



# Healthy Community Planning

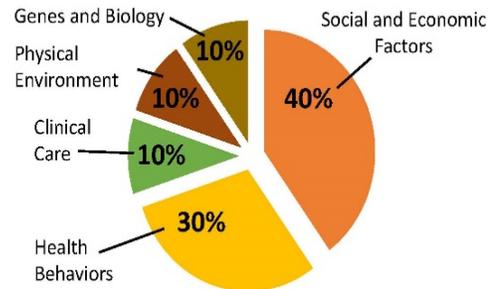
Bringing public works and public health together for a healthier Hennepin County

## Community design, transportation and health

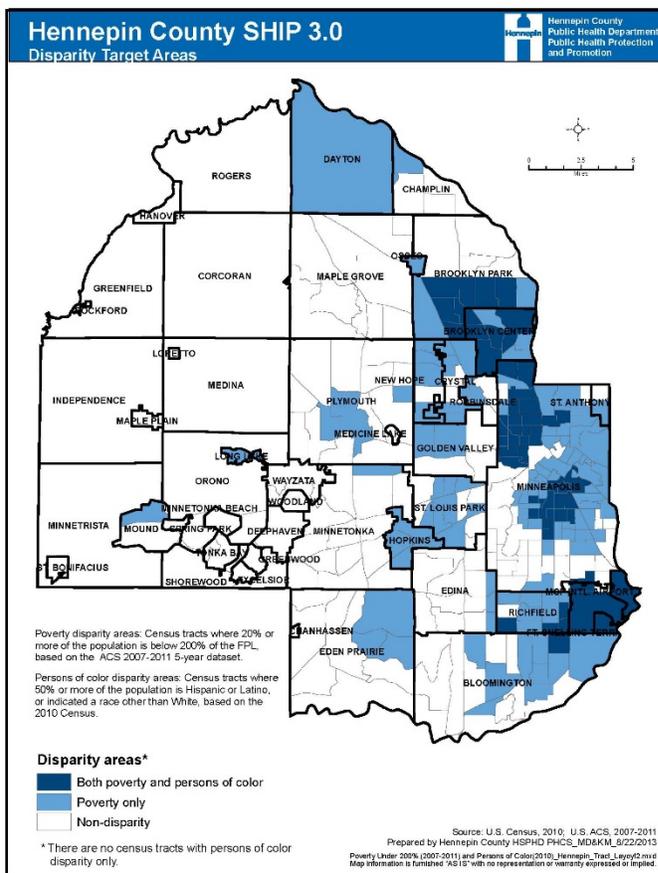
Many of us would like to make healthier choices, but that can be hard if sidewalks, parks, healthy foods, and other health-supportive facilities aren't available where we live. The way we plan and design our communities plays a big role in our physical, emotional and financial well-being.

The **Healthy Community Planning** team, located in the public works Planning Department and supported primarily through public health funding, brings a multidisciplinary approach to improving accessibility, quality of life, and health outcomes in Hennepin County.

### Determinants of Health



## What does the healthy community planning team do?



### Technical support and funding for partner cities and agencies –

Our work has led to 8 cities adopting Complete Streets policies and to several cities developing healthy land use policies such as architectural design guidelines. We have funded and managed pedestrian and bicycle plans in five cities as well as a bike study in the Bottineau corridor. In 2014-2015, we worked closely with the cities of Hopkins and Brooklyn Center to engage residents around active living, develop transportation policies, host demonstration projects on proposed bike/ped projects, and provide bikes and bike education to low income residents.

Additionally, we hold popular **quarterly panels** on current topics related to active living. Topics in 2015 included safe routes to schools, active living & law enforcement, redevelopment, and incorporating health into comprehensive planning. In 2016, meetings focus on comprehensive planning to help cities incorporate health into their 2018 comprehensive plans.

*Our work focuses on areas where there are concentrations of poverty and persons of color because these populations also experience a higher rate of chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.*

**Incorporate active living into Hennepin County policy and processes** – The Healthy Community Planning team works with staff around the county to incorporate active living and health into policies, programs and projects. Examples include collaboration with public health on urban agriculture, collaboration within public works on transit and roadway projects, participating in review of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Affordable Housing Incentive Fund (AHIF) projects, and purchasing fruit trees for planting on county and community owned space. We work closely with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator on bicycle and pedestrian issues, and headed up Hennepin County’s new bicycle counting program, which was first executed in 2015.

**Practice and promote inclusive community engagement around transportation projects** – We work to increase the engagement of low-income people, historic communities of color, and immigrant/refugee populations living near light rail transitway (LRT) station areas; ensure that station area plans support healthy and equitable communities; and work toward integrating community engagement and health equity principles into future projects in Public Works. We also fund the Health Equity and Engagement Cohort (HEEC), a group of small, culturally focused community organizations along the Bottineau LRT corridor, to conduct engagement and gather tangible input for station areas among populations traditionally underrepresented in LRT planning processes.

## Funding

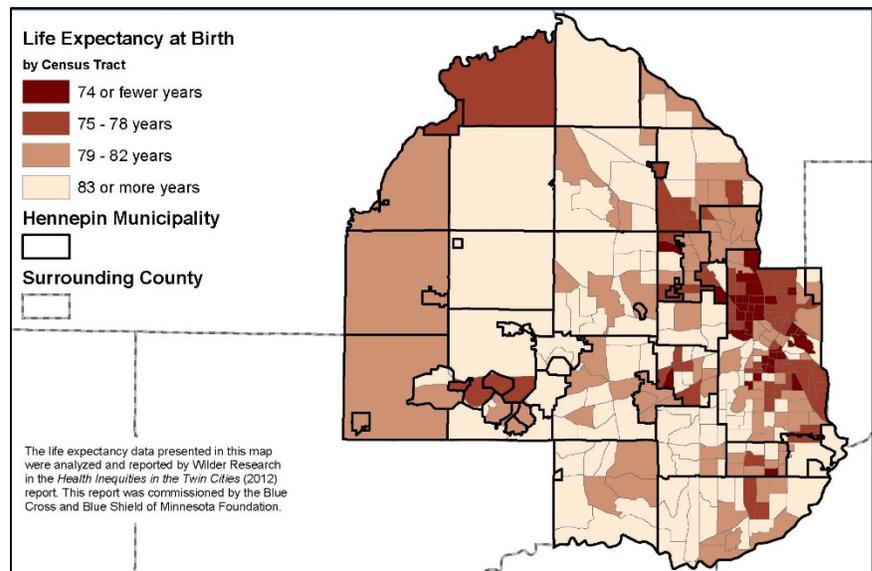
The Healthy Community Planning team is funded primarily by grants from the Minnesota Department of Health, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN, and previously the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The Pew Charitable Trusts. We also are funded in part by property tax and the railroad authority.

## More bang for the buck

The Healthy Community Planning team **leverages public health funds for public works priorities.** From funding health equity focused community engagement along the Bottineau LRT to working with cities to plan and carry out transportation projects, our work helps make public works projects more inclusive for people walking, biking and taking transit.

The Healthy Community Planning team **leverages public works funds for public health priorities.**

Enhancements for people biking and walking often make up a negligible percentage of the cost of a transportation or development project if opportunities are seized early enough. Our team works to identify these opportunities under county goals through policies such as Complete Streets, plans such as the county and city pedestrian and bicycle plans, and through relationships around the county, so that Hennepin County’s investments help residents of all ages, abilities and incomes stay active and healthy.



*Your life expectancy can be predicted by your zip code due to a variety of factors including: access to healthy food, access to parks and physical activity, traffic safety, education, and job training and access. Healthy Community Planning works to influence these factors to increase life expectancy and quality of life.*