

# How to Make Healthy Changes in Your Neighborhood



**If you answered “no” to any of these questions, your neighborhood is ready for some healthy changes.**

Every neighborhood deserves to have clean, safe places to buy fruits and vegetables—and you and your family can help make these healthy changes. It’s not easy, but by working with local agencies you can get more grocery stores, community gardens, and farmers’ markets in your community.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every city and county in California has a local government agency called a **planning department** or a **community development department**. These agencies are in charge of making decisions about where grocery stores, community gardens, and farmers’ markets are located.

These decisions are written down in a document called a **general plan**. A general plan tells everyone the ground rules for any future changes in the community.

As a community grows, its general plan must change, too. To make this happen, the community comes together with the local government to write a new plan. This is called a **general plan update**.

Everyone who lives in the community has the right to help update the general plan. This is a great time to speak out for healthy changes in your neighborhood.



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# 8 STEPS to Get More Fruits and Vegetables in Your Neighborhood!

1

**Find out when your community's general plan will be updated.**  
You can get this information by calling your local planning department or looking on its website.

**Ask how you can get involved.**

*If your planning department is updating the general plan, it has to hold public meetings. Ask when the next meeting will happen. If your planning department is not doing a general plan update soon, ask how you can share your ideas—the planning department may invite you to a meeting or ask you to send comments in writing.*

2

5

**Think about how you will talk to the planning department.**

*Some communities take local decision makers on a tour of neighborhood stores to show how few fruits and vegetables are being sold. Others take pictures of local stores to show what kinds of foods are sold—and how many of these foods are unhealthy.*

**Work together to decide what kinds of changes you want to see in your neighborhood.**

*You might want a new grocery store, or you might decide that your neighborhood needs a community garden or a farmers' market. You might have a lot of changes that you would like to see, or maybe you will choose just one.*

4

**Get together a group of neighbors and other important people to help you find solutions.**

*Invite clergy members, local business leaders, even young people—they can have good ideas, too. Ask your local health department if they have any ideas of who might be interested in making healthy changes.*

3



6

**Tell the planning department about the healthy changes you would like to see.**

7

**Stay involved.**  
It will take many months—maybe years—to get all the changes you would like to see. Making a healthy community takes a while, but it's worth it.

8

**Celebrate your success!**  
Tell other people how you made your community a better place to live!