

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP:  
2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

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**Final**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Health in Transportation Working Group examines the agency's 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. Working Group members lead and participate in many initiatives that aim to encourage the consideration of health in all aspects of transportation.

This report provides an overview of the Working Group's activities and accomplishments in 2014, summarizes other DOT health-related accomplishments, documents its progress toward the recommendations included in the 2013 Annual Report, and offers recommendations for 2015 based on several themes that the Working Group discussed in 2014.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The Federal Highway Administration (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 2013, 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 2012, the Working Group created a charter that laid out goals for the year and 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. The Working Group updated its charter in 2013 and again in 2014 to include additional activities, including developing resources and expertise within DOT related to health, improving leadership and communication with DOT staff on transportation's role in health, fostering a relationship with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and identifying approaches for transportation agencies to consider when addressing health through transportation planning.

## 3. 2014 WORKING GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Early in 2014, the Working Group updated its charter, which lays out its intended activities for the year. Throughout the year, they worked on these activities and had seven major accomplishments in 2014. This section lists each accomplishment and provides some background information on how and why they chose to pursue it.

## COORDINATION WITH CDC

The Working Group collaborated with the CDC in 2014, including the organization of the CDC-DOT Workshop and coordination with the CDC's Built Environment Work Group (BEWG). These activities are described below.

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### CDC-DOT WORKSHOP

The Working Group hosted the CDC-DOT Workshop in May 2014 in Washington, DC to identify ways for the CDC and U.S. DOT to coordinate on their existing and possible future activities that support incorporating health into transportation decisionmaking. The purpose of the workshop was to initiate a dialogue between various organizations within CDC and DOT on health and transportation, which includes active transportation, air quality, and safety. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Share information among the various offices, centers, and agencies within CDC and DOT;
- Build and strengthen interagency relationships;
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and develop next steps;
- Coordinate messaging; and
- Leverage existing resources.

During the Workshop, the agencies shared information about their programs, funding, stakeholders, and existing collaborations and identified opportunities for additional collaboration. The Workshop also included breakout sessions on the following topics:

- Reducing fatalities and injuries by promoting safe roads;
- Promoting opportunities for safe physical activity through transportation and recreation;
- Promoting equity and addressing health disparities by improving access to transportation options; and
- Encouraging transportation and public health stakeholder collaboration at the State and local levels.

Thirteen staff members from CDC and 45 staff members from DOT attended the workshop. The participants represented the following organizations within CDC and DOT:

#### CDC:

- Built Environment Work Group (BEWG);
- National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP);
- National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH);
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC);
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); and
- Office of the Director

DOT:

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA);
- FHWA;
- FTA;
- NHTSA;
- OST; and
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

The CDC and DOT are planning a second Workshop in Atlanta in March 2015 to build on the collaborations that participants have been fostering since the 2014 Workshop.

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#### COORDINATION WITH BEWG

The BEWG brings together approximately 150 CDC staff members from across the Agency to discuss the intersections of built environment and public health, including air pollution, physical activity, and a number of other fields.

The BEWG's goals for collaboration with the Health in Transportation Working Group are to institutionalize the CDC's relationship with the U.S. DOT and to build on, facilitate, and leverage new and ongoing research opportunities. The BEWG would like to look to the Partnership for Sustainability Communities as a potential model for future collaboration with U.S. DOT.

In September 2014, the Health in Transportation Working Group met with the BEWG to share their purpose and current activities and discuss potential areas for collaborations. This meeting served as a follow-up from the CDC-DOT Workshop in May 2014.

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#### CDC STAFF MEMBER ROTATION

A CDC staff member completed a four-month rotation in the FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty. Seventy percent of his time during this rotation was allocated to health in transportation activities, including planning the May 2014 CDC-DOT Workshop, updating the Health in Transportation FAQs, and the Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking and Walkability. This rotational assignment helped to strengthen the relationship between the CDC and the U.S. DOT.

#### FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH IN CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

The [Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning](#) (the Framework) will provide information to practitioners who are interested in incorporating health considerations into the corridor planning process. The intended audiences for the Framework are State DOTs, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other agencies responsible for transportation planning and project development. 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.

The 2013 charter laid out the plan to conduct research for the development of a framework for incorporating health into the transportation delivery process. Components included a literature review, a suite of tools, and the implementation of focus groups and beta-testing to inform the development of the Framework's tools. When completed in 2016, the Framework will be an action-oriented, step-by-step resource to assist States, MPOs, and other agencies in incorporating health into transportation corridor planning and project delivery.

## HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DOCUMENT

In 2014, the Working Group expanded the [Health in Transportation website's Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) to ten questions and answers. The Working Group also revised some of the existing questions and answers to be more comprehensive.

## PLANNING ON THE WEB

The FHWA Resource Center held a Planning on the Web session focused on health initiatives for an internal audience. The session featured presentations on both the Transportation and Health Tool and the Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning.

## TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTH TOOL

The [Transportation and Health Tool \(THT\)](#) is a collaborative effort between U.S. DOT and CDC to develop a set of indicators on the relationship between transportation and health outcomes and to help transportation decisionmakers understand how their community or State compares to their peers in terms of these indicators. The online tool will feature a map of the U.S. that allows users to compare States and metropolitan areas to one another based on a number of health indicators. It draws upon data on fatalities, vehicle-miles traveled reduction, access to transit, and many other public data sets. The agencies expect to release the tool for public use in 2015.

## TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD (TRB) ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE COMMITTEE

The Working Group coordinates closely with the TRB Health and Transportation Subcommittee, which was very active in 2014. The Working Group was directly involved in the 2014 TRB Annual Meeting session called [Raising Public Health Issues to a Higher Level in the Transportation Sector](#). The session featured a panel of four representatives from different State DOTs and a presentation on the case studies found in the [Statewide Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities](#) white paper. In addition, TRB is planning a special issue of *TR News* focused on health in transportation. The issue will be released in 2015.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES WHITE PAPERS

In 2014, the [Statewide Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities](#) white paper was released. This white paper complements the [Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities](#) white paper, which FHWA released in December 2012. These white papers present a flexible approach to integrating health into the transportation planning process at both the metropolitan and statewide level. The approach is based on best practice case studies from across the U.S.

## HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION WEBSITE STATISTICS

Workgroup members began to track visitation to the Health in Transportation website in 2014. The website averaged about 3,279 visitors per month between May and December 2014. During the first four months of this time period, the average was 3,096 visitors per month. The website has seen steady growth in visitation in the last four months with an average of 3,461 visitors per month. The data shows a steady upward trend in total visitors per month and total visitors per day for this time period.

## 4. OTHER HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION ACTIVITIES IN 2014

In addition to the accomplishments in 2014 described in Section 3, many members participated in other health in transportation activities that relate to health in transportation in their roles outside of the Working Group. These activities are listed below.

### RESOURCES

- Federal Lands Highway, Infrastructure/asset management tool for Federal Land Management Agencies (in development)
- [FHWA Bicycle Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System \(BIKESAFE\)](#)
- FHWA Division Offices, examples of bicycle and pedestrian networks will inform a resource that highlights best practices (in development)
- [FHWA Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population](#)
- FHWA Office of the Human Environment, Environmental Justice Reference Book (in development)
- FHWA Office of the Human Environment, 2014 Environmental Justice Implementation Report (in development – 2013 report can be found [here](#))
- FHWA Office of Human Environment, Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation (in development)
- [FHWA Safety Program's Road Diet Informational Guide](#)
- FHWA, Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide (in development)
- OST, [Safer People, Safer Streets Initiative](#)
- [Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking](#)
- TRB Health and Transportation Subcommittee's formal recommendation for a TRB Task Force on Urban Arterials and Public Health
- TRB Circular on Transportation and Health

- TRB Health and Transportation Subcommittee’s Health in Transportation Quiz Game

#### FEDERAL INITIATIVES

- FHWA [Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects](#)
- U.S. DOT [Ladders of Opportunity Initiative](#)

#### CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

- Environmental Protection Agency summit, “[Protecting Children's Health for a Lifetime: Environmental Health Research Meets Clinical Practice and Public Policy](#)”
- TRB subcommittee meeting and session entitled [Raising Public Health Issues to a Higher Level in the Transportation Sector](#)
- [TRB Tools of the Trade Conference: Transportation Planning in Small and Medium Sized Communities](#)
- U.S. DOT Safety Council, [2014 North American Conference on Elderly Mobility](#) in Detroit, MI
- Workshop – “[Breaking the Cycle of Environmental Health Disparities in Children,](#)” in Atlanta, GA

#### COORDINATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

- [AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence](#)
- [FHWA Livability Workgroup](#)
- [FHWA, FTA, NHTSA, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Federal Railroad Administration are leading bicycle and pedestrian assessments in each state](#)
- [NHTSA partnership on Pedestrian Safety and Injury Prevention with Safe States Alliance](#)
- [National Prevention Council](#)
- [United We Ride](#)

### 5. PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING 2013 RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2013 Annual Report listed several recommendations for the group to consider implementing in 2014. The Working Group spent much of the year working towards accomplishing them. These recommendations are listed below, along with a description of progress towards achieving them.

#### INFLUENCING ACTION AT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCIES

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##### INCORPORATE HEALTH INTO THE DECISIONMAKING PROCESS

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group consider the role and use of health impact assessments (HIAs) and other tools to understand and inform transportation decisions.



As part of this effort, the Working Group's Strategic Initiative Framework for Health in Corridor Transportation Planning will help State DOTs, MPOs, and other agencies incorporate health into transportation planning through the corridor planning process. When complete, the Framework will also provide stakeholders with a better understanding of how transportation projects can address the health needs of a community.

Because the Framework promotes broad consideration of the environment and health in the planning process, it is closely connected to the [Planning and Environment Linkages](#) (PEL) approach to transportation decisionmaking. Going forward, the Working Group will frame discussions of incorporating health in the planning and NEPA processes in the context of PEL

Beyond the Framework, the Working Group addresses the incorporation of health into decisionmaking through the [FAQs](#) available on the FHWA Health in Transportation website. Specifically, the FAQs explain how HIAs can be used in transportation planning and decisionmaking to assess the health effects of proposed policies, plans, programs, and projects.

Additionally, in 2014, the FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty released a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) soliciting proposals for research and development projects to advance innovative transportation planning in the United States. One goal of the BAA was to build transportation planning capacity in range of focus areas, including livability and healthy communities.

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#### SUPPORT INTEGRATING HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group support health in transportation practices at the State and metropolitan levels. Specifically, the report suggested that the Working Group could begin the development of a health in transportation business case for State DOTs that explains the benefits of incorporating health into transportation decisionmaking. At the metropolitan level, the report added that the Working Group could plan peer exchanges, workshops, or webinars that target the needs of specific MPOs that wish to improve the integration of health and transportation planning.

While the group has not developed a health in transportation business case, other Working Group activities have included aspects that a business case would address. For example, the 2014 report *Statewide Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities*, presents several case studies and findings that highlight the benefit of incorporating health into State-level transportation planning. Additionally, the Working Group is aware of activities to encourage the consideration of health in transportation at the State and metropolitan levels, such as the [Center for Environmental Excellence's peer exchange](#) efforts to bring together subcommittees to discuss existing efforts to create return on investment and performance metrics for health in transportation. The Working Group will continue to consider its options for influencing action at State and metropolitan transportation agencies. Specifically, the group will consider connections between this goal and work toward a possible third Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities report.

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## PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group draft a plan for completing proposed activities. The Working Group's 2014 Charter addressed these issues and helped the group to execute a number of products and activities, as described in Chapter 3. The 2015 Work Plan will lay out the Working Group's plan for developing and participating in future activities.

## INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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### PARTNER WITH THE CDC'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group collaborate with the CDC's BEWG or other stakeholders at the CDC that address issues of health in transportation. In 2014, the Working Group began working with the BEWG and planning for ongoing engagement. Specifically, the Working Group coordinated with the BEWG to hold a joint DOT-CDC workshop in May 2014 at DOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Participants in the Workshop identified opportunities for the two agencies to collaborate and coordinate on topics relating to the intersection of health and transportation. In September Working Group members attended a BEWG meeting in Atlanta to share information on on-going and future initiatives.

The Working Group is coordinating with the BEWG to plan a second CDC-DOT Workshop for March 2015 in Atlanta, GA. The second Workshop will continue the productive collaborations initiated at the first Workshop. The Working Group will continue to coordinate with the BEWG to implement or expand joint activities identified at the Workshop.

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### IDENTIFY NON-DOT ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERS

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that Working Group members identify additional non-DOT health-related activities that may coincide with the Working Group's purpose. The report also recommended that the Working Group choose liaisons to provide regular updates any such activities.

In 2014, the Working Group improved its awareness of health-related activities at other agencies, including the CDC's health initiatives, though the CDC staff member rotation at FHWA, the CDC-DOT Workshop, the [TRB Health and Transportation Subcommittee](#), EPA workshops, and other opportunities for interagency collaboration. The Working Group will continue to monitor health activities at non-DOT agencies through 2015. If the Working Group identifies any activities for which no member is currently providing updates, then they will identify a liaison to provide regular updates on those activities.

## ENGAGING U.S. DOT STAKEHOLDERS

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### SERVE AS A STEERING GROUP FOR THE U.S. DOT

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group serve as a multi-disciplinary steering group that guides and tracks activities in all U.S. DOT program areas that relate to

health. As a steering group for the U.S. DOT, Working Group would be able to solicit ideas for new health-related initiatives and manage existing health-related programs.

While the Working Group does not serve as a steering committee for the U.S. DOT, the group does serve as a resource for the rest of U.S. DOT on activities related to health. Additionally, the Working Group communicates within U.S. DOT through the Annual Report and the Health in Transportation website. In 2015, the Working Group will continue to track U.S. DOT activities related to health, respond to requests and inquiries and continue to discuss the most appropriate role for the group within the U.S. DOT.

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#### DEVELOP AN EXTERNAL VERSION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group develop an external version of the Annual Report to be shared with a wider audience. In early 2014, the Working Group released the 2013 Annual Report on the Health in Transportation Website. Since its publication, the Annual Report webpage has been a popular destination for website visitors each month, with a total of 186 pageviews in December 2014. The Working Group will continue to distribute each year's Annual Report to a general audience by posting it to the website.

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#### SHARE A SUMMARY OF WORKING GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH AGENCY LEADERS

The 2013 Annual Report recommended that the Working Group share a high-level summary of its past accomplishments and future initiatives with agency leadership in order to engage management in Working Group activities. To this end, the Working Group developed an Executive Summary of the 2013 Annual Report to share with agency leadership.

Beyond the Annual Report, the Working Group also shared updates on its accomplishments through in-person meetings with key agency leaders. The FHWA Office of Planning Director attended a Working Group meeting in March 2014. The OST Director of the Office of Safety, Energy and Environment, the FHWA Associate Administrator for the Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty, NHTSA Associate Administrator for Research and Program Development and the FMCSA Director, Office of Analysis, Research and Technology attended the CDC-DOT Workshop in May 2014. In the coming year, the Working Group plans to continue to brief these leaders on its accomplishments, while also extending invitations to other leaders from FTA and OST.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2015

This section provides recommendations for the Working Group to address in 2015 based on discussions at meetings and teleconferences over the past year.

### INFLUENCING ACTION AT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCIES

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#### EXPAND COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

In 2015 the Working Group should identify opportunities to expand its communication with non-U.S. DOT audiences through new activities and products. Some activities could include case studies on transportation agencies that have successfully considered health in the transportation planning process, webinars on the Health in Transportation FAQs or relevant FHWA reports, participation in the White House Conference on Aging, and drafting articles on health in transportation for TRB's *TR News*.

Updating the FHWA Health in Transportation website with the latest health-related content will also help the Working Group to communicate with a broad audience of transportation practitioners. Regular website statistics will allow the Working Group to track the effectiveness of the website as a communications tool.

The Working Group should consider preparing standardized slide deck or talking points for Working Group members to use for presentations about Working Group activities to external agencies.

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#### CO-SPONSOR DOT ACTIVITIES THAT RELATE TO HEALTH

In order to maximize its impact and leverage existing activities, the Working Group should continue to take part in health-related events organized by other DOT offices and agencies. Co-sponsoring activities, rather than hosting events, has helped broaden the Working Group's reach without requiring a large investment in funding or travel. To achieve this goal, the Working Group should continue to track and participate in peer exchanges, workshops, or webinars that address the integration of health and transportation planning.

#### INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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##### CONTINUE COORDINATION WITH CDC/BEWG

In 2015, the Working Group should build upon the relationships and connections formed during the initial CDC-DOT Workshop. This effort will include a second, outcome-based workshop to be held in Atlanta, GA in March 2015. This workshop will bring together DOT and CDC staff to expand their existing collaborations and identify new activities to jointly pursue. In addition to the upcoming workshop, the Working Group should create a mechanism for regularly sharing updates between the Working Group and the BEWG.

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##### PARTICIPATE IN EXTERNAL HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

In addition to co-sponsoring health-related DOT activities, Working Group members also participate in relevant non-DOT activities, such as conferences and workshops. In 2015, the Working Group should continue to take this approach, which will help the Working Group stay informed about other agencies' health-related work. Some possible venues might include the TRB Moving Active Transportation to Higher Ground Conference, the National Health Impact Assessment Meeting, and the Department of Health and Human Services's White House Conference on Aging.

## ENGAGING U.S. DOT STAKEHOLDERS

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### CONDUCT OUTREACH TO TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS

During 2015, the Working Group should continue to consider new options for reaching out to FHWA and FTA field planners on health-related issues. Some possible opportunities for additional outreach activities include:

- Presenting information at meetings of the FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty/Division Administrators Working Group;
- Using ongoing DOT activities, such as PEL, Context-Sensitive Solutions, Ladders of Opportunity, ongoing bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, the White House Conference on Aging, the America Walks Summit, or the Eco-Logical Webinar Series as opportunities to connect with field staff that work in planning or project development; and
- Inviting a selection of interested field staff to join the Working Group or to present their activities during a future Working Group teleconference. The Strategic Framework beta testing process may help the group identify interested field staff to engage in Working Group activities.

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### CONSIDER EXPANDING WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP WITHIN THE U.S. DOT

The Working Group should reach out to agencies and offices within the U.S. DOT who are not involved in the Working Group to determine whether they might be interested in participating in Working Group activities. These agencies and offices might include the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the FHWA Offices of Freight Management, Operations, and Civil Rights.

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### ENGAGE LEADERSHIP IN WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

In 2015, the Working Group should continue to engage U.S. DOT leadership in Working Group activities by inviting Office Directors to select Working Group meetings. In addition to FHWA leaders, the Working Group should also extend invitations to leaders at FTA, OST, and other DOT agencies.

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### DISTRIBUTE THE ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PLAN

In 2014, the Working Group released the 2013 Annual Report and published it to the Health in Transportation Website. The Working Group will continue to distribute each year's Annual Report to a general audience by posting it to the website. In addition to publishing the 2014 Annual Report, the Working Group should expand the distribution of its documents by sending the report and the 2015 Work Plan directly to agency leaders across the U.S. DOT.