

Transportation and mobility are considered key components of quality of life because they mediate and shape the ways individuals interact with the built and natural environments around them. In this project, we contribute to the developing field of quality of life studies that focuses on the importance of the experience of transportation, specifically the effects of bicycle use on wellbeing. Previous scholarship demonstrates that bicycle use provides numerous benefits for riders by enhancing mobility through healthy and relatively inexpensive transportation. These factors are major components shaping the quality of life for individuals worldwide. Bicycle use has clear and measureable impacts on health and environment, yet the specific effects of utilitarian bicycling on subjective perceptions and objective measures of quality of life are largely unknown. Through this research, we examine the relationship between quality of life, transportation sustainability, and bicycle transportation by asking: How do everyday cyclists and transportation professionals think about the relationship between quality of life and bicycling? Does cycling transportation and culture impact aspects of quality of life beyond transportation and mobility, and what are these extensions?

In-depth interviews were conducted among everyday transportation cyclists and bicycle transportation professionals in Burlington, Vermont and Portland, Oregon in order to gain perspectives on connections between bicycle transportation and quality of life from two cities with distinct bike cultures. Through qualitative analysis of these interviews, we identify personal histories and perspectives on cyclist experience, practice, and perceptions of quality of life. In addition to developing a methodology for understanding impacts of bicycle use on quality of life, we propose several indicators for measuring quality of life specific to active transportation, drawn from both previous academic literature and the insights of interviewees.