

## Health Element Recommendations

While the Health Element makes many strong commitments, we see additional opportunities to be more aggressive. In general:

- The relationships with local city governments should be more clearly defined earlier to strengthen the collaboration process and decision-making on aligned goals. Decisions for land-use and general plan policies, which greatly influence community health, are made at the local level.
- The challenges of active living and dependence on the automobile should be addressed across more sections, such as Social and Emotional Health and Housing to demonstrate relationship.

Comments on specific sections are included below.

### Section A: Health Conditions, Equity and Access

**Strategy #1:** Improve health for all residents through a “Health in All Policies” approach and countywide collaboration (Page A-6)

HE-A.3            Health Impact Assessments – strengthen from, “Consider the use of health impact assessments or similar tools to evaluate how policies, programs, strategic plans and capital projects can improve public health,” to “**Require the use of health impact assessments or similar tools to evaluate how policies, programs, strategic plans and capital projects can improve public health.**”

### Section B: Social and Emotional Health

**Strategy #3:** Prevent and effectively address harmful habitual and addictive behaviors. (Page B7)

Suggested Policy: Create policy that addresses behavior reliant on automobiles and the comforts of a sedentary lifestyle. While existing policies in Strategy 3 are important, no policies exist addressing current behaviors of sedentary lifestyles and car-centric communities.

Note: Section C: Land Use and Urban Design and Section D: Active and Sustainable Transportation contain more language on active commuting and built environments, but current behaviors greatly influence our commute choices and sedentary lifestyles and should be addressed across sections to demonstrate relationship.

HE-B.XX            **Attractive alternative transportation.** Encourage and provide attractive alternative transportation options, such as complete streets for walking, biking and public transit.

HE-B.XX            **Active living.** Establish local temporary pop-up activities and alternative innovative options to activate and bring life into formerly empty areas, such as

- unused parking lots, empty storefronts and blighted parks, etc. to encourage active exploration and decrease the usual habits of a sedentary lifestyle.
- HE-B-XX **Built environments.** Encourage healthy built environments that create life on streets with pedestrians, bicyclists and slow driving speeds. Encourage built environments to have food and entertainment destinations, places to people watch, transit connections to other places and residents actively commuting to work.
- HE B-XX **Active transportation education.** County-wide campaign at neighborhood level educating communities on active commuting, neighborhood by neighborhood.
- HE-B.XX **Age-in-Place.** Improve access, either via Information and Assistance (I&A) or physical transportation networks to needed services to enable older and disabled adults in the community to remain at home (age in place) for as long as possible.

### Section C: Land Use and Urban Design

The relationship between the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission, Santa Clara and the cities are important to know, when addressing how these agencies have worked jointly over the last 35 years to implement countywide urban growth management policies, which has impacted urban housing and land development and ultimately neighborhood environments. This should be highlighted earlier.

Suggested Policy: Create policy that addresses land use and urban design that encourages active living. While existing policies in Strategy 3 are important, no policy exist addressing current behaviors of sedentary lifestyles and car-centric communities.

#### **Strategy #3: Design and build new development at the project level for health and sustainability. (Page C-6)**

- HE-C.XX **Active living.** Promote a healthy built environment by designing communities for active living through attractive and safe entertainment areas that create life on streets with pedestrians, bicyclists and slow driving speeds. Encourage built environments to have food and entertainment destinations, places to people watch, transit connections to other destinations and residents actively commuting to work.
- HE-C.XX **Age-in-Place.** Promote and design environments with accessibility to needed services to enable older and disabled adults in the community to remain at home (age in place) for as long as possible.

### Section D: Active and Sustainable Transportation

- Strategy #2: Develop a robust pedestrian and bicycle network that enables active transportation for both recreation and transportation.**

HE-D.XX **Safe Routes to Senior Centers.** Inspired by the Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) in Policy HE-D-15, use the SR2S framework for the concept of Safe Routes to Senior Centers.

HE-D.XX **Lower Speed Zones.** Promote a comprehensive countywide, lower speed zone around schools and community and senior centers. Decrease from 25-40 mph to 15 mph. Encourage the use of such policies to protect vulnerable users on the street.

**Strategy #3: Provide balanced, innovative transit systems and services.**

HE-D.XX **Competitive Environment.** Identify incentives to encourage competition of transportation services within the region, creating system innovation and improvements.

## Section H: Healthy Housing

**Strategy #2: Inventory and improve housing and neighborhood-level conditions, quality and other environmental factors that contribute to poor health outcomes.**

HE-H.XX **Transportation Connection.** Improve and create sustainably active transportation connections and transportation services between home and destination.

## Section I: Violence Prevention and Safety

Additional strategy suggested.

**Strategy #4: Prevent and reduce elder violence**

HE-I.XX Elder violence response. Improve coordination and policies to ensure effective response to incidents of reported elder violence. Expand outreach and education with immigrant communities on law enforcement protocols.

HE-I.XX Elder violence prevention. Support comprehensive education for seniors, professionals, caregivers, and the public on abuse. Strengthen referral system to support groups for spouses. Encourage the completion of a power of attorney or a living will. Encourage staying active in community and having strong connections with friends. Encourage posting and opening own mail. Support comprehensive education on fraud and knowing your rights. (National Council on Aging)

HE-I.XX Health care screening. Implement best practice elder violence screening, reporting, and referral policies within the health care system.

## Section F

**HE-F.6** – “Promote and expand existing marketing and distribution initiatives that connect local agriculture, **including small urban farms and home grown produce**, to new markets .....

We would like to see the county implement AB 1990 in a way that makes produce from urban and neighborhood agriculture an “approved source,” thereby providing a low-cost, local produce source to small retailers (i.e. cornerstores). Sonoma/Napa/Mendocino counties have a model that includes a simple, online self-certification process whereby the producer gets a certified grower’s permit from the Agriculture Department.

We would like to ask the County to replicate the Sonoma/Napa/Mendocino Counties’ model for making produce from urban and neighborhood agriculture an “approved source” that can be sold to cornerstores, and Fresh Carts. The model includes a simple, online self-certification process whereby the producer gets a certified grower’s permit from the Ag. Dept.

**HE-F.7** – We would like to see a commitment to implementing AB551, which is an important state policy that creates new opportunities for Counties and Cities to expand urban agriculture.

**HE-F.19** – In addition to encouraging acceptance of food assistance programs, we would like the County to invest in creating financial incentives for redemption (i.e. Market Match of Double Bucks). The Federal Government has approved \$100 million in match dollars to incentivize purchasing of produce by food stamp recipients. The funding, however, requires a local match. We also expect the federal allocation to grow over the next few years, which create new opportunities, as well as new demand for local investment.