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Healthy Community

A healthy Moreno Valley is a City that is continually improving its physical facilities, social environment, and community resources to enable its residents to live to the fullest and reach their full potential. Many conditions impact a community's ability to facilitate a healthy life for its residents, employees and visitors. People who reside, work in, or visit communities that have access to vital resources such as recreational facilities, healthy foods, medical services, quality housing opportunities, living-wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, and excellent educational services are more likely to experience healthy lifestyles.

While the State of California does not mandate that local governments address health in general plans, the City of Moreno Valley values health and the important role it plays in the community. The purpose of a Healthy Community Element is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of Moreno Valley's residents, workers, and visitors. To do this, the Healthy Community Element focuses on subjects not comprehensively addressed in other MoVal 2040 General Plan elements. The Healthy Community Element highlights the connection between health and the built environment we live in while providing an overarching strategy for achieving and maintaining a healthy community. Community health and equitable access to healthy food, quality parks and open spaces are also addressed in the Parks and Public Services Element and the Environmental Justice Element.

Planning for Public Health

Health is dependent on many factors including genetics, socioeconomic circumstances, environmental exposures, behavioral patterns, and health care. Among these, the built environment directly and indirectly influences socioeconomic circumstances, environmental exposures, and behavioral patterns.

Health is also determined by social factors. Health inequities occur due to the systematic disparities between communities with different levels of social, economic, and political advantage or disadvantage. Inequities in health put people who are already socially disadvantaged at a greater health risk. Younger populations are generally at lower risk for many chronic diseases and illnesses than older populations. The City of Moreno Valley has a relatively young population, with a median age of 32.1 years, which is moderately lower than Riverside County's median age of 36.7, and the State's median age of 37.6. Additionally, research has correlated higher income and higher educational attainment with positive health outcomes. Only 12 percent of Moreno Valley residents have a four-year college degree compared to 16 percent of Riverside County's population.

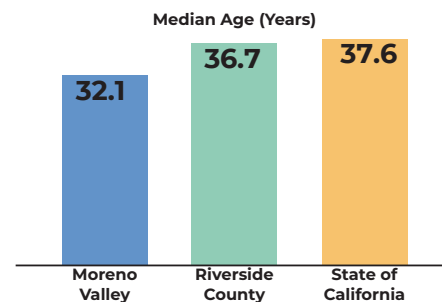
HEALTH INDICATORS

Health indicators will help the City measure future progress toward health goals against baseline conditions in Moreno Valley today. These indicators do not encompass all possible health conditions and determinants that may be monitored in Moreno Valley, but rather focus on a smaller set with more direct relevance to the General Plan.

Health, employment and income are interlinked. When people have access to high quality employment that pays a living wage, they are more likely to have access to health care, and to be able to afford

basic necessities such as healthy food and housing to support their health. People earning higher incomes incur less psychosocial stress about affording basic life necessities such as housing, food, and health insurance. Therefore, an emphasis on local job creation in a variety of sectors can provide for a healthier population. Moreno Valley has added over 26,925 new jobs between 2015 and 2022 and is projected to add another 38,993 new jobs through between 2024 and 2040. The number of jobs in a community in proportion to the amount of housing available (i.e. jobs/housing ratio) is also an important indicator of both the availability of housing for the City's workforce, and availability of jobs for City residents. The need to travel long distances for work or for housing increases time spent driving, which negatively affects physical health and decreases levels of social engagement. A lack of jobs also can diminish economic viability, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are primary risk factors for obesity, a fast-growing disease in California that can lead to diabetes. Obesity rates in Moreno Valley were 30.7 percent in 2017, which is lower than the corresponding Riverside County rate of 33.2 percent, but higher than the overall California obesity rate of 26.4 percent. Adults in Moreno Valley with diabetes comprised 4.7 percent of the population in 2017, which is substantially lower than the corresponding Riverside percentage (12.5 percent) and the California percentage (10.4 percent).



Promoting Health and Well-Being in Moreno Valley

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Valley. By sponsoring health-focused events and promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and active living, the City can encourage individuals and businesses in Moreno Valley to follow suit. Health should be a focus of the City's recreation programs, public spaces, events, and policies.

Healthy MoVal is a City initiative that promotes physical activity, healthy eating, and active living. The Parks and Community Services Department offers many programs that promote health and wellness and will continue to expand these services. The latest effort is the City's Community Demonstration Garden, which opened in February 2022, and provides opportunities for additional programs that promote health and wellness. The City's Community Demonstration Garden is a multi-use space created to educate the community and equip them with the expertise to implement the size, scope, and scale of garden or landscaping appropriate for their residential setting.



Photo credit: Highland Community News

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Access to medical services, including healthcare and preventative care, is an important component of a healthy Moreno Valley. Access to health insurance is one of the most fundamental health services, and important to address for all Moreno Valley residents. In 2017, 81.4 percent of adults in Moreno Valley had health insurance, an increase of 7 percent from 2014. While the increase in coverage is a positive for Moreno Valley, this is 5.6 percent less than those adults in Riverside County who have health insurance. In 2017, 94.5 percent of children in Moreno Valley had health insurance compared to 96.3 percent of children in Riverside County. Ensuring that every Moreno Valley resident has health coverage is important, and the City can promote health coverage through education and enrollment assistance.

Access to health services is important for all residents of Moreno Valley, but is especially important for the City's most vulnerable populations. Health specific services such as free or reduced-price clinics, and educational programs can provide important health access to low-income residents and those without healthcare. Supportive services such as counseling and employment-focused programs can be essential to the health and wellbeing of many Moreno Valley residents including young people, individuals experiencing homelessness, and formerly incarcerated individuals.



Access to vaccinations

HEALTHY INFRASTRUCTURE

The built environment contributes greatly to the health and wellness of a community. Auto-oriented, low density single-use areas and a lack of access to parks and active recreation facilities discourages physical activity and contributes to a higher risk of many health issues such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. Barriers to accessing healthy food can also contribute to chronic diseases.

A top priority for Moreno Valley is increased healthy activity and mobility for all ages. The General Plan strives to achieve this through pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements that decrease the need for car travel, particularly for day-to-day activities. Investing in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will bring healthy physical activity into daily routines. For those that do not have access to cars, such as seniors and young people, a move away from car-oriented infrastructure will improve health and also improve mobility and quality of life. Furthermore, making recreation facilities more accessible—dispersing them throughout the community and making programs



Riverside University Health System Medical Center

affordable to low-income residents—will also increase the likelihood that all residents will incorporate healthy activity into their daily lives. Transportation and physical activity are related to health in a number of ways, for example:

- ◆ When community design accommodates and integrates pedestrians and bicyclists, there are higher rates of walking and biking. And for each half mile walked per day, people are about 5 percent less likely to be obese (controlling for age, education, gender, and ethnicity).
- ◆ Almost one-third of Americans who commute to work via public transit meet their daily requirements for physical activity (30 or more minutes a day) by walking as a part of their daily life, including to and from the transit stop.
- ◆ People who live within walking distance (1/4 mile) of a park are 25 percent more likely to meet their minimum weekly exercise recommendation.



Woodland Park

Goal HC-1: Promote the health and well-being of those who live, work, and play in Moreno Valley.

POLICIES

- HC.1-1:** Collaborate with local health officials, nonprofit organizations, hospitals, health clinics and community groups to improve community health.
- HC.1-2:** Communicate through the Libraries, Senior Community Center, and Teen SPOT (Support, Programs, Opportunities & Technology). Utilize the Libraries and Senior Community Center and Teen SPOT to provide informational resources about health.
- HC.1-3:** Promote access to a diverse array of health services.
- HC.1-4:** Support community education programs on healthy eating habits and lifestyles, including topics such as nutrition, physical activity, and vegetable gardening.
- HC.1-5:** Promote broad awareness of the recreation opportunities offered in Moreno Valley. Provide recreation programs in a variety of locations to make participation convenient.
- HC.1-6:** Promote walking and bicycling as a safe and convenient mode of transportation.

ACTIONS

- HC.1-A:** Incentivize health promotion groups to participate at City-sponsored events.
- HC.1-B:** Explore a Healthy Food and Beverage policy for City events and activities.
- HC.1-C:** Continue initiatives such as Healthy MoVal and the City's Community Demonstration Garden.
- HC.1-D:** Collaborate with Riverside University Health System / Public Health to monitor and maintain data related to Moreno Valley health outcomes and risk factors, and to use these data to inform new County and City programs to serve the Moreno Valley community.
- HC.1-E:** Organize health challenges such as stop smoking; lunchtime sponsored events; bike to work days to promote healthy lifestyles, food choices, and work environments.
- HC.1-F:** Coordinate with public health agencies, health providers and community partners to provide outreach and education about lifestyle changes that can improve health including healthy eating habits and physical activity. Materials and programs should be tailored to multiple cultures and for community members of different ages.
- HC.1-G:** Incentivize health promotion groups to participate at City-sponsored events.

- HC.1-H:** Encourage and support efforts by schools to develop new and improved curricula about the importance of exercise and good nutrition.
- HC.1-I:** Explore the feasibility of a program of health clinics or workshops, run by medical service providers or Riverside University Health System / Public Health, but hosted in local neighborhood facilities such as schools, parks, or even businesses or parking lots.
- HC.1-J:** Work with medical centers and Riverside County to locate new outpatient facilities in under-served neighborhoods, if feasible.
- HC.1-K:** Increase public awareness of youth program opportunities in Moreno Valley. Efforts may include, but are not limited to:
- ◆ Helping to create and maintain a central directory of youth programs serving Moreno Valley and the school district;
 - ◆ Ensuring the directory is available online, as well as through guidance counselors; and
 - ◆ Targeting increasing participation in existing programs and increasing subsidized program spots for low-income youth.



Lake Perris Bike Trail

Healthy Communities

A healthy Moreno Valley means healthy residents and citizens, but it also means a healthy community. Building a vibrant community and feeling of connection in the City is an important part of ensuring the lasting health and wellness of Moreno Valley. The City can play an important role in fostering a strong and healthy community through providing both places and programs that encourage community engagement and social connection.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces such as plazas, natural areas, parks, and sports facilities provide a physical place for gathering and connection. Access to these facilities can greatly benefit physical and mental health by encouraging organized or casual recreational activities. These venues can provide opportunities for social interaction, relaxation and a connection with nature, all of which have well-established links to good mental health. Moreno Valley's Parks and Community Services Department maintains about 482 acres of parkland throughout the City, including a variety of community, neighborhood and specialty parks, as well as a network of trails and greenways. Continuing to ensure that citizens have access to recreation and open space facilities, and that access is equitably distributed throughout the City is important to a healthy future for Moreno Valley. The Moreno Valley Civic Center Amphitheater constructed in 2021, provides a better experience for a number of recurring annual events and provides the opportunity for additional events.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Community Programs can also be an important resource for building connection and community in the City. City-provided programs can offer the public with the opportunity to learn and connect with one another, and to improve health through exercise, relaxation, and self-awareness. The City currently provides many programs and will continue to grow and develop new programs going forward. One of the existing programs by the City is a Community Demonstration Garden. The garden is centrally located at the Civic Center behind the City's Conference and Recreation Center and offers gardening classes, class trips and exercise classes like Yoga in the Garden.



Goal HC-2: Engage community members and community partners in efforts to create a healthier Moreno Valley.

POLICIES

HC.2-1: Support efforts to allow schools to function as multi-service community hubs providing resources to children and adults in the surrounding neighborhoods.

HC.2-2: Create "People Places" such as public plazas with seating, art, and play features near shopping and business districts. Promote public spaces that foster positive human interaction and healthy lifestyles.

HC.2-3: Encourage development and display of public art to promote the history, heritage, culture and contemporary identity of Moreno Valley.

HC.2-4: Provide recreation programs responding to the diverse interests, needs, ages and cultural backgrounds of Moreno Valley residents.

HC.2-5: Expand opportunities for residents to volunteer their time and talents to contribute to community health and quality of life. Expand opportunities for interaction between community members, elected officials, commission members, and City staff and for partnerships between the City and community groups that revolve around making Moreno Valley a healthier place for all residents. Expand opportunities for residents to socially connect across generations and cultures at the neighborhood level and citywide.

HC.2-6: Provide and encourage community events that promote cultural understanding and a shared sense of pride in Moreno Valley.

HC.2-7: Focus on youth engagement (27 percent of City's population is under 18 years-old).

ACTIONS

- HC.2-A:** Identify opportunities to support and fund local artists and students to create public art in the City.
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- HC.2-B:** Work with community groups to increase the number of community gardens and to promote local food production.
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- HC.2-C:** Work with interested community members and organizations to plan and develop an exercise circuit that takes advantage of existing parks, trails, and other pedestrian infrastructure. The course should be clearly marked, and contain simple stations and diagrams for self-guided training.
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- HC.2-D:** Work with interested organizations and residents to create a youth job development partnership – connecting local businesses to teens for after school and summer work, volunteer positions, and other skills development opportunities.
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- HC.2-E:** Coordinate with local businesses, organizations, and the school districts to support a year-round calendar of community events in City parks. Events should be geared toward families and youth, and contain components of physical activity, healthy food, arts, and music.
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- HC.2-F:** Consider working with public and private civic institutions to incorporate healthy public spaces into significant projects.
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Healthy Businesses

Another way that Moreno Valley can promote health is through the businesses it attracts and encourages. These efforts start with ensuring that all Moreno Valley residents have access to traditional and alternative primary, preventative, emergency, and specialty health care options. Residents should be able to meet all of their healthcare needs in Moreno Valley. Currently, Moreno Valley is home to two major medical campuses: Riverside University Health Systems Medical Center (RUHSMC), and Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, and several community-based urgent care clinics. These facilities provide the backbone of Moreno Valley's goal of becoming the future medical hub of the Inland Empire. In addition to meeting residents' healthcare needs, the City must ensure that adequate resources are available for all residents to meet their childcare needs. This can include encouraging the establishment of safe and affordable childcare options and can also include ensuring that those businesses are accessible by locating them near residential centers, transit centers and business centers.

However, health and wellness go beyond access to traditional healthcare facilities. The City must also support residents' health through providing opportunities to exercise, build community, recreate, eat healthy

food, and more. Incentivizing the establishment and growth of businesses such as gyms, yoga and dance studios, martial arts studios and rock-climbing facilities will provide opportunities for residents and visitors to recreate and exercise. Encouraging the establishment of specialty food stores in areas of need, and healthy dining options can make it easier for Moreno Valley residents to eat healthy. Businesses like these can provide spaces for the community to improve their health, and can also help build community, identity and a sense of place in Moreno Valley.



Goal HC-3: Promote a variety of businesses that help support community health.

POLICIES

- HC.3-1:** Explore opportunities to bring businesses to Moreno Valley which encourage fitness, including, but not limited to, encouraging fitness centers such as gyms, yoga and dance studios, martial arts studios, and rock-climbing facilities. Encourage businesses or non-profit organizations to offer indoor recreational facilities and programs compatible with existing commercial structures and zones.
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HC.3-2: Encourage safe, high quality, and affordable childcare services for residents and employees in or near housing, transportation, and employment centers.

HC.3-3: Support high-quality affordable and convenient access to a full range of traditional and alternative primary, preventive, emergency, and specialty health care options.

HC.3-4: Encourage new public facilities, schools, parks, recreational facilities and commercial, office, and medical buildings to provide drinking fountains and reusable water bottle filling stations.

HC.3-5: Partner with community and business leaders to introduce healthy food sales, childcare, laundry facilities, and other needed services in dense neighborhoods that have limited options within walking distance.

HC.3-6: Encourage equitable distribution of healthy food retail and dining options in all commercial and employment areas of Moreno Valley.

HC.3-7: Continue to encourage new businesses to give local residents preference in hiring decisions and develop incentives to support this effort.

