

FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter

In This Issue

Introduction	1
PSC Regional Roundtable Events	2
Update on FHWA Pedestrian and Bicycle Activities	2
Pedestrian and Bicycle Monitoring in the FHWA <i>Traffic Monitoring Guide</i>	3
PSC Region I Resiliency Workgroup.....	3
Livable Communities Meeting Following APA Conference in Atlanta on April 30, 2014	4
Creating a Vibrant, Connected Kansas City Region	5
Corridor Revitalization Plan in Richmond, Virginia	7
The President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget: Building Ladders of Opportunity.....	7
Spotlight on Region 9	8
Announcements/New Resources.....	9

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter is intended to provide transportation professionals with real-world examples of ways that transportation investments promote livability, such as providing access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safer roads. To access additional tools and resources, or to learn more about FHWA's Livability Initiative, please visit [FHWA's Livability website](#), or the interagency [Partnership for Sustainable Communities \(PSC\) website](#). To read past issues of the newsletter, visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit [GovDelivery](#).

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices



PSC Regional Roundtable Events

Dan Goodman, Transportation Specialist
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The PSC is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These agencies held successful regional roundtable events with communities throughout the United States in 2013 to learn how best to continue the work of the PSC in support of community needs. The roundtables strengthened relationships between local elected officials and regional representatives in Federal agencies, and helped identify opportunities for collaboration. Regional roundtable events took place in Arlington, Texas; Asheville, North Carolina; Boston, Massachusetts; Cincinnati, Ohio; Greenville, South Carolina; Indianapolis, Indiana; Little Rock, Arkansas; Phoenix, Arizona; Racine, Wisconsin; Richmond, Virginia; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Toms River, New Jersey.

Feedback received at the events informed PSC priorities ranging from climate change to economic development. Discussions highlighted successful climate-related project examples and addressed challenges such as funding and the need to better understand the multiple benefits of adaptation projects and planning processes. Roundtable discussions also highlighted successful economic development and job training initiatives, as well as future job training needs, the role of public investments in spurring economic development, and the evolving role of public/private partnerships. The roundtables addressed strategies for institutionalizing PSC work, such as ongoing meetings to ensure coordination and facilitate dialogue, rule making, and grant sourcing to “hardwire” sustainability. The roundtables also highlighted the importance of long-term engagement with local partners, and the role of qualitative analysis tools to model choices and improve the decision-making process.

The need to improve local planning capacity was discussed at multiple roundtables. For example, attendees discussed providing training on existing USDOT, HUD, and EPA data tools, and highlighting the relationship between the various tools. Opportunities also exist to highlight the complementary nature of projects. For example, multimodal complete streets projects can improve stormwater management while providing walking and bicycling access to and from jobs and local goods and services. For more information on the regional roundtables, please contact Dan Goodman at daniel.goodman@dot.gov.

Update on FHWA Pedestrian and Bicycle Activities

Cycle Track Project Update

Dan Goodman, Transportation Specialist
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This project will highlight planning and design considerations for cycle tracks. It will include a detailed safety analysis of existing cycle tracks throughout the United States and will also address issues such as accessibility, maintenance, and intersection design. The final document will provide a robust and contemporary assessment of crash data for operational cycle tracks in the United States. It will also present information on design options, safety studies, and qualitative input from practitioners to inform the planning, design, and safety outcomes for future cycle tracks.

As the contractor for this project, the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center completed a draft literature review and is developing a detailed crash and safety analysis of cycle tracks throughout the United States. A



Technical Working Group composed of representatives from cities, State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), as well as organizational representatives from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and the League of American Bicyclists' (LAB) Equity Initiative, has met three times.

The Technical Working Group met recently during the Transportation Research Board 93rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC to review cycle track-related presentations from the District of Columbia DOT (DDOT) and the Green Lane Project. Additionally, members of the U.S. Access Board attended the meeting and discussed accessibility-related questions or issues they have observed related to cycle track projects. FHWA will hold internal monthly meetings to keep staff up-to-date on the project and to answer questions. For more information on this meeting, please contact Dan Goodman at daniel.goodman@dot.gov or Christopher Douwes at christopher.douwes@dot.gov.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Monitoring in the FHWA *Traffic Monitoring Guide*

Jeremy Raw, Community Planner
FHWA – Office of Planning

The September 2013 edition of FHWA's [Traffic Monitoring Guide](#) now includes a chapter on pedestrian and bicycle counting and a recommended data format for reporting counts. Funding and agency commitments are in place to establish a national database of bicycle and pedestrian counts via an extension of the existing Traffic Monitoring Analysis System. This will enable FHWA to curate bicycle and pedestrian counts from anyone who is interested in submitting them. The database is expected to be operational in 2015 and participation will be entirely voluntary. The project team is assembling a technical panel to help develop data validation, quality control, and reporting requirements for the database. In addition, the project team is discussing ways to integrate the existing National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project data into the national database. Contact Jeremy Raw in the FHWA Office of Planning at jeremy.raw@dot.gov with questions or to express interest in participating in the technical panel.

In addition, a [report](#) on bicycle and pedestrian count programs is available at www.planning.dot.gov. This report highlights key recommendations and best practices identified at a May 2013 peer exchange on bicycle and pedestrian count programs in Arlington, Texas. This event was sponsored by the [Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Peer Program](#).

PSC Region I Resiliency Workgroup

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “resilient” as “the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens,” and “sustainable” as “able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed.” Many communities are striving to be sustainable and resilient in the face of uncertain change; this requires integrated strategies across all aspects of society. The lessons learned from Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, and assorted blizzards and ice storms that have affected the region, and the implications of climate change, have driven local, regional, and State interests in developing a toolbox of strategies to meet the current and future challenges facing all of New England.

The PSC Region I Resiliency Workgroup is responding to the desires of grantees who view resiliency and sustainability as interdependent elements of livability. Resiliency, like sustainability, forms a multi-legged stool supported by elements of



housing, transportation, energy, economics, and the environment. The Workgroup is composed of representatives from HUD, DOT, EPA, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As one of its first tasks, the Workgroup updated its resource guide to include resources for communities to improve their resilience to flooding, climate change, and other natural hazards. The Resource Guide contains agency-specific links and information about funding programs, technical assistance, and relevant guidance and information for New England grantees.



Figure 1: New England's Knowledge Corridor comprises the circled area in this map. (Source: Sustainable Knowledge Corridor website)

The Workgroup took an initial step to review Federal agency responses to the [President's Climate Change Action Plan](#) and translated those responses into agreed upon actions, drawing from each agency's resources and local and regional needs. For example, the Workgroup sponsored a meeting on the [FHWA INVEST tool](#) for grantees and State DOTs, which was hosted by the Rhode Island DOT. The intent of the meeting was to promote sustainability in transportation planning, project development, as well as operations and maintenance, and provide support to infrastructure resiliency and green building practices. A HUD program facilitated the compilation, analysis, and measurement of public housing energy and water expenditures in [New England's Knowledge Corridor](#) (see Figure 1) to establish baselines for efficiency. EPA staff will train public housing authorities in the corridor on Energy Star Portfolio Manager, which is a tool that can be used to track energy and water consumption as housing authorities take actions to become more efficient. The Workgroup is planning a community outreach effort to explain [FEMA's Community Rating System](#) and its benefits in reducing threats from flooding and also in reducing flood insurance premiums for residents in participating communities. The Workgroup will continue to seek strategies and perspectives from each Federal agency in collaborating with local and regional partners to complement their efforts toward sustainability and resiliency for New England.

Livable Communities Meeting Following APA Conference in Atlanta on April 30, 2014

The Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division of the American Planning Association (APA) will sponsor an afternoon meeting April 30, 2014 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Atlanta, Georgia immediately following the 2014 National APA Planning Conference. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is organizing the meeting to further ongoing peer exchange among regional planning agencies with livable communities programs. The meeting is free and is not part of the national APA conference. It will be held in the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 235 Andrew Young Boulevard, located adjacent to the Georgia World Congress Center. To register for the meeting, please contact Dan Reuter of ARC (dreuter@atlantaregional.com). If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Dan Reuter (dreuter@atlantaregional.com), Bob Leiter (rleiter9@san.rr.com), or Lee Schoenecker (leeschoenecker@aol.com).



Creating a Vibrant, Connected Kansas City Region

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For years, the Kansas City region has been laying the foundation for a more sustainable, livable future. These efforts were bolstered in 2009 with the award of a three-year, \$4.25 million Sustainable Communities HUD grant. The region combined these funds with Federal transportation funding and local dollars to support the [Creating Sustainable Places](#) initiative, a program intended to create a more vibrant, connected, and green region.



Figure 2: Clay County, Missouri, US-69 Corridor Plan, with proposed target areas for high-density improvements.

The Creating Sustainable Places initiative advanced a variety of sustainability and livability objectives, including the following:

- Engage with communities;
- Address social equity;
- Develop advanced planning tools and technical capacities;
- Establish a network of community partners;
- Develop key regional corridor plans;
- Target work within the [Green Impact Zone](#); and
- Form [Planning Sustainable Places](#), a regional planning program focused on integrating transportation and land-use strategies and supporting local implementation.



Creating Sustainable Places objectives formed a broad foundation for sustainability, and the six key corridor plans and planning/demonstration projects focused more specifically on aligning transportation investments with local and regional development objectives. In 2012 and early 2013, corridor planning teams conducted in-depth analyses of the dominant connections between current and developing centers in each corridor, identifying major nodes with redevelopment potential and means of connectivity.



Figure 3: Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Transit Oriented Development Concept Plan.

In 2013, the Planning Sustainable Places program advanced 18 planning/demonstration projects, selected from 37 local nominations, supported by \$2.2 million in HUD, FHWA Surface Transportation Program, and local matching funds.

The Planning Sustainable Places program included two eligible categories: planning and implementation. The intent was to foster the creation of localized small-area plans that articulate local visions supportive of land-use, transportation, and environmental objectives and promote implementation of specific strategies.

For example, the U.S. 69/Pleasant Valley project allowed two adjoining small communities and their county to develop a plan for an existing transportation corridor (see Figure 2). The result outlines a phased 20-year development plan linking land use, walkability, natural resource preservation, and integration into the larger regional trail system. Another project includes a plan for a multimodal transportation hub for the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, which complements current streetcar line construction and its northern terminus through a hub that connects this newest transit option with other modes. In addition, a mixed-use development will accommodate transit riders and local community needs (see Figure 3).

As a result of the program's initial success and strong community response,, a second round of Planning Sustainable Places projects has been funded for 2015. MARC believes that while there is still work to do, the Kansas City area has made



significant strides toward its goal of becoming a more vibrant, connected, and green region. MARC wishes to thank the PSC for setting the course and providing a national model of collaboration. For more information please visit: www.marc.org/Regional-Planning/Creating-Sustainable-Places.

Corridor Revitalization Plan in Richmond, Virginia

Tammye Davis, Community Planner
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In 2010, the city of Richmond, Virginia, partnered with Chesterfield County and the Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation and was awarded a \$400,000 Community Challenge Planning Grant from HUD and a \$100,000 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II Planning Grant from USDOT. With the support of this funding, the city-county team developed the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan for 4.7 miles of Hull Street Road, extending through both the city of Richmond and Chesterfield County. The goal was to jointly prepare a coordinated strategy for business development, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly circulation, infrastructure improvements, and corridor beautification, with strong citizen engagement from both localities.

The Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan included a citizen-based planning process to encourage citizen participation, as well as an analysis and subsequent recommendations to modify zoning ordinances to support local business development. The plan called for safe multimodal connections (including separated and protected bicycle and pedestrian facilities), transportation infrastructure upgrades, visual and physical enhancements, improved housing options, expanded job opportunities, and critical recreational and environmental investments. These enhancements will transform the Hull Street corridor from simply a highway through communities into a vital, vibrant place where people want to live, shop, work, and recreate.

The city and county gave a presentation on the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan during the White House Roundtable discussion that took place on September 9, 2013. The meeting generated support from local officials, businesses, and community leaders with resources to help implement the plan. The officials and leaders agreed to support the implementation phase wholeheartedly. On February 24, 2014 the Richmond city council adopted the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan and incorporated its recommendations into the city's master plan. Richmond's Department of Public Works is currently negotiating a contract for the production of the construction drawings for the Richmond portion of the Hull Street corridor improvements.

The Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan has won two notable awards; the 2013 Best Example of Regional Cooperation from the Urban Land Institute's Richmond chapter, and the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association 2013 Outstanding Plan Award. For more information please visit: <http://hullstreet360.com/>.

The President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget: Building Ladders of Opportunity

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The President's 2014 budget, which focuses on "ladders of opportunity," includes several measures to make communities more livable for all residents, including underserved and disadvantaged populations. The budget plan supports access to schools and jobs, economic development in underserved communities, affordable housing, and other priorities. The budget



also increases the contribution of several programs toward the [Promise Zones](#) initiative in order to revitalize high-poverty communities across the country. These contributing programs include: [Promise Neighborhoods](#) (Department of Education), [Choice Neighborhoods](#) (HUD), [Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grants](#) (Department of Justice), and [Strong Cities, Strong Communities \(SC2\)](#). This focus on “ladders of opportunity” supports livable communities for all residents, and the PSC is currently considering opportunities to integrate this within its own activities and initiatives in the coming year. For more information, please refer to the White House website on [Ladders of Opportunity](#).

Spotlight on Region 9

Region 9 (Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada) reported multiple recent livability-related updates. Here are some highlights from the region:

- **Study Profiles Healthy Communities Coalition in Las Vegas, Nevada:** The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco published a [study detailing the formation and progress of the Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition](#). The profile looks at the challenges and regional cross-sector collaboration in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- **Grand Boulevard Final Report Released in San Mateo County, California:** The Grand Boulevard Initiative released a [final report for work funded by a USDOT TIGER II planning grant](#) to prepare preliminary designs for four innovative case study segments on the El Camino Real Corridor in San Mateo County, California. The segments are intended to serve as models for future corridor improvements and for other urban transportation corridors across the country. The project also provides direction on navigating the State highway design approval process with the California State DOT (Caltrans), offering design parameters that provide transferable guidance for other jurisdictions. The overall goal of the Grand Boulevard Initiative Complete Streets Program is to develop the El Camino Real Corridor as a multimodal boulevard that is safe and efficient for users of all ages and abilities (pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles).
- **PSC Roundtable in Phoenix, Arizona:** The PSC hosted a White House Roundtable discussion highlighting best practices in urban and rural areas. The forum highlighted infill strategies aligned with the expansion of the Phoenix light-rail transit system and the Hopi Tribe’s planned “new-town” development incorporating green building systems.
- **HUD Facilitates PSC Partnership with *Every Body Walk* in Honolulu, Hawaii:** HUD’s Honolulu field office facilitated a partnership with the Every Body Walk (EBW) initiative to share opportunities to nurture and promote the emerging national movement to promote walking and walkability. EBW is a newly formed national collaboration committed to working together on a culture change to make walking the new norm and walkable places a priority. Additional information is available at: www.everybodywalk.org.



Announcements/New Resources

- FHWA webinar on “Programs and Policies to Advance Livability” will occur April 17. [Register here](#) to participate.
- The FHWA Human Environment (HE) Digest is a weekly electronic compilation of the latest announcements and resources pertinent to the human environment. [Register here](#) to receive the HE Digest.
- A [case study on Comprehensive Planning for a More Balanced Transportation Network in Greenwood, Mississippi](#) is available on the FHWA Livability website.
- [Health and transportation white papers](#) are available on the TPCB website. The papers present insights and flexible models for MPOs and State DOTs that choose to integrate public health considerations into their transportation planning and decision making.
- [INVEST \(Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool\)](#) is a practical, web-based collection of voluntary best practices and criteria designed to help transportation agencies integrate sustainable practices into their projects, plans, and programs. The tool includes components that address livability.
- Join the discussion! The FHWA Livable Communities Discussion Board is an online public forum for users to participate in discussion threads and engage with colleagues on questions and ideas related to livable communities. Have a question or idea to post? Check out the site at: <https://www.transportationresearch.gov/dot/fhwa/livablecommunities/>.

