

## Human Environment Digest

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December 10, 2020

Welcome to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Human Environment biweekly 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.

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### Safety

#### U.S. DOT Publishes Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* released a pedestrian safety [action plan](#) to address pedestrian fatalities and injuries through the expanded use of countermeasures, technology, and data-driven practices. The plan explains the Department's comprehensive approach that encompasses improvements to the roadway and surrounding environment, increased education on the shared responsibility of both pedestrians and motorists, along with enforcement and adjudication of pedestrian safety laws. It identifies actions the Department intends to accomplish in the next two years, focusing on the development or update of resources, tools, and plans; new and revised campaigns, programs, and initiatives; the creation or revision of curriculum; and new research to improve pedestrian safety.

#### U.S. DOT Releases Summary Report on Pedestrian Safety Summit

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* published a [summary report](#) of the Pedestrian Safety Summit held in July 2020. The three-part webinar series covered the current state of pedestrian safety, risk factors that impact pedestrian safety, and the Department's planned efforts to improve pedestrian safety. Additional [videos, presentations, and materials](#) from the event are also available.

#### IIHS Studies Find Most E-scooter Rider Injuries Occur on Sidewalks

The *Insurance Institute for Highway Safety* developed two [research](#) papers using interviews of electric scooter (e-scooter) riders whose injuries brought them to an emergency room in Washington, DC. One study examined how the severity of their injuries varied according to where and how they were injured. The second compared the rider demographics, usage patterns, and injuries to those of bicyclists who were interviewed as part of an earlier study. The studies found that e-scooter riders suffered more injuries per mile traveled than bicyclists, but bicyclists were more likely to have conflicts with motor vehicles.

#### Research Assesses Safety of E-bikes Relative to Conventional Bicycles

The *Journal of Transport & Health* published a [study](#) examining the role of bicyclists' health condition on safety of electric bicycles (e-bikes) compared to conventional bicycles. Researchers surveyed bicyclists treated at emergency rooms for crash injuries and a control group without known crash experience. The findings indicate that e-bike users were not more likely to be involved in a crash or to sustain more severe injuries; however, older female bicyclists had an elevated risk on e-bikes and sustained more severe injuries. The study suggests that older females are more likely to fall while mounting or dismounting their e-bikes, and recommends lower saddle height to mitigate risk.

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### Infrastructure

#### White Paper Discusses Framework to Balance Utility, Safety, and User Experience on Shared-Use Paths

*Alta Planning + Design* published a [white paper](#) exploring how shared-use paths should be designed, operated, and managed to accommodate micromobility transportation options, including powered micromobility. The paper discusses

policy and design considerations for multi-use paths, provides implementation advice for trail managers, and shares examples of how trails across the U.S. are adapting to emerging mobility trends. It suggests several principles to guide decision making regarding powered micromobility devices on trails: advance mobility justice, design for safety, complement the natural environment, prioritize the human experience, expand user amenities, and design for the future trail.

### **Research Analyzes Parking Supply and Demand at Transit-Oriented Developments**

The *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* published a [study](#) examining parking at seven transit-oriented developments (TODs) in the U.S. to determine how much less parking is required at TODs than the new Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation manual would suggest. Researchers conducted a literature review and measured parking generation at the TODs through field observation and intercept surveys. The findings indicate that, at the peak parking demand hour, only 51 to 84 percent of spaces are filled. The study suggests TODs could improve use of shared parking and change policies around bundled residential parking.

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## **Innovation**

### **Transportation Research Board to Host 2021 Annual Meeting**

The *Transportation Research Board 100th Annual Meeting* will be conducted as a virtual event throughout January 2021. The meeting program will cover all transportation modes, addressing topics such as micromobility, ridehailing, [emerging mobility technologies](#), [transportation equity](#), [safety and public health](#), [resiliency and security](#), and more. The sessions and workshops will focus on the spotlight theme for the 2021 meeting: Launching a New Century of Mobility and Quality of Life. This year's meeting will feature dozens of sessions on how the [national health emergency](#) has impacted transportation and how transportation professionals and researchers are responding. Committee meetings will be held January 5-8 and 11-15. Sessions and exhibits will occur January 21-22 and 25-29.

### **Report Examines Availability and Use of Pedestrian Infrastructure Data to Support Active Transportation Planning**

The *National Cooperative Highway Research Program* published a [report](#) describing how State departments of transportation (DOTs) are collecting, managing, sharing, and analyzing pedestrian infrastructure data. The report documents and summarizes current State DOT practices for defining, storing, collecting, and sharing pedestrian infrastructure data. Agencies can use the report's findings to tailor the data collection process to build data infrastructure that supports various uses, leading to more consistent and efficient planning and management of pedestrian infrastructure.

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## **Accountability**

### **Involving Underserved Populations in Rural Community Transportation Planning**

The *Federal Highway Administration* published a [case study](#) discussing community engagement approaches with traditionally underserved populations, including Hispanic and Tribal communities, in Cortez, Colorado during an update to the town's Access Control Plan. The plan is intended to improve traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and preserve traffic flow capacity of two highways in the city. The outreach process gave residents the opportunity to express concerns about street design and high-speed vehicles in the central business district, and as a result, the city incorporated traffic calming measures into the design. Cortez's holistic public engagement efforts enhanced project delivery and established long-term strategy for ongoing engagement.

### **Presentations Discuss Environmental Justice Resources and Methods for Collaboration**

The *National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program* released [presentation recordings](#) from the October 2020 virtual event. The presentations share ideas and approaches to environmental justice, including the impacts of the national health emergency on low-income communities, energy solutions, as well as active transportation and transit considerations. They explain the nexus of environmental justice with the National Environmental Policy Act.

### **Podcast Examines Use of Digital Tools for Participatory Transportation Planning**

The *Public Transport Research Group at Monash University in Australia* released a [podcast](#) discussing how virtual tools can facilitate more collaborative transportation planning. Researchers explain how data and digital tools can assist the public and decision makers during the transportation planning process. The discussion also explores the synergies between transportation and health. The podcast details how an interactive walkability planning support map tool helped planners understand infrastructure needs and healthcare costs of developing in a new neighborhood with limited walkability, compared to redeveloping an existing site.

### **Survey Requests Inputs on Complete Streets Education and Outreach Efforts**

The *Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University*, in partnership with a national transportation advocacy group, is leading an effort to collect information about effective and notable complete streets outreach, along with educational and engagement activities across the country. The researchers encourage representatives of State departments of transportation, regional planning authorities, county and local governments, advocacy groups, community organizations, and all others to respond to the [survey](#) by December 15.

