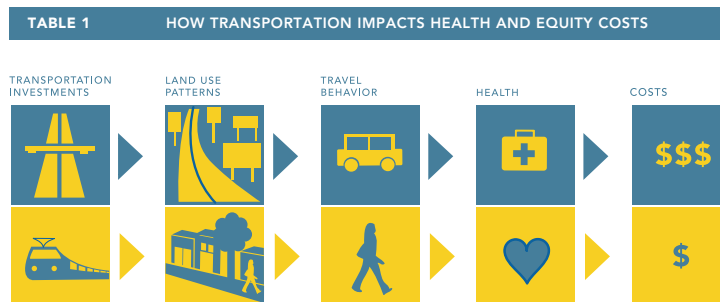


## Transportation and Public Health

Transportation decisions affect our individual lives, economy and health. All Americans need to use various modes of transportation, including highways, streets, sidewalks and trails, to get to work or school, to get medical attention, to access healthy foods at grocery stores and to participate in countless other activities every day. However, too many Americans are negatively impacted by transportation decisions that are detrimental to public health.



Source: *Hidden Health Costs of Transportation*, Urban Design 4 Health, Inc. and the American Public Health Association (2010).

### FACTS

In 2012, there were 33,561 motor vehicle crash fatalities in the U.S., according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This represents a 3.3 percent increase in fatalities compared to 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous communities across the U.S. have limited access to healthy foods and limited opportunities for physical activity; improving active transportation options brings the opportunity to help prevent health problems, including heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure and cancer. Every day, diverse populations are affected by traffic fatalities, injuries and other negative health impacts as a result of poor transportation decisions made in their communities. For example:

- 68.8 percent of American adults are overweight with nearly 35.7 percent estimated to be obese.<sup>2</sup>
- The prevalence of obesity has nearly tripled among U.S. children and adolescents over the past 30 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Physical activity has been proven to reduce the risks of chronic diseases and disorders related to lifestyle. These risks include increased triglyceride and cholesterol levels, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.<sup>4</sup>

## Actions Needed

The reauthorization of the federal surface transportation bill in 2014 presents the nation with an opportunity to reinvent its transportation system to better promote health, safety and equity across vast regions, whether urban, suburban or rural.

APHA is committed to

- Building long-term and meaningful relationships between transportation and public health stakeholders and advocates
- Increasing funding for communities to build biking and walking networks and to encourage active transportation, through efforts such as Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets
- Funding research to evaluate the public health impacts and the true costs and benefits of various transportation policies
- Encouraging the development of healthy communities and incentives for transportation projects that promote health
- Promoting health impact assessments as tools to help decisionmakers determine the public health impacts of transportation activities
- Supporting active transportation options, such as walking, biking and public transportation, that are connected and accessible and affordable for all users

## Sources

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