

CHAPTER 11 - HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES ELEMENT



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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose Statement

While Washington's Growth Management Act does not currently require inclusion of a Health and Human Services Element in Comprehensive Plans, Mason County recognizes the impact of the built environment on the public's health, and believes the design of communities should be optimized in such a way that it protects the health of residents from environmental threats while encouraging healthy behavior.

The policies that guide development and manage growth must consider the human health implications. Healthy communities require that we address the social determinants of health which include transportation, education, access to healthy food, economic opportunities, and more. Responsibility for the social determinants of health falls to many non-traditional health partners, such as housing, transportation, education, air quality, parks, criminal justice, energy, and economic and employment agencies.

The Washington State "Healthier Washington Initiative" summarizes the prevention framework as a framework to "Improve the health of Washingtonians through internal linkages between public health, health service delivery, and systems influencing the social determinants of health".

B. What is a Healthy Community?

A Healthy Community provides for the following through all stages of life:

Meets basic needs of all

- Safe, sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options
- Affordable, accessible and nutritious foods, and safe drinkable water
- Affordable, high quality, socially integrated, and location-efficient housing
- Affordable, accessible and high quality health care
- Complete and livable communities including quality schools, parks and recreational facilities, child care, libraries, financial services and other daily needs
- Access to affordable and safe opportunities for physical activity
- Able to adapt to changing environments, resilient and prepared for emergencies
- Opportunities for engagement with arts, music, and culture

Quality and sustainability of environment

- Clean air, soil and water, and environments free of excessive noise
- Tobacco and smoke free
- Green and open spaces
- Minimized toxics, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste
- Affordable and sustainable energy use

Adequate levels of economic and social development

- Living wage, safe and healthy job opportunities for all, and a thriving economy
- Support for healthy development of children and adolescents
- Opportunities for high quality and accessible education

Social relationships that are supportive and respectful

- Robust social and civic engagement
- Socially cohesive and supportive relationships, families, homes and neighborhoods
- Safe Communities, free of crime and violence

The purpose of this Chapter is to plan for the environments and services that will meet the needs of current and future Mason County residents while preventing or controlling disease and keeping the local population as healthy and productive as possible.

This Chapter will describe goals and strategies that promote a healthy living environment.

C. Origins of Planning in Public Health

The authority of the County to do the work of protecting the public's health and safety is established by the laws of Washington State – namely the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) section 70.05.060 – which set forth the powers and duties of the local Board of Health. The state law for growth

management also sets forth the authority of the Board of County Commissioners to establish this comprehensive plan and its policies. The difference between the two bodies is that the Board of Health has authority to enforce the state's public health laws and rules established by the State Board of Health and Secretary of Health *throughout* the county, including the cities within the county, whereas the Board of County Commissioners has jurisdiction for land use and other areas of regulation only in the unincorporated parts of the County.

D. Determinants of Health

1. Health Behaviors – in addition to a person's genes, how he or she behaves – the things he or she chooses to do – greatly affect his/her health. Behaviors such as tobacco use, diet and exercise, alcohol and drug use have a significant impact upon the health of individuals, families and even the communities in which we live, work and play.
2. Social and Economic Factors affect health outcomes including: education, employment, income, family and social support and community safety. Taken together health behaviors and social and economic factors account for approximately 70% of a person's health.
3. Physical Environment includes air and water quality, housing, transportation, opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods
4. Clinical Care which encompasses both access to care when needed and quality of care received.

Understanding of Interactions between the Built Environment and Health:

- Access to Healthy Food – Access to healthy food can be improved by encouraging features like community gardens, farmers markets, healthier food bank donations, and promotions of healthy foods, as well as through governmental and private sector policies.
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- Facilities for Physical Activity – the availability of active, walkable places – destinations, parks, sidewalks and trails near where people live and work, and the design of these facilities to be safe and inviting – is strongly associated with levels of physical activity, a key factor in preventing chronic disease. Other main characteristics for creating good access to physical activity opportunities that relate to planning the built environment are density and types of uses, which bring more destinations for walking or other activity within reach of residents or people at work.
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- Water – There is continued need for managing wastes and pathogens in order to maintain clean drinking water and to protect water quality more broadly. Land uses and activities such as raising animals/keeping pets or pest and weed control can have substantial impacts on water quality.
- The availability of sufficient housing stock in sufficient variety to provide choices from single-family residences to multi-family residences in both rural and higher density locations is essential. Affordability and location is critical to facilitate access to other systems influencing the social determinants of health.

II. Health Outcomes

A myriad of factors influence a person's health outcomes. This section describes key outcomes that guide planning for health and human services in Mason County.

- Mason County Experiences 7,600 years of life lost due to premature death compared to the state's average of 5,500.
- 15% of Mason County residents report poor or fair health compared to the State's 12%.
- Mason County residents report 3.8 poor physical health days in the past 30 days versus the state's average of 3.9 days.
- Mason County residents report 4.4 poor mental health days in the past 30 days compared to the State's average of 3.7 days.
- On the more positive side, Mason County experiences only 5.9% of live births with low birthweight compared to the State's average of 6.0%. 5.9% is the same experience as the top US performing counties.

Health Behaviors

- Adult smoking rate is 16% while the Statewide average is 15%.
- Adult obesity rate is 33% compared to the State's 27%
- Food environment index (factors that contribute to a healthy food environment 0 – 10) is 7.6 for Mason County versus 7.5 for the State

- Physical inactivity is 24% for Mason County compared to the State's 18%
- Mason County's adults that engage in excessive drinking is virtually the same as the State's.
- 34% of Mason County's driving deaths involve alcohol while 37% of the State's driving deaths involve alcohol.

Social and Economic Factors

- On time graduation rates for Mason County are 73% compared to the State's average of 78%
- Mason County residents with some college is 55% while the State's average is 67.8%
- Mason County consistently experiences a higher unemployment rate than the Statewide rate.
- 24% of Mason County's children live in poverty versus the Statewide rate of 18%. This has increased from the 22% of children living in poverty in the 2013 report while the State has remained the same.
- 35% of Mason County children live in single parent households while statewide 29% of children live in single parent households.
- Violent Crime per 100,000 population reported in 2015 showed improvement from 336/100,000 reported in 2013 to 285/100,000 in 2015
- Mason County residents experience more deaths by injury (78/100,000 population) than the statewide average (59/100,000).

Physical Environment

- Air pollution – particulate matter – average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter (PM2.5) is 10.9 which is slightly better than the statewide average and the US median.
- Mason County experiences No drinking water violation limits
- 77% of Mason County workers drive alone to work compared to the State’s average of 73%.
- 47% of Mason County workers drive alone for a long commute (defined as commuting more than 30 minutes) versus 33% of the Statewide average.
 - Many Mason County commuters leave Mason County to work in other Counties such as Kitsap, Thurston, Pierce and King Counties.

These commuting patterns are not unexpected in a rural community, but can be contributing factors in lowering the percentage of citizens exercising routinely.

*2016 National County Health Rankings Report for Mason County

Mason County has one incorporated city (Shelton), and two Urban Growth Areas (Allyn and Belfair), with most of the county population located in the extensive rural areas. Seniors and retirees choose to live in Mason County due to its proximity to large population centers and the relative affordability of local housing.

Between 2010 and 2014 Mason County’s population increase was at 2.14% while the State grew at the rate of 3.62%. Mason County is expected to continue to increase its population with a medium level rate as projected by the Office of Financial Management.

III. Planning for Health

As a rural community, populations are dispersed and services are limited in many areas. As a result, most county residents are highly dependent upon the automobile as the primary means to access goods and services. This can limit opportunities for walking or bicycling as a means for exercise. The county could offset this through the development of public trails to promote walking or bicycling, and improving the quality and accessibility of county recreational facilities. The county could also increase efforts to inform the citizenry of the many opportunities for exercise and relaxation within Mason County provided by the numerous County and State Parks, and Olympic National Park.

Within the more densely populated urban growth areas, alternative modes of transportation are encouraged. However, much of the supporting infrastructure is not yet in place. The County developed a Master Parks Comprehensive Plan in 2013. This plan integrates the parks and public trails called for within the various sub-area plans of the urban growth areas. This should further support the development of walking or biking trails within the urban growth areas. This Master Plan should be integrated into the overall Comprehensive Plan to ensure internal linkages among the systems influencing the social determinants of health, particularly housing, transportation and recreation in order to improve access to the many recreational facilities within Mason County.

Access to local, affordable, quality physical, behavioral, and dental health care is important to promote community health. However, as in other rural communities, patients regularly travel out of the area to receive these services and treatment. Primary reasons for this include: (1) the limited number of health care providers located in Mason County; (2) recent migrants to the county choose to retain the services of providers they are already familiar with, (3) local providers are not affiliated with the group insurance plans provided by local employers, and (4) lack of access to Medicaid providers – especially dentists. Local access to medical, behavioral, and dental services would likely result in a greater number of residents taking advantage of these services.

Improving local access to medical, behavioral and dental services will be more critical as the proportion of residents over 65 years of age increases, and would support economic development objectives to expand the health care, behavioral health, and dental health care sectors. The State's Healthier Washington Initiative calls for integration of physical and behavioral health to provide a more "whole person" approach to service provision.

The Healthier Washington Initiative also includes paying for “value” leading to improved health versus a fee for a specific service. This value-based purchasing will change health care and supportive services delivery substantially. Health Plans providing services in their service areas will be required to show adequacy of their network to provide the required services. Medicaid expansion and the Affordable Care Act have significantly increased the number of residents with health insurance and created an even greater demand for services and demand on network adequacy to meet those service needs.

County, regional, state, and non-profit social programs also influence the health of families and the Community – addressing the social determinants of health. Mason County will, in collaboration with the medical, behavioral, dental, and social sectors, promote the adequacy of resources to address the social determinants of health through increased federal, state, regional, and local investment in sustaining organizations that address the social determinants of health.

These programs need to adequately respond to families and individuals in crisis, but they also are important supportive services that are necessary for improved health. Providing various means of support can have a profound, positive affect on the entire community. Mason County will strive to promote a community where people can balance work, family, social interaction and support, and community involvement.

This can be achieved in part by promoting and supporting a system of practical, functional, and accessible social programs. It is particularly important that local groundwater and critical aquifer recharge areas are protected in Mason County, as private and small community wells are the source of drinking water for most Mason County residents. A number of policies and programs that help protect critical aquifer recharge areas and assist in the management of watershed areas are already in place and carried out at a local and state level. Group A (public water supply wells greater than 9 connections) systems are required to perform periodic testing to verify delivered water meets accepted quality thresholds; however, once installed there is no requirement for periodic testing of private wells.

Additionally, Group A and B (smaller public water supply and fewer than 10 connections) wells are typically deeper than private wells, making these community wells less susceptible to contamination than the more shallow private wells. Thus, by encouraging community water supply systems, the County will increase the likelihood of residents having access to reliable, clean drinking water. Mason County will draft polices that increase the quality and reliability of the water supply system by promoting community wells to reduce the need for less regulated new private wells, and reevaluating countywide storm water management policies as increased development occurs in the urban growth areas.

IV. Health Goals and Policies

Access to Care Goals and Policies

The following goals, policies and objectives supported by the Mason County Board of Health aim to ensure that all residents have access to affordable, high quality health care, including behavioral health care, and dental care, and services that address the social determinants of health; and that adequate clinical preventive services are available to prevent illness or progression of illness in Mason County.

Goal 1: Local and Regional Health Planning

Mason County will promote and support local and regional health planning, and ensure health planning focuses on efficient and effective physical, behavioral, and dental health care needs and the social determinants of health..

Policies:

- 1.1 As chief health strategist, Mason County will coordinate improvements in public and private sector participation in health and human service planning and implementation activities.
- 1.2 Mason County will periodically conduct an update to the Community Health Assessment and the Community Health Improvement Plan as required by national public health standards.

1.3 Mason County will support recruitment of primary care providers.

1.4 Mason County will support local, regional and state planning to ensure network adequacy for the provision of physical, behavioral, dental, and social services in Mason County provide high quality services at the right place at the right time.

1.5 Mason County will identify and implement strategies to create and stabilize a safety net so that those without access to affordable care can get care when needed. 1.6 Mason County will support organizational capacity in the community to stay abreast of health reform and the Healthier Washington Initiative opportunities for improving the health of Mason County residents.

1.6 Mason County will identify and implement strategies to assure stable, effective community dental care and assist in recruiting dental care providers. The County will further support organizational capacity in the community to refer and link residents with dental providers.

Goal 2: Clinical and Community Preventative Services are Available and Used Effectively

- 2.1 The County will work with health care providers, pharmacies, hospitals, and other health system partners to ensure that immunization services are adequate to make them available to all residents.
- 2.2 The County will work with health care providers to assure that clinical screening for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer are available to all residents, and that follow-up counseling for screening results is available.
- 2.3 The County will work with health care providers to assure that Chronic Disease Self Management is available to foster more effective use of health services by people living with chronic health conditions and help them manage their chronic condition and prevent complications.

Goal 3: Mental Health and Chemical Dependency – Behavioral Health

- 3.1 The County will engage on a regional and local basis, first regarding the integration of mental health and chemical dependency, then the integration of medical care with behavioral health care, and finally integrating public health and social services as the Healthier Washington Initiative compels a broader definition of health to

include the social determinants of health to effectively improve health.

- 3.2 The County will collaborate with the provider community so that the high risk population and most vulnerable population is served appropriate to the level of need.
- 3.3 The County will collaborate with the provider community, the funders, and will with funds under County control work so that services to meet the needs of all ages, ethnicities, and geographic locations of Mason County residents are available.
- 3.4 The County will collaborate with state, regional, and local stakeholders so that resources are equitably distributed for emergent, urgent, treatment, and prevention services.
- 3.5 Mason County will work with the court system, law enforcement, and the prosecutor’s office to ensure best practices are employed with regard to reducing the correlation between poverty and the criminal justice system.
- 3.6 Mason County collaborates with the court system to ensure persons receive appropriate and adequate care for physical health, behavioral health, and substance use issues while incarcerated.

Goal 4: A Regional Approach to High Quality Medical Care and Social Services at Lower Cost

- 4.1 The County will participate in the regional Accountable Community of Health as required in the Healthier Washington Initiative to assure a high-quality health system (including public health and social services) is accessible and adequate to meet the needs of the residents of Mason County.
- 4.2 The County, through its participation in the regional Accountable Community of Health will assure that members of the regional community in need of clinical and social services are able to readily receive treatment services, avoiding the high-cost and inappropriate use of emergency rooms and county corrections systems.

Environmental Public Health Goals and Policies

Environmental Public Health Goals, policies and objectives relate to the maintenance of clean water, safe food, disease protection from vectors, safe recreational waters, and other issues directly related to the impact of the environment on human health.

Goal 1: Protection and preservation of Groundwater Quality and Drinking Water Supplies; Surface Water Quality protection for safe recreation, fishing, and shellfish harvesting.

- 1.1 The County will work to assure ground water resources (aquifers) and surface water are protected. The County will work to keep current on the risks to ground and surface water resources posed by human activities and update its rules and policies to manage these risks to protect the public's health.
- 1.2 The County will work to assure that public water supplies are properly managed; monitored wells produce safe, clean drinking water; and surface water is protected..
- 1.3 The County will collaborate with regional and local partners to assure regional water quality and to identify public health risks.
- 1.4 The County sanitary code will include standards that ensure new and replacement on-site sewage systems are properly designed, constructed and maintained to reduce risks to public health and surface water resources.
- 1.5 The County will ensure that septic systems are properly monitored and managed and failing systems are identified and promptly repaired.
- 1.6 The County will ensure that wastes are managed to protect groundwater and surface water resources.

- 1.7 The County should condition the approval of land use and development permits so they do not adversely affect ground and surface water quality. Proposals should be evaluated for physical, biological and chemical impacts, including pesticides, toxic materials and chemicals.
- 1.8 The County will ensure that on-site sewage systems in urban growth areas that pose significant public health risk are converted to sewer upon availability.

Goal 2: Manage Waste to Protect Public Health and Water Resources

- 2.1 The County will investigate and respond to complaints and take enforcement action as needed to assure solid and hazardous wastes are properly managed.
- 2.2 The County will permit solid waste facilities and assure they comply with permit conditions and applicable law to assure wastes are properly managed.
- 2.3 The County should conduct outreach to bring better understanding of environmental public health and ways to protect air and water quality to Mason County residents.

- 2.4 The County works with business (small quantity generators) to assure compliance with rules for proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials (this is currently provided by a state-funded position housed in Kitsap County).
- 2.5 The County should provide education about the health and environmental hazards associated with household products. Information about safer or lower-risk products should also be provided.
- 2.6 The County should provide education about the health impacts of improperly disposing of hazardous materials such as herbicides, paints, pesticides, unused medicines, used motor oil, medical waste, sharps and needles, etc.
- 2.7 The County should support product stewardship advocacy, programs and legislation to reduce the health and environmental impacts of consumer products in their general, consumption, storage and disposal. This should also include providing information to the public about the importance of product stewardship.
- 2.8 The County's own procurement practices should reflect the goal of reducing the generation of hazardous materials as much as possible. Policies should be updated periodically to ensure that the least toxic effective alternatives are purchased and used.

Nutrition Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies aim to promote wellness and reduce the incidence of chronic disease by increasing the proportion of Mason County residents who eat healthfully – specifically to improve nutrition.

Goal 1: Improve places where people purchase food or eat in Mason County, making healthy options accessible to all local residents.

- 1.1 The County will work with stakeholders to increase the availability and affordability of healthful foods in institutional settings, workplaces, senior centers, and government facilities.
- 1.2 The County will work with stakeholders to increase the accessibility, availability, affordability, and identification of healthful foods in Mason County, including encouraging full service grocery stores, farmers markets, small store initiatives, mobile vending carts, restaurant initiatives, and healthy food bank donation initiatives.

Goal 2: Improve Policies and Systems regarding Food and Nutrition where people live, work and play so that they are encouraged to find healthier food options.

- 2.1 Improve jurisdiction-wide nutrition policies in the institutions that serve people in Mason County.

- 2.2 Work with local schools to improve nutrition quality of foods and beverages served or available in schools consistent with the Standards for Foods in Schools.

- 2.3 Increase policies and practices to support breastfeeding in health care, community, workplaces, and learning and child care settings.

Physical Activity Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies aim to promote wellness and reduce the incidence of chronic disease by increasing the proportion of Mason County residents who meet the recommendations for daily physical activity.

Goal 1: Create Environments for Active Living, Fostering Changes to the Community Environment and Associated Policies that Increase Physical Activity

- 1.1 Increase access to free or low cost recreational opportunities for physical activity
- 1.2 The County will support planning approaches – zoning and land use – that promote physical activity.
- 1.3 The County will support and encourage complete streets and community design for increased physical activity and active transportation.

- 1.4 The County will enhance the safety and perceived safety of communities to encourage walking and bicycling

Goal 2: Increase Levels of Physical Activity Through Education and Social Supports

- 2.1 The County should develop a community-wide campaign that encourages physical activity among Mason County residents.
- 2.2 The County will promote the development of behavioral and social approaches to encourage more physical activity, such as expansion of Chronic Disease Self-Management programs, Safe Routes to Schools and Walking School Buses.
- 2.3 The County will promote enhanced school-based physical education.
- 2.3 The County will support implementation of the Public Trails Policies and establishment of a network of non-motorized paths within Mason County.