



Where You Live Shouldn't Determine How Long You Live



Angela Knowles, PP, AICP
Candice Davenport, RN, BSN, MPH, MCHES, HO
Tara Kenyon, PP, AICP

New Jersey State League of
Municipalities
November 18, 2025, 2:00PM
Room 419

Tell Us About You!

- What is your role / title?
- Do you know your planner / health official?
- Planners: Have you...
 - Worked with a County or Municipal Health Official to advance a planning project?
 - Ever used health data to make land use decisions?
 - Ever incorporated health outcomes as metrics for planning goals?
- Health Professionals:
 - Does your health department cover a sole municipality, region or county?
 - Have you worked with a County or Municipal Planner to advance a health project?
 - Were you involved in your municipality's most recent Master / Comprehensive Plan?
 - In your efforts to improve health, have you ever tried to make land use changes, either through ordinances or policies?
- ALL: Where do you see the overlap between health outcomes and land use?





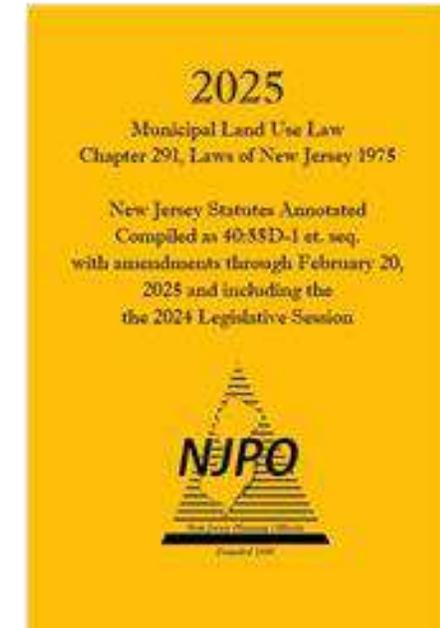
Municipal Land Use Law

40:55D-2 Purpose of the act.

2. Purpose of the act. It is the intent and purpose of this act:

a. To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use or development of all lands in this State, in a manner **which will promote the public health**, safety, morals, and general welfare

“Health” is mentioned only once in the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. There is no mention of Health Equity



Plan4HealthNJ Goal

To advance public health through land use planning by:

- Continuing prior efforts to bring public health and planning together in New Jersey,
- Building the relationship between Planners and Health Departments at the municipal and county level at the start of every project;
- Focusing on the health of the people; and
- Providing funding to towns to help them make the connection.



Plan4HealthNJ Scope

- Create a series of Toolkits to guide municipalities in incorporating health data into master plan
- Develop an Interactive Mapping Tool to research health and land use data
- Establish a website as a clearinghouse for health and planning related data and resources
- Establish a Grant program for towns to obtain financial and technical resources to integrate public health into municipal planning.
- Develop a model Comprehensive Master Plan Public Health Element



Health as the Foundation for Planning

“Scientists have found that the conditions in which we **live** and **work** have an enormous impact on our health, long before we ever see a doctor. ”

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



Health as the Foundation of Planning

- Planning and Health began working together to achieve a shared goal:

Public Health Officials

- Infrastructure's connection to spreading disease
- Improving people's social, physical, and mental health

Planners

- City as a dynamic built environment
- Restructuring the basis of sanitation in cities
- Sewer survey planning
- Townsite consciousness

Health & Planning - an on-again, off-again relationship

19th & early
20th centuries

Focus on preventing the spread of infectious diseases through community infrastructure

Mid-20th century
to about the
1990s

- Economic boom led to focus on developing housing, roads, schools.
- Less focus on environmental quality and individual quality of life... until it was almost too late.
- Greater public health mission to address infectious and chronic diseases.

Last 20 years,
“Culture of
Health” model

- Social (Structural) Determinants of Health
- Universal Design Concept
- Environmental Justice
- Land Use and Zoning as contributor to average life expectancy
- Equity NOT Equality – unique needs of vulnerable populations

How Incorporating Health Into Planning Can Make a Positive Health Impact

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Community Goal	Planning Strategies for Implementation	Health Impact
 <p>Improve Air Quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micromobility strategies • Zoning restrictions on warehouse/tractor-trailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in respiratory and heart illnesses and associated challenges • Reduction in instances of cancer
 <p>Equitable Access to Parks, Open Space, and Farmland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster Zoning Ordinance • Study of preserved and targeted open space (municipal-level) • Reduced permitting fees for Farmers Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in cases of obesity • Improved mental health and overall well-being • Improved nutrition
 <p>Improve Public Engagement with Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary times and meeting formats of Planning/Zoning Boards, Council • Provide digital review and comment for Comprehensive Master Plan elements, site plans, ordinances, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback is heard from a greater sample of the community • Specific health and equity needs are brought forth • Actual health needs can be addressed
 <p>Address Impacts of Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of flood mapping and flood zones to reduce repetitive loss • Increase tree replacement requirements and monetary contributions to Shade Tree Fund through Site Plan and/or Trees Ordinances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in ambient temperatures in urban areas • Safer and more stable homes • Reduction in spread of pathogens and pollutions during floods

Making Changes at the Local Level

What local planners need to know:	What local health departments need to know:
HealthyNJ 2030 and State Health Improvement Plan	New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan
Community Health Needs Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans	Local Comprehensive Master Plan and Its Elements
Health in All Policies Resolution	Using health data to help planners identify areas of health inequities
Powers of the Board of Health	Powers of the Planning Board
Find common ground	
How to apply basic public health considerations or conduct a Health Impact Assessment for future development/ redevelopment plans	
Work together on Civic Engagement so that the community plays an active role in the decision making and planning process affecting their health and physical environment	



Cooperating Organizations

- American Planning Association – NJ
- American Society of Civil Engineers – NJ
- American Society of Landscape Architects – NJ
- New Jersey Association of County & City Health Officials
- NJ Association of Planning and Zoning Administrators
- New Jersey Department of Health
 - Office of Local Public Health
 - Office of Nutrition & Fitness
- New Jersey Department of Transportation
 - Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs
- New Jersey Future
- New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association
- New Jersey Planning Officials
- NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center, Rutgers
- New Jersey Society of Architects
- New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers
- Rutgers Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation
- Rutgers Center for State Health Policy
- UMDNJ - School of Public Health
 - Office of Public Health Practice
- US Green Building Council – NJ

Funded by grants from the University of Washington Population Health Institute to the

New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and

the New Jersey Association of County & City Health Officials.

Download this brochure at www.njasla.org or www.njaccho.org

HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN



What is it?

WHAT YOU CAN DO.

Components of Healthy Community Design



Compact, Inclusive, Active Communities

Compact inclusive communities locate homes, businesses, stores, schools, houses of worship, and parks close to each other to promote walking, biking, and transit use. They are accessible and socially equitable for all residents. Active communities incorporate physical activity into daily life. Not all communities are the same, but opportunities to make your residents more active exist through good community design.

Diverse Employment Opportunities

Healthy communities provide for a diverse economy that offers a range of employment opportunities. Planning and zoning should promote jobs that enable all residents to live more productive and healthier lives.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and convenient transit stops along tree-lined, well lit streets encourage people to leave their cars at home. They promote safe routes to schools and improve air quality by promoting energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Neighborhood Parks and Greenways

Parks and greenways provide areas for people to enjoy a wide range of physical activities. Open spaces should be evenly distributed throughout the community so people have access within 1/2 mile of their homes and businesses. In addition, open spaces provide wildlife habitat and reduce flooding by absorbing stormwater.

Urban Agriculture

All residents need access to healthy foods. Transforming underutilized and vacant lots into community gardens, urban farms, and farmers' markets enhances neighborhood character and provides access to healthy, affordable, fresh, locally grown food. They offer an opportunity for children to learn the importance of healthy, sustainable foods and where it is grown.

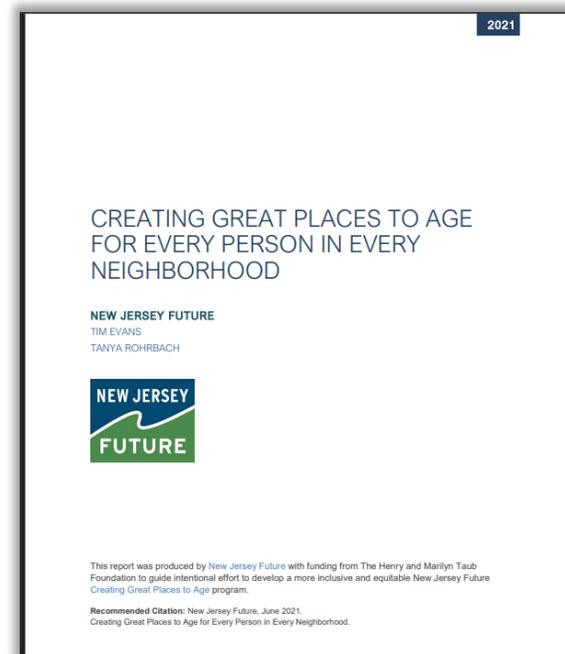
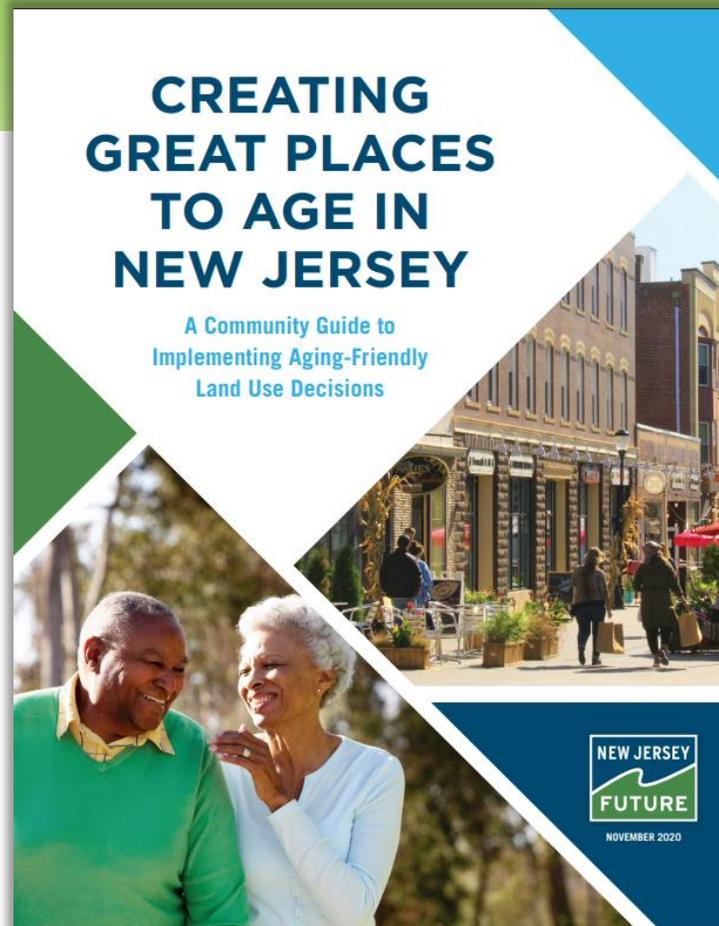
Healthy Buildings

Americans spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, where concentrations of pollutants are often much higher than outside. Healthy buildings reflect good choices in design, materials, ventilation, and consumer products such as household furnishings, personal care items, and cleaning products.

Efforts to Combine Planning and Public Health



Efforts to Combine Planning and Public Health



Efforts to Combine Planning and Public Health



Efforts to Combine Planning and Public Health



The screenshot shows the official website for Healthy Community Planning NJ. At the top, it identifies itself as the 'OFFICIAL SITE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY' and includes the names of Governor Phil Murphy and Lt. Governor Tahesha Way. Navigation links for 'NJ.gov', 'Services', 'Agencies', 'FAQs', and 'Get Updates' are provided, along with a search function. The main header features the 'Department of Health' and the 'NJ Health' logo. A secondary navigation bar includes links for 'Home', 'Municipal Reports by County', 'Using HCP-NJ', 'Glossary', 'FAQs', 'About HCP-NJ', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area has a large banner with the title 'Healthy Community Planning NJ' and the subtitle 'A collaboration between NJDOH and NJDEP'. A 'Learn More About HCP-NJ' button is located at the bottom of the banner. The background of the banner is an aerial photograph of a suburban area with green trees and a road.

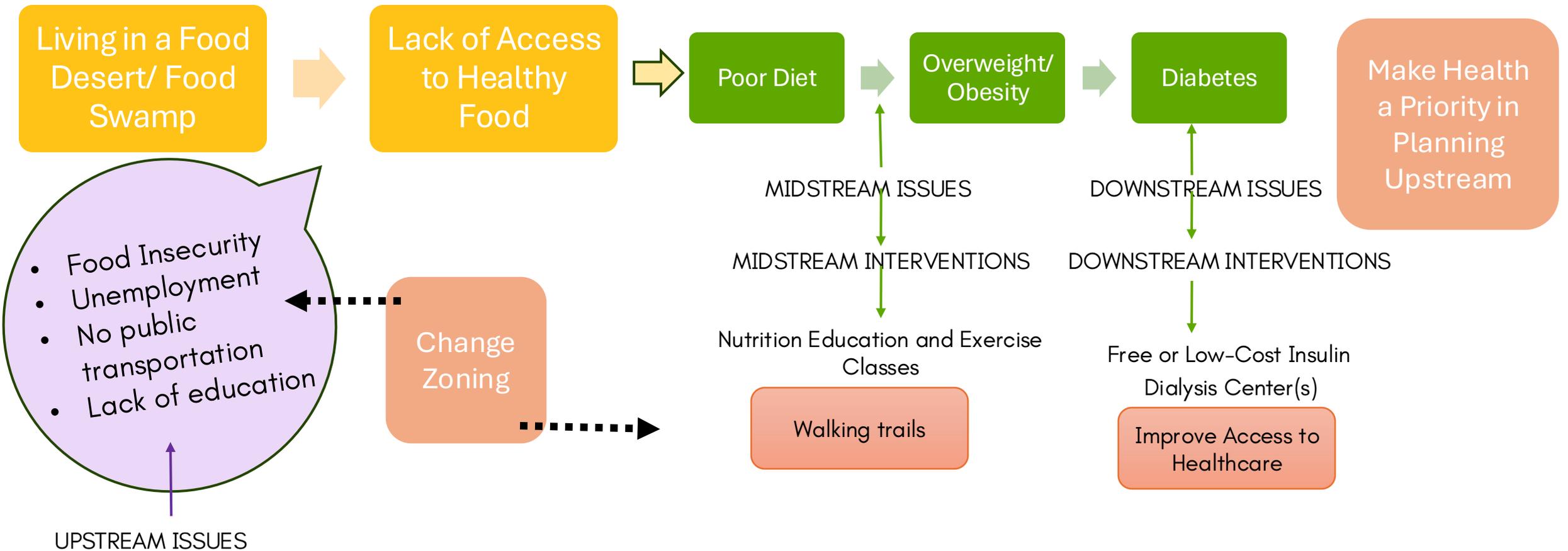


Policy and Civic Engagement



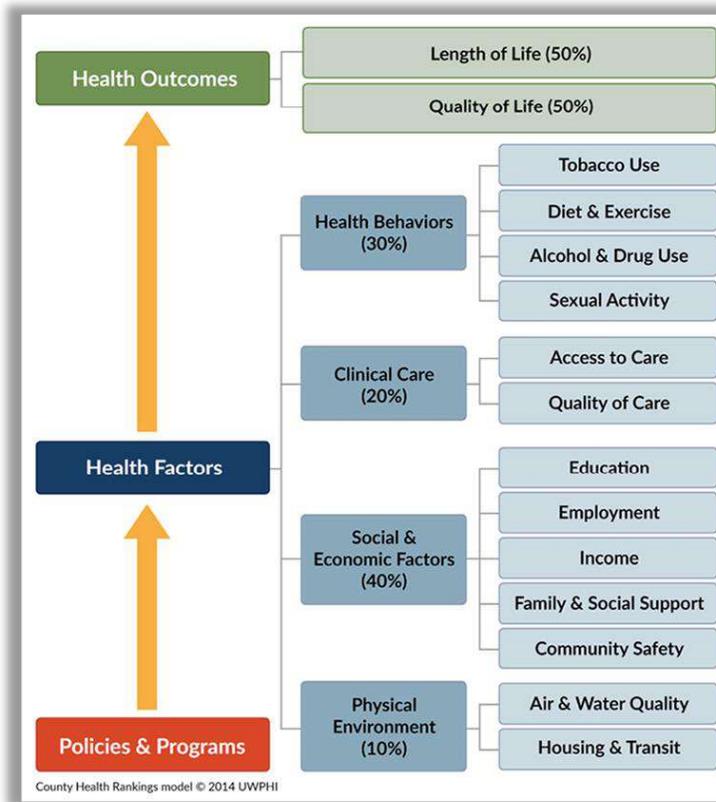


Planning is Upstream, Public Health Outcomes are Downstream

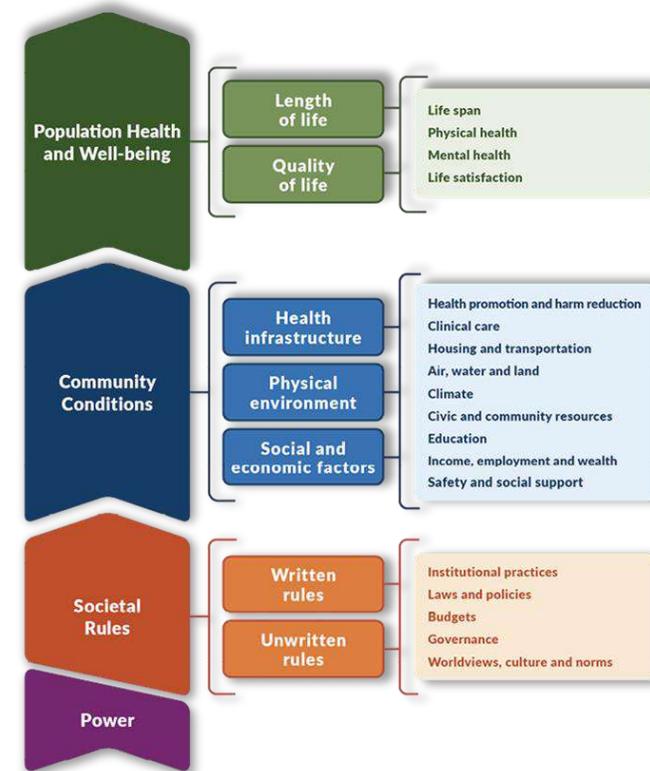




Civic Engagement and Power



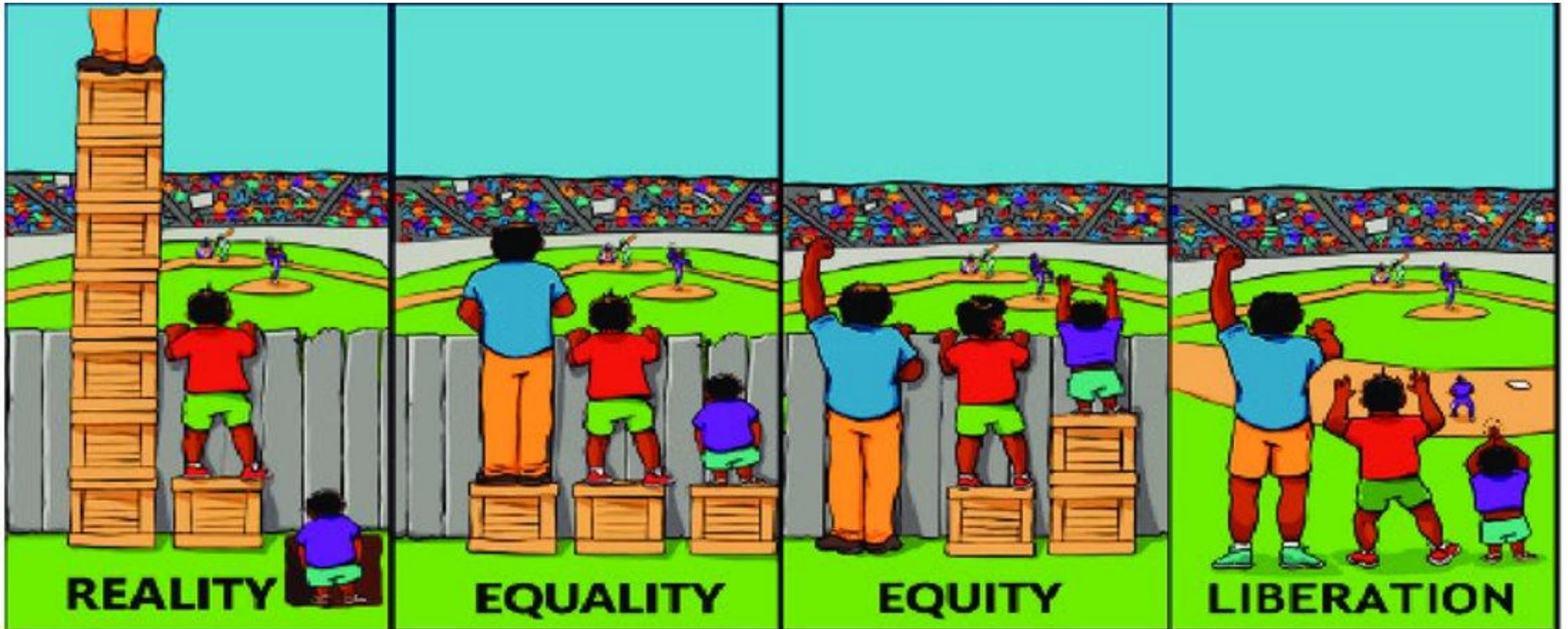
2014 County Health Rankings
Model of Health



2025 University of Wisconsin Population
Health Institute Model of Health

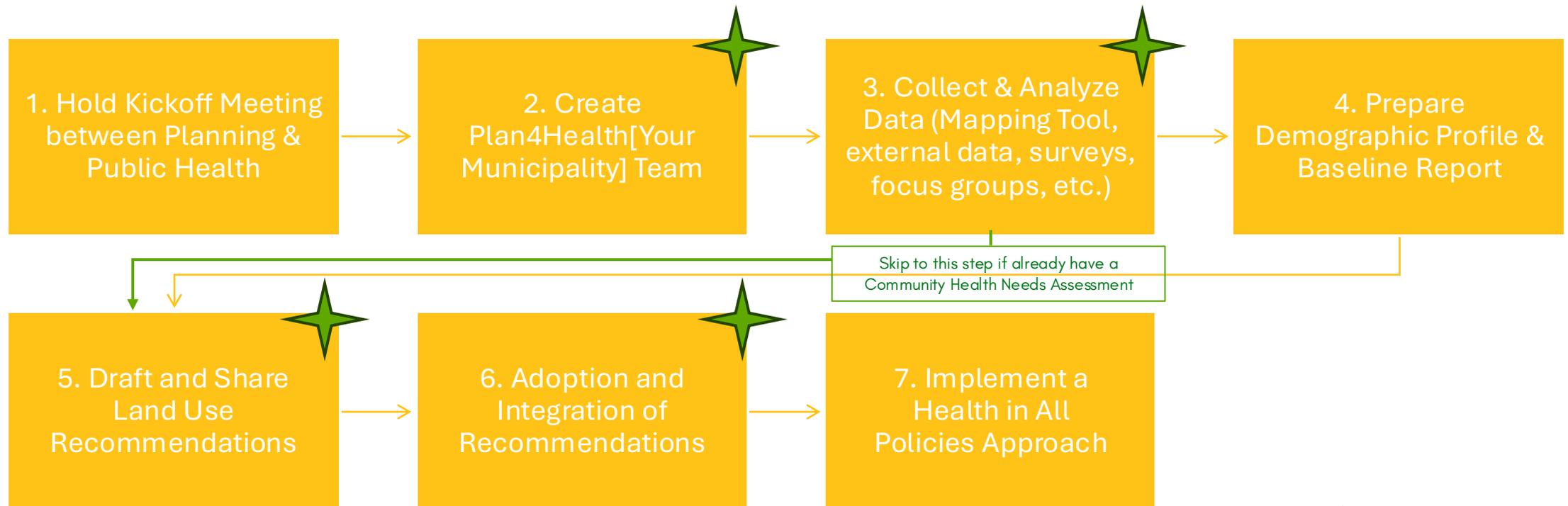


Civic Engagement and Power





Plan4HealthNJ Process



Toolkit Development



**Access to Healthy
Foods & Agriculture**



**Environmental Health
& Sustainability**



**Healthcare
Access**



**Housing & Community
Development**



Mobility



**Policy & Civic
Engagement**



**Data & Mapping
Tools**

Toolkits and Subtopics

Environmental Health and Sustainability

- Air Pollution
- Flooding & Stormwater
- Heat Islands & Shade Trees
- Land Contamination & Brownfields
- Noise Pollution
- Parks & Open Space
- Potable Water and Wastewater

Housing and Community Development

- Buffering Healthy Communities
- Climate Resilience & Disaster Preparedness
- Healthy Housing Units
- Healthy Neighborhood Design
- Housing for Affordability & Stability
- Housing for Vulnerable Populations
- Human Services
- Lifecycle Housing

Healthy Food & Agriculture

- Equitable Access to Healthy Food Choices
- Equitable Access to Locally Grown Agriculture
- Achieving Equitable Access to Healthy Foods through Land Use and Planning
- Minimizing Tradeoffs Between Basic Human Necessities
- Increasing and Creating Opportunities
- Make Growing Food at Home Easy for Everyone
- Conserve Natural Resources

Mobility

- Car-free Culture
- Connected Housing
- First Mile / Last Mile
- Safe and Accessible Biking for All
- Safe and Accessible Walking for All
- Traffic Safety and Injury Prevention
- Walk-Bike Network

Healthcare Access

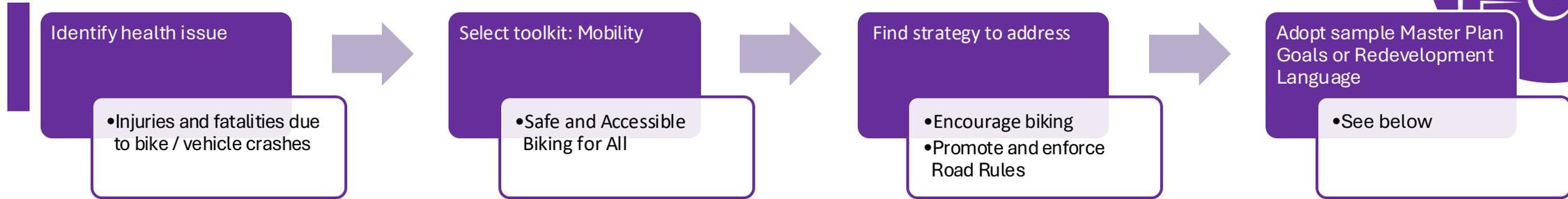
- Digital Equity
- Emergency Room Wait Time & Capacity
- Land Use Planning and Zoning Healthcare
- Mobility and Accessibility to Healthcare

Plan4HealthNJ Website Overview

- About Us
- Events / News
- Toolkits
 - Section - Introduction
 - Subtopic 1
- Funding Resources
- Additional Resources
- Contact

- Description
- Conducting Analysis
- Data and Mapping Resources
- Sample Master Plan Goal
- Implementation Strategies and Case Studies
 - Rural
 - Suburban
 - Urban
- Redevelopment Plan Sample Language
- Resources

Toolkit Example: Mobility



Sample Master Plan Goals

To provide safe and efficient opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to access destinations, to encourage people to bike rather than drive to destinations to reduce traffic congestion and environmental impacts from automobiles, and to promote economic, environmental, and personal health and well-being. Ultimately, to reduce fatal and serious injuries to zero.

1) Ensure the bicycling system is safe, functional, and comfortable for all users, reducing injuries and crashes.

- a. **Objective:** Increase bike networks where everyone can bike with confidence, regardless of ability, connecting communities to all uses.
- b. **Metric:** Through planning and/or implementation, a bicycle network connects bicyclists to their destinations and facilitates these types of trips:
 - Access to work from residential areas;
 - Active transportation to and from school;
 - Bicycling and walking links to transit;
 - Recreation and physical activity opportunities; and
 - Access to grocery stores, government buildings, health care, and other essential services.

Redevelopment Plan Sample Language

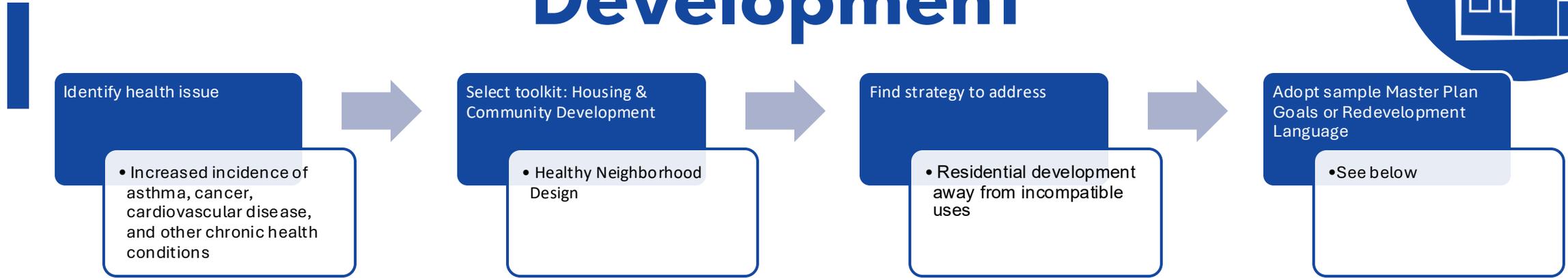
This Redevelopment Plan outlines regulations for including bicycle facilities Parking Standards section:

9.F. BICYCLE PARKING

1. Bicycle Parking shall be provided in accordance with the Bicycle Parking Schedule.

	Indoor	Outdoor
Residential with five or more units	1 per 3 units	
Retail, service, & restaurants 6,000 sqft to 20,000 sqft		1.5 space per 1,000 sf of GFA
Retail, service, & restaurants greater than 20,000 sqft		1 space per 4,000 sf of GFA
Municipal or cultural facilities		1 space per 2,000 sf of GFA
Schools		4 per classroom
Offices		1 per 9,000 sqft of GFA

Toolkit Example: Housing & Development



Sample Master Plan Goals

Ensure that existing and future housing is protected from negative impacts of surrounding land uses and environmental conditions through careful siting, buffering, and design standards, thereby safeguarding public health, improving neighborhood quality, and supporting long-term community resilience.

1) Residential Development Away from Incompatible Uses

- a. **Objective:** Plan for new residential development away from incompatible uses such as heavy industry, major highways, rail corridors, and other facilities that generate significant noise, pollution, or safety risks.
- b. **Performance Metric:** Achieve 100% of new residential units sited outside of standardized incompatibility buffers - at least 1,000 feet from heavy industry, 500 feet from major highways, and 300 feet from active rail corridors - within 10 years, measured through municipal GIS land use analysis and site plan approvals.

Redevelopment Plan Sample Language

Purpose

The purpose of this [Ordinance/Redevelopment Plan] is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents by minimizing exposure of existing and future housing to negative impacts generated by surrounding land uses and facilities. These impacts may include noise, pollution, traffic, light, or other hazards associated with industrial operations, major transportation corridors, utility infrastructure, and high-intensity commercial activities.

Applicability

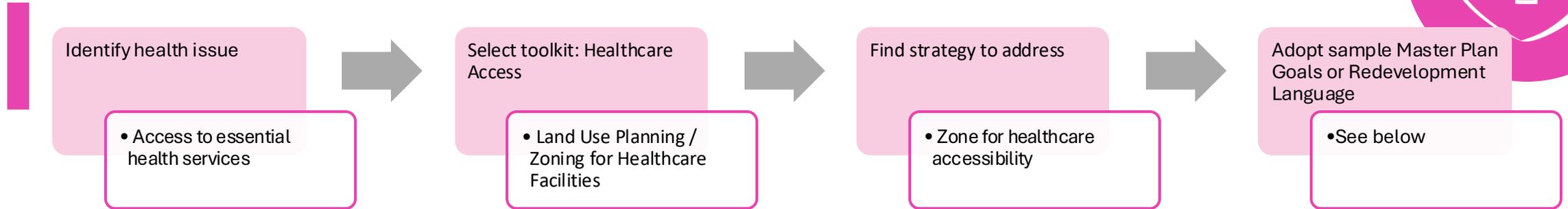
These standards shall apply to all development and redevelopment within the designated Redevelopment Area. Compliance shall be demonstrated through site plan submissions, landscape plans, and post-construction reporting.

Objectives and Standards

Separation from Incompatible Uses:

New residential development shall not be located within 500 feet of active heavy industrial operations, solid waste transfer stations, or permitted air quality facilities unless adequate mitigation measures are demonstrated. Existing housing within this distance shall be eligible for municipal or developer-supported remediation programs such as façade upgrades, indoor air quality improvements, or sound insulation.

Toolkit Example: Healthcare Access



Sample Master Plan Goals

To establish minimum accessibility standards for healthcare facilities through zoning requirements, so that every neighborhood has reliable access to primary and preventive care, emergency services, and mobile facilities. This includes prioritizing transportation and physical accessibility for all residents, and promoting equitable access by addressing community deficiencies while respecting local cultures and dynamics.

1) Zone for healthcare accessibility

- Objective: Include hospitals and primary care facilities as permitted uses within residential and mixed-use zones so that new residential and/or mixed-use developments are within an average of 20 minutes or 5-8 miles of primary care services and include “community health spaces” in the form of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Specialized and Mobile Health Clinics, Public Housing Primary Care Centers, and Neighborhood Care in multiple locations throughout the municipality.
- Performance Metric: Within 10 years, 60% of new residential and mixed-use development in urban areas are within ½ mile of a healthcare facility or community clinic; measurable through GIS, planning reports and documents, land use board resolutions, and building permits, inspection reports and Certificate(s) of Compliance.

Redevelopment Plan Sample Language

Purpose

The purpose of the [Ordinance/Redevelopment Plan] aims to address the lack of healthcare access in communities by transforming vacant or underutilized properties and/or structures into essential public healthcare facilities. It seeks to overcome geographic, financial, and mobility barriers to healthcare by facilitating new construction and adaptive reuse projects, thereby creating vital healthcare infrastructure. Ultimately, the Ordinance promotes equitable access to health services and improves community well-being by strategically integrating healthcare accessibility into land use planning, reducing travel times, and enhancing residents' overall health.

Applicability

Compliance shall be demonstrated through site plan approvals, legal compliance monitoring, financial reviews, building permits and inspections and post-construction reporting. All development and redevelopment projects within the designated Redevelopment Area must adhere to these standards.

Required Objectives and Standards

Zone for Healthcare Accessibility:

All zoning regulations must include provisions that prioritize healthcare accessibility by designating specific zones for the development of healthcare facilities and ancillary uses. These regulations shall ensure that such facilities are strategically located within a 6-8 mile radius of residential areas. This approach will minimize travel burdens and enhance access to medical services. Zoning efforts should prioritize proximity to underserved communities.

Toolkit Example: Environmental Health and Sustainability



Sample Master Plan Goals

To mitigate the negative impacts of heat islands through a comprehensive approach of enhancing the tree canopy, reducing impervious cover, and implementing green infrastructure as a first-line of stormwater management.

1) Develop and Sustain a Cost-Effective, Resilient Shade Tree Canopy

- a. **Objective:** Expand and maintain a diverse, climate-resilient tree population through strategic planting and efficient maintenance practices that reduce urban heat, improve air quality, and enhance public health outcomes.
- b. **Performance Metric:** Achieve a 10% increase in canopy coverage in heat-vulnerable zones within 10 years, measured using NJDEP or i-Tree canopy assessments.

Redevelopment Plan Sample Language

Purpose

Redevelopment within the [Area] shall reduce heat island impacts and improve public health by expanding the shade tree canopy, promoting sustainable landscaping, reducing the maximum allowable impervious coverage and lot coverage by development, and integrating green infrastructure into site and streetscape design.

Applicability

These standards shall apply to all development and redevelopment within the designated Redevelopment Area. Compliance shall be demonstrated through site plan submissions, landscape plans, and post-construction reporting.

Required Objectives and Standards

Tree Canopy Expansion

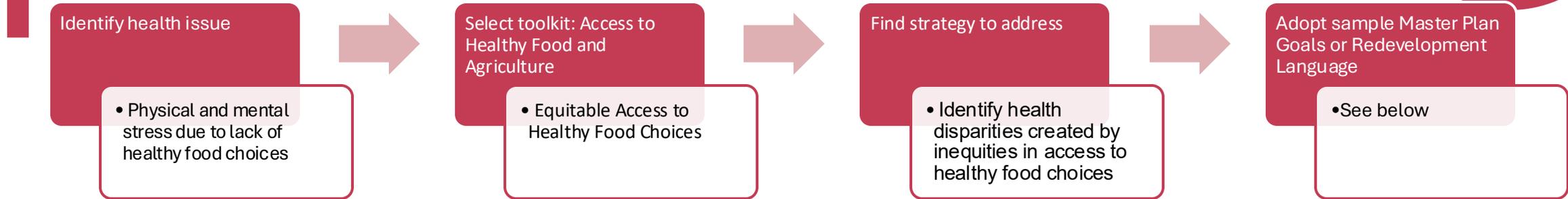
- **Requirement:** The project shall result in a net increase in shade tree canopy coverage of **no less than 10%** from pre-development conditions within the Redevelopment Area.
- **Measurement:** Canopy coverage shall be calculated using NJDEP or i-Tree Canopy analysis pre-development, post-construction, and at 5 years after issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

Species Selection and Diversity

- **Requirement:** A minimum of **80%** of newly planted trees shall be native or climate-resilient species as recommended by the NJ Forest Service or municipal Shade Tree Commission.

Diversity Standard: No more than **10%** of plantings may be of the same species, **20%** of the same genus, or **30%** of the same family....

Toolkit Example: Access to Healthy Food and Agriculture



Sample Master Plan Goals

To provide equitable access to healthy food choices across the entire community through strategic planning and community development.

1) Identify health disparities created by inequities in access to healthy food choices

- a. Objective: Through GIS analysis, study the existing and future locations of healthy food choices in connection with vulnerable populations, schools, and public transportation options to identify gaps in equitable access and to develop recommendations for projects, policies, and programs to mitigate these disparities.
- b. Performance Metric: Prepare mapping series, updated annually, that includes:
 - i. Location of healthy food choices (grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, food pantries, and other identified healthy food vendors) overlaid with municipal zoning
 - ii. Location of the items in the above in relation to identified vulnerable populations, schools, and overburdened census tracts
 - iii. Location of the identified vulnerable populations, schools, and overburdened census tracts overlaid with locations of healthy food options (identified through item i above) with public transportation stops, trails, and multi-modal pathways
 - iv. Outcomes Map, which highlights gaps in equitable access to healthy food choices, identified as areas where studied populations are lacking access by ¼ mile or more

Redevelopment Plan Sample Language

Purpose

Redevelopment within the [Redevelopment Area Name] shall include equitable access to healthy food choices and improve public health by ensuring development is compact and provides opportunities for grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, food pantries, and/or comparable healthy food vendors, especially those that accept SNAP/EBT, WIC, and other food assistance programs in connection with vulnerable populations, residential developments, walkability, and public transportation stops.

Applicability

These standards shall apply to all development and redevelopment within the designated Redevelopment Area. Compliance shall be demonstrated through site plan submissions, landscape plans, and post-construction reporting.

Required Objectives and Standards

Increase in Healthy Food Choice Sites

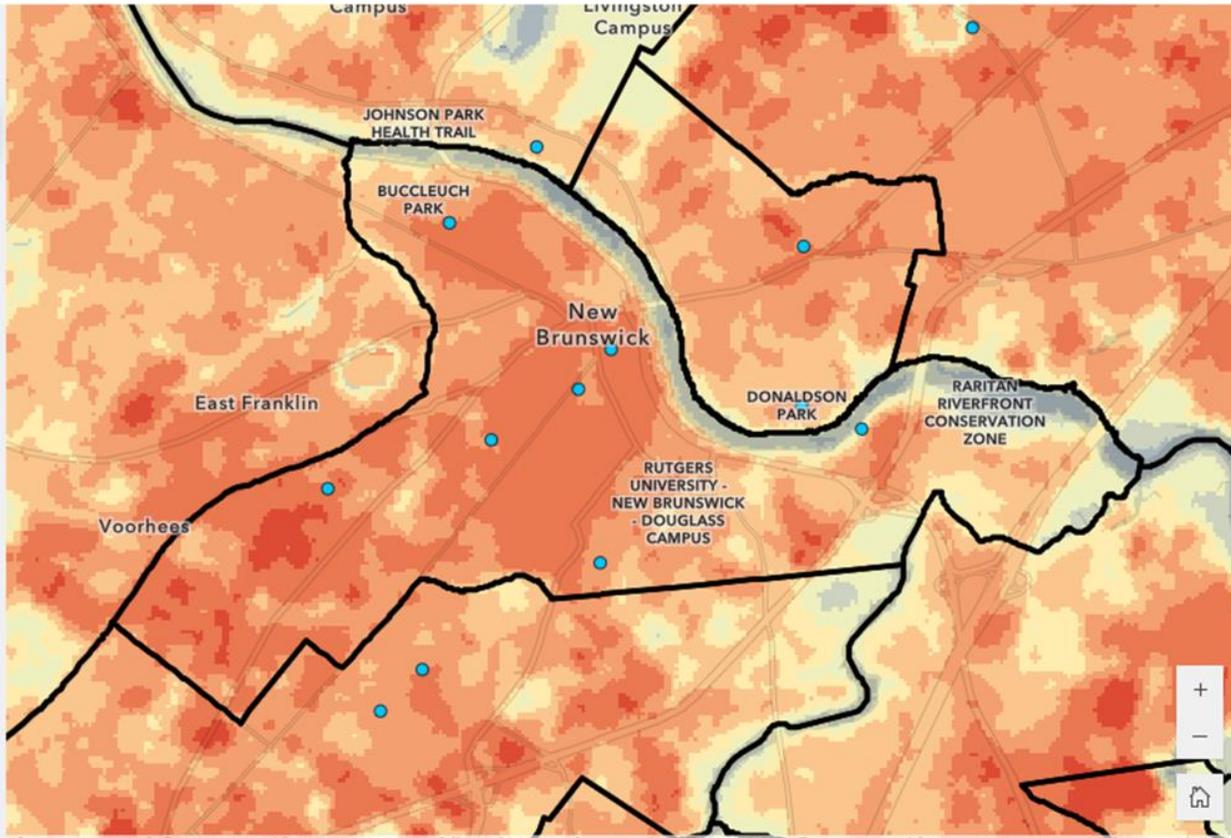
- **Requirement:** The project shall result in a net increase in the square footage of healthy food choice sites of **no less than 10%** from pre-development conditions within the Redevelopment Area.
- **Measurement:** The square footage of healthy Food Choice sites shall be calculated using analysis pre-development, post-construction, and at 5 years after issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy....

Data and Mapping Tools





- New Brunswick
- Search result
- Agriculture
 - CDC's PLACES
 - Public Health Indicators
 - Reference Labels
 - Roads
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - Transportation
 - Census/Demographics
 - Land Use
 - Select Amenities



Municipal Boundaries



Environment

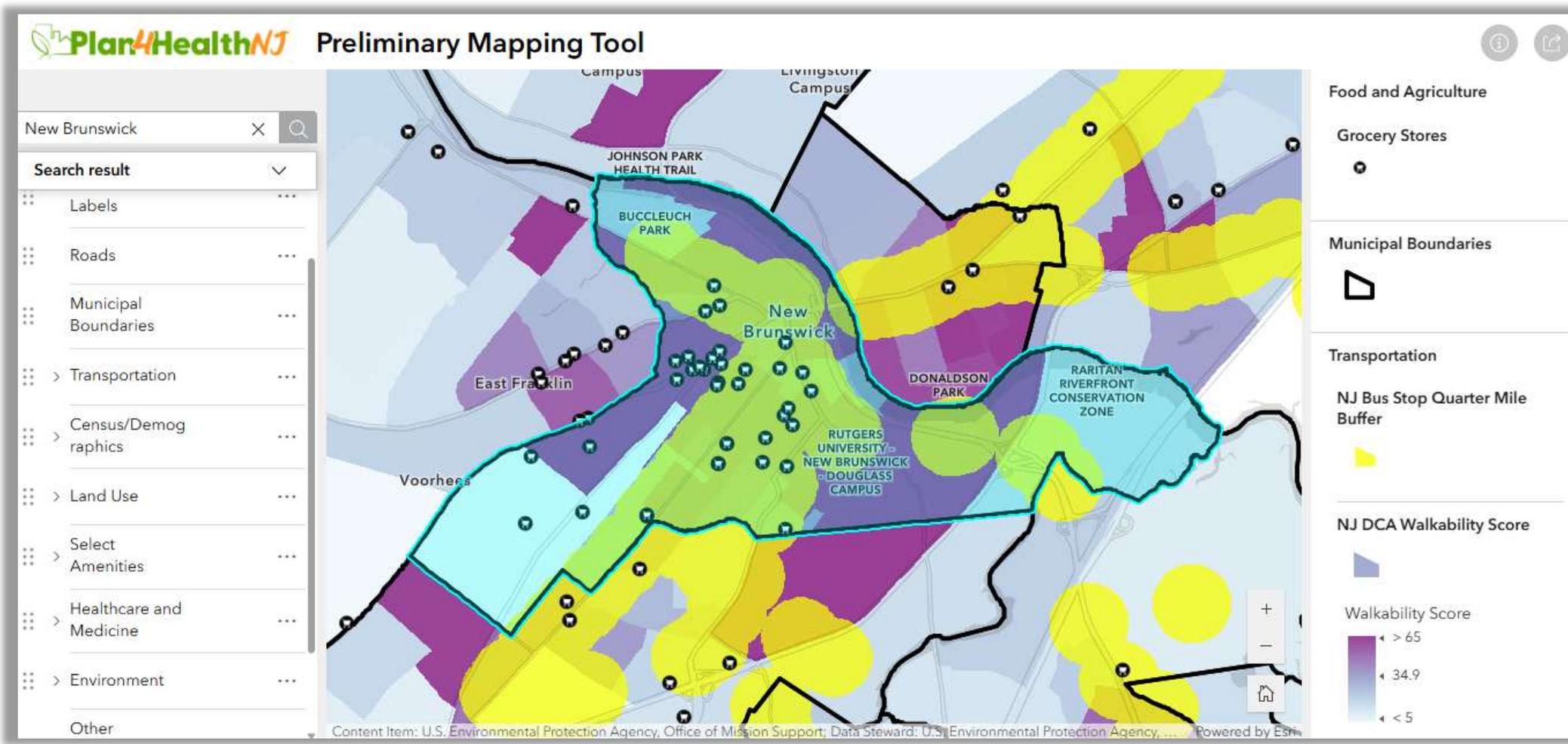
Air Quality and Heat

Public Places to Keep Cool in New Jersey

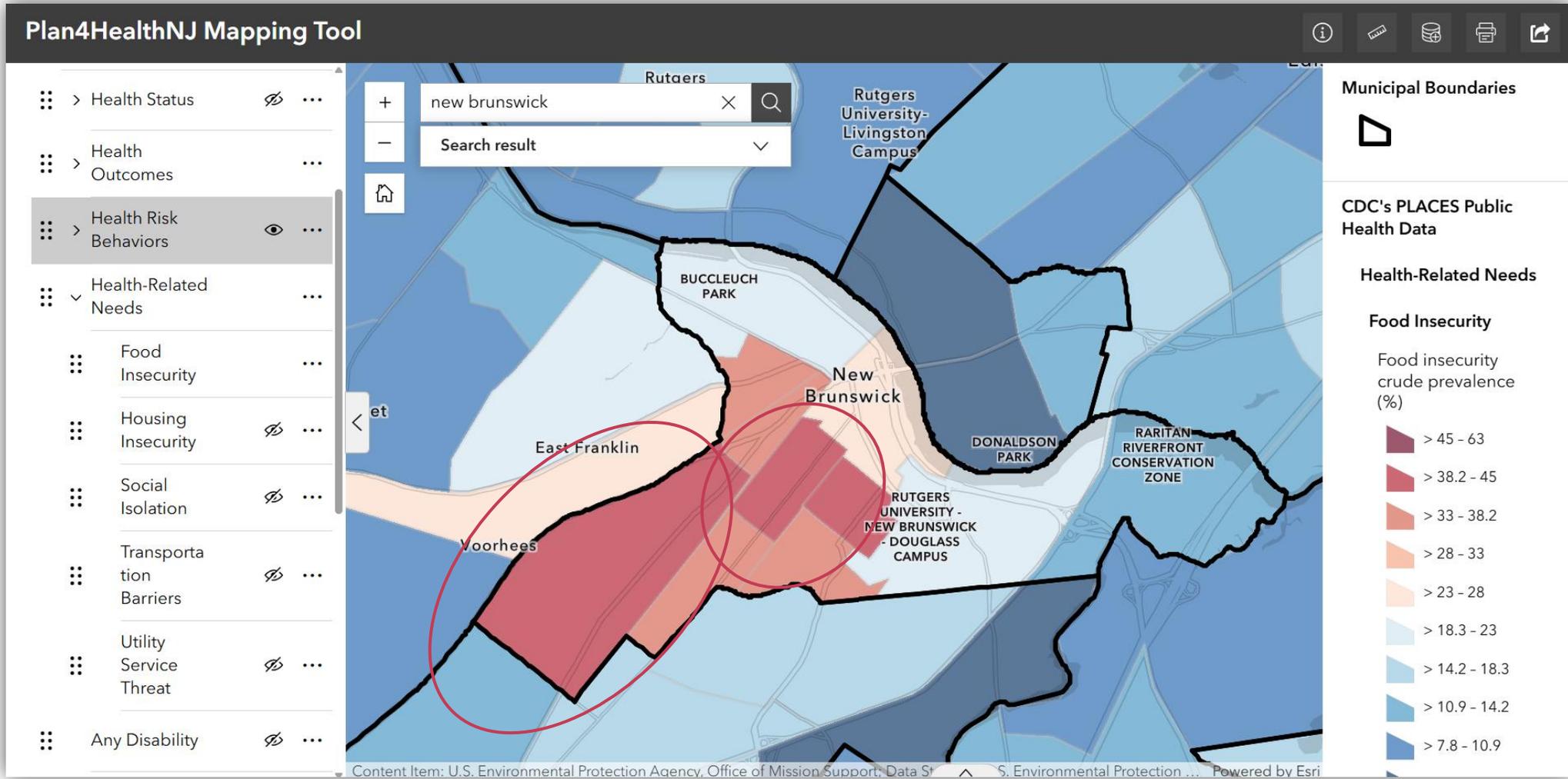


Urban Heat Islands and Land Surface Temperatures in New Jersey

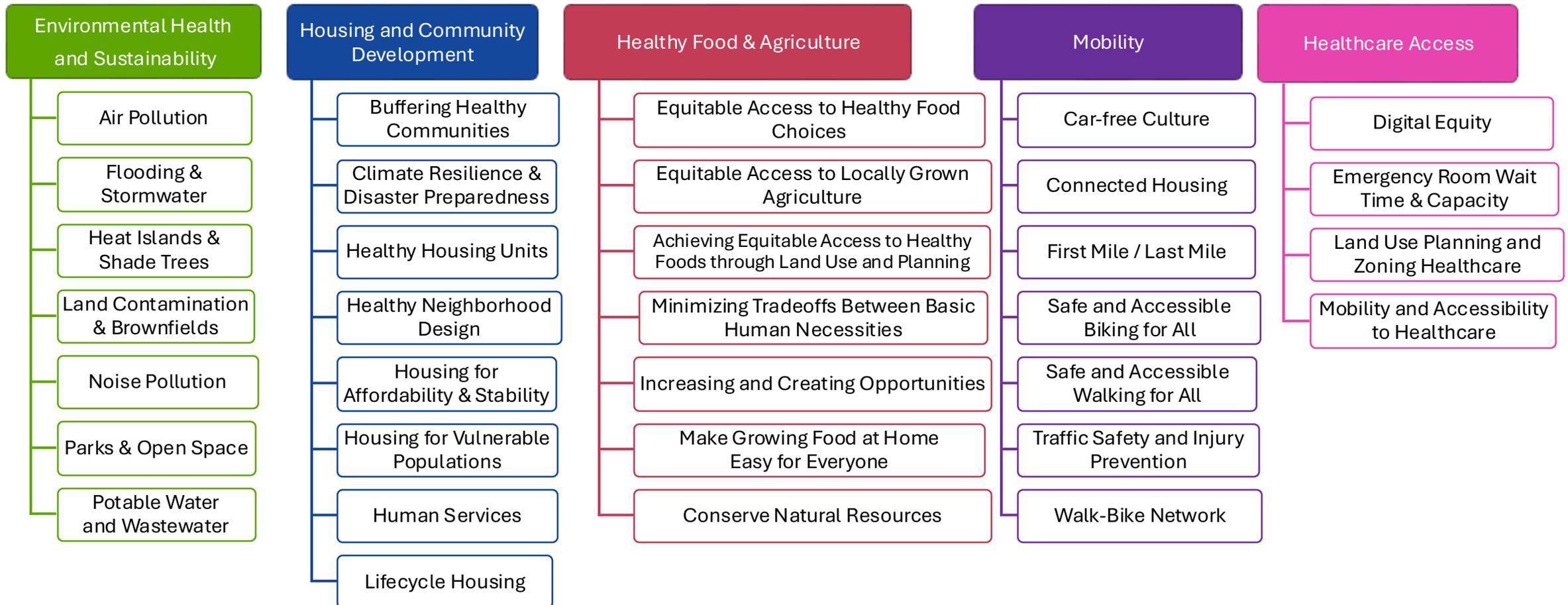




<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d0180defc0c241af942354e0548b150e?org=APANJ>



For Discussion





Next Steps

- Development of website - open to the public Winter 2025
- Webinars on each of the Toolkits
- Grant program - January 2026



Thank you!

Questions?

njplanning.org/plan4healthnj/

