



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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A Mobile MPO meeting is scheduled for March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020; the TCC/CAC met this week, please see *Mobile MPO Updates* **BUILD GRANT ANNOUNCED! TAP GRANTS ANNOUNCED! (May deadline)**, lots of grant opportunities; please see *Funding Opportunities*. The Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan is being updated, please see *RPO Updates*. Budget and new infrastructure in *Legislative Updates* and *In The News* there is electric cars, bridge talk and a Greeno Road controversy. This week's *Just For Fun* you will not need a road map...

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

[www.mobilempo.org](http://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

### Mobile MPO Policy Committee Meeting March 25<sup>th</sup>

The TCC/CAC met this past week on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The Mobile MPO will meet on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM in the GMO Building.

The 25 Year Long Range Transportation Plan (*Envision 2045*) is on the agenda for adoption. There was a public meeting concerning the LRTP *Envision 2045*, on January 29<sup>th</sup> with very limited comments. The draft plan, and all of the comments from the early public involvement can be found at [www.Envision2045.org](http://www.Envision2045.org). If you would like a hard copy of the plan to review, please let me know. At this point, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is not in the fiscally constrained LRTP, yet is a Visionary Project.

Also on the agenda is a transit Program of Projects for the FTA 5310 funding.



Envision2045  
Invest in your transportation Future  
Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan  
<https://www.envision2045.org/public-involvement.html>

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is currently updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Mobile Urban Area. LRTPs are multimodal plans that set priorities for spending federal funds on transportation projects in the Mobile Urban Area over the next 25 years. Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, and projects include improvements to highways, roads, bridges, transit facilities and service, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and related enhancements. 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.

SARPC conducted an online survey in 2019 to give the public a chance on to comment on what is most important in terms of transportation in the Mobile Urbanized Area, to help guide the 25 Year LRTP. **Click [HERE](#) for Full Results.**

A public input meeting on the draft *Envision 2045 LRTP* was held Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm, providing the public a chance to provide input.

Participation and input is encouraged from the community. If you would like a chance to comment, you may send your comments to [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org).

More information on the new plan can be found at <https://www.envision2045.org/> or by contacting Kevin Harrison, Director of Transportation, SARPC, at (251)433-6541 or [kharrison@sarpc.org](mailto:kharrison@sarpc.org).

## The **MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY** is underway



Over the years, the viability of transit in the underserved segments of Mobile County has been an important task to consider. The ability to connect those populations with daily needs and employment could be an important step in improving the quality of life for residents. Recent advancements in technology have given rise to new transit opportunities, and the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization / South Alabama Regional Planning Commission are currently engaged in studying the feasibility of a demand response transit model for our County. The demand response transit model uses a technology system to connect those in need of a ride with the provider based on the most efficient route and timing of other riders as well.



An important step in determining the feasibility of such a system includes talking with important stakeholders in the county. To further these efforts, a stakeholder roundtable meeting was held earlier this week. It is our hope that participating in this roundtable will help our consulting group gather information on the populations in need of improved transit access in Mobile County.

SARPC staff and Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood met with the LeMoyne Citizen Advisory Panel (LCAP) and presented the study last month. It was somewhat well received, with mixed emotions about commuting for shift employees. The further we dig into discovering possibilities of transit outside the WAVE, the more challenges we seem to be finding.

Via is currently working on funding scenarios, and peer reviews. This week there were conversations with ALDOT, SARPC and VIA concerning funding scenarios.

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### [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. 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](#).

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## 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](http://www.MobileRiverBridge.com). On August 28, 2019 the Alabama Department of Transportation ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

### Mobile MPO Perspective

Although the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is commonly mentioned in the above LRTP comments, currently the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is in the LRTP as a Visionary Project. This means it is NOT in the fiscally constrained LRTP, it is on a wish list of sorts as there is not available funding identified. The Bridge is also not in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); it has to be in the LRTP in order to be on the TIP.

When the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast citizens, and the local elected officials agree on how the project can be funded, ALDOT will have a better idea on what type of project can be afforded. Once this happens, and I am confident it will, the Mobile MPO can amend the *Envision 2045 LRTP*, and the TIP to include the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The Mobile MPO would like to know the facts, like how much funding is available, and where does it come from, before adopting a resolution supporting a plan.

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## Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100055881 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (602)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) FROM CR-70 (TANNER WILLIAMS RD) TO CR-31 (SCHILLINGER RD)  
Old Target start date : May 01, 2020  
New Target start date : August 01, 2020

## South Alabama RPO Updates

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### Public Notice

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is updating the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan which details which projects are eligible for Federal Transit dollars for Elderly and Disabled, Job Access and Reverse Commute projects, or those transit projects that go above and beyond the requirements of ADA.

If you are interested in, utilize, or provide transit or would like to apply for federal transit dollars for special needs transit services, please attend a Public Meeting at the GM&O Building at 110 Beauregard Street in Mobile, Alabama. The meeting will begin at 10:00 am on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> in the board room.

Please contact the Transportation Planning Department at SARPC at 251-433-6541 if you have any questions or need special assistance attending the meeting.

## Projects in Region Let February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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### MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Roadway Extension Overpass (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, and Bridge) and Jug Handle on SR-158 over a tributary of EB Seabury Creek and Partial Lott Road to include the Minor Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-158 from 0.020 mile west of the junction of Schillinger Road to 0.400 mile east of the junction of Schillinger Road in Semmes. Length 1.093 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$17,147,508 to \$20,958,065 .

### BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the junction of Crosby Road in Bay Minette to the Escambia County Line. Length 11.308 mi.

The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,982,091 to \$2,422,555 .

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-15 (US-29) from the junction of Finlay Lane to the Covington County Line. Length 18.720 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,962,024 to \$3,620,251 .

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

## Legislative Updates

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*Congress is in session.*

### Legislation would help build weather-resistant infrastructure

BY [MELINA DRUGA](#) | MARCH 2, 2020 |

Bipartisan legislation recently introduced in the U.S. Senate would assist communities and private firms in building infrastructure that will withstand severe weather.

The Built to Last Act would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to identify a federal set of forward-looking metrological information and require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to make the information available to standard-developing organizations. Organizations would then incorporate the information into building standards, codes, and voluntary certifications.

Standard-developing organizations are the primary source of the standards and codes that building planners follow. It can be a challenge to find the best available information to create design standards.

Annually, there is an estimated \$54 billion in economic losses from damage caused by hurricanes and storm-related flooding, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The bill was introduced by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) and was cosponsored by Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN).

“As severe weather becomes more and more frequent, it’s important we equip states and local communities with the modern information and technical assistance they need to build stronger roads, bridges, and facilities that can withstand the next storm or natural disaster,” Baldwin said. “This reform will not only ensure we are better protecting our infrastructure, but it will also save taxpayer dollars.”

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### Administration Releases FY 2021 Budget Proposal

Last week, the Trump Administration released its [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2021 budget proposal](#). Entitled “A Budget for America’s Future,” the budget would substantially cut funding for domestic programs, while increasing funding for defense. If adopted, the president’s budget would cut funding or eliminate programs important to regions, including workforce development, older Americans, emergency management, and energy and environment programs, community development, and the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The good news? There is no chance that this budget proposal will become law. However, the president's budget will frame all future budget and appropriations discussions.

The budget proposal has already stirred substantial criticism. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget [wrote](#) that the budget relies on "inflated economic growth assumptions, unrealistic policy savings, and other gimmicks to paper over its failure to sufficiently reduce the nation's structural deficits and counteract the more than \$4 trillion of debt the President has signed into law."

Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) [wrote in \*The Hill\*](#) that the president's budget is "a declaration of war on hardworking Americans, littered with misplaced priorities and callous cuts unsuccessfully pursued in past requests. At a time when many working families face challenges like stagnant wages and rising health care costs and struggle to get ahead under this administration, the president's budget request would take our country in the wrong direction."

But just as there have been significant criticisms of the president's budget, there have also been those organizations and individuals who have praised it. The Heritage Foundation [wrote](#) that "President Donald Trump's proposed budget for fiscal year 2021 would reduce the size and reach of the federal bureaucracy significantly by shifting government responsibilities back to constitutional priorities and empowering state and local governments. . . These reforms, [contained in the request Trump sent Monday morning to Congress](#), would put the budget on track to balance and represent a significant first step toward reducing spending and stabilizing the nation's unsustainable debt."

Perhaps the most significant budget cuts would be to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. The president's budget would cut Medicare by roughly \$500 billion, Medicaid by \$900 billion, and Social Security by \$24 billion over the next ten years.

Cuts to social and human services programs are likely to have a major impact. The president's budget proposed the following funding cuts:

- The Department of Energy by 8 percent;
- The Department of Health and Human Services by 10 percent;
- The Department of Labor by 11 percent;
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development by 15 percent;
- The Department of Commerce by nearly 50 percent; and
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 26 percent.

Funding for the Department of Homeland Security would be increased by 3.2 percent, most of which would go to immigration enforcement.

Specifically, the president's budget would:

- Eliminate funding for the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program;
- Eliminate funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- Eliminate funding for 50 EPA programs including those that help fight pollution, radon, and lead as well as those that give clean water grants to small and disadvantaged communities;
- Reduce funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency by \$535 million;
- Eliminate \$500 million in funding for "duplicative and unproven job training programs;"
- Eliminate funding for several Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs including Native American programs, the Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers program and reduce funding to Youth Build and ex-offender activities;
- Eliminate funding for the EDA;
- Tighten Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP/Food Stamps) work requirements for individuals between the ages of 18-65, which the Department of Agriculture estimates will result in cuts of \$36.6 billion over ten years;
- Cut or maintain at current levels funding for Older Americans Act (OAO) programs; and
- Keep funding for homeless programs at current levels.

Most of these cuts are likely to present significant problems for regions, counties, and cities. As the Administration puts increased pressure on cities to address homelessness, the lack of additional funds will put increased fiscal burdens on cities and counties for what is a national problem. The lack of resources to fight pollution, radon, and lead are likely to increase the number and types of environmental health problems that cities, counties, and regions can address. Further constraints on obtaining food stamps will mean that cities, counties and regions as well as charity organizations are likely to have to provide food to larger numbers of households and individuals.

It is worth mentioning again that there is little chance that any parts of the president's proposal will be adopted. But as is always the case, the president's budget provides a framework for the ongoing discussion over fiscal year 2021 appropriations and may represent the President's "line in the sand" on funding for certain programs.

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## Hopeful Signs, But Tough Path for Highway-Transit Bill

March 4, 2020 [Tom Ichniowski](#)

With seven months to go before the Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST, Act expires, there have been glimmerings of progress on a long-term successor for that \$305-billion highway-transit authorization. But lawmakers will be hard-pressed to pass a final new measure by the Sept. 30 deadline, partly because the legislative session will be shortened by the run-up to the Nov. 3 elections.

State and industry officials are pressing for a new multiyear highway-transit bill, but given the tight window, a short-term extension remains a real possibility.

In the House, one positive sign came from Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), when he told reporters on Feb. 26 he is aiming to have a five-year surface-transportation bill written in March and hold a vote of his panel on the measure in April. DeFazio's comments came after he addressed the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) winter meeting. The bill is expected to have \$329 billion for highways.

The House isn't as far along as the Senate, where the Environment and Public Works Committee last July 30 unanimously cleared a five-year, \$287-billion highway authorization bill. It is poised to be the highway title of a larger package.

Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) told AASHTO meeting attendees that he is “pushing” for the Senate to take up that measure on the floor. Barrasso favors a long-term bill over an extension. He recalled that stopgaps before the FAST Act was passed led to states’ delaying and considering cancelling more than \$1 billion in projects.

The Senate banking committee also is gearing up, holding a Feb. 25 hearing on what would be the transit title of a Senate transportation package. Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) didn’t say when he would unveil the transit legislation. But he said, “We want to get this right. And we want to get it done.”

The Trump administration has proposed an \$810-billion, 10-year surface-transportation plan. The U.S. DOT has drafted detailed legislative language to flesh out that proposal. Secretary Elaine Chao told AASHTO attendees that the draft legislation is under review by the Office of Management and Budget.

In interviews with ENR, leaders of state departments of transportation who gathered in Washington, D.C., for the AASHTO meeting had varied views about whether Congress will be able to produce a multiyear bill by the Sept. 30 deadline, or fall back on an extension.

After listening to Barrasso, DeFazio and other lawmakers, Omer Osman, acting secretary of the Illinois DOT, told ENR, “It’s good to hear that they are focusing on this, that they are pushing to get us to stability—and to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund.” Osman adds, “Is it going to be done by October? We are hopeful.”

William Panos, North Dakota DOT director, is bullish about the chances for a multiyear bill. “We are confident,” Panos says, “that both sides of Congress, and the people that are involved, are going to be able to work out a bill that is going to be beneficial to all the states.” He adds, “We’re pretty encouraged by ... the progress that they’ve made so far.”

As he assesses the outlook for a long-term bill, Patrick McKenna, Missouri DOT director, takes heart from last year’s successful drive to get Congress to cancel a \$7.6-billion rescission in highway funds slated to happen July 1, 2020. That bipartisan repeal was a big win for state DOTs.

“Everyone told us a year ago that couldn’t happen, that wasn’t going to happen,” says McKenna. “And yet when we really got focused on it and members of Congress understood what the impacts were ... they got focused on it, too. And they got the job done.” He adds, “Frankly, until midnight on September 30, I’m going to be saying that [multiyear] reauthorization is exactly what needs to be done and that’s what we ought to be pushing for.”

North Carolina DOT thinks an extension is the likely outcome by Sept. 30 and has been planning accordingly, says Burt Tasaico, director of strategic initiatives and program support. Because of the lengthy time it takes to construct projects, Tasaico says, “You have to assume a revenue stream and we have to be realistic, because if you make the wrong assumption, you have to adjust the portfolio of projects.”

He says, “Long-term, we do think that Congress will come up with a reauthorization bill that will have additional funding, over what we have in the FAST Act.” He adds, “But for the near future, I don’t see that necessarily happening.”

Craig Thompson, Wisconsin DOT secretary, says that getting a long-term bill enacted by Oct. 1 is “somewhat of a long shot at this point. It’s going to be a heavy lift. But we’re hopeful.”

## Funding Opportunities

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### **U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao Announces Availability of \$1 Billion to Upgrade American Infrastructure (deadline May 18, 2020)**

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 discretionary grant funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program.

“BUILD grants will upgrade infrastructure across America, making our transportation systems safer and more efficient,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

As the Trump Administration looks to enhance America’s infrastructure, FY 2020 BUILD Transportation grants are for planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. BUILD funding can support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

Projects for BUILD will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental sustainability, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership.

To better address the needs of rural America, which has historically been neglected, DOT intends to award 50% of BUILD Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas that deliver positive benefits for these communities, consistent with the Department’s R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative. For this round of BUILD Transportation grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the appropriations act.

To provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2020 BUILD grant application process. A webinar on how to compete for BUILD Transportation Grants for all applicants will be held on February 25, 2020. Further details will be made available at <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>. The deadline to submit an application is May 18, 2020.

For more information, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>.

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## **Transportation Alternatives Program Grants**

Deadline May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcome to submit more than one project.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

**This year applications will only be accepted electronically. Applicants should email their complete application to [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org).**

**Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2020.**

Electronic versions of the applications are available online at <http://mobilempo.org/TAP.html>

Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

If you have any questions please call the SARPC Transportation Planning Department at (251) 433 6541.

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## **The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program (TAP) for FY 2021.**

The guidelines and the application can both be found on the ALDOT website, on the Local Transportation Bureau page under the Operations Section.

<https://www.dot.state.al.us/ltweb/operations/index.html>

The deadline for submission of FY 2021 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, May 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

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## **Federal Lands Access Program**

Deadline June 16, 2020

Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) will be conducting another Call for Projects for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in Alabama for Federal Fiscal Years (FY) 2020 through FY 2022. All final project approvals will be contingent upon the availability of funds in the year for which they are being requested. **Funding beyond 2020 is dependent on reauthorization of the Access Program by Congress.**

**The Call for Projects application period opens March 16, 2020 and runs through June 16, 2020. An estimated total of \$1.5M will be available for programming in your State.**

EFLHD has found that a higher level of outreach at local levels has increased both the number and the quality of competitive applications submitted and ultimately recommended for project programming and implementation. We ask that you provide the widest circulation possible of this announcement to provide a robust pool of applications. **Please feel free to use any of the materials included in with this message to assist in your outreach efforts. The Federal Lands Access Program website is: <https://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>**

**Federal Land Management Agencies:** We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach to your units and gateway communities regarding this program opportunity.

**FHWA Federal Aid Division Office:** We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to the MPOs and RPOs in your state via email or on your website.

**State DOTs:** We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to your District staff and Local Agency Program Coordinators (if applicable), Public Information Officers, via email and/or on your websites.

**Local Agency Representatives:** We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to other County, MPO and Local agencies in your state via email and/or on your local websites.

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## **[AARP Offering Community Challenge Grants](#)**

Date: February 06, 2020 Deadline April 1, 2020

AARP's Community Challenge provides small grants to fund "quick-action" projects to improve housing, transportation, public space, technology, and civic engagement. Applications are due April 1, 2020. Eligible projects include physical improvements in a community, temporary demonstration projects, and new programs or services. Local government agencies and non-profit organizations are welcome to apply. Grant amounts vary by project. Learn more about the AARP 2020 Community Challenge at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

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## **FTA Offering New Grant Funding For Transit Bus, Ferry Projects**

[editor@ashto.org](mailto:editor@ashto.org) February 14, 2020 Deadline March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Federal Transit Administration issued two notice of funding opportunities or NOFOs for fiscal year 2020 on February 7; one via its Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities program and the other via its Passenger Ferry grant program.

The [transit bus NOFO](#) is offering some \$454.6 million in competitive grant funding for transit bus projects that would replace, rehabilitate, lease, or purchase buses and related equipment. Other eligible projects involve purchasing, rehabilitating, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance, FTA said [in a statement](#).

The agency said eligible recipients for that grant money include fixed route bus operators, states and local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, plus Native American tribes – with applications accepted until 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 30.

The FTA also issued a \$30 million [passenger ferry NOFO](#) that will award competitive grants to states and public entities to purchase, repair, or modernize ferry boats, terminals, and related facilities and equipment – both to support existing ferry service as well as establish new passenger ferry service, the agency said in [a statement](#).

FTA noted that eligible projects considered for those grants must be “consistent” with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s R.O.U.T.E. Initiative, launched [last October](#), as well as the FTA’s Accelerating Innovative Mobility program, kicked off in [January](#).

The agency added that applications for both of those grant programs will be accepted up until 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 30.

Lastly, FTA made \$9.3 million worth of [research grants](#) available on February 13 to support the study of “innovative projects” aimed at improving rail transit and bus operator safety.

That pool of grant funding includes \$7.3 million for projects that demonstrate and evaluate new technologies, safer designs, and practices to improve rail transit safety, with the remaining \$2 million reserved for projects that redesign transit bus operator compartments to improve safety for bus operators and the passengers they serve.

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## 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.

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## [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](#)

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To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

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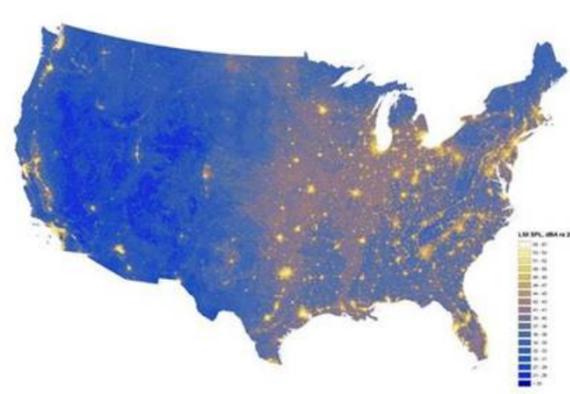
## Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

Next week, March 12, is the kick off of the 2020 US Census, and you know what that means... maps. Lots and lots of new maps are about to be made. As transportation planners, we like maps. We use maps, we make maps, and sometimes we wow at maps, *Just For Fun* here are some noteworthy maps...

Out of Service Railways



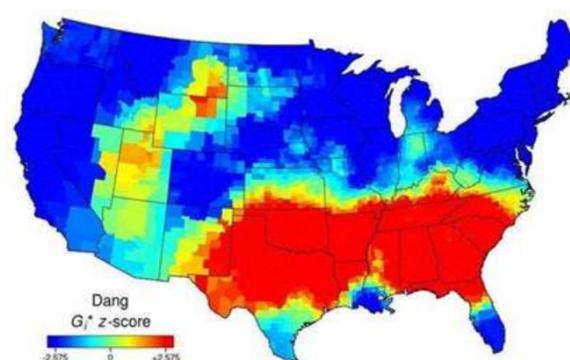
The Loudest vs the Quietest



Most Efficient Route to Every Springfield

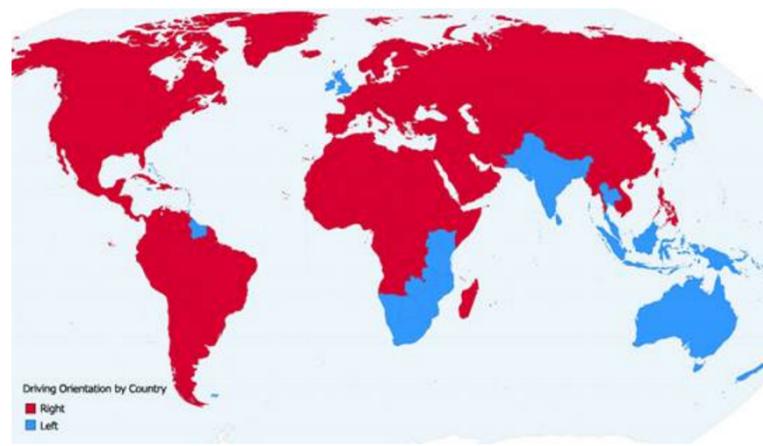
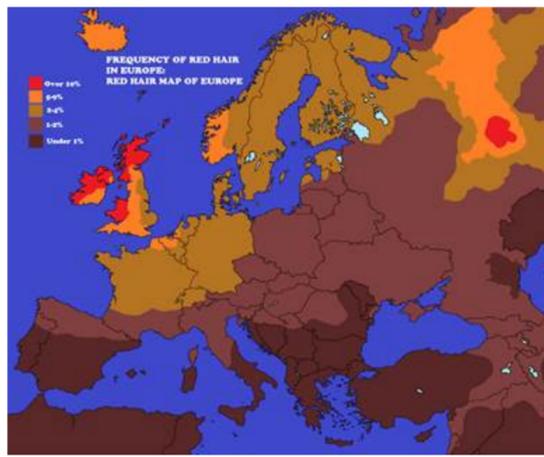


Use of the Word “Dang”



People with Red Hair

Driving on Left or Right



## In the News

### AASHTO campaign outline “Benefits of Transportation”

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | MARCH 5, 2020

As Congress works toward reauthorizing infrastructure investments, a new public outreach campaign hopes to educate lawmakers and the American public about the benefits of those investments.

Entitled “The Benefits of Transportation: The Solutions state DOTs Bring to People & Their Communities”, the national campaign from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) will use interactive mapping to show how public transportation projects are improving the communities they are in by adding to the local economy, increasing safety in the area, reducing the time area residents spend traveling and positively affecting the environment.

Congress has until September of this year to reauthorize Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act spending measures to invest in the country’s infrastructure. President Trump’s budget request for 2020 asks for \$1 billion in infrastructure investments and long-term authorization of investments to help state, local, and private partners with planning and implementing infrastructure projects.

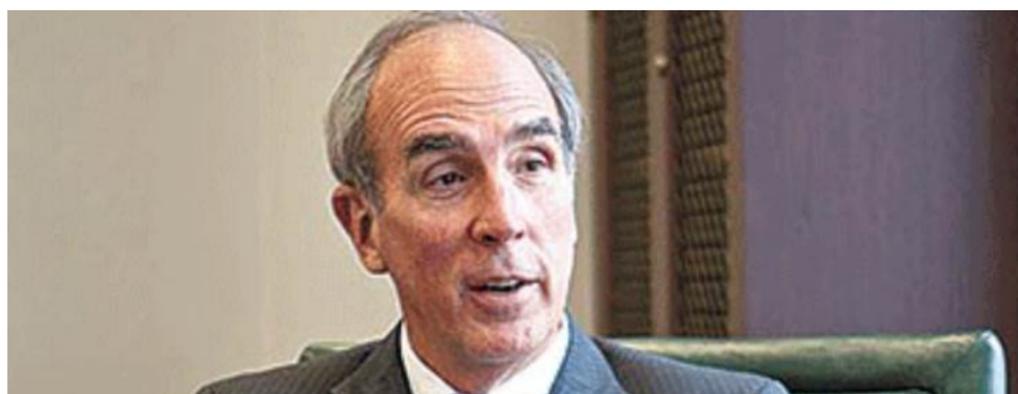
Officials with AASHTO hope the website, advertising campaign, and report will not only educate residents in those communities but the lawmakers who represent them as well.

“The professionals working at state departments of transportation know these benefits first-hand because they’re responsible for planning, designing, and building the transportation projects that keep America moving by car, truck, rail, bus, and bicycle,” said Jim Tymon AASHTO executive director.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, every dollar spent on surface transportation improvements provides taxpayers with a \$5.20 return on investment in the form of lower automobile maintenance costs, less time spent waiting in traffic, lower fuel consumption, improved safety, lower infrastructure maintenance costs, and lower vehicle emissions.

“In addition to the general public, we encourage members of Congress and their staffs to use the website to inform constituents about the importance of transportation investment,” said Patrick McKenna, director of the Missouri DOT and AASHTO’s 2019-2020 president. “A wide range of transportation infrastructure projects are included within the report and on the website to demonstrate how these projects are providing real benefits to real people from coast to coast.”

The interactive map can be found at <http://benefits.transportation.org>



### Stimpson discusses bridge project failure at breakfast event

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) | Mar 5, 2020 | [Latest](#), [News](#) | [0](#) | reprinted with permission from the LAGNIAPPE

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson described “misinformation” about tolls and the actions of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization policy board as catalysts for the failure of the Mobile River Bridge project at a Downtown Mobile Alliance event Thursday morning.

“Nobody in their wildest dreams would’ve thought the project could have been stopped by nine people in Baldwin County,” Stimpson said in response to a question about the bridge project.

Stimpson, who chairs the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization policy board, was referring to the body's Eastern Shore counterpart leaving the bridge off of a short-term planning document last August — making the roughly \$2 billion project ineligible for federal funds.

Amid a large public outcry over proposed tolls that would fund the project, Mobile's MPO voted to table the issue at a meeting last year. However, Stimpson called reports of a \$6 dollar toll "misinformation" during a "Breakfast with the Mayor" event at the Riverview Plaza Hotel.

If the process had been allowed to continue, Stimpson argued, and concessionaires were able to compete with one another, the project would've been less than its \$2-billion estimate.

Relaying information Alabama Department of Transportation Director John Cooper has already stated publicly, Stimpson said the proposed toll would've likely wound up been around \$2 when the project was finished and there would have been deals in place for frequent, local users.

"The process was derailed," Stimpson said. "ALDOT has been trying to get it back on track, but it has not been easy."

Speaking to a number of local business leaders, Stimpson gave an update on the city's plans for the Mobile Civic Center. He said his office recently had a conference call with proposed developers to brainstorm ideas to solve what he called the "Mardi Gras challenge."

"We think we're close," Stimpson said. "Once we get our heads around that we'll decide whether it's something we can sell to the public."

Previous plans to completely tear down the Civic Center and replace it with a large, open-air events center, including restaurants and other entertainment venues, was met with major pushback from local Mardi Gras associations which throw annual balls at the facility.

Asked about recent news that the Reese's Senior Bowl will move from Ladd-Peebles Stadium to the Hancock-Whitney Stadium the University of South Alabama's campus, Stimpson said he didn't feel like the change of venue would have much of an impact on downtown businesses.

He told the crowd that players and coaches would still stay in downtown hotels and game-related events would still take place in the central business district.

Keeping many of the talking points focused on the downtown area, Stimpson announced progress on a number of apartment projects, including a new development at Cedar and St. Louis streets. He said the Meridian at the Port development was on schedule in terms of leasing and added that plans to turn the old Gayfer's building into "desperately needed" affordable "workforce housing" is coming closer to fruition.

"With each passing month we get closer to finding the right combination of developers and financing for the Gayfer's building," he added.

As more housing is made available downtown, Stimpson said the corridor gets closer to fully realizing its potential.

"We all know we need more people downtown to complete the fabric we want," he said.

Stimpson also touted infrastructure improvements that stretch to just about every corner of downtown, including a \$5.9 million project to rework sewer and drainage lines under St. Louis Street. The funding apparently comes from BP money, which went through a long approval process involving the U.S. Treasury Department — one Stimpson called "painfully slow."

Around April or May, crews will begin repaving Dauphin Street from Springhill Avenue to Bienville Square and eventually all the way down to Water Street, Stimpson said. In the fall, drivers can also expect improvements to signalization along Government Street from Broad Street to the Bankhead Tunnel, he said.

"The traffic jam there every weekday is horrific," Stimpson said.

Along the same timeline, Canal Street is slated to see a reduction in lanes and the installation of bike lanes, which Stimpson hopes will link up throughout the Henry Aaron Loop.

The federal grant project to rehabilitate Broad Street is still on schedule, Stimpson told guests, with a completion date of January 2022.

In closing, Stimpson urged those in attendance to get more involved in helping to make Mobile's downtown better. He asked for "double engagement."

"If it's 20 percent of the people making things happen now, imagine what it could be like if 40 percent got involved," he said. "As you do that more people will realize it's time to come back home."

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## Fairhope Planning Commission denies controversial zoning amendment

Posted by [Gabriel Tynes](#) | Mar 4, 2020 | [Baldwin County](#) | [0](#) | reprinted with permission from the LAGNIAPPE

Taking a step back from a plan it has promoted, held public hearings on and amended for more than a year, the Fairhope Planning Commission on Monday voted to deny the contentious Greeno Road Corridor Overlay District. The district, which sought to protect certain aesthetics of development along the city's most heavily trafficked corridor, was pitched as a zoning amendment, not a new zoning ordinance.

But dozens of property owners and residents who would have been subjected to the plan never quite understood it. And as recently as Jan. 29, [substantial changes were unveiled](#) while opponents complained [many details remained unclear](#). Others feared it would open the door to form-based code citywide that was neither [necessary nor widely desired](#).

Cecil Christenberry, a member of the Baldwin County School Board who also owns Greeno Road's Old Tyme Feed & Garden Supply, said the entire process was flawed.

"No one I could find along the entire corridor was ever notified, consulted, ever contacted at all," at the beginning of the process more than 18 months ago, he said. "Greeno Road has and continues to have very strict zoning ordinances for quite a few years and there have been some things that have developed over the past few years that have been very tasteful."

Christenberry noted a development moratorium expires on May 31, but cautioned the commission about passing proposals before they were even defined. He also suggested a recent movement of residents in the Barnwell community to the south of Fairhope, which seeks to create a 44-square-mile historic district, is directly related to their interest in preserving property rights the city may one day change in a manner similar to the overlay district.

Larry Stejskal, who lives within the proposed district on Ingleside Drive, said the city shouldn't try to fix something that wasn't broken.

"I don't know what you all see is wrong, Greeno is doing just fine," he said. "What you all are trying to do with this program is a taking of our property rights. It is a restricting of what we can do with the property that is left, and it is just flat wrong."

His comments didn't sit well with Commissioner Art Dyas, who asked Stejskal to return to the podium after public comments were closed so he could grill him about his understanding of the final, 11-page proposal. It had been whittled down from a 44-page document initially proposed in 2018.

Intermittently interrupting Stejskal to get input from Planning & Zoning Manager Hunter Simmons, Dyas said, "I'm confused why you people think this Greeno Road Corridor Overlay District is going to radically keep you from using your property ... what do you see that I don't understand?"

Using the oft-repeated explanation the underlying zoning of the district would not be altered and anyone who wanted to seek a zoning change still could, Dyas argued without the overlay district's guidance, out-of-town developers could purchase property and develop it as they see fit.

But Stejskal didn't bend.

"If your zoning rules are in place and in effect and are going to be enforced, why are you putting in place another burden that is not needed?" he asked. "It is not my obligation as a private property owner to provide the city with a parkway entrance. If you want it, buy it. Do not confiscate it. That's what this is all about. This is not fair, it is not reasonable, it is discriminatory. You have zoning in place, all you have to do is enforce it."

President Lee Turner said in his time on the commission, two common refrains have been the protection of the downtown business district and Greeno Road corridor, which some people fear may be developed to the scale of Mobile's Airport Boulevard. He said the demographics of the city are changing with new residents and apartments, drawing big-box stores and out-of-town developers.

"What we're trying to do here is come up with something that will help in an aesthetic way, and we started pretty tight," he said, admitting the initial plan "went overboard." But amendments made in the months afterward scaled the plan back and actually awarded property owners new rights, he argued, adding the commission and planning staff have tried to achieve "a balance."

But when it came time for a vote, Dyas could not secure a second on his motion to approve the corridor. City Councilman Kevin Boone broke his silence on the matter afterward to make a motion to deny the measure, one that was seconded by Commissioner Clarice Hall-Black. Ultimately, the denial was approved by a vote of 4-2, with Turner and Dyas dissenting. Although it was denied by the commission, it will still be presented to the Fairhope City Council for consideration.

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## How electric vehicles will shape the future of driving

By Paul Wesslund

March 4, 2020



Electric vehicles represent a rapidly growing, although still small, share of the auto market. As prices drop, battery quality improves and charging stations multiply, industry experts believe EVs could represent more than half the market within 10 years.

Predictors of future auto and energy forecasts say that by the end of this new decade, electric vehicles (EVs) could account for half of auto sales in the world. The trends that could lead to those projections include better battery technology and a rising interest in energy efficiency for buses, rideshare vehicles and electric scooters.

EV sales jumped an incredible 75% from 2017 to 2018, according to the [Alliance of Auto Manufacturers](#), but by the end of 2018, EVs still accounted for less than 2% of the overall vehicle market.

But auto companies see those small numbers as an opportunity for growth. Around the world, they are investing \$225 billion over the next three years to develop more EVs. Manufacturers are offering more than 40 models of EVs, a number expected to grow to more than 200 over the next two years. An analysis by the J.P. Morgan investment firm sees traditional internal combustion engine vehicles falling from a 70% share of the market in 2025 to just 40% by 2030.

#### The efficiency of electricity



The number of EV charging stations in the U.S. has increased from 16,000 to 22,000 in the past two years.

What's powering those predictions is the worldwide interest in less pollution, higher efficiency and greater economy. A study by the [American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy \(ACEEE\)](#) concludes that electricity produces less greenhouse gases than other forms of energy, especially with the increasing use of renewable power sources to generate electricity. The ACEEE study cites transportation as a sector of the economy that could produce the biggest gains in energy efficiency, mainly because of a shift toward EVs. The study says, "Electric vehicles are generally more efficient and have lower emissions than gasoline or diesel internal-combustion engine vehicles. Thus, operating costs are typically lower for electric vehicles."

While efficiency and environmental concerns provide reasons for EV growth, it helps that they're getting cheaper. A lot cheaper. One of the biggest costs of an EV is the battery, and fierce competition is driving down prices. The incentives for researchers and manufacturers to lower costs have reduced battery prices about 15% a year for the past 20 years. As a result, the cost of the battery has dropped from more than half the cost of an EV four years ago to one-third today, and is expected to be down to about one-fifth the cost of the EV by 2025, according to the research firm BloombergNEF.

#### Electric buses, scooters and ride sharing

As battery prices drop, they get better. In the case of a battery, better means they last longer, which addresses one of the biggest roadblocks to more people buying EVs.

There's a term for the concern that an EV battery will run out before you're done driving for the day: range anxiety.

But batteries can now provide a range of 200 miles before needing a recharge, well above the 40 miles a day that most people drive, even in rural areas. Continue [HERE](#)

## Secretary of State's Office, ALDOT, Governor's office partner to encourage voter participation

Sean Ross is the editor of Yellowhammer News. You can follow him on Twitter [@sean\\_yhn](#)

The Office of the Alabama Secretary of State on Monday announced that it will be partnering with the Office of Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to promote voter participation during Tuesday's March 3 primary election across the state.

Messages will reportedly be displayed on ALDOT electronic highway information signs that read "Election Day Vote Today 7 AM – 7 PM."

In statements, Secretary of State John Merrill, Governor Kay Ivey and an ADLOT spokesman voiced their support for Alabama voters to make their voices heard.

"I urge every Alabamian to head to the polls this Super Tuesday. It is important that every citizen's voice is heard, and there is no better way to ensure this than by voting in an election," Ivey said.

"Alabamians are proud of their state, proud of their country, and I look forward to seeing that patriotism in action Tuesday. I am glad to work with the Secretary of State's Office and ALDOT to implement this helpful reminder for our citizens," she concluded.

Merrill stated, "I look forward to an increase in voter participation next week as we come together as Alabamians to elect our representation at the local, state, and federal level. Participating in the electoral process is a part of our civic duty as Americans, and I urge all eligible Alabamians to turn out tomorrow."

"Voting should be a priority for everyone, and I am grateful for the support and encouragement from our fellow governmental agencies on this very important matter," he continued.

"It's important for all citizens to exercise their civic responsibility and right to vote, and ALDOT is pleased to partner in this effort to remind commuters to vote on Tuesday, March 3," ALDOT spokesman Tony Harris added.

## Transportation Research



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

### ModalPEX:

**the multimodal freight peer exchange**

This May, the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Operations will hold a national peer exchange focused on helping State DOTs, MPOs, and their partners plan and deliver multimodal freight projects—and you are invited!

Attending ModalPEX will help you:

- Identify best practices in selecting, prioritizing, and delivering multimodal infrastructure and how to incorporate these concepts into State Freight Plans during the next round of required plan updates;
- Learn innovative multimodal freight data analyses strategies;
- Improve your understanding of multimodal freight networks/supply chains via bus tour of several Memphis freight facilities; and
- Network with your freight stakeholders and peers.

Formal details and RSVP request forthcoming.

Contact: Tiffany Julien (tiffany.julien@dot.gov; 202-366-9241)  
DJ Mason (dj.mason@dot.gov; 617-494-3968)

**SAVE THE DATE**  
MAY 12-13, 2020  
University of Memphis

### [New FHWA Publication: Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book](#)

Date: February 13, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, has released a new [Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book](#). Part I introduces the planning process, the relationship between transportation planning and decision making, and federal transportation funding. Part II covers products of the transportation planning process—the types of plans that states, MPOs, and RDOs develop, performance measures, public engagement, and planning process considerations related to safety, security, and environmental linkages.

Designed for government officials, planning board members, transportation service providers, and the general public, the book is also a useful resource for new transportation planners.

## Highway Administration to Explore How AI and Blockchain Can Transform Transportation



By [Brandi Vincent](#),

Staff Correspondent

FEBRUARY 6, 2020 12:00 PM ET

The Federal Highway Administration launched an Exploratory Advanced Research Program this week to usher in "transformational changes and truly revolutionary advances" in highway engineering and intermodal transportation on roads across the United States.

According to a new [broad agency announcement](#), the administration is accepting research effort proposals—with the deliberate intent of awarding either contracts or cooperative agreements—that address three trendy topics in emerging tech: blockchain for highway transportation, artificial intelligence for highway transportation, and incorporating trashed plastic into asphalt cement to reduce waste.

"This program supports scientific investigations and studies that advance the current knowledge and state-of-the-art in the sciences and technologies employed in the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and management of the nation's highways," officials wrote in the announcement. "Strategically, this research will enable and expedite the development of revolutionary approaches, methodologies, and breakthroughs required to drive innovation and greatly improve the efficiency of highway transportation."

The agency's EAR programs aim to produce strong public-private partnerships that catalyze solutions through "longer-term, higher risk" research. To inform its ultimate intent, FHWA conducted an extensive investigation ahead of the launch, through which it met with a "large number of stakeholders from within and outside the traditional highway research community to identify topics of research that promise transformation and possible breakthroughs in highway technology, processes and policies." With explicitly inherent exploratory aims, the agency doesn't expect the initial results to be immediately implementable but instead plans to further develop them over time.

The agency said it could make multiple awards for each of the following topics:

### Blockchain Technology for Highway Transportation

Mostly known for underpinning Bitcoin, blockchain is a record-keeping technology that validates information on a decentralized public ledger. Though it's still nascent, the agency argues that blockchain "has the potential to transform the connected and automated vehicle industry or freight logistics providing a platform to share a variety of information from the infrastructure and vehicles in a secure manner." Further, the agency's hopeful that it can provide "security and scalability at lower costs than current private network solutions" and offer a wide range of new technological functions."

FHWA wants proposals that explore how blockchain applications could enable more secure traffic operations and car-to-car and car-to-infrastructure communications, anonymized freight data management, auction-based mechanisms for highway pricing, and beyond.

### Artificial Intelligence for Highway Transportation

The EAR program previously [funded](#) AI-focused efforts that incorporated computer vision and natural language processing, but this time around the agency hopes for projects that empower the use of its growing heaps of data. In this light, the agency said it welcomes proposals that connect traditional and non-traditional highway data to make predictions around the system's performance, improve sensor signal data that are used to evaluate roads and structures, provide decision support in highway system design, and more. [HERE](#).

Please join FHWA to discuss the concept of "right-sizing" highways to better match land use and transportation on existing streets. Right-sizing enables practitioners who are confronted with obsolete, damaged, or deteriorated facilities to develop innovative, context sensitive solutions that use transportation infrastructure to connect neighborhoods, create livable communities, and promote economic development.

FHWA presenters will discuss a research study, white paper, fact sheets, and case studies on the topic posted here: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/economic\\_development/right\\_sizing/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/economic_development/right_sizing/), followed by practitioner presentations, and a question and answer session. Featured case studies include, Seattle Alaskan Way Viaduct, the Rochester Inner Loop, and Milwaukee Park East Freeway. Webinar presenters include, Stefan Natzke and Mike Neathery (FHWA), Alec Williamson (Washington State DOT), Erik Frisch (City of Rochester), Peter Park (Univ. of Colorado).

#### WEBINAR LOGISTICS:

- Tuesday, February 25, 2020
- 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Eastern Standard Time
- Registration link: <https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=2254>

For additional information, please contact Mike Neathery, 202-366-1257 or [mike.neathery@dot.gov](mailto:mike.neathery@dot.gov)

#### **Webinar Registration Process**

Webinar registration is a two-step process. First, non-DOT users including State DOTs must request access to the FHWA External Portal. Second, non-DOT users including State DOTs must login using the email address used to request access to the site and their requested password. Federal DOT staff and DOT-badged contractors do not need to register for an account. DOT users can click on the registration link and use their DOT credentials to access the site.

In the External SharePoint System, EXTERNAL users (those without a @dot.gov email address) will have to request an account before they can register. Here is the link to request an account: <https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/FBA/Register.aspx>. Step-by step instructions on how to request an account can be found here: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/esnnon-dotstaff/>

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## **Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook**

Sustainability is often an element that informs decisions made during the planning, programming, and design phases of highway construction projects. However, the construction phase of a highway project is also an opportunity to advance sustainability.

The TRB National Cooperative Highway Research Program's *NCHRP Research Report 916: Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook* provides clear and practical information on what constitutes sustainability in the context of highway construction and how to evaluate any proposed construction practice for its sustainability potential.

The guidebook supports implementation by describing ways to explicitly advance sustainability in procurement and contracting and how to develop a sustainability management plan for the construction phase.

An overview of NCHRP Research Report 916 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#). A separate publication, *NCHRP Web-Only Document 262: Sustainable Highway Construction*, describes the research process and outcomes used to develop NCHRP Research Report 916.

A summary of NCHRP Web-Only Document 262 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Project: [Project Information](#)

DOI: [10.17226/25698](https://doi.org/10.17226/25698)

Project Number: 10-91A

E-Newsletter Type: [Recently Released TRB Publications](#)

TRB Publication Type: [NCHRP Report](#)

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## **FEDERAL TRUST FUNDS AND OTHER DEDICATED FUNDS:**

### **Fiscal Sustainability Is a Growing Concern for Some Key Funds**

GAO-20-156: Published: Jan 16, 2020. Publicly Released: Jan 23, 2020.

Every major federal department has at least 2 trust funds or dedicated funds that pay for key programs. The money comes from related taxes, fees, and premiums—e.g., U.S. postage stamp revenue goes to the Postal Service Fund.

The overall federal trust fund balance is expected to start declining in 2022 as balances in the Medicare and Social Security trust funds drop. The government is projected to borrow the difference—which isn't sustainable.

Of our 13 case study funds, 11 received general revenue in addition to dedicated revenue. For example, the 2015 Highway Trust Fund reauthorization provided \$70 billion in general revenue to the fund. To continue reading click [HERE](#).

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## **The Department of Transportation has identified transportation assets that fall within Opportunity Zones with the goal of driving investment of all types to these important areas.**

Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

- [Housing and Urban Development: Implementation Plan for The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#)
- [The IRS: Tax reform creates opportunity zone tax incentive](#)
- [Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)

The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in communities by granting investors extensive Federal tax advantages for using their capital gains to finance new projects and enterprises. There are more than [8,700 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories](#). Of the Qualified Opportunity Zones 40 percent are in rural census tracts, 38 percent are in urban tracts, and 22 percent are in suburban tracts.

