The Colorado Code Project

Improving Food Access through Land Use Code

by
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Healthy Communities Committee
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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Guidebook
The purpose of this project is to provide a guidebook for planners to learn what type of land use code language can be adapted for their communities needs in creating equitable access to healthy food.

The Problem
Often there is a challenge in translating goals expressed in comprehensive and long-range plans into applicable, practical land use code and planning regulations. However, there is no singular template, guide, or resource available to Colorado planners to aid in implementing food access goals through local land use code.

Methods Used
We used a health metric tool named City Health Dashboard, to determine what municipalities would be chosen for interviews to discuss their land use code. These municipalities have an average of 64% or more of residents who have limited access to healthy foods. We corresponded with five cities and four counties via email, phone, and zoom. The interviews focused on discussing examples of land use code language that improves food access.

Findings
The data collected from the interviews informed the development of a summary of best practices for land use code and food access outreach, a land use code checklist of questions for communities to consider when writing their code, and a toolkit of sample language to serve as a resource for how to write and implement a food focused code.

Recommendations and Next Steps
- Develop a comprehensive statewide toolkit for housing, open space, place and the built environment, transportation and community support.
- Collaborate with rural municipalities.
- Begin developing the chapter of the toolkit focused on transportation.

HOW TO CREATE A LAND USE CODE FOR FOOD ACCESS USING THE TOOLKIT

STEP 1 Engagement & Outreach	STEP 2 Identify Long Range Goals	STEP 3 Identify Needs	STEP 4 Write the Code	STEP 5 Implement & Evaluate
Gather Support: • Public • Funding • Political • Social Media **Who to Contact:** • Planning Directors • Senior Planners • Steering Committee • Development Review • Health Department • Community Leaders*	**Shared Goals:** • Grow local • Sustainable processing • Accessible systems • Active Living • Program Implementation Planners and Health Professionals Role: Use this step as an opportunity to teach about the intersection on between health and planning. The Social Determinants of Health, CDC	**Identify your why.** **Why does the community want to adopt a land use code?** **Identify:** • Assets • Challenges • Solutions **Use resources for help:** • The toolkit case studies • Health Data • Council Briefings • Relevant Policies • Town hall	**What code has worked in other communities to improve food access?** **Places to reference: Minnesota, Ohio, California, Massachusetts** **Use sample language from the toolkit on:** • creating food hubs in residential districts • community gardens • domestic farming • beekeeping • and more!	**Consider increasing staff capacity to implement program and evaluate progress.** **Adopting new code will involve development review.** **Be ready to rewrite and review in necessary.** **UPDATE AND EVALUATE! Strong code is adaptable to changing needs and environment.**