

FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter

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Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter is intended to provide transportation professionals with real-world examples of ways that transportation investments promote livability, such as providing access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safer roads. The FHWA Livable Communities Newsletter also includes topics related to Safe Routes to School, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Environmental Justice. To access additional tools and resources, or to learn more about FHWA's Livability Initiative, please visit FHWA's Livability website or the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) website. The PSC is a partnership of three Federal agencies: the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To read past issues of the newsletter, visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit [GovDelivery](#).

Want to continue the discussion? Have a question about one of the topics you read here? Visit the [FHWA Livable Communities Discussion Board](#) to join the conversation.

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices



Virtual Nonmotorized Data Collection Program Peer Exchange Helps Maine Prioritize Pedestrian and Bicycle Data Collection

Wayne Emington, P.E., Design & Projects Engineer, FHWA Maine Division

As part of the [Safer People, Safer Streets Initiative](#), Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx directed DOT to address nonmotorized safety issues by helping States and local communities create safer and more effective bicycling and walking networks. DOT set out to address these issues through seven Challenge activities, including helping communities to gather better pedestrian and bicycle data. [Mayors' Challenge Activity 3: Gather Data](#) describes how communities can initiate or expand pedestrian and bicycle data collection efforts to help inform decisionmaking and target improvements.

Transportation professionals from across Maine became aware of nonmotorized traffic monitoring through an [NHI Traffic Monitoring Programs: Guidance and Procedures](#) course held in Portland, Maine in May 2015. Following the course, they established a formal statewide program for collecting more complete bicycle and pedestrian traffic volume data. They were eager to hear more about what their peers across the country were doing to improve their data collection, so the FHWA Maine Division Office, Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System, and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine worked together to organize the Maine BikePed Count Summit. The summit was held on September 23, 2015.

To facilitate group discussion, participants included Federal, State, metropolitan planning organization, municipal, consultant, data vendor, Mayors Challenge Team, Trail Alliance, and bicycle and pedestrian advocacy representatives with knowledge of traffic modeling, traffic monitoring, nonmotorized data collection, safe routes to school, bicycle and pedestrian program administration, and bicycle and pedestrian facility design.

Virtual Peer Exchange Program

- Introductions
- Group Discussion: Why Count People Who Walk & Bike
- [Presentation: PACTS Bike & Pedestrian Counts](#)
- [Presentation: CDOT's Non-Motorized Monitoring Program](#)
- [Video: Minnesota: Where Every Step Counts](#)
- [Presentation: STRAVA Data And Its Use](#)
- [Presentation: Non-Motorized Data Collection \(The Basics\)](#)
- Group Discussion: Selecting Long Term Count Locations

Web resources Provided to Participants:

- [PACTS Bike Ped Counts](#)
- [PACTS Count Locations](#)
- [Bicycle Coalition of Maine Bike & Pedestrian Count Program](#)
- [AVCOG Turning Movement Counts](#)
- [CDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Counts](#)
- [STRAVA Heat Map](#)
- [PSU: Guide to Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Programs](#)
- [FHWA Traffic Monitoring Guide: Non-Motorized Traffic](#)
- [Permanent Count Program Checklist](#)

Presentations/Videos Provided to Participants:

- [Pedestrians Count! – How to Measure Foot Traffic](#)
- [Creating Robust Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Programs](#)

The virtual event enabled the Colorado Department of Transportation to participate with a remote presentation and permitted participants from across Maine to participate. To accommodate schedules and provide learning opportunities outside of the summit, links to previously recorded presentations on this topic were provided to participants, and a separate presentation highlighting Minnesota's Non-Motorized Traffic Monitoring Program was recorded at a later date.

Presentations and group activities were structured to begin discussions on topics from chapter four of [FHWA's Traffic Monitoring Guide](#), which outlines a



process for establishing a Permanent Non-Motorized Traffic Count Program. The suggested steps include:

1. Review the existing continuous count program.
2. Develop an inventory of available continuous count locations and equipment.
3. Determine the traffic patterns to be monitored.
4. Establish pattern/factor groups.
5. Determine the appropriate number of continuous monitoring locations.
6. Select specific count locations.
7. Compute month of year, day of week, and hour of day factors to use in annualizing short-duration counts.

As a result of the summit, transportation practitioners across Maine have a better understanding of how their agencies can implement a nonmotorized traffic monitoring program. Participants understand the existing state of Non-Motorized Data Collection in Maine and, thanks to their peers, have a better understanding of what they can do next.

MaineDOT plans to continue discussions—both internally and with stakeholders—on how to best structure and administer a Non-Motorized Traffic Monitoring Program. Conversations related to funding this effort will continue through [Federal Highway Programs](#), the [Accelerated Innovation Deployment \(AID\)](#) Program, and the [State Transportation Innovation Council](#). For a recording of the peer exchange, visit: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/p1dnyu2b8qd/>

Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment Paves the Way for Improved Connections between Downtown Laramie and the University of Wyoming

Jeff Purdy, AICP, PTP, Technical Services Team Leader/Transportation Planner, FHWA Wyoming Division

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) selected the city of Laramie, Wyoming to perform a pedestrian and bicycle safety assessment as part of Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx's [Safer People, Safer Streets Initiative](#). The assessment, which was designed to help planners and engineers understand the safety needs of nonmotorized users in the area, was conducted along three roadway corridors that provide a wide variety of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities between the University of Wyoming and downtown Laramie.

This area, which abuts downtown Laramie and includes the university, provides high-density and mixed land uses with a variety of destinations in a compact area. The good street connectivity of

the study area, combined with a diverse mixture of land uses and jobs-to-housing balance, enhances the friendliness of the area for pedestrians and cyclists. Nationally, Laramie ranks eighth among small cities for rates of bicycling, with 7 percent of the population bicycling to work.



Figure 1: A bike route on Iverson Avenue connecting downtown Laramie with the University of Wyoming campus could be improved to provide safer passage for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. (Image courtesy of Jeff Purdy, FHWA)



Several years prior to the assessment, the city and the university identified Ivinson Avenue as a candidate for new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Ivinson provides a direct route between the university and downtown, but the roadway is in poor condition, and the existing bike lanes do not transition well into the downtown street network. To solve this, planners have been considering either improving the existing bike lanes or installing separated bike lanes (cycle track) along the north side of the street.

Its location and potential bicycle upgrades made Ivinson an important focus in the bicycle and pedestrian assessment. Representatives of USDOT, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), the city, and the university walked Laramie’s street network during the assessment, and determined it is a well-connected, continuous grid of streets, sidewalks, transit, and bicycle facilities that enables a range of alternative transportation options, modes, and routes. The team identified a number of recommendations for improvement, including sidewalk maintenance, crosswalk enhancements, accessibility upgrades, pedestrian access upgrades in the vicinity of transit stops, and bike route enhancements.

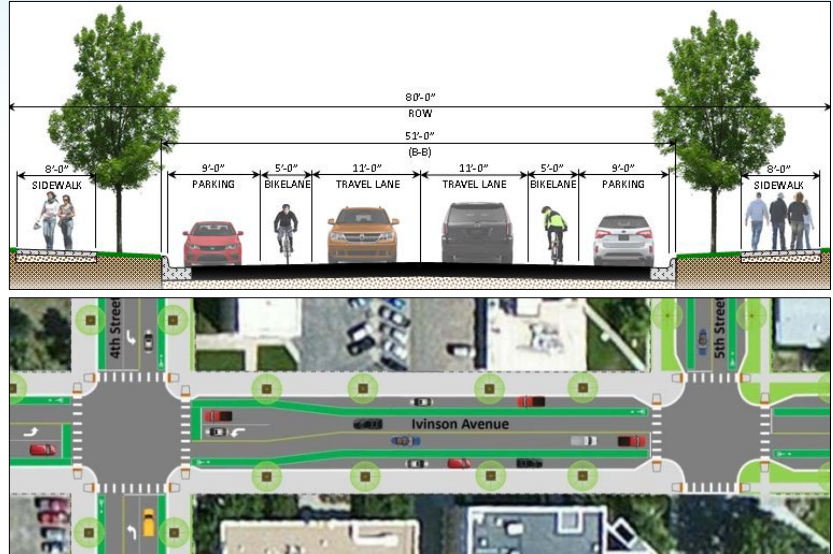


Figure 2: One recommended option from the assessment was to restripe Ivinson Avenue to improve bicycle lanes along the roadway and change parking directions to improve visibility for drivers and cyclists. (Image courtesy of Jeff Purdy, FHWA)

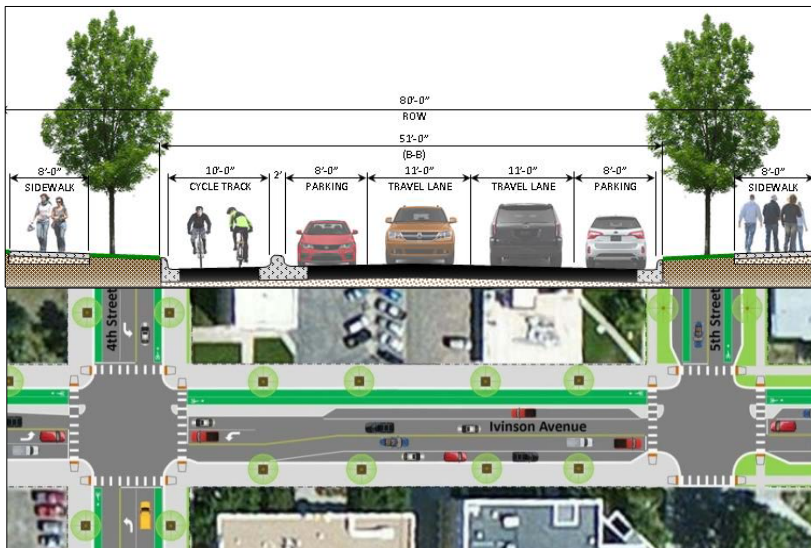


Figure 3: Another recommended option for Ivinson Avenue from the assessment is to build a cycle track that would separate cyclists from motor vehicle traffic entirely. (Image courtesy of Jeff Purdy, FHWA)

Along Ivinson Avenue in particular, the study team assessed the pros and cons of the potential bicycle upgrades the city had previously identified. Improving bike lanes on both sides of Ivinson would involve restriping the street to provide narrower, 11-foot-wide travel lanes, 5-foot-wide bike lanes, and 9-foot-wide parking lanes to prevent parked car doors from opening into the bike lane.

Installing separated bike lanes or “cycle tracks” would provide an exclusive two-way facility for bicyclists on the north side of Ivinson Avenue that would be physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by a curb or median. These bike lanes would link with nonmotorized improvements being planned on the university’s campus and with Laramie’s Main Street revitalization plans.



In addition to reviewing existing bicycle improvement concepts for Iverson Avenue, the assessment identified a number of recommendations to enhance the overall pedestrian and bicycle environment in downtown Laramie. A recommendation to replace pull-in angled parking with back-in angled parking would allow motorists to face toward the roadway, offering better visibility of both oncoming bicyclists and other motorists. Angled and parallel parking can also be alternated from one side of the street to the other, creating a chicane-like traffic-calming effect.

The recommendations also include suggestions for pedestrian safety, transit access, and downtown streetscape improvements. The assessment outlines a broader framework for the city and WYDOT to use for systematic multimodal transportation management, which includes taking a comprehensive approach to transportation system management and multimodal transportation strategies to meet the community’s mobility needs.

Multimodal network planning maximizes uses of all travel modes while meeting the needs of all users. Integrated transportation and community planning can encourage compact, mixed-use development and a well-connected, multimodal street network that accommodates population and employment growth while managing the transportation system.

Following the assessment, the city applied for and received a \$250,000 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant for bicycle enhancements along Iverson Avenue. The TAP funds will be used to install bike lanes during reconstruction of Iverson Avenue and will support complementary nonmotorized improvements being planned by the university and along Laramie’s Main Street.

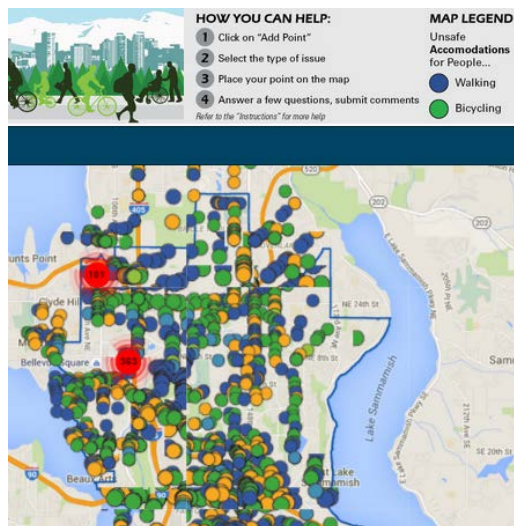
DOT Mayors’ Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets is Engaging Cities in Improving Safety

Anthony Burton, Policy Analyst, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

The USDOT has extended its Mayors’ Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets and announced an awards competition to recognize achievements in improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. The Mayor’s Challenge is one activity growing out of Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx’s [Safer People, Safer Streets: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative, announced](#) in September 2014, with the goal of reducing the growing number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities through a comprehensive approach that addresses infrastructure safety, education, vehicle safety, and data collection.

Challenge activities:

1. Complete Streets
2. Fix Barriers
3. Gather Data
4. Design Right
5. Create Networks
6. Improve Laws
7. Educate and Enforce



The initiative included three parts: engage USDOT field offices in conducting safety assessments led by the U.S.

Department of Transportation (DOT) in every State; identify and address policy barriers that inhibit creating a safer walking and bicycling environment; and work with local governments to advance safety and accessibility goals in their communities. In January 2015 Secretary Foxx kicked off the [Mayors’ Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets](#), which invites cities and other jurisdictions to make improvements in seven key Challenge areas. The Challenge highlights resources and support from the DOT agencies to help with building safer streets for people walking and bicycling.

In February, the cities will complete a survey of their activities so far which DOT will use to provide feedback regarding what activities have been the most successful and where cities can improve. The survey results will also

Figure 4: Residents in Bellevue, Washington can identify and flag areas unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Administration: www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability

Partnership for Sustainable Communities: www.sustainablecommunities.gov/



help DOT disseminate best practices in bicycle and pedestrian safety and identify gaps in data and resources that DOT provides. Cities have anecdotally reported that the Challenge has provided the momentum necessary to tackle priorities around improving pedestrian and bicycle safety.

DOT extends the Challenge due to popularity and announces Challenge Awards

Cities continue to join the Challenge. As of December, 240 cities and other local jurisdictions in 45 states had joined, and seven of the 10 largest cities in the country are participating. Due to the increase in sign-ups and positive feedback, DOT announced that it would extend the Challenge an additional six months beyond the initial year. In addition, DOT announced it would invite Mayors' Challenge cities to submit nomination for awards related to the Challenge Activities. The awards are meant to stimulate exceptional work under the Challenge, and to highlight some of the great work as a model for other cities. More information about the awards can be found [here].

The extension of the Challenge will also allow greater coordination with *Let's Move Cities and Towns*, a White House initiative to increase physical activity for health, as well as the Surgeon General's Call to Action for Walking and Walkable Communities. Both campaigns have several goals that overlap with the safety focus of the Challenge.

Participating cities and communities experience improvements

Many cities are using the Challenge to further their pedestrian and bicycle safety goals. In Florida, Longwood and other cities and agencies throughout Central Florida are engaging in regular discussions about how to best implement the Mayors' Challenge goals. Longwood has adopted a complete streets policy, which is the first Challenge activity.

Bellevue, Washington recently adopted a Pedestrian & Bicycle Implementation Initiative, which explicitly references the Mayors' Challenge. Bellevue has made progress on Challenge activity three - *Gather Data* - by launching a Wikimap survey tool that allows the public to identify unsafe conditions in the walking and bicycling network. Several hundred users have marked unsafe locations. The tool is a good example of a city involving the public in collecting data.

To complete Challenge activity four, *Design Right*, Lexington, Kentucky implemented a pilot project to recover street space for pedestrians by using green paint. The paint shortened pedestrian crossings and enlarged the pedestrian space (Figure 6). New cities are encouraged to sign up for the Challenge and to attend the Mayors' Challenge Summit in September.



Figure 5: Lexington, Kentucky improved pedestrian safety by painting street space green, which has slowed traffic and shortened pedestrian crossings.

For more information on the Mayors' Challenge, visit <https://www.transportation.gov/mayors-challenge>, or email pedbikesafety@dot.gov.

Safe Routes to Parks Concept Gains Momentum with Ideas from APA and Funding from CDC

Anna Ricklin, AICP, Manager, Planning and Community Health Center, American Planning Association

Parks often serve as community gathering places—hosts to picnics, reunions, events, physical activity opportunities, and more. The success of an outdoor space designed to promote social interaction and recreation depends on being able to



access it. We access parks via buses, bikes, and on foot. A safe, connected system creates spaces that promote health and livability.

Safe Routes to Parks refers to the infrastructure that facilitates access to parks through walking, biking, or transit. This is a systems approach integrating three parts: the park, the park's access points, and the park's surrounding infrastructure. The American Planning Association (APA) created a fact sheet that identifies four areas where good planning can have the most impact on creating Safe Routes to Parks and thus on improving the health and safety of neighborhoods.

- *Assessment/Gap Analysis:* Assessments using mapping, community outreach, and walkability audits to understand an area's bicycle and pedestrian incidents, injuries, and traffic counts help officials make smarter decisions on infrastructure investments to improve safety in and around a park. Knowing what prevents people from using a park or what encourages them to use a park can help planners decide where to locate stop signs, how to incorporate context-sensitive street design, and whether to install more signage around crosswalks.
- *Siting Policy:* Land use documents, such as neighborhood plans and development codes, identify the location of new parks and surrounding infrastructure. Plans and policies promoting park visibility, safe streets, and walkability enhance siting efforts. To implement Safe Routes to Parks, planners must consider connectivity via streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- *Capital Improvement Program (CIP):* A CIP is a local infrastructure funding mechanism that can support Safe Routes to Parks. Infrastructure investments that improve access and promote connectivity to parks produce co-benefits such as improved public health, economic growth, and fiscal responsibility. A CIP that incorporates assessment data helps officials make smart investment decisions with objective, relevant information.
- *Partnerships:* A successful Safe Routes to Parks approach requires involving multiple organizations. Partnerships between city departments—planning, transportation, parks, public works—community organizations, schools, and the private sector are critical for ensuring that every person has safe, reliable access to green space. These partnerships enable better park design, use of easements to improve access, and minor infrastructure changes, such as adding stop signs and updating crosswalk designs.

Safe Routes to Parks is still a novel concept. Here are suggestions for advancing Safe Routes to Parks:

- Emulate best practices from the Safe Routes to Schools programs; for example, promoting shared use and coordination with local schools.
- Implement intergovernmental agreements that enhance data sharing among public agencies.
- Learn what others are doing and work in concert with them. The National Recreation and Park Association and the Trust for Public Land are examples of other organizations doing good work related to park development and safe access to parks.
- Increase awareness of how to fund these programs. Consider ways to leverage the Transportation Alternatives Program or Metropolitan Planning Organization efforts, as well as infrastructure sales taxes or other dedicated park funding sources.

The APA's Safe Routes to Parks resources are the result of a contract with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Environmental Health. The Safe Routes to Parks [fact sheet](#), released in June 2015, serves as a quick guide to the planner's role in creating Safe Routes to Parks. For more information, visit: <https://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/toolsforhealth/>.



New Study Shows Shared Space Intersection Design Saves Drivers and Pedestrians Time, Improves Safety

Sam Goater, P.E., Project for Public Spaces

The University of Connecticut released “Shared Space: Could Less Formal Streets Be Better for Both Pedestrians and Vehicles?” a study that shows shared space, a design concept that encourages all users to share street space, can provide much greater vehicular capacity than conventional intersections and increases pedestrian convenience.

By redesigning streets and intersections as human-scaled places and incorporating shared space concepts—such as low design speeds, less-defined separation of travel modes, and curbsless design—communities of all sizes around the world have successfully encouraged active transportation, stimulated their local economies, reduced accident severity, and lessened their environmental impacts. In the U.S., shared space projects have been built in [Seattle](#), Washington; [Cambridge](#), Massachusetts; and [Chicago](#), Illinois, and FHWA included [shared streets](#) as a potential safety countermeasure in [PEDSAFE](#), an online tool for diagnosing and addressing pedestrian safety issues. PEDSAFE includes several case studies about shared streets.

Until recently there was little academic research that proved anecdotal observations of how smoothly and efficiently traffic flows in shared spaces. The study compared actual user delays at six shared space intersections to expected user delays using standard U.S. traffic modeling software to model the intersections as if they had been designed in accordance with standard design guides.

The findings revealed much greater capacity at shared space intersections. Fountain Place in Poynton, United Kingdom, for example, is a high-traffic intersection on a major trucking route. The study found that the recently constructed shared space in Fountain Place saves each of the 26,000 drivers who use the intersection an average of 140 seconds daily compared to a signalized intersection. That translates to millions of hours saved each year. The study also highlights gains in pedestrian friendliness. Pedestrians more likely to follow their ‘desire lines’—taking the shortest route through the space—and their average time spent waiting to cross the space was much lower in the shared spaces. Nationwide, pedestrians have been found to wait an average of 10.7 seconds at signalized intersections and 2.1 seconds at roundabouts before crossing. In contrast, pedestrian wait times at the observed shared spaces were all less than one second.

This new research, combined with FHWA’s inclusion of shared space in PEDSAFE, and its [support in 2014](#) of considering materials such as the [NACTO Urban Street Design Guide](#), which includes guidelines on shared streets, may increase the number of shared space projects being implemented in the U.S. As these types of facilities gain in popularity, it is important to ensure that shared streets are designed with the needs of people with disabilities in mind.

The Project for Public Spaces is developing a resource to support engineers, planners, developers, and the public in learning about the shared space concept and implement it in their communities.

Nashville, Tennessee Increases Investments in Active Transportation Through New Funding Initiative

Michelle Lacewell, APR, Deputy Director & Communications Officer, Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Across the Nation, support continues to grow for enhancing transportation networks through improvements to bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and greenways. To meet similar growing needs in Middle Tennessee, the [Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (MPO) and its Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee developed the [Active Transportation Program \(ATP\)](#) to directly fund such projects in the region.

Since 2012, the ATP has awarded more than \$12 million to projects across the region. The program targets at least 15 percent of the MPO’s available urbanized area Surface Transportation Program resources received from FHWA for walking,



bicycling, or transit-supportive projects that may not have otherwise received funding through more traditional revenue streams.

The MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee created project scoring criteria and, along with MPO staff, conducts in-depth reviews to award funding. Submitted projects that directly address recommendations from the MPO's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Study receive priority consideration for awards. The vision and policy provisions of this study were reflected in the development of the [MPO's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan](#).

Proposals are funded in both urban and suburban areas of Middle Tennessee, creating connections to schools, downtowns, libraries, public transit, and other community destinations. Many of the projects that receive funding focus on safely connecting children to area schools through nonmotorized facilities, demonstrating an increased demand for safe and convenient opportunities to encourage physical activity among young people by way of transportation to and from school.

Below is the list of projects that received funding through the ATP's most recent round of awards made in 2014:

- **Small Town Connections**
The City of Nolensville was awarded a grant for the construction of a 10-foot-wide trail stretching 4,300 feet to connect destinations within Nolensville, including parks, schools, businesses, and community destinations. The trail will also connect with two existing Safe Routes to School trails funded by grants from the Tennessee Department of Transportation.
- **Lower Station Camp Creek Greenway**
Sumner County received funding for construction of a portion of the Lower Station Camp Creek Greenway, which stretches 2.75 miles to connect multiple school campuses with residential developments, providing students an opportunity to walk or bicycle to and from school.
- **Citywide Sidewalk Improvement Program**
The City of Gallatin received funding for the construction of four miles of sidewalk to fill critical gaps in the city's sidewalk network connecting destinations such as schools, residences, and businesses.
- **Franklin-Cool Springs Bike Share Program**
Franklin Transit Authority was awarded funding to support the implementation, administration, and maintenance of 23 bike share stations containing 10 bicycles each across Franklin and the Cool Springs area.
- **S. Lowry Street Streetscaping and Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvements**
The Town of Smyrna received funding for the first phase of a streetscaping and road diet project that includes pedestrian and bicycle facilities to help create a sense of place and define the character of Smyrna.

Through this program, the MPO has been able to increase investments in nonmotorized modes, which provide access to transit, provide safe and reliable choices for short distance trips, promote physical activity, and encourage redevelopment of existing centers and corridors that are nearing or may already have reached expected capacity on supporting roadway infrastructure.

For more information on the Nashville Area MPO's Active Transportation Program or public health initiatives, visit www.nashvillempo.org.

Transformational Planning Effort, Heartland 2050, Improves Quality of Life in Omaha-Council Bluffs Region

Justin Luther, AICP, Transportation Planner, Realty, Civil Rights, FHWA Nebraska Division

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



Regional planning effort unites Omaha-Council Bluffs region and coordinates implementation among local jurisdictions

The Omaha-Council Bluffs region developed Heartland 2050, a long-term vision for the area, through an unprecedented effort to connect people through regional scenario planning. This resulted in a roadmap for Omaha-Council Bluffs for the next 40 years. The Heartland 2050 effort is designed to improve the quality of life for residents and is based on the core values of the communities that make up the region. The visioning effort was funded primarily through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sustainability grant and some additional funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The Omaha-Council Bluffs region is home to over 850,000 people in Iowa and Nebraska. The eight-county area spans 4,400 square miles and is geographically diverse, with urban, suburban, and rural communities of varying sizes. The Heartland 2050 effort is balancing housing, education, transportation, health, natural resources, and utilities considerations across multiple communities in order to plan for a cohesive, regional future. Heartland 2050 connects people throughout the region by providing a roadmap for strategic and proactive efforts across all communities.

The Heartland 2050 Vision identified four guiding principles designed to help translate the core values into the strategies and actions identified in the Action Plan: equity, efficiency, inclusivity, and local control/regional benefits. One action the City of Omaha has taken to achieve equity, for instance, is developing Step-Up Omaha!, a youth employment program that connects primarily low-income youth and young adults with employment opportunities at over 100 worksites spread across 20 community partners.

To ensure that the values and goals established in Heartland 2050 are carried out moving forward, the Heartland 2050 organizers and their partners developed a [framework](#) that outlines plans for monitoring progress, coordinating strategic actions, and continuing community engagement. Working collaboratively across jurisdictions can save residents in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region money by reducing redundant work and better utilizing existing assets.

The Metro Area Planning Agency (MAPA), a voluntary association of local governments in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, was awarded the 2015 National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) President's Award. The NARC President's Award recognizes leadership and excellence in advocating regional concepts, approaches, and programs at any level of the regional community. For more information about Heartland 2050 please go to heartland2050.org.

Metro Area Travel Improvement Study will refine and implement Heartland 2050's transportation planning goals

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), in coordination with MAPA, initiated a comprehensive transportation study of the Omaha metropolitan area. The study recognizes that future interstate system needs are intrinsically linked with arterial and local roads and transit system needs, regionwide investment decisions, and many of the other goals and strategies identified in Heartland 2050. The study is using a performance-based planning approach to design an optimal multimodal transportation system, which will guide where and when investment

Heartland 2050 Core Values

Through research, surveys, and extensive public engagement, residents and planners drafted the following core values for the region:

- Retain a high quality of life
- Maintain affordable and fair housing
- Use public resources efficiently
- Enhance safety, reduce crime, and eliminate poverty
- Attract good, quality jobs
- Attract and retain young professionals
- Maintain excellent educational opportunities
- Ensure high-quality health care
- Maintain our strong network of neighborhoods and communities
- Retain values that make our region inclusive, welcoming, and accessible
- Expand and enhance transportation choices
- Plan for a sustainable and economically resilient future



decisions are made in the region. Decisions will be made based on understanding of the full travel network and by using a variety of approaches to meet community needs while maximizing system performance.

Join Communities Nationwide to Celebrate Bike to School Day on Wednesday, May 4, 2016

Colleen Oliver, Communications Manager, Safe Routes to School Programs

Join tens of thousands of children, parents, school officials, and community members across the country for the fifth annual National Bike to School Day on May 4, 2016.

For the fourth annual National Walk to School Day on October 7, 2015, participants registered more than 2,630 events, which is nearly a 20 percent increase from 2014. Each year event registration sets new records, making 2016 the biggest anticipated celebration yet.

Bike to School Day provides communities across the country with an impetus to promote safe and healthy travel to and from school. The event is part of the movement for year-round safe routes to school and encourages bicycling to school as a healthy way for kids and families to make their school commute. National Bike to School Day joins the excitement surrounding National Bike Month, led by the League of American Bicyclists each May, and builds on the 19 years of success of International Walk to School Day. Events draw attention to safety needs, promote physical activity, help build a sense of neighborhood, and inspire school spirit.

Bike to School Day event registration will begin in February 2016. Registration is free and open to all individuals and organizations planning a Bike to School Day event in the United States. Registering a Bike to School Day event provides organizers access to planning materials, including stickers, certificates, badges, and classroom activities. For more information, visit: www.walkbiketoschool.org.

Registration is Now Open for the 2016 Safe Routes to School National Conference

Colleen Oliver, Communications Manager, Safe Routes to School Programs

[Register](#) for the fifth Safe Routes to School National Conference in Columbus, Ohio on April 5-7, 2016, at the Hilton Columbus Downtown.

The conference will bring together national bicycle and pedestrian safety experts, advocates, and health professionals involved with Safe Routes to School to network, engage in educational opportunities, and form partnerships to enhance their Safe Routes to School work.

Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to safely bicycle and walk to and from school, and it can also play a critical role in providing more physical activity and enhancing traffic safety.

The fourth Safe Routes to School National Conference, held in Sacramento, California, was a resounding success for the more than 600 attendees. To learn more about the 2016 conference visit www.saferoutesconference.org.



Announcements/New Resources

- The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a [summary report](#) of the Secretary's Safer Streets Assessment initiative. The report summarizes the results of 52 pedestrian and bicycle assessments conducted nationwide in the summer of 2015.
- U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx [announced a Smart City Challenge](#) to create a fully integrated, first-of-its-kind city that uses data, technology, and creativity to shape how people and goods move in the future. The winning city will be awarded up to \$40 million from the USDOT.
- The FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty updated its [Bicycle and Pedestrian Program webpages](#), including the new resources: "[Case Studies in Delivering Safe, Comfortable, and Connected Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks](#)." This report provides an overview of pedestrian and bicycle network principles and highlights examples from communities across the country.
- The FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty released the [Connectivity Evaluation Resources](#) tool, which is designed to demonstrate the concept of connectivity and highlight examples of how practitioners are communicating connectivity measures within their communities.
- The annual [pro walk pro bike pro place](#) conference will be held in Vancouver, BC, September 12-15, 2016.

