

Healthy Communities Moses Lake Project

January 2007

OVERVIEW

The **Healthy Communities Moses Lake Project** identified three priority strategies:

1. Increase support for breastfeeding
2. Provide for community gardens
3. Improve path systems

Project areas that address these areas include:

- Breastfeeding Coalition
- Community Garden
- Trails Planning Team
- Corporate Wellness

POLICY & ENVIRONMENT CHANGES: MONITORING PROGRESS

Work in Progress for Environment & Policy Change

Breastfeeding

- Worksites accommodate breastfeeding employees 2004-
- Lactation Center established at Moses Lake Community Health Center, 2005
- Ongoing discussion with local hospital to increase support for breastfeeding
- Moses Lake City Council passed resolution to support breastfeeding, 2006

Gardens

- Community Garden established, plots rented, crops harvested 2004-6
- Youth Wellness Team participated and donated harvest to Food Bank 2004-6
- Community Garden incorporated into City of ML Parks & Recreation in 2006
- Partnership expanding to develop new community garden site in 2007

Trails

- Trails Master Plan adopted by CML city council in 2005
- Trails map printed in 2003, revised map printed in 2006
- Dogwood Court links trails with street crossing signal and trail extensions, 2006
- Numerous improvements to trails for safety, awareness and aesthetics, ongoing

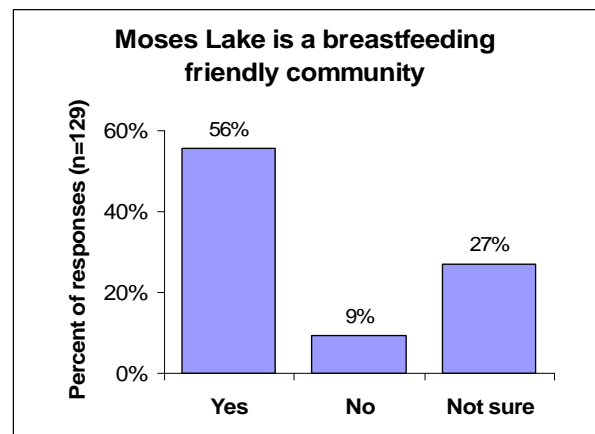
Corporate Wellness

- Engage employers to explore benefits of worksite wellness policies in 2006
- Conduct a worksite wellness campaign
- Survey worksite nutrition and physical activity policies

Breastfeeding

The Breastfeeding Coalition promotes breastfeeding awareness and support for environment and policy changes at worksites, childcare facilities and in healthcare.

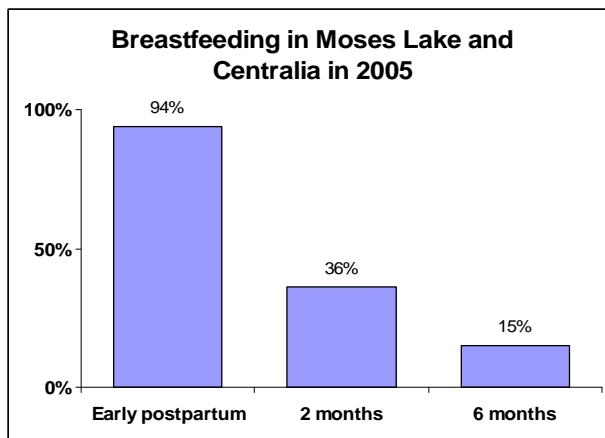
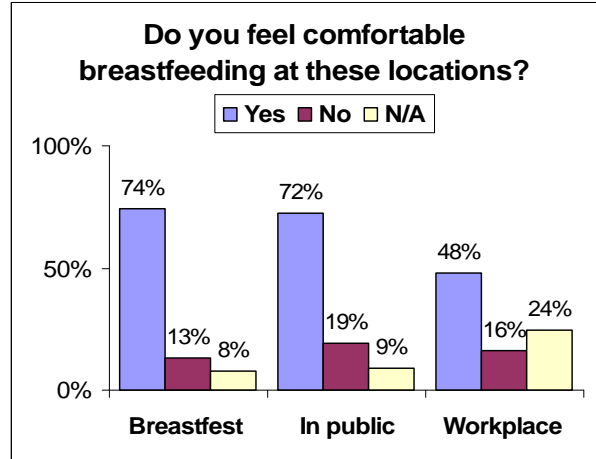
The Coalition sponsors an annual event **Breastfest**. Surveys at this event in 2006 captured information about attitudes concerning breastfeeding in Moses Lake. The majority of those who took the survey felt that Moses Lake is a breastfeeding friendly community.



POLICY & ENVIRONMENT CHANGES: MONITORING PROGRESS

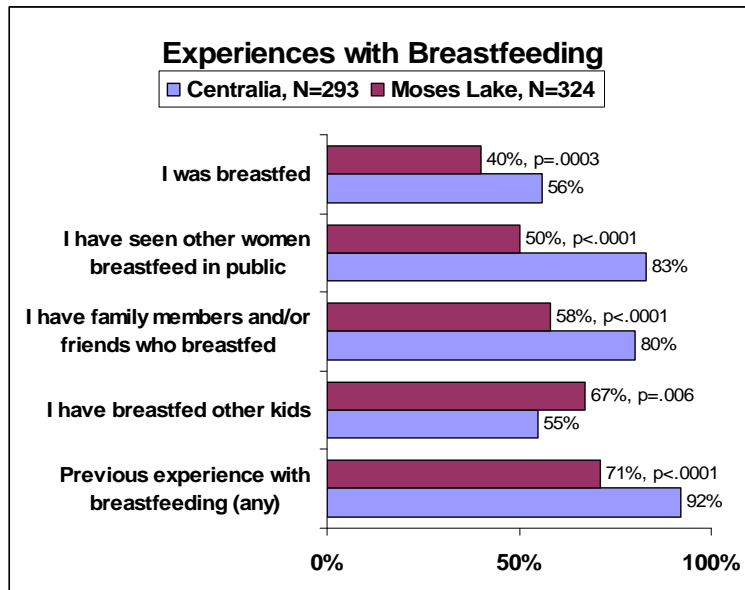
Breastfeeding (continued)

In the same *Breastfest* 2006 survey most women said that they felt comfortable breastfeeding at Breastfest (74%) or in public (72%), but fewer women (only 48%) feel comfortable breastfeeding at work.



Donna Johnson at the University of Washington led a research study to evaluate policy and environmental approaches to breastfeeding in Moses Lake. Results for this study compare Moses Lake with Centralia, a community “matched” for size, geographic location and hospital services.

Based on surveys of mothers who were recruited when they delivered at the local hospital, breastfeeding rates were similar in the two communities.



However, experiences with breastfeeding differed significantly for mothers in Moses Lake compared to Centralia. Women in Moses Lake were

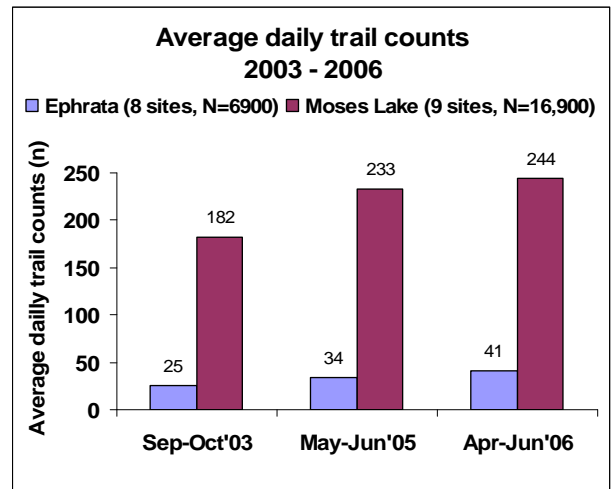
- less likely to have been breastfed,
- less likely to have seen other women breastfeeding in public,
- less likely to know friends or family who breastfed and
- less likely to have had previous breastfeeding experience.

Yet more women in Moses Lake had breastfed other kids. Given this background the similar breastfeeding rates in the two communities suggest that there have been positive changes in Moses Lake supportive of breastfeeding.

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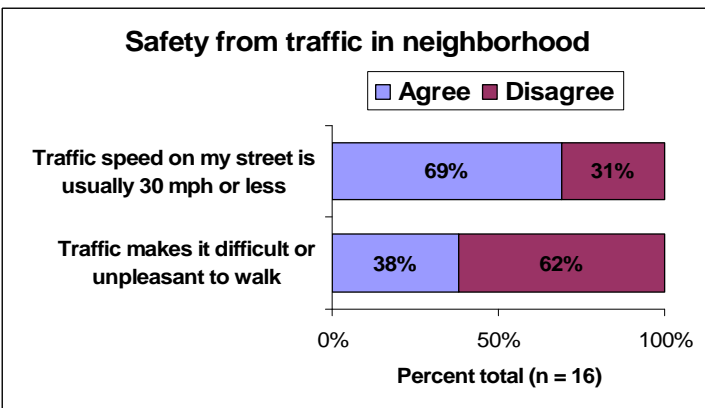
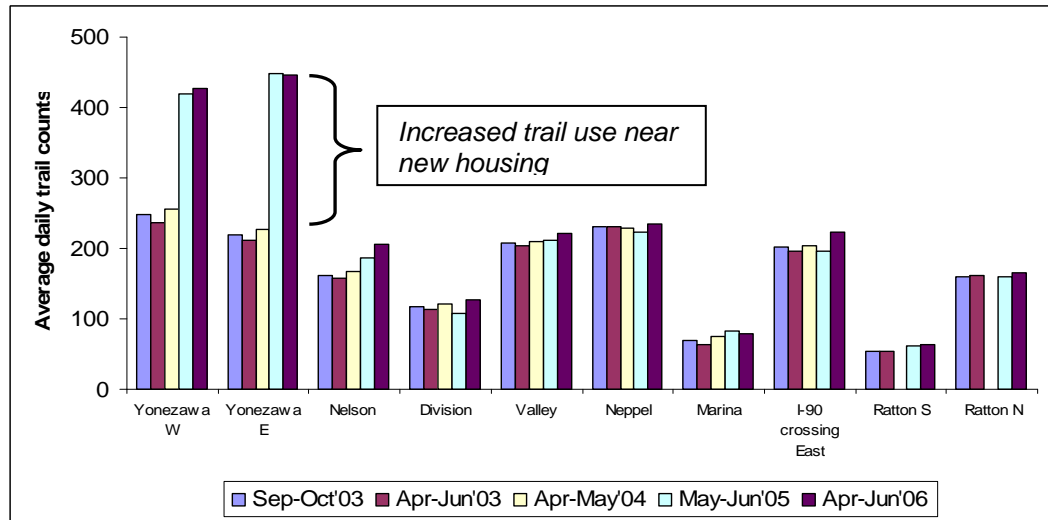
Trails

Annual trail counts have been taken for one week intervals at several sites in Moses Lake and also in Ephrata. Ephrata was intended to be a “control” community that had not received the Healthy Communities intervention. However, the population sizes and respective trail counts differ too much for valid comparisons to be made. Nonetheless, both communities have seen an increase in trail use.



Two sites in Moses Lake experienced almost a doubling in use that corresponded to the opening of a new housing development in the vicinity. One of the priorities of the Trails Planning Team was to increase biking and walking access for new developments and these trail counts reflect that success.

Trail Counts in Moses Lake 2003 - 2006



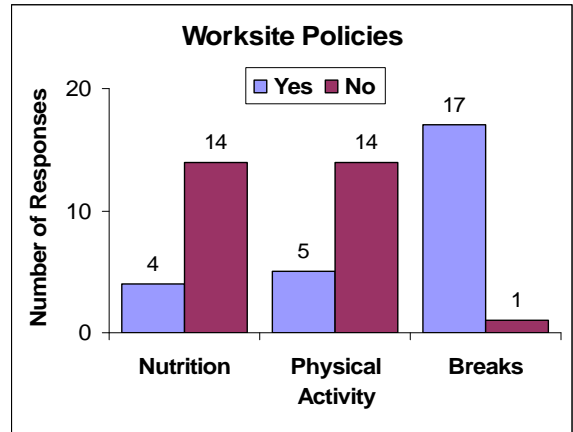
A survey of residents (n=16) in the new development revealed that most felt that their neighborhood was safe and pleasant with regard to traffic for them to walk and bike. Eight respondents were satisfied with how the local design for bike riding, while three were dissatisfied and nine wanted more trails or more bike lines. Nobody said that there were any barriers to walking in their neighborhood. However, when asked if they

would lead a community walking program, none of the respondents volunteered.

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Corporate Wellness

This committee was formed in 2005 to focus on integrating Healthy Communities priorities with businesses and worksites in Moses Lake. Initial assessment showed that while most businesses (17/18) have policies about breaks, fewer worksites have nutrition (4/18) and physical activity (5/19) policies. However, many employers expressed interest in developing policies that support employee health and productivity and benefit health care costs.



**LESSONS
LEARNED**

Breastfeeding

- * Baseline assessment data were not reliable and could not be used for pre-post
- * Surveys at events provided valuable input about the community environment for breastfeeding, but participants at *Breastfest* represent selection bias

Community Gardens

- * Measures of success focused on the number of plots and gardeners in addition to qualitative feedback from gardeners
- * Garden surveys provided input about nutrition and physical activity, however, the small number of replies made it difficult to assess project impact

Trails

- * Trail counts should be taken over time period longer than one week in order to increase validity
- * Moses Lake and Ephrata differ greatly in population size. Control communities need to be better matched for various factors including population size.
- * Bike-ability and Walk-ability assessment surveys repeated in 2006 did not reflect trail improvements compared to baseline, but focused more on current problems. Better pre/post assessment methods are needed.

Corporate Wellness

- * Employers are interested in learning more about wellness policies that benefit employees and their businesses
- * Corporate survey revealed current status of nutrition and physical activity policies, but missed an opportunity to ask about breastfeeding policies

Acknowledgements

- * Project partners and team members in Moses Lake actively participated in pre and post assessments and helped pilot test evaluation processes. They continue to apply evaluation to inform their Healthy Communities Project.
- * Special thanks to Sally Goodwin, project coordinator for the Healthy Communities Moses Lake Project and to all of the project team members for their hard work and valuable participation in program evaluation.