

# Health Impact Assessment

An emerging tool for integrating public health considerations into land use planning decisions

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Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

*- World Health Organization*

## Health Impact Assessment

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.

International Association for Impact Assessment, 2006

# HIA Addresses Determinants of Health



*How does the proposed project, plan, policy*

*affect*

- 
- The diagram consists of three main elements arranged horizontally. On the left, the text 'How does the proposed project, plan, policy' is positioned above a green curved arrow that points to the right. This arrow points towards a large, empty green rectangular box. To the right of this box is a vertical list of 14 determinants of health. To the right of this list is another large, empty green rectangular box. A second green curved arrow points from the right side of this second box down and to the right, towards the text 'and lead to health outcomes'.
- Housing
  - Air quality
  - Noise
  - Safety
  - Social networks
  - Nutrition
  - Parks and natural space
  - Private goods and services
  - Public services
  - Transportation
  - Livelihood
  - Water quality
  - Education
  - Inequities

*and lead to health outcomes*

## Through HIA report and communications

Judge health effects of a proposed project, plan or policy

Highlight health disparities

Provide recommendations

Shape public decisions & discourse

Make health impacts more explicit



## Through the HIA process

Engage & empower community

Recognize lived experience

Build relationships & collaborations

Build consensus

# Steps of a HIA



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

# Examples of HIA Projects



## Comprehensive / Specific / Transit-Oriented Development Plans

Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project

Pittsburg Avenue Railroad Specific Plan

An Existing Conditions Report of the East Palo Alto Ravenswood Business District Planning

Humboldt County General Plan Update

## Housing Projects

Jack London Gateway development

South Los Angeles housing redevelopment

San Francisco public housing redevelopment

## State / Local Policies

I-710 expansion in California

Vehicle miles traveled legislation in Oregon

Paid sick days legislation in California, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire

Benton County Accessory Dwelling Unit Policy

## Proposal

Update Humboldt County's General Plan, including development scenarios to accommodate future growth in the county



## Collaborators

Board of Supervisors  
Public Health Branch  
County Planning Department  
The California Endowment  
Human Impact Partners  
HumPAL (community organization)



## Alternative A

“Focused growth”

All new units built in areas with existing infrastructure  
6,000 units over 25 years

## Alternative B

Build primarily in areas with existing infrastructure  
Some expansion to areas outside city centers  
12,000 units (6,000 urban/6,000 non-urban)

## Alternative C

Requires expansion of infrastructure  
Allows new housing in outlying areas  
18,000 units (6,000 urban/12,000 non-urban)

# Humboldt Screening

- Clearly defined decision to be made
- Decision will impact health
- Public health involvement invited
- Resources available
- Variety of stakeholders interested



## Process

Led by Public Health, HumPAL, and HIP

Conducted three focus groups with ~50 participants

35 community health indicators used  
to assess 3 alternatives

Healthy housing

Safe and sustainable transportation

Environmental stewardship

Public infrastructure

Public safety/Social cohesion

Healthy economy



## Existing Conditions

In Humboldt County, VMT = 27 miles/person/day (2006)  
California VMT = 24 miles/person/day

## VMT affects health

Collisions, walking/biking, proximity to goods and services, social cohesion, global warming

## Disparities

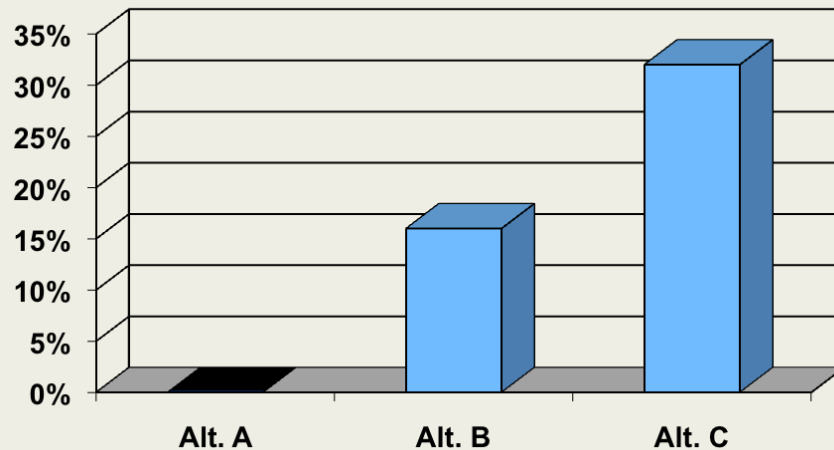
Seniors may be unable/unwilling to drive  
Low-income people may not have access to cars or may need to spend large percent of income on driving

VMT: Average vehicle miles traveled per person per day

## Alternative A (baseline)

Reduced individual travel expenses and time

Increased transit, walking, and biking



## Alternative B

200 million more miles driven in the county annually

## Alternative C

400 million miles more

## Alternative A

Most positive health impacts overall and requires fewest health-related mitigations

## Alternative B

Changes current health outcomes least

## Alternative C

Most negative health impacts overall and requires greatest number of health-related mitigations

## Examples of Transportation-related Recommendations

Encourage employer-based incentives for transit

Increase public education about public transit

Raise priority of non-motorized modes of transport

Collect data about pedestrian and bicycle use

Establish pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools

No decision yet on General Plan Update

Recommendations included in Circulation and Housing Elements

HIA included as appendix to EIS

Built collaboration between planning & public health agencies

Built awareness about health and land use among elected officials, general public, planners, community groups

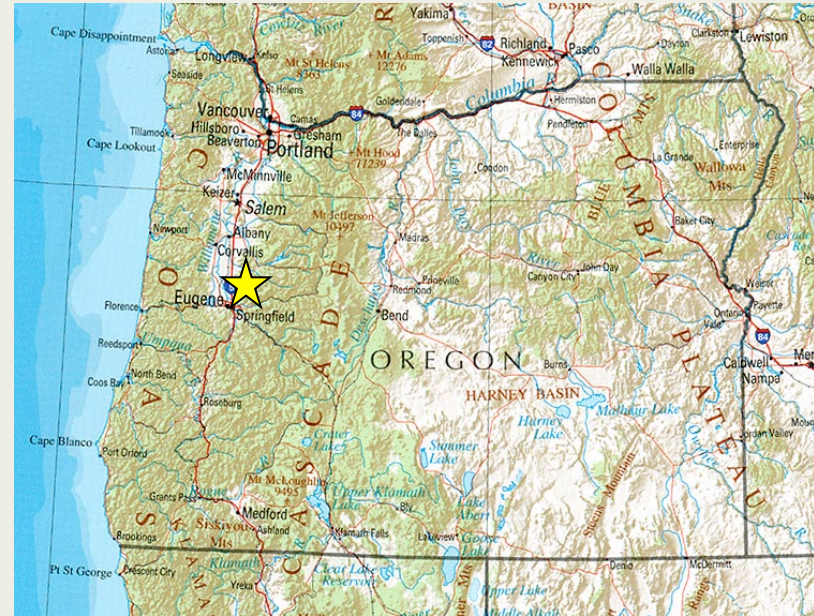
Other counties interested in using the approach

Proposed Humboldt Port expansion project will include an HIA



# HIA of ADU Policy in Benton County, OR

Accessory Dwelling Unit  
on property detached living  
quarters “granny flat” or  
“studio unit”



Benton County code does not currently allow ADU's  
County Comprehensive Plan includes goal to develop  
standards for ADU's.  
Have the potential to promote health, especially  
for persons with medical hardships

HIA completed collaboratively by County Planning and Health Departments to identify possible health impacts of ADUs and to assess potential policy options

## potential policy options

- 1) no policy change
- 2) restriction of current rules;
- 3) allow dependent accessory dwelling units
- 4) allow independent accessory dwelling units
- 5) allow independent accessory dwelling units in urban growth boundary areas only

## 18 indicators of health assessed for each policy proposal

### Positive impacts:

living spaces for ill, disabled, or aging persons near family members or caregivers

affordable housing for low and moderate income persons and small households

living situations for “family-based” or multi-generational housing

additional income for homeowners

### Negative impacts:

development of units in locations far from basic amenities and services

development of units in places without appropriate public transportation

development in rural areas where auto-dependence is necessary and pedestrian and bicycle activity is limited

# Summary of Policy Impacts

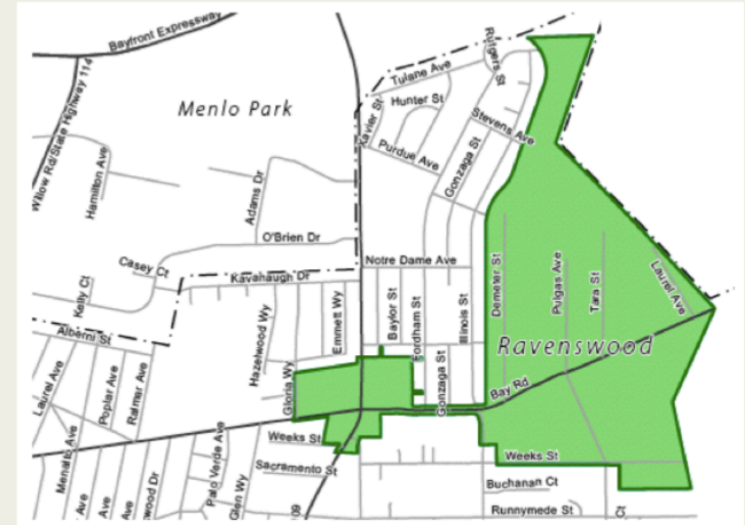


Option 1 (no policy change)	No effect
Option 2 (restriction of current rules)	Positive impact
<b>Option 3 (dependent ADUs)</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>
Option 4 (independent ADUs)	Negative impact
Option 5 (independent ADUs in UGB zones)	Negative impact

## Mitigations:

- 1) Residents of ADUs must be the homeowner, relative or caretaker of the homeowner
- 2) Units cannot be offered as a rental
- 3) The policy will be reviewed for unexpected impacts several years after adoption
- 4) A “cap” of units permitted annually will be established and can be modified after the initial policy review.

1/4 of the land acreage in EPA  
Traditionally industrial area  
Some environmental quality  
concerns  
Last undeveloped land in EPA



East Palo Alto is a “community of concern”

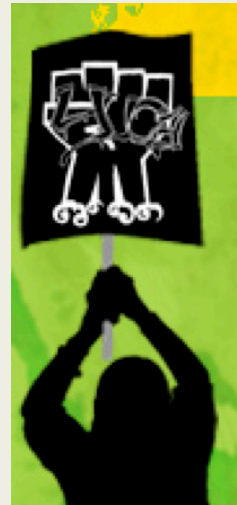
30% or more of households earn below 200% of  
poverty level

70% or more of persons in households are people of  
color

# Partners and Collaborators



San Mateo County  
Health System



YUCA (Youth United for  
Community Action)

Funded by



# Screening

Development decisions will impact health and health disparities

Mayor of EPA committed to including health in decision-making

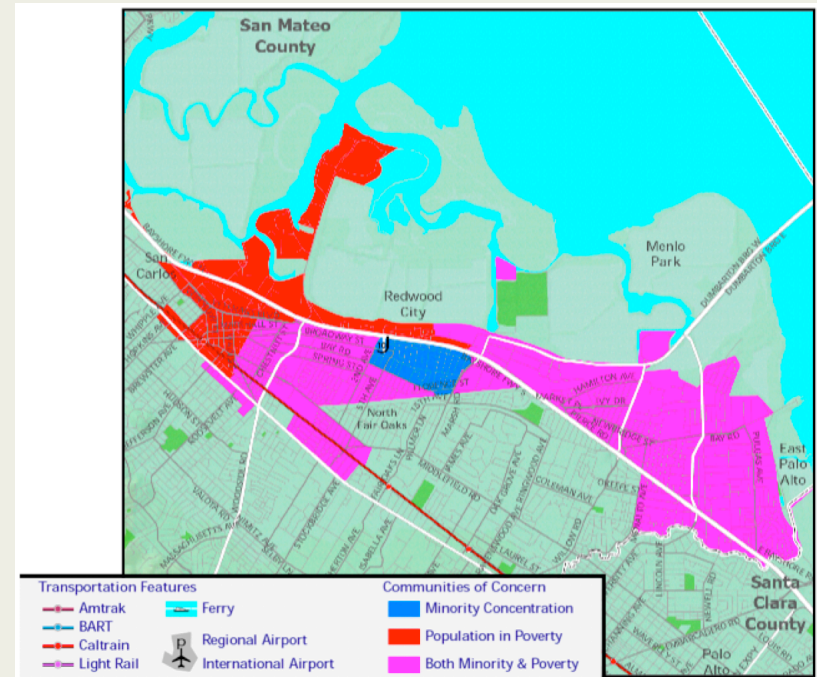
Public health invited to participate

Resources available

Variety of stakeholders interested

Area Plan in development;

City seeking input





## Process

Series of meetings with coalition of community participants

6 chapters to address impact of RBD plans on:

Jobs and livelihood

Safe and sustainable transportation

Neighborhood completeness

Environmental quality

Healthy housing

Social cohesion





## Existing Conditions

89.9% of intersections = poor or unsuitable

11.2% of street segments = poor or unsuitable

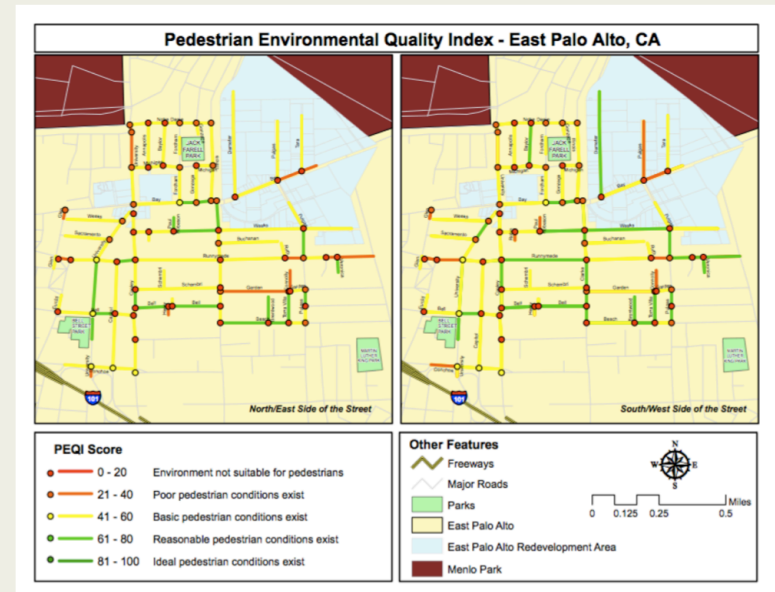
## Pedestrian quality affects health

Collisions, walking/biking, proximity to goods and services, social cohesion

## Disparities

Low-income people may not have access to cars; need to walk more

Upkeep is not as good in lower-income neighborhoods of EPA



## Existing Conditions

Of 149 land parcels in redevelopment area, approximately 50 are zoned for industrial use, and 60% of industrial parcels have some level of hazardous waste contamination

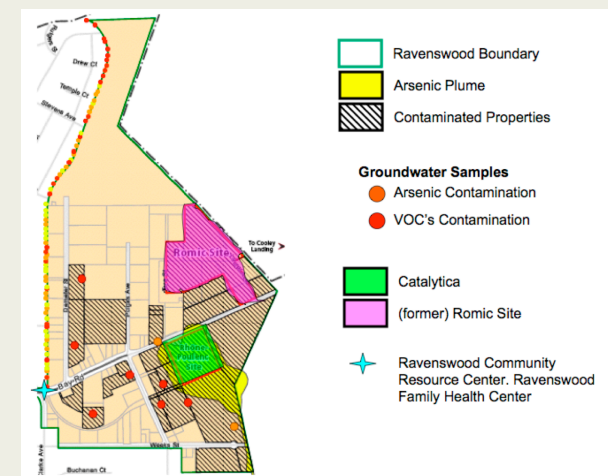
Current water and sewer infrastructure is inadequate and in need of improvement

There is little air quality monitoring data at the local level in EPA

## Environmental quality and health

Living near contaminated land can pose serious threats to health, especially for vulnerable populations

Exposure to environmental hazards is a major concern for residents in EPA



Implement pedestrian improvements equally in all neighborhoods

Traffic calming in most dangerous intersections

Clean-up and remediation of contaminants necessary for RBD to be available for uses that meet interests and needs of the community

Consider the development of a “downtown”, pedestrian friendly area with retail in the RBD

New transportation developments associated with the RBD should help residents get to needed retail and services

150 page report

Introduction

6 detailed analysis reports

Reviewed by community partners, San Mateo County  
Health Systems before release

Shared with other local organizations and  
Redevelopment Agency