

**Recommendations from the Olmsted County Public Health Services Advisory Board  
to the Olmsted County Community Health Board:  
Incorporating Healthy Community Design Principles into the Rochester Comprehensive Plan**

The way we design and build our communities can affect our physical and mental health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The Olmsted County Public Health Services Advisory Board (PHSAB) has compiled this list of broad and specific recommendations for healthy community design for consideration by Olmsted County communities. The PHSAB is requesting the Olmsted County Community Health Board endorse these recommendations and present them to the Rochester City Council as part of their Comprehensive Plan update.

**Broad Recommendations for the Rochester Comprehensive Plan:**

**1. Incorporate the “multiple nodes” scenario into the plan.**

Rationale: The “Dispersed Growth” scenario is not conducive to a healthy community as it is estimated to translate into more vehicle miles/hours traveled (air quality concerns and less opportunities for biking/walking), dispersed housing and more limited access to transit. While the “Super Nodes” scenario would help offset some of these concerns (similar to the “multiple nodes”), the “multiple nodes” scenario is recommended as the best opportunity to improve health for more of the community as it would provide increased access to transit, trails, healthy food options, etc in more areas of the city. In addition, there is concern that fewer “Super Nodes” may split the community into separate “regions” rather than strengthening the entire community. The PHSAB recommends “limited edge growth” with this scenario.

**2. Align and integrate the “social determinants of health” (housing, education, income, transportation, others) into the plan.**

Rationale: Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. These conditions are known as social determinants of health (SDOH). Differences in health are striking in communities with poor SDOH such as unstable housing, low income, unsafe neighborhoods, or substandard education (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

**3. Incorporate effective community engagement strategies into the decision-making process for key future development proposals, such as the use of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA).**

Rationale: HIA is a process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project or policy before it is built or implemented in a manner that engages the community. An HIA can provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

**4. Evaluate future development proposals in conjunction with health promotion programs and initiatives.**

Rationale: Community design and zoning are key components to a healthy community. In addition, aligning and supporting current and future health promotion work among numerous community agencies (public, private, non-profit) can help “make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

**Specific Recommendations**

Below are specific recommendations organized by health factors and four categories that reflect various strategies to improve opportunities for health. The design and zoning recommendations are assumed to be within the scope of the comprehensive plan; the specific policy and program recommendations may be within the scope of the plan, or support the long-term implementation of the plan. (Note: the policy/ordinance and program/initiative list is not intended to be all-inclusive. A process for ongoing review and development will be important, plus to identify ways to incent their adoption and/or continued implementation).

<b>Opportunities to Incorporate Health in...</b>				
<b>Health Factors</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Policy/ Ordinance/ Supporting Plan</b>	<b>Program/ Initiative</b>
<b>Environment</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assure the growth of city limits includes connection to public water/sewer (vs. individual septic systems)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to assure adequate oversight of wellhead protection areas for the public water supplies.</li> <li>- Continue to assure adequate protection of the Decorah Edge geology.</li> <li>- Support alignment with the Olmsted County Water Management Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include vegetative buffers along water ways</li> <li>- Continue stormwater runoff program</li> <li>- Increase green spaces, community gardens, raingardens;</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select transportation plans that reduce (the rate of increase) automobile trips</li> <li>- Provide bike/ pedestrian trails,</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand the number of air monitoring stations in cooperation with Olmsted County Environmental</li> </ul>

	<p>parks, and athletic field options away from major roads/traffic areas to help reduce air pollutant exposure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate schools, parks, outdoor sports facilities away from corridors that have high traffic</li> </ul>			Resources and the MN Pollution Control Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incorporate LEED (Leadership in Energy &amp; Environmental Design) certified construction standards into new (commercial) construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand indoor air quality monitoring</li> </ul>

Safety				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” principles to create a sense of safety</li> </ul>			

Health and Wellness				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Physical Activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design interconnected walking, biking and mass transit networks that interconnect;</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritize projects that promote safe walkability and bike-ability in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan</li> <li>- Support alignment with the Olmsted County Community Health Improvement Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Install bicycle parking facilities at open space locations and transit nodes</li> <li>- Continue support of the Complete Streets policy</li> </ul>

			(CHIP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize Mental Health Stresses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure adequate tree canopy, greenery/ vistas, parks and natural areas</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align (as appropriate) with “dementia friendly community” and related initiatives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce Injury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate proven safety interventions in street design (medians, crossing islands, enhanced signals, etc)</li> <li>Ensure a clear distinction between spaces for walking vs. biking</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue support of Safe Routes to School program</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility to healthy foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design, install and maintain sidewalks, metered cross walks and trails/bike paths on routes that provide access to stores, hunger relief programs, farmers markets, community gardens, and other food sources</li> <li>Locate bus routes and other mass transit options near community food sources and coordinate schedules with those sources’ open hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure mixed use zoning to allow for adequate number of food stores</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen community food assets including community gardens, farmers markets, community kitchens, food banks and community supported agriculture</li> </ul>

Housing	-	-	-	-
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify Types and Affordability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage siting of housing developments within walking distance of parks, schools, jobs and shopping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish zoning regulations that allow for a variety of housing types at densities that support walking to commercial services and transit</li> <li>- Incorporate inclusionary (mixed income) zoning in ordinance updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support alignment with the goals of the Olmsted County Housing Plan</li> </ul>	
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- Mobility and Accessibility				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe mobility and accessibility for elderly/ disabled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure street and trail design comply with ADA requirements and meets the needs of people of all abilities</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support transit-oriented development (TOD)</li> <li>- Ensure transportation plans identify and prioritize the needs of underserved populations (i.e. seniors, children, persons with disabilities, low income persons, etc)</li> </ul>			

References:

1. CDC's Built Environment and Health Initiative: ([http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/information/built\\_environment.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/information/built_environment.htm))
2. CDC's Social Determinants of Health: (<http://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/>)

3. CDC's Health Impact Assessment: (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm>)
4. Adapted from: Healthy Community Design Toolkit-Leveraging Positive Change, Massachusetts Partnership for Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention, ([http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/HCDT\\_2ndEdition\\_140903.pdf](http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/HCDT_2ndEdition_140903.pdf))
5. University of Minnesota, Design for Health: (<http://designforhealth.net/>)
6. Minnesota Department of Health, Healthy Places: (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/places/>)
7. Minnesota Food Charter, Health Equity Guide: (<http://mnfoodcharter.com/category/health-equity/>)
8. Chetty, Hendren, and Katz - Improving economic opportunities for low income children  
<http://economics.harvard.edu/news/new-research-mobility-studies-profs-chetty-hendren-and-katz>

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