

# Health in Transportation Working Group

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Office of Natural Environment



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Health in Transportation (HinT) Working Group examines and promotes the Department's existing policies and programs to assist modal agencies address health-related topics that are raised by staff, project sponsors, and the public. The Working Group covers topics such as safety, equity, accessibility, sustainability, air quality, noise, and access to jobs and services. This annual report provides an overview of the Working Group's activities in 2021, summarizes other USDOT health-related accomplishments, documents the Working Group's progress toward implementing the goals laid out in the 2020 Annual Report, and offers goals for the Working Group for 2022.

## 2. WORKING GROUP OVERVIEW

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established the HinT Working Group in 2012 in response to growing interest in how transportation can support healthy outcomes in the communities we serve. The Working Group initially included representatives from various FHWA offices. Since then, the Working Group has expanded its membership to include representatives from other modal administrations, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST). Representatives from partner agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), also regularly participate in HinT Working Group meetings and activities.

The Working Group's purpose is to support transportation planning, programming, and project delivery by fostering a Department-wide understanding of health in transportation and identifying aspects of existing agency programs that relate to health. The Working Group also serves as a resource to USDOT to support engagement with other Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, academics, researchers, and others in areas related to transportation and health. Through regular meetings, publications, and collaborating with the field and other Federal agencies, the HinT Working Group prepares participants to quickly find answers and expertise needed to respond to stakeholder requests. The Working Group develops a work plan annually that lays out its planned activities for the year.

## 3. 2021 WORKING GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### INFORMATION GATHERING ON HEALTH-RELATED TOOLS

The Working Group continued work from 2020 to review and evaluate options to update and modernize the [Transportation and Health Tool](#) (THT). The Working Group held informational presentations and a facilitated discussion on other health- and equity-related tools developed by USDOT and other organizations. These include:

- [FHWA HEPGIS tool](#): Interactive web-map that includes numerous transportation and equity-related layers, including performance metrics maps, highway systems, fatal crashes, socioeconomic and equity measures (including those used for Title VI analysis), MPOs and air quality, and border flows/FAF4.
- [FHWA Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects \(STEAP\)](#): Designed for buffer analysis around a particular road for pre-project screening.
- US Digital Service equity tool: Tool under development to help advance the [Justice40 initiative](#), which focuses on where the benefits of federal investments go.
- [EPA EJScreen](#): Environmental justice (EJ) mapping and screening tool based on nationally consistent data and an approach that combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports.
- [CalEnviroScreen](#): Developed as part of California’s environmental justice program and displays environmental, health, and socioeconomic indicators at the census tracts level for the whole state.

While updates to the THT have been put on hold, the Working Group is continuing to explore opportunities for better leveraging the THT along with the other tools, and how health and equity can be further included in these tools. For example, Working Group members provided feedback and comments to inform the development of the U.S Digital Service equity tool.

#### **COORDINATION ON HEALTH-RELATED ASPECTS OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW**

HinT Working Group members participated in work on health-related topics in support of Executive Order (EO) implementation as well as implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law around key priorities of safety, equity, and climate change. These efforts included:

- Complete Streets Working Group: A multi-office, multi-disciplinary effort to ensure Federal-aid dollars help states and localities to make streets safer. The group has discussed the intersection of complete streets policies with equity (especially for lower income people and other underserved populations to have improved access and use of public transit, walking, and biking), while combatting climate change through reducing emissions.
- Equity Task Force: Led by OST as part of implementation of [EO 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#). The Task Force held a public information session and will engage in smaller meetings with stakeholders to discuss EO implementation. The group also issued a [request for information \(RFI\)](#) for public comments on data issues related to equity. The group’s work plan will be released in early 2022, and the group is also working to launch a website on transportation equity.

- Pedestrian Safety Working Group: NHTSA and the FHWA Office of Safety partnered to form a Pedestrian Safety Working Group. They released a resource titled [Everyone is a Pedestrian](#).
- Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice: Facilitates the active involvement of all Federal agencies to implement [EO 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations](#). The group includes three subcommittees to align with recent Executive Orders on NEPA and health, racial equity and underserved communities, and NEPA and Title VI.
- DOT Climate Change Center: Convenes DOT staff, experts, and external stakeholders to coordinate on research, policies, and DOT actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase transportation system resilience. In support of [EO 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#), DOT's recently released [Climate Action Plan](#) was coordinated through the Climate Change Center.

### FHWA CORRIDOR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The FHWA Office of Natural Environment released an updated [Framework for Better Integrating Health into Transportation Corridor Planning](#), which provides action-oriented information and step-by-step tools transportation practitioners need to incorporate health into their corridor planning process. FHWA also developed [six new case studies](#) of transportation agencies across the country that tested the framework in a corridor study. The case studies highlight how each of the agencies applied the framework to incorporate health into their corridor planning processes, and the resulting outcomes.

### FTA OPEN-SOURCE TOOL FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED VEHICLES

FTA is [funding an open-source technology](#) in support of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). The tool coordinates Federal transportation funded vehicles to more efficiently connect vehicles that are going in the same direction, rather than separate vehicles for different Federal fund sources. This tool will support efficient use of Federal funding and aligns with efforts to address climate change by reducing vehicle trips and passenger vehicle miles traveled.

### INFORMATION ON HEALTHY AGING

NHTSA developed and funded several resources related to aging road users, including:

- Resources for the American Occupational Therapy Association on [Driving & Community Mobility](#)
- [Plan for the Road Ahead: Making a Transportation Plan](#)
- [Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety \(ChORUS\)](#), developed in partnership with FHWA

In addition, Sylvia von Aulock of the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) presented to the HinT Working Group on [SNHPC's work](#) on better serving an increasingly aging population and attracting/retaining young people. SNHPC deployed a [survey](#) to gather information about the local community and developed a variety of programs to increase awareness of existing transportation programs in the community.

## WORKING GROUP PARTNERSHIPS

The Health in Transportation Working Group continued and formed new partnerships with representatives from the [Center on Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA), and the [Institute of Transportation Engineers](#) (ITE). Representatives are invited to participate in quarterly Working Group meetings and share updates on their agency's work relevant to the group. Additionally, these partnerships have opened opportunities for further coordination on interagency projects to achieve Administration goals.

## 4. OTHER HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2021

In addition to the Working Group accomplishments described above, many members had other health in transportation accomplishments within their roles outside of the Working Group. These accomplishments are listed below, organized into the categories of resources and member participation in related conferences and meetings.

### RESOURCES

- A representative from the FHWA Kentucky Division presented to the HinT Working Group on communicating investments in bike infrastructure and their benefits.
- FAA released its updated [neighborhood environmental survey](#), which includes considerations related to the impacts of aviation noise.
- FHWA launched a new [website on local road safety plans](#), which includes resources on connections between transportation and health.
- The FHWA Office of Safety released a [Safe System Approach brochure](#).
- FHWA's *Public Roads* magazine included articles on [micromobility](#), [combatting human trafficking](#), and [curbside management](#).
- The National Highway Institute (NHI) updated its course on highway traffic noise, and Bicycle Facility Design which are available free and on-demand on the [NHI website](#).
- NHTSA [shared materials](#) for Pedestrian Safety Month in October.
- NHTSA released new pupil transportation safety reports, including [Education on Proper Use of Seat Belts on School Buses](#), [Indirect Effects of School Bus Seat Belt Installation](#), and a case study on an [Examination of Three Districts Implementing Stop Arm Camera Programs to Enforce Laws Against Illegal Passing of Stopped School Buses](#).

- The FHWA Office of Operations is working on a project to connect transportation equity and Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) to explore and understand their relationship and potential opportunities for collaboration. The goal is to assist state DOTs in understanding and communicating how TSMO can support equity goals and implications to equity for consideration when advancing TSMO strategies. FHWA plans to release a fact sheet on this work in 2022.
- NHTSA is partnering with FHWA and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center on a series of pedestrian safety round tables.
- FTA has developed a “[Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge](#)” led by FTA’s Office of Environmental Programs. A recent roundtable event featured transit agency leaders on the industry’s role in achieving greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets. FTA will continue to host a series of events to further promote agency efforts that help to address the Administration’s targets reducing GHG emissions across all sectors of the economy.
- The EPA Office of Community Revitalization is expanding the functionality of the [National Public Health Assessment Model](#), such as assessing the impact of transit projects on health and physical activity and how grant processes can be more equitable.
- NHTSA [shared materials](#) for Older Driver Safety Awareness week during the week of December 6.
- A representative from the CDC [Climate and Health Program](#) and Georgia Institute of Technology [Urban Climate Lab](#) presented to the HinT Working Group on the Lab’s climate change, transportation, and health research. The presentation also discussed the Healthy Streets Program, a new program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that will provide funding for projects that mitigate urban heat islands, improve air quality, and reduce stormwater runoff.
- A researcher from Boston University School of Public Health presented to the HinT Working Group on FAA-funded research on [ASCENT Project 18: Community Measurements of Aviation Emissions Contribution to Ambient Air Quality](#). The research project studies ultrafine particle concentrations from aviation emissions at Logan International Airport in Boston, MA.
- The FHWA Office of Planning, Environment and Realty and Office of Freight Management and Operations, in collaboration with ITE, developed the [FHWA Curbside Inventory Report](#) to convey current practices and emerging specifications in the area of curbside management.
- [BikeGreen](#), the USDOT’s Green Team’s Bike Subcommittee, initiated the Promoting Active Transportation and Health (PATH) Initiative. Through the PATH Initiative, BikeGreen is encouraging all DOT employees of all abilities to engage in safe active transportation in daily trip choices. Choosing travel modes that include some physical activity such as walking, cycling, and micromobility can improve health outcomes,



reduce the carbon footprint of transportation and result in a more efficient transportation system overall.

## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS RELATED TO HEALTH IN TRANSPORTATION THAT WORKING GROUP MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN

- The [TRB Conference on Advancing Transportation Equity](#) was held September 8-10, 2021, in Washington, DC. FHWA's Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty provided co-sponsorship for the conference, which brought attendees together to explore perspectives, challenges, achievements, and opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes in all phases of transportation decision making. Staff from OST, FHWA, and FTA conducted a USDOT Roundtable Discussion on Transportation Equity. FHWA staff also helped plan a plenary session on the Justice40 Initiative involving staff from USDOT, EPA, DOE, and HUD.
- FHWA hosted an [Active Transportation Funding and Finance Toolkit webinar](#). This toolkit describes several innovative strategies that agencies have used to implement and maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities and facilitate timely project delivery. The toolkit will be posted online in spring 2022.
- Tameka Macon of FHWA's Office of Planning attended the ITE Health and Transportation Standing Committee meeting in May. In 2022 the committee will be publishing a paper titled "Beyond the vehicle: Why transportation professionals must consider access."
- Several Working Group members supported a July National Academy of Sciences workshop titled [How We Move Matters: Exploring the Connections between New Transportation and Mobility Options and Environmental Health](#).

## 5. PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING 2021 GOALS

In the 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Work Plan, the HinT Working Group set three goals for its activities for 2021. These goals are listed below, along with progress that the Working Group made towards achieving them.

### **Goal 1: Promote Working Group member activities on equity, sustainability, safety, innovation, and other health-related topics within USDOT and to external audiences.**

- Working Group members presented updates regarding ongoing health-related topics and efforts at Working Group meetings.
- Ongoing: The Working Group continues to promote members' activities and publications through existing channels.

**Goal 2: Conduct research on emerging trends and technologies related to health and transportation, share data, and serve as a resource to Working Group members and other interested parties about these topics.**

- Outlined process for updates to the Transportation and Health Tool and discussed other health-related tools to consider in the updates.
- Discussed potential research topics for the Working Group to explore in the future, in examining how safety, climate change, and health impacts face those traditionally underserved including minority and low-income populations.
- Working Group members shared their expertise with the Working Group and other USDOT staff on the connections between health and other transportation considerations.

**Goal 3: Engage partner organizations to advance joint projects and research related to health in transportation.**

- Continued coordination with CDC's Built Environment Work Group (BEWG), including inviting a representative from CDC to participate in HinT Working Group meetings.
- Invited a representative from EPA to participate in HinT Working Group meetings.
- Coordinated with ITE through participating in ITE's health committee.
- Continued participation in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Committee on Health and Transportation.

## 6. 2022 WORKING GROUP GOALS

The Working Group offers the following goals and related activities for 2022. These goals are carried forward from 2021, with some minor changes to reflect Working Group priorities and one additional goal. The goals and activities to support them will be laid out in more detail in the 2022 HinT Work Plan.

- Goal 1: Promote Working Group member activities on equity, climate change, safety, innovation, and other health-related topics within USDOT and to external audiences.
- Goal 2: Conduct research on emerging trends, tools, and technologies related to health and transportation, explore data applications, and serve as a resource to Working Group members and other interested parties about these topics.
- Goal 3: Engage partner organizations to advance joint projects and research related to health in transportation.
- Goal 4: Support implementation of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs and Executive Orders related to health and transportation.