

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. Starting with the April 2015 edition, the FHWA Livable Communities Newsletter expanded its content to include topics related to Safe Routes to School, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Environmental Justice. The inclusion of these topics creates a more comprehensive understanding of livability. 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 (U.S. 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



Damage from Tropical Storm Irene Creates Opportunity for Community-Backed Transportation Improvements in New Jersey

Richard T. Hammer, NJDOT Assistant Commissioner, Capital Program Management

Transportation planners often lack the budget and capacity to combine cultural, recreational, and functional priorities in a single project. Surprisingly, in August 2011, Tropical Storm Irene created such an opportunity in Gloucester County, New Jersey, when flooding damaged the historic Mullica Hill Pond Dam and adjacent US 322 Bridge.

Flood waters from Irene overtopped the bridge and severely damaged the dam and spillway that create Mullica Hill Pond, spurring an \$8.1-million investment by the Federal Highway Administration in the US 322 Bridge/Mullica Hill Pond Dam over Raccoon Creek project (US 322 Bridge Project). Following the storm, engineers determined the aging bridge to be structurally deficient, requiring imminent replacement. A full replacement allowed the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to address not only structural issues, but also potential safety issues, longstanding environmental concerns, and new or improved recreational opportunities.



Figure 1: The newly designed bridge, dam, and spillway provide safety and resiliency while allowing for new recreational opportunities for local residents. (Image courtesy of NJDOT)

From a functional standpoint, NJDOT designed the project to replace the structurally deficient bridge and undersized spillway in order to accommodate water volumes produced by a 100-year-storm and to withstand future flooding on the roadway. Input from the community made it clear that the pond was a cherished, if underutilized, cultural and recreational resource. Residents viewed the US 322 Bridge Project as an opportunity to preserve, improve, and build resiliency into the Mullica Hill community.

Prior to the project, the US 322 Bridge carried one lane of traffic in each direction with no shoulders and no sidewalks. NJDOT incorporated many new features in the redesign to benefit the community. The bridge profile was raised and the alignment of the approaches was adjusted to improve vehicular safety and sight distances. The bridge was also designed to include shoulders and sidewalks, which are separated from vehicular traffic by a textured concrete barrier. NJDOT also installed decorative streetlights to match those along the nearby Main Street business district, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Construction was performed with a full detour and utilized a recently completed bypass on US 322. The detour shortened the overall construction schedule, provided a safer construction zone, and reduced the overall project cost. In addition, access to all businesses along Main Street remained open throughout construction.

An infiltration basin was added to the drainage system to improve water quality, limit sediment impacts to Raccoon Creek, and provide groundwater recharge. Using a temporary sheet pile cofferdam (a temporary structure used to keep water and



soil out of the excavation and construction area) around the new spillway and a stream diversion system allowed the contractor to construct the spillway and bridge in a dry environment while maintaining the pond water level. This allowed recreation in the pond to continue during construction and eliminated the need to relocate fish.

While the dam created fishing opportunities prior to Irene, it also prevented the migration of certain fish species. The project corrected this longstanding deficiency by including a fish ladder designed in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Division of Fish and Wildlife. Previously, there was no space to cast a fishing line from the old bridge; now there are ramps extending from the sidewalk to the edges of the spillway.



Figure 2: Prior to Tropical Storm Irene, fish could not properly migrate upstream. The US 322 Bridge Project provided NJDOT with an opportunity to correct this design error. (Image courtesy of NJDOT)

Local officials and residents have remarked that the project has strengthened the community's connection to the pond and has sparked an increase in recreational activities such as walking, fishing, canoeing, and birdwatching. It has also created educational opportunities for students, organizations, and environmental groups.

The project earned a regional award in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) 2015 America's Transportation Awards in the Quality of Life/Economic Development category, received a 2015 New Jersey Alliance for Action Distinguished Engineering Award, and was recognized by the South Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

Colorado Bolsters Sustainability in Small Towns with Sustainable Main Streets Initiative

Andy Hill, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Community Development Office Program Manager

In 2010, Colorado's governor directed a team of State agencies to select four communities to pilot a program of intensive, strategic, catalytic assistance called the [Sustainable Main Streets Initiative](#) (SMSI). The purpose of the SMSI was to determine how effectively a collaborative, integrated process that used technical and financial resources could help communities enhance the sustainability of their downtowns. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) led this effort, working closely with local governments, nonprofits, and State agencies, such as the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the State Historical Fund.

To kick off sustainability discussions with the selected communities, the SMSI created a customized version of the [Partnership for Sustainability's "Livability Principles."](#) SMSI then employed an outcome-based approach to create a framework from which government, nonprofit, and private-sector partners could work with communities to support creative solutions that used available resources. Pilot communities developed goals around long-term fiscal health, downtown revitalization, multimodal transportation, pedestrian safety, arts and culture, affordable housing, historic preservation, public health, and local foods—all in the context of sustainability and long-term community well-being.



Partners were asked to think creatively about how they might commit resources to support these desired community outcomes. Two of the four pilot communities, Monte Vista and Rifle, are featured in this article.

The city of Monte Vista focused on transportation, walkability, historic preservation, downtown revitalization, local foods, affordable and quality housing, and local artists. Monte Vista's chosen transportation project was a successful outcome of the SMSI.

CDOT and DOLA provided joint funding for a street enhancement project that met each agency's goals and led to a more pedestrian-friendly main street. Prior to the project, CDOT planned to resurface US Highway 160, which runs through downtown Monte Vista. Rather than conduct two separate projects, CDOT combined them in an effort to better meet its own transportation needs while helping the city achieve its revitalization goals.

To ensure the city's objectives were being met, CDOT engaged the community in a creative design process. US Highway 160 served as Monte Vista's main street, so the city wanted to slow down traffic, widen sidewalks, and preserve some on-street, storefront parking to revitalize the downtown area. To achieve this, CDOT completed the following:

- Reduced the roadway to three lanes (i.e., one in each direction and a turning lane).
- Added a bike path and buffer zone.
- Constructed corner bulb-outs (i.e., key locations where sidewalks are extended to narrow roadways).
- Widened sidewalks.
- Reserved limited space for strategically placed storefront parking.

Monte Vista contributed the following to the revitalization project:

- Upgraded storm sewers along the roadway.
- Added lighting and planters.
- Conducted a pedestrian safety audit.
- Examined the road's connectivity with parks, schools, and trails.



Figure 3: Former Colorado Governor Bill Ritter ties a ribbon during the dedication of the city of Monte Vista's SMSI. The ribbon tying, rather than cutting, symbolized the planning and funding partnerships among CDOT, DOLA, and the city. (Image courtesy of DOLA)



These joint investments met many of the goals Monte Vista developed with its partners at the goal-setting stage. To celebrate, the city held a ribbon-tying event to showcase how joint planning had improved the city's transportation project.

"The project helped to energize the idea of bringing the downtown back as the core of the community," said Forrest Neuerburg, Monte Vista city manager. "The more pedestrian-friendly environment has encouraged street fairs, pop-up art projects, and other fun events which help to bring the community together."

The City of Rifle was another pilot community to benefit from SMSI. The City of Rifle wanted to renew its downtown area and re-establish it as a successful central shopping, dining, and entertainment district. Downtown Rifle had suffered economically for years, and new development near US Route 6/Interstate 70 was not helping.

In 2010 Rifle received an FHWA Transportation Investment for Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant and a HUD Challenge grant to develop a transit-oriented development strategic plan to support infill redevelopment planning. The city combined Federal, State, local, and nonprofit resources to support the desired outcome in a variety of ways, including:

- Conducting a pedestrian safety audit.
- Drafting a bike plan.
- Completing market and housing studies.
- Initiating energy and sustainability planning.
- Conducting planning/preliminary design for public spaces and a historic arts venue.
- Initiating storm water planning to support infill.

"The partnerships helped us understand how to better utilize State and Federal programs, and how we can collaborate with agencies to implement projects," said Nathan Lindquist, City of Rifle planning director. "Having limited staff to devote to these efforts, the challenge for small communities like Rifle is often figuring out where to start, and what programs have the potential to help us. The communication channels established by the Main Street Program have been enormously beneficial in teaching us the lay of the land so that we can effectively pursue the best opportunities that are out there."

Following these investments, redevelopment has increased in Rifle, and continued investment is spurring more economic recovery for the downtown area. Monte Vista has also seen an increase in new investment and tourism.

"This project helped create a focal point for the economic revitalization of our community," said Neuerburg. "While we are still working towards our economic goals, the area improvements have made positive impacts that are helping to attract visitors and outside business interests to our community."

Both Rifle and Monte Vista profited from the momentum and enthusiasm created by the spotlight of being selected for this intensive investment of resources. The SMSI excited and motivated local partners to bolster their involvement, which planners say had the greatest impact in these communities' successes. The SMSI helped each city focus its partners and stakeholders on common desired outcomes and utilized myriad resources to achieve those outcomes through many different projects.



Prescribe-a-Bike Program Improves Public Health Equity and Transportation Access in Boston

Cassie Ryan, RN/MPH, Doctoral Candidate, Boston University School of Public Health
Kim Foltz, Boston Bikes

Clinicians are writing low-income patients prescriptions to use bike shares through a landmark new partnership between the City of Boston and Boston Medical Center (BMC). The “Prescribe-a-Bike” program is an innovative approach to achieving public health and transportation equity, facilitating access to bike share with the power of a “doctor’s orders.”

The program builds on Boston’s subsidized [Hubway](#) bicycle-share membership program, which has enrolled more than 1,800 low-income residents for a \$5 annual membership fee. Membership provides access to more than 1,000 bikes in the Hubway bike-share system. Subsidized participants do not pay usage fees for trips under 60 minutes (non-subsidized members accrue fees after 30 minutes), and they receive a free helmet from the City of Boston. Standard members are required to register using a credit card or bank account. Subsidized members can register without a bank account and can pay using cash or a pre-paid debit card.

The City of Boston and BMC each have a long history of supporting low-income residents, so the Prescribe-a-Bike program was an easy partnership to form. Since 2007, Boston Bikes (the city’s bicycle program) has been committed to biking equity. Boston Bikes’ suite of community bike programs reaches nearly 10,000 low-income residents annually with direct programming to increase bike use and improve safety. BMC, an urban, safety-net hospital, has a long-standing commitment to incorporate innovative non-medical services to reduce disparities and promote wellness.

Prescribe-a-Bike Membership Requirements:

- Must live in the City of Boston.
- Must meet low-income guidelines (either receive public assistance or be within 250 percent of the Federal poverty level).
- May be referred from any provider on a health-care team or hospital social service because this is not a legal prescription.
- Can sign up onsite (at BMC or at Boston City Hall) or by phone; staff members speak Spanish and phone interpreters can be arranged.
- Homeless patients without mailing addresses can arrange to receive the Hubway fob and helmet at the Boston Bikes office.
- 16-17 year olds may enroll with parental consent.

The primary goal of Prescribe-a-Bike is to increase physical activity as a preventive health measure among vulnerable populations. Low-income individuals face greater health risks and therefore have more to gain from incorporating physical activity into daily living. Nearly one in four low-income Boston residents is obese, which is almost double the rate for higher-income residents. BMC and the City of Boston believe Prescribe-a-Bike is an important tool to reverse this trend.

Prescribe-a-Bike also aims to address critical transportation gaps for low-income residents—populations that are less likely to own a car and that spend a disproportionate share of income on transportation. Though private bike ownership can help meet these needs, bike share is an especially attractive option because it dramatically lowers up-front costs and eliminates the need for bike maintenance and storage.

Despite obvious benefits, bike share has not been widely adopted by low-income communities at the national level. In cities around the country, including Boston, bike-share members tend to be wealthier and better educated than the general population. That may soon change.



The newly launched [Better Bike Share Partnership](#), which is establishing best practices for equitable bike-share systems, just awarded grants to seven cities across the country, including Boston.

Prescribe-a-Bike and the subsidized Hubway membership program are well on their way toward creating a more equitable bike-share system. Together, the programs are building a more diverse membership base for Hubway: 83 percent of subsidized members have household incomes under \$35,000, 53 percent self-identify as non-white, and 52 percent are female. Though Prescribe-a-Bike is still new, early reports suggest it is especially effective at reaching the most health vulnerable. More than 90 percent of Prescribe-a-Bike patients are non-white and two-thirds are obese.

Beyond tracking demographic information, the program is also collecting users' experiences through storytelling, hoping that getting members to talk about their experiences will inspire others like themselves to sign up. One such member is Juliette, who joined Hubway in 2014. An immigrant to the U.S., Juliette worked as an executive administrator before getting laid off due to health problems. For four years, Juliette never ventured downtown, because Boston's crowded transit system exacerbated her chronic depression and anxiety. Once she joined Hubway, Juliette's symptoms improved by biking, and she is again venturing outside her neighborhood.



Figure 4: Prescribe-a-Bike is collecting feedback from users to inspire them to share their experiences with others who could benefit from the program. (Image courtesy of the City of Boston)

Despite its successes, Prescribe-a-Bike is a work in progress. One major challenge is motivating primary-care providers who already face competing demands for limited time with patients to consider participating in the program. A survey showed that providers strongly support the program and its potential benefit for patients, but they are concerned about their patients' safety and the time needed for the referral. More than 25 percent of providers were unable to estimate their patients' ability or desire to bike. While most providers self-identified as bikers, almost half did not feel safe or comfortable biking within Boston. Only a handful had tried using a bike-share program.

The Prescribe-a-Bike planning team has learned many key lessons along the way. First, it is essential to find passionate and determined advocates within partner institutions. Prescribe-a-Bike was planned with active participation of BMC medical providers, the Boston Bikes staff from the City of Boston, and researchers at the Boston University School of Public Health. Second, organizers should focus on building providers' support, addressing their concerns upfront, and streamlining the referral process. Finally, patience is important—the program was conceptualized more than three years ago, but only launched last year.

Prescribe-a-Bike is a promising intervention that will take time to build. The City of Boston and BMC believe their investments will pay off through increases in physical activity and improvements to equitable access to biking among low-income communities.



New Report Highlights Positive Effects of Parklets in a Philadelphia Neighborhood

David Leyzerovsky, Project for Public Spaces, Program Associate

The positive effects parks create for users in both urban environments and suburbs are well-established in the research community. Parks promote physical activity, improve mental health, create a sense of community, and can even increase users' workplace productivity. Less has been said about parklets, despite their increasing popularity in cities across the country. A parklet is a temporary street installation that utilizes several street parking spaces to create a small park.

Little is known about the effects of these temporary street parks that provide seating and oftentimes vegetation. Support for parklets has been largely anecdotal until now. *The Case for Parklets: Measuring the Impact on Sidewalk Vitality and Neighborhood Businesses* provides quantitative evidence supporting implementation of parklets as cost-effective enhancements to streetscapes and overall quality of life.

The Case for Parklets, published by [University City District](#), a community development organization in the University City District neighborhood in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, established a set of key factors to demonstrate the success of parklets. These factors were selected to evaluate six parklets in the University City District, and specifically looked at user retention, the diversity of users, and the impact parklets have on adjacent businesses.

The report indicates that parklets attract many users, especially at peak hours when all available space is used along the street. The researchers also found that parklets attract local residents and passersby who are not necessarily patrons of local businesses. These people interacted with parklet users, creating further socialization on the street level, and enhancing the overall streetscape. Men and women appeared to use the space equally, which demonstrates that the areas were perceived as accessible, and safe.

With respect to design and placement, the report noted that parklets attracted more people if they were visible from inside businesses, had ample buffers from traffic, and were placed on low-traffic streets. Reported sales in local businesses increased by 20 percent, which indicates investing in a parklet can provide a good return on investment.

While this University City District report is the first attempt at measuring the impacts of parklets, other cities have deemed parklets a success by institutionalizing programs that support them. New York City is one such example of this success. The NYC DOT implements [Street Seats](#), a program that provides businesses and institutions with space to build parklets. In return, applicants must obtain the community's support, meet safety and design standards, and maintain the temporary installation. NYC DOT's program is popular, and demand for parklets is increasing.



Figure 5: *The University City District Report on parklets is perhaps the first comprehensive study on the effects of parklets on users, local businesses, and neighborhoods. (Image courtesy of University City District)*



Livability on the Landscape: Lessons for Transportation Officials from the Nation's Gateway Communities

Kendra Briechle, The Conservation Fund, Senior Training Associate, Conservation Leadership Network

A Federal Lands initiative recently helped four communities across the country strengthen their quality of life. The initiative, which focused on livability in America's "gateway communities," demonstrated the importance of partnerships for generating trust and goodwill within communities and for achieving compelling outcomes.

The [Federal Lands Livability Initiative](#) was established to improve the livability of gateway communities, which are places adjacent to public lands that attract visitors and residents looking for unique recreational and cultural experiences. The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit organization focused on ensuring that conservation works for America's communities, collaborated with the FHWA Federal Lands Highway Program to engage four pilot communities for the initiative. The purpose was to assess each community's current livability conditions, recommend changes, identify priorities, and lead on-the-ground action planning workshops to ensure each community had plans for achieving its goals.

The communities represent a wide range of geographic and socio-economic characteristics and feature different public land partners. All are unique places, and all engaged diverse partners, including community leaders, residents, transportation agencies, public land partners, business owners, and State officials. The selected communities and their primary Federal partners include:

- Grand Lake, Colorado and Rocky Mountain National Park, with support from the National Park Service (NPS).
- Calhoun Falls, South Carolina, and the Russell Lake and Dam Project, with support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- Sweet Home, Oregon, and the Willamette National Forest, with support from the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Small Changes Promise Big Results in Grand Lake, Colorado

Grand Lake, Colorado is a small community that is home to 471 year-round residents. The adjacent Rocky Mountain National Park, however, hosted more than 3 million visitors in 2012, many of whom arrived at the park via one of the 425,000 vehicles that passed through Grand Lake.

Through the Federal Lands Livability Initiative, Grand Lake decided that expanding its seasonal economy was a top priority. Grand Lake launched a local customer service training program, which is now open to professionals statewide. The training is attracting people to Grand Lake during the colder seasons, providing new income to local restaurants and services.

Grand Lake also committed to acquire the vacant Grand Lake Elementary School and convert it to an Environmental Education and Community Center. Plans for the new building are currently being developed with community and visitor needs in mind. A group attending the livability workshop emphasized the need for affordable housing and is developing potential solutions for year-round and seasonal affordable dwellings.

Grand Lake is pursuing a 2016 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant. The town wants to focus on critically needed road and bridge repairs along West Portal Road, which provides direct multimodal access to three Federal land trailheads. The town's inability to generate matching funds has shifted its focus to a more affordable project. Grand Lake will now redesign signage along Highway 34 within town limits and improve wayfinding for town and recreation assets.



- Saginaw, Michigan, and nearby rural townships, and the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, with support from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The initiative has highlighted the importance of building strong, collaborative relationships between partners to improve livability. Below are some of the lessons learned from the initiative—most of which pertain specifically to communities’ relationships with transportation agencies.

Readiness is a key to success. The process of improving livability requires willing partners. Communities and public land agencies identified common interests for moving forward and engaged others who were also champions of these interests. To start and sustain livability efforts, stakeholders must be willing and ready to contribute.

There is strength in building and sustaining partnerships. By working together, partners can help each other think more broadly about how to implement and sustain their livability goals. The livability assessments and action planning workshops underscored the importance of engaging regionally and sustaining the partnerships. Grand Lake hired a new town manager following the action planning workshop. Existing partners engaged the new manager in implementing ongoing livability efforts, including as part of a team pursuing a Federal Lands Access Program grant.

Partners need to decide what livability means and then prioritize local elements. Livability involves many aspects of a community, and each community in this initiative stressed unique livability components. They all prioritized the need to improve economic development. In the case of Sweet Home, the transportation agency partner helped other stakeholders understand how transportation investments can strengthen other livability outcomes. Sweet Home developed a bus transit system that is well-used by laborers, college students, and senior citizens, creating more equitable access throughout the city. Recently, the city obtained buses with bike trailers to pilot a weekend transit service that connects the city to summer recreation areas.

Under-resourced populations should be a focus of all partners. Livability projects should serve the needs of all residents and visitors in a community. Under-resourced populations can be difficult to reach. For example, 10 percent of Sweet Home's population relies on social services, and a sizable number of youth are homeless. In Calhoun Falls, high school kids lack bus transportation, so many rely on teachers and school administrators to transport them to and from school. Drug use, violence, poverty, and unemployment are concerns in Saginaw. Communities have a clear understanding of what their problem areas are, and transportation agencies can help provide some solutions that address these needs. By working together, community leaders and transportation planners can prioritize projects to benefit under-resourced populations.



Figure 6: Though a hub for summer tourists, Grand Lake has less than 500 full-time residents. The Federal Lands Livability Initiative helped the town find ways to expand its off-season economy. (Image courtesy of Federal Lands)



Figure 7: Ken Bronson prepares to load his bike onto the Linn County shuttle in Sweet Home, Oregon. (Image courtesy of The New Era)



Transportation planners can help improve livability by documenting infrastructure needs, improving access and mobility, increasing safety, revitalizing downtowns and neighborhoods, and investing in community facilities that cultivate opportunities for good jobs, housing, access to food and public services, and recreation and health. These efforts require strong and ongoing partnerships to instill trust and understanding that delivers powerful and lasting on-the-ground results.

Providence, Rhode Island Embarks on Collaborative Planning Process for Building a More Resilient Port

Dr. Austin Becker, University of Rhode Island

In Providence, Rhode Island, researchers from the University of Rhode Island (URI) are partnering with FHWA and State and local officials to develop new methods for assessing storm resilience and vulnerability of coastal infrastructure. Sea-level rise and higher storm surges, due to increasing storm intensity and frequency, threaten the sustainability of maritime transportation infrastructure in coastal areas. In Rhode Island, major storms impacting the State's maritime infrastructure damage the economy, the environment, and residents' quality of life. In the coming decades, tough decisions will need to be made about resilience investment measures, and a pilot project in the Port of Providence is exploring new ways to facilitate a dialogue around these challenging issues.



Figure 8: This computer-generated image depicts the placement of a new hurricane barrier design concept that would protect the Port of Providence from a 21-foot storm surge. (Image courtesy of the University of Rhode Island)

Shippers, port managers, insurers, tenants, environmental and community groups, and ultimately consumers of port cargo, all have a stake in building resiliency into Rhode Island's port systems. Through interviews and workshops, these stakeholders will be introduced to storm scenarios and strategies presented through computer-generated representations and new decision-support tools. The results of this project will inform the planning and policy process in Rhode Island.

During the first year of the two-year project, researchers will create new planning tools, visualizations of storms, and design concepts for building regional resilience to these types of natural hazards. The project will culminate in a

workshop for local stakeholders that will assess the stakeholder perceptions of vulnerability for the State's major maritime transportation infrastructure, as well as their recommendations for long-term risk-reduction strategies.

URI researchers working on this project are guided by a steering committee to assist with identifying stakeholders, developing research questions, and ensuring that outcomes are relevant to policymakers and stakeholders dependent on the success of the Port of Providence. The steering committee comprises members of local, State, and Federal organizations, including the Rhode Island DOT, the Port of Davisville, the Providence Planning Department, CommerceRI, the Coastal Resources Management Council, the URI Graduate School of Oceanography, the USACE, the Maritime Administration, FHWA, Rhode Island Statewide Planning, and the U.S. Coast Guard.



The team plans to expand the project to look at other critical waterfronts around the State. The maritime transportation community in Rhode Island includes import/export terminals, ferry and passenger terminals, commercial fishing infrastructure, and ship repair facilities. Ocean-related activities and industries represent about \$2 billion of Rhode Island's economy and support the quality of life that many Rhode Islanders enjoy. In 2010, the Port of Providence alone handled 3.1 million tons of cargo. ProvPort, which operates the Port of Providence, generated more than \$200 million in economic benefits for the region and over 2,400 jobs were attributed to port activities. Hurricanes pose a significant threat to these areas, along with the commercial and industrial uses, their various economic multipliers, and the citizens of the State who depend upon the activities taking place on the State's working waterfront.



Figure 9: Private, industrial, governmental, and environmental stakeholders listened to presentations at the August 2015 workshop. (Image courtesy of the University of Rhode Island)

New Report Reviews the Past Decade of Safe Routes to School Programming

Colleen Oliver, Safe Routes to School, Communications Manager

The [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) released [Creating Healthier Generations: A Look at 10 years of the Federal Safe Routes to School Program](#), which examines the accomplishments of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program over the past decade.

Since SRTS legislation was enacted in 2005, more than 17,400 schools serving kindergarten through eighth grade students in all 50 States and the District of Columbia have been a part of the Federal Safe Routes to School program. The program has demonstrated the safety and health benefits of active travel to nearly 7 million students nationwide.

Creating Healthier Generations highlights the program's rich data sets, broad reach, and positive outcomes. Featured Federally funded projects show the positive change the program has had on communities nationwide.

Data show that the program improved safety and increased the number of students walking and biking to school. In Miami-Dade County, Florida, for example, SRTS is part of a comprehensive program that reduced child pedestrian injuries by 63 percent. A SRTS program at Heatherwood Elementary School in Boulder, Colorado, dramatically increased walking and bicycling to school and introduced children with autism to tandem bikes. The report also describes the broader benefits of SRTS programs, such as increased connectivity within communities, reduced transportation costs, and enhanced community life.

This report shows how SRTS has achieved a larger purpose than outlined in its original legislation. Communities continue to find ways to include safe walking and bicycling infrastructure in transportation planning.



October Walk to School Day Helps Communities Nationwide Promote Safe Walking Routes

Colleen Oliver, Safe Routes to School, Communications Manager

On October 7, 2015, students, parents, teachers and community members nationwide will walk and bicycle to school in celebration of [International Walk to School Day](#). This annual event is part of an international effort in more than 40 countries to celebrate the many benefits of safely walking and bicycling to school and to raise awareness about the need for more walkable communities.

Walk to School Day began in 1997 with a single school. Since then, participation has grown every year, and a record-setting 4,700 events were registered through www.walkbiketoschool.org in 2014. Growing interest all over the world led to the creation of International Walk to School Month, which is now celebrated throughout the entire month of October.

Walk to School Day helps families across the country connect to important community goals, such as creating safer routes to school, building a sense of community, and inspiring families to use active transportation more often to commute to school. Walk to School Day events have led communities to launch long-term walking and bicycling programs, invest in new sidewalks and pathways, and develop needed policy changes at schools and in communities.

Walk to School Day [event registration](#) is free and open to individuals and organizations holding an event any day in October in the United States. Events that register on the Walk to School website are displayed on an interactive U.S. map, where communities, media, and others [can identify schools that are walking](#).

FHWA Texas Division Hosts Sustainable Communities Interagency Meeting and Livability Workshop

Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration Texas Division, Environmental Coordinator-Urban Transportation Planner

Region 6 Partnership for Sustainable Communities Interagency Meeting—Belton, Texas

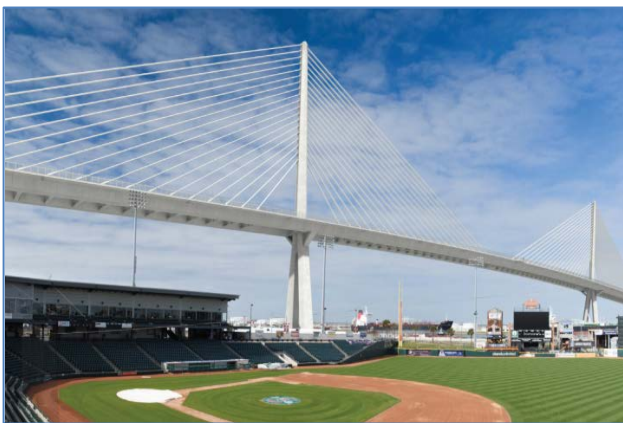


Figure 10: Rendering of the new sustainable Harbor Bridge Replacement in Corpus Christi, Texas. (Image courtesy of TxDOT)

On June 24, 2015, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Texas Division hosted an interagency meeting at the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) in Belton, Texas, in conjunction with the Region 6 staff from the [Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#) (PSC). The purpose of this interagency meeting was to engage Federal, State, and local metropolitan planning organization (MPO) agencies involved in livability and sustainability programs and projects within Texas and the surrounding Region 6 areas.

Cheryl Maxwell, interim director of the Killeen-Temple MPO, provided an overview of completed and ongoing livability and sustainability efforts in her region. Many of the transportation enhancement-funded projects involved bicycle and pedestrian improvements, context-sensitive design, native landscaping, and storm-water runoff drainage using green infrastructure



techniques. Kirk Fauver, Environmental and Transportation Planning Coordinator at the FHWA Texas Division, gave a brief overview of the purpose and availability of the [INVEST web-based sustainability tool](#), which was developed by FHWA's Office of Natural Environment.

Frank Holzmann, P.E., of TxDOT's Strategic Projects Division, along with Erin Grushon of HNTB Corporation, gave a presentation on how the INVEST sustainability tool was applied as part of project development activities and the conditional Design-Build contract award associated with the proposed \$855 million Harbor Bridge Replacement Project in Corpus Christi, Texas. The TxDOT Strategic Projects Division used the INVEST tool to accomplish the following: identify better life-cycle design cost savings and considerations; employ innovative green infrastructure materials; support modern context-sensitive design; ensure cost-effective techniques and sustainable building strategies; and account for long-term maintenance and operations. Ultimately, TxDOT used INVEST to improve the overall final project design concept for the 100-year sustainable cable-stayed replacement bridge.



Figure 11: TRB Transportation for Sustainability conference participants discussed state-of-the-art sustainability solutions for cities around the world. (Image courtesy of Texas A&M)

Dr. Joe Zietsman, of Texas A&M University gave a presentation on outcomes of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Conference "[Transportation for Sustainability—An International Conference](#)" in Washington, DC, in May 2015. The conference showcased state-of-the-art solutions that can be applied in the United States and other countries; addressed sustainability and international relations that arise when transportation modes cross country borders; and highlighted issues of global sustainability related to transportation that may be hard to effectively address because of a lack of knowledge and research capacity. The conference also included technical discussions on sustainable practices and interactive sustainability problem-solving, and featured a plenary session that included presentations from senior-level policymakers, corporate executives, and leading subject matter experts. Dr. Zietsman currently serves as the chair of the Transportation and Sustainability Committee of TRB (ADD40).

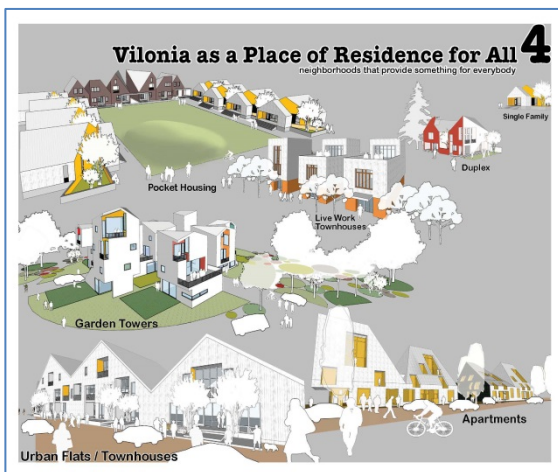


Figure 12: Vilonia, Arkansas made plans to rebuild the city with a greater proportion of mixed-use, high-density land uses. (Image courtesy of FEMA Region 6)

Charlie Cook of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 6 gave a presentation on the natural disaster remediation efforts associated with the storm-ravaged town of Vilonia, Arkansas. This small community was impacted by a combination of tornadoes, floods, and severe thunderstorms on April 27, 2014. As a result, Vilonia suffered 12 fatalities, 91 injuries, and 71 percent of local businesses were impacted (many were completely destroyed).

Various Federal, State, and local emergency disaster teams assessed the damage to residential and commercial properties and provided disaster-relief funding, loans, and recovery assistance to affected citizens. FEMA, assisted by numerous State and local partners and community members, redeveloped Vilonia's main street after the



storms.

“Rebuild Vilonia” resulted from a collaborative effort that included coordinated land-use design, city planning, rezoning, reconstruction, and rebuilding projects. The combined work of Federal, State, and university partners, along with the local interagency task force team, encouraged smart growth and land-use development as part of the rebuilding process. Higher density development, including a combination of mixed-use residential and commercial zoning (form-based code) is being planned for the city. The task force assisted in redeveloping the downtown Main Street portion of Vilonia. Based on community input and participation, it will also include a newly designed town square. These efforts will improve the quality of life in Vilonia and encourage additional vital economic growth opportunities for current and future generations.

Livability Workshop—Laredo, Texas

On August 20, 2015, the FHWA Texas Division, in conjunction with the FHWA Resource Center, hosted a one-day Livability Workshop at the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Laredo District office. Thirty-five representatives of TxDOT, EPA Region 6, HUD Region 6, Laredo MPO, Department of Labor (DOL), TxDOT Laredo District, and the Federal Transit Administration Region 6 attended the event.

Participants also included private businesses, university representatives, and transportation consultants. Presentations from EPA, HUD, DOL, and FTA, focused on the PSC and intergovernmental efforts to better align livability goals with the transportation, housing, and environmental needs of communities in the Laredo region. The course garnered several hours of continuing maintenance credits for certified planners affiliated with the American Institute for Community Planners through the American Planning Association.



Figure 13: Participants at the August FHWA Texas Division Livability Workshop learned how to better align transportation, housing, and environmental goals to meet community needs. (Image courtesy of FHWA Texas Division)



Announcements/New Resources

- [“Changing the Landscape of Livability,”](#) an article published in the July/August 2015 issue of *Public Roads*, discusses the outcomes of Federal policies and investments made by the multiagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities since 2009.
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the University of North Carolina (UNC) published [“Delivering Safe, Comfortable, and Connected Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks: A Review of International Practices,”](#) a report examining noteworthy and innovative international designs and treatments that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- FHWA published [“Boost Safety by Going on a Road Diet,”](#) in the September/October 2015 issue of *The Innovator*. The article describes how communities can increase safety and mobility on streets using cost-effective road diet.
- FHWA revised its [list of potential eligibility for pedestrian and bicycle projects](#) under FHWA and Federal transit programs.
- The United States Surgeon General announced the [“Step It Up!”](#) call to action to promote walking and walkable communities. The call to action recognizes the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities, and describes strategies for improving planning and implementation that encourages more walking.
- Information from a September TRB webinar titled “Multimodality in Major Cities: Urban Success Stories” is now available, including slides that discuss [stakeholder engagement strategies](#) for successful urban projects.

