



The Healthy Development Measurement Tool

An evidence-based tool to consider public health objectives in land use planning.

<http://www.theHDMT.org>

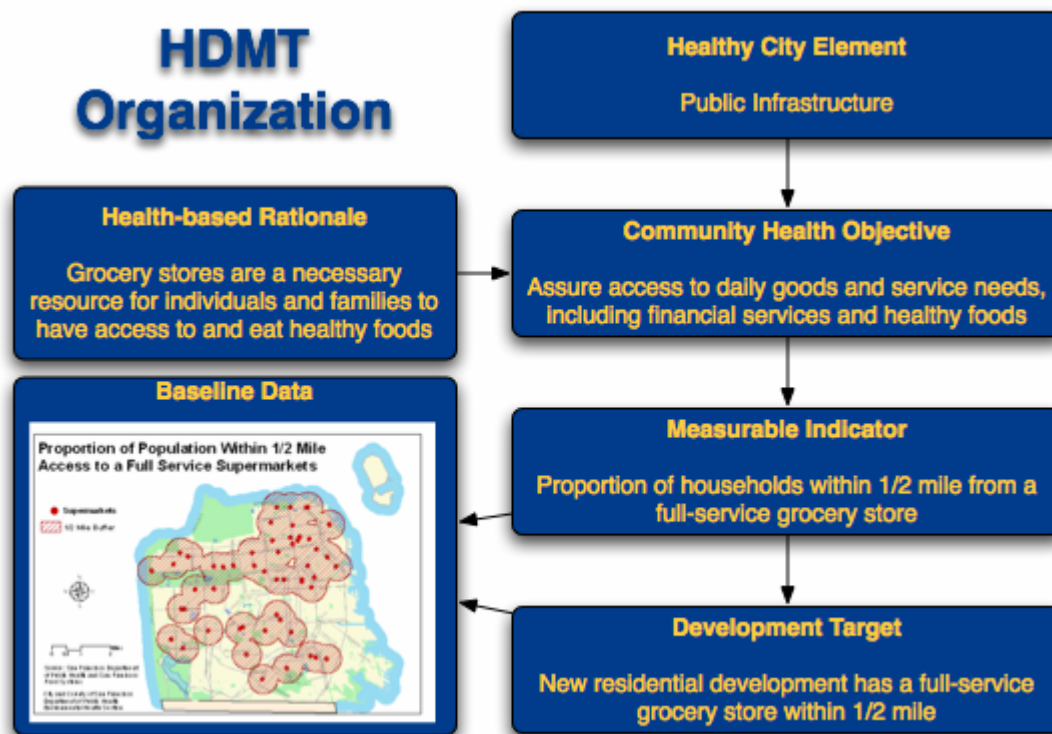


The Healthy Development Measurement Tool (HDMT) is comprised of a set of metrics to evaluate the extent to which land use plans, projects, or policies will advance human health. Evaluation of plans or projects against measurable indicators and development targets provides information about both the positive and negative ways in which health is impacted by a proposed development project. This helps bring attention to the ways that development can improve population health, allowing those involved in policy- and decision-making to make more informed choices between development trade-offs.

The Tool is organized into:

- o Seven Elements that comprise a Healthy City.
- o Community Health Objectives that, if achieved, would result in greater and more equitable health assets and resources for San Francisco residents.
- o Health-based Rationales that describe the nexus between the objective and physical and mental health.
- o Measurable Indicators and Baseline Data to help evaluate progress towards the objectives and evaluate the benefits of projects, plans, and policies.
- o Development Targets that, if achieved by a project or plan, are a proxy for improvement of an indicator.
- o Policy and Design Strategies to support the achievement of development targets.

The diagram below depicts the relationship of many of the components:



See next page for HDMT Frequently Asked Questions.

To access the HDMT and for additional information, please visit: www.theHDMT.org

The HDMT was created by the SF Department of Public Health, Program on Health, Equity, and Sustainability.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Where did the objectives, indicators and development targets come from?

The content of the HDMT primarily came from the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA)--an eighteen month process designed to analyze how development in several San Francisco neighborhoods would affect attributes of social and physical environments that are most important to health. Facilitated and staffed by SFDPH, ENCHIA was guided by a multi-stakeholder Community Council of over 20 diverse organizations. For more information about ENCHIA, please visit: www.sfdph.org/phes/ENCHIA.htm

Are public agencies required to use the HDMT?

The HDMT is not a new form of environmental regulation, and the HDMT development targets are not enforceable standards. Similar to tools like US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and EPA Smart Growth Index, the HDMT is intended to encourage voluntary efforts to improve health-oriented development.

How does the HDMT address development trade-offs?

Good development will always represent an optimal balance between competing objectives. By providing information about both the positive and negative effects on health objectives, the HDMT helps to reveal trade-offs and aids those involved to make more informed choices with full-recognition of those trade-offs. Examples of the types of trade-offs one might expect in the evaluation of land use development projects include:

- o Mixed-use developments and higher densities may be associated with higher noise levels.
- o Meeting LEED/Energy Star standards may increase housing production cost.
- o Desegregating schools may conflict with neighborhood-based education.
- o Decreasing segregation and promoting racial and economic integration may facilitate gentrification.
- o Development impact fees or community benefits agreements may raise the cost of development which reduces developer desire or ability to pay for things like affordable housing or green building design.

The HDMT does not provide a means to weigh conflicting priorities and goals, nor does it advocate for or discourage any specific means of evaluating these trade-offs. Optimal use of the HDMT is in an open and transparent decision-making process.

What are some of the HDMT's limitations?

The HDMT works best as a comprehensive preliminary survey tool--it does not provide for in depth rigorous or scientific forecasting of impacts. However, the HDMT may help to identify and prioritize issues to conduct further research on. The HDMT does not provide indicators for all outcomes related to health. The focus of the HDMT is on environmental, social and economic level factors that affect health at the population level. The HDMT does not include traditional behavioral health indicators nor does the HDMT assess factors modifiable at the household level such as environmental tobacco smoke exposure. Many concepts in the HDMT present challenges to measurement. For example, while we use distance as a proxy for accessibility, distance does not represent aspects of accessibility such as time, cost, and quality.

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How do I use the HDMT?

In order to use the HDMT, a number of preliminary actions must be completed.

1. Identify the plan or project that you are interested in analyzing.
2. Identify a series of analysis "inputs" related to your project/plan of interest
3. Identify the geographic area of interest surrounding the project/plan.
4. Look over the HDMT by Element and select sections of the HDMT that are relevant to your plan/project and that you are interested in analyzing.

Once these are completed, you can move onto conducting your step-by-step application. To carry out an application, you must complete the following steps:

Step A: List Community Health Indicator & Development Target

Step B: Record & Assess Community Health Indicator Data

Step C: State Plan or Project Facts

Step D: Evaluate Plan or Project on Comm. Health Indicator and Development Target

Step E: Identify Potential Plan/Project Improvements

Step F: Summarize Findings

Step G: Optional-Recommend Changes to the HDMT