

Howard County Food and Fitness – County Meeting #1  
Summary of Focus Group Data and Meeting Notes

Strengths:

- Local Food System
  - Local gardens
  - Farmer's Markets
  - Locally grown food network
- Local Fitness & Play
  - Trails
  - Park & Rec – parent involvement
  - Parks & Campgrounds
  - City/Town fitness infrastructure – pool, parks, school gyms, ball fields
  - Schools
  - Fitness center
  - Nature areas – Vernon Springs, etc.
- Local Health

Opportunities:

- Local Food System
  - Food in schools
  - Grocery stores
  - Child care facilities
  - Restaurants
  - Farmer's Market
  - Educational Classes
  - Mennonite produce auction
- Local Fitness & Play
  - Park & Rec
  - Playground equipment
  - More school gym classes
  - Family activities with seasonal consideration
  - Trails – improve surface
  - Promote more outdoor recreational activities
  - Access to biking, walking, trails, golf courses, swimming, parks
- Local Health
  - School wellness programs
  - Business collaboration to promote
  - After-school programming – support eve family time

## Challenges:

- Local Food System
  - Lack of local healthy foods in stores & restaurants
  - Lack of marketing
  - Need education re what is healthy to eat
  - Seasonal Farmer's markets
  
- Local Fitness & Play
  - Cost & time for families and youth
  - Existing facilities & parks need updating
  - Limited access to city/town play & physical activity infrastructure
  - Remote location of schools
  - Play has changed – Kids more screen time, too much organized play?
  - More affordable programming & access needed
  - Activities for kids not in sports
  
- Local Health
  - Families not eating meals – time, cost, knowledge of what & how to cook healthy
  - Consuming too much pop & coffee instead of water
  - Too much homework and sports
  - Model eating habits with parents