

Local Foods, Local Places

A Community Driven Action Plan for Greeley, Colorado













A technical assistance program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Appalachian Regional Commission, and Delta Regional Authority



Community Story

Greeley, Colorado is a mid-sized city about one hour north of Denver, in Weld County. The city was founded as a utopian society with an agrarian lifestyle, values, and economy. Today, agriculture is alive and well in Weld County, where it continues to be a strong component of the local economy. Cattle ranching, dairy, and farming are all viable and significant components of the local foods system. A modern beef processing plant and a large new cheesemaking factory are located on the eastern border of the city.

Northeast Greeley is the older, historic portion of the city and includes Downtown. The neighborhoods around Downtown contain many modest two-and three bedroom single-family homes that have long been occupied by many of the workers in the agriculture industry. Generations of migrants, including many of Hispanic origin as well as a smaller Somali population, live in the area. Students also live in the area; many attending the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). While this neighborhood had seen some disinvestment, the community has made efforts to revitalize this existing historic neighborhood and make it vibrant through food retail, bike and pedestrian connections, and downtown events and programming.

Challenges

Three significant challenges related to local foods are apparent in Northeast Greeley; retail food access, local food system linkages, and coordination. Like most of Colorado, Greeley is growing. Local growth is fueled in part by the oil and gas industry as well as agriculture, and by relatively affordable housing compared to some nearby communities. Much of the growth has been westward from Downtown toward the foothills, and has pulled the center of gravity in Greeley with it. Downtown has made gains in recent years but still struggles to be as vibrant and draw as many visitors as in its heyday.



Greeley	2010	2014
Total Population	76,818	95,677
Pct. Hispanic	29.3%	35.6%
Pct. Minority	33.0%	35.6%
Pct. < 18 Years	25.7%	25.1%
Pct. 65 or Older	10.2%	11.3%

Figure 1. Demographic data. Source: 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). Greeley has seen significant population growth since 2000. Median household income in Greeley (\$47,342) lags behind the statewide median of \$59,488. 18 of 37 census tracts in Greeley are Low-Income, Low-Access tracts, according to the U.S. Census. 9.32% of Weld County residents received SNAP benefits in 2011.

Northeast Greeley has faced a problem with limited retail food access since the 2013 closure of the only downtown full-service grocery store. Many area residents have limited access to a vehicle and struggle to get to a store with fresh offerings regularly. There are several small markets currently offering fresh and specialty or ethnic goods that are serving residents, and despite local efforts there is little likelihood of a full-service grocer returning. The one retailer that does have a focus on local foods has a reputation for offerings that are high quality, but many of the local neighborhood residents consider them to be too expensive.

Food Retail Store Type	#
Full Service Supermarkets	13
Limited Service Stores	5
SNAP Retailers	52
Farmers Markets	2

Figure 2. Food retail offerings available in Greeley. Source: healthyfoodaccess.org

Another major challenge for Greeley is that despite being a major agricultural producer, very little of the locally produced food is available to consumers in Greeley, as most of it is channeled through large distributors. As such, the linkages between local producers, vendors, and consumers are not robust. A related concern is that although Greeley is almost universally known as an "ag town," local foods do not play a significant role in positive branding and placemaking for the community. In addition, many of the local foods venues



are not linked to other active living amenities and efforts in Greeley. For example, although there are vendors selling local foods, there is little signage or wayfinding that highlights where to find them.

A final challenge noted by local stakeholders is lack of coordination among the many partners working on local foods production and access. Many local foods efforts are underway in Greeley, as detailed further below, however many of these efforts could benefit from a stronger coalition of partners and more synergy between their endeavors.



From upper left, clockwise: Participants tour Farmers Pantry small-scale grocery near UNC campus; La Tarahumara Market's colorful blue facade in Northeast Greeley; Greeley bike trail and open space access point; Bike trail signage. Photo Credits: Ted Cochin and Erica Heller.



Assets

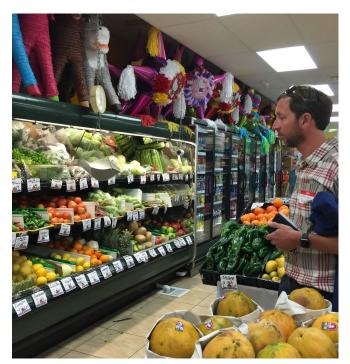
There is an abundance of positive efforts related to local foods already underway in Greeley. A strong farmers market has been operating downtown for 24 years that includes a smaller indoor winter market and a weekly outdoor summer market. The Weld County School District 6, which serves Greeley, has a strong farm-to-school program and growing food hub. The Weld County Food Bank has been innovative in increasing fresh foods through local producer donations. A local foods distributor, LoCo Foods, operates in the area. The UNC has a burgeoning Sustainable Food Systems program, has recently added an operating learning farm, and is looking for ways to market its produce. In 2014, an AgriCULTURE fair began to highlight local food production in a positive way. The newest retailer in downtown, Farmer's Pantry, is operated by a local producer who wants to expand to also accept other producers' goods and to create a commercial kitchen available for use by third parties for food processing.



Left: Greeley Farmers Market vendor and customers. Photo Credit Deb Deboutez.

Many of these local foods efforts have yet to meet their full potential, and stakeholders expressed growing concern about competition among them. For example, if the food hub were to expand its ability to take gleaning and other non-marketable produce, will that reduce the food bank's supply of donations? Or if the UNC farm were to offer a farm stand, might that reduce patronage at the farmers market? With so many assets, efforts to coordinate, support, and leverage one another's effort can be a gain for all.







Left: A workshop participant scans the produce section at a market in Northeast Greeley. Right: Participants hear about the challenges and successes of running a food market from the proprietor of Greeley's Farmers

Pantry. Photo Credits: Erica Heller

Project Assistance

In 2015, the University of Northern Colorado requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop, in partnership with the City of Greeley, an action plan for achieving its vision. The program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority. Implementing the actions described later in this plan can bring several benefits to the community including:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and business.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- A revitalized downtown that is the economic anchor of the community.

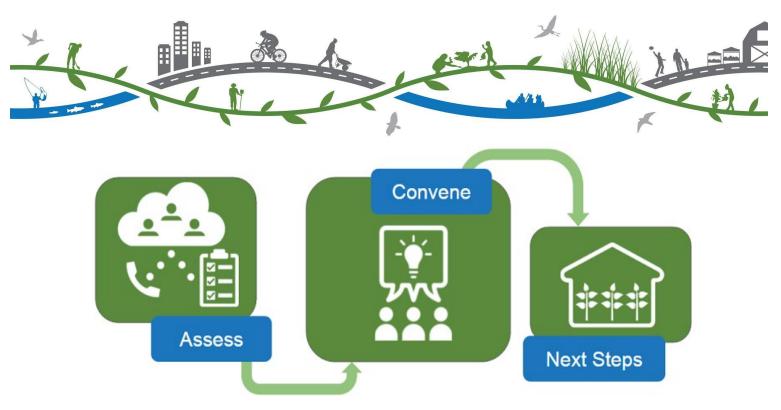


Figure 3. The diagram above lays out all of the steps leading to this action plan.

Engagement

Leading up to the workshop, the community steering committee and federal partners convened three times by conference call and webinar to discuss the community's goals and plan the event. The local steering committee was comprised of the following participants:

- Co-Chair: Kevin Cody, University of Northern Colorado
- Co-Chair: Deb Deboutez, City of Greeley Neighborhood Relations
- Leslie Beckstrom, Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment
- Deborah Romero, University of Northern Colorado Community and Civic Engagement
- Sandra Greenaway, Northern Colorado Food Cluster
- Pam Bricker, Greeley Downtown Development Authority
- Chad Howell, City of Greeley Economic Development
- Natalie Leffler, Weld County Schools
- Jeremy West, Weld County Schools

The main sessions of the Greeley workshop were held over two days in the meeting space at Zoe's Cafe in Downtown Greeley on June 13 and 14, 2016. Prior to the workshop's first public session, the technical advisory team, community steering committee, and federal partners participated in an informal lunch.



About three dozen people attended the public workshop, with many participating both days. See *Appendix A: Workshop Participants* for details on attendees. A compilation of photos from the workshop and tour can be found in *Appendix B: Workshop Photo Album*. A link and visual representation of results of the asset mapping exercise are found in *Appendix C: My Community Asset Mapping*.

The main event on the first day was a bus tour of food-related sites in Northeast Greeley, starting with a visit to the burgeoning UNC farm on the outskirts of town. Kevin Cody, the project co-chair and professor at UNC, walked participants through crop fields in various stages of development and a greenhouse. Other tour stops included four retail food stores, each with different availability of fresh produce. The Farmer's Pantry, a corner market near the university, sold a wide selection of Colorado-grown produce and value-added products. Two ethnic markets visited on the tour offered fresh selections, most non-locally sourced.



Left: Participants tour the UNC farm. Right: participants brainstorming ideas for the community mapping exercise. Photo Credits: Erica Heller



Vision

At the heart of the community's vision is to improve access to healthy, local foods in Northeast Greeley with a particular focus on downtown. One of the themes that emerged from the workshop was connectivity. Whether the goal was connecting Greeley's established producers to local consumers, connecting neighborhood residents to fresh food, or making the University of Northern Colorado more integrated in the local food system, workshop participants discovered a number of economic and physical linkages that they could work to strengthen.

Throughout the workshop, a range of exercises were used to explore community vision and values, explore place-making in context, identify areas for improvement, and identify and prioritize actions. In one exercise, participants were asked to share two statements that reflected their "beliefs" about Greeley in general and about the local food system. A commonly-held belief was that Greeley has tremendous potential for economic growth, community engagement, and improved food access.

Many participants recognized the cultural diversity of the Northeast Greeley neighborhood. Participants also expressed both pride and frustration about Greeley's agricultural sector. On one hand, agriculture in Greeley is thriving—and is deeply ingrained in the history and culture—but on the other hand, more could be done to connect the food grown in Greeley to the local consumers. As one participant noted, "The fact that Greeley is known as an agricultural community can be turned into an enormous asset in an era when people want local food and authenticity." See *Appendix D: Workshop Exercises* for more details and this and other exercises.

Opportunities and Challenges

Throughout day one, workshop participants had engaging conversations about their perceptions of opportunities and challenges in the Northeast Greeley as they relate to local foods goals.

Opportunities/Assets

- Viable agriculture
- Longstanding agricultural history



- Community diversity economic and cultural
- Successes to build upon
- Weld County District 6 farm-to-school
- Weld County Food Bank
- Agricultural festival
- Farmers Market, small scale retailers
- UNC programs, students, buying power
- Growing population
- Bike path
- Reasonable cost to enter small-scale farming

Challenges

- Disconnected elements of the food system
- Low-income families, food affordability
- Sense that Greeley isn't forward-thinking
- Poor cohesiveness among diverse segments
- Cost of growing produce (versus grains)
- Hail and pests
- Overall livability/perception
- Affluence of surrounding communities draws consumers elsewhere
- Water sales to municipalities, drought
- New investment is westward
- Avoiding gentrification long term

Action Plan

The following five overarching goals and action items were finalized at the workshop with input from all participants. A detailed description of the goals and actions items can be found in the implementation matrices, below.

GOAL 1: Coordinate local healthy food partners as assets in the community to maximize and strengthen the impact of all

- Action 1.1 Establish quarterly Local Foods Partners meetings
- Action 1.2 Develop a UNC program/resource list



- Action 1.3 Support a designated position to coordinate/advance the goals
- Action 1.4 Establish city policies related to local foods

GOAL 2: Improve understanding of local healthy food benefits and availability

- Action 2.1 Create branding and marketing for Greeley local and healthy foods aligned with the Made in Greeley campaign
- Action 2.2 Enhance marketing for Greeley Farmers Market
- Action 2.3 Add local foods into existing healthy foods education programs (garden/farm tours, kids zone at farmer's market, NCHA & District 6 programs)
- Action 2.4 Create an education program about benefits of healthy local food, targeting teens and young families

GOAL 3: Strengthen the local economy through links between healthy food producers and local stores and institutions

- Action 3.1 Increase the number of local farmers participating in the food hub (Farm to School)
- Action 3.2 Increase local producers' access to commercial kitchens
- Action 3.3 Explore the capacity of the food hub to service local vendors
- Action 3.4 Explore city incentives for local food

GOAL 4: Improve local, healthy food access and affordability

- Action 4.1 Increase local foods available at the Weld Food Bank
- Action 4.2 Provide training to residents for backyard gardens
- Action 4.3 Establish a food reclamation program at community gardens
- Action 4.4 Add a farmers market stop to Bus Route 4

GOAL 5: Link local, healthy food to biking/active living

- Action 5.1 Create an asset map of local foods and biking amenities
- Action 5.2 Encourage local foods vendors to offer discounts for customers arriving on bike
- Action 5.3 Develop pedestrian and bike wayfinding to local foods services and amenities
- Action 5.4 Improve bike access from the bike path terminus along the shoulder of O Street to the UNC Farm



Implementation Matrices

Implementation matrices, which include specific details for each action to aid in implementation, are found below.

Time Frame Key

Short: 0-6 months Medium: 6-12 months

Long: 1-2 years

GOAL 1: Coordinate local healthy food partners as assets in the community to maximize and strengthen the impact of all

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Action	1.1 Establish quarterly Local Foods Partners meetings	1.2 Develop a UNC program/ resource list	1.3 Support a designated position to coordinate/ advance the goals	1.4 Establish city policies related to local foods
Why is this action important?	 Design to foster collaboration Fill gaps Avoid duplication or competition 	 Help community partners access resources from UNC (and ideally, vice- versa) 	Keep momentum on Action Plan Implementation	 Part of LiveWell Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities campaign goals Leadership and coordination Adopted policies needed for funding
How will we measure success?	 New collaborations that occur as a result Ongoing membership & attendance 	 List is readily available and up-to- date Reciprocal efforts, lists by partners orgs 	Funded part or full- time	Adopted policies
Time Frame	Short	Short: end of summer	Medium - Long	Medium - Long
Lead Role	Make Today Count Health Campaign, Healthy Eating Group - Leslie Beckstrom	University of Northern Colorado (UNC): Kevin Cody, Deborah Romero	Make Today Count Health Campaign, Healthy Eating Group- Leslie Beckstrom, with Kevin Cody, UNC	City of Greeley, Deb Deboutez, with, Designated person in Goal 1.3



Supporting Cast	 Industry groups Weld County Food Bank (WCFB) NCHA Health Coalition City Economic Development (ED) LoCo Foods Weld County Health Department producers & vendors UNC CSU Extension HEAL 	 Partner organizations to respond in-kind, use list for their efforts/needs Greeley Office of Development Staff 	 Industry groups Weld County Food Bank NCHA Health Coalition City ED Department LoCo Foods Weld County Health Department Producers & vendors UNC CSU Extension HEAL 	 HEAL NCHA Health Coalition City ED Department Weld County Health Department
What will it cost, what will it take?	 Structured meetings that feel productive designed to assign partners to specific tasks Meeting space Invite list Coordination point person 	UNC staff resource & web hosting	 Apply for grant funding or staffing program such as AmeriCorps UNC graduate student project 	 City staff time Political will and community support
Possible sources, contributions etc.	Each member will recruit two additional members	• Staff time	 Grant writing Staff time AmeriCorps Local match USDA Community food projects grant USDA grant-writing workshop materials 	• Staff time



GOAL 2: Improve understanding of local healthy food benefits and availability

Action	2.1 Create branding and marketing for Greeley local and healthy foods aligned with the Made in Greeley campaign	2.2 Enhance marketing for the Greeley Farmers Market	2.3 Add local foods into existing healthy foods education programs (garden/farm tours, kids zone at farmer's market, NCHA & District 6 programs)	2.4 Create an education program about benefits of healthy local food, targeting teens and young families
Why is this action important?	 Identifies sense of place Reminder for consumers; guides decisions Promotes local growers Build on Made in Greeley Campaign 	 Strengthen market Attract new customers & vendors Sustain profitability 	 Early education for kids about the whole food system Build long-term support for local producers/foods 	Supports good, healthy choices for young mothers and babies
How will we measure success?	 Customers choosing restaurants/products based on local food Web page clicks Increase in food tax & sales tax revenue from sales in east Greeley 	 Increased patronage of market Increased vendor participation Increased revenue for market Exit interviews how customers heard of market 	 Number of participating farms/farmers Program student numbers 	 Number of program participants Birth weight WIC data
Time-frame	Short: create logo Medium: Local labels	Short: start Medium: launch Long: measure impact, formalize, expand	Medium to Long	Medium to Long
Lead Role	City of Greeley, Deb Deboutez	City of Greeley, Deb Deboutez	District 6 Wellness Coordinator with NCHA programs	District 6 Health Education
Supporting Cast	 The Creative District Chambers of Commerce (Greeley and Latino) LoCo Foods USDA Students: Design Greeley DDA SBDC 	 UNC interns Vendors WIC & SNAP DDA Weld County Human Services Greeley residents Transit authorities Local banks 	 CSU Extension Northern Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA): Kid Zone University of Northern Colorado (UNC) Future Farmers of America District 6 8th grade 	 Weld County Health Dept. WIC program Hospital Pediatrician offices UNC Marketing & health programs



	UNC Marketing & health programs	SBDC Greeley Tribune LoCo Foods	Career Expo • Farmer's Market	
What will it cost, what will it take?	 Design: \$1,000 - \$5,000 Materials: \$500 Website: \$500 Outreach: \$5,000 - \$10,000 	 Signage, design work, marketing strategy, writing City staff time Fees for posting Banks donate marquis space 	 Tours - logistics, advertising Kids Zone - education materials, staffing 	Educational materialsStaff time
Possible sources, contributions etc.	 UNC: time, in-kind Chamber of Commerce: outreach, promotions USDA: grant funding Industry associations: outreach to farmers 	 Funding: The Community Foundation Department of Local Affairs USDA Producers (feature logos for contribution) UNC volunteers Promotion: Farmers market 		Existing US programs abroad - First 1000 Days



GOAL 3: Strengthen the local economy through links between healthy food producers and local stores and institutions

Action	3.1 Increase the number of local farmers participating in the food hub (Farm to School)	3.2 Increase local producers' access to commercial kitchens	3.3 Explore the capacity of the food hub to service local vendors	3.4 Explore City incentives for local food
Why is this action important?	 Increase market for locally produced food Utilizing existing asset: District 6 Farm to School program 	 Increase number of cottage producers and amount of locally produced goods Strengthen local economy 	 Increase market for locally produced food Utilizing existing asset: District 6 Farm to School program 	 Strengthen local economy Encourages participation Connects value Guides decision making Links farmers to end users (markets?)
How will we measure success?	 Number of partners involved Revenue of food hub Footprint of food distribution 	 Hours of commercial kitchen use Number of local users of the Food Corridor app that matches kitchen time to producers 	 Number of vendors served Amount of foods processed 	 Dollars of incentives granted Dollars of sale revenue Number of partners Number of customers
Time frame	Short to begin, ongoing	Medium- Long	Medium- Long	Long
Lead Role	District 6 Food Hub Manager	The Food Corridor, with, D6 Food Hub Manager	District 6 Food Hub Manager with Kevin Cody, UNC	City of Greeley Economic Development
Supporting Cast	 Farm to School partners Weld County Health Department Weld Food Bank Small Business Development Center Surrounding school districts 	 USDA - Natalie Farmer's Pantry Food Bank kitchen Zoe's Kitchen 	 City ED Department Small Business Development Center (SBDC) LoCo Foods 	 Greeley Downtown Development Authority Colorado State University (CSU) Agricultural Extension Small Business Development Center Chamber of Commerce Upstate Colorado
	Self-supporting	More commercial	Increased processing	City Council support



Possible
sources,
contributions
etc.

- Colorado Health Foundation
- United States
 Department of
 Agriculture (USDA)

 Bartering/trading
- USDA local food promotion program
- USDA local food promotion program
- Food tax
- Tax increment financing
- Sales & Use tax
- Fee waivers/rebates

GOAL 4: Improve local, healthy food access and affordability

Action	4.1 Increase local foods available at the Weld Food Bank	4.2 Provide training to residents for backyard gardens	4.3 Establish a food reclamation program at community gardens.	4.4 Add a farmers market stop to Bus Route 4.
Why is this action important?	 Get more fresh and healthy local foods to those in need Support Weld County producers, grocery stores 	 Decentralize food production and cost of local fresh food Training in skills 	 Further engage community members Better food access for persons in need Use underutilized resources already in community 	 To get users of public transit very close to the market Expands client base of market & access to fresh healthy foods
How will we measure success?	 Pounds of local produce distributed If partnership is a voice during organizing stages Number of new organizations donating to food bank 	 Number of CSU Ext. volunteer instructors Number of community participants Number of backyard gardens in Greeley 	 Develop metrics to measure benefit of reclaimed food Increased donations to food bank Measure volume of composting 	 Establishment of Route 4 bus stop Increased attendance at market by bus transit riders
Time-frame	Short: ASAP establish partnership	Short - Medium	Medium: Planning Long: Execution	Long
Lead Role	Local Food, Local Places Steering Committee	City of Greeley Office of Community Engagement	Common Good Composting, Geoff Schmidt	City of Greeley, Transit Department
Supporting Cast	 Weld Food Bank Board of Directors Local Producers Engaged food bank recipients Churches 	 CSU Extension Master Gardener program Community groups City of Greeley Water Conservation Division 	 Kevin Cody, UNC Weld Food Bank City of Greeley Community gardens Churches 	Community & resident supportVendors



		*		
What will it cost, what will it take?	 Trust/time to earn trust Partnership grant dollars 	Volunteers from CSUCity Staff TimeVenue	 Labor, time - intensive Buy-in from participants Partnerships with Food Bank and composting service Equipment (bins) 	Proof of need/impactCity transit fundingProof of interest
Possible sources, contributions etc.	 Local producers Gleaning organizations/volunteers Resources from all over the state Committed to Feeding America 	County & local businesses	Fee-basedVolunteer effortDifferent compost locations	City of GreeleyFederal DOT grants

GOAL 5: Link local, healthy food to biking/active living

Action	5.1 Create an asset map of local foods and biking amenities	5.2 Encourage local foods vendors to offer discounts for customers arriving on bike	5.3 Develop pedestrian and bike wayfinding to local foods services and amenities	5.4 Improve bike access from the bike path terminus along the shoulder of O Street to the UNC Farm
Why is this action important?	Understand existing assets and connections, identify opportunities	 Connect active living (biking) with local food Support local businesses with bike and pedestrian customers Improve information on routes and local food vendors 	 Create mobile version of bike map that includes local food 	 Encourage farm and farmstand as a bike destination Use bikes to bring produce to town Improve safety Encourage use of Poudre Trail, activate east portion
How will we measure success?	Complete and verified map	 Number of people getting the discount Increase in business for vendors 	Number of signsBike and pedestrian counts	 Number of people showing up on farm with bikes for produce and events
Time frame	Short	Medium	Medium-Long: Concurrent with bike plan update	Long: Scheduled for 2021
Lead Role	UNC	City of Greeley	Greeley Bike Advisory Committee	City of Greeley



Supporting Cast	City of Greeley - maps and data sets	DDACreative DistrictBusiness Friendly Designation/Program	 FC Bikes/City of Fort Collins NoCo Bike & Pedestrian Collaboration DDA 	Bike and Health groupsCity and County
What will it cost, what will it take?	 Class project/ students or interns Faculty supervisor Mapping tool from Local Foods Local Places project 	• \$0 - \$5,000	• \$10,000 or less	 Study the ¼ mile segment of O St. and potential of creating a bike lane or trail connection Explore funding options now or if annexed by the City
Possible sources, contributions etc.	• UNC	Bike gear discounts for food baskets, etc.	 City of Greeley State Trails Fund Greater Outdoors Colorado (GoCO) Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) 	 MPO TAP funds State Trails fund GoCo City of Greeley Weld County CDOT

Implementation

The Action Plan identified many short-term action steps including several that did not require new funding sources. The project defines short-term action steps as those that can be completed within six months. Some of these Actions include:

- Action 1.1 Establish quarterly Local Foods Partners meetings
- Action 1.2 Develop a UNC program/resource list
- Action 2.1 Create branding and marketing for Greeley local and healthy foods aligned with the Made in Greeley campaign
- Action 2.2 Enhance marketing for Greeley Farmers Market
- Action 3.1 Increase the number of local farmers participating in the food hub (Farm to School)
- Action 4.1 Increase local foods available at the Weld Food Bank
- Action 4.2 Provide training to residents for backyard gardens
- Action 5.1 Create an asset map of local foods and biking amenities



Appendices

- Appendix A Workshop Participants
- Appendix B Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix C Community Asset Mapping Results
- Appendix D Workshop Exercises
- Appendix E Funding Resources
- Appendix F Additional Resources