

FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter

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Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter is intended to provide transportation professionals with real-world examples to help them improve the relationship between transportation agencies and communities, such as providing access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safer roads. To access additional tools and resources, or to learn more about FHWA's Livability Initiative, please visit FHWA's Livability website, www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability, or visit the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) website, www.sustainablecommunities.gov. To read past issues of the newsletter, visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit GovDelivery.

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices



Nonmotorized Pilot Program Promotes Livability

David Daddio, Community Planner
USDOT – Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

The Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP), [established by Congress](#) in 2005, provided over \$25 million each to four pilot communities—Columbia, Missouri; Marin County, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Sheboygan County, Wisconsin—to develop pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects and programs. NTPP program goals included decreasing congestion and energy usage, increasing the frequency of bicycling and walking, and promoting better health and a cleaner environment. Each community implemented its own strategy to achieve these goals, working in partnership with FHWA, the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to evaluate the results. The USDOT submitted a [final report to Congress](#) in April 2012.



Figure 1: Children participate in Columbia Walking School Bus. Walking routes generally start in a neighborhood within 1 mile of a school and follow streets determined by the home location of participating children. (Photo courtesy of GetAbout Columbia)

Between 2007 and 2011, bicycling as a share of all transportation modes increased 50 percent, while walking increased 22 percent and driving decreased 4.2 percent across the four communities. In absolute terms, this amounts to a 67 percent increase in bicycling and 31 percent increase in walking. Beyond simple mode shift, however, the ongoing evaluation of NTPP suggests that nonmotorized investments and programs can help communities achieve a range of livability-related goals – from health and safety to equity, economic, and environmental benefits. Below is a brief summary of different benefits experienced in the pilot communities between 2007 and 2011 along with highlights of specific projects.

Access to key community facilities

Nonmotorized networks developed through the NTPP were specifically designed to connect with transit stations and key community activity centers, including education, work, and recreational facilities. For example, Sheboygan County's Union Pacific Rail-Trail conversion is designed to connect to the heart of downtown, creating a major north/south corridor running within a mile of 26 schools, 34 places of worship, 90 manufacturing employers, and 31 percent of the county's population.

Energy savings and connections to transit

The NTPP sought to increase the number of utilitarian (as opposed to purely recreational) trips made by walking and bicycling and consequently, aimed to produce environmental and energy benefits. Convenient nonmotorized connections helped the pilot communities avert an estimated 29,180 tons of carbon dioxide emissions and saved more than 3.1 million gallons of gas between 2007 and 2011. One main NTPP approach was to build projects that make walking or bicycling more convenient and safer than driving. For instance, the Medway Road Improvement project in Marin County is part of a corridor linking downtown San Rafael with the Canal neighborhood, providing new lane markings for bicyclists and wider sidewalks in an area with one of the highest rates of pedestrian activity and transit usage in the county. Marin County credits the project for large increases in nonmotorized activity.



More equitable communities

Although all NTPP projects and programs help improve community access, some are explicitly designed to benefit underserved communities. In Minneapolis, the NTPP helped the Sibley Community Bike Library launch a bicycle loan program, complete with safety classes, child trailers, and other resources to support low-income residents. Bicycles are loaned through 1 of 19 community partner organizations, with an emphasis on making bicycles accessible to community members typically less represented in bicycling, including communities of color, women, and immigrants. A member survey indicates that, before the program, 25 percent of participants have either never ridden a bicycle as an adult or ever.

Improved health and safety

By creating new facilities and improving existing walking and bicycling facilities, the communities created the opportunity for increased physical activity. According to an analysis by the CDC, the decline in mortality of bicyclists as a result of the NTPP represented some \$6.9 million in savings in 2010 alone. Furthermore, the evaluation revealed that in spite of increased nonmotorized transportation, fatal bicycle and pedestrian crashes held steady or decreased in all of the pilot communities. This reduction is consistent with research showing that “safety in numbers” raises awareness of nonmotorized transportation and encourages drivers to be more cautious of pedestrians and bicyclists. Columbia’s nationally recognized Walking School Bus Program builds on these concepts. With support from NTPP, the program works with over 400 children participating on 40 routes at 15 schools, providing a safe, consistent means for groups of children to walk to school under the supervision of trained adults.

The FHWA and the pilot communities continue to evaluate the results of the NTPP projects, and plan to release a 2013 update report at the end of the year. Read more about the program at: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/ntpp/

To learn more about each initiative, visit:

- [GetAbout Columbia](#)
- [WalkBikeMarin](#)
- [Bike/Walk Twin Cities](#)
- [NOMO](#) (short for Sheboygan County's "nonmotorized" initiative)

Considering “Value Capture” in Warwick, Rhode Island

Corey Bobba, Program Delivery Team Leader
FHWA – Rhode Island Division

Jeff Price, Community Planner
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With enormous resource constraints, aging infrastructure, increasing demand for services, and the increasing maintenance needs of the transportation system, livable and sustainable community projects face fierce competition for traditional funding sources. It is increasingly critical that these important projects capitalize on innovative partnerships and non-traditional funding sources in order to be successful, and employing “value capture” strategies is one such approach to



consider. Recently, State, municipal, and Federal agencies worked together to learn about value capture and how this approach may apply to an important redevelopment project in Warwick, Rhode Island.

Value capture is commonly defined as a type of public financing where increases in property values generated by public investments are “captured” or recovered by the public sector as revenue that can be reinvested by the public agency. This occurs through an arrangement whereby public agencies are allowed to assess fees for the direct beneficiaries of their investments. For example, a transportation investment can create new or improved access (and mobility) that impacts travel time, cost and/or experience, and thereby increases development potential and property values. The beneficiaries of this public investment (e.g. residents, businesses, developers) can contribute funds back to the public agency (e.g. municipality, county) through a variety of different value capture mechanisms, as documented in published studies. These mechanisms can be applied to corridors as well as specific sites, and to projects as well as programs of projects.

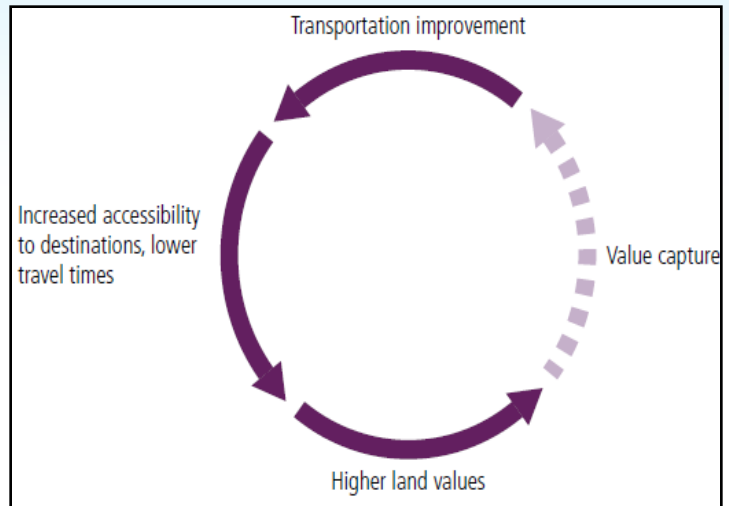


Figure 2: Appropriate use of value capture can create a positive feedback loop. Source: *Harnessing Value for Transportation Investment, A Summary, MN CTS 2009*

In the city of Warwick, Rhode Island, municipal and State officials have led efforts to create a mixed-use, transit-oriented, livable community: the Warwick Station Development District (WSDD). This new community will become the city center and will include the redevelopment of over 95 acres of light industrial sites, brownfields, airport-related uses, commercial properties, and vacant sites. Centrally located in southeastern New England, the WSDD is on the front doorstep of TF Green Airport and straddles the Amtrak Northeast Corridor. Transportation serves the district with commuter rail, local bus public transit and intercity bus vendors, a consolidated rental car facility with nine vendors, and a covered, direct connection with TF Green Airport. The WSDD is also contiguous with I-95 and US Route 1, making the WSDD a strong “3R” community – roads, rails, and runways – and a future aerotropolis.

The FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) partnered with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the city of Warwick to provide technical assistance and conduct a workshop for RI officials on Value Capture. The workshop was held on June 5th, 2012 at TF Green Airport. Forty-two officials attended from five State agencies, four municipalities, four Federal agencies (FHWA, FTA, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)), and two non-profit community advocacy organizations. The workshop agenda included an introduction to value capture concepts, tools, and strategies; perspectives from a developer; case studies of value capture implementation in similar communities; and facilitated discussions for action planning. The workshop also covered “value creation,” a relevant concept whether a community chooses to use value capture or not.

The technical assistance activities from the Federal partners and their consultant, Strategic Economics, included pre-workshop teleconferences, presentations, a walking field tour, a review of the new master plan and zoning ordinances, and a recommendations memo that synthesized information from the pre-workshop activities with discussions from the



workshop. This memo provided tailored recommendations for value creation, value capture, and the strategic implementation of the WSDD. The seven primary recommendations are:

- Build on the Interagency Working Group
- Improve Image and Identity to Signal the Market
- Reassess Assets and Redefine Boundaries
- Develop an Incremental Strategy that Builds Value Over Time
- Identify Near Term Funding Sources
- Prepare Implementation/Value Capture Strategy
- Remain Flexible

Next steps

The results of this value capture technical assistance and workshop are already being integrated into two immediate, key activities. The city of Warwick and RIDOT received a \$400,000 FHWA Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) grant in 2012 for Economic Development and Marketing for the WSDD. The scope of work for this grant has now been expanded based on

the results of the value capture workshop. This effort will be led by the RI Economic Development Corporation in partnership with RIDOT, Warwick, and FHWA. Advertisement of the Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in October 2012. In addition, RIDOT and Warwick had received an \$890,000 FHWA TCSP grant in 2011 to support priority, early roadway and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure improvements. The limits and scope of work have now been updated based on the results of the value capture workshop. RIDOT and Warwick have completed preliminary design for varied locations within the district, and intend to coordinate this work and leverage these public investments together at the time of private sector development.

For more information, please contact Corey Bobba of the FHWA Rhode Island Division (corey.bobba@dot.gov) or Jeff Price of the FTA Office of Planning and Environment (jeff.price@dot.gov).



Figure 3: New development along Post Road can become a highly visible gateway to a mixed-use center along Fullerton Road.



Green Streets Workshop in Passaic County, NJ

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FHWA – New Jersey Division

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The New York/New Jersey Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities participated in a Green Streets¹ Technical Assistance Workshop in Passaic County, New Jersey as part of the EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. Federal staff from FHWA, EPA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) joined approximately 20 county and municipal representatives for the two-day session.

EPA developed the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program (Building Blocks Program) to provide targeted technical assistance to local and/or tribal governments, stimulate discussion about growth and development, and strengthen local capacity to implement sustainable approaches. “Creating a Green Streets Strategy” is one of nine tools that EPA currently offers through the Building Blocks Program.² This particular tool is designed to encourage environmentally friendly infrastructure that minimizes impacts to water resources and other aspects of the surrounding environment.

Prior to the workshop, a Green Streets Audit inventoried the County’s existing efforts to incorporate Green Streets, including the use of permeable pavements; the installation of stormwater treatment units during road construction



Figure 4: Permeable pavements allow stormwater to infiltrate, mitigating the hydrologic impacts of transportation infrastructure.

¹ “Green Streets” incorporate environmental best practices into the design and construction of roadways in order to minimize impacts on the surrounding environment.

² <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks.htm#afepa>



projects; and the purchase and distribution of rain barrels, rain gardens, and bioswales³. The County is also finalizing a “complete streets”⁴ policy which includes Green Streets as a key component.

The workshop began with an introductory presentation on the principles, techniques, challenges, and benefits of Green Streets. During this presentation, the Federal partners described their respective agencies’ pertinent programs and resources. This was followed by a Green Streets Report Card, in which the participants assessed the results of the audit in relation to the county’s goals for Green Streets: decreased construction costs, decreased maintenance costs, better asset management, improved quality of life, better stormwater management, secure drinking water supply, enhanced environmental benefits, and improved public health.

Based on the assessment and the stated goals, participants identified four potential sites for implementing future Green Streets projects. The attendees then split up in groups and each group examined one of the potential sites. After developing a list of strategies, obstacles, and issues for their respective locations, each subgroup reported these to the entire group for discussion.

Though the locations were each unique – some rural, others suburban; some in residential areas; some with historic properties or other constraints – common issues emerged. Participants consistently cited the following three keys for successful implementation, and brainstormed some specific activities to address these points:

- **Identify Funding Sources and Model Ordinances:** Tie Green Streets projects to safety enhancements, which have been a funding priority. For instance, the Greenwood Lake Turnpike improvements included infiltration swales. Use implementation funding sources identified by Federal partners, such as transportation funds and the FEMA reimbursement for Hazard Mitigation. Look to other jurisdictions for model ordinances.
- **Build Support:** Promote successes and educate State officials and the public about the costs and benefits of green infrastructure as compared to traditional stormwater controls. Build support among engineers, who have a major role in determining how stormwater is managed. Work to get Green Streets integrated into the NJDOT Complete Streets Policy.
- **Plan for Operations and Maintenance:** Determine if local aid funding that is used for construction can be utilized for maintenance as well.

Next steps

In order to facilitate Green Streets, participants plan to increase coordination with appropriate agencies, engage the community in Green Streets activities, include a Green Streets resources section on the Passaic County website, and continue on-going consultation and coordination with regional EPA and DOT staff. Building on the success of this effort, the New York/New Jersey Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities conducted similar outreach and education efforts in Paterson, New Jersey.

³ Bioswales are landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. They consist of a depression with gently sloped sides filled with vegetation, compost and/or riprap.

⁴ “Complete streets” is a term used by transportation practitioners in the United States to describe streets that are designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities.



FHWA Supports Roadway Sustainability with INVEST

Andrew Breck, Environmental Protection Specialist
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The FHWA supports balanced decisionmaking among environmental, economic, and social values — the triple bottom line of sustainability. The Sustainable Transport and Climate Change Team of FHWA’s Office of Natural Environment is leading the Sustainable Highways Initiative, an effort to showcase the Agency’s existing sustainability-related programs while encouraging transportation agencies to consider sustainability in roadway systems nationwide.

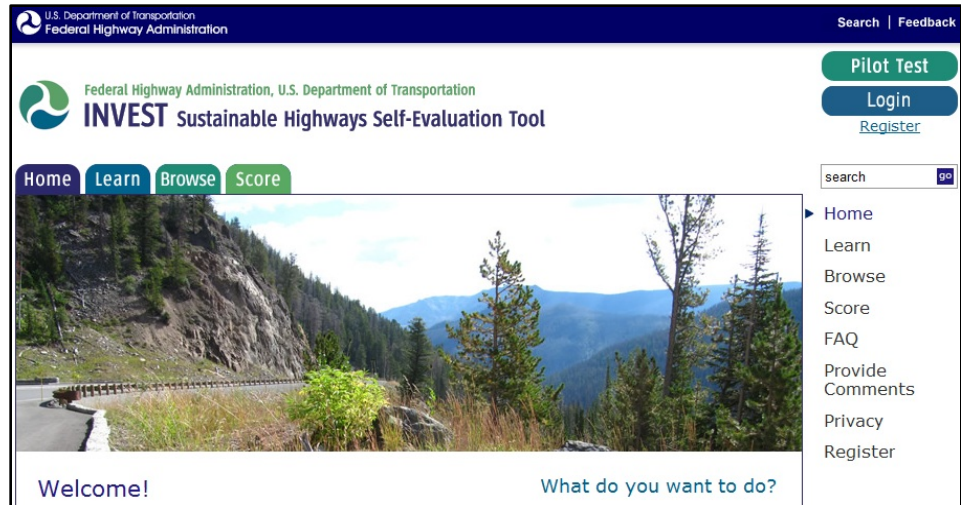


Figure 5: INVEST is available free at www.sustainablehighways.org. (Courtesy of FHWA)

To support roadway sustainability efforts, FHWA released version 1.0 of the Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) in October 2012. A culmination of two years of testing and development (including a beta version and a subsequent pilot test version), this voluntary, web-based, self-evaluation tool is designed to help transportation agencies incorporate sustainability throughout the decisionmaking process and advance projects that yield economic, environmental, and social benefits. INVEST helps agencies identify best practices, communicate with stakeholders and decisionmakers about sustainability, and develop methods for conducting self-assessments and prioritizing areas for improvement.

Sustainability and the Highway Lifecycle

INVEST helps transportation agencies consider sustainability throughout the life of a highway and includes three separate self-evaluation modules that each correspond to a different part of the highway lifecycle: System Planning, Project Development, and Operations and Maintenance. Agencies may choose to use one or more of the modules to evaluate different aspects of their programs and projects. The modules allow an agency to gauge the effectiveness of its sustainability efforts, track improvement, and communicate successes to external stakeholders. The three modules are described below.

System Planning

The System Planning module focuses on agency-wide management and planning of roadway networks and evaluates the policies, procedures, and systems in place to manage an entire planning portfolio, rather than a single project. There are 17 criteria within this module, each containing a set of sustainability best practices related to a specific subject. For example, in the “Integrated Planning: Natural Environment” criterion, agencies may earn points for integrating metropolitan and/or



statewide transportation planning with environmental plans, engaging natural resource agencies, applying system or landscape-scale evaluation techniques such as the Eco-Logical approach, and demonstrating sustainable outcomes. An agency might also use the “Financial Sustainability” criterion to evaluate and document that financial commitments made in transportation planning documents are reasonable and affordable. Within that criterion, points are awarded for advanced revenue forecasting and cost estimating processes that incorporate risk, contingencies, and lifecycle costs.

Project Development

The Project Development scorecard focuses on the development of a specific project once the agency has determined the general need for transportation improvements and has identified a solution to address that need. The 29 criteria in this scorecard deal with issues such as environmental review and the project planning, design, and construction decisions related to a specific project. An agency might use this scorecard to identify ways to minimize construction-related impacts through the use of the “Construction Equipment Emission Reduction” criterion, and other related criteria.

Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance scorecard focuses on the management, operation, and maintenance of existing transportation networks. The 14 criteria in this scorecard include topics such as pavement management systems and traffic control infrastructure maintenance. An agency might use the “Road Weather Management Program” criterion to help implement sustainable policies and procedures for maintaining safe road surfaces in adverse conditions.

Example: Highway 156 in Monterey Bay, California

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) used the pilot test version of INVEST to evaluate the State Route 156 West Corridor Project during its planning phase. Route 156 is a gateway for tourists traveling from the San Francisco Bay Area to the Monterey Peninsula. TAMC is seeking to reduce congestion, improve safety, and restore neighborhood access by realigning and widening the corridor. TAMC used INVEST’s Project Development module, and the entire project team participated in the self-evaluation process, including TAMC management, the sustainability liaison, and the environmental and design practitioners. Team members considered the full list of criteria and discussed current practices and planned activities in order to determine an appropriate score for each criterion.

In the process of scoring, TAMC identified key areas for improvement, including public education, economic analysis, energy-efficient lighting, quality control during construction, and the reduction of emissions from asphalt as it is laid. In addition to identifying improvements, INVEST also helped TAMC to validate the sustainable features of the project and communicate with stakeholders about them. These features include habitat preservation and restoration, best practices for stormwater procedures, maintenance of ecological connectivity, and tracking of environmental commitments. After using INVEST during the planning phase of the project, TAMC plans to implement its new ideas and then use the tool again in the design and construction phases. For information on another agency that has used INVEST, please refer to the case study on the Minnesota Department of Transportation, available on the FHWA Sustainable Highways website.

The Future of INVEST 1.0

INVEST 1.0 is an important part of FHWA’s ongoing efforts to advance the triple bottom line of sustainability: economy, environment, and society. Now that FHWA has launched INVEST 1.0, FHWA’s Division Offices and Resource Center will assist transportation agencies in using the tool by offering training opportunities, peer exchanges, research assistance, and



other guidance to help them improve the sustainability of their projects and programs. Subject matter experts at FHWA will monitor the criteria and scoring, stay abreast of the state of the practice, and advise the INVEST team of necessary updates. FHWA will also rely upon feedback from users to improve the tool, which will continue to evolve over time. Users may submit comments or questions to: sustainablehighways@dot.gov.

New FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program

Christopher Douwes, Trails and Enhancements Program Manager
 FHWA – Planning, Environment, and Realty

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) created a new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The TAP will help create safe, accessible, attractive, and environmentally-sensitive communities where people want to live, work, and recreate. Interim TAP guidance is available at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>. This article focuses on changes from prior programs.

The TAP comprises two percent of Federal-aid highway apportionments to the States, averaging \$814 million annually for FY 2013 and 2014. The TAP replaces the Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities and incorporates the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and eligibilities from the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. TAP also includes planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

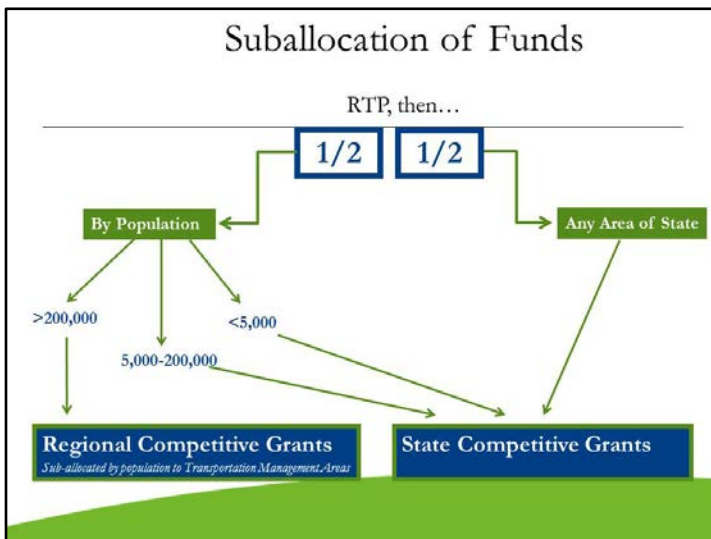


Figure 6: Suballocation of TAP Funds. (Courtesy of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse)

TAP funds are apportioned to the States in proportion to the TE funds made available to the States in FY 2009. Funds are set aside for the RTP at FY 2009 levels unless the State opts out (Florida and Kansas opted out for FY 2013). Otherwise, the RTP remains nearly unchanged: usually administered through a State resource agency, with the same provisions and requirements for eligible projects, eligible sponsors, Federal share, and project administration.

There are no funds set aside for SRTS projects although SRTS projects are eligible for TAP. Because there are no SRTS funds, the Federal share is the same as TAP (80 percent Federal / 20 percent local with sliding scale rates in Federal lands States), and there are no requirements regarding infrastructure or noninfrastructure projects.

Of the remaining TAP funds, half are suballocated based on population (to urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000, small urban areas, and rural areas), and half are



available for any area of the State. The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse developed the graphic in *Figure 6* to show this distribution. All funding must be distributed through competitive grant programs.

Some TE eligibilities were amended under TAP while others remain the same or were removed:

- About half of TE funds went to bicycle and pedestrian projects; these remain broadly eligible under TAP, as well as other Federal-aid highway programs. Rail-trails also remain eligible.
- The landscaping and scenic beautification eligibility was replaced by “vegetation management ... to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control”. Some landscaping projects that are primarily pedestrian streetscapes may be eligible as pedestrian projects. Also, landscaping and scenic enhancement is broadly eligible as part of larger highway projects under 23 U.S.C. 319.
- The historic preservation eligibility is now “historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities”. Archaeological planning and research was changed to only allow mitigation.
- The scenic and historic highway eligibility was eliminated except for “construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas”.
- The environmental mitigation eligibility was revised to allow “any” environmental mitigation, to allow broader use of funds for highway-related stormwater and natural habitat mitigation, and to maintain connectivity among terrestrial and aquatic habitats.
- The outdoor advertising removal eligibility remained unchanged.
- Safety and education activities for pedestrians and bicyclists were eliminated, but remain eligible as SRTS projects, and bicycle safety education remains eligible under the STP.
- The transportation museums and scenic and historic easements eligibilities were eliminated.

Projects funded under the TAP must be treated as projects on a Federal-aid highway, which requires competitive bidding, prevailing wage rates, and the same Federal share as other Federal-aid highway programs. (Projects funded under the RTP set-aside are exempt from the requirement to be treated as highway projects.)

The STP allows all projects eligible under the TAP and RTP to be eligible for STP funds. These projects do not have to be located along Federal-aid highways. Projects not in highway rights-of-way do not necessarily have to be subject to the Treatment of Projects requirement.

MAP-21 Section 1524 allows projects eligible under TAP to be performed by qualified youth service and conservation corps; this provision may allow project sponsors to source work to corps organizations.

The USDOT anticipates providing additional information on best practices to help the States develop and maintain successful programs. For more information, see: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/>.



Federal Partners Promote Coordinated Transportation and Land Use Planning in Fresno, CA

Eric Eidlin, Community Planner
FTA – Region 9

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is working closely with the city of Fresno, CA to advance the city's first bus rapid transit (BRT) line. Representatives of FHWA, EPA, and HUD are also collaborating on the effort as part of the White House's Strong Cities Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) and the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC). More than \$38 million of FTA program funding, representing 80 percent of the total project cost of \$48 million, is now programmed to the project. Early engagement in the fall of 2011 by FTA, FHWA, and EPA resulted in the realization that the city's transit agency, Fresno Area Express (FAX), had proposed a BRT alignment that did not serve key sections of downtown Fresno. In particular, this alignment missed the Fulton Mall, which is the heart of downtown Fresno and the lynchpin of the city's downtown revitalization efforts. Similarly, the planned BRT route also did not offer a convenient connection to the planned future site of Fresno's high speed rail station, which is directly adjacent to the Fulton Mall.

FAX's original proposed alignment skirted the downtown core because it was drawn based on bus ridership numbers from 2008, the year in which initial work on the BRT project began. At that time, FAX selected an L-shaped alignment for the BRT project to serve the busiest east/west and north/south bus corridors in the city. The Fulton Mall was not served by this alignment because it was struggling economically and as a result, ridership to the area was low.

However, as representatives of FTA, FHWA, and EPA became more familiar with the BRT project and the city's downtown revitalization efforts, it became clear that there was an opportunity to foster positive synergy by coordinating transportation and land use planning. If the alignment were altered to serve the Fulton Mall, this could capture increased ridership due to the city's downtown revitalization efforts; in turn, improved bus service (in the form of BRT) could also have a positive impact on the revitalization. An altered alignment would maximize the economic development potential of the Federal government's investment in transit, which is a key strategic goal for USDOT, SC2, and the Partnership.

In light of these realizations, the SC2 team communicated the potential benefit of rerouting the BRT project through the downtown core. Hearing these concerns, the Mayor's Office quickly became more involved. In subsequent meetings with the transit agency, SC2 agencies such as FTA, FHWA, and EPA communicated their support for a BRT route that would better complement and reinforce the city's downtown revitalization activities. In the end, the BRT line was rerouted a half-mile farther to the west, through the heart of downtown, so as to directly touch the Fulton Mall and other key sites for the city's downtown revitalization efforts.

A familiarity with local projects, combined with knowledge of the Federal transportation investments being made in downtown Fresno, enabled the SC2 team to weigh in at a critical juncture in the development of the BRT project. Had the SC2 team not initiated coordination when it did, the costs of making changes to the BRT alignment at a later date would have been high and the City would have missed a tremendous opportunity to leverage a \$48 million investment—the largest transit investment in Fresno's history—to help revitalize key districts of its downtown.



Spotlight on Region 6

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Sharon Hausam, Ph.D., AICP, Tribal Planner
Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico

Beginning in 2010, the Region 6 Partnership (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX) began a series of monthly teleconference calls in order to better coordinate livability initiatives and share information. The Region has also held annual Regional Administrator’s meetings in the Dallas-Fort Worth area over the past three years to better integrate the Regional leadership and their shared visions for the Partnership. Region 6 has reported multiple livability-related updates. Here are a few highlights:

Texas Livability Summits

The FHWA Texas Division, in conjunction with the Texas Transportation Institute, has sponsored annual Livability Summits. The first Livability Summit was held in March 2010 in Arlington, TX (with 130 participants), the second in July 2011 in Austin, TX (with over 170 participants) and the third in Houston, TX in August 2012 (with over 110 participants). A total of over 400 attendees participated in these three events representing Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as private consultants, university researchers, students, transit providers, and members of the general public. The Livability Summits have assisted the Partnership in highlighting best management practices, sharing lessons learned, and fostering local action plans.

Plaza Saltillo Transit-Oriented Development

The Region 6 Partnership has supported the Plaza Saltillo Transit-Oriented Development in East Austin, Texas. The FHWA provided \$5.4 million in Surface Transportation Program minimum allocation funds for the construction of double tracks between Plaza Saltillo and I-35. The EPA, in collaboration with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, supported environmental site assessments on the former Saltillo Rail Yard - the location of the future double tracks in east Austin. By funding the relocation of the rail tracks, this grant removes the main obstacle to redevelopment for the key site at the Plaza Saltillo MetroRail and is a critical step toward realizing the vision for Transit-Oriented Development in the area.

“Without the partnership, we would not have been aware of the grant options, and would not have known how to resolve issues of different regulations applying to the same project. The partnership has provided invaluable technical assistance as we move through this very complex process...”

Lucy Galbraith, CapMetro Transit
Oriented Development Manager



Figure 7: The FHWA Texas Division, in conjunction with the Texas Transportation Institute, has sponsored annual Livability Summits.



Port Arthur Environmental Justice (EJ) Showcase Project

The Region 6 Partnership has selected the Port Arthur Environmental Justice (EJ) Showcase Project near Beaumont, Texas as a focal point. Through grants and technical outreach, the Partnership is finding ways to promote brownfield redevelopment, community involvement, job creation, and economic opportunities to improve the quality of life for this economically challenged region. For example, EPA recently conducted a Walkability Field Review to identify areas that need upgrades to pedestrian infrastructure. The Partnership has also actively participated in Regional workshops, planning events, and meetings to coordinate Federal support for this EJ community. Additional information is available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/grants/ej-showcase-r06.html>.



Figure 8: The Region 6 Partnership has supported the Plaza Saltillo Transit-Oriented Development in East Austin, Texas.

Pueblo of Laguna Adopts Community Bike and Pedestrian Route Plan

The Pueblo of Laguna is a Federally-recognized sovereign Indian tribe located in western New Mexico. The Laguna people began to settle in the area that now includes the Laguna reservation at least as early as the 1300's, according to oral tradition and the archaeological record. Today, most of the Pueblo's community members live in six distinct villages.

The Pueblo of Laguna received a Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II grant from USDOT to plan and design bicycle and pedestrian routes that will improve livability. New trails and improved routes will link the Pueblo's six villages, connect subdivisions to the traditional village core, and provide safe access to the Pueblo's other commercial areas. The reconnections will encourage redevelopment in the form of housing rehabilitation, new home construction, and small business development in the traditional village areas. Bicycle and pedestrian trails may also catalyze tourism on Old Route 66, now NM Highway 124, through the Pueblo.

On April 21, 2012, the Pueblo of Laguna Council adopted the "Pueblo of Laguna Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Plan." A Community Biking and Walking Advisory Group, composed of



Figure 9: The Pueblo of Laguna Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan included multiple methods of community involvement.



representatives of each of the six villages, guided a consulting team led by Alta Planning + Design in developing the plan. Community involvement for the plan included mapping workshops, field tours, open houses, focus groups, a survey, and other efforts integrated into the traditional Laguna governance process. The plan calls for multi-purpose trails, shoulder bikeways, shared roadways, sidewalks, signed routes, safe crossings, a roundabout with bicycle and pedestrian safety features, a road diet to add bike lanes, and connections to transit. Projects are prioritized within the plan to ensure that critical routes move forward into engineering design immediately, in order to be “shovel-ready” when construction funding becomes available.

Announcements/New Resources

- The FHWA and FTA hosted a webinar on “Effective Practices in Planning for Livable Communities at Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)” on November 13th. Access a recording of the webinar at: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/p5s40qedjaa/>.
- The PSC has launched a database of livability-related case studies developed by partner agencies, available at <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/studies.html>.
- To learn about current grant opportunities for livable communities, please visit the PSC website at: www.sustainablecommunities.gov.
- The [EPA announced the seven winners](#) of the 2012 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. The Smart Growth awards are given for creative, sustainable initiatives that better protect the health and the environment of our communities while also strengthening local economies.

