

Public Health and Wellness

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy centers around the development and support of business and a built environment that supports public health initiatives and an improved quality of life. This strategy makes the most sense for a community seeking a unique strategy for its citizens by building relationships with local health and wellness centers. Keep in mind that this strategy can connect with existing health and wellness apps — including Fitbit, Apple Health, Couch to 5K, Healthy Out, Happy Cow and My Fitness Pal — without reinventing the wheel. This strategy is most successful when health and wellness are approached in a fun and creative environment.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Healthy living, nutrition, exercise, walkability, mindful, longevity, community-oriented, natural, age independent, workforce, local, wellness, step count, quality of life, strong, farm-to-table, physical fitness, active lifestyle, therapy, mental health, greenspace, outdoors, family, food desert and clean water.

“Health is a state of body.
Wellness is a state of
being.”

— J. Stanford

PROS

- These initiatives make a healthier community.
- People live longer.
- These initiatives increase quality of life.
- These programs build a sense of community.
- These programs support varied industries.
- These programs are easy to get behind publicly.

CONS

- These programs can take longer to see results.
- Some impacts may be hard to quantify.
- New Year's resolution syndrome can stymie progress.
- There can be an educational learning curve.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Requires a variety of infrastructure – whether its business, public facilities, recreation equipment or greenspace.
- Needs educational programming to be successful.
- Overcoming stigmas can be challenging.
- Health also includes mental health.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What is your community's greatest health need?
- What is your city's commitment to healthy living?
- What existing programs, or partners do you have in place to support this strategy?
- Where can people buy groceries in your community?
- What public facilities or programming do you have for sports or recreation?

Statesboro, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a walking tour to share your community's story while also encouraging an active lifestyle.
- Encourage downtown employers to offer wellness incentive programs.
- Incentivize doctor cooperative businesses and other potential niche industries to locate downtown, e.g. grocery stores, gyms, fitness studios, specialty food or drink establishments, outdoor/recreation businesses, dance studios and karate studios.
- Develop an online wellness directory to highlight community and downtown assets and businesses.
- Work with businesses to eliminate the use of single-serving plastics, i.e. straws, plastic plates and cups.
- Work with local restaurants to offer healthy eating/ nutrition classes.

DESIGN

- Build a dog park and install dog sanitation stations.
- Offer public recreation amenities that encourage an active lifestyle, such as Frisbee golf, bike paths or pickleball.
- Install wayfinding signage that is step-count- or miles-based.
- Create publicly accessible exercise stations along walking trails.
- Install bike racks and scooter stations downtown.
- Install water fountains or bottle refill stations.
- Offer public restrooms and family bathrooms.
- Plant a community garden.
- Plant landscaping that encourages cross pollination.
- Plant edible landscaping.

PROMOTIONS

- Host a farmers' market or makers' market downtown.
- Host a citywide health fair downtown.
- Work with downtown restaurants to offer healthy cooking classes.
- Incorporate active lifestyle and wellness components to existing events.
- Host a walk-a-thon or dance-a-thon as a fundraiser.
- Work with businesses to offer discounts tied to step counts. Examples are 10% off for 10,000 steps or 5% off for 5,000 steps.
- Host a "healthy eating week." Collaborate with local restaurants to offer specials for those with unique dietary needs, i.e. vegan, vegetarian and gluten free.
- Work with a local gym or club to host an exercise bootcamp downtown.
- Host a touch-a-truck event downtown to minimize stigmas existing between the community and law enforcement.

ORGANIZATION

- Declare a healthy living week for downtown businesses.
- Pass a resolution to support healthy living.
- Promote and educate the public regarding the Georgia Rural Hospital Tax Credit program.
- Make EBT available at the farmers' market.
- Put together and sell a healthy downtown cookbook with healthy meals.
- Partner with hospitals and other health-based organizations to host their events downtown.
- Designate an ex-officio position to be held by someone in the health and wellness sector, preferably someone who is not a downtown business owner so that a broader community engagement may occur.
- Install "little libraries" and "little food pantries" downtown. Work with community partners to keep them stocked and maintained.
- Develop programming to encourage indoor physical fitness opportunities in buildings that may traditionally serve another purpose, i.e. train depot, art center, community center, church.

PARTNERS

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Community supported agriculture

Community gardens

Georgia Grown

Georgia Farmers' Market Association

Georgia Organics

Keep America Beautiful

AARP

Department of Health Services

Department of Education

Local hospitals or wellness clinics

Cooperative Extension Service offices