



Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Thought Leader Discussions and Policy Recommendations on Increasing Community Design Through Physical Activity

2024 Executive Report

Written by: Maria Fernanda Gutierrez, MPH

Acknowledgements

The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) is a health justice non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of more than 17 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA, NH, and PI) living in the United States and its jurisdictions. For the past 30 years, APIAHF has worked with community advocates, public health leaders, and policymakers to generate policies, programs, and systems changes to improve the health of AA, NH, PI communities. To learn more about APIAHF, please visit the website at: www.apiahf.org

APIAHF appreciates the opportunity to provide recommendations on improving mobility, walking, and community-based physical activity in AA, NH, PI communities. AA, NH, PIs are diverse communities with unique cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, they share a common experience of marginalization, discrimination, and disparities in health outcomes.

Maria Fernanda Gutierrez, MPH was the lead manager overseeing this CDC-funded project and received support for this project from former APIAHF Capacity Building Specialist, Emily Gordis. To contact the authors, please email Jamila Shipp at jshipp@apiahf.org.

We want to thank all of our community partners and newly recruited thought leaders for their time, energy, and insightful discussions. Thank you for uplifting the voices of our diverse communities and supporting us in our shared efforts to bring positive policy changes for AA, NH, and PIs living across the mainland United States and U.S.-affiliated Pacific territories.

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Executive Summary

The goal of this project is to increase knowledge, awareness, and understanding of AA, NH, and PI transportation and land use experts' professional and lived experiences around barriers and facilitators to walking and other forms of community-based physical activity among AA, NH, and PI communities. This project examines the nature, pattern, and magnitude of commonalities and differences in access, opportunities, and behaviors to walking, mobility, physical activity, and transportation amongst AA, NH, and PI communities living in the United States and U.S-Affiliated Pacific Islands. The findings from the environmental scan and thought leader interviews were synthesized to identify potential policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches for public health to promote walking and community-based physical activity among AA, NH, and PI communities.

The project's goals were to:

- (1) amplify the AA, NH, PI thought leaders' experience and expertise around barriers and facilitators in their communities to walking and community-based physical activity,
- (2) provide recommendations based on findings from the thought leaders to increase physical activity through community design; and
- (3) identify possible policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches to promote walking and other forms of community-based physical activity.

This report summarizes some of the key issues facing the AA, NH, and PI community based on findings from interviews with people across the transportation and land use sectors. Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asian Americans who live in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands may face different obstacles to active transportation than their counterparts who live on the continental United States. Each group brings a different culture and history to form their daily transportation habits, which is also shaped by their current economic, geographic, and neighborhood environment. Culturally relevant strategies that may uniquely work for Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, or Asian Americans to promote community-based physical activity may differ due to historical, societal, and cultural context. For example, some Asian American communities have experienced gentrification of Chinese and Korean neighborhoods in New York City or public transportation challenges created by Minnesota's freezing winters.

This report includes recommendations for public health and transportation professionals to address the systemic inequalities affecting AA, NH, and PI communities' access with explanations of why these inequities affect AA, NH, and PI individuals' mobility and transportation decisions.

Method

This project occurred in two phases:

- Phase 1 consisted of an environmental scan of gray literature sources that focused on themes relating to active and public transportation systems connected to the built environment or urban land use mechanisms (see Appendix C).
- Phase 2 consisted of semi-structured interviews with 9 AA, NH, and PI transportation and land use thought leaders across the United States or its affiliated Pacific Islands (see Appendices A and B). The interviewees represented the disciplines of land use planning, transportation, public health, engineering, urban planning, and active transportation advocacy at the state, local, or academic level.
- Phase 3 consisted of taking results from the environmental scan and interviews, and synthesizing to develop policy, systems, and environmental recommendations.

Results

Analysis of the environmental scan and interviews revealed several barriers and facilitators to physical activity and active transportation in AA, NH, and PI communities. Listed in order of most to least frequently mentioned, the primary barriers and facilitators are:

- Among Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians, the legacy of indigenous displacement and racism has created a sense of disconnection to the environment and a feeling of unwelcomeness in public spaces that undermines social cohesion and prevents practices of physical activity.
- Transit agencies frequently lack knowledge about the causes and consequences of transportation inequities that affect AA, NH, and PI communities. By collecting more data about inequities through surveys and community input, transportation experts and researchers should solicit and validate oral and cultural traditions to overcome the lack of literature and data about these communities, land use experts, and legislative advocates.
- Anti-Asian physical and verbal assaults, which increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, have instilled fear and anxiety that has chilled AA, NH, and PI outdoor movement and use of active transportation.
- Urban decay, gentrification, and tourism in AA, NH, and PI communities, as well as diverted resources prioritizing wealthier residents, businesses, or tourists, have jeopardized AA, NH, PIs access to active transportation and other social services, leading to systemic inequities and challenges to obtaining safe and affordable housing, healthy food options, and adequate sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure.
- The overrepresentation of AA, NH, and PIs in service industry and blue-collar jobs, such as food service, hospitality, and personal care—and their greater likelihood to work multiple jobs—creates greater economic instability and limits opportunities for recreational physical fitness activities.

- Car-Centric infrastructure and corporate interests in large-scale developments limit activity-friendly transportation options for AA, NH, and PIs, who face challenges in accessing private vehicles. Decades-long infrastructure decisions prioritize large highways, parking spaces and wide driving lanes that limit safe walking paths, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and recreational spaces that promote physical activity and community engagement.
- Western-based physical activity practices often do not align with AA, NH, and PI community practices or their cultural and spiritual values, which can create barriers for engagement by over-relying on competitive, individualistic practices that stigmatize or exclude culturally relevant physical activities.

Recommendations and Policy, Systems, and Environmental Approaches

Public health professionals promoting physical activity in AA, NH, and PI communities can incorporate the following recommendations in their work:

1. Address systemic inequities in traffic safety transportation policies by (1) prioritizing communities who experience disproportionately higher rates of traffic-related injuries and fatalities, (2) reviewing laws that create inequitable enforcement practices and do not contribute to overall safety, and (3) address the increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in public spaces through data collection and engagement with community groups.
2. Implement research and data collection that captures disaggregated information on physical activity patterns and transportation behaviors specific to AA, NH, and PI communities.
3. Track the outcomes of transportation, land use, and public health initiatives in AA, NH, and PI communities with traditional and participatory data collection methods and community engagement.
4. Increase the representation of AA, NH, and PI urban planners, transportation officials, and community developers.
5. Prioritize AA, NH, and PI community participation and representation in transportation and land use policies and decision-making processes.
6. Build inclusive spaces for historical healing and community-based health promotion that honor the heritage and cultural foundations of AA, NH, and PI.

Conclusion

The perspectives of the AA, NH, and PI thought leaders and our review of gray literature reveal that the obstacles and facilitators facing these communities' access and adoption of active lifestyles are not solely an issue of transportation, public health, or economics. Instead, we see that generations of systemic racism have contributed to neighborhood disparities that reflect and perpetuate broader forms of economic inequality.

For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, centuries of displacement of indigenous communities have created a sense of disconnection from their environment. This history influences their present-day choices to engage in physical activity and participate in activity-friendly transportation options including safe walking and biking routes. For Asian Americans and some Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, the recent rise in anti-Asian racism and physical and verbal assaults against Asian Americans across generations has instilled fear and anxiety among community members, making them more unwilling to use public spaces or public transportation. And for many AA, NH, and PI individuals working low-wage service industry jobs, the economic reality of working and commuting to multiple jobs makes it challenging to prioritize physical fitness and health.

Promoting transportation equity alongside initiatives aimed at improving street design, enhancing pedestrian safety, and fostering a sense of security will empower AA, NH, and PI individuals to engage in walking and physical activity. However, more comprehensive strategies must be prioritized to promote the health and well-being for AA, NH, and PI communities. By addressing the lack of AA, NH, and PI representation among facilitators such as transportation planners, local community leaders who incorporate cultural practices into physical fitness programs, and researchers and experts investing in collecting more data about how policies affect each ethnic group of the AA, NH, and PI community, public health, transportation, and land use, communities can improve the health and well-being of AA, NH, and PI individuals.

Shaping Active Communities:

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA & NH/PI)
Thought Leader Discussions and Policy Recommendations on
Activity Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations

Principal Investigator: Maria Fernanda Gutierrez, MPH

JUNE 6, 2023

APIAHF
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM



Agenda

What do we hope to cover today?

About Us
Executive Summary
Importance of the Study

Background



Environmental Scan
Key Informant Interviews
Thematic Analysis

Method



Key Themes
PSE Recommendations
Q/A and Discussion

Results



APIAHF
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM

Mission

Achieving health equity for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities through law, policy, and practice.

Vision

A healthier future for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders inspired and driven by community.

APIAHF
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM



35+ Yrs

Serving over 35+ years of leadership, advocacy and movement building

25M

APIAHF is a leading voice for over 25 million AA & NH/PIs in the U.S

170+

Working with over 170 community organizations in all states & U.S Territories

1M

Helped enroll nearly 1,000,000 AA & NH/PIs in the ACA

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

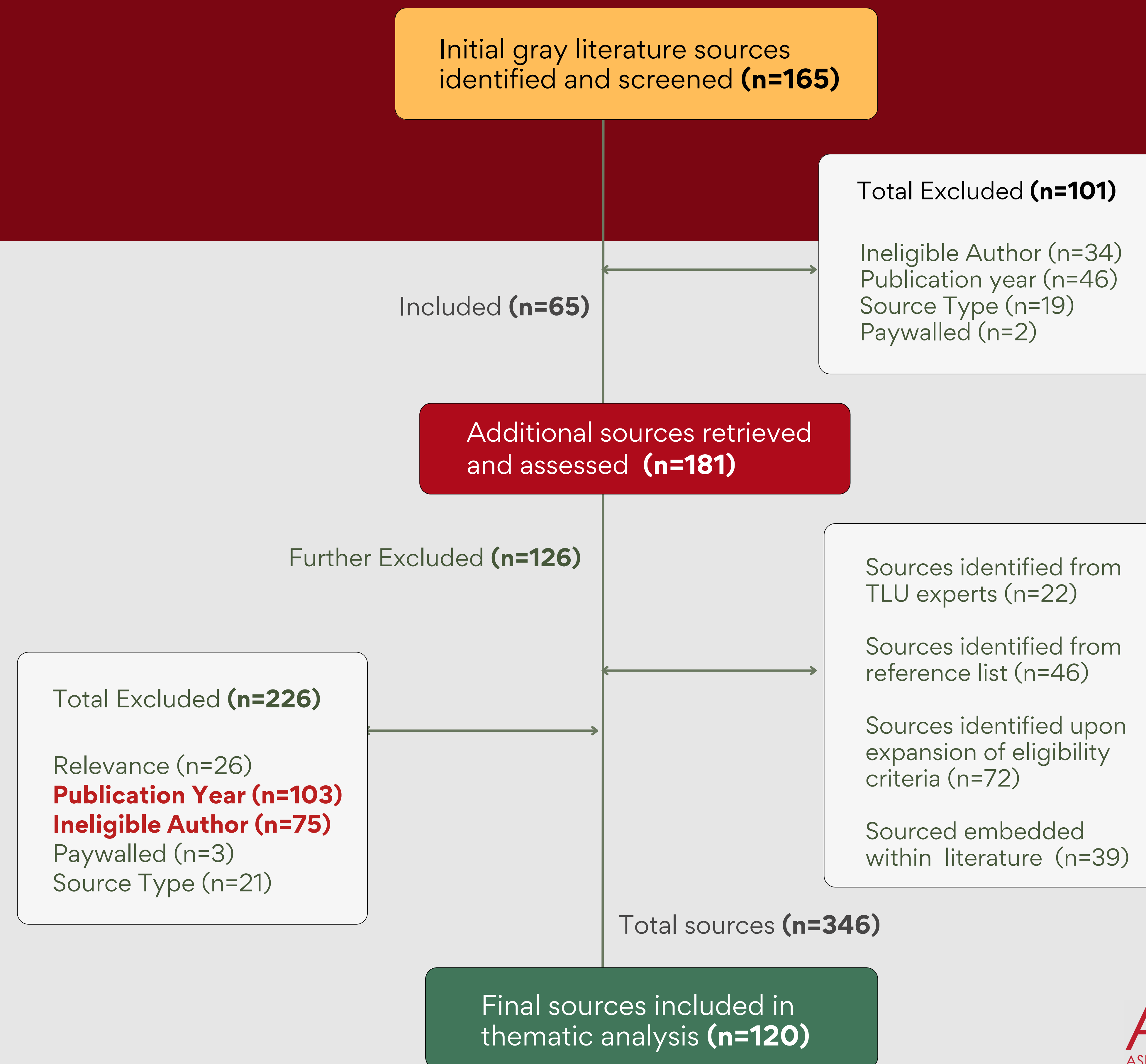
Methodology

INSIGHTS

Environmental Scan

Gray literature sources were selected upon the basis of meeting inclusion criteria requirements, particularly:

- non-peer reviewed sources published between 2017-2023
- written exclusively by AA & NH/PI thought leaders.

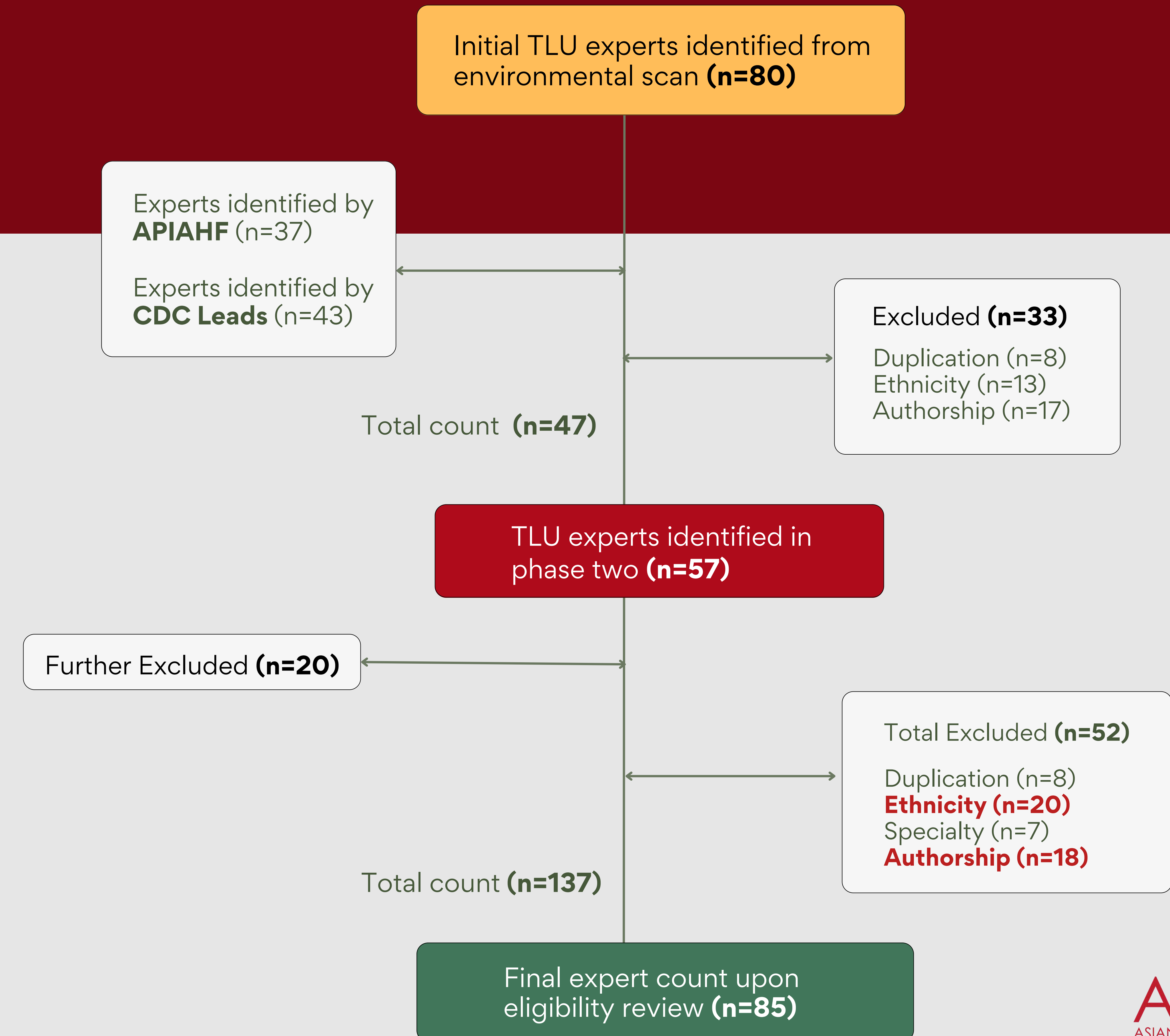


Thought Leader Identification

Thought leaders were independently reviewed by APIAHF for verification based on inclusion criteria requirements.

A total of **85/137** thought leaders met the inclusion criteria and were further considered in the key informant interview process.

Upon review, more than half (**60%**) of thought leaders were **excluded from the study**.



Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with **9 AA & NH/PI transportation and land use thought leaders** across the country.

List of AA & NH/PI Thought Leader Interviews

Name	Title	Profession	Agency	Region
Ashwat Narayanan, BECE	Executive Director	Traffic Engineering	Our Streets MLPS	MN
Kate Fillin-Yeh, MPP	Director of Strategy	Public Policy	National Association of City Transportation Officials	NY
Rosa Chen	Community Planner	Community Planning	Chinatown Community Development Center	CA
Siosaia F. Hafoka, PhD	Post-Doc Researcher	Public Health	University of Hawai'i at Manoa	HI
Lisa Lee, MPA, M.Div., LCI	Deputy Director	Transportation Policy	EZ Ride, Bike and Pedestrian Programs	NJ
Lingqian (Ivy) Hu, PhD	Associate Professor	Urban Planning	University of Florida, Dept. of Urban Studies	FL
Duncan Hwang, J.D	Director, Council Chair	Urban Policy	Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon	OR
Fahina Tavake-Pase	Executive Director	Community Health	National Tongan American Society	UT
Jon Nouchi	Deputy Director	Transportation	Department of Transportation Services, Honolulu	HI

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR

Key Informant Interviews

METHODOLOGY

Kate Fillin-Yeh, MPP

Director of Strategy, National Association
of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Question:

What are your general thoughts on initiatives like complete streets, vision zero, safe routes, etc? How effective have they been in improving AA & NH/PI residence abilities to walk, move through their communities, use active transportation routes, and so forth?

"The challenge with Vision Zero has to do with the resources and funding, but I think more than that, **I think it's a fundamental lack of understanding about what Vision Zero is supposed to be, as it's been translated into an American context. It sort of gotten corrupted in a lot of ways like...** I think it happened in Flushing, where an older Chinese guy, you know the cops decided randomly that they were going to enforce it. And that has nothing to do with Vision Zero and it's being marketed as Vision Zero. So instead we're going to blame individuals for system failures and enforce system failures on individuals, and that's not what this is supposed to be. So again... It's an incredibly important end goal for us to be shooting for, but it has to be... the resources, the time, the focus, has to flip... **To think about it more in the frame of like: "what are the systems that need to be in place to make this possible as opposed to what are the ways that individuals can get penalized for making mistakes?"**

Jon Nouchi

Deputy Director, DOT Services
City and County of Honolulu

Question:

What are your general thoughts on initiatives like complete streets, vision zero, safe routes, etc? How effective have they been in improving AA & NH/PI residence abilities to walk, move through their communities, use active transportation routes, and so forth?

In terms of mobility...One of my colleagues in the professional side of transportation, made like one of the best comments that characterize what we're working towards... **he compared mobility and the accessibility to transportation as this century's accessibility to clean water.** So in the 1800s to the early 1900s hundreds, people didn't have accessibility to clean water. So you had all these waterborne diseases, dysentery, cholera, all these kinds of things that were related to lack of availability of clean water. But as soon as water became available in like, maybe the mid-'30s and '40s, you saw those health outcomes just dramatically increase right? So his challenge, and I still remember him saying this was: transportation, it's just like water. **If we had accessible transportation for everybody, not just car access, but if people had the whole gamut of experiences and availability of ways to get there, then we would overcome a health crisis.** We could overcome a health crisis. That's always stuck in my head.

Rosa Chen

Community Planning Manager,
Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC)

Question:

What are your general thoughts on initiatives like complete streets, vision zero, safe routes, etc? How effective have they been in improving AA & NH/PI residence abilities to walk, move through their communities, use active transportation routes, and so forth?



During the pandemic, they had Safe Streets, or Complete Streets... And people are saying we need to close down streets in Chinatown, a lot of folks are trying to tell them, “What are you doing? Why are you closing down our street?... We didn't ask you to close down our streets. **We didn't think we needed more streets to go hang out. We can go hang out at Portsmouth Square, there's public parks we can go to.**” Closing down like Grant Street doesn't help the situation... So a lot of folks are bringing that up, like, **"why don't people talk to us before they make these changes?" Where do they come up with these ideas that this is what we need when it's not what we need?**... I love the idea of the most of them. I think the main thing is, where do you start that conversation with the community, and see if that's a need for the community?



Ashwat Narayanan, BSES

Executive Director, Our Streets MLPS
Certified in Transportation & Traffic Engineering

Question:

Have you observed significant changes in your community or environment over the years in MN?

"I'd say the biggest threat now comes from gentrification... For example, there was a new train that was planned to be built through downtown MN all the way through Northern MN and into the NE suburbs. That train was planned about 10 years ago. But even just the plans alone brought so much more interest in development along the potential rail lines, so developers started buying up new property. Rent started to go up, housing prices started to go up, and many people were then priced out of their own homes...**But when that happened, the train never came.** It was called the Blue Line, and it was completely routed. **So not only did they not get the benefits of the train, people also lost their homes and their businesses as a result.** And we're seeing this happen across the city to where new investments starts to come, which is one of the main reasons we put together this platform to create land banks, and to create grants to **make sure that public land is kept public, and to really think about the impacts of gentrification and displacement on people who are already at the precipice of losing their home"**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Thematic Analysis

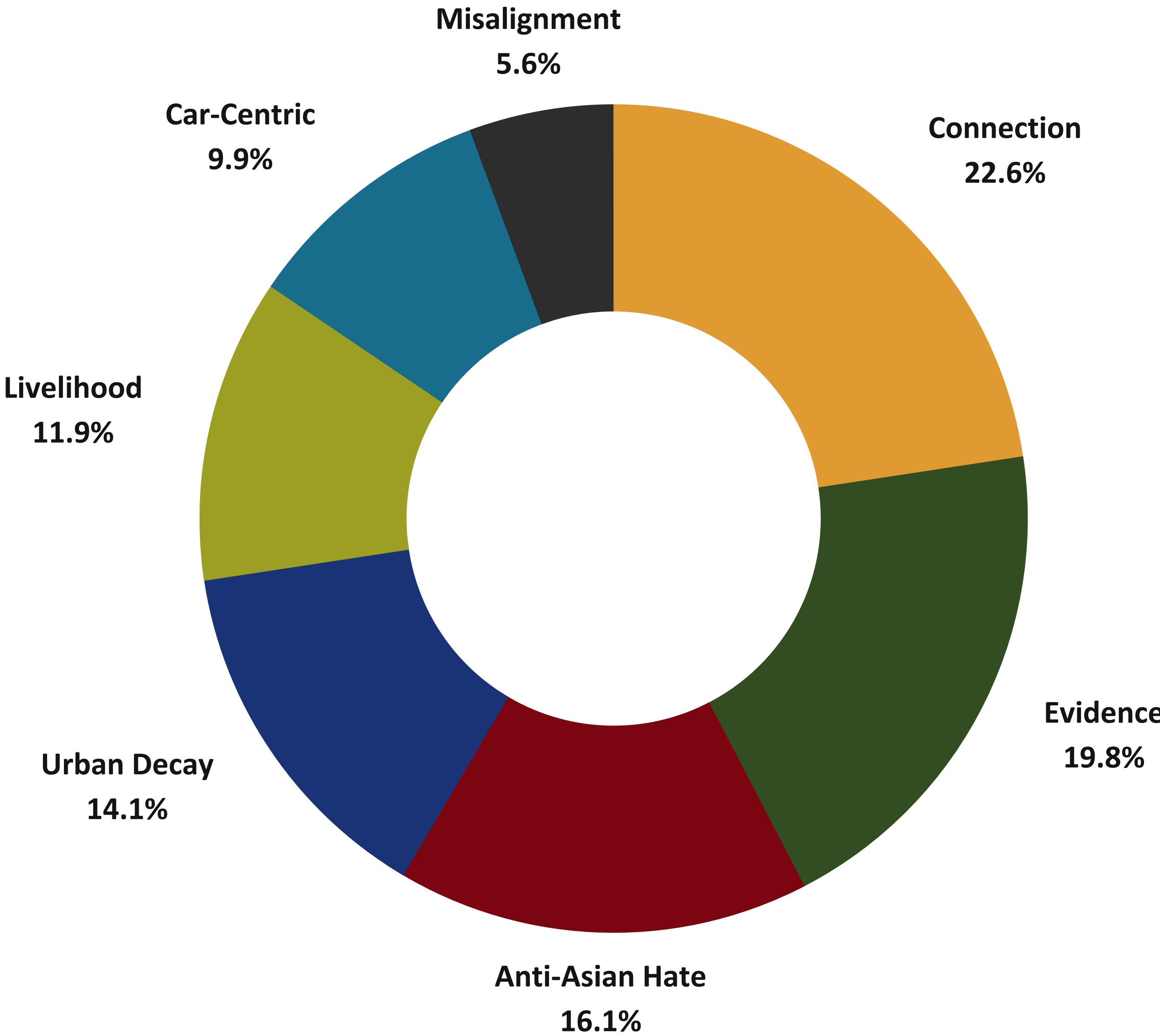
RESULTS

Barriers to Walking, Physical Activity, and Outdoor Movement

Primary Themes

- Sense of Belonging and Connection to Place
- Lack of Viable Evidence and Representative Experts
- Anti-Asian Hate and Sense of Safety
- Cultural Erosion, Urban Decay, and Gentrification

Accounted for **72.6%** of Codes



Secondary Themes

- Pursuit of Livelihood & Economic Mobility
- Car-Centric Infrastructure and Corporate Interest
- Misalignment with Western-Based PA Practices

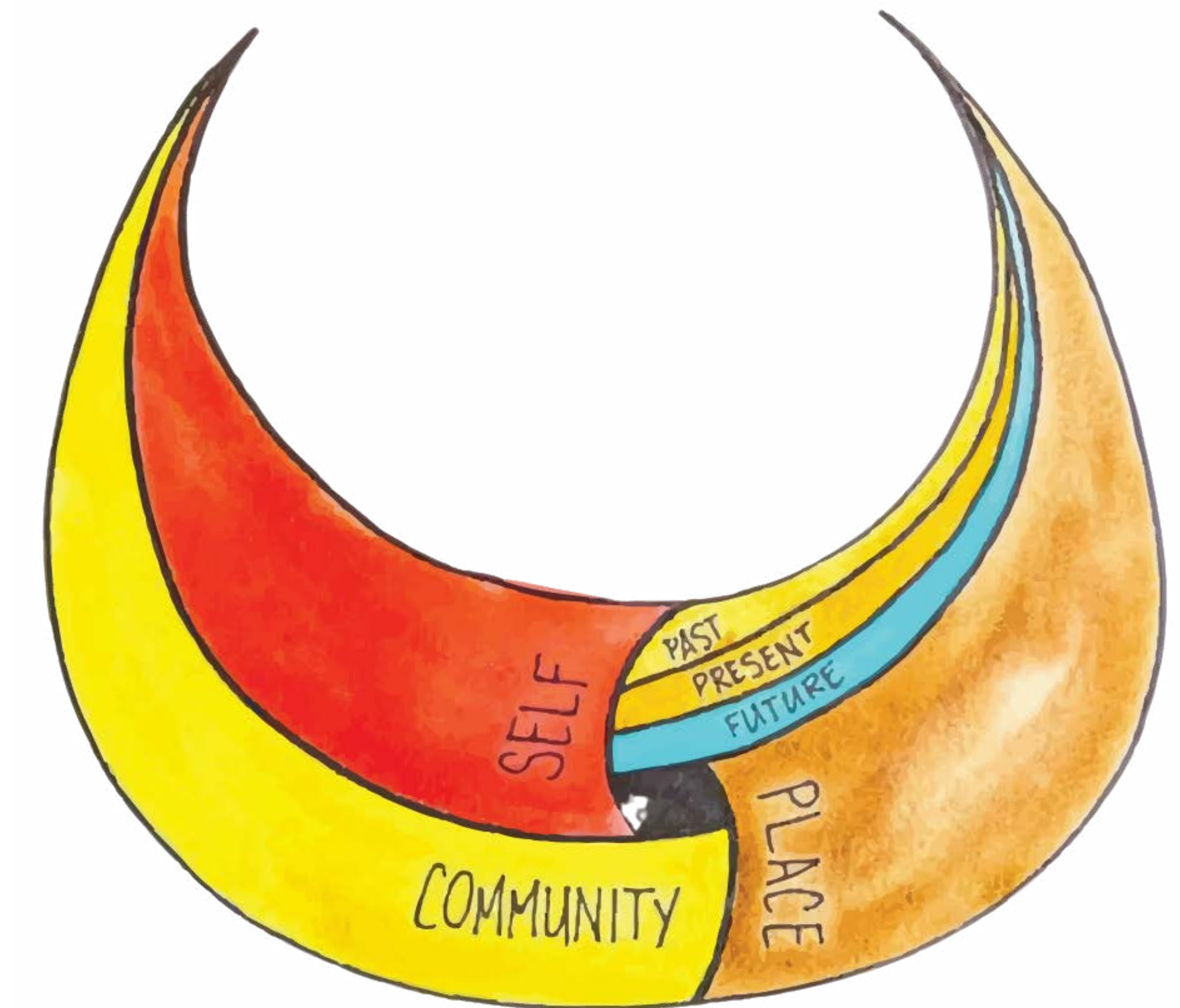
Accounted for **27.4%** of Codes

Sense of Belonging and Connection to Place

- AA & NH/PI communities have a rich tradition of sustainable land use practices and a deep spiritual connection to their natural and urban landscapes.
- Historical disinvestment, corporate tourism, redlining, and the loss of access to land and spiritual sites have created a sense of disconnection to the built environment and lack of social cohesion for AA & NH/PI's living in the U.S.
- Restoring built environments and fostering a sense of place is crucial for addressing barriers to physical activity in AA & NH/PI communities.

"The built environment can either bring people together or push them apart."

Dr. Lingqian (Ivy) Hu, Associate Professor of Urban Planning, UF



Pilinahā: "Four Connections"- An Indigenous Framework for Health

SOURCE: KKV 2021 ANNUAL REPORT / HĀNAI PILINA, HĀNAI KULEANA

Lack of Viable Evidence and Representative Experts

- The lack of evidence and representative experts poses a significant barrier to understanding transportation and land use inequities in these communities.
- Mixed-data sources pointed to a lack of knowledge and technical capacity among transit agencies to effectively understand the causes/consequences of transit-induced inequities.
- Cultural differences in knowledge transmission and disparities in the Western scientific method may contribute to the limited availability of relevant literature.
- The involvement of planners and experts who have a deep understanding of the community's needs and perspectives is essential for developing effective transportation and land use plans.

If we had planners who didn't just graduate from planning school and come in and be like, "I learned this in planning school, so let's do this..."

We need more planners who actually are coming... to get to know the community, get to know what is needed, getting to see... how people are moving...how cars move, how people use their own streets... before they come up with suggestions and plans.

It would be nice if they actually represented these communities, but...at least making sure to involve community from the get-go."

- Ashwat Narayananan, Director of Our Streets MPLS

Anti-Asian Hate and Sense of Safety

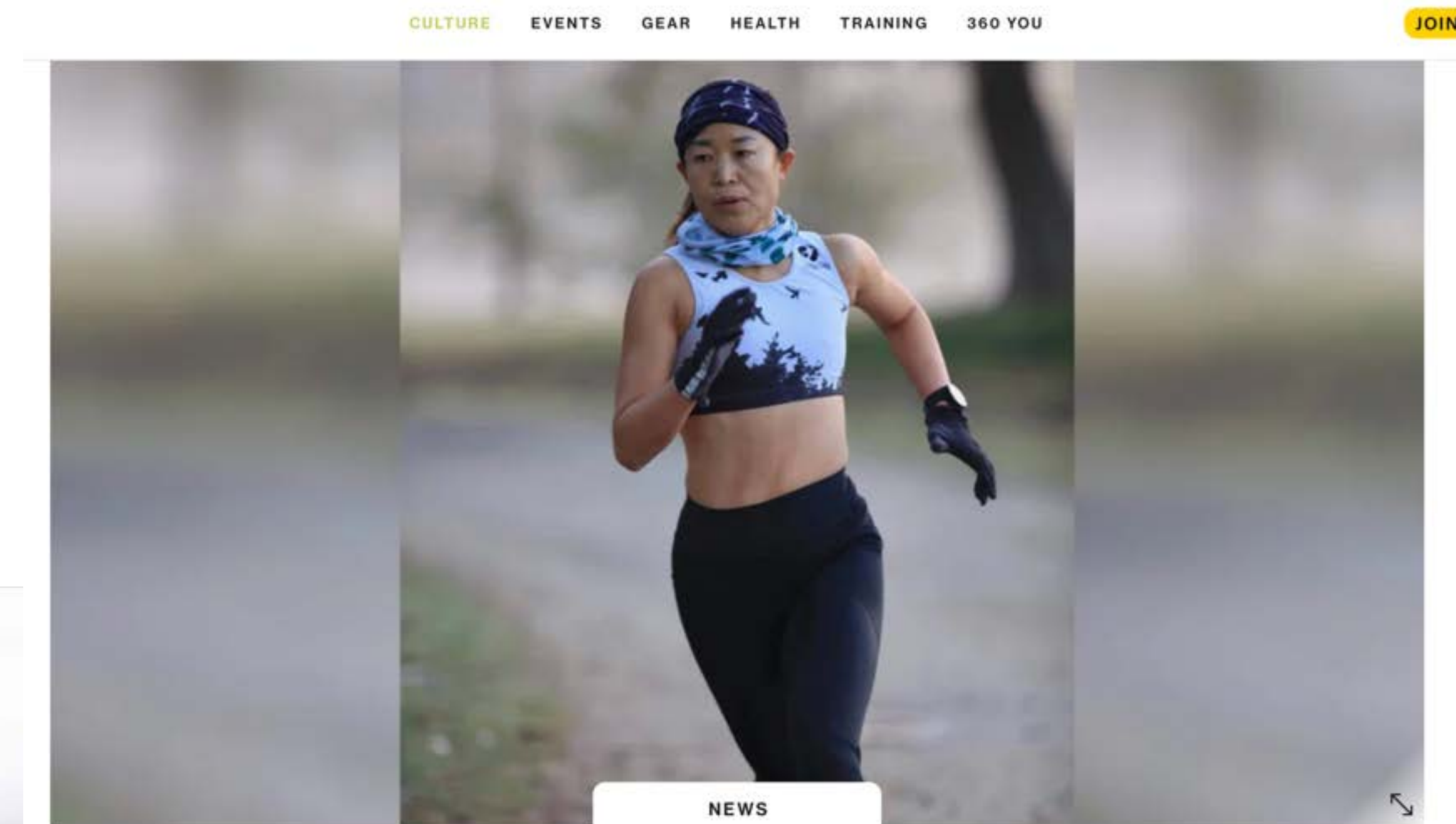
- Personal experiences of racism, verbal assaults, and safety concerns while in public were widely reported across various data sources.
- Unprecedented violence, particularly against AA women and seniors, have created fears and anxieties with accessing open spaces and essential transportation services.
- Key informants noted a perceivable decrease in the number of people walking and being active outside due to fears of Anti-Asian violence.
- Addressing the impacts of racism on outdoor movement and mobility is vital to ensure inclusive and equitable access to public spaces for AA & NH/PI's.



As an Asian American, I Cannot Outrun Racism

I was verbally assaulted by a white woman while out for a run. It's damaged my sense of running as a safe space.

Runner's World / Apr 8, 2021



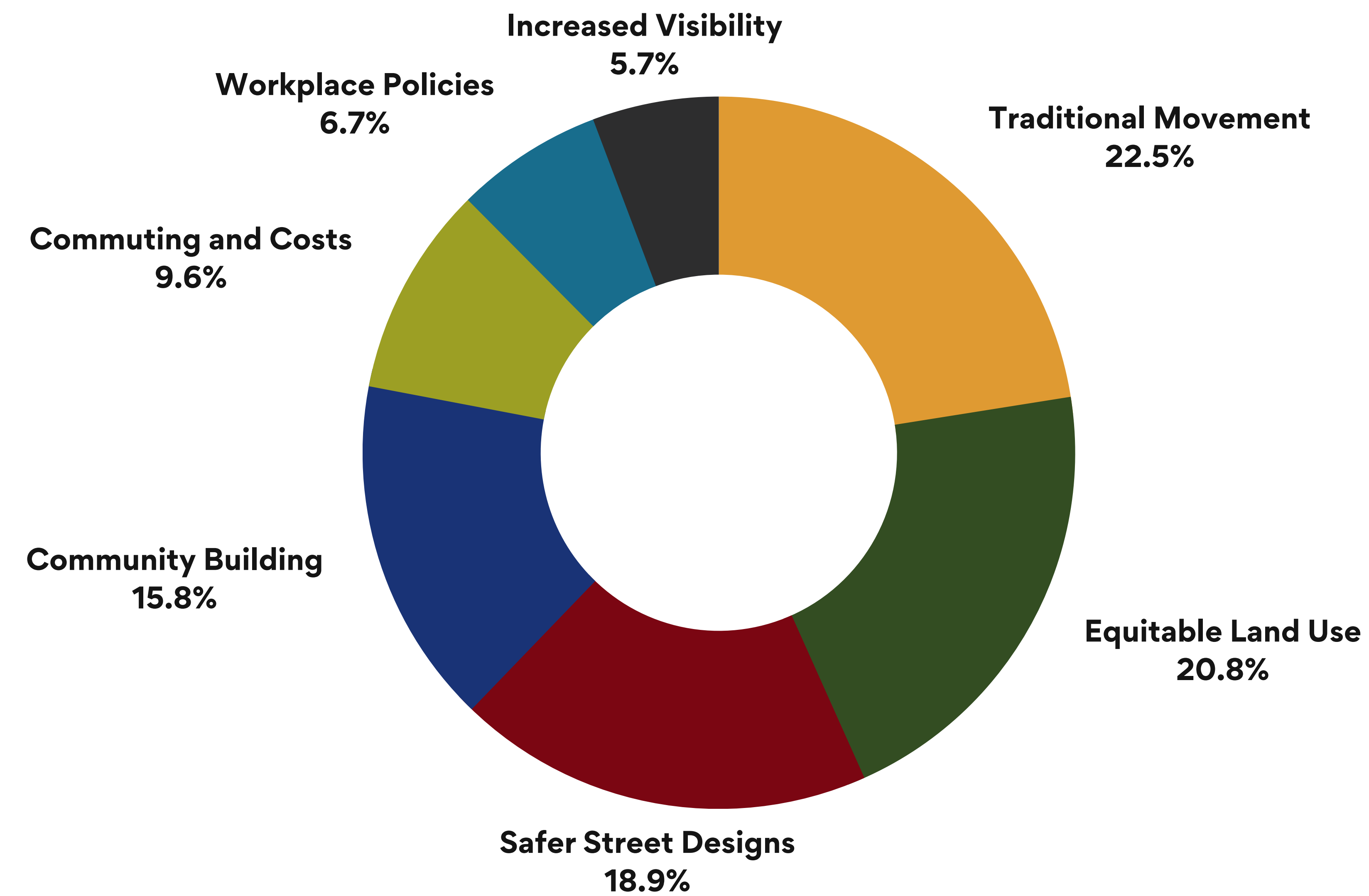
That Could Have Been Me: An Open Letter to Teammates From an Asian American Runner

Facilitators to Walking, Physical Activity, and Outdoor Movement

Primary Facilitators

- Traditional Forms of Movement and Recreational Spaces
- Equitable Land Use and Sustainable Development
- Safer Street Design and Sense of Security
- Community Building and Local Empowerment

Accounted for **78.2%** of Codes



Secondary Facilitators

- Reducing Commuting Inequities and Costs
- Workplace Policies and Incentives
- Interagency Collaboration and Funding

Accounted for **21.8%** of Codes

Traditional Forms of Movement and Recreational Spaces

- Community-based organizations can offer programs focusing on traditional activities that reflect the cultural values and preferences of AA & NH/PI's.
- Public recreational centers that preserve these practices and traditions contribute to community identity and higher PA engagement
- Integrating traditional movement into physical activity programs preserves AA & NH/PI heritages, celebrates cultural identity, and promotes physical activity.



Terasaki Budokan of Los Angeles Sports Complex
Gruen Associates

Safe Public Spaces Like Community Gardens Needed For Asian American Elders, But Funding In Jeopardy
Mee Vue stands in the middle of tidy dirt rows, looking down as she points out the watering line running the length of her garden. The drip system feeds...
KVPR / Apr 9, 2021

Equitable Land Use and Sustainable Development

- The cultural and historical significance of sacred places holds a strong influence on physical activity patterns and outdoor behaviors in AA & NH/PI's.
- The physical fabric of ethnic enclaves and community spaces promotes a sense of belonging to place that can improve PA and walking levels.
- Preserving sacred spaces, embracing architectural traditions, and creating inclusive built environments can help foster community identity and promote higher PA engagement levels amongst AA & NH/PI's.



"These spaces need to be considered in modalities and in different platforms throughout the community, and maybe not the Western American-centric model."

- Jon Nouchi, Deputy Director DOT, HI



Safer Street Designs and Sense of Security

- Increased risk of traffic fatalities and pedestrian assaults create safety concerns that discourage physical activity and active transportation in AA & NH/PI's.
- Accessible and welcoming transit systems ensure that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and identities can participate in physical activity and utilize active transportation options.
- Improving local infrastructure and built environment is essential for enabling AA & NH/PI's to participate in safe physical activity.



"You should be able to move through your environment, and grow up, and make mistakes, and those mistakes shouldn't cost you, or anyone else, your life... You should be able to build a system that makes it so that those mistakes that everyone is going to make doesn't cost people their lives."

Kate Fillin-Yeh, Strategic Director, NACTO

Co-author of "Dangerous by Design" 2020-2022

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PSE Recommendations

CONSIDERATIONS

PSE 1

Address systemic disparities in infrastructure, enforcement, and access by integrating an equity lens into Vision Zero Policies.

PSE 2

Enhance research funding and data collection practices to capture specific physical activity patterns and transportation behaviors in AA & NH/PI communities

PSE 3

Implement robust data collection and evaluation systems to monitor and hold accountable the implementation of transportation, land use, and public health initiatives in AA & NH/PI communities.

PSE 4

Develop policies that prioritize the hiring of urban planners, transportation officials, and community developers who share identities with AA & NH/PI communities, and other communities of color.

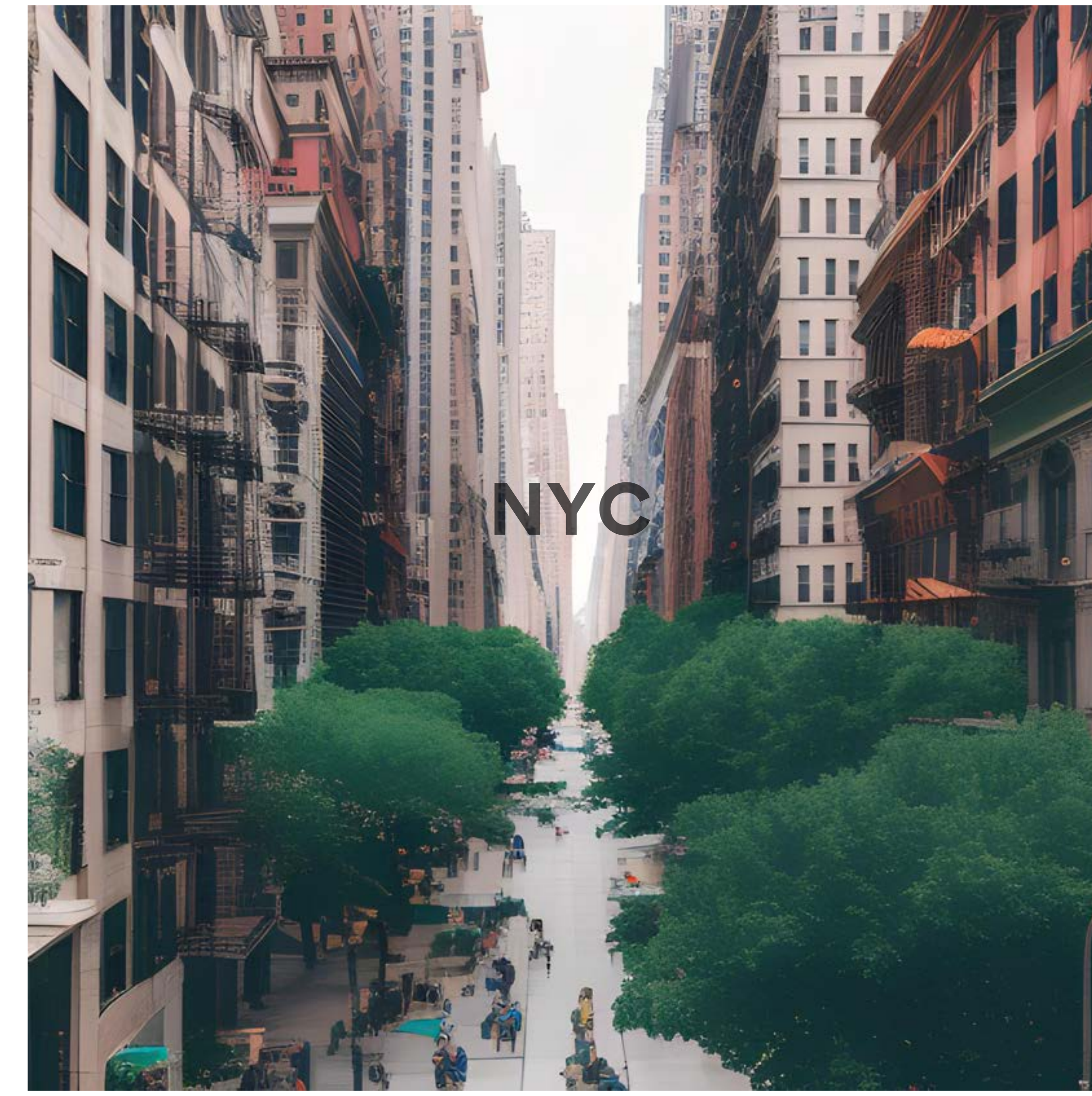
PSE 5

Address power imbalances and amplify AA & NH/PI voices by ensuring community involvement and representation in transportation and land use policies.

PSE 6

Build inclusive spaces for historical healing and community-based health promotion that honor the heritage and cultural foundations of AA & NH/PI communities.

I asked AI to
imagine a world
without cars...



PROMPT: "Retrofit the built environment of these U.S cities (SF Chinatown, Honolulu, and New York) to make it more desirable to walk by improving connectivity, accessibility, presence of greenness and parks, mixed land use, and closeness of destination points."

APIAHF

ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM

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Thank you for your attention!

Questions or concerns please contact me at mgutierrez@apiahf.org



SHAPING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES: ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER THOUGHT LEADER DISCUSSIONS FOR ACTIVITY-FRIENDLY ROUTES TO EVERYDAY DESTINATIONS

PI: MARIA FERNANDA GUTIERREZ, MPH



GOALS

- Amplify the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA, NH, and PI) thought leaders' experience and expertise around barriers and facilitators in their communities to walking and community-based physical activity
- Provide recommendations based on findings from the thought leaders to increase physical activity through community design
- Identify possible policy, systems, and environmental approaches tailored to AA, NH, and PI populations and contexts to promote walking and other forms of community-based physical activity

METHODS

- **Phase 1:** Conduct an environmental scan of gray literature sources that focused on themes related to active and public transportation systems connected to the built environment or urban land use mechanisms in AA, NH, and PI communities.
- **Phase 2:** Interview 9 AA, NH, and PI transportation and land use thought leaders across the United States or affiliated Pacific Islands.
- **Phase 3:** Synthesize and use results from the environmental scan and interviews to identify policy, systems, and environmental approaches tailored to AA, NH, and PI populations and contexts.

METHODS – IDENTIFYING THEMES IN BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

- Data was analyzed using a coding framework developed through an iterative process of open, axial, and selective coding to identify themes.
- Themes were examined to determine how they relate to each other and the research questions and were used in developing policy, systems, and environmental approaches tailored to AA, NH, and PI populations and contexts.
- Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the frequencies at which the primary themes appeared in the grey literature to determine relevancy to the project.

RESULTS – THEMES RELATED TO BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

Themes – Barriers

- Displacement
- Infrastructure
- Land Use Planning
- Lack of Population-Specific Data
- Representation
- Racism and Belonging
- Access to Culturally Relevant Physical Activity

Themes – Facilitators

- Social Cohesion
- Cultural Tradition and Nature Preservation
- Community Empowerment
- Community Knowledge
- Community-Informed Development



BARRIERS

BARRIER: INFRASTRUCTURE

"One interesting thing about [my city] is just how many streets and freeways are not controlled by the city government. **The freeways that cross over the city are either owned and operated by the Department of Transportation or the county. And these agencies don't necessarily have the best interest of the city residents at heart.**

Often, these streets and roads don't kind of respect the lifestyle of people who live and work and play along them are. That means they'll have really wide lanes and often won't have crosswalks.

Where I live, which is a very heavily immigrant heavy area, you'll often see like refugee moms putting their lives at risk everyday walking down those streets balancing their shopping bags on one side, and 2 or 3 kids on the other. **It's very painful to watch... but the state has said that this is not a priority for them.**"



BARRIER: DISPLACEMENT

"I'd say the **biggest threat [to our communities is] gentrification.**

For example, there was a new train that was planned to be built through downtown about 10 years ago. The plans alone brought **so much more interest in development along the potential rail lines, so developers started buying up new property. Rent started to go up, housing prices started to go up, and many people were then priced out of their own homes.**

But the train never came. So not only did they not get the benefits of the train, people also lost their homes and their businesses as a result.

[This] is one of the main reasons we put together this platform to create land banks, and to create grants to make sure that public land is kept public, and to **really think about the impacts of gentrification and displacement on people who are already at the precipice of losing their home.**"



BARRIER: LAND USE PLANNING



"In NY, there was a whole series of rezoning in the early 2000s in an area ... that had historically been “white-er”. ... [F]rom the 80’s onward, there was an influx of folks from various parts of China... and **what all these immigrants wanted was... a duplex or an apartment, where multiple generations [can] live** [instead of single-family homes].

[The existing land use] was still very much reflective of ... European-based older neighbors, and so the neighborhood leadership and formal leadership ... was all very much on the side of “we should keep single family zoning” [... despite the fact that] **the majority of the actual residents, wanted a substantially different set of zoning there in order to allow for more families there.**

[And then from the perspective of] safe[ty] and transportation in the U.S, **the denser stuff is usually more walkable. It is ... spill-over health and safety benefits by simply just allowing for more people to be there."**

BARRIER: LACK OF POPULATION-SPECIFIC DATA

“We need more disaggregation in terms of language and ethnicity, because a lot of the times when we fill out **forms it just says “Asian” or “Black” and that means so many different things. You know, there’s 84 countries in Africa, and there’s like hundreds of countries in Asia with thousands of languages,** and I think what might be relevant to one community, even if there are another Asian community, are just completely different... **It’s important to put in the work to be able to speak to communities in their language or the level they are used to.”**



“If we don’t have the data, we have no way to track the travel behavior, **we have no way to understand Asians’ different responses to build environment changes.** And again, most research is based on white Americans’ experiences... We just don’t have data, then we don’t have results. Everything is speculation and personal stories.”

BARRIER: REPRESENTATION



"During the pandemic, they had **Safe Streets, or Complete Streets** close down streets in Chinatown. [And] a lot of folks [who live in Chinatown] are trying to tell them, "What are you doing? Why are you closing down our street? We didn't ask you to close down our streets. We didn't think we needed more streets to go hang out."

So a lot of folks are bringing that up: **"Why don't people talk to us before they make these changes?"**

I think the main thing is, where do you start that conversation with the community, and see if that's a need for the community?"

BARRIER: RACISM AND BELONGING

"We heard about so many [anti-Asian] incidents in Asian communities. **So, Asians are diverting from their own neighborhoods: Chinatown, Little Tokyo, etc.** And then in those new communities, Asians also feel more scared and are then less likely to walk around.

Social barriers are more serious than the physical environment. I think the safety concerns are more serious for Asian women than for men, not only because of the race factor, but again because of the **gender and because of harassment and security concerns.**"



BARRIER: ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RELEVANT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



"The U.S. ordered that they stopped teaching Hawaiian, the Hawaiian language, in schools. And they also ordered that they stopped teaching hula, which, you know, cultural dance is more than just entertainment. You get language, you get history, you get all of that through these cultural dances."



FACILITATORS

FACILITATOR: SOCIAL COHESION

“Native Hawaiians also view personal health as deeply connected to the wellbeing of their ‘ohana (family, friends, and community) and ‘āina (land).”



“Pickleball is so huge in our community right now... People are going to places [like parks to play], and it's not only just folks that are in their thirties, forties, fifties, and things. It's like sixties and seventies, and some eighties, and kids that are like in their teenage, and even younger, like nine years old.

When you boil it down, Pacific Islanders are socializers. They socialize. They like to get together with their friends and their families and things like that. If, for example, pickleball brings the family together and allows everybody... I think that's one of the reasons why it's up there.”

FACILITATOR: CULTURAL TRADITION AND NATURE PRESERVATION



"[F]or a lot of our folks, they walk everywhere. Walking is the way they get around. Even if there is a bus available to get them from one point to another, walking is very important to them, because it's about their health. [W]hen I went to go visit **my relatives in China, [...] every night after dinner there'll be like, 'Let's go for a walk at a park.'** And this is something to do every day, even during the summer, when it's hot. They're just like, **'We need to take a walk, because physical activity is very important for our community'...** And in Chinatown, you see that a lot, too.

That's why our streets are very important to make sure that there is a way for people to walk around. It's important for us to have open space like our parks... Those are the locations people like to go and exercise. I think one of the things that you'll notice with a lot of our communities is they love utilizing our parks because there is space for them to walk, exercise."

FACILITATOR: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

"We needed to move away from being seen as an organization that is just advocating for bike lanes, because **this is not just about [lanes]. It's about injustice in the transportation system.** And ... we didn't see any way to move forward without [being] able to talk to people in multiple different ways...

So we built a platform by bringing in a lot of local partners to help us build out these things. That also helped us create our future strategic plan. We still have a long way to go, but it's a good start, and **has really helped us build trust in communities** across the city."



FACILITATOR: COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE



"But I think a lot of the issues that we notice is [advocacy organizations] don't talk to the community, because **they don't know how to talk to the community.**

A lot of the scrambles that came into Chinatown were from talking to the community. [We heard community members say,] 'Yeah, we love the scrambles in Chinatown. Add more.'

It comes back to community outreach, like how much outreach is being done with the community to discuss about what happened? Sometimes there's not a need to do something that's a quick fix. We don't need quick fixes for one fatality that happened. **We need long-term fixes that the community can buy into and want to have.**"

FACILITATOR: COMMUNITY-INFORMED DEVELOPMENT

"One of my colleagues in the professional side of transportation, compared mobility and the accessibility to transportation as this century's accessibility to clean water. ...[A]s soon as clean water became available in, you saw those health outcomes [from clean water free of waterborne diseases, dysentery, cholera] just dramatically increase...

If we had accessible transportation for everybody, not just car access, but if people had the whole gamut of experiences and availability of ways to get there, then we would overcome a health crisis."

