



TRANSPORTATION

Healthy Transportation Policies

Many resources have been published that describe policies and programs that begin in the transportation or community design sectors, but can also be beneficial to health. The *healthy policy concepts* section below lists some of these high-level, health-promoting strategies. For each concept, you will also find a summary of specific policies and resources that have shown to be health-promoting when they were implemented in various jurisdictions around the country. These policy concepts are meant to serve as a starting point for conversations between health agencies and their transportation and community design counterparts. Evidence that these policies are health-promoting can be found in the accompanying resources list.

Transportation, Community Design and Health

Transportation, land use, and community design can have significant impacts on both physical and mental health. The way in which communities are designed greatly influences whether people can live in close proximity to basic services, such as health care, grocery stores or job opportunities. In communities where key basic services are not accessible, a variety of transportation options must be available, particularly for those residents who cannot afford the cost of or, for other reasons, use a private vehicle. Low-income households pay a higher percentage of monthly income towards transportation costs, so access to affordable options can provide some financial relief for families. In addition, transportation options that promote and facilitate physical activity, such as walking and bicycling, can be beneficial with attention to specific community design strategies. Even walking to and from public transportation has been shown to provide significant daily physical activity. In communities where transportation planning reduces the number of vehicles on roadways, air quality is improved and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

Healthy Policy Concepts

- » Promote transit-oriented development.
- » Increase opportunities for active transportation.
- » Improve air quality and mitigate other sources of pollution.
- » Promote the use of clean energy technology.
- » Improve access to public transportation.
- » Improve transportation safety
- » Improve public transportation quality.
- » Encourage shifts from individual driving to public transportation.
- » Encourage comprehensive regional planning.

Turn for more »

Mobile source air pollution has been shown to have significant impacts on health, and single-occupancy vehicles are a major contributor. Finally, injuries and fatalities due to motor vehicle crashes are a major public health issue and although significant improvements have been made in the last few decades, much work is left to be done. Over the past few years, bicyclists and pedestrians have not benefited from the safety improvements and are suffering a greater burden of crash fatalities.

Due to these impacts, the conversation between public health, transportation and community design has started around the country. State and local agencies, community organizations and universities are working together to coordinate policy and program initiatives that could accomplish the goals of public health and of the other sectors. Much of this work is being done through the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA), though in some places collaboration on projects and policies occurs without the use of a formal process.

State Transportation Improvement Plans (STIPs): Opportunities for Integration of Health

States are required by law to create both long-term and short-term transportation plans to define statewide goals and prioritize projects for funding. Short-term STIPs, are inclusive of the state's metropolitan area and regional plans, and must be created every four years. Long-term plans must be created every twenty years. State departments of transportation lead the process, and federal law requires public involvement. STIPs include details such as anticipated revenues, total project cost estimates, amount of federal funds that should be distributed to the project per year and public and private sources of funding. Projects must be on the STIP to be eligible for federal funding.

Since STIPs involve multiple partners and forecast the state's transportation needs in advance, they provide the opportunity for public health partners to advocate for the integration of health considerations in both the overall plan and goals and the specific project considerations.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Those same laws require the designation of MPOs, which have responsibility for planning, programming and coordination of federal highway and transit investments. ISTEA, one of these laws, included provisions to encourage full consideration of all reasonable alternatives to meet mobility and access needs within major transportation corridors, and to ensure a comprehensive, transparent and multimodal metropolitan transportation planning process.

For more information about specific strategies to implement these policies, please see our complementary policy guides titled:

"Promote transit-oriented development,"

"Increase opportunities for active transportation,"

"Improve air quality and mitigate other sources of pollution,"

"Promote the use of clean energy technology,"

"Improve access to public transportation,"

"Improve transportation safety,"

"Improve public transportation quality,"

"Encourage shifts from individual driving to public transportation,"

"Encourage comprehensive regional planning."

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Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policy making and programming across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health of all communities and people.

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