



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 8th, 2020

Volume 35, Number 4

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There is a Mobile MPO Policy Board meeting scheduled for August 19th via GOTO meeting; the TCC/CAC met last week and there is an update to the Demand Response Transit Study- see *Mobile MPO Updates*. There are a lot of *Legislative Updates* including talks of another recovery bill. There are not many *Funding Opportunities* this week and troubled bridge over water in Baldwin County, *In The News*. This week's *Just For Fun* is... calming. On another note, Zeigler Blvd from Forest Hill to Athey gets let this month; any guesses on how long that project has been in the Mobile TIP?

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

www.mobilempo.org



Check us out on FACEBOOK; SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

- [Planning and Community Development](#)
- [Area Agency on Aging](#)
- [Employment and Economic Development](#)

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

Mobile MPO Updates

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

There is a Mobile MPO Policy meeting scheduled for August 19th via GOTO meeting; the a TCC/CAC met last week (virtually).

The agenda is to include the following:

- Adoption FY 2021 [Unified Planning Work Program](#) (planning budget)
- Modify 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program
 - Cost estimate change for 100040584 (CN) US98, EB lanes from MS state line to .5 Mile East of Glenwood Rd, from \$18.2M to \$23.9M, FY 2022
 - Cost estimate change for 100033461 (CN) ADDL lanes on I-10 from CR-39 to Carol Plantation, from \$33.4M to \$41M, FY 2021
 - 100071946; PE; 5 Year Regional Traffic Operations (RTOP) TSMO for 130 Signalized Intersections Along SR-59, SR-16 (US-90), and SR-42 (US-98) Target Start Date : 8/1/2020; \$2,631,200
 - 100073250; PE; Independent Review of Austal's Proposed Road Improvements Over the Wallace Tunnels and Bankhead Tunnel; 9/1/2020; \$170,000
- Review of Demand Response Transit Study
- TAP projects (*last week the TCC/CAC recommended to increase the maximum to \$400,000 fed*)

DRAFT 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is now available for review.

The Draft 2021 UPWP is essentially the budget of the Mobile MPO staff. Typically in June of every year, MPO staff reviews the draft document with MOP Policy Board Members and the subcommittees, prior to submitting the draft UPWP to ALDOT and federal agencies for review. Because of the COVID-19 virus disruption our MPO meeting schedule, the draft document was submitted to ALDOT to review without committee review. The document is almost identical to the current UPWP, with the exception of no new third party contracts. The DRAFT 2021 UPWP is available for review [HERE](#).

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

There was a stakeholder meeting this week concerning the study. VIA presented [HERE](#) potential types of operators and potential operating budget. A big challenge is going to the local community support and matching funds.

The current health crisis has affected the potential outcome of the study. The intent of the study was to find potential local sponsors to match federal funds to create a transit system to operate throughout Mobile County to connect with WAVE Transit. The sponsors would have provided assistance through subscriptions or contracts for commuter trips. The current price of gasoline, and the threat of contracting virus on buses, may put a strain on ridership of a new system. However, there are still people in need of transportation, and there is some thought that regardless of the price of gasoline, there will be an increased number of distressed people due to the economy, that will need transportation. This may be the perfect time to consider transportation throughout Mobile County.

Please review the Tasks 1, 2 and 3 [HERE](#).

There will be a stakeholder meeting scheduled in the near future to discuss the draft report that came out his week. This will be a GOTO meeting.

The Draft Report is [HERE](#)

ENVISION 2045 IS THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

The LRTP is multimodal in scope, and is based on public input, and a travel demand forecast model. In 2019, an online survey was conducted with almost 150 respondents. Questions ranged from where is the worst congestion, what roads need improvements, problems with the transit systems, etc. There were a lot of comments about the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and the potential for tolls. Prior to the online survey, staff also conducted a South Alabama Freight Forum, which was an opportunity to hear from large manufacturers and trucking companies, to find out what the top issues are concerning the movement of freight in South Alabama. The Bicycle / Pedestrian plan was updated, and the public transit section was authored by the Wave Transit, less the Demand Response Transit Study. The Climate Change element, or Extreme Event Planning, remained almost unchanged from *Destination 2040* LRTP.

The LRTP *Envision 2045* was adopted by the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization on April 22, 2020.

More information on the new plan can be found at <https://www.envision2045.org/>

FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area. The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100069458 Federal aid number : NH 0013 County : MOBILE Scope : FM
Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-13 (US-43) FROM SR-158 TO PLATEAU AVENUE
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE
Target Start Date : 1/28/2022
Engineers Estimate : \$2,632,052.00

South Alabama RPO Updates

DRAFT 2021 RPO Work Program is now available for review.

The RPO work Program is the staff budget for SARPC Rural Planning Organization. This draft is identical to the current work program. The DRAFT 2021 Work Program is available on the RPO Webpage [HERE](#).

Projects in Region Let August 28th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Culvert Extension, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on Zeigler Boulevard from the junction of Athey Road to the junction of Forest Hill Drive in Mobile. Length 2.762 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$15,625,639 to \$19,098,003 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

[Congress is in session](#)

Highway work at risk as Congress considers next recovery bill

With fuel tax revenue down as people drive less during the pandemic, state transportation officials fear prospects for highway projects

By [Jessica Wehrman](#)

Posted August 4, 2020 at 6:00am

As Congress wrangles with the latest attempt at a coronavirus relief package, state highway departments are increasingly alarmed at the possibility of some \$37 billion in budget shortfalls.

Most states pay for their highways with federal support and a state gas tax. But with a precipitous drop in driving since March, they've struggled.

And while empty airports and subway cars have provided very visible symbols of the decline in travel caused by COVID-19, empty highways have not yet ignited the imagination of lawmakers trying to figure out where to throw federal dollars during this crisis.

Highways were not included in the roughly \$2 trillion relief bill that passed Congress in March, although that bill provided \$150 billion to states and localities to use as they needed. About 75 percent of that money has been allocated, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers, with the delays largely spurred by states awaiting guidance from the Treasury Department.

And while the House included \$15 billion for state departments of transportation in the bill it passed May 15, a series of bills introduced in the Senate last week that were aimed at responding to the crisis included nothing for them.

Meanwhile, 16 states have announced project delays or cancellations valued at nearly \$5.01 billion, according to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, which has tracked the pandemic's impact on highway construction.

Twenty local governments and authorities have announced project delays or cancellations worth \$4.54 billion.

"I think almost every state in the country is going to have a story about projects they are either having to cancel or delay because revenue just isn't there that they had planned for from the beginning of the year," said Jim Tymon, the executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

He said states were crippled when they faced several months of steep reductions in vehicle miles traveled — a reduction that meant less gas tax revenue coming in.

Down 40 percent in April

Federal Highway Administration statistics reflect the decline: In April, Americans drove about 40 percent fewer miles than they did the previous April. That figure improved modestly in May, when the decline amounted to 25.5 percent when compared with May 2019.

Despite the rebound, "you can't make those dollars up," Tymon said. "Everyone is hurting at this point. Everyone has a budget shortfall."

"There is ongoing concern over how things play out on the revenue side," said Alison Black, chief economist with the road builders group.

In Maine, Commissioner Bruce Van Note of the Maine Department of Transportation estimates that the shortfall through the end of fiscal 2021 will be \$61 million.

A July bond issue vote helped a bit, allowing the state to delay the ramifications for roughly the rest of this calendar year, but "there is no playbook for a pandemic," he said. It's unclear what 2021 will look like.

"We desperately need some flexibility and some additional congressional help on emergency relief funding," he said.

Even before the pandemic, he said, state DOTs were struggling. "We were competently managing the slow decline of our transportation system" by shifting dollars to fill in the most-needed gaps, he said.

Now, he said, "people will see it by what we won't do next year."

"This is going to be bad," he said. "But it's not going to happen for a while."

Adie Tomer, head of the Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative at the moderate Brookings Institution, acknowledges that states have seen a steep decline in gas tax revenue. But he questioned whether highways should be a priority during an era of economic calamity.

"What people need is money in their pocket," he said. "They're not worried about potholes in the roads right now."

Still, Tymon said he's optimistic that money for state DOTs will be in the next iteration of COVID-19 relief.

"Is this a little bit of a wake-up call for us with the Senate not including this in their initial package? Absolutely," he said. "But I think the end product will include it."

COVID-19 Relief Stalls, House Passes THUD Appropriations

editor@aaashto.org July 31, 2020

Legislation introduced in the Senate on July 27 to provide \$1 trillion worth of further COVID-19 relief funding is getting little traction ahead of the chamber's August recess. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives passed a package of six appropriations bill or "minibus" on July 31 by a vote of 217 to 197 that would provide a total of \$107.2 billion in budgetary resources for the U.S. Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2021.

While the Senate's latest COVID-19 relief bill — called the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection, and Schools or HEALS Act — provides \$306 billion in supplemental emergency appropriations for FY 2020, including \$13.4 billion Transportation-Housing and Urban Development or THUD funding, emergency aid for state departments of transportation requested by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials is not included.

In fact, any form of state funding was not expected to be included in this "first draft" of the Senate's COVID-19 relief bill. However, AASHTO's policy team noted a provision within the HEALS Act would allow for more "flexible use" of the \$150 billion provided to states in the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security or CARES Act signed into law in March.

AASHTO's policy team added that current negotiations between the House, Senate, and White House is the next "critical step" in the process to develop further COVID-19 relief legislation and that there is "a good chance" that some form of state and local funding relief will eventually be included in the final bill.

It remains to be seen how large the overall funding in this latest rescue package will be, but it is expected to be less than the \$3 trillion offered by the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions or HEROES Act passed by the House in mid-May.

In the meantime, the House passed its six-bill FY 2021 minibus, which included a THUD measure that is much larger compared to recent years as it includes additional COVID-19 relief for FY 2021.

Coming in at \$107.2 billion in total USDOT funding, key aspects include \$62.9 billion for the Federal Highway Administration, \$18.9 billion for the Federal Transit Administration, \$18.1 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration, and \$3 billion for the Federal Railroad Administration.

Specific funding provisions within the House's THUD appropriations bill also include:

- \$1 billion for national infrastructure investments via the USDOT's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development or BUILD discretionary grants program.
- \$500 million for the FAA's discretionary Airport Improvement Grants or AIP program.
- \$1 billion for discretionary Highway Infrastructure Programs.
- \$500 million for the FRA's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements or CRISI grant program.

- \$2.05 billion for Amtrak.
- \$2.2 billion for the FTA's Capital Investment Grants or CIG program.
- \$510 million for Transit Infrastructure Grants.

In addition, to support the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the House's THUD appropriations bill provides – via emergency funding not subject to budget caps – an additional \$26 billion for the USDOT infrastructure programs, including: a further \$3 billion for the BUILD program; \$2.5 billion extra for FAA Grants-in-Aid for Airports; another \$5 billion for the FRA's CRISI program; a further \$5 billion for Amtrak Northeast Corridor Grants and \$3 billion for Amtrak National Network Grants.

Democrats press nominee for Transportation Department watchdog on his independence

By [Ian Duncan](#) August 6, 2020

President Trump's nominee to serve as the Transportation Department's inspector general was grilled by Democratic lawmakers Thursday about whether he would be sufficiently independent at a time when the administration is accused of pressuring internal watchdogs across the government.

Justice Department attorney Eric Soskin largely sidestepped the senators' questions at his confirmation hearing but emphasized his work as a career civil servant.

"I will serve with objectivity and integrity," Soskin told Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), the top Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee, which held the hearing. Asked if that included not interfering with investigations into the department's leadership, he said, "We will investigate all allegations and all issues without fear or favor."

The office was led for more than a decade by a former Marine general. But in May, a few months after his retirement, Trump abruptly replaced the acting inspector general, installed the head of pipeline agency to also lead the watchdog office, and nominated Soskin to fill the job full time.

That prompted an outcry from Democrats on Capitol Hill, who cast the moves as part of a broader administration assault on inspectors general. Soskin was nominated the same day the State Department inspector general was removed amid an investigation into Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and his confirmation hearing took place the day after the [sudden resignation of that inspector general's successor](#).

[Democrats open investigation into Trump's replacement of acting Transportation Department inspector general](#)

After graduating from Harvard Law School in 2005, Soskin clerked for a federal judge before joining the Justice Department. He is a longtime member of the Federalist Society, an influential conservative legal organization.

Soskin, an Indiana native, was introduced at the hearing by Sen. Todd C. Young (R-Ind.), who called him an "exemplary civil servant."

"He has great potential to bring objectivity, accountability and integrity to DOT, which is precisely what we want for this position," Young said. Continue [HERE](#)

Key Democrats pledge support for more federal aid for transit

Leaders of the nation's transit systems say they need at least \$32 billion more in federal coronavirus relief to survive

By [Justin George](#) August 5, 2020

Key congressional Democrats on Wednesday pledged their support for at least \$32 billion in federal [coronavirus](#) relief for public transit, one week after Republicans included nothing in their stimulus proposals for an industry that agency heads warn is on the brink of layoffs without help.

"If we invest now it will ignite economic activity across the country," Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said during a virtual news conference with national transit chiefs. "Investing in mass transit now means that hard working families can rely on the subway and bus to earn a living."

Schumer, along with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Rep. Jesús "Chuy" García (D-Ill.), said they are pressuring Republicans to make sure transit agencies are included in a second round of stimulus funding within the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability, and Schools Act or Heals Act, which Congress is negotiating.

Transit agencies across the country are lobbying for at least \$32 billion on top of \$25 billion they received in April from the first coronavirus stimulus package, the \$2 trillion Cares Act. The additional aid will help transit agencies survive for the rest of the year, transit leaders said, and allow them to continue operating despite huge losses as they stay open to ensure essential workers get to work.

Results from a survey of transit leaders released last month by the American Public Transportation Association showed that nearly all transit agencies are straining from depressed ridership, paused fare collection and reduced tax revenue while also being forced to spend more on personal protective equipment for employees. One-third of transit agencies surveyed have been forced to furlough employees or are planning furloughs. More than a third have delayed capital projects while 1 in 5 agencies have moved money from their capital budgets to plug holes in their operating budgets.

[Metro, other transit providers plead for funding in second federal coronavirus package](#)

Transit leaders [including those who belong to the Republican Party](#) have tried to stress transit's worth using anecdotes and data from the past five months that show just how many essential workers have relied on their services. They say public transportation is not an amenity, but a key cog in the national economy — and it remains crucial to restarting it.

A Chicago Transit Authority rider survey showed that 26 percent of transit riders said they wouldn't have been able to get to work during the pandemic without public transit, while 62 percent would not have been able to get essential things like food, the transit agency's president, Dorval R. Carter Jr., said.

Without transit service, supporters said, grocery stores, restaurants, medical clinics and other critical businesses would suffer, as would minorities who hold many retail, food and service industry jobs. Continue [HERE](#)

Representative introduces legislation prioritizing bridge repair, safety

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | AUGUST 4, 2020

On Thursday, Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN) introduced legislation prioritizing funding for bridges, which he said will address America's deficiencies in bridge infrastructure.

The bill, The National Bridge Replacement and Improvement Act, would create a grant program for bridge improvements, replacements and/or repairs.

In Minnesota, structurally deficient bridges are crossed an estimated 1.5 million times every day. Nationally, 80 percent of structurally deficient bridges are located in rural areas. And according to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, over a third of U.S. bridges are structurally deficient.

Emmer said his bill would help the U.S. Department of Transportation to achieve its stated goal of eliminating the backlog of bridge projects by 2032.

"Roads and bridges are the essential components of our infrastructure. In the land of 10,000 lakes, bridges connect our communities and ease our commutes. In 2007, a bridge collapsed in my home state, in the heart of the Twin Cities. We lost 13 Minnesotans and another 145 were injured. This tragedy happened in a thriving metropolitan area. We rebuilt and recovered, but we still must ensure this never happens again." said Emmer. "Cities across our nation have dangerous bridge crossings, and our rural areas face even more pronounced infrastructure challenges. Over a decade after the collapse of the I35W bridge, our nation still has far too many bridges with structural deficiencies, and not enough is being done to address these serious safety concerns. I am proud to introduce legislation that will prioritize bridge safety and rural infrastructure projects."

Funding Opportunities

Federal Highway Administration Makes \$60 Million Available for Advanced Transportation

Technologies Grants DEADLINE AUGUST 31st, 2020

FHWA 12-20

Contact: Nancy Singer

Tel.: (202) 366-0660

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$60 million in Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD) grants to fund new technologies that improve transportation efficiency and safety.

"These grants promote the use of advanced technologies to address critical safety issues and efficiency throughout our nation's transportation network," said Federal Highway Administrator Nicole R. Nason. "This program helps unleash technological potential to improve travel for all Americans."

Created in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the ATCMTD program works to improve the performance of U.S. transportation systems, reduce traffic congestion, and improve the safety of the traveling public. Now in its fifth year, the ATCMTD program has provided more than \$206 million for projects in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

The program provides funding to help develop model deployment sites for the large-scale installation and operation of advanced technologies that improve safety, efficiency, and system performance. It has funded innovative projects such as Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Bay Area Mobility-On-Demand (MOD) Project to reduce traffic congestion on the I-680 Corridor and surrounding communities in California, the Florida Department of Transportation's Sunstore integrated data system for travelers, and the Texas Department of Transportation's I-10 Corridor Coalition Truck Parking Availability System.

State departments of transportation, local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, and other eligible entities are invited to apply under the program.

The NOFO is available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=327953>

New CDBG GRANT Program

To Address COVID-19 Impacts (currently no deadline)

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) is in the process of developing a special Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant program to address COVID-19 impacts.

DETAILS: Currently, no application deadline, grant ceilings or other program details have been finalized.

MORE DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED AT A LATER DATE; however, please download the guide below to get started and identify potential partners as needed.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the Quick Guide to CDBG Eligible Activities to Support Infectious Disease Response that will assist applicants to begin thinking about possible project needs.

Please note that applications to the CDBG program must be in the name of a local government as the applicant/grantee.

Partnerships and agreements with other agencies/entities, etc. can be developed as necessary. CDBG projects must also benefit primarily low and moderate-income people and this requirement will likely remain for the new funds.

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Department has technical assistance providers that may be available to assist grantees in their implementation of CDBG Funds for activities to prevent or respond to the spread of infectious disease.

Please contact your local CPD Field Office Director to request technical assistance from HUD staff or a TA provider.

Submit your questions to:

CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov

COVID-19 ("Coronavirus") Information and Resources: <https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>

CPD Program Guidance and Training: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/>

EDA CARES ACT RECOVERY ASSISTANCE (currently no deadline)

OVERVIEW

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, [signed into law](#) by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2020, provides the Economic Development Administration (EDA) with \$1.5 billion for economic development assistance programs to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance, which is being administered under the authority of the bureau's flexible [Economic Adjustment Assistance](#) (EAA) (PDF) program, provides a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to and recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

On May 7, 2020, Secretary Wilbur Ross made EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance funding available with the announcement that EDA had published an Addendum to its FY 2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity. EDA intends to deploy its CARES Act funding as quickly, effectively, and efficiently as possible, and in a manner that meets communities needs.

RESOURCES

- [EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for EDA Economic Development Districts and EDA Indian Tribe Planning Grant Recipients*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Economic Development Districts and Indian Tribes*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Revolving Loan Fund Awards*](#)
- [EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance Revolving Loan Fund Award Flexibilities Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for University Center Grantees*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: University Centers*](#)
- [EDA regional office contacts](#)
- coronavirus.gov
- coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness/
- [CDC.gov/COVID19/](https://cdc.gov/COVID19/)
- [USA.gov/coronavirus/](https://usa.gov/coronavirus/)

* As stated in the CARES Act Recovery Assistance Addendum to the PWEAA NOFO, EDA may invite existing grantees, such as Economic Development Districts and Tribes currently in receipt of Partnership Planning awards, operators of existing EDA funded Revolving Loan Funds, and EDA-funded University Centers, to apply for supplemental awards. These standard Scopes of Work and Specific Award Conditions are for use with these supplemental awards only. Existing grantees who are eligible to apply for these awards will be contacted individually for instructions on how to apply. <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=321695>

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

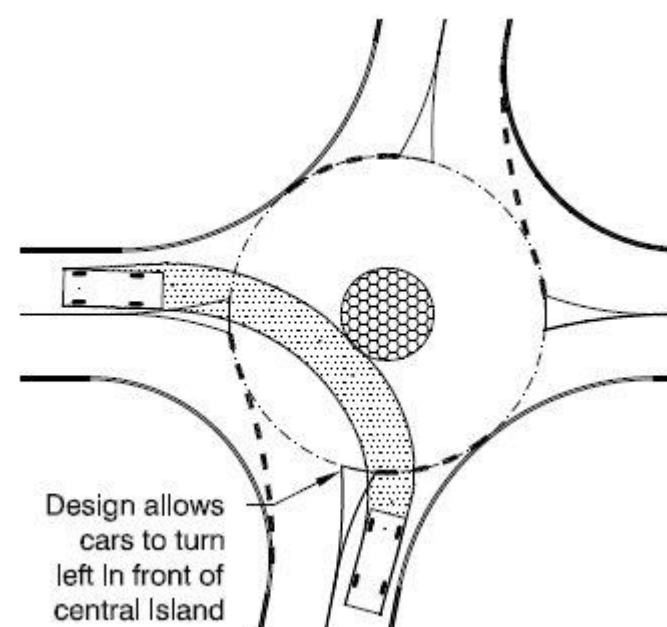
[Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

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](#)

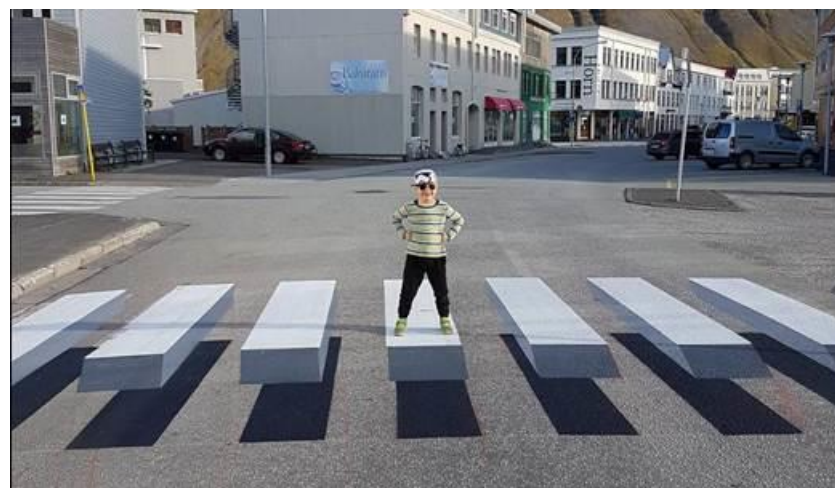
To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

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

In many neighborhoods in South Alabama, there are "traffic calming devices". These can be speed humps, speed tables, chicanes, or traffic circles, etc. There is a notion, that the neighborhood traffic circle should be treated like a roundabout. This is false. In, fact, I carry a FHWA excerpt from Publication Number: FHWA-SA-10-007, just in case I get attacked in a road rage incident where someone thinks an inside left turn at a traffic circle is not "allowed". "Traffic calming devices are to manage the traffic, not operate the traffic" quote from Bill Metzger, former City of Mobile Traffic Engineer.



Speed humps sometimes are hard to see and are noisy (*especially when Fords drive over them*). Problem solved; we need to install 3-D painted traffic calming devices / crosswalks. *Just For Fun*, I can't find them in a FHWA manual.



In the News

Residents petition for relief after bridge is removed in Baldwin County



by: Blake Brown

Posted: Aug 5, 2020 / 01:34 PM CDT / Updated: Aug 5, 2020 / 06:09 PM CDT

ROBERTSDALE, Ala. (WKRG) — Residents in one Baldwin County community are frustrated and asking for assistance after a bridge was removed from their road.

“It is the main access to the freeway for us 50+ families living back this way,” said resident Cathleen Pizzutello, speaking about Linholm Road’s proximity to Interstate 10 at the Wilcox exit.

Pizzutello tells WKRG News 5 residents were never informed about the work. The Baldwin County Commission says they posted updates on their Facebook page when work was scheduled to begin. While she says they appreciate crews bettering their road, she’s worried about being cut off and isolated.

“Mail has been compromised, deliveries. We’re just not getting any services,” she said.

Most importantly, families are worried about medical services and first responders getting to them quickly. Currently, residents are traveling 30 minutes to 45 minutes around the detour.

They asked county commissioners for a temporary access road while work resumes.

“It’s going to do a lot more impact to the environment, it’s going to do a lot more impact to the wetlands, it’s going to be a lot more costly from a right of way standpoint,” said Joey Nunnally, Baldwin County Engineer.

“We had no voice at all to be able to say wait, before you tear it out let us prepare. Let us know an alternate route,” said Pizzutello.

Residents have started a petition for relief.

How old tires could make bike lanes way safer

BY NATE BERG 07-28-20

Barriers between car and bike lanes are notoriously ineffective—if they exist at all.

A used tire, a jigsaw, a drill, and a few bolts. Those are the basic components of a simple new barrier to separate car traffic from bike lanes.

The design is the winner of the [Build a Better Barrier Challenge](#), a design competition to improve the flimsy and costly bike lane barriers used in many cities. The skinny plastic poles commonly used to create a barrier between car and bike lanes often end up like roadkill, flat on the ground after being driven over—and that's if they exist in the first place. Many cities barely have barriers between car and bike lanes, and some have no bike lanes at all. The design competition, sponsored by the shared scooter and e-bike company Spin, was intended to fill this gap by creating a cheaper and more durable version that cities can easily put in place. With the expansion of [temporary road closures](#) and the [surge in cycling](#) during COVID-19, this new barrier could be the quick solution many cities need.

The winning concept was designed by Caressa Givens and Arthur Talayko of Milwaukee. She's a program manager at statewide bicycle organization Wisconsin Bike Fed, and he's an industrial designer. The two met while studying at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and saw the competition as a perfect combination of their interests.

Their design, called WeCLAIM, is based on a simple traffic-calming tactic Givens has used for community events with the Wisconsin Bike Fed. "I feel like I am the tire lady," she explains in an email. "We usually bring whole tires and just stack them up. They do work out well, they just kind of look like a junk parade."

Talayko says they wanted to build on that do-it-yourself simplicity, but with a little added refinement. "If we were going to do this from scratch, with no other involvement from anybody else, what can we actually make?"

A key principle behind the design was that it be something a company could manufacture but also something that community groups could make and repair themselves, unlike the barriers in many cities. "You see a lot of them on the street that have either been knocked over or driven over or vandalized," Talayko says. "Usually, you have to wait for the city to do something about it. But in this approach, maybe it could be community driven and people could repair their own."

They proposed three different designs: an oval-shaped planter, a rainbow-shaped bump, and a vertical post. Each requires one tire, a few bolts, and some reflective tape for added visibility.

Their material of choice is ubiquitous. In the U.S., nearly [300 million tires](#) become scrap every year. About 80% of them are [reused or reprocessed](#) into things such as fuel or ground rubber, but many still end up in landfills where they can take [hundreds of years to decompose](#).

Spin and its parent company, carmaker Ford, are connecting Givens and Talayko with D-Ford, its internal design firm, to produce a refined prototype of the barrier. They're also going to help forge a partnership with a manufacturer who can explore how to produce the barrier at scale. That doesn't mean it will be rolling out in cities across the country anytime soon, says Kay Cheng, Spin's streets program director and city planner who notes the "nightmare" of government procurement processes. "But what it could do and has done is start to open up the dialogue of asking if there are other ways we can approach this design," she says.

Talayko and Givens plan to make the barrier assembly instructions open source, and are hopeful that people will take their design and start making their own barriers. Givens says the project is especially pertinent in her home city. "Milwaukee, like many cities, needs opportunities to experience the benefits of a well-connected micromobility network without all of the cost," Givens says. "For lack of a better term, I think we need to be on a warpath to back-engineer our cities so that they are people-centered like they were in the late 1800s, for example, but with 21st-century technology, and just a little less mud."

A few old tires could be a start.

Tuk Tuk Go: Is This the Vehicle That Will Rescue Public Transit?

SANDY SMITH AUGUST 5, 2020



U.S. Cities Turn to Open-Air Rickshaws for Local Mobility

One thing has become clear in this current pandemic: The last thing anyone should want to do is spend lots of time in an enclosed space with lots of other people close by. Even though no known COVID-19 clusters have originated on public transit yet, many riders remain chary of boarding trains and buses for this reason. That probably makes things safer for those who still ride, but what about the non-riders who still need to go places and would rather not drive? A century-old form of open-air public transport popular in Asia and the Middle East — the tuk-tuk, or rickshaw — might just be the answer, and several American cities are trying them out and expanding their reach. The reason you can dine outdoors but not inside in many cities now is simple: Inside, it's harder to keep enough fresh air flowing to sufficiently disperse the COVID-19 coronavirus if an infected person enters.

That's less of a problem on public transit vehicles than many believe, [as European research indicates](#), but were it not for social distancing and mask-wearing, it would likely be a bigger one. Those strategies, however, mean the buses and trains can't carry as many people as they once did, which leaves cities with unmet demand for local mobility.

At the very local level, Smart Cities Dive [reports](#) that a growing number of U.S. cities are finding that they can meet that demand by turning to a century-old solution. That solution goes by the names "tuk tuk," "rickshaw" and "pedicab." These three-wheeled vehicles are completely open and carry anywhere from two to six passengers. Pedicabs are human-powered, while rickshaws and tuk tuks have motors.

The latest transit agency to adopt these as a micromobility solution is the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) in Florida. The JTA has contracted with a local firm, Go Tuk'n, to offer a pay-to-ride shuttle service around two downtown Jacksonville neighborhoods. The service works a little like the "dial-a-ride" services transportation agencies have offered disabled riders for years: Residents can reserve a spot on one of the "Tuk 'n' Ride" shuttles when they want to go to neighborhood businesses and restaurants.

The JTA benefits by being able to offer patrons a door-to-door local mobility option, and Go Tuk'n gains by showing that rickshaws can be more than tourist attractions. The small size of the vehicles also means more destinations can be served.

"If we can show how to move people around urban areas, we might have people saying, 'I don't have to bring my own vehicle downtown,'" Go Tuk'n CEO Stephanie Dale told Smart Cities Dive. "We cover distances that aren't walkable, and we can get onto the roads that buses can't do very easily."

Cost of littering on the rise in Alabama; fines doubled

Updated 23 hrs ago | Posted on Aug 6, 2020 0

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Litter continues to be an issue along Alabama roadways, and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has launched an anti-litter campaign that highlights the recent increase in litter fines and penalties, they announced Thursday.

Officials say the Alabama Department of Transportation spent almost \$7 million last year to clean up litter along the roadways. To deter littering, the Alabama Legislature increased littering fines in 2019.

For those caught dropping trash on Alabama, the fines have doubled. The minimum fine is now \$500, up from \$250 for a first conviction. The second conviction is \$1,000 and up to 100 hours community service.

"Trash Costs Cash," is the title of a public service announcement produced by ALDOT that is running on television and radio stations statewide and on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube. The PSA highlights the high cost of littering fines, challenging people to think about those costs before throwing out their fast-food wrapper.

Roadside litter includes, but is not limited to:

- Fast food trash
- Beverage containers, such as tin cans or plastic bottles,
- Cigarette butts
- Tires

Litter can harm our environment and have a negative impact on road safety and the natural beauty of our state," said Allison Green, Drive Safe Alabama coordinator, ALDOT. "If we each play our part in keeping our state clean, we won't be impacted by the rising litter fines. More ALDOT funding can be spent on improving the roads we drive instead of litter pickup."

There are many ways that residents can help keep Alabama beautiful:

- Dispose of trash properly
- Never throw anything out of the vehicle window
- Carry a small trash bag in your vehicle to dispose of trash
- Properly secure loads when hauling loose items
- Volunteer with People Against a Littered State (PALS) and apply to Adopt-A-Mile.

ALDOT partners with, PALS, Keep Alabama Beautiful and the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to help keep Alabama litter-free.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally sound transportation network across Alabama

Transportation Research

'Walk and Bike Safely' roadway safety video teaches kids new safety habits

by Danielle Moody Wednesday, August 5th 2020

SAN ANTONIO— Vision Zero San Antonio has created an important new learning tool for area children through a child-friendly, animated video that teaches children critical roadway safety lessons.

“Creating an animated video that teaches roadway safety can arm parents, teachers, and with an easy way to save lives,” said Bianca Thorpe, Capital Programs Manager, Transportation Planning & Programming for Public Works. “Teaching children how to cross the street is a good start, but we can’t stop there when preparing them for how to interact with a dynamic transportation system. Through this video, we were able to capture so much of what children need to know in a simple but engaging way.”

The concern for safety is at an all-time high right now during the warmer months when children are riding their bikes and playing outdoors. In the fall, many children will walk or ride the bus to school.

Walk and Bike Safely, the fifteen minute video, was created with Safe Kids San Antonio and University Health System. It is designed to help children learn important safety habits.

Just some of the lessons your child will learn through the video are:

- Making eye contact with drivers – never assuming a driver sees you
- Always staying alert when on or near a roadway
- The safest place to walk when there is no sidewalk
- The safest place to cross the road
- How to use a pedestrian signal crossing
- How to safely cross the street in front of a parked bus
- Increasing visibility when near or on a road after dark
- Bicycle safety rules and best practices
- How to inspect a bicycle to ensure it is roadway ready
- Hand signals for riding bicycles on roadways
- Safe practices for railroad crossings

You can watch the video by [CLICKING HERE](#).

DOT Unveils Applicant Toolkit for Rural Communities

Eleanor Lamb July 28, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation created a toolkit intended to help those interested in participating in the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success program.

Known as ROUTES, the program was created in October 2019, and it is meant to help connectivity in rural communities. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao on July 27 unveiled the toolkit, which provides information and resources. Its purpose is to help rural applicants understand and navigate DOT’s discretionary grant funding opportunities.

Specifically, the toolkit outlines applicant requirements and sorts grant programs by applicant type and eligible project activities. The toolkit was designed for applicants with varying levels of experience.

“This toolkit will help both the beginner and the experienced better understand, identify and navigate discretionary grant funding opportunities for rural transportation projects,” Chao said during a video announcement. “There are a lot of rural communities who just don’t have the resources to hire an army of dedicated staff and contractors to compete for these federal funds.

“We hope that this toolkit will be a reference and a road map to opportunities and resources at the U.S. Department of Transportation that will benefit your community and our country.”

Rural roads make up 70% of America’s road miles, according to DOT. Maintaining these roadways can be a challenge for rural communities that have thin financial resources. Although geographically sprawling, rural communities generally have low population densities, meaning fewer people to support investment.

Chao noted that infrastructure upgrades can improve safety, which also can be a challenge in rural areas. She said that although 19% of the population lives in rural areas, 45% of highway fatalities occur in rural areas.

In terms of economic activity, Chao said rural communities play an important role. According to Chao, two-thirds of freight moving by rail comes from rural areas, and nearly half the distance traveled by trucks takes place on rural roads.

“Rural transportation is important to our economy and our way of life,” Chao said. “Manufactured goods, raw materials and agricultural products travel through rural areas on their way to global markets.”

The ROUTES initiative’s steering council includes representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration.

DOT has placed an emphasis on rural community needs through some of its popular grant programs. For example, the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America grant program directs a certain amount of funds toward rural projects. In the latest round of INFRA grants, announced June 18, 53% of the funding was devoted to projects in rural areas.

In the latest round of Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grants, issued in November 2019, half of the \$900 million in funding was awarded to projects in rural areas.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Chao Releases Pathways to the Future of Transportation

Thursday, July 23, 2020

WASHINGTON – One year after announcing the launch of the Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today released *Pathways to the Future of Transportation* – a policy document that is intended to serve as a roadmap for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department.

“Pathways to the Future of Transportation guidance on new, cross-modal technologies will help address legitimate public concerns about safety, security and privacy without hampering innovation,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

This policy document is the U.S. Department of Transportation’s first step in providing a clear path for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department. It lays out a process for innovators and stakeholders to approach the Department with their plans and proposals for emerging technologies.

Secretary Chao announced the creation of the NETT Council last year as an internal deliberative body to identify and resolve jurisdictional and regulatory gaps that may impede the deployment of new technologies, such as potential advances in tunneling technology and hyperloop. Pathways to the Future of Transportation intends to help private sector innovators understand the purpose, structure, and function of the NETT Council; lay out the principles guiding the Department’s policies and posture toward transformative technologies; and deliver a high-level overview of the federal framework for supporting non-traditional and emerging technologies.

DOT will publish a Request for Comment on Pathways to the Future of Transportation, which will allow the public to comment and provide feedback on the document. More information on the NETT Council’s work can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/nettcouncil>.

Opportunity Zones

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

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

Read about our partner’s roles in Opportunity Zones:

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

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

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/906/build-fact-sheet2019.pdf>

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.