

BEST PRACTICE AREA 9: COMMUNITY HEALTH

Vision

Joint Planning District residents have a high quality of life rooted in healthy natural, social, and economic environments.

Background

Community health is a key component of a sustainable community. Contrary to conventional thinking, community health involves more than providing biking and walking trails as a means to promote the physical fitness of residents. At its core, community health is really about addressing basic human needs, which includes physical health, but it also includes providing opportunities for participation, leisure, creation, identity, freedom and other basic human needs (refer to the work of the economist, Manfred Max-Neef for additional information). It is important to recognize and understand the strong connections that exist between community health and the natural, social, and economic environments that contribute to a sustainable community.

Goals

- A. Promote the availability and use of locally, humanely, and sustainably produced healthy food. (Refer to Best Practice Area 17: Food and Agriculture Goals for additional information.)
- B. Use a variety of means, including education and regulation, to help ensure that the Joint Planning District has clean indoor and outdoor air and water and other physical conditions necessary to sustain community health.
- C. Work with government agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, and others to ensure all residents have access to quality physical and mental health care and support services.
- D. Create interconnected, walkable, and bikable communities that reduce our use of fossil fuels and that promote healthy, physical activities that can help reduce the obesity rate and promote overall fitness.
- E. Enhance access to and development of natural and cultural amenities and activities as a means to build a strong sense of community for the region and the individual communities within the region.
- F. Work with government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, industries, and others to build a sustainable economy in the region that includes strong employment opportunities with good living wages.





- G. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to help ensure that the Joint Planning District is a safe and attractive community.

Initiatives and Action Steps

The following three initiatives for initial action were identified through public input and reflect local stakeholders' views of which goals would have the most profound effect on moving the Joint Planning District toward sustainability.

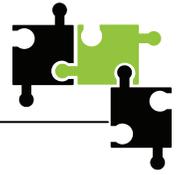
The first initiative refers to the value of getting people to venture outside the confines of their work and/or home and become involved in the community in ways that benefit the community and themselves. For some, this may involve community gardening; for others it may involve working with organizations like Habitat for Humanity; or, it may involve participating in community celebrations. There are countless opportunities for people to get involved in the community in ways that can help meet basic human needs and build a strong sense of community. This will in turn help strengthen community health.

The second initiative recognizes that the area's economy cannot be considered apart from the area's social and natural environments. This initiative focuses on the concept that a strong economy is dependent, in part, on a healthy livable community that meets basic human needs. Those communities that proactively work with businesses and others to ensure that the community has ample ways to help meet basic human needs are in a far better position to have a sustainable economy than those that simply allow time to pass and the status quo to continue.

The third initiative focuses on a more conventional approach to community health, which involves providing biking and walking trails that benefit our physical health as well as our natural and economic environments.

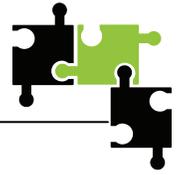
1. **Animate the system:** Provide activities that will get people outside and build a strong sense of community.
 - a. Work with neighborhoods, organizations, and others to support efforts such as community gardens that can meet multiple basic human needs, including providing healthy food, leisure opportunities, and participation in the community.
 - b. Use a variety of means to encourage government employees, businesses, and others to participate in service activities that promote a healthy community. For example, encourage employers to allow employees time off work to participate in community service events.





- c. Continue to program a variety of activities and celebrations that cater to a broad range of residents. For example, continue to program fun runs and other parks and recreation activities. Also work with the Chamber of Commerce and others to promote community celebrations and activities that help build a strong sense of community.
 - d. Provide (or support others in their efforts to provide) community events and celebrations that contribute to a strong sense of community. Ensure that the events are held in a sustainable manner.
 - e. Develop and implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to help ensure that the Joint Planning District is a safe and attractive community in which people are not afraid to participate in outdoor activities.
 - f. Create active, lively, and secure open spaces.
2. **A strong economy does not exist in a vacuum:** Promote economic sustainability through livability and community health.
- a. Work with businesses, industries, and others to develop a shared understanding of the links between economic sustainability and community health.
 - b. Market and support the creation of sustainable businesses in the Joint Planning District, especially those that would have a synergistic relationship with existing sustainable businesses and institutions of higher education.
 - c. Retain and support local businesses and industries. Strive to enhance their capabilities to meet the needs of local and regional customers in a sustainable manner.
 - d. Coordinate with energy providers and others to help businesses conserve energy and resources and reduce operating costs.
 - e. Coordinate with businesses, industries, and others to explore opportunities for the community and region to stand out as a leader in sustainable business and community development.
 - f. Take advantage of the savings that can be achieved through more compact development patterns. If feasible, pass along any savings to developers and the public.
 - g. Recognize the relationship between community health, livability, multi-modal transportation options, and the resulting attractiveness of the region for future investment.





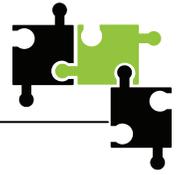
3. **Promote fitness on the road to sustainability:** Create interconnected, walkable, and bikable communities that reduce our use of fossil fuels and that promote healthy, physical activities that can help reduce the obesity rate and promote overall fitness.
 - a. Develop, periodically update, and implement a pedestrian and bicycle trails master plan that provides important bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the community and region.
 - b. Work with the Safe Routes to School Program to facilitate the ability of kids to safely walk or ride their bikes to school.
 - c. Work with others to promote walking and bicycling programs.
 - d. Provide staff opportunities to bicycle or walk to meetings, when feasible.
 - e. Help promote and/or support bike or walk to work programs and celebrations.
 - f. Provide incentives for users that participate in qualified walk or bike to work programs. For example, allow for a reduction in the amount of required parking spaces.
 - g. Where feasible, cluster critical services near residential and employment centers so that more people have the opportunity to walk or bike to those services.
 - h. Adopt and implement standards for streets and trails that ensure safe and universally accessible transportation modes.
 - i. Work with the state and with school districts to rein in “school sprawl”, which involves excessive reliance and busing, excessive acreage requirements, acquisition and development of school sites distant from urban services, and then forcing communities to extend those services.

General Actions

The following general actions have been identified as key steps to allow the Joint Planning District to move toward the goals for this Best Practice Area that were not selected as “initiatives” above.

- I. Where appropriate, consider opportunities to develop organic community gardens that are readily accessible to the public. Identify existing underutilized public and private land, including public parks and along public trail corridors. Also, work with developers to integrate food gardens into new subdivisions, where appropriate. Promote “Plants in the Ground”.
- II. Identify and remove inappropriate zoning obstacles to local food production. For example, consider adopting appropriate ordinances for the keeping of hens and honeybees on residential properties.





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- III. Strive to use locally, sustainably produced food at publicly sponsored events. Encourage others to do the same.
 - IV. In coordination with applicable agencies, continue to review, refine, and enforce environmental regulations.
 - V. Use green cleaning products and environmentally safe landscape maintenance products to maintain public facilities. Encourage others to do the same.
 - VI. Use LEED, B3, Sustainable Site Initiatives, and other tools to help ensure that buildings and sites are energy efficient and healthy.
 - VII. Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions and organizations to conduct a health impact assessment of the region. Develop a plan to address concerns.
 - VIII. Promote accessibility and availability of community health programs to all residents, regardless of income.
 - IX. Promote the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and landscapes that help foster a distinct sense of place.
 - X. Continue to encourage strong property maintenance and enhancement activities, such as promoting neighborhood cleanup days and awarding maintenance and renovation activities.

