



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. The FHWA Livable Communities Newsletter also includes topics related to Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Context Sensitive Solutions, and Environmental Justice. 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 (USDOT), 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/. 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



Every Place Counts: Reimagining the Possibilities

Stephanie Gidigbi, Director of Strategic Initiatives, USDOT Office of the Secretary

As part of the Ladders of Opportunity initiative, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Office of the Secretary launched the [Every Place Counts Design Challenge](#) in May 2016. The Challenge set out to raise awareness and identify inclusive community design solutions that bridge the infrastructure divide and reconnect people to opportunity. It empowered communities and decisionmakers to work together to develop context-sensitive design solutions that reflect and incorporate the input of the people and communities they impact.



Figure 1: Graphic illustration of Every Place Counts Philadelphia. (Image courtesy of USDOT)

The Challenge builds on Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx’s efforts to highlight the long-lasting impacts of transportation decisions on communities across the country: “As our nation’s infrastructure continues to draw closer to the end of its useful life and our population expands, we have an opportunity to do things differently. As we rebuild, replace, or repair it, we must ensure alignment in project planning and community needs, to transform the system into one that reflects the needs of everyone that lives there.”

Community teams led by local officials competed to receive on-site technical assistance in the form of a two-day design and visioning session with USDOT and experts in the field. Each community visioning session covered a range of topics from design, architecture, and engineering strategies to funding programs and the Federal processes for transportation planning, programming, and the National Environmental Policy Act. USDOT received 34 proposals and selected four awardees—Spokane, WA; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; and St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN.

The four selected Every Place Counts applicants convened elected officials, planners, transportation and design professionals, and a cross-section of community residents to participate in the community visioning sessions. The first day of each charrette included:

- A group tour of the infrastructure challenge site;
- Presentations by facilitators about strategies and designs used in other communities to resolve similar challenges;
- A facilitated dialogue to develop a community vision and plan for the focus area; and
- Visual renderings of scalable solutions, presented at the public meeting that closed each visioning session.



Spokane, WA

The transcontinental Interstate-90 was constructed through the heart of Spokane, dividing the working-class suburb of East Central. Participants developed a community vision, value statements, and design focus areas for the Challenge. They expressed that a successful project would be based on the input of local residents and business owners, with the support of local and State decisionmakers. The resulting design concepts included a connected network of parks and trails to form an open space system and recreation loop.

Philadelphia, PA

The Vine Street Expressway (I-676) was built 25 years ago to connect I-95 at Philadelphia's eastern edge with I-76, dividing the city's Chinatown and Callowhill neighborhoods. Residents were able to reimagine a Vine Street Corridor that improves neighborhood connections, creates equitable mixed-use development opportunities, and provides inclusive mobility options. Participants developed short- and medium-term ideas such as traffic calming, street redesign, adding to the network of green space, and making bridges and underpasses more hospitable to people, pedestrians, and bicyclists.



Figure 2: "History of Chinatown," by Arturo Ho depicts the struggle against urban renewal in the late 1960s when construction of the Philadelphia Vine Street Expressway bifurcated the community. (Image courtesy of USDOT)

Nashville, TN

A multidisciplinary team of experts worked with residents and leaders to reimagine the historic Jefferson Street in North Nashville—once a thriving middle-class neighborhood, prior to the construction of I-40. Residents wanted to preserve the rich history of the Jefferson Street corridor while providing new venues for art, entertainment, and culture. The visioning session resulted in design elements including a more walkable and connected corridor with myriad ideas for public art and creative wayfinding.

Twin Cities, MN

In Minnesota's Twin Cities, I-94 divided several established and diverse communities in both cities. These included Prospect Park in Minneapolis and the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul, which accounted for 85 percent of that city's African-American population in the 1950s. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is committed to working with their local partners to develop a comprehensive, long-term, and community-based approach to address the corridor's current needs. Design elements from the session included physical connection improvements; expanded multimodal possibilities; enhancement of green space; and design features like commemorative plazas to honor neighborhood history.

Looking Ahead

A report documenting and drawing on the four workshops will be released this fall. It will include best practices, regional case studies, design guidelines, and consensus-building strategies for addressing community infrastructure impediments through urban design. The lessons learned will be incorporated into the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Every Day Counts \(EDC-4\) Community Connection Innovations](#), which underscores the value of transportation in community revitalization. FHWA EDC-4 will provide technical assistance, training, and resources to facilitate the discussion of highway retrofitting, rehabilitation, or removal options to improve connections between urban cores and neighboring communities.



Connecticut DOT's Community Connectivity Program

Patrick Zapatka, Bureau of Policy and Planning, Intermodal Planning Unit, Connecticut Department of Transportation

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) launched the [Community Connectivity Program](#), as part of Governor Dannel Malloy's comprehensive 30-year transportation initiative. The program seeks to improve accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians in urban, suburban, and rural community centers—the places where people meet for social, educational, employment, and recreational activities. The goal of the program is to make conditions safer and more inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists, thereby encouraging more people to use these healthy and environmentally sustainable modes of travel. At the same time, these improvements will make Connecticut's community centers more attractive places to live and work.

The initial activity of the Community Connectivity Program is to provide Connecticut's towns and cities assistance in conducting Road Safety Audits (RSA) along important bicycle and pedestrian corridors, trails, and at intersections. An RSA is a formal safety performance evaluation of an existing road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. RSAs use a "boots on the ground" approach to qualitatively estimate and report on potential road safety issues, and identify opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users.

CTDOT began this program by creating an informational brochure, a [website](#), and an application process. Through direct outreach to the municipalities via email and regional presentations, CTDOT provided information to every community about the program and the services it would offer. The applications asked for basic information, such as the name of the town/city, population density, and roadway classification, along with details about the location to be studied (town centers, business districts, employment centers, etc.). Throughout the application process, CTDOT aimed to gain an understanding of the types of safety concerns that were most important to the communities.

Municipalities submitted their applications in March 2016. Following the review process, CTDOT ultimately accepted 81 applications for RSA support. CTDOT looked for basic safety concerns such as:

- Sidewalk width/condition
- Intersection improvements
- Shoulder width
- Pavement markings
- Traffic volume
- On-road parking
- Presence of bicycle lanes
- Traffic signalization
- Topography
- Drainage
- Sightlines

CTDOT uses a consultant to help municipalities administer the RSAs, with CTDOT staff from the Intermodal Planning and Traffic divisions participating in each RSA.



Figure 3: Railroad Crossing on Main Street, RSA Location on Riverside Drive (Route 12) and Main Street in Thompson, CT. (Image courtesy of CTDOT)



The municipalities help build a team of local public safety professionals to participate in the RSA. Involving these stakeholders is critical, as they provide local knowledge of their communities and are key contributors to discussions on how to improve safety and livability in their areas.

Each RSA process consists of three parts, comprising one full work day:

- **Pre-Audit Meeting:** In the morning, the RSA team goes over the objectives of the audit and reviews information relevant to the location.
- **Field Audit:** The field audit involves the physical inspection of the location. During this period, the RSA team walks the area and conducts a safety performance review to evaluate safety concerns.
- **Post-Audit Meeting:** The last stage of the RSA involves a wrap-up meeting with the RSA team to discuss the field audit findings.

CTDOT must be flexible in its approach to the RSAs, as each town is unique and has different safety concerns and preferred solutions for local urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Solutions that may work in urban areas may not be applicable to rural areas. For example, traffic calming solutions such as a “road diet” may work well in urban areas, while roundabouts may be more appropriate in suburban or rural areas.



Figure 4: Poor sidewalk conditions along Williams Street, RSA location on Mohegan Avenue Parkway (Route 32) in New London, CT. (Image courtesy of CTDOT)

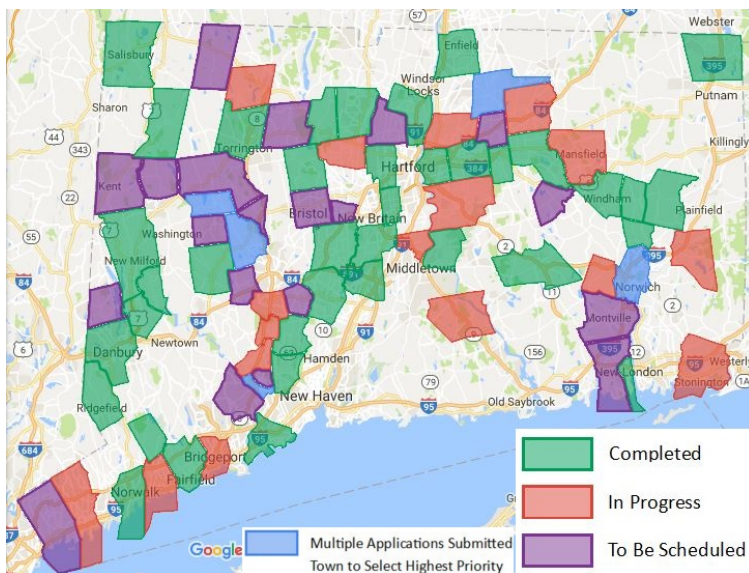


Figure 5: Screenshot of interactive RSA status map. (Image courtesy of CTDOT and Google Maps)

Upon completion of the RSA, each participating municipality receives a final report documenting safety concerns and recommendations that can be used to prioritize projects in anticipation of obtaining funding (similar to a Long Range Transportation Plan or a Conservation and Development Plan). All suggested safety improvements are divided into low-cost recommendations that can be implemented in the short term, and higher-cost recommendations that can be considered over the longer term. Each report will be posted on the Community Connectivity [webpage](#).

An [interactive map](#) on the Community Connectivity website indicates the status of each RSA. CTDOT aims to complete all of the RSAs by spring 2017.

For more information, contact Patrick Zapatka in CTDOT’s Intermodal Planning Unit, at Patrick.Zapatka@ct.gov.



LadderS^{TEP} Transforming Local Communities

Stephanie Gidigbi, Director of Strategic Initiatives, USDOT Office of the Secretary

Transportation infrastructure choices made at the Federal, State, and local levels can strengthen communities, create pathways to jobs, and improve the quality of life for all Americans. Last spring, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) launched the [Ladders of Opportunity Transportation Empowerment Pilot \(LadderS^{TEP}\)](#) to advance catalytic community revitalization transportation projects that foster sustainable economic development. The pilot provided enhanced technical assistance to seven cities:

- Atlanta, GA;
- Baltimore, MD;
- Baton Rouge, LA;
- Charlotte, NC;
- Indianapolis, IN;
- Phoenix, AZ; and
- Richmond, VA.

The USDOT worked with each mayor, and their senior staff, to develop an implementation plan to support their respective transportation investments, cultivating strategic project partnerships, and strengthening local capacity. Through LadderS^{TEP}, USDOT piloted a “place-based” model of providing technical assistance directly to cities, managed by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) and

implemented in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A multidisciplinary team of national organizations including LOCUS, a program of Smart Growth America; the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Enterprise Community Partners, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), aided in developing a work plan for each city. The USDOT continues to support the implementation of each pilot work plan.

LadderS^{TEP} Results and Impact

Each city leveraged Federal assistance to spark transformative investments utilizing a range of approaches to enhance the quality of life for residents including:

- Developing comprehensive land-use and transit-supportive plans;
- Financing capital infrastructure improvements; and
- Implementing growth management policies and zoning regulations.

The convening power of the Federal government led to new investments and partnerships in several LadderS^{TEP} communities. For example, in **Baltimore**, interagency collaboration at the local and Federal levels alleviated private investor concerns to advance a neighborhood revitalization project near the West Baltimore Marc Station. In **Atlanta**, LadderS^{TEP} provided the platform for USDOT to explore priority issues in the area. City and Federal staff formed new strategic



Figure 6: Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, mayor of Baltimore, and Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx at the groundbreaking of the reconnect West Baltimore Project. (Image courtesy of USDOT)

partnerships with area foundations to help stimulate local economic activity. In **Charlotte**, LadderS^{TEP} brought together teams working simultaneously on various local projects so the city could prioritize its next steps. Having these partners together injected a community focus into each project and aided in seeking funding for the neighborhood. The Knight Foundation later announced a grant of [\\$1.5 million to revitalize Charlotte's northwest corridor](#).

The multidisciplinary partnerships and core values emphasized by LadderS^{TEP} encouraged city staff to go beyond traditional transportation-related impacts to communicate economic and place-making benefits to stakeholders in plain language. For example, in **Baton Rouge**, the USDOT educated city staff on the Federal funding process early in their project development process. Having this understanding early on allowed the city to combine strategic planning with economic development, affordable housing, and other community objectives.

In **Indianapolis**, FHWA Division Office and FTA Regional Office staff assisted the city in communicating the benefits of bus rapid transit (BRT) to non-technical staff, such as elected officials, community leaders, and local advocates as it is a new concept for the region. Through LadderS^{TEP}, USDOT staff led conversations with grassroots advocates and city counselors in individual neighborhoods to effectively communicate the advantages of BRT and increase community support.

In **Phoenix**, LadderS^{TEP} helped the city to clarify the positive impacts that light rail could have on the community. One local city official noted, "LadderS^{TEP} helped [us] communicate the benefits of the [South Phoenix Light Rail] project. All of a

sudden we were getting unanimous community acceptance of [the project]. There are many schools along the extension, and we were able to communicate how the project will affect those schools. When you talk about [the project] in that perspective, business owners get really excited about it too." Now, conversations surrounding the light rail project regularly focus on accessibility and opportunity, and key project partners now have greater awareness regarding where highway projects may overlap with transit and pedestrian projects.



Figure 7: Baton Rouge community member participating in the planning and development of the new streetcar line in Baton Rouge, LA. (Image courtesy of Patrick Dennis)

Federal staff involvement also accelerated the timelines of several LadderS^{TEP} projects. For example, **Richmond** was able to overcome challenges more quickly and receive State support to address local capacity concerns with the aid of the LadderS^{TEP} technical assistance. As a result, a BRT cooperation agreement is now in place and [construction began in August 2016](#).

The USDOT aims to build upon these successes in the future. A 2015-2106 LadderS^{TEP} report will be released this fall on the [LadderS^{TEP} website](#) documenting the pilot findings, lessons learned, barriers, and opportunities to scale.

Gary, Indiana Bicycle and Pedestrian Road Safety Assessments

Janice Osadcuk and Joyce Newland, FHWA Indiana Division

Gary, Indiana lies within the Midwest rustbelt. Along with several other steel-producing cities, it was once a symbol of prosperity, but has seen better days. Because of its historic reliance on the steel industry, it entered a decline in the 1960s when steel companies began outsourcing jobs abroad. While in the 1930s, Gary's population was over 100,000, today its population is 80,000. One-third of all homes in the city are unoccupied or abandoned and the city's infrastructure is decaying.



In 2015, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Indiana Division met with Mayor Freeman-Wilson to invite the city to participate in the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) [Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Assessments](#). Building upon Gary's designation in 2014 as a [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#) (SC2) location, FHWA partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region V, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Region V Office, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and the city of Gary, as well as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). In addition to the Federal agencies, several other regional and State agencies, as well as groups advocating for bicyclists, pedestrians, and persons with disabilities participated in the assessment.



Figure 8: Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson welcomes participants and press to the USDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Road Safety Assessment in Gary, IN. (Image courtesy of FHWA)

Ten teams, consisting of staff from various agencies, conducted the pedestrian and bicycle assessments on three Gary corridors, including two existing project areas. The assessments opened a dialogue between transportation practitioners, local decisionmakers, and advocates, fostering ongoing collaboration on all three corridors. The improvements will make a difference in both roadway safety and quality of life in these areas of the city.

Northside Revitalization Project

As part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative, the Northside Revitalization Project aims to “breathe new life” into the historic downtown commercial district. The project focuses on implementing complete streets, expanding greenspace, and improving the quality of life for residents living along 4th and 5th Avenues and the [Lakefront District Revitalization](#) corridor along US-12, US-20, and Lake Street. In the Lakefront District Revitalization corridor, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is working with EPA, FTA, and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) to realign a portion of US-12. In order to create walkable areas, Gary plans to implement a complete streets corridor and traffic calming measures. Revitalization of this portion of Gary will also be aided by the modernization of the Miller Train Station.

Public Transportation Corporation's Livable Broadway Study

The [Livable Broadway Study](#) covers the north-south State Road 53 (SR-53) between Gary Metro Center and 93rd Avenue, which is under review for complete streets improvements. Broadway is also programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program by INDOT as a partial resurfacing, restoration or rehabilitation (3R) pavement project, scheduled for construction in 2017. INDOT has been working with Gary's transit provider to enhance transit service on the Livable Broadway Corridor. INDOT is designing the road to better accommodate buses and will install bus shelters along the route. The project will also provide the traffic controllers needed to enable future installation of bus preemptive settings, which will enhance service along the corridor.



35th Avenue Corridor

This corridor was added for a pedestrian and bicycle assessment due to crash data indicating that bicycle crashes are common. The area is being studied for bicycle accommodations between Indiana University North and the Indiana Vocational Technical School. Additionally, Gary received a [2015 HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Award](#) of \$500,000 for the University Park East Neighborhood, the area of the 35th Avenue corridor. These HUD awards are part of the Obama Administration's effort to build Ladders of Opportunity to the middle class. Using this grant and building upon the recommendation from the pedestrian and bicycle safety assessment, Gary has developed a comprehensive plan to revitalize and transform this neighborhood, which will include installation of bike lanes and sidewalks.

Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets Summit Event

Jason Broehm, Transportation Specialist, Office of the Secretary



Figure 9: Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx with award recipients at the Safer People, Safer Streets Summit. (Image courtesy of the Office of the Secretary)

On September 16, 2016, approximately 100 people, including mayors and other local elected officials and staff, nonprofit partners, and USDOT staff, gathered at USDOT Headquarters in Washington, DC, for the Safer People, Safer Streets Summit to recognize the efforts undertaken through the [Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets](#). USDOT recognized the communities that demonstrated the most progress with awards for Overall Success, Ladders of Opportunity, Engagement, and each of the seven Challenge Activities.

The event also featured sessions focusing on each of the seven Challenge Activities, as well as several panel discussions during which award winning communities (both large and small) shared insights and lessons learned related to partnerships, project delivery, and data collection. A video of the awards presentation and the morning panel discussions, as well as fact sheets featuring success stories on each of the seven Challenge Activities and the 14 award winning cities, are available on the Mayors' Challenge [Success Stories](#) page.

Livability-Related Aspects of the Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Jody McCullough, Community Planner, FHWA Office of Planning

On Friday, May 27, 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published the [Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning](#) in the Federal Register. This Final Rule implements changes to the planning process established by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). FHWA and FTA worked in partnership with the transportation community and other key stakeholders to prepare for this new rule, which relates to livability in a number of ways.



The scope of the planning process—at statewide and nonmetropolitan, and metropolitan levels—relates to livability through the ‘planning factors’ that States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must address. The list of planning factors in the Final Rule provides the foundation for considering livability in transportation. Both States and MPOs must carry out “a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide transportation planning process that provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors:

1. Support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, metropolitan areas, and nonmetropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes throughout the State, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation;
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism” (§ 450.206 (a) and 450.306(b)).

The FAST Act, signed into law by President Obama on December 4, 2015, amended the U.S. Code to include two new planning factors. These new factors are numbers 9 and 10 in the Final Rule: (9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and (10) Enhance travel and tourism.

These 10 planning factors provide a framework for all States and MPOs as they aim to address the needs of people and freight. However, the Final Rule also provides States and MPOs with the flexibility to place additional focus on the particular planning factors that are most pressing given the local context.

Additionally, as the transportation planning process shifts to a performance-based approach, the scope of the planning process also includes the establishment of performance targets to support the seven national performance goal areas, many of which also relate to livability:

- Safety
- Infrastructure condition
- Congestion reduction
- System reliability
- Freight movement and economic vitality
- Environmental sustainability
- Reduced project delivery delays

As each State and MPO undertakes the transportation planning process consideration of the planning factors ensures that decisionmaking is cooperative and comprehensive, while working to meet the needs and priorities of communities.

For more information on the Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning, see the [Federal Register](#), as well as FHWA’s [recorded webinar](#) and [accompanying presentation](#).



Highway Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Building Livable Communities

Elka Gotfryd, Associate, Project for Public Spaces

Transportation planning in the United States is moving far beyond its traditional goals of improving vehicular mobility and regional economic growth, with increasing focus on environmental and social impacts. Historically, transportation planners prioritized the efficient movement of private vehicles over potential negative impacts to local communities and pedestrian connections, with highways sometimes cutting through and severing communities. Today, however, many Federal, State, and local initiatives aim not only to mitigate these negative impacts, but also to utilize existing infrastructure to spark social, economic, and environmental benefits.

On August 17, 2016, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Context Sensitive Solutions](#) program hosted a webinar titled "[Community Connections: Redesigning Highways to Improve Neighborhood Access and Livability.](#)" It explored strategies to improve livability and neighborhood connectivity through collaborative efforts to reconnect communities, create economic development opportunities, and promote multimodal accessibility and mobility in areas with major highways. This article highlights two examples from the webinar:

- Massachusetts's I-93 Overpass in Boston
- Washington D.C.'s 11th Street Bridge

Under the Overpass: MassDOT's Infra-Space Program

In 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) launched its "Infra-Space" Program, which aims to identify areas under elevated roads, bridges, or viaducts for redevelopment opportunities. The goal of the program is to facilitate innovative projects that:

- Create a gateway between neighborhoods/urban resources;
- Create better connections for multimodal travel;
- Create an arts/event space for adjacent communities;
- Support local economic development through commercial uses/parking;
- Create recreational amenities/new open space; and
- Increase safety/security through more active use and lighting.

Under this program, MassDOT is planning a \$6 million pilot project in Boston's South End for the area under the I-93 overpass. During the first phase, artistic lighting was installed, sidewalk improvements were made, and two parking lots were constructed beneath I-93. The second phase will include a new multimodal path, sports facilities, a stormwater management system, a concert stage, and a dog park, all underneath the highway overpass.



Figure 10: Rendering image by Landing Studio of I-93 Overpass improvements. (Image courtesy of MassDOT)



Rather than a burden, MassDOT saw the I-93 overpass as an opportunity. Providing shade during the summer and dry cover during the third of the year when Boston is damp, the area now includes a dual-level right of way with public space amenities to benefit the community. With the success of the I-93 overpass pilot project, MassDOT seeks additional opportunities to implement similar initiatives at locations throughout the State.

Multimodal Connectivity: 11th Street Bridges Project in Washington, D.C.

Between 2009 and 2015, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) completed a \$390 million project to enhance the connection between the north and south banks of the Anacostia River. DDOT saw the needed reconstruction of the two original 11th Street bridges from the 1960s as an opportunity to separate freeway and local traffic, connect pedestrian and bicycle routes, and create space for a future streetcar system.

The first phase of the project, completed in 2013, included the construction of three bridges, serving to separate freeway traffic from local traffic and providing a 14-foot-wide sidewalk for pedestrians and bicyclists on the new local bridge. This phase also added design modifications for the future streetcar, added an additional evacuation route, and made environmental improvements for stormwater management.

Given the success of Phase I, FHWA authorized DDOT to continue with the second phase, which was completed in 2015. This phase improved connections to I-695 and converted the section between 8th and 13th Streets into a boulevard.

The piers of the original bridge still remain and will be repurposed into an iconic recreational amenity for the area. Following a design competition in 2014, the [11th Street Bridge Park](#) will be built atop what is left of the original bridge piers. This project will connect people and create economic opportunity for neighborhoods long disconnected, on either side of the Anacostia.

These efforts serve as inspiring examples of how highway infrastructure can enhance livability through thoughtful design and infrastructure adaptations. While highways have always improved vehicular mobility, these projects show how existing infrastructure can be maximized to build thriving public spaces that promote accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars. These examples and similar projects around the country create opportunities for communities to reconnect through recreation, mobility, and economic activity.



Figure 11: Ornamental lighting under I-93 Overpass. (Image courtesy of MassDOT)



Communities Nationwide Celebrate 20 Years of Walk to School Day

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

On October 5, 2016 thousands of schools and communities across the U.S. participated in [International Walk to School Day](#) (WTSD). This year marks the 20th anniversary of the event, which promotes the many benefits of safely walking and biking to school, and provides an opportunity to bring attention to any needed safety improvements. Communities still have time to organize and [register an event](#) in October as part of Walk to School Month.

In the event's first year, Richard M. Daley, mayor of Chicago and Richard Riordan, mayor of Los Angeles became the first mayors to celebrate Walk to School Day. Two decades later, the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) (National Center) has brought WTSD back to its roots by once again focusing on the leadership role of mayors. Together, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Office of the Secretary's [Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets](#) and the National Center encouraged mayors to get involved in local Walk to School Day events.

Including local officials in these events gives them a chance to see needed safety improvements firsthand, such as new sidewalks, crosswalks, or trails. Involving officials may encourage them to push safety projects forward. Walk and Bike to School events also provide a way for officials to demonstrate their support for safety, health, community quality of life, and protecting the environment. In 2015, Michael Nutter, mayor of Philadelphia participated in an event as a way to bring attention to pedestrian safety in his city. He said, "We need to make sure that those of us who drive vehicles do so in a responsible way, especially in neighborhoods and near school and recreation center buildings, so that everyone has a safe environment in which to walk."



Figure 12: Students celebrate a Walk to School Day event at Tanglewood Elementary School in Lumberton, NC. (Image courtesy of National Center for Safe Routes to School)

WTSD participation has grown impressively with record-breaking participation each year. There were 5,304 events held in 2015. From 2005 to 2014, over 18,500 schools in more than 4,700 different cities across the country held events. Organizers expect more than 5,000 events to register nationwide this year ([registration](#) stays open through the end of October).

WTSD events give parents and school officials a sense of what it would be like to have more students arriving at school by foot or bike. Many schools then decide to organize weekly walking events or walking school buses to keep that momentum going. The events are popular with law enforcement officers who enjoy reaching out to community members and interacting with students with a positive message.

Walk to School events have led to policy and engineering changes that help make communities safer for walking and biking to school. In 2015, 55 percent of event organizers who responded to a survey indicated that their event led to planned, or already completed, policy or engineering changes. These included the addition of required safety education (25 percent of all survey respondents), the addition of walking/bicycling promotion to existing school policies (22 percent), and increased traffic enforcement near schools (14 percent).

Visit www.walkbiketoschool.org for tools and resources to support Walk and Bike to School Day and to learn more about mayor participation.

Federal Highway Administration: www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability
Partnership for Sustainable Communities: www.sustainablecommunities.gov/



Tackling Speed by Building on Youth Initiatives

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

The impact of vehicle speeds on both the likelihood and severity of traffic crashes is well known and documented, though speed remains a major factor in many fatal crashes every year. Addressing speed and road safety near schools is particularly important in order to address the safety of vulnerable road users like children, as well as others who travel using school routes. Fortunately, various safety countermeasures have proven to reduce speeds successfully—many of which have been implemented in proximity to schools through the Safe Routes to School program. The [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) (National Center) aims to expand the benefits of these safety efforts beyond school routes to additional places where youth walk and bike, and to connect them to Vision Zero initiatives taking hold across the country.

Pedestrian Injuries at Impact Speeds

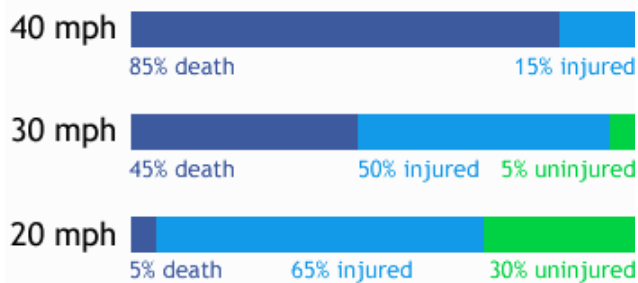


Figure 13: The relationship between pedestrian injury severity and motor vehicle impact speeds. Killing Speed and Saving Lives. (Image courtesy of UK Department for Transport)

Year after year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports in [Traffic Safety Facts](#) that roughly 30 percent of all traffic deaths in the United States are speed-related. A driver may not think going 10 mph) over the speed limit is significantly less safe, but just that small difference in speed greatly impacts whether a pedestrian lives or dies when struck by a car. If a car traveling 40 mph strikes a pedestrian, there is an 85 percent chance the pedestrian will be killed. This percentage drops to 45 percent at 30 mph and 5 percent at 20 mph. Slowing motor vehicle speeds will greatly reduce the chance of a pedestrian fatality or serious injury.

When slowing or ‘calming’ traffic, the right design invites the right driver response. The National Center’s [Safe Routes to School Guide](#) recommends pedestrian and bicycle safety

countermeasures for speed reduction, and Safe Routes to School programs across the country have implemented many of them. These strategies include narrowing lanes, installing speed tables, converting intersections to roundabouts, and more. The Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Office of Safety also provides resources on [speed management safety](#), including ongoing research.

Communities are rallying around the concept of Vision Zero with the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries. In many cases, addressing complex issues like speeding can prove socially and politically difficult. Over the past 10 years, areas around schools have served as spaces to begin conversations about managing traffic speeds and raising awareness of the safety risks involved in speeding. In a number of communities, the implementation of road diets—which provide space for bicyclists and pedestrians, while reducing speeding and crashes—started in school zones. Moreover, innovative programs that combine education and enforcement campaigns, such as North Carolina Department of Transportation’s [Watch for Me NC](#) program, show that areas that receive enhanced enforcement can significantly increase the likelihood that drivers yield to pedestrians at crossings.

Many roadway safety initiatives also start with addressing children’s safety because focusing on children is widely supported. Recently, local Vision Zero initiatives have placed greater emphasis on speed-reduction and speed management programs, with considerable attention toward both engineering and enforcement solutions. For example, the [city of Seattle’s Vision Zero plan](#) is lowering speed limits near schools and parks to 20 mph, and is reviewing speed limits on arterial streets to determine if they can be lowered to 30 mph along key corridors throughout the city.



Attention to youth safety can be a successful way to start more comprehensive, citywide roadway safety programs. The National Center has reached out to mayors and city officials to gain insight into how to expand the successes of Safe Routes to School programs beyond school zones as part of the cities' Vision Zero initiatives. If your city is interested in being part of the conversation, please contact Nancy Pullen-Seufert of the National Center for Safe Routes to School at pullen@hsrc.unc.edu.

Announcements/New Resources

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Administrator Greg Nadeau announced the publication of FHWA's [Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation](#) on September 14 at the [Pro Walk/Pro Bike/Pro Place conference](#). The Strategic Agenda will inform FHWA's pedestrian and bicycle activities in the next 3 to 5 years and is being organized around four goals: (1) Networks, (2) Safety, (3) Equity, and (4) Trips. Each goal includes actions relating to (a) Capacity Building, (b) Policy, (c) Data, and (d) Research.
- FHWA released a fact sheet titled "[Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Considerations for Transportation Decision-making](#)" covering topics such as the climate change impacts on transportation for EJ communities and non-discrimination in emergency operations plans.
- FHWA published the [Bike Network Mapping Idea Book](#), which highlights a range of approaches and techniques for showing connected networks, conveying information in map form, and incorporating local contexts.
- A new study indicates that [even drivers prefer protected bike lanes](#). The article is titled "[We can all get along: The alignment of driver and bicyclist roadway design preferences in the San Francisco Bay Area.](#)"
- The [Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice](#) has launched the monthly [Access & Awareness Webinar Series](#) to provide public access to the working group and to increase community awareness of Federal environmental justice strategies and holistic community-based solutions to address environmental justice issues. To receive announcements, sign up for [EPA's Environmental Justice Listserv](#).
- Oklahoma Department of Transportation awarded nearly [\\$22 million to 45 local transportation alternatives projects](#) including the Edmond trail project at Arcadia Lake and a multi-use trail between Claremore and Catoose.
- FHWA updated the resource on Pedestrian and Bicycle Funding Opportunities / U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds to account for the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and provide more project examples. The updated table is linked from the [FHWA FAST Act webpage](#) in both [HTML](#) and [PDF](#) formats.
- FHWA published a new planning and design resource on [Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts](#). This report will help practitioners address topics such as intersection design, road diets, pedestrian crossing treatments, transit and school access, freight, and accessibility. It highlights ways to apply design flexibility, while focusing on reducing multimodal conflicts and achieving connected networks.
- In response to a successful spring "[Delivering Outcomes for Communities](#)" training, a fourth session has been scheduled for November 30-December 2, 2016. Visit the [website](#) for more information to sign up for this fall option. The training will include working sessions on real-life challenges from Federal teams across the country. Other highlights include "Fed Talks," which feature creative Federal partnerships with communities, plenary sessions on using data to inform Federal initiatives, and a chance to interact with Mayors and other local officials.

