Community Design and Health: Understanding and Making Healthy Places

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Community & Health, forging the link

- What is **community design**?
- What is **health**?
- How does **community design** impact health?
- What do we **know**?
- How do we make **Healthy Places**?
What is community design?

Manmade surroundings that provide the setting for human activity.

**Composed of:**
- Land use patterns
- Transportation infrastructure and services
- Design
What is community design?

Land use patterns and density

WHERE WE DO THINGS

Source: Ypsilanti, MI
What is community design?

Transportation Infrastructure and services

HOW WE GET AROUND

Source: Birmingham, AL
What is community design?

Design

INTERFACE BETWEEN PLACES AND MOBILITY

Source: CQGRD; DART; Kirkwood, MO; St. Paul, MN
Health is “the extent to which an individual or group is able…to realize aspirations and satisfy needs and…to change or cope with the environment. Health is…a resource for everyday life, not the objective for living; it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical capacities.”

– World Health Organization, 1984
What affects health?

**Determinants of Health**

- **Biological:** genes, sex, age
- **Social and Economic:** poverty, employment, social exclusion, crime, social networks
- **Environment:** air quality, water quality, housing, noise, urban design, land use, social environment
- **Lifestyle:** diet, activity level, smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual behavior
- **Services:** education, health care, child care, social services, transportation, technology, recreation
- **Public Policy:** priorities, policies, programs, projects, public involvement

Community design and health

Determinants of Health

- Biological
- Social / Economic
- Environment
- Lifestyle
- Services
- Public Policy

Community design and health

Making Healthy Places

Community design

- natural environment, history
- economic factors, societal values, culture
- policies, regulations, design theory and practice
- individual

- environmental exposure
- monetary impacts
- social impacts
- lifestyle impacts

health
What do we know?

Community design directly affects:

- exposure to:
  - noise, pollutants, other hazards

- access to:
  - services, jobs, healthy food, recreation, transportation options, housing choices, social networks, walkable communities

From community to chronic disease


Conventional development patterns
- Produce more travel miles
- More miles results in more emissions
- More emissions
- Increase severe asthma incidents

Driving a car
- Produces CO, VOC, PM
- CO, VOC, PM
- Increases instances of severe asthma
Making Healthy Places

- Integrated strategies
- Multi-disciplinary
- New tools
- Needed research
- Future opportunities
Programming and education to encourage healthy behavior

Provision and access to health services to prevent, manage, and cure disease

Community design improvements to enable and promote healthy behavior and limit exposure to unhealthy environments
Historic focus on reducing harmful exposures. **Recent research is exploring the link between the built environment and human behavior.**

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<th>The Health Impact Assessment</th>
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<td>A combination of procedures or methods by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to the effects it may have on the health of a population (Gothenburg)</td>
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Used in UK, Netherlands, New Zealand, etc.
Responding to the evidence

Population growth means new construction

In 2030, about half of the buildings in which we live, work, and shop will have been built after 2000.

An opportunity to make healthy places

A chance to do it right

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