

## CASE STUDY

# BEACH CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT 'BLUE ZONES PROJECT'

## Project Summary

The Blue Zones Project launched in 2010 across the Beach Cities, including Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach. The project, based on a **national initiative**, is designed to support policies and programs which encourage healthy lifestyles. Planners took this initiative into the community by:

- Engaging local citizens and businesses through programs, volunteer opportunities, and awareness raising campaigns
- Supporting and promoting city-led projects, such as bike and pedestrian planning and infrastructure, in order to make active living more convenient within their community

## Planning and Implementation

The Project addresses health, including physical, emotional and social health. Programming includes partnering with local restaurants and grocery stores to promote healthy eating, creating volunteer opportunities that keep people emotionally and socially engaged and encouraging walking and biking to improve physical health and social activity.

In 2011, Blue Zones led the creation of the Vitality City Plan and supported the creation of the South Bay Bicycle Master Plan by sponsoring community workshops. Both Plans worked together to promote improvements to walking and biking throughout the Beach Cities. The goals of the Vitality City Plan include:

- A complete network of streets and spaces to support active living
- Safe, natural and enjoyable walking and biking conditions
- Sustainable transportation choices
- Healthier, happier people

Each of the three Beach Cities also adopted policy documents based

on Blue Zones Project, to shift how city streets and public places are constructed to encourage bicycling, walking and social interactions.

The unique collaboration between the Beach Cities Health District and the member cities resulted in successful grant awards. Blue Zones Project won a SCAG Sustainability Planning Grant for the Bicycle Mini-Corral Plan (\$40,000) and a SCAG Transportation Planning Grant for the Aviation Boulevard Multi-Modal Corridor Plan (\$277,000). Both Plans build upon previous successful projects to make the area more attractive for biking and walking.

In 2012, Blue Zones led an initiative to bring Walking School Buses to 13 local schools. The program encourages parents and children to walk together in groups to school rather than drive. The Walking School Bus provides a safe walking environment from home to school using a structured route, and increases safety by encouraging travel with other children and staff members. In 2013, the Beach Cities Health District approved \$1.1m in funding to continue the program.

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**Beach Cities residents who report exercising at least 30 minutes a day, three days a week increased from 60.5% in 2010 to 65.8% in 2015.**

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## Key Outcomes

- More than 24,000 residents, or 20% of the Beach Cities communities pledged and completed at least one action committing to living a more healthy lifestyle
- 14 worksites in the Beach Cities are designated Blue Zones work sites
- More than 100 restaurants in the Beach Cities are designated Blue Zones Restaurants
- 6 schools in the Beach Cities are designated Blue Zones schools. The Beach Cities have reached 25% of the schools in the Beach Cities area
- The 2012-2013 Walking School Bus program encouraged participants to walk 11,808 miles while saving 15,000 car trips
- The percentage of Beach Cities residents who report exercising at least 30 minutes a day, three days a week increased from 60.5% in 2010 to 65.8% in 2015, outpacing the national average of 55%
- As a quality of life measure, the Gallup Well-Being Index shows the percentage of Beach Cities residents who believe they are thriving in their life evaluation increased from 64.4% in 2010 to 72.2% in 2015



Source: easyreadernews.com

## WHY IT WORKED

### PROGRAMMING SUPPORTING PROJECTS

As a multi-city partnership, Beach Cities Health District's Blue Zones Project raises awareness across their sub-region and to support other local walking and biking projects. The integration of health-led active lifestyles programming with city-led projects has increased the effectiveness of each agency's initiatives.

## QUICK FACTS

**What:** a multi-city healthy living program

**When:** 2010 - ongoing

**Geography:** South Bay, Los Angeles County, CA

**Goal:** to actively plan for healthier cities, incorporating active transportation to support healthy lifestyles

**Leaders:** Beach Cities Health District, Blue Zones LLC, Healthways, City of Hermosa Beach, City of Manhattan Beach, and City of Redondo Beach