

## Health Impact Assessment - Housing Scenario



BEFORE



AFTER  
Proposed Mixed-Use High-Rise Towers

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As a metropolitan area, Wonderland California contends with various priorities when making decisions about economic and land use development. Ideally, City decisions will be able to adequately balance the social, economic and environmental interests of all of its residents. However, despite the complementary goals of urban planning and public health, oftentimes health considerations are typically left off of the radar.

The following scenario depicts an event where the long-term goals and objectives of urban developers are not in agreement with those of the Health Department, (due to potential health implications). Please use the following information as a reference when answering the corresponding HIA worksheet.

### **SCENARIO A \***

#### *Background*

Recently, developers have asked the Wonderland Planning Division to approve of a rezoning measure that will allow them to build four mixed-use high-rise towers that include over 1,600 residential units. From their perspective, the development would be beneficial in that it will allow the city to meet housing demands as well as its “smart growth” objectives.

While the Health Department supports the project and its objective to increase residential density in the downtown business district; it is concerned that approximately 93% of area households would be unable to afford to live in the new development. Also, despite the law requiring 12% of developed units to be affordable, some developers do not want to integrate the affordable units into the new project. Instead they propose building the affordable units in a lower-income neighborhood to the west.

#### *Health Considerations*

One of the Healthy People 2010 Objectives is to reduce the proportion of substandard occupied housing units, particularly because these residents are at increased risk for fire, electrical injuries, lead poisoning, falls, rat bites, asthma, and the like.

California ranks first out of the 50 states as the most unaffordable for renter households; a renter household needs an annual income of \$49,080 for a one-bedroom rental unit and \$61,440 for a two-bedroom rental unit at the Fair Market Rent to be affordable. Research shows that excessive rent or housing costs contribute to hunger, mental stress, harsh parenting, and overcrowding.

Finally, it has also been shown that gentrification is associated with involuntary displacement which can cause or contribute to mental stress, loss of supportive social networks, homelessness, and costly school and job relocations. It also increases the risk for substandard housing and overcrowding. In turn, adverse overcrowding has been shown to contribute to mortality rates, infectious disease risk, childhood development and stress. Moreover, low-income workers spend an average of two hours round-trip commuting for a living wage. Gentrification could potentially increase commute times, thereby adding to the associated adverse health effects.

*\*Adapted from San Francisco Dept of Public Health- Eastern Neighborhoods HIA.*

## Health Impact Assessment- Exercise #1 Screening

After reading the Housing Scenario, use the HIA Screening/Scoping checklist below to assess whether an in-depth impact assessment is: 1) feasible and likely to yield useful information; 2) not necessary, but rather recommendations on how to address negative health impacts would suffice; or 3) it is impossible to determine between 1 and 2 due to the inability to obtain sufficient information. Keep the following in mind when reaching a decision:

1. Proposed policy
2. Population affected
3. Immediate, intended effects
4. Health-related and secondary side effects
5. Pathways through which the proposed policy or program is expected to affect health outcomes and intermediate outcomes (i.e., determinates of health)

**UCLA HIA Screening/Scoping Checklist Adapted for the Housing Scenario (see complete checklist in Appendix 3)**

<b>UCLA HIA Screening Checklist of Health Determinants Related to Housing</b>	<b>Potentially <i>significant</i> impact</b>					
	What is the <b>likelihood</b> of impact?			What is the likely <b>magnitude</b> of impact?		
	1 no/unlikely			1 low		
	2 possible			2 medium		
	3 likely			3 high		
<b>Biophysical Environment</b>						
Housing conditions						
Fire, building safety	1	2	3	1	2	3
Security	1	2	3	1	2	3
Sanitation	1	2	3	1	2	3
Indoor air quality (including radon)	1	2	3	1	2	3
Asbestos	1	2	3	1	2	3
Lead	1	2	3	1	2	3
Crowding	1	2	3	1	2	3
Affordability and access	1	2	3	1	2	3
Housing segregation	1	2	3	1	2	3
Water quality						
Drinking water quality	1	2	3	1	2	3
Water quality – waterways and recreational	1	2	3	1	2	3
Water availability/Access	1	2	3	1	2	3
Outdoor air quality (including odors)						
Toxins, carcinogens	1	2	3	1	2	3
Allergens, irritants (e.g. particulates, asthma triggers)	1	2	3	1	2	3
Nuisance odors	1	2	3	1	2	3
Noise	1	2	3	1	2	3
Solid waste (production, disposal and recycling)	1	2	3	1	2	3
Food Supply						

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	What is the likelihood of impact?			What is the likely magnitude of impact?		
	1 no/unlikely			1 low		
	2 possible			2 medium		
	3 likely			3 high		
Food security and access	1	2	3	1	2	3
Food purity and contamination	1	2	3	1	2	3
Nutritional quality, wholesomeness	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>Social and Economic Environment</b>						
Employment and household economic resources						
Job stability	1	2	3	1	2	3
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	1	2	3
Income	1	2	3	1	2	3
Cost-of-living	1	2	3	1	2	3
Access to financial services	1	2	3	1	2	3
Wage and other economic disparities	1	2	3	1	2	3
Violence						
Street violence	1	2	3	1	2	3
Family and relationship violence	1	2	3	1	2	3

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	What is the likelihood of impact? 1 no/unlikely 2 possible 3 likely			What is the likely magnitude of impact? 1 low 2 medium 3 high		
<b>Health-Related Behaviors and Lifestyles</b>						
Diet	1	2	3	1	2	3
Physical activity	1	2	3	1	2	3
Recreation	1	2	3	1	2	3
Means of transport	1	2	3	1	2	3
Substance abuse						
Tobacco use	1	2	3	1	2	3
Alcohol use	1	2	3	1	2	3
Prescription drug abuse	1	2	3	1	2	3
Illicit drug use	1	2	3	1	2	3
Sexual behavior	1	2	3	1	2	3
Motor vehicle use and practices	1	2	3	1	2	3
Firearm ownership	1	2	3	1	2	3
Oral health practices	1	2	3	1	2	3
Mental health practices	1	2	3	1	2	3
Health care seeking attitudes and practices	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>Other Public Services</b>						
Education - Quality and access						
Early childhood development programs	1	2	3	1	2	3
K-12 school programs	1	2	3	1	2	3
College and technical education	1	2	3	1	2	3
Site safety and health conditions	1	2	3	1	2	3
Childcare	1	2	3	1	2	3
Housing services	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>Other Social Services</b>						
Transport						
Roadway infrastructure: capacity, maint., safety	1	2	3	1	2	3
Mass transit: availability, accessibility, safety	1	2	3	1	2	3
Bicycle traffic routes: availability, access, safety	1	2	3	1	2	3
Pedestrian (e.g. sidewalk maintenance and design)	1	2	3	1	2	3
Motor vehicle use reduction support	1	2	3	1	2	3
Public safety (non-medical)						
Police	1	2	3	1	2	3
Fire	1	2	3	1	2	3
Emergency response preparedness	1	2	3	1	2	3
Voluntary services	1	2	3	1	2	3