



Healthy Cities Toolbox

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ABOUT SCAG

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the nation’s largest Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), representing 6 counties, 191 cities and more than 19 million residents. The SCAG region is home to a diverse population and a variety of built and natural environments. SCAG is responsible for developing Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) or Connect SoCal. The multimodal transportation and land use strategies have many co-benefits for improving health outcomes and present opportunities to ensure investments result in equitable health outcomes and benefit all populations in the region.

DEFINING PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. While a doctor treats people who are sick, those working in public health try to prevent people from getting sick or injured in the first place. Public health outcomes are understood to be the product of the Social Determinants of Health (Figure 1), or the circumstances in which people are born, live, work, play, and age. Economic opportunities, government policies, and the built environment all play a role in shaping these circumstances and influencing public health outcomes. Importantly, many public health outcomes are influenced by agencies that do not have public health as a core mission, such as transportation and land use planning agencies.

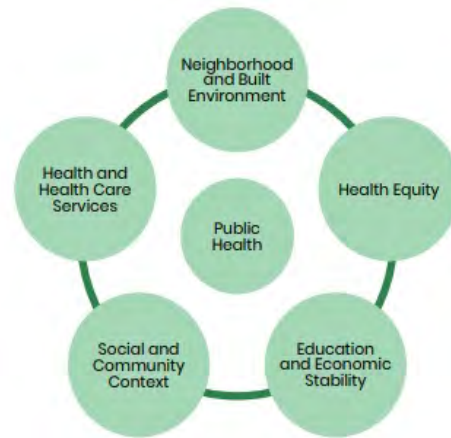


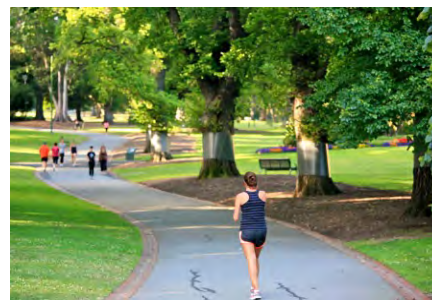
Figure 1: Social Determinants of Health

PURPOSE OF HEALTHY CITIES TOOLBOX

The **Healthy Cities Toolbox** supports local planning or policy processes that identify and implement opportunities to advance plans, projects, programs, and policies that improve community health. The Toolbox presents recommendations that may be effective in addressing public health impacts. These actions and strategies were identified through a review of literature and recent planning activities. Proposed actions and strategies could be effective for addressing public health impacts both across the region and within disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

TOOLBOX USER GUIDE

The **Healthy Cities Toolbox** provides recommended actions and strategies and can be used as a checklist of possible considerations during plan, project, or program preparation. It is intended to help inspire planners to devise practices and approaches that are pertinent to local health conditions and needs. It examines seven different public health focus areas, which are shown on the next page.



PUBLIC HEALTH FOCUS AREAS



Accessibility to Essential Services



Affordable Housing



Air Quality



Climate Change



Economic Opportunity



Physical Activity



Transportation Safety

EXAMPLE: ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES - EDUCATION

Education can lead to better jobs with improved compensation and benefits such health insurance, which can in turn lead to better access to quality health care. Higher earnings can also allow workers to afford better quality housing and help them maintain healthier diets. Students in high poverty schools are twice as likely to be chronically absent as students in low poverty schools. Chronic absenteeism has been shown to have significant negative impacts on student performance and graduation rates, which impact future job prospects.

Recommended Practices and Approaches for Improving Access to Education

Expand affordable, local e-bike, and scooter share program to increase the access to school.

In 2018, the City of Santa Monica launched a new [Shared Mobility Pilot Program](#) with four operators – Bird, Lime, Lyft, and Uber – managing the city’s e-bike and scooter share.

Establish and maintain routes to schools by developing and sustaining [Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\) programs](#) supporting safe and convenient ways for children to walk, bike, or take public transit to school.

Some local examples: [Regional SRTS program in San Bernardino County](#), [City of Los Angeles SRTS program](#), [Imperial County SRTS program](#).

Provide free bus access to youth.

Some local Examples: [Riverside Transit Agency \(RTA\) free ride program](#), [Metro’s Fareless System Initiative](#).

Preserve and expand affordable housing in neighborhoods with high-performing schools through proactive policies (e.g., [inclusionary zoning](#)), enforcing fair housing laws, and dismantling exclusionary land-use policies.

Santa Monica passed an [inclusionary zoning policy for its downtown area](#) in 2017. Some other local examples include: [City of Claremont Inclusionary Housing Program](#), [City of Irvine Inclusionary Housing Ordinance](#).

For more information visit: <https://scag.ca.gov/public-health>

