A Roadmap to Healthier General Plans

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Vice President of Programs
General Plans

“The Blueprint for Future Development”
What will my community look like when I’m in middle school?
Steps to a Healthy General Plan

- Engage community and build partnerships
- Assess built environment conditions that impact public health
- Update plans and policies to include public health considerations
- Support implementation of healthy planning goals
1. Engage
Healthy Engagement

Healthy Eating 101
La Cocina Saludable
Thursday, March 27, 2008
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
South Gate Girls Clubhouse
4940 Southern Avenue
(at South Gate Park)
Help make South Gate a Healthy, Active Community.
Share your thoughts.

Contribuya al desarrollo saludable de su comunidad.
¡Comparta sus sugerencias!

What is healthy eating?
and
Where can it be found in South Gate?

- Interactive Activities
- Dinner Provided
- On-site Childcare

¿Qué es comida saludable?
¿Dónde se encuentra en South Gate?

- Ejercicios Interactivos
- Se proveerá cena
- Cuidado de Niños

For more info call / Para más información favor de llamar al: (213) 613-8800
What’s your ideal street in 50 years?
Arvin General Plan Update

COMMUNITY HEALTH ELEMENT

Introduction

The City of Arvin, a small town that is driven by its agricultural community, is located in one of the most productive areas of California. However, the City faces numerous environmental challenges and health-related issues. Arvin, as well as many communities in Kern County and the San Joaquin Valley, are struggling to address these interrelated issues, such as how the community’s health is impacted by air and water pollution, dependency on cars, lack of physical activity and accessibility to medical care and healthy food. Recognizing that there are critical health risks in the community and that the City can take a proactive approach solving these issues, the City has developed a Community Health Element for its General Plan. This Community Health Element primarily addresses concerns that relate to the built environment, as well as identifying programs that will educate, support, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Authority

The State of California has mandated that city and county governments adopt a General Plan. The General Plan consists of seven required elements and gives the flexibility to include optional elements. The California Governmental Code Section 65309 enables a county or city to adopt “any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.” The Community Health Element is not a required element in the General Plan, but including the Community Health Element enhances and supports the City’s vision of a sustainable and prosperous future.
Healthy Engagement

1. Go to where the people are
2. Speak their language
3. Use health frame to go beyond the usual suspects
4. Mix up the process: let people express themselves beyond the podium
5. Bring youth voices to the table

2. Assess
“We needed the epidemiology. It was easy to go to meetings and say, ‘If you live in cities where you can walk around, you can lose weight.’ But when you can show numbers, it’s a better story.”

– Advocate
MEASURING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD
MEASURING WALKABILITY

Northeast Corner of Five Points

Theoretical 5 min. walk (1/4 mi)  Theoretical 10 min. walk (1/2 mi)

Actual 5 min. walk (1/4 mi)  Actual 10 min. walk (1/2 mi)

Source: City of Ventura. Created for the Midtown Ventures Design Charette, March 2005
• Tell a story
• Combine health and built environment data
• Make it visual
3. Policy & Implementation
Q: What makes a strong policy?

a. Think big
b. Addresses disparities
c. Measurable
d. Actionable
Southwest Residents:
2x likely to report poor bicycling conditions
3x likely to report poor walking conditions

Less likely to identify as “confident” bike rider, but more open to bicycling
Vision Statement

“Healthy RC inspires a lifestyle that embraces a Healthy Mind, Body and Earth, through lifelong learning and enrichment, active and healthy living, and environmental sustainability.”
Good:
Ensure that pedestrian routes and sidewalks are integrated into continuous networks.

Better:
This document strives to address the needs of [southwest Rancho Cucamonga] in particular, so that all citizens have equal access to alternative modes of transportation.
Good:
Encourage the development of bike infrastructure.

Better:
Plan and install bicycle facilities adjacent to schools, except where parking and/or loading zones are prohibitive.
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• Think big
• Addresses disparities
• Measurable
• Actionable
Steps to a Healthy General Plan

- Engage community and build partnerships
- Assess built environment conditions that impact public health
- Update plans and policies to include public health considerations
- Support implementation of healthy planning goals
Getting healthy policies into a community’s general plan can seem daunting. Planning is an inherently complex and occasionally complicated process. But health-promoting policies go a long way toward creating more livable neighborhoods—increasing opportunities for residents to buy healthy foods, ensuring they can walk and bike to meet daily needs, reducing exposure to pollution, encouraging social connections, and more.

City planners, health department staff, community-based advocates, experts and consultants, philanthropic organizations, and elected officials all have roles to play to ensure the general plan reflects both healthy community goals and best practices. In fact, the involvement of these stakeholders is critical throughout the process—from educating residents and decision-makers about the impact of planning decisions on public health to actively participating in drafting policy language that creates more sustainable communities.

Values and visions may differ from one community to the next, but much of the structure and process for updating a general plan is common throughout California (indeed, land use planning processes usually follow the same general path outlined here). This roadmap, which draws from lessons learned and best practices from real-life planning processes, highlights roles and strategies for key players to consider along the way.
DISCLAIMER

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ChangeLab Solutions is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that educates and informs the public through objective, non-partisan analysis, study, and/or research. The primary purpose of this discussion is to address legal and/or policy options to improve public health. There is no intent to reflect a view on specific legislation.
Thank You!

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hwooten@changelabsolutions.org