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**Type of Presentation Considered:** Poster Session

**Title:** Factors in the Mobility of Low-Income Mothers in Burlington

**Abstract:**

The last 60 years of land use in the United States has been highly influenced by the automobile, with millions of families abandoning the compact development of cities and towns for suburban living. Despite the freedom and flexibility that car travel can provide, it is still a relatively high cost form of transport that restricts access to goods and services for those who can not afford its purchase and upkeep. This free market approach to the transportation system has served to exacerbate gender and socioeconomic inequity, forcing vulnerable groups, such as low-income women with children to shoulder a disproportionate share of the costs, in time and money, of mobility. This is particularly true in rural areas, where high travel need, distance from services and limited financial resources can coalesce to make a difficult situation, dire. Ecological Economics offers an alternative framework to the free-market system that views improved Quality of Life (QOL) as the end goal of policy, rather than simply growing profits and increasing economic efficiency.

The incorporation of QOL measures into policy involves two distinct components: an objective assessment of human needs and a subjective assessment of well-being. This paper seeks to explore the latter, utilizing a series of 20 long-form interviews conducted with low-income women in Burlington, Vermont to investigate how gender, class status and access to transportation coalesce to shape the priorities, time trade-offs and well-being and of the entire family unit.