Mapping and Health Equity Advocacy

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About us

PolicyLink
National research and action institute that advances policies to achieve economic and social equity

Center for Health & Place
Works to create neighborhood conditions that encourage health
Overview

• Community GIS and health equity
• Mapping and policy advocacy process
• Case studies
  – General advocacy
  – Health equity advocacy
• Reflections
Evolution of Community GIS

- Beyond access: using technology to bridge historic divides
- GIS as a tool for neighborhood revitalization, community building and policy change
- Leading with community, not technology
- Important role of intermediaries in bridging data/mapping and communities
Healthy Communities Framework

Why Focus on Environmental Factors?

- Environmental conditions significantly impact ones’ ability to be healthy and make healthy decisions
- Evidence of disparities in environments and outcomes
- Economically and racially segregated communities concentrate resources and concentrate lack of resources
Why Place Matters…

Communities of Opportunity
- Safe, Abundant Parks
- Access to Healthy, Affordable Foods
- Financial Institutions
- Well Performing Schools
- Convenient & Affordable Transportation Options

Underserved Communities
- Unsafe, Limited Parks
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Liquor Stores
- Poor Performing Schools
- Exposure to Pollution & Toxic Waste Sites
- Limited Transportation Options

Good Health Status

Poor Health Status
Contributes to health disparities:
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Infant mortality

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Policy Advocacy Process

- Policy Development
- Build Public Will
- Finding Information/Research
- Engage Policy Makers
- Mobilization and Communications
- Organizing and Coalition Building

Policy Change
Climate Ready For Change
Mapping and Policy Advocacy: Strategic Entry Points

1) Analyzing and identifying policy issues

2) Engaging the community

3) Modeling and developing policy solutions

4) Communicating the message: building public and political will
Case Studies: General Policy Advocacy
25 organizations formed the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice in 2001 to advocate for community benefits around the Staples Center Sports Complex development in LA.

Used mapping and data analysis to:
- Illustrate real estate ownership patterns and development “hot spots”
- Communicate the issues to residents
- Mobilize grassroots support for their CBA efforts
Figueroa Corridor Coalition Map
Figueroa Coalition Outcomes

• **The Coalition won an historic Community Benefits Agreement including:**
  – 70% of new jobs will be unionized and/or living wage
  – 50% of new jobs will be hired locally
  – 20% of housing units affordable to low income people
  – $1 million for parks and recreation facilities within a 1 mile radius
  – The city’s first poor people's Preferential Parking District

• **New map also depicts community victories**
DC Inclusionary Zoning Campaign

• DC Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning: Coalition of 65+ groups formed in 2003 to press for the adoption of an inclusionary zoning policy for the District

• Used mapping and data analysis to:
  – Illustrate current and planned housing development
  – Model how an inclusionary housing policy could lead to the construction of additional affordable units throughout the city
  – Communicate the policy problem and IZ solution to residents and policy makers
DC IZ Campaign Maps

Neighborhood Poverty and Housing Production in Washington DC, 2000-2003
An IZ policy that required developers of 10 or more units to make 15 percent of them affordable to low- and moderate-income families would have created 2,336 new affordable units between 2000 and 2003.

DC IZ Campaign Maps

Modeling the Effects of an Inclusionary Housing Policy
The campaign was successful!

In August 2006, the DC Zoning Commission passed a mandatory IZ policy.

The policy will help create affordable homes for families at 50-80% of the area median income.
Case Studies: Health Equity Advocacy
Food Deserts in Chicago

- **Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting** in partnership with LISC and LaSalle Bank Corporation

- **Used mapping and data analysis to:**
  - Describe food retail environment and access to grocery stores in relation to neighborhood demographics
  - Create “food balance measure”: ratio of distance to nearest grocery store divided by nearest fast food restaurant
  - Analyze food retail environments and health outcomes
Chicago Food Deserts Maps

Three Key Food Deserts In Chicago

Comprised of a half million people
Chicago Food Deserts Maps

Chicago’s Most Out-of-Balance Tracts When It Comes to Food Access

The map shows the most out-of-balance tracts that have no or few grocers but nearby fast food restaurants shaded by that tract’s majority race.
Chicago Food Deserts Maps

Distance to Grocers by Tract in Chicago

The map shows distance to all types of grocery stores at the tract level. Red colored tracts are the farthest distance from grocers; we see that they form three key food deserts on Chicago’s West and South sides.

Fig. 6
Chicago Food Deserts Maps

Average Body Mass Index by Tertiles by Chicago Zip Code

Worst Food Balance Scores

The map shows the starkness of obesity patterns by Chicago Zip Code. Red-colored Zip Codes have the highest obesity.

Fig. 9

Mari Gallagher
Research & Consulting Group
Authorship & copyright
Food Desert and USDA Food Stamp Liquor Stores

- Community boundaries
- Food Desert
  - USDA Food Stamp Retailers recoded as liquor stores that are in the **worst Food Balance** tracts
  - All other USDA Food Stamp liquor stores

Chicago Food Deserts Maps

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Chicago Food Deserts Maps

- Sept 08 Food Desert boundaries
- Prioritized City Sites for “Super Incentives”
- # = Community Area numbers
Detroit Food Deserts Map

Detroit out-of-balance areas by tract (scores of 2 or more)
Food Deserts Mapping Outcomes

- Chicago: Retail sites prioritized; Food 4 Less grocery located in Englewood
- Chicago, Detroit, and other cities: Increase in media attention and concern around lack of access to healthy food
- Increased public and community debate: Is food deserts the right term?
- Indirect: Food deserts as a national policy issue. PolicyLink and other groups successfully advocated to include a national study of food deserts in the 2008 Farm Bill, will be completed by USDA in Spring 2009
The City Project produced a report and analysis *Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for the Los Angeles Region* in 2006.

- **Used mapping and data analysis to:**
  - Assess the current state of access to natural places in against its vision for healthy communities
  - Analyze disparities in park access in relation to demographics and health disparities
  - Present principles and recommendations for equitable infrastructure access
  - Advocate for healthy communities
Park Equity in Los Angeles Maps

Park Access, Schools and Child Obesity by State Assembly District

Lifting Up What Works®
Los Angeles parkland

The amount of park acreage available to L.A. residents varies widely from one part of the city to another. Nationally, some park planners recommend six to 10 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.

Deborah Schoch, "How can L.A. create better places to play?" Los Angeles Times, June 1, 2007.
Reflections

• Mapping can and should be used at multiple stages of the advocacy process, but different maps should be created for different stages of the process.

• Community-based research and surveys can get at the critical issue of quality, and engage residents in the advocacy process.

• Data access and sharing is crucial to link place and people data, which is needed for health equity advocacy.

• Continued need for data and mapping intermediaries to provide assistance.

• The best maps tell a clear and compelling story to make the case for action.

• Maps combined with good statistics gain media attention.
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