



Livability & Sustainability Efforts Within the State of Texas

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Concepts of Livability

- A “livable” community has been defined as one in which people have multiple, convenient transportation and housing options as well as destinations easily accessible to people traveling in and out of cars.
- Through workshops, trainings, and dialogue on the concept of livable communities, the DOT has determined that the approach to livability is not “a one size fits all” concept.
- Livability is a concept that will mean different things to different communities, and DOT acknowledges that the needs of rural and urban communities are not necessarily the same.

Concepts of Livability

Livability involves:

- Providing more transportation choices,
- Valuing unique characteristics of communities,
- Improving the links between public transit and communities,
- Gaining better access to affordable housing,
- Lowering transportation costs,
- Enhance the economic and social well-being of Americans,
- Providing easy access to employment opportunities and other destinations, while protecting the environment in communities.

FHWA's Role

- FHWA supports building livable communities through transportation related projects and project activities such as Context Sensitive Solutions, Public Involvement, and funding programs such as Transportation Enhancements, CMAQ, and Safe Routes to School.
- We aid the planning and development of projects that may have:
 - Multi-modal, multi-faceted dimensions
 - Non-Traditional partners/sponsors
 - Inter-disciplinary elements
 - Selection and criterion outside of the regular process

Livability Workshops in State of Texas

- Within the State of Texas, the FHWA Texas Division took a lead role in establishing a one-day workshop on Livability and Sustainability in conjunction with EPA, HUD, and the FTA Region 6 offices.
- On March 23, 2010 over 160 participants including MPOs, TxDOT, Texas A&M (TTI), cities, counties, and regional transit authorities met together to discuss livability and sustainability goals and objectives.
- The outcome of this one-day workshop provided the participants with a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of EPA, HUD, and the DOT Region 6 as part of the Sustainable Communities Partnership Initiative.

Livability Workshops in State of Texas

- On July 14, 2011 the FHWA Texas Division again supported a free one-day livability & sustainability workshop in Austin, Texas at the City Hall.
- Over 170 participants attended representing MPOs, TxDOT, Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), U.S. EPA, HUD, and FTA Region 6 Offices.
- The outcome of this one-day workshop resulted in an Action Plan developed to focus on several areas of livability including integrating TOD, strengthening federal partnerships, and improving land-use and transportation linkages.

Livability Efforts Underway

- In FY 2010 the FHWA Texas Division also performed a livability survey that included 25 State of Texas MPOs and TxDOT to find out how livability is being incorporated within their transportation planning and programming processes.
- All 25 MPOs and TxDOT responded to this livability survey, which concluded that all MPOs and TxDOT were in various stages of incorporating livability goals in their transportation planning process.

TxDOT Livability Efforts

- The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has focused on increasing transportation choices through high speed intercity rail studies, transit, and incorporating bicycle/pedestrian projects into highway projects where it is feasible.
- The Texas Transportation Commission has selected 471 projects under the Safe Routes to School Program over three program calls totaling approximately \$83 M with seven percent of all K-8 grade schools participating.
- The TxDOT has also recently updated its design guidance manual to account for the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS/CSD) into its highway design process.

TxDOT Livability Efforts

- In addition, the Texas Transportation Commission has funded 59 percent of its transportation enhancement (TE) program for bicycle/pedestrian improvements over the past several years under TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU Highway Acts.
- Transportation enhancements have been funded by the Texas Transportation Commission to fund alternative forms of transportation including non-traditional highway projects.
- Consideration of livability is indirectly part of TxDOT's project prioritization process since livability aspects (including safety, intermodal improvements, mitigation to reduce emissions and improved efficiency, and improved mobility via congestion relief) are incorporated within TxDOT's planning and project development processes.



TxDOT Livability Efforts

- The TxDOT Statewide Long-range Transportation Plan (adopted in November 2010 by the Texas Transportation Commission) includes three strategies related to livability:
 - Maximize available resources by refining the current project selection process to investigate comprehensive multimodal options and increasing investment in technology;
 - Manage demand by encouraging shifts to modal departure times, routes and considering capital investments that support modal shifts during peak hours, and coordination with locals to develop land use plans that support sustainable transportation systems; and
 - Leveraging partnerships to meet growing demands.

PEW Center Report (May 2011)

Texas is one of 13 states leading the way in having essential tools- goals, performance measures and data- needed to help decision-makers choose more cost-effective transportation funding and policy options...



Measuring Transportation Investments: The Road to Results

Texas is one of 13 states leading the way in having the essential tools—goals, performance measures and data—needed to help decision makers choose more cost-effective transportation funding and policy options.

The state understands the importance of data in assessing the performance of its transportation system toward key policy goals, including safety, mobility, access and jobs and commerce. Its 2011-2015 strategic plan emphasizes, for example, measurement of “industry access to international markets and gateways via the Texas transportation system.” And an online dashboard, called TxDOT Tracker, presents and explains data on a number of core performance measures, including a statewide congestion index, pavement and bridge conditions, and fatalities. Texas has room for improvement in measuring transportation’s role in environmental stewardship; for instance, the transportation department’s strategic plan recognizes the importance of measuring pollutants from transportation, but it only reports greenhouse gas emissions from TxDOT fleet vehicles, not all cars statewide.

\$8.68 BILLION The state spent an estimated \$8.68 billion on transportation in fiscal year 2010.*

HOW IS THE STATE DOING?

Does it have the tools to ensure transportation spending and policy decisions are advancing six key goals?

- Leading the Way
- Mixed Results
- Trailing Behind



*National Association of State Budget Officers State Expenditure Report 2010.

METHODOLOGY: States were given one of three ratings—leading the way, showing mixed results or trailing behind—based on whether they have the goals, performance measures and data needed to help decision makers ensure their surface transportation systems are advancing six key goals. The ratings are based on 10 criteria. Each state was rated for its performance in each of the six goal areas and given an overall rating.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The Tyler MPO has programmed a pedestrian access study to identify routes and inventory facilities and has created a master trail plan throughout the entire MPO planning boundary.
- The regional trail plan will connect multiple communities within the planning boundary for connections other than personal vehicle. The Parks Department for the city has developed a long-range plan for hike and bike trails throughout the city. Currently, the MPO is utilizing PL funding to develop alternative transportation plans.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The Texarkana MPO has developed a master bicycle-pedestrian plan and has recently completed data collection for an inventory of sidewalks along arterials within 2 blocks of schools.
- This data will be used in order to analyze any gaps in sidewalk service and the overall condition of sidewalks in order to ultimately develop a 20 year implementation strategy to repair/replace, upgrade and expand the bike/pedestrian system.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The Corpus Christi MPO has developed a report funded in part by MPO PL funds on “Transit’s Role in Livability and Sustainability” which can be viewed on-line at: [http://www.corpuschristi-mpo.org/Studies/Transit's Role Sustainability&Livability_0510.pdf](http://www.corpuschristi-mpo.org/Studies/Transit's_Role_Sustainability&Livability_0510.pdf) .
- Livability issues are being addressed by multiple agencies including the City of Corpus Christi, Regional Transit Authority, Downtown Management District, and ad hoc NGO’s such as Destination Bayfront, Smart Growth, and Uptown Neighborhood initiative.
- Livability factors must be considered for each project as are accessibility improvements. The Corpus Christi region has considered livability as a factor and cites early award-winning projects such as the Staples Street Station transit oriented design at: http://www.pps.org/great_public_spaces/one?public_place_id=113 and the most recent initiative entitled Destination Bayfront at: <http://www.destinationbayfront.org/> as local examples.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The Midland-Odessa MPO, as part of the community visioning/scenario planning process of their 2010-2035 MTP development brought local communities together over an 18 month period in a series of workshops to decide on one over-arching vision of how they wanted to see the region grow and the kinds of transportation investments they would like to see made in support of this vision for the region.
- The MPO developed a preferred scenario of a well-connected transportation network that provides optimal mobility and accessibility for all travelers.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The San Antonio-Bexar County MPO incorporated Scenario Planning into their 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and in March 2009 taking a bold step forward of adopting a growth scenario incorporating infill and transit oriented development.
- Additionally, in April 2009, the MPO adopted and distributed a resolution to all municipalities encouraging them to adopt transportation and land use policies that promote multi-modal travel options.
- For over ten years the MPO has hosted and staffed the Bicycle Mobility Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee to support these active transportation modes. In 2011 the MPO celebrated its 15th year of annual Walk & Roll events.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The San Antonio-Bexar County MPO also coordinates several related programs including their Walkable Community Program that focuses on the walkability (and livability) of neighborhoods throughout the San Antonio region.
- The MPO hosts safety classes for adults and children regarding cycling and conducts bicycle rodeos for kids to be more aware of safety and promote best practices with cycling in their community.

MPO Livability Efforts

- The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG- Dallas/Ft Worth MPO) has provided dedicated funding to Sustainable Development Funding programs to address livability.
- Most recently, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the MPO policy body, has provided local match funds to allow for the submittal of HUD Community Challenge Grants, TIGER II, and HUD Regional Planning Grant applications for several projects that would advance livability principles for specific communities in the DFW region.

MPO Livability Efforts

- North Texas 2050, a product of Vision North Texas, which NCTCOG is a partner agency, has addressed livability issues such as housing, economy, mobility, climate resilience, regional ecosystem, community character, education, and health of the 16-county regional level.
- Individual communities are addressing livability as part of membership to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, building of LEED buildings, supporting mixed use developments, and developing bike and trail planning.
- In 2008, the RTC finalized projects selected through the Regional Toll Revenue Program. Early in the RTR process funds were set aside to fund sustainable development projects. One of the major goals for the RTR Sustainable Development program was to support sustainable, walkable communities. These projects were recently funded and programmed within the FY 2011-2014 TIP/STIP.

MPO Livability Efforts

- Livability has been part of the NCTCOG project prioritization process since 2001. As part of the Local Air Quality and Regional Toll Revenue Programs was the adoption of the RTC's Clean Fleet Vehicle Policy. Agencies that did not have the Clean Fleet Vehicle Policy in place were not eligible to compete for funds.
- This ensured that livability and air quality concerns were considered in the project selection process for all project types.

MPO Livability Efforts

- Since 2001, the RTC has funded over \$120 M for livability projects and programs. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) seeks to advance livability throughout the region by incorporating livability criteria in the evaluation process of major funding initiatives. Projects that have been focused toward livability include sustainable development projects that have focused on improving livability in the DFW region.
- Additionally, bike and pedestrian projects, air quality clean vehicle and marketing programs promote energy conservation and clean air, and developing the Regional Ecosystem Framework for the NCTCOG planning area has promoted conservation of natural assets and environmental preservation are some examples of efforts to promote livability in the DFW region.

Livability Issues- National Level

- How to address/discuss livability in rural areas.
- How to establish and track livability performance measures at the national, state, and local level.
- How to incorporate livability in to design guides and standards.
- How to evaluate economic benefits of livability.

Livability Websites

- <http://www.dot.gov/livability/>
- <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/>
- <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/index.html>
- http://fta.dot.gov/publications/publications_10935.html

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