



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, October 18th, 2019

Volume 32, Number 3

In This Issue

- [MOBILE MPO UPDATES](#)
- [SOUTH AL RPO UPDATES](#)
- [PROJECTS LET SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2019](#)
- [LEGISLATIVE UPDATES](#)
- [FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)
- [JUST FOR FUN](#)
- [IN THE NEWS](#)
- [TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH](#)

Recently Completed Planning Studies

[Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan](#)

[Toole Design Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile](#)

[2018 Unified Planning Work Program](#)

[2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program](#)

[Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones](#)

Contact Us

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transportation@sarpc.org

Local legislators are asking trucking lobbyist for help on bridge funds (see *Legislative Updates*). There's a new funding source to get Veterans to health care facilities (see *Funding Opportunities*). Road diets are taking shape around Mobile and the Rail Commission is seeking city and county support (see *In the News*).

The Mobile MPO has developed a Transportation Planning Survey

A survey has been created to supplement our existing public participation portion of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks in the Mobile urban area. Answers to this survey are noncommittal, but will serve as a baseline for public input and further data analysis. Please take a few minutes to take our survey [HERE](#).

This week's *Just For Fun* is scary...

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!



www.mobilempo.org Check us out on FACEBOOK

SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

[Planning and Community Development](#)

[Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Employment and Economic Development](#)

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP

Mobile MPO Updates



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Envision2045
Invest in your transportation Future
Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan

Please help up by providing input on your transportation priorities and projects for the Mobile Urbanized Area. The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization(MPO) is seeking your input via an online survey. The Mobile MPO, comprised of locally-elected officials, sets regional transportation policy and determines where to allocate federal funds.

Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to alternative modes. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission(SARPC) invites decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the general public to participate in the survey. SARPC is seeking feedback on transportation major infrastructure projects, initiatives and policies. Transportation priorities such as congestion, freight, transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian, and other transportation modes will be addressed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Your comments can help SARPC's planners to develop a wide-ranging, action-oriented transportation plan. The Envision2045 plan being developed will also serve as a basis for allocating limited federal money aimed at roadways, bridges, and public transportation facilities.

To complete the survey, please visit: <https://www.envision2045.org/>.

Please contact Kevin Harrison at kharrison@sarpc.org with any questions or requests for further information.

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Recently the consultant selection committee listened to presentations from the three shortlisted firms concerning *Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study*. The groups that presented were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Mott-MacDonald, and VIA Mobility. All firms did a great job at presenting, and were scored and ranked by the committee. The consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin Mills and Cawood as a sub consultant. We would like to get the study under way as soon as possible and are waiting for ALDOT approval to give the consultant the go ahead. We will keep you posted.

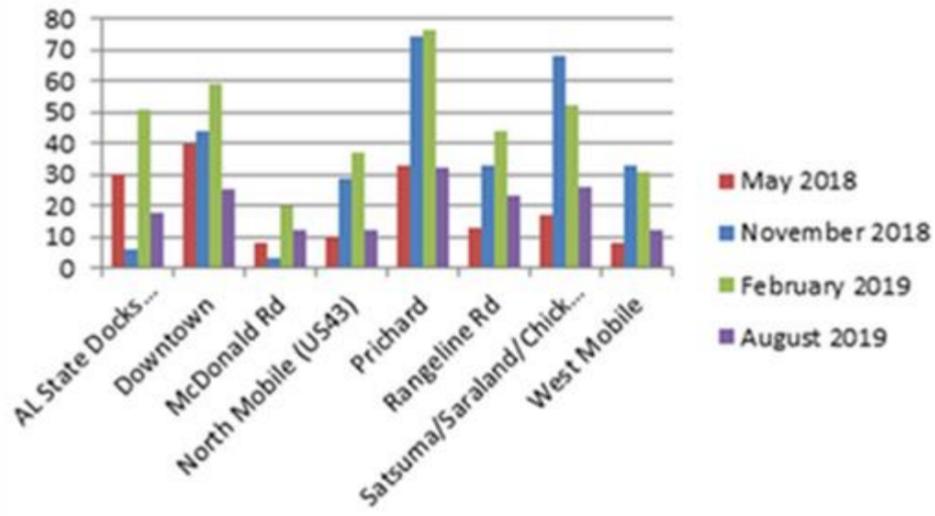
Click on link below to see the Scope of Work
[Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study \(6/27/19\)](#)

If you would like to be part of this study, please call Kevin Harrison for details.

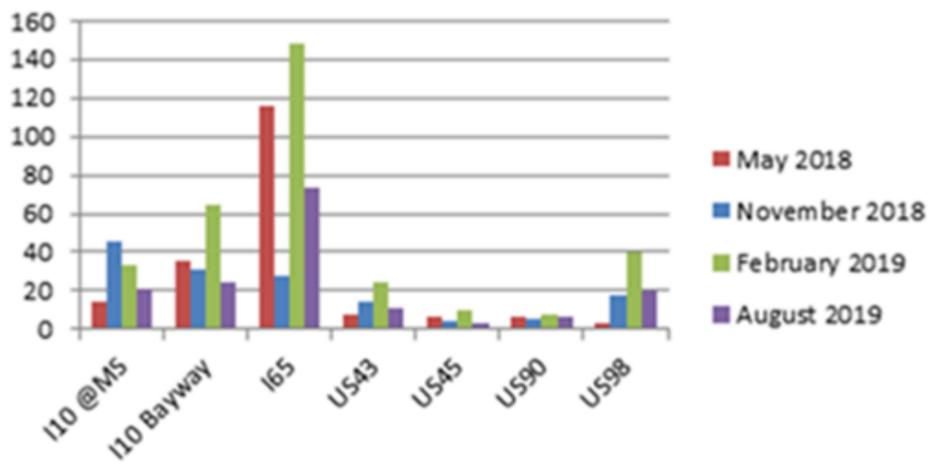
FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their fourth quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for two days APM Terminals had on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from and where they are going. APM Terminals will continue to gather this information quarterly for our benefit of validating truck data for the travel demand forecasting model.

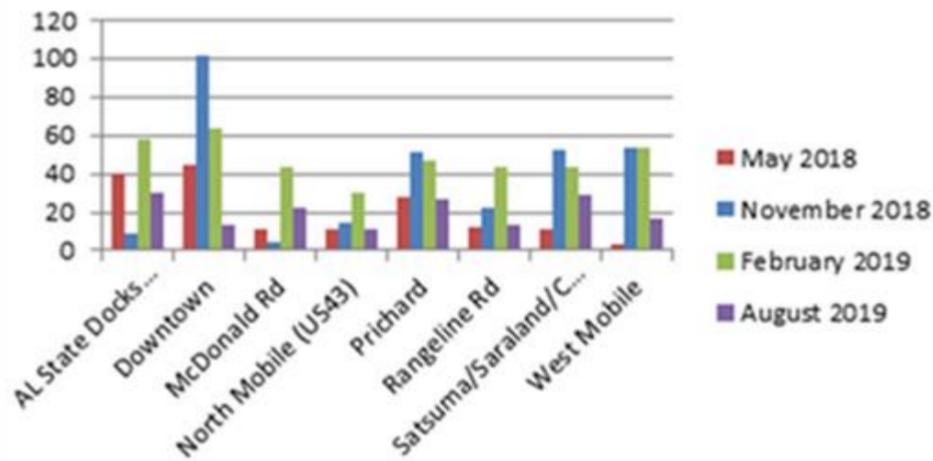
Trips Originating within Mobile County



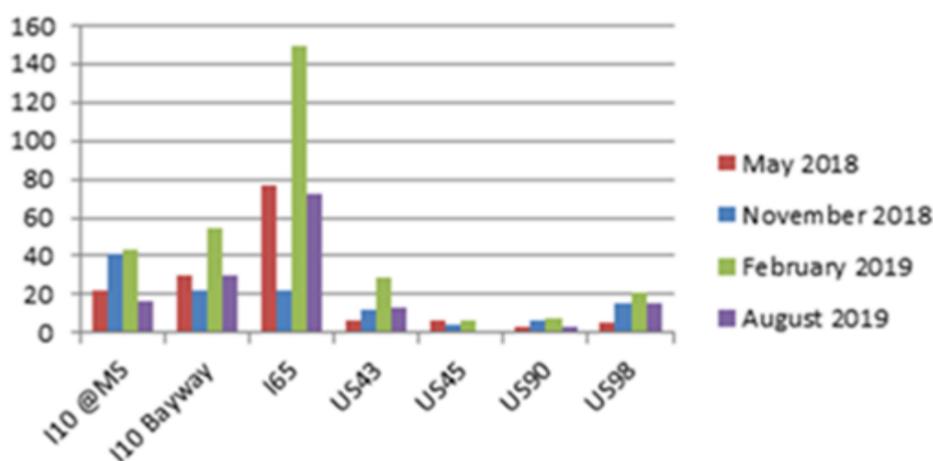
Where Trips Originating outside of Mobile County Are Entering



Where Trips are Dropping Off within Mobile County



Where Trips Dropping Off outside of Mobile County are Exiting



[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area [Destination 2040](#). The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project would reduce congestion on I-10 in South Alabama through the addition of additional capacity: a new six-lane bridge over the Mobile River, full replacement of the existing Bayway with an eight-lane structure, and redevelopment of seven interchanges. The project would run from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com.

The Alabama Department of Transportation on August 28, 2019 ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

The target start date, plan status, or project engineers estimated amount has changed for the following:

Project : 100049566 (CN)

Federal aid number : ACBRF 0016 (522)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : REPLACE BRIDGE, BIN 008714, SR-16 (US-90) WESTBOUND OVER TENSAW-SPANISH RIVER. (SUFF=49.7, STATUS=SD)

Old Engineers Estimate : \$24,841,688.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$29,684,846.89

South Alabama RPO Updates

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Meeting

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) had a meeting of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee last Thursday, September 19, 2019 at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsedale, Alabama.

Items discussed were current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of our region by the ALDOT Southwest Regional Office.

Other items on the agenda included:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (attached and available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)

Projects in Region Let September 27th, 2019

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on Dunlap Drive over Pinto Pass in Mobile. Length 0.085 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,447,445 to \$1,769,100 .

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-213 (Shelton Beach Road) from the junction of SR-158 to the junction of SR-13 (US-43) in Saraland. Length 2.452 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$641,964 to \$784,623 .

[What's Under Construction?](#) [Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Legislators ask trucking lobbyists for help on bridge funds

Posted by [John Mullen](#) | Oct 16, 2019 | [Baldwin County](#), [Bay Briefs](#)

Lawmakers from both Baldwin and Mobile counties are appealing to two trucking industry lobbyists in a quest to haul in federal funding for a new Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project.

“We were hoping we could enlist your help in putting pressure on some of our congressional and national leaders to help prioritize this particular project, especially from the other I-10 states like Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California,” one of the letter states. “This benefits the truckers in your organization just as much as it does our local residents and the many travelers along I-10. We appreciate any and all help you and your organization could be willing to give us on this.”

Four-term State Rep. Joe Faust, R-Fairhope, led the effort with the letters and was joined by Baldwin Reps. Steve McMillan, R-Foley, Harry Shiver, R-Bay Minette, Alan Baker, R-Brewton, and Matt Simpson, R-Daphne. Mobile lawmakers who also signed were Reps. Barbara Drummond, D-Mobile, Chip Brown, R-Mobile, Shane Stringer, R-Citronelle, Victor Gaston, R-Mobile, Chris Pringle, R-Mobile, and senators David Sessions, R-Grand Bay, and Jack Williams, R-Georgetown.

“I felt this was something we could do to help further spur the federal government to step up and help us with the funding for this project,” Faust said. “The trucking industry is the lifeblood of our country, and those truckers and the organizations that help support them can certainly carry a lot of weight up there in Washington [D.C.]. We’re hoping to work with any ally we can to help make this project a reality, so the trucking lobby seemed like an easy, natural ally in this quest.”

Faust said it was a team effort from representatives from both sides of Mobile Bay. The letters were addressed to Chris Spear of American Trucking Associations and David Owen of the National Association of Small Trucking Companies.

“We’ve had bipartisan support on this from both the Baldwin and Mobile delegations,” Faust said. “It’s gratifying to see so many of our local legislators signing on to this, and I’m hopeful it can help have a positive impact on the funding needs we have here.”

A new bridge project favored by the state was turned away by bitter local opposition after a toll plan of \$6 each way was announced to fund the project. State Sen. Chris Elliott, R-Daphne, was a leader in the effort to find alternative funding or at least a more affordable toll. He says in retaliation Gov. Kay Ivey kicked him off of the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II Committee. Elliott didn’t sign either letter to the trucking lobbyists.

With this new effort, Faust said, his group is reaching out to state officials and Ivey and is getting positive feedback.

“I’ve been in contact with the governor’s office and spoken with her chief of staff, former Congressman Jo Bonner, who was supportive of us doing this,” Faust said. “Everyone seems to be on the same page with this; this is a project we have to have, and the federal government ought to be doing more to help with this project.”

New Congressional Infrastructure Caucus Promotes Access, Resilience

[Eugene Mulero](#) | Staff Reporter
October 17, 2019 2:45 PM, EDT

WASHINGTON — Congestion relief, climate resilience and transit accessibility are among the policies a small group of U.S. House lawmakers are promoting as Congress readies a comprehensive highway bill.

The newly formed Future of Transportation Caucus is focused on advancing a new vision to modernize the country’s transportation landscape that is anchored on ensuring access for users on freight and passenger corridors.

Priority will be given to equity, access and sustainability across modes of transportation rather than advocating exclusively for additional funding, caucus leaders explained Oct. 17.

“It’s time we jump-start this conversation about fundamentally rethinking our transportation policy and objectives,” said Rep. Chuy Garcia (D-Ill.), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and caucus co-chairman. He shares chair duties on the caucus — which has attracted nearly two dozen members — with Reps. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) and Mark Takano (D-Calif.) .

“Our policies and investments must intentionally prioritize mass transit systems, protect frontline communities and alleviate the environmental health hazards caused by traffic congestion every day,” said Pressley, who also sits on the House Financial Services Committee.

The group’s aim is to present policy recommendations to transportation leaders during the crafting of the legislation that will update the 2015 FAST Act highway law. The House transportation committee intends to take up the reauthorization bill early next year. The objective is to clear the bill for the president’s desk prior to the FAST Act’s expiration in the fall of 2020.

While transportation policymakers are largely in agreement on the need to proceed with a comprehensive update of infrastructure policies, they continue to disagree on matters pertaining to funding. Few lawmakers advocate for raising federal fuel taxes as a way to boost a highway account used to assist states with projects. Instead, most members of Congress advocate for adopting other sources of funding.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), a member of the tax-writing Ways and Means panel, endorses a fuel tax increase. He extended his support for the Future of Transportation Caucus on Oct. 17.

“It’s not just about money, which is important,” he said. “It’s about the connections. It’s about inclusivity. And this is coming at a time when we are trying to tie communities together,” Blumenauer said.

In recent years, policymakers have offered legislation designed to promote inclusivity across the transportation landscape. The “complete streets” concept calls for accommodating commercial vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, buses and transit along the same system.

Lawmakers also have sought to advance climate resilience provisions in various measures. Most recently, a Senate surface transportation panel reported a five-year, \$287 billion highway reauthorization this summer that included provisions meant to ensure corridors are rebuilt with the capability of withstanding the impact of severe weather events.

In the House, transportation panel Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) recently indicated his reauthorization version will include climate resilience proposals. He said in an interview with Transport Topics he plans to transition away from the Eisenhower-era concept of highways and take the country on a new approach that embraces technological advancements.

The advocacy group Transportation for America endorsed the caucus. The group detailed guiding principles for investment, which included prioritizing maintenance, designing corridors for safety instead of speed, and connecting individuals to employment opportunities and communities.

As the group put it, “Since the dawn of the modern highway era, we have used vehicle speed as a poor proxy for access to jobs and important services like health care, education, public services and grocery stores. The way we build roads and design communities to achieve high vehicle speed often requires longer trips and makes shorter walking or bicycling trips unsafe, unpleasant or impossible.”

States Find Gas Tax Increases Still Not Paying for Infrastructure Funding

With no Federal gas tax increase in sight, 31 states have upped their gas tax prices since 2013 but it's still not enough. Today, states use over 54 different funding mechanisms in an attempt to pay for their crumbling infrastructure.

JESSICA LOMBARDO OCTOBER 17, 2019

For more than 25 years, the Federal government has let the Highway Trust Fund, the source of money for Federal infrastructure projects, lose its purchasing power. That's because the gas tax has been stuck at 18.4 cents per gallon for gasoline and 24.4 cents for diesel fuel since 1993.

While construction costs have [increased 125% since 2003](#), funding has not. Instead of waiting for Washington to get it together, states have taken it upon themselves to fund their own infrastructure projects. Since 2013, 31 states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation that will increase or may increase overall state gas taxes. However, passing a gas tax increase is not an easy task, and even states that have done it successfully are finding they still don't have enough money to pay for the projects they need done.

South Carolina is just one example. In 2017, it passed a 12-cent per gallon gas tax increase which was less than what was initially proposed but a compromise to get the legislation passed. Legislators were warned when they passed the 2017 compromise, the first increase in 30 years, that the 12-cents per gallon hike and other vehicle fees weren't enough to fix the state's entire road system, the nation's fourth largest, and they are now realizing that was true.

A Senate panel has now been created to explore how to step up widening projects on the worst stretches of congestion, potentially sparking another years-long debate over road funding.

“We can't wait until 2040 or 2050 to deal with this,” Senate Minority Leader Nikki Setzler, the panel's co-chairman, said. “We as a state have got to determine how we address the catastrophic needs we have now, or we'll be left behind the rest of the Southeast. We've got to try to figure out how do we move faster. ... I don't think people realize the magnitude or the time it takes to address it.”

The problem is that critical projects to reduce congestion are being delayed due to lack of funding. The state is now considering tolling certain sections of its roads in order to make more money in the short term. The panel will also investigate other funding mechanisms as well. To read this entire article, click [HERE](#).

HIGHWAY EMERGENCY RELIEF:

Federal Highway Administration Should Enhance Accountability over Project Decisions

GAO-20-32: Published: Oct 17, 2019. Publicly Released: Oct 17, 2019.

After a disaster, states and the federal government share the cost of rebuilding roads and bridges. But the federal government pays for emergency repairs to quickly reopen essential routes.

We found at least 3 projects related to the 2017 hurricanes that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) may have inappropriately classified as emergency repairs. For example, a Texas ferry project received \$10 million in emergency funds, but available highways served the same routes immediately after the hurricane.

To ensure future projects are classified appropriately, we [recommended](#) FHWA clearly define emergency repairs and document its rationales.

One of the Federal Highway Administration's emergency repair projects after the 2017 hurricanes was to fix this roadway in Puerto Rico after a landslide caused its collapse.



Source: GAO. | GAO-20-32

What GAO Found

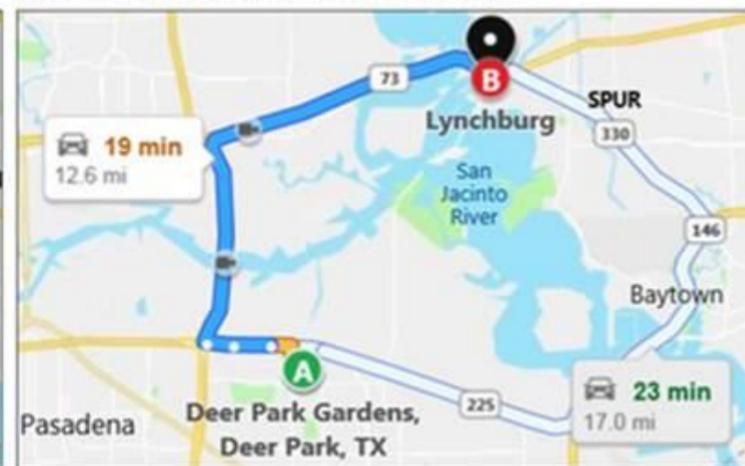
GAO found that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) did not document the bases for decisions to classify projects as emergency repairs in 22 of the 25 project files reviewed. Without such documentation, it is not possible to definitively determine the justification for these decisions; GAO identified at least three projects that may have been inappropriately classified. For example, FHWA classified a \$10.7 million ferry project in Lynchburg, Texas as an emergency repair to restore essential traffic. Several highways, however, were available immediately following the disaster that service the same locations and result in faster travel times than the ferry. FHWA guidance does not require officials to document decisions to classify projects as emergency repairs or clearly define what constitutes restoration of essential traffic. Designating projects as emergency repairs can increase the federal fiscal exposure in disasters. Had FHWA classified the ferry project as a permanent repair—instead of an emergency repair—the state would have been responsible for paying approximately \$2.1 million in matching funds.

Travel Times Using The Lynchburg Ferry and Alternative Routes

Traveling by ferry takes about 40 minutes



Traveling by highway takes about 20 minutes
(up to 45 minutes during rush hour from 4:30 to 6pm)



Source: GAO and Bing, 22 July 2019, Web. | GAO-20-32

GAO also identified two temporary bridge projects in Puerto Rico classified as emergency repairs even though (1) work did not start within 180 days of a disaster, as generally required; (2) the bridges are not to be completed until late 2019 and early 2020; and (3) both are to be replaced by permanent bridges within a couple of years. Out of approximately 1,200 eligible projects in Puerto Rico, FHWA officials reported undertaking 34, including the two

bridges GAO identified, after 180 days. Officials also stated they did not document the basis for continuing to classify these projects as emergency repairs. FHWA officials in Puerto Rico stated they were not required to complete repairs within the 180 day limit established in law because Congress exempted Puerto Rico from federal matching share requirements. Further, emergency repair projects are allowed to expedite contracting and environmental procedures. After GAO raised this issue with FHWA, the agency stated that emergency repair projects are only permitted to use these expedited procedures within the first 180 days. While officials stated they plan to update guidance to include this policy, there is no specific timeline for doing so.

Why GAO Did This Study

In 2017, hurricanes in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico caused \$1 billion in estimated damage. FHWA's Emergency Relief Program provides funding for states to repair or reconstruct federal-aid highways damaged or destroyed by natural disasters, including funding for emergency and permanent repairs. As of September 2019, FHWA has allocated \$634 million in federal funds to the two states and Puerto Rico. By statute, emergency repairs are undertaken during or immediately following a disaster to quickly restore essential traffic and minimize further damage. These repairs receive 100 percent federal reimbursement if accomplished within 180 days and may proceed under expedited contracting and environmental procedures.

GAO was asked to evaluate the federal response to the 2017 disasters. This report assesses how FHWA applied program guidance to classify selected emergency relief projects, among other objectives. GAO visited 33 out of approximately 2,500 projects in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico; analyzed 25 emergency repair project files; and interviewed FHWA, state, and local government officials.

What GAO Recommends

FHWA should (1) document decisions to classify projects as emergency repairs and more clearly define what constitutes restoration of essential traffic, and (2) identify a specific timeline for clarifying the policy on when expedited contracting and environmental procedures are permitted. DOT concurred with GAO's recommendations and provided technical comments that GAO incorporated as appropriate.

For more information, contact Susan Fleming at (202) 512-2834 or FlemingS@gao.gov.

Funding Opportunities

VA Offers Highly Rural Transportation Grants

The Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) is offering a grant for transportation of veterans in highly rural areas (VA-HRTG-NEW-2019) for potential first-time grantees to help Veterans in highly rural areas travel to VA or VA-authorized health care facilities. This program provides grant funding to Veteran Service Organizations and State Veterans Service Agencies to provide transportation services in eligible counties. The deadline to apply is **October 31, 2019**. Learn more from Grants.gov here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=320174>

Also view the program website for more information on the program and a list of prior grantees, the counties they serve, and other information:

https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/highly_rural_transportation_grants.asp.

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning 2019 Notice of Funding

Date Posted: 9/18/2019 Date Closed: 11/18/2019

Opportunity ID:

FTA-2019-010-TPE

Grant Program:

[Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning – Section 20005\(b\)](#)

Opportunity Announcement TXT:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/html/2019-20192.htm>

Opportunity Announcement PDF:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/pdf/2019-20192.pdf>

Details:

09/18/2019. Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the availability of approximately \$19.19 million in Pilot Program for TOD Planning funding to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects. FTA may award amounts ranging from

\$250,000 to \$2,000,000. Synopses and full announcement are posted on Grants.gov site as opportunity [FTA-2019-010-TPE](#). Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 18, 2019.

Summary: The Pilot Program for TOD Planning provides funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning in new fixed guideway and core capacity transit project corridors. As required by statute, any comprehensive planning funded through the pilot program must examine ways to improve economic development and ridership, foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility, improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations. The statute also requires that the planning work be associated with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit project as defined in Federal transit statute (49 USC 5309(a); also see the NOFO for the definitions).

Consistent with statutory direction, FTA is seeking comprehensive planning projects covering an entire transit capital project corridor, rather than proposals that involve planning for individual station areas or only a small section of the corridor. To ensure that planning work reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community and results in concrete, specific deliverables and outcomes, FTA is requiring that transit project sponsors partner with entities with land use planning authority in the transit project corridor.

[Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#)

FTA Providing \$19.2M In Comprehensive Planning Grants (deadline November 18th)

The Federal Transit Administration is making \$19.2 million in grant funding available to support “comprehensive planning” for public transit projects by encouraging ridership, improving transit access, or supporting economic and mixed-use development near public transportation projects.

The agency issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) on September 18 for that grant money, noting that applicants must be an FTA grantee; either a project sponsor of an eligible transit project or an entity with land use planning authority in the project corridor. The deadline for grant applications is November 18.

“Convenient and safe access to public transportation for all is a priority for FTA,” said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams [in a statement](#) – adding that these grants are being offered through the agency’s [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development](#) or TOD planning.

“This program is an excellent opportunity for communities to plan transit-oriented development that improves mobility for citizens and captures the value associated with new transit projects,” she said.

Last year, FTA said it awarded \$16.6 million in grants to 20 organizations for such comprehensive planning efforts, such as making zoning changes to encourage development along a proposed bus rapid transit line in Indianapolis and conducting an analysis of multi-modal access to stations along a proposed light rail line in Maryland.

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

Authoritarian Secretary Of Transportation Declares She Has Ultimate Right Of Way In Every Traffic Scenario



WASHINGTON—Threatening to use her absolute power to run over anyone who dares stand in her way, authoritarian Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao declared Tuesday that she has the ultimate right of way in every traffic scenario. “Whether I am a pedestrian, a driver, or a cyclist—from today onward, all 325 million Americans on the road must yield to me and me alone,” said Chao, adding that all traffic lights, as well as “four-way, three-way, or two-way” stop signs no longer apply to her, and frankly, never really did. “Furthermore, if I speed by a police car, fire truck, or ambulance, they are the ones who must turn off their sirens and promptly pull over to side of the road. And train conductors? They must stop and let me through the gates if I’m ever parked at a railroad crossing. So consider this a warning, because violators will be immediately sentenced to life in prison without trial.” At press time, a seething Chao slammed her fist on a podium and began chanting “all will yield” to a terrified audience.

In the News

New traffic pattern completed on Dauphin Island Parkway

[MOBILE COUNTY](#)

by: [Katarina Luketich](#)

Posted: Oct 17, 2019 / 11:04 AM CDT / Updated: Oct 17, 2019 / 11:04 AM CDT

MOBILE, Ala. (WKRG) — Work is now completed on a new traffic pattern on Dauphin Island Parkway. It’s being called a “road diet.”

A portion of Dauphin Island Parkway just north of the Dog River Bridge has been reduced from five lanes to three, including the center turn lane. Removing one lane of travel from each direction allows space for bike lanes.

ALDOT posted a video on twitter that reminding drivers to be aware of the bike lanes. The video shows the correct and incorrect ways to turn off Dauphin Island Parkway.

Bike lane buffers should never be driven or biked in. The DIP bike lane buffer will soon have hash marks, making it more prominent. Please help keep the bike lane safe by not cutting into the bike lane in order to turn.



The Peninsula of Mobile nonprofit has been working with ALDOT on the change as they were already working on a resurfacing project. Mel Washington is an avid cyclist and a board member for The Peninsula of Mobile. He says that stretch of DIP is not so heavily traveled and reducing lanes to increase safety for cyclists makes sense.

“There’s enough road for cyclists and drivers. If we all cooperate, we’ll all recognize that there is enough space for cyclists and drivers and we won’t have any problems,” Washington said.

Transportation's looming overhaul

[Joann Muller, Alison Snyder](#) 10/18/2019

The transportation industry is teetering between tried-and-true business models of the past and an alluring, but uncertain, future.

The big picture: The modernization of cars, trucks, planes and public transit could be one of the greatest reordering of civilization since the dawn of the horseless carriage. But progress in the [\\$1.5 trillion transportation industry](#) is getting snagged on technological, regulatory and social issues.

What's happening: A historic shift to cleaner, more economical, automated transportation is underway.

- More than 1,400 self-driving cars, trucks and other vehicles are being tested across the country, [according to](#) Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.
- Electric cars are going mainstream, with [35 battery-powered models](#) available in U.S. showrooms next year and 130 by 2026, per IHS Markit.
- Cities are rolling out [electric bus and rail systems](#) to try to curb emissions as well as [congestion pricing](#) to reduce traffic.
- Fledgling microtransit systems — from [on-demand shuttles](#) to e-bikes and scooters — aim to fill the transportation gap in some cities.
- UPS just won [permission to launch the first commercial drone delivery service](#) and Uber, Boeing, Google and others are developing [air taxis](#).

All of this change is roiling an industry that provides jobs to [13.3 million people](#) in the U.S. and represents a 9% slice of the U.S. economy.

- **The future**, industry leaders predict, is a clean, highly-tuned, multimodal transportation system that includes shared, connected vehicles running on electrons rather than gasoline and in which driving is optional.

But that vision is being challenged by unforeseen technical hurdles, crumbling infrastructure and a stalled-out federal government that has yet to create standards and regulations for the coming changes, leaving strapped states struggling to step in.

- Meanwhile, cars, trucks, planes and ships continue to [pump carbon dioxide](#) into the atmosphere, accounting for nearly 22% of global carbon emissions in 2018, per the IEA.
- President Trump has gone to [battle with California](#) over auto emissions laws, causing regulatory uncertainty for automakers during what is likely to be a long court battle.
- All the while, a culture of convenience is fueling a fast delivery system that is putting more vehicles on the road and [more CO2](#) in the air.
- Companies have to solve the stubborn technical challenges associated with [AVs](#) and EVs, but also figure out how to make money from vehicles that consumers aren't interested in or don't trust.
- The world's largest automakers — once drivers of employment and the economy — are also weathering [labor disputes](#) and are caught up in politics as trade wars persist and the global economy is reordered.

What to watch: The specter of disruption is triggering enormous R&D investment by automakers fearful of becoming the next Kodak, Blockbuster or BlackBerry.

- Spending on AVs, by both traditional automakers and newcomers, is forecast to grow to a cumulative \$85 billion through 2025 — on top of the \$225 billion spending for EVs, [according to Alix Partners](#).
- They're all chasing a multitrillion-dollar global market that Boston Consulting Group says is [worth \\$380 billion in profits](#).
- But there's no guarantee any of it will pay off.

"It's a gamble based on what you think will happen, but if you don't do anything, then for sure you're out of business," says Mike Ramsey, an analyst at Gartner.

Rail Commission seeking city, county support for passenger rail line

Posted by [Jason Johnson](#) | Oct 16, 2019 | [Bay Briefs](#)

Despite a lack of enthusiasm from state leaders in Montgomery, advocates pushing Amtrak's visions of a passenger rail service running from Mobile to New Orleans are hoping that tune might change if local officials can show they are willing to put "some skin in the game."

Stephen McNair, a member of the Southern Rail Commission (SRC), addressed Mobile County Commissioners this week about the possibility of the county contributing to Alabama's portion the multimillion-dollar project that aims to re-establish passenger rail routes through Mississippi and Louisiana that haven't been used since they sustained significant damage during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

With members in multiple states, the SRC has been a primary advocate and organizer for the effort.

"This train will not be the old Sunset Limited. This is going to be a commuter train — a seven-days-a-week, twice-a-day passenger rail service," McNair said. "We're still working on things like ticket price and timetables, but in the meantime, we have to find the funding, and the state is interested in seeing what kind of local commitments we can secure before it earmarks any funds toward the project."

That might be a slight understatement given the somewhat chilly reception the idea has gotten from state leaders like Gov. Kay Ivey. Despite that, the vision of Amtrak returning service to the Gulf Coast has continued to gain support in other states and among federal transportation officials. So far, tens of millions of dollars have been earmarked for the idea, but Alabama has yet to make a commitment.

The SRC has already secured a \$33 million federal grant from the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program, and McNair said Louisiana and Mississippi have also dedicated \$10 million and \$19 million to the project, respectively. Alabama has only been asked to put up about \$5.3 million to cover infrastructure costs and some initial operating expenses.

According to McNair, that figure would cover \$2.2 million worth of infrastructure upgrades to the old Amtrak stop downtown as well as another \$3 million to cover operational costs for three years.

"What we're going to be asking the city and state for will be related to the operational costs, but we believe the county would be more inclined to support a one-off payment for infrastructure costs," McNair added. "[Those costs] can be paid over a four year period."

So far, the SRC hasn't approached the county or city with a specific dollar figure request, but McNair said the project would require "committed partners" and he wanted to "start that conversation." The Mobile City Council delayed passing a resolution backing the project and encouraged Ivey to fund it earlier this year, though it did eventually pass one with far less zeal about the city's support for the project.

Among the county commissioners, there seemed to be some support for the idea, but also concerns about the logistics of bringing the project to fruition and whether it would see enough use to make it financially viable. McNair said studies have projected that a passenger rail line could be "self-sustaining by its fourth year," and in a worst-case scenario, would only cost about \$600,000 to operate annually.

Commissioners Merceria Ludgood and Connie Hudson asked McNair who the target market would be for a passenger train, and also questioned how the SRC would market a rail service to New Orleans that is currently projected to take an hour longer than driving there by car does now.

"We anticipate not only tourists coming and going to and from New Orleans and the casinos in Mississippi, but also day-to-day business travelers. We're hoping to keep the ticket prices low enough to keep everyone at the table," he said. "The trip would take longer than driving, but that's time you get back to talk on the phone, use your computer because you're not on the road."

Money aside, some officials including Ivey have been worried the project would negatively impact commercial freight, specifically coal moving through the Port of Mobile. That has especially been a concern as the state prepares to put up more \$150 million to help expand the Mobile Ship Channel.

Previously, Alabama State Port Authority President Jimmy Lyons has objected to the idea because the same lines that would be used for passenger rails are currently used for commercial freight service. Ivey echoed those concerns last year, when she declined to pledge \$5.3 million on Alabama's behalf.

McNair said the SRC has been in conversations with the port and other stakeholders about how the project could move forward without impacting them, and noted that part of Alabama's contribution to the project would create a second line so "the Amtrak doesn't stay on the main line longer than it has to."

"We want to make sure we have the support of everyone involved," McNair said. "The point of the Southern Rail Commission is to benefit not just passenger rail, but all rail services."

He also mentioned the SRC is still in the process of conducting a joint study with the Mobile Airport Authority about what it would take to build a new train station at the old Brookley airfield. That could alleviate some of the concerns about the port, but would likely take more time and money to build.

McNair said he expected the results of that study to be available within the next three to six months and said the SRC is hoping to have a specific funding request to the county by then as well. Commission President Jerry Carl said that information would be needed before the county makes any decision.

"I'd like to see some final numbers, but the idea of it is pretty neat. I've got friends that used the old Amtrak and they'd go over to New Orleans for the day, shop and come back," Carl told Lagniappe. "A regional tie, I think, is what they're trying to focus on, and I find that very thought-provoking."



ALDOT Mobile Area @ALDOTMobileArea 19h19 hours ago

A culvert removal/bridge project on US-43 over Steele Creek in Satsuma will have lane shifts that are tentatively scheduled to begin the last week of October. Wide and oversized loads will need to seek an alternate route while work is performed. Use caution in the work zone.

Planes, trains and Mobile: Why Brookley might be the 'better alternative' for an Amtrak station

Posted Oct 17, 2019

By [John Sharp | jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)

Interest might be growing toward placing a future Amtrak train station tied to the Downtown Mobile Airport.

Mobile area officials with the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) – a 21-member group of advocates for comprehensive rail activity in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama -- say it's too early to speculate where the train station will be, even if interest seems to be pointing toward a location at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley complex where the downtown airport is located.

Fueling that interest is the Alabama State Port Authority, the Mobile-based state agency that has long expressed skepticism toward Amtrak's return to the Gulf Coast connecting Mobile to New Orleans. Port officials believe a Brookley location would be preferable than having a downtown train station at the foot of Government Street adjacent to Cooper Riverside Park.

"Relocating the passenger rail facility to Brookley is a better alternative from our viewpoint, but CSX and Norfolk Southern may still have concerns," said Judith Adams, spokeswoman with the port.

A decision on where to place the train station in Mobile would occur following conversations between Amtrak and CSX, which operates freight traffic along a majority of the Gulf Coast route. A CSX representative didn't respond to a request for comment.

"The community decides where they want to put those stations," said Marc Magliari, spokesman with Amtrak. "We go to the railroads who own the tracks and see if its operationally feasible. This is not uncommon." To read the full story click [HERE](#).

New I-5 Bridge project: Here we go, again ... again

Officials stay positive about second effort, but divisive issues remain from failed Columbia River Crossing

By [Jeffrey Mize](#), Columbian staff reporter

Published: October 13, 2019

Political voices on both sides of the Columbia River are striking a positive tone and avoiding past battles as they launch a second effort to replace the Interstate 5 Bridge.

Lurking beneath the veneer of tranquility are the same issues that polarized the region a decade ago: opposition to tolling, hostility toward light rail, support for a third Columbia River bridge, concerns about climate change, and a sneaking suspicion this \$3 billion-plus megaproject will cost too much and deliver too little.

Nearly \$200 million was spent on the Columbia River Crossing. The project achieved important milestones, including the federal government's December 2011 decision that it had met the National Environmental Policy Act's stringent provisions. Eighteen months later, the project fell apart when the Washington Senate failed to match Oregon's \$450 million contribution to launch construction.

The size and complexity of such a massive project can lead to its downfall.

"Most megaprojects don't succeed," said Aaron Shenhar, an international expert on project management and CEO of The SPLWIN Group in Verona, N.J. "If anybody starts a megaproject today, they must realize that their chances for success are as good as the statistics." Continue reading this article here:

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2019/oct/13/new-i-5-bridge-project-here-we-go-again-again/>

TIGER Begins!

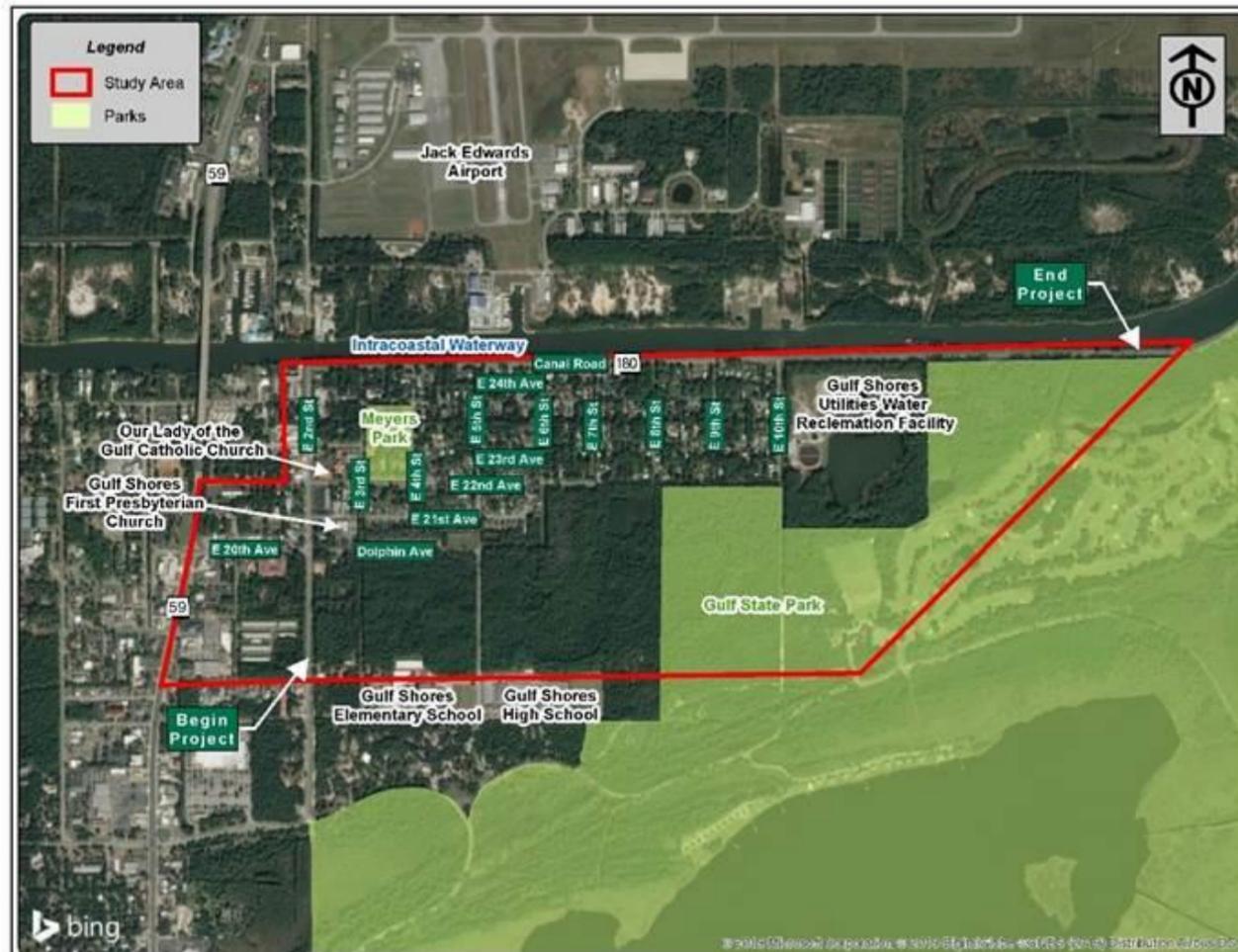
The City of Mobile began construction of the new Broad Street. The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant (TIGER) is designed to revitalize some of the most widely-used corridors with new streets, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, drainage, and landscape architecture, to increase access to work, live and play! To learn more about this grant click [here](#)

Carnival Cruise line and City of Mobile officials sign three-year extension

Aboard the *Fantasy* this week, **Carnival Cruise** line and **City of Mobile** officials signed a three-year extension, keeping the ship sailing from Mobile through November 2022. With the agreement, the Carnival *Fantasy* will continue its popular four- and five-day cruises to Mexico from the Alabama Cruise Terminal, bringing 170,000 guests to Mobile annually.

Carnival officials also announced two longer length experimental voyages – a 10-day cruise featuring a partial transit of the Panama Canal in September 2020, and a 10-day Caribbean cruise departing in September 2021.

Gulf Shores hosting Public Involvement Meeting about Canal Road Modifications



The City of Gulf Shores will host a Public Involvement Meeting for the Canal Road Corridor Study on Thursday, November 7, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Adult Activity Center, located at 260 Clubhouse Drive. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the public an opportunity to participate in the development of the proposed project.

The previously shown roadway build alignments have been revised/modified as more engineering information has become available and in response to comments received from stakeholders and the public during the public involvement meeting held for the project on May 7, 2019. A brief presentation will be given at 6 p.m. After the presentation, representatives from the City of Gulf Shores will be available at displays to discuss the proposed project and answer any questions. Comment sheets will also be made available for those who would like to submit written statements. Written statements may be mailed or e-mailed within 21 days after the meeting date to the address below.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve connectivity and provide a transportation corridor that will better accommodate the existing and projected east-west traffic volumes through the study area. The need for the project is derived from the increased traffic congestion along SR 180 (Canal Road) and along the existing neighborhood streets.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR FOR INDIVIDUALS REQUIRING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE CONTACT:

Volkert, Inc.
1110 Montlimar Drive
Mobile, Alabama 36609
251-342-1070
ATTN: Mr. Jason Goffinet / Jason.goffinet@volkert.com

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE RECEIVED AT LEAST FIVE (5) BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Transportation Research

2020 Alabama Recreational Trails Conference

SAVE THE DATE

February 5-7, 2020
Gulf State Park and Lodge
21196 E Beach Blvd., Gulf Shores, AL 36542

A fun and informative event with mobile workshops and speakers from across Alabama and the United States presenting sessions on the latest trends and ideas in creating recreational trails that are inclusive, accessible, and connected to enhance quality of life and economic development in our state!

Registration announcement coming soon!

[FTA Webinar on Transit/Shared Mobility Partnerships](#)

Date: October 15, 2019

The U.S. Department of Transportation's [Federal Transit Administration](#) will present a webinar in October through its [Mobility on Demand](#) Program. This webinar will address partnerships between public transportation providers and shared mobility companies.

[Compliance with FTA Requirements in Transit/Shared Mobility Partnerships](#)

Wednesday, October 23 at 2 p.m. ET

The webinar does not feature rural agency speakers but may offer lessons learned for rural and other areas, particularly for rural areas near urban areas that might have shared mobility companies operating nearby. [Click here](#) for more information on the webinar series.

Right of Way Acquisition and the Uniform Act

This comprehensive workshop begins with an introduction to the Federal-aid right of way process and the fundamentals of complying with the Uniform Act, Federal Highway regulations, and any State laws, regulations or requirements. Participants will walk away with a strong understanding of the Uniform Act.

This workshop should be of interest to local government employees and consultants who work in the transportation decision making process and who acquire or manage real estate for federally funded transportation projects. This includes local government officials interested in participating in federally funded projects with real property acquisitions, local government management, and staff involved in the Federal-aid real property acquisition process and newcomers to the right of way profession.

Participants completing this seminar will receive 0.60 Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The cost for this seminar is \$125.00 per person.

Payment may be made online, by phone (800-446-0382), or fax (334-844-5715) if paying with Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, or government agency purchase order. Registrants are reminded that registration is not complete until payment is made.

[Brochure for Right of Way Acquisition and the Uniform Act](#)

Printable registration form [here](#).

ADECA seeks public input into 2020 Census Grant Program

With the 2020 Census drawing closer, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is seeking public input for a grant program to assist with local outreach efforts.

Alabama's goal for the 2020 Census is to obtain high participation in every Alabama community, municipality and county. ADECA issued the Request for Information related to \$1 million in funding allocated to the agency in the 2020 Education Trust Fund budget for the 2020 Census Grant Program. The RFI is available on the [ADECA website](#). The public comments about the grant program will be accepted in writing until 5 p.m. on Friday, July 12.

The one-time grant funding is to be expended by ADECA, in coordination with the State Department of Education, to assist local community outreach efforts designed to encourage Alabama residents to complete the 2020 Census count. All grants will be awarded by Dec. 31 in preparation for the census count in March and April 2020.

After the public comment period, ADECA will work to design the full process and establish deadlines for this grant program which will provide funding assistance to help with local, grassroots outreach efforts, specifically those in hard-to-count areas and groups. The agency will host a grant application workshop once all the procedures are in place and applications are ready to be accepted.

Direct link to Request for Information:

document: <http://adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/2020%20Census%20Grant%20Program%20RFI.pdf>

ADECA has set the date for the 2020 Census Grant Program application workshop on Wednesday, September 4 at 10 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. in the Alabama Center for Commerce in Montgomery. At this workshop, we will release the details of the grant program and give an overview. The application period is planned to open on the same day as the workshop.

Please note that preregistration is required and seating is limited. ADECA will also record the workshop and post the video to www.census.alabama.gov for those unable to attend.

Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
- The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym.

For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.