Creating Healthier Communities

"MAKING MORE WITH LESS"

THE HERNANDO, MISSISSIPPI HEALTHY CITY STORY

What is a Healthy Community

"One which provides an environment that makes it easier for its residents to chose a healthier lifestyle option, whether that be active living or healthy eating, and which offers good access to health care treatment and prevention, as well as a safe, aesthetically pleasing, and environmentally sound community." – Chip Johnson, Mayor, City of Hernando

Percentage of Children who are Overweight or at Risk for Becoming Overweight - Mississippi

Grade	Overweight or at Risk 2003	Overweight or at Risk 2005
1st	26.9%	42.1%
2nd	31.7%	35.2%
3rd	42.8%	41.9%
4th	42.5%	50.1%
5th	44.7%	50.4%
6th	34.6%	50.7%
7th	43.4%	54.9%
8th	43.2%	42.9%

Overweight children miss significantly more school days and perform less well academically than normal weight children

Risk factors for heart disease (such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure) and type 2 diabetes occur more frequently in overweight children and adolescents.

In the past ten years there has been a dramatic increase in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in adolescents. In addition to the health consequences, there are risks of developing potentially life-threatening psychological problems as well, such as depression, eating disorders, discrimination and stigmatization, negative self image, and passivity and withdrawal from peers.

Health

Mississippi has one of the highest rates of children found to be overweight or at risk of overweight in the United States

What it Takes- Process & Content

- Process Issues
  - Planning & Policies – help create a sustainable active living, healthy eating, and environmentally sound community
  - Implementation - Programs, Projects & Priorities
  - Publicity – gets people involved; educates
  - Partnerships – do more with less!
- Content Issues
  - Safety - active living environment must be safe or residents will not participate!
  - Aesthetics – active living environment must be aesthetically pleasing!
  - Environmental Issues – clean water & air as important as lifestyle choices!
  - Health & Lifestyle Choices – active living and healthy eating

Mandatory helmet ordinance for youth

Planning & Policies

Planning +Policies = Sustainability

- Planning & Policies
  - Requirement for installation of sidewalks
  - Requirement for open space set-aside (at least 10%)
  - Requirement for a connected street system (no dead ends)
  - Historic Preservation creates more aesthetically pleasing environment
  - Smart Growth development philosophy promotes ped/bike use
  - Design Guidelines provide pleasant walking and biking environment
  - Indoor Clean Air Act
  - Good storm water design/tree ordinance creates a more aesthetically pleasing walking and biking environment and safe water/air
  - Complete Streets Resolution
  - Regularly referenced and updated Comprehensive Plan

Implementation - Programs, Projects and Priorities

- Budget priorities/Grants/Projects/Programs
  - Budgeted funds for sidewalk improvements, bike lane striping/signage
  - Properly funded/staffed Parks and Recreation Department
  - Safe Routes to School grant for sidewalks & promotion
  - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Grant to promote policy change (3 counties)
  - Mississippi Fish & Wildlife funds for park development
  - Code Enforcement helps assure clean & aesthetically pleasing city
  - Tree Board/Planning Commission/Preservation Commission/properly staffed planning department implement policy

Hernando Farmers Market named most popular in the state by American Farmland Trust

Publicity

Publicity

- Mayor is a wellness champion – on the national speaking tour for healthy community strategies.
- Make designations a priority – Tree City, Bike Friendly, Preserve America, Playful City etc.
- Hernando named "Playful City USA" three years in a row by Kaboom
- Bike Friendly Community honorable mention (National League of Bicyclists)
- Preserve America Community (White House)
- New Water Tower 10K race
- Hernando named "Healthiest Hometown" by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation

Hernando Bicycle Club – advocate, advisor, sponsor of rides

Bike to Work Day

Partnerships

Partnerships

- Community Foundation for Northwest Mississippi – Community Garden grant, "Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities" grant, county and regional health councils. Head Start)
- Chamber of Commerce - Partner in Farmers Market
- Head Start – partner in Community Garden
- Kiwanis Club + DeSoto County Schools – School gardens
- DeSoto Greenways/ North Mississippi Land Trust/ County Board of Supervisors /Coldwater River Canoe and Kayak Committee – open space, conservation and recreation strategies
- DeSoto County Schools - Joint Use Agreements
- State and Local Health Departments
- DeSoto County -clean air initiatives
- County Extension Service – urban forestry and workplace wellness
- Let's Move Cities and Towns
- National League of Cities/MML
- Project Fit America playgrounds and Bower programs in local schools
- Developers/landowners – support for Smart Growth development/donations for open space/parks

Environmental Issues

Clean water efforts and aesthetics can go hand in hand to promote outdoor exercise .

It is important that residents have a pleasant environment to walk/bike in.

In the south in particular, shade is very important to encouraging walking.

People WILL walk in a pleasant and safe environment

Motorists CAN be persuaded to share the road with cyclists

Children WILL walk to school if it is safe to do so

Safety and Aesthetics

Continued growth in the DeSoto Greenways Project

Expansion of the Farmers Market/Senior Voucher Program/SNAP/WIC

Expanding effectiveness of the Community Garden

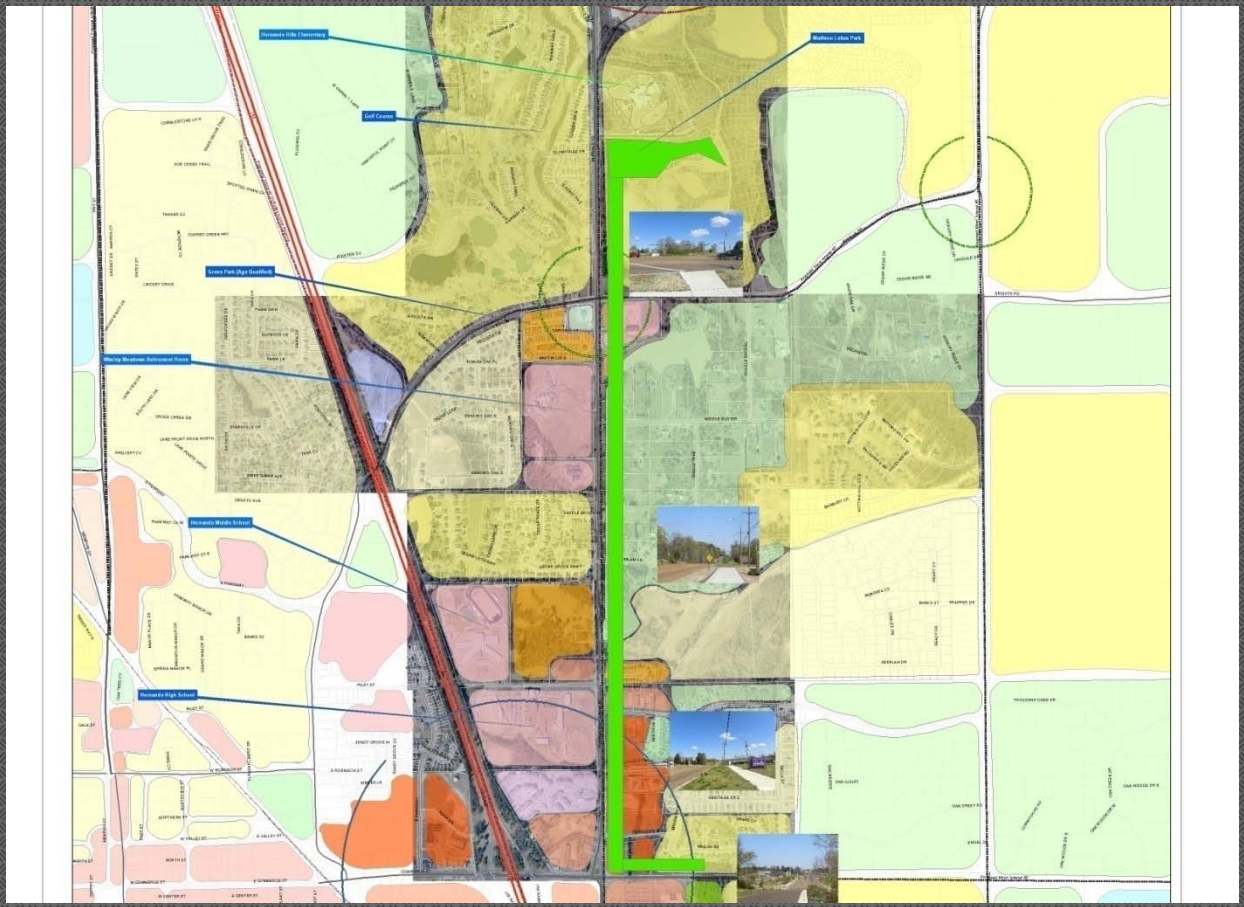
Working in concert with schools to co-utilize recreational facilities (joint use agreements)

More emphasis on walking and biking for transportation

Continue emphasis on Smart Growth

More grants /partnerships where possible

Increased Awareness – Hernando 10k, canoe and kayak race, bike lanes, signage, etc.



Future

Linear Park on major thoroughfare connecting two community parks