

Integrating Public Health into Land Use Planning/Community Design
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The impact of the built environment on public health has come into the spotlight more and more over the past few years as issues such as obesity, asthma, and other chronic illnesses linked to urban sprawl, have become more pervasive. The issue of childhood obesity and physical inactivity is a grave concern that both local planning and public health practitioners have recognized. Research suggests that there are close to 300,000 obesity related deaths/ year and over \$100 billion year spent on health care as a result of overweight/obesity problems. In fact, less than 1/3 of children walk to school and more than 15% of children under 18 classified as obese. Recognizing the need for proactive collaboration on this issue, the National Association for County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the American Planning Association (APA) with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have partnered to begin to educate communities on the links between public health outcomes and community design, land use planning, and transportation decisions. NACCHO encourages local public health professionals to become more involved in developing behavioral and environmental solutions to this epidemic by working with planning professionals and elected officials to create healthier living environments and encourage healthy lifestyles. NACCHO's goal is to enhance capacity of LPHAs to (a) be more involved in planning/community design decision-making processes; and (b) communicate more effectively with planners, elected officials, and transportation engineers about the health issues related to land use/community design. The key here is to expand public practice to include land use planning. This initiative reaches this goal through a variety of activities including:

Research – focus group, joint surveys (which suggest expanding PH roles in community design and recommended action steps for public health and planners). The data presented, is based on recommendations provided from a series focus groups and surveys conducted by NACCHO.

- *Participate in Master Planning and Code revisions*
- *Support mixed-use zoning codes*
- *Require sidewalks on both sides of the street with links to destinations*
- *Support compact housing lots with open space*
- *Advocate for local public health policy making*

Notes: e.g., Safe Routes to Schools, NACCHO Land Use/community design resolution, Colorado,

- *Educate planners, traffic engineers and others with health message*
- Notes: land use planners and public health officials have much to teach each other; customizable PowerPoint presentations on NACCHO website*

- *Be a facilitator: convene planners, traffic engineers, developers, advocacy groups, and elected officials.*
- *Mobilize Community & call attention to issue of Health Inequalities particularly as low income and minority children are disproportionately affected.*

NACCHO Tools and Resources

- Publications – NACCHO *Exchange* and *Dispatch*, E-newsletter
- Resource toolbox – fact sheets, Healthy People 2010
- Conference presentations -
- Educational workshops - cross-training