

# FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter

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## 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](#). The PSC is a partnership of three Federal agencies: the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To read past issues of the newsletter, visit [www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/). To subscribe to the newsletter, visit [GovDelivery](#).

Want to continue the discussion? Have a question about one of the topics you read here? Visit the [FHWA Livable Communities Discussion Board](#) to join the conversation.

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices



## Cleveland MPO Encourages Livable Communities with Multimodal Transportation Planning and Implementation Grant Program

Ryan Noles, Transportation Planner/TLCI Program Manager, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

The [Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative](#) (TLCI) allows local agencies to explore innovative planning concepts through a comprehensive, community-based planning process that improves multimodal transportation across northeastern Ohio. The grant program, developed by the [Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency](#) (NOACA) Cleveland's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), began connecting local agencies to Federal funding in 2006. Projects identified through TLCI-funded studies and plans can help secure funding and/or compete at the regional level for capital funds through NOACA's regional transportation investment process. The program awards up to \$1 million in grants using money set aside from NOACA's [Surface Transportation Program](#) funds.

Modeled after peer MPO programs, the TLCI helps Cleveland area communities plan for multimodal transportation improvements and support land uses at the local level. As the region has undergone urban sprawl, NOACA prioritized reinvestment in the urban core with the goal of enhancing transportation options to support economic and community development. Since 2006, the TLCI program has funded nearly 100 studies leading to \$160 million in planned, programmed, under construction, or completed projects.

To illustrate TLCI's impact in the region, the [Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority](#) completed a [study](#) to relocate an existing rapid transit rail station in the Little Italy neighborhood. Today, a new station is under construction with the help of a \$16 million [Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery](#) grant secured using the completed TLCI plan. The new station will enhance connectivity to Little Italy's main street Mayfield Road, a regional destination, as well as the main campus of University Hospitals, a major employer in northeast Ohio.



*Figure 1: Rendering of the Little Italy neighborhood station, now under construction. (Image courtesy of Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority)*

While the program has supported a number of big-ticket projects, many smaller, simpler projects tend to get overlooked. In response, NOACA created an implementation grant program as part of the TLCI to provide funding for low-cost implementation projects and catalyze increased support for greater implementation of TLCI and other local planning projects. The implementation grant program awards up to \$500,000 to local agencies to help fund projects like bicycle rack installations, crosswalk enhancements, and transit waiting area improvements. By focusing on smaller projects, communities can move forward with implementing plans in phases, extending the momentum of the planning process, and attracting private investment while working toward funding larger-scale improvements.

NOACA is currently in the process of awarding planning grants to seven new studies, ranging in focus from completing trail networks to constructing a new multimodal transportation facility in the heart of downtown Cleveland. By supporting these



and future planning projects, NOACA will continue to promote and increase the livability of the region’s communities, leading the revival of Cleveland as a great American city and promoting the region as a wonderful place to live and work.

### Creating Walkable Communities in Atlanta through the Livable Centers Initiative

Amy R. Goodwin, Atlanta Regional Commission, Principal Planner

The [Livable Centers Initiative](#) (LCI) helps create sustainable, walkable communities by providing grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to develop plans and implement projects that link transportation investments to land use policy. The [Atlanta Regional Commission](#) (ARC) created the LCI program in 1999 with the following goals in mind:

- Encourage a diversity of housing options, employment opportunities, commercial uses, shopping destinations, and recreational land uses at transit stations and local/regional centers that are accessible by people of all ages, abilities, and income levels;
- Enhance access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking, and biking and increase roadway connectivity to provide optimal access to all uses within the study area; and,
- Foster public-private partnerships and sustained community support through an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders, including those historically underserved or underrepresented.

The LCI program is designed to create more densely developed communities where roadway and transit infrastructure and land use patterns can encourage walking, biking, or taking transit. Through the regional planning process, ARC works with local governments to determine the areas within their jurisdictions where higher density, mixed-use growth is likely and desired. These areas are indicated as “centers” and “places” on the [Unified Growth Policy Map](#), an online mapping tool that provides direction for future growth in the region. These areas, which comprise approximately 5 percent of the total land area in the Atlanta region, are eligible to participate in the LCI program. ARC also prioritizes funding for centers located in Equitable Target Areas (based on a socioeconomic index developed by ARC). To date, there are 112 local and regional centers designated as LCI communities.

Through the regional plan, ARC has committed to \$1 million per year for studies and \$500 million through the year 2040 for transportation projects resulting from completed LCI studies. Since its inception in 1999, LCI has expended more than \$13 million in planning and policy/code development and \$175 million in transportation improvements, primarily biking, walking, and transit infrastructure.

The 2015 biennial LCI Implementation Report indicates that more than 63 percent of LCI communities have adopted development regulations to allow for mixed-use development. Since 2000, ARC has provided \$500,000 in matching funds for 19 zoning code updates and design regulations. Table 1 indicates the variety of tools that LCI communities have employed to implement their plans.

*Table 1: Implementation tools used by LCI communities.*

Policy or Regulation Enacted/Adopted	Percent of LCI Communities
Overlay District Zoning	53
Architectural Design Standards	52
Street Design Standards	44
Master Streets Plan or Code	20
Form-Based Code	15
Historic Preservation District	15
Changes to Subdivision Regulations	14
Other Special Zoning District	11
Affordable Housing Policies	10





As of May 2015, the LCI program has provided \$175 million for 106 transportation projects in 63 LCI communities, all of which have included pedestrian facilities; 32 percent of which have included a bicycle facility. The most recent round of projects funded in 2011 were complete streets projects, including both bicycle and pedestrian facilities and innovative elements such as green infrastructure<sup>1</sup>, roundabouts, conversion of one-way pairs to two-way operations, and lane reductions also referred to as “road diets.”

### Norcross Town Center and Norcross Activity Center



Figure 2: Downtown Norcross sidewalk  
(Image courtesy of the Atlanta Regional Commission)

Few communities have done more with their LCI funds than the city of Norcross since receiving its first grant in 2001 that allowed for the transformation of an underutilized downtown into a walkable, livable community. The city of Norcross especially stands out among LCI communities because more than 40 percent of its residents are immigrants.

The city appointed a citizens’ Architectural Review Board and a Design Concept District to encourage design consistency and develop a unified plan for the downtown area. Other efforts included converting old church into a Cultural Arts and Community Center and a worn baseball field into a public space for concerts, events, and public gatherings. The city of Norcross secured additional LCI funding to develop and adopt design guidelines, conduct a parking study, and create a railroad crossing concept. Additionally, the city received a grant in 2008 for a second study area adjacent to downtown to improve connectivity across State highways and enhance aging commercial areas.

These grants helped improve sidewalks and bike facilities around downtown Norcross, including the construction of medians and pedestrian crossings on Buford Highway—one of the most dangerous highways in the U.S. for pedestrians. In 2012, the city of Norcross won ARC’s LCI Achievement Award. In 2015, the city is taking its commitment to diversity and equity one step further by commissioning a [Georgia Tech study](#) on the city’s immigrant population. The purpose is to determine how the city can better accommodate its growing immigrant population through planning and infrastructure adjustments.

For more information on the Livable Centers Initiative, contact Amy R. Goodwin at [agoodwin@atlantaregional.com](mailto:agoodwin@atlantaregional.com).

### NJDOT Uses Smart Growth Principles to Preserve Community Assets Near Busy Interchange

David Nelson, Project for Public Spaces, Project Associate (now with NYC DOT)

Strained by increasing congestion and other adverse effects of suburbanization, Gloucester Township in Camden County, New Jersey needed to design a plan for the busy NJ 42 corridor that considered both traffic management and community quality of life. In 2005 the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) fast-tracked the project by giving Camden County \$17 million to build new freeway interchange designs. The initial design idea was for traditional ‘clover leaf’ and

<sup>1</sup> Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to control stormwater in urban areas to help prevent water pollution, flooding, and erosion ([USEPA, 2014](#)).



'diamond' interchange designs, which emphasize motorist mobility and level of service. Taking a newly adopted 'smart growth' approach to transportation design, NJDOT broadened the scope to develop an integrated transportation and land use plan for the interchange and surrounding area. Through stakeholder collaboration, the planning team produced an alternative interchange design and smart growth plan that would optimize both the pedestrian environment and motorist mobility.

#### *Stakeholders/Public Engagement*

The planning team met with public and private stakeholders to identify community needs in the project area. For example, Camden County College, a nearby commuter school, had plans to transform its campus into a residential college. However, the campus lacked basic pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks. Camden County College wanted to transform the campus to make the area more attractive to their student body. With this type of local perspective, the project planners developed alternative concepts for a new interchange design and associated land use plan that would intrinsically support the stakeholders' community vision.

The team also held a two-day workshop in which stakeholders and the planning team developed the vision for the interchange and provided engineers with guidance for their design. Later, the team introduced proposed design guidelines to the community that addressed roadway design, roadway type, and recommendations on streetscape, building, and site design.

#### *Design Elements*

The original, more traditional design for the interchange was intended to prioritize the direct connection of freeway traffic to College Drive and Camden County College. While the design was fundamentally sound, it required a great deal of right-of-way and a costly stormwater management plan. This design also called for the reconstruction of the College Drive overpass at Route 42, which despite its age of more than 50 years, remains functionally sound.

To accommodate a smart growth vision and the needs of pedestrians, the planning team implemented a plan that included a series of roundabouts within a grid roadway system to direct traffic from the freeway and College Drive to the desired land uses. The roundabouts were designed to take traffic off interchange ramps and safely calm their speed, while distributing the flow along the rest of the roadway network. County designers adapted and supplemented the planning team's vision for a grid roadway network as a framework for development by designing and constructing only principal streets and giving the responsibility to developers to build the rest of the grid.



*Figure 3: NJDOT constructed an innovative design featuring a series of roundabouts that slow traffic and better distribute flow. (Image courtesy of contextsensitivesolutions.org)*

#### *Outcomes*

Camden County successfully developed an integrated transportation and land use plan to accommodate the needs of their stakeholders. Engineers applied sound engineering practice to foster a multimodal environment to meet the needs of pedestrians and motorists. They also preserved community assets, such as the College Drive overpass and were able to achieve operational benefits using only surface ramps that channel traffic through the grid. Lastly, by leaving room for



developers to build in Gloucester Township, the planning and engineering teams leveraged future transportation investment for the benefit of the community's economic development.

Learn more about this project and other innovative interchange designs in the recent Context Sensitive Solutions webinar "[Livability Principles at Highway Interchanges.](#)"

## NCDOT Watch for Me Safety Program Continues Expansion in 2015

James Gallagher, Communications Manager, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

North Carolina's Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is adding nine new communities to its [Watch for Me NC](#) pedestrian and bicycle safety program in 2015. Since its initial pilot in 2012, which consisted of four communities, the program now includes 18 partners across the State.

Watch for Me NC offers a comprehensive approach to reducing bicycle and pedestrian crashes and fatalities in North Carolina through a combined education and enforcement effort. The program has grown each year since it was first piloted in 2012, with partner communities stretching from the coast to the Appalachian Mountains. The evidence-based effort is proving to be a model for how States can develop, obtain buy-in for, evaluate, and fund such a program at the statewide level.



Figure 4: Watch For Me NC educates all road users about how to safely share roads and intersections. (Image courtesy of WatchForMeNC.org)

The Watch for Me NC approach to reducing pedestrian and bicycle crashes starts with educational outreach to inform motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists of the State's pedestrian and bicyclist laws and important safety practices. That effort consists of radio public service announcements; ads on buses, billboards, and in gas stations along high-crash corridors; and strategic public engagement by local coalitions through events and collaboration with schools, universities, and other institutions.

The education component is followed by targeted enforcement in areas with heightened risk for pedestrian and/or bicyclist crashes. Key elements of the program include training for law enforcement officers on existing laws to protect pedestrian and bicycle safety and ways officers can actively enforce those laws, such as targeted operations at crosswalks to improve driver compliance with yielding laws.

"Watch for Me NC is a successful model because the core messages are consistent across the State while local partners can customize outreach to meet their unique population," said NCDOT's Pedestrian and Bicycle Division Director, Lauren Blackburn. "It is also an effective way to engage law enforcement and community advocates in a long-term approach to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists," she added.





This program is different from other statewide bicycle and pedestrian safety efforts because of its targeted approach. While Watch for Me NC is managed at the State level, it is implemented at the local level. The program works closely with a select group of partner communities that must apply to the program each year. Communities must commit to disseminating safety information and materials, sending law enforcement officers to trainings, conducting enforcement efforts, and tracking all other related Watch for Me NC efforts. Applicants must also provide letters of support from key community partners, such as school officials, district attorneys, advocacy groups, and planning departments, to demonstrate commitment from a broad coalition.

In exchange for these efforts, participating communities receive safety materials, enforcement training, support, and technical assistance from the program throughout the year. Communities are also recognized for their efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. To learn more about what communities are doing as part of the Watch for Me NC program, visit the [2014 Partner Profiles Page](#).

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center is working closely with NCDOT to provide technical assistance and support with program implementation. Learn more at the [Watch for Me NC website](#).

### Safe Routes to School Program Updates

Colleen Oliver, Communications Manager, Safe Routes to School Programs, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center

#### Walk and Bike to School Day Events Are Tools for Change

Walk to School Day is October 7, 2015 and more than 4,500 communities in all 50 States and the District of Columbia are planning to participate. Many of these communities already know that there are long-term benefits to holding this event.

Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day are energizing events that can have lasting impacts well after the celebrations end. In fact, based on 2014 survey results, 70 percent of Walk to School Day event organizers indicated the event led to changes to the built environment or policies—the types of changes that can make daily walking and bicycling safer and more appealing. Many communities use these types of events as part of a larger strategy to promote walking and bicycling to school throughout the year. For example, Hominy Valley Elementary School in Asheville, NC used Walk and Bike to School Day events to bring attention to the need for safety improvements near the school. After working with community partners and their local MPO, the school convinced the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to require slower travel speeds during school arrival and dismissal times. NCDOT also offered \$25,000 in construction costs for a pedestrian-activated crosswalk signal and the installation of additional sidewalk outside their school, if the community could raise \$8,000. On Walk to School Day in 2014, Congressman Mark Meadows walked to school with students and families. The event received statewide attention, furthering the message of the opportunity to make positive changes through Walk and Bike to School Day and helping the school meet—and exceed—their fundraising goal.



Figure 5: Walk Bike to School Day logo. (Image courtesy of walkbiketoschool.org)



Walk to School Day started in the U.S. in 1996, through funding from the U.S. DOT, to build awareness for the need for safe and walkable communities. In 2000, the event became International Walk to School Day when the United Kingdom, Canada, and the U.S. held the event together for the first time. Today, the event is coordinated by the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) (National Center). In the past 10 years, more than 17,500 schools in 4,500 cities have held 31,000 Walk to School Day events. In 2012, the National Center launched National Bike to School Day in May as part of the [League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Month](#). The next Bike to School Day is scheduled for May 4, 2016.

Walk to School Day event organizers report a variety of reasons why their communities participate in the annual celebration, including promoting physical activity, bringing attention to safety needs, building a sense of neighborhood, and inspiring school spirit. Studies have shown that physical activity can reduce truancy and absenteeism; improve students' academic achievement, morning energy levels, and attention span, and encourage social bonding and community building in schools and communities.

While long-term changes take time, communities are embracing Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day events as the first step to change community culture and create options for getting around that are more inviting for everyone, both young and old.

To find a Walk to School Day event near you in October, or to learn about organizing an event in your community, visit the [Walk Bike to School website](#).

#### **2014 Report Reveals that Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programs Increase Active Transportation to School**

New research released by the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) (National Center) reveals that more children are choosing active transportation for their trips to school compared to 2007. A report titled "[Trends in Walking and Bicycling to School from 2007 to 2013](#)" shows a sustained increase in K-8 children who walk to school in the morning with more support from schools for walking and bicycling.

This new research supports findings from the National Center's previous Trends Report released in 2013. The 2013 study was based on parent survey data from 2007-2012, while the 2014 study was expanded to include 2013 data. Parent surveys were more likely to be completed in communities where walking to school was slightly more feasible than average, which caused rural schools to be under-represented in the study. Surveys came from schools with varying levels of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) activity, including those seeking SRTS funds to start their program, as well as those actively conducting SRTS programs.



*Figure 6: Children walking to school at Bridge Street Elementary School in Yuba City, California (Image courtesy of [walkbiketoschool.org](#))*

According to the 2014 study, the share of K-8 children who walked to school in the morning increased from 11.9 to 15.2 percent, a 28 percent difference. The share of parents who reported their children's schools support walking and bicycling





for the commute rose significantly from 24.8 to 47 percent. This research reflects the promising pattern of school support for walking and bicycling.

### Local Safe Routes to School Program Helps a Community Improve Connectivity and Accessibility

In Wilmington, Delaware, SRTS funds are helping improve accessibility and connectivity in a low-resource community. In Southbridge, a high-poverty neighborhood with a population of 1,600, residents struggle with limited transportation access to essential services. Through an environmental justice<sup>2</sup> initiative, the [Wilmington Area Planning Council](#) (WILMAPCO) identified Southbridge as a community in need of transportation alternatives to help promote economic revitalization and connect residents to key destinations.

In 2006, WILMAPCO worked closely with the Southbridge community to develop a 20-year transportation vision as part of the [South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan](#). Using this plan, WILMAPCO held a [Walkable Community Workshop](#) with Southbridge residents and produced a [Walkable Community Report](#). During the workshop, residents reported deteriorating sidewalk conditions and speeding vehicles near the local school, Elbert-Palmer Elementary.

As a result of this assessment, in 2009 the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) awarded WILMAPCO a \$203,000 SRTS grant to improve infrastructure conditions. The following year the neighborhood installed new sidewalks, curb ramps, striped crosswalks, stop signs, and enhanced school zone signage around the school. These improvements created safer walking and bicycling routes to the school including after school trips of students traveling to two community resource facilities located a block away. Elbert-Palmer Elementary School plans to conduct some surveys and bicycle/pedestrian counts in fall of 2015 to assess the impact of the infrastructure improvements near their school.

In 2014, DelDOT awarded Southbridge with a second round of funding for further infrastructure improvements in the community. These funds are being used to build more sidewalks, bicycle parking at the school, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps, and enhanced traffic control signage based on ongoing parent feedback. These combined projects will improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between the elementary school and nearby housing, parks, community center, community gardens, and shops.

The Southbridge community serves as a clear example of how SRTS funds continue to benefit communities in new ways. Infrastructure improvements not only help make streets safer and encourage more active lifestyles, these changes can also help connect residents to their communities and to the essential services they need.

The Southbridge community was recently featured in a [FHWA Livability Initiative Case Study](#) that described the livability elements integrated into a comprehensive, multimodal bridge project connecting Southbridge and nearby neighborhood of Browntown to better job opportunities and regional destinations. The project is part of a larger effort to redevelop the land

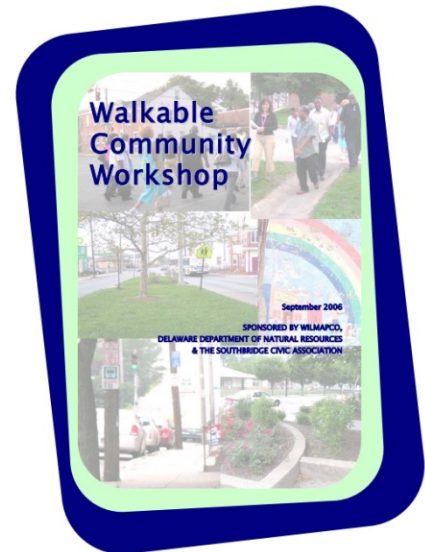


Figure 7: Southbridge completed a 20-year transportation vision plan in 2006 using SRTS funds. (Image courtesy of WILMAPCO)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental\\_justice/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/)



along the Christina River to enhance access to employment, entertainment, and recreation opportunities and improve the walkability of the surrounding area.

### Web Tools Promote Livability Principles in Transportation Planning

Melissa Furlong, Transportation Engineer, FHWA Pennsylvania Division Office

Amy Ingles, Community Planner, U.S. DOT Volpe Center

The FHWA has developed a number of different tools to help communities assess, plan, and design sustainable communities. In addition to FHWA tools, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which includes the U.S. DOT, EPA, and HUD, has also developed several tools to help users build more sustainable communities.

These tools are designed to help planners and practitioners consider community interests; health impacts; access to employment, healthcare, and other basic needs; affordable housing and transportation options; and the environment when developing and implementing transportation projects. The FHWA Office of Human Environment maintains the [Livability Initiative website](#), which contains a complete list of tools. Several of these tools are described below.

#### [Community Vision Metrics Web Tool](#)

SUGGESTED USERS: Planners, MPOs, Councils of Governments, their consultants and partners

This easy-to-use tool employs searchable fields that allow users to select performance measures that match with community's quality of life goals. The tool contains more than 1,700 metrics linked to land use and transportation planning areas of interest.

Community and planner uses include:

- Tracking progress during a visioning exercise;
- Identifying performance measures generated by participants in a charrette; and
- Guiding discussions on community goals.

#### Welcome to Community Vision Metrics

To begin searching for livability measures that fit your unique goals and context, you may choose **one topic** from the areas of interest listed below.

##### Choose Topic

- Accessibility
- Aesthetics and Sensory
- Community Amenities
- Community Engagement
- Economic
- Housing
- Land Use
- Mobility
- Natural Resources
- Public Health
- Safety
- Socio-Cultural

Figure 8: The first step of the Community Vision Metrics tool requires the user to select a priority interest area. (Image courtesy of FHWA)

The tool does not evaluate the performance of scenarios or alternatives. It does, however, provide planners with metrics that can help them evaluate preferred scenarios or alternatives. It also generates a permanent record to document topics and criteria selected for future comparisons and evaluation.



[PlaceFit Community Characteristics Database](#)

SUGGESTED USERS: The general public and transportation practitioners

This tool provides access to a variety of existing websites, giving users a customized list based on selected livability characteristics. The results can be further refined by selecting from the following subcategories: rankings, indexes, and data. The tool helps users identify communities that meet selected housing, employment, and transportation needs and other desirable community characteristics. Uses include:

- Locating useful information to guide planning meetings;
- Querying primary and secondary characteristics of successful communities;
- Identifying desirable, livability characteristics for use in public outreach; and
- Collaborating with other agencies to achieve community-defined objectives.

[INVEST \(Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool\)](#)

SUGGESTED USERS: DOTs, MPOs, Council of Governments, public works departments, and their consultants and partners

As part of the Sustainable Highways Initiative, FHWA developed this tool to help transportation practitioners evaluate the sustainability of transportation programs and projects. INVEST is a collection of best practices designed to help transportation agencies integrate sustainability into their programs, policies, processes, and projects. The tool's three modules allow for self-evaluation of the entire lifecycle of transportation services. Scores from the self-evaluation can be used to set performance measures or establish program or project benchmarks. Evaluation categories include:

- System Planning—for Transportation Improvement Programs and corridor studies;
- Project Development—for design and construction; and
- Operations & Maintenance—for asset management programs.



Figure 9: This is a sample results page from PlaceFit that was generated after selecting categories and subcategories related to the environment and public spaces. (Image courtesy of FHWA)

## System Planning

- Review all criteria are included in the System Planning module;
- Download individual criterion write-ups (when browsing specific criteria); and
- Download All criteria (Criteria Compendium).

SP-01 **Integrated Planning: Economic Development and Land Use**  
Integrate statewide and metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) with statewide, regional, and/or local land use plans and economic development forecasts and goals. Proactively encourage and facilitate sustainability through the coordination of transportation, land use, and economic development planning.

SP-02 **Integrated Planning: Natural Environment**  
Integrate ecological considerations into the transportation planning process, including the development of the long range transportation plan (LRTP) and TIP/STIP. Proactively support and enhance long-term ecological function through the coordination of transportation and natural resource planning.

Figure 10: Two examples of the 16 criteria available in the System Planning Module. (Image courtesy of FHWA)





[Location Affordability Portal](#)

SUGGESTED USERS: The general public, planners, developers, and researchers

The Location Affordability Portal is the result of a collaborative effort between HUD and the U.S. DOT. The tool provides users with estimates of the average percent of household income that a resident would spend on transportation and housing costs in a particular location. This metric, known as the Location Affordability Index, can help consumers, policymakers, and developers make informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest. The tool can be used at any stage of the decisionmaking process. First, users enter an address, intersection, city, county, State, or zip code and select from a set of household profiles. The results include the average affordability index for the location entered, as well as average transportation habits such as miles driven annually. The resulting map shows the location affordability index for different neighborhoods in the selected area so that users can compare the affordability of one neighborhood to another. The Location Affordability Portal covers every populated area in all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

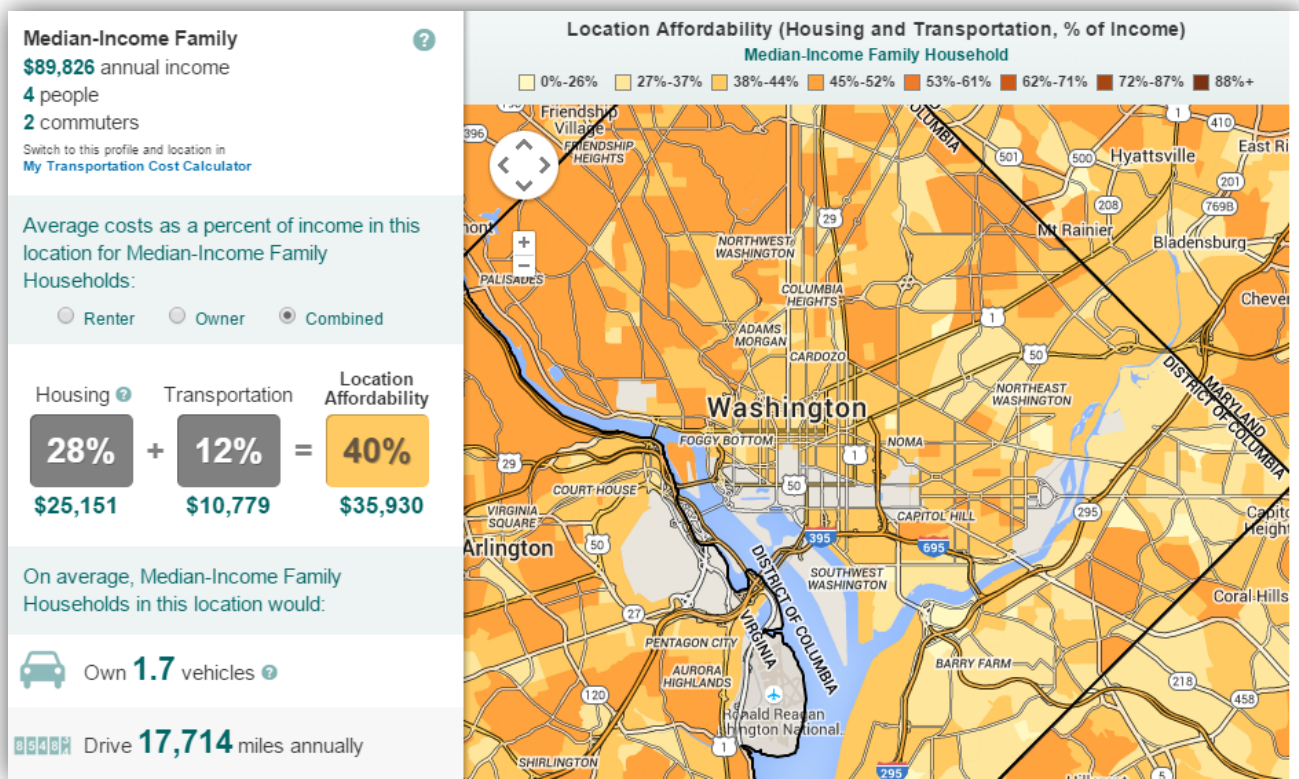


Figure 11: Location Affordability Index map of Washington, DC. (Image courtesy of HUD)



[Sustainable Communities Indicator Catalog](#)

SUGGESTED USERS: Cities, communities, and planners

The Sustainable Communities Indicator Catalog tool is designed to assist users with planning, policymaking, and civic engagement by identifying indicators that can measure progress toward community goals. The indicators used in this tool focus on relationships between land use, housing, transportation, human health, and the environment. First, users selected an indicator topic, geographic scale, level of urbanization, and issue of concern. The choices for each category are shown in Figure 12. In response, the tool develops a list of indicators that can be clicked to find out more information.

The following information is provided for each indicator:

- An explanation of what the indicator is designed to measure and how it relates to sustainable communities
- Suggested data sources that can help users create an indicator for their community
- A list of communities that have created such an indicator and links to additional information regarding how each community created and uses the indicator

For example, clicking on “Bicycle Infrastructure” shown in Figure 12 will take the user to a page that recommends collecting bike lane and trail mileage, demographic, socioeconomic, and land area data. There is also an explanation of how this data can be used to calculate the community’s bike or trail mileage over its area. The purpose of this information is to help communities identify gaps in their bicycle networks, especially in areas where low-income and minority residents could benefit from additional lanes. The page also includes a list of communities that already use the indicator with links that connect users to real-world examples where the indicator has been developed and used.

Home > Indicators

<b>Indicator Topic</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<b>Geographic Scale</b> <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood/Corridor <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region	<b>Level of Urbanization</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban	<b>Issue of Concern</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Access and equity <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community and Sense of Place <input type="checkbox"/> Economic competitiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental quality <input type="checkbox"/> Public health	<input type="button" value="Apply"/>
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Indicator Name	Indicator Topic	Issue of Concern	Level of Urbanization	Geographic Scale
Access to Safe Parks & Recreation Areas: Percent of Residents within Walking Distance of Recreation Land	Housing, Land Use, Transportation	Access and equity, Community and Sense of Place, Public health	Suburban, Urban	County, Municipality, Neighborhood/Corridor, Project, Region
Bike Parking per Capita	Land Use, Transportation	Access and equity, Community and Sense of Place, Environmental quality, Public health	Rural, Suburban, Urban	County, Municipality, Neighborhood/Corridor, Project, Region
Bicycle Infrastructure	Land Use, Transportation	Access and equity, Community and Sense of Place, Environmental quality, Public health	Rural, Suburban, Urban	County, Municipality, Neighborhood/Corridor, Region

Figure 12: Sample of suggested indicators. By clicking on an indicator, the user will be provided with additional detailed information. (Image courtesy of PSC)



## NYSDOT Honors Transportation Projects Committed to Preserving Environmental Sustainability in 2015

Valeriya Remezova, Team Lead of the Planning and Environment Team, FHWA New York Division Office

### GreenLITES

*Figure 13: NYSDOT began implementing the GreenLITES program in 2008. (Image courtesy of NYSDOT)*

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is committed to improving the quality of New York's transportation infrastructure through practices that incorporate a high level of environmental sustainability in projects. Similar to the FHWA's Sustainable Highways Initiative, NYSDOT implements programs that support such practices and recognizes outstanding sustainability projects and the staff that support them.

The Green Leadership in Transportation Environmental Sustainability (GreenLITES) program is an internal management program that NYSDOT uses to better integrate sustainability principles, measure its performance, recognize good practices, and identify where the agency needs to improve. It also provides a way to publicly demonstrate how NYSDOT is advancing sustainable practices. NYSDOT approaches sustainable transportation as a philosophy, ensuring that it protects and enhances the environment; conserves natural resources and energy; preserves or enhances historic, scenic, and aesthetic project-setting characteristics; encourages public involvement in the transportation planning process; integrates smart growth and other sound land-use practices; and explores new and innovative approaches to sustainable design.

In addition to incorporating Federal priorities in its programs, NYSDOT also works closely with the 14 New York MPOs and 11 NYSDOT Regional Offices to understand local needs and provide guidance on planning and project development. NYSDOT offers suggestions on balancing community needs while considering economically sound and environmentally compatible projects.

NYSDOT is committed to minimizing impacts to the environment, including the depletion of irreplaceable resources. In order to recognize transportation project designs, operations, and maintenance practices that incorporate a high level of environmental sustainability, NYSDOT implemented the GreenLITES transportation environmental sustainability rating program.

On Earth Day every year, NYSDOT honors those projects and program areas that obtain the highest levels of sustainability. Fourteen exemplary projects that best incorporated sustainability received the 2015 GreenLITES Award; three of these projects are highlighted below:

The [Robert Moses Parkway project](#) was the recipient of an Evergreen Project Award. The project improves access to the Niagara Falls State Park and the city of Niagara Falls and enhances the Niagara Falls State Park landscape as well as the interface between the Niagara River, the park, and the city. The park receives 8 million annual visitors.

The [Allegany Residency Snowplow Frame Removal and Summer Storage project](#) received an Operations Best Practices Award for maintenance of highways and bridges, ranging from Interstate 86, the Southern Tier's major east-west expressway, to rural highways that connect hamlets and farms to cities and villages. Installing rear view camera systems on snow plow trucks helps optimize roadway salt application by giving drivers a visual confirmation for spreading settings. It also enhances visibility and reduces accident probabilities.



*Figure 14: Rear view camera system installations won an Operations Best Practices Award. (Image courtesy of NYSDOT)*





NYS DOT is working to improve safety and mobility on the NY Route 112 corridor in the community of Coram, located in the town of Brookhaven in Suffolk County. The [NY Route 112 corridor project](#) will reconstruct and improve NY Route 112 from Granny Road to NY Route 25. This mixed-use arterial connects patrons to local businesses and commuters to places of employment. Also, it serves the trucking industry's transport of goods and materials to and from Long Island's North and South Shores.

The NY FHWA Division commends NYS DOT for its leadership and commitment to transportation that provides environmental sustainability while delivering the Federal-aid program.



Figure 15: The NY Route 112 corridor project will improve connections between residents and local businesses and employers. (Image courtesy of NYS DOT)

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Updates

### U.S. DOT Strategic Bicycle/Pedestrian Action Agenda Overview

U.S. DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx has made the provision of safe pedestrian and bicycle options one of the top priorities of his administration. The *Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation*, which is managed by FHWA, will provide a strategic action-oriented framework for issues such as data collection and management, network implementation and documentation, research, training, and national design guidance. This planning process will result in a framework for pedestrian and bicycle planning, design, and research efforts in the next five years. It will identify critical gaps, prioritize near-term investments, and establish goals for such above mentioned issues. This effort will inform the Secretary's 30-year plan and will be completed in early 2016. FHWA will host a series of webinars to collect input.

### Mayor's Challenge Update

In January 2015, Secretary Anthony Foxx initiated the *Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets* to raise the bar for pedestrian and bicycle safety in communities across the U.S. The Mayors' Challenge is now underway and gaining momentum. More than 218 mayors and other elected officials have signed up for the Challenge, and they will be leading pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility initiatives in their communities over the course of the next year. Each community will select activities from the set of Challenge activities outlined below and will focus their efforts on these activities. Challenge activities include:

- Complete Streets: Take a Complete Streets Approach.
- Fix Barriers: Identify and address barriers to make streets safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities, including those using personal mobility devices.
- Gather Data: Gather and track biking and walking data goals by taking on one or more Challenge activities outlined below.
- Design Right: Use designs appropriate to the context of the street and its uses.
- Create Networks: Take advantage of opportunities to create and complete ped-bike networks through maintenance.
- Improve Laws: Improve Walking and Biking Safety Laws and Regulations.
- Educate and Enforce: Educate and Enforce Proper Road Use Behaviors By All.



Participating mayors and their representatives attended a Summit at U.S. DOT on March 12, 2015 to network and learn more about Challenge activities. U.S. DOT staff shared resources and tools available to help cities. FHWA's Acting Administrator Greg Nadeau moderated a panel on "Building the Political Will and Public Support" for walking and biking, and FHWA staff helped moderate sessions about safety and data. U.S. DOT hosted a webinar with all participating cities on April 29, 2015 to provide updates and highlight pedestrian and bicycle safety activities that are underway and planned in Challenge cities. Additional webinars are being planned and the Mayors' Challenge will culminate in a capstone meeting at U.S. DOT in early 2016. For more information, please visit the [Mayors' Challenge website](#).

### FHWA Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Assessments

As part of U.S. DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx's [Safer People, Safer Streets](#) initiative, FHWA has successfully completed pedestrian and bicycle safety assessments in 36 States where FHWA was named the leading modal agency. FHWA also supported assessments in the 16 States where it was not the lead agency. Other leading agencies include the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The purpose of the safety assessments was to: foster relationships, identify pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvement opportunities, establish ongoing conversations, and engage practitioners and stakeholders around pedestrian and bicycle issues. The FHWA division offices provided assessments of the quality and connectivity of local pedestrian and bicycle networks, gaps in and concerns about the networks, and potential solutions. Information collected during the assessments will be compiled, summarized, and presented in reports, webinars, and other media in the late summer and fall of 2015. For more information on the FHWA bicycle and pedestrian program or the bicycle and pedestrian assessments, please visit [FHWA's Bicycle and Pedestrian program website](#).

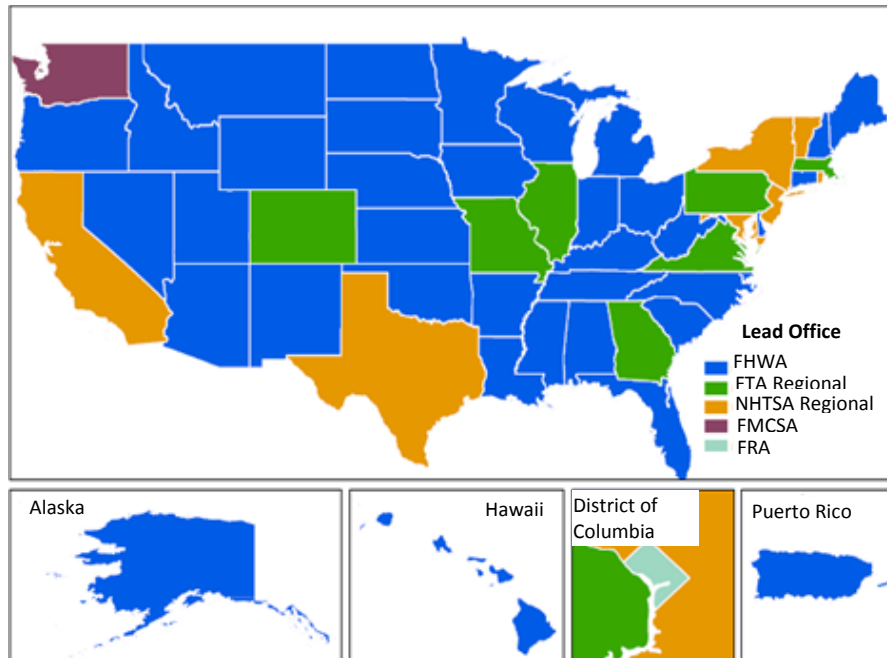


Figure 16: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Assessments location. (Image courtesy of FHWA)



## Announcements/New Resources

- In early 2015, the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program released the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Along Existing Roads—ActiveTrans Priority Tool Guidebook](#), which is a resource for transportation practitioners to help them prioritize Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- [Evaluating Complete Streets Projects: A Guide for Practitioners](#) is a partnership between the [American Association for Retired Persons](#) (AARP) and the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#). The guide helps communities evaluate projects based on multimodal goals and the needs of all users in the system, while providing valuable lessons on performance measurement.
- In May of 2015, FHWA released the [Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide](#), which outlines planning considerations for separated bike lanes and provides a menu of design options for different road geometries and multimodal scenarios. It also provides detailed intersection design information covering topics such as turning movement operations, signalization, signage, and on-road markings. Case studies highlight best practices and lessons learned throughout the document.
- As part of FHWA's Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program, the agency produced a collection of case studies and methods called [Evaluating the Economic Benefits of Nonmotorized Transportation](#). The report examines potential methods for evaluating the economic benefits from nonmotorized transportation investments at the project, neighborhood, and larger community scale, while highlighting case studies from Minneapolis, Toronto, New York City, and the State of Vermont.
- AARP has developed a [Livability Index](#) that considers indicators from a wide range of topics including housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. The index scores neighborhoods and communities based on these indicators through a simple web-based interface.
- The U.S. EPA has developed a new environmental justice (EJ) mapping and screening tool called [EJSCREEN](#). It is based on nationally consistent data and an approach that combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports.

