



Partnerships for a More Vibrant and Healthier Neighborhood

WHAT WORKS IN MONTANA

PROJECT
5

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The project's aim was to identify and prioritize resident-driven solutions to the question, "what would make the South Side a healthier, more vibrant place?"

The project team engaged representatives from neighborhood-based businesses, nonprofit organizations, churches, resident groups, the local chamber, and city and county health and economic development departments to examine how concepts of food access, creative placemaking, health equity, and economic development intersect at the neighborhood level.

POPULATIONS SERVED

The South Side neighborhood in Billings is one of the city's oldest and most diverse neighborhoods. Located there are historic homes, the health department, the first neighborhood schools, first city park, and the first public pool. Despite a relatively low unemployment rate, 1 in 3 neighborhood residents receives SNAP (food stamp) benefits and 46 percent of families with children live below the poverty line.

MAJOR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Healthy By Design, City/County Planning Department, Billings Parks and Recreation, Billings Public Works, Downtown Billings Association, Friendship House, Western Heritage Center, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Passages, RiverStone Health, St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings Clinic, Kresge Foundation, Groundswell, Inc., Community Leadership Development Inc., and the South Side Neighborhood Task Force

MAJOR OUTCOMES

Completed a resident-driven neighborhood plan and received implementation funding from the Kresge Foundation.

Developed and enhanced a multi-season gardener's market with invested vendors while also enhancing placemaking on the South Side.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Used a "community-based participatory research" approach to engage residents at every stage of the planning process.

Translated complex concepts rooted in evidence-based policies, systems, and environmental interventions into actionable concepts.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

"Community-based projects take more time. Relationships and trust take more than one meeting to build. It means a lot when staff have been coming to neighborhood meetings before the project ever started, and keep coming. When organizing a meeting for resident input, make sure your project staff do not outnumber them. It takes away a sense of any real power."

— Neighborhood resident and project steering committee member

Montana Healthy Communities Conference

New Knowledge. New Partners. Better Solutions.

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