



September 5, 2014

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20950

Docket Name: Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Docket Number: FHWA-2013-0037; FHWA RIN 2125-AF52; FTA RIN 2132-AB10

The undersigned organizations write to express our concern that the proposed Transportation Planning rule does not include public health among the key issues that state and regional planners must consider. Our transportation system has tremendous impacts on public health outcomes. Often neglected in transportation planning are the implications of engineering physical activity out of daily routines by making it more difficult to walk or bicycle to get to work, school, shops and other destinations. Providing safe and convenient active transportation networks would help to address chronic diseases and premature deaths associated with physical inactivity, which could save billions of taxpayer dollars spent on health care.

In the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Congress directed that both the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan planning processes shall consider projects and strategies that will increase the safety and security of non-motorized users, and ‘protect and enhance...quality of life.’ Health is fundamental to quality of life and the proposed rule misses the opportunity to innovate by making public health a key performance area.

Our groups strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to:

1. Include performance measures relating to the impact of transportation infrastructure on public health, especially physical activity. Performance measures should include miles and connectivity of active transportation facilities, percentage of users who report commuting by foot or bike at least once a week for even a part of their trip, the percentage of trips of varying lengths that are traveled on foot or by bike, and the percentage of transit trips accessed via active transportation.
2. Enable planners to better measure progress and facilitate healthier outcomes by requiring state, metropolitan and regional transportation planning organizations to collect and aggregate data relating to active transportation infrastructure and its use.
3. Specifically state that programmatic mitigation plans may include an active transportation plan. Many communities have enacted bicycle and pedestrian plans, in part, as a way to reduce carbon emissions by increasing walking and bicycling rates.
4. Explicitly encourage consideration of innovative finance techniques in the context of active transportation in both the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The proposed rule should encourage state, regional and metropolitan area planners to consider innovative finance techniques, such as tax increment financing, as a way to leverage public funding to further the impact of revenue dedicated to active transportation.

Thank you for considering our comments to require the inclusion of public health considerations in transportation planning and to improve the provisions relating to active transportation into the proposed rule.

Sincerely,

The following 21 national organizations:

Alliance for Biking & Walking

America Walks

American College of Sports Medicine

American Planning Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Landscape Architects

American Trails

ChangeLab Solutions

Directors of Health Promotion and Education

International Mountain Bicycling Association

League of American Bicyclists

LOCUS

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Center for Freight & Infrastructure Research & Education, University Of Wisconsin

National Interscholastic Cycling Association

National Recreation and Park Association

Partnership for Prevention

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

The Partnership for Active Transportation

Trust for America's Health

And the following 117 state and local organizations:

Active Transportation Alternatives

Alaska Public Health Association

Arkansas Spa Pacers

Baptist Health South Florida

Baton Rouge Unitarian Church

Berkeley Community Gardening Collaboration

Bicycle Coalition of Maine

Bicycle Indiana, Inc.

Bike & Pedestrian Alliance of Clinton

Bike Walk Montana

Bike/Walk Alliance -Wichita

BikeLid LLC

Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire

Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire

Bridges to Wellness

California Coastal Conservancy

Center for Community Health

Center on Education and Lifelong Learning
City of Richmond Planning Division
Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists
Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail
Conservation Legacy
Coopers Ferry Partnership
Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
Delaware Public Health Association
Discover Howard County Trails
Doylestown Bike and Hike Committee
Ecology Action
Eugene, Oregon Bikers
Feet First
Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency
Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation
ForeverGreen Trails
Friend of Harford
Friends of El Dorado Trails
Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Maine
Friends of Weiser River Trail
Getting to 2100
Green3
Hawaii Public Health Association
Health by Design
Hoosier Rails to Trails Council
Hot Springs Friends of the Parks
Hurley Cyclers
Illinois Public Health Association
Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit
Inland Northwest Trails Coalition
Iowa Public Health Association
Katy King Government Relations and Public Affairs
Keep Vincennes Rolling
Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail
Leverage Points Consulting, LLC
Lewis County Community Trails
Madison Area Bus Advocates
Maricopa Trail + Park Foundation
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Massbike
McCloud Local First Network
Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department
Minnesota Public Health Association
Missouri Bicycle & Pedestrian Federation
Missouri Valley Group Sierra Club
Moda Health

Mount Shasta Recreation & Park District
Napa Valley Vine Trail
New Hampshire Public Health Association
New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition
New Jersey Public Health Association
New Mexico Public Health Association
New York State Public Health Association
North Florida Bike Club
Ohio Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Association
Outlier Energy
Palm Beach Country School District
Parks & Trails New York
Partners for a Healthy Nevada
PEDS
Polk County Public Health
Providence Community Housing
Reach Healthy Communities
Redwood Community Action Agency
Regional Economics Action Links North East Ohio (REALNEO)
Rivers & Mountains Conservancy, LA & San Gabriel
Riverside County Department of Public Health
Roanoke Parks and Recreation
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
Schuylkill River Development Corporation
Skagit Healthy Communities
Southern California Public Health Association
St. John's Safe Environment Ministry
Sunflower Rail-Trail Conservancy
Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway
The Greenway Collaborative, Inc
The Watershed Project
Trails for Richmond Action Committee
Transport New Hampshire
U of R Medical Center
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
Upstream Public Health
Urban Health Partnerships, Inc.
Utah Public Health Association
Vermont Energy Investment Corporation
Vermont Public Health Association
Virginia Bicycling Federation
Virginia Tech
Walk Sitka
Walk!Bike!Brockport!

Walk2Connect

WalkBoston

Washington Bikes

Washington County Council of Governments

West Creek Conservancy

Wisconsin Public Health Association

Worcester Division of Public Health

York Country Day School