

Incorporating Public Health into Transportation Decision Making

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Introduction

This report outlines an effort to incorporate public health into decision-making for the California Transportation Commission, responsible for one of the largest state transportation budgets in the US.

Study Methods

This paper reviews the available literature, tools, data, and current practices, and works to assist in the development of both qualitative and quantitative performance indicators of public health against which prospective transportation projects can be evaluated.

Findings and Policy Recommendations

This report lays out a qualitative and quantitative approach by which transportation agencies can evaluate projects and programs for their public health impacts, both positive and negative. Previous research has established connections between transportation and public health through aspects such as vehicle

crashes, pollution exposure, physical activity and fitness, access to health-related goods and services, and mental health impacts (Litman, 2013). Still, public health has also been overlooked as a consideration in traditional transportation planning practices.

This study's review of existing research shows public health considerations need to be incorporated into transportation funding decision processes to lead to healthier, more livable communities and regions.

There are five main areas where these quantitative and qualitative considerations of public health should be applied:

- physical activity and mental health;
- traffic safety;
- environmental quality and pollution exposure;
- the negative public health impacts of road projects; and

- the positive public health impacts of transit projects.

This report is intended to be useful for any state, regional, or local agency interested in incorporating public health measures into transportation decision making for the betterment of their communities.

It is clear from this study's review of existing research that public health considerations need to be incorporated into transportation funding decision processes to lead to healthier, more livable communities and regions.

About the Authors

Bruce Appleyard, PhD

Dr. Appleyard is an Associate Professor of City Planning and Urban Design at San Diego State University (SDSU) where he helps people and agencies make more informed decisions about how we live, work, and thrive. Working from the human to regional/ecosystem scale, he is an author of numerous peer-reviewed and professional publications and is a renowned expert on urban quality, the future of transport, and reimagining & redesigning streets for livability, placemaking, and especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. His expertise also extends to coordinating housing, land use, and transport to help places become more sustainable, livable, healthy, and equitable. He recently published *Livable Streets 2.0*, a 600+ page book about the conflict, power, and promise of our streets (<https://bit.ly/LivableStreets>). Dr. Appleyard holds a doctorate (as well as a master's and bachelor's) in City Planning and Geography from the University of California in the town of Berkeley, where he grew up.

Tim Garrett, MS

Timothy Garrett holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Lafayette College and a Master of City Planning degree from San Diego State University. He currently works as a Regional Planner for the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).



To Learn More

For more details about the study, download the full report at transweb.sjsu.edu/research/2150



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