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Research Paper

Intro- The community and personal benefits of dedicated bicycle pathways and bike-friendly infrastructure greatly outweigh the involved financial costs for their construction. City development committees should allocate the funds needed to include dedicated bicycle pathways throughout their jurisdiction and place a higher priority on their implementation. By creating a community environment that encourages cycling, many problems the United States currently faces could be curbed. An environment with sufficient bike-friendly facilities encourages a more active lifestyle, and presents the opportunity for reduced traffic congestion and reducing environmental damage.

Problems

-Current Decision-Making Approach

In order to properly suggest an effective avenue for creating bike-friendly infrastructure, one must first understand the flaws with the current approach. Transportation decision making at the federal, state, and local level is primarily conducted using a cost-benefit analysis. The research gathered for decision-making heavily favors using this method to format research techniques and analyze the results. According to a 2013 study on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , this has impacted bicycle and pedestrian research to exclude a wide-variety of factors that affect pedestrian and cyclist behavior (Schneider, 2013). While a cost-benefit analysis is great at interpreting economic factors, it does not provide sufficient data to take non-economic factors into account. This narrows the full spectrum of factors that affect pedestrian behaviors into mainly quantifiable financial terms. Not only does this limit the scope of empirical evidence, it over-generalizes behavior patterns, therefore simplifying the data. Johann Weber proposes an alternative framework that would allow planning committees to more effectively develop bicycle policies (2014). The multiple streams framework would increase the success rate of the actual implementation of public policy advocated by groups interested in improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The multiple streams framework consists of three independent channels of data interpretation. Each stream contains a different part of the equation in public policy making, the problems faced, the available solutions, and the current political climate affecting the proposed legislation. The problems stream lists all of the related problems that a piece of legislation hopes to address or at least take them into account as factors that affect the problem the policy is focusing on solving. The solutions stream contains the whole spectrum of various policy choices available to solve problems in the problems stream. However, these solutions are not yet attached to a specific problem in the problem stream. Pairing solutions to the listed problems is done later in the policy development process. The most significant advantage of the multiple stream approach is the inclusion of the current regional political environment as a factor in developing policies. Creating a list of both problems and solutions is obviously necessary to drafting any public policy, but by including an assessment of the regional political climate the feasibility of proposed solutions can be further evaluated. This creates a huge advantage in determining the likelihood of a policy actually being implemented.

Policy makers are not the only individuals who benefit from the multiple streams approach. Cycling advocacy groups can devise plans of action that are more likely to succeed in their region. Research formulated using this framework would better indicate the causation of actual conditions by taking into account factors that are ambiguous; equipping legislators with more practical information for producing a transportation policy. Policies that prioritize bike-friendly infrastructure must be crafted using multiple streams framework, first by identifying the problems, developing a practical solution, and gathering support from both public officials and the affected population. A study that investigated fifty years of bicycle policies in Davis, California found that the success rate of policy implementation was directly correlated to the amount of consistent pressure on the political players involved in the development of the ordinances (Buehler, Handy 2008). According to the study, another key to success was the ability of cycling advocacy groups to partner with other interest groups, especially in the public-transportation or environmental sectors. By collaborating with the bus and rail industries, several bike-friendly plans in Davis County were successfully implemented that made gains in budget allocations, city-planning improvement strategies, bike infrastructure, and right of way laws. Policy makers should use the multiple streams approach to make better informed decisions and interpret more realistic outcomes from potential plan implementations. By developing bike-friendly policies using this approach, legislators could create more opportunities to diminish several challenges that affect their constituents, policies that later could be used as models to benefit American cities facing the same problems throughout the country.

-American Health Problems

-Traffic Congestion/ Cost

-Environmental Problems