

Assessing Health & Equity Impacts of Trails & Greenways

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*“TO MAKE A GREENWAY IS TO
MAKE A COMMUNITY.”*

Charles E. Little, Author of Greenways for America

Trails and Greenways can:

- Create and preserve open spaces
- **Encourage physical fitness & healthy lifestyle**
- **Create opportunities for outdoor recreation & active transportation**
- Create linkages between communities, goods & services, & jobs
- Strengthen local economies
- Protect the environment



The highest standards of health should be within reach of all, without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition



Despite growing awareness that
social factors have powerful impact
on health –

Decisions about policies and
programs that shape these factors are
often made without considering
their potential health consequences.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – Issue Brief, May 2011

Unintended Consequences

Planning, policy and program decisions may have unintended consequences, particularly if a limited set of issues are discussed in the decision-making process



Unintended Adverse Impacts on Health

Highway Policy



Increases in driving and traffic

Lack of physical activity

Air pollution

Traffic injuries

Estimated costs of traffic-related health outcomes in the US could be as great as \$400 billion annually

Education Policy



Has lead to disproportionately poor education among low income and minorities

Impacts opportunities for jobs and income, as well as life expectancy

HIA Purpose

Through HIA report and communications

Judge health effects of a proposed project, plan or policy

Highlight health disparities

Provide recommendations

Raise awareness among decision makers and the public

Make health impacts more explicit

Through the HIA process

Engage & empower community

Recognize lived experience

Build relationships & collaborations

Improve the evidence

Improve transparency in decision making



“Health and Equity in All Policies”

A collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.

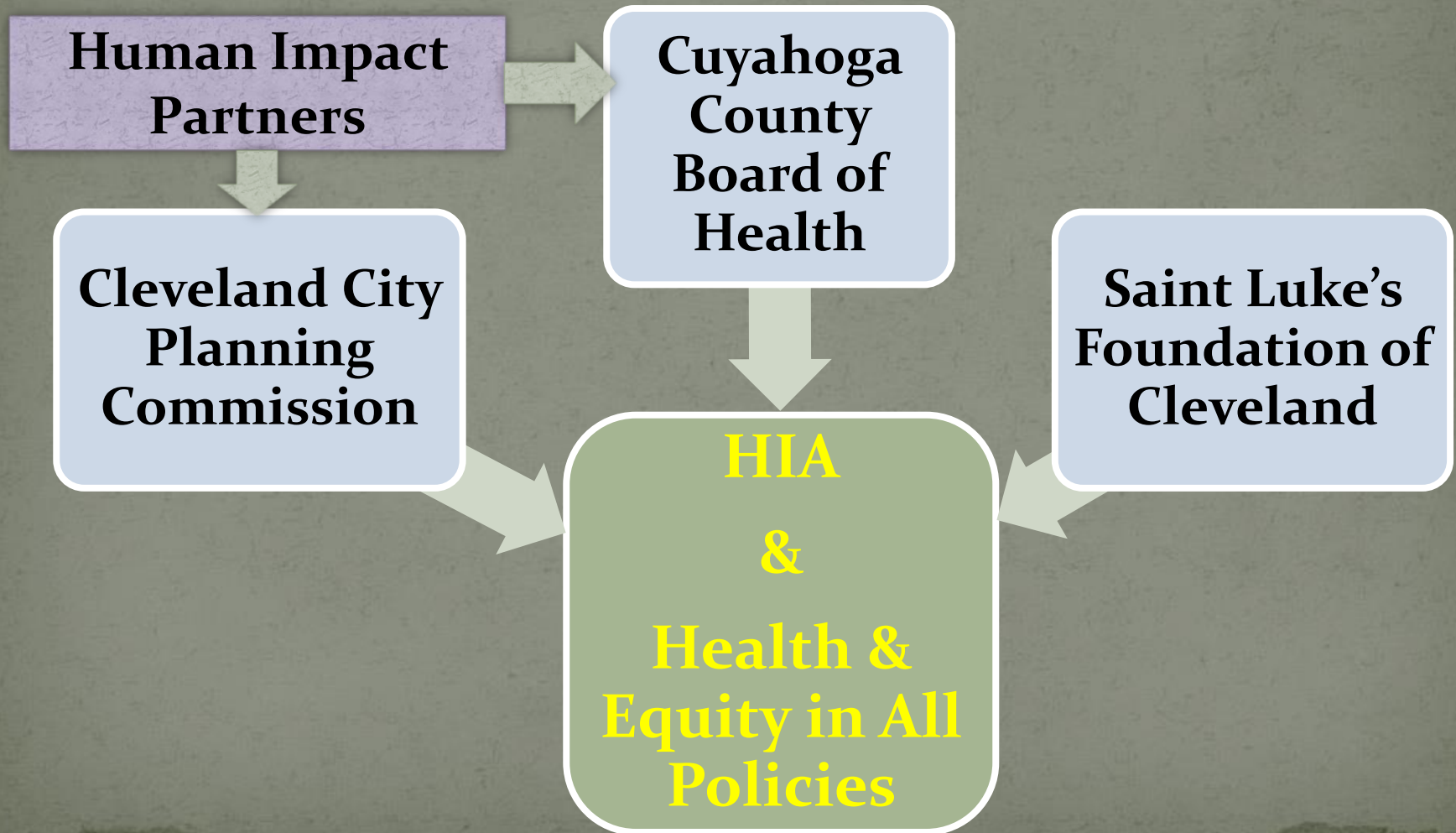
The goal is to ensure that all decision-makers are informed about the HEALTH, EQUITY, and SUSTAINABILITY consequences of various policy options during decision making processes.

The HIA process provides opportunities for communities, especially those that endure health inequities, to ensure that decision-making processes reflect their health concerns and aspirations.



Promoting Equity through the Practice of Health Impact Assessment

Collaborations to Advance HIA Locally



Eastside Greenway Health Impact Assessment - Goals

- Create opportunities for all by influencing plan design, construction and future programming.
- Build capacity for Health Impact Assessment.
- Enhance voice, engagement and empowerment of community residents.
- Influence systems changes that consider health and equity in land use decision making.
- Foster cross municipality collaborations to inform and influence local land use decision making.
- Advance a “Health and Equity in All Policies” approach to decision making.

East Side Greenway – Overarching

Project

Immediate Outcomes

Changes in priority determinants

Long-term
Health outcomes

Eastside
Greenway

Δ Design

Δ
Programming

Δ Trail
Alignments,
Connectivity
& Trailheads

Δ Crime Incidents

Δ Social
Interactions

Δ Transportation

Δ trail usage

Δ perception
of
crime/safety

Δ in
stress

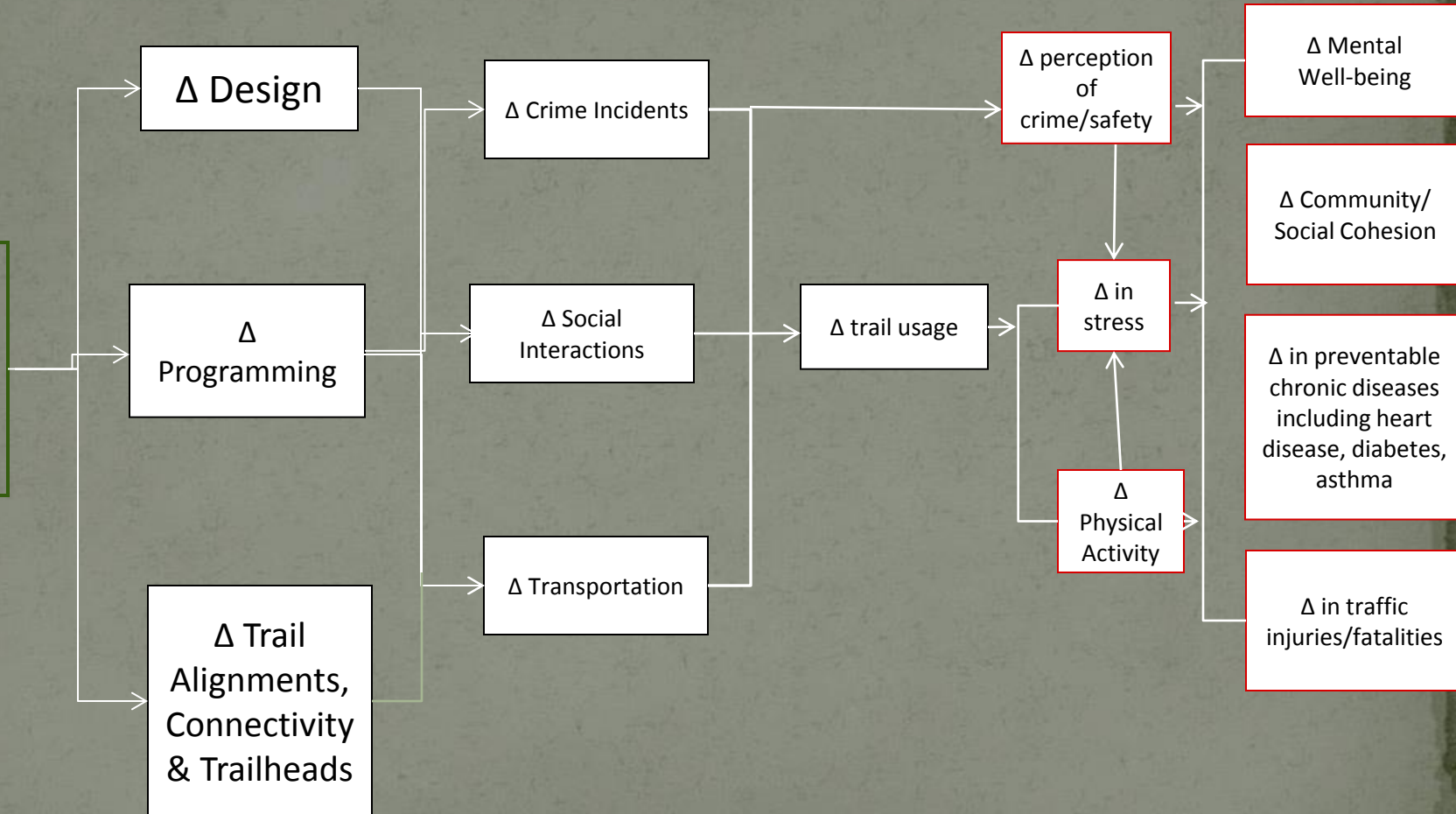
Δ
Physical
Activity

Δ Mental
Well-being

Δ Community/
Social Cohesion

Δ in preventable
chronic diseases
including heart
disease, diabetes,
asthma

Δ in traffic
injuries/fatalities



Cuyahoga County: Life Expectancy (2008-2010) & Eastside Greenway 1/2 Mile Buffer Area



CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH

YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Life Expectancy (in years)

< 72.7

72.8 - 78.6

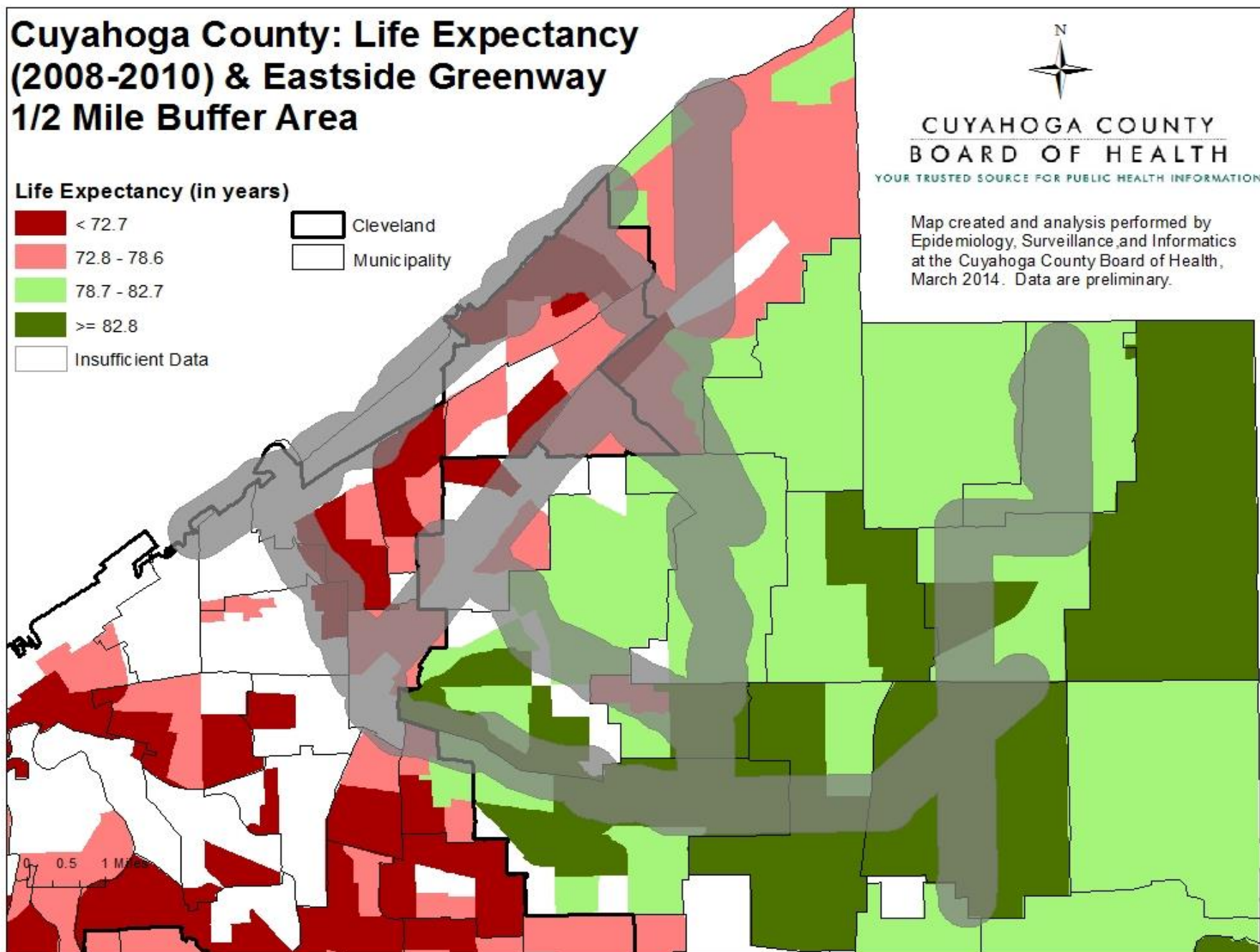
78.7 - 82.7

>= 82.8

Insufficient Data

Cleveland

Municipality



Equity Prediction

Developing a system of connected trails and green spaces through diverse communities will:

- increase access to physical activity, recreation and social connection for over 275,000 people (139,121 African Americans) living within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of proposed trail system
- will encourage those using the system to cross into multiple communities/neighborhoods

Equity Prediction

Developing a system of connected trails and green spaces that offers:

- a variety of safe recreational opportunities
- with affordable equipment

to those living in vulnerable communities near the trail system will increase usage by those populations

Crime Prediction

- Violent crimes and quality of life crimes are present in elevated levels in areas within and proximate to the ESG.
- Without reducing these types of crimes in these areas, use of the greenway will be limited, especially among women, minorities, & low-income populations.



Contact: Jacqueline W. Curtis, Ph.D.
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Perception of Crime Prediction

- Fear of crime contributes to negative health outcomes (stress, elevated blood pressure) and overall constrained outdoor physical activity.
- Reducing fear of crime in the ESG area would increase its use and improve health outcomes.



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Lower Euclid Creek Greenway Plan



Questions

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