The RCHCN mission is to make the healthy choice the easy choice in all Riverside County cities through the advancement of health in all policies.

Let us feature your story, event or resource in HCN Connect!

Do you have a plan, program or endeavor designed to improve your community’s health? Do you have a resource you would like to share with the HCN? Please let us know!

Please submit ideas for the next publication by: The 15th of Each Month
Meeting of the Minds

This blog post was originally published in the Meetings of Minds blog. Written by Miguel A. Vazquez, AICP

Ten years ago, I found myself immersed into a branch of urban planning that at the time was just beginning to emerge at the local, state and national levels: Healthy Communities Planning. At the Riverside County Department of Public Health; now known as the Riverside University Health System—Public Health (RUHS-PH), my role entailed transforming the way planners thought, viewed and applied public health considerations into their practices. For a number of years, leading public health thinkers and practitioners such as Dr. Richard Jackson and Dr. Tony Iton made the case that the built environment can have more influence on individual and community health than our own genetic makeup. As such, under such a premise, planners have a central role in improving the health of our communities through planning and design. Many of them, however, have yet to discover that potential.

A few prominent efforts enable me to navigate this uncharted territory. First, RUHS-PH forged a non-traditional collaboration with the County of Riverside Planning Department to prepare and include a Healthy Communities Element into the General Plan (also known as the Comprehensive Plan or Master Plan). Second, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Healthy Riverside County Resolution directing all county agencies and departments to adopt preventive measures to address obesity and chronic diseases. Third, through a Building Healthy Communities grant from The California Endowment, we worked directly with the City of Coachella during its General Plan Update, specifically on the preparation of the Health and Wellness Element. We were also working with a coalition of health advocates to elevate quality of life in the eastern Coachella Valley. These efforts were unique and bold at the time, to the extent that Michael Osur, one of the masterminds behind this work, earned top accolades from the American Planning Association (APA) in 2013.

Around the same time, the California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) also began updating its General Plan Guidelines which considered public health as a new topic, and APA released the results of a survey revealing the extent to which planners were including health considerations into their planning documents and policies. Both of these efforts materialized into the inclusion of guidelines for preparing a Health Element into the General Plan and the APA’s Healthy Communities Policy Guide respectively in 2017. These examples illustrate how a network of organizations and individuals championing healthy communities planning continues to grow, connect and making a difference. Very slowly, however the paradigm shift—where health in all policies is a natural consideration—is happening. In order to prioritize it, planners, decision-makers, health advocates and the community at large must recognize—and hopefully master—the following three considerations.

1. Places are a Determinant of Health

Anyone involved or interested in solving the most pressing and challenging issues of our time should be familiar with the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) concept. According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the SDOH are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Conditions (e.g., social, economic, and physical) in these various environments and settings (e.g., school, church, workplace, and neighborhood) have been referred to as “place.” In addition to the more material attributes of “place,” the patterns of social engagement and sense of security and well-being are also affected by where people live. Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on population health outcomes. Examples of these resources include safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, availability of healthy foods, local emergency/health services, and environments free of life-threatening toxins.

For urban and regional planning purposes, the SDOH represent the vital signs of a community or a region and for that reason, planners and decision-makers should understand their implications. The California Planning Roundtable published a paper on the subject to introduce the concept to members of the American Planning Association California Chapter and beyond.
2. Thinking and Acting “Upstream” is an Essential Component for Healthy Community Planning and Development

**Upstream intervention**, a widely known public health concept, is the idea of taking preventive actions that would steer away from potential detrimental health effects such as chronic diseases, injuries, and premature death. To put it in simple terms, all things being equal, staying physically active, eating healthy foods, drinking clean water and breathing clean air, can prevent a whole host of chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, heart and lung diseases and cancer. Upstream intervention can be expressed as enacting policies to ensure access to a clean and complete environment of health.

**The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative** (BARHII), a coalition of the San Francisco Bay Area’s eleven public health departments, offers a **framework** suggesting that the most upstream point of action to achieve a healthy community starts with addressing social inequalities resulting from discrimination and implicit bias that may be embedded through policy or custom in our institutions and reflected in our communities’ living conditions.

3. Data is Crucial for Elevating Healthy Communities as a Priority

If the health of cities and regions depend on individual health and their behaviors, planners should be aware of the health status of the communities they are planning for. Only then can a valid healthy community plan can be developed. Today, a plethora of health data sources can be found on the internet. Sites such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation **County Health Rankings**, the **National Equity Atlas**, the **California Healthy Places Index** and **CalEnvironScreen** are a few examples of reliable and credible sources of SDOH data that can be used for assessing health status, trends and for devising preventive measures and interventions.

To conclude, I depart with the following reflection: as our communities continue to grow and continue to be influenced by demographic and markets shifts, technology invention, and innovation and a new era of mass information platforms, the challenges ahead appear to be greater than ever. Healthy community planning may be the approach that can help us retain and elevate the very essence of our humanity. It must be prioritized.

To learn more about Meeting of the Minds and to read the original blog post, please visit https://meetingoftheminds.org/3-guidelines-for-prioritizing-healthy-communities-in-urban-planning-30347
This year’s American Planning Association’s National Planning Conference (NPC19) took place in the City of San Francisco from April 13 to April 16. These conferences provide students and prospective planners exposure to ideas and a variety of scenarios of what could happen in the future through planning. The sessions included themes such as environmental justice, land-use control, revitalization projects on public spaces, and many more. There were also informative city tours available.

One of the sessions that stood out to me was The Off-Port Land Use Environmental Justice Impacts provided by Beth Altsuler, David C. Sloane, Jesse N. Marquez, and Sylvia Betancourt. The learning outcome of this session was to understand thorough story telling how the community and agencies use various methods for analyzing environmental justice, economic, health, and community impacts of port and port-related land issues in the LA Port.

The session Strategic Downtown Revitalization with Stakeholders focused on inclusiveness and social justice. The panel session examined how strategic planning with very short-term pro bono design teams and intense stakeholder involvement made a difference in downtown and commercial center revitalization. They showed examples of downtowns that used APA’s Community Planning Assistance Teams (CPAT’s). The learning outcomes was to understand opportunities for strategic interventions for downtown and commercial center revitalizations and identify when and how short-term external pro bono planning teams can be most helpful to communities.

Other sessions didn't just focus on land projects but touched upon policy perspectives of planning such as the Plan4Equity Forum. A team of RUHS-PH staff that included Michael Osur, Miguel A. Vazquez, AICP and myself actively participated in leading roles during the session. This was a deep dive were planners were able to provide input and suggestions to the APA’s leadership and the APA Diversity Committee on what steps are missing and what could be added or implement the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the Social Equity Policy Guide, and other related policies.

Lastly, as for the Exhibit Hall, there were 70+ planning-related products and services. Some of the booths that stood out to me of most were CalTrans, AARP, Esri, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Raimi + Associates. The exhibitors were very informative and provided a variety of swag such as magazines, brochures, keychains, etc. There was also a hallway showcasing posters about projects and research done from both, professionals in the planning field and students in from urban and regional planning programs.
**What is Active Transportation?**

Active transportation means using human power to get to and from location to another. Active transportation most popular of active transportation include walking and cycling. Can you think of other forms of active transportation?

Useful ways to put Active Transportation into use:
- Travel to work
- Travel to school
- Travel to see friends and family
- Lite Shopping

Active Transportation can be beneficial to your health and to the environment.

For more information - [Active Transportation Information](https://www.behealthyberrien.org/active-transportation/)

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**The Benefits of Quitting Tobacco**

The Benefits of Quitting Tobacco Start Almost Immediately!

20 Minutes After Quitting:  
Your heart rate drops to a normal level.

12 to 24 Hours After Quitting:  
The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.  
The risk of heart attack is significantly reduced

2 Weeks to 3 Months After Quitting:  
Your risk of having a heart attack begins to drop.  
Your lung function begins to improve.

1 to 9 Months After Quitting:  
Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

1 Year After Quitting:  
Your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

5 to 15 Years After Quitting:  
Your risk of having a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's.  
Your risk of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, or esophagus is half that of a smoker's.

10 Years After Quitting:  
Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker's.  
Your risk of getting bladder cancer is half that of a smoker's.  
Your risk of getting cervical cancer or cancer of the larynx, kidney or pancreas decreases

15 Years After Quitting:  
Your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that of a nonsmoker.

For more information on Quitting Tobacco - [Quit Smoking](https://www.americanlungassociation.org/)
Easy Spinach and Fruit Salad
Fruits and Vegetables Series

Spinach and Fruit Salad Ingredients:
- 3 cups fresh spinach
- ½ cup blueberries
- ½ cup strawberries cut in halves
- ½ cup fresh pineapple chunks
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- Red onion- add to desired taste

For Dressing:
- 2 tablespoons EVOO
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:
1. In a medium bowl add the fresh spinach, blueberries, strawberries, pineapple, walnuts and red onions.
2. Toss everything together.
3. In a small jar, stir the salad dressing ingredients (olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper).
4. Gently toss the salad ingredients with the dressing.
5. Enjoy!

15 Benefits to Shopping Local Farmer Markets

1. Farm fresh: Fruits and vegetables you find at the grocery store are often several days old before they even reach the produce aisle.
2. Organic and non-GMO: Many farmers participating in local farmer’s markets use organic methods to grow their produce.
3. Seasonal: There’s a move in the United States towards a more seasonal style of eating where one eats what is locally available in season. Some nutritionists and scientists suggest eating seasonally available foods is better for your body, because humans ate seasonal produce for thousands of years before refrigerated shipping changed all that.
4. Ripe: Offerings at the farmer’s market are generally picked at the peak of their ripeness when the plants’ natural sugars are at their peak. Eating produce when it is ripe not only tastes better, but it also provides the best nutrition possible.
5. More nutritious
6. Tastes better
7. Non-industrial: Just like everything else in this country, industrialized farming has become the norm. These giant factory farms grow massive amounts of produce, shipping it all over the world. Giant corporations run industrial farms, driving local family farms out of business.
8. Affordable: For the sheer nutrition you get from farmer’s market produce compared to supermarket produce, it's a really good value.
9. Variety: The farmer’s market offers a dizzying array of fruits and vegetables.
10. Variety: The farmer’s market offers a dizzying array of fruits and vegetables.
11. Supports local family farms
12. Conserves fuel
13. Better for the environment
14. Provenance: When you shop at the farmer’s market, you know where your food has been.
15. Social: The farmer’s market is a great place to gather. Visiting is a fun family activity, and you can meet members of your community. Some farmer’s markets even offer entertainment and classes, making it a terrific way to while away a fall afternoon.

For more information on this recipe go to: primaverakitchen.com

For more information on local farmer markets in the area: Riverside County Farmer Markets
NEW LOCATION

Striving for Healthy Communities: SB1000 & Environmental Justice

SAVE THE DATE

Riverside County Health Coalition

Wednesday, July 17, 2019
10 a.m. to noon
Registration at 9:45 a.m.

Community Action Partnership of Riverside County
2038 Iowa Ave Suite B-101,
Riverside, CA 92507

Click HERE for more information and to RSVP!

Questions? Contact:
Dleibrandt@ruhealth.org
Coalition For Tobacco Free Communities- Serving Riverside County

Join Us on Facebook!
We are excited to announce the launched a new social media page (Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities – RC). As a follower of the page you will see the latest tobacco news, community announcements, and opportunities to become involved! To follow us on Facebook, click here; then click “Like” at the top of the page.

Coalition For Tobacco Free Communities- Serving Riverside County
2019 Meeting Dates

These meetings are typically held every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Please note locations vary from meeting to meeting to accommodate all coalition members as the coalition serves all of Riverside County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 20, 2019</td>
<td>12:00 – 2:00 PM</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 19, 2019</td>
<td>12:00 – 2:00 PM</td>
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Thank you for reading HCN Connect!