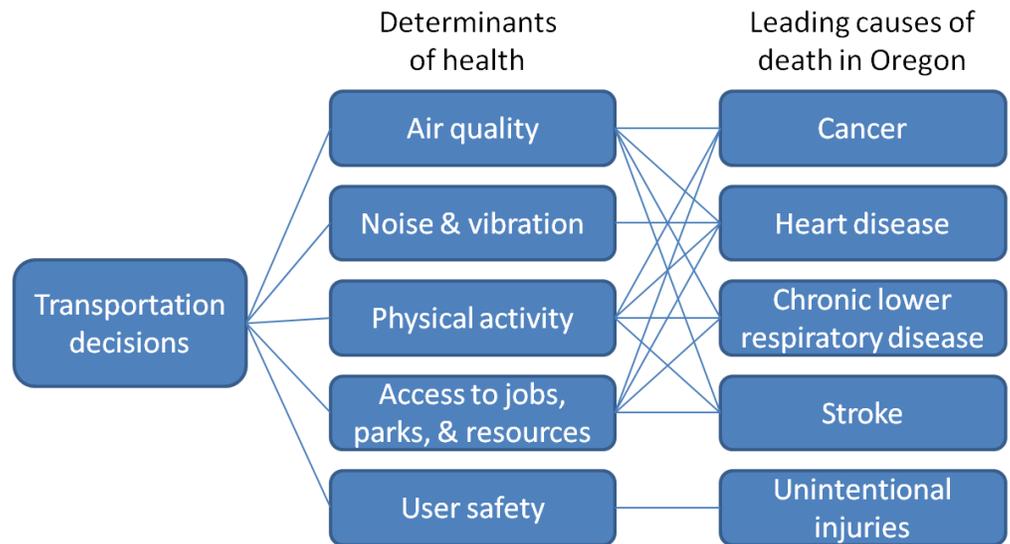


# TRANSPORTATION + HEALTH



**Transportation decisions impact the leading causes of illness and death in Oregon.** Health is more than genes and personal choices; the places we live, work, and play have a significant impact on our health. For example, access to sidewalks and community destinations impact how much we walk. Living close to major roads and freeways increases our risk for chronic diseases such as asthma and cardiovascular disease. The field of public health calls these greater influences the social and environmental determinants of health. Transportation decisions influence the leading causes of illness and death through their impact on the determinants of health.



Oregon State Population Health Indicators Report

## THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

**Public health has many tools available to support decisions on transportation plans, programs, and projects.** The Oregon Public Health Division can support the assessment of health in transportation policies and programs through:

- Development and application of modeling or evaluation tools
- In-depth literature reviews and white-papers
- Policy and program analysis
- Estimates of the cost of illness
- Expertise in selecting indicators for project selection criteria and performance measures
- Health impact assessments of any size and rigor, from rapid to comprehensive
- Analysis and interpretation of health data sets

# HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Health Impact Assessment, or HIA, is one way to characterize how transportation decisions influence health. HIA is a formal, defined framework for bringing a comprehensive health view to transportation decisions. **HIAs synthesize evidence from across disciplines, stakeholder input, and current conditions to understand potential health impacts before decisions are finalized.** This information enables decision makers to develop evidence-based approaches to promote health for all. HIAs improve decision makers' ability to:



- Formalize collaboration across sectors to resolve complicated challenges;
- Analyze health impacts across a range of alternatives;
- Avoid unintended consequences;
- Engage affected communities and leaders;
- Promote health, equity, and sustainability; and
- Consider clear, actionable recommendations for improving health outcomes



HIAs focus on a specific decision or set of decisions. Successful and meaningful HIAs typically feature an engaged advisory committee and an assessment scope that emphasizes social and environmental determinants of health.



## HIA PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The first step of a successful HIA is project selection, also called screening. In screening, the Oregon Public Health Division HIA Program team reviews information about the decision under consideration, including when the decision will be made, in what ways the decision might impact health, and who might be impacted. We also review whether the HIA will provide unique information not already being considered, and whether or not the decision makers will be able and willing to use that information.



We often involve partners in the screening effort, relying on their expertise to help us answer these questions.

If we determine that an HIA could add value to the conversation, the team makes a final determination about whether to conduct an HIA based on resources such as staff time, expertise, and leadership support.

HIA projects completed by the Oregon Public Health Division are guided by practice standards established by the Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA).



These practice standards are reflected in federal guidance documents from the EPA and National Research Council.