

# Health metrics to shape transportation investment

## METROPLAN ORLANDO, FLORIDA



MetroPlan Orlando is examining the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers in Central Florida using data from the Transportation and Health Tool. Photo Courtesy MetroPlan Orlando

METROPLAN ORLANDO, A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) that represents three counties and 23 municipalities in Central Florida, is taking the lead to advance public health through multiple transportation policies and initiatives. These include integrating health into their long-range transportation plan and corridor studies and collaborating with county health departments.

The Transportation and Health Tool is an online resource that provides state and metropolitan area transportation professionals with easy access to data and strategies to improve public health through transportation planning and policy. The tool was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Transportation, in partnership with the American Public Health Association.

#### THT APPLICATIONS

- Use THT indicators to examine regional corridors
- Use THT indicators and strategies to inform health goals, evaluation criteria, performance measures, and investment strategies in its long-range transportation plan

#### THT INDICATORS USED

- Commute Mode Share
- Housing and Transportation Affordability
- Land Use Mix
- Road Traffic Fatalities Exposure Rate
- Road Traffic Fatalities by Mode

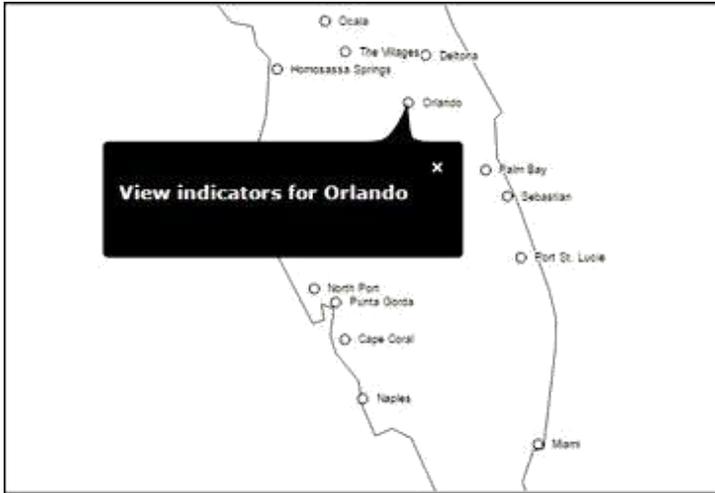
#### EXPLORE THE THT:

[www.transportation.gov/transportation-health-tool](http://www.transportation.gov/transportation-health-tool)

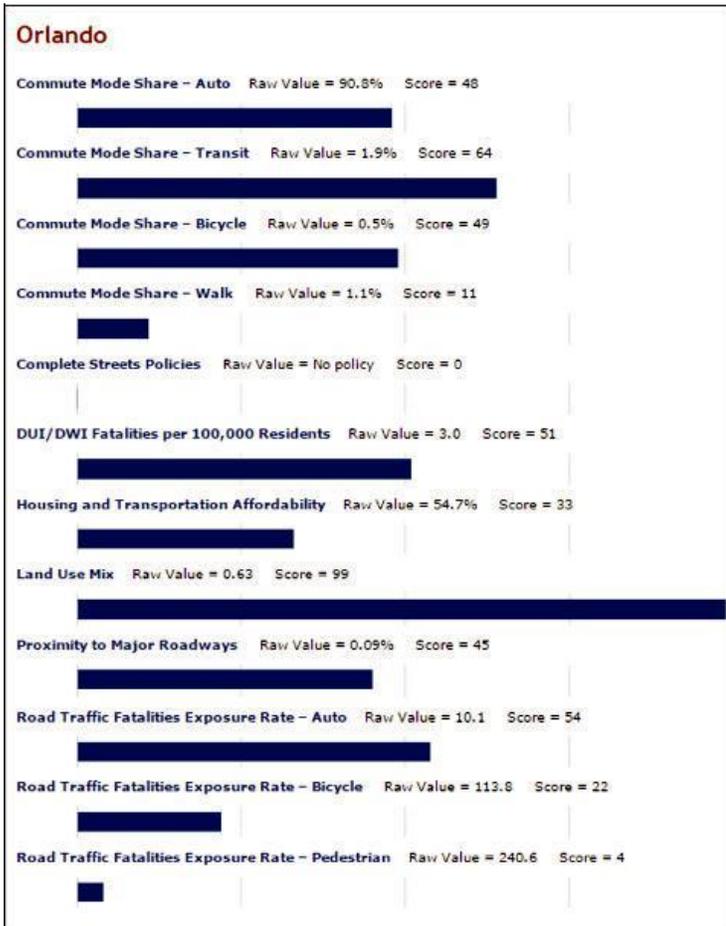
MetroPlan staff are currently developing a comprehensive guide that ensures its transportation investments promote health, economic development, and opportunity for those living in the region. The guide, to be completed in 2017, will feature the Transportation and Health Tool and will include the *Housing and Transportation Affordability* and *Land Use Mix* indicators. MetroPlan is also considering using up to 10 other THT indicators to support the objectives, goals, and performance measures of their next long-range transportation plan (LRTP), which establishes the region's vision for a multimodal transportation system and outlines priority transportation projects for the upcoming 20 years.

MetroPlan's Board formulates its LRTP every five years, aligning the plan with overarching goals that are assessed by evaluation criteria and performance measures. As a result of using the THT, MetroPlan is including health among the overarching goals in its 2045 LRTP and pursuing ways to integrate THT data into evaluation criteria and performance measures.

MetroPlan is also using THT indicators in its Corrine Drive Complete Streets study, a project funded through a Federal Highway Administration MPO Planning grant. For the study, MetroPlan is using the *Commute Mode Share*, *Housing and Transportation Affordability*, *Land Use Mix*, *Road Traffic Fatalities by Mode*, and *Road Traffic Fatalities Exposure Rate* indicators in conjunction with other health data to reveal areas in which public health improvements are most needed. The primary objective of the Corrine Drive Complete Streets study is to improve accessibility to key points of interest along the



Source: USDOT, Transportation and Health Tool website



Source: USDOT, Transportation and Health Tool website

THT indicator scores (represented by the blue bars) demonstrate how the Orlando, FL metropolitan statistical area (MSA) performs on key transportation and health measures compared to other MSAs. Scores are presented on a 100 point scale where 50 is the median and higher scores always represent better performance from a health perspective.



“The THT is helping us fine tune our approach to transportation planning so that our decisions contribute to a healthier Central Florida region.”

— Harold W. Barley,  
Executive Director,  
MetroPlan Orlando

corridor and in surrounding areas, such as civic facilities, educational institutions, health services, employment opportunities, and social gathering places.

MetroPlan began to consider health when it completed the first health impact assessment (HIA) in the region for Orange County’s long-distance bus rapid transit corridor. The HIA became a catalyst for establishing relationships with local health officials. Elizabeth Whitton, a transportation planner with MetroPlan Orlando, noted that “We continue deepening our collaboration with the Orange County Health Department, Seminole County Health Department, Osceola County Health Department, and the region’s non-for-profit hospitals. Collaboration started with the State Route 50 bus rapid transit HIA and will continue with the Semoran Boulevard HIA.”

Semoran Boulevard has become a focal point for MetroPlan to incorporate health data into transportation planning. Currently, MetroPlan is determining how to use THT indicators to advance health and transportation outcomes for the 22-mile corridor. MetroPlan will also use its familiarity with the THT to provide input on transportation and health for the triennial Community Health Improvement Plans of Orange, Seminole, and Osceola counties.