



**CASE STUDY:
Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) &
Economic Development in Frederick, Maryland**

Background:

In June 2015, the City of Frederick’s Mayor and Board of Aldermen passed the City’s Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) resolution. By June 2016, the City had incorporated the HEAL mission into the City’s Sustainability Plan that seeks to “encourage healthier lifestyles by providing alternative transportation options and access to nutritious food choices.”¹ The Sustainability Plan provides a cohesive strategy for implementation of HEAL policies and practices. Through the implementation of the Plan, the City has found creative ways to increase access to healthy eating and active living opportunities in Frederick while also spurring economic growth.

Economic Benefits of HEAL:

As an early contributor to Frederick’s HEAL activities, Jenny Willoughby, the City of Frederick’s Sustainability Coordinator, has seen the many ways the City has brought new opportunities and resources to the community to increase healthy eating and active living. “When people see the economic benefits, they get on board!” she explains. In 2016, Frederick built a shared use bike path that has become a pivotal component of the City’s infrastructure. The path connects the east and west sides of the City and has also contributed to new business development and increased tourism. “Some people even call [Frederick] Little Brooklyn,” comments Ms. Willoughby.



The path, running directly through the central business district, has created significant changes in commuter traffic as more and more people choose to bike to and from work. The City collects annual data that document the increasing commuter traffic along the path and provide further evidence of the project's success. The path not only draws local commuters, but also tourists and visitors seeking to explore the City's outdoor amenities. Ms. Willoughby believes the path has been the number one contributing factor to the increased tourism industry in Frederick—an industry that is further reinforced through City-wide, healthy eating and active living improvement projects including a regular farmers' market in the downtown area, a newly constructed edible food forest, and new community garden projects.



Image 1: Bikers along the new bike path in downtown Frederick. Image 2 (above): Bus/bike transit in downtown Frederick.

HEAL Moving Forward:

The City of Frederick will work to continue evolving and progressing as a healthy place for people to live and work with a continued emphasis on environmental design changes. The City hopes to continue expanding bike paths, building bike lanes, increasing land for the food forest, developing community garden spaces, and providing new food access resources as seen through a City initiative to develop a centrally located grocery store. Each of these projects has and will continue to contribute to the overall health and wellness for both the City's economy and its people.

Frederick has achieved Gold Level status as a member of the HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign of the Mid-Atlantic. The HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign provides free technical assistance to local government leaders to help them create healthy, prosperous communities by adopting policies and practices that improve their communities' physical activity and food environments. HEAL is a project of the Institute for Public Health Innovation, in partnership with the Maryland and Virginia Municipal Leagues, and funded by Kaiser Permanente, founding partner. For more information, visit the HEAL website at www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org and contact HEAL staff at 202-747-3455 or jgroenfeldt@institutephi.org.

Resources:

1: *The City of Frederick Sustainability Plan*. The City of Frederick Department of Public Works. Adopted July 21, 2016: <https://www.cityoffrederick.com/DocumentCenter/View/6120>



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