

# Impact and success of HIAs

## Highlights from a nationwide evaluation

Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



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# Evaluation questions

What outcomes and benefits do HIAs achieve?



What are common elements that increase the likelihood of success in HIA?



What opportunities are there to improve the field of HIA?



# Data collection methods



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## Literature review

- Trajectory of HIA
- HIA success factors & best practices
- Evaluation of HIAs

## In depth study

- 23 HIAs across U.S.
- Spring 2012-Spring 2013
- 100+ interviews

## Web Survey

- Practitioner focus
- 173 respondents
- Spring 2013

# 23 In depth U.S. case studies



23 HIAs in 15 states



Sector:



163 people interviewed



# Did HIA influence decision making?

DECISION  
MAKERS

HIA do shape decision making

HIA are seen as valuable

“ This (HIA) research presented to us a very serious problem (health issues) that we were aware of but it brought light to it and it helped create action”

*Decision Maker*

# Did HIA influence decision making?



**GAINING  
TRACTION**

**Contributed to modifying the decision target**

**7/23 direct effect**

**10/23 partial effect**

**Beyond the intended decision target**

- **New health elements included in a county comprehensive plan**
- **Public health needs assessment process aligned with HIA findings**
- **New method created to prioritize public works projects; assigns weights for health and equity**

## Other important HIA Outcomes



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**Broader perception of health  
for decision makers and stakeholders**

“It connected for people that housing could influence health, and it provided concrete evidence around it, particularly focusing on the vulnerable population of children”

**Facilitated conversations and built  
consensus**

## Other important HIA Outcomes



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Increased or intensified relationships

Community members had a stronger voice

“It was empowering regular folk who don’t know the labels and process ... Empowered is an over-used word but that’s what I saw this process do. Simple grassroots people express themselves individually and collectively and have a voice in a democratic process.” *Community Member*



## Longer term outcomes

- Road standards changed to accommodate bicycles
- Greenspace built as the first step in a major dev. project
- Federal agency committed to using public health section from HIA in future EIS
- Substantial \$ secured for brownfield cleanup and walking trail
- Food environment improvements initiated in other jurisdictions

## Factors to increase success & utility



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“Three things an HIA team needs: someone who coordinates facilitation, someone to coordinate the data (ideally with HIA expertise), and a content specialist – in your team not only in your committees.” *HIA team member*

**Credible voice of HIA**

# Factors to increase success & utility



**Actionable recommendations**

**Decision maker engagement**

- Even handed approach
- Engage perceived adversaries
- Tailor communication products

## Dissemination

“I think the info was disseminated to legislature effectively, but there’s no question in a legislative body, at the end of day, person to person interaction is key.” *Decision Maker*



## STRENGTHS

- Sample Size
- Cooperation with HIA sites
- Resources & time
- In person interviews
- Expertise
- Collaboration with other evaluations

## CHALLENGES

- Difficulty in separating impacts of HIA from other influences on decisions
- Timing
- Politically sensitive
- Relationship management
- Amount of data
- Informant burden
- Not necessarily representative of all HIAs

# Main points

**Screen and scope for the right fit**

**Dissemination and decision maker  
engagement are key**

**HIA can offer concrete value**

# Evaluation team



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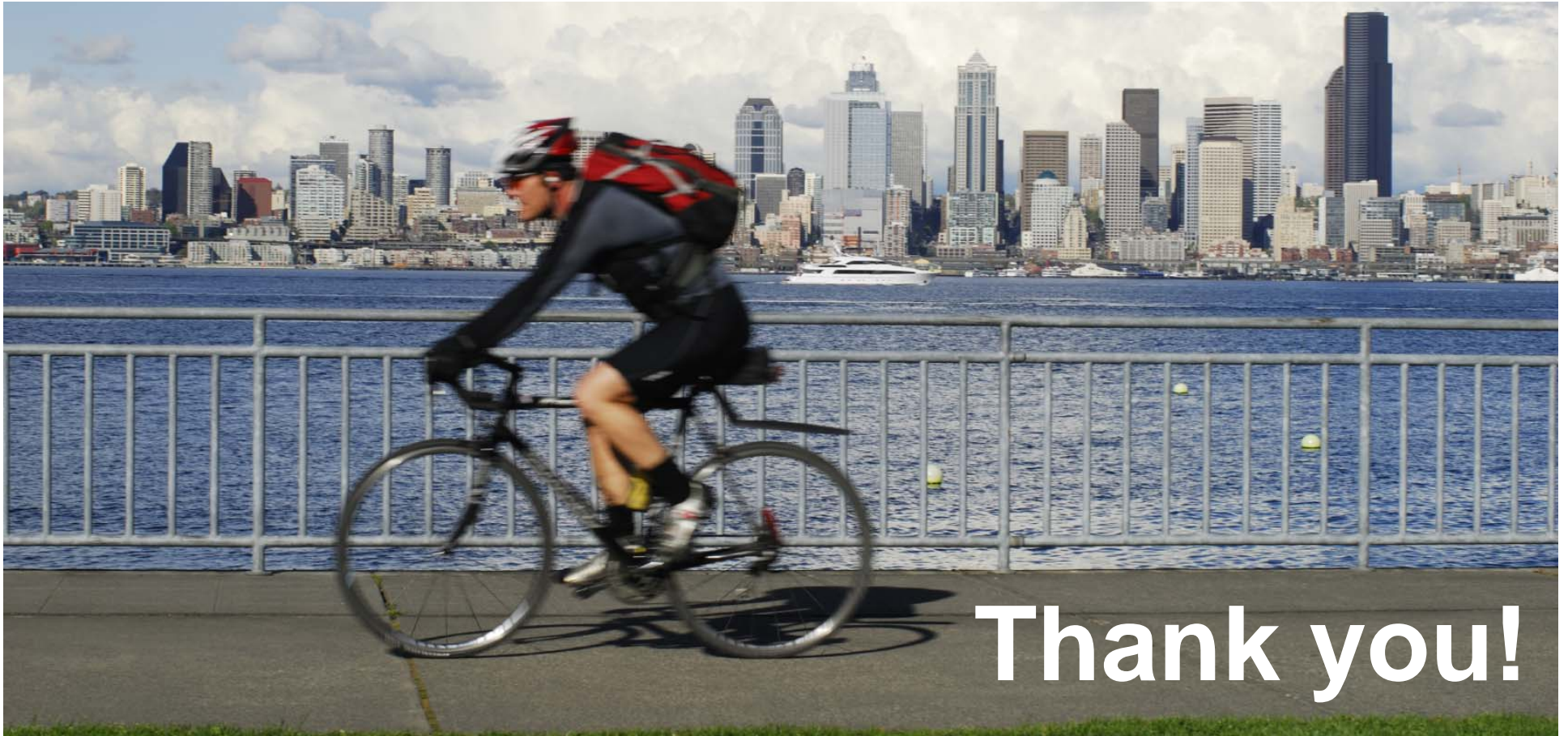
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# Thank you!

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