

## Strategic Objective 4.1—Enhance Quality of Life

*Expand convenient, safe, and affordable transportation choices for all users by directing Federal investments in infrastructure toward projects that more efficiently meet transportation, land use, goods movement, and economic development goals developed through integrated planning approaches.*

### PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

U.S. transportation investments over the last 50 years have often been poorly coordinated with other investments such as housing and commercial development. These development patterns have provided many American families at a range of income levels with choices in where they can live, and in many cases the ability to own a single-family home. However, the reliance on car-dependent, dispersed development is not without costs. According to the Transportation Research Board, the average American between the ages of 25 and 54 drives over 12,700 miles per year; and the average American household spends 19 percent of its annual income to buy, maintain, and operate personal automobiles. Many communities lack alternatives to auto travel. Fewer than 5 percent of households are located within 0.5 mile of rail transit and only 53 percent of Americans have access to any form of public transportation service. A reliable, integrated, and accessible transportation network that enhances choices for transportation users will provide access to employment opportunities and other destinations, and promote positive effects on the surrounding community.

**DOT Operating Administrations:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Office of the Secretary (OST).

# STRATEGIC GOAL 4: QUALITY OF LIFE IN COMMUNITIES

## Strategic Objective 4.1: Enhance Quality of Life


### Pedestrian and Bicycle Access (FHWA)

#### Overview

DOT will encourage the development or significant improvement of multimodal transportation networks with more convenient and affordable choices particularly for people with disabilities, as well as greater use of non-motorized transportation modes such as bicycling and walking. In 2010, DOT issued a policy statement on *Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations* that signaled an increased commitment to support safe and convenient transportation choices, including walking and bicycling.

FHWA released a series of reports that demonstrate how transportation projects can foster livability in communities of varying sizes including in rural areas. These efforts build upon the results of the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP), which demonstrated that making investments in pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure has numerous community benefits. In May 2014, FHWA reported the continued growth in walking and bicycling in four pilot communities and the associated improvements in access and mobility, safety and public health, and the environment and energy. In September 2015, FHWA and the National Center for Safe Routes to School released a 10-year report that highlighted the success of the program in the areas of walking and bicycling and how projects have impacted communities throughout the U.S.

#### PERFORMANCE REPORT

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access (FHWA)								
Goal Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 Target	2015 Actual	Performance
Number of created and/or significantly improved pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks. <i>New measure</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25	86	Met 

#### Progress Update

FHWA led bicycling and pedestrian safety assessments in 36 States in support of the Department's Safer People Safer Streets Initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to improve the safety of the growing number of Americans who are using nonmotorized means of transportation to travel to and from work, to reach public transportation, and to reach other important destinations.

More than one-half of the States currently have policies and plans that support improved transportation choices. FHWA provides funding support for reports, technical assistance, and training related to walking, wheeling, and bicycling. During FY 2015, FHWA continued to share information about the importance of considering transportation choices and to monitor the States

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for the adoption of policies that encourage and support walking and bicycling. FHWA updated its [Guidance: Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of Federal Transportation Legislation](#) in September 2015. The purpose of this guidance is to describe Federal legislative and policy direction related to safety and accommodation for bicycling and walking.

FHWA also released updated guidance for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in a Question and Answer format to address implementation issues identified as States and communities moved forward with eligible projects. In addition to providing accessible transportation choices, TAP projects are vital to improving the safety of all roadway users including bicyclists and pedestrians. Projects funded through the TAP enjoy broad popularity with communities across the country, because small projects at the community level that would not otherwise be funded are eligible. The FAST Act replaced the TAP with the STP Set-Aside, but the project eligibilities and program processes remain the same.

To build on this progress, FHWA increased efforts to promote best practices related to quality of life in communities, multimodal transportation, and collaboration with nontraditional partners. In 2013, FHWA issued a memorandum expressing support for taking a flexible approach to bicycle and pedestrian facility design. The memo also supported the use of the AASHTO, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) resources to plan and design safe and convenient facilities and connected networks for pedestrians and bicyclists. FHWA guidance included examples that demonstrated appropriate design flexibility as follow-up to the memorandum. FHWA issued a set of Questions and Answers to complement the design flexibility guidance that supports the use of the Urban Street Design Guide in the planning and design process. FHWA released the Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding, Design and Environmental Review document to address common misconceptions about the use of Federal funding, street design, and the Environmental Review process as it pertains to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

FHWA is advancing research to enhance safety and accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. FHWA completed several projects including:

- A Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide that includes a detailed safety analysis and offers planning considerations and a flexible menu of design recommendations for this innovative bicycle facility type;
- A Design Resource Index that identifies the specific location of information in key national design manuals for various pedestrian and bicycle design treatments;
- A Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning Handbook that addresses statewide planning from plan inception and scoping to engaging stakeholders and the general public; developing goals, objectives and strategies; collecting and analyzing data; linking to the larger statewide transportation planning process; and implementation;
- A review of international best practices on Delivering Safe, Comfortable, and Connected Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks; and
- A report entitled Case Studies in Delivering Safe, Comfortable, and Connected Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks that focuses on the documentation and promotion of pedestrian and bicycle networks, which are interconnected pedestrian and/or bicycle

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transportation facilities that allow people of all ages and abilities to safely and conveniently get where they want to go.

FHWA added to information provided to stakeholders and the public about fostering quality of life in communities through various education and outreach efforts including: the Fostering Livable Communities newsletter, the Human Environment Digest, additional case studies, and new resources for rural communities. FHWA also hosted webinars with practitioners to discuss: how Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) and Streets as Places reconnect transportation agencies with their customers and their mission, while creating great communities. In addition, these webinars discussed the origin, evolution, and application of level of service (LOS) and the need for practitioners to choose LOS goals that consider all road users, supports livable communities, and help achieve CSS.

### Information Gaps

As noted in the FHWA report, [\*Evaluating the Economic Benefits of Nonmotorized Transportation\*](#), the variety of potential economic benefits of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and programming investments may include: commute cost savings for bicyclists and pedestrians; direct benefits to bicycle and tourism-related businesses; indirect economic benefits due to changing consumer behavior; and individual and societal cost savings associated with health and environmental benefits. There are only limited data available for this type of analysis however. Understanding the economic benefits from non-motorized transportation projects will become increasingly important as communities decide how to allocate limited transportation resources.

FHWA is undertaking research on a range of topics including pedestrian and bicycle safety, performance measures, design flexibility, network development, international best practices, and TAP performance evaluation. FHWA is also working on a *Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation* that will identify critical gaps, prioritize near term investments, and establish a national framework for issues such as data collection and management, network implementation and documentation, research, training, and national design guidance. FHWA is conducting a bicycle and pedestrian count technology pilot, updating pedestrian and bicycle elements of the Traffic Monitoring Analysis System, and developing a Nonmotorized Travel Analysis Toolkit. The Agency is also developing a pedestrian and bicycle safety reference tool, researching noteworthy local policies that support safe and complete pedestrian and bicycle networks, and developing a handbook for MPO pedestrian and bicycle planning.

### PERFORMANCE PLAN

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access (FHWA)			
Goal	Indicator	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target
Increase the number of created and/or significantly improved pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks in communities (i.e., local, regional, and State) that provide functional	Number of States and MPOs taking programmatic steps to correct gaps in connectivity and accessibility (revised from	15	20

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Goal	Indicator	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target
connections and enhance transportation choice to 65 by FY 2018.	FY 2015.)		

#### Key Strategies

FHWA performance measures and indicators are now used to track progress in the development of seamless walking and bicycling networks. FHWA will work with partners and stakeholders, including communities, States, and others, to identify indicators of performance appropriate to the local context, while also providing information on available data, collection methods and analysis techniques. In addition, FHWA will conduct research to support improved bicycle and pedestrian design, with a focus on comfortable, convenient, and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities and intersections that meet the needs of all users.

Hundreds of communities and many States across the United States have established Complete Streets policies. DOT will continue to encourage policies that improve transportation choice so that they are increasingly mainstreamed. Moving forward, the focus will be on measuring the results of these policies. DOT's new measure focuses on tracking the successful implementation of connected pedestrian and bicycle networks (i.e. the physical infrastructure on which people walk and bike). Tracking the creation of pedestrian and bicycle networks is the next logical step in tracking the success of the policies and these networks will, over time, directly improve transportation choice in communities throughout the United States.

#### Next Steps

States will use Federal-aid funds to support projects that create safe and affordable transportation choices in communities across the country. FHWA will continue to develop additional information and tools, such as TAP performance management guidebook, for States and other agencies to use as they implement their competitive project selection processes.

FHWA is undertaking an aggressive research agenda on a range of topics including pedestrian and bicycle safety, performance measures, design flexibility, network development, international best practices, and TAP performance evaluation. FHWA continue to address and implement elements of the *Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation* that will identify critical gaps, prioritize near term investments, and establish a national framework for issues such as data collection and management, network implementation and documentation, research, training, and national design guidance.

FHWA's research initiatives demonstrate our commitment to providing leadership, guidance, tools, and decision support resources to improve safety and accelerate the delivery of connected pedestrian and bicycle networks. To further leverage our research efforts, FHWA will continue to support a Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center to provide technical resources, online tools, and training opportunities.

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### Goal Leaders

Gloria Shepherd, Associate Administrator for Planning, Environment, and Realty, Federal Highway Administration

### Integrated Planning (FHWA)

#### Overview

Building quality of life in communities involves a holistic approach. FHWA and other modal administrations in the Department are working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The Partnership coordinates Federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure policies and investments.

FHWA sponsors planning and project development approaches like Context Sensitive Solutions and activities that promote public involvement and environmental justice. These activities help enable people to live closer to jobs, save time and money for households, reduce pollution, participate in community growth and change, and benefit from transportation system improvements. Projects and activities, such as the HUD-DOT-EPA Location Affordability Portal, build on the Partnership's principles and include investments that increase the number of new and/or significantly improved pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks in communities.

Nearly one-third of bike trips are taken by people who make less than \$30,000 a year. Bicycling is an important option for transportation and FHWA's efforts are directed at helping to make sure that there are safe and efficient routes for all Americans, regardless of what mode they choose.

#### Key Strategies

FHWA has developed numerous tools, as well as provided training and capacity building for livability. Key activities and products are described below:

- PlaceFit, a tool that provides access to a variety of existing websites based on user-identified livability characteristics that may appeal to their locational and lifestyle choices;
- Community Vision Metrics, a tool that provides quality of life performance indicators. goals.
- Case studies covering a broad range of policy areas such as expanding transportation choices and developing integrated multimodal networks; promoting equitable, affordable housing; enhancing economic competitiveness; coordinating and leveraging Federal policies and investments; and enhancing the unique characteristics of communities;
- Fact sheets to address the relationship of transportation to safety, land use, housing costs, system management and operations, development and the environment, economic development, freight, rural communities, and the role of State DOTs;

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- Weekly Human Environment Digest that provides the latest information from a variety of Federal and non-Federal sources that addresses transportation and its relationship to the human environment;
- Newsletters that provide real world examples of the relationship between transportation and community, such as providing access to good jobs and affordable housing, quality schools, and safer streets and roads; and provide access to effective practices and resources for practitioners and the public;
- Outreach to improve the capacity of States and communities to address quality of life in communities and transportation in the development of plans, programs and projects; and
- FHWA's Livable Communities Discussion Board, an online forum for practitioners to share information, and engage in questions and ideas on livability,

### Next Steps

FHWA Research, Training, and Education, or RT&E, will address quality of life in all aspects of transportation. Key activities and products include:

- Case studies showcasing innovative approaches to improving community quality of life through transportation; and webinars to share and promote examples quality of life in transportation planning;
- Quarterly newsletters that 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; and
- FHWA's Livable Communities Discussion Board, an online forum for practitioners to share information, and engage in questions and ideas on livability.

Quality of life is important in rural America as well. Many communities outside national parks, refuges, and forests are close enough to urban areas to facilitate the use of transit, vanpools, and bicycles to access Federal lands. Greater use of alternative transportation options in and outside Federal lands helps reduce emissions, eases congestion at the gate, and preserves the environment for future generations. The Tribal Transportation Program supports rural livability in Tribal communities by providing better access to housing, emergency services, schools, stores, places of employment, and medical services. Access to these basic services will enhance the quality of life on Tribal lands.

### Goal Leaders

Gloria Shepherd, Associate Administrator for Planning, Environment, and Realty, Federal Highway Administration

Timothy Hess, Associate Administrator for Federal Lands Highway, Federal Highway Administration



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### Strategic Objective 4.1: Enhance Quality of Life

#### Increasing Passenger Rail Ridership (FRA)


##### Overview

High-performance passenger rail is uniquely well-suited to addressing interconnected transportation challenges facing the United States. Highway and aviation congestion cost the U.S. economy \$121 billion in 2011 in lost time, productivity, and fuel, from an estimated \$24 billion impact in 1982.<sup>1</sup> The United States' population is projected to grow by 95 million residents from 2015 to 2050, exacerbating congestion and stressing our infrastructure. Reliance on imported oil for American transportation (now 33 percent of consumption, the lowest level since 1985) negatively influences national and economic security and environmental quality. Moreover, 33 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are from the transportation sector, with total 2011 emissions 8.4 percent higher than in 1990.<sup>2</sup>

Rail transportation is also well suited to help meet the mobility needs and choices of the growing and aging U.S. population. The number of Americans 65 years old and older is expected to double by 2040, to more than 80 million people (over 20 percent of expected the U.S. population). Only 15 percent of Americans older than age 65 drive regularly, with 6 percent of those older than age 75 driving regularly. Younger generations of Americans are also choosing to drive both less often and for shorter distances than previous generations.

As highway and airport congestion increases, rail service can provide a more reliable and efficient travel options for many markets. Rail provides high capacity with a relatively limited geographic footprint.

#### PERFORMANCE REPORT

Increasing Passenger Rail (FRA)								
Goal Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 Target	2015 Actual	Performance
Number of intercity passenger rail miles traveled, in billions of miles	5.90	6.33	6.80	6.80	6.65	6.90	N/A	Met 

##### Progress Update

Americans are choosing rail in record numbers—Demand for passenger rail has surged across the United States. Ridership levels set new records in 10 of the past 11 years. In FY 2014, Amtrak carried almost 31 million passengers, down slightly from 2013. Poor reliability—a result of increased freight traffic and construction—contributed to lower ridership this year compared with previous years and projections. As recently funded service improvements take effect—new

<sup>1</sup> Texas Transportation Institute, *2012 Urban Mobility Report*, [tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility-report-2012.pdf](http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility-report-2012.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2014 Climate Action Report*, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/214959.pdf>.



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trains, faster trip times, reduced delays—Amtrak ridership will likely continue rising. FRA has several responsibilities with regard to Amtrak, including:

- Administering Federal operating subsidies and capital and debt grants and ensuring compliance with grant agreement provisions.
- Providing technical assistance and standards for such matters as Amtrak capital planning and equipment standardization.
- Overseeing and enforcing Amtrak compliance with Federal rail safety regulations and accessibility requirements.

### PERFORMANCE PLAN

Increasing Passenger Rail (FRA)				
Goal	Indicator	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	
Increase intercity passenger rail ridership to at least 7.5 billion miles traveled by the end of FY 2018.	Intercity passenger rail miles traveled (in billions.)	7.05	7.20	

### Key Strategies

FRA makes strategic investments that reflect the needs of multiple stakeholders—passenger and freight rail operators, the traveling public and shippers, governments, and private interests. This wide range of projects is based on specific market needs and rigorous analysis of costs and benefits. Investments in both new and improved passenger rail services with varying frequencies and speeds provide financial assistance to eliminate rail chokepoints, add freight capacity, and conduct comprehensive planning.

Most segments of the Northeast Corridor were built over a century ago. Maintaining and modernizing these assets will reduce long-term costs and result in safer, more reliable, and more efficient rail transportation. FRA will invest to reduce the backlog of rail maintenance needs, replace obsolete equipment, upgrade stations to comply with *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, or ADA, requirements, and continue vital long-distance passenger services.

Specific activities FRA will pursue, subject to the availability of funds include:

- Soliciting applications and awarding funding.
- Providing training and technical assistance to States and other stakeholders to aid in the successful development and implementation of high-speed and intercity passenger rail proposals.
- Developing tools for use in regional route planning and national- and corridor-level analyses of public benefits and costs of high-performance rail.

### Goal Leaders

Paul Nissenbaum, Associate Administrator, Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration

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### Strategic Objective 4.1: Enhance Quality of Life

#### Strategic Objective 4.2—Expand Access and Choice

*Expand convenient, safe, and affordable transportation choices for all by emphasizing greater public engagement, fairness, equity, and accessibility in transportation investment plans, policy guidance, and programs.*

### PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (ADA) prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all aspects of life, and applies to all entities, i.e., public or private regardless of funding source. Title II of the ADA applies to the entire operations of all stations in transit systems, airports facilities, intercity rail transportation system, and roadway facilities including sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks. While many entities have developed ADA transition plans, implementation has been slowed by competing priorities for limited funds. DOT will provide guidance and assistance, to encourage ADA compliance in existing facilities. Also, the Department will integrate environmental justice principles into all Department planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formulation.

In the 1950s, President Eisenhower expressed a vision for a modern highway system that would match the needs of our “growing population, our expanding economy, and our national security.” Planners and builders designed a national network that would move cars and trucks as efficiently as possible from one point to another. One devastating outcome of this approach was a decision made to route highways directly through the urban core of cities. These highways often went where housing values were lowest and where public resistance would be least problematic. As eminent domain powered the system into existence, many families and individuals were displaced and entire neighborhoods – often well-established low income and minority communities previously targeted for urban renewal efforts – were razed. Anti-discriminatory planning regulations were passed starting in the 1960s, but by then most of the damage had already been done. A national effort is needed to undo this legacy of dividing neighborhoods through highway building that even today forms a barrier to upward mobility and neighborhood revitalization efforts because cities are divide

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