Community Impact Assessment

Creating a Health Conscious Transportation System
Community Impact Assessment

What is it?

A process to evaluate the effects of a transportation project on a community and its quality of life

Community issues are:

• Documented (notable features and characteristics, local plans)
• Assessed (impacts)
• Addressed (avoid, minimize, mitigate)
Community Impact Assessment

Why do it?

Bring attention to impacts on people
Alert communities to project benefits & consequences

Ensure that community values and concerns are considered:

- Quality of life
- Coordination
- **Context Sensitive Solutions**
- Active transport modes
- Responsive decision-making
- Non-discrimination
- **Complete Streets**
- Environmental Justice
CIA and Context Sensitive Solutions

“CSS involves all stakeholders, including community members, elected officials, interest groups, and affected local, state, and federal agencies. It puts project needs and both agency and community values on a level playing field and considers all trade-offs in decision making.”

Contextsenstivesolutions.org
CIA and Context Sensitive Solutions

Key Action Principles for Active Transportation

• Address alternatives and all modes.
• Consider a safe facility for users and community.
• Address community and social issues
CIA and Complete Streets

NCDOT adopted a “Complete Streets” policy in 2009. The policy directs the Department to consider and incorporate several modes of transportation when building new projects or making improvements to existing infrastructure. The benefits of this new approach include:

- Making it easier for travelers to get where they need to go;
- Encouraging the use of alternative forms of transportation;
- Building more sustainable communities;
- Increasing connectivity between neighborhoods, streets, and transit systems;
- Improving safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

www.completestreetsnc.org
CIA and Complete Streets
CIA and Active Transportation

Is this Active Transportation? or this?
CIA and Active Transportation

Active Transportation = Human-powered Transport

“We envision a state where anyone can choose to bicycle, skate, run, and walk as normal, practical, healthy, safe and active transportation.”

Ncactive.org
CIA and Active Transportation

ADA, Bicycle & Pedestrian Presence and Accommodations
CIA and Active Transportation

Barrier effects
Local plan consistency
- Proximity
- Connectivity & Cohesion

Distance, traffic and uncomfortable conditions are all barriers
CIA and Environmental Justice

What is Environmental Justice?

- Making sure benefits and burdens of transportation are as equitable as possible
- Engaging historically underserved low-income and minority communities in transportation decision-making
- Seeking to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations
CIA and Environmental Justice

“Low-income people often confront difficult social and environmental barriers to physical activity and have less means to overcome them than other income groups. Some of the most common barriers include:

- long distances to important daily destinations,
- lack of meaningful transportation choice,
- unsafe neighborhood and traffic conditions,
- poor access to parks and recreational facilities . . .

While many of these barriers also exist for other income groups, they often exist to a greater degree in low-income communities.”

Active Living by Design

“Low Income Populations and Physical Activity”
CIA and Aging
CIA and Local Plans

A key role of the CIA is to document local land use, development and transportation plans and policies, and to assess a project’s consistency with them.

Many transportation plans simply adopt a project by description – “widen to multi-lanes from here to there”.

Future land use plans may only designate an area for “future growth” or as a “development node”.

*It’s easy for almost any project to be “consistent” with vague plans*
## CIA and Local Plans

### Differing Visions of the same road project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the community wants</th>
<th>What engineering wants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Accessibility (of destinations)</td>
<td>- Mobility (of vehicles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Driveways</td>
<td>- Medians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Greater connectivity</td>
<td>- Fewer intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frequent crosswalks</td>
<td>- Minimal conflict points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Street trees</td>
<td>- Safety clear zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Signals</td>
<td>- Smooth traffic flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Slower speeds</td>
<td>- Less congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Landscaping</td>
<td>- Reduced maintenance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CIA and Local Plans

What does your community want to be when it grows up?

- Walkable?
- Bikable?
- Safe?
- Convenient?
- Child-friendly?
- Elder-supportive?
- Healthy?
CIA and Local Plans

What does your community want to be when it grows up?

The more we understand local goals, the better we can balance transportation needs with community values.
CIA and Comprehensive Transportation Plans

Community Studies and the Transportation Planning Branch are working to initiate the “CIA in the CTP” process

Products:
- Community Understanding Report
- Public Involvement Plan
- Identify CTP stakeholders, including EJ communities
- Develop GIS data layers for human environment features
- Measure results for community issues in the CTP
- Develop Community Vision
CIA and Comprehensive Transportation Plans

Community Vision
Provides overview of communities in study area
- Population trends and projection
- Population diversity, EJ and Traditionally Underserved Populations
- Community Character
- Schools/parks
- Public safety/emergency response
- Centers of community
- Community events and special event venues
- Economic conditions/jobs
- Development goals (new growth)
- Farming operations
- Natural resources
- Transportation choices

Takeaway Points
- Public involvement is vital to the CTP and the CIA process and beyond
- Participate in long range planning meetings in your community
- Attend Public Meetings and Public Hearings for projects in your area
- Make active transportation an important element of community life
- Focus decision-makers on the health effects of plans, policies and projects being considered
Active Transportation or Else

The Economist

The shape of things to come