

The OPINE (Asterhill's Blog)

Summer Series: "Health Communities"

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HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: *Healthy Cities Living Healthy*

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A Vision of a Healthy City

"That is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments, and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life, and in developing to their maximum potential."

Healthy living and a healthy city are more than medical care; it is an ecological, educational, economic, environmental and equitable approach to creating a more livable community. It is a choice that is part of the leadership's philosophy and reflected in their relationship with the community. Healthy living is reflected in policy, leadership and community collaboration. Common characteristics include:

- **The clean** safe physical environment of high quality (including housing quality),
- **Stable** ecosystem and **sustainable** long term,
- **Walkable**, city residents have easy access to the amenities a city offers,
- Strong **mutually supportive** and non-exploitative community,
- Strong **citizen participation**,
- **Basic needs met**: food, water, shelter, income, safety, and work,
- **Diverse**, vital and innovative economy,
- **Connectedness with past**,
- Optimum **access to health care** for all, and
- **High health status**.

A healthy city fosters cooperative partnerships within the community and through the political process to create a political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, consensus building, partnership-based planning, and innovative projects. Healthy Cities seek to apply principles such as equity, empowerment, intersectoral collaboration and community participation through local action in urban settings.

The goal is to put health high on the social, economic and political agenda of all leaders; health is the business of all sectors and local authorities; leaders are in a unique position, with power to protect and promote their citizens' health and well-being.

What are your thoughts and comments?