

Community Health in the Policy Plan

February 15, 2024



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



Agenda



1. Why health?
2. How healthy is our community?
3. Impacts of the built environment
4. Peer community examples
5. New directions: place and health
6. Discussion



Why health?

Why is health an important value for planning?

- Health is part of our humanity - a state of being we all share
- Critical for learning, working, and caring for others
- Poor health makes it difficult to be a productive member of society - i.e., it affects the economy
- Healthy activities promote social connection and help build community

We live out our lives - our health -
in *places*



What is health?

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being - not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

(WHO, 1948)

Public Health is what we do together as a society to ensure the conditions in which everyone can be healthy.





Health and place

Zip code > Genetic code

Health is shaped over a lifetime of living in homes, using transportation, accessing services, and making choices based on what resources are nearby.

Health status is one of the most tangible ways to measure equity among different racial and ethnic groups living the same place.





How healthy is our community?

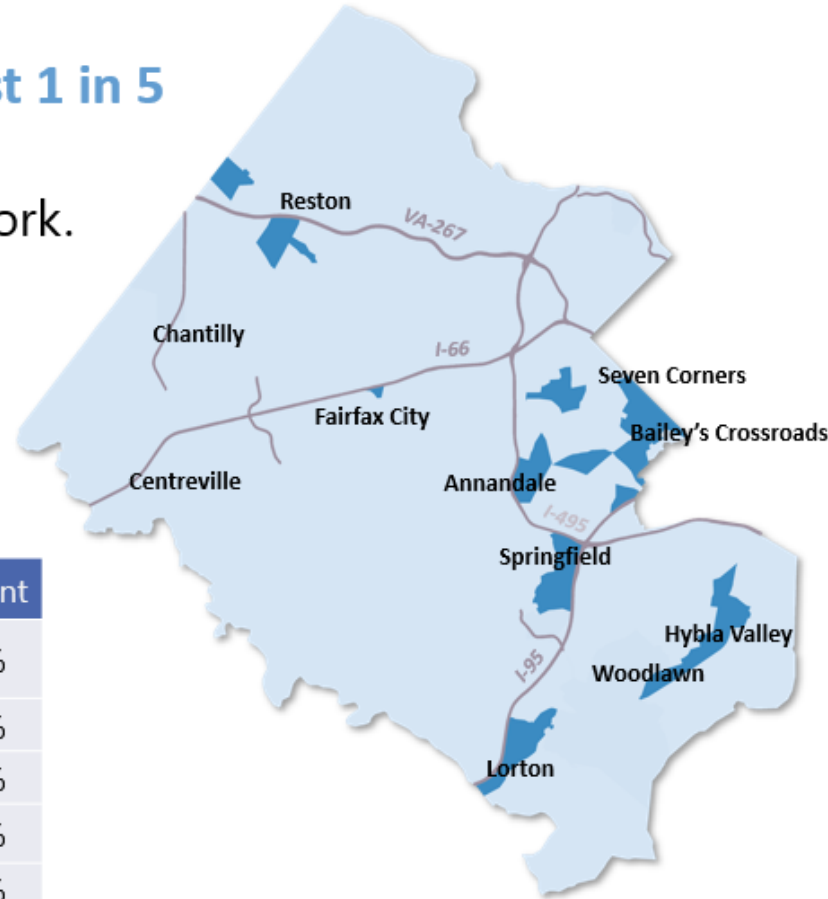
Data on Community Health

Health and Place: Physical activity

In **26** neighborhoods, **at least 1 in 5 (20%)** adults say they get no physical activity outside of work.

The 5 neighborhoods with the highest percent of adults with no physical activity after work:

Neighborhood	Percent
Culmore/Courtland Park – Bailey's Crossroads	34%
Willston Center – Seven Corners	32%
Mount Vernon Woods – Woodlawn	28%
North Buckman - Woodlawn	28%
Hybla Valley	28%



Only **1 in 50 (2%)** workers ride a bike or walk to work.

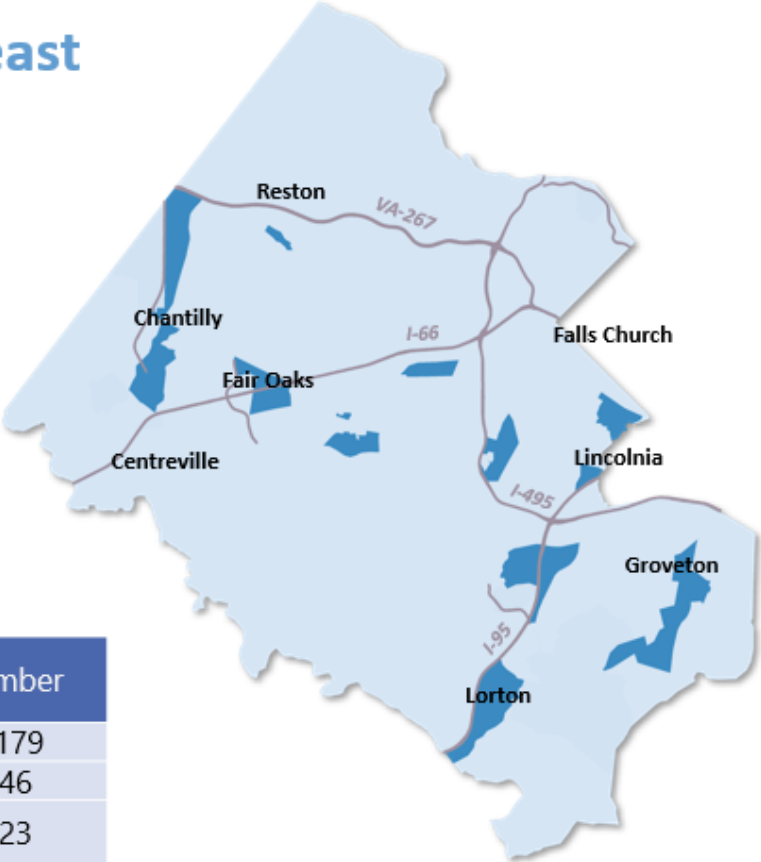
Nearly **half (45%)** of workers travel 30 minutes or more to work.



An average of **172** traffic crashes involve pedestrians each year.

Health and Place: Nutrition and healthy eating

In **26** neighborhoods, **at least 532** households are food insecure.



The 5 neighborhoods with the most food insecure households:

Neighborhood	Number
Beacon/Valley View – Groveton	1,179
Fair Oaks	946
Lincolnia Park – Lincolnia	923
Hunter Woods North – Reston	919
Northeast Lorton	873

Nearly **1 in 4 (24%)** Fairfax County adults are obese.

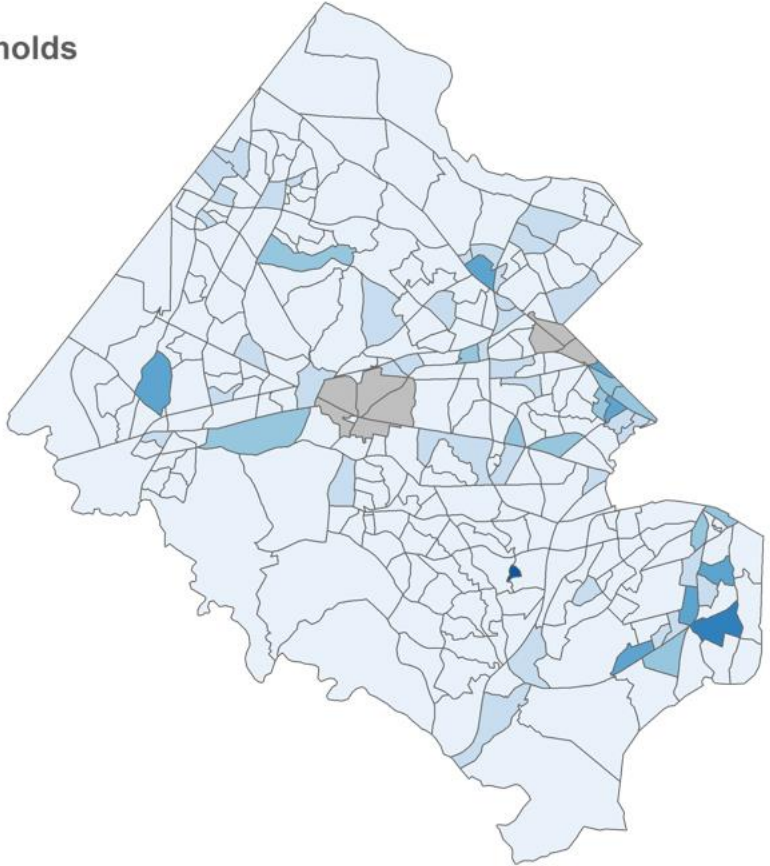
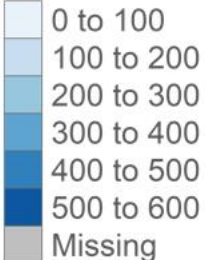


58% of Fairfax County residents are overweight or obese

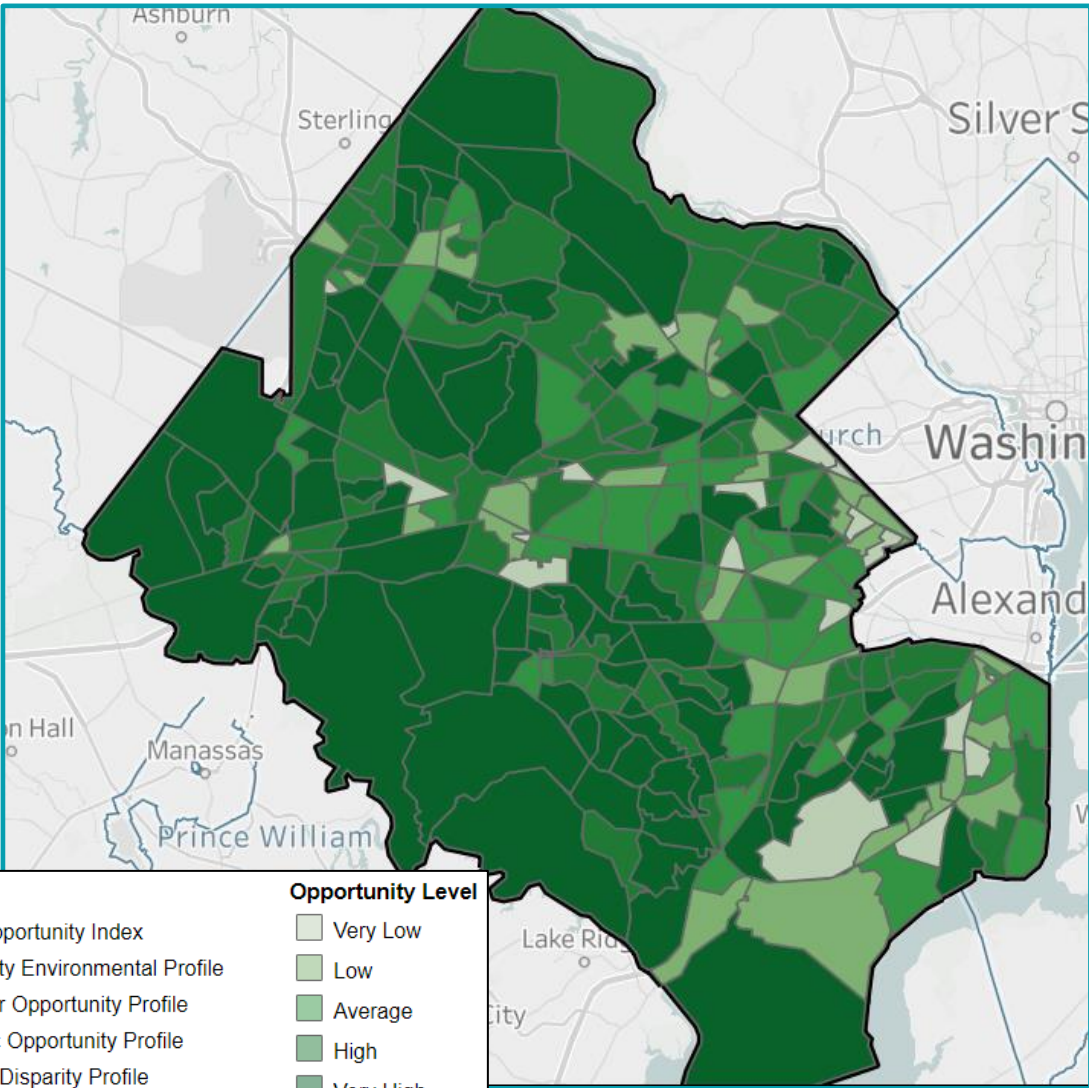
Health and Place: Access to opportunity (*jobs and services*)

Number of Households with No Vehicle by Census Tract (2017-2021)

Number of Households

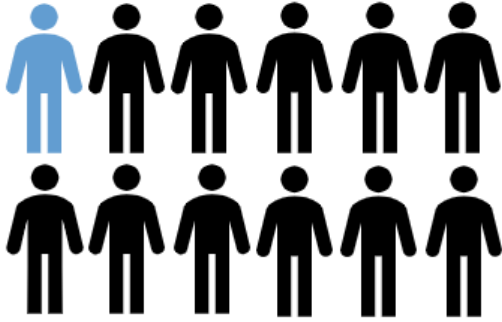


Health Opportunity Index

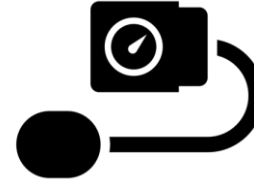


Health and Place: Chronic disease

1 in 12 (8%) adults in Fairfax County have been diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.*



1 in 7 (14%) adults have prediabetic blood sugar levels, putting them at greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes.*

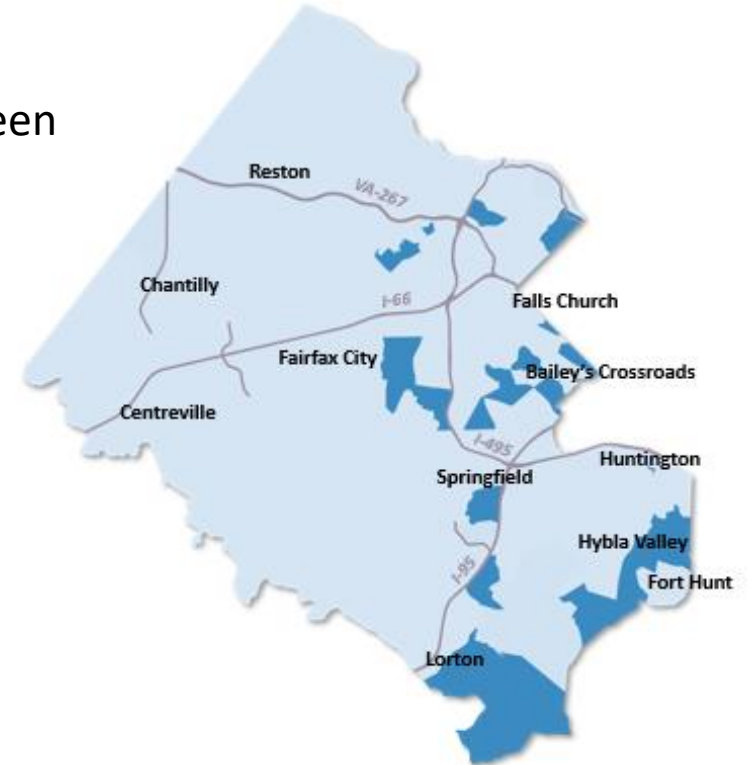


Black/African American residents are hospitalized for high blood pressure at least **9 times** the rate of Hispanic/Latino and White residents.*

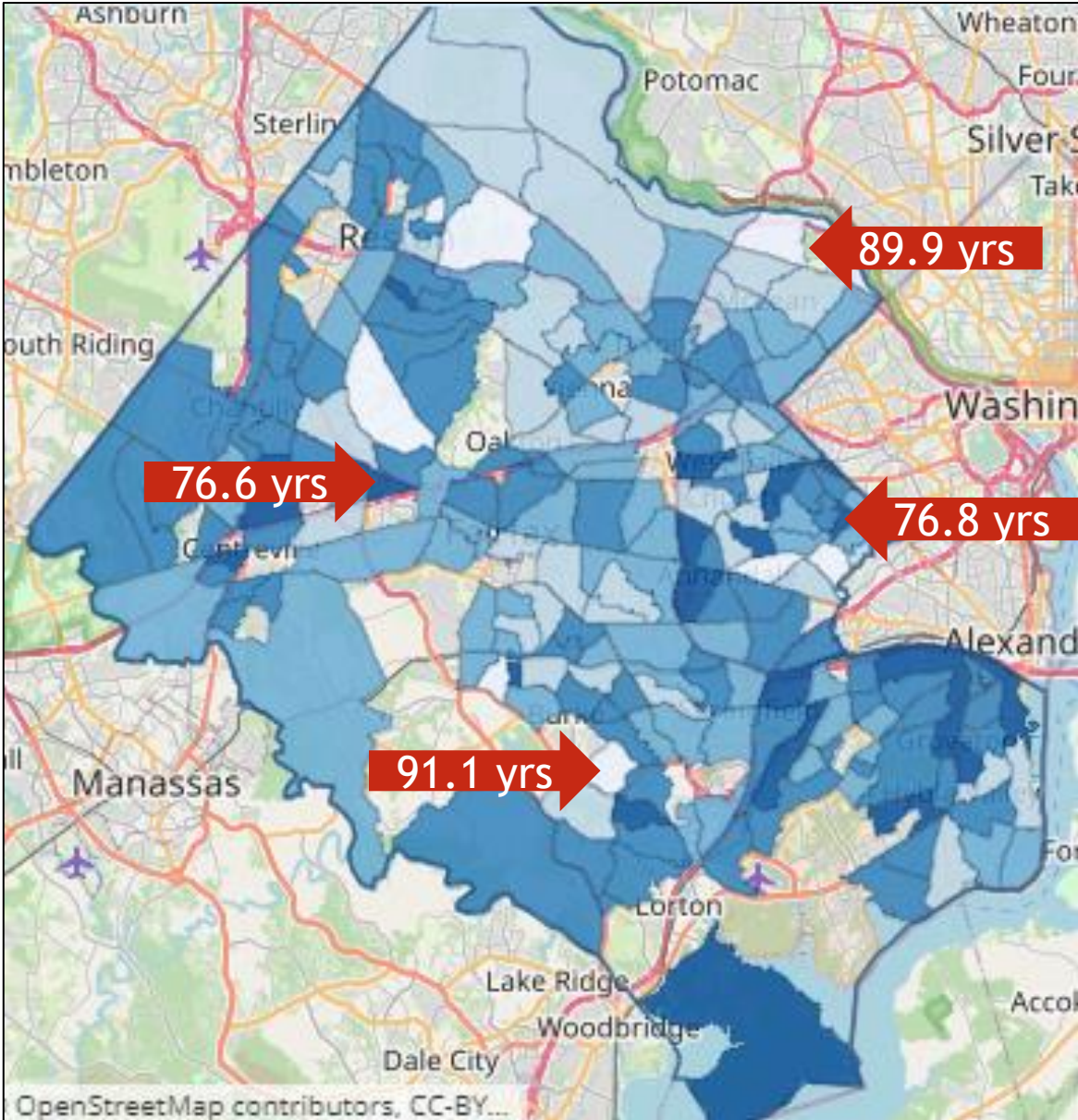
In **26** neighborhoods, at least **1 in 20 (5%)** of adults have been diagnosed with heart disease (county avg. = 4%)

The 5 neighborhoods with the largest percent of people with heart disease:

Neighborhood(s)	Percent
Montebello - Huntington	8%
Fair Vernon - Springfield	8%
Skyline Plaza - Bailey's Crossroads	6%
Gum Springs - Hybla Valley/Fort Hunt	6%
Pohick - Lorton	6%



Health and Place: Life expectancy across Fairfax County



Data Sources

Transportation related data is from the American Community Survey accessed through the Community Health Dashboard.

Pedestrian crash data is from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Overall and neighborhood data on physical activity, food security, and disease rates are from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) PLACES 2023 Data Release for years 2020-2021.

Hospitalization data from Virginia Health Information's by-request data for years 2019-2021.

*The Health Opportunity Index was accessed through the Virginia Department of Health:
<https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/omhhe/hoi/dashboards/health-districts>*


*Life Expectancy data is from the US Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP) accessed through the Live Healthy Fairfax Community Health Dashboard:
<https://www.livehealthyfairfax.org/>*



Impacts of the built environment on health

Potential health impacts of our built environment


TRANSPORTATION

Factor	Direct impacts	Indirect or longer term impacts
 Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respiratory illness• Crashes and injuries• Cardiovascular health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health• Community and social cohesion• Access to education, jobs, services (grocery, healthcare)

Pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity to transportation choices
Considerations for land uses near major roads
Road design

Potential health impacts of our built environment

HOUSING

Factor	Direct impacts	Indirect or longer term impacts
 Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to afford basic needs (food, childcare)• Injuries• Respiratory illness• Maternal and child health• Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family stability• Educational attainment• Job opportunity• Access to parks and transportation options• Life expectancy

Proportion of affordable units for existing and future residents
Housing/jobs balance
Recreation opportunities near residential

Potential health impacts of our built environment


ENVIRONMENT

Factor	Direct impacts	Indirect or longer term impacts
 Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respiratory illness• Water quality• Cardiovascular health• Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community and social cohesion• Learning

Amount of impervious surfaces
Trees and green space
Green building

Potential health impacts of our built environment

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Factor	Direct impacts	Indirect or longer term impacts
 Community Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community and social cohesion• Mental health• Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to education, jobs, services (grocery, healthcare)• Educational attainment• Life expectancy

Urban design guidance
Community Business Centers
Transit Oriented Development
Mixed use development and co-location of services



Peer Community Examples

City of Fairfax Comprehensive Plan – 2022



Policy framework includes 6 chapters: Land Use, Multimodal Transportation, Environment and Sustainability, etc.

Environment & Sustainability:

- Sustainability Initiatives Goal 2: **Support physical activity and healthy lifestyles.**
- Outcome SI2.1: **Access to healthy, regionally-grown foods.**
 - Action SI2.1.1 Evaluate regulations that permit urban agriculture on publicly-owned property and/or space for community gardens in new multifamily and mixed-use developments.
 - Action SI2.1.2 Work with Fairfax County to develop a healthy food access plan.

City of Charlotte Comprehensive Plan – 2021

Policy framework has 10 overarching, cross-sectoral goals

Goal 6 focuses on health:

Healthy, Safe, and Active Communities: All Charlotteans will live and work in safe and resilient neighborhoods that enable healthy and active lifestyles by

- *reducing exposure to harmful environmental contaminants,*
- *expanding and improving the quality of tree canopy cover,*
- *encouraging investment in walking, cycling, and recreation facilities, and*
- *providing access to healthy food options and health care services.*

An Implementation Strategy details suggested actions, agency leads, and support agencies to ensure Plan goals are carried out.

King County, Washington Comprehensive Plan - 2016 (2022)

The Comprehensive Plan contains 6 Guiding Principles including:
Addressing Health, Equity and Social and Environmental Justice to reduce health inequities

The principles in the Comprehensive Plan work together with goals in the Strategic Plan, e.g., *mobility, health and human services, safety and justice, and a healthy environment*

Chapter 4: Housing and Human Services

- *“Countywide Planning Policies provide a framework... for a range of affordable housing choices within neighborhoods that promote health, well-being, diversity and access to opportunities for employment, recreation, social interaction and cohesion, active transportation (walking, biking and public transit) and education.”*

King County, continued

H-204: King County shall strive to apply principles that lead to thriving healthy communities...

King County will support public health investments that help all residents to live... where they have the opportunity to make healthy choices. King County shall support:

Land use and zoning actions that promote public health by increasing opportunities for every resident to be more physically active.

E.g., concentrating growth in the Urban Growth Area; promoting urban centers; allowing mixed-use developments; supporting access to healthy, affordable retail foods; and adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections.

Other plans to reference

[City of Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan - 2021](#)

[City of Richmond Comprehensive Plan - 2020 \(2023\)](#)

[City of Raleigh Comprehensive Plan - 2009 \(2023\)](#)

[Wake County, North Carolina Comprehensive Plan - 2021](#)

[District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan - 2006 \(2021\)](#)



New directions: place and health

A mandate for community health

The Countywide Strategic Plan provides clear direction:

HC1. Integrate considerations of health, well-being and equity into the development, implementation and evaluation of land use, transportation and housing policies and ordinances.

HNL 23. Link the county's public health and equity agenda to a public space agenda by updating the Comprehensive Plan to create healthier environments where access to basic needs, transit, affordable housing and healthy food is available.



We know there is demand from the community to consider health and intentionally plan for it - e.g. Reston update

We can build upon what we have: Many of our existing plans implicitly (if not explicitly) promote health - e.g. multimodal objectives, park plans

Ensure we make our community healthier while offering new flexibility in land use guidance

Vision for Community Health

Fairfax County will be a community where every resident has the opportunity to attain their full health potential, and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of where they live or other socially determined circumstances.



Vision for Community Health

Planning for Community Health can be achieved through objectives in five interrelated categories:



**Healthcare
& Services**



**Food
Systems**



Active Living



**Green Infrastructure
& Healthy Buildings**



**Social
Cohesion**

Integration and next steps

Co-benefits - health-promoting features can benefit equity and economic goals

Avoid unintended consequences - consider health impacts as we craft plan goals and identify priorities:

- What are benefits to health and equity?
- What are potential negative health impacts?
- Who does it benefit?
- Who could be left out?

Collaboration - work across many agencies and stakeholders to ensure *Community Health* plan guidance does, in fact, promote health across Fairfax County.









PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



Community Health in the Policy Plan

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Summary: Potential health impacts of our built environment

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