

HEALTHY COMMUNITY WEB DIALOGUE CONTENT SUMMARIES

I. Planning Safe Walking and Biking Routes to School June 16-25, 2008

This dialogue was designed to share resources related to ways that communities have encouraged more students to walk and bike to school. Here are some of the tips shared.

- ❑ **Pursue a Safe Routes to School Grant** from the California Department of Transportation. Visit the [Department of Transportation website](#) for application guidelines. California Cycle 8 call for projects expected to be announced before the end of 2008.
- ❑ **Engineer and build traffic calming design.** Narrow roads around schools by expanding medians and bike lanes to bring down car speeds to 15-20 m.p.h. 24 hours a day. Use roundabouts to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety around schools.
- ❑ **Use crossing guards for multi-lane roads.** Place an attentive and visible adult or student safety volunteer near the school during arrival and departure times.
- ❑ **Conduct “walkability” audits.** Consider intergenerational audits to evaluate sidewalk conditions, crosswalks and other community features, such as respite islands and benches that add to "streets for life." Engage youth in documenting current conditions. (see [La Mesa Walkability Audit](#) and www.walkability.org)
- ❑ **Organize walking busses and bicycle trains** for students to travel to and from school in groups. www.walkingschoolbus.org
- ❑ **Prioritizing accommodations for physically active transportation,** including pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations in your city’s general plan.
- ❑ **Place schools in or near residential neighborhoods.** Since only about 35% of students in the United States live within two miles of their school, school siting is critical.

RESOURCES

America Walks links communities interested in safe routes with mentors. America Walks is a national coalition of local advocacy groups dedicated to promoting walkable communities. www.americawalks.org

The California Department of Transportation administers both the state and federal safe routes to schools grants. www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm

Cities Counties and Schools Partnership provides collaborative approaches for addressing childhood obesity. www.CCSPartnership.org

Fall Prevention Center of Excellence is a nonprofit dedicated to fall prevention for older people who are at risk of falling. They promote a lifespan approach to walkability

and offer ideas of how to partner with senior organizations to audit and advocate for complete streets. www.stopfalls.org

The National Association of Counties has a Healthy Counties Database where you can search for model policies, programs and initiatives that counties nationwide have enacted to promote wellness and help prevent childhood obesity.

www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=New_Technical_Assistance&Template=/cfiles/healthycounties/search.cfm

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) is a national clearinghouse for information about health and safety, engineering, advocacy, education, enforcement, access, and mobility for pedestrians (including transit users) and bicyclists. They offer walkability audit tools, including information about how to establish a walking school bus program. www.walkingschoolbus.org , www.walkinginfo.org

Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity produced a safe routes to school tool kit available at www.panaonline.org/programs/khz/actionkits/hrak/intro.php

Planning for Healthy Places, a project of the Public Health Law Program has developed a number of tools, including a talking points [flyer](#) on Safe Routes to School. www.healthyplanning.org

Safe Routes to School National Partnership The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a network of more than 300 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals working together to advance the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) movement in the United States. www.saferoutespartnership.org

SMARTRAQ integrates policy issues pertaining to both the Clean Air Act and the obesity epidemic. www.act-trans.ubc.ca/smartraq/files/smartraq_summary.pdf

Walkable Communities is a nonprofit organization which promotes walkability as the cornerstone of a successful, vibrant community. www.Walkable.org

II. Planning for Healthy Communities Dialogue July 14-23, 2008

This online dialogue connected local and school officials and staff from throughout California to share information and resources related to ways that cities, counties, and schools can take steps to plan for better resident health. Here are some of the highlights:

Planning to Promote Physical Activity:

- ❑ Compact communities planned for walking and biking, with short blocks and mixed use development have lower obesity rates, as was shown in [this report](#) based on an Atlanta study. Also read “Urban Sprawl and Public Health” by Frumkin, Frank, and Jackson or a shorter article [here](#) on the same subject.
- ❑ Reforming zoning policies can help create communities that make walking and bicycling safe and convenient as everyday transportation. See [Creating a Regulatory Blueprint for Healthy Community Design](#).
- ❑ Easy access to walking and biking trails, as in Davis, CA, may be a key. Plans that allocate space for community gardening and encourage people to grow and consume local produce have multiple health benefits. Prioritizing accommodations for physically active transportation rather than motor vehicles also promotes physical activity.
- ❑ The city of Chino’s 2008 General plan includes a separate element addressing public health, including the concept of “complete streets” that are safe for walking and biking, as described [here](#) by Heather Wooten of PHLP.
- ❑ Current land use decisions and transportation planning are handled by different agencies and often at different levels of government. The planning process for land use and transportation facilities needs to be aligned and integrated at every level of government or we will not achieve the goal of healthy communities. “Public health professionals supply much of the data we need as urban planners to establish sound and defensible policies.”
- ❑ Involve Residents in Healthy Community Planning, by using techniques such as:
1) Photo Recon: Provide members of the community (perhaps youth?) with a walking tour map and disposable cameras to document positive and negative examples of healthy environments.
2) Create a “Plan Van” to go out and engage residents in their neighborhoods.
3) Involve residents and local officials in interactive community forums.
4) Create a health policy element when updating or adopting a general plan.

Examples of city and county plans that address health issues:

- ❑ The City of Richmond is becoming a model of Healthy Community Planning, as documented [here](#).
- ❑ -[Eastern Neighborhoods Health Impact Assessment](#) in San Francisco.
- ❑ The General Plan best known nationally for promoting public health is that of [King County, WA](#).
- ❑ Chino is developing a [new general plan](#) that will include a public health, or "Healthy Chino" element.

- The city of El Paso de Robles 2003 General Plan includes an [open space element](#) that preserves existing agricultural, scenic, and recreational land and specifically protects wine grape producing areas.
- In 1996 the city of Los Angeles adopted a [Bicycle Plan](#) as part of the Transportation element of their general plan.

Articles and Presentations:

- [Infill Development, Housing Costs, and Public Health](#)
- [Richmond Plans for a More Healthy Future](#)
- [Planning Healthy Communities in Marin](#)
- [The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health](#)
- [Why Place Matters: Building a Movement for Healthy Communities](#)
- [How to Create and Implement Healthy General Plans](#)
- [General Plans and Zoning: A Toolkit on Land Use and Health](#)
- [A Healthy Community Perspective on Aging Well: New Ideas for an Older California](#)
- [Cross-Sector Dialogue on the Impact of Housing/Land Use and Mobility on Physical Activity and Older Adults](#)

Fact Sheets:

- [Complete Streets Talking Points](#)
- [Zoning Talking Points](#)
- [The Planning Perspective on Health: Community Health as a Goal of Good Design](#)
- [Transportation Solutions for Active, Health Communities](#)

Health Assessment and Forecasting Related Tools and Websites:

- [Healthy Development Measurement Tool](#) to consider health needs in urban development plans and projects.
- [NACo Healthy Counties Database](#) search model county policies, programs, initiatives.
- [UC Berkeley Health Impact Group Website](#)
- [San Francisco DPH Health and Place Team](#) is developing and utilizing original interdisciplinary health assessment and forecasting tools in land use planning
- The Institute for Local Government's [Healthy Communities Program](#)

III. Healthy Food Access Dialogue September 29th – October 6th, 2008

This online dialogue connected local and school officials and staff from throughout California to share information and resources about how cities, counties, and schools can provide residents with healthy eating options and combat negative trends in childhood obesity. Here are some of the highlights:

How Local and School Officials can Increase Resident Access to Healthy Foods:

- The City of Los Angeles recently adopted a [moratorium on new fast food restaurants](#) in South Los Angeles. Daly City has considered similar action.
- [Elk Grove Unified Schools](#) have a breakfast program for students and families, they partner with local organizations and obtain grants to grow edible gardens at elementary schools, and students receive vouchers to use at [nearby farmers markets](#).
- The San Francisco Department of Public Health has developed a [Healthy and Sustainable Food Policy](#) to guide city food service operators and other staff.
- Organizations like [Revolution Foods](#) supply local, healthy foods to schools.
- A Half Moon Bay elementary school [developed a garden](#) with help from county staff.
- Kaiser Permanente has [information](#) about how local agencies and schools can help establish farmers markets. One idea is to encourage farmers markets to accept food stamps or “EBT.”
- The mayor of Oklahoma City, Mike Cornett, has worked with Taco Bell and others to market healthier menu items. The Pinellas County Health Department, through a CDC Steps to a Healthier Florida program, introduced a "[Healthy Choices Restaurant Program](#)."

Articles and Reports:

- [Roadmap to Improving Food and Physical Activity Environments: Tips and Tools from the Healthy Eating, Active Living \(HEAC\) Program](#)
- [Policies to Encourage Healthy Eating](#)
- [Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)
- [ICMA Report on Community Health and Food Access](#)
- [Guide to Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#)
- [Toolkit on Land Use and Health](#)
- [Guide to Community Partnerships for Healthier Eating](#)
- [Southeast Food Access report on a food survey of Bayview-Hunters Point Residents](#)

Websites:

- [California School Board Association Student Wellness Website](#)
- [City and County of San Francisco Food System Website](#)
- [Shape Up SF](#)
- [Get Healthy San Mateo County](#)
- [Institute for Local Government Healthy Communities Website](#)