May 16th, 1:45 PM

Exploring the Contributions of Local Health Departments in Land Use and Transportation Policy: Implications for Cross-sector Collaboration

Meera Sreedhara
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: [https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cts_retreat](https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cts_retreat)

Part of the Environmental Policy Commons, Health Policy Commons, Place and Environment Commons, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration Commons, Translational Medical Research Commons, and the Transportation Commons


Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science Research Retreat by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.
Exploring the Contributions of Local Health Departments in Land Use and Transportation Policy: Implications for Cross-Sector Collaboration

Meera Sreedhara, MPH1, Karin Valentine Goins, MPH1, Semra Aytur, PhD2, Katie Heinrich, PhD3, Jay Maddock, PhD4, Stephanie Lemon, PhD1

1University of Massachusetts Medical School, 2University of New Hampshire, 3Kansas State University, 4Texas A&M University

The UMass Worcester Prevention Research Center Grant #UEZ2DP005331 provided support for this study.

**Background**
- Popular media, professional societies and government agencies endorse active transportation.
- Transportation and land use policies impact the built environment and can promote physical activity.
- Community- & street-scale urban design and land use policies are effective approaches.
- Land use and zoning policy decision-making involves planners, transportation/public works, & non-health departments.
- Local health departments (LHD) are encouraged to participate in transportation and land use decision-making, but it is outside their expertise.
- A need exists for cross-sector collaboration, given LHDs limited resources and staffing constraints.

**Themes**
- Physical activity & health perspective (n=44)
  - Emphasize built environment impacts on health
  - Broaden appeal and importance of transportation and land use discussions
  - Incorporate transportation and land use goals into existing priorities
- Knowledge of evidence base & best practices (n=23)
  - Provide evidence base/best practices supporting health impacts of active transportation
- Health equity (n=8)
  - Draw attention to the negative impact of land use and transportation decisions on vulnerable populations
- Resource support (n=7)
  - Identify, write, and secure grants
  - Sources of small grants, technical assistance or testimony
- Data & assessment (n=41)
  - Access to local datasets, collect qualitative community-level data, analyze and collaborate on health data & assessments
  - Identify needs, prioritize needs, describe utilization and demonstrate policy impact

**Research Questions**
1. What is the perceived value of LHD participation in built environment decision-making among practitioners in relevant sectors?
2a. What are the perceived unique contributions of LHDs?
2b. How can LHDs assist other departments in meeting shared goals

**Methods**
- Individual semi-structured telephone interviews
- Purposive & snowball sampling
- Sample identified through PAPRN+ & other colleagues
- Experience with public health in transportation & land use processes
- Thematic Analysis conducted by 2 analysts
- Interrater reliability 91%

**Sample**
- Total of 49 respondents
- Representing 13 U.S. States

**Disciplines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>19 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use planning</td>
<td>13 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/public works</td>
<td>13 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Advocacy &amp; Administration)</td>
<td>15 (31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public education or involvement**
(n=27)
- Engage public to enhance public support and involvement in built environment projects via education on health benefits
- Cultivate engagement through community meetings, effective communication, and development of trust

**Partnership**
(n=35)
- Build relationships with diverse group of partners (e.g. community members, advocacy groups, academia, external and departments)

**Strengths**
- First study of perceived LHD value
- High interrater agreement
- Large rich data source

**Limitations**
- Sample is non-representative due to non-random sampling methods

**Public Health Implications**
- Themes mirror core public health values, capabilities, and functions promulgated by national public health leaders.
- Themes align with Public Health 3.0.
- Identification of content areas and skill sets where LHDs can leverage their strengths to foster cross-sector collaborations.
- Inform development of sustainable capacity building strategies to increase skills, infrastructure and resources for LHD involvement in built environment decision-making to achieve active community environments.
- Current work includes engaging an expert panel and conducting a nationally representative survey of LHDs to develop standards of involvement/capabilities.