

Golden Vision Community Well Being Index Project

Project Goal: A community based project to understand and improve community well being as a further step in a healthy communities initiative. The resulting well being index will become a valuable tool in determining and evaluating City projects and programs in this arena, but also for use by community partners in directing their projects and programs. One of the most significant project outcomes would be the development and organization of data that would assist the City and our partners in making high-impact decisions.

Project Context: Golden Vision has articulated a set of community values that help define Golden's perception of itself as well as community aspirations. A positive next step would be to consider an assessment of where we are as a community in relation to these community values, and to use the assessment as an on-going planning tool for community initiatives to enhance well being. As we continue to support our Golden vision values, it will be desirable to understand which segments of the community (age, geographic location, health or socio economic status) face more challenges related to Golden Vision values, and what role the city should take in addressing these challenges.

Background: As the Golden community strives to address the full spectrum of "community" experience, it leads to more and deeper evaluation of the relationship between the city organization and both the individual and the collective group that is Golden. The evaluation of this relationship is a crucial element in achieving the Golden that is aspired to in the Golden Vision 2030 project. A serious evaluation of this relationship is also necessary in order to define the limits of involvement of the City organization, and where the factors of personal responsibility and group social responsibility dictate that the City organization not engage certain areas of life. A more recent description of the optimum community and individual state in community health circles uses the term "well being" as the community and individual goal. In that sense, well being is characterized as:

"Living a meaningful life, characterized by feeling empowered to make change, be happy, healthy, and connected to one's environment and community... Well being is more than a lack of problems; it involves thriving – not merely surviving – in one's life."

“Cultivating well being is not the job of the collective or the individual. It is a shared responsibility; a process that is dynamic and interactive, telescoping interdependently, from the personal level to the group level and back again.”

In order to pursue the optimum Golden Vision community using the concept of well being, it is necessary to:

- More objectively assess that status of the community’s well being measured against a well defined set of metrics or indices. (In this case, staff is currently recommending that we participate in a national data collection effort with a partnership of Healthways and the Gallup organization to create a base line that can be utilized with our Golden Vision values.) This step involves a formal citizen phone survey as described below.
- Use the objective assessment from the Gallup-Healthways effort to frame a local more “qualitative” review of resident condition and opinions to both enhance the usefulness of the survey instrument data and better guide community actions. This step would likely involve focus groups or interviews or similar tools.
- Use the combined assessment as a springboard for future strategic initiatives by various groups, including the City, non-profit sector, and service sector.
- Continue to use the combined assessment to benchmark the community’s progress primarily against our selves, but potentially against other communities.

Project Elements: Based upon an initial review, such a project could include a few elements:

- On-going review of available existing research data, for a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and opportunities.
- Final investigation and implementation of the Gallup-Healthways Well Being Index survey.
- A partnership with the Colorado School of Public Health for a more in depth evaluation of targeted survey outcomes of the Well Being Index.
- Strategic planning and action plans to improve well being performed by various groups in partnership.
- Ongoing monitoring and refocus, along with periodic re-assessment.

Project partners:

- City of Golden
- Jeffco Public Health Department

- St. Anthony/ Centura
- Colorado School of Public Health at University of Colorado at Denver
- Non-profit partners

Project Element Details: Apart from a decision and commitment that the City organization has a real role in the effort to directly and indirectly encourage an increase individual and community well being, the most important early steps involve the objective and targeted in-depth community assessments. At this point this initial research and testing effort may utilize the following:

- Secondary Research. In preparation for the collection and evaluation of Golden specific well being data, staff and our partners will review available information, including Gallup-Healthways' 2013 national report entitled the State of American Well-Being, county-wide health data from the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE), and county or local data from the Jeffco HEAL cities effort. The separately transmitted Gallup-Healthways national report from 2013 contains very interesting summarized data, including references to rankings by state and for various cities. Based upon the number of national surveys conducted, they are able to make certain general conclusions, but not at a level useful to Golden.
- Specific Golden Sampling of the Well-Being Index Survey. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being index project is a 25 year project (begun in 2006) to continually measure survey responses related to well being organized into six general topic areas:
 - Life evaluation
 - Environmental health
 - Work environment
 - Physical health
 - Healthy behavior
 - Basic Access

In this effort, they complete about 175,000 phone surveys a year (500 a day nearly every day of the year). Upon request, they will perform an “oversampling” when a specific community desires a higher level of information and accuracy compared to a regional view. While staff has not yet seen the specific survey instrument, or an exact cost, the approach to create a community baseline has a great deal of

merit for Golden's long term commitment to Golden Vision values, and should be affordable.

It is important to again mention that the fact, that the City's direct role in several of the six well being topic areas is limited, does not lessen the value to the City organization and the entire community of the assessment effort. It is the diverse nature of well being factors and the many and diverse roles of interested groups that argues in favor of the City taking a lead in collecting and presenting community based information.

- Local In-Depth Discussion of Specific Factors. Once we have the survey instrument results for Golden in hand, we recommend small diverse focus groups asking qualitative based questions about individual and group well being (in Golden Vision value terms) to help focus the conversations about City or community programs and projects. To this end, staff is proposing to partner with an Evaluation Field Study class, taught by Dr. Yvonne Kellar-Guenther, in the Colorado School of Public Health program at UC Denver. This program would help develop specific focus group (or similar method) interactions to more deeply investigate certain findings of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. This second level of local investigation would become the basis of future City and community program discussions.

Deliverables from this project would be defined in detail, but may include reports, video presentations, suggested additional monitoring or analysis or similar products.

- The combined assessment would be complete and presented to Council in preparation for City Council's early 2016 strategic planning session to verify priorities and signature initiatives.

How Will the Results Be used? It is anticipated that the project results may be used by the City and partner groups in a number of ways.

- For the City, the most likely policy and resource decisions will better focus efforts on existing Council initiatives:
 - "Creating and environment where physical activity is easy and safe."

While we are making continual progress on walkability related to our community infrastructure, there will be other opportunities to investigate.

- “Make the healthy choice the easy choice.” In this arena, our efforts related to local food access, healthy vending, and potential efforts with restaurants and grocers can be refined, but this focus also includes making biking or transit use or other positive behaviors the “easy choice”.
 - “Cultivate a culture of well being.” The City is already attempting to encourage and foster a culture of health and well being. The project data and results can help with long term focus for these efforts.
- For community groups, there will be opportunities to refine and refocus programs and services to address specific gaps or needs in the community.
 - For our professional partners, there will be opportunities to refine their community health programs as well as monitoring and evaluating overall progress and in specific areas.

Fiscal Impact: The overall costs of the assessment and planning tool will be determined prior to any requested City commitment. The long term benefits of the project will also be estimated, to the degree feasible.

Community Impact: The community impact of merely collecting Golden specific well-being information will be an enhanced understanding of our community and the needs of certain populations. This information will be useful for:

- The City to assign resources and efforts for direct city efforts; and
- For community groups to refine existing or new programs; and
- For communicating with state, regional, and county level efforts and organizations about local needs.