

CONNECTIONS

Center for Civic Partnerships

California Healthy Cities and Communities

Walking the Walk in Citrus Heights

When Citrus Heights began discussing how to make their community more walkable, they discovered an untapped reservoir of resident interest, commitment and action. “We knew there were people who liked to walk in Citrus Heights, but we didn’t realize how many and how strongly they felt about it!” commented Jayna Karpinski-Costa, Mayor of Citrus Heights. “And we certainly didn’t realize all the obstacles that made it difficult, and sometimes downright dangerous, to walk in our neighborhoods,” she added.

In 2007, Citrus Heights received a grant from the California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Program, supported by the California Department of Public Health through the Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant, and sponsored by the Center for Civic Partnerships. The City embarked on a major initiative to engage the community, especially older adults, in mobility planning. A survey and outreach/education component was followed by a proactive walkability planning process targeting older adults and people with disabilities. Over time the effort expanded to include accessible route planning, neighborhood ride audits and a comprehensive complete streets approach to achieve universal accessibility.

A Few Challenges to Overcome

Citrus Heights is an essentially built-out community located in the heart of the Sacramento region. With a

population of 88,576 residents in just 14 square miles, it has the highest density in the region. The physical infrastructure in Citrus Heights’ neighborhoods is not conducive to walking. There are large sectors of the city without sidewalks, speed bumps, trail ways, bike paths or even lighting. Obstacles such as trees, bushes, cars and basketball hoops encroaching on walkways are common. The City is bisected by a major interstate highway and arterial streets criss-cross the city carrying traffic to and from freeways located outside its boundaries. The traffic congestion has spilled over into Citrus Heights’ neighborhoods, creating resistance to projects that promote circulation and connect neighborhoods.

In addition to the physical and attitudinal challenges, Citrus Heights also faces economic challenges above and beyond the current downturn. As part of a revenue neutrality agreement to keep the County “whole” following Citrus Heights’ incorporation in 1997, all property taxes are retained by the County for the first 25 years of cityhood. The City is in the twelfth year of this agreement, placing it in a unique revenue situation that requires innovative and thoughtful planning.

Residents Take the Lead

Citrus Heights’ neighborhood structure proved to be the key to getting the community engaged. According to Mary Poole, Management Analyst for the City, “This was a grassroots program. I was the only city official at these neighborhood meetings.



Mayor Jayna Karpinski-Costa speaking at the 2009 Citrus Heights Health Faire.”

The residents really embraced the whole concept of becoming a walkable community and took ownership of the program.” A total of 8 interactive community meetings were planned and sponsored by different neighborhood associations in Citrus Heights. The meetings were well attended with 25-35 residents at each one. Neighbors learned about the principles of walkability, discussed examples of impediments to walkability in their immediate

continued on page 2

Inside This Issue ...

Page 2 ...

- Save the Date! California Healthy Cities and Communities Speakers Forum

Page 3 ...

- Support Services – Making Support Services a Priority in Tight Economic Times

Page 4 ...

- Events and Resources

area and became excited about the possibility of creating meaningful changes.

A walkability survey focused residents' attention on the factors that influenced their ability to get around and to access needed and desired services. In addition, outdoor audits were completed during or after a walk around the neighborhood, identifying obstacles to walkability. A total of 459 surveys/audits were completed. According to Ms. Poole, "The surveys and audits were powerful tools. So many people became actively engaged in thinking about the walkability of their community."

The Citrus Heights Healthy Cities Steering Committee was instrumental in the success of the project. They developed the walkability survey based on one from the University of Washington. "We had all the right people on the bus. They showed up and did the work!" remarked Poole.

Into Action

Results of the surveys and audits were presented at a community meeting hosted by R.E.A.C.H. (Residents' Empowerment Association of Citrus Heights), the umbrella organization for the city's 10 neighborhood associations. After hearing about the community-wide and neighborhood-specific findings, work groups of residents prioritized the needs, which were compiled in a comprehensive report and presented to the City Council.

The response to the walkability findings and priorities has been a joint effort by residents and the city. Beginning in 2007 and continuing each year, the Citrus Heights staff and Council have incorporated the identified needs and recommended priorities from the walkability study into the annual Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget process. As a result, multiple sidewalk in-fills and street connection projects have been completed, creating safe walking environments for residents. On


the neighborhood side, residents were asked by the neighborhood associations to trim trees and bushes that encroach in the sidewalk or walking area along their property and most have been happy to do so. Residents have also modified their pet areas, so dogs will not frighten walkers passing by their home.

Walkability Plus

With the high level of resident interest and involvement, and the commitment of the city to creating universal access for residents of all ages, Citrus Heights has expanded their original project to include a wide variety of related activities that enhance and promote walkability. The neighborhood associations have continued their focus on older adults by identifying accessible routes to services and destinations and distributing that information to residents. Several of the neighborhoods have also conducted neighborhood ride audits to assist older adults in learning to use the available transit services.

Given Citrus Heights' unique fiscal situation, staff has aggressively pursued outside funding and leveraged their healthy cities funds to bring in significant resources. In partnership with the school district, they were recently awarded almost \$900,000 in Safe Routes to School funding that will provide sidewalk in-fill and intersection upgrades along a route that links a park on one end and a commercial center on the other, with the city's high school and an elementary school in between, to encourage walking and biking for people of all ages.

The city's decision to include "complete streets" as one of the four focus areas of their current General Plan update reflects the priority on walkability. "It's exciting to have the chance to convert all the things we've been talking about into written policy!" commented Mayor Karpinski-

Costa. The city's focus on older adults also continues, as Citrus Heights looks to the future and the growth of the older adult population. A special effort is planned to ensure that older adults are actively involved in the community planning process for the General Plan Update and a new effort being supported by CHCC funding is underway to design and develop a Green Planning Academy geared for older adults. 

Save the Date!



California Healthy Cities and Communities Speakers Forum


April 22, 2010

The California Endowment
Oakland Conference Center

Come hear Dr. Jason Corburn, author of "*Toward a Healthy City: Urban Planning and Policy for Healthy People and Places*" discuss his book and work bridging planning and public health. The California Healthy Cities and Communities Speakers Forum will include a presentation, question and answer session, and networking opportunities. Please visit www.civicpartnerships.org for more information and registration.



Dr. Corburn is an associate professor in the department of city and regional planning and the Global Metropolitan Studies

initiative at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on the links between environmental health and social justice in cities, notions of expertise in science-based policy making, and the role of local knowledge in addressing environmental and public health problems. 

~ Support Services ~

Making Support Services a Priority in Tight Economic Times

This article is part of an ongoing series on innovative and promising practices that expand upon six domains featured in our publication, “A Healthy Community Perspective on Aging Well.” The domains are: Varied Housing Options, Mobility, Community Involvement, Employment, Lifelong Learning, and Supportive Services.

The City of Kirkland is located in King County, Washington and has a total population of 45,682. The median age of Kirkland residents is 39.9 years which is slightly higher than the overall median for the state. To close budget gaps, many cities first cut funding for parks and support services. The City of Kirkland is an exception.

Kirkland and four neighboring cities are members of the Eastside Human Services Forum, a local initiative that promotes strong public-private partnerships to support human and social services. Instead of cutting budgets for parks and community services, these five cities together increased their total funding for these services for fiscal year 2009 – 2010. The increased funding will support current service levels, and add slightly more funding to emergency services, such as homeless shelters and food giveaway programs.

Public services, such as transit, become more important as people look for less expensive ways to travel to work and school. These services provide a security net for the most vulnerable residents in the city, including older adults.

In addition to the budget increases, a unique private-public partnership between the City and the local Evergreen Healthcare Hospital system resulted in a \$60,000 contribution from the hospital system to the city to support the following three key programs for older adults:

- **Evergreen Health Enhancement Program (HEP)** – Delivers services that help older adults manage chronic conditions, reduce isolation and loneliness, and provide positive activities to incorporate into daily living.
- **Northwest Senior Games** – Gives people age 50 and older opportunities to participate in athletic activities that promote healthy aging and social engagement.
- **Kirkland Senior Council** – Works to ensure that Kirkland is and remains a safe and livable community for residents age 50 and older.

The Kirkland Senior Council is active, and has successfully implemented a number of special projects and campaigns over the past year. Kirkland Deputy Mayor Joan McBride says, “Senior Council participation in regularly scheduled city-sponsored joint study sessions and on special ad hoc planning committees highlights important issues that the city council would not otherwise recognize. Senior Council participants bring a needed, unique perspective and level of expertise to the table.”

Cities that plan ahead and build support for the growing number of older adults who will choose to “age-in-place” can realize a number of benefits. For example, older adults will contribute significantly to local economies. Recent polls suggest that retirees of the boomer generation will be more likely to volunteer their skills and expertise with local city agencies and philanthropic campaigns. Cities can take advantage of the increasing pool of community volunteers by establishing city council-appointed committees to provide guidance on meeting the needs of a new generation of older adults. Ideally these city council advisory groups would also coordinate with the local Area Agencies on Aging, which are



Walking programs abound in Kirkland.

typically administered through county social and human services departments. Cities that reach out to older adults, listen to their interests, concerns and needs, and provide meaningful opportunities for older adults to use their talents and experience to make a difference in their communities will experience many healthy community benefits!

The City of Kirkland has an impressive history of encouraging programs aimed at keeping its residents healthy and active. The city was named the “2007 Achievement Award Winner” as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging Awards” program. The award recognized the Kirkland Senior Council, along with the city’s “holistic development approach that embraces ‘walkable’ communities, affordable housing, and transit-oriented development.” The City of Kirkland is a leader in promoting opportunities for residents in the planning and delivery of programs for older adults. 🌿

For more information contact:

City of Kirkland
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

Joan McBride, Deputy Mayor
(425) 587-3529
Email: jmcbride@ci.kirkland.wa.us

Carrie Hite, Deputy Director
(425) 587-3320
Email: chite@ci.kirkland.wa.us

Connections is a publication of California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC). It is published three times per year. CHCC is conducted by the Center for Civic Partnerships, Public Health Institute, under Contract #07-65423 with the California Department of Public Health, supported by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the CDC.

California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) assists cities and communities with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans, which address environmental, social and economic determinants of health. CHCC advocates a broad definition of health: a shared vision; widespread community participation; system reform; collaborative partnerships; engaging local assets; and a means to measure progress and base improvements upon results.

Executive Editor	Editor	Guest Writers	Designer
Joan Twiss	Nicole Hara	Linda Peek & Clare Smith	Jade Chin

California Healthy Cities and Communities
Tel: 916/646-8680 Fax: 916/646-8660
Email: chcc@civicpartnerships.org

© 2010, State of California, Department of Public Health. This material may not be reproduced or disseminated without prior written permission from the California Department of Public Health.

Connections

Center for Civic Partnerships
California Healthy Cities and Communities
1851 Heritage Lane, Suite 250
Sacramento, CA 95815



A Center of the Public Health Institute

Events & Resources

Events

Association for Community Health Improvement 2010 Spring Training Conference

March 4 -5, 2010
Jacksonville, FL

<https://register.rcsreg.com/regos-1.0/achi2010/ga/top.html>

62nd Annual California & Pacific Southwest Recreation & Park Training Conference

March 9-12, 2010
Palm Springs, CA

http://www.cprs.org/index.php?view=details&id=8%3Aca-a-pacific-southwest-recreation-a-park-training-conference&option=com_eventlist&Itemid=60

Moving Children Safely, Creating Safer Ways for Children to Travel in Cars, as Bicyclists and as Pedestrians

March 14-16, 2010
Burlingame, CA

<http://www.injurypreventionnetwork.org>

California Healthy Cities and Communities Speakers Forum

April 22, 2010
Oakland, CA

<http://www.civicpartnerships.org>

Publications

Dangerous By Design: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths (and Making Great Neighborhoods) – A new report, released by Transportation for America and the Surface

Transportation Policy Project, finds that incomplete streets are a major culprit in the deaths of thousands of Americans every year. This report also analyzes state and regional spending of federal transportation dollars on pedestrian safety, finding that many of the metropolitan areas in greatest need of improvement are spending the least amount on pedestrian safety projects. To read the report, visit the following web site: <http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign/>

Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Urban and Suburban Zoning Codes – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth

Program convened a panel of national smart growth code experts to identify the topics in local zoning codes that are essential to creating the building blocks of smart growth. The document explores 11 "Essential Fixes," addressing the most common barriers local governments face in implementing smart growth. For more information, please visit the following web site: http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/2009_essential_fixes.pdf

Web Sites

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – State Best Practices – Climate and Clean Energy. <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-programs/state-and-local/state-best-practices.html>

California Energy Commission New Solar Homes Partnership (NSHP) – Local Government Resources and Support website. http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/nshp/local_government