



Background Report 3 of 3: Healthy Community Element Topics Report

October 2015

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
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**City of Vallejo
Report on Topics for the
Healthy Community Element**

**Prepared by
The Center for Sustainable Communities
Sonoma State University
October 2015**

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**Appendix A – Solano County Department of Public Health
Community Health Surveys**

Attachment 1 (under separate cover)

“Healthy Communities Elements in General Plans: Insights from Current Practice and Considerations for the City of Vallejo,” Sonoma State University Center for Sustainable Communities

Attachment 2 (under separate cover)

“South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment,” Sonoma State University Center for Sustainable Communities

City of Vallejo

Report on Topics for the Healthy Community Element, General Plan Update

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I. Introduction -- Purposes and Functions of the Topics Report

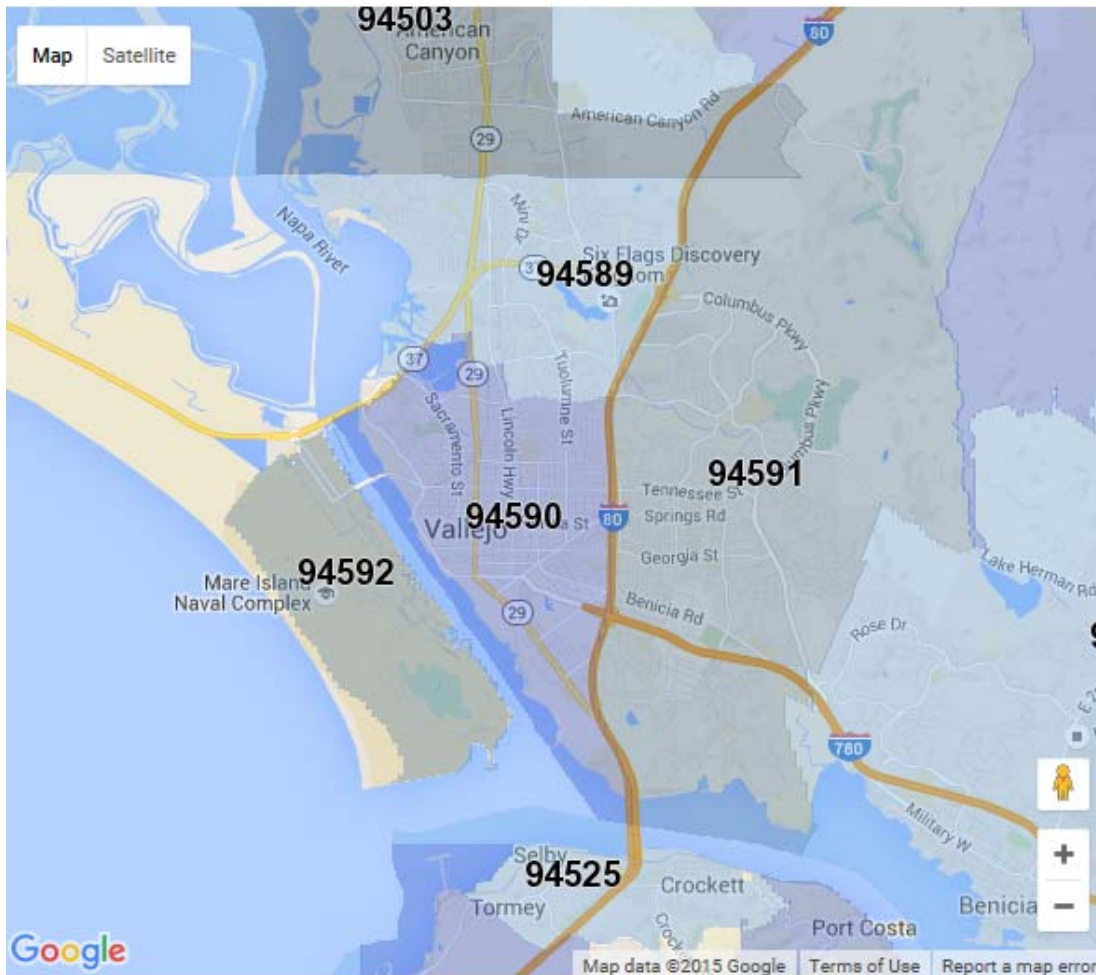
Including healthy community elements in California general plans is an increasingly widespread, though not universal, practice. And the range of potential topics for such topics is virtually endless. Thus, a critical step in developing a healthy community element is determining which topics to address. This Report outlines a variety of actions taken to result in recommended topics for the Healthy Community Element of Vallejo's General Plan, including:

- Summarizing existing community health conditions in Vallejo (Section II)
- Summarizing the results of a series of outreach efforts regarding health concerns with the City's General Plan Working Group, community members, City and other professional staff, representatives of non-profits and the faith-based community, etc. (Section III)
- Reviewing selected healthy community elements from other general plans (Section IV)
- Based on the above, identifying recommended topics for the Vallejo's Healthy Community Element (Section V)
- Identifying existing community health resources in Vallejo to aid in addressing recommended topics (Section VI)

II. Vallejo's Existing Health Conditions

Health issues in Vallejo center on heart disease, cancer, stroke, asthma, diabetes, and mental health and substance abuse. In addition, unintentional injury (including motor vehicle crashes and pedestrian injuries), assault, and homicide present significant health concerns.

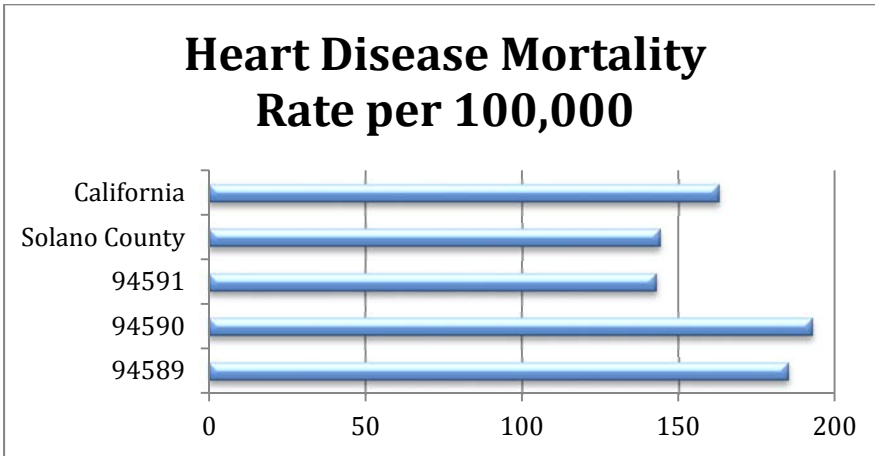
In many cases, there are health disparities based on area of residence within Vallejo and corresponding differences in income and other social determinants. Of Vallejo's ZIP Codes, 94589 and 94590 show significantly poorer health characteristics than ZIP code 94591. In ZIP Code 94590, approximately one out of every four residents is below the federal poverty line. Both ZIP Codes 94589 and 94590 show higher percentages of elderly in poverty, children in poverty, and unemployment than Solano County as a whole or than the State of California. In many cases, the percentages are twice that of the County average. A higher percentage of residents living in these two ZIP Codes are also without health insurance or are living with a disability.



Vallejo Zip Codes; UnitedStatesZipCodes.Org

Heart disease

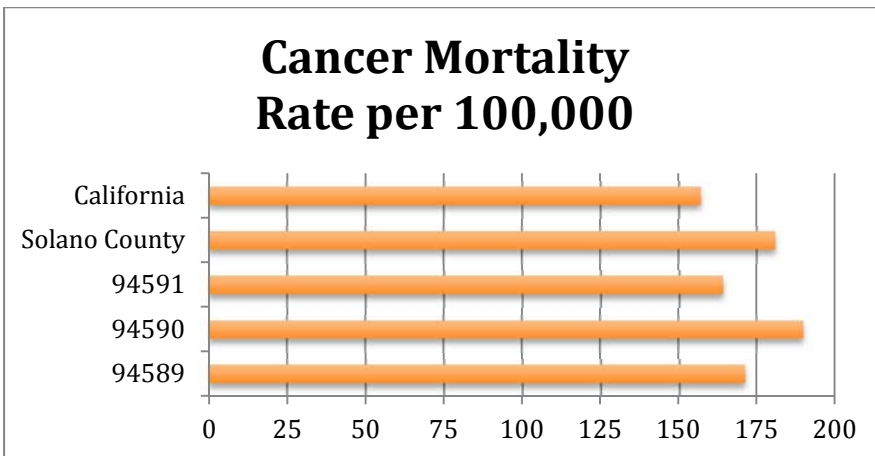
The two leading causes of death in Vallejo are heart disease and cancer. Vallejo ZIP Code 94591 has a similar mortality rate for Ischemic Heart Disease (heart problems caused by narrowed heart arteries) as the Solano County rate of 144 deaths per 100,000 population. However, both ZIP Codes 94589 and 94590 have higher rates: 185 deaths per 100,000 in 94589 and 193 deaths per 100,000 in 94590.



California Department of Public Health, 2010-12

Cancer

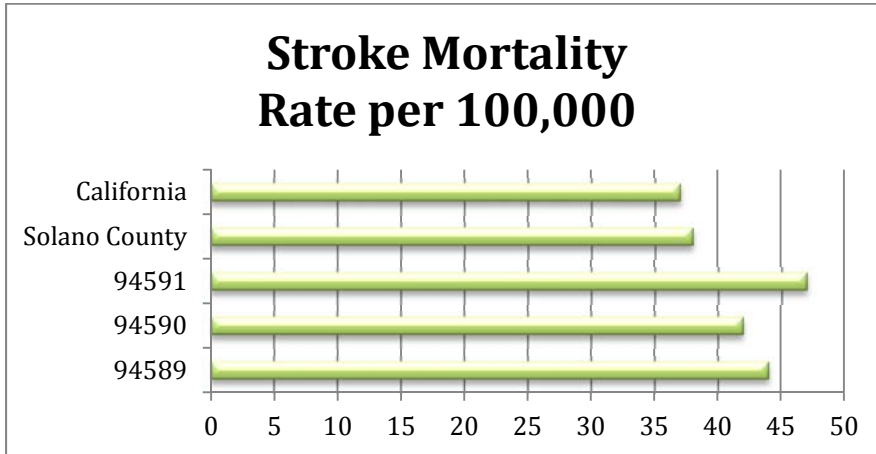
As noted above, cancer and heart disease are the two leading causes of death in Vallejo. Cancer mortality for Vallejo ZIP Codes 94589 and 94591 are lower than the Solano County rate of 181 deaths per 100,000 population. However, as is the case for heart disease mortality, Vallejo zip code 94590 has the highest rate, at 190 deaths per 100,000. This rate is also higher than the County rate. Rates of visits to the emergency department for lung cancer in Vallejo exceed those of the County, and far exceed the statewide rates.



California Department of Public Health, 2010-12

Stroke

Death from stroke is also very high in Vallejo. All three Vallejo ZIP Codes exceed the Solano County rate of 38 per 100,000 population. The rate for Vallejo zip codes ranges from 42 to 47 deaths per 100,000.

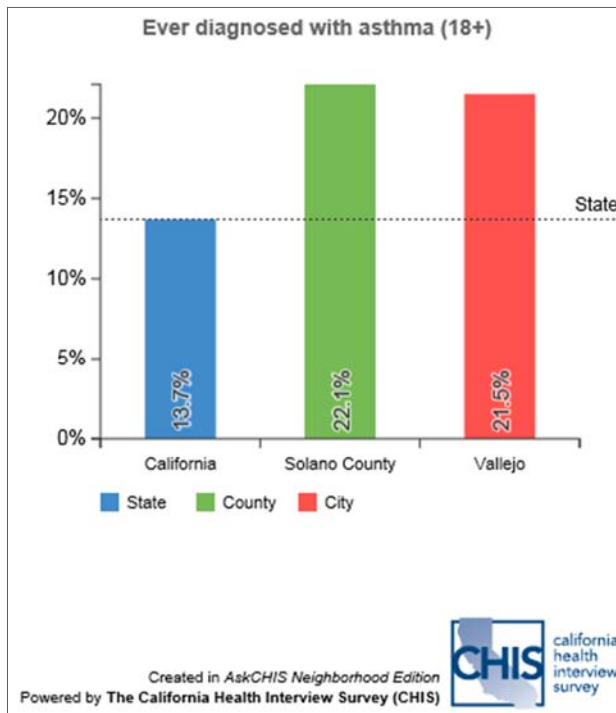


California Department of Public Health, 2010-12

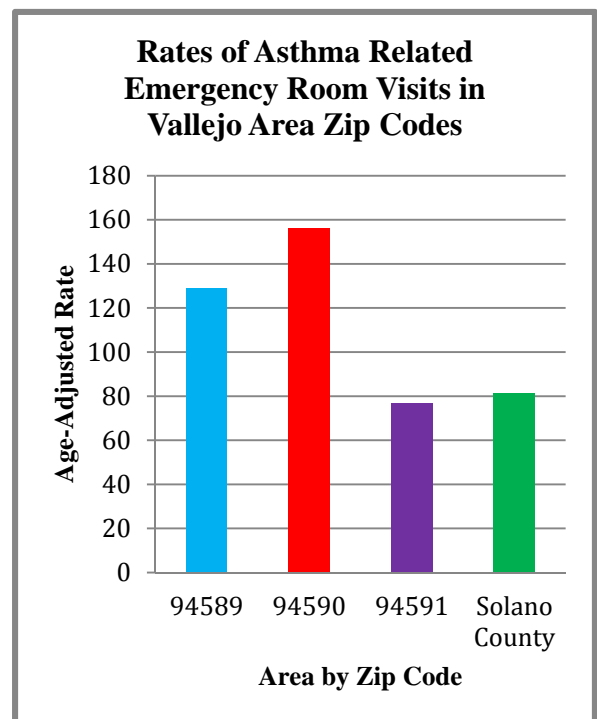
Four modifiable health risk behaviors—lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption—are significant contributors to the illness, suffering, and early death from heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Smoking rates are high in Solano County and in Vallejo. According to the UCLA Community Health Interview Survey, 20.5% of the adult populations in Vallejo are current smokers. This is higher than the average for Solano County, 14%.

Asthma

Asthma is a very common chronic disease that occurs in all age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asthma affects roughly 1 in 9 Americans. This condition essentially irritates and causes swelling of the airways that carry oxygen to and from the lungs resulting in complications such as shortness of breath, wheezing, and chest tightness. If not properly managed, asthma has a morbidity and mortality similar to that of diabetes and liver cirrhosis (Bousquet, Bousquet, Godard & Daures, 2005). According to self-reported data calculated from the California Health Interview Survey, 21.5% of adults in Vallejo have been diagnosed with asthma (compared to just 13.7% of all California adults), and 16.1% of children have been diagnosed with asthma which is roughly 1% percent higher than Solano County as a whole (CHIS, 2014). According to the California Department of Public Health, in 2012 there were 1,319 asthma-related visits to the emergency room in Vallejo. Furthermore, the rate of asthma-related emergency room visits was 1.92 times higher (156.2) in South Vallejo (Zip Code 94590) than that of Solano County as a whole (81.3) (CDPH, 2014).



California Health Interview Survey, 2014

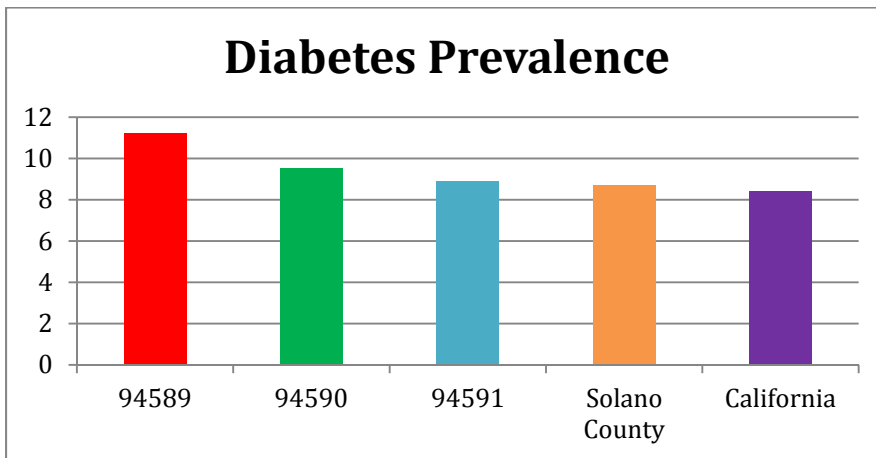


Indoor air quality, air pollution, allergens, and secondhand smoke are all factors that affect individuals with asthma. Promoting new development that meets current EPA standards and locating new development away from major highways or areas where high concentrations of air pollutants such as particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and ground level ozone are found can mitigate the incidence and prevalence of asthma. Reducing pollen count and secondhand smoke exposure, as well as implementing smoking bans can also improve conditions that trigger asthma and asthma attacks.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that is becoming more prevalent in the United States. Diabetes arises when blood glucose levels are consistently above normal and the pancreas cannot produce enough insulin to allow for the sugar in the blood to get into the cells of the body. The current prevalence of adults ever diagnosed with diabetes in Vallejo is 9.6% (CHIS, 2014). In South Vallejo, area code 94589, adults have a prevalence of diabetes of 11.2% (CHIS, 2014).

Prevention is key to decreasing incidence of diabetes. Diet and exercise can be important factors in prevention.

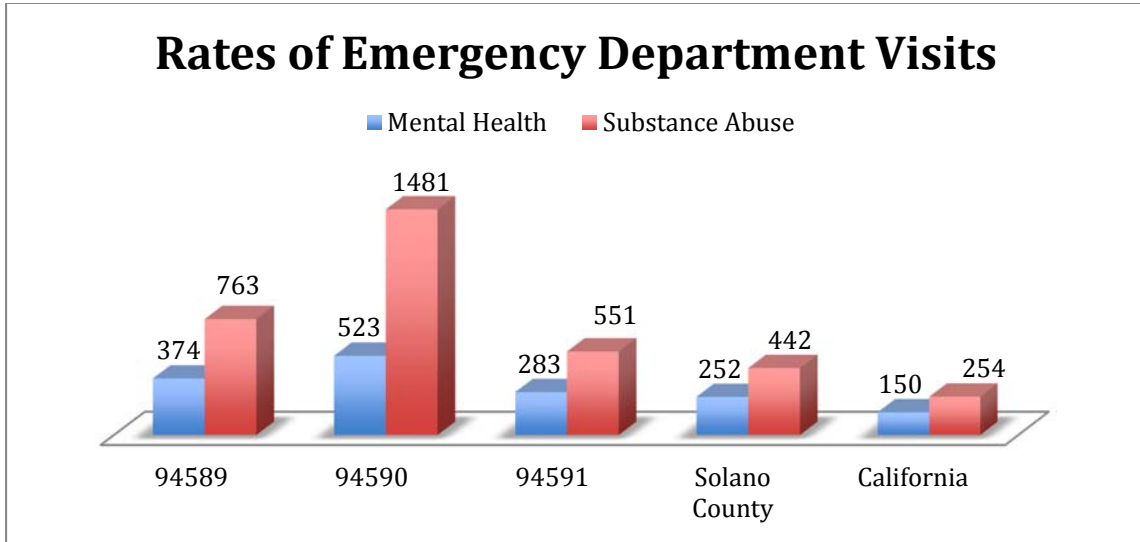


California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2014

Mental Health and Substance Use

Vallejo residents identify mental health and substance abuse as two of the biggest health issues in Vallejo. Emergency department usage for those two conditions illustrate the extent of the problem.

While the causes of mental health problems are varied, the significance of the built environment, access to open space, and similar factors as means of addressing those problems is well documented.

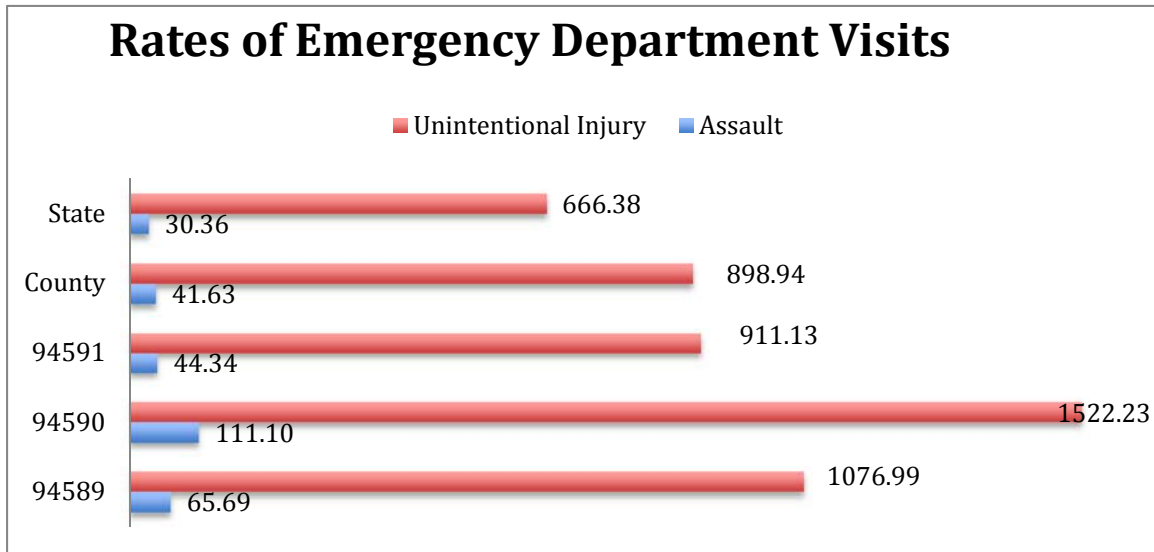


California's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD), 2011-2013

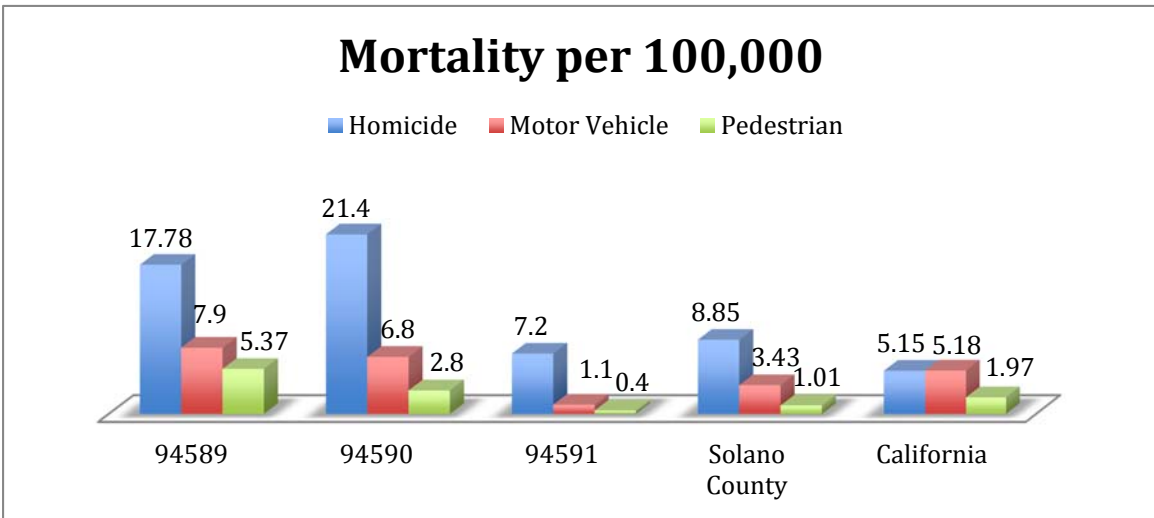
Unintentional Injury (including motor vehicle crashes and pedestrian injuries), Assault, and Homicide

The rates of emergency department use for unintentional injury, including motor vehicle crashes and pedestrian injuries, and assault illustrate the disparities across Vallejo’s ZIP Codes. Solano County has higher rates than the state and ZIP Code 94591’s rates are similar to the County’s rates. However, significantly higher rates are seen for ZIP Codes 94589 and 94590.

Vallejo’s rates may be higher in part because of higher emergency department use in general, but the discrepancies are also illustrated in mortality data; Vallejo has high rates of death from motor vehicle accidents, pedestrian accidents, and homicides. Pedestrian mortality in ZIP Code 94589 is five times the County rate. These rates could be improved through safer pedestrian and motor vehicle environments and a reduction in violence.



California's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD), 2011-2013



California Department of Public Health, 2010-12

III. Community Health Concerns

In addition to the review of Vallejo's existing community health conditions in Section II of this Report, a variety of outreach activities helped to create a sense of community health concerns. They included:

- Community Workshops leading to adoption of Guiding Principles adopted by the City Council for the Propel Vallejo planning effort
- The Guiding Principles themselves
- Meeting with the General Plan Working Group
- Interviews with a variety of community members, City and other professional staff, and representatives of non-profits
- A Health Impact Assessment for South Vallejo, including a series of community workshops
- Solano County Department of Public Health Community Health Surveys

Each of these outreach activities is described below.

A. Community Workshops

The City held a series of four Community Workshops during the spring of 2014, leading to the City Council's adoption of a set of Guiding Principles for the Propel Vallejo planning effort (described below).

The Workshops provided a sense of community concerns across a wide range of topics, including health, and related to various parts of Vallejo. Among the topics receiving the most attention from Workshop attendees were safety; public transit, bicycling, and walkability; access to healthy food; and parks, recreation opportunities, and youth programs.

B. Guiding Principles

As a critical step in the Propel Vallejo planning effort, the Vallejo City Council identified 19 Guiding Principles (<http://propelvallejo.com/overview/guiding-principles/>). Among those that relate closely to community health are:

Healthy Community: Vallejo promotes the health of its residents and recognizes the value of a proactive, preventative approach to health. All Vallejo neighborhoods have easy access to healthy food, including organic food and locally grown food from school and community gardens. (Guiding Principle 7)

Safe City: Vallejo is a safe place for everyone. Residents and businesses in every neighborhood collaborate with each other and with responsive law enforcement to promote personal safety. (Guiding Principle 3)

Caring and Equitable Community: Vallejo treats everyone with compassion, dignity, and fairness and supports stable, diverse neighborhoods. It is a caring community where everyone has access to services, jobs and housing and shares in the vitality and prosperity of the community. (Guiding Principle 4)

C. Meeting with General Plan Working Group

In October of 2014, Vallejo Planning staff and Sonoma State University’s Center for Sustainable Communities met with the City’s General Plan Working Group (GPWG) to address the Healthy Community Element proposed for the City’s new General Plan. This discussion included an introduction to the “healthy community planning” movement, how this might translate into content of the Vallejo General Plan, and the role an upcoming Health Impact Assessment focused on South Vallejo could play in developing the Plan’s Healthy Community Element.

Among the input provided by the GPWG were contacts related to South Vallejo: leaders in the faith-based community, key City staff, members of the Participatory Budgeting steering committee, critical educational institutions and community organizations, and homeowners associations. Suggested potential topics for further consideration included improving access to healthy food (e.g., through “corner store makeovers” and identifying locations for farmers markets), improving waterfront and beach access, reducing risks to bicyclists and pedestrians from automobiles, reducing crime and improving safety, and “urban greening” (e.g., by adding street trees).

D. Interviews with Community Members, City and Other Professional Staff, Representatives of Non-Profits, Etc.

Through meetings, phone interviews, and other outreach efforts described below, City Planning staff and the Center for Sustainable Communities received a variety of opinions and insights.

Participants included:

- Guy Ricca and Anne Putney, Vallejo Housing Authority
- Pastor Bryan Harris, Emmanuel Temple Apostolic Church
- City of Vallejo Police Department (Captain Lee Horton, Captain Jim O’Connell, and Lieutenant Michael Nichelini)
- Shane McAfee, Director, and Phillip McCoy, Recreation Superintendent, Greater Vallejo Recreation District)
- John Allen, Fighting Back Partnership
- Kevin Sharps, Executive Director, Fighting Back Partnership
- Lisa Marie Gerhard, St. Vinnie’s Garden
- Maria Guevara, Vallejo Together
- Alea Gage, Economic Development Project Manager, City of Vallejo (formerly staff for Vallejo’s Participatory Budgeting program)
- Alyssa Alford, City of Vallejo Administrative Analyst

- Pricilla VanLiew, MPH, Registered Environmental Health Specialist and South Vallejo resident

While these interviews were conducted within the context of the South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment described in Section III.E, below, many of the discussions and comments received addressed citywide issues or otherwise have applicability beyond South Vallejo. The comments of interviewees are summarized in the South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment, Attachment 2 of this report. Though the range of issues raised reflected the variety of perspectives interview participants brought, some topics were mentioned repeatedly, including:

- absence of a grocery store in South Vallejo
- adding additional community and school gardens
- residents being less inclined to walk due to safety concerns
- children being less likely to play outside due to safety concerns
- need for more youth programs
- need for more children’s playgrounds and teen and senior centers
- need for recreation and other after-school activities
- need for an expanded bike path network
- adding additional access to the Vallejo waterfront
- better utilization of Lake Dalwigk
- need for more urban green space to increase perceptions of safety and community pride
- too many alcohol outlets
- loss of the police substation in South Vallejo
- need for economic development and job creation
- lack of housing opportunities

E. South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment Workshops

Utilizing resources made available by a grant from California’s Strategic Growth Council, the Center for Sustainable Communities proposed undertaking a Health Impact Assessment for a portion of the City to inform the update of Vallejo’s General Plan. This “HIA” would focus on how the new General Plan and, in particular, its Healthy Community Element, can be utilized to improve public health. In this way, it would function primarily as a “health opportunity assessment,” with the goal of maximizing the health benefits of the General Plan Update. Working with City staff, South Vallejo, one of eight “Opportunity Areas” used in the General Plan Update’s Community Workshops held in early 2015 to develop a set of “Future Scenarios,” was selected. South Vallejo represents a number of the public health concerns, including those present in varying degrees in other portions of the City.

As part of the South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment (Attachment 2 of this Report), three community workshops were held in February 2015 to solicit ideas on ways to improve community health in South Vallejo. Approximately 40 members of the public

attended the three workshops and provided input on several community health concerns: increasing active recreation and transportation, improving access to healthy foods in South Vallejo, and improving safety. (Comments are included as part of Attachment 2 of this Report.) In addition, a questionnaire, also in Attachment 2, was distributed to members of a variety of community groups.

Food Access

Participants noted that it is difficult to access a full range of groceries in South Vallejo and that a bigger grocery store is needed in the area. Suggestions for locating a new grocery store included the vacant lot at Magazine Street and Sonoma Avenue, Lincoln Road East, and Lake Dalwigk. Participants pointed out that bus service in South Vallejo ends at 7 pm, too early to serve food shopping for many people. They also pointed out that convenience stores are generally limited in their offering of healthy food (e.g., fresh fruits and vegetables).

Active Recreation and Transportation

A recurring theme was that parks in South Vallejo, such as Lake Dalwigk Park, are generally unsafe and underutilized. Participants said that improving them by providing, for example, safe playgrounds, would encourage residents to use them more. A new park was suggested for the Sheridan Street and 6th Street area.

Participants also raised the need for an improved and expanded the network for bicycling and walking (e.g., completing the disconnected sidewalk sections on Sonoma Boulevard, adding safe crossings for pedestrians at the cross streets of Sonoma Boulevard, creating pedestrian access to the South Vallejo waterfront, adding all-weather trails for bikes and pedestrians to the Lake Dalwigk area).

Safety

Related to active recreation and transportation, a number of residents said they do not feel safe walking in South Vallejo, particularly at night. Some comments regarding safety were:

“Go inside before dark.”

“Dangerous, particularly at night.”

“I live here and I don’t feel safe.”

“I have lived here for 1 ½ years and I don’t feel safe in Vallejo.”

“In dark areas, shooting and drugs happen.”

Participants also identified specific needs relating to improved street lighting and slowing automobile traffic in certain key locations.

F. Solano County Department of Public Health Community Health Survey

Beginning in 2014, the Solano County Department of Public Health, as part of a Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, conducted a series of Community Health Surveys at 30 different community events and meetings throughout Solano County. The results from approximately 300 surveys completed by Vallejo residents offer important data to help inform Vallejo's Healthy Community Element. The results of these surveys are included as Appendix A of this Report.

IV. What Can Be Learned From Other Healthy Community Elements?

As an early step in the preparation of Vallejo's Healthy Community Element, Sonoma State University's Center for Sustainable Communities prepared a working paper, "Healthy Communities Elements in General Plans: Insights from Current Practice and Considerations for the City of Vallejo" (the "Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper" or "Working Paper," Attachment 1 to this Report). The purpose of this Working Paper was to inform the form and content of Vallejo's Healthy Community Element. The Working Paper looked at healthy community elements adopted in the cities of Richmond and San Pablo and Riverside County, along with an element under development in Santa Clara County. The Working Paper was structured around six questions:

- What is the scope of the element (which topics are addressed)?
- What data sources were used?
- What are some of the noteworthy policies and implementation actions?
- How is the healthy community element integrated with other general plan elements?
- What approaches to collaboration are present?
- Are there aspects of the element of particular interest to Vallejo?

1. What is the scope of the element (i.e., which topics are addressed)?

One of the things that characterizes healthy community elements is the degree to which they address different topics. The range of potential topics is virtually endless and a critical step in developing an element is determining which topics to address. The four elements reviewed for the Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper share certain topics (e.g., active transportation, such as walking and bicycling; healthy eating). There are also topics that are unique to a more limited group of the elements (e.g., violence and crime, mental health).

As described in Section IV.B, below, this Report recommends a set of topics for the Vallejo Healthy Community Element that reflects existing health conditions in Vallejo and key concerns of Vallejo residents and a range of public agencies and non-profit organizations that serve them.

2. What data sources were used in developing the element?

A defining characteristic of healthy communities planning is a reliance on data, an influence of the public health profession and its important role in healthy community planning. Therefore, the Working Paper identifies the various data sources relied on in developing each of the elements.

Section II of this Report reflects the work of the Solano County Department of Public Health and their data collection and analysis to inform development of Vallejo's Healthy Community Element.

3. What are some of the noteworthy policies and implementation actions included in the element?

The Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper provides a focused selection of policies and implementation actions, intended to illustrate some of the targeted and innovative approaches to the health topics addressed in each included element. The intent was not to suggest specific measures that Vallejo should adopt, but to show how communities have come up with strategies tailored to their own needs and aspirations. In this, rather than the specific content of the identified policies and implementation actions, they serve as models for Vallejo's Healthy Community Element.

This Topics Report does not present proposed policies and implementation actions for the topics it recommends. Rather, these will be presented as a "next phase" in the development of the Healthy Community Element and be informed in part by the work of other communities identified in the Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper.

4. How does the healthy community element address public health topics treated in other general plan elements?

Another defining characteristic of healthy community elements is their relationship to other general plan elements, both those that are legally mandated (land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise) and other, "optional," elements (e.g., economic development).

This is an especially important topic with regard to healthy community elements for at least two reasons. First, various planning issues with significant implications for health (e.g., urban form and its effects on "walkability") are often addressed in other elements. Second, the health benefits associated with healthy community planning (e.g., promoting bicycling) may have associated "co-benefits" (e.g., for traffic, energy, noise, and air quality), which should be recognized.

As discussed in Section IV.C, below, this Report recommends an approach that includes both topics addressed primarily in the Healthy Community Element and topics with important health implications that will be addressed primarily in other elements of the Vallejo General Plan.

5. How does the element address collaboration?

As with many planning fields, health community planning typically relies on collaboration – between government entities at various levels, with the business community, with a wide range of non-profits, and so forth. Healthy community planning often includes County public health departments, the medical services sector, agriculture and other food-related groups, mental health organizations, the faith-based community, and so forth in this mix.

As discussed in Section IV.B, below, this Report recognizes the important role that collaboration has in Vallejo’s culture and highlights the potential role of collaboration in Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element.

6. Are there aspects of this element that may be of particular interest to Vallejo?

Each of the elements reviewed for the Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper offers approaches and content that may be of particular interest to Vallejo, because of similar community conditions and concerns, alignment with the adopted Guiding Principles for Vallejo’s current general plan update, etc.

While this Topics Report does not present proposed policies and implementation actions for the topics it recommends, these will be presented as a “next phase” in the development of the Healthy Community Element, informed in part by the work of other communities identified in the Healthy Communities Elements Working Paper.

V. Recommended Topics for the Vallejo Healthy Community Element

A. Underlying concepts for Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element

There are certain fundamental concepts that underlie Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element. Among these are:

- Vallejo is committed to being a healthy community. Its City Council has adopted a Resolution Advocating and Supporting the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign. And Guiding Principle 7 of its General Plan Update program states: “Vallejo promotes the health of its residents and recognizes the value of a proactive, preventative approach to health. All Vallejo neighborhoods have easy access to healthy food, including organic food and locally grown food from school and community gardens.”
- Health is a function of a variety of factors. And while genetics, healthcare, and lifestyle choices are certainly among them, so are aspects of the built environment (land use patterns, transportation infrastructure, open space, etc.), community programs, and other general plan topics.
- Furthermore, social, economic, educational and other factors can be determinants of health. The Healthy Community Element should recognize these additional determinants and the entire General Plan should focus on strengthening the social capital these factors represent.
- At the same time, while economic factors can be determinants of health, community health can support a more economically prosperous community.
- Vallejo has a significant network of facilities and programs to promote the health of its residents. The Healthy Community Element should identify these existing community resources, a number of which are identified in Section V, below.
- Collaboration – between government agencies, involving non-profits and community groups, etc. – is an important part of Vallejo’s culture, is reflected in the Guiding Principles adopted for the Propel Vallejo planning effort, and should play a fundamental role in the Healthy Community Element. The Solano County Department of Public Health, the medical services sector of the Vallejo economy, the faith-based community, agriculture and other food-related groups, mental health organizations, and so forth, should play important roles in these collaborations.
- Policies and actions related to healthy community topics have other community benefits. These “co-benefits” highlight the effectiveness, in terms of cost and otherwise, of well-designed policies and actions.

B. Recommended topics for Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element

The topics recommended in this Report for inclusion in Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element are of two types:

- Topics that will be treated primarily in the Healthy Community Element
- Topics that will get a relatively brief discussion in the Healthy Community Element, with reference to discussions in other elements of general plan
 1. Topics recommended for treatment primarily in the Healthy Community Element
 - Access to healthy food
 - Active recreation facilities (parks, etc.), access, and programs
 - Safety of recreation facilities and access to them (crime and perceptions of safety)
 - Active transportation network (facilities for walking/bicycling) and programs
 - Safety of the active transportation network
 - Roadway design and relationship to autos
 - Crime and perceptions of safety
 - Health concerns related to tobacco and exposure to tobacco smoke
 - Urban greening and mental health

Access to healthy food

One of the topics that came up consistently in the outreach for Vallejo’s Healthy Community Element is the need for greater access to healthy food. While this is not an issue for all Vallejo residents, it is for portions of the city. For example, parts of South Vallejo meet the definition of a “food desert,” with residents living more than a mile from a full service grocery store. While a Grocery Outlet store was recently opened at the site of the old Safeway store on Marin Street in Downtown Vallejo, access to a full range of healthy food remains a concern for residents of South Vallejo. (See Attachment 2, South Vallejo Health Impact Assessment.) Furthermore, for many people in South Vallejo, the closest full service grocery store (Lincoln Safeway) is not served by a bus route. And local convenience stores are generally not sources of fresh produce and a range of other healthy food. Another topic raised frequently was the potential for alternative ways of making healthy food available, such as community gardens, “corner store makeovers,” etc.

Active recreation facilities (parks, etc.) and programs

Another major area of community concern is active recreation, focused on providing more facilities and programs throughout Vallejo. For example, creating public access to and encouraging development of recreation activities along the Vallejo Waterfront is

viewed by some as a way to improve public health and fitness, while providing a focal point of neighborhood pride and encouraging environmental awareness.

Another concern is the quality of these programs and facilities – what they offer to Vallejo residents. For example, stakeholders noted that parks could be improved if safe playgrounds and skate parks were added to them.

Safety of recreation facilities (crime and perceptions of safety)

An additional and related consideration is the safety of existing facilities in portions of the City. For example, according to many residents, public parks in South Vallejo are generally unsafe, reducing their use by Vallejo residents. Conversely, some feel that local parks, such as Lake Dalwigk Park, would be safer if they were used more extensively.

Active transportation network (facilities for walking and bicycling) and programs

Concerns related to Vallejo’s opportunities for active transportation (walking and biking) are generally of two types. One is the need for facilities and programs that promote active transportation – bike routes, attractive and convenient places to walk, and the like.

Safety of active transportation network

In addition to a stronger network for active transportation, there are associated concerns about the safety of existing facilities. Safety concerns themselves fell into two categories. One relates to the design of existing facilities or gaps in needed facilities. For instance, community members spoke of the need for safety improvements for children walking to school. They noted, for example, that it is unsafe to cross Sonoma Boulevard, pointed out a disconnected sidewalk system on Sonoma Boulevard, and identified speeding cars as an issue generally.

The other category of safety concerns relating to the City’s active transportation network has to do with crime and perceptions of safety. Reports, for instance, indicated residents feeling unsafe walking on many South Vallejo streets (e.g., Magazine Street), especially at night.

Health concerns related to tobacco and exposure to tobacco smoke

Outreach efforts for this Report indicated an interest in limiting the number of tobacco retail outlets and making parks smoke-free.

Urban greening and mental health

There is a recognized relationship between well-designed urban green space and mental health (recent research, for instance, found that living in an urban area with green spaces has a long-lasting positive impact on people's mental well-being, even more than a pay

raise or winning the lottery.¹ Concerns expressed during the Healthy Community Element outreach efforts reflected the need for improved green space in Vallejo (street trees, etc.).

2. Topics that will get a relatively brief discussion in the Healthy Community Element, with reference to discussions in other elements of general plan, for example:

- Employment and vocational training (Economic Development)
- Access, in terms of:
 - physical distribution of facilities and programs (Land Use)
 - transportation to health care in its various forms (health education, culturally appropriate health care, preventative health care, follow-up treatment and specialty care, substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation, dental care, medication and prescription drugs) (Transportation and Mobility)
- Appropriate housing (Land Use and Housing)
- Climate change
- Social cohesion – promoting connection among community members and civic engagement

¹ “Green spaces have lasting positive effect on well-being,” <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-25682368> (accessed September 15, 2015).

VI. Existing Community Health Resources

Solano County in general, and Vallejo in particular, has a rich variety of resources for promoting community health. While Vallejo, like any community, can strengthen the support it provides its residents (two recent Community Health Needs Assessments identify the lack of existing community health services and facilities as a significant issue²), there are a number of valuable facilities and programs currently operating in Vallejo. Among these existing resources are:

A. Access to healthy food

Emmanuel Temple Apostolic Church of Vallejo installed a Community Garden in the spring of 2015 with the mission of growing food and distributing it to area soup kitchens and food pantries. It is also a site for regular food distributions with the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano holds Free Produce Days (e.g., twice-monthly at Emmanuel Temple in South Vallejo).

Vallejo’s Participatory Budgeting program included Cal Maritime Garden as one of 10 gardens included in the Community Gardens & Nutrition Education project.

Vallejo People’s Garden promotes health and wellness through educational opportunities and local agriculture. Programs include Harvest Sharing Program, Workshops, Youth Connection, Youth Education, and Green for Green.

Pacific Coast Farmers’ Market Association sponsors the year-round, weekly Vallejo Farmers Market.

The Solano County Food Policy Council is a partnership of food, agriculture, educational, and other organizations with the goal of fostering a sustainable, equitable food system that provides healthy, affordable food for the community through policy and education.

² “A Community Health Needs Assessment of the Solano County Service Area Conducted on the behalf of Kaiser Permanente, North Bay Healthcare, Sutter Solano Medical Center, and the Solano Coalition for Better Health” (2013); “2013 Community Health Needs Assessment - Kaiser Foundation Hospital – Vallejo.”

B. Active recreation/safety

Greater Vallejo Parks and Recreation District operates 20 Neighborhood Parks, four Community Parks and four Special Purpose Parks located throughout Vallejo, as well as four Community Centers and a Sports Complex.

Vallejo's Participatory Budgeting program included Beverly Hills Park (one of 13 parks included in the Parks and Recreation Improvements project)

Vallejo's Fighting Back Partnership is a non-profit collaboration that partners with business, residents, and government to improve neighborhoods, strengthen families, and support youth development, with the goal of a safe, healthy and thriving community.

Neighborhood Watch is a presence in many Vallejo neighborhoods, promoting crime prevention and safer neighborhoods.

C. Active transportation/safety

Solano Transportation Authority included an Active Transportation Element in its 2014 Active Transportation Plan.

Vallejo City Unified School District/'Safe Routes to School' Program promotes "walking school bus" programs in portions of the city.

Vallejo's Fighting Back Partnership is a non-profit collaboration that partners with business, residents, and government to improve neighborhoods, strengthen families, and support youth development, with the goal of a safe, healthy, and thriving community.

Neighborhood Watch is a presence in many Vallejo neighborhoods, promoting crime prevention and safer neighborhoods.

Vallejo Housing Authority, in collaboration with Fighting Back Partnership, has reduced crime "hot spots" by increasing street lighting, etc.

D. Health concerns related to tobacco and exposure to tobacco smoke

Solano County Department of Public Health is involved with a variety of programs to reduce smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke.

E. Urban Greening and Mental Health

Solano Resource Conservation District works closely with a wide variety of partners throughout the County on urban greening and other projects.

VII. Conclusion

This Topics Report summarizes existing community health conditions in Vallejo and the results of a series of outreach efforts regarding community health concerns. Based on these steps, it identifies recommended topics for Vallejo's Healthy Community Element. In addition, it identifies existing community health resources in Vallejo to aid in addressing these recommended topics.

Future steps for the Healthy Community Element will include developing specific goals, policies, and actions. The Healthy Community Element will also include a set of "indicators" to measure the benefits actually achieved through implementing the actions identified in the Element and inform an ongoing process of effective and cost efficient implementation.

APPENDIX A
Solano County Department of Public Health
Community Health Surveys, 2014-15

How would you rate your local community as a place to live?

Excellent	12 %
Good	37 %
OK	40 %
Poor	8 %
Very Poor	2 %
Not Sure	<1%

**How would you rate the sense of community involvement and
responsibility in your local community?**

Excellent	9 %
Good	35 %
OK	33 %
Poor	16 %
Very Poor	3 %
Not Sure	4%

How would you rate the quality of life in your local community?

Excellent	12 %
Good	33 %
OK	39 %
Poor	12 %
Very Poor	4 %
Not Sure	1%

How would you rate your local community as a “healthy community“

Excellent	8 %
Good	25 %
OK	41 %
Poor	20 %
Very Poor	4 %
Not Sure	3%

How satisfied are you with the health care system in your local community?

Excellent	12 %
Good	36 %
OK	30 %
Poor	13 %
Very Poor	4 %
Not Sure	5%

How would you rate your local community as a good place to raise children?

Excellent	9 %
Good	25 %
OK	33 %
Poor	23 %
Very Poor	8 %
Not Sure	2%

How would you rate your local community as a place to grow old?

Excellent	11 %
Good	24 %
OK	34 %
Poor	18 %
Very Poor	9 %
Not Sure	4%

How would you rate your local community with regards to job availability?

Excellent	5 %
Good	15 %
OK	29 %
Poor	30 %
Very Poor	16 %
Not Sure	5%

How would you rate your local community as a place with support networks for individuals and families during times of stress and need?

Excellent	8 %
Good	25 %
OK	34 %
Poor	17 %
Very Poor	6 %
Not Sure	11%

How would you rate your overall health?

Excellent	17 %
Good	52 %
Fair	27 %
Poor	3 %
Very Poor	1 %