

## Health Opportunity Assessment: Gaining Community Perspectives on Health Opportunities and Constraints in Land Use Development

**This section provides a guide for conducting a health opportunity assessment using input of community stakeholders; rapid tools to define community health, assess health opportunities and constraints for development, and map the health landscape**

*A Health Opportunity Assessment (HOA) describes a rapid and facilitated process that helps community stakeholders make connections between land use development and opportunities and challenges for healthy place-making.*

**An HOA will clarify the following questions, from the point of view of inhabitants and users of an area:**

- 1) How do you define a “healthy community”?
- 2) Where and what are the community’s environmental and social resources?
- 3) What new public and private services and resources are needed to create the conditions required for optimal health?
- 4) What environmental constraints should be addressed through development planning?

**Findings of an HOA can be used to:**

- Inform land use development planning
- Guide a community’s visioning efforts with City and private developers
- Begin a dialogue with decision-makers about health
- Assess the need and value for a full scale Health Impact Assessment (HIA). HOA could be part of the part of the Scoping phase of an HIA, but does not always have to be.

**Four steps to Health Opportunity Assessment**

1. Facilitated group dialogue with residents/users of a TOD development project which will:
  - *Establish a local definition of health and its relationship to community environmental conditions*
  - *Map existing health resources and hazards*
  - *Identify health resource needs and environmental constraints for development planning*
2. Collate qualitative data from dialogues to produce a report and options for further potential analysis
3. Return results to the community stakeholders and prioritize potential health impacts for deeper analysis
4. Create an Action Plan for inclusion of health in land use planning.

### Section 2: Health Opportunity Assessment

## Recommended Health Opportunity Assessment Tasks

Ideally, the following tasks should be undertaken at the early stages of the planning process or in conjunction with a planning visioning process.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>
Identify a physical setting where a development project is currently being considered or proposed.		Client
Identify community stakeholder participants for HOA process	Recruit (10+) interested individuals and/or community group representatives with interest in promoting neighborhood health	Client
Coordinate logistics and secure participation for a series of at least 2 meetings with HOA participants	Find suitable dates, times, and location that are optimal for all	Client
<u>Facilitate Community Mtg 1:</u> HOA Participant Exercises	Community stakeholders take a ½ day (or a series of meetings) to complete exercises below about including health in land use planning	Facilitator
Summarize findings from participant dialogue	Compile Mtg 1 data to form community data needs, recommendations to developers, and research needs about potential mitigations	Facilitator
<u>Facilitate Community Mtg 2:</u> Return results to participants who will identify data profile, HIA, and mitigation priorities.  Create Action Plan with community	Present results to community for their future action; community prioritizes most important needs.  Community decides which priorities: - need baseline data and where to ask for it - what requests to make of developer and who will do that - which priorities may need primary data collection and/or analysis by HIA professional - agree on a monitoring action plan	Facilitator  Client & Facilitator
Implement Action Plan	Implement actions either through requests upon decision-makers or through subsequent health needs assessment and HIA	Community stakeholders, Client, and Facilitator

## **Inclusive and Effective Community Involvement in the process of HOA and HIA**

Group meetings for the process of visioning and examining health impacts can promote inclusiveness by considering and/or providing the following:

### **Publicity/Outreach**

- Conduct outreach via trusted community members (community liaisons)
- Post meeting announcements in public spaces including: local newspapers and radio stations, local public library, community television public announcements, city hall, etc.
- Take efforts to reach out to communities most affected by project (geographically, economically, politically or culturally) through local/language specific newspapers, radio stations, community-based organizations, religious institutions, and other community resources.

### **Meeting Accessibility**

- Choose a meeting time and location that work for diverse stakeholders
- Provide childcare and food
- Provide language translation
- Provide wheelchair and public transportation accessible location and/or free or reduced-cost parking

### **Materials**

- Distribute materials to be reviewed or discussed in advance, if possible
- Provide materials understandable by lay audience in the languages of the stakeholders
- Use accessible media to communicate information (e.g. maps with known landmarks)

### **Meeting Process**

- Provide for introductions of participants and the organizations they represent
- Discuss ground rules about how the meeting will be conducted
- Explain the meeting's goals and outcomes
- Identify decisions that may be made at the meeting or may be influenced by the outcomes of the meeting
- Identify the meeting's moderator or facilitator.
- Provide some time for everyone who wants to speak to speak
- Actively solicit input from those not speaking and particularly from non-English speakers.
- Explain of how the convener will respond to issues raised
- Provide publicly available notes taken on the meeting

### **Provide a timeline for future actions**

**Exercise 1: Talking about Health and Place**

**Objective:** To define health for this community, unearth the root causes of health, and name the impacts of development.. *The participants should agree among themselves what a healthy community would look like and how a development project could advance or denigrate health in a neighborhood.*

**What you'll need:** Butcher block paper with a picture of a tree on it, three pieces of butcher block paper with the questions written on them, markers in different colors, large sticky notes that people can paste (or, more creatively, paper cut out in the shape of leaves, tape).

**Conduct the exercise:** The exercise revolves around the three questions on the left side of the chart below. The facilitator hands out the sticky notes/leaves and markers, and encourages people to continue adding their ideas. Explain that there are no wrong answers; this session is about brainstorming all the potential ways we look at health and impacts.

However, there may be some disagreements. The facilitator should make sure people feel free to put up all ideas, even if they oppose others' ideas.

Group Question	Visualization
<p><b>How does your community define health?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What do we mean by healthy people?</li> <li>➤ Healthy families and children?</li> <li>➤ A healthy community or City?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Write or paste ideas or concepts used to define health at the branches of a tree</i></p>
<p><b>What does it take to create a healthy community?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What does a healthy place look like?</li> <li>➤ What is the role of government in a health place?</li> <li>➤ What do people have to do to create a healthy place?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Write or paste ideas or concepts at the roots of the tree</i></p>
<p><b>What is the role of development in creating a healthy place?</b></p>	<p><i>Write or paste the impacts of development on the concepts either at the branches or the roots</i></p>

**Exercise 2: Mapping area health resources and health hazards**

**Objective:** To define the area affected by the development project and create a map of the geography of existing health assets and liabilities in the area.

**What you'll need:** A large map of the area, preferably in black and white so that participants can create symbols in color; markers in black, green, yellow, red, and purple; butcher block paper with the facilitation questions on it; tape.

**Conduct the exercise:** The exercise revolves around the questions on the left of the chart below. The facilitator leads the discussion about symbols and gets direction from the group about where each resource and hazard is, and what color they should be circled in.

Facilitation Question	Facilitation Exercise
<b>1. Where is the area affected by proposed development</b>	<i>Draw a box around the area affected by proposed development</i>
<b>2. Where are the important community health resources within a mile of the proposed development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Schools</li> <li>➤ Parks</li> <li>➤ Business Districts</li> <li>➤ Transit</li> <li>➤ Supermarkets</li> <li>➤ Community Centers</li> <li>➤ Cultural facilities</li> <li>➤ Hospitals</li> <li>➤ Other?</li> </ul>	<i>Identify each resource with a symbol; create a legend for the map.</i>
<b>3. Do these resources provide high quality services or resources? Are they safe and accessible?</b>	<i>Circle high quality <b>and</b> accessible resources in green; high quality <b>or</b> accessible resources in yellow; and neither high quality <b>nor</b> accessible resources in red. Note barriers or obstacles that account for inaccessibility or poor quality.</i>
<b>4. Are there any hazards that might make development not healthy?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sources of air pollution?</li> <li>➤ Sources of noise?</li> <li>➤ Traffic safety hazards?</li> <li>➤ Areas with frequent violent incidents?</li> </ul>	<i>Identify each hazard with a symbol; create a legend for the map. Circle the hazards with purple.</i>

**Exercise 3: Health Resource Needs/Constraints in Development Planning**

**Objective:** To find out what this group thinks the neighborhood does not currently have but needs for good health, what the environmental constraints are for fulfilling those needs, and potential goals for land use development that might address the different needs.

**What you'll need:** Butcher block paper with the chart below on it; markers, tape.

**Conduct the exercise:** With the chart included on the next page outlined on the wall, the facilitator should lead a discussion about each Community Health Resource, whether or not this community is concerned about it and why, and what the participants would envision their goal for their neighborhood would be. If people come up with more elements, there is space for "other", and use another butcher block if necessary.

Community Health Resources	Community Issue or Concern (Yes / No; Explanation)	Goal for Development
Places that provide good jobs		
Quality, affordable, housing		
Convenient Public Transportation		
Safe routes for walking and biking		
Quality affordable food resources		
Quality public schools		
Quality, affordable Childcare		
Places for adult education and training opportunities		
Quality, safe parks		
Places for the community for gatherings and activities		

<b>Community Health Resources</b>	<b>Community Issue or Concern (Yes / No; Explanation)</b>	<b>Goal for Development</b>
<b>Organizations that serve the community</b>		
<b>Local retail</b>		
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Community Health Constraints</b>		
<b>Places where air quality is poor or a concern</b>		
<b>Places where land or water is contaminated</b>		
<b>Sources of community noise</b>		
<b>Places where crime or violence is a concern</b>		
<b>Places where traffic collisions happen</b>		
<b>Other</b>		

Community stakeholders have now had the opportunity to present their ideas about health assets and health hazards; to map those features of their environment; and to envision how health needs and constraints can be considered in land use planning.

The HIA professional will compile this qualitative data into three lists/reports:

- 1. A list or report of findings from community dialogue regarding how development can and should impact health.**
- 2. A list of requests for information**
  - a. Existing information: developer reports (Existing Conditions report, any analyses or data collection that has already taken place), Public Health Department analyses or reports (such as pedestrian injury analysis, health disparity reports, disease prevalence reports, etc), traffic and MVA data (from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, CalTrans, BART), air quality data (from California Air Resources Board).
  - b. List of data needs for area health profile and how that data can be obtained
  - c. For further analyses: Recommendations to request appropriate analyses of specific health impacts of the project from the developer, approving public agency, or other responsible party or agency

Collectively, the above knowledge needs can provide the basic information for a future Health Impact Assessment.
- 3. Identification of mitigations or design strategies and research needs.**

This will set up the work plan for next stage – this list is similar to Scoping (in Section 4 – HIA) but more general.

## Creating an Action Plan

As a result of the HOA process, the community now has some next steps. The final phase of the HOA is for the community, in conjunction with HIA professionals, to create an Action Plan. This can be done as part of a meeting where the results from the exercises are being given back to the community, at a separate meeting, or in some other format.

The Health Opportunity Action Plan should include:

- An overarching mission/goal
- The decision-makers targeted
- Dates by which research must be completed
- Timelines for development deadlines (such as a Draft Environmental Impact Report or community meetings)
- Individuals responsible for the work

Potential actions the community can take leading out of HOA process include:

1. Demanding a deeper background analysis by the developer addressing health impacts.
2. Demanding health specification workshops.
3. Demanding a health element to the development project plan.
4. Monitoring developer/agency response.
5. Deciding which questions & data should be included as part of a City Area Planning work plan.