

## PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES GUIDELINES

The following nine guidelines are intended to inform land use and transportation planners working at regional, county, and city levels of strategies to improve the health of residents and communities throughout King County. The guidelines are based on actual and leading causes of preventable death and illness in King County. The guidelines apply to all populations of King County; particularly the very young, the very old, those with compromised health, and those living in harmful environments and near environmental hazards. These groups merit special attention because they bear disproportionate rates of disease and disability.

### 1. Physical Activity

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County have access to safe and convenient opportunities for physical activity and exercise.

Rationale: Planning and design that encourages and enables access to walking, bicycling, transit, and other means of exercise in safe and inviting environments provides residents with ways to obtain needed levels of daily physical activity.

#### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- Housing, schools, jobs, parks, and commercial and public services within walkable proximity of neighborhoods;
- Number, size, and accessibility of parks and open space;
- Presence of sidewalks and walking and bicycle paths;
- Transit safely reached by walking or bicycling;
- Presence of affordable community centers and other recreational facilities.

### 2. Nutrition

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County have access to healthy and affordable foods.

Rationale: Planning decisions that consider all aspects of a food system can promote residents eating a healthy diet by making affordable nutritious foods readily available and easily accessible.

#### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- A robust local farm to table chain, including community gardens and other food growing opportunities in urban areas;
- Long-term preservation of farm land;
- Number and location of healthy food retail outlets including farmers' markets and grocery stores;
- Safe and reliable transportation options to healthy food retail outlets.

### **3. Harmful Environmental Exposure**

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County are protected from exposure to harmful environmental agents and infectious diseases.

Rationale: Community design, land use designations, and housing standards can reduce exposure to harmful environmental agents in our air, water, food and soil.

#### **Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:**

- Building and design standards that create safe, healthy, and accessible indoor environments;
- Planning policies and practices to reduce generation of and exposure to air pollutants;
- Water resource management that provides safe water for drinking, recreation, and fisheries;
- Management of standing water to prevent transmission of infectious disease;
- Safe management and disposal of solid and hazardous waste and overall reduction of solid and hazardous waste.

### **4. Transportation-related Injury**

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County use transportation systems designed to prevent pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver injuries.

Rationale: Land use designations, roadways, and availability of and access to safe non-motorized transportation infrastructure can reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

#### **Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:**

- Safe roadways designed to prevent motor vehicle collisions;
- Safe pedestrian paths, sidewalks, and street crossings;
- Well designed and safe bicycle paths and lanes.

### **5. Violence-related Injury**

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County live in safe communities free from violence and fear of violence.

Rationale: Land use designations and community design can create environments that reduce violence by fostering a sense of community and security in which residents are safe accessing services, recreation, schools, and jobs.

#### **Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:**

- Commercial districts and community spaces designed for interaction and community cohesiveness, safety, and convenient access;
- Presence of well lit and maintained parks, streetscapes, and other public spaces;
- Site and building design enables open and unobstructed views of public areas and prevents isolated and hidden spaces.

## 6. Tobacco Use

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County are protected from involuntary exposure to second hand tobacco smoke and children cannot access tobacco products.

Rationale: Land use designations, ordinances, and zoning affect access to tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke.

### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- Policies limiting tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke;
- Planning practices limiting tobacco retail outlets near public open spaces and youth-centered facilities, especially schools.

## 7. Alcohol Use

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County are protected from negative impacts of alcohol.

Rationale: Land use designations, ordinances, and zoning can affect access to alcohol products and alcohol-related violence and injury.

### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- Planning practices managing the location and impact of bars, taverns, and retail outlets which sell alcohol, especially near public spaces and youth-centered facilities.

## 8. Mental Health and Well-being

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County benefit from community design that maximizes opportunities for social connectivity and stress reduction.

Rationale: Community design can reduce individual isolation, promote social interaction and community cohesiveness, and alleviate environmental determinants of stress.

### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- Safe, inviting, and accessible venues and community places that encourage beneficial social interaction and community cohesiveness;
- Parks and green spaces that provide stress relief, rest, and relaxation;
- Noise levels managed and mitigated, especially near residential neighborhoods, schools, and health care facilities.

## 9. Health Services Access

Board of Health Guideline: Residents in all communities in King County have access to health care services.

Rationale: Community design that considers the location of services and provides a range of travel options can provide residents with readily available and easily accessible health care services within their community.

### Key Healthy Community Planning Elements:

- Number and accessibility of health clinics providing routine and preventive medical care and urgent and emergency care services;
- Safe and reliable transportation options to health service sites;
- Location of and response time for emergency response units.