

Committee of the Whole Committee

Meeting date: June 16, 2021

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Composite: The Healthy Community Planning Project with the MN Department of Health and the Public Health Law Center

District(s), Member(s): ALL

Policy/Legal Reference: Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)

Staff Prepared/Presented: Eric Wojchik, Planning Analyst (651-602-1330)
Jerome Benner II, Senior Planner (651-602-1494)

Division/Department: Community Development

Proposed Action

No action necessary. This is an information item only.

Background

In 2020, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in partnership with the Metropolitan Council (Council) and the Public Health Law Center (PHLC) led a project reviewing a sample of local comprehensive plans (Plan) for designated health indicators important for promoting healthy communities. The purpose of this research was to (1) Elevate priority public health challenges faced by communities in the region, including climate resilience, health equity, healthy food access, physical activity, and transportation mode shift; (2) Support community-to-community learning; (3) Identify opportunities where partner agencies can provide coordinated technical assistance; (4) Showcase local strategy and policy examples that advance priority public health issues; and (5) Build from foundational partner agency work in this area.

Public Health Law Center staff reviewed 49 comprehensive plans authorized by the Council on or before May 13, 2020. The study sample includes communities from diverse geographies in terms of community designation and location within the 7-county metropolitan area, as well as communities that included a resilience chapter in the comprehensive plan and/or received Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) support from MDH. Staff reviewed the Plans for the following 11 public health indicators:

- **Mixed Use:** Does the community plan for mixed-use developments and/or a town center or city center?
- **Food Access:** Does the community plan for healthy food access that promotes local food production and healthy food retail?
- **Housing Options:** Does the community plan for housing options for a mix of incomes?
- **Multi-Modal Transportation:** Does the plan address multi-modal transportation?
- **Transit Oriented Development:** Does the plan address Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?
- **Greenspace Preservation:** Does the community plan for a balance of development with greenspace preservation/enhancement?
- **Public Recreation Opportunities:** Does the community plan for access to public recreation opportunities?
- **Greenhouse Gas Reductions:** Does the community plan for greenhouse gas reductions?
- **Extreme Heat Events:** Does the plan include protecting public health during extreme heat events?
- **Climate Change Inclusive of At-Risk Populations:** Does the plan incorporate planning for and prioritizing climate change decision-making for at-risk populations?
- **Intense Rain Events and Flooding:** Does the plan address increasing resilience of natural and built environment infrastructure for more intense rain events and associated flooding?