

## “BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITITES: DEFINING PUBLIC HEALTH’S ROLE IN SHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT”

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### **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, the Tennessee Department of Health has made substantial investments in built environment initiatives to improve public health. With a growing body of research demonstrating the connections between our environments and health outcomes, it is imperative that the public health field identify and pursue opportunities to help shape our communities in ways that are health promoting and address health disparities. Many of these factors are outside the direct control of public health, including transportation and mobility, land use planning, housing, parks and greenspace, and economic development. This presentation offers an overview of the Tennessee Department of Health’s work in these areas, led by the Office of Primary Prevention, including the department’s Healthy Development Coordinator positions, Healthy Built Environments grant program, and cross-agency and multi-disciplinary partnerships that are critical to this work’s success.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

**John Vick** is a public health strategist, applied researcher, and educator working at the intersection of public health and the built environment. He brings an interdisciplinary perspective to public health, with a background in applied research, chronic disease epidemiology, urban planning, and community development. John currently serves as Director of the Office of Primary Prevention at the Tennessee Department of Health, where he works to address the social and environmental factors that influence the health of communities, including land use planning, transportation, housing, greenspace, and economic development. John holds a Ph.D. in Community Research and Action from Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College, and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is a Salzburg Global Fellow in Equity and Urban Development, and an Urban Land Institute Health Leaders Fellow.