

HEALTHY Comp Plans

LAND USE



November 2016

This document represents best practices, not Dakota County policies.

VISION

*We support active living
for all.*

*We value healthy food
access for all.*

*We support
development patterns
that encourage mixed
uses and compact,
walkable
neighborhoods.*

*We support healthy
environments.*

LAND USE AND HEALTH

Land use planning started with separating incompatible land uses, such as factories from neighborhoods, for the health and safety of residents. Much of the northern portion of Dakota County is developed at suburban densities, resulting in spread-out, isolated destinations that make car ownership a necessity for many. This development pattern discourages active living as a part of daily life by locating neighborhoods too far from shopping, school, and employment to walk or bike, contributing to the nation's obesity epidemic. Suburban development patterns reduce access to healthy food by placing retailers far from where people live. Conversion of agricultural land to housing reduces a community's capacity to produce food locally. Compact development patterns where people live closer to schools, employment, and retail support both active living and healthy food access and contribute to health. Limiting concentration of alcohol and tobacco retailers promotes safer communities and reduces smoking rates. A city's comprehensive plan guides the pattern, type, density and characteristics of development and can influence the health of residents.

LAND USE AND EQUITY

Low-density development patterns disproportionately impact young people, older adults, and people living in poverty. Higher percentages of people in these groups do not drive and are reliant on public transportation, which makes access to healthcare services, jobs, grocery stores and financial institutions inconvenient and time consuming. These populations are also much more likely to be in fair or poor health, experience food insecurity, and be at risk for not getting enough regular physical activity. Compact, mixed-use development patterns can promote health by locating jobs, retail, schools, transit and parks close to more residents, providing access to healthy food options like supermarkets, and promoting active living and transit use. Ensuring a balance of jobs and housing improves opportunities for living and working within the same community. More compact development patterns improve environmental sustainability by supporting transit and protecting farmland and natural spaces. This approach is also fiscally sustainable, as a more compact development pattern means there are enough taxpayers to support the cost of maintaining roads and utilities over time.

Community engagement affords people an opportunity to identify their needs, contribute to solutions and influence their environment. Authentically engaging community members, especially those most impacted by problems, in the decision-making process can contribute to improved conditions, health, and well-being.

SUPPORTING DATA

Active Living - Adults and youth are not meeting minimal physical activity recommendations.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend 150 minutes per week for adults and 60 minutes per day for children and adolescents. In 2010, 78% of Dakota County adults engaged in regular physical activity. In 2013, only about one-fifth of Dakota County students (18-21%) reported engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- In 2013, 1.5% of Dakota County residents age 16 years and older, who work, walked or biked to work. Statewide, about 4% walked or biked to work.
- From 2005-2010, the acreage of land designated as “mixed-use” in Dakota County has increased by 6%.
- In 2010, 69% of Dakota County adults rated their neighborhood as a very pleasant place to walk.
- On average, neighborhoods in Dakota County have 2.4 parks located within a half-mile.

Healthy Food Access - Adults and youth are not eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Food insecurity is increasing.

- Eight percent of the population in Dakota County was food insecure in 2012. An estimated 13% of Dakota County children were food insecure (lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food).
- In 2010, 41% of Dakota County adults reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables the previous day. Less than one-fourth (17-21%) of Dakota County students reported consuming fruits or vegetables (including fruit juice) five or more time per day in the previous week.
- In 2012, the county served 11,098 in the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program, 10% of the population of women of childbearing age and children 0-5 years old.
- During the 2014-2015 school year, 28% of students in charter and public schools in the county received free or reduced price lunches, up 16% from 2005-2006. Although this is lower than the state as a whole (38%), this percent increased steadily from 16% in the 2005-2006 school year.
- The percent of Dakota County households accessing food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (7%) has steadily increased from 2008-2013 (up from 2.5% in 2008); the state level was 9%.

Equity – Low density development patterns have more impact on the young, older adults, disabled, and those living in poverty.

- In 2013, 20% of Minnesotans were ever told they had arthritis, the leading cause of disability.
- Persons age 65 and older were the most likely to have a disability (28% in 2013).
- The percent of Dakota County residents living below the poverty level (8%) is below the state (11%).
- Poverty is increasing, especially for children under age 18.

POLICIES TO CONSIDER

Active Living

Goal: We will support strategies that encourage mixed uses and efficient design to encourage active living.

- Adopt policies that support infill development and redevelopment to encourage compact, walkable development.
- Encourage and zone for higher-density or mixed-use housing near transit lines and commercial areas.
- Consider minimum density requirement for new residential and mixed-use projects and other types of development.
- Consider form-based zoning code, which places greater emphasis on physical form, rather than land use. This allows for greater flexibility of uses while maintaining an aesthetic urban form.
- Locate schools near existing residential uses and other areas that support active living.
- Reduce the amount of unused land and parking areas surrounding commercial areas to encourage walkable development patterns; consider incentives for shared parking for complementary uses.
- Incorporate active living into the land-use review and the planning process.
- Focus infrastructure investment in the developed portion of town.
- Reduce lot sizes in new residential subdivisions.

Healthy Food Access

Goal: We will use land use regulations to improve local households' proximity to healthy food and support healthy food-related businesses and activities.

- Prepare a community food assessment to identify barriers to healthy food, income levels, lost farmland, community gardens, and farmers' market availability within urbanized areas.
- Review and simplify or remove city's regulation of food and farm-related land uses in order to improve the variety and availability of healthy food outlets.
- Identify clean, vacant or under-utilized property suitable for community gardens and urban farming opportunities.
- Review and update regulations governing backyard gardening, community gardens, and urban farming to foster an expansion of food production in the community.
- Review and update regulations governing food processing businesses such as flash freezing and

small-scale home and commercial kitchens to increase business growth.

- Review and update regulations concerning food outlets, such as grocery stores, small food stores, farmers' markets, seasonal food stands, and farm trucks, to support growth in the types and number of food outlets throughout the community and their hours and locations.
- Promote the need for a choice of healthier meal options on restaurant menus.
- Consider a program to regulate the number of fast food establishments in the city.

Goal: We will support development patterns that preserve agricultural land and decrease the distance between households and retail food options.

- Within the comprehensive plan, designate a land use category that allows for grocery stores or other healthy food retail within a half-mile of all residential areas.
- Develop a program to preserve remaining agricultural lands.
- Employ an approach to planning processes that treats health equity, healthy food access and food systems development as primary considerations when making major land use decisions.
- Cluster multi-family housing around areas well served by commercial goods and services including grocery stores and transit.

Healthy Environments

Goal: Reduce harm of alcohol and tobacco use by restricting access, especially by youth.

- Limit concentration of alcohol and tobacco retail businesses.
- Prohibit sales of alcohol or tobacco products within 1/4 mile of parks or schools.
- Restrict sampling of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes and hookah pipes).

Equity

Goal: Support development efforts that ensure economic stability for all.

- Consider use of a Health Impact Assessment when considering large infrastructure changes that impact low-income residents. Historically, pollutants, contamination and noise are more likely to impact low in-come communities.

RESOURCES

Dakota County:

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- Mary Montagne, Public Health: Mary.Montagne@co.dakota.mn.us
- Jess Luce, Communities for a Lifetime: Jess.Luce@co.dakota.mn.us
- www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/publiccommittees/CFL/Pages/default.aspx

Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention:

- Nadja Berneche, Healthy Comp Plan Consultant: nadja@terrasoma.com
- Eric Weiss, AICP: Eric.Weiss@bluecrossmn.com

General:

- Homegrown South: <http://homegrownsouth.org/>
- Food Access Planning Guide (pp. 20-21): <http://mnfoodcharter.com/planningguide/>
- Design for Health: <http://designforhealth.net>
- APA Policy Guide on Planning: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy_resources/research/publichealth/pdf/healthyplanningreport.pdf
- Minnesota Department of Health: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/places/plans.html>
- ChangeLab Solutions: <http://www.changelabsolutions.org/healthy-planning>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/>

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