



Public Health and Wellness

The purpose of the Public Health and Wellness element stands as an inventory of how natural, built, and social environments are contributing to the health¹ of town residents. The Public Health and Wellness element is concerned with understanding current health conditions and behaviors, risks and opportunities presented by community barriers and assets, and the potential to promote healthier outcomes for current and future residents, regardless of their income, education or ethnic background.

The Public Health and Wellness element informs and connects to other elements of the Unified Plan. It presents new data or different perspectives on how current conditions in other elements, such as Housing, Transportation, and Open Space, can contribute to healthier outcomes for residents. This element also provides evidence-based and -informed strategies that should inform policies, projects, and decisions connected to implementation of the Unified Plan. Lastly, the element integrates the perspective of local public health by including the Wellesley Health Department and Board of Health in the planning process about the future of the town and its residents.

This chapter of the Unified Plan was prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission through a grant to the Wellesley Board of Health. The chapter summarizes a longer report that appears as an appendix to the Unified Plan.

¹ For the purpose of this chapter, health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Source: World Health Organization

Development of the Public Health and Wellness element involved a review of relevant health and socioeconomic data and of literature on the ways physical and social environmental factors affect people’s health. It also involved engagement with a Health Working group and the broader community. These processes produced the Vision and Values for the element.

A. Public Health and Wellness in the Unified Plan Vision and Values*

VISION
In 2040, Wellesley is recognized for a quality of life that enhances the health and social well-being of its residents.

VALUES

- **Sense of Community:** Foster a sense of community and community-building through support for inclusive services and facilities, town-wide events, multi-generational activities, and community gathering places.
- **Healthy Lifestyles:** Enhance the health and wellness of residents through public health initiatives, educational, social and recreational opportunities; create the conditions for healthy lifestyles through easy access to healthful food, medical and psychological care, support systems, non-motorized transportation options, and town facilities.

B. Goals And Policies

GOALS	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS
<i>Wellesley fosters formal and informal connections among neighbors and peers to strengthen social capital and intergenerational ties.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and incorporate deliberate approaches that increase inclusivity and reduce the risk of social isolation.
<i>Wellesley supports the mental and emotional wellness of children and youth to reduce the potential for self-harm and to increase opportunities for positive social interaction among all youth in town.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact changes that decrease the incidence and rates of poor mental health and associated behaviors, especially for those 18 years of age and under.
<i>Wellesley prioritizes walkability and open space to promote physical activity and exposure to outdoor natural environments.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase exposure and access to green spaces and active transportation facilities in order to provide all residents the opportunity for associated positive health benefits like reduced stress, opportunities for physical activity, reduced risk of injury from traffic crashes, and more social connections.
<i>Wellesley addresses environmental hazards to reduce resident exposure to substances that diminish the quality of life in town.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize or eliminate exposure of residents to environmentally hazardous materials and pollutants.

* A stand-alone Health Element, developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, appears in Appendix X.

<p>Wellesley increases the availability of indoor and outdoor recreational space so that all residents have places to be physically active, to socialize, and to relax.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance school, municipal, and community needs for use of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities like school gyms, playing fields, and park spaces.
<p>Wellesley considers health impacts of proposed projects and policies by integrating a health and equity lens into local decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematize the consideration of health and equity impacts as part of decision making on new projects, programs, and policies.

C. Findings And Challenges

Findings

- Evidence shows that how we plan and build communities affects the health and wellness of residents. Although these figures are not exact, collective research focused on the history of what causes disease suggests that roughly 60% of our health is determined by social, environmental, and behavioral factors shaped by the context in which we live and the choices we can afford. Source: County Health Rankings.
- According to data on hospitalizations, health behaviors, and other key indicators of the health status in Wellesley, the town is generally healthier than other towns in the Commonwealth across nearly all health indicators. Wellesley also tends to be healthier than other towns in Norfolk and Middlesex counties, and even outperforms comparison communities for certain key indicators, including aging and mortality. The town did not perform statistically significantly worse than communities statewide on any indicator. An important caveat is that these data do not take into account the distribution of various conditions in Wellesley, and therefore they don't identify any populations that are disproportionately burdened by poor health or worse opportunity. Sources: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative.
- The proportion of youth that is overweight or obese in the town has remained consistent over the last decade, and the number of students who report exercising more than 60 minutes five or more days a week has increased over the last five years. However, youth in the MetroWest region, including Wellesley, have been becoming increasingly stressed and depressed over the last 10 years, and the percentage who report suicide attempts, self-injury, or the contemplation of suicide has not declined over this same period (2006-2016). Source: MetroWest Adolescent Survey.
- Wellesley's older adults are overwhelmingly healthier than the state average, even when compared to similar measures. In particular, Wellesley is the only one of the comparison towns to perform statistically significantly better than the state for the one-year age-adjusted mortality rate. The only issues where Wellesley performs similarly to the state are the percentage of older adults who drink excessively and the percentage who were injured in a fall in the previous 3 months. Source: Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative.
- Based on an indicator of the distribution of income, Wellesley's income distribution is estimated to be more equal now than it was five years previously. Although this is important—because disparities in the distribution and access to goods and resources is linked to worse health for the overall population—it must be interpreted with caution, because it doesn't describe *how* the town became more equitable. For example, the equalizing of the distribution could be due to moderate-income families' leaving Wellesley or to a greater proportion of wealthy individuals moving into the community.
- There were more than 4,300 reported roadway crashes between 2010 and 2014. Of these, 14 percent (614) resulted in injury or death. Ninety percent of the crashes involved two or more vehicles, with the remainder involving bicyclists or pedestrians. Four people died in the crashes, including one pedestrian fatality.

- Increasing rates of stress and mental health issues, particularly amongst youth aged between 9th and 12th grade.
- Potential for social isolation among current older residents (65 years old and older) of the town who live alone and given the projected increase in older adults
- Potential for social isolation among residents who have limited income, transportation, or housing options in the town. These groups face barriers in accessing opportunities in town and realizing the health benefits that accrue with these beneficial opportunities.
- Traffic safety, real and perceived, among non-motorists which has an effect on whether residents feel comfortable choosing to walk or bike to their destination and in the case of families, allowing their children to walk or bike in the town.
- Climate change, which has the potential to exacerbate health conditions due to higher temperatures, increased precipitation, extreme weather events, and new disease vectors.
- Environmental health realities and concern as more residents are exposed to potentially harmful materials like pesticides and to air pollutants such as vehicle emissions and gas leaks.

D. What The Community Said

The Health and Wellness element involved meetings of a health-specific working group, facilitation of a stand-alone public workshop, and participation in Steering Committee meetings and general workshops. Through these engagements, working group members and other participants highlighted issues most important to them.

- **Pollution**
 - › Reduce, and eliminate where possible, the potential for exposure to harmful materials in the town. Include pesticides and chemical exposures from gas leaks and vehicle emissions.
 - › Clean up sites, such as Paint Shop Pond, that are or may be environmentally contaminated.
- **Social Isolation and Barriers**
 - › Address how this does and can affect older adults.

- › Identify how to include residents who have limited incomes and may be physically isolated due to available housing options.
- › Expand consideration of who may be socially isolated to include new mothers and caretakers, as they may be overlooked while experiencing similar issues due to what is happening in their lives (e.g., at home with newborn child, caring for a parent with dementia, etc.).
- › Address Route 9 as a social barrier, as it physically separates the north and south sides of Wellesley.
- **Mental health**
 - › Reduce rates of stress and mental health issues, particularly among young residents in the 9th through 12th grades.
 - › Recognize the causes and impact of poor mental health generally and provide examples of specific ways to respond and support those who experience it.
- **What works in Wellesley:**
 - › Reflect characteristics of successful efforts and projects in Wellesley. Characteristics of successful past efforts are 1) building on a shared vision, 2) using a transparent process to advance and implement recommendation, and 3) identifying action that addresses multiple needs and opportunities at the same time. As an example, the Fuller Brook Park project addressed a critical stormwater issue for the town while helping to meet several other goals, including access improvements for people with physical disabilities, maintenance of historic elements, and creation of off-road recreational amenities.
- **Walkability, Traffic, and Safety:**
 - › Increase walkability so that the town achieves higher rates of physical activity among residents.
 - › Maintain and enhance current sidewalk infrastructure.
 - › Focus particularly on walking accessibility and safety for children, adolescents and older residents.
 - › Improve perceptions of safety, as well as eliminating the potential for serious crashes, for those walking and biking in town.
 - › Reduce vehicle speeds on arterials—particularly Route 9—and local roadways.
- **Unstructured Play and Socializing**
 - › Create spaces for structured and unstructured recreational activities, particularly for youth.

- › Create more places for people of all ages to meet one another and build relationships. Look for opportunities like small outdoor meeting spaces in each neighborhood as well as town events and programs that bring together residents from various communities in Wellesley.
- **Open Space and Water Resources**
 - › Maintain and increase the amount of greenery and green spaces in town. Residents appreciate these natural assets, whether they're located on public or private property.
 - › Protect water resources, including the 10 ponds in town and the Charles River, and the lands adjacent to them, which protect the health of the aquifer that supplies town's drinking water.
- **Disparities**
 - › Create more opportunities for those who experience disparities in the town, such as people with limited incomes, residents in subsidized housing, and people with disabilities. Opportunities include improved transportation access, improved access to full-service grocery stores, and greater inclusion in town activities and benefits.
- **Operationalize Planning for Health**
 - › Educate town officials and residents about health

issues and how the built, social, and natural environments contribute to them.

- › Develop methods, like a checklist, to make sure the town considers health explicitly in decision-making processes.

E. Strategies And Actions To Achieve The Goals

GOAL 1: WELLESLEY FOSTERS FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONNECTIONS AMONG NEIGHBORS AND PEERS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CAPITAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL TIES.

Policy

- Adopt and incorporate deliberate approaches that increase inclusivity and reduce the risk of social isolation

STRATEGIES

A. Promote public spaces in each neighborhood for residents to share experiences and strengthen social capital.²

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
i. <i>Identify or develop publicly-accessible spaces as physical community hubs in each neighborhood in Wellesley.</i> The purpose of the hubs, which could be a park, playground, or cafe, is to provide a known location for neighbors to connect with one another, formally and informally. These spaces could also be programmed to welcome new residents into the neighborhood and to host in-person “collider” events for sharing and learning about each other’s skills and interests.	2018-2022	Council on Aging; Youth Commission; Board of Health; Art Groups

B. Sustain and enhance community arts programs with a focus on inclusivity.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
i. <i>Sustain current arts programming in town.</i> Evidence suggests that community arts programs can improve social networks and relationships and promote community involvement. See Chapter 5.	2018-2022	Library; Arts groups
ii. <i>Hold at least two arts programs each year that promote cultural equity.</i> These events would promote cultural inclusivity for everyone, especially those who have been historically underrepresented.	2018-2022 and ongoing	Library; Arts groups

² “Social capital refers to the collective value of all ‘social networks’ [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other [‘norms of reciprocity’].” Source: <http://robertdputnam.com/bowling-alone/social-capital-primer/>

³ County Health Rankings: What Works for Health. “Community arts programs.” <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/community-arts-programs>

C. Adopt an age-friendly, intergenerational approach to the development of community buildings and spaces.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<i>i. Adopt guidance related to universal design and accessibility for publicly-accessible buildings and spaces so that these places become more accessible and inviting to people of all ages and abilities. Consider seeking designation for town as age- and dementia-friendly.</i>	2018-2022	Town Meeting
<i>ii. Expand opportunities for children, youth, and older residents to connect and interact.⁴ Examples include programs such as intergenerational mentoring⁵ where older residents are matched as mentors to high school students, and mixed-use developments such as siting a daycare center in or alongside an assisted-living facility.</i>	2018-2022	Council on Aging; Youth Commission; Library

GOAL 2: WELLESLEY SUPPORTS THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR SELF-HARM AND TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES AMONG ALL YOUTH IN TOWN.

Policy

- Enact changes that decrease the incidence and rates of poor mental health and associated behaviors, especially for those 18 years old and under in Wellesley.

STRATEGIES

A. Promote Wellesley as a stigma-free municipality.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<i>i. Conduct an annual town-wide communications campaign to reduce the perception of stigma for receiving mental and emotional support. The initiative, which may be new or expand on existing efforts⁶, should include information about mental health literacy and language, peer mentoring, and how parents and older adults can model stigma-free behavior.</i>	2018-2022 and ongoing	Board of Health
<i>ii. Hold annual community conversations to discuss mental health challenges in the community [e.g., suicide] and reinforce a town-wide stigma-free approach by sharing resources and supportive behaviors [e.g., Wellesley Acts].</i>	2018-2022 and ongoing	Board of Health

⁴ Grantmakers in Aging. “Children, youth, families ... and aging” (toolkit). <https://www.giaging.org/resources/gia-toolkit/children-youth-and-families-and-aging/>

⁵ County Health Rankings: What Works for Health. “Intergenerational mentoring.” <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/intergenerational-mentoring>

⁶ The Wellesley Health Department currently provides funding for mental health support in the community and has developed a resource guides for parents and residents of all ages: <http://wellesleyma.gov/204/Mental-Health-Resources>

B. Continue focus on school-based social and emotional instruction and engage in continuous communications about this work with all residents.⁷

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<p><i>i. Enhance public school programs in place to provide social and emotional support (e.g., BRIDGE program). Enhance these programs, as well as others,⁸ as MetroWest or town data indicate that the percentages of youth living with depression or other mental health issues are significantly reduced, with the goal of eliminating the issue. The school system should also consider implementing a universal school-based suicide awareness and education program, if not already in place.⁹ Measure progress through reductions in reported percentages of youth considering harmful behaviors or mental health issues according to town (e.g., Stanford Survey) or MetroWest Health Foundation surveys.</i></p>	<p>2018-2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>Board of Health</p>

C. Promote unstructured play and offer time and space for it to occur.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<p><i>i. Identify spaces and provide resources that support more unstructured play among youth and children in town. There is evidence that associations exist between unstructured, self-directed play and higher rates of creativity, pro-social behaviors, and rates of physical activity¹⁰—all outcomes that are also associated with better mental health outcomes. Explore making more space available for unstructured play (e.g., playgrounds and fields), more time (e.g., extended recesses, after-school programs), and support for parents (e.g., informational materials and volunteer supervisors).</i></p>	<p>2018-2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>Board of Health</p>

GOAL 3: WELLESLEY PRIORITIZES WALKABILITY AND OPEN SPACE TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND EXPOSURE TO OUTDOOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Policy

- Increase exposure and access to green spaces and active transportation facilities in order to provide all residents the opportunity for associated positive health benefits like reduced stress, opportunities for physical activity, reduced risk of injury from traffic crashes, and additional social connections.

⁷ County Health Rankings: What Works for Health. “Community arts programs.” <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/community-arts-programs>

⁸ Local non-profits, such as Community Investors (<http://communityinvestors.net/>), also provide programs for and focus resources on improving adolescent wellness.

⁹ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/universal-school-based-suicide-awareness-education-programs>

¹⁰ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4483712/>

A. Adopt policies that promote and protect active transportation.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
i. <i>Adopt a Complete Streets policy to ensure creation or preservation of sidewalks, sidepaths, bicycle facilities, and transit stops.</i> In addition, adopt a Vision Zero approach ¹¹ with a goal of eliminating crash-related fatalities and serious injuries. Evidence on both policies indicates that they are associated with increases in physical activity and reduction in crash-related injuries and death. ^{12, 13}	See Chapter 10–Mobility
ii. <i>Adopt a data-driven traffic safety policy with the goal of eliminating fatalities and injuries from roadway crashes in Wellesley.</i>	See Chapter 10–Mobility

B. Create a sidewalk-improvement fund.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
i. <i>Establish a sidewalk-improvement fund for the town to provide a mechanism for waiving sidewalk requirements (where allowable) and to collect a payment in lieu of funds, which would be deposited into an enterprise fund.</i> The enterprise fund can then be used to invest in sidewalk infrastructure in key locations (e.g., identified locations in the Complete Streets prioritization plan). The Town of Stow has a sidewalk improvement fund that can serve as an example for local action.	2018-2022 and ongoing	Board of Selectman; DPW

C. Enhance tree protection and planting.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
i. <i>Enhance enforcement (in accordance with tree-preservation and -protection bylaw) to ensure protection of trees and significant vegetation that could be affected by public or private developments.</i> In addition, provide more resources for and promote the town’s tree-planting program. These actions would maintain and expand exposure to green spaces and help mitigate the impacts of urban heat islands, ¹⁴ which affect people with chronic diseases like diabetes and asthma. ¹⁵ The Town should diversify species used in the planting program to reflect anticipated future climate conditions (such as higher average temperatures) and anticipated new vectors (such as invasive insect species). ¹⁶	See Chapter 4–Natural Resources

¹¹ Vision Zero sets a target of eliminating all serious injuries and deaths due to road traffic crashes. The approach focuses on how we design and operate our roadway system so that we prevent the potential for death or serious injury for roadway users, especially those who are most vulnerable. First adopted in Sweden, Vision Zero has reduced deaths from Swedish road traffic crashes by 50% since 2000. Changes in planning and design, technology, education, and enforcement have together created a system that protects the lives of motorists and non-motorists alike.

¹² Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, “The Community Guide: Physical Activity.” <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/physical-activity-built-environment-approaches>.

¹³ Swedish Transport Administration, “Analysis of road safety trends 2014 - management by objectives for road safety work towards the 2020 interim targets” https://trafikverket.ineko.se/Files/sv-SE/12138/RelatedFiles/2015_103_analysis_of_road_safety_trends.pdf

¹⁴ Environmental Protection Agency, “Using Trees and Vegetation to Reduce Heat Islands,” <https://www.epa.gov/heat-islands/using-trees-and-vegetation-reduce-heat-islands>.

¹⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Climate Change and Extreme Heat: What you can do to prepare,” <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/extreme-heat-guidebook.pdf>

¹⁶ United State Department of Agriculture, “Climate Change Tree Atlas,” <https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/atlas/tree/#>

D. Create incentives for preserving natural resources on development sites.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Adopt guidance—regulatory or promotional—for maintaining as much natural, healthy vegetation as possible on developments site, especially redevelopment projects.</i> Instances of clear-cutting of neighboring properties have resulted in increased water runoff in addition to the reduced aesthetic appeal resulting from the removal of trees and ground cover.</p>	<p>See Chapter 4–Natural Resources and Chapter 12–Sustainability</p>

GOAL 4: WELLESLEY ADDRESSES ENVIRONMENT HAZARDS TO REDUCE RESIDENT EXPOSURE TO SUBSTANCES THAT REDUCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Policy

- Minimize or eliminate exposure of residents to environmentally hazardous materials and pollutants.

STRATEGIES

A. Implement best practices for elimination of gas leaks.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<p><i>i. Assess and update regulations and practices in order to reduce exposure to harmful pollutants while modernizing infrastructure.</i> Specific supporting activities include sustained coordination between road maintenance and utility infrastructure construction; priority for repairs of high-volume leaks in sensitive locations (e.g., near elementary schools); and adoption of protective policies that expedite the repair of gas leaks. Refer to MAPC’s assessment guide for additional supporting activities: http://fixourpipes.org/best-practices/</p>	<p>2018-2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>Board of Health; DPW</p>

B. Promote best practices for pest management on private properties.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Identify policies and materials that can encourage private land owners to adopt practices that eliminate the use of pest-control substances with toxic and environmentally hazardous materials.</i> Reduced use of these toxic materials is associated with positive effects on people with chronic diseases (e.g., asthma) and lessens exposure to potential carcinogens. Use existing regulations as well as state resources to showcase integrated pest management (IPM) as a preferred approach.</p>	<p>See Chapter 4–Natural Resources and Chapter 12–Sustainability</p>

C. Protect water resources.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Give priority to policies and land protection (e.g., easement, purchase) that prevent development of potentially environmentally harmful uses on lands adjacent to water resources and water-recharge areas.</i></p>	<p>See Chapter 4–Natural Resources and Chapter 12–Sustainability</p>

¹⁷ Environmental Protection Agency, “Introduction to Integrated Pest Management,” <https://www.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools/introduction-integrated-pest-management#Benefits>

¹⁸ Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance, “Integrated Pest Management,” <http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/procurement-info-and-res/procurement-prog-and-serv/epp-procurement-prog/green-products-and-serv/specific-epp-statewide-contracts/integrated-pest-management.html>.

¹⁹ For reference: MDPH conducted a survey to assessing capacity of local health departments to address climate change in 2013. The report is a useful guide for preparation: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/exposure/climate-change-report-2014.pdf>

D. Prepare for climate change impacts on health.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Develop an action plan that addresses potential impacts of climate change on health and resiliency of town residents.</i> Climate change will exacerbate existing health conditions, such as asthma and cardiovascular disease, and lead to the emergence of new vector- and water-borne diseases. Wellesley’s local public health infrastructure should have the resources to plan for and prepare for these potential impacts.</p>	See Chapter 12.

GOAL 5: WELLESLEY OPTIMIZES THE AVAILABILITY OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL SPACE SO THAT ALL RESIDENTS HAVE PLACES TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE, TO SOCIALIZE, AND TO RELAX.

Policy

- Find balance between school, municipal, and

community needs for use of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities like gyms, playing fields, and park spaces.

STRATEGIES

A. Review existing and consider additional shared use opportunities at recreational facilities.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Investigate existing shared use opportunities that provide for resident and community access to public indoor and outdoor facilities for exercise and other social and recreational activities²¹.</i> Use existing guides, such as the toolkit from the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at the Harvard School of Public Health²², to assess current arrangements and consider updates to reflect recommended standards and practices.</p>	See Chapter 6.
<p><i>ii. Consider establishing arrangements for the shared use of public indoor and outdoor recreational facilities for which no such arrangement currently exists.</i></p>	See Chapter 6.

B. Implement Supportive Community Programs for All Ages.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<p><i>i. Establish municipal- and community-led programs in publicly-accessible spaces and at times convenient for residents.</i> Some programs should occur during open periods made possible by shared use agreement. These programs should have reduced or subsidized costs and be available for smaller groups who can use the space(s) at the same time. Variations on this could involve shared events for youth and older residents in order to encourage more intergenerational interaction; making space available for older residents and those with limited incomes to engage in group exercise; and programs for at-home parents with young children who are seeking to meet neighbors and socialize.</p>	2022-2028	Recreation Commission; Youth Commission; Council on Aging; Library

²⁰ For reference: MDPH conducted a survey to assessing capacity of local health departments to address climate change in 2013. The report is a useful guide for preparation: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/exposure/climate-change-report-2014.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/shared-use-agreements>

²² Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation and the Harvard School of Public Health, “Massachusetts Joint Use Toolkit,” <http://www.chlpi.org/joint-use-toolkit/>

GOAL 6: WELLESLEY CONSIDERS HEALTH IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PROJECTS AND POLICIES BY INTEGRATING A HEALTH AND EQUITY LENS INTO LOCAL DECISION-MAKING.

Policies

- Systematize the consideration of health and equity impacts as part of decision-making on

STRATEGIES

A. Use a checklist to assist in decision-making.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Use a checklist to assist in understanding how municipal decisions affect health conditions in the town.</i> A prototype checklist is presented in the Appendix to this chapter as an initial model to assist in local decision-making on proposed projects and policies in Wellesley. Decision-makers and residents can use this checklist to assess proposals quickly and have an informed discussion about potential positive and negative effects on public health generally and in relation to specific people in the town [e.g., people of color, older adults, households with limited incomes, etc.].</p>	<p>See Chapter 13.</p>

B. Conduct equity impact assessments.

ACTIONS	WHEN & WHO
<p><i>i. Develop and apply an equity impact assessment tool for proposed policies and projects in the town.</i> The tool would explore how a project may disproportionately impact populations already experiencing disparities. Initial assessments should focus on significant proposals and be voluntary to explore how the process and assessment findings work within Wellesley decision-making processes. A model to consider is Race Forward’s Racial Equity Toolkit [developed for Seattle] which lays out a process and offers a ready to use worksheet.²³</p>	<p>See Chapter 13.</p>

C. Increase resources available for community health and to enhance the health department’s role in community planning.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHO
<p><i>i. Consider increases in funding and support for the Wellesley Health Department to sustain existing programs and enforcement activities while allowing staff engagement in implementation of the Unified Plan.</i> Staff from the Health Department can act as stewards of the Health and Wellness Element and use the process to engage other partners from the community health and health care sectors.</p>	<p>2022-2028</p>	<p>Board of Health, Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting</p>

²³ City of Seattle, “Racial Equity Toolkit to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues,” <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/healthequity/resources/seattle-toolkit.html>

Example of a Health/Equity Checklist for Development

1 Housing quality and design

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal address the housing needs of older people and disabled individuals, (e.g., smaller units, assisted living, and connections with supportive services)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include homes that can be adapted to support independent living for older and disabled people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include a range of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing responding to local housing needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

²⁴ Source: The checklist design and contents are based on the London Healthy Urban Development Unit Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool: <http://www.healthyrbandevelopment.nhs.uk/our-services/delivering-healthy-urban-development/health-impact-assessment/>.

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal contain homes that are highly energy efficient (e.g. a high LEED rating, ENERGY STAR compliant, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

2 Access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal provide or retain connections to social or supportive services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal assess impacts on healthcare services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal assess the capacity, location and accessibility of other local community institutions (e.g., schools, social care and community facilities)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal explore opportunities for shared community use and co-location of services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal retain and enhance existing open and natural or recreational spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
In areas with limited green space, does the proposal provide new open or natural space, or improve access to open spaces or off-road trails?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal provide a range of play spaces for children and young people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal provide links between open and natural spaces and community institutions like schools?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Are the open and natural spaces welcoming and safe and accessible for all?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal set out how new open space will be managed and maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

4 Air quality and Noise

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal minimize construction impacts such as dust, noise, vibration and odors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal minimize air pollution caused by vehicular traffic?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal minimize night time light pollution?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal prioritize and encourage walking (such as through sidewalks, sidepaths, or trails)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal prioritize and encourage cycling (for example by providing secure cycle parking, cycle lanes, or shared use paths)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal connect new active transportation facilities and internal routes to local and strategic cycle and walking networks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include traffic management and calming measures to help minimize road injuries and increase feelings of safety from vehicle traffic?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Is the proposal connected to public transport or local shuttle services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal encourage active transportation by reducing distance and barriers to local goods and services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal seek to reduce car use by reducing parking requirements and/or supporting shared parking and car services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal allow people with disabilities to access buildings and places?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

6 Crime Reduction and Community Safety

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal incorporate elements of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (e.g., natural surveillance, maintenance schedule, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal incorporate design techniques to help people feel secure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include attractive, multi-use public spaces and buildings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Has engagement and consultation been carried out with the local community?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal facilitate the supply of local food (e.g., community garden plots, community farms, and/or farmers' markets)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Is there a range of retail uses, including food stores and convenience stores that offer healthy and/or local foods?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal avoid contributing to a concentration of fast food establishments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

8 Access to Work and Training

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal provide access to local employment and training opportunities, including temporary construction and permanent 'jobs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal provide childcare facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include managed and affordable workspace for local businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include opportunities for procurement of goods or services from local businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal connect with existing neighborhoods (e.g., layout and facilities which avoid physical barriers and obstacles, land uses and spaces which encourage social interaction)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal include a mix of uses and a range of community facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal provide opportunities for the voluntary and community organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal create environments that people of all ages and abilities can access and enjoy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

10 Resource Utilization and Sustainable Design

Assessment criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancement actions
Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal incorporate renewable energy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal ensure that buildings and spaces are designed to reduce energy needs in winter and summer seasons (e.g., building orientation, ventilation, shading, landscaping)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal maintain or enhance biodiversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal incorporate sustainable stormwater drainage techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Does the proposal incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	