

## Human Environment Digest

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August 6, 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

#### Research Analyzes Impacts of Smartphone Use on Driving Performance

The *Institute of Transportation Studies* at the *University of California* published a [research report](#) examining the effects of smartphone use on driving performance. Researchers tested drivers' responses to visual distractions from smartphone use, such as making a hands free call or sending a short text, in order to better understand the impacts to driving behaviors. The findings indicate hands free and text distractions increased swerve speeds and lane drifting, highlighting the safety risks associated with smartphone use while driving.

#### Research Examines Influence of Roadside Activities on Pedestrian Safety in Urban Areas

The *Safety Science Journal* published a [study](#) analyzing the relationship between roadside activities and pedestrian safety in urban areas. The study explains how parking or bus stops and loading areas may have negative impacts on pedestrian safety, and lead to increased crashes. Researchers developed crash models for pedestrians in urban areas with high roadside activities. The study found that significant risk factors associated with pedestrian crash risk include bus stops, parking, traffic speed and volume, and intersecting roadways. The findings highlight the importance of integrating roadway design with land use planning to support pedestrian safety and accessibility.

#### Research Examines Effects of Socioeconomic Factors on Crash Rates

The *Kentucky Transportation Center* at the *University of Kentucky* published a [research report](#) analyzing the effects of socioeconomic factors on State crash rates. The study explains that per capita crash rates and crash-related fatalities in Kentucky have exceeded the national average for over a decade. Using State crash data, researchers examined socioeconomic and demographic characteristics based on residential zip codes, and their impacts on crash occurrence in Kentucky. The findings suggest that variables such as income, education level, poverty level, employment, age, gender, and residential community setting influence the likelihood of drivers being at fault in a crash.

#### Resource Highlights Safe Routes to School Programming Recommendations for Back to School

A national transportation advocacy group published a [resource](#) outlining strategies and recommendations to support safe routes to school programming this fall. The resource provides tools, short- and long-term considerations, and other resources aligned with a Six E's framework based on engagement, equity, engineering, encouragement, education, and evaluation. It also highlights recommendations for remote, in-person, and/or hybrid models of safe routes to school implementation, including community engagement opportunities to deliver essential needs and services.

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### Infrastructure

#### U.S. DOT Develops Applicant Toolkit to Support Rural Communities

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT) recently developed an [applicant toolkit](#) as part of the [Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success](#) (ROUTES) Initiative, which aims to address rural transportation infrastructure disparities. The ROUTES applicant toolkit helps rural communities better identify and

navigate U.S. DOT discretionary grant funding opportunities. It provides user-friendly information to build understanding of various discretionary grant programs and application processes, including a matrix of funding opportunities, key applicant activities during the funding life cycle, featured rural transportation projects, and other resources to maximize award success.

### **ITE Article Discusses Considerations for Bicycle Facility Selection**

The *Institute of Transportation Engineers Journal* published an [article](#) discussing considerations to support bikeway selection and decision making. The article outlines planning and design practices to help encourage bicycle ridership for all ages and abilities, which builds on the "[Bikeway Selection Guide](#)" released by the *Federal Highway Administration* in 2019. It discusses common trade-off decisions in the bikeway selection process, such as right-of-way allocation, in order to help practitioners determine appropriate bicycle facilities for their communities.

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## **Innovation**

### **CPSC to Host Micromobility Forum Webinar in September**

The *Consumer Product Safety Commission* (CPSC) is hosting a forum webinar on [September 15 at 9:00-4:00 PM ET](#) to discuss the use of micromobility devices such as electric scooters, electrical bicycles, and self-balancing scooters. The forum will feature a variety of presentations and panel sessions, convening stakeholders to engage and share information related to micromobility safety issues and priorities. For more information on the virtual event, please visit the [Federal Register notice](#). Participants must register by August 28, 2020. CPSC is the Federal agency responsible for regulating micromobility devices that the *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration* (NHTSA) does not consider to be "motor vehicles" under NHTSA jurisdiction. In April 2020, CPSC released a [report](#) examining the safety concerns associated with micromobility devices, which categorizes the related hazards into three broad areas including mechanical, electrical, and human factors.

### **Research Analyzes Equity Programming for Bicycle Share Systems**

The *Transportation Research and Education Center at Portland State University* released a [series of research briefs](#) describing the current state of equity programming for bicycle share systems in the country. The national scan shows key findings for more than 70 bicycle share systems, helping communities and mobility providers to plan and implement more equitable bicycle share services. Developed as a resource to support the [final report](#), the set of 10 two-page briefs outline best practices and lessons learned related to bicycle share equity policies, data collection, metrics, marketing, and more. Researchers are hosting a [free webinar on September 16 at 2:00-3:00 PM ET](#) to discuss the project.

### **Iowa Develops Virtual Public Involvement Tool to Enhance Stakeholder Engagement and Decision Making**

The *Iowa Department of Transportation* (DOT) developed a [virtual public involvement](#) platform to manage stakeholder outreach and improve project decision making. The Iowa DOT created its Public Involvement Management Application (PIMA) to expand citizen input on transportation projects, reduce manual processes, and improve consistency of data collection for public meetings. The PIMA tool features both an internal management tool and a searchable [public portal](#) that provides information on all Iowa DOT projects and details from past public meetings. The Iowa DOT offers PIMA free with the stipulation that other agencies share any improvements they make with Iowa DOT. For more information on the PIMA tool's applications and benefits, please contact the Iowa DOT staff members [Brad Hofer](#), [Valerie Brewer](#), or [John Rees](#).

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## **Accountability**

### **TRB Publishes Research Overview on Equity in Regional Transportation Planning**

The *Transportation Research Board Transit Cooperative Research Program* (TCRP) published the [Volume 2: Research Overview](#) describing opportunities for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and transit agencies to collaborate and analyze equity in transportation. It outlines research findings and recommendations based on a five-step equity analysis framework that enhances stakeholder engagement and public involvement. The Volume 2 research supports the recently published [TCRP Volume 1: Guide](#), which discusses methods for developing and implementing equity analyses in regional transportation planning processes. Both resources provide tools and resources that help MPOs, transit agencies, and transportation practitioners to develop more equitable plans and programs.

### **Toolkit Highlights Resources to Support Green Infrastructure and Community Health**

A national parks and recreation group released [communications toolkit](#) describing strategies and policy considerations to support green infrastructure in parks. The toolkit includes resources and key actions to help provide equitable access to nature while improving community health and resiliency. It highlights the benefits of parks and green features, such as rain gardens and permeable pavement. Green infrastructure manages stormwater run-off making streets and sidewalks safer.

### **National Shared Mobility 2020 Summit Conference Recordings Posted Online**

The *Shared-Use Mobility Center* recently posted the [recorded sessions](#) from the National Shared Mobility Summit LIVE conference hosted in May 2020. The virtual event featured breakout sessions on topics such as micromobility safety, curb

management, shared mobility, freight, and goods delivery, including plenary panels on short- to long-term strategies for transit and shared mobility.