

Health Impact Assessment

Level 1: Preliminary Checklist

Version 2.1

Instructions: The HIA preliminary checklist is meant to provide a relatively simple approach that can suggest answers to important questions about the potential for health impacts. In this desktop exercise, a reviewer responds to questions and sums the scores. The total score helps guide a decision about pursuing a more elaborate HIA. Part 1 addresses the size of the project/plan and Part 2 focuses on easily accessible specific items. These effects can be positive or negative and are not the only effects that a project/plan may have (see the Key Question documents for more detail on the possible effects). Although the total points may not indicate the need for an HIA, answers to a specific question could indicate a need to conduct further assessment. For example, if the total points in Part 2 = 6 but your plan includes housing within 200 meters of an interstate highway, the air quality effects should be further considered.

Part 1: Is it of enough significance to assess?¹

| Key Questions | No | Uncertain | Yes | |
|--|----|-----------|-----|---|
| Geographical extent: Does it apply to a geographic area of a full city block or larger? ² | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Reversibility: Will the changes be difficult or expensive to reverse once put in place? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Population size: Does it substantially increase the residential population or workforce of any area of 100 acres or more (e.g. an increase greater than 33%)? ³ | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Cumulative impact: Is it occurring in a place where specific local health problems have been identified (e.g. traffic safety, air quality, lack of healthy foods, contaminated brownfield)? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| People affected: Does the project or plan affect vulnerable groups (e.g. children, older people, and people with low incomes)? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Land use: Does it substantially change the predominant land (e.g. from residential to commercial)? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Institutional capacity: Is the capacity of local government, nonprofit, and private organizations to address any potential problems adequate? | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Total | | + | + | = |
| If total score is 11 or greater, HIA may be needed, move to Part 2. | | | | |
| If total score is 7-10, a HIA is potentially needed, moving to Part 2 recommended. | | | | |
| If total score is 6 or less, no HIA is required. You may wish to do a HIA on a targeted area or problem. | | | | |

Part 2: Does the plan or proposal meet some initial thresholds for a healthy community? Answer the following in relation to the plan or project and adjacent uses.⁵

| Key Questions | No | Uncertain | Yes | |
|--|----|-----------|-----|---|
| Accessibility: Does the plan involve residential components that are built at an average density greater than seven units per acre of buildable land available for residential use? ⁴ | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Accessibility: Is there regularly scheduled transit service within three-quarter miles of all residential and employment areas? ⁶ | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Physical activity/social capital: In order to provide options for physical activity and social interaction, particularly for children, are all residential areas located within 400 meters of either a neighborhood park, trail, or open space? | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Social capital: Does the plan or project include a mix of housing densities and /or tenures (e.g. at least 15-20% of the housing stock in a different use tenure or as apartments /condos)? | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Air quality: Are there any residential areas or schools within 200 meters of a major auto-related transportation corridor such as a freeway or road with six or more lanes? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Air quality: Does the plan or project area include businesses that disproportionately contribute pollutants (e.g., dry cleaners, automotive paint, manufacturing)? | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| Water quality: Is it developed on a site with existing water and sewer infrastructure? | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Food: Are there supermarkets or fruit and vegetable stores located within a mile of each home? | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Safety: Does the plan or project adequately account for safe circulation patterns for all modes such as employing traffic calming measures, using separate facilities for non-motorized modes, or ensuring adequate lighting and sight lines. | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Total | | + | + | = |
| If total score is 13 or greater, it is recommended that you conduct an HIA. | | | | |
| If total score is 8-12, an HIA is potentially needed. | | | | |
| If total score 7 or less, no HIA is required. You may wish to do a HIA on a targeted area or problem. | | | | |

Notes

^{1]}The following criteria are adapted from Commonwealth of Australia (2001, 18) Health Impact Assessment Guidelines. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care., and from the "HIA Screening Tool developed by the UK Department of Health" and cited in Commonwealth of Australia 2001 (39-40).

^{2]} A city block is approximately 5 acres or two hectares. This size is based on common professional ideas about significant size.

^{3]} These numbers reflect professional judgment not any research evidence.

^{4]} Threshold is suggested in Pushkarev, B. S. and J. M. Zupan. "Where Transit works: Urban Densities for Public Transportation." in *Urban Transportation: Perspectives and Prospects*, ed. by H. S. Levinson and R. A. Weant, Westport, CT, Eno Foundation (1982); other empirical investigations have honed in on similar thresholds as a minimum for intermediate bus transit with one-half miles between bus stops.

^{5]} The questions in Part 2 are based on the research reviewed in the Design for Health Key Questions Series.

^{6]} This threshold is based on detailed distance decay curves of thousands of transit boardings in the Twin Cities (Krizek et. al. 2007, Active Communities/Transportation Research Group); 0.75 miles is where there was considerable drop-off in walk to transit activity.