



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, February 8th, 2019

Volume 29, Number 6

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The University of Alabama Released a Report on State Transportation Infrastructure Challenges this week in *Transportation Research*, and Fix the Infrastructure, it cannot wait... Federal GAS TAX??? See *Legislative Updates*. Watch the I-59/20 bridge collapse in Birmingham, and some Emergency Relief comes to Alabama, *In The News*. This week's *Just For Fun*: it takes a super hero to fix the local roads, and we need more just like him....

Have a great weekend! 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

Mobile MPO meetings

There was a Mobile MPO meeting last week. The agenda items included a variety of changes to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the upcoming 2020-2023 TIP. The Preliminary Engineering (PE) for Celeste Rd from I65 to Forest Ave will be added to this TIP, with the other phases in the outer years of the TIP. We have a lot of projects this year; about \$35 million worth of projects to do in FY 2019.

Please see our web page for further details www.mobilempo.org

FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their second quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for one day 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. This second survey report had a significant increase in truckers answering the survey, which helps refine our understanding of container truck trip patterns in the area. See more [HERE](#)

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE

The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) 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.

2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#)

Stay Up To Date on the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

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ALDOT is doing some preliminary building demolition for the archaeology work associated with the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project. More details are in the release below.

The schedule is in flux, so please contact Allison Gregg (251-604-9790) to coordinate site visits.

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project will 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 runs from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100067507 (CN)

Federal aid number : IM-HSIP I065 (501)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-65 FROM 1.1 MILES NORTH OF SR-13 (US-43) TO SR-225. HSIP FUNDING FOR GUARDRAIL WITH STEEL BLOCK OUTS.

Old Engineers Estimate : \$3,232,705.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$3,732,705.64

Project : 100061588 (CN)

Federal aid number : BR 0013 (601)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : CULVERT REPLACEMENT, BIN 5715, SR-13 (US-43) OVER STEELE CREEK

Old Target start date : April 26, 2019

New Target start date : May 31, 2019

Project : 100068522 (CN)

Federal aid number : BR 0016

County : MOBILE

Project Description : BRIDGE REPLACEMENT (BIN 003691) ON SR-16 (US-90) OVER HALLS MILL CREEK

Old Target start date : January 28, 2022

New Target start date : January 26, 2024

Project : 100055883 (CN)

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 : August 30, 2019

New Target start date : August 28, 2020

Project : 100062412 (CN)

Federal aid number : NHP3 I010

County : MOBILE

Project Description : I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE AND BAYWAY FROM EXIT 24 (BROAD STREET) TO MOBILE COUNTY LINE

Old Target start date : July 26, 2019

New Target start date : July 31, 2020

Project : 100062412 (CN)

Federal aid number : NHP3 I010

County : MOBILE

Project Description : I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE AND BAYWAY FROM EXIT 24 (BROAD STREET) TO MOBILE COUNTY LINE

Old Target start date : July 26, 2019

New Target start date : July 31, 2020

Projects in Region Let February 22nd, 2019

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-163 from the south end of the Dog River Bridge (MP 2.525) to the south end of the I-10 Overpass (MP 8.562) in Mobile. Length 6.036 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,215,333 to \$2,707,629
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-42 (US-98) from the junction of Magnolia Grove Parkway to the junction of Stimpson Lane in Mobile. Length 5.017 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,208,128 to \$2,698,824 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

Infrastructure Stakeholders to Congress: Fix the Highway Trust Fund



UPS Freight President Rich McArdle. (House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure via YouTube)

Nearly a dozen stakeholders representing local governments and the freight and commuter sectors on Feb. 7 urged a House transportation panel to identify a sustainable source of funding for an infrastructure bill.

As the panel prepares to craft legislation, lawmakers agreed infrastructure policy should top their priorities this year. Yet, they continue to differ on a way forward for ensuring the sustainability of the dwindling Highway Trust Fund.

The idea that former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to consider is increasing and indexing the fuel tax by about 10 cents. Doing so, LaHood argued, would bring immediate revenue into the trust fund while other funding alternatives, such as tolls, gain greater acceptance.

Such an increase would need to be signed off by the tax-writing Ways and Means panel. Funding authority for transportation programs expires in the fall of 2020. [HERE](#)

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Holds Organizational Meeting

Finalizes Subcommittee Rosters, Rules, and Oversight Plan

February 07, 2019

Washington, DC—Today, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held its organizational meeting, where the Committee finalized subcommittee assignments and the Committee rules.

“Transportation is not a partisan issue, it’s about moving people and goods more efficiently in this country and connecting us to the world,” said **Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR)**. “Every state and territory in our country is profoundly affected by the decisions made in this committee. As Chairman, I will tirelessly work to build bipartisan agreement and promote common sense, comprehensive solutions to address the major issues facing our aging, 20th century infrastructure and champion a smarter, more resilient infrastructure. I will work to build bipartisan agreement around legislation that strengthens the Federal commitment to our national transportation network and boosts investments that result in job creation and increased economic growth. I look forward to working with my Democratic and Republican colleagues in order to achieve our shared goals. Together, we can lay the groundwork for infrastructure investment that delivers for generations to come”

“Infrastructure can bring us together like few other issues can. It’s why this Committee has a long-standing tradition of bipartisanship – a tradition that produces results. We’ve passed some very good bipartisan legislation here, but we all know that we have more work to do to improve our roads, bridges, airports, inland waterways, ports, transit systems, the nation’s rail system, disaster programs, and more,” said **Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO)**. “It’s pretty rare that the stars align like this on any issue in Washington, but the President indicated in his State of the Union address that he wants to get something done for our infrastructure, Republicans and Democrats in Congress want to get something done, and the American people want us to get something done. I hope that we can take advantage of this opportunity, because we can’t afford to let our efforts get stuck in idle. But I’m confident we can get the job done, and I look forward to working with Chairman DeFazio and all our Committee Members to do so.”

More information from today’s organizational meeting, including subcommittee assignments, the Committee rules, and the Committee authorization and oversight plan, can be found [here](#).

Federal Gas Tax Increase On The Table During House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Hearing

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) told the panel that a proactive approach on investing in infrastructure helped him win election in November, putting a federal gas tax increase up for debate

ARTBA FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) spoke before a hearing of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) under its new chairman, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR.), about his successful campaign which featured the unpopular stance of raising the gas tax. His election is proof that this idea isn’t political suicide; it’s a path to victory.

Walz detailed how he won last November with a proactive stance on raising the state gas tax. He appeared at the hearing on behalf of the National Governors Association and acknowledged that not all its members agree with his stance.

Walz’s poll numbers went up during the campaign even as his opponent ran negative ads about his gas tax increase position. “We ran a campaign talking about investing,” said Walz, a former member of the T&I committee. “In Minnesota, we’ll propose a comprehensive transportation package addressing all modes of transportation to improve the lives of Minnesotans. The gas tax is a reliable funding stream that gets the job done.”

Judging from the questions posed to the panelists, T&I Committee members were split along party lines about a gas tax increase—Democrats leaning for, Republicans leaning against. One exception is Rep. Don Young (R-AL), who noted that the ability of the gas tax to produce needed revenue has eroded since 1993, when it was last increased, from 18.5 cents to 8 cents due to inflation. Young unsuccessfully supported a gas tax increase as part of transportation legislation during the second Bush administration.

“To me there’s not a danger in increasing the user fee for the first time in 26 years,” DeFazio said, “but we have to make the case in a way that’s irrefutable.”

Panelists and committee members agreed that raising the tax by itself won’t solve America’s infrastructure crisis or be enough to replenish the depleted Highway Trust Fund. What’s needed, they said, is a combination of solutions that includes a gas tax increase, user or mileage fees, and a continuing emphasis on Public-Private Partnerships, or P3s.

Chairman DeFazio Statement from Hearing on, “The Cost of Doing Nothing: Why Investing in Our Nation’s Infrastructure Cannot Wait”

February 07, 2019

Remarks as delivered can be found [here](#).

Statement of

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Hearing on “The Cost of Doing Nothing:
Why Investing in our Nation’s Infrastructure Cannot Wait”

February 7, 2019

(Remarks as prepared for delivery.)

Today, we hold the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s first hearing of the 116th Congress. We are starting off by sounding the alarm bells – investing in America’s infrastructure cannot wait.

For years, we have held hearings on why infrastructure investment is important. We have rationally made the case about why roads, bridges, public transportation, airports, water and sewer systems cannot be left to crumble. We have shown how infrastructure keeps the economy humming, creates jobs, connects communities, moves people and goods, and ensures reliable access to clean water.

We know that our infrastructure investment needs are massive: according to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), we have an investment gap of **\$2 trillion** over 10 years to fix what we have, meet future needs, and restore our global competitiveness. The investment gap in surface transportation alone is over \$1 trillion. The gap for water, port, and related infrastructure is \$249 billion. Further, the latest capital needs survey by the Airports Council International (ACI) estimates that, over the next five years, airports will require total investment of \$100 billion -- more than \$20 billion a year.

Unfortunately, highlighting needs has not spurred Congress to action. So let me be clear that the question is not *whether* we will need to invest, but *when* we will invest. Inaction has serious consequences and the cost of delay is high.

Every day that we ignore our ballooning infrastructure deficit, the problem becomes more expensive to fix and more pronounced; our constituents lose time and money; and we increase the risk of failure of these increasingly fragile systems. We must also act now to mitigate the effects of climate change, and build stronger, more resilient infrastructure that will withstand extreme weather events. Continue [HERE](#)

More information from today’s hearing can be found [here](#).

Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition to speak with federal policy makers about clean energy

Published
3 hours ago
on
February 8, 2019
By
[Gabby Dance](#)

Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition representatives will be in Washington D.C. next week alongside other clean transportation leaders to educate federal policymakers on the benefits of expanding alternative fuels.

“Despite the recent drop in gasoline prices, gas prices remain extremely volatile and we continue to send more than \$200 billion per year to OPEC and other nations for oil,” said Mark Bentley, Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition’s executive director. “We are going to Washington to help our representatives understand that Alabama and the United States must aggressively expand our use of alternatives to petroleum-based fuel if we are to stabilize gas prices, decrease our reliance on foreign oil and maintain and create domestic jobs in the transportation energy industry.”

The popularity of alternative fuel has grown in recent years. According the U.S. Department of Energy, there are about 1.8 million alternative fuel vehicles currently on the road in the United States and nearly 70,000 alternative fueling stations.

This movement has made its way to Alabama. Among many other alternative power developments, Montgomery’s United Parcel Service is currently adding electric and compressed natural gas powered delivery vans to its fleet, and the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport is building a public access compressed natural gas station on Airport Highway.

The group will also be attending the 2019 Energy Independence Summit from Feb. 11 to 13 to spread their message.

Funding Opportunities

Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (Deadline March 4th, 2019)

The INFRA Grants program provides dedicated, discretionary funding for projects that address critical issues facing our nation's highways and bridges. INFRA grants will support the Administration's commitment to fixing our nation's crumbling infrastructure by creating opportunities for all levels of government and the private sector to fund infrastructure, using innovative approaches to improve the necessary processes for building significant projects, and increasing accountability for the projects that are built.

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Second Round of Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is announcing the second round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in the Federal Register today. The INFRA program will make approximately \$855-902.5 million available to projects that are in line with the Administration's principles to help rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure – a priority for this Administration. In addition to providing direct federal funding, the INFRA program aims to increase the total investment by state, local, and private partners.

<https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/infragrants>

Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program

A Notice by the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) deadline **5:00 p.m. EDT, on March 18, 2019**

FRA recently issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the **Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program** (Partnership Program). The NOFO makes **\$272,250,000 million** in grant funding available. Here's the link to FRA's Partnership Program website which includes a link to the NOFO: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1107>

The Partnership Program is intended to benefit both the Northeast Corridor ("NEC") and the large number of publicly-owned or Amtrak-owned infrastructure, equipment, and facilities located in other areas of the country, including strengthening transportation options for rural American communities. The NOFO will assist in funding capital projects to repair, replace, or rehabilitate publicly-owned railroad assets, and to improve intercity passenger rail performance. Eligible projects include those that replace existing assets in-kind; replace existing assets with those that increase capacity or provide a higher level of service; and those that ensure existing assets maintain service while being brought into a state of good repair.

Selection preference will be given to projects where Amtrak is not the sole applicant; multiple applicants submit applications jointly; the proposed federal share of total project costs does not exceed 50 percent; non-federal shares consist of funding from multiple sources, including private sources; and applications indicate strong project readiness. Applications for capital projects funding under this solicitation must be submitted via www.Grants.gov and are **due no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Monday, March 18, 2019**. Prior to the application deadline, FRA plans to provide Web-based training and technical assistance to answer questions from applicants.

- **WEBINAR: Wednesday, December 12 at 1:00 PM and Tuesday, January 8 at 1:00 PM - How to Apply for Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program Grants – Register now for either the [December 12 session](#) or the [January 8 session](#)**

The Federal-State Partnership Program is authorized by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and this [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) makes available funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018. During the webinar, FRA will provide information about the new grant opportunity and how to apply for grant funding. For additional information about this grant opportunity, please see FRA's Competitive Discretionary Grant Programs website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/grants>

[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](#)

FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation.

The FHWA continues the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP) under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The AID Demonstration provides incentive funding for any project activities eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C. in any phase of a highway transportation project between project planning and project delivery including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction that address the TIDP goals. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published on September 1, 2016 (<https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-21063>) requests grant applications and provides selection criteria, application requirements, and technical assistance with Grants.gov during the grant solicitation period.

Link to Additional Information: [FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Grants page](#)

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#)

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

Just For Fun

"If you are Ready For A Change, Vote For A Change" says local Super Hero.

We need more super heroes like this guy, because "These holes have got to be fixed" Video [HERE](#)



In the News

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$705.7 Million in Emergency Relief for Road and Bridge Repairs

Funds to states and territories for damage from a variety of events

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced more than \$705.7 million in Emergency Relief (ER) funds to help 34 states, as well as American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, make repairs to roads and bridges damaged by storms, floods, and other unexpected events.

“The Department is pleased to reimburse states and territories that have made critical repairs to their transportation infrastructure following natural disasters such as wildfires, storms, and floods,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

FHWA’s ER program reimburses states, territories, and federal land management agencies for eligible expenses associated with damage from natural disasters or other emergency situations. The funds help to pay for the reconstruction or replacement of damaged highways and bridges along with the arrangement of detours and replacement of guardrails or other damaged safety devices.

More than a fifth of the total amount provided today – about \$153 million – will be used to pay for repairs to damage caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. There are also funds directed towards other severe weather recovery efforts, including the wildfires in California.

This Emergency Relief funding includes awards of:

More than \$12.5 million to repair damage to roads and bridges from wildfires in California in 2018.

\$1.2 million to repair US Highway 550 Red Mountain Pass in southwest Colorado, after it sustained damaged from a rock slide.

\$19.5 million to repair damage caused by Hurricane Michael’s heavy winds and significant storm surge flooding roadways throughout the Panhandle area.

“These funds will help keep our country’s roads and bridges safe and well-maintained in the aftermath of the hurricanes and other severe storms seen in recent years,” said Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Brandye L. Hendrickson.

The video of FHWA’s announcement can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTfs0B_fyko&feature=youtu.be

February 5, 2019 Emergency Relief Allocations

State	Event	Allocation	State Totals
Alabama	June 22, 2017 Tropical Storm Cindy	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000

The Full list may be viewed [HERE](#).

Mobile Chamber, Business Council leader support gas tax

By [Lawrence Specker | \[lspecker@al.com\]\(mailto:lspecker@al.com\)](#)

It may have been a formality, but the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Business Council of Alabama President Katie Britt have made it clear they back a gas tax increase expected to be a hot topic for the state legislature this year.

On Thursday the Chamber held a luncheon to unveil its legislative agenda, with Britt as a guest speaker. Britt, who was chosen to lead the BCA in October and who started in January, said she was still mapping out her the organization's course of action, beyond certain broad priorities such as support for early childhood education.



Alabama gas tax debate could start in March

Alabama's current state gas tax of 18 cents a gallon has been unchanged since 1992 and is among the lowest in the nation, according to comparisons from the American Petroleum Institute.

"A lot of people have asked me, what's the agenda, what's going on?" she said. "I have been in the job 26 days, so we're still trying to figure out what direction we're going to take it." She was specific, however about backing a gas tax increase.

"Back in the day, Ronald Reagan said the bridges and roads we don't repair will cost us far more to do in the future," Britt said, "And I think that is where we are today without a doubt."

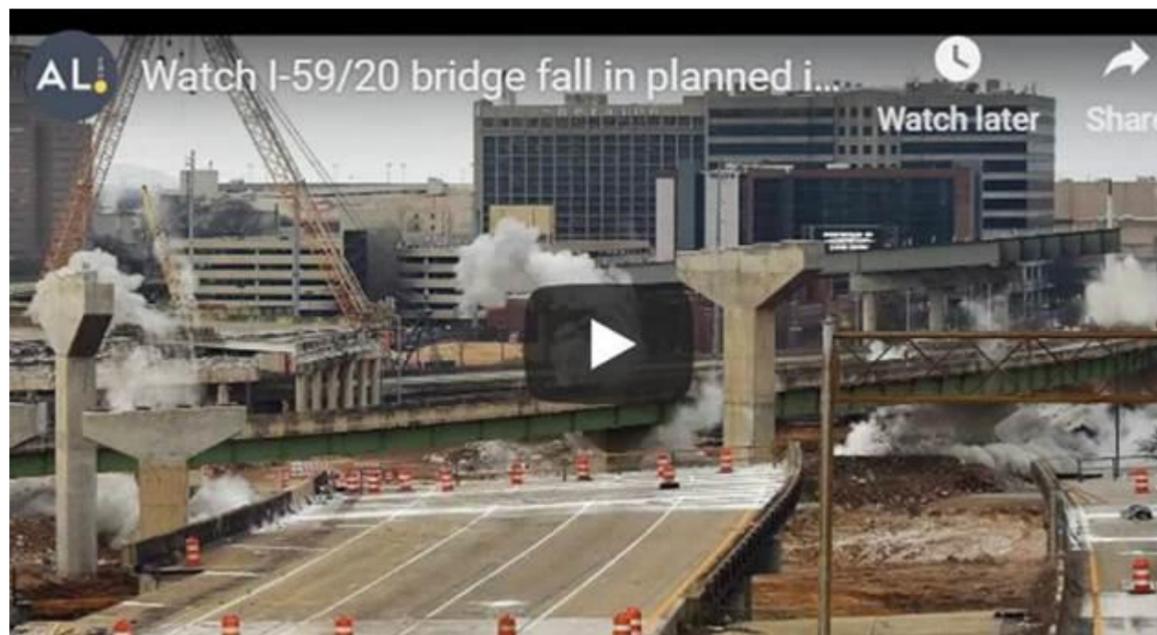
Since the state's current gas tax was passed in 1992, cars have gotten more efficient, meaning the revenue collected per mile driven has dropped. Meanwhile construction costs have risen, further shrinking the amount of infrastructure work the tax can fund. [HERE](#)

Watch I-59/20 bridge come crashing down

Updated Feb 3; Posted Feb 3

[Watch I-59/20 bridge fall in planned implosion](#)

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By [Dennis Pillion | dpillion@al.com](#)

In the blink of an eye, one of the tallest spaghetti-style ramp bridges of the I-59/20 interchange with the Red Mountain Expressway was dropped 50 feet to the ground Sunday morning.

Just before 8 a.m. Sunday, contractors working for the Alabama Department of Transportation detonated controlled explosive charges around the columns supporting the old ramp that led drivers from the RME (U.S. 31/280 Northbound) onto I-59/20 headed south and west, toward Tuscaloosa.

The charges obliterated the support columns, and the bridge immediately dropped straight down to the ground below, splitting in a few places and buckling in others. ALDOT said the ramp section that came down was 880 feet long in total.

Traffic was stopped on I-59/20 beginning at around 7:45 a.m. for the demolition work, and some local city streets, including Carraway Boulevard, had been closed since Saturday night.

New turn lanes coming to Highway 31 in Spanish Fort

Updated Feb 4, 2019 | Posted on Feb 4, 2019



SPANISH FORT, Ala. (WALA) - More construction started Monday on Highway 31 in Spanish Fort.

The Alabama Department of Transportation is working on the left-turn lanes at the intersection of Highway 31 at Highway 225. ALDOT is installing off-set turn lanes to increase visibility and safety in the area.

Officials said 40% of crashes in the area involve vehicles turning left. The new turn lanes will resemble those at the intersection of Whispering Pines and Highway 98 in Daphne.

This is happening during ongoing work to widen Highway 31.

Nason Calls For More Rural Road Safety At FHWA Nomination Hearing

editor@aaashto.org February 1, 2019

During a hearing before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on Jan. 29, Nicole Nason (*above*) said that, should the committee confirm her [nomination](#) as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, she plans to place a special focus on rural roadway safety.

“My priority is safety on all roads, but we must recognize and address some of the unique safety challenges faced by rural communities,” she explained [in her testimony](#).

In 2017, Nason said, 37,133 people lost their lives in U.S. highway crashes. Yet, as an example of how rural communities are “disproportionately” affected by road safety issues, 17,216 of those fatalities occurred on rural roads, representing 47 percent of total fatalities for 2017 – even though only 19 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas.

“This is not acceptable. The only acceptable number is zero,” she stressed. “If confirmed, I will tirelessly support FHWA’s leadership role in providing safety-related assistance and resources to our stakeholders as we work towards a common goal of zero deaths on our nation’s roads.”

Other issues Nason plans to focus on if confirmed as the FHWA’s next administrator include:

- The United States faces an “ongoing challenge” of preserving and improving over four million miles of public roads and over 600,000 bridges and tunnels, she said; thus ensuring sufficient investment in those assets is important not only because it enhances safety, but “because it further benefits all Americans by increasing mobility and stimulating our nation’s productivity and economic growth.”
- Nason noted that while the Highway Trust Fund is projected to have enough cash to cover highway expenditures through the end of fiscal year 2020, a “sustainable, long-term funding solution” must be found. “If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to find a solution,” she said.
- Nason also emphasized that FHWA will play a critical role in helping reauthorize surface transportation funding legislation, as the [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation](#) or FAST Act will expire at the end of fiscal year 2020. “I was proud to play a part in helping shape SAFETEA-LU [The [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users](#), which was passed in 2005] when I previously served at the department [USDOT] and I look forward to the prospect of working together on any infrastructure or reauthorization efforts,” she said. “I recognize that there are challenges to be addressed, but I am ready to work with the [Transportation] Secretary and the Congress to address these important issues as there is not a one-size fits all solution.”

Jim Tymon, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, voiced his support for Nason’s FHWA nomination and urged the committee to approve her.

“The Trump Administration made a wise choice with its nomination of Nicole Nason as the next FHWA Administrator. Given her nomination hearing today which was well-received by both sides of the aisle, we ask for a speedy approval by both the Committee and the full Senate,” he said [in a statement](#). “Not only has Nason served as administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, she has also held the position of assistant secretary of government affairs at USDOT. We look forward to working with her to advance our nation’s transportation infrastructure goals through a strong partnership between FHWA and our state transportation departments.”

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., chairman of the EPW committee, also voiced his support for Nason’s nomination as well.

“I applaud President Trump’s nomination of such an accomplished and dedicated public servant,” Sen. Barrasso said in his [opening statement](#). “She brings impressive, meaningful experience in federal transportation policy to this critically important position.”

He added that the authorization of federal highway programs “will expire in September of next year,” with the Congressional Budget Office projects the Highway Trust Fund will become insolvent sometime in 2021,” Sen. Barrasso noted.

He also stressed that America’s transportation infrastructure “faces a lot of challenges” and that for “far too long” FHWA has lacked Senate-confirmed leadership.

Ranking Member Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., made a special note of the HTF’s revenue issues in his remarks [at the hearing](#).

“Last year, we spent about \$13 billion more from the Highway Trust Fund than we collected in revenues. Next year, that deficit will be even greater,” he said. “To pay for the FAST Act, we took \$70 billion from the general fund and other programs. For the next five-year transportation bill, we will need to find an additional \$85 billion just to keep our programs at the current funding level. Despite spending more than we collect, we still aren’t even spending enough [as] the backlog of money needed to rehabilitate and improve highways and bridges has grown to \$800 billion.”

“That’s why we must work together in this committee to write and pass a bipartisan highway bill that upgrades America’s roads and bridges in a fiscally responsible manner, and do it in this Congress,” Sen. Barrasso explained. “We successfully worked together to pass comprehensive, bipartisan water infrastructure legislation. Now let’s come together to fix our highways, roads, and bridges.”

[University of Alabama Releases Report on State Transportation Infrastructure Challenges](#)

by [Quintin McClellan](#) | Feb 6, 2019 | [Alabama](#), [Latest News](#), [States](#) | 0 Comments

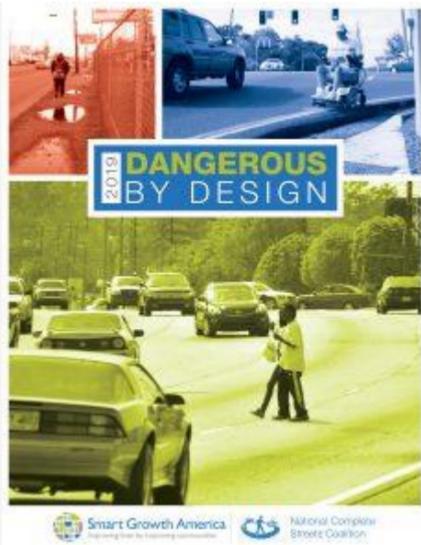
The University of Alabama's Research and Economic Development department [released a Feb. 1 report](#) evaluating Alabama's road network in comparison with neighboring states, assessing potential challenges facing the highway system, and outlining policy options to meet these challenges. One of the most prominent challenges identified in the report is the decline of purchasing power since the last gas tax increase in 1992, due to several factors including increasing fuel efficiency, fleet makeup, and inflation. As a result, the capacity and demand placed on the state's road system is outpacing the rate at which funding can accommodate the influx. The problem is expected to be exacerbated by population, economic, and technological growth.

One recommendation to address the need for additional funding is to adjust the state motor fuel tax, including indexing gas and diesel taxes to offset the impact of inflation. The report's recommendations are aimed at informing state officials about the efficacy of potential approaches to transportation funding.

TIAC expects Alabama will consider measures to increase transportation revenue in 2019.

[Read more.](#)

Dangerous By Design 2019 [HERE](#)



[Download the full report](#)

Between 2008 and 2017, **drivers struck and killed 49,340 people** who were walking on streets all across the United States. That's more than **13 people per day**, or **one person every hour and 46 minutes**. It's the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of people crashing—with no survivors—every single month.

[Dangerous by Design 2019](#) takes a closer look at this alarming epidemic.

We can and must do more to reduce the number of people who die while walking every day on our roadways. For too long we have disregarded this problem by prioritizing moving cars at high speeds over safety for everyone. It's past time for that to change. Protecting the safety of all people who use the street—especially the people most vulnerable to being struck and killed—needs to be a higher priority for policymakers, and this priority must be reflected in the decisions we make about how to fund, design, operate, maintain, and measure the success of our roads.

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[The Data Collected by Dockless Bikes is Helping Cities Map Your Movement](#)

Dockless bikes use a combination of GPS, 3G wireless connections, and solar power to transmit their location to providers and consumers. Providers, and the cities they partner with, have unparalleled access to rider behavior and are leveraging this knowledge to meet the needs of their consumers. In South Bend, IN, Lime is providing aggregate statistics on travel and heat maps showing where most riders occur in the city. South Bend used this data to paint drop-off areas for the bikes and is now hoping to use this information to plan for new bike paths and lanes. Lime is also working with cities to identify a format that makes it easy for them to pull data from multiple operators into their databases to analyze with their own tools.

Transportation Safety Planning and the Zero Deaths Vision: A Guide for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Local Communities

FHWA has released this new [guidebook](#) geared towards MPOs and local stakeholders to reduce fatalities and serious injuries across transportation systems. To address this, USDOT seeks to foster collaboration across all stakeholders to improve the behaviors and conditions that impact these safety outcomes. The Guide seeks to assist MPOs, communities, and other transportation agencies to utilize, implement, and evaluate their safety planning processes to further the zero deaths vision.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO): Transportation Partnerships for the 21st Century

This work will deliver a historical review and contemporary analysis of the institutional structures and performance of MPOs, producing conclusions and lessons learned that are relevant to current challenges. This research will address ways in which MPOs can respond more nimbly and effectively to rapidly changing transportation demands, conditions, and technologies. It will provide a range of strategies and tools drawn from cases and practice in order to better equip MPOs and MPO-state partnerships in planning, maintaining, and improving transportation systems for U.S. metropolitan areas and the economies reliant on those systems.

Staff Contact: Harlan Miller, 202-366-0847

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.