



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

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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."

