Public health, built environment, and transportation

Cristin Muecke

Regional Medical Officer of Health

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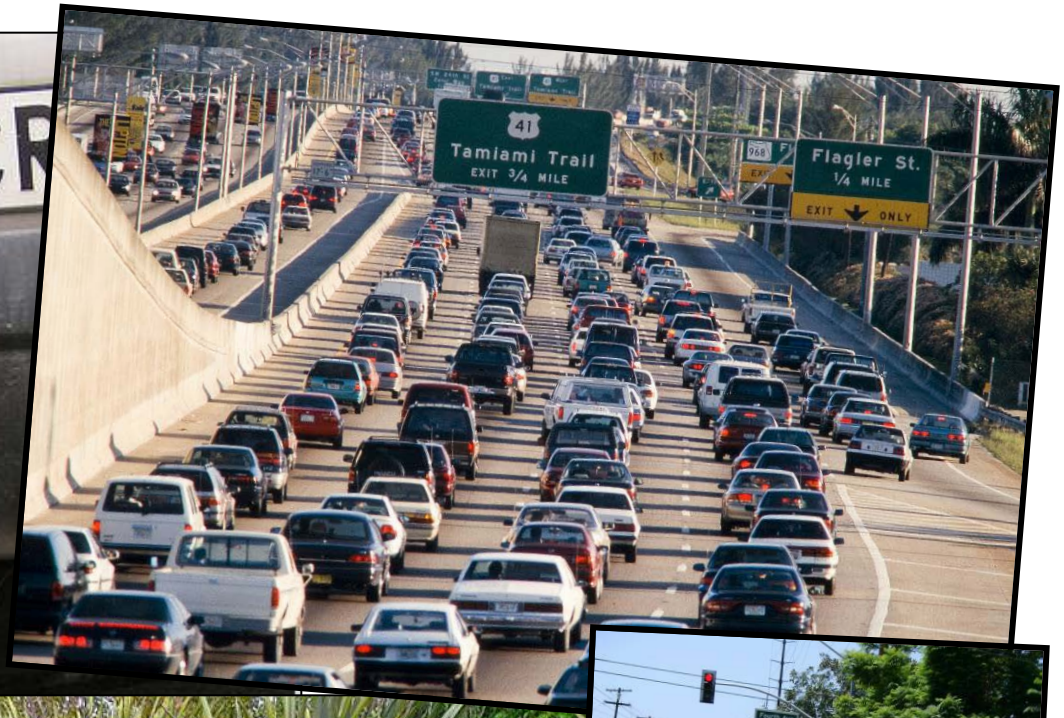
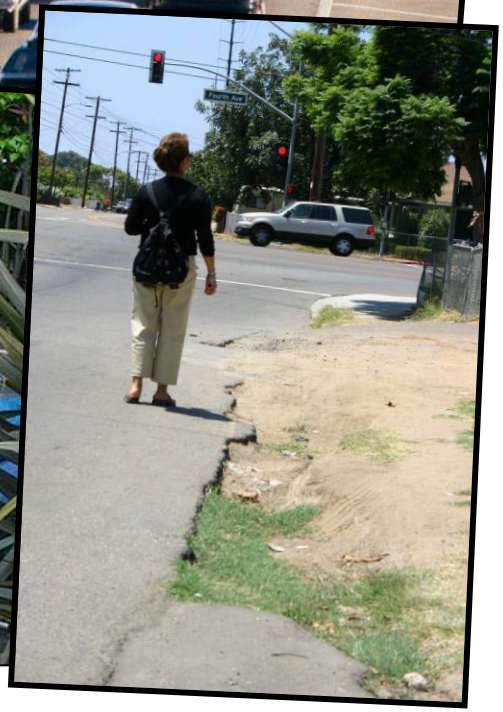
Outline

- What is built environment and why does it matter to public health professionals?
- Impact of built environment on health
- A public health perspective on community transportation

Defining *the Built Environment*

- constructed places, features, and elements that together make our cities, villages, and towns
- varies from large-scale urban areas to rural development and personal space
- includes indoor and outdoor places

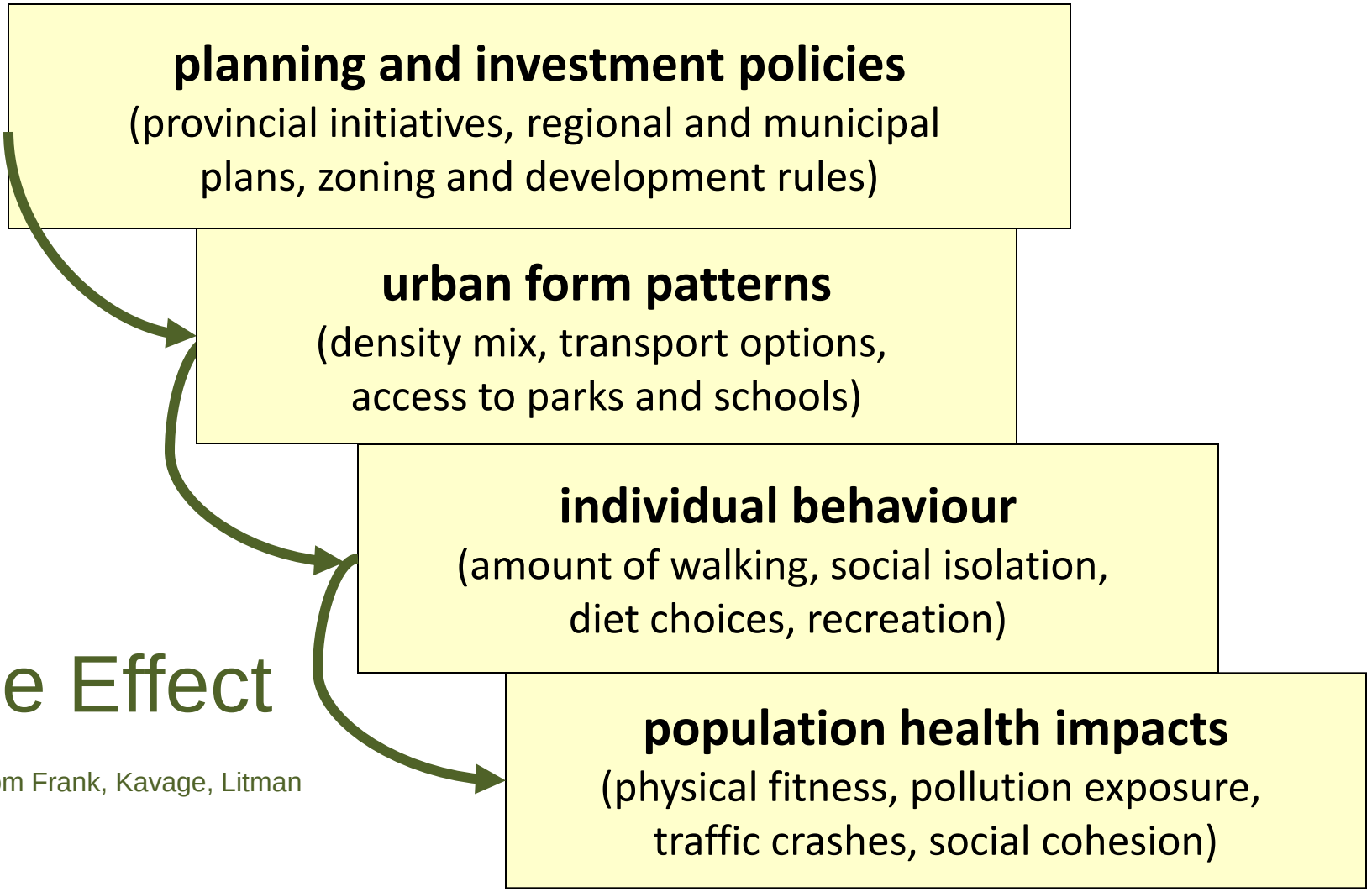

41
Tamiami Trail
EXIT 3/4 MILE
Flagler St.
1/4 MILE
EXIT ONLY



Why do built structures matter to public health professionals?

- Chronic illness and injury are a risk to both public health and our universal health care system.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles is not enough. Effects of *the built environment* must also be addressed.
- Public health, planning, and design professionals share the responsibility to promote environments that enhance public health.

How Planning and Design Affect Health



Ripple Effect

Adapted from Frank, Kavage, Litman

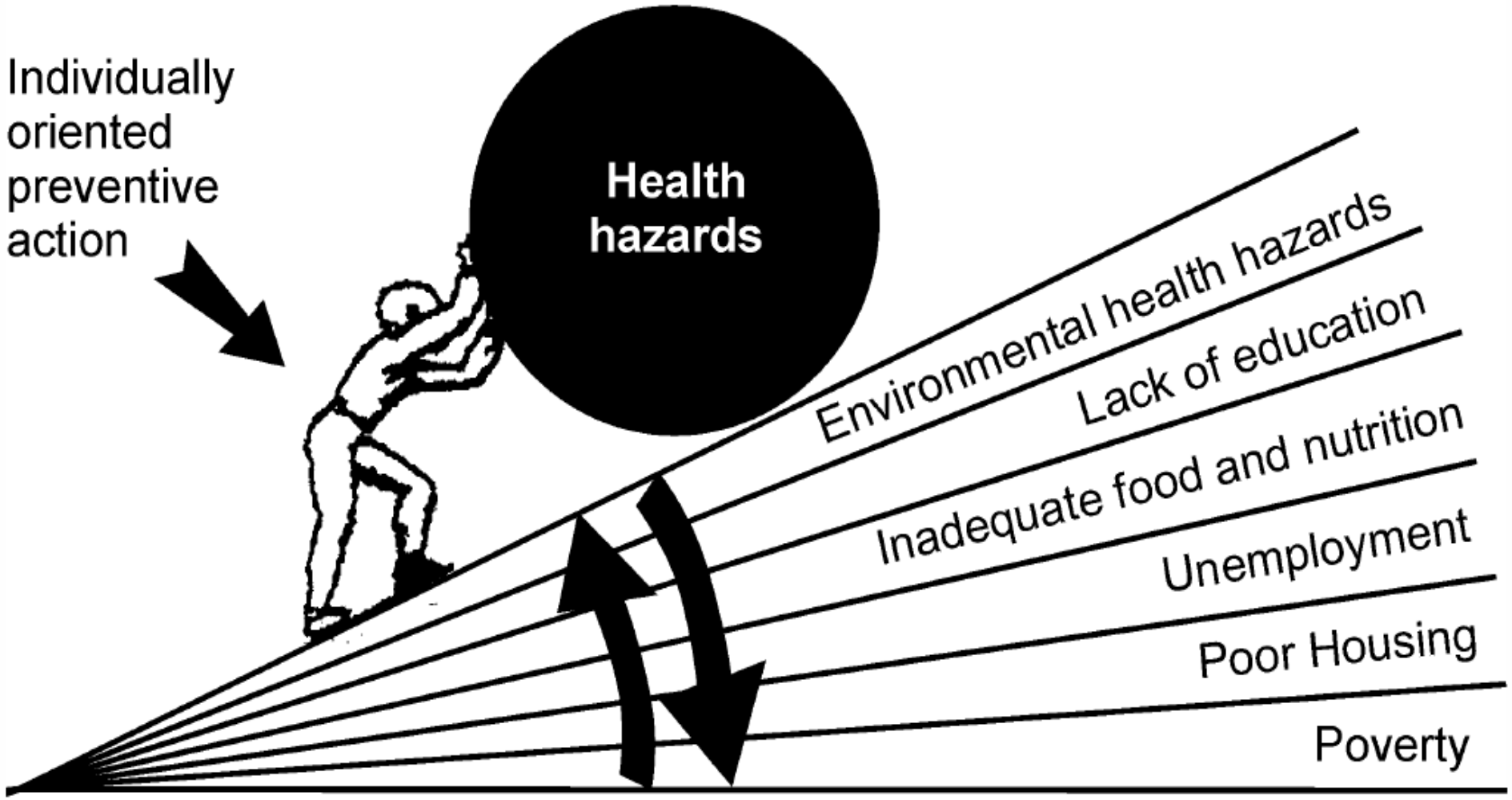
Many Aspects of Planning and Design Affect Short and Long-term Health

- accessibility of buildings, programs, and services
- injuries from poorly maintained or poorly designed built elements
- mental health and social inclusion
- physical activity, transportation, and recreation
- indoor and outdoor air quality
- water quality
- food security
- noise

Ensure Access and Inclusion to Improve Health

- loneliness and isolation are toxic
- social relationships can promote health
- people with strong social networks:
  - live longer
  - have less heart disease
  - are less depressed; use alcohol and drugs less
  - have fewer teen births
  - are healthier overall

Individual action can reduce the impact of health hazards but socio-economic factors make the job harder



Source: adapted from Making Partners: intersectoral action for health.

Why Public Health and Transportation?

- Transportation is a public health issue:
  - Physical activity and obesity
  - Land use, built environment
  - Public safety
  - Air pollution
  - Equity
  - Accessibility

People love their cars but hate traffic!

- Automobiles are a huge driver of transportation policy – but a demanding and costly mode of transportation, hard on the road and the environment
  - Providing more options for getting around helps to keep roads safe and in good shape, reduces traffic and air pollution, creates a healthier environment
  - More options make it easier, more convenient, and more affordable for everyone to get around – drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians
  - More options get people outside and active, provide opportunities to incorporate exercise in everyday life

Community transportation planning

- Provides us with an opportunity to be creative and think in new ways about how we design our transportation systems going forward

- Giving people options for getting around is really an investment in community health – and a healthy community saves money

Community transportation

- Should aim to:
  - Be an investment in preventive health care
  - Give people more options to get around and lighten the pressure on household budgets
  - Ease pressure on our streets and highways, which means fewer headaches and safer conditions for drivers on the road
  - Make driving, riding, biking, and walking all more convenient.

Collaboration is Crucial

Complex problems require leadership by:

- community groups
- planners
- the development industry
- engineers
- design professionals
- elected officials
- public health professionals

Questions