

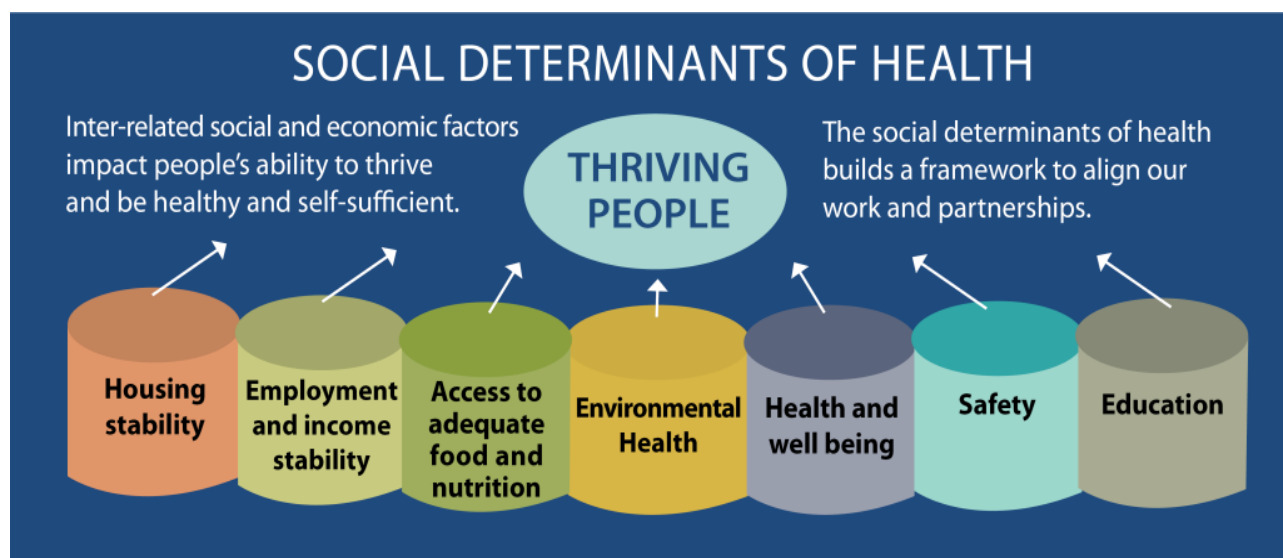
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A CHECKLIST

Planners overwhelmingly agree that a critical aspect of planning is health. In fact, a community's plan for housing, transportation, land use, parks, and economic development impacts – these environments are the largest contributors to our health. "Social determinants of health" are structural factors and conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. Most premature deaths are connected to these determinants, like air and water quality or access to physical activity, and healthy food.

Since the practice of community planning plays a significant role in shaping the built environment, local planning can have real and significant impacts on community health. Local planning, and comprehensive planning in particular, is increasingly recognized as tool to strategically increase health and reduce health disparities for all. "Health in All Policies" is a collaborative approach to improve health by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across all policy areas.

Social Determinants of Health




Content adapted from several sources like: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

How to Use the Checklist


This checklist can help define where – and to what degree – health-supporting policies are present in your local government's comprehensive plan. It can provide examples of policies to consider during plan development and help start important conversations. It can also be used to measure change over previous comprehensive plans.

The tool covers a broad range of polices, so it is important to note that not every item may apply to your local plan. Also, you may have health-related items in your plan that this checklist doesn't cover. We've added a row at the end of each section for you to capture these other items. This tool is open source, so feel free to change it to fit your needs. We've published both .pdf and .doc formats to allow easy customization.


 INTRODUCTION/COMMUNITY VISION/BACKGROUND	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Do the introduction and vision...				
a) Acknowledge the many individuals, community groups, organizations, officials, and staff who contributed to the plan?				
b) Highlight the community engagement process?				
c) Address the connection between planning and social, physical, and mental health and quality of life for all?				
d) Address community health disparities and racial equity?				
e) Identify health metrics that will demonstrate success?				
f) Use explicit language connecting all chapters to health, particularly healthy food access, active living, and environmental effects?				
g) Link the success of the community with the health of its people?				
h) Include language for interdivisional/departmental work of health policy integration throughout the comprehensive plan sections?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resources: [Comprehensive Plans and Health Toolkits](#)

From APA’s Plan4Health initiative, the Comprehensive Plans and Health toolkit includes resources to successfully integrate health into the goals, objectives, and policies that encompass comprehensive plans.

 DATA AND ISSUES ANALYSIS	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Use public health and other data to inform the plan elements, including for all of the social determinants of health?				
b) Identify the residents that experience health disparities in your community?				
c) Visually depict in maps or charts geographic disparities in health?				
d) Use public health data to identify health issues that are of higher prevalence in your community compared with your county, the region or the state?				
e) Identify future trends that may affect health based on data?				
Other health-related items in this section:				


Resource: [Quality national, state, and local sources for public health data](#), along with data templates you can use!

 LAND USE	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Incorporate neighborhood, commercial, and/or mixed-used development to encourage active transportation, such as biking and walking?				
b) Make it possible to cluster activities for easier to access a variety of services at one stop via public transit, bicycling, walking, or car?				
c) Encourage and support co-location of civic buildings, especially schools, in walkable districts?				
d) Assess exposure to environmental hazards such as lead and contaminated soils and consider equity impacts of land use for contaminated areas?				
e) Support health by restricting access to alcohol, tobacco, and fast food with zoning proximity regulations, signage regulations, and drive-through window regulations, particularly near parks, schools, youth centers, and hospitals?				
f) Support parking or other regulatory support for mobile food markets and mobile pantries/food shelves that can bring food into higher density residential areas that need them?				
g) Include land use regulations to improve local households' proximity to healthy food and healthy food-related businesses and activities?				
h) Recommend a community food security assessment to identify barriers and gaps in healthy food access and community assets like farmland, community gardens, and farmer's markets?				
i) Identify existing and future opportunities for local food production (e.g. home and community gardens, small livestock, preservation and tenure of agriculture land)?				
j) Include support for land use policies for pollinators through city ordinance and/or city operations/maintenance?				
k) Recommend use of natural, non-motorized open space corridors (often following roadways, ridge tops and waterways)?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resources:

[Public Health in Land Use Planning and Community Design Fact Sheet](#): An overview of the connection between land use planning and public health, including the role of local health officials.


Food Access Planning Guide: http://mnfoodcharter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/FAPG_PlanGuide_D9_LINKS_LR.pdf

 TRANSPORTATION	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Address transportation system gaps in healthy food access?				
b) Prioritize transportation investments that encourage connectivity between residential and commercial areas to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use?				
c) Include facilities supporting active transportation (e.g. bike parking, benches, etc.)?				
d) Identify Complete Streets, living streets, shared streets, and traffic-calming measures in its future transportation system?				
e) Identify opportunities for working with a transit provider where transit can be supported with higher density land use?				
f) Include human-scaled street design including wayfinding for people walking and biking?				
g) Provide adequate street lighting along all major streets, or non-motorized transportation facilities (eg. paved trails)?				
h) Prioritize transportation needs of underserved populations (seniors, children, persons with disabilities, low-income residents, etc.)?				
i) Support the safety and comfort of walking and bicycling year-around?				
j) Emphasize increasing transportation system safety to reduce transportation injuries and deaths?				
k) Locate housing an appropriate distance from highways and other high-emissions transportation areas (airports, trucking, and railyards)?				
Other health-related items in this section:				


Resources:

[Public Health in Land Use Planning and Community Design Fact Sheet](#) The CDC/DOT [Transportation and Health Tool](#) gives transportation decision-makers, health officials, and the public easy access to data to understand the health impact of an existing transportation system or proposed transportation project.


[Design for Health Physical Activity and Planning Guide \(2007\)](#) was a collaborative project that served to bridge the gap between the emerging research base on community design and healthy living and the everyday realities of local government planning.

 WATER RESOURCES	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Highlight the importance of monitoring water quality equally for all parts of your community?				
b) Plan for vegetated buffers along all water bodies (preferably 65 ft. to 165 ft.) to prevent non-point pollution from impervious surfaces?				
c) Identify and protect groundwater recharge areas and vulnerable aquifers?				
d) Assess the vulnerability of groundwater resources to depletion and estimate dates of resource exhaustion?				
e) Address collection and storage of rainwater for agricultural use?				
f) Increase access to free, safe drinking water in public places, possibly adopting building codes to require access to, and maintenance of, fresh drinking water fountains (e.g. public restroom codes)				
g) Encourage restorative systems and practices (such as groundwater recharge) for natural resources and sustainable use?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resource: From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a [library of water resources](#) planning tools

 PARKS AND TRAILS	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Ensure all people have access to park land and trails within a walkable distance (up to half mile)?				
b) Offer free or low cost community garden space for resident use?				
c) Include recreational opportunities for all community members, regardless of age, culture and mobility level, throughout the city?				
d) Support a variety of greenscapes that contribute to physical and mental well-being?				
e) Require public community facilities to have views of or access to nature?				
f) Require adequate lighting in parks so that pedestrians on paths see other pedestrians at least 700 ft. away?				
g) Encourage edible and pollinator-friendly landscapes on park property?				
h) Include a policy for tobacco-free parks?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resources: [Parks and Trails and Health Workbook](#), From the Center for Disease Control and the National Parks Service Association for Non-Smokers MN (ANSR): <http://www.ansrmn.org/>


 HOUSING	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Incorporate a variety of stable and healthy housing types, densities, and affordability for all who live in the community, that can accommodate different needs, including “aging in place”?				
b) Address multi-generational housing and/or permit accessory dwellings or other small-sized dwelling options?				
c) Include housing in places where residents can meet their daily needs without access to a private automobile?				
d) Consider proximity of housing to grocery stores and farmers markets for all residents?				
e) Encourage edible and pollinator-friendly landscapes on residential properties?				
f) Allow for setback space to be used for home gardening, recreation, shared community resources, etc.?				
g) Require designated open space for subdivisions?				
h) Address smoke-free housing policies for existing and new multi-unit housing developments?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resources:


[Minnesota Healthy Homes Strategic Plan](#)

[Live Smoke Free: Association for Non-Smokers MN](#) (ANSR)


Global Age Friendly Cities: A guide http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/age_friendly_cities_guide/en/

 ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) Link measures of health and well-being to economic prosperity?				
b) Encourage walkability along downtown storefronts and in other commercial areas?				
c) Require non-motorized infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks or trails) in conjunction with future economic development projects?				
d) Recommend partnering with the business community to promote health and well-being within worksites?				
e) Include "buy local" campaigns supported by marketing efforts and local food distribution?				
f) Include business and/or kitchen incubators for entrepreneurs?				
g) Allow for farmers markets to operate within multiple districts?				
h) Restrict tobacco marketing near schools, daycares, hospitals, playgrounds?				
i) Prioritize broadband access to all?				
j) Address eliminating disparities as an economic issue?				
Other health-related items in this section:				


Resource: [The Food Access Planning Guide](#) addresses several strategies for economic development and healthy food access.

 RESILIENCE	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the plan...				
a) address prospective health concerns related to climate change and the impact of extreme weather conditions on infrastructure/ built environment?				
b) include the provision for Climate Change Action Planning or assessment of impacts, indicators, and adaptation/mitigation strategies?				
c) include policies encouraging renewable energy technologies and diversification of energy resources?				
d) define and measure environmental sustainability, health, well-being, and livability when planning for public infrastructure and the built environment?				
e) identify the city's role in creating places that foster social connections, including those across ages, races and economic conditions?				
f) include policies to reduce the urban heat island effect?				
Other health-related items in this section:				

Resource: Consider how your community could prepare for the health vulnerabilities to climate change identified in the [Minnesota Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment](#) prepared by the Minnesota Department of Health.

 IMPLEMENTATION	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
Does the implementation section...				
a) Identify an implementation strategy to each policy?				
b) Identify a strategy to continuously engage the community throughout implementation?				
c) Identify a strategy to continuously inform the community about plan updates?				
d) Identify necessary changes in local controls and a process for making required changes?				
e) Include a process to regularly review progress made on goals and outcomes?				
f) Include evaluation procedures/methods?				
g) Establish practices for actively using the comprehensive plan in the jurisdiction's decision-making?				
h) Identify funding for health-supportive programs and projects identified in the plan in the jurisdiction's capital improvement programming?				

Resource: [The Minnesota Healthy Planning How-To Guide](#) expands upon planning strategies. Each planning strategy includes a definition and multiple ways to implement the strategy in a comp plan. The Guide addresses how health can be included in every step of the planning process of creating a comp plan.

 APPENDIX: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	Not Present	Present Narrow	Present Robust	Page/Goal/Objective/Comments
a) Are multiple engagement strategies included in the community engagement plan?				
b) Are partners, including public health, involved in the community engagement process?				
c) Are multiple, convenient, and accessible ways provided to encourage meaningful participation?				
d) Were populations at greatest risk (1) for health disparities involved in the planning process?				
e) Were community members prepared to participate in the comp planning process?				
f) Is there a clear plan to report back to the community how their input will be used?				
g) Were there ongoing communication and opportunities for community involvement?				
h) Were partners including public health involved throughout the comp planning process?				
i) Is communication about community input opportunities clear and easy to find, such as on the city website?				

Resources:

[Metropolitan Council Community Engagement Plan](#)

[Government Training Services, Land Use Training and Education Program, "Effective Community Engagement for Land Use"](#)

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Prepared by the Metro Healthy Comprehensive Plan Work Group in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Based partially on work done by the [Arrowhead Regional Development Commission](#), [Design for Health](#) (2007), and [South Carolina Health and Planning Toolkit](#) (2015), with funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Center for Prevention.

