# Equitable Access to Active Transportation for Persons with Disabilities

*Data that can help frame community projects*

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NNPHI Session II

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***"Accessibility is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right. Ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities, has equal access to our public spaces and transportation systems isn't just about compliance—it's about affirming dignity, promoting independence, and building a truly inclusive society."– Anonymous.***

## What is Equity?

* Equity means the consistent and systematic treatment of **all individuals** in a fair, just, and impartial manner, including individuals who belong to communities that often have been denied such treatment
* This includes communities often impacted by equity issues such as racial & ethnic minorities, **persons with disabilities**, marginalized groups, geographically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, and intersectional identities

*Source: Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government*

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## What is Transportation Equity?

* The principle of ensuring fair and just access to transportation resources, infrastructure, and services across all segments of society
* Key Aspects
  + **Accessibility**
  + Inclusivity
  + Affordability
  + Safety and Reliability
  + Environmental Justice
  + **Community Engagement**

***Many transportation professionals often are unaware or simply ignore existing data on active transportation accessibility for persons with disabilities.***

## How Might We Redesign for All?

**Universal Design Principles:**

* Apply **universal design** principles in public spaces and buildings to ensure accessibility for people with **disabilities**.
* This goes beyond minimum legal requirements to create spaces that are genuinely usable and **welcoming** for everyone.

**Walkable and Bike-Friendly Infrastructure:**

* Design streets and neighborhoods that prioritize **pedestrians** and cyclists over cars.
* This includes safe sidewalks, **bike lanes**, traffic calming measures, and pedestrian zones, encouraging active transportation and reducing reliance on vehicles.

## Data on Active Transportation Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

**Observed Limitations and Data Needs**

* Limited scope of geographic coverage
* Lack of granularity regarding types of disabilities
* Infrequency of data collection
* Challenges in data collection
* ***Needs:***
  + Detailed mobility data across different types of disabilities
  + User satisfaction and safety perception data
  + Data on access to key destinations (e.g., parks)

## Additional Challenges:

* Identifying and Understanding the Role of Disability and Equity Partners
* Identifying and Involving Persons with Disabilities in Community Engagement Efforts

## The rate of children with a disability experiencing two or more stressful events chart

The rate of children with a disability experiencing two or more stressful events was 18.6 percent. In comparison, about 6.5 percent of children with no disability had experienced two or more stressful life events. This graph shows the percentage of U.S. children aged 5 to 17 who had experienced no, one, or more stressful life events as of 2019, by disability status.

## Percentage of people in the U.S. who had a disability and were obese chart

This statistic presents the percentage of people in the U.S. who had a disability and were obese from 2009 to 2016. In 2016, it was estimated that 38.9 percent of people with a disability were obese, compared to 26.4 percent of those without a disability.

## Multi-jurisdictional Example: Proposed Essex-Hudson Greenway Project in Northern New Jersey

The proposed Essex-Hudson Greenway Project would offer a nearly nine-mile long, multi-use trail corridor following a converted rail line, creating more than 135acres of new green space when completed. The Greenway sets the stage for the creation of a nearly nine-mile transformational linear park that will provide new recreation opportunities for walkers, bikers, birders, and other nature lovers while improving transportation options for area residents.

**Additional Challenges:**Identifying and Understanding the Role of Disability and Equity Partners  
&  
**Identifying and Involving Persons with Disabilities in Community Engagement Efforts**

* This variable shows the percentage of persons with various types of disabilities among the total civilian noninstitutionalized population.
* Disability types are categorized as: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty. Note that children under 5 years old are not included in cognitive, ambulatory, and self-care difficulty measures.
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* The spatial cluster-outlier analysis, aims at accessing the geographic pattern of census tract-level disabilities.
  + High-High cluster: a significant cluster of a high-value census tract surrounded by high-value census tracts.
  + Low-Low cluster: a significant cluster of a low-value census tract surrounded by low-value census tracts.
  + High-Low outlier: a high-value census tract surrounded by low-value census tracts.
  + Low-High outlier: a low-value census tract surrounded by high-value census tracts.

High-High clusters and High-Low outliers are worth notice as they shed light on either cluster of areas or single areas with a higher population of certain disability.  Furthermore, it helps identify high-prevalent areas with each type of disability.

This could ultimately enhance community engagement amount persons with disabilities.

## Municipal Example: The City of Savannah, Georgia

Healthy Savannah

CPTED Analysis - CPTED, or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, is a set of design principles used to deter criminal behavior through the physical environment. This approach emphasizes the proper design and effective use of the built environment to lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and an improvement in the quality of life.

**Complete Streets** – Streets that designed, Operated and Maintained with Everyone in Mind.

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) is particularly important for persons with disabilities for several reasons:

1. **Enhanced Safety**: Ensures safer navigation and access in environments, reducing vulnerability to criminal activities.
2. **Increased Independence**: Well-designed environments enable greater mobility and independence for persons with disabilities.
3. **Reduced Isolation**: Facilitates social interaction and integration by designing inclusive and accessible public spaces.
4. **Empowerment**: Promotes a sense of security and empowerment by enabling persons with disabilities to participate more actively in community life.

*Needs:*

Detailed mobility data across different types of disabilities

User satisfaction and safety perception data

Data on access to key destinations (e.g., parks)

[image of A local park for people to swim, fish, exercise, and enjoy social activities. However, it is divided by a local road that isn’t safe for children, young adults and seniors, and persons with disabilities to cross. ]

[3d renderings of Bowler C. Ford Park showing usability enhancements]

[3d rendering of Bowles C. Ford park showing parking, swimming pool, fishing pier, amphitheater, community garden, food truck, kids play area, benches and bike lanes]

[3d rendering showing lighting, walking track, trash receptacle, group gathering place, food truck, parking, and wildlife educational sign]

[aerial view of Kennedy Park]

[3d renderings showing before and after. Historically Black community with many of those owning homes being seniors, with and without disabilities. There are many noted concerns including vehicular speeding, crime, lack of access, and unfortunately inactivity by children and young adults]

[3d rendering showing enhanced safety and usability. **Traffic garden:** A traffic garden is a set of small-sized streets with scaled-down traffic features where children and other new learners practice, learn and have fun in a place that is free from motor vehicles. Traffic Gardens are known by many terms including Safety Towns, Safety Villages, Road Tracks, and Traffic Playgrounds. These spaces are designed to provide a practical, hands-on way to learn about biking skills, road safety, and how traffic works. They serve as a controlled environment where kids can gain confidence and master these critical life-long skills.]

## Rural Example: Noxubee County, Mississippi

***How might redesigning our towns with a justice lens tackle systemic inequalities and ensure fair resource access for every community member?***

Approaching the redesign of towns through a justice lens adds a deeper dimension to health equity strategies, focusing on addressing systemic inequalities and ensuring fair access to resources and opportunities for all community members. Here are additional strategies that incorporate a justice perspective:

***“To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi!”***

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## Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan

**Project Overview**

* Collaboration between the Small Town Center at MSU and Equitable Cities
* Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and AIM for CHangeE
* **Purpose: “**Catalyst project,” meant to improve safety, comfort, and accessibility of active transportation throughout the county

**Challenges**

* Rural Context with limited resources
* “Inflexible” Street design and conditions
* Unsafe traffic and personal safety conditions
* Car culture
* Rapidly expanding and popular ATV culture

**Select Findings**

* Need for investments in public parks
* Need for investments in sidewalks and existing walking tracks
* Need for increased access to popular destinations such as businesses
* Revitalization of each downtown
* Access to alternative modes of transport

**Project Outcome**

* Establishment of [Bike Noxubee](https://www.wcbi.com/noxubee-county-leaders-help-find-new-ways-of-transportation/)!

## Thank You!

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