The Intersection of Transportation, Equity, and Public Health

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Equity in Transportation

There are two main types of equity as it relates to transportation policy: **substantive equity** and **procedural equity**. **Substantive equity** in transportation occurs when disadvantaged communities receive more transportation benefits than the general population. **Procedural equity** occurs when transit riders have equal access to, equal ability to participate in, and equal representation in the decision-making process. The **Equity Metrics Framework** on the right-hand side attempts to consider the various aspects of substantive and procedural equity as it translates to transportation and transportation projects.

The Equity Metrics Framework

What are Metrics?

Metrics are quantifiable measures used to assess, track, and evaluate, the performance or progress of a particular process, project, or program.

There are several methods for how metrics are used within transportation. One of them is to track how transportation projects advance the transportation needs of the community within the capacity of the project scope.

How do we Develop Metrics?

To ensure that the equity metrics are versatile and applicable to a variety of funding programs, the metrics were tailored to the projects that would be used to implement a funding program's goals.

What are the Project Types?

Mobility Hubs
Feasibility Study
Connectivity Project
Active Transportation
Transit Signal Priority
Infrastructure Assessment/Development

The Equity Metrics Framework addresses six different angles that advance equity through transportation projects and programs.

The figure above is a visual representation of the six themes that represent the points of the framework's theoretical foundation.

1. Is the project located in a low- or a high-resource community? How will the project, if applicable, connect residents in low-resource communities to the resources available in high-resource communities?
2. Will the project center around Priority Equity Communities?
3. How does the project accommodate the demographic considerations of equity beyond Priority Equity Communities (i.e. income, race/ethnic groups, disability, education, English proficiency, housing burden status, household size and makeup, and vehicle ownership)?
4. To what extent and how did the agency engage the community while developing the project? How will the agency conduct and maintain community outreach and engagement efforts?
5. How and to what extent will the project challenge the inequities in access to transportation? Meaning, will the project improve access to transportation and/or transportation affordability?
6. Does the project improve Priority Equity Communities' access to opportunities through transportation? How and to what extent will the project improve education and employment opportunities for Priority Equity Communities?

Project Types and Equity Metrics

Mobility Hubs

Mobility hubs are centralized locations where various transportation modes intersect with the aim to improve connectivity and accessibility for commuters.

Some Metrics

Project improves connections between low-resource and high-resource communities.

Increase in connections between mobility hubs, public transit routes, and housing and employment centers.

Feasibility Study

Assesses the viability and potential impacts of proposed transportation or initiatives.

Some Metrics

Increase affordability of transit options through reduction of financial burden of transportation costs.

Increase transit options and/or improve accessibility to transit facilities.

Increase access to opportunities by increasing connections to education, recreation, employment, and healthcare centers.

Connectivity Project

Improves transportation connections within a region by 1) enhancing connections between different modes of transportation of 2) improving access to key destinations.

Some Metrics

Project improves access to key areas such as parks and transit facilities for key demographics.

Increase in community outreach and engagement with project development and implementation.

Active Transportation

Promotes walking, cycling, and other non-motorized modes of transportation as viable alternatives to driving.

Some Metrics

Project improves first/last mile connections from public transit stops to housing developments through active transportation modes.

Project improves affordability of active transportation methods for Priority Equity Communities.

Transit Signal Priority

Improves transit reliability with technology that allows public transit vehicles to communicate with traffic signals.

Some Metrics

Improved access to transportation with enhanced coordination between buses with transit signals.

Project increased passenger miles traveled per vehicle equipped with transit signal priority technology.

Increased transit signal priority installations.

Infrastructure Assessment/Development

Evaluates the conditions, performance, and capacity of transportation infrastructure in order to plan for future infrastructure investments.

Some Metrics

Improved first/last mile connections between transit stops and employment, housing, and recreational centers.

Improves infrastructure conditions such as the quality of bus shelters and bike paths, or increases public transit services such as increasing the number of bus stops.

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