

Human Environment Digest

April 2, 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

Research Examines Driver Familiarity with Bicycle Infrastructure During Safety Assessments

A [recent study](#) published in the *Accident Analysis & Prevention Journal* examined bicycle safety from the perspective of vehicle drivers to assess whether familiarity with bicycle treatments affected their driving behaviors and roadway safety. Researchers analyzed the impact of bicycling frequency and treatment familiarity using a driving simulator with shared lane markings, standard bike lanes, bike boxes, and merge lanes. The findings indicate that drivers who are more frequent bicyclists had greater awareness of the different treatments. Drivers more familiar with bike infrastructure also adjusted their speeds, stopping distances, and lane positioning to allow for safe travel.

Report Surveys National Safe Routes to School Programming

A [recent report](#) from a national transportation advocacy group examined Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programming across the country. The report includes findings from a 2019 national survey of SRTS initiatives outlining policies, practices, funding resources, and key challenges that communities face. The report notes that SRTS efforts vary in program structure and scale in almost every State, which may include dedicated staff or volunteer-based support. The report also outlines a set of recommendations to improve SRTS planning to promote safe, active transportation.

2020 National Bicycle Summit Presentations and Fact Sheets Now Available Online

This year the *League of American Bicyclists* modified its in-person [National Bicycle Summit](#) "Creating Safe Streets for Everyone," into a [virtual conference](#), featuring a series of webinars focused on active transportation safety. The 2020 National Bicycle Summit [fact sheets](#) and [recorded sessions](#) are now available online. [Registration](#) is still open for webinars during the week of April 6 and for access to the recorded sessions.



Infrastructure

FHWA Publishes Outreach Brochures on Access to Essential Services

The *Federal Highway Administration* recently developed a series of short [outreach brochures](#) on topics related to access to essential services, including the [economic benefits](#) of providing access. The brochures can be used together or as stand-alone documents to highlight transportation connections related to [Active Transportation](#), [Complete Streets](#), [Interagency Cooperation](#), [Public Transit](#) and [Rural and Small Town Transportation](#). Communities that make informed transportation decisions help ensure safe and reliable transportation access for all community members.

FHWA Offers Web-Based Training Course on Bicycle Facility Design

The *Federal Highway Administration* is now offering a free [Bicycle Facility Design](#) web-based training course through the *National Highway Institute*. This eight-hour training helps transportation practitioners learn to implement high-quality, safe, multimodal projects by efficiently and effectively delivering critical planning and design information. The course covers principles of bicyclist safety, comfort, connectivity, selection of bikeway type and associated design considerations, and national planning and design resources.



Innovation

FHWA Provides Resources to Facilitate Virtual Public Involvement

As part of its [Every Day Counts](#) initiative to promote innovation, *Federal Highway Administration* (FHWA) developed a set of resources related to [virtual public involvement](#) (VPI). These VPI resources aim to help agencies facilitate community engagement using different technologies. Public involvement is a critical component to transportation decision-making that enhances project planning and delivery. However, face-to-face meetings are not always possible due to time constraints, travel restrictions, inaccessible locations, and other challenges. Innovative VPI tools such as online surveys, mobile applications, dashboards, and virtual town halls are effective alternatives that ensure timely and robust public input. FHWA developed [fact sheets](#) and hosted a [webinar series](#) to highlight successful VPI techniques used by States and local agencies.

Research Examines Shared-Used Mobility Service Potential in Rural Communities to Improve Access

The *National Center for Sustainable Transportation* at the *University of California, Davis* released a [policy brief](#) on the potential for shared-use mobility service in rural communities. The brief explains that rural residents often have limited transportation options to access essential services. It examines whether shared-use mobility systems, such as ridehailing and carsharing, can provide an alternative mode to existing transit service. Researchers conducted a cost-benefit analysis comparing the costs of existing transit service to ridehailing and carsharing services in California. The policy brief indicates that these shared systems provide costs savings and have the potential to improve access.

Learning Module Discusses the Importance of Shared Mobility

The *Shared-Use Mobility Center* released a [learning module](#) highlighting the importance of electric and shared mobility through examples of pilot projects across the country. The module covers electric and shared mobility concepts such as micromobility, microtransit, ridehailing, and electric vehicles. It also discusses Federal funding opportunities and the impacts of local and State policy development. The module explains that shared mobility options can provide first/last-mile connections and address other travel barriers through supportive policies and adequate infrastructure.

Research Study Analyzes Micromobility Safety to Improve Injury Surveillance Systems

The *Collaborative Sciences Center for Road Safety* is currently conducting a [research study](#) on micromobility safety impacts in order to enhance safety evaluations of emerging technologies and develop a data structure for monitoring crash data. One of the main challenges with tracking micromobility safety data is the variability in crash reporting, which can lead to misclassification of injuries across multiple devices including electric scooters (e-scooter) and bicycles. Researchers are examining micromobility devices in the context of shared mobility systems and developing a behavior-oriented survey instrument. The study began in August 2019 and will be completed in July 2020, though the research team published [interim project findings](#) and a [list of e-scooter fatalities](#).



Accountability

Memorandum Examines Equity-Oriented Performance Measures in Transportation Planning

The *American Planning Association* published a [Planning Advisory Service memorandum](#) that discusses equity-oriented performance measures to improve transportation prioritization processes. The memo examines how metropolitan planning organizations integrate transportation equity as project evaluation criteria in their planning and programming efforts.

AARP Releases Rural Livability Workshop Report

AARP released a [Rural Livability Workshop Report](#), outlining resources and materials gathered from its rural livability national event hosted in June 2019. The report includes data, presentation materials, and other resources to help rural communities and small towns improve conditions related to transportation, housing, public places, weather resiliency, and the local economy. The report also informs community leaders about the needs, benefits, challenges, and solutions for rural places, and highlights exemplary projects that enhance livability for older adults and people of all ages.