

Policy briefs call attention to important statewide policy considerations, relationships, and guidance for use by planners, engineers, implementers and community members.



Healthy Communities

This policy brief helps to show how statewide policies and strategies that support a safe, accessible and sustainable transportation system can also support Oregon's health system transformation efforts by reducing chronic disease rates and improving health and well-being in all Oregon communities.

The policy framework for healthy communities

Health and transportation are both critical to safe, livable and resilient communities across the state. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) are the two agencies in Oregon specifically dedicated to creating, implementing, and maintaining systems that support Oregonians to have equitable access to the health and mobility that support people to get to their jobs, schools, health services, community centers, and more. By working together and leveraging efforts, ODOT and OHA can maximize the returns on the public's investment in health and transportation to improve health, transportation, and quality of life for Oregonians.

Transportation policy, infrastructure and options directly impact health in many ways: they affect exposure to air pollution, injury risk, physical activity levels, emergency preparedness, and access to health supportive resources such as food, living wage jobs, and education. To address these issues, ODOT and OHA entered into an agreement in 2013, committing to work collaboratively to identify, develop and promote connections between public health and transportation. Since then, staff and leadership from both organizations have collaborated to advance shared objectives related to improving the health and livability of Oregon communities. Many ODOT statewide plans and policies now explicitly address transportation and health connections. Similarly, OHA's plans and practices increasingly acknowledge the need to engage transportation partners. These trends are also reflected at the local level as transportation and public health professionals increasingly collaborate on their respective planning and policy development efforts.

Applicable ODOT plans and policies

Plan	Policy
Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Strategy 6.1A: Continue to expand upon the partnership between ODOT and the Oregon Health Authority, encouraging safe and active transportation (walking and biking), collaborating on research and data sharing and analysis, and leveraging resource opportunities. Strategy 6.1B: Engage public health professionals in transportation planning through Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Area Commissions on Transportation, and local jurisdiction planning efforts to more broadly consider the impact of transportation decisions and investments on health. Strategy 6.1D: Identify geographic areas and sub-populations in Oregon (e.g., low-

	income communities, aging population) with higher rates of chronic diseases linked to physical inactivity or air quality, and prioritize actions to address disparities through transportation policies, plans, and project selection.
Oregon Transportation Options Plan	<p>Policy 6.1: Emphasize the role of TO in enhancing human and environmental health.</p> <p>Policy 6.2: Broaden and strengthen partnerships between TO providers, health insurance providers, and social service and community health organizations.</p> <p>Strategy 6.b: Integrate health considerations and impacts in transportation planning. Include transportation options outcomes in Community Health Improvement Plans / Community Health Needs Assessments. Where detailed health impact assessments are not practical, consider elements of public health in transportation and community planning and in site design.</p> <p>Strategy 6.e: Evaluate and communicate the societal and public health benefits of active transportation and active living.</p>

Many of the other statewide transportation policy plans, such as the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) and the Oregon Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) also establish a policy framework that recognizes the shared interest between health and transportation; however these connections are more discrete and often benefit other community priorities. These plans indirectly benefit public health for Oregonians by helping communities become more resilient to environmental hazards, improving air quality by supporting multimodal travel and system efficiency, and reducing fatal and serious injury crashes so that our transportation networks are safer for all travelers.

Applicable OHA plans and practices

Plan	Policy
2015-2019 Oregon State Health Improvement Plan	<p>Obesity Strategy 3: Increase opportunities for physical activity for adults and youth.</p> <p>Obesity Measure 3.1: Number of community design plans that include physical activity as a consideration for land use and transportation.</p>
Oregon Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention 2017-2022 Strategic Plan	<p>Physical Activity Goal 1: By June 2022, decrease the percent of adults who are physically inactive.</p> <p>Physical Activity Goal 2: By June 2022, decrease the percent of youth that do not meet the Surgeon General’s recommended level of physical activity.</p> <p>Physical Activity Objective 1: By June 30, 2022, expand the availability, safety, convenience, and appeal of places for people to be physically active, with a priority to help those who are currently physically inactive become more active by walking.</p>

Oregon Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Accountability Metrics for State and Local Public Health Authorities

The Oregon Public Health Advisory Board has identified accountability metrics for state and local public health authorities. One of the metrics that OHA will be tracking is the percent of commuters who walk, bike or use public transit to get to work. Through this accountability measure, local public health authorities are encouraged to partner on transportation and land use planning initiatives to support active transportation.

Why policies on healthy communities matter

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Institute of Medicine, and other leading health organizations have reviewed a large body of evidence related to transportation behavior and health outcomes and concluded that specific policies and investment strategies can indeed have measurable impacts on health.

By getting more Oregonians walking, biking, and using transit, we can:

- Cut air pollution that contributes to respiratory and heart illnesses;
- Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries from crashes;
- Increase physical activity to reduce rates of diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases;
- Provide critical connections to medical services, employment and other destination centers to maintain quality of life and support travel independence; and
- Reduce high transportation costs on Oregon families.

Healthy Communities Case Studies



Pedal Corvallis

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments in partnership with the InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization launched a public bikeshare system in Corvallis, called [Pedal Corvallis](#). Bikeshare promotes community health, connectivity, and livability. Bikeshare involves a network of bicycles and stations, where a member or renter can check out a bike from a station and return it to any other station in the network. Bikeshare is ideal for short-distance trips and is an innovative way to reduce health disparities by facilitating active transportation choices for work and play.



Veterans Transportation Pilot Project

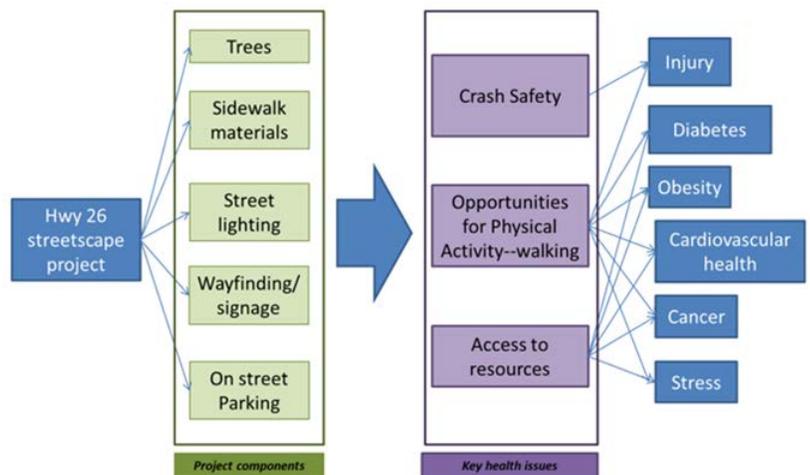
Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA), in partnership with the Oregon Department of Transportation Rail and Public Transit Division (RPTD), administered a Veterans Transportation Pilot Project from July 2013 through June 2016. The primary goals for the pilot project were to implement a replicable shared ride transportation program designed to give veterans a way to get to their VA-authorized medical care; and define the magnitude of the need and the cost for a statewide program to be implemented at a future date. Over the four year project period, 4,128 rides were provided to 470 individuals at an average cost per ride of \$74 with a total grant budget of \$244,120. Funding estimates to implement a statewide program range from

\$1M to \$12M, depending on the scope of the effort.

Improving Community Health in Crook County through Pedestrian Design

In 2016, the City of Prineville began working with ODOT on a streetscape improvement project for Highway 26 in downtown Prineville. To help inform project decisions, the Crook County Health Department and the City of Prineville Planning Department, with support from the OHA's Environmental Public Health section, led a full day Health Impact Assessment (HIA) workshop to identify and assess the relative health impacts of the various design alternatives being considered by project stakeholders. The workshop resulted in a set of [findings and recommendations](#) for ensuring that the project was designed to improve

opportunities for physical activity and increase access to health supportive resources while also minimizing crash risks for bicyclists and pedestrians. The full HIA report can be found [here](#). This project helped inspire the Crook County Community Foundation to form Crook County on the Move, a public health focused initiative supporting this and other local efforts to help residents build physical activity into their daily lives.



When to consider environmental and public health

Until recently, transportation policies, infrastructure programs, and funding sources gave minimal attention to public health impacts. Now, many jurisdictions are including health goals, initiatives, and formalized Health Impact Assessments in their transportation plans and decision-making. The Oregon Transportation Plan and the other statewide modal and topic plans establish a policy framework in

which other regional and local governments operate within. There is opportunity to promote the improvement of health—related outcomes as a common thread in all policies and strategies—while still accomplishing state, regional and local primary transportation objectives.

Including health professionals as representatives in long-range transportation planning can help state, regional and local agencies consider the broader and more holistic impacts of system planning. Establishing these multi-disciplinary relationships can also benefit inter-agency collaboration and sharing of data to improve decision-making and understanding; bring health-based performance measurements into the transportation analysis and prioritization process; and identify leverage opportunities for funding for mutual benefit.

Other helpful guidance and tools

[Health and Transportation: Making the Connection](#)

[Transportation and Growth Management Education and Outreach](#)

[Oregon State Health Improvement Plan](#)

[Components of Local Land Development and Related Zoning Policies Associated with Increased Walking: A Primer for Public Health Practitioners](#)

[OHA Health Impact Assessment](#)

[American Public Health Association's Transportation and Health Resources](#)

For questions about environmental and public health policy framework, contact the ODOT Transportation Planning Unit at 503-986-7140.