

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

A Project of the SF Department of Public Health

April 7, 2006

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Community Council of the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA), we are requesting your review of the attached working draft of our "*Healthy Development Measurement Tool*".

Like in many metropolitan areas, San Francisco is working to manage growth and development in a way that balances social, economic, and environmental interests. City decisions regarding urban development have the potential to benefit or detriment the health of the population. We envision this *Tool* as one way of bringing health considerations to planners and decision-makers. We identified you or your organization as a potential reviewer because of your work at the intersection of health, the environment, and urban planning. Your research and policy expertise in these fields will be invaluable to us in making this *Tool* usable, evidence-based, and influential.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) encompasses a set of processes and methods to inform policy-makers about how policies, plans, programs, or projects can affect health. HIA reflects growing scientific understanding that optimal health cannot be achieved by health services and individual behaviors alone but also through healthful neighborhood conditions including adequate housing; access to public transit, schools, parks and public spaces; safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists; meaningful and productive employment; unpolluted air, soil, and water; and, cooperation, trust, and civic participation.

To insure health considerations in current urban planning processes, the San Francisco Department of Public Health initiated a multi-stakeholder Health Impact Assessment to analyze how development in several San Francisco neighborhoods would affect attributes of social and physical environments that are most important to health. The ENCHIA, facilitated and staffed by SFDPH, is a consensus-building process guided by a Community Council of over 20 organizations who represent a range of interests including, community service and childcare providers, public health, homeless, environmental, housing, bicycle, pedestrian, transportation, and parks advocates, and business owners.

Since its inception in November 2003, the ENCHIA Community Council has:

- 1) Developed an ENCHIA *Healthy City Vision*;
- 2) Developed community health planning objectives to reflect that vision;
- 3) Developed indicators to measure those objectives and vision;
- 4) Generated and presented data on those objectives and indicators;
- 5) Developed research and forecasting tools that help relate planning outcomes to health outcomes; and,
- 6) Developed a menu of urban policy strategies supporting health and advancing those objectives.

Community Council Members

American Lung Association
Asian Neighborhood Design
Center for Human Development
Charlie's Place
Citizen's Housing
Jardinier / 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

Government Agencies Providing Technical Support

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

A significant product developed by the Council is the *Healthy Development Measurement Tool*, an evidence-based support tool for healthy planning and policy-making in San Francisco. We understand that community health provides only one perspective for making policy decisions. However, we believe this *Tool* might ultimately be helpful to the City and its agencies in planning, evaluating projects and policies, and prioritizing budgets.

As currently drafted, the components of the *Healthy Development Measurement Tool* include:

- **Healthy City Vision Objectives:** The ENCHIA *Healthy City Vision* includes 22 objectives organized into four elements: healthy economy, public infrastructure/access to goods and services, adequate housing, and environmental stewardship. These objectives reflect broad goals for what ENCHIA envisions as necessary for a healthy city.
- **Indicators:** One or more indicators are identified for each of the 22 objectives in the *Tool*. The indicators are measures of social progress which are understandable, actionable, measurable, meaningful, and motivating. These indicators would be assessed in comparison to projects, policies and plans to understand whether objectives are being met.
- **Development Targets:** Targets reflects growth and development goals that would, if met, achieve the *Healthy City Vision* objectives.
- **Baseline Data:** Where available, the source of baseline data for each indicator is provided.
- **Health Justification:** For each target, the *Tool* provides an evidence-based rationale illustrating the specific way human health would be affected by improving the indicator.

We want to acknowledge that the Community Council's *Healthy City Vision* objectives reflect needs and goals identified through a deliberative process. We are seeking your input on the best way to measure those objectives and develop targets to achieve them.

The *Tool* is meant to be used in a comprehensive way. This means that achievement of one or more development targets alone does not signify healthy development. Similarly, we do not expect that every plan or project will realistically be able to achieve all objectives and indicators.

The *Tool* will ultimately be placed into a more usable web-based form with indicators linked to baseline data and development targets linked to supportive actions. Over the next few months, this version of the *Tool* will be reviewed by local City agencies as well as organizations not participating in ENCHIA. Over the summer, we will also be developing the methods to collect the information needed to understand whether indicators are being met. Currently, not all indicators have associated development targets and some are missing baseline data and health justifications. Still, at this point, we are requesting your expertise to provide feedback. More specifically, we would like to better understand:

- Whether there are alternative measures to serve as indicators for the *Healthy City Vision* objectives? Whether we are missing key indicators to measure the objectives?
- Whether development targets appear feasible? If so, under what conditions? If not, why?
- Whether you are familiar with specific planning standards or targets related to these indicators?
- Whether you see any trade-offs or conflicts between objectives, indicators, or standards?

The overarching aim of the ENCHIA process has been to support public understanding of the importance of urban planning and policy-making to health. We hope this tool might become one of several practical ways to promote health and prevent illness and injury.

More information about ENCHIA is available at www.sfdph.org/phes/enchia.htm. We are hoping to receive your comments within the next month. If you do not have the capacity to review this *Tool*, it would be great if you could identify a staffperson to review the *Tool* and respond to our inquiry. Staff will be in contact with you to follow up on this request. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Lili Farhang, ENCHIA project coordinator at 415.252.3988 or lili.farhang@sfdph.org with any questions.

Thank you.

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