

06 | COMMUNITY HEALTH + WELLNESS



INTRODUCTION

Coachella envisions a future which includes thriving physical, emotional and spiritual health for the entire community and is committed to provide a supportive environment so this can occur. The City's distinctive and family-friendly neighborhoods will inspire an appreciation of Coachella's history and create unity among community members. Neighborhoods will provide opportunities for residents to improve their physical and mental health while meeting daily needs – walking to the store, meeting friends, bicycling to school, taking transit to work and having access to nutritious and affordable foods that can be purchased or grown in the neighborhood. The City will find innovative solutions to ensure its streets, parks and public spaces are safe, accessible and inviting for all. There will be ample choices for team sports, exercise programs, entertainment and civic participation for people of all ages in public spaces.

The City will encourage local businesses to pay living wages and offer safe, meaningful employment for people of all ages and abilities. Residents will have access to educational opportunities that expand their professional skills, foster creativity and provide tools to support a healthy lifestyle. When preventive health is not enough, residents will be served by first class health providers and social services in the City. Coachella acknowledges a healthy planet directly improves human health, and the City is committed to clean air, water, and soil; conservation of resources; protection of natural areas. Youth are honored as leaders of tomorrow and are an integral part of the City's robust community planning and civic engagement process. The City will consider health and equity in its actions and decisions, supporting the concept that all community members can live healthy, meaningful lives.

OUR COMMUNITY'S GOALS

Numerous community members, community organizations, and other public agency partners spent over a year helping the City ensure this Community Health and Wellness Element and the rest of the General Plan contained a framework and policies that would enhance the social and environmental conditions to improve health outcomes and behaviors, quality of life and social equity.

Coachella residents value the benefits of healthy food, physical activity, healthy environments, education and strong social ties. They understand the importance of a healthy population and encourage the City to consider and prioritize health in decision making.

Please note that many of the issues and opportunities identified throughout the Health Element planning process appear here, specifically goals and policies related to:

- Complete, walkable and family friendly neighborhoods can be found in the Land Use and Community Design Element.
- Pollution and environmental contamination can be found in the Safety Element.
- Climate change and health and parks and open space can be found in the Sustainability and Natural Environment Element.
- Walking, bicycling, public transportation, and traffic safety can be found in the Mobility Element.

To achieve the community's vision for health, the Community Health and Wellness Element is organized around the following broad goals:

- **A physical, social and policy environment that supports residents' health, well-being and equity.** Coachella residents don't just associate health with doctors' visits but their environment and their lifestyles. The concept of health and wellness is highly valued and celebrated and such; and should be a touchstone for decision making and direction setting in the City. Coachella leaders and residents should regularly consider how any decision could affect their health.
- **Safe, affordable, and healthy housing for every stage of life.** Home should be a place of comfort and support, not a source of financial stress or toxic exposures. Older homes and trailer parks in Coachella have potential health risks that should be monitored and mitigated. As household- and family-types continue to diversify, the housing stock should anticipate needs of single young adults, seniors and multi-generational families. The community should ensure all residents have safe shelter by preventing and eliminating temporary and long-term homelessness.
- **Reduced negative public health impacts of tobacco smoke.** First- and secondhand smoke are responsible for one in five deaths in the U.S. While the City is not interested in limiting an individual's freedom to smoke, it does want to protect other community members from smoking externalities. Since most adult smokers begin before age 18, it is critical that youth be educated about and protected from, the impacts of tobacco.
- **Close-knit and safe communities.** Strong social ties are one of the most commonly mentioned assets of living in Coachella and are a crucial ingredient in maintaining a healthy community. These connections help the community decrease stress levels, provide support in times of need, keep a positive outlook and keep neighborhoods safe. When the community feels safe, they feel free to enjoy walking and playing in the park. Spending time in these public spaces can increase health and further strengthen social networks.
- **Strong local food production and ample opportunities to eat locally grown food.** Agriculture is a fundamental part of Coachella's historic and current economy and culture. Residents want a larger portion of their food to come from neighboring farms as well as the opportunity to grow their own food on a smaller scale. In addition to increasing community food security, it is important that children understand the community's connection with agriculture by growing healthy fruits and vegetables themselves.
- **Safe and convenient access to healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse foods with low concentrations of unhealthy food providers.** Food connects family members and friends with each other and connects life in Coachella with the rich cultural traditions of generations past. Food retailers and restaurants should emphasize and enhance healthy options and minimize unhealthy choices. When making decisions about new stores and restaurants, community leaders should consider affordability, nutrition, environmental sustainability and cultural responsiveness.

- **Improved economic prosperity and vibrancy of households and businesses.** Individual and community wealth are the most important predictions of health outcomes across a lifespan. Ensuring people have access to lifelong educational opportunities and enriching and safe employment will improve household and community health in Coachella.
- **Community facilities and schools that support physical activity, civic life and social connections for residents of all ages and interests.** To improve health on a community-wide level, public facilities must be available to people of all ages that support education, physical activity and social and civic engagement. The City wants to increase collaborations with schools and other agencies to optimize resources and public facilities.
- **Affordable, accessible, high-quality health care and social services for all residents.** The community wants to see an accessible, integrated health and social services system with facilities in Coachella that puts wellness and prevention at the forefront. Community members, local employers, the City and community groups will work together to make this a reality. The community is interested in creating innovative, non-traditional models of health care delivery.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1. Healthy Community. A physical, social and civic environment that supports residents' health, well-being and equity.

Policies

- 1.1 Health in all policies.** Consider, and when appropriate incorporate, public health in all City policies and operations across all departments.
- 1.2 Monitoring and evaluation.** Work with the Riverside County Department of Public Health and community groups to monitor trends of the City's health and wellness conditions and outcomes.
- 1.3 Health equity.** Identify and address health inequities in Coachella, within Coachella's sphere of influence and between Coachella and the Riverside County on a regular basis and strive to facilitate a high quality of life for all residents.
- 1.4 Workplace wellness.** Enhance the health and well-being of City employees through workplace wellness programs and policies to increase employee productivity, improve morale, decrease incidence of accidents and injuries and decrease medical costs. Aspire to become a model healthy organization for other cities in the region.
- 1.5 Partnerships for health.** Create new and foster existing health-related partnerships and collaborations with community groups and other public agencies to implement the Community Health and Wellness Element and pursue other healthy communities programs.
- 1.6 Health events.** Create opportunities for health and wellness programs such as health fairs, health screenings and educational workshops/speakers, especially by leveraging partnerships with existing health groups.

- 1.7 **EIR Review.** Submit all environmental documents (Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, and Environmental Impact Reports) prepared with the City as the lead agency to the Riverside County Department of Public Health for review and comment.

Goal 2. Healthy Housing. Safe, affordable and healthy housing for every stage of life.

Policies

- 2.1 **Housing element implementation.** Implement the Housing Element of this General Plan, particularly programs and policies that address affordable housing.
- 2.2 **Affordable housing location.** Support the development of affordable housing in close proximity to services, transit and employment opportunities to reduce unnecessary transportation costs associated with sprawl development and ensure affordable housing is not located near hazardous or undesirable land uses.
- 2.3 **Housing diversity.** Provide a greater diversity and range of housing by location, tenure, type of unit and price throughout the City
- 2.4 **Lifecycle housing.** Support lifecycle housing to provide housing accommodations or living arrangements for persons of all ages and abilities, including young, single professionals, small and large families and retirees, so people can always have a place in the Coachella community.
- 2.5 **Integrated affordable housing.** Strive to create mixed-income neighborhoods by integrating affordable housing with market rate housing, avoiding concentrations of below-market-rate or subsidized housing in any one area of the City or within the City's Sphere of Influence.
- 2.6 **Ageing in place.** Provide programs and services that allow seniors to "age in place" in their homes and encourage the development of senior housing and assisted living services throughout the City, especially in walkable areas well-served by transit and close to commercial goods and services.
- 2.7 **Universal design.** Require a certain proportion or number of units in each residential development to include universal design elements, ensuring easy modifications to accommodate wheelchairs.
- 2.8 **Mobile Home Parks.** Balance the need for affordable housing while protecting the health and safety of mobile home residents by setting standards for tenants and property owners. Standards can include rent and utility cost regulations and other tenant protection measures; utilities infrastructure and hook-ups; fire safety; drainage; water and sewer lines; street access and structure orientation. Seek out resources to support improvements, infrastructure and sustainability of mobile home parks.
- 2.9 **Farm worker housing.** Educate farm owners about the need for safe and affordable farm worker housing and work with local growers to increase the supply of that type of housing in Coachella. Seek funding and develop partnerships to ensure adequate farm worker housing exists in Coachella and within the City's sphere of influence.

- 2.10 **Overcrowding.** Strive to reduce conditions of overcrowding in Coachella that can have negative a impact on sleep, stress, children’s school performance, fire risk and sanitation.
- 2.11 **Code enforcement programs.** Create a code enforcement program to register and/or inspect abandoned properties and respond to graffiti, vandalism, abandoned vehicles and other nuisances that create a perceived, or actual, unsafe environment.
- 2.12 **Rental assistance programs.** Allow the use of incentives to encourage more residential property owners to participate in rental assistance programs, such as Section 8.
- 2.13 **Housing Displacement.** Require a Health Impact Assessment for any development that causes residential displacement for both established and informal housing within the City and Sphere of Influence.
- 2.14 **Workforce housing.** Prioritize the creation and retention of workforce housing in the City, including farm workers, civil service workers and young professionals.
- 2.15 **Foreclosure prevention.** Enlist non-profit and other community partners in reducing the detrimental social and health effects of foreclosures for Coachella residents.
- 2.16 **Homelessness prevention.** Partner with the county and community groups to prevent and eliminate chronic homelessness in Coachella.
- 2.17 **Housing for the homeless.** Allow and encourage the development of transitional and permanent supportive housing for homeless and very low-income residents.
- 2.18 **Healthy building materials.** Encourage property owners pursuing new developments and home renovations to use low-or non-toxic materials such as low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint and carpet and other strategies to improve indoor air quality and noise levels (e.g., kitchen range top exhaust fans, treated windows, etc.).

Goal 3. Smoke-Free Environments. Reduced negative public health impacts of tobacco smoke.

Policies

- 3.1 **Tobacco-free youth.** Reduce Coachella youths’ exposure to, and interest in, tobacco products through educational programs and events.
- 3.2 **Secondhand smoke.** Reduce residents’ exposure to secondhand smoke.
- 3.3 **Smoking cessation services.** Provide opportunities to share bilingual information and services to Coachella residents to assist them in quitting smoking.
- 3.4 **Liquor and Tobacco marketing.** Prohibit stores from placing alcohol and tobacco products near candy and from placing alcohol and tobacco advertisements on exterior signage and below four feet in height (child’s eye-level).
- 3.5 **Smoke-free entertainment.** Work with Riverside County Department of Public Health to encourage local casinos to ban smoking to protect Coachella residents who work in, and patronize, local casinos.

Goal 4. Public Safety and Social Support. Close-knit and safe communities.

Policies

- 4.1 Program diversity.** Ensure social services and programs meet the diverse needs in the community for seniors, youth, non-English speakers and special needs residents.
- 4.2 Community programs.** Work with community partners to create programs that provide opportunities for volunteerism and multi-generational interaction.
- 4.3 Community and Safety.** Improve perceived and actual safety in Coachella.
- 4.4 Domestic violence prevention.** Work with community groups and other agencies to provide resources to families for prevent and end domestic violence.
- 4.5 Teen and youth needs.** Assess the City's entertainment/recreation resources periodically with the participation of Coachella youth to ensure their needs are being met and to curb the influence of gang affiliation/violence.
- 4.6 Collaboration for youth.** Explore opportunities to collaborate with Coachella Valley Unified School District along with faith-based and non-profit organizations to better serve youth.
- 4.7 Urban beautification.** Encourage participation of community partners for the landscaping of public spaces, community gardens projects and community art projects.
- 4.8 Volunteer programs.** Promote volunteer programs with local non-profit organizations and public schools to foster a sense of ownership and pride among residents.

Goal 5. Local Food System. Strong local food production and ample opportunities to eat locally grown food.

Policies

- 5.1 Local food production.** Work with local agricultural stakeholders to establish a strategy to encourage existing and new agricultural uses in and near Coachella to grow healthy food for local consumption. Make land use and policy decisions that encourage increased local food production. To the extent feasible, assess and plan for local food processing and distribution needs to connect local agriculture to markets, such as retailers, restaurants, schools, hospitals and other institutions and encourage certified organic growing practices. Also encourage local growers to consider establishing a co-operative community supported agriculture program.
- 5.2 Farmers' markets.** Continue to support the expansion and success of the Coachella farmers' market. Consider holding the farmers market at night during the summer to avoid extreme temperatures.
- 5.3 Community gardens.** Identify and prioritize locations to create a network of community gardens throughout Coachella with the long-term goal of providing sufficient garden spaces for residents to increase access to nutritional foods. Where feasible, locate these spaces in areas that can be easily accessible to serve as a focal point or community meeting place for one or more neighborhoods.

- 5.4 **Edible school yards.** Partner with schools and other organizations to create “edible school yards” and sustainable gardening programs at public and private schools within Coachella. When feasible, increase access to healthy foods and promote healthy eating by encouraging on-site food swaps, cooking classes and/or selling food at farmers’ markets to provide educational opportunities to learn about farming and selling.
- 5.5 **Zoning for small scale food production.** Remove regulatory barriers to gardening and urban farming, including modifying the zoning code, to conditionally permit these activities on private property in all zones. Allow “interim agricultural uses” as part of a residential land use within residential districts, and within Specific Plans and Planned Development areas.
- 5.6 **Community kitchens.** Support the development of community commercial kitchens that allow residents to pursue micro-enterprise and small business opportunities that increases access to healthy foods.

Goal 6. Healthy Food Access. Safe and convenient access to healthy, affordable and culturally diverse foods with low concentrations of unhealthy food providers.

Policies

- 6.1 **Healthy food retail.** Encourage and provide incentives for healthy and culturally appropriate food retail establishments (including full-service grocery stores, farmers’ markets, fruit and vegetable markets and small markets where a majority of food is healthy) to locate in Coachella. Recognize food retailers and outlets in setting goals for local procurement.
- 6.2 **Food access.** Strive for the majority of residents to be in close proximity to a supermarket or other healthy food retail establishment. Underserved areas and neighborhoods with multi-family properties should be considered for edible landscapes, community gardens, urban farms and the like.
- 6.3 **Elimination of hunger.** Reduce hunger and food insecurity through government programs, community education and emergency food resources. Specifically, work with the county to increase enrollment in WIC and CalFresh by educating residents about eligibility requirements and keeping applications at City offices.
- 6.4 **Nutrition education.** Support the creation of public education programs about healthy and unhealthy food options.
- 6.5 **Healthy food at public events and facilities.** Serve healthy food and beverage options to community members and City staff in public facilities (including vending machines) and at City-sponsored events.
- 6.6 **Non-alcoholic beverages.** Require new liquor licensees to offer a variety of non-alcoholic beverages to their customers during all business hours.
- 6.7 **Liquor stores.** Prohibit off-site alcohol sales within 600 feet of religious institutions, hospitals, schools, parks, playgrounds and preschools to reduce youth exposure to alcohol and potential externalities of liquor store establishments. Consider prohibiting new liquor licenses in areas of the City where numerous alcohol retail establishments already exist.

- 6.8 **Fast food.** Research, draft and adopt an ordinance that restricts unhealthy fast food establishments from locating near parks and public schools.
- 6.9 **School food.** Work with the school district to improve the nutritional quality of food and beverages served on campus through the school breakfast and lunch program and competitive food and beverages.

Goal 7. Jobs, Prosperity and Economic Development. Improved economic prosperity and vibrancy of households and businesses.

Policies

- 7.1 **Workforce housing.** Encourage qualified employees to live in Coachella through home buyer assistance and other programs.
- 7.2 **Targeted employment training.** Work with local schools, colleges, trade schools and non-profit scholarship organizations to ensure a trained and qualified workforce is available to meet the needs of projected growing industries that provide living wages.
- 7.3 **Lifelong learning and professional development.** Work with the school district and the Riverside County Regional Occupational Center/Program to support mentorship professional development and continuing education programs so working adults can expand their skills and embrace lifelong learning.
- 7.4 **Socially responsible businesses.** Develop programs to attract and retain socially responsible employers that can pay a living wage, provide health insurance benefits and meet existing levels of workforce education.
- 7.5 **Formula retail.** Consider requiring a conditional use permit for formula retail establishments (large national/multinational chains). The City Council can assess whether the new establishment will have any serious negative impacts on the local economy or public realm and propose potential conditions of approval.
- 7.6 **Green technology.** Adopt a green technology incubator for the Eastern Coachella Valley and recruit green technology entrepreneurs to locate in Coachella.
- 7.7 **Healthy workplace.** Encourage local employers to adopt employee programs and practices such as health challenges (e.g., weight loss contests, stop smoking, lunchtime/worktime sponsored events, bike to work days), healthy food choices and healthy work environments. The City can provide incentives (such as priority permit processing) to “healthy employers” that provide employee health benefits such as paid sick days, health insurance, gym membership, among others.

Goal 8. Educational and Community Facilities. Community facilities and school Facilities that support physical activity, civic life and social connections for residents of all ages and interests.

Policies

- 8.1 Joint use with schools.** Create joint-use agreements with Coachella Valley Unified School District to maximize community use of school facilities and expand school use of City park facilities, where appropriate and community space to expand opportunities for physical activity.
- 8.2 School facilities planning.** Continued use of CVAG cooperative agreement for school-related projects and consult with the School District in the early planning stages of any new park or school to encourage walkable school design and accessible location. The City would prefer to have schools in existing and new neighborhoods that are multi-story with a smaller campus size verses large school campuses that are not accessible for most students.
- 8.3 Neighborhood schools.** Prioritize new school locations that maximize the number of students who can walk or bike to school over locations that are further away. Consider reducing parking minimums if the school is accessible.
- 8.4 Existing school and park facilities.** Meet with school districts to explore and establish potential joint-use arrangements.
- 8.5 Co-locate parks and schools.** Work to acquire park sites adjacent to existing and proposed schools, where possible, and develop these sites as joint use facilities, develop joint use agreements to ensure public accessibility while ensuring safety and security. Provide for sustainable resources to maintain parks.
- 8.6 Public school capacity.** Coordinate with Coachella Valley Unified School District to provide an adequate number of elementary, middle and high schools for Coachella's growing population.
- 8.7 Education impact fees.** Coordinate with the school districts in the assessment of the impact of new development on existing public educational facilities.
- 8.8 Provision of school sites.** Require the dedication of real property, based on the master plan of the applicable school district, for the provision of necessary public educational facilities within a half-mile of each neighborhood.
- 8.9 Health services.** Encourage and plan for health clinics to open at or near schools.
- 8.10 School wellness.** Work with school districts and existing community groups to collaborate and support school-based nutrition and physical fitness programs and wellness policies.
- 8.11 Healthy school siting.** Work with the school district to promote standards that protect students and staff from environmental hazards.
- 8.12 Healthy school siting.** Work with the school district to promote standards to protect students and staff from environmental hazards. Modify zoning to prevent schools and other sensitive receptors from being located near known or expected new stationary sources of air pollution. The specific "safe" distance from a pollution source is

dependent on the source and amount of pollution releases; however, a good rule of thumb is at least 500 feet.

- 8.13 Safe routes to school programs.** Ensure the provision of safe pedestrian and bicycle access for students of new and existing school sites throughout the City. Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School Program and establish a comprehensive strategy to enable community leaders, schools and parents to improve safety and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school safely.
- 8.14 Child-care distribution.** Encourage child-care facilities be distributed throughout the community in such a way that they are readily available to the majority of residents.
- 8.15 Development of child-care.** Encourage the development of a range of affordable and high quality child care meet the needs of Coachella residents, including family day care homes and public and private day care centers, among others.
- 8.16 Child-care database.** Promote/list existing child care databases on the City website and City offices.
- 8.17 Child-care impact fee or inclusionary ordinance.** Consider establishing an impact fee or inclusionary ordinance to fund the expansion of existing or creation of new child care and pre-k educational facilities.
- 8.18 Child-care in employment centers.** Allow and encourage employers to create on-site child-care facilities for their employees or the public.
- 8.19 Child-care subsidies legislation support.** Actively support legislation that increases state and federal child care subsidies for low- and moderate-income families, tax credits for child-care payments, facility development and early education programs.
- 8.20 Child care wellness policies.** Assist with the development, implementation and monitoring/review of local wellness policies in citywide child care facilities, day care centers (infant centers, preschool, etc.), and family day care facilities.
- 8.21 Library.** As the City grows, encourage the Riverside County Library System to add another public library and/or enter into a joint-use agreement with the school district to provide public access to school libraries.
- 8.22 Library service standard.** Coordinate with the Riverside County Library System to provide local library services at a minimum standard of 0.5 square feet and 1.2 volumes per 1,000 residents.
- 8.23 Community gathering space.** Build one or more affordable, accessible and flexible central gathering/meeting/event space that individuals and community groups can rent for a variety of social, cultural, educational and civic purposes.
- 8.24 Distributed community centers.** Provide every neighborhood with easy access to recreation and service programs by decentralizing community centers and programs.
- 8.25 Public Plazas.** Create public plazas with shaded urban open space, seating, art and play features near shopping and business districts.
- 8.26 Teen center.** Encourage and support existing and new youth programs to create a one-stop teen center that contains social, academic, health and cultural programs.

- 8.27 **Cooperative approaches to youth programs.** Ensure that youth activities and programs are provided in, or accessible from all neighborhoods, either in City facilities or through joint-use or cooperative agreements with other service providers.
- 8.28 **Recreational and community programs.** Prioritize the continued provision of high-quality recreational and community programs since these highly subscribed programs increase social connection, physical activity and quality of life.
- 8.29 **Range of recreational opportunities.** Provide a full range of park and recreational opportunities and active and passive public space for residents.

Goal 9. Healthcare and Social Services. Affordable, accessible and high-quality health care and social services for all residents.

Policies

- 9.1 **Employer-based health care.** Encourage Coachella employers to provide reasonably affordable health insurance to all employees.
- 9.2 **Urgent and primary health care providers.** Encourage the provision of a range of health services (including but not limited to primary, preventive, specialty, prenatal, dental care, mental health and substance abuse treatment/counseling) in a manner accessible to Coachella residents through partnerships with community groups and the Riverside County Public Health Department.
- 9.3 **Affordable health centers.** Allow the creation of incentives to encourage the development of federally qualified health centers or private practices that are committed to serving Medi-Cal and Medicare enrollees that ensure providers serve all residents.
- 9.4 **Accessible health and social services facilities.** Ensure health and social services facilities are accessible to residents and well served by transit.
- 9.5 **Homegrown medical professionals.** Aspire to cultivate “homegrown” medical professionals from by supporting programs that create education pipelines in health careers and providing lease assistance, tenant improvements and capital contributions to new practices.
- 9.6 **Continuum of care.** Work in partnership with county agencies to implement continuum of care strategies.
- 9.7 **Health care information.** Provide information to the community on the availability of health care options and resources in and around Coachella.
- 9.8 **Cultural awareness.** Encourage new and existing health centers to be both high-touch and high-tech.
- 9.9 **Rural health care.** Acknowledge and address the unique health care needs of a suburban-rural community like Coachella, and consider the health care needs of unincorporated rural communities when planning for new programs and facilities. Be open to alternative models of health care systems (such as mobile clinics) that address the specific needs of rural residents in health professional shortage areas.

- 9.10 **Hospital.** Develop a partnership with nearby cities to investigate the plausibility of recruiting a regional medical center/hospital to locate in Coachella to provide expanded medical services.
- 9.11 **Culturally appropriate medical care.** Support cultural sensitivity training of community medical and social service professionals and City staff and encourage bilingual Coachella residents to train and work as medical translators.