



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 17th, 2018

Volume 27, Number 7

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The deadline for Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 applications is September 12th; see *Funding Opportunities*. The South Alabama Freight Forum (SAFF) is on August 20th, see *Mobile MPO Updates*, and *In The News*, the Alabama State Port Authority has some big plans, Lime Bikes are here, and see where Alabama ranks nationally in infrastructure spending. **Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!**

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

www.mobilempo.org  check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

US 45 Feasibility Study

Recently there was a public input meeting at the Prichard City Hall, with an introduction from the City of Prichard Mayor, Jimmie Gardner. Despite the weather, we had a pretty good turnout. Several comments were made pertaining to the study, and we gained some good input. The next meeting will be a stakeholder meeting on August 30th. Please stay tuned for details.

June 28th was the first public meeting for the US 45 Feasibility Study, and was held at Leflore High School. The meeting was well attended by nearly 70 people. Mobile City Councilman Levon Manzie was on hand to guide the meeting and answer questions. Nick Amberger, the City of Mobile Engineer was also present and assisted in answering questions posed by the public. Mr. Drew Davis with Volkert and Mr. Clifton Lambert with CERM presented the attendees with preliminary ideas developed in previous Advisory Committee meetings. These included road diets, sidewalk improvements, bike lanes, and roundabouts at key intersections. The presentation, maps from the meeting, and comment form are available on our website [HERE](#).

FREIGHT

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission will be housing a South Alabama Freight Forum (SAFF). This forum will meet probably twice a year, and talk about freight issues in terms of our surface infrastructure. We want to know what the problems are, and develop solutions. This will also be an opportunity to inform the freight community about various surface infrastructure projects like Water Street, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, etc.; we will keep you posted. The SAFF will take place on August 20th, and is invite only in order to minimize the number of participants. The Alabama Transportation Institute ([ATI](#)) of the University of Alabama will have a program housed in the GulfQuest in the upcoming year. ATI will be at the SAFF as an introduction to Mobile. The SAFF is limited for space and requires an RSVP.

As most of you know, the Mobile MPO has been trying to update its freight plan as an element to the Long Range Transportation Plan. We purchased data from INRIX to give a snap shot of where trucks are coming from and going to. In the travel demand modeling world, this is an important piece of information. To help validate the truck data, we are working with APM Terminals to try and nail down where the container trucks are coming from and going to. One day a quarter, APM Terminal will have on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from, where is their return trip, if they came in from outside of Mobile County, which direction did they come from, etc; the data is exciting and interesting. Below is a flow map from the survey data in terms of container trucks going to the container terminal at Choctaw Point. Click the link for the survey results:

<http://www.mobilempo.org/freightplanning.html>

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](#)

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE

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The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area [Destination 2040](#). The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

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

2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#)

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

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100052812 (CN)
Federal aid number : NHF 0042 (517)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : CONSTRUCT BRIDGE ON GLENWOOD ROAD OVER SR-42 (US-98)
Old Target start date : January 25, 2019
New Target start date : June 28, 2019

Project : 100062410 (RW)
Federal aid number : DPI I010
County : MOBILE
Project Description : I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE AND I-10 BAYWAY WIDENING FROM EXIT 24 (BROAD STREET) TO MOBILE COUNTY LINE
Old Delete Indicator :
New Delete Indicator : D

Projects in Region Let August 31st, 2018

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Resurfacing, Driveway, and Parking Lots with ADA Curb Ramps at the MOWA Visitor Center. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$77,481 to \$94,699.
- For constructing the Relocation of Movable Barriers and Gate Arms on SR-188 at the J.A. Wintzell Memorial Bridge in Bayou La Batre. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,471,184 to \$1,798,114 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Interchange Modifications (Diverging Diamond) on I-10/SR-181; Roadway Improvements (Widening, Bridge Rail Retrofit, and Traffic Stripe) on SR-181; and the Turn Lane Installation and Drainage Improvements (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Traffic Signals, and Lighting) on SR-16 (US-90). Length 0.908 mi.

The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$5,740,572 to \$7,016,254 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Senate gets to work in August — but many don't show up

BY [ALEXANDER BOLTON](#)

The Senate is working through the August recess. Sort of.

Senators didn't arrive in Washington for this week's work until late in the day Wednesday and held their last votes of the week at 1:45 p.m. Thursday, adjourning a few hours later.

Sen. [Dick Durbin](#) (Ill.), the second-ranking Democrat, skipped the week altogether, as did seven Republican senators — not counting Sen. [John McCain](#) (R-Ariz.), who is away from Washington indefinitely fighting brain cancer.

The poor attendance on the Republican side of the aisle did not sit well with Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) (R-Ky.), who has emphasized for weeks that the Senate would work through August to get its business done.

McConnell criticized his colleagues for skipping votes during a private meeting. Thursday, warning it would be difficult to set up votes next week if so many GOP colleagues continue to miss work.

With nine Senate GOP absences on Wednesday and eight on Thursday, Senate Democrats held a majority of the votes in the chamber this week.

"He's rightfully, I think, upset. I wasn't at lunch but I knew what he was going to say," said Sen. [John Thune](#) (S.D.), chairman of the Senate Republican Conference.

Two of the GOP senators who missed votes this week, Sens. [Mike Lee](#) (R-Utah) and [Thom Tillis](#) (R-N.C.), had signed a letter to McConnell in May urging him to cancel the August recess.

"We, and the American people, expect Congress to work tirelessly to restore American greatness," they wrote earlier this year.

But that was then — when the high average temperature in Washington is still in the 70s.

After months of non-stop work on repealing ObamaCare, passing tax reform, repealing Obama-era regulations and confirming 26 circuit court nominees, many senators are ready for a break from D.C.

This is especially true when the mercury is hovering around 90 degrees and the humidity is over 50 percent.

Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) warned that she would be "grumpy" about having to come back to Washington in August as she needs a long recess to visit as much of her massive state as possible.

"I'm going to be chairman of the cranky caucus," she said when asked about the possibility that cancelling August recess may become a new Senate precedent.

She said the travel requirement is much tougher for senators on the West Coast than those from other parts of the country.

But Murkowski, who has one of the longest commutes to the Senate, was at work on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Senate held only one hearing on Wednesday and several of the hearings scheduled for Thursday morning were sparsely attended.

The Senate Judiciary Committee never had more than seven members present at its business meeting Thursday morning, which meant it didn't have the quorum necessary to actually move business (which requires the presence of 9 members).

"I think we should have had more Republicans there," Sen. [Lindsey Graham](#) (R-S.C.), a member of the Judiciary panel, chuckled.

At the same time the Judiciary Committee was meeting, a hearing of the Environment and Public Works Committee was similarly empty.

When a reporter looked into the room about a half hour after it started, there were six lawmakers present and what looked to be about 15 empty seats.

Some senators, such as Sen. [Ben Cardin](#) (D-Md.), don't think the Senate will even be in session for the entire month, betting that it could be out the week before Labor Day.

This all has some senators wondering if the highly-anticipated cancelling of the August recess is more for show than substance.

“I think everyone knows we’re just marking time,” said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman [Bob Corker](#) (R-Tenn.), who estimated that only about seven or eight senators were at the hearing his panel held Thursday morning. “This is all for show.”

But Corker, who is retiring at the end of the year, insisted, “I’m very happy to be here” in August because he knows his time in power is limited.

“I only have so much time left. There are hearings that I want to have,” he said, noting the Foreign Relations panel will have a NATO-Russia hearing next week.

Democrats were quick to criticize the schedule.

“If we’re going to work, let’s work. It’s not sort of working, it’s not working,” said Sen. [Chris Murphy](#) (D-Conn.), who pointed out the abbreviated schedule. “It seems silly to drag folks back from the West Coast for two votes.

“Let’s come in on Monday and let’s vote until Friday,” he said.

“I’m not so sure the taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely to fly us back. I’m basically here for 24 hours and it took me 24 hours to get here,” said Sen. [Jon Tester](#) (D-Mont.).

Senate GOP leadership aides, however, vigorously disputed that it was a light week in the Senate.

They pointed to the confirmation of Marvin Quattlebaum, Jr., and Julius Ness Richardson to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and an agreement to begin debate on a bill funding the departments of Defense, Labor and Health and Human Services, which often waits until the end of the year.

“Two circuit court judges and an appropriations bill? That’s not a light week. Next week we’re doing the two biggest appropriations bills there are. That’s not a light week,” said Don Stewart, a spokesman for McConnell.

He also noted that legislation to combat opioid addiction and overdoses, to build water infrastructure and to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are on the agenda.

Stewart knocked down the rumor that the Senate will leave town again the week of Aug. 27.

“We’re not going anywhere. We’re going to be here for the rest of the time,” he said. “Some people thought we were going to be out next week. We’re not going to be out next week. We’re not going to be out the last week. We’re going to be here.”

Another senior GOP aide said rumors the Senate will be gone after next week are “the wishful thinking of some members.”

Shelby: Senate Works to Rebuild America's Military in Third Appropriations Minibus

Senate press release

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) today [delivered remarks](#) on the Senate floor regarding the consideration of H.R. 6157. This bill packages two Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations measures – [Department of Defense](#); and [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies](#) – which are the eighth and ninth funding bills to be processed by the full Senate this year. Both of the measures included in the appropriations package were passed by the full committee with near-unanimous support.

“The package before the Senate makes essential investments to accelerate the rebuilding of America’s military and provides our men and women in uniform with the largest pay increase they have seen in nearly a decade. Further, it supports increased funding to advance medical research and fight the opioid epidemic,” **said Chairman Shelby**. “I am proud to present this legislation to my colleagues and urge their strong support. With the continued cooperation of my colleagues, I am confident that we will continue to get our work done in a deliberate and timely manner.”

The Senate’s consideration of H.R. 6157 follows the recent passage of H.R. 5895, a minibus including three FY2019 appropriations bills that passed the Senate 86 – 5, and H.R. 6147, another minibus including four funding measures that passed the Senate with the overwhelming support of 92 – 6. All 12 of the Senate’s FY2019 appropriations measures were [passed out of the committee](#) by wide bipartisan margins and were approved by a cumulative committee vote of 363 – 9.

Chairman Shelby’s [full remarks](#), as prepared, are as follows:

“Today the Senate begins debate on an appropriations package that is absolutely essential to the strength and security of this nation.

“The package before the Senate marries the two largest fiscal year 2019 appropriations bills: Defense and Labor-HHS-Education. Each of these bills carries the near unanimous support of the Appropriations Committee.

“The Chairman of the Labor-HHS Subcommittee, Senator Blunt, and his Ranking Member, Senator Murray, worked together to produce a strong bipartisan bill that balances many competing priorities. I commend these senators for their hard work and thank them for their continued efforts.

“Soon, Senators Blunt and Murray will come to the floor to discuss the particulars of the Labor-HHS division of this package, so I’m not going to get into the details of that bill.

“But, as Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I want to provide my colleagues with an overview of the funding it contains for America’s military.

“Secretary Mattis – a decorated general who commands deep respect on both sides of the aisle – has warned that ‘failure to modernize our military risks leaving us with a force that could dominate the last war, but be irrelevant to tomorrow’s security.’

“We cannot allow that to happen. We must rebuild America’s military. We have to defend this nation.

“Mr. President, I am pleased to report that this bill takes a big step in that direction. This package contains \$607 billion in base defense funding. It also provides an additional \$67.9 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations.

“The fiscal year 2018 Defense Appropriations bill, enacted earlier this year, contained the largest increase in military spending in 15 years.

“The bill now before the Senate does even better by providing an additional \$16 billion above the fiscal year 2018 level. This funding sustains U.S. force structure and improves military readiness.

“It also provides critical resources for a wide range of priorities that are essential to maintaining our technological superiority in an increasingly complex and competitive national security environment.

“The bill includes substantial investments in the areas of basic research, hypersonics, directed energy, artificial intelligence, microelectronics, missile defense, cybersecurity, and our test and evaluation infrastructure – among many other priorities.

“Just as important, the package before the Senate provides our men and women in uniform with the largest pay increase they have seen in nearly a decade, and they certainly deserve it.

“As we debate this bill over the coming days, the sacrifices of these brave men and women should be top of mind for each of us. In light of their sacrifices, it is our duty to ensure they are the best prepared and the best equipped military in the world.

“The American military is the most feared fighting force the world has ever known. This bill ensures that continues to be true. That is how we defend this nation.

“I want to thank the Vice Chairman of the Defense Subcommittee, Senator Durbin, for his valuable input in crafting this bill.

“Together, I believe we have produced a balanced bill that meets the Pentagon’s objectives and includes the contributions of Senators from both sides of the aisle. I am proud to present this legislation to my colleagues and urge their strong support.

“In closing, I want to recognize the Vice Chairman of the full Appropriations Committee, Senator Leahy, and the Leaders on both sides, Senators McConnell and Schumer.

“At the outset of this appropriations cycle, the four of us met and agreed to work together in an effort to return the Senate to regular order.

“Since that time, the Appropriations Committee passed all 12 bills before the July 4th recess, all with strong bipartisan margins. The first time that’s been done in 30 years.

“The first minibus contained three bills and passed the Senate by a vote of 86 – 5. It is now in conference with the House.

“The second minibus contained four bills, two of which had not seen the light of day on the Senate floor in many years – Interior and FSGG. That package passed by a vote of 92 – 6. Hopefully it will soon be in conference as well.

“By August, the Senate had passed more appropriations bills than the House. That had not happened in 20 years.

“None of this would have been possible without the partnership of Vice Chairman Leahy and the leadership of Senators McConnell and Schumer. I thank each of them once again.

“But our work continues. We now have an opportunity to extend the success we have generated. It has been more than a decade since the Senate passed a Labor-HHS appropriations bill. And it has been a dozen years since the President was able to sign a Defense appropriations bill into law before the end of the fiscal year. These two records must be broken.

“We must not only provide the resources necessary to rebuild our military, we must do so before the end of the fiscal year. There is no time to waste when it comes to our national security.

“With the continued cooperation of my colleagues, I am confident that we will continue to get our work done in a deliberate and timely manner.

“Thank you; I yield the floor.”

Funding Opportunities

Applications for FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area *deadline September 12, 2018*

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is responsible for the management and administration of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urban Area Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Transportation program in the Mobile Urbanized Area. The goal of the 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. The FTA 5310 Program provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

This program provides grant funds for capital, mobility management, and operating expenses for:

- Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;
- Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and
- Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities and with transportation.

Eligible Recipients for the Mobile Urban Area 5310 funds include:

- Private non-profit agencies providing transportation services that meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Local governmental agencies approved by the state to coordinate service for the seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Governmental authorities certifying that no non-profit organizations are readily available in an area to provide the service.

SARPC will accept grant applications until September 12, 2018 at noon for Fiscal Year 2019 Mobile Urban Area 5310 funds. Please read the guidelines and application before attempting to complete it. The guidelines and application can be found online at <http://mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Technical assistance is available on an as needed basis. If you have questions or to request technical assistance, please contact Monica Williamson at (251)706-4613 or email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

[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](#)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements

On July 19, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program that includes more than **\$318 million in grant funding** from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. **Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT, September 17, 2018.** To view the NOFO, visit <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1120>. FRA plans to provide web-based training and technical assistance to applicants to address questions – see CRISI webinar info section below.

- The CRISI grant program directs much needed critical investment to rural America. By directing at least 25 percent of available funds towards rural communities, the USDOT/FRA is able to safely connect and upgrade rural America's rail infrastructure.
- In addition, selection preference will be given to projects with a 50-percent non-federal funding match from any combination of private, state, or local funds. USDOT/FRA will also consider how well the project aligns with key USDOT/FRA objectives including supporting economic vitality; leveraging federal funding; preparing for life-cycle costs; using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and holding grant recipients accountable for achieving specific, measurable outcomes.

CRISI Webinar Info

The FRA will host webinars on **August 8, 2018**, to aid eligible entities seeking funding. Those interested in participating can **register** at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1117> , and FRA encourages participants to submit questions in advance.

FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation.

The FHWA continues the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP) under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The AID Demonstration provides incentive funding for any project activities eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C. in any phase of a highway transportation project between project planning and project delivery including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction that address the TIDP goals. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published on September 1, 2016 (<https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-21063>) requests grant applications and provides selection criteria, application requirements, and technical assistance with Grants.gov during the grant solicitation period.

Link to Additional Information: [FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Grants page](#)

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#)

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

Just For Fun

Happy Palindrome week

^lpalən_ldrōm/

noun

a word, phrase, or sequence that reads the same backward as forward, e.g., *madam* or *nurses run*.



Some simple palindromes are WOW, and BOB, but it gets fun to read palindrome sentences, like:

- Was it a bar or a bat I saw?
- Live on, Time; emit no evil
- God, a red nugget! A fat egg under a dog!

JUST FOR FUN, HOW ABOUT SOME TRANSPORTATION RELATED PALINDROMES:

- He won a Toyota now, eh?
- A man, a plan, a canal – Panama
- Never a foot too far, even.
- Tracy, no panic in a pony-cart.
- Too far, Edna, wander afoot.
- Degas, are we not drawn onward, we freer few, drawn onward to new eras aged?
- Yes, Syd, Owen saved Eva's new Odyssey
- Live dirt up a sidetrack carted is a putrid evil
- Pull up, Eva, we're here, WAVE, pull up.
- Won race, so loth to lose car now.

For a good laugh, check [these palindromes](#) out

In the News

Alabama port looks to add to its \$22.4 billion economic impact with expansions

BY [ALABAMA NEWSCENTER](#) ON AUGUST 11, 2018

The [Alabama State Port Authority](#) is one of the largest economic engines for the state and wants to build on its \$22.4 billion economic impact. The 4,000 acres that make up the state docks have multiple complexes that handle everything from auto parts to coal and from poultry to pine.

But the port could be doing more, according to [Jimmy Lyons](#), director and CEO of the Port Authority.

[Alabama port moving forward with growth plans](#) from [Alabama NewsCenter](#) on [Vimeo](#).

“We’ve got a couple of exciting projects going on right now,” Lyons said. “We’re in the midst of doing a second expansion to our container terminal, actually our third phase. We finished phase two last year and realized that’s not enough, so we’re going to phase three right away. We’re on schedule to have that work all completed by the end of ‘19.”

The start of 2019 should see construction begin on a new [\\$60 million automobile roll-on, roll-off terminal](#), a major move to support automotive logistics in a state where automotive manufacturing is a major industry.

Another major event will take place Aug. 14 when [Walmart officially opens its \\$135 million import distribution center](#) in Mobile. In addition to creating 550 full-time jobs, that 2.5 million-square-foot facility will generate something the port desperately needs: empty shipping containers.

Lyons told the [Economic Development Association of Alabama](#) at its 2018 Summer Conference this week that the state struggles to find enough shipping containers to meet the demand. With Walmart bringing in 50,000 containers per year when fully operational, that will help

provide more empty cargo containers for exporters. That will reduce costs for exporters who pay to bring in empty containers; it will also help Alabama's port retain business that now goes to other ports when containers aren't available, Lyons said.



The [Army Corps of Engineers is seeking comments now on a \\$388 million plan to enlarge the port's Mobile Ship Channel](#). A deeper and wider channel will clear the way for the port to accommodate larger ships that are already starting to come through the expanded Panama Canal, Lyons said. A deeper channel also allows ships to carry more weight, making the port more efficient for importers and exporters, he said.

According to an economic impact study from the University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research, the port is responsible for 134,608 direct and indirect jobs in the state with a direct and indirect tax impact of \$486.9 million. In 2017, the port handled 28.7 million tons of goods and 318,889 shipping containers.



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LimeBikes Hit the Streets

By Carol Hunter

Alabama's largest bike share program is now officially active in Downtown Mobile and the University of South Alabama. If you've walked around the city center at all in the past couple of days, you've no doubt noticed the bright green bikes positioned throughout the neighborhood.

Lime is an app-based system that allows users to rent the nearest bike and then leave it at their destination. No need to find a special docking station, but you will need to make sure the bikes are locked and parked in a proper spot. Bikes should never be left in the roadway, or parked in such a way that they create obstacles for pedestrians. When parked alongside any of the existing fixtures in the sidewalk (garbage cans, street lamps, balcony supports, etc.) the bikes are out of the way and easily accessible for the next rider. If you happen to see one creating a

problem, you could be that good citizen who simply moves it a few feet out of the way, or call the phone number on the bike and report the issue.

And please remember, downtown is a great place to ride a bike, but you'll need to follow the rules of the road. Stop at red lights and stop signs, let drivers behind you know when you're turning. **And above all, ride with the traffic, especially on one way streets!** It's really dangerous to do otherwise.

Rauf Bolden: Solving the traffic problem in Orange Beach

Roads are the lifeblood of a community, moving prosperity, maintaining economic flow. The ones in Orange Beach do not perform well, especially during the peak-tourist season. We must find a better way to move traffic or we must reduce development, because the countdown is ticking for a summertime solution.

When government pours money into local economies jobs are created, according to a stimulus theory espoused by **John Maynard Keynes**. In Orange Beach development has outpaced infrastructure, requiring government to come in. They are investing millions-of-dollars in the local economy, re-balancing the development-to-infrastructure equation, spurring economic growth, and alleviating congestion on our roads.

Visitors do not care if it's the State's road, it passes through our town and City Council must answer for what is perceived to be poor planning on the part of elected officials. In recent memory, traffic complaints were innumerable, prompting Mayor **Tony Kennon** to put the Governor's telephone number on the electronic sign in front of City Hall, telling people to call Montgomery.

"All I know is we need a road through the State Park," said Mayor Kennon in an interview with **John Mullen** of the Lagniappe, putting commerce ahead of environmental impact, supporting development of the natural resource the State Park was created to protect.

The Gulf Restoration Project lawsuit settlement (\$53 Million) prohibits building a road across the State Park for the next 20 years, according to the Lagniappe. Mayor Kennon is frustrated that officials from Orange Beach were not consulted prior to the settlement, acknowledging the settlement virtually erased any chance to build a direct route from the Beach Express to the Beach Road for a generation.

"That was part of the settlement that was able to get the lawsuit settled and us moving forward," said **Chris Blankenship**, Commissioner of [Alabama's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#)' (DCNR).

We must plan an alternative route, going east from the Beach Express, skirting around the State Park. The city disavows any responsibility for traffic problems on State roads, saying it is not a local issue but one for the State of Alabama, arguing the revenue sent by the beach community is supporting their General Fund, implying the State should repatriate dollars to solve the beach's traffic problem.

At some point the beach community will own up to the fact that locally-approved developments fueled this expansion, causing traffic congestion. Once partial guilt is accepted, solving the traffic issue becomes a partnership with the State, letting them provide input on developments with the city supply feedback on infrastructure. Both sides discussing additional-developer fees to pay for road improvements, understanding that fee increases for the developers are not going to go down well.

Funding is always a key issue in Orange Beach because we treasure our reserves. The new school being built on Canal Road is a good example of the thought process, getting someone else to pony-up \$14.7 million for our children's school was a stroke of negotiated genius, but now that everyone in the county has seen the jet-sweep, evaluating different strategic options is our only choice.

Sain Associates wrote Orange Beach's traffic counts. For a typical summer weekend we had 1796 cars per hour come down the Foley Beach Express, turning onto Canal Road (SR-180). On the Beach Road we had 2436 vehicles per hour down SR-182, according to documents on the city's old website. Obviously the major holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day generate more traffic, but you get the idea. Development has outgrown capacity, tarnishing Orange Beach's image.

For the best possible traffic flow, making all the arteries five lanes, matching the capacities on every passageway is the common-sense approach. Finding the funds to pay for it is easy, but whose funds will be tapped is another question.

Arguing strongly against a "free bridge" for Orange Beach, because it only benefits a few people in the State is espoused by a couple of political groups. "Ending the push for a \$30 million Government Bridge to the Gulf Coast and allowing a public-private partnership to solve that problem would be a great place to start. As such, there is no justification for shaking more money out of Alabama families and businesses. Alabama's transportation woes can be solved without a net tax increase, encouraging public-private partners rather than competing with them," said **Grover Norquist**, President of Americans for Tax Reform, a non-profit taxpayer advocacy group, and **Marty Connors**, Chairman of the Alabama Center Right Coalition.

Mayor Kennon told Fox10 News, "You can't stop the growth. It's coming whether you like it or not." Are the constituents comfortable, knowing their City Council has an insatiable appetite for big developments and the dollars they bring?

In the playbook, Orange Beach officials have eaten up a lot of clock with Town Halls, inviting Montgomery to show its hand, promising a bridge across Wolf Bay to County Road 20, promising a bridge to the west of the Beach Express, promising five lanes down Canal Road, giving residents hope that the traffic nightmare will soon be over.

Not so fast. Environmentalists, Americans for Tax Reform, and Alabama Center Right Coalition will certainly file separate actions in Federal Court, moving to impede the proposed bridges, stating various ideological reasons, possibly taking years to settle.

I suggest an unpopular approach, studying the consequences of local re-zoning, putting a moratorium on development until Council can determine what level of fees are right for infrastructure compensation, leveraging the developers' purse versus the City's ability to assess premium fees for ambitious projects. We must find a better way to move traffic or we must reduce development, because the countdown is ticking for a summertime solution

[96% of State Lawmakers Who Voted for a Gas Tax Increase Win Their 2018 Primaries](#)

by [Carolyn Kramer](#)

Ninety-six percent of state lawmakers who voted in favor of a gas tax increase and faced reelection in 2018 primaries will advance to the Nov. 6 general election, reinforcing earlier findings that showed the decision to vote for legislation to increase a state gas tax has little impact on re-election rates.

The 2018 primaries saw 802 legislators who voted on gas tax increase legislation from 12 states run for reelection. Of those lawmakers, 558 voted in favor of a gas tax increase and ran for reelection, with 536—or 96 percent—advancing on to November's general election.

The numbers include 97 percent of the 263 lawmakers who are Democrats and won their primary (one race still pending), and 96 percent of the 282 lawmakers who are Republican and won their primary (one race still pending).

Of the 222 legislators who voted against a gas tax increase and ran for reelection, 215—or 97 percent—will move on to November's general election. This includes 96 percent of 52 Democratic lawmakers (two races still pending) who won their primary, and 97 percent of 170 Republican lawmakers who are moving on.

An additional 22 lawmakers did not cast a vote on a gas tax increase measure and ran for reelection.

The results support [earlier findings](#) from ARTBA-TIAC that showed voting for a gas tax increase does not affect a lawmaker's chance of reelection. In the 16 states that increased their gas tax rates or equivalent measures between 2013 and 2016, nearly all (92 percent) of the 1,354 state legislators who voted for a gas tax increase and stood for reelection between 2013 and 2017 were sent back to the state house by voters. Of the 712 elected officials who voted against a gas tax increase, 93 percent were also given another term.

Walmart opens \$135 million distribution center in Alabama

BY [ALABAMA NEWSCENTER](#)

Walmart on Tuesday officially marked the opening of a [\\$135 million distribution center](#) in Mobile that will create 750 jobs and strengthen the retailer's supply chain network.

During a grand opening ceremony, Gov. [Kay Ivey](#) highlighted how the new facility will contribute to economic growth in the region while providing career opportunities for residents.

"Walmart proves to be a great corporate partner to the state of Alabama, year after year, by investing in its stores, its employees and the surrounding community," Ivey said. "Their commitment cannot be better proven than by the opening of this new distribution center, which, when fully operational, will provide approximately 750 quality jobs in the Mobile area.

"We are grateful to Walmart for supporting the economic health of the Port City, and for the large role they play in propelling our great state forward."

The new Walmart Import Distribution Center will bring a lot of business to the Alabama State Port Authority. [Photo Credit: Walmart]

'Warm welcome'

[The Arkansas-based retailer](#) announced plans for the 2.6 million-square-foot facility in March 2017. It will supply several regional distribution centers that support approximately 700 Walmart stores in Alabama, Mississippi and beyond.

"We are excited about how this facility will help us better serve our customers across the South and beyond, while creating a positive economic impact locally through job creation and future development," said Jeff Breazeale, Walmart vice president, direct import logistics.

“We are grateful to the State of Alabama, Mobile County, the City of Mobile, the [Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Alabama State Port Authority](#) for the warm welcome we have received here, and we look forward to a strong partnership with the community for years to come.”

The Mobile facility employs 575 full-time workers, with plans calling for a total of 750 once it's fully operational. Pay for associates starts at \$16.50 an hour, while managers earn \$50,000 a year or more and are eligible for additional annual incentives.



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Infrastructure spending: Which state is falling apart the worst?

Samuel Stebbins, 24/7 Wall Street

In the Donald Trump era, the United States appears to be more politically divided than it has been in decades. Still, there are matters of public policy that most Americans can agree on -- chief among them is investment in infrastructure. According to a recent non-partisan Gallup poll, three out of four Americans support the president's plan of spending more federal money on infrastructure.

The president proposed a \$1 trillion plan to improve aging roads, bridges, and tunnels across the country. While funding the project has proven to be a political challenge, broad public support for the plan is rooted in necessity.

About seven out of every 100 miles of roadway nationwide are in poor condition; 9 percent of bridges nationwide are structurally deficient, meaning that they are in need of some repair; and 17 percent of dams in the country have a high hazard potential -- meaning a functional failure would result in the loss of life.

For many, the notion of crumbling infrastructure conjures images of a bridge collapsing during rush hour, or a speeding passenger train hurtling off a faulty track. While such tragedies occur on occasion, they are relatively rare. Most people are affected by aging infrastructure on a daily basis in a number of more subtle ways including traffic congestion, public transportation delays, and vehicle damage.

Kristina Swallow, 2018 president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, explained the extent to which poor infrastructure affects our lives. “It’s hurting our economy, it’s hurting our communities' ability to grow, it’s hurting our quality of life, and in some cases, there are public safety concerns,” Swallow said. “Our infrastructure is not meeting our needs.”

24/7 Wall Street created an index using the share of bridges, roads, and dams that are in a state of disrepair or potentially hazardous, to identify the states with the best and worst infrastructure. States with a higher ranking are the worst on infrastructure. Click [HERE](#) to see where Alabama ranks.

Transportation Research

Analysis of Congestion Scenarios in Long Range Plans Using Travel Forecasting Models

A recent FHWA report describes the process of developing, analyzing, and displaying results of a scenario forecasting process using travel demand models. It strives to inform MPOs and state DOTs on scenario building methods using the Travel Time Index (TTI) and regional long-range planning models, and includes a step-by-step section to produce calculations using a trip-based model and explores the question of “what would it take to not let congestion get worse?” [HERE](#)

[Updated Report Tracks 209 Transportation Funding Bills in 39 States](#)

by Carolyn Kramer

One-time funding measures, primarily bonds or general fund transfers, are the most popular type of state transportation investment legislation introduced since the start of 2018, according to the Transportation Investment Advocacy Center's™ (TIAC) latest tracking report.

Twenty measures to increase transportation infrastructure funding have been approved in 15 states, among a total of 209 bills considered in 39 statehouses tracked by TIAC.

Other popular funding mechanisms introduced this year include:

- Allowing local transportation funding, 41 bills in 14 states.
 - Providing non-fuel tax recurring revenue, including tolls, vehicle registration fees, and sales taxes, 36 bills in 17 states. Five bills in Kansas, Utah, Oregon and Connecticut were approved.
 - Increasing state motor fuel taxes, 25 bills in 11 states. Only one state- Oklahoma- approved a measure to increase the state gas tax. Oklahoma's 5 cents-per-gallon increase goes to the Roads Fund, which frees up General Fund revenue to be used for education purposes.
 - Establishing a study or task force to investigate the state's current transportation funding system and make suggestions for improvements to create more sustainable revenue sources, 18 bills in 13 states.
 - Altering electric and hybrid vehicle fees, 13 bills in nine states.
- While many state legislatures have adjourned for the year, 12 are still in session, and several— including Maine and Mississippi— are considering special sessions to address unfinished transportation funding proposals. Ballot measures are also pending in Missouri, Colorado, Connecticut, California, and Virginia.

[Read](#) the report to see more details about what is happening in each statehouse.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO): Transportation Partnerships for the 21st Century

This work will deliver a historical review and contemporary analysis of the institutional structures and performance of MPOs, producing conclusions and lessons learned that are relevant to current challenges. This research will address ways in which MPOs can respond more nimbly and effectively to rapidly changing transportation demands, conditions, and technologies. It will provide a range of strategies and tools drawn from cases and practice in order to better equip MPOs and MPO-state partnerships in planning, maintaining, and improving transportation systems for U.S. metropolitan areas and the economies reliant on those systems.

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Strategic Transit Automation Research Plan

FTA has published its final [Strategic Research Transit Automation \(STAR\) Plan](#). The STAR Plan outlines an FTA research agenda for transit bus automation over five years and provides a framework for the transit industry to pursue transit bus automation. Additionally, it defines activities in the areas of enabling research, integrated demonstrations, and strategic partnerships. The plan focuses on stakeholder engagement, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance to ensure that complementary work being done by the public sector, private sector, and academia is effectively communicated and leveraged.

[Identification of High Pedestrian Crash Locations](#)

This FHWA guidebook presents a process to help state and local agencies identify high pedestrian crash locations and includes a literature review, case studies, and other research needed to develop a five-step process.

New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

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- Simple to Use
- Download from Apple Store or Google Play
- Collect information at your pace
- Gathers ADA Compliance inventory and condition information
- Location is automatically collected in GIS

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.