

It is the position of the Healthy Nashville Leadership Council that the Inclusionary Zoning policy being developed by the Metro Planning Department for consideration by Metro Council should consider and effectively address the significant health impacts of housing and neighborhood composition on residents of Davidson County.

Healthy Nashville, and the Healthy Nashville Leadership Council, seeks to improve health and quality of life for those who live, work, learn, worship and play in Nashville. Housing policies, like the plans for an inclusionary zoning ordinance, can have substantial impact not only on creation of affordable housing units, but also on the physical and mental health of Davidson County residents. Housing policies can impact health in a multitude of ways including the following:

- 1) Neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated impact health and well-being adversely, especially during early childhood. One in five adults and one in three children in Davidson County live in poverty, a number that has risen 10 points in the last decade. The relationship between poverty and poor health outcomes is well documented, as is the association between poverty and lower educational attainment, reduced economic opportunity and unemployment. Living in poverty impacts the cognitive development of children as well as their physical and mental health and wellbeing.¹
- 2) Inclusionary Zoning has been used as a strategy for creating mixed income neighborhoods², and policies that foster mixed-income neighborhoods have shown positive health impacts. While the premise that mixed income housing improves the health of residents is still being researched, the available research suggests a relationship between mixed income housing and improved health. A recent report on the large-scale Moving to Opportunity experiment, a HUD sponsored study, looked at quality of life indicators that were impacted for people moving from areas of concentrated poverty to areas with lower rates of poverty. Improvements were shown in quality of life indicators such as decreased fear, improved health outcomes, lower rates of violent juvenile crimes and higher test scores.³
- 3) Long commute times have detrimental physical and environmental⁴ impacts. While individuals commute for various reasons, one of the primary reasons is increasing housing prices that drive people further from urban centers and large employers. As Nashville's housing stock becomes more expensive, residents are being displaced from neighborhoods and are commuting longer distances. Roughly 4 of 5 individuals in Davidson County commute alone, by car. Research shows commuting to be unhealthy for individuals, impacting cardiovascular fitness, weight, blood pressure and other risk factors. The impacts of long commutes are not only on physical health but also mental health and emotional well-being, as commute times have been associated with stress, feelings of isolation and fewer social connections.⁵⁻⁸

Finally, we ask that the final recommendations include accountability and tracking mechanisms for measuring the success of the policy in creating more affordable housing options. Ultimately, the policy decision about inclusionary zoning will be not only about the critically important issue of creating long term, affordable housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds, but also about making Davidson County a healthier community for everybody, at all income levels.

¹ American Psychological Association, "Effects of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness on Children and Youth.

<http://www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty.aspx>

² "Mixed-Income Living: Anticipated and Realized Benefits for Low-Income Households". Diane K. Levy, Z. McDade, K. Bertumen. Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research, Volume 15, Number 2, 2013. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research .

³ Moving To Opportunity. Final Impacts Evaluation.

<http://www.nber.org/mtopublic/final.htm>

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

<http://www3.epa.gov/epahome/trans.htm>

⁵ "Commuting Distance, Cardiorespiratory Fitness, and Metabolic Risk." C.M. Hoehner, E.E. Barlow, P. Allen, M. Schootman. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. June 2012.

⁶ "Stress that Doesn't Pay: The Commuting Paradox." A. Stutzer and B. Frey. Journal of Economics. 2008.

⁷ Christian, T.J., "Trade-Offs Between Commuting Time and Health-Related Activities," Journal of Urban Health, October 2012.

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