



Healthy Communities Toolkit

A SELF-PACED WORKSHOP TO INTRODUCE THE CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES MAY/JUNE 2021

OVERVIEW and expected outcomes

- **Week 1:** Taking stock // introduction to policy and environmental change, the audit tool & reflection on current status/recent changes in your town
- **Week 2:** Overview of toolkit resources // Understanding what is included in the toolkit and how it applies to rural communities like ours
- **Week 3:** What's Brewing & What's Stewing // Identify what is working well, what's on the agenda and what needs to be on the agenda
- **Week 4:** Taking Steps Forward // Using the toolkit to support change

BACKGROUND

- The Healthy Communities Toolkit is a resource funded by a grant through Plan4Health.
- Plan4Health is an initiative that connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions.
- Launched in 2010, the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) Community Health Action Response Team (CHART) focuses on policy and environmental change to support healthy eating and active living among the 10 towns served by the EHHD. Strategies for the Plan4Health project include assessing zoning policies and codes that impact opportunities for healthy eating and active transportation, and developing a rural community toolkit.

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- Much of the work the EHHD facilitates in the community focuses on **sustainable change**: working to support updates to policy and the environment where people have choices (or make choices) that impact their health.
- Policy and environmental change in a community (or worksite or household) takes place in incremental steps that start with noticing that there is a situation that can be addressed (changed).
- While the primary focus of this toolkit workshop is to look at the larger community – many aspects can be applied to worksites and households.

Policy	Environment
Policy evaluation, adjustment &/or termination	All elements in place and well developed
Policy implementation	Most elements are in place &/or well developed
Policy formulation	Some elements are in place &/or well developed
Problem identified/ gaining agenda status	Few elements in place and/or well developed
Not identified as a problem	Elements not in place

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The lower boxes start with pre-awareness that steps can be taken, and includes the first steps to making improvements in the community, such as the time it takes to research best practices and get on an agenda. This stage is meaningful and should be acknowledged



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POLICY AND ENVIORNMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The middle boxes represent an issue actively being addressed, but not complete; it can take months or years in this stage



Policy	Environment
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POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The top boxes demonstrate successful implementation of policies or changes to the built environment that support healthy living



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Policy evaluation, adjustment &/or termination	All elements in place and well developed
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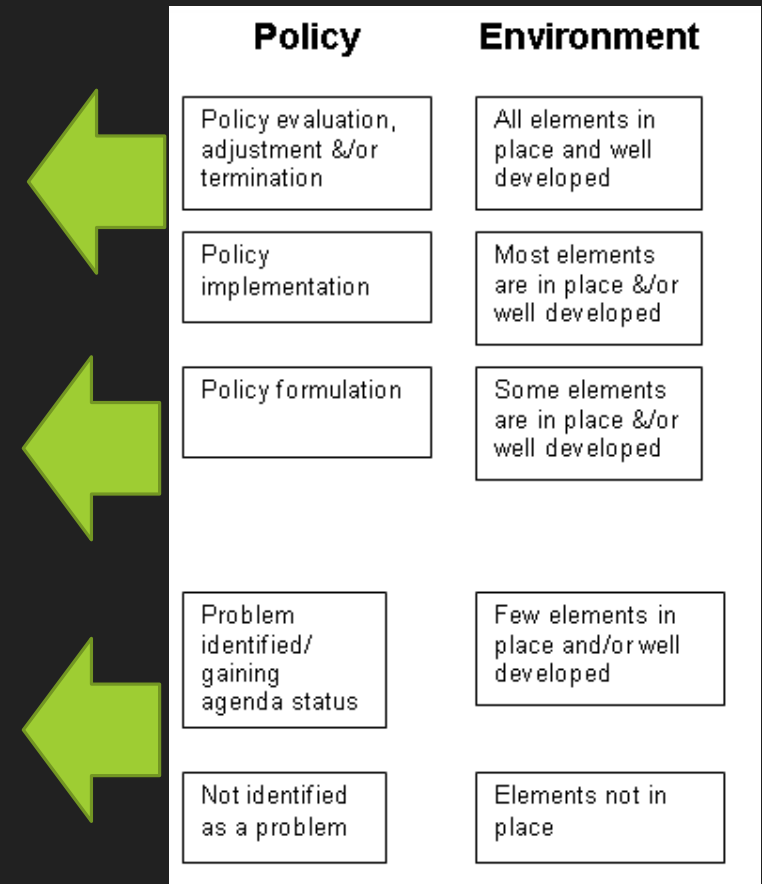
POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The top boxes demonstrate successful implementation of policies or changes to the built environment that support healthy living

The middle boxes represent an issue actively being addressed, but not complete; it can take months or years in this stage

The lower boxes start with pre-awareness that steps can be taken, and includes the first steps to making improvements in the community, such as the time it takes to research best practices and get on an agenda. This stage is meaningful and should be acknowledged



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POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- The main goal of a policy and environmental approach to improving community health is

**TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE
EASY CHOICE!**

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

REFLECTION:

1. Can you identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to incorporate active living in their daily/weekly routine?
 2. Can you identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to access healthy foods?
- These can be either health-promoting or limiting things.
 - Jot them down – we will use these in future sessions!

COMMUNITY QUICK AUDIT

- Take the Community Quick Audit (YOUR perspective and awareness at this time is all that is captured in this questionnaire)
- The audit includes general 'best practice' statements that promote access to healthy food and opportunities for active living

[CLICK HERE](#) TO TAKE THE AUDIT (ONLINE)

Preview for next week (extra time activity)

Access to healthy food can be as close as your back yard

- Do you know your town's rules/regulations on keeping hens (for fresh eggs)?
- If you have time this week:
 - Locate your town's zoning rules on livestock (specifically hens)
 - Review one Connecticut town's approach to permitting hens that enables many families to have their own source of fresh eggs (policies can be found [HERE](#))
 - Compare and contrast your town's policies to the 'best practice' policies referenced above
 - Every town has different needs – but is there room in your zoning rules to be more inclusive?

Next week...

- We will dive into the resources available in the [Healthy Communities Toolkit](#)

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at blooma@ehhd.org

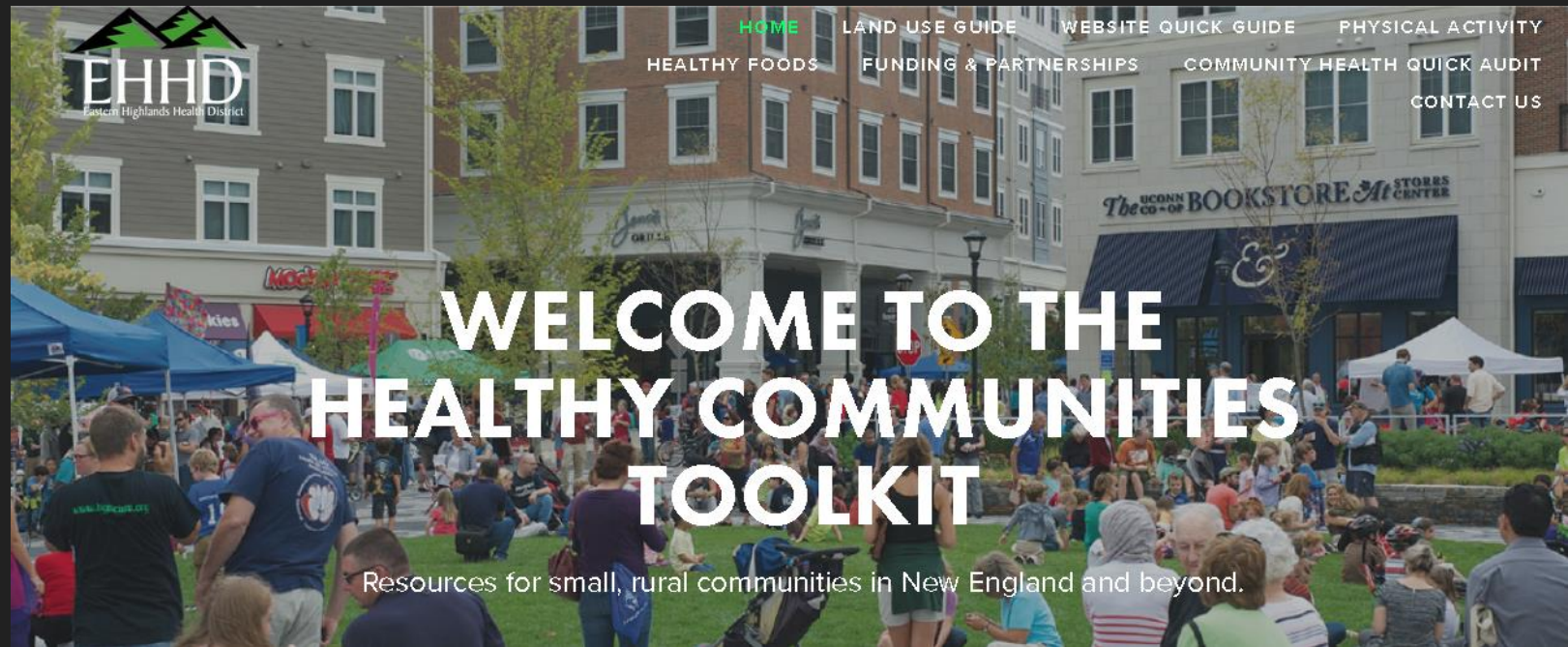
WEEK 2

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

- The toolkit can be found at the web address:

HEALTHYEASTERNCT.COM

- Includes links for smaller/rural communities to explore how land use and zoning policies impact opportunities for healthy eating and active living
- Policy change does not always need funding resources, but changes to the built environment often stalls because of costs; there are links for funding opportunities included in the toolkit



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

No single town has all the answers or best practices, and because each town is unique, what one town can do might not be a good fit for your town.

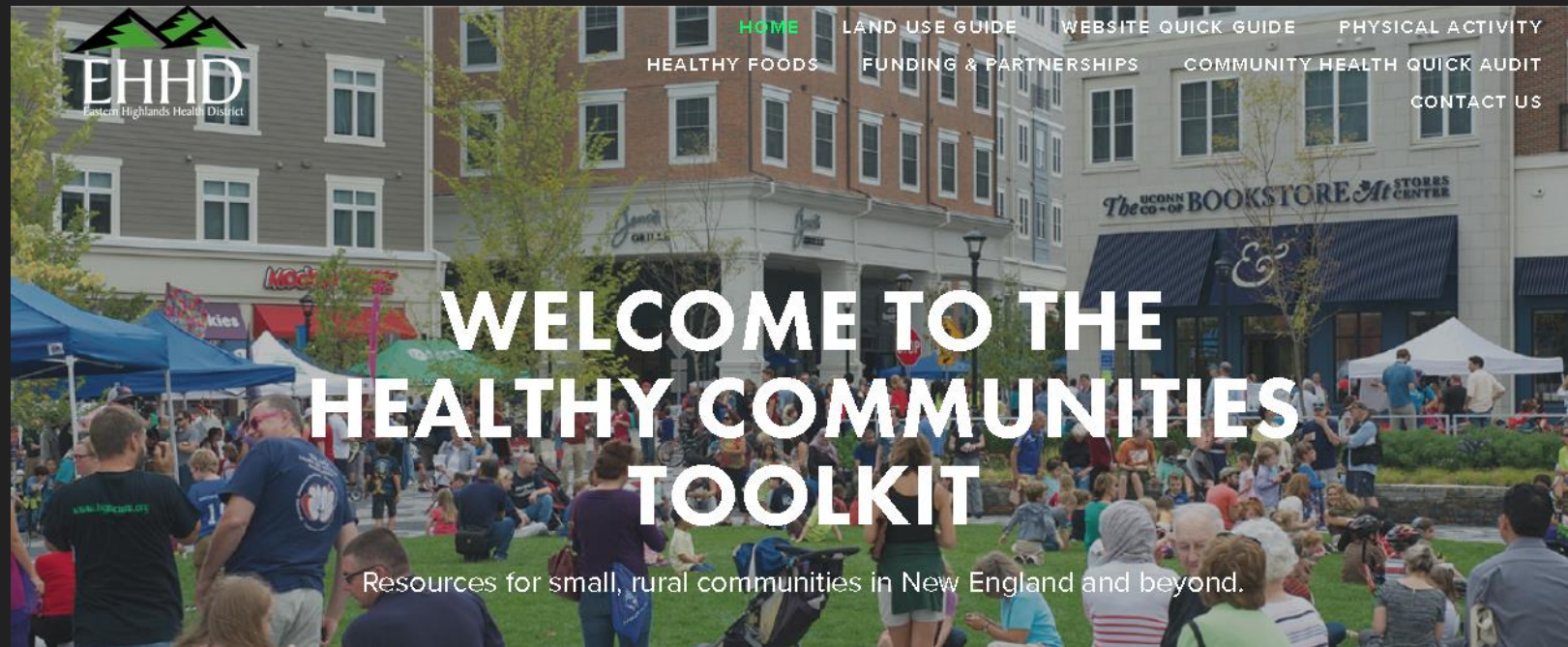
The toolkit is a resource to present new ideas to facilitate healthy communities in ways that have worked in other towns.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

Specifically, the toolkit includes resources and information regarding:

- Increase &/or improve opportunities for physical activity
- Ideas to increase access to healthy foods
- Funding opportunities and resources
- Best practices and examples from other rural &/or New England towns



LAND USE GUIDE

Why should your land use commission and other local officials promote healthy communities?



LAND USE GUIDE

Town planning and zoning commissions and other land use managers have a significant impact on their communities in a number of ways, including community health. They guide development and influence how the community evolves. They can influence housing variety, business types and locations, available open spaces, and the connections among them.



LAND USE GUIDE

Are homes, businesses, and open spaces mixed together or separate? Can you safely and easily travel among them in a variety of ways?

Considering only your town hall or primary commercial area, is it possible to move between locations safely without a car?



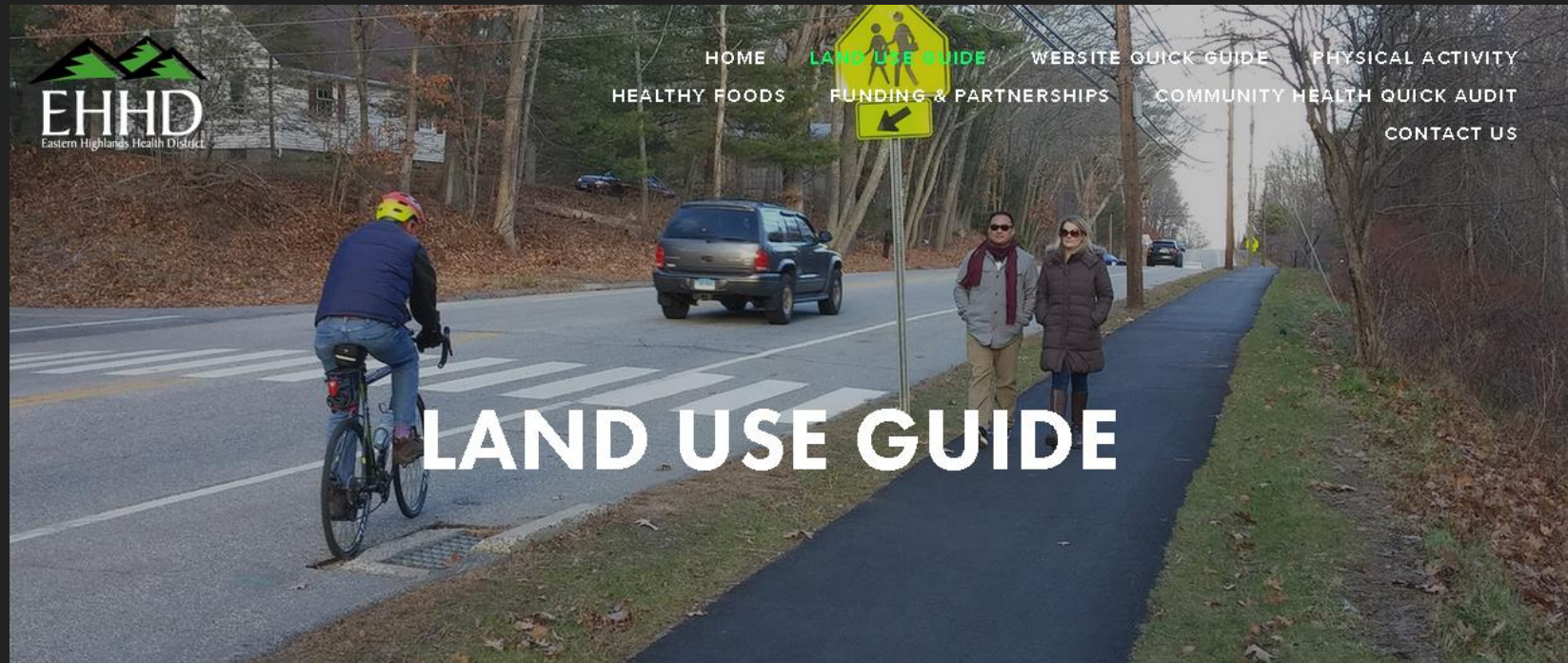
LAND USE GUIDE

These factors directly influence opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy food. By increasing those opportunities, land use managers help create a healthier environment and reduce major illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke among their residents. This improved quality of life allows healthier communities become more connected, desirable places to live.



LAND USE GUIDE

Land use policy and implementation is an aspect of each community that every resident can participate in.



LAND USE GUIDE

3 Key ways Planning and Zoning Commissions promote healthy communities:

1. Implement the Plan of Conservation & Development
2. Manage the Features of Land Development
3. Engage the Community



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

- Click on the image to read an overview of the Healthy Communities Toolkit

PLAN4Health

EHHD

100 YEARS

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

Website Synopsis and Information You Can Find In This Website



VISIT
HEALTHYEASTERNCT.COM

WHAT ARE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?



Healthy communities are places that offer opportunities to maintain a good state of health including physical activity (such as walking) and healthy foods (such as those available at farmer's markets).

WHY HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MATTER



Communities with ample opportunities to get and stay healthy are more desirable places to live. They offer clean air and water, ample food choices, places to walk and bicycle comfortably, and places for recreation. Healthy places attract new residents and in doing so, become more lively and dynamic.

New businesses that serve people engaged in healthy lifestyles are attracted to those communities and can enrich the local economy. A healthier population can reduce burden on local governments for health and social services. Where quality of life is elevated, in part with healthy options, redevelopment and restoration efforts tend to be more successful long-term.

In rural and small towns, creating healthier communities can be of particular importance. Where homes and businesses are far apart from one another, the car becomes the easiest way to get from one destination to another. Walking and bicycling may be more difficult and most often takes place in the shoulders of the road. Safety becomes a concern. In addition, many small towns struggle to keep a successful variety of food stores with healthy options in the community.

HOW THIS TOOLKIT CAME ABOUT

In 2015, in partnership with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA), EHHD was awarded a Plan4Health grant by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association.

The focus of this grant is to support EHHD/CCAPA efforts to increase physical activity and access to healthy foods in the region's towns by helping them link their planning and public health programs with a focus on healthier communities. This toolkit is designed to support the EHHD region towns, as well as any other small, rural towns, in these efforts.

WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT?



This website is a compilation of various tools to help people make their communities healthier places to live, work, and play.

These include planning and regulatory tools focused on growing options for physical activity and access to local, healthy foods. Specifically, these tools are for local officials who make land development decisions in small and rural Connecticut towns.



Flip the page to learn more!

ONE EXAMPLE/EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY TO DO

Access to healthy food can be as close as your back yard

- Do you know your town's rules/regulations on keeping hens (for fresh eggs)?
- If you have time this week:
 - Locate your town's zoning rules on livestock (specifically hens)
 - Review one Connecticut town's approach to permitting hens that enables many families to have their own source of fresh eggs (policies can be found [HERE](#))
 - Compare and contrast your town's policies to the 'best practice' policies referenced above
 - Every town has different needs – but is there room in your zoning rules to be more inclusive?

Next week...

We will take a look at what is working well in your community and what is on (your) agenda for areas to improve or address (or learn more about) regarding building a healthy community in your town.

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at blooma@ehhd.org

WEEK 3

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Examples of how PZC impacts health through policy and environment:

- connecting places through paths and sidewalks
- allowing for roadside farm stands and community locations for farmers' markets
- allowing for backyard hens

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

What are your town's regulations or implementation regarding these and other issues?

- connecting places through paths and sidewalks
- allowing for roadside farm stands and community locations for farmers' markets
- allowing for backyard hens

Example to explore: BACKYARD FOWL

Click on the town name to open the zoning policies

Town	Notes regarding backyard fowl
Andover p. 135 Section 20.5	homeowners may have up to 8 total of any combination of chickens, guinea hens, turkeys, and rabbits without a special permit.
Ashford P. 25	Unknown livestock rules
Bolton p.3 Section 6A.10b	No more than six (6) hens may be kept on any property located in residence zoning districts as an accessory use as of right to a residential use. Such accessory use shall require a Zoning Certificate of Compliance
Chaplin p. 13 Section 5.2.A.3.c.a	One-half (1/2) acre for a total number of poultry and/or fowl not to exceed ten (10) individuals, and an additional one-quarter (1 /4) acre per each additional five (5) or less poultry
Columbia p. 34 Section 21.5.1	Min. 1 acre for fowl. No zoning permit required to keep less than a total of 20 small animals.

Town	Notes regarding backyard fowl
Coventry p. 99 Section 6.03.01	any parcel for the raising of animals other than common domestic household pets shall be no less than two (2) acres in size, except with a special permit pursuant to Section 6.06.02.g
Mansfield p. 190	16 hens per 40,000sqft
Scotland	No notation of livestock regs
Tolland p. 143 Section 16.9	One half (0.5) acre to less than two (2) acres: The keeping of chickens or other domestic fowl no larger than a chicken is allowed No more than 6 allowed
Willington p. 126 Section 7.07.03	2021 – revisions not reflected in current regs/pending. Property must be greater than or equal to 40,000 square feet in order to keep backyard poultry. (up to a maximum of 8)

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Town planning and zoning policy:

What are you aware of and What can you find?

- Two weeks ago you were invited to take the Community Quick Audit (YOUR perspective and awareness at this time is all that is captured in this questionnaire)
- The audit includes general 'best practice' statements that promote access to healthy food and opportunities for active living
- If you did not take the audit yet, [CLICK HERE](#) TO TAKE THE AUDIT (ONLINE)

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

TWO WEEKS AGO YOU WERE ASKED TO:

1. identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to incorporate active living in their daily/weekly routine?
 2. identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to access healthy foods?
- These can be either health-promoting or limiting things.

WHAT'S BREWING / WHAT'S STEWING?

- What issues are you aware of that are on an agenda or has been on the agenda for the town or PZC that impacts residents and visitors access to healthy foods and opportunities for active living?
- What issues would you like for your town to address to remove barriers to healthy foods and opportunities for active living?

WHAT'S BREWING / WHAT'S STEWING?

As you consider how to best use the resources in the Healthy Communities Toolkit, take a few minutes to write down four key aspects of identifying opportunities for change. The following slide poses a few questions to get you started.

Regarding policy and the built environment, what are your town's

STRENGTHS :: WEAKNESSES :: CHALLENGES :: OPPORTUNITIES

??

WHAT'S BREWING / WHAT'S STEWING?

STRENGTHS

- What resources does your town have?
- What works well in your town for facilitating healthy eating and active living?

WEAKNESSES

- Are zoning policies clear and do they address HEAL in a positive way?

CHALLENGES

- Lack of awareness of impact of PZC on HEAL?
- Funding?

OPPORTUNITIES

- Room for growth/progress in addressing HEAL?
- Items already on agenda that need support?
- "low hanging" fruit to put on an agenda?

WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON THE AGENDA?

While this activity is best done in groups – and we encourage you to bring this back to others in your community to narrow down the wish list to actionable items to put on an agenda or continue to find support for,

- What are a few items you would want on an agenda for the PZC to consider?
- Are there items that other town committees/commissions could address?
- What steps can you take to advance HEAL in your town?

Next week...

- With your list in hand (items you would like on an agenda and the challenges facing your town in moving HEAL issues forward), next week we will dig into the Healthy Communities Toolkit to help connect you with resources that will resonate!

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at bloomma@ehhd.org

WEEK 4

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

how the toolkit can help:

How the Healthy Communities Toolkit can help -->>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Land Use Guide Page & resources • Explore model policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize model policy and resources for Healthy Eating and Active Living • Tap into Funding and Partnerships to gain momentum 				Identify new goals through annual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick Audits • CHANGE Tool
POLICY >>	Not identified as a problem that needs to be addressed	Problem identified/gaining agenda status or policy drafted (in process)	Policy formulation & adoption	Policy implementation but not reviewed yet	Policy evaluation & adjustment Or modifications	
ENVIRONMENT >>	Elements not in place that allow for this practice	Few elements in place &/or well developed; some elements are there, but not in a truly useful way	Some elements in place &/or well developed, but can be enhanced with additional elements	Most elements in place &/or well developed, but there is room for improvements	All elements in place and well developed	

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Last week we ended with a short list of

- Items you would want on an agenda for the PZC to consider
- Items that other town committees/commissions could address (Parks or Recreation commission)
- Action steps you can take to advance HEAL in your town

Moving forward

Consider your list, and the

- STRENGTHS :: WEAKNESSES :: CHALLENGES :: OPPORTUNITIES in your town that you identified last week
- If you still need to explore resources, use the toolkit links on the following pages to find justification, sample policy and conceptual ideas of how this even works in a small rural Connecticut town

Toolkit: Healthy Eating

Gardens or farm plots of all sizes and shapes can create a local supply of healthy foods. These include local farms, community gardens, backyard gardens, and neighborhood plots dedicated to growing food or keeping farm animals.

Tools to encourage these agricultural resources include:

- Incentivize Agriculture Large & Small
- Adopt Farm Preservation and Farm Stand Programs
- Support Farmer's Markets & Food Trucks
- Support Community Agriculture
- Foster Healthy Grocery Stores
- Support Rural Transportation Programs

**[CLICK HERE FOR THE
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
TOOLKIT PAGE ON
HEALTHY EATING TO
REVIEW RESOURCES
ASSOCIATED WITH THESE
TOPICS](#)**

Toolkit: Active Living

Towns have multiple opportunities to encourage and facilitate physical activity in the community from bike lanes and sidewalks to parks, trails and playgrounds (and everything in between). Even towns in our Quiet Corner of the state have opportunities to implement policies and changes to the built environment such as:

- Develop Trails
- Leverage DOT Tools & Resources
- Make Trail Connections
- Engage in Placemaking, Wayfinding, and invest in Playability

[CLICK HERE FOR THE
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
TOOLKIT PAGE ON
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO
REVIEW RESOURCES
ASSOCIATED WITH THESE
TOPICS](#)

Funding

Often local initiatives stall from the need for funding or strategic partners. The Toolkit helps bridge these gaps through links for:

- Transportation project funding
- Funding to support agriculture
- Open space and greenways funding
- Private Non-Profit opportunities

[CLICK HERE FOR THE
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
TOOLKIT PAGE ON
FUNDING AND
PARTNERSHIPS TO REVIEW
RESOURCES ASSOCIATED
WITH THESE TOPICS](#)

Next Steps...

We would like to convene meetings (virtual to begin with) to coordinate some action steps and help our local towns take their next steps forward. We invite you to do two things if you are still interested in continuing the conversation and getting support for your Healthy Communities initiatives

1. Email your wish list, strengths & opportunity analysis or anything you would like to share to get the conversation moving in your town to our Healthy Communities CHART: [Click HERE](#) You can drop your comments or lists in the body of the email, attach documents, or take a picture of your handwritten notes to send along.
2. Click [HERE](#) to submit an email to express interest in joining quarterly CHART meetings convened by the EHHD to allow for group discussion, input and support for your Healthy Communities initiatives. Let us know if **daytime** or **evening** meetings are best for you.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for participating in this mini-workshop to introduce the Healthy Communities Toolkit to more members of our community. This is a dynamic site, so come back to find new and updated information.

If you have suggestions for additional links and resources to be included in the toolkit, please send them our way!

We look forward to working with you and our member towns as we work together to

Build a Healthy Eastern CT!

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at blooma@ehhd.org

Next
page



P.S. CAN YOU HELP WITH OUR 10 YEAR EVALUATION?

- This survey tool mirrors the questions and rating system that was used in 2009 through 2011 in the Eastern Highlands Health District, and we are collecting responses this summer for a 10 year progress update.
- This tool was developed by the CDC, and implemented across the nation by towns and cities, large and small. We are very aware that some of the questions don't 'fit' the Quiet Corner exactly. We also know that the needs and infrastructure of Mansfield, Coventry and Tolland are different from Scotland, Ashford and Chaplin.
- To the best of your awareness, and thinking of the questions in ways that do apply to your town, please rate each statement. The statements are categorized by Active Living/Physical Activity and Healthy Eating/Nutrition. Further, the evaluation for each section is based on POLICY and ENVIRONMENT. The differentiation between the two rating options (Policy and Environment) is because sometimes there are policies on the books that are not implemented or need to be addressed in a physical sense and other times there are environmental assets in place but perhaps no policy on the books - sometimes the two aspects of a particular statement are rated very differently.

CLICK HERE: [2021 CHANGE Tool](#)