

# Intro to Health Impact Assessments

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Adapted from materials created by Human Impact Partners ([www.humanimpact.org](http://www.humanimpact.org))

# Objectives

- Introduce Health Impact Assessments (HIA)
- Review steps in the HIA process
- Describe completed HIA projects
- Discuss interagency collaborations to facilitate use of HIA

## Health Impact Assessment Definition

A combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA identifies appropriate actions to manage those effects.

Health means physical, economic, emotional, and social wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

Health begins where we live, learn, work, (worship) and play.

# Determinants of Health

- Health Behaviors
- Clinical Care
- Social and Economic
- Physical Environment
- Genetics and Biology



# HIA Addresses Determinants of Health

*How does the proposed project, plan, policy*

**affect**



*and lead to health outcomes*

# Why Conduct an HIA?

- Health is not always considered
- Disconnect between policy-making and the people impacted
- Disconnect between policy-making and current evidence

# HIA Benefits

- Ensure that health and health disparities are considered in decision-making using an objective and scientific approach
- Make health impacts more explicit
- Shape public decisions and discourse
- Engage and empower communities
- Emphasize everyday experiences in decision-making
- Build relationships and collaborations
- Provide a comprehensive lens on issues and help identify trade-offs in decision-making
- Help to provide input up-front in decision-making and build support for better outcomes



# HIA Steps

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Screening  | Determines the need and value of a HIA  |
| Scoping    | Determines which health impacts to evaluate, methods for analysis, and a workplan   |
| Assessment | Provides:<br>1) a profile of existing health conditions<br>2) evaluation of potential health impacts<br>3) strategies to manage identified adverse health impacts |
| Reporting  | Includes:<br>1) development of the HIA report<br>2) communication of findings & recommendations   |
| Monitoring | Tracks:<br>1) impacts on decision-making processes and the decision<br>2) impacts of the decision on health determinants  |

# HIA can evaluate many types of projects, plans, policies

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Land use plans                       | Housing developments, revitalization plans               |
| Transportation plans                 | New transit stations, roadway expansions, new rail lines |
| Comprehensive or specific area plans | Guides for future development                            |
| City, state, or national policies    | Labor, education, incarceration, immigration             |

# HIA: A Spectrum of Practice

## *Rapid HIA*

- Brief investigation of health impacts
- Exchange of existing knowledge, expertise, and research
- Carried out quickly and with minimal resources

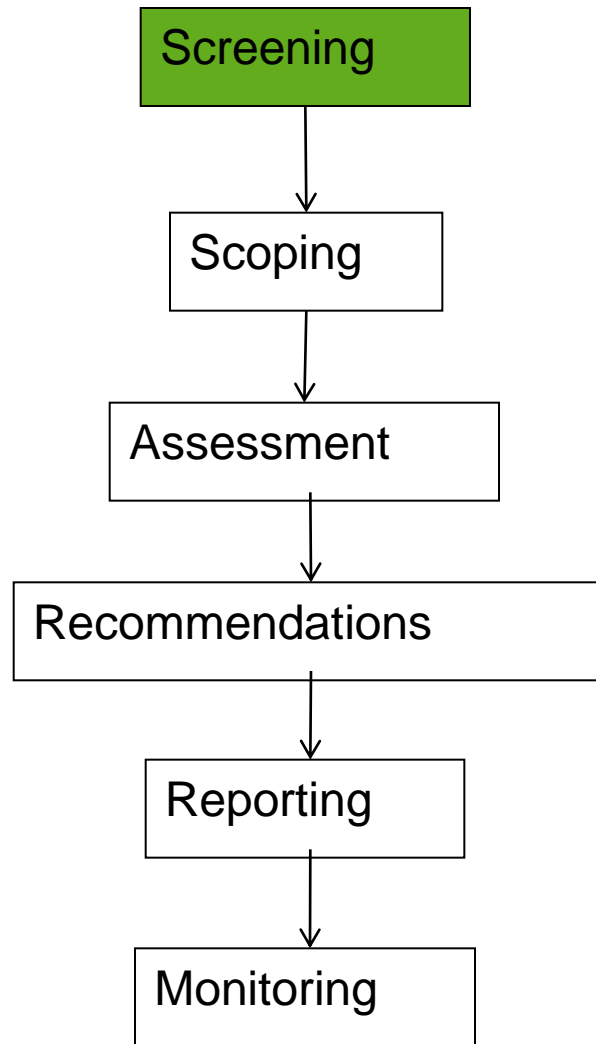
## *Intermediate HIA*

- More detailed investigation of potential health impacts
- Review of available evidence gained from similar assessments

## *Comprehensive HIA*

- Intense investigation
- Review of available evidence, data collection or analysis of new data
- Community-based collaborative process

# Step 1



# Step 1: Screening

## Objective

To decide whether a HIA is feasible, timely, and would add value to the decision-making process

## Essential Tasks

HIA is used to assess a defined project, plan or policy

Purpose is to inform decision-makers **before** they make a decision as such, HIA is most often carried out **prospectively**

Understand timing and whether decision making process is open to HIA findings and recommendations

Assess feasibility of conducting an HIA

Avoid redundancy

Be inclusive

# Screening Activities

Complete “Screening Criteria” for project ideas with your HIA team

Identify others with outside expertise and knowledge who can contribute to your screening process

Screening may require preliminary research

## Screening Challenges

Identifying a specific proposal to evaluate

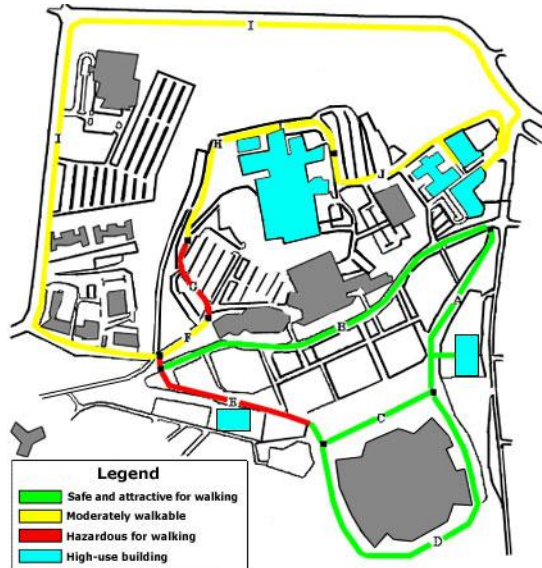
Understanding timelines and decision making processes

Finding out about proposals before a decision is made

Identifying a potential project with a focus that is of interest to your team

# Why NOT do a HIA?

## A plan to improve walkability in Chula Vista, CA



Plan was already considering health

Little opportunity to develop useful recommendations

Health advocates involved in design

Resources better focused elsewhere

# Why NOT do a HIA?

## Milwaukee Zoo Interchange Project, Milwaukee, WI



Idea for the HIA came after the draft EIS, however there was not enough time to conduct a HIA and put together a comment letter in response to the draft EIS

DOT was not open to considering health

Health advocates recommendations were seen as another obstacle or more red tape

Resources better used to suggest mitigation strategies once the final plan for construction is in place



# Jack London Gateway Project

## Proposal

Build 55 units of low-income senior housing and retail near JLG shopping mall in West Oakland

## Project sponsor

East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), a non-profit developer

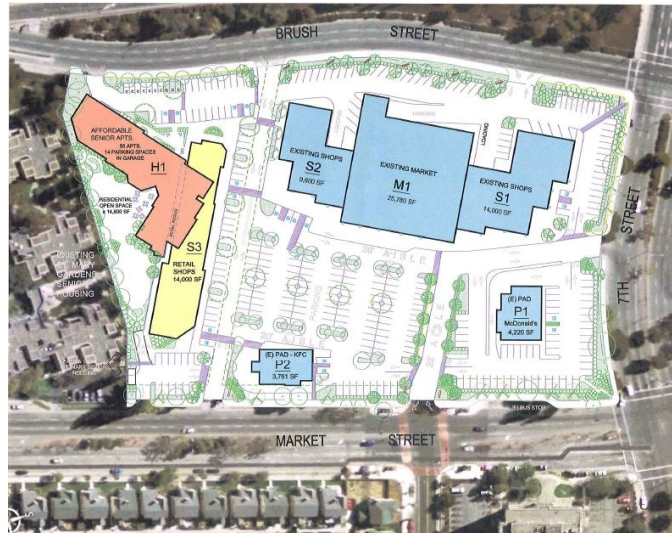
## Project site

Borders Freeway 980, near Port of Oakland



# JLG Health Concerns

Residents interested in using the project as a case study for understanding HIA



## Community health related concerns included:

*Air quality* - respiratory disease

*Noise* - sleep disturbance, social cohesion

*Retail* - fresh produce, pharmacy

*Safety* - pedestrian, crime

# JLG HIA Process

*In 4 meetings over 3 months, the community:*

Selected the project

Engaged EBALDC in discussions

Scoped and prioritized concerns about project

Found supporting evidence for concerns

Developed suggested mitigations

Wrote letter to EBALDC and Planning Commission

# JLG Outcomes

Oakland Planning Commission asked EBALDC to work with community and implement mitigations

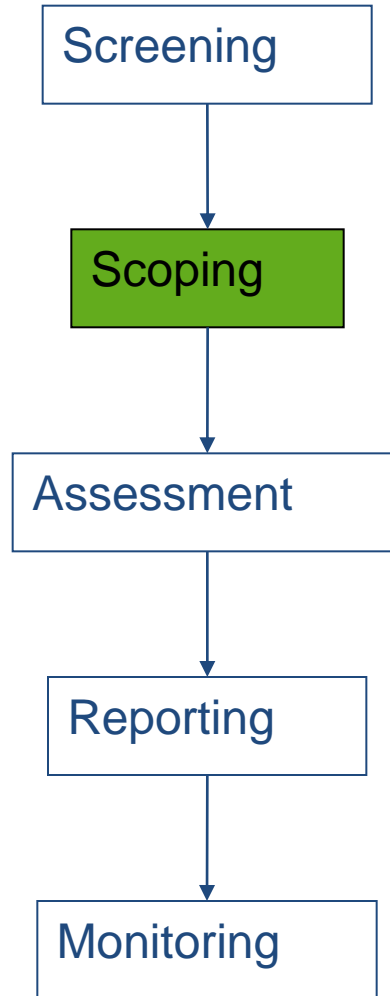
EBALDC made many concessions:

Installing filtered air systems in common space and residential units

Placing bay windows instead of balconies on the freeway side of building

Changing main entrance from highway side to neighborhood side

# Step 2



# Scoping

## Objective

To create a plan and timeline for conducting a HIA that defines priority issues, research questions and methods, and participant roles.

## Essential Tasks

Determine who will oversee the HIA process

Set ground rules for working together, including participant roles

Establish objectives for the HIA

Develop research questions, workplan, and timeline

Determine the format for the final HIA, including how findings will be communicated

# Scoping: Resources

HIAs can vary greatly in scope. How will available resources impact the scope?

**Least  
Resources**



**Most  
Resources**

**Review of available reports**

**Literature review**

**Analysis and mapping of existing data from the census, public agencies, etc.**

**Expert opinion**

**Application of quantitative forecasting methods using existing studies**

**Interviews or focus groups**

**New quantitative data collection and analysis**

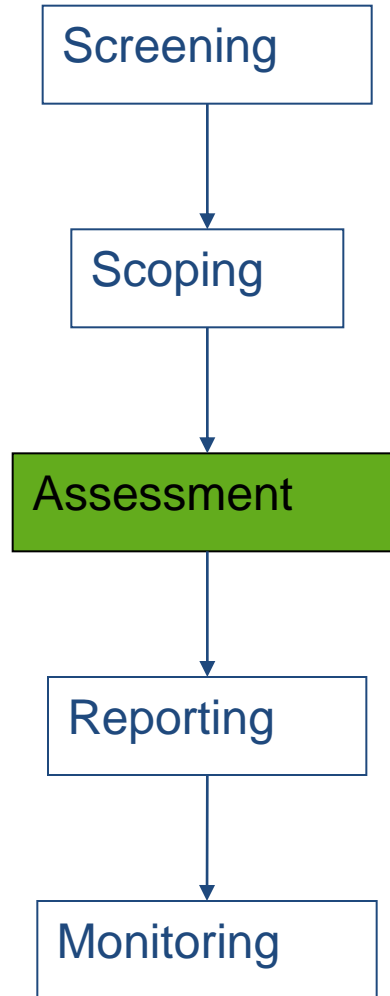
# Example Scoping Questions

For each health issue of concern:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Existing Conditions</b> | <b>What do we know about existing conditions, potential health impacts, and vulnerable populations?</b>                        |
| <b>Populations</b>         | <b>What are specific populations (age, gender, race, income, place) that will be impacted by this project/policy proposal?</b> |
| <b>Research Questions</b>  | <b>What research questions do we want to answer?</b>   |



# Step 3



# Step 3: Assessment

## Objective

To provide a profile of existing conditions data, an evaluation of potential health impacts, and evidence-based recommendations to mitigate negative and maximize positive health impacts.

## Essential Tasks

Profile existing conditions using existing and new data

Judge the impacts of the decision on selected indicators

Use results to develop recommendations and mitigations to address negative health impacts

# HIA Assessment Methods

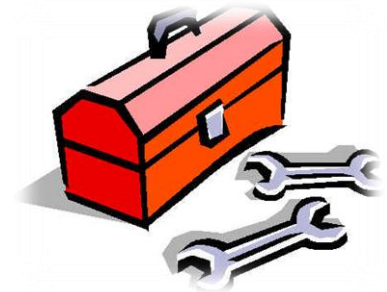
Conduct an empirical literature review

Gather existing data or conduct new analysis on health, environmental and social indicators

Compare data to existing regulatory criteria, standards, & benchmarks

Utilize community expertise - e.g., focus groups, surveys

Apply specialized data collection tools for observational data, forecasting, and modeling



# Indicator Data Sources

## United States Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Population data on demographics, social and economic characteristics, at state, county, city, zip code, census tract, block group, and block level

## Centers for Disease Control, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

The world's largest, on-going telephone health survey system, tracking health conditions and risk behaviors in the US

## NYS DOH METRIX

Health and environmental data available through a public website through the Maximizing Essential Tools for Research Innovation and eXcellence (METRIX) project

## NYC Agencies

NYC DOHMH, transportation, planning

# Community Expertise

Residents

Neighborhood organizations

Medical practitioners

Public officials

Health agencies



*“It affects my community, making residents sick. We need to stop the diesel trucks from passing through residential areas, also diesel buses, and if possible make it the law or policy.”*

Focus groups

Surveys

Interviews

# Specialized Assessment Tools

San Francisco Department of Public Health - [www.sfpbes.org](http://www.sfpbes.org)

Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index

Air Quality Modeling

Noise Modeling

Pedestrian Injury Collision Modeling

Healthy Development Measurement Tool

County Health Rankings - [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

WalkScore - [www.WalkScore.com](http://www.WalkScore.com)

# Recommendations & Mitigations

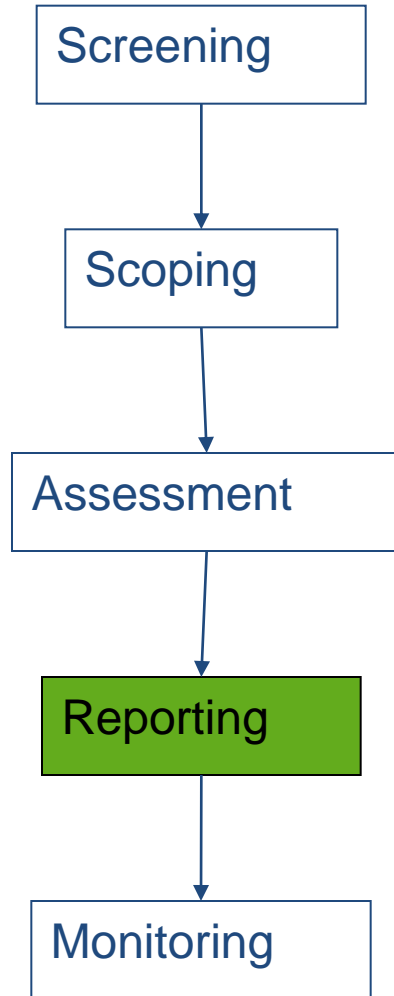
A key function of HIA is to identify opportunities for public decisions to promote health

Based on Assessment, HIA may suggest:

Recommendations: alternative ways to design a project, plan, or policy its location, or timing to benefit health.

Mitigations: strategies to lessen anticipated adverse health effects of a decision.

# Step 4





# Step 4: Reporting

## Objective

To develop the HIA report and communicate findings and recommendations

## Essential Tasks

Develop a consensus among stakeholders re: key findings and recommendations

Determine the format and structure of the report

Write the report

Develop a communication plan

Prepare communication materials to suit the needs of all stakeholders

# HIA Reporting Formats

Letters to proponents & decision-makers

Comment letters on draft EIAs

Formal report

Presentations

Peer-reviewed publications

September 1, 2006

Karoleen Feng  
Project Manager  
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation  
310 8th Street, Suite 200  
Oakland, CA 94607

RE: Jack London Gateway Phase 2

Dear Karoleen,

First, we wanted to thank you for your participation in and contribution to the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Jack London Gateway. Considering the diverse ways that land-use affects health, incorporating supportive design and mitigation strategies into new development can help avoidable disease and illness among Oakland's most vulnerable populations. Growth and development currently happening in Oakland present an opportunity to address long standing disparities in health, and we hope the HIA will be a tool for achieving this goal. Health evidence can support environmentally sensitive resource-efficient land use strategies such as mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, and high traffic areas.

### Estimation of Health Benefits From a Local Living Wage Ordinance

[Raj Shrivastava, MD, MPH, and Michael Kagi, MD]

The inverse relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and health, which has been extensively documented, "may be explained by material, behavioral, psychosocial, or physiologic pathways."<sup>1</sup> Income is a widely used dimension of SES that at lower levels predicts poor health and premature death, whether measured at the individual or at the aggregate level.<sup>2-5</sup> Increasing the federal minimum wage is one means of reducing income poverty in the United States. Indeed, many municipalities in the United States have increased the minimum wage for certain sections of the local labor force by establishing local "living wage" laws. In contrast to the na-

**Objectives.** This study estimated the magnitude of health improvements resulting from a proposed living wage ordinance in San Francisco.

**Methods.** Validated econometric models of the relationship of income to health were applied to predict improvements in health outcomes associated with proposed wage increases in San Francisco.

**Results.** With adoption of a living wage of \$11.00 per hour, we predict decreases in premature death rates at rates for adults aged 24 to 64 years working full-time in families whose current annual income is \$20,000 for men, relative hazard [RH]=0.94, 95% confidence interval [CI]=0.82, 0.87; for women, RH=0.96, 95% CI=0.85, 0.86. Improvements in subjectively rated health and reductions in the number of days sick in bed, in limitations of work and activities of daily living, and in depressive symptoms were also predicted, as were increases in daily alcohol consumption. For the offspring of full-time women currently earning \$20,000, a living wage predicts an increase of 0.25 years (95% CI=0.20, 0.30) of completed education, increased odds of completing high school (odds ratio=1.54, 95% CI=1.20, 1.89), and a reduced risk of early childbirth (RR=0.78, 95% CI=0.66, 0.86).

### FACTS ABOUT THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE RAILROAD AVE. eBART HOUSING PLAN

**How does housing impact health?**

- High housing costs = less \$\$ for health care services, nutritious food, and transportation to get to work.
- High housing costs = overcrowding, homelessness, and displacement.
- Location of housing = access to services, retail, public transit options, rates of pedestrian injury, and exposure to toxic emissions from industry.
- Location of housing can impact social cohesion and residential segregation.

**How will the Railroad Ave. eBART housing plan impact health?**

This plan includes 1,500 units of housing

- Moving 3 or more times by the age of 7 can result in a 26% increased risk of developing depression.
- People who live within 1/4 mile of public transit are 4 times more likely to use it, and get more exercise.
- Designate at least 40% of the units as affordable. This would mean 636 units would be affordable to those making \$44,000/year.

**How can this plan do a better job for our health?**

### The East Bay Greenway HIA

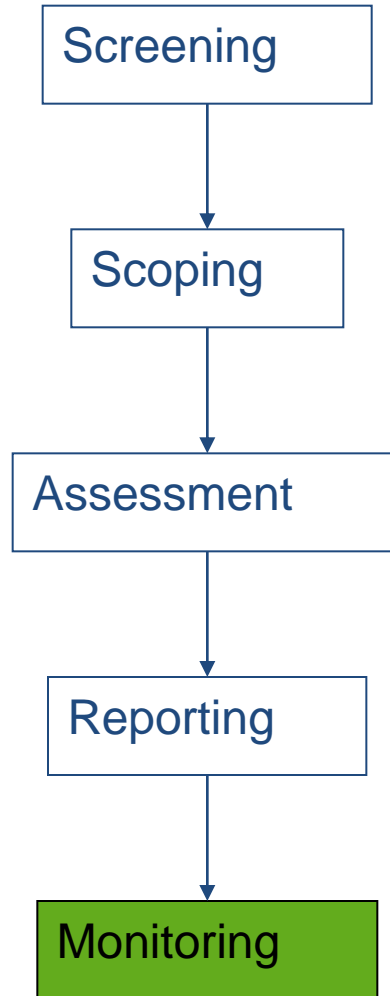
**Supporting beneficial planning projects.**

- Multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists under BART tracks, proposed by Urban Ecology, funded by TCE
- Through:
  - community meetings
  - input from planners, public health officials, elected officials, and others
  - literature reviews and
  - secondary data analysis
- Assessed:
  - physical activity
  - motor vehicle use
  - social cohesion
  - proximity to green space
  - safety

health concerns were prioritized, researched and feasible mitigations were suggested.

reviewed on health, performance, and land release using Michigan Library and by searching the word "and" and Hospital and the ad. PHA, A 6.6 minute

# Step 5



# Step 5: Monitoring

## Objective

To track the impacts of the HIA on the decision-making process and the decision, the implementation of the decision, and the impacts of the decision on health determinants

## Essential Tasks

Track recommendation adoption, discussion of findings, decision-making climate for health, & HIA institutionalization

Monitor decision implementation to track whether policy was carried out in accordance with recommendations

Monitor health determinants and outcomes to evaluate HIA predictions

# Examples of HIA Monitoring Questions

Did the HIA lead to changes in the design of the proposed project, plan, or policy?

Did the project, plan, or policy change in a way that was consistent with recommendations?

Did the HIA help to build consensus?

Did the HIA aid in securing funds for project mitigations?

Did the HIA lead to other policy changes?

# HIA Collaboration: Challenges

Developing and maintaining relationships

Establishing common goals, expectations, ground rules

Ensuring partner involvement

Start-up is important!

# What the Critics Say

| <b>Criticism</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>HIA is costly</b>   | <b>Not as costly as treatment of health impacts in the long run</b>  |
| <b>HIA is time-consuming and will slow decision-making processes</b> | <b>Conducting the HIA early will bring issues to the front of the decision-making process, potentially speeding approval processes and preventing costly litigation that delays projects</b> |
| <b>HIA will stop economic development</b>                            | <b>The role of HIA is to identify mitigations and recommendations, not to say “don’t do that”</b>  |
| <b>HIA is not scientific</b>   | <b>Role of HIA is to pull together disparate pieces of evidence to make a broad statement about impacts</b>  |

# Additional Resources

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Dr. Rajiv Bhatia, Director of Occupational and Environmental Health

- <http://www.sfpbes.org/>
- [http://www.sfpbes.org/SFBayArea\\_HIA\\_Collaborative.htm](http://www.sfpbes.org/SFBayArea_HIA_Collaborative.htm)

## Wisconsin Department of Health Services

- <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hia/>

## Human Impact Partners

- [www.humanimpact.org](http://www.humanimpact.org)