

Becoming a Fit City: Transportation & Planning Policy

Mark Plotz



The Need

"A straight-line distance of about 400 to 500 meters [439 to 546 yards] between where you live and a grocery store or an eating or drinking establishment will result in directly increased walking...Walking increases for individuals about 20 percent for each park that is within a 1-kilometer [0.6 mile] distance of a residential area. That's a big number."

"That's why a person who lives in a suburban density is at least 10 pounds heavier than the average person who lives in an urban density, all other things being equal. Well, for every pound, your body creates roughly 75,000 miles of capillary blood paths to treat all those cells. So, ten times that, that's a lot more; that's blood pressure issues. Access to community gardens definitely improves physical health, it improves diet, it increases social interaction...The list goes on..."

-- Mark Holland, former director of Vancouver's Sustainability Office & founder of the Healing Cities Institute
<http://bit.ly/z9iKkC>

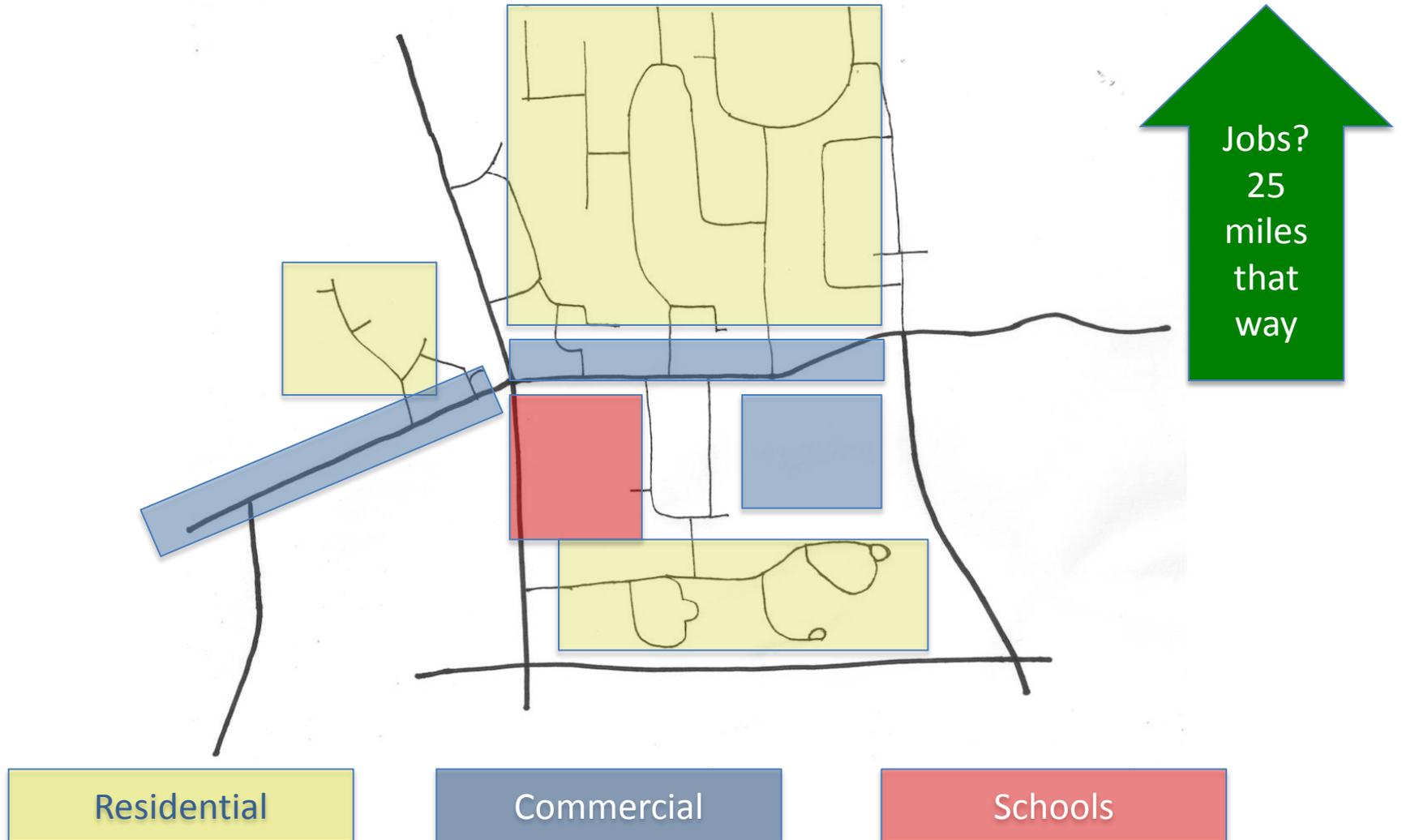
A remedy



Mixed use neighborhoods
<http://www.formbasedcodes.org/>

Right-sized streets

Our reality



Our Opportunities

- Policy 0: Do no harm
- Policy 1: Civic investments
- Policy 2: Parks & Recreational Facilities
- Policy 3: School location
- Policy 4: Completing your streets
- Policy 5: Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Policy 0: Do No Harm

Principles:

- Evaluate the projects underway in your community and ask:

Did we think about opportunities for walking and bicycling?

Are there barriers to physical activity?

Challenges:

- Already-developed projects and proposals and resistance to change

Resources:

Healthy Development Measurement Tool

Louisville Healthy Development Checklist

Active Design Guidelines: Urban Design and Building Design Checklists

Health Impact Assessments

Healthy Development Measurement Tool
A comprehensive evaluation metric to consider health needs in urban development

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Recent News

2008-05-27 HDMT Website and Data Revision Complete
We recently completed an extensive update to HDMT website content, including to indicators and data, development targets and checklist, and neighborhood profiles. In addition, we added a "Tool Instructions" section to the website to better explain how the HDMT can be applied. Thank you for your patience as we completed this update.

2008-05-27 Draft Evaluation of Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plans Released
The public draft of our evaluation of the Eastern Neighborhood Area Plans using the HDMT is now available. [Click here](#) to download the report ["Impacts on Community Health of Area Plans for the Mission, East SoMa, and Potrero Hill / Showplace Square: An Application of the Healthy Development Measurement Tool"](#).

For additional HDMT updates and changes, please visit [News Archives/Connections and Errors](#).

Get Started...

- Begin with an [introduction](#) or download a [helpful presentation](#) (PDF).
- [Use the Tool.](#)
- Look at [community indicators](#).
- Check out [SF neighborhood data](#).
- Access Tool [resources](#).

The Tool

The **Healthy Development Measurement Tool** is a comprehensive evaluation metric to consider health needs in urban development plans and projects. The HDMT explicitly connects public health to urban development planning in efforts to achieve a higher quality social and physical environment that advances health.

Who We Are

We're committed to assessing urban environmental conditions and responding to health inequities and environmental policy gaps using health impact assessment methods. We're the [San Francisco Department of Public Health, Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability](#). Be sure to [contact us](#) with any questions or comments.

Policy 1: Civic investments

Principles:

- Centrally locate civic buildings.
- Locate health & social services centers near transit.

Challenges:

- Inexpensive land available on the fringe.
- Budgetary pressure to consolidate operations.

Model city/counties:

- Mankato's (MN) Intergovernmental Center. Includes City Hall, School District Administration, Social Security
- Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (SF Bay Area). Coordinating transit and social services.
- Plan El Paso (TX). Downtown revitalization.

Resources:

planelpaso.org



Goal	Policy	Responsible Department(s)
Downtown		
<p>Goal 1.1: The City of El Paso places the highest priority on the reinvigoration of Downtown, whose strategic location, walkable blocks, and historic buildings will once again make Downtown a vibrant destination and center of culture, shopping, government, and the arts. These policies apply to land in the G-1 “Downtown” growth sector on the Future Land Use Map (see Goal 1.10).</p>	<p>Policy 1.1.1: City policies and programs will encourage the rehabilitation of upper stories of existing Downtown buildings as office, retail, entertainment, and residential space. Financial incentives will be considered to encourage investment from the private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Economic Development • Historic Preservation
	<p>Policy 1.1.2: The City encourages new multi-story mixed-use buildings with windows and doors facing all sidewalks to be constructed on vacant lots. The City will not require any on-site parking for buildings Downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Economic Development
	<p>Policy 1.1.3: Downtown redevelopment strategies will include new and improved civic buildings and civic spaces, plus shared parking for residents, employees, and visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Economic Development
	<p>Policy 1.1.4: As public buildings are added, updated, or replaced, they will be integrated into El Paso’s original street network and other land uses rather than being isolated in large complexes of civic buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Economic Development
	<p>Policy 1.1.5: The City’s historic landmark design regulations will be expanded to highlight Downtown’s architectural heritage, to avoid unnecessary damage to this valuable resource, and to ensure that new buildings maintain and improve this historic character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Economic Development • Historic Preservation

Policy 2: Parks and Recreational Facilities

Principle:

- Develop well-connected neighborhood parks;
- Avoid supersized recreation facilities;
- Develop joint use agreements with school districts;
- Open space requirements for subdivisions.

Challenge:

- Centralized recreational facilities provide the amenities residents expect, but are often only accessible by car.

Model cities/states:

- Green2015 Philadelphia: add 500 acres of parks in 4 years on vacant city owned land.
- Tucson AZ: Joint use agreements.

Resources

<http://philaplanning.org> | <http://nplanonline.org> | <http://kaboom.org>



- *68,000 SF Recreation Center*
- *410 parking spaces*
- *A 6,150 SF competitive natatorium, natatorium spectator seating, a whirlpool/spa*
- *Sauna, fitness and weight training rooms, locker rooms, a child care area and a multipurpose room*
- *Cost \$15,000,000.*



Neighborhood parks circa 2004

Policy 3: School Location

Principles:

- Elementary, Middle, and High schools should be planned to accommodate walking and bicycling trips.

Challenges:

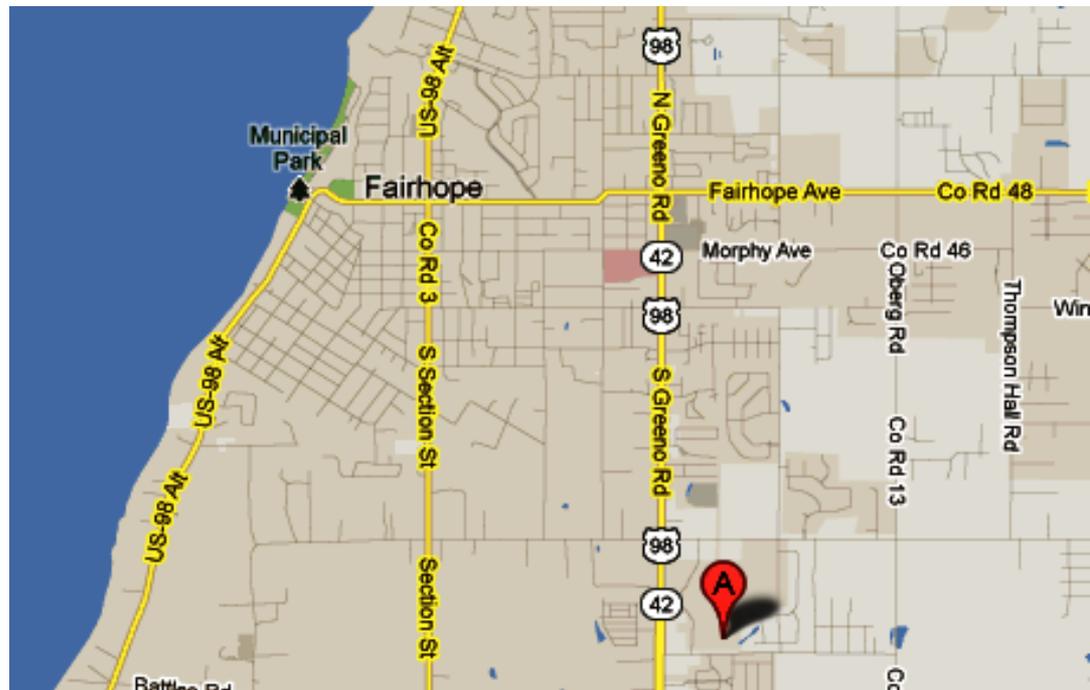
- Schools are not located in walkable areas.
- Schools are supersized and located on the urban fringe;
- Transportation costs are not calculated;
- School board members are not planners.

Model Cities/States:

- Oregon
- Maine

Resources

- EPA School Siting Guidelines
- Safe Routes to School Nat'l Partnership





Schools are community assets.

- Elementary school: \$14.8M for 600 students
- Middle school: \$30M for 900+ students
- High school: \$54.9M for 1600 students

Policy 4: Complete Streets

Principle:

➤ When roads are designed, “improved,” or rebuilt, the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and adjacent land uses should be considered.

Challenges:

- Wide roads become barriers to physical activity;
- Auto intensive land uses lead to ever increasing traffic and wider roadways that are dangerous for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

Model Cities/States

- Charlotte NC
- Long Beach CA
- Fairhope AL





Charlotte NC Road Diet

Design innovations

City of Charlotte NC

Urban Street Design Guidelines

Los Angeles County

Model Design Manual for Living Streets

<http://modelstreetdesignmanual.com/>

NACTO

Urban Bikeway Design Guide

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>

FHWA Office of Safety:

Proven Safety Countermeasures

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>



Belmont Shores in Long Beach CA

Policy 5: Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Principles:

➤ Transportation engineers, planners, public health practitioners, educators, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, and others, all working together, will produce the best outcomes.

Challenge:

➤ We're stuck in our silos; collaborative opportunities are few.

Model Cities/MPOs

➤ Nashville TN

Resources

American Public Health Association
Project for Public Spaces
Active Living Resource Center/NCBW
Livability Solutions



Step by Step: Who Does What?

STEPS



COMMUNITY VISIONING
Objective: Lay the foundation for the general plan update by establishing a vision statement and goals that reflect community health priorities

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**
- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Educate community members and decision-makers on the links between planning decisions and health
 - Help residents identify health issues that can be addressed in a general plan
 - Organize residents to participate in community meetings, providing training on message development and public speaking
 - Organize workshops and presentations for key decision-makers on land use policy and health
 - Package and disseminate data documenting/supporting local health concerns

- PLANNERS**
 - Learn about the relationship between the built environment and health
 - Host and attend community meetings and workshops on creating healthy land use policies
 - Conduct meaningful, multipronged outreach to keep residents informed about community meetings and other opportunities to provide input

- EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS**
 - Speak at workshops and meetings to engage and educate residents, planners, elected officials, and other stakeholders about the links between health and neighborhood design
 - Provide compelling visual information that connects quality of life, healthy communities, and planning decisions

- FUNDERS**
 - Support public events, advertising, inclusion of diverse voices, and other community engagement efforts

"We had a community visioning process the first year where people told us what they wanted in the update. It was exciting to see that there were health elements in the comments that we got. That worked out well, health tied in well, and it was what the community wanted, so it seemed a natural fit" – Planner

FORMATION OF REVIEW COMMITTEE

Objective: Ensure a diverse team of community representatives to provide input and oversight

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**
 - Identify and recruit advocates (e.g., neighborhood, health, housing, schools, etc.) with the experience, sophistication and commitment to serve for an extended period of time

- PLANNERS**
 - Tap health stakeholders with both technical and community expertise

- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Meet with **PLANNERS** to shape the function and composition of the review committee
 - Serve on the review committee to ensure direct, long-term representation of health concerns
 - Bring in **EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS** and other speakers for study sessions to establish common knowledge base on key issues

- EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS**

"A successful review committee starts with a good base in terms of folks who get the big picture, and a lot of neighborhood representatives who've been through the bruising battles and understand smart growth." – City Council Member

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Objective: Document baseline health and built environment data in a way that informs policy development and can be measured and evaluated over time

- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Provide/interpret relevant health data (e.g., maps correlating health outcomes with neighborhood conditions)
 - Coordinate data-driven briefings for councils or commissions, reporting on the city/county's current health status and relevant policy options (and/or educate electeds and staff one-on-one)

- FUNDERS**
 - Fund **HEALTH DEPT STAFF, EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS, COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES** invest in overall community health assessments, walkability and bikeability audits, community food assessments, and/or other analyses to inform policy priorities

- EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS**

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**

"We needed the epidemiology. It was easy to go to meetings and say, 'If you live in cities where you can walk around, you can lose weight.' But when you can show numbers, it's a better story." – Advocate

POLICY DRAFTING

Objective: Provide, refine, and secure comprehensive and implementation-oriented health policy language

- EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS**
 - Provide model/best practice policy ideas to support health goals
 - Work with **PLANNERS, HEALTH DEPT STAFF, and COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES** to tailor model language to suit local context

- PLANNERS**
 - Release updated drafts using tracked changes so that stakeholders can monitor revisions
 - Write policies that explicitly link to implementation steps (e.g., "adopt zoning definitions that protect and promote farmers' markets to increase access to healthy food" and/or provide benchmarks and standards ("75 percent of households will live within 1/2 mile of a farmers' market, produce market, grocery store, or other healthy food retail option")
 - Write policies that prioritize underserved communities and those with disproportionately worse health outcomes

- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**

"The general plan document is shaped heavily by staff... Having good relationships with planning staff was absolutely helpful." – Advocate

DRAFT REVIEW

Objective: Ensure that plan language reflects community vision and priority health issues

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**
- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Ask planners what type of comments would be most helpful (some may appreciate policy language; others may prefer comments that identify issues but let planners figure out how to draft the actual policy)
 - Write comment letters that include both strengths and opportunities for improvement – acknowledge good language, and identify where community health needs are reflected and addressed.
 - Meet with planners and share comments with them before making comments public

- FUNDERS**
 - Support health-based policy analysis (e.g., health impact assessment) that can strengthen draft plan review and commenting

"You can't just say 'biking is good'; you have to explain why, the health and financial benefits. So in my letters I make those points." – Advocate

PLAN ADOPTION

Objective: Ensure the city council adopts plan language that meets healthy community goal

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**
- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Consider possible opponents in advance, and identify strategies for addressing their concerns
 - If threats emerge, meet with elected officials and other powerbrokers (business leaders, city manager's office, city associations, labor) and educate them about the importance of supporting strong health policies
 - Frame health goals in a way that supports adversarial powerbrokers' perspective and culture; look for appealing "co-benefits"

"We can work for years advocating on the general plan, but when it goes to vote, everything can be reversed – that's when people who have relationships with the council will come out and get their ear." – Advocate



IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: Translate health vision into on-the-ground change

- PLANNERS**
 - Work with **EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS** to ensure that community planning documents (e.g., zoning codes, roadway/transportation plans) are updated to conform to new general plan goals and policies

- EXPERTS/CONSULTANTS**

- COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCATES**
- HEALTH DEPT STAFF**
 - Partner with **FUNDERS** to initiate and sustain programs and implementing policies (e.g., zoning codes, design guidelines, area/specific plans) in support of goals outlined in the general plan
 - Continue to educate elected officials and other decision-makers about the goals of the plan and the steps needed to achieve its vision

- FUNDERS**

"Planning is only 40 percent of the battle. Implementation is the majority of the effort required." – Planner

Just What Is a "General Plan"?

Learn more about the policy blueprint for local land use and development in PHLP's toolkit, *General Plans and Zoning: A Toolkit on Land Use and Health, and How to Create and Implement Healthy General Plans*, available at www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/participating-planning-process.

Where to start?

1. Problem Identification/Assessment

- Road safety
- Personal safety
- Chronic disease data
- Talk to people! Including the kids!!!



Where to start?



2. Set an initial goal

- Bicycle Friendly Comm.
- Walk Friendly Comm.
- Walkscore
- Level-of-service

6.3 Neighborhood Parks and Recreation

Expand access to neighborhood parks and recreation

- 1 Ensure that all Philadelphians live within a 10-minute walk of a neighborhood park or a recreation center.
- 2 Connect neighborhood parks and trails to neighborhood centers and major public facilities.
- 3 Ensure proper maintenance and vibrancy of park and recreation facilities.

Where to start?

3. Have a meeting
4. Get started!



Mark Plotz

mark@bikewalk.org

