

Human Environment Digest

September 6, 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

ITF Publishes Annual Safety Report

The *International Transport Forum (ITF)* published its 2018 "[Road Safety Annual Report](#)," which includes road safety performance data and trends from 32 countries. The report analyzes road safety performance in terms of road user, age group, and type of road. It provides comprehensive information about the current state of road safety in its member countries and to offer potential solutions to emerging road use issues.

Walk to School Day 2018

The *National Center for Safe Routes to School* announced that October 10, 2018 will be [Walk to School Day](#). A record-breaking number of more than 5,600 communities registered to participate in Walk to School Day in 2017. The annual event promotes health and safe routes that allow students to walk and bike to school.

NHTSA Finalizes Sound Rule for Electric Vehicles

The *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)* finalized a [new rule](#) requiring electric vehicles to generate sounds when travelling at speeds of up to 18.6 miles per hour. The new regulation requires that automakers add sound to half of qualifying vehicles by September 2019 and to all qualifying vehicles by September 2020. The rule will help ensure that pedestrians, especially those with visual impairment, can be aware that electric and hybrid vehicles are approaching, even at low speeds.

APTA Releases Analysis of Public Transit and Traffic Safety

The *American Public Transportation Association (APTA)* released a [new research analysis brief about public transit as a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities](#). The analysis draws on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Transit Administration data, which indicate that cities with high rates of public transportation use see fewer traffic fatalities than cities with lower rates of public transportation use, on average. The analysis provides compelling evidence that a modest increase in public transportation use corresponds with increased safety for all road users.



Infrastructure

AASHTO Announces America's Transportation Awards Finalists

The *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)* revealed 12 finalists for its [America's Transportation Awards](#), which recognize State departments of transportation (DOTs) for outstanding projects that improve safety and promote economic growth. The awards are divided based on total project cost and given in three categories: quality of life and community development; best use of technology; and innovation and operations excellence. Five of the 12 finalists are in the quality of life and community development category, including one medium-sized and four small projects. The 12 finalists will compete for two top prizes: the Grand Prize, which will be determined by an independent panel of experts, and the Socrata People's Choice Award, which will be determined through [online voting](#).

FTA Announces Grants for Advanced Bus Technology

The *Federal Transit Administration (FTA)* [announced](#) \$84.5 million in grant selections to support advanced bus technology through the [Low- or No-Emission Grant Program](#) (Low-No). The program funds transit buses and infrastructure that use advanced propulsion technologies. 52 projects in 41 States will each receive a portion of the funding. Projects eligible for funding through the Low-No Program include purchase or lease of buses with hybrid or battery electric engines, as well as infrastructure additions like changing stations.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Releases Transportation Alternatives Report

The *Rails-to-Trails Conservancy* released its [2017 Transportation Enhancements and Alternatives Spending Report](#), which provides an overview of how States spent their cumulative Transportation Enhancement and Alternatives funds. The report notes that the program has invested almost \$13 billion for more than 35,000 projects over its 26 years of funding. This funding has supported the development of multimodal infrastructure, such as protected bicycle lanes and multiuse pathways.

ASLA Releases Guide on Transportation Design

The *American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)* [released a guide](#) on transportation design that supports active, safe, equitable, and resilient transportation systems. The guide includes discussion of and recommendations for design at the regional, urban/rural, neighborhood, and street levels. It also includes references to relevant organizations and resources.



Innovation

USDOT Releases Comprehensive Plan for Automated Vehicles

The *U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)* published its "[Comprehensive Management Plan for Automated Vehicle Initiatives](#)." The plan describes USDOT's general management approach to automation initiatives. It presents the Department's iterative, adaptive, and collaborative approach to identifying and managing automated vehicle priorities.

APTA Releases Report on Clean Public Transit

The *American Public Transportation Association (APTA)* released a [report on the potential benefits of alternative fuel technologies in transit vehicles](#). The report indicates that more than 17 percent of U.S. transit buses were electric or hybrid vehicles in 2016. State and Federal grant programs have helped transit agencies nationwide to purchase alternative fuel transit technologies, including the acquisition of hybrid or battery electric buses, as well as improvements to infrastructure.



Accountability

VDOT Considers Nonmotorized Count Program

The *Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)* released a [report that considers the feasibility of planning and implementing a pedestrian and bicycle count program in Virginia](#). The report, which was cosponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, identifies populations that would be served by the program, the potential frequency of data collection, and the applicability of count data. Count data for walking and bicycling in Virginia will help VDOT to plan projects, prioritize improvements, and invest strategically in its transportation system. The report recommends that VDOT pilot a nonmotorized count program in one or more districts to inform future actions.

APHA Publishes Guide for Local Health Departments

The *American Public Health Association (APHA)* released a [guide for local health departments](#) with considerations for transportation as communities and health departments consider health and equity responses to extreme weather and sea level change. The report notes the importance of multimodal transportation networks in supporting physical activity and reduced climate impacts.