



Although the Delaware Plan4Health project is officially complete, the overall goal was to continue to use a “health in all policies” approach to urban planning. The American Planning Association (APA) highlighted the Delaware project in its last newsletter of 2018, and recognized the success of the Delaware Plan4Health project on its website (<https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9135370/>). In addition, the Delaware Plan4Health project continues to influence Delaware counties.

Kent County Planning Activities

Kent County updated its Comprehensive Plan in September of 2018. The plan specifically discusses the Delaware Plan4Health design strategies for a healthy community, and includes the renderings of Felton East that were designed during the Plan4Health charrette. The Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan now includes Map7C, Land Use Strategies. This map adds more land use options for economic development, town and village development areas, and allows for more compact, mixed use development. This is a major change for Kent County, and will hopefully allow for developments that have healthy community design principles promoted by Plan4Health.

The City of Dover Comprehensive Plan update is underway, and expected to be completed in 2019. A draft of the goals and recommendations for the Dover plan has been published on the City’s website (<https://evogov.s3.amazonaws.com/media/27/media/180571.pdf>), and indicates they intend to incorporate Plan4Health recommendations throughout the plan.

A study is being completed of the Bank Lane corridor in Dover, and current plans include proposals for either a multi-use path, or a cycle track, as well as improvements at intersections. The Dover Plan4Health charrette proposed a bicycle network for downtown Dover, and the Bank Lane corridor was identified as an important connection.

In November 2018, the Town of Felton adopted their updated comprehensive plan. During the Kent County charrette, a parcel of land adjacent to Felton was selected and the attendees designed a conceptual healthy community called “Felton East.” This parcel has been included in Felton’s annexation area, and the town included a section about Plan4Health, the “Felton East” plan, and the seven principles for incorporating health into comprehensive plans in their annexation chapter (<http://redclay.wra.udel.edu/wpplan/>).

Mapping Projects

During the Plan4Health project, a series of health equity maps was created that focused on Kent County. As part of the follow up grant, Planners4Health, these maps were expanded to the entire state of Delaware. These maps were used to identify areas where health disparities exist, and to prioritize grant activities. Since that time, similar mapping efforts have been enacted throughout the state. The Division of Public Health is developing a “Environmental Health Tracking Network” website based on the maps and CDC data; Wilmapco is using health equity mapping while implementing the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan; and the Department of Agriculture is mapping food access issues. In 2019, Delaware

Department of Transportation's Livability Collaborative will try to use mapping to gain a better understanding of Delaware specific data, and how mapping can be coordinated with data collection.

Other Programs

The insights and lessons learned from the Plan4Health project have sparked other programs to include health planning and map making in their overall goals and missions. A study undertaken by the University of Delaware and the Delaware Department of Agriculture in 2018 led to the formation of the Delaware Farm and Food Policy Council in August 2018. This council includes representatives from agriculture (farmers, food business, public health, academics, education, urban agriculture, farmers markets, etc.) whose purpose is to collect data and inform policy on the coordination of food production, distribution, and retail in the State of Delaware.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III approached the City of Dover in July of 2017 with a proposal to complete a rapid health impact assessment (HIA) of the Former Chesapeake Supply Brownfield site within and identified by the Plan4Health charrette area in Dover as a potential urban agriculture project. The Rapid HIA tested the impacts of potential site redevelopment on a variety of community health metrics (food access, employment, mental health, and chronic disease). The landowner is reportedly considering the economic feasibility of this concept. The report can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-06/documents/dover_health_impact_assessment_report.pdf.

Delaware received a four-year State Innovation Model (SIM) Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in 2013 to transform the State's health system towards the Triple Aim of higher quality care, improving the health of communities, at lower cost. Part of this plan was to establish three "Healthy Neighborhoods" committees in local communities across Delaware, to identify the highest priority health issues in local communities and develop projects to address those issues. The Dover/Smyrna committee was formed in July 2017, immediately after the completion of the Plan4Health grant. Many people and organizations active in the Plan4Health project became members of the Dover/Smyrna Healthy Neighborhoods. This committee has implemented three behavioral health initiatives and one healthy lifestyles initiative (Open Streets Dover). The Open Streets initiative was held in the targeted charrette neighborhood, and was the only healthy lifestyles project funded through a SIM grant.

The Future

Because of a desire to see the progress made in the Healthy Neighborhoods program sustained, the Division of Public Health, the University of Delaware, and other partners developed a framework called Healthy Communities Delaware. This framework "takes a collective approach to align efforts and invest in projects, programs, and policies aimed at improving the health of people in low-wealth communities in the state." This focus on the holistic quality of life and health of neighborhoods is a direct link between this new effort and the work of Plan4Health. As this consortium of public, non-profit, and private organizations matures, more resources and coordinated policy decisions may be available to help achieve some of the goals and projects envisioned by the original Plan4Health program, and now embedded within the Dover and Kent County Comprehensive Plans.