



Healthy Communities Toolkit

A SELF-PACED WORKSHOP TO INTRODUCE THE CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES MAY/JUNE 2021

OVERVIEW and expected outcomes

- **Week 1:** Taking stock // introduction to policy and environmental change, the audit tool & reflection on current status/recent changes in your town
- **Week 2: Overview of toolkit resources // Understanding what is included in the toolkit and how it applies to rural communities like ours**
- **Week 3:** What's Brewing & What's Stewing // Identify what is working well, what's on the agenda and what needs to be on the agenda
- **Week 4:** Taking Steps Forward // Using the toolkit to support change

BACKGROUND

- The Healthy Communities Toolkit is a resource funded by a grant through Plan4Health.
- Plan4Health is an initiative that connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions.
- Launched in 2010, the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) Community Health Action Response Team (CHART) focuses on policy and environmental change to support healthy eating and active living among the 10 towns served by the EHHD. Strategies for the Plan4Health project include assessing zoning policies and codes that impact opportunities for active transportation and developing a rural community toolkit.

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

REVIEW // TO LEARN MORE, SEE WORKSHOP WEEK 1 SLIDES

- Much of the work the EHHD facilitates in the community focuses on **sustainable change**: working to support updates to policy and the environment where people have choices (or make choices) that impact their health.
- Policy and environmental change in a community (or worksite or household) takes place in incremental steps that start with noticing that there is a situation that can be addressed (changed).
- While the primary focus of this toolkit workshop is to look at the larger community – many aspects can be applied to worksites and households.

| Policy | Environment |
|--|--|
| Policy evaluation, adjustment &/or termination | All elements in place and well developed |
| Policy implementation | Most elements are in place &/or well developed |
| Policy formulation | Some elements are in place &/or well developed |
| Problem identified/ gaining agenda status | Few elements in place and/or well developed |
| Not identified as a problem | Elements not in place |

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- The main goal of a policy and environmental approach to improving community health is

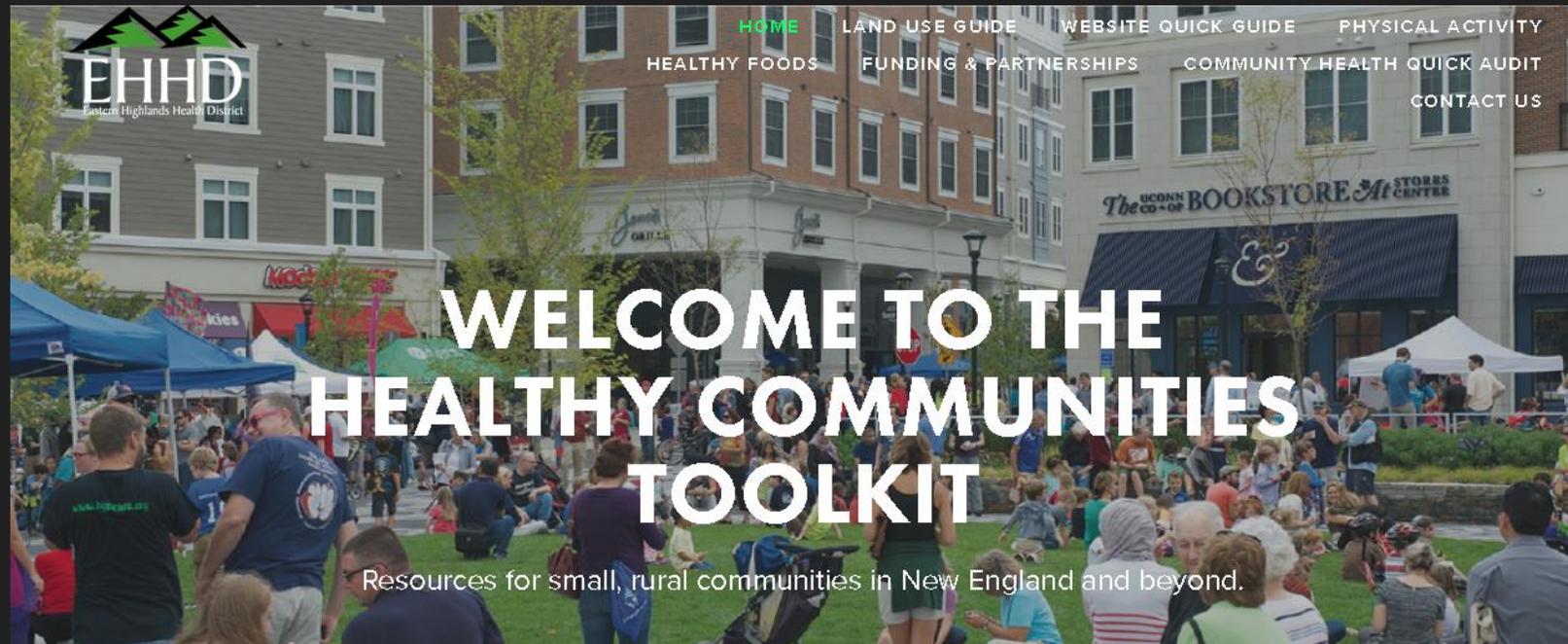
**TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE
EASY CHOICE!**

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

- The toolkit can be found at the web address:

HEALTHYEASTERNCT.COM

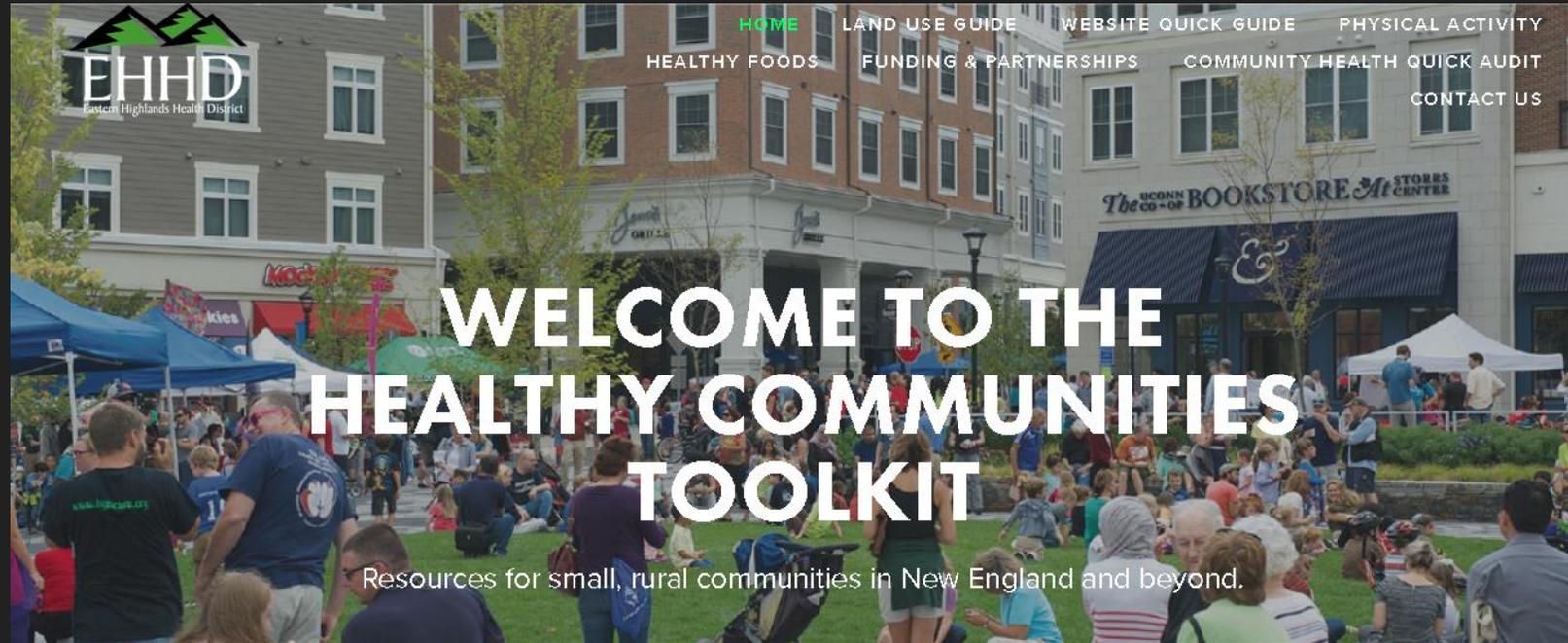
- Includes links for smaller/rural communities to explore how land use and zoning policies impact opportunities for healthy eating and active living
- Policy change does not always need funding resources, but changes to the built environment often stalls because of costs; there are links for funding opportunities included in the toolkit



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

No single town has all the answers or best practices, and because each town is unique, what one town can do might not be a good fit for your town.

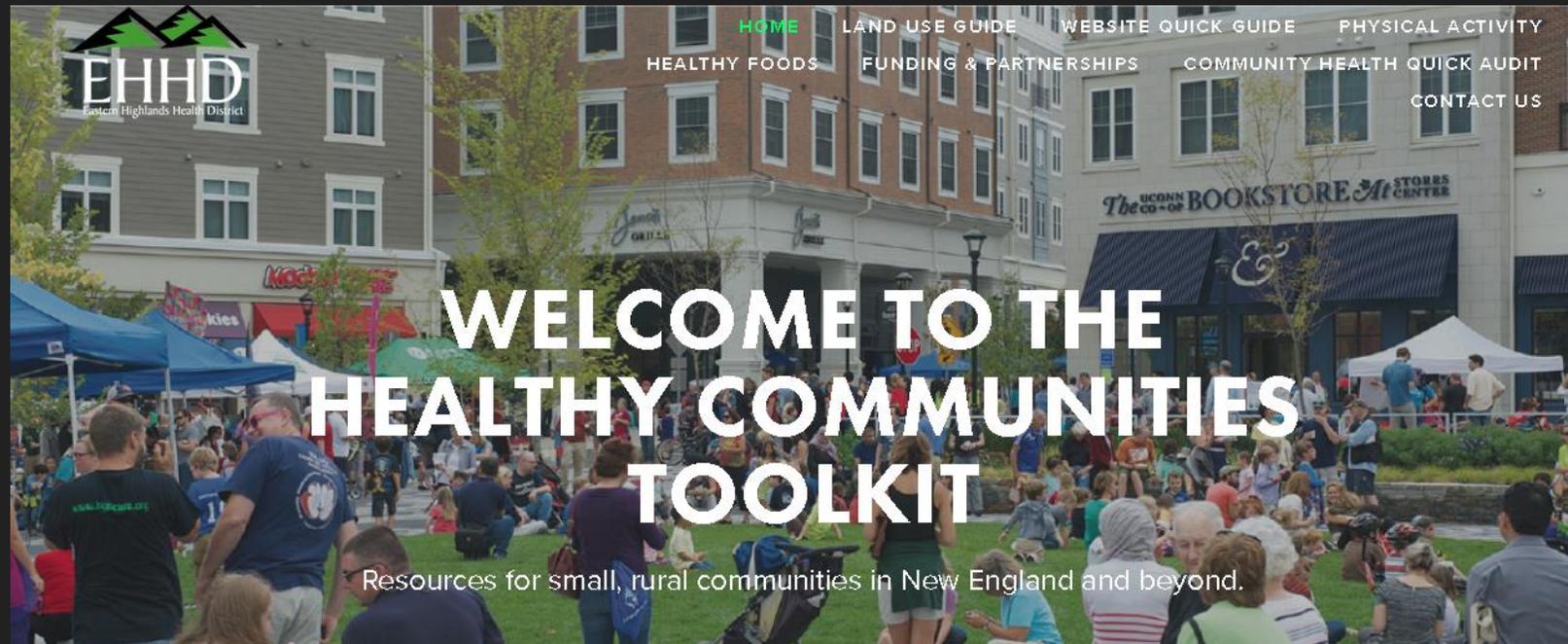
The toolkit is a resource to present new ideas to facilitate healthy communities in ways that have worked in other towns.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

Specifically, the toolkit includes resources and information regarding:

- Increase &/or improve opportunities for physical activity
- Ideas to increase access to healthy foods
- Funding opportunities and resources
- Best practices and examples from other rural &/or New England towns



LAND USE GUIDE

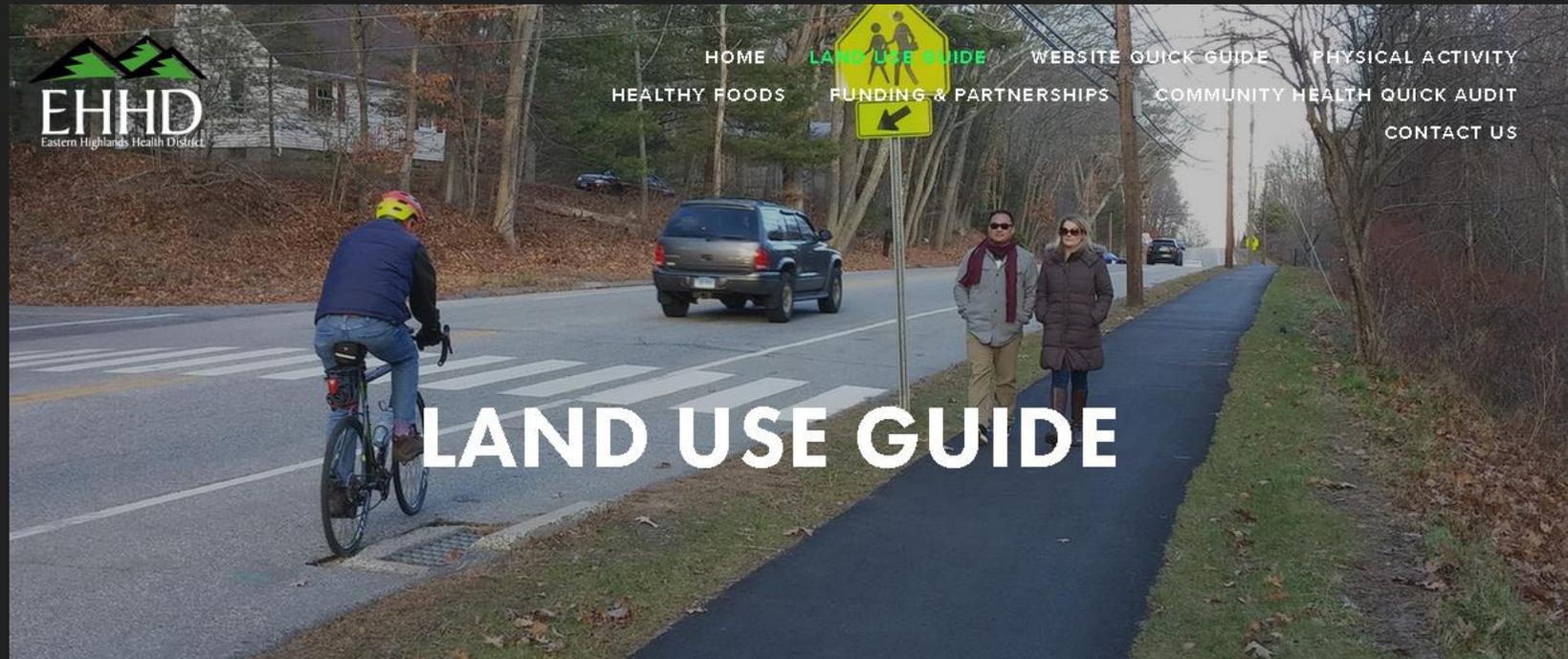
Why should your land use commission and other local officials promote healthy communities?



LAND USE GUIDE

Town planning and zoning commissions and other land use managers have a significant impact on their communities in a number of ways, including community health.

- They guide development and influence how the community evolves.
- They can influence housing variety, business types and locations, available open spaces, and the connections among them.



LAND USE GUIDE

Are homes, businesses, and open spaces mixed together or separate? Can you safely and easily travel among them in a variety of ways?



- HOME
- LAND USE GUIDE**
- WEBSITE QUICK GUIDE
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- HEALTHY FOODS
- FUNDING & PARTNERSHIPS
- COMMUNITY HEALTH QUICK AUDIT
- CONTACT US

LAND USE GUIDE

LAND USE GUIDE

Considering only your town hall or primary commercial area, is it possible to move between locations safely without a car? Are there marked cross walks or other enhancements to encourage walking?



LAND USE GUIDE

Are there connections between homes (or your local school/s) and parks? Are there connections between clusters of homes in the same geographic area? Paths and trails connecting the 'back side' of geographically close areas can increase active transportation and recreation.



- HOME
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LAND USE GUIDE

LAND USE GUIDE

These factors directly influence opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy food. By increasing those opportunities, land use managers help create a healthier environment and reduce major illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke among their residents. This improved quality of life allows healthier communities become more connected, desirable places to live.



LAND USE GUIDE

3 Key ways Planning and Zoning Commissions promote healthy communities:

1. Implement the Plan of Conservation & Development
2. Manage the Features of Land Development
3. Engage the Community



LAND USE GUIDE

Land use policy and implementation is an aspect of each community that every resident can participate in.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

- Click on the image to read an overview of the Healthy Communities Toolkit

PLAN4Health **EHD** **STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

Website Synopsis and Information You Can Find In This Website

VISIT
HEALTHYEASTERNCT.COM

WHAT ARE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

 Healthy communities are places that offer opportunities to maintain a good state of health including physical activity (such as walking) and healthy foods (such as those available at farmer's markets).

WHY HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MATTER

 Communities with ample opportunities to get and stay healthy are more desirable places to live. They offer clean air and water, ample food choices, places to walk and bicycle comfortably, and places for recreation. Healthy places attract new residents and in doing so, become more lively and dynamic.

 New businesses that serve people engaged in healthy lifestyles are attracted to those communities and can enrich the local economy. A healthier population can reduce burden on local governments for health and social services. Where quality of life is elevated, in part with healthy options, redevelopment and restoration efforts tend to be more successful long-term.

In rural and small towns, creating healthier communities can be of particular importance. Where homes and businesses are far apart from one another, the car becomes the easiest way to get from one destination to another. Walking and bicycling may be more difficult and most often takes place in the shoulders of the road. Safety becomes a concern. In addition, many small towns struggle to keep a successful variety of food stores with healthy options in the community.

HOW THIS TOOLKIT CAME ABOUT

In 2015, in partnership with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA), EHD was awarded a Plan4Health grant by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association.

The focus of this grant is to support EHD/CCAPA efforts to increase physical activity and access to healthy foods in the region's towns by helping them link their planning and public health programs with a focus on healthier communities. This toolkit is designed to support the EHD region towns, as well as any other small, rural towns, in these efforts.

WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT?

 This website is a compilation of various tools to help people make their communities healthier places to live, work, and play.

These include planning and regulatory tools focused on growing options for physical activity and access to local, healthy foods. Specifically, these tools are for local officials who make land development decisions in small and rural Connecticut towns.

 Flip the page to learn more!

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT

Take a few minutes to review the Healthy Communities Toolkit resources at:

www.HealthyEasternCt.com

Next week...

We will take a look at what is working well in your community and what is on (your) agenda for areas to improve or address (or learn more about) regarding building a healthy community in your town.

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at blooma@ehhd.org