



# HEALTHY CHULA VISTA ACTION PLAN

Prioritizing Strategies for Health

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Healthy Chula Vista Action Plan: Prioritizing Strategies for Health

The Healthy Chula Vista Action Plan (HCVAP) is a set of 65 strategies developed by the Healthy Chula Vista Initiative, whose primary goal is to provide Chula Vista residents with tools to lead healthy lifestyles. The goal of the HCVAP is to promote opportunities for health by improving the City's physical and social environments, promoting awareness and access to services, and building community partnerships. The HCVAP strategies are divided into the following seven focus areas:

- Community Engagement
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Healthy Food Access
- Physical Activity
- Health Care & Prevention
- Environmental Quality

Human Impact Partners (HIP) was hired by Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) and awarded a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant from the CDC to prioritize the proposed HCVAP strategies based on their anticipated impacts on health. To accomplish this, HIP collected data on local health status and inequities, reviewed public health research literature, and collected community and stakeholder input. HIP's overall goal is to prioritize strategies that if implemented, will result in the largest improvements in health and reductions in health inequities in Chula Vista.

City staff will present the results of this prioritization process to the Chula Vista City Council in January 2016. Once approved, the HCVAP will provide guidance on promoting health in the city over the next several years.

In order to collect public input on health status, health inequities, and prioritization of HCVAP strategies, HIP and City staff organized and facilitated three community workshops attended by 64 people, and one meeting with HCVAP stakeholders attended by 24 people. In addition, HIP and city staff developed

and administered an online and printed survey that 37 people responded to. Together, this community input provided information about the perceived needs of the community. In addition, the process engaged community members in the work of the local government and gave them another venue to voice their opinions about city policy.

## SNAPSHOT OF CHULA VISTA HEALTH CONDITIONS

Based on local data collection, the main health concerns in the city are obesity and overweight among youth and adults, diabetes, low rates of physical activity, inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables, asthma, and mental health issues. In general, the western portion of the city faces inequities in terms of lower incomes, lower quantity and quality of public resources such as parks and sidewalks, higher concentration of fast food restaurants, and fewer healthy food options.

## HEALTH PRIORITIES IN CHULA VISTA

***Healthy food access.*** Based on feedback from community workshops, the stakeholder meeting, and the survey, healthy food access is the highest priority focus area. Many Chula Vista residents feel that it is difficult to have healthy eating habits due to the abundance of fast food restaurants, especially in the west side of the city, as well as a dearth of affordable healthy food outlets. Six full-service grocery outlets have closed in recent years.

Public health research indicates that equitable access to nutritious food is paramount for promoting the health and well being of a community. The food that we consume plays a critical role in our overall health status and is closely related to obesity and diabetes, whose rates are higher in Chula Vista compared to the county. When fast food outlets and corner stores provide the only food options within close proximity and affordable to communities, people in those communities will consume the highly processed and unhealthy foods that are realistically available to them. Full-service supermarkets are a crucial resource for healthy food in any community because they offer a variety of fresh, unprocessed, and affordable food choices.



**Affordable housing.** According to community workshops, survey respondents, and local data, there is not enough quality affordable housing in the city. In addition, community workshop participants expressed their concern about the city's large homeless population.

High housing costs relative to the income of an individual or household can threaten food and financial security, lead to overcrowded living conditions and acceptance of lower-cost, substandard housing; it can also force people to relocate far away from their communities and resources to where housing costs are lower or possibly become homeless. Housing instability can result in job loss, difficult school transitions, and the loss of health protective social networks. Spending a high proportion of income on rent or a mortgage means fewer resources for heating or cooling, transportation, health care, childcare, and food. Cities can implement policies that increase affordable housing development and mixed-income neighborhoods.



**Quality of public resources.** Some residents at workshops said that sidewalks are absent or are poorly maintained in certain areas of the city. Residents also expressed that there is insufficient street and pedestrian lighting in some areas, which makes them feel unsafe. Some parks are unmaintained, dirty, lack amenities such as bathrooms and lighting, and are perceived as unsafe due to the presence of homeless people. Many residents reported a lower quality and quantity of parks in the western portion of the city as compared to the eastern portion. Survey respondents rated public safety as their highest neighborhood concern.

Well-maintained and well-lit sidewalks provide safe places to travel and exercise. By encouraging exercise and leading to improvements in mental and physical health outcomes, parks can be very beneficial to the health of those who use them. However, perceptions of crime and a lack of safety deter people from using sidewalks and visiting parks.

**Public transit.** Some community workshop participants said that public transportation resources in the city are inconvenient due to frequency of service, timeliness, and affordability.

High-quality and affordable public transit resources are vital for accessing workplaces, schools, childcare, healthy food, medical care, and other resources necessary for health. Public transit is particularly important for residents without access to a vehicle. Using public transit rather than driving can encourage physical activity and reduce air pollution.

The city is served by the regional light rail network and a network of buses. A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is scheduled for construction in 2016.

**Inequities between East and West.** According to local data and participants in community workshops and the stakeholder meeting, inequities in income, availability of public resources, access to healthy food, and the presence of environmental burdens persist in the city, particularly between the west and east. Inequitable access to resources leads to inequitable health disparities. Many health outcomes can be linked to socioeconomic inequities within a given population. Many HCVAP strategies can be focused on reducing inequities by prioritizing areas of the city that need better opportunities for health.

## PRIORITY HCVAP STRATEGIES

Based on this analysis, the highest priority strategies are summarized below. Focus areas and the strategies listed under each focus area are presented in order of community priority.

### Healthy Food Access

- Support regional efforts for Food Waste Prevention Programs that provide food alternatives for food insecure individuals.
- Evaluate the feasibility of additional Farmers Markets, Food Distribution, and/or other innovative programs to address healthy food insecurity and accept EBT.
- Study the location and number of Fast Food Offerings and explore No Drive Thru Regulations in areas of the city already concentrated.
- Attract and retain Full-service Grocery Stores and Casual Restaurants that offer affordable and quality healthy food.

### Transportation

- Support Walking Audits to address mobility for all users.
- Continue to respond and promote schools to participate in Safe Routes to Schools.
- Review Public Transit Access with MTS to ensure residents can access community assets and innovative programs to encourage transit use are supported.

### Physical Activity

- Educate and address inequities through the Safe, Accessible, Fun & Easy (SAFE) campaign to encourage increased awareness of walking, bicycle and pedestrian access.

### Land Use

- Evaluate the Balanced Communities (“Inclusionary”) Policy Guidelines to provide Affordable Housing throughout the city and support financial self-sufficiency.

- Evaluate the Design Standards Manual to reflect concepts of Complete Streets, address signage barriers and other health concepts as adopted.
- Review and amend as appropriate CVMC Zoning and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) processing using a holistic approach to health considerations stressing co-location of amenities and sensitivity of uses near community assets.
- Develop an awareness campaign and update the Otay Valley Regional Park Concept Plan and consider updates to the Green Belt Master Plan to incorporate healthy community concepts.

### Community Engagement

- Inventory Community Assets and establish a Health Advisory Commission representative of community partners and residents.
- Engage Youth and Seniors through volunteerism, issue identification, problem solving, and health issues specific to these populations.

### Environmental Quality

- Utilize Health Assessment Tools to identify vulnerable areas of the community and support programs that address Environmental Justice issues.
- Continue to promote programs that address residential indoor Air Quality and review changeable sources of air pollution for outdoor.

### Health Care & Prevention

- Identify barriers to Mental Health care and resources.
- Continue to support regional efforts that reconnect Homeless Individuals with health-promoting resources.
- Support funding applications for Community Development Block Grant funding that provide preventive health care to the most vulnerable populations.

Additional discussion about the prioritization process, including supporting evidence and policy recommendations, is included within the full report.



For more information, see [www.chulavistaca.gov/healthycv](http://www.chulavistaca.gov/healthycv).  
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