Step It Up: The Intersection of Public Health and Transportation in Utah

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Key Points for Utah’s Efforts

1. Building/maintaining multi-sector partnerships

2. Connecting health data and transportation data

3. Bridging the urban/rural divide
How Did We Get Here?

Diverse objectives that encouraged contact but not collaboration.

Task forces of the “usual suspects.”

Utah Department of Health
Utah Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School
Highway Safety Office
Local Health Departments

All very Injury Prevention based
Planning Levels

**State Legislation**
- Laws
- Visioning Statements

**County Ordinances**
- Written Ordinances
- RPOs & MPOs

**City Ordinances**
- Planning Commission
- Economic Development Groups
- Ordinances
Current Efforts and Support

**MPO based:**
- Active Transportation Committee
- Complete Streets Coalition

**Transportation based:**
- UDOT connections

**Public Health Based:**
- Utah Leaders for Health
- LHD Connections
Previous Successes (and Failures)

**SUCCESES**

Previous guides (2) promoting bicycle & pedestrian features

Bicycle Coordinator at UDOT

State chapter of American Planning Association has held sessions on active transportation at meetings

**FAILURES**

The guides were internal documents or were not adequately disseminated

Conflict between UDOT and bicycle advocacy groups

Lack of communication between agencies

A lot of talking, not a lot of action
The Guide

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Design Guide is focused on:

- Providing local municipalities with the background, support, and local examples of bicycle and pedestrian regulations, infrastructures, and systems
- Not mandated, but supported and encouraged
- Targets the planning department and elected officials
- A “How-To” guide to creating a walkable/bikeable environment at the community level
What Do We Know

Utah VMT has had a steady increase, but decrease relative to population increase

Utah physical activity rates are among the best in the nation, but rates are relatively flat over the past 30 years

Utah obesity rates are leveling off, but still high

Based on Envision Utah studies, Utahns want a design that emphasizes active transport, less sprawl, more connected neighborhoods...for other people.
Evolving the Process

Realizing we were all at the same goal, but with different purposes

Coordination, collaboration, integration

Learning to speak each other’s languages
  ◦ LOS for planners, health professionals, and parks & rec coordinators quite different

Meeting halfway to go further

Talk in big groups, work in small ones
  ◦ But keep a consistent message
Planning for the Future of Health

Training for use of Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Design Guide
Guide is discussed with each city each year
Presented at Utah APA meetings

How to Conduct Walkability Assessments training

Health Impact Assessments

This is the intersection of public health and planning

Training on Complete “Systems”

Active Transportation Committee
- Potential for Regional Bicycle Authority
- Potential for statewide legislation
  - If it is going to happen at the state level, there must be a local example
But, They Aren’t “Us…”

Urban versus Rural challenges
- 86% of population live in a small area - Wasatch Front
- Policies existed in urban areas, but not in rural/frontier areas

Outreach and engagement
- Partnering with other Public Health agencies for funding

Rural examples
Brett McIff, PhD, PAPHS
bmciff@Utah.gov
801-538-6530