



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0674, **Version:** 1

A Resolution of Commitment to Join the Livewell Colorado Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Towns and Cities Campaign to Support Healthy Lifestyle Choices and Obesity Prevention in Colorado Springs

From:

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Summary:

In a time when health trends in Colorado and across the nation are becoming increasingly more alarming, creating awareness and galvanizing action around community health is critical to improving quality of life in Colorado Springs. LiveWell Colorado and the Colorado Municipal League have partnered together with cities and towns across our state to create the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Cities and Towns Campaign to provide just this type of awareness. The HEAL Campaign invites municipalities to take action in the areas of healthy food access, active communities and workplace wellness to help reverse some of the negative health trends impacting Colorado communities.

There are currently 32 HEAL Cities and Towns in Colorado. Becoming a HEAL City and joining the HEAL Campaign requires a vote of Council. Joining the Campaign does not require a commitment of funds or dictate City policy. Rather, joining the HEAL Campaign is a pledge to continue to work internally and with community partners to develop plans, policies, and actions that promote a healthy lifestyle for residents of Colorado Springs. Examples of HEAL-supported policies the City is already engaged in include adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, support for community gardens in parks, and continued improvement of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout our city.

Becoming a HEAL City has multiple benefits for Colorado Springs. First, joining the campaign sends a message that the City recognizes the importance of community health and understands that through a combination of municipal action, the work of community partners, and individual choice, we can make a positive difference in the health of our citizens. Furthermore, becoming a HEAL City has the potential to open up new grant and funding opportunities as well as the possibility of new partnerships in the area of public health. In a state known for the active lifestyles of many of its citizens, joining the HEAL Campaign can help to brand Colorado Springs as a healthy, fit city that is an attractive place to live and do business. Finally, becoming a HEAL City will allow Colorado Springs to be recognized for all of the positive contributions the City already makes in the areas of active communities, healthy food access, and healthy workplaces.

Should Council elect to become a Healthy Eating Active Living City, the HEAL Campaign will provide the City with promotion on the HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign website, technical assistance and

policy development support, targeted press releases across the state, and a HEAL plaque and recognition at the Colorado Municipal League annual conference. If the City elects to join the campaign, it is anticipated that Colorado Springs will receive an “Active Rating.” This is the second of four rating tiers and is the highest rating a City may receive upon joining HEAL. This elevated ranking is recognition for the many positive policies and actions the City is already engaged in.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Background:

The City of Colorado Springs, like many cities across Colorado, has seen a decline in residents’ health in recent years. Despite Colorado being the “leanest” state, over 58% of adults and 28% of children in El Paso County are either overweight or obese. Individuals at an unhealthy weight are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These health trends have both a social and economic burden. A 2009 study found that the cost to Colorado in medical bills, lost productivity and worker’s compensation is \$1.6 billion a year. Just as important can be the social cost of diminished quality of life and a shorter life span.

Local government, through its policies and plans, is uniquely positioned to support an individual’s choice to lead a healthy lifestyle, and the City of Colorado Springs has a long history of municipal action that positively impacts community health. From hosting annual events like Bike to Work Day, to preserving open space, constructing parks, and providing active transportation options, the City has long taken action and implemented policies that positively contribute to the public’s health.

LiveWell Colorado and the Colorado Municipal League created the Healthy Eating and Active Living Cities and Towns Campaign to support and recognize the positive contributions made by City policy and programs. Thirty-two municipalities including Denver, Pueblo and Manitou Springs have joined the Campaign to take action to improve opportunities for healthy eating and active living for their citizens.

Joining the HEAL Campaign now is a way for the City to reaffirm its commitment to the importance of healthy eating and active living and receive due recognition for its many positive contributions to residents’ quality of life.

Financial Implications:

None. Joining HEAL does not commit the City financially. It is anticipated that over the long term the recognition, partnerships and grant opportunities the HEAL Campaign may create for the City will have positive financial implications for Colorado Springs.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

On October 14, 2014 the Active Transportation Advisory Committee voted in unanimous support for Colorado Springs to join the Healthy Eating and Active Living Towns and Cities Campaign. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will make a recommendation on joining the HEAL Campaign at its November 13, 2014 meeting.

Stakeholder Process:

Through the Walk and Wheel grant, funded by Kaiser Permanente, City staff has had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with multiple community partners about Colorado Springs becoming a HEAL

City. The positive response from these partners has been universal, with commitments of support from groups as diverse as LiveWell Colorado Springs, Harrison School District Two, El Paso County Public Health, the Colorado Community Center Collaborative, United States Olympic Committee, and Bicycle Colorado.

Alternatives:

Council is being asked to pass a Resolution of Commitment to join the LiveWell Colorado Healthy Eating and Active Living Cities and Towns Campaign to support improved community health in Colorado Springs. Council may elect not to pass a Resolution of Commitment. Doing so would eliminate the possibility of joining the statewide campaign.

Proposed Motion:

Pass a Resolution of Commitment to Join the Livewell Colorado Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Towns and Cities Campaign.

N/A