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TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE: WHAT DETERMINES LIVABILITY?

Livability is a key focus of transportation and land use planning throughout the United States, and a concept that has been guiding U.S. Department of Transportation policy since 2009. In Oregon, the state’s long-range transportation plan identifies “enhancing livability” as a key outcome, but little research has tackled how these planning efforts contribute to residents’ perceptions of livability. This project seeks to fill this research need by exploring the question, “How do residents understand the connection between transportation and land use planning, and its association with livability?”

Researchers at the University of Oregon surveyed over 3,000 residents of three different MPOs in Oregon about the land use mix, transportation options, and built environment in their neighborhoods. The goal of this research is to gain an understanding of how Oregonians perceive livability at the individual, neighborhood and city scale. This information will provide valuable insight into how cities and state agencies justify investments in transportation infrastructure. The findings offer interesting insights into the determinants of livability, including:

- **There’s a common “trade-off” between housing affordability and livability.**
- **Better access to multimodal transportation options is important to the perception of livability.**
- **Perceived density is higher than actual density, and in turn density negatively impacts perceptions of livability.**

Takeaways for planners? Given that perceptions of density can have a negative impact on perceptions of livability, it is important how planners communicate with the public about new developments. For example, highlighting increased access to services and multimodal transportation options may garner more positive responses than emphasizing a proposed increase in density.

Livability is a key goal in many transportation plans, but can be a difficult concept to measure or define. This research project surveyed Oregon residents to capture their perceptions about livability in their neighborhoods.

PROJECT TITLE

The Contribution of Transportation and Land Use to Citizen Perceptions of Livability in Oregon MPOs (#2018-1050)

INVESTIGATORS

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<http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/project/1050>

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