



Sustainable Communities Regional Principles

Healthy Places

One of the biggest attractions of the Denver region has long been the high quality of life and public health supported largely by environmental conditions and access to amenities that encourage active living. As the region continues to grow it must do everything possible to continually support and enhance the quality of public health, environmental resources and the built environment. The expansion of the regional transit system offers new opportunities for achieving this goal by enhancing accessibility to services and amenities, increasing activities that support healthy lifestyles, encouraging development conducive to health, and providing the availability of alternative modes of transportation. These activities should be conducted in partnerships with organizations currently involved in related work and should build on existing efforts.

Each community, agency and organization operates within different realities: fiscal, political, economic, legal, etc. As such, the application and implementation of these principles, as well as the strategies provided herein, must be voluntary and sensitive to those contexts.

Strategies

Develop regional targets or thresholds related to human health and environmental quality.

People manage what they measure; therefore, having targets for human health and environmental quality should enable a concerted effort to reach the set targets.

Identify and share best practices, model policies and metrics for human health and environmental quality (including the built environment/active design, access to healthy food, active lifestyle/recreation choices, access to healthcare, etc.). Develop mechanisms to share best practices and metrics with jurisdictions, NGOs, etc.

Best practices and case studies provide examples of what is working that can serve as guidance for communities. The projects and processes that are already working are the best ways people, organizations and communities have of learning, evaluating and implementing/replicating successes.

Establish and facilitate greater coordination among entities to support achievement of regional human health/environmental quality targets or thresholds. Develop mechanisms to reduce disparities between communities, zip codes, etc.

Human health and environmental quality are comprised of multiple, complex interrelated issues. Most of these issues cannot be addressed by one department or entity; only a coordinated approach can lead to lasting and real progress. Using the expertise of various participants allows for a better approach and ultimately better outcomes.

Identify and implement appropriate incentives to encourage and support communities in achieving identified targets and goals.

Reward activities by organizations and people that promote and support public health and environmental quality.