The Mayor’s Challenge: Shape Up San Francisco was created in 2006 to respond to growing levels of chronic disease, especially in San Francisco’s low-income communities and communities of color. Unlike generations of previous work aimed primarily at educating San Francisco residents, the Shape Up SF Initiative adopted far-reaching environmental strategies in partnership with local neighborhoods and communities to create a city where healthy opportunities and choices became the norm.

The outcome after ten years has been both profound and significant.

In addition to creating healthier environments for all San Franciscans, Shape Up SF has changed social and cultural norms in settings as varied as schools, retail outlets, government agencies and neighborhoods. Through partnerships with communities, Shape Up SF has positively and dramatically impacted consumption patterns, marketing practices, laws and physical activity patterns for all San Franciscans.

Specifically, Shape Up SF has led to four citywide policies to decrease consumption of sugary drinks, laid the foundation for a citywide policy to support businesses to sell fresh produce, increased physical education opportunities in schools and promoted initiatives to increase opportunities for physical activity among all residents.

Most importantly, by placing a priority on equity, Shape Up SF works with communities that suffer most from chronic diseases to prioritize the resources, supports and partnerships that will lead to sustainable, healthy changes.

With concrete, measurable results, Shape Up SF has demonstrated that real, lasting change is possible. This 10-year public health initiative stands as a concrete example of what can be achieved when government, communities and non-profits make a concerted and ambitious commitment to fundamentally improve the health of a city.
KEY AREAS OF SUCCESS

Shape Up SF proudly points to successes in its three priority areas: Healthy Food Access, Physical Activity Opportunities and Sugary Drinks/Water Access.

• Awareness campaigns to reduce consumption of sugary drinks registered over one billion media impressions among SF Bay Area residents.

• 47% of survey respondents report lowered consumption of sodas and sport drinks during the 2008 Soda Free Summer campaign.

• Years of education and technical assistance led to two innovative policies in 2015: prohibiting use of city funds and requiring warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages.

• 3 stores in the Bayview, 5 stores in the Tenderloin and one in Oceanview redesigned their inventory to include fresh produce; with an average of 11,000 pieces of produce sold on a monthly basis thanks to the new Healthy Retail SF program.

• Safe Routes to School now serves 35 elementary; 3 middle and 2 high schools. To date, 41% of participating schools have increases in walking and 59% have increases in biking.

• In partnership with SFUSD, the PE Advocates research and recommendations resulted in: a 500% increase in Physical Education specialists and a systematic, more equitable approach to distribution of PE specialist resources.

• SFUSD and DCYF instituted wellness and nutrition policy standards that impact thousands of children at school and in afterschool programs.

• Shape Up @ Work was a catalyst to the City and County of San Francisco launching a new, full-fledged worksite wellness program for its 27,000 employees.

• Nearly 475,000 clients and staff are impacted each year by organizational wellness policies to support healthy beverage choices.

• Shape Up SF was the presenting sponsor of Sunday Streets in 2008; now a regular and cherished SF event that brings tens of thousands of San Franciscans out at each event to claim the streets for physical activity.

• Recreation and Park Department instituted Soda Free Summer Camps, free Active Zones at parks and Mobile Recreation opportunities to increase access for underserved communities.

A decade of working in partnership with residents, community based agencies, city agencies, state and national public health organizations, has resulted in significant and sustainable impacts that make the healthy choice the easier choice for San Franciscans.

In the last ten years, Shape Up SF has developed health initiatives that transformed the thinking of our communities. As a health advocate, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, I am more empowered to fight the health disparities that consistently affect our communities of color.

Bea Cardenas Duncan
Former Shape Up SF Coalition Co-Chair
Rates of chronic and cardiovascular diseases and disease risk factors have been increasing rapidly in many American urban areas including San Francisco since the 1990s, largely impacting low-income and communities of color. To address this growing health crisis, local, regional and national health agencies created initiatives and programs focusing on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Of the emerging strategies, coalition-building became one of the most important and effective. These “action-oriented” partnerships (Butterfoss, 2007) bring people together to maximize resources while focusing on a problem of community concern, an approach that, in California, had already been successful in the campaign for a tobacco tax (Traynor, 1996).

At that time, little was known about coalition effectiveness in promoting active living (i.e. healthy eating and physical activity), and these types of coalitions had not yet been broadly implemented (Cheadle et al, 2010; Litt et al., 2013). The socio-ecological model (McLeroy, 1988) was also gaining traction among public health researchers and practitioners as an approach that emphasized change at the policy and environmental levels, rather than at the individual level. Growing research supported the idea that social, physical and political environments shape health behavior in ways that go beyond personal choice. With these new strategies, public health departments aimed for population-level behavior change in physical activity and healthy eating (Schmid, JPAH, 2006).

Looking back at the early years of Shape Up SF, Director of SFDPH, Barbara Garcia, viewed the coalition’s role as a “community igniter for improving health,” emphasizing its influence in shaking up government and other entities to improve the health of our communities. Shape Up SF raised the important question: “How do you work with communities to understand what their needs are?” according to Garcia.
A MODEL FOR ACTION:

Shape Up SF has two primary components: the Shape Up SF Coalition, a multidisciplinary, public-private partnership, staffed by DPH; and the Shape Up SF Initiative, projects that are led and staffed by SF Department of Public Health (DPH). Shape Up SF’s success centers on several tenets: collaboration and coalition; policy, systems and environmental change; and equity and social justice. The Shape Up SF Coalition’s priorities drive the Shape Up SF Initiative’s projects. The Coalition and Initiative work symbiotically to expand reach and engagement. Together, they are referred to as Shape Up SF in this brief.

Collaboration & Coalition

Shape Up SF was an early adopter of the coalition approach to strengthen efforts around chronic disease prevention. Over the course of a decade, Shape Up SF has addressed community health issues by engaging with community partners to assess need; gather and analyze data; develop and implement action plans; and identify solutions to reach community level outcomes.

Central to its success in leading—and implementing—dozens of programs, initiatives, polices and environmental changes is Shape Up SF’s effective leadership and shared vision of changing the health of the community through the values of collaboration and equity.

A key strength of Shape Up SF is consistently engaging partners, either to build on their existing work or to fill gaps where new efforts and energy are needed. Shape Up SF engaged San Francisco city government departments, community-based organizations, businesses, health disparities academics, and residents to initiate conversations and activities that focused on reducing health disparities and chronic diseases, which disproportionately impact African American and Latino populations in San Francisco. Ongoing support and funding from SFDPH; Department of Children, Youth & Their Families (DCYF); and Kaiser Permanente created a solid foundation for this work. Along the way, agencies like Recreation and Park and the Health Service System integrated different wellness concepts into their departmental activities, furthering this cultural shift toward wellness.

Shape Up SF looked to data and resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, the San Francisco Food Alliance, California Strategic Alliance and the Governor’s Summit to identify best practices and strategies. Early areas of interest included complete streets for improved walking and biking; worksite wellness/healthy vending; and coordinated physical activity services and policies. There was a lot of excellent work happening in many of these areas, so Shape Up SF focused its efforts to fill the gaps that particularly impacted low-income and communities of color.

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The strength of a coalition, according to Shape Up SF Co-Chair Roberto Vargas, “is to speak as a unified group of organizations and individuals who share visions, share goals, share resources in our working toward a common goal.”
The goal of Shape Up SF is to identify systems level changes that can help create environments that support people in making the healthy choice the easy choice.

Christina Goette  
*Shape Up SF Director*

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**Policy, Systems & Environmental Change Approach**

Shape Up SF began with a multi-pronged approach that reflected the new directions of the national health agenda:

- A focus on addressing health disparities through the development and implementation of broad-based policies (e.g. worksite wellness guidelines);
- A systems approach to understanding community and structural origins of health behavior that contribute to chronic disease (e.g. lack of access to healthy food); and
- Promoting environmental level changes (e.g. improved playgrounds).

Shape Up SF held a clear focus on policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change strategies since its inception. At the same time, it also recognized the need to lay the foundation of understanding for systems and policy-level change by educating individuals, providers and the community-at-large.

The early Shape Up SF work centered on:

- Healthy food access in the Bayview Hunters Point through the Southeast Food Access Working Group (SEFA)
- Physical activity opportunities: Shape Up @ Work: Worksite Wellness Guidelines; the Physical Activity Council’s policy analysis and initiation of Sunday Streets; Safe Routes to School
- Place-based approaches: Shape Up SF adopted a workgroup structure organized by place, an unconventional approach that broadened its scope beyond a single issue or disease: 1.) worksite; 2.) neighborhood; 3.) clinical/healthcare; and 4.) schools/afterschool
  - The Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) district—a critical site of chronic disease burden among its predominantly low-income, ethnic minority population—was an early focus of Shape Up activities
  - Shape Up SF developed Shape Up @ Work Guidelines that prompted the city controller to issue a report recommending workplace wellness belong in the sphere of the Health Services System. In 2014, the City and County of San Francisco launched a new, full-fledged worksite wellness program.

A key trait to successful coalition building is flexibility. Over time, participation waned on these workgroups and project based work (physical education, Safe Routes to School) had begun to emerge. Staff went back to the membership for guidance and adopted a general coalition meeting format.

In 2012, Shape Up SF inducted two coalition members into the roles of Coalition co-chairs: Chuck Collins, President and CEO at the Y San Francisco Bay Area and Beatrice Cardenas Duncan, City Retiree and Health Advocate. Their leadership brought new energy, structure and focus to Shape Up SF.
Equity & Social Justice

Shape Up SF was founded on the principle of addressing chronic disease health inequities. This value was initially actualized through work in the Bayview Hunters Point on food access that responded to community organizations advocating for city action to bring a full service grocery store to the neighborhood. Their requests sparked the local work on food access through SEFA that led to the city ordinance initiating Healthy Retail SF – a program that supports corner stores in traditionally low-income neighborhoods to sell fresh produce.

These early successes led to significant funding support from Kaiser Permanente for the Bayview HEAL Zone which has been instrumental in activating local parks, supporting agencies to develop wellness policies, creating walking school buses at two local elementary schools, and supporting the local urban agriculture movement.

Ultimately, Shape Up SF engaged in issues where data demonstrated potential to impact health inequities. PE was well documented as an effective public health approach to increase physical activity among school-aged youth. However, there was no organized efforts to improve PE in San Francisco, so Shape Up SF convened the PE Advocates.

Many low income children attend schools that do not have the PTA power to raise funds for a full time PE teacher; additionally, data shows that these same children do not have opportunities to access after school sports teams. Other factors also influence their ability to be physically active: unsafe neighborhoods and/or parks, lack of funds and/or transportation for extracurricular activities. Many of the public schools serving low income students did not avail themselves of the limited PE services, further limiting vulnerable children’s opportunities for physical activity. The PE Advocates’ attention to the issue resulted in significant changes for SFUSD elementary school students.

500% increase in Physical Education teachers in the San Francisco Unified School District
Increase Access to Healthy Food

There is considerable evidence that a healthy diet supports the maintenance of healthy weight and reduces the risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. For many residents of low-income neighborhoods, corner stores and fast-food restaurants are the only sources of food, limiting residents of these “food deserts” from making healthy food choices. Shape Up SF launched numerous initiatives that influenced programs, policies and environmental change across the San Francisco Bay Area to increase access to healthy food. Shape Up SF efforts focused on nutrition guidelines, policy, healthy food access and healthy retail.

Nutrition: Shape Up SF led the effort to support healthy eating for thousands of San Francisco schoolchildren through the development of nutrition guidelines implemented by DCYF for use in afterschool programs in 2007.

Policies: In 2008, DPH and the Department of the Environment adopted sustainable food policies as the way toward broader policy implementation.

With the passage of “Healthy Meal Incentive” legislation in 2010, San Francisco became the first jurisdiction in the nation to pass an ordinance setting nutritional standards for restaurant meals that come with a toy. As a result, national chain restaurants provided healthier side dishes as the default in children’s meals (Otten, 2014).

Shape Up SF supported the YMCA to adopt a Healthy Food and Beverage Policy (2012) impacting tens of thousands of families. Shape Up SF staff were involved in the development and adoption of the Food and Fitness Task Force recommendations for San Francisco Unified School District Wellness Policy (2014) again supporting healthy choices for over 55,000 children before, during and after school.

Healthy Food Access: The Southeast Sector of San Francisco’s, a community significantly impacted by lack of access to healthy food, Southeast Food Access Working Group (SEFA) began its work in 2007 addressing food access, nutrition education and awareness, and urban agriculture by surveying 600 Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) residents to determine food access preferences. The survey results helped the City attract a full service market to the neighborhood.

In 2009, funded by the Department of the Environment, SEFA launched the Food Guardians: BVHP residents trained in food justice. They developed healthy retail criteria to rate corner markets and help them increase their healthy offerings.
Healthy Retail: Kaiser Permanente awarded Shape Up SF a $1 million grant in 2011 to support changes to the food and physical activity environments in the Bayview through the Bayview HEAL Zone initiative. This funding supported the SEFA Food Guardians to pilot a Healthy Corner Store redesign project at two markets, paving the way for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to pass the SF Healthy Retail Incentive Program Ordinance in 2013. To date, four markets in the Bayview, five in the Tenderloin and one in OceanView have transformed their inventory to include healthy produce.

Increase Physical Activity

The benefits of physical activity for health are extensively supported by scientific research. Lack of access to physical activity because of environmental variables (e.g. lack of safety), economic variables (e.g. long-hours, low-income) and lack of awareness of its importance are just a few of the known barriers. Residents of low-income neighborhoods, particularly ethnic minority populations, are particularly at risk for inadequate physical activity.

Shape Up SF activities to support improved access to and number of opportunities for physical activity in the San Francisco Bay Area include: Walking Challenge, Sunday Streets, Safe Routes to School and increasing physical education for San Francisco Unified School District elementary students.

The Walking Challenge was one of the earliest activities of Shape Up SF, drawing 2000 City and County of San Francisco participants in its first year in 2006, a trend that increased each year through 2015 when the program was institutionalized by SF Health Service System. The National League of Cities recognized the Walking Challenge as a model program to support physical activity.

Shape Up SF was the presenting sponsor for the first Sunday Streets events in 2008; a partnership with the SF Bicycle Coalition, YMCA, Mayor’s office, MTA and many others. This now beloved San Francisco institution draws up to 25,000 San Francisco residents for recreational and community activities on city streets closed to vehicle traffic. Evaluation results show that Sunday Streets offers important opportunities to meet physical activity guidelines. Today, Livable City runs 8-10 monthly Sunday Streets events annually.

In 2009, the Policy Committee of the Physical Activity Council (PAC) conducted an extensive study to increase understanding of the influence of City policies on physical activity across all city sectors. The subsequent report, Shape Up SF Policy Analysis (2010), provided key recommendations and strategies for implementation in 5 areas: Health in All Policies; Physical Education; Active Transportation; Open Space; and Active Recreation.

Based on the work of the PAC and legislative activity in Sacramento, Shape Up SF convened the PE Advocates to support physical education in the San Francisco Unified School District. Funding from the California Obesity Prevention Program supported the project to assess quality and quantity of physical education at the elementary level. From this focused effort, the number of physical education specialists in the San Francisco Unified School District increased 500 percent and the SFUSD implemented a systematic approach to disseminating the specialists to its 72 elementary schools.

Ongoing work funded by Kaiser Permanente Community Benefits, “Uniting Parents for Physical Education” (U.P.P.E.) continues to educate and empower parents in...
low-income neighborhood schools about the value and benefits of physical education.

Another program to address physical activity among school children is Safe Routes to School (SRTS), which began in 2009 with a $500,000 grant from California Department of Transportation and worked in conjunction with the Municipal Transportation Agency. SRTS focused its efforts through programming in five SFUSD elementary schools, tripling to 15 elementary schools one year later. By 2013, SRTS secured a $1.6 million grant from CalTrans to expand programs into 35 elementary, three middle and two high schools and another $1 million grant the following year to develop school transportation policy, toolkits and traffic enforcement. SRTS serves nearly half of all elementary schools in SFUSD and has seen increases in walking by 41% and the number of schools with increases of biking by 59%.

**Sugar Sweetened Beverages**

There is new and growing evidence linking the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, including soda and sports drinks, to chronic disease risk factors such as obesity and to the rates of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and other chronic conditions. Data demonstrates that youth of color consume more sugar-sweetened drinks than their white peers, increasing their risk for metabolic disease, and making the reduction of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption a critical issue for Shape Up SF.

Like its PE work, Shape Up SF recognized the need for efforts focused on sugary drinks. The first regional effort around sugar sweetened beverages was coordinated in 2008 with leadership from Christina Goette, Shape Up SF director, who was also a member of the leadership council of the Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC). The Soda Free Summer Campaign was a broad-ranging media campaign that incorporated new research on the role of sugar sweetened beverages in risk for obesity and Type 2 diabetes and encouraged San Francisco residents to “rethink their drink” and minimize drinking sweetened beverages.

Among the activities of the campaign was a survey that showed significant public support for policies and government action to limit the sale of high-calorie beverages. Forty-seven percent of the participants also reported decreased consumption during the three months of the campaign. Based on these successes, Shape Up SF took a new direction with its 2009 “Drink
“If you can think about diverse communities coming together with like minds and really being able to focus on the same goal, it builds community in a really beautiful way.”

Barbara Garcia, Director, Department of Public Health

Water” campaign to reduce consumption of sugar sweetened beverages through the distribution of 25,000 ““Drink Water! Said the Otter” books to SF pre-K and kindergarten classes. The effort to raise awareness about the importance of drinking water for health continued in 2011 with the release of Potter the Otter, A Tale About Water.

With technical assistance and support from Shape Up SF staff, “soda free” institutional policies were implemented by Boys and Girls Clubs, Junior Giants and Sunday Streets and SF Recreation and Parks Department Summer Camps in 2009; Recreation and Parks Department, Bay Area Scores and Kai Ming Head Start in 2010, and the YMCA of SF, Bayview Hunters Point Foundation and the Children's Council of SF in 2013.

The following year, Shape Up SF introduced the “Choose Healthy Drinks” campaign and the results showed its effectiveness: 62 percent of respondents reported increased likelihood of reducing consumption of sodas and other sweetened beverages and 74 percent reported the likelihood of shifting to healthy beverages such as water and milk.

The 2015 counter-advertising campaign, “Open Truth”, a partnership between Shape Up SF, the American Heart Association, The Bigger Picture and UCSF, called attention to health impacts of sugary drinks and the beverage industry’s role in the chronic disease epidemic. These campaigns had a combined reach of over one billion media impressions among SF Bay Area residents. With funding from California Healthcare Foundation and A Small Planet, Shape Up SF translated the Open Truth campaign into Spanish to reach a population that is disproportionately impacted by chronic diseases fueled in part by sugary drinks.

When Shape Up SF began its sugary drink work, very few understood the significant health harms related to daily consumption. Shape Up SF’s work raised the awareness of the issue that paved the way for institutional and city policy changes. These include: UCSF and SFDPH hospital campuses policies prohibiting the serving/sales of sugary drinks; citywide policies that prohibit use of city dollars to purchase sugary drinks and require warning labels on sugary drinks; and a 2014 tax effort that garnered a majority of the vote but did not meet the necessary super majority threshold. In November 2016, the voters will again consider a fee on sugary drink distributors.
LOOKING BACK:
TEN YEARS OF SHAPE UP SF

Coalitions allow public health systems to work with the logic of the 21st Century through coordinated efforts, shared resources and carefully considered agendas. The highly synergistic working culture of the Shape Up SF Coalition, the success of its almost 100 partners in building consensus to determine and achieve positive outcomes for the most vulnerable San Francisco residents, make it worthy of careful examination. During the past ten years, Shape Up SF has supported, provided technical assistance, or directly implemented, policies, systems and environmental changes that have had wide-ranging impact on the lives of San Franciscans across income, neighborhood and racial and ethnic populations. The breadth of this work demonstrates Shape Up SF’s reach across city government agencies, neighborhoods and communities, healthcare systems and worksites.

Shape Up SF has evolved over time. A decade ago, work was driven by what could and should be done to promote healthy eating and active living. Today, the focus is on efforts to develop strategic, symbiotic partnerships and filling the gaps where needed. The narrowed focus and collective impact are the core of Shape Up’s strength and why we’ve seen so many successes.

Marianne Szeto
Shape Up SF staff

LOOKING FORWARD:
SETTING THE FUTURE AGENDA

As Shape Up SF moves past its first decade, questions remain about how to best serve its communities in the future. The larger goal of changing cultural, behavioral and political norms remains as does the coalition’s specific focus on communities that continue to struggle with the determinants of health: poverty, homelessness and poor access to physical activity opportunities and healthy food.

Moving forward, the leadership of Shape Up SF share the goals succinctly stated by co-Chair Chuck Collins: “We’re not always trying to do ‘for’ community; we want community to do for itself.”

Shape Up SF will continue to engage the communities that are most vulnerable, most impacted by chronic diseases, to empower and build capacity of our community partners to advocate more strongly on behalf of their communities toward addressing chronic disease. The leadership of Shape Up SF agree that its primary strength, throughout the past ten years, comes from its capacity to speak as a unified body, by leveraging its collective impact.
METHODS

The information included in this report is based on key informant interviews with five key Shape Up SF leaders and stakeholders: Barbara Garcia, MPH, Director of DPH; Catherine Dodd, RN, Director of SF Health Service System; Charles Collins, JD, Co-Chair, Shape Up SF and CEO of the YMCA SF; Roberto Vargas, MPH, Co-Chair, Shape Up SF and Navigator of Community Engagement and Health Policy Program, UCSF; and Christina Goette, MPH, Director of Shape Up SF and Senior Health Program Planner, DPH. Additional information was provided by Marianne Szeto, MPH, DPH and Shape Up SF staff member. Also included is information from Shape Up SF documents, including: Strategic Plans (2008 and 2015); Shape Up Year in Review (2007-2015); Shape Up SF Policy Analysis (2010); PE Advocates’ 2012 PE Assessment; and the Bayview HEAL Zone and SEFA Report and Recommendations (2014). The interviews, research and report were developed by Dr. Susan G. Zieff in May-June 2016.

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REFERENCES


