

Human Environment Digest

September 3 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

FHWA Hosting Webinar Series on Americans with Disabilities Act 30th Anniversary

The *Federal Highway Administration* is hosting a [webinar series](#) highlighting the different aspects of implementing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans. The webinars outline resources to support the implementation of ADA plans, and other key information including incorporating the transition plan in the Statewide transportation improvement program process, establishing dedicated ADA funding, and how State transportation agencies are using emerging technologies to maximize impact and increase accessibility. The webinars are free and attendees should register for each webinar separately.

NHTSA Publishes Idea Book on Law Enforcement Supporting Active Transportation Safety

The *National Highway Transportation Safety Administration* published an [idea book](#) analyzing the role of law enforcement in supporting bicycle and pedestrian safety. The report explains their role as first responders to crashes, and how their experience can support road safety, strengthen injury prevention programs, and shape policy. It provides examples and resources on ways to involve law enforcement to address road safety measures including trainings, data analysis, information exchange, and community engagement.

TRB Releases Resources on Role of Transportation in Combatting Human Trafficking

The *Transportation Research Board* released a set of [resources](#) discussing the role of transportation in stopping human trafficking. Researchers hosted a webinar discussing the human trafficking and mobility of missing and murdered Tribal women, and the [webinar recording](#) is now available online. The resources outline reading materials and tools to better protect Tribal women, provide considerations for transit agencies and airport operations, and address the issue in rural transportation.



Infrastructure

ITE Article Analyzes Design Considerations and Performance of Turbo Roundabouts

The *Institute of Transportation Engineers Journal* published an [article](#) discussing the key attributes and performance of turbo roundabouts, including resources for U.S. implementation. The article discusses turbo roundabouts as intersection alternatives with the potential to enhance safety performance by eliminating conflict points. It provides an overview of design considerations, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and highlights increased education and outreach for both practitioners and the public to build understanding.

TRB Releases Report and Survey Tool on Quality of Life in Communities Surrounding Airports

The *Transportation Research Board's Airport Cooperative Research Program* released a [report](#) analyzing the effects of airports on quality of life in surrounding communities. The research identified resources to help practitioners measure and better understand how airport activities impact communities. As part of the study, researchers developed a quality of life assessment survey tool capturing indicators across six categories including environmental, health, economic,

transportation, social relationships, and local governance/community services. Practitioners can tailor the resources to individual airports' needs to support data collection and build stronger community relationships.

NACTO Releases Guide on Designing Streets for Children

The *National Association of City Transportation Officials Global Designing Cities Initiative* published a [guide](#) on designing streets for children. The resource describes international best practices, strategies, programs, and policies to better support youth needs and enable mobility for children of all ages and abilities. It outlines design considerations and case studies showcasing examples of effective street design approaches that improve the quality of life for all.

Report Discusses Impacts of the Built Environment on Health

The *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies* published a [study](#) examining the impacts of the built transportation environment on public health. The report explores health issues related with increased automobile dependence and the auto-oriented transportation environment including reduced physical activity, obesity, respiratory problems, and mental health issues. It also describes the development of a land use planning health index, which helps practitioners identify active transportation and accessibility needs within communities. The findings highlight the importance of designing infrastructure encouraging and supporting greater opportunities for walking, bicycling, and transit.



Innovation

Study Analyzes Perceptions of New Mobility Services Among People with Disabilities in San Francisco

The *Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles* released a [report](#) and [policy brief](#) on the perceptions of new mobility services among people with disabilities in San Francisco, California. Developed in collaboration with the *San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency*, researchers surveyed people with a range of disabilities to better understand accessible transportation needs related to transportation network companies, bikeshare, electric scooters, and automated vehicles. The study notes opportunities for new mobility services while highlighting significant barriers to use, particularly physical and sensory inaccessibility. Survey respondents reported experiencing mobility barriers due to improperly parked dockless electric-scooters and bicycles, as well as abandoned devices on sidewalks, which block travel paths for pedestrians.

Study Develops Bicycling Accessibility Planning Tool to Support Regional Connectivity

The *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment Journal* published a [study](#) examining the application of an accessibility-oriented decision-support tool for bicycle route planning. The study notes local agencies often have limited resources to evaluate the impacts of bicycle infrastructure projects as part of a larger network. To address this, researchers developed a tool designed to quantify the benefits of new bicycle facilities for different populations and neighborhoods, supporting increased network connectivity. Using Boston's regional bicycle network as a case study, the tool captures route preferences of different bicyclist types and trade-offs in travel time and level of traffic stress.



Accountability

Toolkit Outlines Resources to Address Social Determinants of Health in Rural Communities

The *Rural Health Information Hub* released a [toolkit](#) analyzing the social determinants of health in rural communities. The toolkit addresses the various environments, systems, and policies affecting health in rural areas, including conditions contributing to negative outcomes. It provides evidence-based practices and resources in a series of modules related to care coordination, community health workers, food access, health networks and coalitions, health promotion and disease intervention, services integration, telehealth, and rural transportation. Researchers hosted a webinar discussing the toolkit and the [webinar recording](#) is now available online.

Study Explores Health Benefits and Socioeconomic Contexts of Active Transportation

Researchers at the *University of California, Davis* and *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign* published a [study](#) examining the associations between active transportation and self-reported health, including whether or not socioeconomic status and gentrification influences the relationship. The study aimed to determine if health benefits are unevenly distributed across demographic groups in the context of neighborhood change. Using data from the [2017 National Household Travel Survey](#) and U.S. Census, the findings indicate active transportation is positively linked with self-reported health including some variations by race and socioeconomic status. The findings highlight the importance of ensuring infrastructure investments and policies address inequities across communities.

Information Briefs Outline Street Design Approaches to Support Economic Development

AARP Livable Communities and *Main Street America* released a series of [information briefs](#) describing safe, equitable, and age-friendly strategies and street design approaches to support COVID-19 recovery. The five briefs provide key tools and ideas related to open streets, 'parklets and pedlets,' public amenities, small businesses, and trails and parks. The information outlines infrastructure elements and street design considerations to encourage economic development and assist communities with their commercial district design

