

Background Information

The Fresno County Department of Community Health (DCH) began its built environment effort in February 2005, with the launch of the Building Healthy Neighborhoods (BHN) Task Force, which has engaged representatives from schools, health insurance agencies, community-based organizations, health care agencies, worksites, government agencies, and community residents. The BHN's mission statement is to "work collaboratively to move our community toward physical activity friendly neighborhoods." The DCH coordinates and facilitates monthly BHN meetings.

The BHN held a *Building Healthy Neighborhoods in Fresno County Summit* on November 18, 2005. The Summit's agenda was broad-based, featuring experts in public health who provided presentations on the disparities among communities with high rates of obesity, diabetes and other chronic conditions and a lack of healthy food and physical activity resources. Also featured were planners, builders, and architects with expertise in "smart-growth" strategies intended to design more livable communities that include healthy food and physical activity resources.

In 2005, the DCH received the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP) grant funded by The California Endowment, with a goal to create policy changes in the environment to support healthy eating and active living. Through the CCROPP, the Department hosted the *Integrating Public Health into Community Design* training on May 2, 2007, in Fresno. The goals of this community training were to improve knowledge of land use and transportation planning policies and to understand how to organize and build the capacity of the attending community agencies to address built environment issues. Various community-based organizations, DCH project staff, and a city and county staff attended this training.

As a follow-up to the 2005 Summit, the BHN members sponsored two additional workshops. In March 2006, Fresno Metro Ministry hosted a *General Plans and Zoning Workshop* offered by Lisa Feldstein of the Public Health Law Program and held a strategic planning session with the Prevention Institute's Leslie Mikkelson on environmental change strategies for southeast metropolitan Fresno. In April 2006, the BHN sponsored a *Walkability Workshop* featuring presenters from the California Center for Physical Activity, the Rails to Trails Conservancy and the Local Government Commission.

Additionally, the BHN co-sponsored Bike to Work Week, May 13-19, 2006, with the local Bike Coalition. BHN also donated approximately \$5,000 to the National Hmong American Farmers for an irrigation system in September 2006. To bring awareness to the importance of community gardens and to highlight BHN, a press conference was held on February 20, 2007, announcing the donation.

In 2006, on behalf of the BHN, the DCH applied for and received a grant from the Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Partnership. The goal of HEAL is to increase access to healthy food and physical activity resources in southeast metropolitan Fresno neighborhoods. The BHN Task Force assisted parents of Burroughs Neighborhood Elementary in forming the Burroughs Neighborhood Committee (BNC), whose goal is to create a safer and healthier neighborhood for their families to participate in physical activity. A *Walkable Community Workshop* was held on October 15, 2007, at Burroughs Elementary School led by Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission's Director for Livable Communities. During the Walk Survey of the Burroughs Neighborhood, various stops were made to point out how the built environment affects overall health and neighborhood features

that either discourage or promote safety and walkability.

On April 13, 2007, the DCH's Director-Health Officer, the County Public Works and Planning Department's (DPWP) Deputy Director and the DCH's Health Educator attended the California Center for Physical Activity Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Training. This training served as a catalyst for the DCH to engage in further conversations with the DPWP to ensure that DCH is involved in the development process. As a result, the DCH's Director-Health Officer coordinated an HIA meeting with the DCH's Environmental Health Division and DPWP on June 4, 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to have an initial discussion on HIA, the extent to which DCH is currently involved in the planning approval process, and how the DCH can effectively participate to assure that public health is incorporated into the planning approval process.

BHN members have continued collaboration with DPWP staff, local Council of Government staff, and a former County Planning Commissioner. Furthermore, the DCH's Director-Health Officer is participating on the Regional Blue Print Advisory Council and the Assistant Director is participating on the County Blue Print Roundtable to assist in developing a regional vision that will be used to guide growth in the Valley to the year 2050.

Project Description

The DCH is currently developing a strategic plan for the future. Smart growth is one of the priority objectives. The relevant smart growth objective, *Promote and advocate the development of "smart growth" to create healthy communities that improve air quality, water quality, the addition of green space, promote exercise, fresh food and healthy lifestyles* is specifically aligned with the Local Public Health and the Built Environment Project (LPHBE) and was determined a priority early in 2006. The implementation of this objective will build upon the DCH's organizational foundation and will allow the DCH to strategically strengthen its public health infrastructure and capacity to meet the needs of residents residing in Fresno County. Through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis conducted in 2007, the following strategic actions were identified to help achieve the DCH's smart growth objective: collaborate with local and regional planners, educate on urban sprawl; design and advocate for transportation options that decrease car dependency; and advocate for safe parks.

As a next step to achieve the smart growth objective, the DCH's Director-Health Officer has directed health education (project) staff within the Wellness Education and Outreach Program to increase the knowledge and skills of DCH staff to implement the DCH's smart growth objective, continue and enhance collaboration efforts with DPWP and City of Fresno Planning and Development staff, and identify community design activities that the agencies can work on collaboratively. Along with the DCH's three FTE staff dedicated to work on obesity prevention and chronic disease risk reduction efforts for the DCH, the current level of activity, as described above, demonstrates the commitment of the DCH to smart growth. The purpose of this proposal builds upon the DCH's current community built environment efforts and begins to focus efforts specifically on building the DCH's internal capacity to address the built environment.

The project will begin by engaging the Administration of the DCH and DPWP in developing a Built Environment 101 training. This training will be designed for DCH and DPWP and will be the key to any future successful and sustainable community design effort. Examples of staff participating include, but are not limited to: Environmental Health Analysts, Health Education staff, County Planners, and key Administrative staff from both departments. The project will secure Tina Zenzola, MPH, Director, Safe & Healthy Communities Consulting, to conduct the

one-day Healthy Built Environments training to include: an introduction to a menu of approaches and a "how to" for the DCH to engage in and affect the community design process. As a result of the training, participants will: improve their knowledge of land use and transportation planning policies; understand the public health sector's role and strategies for working with local planning and transportation agencies; be able to engage in the local land use decision-making process to create safer, healthier community environments; and to understand how to organize and build the capacity of their agency to address built environment issues. Additionally, project staff will develop the training packet, recruit the targeted staff and coordinate training logistics. This includes providing a boxed lunch for the participants. During the lunch section of the meeting, project staff will conduct a presentation on the DCH's Wellness Education and Outreach Program.

Following this training, project staff will sponsor the cross-disciplinary team of Ms. Zenzola and Paul Zykofsky to conduct and facilitate a Collaborative Action Workshop. The overall goal of the Collaborative Action Workshop is to strengthen working relationships between the DCH and DPWP. The City of Fresno Planning and Development will also be invited to participate in this workshop. This workshop will enable the County to foster new working relationships that will enhance the County's efforts to integrate public health into community design. During this meeting, public health will be introduced to DPWP and City of Fresno Planning and Development participants; successful collaboration models from around the United States will be examined; and specific projects that participants and their agencies can work on together to integrate public health into community design will be identified, resulting in the implementation of smart growth strategies. Additionally, Mr. Zykofsky will provide an in-depth technical presentation on how innovative community design strategies that are focused on smart growth can be incorporated into the built environment. Project staff will develop the meeting packet, recruit the targeted participants and coordinate meeting logistics. This includes providing a boxed lunch for the participants. During the lunch section of the meeting, project staff will conduct a presentation on current community and collaboration efforts. Project staff will specifically highlight the Burroughs Neighborhood Committee Walkable Community Workshop and the importance of engaging the community, a key principle in smart growth.

The implementation of these objectives will build upon the DCH's organizational foundation and will allow the DCH to strategically strengthen its public health infrastructure and capacity to meet the needs of residents residing in Fresno County.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: By May 31, 2008, conduct one specialized and in-depth training, Healthy Built Environments, to build the core competencies and skills of DCH staff to increase their capacity to promote built environment policies and processes.

Objective 2: By June 30, 2008, conduct one cross-disciplinary workshop and strategizing session, Collaborative Action Workshop, to introduce healthy built environments to the DPWP and City of Fresno Planning and Development and to identify and prioritize at least three community design activities for collaboration.

Intended Outcomes

Outcome 1: Targeted staff will have increased their knowledge and skills to ensure that DCH's smart growth objective is achieved. Once the Department has completed its Strategic Plan, the

DCH will have a commitment to smart growth strategies in place and can engage in capacity building.

Outcome 2: Participating agencies will have established an ongoing working relationship intended to incorporate public health into community design activities that are focused on smart growth strategies. These collaborations will allow the DCH, for the first time, to incorporate a public health perspective into the approval planning process. As a result of collaboration efforts, relationships will continue to grow between DCH staff and city and county planners.

Outcome 3: Participants will have identified three specific community design activities that incorporate public health to work on together. These community design activities will utilize creative and innovative strategies to incorporate smart growth into the built environment. In turn, this will benefit the residents of Fresno County through the creation of physical activity friendly neighborhoods.

Next Steps

The collaborative partnership established through this project will hold ongoing meetings to stay informed of any efforts that are or are not structured to bring improvements to the built environment. Additionally, it is anticipated that the Partnership will develop a strategic plan that includes the specific community design activities identified during the proposed project. Once a strategic plan has been developed, the Partnership will begin to implement the specific activities identified. Furthermore, the Partnership will be poised to develop and/or modify an existing public health and land use tool to assist in ensuring that public health is being incorporated into planning.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Operating Expenses (\$899)

1. Meeting Supplies (\$299) – supplies needed for training and collaboration meeting.
2. Food (\$600) – healthy food for lunch provided during the training and collaborative meeting (\$10 x 60 participants).

Training and Education Costs (\$4,100)

Trainer/Consultant (Tina Zenzola) required to facilitate Built Environment 101 training and collaboration meeting (\$3,000 = one day of training, one collaborative meeting and planning for each + \$1,100 = travel and lodging for training and meeting).

In-kind (\$890)

Expenses for time and travel of additional trainer/consultant (Paul Zykofsky) to plan and conduct the session on technical side of design at the collaborative meeting will be funded by Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program.

Project staff time is not included in the budget.