

# Chapter 2 – Healthy Communities

## Goals, Policies, and Recommendations: Community Design, the Built Environment, and ~~Land Use~~ Healthy Food Access

### Goals

1. ~~The relationship ~~impact~~ between of our built environment and ~~on~~ the health and wellness of our community is understood.~~
2. ~~Communities are intentionally designed to promote physical and mental health.~~

### Policies

1. Communities should be designed, in both physical form and services, to support physical and mental health.
2. Access to healthy foods must be increased, especially in more rural areas.
3. TRORC supports the Vermont Farm to School Network.

### Recommendations

1. ~~TRORC should work with Vermont legislators to create a public health element in 24 VSA § 4382.~~
- 2.1. TRORC should organize and host a regional public health summit.
- 3.2. TRORC should partner with schools that have limited access to nutritious food who would like to partner with local farms.
- 4.3. Municipalities should connect with the Vermont Farm to Plate and Farm to School networks to see how they can best promote the consumption of locally grown foods by their residents.
- 5.4. TRORC and/or the State should create mapping resources, showing:
  - a. Locality of grocers, convenience stores (if healthy food options are offered), farmers markets, farms, agricultural institutions, community gardens, food banks, and food pantries.
  - b. Overlaying public transportation routes and types to food retail and food shelves.
  - c. Location of low-income census tracts.
6. ~~Municipalities should develop incentives such as local tax breaks for small or convenience store owners to stock healthy and local options~~
- 7.5. Municipalities should promote and expand farmers markets and community gardens by identifying ~~ideal~~ locations for such activities and letting potential organizers know of these sites ~~locations~~.
8. ~~TRORC and municipalities should educate state and local policymakers on connections between food access and nutrition.~~
- 9.6. Municipalities should support the preservation of large and small, ~~contiguous~~ blocks of productive agricultural land.

## CHAPTER 2– GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ~~10. Municipalities should work jointly with other jurisdictions to preserve agricultural land.~~
- ~~11.7. TRORC should conduct a food system analysis for the Region.~~
- ~~12.8. TRORC will support Towns in establishing community nursing / community health worker services.~~
- ~~13.9. TRORC will support Towns in planning for built environments that are ADA compliant.~~

### ~~Policies and Recommendations: Healthy Food Access and Security~~

#### ~~Policies~~

- ~~1. Increase access to healthy foods.~~
- ~~2. Support the Vermont Farm to School Network~~

#### ~~Recommendations~~

- ~~1. Municipalities should connect with the Vermont Farm to Plate and Farm to School networks to see how they can best promote the consumption of locally grown foods by their residents.~~
- ~~2. TRORC and/or the State should create mapping resources, showing:
  - ~~• Locality of grocers, convenience stores (if healthy food options are offered), farmers markets, farms, agricultural institutions, community gardens, food banks, and food pantries.~~
  - ~~• Transportation routes and types to food retail and food shelves.~~
  - ~~• Location of low income census tracts.~~~~
- ~~3. Municipalities should develop incentives such as local tax breaks for small or convenience store owners to stock healthy and local options~~
- ~~4. Municipalities should promote and expand farmers markets and community gardens by identifying ideal locations for such activities and letting potential organizers know of these locations.~~
- ~~5. TRORC and municipalities should educate state and local policymakers on connections between food access and nutrition.~~
- ~~6. Municipalities should support the preservation of large, contiguous blocks of productive agricultural land.~~
- ~~7. Municipalities should work jointly with other jurisdictions to preserve agricultural land.~~
- ~~8. TRORC should conduct a food system analysis for the Region.~~

### Goal, Policy, and Recommendations: Healthy PlacesHomes

#### Goal

1. The physical places we live and work in contribute to our health.

#### Policy

## CHAPTER 2– GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize the development and maintenance of ~~high-quality~~ healthy, affordable, and energy efficient -housing.

### Recommendations

1. TRORC will encourage towns to ~~advocate for implementation of the State's greenhouse gas reduction strategies in their plans~~ plans.
2. ~~TRORC and municipalities should participate in the review of environmental impact reports.~~
3. ~~2.~~ TRORC and municipalities should advocate for and participate in health impact assessments for development projects.
4. ~~3.~~ Municipalities should prioritize the reuse and remediation of brownfields ~~TRORC should assist municipalities in assessing and remediating brownfields, especially those with hazardous building materials.~~
5. ~~Municipalities should require new development and significant additions to existing development to provide adequate tree canopy to improve or maintain environmental health.~~
6. ~~TRORC and municipalities will continue to advocate for plentiful, high-quality drinking water.~~
7. ~~The State and municipalities must protect the water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands.~~
4. Municipalities should encourage ~~support~~ the renovation of existing housing stock and development of new housing stock in compliance with healthy home and energy efficiency best practices.

## Goals, Policy, and Recommendations: Healthy Natural Environment

### Goals

1. ~~Increase in access to public green space.~~
2. ~~The number of confirmed Lyme and other tick-borne disease cases in Vermont is decreased.~~

### Policy

1. ~~Support climate change mitigation efforts.~~

### Recommendations

1. ~~TRORC should work with municipalities to distribute information on Lyme disease and prevention.~~
2. ~~TRORC should work with municipalities on climate change mitigation strategies.~~

## Goal, Policies, and Recommendations: Active Living and Transportation

### Goal

## CHAPTER 2– GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A balanced and equitable transportation system provides for the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, strollers, and wheelchairs.

### **Policies**

- ~~1. Create a balanced and equitable transportation system that provides for the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, strollers, and wheelchairs.~~
- ~~2.1. Incorporate active transportation design features into new development projects.~~

### **Recommendations**

1. When requested, tThe State and/or TRORC ~~should assist municipalities map neighborhoods and advocate for~~ connectivity to essential services, walkable routes, recreation opportunities, and transportation options.
2. TRORC and municipalities should plan for bike-friendly state highways to connect village centers, if feasible.
3. Municipalities should conduct walkability and bikability assessments.
4. ~~TRORC should work with local jurisdictions to adopt bike and pedestrian master plans.~~
- ~~5.4.~~ The State and TRORC will educate decision makers on links between safe streets and health.
- ~~6.5.~~ TRORC will collaborate with local agencies and communities to explore implement Safe Routes to Schools programs and Vermont’s Complete Streets program.
- ~~7.6.~~ Municipalities should promote joint use of park and recreation facilities between communities and ensure residents without cars have access to outdoor recreation opportunities.-
8. ~~Municipalities should promote existing trails.~~

## Goal, Policies, and Recommendations: Social Inclusion

### **Goal**

1. All residents feel socially connected.

### **Policies**

1. Promote increased, ~~accessible~~ use of public space, walkable ~~and accessible~~ neighborhoods, and mixed-use development.
2. Increase affordable and reliable transit options to essential services and recreational and social opportunities.
3. Improve parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces for accessibility and community mingling.
4. Promote equitable access to public meetings and events.
5. Actively work to diversify the voices representing the Town in towns in local government.

### Recommendations

1. Municipalities should ~~map~~ evaluate how to make public gathering spaces more accessible and welcoming to people of all abilities and identities. ~~and indicate their levels of accessibility.~~
2. Public health professionals should educate decision makers on the link between social support and health.
- ~~3. Municipalities should consider accessibility when developing public spaces or recreational opportunities.~~
- ~~4.3.~~ TRORC will provide training for neighborhood residents to participate in boards and commissions.
- ~~4.~~ Municipalities should support diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives such as audits or surveys, committees, celebration events, etc.
- ~~5.~~ Municipalities should support mutual aid networks within the community.

## Goal, Policies, and Recommendations: Substance Misuse Prevention

### Goal

- ~~1.~~ All forms of drug addiction is eliminated in all segments of society.

### Policies

1. Reduce concentrated exposure to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
2. Provide opportunities for substance-free recreation and community involvement.

### Recommendations

1. With the help of public health professionals, municipalities should assess the types of substance use problems within their community.
2. Municipalities should continue to raise awareness of the nature and seriousness of health issues.
- ~~3. Municipalities should assess the community's readiness for prevention.~~
- ~~4.3.~~ Municipalities should assess the community's readiness for prevention, ~~Municipalities should~~ review current programs already in place, and identify service gaps and barriers.
- ~~5.4.~~ Municipalities should convene community organizations who serve youth and local leaders to capture ideas and resources to help implement and sustain research-based programs to promote clear expectations around substance use for youth.-
- ~~6.5.~~ ~~Municipalities should provide plenty of healthy recreational opportunities for youth and overall community participation.~~ Municipalities should consider establishing substance-free public spaces and events and buffer zones around

sensitive areas (e.g., libraries, community centers, etc.) to reduce youth exposure and support those who are in recovery.

## Goals, Policies, and Recommendations: Health-Care Facilities

### Goals

1. Prioritize ~~Health care coordinators are prioritized~~ in all towns.
2. The availability of medical and elderly care services in the Region is enhanced.
- ~~3. Residents have access to all levels of health care, regardless of wealth or income status.~~

### Policies

1. ~~All medical and elderly or other~~ care facilities are encouraged when located within or immediately adjacent to designated growth areas provided that they do not have an undue adverse impact on traffic or the character of the area.
2. TRORC will support efforts at the state and local levels to develop additional elderly care services and facilities.
3. TRORC will support for the development of new facilities by reviewing any potential projects before they are submitted to the District Environmental Commission to reduce the possibility that a permit will be denied, delayed, or heavily conditioned.

### Recommendations

- ~~1. TRORC should identify areas of the Region where medical or elderly care facilities would be beneficial.~~
1. TRORC and municipalities should evaluate and address barriers to health care access, including but not limited to transportation, service gaps, education, language, cost of services, immigration status, and providers' competency and sensitivity in working with underserved populations.
2. TRORC should review local zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that they do not prohibit ~~have the effect of prohibiting~~ health-care or elderly or other ~~vulnerable populations care~~ facilities from appropriate areas and should assist with bylaw revisions as needed.