



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, March 1st, 2019

Volume 29, Number 9

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Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>
transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper

The Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA) annual conference will be at the new Lodge at Gulf State Park, March 13-15, 2019 (Spring Break for some colleges) and is open to all MPO members, Technical and Citizen Committee members in the State of Alabama. Please join us, www.alabamatransportation.org. Our federal congressional leaders are hard at work and a State Senator will be at 5 Rivers next week (See *Legislative Updates*). The Community Foundations has a new Grant Application (See *Funding Opportunities*) and Governor Ivey is proposing a 10 cent gas tax increase (See *In the News*).

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 recently. 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/>

Senior Transportation
Planner

tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

South Alabama Regional
Planning Commission
110 Beauregard St
Mobile, Alabama 36602
(251) 433-6541



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 : 100069725 Federal aid number : STPAA 4917 County : MOBILE Scope : CN

Project Description : RESURFACING AND STRIPING ON CR-32 (THREE NOTCH KRONER ROAD) FROM CR-33 (DAWES ROAD) TO CR-39 (MCDONALD ROAD); THE PROJECT WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE EXTENSION AND/OR REPLACEMENT OF ROADWAY DRAINAGE STRUCTURES - MCP 49-86-17

Urban Area : 067 MOBILE

Target Start Date : 5/31/2019

Engineers Estimate : \$898,100.00

Project : 100069088 Federal aid number : IM I010 County : MOBILE Scope : PE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-10 FROM .28 MILE WEST OF CAROL PLANTATION ROAD TO .87 MILE EAST OF SR-193

Urban Area : 067 MOBILE

Target Start Date : 7/1/2019

Engineers Estimate : \$153,500.00

Project : 100069060 Federal aid number : IM I010 County : MOBILE Scope : CN

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-10 FROM .28 MILE WEST OF CAROL PLANTATION ROAD TO .87 MILE EAST OF SR-193

Urban Area : 067 MOBILE

Target Start Date : 4/3/2020

Engineers Estimate : \$1,550,350.00

Project : 100069167 Federal aid number : IM I065 County : MOBILE Scope : PE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-65 FROM I-10 TO SR-17 (US-45)

Urban Area : 067 MOBILE

Target Start Date : 7/1/2019

Engineers Estimate : \$332,000.00

Project : 100069170 Federal aid number : IM I065 County : MOBILE Scope : CN

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-65 FROM I-10 TO SR-17 (US-45)

Urban Area : 067 MOBILE

Target Start Date : 4/3/2020

Engineers Estimate : \$3,353,200.00

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

The House and Senate are in session.

Congress Returns with Multiple Issues to Address

On March 2, 2019, the federal debt limit will be reinstated. At that time, Congress will have to decide how it will handle funding a record \$22 trillion federal debt and what course of action it will take to prevent the government from defaulting on its obligations. Because Congress is unlikely to take action immediately, the Treasury Department will be forced to take so-called “extraordinary measures” to finance the government for some time into the future. The extraordinary measures – issuing IOUs instead of bonds to pay for certain government obligations and using cash-on-hand and incoming cash flow to pay for other obligations – are likely to keep the government operating until mid-2019, after which Congress will have to take action or risk causing the federal government to default on its obligations.

Congress will also have to consider adopting a budget agreement. Without a budget agreement for fiscal year 2020, appropriations are likely to be subject to automatic, across-the-board spending cuts to defense and non-defense discretionary programs (also known as sequestration). The most recent budget deal (the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018), temporarily suspended automatic cuts for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. However, they are reinstated with the fiscal year 2020 appropriations cycle, the one Congress has already begun working on.

These are not the only issues Congress must address, but they are probably the most serious and consequential. Without some effort to address the federal debt limit and pass a budget agreement to ensure that federal programs can be funded at an appropriate level, the consequences could impact the work of Congress across all issue areas.

Congress to Take Up Several Bipartisan Efforts this Week

The Senate’s annual reading of President George Washington’s farewell address will kick off a week that will include several bipartisan efforts from federal lawmakers. The House could take up the recently Senate-approved [Natural Resources Management Act](#) (S. 47), which would reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund and prevent other funding lapses that impact national parks and local biking and hiking trails. The House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee are looking at areas of bipartisan compromise to tackle high drug prices. Both chambers are also looking towards bipartisan compromise to address America’s infrastructure issues, holding related hearings this week during the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety.

Congressional Leaders Focus On Transportation Funding Options At Washington Briefing

editor@ashto.org February 27, 2019

A vehicle miles traveled or VMT fee, wider use of tolling, and a hike in the federal fuel tax were some of the many transportation funding options four key Congressional leaders discussed at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2019 Washington Briefing, held annually in the nation’s capital at the Washington Court Hotel.

Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., and the ranking member on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee stressed that there is “a lot of support” to get an infrastructure bill done this year.

“Everybody wants to get something done – the House, the Senate, the President, Democrats and Republicans,” he said. “The hard part will be figuring out how to pay for it — will this just be a straight [Fixing American’s Surface Transportation] reauthorization bill or a much broader infrastructure bill? Hopefully it will fall somewhere in between.”

Rep. Graves stressed that Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., chairman of the House T&I Committee, has set “an aggressive schedule” to get transportation infrastructure funding bill done this year, with a deadline on May to get a bill delivered out of the committee.

“In terms of how we pay for it, everything is on the table: from tolling, which I am not a fan of, to changing over to a VMT which I am,” he said. “In my opinion, we’ll need to spend a lot of political capital to get it done – and raising the gas tax will be tough. We’ve never indexed the gas tax [to inflation] and that’s one of the biggest problems we have [because] the reality of politics makes raising taxes very hard.”

But Rep. Graves emphasizes that “the fact of the matter is we have to do something eventually” in terms of replacing the federal fuel tax with another “revenue generation tool” particularly as more movement to more efficient internal combustion engines that use less fuel alongside the movement away from fossil fuels altogether as more electric, natural gas, and propane vehicles are deployed.

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee echoed Rep. Graves’ point about the impact of declining fuel tax revenue on the nation’s transportation infrastructure, noting that the Highway Trust Fund is projected to become insolvent in 2021.

But Sen. Barrasso also highlighted the importance of two other issues related to solving transportation funding needs in the future.

“We need to maintain reliable formula funding; it’s what protects long-term planning so we can build [transportation infrastructure] better, faster, cheaper, and smarter,” he explained.

“That money needs to be used as efficiently and effectively as possible and part of the way we can do it is by cutting red tape,” Sen. Barrasso added. “As states, cities, and towns wait to get approvals from Washington, precious time is wasted. It should not take years to get permits for projects. We need to speed up project delivery. And this it is not a Democrat or Republican issue – it is an American issue.”

Rep. DeFazio also stressed the “bipartisan nature” of transportation funding and said restoring earmarks would be one way to build on that sentiment in Congress.

“Funding infrastructure is by its nature a jobs program, plus a huge boost for our economy and international competitiveness – so I can’t understand why we can’t get it done. It’s a win for all Americans,” he explained. “The American people get it – the gas tax is a user fee. And they are willing to pay a user fee [because] they are tired of congestion, tired of blowing out wheels in pot holes, and transit systems that don’t work.”

To that end, he believes bringing back earmarks would help legislatures connect such taxes more directly with transportation improvements.

“Why does an unelected bureaucrat get to decide who gets [transportation] grant money? Why not allow elected representatives to bring some of that back to their districts to show their constituents what they are getting for their gas taxes. I think this is key to getting this done – and I aim to bring back earmarks.”

In terms of future sources of transportation funding, Rep. DeFazio said he supports exploring the use of a VMT fee. However, he said that a flat VMT is not fair to everyone using the roadways. “Is it fair to pay the same per-mile on a congested highway versus a farmer on a rural road? That means we have to go to congestion pricing in some form,” Rep. DeFazio said.

He added that when his committee draws up an infrastructure bill it will have a national VMT pilot program included within it. “This is something Sam (Rep. Graves) and I agree on,” Rep. DeFazio noted. “It will be easier to do that for commercial vehicles, maybe move to a weight/mile tax. I think there is some promise there.”

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., the ranking member on the Senate’s EPW Committee, agreed with Rep. DeFazio’s points regarding both the establishment of a national VMT pilot program and the re-establishment of earmarks for transportation funds.

“What I envision is combining road user charge with [the all-electronic] EZ pass to help fund transportation around the country,” he said. “And earmarks are important for it is hard to convince a legislator to raise user fees without a way of showing benefits to their state.”

Sen. Carper added that one of his “favorite songs” is “Hope in a Hopeless World” and he feels that might serve as a guiding mantra where transportation funding is concerned.

“We’ve begun work on surface transportation reauthorization bill and we need hope,” he said.

“We spent \$13 billion last year above what the [highway] transportation fund provided; that is not sustainable,” Sen. Carper pointed out. “Yet we still aren’t spending enough; we need \$800 billion worth of infrastructure investments by some estimates to get us where we need to be. As a result, we don’t have a national transportation system that functions as it ought to.”

Senate intermodal transport hearing addresses trucking issues

By [Tyson Fisher](#), Land Line staff writer | 2/28/2019

The Senate Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety heard from stakeholders on Tuesday, Feb. 26, about intermodal surface transportation markets and infrastructure. Several trucking-specific issues popped up, including size and weight, hours of service and “street turns.”

Trains, ships and trucks were the focus of a Transportation and Safety subcommittee hearing on Tuesday, as Senate members heard from four witnesses representing intermodal transportation:

- Chuck Baker, president of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association.
- Noel Hacegaba, deputy executive director of administration and operations at the Port of Long Beach, representing the Intermodal Association of North America.
- Donna Lemm, executive vice president of IMC Cos., representing the Agriculture Transportation Coalition.
- Joseph C. Szabo, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, representing the Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors.

Although the trucking industry was not represented exclusively by any of the witnesses, topics directly related to trucking were.

Size and weight

In his written statement to the subcommittee, Chuck Baker pointed out that an infrastructure bill is an opportunity for proponents of increasing truck size and weight to get their way. Baker cautioned the senators about including any such language.

“Bigger trucks mean diversion from rail to truck and thus more expensive damage to our highways and bridges, more highway congestion, more environmental damage, and more danger for the motoring public,” Baker said. “The biggest hurdle to enacting new infrastructure funding legislation is finding the funding. Including a provision that guarantees higher infrastructure repair costs makes the hurdle all the more difficult to overcome, and that just doesn’t make sense.”

Baker also warned the senators that those who favor larger trucks have attempted to include provisions through appropriations bills. If Congress considers increasing truck size, Baker argued, it should be done through thorough vetting by the appropriate committee. Previous attempts in the past to increase truck size have failed.

[In a letter to Congress sent last week](#), the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association and a dozen other groups urged lawmakers to oppose legislation that will increase truck size and weight. The coalition also cited increased damage to local roads and bridges as support for its argument.

However, Donna Lemm suggested increasing truck weights to levels compatible with the rest world to solve port congestion.

Port congestion

A topic during the hearing was the issue of congestion at the nation’s ports. Witnesses highlighted the problem and offered some solutions.

In her statement, Lemm said that truckers are waiting in line two and six hours for a variety reasons, including volume, congestion and ramp equipment breakdowns. Consequently, truckers are getting less loads per driver per day, which negatively impacts all modes downstream.

Lemm also addressed what is known as “street turns.” A street turn is the process of taking an empty container and chassis owned by an ocean carrier after unloading and using it to backhaul freight near the location the ocean carrier wants the trucker to drop off the empty container and chassis. Ocean carriers are charging truckers anywhere from \$30 to \$75 for doing street turns.

“The fees imposed on street turns injures all, including the carriers themselves, by adding to congestion and delay, which already makes marine terminals at some of our largest ports the greatest challenge to the U.S. export/import supply chain,” Lemm stated. “Penalizing street turns threatens one of the only measures available to shippers, carriers, terminals, truckers to address the unending congestion.”

Lemm suggested eliminating these fees because they are increasing the number of trucks and emissions.

Noel Hacegaba said that using technology is helping with port congestion. Hacegaba mentioned that some ports are pairing “predictive analytics” with terminal truck appointment systems.

“Such systems allow trucking companies to schedule appointments for container pick-up up to five days before a ship arrives at the terminal,” Hacegaba said. “This advanced visibility enables terminals and trucking companies to optimize their operations.”

Federal regulations

Chairwoman Deb Fischer brought up federal hours-of-service regulations during the hearing. Fischer said that hours of service flexibility has been important for egg and livestock haulers, who have been allowed exemptions. Outside of those exemptions, hours of service was not discussed in the context of the trucking industry as a whole.

Speaking more broadly about government regulations, Baker discussed the direct impact regulations have on the intermodal industries. Much like the trucking industry, Baker said the short line railroad industry is burdened with “unnecessary and expensive regulations” that take away money that can be used for infrastructure improvements.

“Most damaging for short lines are the kind of one-size-fits-all regulations that provide no basis for the presumed benefits and that don’t take into consideration our unique operating characteristics,” Baker said.

Senator David Sessions to Present at Sierra Club Meeting

The Sierra Club will host its monthly meeting on Thursday, March 7 at 6:00 p.m. at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center's Tensaw Theater on the causeway. The documentary film "A Disrupted System: Alabama's Disappearing Barrier Island" will be shown.

Also, Senator Sessions will talk about the bill he will reintroduce into the State Senate during the upcoming session referred to as the "Alabama Coastal Sand Conservation Act." There will be the opportunity to ask questions about the bill as well as learn what can be done to support those efforts in the state legislature.

Funding Opportunities

Closing the Opportunity Gap

Apply for a Grant

The Community Foundation of South Alabama believes it is vital that we – as a community – work together to provide equal opportunity for all children, regardless of zip code, to grow into capable adults who can contribute to a prosperous and sustainable society.

We have identified three long-term focus areas for our eight-county footprint: **Family, Education** and **Work**. This cradle-to-career approach to youth development aims to increase access to high-quality education, to meaningful job opportunities, and to healthy and vibrant communities.

For the 2019 Grant Cycle, the Community Foundation will accept grant applications in the following four priority areas:

- FAMILY: Promoting parenting and family education (ages: birth- 5)
- EDUCATION: Increasing access to preschool education (ages: 3-5)
- EDUCATION: Increasing youth access to extracurricular activities (grades: K-12)
- WORK: Expanding opportunities to help young people get well-paying jobs through workforce training (ages: 16-24)

Join us on Friday, March 1st at the Community Foundation of South Alabama to learn more about our grant cycle or [click here](#) to review the Grant Guidelines.

Date: Friday, March 1st, 2019

Time: 11:00 AM

Location: 212 St Joseph Street, Mobile AL 36601

The deadline to apply for the 2019 Closing the Opportunity Gap Grant Cycle is March 14, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. Contact Brooke Switzer, Director Community Initiatives, at BSwitzer@communityfoundationsa.org or 251-438-5591, for more information.

Through a competitive grant-making process, The Community Foundation of South Alabama awards grants to local organizations serving Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia, Monroe, Conecuh, Choctaw, Clarke and Washington counties. Applicant organizations must be recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization, government entity, educational institution or religious organization.

About the AARP Community Challenge

AARP invites you to submit applications for quick-action projects that can help your community become more livable. Applications are now being accepted for small grants to improve housing, transportation, public space, smart cities and other community elements.

- **Applications are due by April 17, 2019, 11:59 pm (ET)**
- **All projects must be completed by November 4, 2019**

More information may be found by following this [LINK](#).

National Park Service Accepting Proposals for Historic Revitalization Subgrants in Rural Communities

News Release Date: February 8, 2019

Contact: NewsMedia@nps.gov

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service is now accepting applications for \$5 million in grants to support the preservation of historic buildings in rural communities across the country that are listed in or eligible for inclusion in the Places through the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program (HRSP).

"Historic preservation projects have consistently proven to spur economic growth," National Park Service Deputy Director P. Daniel Smith said. "The goal of this new competitive subgrant program is to support the rehabilitation of historic properties in our nation's rural communities, shine a light on their unique local history, and foster economic development."

The HRSP is funded through the Historic Preservation Fund, which is supported by revenue from Federal oil leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, providing assistance for a broad range of preservation projects without expending tax dollars. State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Certified Local Governments, and non-profits may apply to the NPS for funding to support a subgrant program that will in turn fund multiple physical preservation projects in their rural jurisdictions.

Applications for funding are now being accepted in Grants.gov through April 1, 2019 (11:59 p.m. EST). Applicants must define a subgrant program that covers areas defined as rural by the U.S. Census (less than 50,000) and preserves multiple National Register listed or eligible properties in support of economic development. Applicants must also demonstrate that they are capable of managing a federally funded subgrant program.

More information about the HRSP grants, including application materials, is available on the program website: <http://go.nps.gov/revitalization>.

To confirm rural eligibility: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>.

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](http://FederalRailroadAdministration) 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

Dadgum, That's Good!

King Cake has a long history and they are eaten throughout the world. Depending on which article you read, the King Cake dates back to either the 12th, 16th or 17th century. There are several varieties of king cake.

The French King Cake (pictured on the left) traditionally celebrates Epiphany in France and Quebec and is sold in bakeries during the month of January.



The United Kingdom king cake is normally referred to as a “Twelfth Cake.” And can be found in history as early as January 6, 1660. It was traditionally baked with a bean hidden in one side and a pea hidden in the other; the man finding the bean became King for the night, while the lady finding the pea became the Queen. The cake declined in popularity during the Industrial Revolution and has been replaced by the Christmas cake.

King Cake in Spanish-speaking countries (pictured on the top right) is traditionally eaten on January 6th during the celebration of the Dia de los reyes magos.



Of course, we are partial to the U.S. Gulf Coast King cake. It is a tradition that was brought to the area by Basque settlers in 1718. Originally, the king cake was used



to celebrate Epiphany, and is now associated with Mardi Gras.

No one likes their King cake more than New Orleans. They celebrate their king cake in a variety of ways. The New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates at least **750,000 King Cakes** are sold there each year.

The New Orleans king cake is symbolic of the Mardi Gras celebration. Traditionally, it has a small plastic baby hidden in it that today symbolizes luck and prosperity

of whoever finds it in his/her slice of cake and also means that person is responsible for purchasing next year's cake. The tradition of the king cake baby has also been infused in New Orleans sports. The AAA minor league baseball team is now known as the New Orleans Baby Cakes and the New Orleans Pelicans, the NBA team, brings out a second mascot during Mardi Gras, King Baby Cake.

Whichever king cake you prefer, enjoy a slice because there is no better way to celebrate National Dadgum, That's Good Day!

In the News

Gov. Kay Ivey proposes 10-cent gas tax increase

By Mike Cason

Gov. Kay Ivey and other officials announced a plan to increase funding for roads, bridges and other state infrastructure by raising the state's gasoline tax 10 cents per gallon over three years.

The state gasoline tax, which is 18 cents per gallon, would increase by 6 cents this year, 2 cents in 2020 and 2 cents in 2021. The plan also links the tax to a national index on highway construction costs. That could increase the tax no more than 1 cent every two years, Ivey said.

The same increases would apply to the tax on diesel fuel, which is now 19 cents per gallon.

House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, a supporter of the plan, said each 1-cent increase would generate an estimated \$32 million in new revenue, so the full 10-cent increase would raise more than \$300 million.

Rep. Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, the bill's sponsor, said the plan calls for 66 percent of the new revenue to go to the state, 25 percent to counties and 8 percent to cities. A separate portion will go to finance a bond issue to widen and deepen the shipping channel in Mobile Bay to allow more shipping traffic and faster turnaround in the state port.

Poole said associations representing cities and counties had agreed on the formula.

Ivey, McCutcheon, Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh and other legislative leaders announced the Rebuild Alabama Infrastructure plan this morning at a press conference by an aging bridge on a county road in Maplesville, two turns off the main highway between Tuscaloosa and Montgomery.

The Republican governor and the Republican leaders of the Legislature say the state gasoline tax does not provide enough money to support a road system adequate for today's traffic volume and competitive economy. The 18 cents-per-gallon tax hasn't changed since 1992.

The total gas tax in Alabama, including federal and local taxes, is lower than in most states.

Ivey said increasing the investment in infrastructure is vital to promoting economic growth and making roads safer.

"Y'all, this is an issue that is felt by every Alabamian," Ivey said. "Every Alabamian is affected. That makes it clearly a bipartisan issue. That means an issue that we can all get behind and all find a solution to."

Republican leaders in the Alabama House proposed gas tax increases in 2016 and 2017 but they did not pass. The governor and lawmakers had not announced a specific proposal for this year before today.

There is opposition in the Republican Party.

On Saturday, the state Republican Executive Committee passed a resolution opposing a gas tax increase without an offsetting tax decrease, which was not mentioned as part of the plan today.

"It's very clear that they're staying as close as they can to their original broken record of a significant increase in the per capita tax burden under the auspices and justification of infrastructure," said Tom Fredricks of Decatur, who sponsored the resolution passed by the GOP.

To see the full story, click [HERE](#).

Public Comment for the Mobile Unified Development Code

The City of Mobile is preparing to adopt a new zoning code that will implement the vision in Map for Mobile. The complete draft zoning code overhaul, known as the Unified Development Code, addresses many issues important to citizens and reflects modern planning and zoning best practices. [Learn about the code and provide feedback for consideration before the regulations are formally adopted. Please provide public comments by Friday, March 8.](#)

Keep driving, Alabama; you'll pay a toll



This photo from 2017 shows hurricane evacuees lining up on I-10 at the George Wallace Tunnel in downtown Mobile. It could become a toll tunnel.

By [John Archibald | jarchibald@al.com](#)

This is an opinion column.

They're talking about using tolls -- \$3 to \$6 each way -- to pay for an I-10 bridge over the Mobile River.

And -- oh wait -- they know thrifty drivers who don't want to pay the toll would simply take the George Wallace Tunnel, so the Alabama Department of Transportation [is thinking of charging \\$3 to \\$6 on that route too](#).

That's literal highway robbery.

If you had to go back and forth each day you'd run up quite a bill. It's like starting to smoke. Or going to lunch every day. Or setting your money on fire.

What a plan. What a scam.

I mean, a bond deal would let taxpayers pay off the \$2 billion-plus bridge in 40 years or so, right? But a toll goes on forever. Money in the bank.

And out of driver's pockets.

It's genius. Put it on users and limit their ability to get around it.

It's so brutally brilliant my first thought was that we should emulate it to pay for all the things Alabama needs but can't afford, like prisons and schools and courts and roads and healthcare. But who am I fooling? That's exactly what Alabama already does, tacking on tolls in the form of fees. All so it can maintain plausible deniability as a tax-friendly state while creating ways to charge regressive tolls to pay the costs of running the state.

Alabama is a low-tax state when it comes to property taxes. It's right up there at the [lowest in the country](#), according to the [Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama](#). That's great for rich landowners -- including those out-of-staters who own vast swaths of the timber -- who want to get richer.

But Alabama makes up for it with high sales taxes -- the highest local rates, according to [The Tax Foundation](#). That means a poor schmoo who buys a lawnmower or a barbecue grill pays a much bigger chunk of his income on the sales taxes than a fat cat who buys the same thing. Terrible. And brilliant.

Alabama gets to claim it is tax friendly as the rich get richer and the rest pay the toll.

It's made even worse because Alabama continues to tax groceries. Which seems Sheriff-of-Nottingham-sinister but is really another malodorous masterpiece. I mean, how could any good accountant reconcile not taxing groceries in America's fifth fattest state?

Life is a highway, and you're gonna pay the toll as long as you live. No matter what happens with the gas tax Gov. Kay Ivey and others are now pushing to pay for road and bridge improvements. One way or another, you'll foot the bill. From birth to death.

They'll hit you [big in the court system](#), but they'll nickel and dime you from birth to death across governments. Just \$15 for a copy of your birth certificate -- \$30 if you need it fast -- or \$70 to Jefferson County for a marriage license. A death certificate's another \$15, and when you're put in the ground in a Montgomery cemetery you'll pay -- or someone will -- a \$125 "city burial fee."

If you are stopped on a charge of "coasting" in your vehicle in Birmingham it's a \$20 fine. And a \$170 fee.

Failure to stop at a railroad crossing will get you a \$10 fine and a fee of \$170. Which is crazy. Particularly since the charge of "skating in front of a church" in Birmingham is a \$30 fine and a \$271 fee, for a total of \$301. Go figure.

Just tell yourself it all makes sense. Tell yourself it's a low-tax state. As you pay the toll and drive on.

First look: Mobile's new air terminal taking shape

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

The future of air travel in Mobile is taking shape in a building called T1T, a construction site as busy as a kicked anthill.

That stands for Terminal One Temporary, and if you fly out of Mobile after May 1, there's a chance you'll pass through its doors (which, as of Wednesday, hadn't been installed yet). That's the date when Frontier Airlines will begin service from Mobile, using the Downtown Mobile Airport at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

Another low-cost carrier currently flying out of Mobile Regional Airport, Via Airlines, will shift its base of operations to Brookley immediately after T1T opens for business, said Elliot Maisel, chairman of the Mobile Airport Authority board. Via was the first to commit to Brookley, announcing when it came to Mobile in spring 2018 that it [planned to shift to the downtown airport as soon as possible](#).

Under the leadership of Maisel and President Chris Curry, the Mobile Airport Authority has aggressively pushed the long-debated concept of swapping commercial passenger service from Mobile Regional to Brookley. They and other local leaders, including Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, argue that Brookley's easy interstate access and closer proximity to potential customers in Baldwin County make the swap desirable. Such advantages should make it more competitive with other airports in the region, they say, with more customers leading to more flights and lower fares.

On Wednesday, Maisel described T1T as essentially "step one, phase one" of the airport swap. The big picture includes a master plan that hasn't been drawn up and the construction of a full-service terminal that hasn't been designed. Those things will take years. But the Airport Authority [has committed \\$7 million](#) to getting T1T ready for business on a tight timetable.

After pressing briskly through its regular meeting agenda on Wednesday, members of the Airport Authority board got a hardhat tour of the new facility from Izzy Bonilla, the authority's vice president of operations.

The building is a warehouse that was being used by Airbus. For now the authority has a little less than half of it -- about 22,000 square feet -- and it'll take over the rest in July.

The parking lot outside is tracked with the muddy treadprints of heavy equipment. Inside, fresh drywall is being readied for paint, wiring is being run, framing is being put up for climate control and other equipment.

Back in their boardroom, members had heard Curry talk about contracts for automated parking equipment and a security plan required by federal authorities. On-site, they followed as Bonilla led them through a series of unfinished spaces, explaining where ticket counters will be set up, how the flow of incoming baggage will be handled and where lines for security checkpoints will be arranged.

One theme was that expansion capacity is being built into the design. Bonilla said T1T will open with one security check lane, but there's room to add a second. When Airbus turns over the other half of the building, there'll be room for more of everything.

Another was that this was no mere show-and-tell tour. Maisel took advantage of the situation to set some goals for customer service. Automated baggage handling will come eventually, but the terminal will open with manual baggage handling. "Let's not short on personnel," Maisel said, saying it's important to impress the terminal's first wave of users -- both passengers and airlines -- with speedy service.

He also focused on making sure there was adequate parking, saying that if necessary, terminal workers will park elsewhere and be shuttled in to free up more nearby spots for customers. And he suggested that as concessions are added, he'd rather see some local flavor -- this restaurant's famous hot dogs or that one's gumbo -- rather than generic snacks.

"This is not a lipstick-on-a-pig project," he said. T1T isn't a stopgap until a "real" terminal arrives, he said. It's a facility that will meet short-term needs while offering room for growth. It might help attract other low-cost carriers to Mobile alongside Frontier and Via. It might prompt airlines currently using Mobile Regional to switch over. It might become a permanent fixture even after a bigger Terminal Two is built at Brookley.

There are a lot of options that may be explored, he said, and T1T will make it possible to explore them. "This building takes all the pressure off," he said.

There's a lot of work to be done between now and May 1, he said, but when the day arrives, Mobile air travelers will find an "efficient, functional, clean terminal that will allow them to best use the location of Brookley Field."

"Nothing happens without a deadline," Maisel said of the pace. "The building will be there."

'Generational opportunity' or tax concern? A final push before Ivey releases road plan

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

Supporters of a state infrastructure program and a gas tax increase have been buoyed in recent days over a blistering report about Alabama's roads and bridges.

Research was compiled by a Washington, D.C.-based transportation research group called TRIP, otherwise known as The Road Information Program, and compiled into seven reports detailing how the state's roads and bridges are [costing residents \\$5.3 billion a year in higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays](#).

The release of each report has been met with news conferences involving mayors, county commissioners, economic development specialists and others advocating for a state transportation program on the eve of [Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey's unveiling Wednesday of an infrastructure plan](#).

"The reports by TRIP outline just how much deficient, congested and unsafe roads truly impact Alabama citizens," said Drew Harrell, executive director of the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure. "This data only reiterates the dire situation we face as a state when it comes to providing Alabamians with a safe and efficient road and bridge system."

On Tuesday, the TRIP Mobile report was discussed during a news conference at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

“We understand the residents of Alabama and the Legislature are making an important decision on the future of their transportation system,” said Carolyn Bonifas Kelly, associate director of research and communications with TRIP, a non-profit which is not taking an official stance on a gas tax increase. “With that in mind, we want them to have all the available information.”

To read the full story, click [HERE](#).

Transportation Research

STEP (Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian) workshop in Mobile

The Alabama Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP, the Alabama LTAP Center) has partnered with FHWA’s Every Day Counts program to present a one-day, reduced-fee, STEP (Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian) workshop in Mobile. The workshop will be on Wednesday, April 3, at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission office at 110 Beauregard Street. Peter Eun, who co-leads FHWA’s STEP team, will deliver the workshop. The brochure is attached. The registration fee is \$75; this includes the 6.5 PDH workshop, course materials, and lunch on site. To register, go to <http://eng.auburn.edu/atap/events/edc5-step.html>

Making Travel Safer Using Pedestrian Safety Technologies

March 6th 1:00 PM ET

The [WEBINAR](#) will feature a discussion on current trends in pedestrian crashes and the importance of pedestrian safety application, including the development of vehicle-to-pedestrian (V2P) communication systems aimed at improving the safety and mobility of vulnerable road users.

2018 Benchmarking Report on Biking and Walking from the League of American Bicyclists

WASHINGTON, DC – February 8, 2019: In 1958, Walt Disney imagined the future of transit was a “Magic Highway” where technology and infrastructure combined for fast, uncongested, sedentary travel by car. In 2019, with the rates of chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes rising and roads get deadlier for pedestrians and cyclists, the real solutions for better infrastructure are not found in 1950s futurism – they are found in the Bicycle Friendly Communities and States where more people are biking and walking, and fewer bicyclists and pedestrians are dying.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE 2018 BENCHMARKING REPORT ON BIKING AND WALKING »](#)

Congress first authorized federal funding to improve infrastructure projects intended for bicyclists and pedestrians in 1991. In 25 years, the United States has made significant investments in infrastructure, but a review of data and official documents by the League of American Bicyclists for Bicycling & Walking in the United States: 2018 Benchmarking Report shows that more federal and state leadership is needed to make improvements in infrastructure. While forward-thinking advocates and city leaders have made progress for bicyclist and pedestrian safety at the local level, further leadership at the federal and state level is necessary to coordinate the design and implementation of cohesive, connected, and safe environments for bicycling and walking in America.

“The way we’re investing in infrastructure isn’t working,” said Ken McLeod, policy director with the League of American Bicyclists, and lead author of the 2018 Benchmarking Report. “There is a crisis in traffic safety and we have the tools to reduce the number of bicyclists and pedestrians killed on our roads every year—we need leaders at the national and state levels to take action: adopt Complete Streets policies, draft and implement bike and pedestrian master plans, and build protected infrastructure.”

The 2018 Benchmarking Report is the sixth edition of the report, the first published by the League of American Bicyclists. By combining data analysis with the League’s research and data collection, the 2018 Benchmarking Report offers the most comprehensive look at national and regional statistics on bicycling and walking alongside an examination of the policies and plans, or lack thereof, to improve infrastructure for people biking and walking. In investigating the relationship between states with Complete Streets policies and/or bicycling and walking master plans, the League found that states with long-term and multiple actions on both had more growth in active transportation.

“The Benchmarking Report should be a wake-up call,” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. “While the state and safety of bicycling and walking may seem dire, it’s not all bad news. The data shows there are places like Oregon, Minneapolis, and Washington, DC, where officials are working with advocates on the ground to create communities that are more welcoming for bicyclists and pedestrians. Local bike advocates are working to meet their communities’ needs and make biking better—it’s time for state and federal leaders to empower local efforts.”

Produced with support from groups such as AARP and Toole Design Group, the 2018 Benchmarking Report demonstrates the urgency to create bikeable and walkable communities to not only save lives on the roadway, but also encourage healthy living options. Just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, of moderate to vigorous physical activity for adults can help prevent eight types of cancer, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and depression. Even small amounts of physical activity each day have health benefits. Building Bicycle Friendly Communities and ones that enable even short trips to work, school, or the doctor’s office encourage healthier outcomes for everyone.

The 2018 Benchmarking Report contains state and city-level data charting the increases and declines in bicyclist and pedestrian safety, federal funding for active transportation infrastructure, policies and plans for biking and walking, and much more. A few noteworthy findings include:

- Mississippi was the deadliest state for bicyclists with the highest average fatality rate per 10k bicycle commuters from 2012-2016. Mississippi also had the lowest percent of commuters biking to work in 2016 at .1 percent of the population.
- Cities where the rate of biking to work is highest, like Portland, Oregon, and Washington, DC, have the lowest rate of bicyclist fatalities.
- 71 percent of bicyclist deaths occurred in an urban area, with 61 percent occurring on principal or minor arterial roadways, which only make up 10 percent of the national roadway system.
- 39 percent of biking trips and 35 percent of walking trips in 2017 were for social and/or recreational purposes.

- 20 percent of biking trips in 2017 were to earn a living.
- Women are underrepresented among people who bike to work, but there have been modest participation increases in recent years.
- For people with an income below \$25,000 per year, biking is an increasingly common method for taking trips.

A new initiative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Active People, Healthy NationSM](#) aims to get 27 million Americans more active by 2027. This initiative supports proven strategies to promote physical activity, including creating bikeable and walkable communities.

The nearly 400-page 2018 Benchmarking Report contains graphs, maps, and tables touching nearly every topic related to bicycling and walking in the United States. Please contact communications@bikeleague.org to ask about specific cities or states, speak to an expert, or learn more about how your state and community can become more bicycle friendly.

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.