



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 23rd, 2019

Volume 31, Number 7

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[Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones](#)

Contact Us

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Kevin Harrison, PTP

ATRIPII applications are due next week; please see *Funding Opportunities*. There was a Mobile MPO meeting this week and the Mobile MPO voted to table the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project until further notice. The recommended funding scenario presented by ALDOT includes a tolling scenario that is necessary, but not popular with the public. Please *Mobile MPO Updates*. There is a lot of interest in the proposed toll over the Mobile River. There are too many articles for all of them to be posted in this newsletter; of note, the Eastern Shore MPO has moved the Aug. 28 meeting to a larger venue *In the News*. This week's *Just For Fun* is a....WINNER

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

MPO MEETING

There was a Mobile MPO meeting this week. The Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) met on July 31st and recommended the agenda. Staff received 88 comments concerning the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to the Tuesday, August 20th noon deadline for comments. The comments were presented to the MPO Policy Board members that afternoon prior to the MPO meeting on August 21st. A motion was made and approved by the Mobile MPO to "table" any projects that had tolling as a revenue source pertaining to the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. An MPO meeting will be determined at a later date, closer to the October 7th meeting of the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

It needs to be noted that without the construction (CN) or utilities (UT) project in the TIP, the preliminary engineering (PE) cannot be authorized for funding. Does ALDOT need the PE project authorized to move forward to find a better funding solution. If so, are we at a catch 22?

The Mobile MPO staff (and the Eastern Shore MPO staff) is currently working on the 25 year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and there will be a public comment period very shortly. The Bridge project NEEDS to be in the next LRTP in order for it to have ANY federal dollars spent on it, tolled or not tolled.

MPO 101 Seminar



The MPO 101 Class was last week and it was very well attended. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and The Eastern Shore MPO jointly conducted the class for our committee members. The Federal Highway Administration also presented. This class was intended for committee members of

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the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, or MPO Policy Board for either the Mobile MPO or the Eastern Shore MPO. This class was held two years ago for just the Mobile MPO, and was well received. This may become a biennial event depending on the success of next week.

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Last Friday, the consultant selection committee listened to presentations from the three shortlisted firms concerning *Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study*. The groups that presented were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Mott-MacDonald, and VIA Mobility. All firms did a great job at presenting, and were scored and ranked by the committee. The consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin Mills and Cawood as a sub consultant. We would like to get the study under way as soon as the new fiscal year begins and are currently awaiting approval to enter contract negotiation. We will keep you posted.

Click on link below to see the Scope of Work

[Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study \(6/27/19\)](#)

If you would like to be part of this study, please call Kevin Harrison for details.

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.

[FY 2020-2023 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](#).

NOTE: There are currently two Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) on the website. The 2016-2019 TIP runs through September 30, 2019. The 2020-2023 TIP goes into effect on October 1, 2019.

FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area



The Independent Living Center received their new bus last week. The bus holds up to 10 ambulatory passengers and has space for three wheelchairs. The bus was purchased using FTA 5310 Funds. The 5310 funds are for enhanced mobility to seniors and individuals with disabilities. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is the designated recipient for the Mobile Urban Area. The application for FY2020 funds will be released on Wednesday, September 4th, 2019. There is a tentative meeting for anyone needing more information about the application process on Tuesday, September 10th. Look for more details about the application and details about the meeting in next week's newsletter. For more information, email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

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. Please contact Allison Gregg (251-604-9790) to coordinate site visits

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

There are no changes this week.

Projects in Region Let August 30th, 2019

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

Will coastal lawmakers get to vote on I-10 toll plan?

By [John Sharp](#) | jsharp@al.com August 22, 2019

State lawmakers in Baldwin and Mobile counties received assurance Wednesday from Alabama Department of Transportation Director John Cooper that they could vote on the fate of the \$2.1 billion Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project.

Cooper, during a contentious meeting with the lawmakers in Mobile, said he would write a letter to Gov. Kay Ivey recommending that state delegations in both counties be allowed to weigh in on the project before it moves forward.

TIP plans

Cooper, in return, requested that the project be re-included into the short-term planning documents in both Mobile and Baldwin counties. The Mobile Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted unanimously Wednesday to remove the I-10 project from its "Transportation Improvement Program" or TIP, which guides transportation priorities for a region. A project has to be included within each TIP in order to be eligible for federal funds.

The Mobile MPO's decision was only temporary: The group voted to "table" a decision on whether to re-include the I-10 project until October.

"If it's not in the TIP, you can't spend any federal money on it and you can't do anything," said Cooper.

He said that the state cannot "circulate a request for proposal" to begin a process of seeking a concessionaire to work on the project as part of the state's public-private partnership or P3. ALDOT wants to have a concessionaire team selected and hired by March 2020.

It's unclear whether the project will reappear in either the Mobile TIP or one that will be reviewed by the Eastern Shore MPO on Wednesday. The Eastern Shore proposal strips out the entire toll project, and could effectively kill ALDOT's plans to build the \$2.1 billion project with tolls.

Coastal Alabama public officials are all supportive of the I-10 project, but not a proposed \$6 one-way toll that would be assessed on all users. The toll plan also includes frequent user discounts, and there is a non-toll route between the two counties that includes the Spanish Fort Causeway.

Simpson and others, including Daphne Mayor Dane Haygood, have said that the TIP represents a “defense” for the region in preventing the toll plan from moving forward. Haygood is chairman of the Easter Shore MPO.

Coastal officials have also since said that they want ALDOT and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey’s office come out with a plan that does n’t include tolls. ALDOT has long said that without tolls, the project cannot be built.

“We cannot bring you a final plan if it’s not in the TIP,” said Cooper.

Simpson, on Thursday, said there are no “checks and balances” in the project. He cited the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority, which is chaired by [Ivey who has repeatedly express support for the project](#) and has expressed concerns over slowing it down. The authority will host [an Oct. 7 meeting in Montgomery](#) to review possible alternatives to the toll plan.

“The governor and five people she employs can do whatever she wants to,” said Simpson, referring to the authority’s nine-member make-up.

Simpson said it would be a “huge step for us” if the legislative delegation were given a vote on whether the project should proceed.

“The way it’s set up now, we have no say so,” he said. “To give us a say so is hugely important.”

An Ivey spokeswoman said they had not received a formal, written letter for it.

Unpopular project

Coastal Alabama lawmakers remained pressured to act on the state’s toll plan amid growing animosity on social media toward it. [An anti-toll Facebook page](#) has amassed more than 52,000 followers, and local lawmakers are being inundated with phone calls and emails with questions and concerns about the project.

Dean Young, an Orange Beach businessman and former congressional candidate, has commissioned two separate polls on whether interstates should be toll. On Thursday, he released his most recent poll which showed that 79% of 1,613 registered voters in Alabama oppose the introduction of tolls to the interstate system.

[Young is pitching a statewide and local constitutional amendment](#) that would prohibit tolls from being place on interstates and bridges. Legislation pushing for the amendment is expected to be introduced next spring.

Young commissioned a poll earlier this month that asked voters in Baldwin and Mobile counties a similar question. Released on Aug. 13, [that poll showed 77% opposed.](#)

Young commissioned the most recent poll after lawmakers in other parts of the state told [AL.com](#) recently that the issue wasn’t resonating with constituents outside of the coastal area.

“What we are seeing is that there are more and more people understanding what is happening and the polling numbers are going up on this,” said Young. “They can’t just say, ‘that’s just Southwest Alabama.’ The message to the people of Baldwin and Mobile counties is that you’re not just alone. It’s the entire state.”

Allison Gregg, spokeswoman with ALDOT on the I-10 project, said Young’s findings are not a surprise: A whopping 86% of people who participating in the public comment period for the project in May cited their opposition to the project as proposed with tolling, while approximately 14% support it

On the other hand, “ALDOT has found that around 82% of the people who submitted comments following the public hearings believe the project is needed,” said Gregg.

“ALDOT understands that tolling is not favorable. However, with an estimated construction cost of \$2.1 billion, it is not possible to deliver the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project without tolling. The state and federal governments do not have enough funding readily available to fund and finance this project.”

6 Transportation Goals Congress Should Be Thinking About

Too often, the debate over transportation funding in Congress revolves around dollars and cents. But many advocates say we should agree on big goals first, so we know what we’re getting for the money we spend.

BY [DANIEL C. VOCK](#) | AUGUST 23, 2019

Congress spends a lot of time trying to figure out how it should allocate money for infrastructure, but its members rarely articulate *why* they want to spend that money. There seems to be more discussion in Washington about the size of an infrastructure package—whether it should be \$500 billion, \$1 trillion or even \$2 trillion—than what the public would actually see as a result.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, for example, earned plenty of praise last month for [drafting a bipartisan bill](#) that calls for spending \$287 billion on highways and related infrastructure. That would be a 27 percent increase over current levels, which should please road builders and perhaps frustrated commuters. The bill also maintains the current methods for doling out that federal money, a victory for state highway departments, which would receive 90 percent of the funds. (The bill does not include spending for rail, transit or certain safety programs, and it does not identify a funding source, because, in Congress’ typical piecemeal fashion, those concerns are the responsibilities of other committees.)

But without clear goals, it's hard to measure how well the legislation would achieve them. The package includes \$10 billion to address climate change, a first for a highway bill. But is that enough to curb carbon dioxide emissions that heat the atmosphere? Or to make roads that can better withstand the increased flooding and extreme weather that climate change brings? How do we know if the highway bill is boosting the economy, as its authors promise, or reducing congestion? Is the current funding scheme the best way to achieve those goals?

These are questions that are all too familiar to state and local leaders.

"When it becomes a conversation [on Capitol Hill] about billions of dollars and engineering projects, we lose what this is about: Infrastructure is what improves the quality of our lives," says Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. "Bad infrastructure keeps us from our happiness, keeps us from our families, keeps us from jobs and, in the worst-case scenarios, threatens our health in our lives. Who cares how many miles of roads I can pave in L.A., if Venice Beach is underwater?"

As Congress considers such big-picture considerations this year, though, *Governing* will not be around to cover the debate. After three decades, both the magazine and the website [will cease publication](#) next month.

So, as we sign off, *Governing* asked prominent transportation leaders to offer their perspectives on what transportation goals the country ought to set. We asked them what obstacles stood in their way, and what Congress or other policymakers could do to help achieve those goals. To continue reading this article click [HERE](#)

What's Next for the Senate EPW Committee's Highway Title?

POSTED BY: [ERICH ZIMMERMANN](#) AUGUST 22, 2019

The push for transportation reauthorization has begun, with approximately 15 months before the current authorizing legislation – the FAST Act – expires. This early start to the process can be ascribed to two systemic challenges Congress faces in getting a final bill across the finish line. First, the transportation reauthorization is a complex piece of legislation, under the jurisdiction of four committees in the Senate and two in the House. It is also a large program with a fading source of revenue, which requires Congress to find a funding patch every time it enacts a new, long-term authorization. This time around, the gap between anticipated Highway Trust Fund revenues and desired spending levels is expected to be \$100 billion or more, which needs to be transferred from general Treasury funds and somehow offset with new revenues or spending cuts.

The second systemic challenge Congress faces is a simple one of timing: voting for the 2020 Presidential election will take place just over a month after the current authorization expires. The politicking, of course, will begin much sooner. Neither side will want to hand the other a substantial victory too close to an election, and both sides could be wary of spending hundreds of billions of dollars (to say nothing of raising the federal fuels tax), unsure of how it will swing voters.

That brings us to the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee's proposed highway title (transit, rail, and other items will be added later by other committees), which is a five-year, \$287 billion bill. As is often the case with transportation bills, there is much for both sides to point to as advancing their policy agendas. This is part of the reason it passed out of committee on a unanimous 21-0 vote. On one side is project permit streamlining, increases to the National Highway Performance Program, and rural-focused provisions regarding safety and bridge repair. On the other side is a new climate title, safety and funding provisions for bicycle and pedestrian projects, and a new program to combat congestion in the nation's largest urban areas.

The EPW bill maintains the existing structure of the federal transportation program. This is, overall, a positive. There are only minor changes made to the law as it applies to planning and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. One change we had advocated for was an increase in the portion of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) that is provided directly to local areas through their metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Though this share will remain at 55%, we were pleased at changes to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), including an increased share for local projects (57.5%, up from 50% presently) and broader eligibility to include MPOs in urbanized areas under 200,000 population. In addition, two new programs created in the EPW bill for resilience and safety require suballocation of funds and create incentives that would allow a portion of those funds to be used as STBGP funds if certain criteria are met.

A notable aspect of the EPW bill is the sheer number of new programs that it would create, covering a broad range of topics including wildlife crossings, bridge investments, safety, charging and alternatives fuel infrastructure, carbon reduction, congestion relief, resilience, and more. This is an interesting shift in approach, with the current FAST Act bill sticking mainly to the approach initiated in the MAP-21 authorization which consolidated the program from more than 100 programs to just a handful.

If you want to learn more about what the bill contains, NARC has prepared a number of resources that will be helpful, including a analysis and a [broader overview](#) of some of the most relevant portions. In addition, NARC will be hosting a webinar on Tuesday, August 13 at 3:00 PM ET and you can [register here](#).

As one Senator said during the committee discussion, the committee passage of this bill is the "end of the beginning" of the process. We'll still need to see what the Senate Commerce and Banking committees develop for their portions of the bill, and that combined package will need to make it through the full Senate. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is also likely to develop its own proposal, though it is unclear when it might release something. And the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees have perhaps the toughest job of all, which is coming up with a way to pay for the whole package.

Chair DeFazio Urges Reinvigorated Federal Role in Infrastructure Investment after New Report Shows Traffic Congestion Only Getting Worse Across the U.S.

August 23, 2019

Report: Congestion now costs the average commuter in the U.S. an estimated 54 hours and more than \$1,000 each year
Chair DeFazio: This is "the result of trying to run a 21st century economy on a 1950s-era transportation system"

Washington, D.C. — Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) released the following statement in response to the release of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute's [2019 Urban Mobility Report](#), which showed the number of hours commuters lost to traffic delays has climbed to 54 hours a year, at a cost of \$1,010 per commuter. Nationwide, the cost of congestion is now \$166 billion a year, while the amount of wasted fuel now amounts to 3.3 billion gallons.

"This report crystalizes what so many American families, students, workers, and businesses are already feeling every single day in our country – clogged highways, wasted time and money, and mounting frustration," **Chair DeFazio said.** "That's the result of trying to run a 21st century economy on a 1950s-era transportation system, which simply does not work. Reports like the 2019 Urban Mobility Report are exactly what we should expect after decades of underinvestment at the federal level and a lack of political will to even consider raising the federal gas tax for the first time since 1993, and why we're left with highways, roads, bridges and transit systems that are inefficient, outdated, and in some spots, downright dangerous.

"So I'm calling yet again on President Trump and my colleagues in Congress to work together to figure out how to address hundreds of billions of dollars in stalled infrastructure projects, and to start re-imagining our transportation systems in order to meaningfully combat congestion, reduce emissions, and create more resilient infrastructure that will be around for the long haul. The cost of inaction is too great."

You can read the full report from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute [here](#).

The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit will hold a hearing next month on tolling and congestion pricing, including their impacts on congestion. Hearing information, including witnesses and a livestream, will be posted [here](#) as it becomes available.

Funding Opportunities

Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II)

Deadline August 30th. 2019

The purpose of this program is to rehabilitate and improve transportation infrastructure by funding projects of local interest, proposed by one or more local governments, related to the state-maintained highway system. Projects may include local roads and bridges essential to such projects. The program's goal is to address critical needs projects across the state to rehabilitate and improve the in-place facilities and in some cases provide new facilities at locations throughout the state. The program's focus is an emphasis on the public safety, economic growth, and stability of the state and its roads and bridges.

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

[ATRIP-II Procedural Guidelines](#)

[FY2020 ATRIP-II Project Application](#)

[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](#)

Does your community need help with a climate adaptation process?

August 31, 2019 Deadline

EcoAdapt, in partnership with Virginia Tech, is excited to offer support for up to eight communities to undertake a stakeholder-driven climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning workshop (1-2 days). We are looking for interested communities who are creating, updating or implementing a local plan (e.g., comprehensive/general, hazard mitigation, neighborhood). The goal of these workshops is to build local capacity for climate change adaptation, improve understanding about local climate change vulnerabilities, and develop implementable adaptation responses. Following the workshop, each community will receive a climate adaptation action plan focused on specific issues identified and discussed during the workshop. The action plan will summarize local climate vulnerabilities and impacts as well as adaptation strategies and actions designed to minimize vulnerabilities and increase community resilience.

EcoAdapt and Virginia Tech are convening these workshops as part of an ongoing National Science Foundation-funded study to determine what factors support effective adaptation learning and catalyze post-workshop action. Participants will be asked to respond to surveys before and after the workshop to assess learning and outcomes.

If your community is interested in being considered as a workshop site, please let us know using this [application form](#). Applications must be submitted by 30 August 2019 and you will be contacted by EcoAdapt in the fall.

FY 2019 Land and Water Conservation Fund Application Workshop Notification

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is sponsoring a LWCF application workshop on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at the Center for Commerce, 401 Adams Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama in the 7th Floor Auditorium.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is sponsoring a LWCF application workshop on **Wednesday, September 11, 2019**, at the Center for Commerce, 401 Adams Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama in the 7th Floor Auditorium. The workshop will begin at 1:00 p.m. and end by 4:30 p.m. Participants may access the Center for Commerce parking deck from the South Decatur Street entrance by entering the code 801880. Everyone interested in competing for LWCF grant assistance during this funding cycle is encouraged to attend.

Preregistration is required. To preregister, please call Kim Martin at (334) 353-3151 or email her at kim.martin@adeca.alabama.gov by Friday, September 6, 2019. It will be necessary to provide Ms. Martin with the name(s) of the workshop attendees and the organization(s) they will be representing. The maximum capacity for the meeting location is 100. Preregistration will be closed should that number be reached. On-site sign in for preregistered attendees will begin at 12:30 p.m. the afternoon of the workshop.

The workshop will be accessible to all persons. If you have a disability that requires special services, materials, or assistance please notify Ms. Martin when you preregister. We look forward to working with you during the next funding cycle.

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)

WINNER!

With full credit to Sean Sullivan of the FMTALK 106.5, he presented the idea of a lottery to help pay for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. An example of this would be, each time your license plate is captured by the toll scanner, you are automatically entered into a lottery for cash and prizes. People would not only be driving across the new bridge multiple times a day in order to win cash and prizes, but people from all of the country would be coming to drive on our bridge in order for a chance to win a prize; this is genius. We could have catchy slogans like a "Drive for the Prize" or "Commute for Loot" or "Pay the Bayway".

\$-COMMUTE FOR LOOT-\$
brought to you by the Bayway Tolling Authority

**This Month's Lottery tag announced!!
\$10,000! Congratulations to tag number:**

ALABAMA
9059AT4

**The more times you drive, better chances for
the prize. PLAY COMMUTE FOR LOOT**

Mr. Dalton Orwig
\$10,000
Ten thousand dollars
can be cash payout or toll coupons
ALABAMA STATE LOTTERY
DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

This is completely not legal and would never pass the Alabama Legislature in terms of a lottery/gambling; however, *Just For Fun*, this could actually work.

In the News

I-10 project receives final environmental clearance from federal government

Posted Aug 16, 2:27 PM



Edwin Perry, project director with the Alabama Department of Transportation, speaks during a public hearing into the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at the Spanish Fort Community Center in Spanish Fort, Ala. (John Sharp/jsharp@al.com).

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

In an expected move, the Federal Highway Administration gave the environmental clearance Friday on the \$2.1 billion Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project.

The FHWA signed the [combined final environmental impact statement/record of decision \(FEIS/ROD\)](#) for the I-10 project is a defining moment for a project that has been under an environmental review process for 20 years, according to the Alabama Department of Transportation.

“For more than 20 years, the Alabama Department of Transportation worked closely with FHWA to thoroughly study and assess potential impacts of the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project,” said Edwin Perry, the project’s director.

The FEIS/ROD also endorses the preferred alternative route for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge which, up until now, had not been finalized.

ALDOT, according to its news release, indicated the project can move to the next phase which involves issuing requests for proposals to the three teams pursuing the project. The project is being developed under Alabama’s first-ever public-private partnership (P3) arrangement, and three teams have been working with the state in developing RFPs since February 2018.

The proposals are due in December, and ALDOT anticipates announcing the selected bidder by March 2020. The selected team will then design, build, finance, operate and maintain the project for 55 years. The project is expected to be completed by 2025.

The project has come under intense scrutiny from residents in Mobile and Baldwin counties, as well as from local politicians, upset over a proposed toll plan to finance much of the development.

ALDOT’s toll plan calls for a \$6 one-way toll to utilize the project from Virginia Street in Mobile to U.S. 98 in Daphne. The state is also offering frequent user discounts, including a \$90 monthly pass for unlimited trips. [HERE](#)

I-10 toll talks tabled by Mobile County officials; October meeting planned

- [Brendan Kirby](#)
- Updated Aug 21, 2019 | Posted on Aug 21, 2019

Discussions of a possible toll related to the planned Interstate 10 Mobile River bridge project were tabled at a meeting of the Mobile County Metropolitan Planning Organization Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2019, at the GM&O Building.

FOX10 News

MOBILE, Ala. (WALA) – The Mobile River bridge and Bayway project lives – for now.

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization, which has a strong say in local transportation projects, decided Wednesday to delay a vote on the plan to build a new bridge and expanded Bayway.

The group, made up of elected and appointed officials in Mobile County, approved the Transportation Improvement Program that lays out federally funded transportation projects through the year 2023 – but removed the bridge and Bayway project.

The MPO will take up that project again at a meeting in October after the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge, and Tunnel Authority meets to discuss the project.

Mobile County Commissioner Jerry Carl, a member of the MPO board, had called for removing the bridge project and voting it down. But he said after the vote that he is satisfied with the delay to give Gov. Kay Ivey and her team more time to come up with an alternative to the current plan that includes tolls.

Removing the project from the TIP list permanently effectively would have killed it, according to Alabama Department of Transportation officials.

“In order for a project to be authorized for federal funding, it has to be in this document,” said Kevin Harrison, the MPO’s director of transportation planning.

ALDOT’s current plan is to construct a new six-lane bridge rising 215 feet above the Mobile River and a new Bayway that would be eight lanes and significantly more elevated than the current structure.

With little direct federal money available, state officials consistently have maintained that tolls are the only way for the state to finance the project. ALDOT has proposed imposing tolls on Bayway, regardless of whether drivers use the new bridge or the existing Wallace Tunnel.

The proposed maximum rate is \$6 for a one-way trip, and lesser amounts for drivers who use only a portion of the 10-mile route. Discounts would be available for people who buy transponder devices for their cars and make more than four one-way trips in a month. But drivers who do not have transponders would have to pay a 50 percent surcharge on top of the toll and would get bills in the mail from pictures taken of their license plates.

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, who chairs the MPO, acknowledged during the meeting that people do not want tolls. But he urged fellow board members to keep the project alive.

“In discussions with the governor’s office, the No. 1 thing she needs from us – that is the MPO – is more time to determine what the real options are,” he said.

Mobile County Commissioner Connie Hudson, who is not on the MPO board, urged the panel not to jeopardize federal funding for a project she said only will grow in importance over time.

“We need the bridge,” she said. “We’re looking at gridlock on the weekends now. Within 20 years, we’ll have gridlock every single day.”

The vote was unanimous, but several members of the MPO board expressed frustration.

“This has been set up as a binary decision of you’re either for the toll or you’re against the bridge,” said Saraland Mayor Howard Rubenstein.

He added, “There’s a little bit of a disconnect right now between us and the governor’s office,” he said.

Satsuma Mayor Tom Williams called charging tolls “morally wrong.”

Carl, who is running for the U.S. House of Representatives, [told reporters on Tuesday](#) that he wanted to force ALDOT to go back to the drawing board, scale back the \$2.1 billion project and come up with a less-expensive plan that could be financed without tolls.

Carl reiterated that position on Wednesday.

“We have got to come up with a better plan, and quickly,” he said.

The tolling plan has sparked fierce opposition in Mobile and Baldwin counties, and arguably an unprecedented amount of civic engagement. An anti-toll Facebook group founded by state Auditor Jim Zeigler has more than 50,000 followers, and organizers who held a meeting at the Five Rivers Delta Center on the Causeway had to [turn away dozens of people](#) who could not fit into the theater where the gathering took place.

Zeigler attended Wednesday’s MPO meeting along with a group of supporters who wore anti-toll hats.

Has climate change triggered a need for a more costly I-10 project?

By John Sharp Updated Aug 23

Critics of the state’s plan to toll the future Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project have repeatedly questioned the rationale for building a new 7.5-mile Bayway between Mobile and Baldwin counties.

They’ve assailed the changes in the project as representative of “Taj Mahal” exuberance and are pointing to the elevated Bayway as the culprit – in 2014, cost estimates were around \$850 million; today they are \$2.1 billion.

“I don’t understand why the discussion is to raise the Bayway,” said Mobile County Commissioner Connie Hudson on Wednesday, echoing the comments of other coastal Alabama public officials and anti-toll advocates.

The answer, according to the state, is that it’s under federal instructions to respond to warming temperatures and rising sea levels. In other words, the Bayway is being made ready to withstand climate change and newly severe winds, flooding and storm surge.

“If we’re so short-sighted as to just concern ourselves with the immediate, with the next 20 to 30 years, we might get by with that but what are we leaving for the next generation?” said Scott Hagen, director of the Louisiana State University Center for Coastal Resiliency, who has co-written pieces about the effects of rising sea levels on the Gulf Coast.

“Eventually, you have to catch up to how the system has changed and when you play this catch up is when it will really cost you,” said Hagen. “We have to have a vision that is generational.”

Rising costs

The issue erupted during a lively meeting Wednesday between state lawmakers who are feeling anti-toll pressure from the public, the Alabama Department of Transportation’s team that has been working on the I-10 project for years.

Much of the back-and-forth focused on whether any federal law or federal guideline was steering ALDOT to make the expensive revisions to the Bayway piece of the I-10 project.

Lawmakers who are critical of ALDOT’s recommended \$6 one-way toll to pay for the project blame the Bayway redesign for the soaring overall price tag.

But the elevation of the Bayway, according to the state, adds only \$350 million extra to the overall cost. The overall price tag for the new Bayway comes in at \$880 million, or slightly more than 40% of the \$2.1 billion project.

Here’s what ALDOT says about the project’s cost:

-The \$850 million estimate, in 2014, represented a “corridor study estimate.” Since then, the state has conducted additional engineering studies at a “higher level of detail,” as specified by the Federal Highway Administration. The 2014 estimate would have been around \$1.4 billion had the more detailed analysis already been factored in, according to ALDOT spokeswoman Allison Gregg.

“There was never a design that cost \$850 million,” said Edwin Perry, ALDOT’s bridge project manager. “It was an idea and a comparison of different alternatives.”

-ALDOT estimates that environmental commitments, drainage, design work, fuel costs, engineering controls, and other items needed for the project pushed the cost estimates up to \$1.6 billion.

-Rebuilding the Bayway to meet storm surge requirements increased the overall costs by \$350 million, to a total of \$1.95 billion.

-With inflation and the rise in construction prices, the estimate presently stands at \$2.1 billion.

ALDOT Director John Cooper said the requirement to replace the existing Bayway with a newer and taller Bayway comes from Federal Highway Administration guidelines.

“You either do it their way, or you don’t do it,” Cooper told lawmakers on Wednesday. “If I don’t satisfy the Federal Highway Administration, there will be nothing done. I have not spent the past 8-1/2 years of my life begging and cajoling to approve a document just because I like doing it. This is what is required to get to this point.”

But some lawmakers are disputing how much legal weight that the guidelines carry.

“If I go back to tell the constituents that the bridge has to be raised to a 100-year level, I don’t think it’s too much to ask and say, ‘Where are the laws?’” said state Rep. Matt Simpson, R-Daphne.

The existing guidelines were established in 2008, following an analysis of the infrastructure damage that occurred along the Gulf Coast following Hurricanes Ivan in 2004, Katrina in 2005 and Rita in 2005.

Bayway decision

The non-partisan American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) was another key player in the decision to elevate the Bayway. It’s the entity that developed the guidelines that the Federal Highway Administration sets out for new bridge construction in areas vulnerable to coastal storms.

The guidelines state, “Wherever practical, the vertical clearance of highway bridges should be sufficient to provide at least 1 foot of clearance over the 100-year design wave crest elevation, which includes the design storm water elevation.”

AASHTO is based in Washington, D.C., and represents all 50 state departments of transportation, as well as those in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

While the guidelines that it wrote are not federal law, they are recognized by the Federal Highway Administration as the standard that states must adhere to qualify their road projects for federal funding and grants.

“This association works for its member departments and we do not direct the work of our member departments,” said Lloyd Brown, AASHTO spokesman. He referred questions about the regulatory strength of AASHTO’s guidelines to the Federal Highway Administration.

ALDOT’s Gregg said the existing Bayway, which was built in 1977, is “well below the 100-year wave crest elevation, placing it well within the wave impact” of a 100-year storm.

Retrofitting the Bayway to widen it and strengthen it to withstand strong storms would be “more expensive,” she said, than building an entirely new Bayway of seven and a half miles that complies with AASHTO’s specifications.

ALDOT's design team for the Bayway conducted storm analyses that accounted for sea-level increases. [HERE](#)

Eastern Shore MPO moves Aug. 28 meeting to larger venue

Posted by [Gabriel Tynes](#) | Aug 22, 2019 | [Latest](#) | [0](#) | (reprinted with permission from the LAGNIAPPE)

According to a news release this morning, the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board's special called Work Session and Meeting scheduled Aug. 28, at 2 p.m., will be held in the city of Fairhope Council Chambers located at 161 N. Section St., instead of its normal, smaller venue at the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse.

An item concerning the Mobile River Bridge & Bayway project will be on the agenda and open for public comment, according to MPO Coordinator Sarah Hart Sislak, although the board's Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) document is not scheduled to be approved until the board's meeting Wednesday, Sept. 25. Yesterday the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization, making similar considerations, [voted to table all aspects of the bridge project](#) until after Gov. Kay Ivey hosts a meeting of the state's toll authority on Monday, Oct. 7.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or those requiring language translation services should contact the Eastern Shore MPO at 251-990-4643.

Fine increasing for Alabama's Move Over law

[STATE / REGIONAL](#)

by: [Abby Bradshaw, WRBL](#)

Posted: Aug 23, 2019 / 08:34 AM CDT / Updated: Aug 23, 2019 / 08:34 AM CDT

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Alabama drivers can expect to pay a heavier fine if the Move Over Law is violated.

The current fine for violating the Move Over law is \$25, but it will increase to \$100 in September 2019 for first-time offenders. Although the Move Over law is not new...State troopers say people are still violating it.

The law requires drivers to move away from emergency vehicles parked alongside the road. Last year, the law was expanded to protect any vehicle with flashing lights.

Alabama Department of Transportation is helping spread awareness about the changes by displaying it on their messaging signs.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Service Modifications

EFFECTIVE Tuesday, September 3, 2019, Transit Management of Mobile, Alabama D/b/a The Wave Transit System (The New Wave) has scheduled service modifications designed to address current travel patterns and maximize efficiency of its resource's to better serve the community.

ROUTE	ROUTE NUMBER	ACTION
Airport	#1	Modify weekday and Saturday bus service with direct service along Airport Boulevard from the Shoppes at Bel Air to include Providence Hospital, Schillinger Road and Mobile Regional Airport's Airport Station.
Dauphin Street	#7	Modify inbound route to include services to Midtown Walmart.
Crosstown Malls	#10	Modify inbound route, discontinuing bus services to Atlanta Bread Company. Modify outbound route to include services to the new Department of Human Resources on Broadcast Drive.
Dauphin Island Parkway	#11	Modify weekday bus service with continuous service along Dauphin Island Parkway to include, Fulbrook Shopping Center, Mobile Public Library, B.C. Rain High and Boykin Boulevard.
Highway 90-Tillmans Corner	#12	Modify weekday and Saturday bus services to include The Shoppes at Bel Air.

The Wave Transit System assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act

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Transportation Research

Experts Emphasize Communication, Teamwork in Transportation Planning

Eleanor Lamb August 22, 2019

Fruitful partnerships between state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations depend on communication, collaboration and inclusion, according to transportation experts.

Darryl Fields, senior transportation planner at the Mid-America Regional Council, said successful projects come from frequent collaboration with government agencies and planning organization partners. MARC serves the Kansas City metropolitan area, representing two states, two Federal Highway Administration divisions and eight counties (four each in Kansas and Missouri). Fields spoke at a webinar hosted by FHWA on Aug. 21, which was held as part of the agency's Talking Freight seminar series.

Kansas City is an important freight hub, containing four intermodal hubs, a massive rail center and an inland waterway. Fields said past collaborative successes include the reconstruction of the interchange linking interstates 435 and 470 to U.S. Route 71 south of Kansas City and flyover rail crossings.

"An important aspect in any business are successful relationships. We, as public policy providers, must maintain agency cooperation and participation," Fields said. "Freight has no boundaries."

Yatman Kwan, chief of the California Department of Transportation's Office of Freight Planning, agreed with Fields, stating that regular collaboration fosters better work between transportation agencies and planning groups. Kwan and his team developed a survey geared toward state DOTs and metropolitan planning organizations. The purpose was to learn how often these entities regularly interacted, the extent of their involvement in one another's work and their biggest concerns related to freight.

From the survey, Kwan determined that the best practices are found in MPOs and DOTs that frequently reach out to each other and maintain reliable points of contact. State agencies reported various ways in which they work with MPOs. For example, MPOs are represented on Michigan DOT's task teams devoted

to developing long-range transportation plans. Tennessee DOT created an Office of Community Transportation, which regularly communicates with members of planning organizations.

Challenges remain for smaller MPOs that sometimes feel overlooked, according to the survey results. A few MPOs reported they don't have regular meetings with their DOT counterparts.

"[Some] small MPOs feel neglected in statewide efforts and meetings. Some MPOs felt some DOTs are very siloed," Kwan said. "[They] would like to see more ongoing conversation."

Kenneth Kao, principal planner within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Programming and Allocations Section, said he and his team work closely with Caltrans, holding quarterly meetings with the agency's Freight Advisory Committee. MTC covers the San Francisco Bay area, encompassing 7.5 million people and nine counties. MTC and Caltrans work together to identify common goals (a recent example was the assignment of critical urban and rural freight corridors).

The Northern California megaregion, which includes San Francisco, Monterey Bay, Sacramento and the northern San Joaquin Valley, is an important area for freight movement, according to Kao. Specifically, the area facilitates the movement of various agricultural products and goods from the Port of Oakland.

"We're linked very closely with transportation and economic links within our region as well as with neighboring MPOs," Kao said. "Northern California is an important part of the national freight movement puzzle."

FHWA's next Talking Freight seminar will be held Aug. 28 and focus on using real-time information to improve supply chain efficiency.

ADECA seeks public input into 2020 Census Grant Program

With the 2020 Census drawing closer, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is seeking public input for a grant program to assist with local outreach efforts.

Alabama's goal for the 2020 Census is to obtain high participation in every Alabama community, municipality and county. ADECA issued the Request for Information related to \$1 million in funding allocated to the agency in the 2020 Education Trust Fund budget for the 2020 Census Grant Program. The RFI is available on the [ADECA website](#). The public comments about the grant program will be accepted in writing until 5 p.m. on Friday, July 12.

The one-time grant funding is to be expended by ADECA, in coordination with the State Department of Education, to assist local community outreach efforts designed to encourage Alabama residents to complete the 2020 Census count. All grants will be awarded by Dec. 31 in preparation for the census count in March and April 2020.

After the public comment period, ADECA will work to design the full process and establish deadlines for this grant program which will provide funding assistance to help with local, grassroots outreach efforts, specifically those in hard-to-count areas and groups. The agency will host a grant application workshop once all the procedures are in place and applications are ready to be accepted.

Direct link to Request for Information:

document: <http://adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/2020%20Census%20Grant%20Program%20RFI.pdf>

ADECA has set the date for the 2020 Census Grant Program application workshop on Wednesday, September 4 at 10 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. in the Alabama Center for Commerce in Montgomery. At this workshop, we will release the details of the grant program and give an overview. The application period is planned to open on the same day as the workshop.

Please note that preregistration is required and seating is limited. ADECA will also record the workshop and post the video to www.census.alabama.gov for those unable to attend.

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.](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Mississippi was the deadliest state for bicyclists with the highest average fatality rate per 10k bicycle commuters from 2012-2016. Mississippi also had the lowest percent of commuters biking to work in 2016 at .1 percent of the population.
- Cities where the rate of biking to work is highest, like Portland, Oregon, and Washington, DC, have the lowest rate of bicyclist fatalities.
- 71 percent of bicyclist deaths occurred in an urban area, with 61 percent occurring on principal or minor arterial roadways, which only make up 10 percent of the national roadway system.
- 39 percent of biking trips and 35 percent of walking trips in 2017 were for social and/or recreational purposes.
- 20 percent of biking trips in 2017 were to earn a living.
- Women are underrepresented among people who bike to work, but there have been modest participation increases in recent years.
- For people with an income below \$25,000 per year, biking in an increasingly common method for taking trips.

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

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

Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.

· The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym. For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.