

Human Environment Digest

October 4, 2018

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.

*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

NTSB Releases Pedestrian Safety Report

The *National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)* has released [a special report on pedestrian safety](#). The report identifies vehicle-based changes, infrastructure improvements, and data needs for preventing pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Among the recommendations are updated standards for vehicle headlight systems and producing a national database of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

Walk to School Day 2018

The *National Center for Safe Routes to School* has announced the 22nd annual [Walk to School Day](#) will be on October 10, 2018. After a record 5,600 events in 2017, thousands of schools have signed up to host events promoting student pedestrian safety. These events often serve to influence community culture, and initiate larger efforts related to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

A New Mobile App Will Identify Safest Walking Routes

Researchers at *Cardiff University* are [developing a mobile app](#) that identifies pedestrians' safest rather than quickest route to their destinations. The app draws on math and computer science to score the safety of a given area. Popular mapping software already on the market does not consider characteristics of pavements and roads, which may affect the safety of a route. The app will allow the user to input a destination and then choose the route that will facilitate the safest possible journey on foot.



Infrastructure

FTA Funds Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has announced that the *Federal Transit Administration (FTA)* will award \$336.2 million in grants to improve the safety and reliability of bus systems through the [Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program](#). A total of 107 projects in 50 States and territories have been selected to receive funds. Each of the projects will replace, rehabilitate, or purchase buses, bus facilities, and related equipment.

FHWA Issues Updated Guide to Early Acquisition Projects

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* has issued a [revised question-and-answer guide](#) regarding Federally funded early acquisition projects. The guide addresses the acquisition of real property—including a specific parcel, a portion of a transportation corridor, or an entire corridor—in advance of the completion of the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act. The guide includes answers to frequently asked questions and citations to the relevant Federal regulations to support practitioners in understanding the impacts of early acquisition on transportation projects.

NACTO Releases Report on Engaging Communities on Bike Share

The *National Association of City and Transportation Officials (NACTO)* has released a report on "[Strategies for Engaging Community: Developing Better Relationships through Bike Share](#)". The report offers recommendations for communities

and bike share operators to ensure that the benefits of bike share are distributed equitably. At the core of these recommendations are to practice meaningful public engagement, especially in key communities that have historically been left out of public decision making. Through equitable engagement, planners support the goals of increasing access to and awareness of bicycling and bike share as a transportation option.

AARP Releases Guide to Park Planning

AARP has released a guide titled "[Creating Parks and Public Places for People of All Ages: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)." The guide is a collaborative effort between the *AARP Livable Communities*, *80 Cities*, and *The Trust for Public Land* highlighting the important role that parks play in communities, and to promote inclusive park planning. It includes suggestions for safe and efficient transportation to and within parks, and tools and strategies for park planning.

Study Outlines Pedestrian and Cyclist Preferences for Tree Locations

A study recently published in *Cities* outlines [pedestrian and cyclist preferences for tree locations by sidewalks and separated bike lanes](#). The paper surveyed pedestrians and bicyclists in Boston, Massachusetts on their perception of separated bike lanes in the area and options for tree and bush placement in relation to the sidewalk, bike lane, and street/parking. Participants reported strongly supporting having trees, and preferred them to be placed between the bike lane and street/parking.



Innovation

FHWA Awards \$8.4 Million for Innovative Highway Projects

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* has [announced \\$8.4 million in awards](#) to nine States under the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration awards program. For example, the Florida Department of Transportation will improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians near the University of Florida and throughout the city of Gainesville by improving access to real-time traffic information and enhancing the city's existing "SmartTraffic" system. Since its launch in 2014, the AID program has provided over \$60 million for innovative traffic, safety, and construction projects.

Early Access Papers Addressing Society

TRB's Transportation Research Record, Journal of the Transportation Research Board, has released [18 early access papers](#) addressing society and transportation. The papers include issues related to accessibility, evaluating bicycle share systems, pedestrian safety, and economic resilience.

Applications Open for 2018 Community Change Grants

America Walks has opened the [application period for its 2018 Community Change Grants](#). Selected grantees will receive \$1,500 each for projects that promote healthy, active, and engaged places to live, work, and play. Awardees will complete projects that promote walking and the benefits of walkability, and work toward a culture of inclusive health. Applications are due by 5:00 PM ET on Friday, November 2, 2018.

Self-Driving Shuttles Deployed in Columbus

The *City of Columbus, OH* has partnered with *May Mobility*, a private autonomous vehicle firm, to [deploy self-driving shuttles](#). The shuttles are electric and can travel up to 25 miles per hour. Each shuttle will be staffed with a human "fleet attendant," who oversees the vehicle and may take over control if the need arises. The shuttles will first run without any passengers on board, and are scheduled to begin accepting passengers beginning in December 2018. The shuttles are part of a larger innovation initiative with Smart Columbus and DriveOhio.

Knight Foundation Announces Investment in Autonomous Vehicle Research

The *Knight Foundation* has [announced a five-year \\$5.25 million initiative](#) for people-centered research on autonomous vehicles. The program will implement a customized pilot program in each of five chosen cities: Detroit, MI; Long Beach, CA; Miami, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; and San Jose, CA. The pilot programs will engage residents for input on how autonomous vehicles could best meet their individual needs.



Accountability

2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

The *National Physical Activity Plan Alliance* has released the "[2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#)." The 2018 report is the third comprehensive assessment, updating the first report card in 2014 and the second released in 2016. The report assesses facilitators and barriers for physical activity, and related health outcomes based on nine indicators, including active transportation. The report offers recommendations for schools and policymakers to allocate funding to initiate research, collect data, and fund programs to support physical activity among youth.

ITF Publishes London Connectivity Report

The *International Transport Forum (ITF)* has released a report titled "[London's Accessibility Indicators: Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges](#) ." The report provides an overview of connectivity indicators, which describe the extent to

which people can utilize the transportation system to access jobs and services. It concludes with a set of challenges and opportunities for improving connectivity in London's transportation system.