



SFDPH Program on Health, Equity, and Sustainability

Urban Health and Place Team

Healthy Development Measurement Tool – June 2009

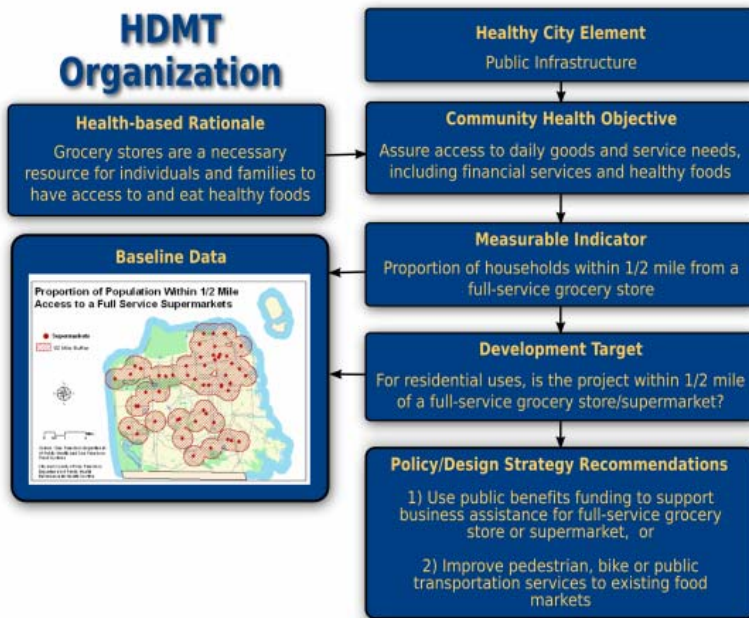


Healthy Development Measurement Tool

Description

The Healthy Development Measurement Tool (www.TheHDMT.org) is a comprehensive evaluation metric that supports the inclusion and consideration of health needs in urban land use plans and projects. The HDMT is comprised of three core components: 1) a “community health indicator system” to evaluate community health objectives and baseline neighborhood conditions, 2) a “healthy development checklist” that is used to evaluate land use plans and projects, and 3) a “menu of policy and design strategies” that can be used to make recommendations on how to improve baseline conditions and/or meet checklist targets. These components are organized by six broad elements that comprise a healthy city and twenty-seven community health objectives that, if achieved, would result in greater and more equitable health assets and resources for San Francisco residents. The HDMT also includes an extensive literature base that describes the nexus between the community health objectives and health.

HDMT Organization



Background and Development

In November 2004, SFDPH convened over 20 organizations to conduct the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA), an 18-month process to analyze how development in several San Francisco neighborhoods was affecting to the needs of community health. Acknowledging that healthy city planning requires tools and guidelines to systematically consider health impacts in planning processes, the ENCHIA Community Council recommended that SFDPH develop an evaluation metric to assess and improve the social, economic, and environmental conditions needed for a healthy city. Building on the work of the Council, SFDPH integrated ENCHIA’s healthy city vision, community health objectives, and data and policy concepts to create the HDMT.

The ENCHIA Council, along with SFDPH, envisioned that the use of the HDMT would be a regular part of the planning process in San Francisco, both serving as a way to shape plans and projects and as a way to track progress over time. The ENCHIA process is described in detail at: <http://www.sfpbes.org/ENCHIA.htm>.

Over 20 national technical experts from diverse disciplines such as land use and transportation planning, public health, health impact assessment, environmental impact assessment, and health equity, reviewed the first version of the HDMT. In addition, seven city agencies reviewed and provided feedback on the HDMT, including Planning, Redevelopment, Recreation and Parks, Arts Commission, Building Inspection, Public Works, Mayor’s Office of Community Development, and the Public Utilities Commission. To date, the web-based version of the HDMT has undergone a number of revisions to improve its applicability and specificity.



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Collaborations/Constituencies Involved

The content of the HDMT reflects the ENCHIA Community Council's vision for a healthy city. The multi-stakeholder Community Council that guided the ENCHIA process consisted of over 20 diverse organizations' whose work was affected by urban development. Public agencies, community organizations, and private sector groups were included on the Council. Public agencies included: recreation and parks, planning, redevelopment, police, transportation, parking and traffic, public health, and elected officials. Community organizations' focus areas included: community planning and design, economic and neighborhood development, environmental justice, homelessness, open space, housing, transportation, bicycle advocacy, low-wage and union workers, food systems, local residents, child care, and childhood development. Private interests included: non-profit and private developers, property owners, architects, and small businesses.

Relevance to Health and Health Equity

The fundamental vision of the Community Council, and subsequent framework of the HDMT, is that all communities should have equal access to health resources, which are defined as the physical, economic, social and environmental resources needed to be healthy. As such, HDMT objectives and indicators explicitly call out the need for development that serves existing and new residents and workers. Data are disaggregated by neighborhood and are illustrated spatially in an effort to highlight disparities.

Applications and Policy Targets

Application of the HDMT is appropriate for urban land and community plans in dense, socially and economically diverse settings. It is also relevant to new residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial development projects. Application of the HDMT asks the following questions:

- 1) Does a place have healthy living and working conditions?
 - Community health indicator data are used to assess baseline conditions
- 2) Does a plan or project advance health-related conditions?
 - Healthy development checklist is used to evaluate plans and projects to assess the extent to which they meet development targets
- 3) What recommendations for planning policies, implementing actions, or project design would advance community health objectives?
 - Menu of policy and design strategies are used to develop concrete, specific recommendations for the plan/project based on the evaluation

In San Francisco, SFDPH has primarily targeted use of the HDMT in communities experiencing health inequities as these communities are most likely to be impacted by new development. To date, several applications of the HDMT have been completed. The primary target for the *Executive Park Subarea Plan* and *Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plans* applications were several local area plans under development by the SF Planning Department. The *Bernal Heights Community Health Assessment* targeted a decision-making process related to a local preschool. An application to the *Western SoMa Community Plan* is currently underway.

SFDPH supports agencies and organizations who want to use the HDMT in the following ways:

- Providing guidance on how to use the healthy development checklist to evaluate a project/plan.
- Advising on the use of community health indicator data and maps to support neighborhood baseline conditions assessments.
- Providing education and training on the HDMT and on how social, environmental and economic conditions affect community health.

For help in using the HDMT, please contact Lili Farhang at 415-252-3988 or at lili.farhang@sfdph.org.

For more information, please visit:

www.TheHDMT.org or www.sfphe.org