



Public Health Talks Transportation



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Why Public Health and Transportation?

- We all know transportation is a public health issue
 - Public safety
 - Air pollution
 - Physical activity and obesity
 - Land use, built environment
 - Equity
 - Accessibility

The Challenge

- **We** all know transportation is a public health issue
 - Public safety
 - Air pollution
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The State of Play



Goals for Today



Goals for Today



Reaching An Audience





Reaching An Audience



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Reaching An Audience



Understanding Our Audience



Research Questions

- **How do transportation professionals think and/or talk about public health?**
- **How do the fields of public health and transportation communicate with each other?**
- **How can we improve the ways public health and transportation communicate with each other?**

Research Methodology

- Review existing transportation and public health communications materials, draft messages
- Media coverage of transportation debates
- Online survey focusing on transportation, planning, public health, advocacy – 769 responses
- 20 one-on-one interviews with key representatives of:
 - Transportation
 - Public Health
 - Land Use

What impacts transportation planning?

“Everybody wants to keep cars moving, sometimes to the detriment of people.”

What issues override public health?

“Limited funding with many competing interests.”

“Transportation planners’ emphasis is on moving cars, not people.”

“Domination by cars is entrenched in planning. It's common for planners to say they'll 'improve the roadways,' when all they're doing is widening the road, which creates more barriers to other modes of transportation, forcing more people into cars, and creates a future need to widen the road.”

How does the transportation field view public health?

“As a separate issue, not part of the core mission.”

“Unrealistic.”

“Mostly benign and somewhat naive and uneducated about ‘the way things are...’”

“As interlopers. I think that public health has a valuable message but is being pretty heavy-handed in pushing their agenda and demanding things be done their way.”



Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Meet Them Where They Are

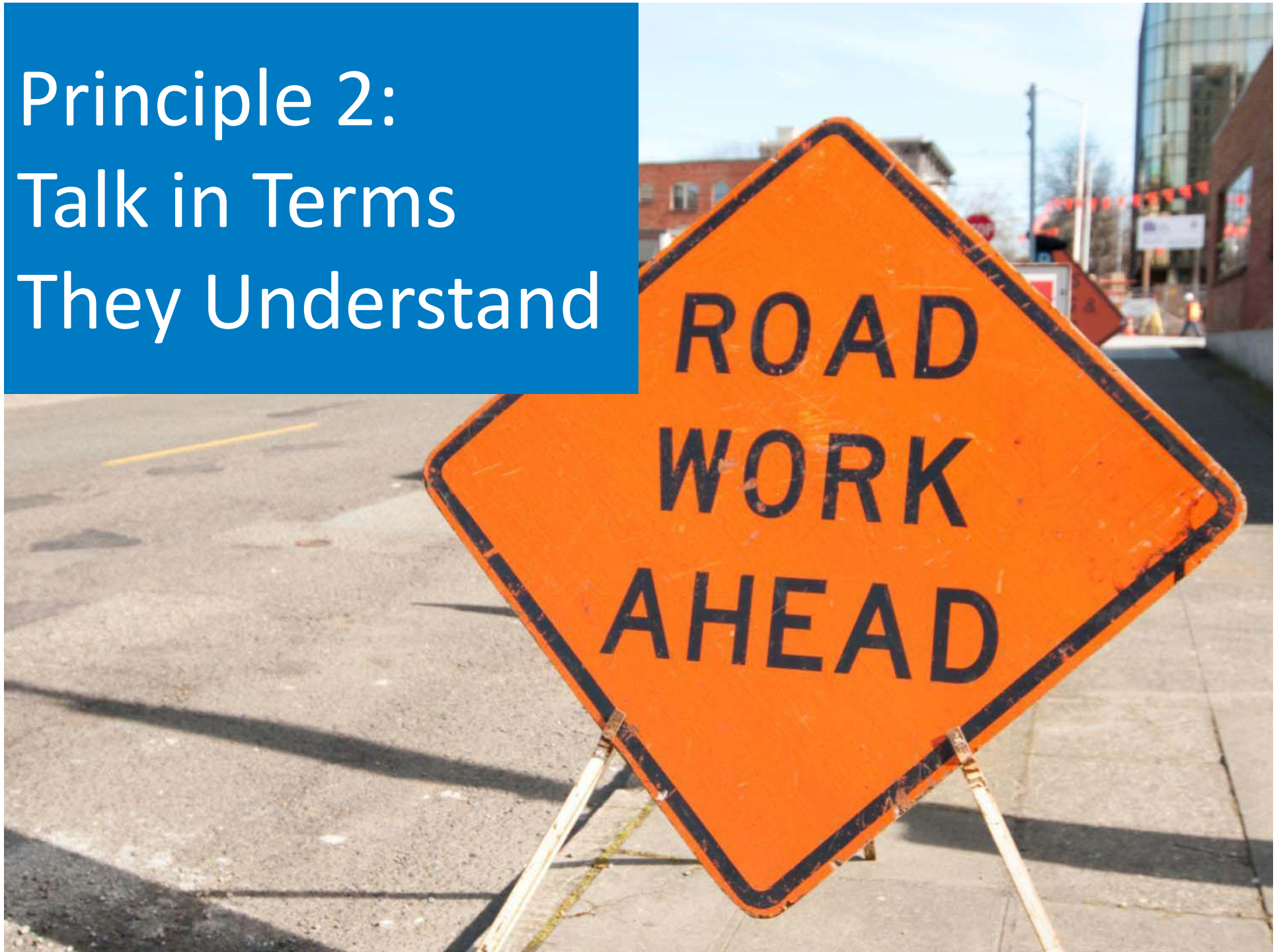




Meet Them Where They Are

“Start with what resonates with departments of transportation. If we want to influence them, we have to tie this stuff back to what they care about. Say to them, if we can get people out of cars, it will help with your congestion problems, save your funding, etc. More people in cars equals a greater need for roads which eventually equals more money than you have to spend.”

Principle 2:
Talk in Terms
They Understand



Talk in Terms They Understand

“The prevailing attitude is, cars pay for the road and everyone else is getting a free ride. It’s actually the opposite – pedestrians and cyclists save communities from having to pave more roads! It is far cheaper to build environments where people can walk and bike than to build one bigger intersection. We’d all be better off if we found a better way.”

Principle 3: Then Own Your Own Space





Then Own Your Own Space

“The exploding cost of health care is showing if we don’t move toward preventive health (obesity, diabetes, lack of opportunities to exercise, levels of isolation as a result of sprawl and no public transportation), and build neighborhoods right, health care costs soar. Which makes all of our economy slow. We can’t afford not to have healthy people.”

Three Principles

1. Meet Them Where They Are
2. Talk in Terms They Understand
3. Then Own Your Own Space

Topline Messages



Meet Them Where They Are

- Providing more options for getting around helps to keep roads safe and in good shape.
 - It lets people take public transit, walk or bike, reducing traffic and decreasing roadway wear and tear.
 - More options make it easier, more convenient and more affordable for everyone to get around – drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Talk in Terms They Understand

- At every level, we need to be serious about how limited transportation dollars get spent.
 - America needs major infrastructure investment in the coming years.
 - We're expected to do a lot with little.
 - However, this also provides us with an opportunity to be creative and think in new ways about how we design our transportation systems going forward.

Then Own Your Own Space (Pt 1)

- Giving people options for getting around is really an investment in health.
 - Trails for runners, bike lanes for commuters and sidewalks for a stroll to the store all provide opportunities to incorporate exercise into everyday life, combating obesity while cutting air pollution.
 - And a healthy community saves money – it makes good business sense to consider issues like obesity, diabetes, safety and air quality when we make transportation decisions.

Then Own Your Own Space (Pt 2)

- *Make it local*
 - *[Specific transportation investment]* is really an investment in preventive health care. It will make our community healthier, which isn't just good policy today – it will reduce health care costs tomorrow.
 - *[Specific transportation investment]* will give people more options to get around and lighten the pressure on household budgets.
 - *[Specific transportation investment]* would ease pressure on our streets and highways, which means fewer headaches and safer conditions for drivers on the road.
 - *[Specific transportation investment]* will make driving, riding, biking and walking all more convenient.

Final Thought



Materials For You

- Full talking points
- “Cheat Sheet” of useful data and additional resources
- Customizable talking points, Op-Ed, Letter to the Editor, Reporter pitch
- Training presentations on communications skills for dealing with the media and for meetings with transportation decision-makers
- Additional APHA background materials

Thank You

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