

# TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IMPACT PUBLIC HEALTH

## A Public Health and Transportation Factsheet

CDOT envisions a transportation system that enhances the quality of life for all Coloradans. CDOT understands that public health is a key component of quality of life and the integration of public health concepts into transportation planning is something the Department can not do alone. Therefore, CDOT has partnered with public health and multimodal organizations to create a Public Health, Equity and Transportation Taskforce. This factsheet is one of the results of the Taskforce’s efforts.

### TASKFORCE VISION STATEMENT

Transportation systems impact public health, therefore, CDOT commits to consider statewide transportation policies and strategies that maximize the health and safety of all people.






### TASKFORCE PUBLIC HEALTH DEFINITION

Public health works to prevent disease, protect, and prolong life through organized efforts and informed choices by all people in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play.



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Outside of health care and genetics, the largest determinants of health are factors such as behavior, social and economic factors, and the physical environment which account for 80% of health impacts.<sup>1</sup> Below are selected national and Colorado social determinants of health that have a strong link to transportation.


| IMPACT   |  Air Quality  |  Obesity   |  Injury   |
|----------|--|---|--|
| NATIONAL | Vehicle emissions contribute a large portion of <b>air pollutants</b> . These pollutants are linked to <b>respiratory illness, cancer, and heart disease</b> . <sup>2</sup>  | One of many contributing factors of obesity is the time an individual spends sitting in a car, in addition to physical inactivity and access to active transportation like walking and biking. <sup>3</sup> | There are over <b>35,000 annual traffic fatalities</b> , <sup>4</sup> resulting in <b>medical and productivity costs</b> for individuals, states, and our nation. <sup>5</sup> |
| COLORADO | <i>Ozone concentrations in Denver Metro and North Front Range areas have exceeded federal standards, especially during the summer; putting many Coloradans at risk for asthma and other respiratory conditions.</i> <sup>6</sup> | While Colorado has the lowest adult obesity rate in the nation, the 2015 combined overweight and obesity rate of 5-14 year olds was over 1 in 4, or 27.6% <sup>7</sup>                                      | In 2015, there were <b>120,723 crashes</b> on Colorado roadways, resulting in the death of <b>547 Coloradans</b> . <sup>8</sup>  |


1 [https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2012/rwjf402311](https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2012/rwjf402311)  
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>  
 2 [https://www.colorado.gov/airquality/tech\\_doc\\_repository.aspx?action=open&file=2015AnnualDataReport.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/airquality/tech_doc_repository.aspx?action=open&file=2015AnnualDataReport.pdf)  
 3 <http://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators>  
 4 [https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2012/rwjf402311](https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2012/rwjf402311)

4 <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/Publication/812453>  
 5 <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/crash-injuries/index.html>  
 6 [https://www.colorado.gov/airquality/tech\\_doc\\_repository.aspx?action=open&file=2015AnnualDataReport.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/airquality/tech_doc_repository.aspx?action=open&file=2015AnnualDataReport.pdf)  
 7 [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DC\\_CD\\_fact-sheet\\_Childhood-Obesity.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DC_CD_fact-sheet_Childhood-Obesity.pdf)  
 8 <https://www.codot.gov/library/traffic/safety-crash-data/crash-data/crashes-by-county-2000-2015/view>


# TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS ARE PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

## TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IS AN EQUITY ISSUE

 **EQUITY** is when everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has the opportunity to thrive. This requires eliminating barriers like poverty and repairing injustices in systems such as education, health, criminal justice, and transportation.<sup>6</sup>

  
In 2015, **5.5%** of all households in Colorado did not have a car, compared to **14.8%** of all Black households.<sup>7</sup>

Nationally, communities of color make up a majority of transit riders (60%), with African-American riders comprising the largest single group (24%) within communities of color.<sup>8</sup>



Access to transportation can be an equity issue. Transportation can help or hinder people from making healthy lifestyle choices, such as accessing medical visits, employment, and healthy food.



For households that do not have a vehicle or younger and older individuals who are unable or choose not to drive, improved modal access like biking, walking and transit is essential.

## TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTEGRATION

Transportation systems impact public health. Therefore, CDOT with our Taskforce partners commit to develop statewide policies and strategies in ways that maximizes the health and safety for all Coloradans. Better planning and policy decisions made through an equity lens can help develop a healthier Colorado and improve quality of life.



<sup>6</sup> Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Office of Health Equity

<sup>7</sup> <http://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Who-Rides-Public-Transportation-2017.pdf>

All icons sourced from [www.thenounproject.com](http://www.thenounproject.com)