

## Human Environment Digest

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**August 20, 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 Seeks Input for Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Development**

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT) seeks comments on the [current and future U.S. DOT actions to enhance pedestrian safety](#), which will inform the development of the U.S. DOT Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. These draft actions capture key activities supporting the safe system approach over a two-year period, including strategies for all modes of transportation across different Federal agencies. As part of this effort, the materials from the recent [U.S. DOT Summit on Pedestrian Safety](#) are now available online. U.S. DOT encourages practitioners to provide feedback on the draft actions and share ideas for continued dialogue on noteworthy practices and partnership opportunities. The comment period closes on August 31, 2020.

#### **U.S. DOT Develops Accessibility Strategic Plan Framing Document**

The *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT) developed an [Accessibility Strategic Plan Framing Document](#), which serves as a starting document to guide the development of the forthcoming [Accessibility Strategic Plan](#). The framework presents U.S. DOT's accessibility goals and priorities across four overarching themes: complete trip, partnerships, innovation, and geographic equity. Although the comment period on the framework has closed, users may still access the [online dialogue portal](#) to view submitted comments and stakeholder input on the draft accessibility goals. Once completed, the Accessibility Strategic Plan will enhance coordination of accessibility initiatives across the Department.

#### **Report Highlights Connections between Transportation, Health, and Healthcare**

The *Eno Center for Transportation* released a [report](#) discussing the role of transportation in improving health conditions across the country, such as providing access to essential health services. The report analyzes the connections between transportation, health, and healthcare, including analysis of the current state of practice, key challenges and access barriers, and innovative solutions. It outlines recommendations for agencies to improve policy and programming. Researchers hosted a webinar discussing the report and the [webinar recording](#) is now available online.

#### **TRB Releases Research Circular on Conference on Health and Active Transportation**

The *Transportation Research Board* released a [research circular](#) summarizing comments from participants at the Conference on Health and Active Transportation hosted on December 11-12, 2019 in Washington, D.C. The event convened leaders from transportation and health disciplines to develop a road map for the future of active transportation. The document describes the discussions during the plenary sessions and individual breakout groups related to active travel behavior, walkability, research priorities, innovative practices, and more.



### Infrastructure

#### **NACTO Releases Report on Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets**

The *National Association of City Transportation Officials* released a [report](#) analyzing methods to set safe speed limits on urban streets. The report outlines context-sensitive recommendations based on a three-method approach that provides

an alternative to percentile-based speed limit setting. It includes step-by-step checklists for analyzing street activity and density levels in order to determine safe speed limits. The report highlights the potential for communities to create safer outcomes for all road users by integrating speed limit setting practices as part of traffic fatality reduction or Vision Zero program efforts.

### **Baltimore, Maryland Develops Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook**

The *City of Baltimore, Maryland* developed an [ideas guidebook](#) compiling design approaches and concepts for public space interventions to support social distancing. Presented at the [2020 Walk/Bike/Places virtual conference](#), the guidebook outlines community-driven recommendations including public health considerations to create safe, accessible, and equitable public spaces. It includes customizable design concepts, such as 'curblet commons' or street closings, which serve as templates to help communities activate sites in different locations and scales.

### **Webinar Discusses Curb Management and Emerging Mobility**

A national mobility advocacy group hosted a webinar discussing the interactions between shared mobility services, curb access, and public right-of-way. It highlights the role of emerging mobility technologies and discusses challenges related to curb management, including how mobility data can support local decision making. The [webinar recording](#) is now available online.

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## **Innovation**

### **Micromobility Tool Analyzes Service Data and Local Policy**

The *New Mobility Alliance* (NUMO) developed a [micromobility data tool](#) to help communities evaluate micromobility services against policy goals. It provides use cases outlining the impacts of micromobility, such as electric scooters and electric bicycles, including evaluation metrics that communities can use to track progress. As part of the process, NUMO engaged a group of local governments, mobility providers, and data management companies to determine best practices in developing safe and equitable micromobility programs. The tool offers valuable insights to support the development of policies, plans, and regulations in order to maximize the benefits of shared mobility while meeting local goals.

### **Research Analyzes Travel Behavior of E-bike Riders**

The *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment Journal* published a [study](#) examining the travel behaviors of electric bicycle (e-bikes) riders to determine whether people who purchase the devices ride more than those without e-bikes. The study also analyzed whether preferences for e-bikes reflect a larger change in bicycling. Researchers conducted a comparative analysis surveying a group of e-bike customers and a non-customer group using a travel diary to capture travel behavior changes. The results indicate people who purchase an e-bike increased their bicycle use from 2.1 to 9.2 kilometers on average, and decreased their use of walking, public transportation, and motor vehicles.

### **Research Examines Relationship Between Automated Vehicles and Parking Demand**

The *National Institute for Transportation and Communities* published a [study](#) analyzing how automated vehicles (AVs) impact on-street parking revenues in Seattle, Washington. Using transportation network companies as a proxy for AVs, researchers compared trip data with local parking and built environment data to determine changes in parking demand. The findings indicate increased TNC trips led to more parking spaces occupied, suggesting travelers used a combination of modes to reach their destinations. The study highlights policy options for communities, including opportunities to reshape public rights-of-way for new or different uses.

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## **Accountability**

### **AARP Livable Communities to Host Virtual Transportation Workshop**

*AARP Livable Communities* is hosting a [two-day transportation workshop](#) to explore mobility options supporting vibrant neighborhoods, improving public health and connecting older adults and people of all ages to economic, social, and civic opportunities. The free online workshop will feature panel discussions, presentations, best practices, and other resources across three themes including safety, accessibility, and resiliency. The virtual event will take place on [September 15 from 1:00-4:00 PM ET](#) and [September 16 from 1:00-4:00 PM ET](#). Interested participants must register for each session separately.

### **AASHTO Environmental Justice Peer Exchange Materials Available Online**

The *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials* (AASHTO) posted the [materials](#) from the Environmental Justice Virtual Peer Exchange held on July 10. Offered by the Center for Environmental Excellence at AASHTO, and in partnership with the *Federal Highway Administration* and *Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations*, the virtual meeting included two panel discussions. Panelists from the *Georgia Department of Transportation* and *Atlanta Regional Commission* discussed health and transportation. Representatives from the *Washington State Department of Transportation* and *Puget Sound Regional Planning Commission* discussed incorporating equity during the transportation planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act review process.

### **Webinar Series Discusses Triple Zero Vision for Urban Freight**

The *World Resources Institute Ross Center* hosted a four-part webinar series on the future of urban freight. The webinars discuss a "triple zero" vision that includes zero emissions, zero road deaths, and zero exclusion from health, education, food, and economic services that support community livelihood. The [webinar recordings](#) are now available online.