

## 2.1 Introduction to Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities

The Kane County 2040 Plan (2040 Plan) is the first Kane County plan to integrate planning for community health with land use and transportation issues. This new approach was included in the *2040 Conceptual Land Use Strategy Report* adopted by the Kane County Board on October 12, 2010. This report also set the overarching theme for the 2040 Plan as *Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities*. This theme recognizes and emphasizes the connection between the most important resource in Kane County – its people – with the opportunities and barriers for healthy living created by the built and natural environment, and how together they shape the overall health of communities.

The chapters following this introduction directly relate to each other and to the theme of *Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities*. Individually, the chapters focus on various aspects of planning and healthy, livable communities. Together, they describe the intricate mosaic which is the Kane County of today. Each chapter provides clear objectives and policies for land use, transportation and community health decision makers that are responsive to the future needs and vision of our citizens within the capacity of our resources.

- Land Use and Built Environment
- Mobility and Connectivity
- Community Health
- Housing
- Agriculture: Food and Farm
- Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- Water Resources
- Sustainability and Energy
- Historic Preservation
- Economic Prosperity

The 2040 Plan envisions *Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities* in Kane County by advocating for a future where:

- the built environment promotes, rather than restricts, physical activity and mobility for residents of all ages
- all residents have convenient access to safe public parks, active recreation opportunities and open space areas
- access to healthy food choices and a safe water supply is not restricted because of where people live or social/economic factors
- planning for healthy results is standard practice for local governments
- healthy living is a part of our local culture and current trends in obesity and diseases have been reversed
- Kane County's residents are the healthiest people in Illinois

## *Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities*

This new over-arching theme for the 2040 Plan is based on Kane County's *Making Kane County Fit for Kids* initiative. *Making Kane County Fit for Kids* was launched on April 7, 2008, with a Leadership Summit convened by the Kane County Board Chairman and attended by more than 100 executive leaders from Kane County municipalities, school districts, park districts, businesses, the faith community, health and social service agencies, as well as local and state elected officials. The Leadership Summit provided participants with an in-depth briefing on the childhood obesity epidemic and called for a sustained, countywide mobilization through implementation of four strategic action principles that go to the heart of the systems, policies, environmental and land use changes needed to reverse this epidemic.



1. Develop land use, planning and other public policies that foster and support physical activity for all our communities;
2. Assure that fresh fruits and vegetables are affordable and accessible to all families in our communities;
3. Support a culture of wellness and health promotion in our workplaces, schools, homes, communities and other institutions;
4. Provide parents and children with reliable, up-to-date information in multiple settings regarding healthy physical activity and eating habits.

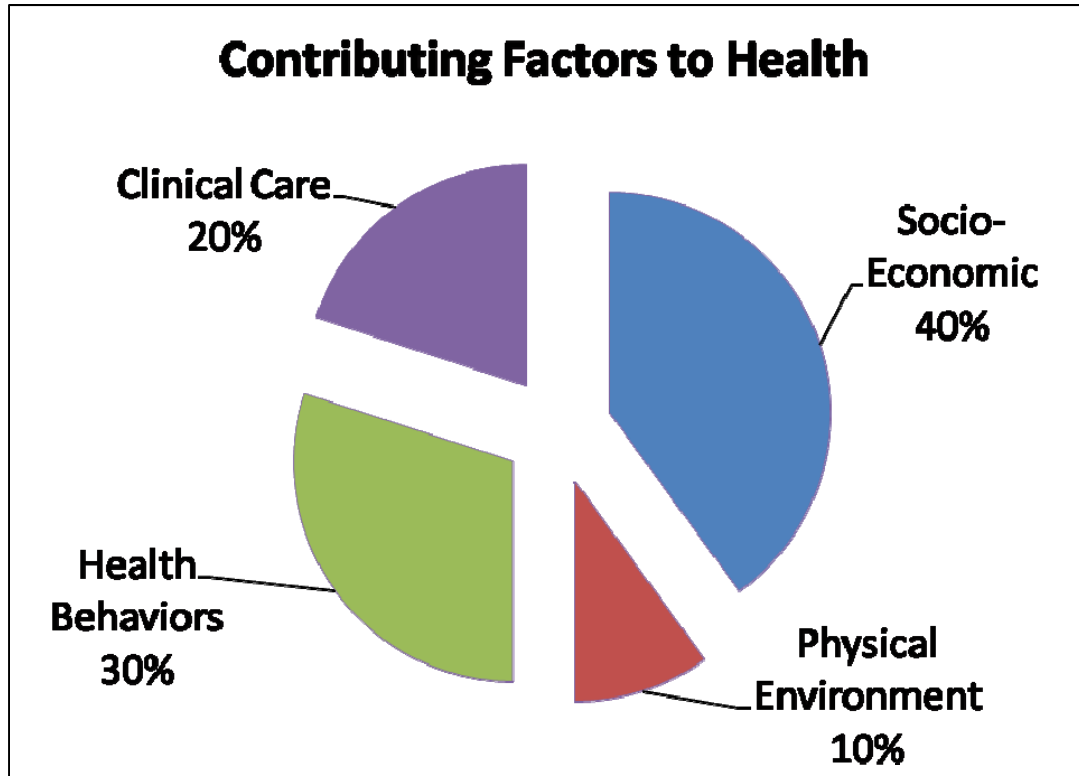
*Making Kane County Fit for Kids*, the Strategic Action Principles and the *Fit Kids 2020 Plan* are the fundamental building blocks for the 2040 Plan. Additionally, the 2040 Plan includes recommendations that integrate land use, transportation, community design and economic development planning with public health planning to increase active transportation and other recreational and physical activities which can help prevent childhood obesity, as well as many chronic diseases such as heart disease and high blood pressure.

During the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many aspects of the built environment were considered in the design of urban areas, including water systems, sanitation, housing, transportation and working conditions. Since World War II and the spread of growth into suburban communities designed for the automobile, community health has operated in a separate sphere than land use and transportation planning. Such an approach limits both the input needed for good planning and decisions as well as limits the possibilities for the healthiest outcomes. Unless the professionals working in all three spheres share information and results, and the decision makers use facts and proven practices from both areas, the health of people and communities are shortchanged.

Community health planning has traditionally looked at health indicators and data across the community and focused on policies, systems and programs that effect changes at a

broad level. Most people recognize that personal health is affected by clinical care and behavioral factors, like tobacco use, excessive drinking, or living a sedentary lifestyle. However, there are other factors that affect our health and have a tremendous influence on health outcomes. Physical environments as well as social and economic factors also play a part in an individual's health (Figure 11).

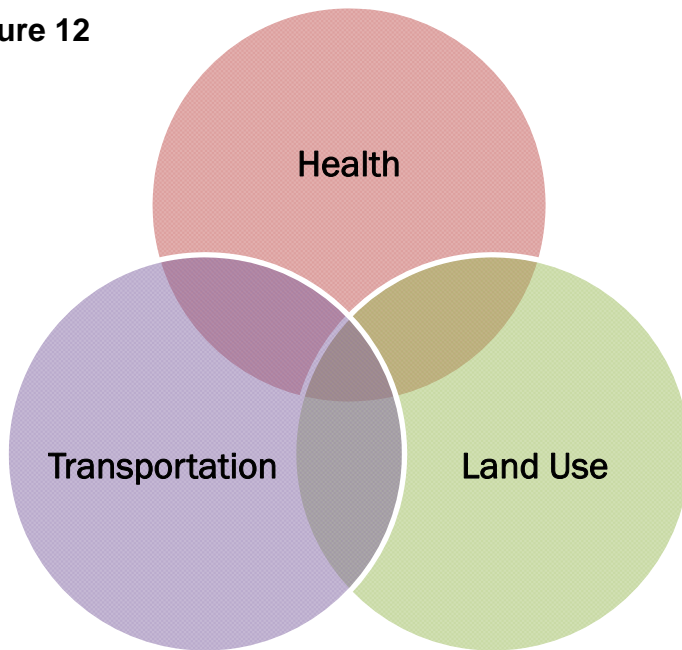
**Figure 11**



Modern land use and transportation planning examines many aspects of the physical environment, but only recently have the short and long term impacts on individual and community health re-emerged as considerations for making decisions about our built environment. As much as 40% of the above factors contributing to health are primarily addressed through land use and transportation planning, illustrating the link between the built environment and public health.

Kane County recognizes that all three areas, health, land use, and transportation, contribute to the quality of life and the health of our communities (Figure 12).

**Figure 12**



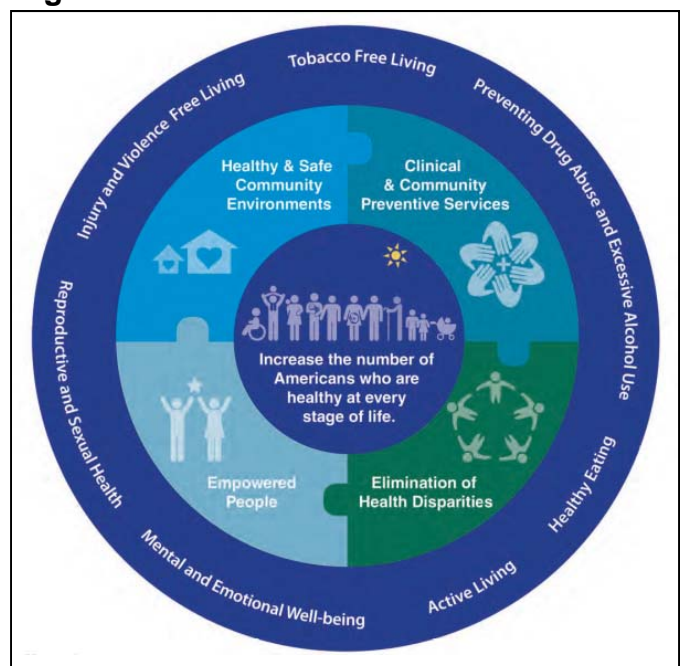
The 2040 Plan represents the convergence of planning for land use, transportation and health in Kane County.

*The National Prevention Strategy*

In June 2011, The U.S. Department of Human Services released the National Prevention Strategy. This Strategy is a plan for the federal government, but also is a call to action for various other state, county, and local governments as well as other organizations.

The Strategy outline recommendations for what can and must be done and includes specific actions for state and county health departments, non-profit organizations, health care systems, and private citizens (Figure 13).

**Figure 13**



Kane County is already responding to this national call to action with the 2040 Plan's theme of *Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities*.

### *Healthy People*

The health of the people of Kane County is the cornerstone of who we are and the key to our continued success. Personal health depends on much more than the level and quality of health care; it includes personal behaviors, physical environment and social/economic conditions. The built environment – our neighborhoods and communities where we live, work and play – influence our personal behaviors such as physical activity, and reflects social/economic conditions. The impact of the built environment on people's health is undisputed in the public health profession, leading Kane County to emphasize this direct connection for the first time in its land use and transportation planning.

### *Healthy Living*

Healthy living is characterized by a lifestyle that includes regular exercise, a healthy diet, preventative health and dental care, social well being and maintaining a healthy weight. The built environment has a direct connection to healthy living by promoting physical activity rather than restricting it. Communities designed primarily for transportation by automobiles without other safe and viable opportunities to get around restrict physical activity.

Healthy living also reflects the need for a cultural shift from the lifestyles and personal habits of the recent past, which have resulted in the national and local epidemics of obesity and diabetes, among other negative health trends. The goals and strategies for confronting these national problems are outlined in The National Prevention Strategy. The National Prevention Strategy makes specific recommendations and actions including:

1. Providing people with tools and information to make healthy choices
2. Promoting positive social interactions and supporting healthy decision making
3. Engaging and empowering people and communities to plan and implement prevention policies and programs
4. Improving education and employment opportunities
5. Reducing disparities in access to quality health care

### *Healthy Communities*

Whereas healthy people and healthy living are the basic building blocks for measuring overall health, The 2040 Plan primarily addresses the need for visionary, coordinated planning and implementing policies that support healthy communities. The National Prevention Strategy perhaps describes it best;

*The strength and ingenuity of America's people and communities have driven America's success. A healthy and fit nation is vital to that strength and is the bedrock of the productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship essential for our future. Healthy people can enjoy their lives, go to work, contribute to their communities, learn, and support their families and friends. A healthy nation is able to educate its people, create and sustain a thriving economy, defend itself, and remain prepared for emergencies.*

The chapters in the 2040 Plan include planning issues from the 2020 and 2030 Plans, plus new issues directly related to creating and maintaining healthy communities. For the first time, land use, transportation and health issues are integrated toward a common goal for Kane County – to have the healthiest people in Illinois.