



## **Preston Community HEAL MAPPS™ Report**

Preston is a rural city located in Franklin County, Idaho, on the northern end of the Cache Valley. Approximately half of the Cache Valley is in Idaho and the other half is in Utah. Mountains and high hills – Including the Bear River Range of the Wasatch Mountains on the east and the Wellsville and Malad Ranges on the west – enclose the valley floor. The highest peaks reach elevations of 10,000 feet. The elevation of Preston at the valley floor is approximately 4,715 feet. The Bear River is the only major river flowing near Preston. It is the largest river in the United States that does not flow into the ocean; it empties into the Great Salt Lake.

In 1866, Latter-day Saint (LDS, or "Mormon") pioneers arrived in the northern end of the Cache Valley, stretching across southeastern Idaho and northeastern Utah. They founded a community in that location and named it Worm Creek, but later changed it to Preston. Preston was named after Preston, England, the center of early LDS proselytizing in the UK. It was not until the 1880s, while William C. Parkinson was serving as the bishop of the Preston LDS Ward that a regular town site was laid out.<sup>1</sup>

Located approximately 10 miles north of the Utah/Idaho border, Preston is classified as a commuter community. This means that it is a less populated community tied to a metro community (Logan, Utah which is 27 miles south) by a high level of commuting for employment, healthcare, commerce and higher education.

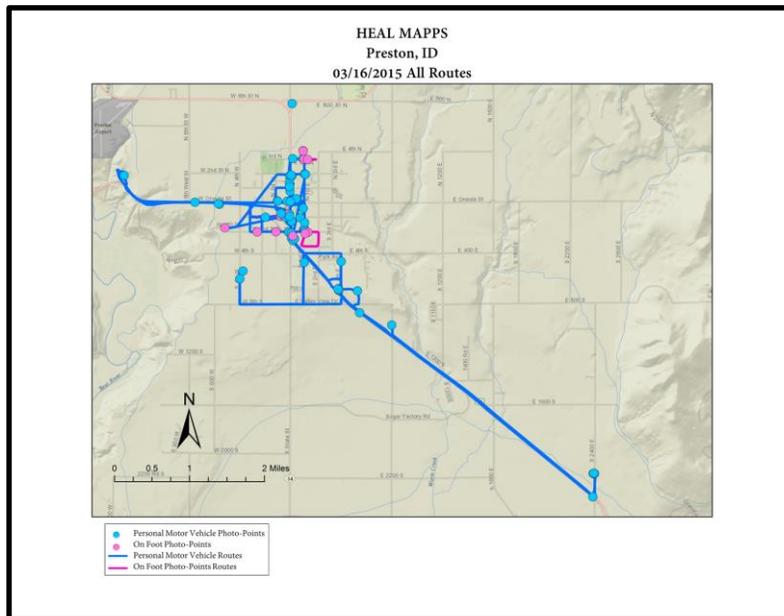
The 2013 population estimate for Preston was 5,168. The vast majority of Franklin County residents are Caucasian (90.6%). The remainder of the population consists of 7.5% Hispanic/Latino and 1.9% other ethnicities. In 2010, 10% of the population in Preston were under 5 years of age, 33.2% were under 18, and 15.2% were 65 years of age or older. There are slightly more females (50.5%) in Preston than males. In 2012, 90.7% of Preston residents age 25 or older had a high school diploma/equivalent or higher and 17.1% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. The per capita personal income in 2012 was \$19,378, which was 69.1% of the national average and 85.8% of the state average. The median household income for Preston residents in 2012 was \$45,781.<sup>2</sup> There is one school district in Preston (Preston School District) which has two high schools: Preston High School (9-12 grades) and Franklin County High School (an alternative high school), one junior high school: Preston Junior High School (6-8 grades), and two elementary schools: Oakwood Elementary (3-5 grades) and Pioneer Elementary (Kindergarten-2nd grades). Preston has one grocery store (Stokes Marketplace), five convenience stores, and 13 foodservice establishments. There are many recreational opportunities around the Preston area including hunting, fishing, boating, water skiing,

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preston,\\_Idaho](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preston,_Idaho)

<sup>2</sup> <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/16/1665260.html>

camping, hiking, swimming, golfing, snowmobiling, skiing, etc. There are three attractions in Preston: That Famous Preston Nights Rodeo (three nights of rodeo and parade in late July), Franklin County Fair (2<sup>nd</sup> week of August), and Festival of Lights (weekend after Thanksgiving).



**Generating Rural Options for Weight Healthy Kids and Communities (GROW HKC)** is a USDA-funded, participatory childhood obesity prevention study conducted by Oregon State University's Extension researchers in partnership with rural residents and communities. GROW HKC and the Preston community have partnered to map features of the local environment and discuss residents' perceptions of the community supports and

barriers to regularly eating healthy and being physically active, particularly for children and families. Community members were mobilized and trained to use HEAL MAPPS™ (Healthy Eating Active Living: Mapping Attributes using Participatory Photographic Surveys), our community resource and readiness tool, to assess community resources for and readiness to improve and implement healthy eating and physical activity supports – environmental and policy actions to make easier these obesity preventing behaviors.

HEAL MAPPS™ projects conducted in partnership with rural communities across several Western States (CO, ID, NM, NV, OR, WA) will provide evidence and insights that will drive the development of a rural obesity prevention model. The model will be used as a framework for rural community actions aimed to promote healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, environments, and policies to prevent overweight and obesity among children and families.

The problem of obesity in children is in the forefront of nationwide research efforts and there are documented physical and mental health outcomes associated with childhood obesity that contribute to lifelong chronic health problems which may disproportionately affect people living in rural places. Rural residency tends to increase the risk of overweight and obesity for children and adults; the prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity is higher among children living in rural areas. To date, most evidence-based strategies to combat the childhood obesity epidemic have been developed and tested in non-rural settings and target either individuals or environments. The overall goal of the GROW Healthy Kids and Communities (HKC)

project is to learn more about the factors influencing health behaviors in rural places in order to prevent obesity in rural children **by improving their behavioral environments – at home, in school, and in the community** – to make healthy eating and activity options their easy and preferred choice.

### **Relevance for Preston Community**

The 2011 Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reports on the results of a statewide lifestyle survey according to the eight public health districts<sup>3</sup>. Franklin County is in District 6 along with Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Butte, Caribou, Oneida, and Power counties. The District 6 adult health risk factor results reported 15.8% of the population having fair to poor general health, 13.3% having been told they had diabetes, 35.7% told they had high cholesterol, 32.8% told they had high blood pressure, 80.5% eating less than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day, 21.4% getting no leisure time physical activity, 69.5% being overweight, and 33.5% being obese. In addition, the State of Obesity in Idaho website<sup>3</sup> reports that 11.5% of 2-4 year olds, 10.6% of 10-17 year old, and 9.6% of high school students in Idaho were obese in 2013<sup>4</sup>.

Helping children develop healthy habits and providing healthy eating and activity supports to balance their energy intake with energy expenditure is an important aspect to maintaining healthy weight, preventing overweight and obesity, and minimizing chronic disease risk. Because obesity prevention among rural populations requires an understanding of the supports and barriers to healthy eating and active living within and among rural communities, we are pleased to provide this report of resources and readiness to prevent childhood obesity for the community of Preston.

### **Methods and Preliminary Results**

A HEAL MAPPS™ team (n=10) comprised of Preston community members with an interest in creating a healthier community volunteered and were trained to individually photograph and map the Preston community features that they perceived as either supports or barriers to eating healthy and being physically active most every day. Collectively, over 90 photographs were taken and mapped along 13 routes that represented the community's active (i.e. walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.) and motor vehicle transportation system. The 'mappers' covered approximately 30 linear road miles included within the 7 square miles of the city of Preston and

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Users/074/54/1354/Idaho\\_BRFSS\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2011.pdf](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Users/074/54/1354/Idaho_BRFSS_Annual_Report_2011.pdf)

<sup>4</sup><http://stateofobesity.org/states/id/>

included features in the surrounding unincorporated areas (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> The HEAL MAPPS™ team reconvened to discuss the photographs and maps during a focus group meeting. The most relevant 36 photographs, based on group consensus, were included in a presentation to provoke a larger community conversation. Over 15 Preston residents and stakeholders attended and participated in a community dinner and discussion held at the Franklin County Extension Office on March 26, 2015.

The community conversation was facilitated by a member of the GROW HKC team trained to conduct HEAL MAPPS™ processes. Following the community dinner, photographs were displayed, participants were polled as to whether the feature made eating healthy or being physically active easier or harder for themselves or others in the community, and discussed their thoughts and feelings that led to their ratings.

### **Community Readiness**

Communities differ in many ways including their readiness to take action on an issue and implement relevant programs. The level of community readiness is a major factor in determining whether a particular program can be effectively implemented and supported by a community. Assessing the level of readiness for obesity prevention efforts is thereby a critical component of obesity prevention program planning and evaluation.

The Community Readiness Assessment Model is a tool we used to gain an understanding of the Preston community's resources and readiness for obesity prevention efforts. The assessment is divided into six dimensions that influence a community's readiness to take action on an issue. The six dimensions are: community knowledge about the issue; community efforts; community knowledge of the efforts; local leadership; community climate; and local resources related to the issue. Questions representing each dimension were asked during the Preston Community Conversation and the participants shared their perception of Preston readiness and preparedness for change. Each dimension was then scored by two independent evaluators and combined to identify the overall stage of readiness.

Several Preston community organizations, such as the Hospital, the LDS church, local businesses, and the school board emerged as supports for healthy eating and physical activity. A newly created community garden and the well-stocked local grocery store, as well as health promotion and engagement programs like the health fair emerged as supports for healthy eating. Community members cited Preston's parks and community play areas as well as local gyms and a variety of community events –for example the bed race –as supports for being physically active. Participants also mentioned that they see the natural beauty and rural nature

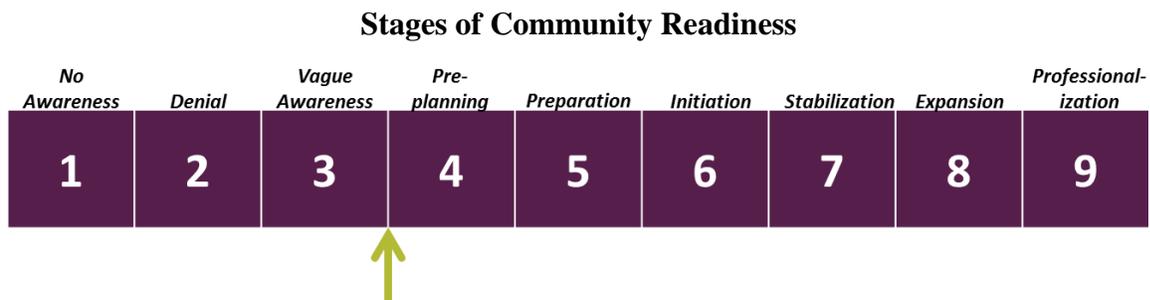
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<sup>5</sup> The 'mappers' individually determined the community boundaries as within the city and unincorporated land approximately served by the Preston school district

of their community as a support for being physically active. These community organizations and food and physical activity resources and contributed positively to the community readiness score given to the community.

Barriers to healthy eating and physical activity include a lack of active transportation supports (sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic calming features), as well as a lack of locations to buy healthy foods and the distance community members need to travel in order to procure healthy food or physical activity supports. A consistent theme that emerged during the community conversation was the lack of a centralized way to disseminate information about events or programs. Participants agreed that Preston has a number of food and physical activity supports, but that this lack of communication makes it more difficult for some community members to access these resources. These barriers contributed negatively to the community readiness score given to the community.

Preston’s stage of readiness to implement environmental and policy strategies to prevent obesity falls somewhere between stage 3 (vague awareness) and stage 4 (preplanning) as indicated by the arrow on the Stages of Readiness graph.



Based on the Community Readiness Assessment Model, community efforts should focus on:

- 1) Raise awareness that the community can do something about the problem by improving communications and increasing local messaging about successful efforts.
- 2) Provide suggestions on where and how efforts should be focused based on resident input and identified barriers. Present information at local community events and to unrelated groups; launch a media campaign - post flyers, posters, and billboards. Begin to initiate events and present information on the issue. Work with GROW Healthy Kids and Communities team to gather more information from other community members, publish newspaper articles and editorials with general information related to the local situation.
- 3) Gather and utilize existing information about childhood obesity, the food environment, and physical activity resources in order to plan strategies aimed at improving resource availability, accessibility, and affordability.

4) Raise awareness that efforts to address childhood obesity are happening in Preston

5) Start planning how to evaluate the successes of your efforts. Conduct height-weight assessments among youth; sponsor a community picnic or fun-run to kick off the effort; conduct public forums to develop strategies from the grassroots level; utilize key leaders and influential people to speak to groups and participate in local radio and television. Begin to plan for evaluation of your efforts. Build and communicate Preston's capacity to change – *Our Community can GROW Healthy Kids*.

For more information about the Community Readiness Model, stages of community readiness, and stage-based strategies to increase community readiness to address health issues visit:

<http://www.colostate.edu/Dept/TEC/article3.htm>.

## Summary of Results based on Preston Community Conversation

### *Physical Activity (26 references)*

#### Supports – 14 references

- Roads are nice and long for cycling
- Lots of farms for kids to work on and be active
- Parks and play areas
  - Skate park
  - Tennis courts
  - Ball fields
  - Rec leagues
  - Close to trails for hiking
- Community Garden
- Community engaged in supporting PA
  - Volunteers for Garden and parks
- Local business support PA activities (little league)
- Some nice sidewalks
- Gyms
  - Free programs at local gyms for seniors
- Natural beauty and rurality of the area is a support for physical activity for some
  - Not a lot of traffic
  - Small community easy to walk from place to place
- Some traffic calming and safety devices for walking/biking
- Community events, programs, and activities
  - Community Bed race
  - Health fair
  - 3 K/fun runs
  - Biathlon
  - Unplugged program
  - Rec program
  - Fit and fall proof
  - Silver sneakers
  - Low income family wellness education
- Local LDS Churches
  - Gym access
  - Health and wellness code
  - Meeting spaces
  - Exercise groups

- Schools
  - Play areas/education

### Barriers – 12 references

- Cost is a barrier for some
- Weather a barrier for outdoor PA at certain times of the year
- Access to Indoor facilities
  - Lack of indoor recreation space
  - Scheduling for use of space
- Lack of centralized place to get information on events/programs
- Community support for physical activity
  - Community doesn't always support the resources they have
  - Funding for physical activity supports
    - Community funding by raising taxes not well supported
- Because community is so remote, long distances to get resources
  - Grocery Store
  - Gyms
- Few active transportation supports
  - Few sidewalks or sidewalks are old/not well maintained
  - Few bike or walking paths
  - Few shoulders
- Kids not interested in working on farms
- Personal motivation to take knowledge of physical activity and act on it.
- Lack of handicapped supports at parks
- Free running dogs

### ***Healthy Eating (22 references)***

#### Supports – 12 references

- Grocery Store
  - Great quality produce (Organic)
  - Great produce deals
- Community Garden
- Community engagement and support for healthy eating supports
- Some healthy options at local restaurants and convenience stores
- Local farms
- Health promotion and education programs and events

- “Got Health”
- Programs for low income families
- Health Fair
- Extension programs
  - 4H, cooking, gardening classes
- Food assistance
  - Food drive
  - Food bank
- Community organizations
  - Hospital
  - Service organizations
  - Schools/school board
    - Food program
    - HE Education
  - Health Dept.
    - SNAP/WIC
  - Senior center
    - Community meals
  - Local churches
    - Health and wellness programs

#### Barriers – 10 references

- Lack of places to purchase fresh fruits and veggies (only 1 grocery store)
- Remoteness of area means it’s very far to drive to get anywhere
- Lack of information about available healthy eating supports
- Weather is sometimes a barrier to growing vegetables
- Easy access to unhealthy food choices via fast food or convenience stores
- There is a lack of personal motivation to take knowledge of healthy eating and act on it.
- Cost of purchasing healthier food
- Lack of healthy options at restaurants and convenience stores
- There is a lack of demand for healthier options, which is why they are not sold at stores
- Unhealthy options more tempting

#### **Resident-Informed Recommendations for Community Change**

The following recommendations emerged from the data generated during the **Preston** community conversation and represent those of the **Preston** community members who shared their ideas during the facilitated discussion of the photographed community features. These

recommendations do not represent those of the GROW Healthy Kids and Communities project members or Oregon State University.

**Make healthy eating the easy and preferred choice**

*Move donuts away from produce in the grocery store*

*Serve healthier snack at local events*

*Offer healthy options at local restaurants and convenience stores*

**Structural Changes**

*Add shoulders to roads to make them safer for riding bikes and walking*

*Need better sidewalks*

*Add handicapped access to parks (ramps and paved pathways)*

*Fenced in Dog Park, or increase in doggie waste supports (poop bags, trash stations)*

**Information**

*Work toward better information dissemination (community posts, websites, etc.)*

*Make a tour: "Ways to be active in Preston" or "Things to do..."*

**Community Engagement**

*Get more youth involved (like 4H)*



**Figure 2.** Represents an example of the routes generated while using a personal motorized vehicle.

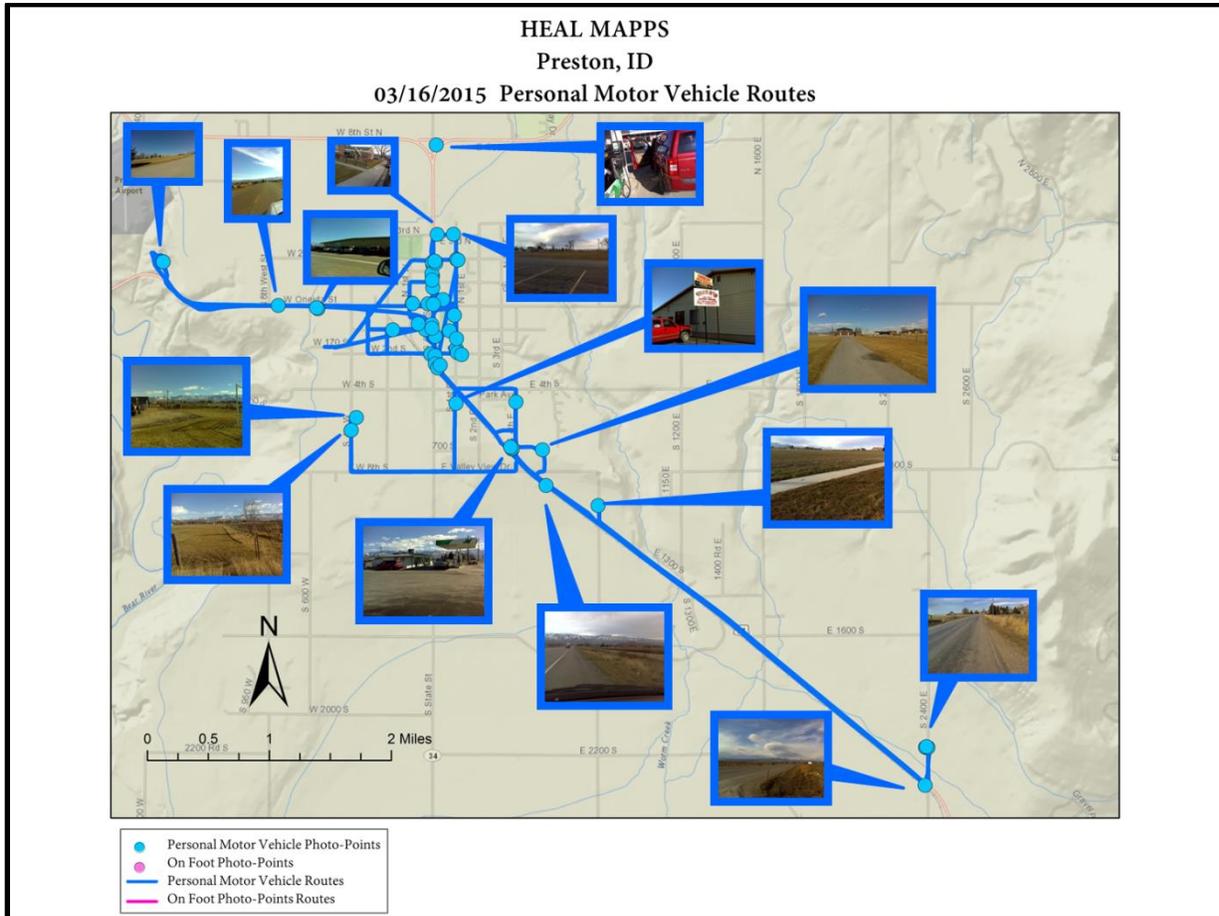


Figure 3. Represents a zoom in of personal motor vehicle routes.

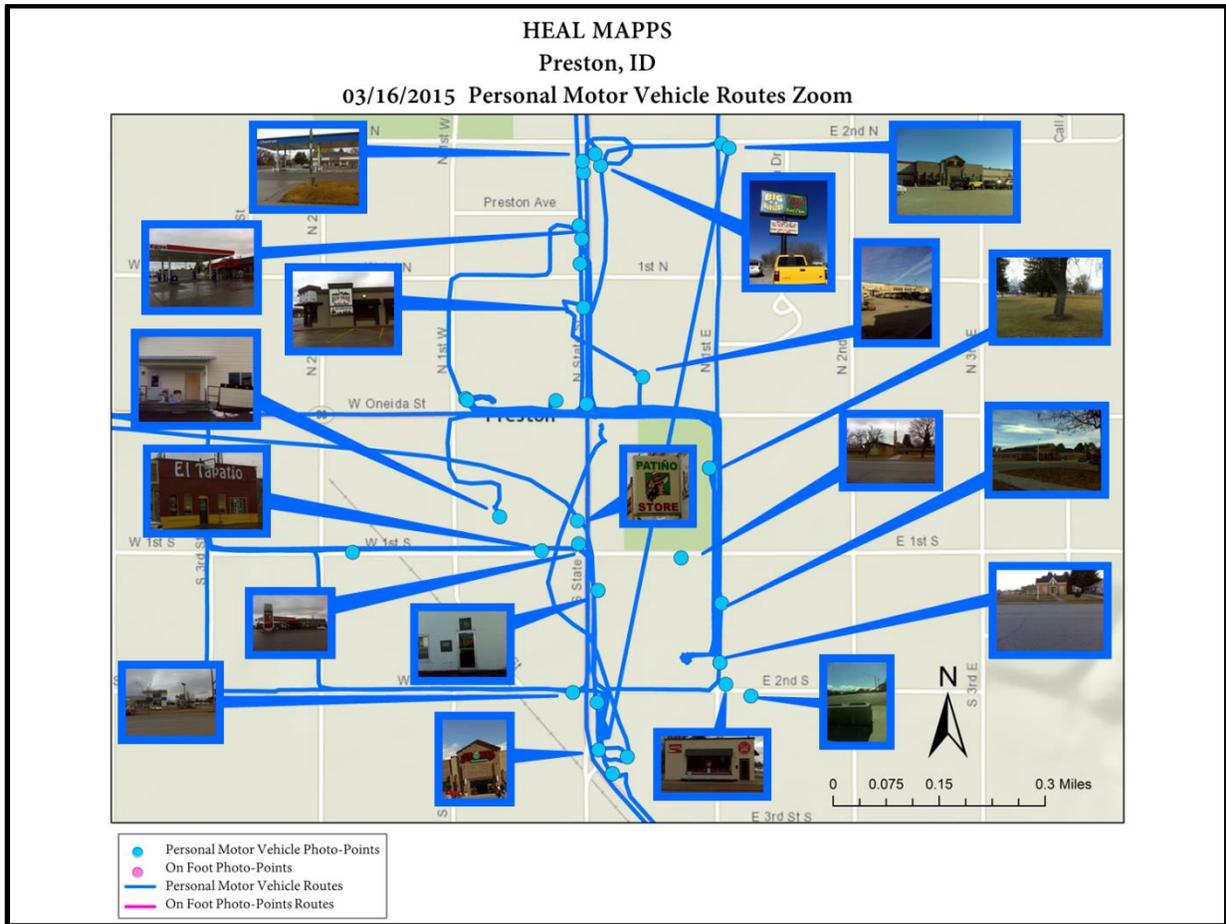


Figure 4. Represents an on foot route

