

CITY OF CD'A PLANNING FOR HEALTH — WHERE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC VITALITY COLLIDE

October 28, 2015 at 5:00 am |

City planning and zoning originated during the industrial revolution to separate incompatible uses and protect people from infectious disease by moving residential areas away from industry, providing sewer systems, and ensuring light and fresh air.

In more recent years, it has become common knowledge that the built environment can affect people's health, either positively or negatively. Trends in city planning are starting to focus on how to better design communities to proactively support health and wellness, recognizing that health is a core component for community vitality.

October is National Community Planning Month, celebrating the many benefits of planning in communities. Community planning takes a "big picture" approach and looks at both current and future needs. This year, the theme "Healthy Communities, Healthy People" focuses on the many facets of creating healthy communities.

A great example of recent progress in Coeur d'Alene is evident in the work stakeholders and the community-at-large have done to guide the future of East Sherman through master planning efforts. Much of the input received to date trends toward improved economic vitality, aesthetics, safety, and health. Health-related responses include: Trees, green space, and landscaping to contribute to clean air and aesthetic pleasure; bike lanes, crosswalks, and pocket parks to promote physical activity and reduce carbon emissions; and a farmers market, open-air market with fresh local food and a grocery store with healthier food options — including frequent requests for Whole Foods and Trader Joe's.

Many of the components of the recent PARK(ing) IT ON SHERMAN! event had a health focus as a result of community input. These elements included a temporary installment of street trees, bike lanes, and a pocket park as well as pop-up businesses selling gluten-free snacks, locally-grown organic produce, and crepes made with local organic and non-GMO ingredients. Performances by local jugglers, BMX, skateboarders and yoga classes illustrated fun ways to increase personal activity.

The city and CDA 2030 have received considerable support for progressing in the near term with the implementation of street trees and bike lanes on East Sherman. It could be argued that the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods could profit if more street trees were planted. According to the city's urban forester, Katie Kosanke, trees result in improved air quality by reducing pollutants from tailpipe emissions, healthier soils, and decreased temperatures and sun exposure for pedestrians.

In the upcoming months, the city and CDA 2030 will continue conducting stakeholder interviews and meet with focus groups to better understand the opportunities and constraints of East Sherman. The team is also compiling background data and responses from the survey, town hall meetings and other outreach efforts into a report. This information will be used to help the planning team advance with the visioning and master planning efforts, which will include more opportunities for community involvement. To sign up for email updates, contact the City of Coeur d'Alene Planning Department at 769-2274 or planningdiv@cdaid.org.