

Human Environment Digest

April 16, 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

National Bike Month Kicks Off in May

The *National Bike Month* begins in May through September 2020. This [event](#) encourages safe bicycling in our everyday lives and highlights the benefits of bicycling for transportation and recreation. The *League of American Bicyclists* provides a [variety of resources](#) to help individuals celebrate *National Bike Month*.

Research Surveys Parents' Safety Perceptions of Bicycle Networks for Children

A [recent study](#) published in the *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* surveys parents' safety perceptions of roadway design and its suitability for youth bicycling. The study uses level of traffic stress (LTS) methodology, which rates roadways at different scores based on the level of stress it imposes on bicyclists. The findings suggest that the LTS scores of roadways coincides with parents' perceived safety preferences and allowance rates for youth bicycling activity.

Report Analyzes Public Transportation Impacts on Crime and Harassment

The *Mineta Transportation Institute* at *San Jose State University* released a [report](#) discussing student riders' experiences related to crime and harassment while using public transit. Researchers surveyed student harassment experiences and fear of sexual crime while waiting for the bus or train, riding on the vehicle, and walking to/from the bus stop to determine impacts on ridership. The findings indicate an association between fear of sexual harassment and lived experiences with decreased transit use.



Infrastructure

FHWA Offers Value Capture Virtual Peer Exchanges

The *Federal Highway Administration* (FHWA) is now offering a series of free [virtual peer exchanges](#) on the topic of value capture through the *Center for Innovative Finance Support*. Beginning on May 7 through October 22, FHWA presenters and local experts will share best practices and examples of value capture strategies to finance public infrastructure improvements. The online series covers successful approaches to help fill transportation funding gaps including transportation impact fees, special assessments, tax increment finance, transportation utility fees, joint development, and value captured from existing assets. Interested participants can [register here](#) for the first webinar on May 7, 2020 at 1:00-3:00 PM ET.

AASHTO Releases Guide on Communicating the Benefits of Transportation Infrastructure Investments

The *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials* and *National Cooperative Highway Research Program* released a [guide](#) to help States communicate the economic and quality of life benefits of transportation infrastructure investments. The guide compiles research-tested themes and messages with recommendations for customizing and deploying communications across different formats. It also highlights highly resonant messages that

focus on travel time, mobility, and reduction of stress, including new approaches such as videos and other web-based visualization tools that help illustrate project benefits and improve public awareness.

Researchers to Test Structural Support of Porous Concrete Sidewalks

Researchers from the *Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation* at *Rutgers University* are conducting a [pilot project](#) to collect performance data on porous-concrete based sidewalks and test its ability to provide sufficient structural support. Funded by the *New Jersey Department of Transportation* and *Federal Highway Administration*, the project team will build a 1,500-square foot sidewalk using three different mix designs of porous concrete. The study will determine whether the material mitigates stormwater run-off and provides a solution to flooding and puddling. The research team published [a report](#) in 2017 outlining the use of porous concrete for sidewalks. When completed in late 2020, the study findings will identify the material's performance, service life, and environmental impacts.



Innovation

Federal Agencies Launch 2020 Civic Innovation Challenge

The *National Science Foundation*, *U.S. Department of Energy*, and *U.S. Department of Homeland Security* recently launched the [2020 Civic Innovation Challenge](#), a national research and action competition that addresses local mobility and resilience priorities. The challenge includes up to \$9 million in total program funding to support shovel-ready, research-based pilot projects that provide scalable and sustainable solutions. The two-stage competition funds projects under two tracks, including "Communities and Mobility" to improve mobility options between housing and employment, and "Resilience to Natural Disasters" to enhance community preparedness to severe weather. [Proposals are due July 1, 2020.](#)

NADTC Announces Availability of Grant Funding for Innovations in Accessible Mobility

The *National Aging and Disability Transportation Center* announced \$300,000 in available grant funding to support [program innovations in accessible mobility](#). The grant supports innovative "ready-to-launch" projects that remove transportation barriers and increase accessible mobility options for older adults and people with disabilities. It will award funding for up to 10 communities over a six-month period. The [application deadline has been extended](#) and [proposals are due May 1, 2020](#).

Research Examines Impacts of Ridehailing Services

The *National Center for Sustainable Transportation* at the *University of California, Davis* released a [report](#) analyzing the impacts of ridehailing services on transportation systems in California. Researchers surveyed transportation stakeholders involved with planning and policy making to examine their perspectives on this emerging shared-use mobility service and its long-term role on transportation systems. The findings indicate that the level of uncertainties surrounding ridehailing are related to limited data or resources, and highlight the need for improved coordination between local regulations and State level guidance.



Accountability

Interactive Map and Report on Travelers' Attitudes and Happiness Along Roadways

The *Center for Transportation Studies* at the *University of Minnesota* published a [research report](#) illustrating travelers' happiness ratings of roadways in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region. The report describes the development of an [interactive transportation happiness map](#) that displays mode- and time-specific information related to travelers' positive and negative experiences along roadways. The map visualizes patterns of various emotions and identifies potential areas for improvement. The report indicates that transportation happiness levels associated with bicycling are greater than other modes.

Report Outlines Strategies to Integrate Tribal Expertise into Transportation Planning Processes

The *Transportation Research Board* released a *National Cooperative Highway Research Program* [report and presentation](#) analyzing the role of tribal communities in transportation planning processes. The report discusses how the integration of tribal perspectives during the early planning phases and environmental reviews benefits project development and outcomes. It outlines strategies to more effectively engage and collaborate with tribes during transportation projects.

Report Analyzes the Role of Women within the Transit Workforce

The *Transportation Research Board* released a *Transit Cooperative Research Program* [report](#) analyzing the employment of women within transit agencies. The report discusses how the percentage of women within the transit workforce, particularly in leadership positions, has increased in the last five years. It outlines strategies deployed to help advance the role of women in the industry and strategies to ensure inclusivity.