

Foothill Corridor Partnership

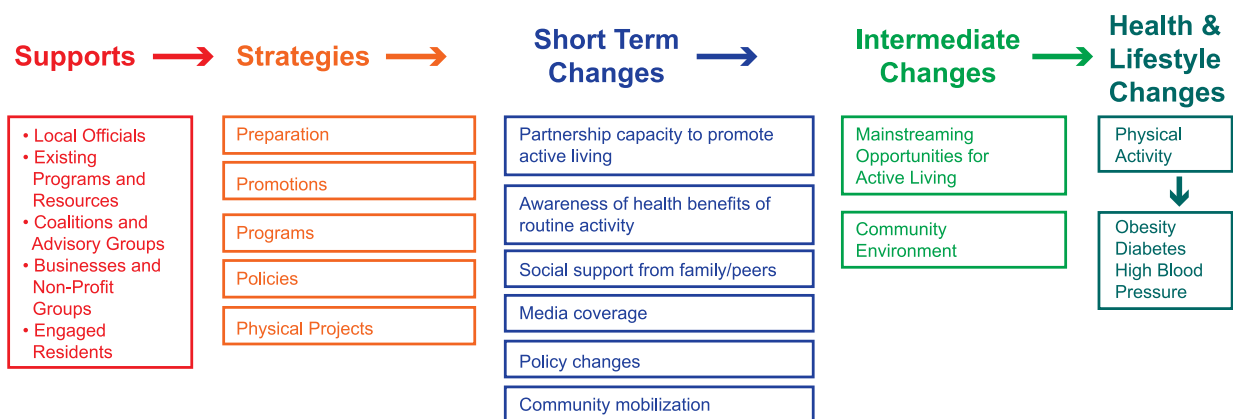
Evaluation of Active Living by Design | Oakland, California | 2003-2008

In the San Antonio neighborhood of Oakland, California, students venturing outside for recess did not find grassy fields, athletic courts, or play equipment. Rather, schoolyards were often covered in asphalt and crowded with temporary classroom trailers. Students, left to their own devices, often engaged in inappropriate or dangerous behaviors. Residents desired safe, inviting places for their children and themselves to be active, a community where safety was not an everyday concern. The East Bay Asian Youth Center, a local community-building organization active with youth, believed it knew the solution: active living.

“Active living” is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines in order to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. In November 2003, the East Bay Asian Youth Center and the Foothill Corridor Partnership received a five-year, \$200,000 grant as part of the Active Living by Design national program (www.activelivingbydesign.org) funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). By advocating for changes in community design, specifically land use, transportation, parks, trails, and greenways, the Active Living by Design initiative intended to make it easier for people to be active in their daily routines.¹

The Active Living by Design Community Action Model provided five active living strategies to influence community change: Preparation, Promotions, Programs, Policies, and Physical Projects. The 5Ps represent a comprehensive approach to increasing physical activity through short-term, intermediate, and long-term community changes. This inclusive model allowed the East Bay Asian Youth Center and the Foothill Corridor Partnership to create tailored strategies to engage residents in efforts to create a safe environment supportive of active living.

Active Living by Design Community Action Model



Above all, residents expressed an interest in having safer, more eye-pleasing spaces conducive to active living. Through the leadership of the East Bay Asian Youth Center, the Foothill Corridor Partnership used a culturally appropriate, community-building approach, combined with policy influences, physical projects, and promotional and programmatic efforts to create positive and active environments that would cultivate a sense of ownership and motivate residents to incorporate activity into their daily lives.

¹ The Active Living by Design (ALbD) initiative was established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 2001, and its National Program Office (NPO) is part of the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Twenty-five interdisciplinary community partnerships were selected across the country to demonstrate how changing community design can impact physical activity. Transtria was funded by RWJF to work with the NPO to conduct ALbD evaluation and dissemination activities. This case report draws from Transtria’s evaluation efforts.

Oakland, California

During the Active Living by Design (ALbD) grant period, the partnership focused mainly on the residential Lower San Antonio neighborhood, located in East Oakland. The neighborhood is a diverse, lower income, immigrant neighborhood, comprised of approximately 36% Latino, 31% Asian, 19% African American, and 14% Caucasian residents. The neighborhood has high concentrations of poverty; over 28% of residents live below the poverty line. Mortality rates for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, homicide, suicide, and motor vehicle crashes are higher than those in Alameda County. For example, the homicide-related mortality rate is 2.25 times higher than that of the county.

There are more children per household in Lower San Antonio when compared to other communities in Oakland. In addition, students have high rates of obesity and diabetes. Therefore, the partnership focused most of its efforts on local schools, mainly Roosevelt Middle School, Garfield Elementary School, and Manzanita Community School/Manzanita SEED.

“I would say that working through and with schools is probably one of the best ways to make an impact on a neighborhood, just because this is where all of the families are, this is where the kids are. So, it’s just an easy way in, if you have the right people.” -Community Member

East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), lead agency for the ALbD grant, is a non-profit organization focused on community organizing and youth development. Founded in 1976, EBAYC moved its operations to the East Lake and San Antonio neighborhood of Oakland in 1988. Because its services are place-based, rather than population-based, EBAYC works with all populations in the neighborhood, including African Americans, Asians, and Latinos. EBAYC main efforts include after-school programming in seven local schools.

Throughout the ALbD grant period, EBAYC and the Foothill Corridor Partnership worked to 1) expand the number of after-school and summer programs that provide children opportunities for regular active play, 2) improve schools’ built environment to facilitate routine walking, biking, and active play for children and parents, and 3) expand project results to achieve city-wide scale. All efforts and described in this report.

Preparation

Partnership

The Lower San Antonio Collaborative, a group of over 30 community-based organizations, public agencies, and businesses, formed the ALbD partnership. However, this group quickly realized the scope of work was outside its expertise and capacity. East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) became lead agency and worked to narrow the scope of the proposal to those strategies that focused on children and schools.

EBAYC formed the Foothill Corridor Partnership to promote increased physical activity and healthy eating among children, youth, and families of Oakland’s Lower San Antonio neighborhood. The small, but focused, partnership was composed primarily of three core organizations: EBAYC, Urban Ecology, and Cycles of Change. Each organization had a long history in the area, and all were committed to improving the built environment and physical activity opportunities for residents, particularly children.

Prior to the ALbD grant, EBAYC and Cycles of Change, a bicycle advocacy and education non-profit organization, worked together on a bicycle program at Garfield Elementary School. Urban Ecology, a community development organization, became the third core partner of the Foothill Corridor Partnership, primarily responsible for developing and implementing built environment plans. While these three organizations shared a common interest in creating active living friendly communities, the core partners initially struggled to coordinate community organizing and community planning. Early in the ALbD grant, they worked to bridge differences in an effective way, resulting in a strong working relationship in which Urban Ecology provided technical assistance related to planning and design and EBAYC encouraged community involvement and outreach.

The partnership hosted three major meetings during the first year of the grant, which were attended by a diverse group of community members and organizations interested in increasing physical activity and healthy eating among children and families in the San Antonio neighborhood. The meetings created a positive buzz among stakeholders, including key political officials. Though the partnership met regularly during the initial stages of the grant, it later scheduled meetings around specific projects.

The partnership relied heavily upon residents to drive the planning processes. When residents approached the partnership with issues or concerns, the partnership developed strategies to address them. In addition, the partnership engaged community members, school staff, parents and students to plan improvements for schoolyard, park, and street initiatives.

“[Urban Ecology has] the design and planning background, and then EBAYC, or other community partners, they are community experts and so they help with the outreach. We bring the stuff to the meetings and run the meetings, but they bring the people to the meetings. And then hopefully through that process, certain people emerge as leaders to bring into the implementation phase. And there will be some parents and teachers who are really excited about the project that can help us through.” -Partner

Together, the three core organizations worked well, providing technical expertise, outreach, trust, and action to the efforts within the community. Partners, staff, and community members identified several beneficial characteristics of the Foothill Corridor Partnership:

- The partnership relied on residents’ interests and concerns to shape work plans, which resulted in an increased involvement of community members.
- Because many residents were involved in and aware of the partnership’s efforts, the ALbD project became a source of pride and evidence of an investment in the future of the community.
- The partnership excelled at conducting community outreach, gathering feedback, and collaborating with existing community organizations.

“From a parent perspective, I see that when [kids and parents] are a part of [Easy Bay Asian Youth Center] they feel proud... I think this year, the parents are more visible, stronger. They speak out. They advocate by themselves.” -Community Member

Partners, staff, and community members also noted many challenges to creating and maintaining the Foothill Corridor Partnership:

- Because the partnership chose to focus on resident identified projects, issues identified by partners were not always addressed.
- The change process was slow and frustrating to many partners and community residents, which made it difficult to keep people engaged.
- Differing visions, approaches, and agendas made it challenging to keep individual partners focused on common goals.

Partners were engaged to contribute to specific 5P strategies initiated by the three core partners. A list of partners follows.

Members of the Foothill Corridor Partnership	
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oakland Unified School District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bella Vista - Franklin - Garfield - La Escuelita - Manzanita - Manzanita SEED - Roosevelt - Urban Promise Academy • University of California – Davis Extension
Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Oakland Office of Parks & Recreation
Urban Design, Planning & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Oakland Traffic Engineering • Transportation and Land Use Coalition • Urban Ecology
Community Leaders, Policy & Decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Oakland City Councilman Danny Wan
Other Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Oakland Public Works Department
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycles of Change
Community & Faith-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps • East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation • East Bay Asian Youth Center* • Full Circle Farms • San Antonio Hills Neighborhood Association • United Way • Unity Council

*Organization that served as lead agency during the ALbD grant period

Leadership and Champions

As an organization, EBAYC possessed a number of characteristics that contributed to its success. Community residents described EBAYC as a “community expert” with a long history of success and follow-through. Residents noted that the organization’s passionate staff spoke a number of languages, which enhanced the organization’s ability to reach the entire community. Its active involvement in the community and work with students was effective in building trust.

Staff members of EBAYC were committed employees who dedicated countless hours to the students they served. Many staff members were involved with EBAYC as students and were involved in various organizations in the community. Because many of the staff members had similar backgrounds or lived in the same setting as the students, students saw the staff as mentors.

The Project Director, who was also the founder of EBAYC, emerged as a particularly important part of the initiative’s success. His under-the-radar leadership style, clear commitment to the area’s youth, and service on the local Board of Education were tremendous assets to the active living movement in Oakland.

“And, if you’re passionate about your work, then the students are going to feel it and they’re going to get it and they’re going to trust you... I’ve seen people do this work before and if they don’t have the passion and they don’t have the drive and the love for this work they don’t get anywhere.” -Staff

Funding and Resources

The ALbD grant funding mainly supported staff salaries, but was also used to hire contractors to design and implement physical project plans. The ALbD funding was effectively leveraged to bring two million dollars of public funding to improve the built environment at three schools and two parks in the project area. The Foothill Corridor Partnership also reached out to a number of local, state, and national funding sources to expand the resources available to support and nourish its active living efforts. Financial and in-kind support came from the following sources:

- 21st Century Community Learning Center
- Alameda County Transportation Improvement Agency
- Bay Area Air Quality Management Agency
- California Department of Education
- California Department of Transportation
- California Endowment – Healthy Eating/Active Communities Initiative
- California Nutrition Network
- City of Oakland
- Community volunteers
- East Bay Regional Parks
- Oakland Unified School District
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Safe Routes to School
- Stewardship Council
- Team Up for Youth
- United States Department of Agriculture

Community Supports and Challenges

The Lower San Antonio neighborhood was the densest neighborhood in Oakland with the least amount of open space per acre. The City of Oakland recommended four acres of greenspace per 1,000 residents, but the San Antonio neighborhood had only 0.78 acres per 1,000 residents. San Antonio Park was the largest park in the area, but was often gated, had inadequate facilities and amenities, and a history of gang activity. Residents avoided using the park because of a fear of violence. Due to safety concerns and violence in the areas, parks in the San Antonio Neighborhood were neglected and under utilized. Area parks were locked and accessible only with permission from the city.

“[San Antonio Park is] one of the few greenspaces within several blocks in any direction, and it’s gated off. People are accessing it anyway, so you might as well open it up and keep it safe, keep it staffed, and keep it clean.” –Community Member

The schools in Oakland were not equal in terms of schoolyards. Many schools had beautiful schoolyards with greenspace, creative play areas, and sports fields, while others had neglected asphalt with few or no amenities. Schoolyards were often filled with portable classrooms and the dangerous street conditions around schools resulted in high pedestrian accident rates. The local schoolyards were not open during non-school hours due to vandalism and misuse of property. This inequity motivated parents and students to work for change in their schools. The schools first selected for improvement were those in the immediate San Antonio neighborhood with parents, students and school staff requesting improvements.

In addition to a lack of greenspace, residents of Lower San Antonio did not have access to adequate facilities and amenities to support active living and physical activity. While there were recreation centers in the area, the after-school programs offered lacked adequate supervision and considerations for safety. As a result, students enrolled in the programs and engaged in inappropriate and illegal behaviors. EBAYC played a major role in reducing such behaviors prior to and during the ALbD grant.

The partnership benefited from EBAYC's long history in the community. Its after-school programs garnered support from school administrators, staff, parents, students, and other organizations. Residents trusted EBAYC because of its proven commitment and previous success. As a result, EBAYC was able to bring diverse residents together to accomplish the project goals.

“The trust issue is a big issue because EBAYC’s been here for a long time and they’ve done so many great things in the community. If [another organization] came in and said, ‘We’re going to do the schoolyard plan,’ [community residents] are going to say, ‘How’s it going to get built? Who’s really going to do this? Why are you doing this?’ But, with EBAYC on board, they know that it’s something that’s going to be sustained and they’re actually going to see something.” -Partner

Community members, especially parents, were critical to the planning and implementation of ALbD efforts. Through the efforts of EBAYC, parents became grassroots leaders in the community, which contributed to the success of the partnership's efforts. Without the ideas, feedback, and assistance of residents, many of the partnership's efforts would not have been successful. The school staff members at each school were also instrumental in getting parental involvement. School administration and teachers utilized parents in the classroom and school settings on a regular basis, therefore parents were comfortable being at the school and being involved in the school's day to day operations.

The support of school district, school board, school administration, and staff was crucial to the success of the after-school programs and the built environment projects at the schools. However, each of these entities could have also served as a hindrance to progress. While the school district provided a majority of the funding for the schoolyards project and was instrumental to its success, getting the District to that point was frustrating and time consuming.

“I’ve seen the difference between the schools, and the difference, a lot of the time, is the school leadership, the principal and whether they’re supportive of what we’re doing and willing to collaborate.” -Partner

Because the schoolyard project required the involvement of the school district, the partnership had to learn how to get projects approved and completed within the District's means and processes. To facilitate planning and design efforts, Urban Ecology involved the District Facilities Department. As projects were successfully completed, the District began to work with the partnership in a more constructive way.

“[The Facilities Department] is in charge of maintenance... and they do things the way that they’ve always done them and coming in and trying to partner with them – even when you’re bringing in funds to get the projects done – there’s no standard protocol of how to proof the plans and how to get them done and who’s going to be doing the implementation.” – Partner

The partnership cultivated a relationship with the City of Oakland staff and elected officials. The partnership found that working with the government was challenging due to the number of departments involved and the complicated leadership structure. It was also a challenge to work with the City of Oakland because budget concerns and gaps in knowledge contributed to resistance with street design projects. The partnership expressed a concern that government staff or elected officials heard the concerns and ideas of citizens but were not moved to action.

“We wanted these high-visibility crosswalks. After a while [the government] just said, ‘We’re not going to do that. We’ve done our own research that showed if you put in a lot of high visibility crosswalks that the driver visual attention will get attuned to these crosswalks and therefore will no longer have any effect.’ And we were going, ‘Really? Where’d you do that research?’” -Staff

Much of the funding for the completed physical projects was allocated by the city, including \$1.5 million for park renovations. While the city demonstrated support in this regard, the planning and implementation process took many years to complete.

“[City of Oakland staff] are always supportive of my ideas, which you can’t really argue against children’s safety or things like that. The problem is money and time.” -Partner

Community Assessment

The success of Foothill Corridor Partnership was facilitated in large part by the various assessments conducted by the partnership and community members, most notably focus groups, walking audits, and neighborhood mapping, in order to identify issues and develop solutions to improve the physical environment.

EBAYC had a strong background in community organizing and advocacy. As part of its community involvement during the ALbD grant, EBAYC held parent focus groups in conjunction with the after-school programs. The meetings were parent led and designed to address many of the parents’ concerns, including violence, improving classroom instruction, and school administration.

To implement change in the area’s schools and parks, the partnership felt it was imperative to meet first with the community to get feedback and buy-in. Parents and students participated in schoolyard improvement planning focus groups. Student leaders were chosen to go through the focus group process and then report back to the students as a whole. This method created a leadership training exercise for the students and was more productive than trying to work with 200 students at once.

“[The students and parents] actually contributed to the design process also, so they were kind of able to give their input on what they think what would be good for the kids here, what they would enjoy and stuff like that.” -Staff

The interactive parent and student meetings were held in the evenings at three schools. An example of the meeting process included the following:

- Participants were shown a map of existing facilities to comment on what they liked and did not like and what they would like changed at the school.
- Participants were divided into small groups to discuss the maps, label areas of concern, and brainstorm solutions.
- Urban Ecology presented suggestions to address concerns noted by the participants and developed a 3-D model of the school site to allow participants to place scaled objects on the map and see how ideas would look and work together.
- The participants worked together to develop the final design through a voting process.

The top issues for parents were safety, beautification, and landscaping, while the top issues for students were artificial turf fields, soccer and basketball goals, shade and places to sit, security, and lighting.

“They show up. They come to these meetings and they’re looking to be empowered. And that’s what we do. We really, we have these meetings and try to mobilize and get them to do stuff... and it’s a process.” -Staff

“I think the majority of people felt heard, at least, and they probably realized that this is a good compilation of the ideas that were brought up. It was physical participation, which was nice.” -Community

In combination with many of the focus groups, walking audits were conducted to highlight problem areas in and around the schools. Cycles of Change also conducted a mapping project to identify safe bike routes within the Lower San Antonio neighborhood.

“And then once the meetings started happening, parents showed up and there was a lot of involvement and people would come and they would walk around and take a look. I mean they recognize that this is not ideal for their kids.” -Staff

Policies and Physical Projects

In the initial stages of the ALBD grant, the Foothill Corridor Partnership focused primarily on physical projects. As projects were completed successfully, the partnership began to address broader change through city and school district policy. Policy influences and physical projects, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes include the following:

► **Schoolyard Improvements**

- The partnership identified three sites in need of schoolyard improvements.
- The improvement plans that were developed included schoolyard enhancements (e.g., landscaping, artwork), safety improvements around the school and pick-up/drop-off areas (e.g., traffic calming, signage, security gates), and educational features (e.g., drainage areas that demonstrated water movement).
- The community was very involved in the work completed at Garfield Elementary. Parents and students participated in the planning process, advocated for pavement repair, and held work days during the implementation phase.
- The \$400,000 improvement plan completed at Garfield Elementary included the removal of a portable classroom, resurfacing of a schoolyard, asphalt painting (e.g., hopscotch, four-square, maps), and the installation of a garden, athletic courts (e.g., basketball, tetherball), benches, picnic tables, shade trees, a new entry gate, and a tiled mural.
- The Manzanita Schoolyard Plan included creative play areas (e.g., castle, planters, wave garden, sound pipes), gross motor and tactile skill areas, traffic safety improvements, increased shade and lighting, greenspace, and benches; \$200,000 was earmarked for implementation.
- Improvement plans at Roosevelt Middle School were scheduled to be completed by December 2008.



“But [the blacktop at the school] was all... It was something that looked like inner city had been forgotten about. Because of the grant, because we all started, we all have what we have now and it’s a place that I think kids can feel proud about having a nice place to come and play. And don’t have to come play with cracked and broken basketball courts and fences torn down, no kickball spots and gangs on the ground and through all of that it just made it a more wonderful place for the kids to have and come and play.” -Community Member

► **Park Improvements**

- As a result of the work of the partnership, the City of Oakland Office of Parks & Recreation completed over \$1.5 million in physical renovations to several parks in the neighborhood.
- A portion of the funding was used to level and re-sod terrain and repair drainage flaws at Garfield Park, which was used extensively by Garfield Elementary for after-school and summer programs.
- Improvements to San Antonio Park included a synthetic turf soccer field, a basketball court, a play structure, drainage repairs, and a community garden.
- The park improvements had a positive impact on area residents' use of the park and aided the expansion of after-school and summer programs.
- Area schools and EBAYC regularly used the parks for soccer games, football games, basketball games, barbecues, and other activities.



“I’m not a parent yet but as a parent I will feel a lot more comfortable sending my kids to do anything [at the park] than when I was growing up as a child.” -Staff

► **Oakland Schoolyards Initiative**

- In 2007, the Oakland Schoolyards Initiative was founded as a pilot project involving four schools (Garfield Elementary School, Urban Promise Academy Middle School, Manzanita SEED/Manzanita Community School, and Roosevelt Middle School) and three non-profits (EBAYC, Unity Council, and Urban Ecology).
- The partnership and community also wanted see the school district have an open campus policy that would enable residents living near the schools to utilize the new schoolyard facilities.
- These policy changes required a high degree of oversight, maintenance, scheduling, and security and proved to be a challenge to implement.
- The Oakland Board of Education unanimously passed legislation that established the school district as a formal member of the initiative and directed appropriate senior management leaders to staff the initiative.
- The initiative aims to renovate, with specific standards and guidelines, up to 25 schoolyards in the next five years.
- EBAYC secured \$200,000 to develop and implement improvement plans at six schools by December 2010.

“I think the general trend with the Oakland schoolyard initiative is to push towards having open campus on the weekends. But again, it’s that trade-off of who’s going to maintain it, who’s going to watch it, who’s going to open it and close it. I think the specifics still need to be ironed out, and that’s a pretty daunting task. But because there is such a dearth of open space in this neighborhood, that it’s an asset that really needs to be opened up.” -Community Member

► **Garfield Elementary Intersections**

- An intersection near Garfield Elementary had the highest pedestrian accident rate in Oakland, and parents in the area were very concerned about the safety of their children.
- EBAYC and Urban Ecology conducted a walking audit with 30 parents to identify safety and street design issues and to design a plan.
- Foothill Corridor Partnership, parents, community partners, and the city council worked together to advocate for the implementation of changes to improve safety for students and residents.
- The process took several years to complete, but eventually the City of Oakland Traffic Engineering Division completed \$200,000 of pedestrian safety improvements at Garfield Elementary School, including installation of new “countdown” signal lights at two intersections, construction of curb bulb-outs at one intersection, and deployment of an adult crossing guard.



► **Roosevelt Middle School Bike Storage**

- Cycles of Change operated the Bike Club at Roosevelt Middle School, but students had no safe place to store bikes and were reluctant to bike to school.
- In the second year of the grant, the partnership secured a \$20,000 grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management Board to purchase and install a bike storage cage.
- After a two-year struggle with the school district, a bike cage was installed, which increased the number of students biking to school.
- The structure cost \$15,000 and had space for 50 bicycles.



“The immediate hurdle [to biking to school] was a place to securely lock up their bikes...” -Staff

“We actually had to meet with the principal, tell her why we needed a bike cage. Students weren’t riding bikes to school and if they were, there was no place to store them. Now that we have a bike cage, students have been riding bikes more often.” -Staff

► **Oakland After-school Initiative**

- Through the advocacy of the partnership, the City of Oakland approved an initiative that matched Proposition 49 funds to expand after-school and summer programming for youth at 70 schools throughout Oakland.
- EBAYC advocated for a local ballot measure to require the city to increase its budget for children's services to 2.5% (\$13-15 million).

► **Other Policies and Physical Projects**

- A city council member pledged a commitment to fund a full-time San Antonio Recreation Center Director, with whom the partnership met frequently to discuss programming needs.
- The partnership secured funding to develop architectural designs to improve streetscape along 23rd Avenue and Foothill Boulevard.

Challenges and Successes

The projects completed at area schools and local parks in the Lower San Antonio neighborhood had a positive impact on students and residents, increasing their physical activity, community pride, and involvement within the community. Staff, partners, and communities members noted a number of facilitators to developing and implementing policies and physical projects:

- Many parents, students, community members, and community organizations were involved in all stages of physical project strategies, from planning and advocacy to implementation and upkeep.
- The partnership found that working with the schools created the largest impact on the community.
- The success of early efforts increased the demand for improvements at other schools.
- A city council member had a special interest in improving parks in the neighborhood.

“I feel like when the students and the parents feel like they have something to do with it, they feel that ownership over the school and then, you know, the whole environment and atmosphere changes and outlook on this is my school now, I take pride in my school... So, these little projects they do have an effect on the way the students see their school and the parents see the school. There's a kind of ownership when they had a part of making this happen.” -Staff

The ongoing struggles that the Foothill Corridor Partnership faced with city and school bureaucracy limited its involvement with policy issues. Because physical projects were so taxing to implement, the challenges related to policy change seemed insurmountable. However, barriers lessened after the successful implementation of physical projects and the partnership began to see more success in policy change. Staff, partners, and community members noted a number of challenges to developing and implementing policies and physical projects:

- From the partnership's perspective, the City of Oakland and the Oakland Unified School District responded differently to built environment issues in higher income neighborhoods versus lower income neighborhoods, creating a disparity in access to resources.
- Lower income neighborhoods required considerable resources and political power to move toward action.
- Turnover in leadership, slow bureaucratic processes, and complicated leadership structures at public agencies delayed progress.
- Plans that included multiple or complex features did not get fully completed, due to lack of funding or conflicts with priorities.
- The partnership had to decide which battles to fight in regard to specific policies and projects. For example, the partnership did not advocate for a one-way loop policy at Garfield Elementary for fear that doing so would negatively impact other campaigns at Garfield Elementary.

“Right now, it’s just been this person talking to that person trying to figure things out, but I think we’re kind of reaching a point where we’re realizing that it does need to be something that everybody buys into and becomes an agreement, an established procedure.” -Partner

“The challenge has been that there’s a lot of moving parts... We do well on community engagement. We do well on actually having first-cut architectural designs for both pedestrian safety and for schoolyards. We’ve got great community-based partners... But, design proposals have to be approved by the school district. The same thing with pedestrian safety; it has to be done by the City of Oakland. And moving those bureaucracies is like – to get four curb bulb-outs at one intersection took two-and-a-half years.” -Staff

Programs and Promotions

EBAYC and Cycle of Changes each had a long history of working in schools in the Lower San Antonio neighborhood. Many of their programs were in place prior to the ALBD grant but were expanded with the addition of ALBD funding and partnership activities. Programs and promotions, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes, include the following:

► After-school Programs

- EBAYC established new after-school centers at four neighborhood schools, with services that included academic support, cultural enrichment, sports, parent organizing, and parent outreach.
- The after-school programs were designed to reduce and prevent gang involvement, violence, and drug activity by providing positive roles models and activities to keep children busy.
- Program staff tailored the programs to meet the needs of the students by conducting surveys. Staff also offered new activities and then polled students to determine which ones to make permanent.
- Activities that were offered, included college mentors, homework assistance, snacks, cooking, hip-hop dance, break dance, Asian cultural dance, flag football, soccer, basketball, bike club, computer club, girls’ science program, art, leadership class, and career/college planning.
- Overall, the after-school program’s daily participation increased from 500 to 1,200 students during the course of the grant period.

“You have to always involve the students to see what, like listen to what they want, because when you offer activities that they’re not interested in period, you’re not going to get any participation.” -Staff

▶ ***Roosevelt Bike Club***

- Since 1998, Cycles of Change has coordinated a Bike Club with EBAYC at Roosevelt Middle School.
- The Bike Club was open to all students, whether or not they were officially participating in the EBAYC after-school program.
- Participants learned bike repair and safety, practiced riding a bike, and took bike fieldtrips around Oakland.
- Based on the hours put in at the Bike Club, students earned bikes, helmets, and locks for themselves and family members.
- The club provided students with leadership roles by inviting them to teach other students and lead the bike rides.
- Many former student participants volunteered with the club. Because of their commitment to the students, staff and older student volunteers were seen as mentors to Bike Club students.
- Neighborhood residents and organizations were also very supportive of the club and appreciated its influence on area students. Some supported the club by donating snacks, assistance, used bikes and bike parts to the club.
- While the partnership attempted to expand the Bike Club to include a summer program, they were unable to sustain it, due to lack of funding and staff availability.

▶ ***Recreational Opportunities***

- The partnership successfully expanded formal and informal recreational opportunities offered in the Lower San Antonio neighborhood and increased the number of youth participating in activities offered by the San Antonio Sports Initiative.
- The renovation of the parks permitted the expansion of year-round recreational opportunities, including team sports, wrestling, bike education, ballet folklorica, capoeira, and hip hop dance.

▶ ***Promotional Events***

- Throughout the funding period, the partnership planned several large, community-wide promotional campaigns to coincide with its physical project milestones.
- In 2004, a city councilman co-hosted the grand opening of San Antonio Park; over 300 people attended.
- In May 2005, San Antonio Girls' Sports Day was held. The event increased awareness among local policy-makers and public administrators of the need to achieve equity in girls' involvement in organized sports.

▶ ***Local Media***

- At several points during the grant period, partnership activities received local press attention, including health features and news reports on a local television channel.
- In July 2005, California First Lady Maria Shriver visited EBAYC to learn more about grassroots efforts to prevent childhood obesity. The visit received press attention from several newspapers, including the Oakland Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle, Montclarion, and Sing Tao.

► **Other Promotional and Programmatic Strategies**

- Cycles of Change launched two bike promotion projects: 1) a mapping project to identify safe bike routes and create maps, and 2) an advocacy campaign to encourage schools to allow students to ride bicycles to school.
- Cycles of Change worked with the Transportation and Built Environment Coalition to create a Safe Routes to School program that included bike education, Walk to School days, and staff training.

Challenges and Successes

Due to the slow implementation process for physical projects, the partnership postponed or abandoned several planned promotional events and social marketing campaigns. While the partnership believed such events would be beneficial to raising awareness of improvements to active living opportunities and amenities in the community, the partnership's strong connection to other organizations and presence at the local schools were sufficient for getting the word out to parents, students, and community members. Overall, partners stressed the importance of building trust and support in the community.

“If there’s no buy-in and no support and collaboration with the school, nothing will work.” -Staff

Sustainability

Because the partnership focused primarily on physical projects, its efforts had inherent sustainability. However, the Lower San Antonio neighborhood had issues with vandalism and misuse of amenities in the past. The partnership believed that the new park and schoolyard facilities would become a source of pride for the community.

“It’s called broken glass syndrome, where if you walk by a building, you see broken glass, you just want to break the windows even more, but if you see a beautiful setting, you would want to maintain it.” -Community Member

Due to the impact and success of the local schoolyard projects during the ALbD grant, the Foothill Corridor Partnership formed the Oakland Schoolyards Initiative to improve schoolyards city-wide. Specifically, the Oakland Schoolyards Initiative aimed to establish organizational capacity to effectively advance its mission and achieve its goals of 1) developing an inventory of existing and potential resources that could be used in association with schoolyard improvement plans for capital improvements, routine maintenance, and program operations, and 2) developing and implementing schoolyard improvement plans. With the assistance of a Robert Wood Johnson ALbD Sustainability grant and other private and public funds, the Foothill Corridor Partnership expanded from a neighborhood-level pilot project to a community-driven intergovernmental policy initiative working on a city-wide scale.

Acknowledgements

This evaluation and report were developed under the leadership of Laura Brennan, PhD, MPH, Principal Investigator, Transtria LLC, and Ross Brownson, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator, Washington University Institute for Public Health. Support for this evaluation was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (#57649). Transtria LLC led the evaluation and dissemination activities from November 2006 to December 2009. For more information about the evaluation and dissemination methods, activities or results, please contact Laura Brennan (laura@transtria.com).

Our team is grateful for the collaboration and support from the staff East Bay Asian Youth Center and the Foothill Corridor Partnership in Oakland, California.

With special thanks to the many individuals who have contributed to these efforts from Transtria LLC (Anna Alexandrov; Joanna Bender; Shruthi Bhatt; Yolanda Campbell; Julie Claus, MPH; Kathryn Coniglio, MPH; Kate Dickman; Kate Donaldson, MPH; Melissa Hall, MPH; Courtney Jones, MPH; Shannon Keating; Allison Kemner, MPH; Benjamin Krause; Amy Krieg; Lisa Meng; Lauren Middendorff; Luke Odom; Regina Quadir, MPH; Laura Runnels, MPH; Elsa Taricone, MPH; Cindy Thomas, MPH; Sarah Weiner), Saint Louis University School of Public Health (Elizabeth Baker, PhD, MPH), Active Living By Design (Rich Bell, MCP; Phil Bors, MPH; Mark Dessauer, MA; Joanne Lee, LDN, RD, MPH; Mary Beth Powell, MPH; Sarah Strunk, MHA; Risa Wilkerson, MA), National Park Service (Helen Mahan), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Laura Leviton, PhD; Jamie Bussel, MPH), University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health (Kelly Evenson, PhD), University of California at Davis (Susan Handy, PhD), Wholonomy Consulting (Katherine Kraft, PhD), San Diego State University and Active Living Research (James Sallis, PhD), and Innovative Graphic Services (Joseph Karolczak).