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February 4, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *Jonathan E Fielding*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON HEALTHY DESIGN PHASE II (ITEM 7, AGENDA OF JANUARY 23, 2012)**

This report is in response to your Board's January 23, 2012 motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky in support of the Healthy Design Ordinance (HDO). The report summarizes the accomplishments of the Healthy Design Workgroup (HDW) in 2013 to implement the goals of the HDO and describes the group's work plan for 2014.

On January 23, 2012, the Board of Supervisors reviewed and approved in concept the HDO, developed to increase levels of physical activity and access to healthy foods in County unincorporated areas. In a motion of that date, your Board 1) declared that it is the intent of the Board and the policy of Los Angeles County to encourage design of public and private facilities in a manner that encourages pedestrian activity, bicycling, use of public transit and outdoor physical activities, and 2) directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to coordinate an interdepartmental effort consisting of Public Health, Public Works, Regional Planning, Parks and Recreation, Chief Information Office, Fire, and Beaches and Harbors to review the best practice recommendations in two documents - the *Healthy Communities Report: Active Transportation Design Guidance and Recommendations* and the *Model Design Manual for Living Streets* to determine which practices should be mandated or encouraged by the County; appropriate mechanisms for implementation; an implementation program; and potential funding mechanisms.

On January 24, 2013, the CEO reported to the Board of Supervisors on progress during 2012 of "Healthy Design Phase II", the interdepartmental effort mandated by the Board the previous year, now the HDW. At that time, leadership of the HDW was transferred from the CEO to the Department of Public Health (DPH). During 2013, several additional departments joined the HDW, including the Arts Commission, Community Development Commission, and Internal Services Department/Office of Sustainability.

On February 5, 2013, the Board of Supervisors formally adopted the HDO, which changed existing zoning and subdivision regulations to legally establish community gardens and farmers markets throughout the County and created more specific requirements for bicycle parking and sidewalk design.

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This memorandum includes four attachments, as follows: Attachment A summarizes the accomplishments of the HDW in 2013 and describes the future outlook of this initiative; Attachment B provides a detailed 2014 work plan for the HDW, including specific strategies to be implemented; Attachment C describes the roles of each department in implementing the 2014 work plan; and Attachment D details the timeline for implementation of each subcommittee.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:ja

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Public Works
Regional Planning
Parks and Recreation
Chief Information Office
Fire
Beaches and Harbors
Arts Commission
Community Development Commission
Internal Services Department/Office of Sustainability

Healthy Design Workgroup 2013 Accomplishments

OVERVIEW OF HEALTHY DESIGN WORKGROUP

The Healthy Design Workgroup (HDW) brings together high-level representatives from the departments of Public Health (DPH), Public Works (DPW), Regional Planning (DRP), Fire, Parks and Recreation (DPR), Community Development Commission (CDC), Chief Information Office (CIO), Beaches and Harbors (B&H), Arts Commission, Chief Executive Office (CEO), and the Internal Services Department (ISD) Office of Sustainability. DPH leads and coordinates the activities of the HDW and its subcommittees. The workgroup meets regularly to develop and implement strategies for designing and building healthy environments. The interdepartmental nature of this effort is well aligned with County strategic planning efforts and Supervisor Knabe's 2014 goals as Chair of the Board of Supervisors to encourage collaboration across County departments.

SUMMARY OF 2013 EFFORTS

Interdepartmental Convening

In February 2013, DPH convened an all-day interdepartmental meeting to develop a shared vision for the HDW, solidify working relationships, and begin to develop a strategy to build a healthier Los Angeles County. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 staff from all HDW departments. The meeting began with a discussion about how community health is shaped by the physical, economic, and social environments in which people live, learn, work, and play, and that these environments are significantly influenced by policies developed by County agencies and departments. Participants agreed that DPH and other health agencies cannot change these environments alone but must work collaboratively with other governmental agencies, businesses, and community partners to develop policies that promote health. Such strategies can also create co-benefits by improving air and water quality, reducing noise, protecting natural resources and agricultural lands, improving infrastructure systems, planning sustainable communities, and addressing climate change. Meeting participants also discussed current departmental activities that support healthy communities; criteria by which new strategies should be selected; challenges and benefits associated with interdepartmental workgroups; other departments with which collaboration would be beneficial; and initial thoughts about priority strategies.

Meetings with Individual Departments

In March and April 2013, DPH then convened two meetings with each individual department (for a total of ten meetings), to further assess needs and concerns, and to identify each department's priorities. These meetings helped solidify working relationships with key leaders and staff within each participating department and served to generate significant support and enthusiasm for HDW efforts. Discussion at these meetings included the need to confirm high-level support and Board approval of HDW efforts; culture change among staff; data that demonstrates the benefits of healthy design approaches; and greater coordination among departments. From these meetings an initial list of departmental priorities began to emerge.

Policy Subcommittee

From May to September 2013, DPH convened a Policy Subcommittee with representatives from all HDW departments to prioritize a list of strategies and next steps for implementing healthy design within the County. The strategies identified are described in the proposed HDW 2014 work plan, detailed in Attachment B. These strategies were drawn from the best practice recommendations in the Healthy

Communities Report and Model Design Manual for Living Streets, as well as HDW departmental priorities.

Healthy Design Guidelines Subcommittee

Throughout the year, DRP convened a technical subcommittee of the HDW to finalize a set of guidelines that will support and expand upon the Healthy Design Ordinance. The Healthy Design Guidelines (HDG) will provide more specific guidance to developers about how to incorporate building, sidewalk, roadway, and open space design elements into proposed development plans that will result in healthier environments. DRP Plan Check staff will use the guidelines at the counter to verify compliance with healthy design standards. The guidelines will ensure that the design of public and private facilities in unincorporated areas encourages pedestrian activity, bicycling, public transit, outdoor physical activity, and access to healthy foods. The HDG will also help support and implement many of the sustainability policies in the County General Plan.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Subcommittee

The GIS Subcommittee developed a Healthy Design GIS Viewer that incorporates location-based information from multiple departments on current and planned projects and activities. This subcommittee has now been folded into the Interdepartmental Coordination subcommittee, and is working to enhance the use of data and GIS tools to facilitate coordination across departments.

Interdepartmental Coordination Subcommittee

The HDW identified a need for greater coordination when multiple departments are engaged in projects in the same unincorporated community; lack of such coordination creates inefficiencies for the County, and confusion and fatigue for community members. This subcommittee decided to select a community where many departments had current ongoing projects as a way to practice better interdepartmental coordination. The unincorporated area of Willowbrook was selected because five departments are conducting planning and community outreach in the area, and its location near transit could provide a model for improved coordination related to transit oriented development. Over the last year, the subcommittee focused on better coordination in Willowbrook with the goal of creating new systems and relationships for better coordination countywide. This strategy does not entail developing new initiatives but seeks to streamline work on concurrent initiatives. In July 2013, five departments participated in a joint outreach event in Willowbrook, each hosting a table at a community fair sponsored by DPR. Attendees were able to engage directly with staff, learn about each project, and learn how all of the projects are linked.

This strategy is serving to improve efficiencies within the County, as departments learn how their own efforts can be enhanced through greater coordination with other departments. In addition, it serves to improve community relations as departments are seen working together and linking projects. Moving forward, the subcommittee will continue to promote better collaboration on healthy design projects across County departments, including providing technical advisory functions for departmental projects and coordinating on joint outreach. Where possible, the committee will utilize the GIS Healthy Design Webviewer as a tool for increased collaboration.

Funding Subcommittee

The HDW continues to identify opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration on grant applications. Joint applications have the potential to create greater synergy for the County, reduce redundancy, increase competitiveness and increase the amount of awards. A good example is the County's Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) grant application to the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Clean Transportation Funding program.

In July 2013, ISD, DPH and DPW met to discuss the need for funding for bicycle parking at County facilities¹. Through this meeting, staff learned from ISD about a grant opportunity through the MSRC Clean Transportation Funding Program that could potentially provide a funding source for bike parking. In October 2013, County departments submitted a joint MSRC application that included funding for bicycle parking, bike infrastructure, and bike education and encouragement programs as well as clean trucks and other allowable items. If funded, the program will provide a dollar-for-dollar match to support the purchase of bicycle racks for County-owned facilities, as well as signage and lighting to enhance bicycle parking areas.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

In 2013, the HDW made significant progress in deepening collaboration across departments and taking concrete steps toward implementation of strategies for healthy design in the county. These efforts have great potential for increasing the efficiency and cost effectiveness of County operations through enhanced collaboration. The 2014 HDW work plan identifies specific strategies to be implemented that were selected based on criteria such as whether the strategy was feasible, under County control, could be replicated, and had potential impact. Each of the strategies will be implemented via a subcommittee consisting of two departmental co-leads, as well as additional interdepartmental participants. The roles of each department in implementing the work plan and a timeline for implementation of each subcommittee are included in this report. The HDW will report to the Board in January 2015 on the status of implementation of the 2014 report, and will propose a 2015 HDW work plan at that time.

The 2014 work plan addresses only a fraction of the best practices outlined in the Model Design Manual for Living Streets and the Healthy Communities Report. The interdepartmental efforts of the HDW and its subcommittees are very labor intensive and require dedicated leadership and high level staff support. Currently, staffing for the HDW and its nine subcommittees is provided by DPH through grant funded positions. To continue implementing additional healthy design best practices, the HDW will need a sustainable funding source. Toward this end, DPH and the CEO will work to identify funding to sustain the existing staffing level. Sustainable funding will help ensure that progress toward creating healthy communities will continue and expand. In the meantime, the HDW will continue to identify grant opportunities for implementing healthy design strategies.

¹ In response to a 2012 Board motion, ISD sent a memorandum to County Departments on April 10, 2013 identifying 214 feasible County sites where bicycle racks could be installed. However, because no funding was associated with installation of these racks, very little of this parking had been installed.

Attachment B

Work Plan for Healthy Design Workgroup

The following Healthy Design Workgroup (HDW) strategies were selected through interdepartmental meetings and were based on criteria such as whether the strategy was feasible, under County control, could be replicated, and had potential impact for improving community health. Each of the strategies is being implemented via a subcommittee consisting of two departmental co-leads, as well as additional interdepartmental participants.

Strategy 1: Soil and Water Guidelines for Community Gardens

Department of Public Health (DPH) will develop a framework for assessing the suitability of soil and water sources for growing food in community gardens. The framework will include best operational practices to determine whether soil and water sources contain contaminants that could cause illness. This framework will be made available to the public on relevant County websites.

Timeframe:

Jan – April 2014

Rationale:

Urban agriculture, including community and school gardens, holds much potential for increasing access to fresh produce in underserved communities, while also strengthening community ownership, pride of place, and social connectedness. Promoting community gardens is in line with Board Chairman Knabe's priorities for 2014 and several County departments have activities associated with community gardens. To ensure that urban agriculture promotes health, DPH will develop criteria to help community groups and residents detect contaminants in the soil and water sources and provide best operational practices for the use of pesticide and fertilizer. This effort supports the County's recent Healthy Design Ordinance, which changed the zoning code to allow for community gardens in all zones.

Recommended by:

County General Plan

Funding Mechanism:

Staff time

Strategy 2: Bike Parking Guidelines

Department of Public Works (DPW), DPH, Department of Regional Planning (DRP) and Internal Services Department (ISD) will develop bicycle parking design standards and guidelines for County facilities, new development, building renovations, and public rights-of-way. This team will also support ISD in the installation of bicycle parking at County facilities and county unincorporated areas.

Timeframe:

Jan – Mar 2014

Rationale:

Bicycle parking is an integral part of a bikeway network and lack of secure parking is often cited as a reason people hesitate to ride a bicycle. Guidelines are needed to ensure that bike parking is installed in such a way that best meets the needs of users, including located in well-lit, secure locations close to the main entrance of a building; not interfering with pedestrian movement; supporting the bicycle frame well; and making it easy to lock the bike frame to the rack. In addition, bicycle lockers are needed where bikes will be parked for longer periods. Implementing bike parking at County buildings and in unincorporated areas of the county supports goals of the Bicycle Master Plan, the Healthy Design Ordinance, and Board directive regarding bicycle parking (February 28, 2012, Item 7). This strategy will be especially critical if the MSRC grant application for bike parking (submitted in October 2013) is successful.

Recommended by:

The Model Design Manual for Living Streets

*Healthy Communities Report: Active Transportation Design Guidance and Recommendations
County General Plan*

Funding Mechanism:

Submitted MSRC grant application to fund purchase and installation of bike racks
Staff time

Strategy 3: Community-Based Planning and Project Initiation Checklist

DPW, DRP, DPH, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Community Development Commission (CDC) will conduct community-based transportation planning that will seek to incorporate active transportation, active design strategies, public transportation, and green street infrastructure elements for the future development of infill and public works infrastructure projects in TODs, General Plan Opportunity Areas, and other appropriate locations. In addition, this committee will create a project initiation checklist that incorporates active transportation, active design strategies, public transportation, and green street infrastructure elements into project conception and design of public works infrastructure projects that involve pavement reconstruction, and other types of major street and road construction including bridge and flood control projects. The checklist should apply to all unincorporated areas to the extent feasible given the intended scope and budget of the infrastructure project.

Timeframe

Jan – Dec 2014

Rationale:

“Complete streets” are those that are planned, designed, operated, and maintained for safe, convenient and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities, and for all transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, driving, and public transit. While the County Bicycle Master Plan and General Plan both support complete streets principles, implementing complete streets can be quite complex and require community involvement. The combination of community-based transportation planning and the development of a project initiation checklist will support DPW in incorporating active design/green infrastructure improvements during capital project construction. Understanding community priorities for street improvements in local neighborhoods is necessary to move forward with implementation. The project initiation checklist will enable DPW to ensure complete streets features are incorporated into regular roadway projects, by ensuring their consideration during the planning stages of a project.

Recommended by:

The Model Design Manual for Living Streets

Healthy Communities Report: Active Transportation Design Guidance and Recommendations

County General Plan

Seattle Department of Transportation

Funding Mechanism:

Staff time

Strategy 4: Promote Process for Community Gardens and Events

DRP, DPH, Arts Commission (Arts), DPW, DPR, CDC, and Beaches and Harbors (B&H) will develop educational resources to inform residents and/or community groups about the process to apply for temporary and regularly occurring activities such as community gardens, farmers markets, and other community events at opportunity sites such as parking lots, set back landscaped areas, County facilities, and others as appropriate.

Timeline:

Jan – Aug 2014

Rationale:

The Healthy Design Ordinance legalized community gardens and farmers markets countywide, and a number of County departments have initiatives promoting community gardens and farmers markets.

While these are important steps for increasing access to fresh foods for residents of all income levels, the County must build awareness among and develop a streamlined process for residents and community groups to use opportunity sites for these and other temporary purposes such as block parties, concerts or cultural events. This HDW strategy will support the implementation of the HDO by developing a system for community members to legally activate opportunity sites in unincorporated areas, and provide promotional and educational materials that increase access and encourage use.

Recommended by:

County General Plan

Funding Mechanism:

Staff time

Strategy 5: Healthy Design Guidelines

DRP, DPW, Fire, CDC, DPH, DPR, and B&H will continue developing the Healthy Design Guidelines as part of the Technical Subgroup of the HDW, and present draft guidelines to the Board within one year for approval.

Timeframe:

Jan – Dec 2014

Rationale:

DRP, along with the HDW Technical Subgroup, is finalizing a set of Healthy Design Guidelines that will support the implementation of the Healthy Design Ordinance and will be working with a consultant in 2014 for final review and graphic design. The guidelines will ensure that the design of public and private facilities in unincorporated areas encourages pedestrian activity, bicycling, public transit, outdoor physical activity, and access to healthy foods. The Guidelines will also help support and implement many of the sustainability policies in the County General Plan.

Recommended by:

The Model Design Manual for Living Streets

Healthy Communities Report: Active Transportation Design Guidance and Recommendations

Funding Mechanism:

Staff Time; Allocated funding by CEO to hire consultant for final review and graphic design

Strategy 6: Implement High Visibility Crosswalks

In collaboration with DRP and DPH, DPW will implement advanced yield or limit line bars and high-visibility (continental) crosswalks at appropriate intersections in transit oriented districts (TODs), TOD corridors, General Plan Opportunity Areas, and at 25 intersections with the highest number of pedestrian-vehicle collisions in County unincorporated areas. DPW will evaluate the efficacy of these devices by compiling and evaluating a before and after 36 months traffic collision history to identify any continued recurrence of specific collision patterns at locations where they have been implemented.

Timeframe:

Jan – Dec 2014

Rationale:

Advanced yield or limit line bars are solid white lines extending across all approach lanes to indicate where vehicles must stop in compliance with a stop sign or signal. These lines reduce vehicle encroachment into the crosswalk and improve drivers' view of pedestrians. High-visibility or continental crosswalks (also known as "zebra striped" for their longitudinal lines) significantly increase the visibility of a crosswalk to oncoming traffic and have been shown to increase motorist yielding. Implementing these devices in key geographic areas and areas with the highest pedestrian-vehicle collisions has great potential for improving pedestrian safety in county unincorporated areas.

Recommended by:

The Model Design Manual for Living Streets

Funding Mechanism:

Staff time; Building in additional cost of crosswalk into grant applications and project scoping

Strategy 7: Street Tree Guidelines

DRP, DPW, DPR, B&H, DPH, Arts, and Fire will identify a range of street tree species that meet multiple departmental needs including rainwater infiltration, shade, non-invasive root systems, community character, and low maintenance, and create criteria for use and placement by all affected departments.

Timeframe:

July – Dec 2014

Rationale:

Street trees are an essential part of the urban environment and contribute positively to climate control, storm water collection, and the comfort and safety of people who travel along the street. Trees provide a physical and psychological barrier between pedestrians and motorized traffic, increasing safety as well as making walking more enjoyable. Multiple considerations must be taken into account when selecting species of street trees, including shade, drought tolerance, planting widths, and root systems that do not destroy sidewalks. Because different departments may have competing needs regarding tree selection, HDW will convene an interdepartmental discussion to establish a list of recommended species for the public right of way in unincorporated areas.

Recommended by:

The Model Design Manual for Living Streets

Healthy Communities Report: Active Transportation Design Guidance and Recommendations

County General Plan

Funding Mechanism:

Staff time

Strategy 8: Interdepartmental Project Coordination

All HDW departments will continue to collaborate on healthy design projects including providing technical advisory functions and coordinating on joint outreach in the unincorporated communities. The committee will utilize the GIS Healthy Design Webviewer as a tool for increased collaboration.

Timeframe:

Jan – Dec 2014

Rationale:

Departments are often involved in plans and projects at the same time in a particular unincorporated community, but do not always coordinate their respective efforts. This results in inefficiencies for the County, and fatigue for community members. The HDW has identified a need for greater coordination when engaging in healthy design activities in unincorporated communities. Building on the coordination examples implemented in Willowbrook, the HDW will collaborate whenever feasible in the unincorporated areas to support department staff in identifying new methods of working together and the better sharing information collected through community outreach. In addition, many County planning projects are grant funded and require a technical advisory committee to be established. Through our existing convening, we can provide a technical advisory function to the many different types of planning projects that departments are engaged in, ensure healthy design elements are included, and departments are coordinating on outreach.

Recommended by:

County Strategic Plan

Funding mechanism:

Staff time

Strategy 9: Collaboration on Funding Opportunities

All departments involved in the HDW will bring potential joint grant opportunities to the workgroup's attention at quarterly meetings, to apply for healthy design related funding opportunities.

Timeframe:

Jan – Dec 2014

Rationale:

The HDW and its subcommittees will continue to track and identify opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration on grant applications. Joint applications have the potential to create greater synergy and efficiency for the County, reduce redundancy, increase competitiveness and increase the amount of awards.

Recommended by:

County Strategic Plan

Funding mechanism:

Staff time

Attachment C

Department Roles in Implementing Healthy Design Workgroup Work Plan

- 1) Public Health:
 - Assume lead role in all Healthy Design Workgroup efforts
 - Convene and facilitate quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Serve as co-lead on the following subcommittees: soil and water guidelines; bike parking guidelines; community-based transportation planning and project initiation checklist; high visibility crosswalks; promote process for community gardens; tree guidelines
 - Participate in the following additional subcommittees: healthy design guidelines; high visibility crosswalks; interdepartmental coordination; funding opportunities; high visibility crosswalks
 - Develop and coordinate progress reports to the Board of Supervisors
- 2) Chief Executive Office
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Provide administrative oversight and execute contractual agreements
 - Serve as liaison with the Board
 - Support the coordination of interdepartmental grant applications
 - Support DPH in developing and coordinating progress reports to the Board
- 3) Public Works:
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Serve as co-lead on the following subcommittees: bike parking guidelines; community-based transportation planning and project initiation checklist; healthy design guidelines; high visibility crosswalks
 - Participate in the following additional subcommittees: promote process for community gardens; tree guidelines; interdepartmental coordination; funding opportunities
- 4) Regional Planning:
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Serve as co-lead on the following subcommittees: healthy design guidelines; tree guidelines; interdepartmental coordination
 - Participate in the following additional subcommittees: bike parking guidelines; community-based transportation planning and project initiation checklist; promote process for community gardens; high visibility crosswalks; funding opportunities
- 5) Parks and Recreation
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Serve as co-lead on the following subcommittees: interdepartmental coordination
 - Participate in the following additional subcommittees: develop soil and water guidelines; bike parking guidelines; community-based transportation planning and project initiation checklist; promote process for community gardens; healthy design guidelines; tree guidelines; funding opportunities
- 6) Arts Commission
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Serve as co-lead on the following subcommittees: promote process for community gardens
 - Participate in the following additional subcommittees: tree guidelines; funding opportunities; interdepartmental coordination

- 7) Community Development Commission
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Participate in the following subcommittees: community-based transportation planning and project initiation checklist; promote process for community gardens; healthy design guidelines; interdepartmental coordination; funding opportunities
- 8) Fire
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Participate in the following subcommittees: healthy design guidelines; tree guidelines; interdepartmental coordination; funding opportunities
- 9) Internal Services Department
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Participate in the following subcommittees: bike parking guidelines; interdepartmental coordination; promote process for community gardens; funding opportunities
- 10) Beaches and Harbors
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Participate in the following subcommittees: tree guidelines; interdepartmental coordination; promote process for community gardens; funding opportunities
- 11) Chief Information Office
 - Participate in quarterly meetings of the full workgroup
 - Participate in the following subcommittees: interdepartmental coordination; funding opportunities

