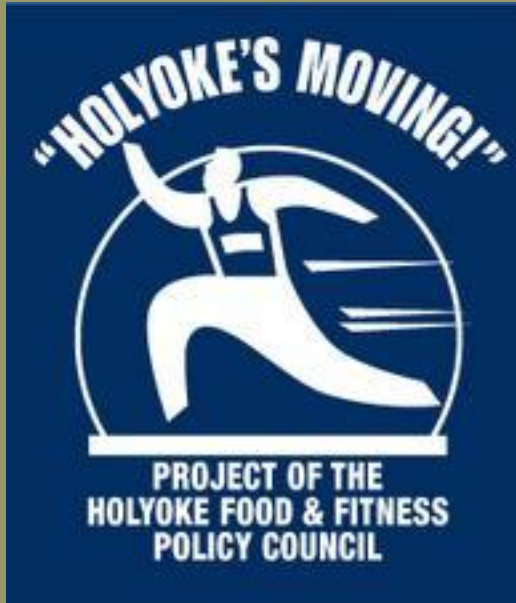


Healthy Kids Healthy Communities Holyoke's story

June 2010



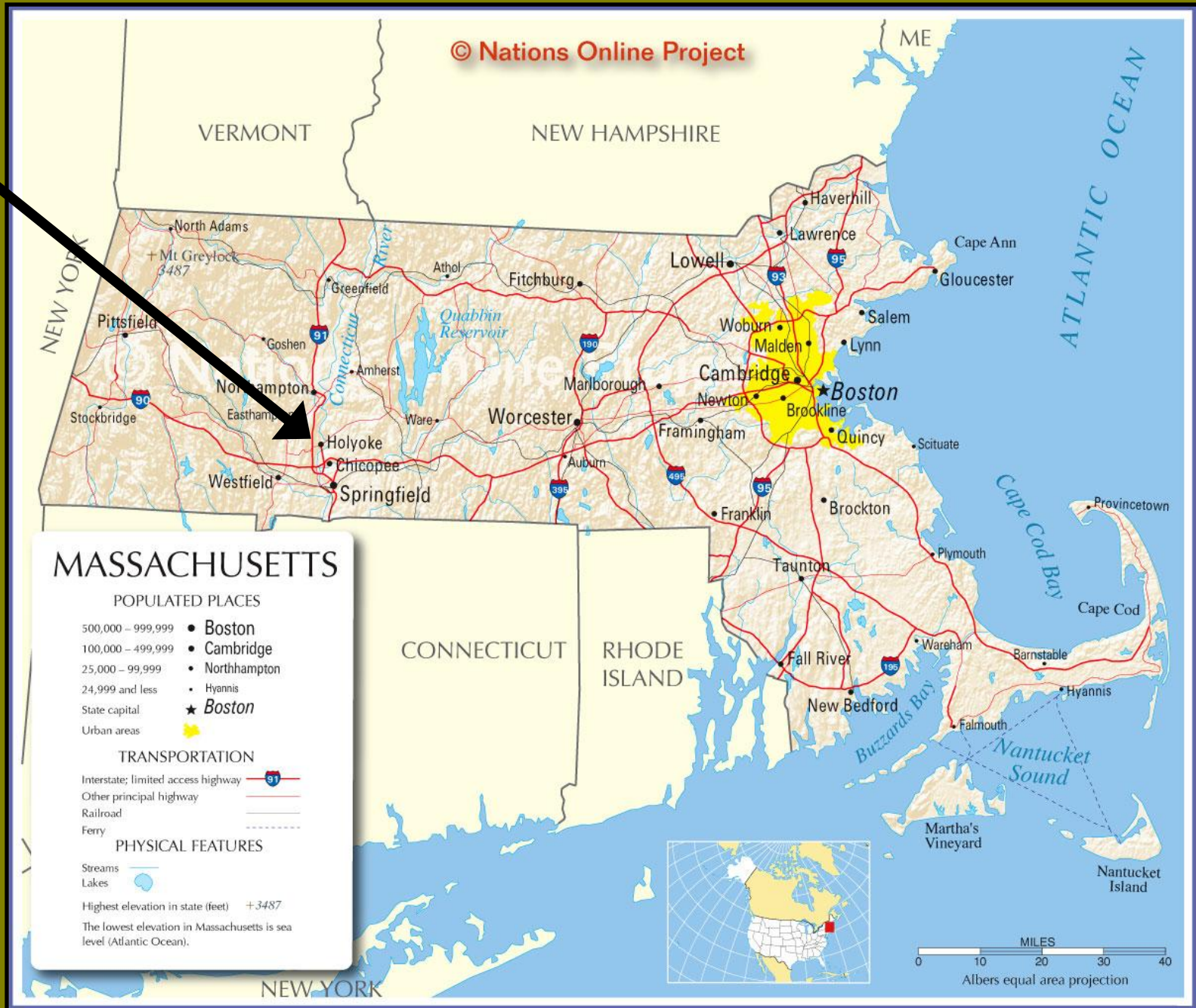


Holyoke Food and Fitness Policy Council

Holyoke, MA

Jeff Harness, Director

**Western Massachusetts Center for Healthy
Communities**



Mission

The mission of the Holyoke Food & Fitness Policy Council is to create and sustain a more healthy and vibrant Holyoke through the development of programs, policies, community leadership and advocacy.



W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food and Fitness Project: Expectations for the nine communities in the project

- 3 years comprehensive assessment and planning
- With a focus on local food systems and the built environment
- Community led planning with a lot of youth involvement
- Create a community action plan
- Program evaluation, replication, and sharing results

Teens from the **Holyoke Youth Commission** represented the city's population of young people.



The **Community Leaders Council** was composed of grassroots community leaders dedicated to making a difference in the city.

The **Agency Alliance** brought together representatives from Holyoke's nonprofit organizations and city government.

Planning Goals

(1) create and maintain a vibrant community coalition that has a focus on community change through food and fitness

(2) create an actionable, comprehensive food and fitness plan for Holyoke



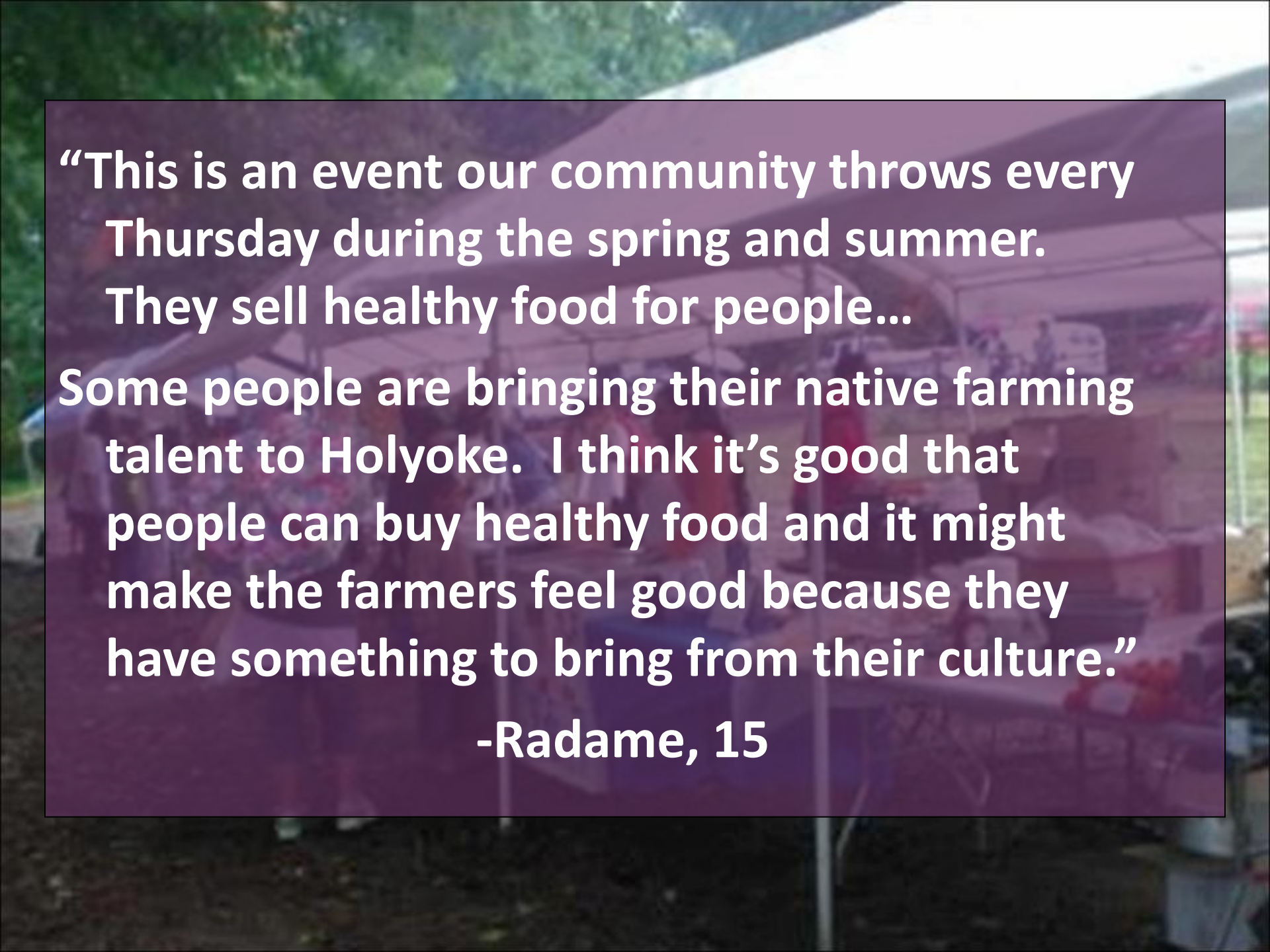
Supporting the Community Voice

- Listen
- Let people tell their story
- Understand power dynamics
- Understand culture and language

Engaging youth and adult residents

- By-laws
- Community participation in data collection
- Community leadership on steering committee
- Decision-making, especially about the budget





“This is an event our community throws every Thursday during the spring and summer. They sell healthy food for people... Some people are bringing their native farming talent to Holyoke. I think it’s good that people can buy healthy food and it might make the farmers feel good because they have something to bring from their culture.”

-Radame, 15

Organizational Structures

- Steering committee structure has balance of youth, adult residents, and agencies
- Aside from steering committee, youth, residents, and agencies met separately during planning phase
- Teams were formed and organized by topic, such as food systems, school wellness, fitness, and built environment



Data collection

- 100 resident one-on-one interviews
 - (stipends, resident input into the design, training)
- 1,000 youth led community surveys
- Youth PhotoVoice project
- Community walk-ability assessment
- Policy review
 - (ordinances that support or inhibit health eating and active living)
- Demographics



Words from Holyoke Youth – Quotes from PhotoVoice Project

“What is the point of closing a field because adults feel that it might get trashed, damaged, or destroyed by children? ... By keeping it closed they stop some youth from using it and some end up destroying the barrier between them and the field. And we will get in.”

– Frankie, 18

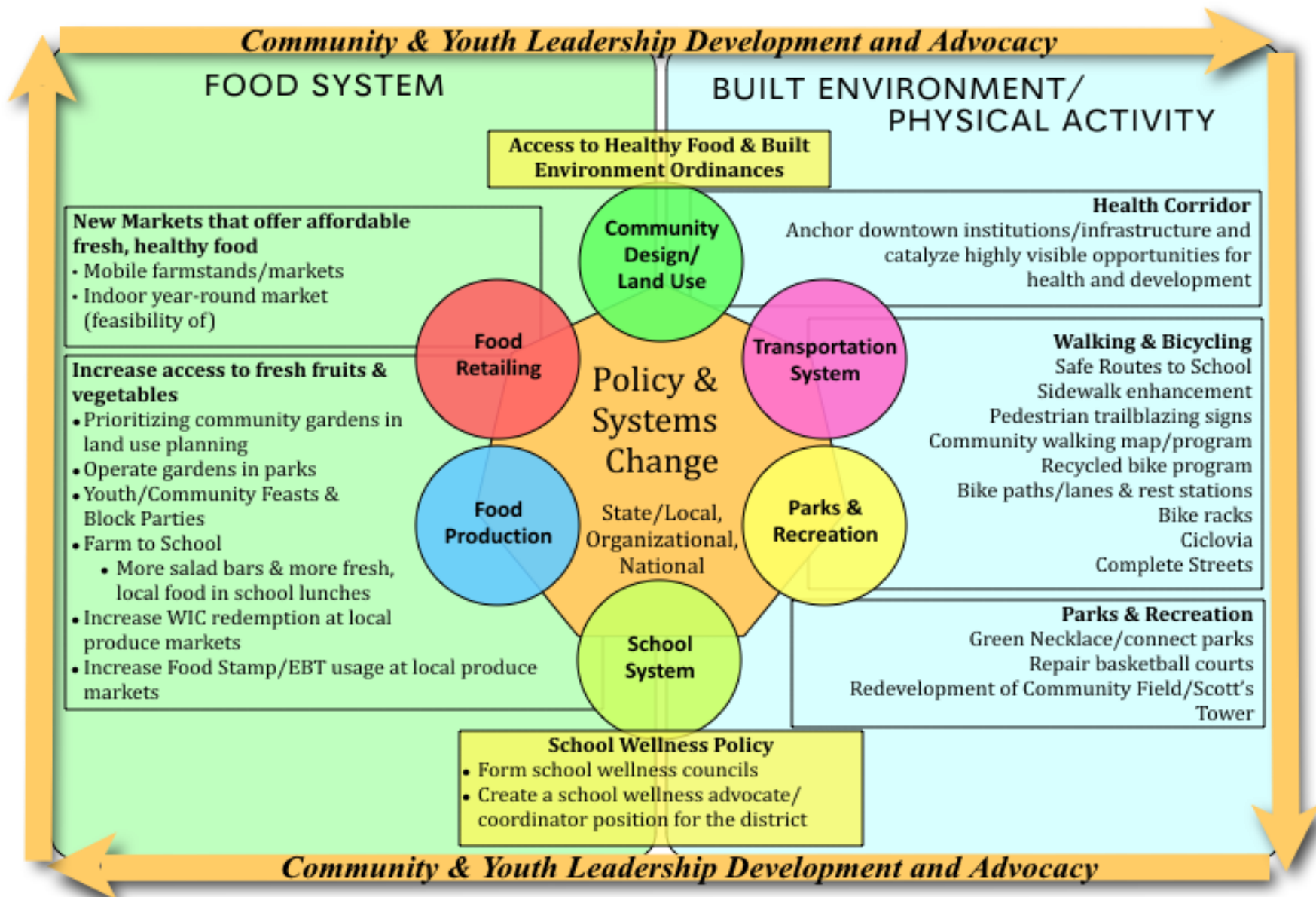


We held 2 planning retreats

First: Teams worked on their strategy sheets

Second: Together, we selected strategies for implementation

HOLYOKE FOOD & FITNESS POLICY COUNCIL STRATEGY MAP



Future Vision and Goals

As we prepare to dive deeper into the new work, we will be zooming in on six key areas:

- Youth and community engagement
- Food system, transportation system
- Parks and recreation system
- School system
- Statewide policy



Strategy teams

The majority of the implementation work is organized within three main strategy teams

- Active Living
- Community food access
- School wellness

Each team will continue to be comprised of agency, youth and community residents and the three core implementing partners: YMCA, Nuestras Raíces, and Holyoke Health Center

Examples of Success

- New salad bar at Dean Technical High School
- Nuestras Raíces grant to double the value of WIC, EBT and Senior Farmers Market Coupons
- Healthy Summer Camp at La Finca Farm




Examples of Success





- Youth led bike repair shop
- More spaces for biking and walking
- City planning department leadership on built environment opportunities

Examples of Success



**Holyoke
Youth
Candidate
Forum**

Sponsored by:
Holyoke Food & Fitness Policy Council
Holyoke Youth Commission



Join with youth across Holyoke for a
question and answer forum led by
the Holyoke Youth Commission

When: Tuesday, Oct. 27, 5:00 snacks, 5:30-7:30pm forum
Where: Holyoke Health Center, 230 Maple St, Holyoke, MA
Who: Candidates for Mayor and City Council At-Large
More info: Rebecca Masters, Holyoke Youth Task Force Coordinator
rmasters@girlsinholyokey.org
(413) 532-6247, ex. 108

- Youth-led Forum for Candidates for Mayor and City Council
- Youth organized FEESTs (Food Education Empowerment Sustainability Team) – youth plan, cook, eat, talk, have fun, lead

Things We've Learned

- Common language across race, culture, class, education and profession
- Capacity and infrastructure of agencies to take on the work
- Systems to maintain records, procedures, decisions
- In what ways are we prepared for accountability to the funder, the community, each other?
- What procedures do we have for ensuring accountability of the budget and financial management?

Things We've Learned

- Having young people so involved is great, but they also get older and move on with their lives. How to continually develop new youth to take over leadership
- Constantly work on relationship between agencies, between community groups, and between agencies and communities
- Keep going forward no matter the obstacles, challenges, good times, and bad times

“Together we can transform this city into a place where young people and adults alike have access to clean parks, health clinics, and community centers.”

– Alex, 19

