

Human Environment Digest

December 17, 2015

Welcome to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Human Environment bi-weekly 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.

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.

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Announcements

President Obama Signs FAST Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act."](#) It is the first law enacted in over 10 years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, meaning States and local governments can move forward with critical transportation projects. The *US Department of Transportation* has provided [a brief summary of the FAST Act on transportation.gov](#) and has written about the Fast Act on the [Fast Lane blog](#).

USDOT Announces Smart City Challenge

US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx [announced a Smart City Challenge](#) to create a fully integrated, first-of-its-kind city that uses data, technology, and creativity to shape how people and goods move in the future. The winning city will be awarded up to \$40 million from the *US Department of Transportation* (USDOT) to implement bold, data-driven ideas that make transportation safer, easier, and more reliable. Additionally, Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Inc., has announced its intent to award up to \$10 million to the USDOT winner of the Smart City Challenge. Additional [details are available](#) on the USDOT website.

Bicycle/Pedestrian



FHWA Releases Pedestrian and Bicycle Case Studies

The *Federal Highway Administration* (FHWA) released "[Case Studies in Delivering Safe, Comfortable, and Connected Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks](#)," a report that provides an overview of pedestrian and bicycle network principles and highlights examples from communities across the country. The US Department of Transportation's Fast Lane blog [highlighted top takeaways from the report](#).

GAO Releases Report on US Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

The *US Government Accountability Office* (GAO) released "[Pedestrians and Cyclists: Cities, States, and DOT Are Implementing Actions to Improve Safety](#)," a report that analyzes pedestrian and bicycle traffic accidents and fatalities

from 2004 to 2013. The report found that pedestrian and bicycle fatalities make up an increasing share of total US traffic fatalities. It discusses reasons why these accidents and fatalities may be increasing as well as solutions that are being implemented at the National, State, and local levels.

Economic Development



Smart Growth America Releases Guidebook for Revitalization

Smart Growth America (SGA) released "[\(Re\)Building Downtown: A Guidebook for Revitalization](#)," a resource for local elected officials who want to re-invigorate and strengthen neighborhood centers of economy, culture, and history through a smart growth approach to development. The guide uses SGA's seven-step approach to downtown redevelopment. A [recording of the kickoff webinar](#) held on December 15, 2015, is also available.

Environmental Justice



TRB Releases Report on the Effects of Innovative Transportation Services on Mobility

The *Transportation Research Board* (TRB) released Special Report 319, "[Between Public and Private Mobility; Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services](#) ." This report analyzes how innovative transportation services, including ridesharing, carsharing, bikesharing, and microtransit, are changing mobility. It also discusses the implications of a decline in, or even the demise of, taxi companies in places where low-income, disabled, and older persons rely on taxis, including wheelchair-accessible taxis, for lifeline services.

Health



VTPI Publishes Paper on Active Transport Benefits and Costs

The *Victoria Transport Policy Institute* (VTPI) published "[Evaluating Active Transport Benefits and Costs; Guide to Valuing Walking and Cycling Improvements and Encouragement Programs](#) ." The report describes methods for evaluating the benefits and costs of active transport (e.g., walking and cycling). Benefits include improved personal health for users and decreased environmental impacts for society. The report also discusses ways to increase walking and cycling activity, and concludes that many active transport benefits tend to be overlooked or undervalued in conventional transport economic evaluation.

Livability



FHWA Publishes New Livability Case Study on Transportation Solutions in Lewiston, Idaho

The *Federal Highway Administration's* (FHWA) Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty published "[How a Port City Transformed its Downtown-Lewiston, ID](#)," a case study that discusses the unique transportation challenges in Lewiston, Idaho, and several solutions the city has implemented to improve its downtown. Solutions include: establishing a downtown business improvement district to increase business and community support for transportation projects, as well as context sensitive design strategies.

TFN Announces Round Eight of Partners for Places Grant Program

The *Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities* (TFN), in partnership with the *Urban Sustainability Directors Network*, announced Round Eight of Partners for Places. Partners for Places is a matching grant program for cities and counties in the United States and Canada to improve communities by building partnerships between local government sustainability offices and place-based foundations. The grant program provides partnership investments between \$25,000 and \$75,000 for 1-year projects, or \$50,000 and \$150,000 for 2-year projects, with a match requirement. The application deadline is January 29, 2016 (by 11:59 p.m., any time zone).