and knowledge: how much do they know about the benefits of physical activity and the risks associated with sedentary living?

Values, beliefs and attitudes: how important is a healthy, active lifestyle to them? Do they view physical activity as valuable and important? What do they perceive are the major barriers to being active? How ready are they to change (that is, become more physically active)? What would make physical activity more fun and attractive to them?

Health, ability and confidence levels: do they have health conditions that limit their ability to participate? Do they have the skills they need to be physically active? How confident are they in their ability to be active?

Cultural norms and social networks: do cultural customs, beliefs and traditions hinder or support participation by women, men and children? Who would support them in being physically active? Who is in their key informal networks? To what organizations do they belong?

Access and use: are existing sport and physical programmes, natural resources (such as trails and rivers), activity facilities (such as playing fields, playgrounds and schools) and options for active transport available, accessible and affordable to this population? Do they make use of these? If no, why not?

Box 11. Sample goal statements for a physical activity plan

Built environment

To increase opportunities for active living in the built environment through planning processes and urban design that: encourage active transport (such as cycling and walking) and the use of public transport; control road traffic and reduce car use; support easy access to local destinations, green spaces and recreation areas; and provide streets and neighbourhoods that are well connected, appealing and safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Social environment

To increase opportunities for active living in the social environment by recognizing and building on the strengths of a diverse population, reducing inequity, increasing social support for active living, enhancing security and crime prevention, addressing real and perceived threats to participation, effectively communicating with the public, offering campaigns and events and working in partnership to providing innovative programming in recreation and sport for all ages and groups.

Specific settings

To increase opportunities for physical activity in schools (from day care to university), workplaces, health care settings, recreation and sport facilities, neighbourhoods and homes.

Population groups

To improve understanding of the benefits of active living and increase opportunities for active living for all residents (with a special emphasis on children, youth, older people and employees) and to reduce inequity in physical activity for people with disabilities, people and neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status and other minority and high-risk groups.

Box 12. About city-wide comprehensive campaigns

City-wide comprehensive campaigns can influence both the behaviour of individuals and the social systems in which they live. These campaigns can also create institutional and organizational support for behaviour change goals.

These campaigns typically use both mass media and direct interpersonal programmes to reach the general public and specific population groups. Mass-media messages are combined with organizational efforts directed toward schools, workplaces, health care settings and communities. Interventions are conducted in stages based on the assumption that people modify their behaviour in a process that requires different types of support at different times. They target multiple audiences, use multiple channels of communication and involve multiple partners and stakeholders. Some address more than one type of health behaviour, such as combining a campaign for physical activity and healthy eating. This approach is particularly useful if there are concerns about obesity in the population.

Box 13. Pay attention to special population groups

- Ensure that children and young people have safe places to play. Make some city streets active leisure zones suitable for children's play and ensure that housing developments incorporate shared play areas in common spaces. Provide interesting, safe, well-maintained playgrounds, wading pools, outdoor skating rinks, skateboard parks, sport fields and cycling paths that children and young people can use.
- Encourage active socialization for older adults. Improve walkability, especially in areas where older people live: provide well-maintained sidewalks, benches for resting, adequate lighting and shaded and attractive streetscapes. Encourage the development of places for socialization on city streets, such as coffee shops and small markets. Provide spaces for older people to be active in local parks and green spaces with activities such as tai chi, bocce ball or pétanque, crocket, dog walking and organized group walks. In cities in cold climates, ensure that sidewalks are clear of ice in winter.
- Increase access to active spaces. Put playgrounds, sporting areas, trails and parks within walking or wheeling distance. Provide free or subsidized access to swimming pools and other facilities to children and youth, older adults and people with disabilities.
- Improve accessibility to public transport and/or provide transport to recreation facilities for people with disabilities, older adults and families in disadvantaged circumstances.
- Ensure that residential settings for all income groups have full opportunities for health-promoting transport and equal access to green spaces. Set targets for achieving this.

Box 14. A key priority: reducing inequity in physical activity

Disadvantaged populations (especially those with low incomes) are less likely to be able to afford or have access to a gym; user fees may prohibit low-income families from participating in recreation programmes and sports. Disadvantaged populations are less likely to have easy access to the places that encourage an active lifestyle, such as safe streets and sidewalks, parks, trails and community gardens. When they do choose to be active, they often face disproportionate risks related to road safety and the real or perceived risk of crime.

Neighbourhood renewal schemes that provide facilities and equipment for active living (such as basketball courts, skateboarding parks, playgrounds and soccer fields), safe routes to school and to public transport stations and establishing safe neighbourhood parks can reduce inequity in access and choices for physical activity. Programmes that are culturally sensitive can draw in women, young people in minority populations and other groups that are often excluded from mainstream sport and physical activity programmes. Accessibility and integration are key to enabling people with disabilities to enjoy enhanced levels of participation.

Box 15. Essentials for changing behaviour among inactive populations

Leading behavioural scientists suggest the following points to be essential elements for behaviour change among inactive populations.

1. They must believe that the benefits of being active (improved health, more energy, social time with friends etc.) outweigh the disadvantages (cost and time).
2. Performing the behaviour must be consistent with their self-image and not violate personal standards or values: that is, they must see perceive more social acceptance and pressure to perform the behaviour than not to do it.
3. They must have the skills necessary to perform the behaviour.
4. They must be ready to change: that is, have a strong commitment and intention to follow through.
5. Their self-efficacy must be high: that is, they believe they are capable of performing the behaviour.
6. Their environment must be free of constraints that make being active difficult or impossible and provide social support and opportunities to be active in a variety of settings.

Experts in a consensus workshop saw all of these as important factors but identified three – 3, 4 and 6 – as essential and sufficient for this behaviour change to occur *(26)*.

Box 16. Elements of successful programme and policy implementation

In 2002, at a joint Consultation on Physical Activity Policy between WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, participants developed a policy framework for physical activity. In terms of implementation, the following elements were identified as necessary for success:

- consultation and needs assessment;
- written plan and objectives;
- surveillance of physical activity patterns, policy, public opinion and environments;
- stable base of support;
- clear programme identity and message;
- coalitions, partnerships, leaders and champions and intersectoral action;
- multiple intervention strategies, sites, populations at all levels;
- integration of physical activity efforts with overall noncommunicable disease prevention and with the policies of related sectors;
- focus on physical activity providing enjoyment and social interaction; and
- evaluation throughout the process.

Source: Shephard et al. *(26)*.

Box 17. Types of evaluation

There are four main types of evaluation.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation focuses on activities that are in the planning stages to ensure that they are based on stakeholders' needs and using effective and appropriate materials and procedures. Formative evaluation includes such things as: needs assessment, programme logic models, pretesting communication materials and audience analysis.

Process evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on activities that are already underway. They examine the procedures and tasks involved in implementing the strategy. They seek to answer the question, "What services, activities and interventions are actually being delivered and to whom?". Process evaluation includes such things as tracking the quantity and description of people who are reached and tracking the quantity, quality and types of services and interventions provided. It also includes assessing how communication channels are working and funding for developing and implementing the plan.

Summative evaluation

Summative evaluation focuses on activities that are already underway or completed. They can include changes in attitudes, knowledge or behaviour, changes in morbidity or mortality rates, number of people participating or served, cost–benefit analysis and cost–effectiveness analysis. Summative evaluation investigates the effects of the activity, both intended and unintended. Impact evaluation asks "Did the activity make a difference?"; and outcome evaluation asks "Did the activity meet its stated goals and objectives?".

Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation can assess both short-term outcomes (immediate changes in individuals or participants, such as participation rates, awareness, knowledge or behaviour) and long-term outcomes, which look at the larger impacts of a programme or policy on a community. Outcome evaluation can also analyse the results in relation to the costs of the programme.

Source: Van Marris & King *(28)*.

Tool 7. A checklist for identifying activities with which to proceed

This checklist identifies some criteria that can be used to set priorities among and select activities and interventions with which to proceed. Not all criteria apply to every activity; you also may have additional ones to apply.

Rank the activities from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

Will achieve the goals and objectives of the plan	1 2 3 4
Will address the needs of targeted audiences and groups	1 2 3 4
Will help to reduce inequity	1 2 3 4
Recognizes and supports diversity	1 2 3 4
Can produce the desired results in the desired time frame	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by stakeholders and the leadership group	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by residents of the community or city	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by partners in a variety of sectors	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by external funding agents	1 2 3 4
Has a clear lead agency or department	1 2 3 4
Takes full advantage of existing resources and initiatives	1 2 3 4
Can be implemented with available financial resources	1 2 3 4
Can be implemented with available staff and voluntary resources	1 2 3 4
Will not conflict with or duplicate other initiatives	1 2 3 4
Can be realistically implemented within the time frame	1 2 3 4
Can be evaluated	1 2 3 4
Is sustainable over the long term	1 2 3 4
Will attract mass-media support	1 2 3 4

Source: adapted from *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual (16)*.

The following document is a model of what Weld County could require of all new development in order to assess the walkability and bikeability of proposed projects.

Project:_____Date:_____
Location of Project: _____

A Walkable & Bicycle Friendly Checklist for Weld County

Project Recommendations
When designing a new development, Weld County should consider having planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers and developers check proposed development projects carefully for their potential walkability and bikeability. Small details make a big difference and can lead to a healthier lifestyle.

Please check off items as you go through the list. Submit this list, along with your design plans.

INITIAL ANALYSIS

- ☐ Imagine a virtual walk of the project from various surrounding locations and from within the project. Imagine that you are walking to the project from the nearest bus stop, the nearest residential area, etc.
- ☐ Imagine a virtual bike ride to the project from various surrounding locations.
- ☐ Plot the potential walking and biking routes from the various surrounding locations.
- ☐ Identify potential barriers to walking and biking for the project and how they might be removed.
- ☐ Visit the location of the potential project and walk and bike in the vicinity of the project.

CONNECTIVITY – How well does the project connect to the surrounding community for walkers and bikers?

- ☐ Are direct, short and clearly adjacent routes to entrances provided?
- ☐ Does the building or project provide convenient access from neighboring uses?
- ☐ If feasible, is access provided on all sides?
- ☐ Does the project provide short cuts for bicyclists and walkers to adjacent uses?
- ☐ Does the project give priority to access to walkers and bicyclists? Does the project encourage you to walk or bike?
- ☐ Does the project connect to nearby walking/biking lanes or trails?

ENTRANCES

- ☐ Are entrances to the building(s) directly adjacent to the street?
- ☐ Are entrances convenient to transit?
- ☐ Is the building's primary entrance and address well marked so that walkers and bicyclists can readily locate the building and how to access it?
- ☐ Are the setbacks beneficial or detrimental to walkers? Note: Setbacks may be visually attractive but can dis courage walking by adding greater distance to entrances, unless treated appropriately.

BICYCLE PARKING

- ☐ Does the project provide safe, secure short and long term parking for bicyclists in a conspicuous location?
- ☐ Is the bicycle parking conveniently located near the primary entrance of the business (within 100 ft)?
- ☐ Are the bike racks readily visible and a city approved design? Note: City approved designs are either an up side down "u" or a "hitch".

SIDEWALKS

- ☐ Are sidewalks sufficiently wide to accommodate the potential number of walkers? Note: 6' minimum clear width without obstructions for commercial uses.
- ☐ Are hard curbs provided?
- ☐ Is shade provided on the sidewalk through canopy trees, awnings or building design?
- ☐ Is there supplemental evening lighting?
- ☐ Are there buffers between walkers and traffic?
- ☐ Is there sufficient width for a bus stop and bus shelter provided, as may be necessary?

INDOORS

- ☐ Are wide central stairs provided or easily located to encourage walking rather than use of elevator(s)?
- ☐ Are showers and lockers provided for office and commercial uses?
- ☐ Can bicyclists bring their bikes indoors or place them in a secure indoor environment?

CROSSINGS

☐ Are safe, direct crossings provided for walkers? – This could include "bulbouts"at corners, median refuge islands, midblock crossings, signals for pedestrians, etc.

BARRIERS

- ☐ Are utility poles, traffic mast arms, and equipment boxes located outside the sidewalk area? Note: preferably in the planter strip between the sidewalk and the street, without obstructing line of sight for pedestrian and drivers.
- ☐ Is there a plan for removal of existing barriers in the sidewalks?
- ☐ Is there a plan for removal of existing barriers in the bike lanes?

Thank you for completing this project checklist! Please submit with your plans.

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Please provide written responses to each applicable question. For those questions which are not applicable, please indicate so on the form (N/A). Attach additional sheets if more space is necessary to respond fully to the questions. Submit completed form with your project/development application.

PROJECT NAME: _____

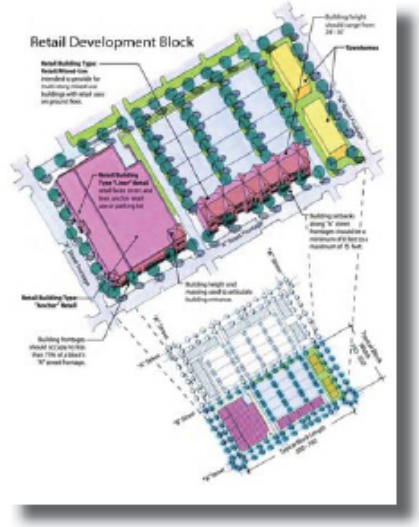
ADDRESS/LOCATION: _____

CASE #: _____

TYPE OF PROJECT: ☐Residential ☐ Mixed ☐Commercial ☐Office ☐Civic

LAND USE

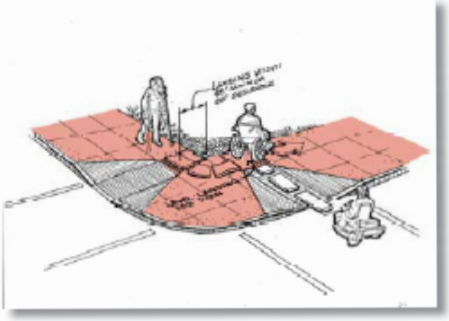
YES	NO	
☐	☐	Does the project/development promote interaction between neighbors? If YES please list: _____
☐	☐	Is the physical design of the project harmonious with the overall neighborhood?
☐	☐	Is this development adjacent to existing development and connecting to the development with pedestrian links and roadway connections?
☐	☐	Is there an adequate mix of land uses that provide a variety of housing choices?
☐	☐	Do these mixes provide for a great diversity in incomes, and especially provide for affordability?
☐	☐	Are there locations for non residential land uses that are integrated with the residential?
☐	☐	Is the land use configured around a walkable block size (¼ mile perimeter)?
☐	☐	Is there a range of density permitted in the neighborhood?
☐	☐	Are fronts of homes properly placed and have windows watching over schools, parks, streets, trails and other public places?
☐	☐	Is the architecture of buildings attractive and supportive of life on the street, park, school?
☐	☐	Are there provisions eliminating garages from "mooning" the street (i.e. required garage setbacks, lot frontage percentage)?
☐	☐	Are public buildings, parks and other common destinations properly placed to maximize the number of people that can walk to them?
☐	☐	Can the majority of people walk safely and comfortably in ten minutes (2500 feet), and without crossing dangerous intersections to an elementary school?
☐	☐	Can the majority of people walk safely and comfortably in twenty minutes (5000 feet), and without crossing dangerous intersections to a high school?
☐	☐	Is there too much emphasis on providing large amounts of off-street parking (relates to affordability, density)?

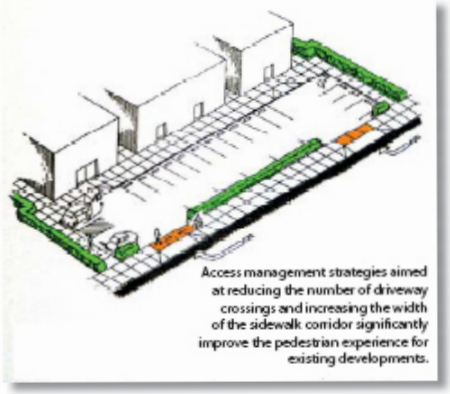


Version 2.1 (October, 2007)

TRANSPORTATION, STREETSCAPING, & STREET DESIGN

YES	NO	
☐	☐	Does the project/development achieve a connectivity index of 1.4? The index is calculated by dividing the number of street links (street sections between intersections, including cul-de-sacs) by the number of street nodes (intersections and cul-de-sacs). A grid street network would yield an index of 2.0.
☐	☐	Does the project/development provide mobility options for those who cannot drive?
☐	☐	Does the project/development have a well connected sidewalk system that lead to local destinations? If YES what is the proposed width of the sidewalks (5.0 foot minimum recommended)? _____
☐	☐	Are sidewalks detached from the curb allowing planter strips to take up driveway elevation changes?
☐	☐	Do all corners have ADA accessible ramps (2 ramps per corner preferred)?
☐	☐	Do planter strips offer canopy street trees (each 15-30 feet recommended)?
☐	☐	If median tree plantings are preferred, are plantings adequate for canopy development (each 15-30 feet recommended)?
☐	☐	Are there adequate provisions made for proper care and maintenance of canopy trees?
☐	☐	Do building practices eliminate privacy fences (above 4.0 feet) toward the public side of properties?
☐	☐	Are there specifications that public facing fencing be attractive and transparent above 4.0 feet?
☐	☐	Do curbs, swales, curb extensions, or other designs keep cars parked in correct locations (no rollover curbs)?
☐	☐	Does the project/development have, or connect to, a trail system for walking or biking?
☐	☐	Does the project/development contain elements that enhance the feeling of neighborhood security and safety?
☐	☐	Are local street lights provided?
☐	☐	Are houses oriented toward the street to provide "eyes on the street?"
☐	☐	Are buildings built to properly address the street? (i.e. front doors)
☐	☐	Is parking to the interior or back side of buildings?
☐	☐	Can a child walk safely, comfortably, and feel watched over enroute to school?
☐	☐	Are there sidewalks/pathways along the route to the school(s)?
		What is the walking distance to the area's schools? _____
☐	☐	Is the visibility at intersections good? Can drivers see short children, physically handicapped?
☐	☐	Does the route contain known dangerous intersections? If YES please list _____
☐	☐	Are there crossing guards at these intersections?
☐	☐	Will the project/development contain a significant elderly population?
☐	☐	Can the elderly walk to important destinations (i.e. banks, post office community centers, and library)? What is the walking distance to these destinations? _____





Access management strategies aimed at reducing the number of driveway crossings and increasing the width of the sidewalk corridor significantly improve the pedestrian experience for existing developments.

TRANSPORTATION, STREETSCAPING, & STREET DESIGN CONTINUED

YES	NO	
☐	☐	Are there sidewalks/pathways along the routes to these destinations?
☐	☐	Is the overall speed at or below 25 mph for all local streets?
☐	☐	Is the overall speed at or below 30 mph for all collector streets?
☐	☐	Does the project contain design elements to calm traffic such as curb extensions, mini-circles, parking chicanes, roundabouts, medians, raised street crossings, or similar features? If YES please list _____
☐	☐	Does the project/development present unsafe conditions or deter access and free mobility for the physically handicapped?
☐	☐	For projects/development on arterial streets, does the plan include pedestrian crossing signals and/or mid-block crossing islands?
☐	☐	Is public transportation available? If YES, where and how close is the nearest bus/train stop? _____ _____
☐	☐	Does the nearest bus/train stop have a shelter?
☐	☐	Does the nearest the bus/train stop have a bench and litter can?
☐	☐	Do curb extensions or other treatments prevent motorists from parking too close to corners?
☐	☐	If narrow streets are used, do streets provide a physical space (20 feet wide) every 200 feet for emergency response operations?
☐	☐	If alleys are used, is there high transparency (surveillance) in the alley?
☐	☐	If paseos (connectors or links) are used, is there high transparency (surveillance) to the paseo?
☐	☐	Do schools, parks, and other public destinations have adequate well located and secure bike parking?

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

YES	NO	
☐	☐	Can the majority of people walk safely and comfortably in five minutes (1500 feet) to a public gathering place, park, plaza, or community center?
☐	☐	Are there an adequate number of parks provided within walking distance (1/8 – ¼ mile) from every residence?
☐	☐	Are there sidewalks/pathways, ADA ramps along the route to the above services?
☐	☐	What is the walking distance to the area's amenities? _____
☐	☐	Is the size of parks and open space adequate for the amount of potential residents?
☐	☐	Are there a number of buildings/houses that watch over parks, trails, and open space?
☐	☐	Are these parks well used? If not yet built, are there a number of things to discover and do in these parks?
☐	☐	Do parks have appropriate on-street parking, or is there too much off-street parking?

References

Russell, R. D. (1973). "Social Health: An Attempt to Clarify This Dimension of Well-Being." International Journal of Health Education 16:74–82.
http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_13631048

Walkable and Livable
Communities Institute, Inc.