



Making Connections:
Understanding Community
Health, Safety, & Welfare
in Northwest Michigan

DRAFT Making Connections: Introduction

Communities and local leaders nationwide are charged with protecting and serving the public health, safety, and welfare. But, our understanding of what that means may vary widely. And interpretations may depend on what problems or needs each community is facing.

If asked about what's needed to protect the health, safety, and welfare, some communities might talk about structural issues—like the condition of its roads, its tax rates, or its ability to attract or manage new growth and development. Others might discuss social issues like poverty, crime, addiction, and health.

While these might all be considered part of the public “health, safety, and welfare,” and while each community experiences all of these issues, we often separate one from another when considering solutions. We expect the “structural” issues of the community—like its roads, bridges, sewer systems, and water quality—to be handled by local governments like cities, counties, villages, and townships. And we often look to human service agencies—including social workers, public health officials, and others—to address the social, “people-oriented” needs of the community. Indeed, it often



seems that our local decision-making processes and social or human service provision system rarely cross paths. Local governments typically focus taxpayer resources on protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the community through improving and maintaining physical community assets, while human service providers work within their budgets to meet people's needs as best they can.

But there are important areas of overlap that many residents, organizations, and decision-makers don't often consider.

Decisions made by our local governments have far-reaching impacts on the lives, livelihoods, and opportunities of all residents in the community; and the individual needs and actions of residents play an enormous part in driving the future development of the community, and in determining its needs for physical assets and infrastructure. For instance:

- Zoning may limit options for treatment centers. A lack of treatment options for those struggling with addiction can prevent potential employees

ALICE: Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed

The United Way ALICE Report provides the most comprehensive look at Michigan residents who are struggling financially: 40 percent of households in Michigan could not afford basic needs such as housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation in 2015.

Many households are living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but an even greater number of households are what United Way calls ALICE – an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households have incomes above the FPL, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. Although evidence is emerging that jobs and wages are improving, the percent of households struggling has only improved from 41 percent in 2010 to 40 percent in 2012 and has remained flat since.

The ALICE report identifies the cost of basic needs in the Household Survival Budget for each county in Michigan, and the number of households earning below this amount – the ALICE Threshold. It delves deeper into county and municipal data as well as ALICE and poverty-level households by race, ethnicity, age, and household type to reveal variations in hardship that are often masked by state averages. Finally, it highlights emerging trends that will be important to ALICE in the future.

The data reveals an ongoing struggle for ALICE households and the obstacles to achieving financial stability:

- **Struggling Households:** Of Michigan's 3.86 million households, 15 percent lived in poverty in 2015 and another 25 percent were ALICE. Combined, 40 percent (1.53 million households) had income below the ALICE Threshold, an improvement since 2010, but still above the level in 2007.
- **Basic Cost of Living:** The cost of basic household expenses increased steadily in every county in

Michigan between 2007 and 2015. The average budget rose by 18 percent, which was above the national rate of inflation of 14 percent during that time period. In 2015, the average annual Household Survival Budget for a Michigan family of four (two adults with one infant and one preschooler) ranged from \$43,920 in Osceola County to \$64,320 in Macomb County – well above the family FPL of \$ 24,250.

- **Low-wage Jobs:** Low-wage jobs continued to dominate the landscape in Michigan, with 62 percent of all jobs in the state paying less than \$20 per hour. At this wage, a family of four falls far short of the Household Survival Budget of \$56,064. And, more than two-thirds of these jobs pay less than \$15 per hour.
- **Assistance for ALICE:** Since 2012, the amount needed to bring all ALICE households to financial stability has grown faster than government spending. Health care spending increased by 23 percent, accounting for two-thirds of all public and nonprofit spending on ALICE and poverty-level households. Because services and funds are not typically transferable from one area of need to another, there are large gaps between spending and need in many categories. For example, the gap to meet housing needs is 44 percent and the gap to meet child care is 50 percent.
- **Emerging trends:** Several trends could change the economic landscape for ALICE families:
- The Michigan population is aging, and many seniors do not have the resources they need to support themselves.
- Differences by race and ethnicity create challenges for many ALICE families as well as for immigrants in Michigan.
- Low-wage jobs are projected to grow faster than higher-wage jobs over the next decade.
- Technology is changing the workplace, adding some jobs, replacing many others, while also

changing where people work, the hours they work, and the skills that are required. Technology creates opportunities as well as challenges for ALICE workers.

Using the best available information on those who are struggling, the ALICE report offers an enhanced set of tools for stakeholders to measure the real challenges ALICE households face in trying to make ends meet. This information is presented to inform the discussion around programmatic and policy solutions for these households and their communities now and for the future. The lack of accurate information about the number of people who are “poor” and struggling distorts the identification of problems related to poverty, misguides policy solutions, and raises questions of equity, transparency, and fairness in the allocation of resources based on an outdated FPL.

from getting or maintaining a job, and can create challenges for businesses that are looking for employees.

- A shortage of housing options, which is affected by zoning, can force vulnerable families into unsafe situations. What's more, without adequate housing choices, we lose families, children, and workers that are needed by our communities—in schools and businesses.
- People that are suffering from addiction, homelessness, or mental illness; or that don't have transportation to and from medical care, may place a greater burden on local services, like emergency medical transportation or police protection when regular

treatment isn't readily available. Options like long-distance health care or telemedicine, which requires broadband infrastructure, may improve health care access for some; while improved transportation and transit connections can reduce the burden on emergency transportation and medical services.

These policy decisions—about infrastructure, transportation, and zoning—have real and immediate impacts, financial and otherwise, on the health, safety, and welfare of people that live in our communities—and on the local governments that provide services to residents and businesses. Yet, despite the clear intersection

of local assets and policies with our communities' social needs, there's often little recognition or understanding of the role that local decisions can make in some of our most complex problems.

Making Connections: A Guide to Community Health, Safety, and Welfare in Northwest Michigan attempts to build a greater understanding of how local policy decisions impact public health issues in communities throughout Northwest Michigan. By building awareness and making these connections, we can create additional opportunities for partnerships between local governments and service providers, build a more holistic approach to decision-making, and develop a framework for long-

Making Connections: Process & Participation

This guidebook was developed by Networks Northwest with support from the Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative, with guidance and oversight from a committee made up of local governments, human service providers, and other community stakeholders. The document was informed by data, stakeholder input obtained through regular committee meetings, and public events held in 2017. Participating agencies include:

- Addiction Treatment Services
- Area Agency on Aging in Northwest Michigan
- Blair Township
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Elmwood Township
- Grand Traverse Area Continuum of Care
- Leelanau County
- Third Level Crisis Center
- Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center
- Traverse Health Clinic

term, structural solutions that create the conditions for meaningful change.

The Penny-Farthing: Structural and Service-Based Solutions

When considering connections between local government and social service organizations, it's important to recognize that the nature of their activities—and the solutions they pursue—is necessarily and fundamentally different.

Service-based solutions attempt to address immediate needs. They provide tangible impacts to an individual or family, and are focused on short-term safety and health issues. Food pantries provide food for families without enough to eat, shelters house individuals or families that have lost their homes, and in-patient rehab treats those that might be dealing with an addiction-related crisis. These programmatic solutions are visible and tangible to everyone involved: they change people's lives immediately and often profoundly.

Local policy solutions, however, have a much longer timeframe: communities often plan 10, 20, or 50 years into the future. They're also more likely to be focused on physical assets or activities, like development, sewer and water systems, and planning for roads. When considering these needs and policies, communities often don't see the impact right away: it

| Service Solutions | Local Policy Solutions |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Immediate | Long-term |
| Tangible impacts to individual | Impacts are cumulative; often unnoticed by individuals |
| Social/needs focus | Land use/tax focus |

may take years before there's a visible change. For example, zoning ordinances—which can take years to write—may fundamentally alter the way development is regulated, but it could be years before a developer comes to town to build new homes that meet those zoning regulations—and citizens may or may not be aware of zoning's role in that construction. Similarly, it may take decades for decisions about taxes to result in enough revenues to effectively enhance transit, transform blighted neighborhoods, or complete a sidewalk system in an underserved neighborhood.

Both of these approaches, while dramatically different, are necessary parts of the whole. Like the penny-farthing, or the big-wheel bike of the late nineteenth century, both of them turn together, at different speeds, to make the system run and meet community needs.

Using This Guide

While the importance of service-based solutions cannot be overstated, this document is not intended to focus on specific, service-based programmatic solutions. Instead, it's meant to

start a conversation about local policies and their impact on long-term, structural issues that affect pressing community needs.

To that end, the region's priority social service issues—or community health, safety, and welfare needs—are discussed in the context of major community development issues, including:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Food & Farming
- Natural Resources
- Recreation

Local policy solutions that can address priority community health, safety, and welfare issues are identified and summarized.

Community Planning 101:

Master Plans, Zoning Ordinances, & Local Leadership

The policies and ordinances that are guided by local plans have tremendous impacts on our communities—including the price of our homes, the views out our windows, the quality of our air and water, and the amount of time we spend in traffic. In order for these policies to reflect the values and priorities of citizens, it's imperative for the public to become involved in the planning process.

Master Plans

A master plan is a guide that's intended to help shape local decisions. It helps the community understand current conditions and build a vision for the future—and identify what actions they need to take to achieve that vision. To do this, plans make recommendations about the development of land and public services like schools, roads, and sewer and water lines. In communities that are zoned, they also serve as the foundation for zoning ordinance regulations, which control how land and buildings are developed and used.

State law allows all local governments, including townships, cities, villages, and counties, to adopt plans. They're created by the community's planning commission, with help from staff or consultants.

Public Input

Because the purpose of the plan is to create a shared vision of the community's future, public participation is one of the most important steps in the planning process. To get input, the planning commission may conduct a survey, hold a visioning session, or invite citizens to be part of a steering committee. Public input is used, along with background studies and analysis of the community's population, environment, transportation systems, and other features, to develop goals and objectives for the next 20 years or more.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives are the “heart” of the master plan: they identify the community's priorities for the future and how it will achieve its goals. They might include recommendations on the future development of land, which is shown on a future land use map. For communities that have adopted zoning, the plan must also include a zoning plan.

Putting the Plan into Action

The master plan is just a guide for a community—it does not have the force of law. A community might adopt an excellent master plan, but it will only be effective if the public and the local government are willing to put its goals into practice.

- Zoning regulates how and where development occurs and is the most common means of implementing a master plan.
- Tax breaks or other economic incentives available through brownfield authorities, land bank authorities, economic development corporations, and other governmental entities can encourage development in certain areas.
- Recommendations that are beyond the scope of the local government may require partnerships with nonprofits or other community partners.
- New or remodeled public buildings, parks, and major equipment are all considered capital improvements.
- Other local ordinances can also be used to implement parts of an adopted plan—such as junk ordinances, housing inspections, erosion prevention, solid waste management, or land division and subdivision ordinances.

Zoning Ordinances

A zoning ordinance is a local law that regulates land and buildings in order to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens. Together with the master plan, the zoning ordinance is an important tool

that allows the community to guide development and land use in a way that achieves their long term goals.

Zoning Districts and Map

A zoning ordinance divides a township, village, city, or county into different districts (zones). The zoning map shows the legal boundaries for each district. Districts regulate the uses, building size, and other features for all properties in the district. Zoning districts are often based on the types of uses that are allowed, with separate districts for residential, commercial, agriculture, recreation, and industrial development. They may also be organized around building or architectural types, neighborhood patterns, or other physical and cultural features. This is known as “form-based” zoning because it takes into account the “form,” or character, that the community wants to develop or maintain, and encourages development to be consistent with that form.

Types of Regulations

Each zoning district includes sets of regulations designed to ensure that development is safely designed. Regulations address use, dimensions, and other aspects of development:

- Use regulations state what types of land use can be located in each zoning district. Some uses are allowed “by right,” which means they can be allowed through a simple application process. Others, called special uses, are subject to extra requirements and additional review. These are more intensive uses that need additional review in order to protect the neighborhood from any negative impacts.
- Dimensional regulations control features such as building height, floor area, yard area, and the building footprint, or outline.
- Setbacks control the distance between the building and the street or property line. Setbacks are specified for the front, side, and rear of a lot.
- Density regulations limit the number of homes or other buildings that may be built on a piece of land. Usually this is done by requiring a minimum property size—such as one home per acre.

Ordinances also include general development standards that regulate features of larger developments, including parking, landscaping, lighting, and street layout.

Administration

The zoning ordinance is developed by the planning commission, and is approved by the legislative body (i.e. the city council or township board). The zoning administrator reviews applications for land use permits and other requests, and interprets the ordinance to determine if new developments or uses meet its requirements.

Master Plans & Zoning Ordinances

A community’s master plan and zoning ordinance are closely linked. State law requires zoning ordinances to be based on a master plan; and the zoning ordinance also offers important ways to achieve a master plan’s goals. By defining appropriate uses of land, regulating density, and creating standards for development, the zoning ordinance offers clear direction on where and how development should occur. It’s important to remember, though, that the master plan is a guide without the force of law behind it, while zoning is an enforceable law. Because it affects the use and value of private property, state law is very specific about how zoning ordinances are structured, what’s included, and how zoning authority can be limited. In order to meet these legal obligations, while balancing community goals with the interests of property owners, zoning ordinances are often complex legal documents.



Local Leadership

For anyone that would like to become involved in local land use issues, it's very important to become familiar with the key players. Depending on the issue you're interested in, you may need to get to know the local legislative body, planning commission, zoning board of appeals, and local government staff.

Legislative Body

The local legislative body is elected by the public every 2-4 years to represent the community. These bodies— including boards, councils, or commissions—make the final decisions on zoning, and in some cases (but not all) they are the final authority on plan adoption. They also control, through appointments to the planning commission and oversight of staff, how local ordinances are administered. Their responsibilities include:

- Adopting plans and ordinances
- Setting the tax rates
- Authorizing expenditures and borrowing ☒ Hiring administrative staff
- Providing oversight of public facilities and infrastructure
- Appointing members to the planning commission and zoning board of appeals
- Other duties as necessary

Planning Commission

The planning commission is an important advisory group that is appointed by the legislative body to develop plans. For communities with zoning authority, it also prepares and makes recommendations on zoning ordinances, zoning changes, special use or planned developments, and site plans. The planning commission can serve as the final authority on some of these matters - but only when authorized by the zoning ordinance.

Planning commissions are made up of 5-11 citizen volunteers that serve a 3 year term. Some members may have a land use background like engineering, architecture, or development, but this experience isn't

required, and many planning commissioners don't have this background. In order for the commission to be fair and objective, planning commissioners should represent diverse interests and backgrounds. Planning commissioners may be appointed based on their ability to represent different segments or interests of the community—such as schools, farming, or business. Depending on the capacities and activities of the community, a planning commission is generally expected to: ☒ Develop and maintain a master plan ☒ Make recommendations on approval of the plan, and in some cases adopt the plan ☒ Develop, upon direction from the governing body, capital improvement plans, recreation plans, and other community plans ☒ Develop a zoning ordinance and map ☒ Make recommendations on changes to the zoning ordinance and map ☒ Review rezoning applications, site plans, and planned unit development applications ☒ Review the community's property purchases and development projects

Zoning Board of Appeals

All zoned communities must appoint a zoning board of appeals, or ZBA. The procedures and makeup of the ZBA are outlined in the zoning ordinance. The ZBA hears appeals on requirements or on zoning decisions, and can grant variances to regulations in order to change one or more requirements of the zoning ordinance. In order to receive a variance, the property owner must show that the zoning regulation creates a hardship or prevents the development of the property. On request, the ZBA also provides interpretation of language in the zoning ordinance. *** The responsibilities, makeup and procedures of planning commissions and elected officials vary from community to community. However, regardless of the community's individual government structure, and whether officials are elected, appointed, or hired, it is the imperative of local government and staff to serve the interests of the community. Citizens are encouraged to contact their local officials and staff to communicate their interests, learn about local issues, and find out how they can get involved.

What Is Community Health, Safety, and Welfare?

The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the inhabitants of...

It is the legislative intent of the city council in adopting this Code, that all provisions and sections of this chapter be liberally construed to protect and preserve the peace, health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the city...

When local governments make decisions about policy, spending, and community improvements, their ordinances and organizational documents guide them towards a clear goal: to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. But, while the goal may be clear, the specific components of what, exactly, constitutes public health, safety, and welfare may vary by community or individual.

Traditionally, local policy decisions have focused on structural issues and the built environment: zoning and development regulations, infrastructure, parks and recreation opportunities, and environmental protection and remediation. Today, evidence is growing that local decisions about the built environment have clear and substantial connections to our social environment. As we develop a greater understanding



of how our social interactions and issues play out in the built environment, it becomes more important to consider these social factors—including the ability to meet our basic needs, maintain and improve behavioral health, and protect and enhance child and family welfare—when making decisions about policies that affect our neighborhoods and communities. To better place these issues in the local context, this guidebook refers to these social factors as elements of **community health, safety, and welfare**.

So what does community health, safety, and welfare mean, and what does it include? Community health assessments, public participation in regional planning

processes, including the *Framework for Our Future*, and stakeholder input have identified priority issues that communities are facing in Northwest Michigan. Of those issues, many cannot, or may not, be effectively addressed at the local policy level. However, stakeholder input has identified some issues related to basic needs, behavioral health, and child and family welfare that have a clear linkage to local policy issues. These issues are outlined below, with local policy impacts on each issue explored in Section 3.

Basic Needs

Income and employment

To meet the basic needs—that is, food, water, clothing, and

shelter—a household or individual needs adequate income. For many households in Northwest Michigan, this most foundational need—that of an adequate income—is a primary challenge.

With ___ of Northwest Michigan households living below the federal poverty threshold, an even greater number are what United Way calls ALICE – an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households have incomes above the poverty threshold, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. Over ___ in Northwest Michigan are considered to be struggling to meet basic needs, due in part to the type of employment available, costs of living, and workforce readiness.

A Framework for Talent in Northwest Michigan reports that of available jobs in the ten-county region, a high percentage are hospitality-related positions, which generally have a lower pay scale and are often seasonal. Public input heard throughout the *Framework for Our Future* process indicated that the low wages and temporary or part-time nature of these occupations create difficulties for employees: many don't receive employer benefits, and many are unemployed during the winter months. Even year-round jobs are significantly impacted by seasonality issues, with less work or income for employees off-season. For these lower-wage employees,

seasonally-impacted employment can also come with barriers in obtaining services or assistance; in applying for loans or credit; or in renting or purchasing homes.

Regardless of industry, lower wages— and even average wages— often aren't enough for workers to cover basic living expenses in Northwest Michigan. The Michigan League for Public Policy releases an annual report called "Making Ends Meet in Michigan," which explores current costs of living, including housing, transportation, childcare, healthcare, taxes, and more. The latest report indicates that the true cost of living for a single parent, statewide, is about \$44,000 annually. In Northwest Michigan, wages tend to be lower, and expenses higher, than statewide averages. For a single worker earning the region's average earnings of about \$43,000 annually, expenses account for about half of total wages, and for single parents earning the region's average income, basic annual living expenses consume all of their annual wages. Workers statewide earn more—\$55,786 annually, on average—and pay less for basic living expenses. Expenses for single adult workers statewide consume about 39% of their annual income, and 79% of the wages of single parents (see chart).

Workers earning below-average wages in Northwest Michigan struggle to make ends meet, even

when working fulltime; and the many regional residents that must spend more than average for transportation, heating, or housing costs experience extreme financial instability.

Food access, insecurity, and affordability

Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as a lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Lack of access to food in Northwest Michigan means, primarily, that a household cannot afford enough food, but it can also be connected to an individual or household's ability to walk or drive to stores or pantries.

Food insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Rather, food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make tradeoffs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. In Northwest Michigan, over 40,000 individuals are considered food insecure. On average, about 27% of those individuals are not eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other nutrition programs like the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides food assistance to income-eligible families and individuals.

Northwest Michigan's Aging Population

Northwest Michigan has a higher-than-average concentration of older residents when compared to the state or the nation. While this is due in part to the region's appeal as a retirement destination, the trend is also impacted by natural population and aging trends, and from the region's economic and demographic conditions.

Many rural communities nationwide have experienced a decline in younger populations. The out-migration of younger individuals, combined with the already-higher rates of seniors in rural communities, creates an imbalance wherein seniors make up a larger percentage of rural communities than in other areas. This holds true in Northwest Michigan, where seniors are the fastest growing population group in the region, and where the proportion of seniors as a percentage of the population is expected to continue to increase. Natural age increases that are occurring as the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age are compounded by large numbers of retirees that are relocating to communities in Northwest Michigan post-retirement. At the same time, Michigan's "Great Recession," combined with the lack of year-round employment or higher education opportunities in many communities, have resulted in a significant decline in the numbers of younger individuals and families.

An aging population creates an increased demand for specific services, particularly related to health care. Demand for services related to chronic disease and pain management, dementia, case management needs, transportation for medical needs, preventative care services, accessing affordable care, and end-of-life planning will increase as the population ages. Exacerbating the demand for these services is the fact that many of the young families and individuals leaving the region over the last ten years represent important family support for seniors. And, for those retirees who have recently relocated to the area, family or social supports may not be in place at all. Without these supports present to provide much of the day-to-day care for these seniors, many seniors may need to rely more heavily on services from regional and local agencies.

The aging of the population also has profound implications for the workforce and the economy. As Baby Boomers—our nation's largest population group—reach retirement age and beyond, the nation is experiencing major shifts in service demand, housing needs, and health care. Because of the sheer volume of seniors, these issues are occurring at a greater intensity and volume than ever before in US history. Addressing these needs will be particularly important for Northwest Michigan, where existing age imbalances and growing senior populations, combined with an out-flow of younger workers that can provide services and support, will exacerbate demand and need.



Access to health care

Access to care is a high-priority concern for many communities throughout Northwest Michigan.

Related issues include:

- A shortage of both primary care physicians and specialists
- Lack of providers for some specialized services and for new Medicaid patients
- Unaffordable medications
- Increased need for preventive care services
- Lack of access to dental care for people in poverty
- Increased demand from aging

population

Healthy lifestyles

Physical activities and exercise play an important part in preventing and addressing obesity. However, the design of some neighborhoods and communities discourages physical activity. In some cases, neighborhood or subdivision design creates conditions in which it is difficult or unsafe for residents to walk and bike. In other cases, neighborhoods may not have good access to parks and other

recreation opportunities that provide important options for exercise and fitness.

Seniors, the disabled, those who can't drive.

Accessibility

Disabled individuals have specific needs and challenges related to accessibility both in homes and in public spaces. Accessible or barrier-free housing is very limited throughout the region. Additional community challenges for the disabled include contending with

Becoming a Trauma-Informed Community

Trauma is an overwhelming event or events that renders an individual helpless, powerless, and creates a threat of harm and/or loss AND an internalization of the experience that continues to impact the person's development as well as their perception of self, others, and the world. Trauma-informed communities use this information as a lens to better understand individual and collective actions and decisions.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” after bad things happen. The good news is, resilience can be learned and developed. Resilience factors include:

- Developing personal capabilities/skills.
- Having positive relationships with others.
- Connecting with one's community, faith and culture.

WHAT DOES A TRAUMA INFORMED COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?

Trauma –informed communities...

- Shift thinking from “What's wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”
- Engage in education, training, and conversations around trauma, resilience, and other social determinants of health.
- Support trauma specific services and interventions in healthcare, education, and social services.
- Use “universal precautions,” assuming everyone has experienced some kind of hardship and treating people with kindness, understanding, and respect.
- Encourage others and promote a sense of community and connectedness.
- Take care of ourselves and consider how our own experiences impact our relationships and interactions.
- Participate in self-reflection, exploring how implicit bias, systemic oppression, historical factors, and privilege play a role in perpetuating traumatized individuals and communities.
- Equip agencies, businesses, and schools to adopt trauma informed cultures and practices.

transportation systems that are designed around private vehicles. For disabled individuals who can't drive, transit options are limited, and many residential neighborhoods and homes lack connections to services, jobs, or shopping. Street crossings, paths, and sidewalks may be too narrow for or otherwise not accommodate wheelchairs or those with other mobility impairments.

Housing/Shelter

Northwest Michigan is experiencing a well-documented shortage of housing—particularly rental housing—that's affordable to a broad range of income levels. The short supply of available and affordable housing leaves families with few choices but to live in deteriorating or inadequate homes, which has been shown to increase exposure to allergens, indoor air pollutants, and extreme hot or cold temperatures. These conditions, in turn, can lead to the development of chronic or infectious diseases and increased mortality rates among some populations.

Other families that can't afford housing may have to "double up" with relatives or friends, leading to overcrowding, which comes with increased risks of health hazards like communicable diseases and stress, and places children in vulnerable situation. And, those that live in unaffordable housing have less expendable income, reducing the resources available for healthy food, child care, and



health care. Fewer resources can in turn can result in hunger, stress, and decreased access to health care.

Behavioral Health

Substance abuse/addiction

Addiction is a complex condition, a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequence. People with addiction, or severe substance use disorder, have an intense focus on using a certain substance, such as alcohol or drugs, to the point that it takes over their life.

Addictive disorders have far-reaching impacts for individuals, families, and communities. For individuals, there are tremendous impacts on health and well-being, up to and including overdose and death. Untreated addiction can destabilize employment and subsequently income, thereby increasing the risk of housing insecurity or homelessness. It is a contributing factor in domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, and is strongly associated with crime and public safety.

At the community level,

consequences for local law enforcement, courts, and the jail and prison system are profound: addiction-related crimes and drug abuse incur enormous costs. Local governments and medical providers, meanwhile, bear the expense of increased demand for emergency services and law enforcement. And employers in some industries struggle to find workers that can pass drug tests.

Alcohol and drug addiction affect millions of people nationwide, and have long been a primary public health concern. But today, the United States is experiencing an opioid addiction epidemic that has significantly altered communities nationwide, impacting mortality rates—especially among men—family and workplace dynamics, and the legal system. Northwest Michigan is no exception.

As addiction rates rise and associated impacts leave a ripple effect on the community, treatment options—including in-patient rehabilitation, long- and term residential treatment, methadone clinics, transitional housing or short-term residential treatment, or out-patient rehab – for drug and alcohol addiction

become increasingly important.

Mental Health Care and Treatment

Mental health issues impact nearly every family, and approximately one in 5 Americans have a mental health problem in any given year. Yet only a little over a third of those with mental health issues with receive treatment or services.

Those who receive community mental health services after hospital stays are more likely to achieve full recovery or improvement in psychiatric status and social function. Services and treatment can dramatically improve health and well-being, and can increase an individual's chance of securing employment.

Treatment and recovery are closely connected to access to health care, and primarily its affordability. The lack of ability to afford care is among the top reasons that people report not seeking treatment. Additionally, housing instability, or lack of available housing options, greatly reduces an individual's ability to begin or maintain effective treatment and recovery. Without appropriate treatment or housing options, people with mental illness may be more likely to remain unemployed, experience homelessness, require costly emergency hospitalization or other medical services, or incarceration, often for non-violent offenses. Untreated mental illness is also closely associated with substance abuse and addiction.



Problems associated with access to behavioral health issues were emphasized in the health assessment process, with issues including:

- A fragmented behavioral health system
- Difficulty accessing services for those with mild to moderate behavioral health issues
- Challenging transportation issues for those living in rural areas
- Lack of providers for some specialized services, such as children and substance abuse treatment
- Violence/crime

Health care access, along with appropriate housing options—including supportive housing—are necessary in improving public mental health.

Child & Family Welfare

Child and family welfare is directly impacted by the full spectrum of community health, safety, and welfare issues—such as mental health, housing instability, and substance abuse or addiction. The impact of these issues on children is profound and long-lasting, with consequences that reach into later life and even subsequent generations.

Child and family welfare issues might best be understood through the lens of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), or childhood events that negatively impact the child's future, including:

- Witnessing or experiencing verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse;
- Living with household members who are substance abusers, mentally ill, suicidal or ever incarcerated;
- Living in a household with poor economic resources or

with parents who divorced or separated after the child was born

- Exposure to racial or ethnic discrimination

ACEs have been linked to a range of poor health outcomes in adulthood, including substance abuse, depression, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and premature mortality. They impact the current health of individuals and can predict future individual and intergenerational health and social outcomes.

In addition to the health and economic issues that are considered other community health, safety, and welfare issues, specific ACEs are outlined below.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation and emotional abuse.

Data show that more families are investigated, and more victims are confirmed, at a rate that's higher in Northwest Michigan than the state as a whole.

Preventing child abuse and neglect requires a community-wide network of resources and support to minimize risk factors—including treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, providing additional

housing options for vulnerable families in unsafe situations, improving awareness of signs of child abuse and reporting procedures, and building social connections for parents and families.

Early childhood education

The years from birth to five are a critical time in the life of a child. During this time, the brain has the capacity to form more new neurological connections than at any other phase of development. 90% of the brain's architecture is built and most of the foundation for language, social behavior, problem solving ability and emotional health is created in the first five years.

With positive stimulation, healthy learning experiences, stable family and social environments, and other positive inputs, children grow up with greater capacity to learn and succeed. Under the wrong conditions, neurological development suffers, with consequences that can impact an individual's ability to succeed in school and later on in the workplace.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual

violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Domestic violence affects individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. It can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and in severe cases, even death. The devastating physical, emotional, and psychological consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime. At the community level, domestic violence increases the costs of healthcare services, social and welfare services, counseling, police and criminal justice services, legal services, transportation costs, and housing and other refuge services used by victims of domestic violence and special education services used to treat children of abused women.

Data from the Michigan State Police report 2,199 domestic violence crimes in Northwest Michigan in 2014.

Housing: Policy Overview

Local Government Roles

- Local planning commissions make decisions about zoning, which define where, what type, and how much of housing is built.
- Local elected boards make decisions about tax incentives and abatements, including payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTs)
- Local elected boards enact and enforce rental inspection ordinances.
- County boards sometimes administer state funding for home repair programs.
- Local and county governments sometimes work in partnership with developers and community organizations to support housing goals and projects.

Policy Tools

Zoning for housing choices

Communities can consider zoning changes that, for instance, allow multi-family housing construction such as apartments or townhomes; create opportunities to add small homes to existing neighborhoods, through techniques such as cottage zoning or accessory dwelling units ; or plan for higher densities in areas with infrastructure and

good access to nearby services or jobs.

Zoning for shelters/transitional housing/supportive housing

Shelters and transitional homes are often controversial topics in a community. Planning proactively to find appropriate locations for these critical facilities can smooth the process for organizations working to provide services and treatment, while ensuring that the community is supportive. Local governments may consider working in partnership with community organizations to determine needs and opportunities.

Home repair and rehabilitation programs

Communities can take advantage of a variety of home repair or rehabilitation programs available through state or federal funding sources. These programs provide low-interest loans or grants to homeowners and property owners that are working to improve housing units.

Rental Inspection Ordinances

Enacting rental inspection ordinances —particularly in communities with higher numbers of rentals and/or deteriorating homes—may provide some recourse for renters in deteriorating homes while

improving the quality of homes in the community. Additionally,

Incentives and abatements

An incentive known as a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) programs is an important tool in incentivize affordable rental development at the local level. They lower the tax liability for developers of multi-family housing. In many cases, without the PILOT, the affordable development may not be financially viable. Communities can pass ordinances that provide guidance on when and how these incentives should be used.

Incentive programs like brownfield redevelopment authorities and land bank authorities can aid in the development of affordable housing. Land bank authorities exist in some counties in the region, and offer opportunities for housing development, with incentives and development tools available to help with elements like site preparation activities, infrastructure costs, and land purchases. In some cases, they may make tax-foreclosed properties available at a low cost to nonprofits for the purposes of housing development, and may also partner in property purchases to lower the costs of development.

Housing: Policy Connections

Basic Needs

| | What are housing-related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Income and Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing costs, combined with lower-than-average wages, make homes unaffordable to the many families and households that are struggling to make ends meet. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing vouchers and subsidies Zoning for housing choices Provide incentives and abatements for desired types of housing |
| Shelter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing instability— caused by factors such as unaffordable housing, high energy or transportation costs, substandard housing, or housing discrimination—may result in the loss of housing through eviction or foreclosure. Compounding housing instability issues are issues that can cause or contribute to homelessness, such as alcohol or other drug abuse; divorce, separation, or other personal relationship issues; discharge from a hospital, jail, or prison; domestic or family violence; disability; and loss of income or unemployment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning for housing choices Zoning for shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing Provide incentives and abatements for desired types of housing development |
| Healthy lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substandard housing can expose inhabitants to air pollutants have been linked with respiratory illness and some types of cancer. Structural features in homes, including steep staircases and balconies, and substandard heating systems can result in injuries occurring at home, especially for seniors, children, and the disabled. Extreme low and high temperatures have been associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease and increased mortality, especially among vulnerable populations such as the elderly. Residential crowding has been linked with psychological distress among both adults and children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental inspection ordinances Home repair and rehabilitation programs Housing vouchers and subsidies |
| Accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible or barrier-free housing is needed by anyone who currently experiences, or may experience in the future, a disability. There is very limited availability of accessible housing units in Northwest Michigan. Long wait times exist for disabled individuals that are looking for accessible rentals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing vouchers and subsidies |

Housing: Policy Connections

Behavioral Health

| | What are housing-related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Substance abuse/addiction</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction can disrupt relationships with family and friends and cause people to lose their jobs—putting many people in unstable housing situations. • Nationally, 35-40% of chronically homeless people suffer from severe substance use disorders. In Often, substance abuse is a result of homelessness rather than a cause, as people turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with their homelessness. • Stable housing during and after treatment for substance abuse/addiction decreases the risk of relapse. Treatment without housing has been shown to be inadequate, with better chances for recovery when combined with supported housing opportunities—including transitional housing, residential treatment programs, and long-term supportive housing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning for supportive housing • Zoning for residential treatment facilities |
| <p>Mental health care and treatment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of untreated mental illness can lead to unstable housing situations or homelessness. • The lack of safe and affordable housing is one of the most powerful barriers to recovery. When this basic need isn't met, people can cycle in and out of homelessness, jails, shelters and hospitals. Having a safe, affordable place to live—particularly when it's combined with support services, as in supportive housing—can provide a stable environment and foundation for treatment. • Living in unaffordable housing limits resources for other basic necessities, including health care. The unaffordability of treatment has been identified as one of the biggest barriers to accessing behavioral health care. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning for housing choices • Zoning for supportive housing • Housing vouchers and subsidies |

Housing: Policy Connections

Child & Family Welfare

What are housing-related issues?

Abuse and Neglect

- Lack of affordable housing can force families into overcrowded situations and/or substandard or unsafe homes. In some cases, children may be at increased risk of physical or sexual abuse as families are forced to double up with .

Early childhood education

- Children who live in crowded housing may have poorer cognitive and psychomotor development or be more anxious, socially withdrawn, stressed or aggressive.
- Lead poisoning irreversibly affects brain and nervous system development, resulting in lower intelligence and reading disabilities. Deteriorating paint in older homes is the primary source of lead exposure for children.
- Families who lack affordable housing are more likely to move frequently. Residential instability is associated with emotional, behavioral and academic problems among children, and with increased risk of teen pregnancy, early drug use, and depression during adolescence.
- Children who lived in areas with higher rates of unaffordable housing tended to have worse health, more behavioral problems and lower school performance.

Domestic violence

- Studies have shown that without housing, other services to address domestic violence are less likely to succeed.

What local policy tools are available?

- Zoning for housing choices
- Home repair and rehabilitation programs
- Provide incentives and abatements for desired types of housing development
- Zoning for housing options
- Home repair and rehabilitation programs
- Provide incentives and abatements for desired types of housing development
- Zoning for shelters, transitional homes, and supportive housing
- Home repair and rehabilitation programs
- Provide incentives and abatements for desired types of housing development

Transportation: Policy Overview

Local Government Roles

- Local planning commissions make decisions about zoning, which defines where, what type, and how development occurs—which impacts how uses and activities are connected by transportation networks.
- County road commissions and local governments allocate dollars for transportation improvements and maintenance, including non-motorized transportation facilities like sidewalks.
- Road Commissions work with state and federal agencies to obtain and administer funding for special projects.
- Counties create and participate in county-wide transit authorities, and participate in decisions on when and how to seek funding for transit, including millage requests.

Policy Tools

Adopt Complete Streets policies, resolutions, or ordinances

By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users,



regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists – making a more desirable place to live.

Provide for improved transit connections or services

Faster service times, cross-county service, and easier-to-navigate transit systems can increase the efficiency of transit for those who can't or don't drive. However, complexities and limitations in transit funding create challenges in expanding transit services. Alternative approaches and partnerships between counties and other agencies can provide some alternatives for improving transit.

Provide for improved transit connections or services

Communities may consider multiple funding options for new non-motorized transportation improvements, including local sources such as millages, bonds, or community endowments. Grants, however, typically finance the majority of new non-motorized facilities; and many are provided by state and federal agencies. Non-motorized transportation inventories or plans may help communities prioritize and balance improvements and funding.

Transportation: Policy Connections

Basic Needs

What are related issues?

What local policy tools are available?

Income and employment

- A lack of reliable transportation is consistently cited as one of the region’s biggest barriers to employment.
- Low incomes and the high costs associated with owning a private vehicle, combined with affordable housing shortages, leave many households struggling to make ends meet. Many households are “one car repair away” from losing their jobs or their homes.

- Adopt Complete Streets plans, policies, or resolutions

Healthy lifestyles

- Safe non-motorized transportation residents are encourages residents to walk or bike, which provide important opportunities for exercise.

- Adopt Complete Streets plans, policies, or resolutions

Access to health care

- Residents, particularly in rural areas, must travel long distances to access medical care. For those who can’t drive but have regular or frequent needs for medical care— such as cancer treatment, physical therapy, or chronic conditions requiring regular care— transportation limitations leave residents unable to adequately manage their medical conditions, ultimately eroding their health and increasing costs.

- Provide for improved transit options
- Provide for improved non-motorized transportation options

Food access, insecurity, and affordability

- For those who can’t or don’t drive in rural areas, access to retail outlets and food pantries may be limited.

Accessibility

- For disabled individuals who can’t drive, transit options are limited, and many residential neighborhoods and homes lack connections to services, jobs, or shopping. Even existing pedestrian facilities such as street crossings, paths, and sidewalks may be too narrow for or otherwise not accommodate wheelchairs or those with other mobility impairments.

- Adopt Complete Streets plans, policies, or resolutions

Housing/Shelter

- Lack of affordable housing forces families to live farther from work and school, forcing a reliance on a private vehicle—which comes with high costs and, if unreliable, can impact the ability to maintain long-term employment.

- Adopt Complete Streets plans, policies, or resolutions

Transportation

Behavioral Health

What are related issues?

What local policy tools are available?

Substance abuse/
addiction

- A reliance on private vehicles means that those who don't drive face challenges in getting and maintain employment. When addiction-related offenses result in a loss of a driver's license, individual's employment can be adversely affected. Transit and safe biking or walking trails that connect residential and commercial areas provide important transportation options for those who can't drive.

- Adopt Complete Streets plans, policies, or resolutions
- Provide transit options
- Provide non-motorized transportation options

Mental health care
and treatment

- Access to behavioral health care is limited in the region, and for those without a private vehicle, transportation is a significant hurdle.

- Provide transit options
- Provide non-motorized transportation options

Child & Family Welfare

What are transportation-related issues?

What local policy tools are available?

Abuse and neglect

- Reliance on a private vehicle can leave families, particularly lower-income families in rural areas, in isolated situations, discouraging the social connections necessary to preventing abuse and neglect.

- Provide transit options
- Provide non-motorized transportation options

Early childhood education

-

Domestic violence

-

Food & Farming: Policy Overview

Local Government Roles

- Local planning commissions make decisions about zoning, which define where, what type, and how development occurs—which can impact where food is accessible and available.

Policy Tools

Zoning for mixed commercial and residential uses

Providing opportunities for food retail, farm stands, or other food outlets in residential areas can improve access to healthy food, particularly for lower-income families and those who can't or don't drive.

Zoning for food innovation

A food innovation district is a geographic concentration of food-oriented businesses, services, and community activities that local governments can support through planning and economic development initiatives. They can improve access to food and food education by clustering food-related businesses in a concentrated area. and increase access to local food.

Institutional Purchasing Programs

Public schools—although not under the authority of local governments—also have a vital role in ensuring that children have



access to healthy food during the school day. School policies that establish nutrition standards in schools and daycare facilities can promote the health and well-being of children. A number of schools in the region participate in farm-to-school programs that provide healthy local food to school cafeterias while providing outlets for local farms.

Food & Farming: Policy Connections

Basic Needs

| | What are related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Food insecurity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 40,000 individuals in Northwest Michigan are considered food insecure, with many of those individuals unable to qualify for nutrition programs that provide food assistance to income-eligible families and individuals . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning for mixed commercial and residential uses Zoning for food innovation districts |
| Healthy lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to healthy, affordable food can result in consequences such as hunger, obesity, and related chronic conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional purchasing programs |

Behavioral Health

| | What are housing-related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Substance abuse/ addiction Mental health care and treatment | | |

Child & Family Welfare

| | What are related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Abuse and neglect | | |
| Early childhood education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food insecurity in the early years of life is particularly detrimental and can compound the effects of other risk factors associated with poverty, such as reduced access to health care and unstable or unsafe housing. Poor nutrition and food insecurity are associated with poorer physical and mental health in all age groups, but in young children they can deeply affect well-being and development in ways that can endure for a lifetime. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional purchasing programs |

Domestic violence

Recreation: Policy Overview

Local Government Roles

- Local governments purchase, design, develop, and maintain local parks and recreation facilities.

Policy Tools

Provide parks and recreation opportunities in all neighborhoods

Many communities lack the recreation opportunities needed by a changing population. Facilities that provide easy access to seniors, youth, people with disabilities, families, and low-income households can help to create a high quality of life for new and future residents.

Provide park and trail connections

Communities can partner with a variety of organizations and funding agencies to explore and implement opportunities to connect parks and trails through new non-motorized connections—including trails and wayfinding, or signage.

Partner with community organizations to provide and support recreational opportunities

When local resources are not available, communities can explore partnerships with



community groups and nonprofits to groups and nonprofits offer recreational opportunities for children and families.

Provide or improve barrier-free access at all parks and recreational facilities

Communities are required to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which provides minimum standards for accessibility, and many recreation plans region-wide identify compliance with ADA standards as a community goal. However, ADA standards are considered the “bare minimum” of what’s required to provide access, and compliance with these standards does not ensure access for a wide range of people with disabilities. Some communities are instead striving for universal accessibility, often with support

from grant dollars, which encourages spaces and facilities to be designed to be used by the widest range of people possible .

Recreation: Policy Connections

Basic Needs

| | What are related issues? | What local policy tools are available? |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Healthy lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% of residents region-wide are obese; and a number of counties experience obesity rates that are higher than the statewide rate. Obesity is closely connected with lifestyle issues like physical activity, which is impacted by access to safe and enjoyable recreational facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide parks and recreation opportunities in all neighborhoods Provide park and trail connections |
| Income and employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obesity among those in poverty is of particular concern, as national studies show that those in poverty are more likely to experience obesity and related disease. Issues associated with recreation access and costs. Many individuals are priced out of activities like fitness programs or classes, biking, or skiing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with community organizations to provide and support recreational opportunities Provide parks and recreation opportunities in all neighborhoods Provide park and trail connections |
| Accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational opportunities that are accessible to people with disabilities are limited. And, as the population ages, recreation needs will shift more towards passive forms of recreation—like walking trails—with an increased need for barrier-free and universally accessible recreation facilities. Many recreation opportunities are focused on water and other natural resources, which may be difficult to access for those in wheelchairs, and due to terrain and other environmental features, there are limited trails that provide universal or barrier-free access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide or improve barrier-free access at all parks and recreational facilities |

Child & Family Welfare

Abuse and neglect •

Childhood development •

Natural Resources: Policy Overview

Local Government Roles

- Local governments purchase, design, develop, and maintain parks and recreation facilities.
- Local and county governments administer and enforce some environmental regulations.

Policy Tools

Zoning for environmental protections and enhancement

A wide variety of zoning techniques provide important environmental protections to wetlands, shorelines, water bodies, and other natural resources.

Provide or improve barrier-free access at all parks and recreational facilities

Communities are required to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which provides minimum standards for accessibility, and many recreation plans region-wide identify compliance with ADA standards as a community goal. However, ADA standards are considered the “bare minimum” of what’s required to provide access, and compliance with these standards does not ensure access for a wide range of people with disabilities. Some communities are instead striving for universal accessibility, often with support



from grant dollars, which encourages spaces and facilities to be designed to be used by the widest range of people

Natural Resources

Basic Needs

What are related issues?

Healthy lifestyles

- An environment free of hazards, such as secondhand smoke, carbon monoxide, allergens, lead, and toxic chemicals, helps prevent disease and other health problems.

Accessibility

- Many recreation opportunities are focused on water and other natural resources, which may be difficult to access for those in wheelchairs, and due to terrain and other environmental features, there are limited trails that provide universal or barrier-free access

What local policy tools are available?

- Zoning for environmental protections and enhancement
- Provide or improve barrier-free access at all parks and recreational facilities
- Consider and incorporate universal access at parks and recreational facilities

Behavioral Health

What are related issues?

Substance abuse/ addiction

Mental health care and treatment

What local policy tools are available?

Child & Family Welfare

What are related issues?

Abuse and neglect

Early childhood development

Domestic violence

What local policy tools are available?

Making Connections: A Local Decision Checklist

When making decisions about new policies, public improvements, or projects, local governments can use the following checklist to help assess what impacts their decisions will have on the community development issues that most directly impact community health, safety, and welfare.

| | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Do policies, investments, strategies, or projects enhance transportation access through features such as: | | |
| Locations close to existing services, jobs, and housing? | | |
| Existing or planned transit routes that provide timely connections? | | |
| Additional sidewalks or bike paths to connect neighborhoods to jobs, services, or shopping? | | |
| Greater accessibility for individuals with disabilities? | | |
| Do policies, investments, strategies, or projects enhance housing access through features such as: | | |
| Locations close to existing services, jobs, and housing? | | |
| Greater affordability to low- and moderate-income households and the workforce? | | |
| Energy efficiency? | | |
| Diversity of housing types, including apartments, townhomes, small homes, condos, duplexes, or fourplexes? | | |
| Opportunities to rehabilitate deteriorated housing? | | |
| Do policies, investments, projects, or strategies enhance access to food through features such as: | | |
| Improved access to fresh foods ? | | |
| Opportunities to locate food outlets near residential areas? | | |
| Do investments, projects, or strategies enhance access to food through features such as | | |
| Additional or improved recreation opportunities in or near residential neighborhoods? | | |
| Additional or improved non-motorized transportation connections to or between parks, residential areas, and commercial/employment centers? | | |
| Additional or improved barrier-free access or universal design? | | |
| Have policies, investments, projects, or strategies sought and incorporated input from: | | |
| Vulnerable and/or affected populations? | | |
| Nearby residents? | | |
| Community organizations and human services providers? | | |
| Do investments, projects, or strategies address impacts on: | | |
| Basic needs? | | |
| Behavioral health? | | |
| Child and family welfare? | | |

Making Connections: Local Policy Impacts & Tools for Community Health, Safety, and Welfare

DRAFT

This section provides guidance for local governments and community stakeholders that are exploring community development and local policy impacts on community health, safety, and welfare issues.

Some tools can kill multiple birds: for instance, improved street connectivity can have impacts in a wide range of community health, safety, and welfare issues.



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