

Agenda Item #2 – CanDo Loveland’s Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET) Project

At the November Youth Advisory Commission meeting, a PhotoVoice project was presented by a group of youth from the Maple Terrace neighborhood. Following the presentation, there was a brief discussion about the Commission potentially commencing a similar project. To provide a more comprehensive background and understanding, below are some definitions along with potential project goals.

PhotoVoice is type of communication that combines photography with story-telling. It is mostly used in community development, public health, and education efforts. Participants are asked to represent their point of view by taking photographs, discussing and developing narratives to go with their photos. The end product (a collection of photographs with descriptions) can then be used in a variety of ways to foster understanding and collaboration. Oftentimes, it is used as a way for underrepresented populations to have a voice in the public process. Participants in such a project typically come together around distinct topics (i.e., the built environment, food access) or geographic locations (i.e., downtown, new development or redevelopment projects).

The **built environment** refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for where we live, work and play. It ranges in scale from homes and apartments to neighborhoods and cities, from sidewalks and interstate highways to backyards and regional parks. The built environment includes all of the places and spaces created or modified by people.

As an example, think about going to your local post office – consider the building itself, its entrances, sidewalks, parking lots and bike parking facilities. Also, include lighting, trees and the streets leading to it, as well as adjacent buildings and businesses. All of these elements come together to create an experience and a space, and how they’re combined influences the accessibility of that place, whether you’re in a car, on foot, on a bike, or require certain accommodations.

Our built environment and the way our community is designed affects our ability to make healthy choices and to be physically active. Land use codes establish where commercial, industrial, retail or residential uses can be located. The location and proximity of these uses impact your access to healthy food from a grocery store or access to a bike trail, for example. Community planning policies, including zoning and density also affect the walkability of your neighborhood. It is commonly understood that a sprawled community requires you to get into your car for errands and everyday travel, whereas a compact neighborhood allows for reasonable walking distances to work, school and other ordinary trips.

Overall Project Goals:

1. Empower youth in Loveland to observe and critically analyze their built environment.
2. Develop advocacy skills to influence change at various levels in the community.
3. Raise youth understanding and expectations for a healthy, active lifestyle.
4. Cultivate healthy, active behaviors in Loveland’s youth.
5. Learn more from youth about what they would like to see in the community.

About CanDo:

CanDo – the Coalition for Activity & Nutrition to Defeat Obesity – is a community-wide task force who works to improve the health of our community by increasing physical activity and healthy eating to reduce and prevent obesity. We work with schools, worksites, health care settings, and community organizations to achieve our mission of engaging community members and organizations in obesity prevention through support, advocacy and education. CanDo is the coordinating agency for the LiveWell Colorado initiatives in Fort Collins and Loveland.

For more information, contact:

Katie Guthrie, Health Planner
kmg13@pvhs.org or 970-667-2192

Jessica Hinterberg, Obesity Prevention Coordinator
jrh10@pvhs.org or 970-624-1879

