

Meeting Summary



Health & Equity Workgroup – Meeting #1

Thursday, June 4, 2015

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Beaverton Library, 12375 SW 5th Avenue, Beaverton OR 97005, Meeting Room A

Members and Attendees Present

Scotty Ellis, Coalition for a Livable Future

Heidi Guenin, Upstream Public Health

Juan Carlos Ocana-Chiu, Metro

Ann Blaker, Bienestar

Maria Caballero-Rubio, Centro Cultural

Alexis Ball, City of Beaverton

Alfonso Lopez-Vasquez, SAC Member and Pacific University

Meeky Blizzard, SAC Member

Gregg Snyder, representing SAC member

Hillsboro Mayor Willey

Lisa Frank, Bicycle Transportation Alliance

Tricia Mortell, Washington County Department of Health and Human Services

Amanda Garcia Snell, Washington County Department of Health and Human Services

Jennie Proctor, Washington County Office of Community Development

Steve Franks, Washington County Department of Land Use and Transportation

Sia Lindstrom, Washington County Office of Community Development

Kimberly Armstrong, Washington County

Study Team and Staff

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Dyami Valentine, Washington County

Mike Dahlstrom, Washington County

Erin Wardell, Washington County

Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates

Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement

Welcome and Introductions

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County Director of Land Use and Transportation, welcomed participants to the meeting. He noted that the purpose of this workgroup is to focus on providing a health and equity perspective on the long-range Transportation Futures Study. Input from this group will be provided to the study team and Study Advisory Committee (SAC). SAC members participating in workgroup meetings will act as liaisons to the SAC to present the workgroup's perspective.

Study team staff and workgroup members introduced themselves.

Workgroup Charge

Andrew Singelakis reviewed the workgroup charge: *to support the evaluation of the health and equity measures and the assessment of potential benefits and burdens to the community.* The workgroup is a coalition of experts, called on to act as a sounding board for health and equity issues. Primarily, the group will focus on developing evaluation measures with health and equity lens.

Background and Study Overview

Chris Deffebach, Washington County, provided a brief overview of the purpose and process for the Transportation Futures Study. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the long-term transportation strategies and investments needed to sustain the county’s economic health and quality of life in the coming decades. This is a study—not a plan. The intent is to provide information to policy-makers to set the direction for the future by identifying areas of agreement and transportation priorities for further evaluation and refinement. Chris reviewed the five phases of the project, and noted that we have completed the Taking Stock report. Currently, the Study team is revising a set of community values and developing transportation “drivers,” or factors that could change the way we get around in the future.

Health & Equity Measures in Current Transportation Planning

Dyami Valentine, Washington County, provided examples of how Washington County and transportation planners evaluate short-term projects for health and equity outcomes. Short-term projects have the benefit of access to data that can be reliably projected out for a five-year timeframe, such as vehicle trip counts, safety data, and travel characteristics.

The Transportation Futures Study is looking at the very long-term (twenty to fifty years and beyond). The kind of data available for such a long-range timeframe is inherently different, although some data can be used as a proxy for health and equity measures.

Community Values and Potential Evaluation Measures

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement, provided a brief presentation on the community values, which are statements of what people care about when it comes to transportation and getting around the County. She explained how the community values were developed and the process to solicit public comments on them. The values will be used to develop evaluation measures that will be applied to transportation investment packages.

The ten draft community values include:

- Connectivity
- Efficiency
- Transportation Options
- Community Identity
- Social Equity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Strategic Investment
- Economic Vitality
- Safety
- Health

Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates, provided an illustration of the type of evaluation framework that the values could be fit into. The framework categorizes values as transportation system attributes, transportation outcomes, and non-transportation outcomes.

Heidi Guenin explained the Transportation for America grant. Coalition for a Livable Future and Upstream Public Health were awarded one of five grants nationally from T4 America to support development of transportation metrics for health and equity.

Committee Discussion

Members were asked to discuss: *When we get to transportation investment packages, what measures should we use to understand the tradeoffs—in terms of health and social equity?*

They discussed the community values, evaluation measures for health and equity and other values, as well as the evaluation framework. Their comments are organized by category below:

Comments related to *Evaluation Framework*

- The illustrative evaluation framework presented by staff seems to give an **arbitrary sense of weight** to one value over another. Some values could likely fit into more than one category. If the study team does plan to use a similar kind of framework, members would like to be involved in that discussion. It may be more accurate to rename the categories as “directly related to” and “indirectly related to” transportation, or “direct and indirect outcomes.”
- An **equity lens** should be applied over the entire framework.

Comments related to *Community Values*

- There is an important intersection between **education and health**; the team might want to consider how to bring education into the values or evaluation measures.
- It is important to discuss **historical inequities** when looking at transportation values, and to consider the impact of transportation policies on communities.
- There will be **tradeoffs** for the values. For example, seeking good connectivity might negatively impact safety.
- The Study should be looking at **what kind of community we want our kids and grandkids to inherit in fifty years**, which is really about non-transportation outcomes. We should design a transportation system that supports healthy people, strong communities, and a healthy environment, etc. Those values are unlikely to change much in fifty years.

Comments related to *Evaluation Measures*

- The study team should look into the following **case studies and models** to help shape the evaluation measures:
 - An **activity based model** provides a good base for measurement. It looks at all of a person’s trips in a day rather than focusing solely on commute trips. Staff clarified that the study will look at all-day trips and trip purposes; not just commute trips.

- **Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modeling (ITHIM)** provides good measurements for health, though it is very intensive in terms of expertise, time and data.
- **Nashville Tennessee** might have useful lessons to look at. Nashville used health and equity measures in their Transportation System Plan ten years ago. A project conducted in the small town/suburb of Tennessee might also provide good examples of evaluation measures, and the trouble of projecting data into the future.
- **Opportunity mapping** to inform the Study. Decisions about where to place housing and transportation facilities should be holistic, and consider placement of housing where there is access to transportation, good schools, and healthy food choices. The **Consolidated Plan** may also help inform this.
- The measures should **look globally** at what is needed to make a community function well, beyond just transportation (i.e., consider housing, parks, and other elements that make up communities).
- **Safety Measures:** Safety is inextricably linked to health. These measures could evaluate safety in relation to health:
 - **Safety for children** to travel to school and other destinations. Could look into youth injury statistics.
 - **Sidewalks and safe pedestrian areas**
 - Being able to get to destinations without **major barriers to walking**, such as having to walk across large highways.
 - **Crash data**
 - **Crime statistics**
 - **Perception** of safety. It is hard to measure, but easier to address (by installing lighting, etc.).
 - Presence of **community gathering places and plaza designs**, which are important ways to encourage walking and help people feel safe.
- **Health Measures:** Suggested measures and considerations include:
 - Likelihood that a project will **encourage an active lifestyle**.
 - **Childhood obesity** – one member suggested this as an evaluation measure, but others cautioned that a lot of factors come into obesity beyond just transportation.
 - **Measure of activity**
 - **Social connectedness**
 - **Access to outdoor spaces**
 - **Perception of safety**
 - **Housing**
 - **Education**
 - **Economic vitality**
 - **Availability and quality of jobs**
 - **Disparities and disproportionate impacts** – Health measures should use a lens to measure disparity. For example, there should be no disproportionate impacts of air quality on low-income communities.

- **Social Equity Measures:** Suggested measures and considerations include:
 - Measures should look at **who is being impacted**. The goals should be to reduce injuries for everyone, but also to **close existing gaps**. Some demographics (poor, elderly, etc.) are more affected than others. The goal should be zero deaths (Vision Zero) *plus* ensuring that no one group is affected disproportionately. One suggestion is to consider a measure that looks at **where housing developments are being built, and who is living there**. By understanding the availability of jobs in an area and level of education needed to work at those jobs, staff may be able to uncover areas where, for example, immigrant populations are likely to live.
Staff noted that demographic shifts are difficult to predict for a fifty year period, but there will be some data for household income, age and size.
 - Consider **who is being displaced** when large transportation projects come in.
 - When developing measurements to measure “equity,” it is best to focus on **impacts** that the project or facility will have on underserved populations. This requires a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data.
 - Data that measures the **distance between homes and destinations**. The goal should be to reduce distances to jobs, schools, goods, services, etc.
 - **Availability and location of sidewalks**. Being within walking distance of a location is not enough; safe and connected pedestrian facilities need to exist.
 - Being able to get to destinations without **major barriers to walking**, such as having to walk across large highways
 - Measure how the **location of transit** affects the diversity and demographics of a community.
 - Measure the **affordability of transit** and how that affects a family’s ability to get to jobs. The goal should be inexpensive or free transit in order to truly meet equity goals.
 - **Availability of transit** is an important equity consideration. Communities of color tend to cluster around transit-served areas. Many immigrants rely on public transportation because policies do not allow them to get Drivers Licenses.
 - Number of bedrooms or lot size to measure **housing opportunities**.
 - **Disaster preparedness:** an evaluation measure could ask what kind of transportation system would help us be resilient to a major event.
- **Other Measures:** Suggestions for other measures include:
 - Measure whether **mobility** is getting better or worse and who is impacted (can be measured using data that shows the geographic spread of mobility).
 - Impact of transportation investments on **rural and fringe suburban communities**.
 - Measurement of the **value of time**. A measure could ask: what is the cost of congestion in terms of income (using income and congestion data). This should also consider the **value of time for non-vehicle modes**. People who bike, walk, or take transit spend longer traveling than do drivers.

Comments on *Health Value*

- The Health value as written is **behavior-based, not environment based**. It is easier to measure personal (as opposed to community) health because it is specific. However, the focus should be on building a transportation system that leads to community health and provides everyone the same access to opportunity.
- The Health value should include **air and water quality** impacts.

Comments on *Social Equity Value*

- The Study should use an **equity lens**, rather than singling out equity as one value. The equity lens would measure whether there is a disproportionate impact on low-income communities with regards to each value.
- The value as written **does not close gaps**. The team needs to consider whether the goal is to lift all people equally, or address gaps already created. What is important is to have the same access to opportunity, and we can measure that by looking at access to education.

Comments related to *transportation drivers*

- **Using technology-based solutions** does not solve a lot of health and equity concerns. Instead, the measures should **focus on biking and walking** as the way to create a healthy lifestyle. There are future trends that we already know a lot about (like millennials not driving as much, more telecommuting, etc.). Technology advances like driverless cars don't have the same kinds of evidence. We should leave room for innovation, but also think about and anticipate problems that innovation brings.
- Members asked if some policies can be assumed in the transportation packages, such as **free transit service** in the area.
- **Poverty is shifting** from urban to suburban areas, which is likely to impact transportation and equity outcomes.

Action Items and Next Steps

Chris Deffebach encouraged members to send in links to documents or references that could be useful in developing health and equity evaluation measures (email to:

Christina_Deffebach@co.washington.or.us).

Members are also encouraged to contact staff with ideas for organizations/groups that might benefit from a presentation and the Study or who might be able to provide good insight into health and equity evaluation measures.

Due to schedule conflicts with the proposed meeting date for July 9, 2015, the project team will send out a poll to figure a meeting time that works for the most people. At that meeting, the project team will present to members some suggestions for evaluation measures based on today's discussion.