

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP:
2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

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FINAL

EXTERNAL DOCUMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established the Health in Transportation Working Group to examine the agency's existing policies and programs and their impacts on health-related issues such as air quality, active transportation, environmental review, noise, safety, livable communities, and access to health-related facilities. After the first year, FHWA produced an internal report that summarized the accomplishments to date, identified related research and outreach activities, and provided direction for future Working Group products.

This report provides an overview of the Working Group's activities and accomplishments in 2013, summarizes other U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) health-related accomplishments, documents its progress toward the recommendations laid out in the 2012 Annual Report, and offers findings and recommendations based on themes that the Working Group discussed in 2013. It is intended for a general audience.

2. BACKGROUND

FHWA established the Health in Transportation Working Group in early 2012 in response to growing interest in the intersection of health and transportation within the agency. The Working Group initially included representatives from various FHWA Offices, including: Chief Counsel, Federal Lands Highway, Human Environment, Natural Environment, Planning, Project Development and Environmental Review, Resource Center Environment and Planning Technical Service Teams, Safety, and Transportation Policy Studies. In the past year, the Working Group expanded its membership to include representatives of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST).

In March 2012, the Working Group created a charter that articulated its purpose: to develop an agency-wide understanding of health in transportation, identify aspects of existing agency programs that relate to health, and address health-related concerns and communicate these concerns with FHWA management. During its first year, the Working Group identified projects, activities, and initiatives throughout FHWA and U.S. DOT that target positive health outcomes of transportation programs. The Working Group also discussed the need for FHWA to more explicitly address health issues in transportation and made plans to improve internal and external communication regarding the health outcomes of existing programs.

The Working Group updated its charter in early 2013 to include additional activities, including developing resources and expertise within FHWA related to health, improving leadership and communication with FHWA staff on transportation's role in health, and establishing a more standardized approach to addressing health issues and requests. Looking forward to the following year, they also made plans to conduct research on ways to improve the connection between health and transportation. Finally, the Working Group decided to expand its awareness of and involvement in health and transportation activities at other Federal, State, local, and not-for-profit agencies. For example, they sought to become more familiar with the U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services' National Prevention Strategy and how FHWA Headquarters and Division Offices could participate in the initiative.

In 2013, the Working Group held five teleconferences and one in-person meeting in Washington, D.C. Members used these six meetings to offer information on upcoming events and initiatives related to health in transportation; to plan for new projects and activities; and to summarize progress toward the completion of products. Notable accomplishments during the past year included:

- 2013 Health in Transportation Working Group Charter
- [Moving Healthy: Linking FHWA Programs and Health](#)
- [Health in Transportation Website](#)
- [Health in Transportation Frequently Asked Questions Document](#)
- Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning (*early stages*)

In addition to these accomplishments, which are described in greater detail in Section 3 of this report, the Working Group also made several key decisions regarding its future priorities and activities. These include:

- **Foster Collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** At its September 2013 in-person meeting, representatives from the CDC came to discuss the impact of land use and transportation on public health and the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA) in transportation. The Working Group decided to continue and expand its collaboration with CDC on the connections between health and transportation.
- **Identify Future Activities:** Throughout the year, the Working Group identified many potential future activities, including generating research ideas for the Transportation Research Board (TRB), developing a business case to supporting health in transportation, drafting best practice case studies, and organizing peer exchanges between transportation and public health agencies.
- **Engage Agency Leadership:** The Working Group strives to engage agency leadership within FHWA to build support for promoting health in transportation across FHWA. To further cultivate leadership support, the Working Group will use an executive summary of its 2013 report to brief FHWA leadership, and plans are being made to invite leadership to future meetings to better inform them about health in transportation issues.
- **Work with Field Offices:** The Working Group decided to focus more on working with FHWA Division Offices, FTA Regional Offices, and other field offices to learn more about how these offices address health in their activities, particularly through their oversight of State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Field offices have a direct connection to the agencies that implement projects and programs that have direct health implications, both positive and negative. Working with field offices could help the Working Group direct its impact on health in transportation decisionmaking. The FHWA Livability Team is actively engaged with this effort and with the implementation

of the *Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning* will also further this work.

3. 2013 WORKING GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Early in 2013, the Working Group drafted a charter that laid out its intended activities for the year. Throughout the year, they worked on these activities and had five major accomplishments in 2013. This section lists each accomplishment and provides some background information on how and why they chose to pursue it.

2013 HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP CHARTER

The 2013 Charter serves as a guiding document for the Working Group's activities. It is an internal document that lays out the major tasks and mid- and long-term tasks for calendar year 2013, and also describes the purpose of the Working Group and lists the members.

MOVING HEALTHY: LINKING FHWA PROGRAMS AND HEALTH

The Working Group published the [*Moving Healthy: Linking FHWA Programs and Health*](#) brochure in May 2013. It provides information on FHWA programs, initiatives, tools, and resources that influence or are influenced by health. The brochure explains that although FHWA does not have a single, specific program that focuses solely on health, it is implicit in a broad range of the Agency's existing programs. It describes many FHWA programs, funding sources, and tools that can support health-related issues in communities across the country.

HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION WEBSITE

In January 2013, the FHWA Office of Planning launched the [Health in Transportation website](#). The website includes five main pages:

- Resources – provides links to publications and resources that focus on the relationship between transportation and health.
- Health in Transportation Working Group – provides an overview of the Working Group.
- Frequently Asked Questions – lists common questions and answers about health in transportation.
- Training Opportunities – lists opportunities for learning more about health in transportation, including webinars, conferences, and other programs.
- Related Links – provides links to government agencies and initiatives; advocacy organizations and coalitions; and health, planning, and transportation organizations.

The Office of Planning keeps the website current with the latest information on health in transportation, and posts products as they are available.

HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DOCUMENT

The Working Group decided to develop a list of frequently asked questions and answers relating to the connections between transportation and health. Initially, they wrote it for an audience of FHWA Division Office staff. However, while drafting the questions and answers, the Working Group decided to write them for a broader audience to apply to a wider set of situations. In September 2013, the Working Group finalized the list of health in transportation frequently asked questions and answers. The [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) can be found on the Health in Transportation website. The five questions are:

- How does transportation affect public health?
- How is FHWA considering health in transportation decisionmaking?
- What Federal transportation programs can help improve the health of communities?
- How can transportation agencies incorporate health into transportation decisionmaking?
- What is an HIA and can it be used to evaluate transportation projects?

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH IN CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The 2013 charter laid out the plan to conduct research for the development of a framework for incorporating health into the transportation delivery process. Victoria Martinez and a small group of Working Group members are leading the FHWA effort to develop this framework, which is being funded with existing FHWA research funds. The Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning will be an action-oriented, step-by-step document to assist States, MPOs, local governments, and the public in incorporating health into transportation corridor planning and project delivery. It will provide detailed information about health and transportation topics such as equity analysis, active transportation, injury prevention, air pollution, infectious diseases, and access to services that enable healthier lifestyles. The framework will also help to build internal capacity so that FHWA can engage stakeholders and provide a better understanding of how the transportation infrastructure can accommodate and affect the health needs of a community.

FHWA conducted a competitive bid process to hire a consultant to develop the framework. After careful consideration, FHWA selected ICF International as the consultant. The Working Group will play an important role in the development of the framework; a subgroup of members helped to develop and review the initial scope of work, and will continue to offer guidance throughout the development of the framework. The framework is scheduled to be completed in January 2016.

4. OTHER HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2013

In addition to the accomplishments in 2013 described in Section 3, many members had other health in transportation accomplishments within their roles outside of the Working Group. These accomplishments are listed below.

RESOURCES

OST TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTH TOOL

The CDC and OST have partnered to develop a simple-to-use transportation and health tool to help transportation decisionmakers to understand how their community or State compares to their peers in terms of key health and transportation indicators. The online tool will allow agencies to assess how their communities are performing in terms of health and transportation, help agencies determine where to incorporate health measures in its decisionmaking, and will recommend policy improvements. CDC and OST are planning to launch the tool in the fall of 2014. The [Transportation and Health Tool brochure](#) provides more information on this resource.

FHWA TOOL KIT FOR INTEGRATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION DECISIONMAKING

FHWA's [Tool Kit for Integrating Land Use and Transportation Decisionmaking](#) is a collection of resources that provide a user-friendly, web-based source of methods, strategies, and procedures for integrating land use and transportation planning, decisionmaking, and project implementation. Robin Smith worked with the Volpe Center to expand the tool kit to include examples of connections between transportation agencies and public health agencies.

FHWA PUBLIC ROADS ARTICLE

Ed Christopher co-authored an article for the FHWA magazine *Public Roads* that summarizes health in transportation activities at the metropolitan, State, and Federal levels. The article, [How Does Transportation Affect Public Health?](#), was published in the May/June 2013 issue of *Public Roads*.

FHWA STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES REPORT

FHWA developed the Statewide Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities Report. It identifies an integrated and flexible approach to how States and their partners can successfully consider aspects of health during the transportation planning process. The report proposes a framework for States and partners to use to integrate health into statewide transportation planning. It expands upon the recent [Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities Report](#) to develop a comprehensive approach to considering health during all stages of the statewide transportation planning process.

FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAMS

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), authorized under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation, and enhanced mobility. The TAP replaced the Transportation Enhancement Activities and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs, which were two of the largest funding sources for nonmotorized transportation under prior legislation. FHWA completed the [TAP Guidance and Questions and Answers](#) in June 2013, which provide information about TAP in general, as well as on SRTS and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

The RTP provides funds to States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. FHWA recently completed the 2013 RTP Annual Report, which has a section on how the RTP promotes health outcomes through increased physical activity, as well as sections on accessibility improvements, safe and livable communities, active transportation, environmental protection, and safety education.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The States obligated \$676 million in Federal-aid highway program funds for bicycle and pedestrian programs and projects in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 through the [Transportation Alternatives Program](#) (TAP). This was a 20 percent decrease compared to FY 2012, reflecting significant changes necessary to implement MAP-21 requirements. This figure may rise in FY 2014 as States implement projects selected under MAP-21.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

2013 NEW PARTNERS FOR SMART GROWTH CONFERENCE

Fred Bowers participated in the 2013 [New Partners for Smart Growth Conference](#), where he took part in a session on incorporating transportation and health and met with SRTS representatives to discuss the potential for planning a peer exchange to improve the planning process within SRTS programs.

2013 NATIONAL HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT MEETING

Ed Christopher, Victoria Martinez, and Robin Smith attended the [2013 National HIA Meeting](#) on September 24-25. This meeting was mainly aimed at public health agencies who were awarded grants to perform HIAs. FHWA was provided an opportunity to discuss transportation programs and policies that support healthy outcomes with these health professionals and other stakeholders during a breakout session.

FUNDING FOR HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCES

FHWA provided limited conference co-sponsorship in FY 2013 for several conferences related to health or that had tracks or sessions related to health and physical activity.

- The [International Trails Symposium](#), held in April 2013 and organized by American Trails, had many sessions related to the health benefits of outdoor recreation through trail use.
- The [Safe Routes to School National Conference](#), held in August 2013 and organized by the Local Government Commission, focused on safety and health.
- The [2013 Walking Summit](#), held in October 2013 and organized by Every Body Walk! with participation from health-related organizations, incorporated health themes throughout the conference.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION

Fred Bowers attended an annual meeting with the Dutch Embassy, where the conversation focused on performance measures. He hopes that next year the focus of the discussion will be health in transportation. At the meeting, Fred Bowers learned about [Polis: European Cities and Regions Networking for Innovative Transport Solutions](#) and its initiatives in health and transportation. Within Polis' Environment and Health in Transport focus area, the group addresses several categories, including cycling and walking, noise, air quality, climate change, mobility and health, and cleaner vehicles and alternative fuels.

FHWA LIVABILITY WORKING GROUP

The Office of Human Environment convenes the FHWA Program Offices bi-monthly to coordinate and share information related to livability. The Office of the Secretary's Policy Office also participates in the meetings.

FHWA OFFICE OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

The Office of Human Environment Working Group is a collaborative effort among multiple FHWA Offices to leverage and integrate human environment activities such as livability, health in transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian activities in support of agency initiatives, programs, and project delivery.

NATIONAL PREVENTION COUNCIL

The [National Prevention Council](#), created through the Affordable Care Act, comprises 20 Federal departments, agencies, and offices and is chaired by the Surgeon General. Lilly Shoup serves as the U.S. DOT designee to the National Prevention Council. OST is submitting a summary of its activities related to health and injury prevention to be included in the [2013 National Prevention Council Annual Status Report](#) of Federal activities related to health.

The National Prevention Council developed the [National Prevention Strategy](#) with input from the Prevention Advisory Group, stakeholders, and the public. The Strategy, which was released on June 16, 2011, aims to guide the U.S. in the most effective and achievable means for improving health and well-being. The Strategy prioritizes prevention by integrating recommendations and actions across multiple settings to improve health and save lives.

One of the National Prevention Strategy's seven priorities is active living. Robin Smith served on the Active Living Committee for FHWA Region 8 for the National Prevention Strategy and also worked on [National Get Outdoors Day](#). The group is working with Central Federal Lands Highway and the FHWA Colorado Division Office to connect three Colorado's urban National Wildlife Refuges together via local trails.

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Ed Christopher serves as co-chair of the [TRB Health and Transportation Subcommittee](#), which advances research, education, and professional practice in public health and transportation. Relevant subcommittee activities and accomplishments include:

- A call for papers on the use of transportation and travel analysis models to assess the effects of transportation on public health;
- A call for posters displaying data to explain the intersection of transportation planning and health;
- A research proposal related to transit-related subcommittees that are dealing with transit planning and public health;
- Meetings with two groups affiliated with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: the [Network for Public Health Law](#) and [Active Living Research](#);
- Two health-related sessions for the 2014 TRB Annual Meeting: a high-level transportation and health policy session and a session focused on planning for small- and medium-sized communities; and
- An issue of [TR News](#), TRB's monthly magazine, to focus on health in transportation to be published in 2015.

UNITED WE RIDE

[United We Ride](#) is an initiative of the interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, which is chaired by the Secretary of Transportation. United We Ride makes recommendations that improve the availability, quality, and efficient delivery of transportation services to transportation disadvantaged populations, including persons with disabilities. Doug Birnie, an FTA representative involved in the United We Ride program, delivered a presentation to the Working Group regarding the program and its upcoming initiatives as they relate to health in transportation. In December members of the Working Group had a follow-up meeting with a subcommittee of United We Ride and made plans to stay apprised of their activities and to seek opportunities for further coordination.

5. CONCLUSION

In its second year, the FHWA Health in Transportation Working Group accomplished many of the goals its members set for itself, and in doing so helped to expand knowledge about the connections between health and transportation within FHWA, U.S. DOT, and the general public. The Working Group's new web presence provides a venue to share its activities and products with interested parties within and outside of the Federal government. The development of *Moving Healthy* and the Frequently Asked Questions document are recent examples of products that the Working Group is sharing on its website.

As the Working Group moves into its third year, some of its 2013 accomplishments will continue to develop, including the Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning. In 2014, the Working Group will continue to expand awareness of health in transportation issues, collaborate with potential partners in expanding the consideration of health in transportation, and educate FHWA, U.S. DOT, and external agencies on ways to incorporate health in transportation decisionmaking.