



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Volume 30, Number 5

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[2018 Unified Planning Work Program](#)

[2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program](#)

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## Contact Us

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**PLEASE BE ADVISED** There are several public meetings coming up for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that [need your attendance](#) – See *MPO and RPO Updates*. See *In The NEWS* for the public meetings that were held this week on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, and what Congressman Byrne’s idea is about the toll. A \$2 Trillion Infrastructure deal? Check out *Legislative Updates* for the details. This week’s *Just for Fun* is....**up, up, and away, in my beautiful balloon...**

Have a great weekend! **Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!**

[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)  Check us out on FACEBOOK

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

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

[Planning and Community Development](#)

[Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Employment and Economic Development](#)

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

## Mobile MPO Updates

### Mobile MPO meetings

There was a Mobile MPO meeting this week, the agenda items included a draft 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and some minor edits to the Public Participation Plan (PPP). There are also numerous projects modified in the current 2016-2019 TIP. Finally, there will be a discussion concerning the 2045 Long Range transportation Plan (LRTP).

Also discussed at the meeting, President Trump signed into law the Appropriations Act of 2019 which allocated \$10,097,088 of federal funds to the State of Alabama for MPO projects. That translates to almost \$2 million for the Mobile MPO (\$1,944,435). The TCC/CAC deliberated at the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting on how to treat this Special Allocation. It could be used for any variety of STP type projects. It was discussed the \$2 million Special Allocation could be used for a beautification type award, through a competitive type process, OR be placed into the regular STP Attributable funding for future deficits. The TCC/CAC voted to recommend to the MPO to use the \$2 million (fed) for future deficits of the existing projects and the MPO agreed.

Please see our web page for further details [www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)

### FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their third 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 third survey report had 88% of trucker visits answering the survey, the best percentage yet, which helps refine our understanding of container truck trip patterns in the area.

### 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](#)

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

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

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>



### 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](http://www.MobileRiverBridge.com). Please contact Allison Gregg (251-604-9790) to coordinate site visits.

Last night, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) conducted the second of two public hearings on the Mobile River Bridge project. As you know, your Chamber has long been in support of this critical project. Below is a link to today's al.com coverage.

<https://www.al.com/news/mobile/2019/05/a-bridge-too-far-concerns-aired-on-i-10-project.html>

As you'll note, there were dissenters on this project. Consequently, it's vitally important ALDOT receive positive, encouraging commentary regarding this project.

Please take but a few minutes and email your comments to: [mrbenvironmental@dot.state.al.us](mailto:mrbenvironmental@dot.state.al.us)

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### Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100064262 ( TR )  
Federal aid number : FTA9 TR19  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : SECTION 5307 BUS TRANSIT ENHANCEMENTS (ENGINEERING/BENCHES/TRASH RECEPTACLES) (APPORTIONMENT FY 2019)  
Old Engineers Estimate : \$43,750.00  
New Engineers Estimate : \$106,875.00

Project : 100064259 ( TR )  
Federal aid number : FTA9C TR19  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : SECTION 5307 ACQUISITION OF SUPPORT VEHICLE  
Old Engineers Estimate : \$93,750.00  
New Engineers Estimate : \$17,198.00

Project : 100064258 ( TR )  
Federal aid number : FTA9 TR19  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : SECTION 5307 REHAB/RENOVATION OF ADP, SECURTIY AND MISC. EQUIPMENT (APPORTIONMENT FY 2019)  
Old Engineers Estimate : \$31,250.00  
New Engineers Estimate : \$110,000.00

Project : 100046895 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (601)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) ADD LANES FROM CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) TO CR-429 (CODY RD)  
Old Target start date : July 26, 2019  
New Target start date : August 30, 2019

## Projects in Region Let May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

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### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on I-65 from the SR-21 Interchange in Martinville to 0.400 mile north of the junction of CR-40. Length 13.294 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$16,798,221 to \$20,531,159 .

### **MOBILE COUNTY**

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on I-65 from north of the SR-13 (US-43) Interchange in Creola to include the Bridge Raising at Lester Dairy Road. Length 6.049 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,440,086 to \$2,982,327 .
- For constructing the Planing, Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on CR-32 (Three Notch - Kroner Road) from the junction of CR-33 (Dawes Road) to west of the junction of CR-39 (McDonald Road) in Churchill. Length 1.800 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,723,604 to \$2,106,628 .

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) in Bay Minette from the junction of Pine Street to the junction of Crosby Mill Road. Length 1.657 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,480,703 to \$3,031,971

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

## **RPO Updates**

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### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DRAFT**

#### **STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - STIP**

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will hold public meetings to gather input regarding the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The meetings are scheduled for:

**Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019**  
**GM&O Building**  
**110 Beauregard Street**  
**Mobile, AL 36602**  
**5:30 PM to 7:30 PM**

**Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019**  
**Atmore City Hall**  
**201 East Louisville Ave.**  
**Atmore, AL 36502**  
**5:30 PM to 7:30 PM**

**Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019**  
**Baldwin County Central Annex**  
**22251 Palmer Street**  
**Robertsdale, AL 36567**  
**5:30 PM to 7:30 PM**

The ALDOT is seeking public comment on the proposed STIP, which includes a listing of specific transportation projects that will be funded during the next four years.

The meeting will be held in an open house format. Displays and information, along with a short presentation, will be included to explain the requirements to have a STIP. ALDOT staff will be available to discuss planning efforts and answer questions.

Physically challenged persons who need special accommodations should contact the Transportation Planning Coordinator at SARPC, (251) 433-6541, email: [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org), to request special assistance. Please make this request at least one week prior to the meeting and specify the type of assistance needed.

The DRAFT STIP 2020-2023 will be available for review at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission Offices, located at the GM&O Building at 110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207 Mobile, AL 36602.

Comments will be accepted until June 30, 2019 and should be forwarded to:

State Office Engineer  
Alabama Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 3050  
Montgomery, AL 36130-3050

OR:

Submit your comments electronically by going to ALDOT's web page: [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us)  
Click on: DRAFT 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

## **Legislative Updates**

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### **Lawmakers Mull Funding Options for \$2 Trillion Infrastructure Deal**

May 9, 2019 5:30 PM, EDT

WASHINGTON — More than a week after President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats elevated a \$2 trillion infrastructure package for lawmakers' legislative agenda, stakeholders are speaking up about their funding preferences in advance of a planned meeting between the White House and transportation policymakers to discuss how to pay for the initiative.

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee, continues to champion a funding approach for surface transportation programs that would combine new user fees with other options. He is among the few voices openly endorsing raising the Clinton-era fuel taxes and relying on what he calls “real” federal funds. The federal 24.4 cents-per-gallon diesel tax and 18.4 cents-per-gallon gas tax rates were set in 1993.

“We’ve got to come to an agreement on how we pay for the package,” DeFazio said May 8. “I would hope that we can come together and agree on a funding package that is significant.”

Missouri Rep. Sam Graves, DeFazio’s Republican partner on the House transportation committee, is consistent with his call to transition to a fee-based system for miles traveled. “We need to keep the focus on infrastructure,” Graves told Transport Topics. “How we fund it is the elephant in the room and I am hopeful legislators will bring thoughtful ideas to the table.”

Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), head of the Senate transportation panel, has pushed back on funding proposals anchored primarily on public-private partnerships, and has joined other top Republicans in supporting ongoing efforts to streamline the regulatory permitting process for big-ticket infrastructure projects.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) recently indicated her caucus will await Trump’s lead on the funding question. “The country needs this,” Pelosi told The Washington Post on May 8. “We’ll want to hear what [Trump] wants to do.”

Meanwhile, stakeholders are urging Congress to advance an infrastructure package this year, and are sounding the alarm on the uncertainty created by dwindling funds from the Highway Trust Fund, which is used to pay for infrastructure improvements. Analysts estimate it will approach insolvency in about two years.

“The fuel tax is the one funding tool in the toolbox that pays for itself by users. It is the most effective, efficient and yes, conservative, way of generating the amount of money we need to do the job,” said American Trucking Associations President Chris Spear.

Citing federal inaction, more than two-thirds of the states have approved increasing their fuel taxes in recent years.

Reached by Transport Topics, neither the White House nor Barrasso or DeFazio had further details on when the planned meeting to discuss funding for the \$2 trillion infrastructure plan would take place.

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## Committee Approves Slate of Legislation to Maintain Nation’s Ports, Increase Transparency, Encourage Energy Efficiency in Federal Building Leases, and More

May 08, 2019

**Washington, DC-** Today, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved a slate of bipartisan measures by voice vote, including the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act, the DISASTER Act, the Transparency in Federal Buildings Projects Act of 2019, and nearly two dozen General Services Administration (GSA) Capital Investment and Leasing Program Resolutions.

“I am pleased the Committee approved my bipartisan legislation to unlock billions in already collected taxes in order to better maintain our nation’s ports and harbors,” **said Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR)**. “In addition, I’m pleased the GSA resolutions approved today incorporate new language that encourages the use of energy efficient spaces, with the ongoing hope of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee also passed important legislation to streamline disaster relief assistance information, and to modernize GSA website practices. I applaud Ranking Member Graves and all members of the Committee for again working in a bipartisan way to advance critical pieces of legislation.”

“The bills we approved today are about good government. The ‘Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act’ ensures that these user fees we collect are used for their intended purpose – investing in America’s ports and harbors,” **said Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO)**. “Legislation approved today will also provide greater transparency in how the government spends disaster program funding and in the management of federal real property. For years, Committee Republicans have elected to post information about proposed capital and leasing projects on their website, and if signed into law, the Transparency in Federal Buildings Projects Act will require GSA to post this information. These measures are wins for the taxpayers and the Nation’s infrastructure. I want to thank Chairman DeFazio for working with us on these bipartisan bills, and I commend Ranking Member Meadows and Congressman Palmer for their leadership on these issues.”

The legislation passed today out of Committee includes:

### **H.R. 2440, Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act (DeFazio)**

“For years—during Republican and Democratic administrations alike—the Harbor Maintenance tax has been diverted from its intended purpose, which is to ensure our Nation’s ports and harbors are properly dredged and fully operational. It’s past time we put those taxes back into much-needed improvements,” **said Chair DeFazio**. “This commonsense, bipartisan bill will make approximately \$34 billion in harbor maintenance taxes available over the next decade for harbor maintenance, assuring we are able to save and create jobs, grow businesses, and keep us globally competitive. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this bill and advancing it out of Committee, and I will keep fighting for this legislation at every step until the President signs it into law.”

Currently, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (Trust Fund) collects more revenue from shippers than Congress has appropriated to the U.S. Army Corps (Corps) of Engineers to maintain our harbors. Approximately \$9.3 billion in already collected revenue sits idle in the U.S. Treasury, not being used for its intended purpose of investing in our Nation’s ports and harbors. At the same time, some ports and harbors of all sizes

struggle to remain competitive in the global shipment of goods and services or remain open to meet the needs of the communities that depend on a vibrant maritime and commercial fishing industry. While shippers continue to pay into the Trust Fund for Congressionally approved maintenance activities, the Federal Government has not carried out many of them.

This bipartisan bill makes it easier for Congress to appropriate any funds collected in the Trust Fund for authorized harbor maintenance needs, including the existing \$9.3 billion balance in the Trust Fund. The legislation enables the expenditure of approximately \$34 billion over the next decade, which will allow the Corps to dredge all Federal harbors to their constructed widths and depths.

#### **H.R. 1984, DISASTER Act**

“The DISASTER Act would mark a significant step forward in providing needed transparency to disaster relief expenditures,” **said Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee Ranking Member Mark Meadows (R-NC)**. “Our constituents deserve to have access to details on how we spend their money, and our bill would go a long way toward consolidating this research and information for them, like spending reports or calculation breakdowns. I look forward to continuing our bipartisan work on this important issue going forward.”

H.R. 1984 directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to compile, aggregate, and organize all federal disaster relief assistance information it currently collects into an annually produced, user-friendly, publicly-available report.

#### **H.R. 2502, Transparency in Federal Buildings Projects Act of 2019**

“I’m pleased that my colleagues joined me in advancing the Transparency in Federal Buildings Projects Act, which will strengthen transparency and accountability in federal construction, renovation, and leasing projects. I thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for their work on this bill and look forward to giving the taxpayers more information about how their hard-earned dollars are being spent going forward,” **said U.S. Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL), sponsor of H.R. 2502**.

H.R. 2502 requires the General Services Administration (GSA) to publish on its website all prospectuses for leasing, design or construction activities which the GSA - pursuant to Chapter 33 of Title 40, United States Code sections 3307 and 3316 – has submitted to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

#### **General Services Administration Capital Investment and Leasing Program Resolutions**

“The Federal government has a great opportunity to reduce energy costs and curb carbon emissions in its day-to-day operations, which is why I’m proud to include this new language to encourage the use of greener infrastructure,” **said Chair DeFazio**. “By emphasizing the availability of public transportation and the inclusion of renewable energy, water efficiency, and indoor air quality improvements in future leases, the Federal government will be part of the solution in our continued fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Each fiscal year, the Committee considers GSA’s Capital Investment and Leasing Program (CILP) resolutions. Today, the Committee approved 20 resolutions that authorize GSA to complete several lease projects across the Nation. Nearly all of the projects considered involve an agency either reducing its space footprint or improving its utilization rate.

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## **In New Bipartisan Letter, Committee Leaders Urge Congressional Leaders to Address Key Infrastructure Priorities in Budget Talks**

**Washington, DC-** Yesterday, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO); Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Chair Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Ranking Member Rodney Davis (R-IL); and Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Chair Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA) and Ranking Member Bruce Westerman (R-AR) sent a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy requesting two Committee-related priorities be included in any upcoming budget agreement.

First, the Members requested a repeal of the \$7.6 billion rescission contained in the most recent surface transportation law, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act; P.L. 114-94). The rescission, if carried out, would mean that highway funding provided by Congress would be taken back, impacting all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The members wrote: “...the rescission will significantly limit the flexibility of all states and impact the ability to plan and execute highway and bridge projects. These projects are necessary in order to grow the U.S. economy, create jobs, and ensure the Nation’s global competitiveness. We therefore request that the rescission be repealed as part of any budget agreement.”

The Members also requested that a mechanism to ensure full utilization of annual Harbor Maintenance Tax collections for harbor maintenance and access to the remaining balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund be included in the budget agreement. Enacting such a mechanism would make sure our Nation’s ports and harbors are fully maintained with the fees collected for this very purpose.

Both requests will ensure our country is able to save and create jobs, grow businesses, and keep our nation globally competitive.

Full text of the letter can be found [HERE](#).

# Funding Opportunities

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## [Federal Planning Assistance Program to Focus on Main Street Redevelopment through Outdoor Recreation Initiatives](#)

**Date:** May 09, 2019

[Recreation Economy for Rural Communities](#) is a new planning assistance program from the [U.S. Forest Service](#), the [Northern Border Regional Commission](#), and [the Environmental Protection Agency](#) to help communities develop strategies and an action plan to revitalize their main streets through outdoor recreation. Outdoor activities are increasingly popular across the United States. Communities can take advantage of this trend to revitalize main streets. By conserving forests and other natural lands and making them available for outdoor recreation, small towns can boost air quality and water quality and focus development downtown. Communities are invited to apply for planning assistance; the application deadline is **May 31, 2019**. Click [here](#) to learn more and to apply.

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## **Federal Transit Administration Announces \$15 Million Funding Opportunity for Innovative Mobility Projects in Public Transportation**

5/8/2019

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the [opportunity to apply for \\$15 million in research funds](#) through the new [Integrated Mobility Innovation \(IMI\) Demonstration program](#). This program will support innovations in public transportation service models, payment systems, and automation applications to improve mobility for all Americans.

“FTA is committed to advancing U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao’s strategic goal of innovation, which is key to improving safety and reliability in our transportation system,” said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams. “As public transportation continues to experience a period of rapid change, these grant funds are designed to help public transit providers throughout the country develop and deploy emerging technologies to better serve their customers.”

The Integrated Mobility Innovation program brings together three areas of high interest to the transit industry and traveling public: Mobility on Demand, Strategic Transit Automation Research, and Mobility Payment Integration. Applicants can propose projects that involve one or multiple areas.

### **Mobility on Demand (MOD) – \$8 million**

Building on FTA’s successful [initial round of MOD projects](#), these projects will deploy new tools and service models, such as mobile applications or on-demand microtransit, that make transit more convenient and accessible. Focus areas include projects that provide first-mile/last-mile connections to transit hubs; improve mobility for those with limited transportation choices; and involve targeted, reproducible approaches to data sharing and collection.

### **Strategic Transit Automation Research (STAR) – \$5 million**

FTA developed the five-year [Strategic Transit Automation Research \(STAR\) Plan](#) to explore the use of vehicle automation technologies in bus transit operations. This grant opportunity is specifically soliciting automation projects identified in the STAR Plan roadmap, including Automated Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) for transit buses and automated shuttles.

### **Mobility Payment Integration (MPI) – \$2 million**

This research area was developed from FTA’s recognition of the importance of the evolving mobility payment marketplace in managing and integrating mobility. Payment integration can allow seamless, complete trip planning among a range of public and private operators, enhancing regional mobility.

### **How to Apply**

Providers of public transportation, including public transportation agencies, state/local government DOTs, and federally-recognized Indian tribes, are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants must identify one or more strategic project partner(s) with a substantial interest and involvement in the project.

Projects will be evaluated and selected based on criteria outlined in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), including the project’s potential impact, innovativeness, and transferability to other communities. Applications will be accepted until August 6, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern time.

Additional information, including detailed application instructions and contacts for additional information, can be found at <https://transit.dot.gov/IMI>.

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### **BUILD GRANT deadline (July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019)**

**Department of Transportation BUILD Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced that the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available for its competitive grant program known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD, formerly known as TIGER). A total of \$900 million was appropriated for this program in FY 2019. The application is currently available online at <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>. The application deadline is **July 15, 2019**. A series of webinars to provide information and answer applicants' questions has also been announced:

- How to Compete for BUILD Transportation Grants – All Applicants
  - Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-5:00 EDT -- [register here](#)
- How to Compete for BUILD Transportation Grants – Tribal and Rural Applicants
  - Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2:00-4:00 EDT -- [register here](#)
- Preparing a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) for a BUILD Application –All Applicants
  - Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2:00-4:00 EDT -- [register here](#)
- How to Compete for BUILD Transportation Grants – All Applicants
  - Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-4:00 EDT -- [register here](#)
- Preparing a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) for a BUILD Application – All Applicants
  - Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> 3:00-5:00 EDT -- [register here](#)

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## Innovations in Transit Public Safety Deadline May 28, 2019

Agency Name: DOT/Federal Transit Administration

Description: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the availability of \$2 million in funding provided under the Public Transportation Innovation Program, as authorized by 49 U.S.C. § 5312, as amended by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST), Public Law 114-94 (December 4, 2015). This is a national solicitation for project proposals and includes the selection criteria and program eligibility information for Fiscal Year 2019 projects. The primary purpose of these competitively selected grants is to identify innovative solutions to reduce or eliminate human trafficking occurring on transit systems, protect transit operators from the risk of assault, and reduce crime on public transit vehicles and facilities.

Link to Additional Information: FTA Notices of Funding Opportunity

Grantor Contact Information: If you have difficulty accessing the full announcement electronically, please contact:

**Dakisha Spratling**  
**Office of Transit Safety and Oversight**  
**(202) 366-2530**

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

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

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## 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](#)

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## 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](http://www.grants.gov).

## Just For Fun

### ***Up, up, and away, in my beautiful balloon...***

It's graduation time, and if you have tried to get helium balloons for your graduate, you may be paying a “high” price. There is a royal shortage of the noble gas, and there is even a push to ban helium balloons. Not only are they bad for the environment, they are consuming a large amount of the gas.

Ever drive with a helium balloon? It's crazy, check this out (*physics is such a gas, HeHe*):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXpURFYgR2E>



The United States produces about [75% of the world's helium](#), with more than 40% of the helium used annually by the US found in the Federal Helium Reserve in Amarillo, Texas. The rest of the world's supply comes from [Qatar](#). How is Helium used in automobiles and the transportation industry?

**Airbags:** Because it can diffuse quickly, helium is the gas of choice for effecting the near instantaneous deployment of airbags in cars.

**Detecting leaks, such as in the hull of a ship:** Helium is famous for its capacity to detect leaks in many different mediums. Whether it's the hull of a ship, the air conditioning line of a car or high-pressure systems like vacuums, helium's ability to diffuse through solids three times faster than air allows it to effectively identify possible leaks.

**Shielding in welding in auto manufacturing:** When used as a shielding gas in welding, helium promotes a higher heat transfer for a more consistent weld, ultimately yielding a higher work speed. Better productivity is something companies always want to embrace.

**Mobile phone, computer and tablet chips:** One of the more prevalent uses of helium comes in the production of semiconductor chips. Phones, TVs, computers, tablets—if a device contains a chip, and there are plenty in your car, it wouldn't be possible without the helium used at different stages in the production process.

**Cleaning rocket fuel tanks:** Although not used directly as rocket fuel, helium is used to clean the fuel tanks of the liquid hydrogen and oxygen that are used as fuel. Knowing that helium is inert allows the space program to trust that it won't react or combust with any oxygen that happens to remain in the tank.

Helium is also used in.....

**Heliox mixtures in respiratory treatments for asthma, bronchitis and other lung deficiencies:** By combining helium and oxygen, doctors produce a heliox gas mixture (roughly 79% helium and 21% oxygen), useful for the effective treatment of respiratory ailments like asthma and emphysema. This works by lowering overall airflow resistance. For this reason, heliox is also used in deep sea diving.

**MRI magnets:** The super powerful magnets used to produce MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) have to be cooled in order to consistently and accurately do their jobs of providing extremely detailed images of internal body structures. With its extremely low boiling point, helium gas is the first choice of hospitals to perform that crucial task.

**High speed Internet and Cable TV:** The high-speed Internet service everyone has grown to love wouldn't be possible without helium. The fiber optic cables that carry Internet and cable TV services have to be manufactured in a pure helium atmosphere in order to ensure air bubbles don't get trapped inside the cables.



**Computer hard drives:** Computer hard drives featuring dramatically improved storage capacities are also reliant on helium. Helium filled hard drives are starting to replace air filled hard drives, primarily because they offer [50% higher storage capacity with 23% lower operating power](#). It's also estimated that a single tank of helium gas can produce 10,000 hard drives.

*Who knows if helium is safe to inhale, [celebrities do it](#), and it's a gas...BTW, Helium (He) is at top of the periodic table, did it just float there, Just For Fun?*

## In the News

### A bridge too far? Concerns aired on I-10 project

Updated May 9, 9:16 PM; Posted May 9, 9:04 PM



Lawrence Specker | [LSpecker@AL.com](mailto:LSpecker@AL.com)

*At a public meeting on May 9, 2019, Mobile attorney Herndon Inge III airs his complaints about planning of a proposed I-10 bridge to Alabama Department of Transportation officials. (Lawrence Specker | [LSpecker@AL.com](mailto:LSpecker@AL.com))*

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

The second of two public meetings held this week on the proposed I-10 bridge seems to have made this much clear: If Baldwin County residents have one reason to hate the plan, Mobile County residents have several.

That's putting it harshly. Despite a looming storm front, dozens of people turned out Thursday night at the Mobile Civic Center to study the information about the bridge being presented by the Alabama Department of Transportation. Of those, only 14 signed up to speak, and there was no objective way to gauge how widely their views were shared.

Three of those spoke in favor of the bridge, starting with Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Bill Sisson and another Chamber representative. Sisson said the bridge was simply essential to the area's economic future. "At the end of the day, our competitiveness, it comes down to infrastructure," he said. "This bridge will make it possible for us to continue to attract businesses and jobs to this area and will keep us competitive in economic development ... Let's build the I-10 bridge, the time is now."



[Toll opposition dominates I-10 Mobile River bridge project hearing](#) [Mobile and Baldwin County residents at a public meeting](#)  
Tuesday in Spanish Fort overwhelmingly oppose the suggested \$3 to \$6 tolls on motorists to help pay for the \$2.1 billion bridge and bayway project.

Mike Lee said studies suggest that at peak times, 60 percent of those paying a bridge toll would be from out of state, and that looked like a win for him. "It would be great if we could get money from those states, but that is totally unrealistic," he said. "There is no mechanism for those states to throw money to Alabama's bridges and roads, but we can get it out of them anyway with these tolls ... When you couple that investment with the federal investment, we're solving a problem for Alabama and particularly for Mobile probably for less than 30 cents on the dollar."

The hearing was civil and even had a moment of levity when every cell phone in the room simultaneously blared weather alerts as the front passed by. Continue [HERE](#)

Congressman Bradley Byrne suggested an idea that could mean anyone with an Alabama tag get a reduced rate supplemented with GOMESA Funds. The media was not fair, and very misleading, with the piece titled "[Did Alabama Dept. of Transportation dismiss idea to lower tolls for Mobile bridge project?](#)" [HERE](#)

### Did Alabama Dept. of Transportation dismiss idea to lower tolls for Mobile bridge project?

by Muriel Bailey

Thursday, May 9th 2019

MOBILE, Ala (WPML) - Alabama Department of Transportation's I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project will cost \$2 billion.

You will help pay for it with a \$3-\$6 toll. It could cost a daily commuter more than \$2,000 a year.

Congressman Bradley Byrne says to lower the burden on all of us, he suggests ALDOT use the money Alabama gets from offshore gas wells.



*Did Alabama Dept. of Transportation dismiss idea to lower tolls for Mobile bridge project? (img: WPML)*

"What I proposed to them is to take a certain proportion of this GOMESA money which is the money we get from offshore gas wells and buy down the cost of the project," Byrne said. "Then tell the people that collect the tolls 'when you take the pictures of everybody's tag, if it's an Alabama tag, their tolls are a fraction of what everybody else is paying because Alabama has put up that money.' I think that's a commonsense way to do this where our tolls would be very small. But the State Department of Transportation did not like that idea. They didn't like any of my other ideas, by the way, with how they were going to pay for the bridge. And I've got to just realize this is a state decision, not a federal decision and so it's out of my hands."

We took that comment to ALDOT's Director John Cooper and asked if ALDOT did in fact turn down Byrne's idea.

"I don't know that it would be fair to say we didn't like the idea," Cooper said. "We had some qualms about the idea because we don't control the GOMESA money. Outside of Congressman Byrne none of the local officials have suggested that we use that money. No one has approached us with any offer to allow us to use any of that money."

When asked if he would approach someone about the pool of money, Cooper says probably not.

"Obviously everyone involved with the GOMESA money knows where we are, knows about this project," Cooper said. "Will I reach out to people about the GOMESA money? I probably will not. As I said, if those people who control that money are interested in seeing it used to defray the cost of this bridge and thereby reduce the toll we're really easy to find."

He says from his understanding there are many other uses for that money.

Cooper says even if they were to get the money by chance, he can't guarantee the toll would be cheaper for Alabamians.

"I don't make that decision in a vacuum," he said. "That's a decision that the three concessionaires who will be giving us proposals to do the project actually make."

Cooper says right now the only plan in place for a 15 percent toll discount is for those who travel across at least 20 times a month.

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## **SARPC to conduct Public Meetings for the STIP**

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) lists transportation projects programmed over a four year period. A major component of STIP development is public involvement. Each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) engages the public involvement process as part of the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). All thirteen MPOs follow the TIP development process whereby TIP's include a four year listing, of projects identified by the MPOs. The TIP's are incorporated, as adopted by the MPOs, into the STIP. In rural areas of the state, ALDOT is responsible for cooperatively identifying needed projects, facilitating public input and involving traditionally under-served populations in transportation decision-making for the STIP. The RPOs are assisting ALDOT with the public involvement component of the STIP process.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) has meetings scheduled for Mobile County on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the GM&O Building in Mobile from 5:30-7:30, in Escambia County on May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Atmore City Hall from 5:30-7:30, and for Baldwin County on May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Baldwin County Central Annex in Robertsdale from 5:30-7:30.

If anyone has any questions pertaining to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, please do not hesitate to contact us at [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org)

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## ALDOT performing I-65 evacuation exercise

Updated May 8, 2019 | Posted on May 8, 2019

MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- The Alabama Department of Transportation announced this morning that the department, in conjunction with the state Emergency Management Agency and local agencies, will conduct a hurricane preparation lane-reversal simulation today on I-65 from Mobile to Montgomery.

There will be no traffic impacts, but drivers may see activity from these agencies along the I-65 corridor, according to ALDOT.

Interstate lane reversal, or “contraflow,” requires extensive communication from all agencies involved, ALDOT said. This annual exercise provides agencies a dress rehearsal opportunity which helps ensure an actual contraflow event will be executed safely.

In the event of an evacuation situation, ALDOT would convert all lanes on I-65 to the northbound direction from Mobile to Montgomery.

### **A Diversified Investment**

Future-focused investing requires deep diversification. ROBO Global provides investors varied exposure to the evolving robotics industry.

ALDOT states that its mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally and economically sound transportation network across Alabama. For additional information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## The Ongoing Debate Over Disaster Relief and Climate Change Collide

POSTED BY: [NEIL BOMBERG](#) MAY 8, 2019

After more than a year of negotiations, the Senate appears to have moved closer to an agreement on disaster funding for Puerto Rico, Florida, and California.

According to *Politico*, Senators Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), the chair and ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, respectively, and the President are near an agreement that will provide \$17 billion in assistance to communities recently impacted by disasters, though the amount going directly to Puerto Rico remains under discussion.

Sadly, it is likely that the debate around how much the federal government should spend to respond to the impacts of disasters on states, counties, cities, and regions will continue as more and more data suggest that climate change and weather-related disasters are likely to be on-going and have more severe consequences than previously thought.

Early Monday, hundreds of scientists, working under the auspices of the United Nations, gathered in Paris for the release of a summary report that was approved by 132 nations, including the United States. The report focuses on the unanticipated impact that climate change and weather-related disasters are likely to have. New and profoundly significant impacts on plants and animals and the ecosystems in which they live, and upon which humans are dependent, are now predicted.

The report states that changes in weather patterns such as those being experienced in the Midwest and Mississippi and Missouri River Basins right now, the severity of storms and sea level rise, the elimination of coastal wetlands and inundation of fresh water supplies by salt water, and continued melting of the polar ice caps, will result in the extinction of a million plant and animal species. The report adds that once flourishing ecosystems are likely to all but disappear because humans are transforming the earth’s natural landscapes so dramatically.

While short term political battles, such as the one we are seeing over disaster relief for Puerto Rico and some states, are likely to continue, there can be no doubt, given the most recent reports on climate change, that funding for disaster relief will continue into the foreseeable future as we face an increasing number of climate change and weather-related disasters.

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## The Downtown moda! Trolley Extends Route!

Beginning Monday, May 13, 2019 the Downtown Moda! Trolley will extend its route to include the GM&O Building.



*Ride the Wave*

## Moda Trolley Extends Route!

Beginning Monday, May 13, 2019, the Downtown moda! Trolley will extend services to include the GM&O Transportation Center.

### Outbound

Depart from Ft. Conde; Left on Church Street; Right on Washington Ave.; Right on Dauphin St.; Left on Royal St.; Right on St. Louis St.; Left on Water St.; End at the [GM&O Transportation Center](#)

### Inbound

Depart from the [GM&O Transportation Center](#) to Water St., stopping at the Alabama Cruise Terminal and GulfQuest Maritime Museum, End at Ft. Conde

### Hours of Operation

Monday thru Friday, 7:00a.m.-2:00p.m.

### For Additional Information

251-344-6600 or [www.thewavetransit.com](http://www.thewavetransit.com)



## Transportation Research

### TRB TCRP Report on Dialysis Transportation

The Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) has released a pre-publication version of [Research Report 203: Dialysis Transportation: Intersection of Transportation and Healthcare](#). The report responds to major concerns of public transportation agencies about the rising demand and costs to provide kidney dialysis trips and about experiences showing these trips require service more specialized than public transportation is designed to provide.

The report documents the complicated relationship of two different industries—public transportation and healthcare, each with its own perspective and requirements—to highlight problems, identify strategies addressing concerns, and suggest options that may be more appropriate for dialysis transportation.

Accompanying the report are a supplemental report and Excel spreadsheet. The [Supplemental Report](#) includes, along with a literature review and results from the project's surveys, an assessment of the comprehensive data provided by the U.S. Renal Data System. The community data tool is an [Excel forecasting tool](#).

[Learn more and access the reports and tool here.](#)

### HUD Updates Location Affordability Index

**Date:** May 09, 2019

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced the publication of Version 3 of the [Location Affordability Index \(LAI\)](#) dataset. The LAI is a nationwide database of modeled household housing and transportation costs launched by HUD and DOT in 2013, and now updated, with the goal of providing greater insight into how these costs vary by geographic and household characteristics. Version 3 primarily uses data from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey and other national and state data products. The LAI has seen significant use since its initial release in 2013. Policymakers have used this data for local and regional transportation and land-use planning. It has also been used by a number of researchers for a variety of topics. In 2016 it was the focus of a special [Location Affordability double issue of Housing Policy Debate](#), which included new research on the impact of location affordability. Lastly, the LAI has proved valuable to software developers because makes a large amount of Census data on demographics and the built environment available via web service. The data can be accessed via the [LAI page on HUD Exchange](#) or directly from [HUD's Enterprise GIS Open Data Portal](#). Please email [locationaffordability@hud.gov](mailto:locationaffordability@hud.gov) with any comments or questions.

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## 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 in an increasingly common method for taking trips.

A new initiative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup>](#) 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](mailto: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.

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## 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.