



# SHAPE UP SF POLICY ANALYSIS

Recommendations to create environments that promote physical activity

November 2010



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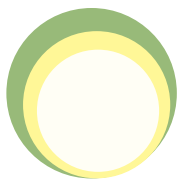
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# INTRODUCTION

*Increasing prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases* such as diabetes, particularly among children, along with rising health-care costs associated with chronic and lifestyle-related diseases in recent decades, have become issues of great concern. Research has shown the health benefits from regular physical activity, but recent figures suggest that the majority of Americans at all age levels do not engage in adequate amounts of physical activity to receive these health benefits.<sup>1</sup> Among ethnic minorities and women, the rates of physical activity are even lower than the national averages.<sup>2</sup> In San Francisco, the rates of obesity and physical activity mirror those of the state of California with 20-24 percent obese<sup>3</sup>, while fewer than half of San Francisco adults and even fewer women and ethnic minorities, reported moderate or vigorous physical activity.<sup>4</sup>

Given the evidence supporting the mental, physical and social health benefits to be gained from physical activity, **all San Franciscans should have equal access to physical activity that is safe, convenient, accessible, and without financial burden.** This report, based on interviews with city and county departments and policy and literature reviews, illustrates how policies can improve community environments to be more supportive of and conducive to physical activity. Through open spaces that provide safe and convenient opportunities for activity, strengthened physical education programs, recreation programs that reach all communities, and a shift to active transportation, as well as by using health as a criteria for policies and decision-making, physical activity can be integrated into city residents' day-to-day lives and support them in reaching the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Policies can also address disparities in low-income neighborhoods that have the least access to safe and convenient active recreation in this urban context.

Many city and county departments address physical activity implicitly in their programs. By moving to a shared definition and understanding of physical activity, departments can make physical activity, and more broadly—health, a key component to the primary issues on which they are working. Building off the collaboration amongst city agencies and the growing interest in incorporating health impacts and outcomes into policy making, the City can begin to break down the barriers to physical activity. The crux of

*“What we want to do is create [a] social norm that we all hold in the public sector and the community sector: that every kid is valued and every kid has safe opportunities to be physically active.”*

this report is a series of recommendations in key areas that policy can impact to increase physical activity in San Francisco. By incorporating physical activity as a principle in our policies and as a part of our built environment, we can lead San Franciscans to be a healthier, more active population.

## About This Study

In January 2009, the Physical Activity Council contracted with Susan G. Zieff, Ph.D. to conduct the research. The project began with a literature review that focused on identifying existing physical activity and wellness policies at the local, state and national level. Twenty-one interviews were conducted with key staff from 16 City and County of San Francisco government departments. The interview questions probed current as well as new ideas for policies that could impact physical activity as well as the priority of physical activity in the development of department policies. In addition, key city planning documents were selected and analyzed to identify potential barriers to physical activity.

The Policy Committee, a subcommittee of the Physical Activity Council, selected, developed and prioritized the policy recommendations based on a detailed analysis of more than 100 policy suggestions from interviews and were presented to key community stakeholder organizations for feedback as well as to the Board of Supervisor to garner support. *The policy recommendations presented in this report are divided into five categories: 1.) Health in All Policies; 2.) Physical Education; 3.) Active Transportation; 4.) Open Space; and 5.) Recreation.* Also included are activities that can enhance the recommendations such as funding and stakeholder participation.



# CITY LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

*At the San Francisco city government level,* policies are developed by the Board of Supervisors, Mayor and within city departments and their associated commissions. Policies affecting physical activity opportunities are typically developed within recreation and parks, planning, transportation, public-school education, housing, environment and public health. However, most city departments may also directly or indirectly impact physical activity access for residents.

Various studies have shown that policies at all levels of government have become increasingly viewed as effective interventions for promoting healthful physical activity.<sup>5</sup> In the interviews, key informants unanimously agreed that it is the role of City government to provide leadership, improvements to the built environment, including attractive and safe recreational space, and other services to encourage physical activity. All of the participants interviewed acknowledged that physical activity is critical to the health and well being of all San Franciscans.

## Physical Activity Implicit in Policies and Programs

More than half of the interview participants reported an “increased realization” that, although the term “physical activity” is not used

in department discussions, issues associated with physical activity inform a considerable part of their work projects. One participant noted how “there could almost be a physical activity component to almost everything you do... Yesterday we sat down with some people to talk about... tearing up [a] sidewalk and putting in permeable landscape. Now you wouldn’t link the two, but if you make your sidewalks more walkable then, there’s a link.”

Physical activity was referenced **implicitly** by 62 percent of the participants in department policy discussions with half of the references focused on alternative modes of transportation (Table 1). Also referenced indirectly were benefits to the environment and increasing open space.

Of the 38 percent of City personnel interviewed reporting that enhancing physical activity opportunities for San Franciscans was an **explicit** component of policy development in their department, the most important issues referenced were: health and wellness and active recreation. But, explicit references came up in other areas of

## SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Having a common definition of physical activity provides a basis and starting point for discussions about the design and implementation of city projects that increase opportunities for health-benefiting physical activity. A definition of physical activity that has become a standard among scholars is: **“Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure.”**<sup>6</sup>

In addition, these policies should facilitate and support reaching the recommendations found in the *2008 Guidelines for Physical Activity for Americans* that outlines the amount of time children and adults should be engaged in physical activity. **It recommends that adults engage in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week and that children engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity per day.**

**TABLE 1: Implicit and Explicit References to Physical Activity in their Work**

Implicit References	% of Respondents
Physical Activity—overall	62%
Alternative Modes of Transportation	52%
Benefits to Environment	29%
Increasing Open Space	24%
Explicit References	% of Respondents
Physical Activity—overall	38%
Health and Wellness	24%
Active Recreation	14%

Source: Shape Up SF Interviews 2010

policy making. For example, one interviewee described the connection of health with zoning decisions: “We feel that and have succeeded in ... incorporating [a] public health review as part of zoning. So, five years ago, no one would have said that public health had any role in zoning decisions. And now, it’s pretty widely accepted that we do. And our focus in zoning is to try to promote neighborhoods that increase the opportunities to exercise, to make it easier to exercise.”

## Integrated Approach to Physical Activity

Physical activity was considered a priority by 24 percent of personnel interviewed during department policy discussions. Among the three quarters interviewed who indicated that physical activity was not a priority of policy discussions, 31 percent favored an approach that integrated increased physical activity opportunities with, among other issues, environmental concerns, pedestrian and cyclist

safety and improving access to alternative modes of transportation and affordable housing. The interviews revealed that although the work of many city departments impact physical activity, it was often not recognized as an outcome. One interviewee noted how health can be key to their issue: “I think something the transportation agencies can do is more recognize streets as a resource that’s not just a transportation resource, but as a resource for other kinds of things like physical activity and open space.”

Using a standard definition of physical activity in conjunction with recommended physical activity guidelines (see “Shared Understanding of Physical Activity”) would provide policy-makers with sufficient guidance toward the goal of enhancing physical activity opportunities and behavior among San Franciscans. Further, such a shared definition could support the further integration of work in sectors such as housing, transportation, planning and recreation to improve physical activity access for all San Franciscans.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE: HEALTH EQUITY IN POLICIES

One critically important objective of policy analysis and revision is the identification of areas of inequity and unequal distribution of resources that act as barriers to engagement in health-benefiting physical activity. A recent research project investigated the neighborhood-level barriers to accessing physical activity in selected San Francisco communities. The researchers<sup>8</sup> found that neighborhood disparities in physical activity resources exist and low-income neighborhoods with high proportions of ethnic minorities have the least access to safe and convenient physical recreation in this urban context.<sup>9</sup> In addition, residents of underserved neighborhoods (e.g. Tenderloin and the Bayview) experience chronic diseases at higher rates than residents of neighborhoods well served for physical activity.<sup>10</sup> These findings concur with the San Francisco General Plan which reports that “The older, more densely populated areas contained few sites suitable for parks, and those which were available in built-up areas tended to be more costly compared to land in outlying areas. The result has been an unequal distribution of facilities throughout the City. The inequality merits correction where neighborhoods lacking parks and recreation facilities also have relatively high needs for such facilities.”<sup>11</sup>

For Shape UP SF, health equity is a guiding principle. The Policy Committee discussed at length the importance of health equity and recognized that not every policy would clearly indicate that sentiment. To that end, the group identified health equity as a core value and one that underpins the recommendations found in this report, whether stated explicitly or not. Revisions to existing policies and the development of new policies can help address disparities in physical activity opportunities in the built environment.

## Interaction Amongst Departments Can Play Key Role

Research has documented the need for collaboration between planning, transportation, public health and other city agencies to facilitate projects that highlight the connection between public health and the built environment.<sup>7</sup> In the interviews, 17 department representatives reported interaction with at least one other city department in policy work that impacts physical activity access and opportunities. On average, departments interacted with six other city departments. The current high level of interaction between city departments could play a key role in the ability of decision-makers to create more public and private spaces conducive to physical activity in the future. Many city departments currently work together effectively in developing policies that impact physical activity, regardless of whether increasing physical activity is an explicit desired outcome. Increasing cross-department activity in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, projects and programs that affect active living among San Francisco residents will improve potential health, environment and quality of life outcomes.



Photo: Silver Lumsdaine



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Physical Activity Council and the Policy Committee selected and developed the following policy recommendations from an analysis of the interviews and City policy documents:

### a. HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES (HiAP)

Using “health in all policies” as a guiding principle for policy activity in San Francisco city government ensures the implementation of policies, programs and measures to safeguard and improve the public’s health.

#### Existing Policies

At the February 24, 2010 California “Summit on Health, Nutrition and Obesity: Actions for Healthy Living,” Governor Schwarzenegger announced actions to combat the state’s obesity crisis and encourage “all Californians to live a healthy, active lifestyle through promoting healthy beverages, increasing physical activity and incorporating the idea of “health in all policies” (State of California, 2010 – EO-S-04-10).

As an overarching goal, HiAP provides a framework for general and consistent consideration of health—through the provision of physical activity—as a component of city policies. The City’s General Plan alludes to a similar objective with its goal of: “Improvement of the city as a place for living, by aiding in making it more *healthful*, safe, pleasant, and satisfying, with housing representing good standards for all residents and by providing adequate open spaces and appropriate community facilities.”

#### Recommendations

Increase access to physical activity by **explicitly incorporating “Health in All Policies” into highest-level policy documents** of the City and County of San Francisco and as a priority policy in the General Plan by incorporating a specific health-related element.

**Establish an interdepartmental committee to provide oversight** of the implementation and evaluation of HiAP. Committee leadership should be provided on a rotational basis.

### b. PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Extensive research has shown that physically fit children perform better on academic tests; physical activity can improve classroom behavior and attendance; and that physically active students are healthier overall and have a decreased risk for chronic diseases.<sup>12</sup> Physical Education and school-site physical activity could make a significant contribution to health among San Francisco Unified School District students. Yet, a recent California study<sup>13</sup> on the status of public school physical education, noted the absence of physical education from the Academic Performance Index and its general de-valuation within the school curriculum. In one school district, legal advocacy and civil rights laws were used to require the district to enforce physical education curriculum requirements.<sup>14</sup>



These recommendations are intended to provide long term guidance for creating environments conducive to physical activity.

**Table 2: Overview of Recommendations and Implementation**

	Recommendations	Implementation
<b>a. Health in All Policy</b>	Increase access to physical activity by explicitly incorporating “Health in All Policies” into highest-level policy documents of the City and County of San Francisco and as a priority policy in the General Plan.	Physical Activity Council (PAC) members will request to present report recommendations to the Land Use committee of the Board of Supervisors; at that time a request to consider and move on the Health in All Policies recommendations will be made.  PAC will provide indicators for departments to understand how to incorporate health in all policies.
	Establish an interdepartmental committee to provide oversight of the implementation and evaluation of HiAP. Committee leadership should be provided on a rotational basis.	
<b>b. Physical Education</b>	Advocate to include PE in API and AYP scoring systems.	Shape Up SF secured a grant from the California Obesity Prevention Project to assess PE at SFUSD, develop and share recommendations with policymakers and hold a PE Forum to educate the public, educators, and policymakers about the benefits of PE. The long term goal of these efforts are to provide quality, daily PE with credentialed PE specialists to all SFUSD students and to incorporate PE scores into school ranking criteria.
	Activate school playgrounds for after school hours.	
	Blend needs of open/blacktop and greening space.	
	Require certification and/or specialized training for instructors delivering physical education.	
<b>c. Active Transportation</b>	Consider Auto Trips Generated as a measure to offset new car trips created.	PAC will support emerging City efforts to Shift Level of Service.  The Department of Public Health has obtained funding from the Office of Traffic Safety to develop policies and strategy for key pedestrian streets in partnership with MTA and Planning.  Shape Up SF is currently implementing Safe Routes to Schools in fifteen schools and has funding to do so for the next three years.
	Develop policies and strategy for key pedestrian streets.	
	Expand Safe Routes to School.	
<b>d. Open Space</b>	Activate Joint Use Agreements/Community Hubs.	All of the Open Space recommendations were included in Shape Up SF’s response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mega Communities Putting Prevention to Work funding announcement. Although approved for funding, the Shape Up SF application has not yet been funded. Shape Up SF continually seeks funding streams to support these efforts.
	Increase way-finding signage.	
	Increase temporary open space.	In partnership with the Safe Routes to Coalition, Shape Up SF helped secure a grant application to Kids’ Plates, designed to activate Hub Sites.
	Streamline liability and permitting.	Shape Up SF remains active in Sunday Streets planning and sustainability efforts.
<b>e. Active Recreation</b>	Provide health benefiting active recreation through Recreation and Parks centers and services.	PAC will offer technical assistance to develop evaluation plan/protocol to measure the impact of infrastructure and program changes, particularly among underserved communities.
	Engage local communities in identifying, training and hiring RPD staff.	
	Extend marketing and outreach to inform economically and technologically underserved communities.	
	Monitor and assess response to infrastructure and program changes among underserved communities.	



### Existing Policies

In San Francisco, the city and district have begun to form various partnerships and initiatives designed to improve and increase physical activity for our young people. The most notable example is the passage of the Public Education Enrichment Fund in 2004—by over 70% of the electorate—which provides critical funding to support physical education and athletic programs throughout the district.

**State mandated PE minutes:** Currently the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) uses the State of California Department of Education physical education requirements of a minimum of 200 minutes each 10 schooldays for children in grades 1-6 and 400 minutes each 10 school days for grades 7-12. Exemptions and waivers are allowed in circumstances such as involvement in inter-collegiate athletics and other extracurricular activities.

**SFUSD PE Master Plan** aims “to develop a well-planned physical education program that is sequential, developmental, and age-appropriate for every child. To provide physical education programs that help children and youths develop active life-style fitness commitments to their own physical well-being, health, fitness, and active life-style.”

### Recommendations

**Advocate to state and federal policymakers to include PE in the Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress scoring systems.** Doing so will demonstrate a commitment to physical education as a valued part of the curriculum; send a message to parents, school administrators and the broader community of the role of physical education in education; and provide an accountability mechanism to ensure PE is a valued contributor to student success.

**Identify grants and partners to activate school playgrounds for after school hours** for the enhancement of physical activity among children and area residents.

**Blend needs of open/blacktop and greening space** to provide more opportunities for physical activity and learning for students.

Often classroom teachers do not have the skill, knowledge, confidence or desire to provide quality physical education. Where possible, **require certification and/or specialized training for instructors delivering physical education** and physical activity content during school day and after school hours. Include community-based organizations in the process of identifying and providing training for appropriate applicants for instructor positions. Involve

community based organizations in the development of local programs and employ local residents when feasible.

Many of the above recommendations are long term and build on SFUSD’s progress toward providing quality PE to its students.

## C. ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Transportation infrastructure is closely linked with public health and specifically, to opportunities for physical activity. The design of our cities, communities, and transportation infrastructure often unintentionally discourage walking, bicycling, or other modes of active transportation that would help more Americans reach the recommended daily minutes of physical activity. It is important to note that bicycle and pedestrian plans often arise at the city level earlier than at the state level showing promise as a strategy for the promotion of physical activity.<sup>15</sup> In an example of the incorporation of health concerns into transportation policy, a local collaborative planning process resulted in the creation of the Public Health Component of the Regional Transportation Plan that included the goal of increasing physical activity.<sup>16</sup>

### Existing Policies

**Transit First:** Since 1970, multi-modal transportation has been set forth as an important component of project and policy development in the City and County’s *Transit First* policy. According to *Transit First*, “within San Francisco, travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot must be an attractive alternative to travel by



Photo: Silver Lumsdaine



Photo: Silver Lumsdaine

private automobile. Decisions regarding the use of limited public street and sidewalk space shall encourage the use of public rights of way by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, and shall strive to reduce traffic and improve public health and safety” (SFMTA, Transit-First Policy, Sec. 8A.115). These principles were again outlined in the *SFMTA 2008–2012 Strategic Plan* with the mandate of the provision of “timely, convenient, safe and environmentally friendly transportation alternatives.”

**The 2008 San Francisco Better Streets Plan: Policies and Guidelines for the Pedestrian Realm** (Administrative Code Charter Section 16.102) “seeks to balance the needs of all street users, with a particular focus on the pedestrian environment and how streets can be used as public space. The Plan reflects the understanding that the pedestrian environment is about much more than just transportation—that streets serve a multitude of social, recreational and ecological needs that must be considered when deciding on the most appropriate design.” One of the goals of the Better Streets Plan is “to promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking to daily and occasional destinations, minimizing pedestrian injuries, and helping to decrease major chronic diseases” through street design.

**San Francisco Bicycle Plan:** Bicycling is a key component of transportation in San Francisco. The San Francisco Bicycle Plan developed in 2009 by SFMTA includes eight goals towards its

objective of “integrating bicycle travel into all roadway planning and design and construction policy.”

These policies, among others, demonstrate the City and County’s commitment to improving non-vehicular travel options with reference to both health and environmental benefits. These valuable policies would be strengthened through enforcement and prioritization. The following recommendations construct a new paradigm for transit in San Francisco that de-emphasizes the role of the automobile and provides greater opportunities for improved pedestrian, bicycle and public transit options.

### Recommendations

**Consider Auto Trips Generated as a measure to offset new car trips created.** In doing so, the focus would shift from Level of Service and could support active transportation. Until recently, Level of Service has prioritized automobile transit with its focus on minimizing congestion and traffic light timing. A shift in this paradigm toward Automobile Trips Generated can better support active transportation (e.g. walking, biking, public transit) in the development and implementation of policies related to transportation and city planning. Such a shift must occur to meet the goal of improving health and the environment for all San Franciscans, particularly within neighborhoods with reduced access to public transit.

**Develop policies and strategy for key pedestrian streets.** Currently, there is no standard methodology to identify and prioritize pedestrian-related capital improvements in San Francisco. In order to fill this gap, a strategy for key pedestrian streets should be established. A strategy for key pedestrian streets will develop criteria for prioritizing pedestrian locations in San Francisco, identify key pedestrian streets, establish a methodology for prioritizing capital improvements, and write policies and objectives for pedestrian streets to be incorporated into the City’s General Plan. These policies and strategies are the first step in order to create and implement a list of prioritized capital improvements for the pedestrian environment.

**Expand Safe Routes to School.** Safe Routes to School in San Francisco (SRTS-SF) promotes safe and active walking and bicycling to and from school. The SRTS-SF program was launched in September 2009 at Walk to School Day. In 2010, a total of fifteen elementary schools were added as Safe Routes to School sites. SRTS is funded through 2013, and is an ideal program to support SFUSD’s new school reassignment policy.



## d. OPEN SPACE

Parks and open spaces impact health by offering a place for physical activity, which is a protective factor against chronic disease. Among older Americans, increasing neighborhood walkability with multiple destinations within short distances supports greater physical activity and subsequent healthy aging.<sup>17</sup> Amongst consumers, neighborhood characteristics that include pedestrian-oriented design in housing set close to the street, designated and designed public spaces and mixed use environments with opportunities for live, work and play within close distances are increasingly favored.<sup>18</sup>

In a dense urban environment such as San Francisco, policies must be in place to protect and enhance existing parks and open spaces, but policies can also serve to create temporary open spaces for neighborhoods lacking access to safe open space for physical activity. A focus group study conducted in San Francisco neighborhoods, found that access to safe, convenient and healthful physical activity differs by neighborhood and that low-income ethnic minority populations are more likely to reside in neighborhoods with limited recreational and open space resources.<sup>19</sup>

### Existing Policies

**San Francisco General Plan, Recreation & Open Space Element:** The following are various references in the general plan to open spaces: Policy 2.7: “Acquire additional open space for public

use.” Policy 4.4: “Acquire and develop new public open space in existing residential neighborhoods, giving priority to areas which are most deficient in open space.” Policy 4.6: “Assure the provision of adequate public open space to serve new residential development... Major new residential development should be required to provide open space accessible to the general public.”

**San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council report:** The six action steps recommended in its report, “Green Envy: Achieving Equity in Open Space,” the San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council recommended “to aid in the development of a comprehensive Open Space Plan via a multi-agency and multi-stakeholder process” that recommends the surveying of public property for open space and recreation potential as part of the creation of an inventory of available public land and vacant private spaces. The underlying aim of the NPC is to increase equitable access to parks and natural recreational sites and increase the personal, community and economic health of the city.

**Port of San Francisco Waterfront Goals:** One of the three highlighted goals of the waterfront “Design & Access Element” of the Port of San Francisco (2004) is to “create a continuously accessible waterfront from Aquatic Park to Pier 70.” The Port has a commitment to improving access to open space with “City Connection Areas” located at regular, five to ten minute walking intervals along the 7.5 miles of waterfront walkway administered by the Port.

**Violence Prevention Plan:** Although the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice Violence Prevention Plan does not specifically identify open space as a component of the strategy for reducing and preventing violence in San Francisco, neighborhood blight and both real and perceived threat of crime operates to deter individuals from using available open space and recreational facilities. One of the goals of the Violence Prevention Plan is to increase neighborhood capacity and support efforts of the community in partnership with city agencies to transform local conditions in the effort to “create a violence-free environment for all San Franciscans.”

**The Community Hubs Pilot Project,** a joint-use agreement between the San Francisco Unified School District and the Recreation & Parks Department, provides access to more open space. Scholarly literature<sup>20</sup> documents that active transport was strongly associated with use of recreational sites such as neighborhood recreation centers and school play yards. Eleven school sites were selected (one in each supervisorial district) to participate in a program opening locked schoolyards for recreational use on weekends.







These highlighted policies demonstrate strong commitment to the provision of open space for recreational activities in a variety of contexts. Greater enforcement and oversight of implementation of these policies will result in expanded and improved open space access for all San Francisco residents.

### Recommendations

**Activate Joint Use Agreements/Community Hubs.** Proximity and activation impact the extent to which available sites are accessed and used for physical activity. A survey of the selected Community Hub sites in San Francisco demonstrated opportunities to increase usage of opened sites for local users.<sup>21</sup> The presence of equipment, game markings and supervision increases physical activity among children<sup>22</sup> and should be strongly considered as this project moves forward.

**Increase Way-finding Signage.** Installation of motivational signs increased stair usage on college campuses, bank buildings and parking garages.<sup>23</sup> The installation of signs and trail markers that make it easy to identify and follow walking and bicycle paths

are relatively low-cost interventions with minimal infrastructure requirements that have proven positive behavioral outcomes.

**Increase temporary open space.** Pavement to Parks, a collaborative project between the Mayor's Office, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Department, and the Municipal Transportation Agency, completed four projects with five others in various stages of planning to transform unused and wasted street space into pedestrian plazas.<sup>24</sup>

An international movement has developed, with San Francisco in the forefront, re-claiming public space such as roadways for recreational and leisure-time use. Effective examples of this include Sunday Streets in San Francisco and the Castro Street Commons. These provide resources for large segments of the population to increase physical activity levels without significant changes to the city's infrastructure.

**Streamline liability and permitting.** Reduce known barriers to utilizing existing spaces for physical activity. At present there is a multi-layered liability structure that presents a significant barrier to the installation of temporary open space projects in San Francisco due to the process of gaining clearance from numerous departments for temporary street closures.

## e. ACTIVE RECREATION

Park and recreation professionals are aware of the relationships between health and physical activity. This awareness was further heightened with the publishing of Healthy People 2020.<sup>25</sup> This report emphasized that the design of communities and the presence of parks, trails and other public recreational facilities affect people's abilities to reach the recommended 30 minutes a day of moderately intense physical activity. The research shows the value, role and potential of parks (i.e., primarily nature-based areas such as community parks, trails and greenways) in facilitating active living.<sup>26</sup>

### Existing Policies

**Strategic Vision for Recreation Service Delivery:** In its 2009 *Strategic Vision for Recreation Service Delivery*, the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department (RPD) identified future directions that emphasize the delivery of consistent, reliable "primary recreation programs" using RPD properties and leveraging staff competence. RPD's strength is in its real estate and the broad distribution of its 19 Recreation Centers and 42 Clubhouses using a "hub-spoke model" that includes community-based organizations in the supply of local programming. There are numerous infrastructure and programmatic changes underway in the Department.

“Active recreation” serves as the philosophical basis for many of the Department’s programs in its effort to improve the quality of programs and enhance the health and social benefits of participation. RPD staff is required to acquire appropriate certification or training to qualify for employment. The RecOnline database provides a comprehensive listing of RPD facilities and offerings and includes online program registration as well as on-site registration.

### Recommendations

Continue to **provide health benefiting active recreation** through RPD centers and services throughout the city.

Continue to **engage local communities** in identifying, training and hiring RPD staff.

Continue to **extend marketing and outreach** to inform economically and technologically underserved communities about RPD programs and registration processes (e.g. provide informational materials regarding scholarships and public access registration sites).

**Monitor and assess** response to infrastructure and program changes among underserved communities (e.g. self-report of population attendance).



## Strategies to Enhance the Recommendations

Limited funding makes the provision of adequate physical activity infrastructure resources a challenge. Identifying novel, short-term and sustainable resources to fund the recommendations described above is an important component of the policy review process. As such, examples of possible sources are identified below, and City departments are encouraged to work both individually and in collaboration to secure additional resources to fund and advertise projects that impact physical activity.

### Funding

Incentivize active transportation by revising parking policies to reduce or eliminate subsidized parking.

Expand healthy- and environmentally friendly public-private partnerships on park property citywide that could serve as a revenue

source to encourage outdoor activity and active recreation.

Approach professional sporting organizations to create partnerships that will support physical activity and/or physical education.

### Engaging stakeholders and the public

Provide incentives/recognition/publicity programs for Departments who enhance, through media campaigns and educational forums, public’s knowledge of physical activity opportunities and resources.

Report status and progress of physical activity policies (and related programs) to the public.

Involve key stakeholders in all steps of developing and implementing the policies described above.

# ENDNOTES

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## ABOUT SHAPE UP SF

In 2006, the Shape Up SF coalition was formed as an initiative sponsored by Mayor Gavin Newsom to address the epidemic of chronic disease through primary prevention and environmental strategies, with an emphasis on physical activity and nutrition. Shape Up SF is committed to reducing health disparities in chronic diseases that disproportionately affect African American, Latino and Asian populations. Our mission is to increase the awareness of and opportunities for increased physical activity and improved nutrition where people live, play, work and learn (<http://www.shapeupsf.org>). In 2007, the Shape Up SF Physical Activity Council (PAC) was formed as an advisory body to the Mayor to coordinate and focus citywide efforts promoting and advocating for physical activity. The Policy Committee emerged as a sub-group of the PAC to focus efforts at the policy level, and operated as a working committee for this project.



The Mayor's Challenge:

**SHAPE  
UP**  
SAN FRANCISCO

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Public Health  
Community Health Promotion and Prevention  
30 Van Ness Ave., Suite 2300  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
[www.shapeupsf.org](http://www.shapeupsf.org)