

*Shared Agendas and Common Solutions: Engaging Non-Traditional Health Partners
in Policy Change to Create Active Living Environments*

A Case Study Commissioned by the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative

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I. Introduction / background.

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (COI) is a public/private partnership whose mission is to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in San Diego County by creating healthy environments for all children and families through advocacy, education, policy development, and environmental change. COI is based on a social-ecological model that focuses on environmental and policy change addressing multiple levels of influence.¹ (see Figure 1 below).

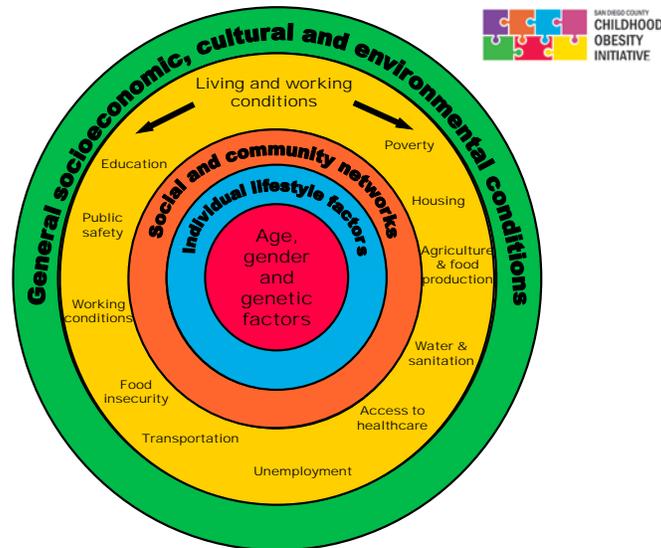


Figure 1.

To fulfill its mission, the COI mobilizes partners from seven domain areas encompassing Government, Healthcare, Schools and After School, Early Childhood, Community, Media and Business. By engaging agencies, institutions, organizations, neighborhoods, and individuals to work together to combat childhood obesity, the COI is leveraging existing resources and promising practices, inspiring new partners to join the cause, and promoting cross-collaborative opportunities.

The government domain “offers a forum for city, county, and tribal governments to advance policy and planning strategies that help establish active, healthy and thriving communities.” [www.ourcommunityourkids.org] COI’s government domain is led by leaders from County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and Department of Parks and Recreation.

II. Objectives.

A case study was designed to document the unique efforts of COI’s government domain to support and enact policy change at multiple levels of government to create healthy environments. A specific goal was to study and highlight the multidisciplinary partnerships that

have developed in working for policy change and to investigate the factors that have contributed to and challenged partnership success.

III. Methods.

Case study methodology was employed, including interviews of multidisciplinary government domain partners representing disciplines spanning public health, parks and recreation, transportation planning, architecture, city planning, and citizen advocacy. The key informants who were interviewed are listed in Appendix A.

Documentation was reviewed and analyzed, including 1) public records of laws and regulations, 2) public records of correspondence from domain members advocating for change and government documents concerning integration of advocated changes into policy, 3) lists of participants at convened symposia and other records of COI concerning domain membership and activities, 4) reports and agenda of meetings and symposia, and 5) domain partner websites.

IV. Findings.

COI has played a role in a number of specific policy and environmental changes within different jurisdictions and impacting a number of sectors. Key COI government domain policy change activities are illustrated on a timeline appearing as Figure 2.

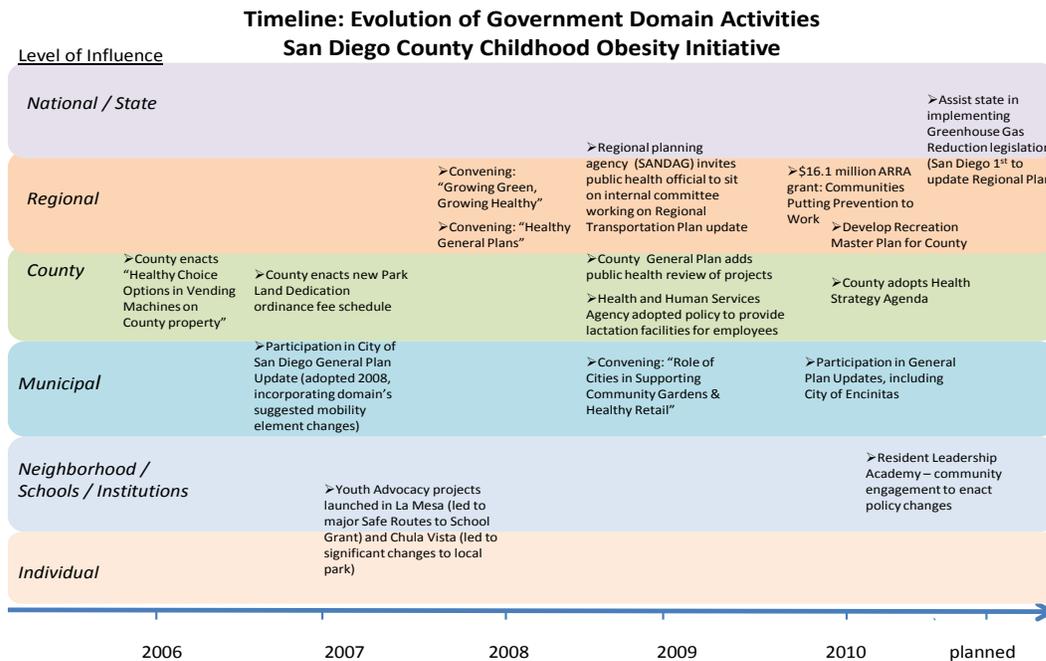


Figure 2

A. Policy change at the County level.

At the County level, the government domain's initial focus was to pursue policy and environmental change that would build on existing experience and contacts within County government. Co-chaired by Dr. Tracy Delaney of the Health and Human Services Agency and Christine LaFontant of the Department of Parks and Recreation, the government domain experienced one of its earliest policy change successes in the implementation of a "healthy choices" vending machine policy for vending machines on county property. This county-wide policy grew out of the early, local work of the County Department of Parks and Recreation to encourage healthy food choices at parks and recreation sites, and to discourage advertising of unhealthy foods. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors enacted a vending machine policy providing that all vending machines on county property must have at least 50% "healthy" choices in the machines.² This regulation was a first of its kind in the county.

Toward the end of 2006, the government domain began planning to pilot two youth engagement projects based on the Communities of Excellence model. California Department of Health Service's (CDHS) Network for a Healthy California, along with WIC, and other CDHS programs, spearheaded the initiative to adapt tobacco control's Communities of Excellence model for nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention (*Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention -CX3*). CX3 is a community planning framework that involves assessing communities in relation to a variety of nutrition and physical activity benchmarks known as community indicators and assets. The indicators are grouped into community "environments" that are based on the Social-Ecological Model and modeled after the Prevention Institute and Strategic Alliance's Environmental Nutrition and Activity Strategies Tool. In the latter part of 2006, the County of San Diego attended CX3 trainings and received permission to modify the assessments and trainings to add components relating to physical activity and active living to pilot test in the cities of Chula Vista and La Mesa. Utilizing an intergenerational approach, the local CX3 youth engagement projects recruited both youth and older adults as team members. In-depth trainings were implemented on walkability, physical activity, healthful eating, leadership and advocacy. Teams conducted walking assessments of their neighborhoods to assess walkability, availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at local stores, park environments, and advertisements of unhealthful products. Using these data, these intergenerational teams defined the approach most relevant to their community, and developed plans to advocate for changes in their neighborhoods. Chula Vista youth, promotoras (Spanish-speaking community health workers) and community partners focused on taking back a local park that was too dangerous to play in due to gangs, drugs, alcohol, litter, graffiti, transients, old play equipment, no restrooms or drinking fountains, and insufficient lighting. The Chula Vista team met with city officials and testified to the city council regarding park improvements. Their advocacy efforts resulted in removal of overgrown bushes

and a dilapidated fence, improved landscaping and lighting, a children’s play area, new restrooms, a drinking fountain, more picnic tables, trash cans, and enhanced pedestrian pathways. In La Mesa, youth and their adult mentors focused their efforts on advocating for sidewalk construction and other improvements that would support safe walking around Helix Charter High School. They developed and presented a photo essay to the Helix High Charter School Board, La Mesa City Council, and legislators in the state capitol, Sacramento. The teams’ efforts helped the City of La Mesa secure a \$550,000 Safe Routes to School Grant for the installation of sidewalks next to Helix Charter High School and \$452,000 to implement “The La Mesa Kids Walk and Roll to School” program. The new sidewalks were installed in August 2009 creating a safer and more walkable neighborhood. The Community Domain subsequently worked with COI partners to develop a program of training and technical assistance to train and support youth leaders on a countywide basis. Youth Engagement and Advocacy for Health (YEAH!)³ is an active outgrowth of the early success of the Government domain.

Other policy changes arose from the early partnerships of the government domain. Changes were made to the process for reviewing the County’s General Plan. The new internal review process provides for systematic review and comment on land use proposals by public health personnel—a first for the County.⁴ The enhanced review also marked a new partnership at the County, internally, as Public Health Services began a new relationship with the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). This relationship continues to develop with growing evidence of the impact of the built environment and community design on human health. DPLU personnel now participate on the Advisory Group guiding a major public health grant secured through stimulus funds (see discussion below).

Other efforts to impact land use planning were successful. In 2007, the Board of Supervisors voted to increase the fees developers are required to pay into the Park Land Dedication Ordinance Fund. This supports strategies identified in the COI Action Plan and recognizes the importance of park and recreation facilities to supporting livability and physical activity for the citizens of San Diego County.

Another significant policy change within the County focused on promoting and supporting lactation policies for County employees. The government domain promoted adoption of a workplace lactation policy at the County’s Health and Human Services Agency facilities that establishes dedicated lactation rooms and support for employees in all HHSA buildings.⁵ Informal reports from facilities staff and lactating employees suggest that lactation facilities are well used. The policy and HHSA’s implementation experience are viewed as a model for other government agencies, including city governments, and may also serve as a model for businesses to adopt.

A current effort of the government domain is the development of the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This project will be part of an effort for the Department of Parks and Recreation to receive national accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association. The Recreation Master Plan will include inventory of programs and facilities; community needs assessments; local, state, and national trends in recreation; activity selection methodology and program service determinants; outreach to underserved populations; program evaluation, and participant involvement; and strategic and program forecasting tools for short and long range plans (3-5 years). This collaborative effort involves bringing together local residents, recreation users, local businesses, non-profit organizations and advisory groups.

B. Collaborating for policy change at the municipal level.

Recognizing that most community design and pedestrian infrastructure is guided by policy created and administered at the local level, the government domain, through its leaders and partners, pursued means for supporting policy change at the municipal level. Co-chair Dr. Delaney attended a Smart Growth Awards meeting hosted by the San Diego / Tijuana Urban Land Institute. At that meeting, Dr. Richard Jackson made a compelling presentation about the urgency of a range of public health problems, including obesity, that are directly influenced by the built environment. He demonstrated the potential for land use and transportation policy to shape the built environment, commended County leaders pursuing healthful goals, and urged a concerted effort to continue policy change.

Dr. Jackson's presentation sparked a wave of intense interest and galvanized the work of the government domain. In the words of Urban Land Institute CEO, Mary Lydon, "it was like a lightning bolt hit San Diego." A small group of people stayed after the presentation to join forces and strategize about how to work for the changes advocated by Dr. Jackson.

At least two major projects flowed directly after the Jackson speech. The City of San Diego was undergoing an update to its General Plan in 2007, and a subcommittee of the domain had been following the process with interest, understanding that the content of the plan represented a policy blueprint that would guide future development in the City of San Diego. The subcommittee included partners representing a spectrum of disciplines, including members of the COI (HHS and others), Tierra Miguel Foundation (community supported agriculture, farm-to-school), California Project Lean (leaders encouraging activity and nutrition), International Rescue Committee (locally representing interests of East African refugees), New School of Architecture and Design, *WalkSanDiego* (regional coalition promoting walkable communities), Air Pollution Control District (County), San Diego Hunger Coalition, and MIG (planning and design consultants). Together, the group researched the potential for improved policy language in the General Plan to promote routine physical activity and improved access to

healthy food, and they submitted a six-page document of support to the City's planning department.

According to Nancy Bragado, Program Manager for San Diego's City Planning and Community Investment Department, the group's work prompted specific additions to the General Plan. "We made the plan much more specific about mobility and made the overt connection between mobility and health, including some of the specific language and references supplied by the COI's government domain subcommittee." As stated in San Diego's General Plan, "the Mobility Element's purpose is to improve mobility through development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation. . . For example, the element contains policies that will help walking become more viable for short trips, and for transit to more efficiently link highly frequented destinations, while still preserving auto-mobility network. While the City had a longstanding commitment to walkable communities, many of the specific suggestions, together with the powerful references to the health benefits of increased walking and the research supporting the role of walkable community features were ultimately incorporated in the final document, strengthening the Mobility Element. The City's acclaimed General Plan, focused around the City of Villages land use concept, was awarded the American Planning Association's prestigious award for the best comprehensive plan in the nation in 2010.

A second major project was initiated after the 2007 Jackson speech sponsored by ULI. It was clear to many in the audience, including a dynamic group of COI government domain partners, that government policies supporting a greener built environment and balanced transportation system had an important role to play in supporting health on many levels: air quality (asthma, etc.), physical activity (improved opportunities for walking and bicycling), and healthy eating (food systems, access to healthy foods). A small planning group decided it was important to bring Dr. Jackson back to San Diego, together with other local and national experts to produce an educational symposium, "Growing Green, Growing Healthy" (GGGH) that would directly educate policymakers and others in a position to support policy and environmental change. Together, the group designed the conference with the goal of "bringing together leaders in the fields of health, development and climate change to explore solutions that balance both community and economic needs, and support healthy, sustainable development in San Diego County." With funding from the Local Public Health and the Built Environment Network, a project of the California Center for Physical Activity and the EPIC branch of the California Department of Health, as well as a matching grant from The California Endowment, GGGH attracted 130 participants including local elected officials, developers, builders, architects, urban planners, transportation planners, planning commissioners, community development directors, housing officials, public health leadership, energy sector representatives, and representatives from philanthropy. Government officials spanned a variety of jurisdictions,

including at least six municipalities, the local port district, the regional transportation planning agency, and county government. With Dr. Jackson as a keynote speaker, the agenda focused on sustainability and the future, and identified goals of 1) increasing understanding of the interrelated issues of climate change, health, and land use and transportation planning; 2) increasing knowledge and application of promising practices and policies for creating healthy, sustainable communities; and 3) generating greater collaborative action on these issues among the region's elected leaders, planners, developers and public health community. In addition to bringing educational speakers, the planning committee, led by Dr. Tracy Delaney, co-chair of the government domain, designed an interactive "Next Steps" exercise to engage participants in identifying those policies and planning needed locally to promote health, resources and incentives required to move to next level, ideas for coordination of efforts, education, media and community engagement. The convening was an unqualified success, with more than 90% of participants rating the symposium "high" or "very high," with specifically high ratings about collaborative opportunities and networking possibilities .

It became immediately clear to members of the government domain that a hands-on technical assistance workshop to assist local planners in integrating health into local general plans would be a valuable service in educating staff in local communities and bringing together interested communities to network and share best practice ideas. The domain invited Richard Mitchell, Planning Director for the city of Richmond, California and Vikrant Sood from MIG, a planning consulting firm, to present Richmond's work toward integrating a Community Health and Wellness Element into the Richmond General Plan. Local officials representing eight different municipalities participated, together with representatives from County Departments of Land Use and Planning, Health and Human Services Agency, Parks and Recreation, and the Air Pollution Control District. Other participants included members of non-profit environmental organizations, academia, and health coalitions. The presenters shared concrete information about the healthy communicators they used in Richmond and demonstrated the rich, transdisciplinary process used in their city's general plan update. Following the presentations, participants were divided into groups geographically. Working with maps, each group explored the potential for applying indicators in their geographic area, discussing issues of common concern and laying the groundwork for future planning while building connections with fellow planners. For some participants, the workshop represented their first interaction with planners in neighboring communities. For at least one community, the workshop was considered important enough to close the entire department for the day so that all personnel could attend.

The government domain sought means to provide even more support and technical assistance to municipalities seeking to integrate health in their general plans. COI engaged a consultant to scan local jurisdictions and assess the status of their General Plan, as well as active living

components such as status of a bicycle master plan, healthy food access features such as farmers' markets, and elements of political, community and staff support. The consultant also began creation of tools that could be developed to provide templates and handouts for use in supporting municipalities seeking to incorporate health into General Plans and other policy documents.

Based on information learned through this process and through contacts developed in hosting workshops, the domain has proactively offered support to municipalities actively engaged in updates of their general plans. An excellent example is the City of Encinitas. City Planner Michael Strong participated in the Healthy General Plans workshop, and has maintained an ongoing relationship with the COI, which has supported the city's effort. The workshop presented emerging issues, and before attending he was not aware of some of the comprehensive indicators demonstrated at the workshop. "It was really helpful to get this information early in the process of updating the General Plan and has been of great assistance. It made me aware of how to capture some of the data; there were presentations on the use of data to map and present information like access to healthy food. . . It was good to hear about how cities were incorporating health." To date, Encinitas has held a series of community education workshops, and government domain members (COI staff and County of San Diego Public Health staff) have made presentations to the Encinitas community about regional health trends and strategies, including childhood obesity considerations. They have also served Encinitas by participating on a technical advisory committee charged with making recommendations to the City about aspects of the General Plan. As of this writing the committee is engaged in reading and commenting on a draft of "Current Conditions and Analysis Report."

While it is still relatively early in the General Update process in Encinitas, it is clear that health and criteria focused on increasing availability of active living and healthy eating will play a prominent role in the new policies and priorities. "Encinitas: yesterday, today, tomorrow: Vision Summary Report Encinitas General Plan Update" summarizes the input and priorities expressed by the community during Phase 1 of the Comprehensive General Plan Update, including those gathered through a community-wide vision workshop.⁷ The report proposes healthy community indicators and specifically identifies obesity and overweight as a policy driver favoring policies to provide opportunities for residents to meet daily physical activity needs through walking and bicycling. Improving the safety, connectivity and quality of the bicycle and pedestrian networks and creating more walkable environments and pedestrian friendly streetscapes, as well as improved public transit are named goals, as is other health related strategies such as creating a multiuse connected trail system, and supporting joint use agreements to allow public use of recreation facilities at schools and community colleges. The

document advocates for a comprehensive policy to increase healthy food choices, acknowledging that there are plenty of grocery stores available, but not enough community gardens and an overabundance of available fast food options. One goal would locate a centralized community garden with additional gardens located within walking distance of residential areas.

The domain also participated in designing and producing an additional educational forum, “Role of Cities in Supporting Community Gardens and Healthy Food Retail,” to highlight opportunities for elected officials to work for policy change. This was a collaborative presentation of 1) the Healthy Eating Active Living Cities Campaign, a partnership of the League of California Cities, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, and the Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership, 2) La Mesa Mayor Art Madrid and *Live Well La Mesa*, 3) Chula Vista City Council Member Steve Castaneda, 4) San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative, and 5) County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. Policymakers from at least nine different communities in the county attended to learn about the potential to use redevelopment and land use to support community gardens and healthy food retail and potential resources for moving forward, as well as sharing about successful approaches employed by several jurisdictions.

C. Policy partners develop at the regional level in transportation planning.

One important outgrowth of government domain collaborations to produce educational workshops and networking in connection with convening was the expansion of the role of health as a consideration in policymaking within other government and quasi-government agencies. Dr. Delaney, as co-chair of the domain and in her capacity as an official at the County’s Public Health Service was invited to speak in a variety of settings, including a workshop hosted by SANDAG in March 2009, and billed as a “Regional Planning Collaborative Workshop for Planning Commissioners and Professional Planners.” While the focus was on global climate change initiatives in the San Diego area and considerations posed by California’s SB 375, Dr. Delaney’s offering of data and information about the impact of the transportation infrastructure on physical activity and human health demonstrated the value of joining forces to strategize around implementation of the new law, a mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Significantly, Dr. Delaney was invited to join “Project Mercury,” an internal working committee at SANDAG dedicated to the update of the San Diego area’s Regional Comprehensive Transportation Plan. While SANDAG had interacted with public health professionals as members of community stakeholders’ groups, Dr. Delaney’s participation on Project Mercury represented the first time that a health professional was invited to serve as an “insider” on a working committee. As noted by SANDAG’s Stephan Vance, Senior Regional

Planner, “the public health focus is coming at just the right time. Greenhouse gas reduction is a big driver here and public health is another support. There are natural connections between public health goals and greenhouse gas reduction.” To help inform the Regional Transportation Plan update process, the internal working committee will generate a series of white papers, including a paper about the role of public health in transportation planning and Dr. Delaney will assist with the white paper. Per Vance, “the purpose is to document the case for the relationship between transportation decision making and public health outcomes. It will establish options for policy makers. The RTP will likely have an entire section on public health.”

V. Lessons Learned.

Leadership and political will on multiple levels is critical. The COI was initially conceived by two members of the County Board of Supervisors, Ron Roberts and Pam Slater Price and they have continued to support the Initiative. The County’s Public Health Officer serves as Co-Chair of the overall Initiative, together with Dr. Christine Wood, a local pediatrician and Dr. Chris Searles, associate clinical professor of family medicine and psychiatry at UCSD School of Medicine. Many local public and private organizations have devoted hundreds of hours of staff time and have integrated a commitment to reducing childhood obesity into their work as individual organizations. The composition of the Leadership Council, including local non-profit organizations (e.g. San Diego Hunger Coalition), county government (staff from Ron Roberts and Pam Slater Price’s offices), business (San Diego Padres), education (San Diego County Office of Education) and healthcare systems (Rady Children’s Hospital), provides a forum for creative solutions and a network for drawing upon expertise across sectors and for generating participation throughout the community.

The ability of the COI to provide staff time and creative energy to speak at partner events, including providing health data at municipal general plan update workshops, organizing education events, coordinating government domain partners and supporting connections between partners, as well as writing grants, has provided a unifying resource. Leadership among partners, including municipalities with longstanding interest in walkable communities and local organizations dedicated to aligned goals has been key for creating examples and support for other communities to adopt new approaches.

Finding a common agenda and shared solutions effectively engages partners from different sectors. While the business domain of COI has been slow to find an effective means to engage business in the fight against childhood obesity, the business community has played an active role in the government domain’s activities. Business is engaged through the local Urban Land Institute, including developers, architects, planners, and elected officials – all with strong connections to the land and with a vision of creating great cities, but with additional focus on

economic realities and feasibility. The increasing market for walkable and healthful communities represents a common agenda focus. While many business partners are committed to creating vibrant, livable, walkable communities, they are experiencing an increasing economic motive to design communities that support more physical activity and healthy eating.

Climate change and California's requirements contained in AB 32 /SB 375 have provided a powerful incentive to seek common solutions that are aligned with public health goals of creating environments supporting active living and healthy eating. For the first time, public health leaders were invited to participate on the internal working group of SANDAG, the regional transportation planning authority that is guiding the update of the regional transportation plan, and this suggests integration of health into the agenda of a field that has not traditionally partnered with public health. This may represent a combination of opportunity (SANDAG is compelled by new state greenhouse gas legislation to implement new standards and is the first metropolitan planning agency that will integrate new standards in a regional transportation update) and the work of many partners over the past ten or fewer years to build understanding of the connections between the built environment and health. As observed by Stephan Vance of SANDAG, "it is really understood now that street design / transportation infrastructure is related to the propensity to be active. We are seeing that health must play a role in the way we make funding decisions. It is also driving decisions about the data we collect. We have never been able to say how many people in San Diego County walk or ride bicycles because it is not something we measured. But now our transportation modelers are saying we need this data."

Health data about the importance of built environments that support more physical activity has proven synergistic. Andy Hamilton, Board President and co-founder of *WalkSanDiego*, a local advocacy group believes that the public health component has helped create an atmosphere of acceptance of climate change and observes that there are "co-benefits" of decreased Vehicle Miles Travelled and increased walking and bicycling, and this may a more powerful motivator than either outcome alone.

Public health's role has evolved, and holds great potential for guiding future change. Public health by its nature, is focused on health problems that affect the community at large, yet many of these challenges have historically been addressed using individual behavior change strategies (e.g. smoking cessation programs). Policy and environmental change is a relatively new approach and public health enjoyed much success employing this model in addressing tobacco use. Experience in tobacco led public health to new collaborations with outside agencies. Addressing obesity, physical inactivity and unhealthy eating is an even more complex challenge that is requiring an even more complex solution. Collaboration with partners across

the ecological spectrum is requiring concerted leadership to bridge the gaps between disciplines. Michael Stepner, an architect and academician associated with the NewSchool of Architecture in San Diego, is quick to point out the public health roots of planning and architecture, including issues relating to the importance of nature, recreation and green space. But in reflecting on his own career, he could not think of many interactions with local health officials until his recent collaboration in promoting active living in community design. “Until now, it was confined to negotiating with health officials concerned about food safety about the benefits of outdoor cafes.” All of that has changed. Stepner (architecture), Vance (transportation planning), Hamilton (advocacy), Bragado (urban planning), and Lydon (business), all point to the leadership and compelling gravitas that public health has brought to the movement to create active living and healthy eating environments. The NewSchool of Architecture has already invited Dr. Delaney and others to speak on issues of public health and the school is in the process of designing courses that will be devoted to the intersection of architecture and public health.

Working across disciplines, across sectors, and across jurisdictions provides a powerful approach to complex challenge. The government domain has been an active domain from the inception of the COI. The original intent of the government domain was to build public health capacity; however, their work evolved to encompass land use, facilities planning, community assessments, urban planning and community design. The government domain has been very active in engaging partners throughout the County of San Diego, and has successfully brought together many partners, including SANDAG, the Urban Land Institute, the New School of Architecture, WALKSanDiego, HHSA regions and community leaders and youth to participate in a variety of projects. Integration across disciplines is also evident in the co-leadership of the domain. The County Parks and Recreation Department has played a vital role. The local representative of the California Parks and Recreation Society was a key leader in creating the Action Plan, and set the stage for the County Parks and Recreation Department staff to serve as strong leaders within this domain. The County Parks and Recreation staff have been at the forefront of advocating for healthier vending machine policies, providing and advertising physical activity programs for children and families, and working closely with the county, regions and municipalities to create a healthier environment within the parks and recreation realm. The Co-Chair from the Parks and Recreation Department has also assumed a leadership role in a state organization where she is able to share the success of her work in San Diego County. Domain co-chair Christine LaFontant recently observed that the department’s participation had resulted intangible benefits internally; the department’s facilities division has actively sought her input in determining park design and amenities, recognizing that design affect the potential for increased physical activity.

Offering value and support to non-traditional health partners is essential. Providing educational symposia on topics of mutual interest effectively engaged urban planners, transportation planners, policymakers, and developers as well as more traditional public health partners. It provided vision about what is possible and concrete ideas and tools for creating policy change. It also provided networking opportunities and built “bridges” across disciplines. An example is seen in collaboration among partners attending a partner event who successfully proposed revisions to the City of San Diego’s General Plan. This group included representatives from planning and design, architecture, philanthropy (supporting community supported agriculture), public health, county air pollution control, several citizen advocacy groups (with varied agendas such as promoting walking, preventing hunger, and supporting interests of East African immigrants).

Moving into the future; continuing to leverage opportunity.

Stimulus funds secured by County’s Health and Human Services Agency.

HHS was able to capitalize on the work of multiple efforts including the Chronic Disease Agenda, the Health Strategy Agenda, the Nutrition Security Plan and the COI and its established infrastructure to secure a \$16 million ARRA grant that began March 2010. The project, Communities Putting Prevention to Work, will leverage existing efforts and includes provisions for development of a health impact and forecasting assessment tool, assistance in integrating health into regional comprehensive transportation and land use policies, creating a healthy communities campaign that will include grants for local communities to support planning for changes supportive of active living and access to healthy foods. Participation in COI domain workgroups is a requirement for subcontractors, and the sustainability of the activities funded under this grant includes mobilizing and integrating this work into COI. Providing concrete resources in the form of grants (Healthy Cities Campaign) and technical assistance can be expected to accelerate policy and environmental change in the county, deepen partnership connections, engage community residents, and, sustain and continue policy change.

Sharing lessons learned. California’s SB 375 compels local planning agencies to engage in planning that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled. SANDAG is currently engaging in the first Regional Transportation Plan update in the state. While the planning process includes many steps to come, Dr. Delaney hopes to demonstrate the benefit of engaging public health officials and community collaboratives in the process and hopes to share this with state officials and other communities as they, too, begin the process.

Continued support of multi-jurisdictional policy change. The County of San Diego has adopted a 10-year Health Strategy Agenda that builds on four major themes: a) building a better system, b) supporting healthy choices, c) pursuing policy changes for a healthy environment, and d) improving the culture from within. The guiding philosophy of this agenda is that the county can only succeed with the implementation by engaging and involving community partners from across disciplines. Achievement of systemic change can only occur with collaboration and co-investment of community partners. The implementation of the Agenda will unfold over coming years and is likely to influence policy change in County government, particularly given the specific incorporation of active living and healthy eating goals in the Agenda. Municipalities in the County are likely to continue to work toward integrating health policies supporting active living and healthy eating, particularly given the new availability of funds for the Healthy Cities Campaign. The development of resources such as the GIS-based health impact assessment tool that is part of the CPPW grant, and the continued development of existing data and potential tools for mapping and public interface and use of these data (currently under discussion by COI's evaluation team and the County of San Diego's Health Statistics Unit) will also provide resources and tools that municipalities, organizations, and neighborhood groups can use to work toward policy and environmental change.

Conclusions.

As research continues to reveal the characteristics of the built environment that support and inhibit physical activity, the translation of this information into policy change requires creative partnerships. While chronic disease has traditionally been the exclusive province of health departments, rich partnerships across many fields and sectors are essential to implement policy change and create healthy built environments. The COI's government domain has successfully embraced the ecological model at multiple levels, created vibrant new partnerships, enjoyed significant early policy change successes, and laid the groundwork for significant future impact through solid, synergistic partnership relationships. The model represented by San Diego County's Childhood Obesity Initiative, and the approach of the government domain is successfully marshalling the "unique ability of humans to plan creatively for healthy communities" envisioned by Dr. Richard Jackson.

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Attachment A: List of key informants interviewed

1. Tracy Delaney, PhD, RD, Chronic Disease and Health Disparities County of San Diego, Public Health Services, MCFHS
2. Cheryl Moder, San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative.
3. Christine Lafontant, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department.
4. Cory Linder, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department.
5. Stefan Vance, San Diego Area Association of Governments (SANDAG).
6. Michael Stepner, NewSchool of Architecture, San Diego, California.
7. Mary Lydon, San Diego / Tijuana Urban Land Institute.
8. Andrew Hamilton, San Diego Air Pollution Control District.
9. Michael Strong, City of Encinitas Planning Department.
10. Nancy Bragado, City of San Diego Planning and Community Investment Department.