

Principles of Healthy Land Use Development:

A Public Health Perspective

Creating communities that offer healthy and safe places for people to live, work, and play is a primary strategy in the prevention of childhood obesity, heart disease, stroke, some cancers, asthma and pedestrian and bicycle injuries.

Land use development that looks at the big picture & considers all the options while emphasizing fairness, community improvement, and citizen participation can lead to communities that have long term health & wellness benefits for all citizens.

Healthy Communities Incorporate The Following Principles:

Growth is Managed and Directed Towards Existing Communities

Growth that is centrally focused allows communities to save money on infrastructure costs, preserve prime agricultural lands, preserve open space, and decrease the amount of vehicle miles traveled. A decrease in vehicle miles traveled results in better social, mental, and physical health.

Development Emphasizes a Mix Of Uses that Include a Range of Housing Opportunities

Development that offers a mix of land uses provides a central location for shopping, housing, office space, plazas, restaurants, and other services that meet the needs of a neighborhood. Housing for a variety of incomes incorporated into mixed use areas makes it easier for people to incorporate physical activity into daily routines.

Create Walkable Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that are well lit, have continuous sidewalks, have safe street crossings, and are connected to services and other recreational activities are a key component to healthy development.

Provide a Variety of Transportation Options

Communities that provide people with options to walk, bicycle, or take transit increase the quality of life for people both young and old who for physical reasons or personal choice no longer depend on the automobile as the sole source of transportation.

Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas

Green space provides community members opportunity for recreation and relaxation. In addition, the ability of these natural areas to filter water runoff, improve emotional well being, and provide local food production makes the preservation of green space a crucial element to both the physical and mental health of a community.

Encourage Meaningful Citizen Participation

Growth that responds to a community's sense of how and where it wants to grow can result in healthy and safe places to live, work, and play.

Construct Schools Close to Neighborhoods

Schools that are accessible by walking and bicycling increase the level of children's physical activity, provide a recreational resource to the community, have a positive impact on air quality, and have lower infrastructure and transportation costs.