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CITY OF SAN PABLO
City of New Directions

Community Action Plan

Raising Healthy Future Generations

MARCH 2014



Current FY 2013-14 COPTF Task Force Members

(As of March 3, 2014)

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Community Action Plan

Contents

I. Introduction and Executive Summary.....	4
II. The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign and the Creation of the Childhood Obesity Prevention Taskforce and Steering Committee.....	6
III. The Role of Expert Consultants.....	7
IV. The Task Force, Steering Committee, and Development of the Policy and Program Priorities.....	10
V. Conclusion.....	22
VI. Appendices.....	23





introduction

I. Introduction and Executive Summary

The San Pablo City Council understands that the health and well-being of San Pablo residents are fundamental to their quality of life and to the City's economic and social vitality. City officials further recognize that childhood obesity has reached a crisis level in the United States, and that San Pablo has not been spared. More than half of the children in San Pablo are overweight or obese, a rate that is among the highest of California cities.¹

At its most basic level, the obesity crisis is the result of a so-called energy imbalance – people are consuming more calories than they are expending. As described in a 2012 report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the obesity prevention movement centers on five broad goals to address this crisis:

- 1. Increasing physical activity levels;**
- 2. Increasing access to healthy foods and beverages and limiting access to unhealthy foods and beverages;**
- 3. Changing messages about nutrition and physical activity, including limiting marketing of junk food to children;**
- 4. Working with health care providers, insurers, and employers; and**
- 5. Improving nutrition and physical activity in schools.²**

As part of its effort to stem rising obesity rates in San Pablo, the City Council created the Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force (Task Force) to develop and implement a feasible, evidence-based plan to improve the health of all San Pablo residents, with particular emphasis on the City's youth. By focusing on the environments in which people live, learn, work, and play, the Task Force can make a significant, positive impact on a wide range of health outcomes.

To assist the Task Force, the City retained expert consultants to provide technical assistance on a range of approaches to combat San Pablo's obesity crisis. Using the City's current legal and policy landscape as a foundation, the consultants identified several policy and programmatic strategies that could increase opportunities for healthy eating and active living within the City. Subsequently, the Task Force, together with the consultants, city staff, and relevant community-based organizations, developed policy and program priorities for the City Council to consider. These priorities are summarized in the following tables.

¹ Babey SH, Wolstein J, Diamant AL, Bloom A, Goldstein H. 2012. *Overweight and Obesity among Children by California Cities – 2010*. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and California Center for Public Health Advocacy, <http://cbsla.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/patchworkcities6-4-12.pdf>

² Glickman D et al. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Institute of Medicine, National Academies Press, www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Accelerating-Progress-in-Obesity-Prevention.aspx



POLICY PRIORITIES: Healthy Eating

- 1) Fund obesity prevention programs and policies through a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages
- 2) Increase access to free drinking water
- 3) Improve nutritional quality of school lunches

POLICY PRIORITIES: Active Living

- 1) Support safe routes to school
- 2) Improve park spaces
- 3) Establish play streets

PROGRAM PRIORITIES: Healthy Eating

- 1) Offer free & reduced-cost nutrition and cooking classes
- 2) Promote water in schools/Rethink Your Drink Campaign
- 3) Create urban and school farms/gardens
- 4) Foster healthy fundraising and recognition
- 5) Explore healthy food retail recognition

PROGRAM PRIORITIES: Active Living

- 1) Offer free and reduced-cost programs and classes for all ages, particularly ages 0-5 and teens
- 2) Promote competitive physical activity events (e.g. City 5k, Thanksgiving Turkey Trot, etc.)
- 3) Promote Adopt-A-Spot program

This Community Action Plan (CAP) summarizes the results of several years of work. Its purpose is fourfold: (1) to memorialize the City and Task Force's efforts in addressing the City's obesity crisis; (2) to describe each of the policy and program priorities identified by the Task Force; (3) to assist the City in creating funding opportunities for community-based organizations through the City's Annual San Pablo Community Foundation Grant Program; and (4) to leverage external funding opportunities to help turn the Task Force's vision into action.



Stuffed Squash Blossoms

- Freshly picked Squash Blossoms
- Home grown vine-ripened Tomatoes
- Diced Persian Cucumbers
- Avocados
- Sprigs of Cilantro
- Fresh Dill
- Micro Greens/Sprouts
- Dash of Bragg's Amino Acid

Enjoy!



SEEDSIGN



task force

II. The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign and the Creation of the Childhood Obesity Prevention Taskforce and Steering Committee

The foundation for the Task Force rests in commitments the City Council made to San Pablo residents in 2010. In August of that year, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution³ to join the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign, a project of the League of California Cities and its partner, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA). The resolution outlined a number of policy goals in the areas of land use, access to healthy food, and work-site wellness. The resolution also contained a commitment to adopt a Health Element as part of the City's update to its General Plan. Together with the HEAL resolution, the award-winning Health Element (adopted in April of 2012) set the stage for the Task Force's work.

In April of 2011, then-Mayor Leonard McNeil invited Dr. Wendel Brunner, Public Health Director of Contra Costa Health Services, to present to the Council about childhood obesity prevention. Dr. Brunner noted that at 52.4 percent, San Pablo had the third highest childhood obesity and overweight rate in the State of California, and the highest rate among Northern California cities.⁴ Later that year, Dr. Brunner returned to the Council and presented research on the negative relationship between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and health. His research culminated in a report entitled, "The Impact of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption on the Health of San Pablo Residents (SSB Report)."⁵

In response to the SSB Report, and as part of its FY 2011-13 work plan, the City Council created the Task Force and asked that it develop a strategic plan for addressing the growing childhood obesity epidemic. As a show of the City's commitment, the Council also appropriated \$25,000 from its general fund to support the work of the Task Force.

In March of 2012, the Council hosted its first Task Force meeting, drawing representatives from over 10 organizations serving San Pablo residents. Participants developed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, which contributed to a mission statement and governance structure for the Task Force as well as funding guidelines to seek outside expertise.

The Task Force met again in May of 2012 to review the SWOT analysis and discuss a community education campaign. Following this second meeting, 12 leaders in the local and statewide public health movement were invited to join the Task Force's Steering Committee. The Steering Committee first met in July of 2012, at which time the City Manager, together with consultant Dr. Gary Manross of Strategy Research Institute (SRI), outlined a timeline for (i) conducting community education and research, (ii) gathering feedback regarding obesity prevention activities and potential funding opportunities, and (iii) establishing a funding mechanism through a ballot measure to support policies and programs designed to reduce obesity rates. The Steering Committee also elected co-chairs, established sub-committees, and prepared a timeline for reviewing applications for hiring consultants. Finally, in August of 2012, the Council adopted Resolution 2012-00⁶ which, among other things, authorized the hiring of expert consultants to provide technical assistance related to the obesity epidemic generally and to the mitigation of the effects of SSBs on local obesity rates specifically.

³ Resolution attached as Appendix 1.

⁴ Babey et al., supra note 1.

⁵ SSB report attached as Appendix 2.

⁶ Resolution attached as Appendix 3.



III. The Role of Expert Consultants

Towards the end of 2012, based upon recommendations from the Task Force, the City awarded contracts to three organizations to work with the City to combat the obesity crisis in San Pablo. An additional consultant, SRI, was already working with the City. All four consultants played a critical role in understanding the City's political and legal landscape. In addition to SRI, the consultants were:

- The California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA);
- Verduzco & Associates; and
- ChangeLab Solutions.

A. CCPHA is a statewide non-profit at the forefront of state and local efforts to transform neighborhoods and schools into environments that support healthy eating and physical activity. CCPHA has achieved meaningful success in several areas, including:

- Supporting Local Policymaker Capacity for Promoting Health. CCPHA's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign has spurred more than 160 cities, including San Pablo, to adopt resolutions and policies to create healthy communities with walking, biking, parks, farmers markets, community gardens, soda free facilities;
- Promoting Health Eating and Physical Activity through Policy Change. CCPHA led successful campaigns in California to (i) remove soda and junk food from public schools (1999-2005), (ii) provide ongoing state funding for physical education (2006), and (iii) require chain restaurants to provide calorie information on their menus (2007-2008); and
- Leading the Fight to Reduce Sugary Drink Consumption. The Kick the Can: CA Campaign is a hub for the healthy drink movement both in California and across the nation through its resource-packed website www.kickthecan.info and comprehensive technical assistance program.

CCPHA was asked to develop and distribute a survey for organizations serving San Pablo residents and conduct in-person interviews with key stakeholders. CCPHA drafted a summary of the survey and interview findings and reported to the Task Force at its September, 2013 meeting. CCPHA also compiled local, state and national obesity data, which ultimately informed a bi-lingual education piece that the City distributed in June of 2013.⁷

CCPHA learned that while there is a range of programs providing nutrition and physical activity services to young children, adults and seniors, there is a gap in services for middle and high school students. CCPHA also discovered that public safety is a vital concern that must be addressed within the context of the childhood obesity effort. Further, CCPHA gathered that Task Force members and invitees maintain a high level of interest in working together, through the Task Force, to coordinate programs, services and messages. Finally, given that the City has a large number of Spanish speaking residents, CCPHA found that education and services must be provided in Spanish as well as English. CCPHA's final report is attached as Appendix 5.

⁷ CCPHA subcontracted with Berkeley Media Studies Group to distill messages from the 2012 San Pablo Community Satisfaction survey and frame the education piece. A copy of the education piece is attached as Appendix 4.



consultants

B. Verduzco & Associates has extensive experience in the areas of youth leadership development, advocacy, and community mobilization. By using a place-based approach, Verduzco & Associates has a track record of successfully engaging stakeholders in community planning processes for such efforts as The California Endowment’s Healthy Eating Active Communities program (HEAC). Additionally, Verduzco & Associates has worked in the Bay Area providing technical assistance to the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) supporting the development, expansion and sustainability of their six school-based health centers.

The City tasked both CCPHA and Verduzco & Associates with outreach to residents and organizations to assess:

- The degree to which childhood obesity is recognized as a significant issue in San Pablo;
- The willingness of community members to help solve the issue, including participating in Task Force meetings; and
- Current City programs and services that affect all City residents, specifically youth.

Verduzco & Associates followed a two pronged approach:

1. Intensive education and engagement of the San Pablo Youth Commission; and
2. Surveying youth and parents.⁸

Overall, the majority of parents surveyed expressed that they have to be part of the solution if they are going to help their children lead healthier lifestyles. They indicated that they are excited to work in partnership with the City to make San Pablo a better place to live. More specifically, survey results showed that the two most important issues for families are:

- Safe public places for children to play; and
- More family programming in parks, community centers, and other City properties.

Verduzco & Associates presented its data in two reports published by the San Pablo Youth Commission, “Childhood Obesity Youth Survey Results” and “Strategies to Childhood Obesity Prevention.” Members of the Youth Commission presented to the Task Force at its September, 2013 meeting. Subsequently, they participated in small groups to vet and prioritize policies and programs for this CAP. The Youth Commission’s final reports are attached as Appendix 6.

C. Strategy Research Institute (SRI) is a supplier of applied science for purposes of policy decision-making in both the public and private sectors. This includes policy research and consulting for agencies in the public sector, and market research and consulting for firms and organizations in the private sector. Among other objectives, SRI specializes in consensus building among constituents, many with competing agendas.

In 2010, the City retained SRI and its CEO, Dr. Gary Manross, to identify and better understand the collective desires and concerns of San Pablo residents. Since that time, SRI has conducted numerous scientific surveys, which have generated the form of “intelligence” needed for allowing City officials to make informed decisions when addressing the needs and wishes of the community-at-large.

⁸ Verduzco & Associates partnered with WCCUSD and community-based organizations to conduct the survey. Surveys were available in English and Spanish.



Through its surveys, SRI found that nearly eighty percent of residents and 85 percent of Opinion Leaders view childhood obesity as being of crisis proportions and that something needs to be done to fight it. Between 2011 and 2013, concern over childhood obesity increased 21 percent, from 58 percent to 79 percent.

Moreover, a clear majority of respondents in the most recent survey believe that the City's youth do not get enough exercise and that City officials should restrict the number of fast food outlets in San Pablo as well as the location where SSBs can be sold. Over eighty percent of respondents said they support the City funding projects that incentivize convenience stores and corner markets to sell healthy food and beverages instead of unhealthy food and beverages. An executive summary of SRI's work is attached as Appendix 7.

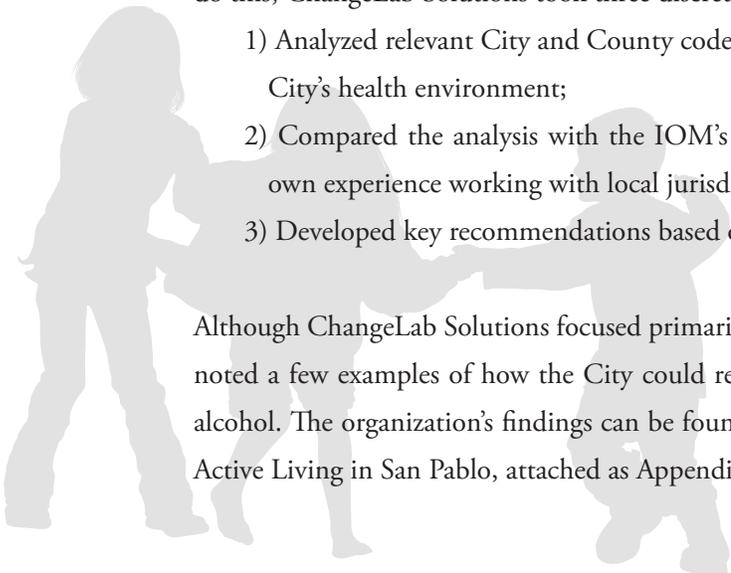
D. ChangeLab Solutions is a national non-profit that promotes the common good by developing model laws and policies that link all aspects of community life – housing, education, jobs, the economy, and the environment – to healthy outcomes.

Since its inception, ChangeLab Solutions has been at the forefront of the “Health in All Policies” movement by providing training, leadership, and in-depth legal and policy analysis to numerous communities and government agencies to advance the practice of “planning for healthy places.” And as a national leader on strategies to reduce SSB consumption, ChangeLab Solutions has worked with most of the jurisdictions in the country that have considered levying a tax on SSBs.

The City hired ChangeLab Solutions to work directly with the Task Force, city staff, and relevant community-based organizations and inform them of the healthy eating and active living opportunities within San Pablo. To do this, ChangeLab Solutions took three discrete steps:

- 1) Analyzed relevant City and County codes, policies, regulations, and agreements to assess the gaps in the City's health environment;
- 2) Compared the analysis with the IOM's best practice recommendations and against the organization's own experience working with local jurisdictions across the country; and
- 3) Developed key recommendations based on the analysis and best practices.

Although ChangeLab Solutions focused primarily on policies addressing healthy eating and active living, it also noted a few examples of how the City could reduce the negative health impacts associated with tobacco and alcohol. The organization's findings can be found in the report entitled, Policies to Support Healthy Eating & Active Living in San Pablo, attached as Appendix 8.





development

IV. The Task Force, Steering Committee & Development of the Policy and Program Priorities

The Task Force, together with each of the City's outside consultants, worked collaboratively to engage a diverse cross section of the community and identify the policy and program priorities for the City Council to consider. As noted above, ChangeLab Solutions' role was to examine the City's existing legal and policy landscape and develop recommendations for how the City can improve its healthy eating and active living environments. Many of the recommendations are based on sound science and have been successful in other jurisdictions while others are promising but untested. A few recommendations have potentially significant impact on San Pablo residents, while others are less impactful but far more politically feasible. Finally, some of the strategies could be implemented immediately while others are more likely to be longer-term goals.

Given the above, the Task Force and Steering Committee ultimately identified several strategies that would complement existing City policies as part of a long-range plan for creating an environment that facilitates healthy lifestyles.

A. Process for Developing Priorities

As discussed earlier, the Task Force and Steering Committee met several times between March of 2012 and December of 2013. Meetings covered a wide range of topics, including (i) the City's survey findings, (ii) education messages and campaign, (iii) consultant reports, and (iv) priorities for 2014 and beyond. Representatives from over ten organizations attended the meetings, and all were given a forum to express their viewpoints and desires. The final three meetings were designed to educate members about the consultants' work, provide opportunities to ask questions and make suggestions, and prioritize policies and programs for this CAP.⁹ Each of the final meetings also included interactive, small group discussions focusing on three topics:

- 1) Nutrition policy
- 2) Physical activity policy
- 3) Nutrition and physical activity programs

As a result of this engagement, the Task Force was able to prioritize various policy and programs options to increase opportunities for healthy eating and active living.

B. Policy and Program Priorities

Before detailing each of the policy and program priorities, it is important to first understand the difference between policies and programs and the complementary use of both to improve community health.

1. Policies versus Programs

Because policies and programs are often implemented in conjunction, even the savviest public health professionals sometimes have difficulty distinguishing the two. In order to gauge scope, impact, sustainability, and implementation costs, it is important to recognize the difference between policies and programs, as those terms are used in this CAP.

⁹ During the September meeting, each consultant made a thorough presentation about its findings and recommendations.



Generally, a policy is an enforceable law, regulation or rule that applies broadly across an entire jurisdiction, and indefinitely. A program is a system or plan implemented by a government agency or community organization to provide a specific service to a discrete set of persons.

Policies are generally more influential than programs in the long term, though they often work in conjunction. Policies have broad applicability and are implemented upstream, setting the course within which people and programs must navigate. In addition, policies tend to last longer than programs because they codify change and survive individual leadership transitions. Also, governing agencies can mandate compliance with a policy and, if need be, take appropriate enforcement measures.

A program is often used as a mechanism to implement a policy. In other cases, a program is implemented independent of a policy. In those latter cases, a program will only work to the extent there are financial and human resources available to operate it.

2. Policy Priorities to Facilitate Healthy Eating

The Task Force identified three priorities to facilitate healthy eating: (1) funding healthy eating and active living programs and policies through a tax on SSBs; (2) improving drinking water access, both in schools and throughout the community; and (3) improving the nutritional quality of school lunches.

a. Funding Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs Through a Tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Imposing a tax on sales of SSBs is a strategy that has garnered much attention in the media and among the public health research and scientific communities. Because the electorate must approve all local taxes, a City policy would consist of preparing a tax ordinance and adopting a resolution along with the ordinance to put the issue on the ballot for voters to decide. However, there are several policy decisions that would affect the likelihood of success of the tax, the amount of revenue raised, and the potential public health impact.

The Task Force was particularly interested in using a tax to generate revenue to fund other obesity prevention policies and programs, and therefore supported a “special tax,” the proceeds of which would be earmarked for specific purposes. This could be accomplished in two ways, either through a generally applicable increase in the City’s transactions and use tax – a “sales tax,” or through a tax specifically imposed on businesses that sell SSBs, with the proceeds from either tax earmarked. An increase in sales taxes applicable only to SSBs (i.e., and not to other products subject to the sales tax) is preempted by the California Constitution.

A sales tax increase is relatively straightforward and would apply to all products subject to the sales tax under state law. A tax specifically imposed on SSBs may reduce consumption of those drinks in addition to raising revenue. To levy a tax on a specific product, the only viable option for California cities is a business license tax imposed on businesses that sell SSBs, either retailers that sell SSBs to consumers or distributors doing business in the City. If the amount of the tax is passed onto the consumer through a price increase, consumption should reduce accordingly.





free water

The amount of the tax could be calculated various ways. While most business license taxes are based on gross receipts, the tax could also be imposed per ounce or based on another metric.

RESOURCES

ChangeLab Solutions, Local Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in California (Fact Sheet and Legal Memo) www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/CA-local-ssb-taxes

“Kick the Can” website operated by California Center for Public Health Advocacy
www.kickthecan.info/soda-taxes-and-other-beverage-policies

b. Improving Access to Free Drinking Water

The Task Force also identified that access to potable water is important for community health. Fresh drinking water is an important alternative to SSBs; studies suggest that if fresh drinking water is not readily available, consumers may substitute SSBs for the water they would prefer to drink.¹⁰ Making water available is one of the IOM’s core recommendations for reducing SSB consumption.

To improve the availability of drinking water in the community, the Task Force supported a policy that would require access to free, potable water in all public areas, such as government buildings, city-sponsored facilities, and parks and recreation areas. Part of such a policy would include an initial audit of these facilities to determine where water fountains or filling stations are lacking, and a requirement for regular ongoing inspections to ensure continued compliance. Another component of the policy would determine if water fountains suffice, or whether the City should invest in “water filling stations” for persons with their own bottles, or some combination of both.

This policy would impact persons using any government facilities by ensuring that they have access to free water during their visit. This policy would also require staff or consultants to conduct the gaps assessment and ongoing inspections, as well as financial resources to install the necessary infrastructure.

(Water access in the school environment is addressed in the section below.)

RESOURCES

Take Back the Tap, a campaign of Food and Water Watch, includes guides, resources and a curriculum on how to increase safe tap water consumption.
www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/take-back-the-tap/

¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. *The CDC Guide to Strategies for Reducing the Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages*, p. 6, www.cdc.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/StratstoReduce_Sugar_Sweetened_Bevs.pdf



school lunches

c. Improving Nutritional Quality of School Lunches

The Task Force focused much discussion on the school environment, which is where many children spend the majority of their day and consume one or more of their daily meals.

In school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program, federal law establishes nutrition standards for school meals and other foods sold on school campuses. California law imposes additional nutritional requirements on foods sold outside of school meals (so-called “competitive foods”). The federal 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act included a number of important changes that impact school food policy, including changed nutrition requirements for both school meals and competitive foods. The enhanced school meal requirements have been in place since 2012; school districts must be in compliance with enhanced competitive food requirements by July 1, 2014.

Most school districts adopt a number of board policies and associated administrative regulations that address food sales in schools. These include a local school wellness policy, which all school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program have been required by federal law to develop and adopt since 2006. School wellness policies must include nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available on school campuses. The federal 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act imposed new content requirements for school wellness policies. The USDA released proposed rules on school wellness policies in February 2014, and should adopt a final rule in late 2014.

Many school board policies on food sales simply refer to or restate the California and federal competitive foods nutrition standards. However, school districts can choose to go beyond these basic requirements and adopt stronger rules on foods and beverages. WCCUSD Board policies and administrative regulations on school foods, which apply to schools in the City, generally mirror state and federal requirements for foods served in schools. However, they do not appear to have been updated to reflect the new nutritional requirements for school meals or competitive foods. In addition, to comply with changes in federal law, WCCUSD will have to adopt a revised wellness policy by the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

Recognizing that the City does not have jurisdiction over WCCUSD, the Task Force supported a policy designating and directing City staff to work with WCCUSD to update and improve its Board policies, including the school wellness policy to improve the nutritional quality of all foods offered on school campuses, both during the school day and before and after school hours. The City policy could also allocate staff and financial resources to help WCCUSD officials determine the elements of stronger school foods policies and draft policy revisions.

There are many examples of strong school foods policies from other California jurisdictions, and several model policies as well. Some aspects of a strong policy may include:

- Ensuring school meals and competitive foods comply with current USDA and California minimum standards.



nutrition

- Adopting nutrition requirements for school meals and competitive foods that go beyond USDA minimum standards.
- Requiring schools to adopt strategies to increase participation in the school breakfast, school lunch, and summer meal programs.

The Task Force also supported a policy to improve access to drinking water in schools. Federal and California law require that school districts provide access to free, fresh drinking water during meal times in the food service areas of schools. As with a policy addressing school meals, a City policy would entail designating and directing staff to work with WCCUSD officials to adopt and implement Board policies to improve access to drinking water.

Specific policy elements might include:

- Conducting a water audit and improving water infrastructure, including repairing water fountains and/or purchasing and installing water filling stations.
- Providing cups and containers of water throughout the school campus and throughout the school days, and particularly when students are engaged in physical activity.
- Allowing students to keep personal water bottles with them at all times.

Finally, several Task Force members, citing the importance of early childhood interventions, also strongly supported policies or programs to improve the nutritional quality of food served in child-care settings, and/or to prohibit SSBs in childcare settings.

RESOURCES

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, *School Nutrition Environment and Wellness Resources*

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/local-wellness-policy-resources/school-nutrition-environment-and-wellness-resources-0>

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, *Model School Wellness Policies*

(these resources will be updated to reflect the Proposed Rules on Wellness Policies released last week by USDA)

www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/

ChangeLab Solutions, *Addressing Sugary Drinks through the Local School Wellness Policy*

www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/SSBs-school-wellness

ChangeLab Solutions, *Water Access in Schools: Model Wellness Policy Language*

www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/wellness-policy-water

Water in Schools, a campaign of the California Food Policy Advocates

<http://waterinschools.org>



rethink your drink

3. Program Priorities to Facilitate Healthy Eating

This section describes the program priorities related to healthy eating. Because there are different permutations that will need to be developed by the agency or organization implementing them, below are very brief descriptions of each type of program.

a. Free and reduced nutrition and cooking classes

The Task Force strongly supported community-based cooking classes to provide instruction and tips to community members on preparing healthier meals for their families. According to members of the Task Force, similar classes have already been met with tremendous success in the City and have served to educate community members about the importance of preparing healthy meals. To operate this program, the City would need to identify a source of funding and work with groups such as Champions for Change, First 5, Fresh Approach, and Healthy and Active Before 5, all of which are already active in the community.

b. Educational campaigns about water access / “Rethink Your Drink”

The Task Force supported additional programs to educate residents about the health harms of SSBs, and cited the “Rethink Your Drink” campaign as a successful example. This campaign came to San Pablo relatively recently and the Task Force supported the continuation of the program as well as a push to improve and scale the program to get the message out to a wider audience. As part of the campaign, the Task Force supported educating residents about the importance of drinking water. In 2014, there may be an opportunity for the City to participate in a Bay Area-wide ReThink Your Drink campaign being conducted by local health departments.

c. Creating urban and school farms/gardens

The Task Force also supported programs to assist residents in growing their own food, at their homes, in community farms, and in schools. This is an example where policies and programs complement one another. The policy scan conducted by ChangeLab Solutions identified no legal barriers to urban farming. Therefore, a citywide program would entail the City providing resources to community organizations (or providing dedicated City staff) to assist community members in learning how to properly grow food. For community gardens, the City could also recognize and support a community organization to locate a suitable plot and execute any required lease and legal documents. One option would be to explore a partnership with Urban Tilth, the established urban farming organization in the Greater Richmond Area.

For school farming, the City could work with WCCUSD to encourage it to develop a program to allow for school farms, and also to help create the policy itself.

d. Fostering healthy fundraising and recognition

Organizational fundraising, particularly by youth groups, tends to involve selling of unhealthy foods like cookies and candy bars. The Task Force would like to help organizations change this paradigm by developing alternative fundraising mechanisms that can successfully raise funds while





active living

not harming the community health. There are many different forms this might take, but the Task Force supported using City resources to develop this type of program and identify healthy fundraising options.

As part of its wellness policy, WCCUSD included a document entitled “Ideas for Healthy Celebration and Fundraising Alternatives,”¹¹ which can be used as a basis for a program that applies outside of school.

Similarly, recognition programs for performance in school or extracurricular activities, often reward youth with a gift certificate for unhealthy food or with unhealthy food directly. Similar to fundraising, the Task Force identified a need to shift recognition programs toward healthier options, such as awards that incentivize the recipient to engage in a healthy activity.

e. Exploring a healthy food retail recognition program

Although the Task Force did not find access to healthy foods in the retail environment to be a significant problem, it nonetheless supported exploring a program to recognize or certify food retailers that began to carry healthier items such as fresh produce or staple foods.

A government certification program would establish guidelines for businesses to be eligible to be recognized as a healthy retailer (besides carrying produce and staple foods, additional requirements could be to reduce the amount of unhealthy items stocked, such as alcohol, tobacco and sugary drinks, and to improve the storefront to reduce visual blight or nuisance.) In exchange for a retailer voluntarily agreeing to abide by the conditions, the government would officially recognize the business as “healthy” and could provide additional incentives (generally nonfinancial ones) to the retailer. This type of program would likely require a designated City agency working with a community organization to develop the program guidelines and provide technical assistance to retailers that choose to participate.

4. Policy Priorities to Facilitate Active Living

There are many reasons why San Pablo residents do not get sufficient amounts of physical activity. The built environment – the physical structures and infrastructure that make up our cities and communities – is one of them. For example, the Task Force learned that not everyone in San Pablo has the same access to environments that support good health. Further, the SSB Study and presentations at various Task Force meetings showed that rates of obesity are significantly higher in San Pablo than in other neighboring jurisdictions; these differences are partly based on race and ethnicity, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Generally, the same communities that are at greater risk for obesity have fewer parks and open spaces compared to other communities. Moreover, often times the streets in lower-income communities are more dangerous for people who walk or ride bicycles, due to an absence of protective infrastructure and poor street design. In San Pablo, collisions between automobiles and pedestrians/bicyclists are higher than the state and county average. Finally, and perhaps most prominent in San Pablo, violence and the

¹¹ WCCUSD healthy fundraising statement attached as Appendix 9.



perception of violence significantly and negatively impacts levels of physical activity among San Pablo residents. The Youth Commission, in particular, underscored the significance of violence and its impediments to engaging in physical activity. In light of the foregoing, the Task Force identified three policies to improve San Pablo's built environment.

a. Adoption of a Safe Routes to School Policy

In 1969, almost half of American students walked or bicycled to school. That number has since shrunk to 13 percent. Physical activity and recreational opportunities in schools have decreased during the same time period, creating new challenges for student health, academic achievement, and behavior.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a movement that is changing communities and making children healthier by encouraging them to walk, bicycle, or roll to and from school. SRTS programs began in Europe in the 1970's, and similar efforts emerged in the United States in the late 1990's. In 1999, California was the first state in the country to enact a Safe Routes to School program. Congress eventually established a federal Safe Routes to School program in 2005.

By walking or biking to and from school, children and youth can easily incorporate exercise into their day and arrive at school focused and ready to learn. Engaging in active transportation also helps reduce air pollution and traffic congestion around schools and surrounding neighborhoods.

The City and WCCUSD each have a role to play in making it easier and safer for children to walk and bicycle to school.

- **City Policy:** Failure to explicitly support Safe Routes to School through clear policy language can inadvertently discourage active transportation. Accordingly, the Task Force showed interest in the City adopting a stand-alone SRTS policy or explicitly incorporating SRTS related provisions throughout existing policies.
- **Partnership with WCCUSD:** Recognizing that the City does not have jurisdiction over WCCUSD or its schools, the Task Force supported the City directing staff to work with WCCUSD and help draft a comprehensive Safe Routes to School policy that would affect all schools within the City's jurisdiction. (Also note that the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provides an opportunity to partner with WCCUSD to incorporate certain aspects of Safe Routes to School, including physical activity goals and guidelines, into the District's wellness policy).





RESOURCES

Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook
(ChangeLab Solutions & Safe Routes to School National Partnership)
www.changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/welcome

Safe Routes to School National Partnership Resource Center
www.saferoutespartnership.org/resourcecenter

ChangeLab Solutions Resources on Safe Routes to School
www.changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/safe-routes-schools



There are many examples of strong SRTS policies throughout the state. The strongest ones incorporate five key components, commonly referred to as the Five E's:¹²

Education – Policies can help educate children about the broad range of transportation choices and instruct them in bicycling and walking safety skills. Also, driver safety campaigns can educate drivers – both students and adults – regarding safe driving near schools and elsewhere.

Encouragement – Policies can institutionalize events and activities that promote walking and bicycling and generate enthusiasm among students, parents, city and school officials, and the surrounding community.

Engineering – Policies can outline how cities and districts can act independently or partner with relevant agencies to improve infrastructure around schools, thereby increasing the safety and convenience of active commuters.

Enforcement – Policies can specify ways in which local law enforcement can ensure that traffic laws (including speed limits and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) are obeyed near schools. Cities and districts can also facilitate community enforcement, such as crossing guard programs and student safety patrols.

Evaluation – Policies can encourage monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes, and trends via data collection before and after programmatic changes are made.

¹² Discussion on the Five E's is taken from: ChangeLab Solutions and Safe Routes to School National Partnership. *Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook*, www.changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/about-elements



play streets



b. Improving Park Spaces

As noted in the City's General Plan, the City has a park ratio of 0.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, significantly below the 3.0 acres/1,000 residents called for in the Municipal Code. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the Task Force spent a significant amount of time discussing the current conditions of the City's parks. The Youth Commission also provided extensive feedback on the use and condition of parks. There was unanimous sentiment that there are too few City parks, and that those that do exist are either unsafe, in need of repair, or both.

Lack of access to high-quality recreational spaces has measurable effects on physical activity. For example, adults who live within one-half mile of a park are more likely to exercise five or more times a week than those who live farther away. Similarly, children who live near parks and recreational facilities are more active and less likely to be obese than those who live farther away. And children and adults are less active when they live in neighborhoods that are perceived as unsafe or have high levels of social disorder (such as loitering and public drinking).

Parks, trails, and other common recreational space can also help to create and enhance family and community ties by increasing interaction among community members, by decreasing isolation and crime, and by encouraging volunteerism. Social interaction through physical activity and recreation can also offer opportunities for connections across race, class, and geography.

By prioritizing park improvements, the City can significantly boost physical activity levels among all residents, especially its youth. The first step would be for the City to direct staff to determine the following:

Condition. Are certain parks in better condition than others? Is equipment in need of repair? Are there adequate facilities (bathrooms, garbage cans, etc.)?

Location. Are parks equitably dispersed throughout the City? Are parks accessible via alternative transportation (e.g. walking, biking, public transit)?

Safety. Is there evidence of criminal activity at certain parks? If so, where? How often? What type? Is there adequate lighting? Are there design features that can improve safety?

Health. Are parks smoke-free? Is there access to free and clean drinking water? Can residents easily access them via active transportation?

Once the City has a better understanding of its park resources, it can draft a policy to address any gaps in service and identify adequate funding sources.



recreation

c. Establishing Play Streets

As discussed above, it is clear that San Pablo is “park poor.” Unfortunately, it is not alone. Cities throughout the country are finding innovative ways to create more recreation space for their residents without having to expand existing parks or develop new ones. For many localities, Play Streets are being used to accommodate this lack of space.

Play Streets are streets that are closed to traffic on a regular basis (i.e. every Sunday morning) and used to encourage physical activity among community members of all ages. There are now over 100 Play Streets throughout the country, and they are increasingly seen as a strategy for cities to achieve their public health goals, especially for cities like San Pablo that lack sufficient park and open space for recreation.

Cities can establish Play Streets by partnering with ongoing activities (i.e. farmers’ markets) or closing off different streets throughout the city to create a variety of recreational spaces for as many residents as possible.

By adopting a Play Streets policy, the City could create new places for recreation without having to develop new parks or more traditional open space. There are a number of successful Play Street policies and programs throughout the country, San Francisco’s being among the most popular. And San Pablo already has a successful “Random Acts of Recreation” program. Components of a strong policy include:

- Ensuring that Play Streets occur on a regular basis and at different locations throughout the City so that the maximum number of residents can participate
- Ensuring that Play Streets will increase and sustain physical activity levels within the community, particularly among youth
- Creation of a Play Streets Task Force
- Commitment of City staffing and resources to ensure success
- Requiring healthy food vending at each Play Street
- Partnering with businesses and community-based organization to offer a variety of activities and services
- Evaluating each Play Street for potential improvement and increase in participation rates

RESOURCES

Open Streets Project

<http://openstreetsproject.org/>

Partnership for a Healthier America

<http://ahealthieramerica.org/play-streets/>

Sunday Streets

www.sundaystreetssf.com/



Adopt-A-Spot

5. Program Priorities to Facilitate Active Living

The Task Force had significant experience with different types of programs that could be implemented in the City.

- a. Offer free and reduced-cost programs and classes for all ages, particularly for ages 0-5 and teenagers. The Task Force overwhelmingly supported City- and school- run programs and classes. These could range from traditional exercise classes to pedestrian and bicycle skills and safety workshops. The Youth Commission is in an excellent position to support and lead program development and implementation, and groups such as Weigh of Life and the City's own Community Services Department would be excellent partners.
- b. Sponsor and promote competitive physical activity events. Another favorite program of the Task Force was City-sponsored competitive events such as an annual 5k/10k/half marathon, or a Thanksgiving Turkey Trot. These types of events are commonplace in cities throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Depending on the scale of the event, they can require significant planning and resources (i.e. promotion, road closures, police presence, etc.) Oftentimes, success hinges on engagement with local businesses and community-based organizations for promotion and sponsorship opportunities.
- c. Promote Adopt-A-Spot Program. Many cities throughout the Bay Area have an Adopt a Park program. These programs allow individuals or groups to “adopt” a playground, park, or trail, and provide routine maintenance and oversight activities. In July of 2013, the City Council established a similar program to encourage volunteerism and active living called the Adopt-A-Spot Program.¹³ For example, volunteers may provide gardening services (i.e. weeding and planting), equipment maintenance (i.e. painting park benches or playground structures), or cleaning services (i.e. litter pick up and graffiti removal). Volunteers can also help plan and coordinate programs and report any incidents/problems to City staff. In terms of resource allocation, City staff would need to review applications from those interested individuals/groups, choose the best applicant, train them in proper procedures, and generally oversee the program.



¹³ For details see staff report and resolution attached as Appendix 10.



action plan

V. Conclusion

Since 2010, the City has taken numerous actions to confront the childhood obesity crisis within its borders. The year 2014 is no exception; the City Council unanimously declared 2014 to be *The Year of Healthy Living!*

Through this process, the City has successfully engaged stakeholders from a diverse cross section of the community, and all have significantly contributed to the City's success thus far. This CAP will allow the City to leverage funding to implement the policy and program priorities identified by the Task Force. By adopting this CAP, the City is taking yet another step to demonstrate its commitment to improving the health of its residents.

ChangeLab Solutions is a nonprofit organization that provides legal information on matters relating to public health. The legal information in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, readers should consult a lawyer in their state.



CITY OF SAN PABLO
City of New Directions



Prepared for the Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force, City of San Pablo
Submitted by ChangeLab Solutions, Oakland, California

March 2014
www.changelabsolutions.org