

Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA) Building a Vision for Healthy San Francisco Neighborhoods

A Project of the SF Department of Public Health

Community Council Members

American Lung Association
Asian Neighborhood Design
Center for Human Development
Charlie's Place
Citizen's Housing
Jardiniere / Nextcourse
Low Income Investment Fund
Mission Community Council
Mission Economic Development Association
Mission SRO Collaborative
Neighborhood Parks Council
Okamoto-Saijo Architecture
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights
People Organized to Win Employment Rights
SEIU Local 790
SF Bike Coalition
SF Community Land Trust
SF Food Systems/Food Alliance
SOMA Family Resource Center
South of Market Community Action Network
South of Market Employment Center
Tenants and Owners Development Corporation
Transportation for a Livable City
Urban Habitat
Walk SF

Participating Government Agencies (non-voting)

SF Department of City Planning
SF Department of Parking and Traffic
SF Department of Public Health
SF Municipal Transportation Agency
SF Police Department
SF Recreation and Park Department
Board of Supervisors, Maxwell
Board of Supervisors, Ammiano
Board of Supervisors, Daly

Technical Advisors

Columbia University
Center for Collaborative Policy

Sponsor and Coordinator

Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability,
SF Department of Public Health

April 18, 2006

Dean Macris
Director, Department of City Planning
1660 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Dean,

On behalf of the Community Council of the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA), we would like to update you on the products of our work over the past 17 months and share with you several ideas and recommendations for the ongoing Eastern Neighborhoods rezoning and area planning process.

As you know, the primary goal of the ENCHIA process has been to inform the Eastern Neighborhoods rezoning and area plans as to how they might support optimal community health. Initially, we had intended to provide a health assessment of the rezoning and area plans, complimentary to the required CEQA review and other socio-economic analyses.

At the Council meeting of January 18, 2006, staff from the Planning Department briefed the ENCHIA Council on the status of planning efforts. Given that area planning efforts have recently begun while the ENCHIA process is reaching its conclusion, Council members realized that it was not possible to meaningfully and comprehensively evaluate the health consequences of Eastern Neighborhoods zoning and area plan efforts in the timeframe originally proposed for the ENCHIA.

Nevertheless, the ENCHIA Council would like to share several products of this process that we believe would be useful to your staff in conducting a comprehensive planning process. These products include:

- *A Healthy City Vision* for San Francisco;
- A set of measurable community health planning objectives;
- Data and maps that assess how San Francisco is meeting these community health objectives;
- Research and forecasting tools that help relate planning outcomes to health outcomes;
- *A Healthy Development Measurement Tool* that aims to evaluate development plans and projects against a comprehensive set of health indicators and standards; and,
- Effective and feasible urban planning policy strategies that can advance community health.

The Council believes that the data, research, and tools identified above can help achieve many goals and values of community planning. We

recently sent one ENCHIA product, the *Healthy Development Measurement Tool*, to you for review, and we look forward to your comments.

This *Tool* provides a comprehensive and evidence-based way to evaluate land use development plans and projects against both community health objectives and established DCP planning goals for the Eastern Neighborhoods, including those for diversity, sustainable transport, and displacement prevention. The *Tool* also provides a framework to assess whether plans, policies and projects supply the resources and infrastructure needed to attract and retain families in San Francisco.

In addition, the indicators and targets used in the measurement *Tool* might provide a specific way to gauge and monitor the achievement of several priority planning policies set forth in San Francisco's General Plan:

- That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;
- That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;
- That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;
- That commuter traffic not impede Muni transit services or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;
- That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced; and,
- That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

While we understand that the *Healthy Development Measurement Tool* provides only one lens on land use decisions, we would encourage you to consider how DCP might use this tool in the development and evaluation of area plans. Over the next few months, the *Tool* will be evaluated by a national group of colleagues and technical experts to get feedback, ideas and an overall "peer-review".

We also encourage DCP to consider several specific land use policy strategies that can help achieve the goals of healthy development. Many of these policy strategies are already well known to planners however, what we have added is research on how these strategies relate to community health objectives. Through ENCHIA we have conducted research on the effectiveness of a number of policy strategies available to improve neighborhood health conditions and, through the Council, have begun discussions of their feasibility. Both a draft version of the *Healthy Development Measurement Tool* and a list of (un-prioritized) policy strategies are attached to this letter.

In addition to the data, research, and tools discussed above, Council members would also like to share the following more specific observations and comments for your next steps in the planning process:

- Rezoning and planning should be evaluated against a comprehensive community vision. While priority community planning goals have already been identified through the process (Mission Area Plan Community Planning Workshop #1, February 15, 2006, Page 2), it is not clear how Area Plan elements including land use, urban form, open space, and transportation will be evaluated against these goals.
- It is important to identify existing boundaries of socially defined neighborhoods and communities. The rezoning should help further spatially define and physically develop coherent and complete mixed

use residential neighborhoods. Rezoning, circulation changes, and buildings should not physically splinter or break up existing communities of people or neighborhoods.

- Planning should provide rules as strong as possible to anticipate the housing cost and housing size needs of San Francisco's current and future diverse population.
- Open space planning, in terms of quantity and quality, should be a priority for the Eastern Neighborhoods. While pedestrian realm improvements are valuable, it is imperative that the city not count 'living sidewalks', alleyways and streets towards "usable" public open space requirements.
- Rezoning and area planning should create safe and inviting pedestrian environments with street lighting, sidewalk design, transportation improvements, traffic calming, and small pocket parks.
- A priority for planning and zoning should be the creation and promotion of mixed-income and multi-generational residential projects and neighborhoods a means to reduce racial and economic segregation and its attendant health and social costs.
- Rezoning should promote pedestrian and bicycle forms of transport over automobiles.
- Rezoning should promote environmental stewardship and conservation, including green building standards and energy alternatives for new construction.
- Rezoning and area planning should be coordinated with the planning of all City agencies, i.e., Redevelopment, MTA, SFSUD, Health, Recreation and Parks, and Libraries. Impact fees or other exactions should be adequate to fund fair share contributions of necessary public services or infrastructure improvements.

In sum, we hope the ENCHIA process has created a deeper understanding of the importance of urban planning to human health and has created some practical tools to help advance health needs through planning. ENCHIA members look forward to working with the Department to find out how the products of our endeavors can be best utilized in the interests of Public Health and City Planning.

We would like to meet with you to review these products with you and Council members. We will follow-up with you in the next several weeks to schedule this meeting. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me or Lili Farhang, the ENCHIA Project Coordinator, at 415.252.3988 if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this work,

Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH
Director of Environmental Health
San Francisco Department of Public Health

Lili Farhang, MPH
ENCHIA Project Coordinator
Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability
San Francisco Department of Public Health

CC: Amit Ghosh, Christina Olague, Mitch Katz