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Empowering Portland's Youth to Choose Car-free Mobility

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EMPOWERING PORTLAND'S YOUTH TO CHOOSE CAR-FREE MOBILITY

This NITC project developed strategies to motivate Portland-area youth to choose non-car mobility. Today's youth are tomorrow's riders, bikers, walkers, voters, and transportation planners. Thus, it is important to develop age-appropriate messaging strategies and tactics that promote youth non-car mobility.

The project sought to create and evaluate communication messaging that fosters more positive attitudes, intentions, and behaviors related to transit and other non-car transportation options among Portland youth. Researchers collected feedback on test messages aimed at encouraging non-car mobility among Portland youth.

Three focus group were conducted with participants who were teenagers entering the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades within the boundary of the Portland Public Schools district. Findings addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the non-car mobility relevant attitudes, norms, perceived behavioral control beliefs, intentions, and behaviors of Portland youth?
2. Which communication channels and settings may be effective with Portland youth in regards to transportation system information and promotion?
3. How are each of the communication strategy themes promoting non-car mobility perceived by Portland youth?

Key insights found mixed attitudes related to non-car mobility that were often based on the youth's firsthand experience. A dominant non-supportive belief was youth's lack of agency related to safety on public transit. Youth reported positive intentions to practice non-car mobility until they were old enough and could afford to drive. A variety of channels and settings, such as YouTube advertisements, may be effective at reaching teens, and the study participants responded positively to appeals to autonomy.

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Today's youth are tomorrow's riders, bikers, walkers, voters, and transportation planners. Thus, it is important for agencies like the Portland Bureau of Transportation and TriMet to develop age-appropriate messaging to promote non-car mobility.

Engaging Youth to Increase their Transportation System Support, Understanding, and Use (#2018-1077)

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