

Executive Summary: Island County Plan for Healthy Living

The Island County Plan for Healthy Living lays out opportunities and strategies to help residents of Island County live healthier lives through more physical activity and healthier diets. This plan is based on information and ideas which were gathered through key informants and tested through an on-line community survey. Research into best practices also informed the final recommendations.

A **VISION** for a healthy Island County emerged from this work that embraces:



Walking as a way of living a healthy life and sustaining a sense of connectedness to the land and to community.



A wide array of choices in physical activity and food spanning the needs of different generations.



Easy access to information about activity and nutrition choices to diminish barriers to living healthier lives.



Healthy foods that are conveniently available to everyone, regardless of income, with ample opportunities to expand one's knowledge of quick and easy ways to prepare healthful foods. Small local farms are supported as an important source of healthy fresh foods, and restaurants and markets of all kinds offer convenient foods which are nutritionally sound.



Children who are physically active in and outside of school and have healthy food habits.

This plan includes thirteen **STRATEGIES** for moving toward the vision for a healthy Island County; strategies which touch all parts of the community – local government, schools, businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals. They are grounded in what was learned from the more than 668 survey respondents and 17 in-depth interviews with stakeholders.


















1. Hold a Walkability Conference, building on the Island County Comprehensive Non-Motorized Trail Plan, to bring together and build the capacity of interested community groups from across the County.



2. Develop regulations and guidelines requiring new housing developers to include provisions for trails and sidewalks, to encourage and enable walking.



3. Create a County website with information about trails, events, and low-cost ways to be active. Do so through public-private partnerships and by possibly expanding on the website developed by WHIM.

4.  Continue publication of the activity guide and trail map developed by WHIM.
5.  Create a regular “Healthy Living” column in local newspapers to keep physical activity and nutrition in people’s consciousness and provide creative ways to overcome individual barriers.
6.  Create, over time, a wide variety of low-cost activities available to residents such as rowing or kayaking, tennis, swimming, dancing and yoga, through Parks Departments and community organizations.
7.   Expand the scholarship and free or low-cost equipment available to children and youth in low-income families to make participation in organized sports possible. Accomplish this through public-private partnerships between Parks and Recreation Departments, schools, youth-oriented organizations, thrift stores and businesses, and make the information about scholarship opportunities available on the County website.
8.   Develop guidelines for early childhood physical activity and nutrition guidelines and convene a conference for childcare and preschool providers in Island County to educate and engage providers in these issues.
9.   Strengthen policies and curricula of school districts to support healthy meals and snacks and expand physical activity at all grade levels. Explore ways to work with local farms and food sources to increase healthy food choices in schools and with Parks and Recreation Departments to increase after-school activities.
10.   Develop a County workplace physical activity program for employees as a demonstration project, to encourage and model ways to enable working adults to be more active.
11.   Develop and encourage the use of a common set of icons or other visual cues for identifying healthy menu choices in local restaurants.
12.  Expand availability of convenient, healthy foods at markets and restaurants.
13.  Bring a Farmer’s Market to Camano Island.

Implementation of these recommendations will take the work and enthusiasm of local government, school districts, parks, businesses, community groups and individuals. Success will depend on a broad-based, long-term community effort and vision.