
VI SOCIAL SERVICES ELEMENT

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VI Social Services Element

Social services provided or coordinated at the local level by city governments have been a growing concern of local government officials. Human needs are complex, and their identification and fulfillment remain difficult due to the many and varied factors interacting in today's society. This Element serves as a blue-print for the physical development of the City and is intended to assist elected and appointed officials in the decision-making process. This Element also provides direction to City Staff, developers and the general public to ensure that social factors be considered during the planning and development process.

1 Goals

- 1 Promote public input and participation in the decision making process by all members of the community.
- 3 Promote the efficient and equitable use of public facilities by all members of the community.
- 4 Promote healthy and affordable housing opportunities for all segments of the community.
- 5 Promote healthy food access and physical activities for all segments of the community.
- 6 Prioritize improvements and programs in the City to better address the needs of its senior population.

2 Policies

Public Input and Participation

- 1 Support mechanisms for participation with area-wide districts and jurisdictions for the betterment of the residents of the City.
- 2 Encourage and provide facilities and resources for recreational, social, cultural, and educational programs for residences.
- 3 Involve residents in community and civic activities.
- 4 Seek input from residents and address their concerns during the planning process for projects.
- 5 Aid in matching the facility needs of the community with existing and future facility resources throughout the City.
- 6 Utilize culturally and linguistically inclusive approaches to public participation and involvement.
- 7 Continue using town meetings and forums to obtain public input. Encourage community events.
- 8 Develop information services designed to reach as many residents as practical that lists organizations, events, issues, and services available to City residents.
- 9 Encourage the development of homeowner associations and other community groups as a vehicle for increased participation in government.

Public Facilities

- 13 Plan for a Civic Center.
- 14 Provide leadership in solving the need for community meetings, cultural events, and recreational facilities.
- 15 Encourage the building of meeting facilities by private or nonprofit groups. Existing and new businesses, churches, utilities, and other organizations should be encouraged to allow some use of their facilities by community groups.
- 17 Design recreational facilities including parks and trails for the use of older adults in the City with limited mobility.

Safe and Sanitary Homes

- 18 Promote the incorporation of universal design¹ concepts in new construction and rehabilitation projects, including but not limited to, general internal space planning consideration to accommodate wheelchair bound individuals.
- 19 Prioritize enforcement activities of residential structures with known health hazards.
- 20 Promote efforts to repair, improve, and rehabilitate substandard housing.

Healthy Food Access and Physical Activity

- 21 Create recreational opportunities for all City residents.
- 22 Be an advocate for the efficient delivery of services to City residents.
- 23 Work with neighboring jurisdictions and organizations to identify and address common issues. This should include the encouragement of dialogue between the City and employees of neighboring jurisdictions and organizations.
- 24 Continue the implementation of community education and programming related to healthy living and physical activity.
- 25 Continue to provide a variety of active and passive parks and recreational activities accessible to all residents.
- 26 Promote the use of alternate modes of transportation including biking and walking.

Improvements and Programs

- 27 Recognize residents' cultural, educational, and recreational needs, and encourage programs in these areas.
- 28 Work with neighboring cities, agencies, and organizations to identify, provide, and/or promote services for the large population of older adults within the City.

¹ Universal design refers to the concept of designing environments to be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design.

29 Establish City committees to use residents' skills to benefit the community.

3 Setting

The population of those 60 years and older in the City has grown to almost 30% of the total City population. As such, the City acknowledges and works to support the needs of this large segment of its population. In addition to coordinating recreational classes for older adults, the City assists older adults through organizations such as the Peninsula Seniors.

Peninsula Seniors

Established in 1982 with help from the League of Women Voters, Peninsula Seniors is a nonprofit membership organization that caters to the needs and interests of the older adult community. With more than 2,000 members, Peninsula Seniors provides a variety of programs and services for Rancho Palos Verdes residents and those from surrounding cities.

In addition to Peninsula Seniors, the following other services are also available in the area:

- H.E.L.P. (Healthcare and Elder Law Programs);
- Peninsula Transit Authority's Dial-a-Ride Program; and
- South Bay Senior Services.

The City works with each of these organizations to assist in addressing concerns for this specific demographic. Due to the activity and involved participation of the City's older adult population, the City is continuously receiving input and suggestions for new or improved services to be provided, and the City works with members of the community to help in areas that it is able.

To further ensure that the City continues to provide and/or make available specific and appropriate services addressing this portion of the City's population, this element sets forth goals and policies to promote public input and participation, reduce unique environmental and health risks, and prioritize improvements and programs amongst this segment of the City's population.



4 Public Input and Participation

Community input and participation is a fundamental part of the decision making process, as for example, the public can voice their concerns or support of a proposed development project. Public input and participation is particularly important with respect to environmental justice because it allows communities that have often not been included in the planning process to be engaged to improve their community. Participating in the public decision making process is important, but as a result of various factors such as cultural and linguistic barriers or lack of information, many members of the community, including the senior population in the City do not participate in the process. The City has been posting various notices, such as voter information, in other languages in an effort to encourage participation. The City issues public notification for various projects under consideration by the City in the local newspaper, on the City’s website, to listserv subscribers, mailings, and social media platforms.

5 Environmental and Health Risks

Promotion of Public Facilities

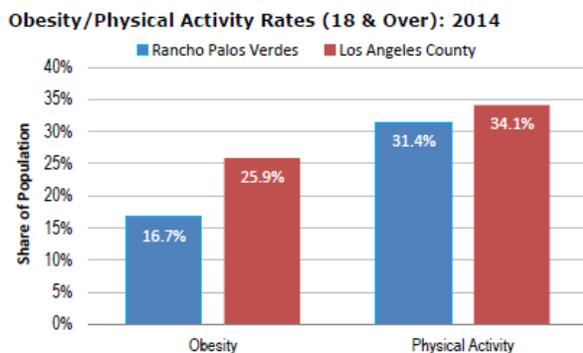
As described in the Conservation and Open Space Element, the City has multiple active and passive recreational sites that provide the community with usable outdoor areas for picnics and hiking, and also various other amenities. The Recreation and Parks Department handles the rental and usage of these facilities, providing the community with meeting facilities for private and nonprofit groups, as well as playing fields for multiple uses by various recreational groups from the Palos Verdes Peninsula and surrounding areas.

Promotion of Safe and Sanitary Homes

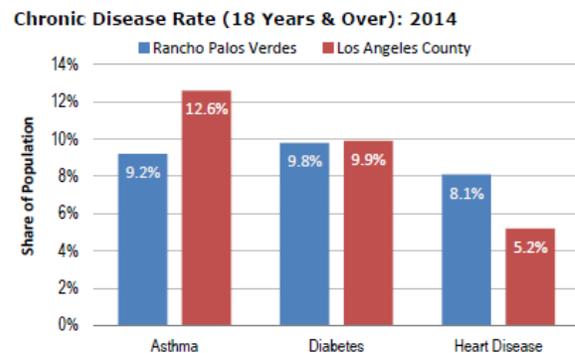
The quality of housing available impacts the health of residents and community members. Factors such as indoor air quality, mold and moisture, pests, safe drinking water availability, lead and second-hand smoke affect the safety and health of residents’ homes. Housing policies can direct housing quality by mitigating or preventing health impacts. The City’s Housing Element addresses current and future housing needs in the community, as it relates to affordability, construction, conservation, and preservation.

Promotion of Healthy Food Access and Physical Activity

Based on public health data, the City has lower rates of obesity, asthma, and diabetes as compared to Los Angeles County. However, the City has higher rates of heart disease and lower rates of physical activity than the County. The promotion of healthy food access and physical activities serve as a means to further improve public health in the community, including that of its senior population.



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2016



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2016

6 Improvements and Programs

Special Events: Each year, the City hosts three events that are coordinated by the Recreation and Parks Department: Whale of a Day, July 4th Independence Day Celebration, and Shakespeare by the Sea. Each of these free events is located at City parks and provides opportunities for social, recreational, cultural, and educational interactions for residents and people from around the Peninsula and South Bay areas.

Point Vicente Interpretive Center: This beautiful park and facility, located adjacent to the Point Vicente Lighthouse, offers recreational and educational opportunities to the public. In addition to a museum presenting the unique features and history of the Peninsula, there is also meeting rooms for private parties and meetings, a gift shop, areas for whale watching, and an outdoor amphitheater. The City trains volunteers (docents) to lead tours, with the Los Serenos de Point Vicente being the City's volunteer docent organization.

Reach Program: Administered by the City's Recreation and Parks Department, Reach is designed to serve the social and recreational needs of youth and young adults with developmental disabilities in Palos Verdes and the South Bay.

Dog Parks: The City has two separate dog parks in the City: Point Vicente Park/Civic Center and Eastview Park. Both parks are half-acre in size, has separate small and large dog areas, water faucets and bowls for dogs, restroom and hand wash station, and are ADA accessible.



7 References

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