Healthy Cities and Urban Governance in San Francisco: Towards Accountability to Population Health

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“Healthy Cities” in San Francisco: The Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability

- Inter-disciplinary health equity and environmental justice program at SFDPH
- Envisions a San Francisco “…where communities are engaged in democracy and committed to equality and diversity.”
- Engages with public institutions, social movements, non-profit and for profit organizations
- Inter-disciplinary, policy focused practice in Land Use Planning, Transportation Systems, Safe Housing, Quality Jobs, Workers’ Rights, and Food Resources
- Research and tools serve social change goals
Community and Environmental Justice
Challenges to “Smart” Growth and Sustainable Economic Development

- Will development protect and improve environmental quality for existing residents?
- Can development leverage needed infrastructure for health and well being?
- Will development result in displacement or facilitate social inclusion and integration?
- Will economic equity and health be included along with resource conservation in “sustainability?”
PHES Strategies for Healthy Cities and Urban Governance

- Assessment and monitoring of health & health determinants
- Health impact assessments
- Health-protective laws & regulations
- Inter-sectoral planning and design
- Collaboration and support for NGOs
- Advocacy for healthy policy

Adapted from the WHO Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion (1986)
Health Impact Assessment: Key Characteristics

- Systematic and transparent process
- Assessment of multiple health effects
- Holistic definition of health—determinants, behaviors, diseases
- Analysis of beneficial and harmful impacts
- Best available evidence and theory
- Engagement with stakeholders
- Evaluation of alternatives
Health Impacts of a Living Wage (1999)

- Quantified the following Health and Social Benefits of a Living Wage
  - Life-expectancy
  - Graduation rates
  - Teenage childbearing
  - Depression’
  - Sick days

- HIA Outcomes
  - Support for local living wage laws
  - Public health could contribute analysis to social and economic policy
Organized tenants argued that the demolition and redevelopment of 360 rent-controlled apartments to market rate housing would have adverse human impacts.

SFDPH comment on the scope of an EIA documented adverse health effects of on stress, social cohesion, and housing.

Outcomes:
- City required alternative and study of housing impacts
- Project alternative replaced rental housing
- City level planning policy created demolition protections for private housing
**Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment**

- Collaborative, consensus-based health impact assessment to analyze how growth and development impacts health in four SF neighborhoods

- Facilitated by SFDPH & Guided by a Community Council Comprised of >20 organizations and government stakeholders

- 18-month process culminated in the development of the “Healthy Development Measurement Tool”
1) Framework of Community health objectives

2) Community-level Health Indicators

3) Policy and Design Strategies

4) Development Targets

5) Public Health Evidence
Addressing Research Gaps in City Planning: Vehicle-Pedestrian Injury Collision Model

Predicted % change in pedestrian injury collisions based on estimated changes in resident population and traffic volume.

- 20%
- 21%
- 15%
- 24%
New Public Health Laws as Health Cities Interventions

- San Francisco Sensitive Use Protections for Traffic Pollution Hot Spots (HC Article 38)
  - Identify Areas with Potential Conflicts through Roadway Exposure Zone Map
  - Establish an PM 2.5 based Action Level for Mitigation
  - Conduct Site Specific Air Quality Modeling
  - Mitigation via Building Design or Engineered
Impacts of Health Equity Practices in the Planning Sector

- Changes public understanding of the causes of poor / good health
- Development of new policy agendas
- Composition of policy coalitions
- Changes to policy design
- Integration of health in cross-sector activities
- Accountability to CEQA and other laws for health protection
- Capacity building for participation in urban governance by public health
Some Deeper Lessons for Healthy Cities

- Governments are currently not accountable to existing values and laws intended to protect public health.
- Public health institutions need to proactively engage in urban governance.
- Social movements / Civil Society Organizations need to demand and organize around the improvement of health.
Cities have the capability of providing something for everyone only because and only when they are created by everybody.

- Jane Jacobs
California HIA Resources

Healthy Development Measurement Tool
- [www.TheHDMT.org](http://www.TheHDMT.org)

Health Impact Assessment Collaborative
- [www.HIAcollaborative.org](http://www.HIAcollaborative.org)

UC Los Angeles – HIA Clearinghouse
- [www.ph.ucla.edu/hs/hiaclinc](http://www.ph.ucla.edu/hs/hiaclinc)