



Top Stories

2/23/18 – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [finalized](#) minimum sound requirements for hybrid and electric motor vehicles aimed at making it easier for blind pedestrians, as well as cyclists and other road users outside of cars, to better hear quieter hybrid and electric vehicles operating at low speeds. Although initially finalized in December, some automakers filed petitions for reconsideration of certain aspects.

2/15/18 – As part of a House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee [hearing](#) on positive train control, a technology aimed at preventing rail accidents that is required to be installed by the end of 2018, Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson [said](#) there is the possibility that trains which lack PTC technology will not be allowed to operate on Amtrak-owned tracks. If such a decision were to be implemented on the Northeast Corridor outside the New York City metro area, millions of commuters could be significantly impacted. Additionally, there will likely be areas of the country where Amtrak trains won't operate after the deadline passes due to the track itself, that is not owned by Amtrak, lacking the necessary technology.

2/15/18 – The National Safety Council [estimated](#) there were 40,100 traffic-related deaths in 2017, a number that if confirmed, would represent a 1 percent drop from 2016 levels. However, this is the second consecutive year the annual fatality total has been above 40,000 after not having reached this level since 2007.

2/14/18 – At a [hearing](#) before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, NHTSA's Deputy Administrator Heidi King was unable to provide a specific timeline in which it would finalize a rule pertaining to requirements, such as Digital Short-

Range Communication devices or 5G networks, for vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication. NHTSA issued a [proposed](#) rule in January 2017 with the comment period ending in April.

2/2/18 – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [reported](#) traffic on U.S. roads continued to increase to new records in November 2017, increasing by 1.1 percent, or 2.8 billion vehicle miles from the previous year.

1/25/18 – The Department of Justice (DOJ) [issued](#) a new policy that prohibits the agency from using its civil enforcement authority to convert agency guidance documents into binding rules. Under DOJ's new policy, its civil litigators are prohibited from using guidance documents—or noncompliance with guidance documents—to establish violations of law in affirmative civil enforcement actions. Countless numbers of active federal guidance documents are currently in use.

From Congress

2/12/18 – The Senate confirmed three DOT nominees: [Raymond Martinez](#) to lead the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), [Adam Sullivan](#) to be assistant secretary of governmental affairs for the Department of Transportation (DOT), and [Ron Batory](#) to head up the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). [Martinez](#) was formerly the New Jersey Vehicle Commission chair. Chief administrator [Sullivan](#) was a Senate Labor, HHS & Education, Appropriations Subcommittee staffer and formerly worked in congressional relations at Department of Labor during the George W. Bush Administration. [Batory](#) was formerly the president and COO of Conrail.

2/8/18 – A House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee minority staff [report](#) found "significant gaps" in DOT's drug and alcohol testing program. Minority committee staff found that drug misuse and abuse among transportation workers are on the rise and included 15 key recommendations for Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

2/8/18 – House Democrats [released](#) their own infrastructure proposal that proposes spending \$1 trillion federal dollars, five times more than the \$200 billion investment called for by President Donald Trump's plan.

1/30/18 – The Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) examining recent changes made to infrastructure project review requirements. The report indicated that while some of the new provisions enacted by Congress had sped up review times, the Federal Highway Administration, should provide additional guidance and technical assistance to states to help them improve even further.

From the Administration

2/15/18 – The Federal Railroad Administration [issued](#) a notice funding opportunity for \$68 million in Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant money. Lawmakers appropriated funding for the program, which the FAST Act established, in fiscal 2017.

2/12/18 – President Donald Trump [announced](#) his nomination of former [Representative Thelma Drake](#) to be administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Drake is currently assistant director of public works for the city of Norfolk, Va. She served in Congress from 2005 to 2009 and was a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Drake is also a former state lawmaker and former director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

2/6/18 – The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) unanimously approved a [report](#) finding FRA's failure to require safety-sensitive railroad workers to be medically screened for disorders like obstructive sleep apnea contributed to two New

York-area commuter rail crashes and "jeopardizes public safety."

2/6/18 – FTA [updated](#) its procedures for handling requests for waivers from regulations following disasters for calendar year 2018.

Other

2/7/18 – A report [unveiled](#) by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found the share of car crashes involving drowsiness to be nearly eight times higher than official NHTSA figures indicate. Drawing from a federally funded study of 3,593 drivers, who were monitored via in-car cameras, the new report calculates the percentage of time drivers' eyes were closed in the final minutes before a crash. Between 8.8 and 9.5 percent of all crashes involved drowsiness, the analysis found—a stark contrast to the federal estimate of 1 to 2 percent.