

Human Environment Digest

September 20, 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

NCSL Publishes Brief on Bicycle Passing Laws

The *National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)* [published a brief](#) discussing State safe bicycle passing laws. These laws generally require that drivers allow adequate space, usually at least three feet, between vehicles and bicyclists. The report identifies that 32 States and the District of Columbia have enacted these safe passing laws, with some communities implementing stricter laws, such as requiring vehicles to change lanes to avoid bicyclists. A safe passing distance helps prevent common bicycle crashes such as sideswiping or dooring. New technology for measuring passing distance with a radar on police bicycles can support enforcement of these laws.

TRB Releases Guidebook to Support Safety Improvements for Pedestrians

The *Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)* recently [released a Systemic Pedestrian Safety Analysis](#) to support transportation agencies in identifying sites for potential safety improvements for pedestrians. The report is designed to provide a safety analysis method for agencies to proactively identify, prioritize, and select countermeasures for locations with a high risk of pedestrian-related crashes. The report also provides insights to support agencies interested in improving their data collection and management processes to support future safety analyses.

FHWA Announces National Roundabouts Week

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* [launched National Roundabouts Week](#) on September 17 to conduct education, outreach, and awareness to the American public about roundabouts in order to support State and local efforts to build safer intersections. Roundabouts reduce the types of crashes in which people are seriously injured or killed by 80 percent compared to conventional stop-controlled and signalized intersections. This initiative will support FHWA's efforts to reduce injuries and fatalities across the transportation system and make intersections safer for all users.



Infrastructure

2019 Environmental Excellence Awards Deadline Extended

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* has extended the deadline for nominations for its [2019 Environmental Excellence Awards](#), which recognize outstanding transportation projects, processes, and organizations that incorporate environmental stewardship into the planning and project development processes. FHWA is accepting nominations for any project, process, group, or individuals involved in a project or process that has used FHWA funding sources to contribute to transportation and the environment. Entries are due by September 28, 2018.

TRB Releases Design Guidelines for Low-Speed Multimodal Roadways

The *Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)* recently published a [report outlining best practices for the design of low-speed multimodal roadways](#). The report assists practitioners in designing roadways with an appropriate balance between efficiency, safety, comfort, and convenience for a wide array of users. The strategies discussed in the paper can be used in cities across the United States to develop multimodal transportation networks that promote greater safety and livability for all users.

New Report Provides Strategies to Improve Multimodal Travel in Rural Communities

The *Victoria Transport Policy Institute* released a report examining [strategies to improve multimodal travel options in small towns and rural communities](#). Historically, the geographic isolation of rural communities has created a dependence on auto travel; however, various trends including aging populations as well as health and safety concerns have supported an increased demand for multimodal travel options throughout rural areas. The report serves as a resource for planning agencies in rural areas to improve and connect walking, bicycling, and public transit.

FTA Announces Funding Opportunity to Improve Access to Healthcare

The *Federal Transit Administration (FTA)* [announced the availability of \\$6.3 million in competitive grant funds](#) for transit coordination projects to improve access to healthcare across the country. The grants will help improve options for people with limited transportation options and bridge the gap between service providers in the transportation and health sectors. The program will also support the work of the [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility](#), which helps to coordinate Federal programs to improve access to jobs, schools, healthcare, and other opportunities. Interested transit agencies should apply by November 13, 2018.

TRB Publishes Paper on the Relationship between Transit Asset Condition and Service Quality

The *Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)* released "[The Relationship Between Transit Asset Condition and Service Quality](#)," a report analyzing these trends at transit agencies across the country. The paper provides guidance and a quantitative method that agencies may use to see how asset condition and service quality relate to investment prioritization. The report includes a number of quantitative tools that transit agencies across the country may use to better manage existing transit capital assets and make more efficient investment decisions. The guidance and information provided in the report can be used by agencies to ensure that public transit systems continue to provide safe and reliable transit options.



Innovation

FHWA Awards AID Funding to Support Innovative Solutions for Safety and Mobility

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* [recently awarded](#) \$8.4 million in Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration funding to nine State departments of transportation. Grantees will use the funding to implement innovative solutions to improve safety and mobility on roads and bridges. One of the grants, awarded to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), will improve access to real-time traffic information and support the City of Gainesville's [SmartTraffic system](#) in order to enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Presentation Offers Top Research Needs for Automated Vehicles and Shared Mobility

The *National Academies and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Forum on Preparing for Automated Vehicles and Shared Mobility* released a [presentation that highlights the top ten research needs for both automated vehicles and shared mobility](#). The TRB Forum brings together public, private, and research organizations to share perspectives on critical issues related to automated vehicles and shared mobility. These organizations are strategizing how to employ mobility innovations in a manner that will increase safety, reduce congestion, and enhance accessibility. The presentation specifically highlights the importance of developing models for sharing data, creating safety scenarios for the transition to highly automated vehicles, and ensuring equitable access to new technologies.

Report Analyzes the Potential Impacts of Autonomous Trucks

The *UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education* recently released a report, "[Driverless? Autonomous Trucks and the Future of the American Trucker](#)." The arrival of autonomous trucks has the potential to transform the trucking industry by repositioning existing jobs and altering the logistics network. The scenarios in the report revolve around advancing autonomous trucks for long-distance highway driving, where there are no bicyclists and pedestrians, and note that it will take far longer before driverless trucks will be able to navigate local streets.



Accountability

Gallup Poll Reveals Changes in How Americans Commute to Work

The *Business Insider* released an article showing [changing trends in how Americans commute to work](#). While driving continues to be the most common travel mode, the percentage of people driving to work dropped significantly from 85 percent in 2017 to 77 percent in 2018. The author attributes this drop to individuals beginning to seek alternatives to driving, a claim supported by data showing increases in public transportation use, walking, bicycling, and teleworking. As congestion and commute times continue to increase, analysts project the share of drivers to fall further as individuals choose alternatives that promote shorter commutes.