

## **Outcome #4**

### **Residents live in Communities with Health Promoting Land Use, Transportation and Community Development**

Research has increasingly demonstrated links between the built environment<sup>1</sup> and a range of health outcomes that should be considered when advancing community health promotion. There are a number of key practices and strategies that can positively affect the decisions and policies of government, business and institutions around shaping the built environment.

#### **PROMISING PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES**

1. Walkable and Bikable Neighborhoods
  - a. Implementing [Complete Streets](#) policies, which are aimed at including or enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructures during routine road maintenance and repair, new construction, and re-design. Also see California's [Local Government Commission's Complete Streets](#) 2009 workshop resources.
  - b. Implementing a Safe Routes to School program to ensure that all children can walk and bicycle safely to school. Example – Marin County's [Safe Routes to School](#) program.
  - c. Connecting roadways to complementary systems of trails and bicycle paths that ensure safe connections between community destinations such as parks, school, retail stores and workplaces. Example – the [Seattle Department of Transportation](#) implemented a comprehensive urban trail system connecting the corners of the city with downtown.
  - d. Adopting pedestrian and bicycle master plans, such as the City of Sacramento's [Pedestrian Friendly Street Standards](#) or Long Beach's [Bicycle Master Plan](#).
2. Public Transit
  - a. Encouraging for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) that situates housing, services and amenities within walking distance from public transportation access. See the discussion regarding [Los Angeles' TOD project](#).
3. Parks, Recreation and Open Space
  - a. Providing parks, playgrounds and recreating facilities in currently underserved residential areas with the use of sales and use taxes, parcel taxes, special assessments, and benefit assessments. Also offering parks and recreational programming that encourages physical activity. See the Trust for Public Land's [Parks for People](#) program.
  - b. Utilizing joint use agreements between public schools and facilities for the public's use. Profiles of success include Chula Vista, Pixley, and Fresno. Click [here](#) to view.
4. Safety: Violence and Perceived Violence
  - a. Facilitating a decreased perception of violence by using public art displays. See [San Francisco](#) and [Philadelphia](#) examples.
  - b. Creating neighborhood focal points, such as parks, supermarkets, plazas and community centers that provide a sense of community identity and a venue for social interaction and information sharing. The [Eden Area Livability Initiative](#) in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County is a good example.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this resource guide, land-use, transportation and community development are referred to collectively as the "built environment". The built environment is broadly inclusive of manmade surroundings such as buildings, public facilities, land use patterns, transportation systems, and design features.

5. Healthful Food Environments (also see Guide #7)
  - a. Offering retailers incentives from local government to increase a community's access to healthy food options, such as the [City of Chicago's Retail Chicago program](#).
  - b. Support corner stores to provide more healthful food options by providing needed loans, training, special permitting provisions, and local advertising. See the [Good Neighbor Food Project](#) in San Francisco.
  - c. Reduce the availability of unhealthy food options provided by stores using Conditional Use Permits (CUPs). See the Public Health Law & Policy's [guide on policy language](#) for establishing healthy food standards for chain restaurants.
  - d. Preserve farmland on the urban and suburban fringes and in prime grown areas. For example, Ventura County's [Save Open-Space and Agricultural Resources \(SOAR\)](#) program.
  - e. Expand community gardens and urban agriculture, such as the City of Escondido's [Interim Land Use Policy](#), that allows public use of vacant lots for community gardens, recreational space, or temporary art displays.
  - f. Expand access to farmer's markets.
  
6. Land Use Policy
  - a. Ensuring health elements exists in general plans, such as in the [City of Richmond](#).
  - b. Advocating for zoning codes that support healthy built environments. The Public Health Law and Policy has put together [talking points](#) on zoning.
  - c. Securing redevelopment funds for urban revitalization efforts. See the [Institute for Local Government](#) for examples.
  - d. Advocating for the use of [Health Impact Assessments](#) to identify activities and policies likely to have positive and negative impacts on a community's health.

All of the above strategies should incorporate and/or consider the following important principles in order to advance health-promoting built environments:

- **Equity**: Improvements to the built environment need to be approached in a manner that does not negatively effect low-income populations and communities of color (e.g. ensuring built environment improvements do not lead to higher living expenses such as rents, mortgages and property taxes). See the *PolicyLink's* [Equitable Development Toolkit](#) for more information.
- **Intersectoral Collaboration**: Use collaboration to address complex problems such as safety and chronic illness and reducing health inequities.
- **Community Engagement**: Community engagement is an essential component of any effort to improve the built environment and achieve health equity. Two effective examples that brought community members together with representatives from multiple public sectors are the [Eden Area Livability Initiative](#) in Alameda County and the [Eastern Neighborhood Community Health Impact Assessment](#) in San Francisco.

### **MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

- Land use planning decisions consider health through tools such as health impact assessments.
- Shared and multipurpose facilities (e.g. family resource centers, schools, parks) are safe and accessible for community use.
- Changes to the physical neighborhood promote safety and recreation (e.g. lighting sidewalks, pedestrian crossing signs).
- Schools are built and maintained as environmentally healthy buildings and property (asbestos-safe, lead-free, hazard-free, adequate playgrounds, etc.).
- Increased number of complete streets and safe routes to school.
- Public transit is available and accessible and meets the needs of the community.