Building Healthy Communities

Residential Checklist

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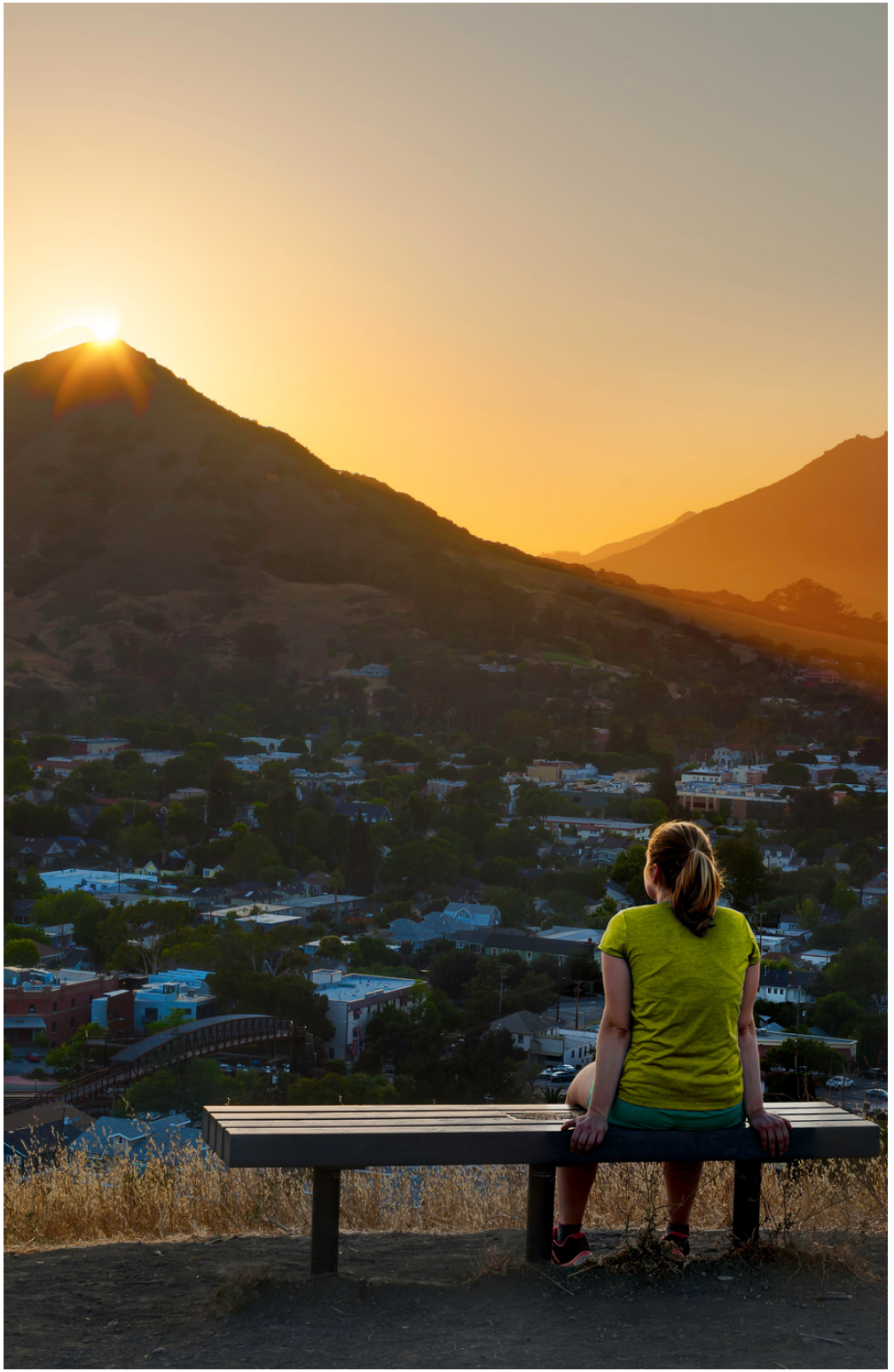
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO



Acknowledgements

Building Healthy Communities Checklist was developed by the Healthy Communities Work Group and produced by the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department.

The Healthy Communities Work Group is a collaboration between public health officials, local planning and transportation officials, community-based organizations, academia, and community members, working to improve health through community design. The Work Group provides research and evidence-based recommendations from a health perspective on proposed land use projects, ordinance and general plan amendments, and special projects.

The mission of the Healthy Communities Work Group is to improve the health and wellness of all current and future San Luis Obispo County residents through collaboration, education, and policy guidance as it relates to the built environment.

Healthy Communities thanks the following organizations and individuals for their valuable feedback and contributions to this checklist:

Riverside University Health System - Public Health, Healthy Development Checklist
First 5 San Luis Obispo County
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Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County
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CAPSLO Child Care Resource Connection and Child Care Planning Council
San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
Smart Share Housing Solutions
CalTrans District 5
County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department:

- Community Wellness Program
- Health Equity Program
- Injury Prevention Program
- Tobacco Control Program

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Introduction

Where we live, work, play, and learn affects our health. The built environment – or the design of our cities and towns – can foster equity and create healthy opportunities for everyone. Consider the following:

- Communities with safe, accessible options for active transportation (like walking and biking) see higher rates of physical activity.
- Neighborhoods with accessible and healthy food options see higher rates of fruit and vegetable intake, and lower rates of chronic disease like obesity and diabetes.
- Access to affordable housing allows residents to spend more on food and health care, which improves health outcomes.
- Housing that is poorly maintained or located close to freeways contributes to asthma and other respiratory disease in residents.

Planning decisions help shape many elements of the built environment – from housing and transportation to schools, public spaces, and healthy food choices. City and regional planners, decision makers, and community members alike can be advocates and partners in ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to live a healthy life.

ON HEALTH EQUITY

Historically, planning decisions have contributed to systems and environments that perpetuate health disparities between groups of people. Today, communities are questioning the disproportionate burdens caused by the structural drivers of inequity, such as discrimination, poverty, lack of economic and educational opportunity, uneven power, and limited participation in governance. Instead of focusing on a single health or planning outcome, efforts can be directed toward a wider starting point based upon the understanding that housing, food, transportation, education, and jobs are fundamental to people's health and well-being.

Looking ahead, health equity must be included in plans from the ground up. Incorporating health equity in planning can transform communities in ways that will ensure healthier lives for all residents. No one should be disadvantaged in achieving their full health potential because of where they live, who they are, or what social position they occupy.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHECKLIST?

This tool was designed to evaluate residential developments from a healthy communities perspective. The criteria included in this checklist are based on principles of healthy communities. Projects should aim to comply with as many criteria as possible to promote health; however, not all criteria will apply to all projects.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS CHECKLIST?

The Healthy Communities Work Group uses this tool for evaluating projects to make evidence-based recommendations to decision makers from a health perspective. Other partners are invited to use this tool:

- **DEVELOPERS** may refer to the criteria and rationales as a guide in early stages of designing and planning a project, before submission for development review.
- **PLANNERS** may use the checklist to review proposals and make recommendations to developers and decision makers. The checklist may also inform staff reports and public meetings.
- **DECISION MAKERS** may refer to the checklist to better understand potential health impacts of a proposed project.
- **COMMUNITY MEMBERS/ADVOCATES** may use this checklist as a tool to guide healthy development in their communities.
- **ADVISORY BODIES** may use this checklist as a tool to guide healthy development in their communities.
- **HEALTH PROFESSIONALS** may use this checklist as a tool to influence policy decisions. Healthy built environments support positive health outcomes by making healthy, active lifestyle choices easier.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Each section of this document features a summary checklist which can be used to assess a project or policy. Following the summary checklist, you will find detailed criteria elaborating on each assessment topic including sources of information*.

Projects/policies are "scored" as:

- "**Meets all criteria":** Projects/policies comply with all listed criteria and are likely to advance community health.
- **"Meets some criteria"** These projects/policies comply with some but not all criteria, and can make improvements to better support community health.
- **"Does not meet criteria":** These projects/policies do not comply with criteria. Changes should be considered.
- **"N/A":** Criterion does not apply.

*best practices are subject to local and state laws.

Summary Checklist for Residential Projects

ACCESS TO FOOD, SCHOOLS, JOBS, AND SERVICES	Meets all criteria	Meets some criteria	Does not meet criteria	N/A
1. Healthy Food: How well does the project provide access to a full-service grocery store that has fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy, and meat within a 3-mile driving distance or neighborhood market within 1-mile walking distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Schools: How well does the project provide for safe access to elementary, middle, and high schools that are within a 1-mile walking or bus route distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Jobs: How well does the project design promote shorter commutes and access to jobs?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Child Care: How well does the project support access to affordable, high-quality child care onsite or within a 3-mile driving distance or 1-mile walking distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Community Garden: How well does the project incorporate space for growing food onsite in community gardens, edible landscaping, or small-scale farming within a 1-mile walking distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Health Services: How well does the project provide residents with access to health services within a 1-mile walking or transit stop distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Farmers' Market: How well does the project designate space for or provide access to a farmers' market within a 1-mile walking distance?	☐	☐	☐	☐

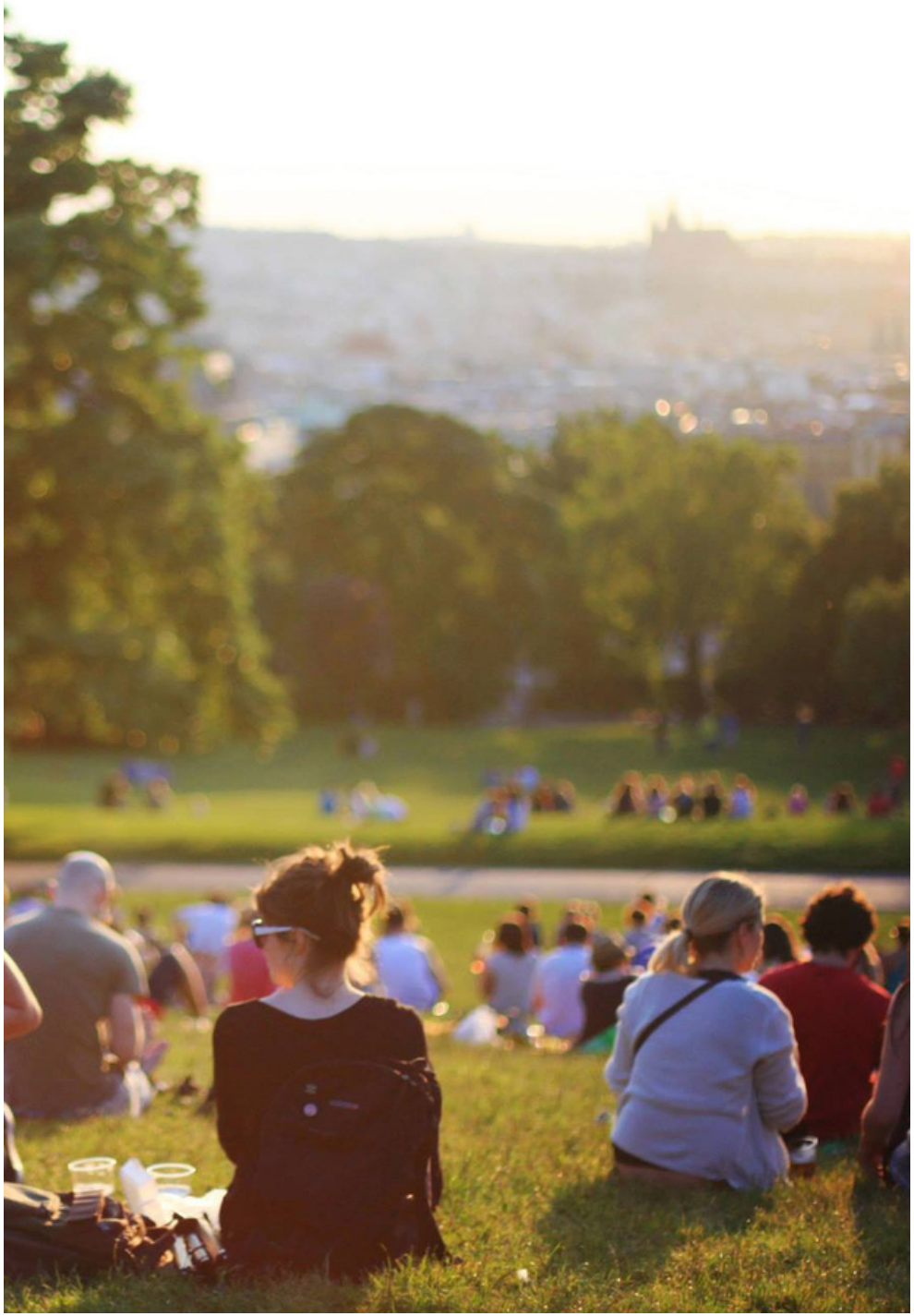
	Meets all criteria	Meets some criteria	Does not meet criteria	N/A
ACTIVE AND NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN				
8. Neighborhood Amenities: How well does the project provide access to a grocery store, amenities, bike racks, etc. within a 1-mile walking distance from residential development?	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Parks and Open Space: How well does the project provide access to a park with aerobic equipment, safe places for kids of all ages to play, pet areas, open space, and/or trails within a ½ mile walking distance from residential development?	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Pedestrian Environment: How well does the project contribute to a safe, complete network of sidewalks, benches, and provide a comfortable pedestrian environment for residents of all ages and abilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Physical Activity: How well does the project incorporate design features to promote physical activity, such as recreation facilities, open space, parks, bike paths, and multi-use trails?	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Accommodations: How well does the project incorporate accommodations for people with mobility limitations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Lot Size: Does the project have lot sizes less than 6,000 square ft. (small-lot single- family housing product)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
HOUSING TYPE AND AFFORDABILITY				
14. Affordable Housing: How well does the project provide for affordable housing units?	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Meets all criteria	Meets some criteria	Does not meet criteria	N/A
15. Rental Housing: How well does the project provide adequate rental housing for a wide range of income brackets?	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Mixed Housing: How well does the project contribute to a mix of housing options, such as single-family attached or condo or multi-family that allows for all potential household sizes, incomes, and types to become neighbors and share available amenities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Secondary Housing: How well does the project provide for secondary housing units or accessory dwelling units?	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Mixed-Use: How well does the project integrate mixed-use development?	☐	☐	☐	☐
CONNECTIVITY				
19. Walkability: How well does the project enhance walkability by providing sidewalks and a highly connected street network?	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Transit: How well does the project provide all residents with safe access to a transit stop?	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Bicycle Connectivity: How well does the project provide continuous bicycle connectivity through a safe, well-marked, and complete bicycle network?	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Network: How well does the project provide for ADA compliant sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, bicycle paths, and multi-use trails to connect safely and comfortably to surrounding neighborhoods?	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Meets all criteria	Meets some criteria	Does not meet criteria	N/A
PUBLIC SAFETY				
23. Injury Prevention: How well does the project foster injury prevention through the use of traffic calming features, such as speed bumps and bulb outs, safe pedestrian crossings, and moderate roadway speeds?	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Reducing Level of Traffic Stress: How well does this project enhance the surrounding multi-modal network to decrease the level of traffic stress for bicycles and pedestrians?	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Lighting: How well does the project provide adequate neighborhood lighting to increase safety and prevent crime?	☐	☐	☐	☐
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH				
26. Near Road Pollution: How well does the project incorporate efforts to protect residents from the harmful effects of high-volume roads and exhaust fumes?	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. Noise Pollution: How well does the project mitigate noise pollution for all residents?	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. Smoking: How well does the project incorporate efforts to reduce smoking of all substances in multi-family developments and open spaces?	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Indoor Air Quality: How well does the project incorporate the usage of materials and products that support healthy indoor quality?	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Neighborhood Air Quality: How well does the project meet criteria from the Air Pollution Control District's Clean Air Plan?	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Meets all criteria	Meets some criteria	Does not meet criteria	N/A
COMMUNITY COHESION AND POLICY CONSISTENCY				
31. Other Environmental Pollutants: How well does the project mitigate any environmental pollution burdens that might disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities, such as contaminated drinking water, lead in housing, pesticides, toxic releases, cleanups, groundwater contamination, hazardous waste, impaired waters, and solid waste facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. Passive Spaces: How well does the project provide spaces that facilitate social engagement?	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. Recreational Spaces: How well does the project incorporate facilities and access to a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents?	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. Community Spaces: How well does the project incorporate a multi-purpose community space that is accessible to the public?	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. General Plan: Is the development project consistent with health-related policies in the jurisdiction's general plan?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Residential Checklist: Detailed Criteria



Access to Food, School, Jobs, and Services

1. HEALTHY FOOD

How well does the project provide access to a full-service grocery store that sells fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy, and meat within a 3-mile driving distance or neighborhood market within a 1-mile walking distance?

Why is this important?

Proximity to a grocery store is associated with increased fruit and vegetable intake and healthy weight status.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Access to a grocery store is within reasonable driving and walking distance.
- Distance guidelines include: Within 3 driving miles and 1 walking mile of project.

Literature:

Fiechtner, L., Kleinman, K., Melly, S. J., Sharifi, M., Marshall, R., Block, J., Cheng, E. R., & Taveras, E. M. (2016). Effects of proximity to supermarkets on a randomized trial studying interventions for Obesity. American Journal of Public Health, 106(3), 557–562. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302986

2. SCHOOLS

How well does the project provide safe access to elementary, middle, and high schools that are within a 1-mile walking or bus route distance?

Why is this important?

Proximity to schools or a bus route within one mile is associated with increased attendance in schools. Lack of transportation can be a barrier to getting to school on time or at all, especially for students in disadvantaged communities. These features also enhance safety of students in commuting to school and promote physical activity.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Is within 1-mile walking radius to elementary, middle, or high school.
- Is within 1-mile walking radius to a bus stop.

Literature:

McDonald, N., Steiner, R., Lee, C., Smith, T.R., Zhu, X., & Yang, Y. (2014). Impact of the safe routes to school program on walking and bicycling. Journal of the American Planning Association, 80(2), p 153-167. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2014.956654

3. JOBS

How well does the project design promote shorter commutes and access to jobs?

Why is this important?
A jobs/housing balanced community is where residents can both live and work. With jobs and housing in close proximity, vehicle trips and commute times reduce and active transportation and transit use increase. These balanced communities also provide a broad mix of housing options to accommodate households with a range of incomes.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Layout includes higher density housing near job-centered areas.
- The development includes a mix of affordable housing options that accommodate households with a range of incomes.
- The development has an accessible transportation route to job-centered areas.

Literature:

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. (2019). Regional Transportation Plan. https://slocog.org/2019RTP

Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (2014). Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the United States. Quarterly Journal of Economics,129(4), 1553–1623. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju022

Anderson, M. (2016). Who relies on public transit in the U.S. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/

Barkley, B., & Gomes-Pereira, A. (2015). A long ride to work: Job access and public transportation in Northeast Ohio. Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

4. CHILD CARE

How well does the project support access to affordable, high-quality childcare?

Why is this important?

Access to quality childcare directly contributes to the economic vitality of a community, including a more productive workforce and increased tax revenues while also playing a significant role in enhancing a child's early development.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Offers multi-use spaces that could be used as a childcare center, such as libraries, parks community activity areas, etc.; or
- Access to outdoor spaces that are safe for children of all ages including fenced spaces within residential space or multi-use space; and
- Access to a licensed family child care home within reasonable walking distance.
- Project plan was informed by child care facilities development expert.
- Project contributes to ensuring adequate access to child care centers or licensed family child care homes to meet projected demands of new residents.

Literature:

Hodgson, K. (2011). Childcare and sustainable community development. American Planning Association. https://www.planning.org

Low Income Investment Fund Report. (2021). Public sector collaborative child care study.

BW Research Partnership. (2021). Economic impact of child care in San Luis Obispo County.

https://www.cuesta.edu/about/documents/inst_research/SLO_Childcare_Economic_Impact_Report.pdf

5. COMMUNITY GARDEN

How well does the project incorporate space for growing food onsite in community gardens, edible landscaping, or small-scale farming within a 1-mile walking distance?

Why is this important?

Participation in community gardens promotes higher fruit and vegetable intake, as well as better access to nutritious foods of high quality and fosters a sense of community.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Community gardens in neighborhood parks and residential development as part of the project design; or
- Joint-use agreements with local school districts or other entities (if necessary to ensure access to a school garden); or
- Access to a community garden within 1-mile walking distance.

Literature:

Lovell, S. (2010). Multifunctional urban agriculture for sustainable land use planning in the United States. Sustainability 2(8), 2499-2522. https://doi.org/10.3390/su2082499

6. HEALTH SERVICES

How well does the project provide residents with access to health services within a 1-mile walking or bus transit distance?

Why is this important?

Lack of access to public transit creates barriers for people in identifying reliable transportation methods to receive healthcare. Clinical-community partnerships may address these barriers and serve as a more cost-effective method by promoting preventive care.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Access to a clinic or health facility within 1-mile; or
- Include multi-use spaces that have development potential as a health center or may provide health care services within the project.

Literature:

Houston, D., Basolo, V., & Yang, D. (2013). Walkability, transit access, and traffic exposure for low-income residents with subsidized housing. American journal of public health, 103(4), 673–678. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJP

7. FARMERS' MARKET

How well does the project designate space or provide access to a farmers' market within a 1-mile walking distance?

Why is this important?

Access to a farmers' market within walking distance is linked to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, and decreased BMI (Body Mass Index). In San Luis Obispo County, the Market Match Program provides increased access for low-income shoppers via dollar per dollar matching for EBT (Food Stamp) money spent at participating farmers' markets.

Criteria:

- Project provides designated space for farmers' market on site; or
- Project is located within 1 mile walking distance of existing farmers' market.

Literature:

Evans, A.E., Jennings, R., Smiley, A.W., Medina, J.L., Sharma, S.V., Rutledge, R., Stigler, M.H., & Hoelscher, D.M. (2012). Introduction of farm stands in low-income communities increases fruit and vegetable among community residents. Health & Place, 18(5), 1137-1143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2012.04.007.

Jilcott, S.B., Wade, S., McGuirt, J.T, Wu, Q., Lazorick, S., & Moore, J.B. (2011). The association between the food environment and weight status among eastern North Carolina youth. Public Health Nutrition, 14(9) 1610-1617. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980011000668

8. NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

How well does the project provide access to neighborhood amenities (convenience store, personal services, laundromat, child day care, cafés, etc.) within a 1-mile walking distance from residential development?

Why is this important?

Neighborhoods that include destinations within 1-mile are linked to increased physical activity of residents. Reasonable proximity links people to key neighborhood destinations safely and efficiently.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- At least two destinations within a 1-mile walking distance of all or most residents, including convenience store, daycare, cafes, bike racks, etc.
- Access to one or more existing or planned transit stops within a 1-mile walk distance.

Literature:

Mouzon, S. (2012). Walk appeal: A new tool to determine walkability. Better Cities and Towns. https://smartcitymephis.com/2012/08/walk-appeal-a-new-tool-to-determine-walkability/

Frumkin, H., Frank, L., & Jackson, R. (2004). Urban sprawl and public health: Designing, planning, and building for healthy communities. Washington, DC: Island Press.

9. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

How well does the project provide access to a park (ideally with aerobic equipment, safe places for kids to play, pet areas, open space, and/or trails) within a ½ mile walking distance from residential development?

Why is this important?

Residential proximity to parks and open space is associated with increased physical activity, community safety and park use. Parks and open spaces can be used for community events. Living within ½ mile is considered reasonable walking distance.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Every resident lives within 1⁄2 mile of a park or public open space.
- The project has a ratio of at least 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Literature:

Cohen, D. A., McKenzie, T. L., Sehgal, A., Williamson, S., Golinelli, D., & Lurie, N. (2007). Contribution of public parks to physical activity. American Journal of Public Health, 97(3), 509–514. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2005.072447

10. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

How well does the project contribute to a safe, complete network of sidewalks, benches, and a comfortable pedestrian environment for residents of all ages?

Why is this important?
When sidewalks are present, rates of walking and neighborhood safety increase. A carefully planned built environment can be highly effective in preventing pedestrian injuries.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Pedestrian signals, in-pavement flashing lights, four-way stops, crosswalks, and/or pedestrian overpasses to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Barrier-free paths that facilitate access for all users; and
- Legible signage that minimizes confusion and communicates important way-finding information to all users (e.g., seniors, deaf, multi-language).

Literature:

Retting, R. A., McCartt, A.T., & Ferguson, S.A. (2003). A review of Literature-based traffic engineering measures designed to reduce pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes. American Journal of Public Health 93(9), 1456-1462. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.9.1456

11. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

How well does the project incorporate design features to promote physical activity, such as recreation facilities, open space, parks, bike paths, and multi-use trails?

Why is this important?

Individuals in neighborhoods that include features relevant to physical activity are more active and maintain better health.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Project provides access to features that promote physical activity with through access.
- Adequate safety regulations are posted to prioritize the safety of patrons.

Literature:

Balcetis, E., Cole, S., & Duncan, D.T. (2020). How walkable neighborhoods promote physical activity: Policy implications for development and renewal. Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 7(2), 173-180. https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732220939135

12. ACCOMMODATIONS

How well does the project incorporate accommodations for individuals with mobility challenges or limitations?

Why is this important?

Older adults and individuals with mobility limitations require accommodations to physical structures in order to have equitable access to the usage of facilities. In order to provide accessible entry to all, these accommodations are crucial to the design.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- ADA compliant structures and walkways, bathrooms, kitchens and laundry facilities.
- Parking accommodations are available.
- Community need for accessible units has been assessed, versus ADA minimum standards (consider needs of persons with disabilities and seniors).

Literature:

Fox, S., Kenny, L., Day, M.R., O'Connell, C., Finnerty, J., & Timmons, S. (2017). Exploring the housing needs of older people in standard and sheltered social housing. Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine, 3, 2333721417702349. https://doi.org/10.1177/2333721417702349

13. LOT SIZE

Does the project have lot sizes less than 6,000 ft. (small-lot single-family housing product)?

Why is this important?
Small lots have the potential to encourage density and housing diversity in jurisdictions and neighborhoods dominated by single-family housing types on large lots. Higher residential density is associated with higher total physical activity and lower BMI. Allowing small lots in areas where the value of land is high can reduce the per-unit land costs and result in making housing more affordable.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Project has lot sizes that are between 1500-6000 square feet.

Literature:

Housing Innovations Program. (2017). Featured tool: Small lot development. Puget Sound Regional Council. https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/hip_small_lots.pdf

Durand, C.P., Andalib, M., Dunton, G.F., Wolch, J. & Pentz, M.A. (2011). A systematic review of built environment factors related to physical activity and obesity risk: Implications for smart growth urban planning. Obesity Reviews, 12(501), e173-e182. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-789X.2010.00826.x

14. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

How well does the project provide for affordable housing units?

Why is this important?

Affordable housing is crucial for accommodating lower-income populations, persons with disabilities, and those on a fixed income in order to diversify equitable access to housing.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Project includes inclusionary housing units;
- Units are affordable by design; or
- A percentage of housing units that are deed restricted for lower income households.

Literature:

SLO County Planning & Building.(n.d.). Affordable housing standards. Retrieved June 2022, from https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building/Housing/Services/Affordable-Housing.aspx

15. RENTAL HOUSING

How well does the project provide adequate rental housing for a wide range of income brackets?

Why is this important?

Rental homes fulfill the needs of many families. For some, especially low- and moderate- income families in high-cost markets, rental homes are the most financially realistic option. To meet the diverse needs of your community, it is important to ensure that there are rental housing options available to a wide range of income groups.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Does the project include rental units along with owner occupied homes?
- Does the rental housing include a variety of sizes and number of bedrooms that can accommodate families with children?

Literature:
Housing Forward Virginia. (n.d.).*Why is affordable housing important? Is rental or homeownership more important?. Retrieved June 2022, from https://housingforwardva.org/toolkits/affordable-housing-101/why-is-affordable-housing-important-is-rental-or-homeownership-more-important/*

16. MIXED HOUSING

How well does the project site layout contribute to a mix of housing options (such as single-family attached, condo, multi-family, or accessory dwelling units - ADUs) that allow for all potential household sizes, incomes, and types to become neighbors and share available amenities?

Why is this important?
Offering housing choices that are affordable to local workers is vital, because a mix of housing that meets diverse community needs and incomes allows people to live in the community in which they work. There are co-benefits to having housing that can accommodate workers locally, including enhanced social cohesiveness and a decrease in commuting.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- An inclusive housing requirement.
- A design of multi-generational housing.
- A wide range of housing for diverse household types, sizes, and incomes.

Literature:
Urban Land Institute. (2003). Mixed income housing, myth and fact. http://inclusionaryhousing.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2010/01/ULI-Mixed-Income-Hsg-2003.pdf

17. SECONDARY HOUSING

How well does the project provide for secondary housing units or accessory dwelling units?

Why is this important?

Secondary housing, also known as Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs, increases the stock of rentals affordable to lower income and moderate income renters. ADUs cost less to construct than comparable types of affordable housing, and help address the shortage of one-bedroom and studio units for the region's growing demographic of one-person households. ADUs provide a diverse, flexible and inclusive housing option within the fabric of existing neighborhoods, and assist with aging in place by providing downsizing options within the neighborhood network. Additionally, they can provide extra income necessary for homeowners struggling to maintain their homes and a place for family members or caregivers to stay.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Project provides an Accessory Dwelling Unit that is either incorporated into the main home, a detached structure, or a converted garage.

Literature:

Planning and Building. (n.d.) Coastal accessory dwelling unit. Retrieved June 2022 from https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building/Permitting/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit/Coastal-Accessory-Dwelling-Unit.aspx

18. MIXED-USE

How well does the project integrate mixed-use development?

Why is this important?

There are many health benefits to living in a mixed-commercial and residential project. For instance, youths, adults, and seniors living in developments and neighborhoods with mixed land use typically participate in more physical activity than those in single-use neighborhoods. Adults are more likely to walk if they live in neighborhoods with high population density and mixed land use.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- The development Includes a variety of residential development types.
- The development includes residential units that are located either above commercial uses or behind them on the same parcel.
- The development includes commercial uses that act in support of residential occupants such as grocery, cafes, personal services, and retail businesses.

Literature:

Frank, L.D., & Andresen, M.A., & Schmid, T.L. (2004). Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 27(2), 87-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2004.04.011

19. WALKABILITY

How well does the project enhance walkability by providing sidewalks and a highly connected street network?

Why is this important?

Higher street connectivity and higher residential density are associated with higher total physical activity and lower BMI. Physical activity reduces anxiety and depression symptoms, improves mood and feelings of well-being, and promotes a healthy sleep pattern. Adults are more likely to walk if they live in neighborhoods with high population density, high connectivity and intersection density, and a mix of land uses.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Through access by pedestrians and bicyclists to streets, commercial uses, or parks and recreational areas.
- Small, walkable blocks.
- At least one through connection (street, alley, trail/path) of all blocks and the project boundary every 800 feet.

Literature:

Stangl, P. (2015). Block size-based measures of street connectivity: A critical assessment and new approach. Urban Design International 20(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1057/udi.2013.36

20. TRANSIT

How well does the project provide all residents with safe access to bus/transit stops?

Why is this important?

Public transit offers an alternative to driving. Public transit improvements can also result in other benefits, including decreased traffic crashes, improved physical fitness and health, increased community livability, increased affordability, and economic development.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Residential and nonresidential use entrances have access to transit stops (including bus, streetcar, or informal transit stop) within a 1⁄2 mile walk distance; and
- Compact forms of development and mixed land use that maximize walkable access to public transit; and
- Transit facilities designed to maximize user comfort while waiting by incorporating shade structures, street furniture and relevant information/signage.

Literature:
American Public Transportation Association. (2009). Defining areas of influence: Recommended practice. http://www.apta.com/resources/standards/Documents/APTA%20SUDS-UD-RP-001-09.pdf

21. BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY

How well does the project provide high levels of bicycle connectivity through a safe, well-marked, and complete bicycle network?

Why is this important?
Communities that support walking and bicycling are associated with more physical activity and lower body weights. Key components to the success of bicycle networks is trail/bikeway quality and accessibility.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- On-street bicycle facilities on most streets; and
- Visible or color-coded markings and/or bicycle lane striping on the road surface; and
- Where appropriate, "bicycle boulevards" with narrower travel lanes, slower target speeds, unique signage, and bicycle prioritization through vehicle barriers or other visual cues.

Literature:
Pucher J., Dill, J., & Handy, S.(2010). Infrastructure, programs, and policies to increase bicycling: An international review. Preventive Medicine, 50, 106-25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2009.07.028

22. NETWORK

How well does the project provide for ADA compliant sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, bicycle paths, and multi-use trails to connect safely and comfortably to surrounding neighborhoods?

Why is this important?

When citizens can safely walk along roadways and ride bikes, a community will have lower rates of traffic accidents and fatalities. Communities will also encounter less congestion in their walkways and roadway.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Access to safe bike lanes.
- Walkable sidewalks or appropriate walking lanes with no impairments in the pavement and within safe proximity from the street.

Literature:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2020). Pedestrian safety. U.S. Department of Transportation. Retrieved June 2022 from https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety

23. INJURY PREVENTION

How well does the project foster injury prevention through the use of traffic calming features, such as speed bumps and bulb-outs, safe pedestrian crossings, and moderate roadway speeds?

Why is this important?

Design features that moderate traffic speeds and enhance driver awareness of bicycle and pedestrian activity help reduce the occurrence and severity of injury from collisions. These features particularly impact persons with limited mobility, such as elderly pedestrians and children. Risk of injury is also greater on busier streets and streets with more than two lanes. However, pedestrian safety can be improved through the provision of continuous wide sidewalks, well-marked crosswalks with signals, traffic controls at intersections, and traffic-calming infrastructure.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Traffic-calming infrastructure, such as speed humps.
- To the extent possible, neighborhood/local streets have a target speed limit of 20 miles per hour and collectors/arterials have a target speed limit of 30 miles per hour.
- All vehicle lanes on local streets within the project area are 10 feet wide; collector streets and roads are no wider than 11 feet; and arterial roads have travel lanes no wider than 12 feet.
- All two-lane streets have clearly marked spaces for on-street parking and/or bicycle lanes.
- Wide parking lanes (up to 10 feet) where physical separation between bicycle lanes and on-street parking is neither desirable nor possible, such as in areas with high parking turnover.

Literature:

Koepsell, T. (2002). Crosswalk markings and the risk of pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions in older pedestrians. The Journal of the American Medical Association 288 (17), 2136-2143. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.288.17.2136

24. REDUCING LEVEL OF TRAFFIC STRESS

How well does the project enhance the surrounding multi-modal network to decrease level of traffic stress for bicycles and pedestrians?

Why is this important?

Level of traffic stress helps identify perceived safety for bicyclists and pedestrians using a data-driven approach. Typically the level of traffic stress analysis is subject to availability of data, such as speed limits, presence and widths of bikeways, intersection control, proximity to vehicle parking, traffic volumes, and truck route designations. Building appropriate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can lower levels of traffic stress and encourage more frequent bicycling and walking trips for all user-types.

Criteria:

Bicycle level of traffic stress review for the following features:

- New bikeways or green striping to existing bikeways
- Space between bikeways and parked/traveling vehicles
- Reduction of travel lane width to slow vehicles down
- Reduction in traffic volumes: shift or divert traffic to an alternative route if this is a highly biked corridor
- Conflict zone striping through intersections

Pedestrian level of traffic stress review for the following features:

- Pedestrian leading intervals to give pedestrians a head start and increases visibility
- Sidewalk widths
- Crosswalk enhancements to increase visibility
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons at unprotected crossings

Literature:

Mineta Transportation Institute. (2012). Low-stress bicycling and network connectivity. https://transweb.sjsu.edu/research/Low-Stress-Bicycling-and-Network-Connectivity

Alta. (2017). Level of traffic stress — what it means for building better bike networks. https://blog.altaplanning.com/level-of-traffic-stress-what-it-means-for-building-better-bike-networks-c4af9800b4ee

25. LIGHTING

How well does the project provide adequate neighborhood lighting to increase safety and prevent crime?

Why is this important?

Street lighting improvements can reduce people's fear and lower crime rates. Street lighting can have the impact of increasing physical activity after dark.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Lighting that increases visibility of alleys, streets, walkways, windows, and bikeways for pedestrians and vehicle traffic.
- Safe pedestrian paths that align with traffic patterns and provides access at all hours of the day.
- Sufficient lighting for safety, while ensuring limited or no glare for pedestrians, drivers, or light trespass to neighbors.

Literature:

IESNA Security Lighting Committee. (2003). Guideline for security lighting for people, property, and public spaces. Illuminating Engineering Society of America. https://webstore.ansi.org/preview_IESNA+G-1-03.pdf

26. NEAR ROAD POLLUTION

How well does the project incorporate efforts to protect residents from the harmful effects of high-volume roads and exhaust fumes?

Why is this important?

Pollutants from trucks, cars, and other motor vehicles are found in higher volumes near major roads. People who attend school, live, or work near major roads, particularly persons with existing impaired health, appear to have a higher incidence and severity of health problems associated with air pollution exposures related to roadway traffic. These health conditions include higher rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, impaired lung development in children, and premature death.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Residential units are oriented as far as possible from the roadway, directly reducing cancer risk;
- Disclose potential health risks from US Highway 101 to the future sensitive receptors for informational purposes; and
- Incorporate strategies to reduce air pollution exposure near high-volume roadways such as speed reduction mechanisms, including roundabouts, traffic signal management, and speed limit reductions on high-speed roadways; near-road landscaping to increase pollution dispersion, and indoor high efficiency filtration.

Sensitive receptors: children, elderly, people who are asthmatic, and others whose are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to exposure to air pollution.

Note: Implementing strategies such as air filtration systems, sound walls, and vegetation barriers have not been proven to be as effective as moving a sensitive receptor farther from the toxic source.

Literature:

California Environmental Protection Agency. (2017). Strategies to reduce air pollution exposure near high-volume roadways. https://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/rd_technical_advisory_final.PDF

California Air Resources Board. (n.d.). Sensitive receptor assessment. Retrieved June 2022: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/capp-resource-center/community-assessment/sensitive-receptor-assessment

27. NOISE POLLUTION

How well does the project mitigate noise pollution for all residents?

Why is this important?
Noise pollution can have a detrimental effect on residents' physical and mental health. Unwanted noise may arise due to population growth, technology, and street traffic changes. Long term exposure to excessive noise can lead to fatigue, hearing loss, stress, and loss of productivity.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Active rooms, such as kitchens, should be placed in locations closer to roads where noise is more prominent.
- Minimize exposure to noise pollution in private and communal outdoor spaces by locating buildings between the noise source and the outdoor space.
- Locate residential buildings on the site in such a way that helps block excessive road noise sources from outdoor use areas.
- Build decorative concrete walls and fences at sufficient height to reduce noise impacts.

Literature:

Kryter, K. (1994). The handbook of hearing and the effects of noise: Physiology, psychology, and public health. San Diego: Academic Press.

28. SMOKING

How well does the project incorporate effects to reduce smoking of all substances in multi-family developments and open spaces?

Why is this important?

Second-hand and third-hand smoke and smoke residue is hazardous to people (and pets) who are exposed. At this time, no method of ventilation is available to prevent smoke and smoke residue from seeping into neighboring adjoining housing units and endangering the health of others. Additionally, smoke-free housing has less risk of fire, retains higher market value, and is costly to clean and turn over to new inhabitants.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Restrict smoking in deed, covenant or lease agreement, within multi-unit housing (at least one shared wall) developments, including patios, decks, and other outdoor spaces within 25 feet of indoor areas.
- Signage stating smoking bans in the housing units, outdoor spaces, and at parks.

Literature:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Smoking and tobacco use, secondhand smoke. Retrieved June 2022 from: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/protection/ventilation/

29. INDOOR AIR QUALITY

How well does the project incorporate the use of materials and products that support healthy indoor quality? These products can include flooring materials and adhesives, paints and coatings, sealants, wallcoverings, wood products, textiles, and insulation.

Why is this important?

Exposure to environmental pollutants commonly occurs by breathing air indoors. Poor indoor air quality can contribute to chronic diseases, such as asthma, heart disease, and cancer. Negative impacts on health can be caused by poor ventilation, humidity, and exposure to carbon monoxide.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- Usage of building materials that do not emit harmful toxins.
- Usage of cabinetry, doors, molding, shelving, and trim materials with low VOCs (volatile organic compounds).
- Usage of mold resistant materials in community bathrooms and other water sensitive locations.

Literature:

American Lung Association. (2020). Healthy air at home. Retrieved June 2022 from: http://www.lung.org/clean-air/at-home

30. NEIBORHOOD AIR QUALITY

How well does the project meet the Air Pollution Control District's clean-air plan?

Why is this important?

National and state air quality standards have been adopted to protect public health, materials, and visibility. Clean air is a valuable and essential resource which affects many aspects of our daily lives. It is vital to our health and welfare, to the local agricultural economy, and to the aesthetic beauty and quality of life enjoyed by SLO county residents.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Meets criteria for the Air Pollution Control District's Clean Air Plan listed here: https://storage.googleapis.com/slocleanair-org/images/cms/upload/files/business/pdf/CAP.pdf

Literature:

Air Pollution Control District San Luis Obispo County. (2001). Clean Air Plan. https://www.slocleanair.org/rules-regulations/clean-air-plan.php

31. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS

How well does the project mitigate any environmental pollution burdens that might disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities, such as drinking water, lead in housing, pesticides, toxic releases, cleanups, groundwater contamination, hazardous waste, impaired waters, and solid waste facilities?

Why is this important?
Communities across California are disproportionately burdened by pollution. Historical land use decisions created these inequities, but future land use decisions can provide restitution. CalEnviroScreen is a screening methodology that can be used to help identify sources of pollution. Burdens from pollution of concern should be mitigated to create healthier, equitable neighborhoods.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Minimize exposure to potentially hazardous contaminants, including contaminated soils, pesticides, contaminated groundwater, and emission sources by not siting residential developments near or in the path of exposure areas.
- Minimize development of sensitive land uses – defined as schools, hospitals, residences, – near air pollution sources, including freeways, high volume roads, airplane landing paths, and industrial sites that emit potentially harmful materials.

Literature:

California Department of Education. (2015). Sustainable communities and school planning. http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/bp/documents/bestprcticesustain.pdf
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (2021). CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Retrieved June 2022, from https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40

32. PASSIVE SPACES

How well does the project provide spaces that facilitate social engagement?

Why is this important?

Creating public spaces that promote the engagement of residents and high connectivity of neighborhoods and services have positive impacts on health. The good design of public spaces is important to ensuring not only their use, but also the encouragement of socialization and activity.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- A common open space area which encourages residents to gather for social interactions and recreation with physical activity options for themselves and others.
- Comfortable seating in parks and public spaces.

Literature:

Project for Public Spaces. (2009). Why public spaces fail. http://www.pps.org/reference/failedplacefeat

33. RECREATIONAL SPACES

How well does the project incorporate facilities and access to a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents?

Why is this important?

Exercise or sports facilities within residential developments and in neighborhoods tend to be associated with active recreation. Children who attend schools that have more available playground equipment and a larger area for outdoor leisure are more physically active.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- Soccer fields, baseball or softball diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball courts, and/or practice fields or swimming pools
- Parks that include: Open lawns, restrooms, shade structures, picnic areas
- Consider the following age-specific park infrastructure: Very young children (age 0-6): tot lots, splash pads; Older children (6-18): sports fields, courts; Adults: sports fields, putting green, gardening, fitness facilities, and trails.

Literature:
Edwards, P., & Tsouros, A. (2006). Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments. World Health Organization Europe. https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/98424/E89498.pdf

34. COMMUNITY SPACES

How well does the project incorporate access to a multi-purpose community space accessible to the public?

Why is this important?
Multi-purpose community rooms can help create a sense of social cohesion and offer a space for education and health-related programs. Education can improve social well-being and help maintain cognitive function as people age.

Criteria:
Review the project for the following features:

- At least one community space in every community and/or neighborhood
- Community room with multi-use spaces
- Integration of community rooms with parks, large spaced facilities, and cultural centers

Literature:
National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Communities in action: Pathways to health equity. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. https://www.doi.org/10.17226/24624

35. GENERAL PLAN

Is the development consistent with health-related policies in the jurisdiction's general plan?

Why is this important?

Residential projects subject to a discretionary review process are usually reviewed by a hearing body such as a Planning Commission or City Council. If approved, a resolution is passed by the hearing body that must include findings, or facts, that demonstrate how the project is consistent with their general plan.

Criteria:

Review the project for the following features:

- The most common and most relevant residential development policies are found in the Land Use Element, Circulation Element and Housing Element of a General Plan. Many jurisdictions now have separate Health Chapters in their general plan.

Literature:

Institute for Local Government. (n.d.). Policy considerations for housing in California communities. Retrieved June 2022, from https://housingtoolkit.ca-ilg.org/housing-policy-considerations