DECATUR HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)
HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A process that uses a variety of methods and approaches to identify and measure potential health impacts, both positive and negative, that may result from a particular policy or project.

Guided by the definition of health given by the World Health Organization: “a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”
DECATUR HIA PURPOSE

To ensure the explicit consideration of the human health impacts of the proposed projects and policies.

To provide guidance to improving and maintaining the health of Decatur residents and visitors, reducing the burden on the health sector.

To inform residents, concerned community members, and decision-makers about health outcomes.
DECATUR HIA PROCEDURE

1. Screening- determines whether or not there exists the potential for significant and unknown health impacts as the result of a policy, program, or project;

2. Scoping- establishes the study area boundaries, identifies possible consequences, and determines a management approach for the HIA;

3. Appraisal- considers the nature and magnitude of health impacts and the affected population;

4. Dissemination- circulates the results of the HIA to decision-makers, individuals implementing the plan/policy, and community stakeholders; and

5. Monitoring and Evaluation- reviews the effectiveness of the HIA process and evaluates the actual health outcomes as a result of the project or policy.
HEALTH DETERMINANTS

Health determinants are factors which influence the ability to be healthy.

These factors include biological, social and economic, environmental, lifestyle, services, and policy.
HEALTH AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. Health and the Neighborhood;
2. Physical Activity;
3. Universal Design;
4. Active Living;
5. Access and Affordability;
6. Environmental Threats; and
7. Social Capital.
The one-day HIA workshop was held on April 30, 2007 and included residents of the city of Decatur, representatives of government bodies, and representatives of local businesses, churches, and nonprofit organizations.

Participants were split into groups to discuss the potential impacts of the Community Transportation Plan on health. The results of the group discussions were then presented to the workshop at large.
Four main areas of concern emerged from the discussion groups:

1. Intersection Improvements;
2. Bicycle Facilities;
3. Sidewalk Improvements; and
The Community Transportation Plan suggests emphasis on three main points:

1. Making and keeping Decatur a “healthy place to live and work”;

2. Maintaining a high quality of life in Decatur; and

3. Increasing opportunities to use alternative modes of transportation.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HIA WORKSHOP

• Make traffic safety a priority;
• Intersections should be ADA-compliant and easily crossable;
• Bicyclists need more than just safe routes;
• Connectivity is crucial; and
• Active living must remain a priority as Decatur continues to grow.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HIA

• The Community Transportation Plan can contribute to Decatur’s high quality of life by promoting physical activity and a sense of community.

• Planning for alternate modes of transportation must accommodate both commuters and recreational users.

• Not all of Decatur’s most vulnerable populations may benefit from the Community Transportation Plan.

• The Community Transportation Plan should be just one part of planning efforts towards a healthy Decatur.