

SHAPING HEALTHY CITIES: NASHVILLE

The shape we give our city, in turn shapes us. Public health and urban planning emerged from the recognition of the impact built environments have on health. Last century we altered the built environment to reduce ill health; by redesigning cities we successfully eradicated infectious diseases and exposure to industrial toxins. We did not, however, foresee the unintended consequences of the resulting zoning requirements, such as the emergence of a sedentary and increasingly obese population. The challenge for 21st Century public health and urban planning has, therefore, shifted from shielding people from harm from the built environment, to also shaping our cities so that their design fosters good health. The *Shaping Healthy Cities: Nashville* project takes on this challenge.

The Nashville Civic Design Center, in partnership with the Metro Public Health Department, will develop a comprehensive plan of action to transform Nashville into a healthy city. The *Shaping Healthy Cities: Nashville* project will conduct solid research concerning the impact of ‘built environments’ on health. The project will analyze and synthesize existing local plans, efforts and initiatives for Nashville’s built environment through the lens of health impacts, and integrate this research with the Ten Principles of *The Plan of Nashville*. These principles, derived previously through a community-wide visioning and planning process on the future design of Nashville’s neighborhoods, provide guidance on public policy, development practice, urban planning and design. The *Shaping Healthy Cities: Nashville* project will outline how we can adapt our city to foster good health through design. This data, research, and consultation process will result in three products:

- A **narrative book** with vignettes of Nashville’s built environment today; personal narratives of life in Nashville’s neighborhoods, and plans and designs for the short-, mid-, and long-term re-design of Nashville’s neighborhoods to promote health and well-being. An attractive and informative publication, the book will appeal to a wide lay and professional audience, providing sidebars on key built environment and health topics by local and national experts; infographics on the impact of built environments on health; images of existing health promoting built designs; local resources, and extensive empirical references. Most importantly, this book will offer a pragmatic action plan to guide city policy makers, planners and communities, in adapting Nashville’s built environments to benefit our cities’ health.
- A series of visually appealing and comprehensible **educational pamphlets** targeted to specific user groups on specific topics related to the built environment and health.
- **Video shorts** will be created and made publicly available. These shorts will offer a visual and auditory account of Nashville’s current built environments; visions for the future design of Nashville neighborhoods; and action plans for community members, leaders, and officials to make those visions a reality.

With a wealth of data, information, and tools to inform policy, development, planning and design, the *Shaping Healthy Cities: Nashville* project will be the catalyst to transform Nashville into the “Healthiest City in the South.” With action plans grounded in the geographic, fiscal, policy and political realities of the city, Nashville will have the tools to improve on Tennessee’s rankings of least active state, with third highest obesity prevalence, in the nation. Our goal is to ensure that our citizens can live out their lives fully—from birth through their golden years—in each and every neighborhood in the city.