



How Springfield, Missouri is Promoting Walking and Biking to Everyday Places through Quality of Place Initiatives

BACKGROUND

The City of Springfield is a regional hub for economic, educational, and healthcare services in the southwestern part of Missouri. In 2018, the City Council launched a new, ongoing initiative called "[Quality of Place.](#)" The City Council defines Quality of Place as "those features of physical environment and qualities of life that make a location a desirable, competitive, and economically vibrant place to live."



APPROACH

To help support the city's Quality of Place initiative, Springfield sent an interdisciplinary team from the region to the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors' Active People, Healthy NationSM [Walkability Action Institute](#) (WAI). The WAI convenes teams representing public health, planning, transportation, elected officials, and other disciplines to participate in an intensive, applied-learning course on improving walkability with a focus on community and transportation design. The WAI provided the Springfield team a unique opportunity to collaborate, learn, and develop an action plan to embed walking and biking principles into the city's planning processes.

Learn more at chronicdisease.org

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Comprehensive Planning and Policy Changes

The interdisciplinary efforts outlined in the WAI action plan led to the creation of the [Springfield, Missouri Walkability Guide](#), which the city subsequently adopted through a [resolution](#), and a new 2020 [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#).

The city also incorporated walkability and Quality of Place into its 2022 update of the [City of Springfield Comprehensive Plan](#). Updates included policy changes and zoning recommendations to promote mixed-use developments, enhance public spaces, and improve transportation options.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Leveraging Funding and Resources

Springfield leveraged multiple funding streams, including federal funds, local sales taxes, and grants, to support its projects. The strategic use of resources enabled the city to implement significant improvements despite budget constraints. Since the WAI, the city team has secured over **\$75 million** to support walking and biking to everyday places. In 2019, Springfield received a Federal Transit Administration [Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development \(BUILD\) Grant](#) to design and build an off-street [pedestrian and bicycle pathway](#) in the heart of Springfield. The new pathway spurred related planning initiatives for housing and mixed-use zoning.

In 2024, Springfield was awarded a Department of Transportation [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant](#). The RAISE grant will fund an initiative called “[Ungap the Map](#)” to close gaps in the trail system. Portions of the trail system impacted by the grant are located in some of Springfield’s most under-resourced neighborhoods.

“NACDD’s Walkability Action Institute helped us find a common language between the different disciplines and helped strengthen cross-sector collaboration.”

-**Natasha Longpine**, Ozarks Transportation Organization

LESSONS LEARNED

Persistent and Cross-Sector Collaboration: The interdisciplinary team’s collaboration was crucial. Regular meetings and consistent communication ensured that all departments and disciplines aligned and worked toward common objectives. The collaboration extended to the local trail organization, public health department, and city planners, creating a unified approach to community development.

Documenting and Sharing Progress: Keeping detailed records of accomplishments and outcomes helped inform policymakers and the community on walkability initiatives. Sharing successes can also inspire and guide other communities.

CONCLUSION: Springfield, Missouri’s experience with the WAI illustrates how a committed and collaborative approach can enhance the quality of a place through improved walkability. By integrating walkability principles into urban planning, engaging the community, and leveraging multiple funding sources, Springfield has made significant strides in creating a more vibrant, accessible, and economically robust community.

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