

## Human Environment Digest

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July 11, 2019

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

#### Report Examines Correlation Between Street Improvement Projects and Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

The *Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota* released a [report](#) that illustrates how estimates of pedestrian and bicycle crash risk and assessments of inequities may inform prioritization of street improvement projects. This report also provides information about variations in crash risk across street networks to inform investments that may increase roadway safety, as well as address issues of equity in communities. Results from this study indicate that pedestrian and bicycle crash risk is correlated with exposure; that different factors affect crash risk at intersections and mid-blocks; and that these factors differ for pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

#### Report Considers How to Improve Safe Routes to Transit for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

The *Centre for Active Transportation* released [Improving Active Transportation and Public Transit Integration: A Guidebook for Policy and Planning](#). The guide is designed for planners, decisionmakers, and interested community members to find policy, infrastructure, and programming approaches to removing barriers to safe and efficient access to transit stations on foot or by bicycle. It includes case studies of North American jurisdictions maximizing opportunities for access to transit by active modes of travel, and profiles the potential for transit projects to serve as Complete Streets projects.

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### Infrastructure

#### Report Identifies Opportunities to Invest in Green Infrastructure and Social Enterprises

The *Democracy Collaborative* released a [report](#) that examines how investments in green infrastructure can be leveraged to build community wealth with worker cooperatives and social enterprises. The report also explores how green infrastructure projects make travel safer for all road users. Green infrastructure elements such as permeable pavement on surface roads and rain gardens in parking lots reduce flood risk and mitigate travel risks created by inclement weather. The report focuses on four case studies of green infrastructure enterprises in Oakland, California, Detroit, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Portland, Oregon and provides practical insights to practitioners, local governments, and local institutions seeking to undertake green infrastructure projects via community enterprises.

#### Short Film Explores Strategies to Make Cities More Bicycle-Friendly

A new [short film](#) from the transit-oriented documentary-makers at *Streetfilms* reveals how the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands has [redesigned its infrastructure to enable safer and more attractive bicycling](#). The documentary explores the infrastructure projects that have prioritized safe bicycle travel, including a bicycle parking garage beneath a train station, and protected, multi-use paths that separate bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicles

#### USC Produces Guidebook for Complete Street Design Focused on Freight and Emergency Services

The *University of Southern California's Transportation Center* produced a [guidebook](#) for incorporating the needs of freight activities and emergency services into the design and operation of complete streets. Suggested designs include

recessed stop lines at intersections, dedicated on-street loading zones, and curbside bicycle lanes. The guidebook will help planners and engineers to better incorporate freight activity in complete street design, reduce conflicts with transit, bicyclists and pedestrians, and make complete streets truly complete.

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## Innovation

### EDC-5 Virtual Public Involvement Webinar Recording Available

As part of the [Every Day Counts \(EDC-5\) Virtual Public Involvement \(VPI\) innovation](#), the *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* hosted a webinar on June 25, 2019 focused on helping practitioners utilize innovative and proven public involvement techniques. The webinar highlighted three techniques: [Building an Engaged Social Media Following](#), [Targeted Online Ads](#), and [Telephone Town Halls](#). Attendees were able to learn from fellow practitioners how to increase public engagement through new and existing technologies, such as social media. Presentation slides and the webinar recording are available [here](#).

### FHWA Announces Recipients of 2019 Environmental Excellence Awards

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* announced the recipients of the [2019 Environmental Excellence Awards](#). The awards recognize partners, projects, and processes that use FHWA funding sources to make outstanding contributions to environmental stewardship and partnerships. These projects not only meet environmental requirements such as those in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act, but they also excel in advancing innovations and best practices that protect and enhance the natural and human environment, and help accelerate project delivery.

### TRB Releases Best Practices for Online Public Involvement

The *Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)* published a [report](#) summarizing current practices regarding online public participation strategies being used by State departments of transportation. The report also showcases the effectiveness of using these strategies and tools. Online public participation methods offer agencies the potential for expanded participation and also present new challenges and demand new thinking about the appropriate mix of techniques in a public participation program, communication protocols, staffing and skill requirements, and how best to integrate emerging online engagement tools with traditional face-to-face methods such as public meetings.

### Podcast Focuses on Mobility as a Service

*Transportation Radio* posted a [new podcast](#) in its *Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Talks Transportation* podcast series. The June episode features Sam Zimbabwe, Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation, who discusses how Seattle and the surrounding region have incorporated Mobility as a Service, as well as how they are addressing equity and accessibility gaps in the transportation system.

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## Accountability

### Researchers Create Daytime Walkability Index for Women in San Francisco

Researchers from *San Francisco University* released a [paper](#) exploring the factors that influence women's walking patterns. They created a women-specific walkability index that identifies the variables that most influence women's propensity to walk, and the most and least walkable places for women in San Francisco. The study determines that today's leading walkability index, Walk Score, does not accurately account for how women travel on foot. The authors encourage policymakers to use this research to design urban environments that are safe and welcoming for women.

### Global Coalition of Cities Launches the Open Mobility Foundation

The *Open Mobility Foundation (OMF)*, a global coalition led by cities committed to using well-designed, open-source technology to evolve how cities manage transportation in the modern era, launched in June 2019. The OMF mission is to promote safety, equity, and quality of life on city streets. The non-profit organization brings together members from industry, municipal governments, academia, and advocacy groups to help cities develop and deploy new digital mobility tools.