

American Planning
Association
Guiding Principle:

Healthy and Safe Community

Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

The World Health Organization defines health as being fully well in body, mind, and social life, not just lacking illness. To support public health, the Healthy Community principle and four previous principles work together. A healthy community ensures that residents have safe air and water, easy access to parks and recreation, nearby local food sources and options, equitable public schools, and fair access to healthcare, along with effective public safety programs. Since the private market may not provide these important public benefits equally, it may be necessary for the government to fill the gaps. For instance, some disadvantaged neighborhoods might be in unsafe or unhealthy places, like polluted areas or flood zones, and public programs can help address those risks. The comprehensive plan is a useful tool for identifying and managing public health risks and for encouraging strong healthy community goals.