

Federal Highway Programs and Livability

How FHWA programs can help support your livability efforts

Livability in transportation is about leveraging the quality, location, and type of transportation facilities and services available to help achieve broader community goals such as access to a variety of jobs, community services, affordable housing, quality schools, and safe streets.¹ Livability is an outcome of a multimodal transportation planning process that involves nontraditional partners and advances policies and projects that integrate transportation solutions into broader community goals. FHWA funding programs provide opportunities to incorporate livability principles and to better align projects with local interests and needs.

FHWA programs that support livability. Within the Federal-Aid Highway Program, there are several major funding programs that support a broad range of livability-related projects.² Surface Transportation Program (STP) and National Highway System (NHS) funds can be used flexibly to advance projects that promote livability. Metropolitan Planning (PL) and State Planning and Research (SPR) funds can be used for livability-related planning, research, training, and technical assistance. Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for most Federal-Aid highway and transit program funds.³ Other programs that have been used to support livability include:

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program** funded a \$16.4 million Massachusetts project to retrofit school buses, lowering bus-related particulate matter and carbon dioxide emissions by 80%.
- **Transportation Enhancement** funding was used to add rain gardens to Lansing, MI streets to clean stormwater and improve the pedestrian and business environment.
- **EcoLogical Grant Program** funded the Salt Lake City region's Blueprint Jordan River Project to follow the city's growth vision and protect its natural resources, as part of the implementation of Envision Utah.⁴
- Several Federal programs fund transportation improvements in **National Parks and Forests** (including Public Land Highway Discretionary Program, Park Roads and Parkways Program, Forest Highway Program, Refuge Roads Program, National Scenic Byways Program, and the NHS and STP). One example is the reconstruction of the Grand Loop Road in Yellowstone National Park, allowing safer transit to the park's main attractions, such as Old Faithful.



Federal programs support roadway, transit, walking, and biking improvements, to make it easier to get around – connecting people, business, and communities (H.B. Rue)



Rain gardens in Lansing MI clean stormwater and improve the streetscape (H.B. Rue).

¹ FHWA, The Role of FHWA Programs In Livability State of the Practice Summary, 2011. www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/state_of_the_practice_summary/research2011.pdf

² FHWA Livability Initiative. Leveraging the Partnership. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/scp.cfm>

³ FHWA and FTA Funds That May be Used for Bicycle and Pedestrian Activities. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/bkpedtbl.htm>

⁴ FHWA, Blueprint Jordan River. http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/ecological/grantProgram_rpt/grants/bpjr_2011.asp

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices



- **National Scenic Byways Program** provided \$635,500 to construct bike lanes along the Edisto Island National Scenic Byway in South Carolina.
- **Recreational Trails Program** funded conversion of a former rail corridor into the multi-use Agassiz Recreational Trail in MN, including constructing and refurbishing several bridges.⁵

Success Stories

Transportation choices help clear the air.

Fort Collins, Colorado used CMAQ funds to create a bicycle library (bike sharing). Members of the public borrow bicycles at no cost from two locations. The City estimated that the project would reduce carbon monoxide by 759 kilograms in the first year of operation. Within the first month, the library was lending bicycles at capacity, with more than 3,000 bicycles lent out since April 2008.⁶

Small towns need Safe Routes to School. Students in Brevard, NC, a 7,000-person community, will benefit from the Gallimore Road multi-use path to be constructed with a \$250,000 Safe Routes to School infrastructure grant awarded in 2008. The one-mile, 10-foot wide path will connect Brevard Elementary and Brevard High School, while linking them to the Transylvania County Boys and Girls Club, several residential communities, and a medical facility. It will also connect to a bicycle network, and is close to nearby Pisgah National Forest.⁷

Bridges provide “gateways” to Communities. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation replaced a severely deteriorated bridge that serves as a gateway from downtown Pittsburgh to Oakland. The Boulevard of the Allies is one of the main roadway entrances into Oakland which is the region’s premier medical, educational and cultural center as well as a vibrant city neighborhood. Oakland is not only a destination but it also serves as a through corridor between downtown and the eastern neighborhoods and suburbs.

“Livability is investing in a way that recognizes the unique character of each community. The era of one-size-fits-all transportation projects must give way to one where preserving and enhancing unique community characteristics, be they rural or urban, is a primary mission of our work rather than an afterthought.”

-USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood

⁵ American Trails, 2010. www.americantrails.org/awards/CRTawards.html

⁶ League of American Bicyclists, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/lab_cmaq.pdf

⁷ www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/success-stories/brevard-north-carolina-walking-path-everyone

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

