

# Plan4Health: Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Partnership – Active Living Workgroup St. Louis, MO

## SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) Chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) Affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Partnership and Trailnet, a nonprofit 501(c)(3), are working to highlight the possibilities of creating a better pedestrian experience through temporary pop-up traffic calming demonstrations and working with the community to educate residents on the benefits of traffic calming to create safer streets.



## CHALLENGE

Out of the 115 counties in Missouri, St. Louis City ranks in the bottom quartile for length of life (108th), quality of life (107th), and health behaviors (111th). In St. Louis, nearly 60 percent of adults are overweight or obese and 27 percent report no leisure time physical activity. St. Louis ranked below the state and nation with a score of 5.2 on the Food Environment Index. This indicates a large portion of the low-income population does not live within one

mile of a grocery store. While 80 percent of City residents live within a half mile of a public park, comparatively better than the rest of Missouri, poor pedestrian access leads to a low level of park use. The HEAL Partnership is committed to increasing access to physical opportunities and to healthy food and beverages. Trailnet is leading the Plan4Health initiative by working to make the streets of St. Louis safer and more accessible for residents in the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

If you are a resident of St. Louis, find the next pop-up near you and join in the festivities. Consider following Trailnet's Plan4Health blog and hosting a pop-up demonstration in your community!

To learn more about HEAL's Active Living Workgroup and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)) and join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following [#plan4health](https://twitter.com/plan4health).

*"The traffic calming project will have a great and positive impact for neighbors in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood. For many years JVL neighbors have been looking for solutions to these problems they are faced with on a daily basis. It is extremely dangerous and JVL neighbors have been seeking and requesting assistance. The neighbors welcome this traffic calming project."*

- Carla Pearson  
Community Member

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## SOLUTION

The HEAL Partnership is tackling the dangers the average St. Louis pedestrian encounters by demonstrating alternative ways of designing city streets. Using temporary traffic calming tactics, the HEAL Partnership and community members will re-imagine streets of concern to the community. Instead of a space dominated by vehicles, the pop-up demonstrations will create space that accommodates walkers, bicyclists and vehicles - and will offer local decision-makers the chance to experience the possibilities of policy change. While the traffic calming demonstration itself is temporary, the Partnership is developing a lending library of materials on how to implement demonstrations and to continue the conversation about safer streets for people walking.

## RESULTS

The HEAL Partnership is successfully engaging community members and the City of St. Louis in initial conversations about the pop-up sites. The development of the lending library is an opportunity to gather re-usable materials to create a life-size toolkit that will be easy to share with neighborhoods across the city. While four key pop-ups are part of the Plan4Health initiative, ongoing information sharing and smaller temporary installations are part of the overall project strategy. Trailnet, a key coalition member, has developed a Plan4Health blog to track the experiences of the coalition and to share pop-up examples. Raising awareness about both the need for community action as well as resources available to take that action ensures this temporary approach to change is anything but short-lived.

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS

In order to measure the shift in attitudes and understanding of pop-ups, HEAL has conducted surveys with key decision-makers. A follow-up survey is scheduled after education and pop-up traffic calming demonstrations have been completed. The lending library is a key strategy for replication. Having materials and a "how to" guide at the ready, community organizations and residents are able to educate their own local leaders and demand policy, systems, and environment changes that meet their needs and support their safety.

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