



NEWPORT  
**HEALTH EQUITY**  
ZONE

Issue Briefs

# Arts and Culture

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**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## How is ARTS & CULTURE related to health?

- Direct involvement with art programs in one's community can help build inter-personal ties and promotes volunteering (which can improve health), increases opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment, reduces delinquency in high-risk youth, reduces neighborhood crime, relieves stress, improves individuals sense of belonging or attachment to a community, and improves participant's skills and creative ability.
- Fostering the arts can improve mental and psychological well-being: "we know that the organism responds with changes in the humoral nervous system--for example, verbal expression of traumatic experiences through writing or talking improves physical health, enhances immune function, and is associated with fewer medical visits."
- Education studies show that kids engaged in an arts class will do better in other subjects and that an arts-integrated curriculum improves school performance, perhaps because children find learning through artistic/creative activity much more enjoyable, and so they will have an easier time engaging with the material. <sup>1</sup>
- The arts can also play a valuable role in preventative care and wellness through public health campaigns carried out by arts organizations at both the city and neighborhood levels.
- The community benefits of arts organizations forming partnerships with primary health causes can occur in the form of better education with a focus on preventative healthcare and public health issues and integration of new activities for leisure and recreation with important health messages (such as film screenings or healthy food potlucks). <sup>2</sup>
- An emerging literature shows that art contributes to health in a holistic sense through its ability to aesthetically improve the physical environment, provide an avenue through which emotions are expressed, lift spirits, or stimulate thought—these benefits can be achieved through both passive (viewing, attending or listening to exhibits/performances) and active participation.
- Studies have shown that practicing an art form, with its attendant focus on concentration and self-improvement may provide a welcome distraction from illness or other worries and a satisfying sense of accomplishment. <sup>3</sup>
- Being active, and remaining active in community cultural events promotes positive health outcomes. Those who remain culturally active, and those who become culturally active report higher self-perceived health when compared to those that are not culturally active. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Guetzkow, Joshua. 2002. "How the Arts Impact Communities: An Introduction to the Literature on Arts Impact Studies." Princeton University: Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies.

<sup>2</sup> Rollins, Judy et. al 2011. "Arts Organizations and Public Health: Developing Relationships and Programs to Address Local Health Priorities." Partners for Livable Communities.

<sup>3</sup> "Weaving Traditional Arts into the Fabric of Community Health: A Briefing from the Alliance for California Traditional Arts." 2011. Alliance for California Traditional Arts.

<sup>4</sup> Johansson, Sven Erik, Boinkum Benson Konlaan, and Lars Olov Bygren. "Sustaining habits of attending cultural events and maintenance of health: a longitudinal study." Health promotion international 16.3 (2001): 229-234.

# Arts and Culture

## Causal Links:

(Exposure ▶ mediating or moderating variables/proximal outcomes ▶ Health outcomes)

- Prevalence of arts and culture organizations ▶ increase self-expression, social cohesion, and promotes acquiring new skills and creative thought ▶ decrease in stress and depression among community members through social cohesion

## Useful Videos:

[Video 1](#) (Running time 4:52)

[Video 2](#) (Running time 56:21) (long, but has some useful perspectives)



# Education, Innovation, Economic Opportunity

**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## How is EDUCATION/INNOVATION/ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY related to health?

- Lower rates of education can lead to higher rates of disease and disability and can place greater strains on mental health. <sup>1</sup>
- Americans without high school diplomas are living sicker and shorter lives than ever before, especially for white women with less than 12 years of education.
- Investing in education can save both lives and dollars: more education leads to higher earnings that can provide access to healthy food, safer homes, and better health care.
- “Downstream benefits of education”: having a good education is very important for getting better jobs that have better benefits including health insurance coverage, and higher earnings that can allow people to afford healthier lifestyles.
- “Upstream issues of education:” these can impact children before they even reach school age, including unhealthy coping skills to deal with stress and later taking up unhealthy behaviors as young adults (such as smoking or substance abuse) that often set up a lifetime of adult health problems. <sup>2</sup>
- Research shows that prolonged unemployment takes a severe toll on health, both in terms of resources available for self-care, but also in the form of stress. Also, occupations that have high demand and low control contribute to sustained high stress levels.
- Education and employment increase individual income, leading to improved individual health, community prosperity, and income equality. These all lead to greater community health, which feeds back into improved opportunity for education and employment. <sup>3</sup>
- Culture can impact the learning style and level of classroom participation of students, which can in turn impact how successful a student is academically. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Society and Health. 2014 “Education: It Matters More to Health than Ever Before.” Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 2014 “The Links Between Education and Health: An Interview with Steven Woolf.” RWJF Public Health Blog.

<sup>3</sup> “Pathways from the Built Environment to Health: Economic Opportunity.” 2011. Clark County Public Health.

<sup>4</sup> “The impact of culture on education” 2010 <http://www.education.com/reference/article/impact-culture-education/>

# Education, Innovation, Economic Opportunity

## Causal Links:

(Exposure ▶ mediating or moderating variables/proximal outcomes ▶ Health outcomes)

- Lack of education and economic opportunity ▶ lack of access to proper physical and emotional care ▶ increase in chance for developing chronic diseases, disabilities, and depression
- Access to education and economic opportunity ▶ increase in chance for better jobs and individual income ▶ less chance for adverse health outcomes and improved individual health and community prosperity

## Useful video:

[Video 1](#) (Running time 3:24)

## Useful Reading:

[The Links Between Education and Health: An Interview with Steven Woolf](#)



# Food Access

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**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## How is FOOD ACCESS related to health?

- For many low-income communities and communities of color, finding quality fresh food means either traveling significant distances or paying excessive prices for fruits and vegetables. With these burdens, it is no surprise that these communities face higher risk of obesity, diabetes, and other preventable food-related health challenges.
- Having easy, regular access to grocery stores or other food markets that sell fruits, vegetables, produce, and other products at affordable prices is necessary to eat the well-rounded, nutritious diet that is essential for good health.
- Healthy food retailers can generate significant economic activity by serving as anchors for further commercial revitalization, creating local jobs, generating tax revenues etc. <sup>1</sup>
- Lack of transportation to grocery stores represents a serious problem for many people.
- Food access is also about more than whether there are grocery stores in a community, but also has to do with whether households can afford to purchase food, which is closer related to rates of employment and job quality.
- Farmers markets, mobile produce vendors, farm to school initiatives, food hubs, and other community-based methods for selling local food are already gaining an impressive track record in improving community health. <sup>2</sup>
- The American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that neighborhood access to healthy food and safe places for physical activity matters for children's weight. The study showed that children living in neighborhoods with healthy food and safe play spaces are 56 percent less likely to be obese than children in neighborhoods without these features. <sup>3</sup>
- Culture directly impacts food choices. For example, in the Hindu and Buddhist religions the consumption of both pork and beef is frowned upon. Therefore, the high prevalence of certain diseases among particular populations (e.g. African Americans and diabetes), can in part be attributed to the cultural influence on food choices. <sup>4</sup>
- Research in Atlanta GA found that the primary reason for participants not following food recommendations was that the recommended diet was not familiar to them and contained unfamiliar food choices. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bell, Judith et.al. 2013. "Access to Healthy Foods and Why it Matters: A Review of the Research." The Food Trust. Policy Link.

<sup>2</sup> "Healthy Food Access." United States Department of Agriculture.

<sup>3</sup> Bell, Judith et al. 2014. "Access to Healthy Food Improves Health, Bring Economic Benefits." The Huffington Post.

<sup>4</sup> Dindyal "How Personal Factors, including Culture and Ethnicity, Affect the choices and selection of food we make" <https://ispub.com/IJTWM/1/2/11779>

<sup>5</sup> Kulkarni, Karmeen D. "Food, culture, and diabetes in the United States." Clinical Diabetes 22.4 (2004): 190-192. <http://clinical.diabetesjournals.org/content/22/4/190.short>

# Food Access

## Causal Links:

(Exposure ▶ mediating or moderating variables/proximal outcomes ▶ Health outcomes)

- Lack of a close grocery store/access to healthy foods ▶ increase in stress and lack of a nutritious, well-balanced diet ▶ increase in rates of obesity and other diet-related health outcomes
- Access to grocery stores, farmers markets and other fresh produce outlets ▶ chance for more nutritious diets and generation of local jobs ▶ better overall physical and mental health for community

## Useful video:

[Food Access Impacting Health](#) (Running time 2:03)



# Open Space

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**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## How is OPEN SPACE related to health?

- Parks can have a multi-purpose use: giving residents a choice of physical activities within their local space increases the number of participants.
- It is also important that streets are safe and inviting for commuters who choose not to travel by car or bus.
- Parks can reduce stress among residents, but only if they provide a safe and welcoming environment. Reducing automobile traffic through and around parks can increase park visits and reduce stress of the users (although most, if not all parks in the Newport area do not have streets through them).
- Park design can also be related to health: great and safe playgrounds, useful signs, clear trails etc. can all promote health because they can lure residents to use the park for recreational activity <sup>1</sup>
- Open spaces afford opportunities for purely physical recreation. Some part of every park and square should be devoted to play grounds. Liberal Provision in open spaces for physical recreation in its various forms would confer salutary benefits on old and young alike. The least useful purpose an open space can serve is merely as an ornament. <sup>2</sup>
- Parks and open spaces are viewed as allowing children to burn off surplus energy, improve their motor skills, and interact with other children in environments that are usually less restrictive than those of home and school.
- For older children/teens, parks are seen as important settings to socialize with peers and get involved in sports and physical activities. <sup>3</sup>
- Open spaces also provide valuable green ecosystem services, by improving air quality, storing carbon, and mitigating the urban heat island effect.
- The use of parks and open space vary by race/ethnicity. The odds of an active visit (i.e. a visit that involved walking/hiking, swimming, biking, running/jogging, or playing sports) are significantly lower among non-Hispanic Blacks than whites. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peter Harnik and Ben Welle. "From Fitness Zones to the Medical Mile: How Urban Park Systems Can Best Promote Health and Wellness." The Trust for Public Land.

<sup>2</sup> E. R. L. Gould. Park Areas and Open Spaces in Cities. Publications of the American Statistical Association. Vol. 1, No. 2/3 (Jun. - Sep., 1888), pp. 49-61

<sup>3</sup> Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Orit Stieglitz. Children in Los Angeles Parks: A Study of Equity, Quality and Children's Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Parks. Town Planning Review. Vol. 73, No. 4 (Oct., 2002), pp. 467-488

<sup>4</sup> Carlson, Susan A. et al. "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Perceived Access, Environmental Barriers to Use, and Use of Community Parks." Preventing Chronic Disease 7.3 (2010): A49. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2879981/>

# Open Space

## Causal Links:

(Exposure ▶ mediating or moderating variables/proximal outcomes ▶ Health outcomes)

- Open Spaces ▶ parks create social cohesion and promote recreational physical activity ▶ reduced rates of obesity and depression in both children and adults.
- Open Spaces ▶ increase exposure to green areas in a city ▶ reduces stress levels, cortisol levels, pulse rates, and blood pressure and an increase in job satisfaction

## Useful video:

[Park Poor](#) (Running time 8:40)



# Physical Activity and Emotional Health

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**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## What community level/environmental factors influence Physical and Emotional Health?

- Communities that have limited outlets for recreational activities (i.e. neighborhood parks, walking trails, structured afterschool activities) make it less convenient for motivated residents to remain physically active.<sup>1</sup>
- Physical and emotional health are connected. For example, exercise releases endorphins, powerful chemicals that energize us and lift our mood. Therefore, increasing neighborhood level physical activity can also positively affect neighborhood level mental health.<sup>2</sup>
- Residents that live in communities with high neighborhood disorder and (i.e. high rates of vandalism and unsafe) and low community cohesion are more likely to express symptoms of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).<sup>3</sup>
- Women and children that live in unsafe neighborhoods are more likely to be obese when compared to women and children that live in safe neighborhoods. Although multiple mechanisms are likely to be involved in the association between safety and obesity, the most common explanation is the effect of safety on physical activity.<sup>4</sup>
- Residents who perceive their neighborhood to be of poor quality are more likely to self-report low sleep quality. More research is needed to understand whether this is due to physical differences in neighborhoods (e.g. traffic, environmental toxins and crowdedness), psychological factors (e.g. fear of one's safety and financial insecurity), or sociocultural factors (e.g. timing of evening meals, dietary or behavioral preferences).<sup>5</sup>
- The cultural make-up of a community influences what symptoms of mental health residents report, the meaning they impart to illness, and the services they seek for treatment. For example, African Americans often rely on ministries who may play various mental health roles as counselor or referral agent, and many African Americans prefer counseling to drug therapy.<sup>6</sup>
- The cultural make-up of a community influences what recreational activities residents are familiar with and enjoy. Some activity requirements such as wearing head gear could serve as a barrier to participation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2108465>

<sup>2</sup> [http://journals.lww.com/co-psychiatry/Abstract/2005/03000/Exercise\\_and\\_well\\_being\\_a\\_review\\_of\\_mental\\_and.13.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/co-psychiatry/Abstract/2005/03000/Exercise_and_well_being_a_review_of_mental_and.13.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01069.x/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

<sup>4</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1038/oby.2006.67/pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027795361200562X>

<sup>6</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. "Chapter 2: Culture counts: The influence of culture and society on mental health." *Mental health: Culture, race, and ethnicity—A supplement to mental health: A report of the surgeon general*. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services (2001). <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44249/>

<sup>7</sup> "Cultural Diversity: Including everyone in Physical Activity" <http://www.healthyalberta.com/760.htm>

# Physical Activity and Emotional Health

## Causal Links:

(Exposure ▶ mediating or moderating variables/proximal outcomes ▶ Health outcomes)

- Increased community outlets for physical activity ▶ increased physical activity by residents ▶ decreased BMI and obesity
- Physical and emotional wellness ▶ improved educational attainment (and improved social economic status in the future) ▶ better health outcomes

## Useful videos:

- [Chicago schools rev up fight against obesity](#) (Running time 2:01)
- [The Whole Child](#) (Running time 31:28)



# Transportation

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**Purpose Statement:** The HEZ project is striving to improve health outcomes among residents living in zones 405 and 406 through a place-based initiative in order to help achieve health equity in Newport.

## How is TRANSPORTATION related to health?

- The availability, safety and accessibility of both public and private forms of transportation directly impact health.
- Transportation allows individuals to easily access many health related services (such as hospitals, clinics and pharmacies).<sup>1</sup>
- The inability to access resources due to a transportation barrier, and long commute times can increase individual levels of stress.<sup>2</sup>
- Limited transportation options creates isolated communities (a reduction in “bridging capital”).
- The type of transportation utilized, and the proximity of roads to residential neighborhoods impacts air quality and exposure to environmental toxins (including noise pollution).
- Transportation via walking or cycling has the ability to increase neighborhood-level physical activity.
- Communities that are walkable and bikable are associated with healthier populations that have more physical activity, lower body weight, lower rates of traffic injuries, less air pollution, and improved mobility for non-drivers.
- Transportation must be safe. In the United States, injuries are the leading cause of death for people ages 1-44 years. Almost a quarter (22%) are attributed to motor vehicle/other road users<sup>3</sup>
- Public transportation can also give people an opportunity for more physical activity in their day. In fact, public transit users walk an average of 19 minutes daily getting to and from transit stops.<sup>4</sup>
- The use of bicycles may have a greater potential to substitute for motorized vehicle use than walking because of its faster speed and ability to cover greater distances. Bicycle commuting has also been shown to be an activity that can lower rates of overweight and obesity.<sup>6</sup>
- By reducing the amount of emissions that are generated and reducing exposure to the emissions that occur, areas will likely see positive health outcomes in their residents, including a decrease in asthma, better lung function, and a decrease in cardiovascular mortality and morbidity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2012/10/how-does-transportation-impact-health-.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/transportation/default.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/overview/data.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/states/index.html> (info by state)

<sup>4</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 2012. “How Does Transportation Impact Health?” Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Health Policy Snapshot Series.

<sup>5</sup> Dill, Jennifer. 2009. “Bicycling for Transportation and Health: The Role of Infrastructure.” Journal of Public Health Policy.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, Booz, Hamilton. 2001. “Transportation and Health: Policy Interventions for Safer, Healthier People and Communities.” Partnership for Prevention.



# Transportation

## Causal Links:

- Transportation (biking) ▶ increases physical activity ▶ reduced rates of obesity
- Transportation ▶ close residential proximity to a major road ▶ increased rates of cardiovascular disease
- Transportation ▶ level of safety ▶ number of pedestrian injuries
- Transportation (automobile) ▶ increased air pollution ▶ increased rates of asthma
- Transportation ▶ shorter commutes = more social and family time ▶ decreased stress

## Useful videos:

- [Member profile: Dr. Meghan Winters - Transportation, city design and health](#)  
(Running time 4:18)

