Healthy Neighborhood Project
Past Updates

Project Overview

In summer 2016, the Healthy By Design Coalition was awarded a planning grant to work with South Side residents and community partners to develop a healthy neighborhood plan. This opportunity, dubbed FreshLo, stands for Fresh, Local and Equitable: Food as a Creative Platform for Neighborhood Revitalization, is an initiative of the Kresge Foundation’s Arts & Culture and Health programs.

Between July 2016 and June 2017, a small team worked together to develop a resident-driven Healthy Neighborhood Plan for the South Side triangle neighborhood. Residents and other neighborhood stakeholders were asked *What would make the South Side a healthier, more vibrant place to live, learn, work, and play?* in a variety of ways. The resulting plan created a call to action to make the South Side the *Bright Side of the Tracks* through two key emphasis areas – increased access to healthy, affordable food year round and a stronger sense of pride through neighborhood revitalization.

Through an implementation grant from the Kresge Foundation, the Healthy Neighborhood Project team, in direct collaboration with a resident steering committee, is working toward the implementation of the Healthy Neighborhood Plan for the South Side. Current projects include the following a year round, brick and mortar grocery store in or around the triangle; a community garden gathering space in the neighborhood, and resident-driven community art and creative placemaking efforts that celebrate the *Bright Side of the Tracks* theme, including entryway and wayfinding signage, traffic signal box wraps, murals, benches, and more!

Spring 2019

Over the past 6 months, neighborhood residents, community partners, and dedicated staff have focused on implementing the South Side’s Healthy Neighborhood Plan. The grant that supports this project will end in September 2019, and our team is beginning to plan for that future. Check out the Spring updates below to learn more about our current accomplishments:

Food Access

The *Grocery Store Feasibility Study* is moving along quickly, including the following activities:

- Research on existing models found in other communities, including what has worked elsewhere helps us figure out what might work in the South Side neighborhood; and
- Exploring market potential within the neighborhood, including the number of households, annual incomes, and total workers in the area. By combining what we learned from existing models and what we know about our community, we hope to find a solution that works best for the neighborhood.
Gardening season is almost here!

- The Community Greenhouse is located at the South Park Senior Center, 901 S. 30th
  Start growing your plants from seed before planting them in the ground.
- The Sprouts container gardener program through Billings Parks, Recreation, and Public
  Lands gives residents an opportunity to have a “community garden” in their own
  backyard. More information can be found at https://www.billingsparks.org/community-
  gardens/. Container gardens will be available for check out at the first Gardeners’
  Market at South Park, June 13.
- Sell your excess garden produce at the Healthy By Design Gardeners’ Market, which
  runs on Thursdays at South Park June 13-October 3. Learn more at
  www.hbdyc.org/market

Celebrating the Bright Side of the Tracks

We have finished collecting South Side Stories and are now starting to develop two walking
routes around themes from the interviews, stories, and memories from people with a
connection to the South Side! We heard all about fond memories of neighborhood events --
such as the Fiesta and the annual egg hunt -- and laughed at cute stories of what it was like to
grow up on the South Side. The history and pride of the South Side is truly remarkable!

Two more traffic signal boxes surround the South Side Triangle will be wrapped with local
designs this summer! The application is live and submissions are due April 30th. The application
can be found at the top of this page.

In June, a community mural will be added to the pool house at South Park. We are partnering
with a local artist, Rachel Larson Long, to design the mural with student and resident input. We
will need help painting the mural on the South Park pool wall, so stay tuned for more on this
opportunity!

Find Out More and Get Involved!

Residents and students from the South Side have provided input in a variety of ways during this
project. Ongoing opportunities to stay involved and informed include:

- Healthy Neighborhood Project Quarterly E-Newsletter
- Announcements, events, and updates on our Facebook page
- Bi-monthly Resident Meetings
- Providing updates at the monthly South Side Task Force Meetings

Interested in signing up for the newsletter, finding out about the resident meetings, or getting
involved in other ways? Get in touch.

Fall 2018
Through the creation of the Healthy Neighborhood Plan, residents decided that celebrating the unique history of the bright side of the tracks would increase neighborhood pride. The Healthy By Design Coalition and the Western Heritage Center have teamed up to gather and share resident stories about the South Side neighborhood. Stories will be used to enhance the current South Siders history exhibit and may also be used to create walking tours and a walking map of the neighborhood that anyone can use, any time! If you have ever heard of StoryCorps, this is a similar project. Residents who share their stories receive a copy of their recorded story along with a written transcript. This project is open to anyone that currently lives or has lived on the South Side. Email southsidestoriesblgs@gmail.com if you would like more information about this project.

A great deal of progress has been made in implementing the Healthy Neighborhood Plan. Here are just a few highlights…

- **Bright Side of the Tracks** entryway signage is being placed by Billings Public Works at entry points into the South Side neighborhood.
- 3 box wraps created by local artist are being placed along State Street.
- We will soon be accepting applications for a unique artist in residence opportunity through Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands. This individual will design and install an interactive, outdoor community gathering space that includes edible landscape features in South Park.
- To stay updated on the Healthy Neighborhood Project contact us to receive monthly e-newsletters. You can also request past newsletters. Check out the link below to see the latest newsletter!