**WALKABLE WASHINGTON**

Transformation towards walkability is taking place all over the state of Washington. From urban, suburban and small town initiatives, the program showcases the effects of a renewed focus on creating great places for people to walk. The case studies are exceptional projects and programs showcasing how cities, counties, school districts, and community organizations throughout the state are making it safer, easier, and more inviting for people to walk.

**WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO**

We promote walkable communities and empower people throughout Washington to connect to the world by foot.

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**CASE STUDY**

**THURSTON THRIVES**

**THURSTON COUNTY, WA**

**DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE:** Thurston Thrives is a cross-sector collaboration to improve the health of all Thurston County residents. The county’s Board of Health initiated Thurston Thrives to streamline positive health outcomes across many organizations and all sectors within Thurston County. This initiative is guided by ten action teams, each of which focuses on one factor that contributes to health outcomes. Each team starts with an assessment of existing data, develops metrics and indicators for success, and works with community partners to secure funding, promote collaboration, and grow positive health outcomes by aligning efforts under common goals.

The Community Design action team explores the built environment and how it can support healthy lifestyle choices. This team will develop a walk-shed analysis of the county and identify opportunities to connect residential areas - especially low-income neighborhoods - with employment centers through existing trail networks. Once informed by this analysis, the team will make recommendations to local governments, sponsor field workshops to demonstrate the impacts of these recommendations, and apply lessons learned to development codes and the county’s comprehensive plan. The Community Design team will also promote place-making for pedestrians and projects that increase the county’s trail mileage.

**CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:** The main challenge for Thurston Thrives has been inspiring the community to embrace the action phase of the initiative. Many individuals
and organizations are already actively pursuing positive health outcomes and have questioned the necessity for a new project and whether it would compete for resources or duplicate efforts. The initiative addressed this skepticism by emphasizing support for, and alignment with, existing efforts rather than a deluge of new projects. For example, the Community Design team’s strategy map includes Safe Routes to School projects which predate Thurston Thrives by a decade. Thurston Thrives also established a new backbone organization, the Thurston Thrives Coordinating Council, to help support existing as well as new efforts that align with Thurston Thrives’ strategic objectives.

An ongoing challenge for this initiative is to persuade hearts and minds that “health” extends beyond doctors visits and individual diet and exercise choices. This challenge gives Thurston Thrives the opportunity to educate the community on how non-traditional health factors, such as community resilience and access to economic opportunities, contribute to health outcomes.

COSTS AND FUNDING: Thurston County dedicated about $100,000 annually in staff time and other resources during the two-year developmental phase. During this same period, the initiative also received many additional in-kind contributions and thousands of hours of support from community partners and volunteers.

Now, in the implementation phase, the Thurston Thrives Coordinating Council will receive approximately $35,000 in support from Thurston County and a match from three partner organizations, totalling about $75,000 annually in cash funding for projects. The county also continues to provide about $60,000 annually in staff time and other in-kind resources.

IMPLEMENTATION TIME-FRAME: The two-year developmental phase focused on assembling action teams, assessing health data and existing efforts, and developing strategic objectives according to this assessment. The implementation phase began in 2015 and will continue through 2020, followed by a one- to two-year re-assessment phase to review and revise strategic objectives, revisit priorities, etc., as needed.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: The Thurston Thrives Advisory Council and all ten action teams are staffed by community members from all sectors. The general public is welcome to join action teams and participate in Advisory Council meetings.

BENEFITS AND RESULTS: Now that the developmental phase is complete, partners across all sectors in Thurston County have common goals for the health of their community. The Thurston Thrives Coordinating Council will use these goals as criteria for pursuing implementation resources. The action teams will make informed recommendations to local and county governments on how to help meet these goals. And Thurston County will be unified in its efforts to promote healthful conditions for all residents.
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RESOURCES:
Full project description, meeting minutes, team member listings, and other information available online at http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/thrives/