



CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington

School of Public Health

HSERV 581: Social Determinants of Health

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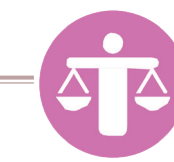


Improving access to quality and healthy foods by expanding locations and hours of stores with robust produce, fresh food, and ethnic food departments can improve accessibility to healthy food, help promote healthier lifestyles, and ultimately improve health outcomes, especially in areas with otherwise limited choices.



As the city grows, combatting gentrification of historic neighborhoods like the Hilltop will also become important for the health and livability of each neighborhood. Higher-density developments like this one can help increase supply of affordable units.

TACOMA NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY: DEVELOPING INDICATORS FOR SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Introduction

The goal of this project was to develop a list of indicators, across a number of social determinants of health, that the City of Tacoma can use to track and monitor neighborhood health and livability.

The structural conditions under which people are born, live, work, and play share an important role in shaping individual and population-level health outcomes. These factors include the schools, grocery stores, parks, employment opportunities, rates of foreclosure, age,

race, and ethnicity that can influence both individual and community-level health. When possible, the indicators developed for the City of Tacoma were pilot tested by collecting any available data for three neighborhoods of particular interest: Hilltop, Lincoln District, and the South End. By implementing usage of these indicators, City leadership and departments can analyze, interpret, and correlate indicators of social determinants of health and track efforts to promote neighborhood well-being.

Methods

Students collaborated with representatives from Neighborhood and Community Services and Planning and Development Services to identify indicators across the following domains: housing, education, income/employment, food access, recreation and parks, arts and culture, and health and social services. The students worked together to assess the academic literature to better understand individual indicators. They also performed key-

informant interviews with community leaders and neighborhood stakeholders to better understand experiences of living and working in Tacoma and to help prioritize their recommended indicators. Finally, the students generated a list of recommended indicators for each domain and possible data sources available or plans for how indicators could be collected in future by other UW students and/or City staff.

Recommended Indicators of Livability

The following are a selection of the proposed domains and indicators of neighborhood livability that the City of Tacoma may consider as they move forward. Students developed these indicators by considering the feasibility and ease of measurement, the availability of similar data across city, state, and national levels, and the input of community stakeholders.

Housing:

Beyond the basic human need for shelter, housing is a social determinant of health that impacts access to health and social services, access to employment, education, food, and environmental exposures. Indicators include:

- Homelessness
- Gentrification
- Affordability & Accessibility
- Community Health

Education:

Not only are higher levels of education linked to better health outcomes, this social determinant of health also intersects with income, employment, and social status. Indicators include:

- Graduation Success
- Parent Engagement
- Student Mobility
- Extracurricular Activity Involvement

Income/Employment:

Economic opportunities play an important role in the health of a community and have a significant impact on all of the other domains. Indicators include:

- Unemployment
- Concentration of Poverty
- Neighborhood Wealth Distribution
- Perceived Job Security

Food Access:

Inadequate food access can impact health and lead to poor nutrition and chronic health conditions, but it can also have far-reaching consequences for other intersecting social determinants of health. Indicators include:

- Physical Access to Food
- Sociocultural Factors
- Economic Access to Food
- City Planning & Infrastructure

Parks & Recreation:

The quality and accessibility of parks and recreation can play a major role in promoting healthy behaviors within communities, improving physical and mental health, and community connection. Indicators include:

- Safety
- Community Participation
- # of Parks Neighborhood
- Park Utilization and Engagement

Arts & Culture:

Participation in arts and cultural events improves both physical and mental health outcomes and also fosters economic development, community building, and higher-quality education. Indicators include:

- Funding
- Food
- Employment
- Community Programs

Health and Social Services:

These critical services include health promotion activities, illness prevention, diagnosis and treatment, and rehabilitation. Indicators include:

- Burden of Chronic Illness (ex: smoking & obesity)
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Health Facilities with Multilingual/multicultural resources
- Geographic Availability of Healthcare Resources