

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

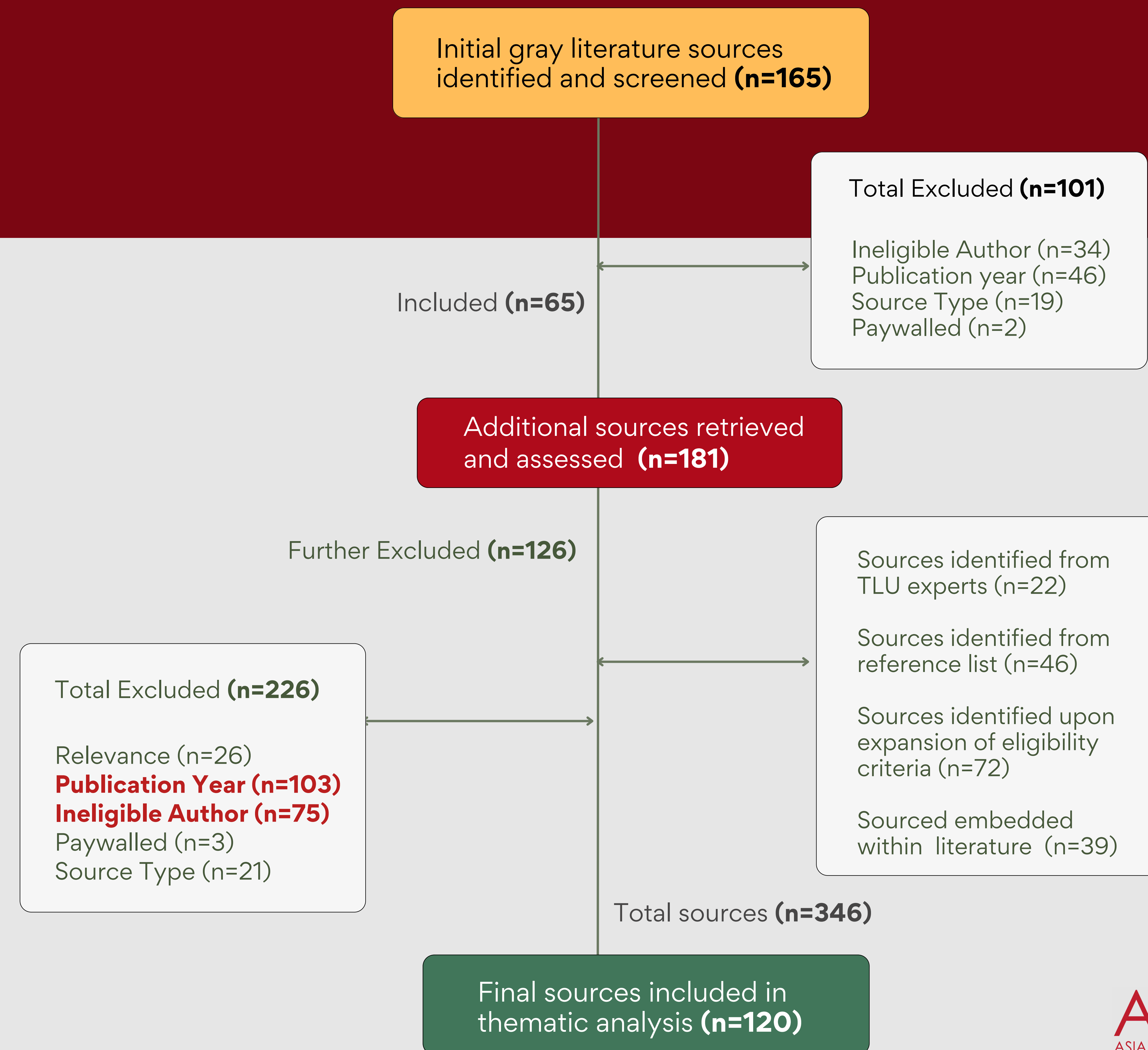
Methodology

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.

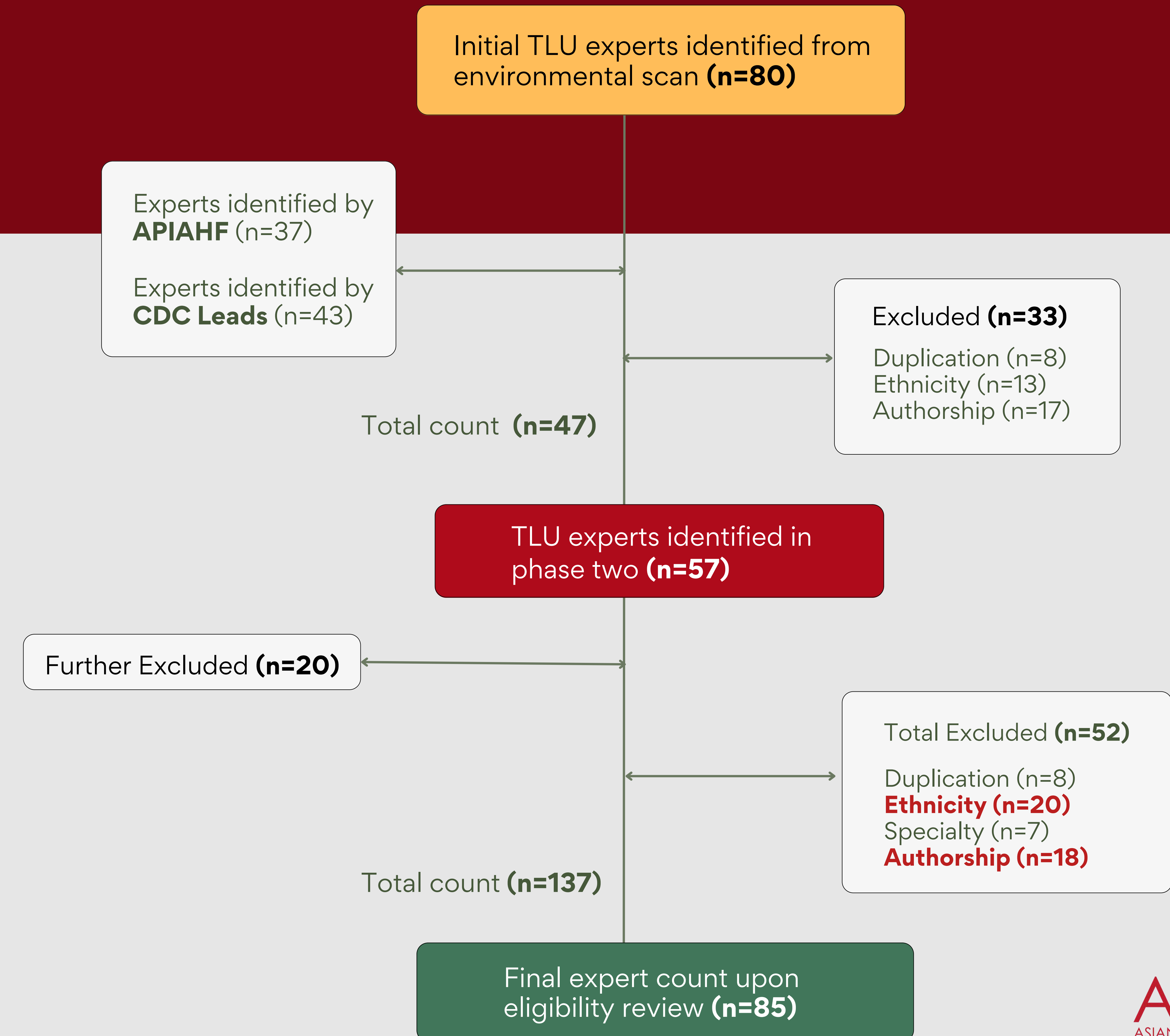


Thought Leader Identification

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

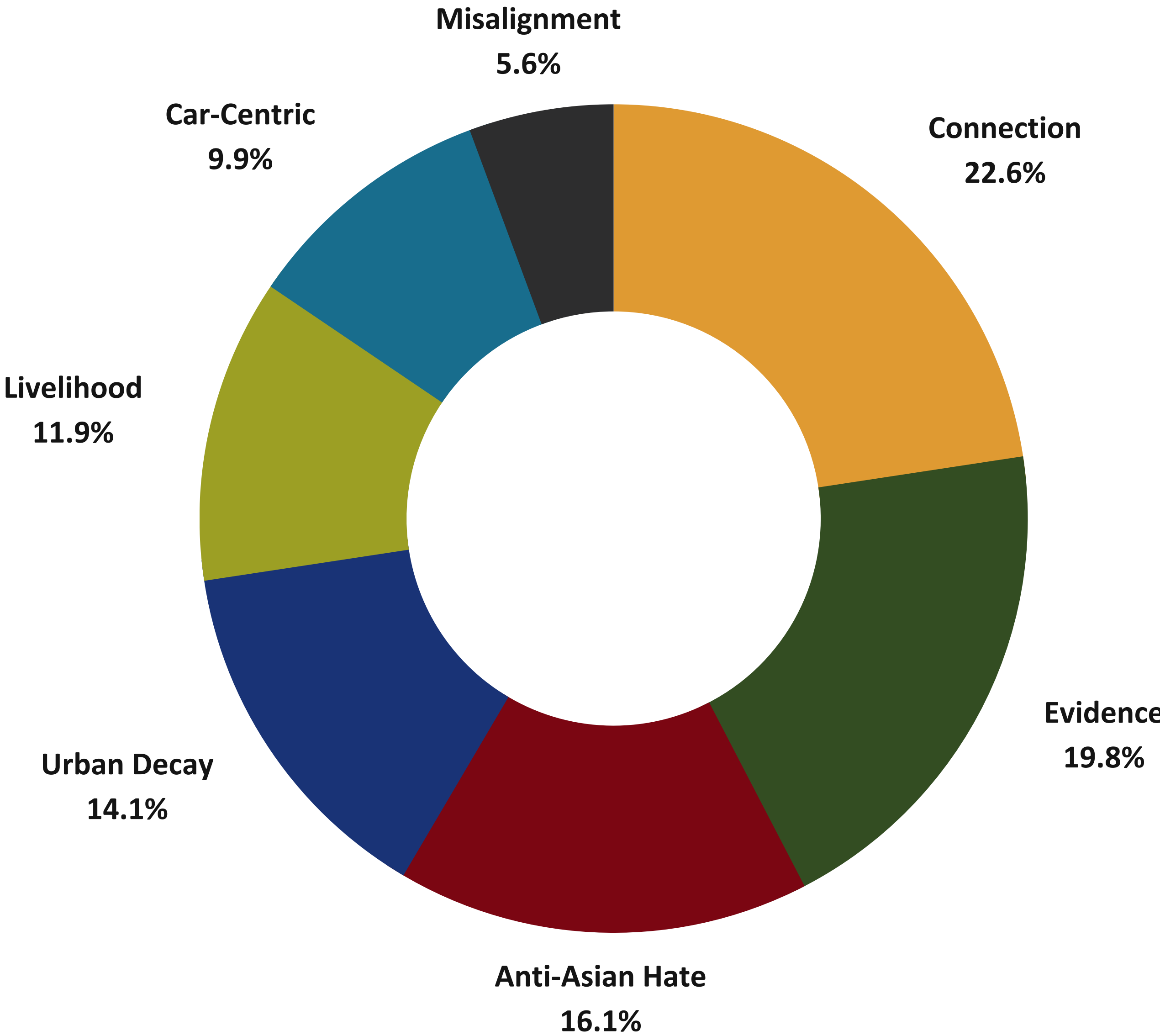
RESULTS

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

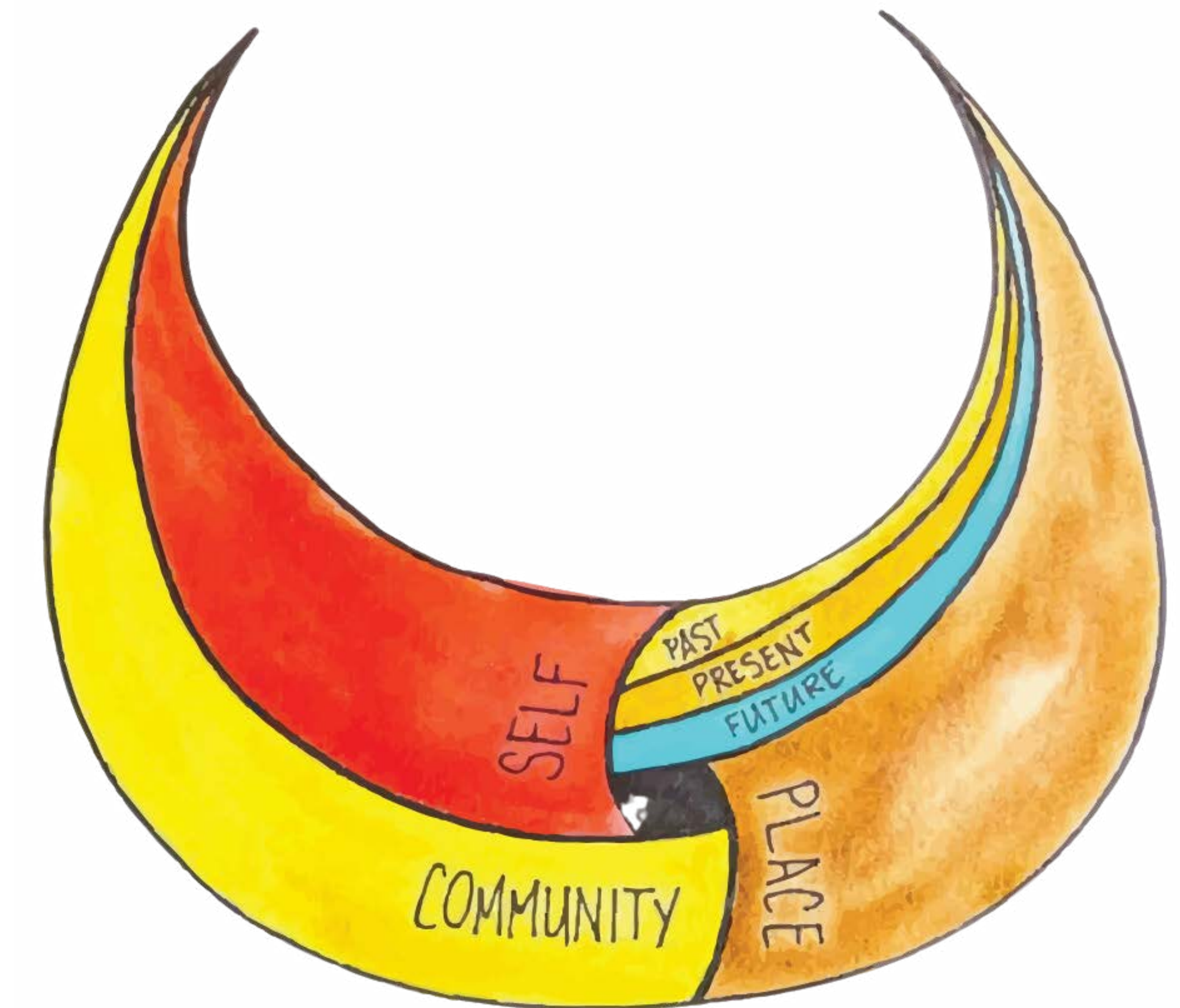
Accounted for **27.4%** of Codes

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

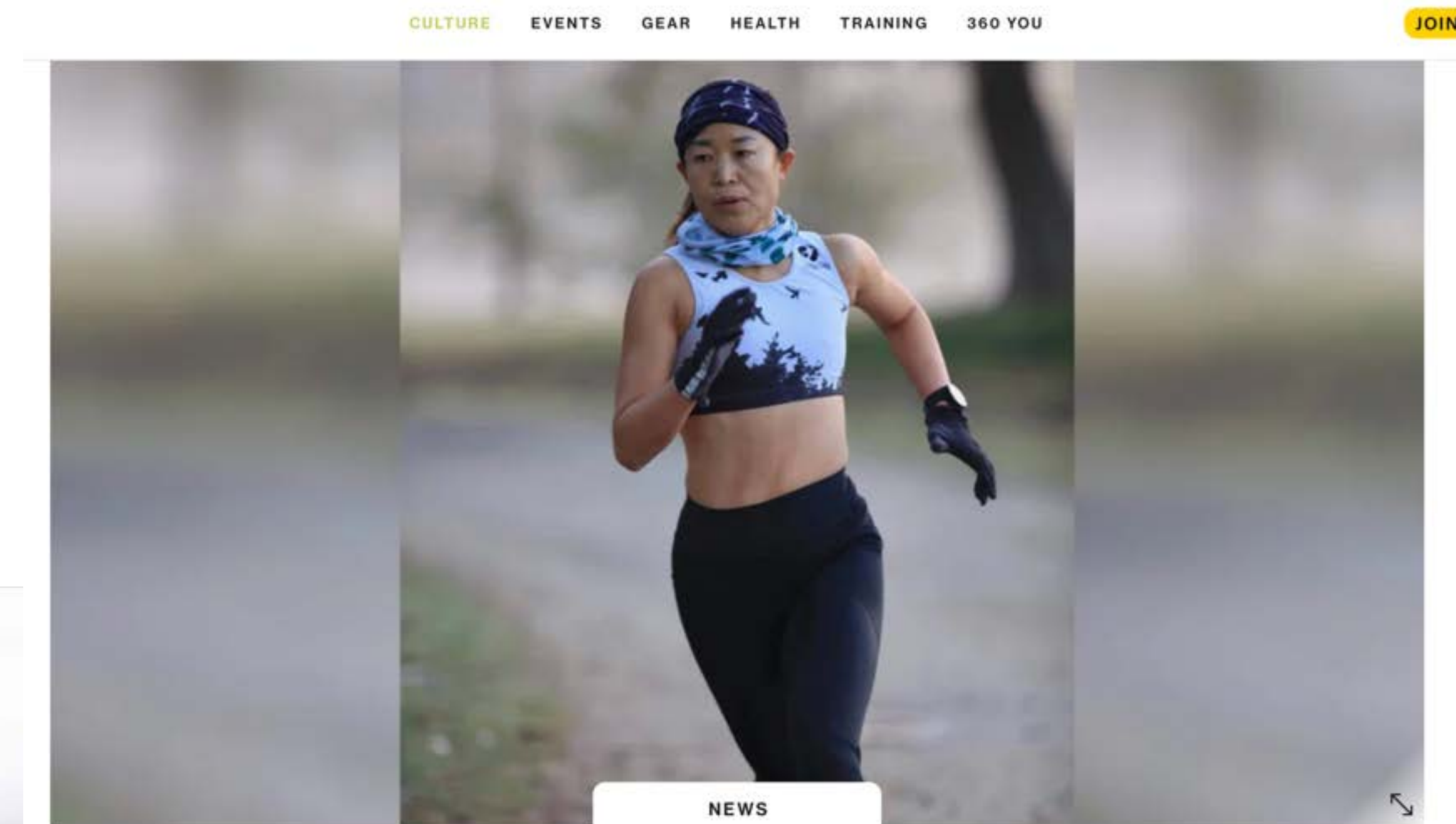
- Personal experiences of racism, verbal assaults, and safety concerns while in public were widely reported across various data sources.
- Unprecedented violence, particularly against AA women and seniors, have created fears and anxieties with accessing open spaces and essential transportation services.
- 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



NEWS

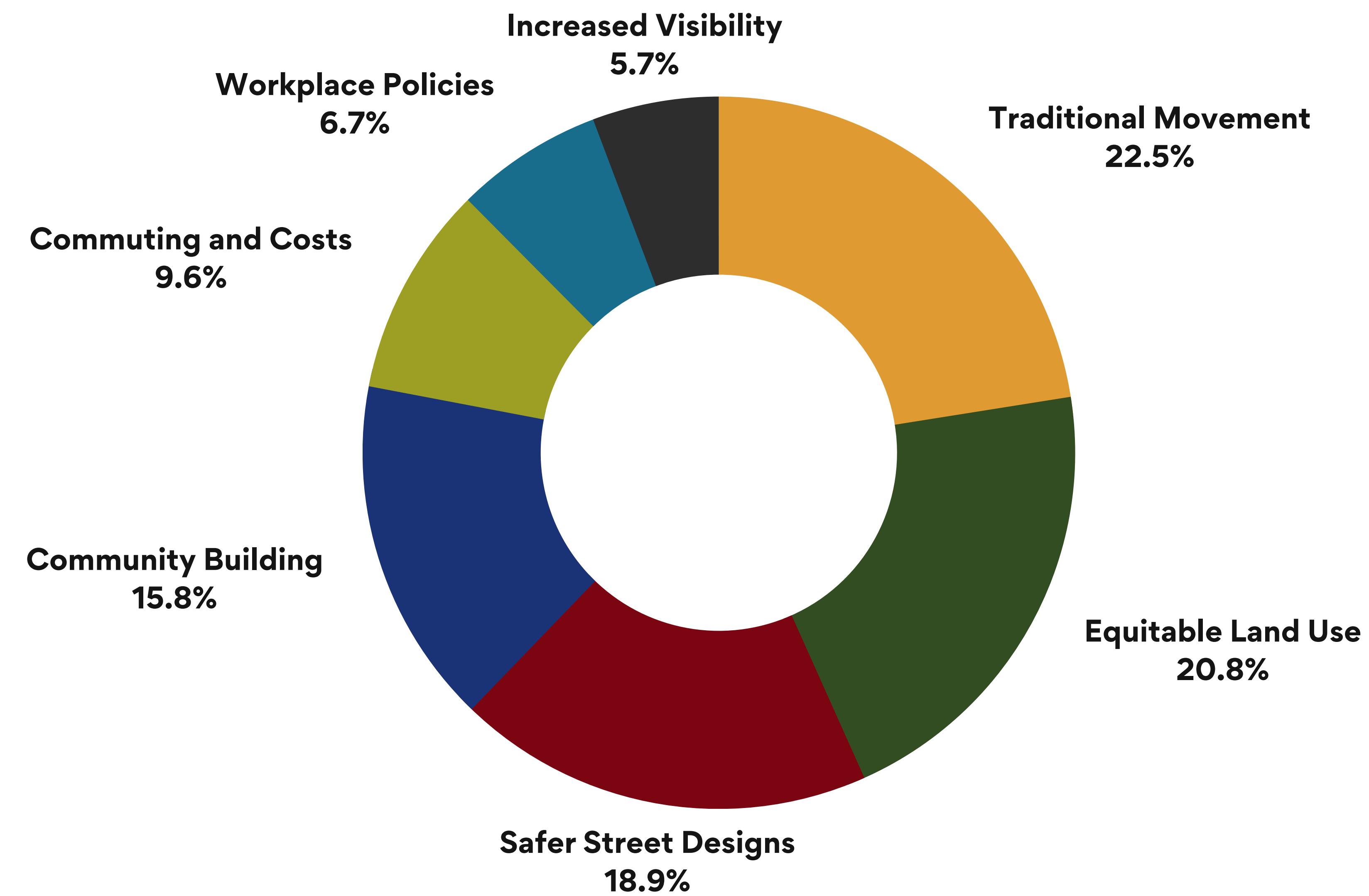
That Could Have Been Me: An Open Letter to Teammates From an Asian American Runner

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.

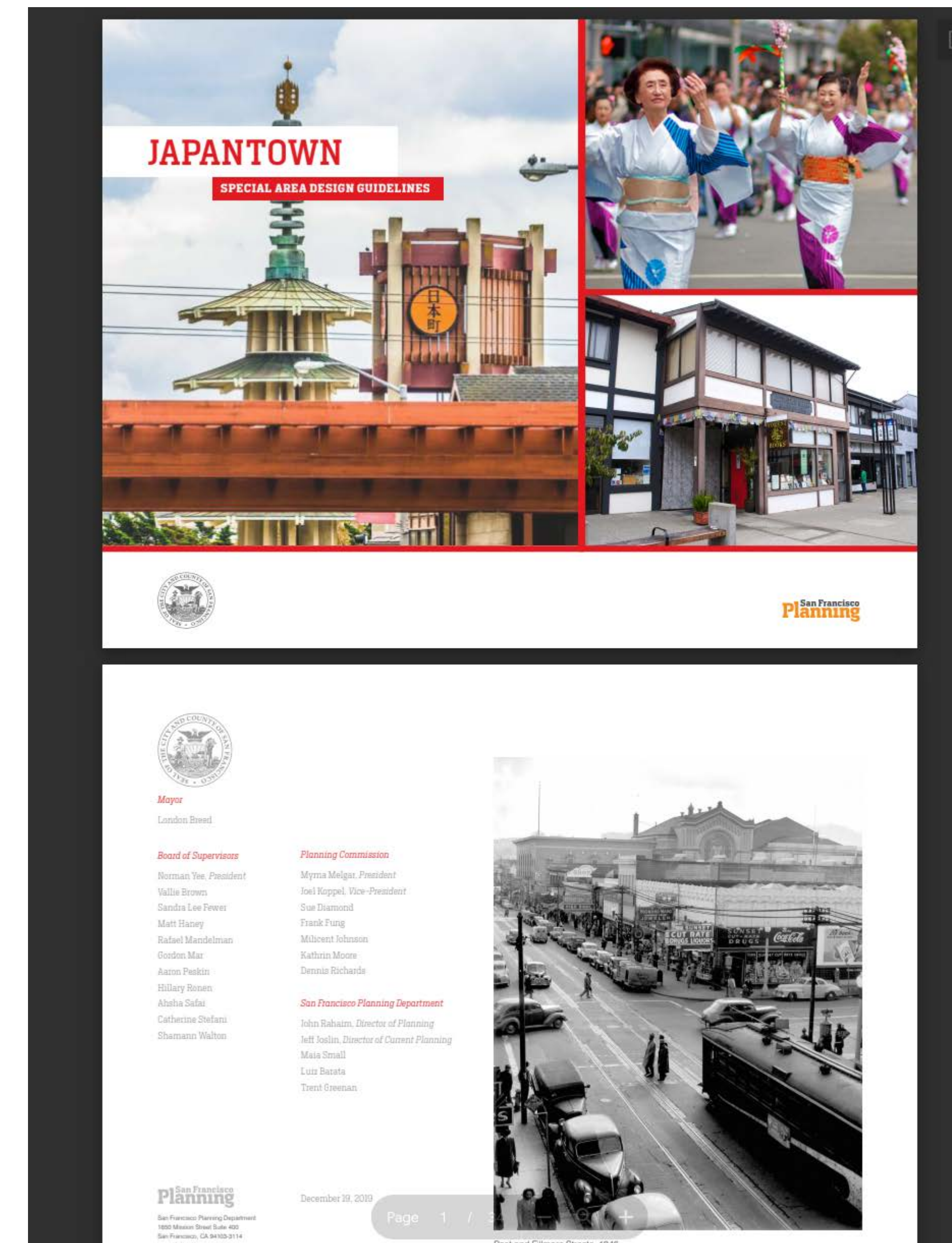


Safe Public Spaces Like Community Gardens Needed For Asian American Elders, But Funding In Jeopardy
Mee Vue stands in the middle of tidy dirt rows, looking down as she points out the watering line running the length of her garden. The drip system feeds...

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

Contact

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
1629 K St NW, Washington, DC 20036, Davis
Building, Suite 400

www.apiahf.org 
mgutierrez@apiahf.org 
[@apiahf](#) 

Thank you for your attention!

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