



PARK HILL THRIVING COMMUNITIES: Year Five Annual Report to the Community

Since its inception five years ago, the Park Hill Thriving Communities Project has been engaged in a mission to eliminate health disparities in the community through creating and building opportunities for greater access to healthy foods and active living. Residents of Park Hill have been able to walk around the new perimeter path constructed in Axum Park, a small neighborhood park in the community. Youth and adults in the community have come into the new

Bike Depot to learn how to fix their bikes and to participate in bike maintenance and safety classes to receive a bike for free or at low cost. And, expanding beyond Park Hill to the greater Denver Metro Area, Park Hill Thriving Communities staff are engaged with city officials, grocers, funders and other partners in a city-wide effort to identify barriers to and develop policy recommendations for grocery store development in underserved communities.

TIMELINE

January 2010

- Mayor's Kick-Off to celebrate the Food Access Initiative, supported by a grant from the Colorado Health Foundation.

June 2010

- Groundbreaking ceremony held at Axum Park led by Denver Mayor Hickenlooper and the mayor of Axum, Ethiopia.
- Members of Food Access Initiative Task Force secured and 1st quarterly meeting held.
- Completed hiring of 4 permanent staff at the Bike Depot.

July 2010

- Opening of the Colorado Ranch Market in an underserved neighborhood in North Denver. First "win" for the Food Access Initiative.

October 2010

- Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council established.
- Food Access Initiative Task Force came to consensus on barriers to grocery store development.
- Received \$40,000 as part of a Community Challenge/TIGER grant to study development of a Food Lab in West Denver.

November 2010

- PHTC partner, Colorado Enterprise Fund, submitted grant to establish a food financing fund.
- Presented PHTC project at annual APHA conference in Denver.

Accomplishments

2010 was a very successful year, continuing to expand upon activities from the previous year.

PROGRAMS

- **Mini-grants** were provided to three Park Hill elementary schools to continue to support school wellness programming.
- The Bike Depot continued to offer programs: **200 patrons** participated in Earn-A-Bike classes, **90 children** received bikes at "bike rodeo" events and **1500 patrons** came in to fix their bikes as part of the Fix-a-Bike program.
- **Four permanent staff** were hired at the Bike Depot.
- The **new successful retail business** at the Bike Depot covered 60% of operational costs in 2010.
- The Bike Depot secured a **grant from the Colorado Health Foundation** to support 2010 programming.



POLICY

GOAL: Increase access to healthy food retail

- The **Denver Healthy Food Access Initiative** launched in February. Its 38-member Denver Food Access Task Force came to consensus on a list of barriers to grocery store development (high cost of redeveloping land, low participation of eligible population in the SNAP (formerly Food Stamp) program, adjusting business plans to serve low-income neighborhoods, financing development and opening of new stores). The barriers were presented to the City Council Business, Workforce and Sustainability Committee in January 2011.

- A relationship established between the Task Force and the Denver Office of Economic Development resulted in the preservation of a grocery store in North Denver, the **Colorado Ranch Market** is credited as a "first win" for the Initiative.



- The PHTC Healthy Eating Active Living Program Administrator, the Mayor's Office and other Denver partners created the **Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council** to plan for strengthening sustainable food systems in underserved areas of Denver. In late 2010, the Council prepared background research to support a forthcoming ordinance related to removing barriers to keeping food producing animals in the city.
- Denver Department of Environmental Health received \$40,000 to conduct a **feasibility study to develop a Food Lab** at a Denver Housing Authority complex in West Denver. A Food Lab is a community facility that provides fresh fruits, vegetables and other foods as well as nutrition education and health promotion activities on-site.

Park Hill Thriving Communities is pleased to present its fifth annual report to the community which tells the story about how work continues toward achieving our mission to eliminate health disparities in Park Hill through equal access to healthy eating and equal opportunities to active living.

POLICY

GOAL: Increase opportunities for active living

- Staff provided input into the **Westerly Creek master plan**. The redevelopment supports the creation of a safe biking connection to regional bike trails throughout Denver.
- Denver Environmental Health staff participated in a COPAN/LiveWell focus group for the development of the LiveWell Health and the **Built Environment Blue Print**.
- PHTC staff provided data support of **Health Impact Assessment** being conducted in redevelopment efforts around the Denver urban area.
- A Bike Depot board member continued to participate as an active member of the **Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Council** to advocate for increased opportunities for physical activity for lower income populations.



ENVIRONMENT

- A **groundbreaking celebration** in Axum Park was held in June led by Denver Mayor Hickenlooper and Axum, Ethiopia Mayor Hagos to celebrate the ongoing construction of the remaining park features.
- PHTC staff met with Denver Urban Gardens, Denver Parks and Recreation and the Northeast Park Hill Coalition of community residents to discuss and draft plans for constructing a **community garden** in Axum Park.
- **Bike racks** were installed in Axum Park and at several business and school locations in Park Hill.



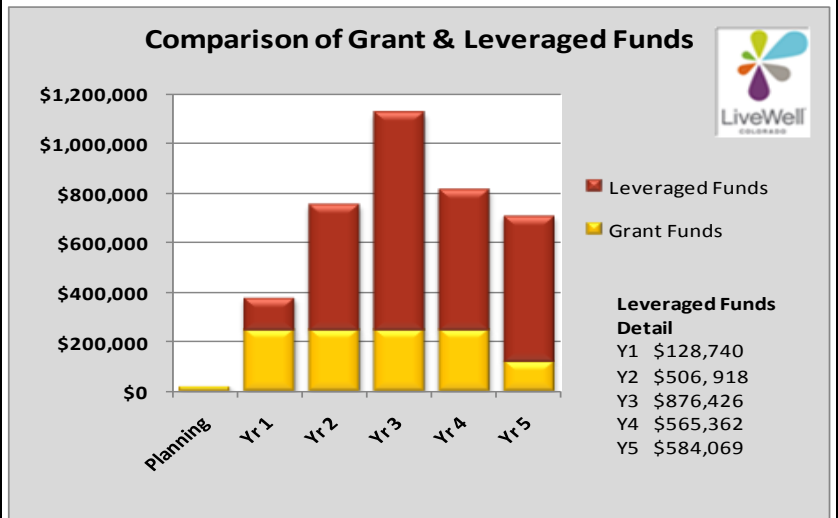
- A **follow-up observation assessment** of Axum Park will be conducted in the Fall of 2011 to assess changes in park use, with the anticipation of seeing increased use of the park and its new features.

Continuing in 2011

- School activities supported by PHTC will sustain on own in 2011
- The Bike Depot will continue to offer and expand programs. Retail business will grow to cover majority of operational costs.
- Food Policy Task Force will develop policy recommendations for Denver.
- The Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council will develop strategic plan which will include new policy proposals.
- Axum Park renovations will be completed.
- PHTC will continue with partners to plan for redevelopment of Holly Square site.
- PHTC will partner with the University of Colorado, the Denver Police Department and other partners to implement a design competition to engage students in designing a redevelopment plan for the District 2 watershed site that will incorporate HEAL principles.

FUNDING

While LiveWell Colorado provided \$125,000 for year five, additional funds totaling over \$580,000 were leveraged with other grant funds and in-kind support via relationships with partners.



Lasting Beyond the Park Hill Thriving Communities Project

Park Hill Thriving Communities has been a very successful project that has implemented a wide range of Healthy Eating Active Living programs, policies and environmental changes over the past five years, not only in Park Hill but in other neighborhoods around Denver. Community input to help plan for and implement these changes has been critical to the project's success. It began with a group of community residents engaged in a photovoice project to illuminate conditions and underutilized resources in their neighborhood. Over the years, the project has continued to work on local efforts at Axum Park and the Bike Depot and has expanded to work with other Denver-area communities. PHTC continues to assist development planners in other Denver-area neighborhoods to conduct Health Impact Assessments. The project continues to advocate for and provide a health voice into the development of the Denver Comprehensive Plan. Finally, the project has leveraged additional funds to engage in a broad city-wide effort with residents, city-level staff, grocers and non-profit partners to discuss barriers to grocery store development in underserved Denver communities. Park Hill Thriving Communities continues to leave its mark in Park Hill and beyond and will undoubtedly serve as a model community for others in Colorado.