

# Built Environment and Health in Low-Income Communities

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**A Healthy Pima County**  
Every **one**. Every **where**. Every **day**.

# What is the “built environment?”

- Where we live, work, and play
  - At any point in our day, built environment plays a role on how we behave
- “Determinant of Health”
- Influences choices made each day



# Impact of Built Environment on Health

- Walkability of neighborhood, linked to a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, negligible street lighting, and minimal green spaces to exercise
- Sedentary lifestyles associated with chronic disease
  - CVD, stroke, diabetes, etc.



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# Why low-income communities?

- Low income linked to higher disease burden:
- Diabetes increases as income decreases.
  - \$25,000 11.2%.
  - \$10-15,000 11.9%,
  - <\$10,000 20.7%<sup>2</sup>.

- Income plays a significant role in obesity:
  - 33% of adults earning < \$15,000
  - 25.4% of those who earned at least \$50,000 per year were obese
  - Over 25% of Pima County residents were identified as being obese
    - 15% of residents failed to complete 60 minutes of physical activity on any day of the week
  - More consistent associations between weight-status and built environment in low-income communities<sup>3</sup>

# An uphill battle

- Low income communities have<sup>4</sup>:
  - Less open space
  - Greater density of fast-food restaurants
  - Lower density of healthy food options

## Locally:

- S. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue has few sidewalks, little shade, few physical activity opportunities



# Who has a role?

Built environment & health brings together diverse teams

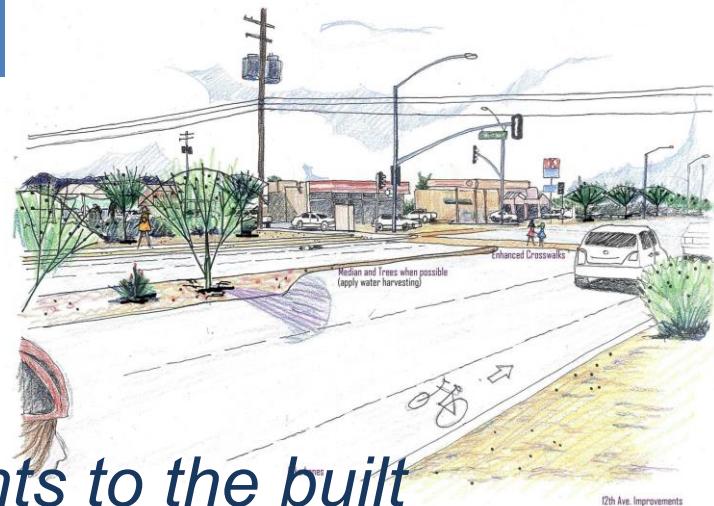
- Planners
- Health Officials
- Civic leaders
- Neighborhood coalitions
- Police
- Transportation engineers
- Designers

Each plays a unique role in influencing the built environment, and all are necessary to affect change.

# What can be done?

Institutes of Medicine: “*improvements to the built environment that can increase physical activity should be a priority*”

- Complete Streets Design-Sidewalks, shade trees, bike lanes, lighting reconfiguration
- Increasing availability of space for physical activity
- Mini-parks, increasing trees, upgrading landscaping
- Providing walking/multi-use paths



# Ajo Community

- Per capita income: \$19,472
- 47% of population is Hispanic
- 33% of houses are vacant
  
- Health Department conducting a health impact assessment on proposal to clean up derelict and abandoned properties

# AJO PROJECT

## Pima County Partners

- Health Department
- Wastewater
- Sheriff
- Development Services

# 24 properties under review-potential danger to health and safety

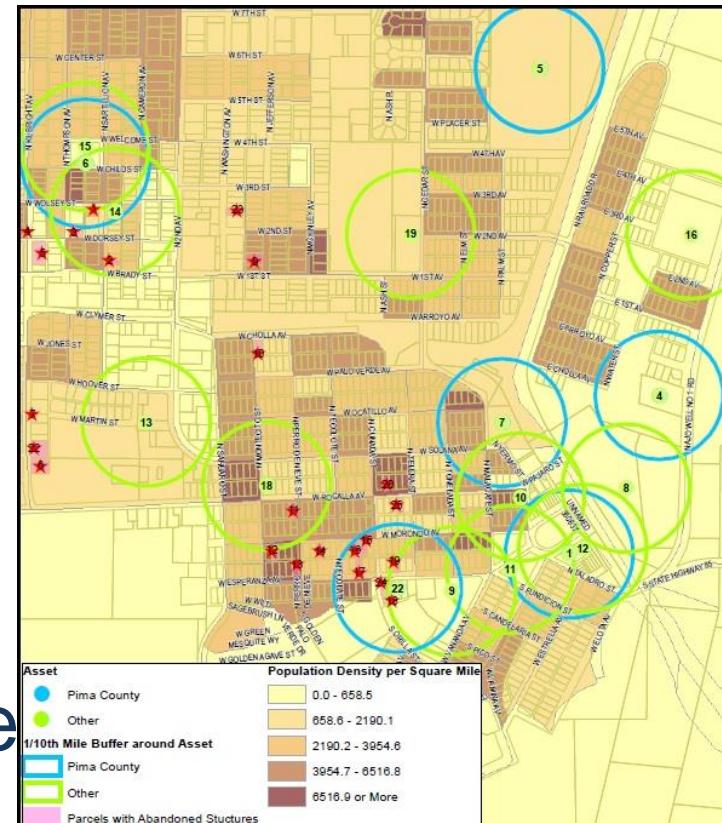
- Need arrive at consensus to identify highest priority for action
- Generally cost of mitigation exceeds the value of the properties

# Some of the properties



# Steps so far

- PCHD worked with PC Development Services to map locations of:
  - Abandoned/derelict properties
  - Community assets
  - Population density
- Worked with PCSO to map crime related to each property
- Additionally, PCHD staff visited sites to determine real-time situation in Ajo



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# Next steps

- Compile the feedback from all departments involved
- Review health data to determine affect on population
- Review proposed County plan
- Develop recommendations based on the available data
- Distribute report