

Human Environment Digest

March 11, 2021

Welcome to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Human Environment monthly email digest. This digest shares the latest information from a range of Federal and non-Federal sources, addressing transportation and its relationship to the human environment. Through this information exchange, FHWA hopes to foster dialogue at all levels and continue to further the state of the practice on these important topics in support of safety; infrastructure, including accelerated project delivery, access to jobs, and community revitalization; technology and design innovation; and accountability, including, data-driven decisions and performance-based planning.

For more information on any of these topics, see the FHWA Related Links on the sidebar.

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*The information provided in this mailing does not necessarily reflect the view of the Federal Highway Administration or the U.S. Department of Transportation.



To ensure this email digest continues to meet the needs of subscribers, FHWA is collecting feedback through an anonymous, 5-minute survey. [The survey](#) is open for responses through April 9.



Safety

SGA Releases Dangerous by Design 2021 Report

Smart Growth America (SGA) released "[Dangerous by Design 2021](#)," showing that the number of pedestrians struck and killed by drivers nationwide has increased 45 percent over the past decade. In addition to the report, SGA created an interactive map showing pedestrian fatalities from 2008-2019. SGA will host a [webinar on the report](#) Thursday, March 25 from 2:00-3:00 PM ET.

PBIC Releases Info Brief on Preventing Pedestrian Injuries and Deaths Among School Bus Riders

The *Pedestrian and Bike Information Center* released an [info brief examining pedestrian crashes related to school bus stops](#). The brief includes a literature review, media scan, multiple policy case studies, and findings from interviews with transportation directors. It outlines seven recommendations for preventing injuries and deaths as children walk to their bus stops and wait for the school bus.

NCHRP Guide Provides Design Guidelines for Alternative Intersections and Interchanges

The *National Cooperative Highway Research Program* published "[Research Report 948: Guide for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety at Alternative and Other Intersections and Interchanges](#)." The report provides recommendations for four common Alternative Intersections and Interchanges that may involve reversing traffic lanes from their traditional directions, potentially confusing pedestrians and bicyclists.

Report Examines Micromobility Safety Concerns

The *International Transport Forum* released a [report examining safety concerns resulting from increased use of electric scooters \(e-scooter\) and other micromobility devices in cities](#). The report provides recommendations to improve micromobility safety related to vehicle design, fleet operation, infrastructure and street layout, regulatory enforcement, and user education. The recommendations focus on allocating space for micromobility, enacting regulations on motor vehicles, and eliminating speeding across all vehicle types.

Study Analyzes Multimodal Safety in Transit Areas

A [study from the Mineta Transportation Institute examines pedestrian and bicyclist safety in areas surrounding transit stations](#). Researchers developed a safety model considering built environment characteristics, socioeconomic and demographic information, and aggregated crash data. The study suggests that reallocating space and resources to nonmotorized modes through widening sidewalks and adding physical barriers to bicycle lanes can reduce potential collisions between users.



Infrastructure

U.S. DOT Grant Program Includes Climate Change and Environmental Justice Evaluation Criteria

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT) is seeking applications for the [Fiscal Year 2021 round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America \(INFRA\) discretionary grant program](#). With approximately \$889 million in available funding, the INFRA program supports projects that consider access to jobs, economic recovery, safety, innovative technology, and racial equity. For the first time, U.S. DOT also seeks projects that address climate change and environmental justice. The [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) will remain open through March 19.

Data Show That U.S. Driving in 2020 Was Lowest in Two Decades

The *Federal Highway Administration* [released year-end estimates in the "Traffic Volume Trends" report](#) which shows [total U.S. driving fell](#) by 13.2 percent in 2020, reducing approximately 170 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Although overall traffic decreased significantly, preliminary data show that roadway fatalities fell less than 5 percent in the first half of 2020.

FHWA Releases Resources to Support Bikeway Selection

The *Federal Highway Administration* (FHWA) released two resources about bikeway selection. "[Traffic Analysis and Intersection Considerations to Inform Bikeway Selection](#)" examines bikeway selection trade-offs as they relate to intersections, including spatial needs, safety, equity, and traffic operations. "[On-Street Motor Vehicle Parking and Bikeway Selection Process](#)" discusses on-street parking considerations around bikeways, including strategies for various curb use and parking considerations. Both reports supplement the [FHWA "Bikeway Selection Guide."](#)

U.S. DOT Announces New America's Byways® Designations

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* announced [49 new roadway designations as part of the America's Byways® program](#). The program recognizes, preserves, and enhances selected roads throughout the country based on archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. To date, [there are 184 total America's Byways® designated in 48 States](#).

Report Assesses Signal Timing Inefficiencies

INRIX released a "[U.S. Signals Scorecard](#)" that [evaluates signal timing at over 210,000 signalized intersections nationwide](#). The report provides national benchmarking of traffic signal performance measures, including delay per vehicle and percent of vehicles arriving on green. It finds that signals are responsible for more congestion than previously understood, significantly impacting experiences for pedestrians and residents near intersections.



Innovation

NAS Workshop Will Explore Connections Between New Transportation Mobility Options and Environmental Health

The *National Academy of Sciences* will hold a [virtual workshop examining the impacts of transportation innovations on the environment](#), including ridehailing, delivery applications, automated vehicles, and electric scooters. Participants will explore existing research on anticipated environmental health challenges and identify research needs for the future. [This virtual event with free attendance will be held July 13, 16, and 21.](#)

Research Analyzes Trends from PBIC Shifting Streets Dataset

The *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives* released a [research paper analyzing trends from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Shifting Streets dataset](#). The paper proposes that transportation planning, policy, and engineering are at an inflection point, shifting towards a mobility landscape that equitably accommodates all road users and modes. It provides a research agenda aimed at increasing understanding of the processes that led to the development of many mobility projects driven by COVID-19 impacts, and how these projects will affect future pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure implementation.

Report Outlines Strategies to Reduce Car Dependency

The *International Transport Forum* (ITF) released a [report examining how governments can encourage residents to use transportation alternatives](#), such as micromobility, to reduce car dependency. The report explains implications of mode-shift in the short, medium, and long term, ranging from the reallocation of roads and parking spaces to significant land use pattern changes. The recommendations highlight strategies such as providing convenient and efficient alternatives, removing minimum parking space requirements for new developments, and implementing road pricing. ITF will hold a [webinar on the report](#) Tuesday, March 16 from 10:00-11:30 AM ET.

Report Examines Pandemic-Resilient Community Planning

The *Victoria Transport Policy Institute* released a [report discussing how communities can become more resilient to pandemics and other disasters](#), including economic, social, and environmental changes or sudden shocks. The report highlights a resiliency framework that includes community connection, safe transportation, neighborhood accessibility,

zoning, and strong social services. It focuses on infectious disease risks to communities first, but also examines other economic, environmental, and social disaster risks.



Accountability

EPA Announces Up to \$6 Million in Annual Environmental Justice Grants

The *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* announced the availability of up to \$6 million in grant funding through the [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program](#) and the [Environmental Justice Small Grants Program](#). Special consideration is given to applications that address COVID-19 concerns faced by low-income and minority populations, small nonprofits, new applicants, and people living and working near ports. Interested applicants must submit proposal packages by May 7 to be considered.

Secretary Buttigieg Speaks at Annual National Bike Summit

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg spoke at the [League of American Bicyclists' annual National Bike Summit](#) on March 3, 2021. His remarks focused on quality of life, the role of bicycling in addressing climate change, and creating a more equitable transportation system. [A recording of the session is available publicly for viewing along with other sessions from the event.](#)

CUTC Publishes Webinar Recording on Equity and the Black Experience

The *Council of University Transportation Centers* (CUTC) published a [recording of the first webinar in a series on equity and the Black experience in transportation](#). This webinar, focused on the experiences of panelists working in the transportation sector, lays the groundwork for the remainder of the series. [CUTC will announce dates for upcoming webinars in the coming months.](#)

Research Assesses Equity Concerns for Transportation Infrastructure Impacts from Sea Level Rise

Transport Policy journal published a [study on transportation inequities caused by sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay Area](#). Research projects that that concentrations of low-income and minority populations in waterfront communities will be most impacted by transportation network effects from climate change; however, the same underserved communities will be less able to relocate to neighborhoods with lower risks. The study recommends accessibility and mobility improvements that can support equitable outcomes, including the protection of bridges that provide critical linkages.