

Summary of Previous Stakeholder Input

Distillation of Community perspectives - 2011

For designing the SHC program, a variety of outreach efforts to external community-sustainability stakeholders were conducted, including seven community listening sessions in five regions, four discussion webinars, and a 1 ½ day meeting with EPA scientists talking with key leaders representing community sustainability professionals, nongovernmental organizations and academics. The input from the stakeholders fell into two categories, both of which are relevant for targeting community sustainability research. First are types of information needed as input into decision processes (e.g. “we need metrics about economic impacts.”). Second are problems and decisions within stakeholders’ purview that can positively or negatively affect community sustainability (e.g. transportation decisions).

The input from community stakeholders, when summarized in this fashion, ranks (roughly) as:

Types of Information	Community issues/problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“Full cost/benefit accounting”</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For understanding multiple impacts and purposes of actions ○ Holistic, cumulative, including cascading and unintended impacts ○ Including health, environmental, climate change, social/psychological, and other well-being , but <u>especially economic</u> • <u>Metrics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance for standardization and comparison ○ Prefer metrics rolled into one index • <u>Methods/tools</u> to make up for lack of capacity and provide standardization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To collect information ○ To assess/analyze information • <u>Eco-psychology</u> understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To characterize quality of life (per our goals for human well-being) ○ To characterize what factors drive human behavior and are important for decision making and messaging ○ To best communicate a compelling picture of sustainability and build will for action “outside the choir” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Land use planning and implementation of smart growth goals</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (most often mentioned and intersects w/nearly everything else) • Decisions on <u>schools and housing</u> re: placement, efficiency, toxicity • <u>Transportation</u> • <u>Stormwater</u> management, especially grey vs green infrastructure decisions • <u>Water</u> quantity and quality • <u>Air</u> quality management and attainment • <u>Waste</u> management and reduction • <u>GHG</u> reductions (often addressed in municipal operations, weatherization programs and VMT management decisions) • <u>Local food</u> systems • <u>Individual actions</u> for sustainability

In order for SHC research to most effectively provide meaningful and effective information, it seems that high priority research should provide information where:

- Form and substance are relevant, understandable and compelling for decision-makers (e.g. “we need metrics (form) about economic impacts (substance)”).
- Problems or activities in question are of high community priority and within decision makers’ purview
- Activities in question are potentially highly-impacting , but can be significantly less or more impacting (per sustainable conditions) depending on decisions

Summary of thoughts from Stakeholders – from July 10, 2014 Stakeholders meeting

- Scale is critical (neighborhood to national, for different purposes)
- Capacity varies and affects tool usability
- Tool should:
 - collect data at different scales
 - data/parameters must be relevant to communities (e.g. VMT)
 - collect data as a bottom up process
 - Prepopulated with geospatial measures and benchmarking
 - Visualizations with geospatial break-down are very compelling
 - Mapping e.g. food deserts; trees
 - Wholesale-able/generalizable – serve hundreds of communities at once
 - Flexibility to tailoring – can local gov't or NGO use/expand, add own data
- What are the 5 most important decisions they make? These are more important than “biggest problems”
- What are good indicators?
 - More fine-scale indicators needed for communities
- Demonstrate methods and best practices for tool use
 - e.g. Durham Sustainability pilot
 - Create an “ecosystem of tools” to reflect use cases and allow decision-makers to choose the appropriate tool
- Need better data and guidance on assumptions;
 - put numbers to likely benefits (soc, econ, env) or impacts avoided
 - E.g. economic like infrastructure costs, jobs, property values, etc.
- Equity is important
 - e.g. gentrification
 - Attention to tribes' unique concerns (trust, data sanctity, sensitivity to traditions)
- Indirect and non-technical issues are important (eg. Feeling unsafe leads to less activity)
- Human touch, translation is important; Translating problems to solutions
 - Frame tools as “solutions” for problems that local decision-makers identify
 - Experience and peer advice at the local level is crucial
 - Need a local end-user of tools, to help apply them to decisions when they need to be made

How does this compare to earlier feedback:

- Still an emphasis on impacts and economics/cost-benefits
- Still centered on Decisions Made
- Still want metrics, and they need to reflect decisions made and priorities
- Still want tools that are generalizable (cover many cities) but tailorable
- Reflects expanding use of GIS and mapping capabilities at local level
- Even more about scale – data needs to reflect the decision contexts and be meaningful for decision makers
- Expanding integration of equity into efforts

Summary of NPSG Listening Session - Feb 11, 2016, Portland OR

EPA SHC staff held an early morning Listening Session at the 2016 New Partners for Smart Growth (NPSG) conference. Attending were 15-18 people representing different professions relating to community planning and development. The format comprised: a short presentation of the SHC program and goals; highlights of what two SHC tools, the EnviroAtlas and C-FERST, could accomplish; and table discussions about using tools, in general. Staff brought a series of questions developed with SHC tool developers and researchers to prompt discussion, and allotted time for both discussion and jotting ideas on post-its, to assure everyone's ideas would be included. This summary is arranged by discussion questions.

1. What kinds of issues and/or decisions do you need tools for -- Answering questions? Prompting discussions? Prioritizing issues? What are the biggest gaps or barriers for addressing those?

Specific tools mentioned:

- EJScreen – to identify impacted communities
- Land protection – w/GIS (very effective)
- CalEnviroScreen – indicates disadvantaged communities; raises awareness (but combines metrics – cumulative, but harder to target solutions/money)
- Pedestrian Toolkit – Long Beach, CA – to catalogue treatments, show local examples
- Urban Footprint – has health model and other scenario components, used for planning
- IVAN – NGO-developed crowdsourcing tool, to identify local problems and photo report
- Portland – Regional Equity Atlas – local data input by community, advancing sense of community ownership

Specific uses for tools:

- Tools to help with engagement in communities – explain, build support, evaluate problem solutions
- Tech assistance for grant writing
- Target investments, like infrastructure
- Community health assessment
- Land use planning with transportation planning

2. What additional information would your community still need and is the process for obtaining it readily available?

- Design feature-specific outcomes – e.g. what is the effect on _____ (e.g. property values, health, VMT), when _____ (e.g. sidewalk is narrow, there's a plaza on a 4 lane road)
- Economic decisions and the consequences of those (e.g. pollution, sprawl, global warming, people leaving communities)
- Cumulative impacts information
- Tools easy for youth to use (to engage youth)
- Tools for small communities, maybe useable through COGs
- Community ownership and targeting of data
- How to get cross-community involvement and input – hear all voices?
- Data:
 - Transit and land use, and the consequences of alternate uses (one e.g. low-income housing built w/o amenities or transit, and more costly to provide transit than would be to relocate entire resident population)
 - Housing access
 - Redevelopment/transit
 - Health (e.g. asthma rates by block for community assessment and improvement plan, zip codes and longevity)
 - Representative input from across a community
 - Gentrification
 - Codes (zoning, etc)

- Tree info - species specific tree info, e.g. palm trees don't provide shade, what will do well in area, which help most with air quality, how account for varied ecosystem services in life stages of tree
- Scenarios
 - How do you ensure your development codes create the projects you want?
 - Economic impacts on coastlines – e.g. displacement,
 - Relating how economic issues connecting to environment
 - Defining priorities, going above the standard and stewarding money in decisions

3. What prevents you from using tools (awareness of the tool, time to learn the tool, ease of use of the tool, other)?

- Do you have to be a geek to use them? Cities need to know how to use them.
- Too many tools and lack of integration! Which one to pick? = “battle of the tools”
- Unintentional misapplication (e.g. a tool says, “don't use for X” but people do anyway)
- Understanding the value added by tools
- Need a lower threshold for entry:
 - Cost – bigger issue for community groups
 - Bandwidth
 - Training
 - Monster to run (Urban Footprint) -- web-based can be easier
 - Data – particularly the need to collect it and it's representativeness
- Silos in government departments
 - Need to know who each tool relates to in different departments
 - Tools can help bring them together with useful information for each/all [show the whole, and relationships between parts]
- Need more frequent data (e.g. ACS)
- EJScreen may not represent the whole zip code

4. What learning is needed for communities to feel comfortable in stepping forward to use tools like these?

- Linked tools are preferred to quickly illustrate problems and solutions to non-professional audiences
- One tool for all players to decide together
- Accessible training – time, place, within capacity
- Training specific to issues/problems that communities are dealing with