**FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation University Course**

**Module: 20 – Leadership in Implementation**

**Assignment: Media Portrayal and Perception of Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes**

**PROMPT**

How does media coverage of pedestrian and bicycle crashes influence the perception of walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation?

Students should analyze media coverage of a recent bicycle or pedestrian crash and write a letter to the editor to discuss what was not covered or should be covered differently. Pay special attention to the vocabulary used in the media coverage. It may be helpful to review multiple articles about crashes to better understand patterns and trends. Consider the following questions:

* Does the article use a victim/villain storyline? Who are the victim(s) and villain(s)? Does the article imply that the victim was at fault or could have avoided negative consequences through different behavior?
* Does the article use passive voice, non-agentive language, or object-based language to talk about a crash? (e.g., “the pedestrian was hit by a car” instead of “the driver drove into the person crossing the street”)

Required reading for back ground information on media portrayal of crashes:

* Ralph, K., Iacobucci, E., Thigpen, C. G., & Goddard, T. (2019). Editorial patterns in bicyclist and pedestrian crash reporting. *Transportation Research Record*, 2673(2), 663-671. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361198119825637

Optional reaching:

* De Ceunynck, T., De Smedt, J., Daniels, S., Wouters, R., & Baets, M. (2015). “Crashing the gates”: Selection criteria for television news reporting of traffic crashes. *Accident Analysis and Prevention, 80*, 142-152. doi:10.1016/j.aap.2015.04.010.