

Human Environment Digest

August 23, 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

New Toolkit on Improving Safe Access to Parks

The *Safe Routes to School National Partnership* released a [Safe Routes to Parks Walk Audit Toolkit](#), to help communities improve safe access for people walking and bicycling to parks. A walk audit is a formal or informal process that allows community members to assess the walking environment and discuss potential improvements. The toolkit provides resources for holding walk audits and improving safe access to parks.

National Complete Streets Coalition Webinar Addresses Pedestrian Fatalities

The *National Complete Streets Coalition* hosted an August webinar titled, "[People are dying on our streets: Why is this happening and how can we talk about it responsibly?](#)" The webinar focused on how media reporters and city leaders can adjust their language to avoid frames that encourage "victim blaming" of pedestrians, and to further acknowledge the role of street design in contributing to pedestrian fatality rates. The webinar offered suggestions for how reporters can use better data to tell a more comprehensive story about traffic fatalities.



Infrastructure

FHWA Releases Transportation Alternatives Annual Report

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)* has published the fiscal year 2017 [Transportation Alternatives Annual Report](#). Each State and the District of Columbia submitted a report detailing their transportation alternatives project applications and selections that will use FY 2016 and 2017 funds.

FHWA Releases New Reports on Context Sensitive Solutions and Design

The *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Human Environment* released two reports on Context Sensitive Solutions and Design (CSS/D). The "[Using Context Sensitive Solutions to Achieve Context Sensitive Design - State of the Practice Assessment](#)" provides information on how CSS/D has evolved over time and highlights key takeaways from interviews and group discussions with 12 States, case studies, and a review of all State DOT websites for CSS/D content. The "[Summary Report: Using Context Sensitive Solutions to Achieve Context Sensitive Design - Technical Assistance and Virtual Peer Exchanges](#)" covers key takeaways from targeted technical assistance provided in six States and four virtual peer exchanges to better incorporate CSS/D in transportation decision making.

TRB Releases Report on Assessing Value of Transportation Projects

The *Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)* released a report titled "[How Transportation Agencies Assess the Value of Added Capacity Highway Projects Versus Other Modal Projects and Strategies](#)," which summarizes the methods and policies that State and local transportation agencies employ to evaluate and compare transportation improvement strategies. The report focuses on evaluation of how public funds are best used to "increase mode choices, reduce congestion, improve travel times, improve safety, and efficiently move freight." This report provides information to help practitioners quantify the benefits, costs, and economic impacts of various transportation improvement strategies.

Report Identifies Benefits of Bicycling

The *Barcelona Institute for Global Health* released a study, "[The Effects of Transport Mode Use on Self-Perceived Health, Mental Health, and Social Contact Measures](#)." The study identified bicycling as the transportation mode associated with the greatest health benefits including self-perceived physical and mental health, as well as fewer feelings of loneliness. The study included seven European cities and more than 8,800 participants, who completed baseline and final surveys about their modal choices and perceived physical and mental health. Key findings suggest that bicycling and walking should be encouraged to improve physical and mental health, as well as social outcomes.



Innovation

FHWA Kicks-Off Virtual Public Involvement Initiative

As part of the [fifth round of Every Day Counts \(EDC-5\)](#), the *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty* is leading an initiative to support agencies' efforts to engage the public more effectively by supplementing face-to-face information sharing with [virtual public involvement techniques](#). Virtual public involvement strategies can streamline information sharing and consideration by decision makers during planning and project development phases.

USDOT Releases Comprehensive Management Plan for Automated Vehicle Initiatives

The *United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)* released a "[Comprehensive Management Plan for Automated Vehicle Initiatives](#)" as the first step in an iterative framework to specify the Department's goals, activities, and method of measuring progress for departmental initiatives related to automated vehicles (AVs). Broadly, the report defines *USDOT's* goal as preparing for emerging technology to ensure a positive relationship between innovation and safety. The report also reiterates *USDOT's* commitment to transparency and active engagement of stakeholders in the development of policy related to emerging technology.

Florida DOT Releases Report on Using Communication Technologies to Enhance Public Involvement

The *Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)* released a report entitled "[Use of Communication Technologies to Enhance Public Involvement in Transportation Projects](#)". The report considers the application of communication technologies to disseminate information, facilitate two-way remote communication, and assist participation at public meetings. Key findings determine that a multi-pronged approach using both traditional public meetings and new communications technologies is most effective for public engagement in transportation projects.

NGA Releases Governors' Transportation Innovation Roadmap

The *National Governors Association (NGA)* released a new [policy roadmap](#), which provides governors with ideas to prepare States for the increased influence of connected and automated transportation technologies. The roadmap examines the potential uses and impacts -including those affecting low-income and rural populations - of connected and automated vehicles; electrified transportation; ride-hailing and car-sharing; and drones on transportation systems. The report concludes that governors should support technological innovation by proposing updated legislation, enhancing data systems, and educating the public on the benefits and risks of these innovations.