

Human Environment Digest

July 23, 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

PBIC Develops a Resource on Pedestrian Safety

The *Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center* published a [resource](#) outlining challenges, impacts, and opportunity areas related to pedestrian safety. The document supports the *U.S. Department of Transportation Virtual Summit on Pedestrian Safety*, providing background information on pedestrian safety issues, known risks, patterns of injuries, and other outcomes to provide context on pedestrian travel needs. It highlights crash data and key concepts for creating safer and more equitable multimodal transportation environments.

PBIC Resource Outlines Active Transportation Planning Considerations for Back to School

The *Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center* published a [resource](#) on planning considerations to enhance safe routes to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. The document describes the benefits of walking and bicycling to school to help address school re-opening challenges. It also highlights approaches and resources to support safe student travel through active transportation such as street design, bicycle parking, and walking school buses.

Report Analyzes Crash Outcome Differences between Automobiles and Sports Utility Vehicles

The *Insurance Institute for Highway Safety* released a [report](#) analyzing the differences in crash outcomes and pedestrian injury levels between motor vehicles and sports utility vehicles (SUVs). Researchers used the Vulnerable Road User Injury Prevention Alliance pedestrian crash database, which compiles information from police reports, pedestrian medical records, crash reconstructions, and injury experts. The findings suggest that SUVs pose an elevated injury risk to pedestrians, resulting in more serious or fatal injuries than crashes involving smaller motor vehicles.

Research Analyzes Effective Messaging Strategies to Enhance Traffic Safety

The *Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University* published a [study](#) examining the role of traffic safety messaging and its impact on attitudes and behaviors. Researchers examined the effectiveness of different messaging strategies and frameworks aimed at promoting safer behaviors among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists in Fresno, California. The study concludes that appropriately framing messages influences key transportation safety practices. The findings suggest that promotion-based messages on positive outcomes are more effective facilitating safer travel behaviors when compared to prevention-based messages that direct users to avoid negative consequences.



Infrastructure

Interactive Dashboard Tool Highlights Benefits of Federal Highway Investment

The *American Road and Transportation Builders Association* launched an [interactive dashboard tool](#) that displays how States deploy their Federal-aid highway funds, featuring projects between 1950 and 2018. The interactive dashboard compiles data from the *Federal Highway Administration* Federal Management Information System, allowing users to visualize the impacts and benefits of Federally-supported infrastructure investments. Users can customize their search to

examine how and where each State invests its Federal transportation funds by county, fiscal year, project type, and Federal-aid system.

ITE Article Discusses Impacts of COVID-19 on Local Complete Streets Development

The *Institute of Transportation Engineers Journal* released an [article](#) discussing the impact of complete streets development in local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article describes how COVID-19 has highlighted the need for improved active transportation infrastructure to support walking and bicycling, including safe and reliable access to jobs, healthcare, food sources, and other essential services. It analyzes how communities are adapting their active transportation networks to better support the needs of community members, featuring examples of complete streets approaches such as open streets and slow streets, as well as other resources to improve conditions for underserved communities.

Research Analyzes Complete Streets Strategies Through Traffic Simulation Models

The *Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University* published a [study](#) analyzing the network-wide implications of transforming roadways into complete streets in downtown San Jose, California. Researchers developed a traffic simulation model to assess the impacts of complete streets and tactical urbanism strategies on street design and the overall road network. The findings highlight the importance of integrating travel demand management measures into the planning process in order to support all transportation modes including walking, bicycling, and transit.

Webinar Discusses Sidewalks and Tree Growth in Urban Areas

An arboriculture advocacy group hosted a webinar discussing the relationship between pavement, sidewalks, and tree growth in urban areas. It presents research findings on different treatments and stormwater considerations in order to reduce sidewalk damage from root development and support tree growth. The webinar recording is [now available](#).



Innovation

Research Analyzes Adaptive Bicycle Share Options for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

The *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* published a [research article](#) examining adaptive bicycle share options for older adults and people with disabilities. The article explains that adaptive bikeshare options, such as electric bicycles and three- to four-wheeled devices, provide opportunities for older adults and people with physical limitations to recreate and socialize through motorized travel. Researchers examined the current landscape of adaptive bikeshare systems in select communities, highlighting best practices, areas of improvement, and potential next steps to expand these systems across the country.



Accountability

TRB Publishes Guide on Equity in Regional Transportation Planning

The *Transportation Research Board (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program* published a [guide](#) analyzing methods for developing and implementing equity analyses in regional transportation planning processes. The guide outlines a five-step framework to better support minority, low-income, and limited English proficiency populations in transportation investments and programs. It includes examples and resources to help metropolitan planning organizations avoid or mitigate inequities during planning and programming processes, as well as strategies to enhance public and stakeholder engagement. TRB also released [Part 1 of a three-part TRB Blog series on equity](#), which discusses socioeconomic equity resources.

U.S. Access Board Hosting Virtual Meeting to Celebrate 30 Years of the American Disabilities Act

The *U.S. Access Board* is hosting a [virtual public meeting on July 29 at 1:30-3:00 PM ET](#) to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). The event will feature a panel discussion from guest speakers and Access Board members on the ADA and its accomplishments, including early achievements of the disability rights movement. It will also outline how the ADA has advanced inclusive and accessible architecture and design practices.

Webinar Discusses Local Business Impacts on Walkability

A local transportation advocacy group hosted a webinar discussing the influence of town centers and downtown districts on walkable communities. It highlights the importance of sustaining business districts to encourage walkability, featuring strategies that communities have deployed to support their main streets and local business resilience in response to COVID-19. The webinar recording is [now available](#).