



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Volume 30, Number 6

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## Contact Us

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Tom Piper

The proposed toll is taking a toll on area residents; see In The News. **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*. In Legislative updates there is a closing window on the Highway Trust Fund, and there are several versions of the next Appropriations Bill. Finally, this week's Just For Fun is all touristy...

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 last 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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## 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 : 100040611 Federal aid number : ACAA59064F-STPMBF 7503 (600) County : MOBILE  
Project Description : 5-LANE SCHILLINGER RD FROM HOWELLS FERRY RD TO SR-42 (US-98)  
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE  
Current Funding : \$23,381,719.00 Requested Funding : \$26,774,796.00  
Reason for Request : COVER OVERRUN (Z905 AND M230)

Project : 100040608 Federal aid number : ACAA59064F-STPMBF 7503 (600) County : MOBILE  
Project Description : 5-LANE SCHILLINGER RD FROM HOWELLS FERRY RD TO SR-42 (US-98)  
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE  
Current Funding : \$1,674,729.00 Requested Funding : \$1,804,549.00  
Reason for Request : Change federal amount to \$360,000.00.

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

### 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 Bearegard 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 Bearegard 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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### Window closing fast on highway trust fund

[John Gallagher, Washington Correspondent](#) · 1 day ago

0 394 2 minutes read



Photo credit: Shutterstock

Next year's presidential election could require some creative legislating to avoid seeing the Highway Trust Fund expire before it can be reauthorized.

"It's our bad luck that the Highway Trust Fund [reauthorization] is set to expire October 1, 2020, five weeks before a presidential election. That doesn't bode well for getting the trust fund reauthorized on time," said Jeff Davis a Senior Fellow at the ENO Center for Transportation, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit research group.

Speaking on May 14 at a forum on Capitol Hill hosted by the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, Davis said that having seven U.S. Senators – so far – announce their candidacy for a presidential run further complicates things.

"Next year is going to be an awful slowdown – I don't see the Senate doing much after about February other than confirming judges around the clock – no one's going to be around," he said. That means "the window is closing rapidly" on getting transportation legislation passed between now and 2020 for which both President Trump and the Democrats could claim victory.

However, there's still a chance that the Highway Trust Fund can begin to be refilled before Congress agrees on a long-term infrastructure plan to pay for roads and bridges. "The Highway Trust Fund is not going to actually run out of money until late summer of 2021, so [Congress] can do an extension to mid-2021 this year and not have to have any kind of 'pay-for'" agreed upon until next year, he said.

Davis said that while it will take approximately \$175 billion to keep the fund solvent, there's agreement among some lawmakers that it could start to be funded this year using "revenue fixes" such as loans. "It wouldn't be one bill, but a series of separate legislative enactments that all count towards the final amount of a big infrastructure package."

But Davis was skeptical about the current size of that package – \$2 trillion over 10 years – [touted earlier this month](#) by President Trump and Democratic leaders in Congress. To put in perspective what would be needed to get to such a number, Davis pointed out that total spending on transportation by the federal government over the last 60 years was \$4.2 trillion. And only \$749 billion was spent over the previous 10 years. "So the concept that they're going to increase that by two-and-a-half fold for the coming decade is a bit much," Davis said. He added that using the gas tax alone to pay for a \$2 trillion spending package would mean raising it immediately by at least \$1.50 a gallon.

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, by contrast, support raising the gas tax by just 20 cents per gallon over four years.

Part of ATA's approach has support from Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), who sits on the Ways & Means Committee, the tax-writing committee in the House of Representatives.

Speaking at the forum, Blumenauer said that "the answer is pretty simple – raise the gas tax, index the gas tax, then replace the gas tax with something that's sustainable," such as a road user fee, he said. The ATA, while open to considering road user fees longer-term, [believes there is not enough evidence currently](#) to justify supporting such an approach.

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### **Five Draft Versions of FY 2020 Appropriations Bills Advanced**

This week, five more appropriations bills are advancing through the FY 2020 appropriations process. Some of these bills have been advanced for consideration by the full House Appropriations Committee, while others remain under consideration in their respective subcommittees. The five bills advanced this week are:

- On May 16, 2019 the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science released a draft version of the FY 2020 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. An overview of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The full text of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science is scheduled to review this bill during the day today, May 17, 2019. The draft legislation includes \$540 million for the EDA, an increase of \$236 million above the FY 2019 level.
- On May 15, 2019 the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development approved a draft version of the FY 2020 Energy-Water appropriations bill. An overview of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The full text of the draft bill can be found [here](#).
- On May 15, 2019 the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and the Environment approved a draft version of the FY 2020 Interior-Environment appropriations bill. An overview of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The full text of the draft bill is available [here](#).
- On May 15, 2019 the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense approved a draft version of the Defense appropriations bill for FY 2020. An overview of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The full text of the draft bill is available [here](#).
- On May 10, 2019 the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations approved a draft version of the FY 2020 State-Foreign Operations bill. An overview of the draft bill can be found [here](#). The full text of the draft bill is available [here](#). On May 16, 2019 the full Appropriations Committee held a markup session for this bill and approved it 29-23.

The amounts of proposed funding included in these draft bills will serve as a foundation for the ongoing FY 2020 appropriations process.

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## House T&I Committee Seeks Rescission Pullback, More Harbor Fund Spending

[editor@ashto.org](mailto:editor@ashto.org) May 10, 2019

Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure sent [a letter](#) to House Speaker Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Minority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., to request the repeal of a \$7.6 billion surface transportation budget rescission due to go into effect next year, as well as release of \$9.3 billion in revenues “sitting idle” in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.

The letter – signed by House T&I Chair Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., and Ranking Member Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo.; Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Chair Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-Washington D.C., and Ranking Member Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill.; and Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Chair Rep. Grace Napolitano, D-Calif., and Ranking Member Rep. Bruce Westerman, R-Ark. – states that if the budgetary rescission contained within the 2015 [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation](#) or FAST Act occurs as planned on July 1, 2020, “it could nearly wipe out” all remaining surface transportation contract authority available to the states.

“Regardless of the amount rescinded from each state, the rescission will significantly limit the flexibility of all states and impact the ability to plan and execute highway and bridge projects,” the House T&I committee leaders said in their letter. “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.”

Jim Tymon, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, said the rescission is a major concern for state DOTs because it impedes the ability of states to meet their individual infrastructure needs and disrupts transportation planning and timely delivery of projects.

“The rescission will result in real cuts to transportation funding and it will cause delays in project construction at a time that both Congress and the Administration are looking to increase transportation investments,” he said. “AASHTO and our state DOT members have been working to educate Congress on the impacts of the rescission and we applaud this effort by the House T&I Committee leaders.”

Meanwhile, the House T&I letter also sought leadership support for H.R. 2440 – formerly [H.R. 2396](#), a bill entitled the *Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act* – that the committee passed by [voice vote](#) on May 8. That bill seeks to “free up” some \$9.3 billion in “already collected revenue [that sits idle in the U.S. Treasury](#), not being used for its intended purpose of investing in our nation’s ports and harbors.”

“Congress created the HMTF to pay for the operations and maintenance needs of the nation’s roughly 1,067 harbors and shipping channels under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers,” the House T&I letter stated. “Over the past decades, Congress has appropriated to the Corps far less revenue than has been collected from shippers. As a result ... there is enough money to cover the entire maintenance backlog without raising a dime in taxes or borrowing from the Treasury.”

While the letter said H.R. 2440 is being reported out “in a bipartisan manner ... given that a budget agreement will be looking at discretionary spending on the whole, it would be appropriate to include a discretionary cap adjustment for the HMTF in any such deal. This would be the only such adjustment covered by actual revenues.”

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## ACEC Panel Highlights National Infrastructure Needs

[editor@ashto.org](mailto:editor@ashto.org) May 10, 2019

A panel discussion hosted by the American Council of Engineering Companies at its annual legislative summit in Washington, D.C., focused on several key infrastructure challenges, especially in terms of funding sources and [finding enough workers](#) to meet construction demand.

“There is an appetite in Congress to spend money on infrastructure. It may not be the amount we need, but it will be beyond what we are spending now,” noted Jim Tymon, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. “Will it be a \$2 trillion package like what Congressional leaders and President Trump discussed? I don’t know. But infrastructure is one area where we can get something done. There is a window of time here to do something.”

Joining Tymon on ACEC’s panel were: Mike Toohey, president and CEO of the Waterways Council Inc.; Thomas Kuhn, president of the Edison Electric Institute; Stephen Sandherr, CEO of the Associated General Contractors of America; and Paul Skoutelas, president and CEO of the American Public Transportation Association.

Most of them noted that finding enough funding for infrastructure, much less for a \$2 trillion package, is a major hurdle.

“We see the gas tax as most reasonable and rational way to raise revenue for transportation; and it has not been raised [at the federal level] for 25 years,” noted Sandherr. “Many on both sides of the aisle, including the president, say raising it is something we need to do.”

Toohey added that gas taxes have been successfully increased in the past only with public support from the president. “Without presidential leadership, what is in it for a Congressman in a [non-earmark environment](#)?”

“We view infrastructure funding as joint responsibility between the federal, state, local governments,” Tymon noted. “The federal government has not increased the gas tax in 25 years, yet over 30 states have raised it within the last five years. And the politics of that are not falling along traditional partisan lines – support from [state legislators](#) on both sides of the aisle for it [gas tax increases] hasn’t cost them their seats. Hopefully, legislators at the federal level will see that and take encouragement from it.”

Meanwhile, finding enough workers to handle increases in infrastructure construction demand is becoming more difficult.

“The economy is great and unemployment rates are low – but the bad news about that is it makes it [harder to attract and retain workers](#),” Tymon explained. “Not just at the engineering level; this includes the construction, equipment operator, and maintenance levels. States are having to be more innovative – whether going out and partnering with [community colleges](#) or creating more [flexibility in the workplace](#). They have to think outside the box now to attract and retain a workforce to get the job done.”

Sandherr agreed with that assessment. “Our biggest challenge is finding workers – we’re turning down work,” he explained. “Wages in the construction trade are 15 percent higher than the average trade – and these are jobs not likely to go overseas. You can be a welder for \$90,000 to \$100,000 a year in your 20s; that’s a great story we need to tell.”

## Funding Opportunities

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### [FTA Announces Bus and Bus Facility Funding Opportunity](#)

Date: May 16, 2019

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced the availability of \$423 million of competitive grant funding through its [Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program](#). Fixed route bus operators, states and local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes are eligible to apply for projects involving the replacement and rehabilitation of buses and related facilities. Proposals are due June 21.

### [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.

### **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](#)

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

## Just For Fun

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### Memorial Day is right around the corner....

Summer is almost here, and last week was National Tourism and Travel Week. In honor of all the summer trips that are about to start, we have highlighted some off the beaten path sights, you know, like our very own [Spear Hunting Museum](#) in Summerdale, AL.

#### [Barney Smith's Toilet Seat Art Museum](#)



#### [Salt and Pepper Shakers Museum](#)



#### [Leila's Hair Museum](#)



#### [Worlds Largest Chest of Drawers](#)



#### [Bubble Gum Alley](#)

#### [The National Mustard Museum](#)





I just keeps getting weirder..... [HERE](#) are some of America's bizarre tourist attractions.

## In the News

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### Mobile meeting Wednesday on state transportation plans

Posted May 15, 2019

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

A Wednesday night meeting in Mobile will offer an overview of federally aided transportation projects in the area over the next four years. Similar meetings are coming up in Atmore and Robertsdale.

The Wednesday night meeting is hosted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. Its purpose is to gather input on the draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The gathering takes place 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 15, at the GM&O Building at 110 Beauregard St.

The open-house meeting will include displays, information and a short presentation. Alabama Department of Transportation 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, or email [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org), to request special assistance.

Other regional meetings:

Tuesday, May 21, Atmore City Hall, 201 E. Louisville Ave., 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 22, Baldwin County Central Annex, 22251 Palmer St. in Robertsdale, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

For more information on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan for 2020-2023, visit <https://cpmsapps.dot.state.al.us/OfficeEngineer/Plan/Statewide>.

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### The I-10 bridge bet – overall traffic will be lower than if project doesn't happen

Brendan Kirby Updated 11 hrs ago | Posted on May 16, 2019

MOBILE, Ala. (WALA) — At the heart of Alabama's plan to build a new bridge connecting Mobile and Baldwin counties is a little-emphasized, counterintuitive gamble – that the project actually will reduce the number of vehicles making the trip.

Without the \$2.1 billion project, state officials project traffic will worsen year by year, growing by 2040 to an average of more than 173,018 vehicles a day using the Cochrane-Africatown USA Bridge and the two tunnels. That's up 52 percent from 2017.

The new bridge, according to the projections, would not just relieve traffic through the Wallace Tunnel by redistributing the flow. State planners contend it actually would reduce traffic overall. Instead of those 173,000 vehicles using the current three crossings in 2040, the total would be less than 154,462 a day.

That represents motorists each day skipping 18,556 trips if faced with a choice between paying a toll to use the new bridge or Wallace Tunnel, or enduring a more congested free route over the Causeway.

Allison Gregg, a spokeswoman for the project, says planners hope drivers are willing to fork over a toll – currently projected at \$3 to \$6 per crossing – to avoid traffic jams.

“And so you have to ask, what’s the price point that people will pay to not sit in the traffic?” she said. “And that’s what we’re still working to find out.”

The Alabama Department of Transportation projects that traffic flow during peak commuting times on the Causeway actually will be worse by 2040 with the project than if it does not get built.

Currently during the peak morning period, traffic flow from Baldwin to Mobile along the Causeway earns a C grade on a scale from A to F, with A being the best. With increased traffic from natural growth, that grade is expected to be a D with the current infrastructure. With a bridge, though, traffic flow on the Causeway would be even worse – an E.

The picture is similar for the afternoon commute home, when ALDOT projects the traffic flow on the Causeway would be worse without a new bridge than with.

Plenty of research indicates that new roads and bridges built to alleviate traffic only draw more cars and trucks. Take the Katy Freeway in Houston. Workers finished a massive widening project in 2008. The highway now has 26 lanes in some parts. Yet, traffic congestion remains a problem.

Susan Handy, an environmental science professor at the University of California, Davis, said the reason expanded transportation capacity often fails to alleviate traffic jams is that when a road expands, drivers who previously avoided the route start using it. Economists call this “induced traffic effect.”

But Handy said there is less research on how increased capacity and new tolling work in conjunction.

“The tolls make it a somewhat different story,” she said. “And I think it depends on exactly how they’re setting those tolls relative to the change in travel time. So, if the tolls were significant enough, I could see a situation where the actual number of trips trying to cross the river would go down.”

But Handy added that the rates would have to be high, and she questioned whether the reduction would be as large as ALDOT anticipates.

“The numbers they’re showing sound like a pretty significant decrease, and it’s hard for me to see how with that new capacity that’s going in that even if the bridge is tolled, that that many trips would be deterred,” she said.

That could be bad news for commuters, who would confront a choice between a hefty toll – more than \$2,600 a year if the toll is set at \$6, even with a frequent-user discount – and ever-longer waits on the Causeway.

“That is a heavy piece of cash that you have to lay out there just to do this kind of stuff,” said Lou Campomenosi, president of the Common Sense Campaign.

The Tea Party group this week launched a radio ad campaign urging people to register their opposition to tolls during ALDOT’s public comment period that lasts through May 23. Notwithstanding the state’s hope that traffic backups at the Bankhead Tunnel and the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge will push people to the tolled bridge, Campomenosi argued many people will have no choice but to endure the jams.

“If you can’t afford a \$12 round trip, then, you know – time may be money, but money is real money, and if it’s going out of your pocket at \$12 a day? I’m sorry,” he said. “You may think twice about it. Or don’t eat lunch or breakfast. I don’t know.”

If Campomenosi is right, and ALDOT is wrong about the project reducing overall traffic, the result could be that the Causeway by 2040 is a daily traffic nightmare – as bad or worse than the Bayway is now.

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## Will Trump’s re-election solve Mobile’s I-10 nightmare?

Updated May 15, 2019; Posted May 15, 2019

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

President Donald Trump vowed Tuesday to deliver a “brand new I-10 bridge” if he wins the 2020 presidential election.

Unfortunate for Alabama, the promise was made in Louisiana.

The president, speaking in the southwest Louisiana city of Hackberry, promised to have the new bridge built about 325 miles to the west of Mobile in Lake Charles, La.

At least one Alabama state official plans to request the Trump Administration deliver a similar promise to Mobile, home to arguably the president’s earliest and most successful campaign rallies in 2015.

“I’m going to make him aware of a similar project in Alabama,” said Alabama Auditor Jim Zeigler, a Mobile resident and a backer of Trump. “I would like to work on a specific plan on how to pay for it with federal funds.”

Zeigler, in a news release Wednesday, said he is drawing up a request to the administration for funding of the \$2.1 billion Interstate 10 Bridge and Bayway project from Mobile to Baldwin counties.

Zeigler said he will advocate that Trump support the Alabama project as a way to eliminate a proposed \$3 to \$6 one-way toll levied on motorists who use the entire 10-mile span of the new structure once it's completed in 2025.

"The Louisiana precedent is there to use the Trump infrastructure money for the I-10 Bridge," said Zeigler. "Not only is the (Alabama) I-10 project similar, but it's more for a case of federal funding. It's a safety issue on I-10 and through the tunnels and the Bayway and it's an economic issue with tourists coming to the beaches, and for commuters who work in one county coming into the other."

Zeigler, a favorite among tea party Republicans, recently started a Facebook page objecting to the toll proposal that would be initiated to raise a lion share of the funding to pay for the Alabama project. There is also a website, [www.stophetoll.com](http://www.stophetoll.com).

Zeigler has called the proposed toll "irresponsible and economically dangerous," and his Facebook site has over 1,300 followers since it began on Sunday.

Alabama Department of Transportation officials, during public hearings last week, said the tolls were necessary for the project to become a reality.

Allison Gregg, an ALDOT spokeswoman for the project, said the state agency has been working with the U.S. Department of Transportation in securing funding through a variety of federal programs.

ALDOT has applied for a \$150 million Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation, and is seeking all other funding opportunities.

"Local elected leaders met with the Trump administration regarding the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project," Gregg said in an email to AL.com. "ALDOT leadership is open to conversations and will embrace additional funding opportunities from the federal government." Continue [HERE](#)

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## Lawmakers taking on ALDOT over new I-10 Mobile Bayway-Wallace Tunnel tolls

[Jeff Poor](#) 4 days ago

For [over a century](#), residents of Southwest Alabama have been grappling with a solution to getting back and forth across the Mobile Bay.

Prior to the opening of the vertical-lift Cochrane Bridge and the Mobile Bay Causeway in the 1920s, those making the trek from Mobile to Baldwin County's Eastern Shore relied on ferry service to Daphne and Fairhope. In the 1940s, the Bankhead Tunnel opened, which offered for a more direct path to the existing Causeway. In the 1970s, the Wallace Tunnel opened. Then in the 1990s came the completion of the \$69 million Africatown-Cochrane Bridge that replaced the old Cochrane bridge.

In recent years, Alabama's transportation policymakers have decided on offering another option for Bay crossers to alleviate back-ups coming in and out of the city of Mobile through the Wallace Tunnel: a new Bayway bridge that will be erected south of Mobile's downtown.

However, it comes with a catch: [tolls](#).

Dollar figures for the proposed toll that would be levied on those crossing the new Bayway bridge and the existing Wallace Tunnel range from \$3-6 according to [reports](#). The proposal has been met with opposition from residents of Baldwin County, which is one of the most-Republican counties in the state of Alabama.

The opposition comes on the heels of the Alabama legislature [passage](#) of a 10-cent gas tax increase, part of Gov. Kay Ivey's Rebuild Alabama Act.

State Rep. Matt Simpson (R-Daphne), who represents parts of western Mobile County and the area of Baldwin County where the bridge will be constructed, insists the tolls levied would be the same as double-charging some citizens.

"I have met in person with ALDOT to express my concerns not only with the high tolls on the I-10 bridge but also making sure improvements to the Causeway are addressed," Simpson said to Yellowhammer News on Monday. "The people of our district are already paying an increase in gas taxes. It would be wrong to charge our citizens twice."

One proposed alternative is using GOMESA [Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act] money in place of tolls, which has been [put forth](#) by U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Fairhope), who represents the area in Congress.

*[@Jeff Poor](#) is a graduate of Auburn University, the editor of [Breitbart TV](#) and host of "The Jeff Poor Show" from 2-5 p.m. [on WVNN](#) in Huntsville.*

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## Island mayors give State of the City addresses



Posted Wednesday, May 8, 2019 2:50 pm

### **Crystal Castle/ Islander Editor**

The mayors of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores recently gave progress updates on various issues affecting their cities.

At the May First Friday Forum for the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber, Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft and Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon spoke to local business owners about the state of their cities.

Craft spoke about his city's goal to diversity geographically.

"The majority of our assets are on that Gulf Coast right on the beach," Craft said. "Therefore, over the years, every time we've had some type of economic disaster it basically shuts down Gulf Shores' economy."

Craft said the move of the zoo to the property on Coastal Gateway Boulevard was a way to get a big tourism attraction off the beach area as well as not having to evacuate the animals during a storm.

Craft said since 2010, his city has seen a 79% revenue increase. There has also been a 160.9% lodging tax increase in the month of December from 2014 to 2018.

"The focus on seasonal diversification has helped round out our economy, which is wonderful for the city," Craft said. "It's even better for businesses who are no longer looking at being part-time. Hopefully we can continue with that."

Kennon focused some of his speech on the transportation improvements coming to Orange Beach.

"Canal Road, we're moving utilities right now," Kennon said. "Hopefully start paving next year or in the fall with a completion date that was Memorial Day 2020, but it looks like it will be fall 2020."

He also spoke on acquiring Canal Road from Doc's Seafood to Bear Point which will allow for more freedom in the improvements the city is looking to make in the future.

A topic on everyone's minds on the island is the school situation. Kennon said his administration is extremely excited for the new school in Orange Beach.

"We feel like it changes everything for the city of Orange Beach," Kennon said. "In our mind, you're not a community if you don't have a school. So, now we have a school and it completes us."

One of the biggest challenges on the island has been getting people emergency medical care. With traffic being what it is during the summer, and large pockets of residents in areas far from Hwy. 59, getting people quickly to an emergency room can be challenging.

Gulf Shores is working on a solution to this problem with a freestanding emergency room it plans on putting on a property near the airport.

"Having a freestanding emergency room in Gulf Shores to serve the entire island to be able to stop ambulances there is big," Craft said. "We will also have a helipad there, and a medical helicopter will have to be there to operate that emergency room. Therefore, it can go get you if you're in Fort Morgan or Orange Beach or Ono Island and having a heart issue and you need something right now. We believe we've made huge strides there."

## **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.](#)

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## **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 it 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 is 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.