

# National City takes Steps towards a Healthier Community

“Walking gives me the opportunity to enjoy the people who are part of my walking community and enables me to meet people and/or talk to my neighbors.”

*Ana Maria Garcia  
Community Member*

## PROBLEM

There were limited pedestrian walkways that enabled National City residents to safely walk throughout the community and access community resources, like grocery stores, on foot.

## SOLUTION

Partner with National City Latino community members to implement a walkability assessment, and present the findings and recommendations for the city's improvement to the City Planner and Mayor.

## PARTNERS

- Nick Inzunza, Mayor, National City
- Rudy Lopez, National City Neighborhood Council
- Rosalie Zarate, National City Councilmember
- Adolfo Gonzalez, Chief, National City Police Department
- Salvador Gil, Code Enforcement Officer (Building and Safety)
- Leslie Deese, Director of Community Services
- Walk San Diego
- Por La Vida Health Program
- National City Latino Community Members
- *Network for a Healthy California—Latino Campaign, San Diego Region*

## STEPS TOWARD CHANGE

On Monday, June 6, 2005, 15 National City residents and the partners listed above conducted a walkability assessment to determine the safety risks and barriers faced by residents as they walk throughout the community. Some of the safety risks that were identified included lack of pedestrian lighting that caused residents to feel unsafe walking at night; poorly maintained landscaping that blocked the sidewalks; uneven and broken sidewalks; crossing signals that did not provide pedestrians with enough time to cross the street; trash and litter; and obvious signs of drug use (e.g., used needles) along the sidewalk and in the parks.

Workshops were conducted with community members to identify the most important pedestrian safety and access barriers in the surrounding neighborhood. The community members then made recommendations on how to improve the walkability of their neighborhood. These recommendations were provided to the city planning department for consideration.



## National City takes Steps towards a Healthier Community (Continued)

The National City Planning Department considered the assessment recommendations and agreed to include them in the “Specific Area Plan” for the neighborhood. Participating community members worked closely with the Environmental Health Coalition, St. Anthony’s Organizing Ministry, city engineers, and other groups to spread the word about the importance of safe walking routes.

As a follow up, the community members participated in a public workshop organized by EDAW, National City’s planning consultant. This second workshop helped guide the development of a long-range plan for the neighborhood of National City. At this meeting, the community provided the city and the planning team with information regarding neighborhood issues, priorities, and its vision for the city. The city and the planning team then developed a series of draft principles and ideas for the future re-development of the neighborhood.

These efforts produced outstanding results. The residents of National City now enjoy improved pedestrian lighting along the streets. Overgrown landscaping has been trimmed and removed, and uneven and broken sidewalks have been repaired. In addition, the trash and litter is cleaned up on a regular basis and the signs of drug use along the sidewalks and nearby park have been removed. These changes have allowed the residents of National City to walk more freely throughout their community and enjoy their local resources, like nearby grocery stores and parks.



For partner information, visit [www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net](http://www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net) or contact Blanca Meléndrez, *Network for a Healthy California—Latino Campaign*, at [bmelendrez@ucsd.edu](mailto:bmelendrez@ucsd.edu).

For consumer information, visit us at [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net).

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