

MAYORS' CHALLENGE FOR SAFER PEOPLE AND SAFER STREETS

March 20, 2015

Executive Summary

The Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets is a call to action by U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Foxx for mayors and local elected officials of any political jurisdiction whether town, city, county, tribal lands, territory, or State to take significant action to improve safety for bicycle riders and pedestrians of all ages and abilities over the next year. The challenge is based on the 2010 USDOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. USDOT recognizes the many benefits walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life. Nearly 200 cities across the nation have accepted the Challenge.

Mayors or top elected local officials are challenged to:

- Issue a public statement about the importance of bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Form a local action team to advance safety and accessibility goals
- Take local action on seven Challenge activities

USDOT invited Mayors' Challenge participants to a Summit for a kick-off event here at USDOT's Headquarters' office in Washington, DC on Thursday, March 12, 2015. The Summit brought together more than 110 people representing 64 participating cities to network and learn more about the Challenge activities. USDOT Staff members shared resources and tools available to help cities with Challenge activities. Throughout the Challenge year, participating cities will also have the opportunity to participate in peer-to-peer sessions, topical webinars, receive USDOT updates, and other benefits added throughout the challenge year. At the conclusion of the Challenge year they will be invited to a capstone event to celebrate accomplishments and share best practices.

Challenge cities win by improving walking and biking that contributes to the health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life for its community members. Below is a listing of the Challenge activities with just a sampling of the many resources we will be offering over the Challenge year.

Challenge activities:

1. *Take a Complete Streets approach*

The Complete Streets approach considers walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes. Challenge cities will have opportunities to learn from other cities who successfully implemented Complete Streets policies and the tools that are available to them.

2. *Identify and address barriers to make streets safe and convenient for all road users, including people of all ages and abilities and those using assistive mobility devices*

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks for people of all ages and abilities, especially children, by identifying and addressing barriers. Among other resources, Challenge participants will learn more about the FTA program and bicycle-related funding opportunities and how to use FHWA's recently released Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking.

3. Gather and track biking and walking data

Communities that routinely collect walking and bicycling data are able to track trends and prioritize investments to ensure the success of new facilities. FHWA's 2013 edition of the Traffic Monitoring Guide provides the most up to date guidance to State highway agencies in the policies, standards, procedures, and equipment typically used in a traffic monitoring program. Cities can learn how to use this and other resources to help them with this Challenge activity.

4. Use designs that are appropriate to the context of the street and its uses

Transportation agencies are encouraged, when possible, to avoid designing walking and bicycling facilities to the minimum standards. Planning projects for the long-term should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements. The Challenge will help participants sort through many existing resources, and FHWA will share its recently released Road Diet Informational Guide that provides information regarding the benefits of road diets including speed reduction, decreases in accidents, and the opportunity to provide improved accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

5. Take advantage of opportunities to create and complete pedestrian and bicycle networks through maintenance

Many transportation agencies spend most of their transportation funding on maintenance rather than on constructing new facilities. Transportation agencies should find ways to make facility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists during resurfacing and other maintenance projects. For example, Challenge cities will learn about the soon to be released Workbook for Building On-Road Bicycle Networks through Routine Resurfacing Programs, and about best practices through peer learning opportunities.

6. Improve walking and biking safety laws and regulations

Strengthening codes, ordinances, and practices can help to protect non-motorized users. Ideal local ordinances clarifies and promotes safe road uses, allow for shared or designated and proper road use by all, clearly outlines consequences for harmful traffic violations, and promotes cooperation and commitment to follow the rules. NHTSA's Countermeasures that Works will be one of the resources offered to cities addressing this Challenge area.

7. Educate and enforce proper road use behavior by all

A comprehensive education and enforcement program can be effective in reducing pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities. NHTSA recently released their Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Operations: How-to-Guide. Cities will learn about the cities successes highlighted in the guide.

Challenge cities will be free to focus on Challenge activities where they can make the most progress and to document previous achievements in the Challenge areas. Throughout the year, opportunities will be provided for peer exchange and additional group technical assistance in each of the seven Challenge areas. No direct financial assistance is associated with the Challenge.

Cities can learn more about the Challenge activities or join via the Mayors' Challenge web page at www.dot.gov/mayors-challenge or by emailing their official designated Team Leader's contact information to pedbikesafety@dot.gov. They can also follow Twitter or Instagram discussions using #Mayors4Safety.