

HEALTH ELEMENT

Introduction

A community can plan to be healthier, to create the social and physical infrastructure to help its residents live longer, higher quality lives. Themes such as aging in place, longevity, and many of the chronic diseases associated with sedentary lifestyles can be addressed, in part, by policies pertaining to the built environment. The introduction of the Health Element to the Village of El Portal's Comprehensive Plan has the overall mission of promoting a well-designed built environment that may provide a favorable context for the optimization of residents' health, happiness, safety, and longevity.

Issues considered when developing policies to achieve a healthier community include the encouragement of physically activity, especially walking, which provides health benefits and can be encouraged or discouraged by the design of the built environment. Walking allows for opportunities to gather with others and creates a sense of community. An environment in which people have access to their daily needs at a walking distance also shortens or eliminates car trips that in turn help to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Other design implications for human health include designing for safety crossing the street and calming vehicular traffic, zoning that encourages rather than discourages food production on private yards and even public spaces to increase access to fresh, organic, produce, and zoning to allow for medical clinics and first responders to be closer to every resident.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1 Preserve and improve the physical and mental health and quality of life of the Village of El Portal residents and visitors by providing a safe, healthy, and livable built environment and improving access to health care.

Objective 1.1 Coordinate and collaborate with all agencies in the region to address the health needs of all residents.

Policy 1.1.1 Partner with Miami-Dade County and other relevant local and State agencies and work together to implement policies and programs to help solve problems that negatively affect residents' health.

Policy 1.1.2 Coordinate with the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County to combat the spread of infectious diseases.

Policy 1.1.3 Partner with the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County to create active and passive open spaces that provide opportunities to improve physical and mental health.

Objective 1.2 Promote urban design that encourages physical activity and improves health and safety.

- Policy 1.2.1 Implement complete streets throughout the Village that offer mobility alternatives for all residents to reach their destinations without having to depend on automobiles.
- Policy 1.2.2 Encourage designs that make the Village more walkable and promote strategic locations for recreational and community facilities to increase walkability and thereby reduce the occurrence of illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Policy 1.2.3 Address streetscape designs to reduce vehicular speeds and improve pedestrian safety. Redesign existing streets to restore balance and ensure that pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists feel safe and comfortable reaching their destinations. Incorporate traffic calming techniques that are built into the redesign and reduce vehicle speeds.
- Policy 1.2.4 Incorporate crosswalks and increased signal times in favor of pedestrians crossing streets.
- Policy 1.2.5 Require pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements whenever other improvements are made to the streets such as construction, resurfacing, restriping, shoulder, or drainage work.
- Policy 1.2.6 Reduce the risk of accidents by requiring signal installations and pedestrian displays on major corridors and by supporting public outreach and informational campaigns, increased enforcement of traffic safety, and advancements in transportation system infrastructure.
- Policy 1.2.7 Work toward increasing density and connectivity and ensure that residents have access to from public facilities, retail, grocer, and other businesses where they may obtain their daily needs within walking and biking distance.
- Policy 1.2.8 Create a network of safe routes to school for existing and proposed schools.
- Policy 1.2.9 Maintain and preserve existing open spaces and seek to provide new open spaces to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
- Policy 1.2.10 Encourage schools to open facilities and recreational facilities to the community after school hours and on weekends.
- Objective 1.3** Improve safety in the community by implementing crime prevention design and strategies.
- Policy 1.3.1 Support the inclusion of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for new development and redevelopment. ‘Eyes-on-the-street’ or ‘natural surveillance,’ is a pillar of CPTED. Consider adding minimum glazing and transparency requirements for most zoning districts in order to

encourage ‘eyes-on-the-street.’

Policy 1.3.2 The Village shall continue to foster and support the Citizen Crime Watch group.

Policy 1.3.3 Continue enforcement of traffic laws by the Village Police Department.

Policy 1.3.4 Implement community policing strategies to reduce safety concerns.

Policy 1.3.5 Provide adequate street lighting to deter crime.

Objective 1.4 Promote access to healthy and affordable food for residents to meet proper nutritional needs.

Policy 1.4.1 Encourage locally-based food production.

Policy 1.4.2 Promote home and community gardens and allow for small-scale urban agriculture where appropriate.

Policy 1.4.3 Seek to integrate food markets that provide fresh and healthy products within the community.

Objective 1.5 Ensure access to quality health care for all residents.

Policy 1.5.1 Coordinate with local, regional, and national health programs and healthcare providers to ensure and facilitate the delivery of health care services.

Policy 1.5.2 Promote retention and recruitment of healthcare providers to help meet community needs and access.

Policy 1.5.3 Inform residents of the range of health care coverage options and provide assistance in obtaining appropriate coverage.

Policy 1.5.4 Promote the location of healthcare services and programs in areas served by transit.

Policy 1.5.5 Inform residents of the importance of preventive services, health education, and nutritional programs.

Objective 1.6 Implement design and strategies that improve mental health and emotional well-being.

Policy 1.6.1 Reduce land use patterns that lead to social isolation and long commutes to allow for more connectivity and time to spend with friends and family.

Policy 1.6.2 Foster social interaction through increased open spaces and designs that improve connectivity.

Policy 1.6.3 Use landscaping and tree planting to increase mental health and increasing quality of life for Village residents by screening unattractive elements, minimizing heat island effect, providing shade, and softening the impact of new developments.

Policy 1.6.4 Discourage commercial uses that have intrusive levels of lighting and noise pollution in proximity to residential areas.

Objective 1.7 Increase preparedness for epidemics and pandemics.

Policy 1.7.1 Ensure educational continuity by coordinating with Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Refer to Educational Facilities Element Objective 1.7 for measures.

Policy 1.7.2 Coordinate with County and appropriate agencies regarding immunization, rapid testing, and contact tracing. Ensure that areas are designated to carry out these activities within the Village and that residents are informed as to location, operating hours, and safety protocol.

Policy 1.7.3 Coordinate with County officials regarding physical distancing, facial coverings, quarantine, and other safety protocols.

Policy 1.7.4 Enhance sanitation of Village properties and public spaces within El Portal.

Policy 1.7.5 Encourage remote telecommuting and remote work and learning by increasing access to wi-fi and high-speed internet.

Policy 1.7.6 Coordinate with County, faith-based, food banks, and charitable institutions to distribute food and water to Village residents.

Objective 1.8 Continue to support efforts and strategies for public outreach and community engagement.

Policy 1.8.1 Educate developers and residents on the connection between the built environment and public health.

Policy 1.8.2 Include public health information in community meetings and events.

Policy 1.8.3 Organize community events and activities that promote health, such as walks, runs, bike rides, clean-ups, and volunteering to help the elderly.

Policy 1.8.4 Support and promote nutrition and food literacy education programs.