

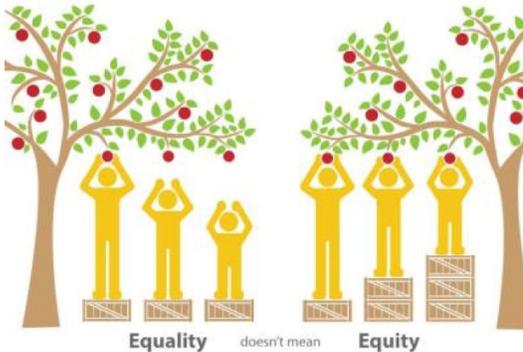
# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



## PLANNER'S PORTFOLIO

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Healthy communities are places where the healthy choice is the easy choice for everyone who lives, works, or visits. This means more than just the absence of illness and rather focuses on creating healthy lifestyles. The design of a community directly affects the ability of people to live a healthy lifestyle.



A truly healthy community starts with equity. Equity goes beyond merely providing equal access for all people; rather, it focuses on the ability of all to reach the goal of a healthier lifestyle. It acknowledges that different people may need different levels of assistance or tools to live healthier and that no one should be left behind.



### Physical Activity

Communities that create inviting places for residents, workers, and visitors to exercise or play and encourage people to walk or bicycle to destinations increase physical activity. [Community trails](#) and [complete streets](#), which provide safe spaces for all driving, bicycling, walking, and public transit, make it easier and safer for people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday life.



### Social Connections

Social isolation is a contributing factor of many chronic diseases, affecting all ages but particularly for the aging population. Community gathering places, such as town squares, libraries, downtowns, and popular parks, help to increase social activity, particularly for those vulnerable to isolation. Additionally, real estate and demographic [trends](#) in recent years also show that homebuyers desire a vibrant community with social activities.



### Healthy Food

Physical and economic access to a variety of fresh, healthy, and quality [food options](#) is also an important facet of creating a healthy community. Residents, workers, and visitors can access healthy food from grocery stores, a local farmer's market, produce stand, or at a local deli, restaurant, or employer's cafeteria. It becomes easier for people to eat healthy when these foods are readily accessible and affordable.

### Healthy Community Checklist

When communities consider actions through the lens of health, it is easy to see how many decisions affect the health of residents, workers, and visitors. When considering a policy, plan, or project, prioritize those which will:

- Make the community livable for all people regardless of age, income, or physical ability
- Make people feel safer in the community
- Encourage people to go outside and be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day
- Allow people to get around easier without a car
- Offer more opportunities to get to know neighbors
- Create healthier and more affordable food choices
- Encourage a cleaner environment

