

A Health Impact Assessment of the I-710 Corridor Project, Los Angeles, CA

Lessons Learned

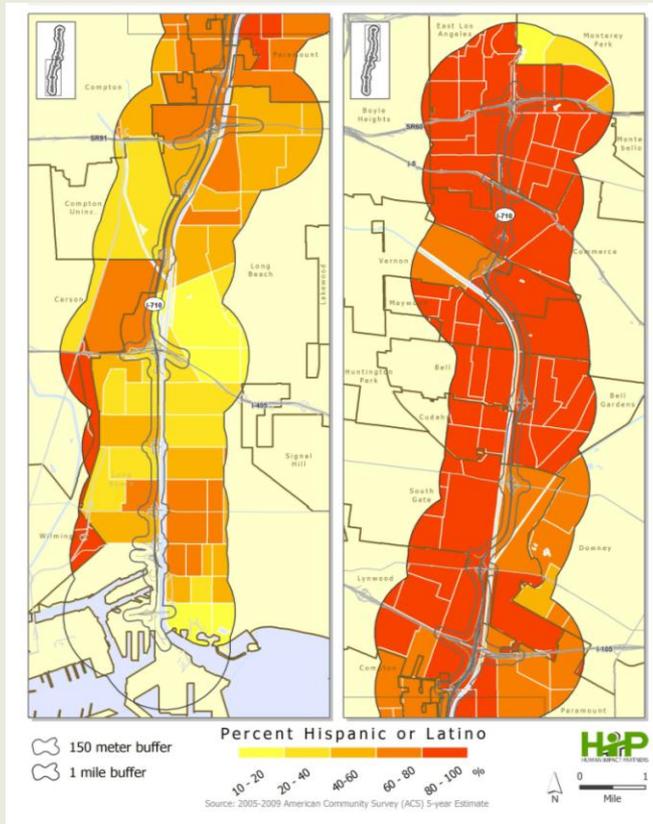
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Vital transportation artery linking the Ports of Southern California region and beyond

Passes through 15 cities and unincorporated areas in LA County



Trucks (from goods movement) compose 25% of traffic on I-710

Freeway is close to housing, schools, day care and senior centers, and hospitals

Communities nearby are majority communities of color and low income

To alleviate traffic congestion, air pollution and safety issues, and to accommodate goods movement from the Ports, an improvement project, including significant widening of the I-710 freeway has been proposed

I-710 Project lead agencies include:

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG)

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

A “Community Participation Framework” was established to include stakeholders in process

CPF committees asked for an HIA to be integrated into the EIR/EIS

No build

10 lanes + other improvements

14 lanes (10 general purpose + 4 dedicated conventional truck lanes) + other improvements

14 lanes (10 general purpose + 4 dedicated zero emission truck lanes) + other improvements

14 lanes + tolling

All alternatives assume:

that the ports will triple their throughput by 2035

the same number of cars and trucks on the road system in 2035

Improve health

Understand impacts on health outcomes (e.g., cardiovascular disease, asthma, premature mortality), not just on the determinants of health (e.g., noise, air quality)

Democracy and transparency

Increase engagement and empowerment of the impacted community

Equity and environmental justice

Improve analysis of how the project will impact populations differently and, specifically, those most vulnerable

Conducting HIA on major transport infrastructure projects and in the context of Environmental Impact Assessment is feasible

I-710 project is one of the biggest projects for which an HIA has been completed in the US

This is a foundational example of conducting HIA within EIA

HIA can foster awareness and inter-disciplinary dialogue on health

Increased awareness about the potential public health implications of transportation infrastructure

Provided opportunity for cross-disciplinary dialogue and relationship building, particularly at Technical Workgroup meetings

When conducted as part of an EIR/EIS, HIA tends to be constrained to the project alternatives and assumptions that are under consideration

As a result of integration with EIR/EIS, constraints were imposed on the HIA regarding alternatives and assumptions; this limited the HIA's value from the community and public health perspective

Likely constraints should be taken into account during Screening

For highly political projects, HIA analysis requires better access to data, methods, and expertise as well as increased resources with which to conduct HIA

Some analyses in HIA were more limited than we would have liked (e.g., traffic safety and neighborhood resources)

This led to unfounded criticism of the HIA as a whole

For project with this level of scrutiny, more resources are needed

Successful HIA requires decision-maker openness and responsiveness to new information

Agency staff were openly skeptical of the HIA process and its findings
Staff challenged many findings of adverse impacts as “not locally relevant” and “counter to my personal experience”

May not be worth expending resources to conduct HIAs on proposals when decision makers and staff are truly closed to findings

When integrated into EIR/EIS, many substantial obstacles may impede HIA’s ability to achieve its aims, though some of these may be particular to transportation projects

Significant value in extending EIA to include health impacts, but it is difficult to convince lead agencies to conduct HIA within EIA

Once decision is made to conduct an HIA as part of an EIA, limitations on HIA include alternatives and assumptions that can be considered as well as transparency allowed

There often remains a need to conduct HIA independent of EIA

Those responsible for conducting an HIA need to be accountable to, and share power with, a representative and supportive oversight body

Oversight of the HIA was separated from committees that requested the HIA

GCCOG/Metro made key decisions regarding timeline, funding, alternatives and assumptions, disregarding input from others

GCCOG/Metro not willing to share power/decision making

GCCOG/Metro staff controlled information flow to elected officials

Some stakeholders had more influence than others

As a result of these oversight issues, many of the benefits of HIA were not realized (e.g., consensus building, buy-in)

Without a commitment to equity and democracy on the part of those controlling the HIA process, and without power in the hands of those who support these values, HIA can become another technocratic tool that supports those in power who are interested in maintaining the status quo.

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Case study and HIA Scope available
at:

<http://www.humanimpact.org/projects>

Thank You!

