

Social Impact Assessment

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What is Social Impact Assessment ?

- the process of assessing the social consequences that are likely from the development of a project and an effort to describe and analyse the real and/or potential impacts of a project on specific groups of people, individuals, and communities.
- social impacts are changes that occur in:
 - people's way of life (how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis);
 - their cultural traditions (shared beliefs, customs and values); and
 - their community (its population structure, cohesion, stability, character, aesthetics, services and facilities)**and that are experienced by these people as significant events.**
- The purpose of SIA is to determine the direct and indirect impacts of a proposed and/or on-going project and assess the implications of these impacts for the people and communities involved, considering their characteristics, perceptions, and values.



What is Social Impact Assessment?



- Social science-based field of inquiry
- Significant academic literature and use in other jurisdictions
- Within Ontario, SIA has been undertaken as part of Environmental Assessments since the late 1980's.
- Technical studies such as those undertaken under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA) for noise and air quality, assume that impacts affect all people the same whereas a SIA seeks first to understand the people affected and then how those people react to the changes created by the technical impacts.
 - For example, a noise engineer will assess the noise experiences at specific receptors. Social impact assessors assess how the changes to noise disrupt resident's day-to-day activities and whether there are people within the community particularly sensitive to noise.
- **Social impacts depend on people's perceptions and their responses to change created by a project. Perceptions and responses need not be logical, rational or in conformity with the perceptions or responses of any other group of people.**

What does SIA address?

Baseline conditions and effects on:

- **Demographics:** changes in size and composition of local population; emigration / immigration
- **Socio-economics:** changes to local and regional economy, housing, taxes, employment opportunities and changes to existing economic activities
- **Social infrastructure:** health care, education, transportation, water, waste, emergency services, and power systems
- **Resources & Resettlement:** local land and water use; land-take for new facilities; new or increased access to rural or remote areas; physical and economic resettlement
- **Community Character and Culture:** changes from traditional lifestyles, perception of risk, community cohesion, way of life and cultural traditions
- **Social Equity:** who gains and who loses
- **Cultural resources:** built heritage and archaeological



SIA Baseline Data Collection

Information Sources

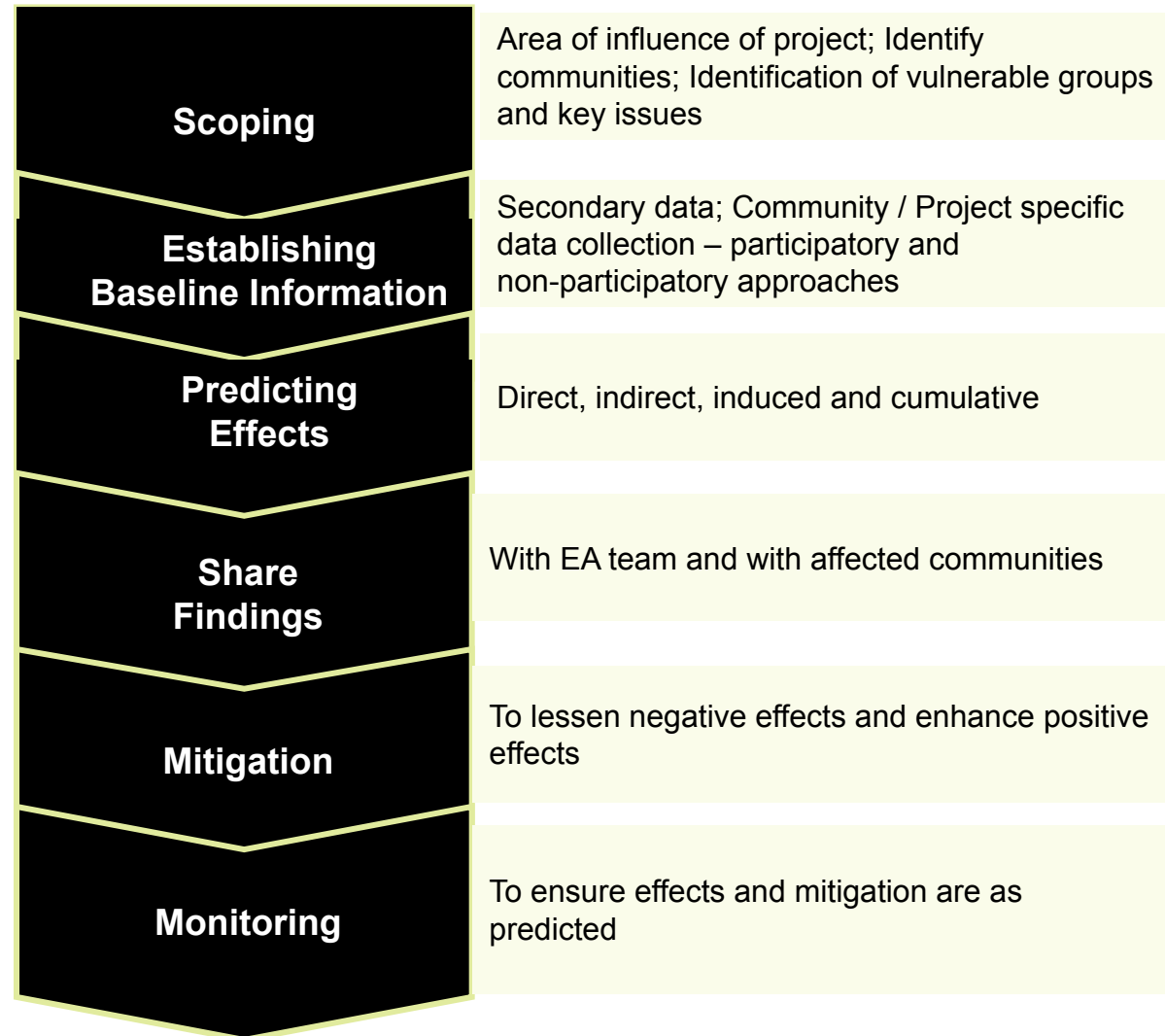
- Statistics Canada information
- Key informant interviews
- Surveys/Questionnaires:
recreational users, facility
operators, local residents
- Case studies and Literature
Review
- Field surveys and mapping
- Kitchen Table meetings
- Public attitude research
- Local government interviews

Questions to be answered

- How people use their property?
- Special or vulnerable populations
- Recreational uses
- Unique community attributes
- In/out migration trends
- How do people use public facilities
and institutions?
- How is the community changing over
time?
- How do the residents define their
community?
- How is the community functioning?



How is SIA undertaken



Policy and Regulatory Basis

Aggregate Resources Act – approval of pits and quarries

- Mentions socio-economic matters related to pits and quarries (Sec. 3(2)(h))
- Shall have regard to “the effect of the operation of pit or quarry on nearby communities” (Sec.12(1)(b))
- Does not define socio-economic matters

Provincial Policy Statement

- Section 2.5.2.2. “extraction shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts”
- Few supporting definitions

Environmental Assessment Act – does not apply to pits and quarries unless designated - Requires SIA

Caledon Official Plan

- Section 5.11.2.4.13 “Any impact studies required by this Plan, will include, where appropriate, an assessment of social impacts based on predictable, measurable, significant, objective effects on people caused by factors such as noise, dust, traffic levels and vibration. Such studies will be based on Provincial standards, regulations and guidelines and will consider and identify methods of addressing the anticipated impacts in the area affected by the extractive operation.”





The Reality

- Ontario Land Tribunal – Fowler Quarry Expansion Decision
 - Pg. 20 *“Land use planning is concerned with the uses of land and not the users of land, and it is the compatibility of uses that must be assessed.”*
- Even if SIA was done for quarry applications the Province does not have standards, regulations, or guidelines to support SIA nor does it have the internal expertise to review SIAs.
- With respect to the Town’s OP requirements, while the Province has standards and regulations with respect to noise, air, traffic, dust and vibration these standards do not take into consideration the community or resident characteristics, nor do they consider the cumulative effects.
- The Province has not standards, regulations or guidelines for social and economic impacts

A Paradox

Quarries are a use of land perhaps only marginally more popular than landfill sites.

Every community in Ontario requires the services provided by quarries and landfill sites, yet each of us would prefer to not live near one.

Many of the social impacts of quarries and landfills are similar: traffic, noise, dust, changes to use of property, and perceived and actual risk.

Many of the most common social impacts of both quarries and landfills relate to noise, dust and traffic impacts changing how residents use their properties.

However, the impacts and risks of quarries and landfill sites are assessed differently as SIA is typically done for landfill projects but not for quarries.

Given the social impacts of quarry operations are similar to landfilling operations, the assessment of those impacts should be similar to that undertaken for a landfill.

Why the difference?

