



# Social Determinants of Health

## Social & Community Context

Social Determinants of Health are the non-medical factors that affect people's health, like socioeconomic status and geographic location, either by affecting their exposure to health risks or their ability to access healthcare.

**Social and community context** refers to residents' cultural, civic, and recreational access and participation, promoted through community spaces. However, community spaces are often distributed inequitably. *Places with higher income inequality tend to have higher mortality rates and can also be linked to lower social capital.*



### How does zoning impact Social & Community Context?

Zoning determines if and where community and third spaces can be located, affecting how residents can access them.

Zoning can affect the profitability of new developments that include community spaces, preventing or limiting these spaces from being built.

### Components of Social & Community Context

**Collective efficacy:** A community's shared belief and/or vision that allows community members to work together to address community issues.

**Third spaces:** Places where community-building can happen, like community centers, parks, plazas, or even publicly accessible private spaces.

**Civic participation:** Actions that community members take to help or improve their community, such as volunteering. *A study of adults age 60 and older found that volunteers had a lower risk of cognitive impairment.*

## What are some zoning solutions?

- Requiring or incentivizing the inclusion of community spaces, like parks, community centers, or other third spaces, in new developments
- Requiring or incentivizing contributions from developers to local funds that create and maintain parks, community centers, or other community spaces
- Form-based codes that regulate development by building appearance and character, rather than by internal uses, creating a cohesive sense of place.
- Complete Streets policies that allow people to safely and easily walk or bike to their destination, promoting opportunities for natural social interaction.
- Ensure that community-driven planning is at the forefront of the planning process, guiding a project from inception to completion.



## How can CBOs help?

- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that create more community spaces. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Provide height or density bonuses for developments that incorporate community spaces
  - Dedicate new or existing impact fees to specific funds for public space creation and maintenance
  - Reuse excess road capacity for parklets, streateries, and other outdoor spaces in the public right-of-way, especially along commercial corridors with ground-level retail
- Promote and facilitate opportunities for civic participation, including volunteering and advocacy
- Encourage and support community engagement efforts in the planning process for new housing and other development projects. This might mean acting as a connector or convener to empower residents to provide insight into the community's past, present, and future identity of their community.

## CASE STUDY: 11th Street Bridge Park (Washington, DC)

Led by [Building Bridges Across the River](#), the 11th Street Bridge Park will convert a former bridge into an elevated greenway, adding a variety of green spaces and community spaces, including an environmental education center, food and dining, kayak/canoe launches, and a performance space. Developed and designed by community members over nearly a decade of engagement and relationship re-building, this project aims to promote community-building while incorporating community investments in workforce development and affordable housing.



# Social Determinants of Health Neighborhood & Built Environment

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**The built environment** is the buildings, infrastructure, and other physical aspects that shape your neighborhood, and is regulated by zoning and transportation policies. *Many of these policies disproportionately harm underresourced groups. The Interstate Highway system, for example, was **routed** through many communities of color, resulting in higher rates of asthma and other health conditions for these communities—trends that continue today.*



## How does zoning impact the Built Environment?

Zoning determines if and where schools, healthcare facilities, job centers, grocery stores, and other needs and amenities can be located.

Zoning determines if and where sources of pollution, like industrial & other noxious facilities, can be located.

Zoning determines how closely homes and destinations can be located, which impacts vehicular traffic and associated noise and air pollution.

## Components of the Built Environment

**Access to everyday needs & amenities:** Your ability to access jobs, schools, healthcare facilities, parks, community centers, etc. in a reasonable amount of time and via a range of transportation options. *People who **commute long distances** tend to have higher rates of sleep disorders, obesity, and heightened stress levels.*

**Access to healthy food:** Your ability to afford and access fresh produce (in grocery stores, farmers markets, or community gardens) and reliable transportation to it. *Young adults with limited access to healthy food are **41 percent more likely** to develop heart disease later in life.*

**Exposure to climate & environmental hazards:** Your ability to go about your daily activities with minimal exposure to environmental hazards like flooding, heat, excessive noise, and hazardous chemicals and pollutants in air and water. ***145 million** Americans are at risk of noise-related hypertension, which increases heart disease risk.*

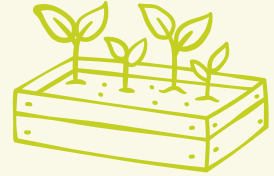
## Components of the Built Environment (Cont'd)

**Access to quality housing:** Your ability to live in a home without exposure to health risks due to overcrowding, lack of climate control, or exposure to lead, mold, asbestos, or other health hazards. *Children exposed to lead have worse cognitive functioning more than 50 years later.*

**Access to safe streets & public transit:** Your ability to safely and conveniently walk, bike, or take public transit to your destination. *Traffic fatalities killed almost 43,000 Americans in 2022 alone.*

### What are some zoning solutions?

- Allowing grocery stores, community gardens, and neighborhood corner stores as acceptable uses in or near residential neighborhoods by-right
- Strengthening building codes and enforcement to reduce exposure to hazardous housing & environmental hazards
- Requiring greenery to manage stormwater runoff & urban heat
- Establishing and implementing a Complete Streets policy



### How can CBOs help?

- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that guide the development of a healthier built environment. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Add small-scale agriculture as an allowable use by-right in residential zones
  - Require a proportion of each lot to be reserved for green space, including green roofs, in new developments
  - Establish bicycle parking requirements for certain residential and commercial zones
- Lead or support efforts to create community gardens, establish farmers' markets, or otherwise create or bolster local food systems
- Activate vacant lots, parks, or other potential community spaces with programming, community events, public art, etc.

### **CASE STUDY:** Habitat for Humanity Clallam County (Sequim, WA)

In the small town of Sequim in western Washington, [Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County](#) found that restrictive zoning regulations stymied its affordable housing efforts, limiting its projects to large single-family homes on large lots. In 2021, they led a yearlong advocacy effort that led to the city allowing multifamily housing in more residential areas. As a result, Habitat Clallam County was able to build 52 affordable homes, rather than the two they would've been allowed to under former zoning rules.

# Social Determinants of Health

## Economic Stability



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**Economic stability** involves job security, which means avoiding unemployment or underemployment, and housing stability, which means having a safe and comfortable place to live without moving frequently. *Underresourced communities face greater difficulty achieving and maintaining economic stability. For example, during the pandemic, Black, Hispanic, and Asian households were far more likely to **fall behind** on housing payments than white households.*



### How does zoning impact Economic Stability?

Zoning determines where job centers can be located, affecting access to stable employment.

Zoning determines where housing is located, what types can be built, and how much can be built, affecting housing costs, the availability of the right size housing, and the prevalence of safe housing.

### Components of Economic Stability

**Stable housing:** Your ability to maintain a stable living situation in safe and comfortable housing, avoiding homelessness and the associated negative health effects. *Experiencing homelessness can result in mortality rates **9-10 times** higher than the general population.*

**Healthcare access:** Your ability to afford competent and accessible healthcare, including preventative care. *Only **55 percent** of Americans report they can afford quality healthcare.*

## What are some zoning solutions?

- Allowing small-scale commercial uses in residential neighborhoods to increase accessibility to stable jobs
- Allowing more housing in and near job centers by ending exclusionary zoning
- Utilizing land use tools to combat displacement, like community benefits agreements or community ownership models of housing (e.g. community land trusts).



## How can CBOs help?

- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that support access to stable jobs, stable housing, and healthy food. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Require a portion of commercial spaces to have smaller square footage (which small businesses can afford) in new developments in commercial or mixed-use zones
  - Establish a land bank that acquires and preserves tax-delinquent or otherwise underutilized land for affordable housing development via partnerships with non-profits
  - Add neighborhood-scale commercial uses (ex. clinics, retail, etc.) as allowable uses in residential zones
- Organize economic development initiatives, such as skills training, networking events, business incubators, entrepreneurship classes, etc.
- Create opportunities for stable housing, including by leading or supporting affordable housing developments, community land trusts, homeownership classes, and programs to connect people with other affordable housing programs and resources

### **CASE STUDY:** Emerald Development and Economic Network (EDEN) (Cleveland, OH)

**EDEN**, primarily in the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, provides housing solutions for those experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness with the goal of supporting people with a stable foundation to fulfill their aspirations. EDEN owns and manages housing for individuals and families with a mental illness and for chronically homeless individuals, while also providing rental assistance to people with disabilities and formerly homeless people.

Source: [edencle.org](http://edencle.org)





# Social Determinants of Health

## Health Care Access & Quality

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**Health care access and quality** refers to the ease of reach as well as the level and quality of healthcare services available. *Nationally, neighborhoods with prolonged high poverty or large Black populations had 2.5 times higher chance of lacking an ambulatory facility and 2.0 times higher chance of lacking a pharmacy, compared to majority-white areas.*



### How does zoning impact Access to Healthcare?

Zoning determines if and where hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and other healthcare facilities can be located, affecting how residents can access them.

Zoning plays a role in determining how sprawled communities are, and therefore, proximity to healthcare facilities and the time it takes for ambulances and emergency services to reach homes.

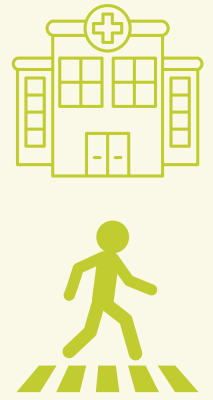
### Components of Access to Quality Healthcare

**Transportation to healthcare services:** Your access to reliable, convenient, and safe transportation that connects residents to healthcare facilities. *Transportation barriers and residential segregation tend to coincide with later diagnosis of certain medical conditions, like breast cancer.*

**Insurance access and usage:** Your ability to access and use quality health, dental, and vision insurance that is accepted by nearby healthcare providers. *Even those with health insurance may face barriers to health care access and quality; those on Medicaid may live in areas where few providers accept it.*

## What are some zoning solutions?

- Allowing healthcare facilities to be located within and nearby residential neighborhoods, so more people can easily access them.
- Allowing healthcare facilities, especially smaller ones like clinics and pharmacies located closer to neighborhoods, to have more flexible operating hours.
- Reducing or eliminating setbacks and parking requirements for healthcare facilities, so that people walking, biking, or taking public transit can more easily access them.



## How can CBOs help?

- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that increase access to quality healthcare. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Streamlined permitting process for health care facilities
  - Promoting and funding bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure near health facilities
  - Streamlined Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) to support pop-up health care centers
- Facilitate discussions between community members, local officials, and developers to promote access to healthcare facilities that serve community needs

### **CASE STUDY:** So Others Might Eat (SOME) (Washington, DC)

**SOME** provides holistic, whole-person care to community members, aiming to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness. In addition to affordable housing and workforce development programs, SOME provides full-service physical, mental, and behavioral health services, as well as emergency and social services.

Source: [some.org/services/healthcare/medical-services/](https://some.org/services/healthcare/medical-services/)

### **CASE STUDY:** Fallon Tribal Health Center (NV)

The **Fallon Tribal Health Center** operates, among other services, a mobile clinic to provide healthcare to members of multiple tribes in rural Nevada, where lack of transportation often hinders healthcare access. Serve over 20 people a month and operating over a 200 mile area, the mobile clinic can conduct primary care visits, administer vaccines, and conduct lab testing.



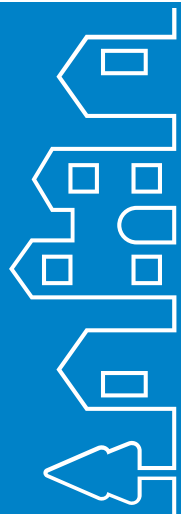


# Social Determinants of Health

## Education Access & Quality

Social Determinants of Health are the non-medical factors that affect people's health, like socioeconomic status and geographic location, either by affecting their exposure to health risks or their ability to access healthcare.

**Access to quality education** provides you with skills, connections, and credentials, all of which impacts your future health. However, access to quality education is often limited in under-resourced communities, where lower property values can result in less school funding. This creates disparities in educational outcomes. *For example, incoming high school students from lower-socioeconomic status families have average literacy skills 5 years behind higher-income students.*



### How does zoning impact Access to Education?

Zoning determines what types of housing are allowed in different neighborhoods, affecting affordability, property values, and school funding.

Zoning determines where schools and other educational facilities can be located, and how students can access them.

### Components of Access to Quality Education

**Upward mobility:** Your access to jobs with higher wages, better benefits, and fewer workplace health hazards. *Upward mobility results in fewer biological markers of stress.*

**Health literacy:** Your ability to obtain and understand personal health information, avoid health hazards, and prioritize preventative care.

**Social & emotional skills:** Your development of skills like self-awareness, relationship-building, and empathy in early childhood. *Participation in social-emotional learning can lead to a 10% decrease in distress like anxiety or depression.*

## What are some zoning solutions?

- Pro-housing policies that increase the number and types of homes available at multiple income levels, making it easier for teachers and school staff to find housing and for families to have access to high-quality school districts
- Allowing facilities that support education, like libraries, museums, tutoring centers, or maker spaces (for those learning trades), to be located within and nearby residential neighborhoods, so more people can easily access them.
- Complete Streets policies that allow students to safely and easily access schools via walking or biking, which promotes physical activity.



## How can CBOs help?

- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that increase housing affordability for teachers and school staff. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Add Missing Middle Housing types (e.g. duplexes, cottage courts) as allowable uses by-right in residential zones where single-family homes are the primary allowable use
- Advocate for zoning and land use policies that support schools to be sited closer to neighborhoods and families. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Add certain commercial uses (e.g. tutoring centers) as allowable uses in residential zones
- Advocate for safer walking and biking connections between students and schools. Specific policy asks or actions could include:
  - Require multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements (e.g. bike lanes, wider sidewalks, etc.) to be incorporated into regular road maintenance and expansion
- Lead or support walk or bike buses to help ensure students can safely get to school

### CASE STUDY: Bike Bus (Portland, OR)

Sam Balto, founder of [Bike Bus World](#) and a former elementary school physical education teacher, led a Bike Bus for Earth Day that allowed students to bike to school as a group, picking up kids along the way. After, students wanted to keep doing it—and other schools around the world also started similar initiatives.

Source: [bikeportland.org/2022/04/22/portlands-bike-bus-for-earth-day](https://bikeportland.org/2022/04/22/portlands-bike-bus-for-earth-day)

