

# East Cleveland ~ A Healthy Place to Live

This brochure was created by partners in the Health and Development Team of East Cleveland. More information at: [ccbh.net](http://ccbh.net)

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**About the Health and Development Team:** The Health and Development Team is a group of community partners who focus on addressing upstream impacts of health through healthy land use policies and environmental changes.

The committee's mission is to: **Promote the sustained revitalization of East Cleveland through healthy land use development and design by empowering residents, community leaders and partnering organizations to promote health, as well as environmental, economic and social well-being.**



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## Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health are also called “upstream causes” of health. These include social conditions such as:

### Employment

### Education

### Poverty

### Housing

Places where problems around these conditions exist have higher rates of chronic disease.

In the past, many groups and community organizations have worked in East Cleveland to help improve the health of the community. However, most of these programs did not engage the community or address “social determinants of health”. Research clearly shows that programs targeting social determinants of health can positively impact health, reduce illness and health disparities.

The efforts of the Health and Development Committee are different from the traditional community health programs aiming to promote healthy lifestyle choices. This effort is addressing these social conditions while engaging the community in all steps of the program, to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the residents.

## Brownfield/Environment

A brownfield is a property where hazardous pollutants, substances or contaminants exist. These toxins, such as lead or asbestos pose threat to human health.

East Cleveland is located in an area where many brownfield risks exist. Brownfields typically exist on former industrial sites, gas stations, or where commercial dumping has occurred.

Brownfields and lead contamination pose significant risk to human health. **An estimated 85% of the housing in East Cleveland contains lead.** Chemicals in brownfields or lead paint can cause disorders such as asthma, neurological problems, learning disabilities, and increased risk for several types of cancer.

The Health and Development

team is seeking funding for brownfield assessment and redevelopment projects. We are also planning on working with residents to assist with water and air conservation and community cleanup projects, and educate children and families on environmental stewardship.



## Green Space Development

City Parks and open spaces improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work.

Research shows that if people have access to parks, they exercise more. In places where people have access to parks, health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and colon cancer are reduced. Open spaces increase the value of neighboring residential property. When selecting a place to live, most people prefer a location near

greenspace.

Green space provides significant environmental benefits. Trees reduce air and water pollution, and absorb excess rain water, reducing sewer flooding.

Community gardens have many benefits. They increase residents' sense of community ownership, provide a focus for neighborhood activities, reduce crime by cleaning up vacant lots, and build community leaders.

City parks create social and community development benefits.

They make neighborhoods more livable; they offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, and they provide places where people can build a sense of community. Access to public parks and recreational facilities have been strongly linked to reductions in crime and juvenile delinquency.

The Health and Development Team is working with the East Cleveland community to develop a healthy land use policy for utilizing vacant properties for green spaces and gardens.

**Some tips to be involved:**

1. Introduce yourself to your neighbors.
2. Join your community block club.
3. Start or join a community garden.
4. Assist with community cleanup or playground build days.
5. Install a motion sensor light on your front porch or side door.



## Community/Public Safety

In a survey of East Cleveland residents, many cited safety concerns when asked why they choose not to be physically active in their community. It is widely understood that high crime rates coincide with high disease rates. Vacant properties become a

common location for crimes such as drug use/sales, prostitution, looting, fighting, and illegal dumping of garbage. Many neighbors of vacant properties have complained about these criminal activities. It is a goal of the Health and

Development Committee to reduce crime, improve community involvement and safety through our activities. Getting involved can improve your neighborhood.



## Residential Development

Housing improvements in disadvantaged areas or social housing may provide a population-based strategy to improve health and reduce health inequalities.

Several health problems are

associated with poor housing quality. These include asthma, lung cancer, depression, anxiety, injury/death from accidents and fires, hypothermia, and skin and eye irritation.

The Health and Development

Team promotes housing ownership assistance programs, and the City Development Office offers opportunities for residents to obtain low rate home improvement loans.

## Economic/Commercial Development/Zoning

Communities that people want to live in have higher property values. Businesses are likely to choose their location based on a number of factors including: cost of land, tax incentives, customer base, and structural requirements of their business. Other factors are safety, community cohesion, green space, and property values. All of these are issues that are important to the Health and Development Team as they strive to improve the community image, which will make the city more attractive to business owners and meet the needs of residents to provide essential services. Many city planners around the country are learning that it is important to include public health, as well as safety and welfare to zoning and land use regulations.

Neighborhoods with high concentrations of fast food restaurants, limited access to healthy food, and limited access to both public and private recreational facilities increase the risk for obesity. Asthma, and obesity both have risk factors associated with low use of walking and poor air quality, and limited access to recreational opportunities.

East Cleveland's current zoning policies have been on the books for a very long time. The Health and Development Team plans to assist with rewriting the zoning ordinances with the health of the residents in mind. The changes will hopefully improve the walkability, air quality, opportunity for physical activity and nutritious food for East Cleveland residents.

## Transportation

Increased automobile transportation and reduced biking and walking leads to greater health problems. Children who walk to school are more likely to be focused on their schoolwork and less likely to develop obesity. About 85% of East Cleveland residents own a car. Transportation is a common barrier to physical activity and recreation, buying healthy foods, and getting regular scheduled medical appointments. The Health and Development Team understands that transportation improvements can greatly improve the health of East Cleveland residents. The activities of the Health and Development Team aim to provide healthy and adequate transportation solutions for all types of commuting, including biking, walking, and automobile use.



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