



HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN

Cooperating Organizations

American Planning Association – NJ

American Society of Civil Engineers – NJ

American Society of Landscape Architects – NJ

New Jersey Association of County & City Health Officials

NJ Association of Planning and Zoning Administrators

New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Local Public Health
Office of Nutrition & Fitness

New Jersey Department of Transportation
Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs

New Jersey Future

New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association

New Jersey Planning Officials

NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center, Rutgers

New Jersey Society of Architects

New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers

Rutgers Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation

Rutgers Center for State Health Policy

UMDNJ - School of Public Health
Office of Public Health Practice

US Green Building Council – NJ

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*Download this brochure at
www.njasla.org or www.njaccho.org*

Components of Healthy Community Design



Compact, Inclusive, Active Communities

Compact inclusive communities locate homes, businesses, stores, schools, houses of worship, and parks close to each other to promote walking, biking, and transit use. They are accessible and socially equitable for all residents. Active communities incorporate physical activity into daily life. Not all communities are the same, but opportunities to make your residents more active exist through good community design.

Diverse Employment Opportunities

Healthy communities provide for a diverse economy that offers a range of employment opportunities. Planning and zoning should promote jobs that enable all residents to live more productive and healthier lives.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and convenient transit stops along tree-lined, well lit streets encourage people to leave their cars at home. They promote safe routes to schools and improve air quality by promoting energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Neighborhood Parks and Greenways

Parks and greenways provide areas for people to enjoy a wide range of physical activities. Open spaces should be evenly distributed throughout the community so people have access within 1/2 mile of their homes and businesses. In addition, open spaces provide wildlife habitat and reduce flooding by absorbing stormwater.

Urban Agriculture

All residents need access to healthy foods. Transforming underutilized and vacant lots into community gardens, urban farms, and farmers' markets enhances neighborhood character and provides access to healthy, affordable, fresh, locally grown food. They offer an opportunity for children to learn the importance of healthy, sustainable foods and where it is grown.

Healthy Buildings

Americans spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, where concentrations of pollutants are often much higher than outside. Healthy buildings reflect good choices in design, materials, ventilation, and consumer products such as household furnishings, personal care items, and cleaning products.

What is it?

What YOU Can Do.

Healthy Community Design — *Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice*



What is Healthy Community Design?

It is planning, designing and building sustainable communities that encourage people to live healthier lives by making it easier to walk, bike, and incorporate mass transit opportunities. It puts fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods and beverages within easy reach of all neighborhoods.

Benefits of Healthy Community Design

- Increases sense of social connectivity & sense of community belonging
- Produces positive economic outcomes for developers, homeowners and local governments
- Ensures social equity for all community residents
- Promotes good mental health
- Incorporates physical activity into our daily lives
- Creates safe environments
- Lowers the risk of traffic-related injuries
- Increases access to healthy, locally grown food
- Improves air and water quality

How Healthy are NJ Communities?

- More New Jerseyans are leading sedentary lives contributing to obesity, which is associated with chronic diseases and disability. In 1994, 10% of New Jersey residents were considered obese. By 2011 the number increased to almost 24%.

If we don't reverse this trend, the current generation of young people could be the first in U.S. history to live sicker and die younger than their parents' generation.

- In 2008, New Jersey spent \$2.2 billion on obesity attributable medical costs which are expected to increase to \$9.3 billion by 2018, as the percent of obese adults rises to 40%.
- Left unchecked, by 2030, NJ's obesity related medical costs will increase by 34.5%

Get Involved, Make a Difference

Residents are the best advocates for change. No one knows your neighborhoods better than you do. Individuals and community groups with a common purpose can influence public policy makers to allocate resources toward sustainable planning for healthy communities.

For more information on how you can make a difference:

- Contact your local planning department
- www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj
- www.countyhealthrankings.org

The *County Health Rankings* are an annual national report that provides information about the overall health of each county in the U.S., by comparing health outcomes (health status) with health factors (conditions that support health). They show us that where you live, learn, work, and play matters to your health. They are a "call to action" for community partners to work together to develop programs and policies that address multiple influences on health.

What You Can Do

- Become educated on how your community can be designed to provide convenient opportunities for healthy, active living.
- Attend local meetings (governing body, Land Use/ Planning Boards, Board of Health) to express your opinion
- Mobilize a community partnership to collectively lobby for change; include youth in your efforts
- Meet with elected officials to ask for their support in promoting healthy community design
- Support local businesses because they drive the local economy and create jobs
- Organize a community garden and farm stand
- Advocate for parks, sidewalks, bike paths and public transit options
- Contact your Board of Education about providing healthy food in schools, safe routes to school, and access to facilities for community recreational activities
- Start a community blog, media campaign or host a public event focused on healthy choices



“An apple a day may help keep the doctor away but assumes you can find an apple in your neighborhood.”