

Bridging the Gap

Susan Handy

Outline of points

- Women lead crazy lives: work responsibilities, family responsibilities, and, if time, personal responsibilities.
- Our crazy lives lead to crazy transportation needs: more complex travel patterns than men, many trips for “serving passengers”, i.e. “chauffeuring”
- Transportation system together with land use patterns – the structure and design of our communities – can make women’s lives easier or harder
- In the U.S, it is often harder for women: often little choice but to drive the kids to school, drive to work, drive to pick up the kids, drive them to soccer practice, drive to the grocery store.
 - o For those without a car, life is very hard!
- In Europe, at least as it looks to me, easier: For one thing, kids can get themselves to school and other places; for another thing, women have more options – walking, driving, biking, transit
 - o But that doesn’t mean it is easy!
- Current focus on creating more sustainable communities, with more transportation options, is a positive thing. Motivation is environmental, but will benefit women in many ways.
- Need for policy makers – and researchers – to think more explicitly about this – about women’s needs as they differ from men’s, about how community design impacts women’s lives.
- Looking at community design from women’s perspective – not just environmental perspective – could lead us to at least somewhat different answers and will certainly help strengthen the case for improved community design.