

Place Matters

Economic Development Talking Points

- In Alameda County, the health of some groups is improving much faster than other despite improved medical technology and increased access to services. For example, the average life expectancy of a Oakland flats residents is 10 years less than a resident in the Oakland hills.
- Research shows access to care accounts for, at most, 15% of the life expectancy gap. The other 85% of the difference is heavily impacted by hidden health factors such as access to quality jobs, education, food, and places to play, affordable transportation and housing, and clean air. In other words, Alameda County residents' social and environmental context, their access to healthy opportunities, plays a large role in determining health outcomes.
- As a result, the Alameda County is increasingly working to improve the social and environmental contexts in which our clients live. One such project is Place Matters.
- Our Place Matters Initiative is part of a national initiative of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Health Policy Institute and is funded by the W.K. Kellogg foundation. There are 15 other teams spread across the County.
- The goal of our Place Matters project is to create and advocate for a policy agenda that addresses economic development, transportation, housing, education, incarceration (criminal justice reform), and land use and transportation.
- To this end, we launched 5 staff workgroups – one workgroup/issue area – that are comprised of over 100 staff members. The workgroups are gathering information about these issues, the links to health, and the policy opportunities that exist in Oakland – our policy agenda is initially focused on Oakland as this is Alameda County's city with the worst gaps in health outcomes.
- We are contacting you because of your economic development background. As you are probably aware, safe jobs that pay a living wage and provide benefits are an essential ingredient for good health. We would like to support efforts to attract healthy jobs to Oakland.
- We will use the information we collect from you and other “experts” in the field to help us chose which policies to include in our agenda. Once we have a draft of our policy agenda complete, we will be holding community meetings where we will ask residents, partners, and other stakeholders to join us in a process of prioritizing and finalizing policies for our agenda.
- We plan to work very closely with all stakeholders as we move through this process and thank you in advance for working with us.