

1. Introduction

Setting

The City of Chula Vista is situated in the southwestern corner of San Diego County along the southeastern edge of San Diego Bay. It encompasses over 51 square miles of land, and is bordered on the north by National City, on the south by a portion of the City of San Diego, and to the east and northeast by the unincorporated County of San Diego. With a population of 233,108², it is the second most populated city in the San Diego region. The topography of Chula Vista varies from generally level with a well-connected grid network of roadways in the area west of Interstate 805, and then becomes more undulating and hilly to the east of Interstate 805 with roadways becoming less connected and circuitous often matching the rolling terrain. **Figure 1-1** displays the City of Chula Vista within the San Diego region.

Benefits of Walking

Planning to create a more walkable city contributes to resolving several complex and interrelated urban issues, including traffic congestion, air quality, public health and livability. By guiding Chula Vista toward pedestrian-friendly development, this plan can affect all of these issue areas, which collectively can have a profound influence on the existing and future quality of life in Chula Vista.

Environmental/Climate Change Benefits

Replacing vehicular trips with walking trips contributes to reducing human-generated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that contribute to climate change. Fewer vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) translates into fewer mobile source pollutants, such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons, being released into the air. Ground-level ozone, a byproduct of hydrocarbon emissions, has historically been San Diego County's greatest air pollution problem, which has implications for the population's respiratory and cardiovascular health.³ While the region has made progress on reducing ozone and other air pollutants, providing transportation options that reduce VMT is an important element to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the region's air quality.

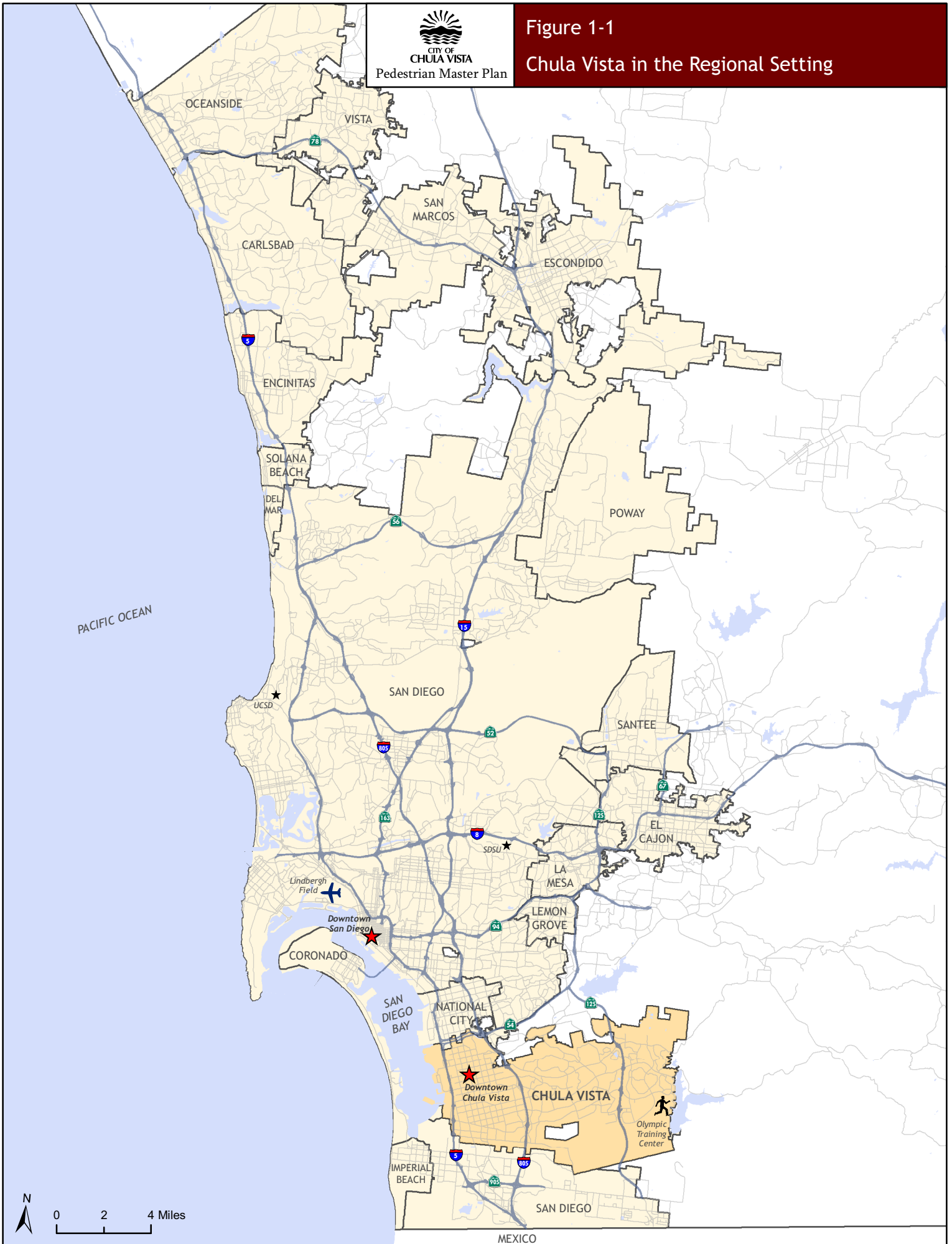
Public Health

In recent years, public health professionals and urban planners have become increasingly aware that the impacts of automobiles on public health extend far beyond asthma and other respiratory conditions caused by air pollution. There is a much deeper understanding of the connection between the lack of physical activity resulting from auto-oriented community designs and various health-related problems such as obesity and other chronic diseases. Although diet and genetic predisposition contribute to these conditions, physical inactivity is now widely understood to play a significant role in the most common chronic diseases in the

² SANDAG, Current Population and Housing Estimates (2009)

³ Air Quality in San Diego County: 2007 Annual Report. County of San Diego Air Pollution Control District, 2008.

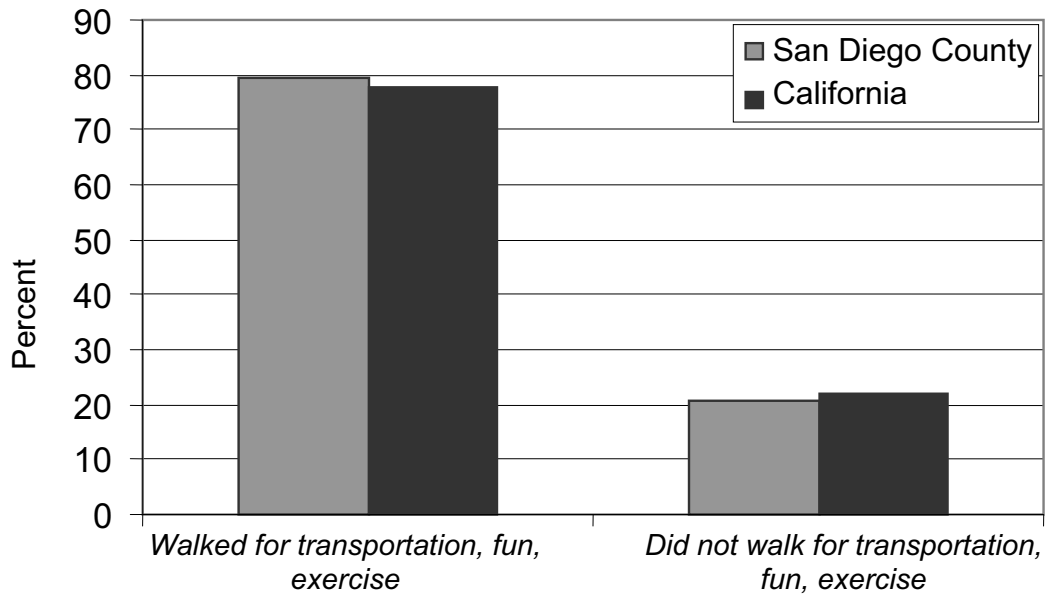
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US, including coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes⁴ – each of which is a leading cause of death in Chula Vista. In 2003-05 (the most recent period for which data is available) 26 percent of all deaths in the south bay region of San Diego County were from heart disease⁵. Stroke and diabetes were responsible for an additional nine percent of deaths during this period.

Figure 1-2 shows that walking rates for San Diego County are slightly higher than statewide rates. The figure shows responses to the survey question: “Have you walked for transportation, fun, or exercise during the past week?” As shown, nearly 21 percent of San Diego County respondents and 22 percent of California respondents did not walk for any purpose in the previous week.



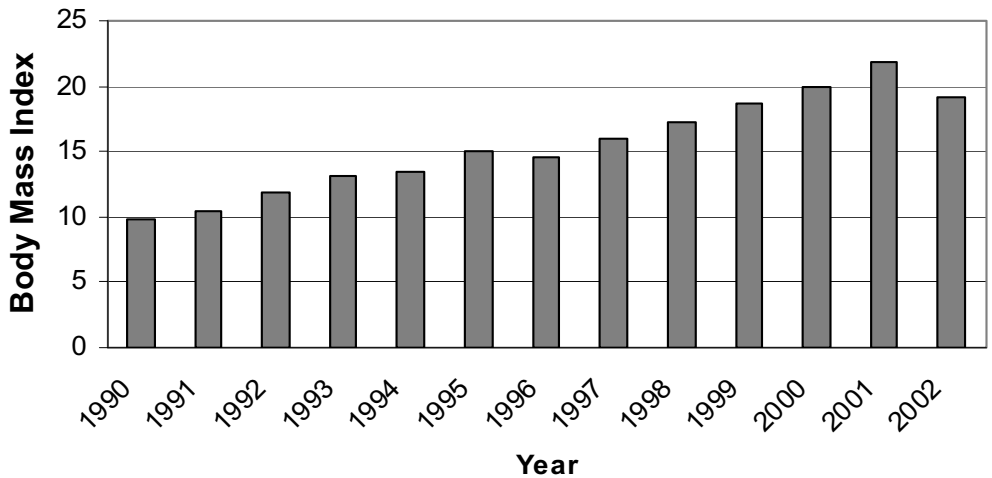
Source: 2005 California Health Interview Study

Figure 1-2: Walking Trips based on California Health Interview Survey

Physical inactivity can lead to the growing trend of obesity. As **Figure 1-3** shows, obesity or body mass index (weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared) has been on the rise for the last decade in California.

⁴ McKenna, M.T., Taylor, W.R., Marks, J.S., & Koplan, J.P., “Current issues and challenges in chronic disease and control” in *Chronic Disease Epidemiology and Control*, 2nd edition, American Public Health Assn. , 1988.

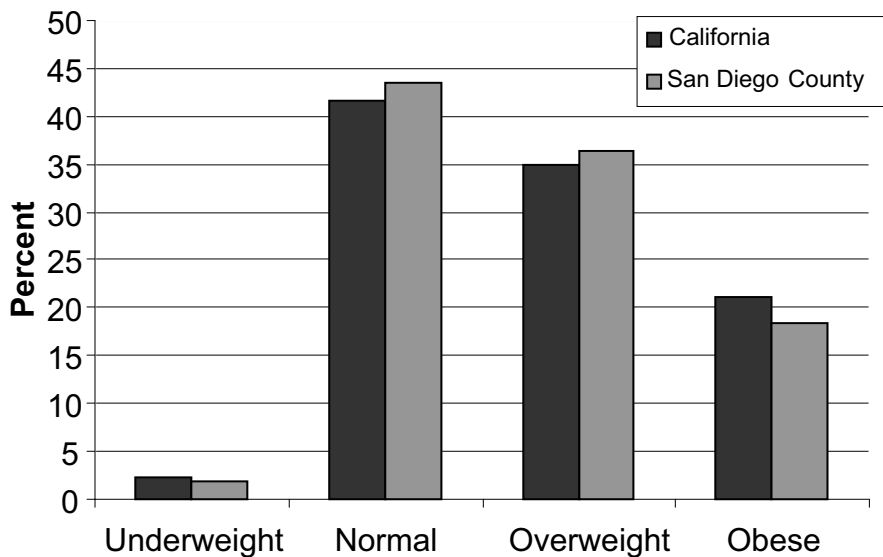
⁵ *County of San Diego, HHS, Public Health Services, Community Health Statistics Unit, 2007.*



Source: CDC.gov

Figure 1-3: Annual Obesity in California by Body Mass Index

Like the state of California, San Diego County also has a growing trend of obesity. **Figure 1-4** shows BMI categorized as underweight, normal, overweight and obese. As shown, San Diego County has approximately two percent more respondents within the normal category than the state of California; however a majority of respondents were either overweight or obese in both the County and the entire state.



Source: 2005 California Health Interview Study

Figure 1-4: Obesity in California and San Diego County

Obesity alone is a health issue and it can also lead to other chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. According to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Department, heart disease was a leading cause of death between 2003 and 2005 in the County. By providing a pedestrian-friendly environment more people will walk on a regular basis and can help reverse these health trends.

In response to these trends, the public health profession has begun to advocate for the creation of walkable neighborhoods as one of the most effective ways to encourage active lifestyles. Studies show that 43 percent of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home meet recommended activity levels, compared to only 27 percent of those without safe places to walk.⁶ As Chula Vista becomes a more walkable city, Chula Vista's population will have more opportunities to exercise, ideally resulting in a higher proportion of Chula Vista residents achieving recommended activity levels.



Sense of Community

Cities in which people walk provide more opportunities for chance meetings than do areas where travel is primarily by automobile. Such serendipitous encounters help neighbors get better-acquainted and provide eyes on the street, which can make an area feel and be safer. Chula Vista residents' sense of living in a cohesive community will be enhanced as the City focuses future residential growth in compact, walkable communities, creates shopping districts that cater to those on foot, and provides facilities that enhance the pedestrian experience.

Purpose of the Pedestrian Master Plan

This document will serve as a technical resource for the City to guide the implementation of goals and policies in Chapter 2.

Citizens can use this Pedestrian Master Plan to ensure that pedestrian needs and conditions are properly identified, and assist the City in keeping this Plan accurate over time as it is updated. Citizens can also identify City priorities and proposals and how and when they may impact their own neighborhoods or walking routes. Most importantly, citizens can use this Plan to identify the various tools and strategies that are available to improve conditions on their streets, and to work with the City to help fund and implement these improvements.

⁶ Powell, K.E., Martin, L., Chowdhury, P.P., "Places to walk: Convenience and regular physical activity" in *American Journal of Public Health*, 2003.

Overview of the Plan Contents

After this introductory chapter, the Plan is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2** describes the goals and objectives that provide a vision for enhancing the pedestrian environment in the City of Chula Vista and serve as the foundation for the Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations;
- Chapter 3** presents a summary of existing pedestrian facilities in the City of Chula Vista as well as an overview of the public input obtained through the Pedestrian Master Plan planning process;
- Chapter 4** summarizes pedestrian needs in the City of Chula Vista in terms of demand for walking and barriers faced by pedestrians. This chapter presents a raster-based spatial analysis model that was employed to understand the location and intensity of pedestrian generators, attractors, and barriers;
- Chapter 5** provides an overview of the recommended improvement projects including citywide infrastructure projects and 30 high priority improvement projects that should be the focus of implementation in the short range;
- Chapter 6** addresses the school area assessments conducted around thirty six (36) Chula Vista elementary schools. This effort draws upon work completed as part of the “Kids Walk and Bike to School” project led by Walk San Diego;
- Chapter 7** summarizes the Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement Program recommendations that are essential companions to the infrastructure recommendations made in Chapter 5; and finally,
- Chapter 8** presents an overview of pedestrian-related funding opportunities at the Federal, State, regional, and local levels with the purpose of informing City staff and Chula Vista community members about the range of opportunities for providing financial support to implement the Plan recommendations.