Healthy Planning Project – Advisory Team Roles & Responsibilities
UPDATED 2/4/2020

Background:
Many communities across the metropolitan region are engaging in healthy community strategies and there is a growing recognition of the need to prioritize health in local planning.

Comprehensive plans (comp plans) are a primary tool used by local government that influence the vision of and investment in structural factors and conditions that shape public health. Comp plans facilitate the connection between how we plan our communities and achieve our health goals. Such as in the areas in land use, transportation, climate resilience, physical activity and healthy food access. By combining community planning and public health expertise, the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) are well positioned to facilitate momentum from the current local comp plan effort and support healthier communities.

This project builds from MDH work during the previous comp plan cycle includes reviewing a sample of local metropolitan region comp plans for designated health indicators that are important for promoting healthy communities. The project process will convene allied professionals over the shared value of public health and provide a stepping stone for building networks and capacity to shape healthier communities.

Project Goals
The intent is to align project framework, process, and outputs to support cross-cutting goals of partner agencies (Minnesota Department of Health and Metropolitan Council). These include:

- **Elevate priority public health challenges** including climate resilience, health equity, healthy food access, physical activity, and active transportation mode shift.
- **Support community-to-community learning and grow the network of allied professionals**
- **Showcase local strategy and policy examples that advance priority public health issues.**
- **Build from foundational partner agency work in this area**
- **Identify opportunities where partner agencies can provide coordinated technical assistance**

Role:
Support the Core Project Team by providing subject matter expertise. Feedback and insights from the Advisory Team will help guide the Healthy Planning Project scoping, analysis and roll-out activities. The Core Project Team will make final decisions on project activities, taking Advisory Team feedback into account.

Responsibilities:

- Advise the Core Project Team on a transparent and thorough approach that will benefit not only the MN Department of Health and the Metropolitan Council, but also local jurisdictions.
- Support community engagement efforts by helping communicate with local stakeholders.
- Periodically review materials and provide feedback to the Core Project Team.
- Actively participate in project update meetings.
- Support roll-out efforts by sharing project information with networks and integrating it into your work as appropriate.

Time Commitment:
Time commitment by Advisory Team members is NOT expected to be a heavy lift. Core Project Team members are responsible for project management, meeting facilitation, and carrying out the technical work. Advisory Team member time commitment is expected to be limited to:

- Attending 2-4 meetings (~1.5-2hrs. each meeting) between March-September 2020.
- Providing periodic feedback via e-mail or a phone call.
Minnesota Department of Transportation Research

Presented by:

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Minnesota Transportation Research Collaboration Site
https://mndot-lrrb.ideascale.com/a/index

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Minnesota Local Road Research Board (LRRB) welcome your ideas for research and research implementation funding. You can submit a new idea or vote on an idea to show your support.

_Idea solicitation for the 2020 academic transportation research program is open._ Submit your ideas by _Monday, March 16_ for consideration in the 2020 research RFP. Ideas submitted after March 16 will be included in the 2021 cycle. MnDOT research implementation projects can be proposed at any time (pilot projects, training material development, etc.)

**Contribute on a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)**

Several recently funded projects are looking for Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) members to give input into these projects. Several of these projects address concerns that have been raised by the workgroup. The list of projects is linked below.

If you are interested in serving on a TAP, please contact Dave Glyer at David.glyer@state.mn.us and see [http://www.dot.state.mn.us/research/awards.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/research/awards.html)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Overview

Local planning can be a powerful tool for improving the health of communities. However, local plans often do not concretely identify and prioritize the actions needed to realize their goals.

This toolkit provides resources to support implementation of local plans to improve community health and create more equitable communities. It is intended to guide public health professionals and others involved in the planning process in assessing, organizing, and prioritizing local plan implementation actions to improve community health outcomes. It is designed to support plan implementation efforts in towns, cities, and counties, and can be adapted to fit the local context of a wide range of communities.

Healthy Community: “A community that is continuously creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential.”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹
Local Plan Implementation Toolkit

The Local Plan Implementation Toolkit includes the following resources:

- **Plan Implementation Toolkit: Overview** — Introduces the toolkit and discusses how local plan implementation fits within a community context.

- **Plan Implementation Toolkit: Worksheet** — Outlines steps local governments, public health professionals, planners, and partners can use to develop detailed, community-specific, and actionable work plans to implement local plan goals.

- **Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Linking Planning Goals & Implementation Actions** — Provides examples of local planning goals related to food access, with specific implementation actions to ensure community members have equitable access to healthy, affordable food.

- **Plan Implementation Toolkit: Working with Community Partners** — Discusses the range of public agencies and community stakeholders that can be effective partners in implementing local plan goals.

- **Plan Implementation Toolkit: Evaluation Guide** — Discusses how groups can define what success looks like and different methods to evaluate progress towards reaching these goals.
The Planning Journey

The local plan toolkit approaches the planning process as a journey, with the plan reflecting the evolving needs and priorities of a community over time. This approach recognizes that the priorities, vision, and long-term goals included in a local plan reflect a mix of historical factors and current community conditions and needs. The priorities included in a plan can be used to leverage resources and energy around community goals and aspirations, hopefully moving the community towards a more equitable and healthy community for all residents.

The local grid, road, and road markers included in the journey visual show how a community evolves as it tackles the goals and activities outlined in the plan.

The local grid reflects the underlying historical and current community conditions impacting current planning efforts. The road represents locally unique circumstances and conditions to be considered by planners, citizens, and stakeholders during the planning process. The road markers indicate the specific local planning steps.

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**LOCAL GRID**
Inputs shaping a community’s health: built environment; natural environment; economy; politics; demographics; civic engagement; history; civil rights issues; science and technology; laws and policies; public health; access to services; community relationships

**ROAD MARKERS**
Actual steps taken in the planning process

**THE ROAD**
Actions a community can take when developing and implementing a local plan: community engagement; health equity; community needs and priorities; evaluation of planning process

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Our past shapes our present communities and how we work toward building a healthier, more equitable future.
Local Planning and Public Health Priorities

The field of planning grew out of the public health issues created by the design of communities in the early to mid-20th century. Early planning efforts focused on reducing the transmission of communicable diseases and separating industry and manufacturing land uses from homes, light businesses, and parks to limit the exposure of community members to pollutants. With the eradication of many communicable diseases and improvement of medical technology to treat those communicable diseases that remained or emerged, planning was no longer seen as essential to protect public health and the two fields drifted apart.

In recent years, local planning efforts have started to reengage with their public health roots by focusing on the impact community design has on current public health issues related to chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. These diseases are increasingly linked to modern economic conditions and community design that promote physical inactivity and poor nutrition. A new generation of planners and public health professionals is working together to tackle these pressing issues.
Federal, state, and local laws may direct local government and planning officials to prepare specialized planning documents such as Environmental Impact Statements, American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Audits, and Comprehensive Operations Analyses to show compliance with legal standards. Current guidelines and laws that inform local planning processes, along with a growing recognition among planners that community health should be a planning priority, can help local planning become a valuable tool to advance community health goals and address health inequities.

**What is health equity?**

“What health equity is a state where all persons, regardless of [ability], race, income, creed, sexual orientation, gender identification, age or gender have the opportunity to be as healthy as they can — to reach their full ‘health potential.’”
What causes health inequities in local communities?

There are persistent, significant, and socially determined differences in the conditions that create health and the opportunity to be healthy for certain populations. These social determinants of health are conditions created by decisions that affect the larger community or society, such as local plans and policies; corporate decisions; neighborhood actions; resource allocation; and others. These decisions are influenced by a variety of factors, including both positive and negative social forces such as sense of community, economic pressures, environmental conditions, discrimination, implicit bias, and the current political climate.


Health Equity and Planning

When done well, local planning benefits all members of the community and helps to reduce underlying inequities experienced by groups within the community. However, local plans have not always considered the wellbeing of all community members. The development and implementation of some local plans has also served to perpetuate existing and create new health inequities within a community.

How can local planning efforts address health inequities?

Cities, towns, villages, counties, and regions can undertake specialized plans and develop planning documents that directly address inequities. For example, a jurisdiction may prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on a roadway project that addresses the project’s impacts on low-income neighborhoods, the various racial and ethnic populations in the community, Tribal resources, and recreational facilities. An ADA Compliance Audit can inform local policymakers of gaps in its infrastructure to support individuals with disabilities by including curb cuts, signalized intersections, and well-maintained sidewalks. A Comprehensive Operations Analysis can be prepared for a transit agency to discuss whether its services meet the needs of communities of color and neighborhoods with low rates of vehicle ownership.
The negative impact transportation planning and implementation projects can have on communities of color is illustrated by the experience of the Rondo Neighborhood in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In the mid-20th century, local engineers chose to convert St. Anthony Avenue, a local street running from Saint Paul to Minneapolis, into a section of Interstate 94 (I-94) linking the downtowns of each city. In Saint Paul, St. Anthony Avenue ran through the heart of Rondo, a vibrant, predominantly African American neighborhood. Construction of I-94 began in 1956 and concluded in 1968, demolishing homes and businesses, cutting what was left of Rondo in half, and creating air and noise pollution issues for the remaining residents. The damage to the community fabric in Rondo led to blight, increased drug use, and crime. Today, the average lifespan of a Rondo resident is one of the lowest in Saint Paul. In 2015, the City of Saint Paul finally apologized to the residents of Rondo, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation has publicly acknowledged that the earlier I-94 project and resulting damage to the neighborhood “led to a pattern of community distrust” with the agency.

The City, with active input from the Rondo neighborhood, is currently working on a project called Rethinking I-94. This project was initiated in anticipation of significant work in the next few years on the I-94 corridor to improve aging infrastructure. Rethinking I-94 aims to address these past harms and is including residents in the planning for construction and possible redesign of infrastructure so that it will respond to community needs, and build trust with community members. By focusing on “easier, safer travel in the corridor Rethinking I-94 intends to reconnect neighborhoods, revitalize communities and ensure residents have a meaningful voice in transportation decisions that affect their lives.”

Although planners and public officials can never undo the damage they have caused to communities of color and other socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups through these projects, they can show that they are striving to do better by engaging residents and including them in these critical planning decisions moving forward.
Legal Framework for Local Planning

Local planning efforts may be impacted by a range of local, state, and federal laws and policies.

Federal Laws

Federal laws can create requirements about how certain types of planning activities are executed or limit the authority of local governments to do certain things. Federal environmental and civil rights laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act,11 Civil Rights Act,12 and National Environmental Policy Act,13 create standards that should inform the development and implementation of local plans to ensure that local planning efforts consider the health and wellbeing of the entire community.

State Laws

State statutes can require municipalities to engage in specific planning activities and specify the roles and responsibility of local planning commissions. For example, Minnesota statutes require counties, cities, and townships in the Twin Cities Metro Area to update their comprehensive plans every ten years and specifies the role of the Metropolitan Council in overseeing these planning activities.14

State laws may also go beyond the federal environmental and civil rights laws described above and create separate legal requirements and standards that impact local planning efforts. For example, the Minnesota Human Rights Act includes protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation and familial status in employment and housing that go beyond federal civil rights protections.15

Local Ordinances

Local governments can create both municipal-specific and regional planning requirements through local ordinances even if local planning is not required by state laws. Local ordinances can also provide direction about how a certain municipality conducts its planning activities. For example, the City of Bemidji, Minnesota, while not required to engage in local planning efforts by state law, enacted a local ordinance ratifying the creation of the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Commission and creating requirements for the participation of Bemidji in the Commission.16
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The Public Health Law Center provides information and legal technical assistance on issues related to public health. The Center does not provide legal representation or advice. This document should not be considered legal advice.

Endnotes

12 42 U.S.C. Ch. 21 (2018); 45 C.F.R. § 80.6 (2018).
Hennepin County’s Community and Economic Development (CED) division brings a multidisciplinary approach to improving places where people live, work, learn, and play. We work with cities and partners to improve accessibility, quality of life, and health outcomes in Hennepin County. Through the Active Living program, CED provides funding and technical assistance to advance healthy communities and equity by helping with the following:

Assessments and education
- Walk, bike, and roll assessments
- Introductory biking classes
- Community bike rides (such as Slow Rolls)
- Walking workshops (e.g. history and culture walks)

Equitable engagement and demonstration projects
- People-centered public spaces
- Pop-up placemaking
- Community outreach to underrepresented populations
- Temporary bike lanes and pedestrian crossings

Policies, plans, and implementation strategies
- Bike and pedestrian plans
- Community engagement plans
- Comprehensive plan implementation
- Complete streets and other land use and transportation policies
- Small area or corridor studies

Need ideas to support active living in your community? Our program is here to meet your individual needs! We can also connect you to Hennepin County Public Health staff working on healthy food access and tobacco-related work.

Funding
This work is funded by a Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grant from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Previous work
Hennepin County has provided funding and technical support to cities for:
- Passing Complete Streets policies or resolutions in 10 cities
- Completing an active living design checklist for new development projects (adopted by Brooklyn Center)
- Demonstrating placemaking and bike/ped improvements in Brooklyn Center, Osseo, and St. Louis Park
- Assessing walk and bike conditions in Crystal, Dayton, and Golden Valley
- Integrating active living and healthy community planning principles into downtown development guidelines (adopted by Corcoran)
- Engaging community in activating public spaces in Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale

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PLANNING THROUGH A PUBLIC HEALTH LENS

The City of Osseo took a unique approach to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan by writing it through a public health lens. Public health is a comprehensive, prevention-based approach to promoting human wellbeing. It acknowledges the influence of medical care and biology, but asserts that social and environmental factors also play a significant role in determining health. Throughout the Plan, the City highlights five health themes that demonstrate its goals for the future: access to healthy food, physical activity and active living, community safety, social health and equity, and healthy natural and built environment. These themes emerged from community input during the engagement process. The City also used the Social Determinants of Health as a framework for developing these themes.

The City decided to take this approach to planning due to its desire to improve community health and vitality. It believes it can achieve this goal by promoting health across a broad spectrum of city life and services. As a result, the City hopes Osseo will be a healthy place to live for all generations—now and in the future.

WHAT MAY HELP OTHER COMMUNITIES?

Community Engagement
In the years leading up to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the City employed a variety of engagement efforts to determine the community’s vision for the future. These efforts included pop-up events, community visioning meetings, and steering committee feedback. Throughout this process, the City listened to personal accounts of people’s experiences living and working in Osseo. Despite the broad range of feedback, the community’s responses often revolved around a common topic: health. This pattern drove the City’s decision to frame the comprehensive plan from a public health perspective. Throughout the Plan, the City clearly presents the influence of community voices on its proposed policies. Most chapters have a “What We Heard” section that lists the community’s top priorities as determined by the City’s engagement efforts. By incorporating the community perspective, the City personalized its vision for the future in a way that prioritizes its residents’ health and wellbeing.

Putting the Plan in Perspective
Planning through a public health lens allowed the City to address the complexity and intersectionality of health in the context of its community. Long-range planning occurs at a high level and it can be difficult for people to connect with a twenty-year vision.
In response to this reality, the City attempted to bridge this gap by using a public health lens to demonstrate the Plan’s direct impact on the community and on individual residents. This decision stems from the fact that health is an extremely personal concept to which all people can relate. As a result, this approach not only fosters community engagement, but promotes better understanding of the implications and importance of long-range planning. Increased community involvement in the planning process also acts as an accountability measure for the City to help ensure the implementation of action items outlined in the Plan.

Applying Health to All Plan Elements
The City’s approach to planning through a public health lens demonstrates the applicability of health across a range of plan elements including land use, transportation, housing, parks, and water resources. Regarding land use, the City plans to limit the number of fast food retailers and work to attract businesses with a health-promotion focus. In its Parks and Community Facilities section, the City discusses its plans to encourage adding community garden plots in conjunction with high-density development, develop health-related education and programming, and support initiatives to integrate health, nutrition, and cooking education in local schools.

The City also plans to address growing concerns around food insecurity in the community. It believes that ensuring adequate nutrition is an essential first step to progressing other health indicators. In 2017, the City partnered with local nonprofits to create the Osseo Orchard, a fruit tree and berry orchard located on the south end of the Osseo Public Works building site. The orchard will provide a wealth of health benefits to the community as residents are welcome to visit the orchard and take advantage of ripe produce. The remaining produce will also be distributed to local food shelves. Space remains available at the site for future community planting or recreational activities.

Collaboration and Partnerships
The City’s efforts to promote public health were supported by the Creating Healthier Communities project, a financial and technical assistance program sponsored by Active Living Hennepin County and the Minnesota Department of Health’s Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP). This project took a broad approach to promoting community-wide health in Osseo by examining the influence of policies, systems, and environments. The City later used this information to inform the framework for its comprehensive plan and the development of its five health themes. These efforts were also guided by a community leadership team comprised of city and county staff, residents, officials, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders.
Evaluation of Community Engagement in Comprehensive Planning

1. What sorts of community engagement activities did you do during the Comprehensive planning process?

2. Use three words to describe how you feel about Community Engagement during the Comprehensive Planning process:

3. When you think of who does community engagement really well, what do you think of? Can be an organization, person or other resource. Try to leave enough information that we can find out more information through a Google search.

4. In your work in the planning field, what is something you’d like to do better related to community engagement? What would you hope a resource such as the one I’m hoping to develop would include?

(Optional) As my project proceeds, it may be useful to talk to people working in the field to review findings, test assumptions or just answer a basic question. If you would be willing to serve as an occasional reference for this project, please leave your name and contact information below. Thank you!

To submit or to get more information, contact Margaret Perez, City of Bloomington – Division of Public Health, at mperez@bloomingtonmn.gov or 651-529-0552.