DESIGNING INCENTIVES FOR HEALTH

The built environment has tangible and quantifiable elements with a correlation between people and their overall health, so by understanding these elements through examining urban environments and socio-spatial processes, problems contributing to decreased health can be solved through alterations in the urban fabric and various implemented designed incentives.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the main factors contributing to people’s health and the connection to demographic trends.
2. Examining socio-spatial processes contributing to unhealthy lifestyles that could benefit from designed incentives.
3. Learn how physical design and social schemes can be simultaneously implemented promoting healthy communities.
4. Discover how designing incentives for healthy lifestyles can be applied to various project scales.
PRESENTER INFORMATION

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ASLA 2015 Annual Meeting and EXPO
EMBEDDING LANDSCAPES WITH HEALTH INCENTIVES

“Even though the United States spends one of every seven dollars on medical care, we will not significantly improve health and the quality of life unless we pay more attention to how we design our living environments. Healthy living environments include...the landscape around us. Health for all, especially for the young, aging, poor and disabled, requires that we design healthfullness into our environments as well.” - Richardson of the CDC (2001)

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

1. Preventative
   - identify the primary community
   - identify the primary health issue
   - exploration of current research relevant to the identified challenge to identify the possibilities
   - inclusion in the program development
   - inventory the physical and cultural resources that are available

2. Prescriptive
   - what design elements can be utilized to meet the needs identified in the preventive phase: active or passive

3. Restorative
   - use the informed design ideas to restore a landscape

CASE Study: Alexandra Township in South Africa
Identified the treatment plan for the Township to develop preventative, prescriptive, and restorative design alternatives that explored improving physical and social health. Healthy food access and nutrition became important to elements when increasing community capacity.
HEALTH INCENTIVES AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

“Seventy percent of health is dependent on behavior and environment. We’re at the beginning of recognizing this need for bringing choice back into people’s lives, in how they move about the environment.” - Christopher Smith, senior program officer Healthy Living, the Colorado Health Foundation

10 ULI PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

1. **Put People First** - individuals are more likely to be active in a community designed around their needs
2. **Recognize the Economic Value** - healthy places can create enhanced economic value for both the private and public sectors
3. **Empower Champions for Health** - every movement needs its champions
4. **Energize Shared Spaces** - public gathering places have a direct, positive impact on human health
5. **Make Healthy Choices Easy** - communities should make the healthy choice the one that is SAFE (safe, accessible, fun, and easy)
6. **Ensure Equitable Access** - many segments of the population would benefit from better access to services, amenities, and opportunities
7. **Mix It Up** - a variety of land uses, building types, and public spaces can be used to improve physical and social activity
8. **Embrace Unique Character** - places that are different, unusual, or unique can be helpful in promoting physical activity
9. **Promote Access to Healthy Food** - because diet affects human health, access to healthy food should be considered as part of any development proposal
10. **Make It Active** - urban design can be employed to create an active community
ENGAGING THE CITY TO BECOME AN INCENTIVE ENVIRONMENT

“Cities must urge urban planners and architects to reinforce pedestrianism as an integrated city policy to develop lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities. It is equally urgent to strengthen the social function of city space as a meeting place that contributes toward the aims of social sustainability and an open and democratic society” - Jan Gehl

HOW URBAN SPACES CAN BE TRANSFORMED TO BENEFIT HEALTH

1. **11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C. and its community’s focus on health**
   - Breaking physical barriers between communities and implementing health-oriented goals and design to engage users of medial landscapes
   - Identify park program to foster active recreation, access to the immediate environment, and improve economic activity in a way to produce health benefits

2. **Mill River Park and its vibrant social and recreational spaces**
   - Restoring the river’s ecology and its positive impact on re-engaging the city
   - Natural resource as a catalyst to bring people together for social and recreational activities providing health benefits

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