

TIA-LOS Structured Interview Guide for Municipal Planners

As I mentioned [in my email/on the phone], we are interested in understanding how municipalities in [state] handle the traffic impacts of new developments. We understand a number of municipalities have been revisiting their approaches to traffic impact assessment in recent years. We're curious to understand both the state of the practice with respect to traffic impacts, and the factors driving some communities to change their approaches. Are you ready to proceed?

1. Please describe how your community handles the traffic impacts of new developments. Could you walk me through the process of approving new development proposals with respect to traffic impacts?

Prompt specifically for:

- innovation within ITE standards/conventional TIA,
- allowance for changing LOS,
- potential for exceptions or waivers,
- different approaches in different parts of town or different contexts (e.g., mixed use),
- collection of local data on trip gen,
- innovation with respect to metrics,
- whether the town collaborates on traffic impact assessments with bordering communities

2. How long has the community been following this approach?

- If the approach varies by context, allows for innovation within the ITE standards, accommodates MMLOS, or is something different altogether, something else: [go to Q13](#)
- If a standard, conventional ITE TIA approach: [go to Q3 \(p2\)](#)

Once you start recording, introduce yourself and your affiliation, and then ask the interviewee to state their name and title.

Stick to the script on the intro, so as not to allow your perceptions of local planning culture to bias responses.

1. Go through all the prompts if the interviewee does not cover them in their initial response.

For communities with no or conventional TIA practices:

3. Has the town run into any specific challenges or shortcomings with this approach?

Prompt for specifics

4. Are you aware of different approaches or efforts to change approaches to handling traffic impacts in other, similar, communities?

5. To your knowledge, have there been any efforts within the community or local government to change this approach?

Prompt if needed for types of change, e.g., relaxing of LOS standards, changes in thresholds needed to trigger TIA, changing focus from auto trip gen to person trip gen

- If yes: proceed to Q6, below
 - If no: ask if there is anything else interviewee would like to add, and then end interview.
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For communities with previous efforts to change:

6. What new approaches has the community considered?

7. Is the effort to change approaches still underway?

[If yes,] **Where are you in the process of changing the approach?**

- If yes: jump to Q13, page 3
- If no: proceed to Q8, below

8. Were there any particular individuals, organizations, or events that motivated efforts to change?

Prompt for roles of *people* (e.g., developers; engineers) and *phenomena* (e.g., professional planning networks; public pressure)

9. Did you play a role in the effort to change the standards [either as opponent or proponent]?

[If yes,] **What was your role? What motivated you to take on that role?**

10. How did people involved in the effort learn about new approaches to addressing traffic impacts?

What influence did those information sources have on the effort?

11. Did the community work with a consulting firm in the effort?

[if yes] **What was (is) the consultant's role in the process? Can you provide the name or contact information for your consultant?**

12. Why did the community not adopt a different approach?

Who or what were the barriers or obstacles to adopting a different approach?

Ask if there is anything else the interviewee would like to add, and then end the interview.

3. Prompt for specifics.

If question elicits a soapbox response; work to keep the interviewee focused on the town's challenges rather than on personal opinions.

5. Efforts can be formal or informal, codified or soft/subtle. Prompts optional.

For communities with innovative approaches or ongoing efforts to change:

- 13. What's the process (or what's it likely to be) to bring about this sort of change?
Who is or will be involved?**
- 14. Have there been any particular individuals, organizations, or events that motivated (are motivating) efforts to change the standards?**
Prompt for roles of *people* (e.g., developers; engineers) and *phenomena* (e.g., professional planning networks; public pressure)
- 15. Did you play (are you playing) a role in the effort to change the standards** [either as opponent or proponent]?
[If yes,] **what was (is) your role?**
What has motivated you to take on that role?
- 16. How have people involved in the effort learned about new approaches to addressing traffic impacts?**
What influence have those information sources had on the effort?
- 17. What costs or benefits did / (do) community leaders expect to arise from the change?**
Be on the lookout for better communication with neighbors of new developments, multimodal friendliness and safety, more \$ from developers etc., and probe for additional detail
- 18. Has the community worked with a consulting firm in this effort?**
[if yes] **What was (is) the consultant's role in the process?**
Can you provide the name or contact information for your consultant?
- 19. Were there (have there been) any particular legal or regulatory actions that enabled (are enabling) this change?**
- 20. Did you encounter (have you encountered) any challenges to the change process?**
[If yes,] **Would you mind describing some of these challenges, or sharing an example?**
Prompts:
 - From what quarters have these challenges come? (e.g., the public, regulations, external agencies, internal objections, politics, logistics, developers, etc)
 - What's the expected impact of these obstacles (e.g., might they derail your efforts?)

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Don't forget to ask the secondary or follow-up questions.

13. Looking for steps involved in bringing about change. Focus on process of change, rather than politics.
14. Probe for information on people and phenomena/ events that have led to change efforts.
15. Don't forget the follow-up questions—What is your role AND what motivated you to take on that role?
17. If necessary, push for *costs* and *benefits*.
20. Use the prompts here as follow-up questions as needed.

If the community is in the process of changing their approach, but hasn't formally adopted a new approach:

21. In your professional judgment, will this effort succeed?

Why or why not?

- If yes: *continue to Q22, below*
- If no: ask if there is anything else interviewee would like to add, and then end interview.

22. What do you anticipate to be the most likely impacts or outcomes of the new approach?

- [prompt: impacts on development, traffic, public perception]
 - Ask if there is anything else interviewee would like to add, and then end the interview.
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If the community has successfully adopted a new approach:

23. Is the current approach working?

What are its strengths and weaknesses?

- Prompt for metrics used to assess whether the new approach has been successful.

24. Do you know if the community has considered (or is considering) further changes to the TIA approach?

Why or why not?

- Ask if there is anything else the interviewee would like to add, and then end the interview.
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22. If necessary, prompt for impacts on development, traffic, or public perceptions.