

Human Environment Digest

October 29, 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.



Safety

U.S. DOT Issues Contract Awards to Support Data-Driven Transportation Safety Research

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT) issued contract awards prioritizing the use of data and innovative technologies to support transportation safety research. The contract awards follow a Broad Agency Announcement from the Office of the Secretary of Transportation seeking to leverage data to address surface transportation safety issues related to precursors to crashes, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, intersections, and non-fatal injury crashes. As part of the effort, U.S. DOT will partner with a micromobility data management platform and three other vendors to develop concept designs and digital solutions using new data sources and/or data unavailable to the DOT. The forthcoming research findings will support the U.S. DOT Safety Data Initiative, which was launched in 2018 to enhance road safety efforts and decrease traffic fatalities through data-driven decision making.

NHTSA Releases Pedestrian Safety Playbook and Active Transportation Data Visualizations

The *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration* (NHTSA) released a playbook with social media strategies and resources to support Pedestrian Safety Month activities. It provides information on vehicle speed enforcement and Walk to School Day activities; distracted drivers and impaired pedestrians; illegal school bus passing; and conspicuity/Day Light Saving Time, and older pedestrians. NHTSA also developed two interactive data visualization dashboards displaying pedestrian and bicyclist fatality data between 2010 and 2018. Based on Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, the dashboard allows users to view key data by State, year, month, time of day, age group, and land type.

Research Analyzes Pedestrian Safety and Roadside Activities in Urban Areas

The *Safety Science Journal* published a study examining the influence of roadside activities on pedestrian safety in urban environments. Researchers developed models to analyze interactions between pedestrians and motorists, capturing both infrastructure and traffic attributes. The findings indicate significant risk factors related to pedestrian crash risk include: number of bus stops per unit of time, parking, volume of pedestrian crossing and violations, traffic speed variation, number of intersecting side roads, as well as through and intersecting traffic volume.



Infrastructure

U.S. DOI Finalizes Rulemaking on Electric Bicycles on Public Lands

The *U.S. Department of Interior* finalized regulations allowing electric bicycles (e-bikes) on public lands managed by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. Through these regulations, e-bikes are no longer defined as motor vehicles or off-road vehicles, but are defined in three classes. The regulations enhance e-bike access to facilities where traditional bicycles are allowed on public lands, increasing recreational opportunities and public health.

Walk/Bike/Places 2021 Conference Announces Call for Proposals

Project for Public Spaces announced a [call for proposals](#) for the Walk/Bike/Places 2021 Conference, which will take place as both a remote and in-person event in Indianapolis, Indiana on June 14-18, 2021. The conference theme will be on "The Route to Recovery," featuring projects and research discussing the social, economic, and environmental challenges that communities faced in 2020 and will continue to address in the future. The sessions and presentations will highlight the role active transportation and public spaces play during these challenges. Proposals are due on Wednesday, December 9 at 5:00 PM ET.



Innovation

Micromobility Policy Atlas Database Highlights Shared Bicycle and E-scooter Policies in 25 Countries

The *Shared-Use Mobility Center*, *New Urban Mobility alliance*, and *World Resources Institute Ross Center for Sustainable Cities* released the [Micromobility Policy Atlas](#) which describes local bicycle- and electric scooter (e-scooter)-sharing regulations from 25 countries. The database classifies micromobility policies by regulation type, providing information on guidelines, permits, and laws from local and State/provincial levels since 2017. It includes operating rules such as parking and use of bicycle lanes; fleet size limits, fees, and fares; equity plans and requirements; and data and communications guidelines, as well as links to the original policy documents. Users can also search by year and country to understand the different ways that global cities are managing bikeshare and shared e-scooter services.

Research Examines E-scooter Impacts on Equity Improvements and Mode-Shift on University Campus

The *Transportation Research and Education Center* published a [study](#) analyzing the impacts of electric scooters (e-scooters) on mode choice and their performance in meeting equity goals. Researchers surveyed students at Portland State University to identify how e-scooters, cars, bicycles, and light rail transit support general and university-related travel needs. Survey respondents largely represent younger and low-income populations. The findings indicate several barriers to e-scooter use such as inexperience, discomfort riding in traffic, unreliable time options, affordability, and limited infrastructure. The study suggests communities deploy targeted management interventions, such as parking cost increases, to provide improved first/last-mile connections through micromobility.

Research Identifies Health Impacts of Automated Vehicles

The *Sustainable Cities and Society Journal* published a [study](#) analyzing implications of automated vehicles (AVs) on public health. Researchers developed a conceptual framework summarizing potential changes in transportation after AV implementation into seven impact areas: (1) transportation infrastructure, (2) land use and the built environment, (3) traffic flow, (4) transportation mode choice, (5) transportation equity, (6) jobs related to transportation, and (7) traffic safety. Based on the impacts, the study identified 32 potential pathways between AVs and public health, 17 of which negatively impact health. The findings note several strategies to promote health related to electric motors, urban area development, traffic demand management strategies, and ride-sharing policies.

Webinar Discusses Relationship between Transportation Modeling and Decision Making

The *Eno Center for Transportation* hosted a webinar discussing how transportation modeling supports planning and decision making. It provides a history of transportation modeling and related challenges, examining technical aspects to help practitioners improve the relationship between predictions and future planning goals. The webinar recording and presentation materials are now [available online](#).



Accountability

Report Discusses Innovations in Transportation Equity for Latino Communities

Salud America! published a [report](#) outlining innovations in transportation equity for Latino communities. Funded through [Voices for Healthy Kids](#), the grant summary report discusses policy and advocacy recommendations identified by the Innovative Equity Exploration Special Project Workgroup. The research highlights four transportation-related issues impacting Latino health: lack of racial and gender diversity in policy and investment best practices; community displacement because of planning and design practices; policies or projects increasing auto-dependency; and siloed processes between land use, transportation, and public health agencies. The recommendations aim to support expansion and integration of active transportation and complete streets through policies and investments in Latino and low-income communities.

Fact Sheet Outlines Strategies and Resources to Enhance Active Transportation through Regional Transportation Planning

The *Safe Routes Partnership* published a [fact sheet](#) providing strategies and resources to increase bicycling and walking through regional transportation planning. It outlines notable practices and example case studies to support active transportation efforts by influencing policy, plans, and funding at the regional level. It adds that regional transportation plans and transportation improvement programs provide opportunities to identify short- and long-term bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

PBIC Health and Transportation Webinar Series Materials Available Online

The *Pedestrian Bicycle and Information Center* hosted a five-part webinar series from October 13-28 discussing the integration and advancement of health in various transportation planning practices. The sessions highlighted

opportunities to address health issues through equity assessments, collaborative partnerships, data integration, project prioritization, and policy change. The webinar recordings and presentation materials are now [available online](#).