



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Transit Research and Industry News Update Contents – November 2009

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SPECIAL

Charter for Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety

This charter establishes the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C., App. 2. The TRACS is in the public interest and supports the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in performing its duties and responsibilities under 49 U.S.C. Section 5329. More online at: <http://transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/Publications/order/singledoc.asp?docid=1083>

U.S. Department of Transportation Motorcoach Safety Action Plan

The U.S. Department of Transportation released its Motorcoach Safety Action Plan which lays out concrete steps for improving motorcoach safety across the board. The action plan addresses major safety issues such as driver fatigue and inattention, vehicle rollover, occupant ejections, and oversight of unsafe carriers.

“We are committed to making sure that bus travelers reach their destinations safely,” said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “These improvements will not only help reduce the number of motorcoach crashes, it will also help save lives and reduce injuries.”

This comprehensive action plan proposes enhanced regulatory oversight of new and high risk motorcoach operators, as well as the increased use of new technologies. To address driver distraction, it proposes to initiate rulemaking to prohibit texting and limit the use of cellular telephones and other devices by motorcoach drivers. It also discusses requiring electronic on-board recording devices on all motorcoaches to better monitor drivers’ duty hours to address fatigue, and enhanced oversight of unsafe carriers. More online at: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/reports/HS811177.pdf>

U.S. Seeking to Set Transit Safety Rules

The Obama Administration is proposing that the federal government oversee safety regulations for subway and light-rail systems after several serious accidents. It also wants to monitor bus operator fatigue, ban driver cell-phone use, and require seat belts on commercially-operated buses to improve safety.

"Safety is our No. 1 priority when it comes to planes, trains and automobiles," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in an e-mailed statement. "It only makes sense that we should be looking out for passengers who ride subways, too." The Secretary will release the full initiative December 8 as he testifies before a House subcommittee overseeing transit. More online at:

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/20091117_U_S_seeking_to_set_transit_safety_rules.html

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Advanced Technology Bus Rapid Transit

FTA Project: CT-26-70004-03
Record Type: Research in Progress
Funding: \$625,000
Schedule: August 2009 – December 2011
Performer: Southeast Area Transit Authority
21 Route 12
Preston, CT 06365
Contact: Ella Bowman
Phone: 860-886-2631
FTA Project Monitor: Helen Tann, TRI
Phone: 202-366-0207
Fax: 202-366-3765
Email: Helen.Tann@dot.gov

Description. This third amendment provides for the purchase of the first of two advanced- technology vehicles for the Southeast Area Transit Authority advanced technology bus rapid transit (BRT) project. Overall, the advanced technology BRT project will collect, analyze, and compare performance data of the new vehicles alongside data on existing vehicles to obtain information on operating cost, performance and reliability comparisons of advanced vehicles operating under a range of seasonal conditions. These data will aid transit planners and operators in making better vehicle selections and in finding the best use of these vehicles.

Index terms: Advanced Technology Bus Rapid Transit, Comparison, Conventional Bus, Data Collection, Performance, Operating Cost

Travel Management Coordination Center

FTA Project: OH-26-7249
Record Type: Research in Progress
Funding: \$100,000
Schedule: August 2009 –December 2010
Performer: Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority
2000 Summit Road
Kent, OH 44240
Contact: Bryan Smith
Phone: 330-678-7745
FTA Project Monitor: Aletha Goodine, TRI
Phone: 202-366-4148
Fax: 202-366-3765
Email: Aletha.Goodine@dot.gov

Description. The objective of this amendment is to continue to support the effort of Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (Portage Area RTA) to advance development of a travel management coordination center (TMCC) as part of the Mobility Services for All Americans (MSAA) initiative. Portage Area RTA is one of the four TMCC Phased Implementation project sites. The expected result of this phase of the initiative is twofold: (1) development of a TMCC module to coordinate transportation solutions within the context of all participating agencies, and (2) development of a TMCC interface that will interconnect existing scheduling software packages. The MSAA Initiative aims to improve transportation services and simplify access to employment, healthcare, education, and other community activities by application of advanced ITS technologies.

Index terms: Mobility Services for All Americans, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Travel Management Coordination Center, Human Resources

The Center for Transportation and the Environment

FTA Project: GA-26-7007
Record Type: Research in Progress
Funding: \$190,610
Schedule: July 2009 – July 2012
Performer: The Center for Transportation and the Environment
 730 Peachtree Street, Suite 330
 Atlanta, GA 30308
Contact: Steve Clemont
Phone: 678-244-4155
FTA Project Monitor: Sean Ricketson, TRI
Phone: 202-366-6678
Fax: 202-366-3765
Email: Sean.Ricketson@dot.gov

Description. The objective of this cooperative agreement is to support the efforts of The Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) to develop and promote the research efforts of the Southern Hydrogen Fuel Cell Coalition (SHFCC). The SHFCC brings together public and private entities to address a broad range of issues and challenges associated with transportation fuel cell applications and flywheel technology and the infrastructure needed for the continued advancement of these technologies. The primary focus of the SH FCC is on medium-and heavy-duty vehicle applications as well as the infrastructure necessary to support these vehicles.

Index terms: Fuel Cell Application, Flywheel, Energy Efficiency, Clean Fuel Technology, Hydrogen Fuel Cell Coalition, Infrastructure, Public Transit

FEDERAL RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Catalog of 2010 Practice-Ready Papers

Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Technical Activities Division has released the TRB Annual Meeting catalog of 2010 practice-ready papers. Papers in the catalog have been identified as containing information that has potential for immediate application by practitioners in daily operations. Each entry in the catalog includes an abstract of the paper and contact information for the authors to facilitate interaction between the researchers and practitioners. The complete texts of most of the papers in the catalog will be on the Annual Meeting Compendium of Papers CD-ROM. The practice-ready papers website includes links to catalogs back to 1998. More online at: <http://www.trb.org/Publications/Public/PubsPracticeReadyPapers.aspx>

Detection of Radioactivity in Transit Stations—Phase 2

Transit stations are potential targets for terrorist attacks because they are open areas that serve large numbers of people daily. To protect against that threat, pervasive radiation detection is needed at all times. This report, "Detection of Radioactivity in Transit Stations, Phase 2," documents the final results of the Transit IDEA Project 54. The purpose of the Transit IDEA Project 54 was to install, test, and evaluate a prototype system to detect dangerous levels of radioactivity in rail transit stations. A prototype system was installed in a Metrorail station of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. This project report discusses the results achieved.

Innovations Deserving Exploratory Analysis (IDEA) Program is managed by the Transportation Research Board. The Transit IDEA Program is funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as part of the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP). The Transit IDEA Program fosters development and testing of innovative concepts and methods for advancing transit practice. More online at: <http://144.171.11.40/cmsfeed/TRBNetProjectDisplay.asp?ProjectID=2263>

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Research Results

FRA's Human Factors Program within the Office of Research and Development released its September 2009 issue, Research Results. It highlights the new safety process called Changing At-Risk Behavior (CAB) that is being conducted at Union Pacific's San Antonio Service Unit (SASU) with the aim of improving road and yard safety. CAB is an example of a proactive safety risk-reduction method called Clear Signal for Action (CSA). CSA combines behavior-based safety, continuous improvement, and safety leadership development. Overall, strong evidence exists that locations practicing CSA are becoming safer. With sponsorship from FRA, the performing organization is instructing and advising on the implementation of CAB. More online at: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/Research/rr0920.pdf>

Extra—Easter Seals Project ACTION Monthly Electronic Newsletter

Easter Seals Project ACTION is constantly offering something new products, services, training opportunities, facts and reports to help all who are working toward the mission of creating and improving accessible transportation for people with disabilities. Stay in-the-know on everything happening at Easter Seals Project ACTION by subscribing to the monthly electronic newsletter called Extra.

Easter Seals Project ACTION is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and is administered by Easter Seals, Inc. The program promotes cooperation between the transportation industry and the disability community to increase mobility for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and beyond. More online at:
http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_Newsletter_Extra

Guidebook for Rural Demand-Response Transportation: Measuring, Assessing, and Improving Performance

TCRP Report 136: “Guidebook for Rural Demand-Response Transportation: Measuring, Assessing, and Improving Performance” will be of interest to rural public transportation systems that provide demand-response transit (DRT) services and to the communities they serve. The Guidebook is a resource to assist DRT systems to measure, assess, and improve their performance, focusing on DRT systems in rural areas.

This research is sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration and conducted in the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) which is administered by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. TCRP is an applied research program that provides solutions to practical problems faced by transit operators. More online at: <http://www.trb.org/Publications/PubsTCRPPProjectReports.aspx>

Guidelines for Rail Base Inspection and Rail Condemnation Limits for Corrosion-Induced Material Loss

TRB’s Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Web-Only Document 47: “Guidelines for Rail Base Inspection and Rail Condemnation Limits for Corrosion-Induced Material Loss” explores the maximum allowable material loss in the rail base as part of an evaluation of the causes and effects of corrosion on rail base.

This research is sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration and conducted in the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) which is administered by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. TCRP is an applied research program that provides solutions to practical problems faced by transit operators. More online at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_webdoc_47.pdf

Federal Project Approval Process Remains a Barrier to Greater Private Sector Role and DOT Could Enhance Efforts to Assist Project Sponsors

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has released a report that explores the private sector's role in public transportation projects, and examines a public-private partnership pilot program managed by the Federal Transit Administration. The study found that the private sector role in delivering and financing transit projects through alternative approaches, such as public-private partnerships, has been more limited than in international projects. The study found that the private sector role in U.S. projects has focused more on project delivery rather than project financing, while the private sector role in international projects has focused on both project delivery and financing.

More online at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1019.pdf>

RECOVERY

A Day in the Life of a Recovery Act Transit Grant

Santa Rosa CityBus received a Recovery Act grant of \$4.2 million for paratransit services, solar bus shelters, and eligible operating assistance. This grant prevented service cuts and fare increases, and helped save 10 jobs — mechanics and bus drivers — in a city where unemployment is running nearly a full percentage point higher than the national average. More online at: <http://fastlane.dot.gov/2009/11/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-recovery-act-transit-grant.html>

BART Considers Stimulus Funds to Avoid Layoffs

The financial picture at Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) district is growing darker, but the transit district hopes it can stave off more layoffs or service cuts and fare increases by using some of its federal economic stimulus money to run trains.

Since BART approved its budget and won more than \$100 million in savings from its labor unions the budget deficit for the current year has grown from a projection of \$22 million to an estimated \$26 million. Officials blame larger-than-expected drops in ridership and sales tax revenue. But instead of cutting 70 to 80 employees, the transit district plans to divert a \$20 million combination of stimulus funds and other federal funds into operating expenses. More online at: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/11/20/BAG11ANJVR.DTL&tsp=1>

Hybrid Metro Mobility Buses Hit the Road in Minnesota

Metro Mobility's first hybrid electric vehicles are now on the road. The 15 new buses, bought with federal stimulus dollars, replace 15 diesel-powered vehicles in the public transportation service fleet for people with disabilities. Each bus is equipped with wheelchair lifts and other safety features and costs \$110,000. Funding to purchase the buses was part of \$70.6 million appropriated to the Metropolitan Council earlier this year by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for metro-area transit projects.

The bulk of the transit stimulus money was used to buy 90 buses for the Metro Transit fleet, 27 small buses for dial-a-ride service, and to help pare a projected transit shortfall. In addition to the initial appropriation from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Council and Metro Mobility applied for and received another \$1.1 million in competitive stimulus money that will be used to purchase an additional 10 hybrid electric buses for the Metro Mobility fleet. More online at: <http://www.masstransitmag.com/publication/article.jsp?siteSection=3&id=10110>

Transit, Road Contractors Expect less Business in 2010, Coalition Poll Shows

About 80 percent of road and transit contractors expect a construction market decline next year despite the effects of stimulus dollars because the multi-year transportation reauthorization bill remains stalled in Congress, according to a survey recently conducted by the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC).

Nearly 70 percent of the 527 respondents said they received stimulus-funded contracts this year. However, 63 percent said they laid off employees in 2009 because of adverse business conditions and 44 percent expected to lay off additional workers. More online at: <http://www.progressiverailroading.com/news/article.asp?id=21991>

ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Transportation Research Program for Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change and Conserving Energy

TRB Special Report 299: “A Transportation Research Program for Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change and Conserving Energy” suggests that federal, state, and local policy makers need informed guidance about the effectiveness, costs, feasibility, and acceptability of transportation strategies to mitigate transportation greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy and to adapt to climate change. This report covers strategies affecting travel and mode choice, models and decision tools, infrastructure investment options, and infrastructure construction, operation, and maintenance. The committee that prepared the report recommends beginning a research and development initiative by making a modest investment of \$40 million to \$45 million annually in the next surface transportation authorization that would be used to develop the best available guidance quickly on the basis of existing information and then begin to improve that guidance over time as new research is completed. More online at: <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/sr/sr299.pdf>

Santiago, Chile Installs Green Walls in Subway Stations

Rush-hour commuters in Chile are breathing easy thanks to new green living walls being installed in subway stations in the capital city of Santiago. Green walls are gaining popularity the world over. Platform-level gardens, that is, living walls are said to improve indoor air quality, fight noise pollution, and make for a pleasant commute for residents and visitors alike. More online at: <http://dcnonl.com/article/id36395>

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Security 101: A Physical Security Primer for Transportation Agencies—Surface Transportation Security Volume 14, NCHRP Report 525

Security 101: A Physical Security Primer for Transportation Agencies provides transportation managers and employees with an introductory-level reference document to enhance their working knowledge of security concepts, guidelines, definitions, and standards. This is a document for use primarily by those who are neither security professionals nor well versed in security language.

Security 101 focuses on physical security, the part of security concerned with measures and concepts designed to (1) safeguard personnel; (2) prevent unauthorized access to equipment, installations, material, and documents; and (3) safeguard equipment, installations, material, and documents against espionage, sabotage, damage, and theft. Physical security is integral to an all-hazards approach to preparedness. More online at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_525v14.pdf

NTSB Issues Safety Recommendations

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is making the recommendations to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration requiring all new motor vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds to be equipped with direct tire pressure monitoring systems to inform drivers of the actual tire pressures on their vehicles and the development of performance standards for all motorcoaches requiring overhead luggage anchoring, head and neck injury prevention, occupant protection system, occupant crash protection system, roof strength, and more.

The NTSB is also making the recommendations to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regarding the establishment of a regulatory requirement within 49 Code of Federal Regulations 382.405 that provides the NTSB, in the exercise of its statutory authority, access to all positive drug and alcohol test results and refusal determinations that are conducted under the U.S. Department of Transportation testing requirements, and other recommendations. More online at <http://www.metro-magazine.com/News/Story/2009/11/NTSB-reiterates-safety-recs.asp>

Obama Administration Proposes Seatbelts, Other Safety Measures for Long Distance Buses

The Obama Administration proposes safety requirements for long-distance buses/motorcoaches including seatbelts and stronger roof standards. A motorcoach safety plan released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration calls for developing performance requirements for bus roofs before the end of this year and issuing a rule by early next year on installation of seatbelts.

Motorcoaches are buses with elevated passenger decks over a baggage compartment. They are widely used for service between cities and by the tour industry. More online at: <http://www.latimes.com/business/nationworld/wire/sns-ap-us-motorcoaches-seatbelts,0,3286503,print.story>

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Financing Tools and Partnerships for Rural and Semi-Urban Transportation Projects

The Center for Transportation Research at the University of Texas, Austin has released a report that examines financing techniques and partnerships for rural and small urban area transportation projects. The research examined alternative financing options, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) experience with them, and lessons learned. The results will be of use by TxDOT district staff in developing partnerships with local and private entities to address local needs.

More online at: http://www.utexas.edu/research/ctr/pdf_reports/0_6034_P1.pdf

Integrated Vehicle-Based Safety Systems Third Annual Report

The Integrated Vehicle-Based Safety Systems (IVBSS) program is a five-year, two-phase cooperative research program being conducted by an industry consortium led by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI). The program goal is to assess the safety benefits and driver acceptance associated with a prototype integrated crash warning system designed to address rear-end, roadway departure, and lane change/merge crashes for light vehicles and heavy commercial trucks.

This report describes accomplishments and progress made during the third year of the program and activities planned for the following year. Accomplishments detailed in this report include making refinements to the integrated crash warning system, conduct of additional verification testing and extended pilot tests, the analysis of data, and the construction of the fleet of 26 research vehicles. The program is sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. More online at:

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/64263/1/102369.pdf>

Personal Rapid Transit: Winona is Ready

Embracing technology and innovation has been the catalyst for economic growth in Minnesota. This 10-page brochure highlights the City of Winona, Minnesota as the site selected for the development of a Personal Rapid Transit System (PRT) project. The combination of Winona's demographic patterns, public/private partnerships, and unique university resource is identified as an appropriate testing environment for PRT.

“Winona State University offers its support for the Personal Rapid Transit project in the City of Winona, Minnesota. With its history as a transportation center, its access to the resources of three institutions of higher education... Winona State University would be

proud to support the city on this project,” - Judith Ramaley, President, Winona State University. More online at:

http://faculty.washington.edu/jbs/itrans/winona_brochure.pdf

University of Delaware Adds Hydrogen Bus to Fleet

The University of Delaware's (UD) newest bus, a 22-foot, 22-seat vehicle that runs on hydrogen, tooled around downtown Wilmington on Monday, Nov. 16, carrying some very important riders — U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.), U.S. Representative Michael N. Castle (R-Del.), and Wilmington Mayor James Baker.

The ride was part of a briefing session to update Delaware's congressional delegation about the progress of the university's fuel cell research—research for which they secured \$1.7 million in funding in 2007 from the Federal Transit Administration. The bus, built by California-based Ebus, features fuel cells from Ballard Power Systems. Newark, Del.-based Air Liquide is providing a climate-controlled facility to store the vehicle. More online at: <http://www.metro-magazine.com/News/Story/2009/11/U-of-Delaware-adds-hydrogen-bus-to-fleet.aspx>

INTERNATIONAL

Developing Countries 2009

TRB's Transportation Research Record No. 2114 includes 10 papers that explore increasing the efficiency of road development aid; bus rapid transit systems in India; citywide transit integration in Sao Paulo, Brazil; carbon dioxide emissions from land transport in India; and transportation greenhouse gas mitigation in Nanchang, China, and more. More online at:

<http://trb.metapress.com/content/n16507864668/?p=0cb79cf5f82a44fa8866399171cc5f9a&pi=1>

Indian Bus Rapid Transit Systems Funded by the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission

This paper reviews the planning, implementation, and initial operation of bus rapid transit systems (BRTs) in India. The initial four cities that received funds under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) are reviewed: Ahmedabad, Indore, Jaipur, and Pune. The paper describes relevant characteristics of the BRTs being implemented in each city and provides comments on planning, design, and institutional arrangements. The projects are an important departure from traditional urban transport practices in Indian cities—they prioritize the use of public transport and nonmotorized modes. However, this preliminary survey suggests that in most cases a strong focus remains on infrastructure, while other elements of BRTs receive less attention. As a result, the full potential of BRTs is not necessarily attained. Regarding planning activities, it is noted that demand estimation and operations design could have been more elaborate. This paper provides general recommendations for planners, decision makers,

and funding agencies in an effort to improve the state of the practice in India and other developing countries. More online at:
<http://trb.metapress.com/content/n16507864668/?p=0cb79cf5f82a44fa8866399171cc5f9a&pi=1>

Towards Sustainable Production and Use of Resources: Assessing Biofuels

The United Nations Environment Programme has released a report that explores published research about the risks and benefits of biofuels. More online at:
http://www.unep.fr/scp/rpanel/pdf/Assessing_Biofuels_Full_Report.pdf

Transportation Research Program Administration in Europe and Asia

The Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and National Cooperative Highway Research Program sponsored a scanning study of Europe and Asia to review transportation research program administration practices. The scan team sought policy initiatives and improvements to enhance transportation research administration in the United States. Team recommendations for U.S. application include building international relationships in transportation research to achieve global goals, and strengthening the innovation process by examining international research institutes that link the creation and application of knowledge. More online at:
<http://international.fhwa.dot.gov/pubs/pl09015/pl09015.pdf>

RESEARCH NEWS & RESOURCES

Associated Press Poll: Sometimes It Isn't Easy Being Green

A solid majority of Americans recognize the need to help the environment, although there are some things — like buying a hybrid car or taking mass transit — that people often talk about, but don't necessarily act on. That's shown in a survey of more than 1,000 adults that sought to gauge attitudes about the environment.

The telephone poll, conducted for The Associated Press and NBC Universal, found that 60 percent of those surveyed felt either a "great deal" or "a lot" of personal responsibility to protect the environment, while 37 percent rarely, if ever, even thought about the impact of their actions on the Earth's health. More online at:
http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5ghAQ6gUsDZh7yQ2dX3HbbdM_OsIQD9C1QPVO0

Bay Area Burden: Examining the Impacts and Hidden Costs of Housing and Transportation

The Urban Land institute has released a report that examines the costs and impacts of housing and transportation on the San Francisco Bay Area residents, their neighborhoods and environment. More online at: http://bayareaburden.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Bay-Area-Burden_FINAL_lowres.pdf

CTA Fare Deal Gets Final Approval

The Regional Transit Authority's board of directors, which oversees the CTA, Metra and Pace, officially signed off on a plan that was brokered by Governor Pat Quinn and transportation officials last week. Under that plan, the RTA will issue bonds to fund the CTA's capital improvement projects necessary maintenance that keeps buses and trains running safely and efficiently. The RTA's bonds will be for a total of \$166.6 million over two years. Under the deal, the state will pay interest on the bonds for 2010 and 2011, and possibly beyond that if the RTA is not meeting its funding goals. More online at: <http://www.masstransitmag.com/publication/article.jsp?siteSection=3&id=10106#>

DC Metro Wrestles with Growing Suicide Problem

When a woman put herself in the path of a Red Line train at the Brookland station Friday evening, November 20, she became the latest statistic in a growing problem for Metro. The woman was at least the ninth person to kill herself using a Metro train this year. The alarming suicide toll includes a 15-year-old boy, a Metro employee and a 57-year-old man who jumped in front of a train just a week ago. The transit agency reported just two cases each in 2007 and 2008. More online at: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/local/Metro-wrestles-with-growing-suicide-problem-8564095.html>

Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities for the First Half of 2009

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has released a Traffic Safety Facts sheet that includes early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first half of 2009. According to the report an estimated 16,626 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes from January to June 2009. This represents a decline of about seven percent as compared to the 17,871 fatalities that occurred in the first half of 2008. More online at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811207.PDF>

Feds to Check if BART Service and Fares Amounts to Bias

Federal officials set to review the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system for bias. A federal agency says it is conducting a civil rights review service and fares in part because of a complaint that a planned rail extension to the Oakland International Airport would unfairly benefit affluent airline travelers over minority public transit riders.

In an October 28, 2009 letter released Tuesday by rail extension critics, the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights said it will send employees to the Bay Area in the next few months for a review of BART's compliance with anti-discrimination laws. More online at: http://www.contracostatimes.com/search/ci_13810618

Indiana DOT Launches Statewide Traveler Website

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) announced expansion of its free TrafficWise traveler information service to include updated reports for all State Roads, U.S. Highways and Interstates around the state. The Free Service lists Road Conditions, Construction Work on State Highways. Starting November 19, 2009, motorists now have a new tool to plan their travels by visiting [TrafficWise.IN.gov](http://www.in.gov) or dialing 800-261-ROAD (7623).

More at link: http://www.in.gov/portal/news_events/44107.htm

Landscapes on the Edge: New Horizons for Research on Earth's Surface

The Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, part of the National Academies' Division on Earth and Life Studies (DELS), has released a report that identifies nine research challenges and four research initiatives designed to advance the study of how Earth's landscapes change. According to the committee that produced the report, these challenges and initiatives could open the path to resolving environmental issues, from coastal erosion to landslides, by helping predict how processes such as wind, ice, water, tectonics, and living organisms drive changes in the Earth's surface. DELS, like TRB, is a division of the National Academies, which include the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council.

More online at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12700

Stranded at the Station: The Impact of the Financial Crisis

This report documents the devastation of transit cuts and fare increases on America's communities. Americans across the country, in towns large and small, are being hurt by fare increases and deep cuts in public transportation service, an epidemic that did not have to happen, according to a new report from Transportation for America and the [Transportation Equity Network](#).

Stranded at the Station is the first systematic analysis of the conundrum faced by communities and their transit systems—historic ridership and levels of demand for service, coupled with the worst funding crisis in decades. The nationwide demand for public transportation is at historic levels and growing, but funding for the day-to-day operations of these transit services is built on an unstable foundation. This report shows that without federal support, many transit systems will be unable to meet the demand now and in the future. More online at: <http://t4america.org/resources/stranded/>

Transit Use is Growing, but Not Where You Think

Transit saw some big ridership increases over the past few years, but maybe not where you'd expect. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows the top ten metropolitan areas where transit use has increased the most. Metro areas like Charlotte, NC, Detroit, MI, and Riverside, CA, have seen the nation's highest increases in transit use between 2006 and 2008. Listed here are the top 10 metropolitan statistical areas where commuting by

public transportation has grown the most. None of them are among the nation's top 10 most populous metro areas, and yet seven are within the top 20. So what's behind the story? Why are these smaller metros topping larger regions when it comes to growth in transit use? More online at: <http://www.planetizen.com/node/41730>

TR News September-October 2009: Demographic Changes Driving Change: Ensuring Mobility for All—Safely, Efficiently, Equitably

The September-October 2009 issue of TR News includes the following articles:

- Changing Demographics Change the Transportation System
- Travel Demand in the Context of Growing Diversity: Considerations for Policy, Planning, and Forecasting
- Changes in Travel Characteristics by Gender: U.S. Commuting Trends from a National Sample, 1985–2005
- Key Issues in Transportation and Aging: Ensuring Safe Mobility for Older Adults
- The Safety and Mobility Patterns of Older Women in 2030: Defining and Meeting the Challenges. More online at; http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/TR_News_SeptemberOctober_2009_Demographic_Changes_162566.aspx

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