

## 6 COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This chapter addresses community health and wellness in Laguna Niguel. Community health and wellness are related to several environmental categories and topics.

There are numerous references to other sections in this report. For example, conditions regarding parks and recreational facilities are discussed in Chapter 3, Utilities and Community Services. Hazards and hazardous materials and applicable regulations are addressed in Chapter 4, Hazards, Safety, and Noise. Air quality and air quality regulations, as well as water quality and water quality regulations, are addressed in Chapter 5, Conservation.

### **This chapter includes the following sections:**

- 6.1 Health and the Built Environment
- 6.2 Health Indicators
- 6.3 Opportunities for Physical Activity
- 6.4 Healthy Food Access
- 6.5 Access to Healthcare and Health Facilities
- 6.6 Local Programs Related to Health and Wellness



## 6.1 HEALTH AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the relationship between health and the built environment and outlines how city planning policies can directly impact resident health.

### 6.1.1. Historical Background

The field of city planning, and the role of city planners grew out of concerns for public health and welfare during the periods of rapid industrialization and urban growth in American cities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These concerns were related to pollution and unsanitary conditions in cities where industrial operations such as tanneries and slaughterhouses abutted homes and schools, and tall skyscrapers blocked light and air from streets. Poor living conditions for city residents often resulted in infectious disease outbreaks and public health emergencies. Early planners required sanitary sewers to prevent cholera epidemics and zoned city blocks to buffer residential neighborhoods from polluting industries, often resulting in a strict separation of uses that is still common today.

These land use restrictions, infrastructure requirements, and development regulations went far beyond the 19<sup>th</sup> century common law theory of nuisance that addressed public health and safety by prohibiting “unreasonable” uses of land to prevent similar outbreaks of infectious diseases.

By 1926, the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.* established the right of local governments to control land use through zoning laws and introduced the concept of “Euclidean” zoning that segregated land uses to minimize conflicts. While these laws and trends prevented factories from locating close to neighborhoods and offered centralized wastewater and waste disposal services which decreased instances of disease and epidemics, they also resulted in a shift in the built environment.

Strong zoning regulations that separated industrial and residential uses gave rise to the rapid expansion of suburbs and the “suburban lifestyle” during the 1950s. Increased U.S. investments in the national highway system and the increased accessibility of the automobile to average American families resulted in people living farther and farther away from their place of work, schools, shopping centers, and recreational centers. Improvements in the transportation system, including the construction of freeways, further weakened the connection between work, home, retail, and other daily services, isolating them from one another and making them accessible only by car.

While these laws and trends prevented factories from locating close to neighborhoods and offered a means to escape from the polluted city center, they also provided local governments the power to exclude and segregate communities and supported the growth of suburbs. People were protected from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and cholera, but they now faced new epidemics such as obesity, asthma, heart disease, and diabetes, all related to the design of the built environment.

Despite the historical connection between public health and planning, addressing public health through city planning became less common as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed. One reason is that early planning practices successfully resolved many of the public health issues plaguing urban areas during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as overcrowding and the proximity of housing to heavy industry. Public health professionals began to focus on disease treatment, education, and discouraging unhealthy behaviors, while planning professionals shifted their attention to such issues as economic development and transportation. Planners particularly focused on how to accommodate rapid population growth and the desire for unlimited personal mobility through driving. Zoning increasingly became a means to protect property values and bolster the tax base, and infrastructure projects more often served to provide for efficient movement of vehicles.

In recent decades, however, there has been a rediscovery and professional shift in city planning that recognizes the role our built and natural environments play in public health and well-being. The environmental movement in the 1970s gave rise to the environmental review process, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Other urban planning concepts such as New Urbanism and smart growth have suggested a reassessment of urban development policies of the previous decades in favor of a return to the traditional neighborhoods and urban form that valued a mix of uses, pedestrian and transit amenities, and compact development.

### 6.1.2 Current Trends

The places where people live, work, and play profoundly shape the health of a community. Transportation options, accessible parks, crosswalks, the availability of grocery stores, and the prevalence of fast-food restaurants, and real or perceived levels of crime and safety are a few examples of physical indicators that provide a framework for a community, sculpt the daily routines of residents, impact lifestyle choices, and ultimately affect public health and longevity. Collaborative work between city planners and public health professionals can help strategically develop spaces and systems for safe and healthy human activity.

A growing body of evidence supports the idea that the built environment (urban form, design, and street configurations) has a strong impact on the public's health. Between 1995 and 2010, the number of Americans who are overweight or obese (as measured by body mass index, or BMI) increased from 15.9 percent to 27.6 percent (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Additionally, between 2004 and 2010, the percentage of Americans diagnosed with diabetes increased from 7 percent to 8.7 percent.

Based on current obesity trends, for the first time in American history, children are not predicted to live as long as their parents (Besser & Dannenberg, 2005). Increasing rates of these chronic conditions in the U.S. have paralleled higher levels of physical inactivity, auto-dependence, and consumption of foods high in calories and low in nutrients. There is a movement to better understand our decisions about the way we structure our community. Walkable urban form, more compact development, a mix of land uses, transportation choices, and access to recreation spaces all increase physical activity, which can improve health outcomes (Frank, Kavage, & Litman, 2006).

Although California is meeting the Healthy People 2030 targets, a significant percentage (30.3%) of California adults are obese as of 2021 and the obesity rate for children and adolescents aged 10–17 years was 30.4% (United Health Foundation, 2022).

Land use and planning decisions play a role in determining community members' behavioral and lifestyle choices that ultimately impact their physical health and mental well-being. The quality, safety, location, and convenience of the pedestrian or bicycle environment, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, signals, and crosswalks, may impact a resident's decision to use them, which in turn influences physical activity levels. Similarly, neighborhood parks and open space provide an avenue for increased physical activity. Infrastructure and zoning to support local food processing and distribution enables local food to be used in the community where it was grown. Access to full-service grocery stores and farmers' markets is also correlated with increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. The physical presence and distribution of health care providers and facilities influence how easily people can access health care.

Furthermore, urban design and maintenance can contribute to or decrease levels of crime and perceptions of pedestrian comfort and safety. Poor mental health is associated, in part, with several factors related to planning, including long commute times, exposure to crime, lack of transportation choice, driving related stress, lack of access to public spaces, and lack of opportunities for recreation and physical activity. Emissions from transportation sources are strongly linked with respiratory diseases, and various toxic air contaminants are known or suspected to cause asthma and cancer. Driving carries with it the risk of accidents that are fatal and or cause injuries for drivers, cyclists, or pedestrians. Automobile accidents alone kill roughly 30,000 Americans each year. Additionally, in 2014, 4,884 pedestrians were killed in auto related accidents (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2014).

## 6.2 HEALTH INDICATORS

### 6.2.1. Life Expectancy and Death Data

Average life expectancy at birth is one of the most fundamental measures of the overall health of a community. According to the Life Expectancy in Orange County Report (Orange County Health Care Agency, 2015), life expectancy in Orange County has increased by 5.1 years over the past 25 years. With a life expectancy of 82 years, Orange County residents live over three years longer than the State and national averages. Moreover, the County would rank near the top 10 of all the world's nations in terms of longevity. The Life Expectancy in Orange County Report includes data on average life expectancy at birth by city and shows that Laguna Niguel has the same life expectancy as the County.

The California Department of Public Health provides detailed statistics on deaths throughout California. Between 2018-2020, Orange County had an age adjusted death rate of 561.2 per 100,000 people, which is lower than the State at 625.4 per 100,000 people. (California Department of Public Health, 2022). As shown in Table 6-1, in 2021, the top two leading causes of death for both Orange County and the State were diseases of heart, which includes coronary artery disease and malignant neoplasms (cancerous tumors).

Table 6-1: Leading Causes of Death (2021)

Cause	Orange County <sup>1</sup>		California <sup>2</sup>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Diseases of heart</b>	5348	17%	65684	17%
<b>Malignant neoplasms</b>	4903	15%	59853	15%
<b>Accidents (unintentional injuries)</b>	1523	5%	21534	5%
<b>Cerebrovascular diseases</b>	1493	5%	18370	5%
<b>Alzheimer's disease</b>	1480	5%	16950	4%
<b>Chronic lower respiratory diseases</b>	775	2%	11576	3%
<b>Diabetes mellitus</b>	712	2%	11489	3%
<b>Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis</b>	494	2%	7131	2%
<b>Influenza and pneumonia</b>	452	<2%	4668	<2%
<b>Essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease</b>	437	<2%	6513	<2%
<b>Parkinson's disease</b>	416	<2%	4053	<2%
<b>Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis</b>	400	<2%	4696	<2%
<b>Intentional self-harm (suicide)</b>	338	<2%	4174	<2%
<b>Assault (homicide)</b>	83	<2%	2558	<2%

SOURCE:

1. CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, 2014-2021 FINAL DEATHS BY YEAR BY COUNTY

[HTTPS://DATA.CHHS.CA.GOV/DATASET/DEATH-PROFILES-BY-COUNTY](https://data.chhs.ca.gov/dataset/death-profiles-by-county)

2. CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, 2014-2021 FINAL DEATHS BY YEAR STATEWIDE

[HTTPS://DATA.CHHS.CA.GOV/DATASET/STATEWIDE-DEATH-PROFILES](https://data.chhs.ca.gov/dataset/statewide-death-profiles)

## 6.2.2 Obesity and Overweight Trends

Evidence demonstrates that risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's, and diabetes can be decreased by avoiding obesity or being overweight through lifestyle and behavior changes such as increased physical activity and reduced consumption of foods high in calories, sugar, and fat (Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002; Morland, Roux, & Wing, 2006).

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) is the nation's largest State health survey. A random-dial telephone survey conducted every two years on a wide range of health topics, CHIS data gives a detailed picture of the health and health care needs of California's large and diverse population. Data regarding obesity for adults, children, and teens is available from CHIS for the City of Laguna Niguel, Orange County, and the entire State. Adult obesity trends are shown in Table 6-2 and child and teen overweight trends are shown in Table 6-3. Obesity and overweight trends for adults, teens, and children are lower in Laguna Niguel than County and State trends.

Table 6-2: Obesity Trends – Adults (18+)

Year/ Region	Obese (BMI 30.0 or higher)
<b>2020/ Laguna Niguel</b>	19.6%
<b>2018/ Laguna Niguel</b>	17.5%
<b>2016/ Laguna Niguel</b>	19.8%
<b>2020/ Orange County</b>	22.5%
<b>2018/ Orange County</b>	20.4%
<b>2016/ Orange County</b>	23.9%
<b>2020/ California</b>	28.2%
<b>2018/ California</b>	26.8%
<b>2016/ California</b>	28.0%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. ASK CHIS NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://askchisne.ucla.edu/_layouts/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

Table 6-3: Overweight Trends – Children (2-11) &amp; Teens (12-17)

Year/Region	Overweight Children (Age 2-11) Weight $\geq$ 95th percentile)	Overweight Teens (Age 12-17) BMI $\geq$ 85th percentile)
<b>2020/ Laguna Niguel</b>	9.1%	19.3%
<b>2018/ Laguna Niguel</b>	8.0%	31.0%
<b>2016/ Laguna Niguel</b>	6.3%	27.9%
<b>2020/ Orange County</b>	11.5%	24.3%
<b>2018/ Orange County</b>	12.8%	37.0%
<b>2016/ Orange County</b>	8.9%	34.9%
<b>2020/ California</b>	13.9%	31.2%
<b>2018/ California</b>	14.9%	33.4%
<b>2016/ California</b>	15.1%	38.2%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. ASK CHIS NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://askchisne.ucla.edu/ask/_layouts/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

### 6.2.3 Physical Activity and Fitness

Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases and leading causes of death, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and Alzheimer's. CHIS includes data regarding activity levels for adults, children, and teens in the City of Laguna Niguel, Orange County, and the entire State. Table 6-4 shows that the percentage of Laguna Niguel residents who walked at least 150 minutes a week is a bit higher than County rates and about the same as State rates. The rates are overall higher in 2016 than 2014. Likewise, Table 6-5 shows that the percentage of children in Laguna Niguel age 5-17 who engaged in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a week is a bit higher than County rates and about the same as State rates. However, what is different than the data for adults is that the rates are overall lower in 2016 than 2014. This factor could be related to policy changes, demographic shifts, changes to the built environment, or alterations to social norms.

Table 6-4: Adults (18+) who walked for at least 150 minutes a week

Year	Laguna Niguel	Orange County	California
<b>2016</b>	38.9%	36.9%	38.9%
<b>2014</b>	32.3%	31.3%	33.0%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. ASK CHIS NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

Table 6-5: Children & Teens (5-17) who engaged in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a week

Year	Laguna Niguel	Orange County	California
<b>2016</b>	16.8%	14.6%	16.5%
<b>2014</b>	20.4%	16.9%	20.7%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. ASK CHIS NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

### 6.2.4 Asthma and Heart Disease

Local air quality conditions can be a strong indicator of asthma rates within a community. Table 6-7 includes data from CHIS for asthma rates for Laguna Niguel. Detailed data on local air quality conditions is contained in Chapter 5 (Conservation) of this report. As shown in Table 6-7, 13.6% of Laguna Niguel children and 15.3% percent of Laguna Niguel adults have been diagnosed with asthma at some point in their lives as of the year 2020. The percentage of children diagnosed with asthma in Laguna Niguel is lower than the County but higher than the State for 2020. Conversely, the percentage of adults diagnosed with asthma in Laguna Niguel is higher than the County but lower than the State for 2020. This is an increase in asthmas rates for both children and adults from the year 2018.

Table 6-7: Asthma Rates

Region	Ever Diagnosed with Asthma (Age 1-17)	Ever Diagnosed with Asthma (Age 18+)
<b>2020 Laguna Niguel</b>	13.6%	15.3%
<b>2018 Laguna Niguel</b>	12.7%	13.8%
<b>2020 Orange County</b>	14.6%	13.7%
<b>2018 Orange County</b>	13.6%	12.7%
<b>2020 California</b>	12.3%	16.1%
<b>2018 California</b>	14.5%	15.9%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. ASK CHIS NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

### 6.2.5 Alcohol Use

The American Medical Association (AMA) reports that approximately 11 million American youth under the age of 21 drink alcohol. Nearly half of them drink to excess, consuming five or more drinks in a row, one or more times in a two-week period. Alcohol is the most frequently used controlled substance by high school seniors, and its use is increasing. Boys usually try alcohol for the first time at just 11 years old, while the average age for American girls' first drink is 13. The AMA reports the following facts for teen-related drinking (American Medical Association, 2011):

- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes, the leading cause of death among teenagers.
- Alcohol use contributes to youth suicides, homicides, and fatal injuries – the leading cause of death among youth after auto crashes.
- Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.
- Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Research indicates that the density of alcohol outlets may be correlated to the level of crime, domestic violence, and sexual assault in a community. An “alcohol outlet” is defined as a location where alcohol can be purchased and can be moved into an on-premise setting such as a bar or restaurant, or off-premise settings (e.g., packaged liquor stores, grocery stores, convenience stores). Areas with a higher density of alcohol outlets also tend to have higher rates of vehicular accidents and fatalities, underage drinking, and adult alcohol and drug use (Kearns, Reidy, & Valle, 2015). In Laguna Niguel, there is currently a total of 109 active on-and off-sale retail licenses for alcohol sales, which includes 31 active off-sale and 78 active on-sale retail licenses (California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 2023). Table 6-8 summarizes retail liquor licenses per capita in Laguna Niguel, and neighboring cities. The Laguna Niguel active retail license per capita density is less than most neighboring cities. U.S. Census population data was utilized for the year 2021 to calculate retail license per capita.

Table 6-8: Retail Liquor Licenses per Capita (2021-2022 Fiscal Year)

City	Active Off- and On-Sale Retail Licenses	2021 Population	License per Capita
<b>Laguna Niguel</b>	109	64,239	1/589
<b>Aliso Viejo</b>	61	51,824	1/849
<b>Laguna Hills</b>	74	30,965	1/418
<b>San Juan Capistrano</b>	101	34,955	1/346
<b>Dana Point</b>	148	32,821	1/222
<b>Laguna Beach</b>	176	22,795	1/129

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSES, AUGUST 2023.

AVAILABLE AT: [HTTP://WWW.ABC.CA.GOV](http://www.abc.ca.gov)

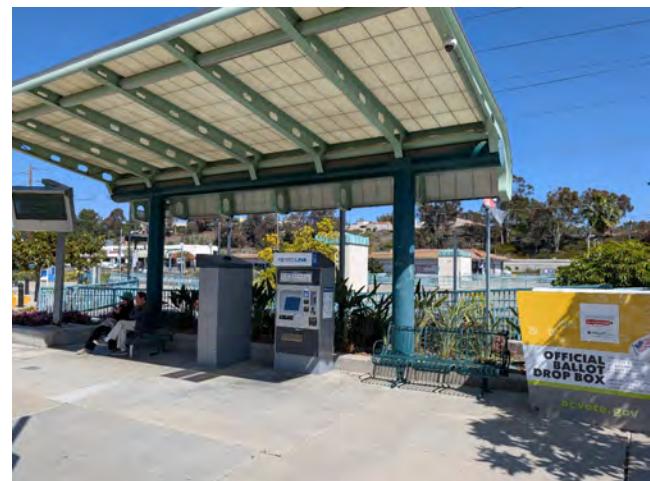
## 6.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

This section focuses on levels of neighborhood walkability and existing commercial services (and other destinations) that enable or encourage physical activity. Other chapters of this Existing Conditions Report address topics that also impact physical activity and health, including Chapter 3 (Utilities and Community Services), and Chapter 5 (Conservation).

### 6.3.1 Active Transportation Use

Active transportation is any form of transportation that is non-motorized. The use of active transportation during a daily commute increases physical activity levels. Increased physical activity has positive health benefits, including mortality risk reduction, disease prevention, cardiorespiratory fitness, and metabolic health. In a comprehensive study of transportation, land use, air quality, and health, researchers found that when many destinations are near the home and there is a direct path to get there, people are more likely to engage in active transportation for at least 30 minutes on any given day (Frank et al., 2005). These results highlight the importance of urban form and of a comfortable, safe, and inviting pedestrian environment. They suggest that a mix of land uses and development densities, a connected and well-maintained pedestrian network, and traffic calming measures can increase physical activity and health.

The American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-year estimates report that most workers living in Laguna Niguel (71.7%) drove alone to work, 6.4% carpooled, 0.2% took public transit, 1.6% walked, 0.2% rode a bicycle, 1.3% took a taxicab, motorcycle, or other means.<sup>1</sup> Based on this data, active transportation use within Laguna Niguel is not very prevalent. Utilizing active transportation is an effective way of engaging in physical exercise and can be a factor in improving community health outcomes in general.



<sup>1</sup> U.S Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table S0801.

### 6.3.2 Walkability and Bikeability

A factor that determines physical activity levels is the distance between the home and other neighborhood amenities, including shopping centers, parks, transit, schools, and places of work. If this distance is perceived as "walkable" (safe, pleasant, and distance-appropriate), residents may be more likely and willing to walk to those amenities. A quarter mile is a commonly cited threshold for how far most people are willing to walk for neighborhood services, while many people are willing to walk up to a half mile for work or access to regional transit. Many factors contribute to a neighborhood's real or perceived walkability. Land uses, pedestrian facilities such as lighting and benches, commercial services, urban design, and residents' perceptions of safety, distance, and relative need for goods and services are some indicators that may promote or impede the decision to walk, rather than drive. Residents of higher-density, mixed-use areas make fewer vehicle trips and drive fewer miles than residents of lower-density, more single-use areas (Crane, 2000).

"Bikeability" is like walkability, but on wheels. For an average cyclist, a distance of up to five miles is considered easy, six to ten miles moderate, and more than ten miles difficult. Riding 10 miles at a moderate pace in normal traffic conditions takes about one hour.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Bicycle2Work: <https://bicycle2work.com/how-far-is-too-far-to-bike-to-work/>, accessed August 9, 2023.

Within Laguna Niguel, different areas of the City have different levels of walkability and bikeability. One way of measuring these is with Walk Score and Bike Score, which are based on access and proximity to various destinations and amenities from a selected location within a community. Walk Score and Bike Score provide numerical rankings of an area's walkability/bikeability on a scale of 0-100. A description of the numerical ranking system is provided below.

- 90-100: Daily errands do not require a car.
- 70-89: Most errands can be accomplished on foot/bicycle.
- 50-69: Some amenities within walking/cycling distance.
- 25-49: A few amenities within walking/cycling distance.
- 0-24: Almost all errands require a car.

Table 6-9 shows the Walk Score and Bike Score for the overall City and various neighborhoods within Laguna Niguel. The overall Walk Score for Laguna Niguel is 33, which means the City is considered car-dependent as most errands require a car. The overall Bike Score for the City is 31, which means the City is somewhat bikeable and has minimal bike infrastructure. The most walkable/bikeable Laguna Niguel neighborhoods are Country Village, Rolling Hills, and Rancho Niguel.

Table 6-9: Walk and Bike Scores

Neighborhoods	Walk Score	Bike Score
<b>City Overall</b>	33	31
<b>Country Village</b>	58	50
<b>Rolling Hills</b>	50	30
<b>Rancho Niguel</b>	44	29
<b>San Marin</b>	39	30
<b>Laguna Heights</b>	37	39

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.WALKSCORE.COM/CA/LAGUNA\\_NIGUEL](https://www.walkscore.com/CA/LAGUNA_NIGUEL). ACCESSED AUGUST 9, 2023.

### 6.3.3 Activity-Related Commercial Services

Another proxy measure for physical activity is the availability of activity-related commercial services, such as health clubs, gyms, and personal training facilities. The location of each facility and its Walkscore are listed in Table 6-10 below.

Laguna Niguel has an ample amount of commercial recreation centers for physical activity. In addition, surrounding cities have additional gyms and workout centers that may be accessible to residents. These resources are important to maintaining good physical health for residents as they provide opportunities for physical activity outside of a traditional city environment.

Still, research suggests that formal spaces for physical activity, such as gyms and health clubs, may not be enough to increase overall individual physical activity levels, even if it is easily accessible (Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002). This demonstrates the importance of providing an environment where residents can easily incorporate physical activity into their everyday routines. This can be accomplished through improvements to the physical environment such as the addition of bicycle lanes, sharrows, and convenient bicycle parking near shops and restaurants, or improving the pedestrian realm with wider sidewalks and count-down signals.



Table 6-10: Activity-Related Commercial Services

Facility	Address	Walk Score	Bike Score
<b>BE Fit Modern Pilates Laguna Niguel</b>	27281 La Paz Road	76	60
<b>24 Hour Fitness</b>	27921 La Paz Road	61	71
<b>24 Hour Fitness</b>	32451 Golden Lantern Street	55	33
<b>Barre3</b>	23882 Aliso Creek Road	56	41
<b>Orangetheory Fitness</b>	24034 Aliso Creek Road	61	66
<b>Life Time Fitness</b>	25600 Rancho Niguel Road	66	28
<b>Perles Personal Training</b>	28121 Crown Valley Parkway Suite H	74	30
<b>Laguna Niguel Family YMCA</b>	29831 Crown Valley Parkway	44	29
<b>The Perfect Workout</b>	30001 Crown Valley Parkway	57	46
<b>Club Pilates</b>	30100 Town Center Drive, Suite B-1	75	61
<b>9Round Kickboxing Fitness</b>	30100 Town Center Drive, Suite S	75	61
<b>OC Planet Fitness</b>	30272 Crown Valley Parkway	67	45
<b>Royce Gracie Academy OC</b>	30232 Crown Valley Parkway, Suite A1 -A2	77	49
<b>F45 Training Laguna Niguel</b>	30251 Golden Lantern Street, Suite H	66	60
<b>StretchLab</b>	30271 Golden Lantern Street, Suite C	67	63
<b>Pure Pilates</b>	30301 Golden Lantern Street, Suite B	69	56
<b>Optimus Brazilian Jiu Jitsu</b>	31151 Niguel Road	41	39
<b>Fitness Elite</b>	31271 Niguel Road, Suite J	48	39
<b>Pilates Plus Laguna Niguel</b>	31161 Niguel Road, # L	41	39

SOURCES: [HTTP://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/](http://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/) AND [WWW.WALKSCORE.COM](http://WWW.WALKSCORE.COM). ACCESSED DECEMBER 2024.

NOTE: THIS LIST OF FACILITIES IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE

## 6.4 HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Residents of neighborhoods with higher concentrations of “unhealthy” food outlets such as fast food and liquor stores rather than full-service grocery stores have more health problems and higher mortality rates than residents of neighborhoods with more full-service grocery stores and other vendors selling fruits and vegetables, even when other factors are held constant (Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, 2006). The presence of a grocery store in a neighborhood is linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption and reduced prevalence of overweight and obesity (Inagami et al., 2006). Fresh, minimally processed, local food is generally the most nutritionally valuable and the least detrimental to the environment. Access to affordable specialty grocery stores and farmers markets increases the likelihood that people will eat healthy, locally sourced food.

The concentration of food outlets is important, but it is more significant to concentrate on the impact of the entire food system. In response to the environmental and health implications of food systems, the popularity of local food is on the rise. The proliferation of the term “food miles” to measure the impact of the food system on the environment reinforces the logic of local production. Locally sourced food attempts to address the negative externalities associated with packaging, preparing, and shipping food, which is higher for fresh food that is grown at long distances; because many foods do not travel a single or logical route, but take many steps along the supply chain from “field to plate”.

### 6.4.1 Retail Food Environment

Laguna Niguel's retail food environment includes many restaurant and non-restaurant options. The City has a range of dining options that vary from chain restaurants to unique dining experiences. Table 6-11 lists examples of non-restaurant food options within the City including grocery stores and specialty food shops, which provide residents with a full range of grocery options and provide a wide variety of healthy and organic grocery options.

Table 6-11: Non-restaurant Food Vendors

Retail Food Type	Examples
<b>Grocery Stores</b>	Pavilions, Costco, Sprouts, Target, Walmart, Whole Foods, Ralphs, Mucho Mucho Market, Albertsons, Grocery Outlet, Smart & Final, Trader Joe's
<b>Small and/or Specialty Markets</b>	Laguna Niguel Farmers' Market
<b>Convenience &amp; Discount Stores</b>	KR Food Mart, AM PM, Walgreens, CVS, Circle K, 7-Eleven

SOURCES: [WWW.GOOGLE.COM](http://WWW.GOOGLE.COM). ACCESSED AUGUST 2023.

NOTE: THIS LIST OF FACILITIES IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE.



### 6.4.2 Eating Habits

A person's overall health and well-being is strongly correlated to food choices. Food choices are influenced by the availability of different types of food in the community. A high number of fast-food establishments per capita is correlated with a higher obesity rate. There are approximately 30 fast-food restaurants in Laguna Niguel. Fast foods tend to be high in saturated fats, high in simple sugars, and low in fiber and nutritional value. Studies suggest that junk food consumption alters brain activity in a manner similar to addictive drugs (Johnson & Kenny, 2010).

Fast food restaurants are also a source of sugar-sweetened beverages and sodas. According to the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, scientific evidence suggests that sugar-sweetened beverages and sodas are contributing to the obesity epidemic. One 20-ounce bottle of soda has almost 17 teaspoons of sugar and contains 250 calories. Drinking a sugar-sweetened soda daily can increase a child's risk for obesity by 60 percent (California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2020).

Table 6-12 below shows the percentage of adults (18+) in Laguna Niguel who drink at least one sugary drink (soda or sweet beverages) a day is less than compared to the county and State.

Table 6-12: Percentage of Adults that Consume 1+ Sugary Drinks a Day

Location	Percentage of Adults (18+)
<b>Laguna Niguel</b>	7.4%
<b>Orange County</b>	11.3%
<b>California</b>	13.7%

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY. CHIS 2020 SUGAR DRINKS SOURCE FILE. LOS ANGELES, CA: UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH. ACCESSED AUGUST 2023. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/\\_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/](https://ASKCHISNE.UCLA.EDU/ASK/_LAYOUTS/NE/DASHBOARD.ASPX#/)

## 6.5 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE AND HEALTH FACILITIES

Access to health care and mental health services is an important determinant of health and disease prevention, and increased access is very likely to improve public health. Preventive measures, such as screening for common health problems like diabetes and respiratory illnesses, and dental care have been shown to reduce the incidence and severity of illnesses and are often less expensive than care once someone has become sick (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

Laguna Niguel has multiple health care providers. This primarily includes private practice medical facilities such as South Coast Family Medical Center and urgent care facilities such as Clineva Urgent Care and Cali Quick Urgent Care. Though there are no major hospitals within Laguna Niguel, there are numerous hospitals within a 5-mile radius of the City. This includes Providence Mission Hospital Mission Viejo, located less than half a mile from Laguna Niguel, and Providence Mission Hospital Laguna Beach, located approximately one quarter mile from Laguna Niguel.

According to Data USA, 96% of the population of Laguna Niguel has health coverage, with 54.5% on employee plans, 9.23% on Medicaid, 13.8% on Medicare, 18% on non-group plans, and 0.39% on military or VA plans.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Data USA: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/laguna-niguel-ca>, accessed August 2023.

## 6.6 LOCAL PROGRAMS RELATED TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The City provides a wide variety of innovative, diverse, and inclusive opportunities to enhance the overall wellness of all residents of Laguna Niguel, with many programs aimed at youth, teens, and senior citizens. These activities not only provide physical health benefits, but also offer social and mental health benefits. Public recreation programs promote community engagement and the opportunity for social interaction, thereby increasing social capital – characterized by the level of neighborhood trust and community participation. The Parks & Recreation Department offers City sponsored recreation programs including aquatics, fitness classes, summer day camps, youth, and adult sports. Programs for youth and teens include classes, workshops, and special events that provide opportunities for youth and teens to create new friendships and experiences. The Department offers a multitude of senior services to foster senior citizen well-being. These senior services include educational classes, recreational classes, games and social activities, health & wellness presentations, exercise & fitness classes, special events, trips/excursions, and senior services



One of the elements of a sustainable and healthy city is adequate urban parks, open space, and street trees, which contribute to a local healthy environment. Laguna Niguel has over 30 parks that provide the community with benefits including improved air quality, shade, and reduced urban heat island effects. Within Chapter 3, Utilities and Community Services, Figure 3-9 shows parks and recreation facilities within Laguna Niguel and Table 5-8 lists the amenities contained within each park.

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