CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

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Civic engagement

1. Formal political participation – voting, discussing politics with family and friends, posting on social media
2. Social activism or social movement participation – petitions, protests
3. Civic voluntarism – charitable contributions, volunteer service

Civic engagement or participation is predicted by individual/background attributes, interpersonal influences, and contextual factors such as media, place of residence, and employment.

Civic Infrastructure

Equity is the ultimate determinant of wellbeing – usually based on place and race

89.9 yrs

76.6 yrs

LiveHealthyFairfax.org
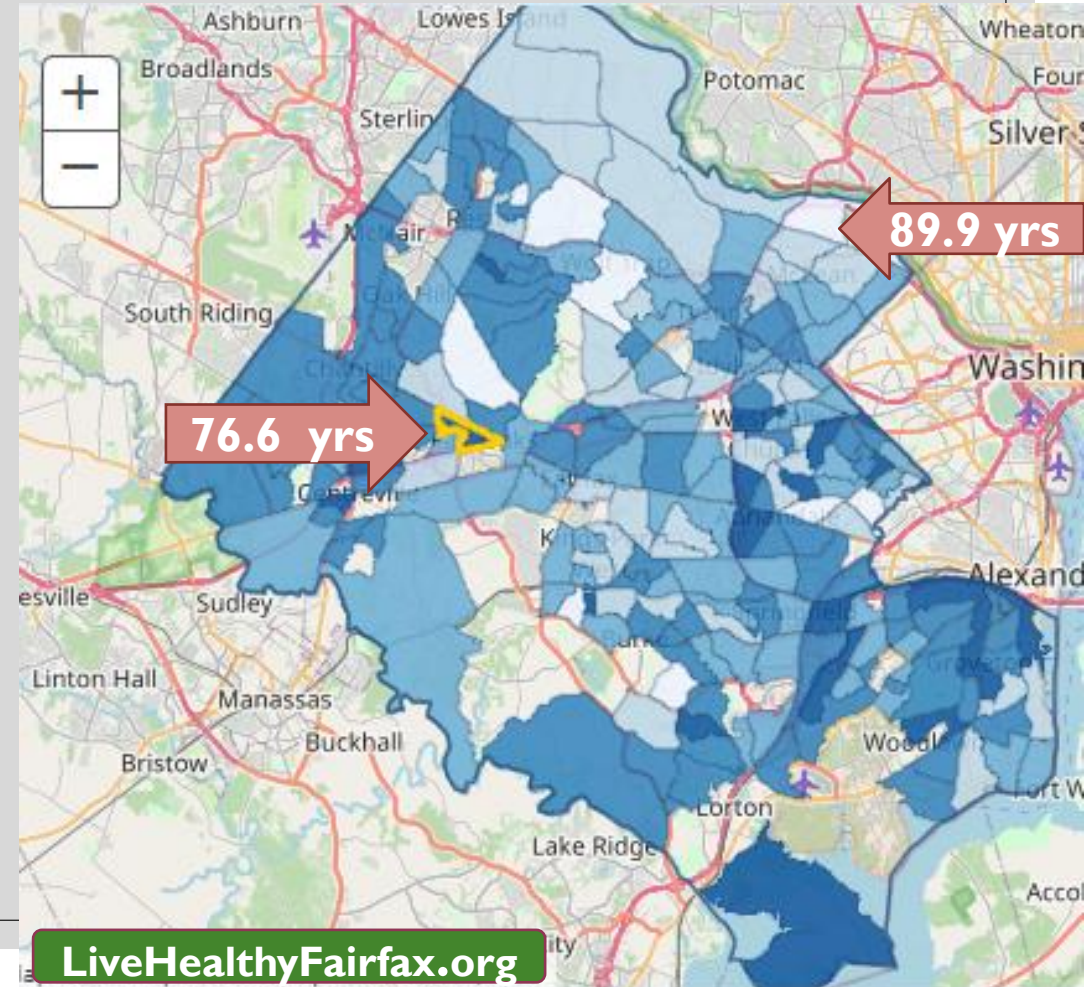
Wellbeing and place

Zip code > Genetic code

Health and wellbeing are shaped over a lifetime of living in homes, using transportation, accessing services, and participating in the economy

We live out our lives, and our health, in places.

Why is wellbeing an important value for economic development?

- Our health and wellbeing are is part of our shared humanity
- Critical for learning, working, and caring for others
- Poor health and mental wellbeing make it difficult to be a productive member of society
- Healthy activities promote social connection and help build community
- We live out our lives, and our health, in *places*

Potential impacts of our built environment on human wellbeing

Factor	Direct impacts	Indirect or longer-term impacts
Transportation	Respiratory illness; Crashes and injuries; Cardiovascular health	Mental health; Community cohesion; Access to education, jobs, services (grocery, healthcare)
Housing	Ability to afford other basic needs (food, childcare); Injuries; Respiratory illness; Maternal and child health; Mental health	Family stability; Educational attainment; Job opportunity; Access to parks and transportation options; Life expectancy
Community Design	Community and social cohesion; Mental health; Public safety	Access to education, jobs, services (grocery, healthcare); Educational attainment; Life expectancy
Environment	Respiratory illness; Drinking water; Cardiovascular health; Mental health	Community cohesion; Learning

Can you think of places in Fairfax that promote civic engagement or social connection?

Put it in the chat!
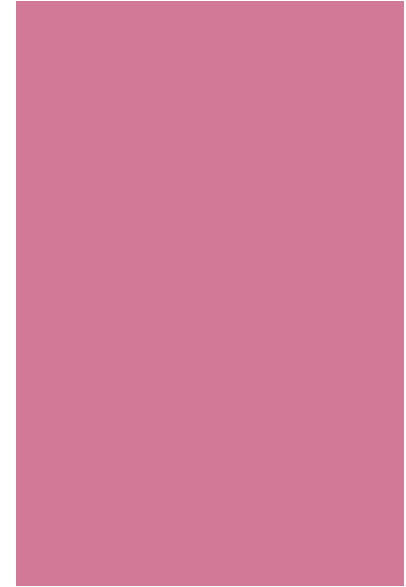
Considerations for an environment that promotes connection and civic engagement

Big roads v. smaller streets

Parks v. parking lots

Schools and playgrounds

Benches, signage, lighting

Public art v. empty spaces

Businesses large and small

Public space v. privately owned space

Challenges to building out our civic infrastructure

Legal or policy restrictions at the state and local level

Government structure – this matters!

Buy-in – even from obvious allies

How to measure success

Opportunities to empower communities

<u>Community Development Plan</u> – hyper local plans that focus on economic prosperity and community wellbeing

Clean and safe environments

Support small businesses

Consider the public realm along with residential needs

1. Action-oriented
2. Resident-driven
3. Focus on equity

<u>Community Benefit Agreements</u> – paired with specific development projects to support impacted residents and businesses

Build partnerships between residents, small businesses, and the development community

Address specific impacts of construction or displacement

1. Action-oriented
2. Focus on equity
3. Highly measurable

Because ultimately…

Civic infrastructure and civic engagement are about –

○ Space: The right to move freely and congregate

○ Speech: The right to free speech

○ Health: The right to be healthy and well

○ Power: The right to vote

The return on investment is worth it.

THANK YOU!

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