

Public Health and Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

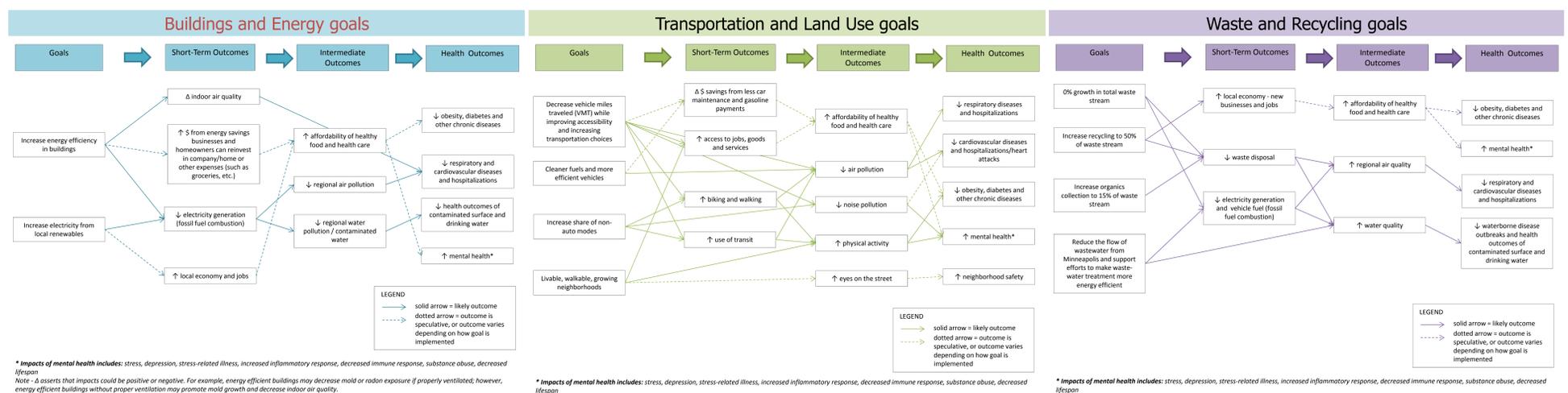
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Justice and climate mitigation

Reducing our impact on the climate benefits everyone, but the design of emissions reduction strategies may disproportionately benefit or burden specific communities or groups. An Environmental Justice working group is meeting throughout the fall to analyze draft Climate Action Plan goals and strategies. This group's recommendations and ideas will help produce a Climate Action Plan that addresses diverse needs across the community while steering Minneapolis towards its emissions reduction targets.

Public health pathways analysis

The Minnesota Department of Health, with assistance from the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, has provided an analysis of draft Climate Action Plan goals. Public health professionals traced the outcomes of these goals from their short-term impacts to potential longer-term public health outcomes. They found that there are many possible positive impacts from the draft Climate Action Plan program of action. The scope and scale of these impacts will depend on how recommendations are implemented.



Economic impacts of better public health

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a tool called the Co-Benefits Risk Assessment (COBRA) Screening Model. This tool estimates the health and related economic impacts of policies that influence air quality. By inputting estimated improvements in air quality (i.e., reduced pollutants like NOx, SOx, PM 2.5, and VOCs), the COBRA tool quantifies improvements in mortality as well as non-fatal health problems and lost productivity. It then estimates the total estimated savings of the policies in dollars. While the data are general and preliminary, they provide some insight into the impacts of policies like those outlined in the Climate Action Plan.

2017 statewide impacts of Minneapolis Climate Action Plan goals: EPA-COBRA estimates

| | Electricity efficiency goal | Natural gas efficiency goal | Vehicle miles traveled goal |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Adult mortality | 0.4 - 1 | 0 | 0.2 - 0.4 |
| Infant mortality | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-fatal heart attacks | 0.04 - 0.4 | 0 | 0.02 - 0.2 |
| Asthma E.R. visits | 0.17 | 0 | 0.08 |
| Work loss days | 63 | .01 | 31 |
| Asthma exacerbations | 14 | .002 | 6.3 |
| Total savings | \$3.5 - \$8.9 million | \$509 - \$1,299 | \$1.0 - \$3.7 million |