

# Planning for Active Transportation and Health

an effort of the Healthy Rural Roads Project

## Executive Summary

March, 2010

*"Ultimately, social equity means that access to all aspects of the community (including health, safety, open space, transportation investments, and economic development) is fair for all residents - regardless of socio-economic status, race, class, ethnicity, gender, age, or ability."*

- **International City/County Management Association**, *Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for all Residents, 2005*

Advocacy Planning Award, 2007



CA Chapter of the American Planning Association

*"Transport planners must recognize that their decisions can create self-fulfilling prophecies."*

- **Victoria Transport Policy Institute**, *Reinventing Transportation, 2003*

Those involved with community and transportation planning efforts are discovering a need for new decisionmaking models, techniques, and partnerships that will help communities provide **improved access to services, employment, education and recreation in ways that work for all community members**. At all levels of government and within diverse disciplines, there is an increasing awareness that:

- **Transportation, land use and economic development decisions are inextricably linked and**
- **Transportation investments affect public & social health.**

The importance of transportation investments has begun to result in **new decisionmaking practices**. Civil Rights Act and Environmental Justice (EJ) regulations have provided some guidance and tools for transportation planners within most urban and metropolitan regions. However, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), planning and public works departments with limited staff and resources are increasingly challenged to meet these government regulations while still addressing the needs of their communities.

This is an effort to provide practical measures to incorporate "Planning for Active Transportation and Health" (PATH) into decisionmaking processes as a way to address these regulations and improve overall access for community members. Those communities that pursue "transportation equity" ensure that all residents **benefit from an equitable distribution of transportation investments that serve travelers of all means and abilities**. This approach has benefits to **community safety, economics and health**.

## A New Perspective

To collectively **modify the standard tools, policies and funding programs** that contribute to inequitable, unhealthy and unsustainable transportation decisions, we need a new perspective. An evolution in the way we think about, identify and evaluate solutions to transport challenges will help communities:

- **Efficiently get people where they need to go:** plan for **community access** to services, employment, and education instead of focusing on **mobility**. In the PATH model, enhancing mobility is not the goal, but is instead one strategy among many toward achieving the overarching goal of improved equitability through increased access.
- **Consider everyone's needs:** establish a planning process and system for investments that clearly considers, includes and addresses the **needs of the whole community** -- including transportation-disadvantaged populations.
- **Look ahead:** Consider, proactively, the **impacts of transportation decisions and investments** on public health, social equity, land use and economic development, and involve a diverse spectrum of professionals and stakeholders to assist in the transportation planning process.
- **Learn from ourselves:** Periodically **review progress, adapt** to 'best practices' information and evaluate and adjust planning and design practices to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation planning and investments.

# PATH Resources

The PATH effort is an exploration of **practical measures** to improve the equitability of transportation decisionmaking and investments. It is a series of in-depth reports and supporting resources that synthesize research and emphasize the goal of transportation equity. The following documents and online resources are a product of a Caltrans Environmental Justice Program-funded grant to the County of Humboldt and Redwood Community Action Agency.



## The PATH Guide

**USE INNOVATIVE TOOLS** from the *PATH Guide*, a compilation of ideas, examples and resources to help small and medium-sized governments shift decisionmaking perspectives to find affordable, practical ways to improve transportation equity.



## Opportunities for Improving Transportation Equity

**SUPPORT AND INCORPORATE** recommended strategies to improve public participation, active transportation and community access in *Opportunities for Improving Transportation Equity in Humboldt County*.



## Transportation Disadvantaged Populations Report

**DISCOVER** new ways to consider needs of the entire community in the *Humboldt County Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations Report*, featuring intriguing GIS maps that illustrate disadvantaged populations, bicycle- and pedestrian-vehicle collisions and access to public transit services.



## Best Practices Report

**GET INSPIRED** by a unique compilation of innovative programs, projects and policies in the *Best Practices Report*. The report provides non-metropolitan regions with ideas about transportation equity, multi-disciplinary planning, promoting access and active transportation, and highlights planning and decisionmaking tools.



## Humboldt County Transportation Services Gaps Analysis

**UNDERSTAND** the gaps in Humboldt County's formal and informal transportation services, the challenges faced by those who rely on those services, and emerging opportunities for cross-service collaboration to fill those gaps in the *Humboldt County Transportation Services Gaps Analysis*.



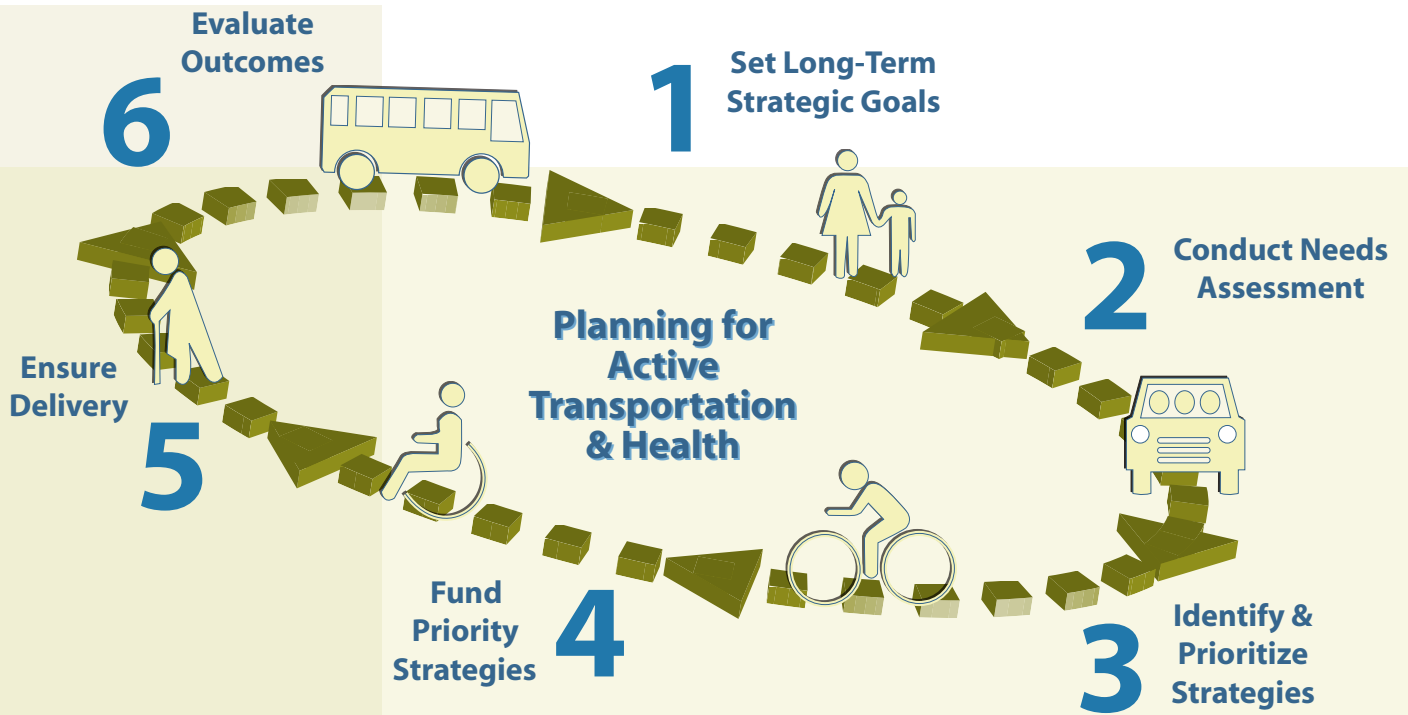
## Rural Transportation Partnership & Access Program

**FIND OUT** about how neighborhoods can partner with Humboldt County to improve access to goods, services, employment, and education for community members through the innovative *Rural Transportation and Access Partnership (RTAP)* program.

All of the above documents and resources can viewed at <http://www.naturalresourceservices.org/path.html>.

# The PATH Model

The PATH model is intended to incorporate a wide range of community interests and needs into traditional transportation planning efforts. The PATH model outlines **six basic procedural steps** (explained in detail in the PATH Guide).



At first glance, the model may look similar to conventional transportation planning processes, but there are several differences, including emphasis to:

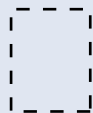
- **Link transportation goals to broader community goals** for equity, public health, economic development, and land use;
- Consider a **diversity of planning inputs** (e.g. hard data, qualitative information, maps of target populations, personal stories);
- Use inclusive, **innovative public participation techniques** to understand actual community needs;
- Consult the latest 'best practices' and research to help prioritize **which transportation investments will achieve strategic goals**;
- **Create funding partnerships** to get multimodal projects moving forward and build local stewardship;
- Ensure accountability in planning, contracting, and construction management so **multimodal projects are delivered intact**; and
- Evaluate outcomes to ensure transportation **investments are cost-effective in achieving community goals**, and revise investment as necessary to improve success.

The PATH model is not a revolutionary concept intended to overhaul existing planning processes. It is an evolution of conventional processes, designed to help planners, engineers, and electeds comply with federal and state regulations, while still providing their respective communities with opportunities for equal access.

---

*"Ultimately, social equity means that access to all aspects of the community (including health, safety, open space, transportation investments, and economic development) is fair for all residents - regardless of socioeconomic status, race, class, ethnicity, gender, age or ability."*

- International City/County Management Association, *Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for all Residents*, 2005



Natural Resources Services  
 A Division of Redwood Community Action Agency  
 904 G Street  
 Eureka, CA 95501

Prepared by  
**Natural Resources Services**  
 A Division of Redwood Community Action Agency  
 Eureka, California  
 707-269-2060  
<http://www.naturalresourceservices.org/path.html>  
[jen@nrsrcaa.org](mailto:jen@nrsrcaa.org)

With assistance from  
 Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates  
 Transportation & Land Use Coalition  
 Alta Planning + Design  
 Victoria Transport Policy Institute  
 Planwest Partners

Prepared for  
**The County of Humboldt**  
**Public Works Department**  
 With funding from  
**The Caltrans**  
**Environmental Justice Program**



## Planning for Active Transportation and Health

an effort of the Healthy Rural Roads Project



Inside, you will find summaries of useful reports and programs, some completed in 2006 and others in 2010 - all relevant to current efforts to ensure that every dollar invested in transportation and community infrastructure serves as many goals as possible and benefit as many community residents as possible.

- Best Practices Report
- Transportation Disadvantaged Populations Report
- The PATH Guide
- Opportunities for Improving Transportation Equity
- Humboldt County Rural Transportation & Access Partnership
- Humboldt County Transportation Services Gaps Analysis