



HEALTHY EATING  
ACTIVE LIVING  
**CITIES**  
CAMPAIGN

# Improve the Health of Your City: *Design Your General Plan for Health*

Decisions surrounding planning and community design can have a significant impact on the physical, social and mental health of community members. Local leaders can influence health impacts when making decisions related to the general plan, zoning, conditional use permits, environmental review and health impact assessments.

## Implementing these practices can improve residents' health outcomes:



### **DEVELOP FARMERS' MARKETS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS**

Establish land-use and zoning policies to promote, expand and protect farmers' markets and community garden sites, including vacant city-owned land and unused parking lots. In addition to affordable produce, these options provide sites for community building and socialization for residents.

### **IMPROVE THE NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT**

Restrict fast-food establishments near schools and playgrounds through smart land-use policies and regulate the density of fast-food outlets in residential communities.

Increase access to clean, free drinking water to encourage water consumption over sugary drinks.

Consider adopting building codes that require maintenance and access to drinking water fountains.



### **PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS**

Open spaces improve air quality and quality of life while fostering a sense of community and improving residents' physical and mental health.

Create and protect trails, urban forests, farms, community gardens, paths and greenways to provide attractive destinations and recreation spaces.



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## IMPROVE HOUSING CONDITIONS

Prioritize the development of high-quality affordable housing and safe neighborhoods in your general plan.

Providing incentives for developers such as reduced plan check fees and expedited review processes create a higher percentage of below-market-rate housing for residents with additional needs.

## ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Provide a mix of moderate and high density development within walking distance of transit stops to increase the use of public transportation.

Reduce auto dependency and roadway congestion by creating hubs of commercial activity within walking distance of one another.



## INCREASE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

Modify general plans, zoning codes and other planning requirements to increase the safety and feasibility of walking. For example, cities can install traffic calming improvements such as expanded sidewalks and bulb-outs to slow and channel auto traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

Fact sheet created with support from Kaiser Permanente, a founding partner of the HEAL Cities Campaign

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