



American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

*A publication of the American Planning Association's
 Planning and Community Health Center*

*Share your story with us! Is your community using
 APA's materials on Comprehensive Planning and Health?
 Please let us know how at health@planning.org*

HEALTHY PLAN MAKING

The comprehensive plan and the planning process can be used as tools for creating an environment that makes the healthy choice the easiest choice. A comprehensive plan is a guide for improving quality of life, promoting economic development, and creating livable spaces, all of which improve community health. The plan and the resulting regulatory changes, capital investments, and other implementation actions can set the foundation for land-use and development patterns that promote positive health outcomes and prevent chronic disease.

In 2010, the American Planning Association, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, began a three-year study to assess the integration of public health into comprehensive plans and their development process. This fact sheet lists strategies commonly used in the planning process to create vibrant communities, shows their connection to public health, and identifies best practices from across the country.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Community Engagement+Partnerships +Evidence Base=Effective Implementation

Planning Strategies:

- Include reference to health in the plan's vision, mission, engagement strategy, and approach
- Engage the public and local public health professionals in defining priority health issues
- Involve key partners in plan development and implementation:
 - Health department, schools, community groups, nonprofit organizations, real estate community, elected officials, local and regional leaders
- Establish a sound evidence base for plan recommendations and use metrics to track and demonstrate progress:
 - Local health department data, local land-use databases, U.S. Census Bureau, USDA Agriculture Census, Community Commons, local school district data, etc.
 - Include Health Impact Assessments in establishing evidence base for plan monitoring and evaluation



Effective Implementation Examples

Nashville, Tennessee;
 Fort Worth, Texas;
 King County, Washington

PLAN COMPONENTS

ACTIVE LIVING: a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines

Planning Strategies:

- Promote partnerships and coordination among related agencies/stakeholders in plan development and implementation
- Use data-driven decision making to incorporate biking, walking, parks and recreation, and infrastructure into specific elements such as Parks and Open Space, Transportation/Circulation, Urban Design, Subdivision, and Site Plan
- Locate community facilities such as schools and parks to promote connectivity between places where we live, work, and play

Active Living Examples

Baltimore County, Maryland;
 Chino, California;
 Grand Rapids, Michigan



PLAN COMPONENTS (continued)

Emergency Preparedness: a readiness to protect public health when disaster strikes

Planning Strategies:

- Plan for the public health impacts of climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies, with particular emphasis on identified vulnerable populations
- Use evidence base to address public health impacts in pre-and postdisaster recovery planning
- Incorporate strategies to stop the spread of possible infectious diseases



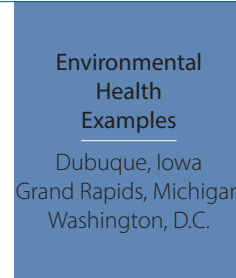
Emergency Preparedness Examples

Fort Worth, Texas
North Miami, Florida
San Francisco

Environmental Health: a safe and healthful environment for people

Planning Strategies:

- Use air and water quality data as indicators for where to locate infrastructure and future residential units; monitor land-use changes; enhance connectivity and other related uses
- Promote brownfield clean up and/or reuse to improve environmental quality, promote community development goals, and address equity concerns
- Use green infrastructure to improve environmental quality for human health benefits



Environmental Health Examples

Dubuque, Iowa
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Washington, D.C.



Food and Nutrition: a food system designed to facilitate healthy eating

Planning Strategies:

- Promote access to clean water and public drinking fountains
- Designate areas in urban as well as rural communities for agricultural use and allow community gardens within all residential neighborhoods
- Promote the availability of healthy, fresh foods in identified food deserts and food swamps



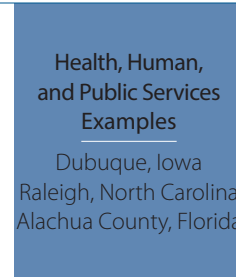
Food and Nutrition Examples

Philadelphia; Seattle
Oneida Nation, Wisconsin

Health, Human, and Public Services: equal access to care and preventive services for all

Planning Strategies:

- Address access to health and human services in the community facilities component of plan
- Connect strategies for active transportation, walkability, etc., to public health programs and services
- Enact policies that incorporate community linkages in access to clinical care



Health, Human, and Public Services Examples

Dubuque, Iowa
Raleigh, North Carolina
Alachua County, Florida



Social Cohesion and Mental Health: a built environment that supports access to social, economic, and mental health benefits

Planning Strategies:

- Increase visibility and access to parks, tree canopy, and public space
- Reduce the negative health effects of air, noise and light pollution through policy, systems, and environmental strategies
- Integrate engagement of historically underrepresented communities throughout all public planning and projects to enfranchise all community members
- Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies to improve public safety and security



Social Cohesion and Mental Health Examples

Philadelphia
Austin, Texas
Dona Ana, New Mexico

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

1. APA: [Comprehensive Planning and Health Resources](#)
2. CDC: [Healthy Community Design Initiative; A Practitioners Guide for Advancing Health Equity; The Guide to Community Preventive Services](#)
3. [National Prevention Strategy](#)
4. [Community Commons](#)