Planning and Health Resource Guide for Designing and Building Healthy Neighborhoods

National Center for Environmental Health
Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services

Introduction

The way we design and build our neighborhoods can affect our physical and mental health. In this time of rising obesity rates, traffic congestion, long work hours, high stress levels, and fewer opportunities to be physical active, finding creative ways to address these issues is important. We must also consider the changing weather patterns and the possible impact on our way of life. All these factors stress the importance of designing and building healthy and vital communities that promote health.

To learn more about healthy community design, watch the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), 15-minute video Building Healthy Communities at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/cdc_healthy_community_design_webserver/video_h.htm. You may also find helpful CDC's Healthy Community Design fact sheet available at http://www.cdc.gov/healthy-places/factsheets/healthy_community_design_factsheet_final.pdf.

About the Resource Guide

This resource guide provides links to guides, checklists, audit tools, Web sites, and pamphlets that can help planners, local officials, and local citizens create vibrant neighborhoods where the healthy choice is the easy choice. The guide is structured to complement CDC's Healthy Community Design Checklist (http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/factsheets/healthy_commu-nity_checklist.pdf), including resources for each of the Checklist's seven categories. The resource guide is a small sample of the many excellent resources available that address healthy community design.

Comprehensive Guides

NYC's Active Design Guidelines

NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Built Environment and Physical Activity Program worked in partnership with the American Institute of Architects and other city departments including the Departments of Transportation, Design and Construction, and City Planning to develop NYC's Active Design Guidelines (www.nyc.gov/adg).

Healthy, Active & Vibrant Community Toolkit

The toolkit is a resource to provide key community decision-makers with innovative ideas, policy suggestions and healthy community and living resources for improving the health of their communities.

http://www.trailnet.org/our-work/community-toolkit

Leadership for Healthy Communities Action Strategies Toolkit

The toolkit addresses the childhood obesity epidemic in the U.S., especially the increased risk faced by racial and ethnic minorities. Comprehensive strategies on how the built environment influences active living and healthy eating are provided.

http://www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/LHC_Action_Strategies_Toolkit_100222%5B1%5D.pdf

New South Wales Department of Health Healthy Urban Development Checklist

The checklist, developed by the Government of New South Wales, Australia, provides evaluation questions that include housing, public open space, and social cohesion, to measure the health impacts of various development plans and policies.

http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2010/pdf/hud_checklist.pdf

Health Impact Assessment: A Guide for Practice

The guide is for local officials and others to conduct Health Impact Assessments in their communities, laying out the basic steps and strategies used in the process.

http://www.healthimpactproject.org/resources/document/Bhatia-2011_HIA-Guide-for-Practice.pdf

Guidelines by Category (See CDC's *Healthy Community Design Checklist*)

I want more options to help me get outside and be more active

Providing features such as parks, bike trails, rec centers, and outdoor plazas that give people a place to be active encourages outdoor physical activity. Ensuring that sidewalks are in good repair and streets are safe for people who walk and bike are important, too. The following guides offer strategies for creating features that encourage people to spending more time outside and living active lives.

Active Neighborhood Checklist

This do-it-yourself checklist addresses street-level features of neighborhood environments relating to physical activity.

http://activelivingresearch.org/files/Protocol_ActiveNeighborhoodChecklist.v2.pdf

Community Park Audit Guideline and Tool

This guide allows users to audit neighborhood parks for design criteria related to physical activity. The tool itself is

Guideline: http://activelivingresearch.org/files/CPAT_UserGuidebook_0.pdf

Tool: http://activelivingresearch.org/files/CPAT_AuditTool_0.pdf

Wisconsin Active Community Environments Resource Kit to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases

This guide offers advice on creating an active-friendly environment where it is easy to be physically active on a routine basis. The guide also includes an Active Community Environments checklist for assessing communities (p.31-42) and a sample resident survey (p. 42-48).

http://www.reducingobesity.org/docs/toolkits/Active%20Community%20Environment%20Tool%20Kit.pdf

I want to have healthier and more affordable food choices

Just hearing about the benefits of a balanced diet persuades some people to change their eating habits and lifestyles. For others, eating a healthy diet may be more difficult because healthy food options are not readily available, easily accessible, or affordable near their homes. These guides offer tools and strategies to help increase access to healthy foods through the promotion of "farm to fork" campaigns, farmers markets, community gardens, urban agriculture, the equitable placement of grocery retailers, and healthy corner stores.

APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning

This American Planning Association (APA) policy guide offers seven general policy recommendations regarding urban and regional food planning, with specific roles for planners.

http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/pdf/foodplanning.pdf

Food Access Policy and Planning Guide

This guidebook offers advice and provides examples of model language for policies that address issues of healthy retail, farmers markets, urban agriculture, restaurants, and transportation. It also includes a quick reference "Food Access Menu" with key steps to follow (pp. 10-11).

http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/downloads/pdf/ActiveDesignWebinar/King%20County%20Food%20Access%20Guide.pdf

Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture toolkit offers guidance on conducting community food security assessments to ensure that all residents have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. The toolkit includes tools for assembling community assessment teams, conducting focus groups and surveys and collecting the necessary data for the assessment.

http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/327699/efan02013_1_.pdf

Improving Access to Healthy Food: A Community Planning Tool

The tool offers strategies on developing a healthy food action plan, implementing it, and evaluating its effects.

http://publichealth.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Public_Health/Content_Editors/Planning_and_Performance/Cardio-vascular_Health/Improving_Access_to_Healthy_Foods.pdf

Good Food Checklist.

The checklist provides steps people can take to promote a healthier food environment in their community.

http://www.iatp.org/files/143_2_102827.pdf

I want to get around in my community more easily without a car

Walking, biking and other active modes of transport are great ways to fit exercise into busy daily routines. They also allow us to get outdoors, interact more with our neighbors, and help reduce traffic emissions. These resources offer advice on how to make neighborhoods safer for people who walk, bike, and take public transit.

Bikeability Checklist

This checklist provides an easy-to-conduct audit that scores a neighborhood's bikeability based on a number of design features.

http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikeability_checklist.pdf

Walkability Checklist

Similar to the Bikeability Checklist, this tool evaluates a neighborhood's design for walking and produces a walkability score.

http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/sites/default/files/walkability_checklist.pdf

LA County Model Design Manual for Living Streets

The manual, developed by Los Angeles County, provides principles of good street design as well as concept drawings that promote active, living streets. The manual focuses on issues related to walking and bike access, traffic calming, intersection design, and land use along streets.

http://modelstreetdesignmanual.com/training.html

Great Corridors, Great Communities

The guide highlights eight successful corridor planning projects that considered multiple forms of transportation. Detailed case studies illustrate the tools used to make the projects a success.

http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Great_Corridors_Great_Communities.pdf

Creating a Road Map for Producing & Implementing a Bicycle Master Plan

The guide provides steps and strategies for the initial planning, development and implementation of a bike master plan.

http://www.bikewalk.org/assets/BMP_RoadMap.pdf

🍃 I want to feel safer in my community

Feeling safe in our surroundings plays a big role in the state of our mental health, social interaction and our physical activity levels. The following tools and guides offer ways to evaluate a locale for crime or danger, and offer strategies for creating safer places to live.

🍃 CPTED Resource Guideline

The guide explains CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), offers tips on how to apply CPTED in various situations, provides templates to follow and links to other resources, including those tailored to specific safety problems.

http://www.popcenter.org/tools/pdfs/cpted.pdf

🍃 National Crime Prevention Council of Singapore CPTED Guidebook

This guidebook, which draws from several U.S. CPTED manuals, provides guidance on safety design measures by specific location type such as schools, downtowns, and shopping districts. It also includes a checklist of Yes/No questions to assess a location's safety.

http://www.ncpc.gov.sg/pdf/CPTED%20Guidebook.pdf

🍃 City of Edmonton Safety Audit Guide

Created by the Safer Cities Initiative Office in Edmonton, Canada, the guide provides a checklist of safety audit questions; and detailed advice on how to organize, conduct, and follow-up on a safety audit. The guide also offers tips on conducting large, joint, and transit safety audits.
http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/PDF/SCACSafetyAuditGuide.pdf

🍃 LISC/CSI Safety Audit Checklist

This safety audit checklist from the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC), offers a quick-reference tool to conduct safety audits for any location.

http://www.lisc.org/csi/images/strategies_&_solutions/asset_upload_file98_15303.pdf

✿ I want to have more chances to get to know my neighbors

A friendly neighborhood is a healthy neighborhood. We need to feel comfortable walking around and talking with our neighbors. This allows us to build a sense of safety and trust and helps create a neighborhood that is relaxing, enjoyable, friendly and welcoming. Public places, such as parks and plazas, are great places for neighbors to interact.

✿ Good Neighboring Resource Guides

The one-page Good Neighboring guide offers simple tips on how to create a friendly and welcoming environment through social activities and fostering neighbor interaction.

http://nrc-neighbor.org/resourceguide2

The Good Neighboring pamphlet gives 8 strategies for becoming better neighbors such as "welcoming a new neighbor," "motivating people," and "creating partnerships with a local business." (http://nrc-neighbor.org/publications).

(http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/cnr/neighborhood/documents/book.pdf)

✿ The Community Toolbox

This chapter of the toolbox explains the importance of creating neighborhood action activities that bring neighbors in contact with one another, or helps them appreciate their neighborhood more; and offers strategies and tips on when and how to promote neighborhood action. Links to additional resources with more in-depth guidance are also provided.

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1327.aspx

✿ How to Form a Neighborhood Association

This general guide, written by Sacramento County, California, gives pointers on how to form and run a neighborhood association. A by-law template is provided.

http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/dns/Documents/HOW%20TO%20ESTABLISH%20A%20NEIGHBORHOOD%20ASSO-CIATION%20webcopy%20040709.pdf

⚑ *I want my community to be a good place for all people to live regardless of age, abilities, or income*

People from every age, ability, income, and ethnic group deserve a healthy place to live, work, and play. These guides give advice on meeting the needs of diverse communities, and making sure everyone has fair and equal access to the resources needed to lead healthy, stable and fulfilling lives.

🍃 *AARP Livable Communities Guide*

The evaluation guide offers advice on how to evaluate the livability of communities for adults over age 50. The guide is broken down into sections including transportation, health services, safety and security, housing, and provides recommendations for each section as well as survey questions to guide evaluation.

http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf

🍃 *Policylink Community Engagement and Participation Checklist*

This evaluation tool allows residents to rate their community in five main categories relating to citizen participation and involvement. Links are provided on certain questions to offer further resources.

http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/COMMUNITY%20ENGAGE-MENT%20CHECKLIST.PDF

🍃 *Promoting Health Equity: A Resource to Help Communities Address Social Determinants of Health*

This Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) workbook was created to encourage and support the development of new and the expansion of existing, initiatives and partnerships to address the social determinants of health inequities. It provides a number of case study examples and lays out the steps for developing initiatives to address the causes of health inequality on a local level.

http://www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/SDOH-workbook.pdf

🍃 *Best Practices for Stakeholder Participation in Health Impact Assessment*

This resource guide gives best practices for involving citizens and other interested parties in Health Impact Assessments.

http://www.healthimpactproject.org/resources/document/Guide-for-Stakeholder-Participation.pdf

🍃 I want to live in a clean environment

A healthy neighborhood has clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. The health of our natural environment and resources can affect our own health. Protecting the natural environment helps make it more resilient to pollution, natural disasters and human disease.

🍃 A Citizen's Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development

This citizen's guide helps residents evaluate the impact of development in their neighborhoods. It is based upon the LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) criteria and offers an evaluation checklist for residents.

http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/files/citizens_guide_LEED-ND.pdf

🍃 LEED-ND and Healthy Neighborhoods: An Expert Panel Review

This CDC guide specifies which LEED-ND rating system standards could provide several health benefits.

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/factsheets/leed-nd_tabloid_final.pdf

🍃 Household Carbon Footprint Calculator

This online tool allows individuals to calculate their current carbon footprint based on the lifestyle choices they make. It also shows how changing certain behaviors can lead to possible reductions in carbon footprint. This allows all of us to see the role we can play in making sure we have a clean and healthy environment in which to live, work, and play.

http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/ind-calculator.html

🍃 2011 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria

This checklist can help evaluate the environmental impacts of new and existing developments. It focuses on community-wide impacts but also on construction materials and energy efficiency. A number of recommendations and resource links are provided.

http://www.enterprisecommunity.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pa000000FxwvNEAR