INTRODUCTION

One of the primary goals of both the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department and the Health Commission is to enhance the quality of life for all people living in communities throughout the County. As public health advocates, they have acknowledged the need to address the many chronic diseases and preventable health conditions which stem from unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles. They have recognized there is a multitude of contributing factors that can impact an individual’s health status, including the built environment, access to healthy food sources and opportunities for physical activity and recreation, all of which are aspects of community design that fall under the purview of the planning profession.
Over the course of the past two decades, a reintegration of public health and city planning professions has been occurring. Health departments have realized that without changes to particular physical determinants of health, behavioral changes cannot be influenced and risk factors contributing to chronic disease cannot be controlled.\textsuperscript{1} Being such, health departments have begun collaborating with planners in an effort to bring forth changes to community design and land use development that impact the built environment.

\textbf{Figure 1 – Framework for Understanding the Social Determinants of Health}

This planning document, modeled after health elements currently being included in general plans throughout California, will integrate the fields of planning and public health to provide Oceano an assessment of its residents’ health, a description of the current built environment conditions that may be hindering physical activity and access to nutritious food sources, as well as establish goals, policies and action programs that will set a course of action toward a healthier Oceano community.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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COMMUNITY HEALTH GOALS

The Oceano Community Health Plan was purposed with the idea of improving the health of Oceano’s residents by promoting policies that help create a built environment that encourages physical activity, increases health equity, fosters social interaction, safety and overall wellness. The following community health goals are a synthesis of the concerns, desires and needs expressed by the community:

GOAL 1: **Improve the overall health and wellness of Oceano residents** by promoting policies, collaborations, partnerships and education programs that seek to increase physical and mental wellness cross-culturally across all age groups.

GOAL 2: **Enhance the built environment** so that it acts as a catalyst for active living behaviors, through land use patterns and urban design strategies.

GOAL 3: **Make Oceano a physically active community** by creating an active transportation network that places an emphasis on safe, accessible and well-connected pathways to commercial, residential and recreational destinations throughout the community.

GOAL 4: **Increase the provision of parks, recreation facilities, green and open spaces** by exploring all feasible avenues that may lead to additional areas/space for physical activity, recreation and relaxation, and providing safe and efficient access to these destinations.

GOAL 5: **Make Oceano a healthier place** by providing safe and easy access to a full range of primary, preventative, and specialty healthcare facilities that can screen, treat and educate community members.

GOAL 6: **Make Oceano a nutritious food environment** by increasing access to affordable and nutritious foods/beverages by supporting community-oriented healthy food sources, such as farmers’ markets, community gardens and food banks.

GOAL 7: **Make Oceano a safer place** by providing street illumination, expanding walking and bicycle networks, increasing traffic calming infrastructure, and encouraging zoning that balances compatible land uses, as well as urban design strategies that enhance visibility and natural surveillance.

GOAL 8: **Make Oceano a well-informed community** by promoting cross-cultural preventative health and awareness education, and supporting organizations that provide alcohol and tobacco prevention and cessation programs/classes.
City planning and public health in the United States has held a long and intertwined relationship which dates back nearly 150 years. “The emergence of urban planning as a profession and academic discipline had its basis in nineteenth century public health initiatives, including tenement housing reforms, the construction of urban water supply and sewerage systems, and the design of parks and playgrounds.” Due to the burgeoning industrialization and urbanization of the time, major American cities of that day were the antithesis of sanitary and healthy environments. Overrun with human and animal waste, trash and general squalor, major cities were breeding ground for infectious diseases such as yellow fever, cholera, typhoid and tuberculosis. Further, toxic air pollution and run-off from nearby industrial sites, ventilation and lack of clean water sources made living in a city a health risk. Planners utilized physical interventions to respond to the many urban health crises of that era.

By the 1930s, many of the primitive health issues had been resolved. Advancements in research and technology led to the understanding of diseases being biological in nature instead of environmental. The two disciplines began to drift into their own separate fields of practice. Public health became the domain of science and medicine focused on controlling and identifying the causes of infectious diseases. City planning became primarily concerned with urban form, land use, growth and zoning. This divergence would continue on unto nearly the end of the century.

During the past 20 years, there has been a reconnection between the fields of planning and public health. The infectious disease epidemics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are now primarily gone in our country. Today, the battle is dealing with chronic and preventable diseases.

According to the Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) website, chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO),
chronic diseases are “diseases of long duration and generally slow progression,”\textsuperscript{6} which include heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes.

The 2013 Chronic Disease Prevention Framework report published by the California Conference of Local Health Officers and County Health Executive Associates of California states the following:

A growing body of research links these chronic diseases to specific risk factors—such as obesity, smoking, poor nutrition and physical activity—which are strongly influenced by economic and education levels, social norms, and the physical environment.\textsuperscript{7}

Mounting research has shown a strong correlation between the built environment and its effect on public health. “The designated use, layout, and design of a community’s physical structures including its housing, businesses, transportation systems, and recreational resources affect patterns of living (behaviors) that, in turn, influence health.”\textsuperscript{8} The decisions we make regarding aspects of planning such as land use, vehicle circulation, zoning and street design are all elements that influence human behavior; the level of physical activity (i.e. walking, bicycling and recreation) we receive; the amount of time we spend in our cars driving; the foods we consume (fast foods vs. fresh markets); the quality of air we breathe—all act as contributing factors to our health.
The Oceano Community Health Plan will serve to strengthen policies that acknowledge the connection between health and the built environment. It will guide programming, funding, and future development toward a more health-conscious environment. The plan helps to address health where it is not fully addressed elsewhere in the County’s General Plan. San Luis Obispo County area plans describe specific land use policies and categories that determine uses, density and intensity for specific portions of the county. They specify development standards for public services, circulation and land use, as well as programs for correcting local problems or conditions.

San Luis Bay Coastal Area Plan

Oceano, along with Pismo Beach, Grover City, Arroyo Grande, Halcyon, and the urban area of Avila Beach, comprise the San Luis Bay Planning Area. The San Luis Bay Coastal Area Plan (last revised in August 2009) describes the land use policies for the Coastal Zone portion of the San Luis Bay Planning Area, as well as defines allowable density and intensity and specific development standards meant for addressing issues unique to the individual communities.\(^9\)

The Plan does not contain any explicit promotion of public health related goals or policies in reference to Oceano. In fact, the term “health” is never used in the document in the context of providing benefits for, or the protection of, public health purposes. However, some of the language used throughout the document does have public health supporting implications.

The San Luis Obispo County’s General Plan provides recommendations for programs or policies found in the San Luis Bay Coastal Area Plan that have potential public health ramifications. Specifically, one of the Oceano Urban Area Program recommendations is for the County Engineering Department to work in conjunction with property owners and LAFCo in an
effort to bring urban street improvements such as curbs, sidewalks and street trees, to residential areas. These improvements could provide increased pedestrian mobility and enhance the aesthetic appearance within the neighborhood, which can both act as catalysts for provoking physical activity.

The Land Use section provides the following public health impacting recommendation “a neighborhood park site should be reserved in the easterly portion of the community to better meet resident needs.”

Though, it should be noted the recommendation makes no connection between parks or green spaces and the benefits to public and mental health.

In Chapter 4: Circulation, the Plan states “the planning area will likely continue to be automobile-based, but alternative components of the circulation system such as transit, bikeways and air traffic will be important components of the area wide circulation system.” Recommendations for improved bikeways, “Bike lanes as wide 8 feet, or separated Class I bikeways, are needed on such roadways as […] along Highway 1 from Pismo Beach through Oceano […] Class II or III bikeways are recommended on Highway 1 from Oceano onto the Nipomo Mesa” are mentioned for future improvement projects. The potential health and environmental benefits of increasing bike ridership is not mentioned.

Oceano Specific Plan

The Oceano Specific Plan was adopted by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors in 2002, and certified by the California Coastal Commission in 2004. The Specific Plan’s purpose is to provide “an overall framework for translating broad community values and expectations into specific strategies for enhancing the community’s quality of life.” The concerns addressed in the Specific Plan were informed by Oceano residents through information collected via surveys, meetings and public workshops. The Specific Plan is meant to be used in conjunction with the San Luis Bay Area Plan.
The Specific Plan places an emphasis on safety, sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, park, open spaces and recreational facilities, as demonstrated by one of the Specific Plan’s four defined primary goals, Oceano’s future community designs will feature “Improved buildings, public spaces, pedestrian walkways, safe bikeways, more natural areas, parks and high quality landscaping.” Indeed, the concept plan for Oceano’s downtown is a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use commercial retail development. As detailed in the literature review section of this report, the provision of these built environment features are associated with inhibiting physical activity behaviors, and therefore may yield potential health benefits. There is also implicit acknowledgment that parks, public open spaces and plazas provide intangible beneficiary value by fostering social activity, interaction and community cohesiveness, all of which research has shown to be associated with improved mental well-being.

While many of the goals, programs, land use regulations, development standards and design guidelines stated in the Specific Plan would have corresponding positive health impacts, it is generally not described in the document as the overriding motive. Rather, the outlined development strategies are meant to be “used as a promotional tool, to acquaint potential developers with Oceano’s economic potential and the expectations of its residents.” Nevertheless, from a health perspective, the plan does provide new development standards and programs that will serve to help Oceano residents.

**Oceano Revitalization Plan**

The County of San Luis Obispo in partnership with the Local Government Commission from the California Department of Transportation, and funded by an Environmental Justice Planning Grant, created the Oceano Revitalization Plan, with work beginning in 2012. The Revitalization Plan builds off of the 2002 Oceano Specific Plan and seeks to employ actions that will implement policies outlined in the Specific Plan. The Revitalization Plan lists three objectives:
1. Identifying improvements that will lead to a safer and more walkable downtown and adjacent neighborhood areas,
2. Planning for improved mobility, and
3. Creating more attractive streetscapes along Highway 1 to enhanced retail activity and jobs

Whereas the Oceano Specific Plan sees improvement of sidewalk infrastructure and connectivity as a necessary step to encourage new development in Oceano, the Revitalization Plan makes a clearer connection between the health benefits of providing such amenities. For example, the Revitalization Plan states “Frequent bicycle racks along the street corridor are another necessity for promoting healthy community living and easily enabling alternative modes of transportation.”

Public safety is also a primary concern that is addressed in the plan, as both short-term (crosswalk striping, bike lane restriping) and long-term (street medians, roundabouts, lane reductions) enhancements are identified as strategies to improving pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist safety. Improvements in traffic safety and connectivity remove fear barriers and increase opportunities to be physical active.

Other County General Plan Elements

Other goals and policies that apply to Oceano are described in the County of San Luis Obispo’s General Plan. The General Plan is the blueprint for the future physical, economic and social development of the unincorporated areas of the County, outside cities. It implements California laws that regulate land use planning and development. State law requires that every general plan must contain the following components or “elements”: Land Use, Conservation, Noise, Circulation, Open Space, Safety and Housing. In addition, state law allows for the adoption of additional or optional elements of a general plan. The County of San Luis Obispo has adopted seven optional elements: Recreation, Historic and Esthetic, Energy, Off-shore Energy, Economic and Agriculture. It should be noted the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research has begun its 2014 update of the General Plan Guidelines. Along with an
extensive overview of the required general plan elements, it will also focus on four key areas: Economics, Equity, Climate Change, and Healthy Communities.
Several efforts were made to connect with the community prior to and throughout development of this document. The goal of the outreach effort was to garner valuable perspective and feedback from community members regarding physical activity levels, information about the built environment where they live, work, and play, and perceived barriers to healthy activities and food access. Efforts included key informant interviews with informed members of the community, a widely-distributed survey questionnaire, meetings with local family and social service groups, a planning activity with students at Oceano Elementary, visits to community events such as the Oceano Farmers’ Market meeting and Day of the Child event, and presentations to the Oceano Advisory Council and Community Service District. Outreach results aided in constructing goals, policies, and action programs that will meet the specific needs of the Oceano community. Results are included in the following section, Health and Wellness context, and contributed to creating a more complete picture of community health in Oceano.
HEALTH & WELLNESS CONTEXT

The Health & Wellness Context section describes health concepts that relate to city planning, the built environment and public health. Background information is provided regarding existing conditions and issues found in Oceano that relate back to those concepts, helping to inform and provide rationale behind the goals, policies and action programs later outlined in this document.

Oceano’s status as an unincorporated, census-designated place meant certain community-level health data was not available. In these cases, regional county-level data from the 2013 ACTION for Healthy Communities project was utilized,22 with Oceano and the communities of Arroyo Grande, Halcyon, Grover Beach, Nipomo, Pismo Beach, and Shell Beach being represented in the “South County” area data. Additionally, project studies involving specific segments of Oceano’s population were used, providing some relevant data findings which helped to inform this plan.

Chronic Diseases

Chronic disease is the leading cause of early morbidity and mortality in California.23 Inequalities in life expectancy and health outcomes due to chronic disease are associated with income, education, and ethnicity.24

During a three-year (2008-2010) recorded span, the leading causes of death in Oceano were cancer, diseases of the heart and chronic lower respiratory diseases (i.e. asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and other lower respiratory illnesses).25 These health conditions commonly stem from obesity, poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles. Oceano’s younger-than-average median age (35.4 years old) could act as an impending risk factor, due to younger residents going undiagnosed while living prolonged unhealthy lifestyles. This factor compounded with the Oceano’s low-socioeconomic (SES) status and lack of access to health and preventative care facilities puts residents of the community at higher risk for developing and diagnosing chronic and preventable health issues.

Obesity & Physical Activity

The health benefits of regular physical activity, even at moderate levels, are well-documented and established.26,27 Physically active lifestyles, among other benefits, can help regulate weight, reduce rates of chronic and preventable diseases, raise lung capacity, improve mental well-being and increase life expectancy.28 Despite the many benefits of active living, obesity rates in the U.S. for adults have doubled and rates for children have tripled since 1980.29

Each year, the California Department of Education requires all public school students in grades five, seven and nine to participate in a Physical Fitness Test (PFT).30 The PFT measures six categories of physical fitness to assess whether the child scores in the Healthy Fitness Zone® (HFZ). Children that score in the HFZ are said to have sufficient fitness for good health, at a level which offers some degree of protection against diseases that typically result from inactive lifestyles.
The 2012-2013 PFT results of Oceano Elementary fifth graders were alarming. Only 48.8 percent of Oceano students tested in the HFZ for body composition and fitness levels; the lowest figure of all the tested schools in San Luis Obispo County. Further, 34.4 percent of the students scored in the Needs Improvement (NI) – Health Risk Zone; the highest percentage in the county. The NI – Health Risk Zone is an indicator that suggests “if the student continues to track at this level there is a clear potential for future health problem (a more probable risk).”

Inferences may be drawn from these results as the percentage (29 percent) of time spent (> 10 hours per week) by South County children on screen time (computer, television, videos, texting) has increased from 2010 levels, which may be an indication that children in Oceano are spending less time doing physical activities in favor of sedentary behaviors.

No statistical data was available regarding obesity rates of Oceano adults. However, county-wide data indicates an improving trend, as 48.1 percent of adults in the County were overweight or obese (BMI > 25), indicating a significant drop from the previously surveyed results of 59.2 percent in 2009.

A community survey conducted in Oceano provided insight into residents’ perceptions of their own personal health levels. Half of the all respondents viewed themselves as “somewhat healthy.” Perhaps even more revealing was the fact one quarter of respondents deemed their personal health as “unhealthy” to “very unhealthy” [see Figure 2].

During interviews, community stakeholders who work closely with Oceano families suggested a lack of nutrition education and cultural barriers may be contributing to poor health outcomes; notions of nutrition and physical activity for health purposes are unfamiliar concepts for many first generation families, and therefore these concepts are not being imparted to younger generations.

**Figure 2 – Perceptions of Personal Health**

**Perceptions of Personal Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Very unhealthy”</td>
<td>22% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Unhealthy”</td>
<td>12% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Somewhat healthy”</td>
<td>12% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Healthy”</td>
<td>22% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Very healthy”</td>
<td>2% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*120 total people responded to this survey question*

**Land Use & Community Design**

The role of the built environment, which is “defined broadly to include land use patterns, the transportation system, and design features that together provide opportunities for travel and physical activity,” has been identified by practitioners in both the urban planning and public health fields as a determinative factor influencing active living behaviors. Well designed land use can create an environment that fosters physical activity. Land use policy through zoning can affect a community’s design, allowing for, or prohibiting certain types of uses. This regulatory power can help support public health by restricting unhealthy uses such as liquor
retail stores or fast food restaurants in certain locations.

Mixed land use is one approach planners have been successfully utilizing to create attractive, compact developments that promote active transportation and social interaction. Mixed land use reduce travel distances by locating origins and destinations in close proximity to one another, allowing for “linked” destination points that can be undertaken in one trip. Studies have suggested individuals living in communities with higher density, connectivity and land use mix reported higher rates of pedestrian and bicycling activity versus those from less dense, poorly networked, single land use neighborhoods.36

Mixed use neighborhoods should include a diverse mix of uses, including various dwelling types, home businesses, child care centers, schools, medical centers and public open space that promote walking or cycle trips.

In addition to the potential health benefits, commercial and residential mixed use developments offer increased economic, employment, entrepreneurial and housing opportunities for residents living within the community, which can be attractive incentives for impoverished communities. This community health plan supports the mixed-use project design found in the recently adopted Oceano Revitalization Plan, which propose vertical mixed-use residential units on top and commercial (or offices) spaces on the bottom floor.37

Active Transportation Network

Active transportation defined is “physical activity that is done primarily for the purpose of moving from one destination to another, usually by walking or bicycling.”38 These types of travel modes are facilitated by the provision of complete, safe and accessible sidewalk and bikeway infrastructure. Community design that places an emphasis on integrating pedestrian and bicyclists into its transportation network have higher rates of walking and biking as a result.39

Efficiently connected bike and pedestrian networks can reduce reliance on short-trip automobile use, providing the added benefits of monetary savings (fuel expenditure), as well as environmental ramifications by lessening air pollutants that contribute to greenhouse gases and poor air quality. Further, research has shown communities with high rates of bicycle usage have lower rates of auto-related accidents due to drivers being more cognizant of their surroundings while driving.40

Oceano’s SES profile comports with research findings that indicate “access to recreation facilities, quality and safety of pedestrian facilities, and aesthetics are poorer in areas with mostly low-income and racial or ethnic minority populations.” 41 Oceano’s pedestrian network is severely disconnected presently. Residential areas surrounding Oceano Elementary are without consistent sidewalk surfaces, are in poor condition and lack safety amenities such as street lamps that provide added security at night. Some streets, particular those nearest the elementary
school, have sidewalks on just one side, or none at all. These factors along with a failure to provide connected, intuitive and efficient access to primary destination points in the town are major impediments to eliciting active lifestyle behaviors.

This community health plan fully supports the stated goals expressed in both the Oceano Specific Plan and Oceano Revitalization Plan, which seek to improve and enhance sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure in the town.

Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces

Parks, recreation and open spaces are vital outlets for exercise, recreation, leisure, relaxation and overall wellness. Multiple studies have related proximity to parks and recreation facilities with increased levels of recreational physical activity. Additionally, research studies have shown being in contact, or in the very least, in sight of natural environments has beneficial effects on our mental health.

According to the Urban Land Use Map for the South County Planning Area, there are three areas, totaling 25 acres, which are designated for recreational land use purposes. Of those areas, Oceano Memorial Park (County Park) comprises the largest portion of acreage. However, the actual acreage area may be less due to the fact a significant portion of the space is devoted to camp grounds, as well as another section designated as a Sensitive Resource Area, rather than providing surfaces (i.e. grass, trail, soft surfaces) that can be used for recreational purposes.

Approximately a half acre of land is designated as Open Space on the eastern side of Oceano. However, no changes were proposed for this space in the Oceano Specific Plan. This is likely due to permitting, easement, and parking issues related to the location (encompassed by residences) and narrow linear dimensions of the space.

The grass fields at Oceano Elementary have long served the community as an unofficial recreation space. Community members are widely known to “jump” the fence to gain access and use of the space. This is indicative of the need for publically accessible recreation spaces; a desire voiced in the community survey [see Figure 3] when asked “What should change in Oceano that could contribute to your personal health or the health of the community?” Grouped answers related to parks, recreation centers and playgrounds came up as the most commonly mentioned response type.

Figure 3 – Features that Would Improve Personal or Community Health

In light of research studies that have linked disparities in access and park distribution in communities similar to Oceano, proximity maps [see Figures 4 & 5 on p. 15] have been provided which mark the location of currently existing outdoor park and recreation areas in Oceano. Oceano Elementary is included as an
outdoor space for the previously aforementioned reason. The colored overlays represent the areas in distance via street network (quarter-mile and half-mile) each location serves. The second map adds a proposed park in the east side of Oceano and indicates the potential increased area it would serve.
Figure 4 – Existing Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities in Oceano Proximity Map

Figure 5 – Proposed Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities in Oceano Proximity Map
Access to Healthy Affordable Foods

Access to fresh produce and nutritious food sources is critical to maintaining a healthy diet which can reduce the risk of obesity and diet-related diseases. Conversely, the lack of access to affordable and healthy food options can be determinant to negative health outcomes.

Larger chain supermarket food stores have shown to be more likely to offer healthy food options at reduced costs than smaller non-chain type markets. There is an association between race and economic status with low-income neighborhoods having fewer chain supermarkets than middle-income neighborhoods, and the availability of chain supermarkets in Hispanic neighborhoods being only 32 percent of what is found in non-Hispanic neighborhoods.47

Planners can help reduce the inadequacies in the food system as food production, access, transport and distribution are subjected to land use regulations. Land use planning and zoning initiatives regulate what types of businesses can be built within a particular planning area. For example, ordinances have been used to create healthier environments by restricting businesses such as fast food restaurants and tobacco vendors from being built within a certain distance from school or recreational areas. Ordinances have also been used to provide allowance for the creation of urban garden districts where community members can grow and harvest fresh produce and natural herbs.

Oceano does not have a chain supermarket within its borders. Three small markets, La Tapatía Market and Deli, Central Market and Johnson’s Market serve the community, with only one vendor participating in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program. Key informant interviewees mentioned the excellent selection of fresh produce at certain markets, but also noted many residents preferred the larger selection and affordability of certain foods available at Vons, located in Grover Beach, just over a mile from the most northern border of Oceano.

Two food access proximity maps are on provided on the following page. The first [see Figure 6] map provides the location of “healthy” food outlets; stores with a moderate to wide variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grain bread and reduced fat milk. The second map [see Figure 7] plots the location of “non healthy” retail food outlets; stores lacking the aforementioned healthy food options, instead offering a predominance of prepackaged, highly processed, high sugar and fat, less nutritious food options. Both maps provide a colored overlay which represent the areas by distance via street network (half-mile to mile) each location serves.

The maps illustrate that most of the community is adequately served by markets that sell healthy foods. The food outlets that sell less healthy food options are clustered close together in the commercial downtown corridor, and therefore are less accessible to a large part of the community.
Figure 6 - Healthy Food Access Proximity Map

Figure 7 - Unhealthy Food Access Proximity Map
Access to Hydration Stations

A major contributor to the obesity epidemic is found in the empty calories consumed daily from sugar-sweetened drinks, which include non-diet sodas, fruit drinks, smoothies and any other beverage that uses sugar as a primary additive. One study found that replacement of sugary beverages could cut up to 235 calories per day for the average American child’s intake.48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 – Water vs. Sugar Sweetened Beverages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit punch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% apple juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% orange juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemonade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular lemon/lime soda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular cola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened lemon iced tea (bottled, not homemade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonic water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular ginger ale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened iced tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet soda (with aspartame)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbonated water (unsweetened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some diet soft drinks can contain a small number of calories that are not listed on the nutrition facts label (USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference)

Water is the healthiest calorie-free alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages (see Table 1) and provides numerous health benefits such as weight management, reduces the risk of dental caries, and boosts the immune system. Despite the added benefits, research has indicated both children and adults are not consuming the recommended daily intake of water (8-12 8 oz. glasses per day).49

Many planning departments across the country have begun addressing this health issue by incorporating polices into their general/comprehensive plans that recommend providing hydration station (i.e. drinking fountains) amenities at public parks and facilities. Code ordinances are being used to require the provision of hydration stations for certain types of development.

Oceano presently has no hydration stations available in the community. Oceano Elementary has drinking fountains on the school grounds, but is not officially made accessible to the general public. The provision of publicly accessible hydration stations in the community serves a practical need, but can also act as a symbolic gesture of the municipal government’s interest in the well-being of its residents.

Air Quality and Respiratory Health

The built environment, with specific regard to roadways, traffic patterns and exposure, has critical implications for local inhabitants in regard to air pollution exposure. “Motor vehicles contribute to more than 50 percent of air pollution in urban areas.”50 Carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter (PM) are all common auto-related air pollutants which in increased levels can be respiratory irritants that can aggravate existing asthma and other respiratory conditions. Community design that includes active transportation networks, mixed land uses, and efficient mass transit systems can help decrease auto dependency and reduce air pollution.

The San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District (APCD) monitors particulate matter and ozone in the air. Long-term exposure to high concentrations of PM and high ozone levels (smog) pose a health danger by increasing the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory harm.51 PM is measured at two levels, 2.5 microns or...
less in diameter (PM2.5) and 10 microns or less (PM10). These size particles can penetrate the lungs and cause harm. In 2012, zero days exceeded the California ozone standards, down from 5 days in 2006. There was an estimated 3.1 days in 2012 when the PM2.5 exceeded the national standard, up from 0 days in 2006.52

Though it was not expressed by the community during the course of conducting the various aforementioned outreach activities (see p. 9), air quality concerns stemming from dust plumes coming off of sand dunes at nearby Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreational Area (SVRA) has historically been a known concern.

In 2012, the APCD conducted the South County Community Monitoring Project, for the purpose of mapping the extent, concentration level, and impact of dust plumes in Nipomo Mesa and Oceano neighborhood areas.53 Results from temporary monitoring stations indicated elevated PM concentration levels in Oceano, typically during times of high northwesterly winds, at locations near areas of open disturbed sand, such as those found in Oceano’s SVRA and near the park entrance on Pier Avenue. However, these levels were found to diminish dramatically over a short distance downwind and were deemed limited in spatial extent and impact.54 The findings corroborated with data collected from previous short-term monitoring conducted in 2011, which found no windblown dust impacts were measured at centrally located Oceano Elementary School.55

According a recent survey of fifth grade students from schools belonging to the Lucia Mar School District, 24 percent of students responded that a parent or other adult told them they have asthma, and 17 percent reported having trouble breathing when not exercising.56

Access to Health Care

Due to many of the risk factors summarized in the previous sections, low-income, ethnic minority populations are groups most prone to incurring negative health outcomes.57 High rates of unemployment, education levels, limited transportation options, lack of insurance coverage and fewer health and medical care facilities are compounding issues which limit access to health care.

The percentage of county residents with health insurance and those with a regular source of healthcare has decreased since 2010.58 In 2013, 77.9 percent of South County residents reported having health insurance, with 28.2 percent receiving insurance through a state or federal program such as Medicare or Medi-Cal. These figures are likely not accurately representative of Oceano, as the rates of unemployment, residency status and income are prohibitive for many residents to obtain health coverage. Support for this assumption may be deduced from ACTION face-to-face survey results which found 75 percent of Spanish-speaking respondents in the county were uninsured in 2013.59

The Community Health Centers clinic, located along Highway 1 next to Central Market, did provide low-cost medical, dental, chiropractic services, as well health education and specialty care, but has recently since closed its doors. This has subsequently left a health care service vacuum in the community.
Through land use controls and zoning, planners can help dictate the facility use of specific locations. Additionally, initiatives can be provided that allow for variances within a designated land use as deemed necessary, relative to the community’s need.

**Safety**

Walking is the most common form of physical activity in the United States and one of the most affordable and resource efficient forms of travel (Litman, 2014). The ability to walk is especially important in disadvantaged communities where walking to a destination (or to a transit stop) such as place of employment, grocer, healthcare facility or park is the only means of arriving to these locations.

If not dictated by necessity, there are many contributing factors that may dissuade individuals to walk for physical activity or recreational purposes. Multiple research findings have indicated feelings related to personal safety and security were behavioral motivators which help determine whether community residents will be physically active. The perceived threat of violence or crime in certain neighborhoods can impact decisions to walk for leisure, exercise or even necessity.

Gangs, crime and drug activity are unfortunately an inherent part of many socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Negative perceptions associated with these types of activities were voiced repeatedly by Oceano community members during outreach events and responses from the community survey.

Survey respondents were asked (see Figure 8 above), “What community features, if any, could contribute to the health and quality of life in Oceano?” They were instructed to first checkmark all the answer choices that applied, and then to prioritize three answer choices they felt were most important by circling them. More than half of all respondents which answered the question valued “safer neighborhoods” over additional or improved bike lanes or park facilities.

During a spatial mapping exercise with Ocean Elementary sixth graders, the question was asked “where do you feel unsafe in Oceano?” Some students specifically noted areas around 15th and 19th Streets as being locations where “scary people” and “gangsters” were (see Figure 9 on next page). The need for more police was also mentioned.
Common responses were “más seguridad […] más luz en las calles […] menos miembros de pandillas […] las calles están muy obscuras, necesita más iluminación” [translated to English: “more security […] more lights in the streets […] less gang members […] the streets are very dark; need more light”].

Land use and transportation planning, along with urban design can help curb community violence and increase positive perceptions of safety. In addition to dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks, traffic-calming features such as bulb-outs, raised crosswalks, and speed bumps can reduce the speed of auto traffic near schools and residential areas, in turn promoting safe walking and biking experiences.

Research has indicated that crime rates are influenced by building design and land uses. Mixed-use developments which typically place residences above retail/commercial spaces put “eyes on the streets,” dissuading illicit activities, as does providing clear sight lines and street lamps that allow residents to see and be seen, helping to illuminate the dark areas within the community.
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES + ACTION PROGRAMS

The goals, objectives, policies and action programs outlined in this section are intended to address Oceano’s key health issues and challenges, and were developed for the purpose of fostering an environment that will promote physical and mental health wellness for all community members.

OCHP GOAL 1: IMPROVE THE OVERALL LEVEL OF PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLNESS IN OCEANO

Objective

Establish protocols, procedures and collaborations that produce positive health outcomes for Oceano residents

POLICIES

P. 1.1 Prioritize the health of Oceano residents; particularly for the most vulnerable groups in the population

P. 1.2 Incorporate health considerations and implications in all policies, programs, decisions and development activities when applicable

P. 1.3 Promote and encourage community participation during open forums at local government public meetings

P. 1.4 Collaborate with external partners, such as the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department (SLOCPHD), Lucia Mar School District, and other non-profit, social service groups and local government agencies in making health a priority for the community

P. 1.5 Promote an understanding of the connections between the built environment and public health challenges in Oceano
ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 1.1 All community development project proposals, permit applications, zoning and amendment requests shall be routed to the SLOCPHD’s Healthy Communities Workgroup to be reviewed for potential public health impacts.

A. 1.2 A collaborative review of the County’s General Plan with staff from the SLOCPHD and San Luis Obispo County Planning and Building Department should be established to identify opportunities to incorporate health promoting policies in future General Plan amendments.

A. 1.3 SLOCPHD should develop and define health indicators and methods to track, monitor and collect community-level health data to better understand the health issues specific to Oceano.

A. 1.4 Initiate discussions with the San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District to explore the feasibility of adding a permanent monitoring station within or in close proximity to the Oceano Community Service District boundary.

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OCHP GOAL 2: A BUILT ENVIRONMENT THAT AFFORDS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITY THE OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS OF BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Objective

Promote land use patterns and urban design to create an environment that encourages active living, promotes social interaction, and improves overall wellness.

POLICIES

P. 2.1 Recreational facilities and parks should be easily accessible to all Oceano residents, emphasizing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility.
P. 2.2 New development should be encouraged to provide healthy public spaces into the project

P. 2.3 Compact, mixed commercial/residential development should be encouraged in the downtown commercial corridor

P. 2.4 Encourage development strategies that will increase the amount of park, trails, open spaces and green spaces should be developed

P. 2.5 To the greatest extent possible, the community should be designed and developed in such a way to provide safe, easy and efficient access for the disabled

ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 2.1 Develop street design guidelines for the commercial downtown area, providing guidance on improvements to the public right of way through complete street principles including: narrow roadways; bike lanes; on-street parking; enhanced crosswalks; street trees; way-finding signage; public art; and other features that may contribute to the desired character of the town

A. 2.2 Develop and adopt a minimum street design standards for both residential and commercial street design features that will facilitate walking and biking opportunities in new developments

A. 2.3 Ensure existing minimum density standards are upheld for new development projects

A. 2.4 Identify opportunities for mixed-use development that achieves additional community benefits such as improving neighborhood aesthetic, recreation opportunities, affordable housing, live-work units, and public art space

A. 2.5 Enhance the commercial downtown corridor by co-locating services and retail next to each other, allowing for residential on top of commercial mixed-use spaces, and providing attractive and walkable retail nodes
OCEANO COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN

OCHP GOAL 3: A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Objective

Increase opportunities for physical activity throughout the community

POLICIES

P. 3.1 Support the development of safely accessible, clearly marked, walkable paths to the beach and County Park should be sought

P. 3.2 Support regional efforts to increase cycling as a viable transportation alternative

P. 3.3 Support the development of regularly scheduled, low-cost events and programs that encourage physical activity

P. 3.4 Increase bicycle amenities such as bike racks or storage lockers in the commercial downtown area

P. 3.5 Create a network of intuitively connected, continuous, efficient, and safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways

P. 3.6 Direct policy efforts to make active transportation the primary mode of travel within the town’s borders

P. 3.7 Prioritize the creation of a continuous, safe and attractive pedestrian and bike network as a community strategy

P. 3.8 Provide amenities such as bike lockers or racks to encourage bicycle use

P. 3.9 Prioritize infrastructure upgrades that improve pedestrian and bike safety closest to the school

ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 3.1 Develop a joint-use (or shared-use) agreement with the Lucia Mar School District and the County to allow use of Oceano Elementary’s sports field after hours as a cost-effective strategy to increase opportunities for physical activity.
A. 3.2 Establish a community program which specializes in low-cost recreation alternatives such as temporary parklets or monthly cyclovias events. A cyclovia (or ciclovia) is a Spanish term for “cycle way,” and are events in which sections of public roads are shutdown and made into temporary bike paths and recreation areas.

A. 3.3 Establish a “bike kitchen” run by volunteer community members, providing tools and maintenance instruction to keep bikes functioning and in use, and creating opportunity for social cohesion

A. 3.4 Traffic light timing will provide pedestrians, particularly the elderly, disabled and those pushing strollers, sufficient cross times

A. 3.5 Develop a bike rack donation and dedication program

OCHP GOAL 4: ADEQUATE, SAFE, AND ACCESSIBLE PARKS AND RECREATION SPACES FOR THE COMMUNITY

Objective

Increase the provision of quality parks, recreation facilities, green and open spaces in Oceano

POLICIES

P. 4.1 Recognize that parks and public recreation spaces are critical components for an active and healthy community

P. 4.2 Ensure that parks and public recreation spaces are equally distributed and safely accessible within Oceano

P. 4.3 Support the use of turning long-standing vacant lots into small parks, open spaces or community gardens
ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 4.1 Seek sponsors to subsidize costs of using the Oceano Community Center, making it available to all residents

A. 4.2 Explore the feasibility of increasing the land use and acreage of land dedicated to recreation and open space, as specified in the county general plan

A. 4.3 Develop community garden regulations specifying appropriate design, maintenance and operation requirements which will provide a starting point to creating said gardens

A. 4.4 Create an incentive program that will provide property owners of vacant lots reduced property taxes for use of the land

A. 4.5 Evaluate the feasibility of developing new smaller neighborhood pocket parks in areas of most need

A. 4.6 Develop and promote regularly scheduled community and cultural events which make use of County Memorial Park

A. 4.7 Work with the Oceano Community Service District to explore feasibility for property owners in Oceano to help defray expenses for maintenance of neighborhood parks through small increase in property tax
**OCHP GOAL 5: ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE**

**Objective**

Ensure all community members have safe and convenient access to a full range of primary, preventative, and specialty health care

**POLICIES**

**P. 5.1** Encourage new health care facilities to locate in Oceano

**P. 5.2** Support the use of mobile health care services to increase access within the community

**P. 5.3** Encourage the development of a complete care center; co-locating various medical, physical and mental health care services together

**P. 5.4** Enhance and promote the relationships with local private hospital and medical groups, and public organizations that provide health and wellness programs in the community

**ACTION PROGRAMS**

**A. 5.1** Investigate the feasibility of incorporating a one-step electronic application process for enrolling qualified applicants into a public benefit programs

**A. 5.2** Create a developers’ incentives program to help recruit medical and health care providers into Oceano, offering reduced or waived permit fees and discounted property taxes

**A. 5.3** Create development guidelines that would require health care facilities to be readily accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit-dependent members of the community

**A. 5.4** Support state licensed residential care programs that provide 24-hour non-medical care for children, adults and the elderly
A. 5.5 Partner with SLOPHD to provide technical assistance to aid local organizations that deliver health and social services to seniors, homeless persons, low-income community members, and other groups with special needs

**OCHP GOAL 6: A HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE FOOD ENVIRONMENT**

**Objective**

Increase accessibility, availability and affordability of fresh, locally grown foods for Oceano residents

**POLICIES**

P. 6.1 Partnerships between local merchants and the community farmers’ market should be encouraged to increase the availability of healthy food choices in the community

P. 6.2 Improve opportunities for nutritious food options by encouraging a mix of food establishments in the commercial corridor

P. 6.3 Promote the production and distribution of locally grown food by reducing barriers to farmers’ markets, food cooperatives and community food gardens

P. 6.4 New commercial, retail and mixed use development should provide pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities such as bike racks

P. 6.5 Support the use of vacant private and public lots for community gardens as deemed feasible and appropriate

P. 6.6 Public transit routes should be directed to stop at or near food market locations, in an order to provide greater community access to grocery outlets
ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 6.1 Develop a local ordinance that requires farmers’ markets utilizing public streets or sidewalks, to accept EBT payments. This requirement would allow many low-income residents access to healthier food options.

A. 6.2 Provide an expedited permitting and licensing process for food vendors selling unprocessed, nutritious foods

A. 6.3 Provide permitting incentives to retailers who accept WIC and EBT payment; provide an assistance program to help businesses

A. 6.4 Develop a Healthy Food Vendor program that recognizes food establishments which sell primarily unprocessed, locally grown or harvested foods

A. 6.5 Create a Hydration Station program to seek opportunities for funding through grants or donations to provide hydration station/drinking water units across Oceano

OCHP GOAL 7: A SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY

Objective

Create an environment where residents and visitors feel safe in their surroundings

POLICIES

P. 7.1 Improve street illumination in residential areas

P. 7.2 Increase visible pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic signage

P. 7.3 Continue to support and participate in the program efforts of the Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) program, prioritizing their findings for infrastructure improvements
P. 7.4 Support the use of traffic-calming features near the commercial downtown corridor and near the elementary

P. 7.5 Invest in Oceano’s youth (working age individuals) by providing opportunities to gain experience learning marketable skills

P. 7.6 Support the increase of peace officer staff and patrols in the community

ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 7.1 Create commercial and mixed-use development standards which apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into planning and design strategies to enhance public security and safety

A. 7.2 Develop a job development or apprenticeship program with interested local businesses and organizations that will partner with local youth organizations such as the Oceano Boys & Girls Club, S.A.F.E. Family Resource Center, and Arroyo Grande High School Student Support Center, connecting youths that have a to develop skills, volunteer or find summer work, providing them personal finance training.

A. 7.3 Seek grant funding to aid developing or enhancing community crime prevention, gang control, and youth mentorship programs

A. 7.4 Inquire about requirements and seek funding from eligible grant programs such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant and the Community Facilities Grant

A. 7.5 Work with OCSD and County Department of Public Works to seek and secure funding for increasing the number of street lights in neighborhoods.
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OCHP GOAL 8: A WELL-INFORMED COMMUNITY

Objective

Prioritize health, nutrition and preventative education for all ages

POLICIES

P. 8.1 Opportunities to educate local social-service, family and community groups on preventative healthcare training should be sought by SLOCPHD

P. 8.2 Partnerships should be sought with healthcare providers and organizations to promote programs that reduce dependence on drugs, alcohol and tobacco

P. 8.3 Informational and health promotion materials should be developed and encouraged to be distributed at public facilities and private businesses within the community

P. 8.4 Collaborative partnerships should be developed with local and regional agencies of relevant interest to promote health education

ACTION PROGRAMS

A. 8.1 Develop an arrangement between the SLOPHD and the Oceano Community Center to allow scheduled regular use of the facilities to teach free disease and preventive health education, as well as drug, alcohol and tobacco cessation classes

A. 8.2 Develop a Public Participation Program aimed at educating community members about their public participation rights, providing schedules to local advisory body meetings for opportunities to engage with community decision makers

A. 8.3 Investigate the development of joint-use agreements with Lucia Mar School District to utilize classroom and library facilities for free community after-hour health and nutrition education classes
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