

# Planning for a Healthier Alameda County: Incorporating a Community Health and Wellness Element into the General Plan



Alameda County Community Development Agency (CDA)  
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA)

Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council  
October 24, 2011

# What is the “added value” of the Element?

---

- ❑ Builds upon and supports the County’s General Plan—it is not duplication it would be an enhancement of existing policies
- ❑ Helps to identify those projects that yield economic co-benefits and prioritizes them for action
- ❑ Encourages inter-agency collaboration that will help the County to better leverage existing and increasingly scarce resources
- ❑ Will support the County’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

# How Do We Achieve a Healthier County?

---

- ❑ Cross-departmental collaboration between Planning and Public Health staff
- ❑ Address health concerns in the General Plan
- ❑ Create a comprehensive community vision for a healthy Alameda County
- ❑ Set clear policies and actions guided by local health data to achieve this vision

# Project Background...Why Now?

---

## □ Internal Drivers

- Board of Supervisors
- CDA
- HCSA
- Eden Area Livability Initiative

## □ External Drivers

- Academic and Professional Groups/Institutions
- Other California Jurisdictions
- Health in All Policies

# What Will the Element Achieve?

---

- Improved health, wellness and resiliency for County residents.
  - Invests residents in a vision for their community
  - Creates a proactive plan for achieving this vision
  - Ties together related issues from different elements to tell a coherent story about unincorporated Alameda County
  - Shifts focus to the environment in which projects are developed
  - Creates a healthy community image
  - Provides a planning model that could be replicated in other cities within Alameda County

# What the Element will not do?

---

- ❑ Mandate that residents engage in certain activities
  - Instead it will promote those activities and policies that provide a tangible positive impact on community health and wellness.
- ❑ Recommend that certain types of commercial activities be prohibited
  - To the contrary, it will identify actions and policies that offer both economic and health co-benefits
- ❑ Be inconsistent with existing County plans and strategies
  - No. Under state law, the County is required to maintain a General Plan that is internally/externally consistent

# What Topics Will Be Discussed?

---

■ Economic Development

■ Housing

■ Social Engagement

■ Food Access

■ Crime Prevention/Public Safety

■ Disability/Elderly Issues

■ Healthcare

■ Environmental Conditions

■ Sustainable Development

■ Transportation

■ Public Facilities

# How Will It Be Accomplished?

---

- Literature Review and Community Health Assessment
- Assessment with Key Community Stakeholders
- Communications, Public Outreach, and Education
- Community Engagement and Participation
- Formal Review and Adoption



# Critical Elements of a Successful Element

---

- Robust community engagement
  - Must reflect local priorities
  - Should increase community capacity to engage in these issues in the future
- Set clear concrete indicators, policies, and actions guided by local health data to achieve community vision

# Land Use/Transportation → Health



**Access to health-related goods and services**

(e.g., health care, healthy foods)

**Access to employment**

**Highway and transit-related air pollution**



**Vehicle miles traveled and climate change**

**Social isolation & quality of life**

**Physical activity levels and pedestrian/bicyclist injuries**

**Health**

- Physical
- Mental

# Land Use, Transportation & Seniors

---

- Growing population of seniors
- Higher need for walkable communities and access to transit
  - Access services to meet daily needs
    - Encourage social interaction
- Prevent injury and mental disorders, increase physical activity



# Land Use, Transportation & Obesity

---



“People who live in neighborhoods with a mix of shops and businesses within easy walking distance have a 35% lower risk of obesity.”

Larry Frank, et al, American Journal of Preventative Medicine

# Examples of Health Element Policies and Programs:

---

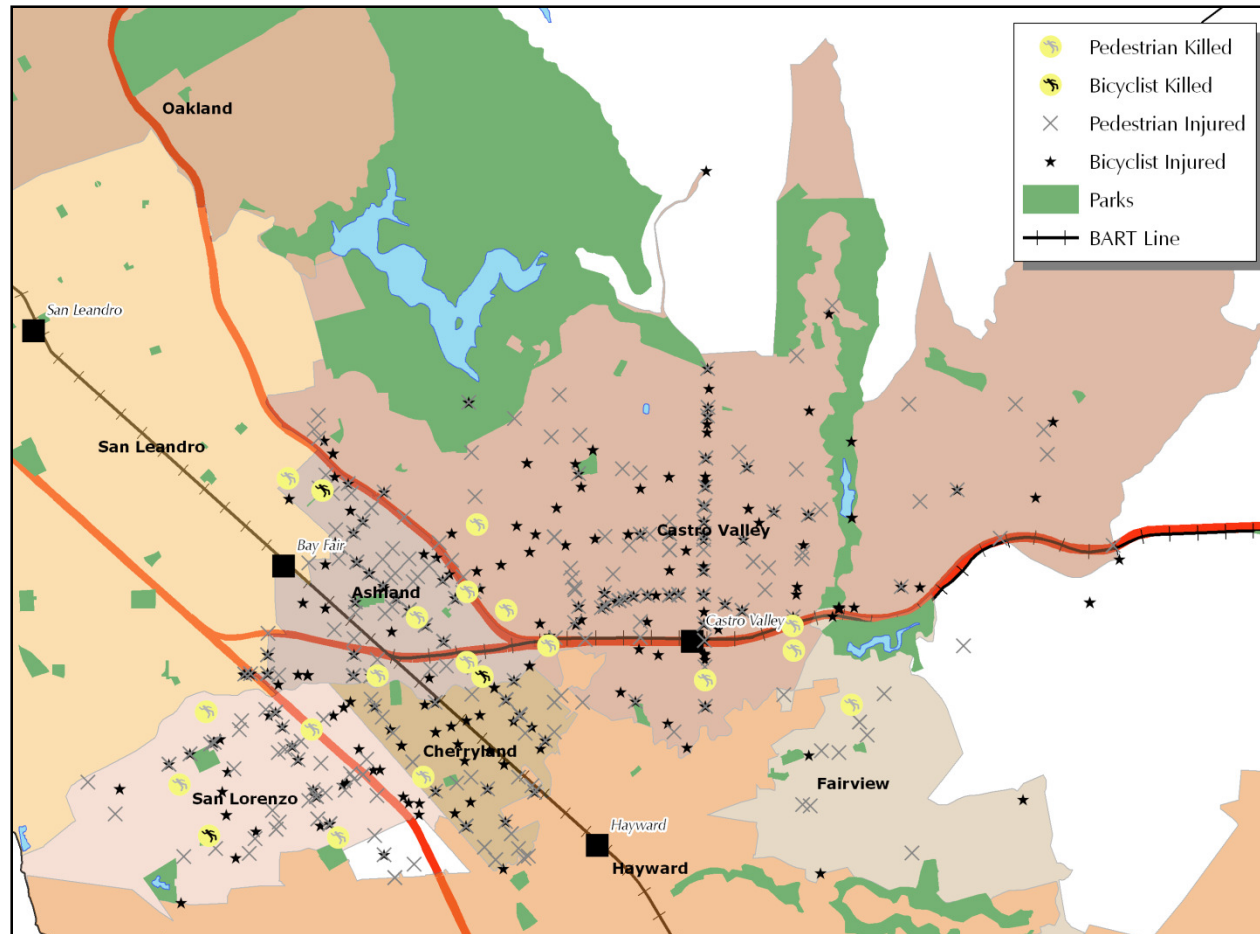
- Solano County: Public Health and Safety Element
  - HS.P-38: Integrate public health concerns into land use planning and decision making.
  - HS.P-40: Increase access to healthy foods throughout the county.
    - HS.I-43: Promote the establishment of farmer's markets using locally grown produce. Revise the County Zoning Ordinance to allow licensed farmer's markets in unincorporated locations and fruit stands in agricultural areas. Remove barriers to siting of farmer's markets.

# Examples of Health Element Policies and Programs:

---

- South Gate: Healthy Community Element
  - Goal HC 3: Excellent pedestrian and bicycle networks throughout the City
  - Objective HC 3.1: Create a high quality pedestrian network in all areas of the City so that residents can safely walk to their destinations.
    - Policy 7: New development projects and public infrastructure developments will be required to provide safe and direct pedestrian connections to transit stops.
    - Policy 9: The City will allow sufficient pedestrian cross times, particularly for the elderly and strollers, when setting traffic light timing.

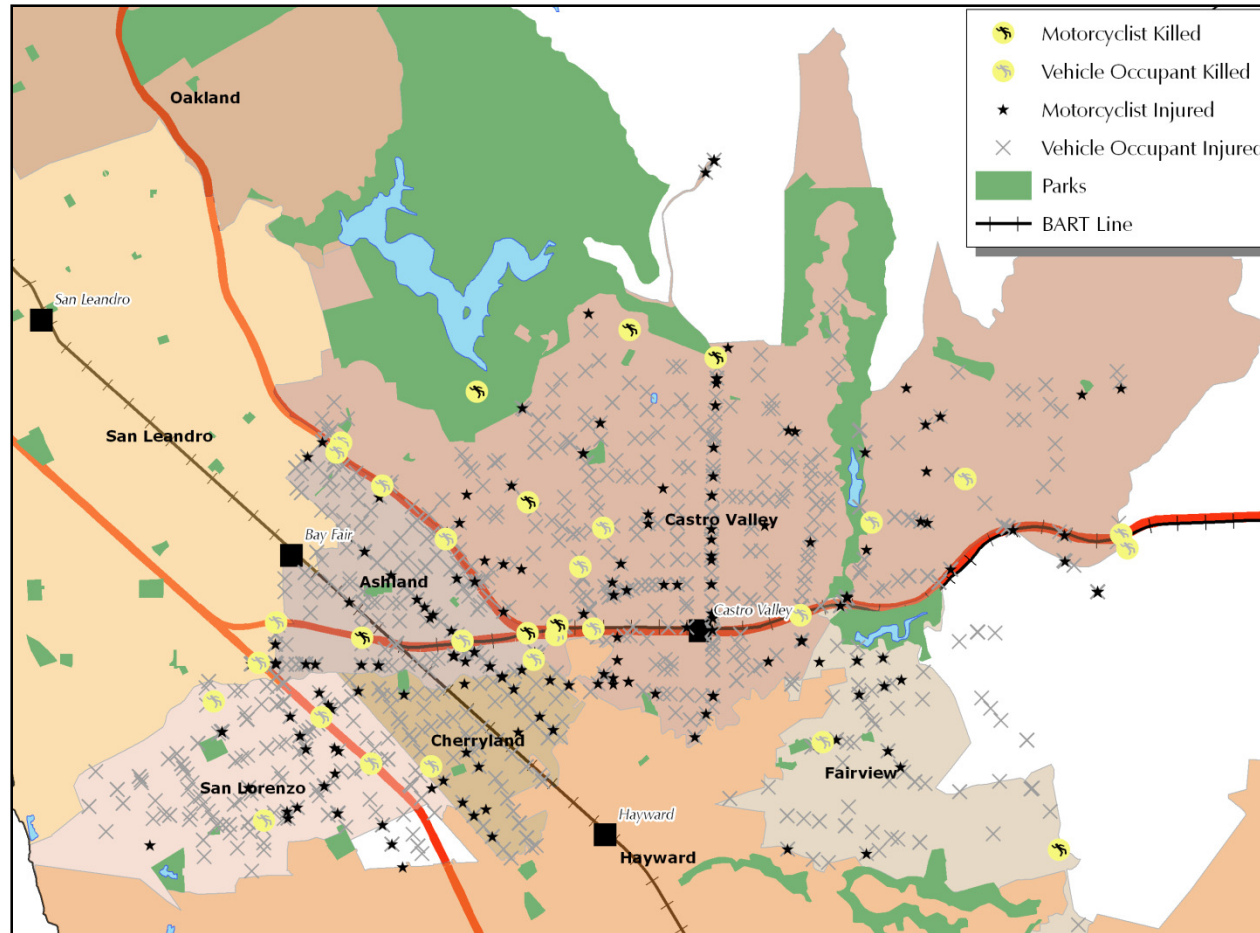
# Health Data-Pedestrian and Bicyclist Injuries and Deaths



Source: CAPE, with data from SWITRS 1996-2008



# Health Data: Vehicle Occupant and Motorcyclist Injuries and Deaths



Source: CAPE, with data from SWITRS 1996-2008



# Example of Economic Co-Benefits

---

- ❑ Pedestrian friendly environments:
  - Economic: higher home sale prices, enhanced marketability and faster sales or leases than conventional development
  - Health: encourages physical activity, discourages driving
- ❑ Downtown Lodi Example:
  - Pedestrian improvements, coupled with economic development incentives attracted 60 new businesses
    - ❑ Vacancy rate dropped from 18% to 6%
    - ❑ Sales tax revenues increased by 30% since work was completed in 1997

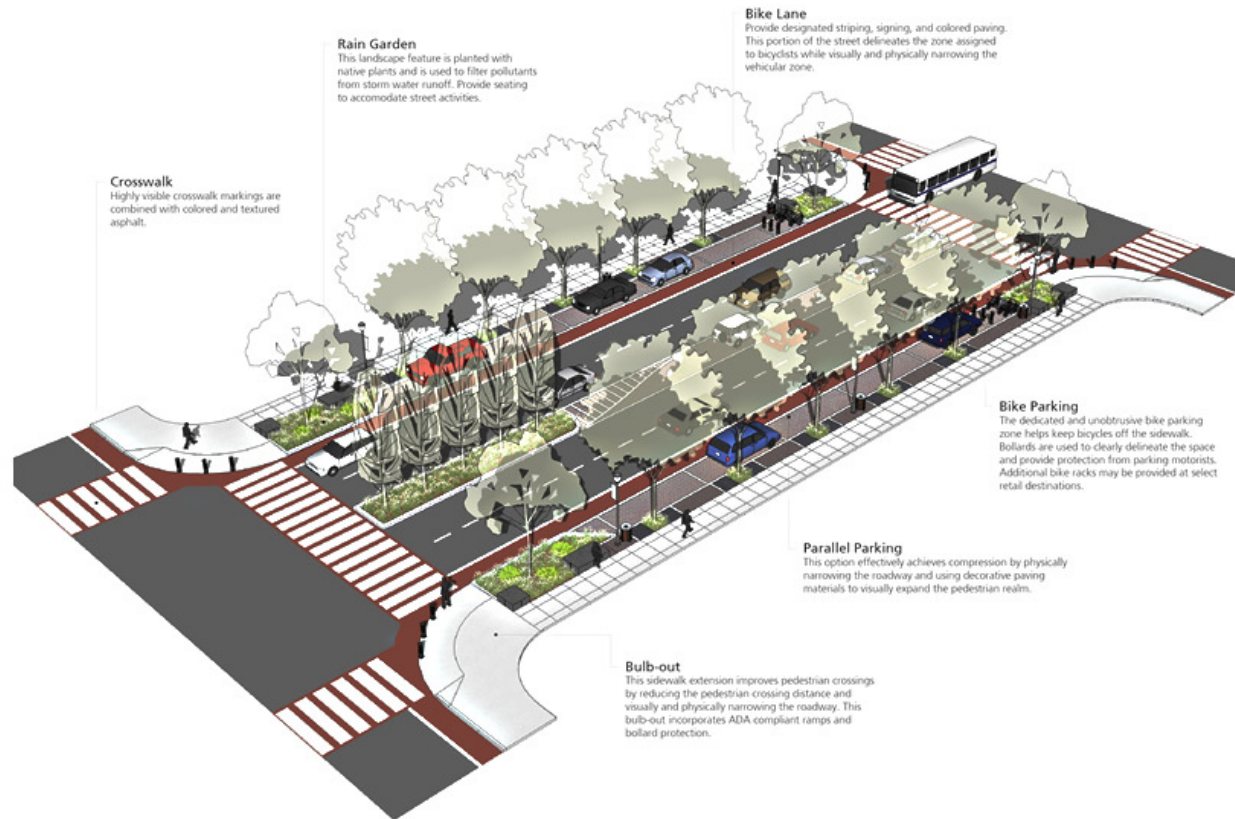


# Examples of Economic Development Policies (Richmond)

---

- ❑ Expand and diversify the local employment base to provide quality jobs for Richmond residents
- ❑ Promote and support locally owned and cooperative enterprises and businesses, particularly along major corridors, to maximize economic and community benefits for Richmond residents
- ❑ Encourage existing business and industries to become increasingly environmentally progressive and continue making positive contributions to the community

# Examples of Local Projects that Provide Co-Benefits



## CONCEPT RENDERING

Castro Valley Blvd Streetscape Project

Alameda County Redevelopment Agency



# Examples of Local Projects that Provide Co-Benefits

---



# Anticipated Process

---

- **Ongoing Staff Updates:** Staff will provide periodic updates to the CV MAC on the preparation of the draft Element
- **Literature Review and Health Assessment:** Staff will assemble, summarize and analyze relevant project data regarding current health indicators and land use policies. A summary of staff findings will be prepared.
- **Form Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** The TAC will guide the preparation of the Element
- **Visioning:** Through the visioning process language will be developed that articulates the core values and desires of the community as they relate to the General Plan. The Vision will guide and inform the development of more specific policies later in the update process.

# Anticipated Process-Cont'd

---

- **Goals and Policies:** Staff will work with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to prepare goals, policies and actions for the Element. Policy development will occur at meetings that will be advertised and open to the public.
- **Draft Element and Environmental Document:** Once the goals and policies are complete, the draft Element will be distributed for public review and comment. An Environmental review analyzing potential environmental impacts from the Element will be prepared and released for public review.

# Anticipated Process-Cont'd

---

- **Final Element and Environmental Document:** A final draft Element will be prepared that responds to comments received on earlier drafts. After review by the public, the TAC, CV MAC, Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors, the Element will be formally approved and adopted by the Board. A final environmental document will also be approved at this time.

## Where We Are Today

---

- \$75,000 allocated to the project in the FY 2011-2012 Planning Department budget
- \$25,000 committed by Supervisor Miley
- Request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-  
decision pending