



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, April 20th, 2018

Volume 26, Number 3

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There will be a Mobile MPO meeting on May 23rd, TCC/CAC ON May 9th and BPAC will be May 2nd; please mark your calendars. Both the State and the Mobile Urban Area TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) are due May 1, 2018. The I-10 Mobile River Bridge Project is moving forward – see *Mobile MPO Updates*. The Mobile MPO web page has been updated: Check it out! <http://mobilempo.org/>. This week's *Just For Fun* is really far out....

Have a great weekend!

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

Please see Funding Opportunities below for the Mobile Urbanized Area TAP Funding announcement

MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

The Mobile MPO will meet on May 23rd, and the TCC/CAC Advisory Committee will meet on May 9th, and the BPAC for the Mobile MPO will meet on May 2nd. Also, the Mobile MPO web site has had a makeover. Please let us know what you think <http://mobilempo.org/>

There are several items on the agenda. The Long Range Transportation Plan needs to be modified to accurately portray the I-10 Mobile River Bridge in terms of a considered toll, environmental justice considerations, and the bicycle/pedestrian component. Also, we will be discussing a draft 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and there are some revisions to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). We will be continuing our discussion of performance measures, and we must adopt a resolution supporting a Transit Asset Management Performance Measure for the WAVE Transit. Finally, the Southern Rail Commission will be present (5/23/18) to briefly bring the MPO up to date on the status of the initiative to return passenger rail to the Gulf Coast.

NEW SARPC Transportation Video



[HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

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

US 45 Feasibility Study

This past Tuesday there was a kick off Advisory Committee meeting held at the GM&O Building. The project consultants Volkert and CERM gave a short presentation on the goals of the project. There was a discussion about project expectations by the Advisory Committee members. If you are interested in serving on the Advisory Committee, please contact Kevin Harrison.

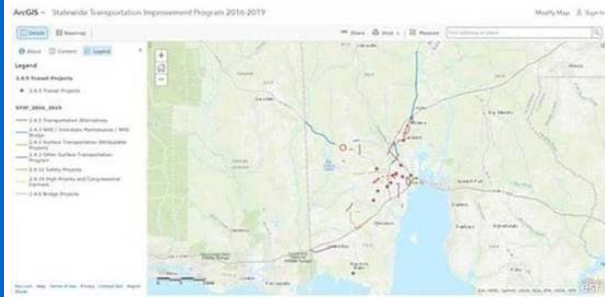
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE

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](#)



Mobile MPO 101

Here are a couple of great videos that were produced by our counterpart in Birmingham (Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham). The videos are a summary of the MPO planning process and are below:



Funding a Project with an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210829210>



Inside an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210825997>

[HERE](#) are the slides and presentations of the Mobile MPO 101 training.

Stay UP To Date on the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project: <http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

This critically important, high-priority transportation project will involve constructing a new six-lane bridge across the Mobile River to increase Interstate 10's capacity and replace the existing four-lane Bayway with an eight-lane facility at an elevation above the 100 year storm surge event to reduce traffic headaches for thousands of commuters each day by saving motorists time.

The Wallace Tunnel currently averages 75,000 vehicles per day, reaching up to 100,000 vehicles during the peak tourism season. With almost double the daily traffic originally anticipated for the crossing, heavy congestions and longer travel times impact motorists, businesses, and the quality of life in the region. ALDOT expects this project to:

- **Reduce travel time between Mobile and Spanish Fort/Daphne.**
- **Increase reliability in travel times and accessibility to jobs, educational facilities, medical services, and recreational activities.**
- **Facilitate access to/from major industries and freight destinations in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and provide hazardous material vehicles a direct route away from the downtown district.**
- **Take all efforts to preserve and protect the Mobile Bay so that generations to come can enjoy the view and natural beauty from the bridge.**

Hyperlinks within the advisory:

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project: <http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally and economically sound transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit www.dot.state.al.us.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100066180 (FM)

Federal aid number : STPAA 0163 (503)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-163 FROM NORTH I-10 BRIDGE ABUTMENT TO SR-16 (US-90) AND ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD CROSSING

Old Target start date : May 25, 2018

New Target start date : June 29, 2018

Project : 100057688 (CN)

Federal aid number : HSIP I065 (488)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : INSTALL INTERSTATE MEDIAN CABLE BARRIER ON I-65 FROM MP 13.0 (SR-158) TO MP 16.9 (NORTH OF CR-41) IN MOBILE COUNTY

Old Engineers Estimate : \$528,070.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$490,980.39

Region Let April 27th, 2018

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Sidewalk, Curb & Gutter Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) at the Illinois Central Railroad Crossing (MP 31.246) west of the I-165 Interchange to MP 34.207. Length 2.840 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,665,560 to \$2,035,684.
- For constructing the Bridge Deck Replacement (Partial) on Airport Boulevard over I-65 in Mobile. Length 0.052 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,350,712 to \$2,873,092.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-13 (US-43) from the Cedar Creek Bridge south of Mt Vernon to the Washington County Line. Length 5.607 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,785,404 to \$2,182,160.

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Median Barrier Protection (Cable Guiderail Installation) on I-10 from the SR-181 Interchange in Daphne to the Perdido River Bridge and on I-65 from MP 75.500 to MP 105.500. Length 55.994 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,360,529 to \$2,885,091.
- For the Maintenance Dredging of Little Lagoon Pass in Gulf Shores as indicated in the plans. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,078,113 to \$1,317,693.

What's Under Construction?

Project Status

Legislative Updates

At Long Last, Congress and the President Fund FY 2018

After months of wrangling, five continuing resolutions, two short-term government shutdowns, and much argument over what funding levels and policy riders should make the final cut, Congress voted and the president signed an omnibus appropriations bill that will keep the federal government funded through the end of the current fiscal year on September 30, 2018.

The \$1.3 billion appropriation represents a significant success for our members! Many of NARC's 2018 legislative and funding priorities received substantially more funding than the president requested and more than was appropriated in fiscal year 2017. Areas that saw significant funding increases include:

- Transportation and infrastructure, including TIGER Grants, AMTRAK funding, and autonomous vehicles;
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
- *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) state workforce formula grants;
- Economic Development Administration (EDA);
- Census Bureau;
- Opioid crisis relief, including funding for prevention, treatment, and law enforcement;
- Rural water and broadband programs;

Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds;

- Aging programs;
- Low Income and Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program and other housing assistance programs; and
- Homelessness assistance.

Several policy riders and authorizations were also adopted as part of the omnibus, including:

- Reauthorization of the EPA Brownfields Program, including NARC supported language;
- Reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration is now extended through September; and
- Short-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is extended through the end of July.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Senior Senate Appropriator Collins Sounds Alarm on Highway Trust Fund

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who chairs the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees transportation programs, warned that the Trump administration's approach to project investment "fails to address the greatest threat to our nation's infrastructure, which is the ever-growing insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund."

The senior appropriator continued with several criticisms of the administration's approach on various programs in her [opening statement at an April 11 hearing](#) on the Department of Transportation's budget. USDOT Secretary Elaine Chao appeared at the hearing to defend administration proposals.

Collins directed part of her criticism at the president's budget request, although she noted that the administration offered that budget before Congress agreed on a two-year increase in spending caps and then specifically added funding for transportation infrastructure in its fiscal 2018 omnibus spending bill.

However, she said, "I am also concerned that the administration has not offered up its own solution to the insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund . . . Rather than focusing on this issue, the administration is instead advocating a new set of grant programs" through its infrastructure investment proposal.

Collins said in the president's infrastructure plan "half of the overall funding would be devoted to the incentives grant program, which would slash the federal cost share of highway projects from the current 80 percent down to 20 percent, and require state and local governments to raise their own revenue to make up the shortfall. This formula would penalize low-income and rural states, in particular, but I find it difficult to conceive of many states or local governments that would choose to apply for federal funds that only provide a 20 percent cost share."

She added that "while I am pleased to see the rural set-aside in the infrastructure proposal, I want to reiterate that this cannot be a substitute for funding from the Highway Trust Fund. Without a fix to the Highway Trust Fund, my concern is that the administration's infrastructure proposal would simply lead to the abdication of the federal role in transportation and lead to devolution to the states. I do not believe that that is a feasible approach."

Chao said the president's budget request and infrastructure proposal "work together to provide bold new ideas for using our financial resources wisely, creatively and expanding our partnerships with state and local governments, and encouraging private-sector involvement where appropriate. These changes provide a path forward to improving our transportation infrastructure quickly without dramatic increases in federal spending that will stifle economic activity and job creation."

Collins went on to criticize administration proposals to reduce funding for the Essential Air Service program that subsidizes commercial air travel for many smaller airports in rural areas, and funding for Amtrak's long-distance routes.

And she said several committee members have expressed concerns with the administration's request to eliminate transit projects supported by federal capital grants "and are particularly concerned about how the administration will use funding provided by Congress" in the 2018 omnibus.

"Communities often wait years to receive approval for these projects after a rigorous evaluation process, and any delays will lead to cost increases for these projects, Collins said. "I know the secretary is deeply concerned about eliminating unnecessary delays and red tape for all infrastructure projects, and so I hope the department will move projects to completion more quickly going forward."

Chao, also noting that the administration put together its budget request in advance of the congressional budget agreements, observed that Congress in its omnibus spending bill added significant amounts of new funding for DOT programs. "The department is assessing the requirements in the act," she said, "and is identifying the steps needed to responsibly administer this funding and the new programs provided on a timely basis as dictated by the Congress."

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the subcommittee's ranking member, chided the department for moving too slowly to push out funds Congress has appropriated, particularly for transit projects.

"It is somewhat discouraging to see how slowly the administration is moving to deploy funding provided in previous years," Reed said. "For months and in some cases for more than a year the administration has been sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars that could have been put to work on infrastructure and safety projects around the country. For all of its talk about project streamlining, the administration needs to streamline its own process and quickly deploy these dollars."

Chao told Reed that "we've worked very hard" at getting the transit grants out. She noted that during the administration's first year "we did have problems in getting leadership" installed at the USDOT, and that a new administration will want to make sure that its "goals and objectives are incorporated" in programs.

But she said that "we understand the will of Congress," and "I think we've done actually pretty well" on approving funds – "better than I think you've told us."

USDOT's Chao Joins President, Other Cabinet Chiefs in Memo to Speed Project Permitting

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao joined President Trump and a group of other Cabinet officers at the White House April 9 in

signing a formal "memorandum of understanding" committing their departments to follow the president's "one federal decision" framework on environmental reviews and permits for major infrastructure projects.

The event was the latest effort by the Trump administration to try to maintain momentum on infrastructure issues, and to promote a goal of sharply speeding up the permitting process.

Under the framework, one lead federal agency will have overall responsibility for shepherding each major infrastructure project through the federal process. That agency will set the permitting timetable and other agencies will follow that schedule "with a goal of completing the process within two years," [the White House said](#).

Chao said the Department of Transportation has already been following the plan.

"The department has been vigorously implementing the president's 'one federal decision' policy since last August to reduce costs and unnecessary burdens that have long delayed infrastructure projects," she said in a press release. "It is essential for all federal resource agencies to work together to cut red tape and deliver infrastructure and safety improvements more rapidly and spurring economic growth."

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., who chairs the Environment and Public Works Committee that oversees highway program legislation, [praised the administration policy in a statement](#). "Roads, bridges, dams and water systems that take months to build shouldn't take a decade to permit," he said. "This is a commonsense idea that will help get projects done faster, better, cheaper and smarter."

In the House, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Pa., said: "[Time is money](#). Reviewing and approving infrastructure projects in the most efficient way possible is critical to our nation's efforts in building a 21st century infrastructure and keeping project costs from escalating. I am pleased that the Administration is exercising the authority provided by Congress to streamline the review process for infrastructure projects."

Funding Opportunities

Transit Planning Funding

CTAA announces the availability of funding for inclusive planning projects ([deadline May 4th, 2018](#))

The Community Transportation Association along with its partners the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Institute for Community Inclusion of the University of Massachusetts-Boston is pleased to announce the availability of a new round of funding for local inclusive planning projects. CTAA, with financial support from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, and in collaboration with other federal and national partners, is making available grants of up to \$35,000 each for up to 20 organizations for a six-month period. The new projects are expected to adopt inclusive strategies that fit their communities and build upon learning from previous projects. It is anticipated that the experience from these grants will add to the knowledge garnered from previous project and help to build recognition and support for inclusive planning across the U.S.

[To learn more about the grants and to apply, download the grant application package here.](#) (PDF)

The mission of this project, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) in collaboration with the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, is to demonstrate the value that inclusive processes can bring to coordinated transportation efforts.

We are developing, testing, and demonstrating ways to empower people with disabilities and older adults to be actively involved in designing and implementing coordinated transportation systems. The project's goal is to support communities nationwide in adopting proven, sustainable, scalable, and replicable models that include participation of people with disabilities and older adults in the design and implementation of coordinated transportation systems that are responsive to their needs. To date, the project has funded [25 demonstration programs](#) and compiled a wealth of information and resources on the inclusive planning process.

For questions about the project, contact project director Charles Dickson at dickson@ctaa.org.

[ACL Inclusive Planning Project Round Four Grantees: Case Studies](#)

Our eight 2016-17 projects across the country demonstrated different approaches to inclusive planning. [Read here about each project's approach, lessons learned, and accomplishments.](#)

Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Funding Availability Announcement

(deadline May 1st, 2018)

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcome to submit more than one project.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

This year applications will only be accepted electronically. Applicants should email their complete application to transportation@sarpc.org.

Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 1, 2018.

Electronic versions of the applications are available online at:

<https://mobilempo.org/TransportationAlternatives.html>.

Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

If you have any questions please call the SARPC Transportation Planning Department at (251) 433 6541.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2019. (Deadline May 1st, 2018)

There are several changes to the State's TAP application and instructions this year. Application information packets were mailed out to city and county agencies this week.

The deadline for submission of FY 2018 TAP applications including support documentation is Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Please contact Tina Milton at (334) 353-6441 (miltont@dot.state.al.us) if you have questions regarding this matter.

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant programs

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (FY 2017)

CRISI program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT, June 21, 2018*.

More information on FRA's CRISI website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1079>

Overview: This program will fund projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of passenger and freight rail. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11301 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24407. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$65,232,400

Restoration and Enhancement Grants Program (FY 2017)

REG program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT May 22, 2018*.

More information on FRA's REG website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1081>

Overview: This program will fund operating assistance grants for initiating, restoring, or enhancing intercity rail passenger transportation. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11303 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. No. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24408. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$4,796,500

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](#).

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 click [HERE](#) or type www.grants.gov in your browser.

Just For Fun

Just what exactly is an Elon Musk and is there really a Tesla Roadster hurtling through outer space?

Elon Musk isn't a what, he's a who. [Here's](#) a short video that will give you some insight into the man that is leading the way in transportation and space exploration.



And yes there is a Tesla Roadster in outer space. It's called Starman and it's currently hurtling away from Earth at 13,523 m/h. Here's a [VIDEO](#) of its launch. You can track Starman's current location [HERE](#).

In addition to space exploration Musk is working on very high speed passenger pod trains. Check this out [HERE](#).

In the News

Mobile River Bridge work moves forward

MOBILE, AL (WALA) –



The Alabama Department of Transportation wants drivers to be aware of more work happening to prepare for construction of a new bridge over the Mobile River.

Traffic is not expected to be impacted, but ALDOT wants to prevent rubber-necking and wants drivers to obey speed limits on the Bayway and the Causeway.

Right now, there are barges in the water along the Bayway. They have been there for a few weeks doing some pile driving. They work should continue throughout the week along the north side of the bridge near the Wallace Tunnel.

Spokesperson Allison Gregg said, "So what the crews are out there doing right now is they are doing some preliminary testing work. They are driving the piles and collecting the data to see what kind of construction methods we are going to be using once we move into construction. We have done pile driving at three different sites and this is the third and final site. The data we are collecting will be gathered and given to the proposing teams and they will be able to use that data to help them develop their plan for the project and help us save money and reduce risk in the long run."

Continue [HERE](#)

Coastal Alabama officials want transportation future planned in Alabama, not Florida

By John Sharp

Each summer, tourists flock to coastal Alabama and clog the roads leading to the sugar-white sands and towering condominiums of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

And each summer, as the bumper-to-bumper jams stretch longer and longer, city and county officials plead for federal or state help to

build more roads.

"All of south Baldwin County is growing, certainly from Spanish Fort south, it has grown dramatically," said Mike Thompson, city administrator in Foley.

In Alabama, there are 11 so-called "urbanized areas" which have been designated as metropolitan planning organizations. The areas allow public officials ability to apply for grants and secure federal tax money to assist in expensive road construction projects.

But coastal Alabama is noticeably absent from the list because it has lacked population counts in previous decades. Now, local leaders are angling to change that and are eyeing the 2020 Census count as their key tool.

Leaders in all three south Baldwin cities - Foley, Orange Beach and Gulf Shores - want to see a new coastal planning organization created following the 2020 Census. A group of elected leaders recently met with U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, to discuss their request.

Only one of the three cities lies within an existing road-planning entity: Orange Beach, along with portions of unincorporated Lillian. [That slice of coastal Alabama](#) is part of the West-Florida Transportation Planning Organization, an arm of the [West Florida Regional Planning Commission](#) that's dominated by public officials from the Pensacola area.

"I don't even know why we are in the Pensacola group," said Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon.

Said Foley Mayor John Koniar: "It's kind of squirrely."

Florida dominance

Orange Beach was added into the Florida-based TPO, with approval from transportation leaders in both states, in 2012.

Gulf Shores wasn't added because it's population core isn't contiguous with Orange Beach, according to Gary Kramer, a planner with the Florida-Alabama TPO. Although the two Alabama beach cities are neighbors, they're separated by the 6,500-acre Gulf State Park.

Baldwin County and Orange Beach are each allowed to have voting members on the TPO, which meets regularly.

A recent meeting in Milton, Florida - a more than one-hour drive from Orange Beach - illustrated why coastal Alabama is pushing for its own transportation planning group.

During the TPO's Milton meeting, [members heard stirring testimony from homeowners on Canal Road in Orange Beach who oppose the construction of an \\$89 million state-funded bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway](#). The TPO was slated to endorse the bridge in its long-range transportation plan.

But Alabama's only two TPO representatives - Orange Beach City Councilman Jerry Johnson and Baldwin County Commissioner Charles "Skip" Gruber - were absent. Others present were all from Florida, and they expressed reluctance to vote on an hotly disputed project on the other side of the state line.

The matter will come back before the TPO in June.

"That was the right thing to do," said Johnson, who said he was absent from the meeting because he was speaking before a Realtor's group in Robertsdale. "I will be there in June, and we will get it added to the long-range transportation plan."

Johnson said the bridge's addition into the plan is "a procedural thing" and that no federal money is expected to be added. He said the project is entirely financed by the Alabama Department of Transportation, though it's also the [subject of a heated condemnation case between the state and the operators of a nearby toll bridge](#).

"I've been on the TPO board for three to four years and 98 percent of the time, I'm voting on Escambia County or Santa Rosa County or Gulf Breeze projects," said Johnson, referring to the Florida areas that dominate the group. Seventeen of the 19 voting members on the group are from Florida.

"In Orange Beach, we have a bridge project in the long-range transportation plan and we have some sidewalk projects, street lighting," said Johnson. "We have a few projects in there."

'Good for area'

To qualify as an urbanized area, [the Alabama coastal region must have a population of over 50,000 in a generally adjoining area](#). In 2010, the population fell short of the standard.

Since then, population growth is surging. Foley and Gulf Shores have each experienced a 20 percent jump in population, while Orange Beach has grown by 10 percent.

According to 2016 Census figures, the three cities have a combined population of 35,277, but that's before adding in the surrounding communities and outlying suburban tracts.

In the meantime, the area has seen annual record tourism since the 2010 BP oil spill, packing the roads from central Baldwin to points south on warm weather weekends.

Both Gulf Shores and Orange Beach agreed last year to increase their lodging taxes to help pay for road projects. Orange Beach officials plan to dedicate their revenues for a new Wolf Bay Bridge, which has been described as an "economic development" project connecting the city near Doc's Seafood with an undeveloped area called Sapling Point.

The Alabama Department of Transportation's controversial bridge, meanwhile, would be located about two miles west of the toll bridge next to The Wharf.

Thompson, with Foley, said having the entire coastal Alabama area under the same transportation planning umbrella will help in communications for future projects such as the ALDOT bridge.

"That project, for example, is entirely outside the city of Foley but it affects Foley," said Thompson. "We haven't been privy to the discussions between ALDOT and local legislative leadership on where that project's footprint is located. So we'd have a better understanding of projects Orange Beach and Gulf Shores are working on and they'd have a better understanding of the projects we are working on."

He added, "With a TPO, you are segmenting money and leveraging that funding with additional state and county funds and those sort of things. It gives you a base of dollars to move forward with transportation needs."

Among the present needs is widening work along Alabama 59 - the main north-south corridor leading beach-bound tourists from Interstate 10 toward Gulf Shores.

"It would be good for our area," said Gulf Shores spokesman Grant Brown.

Added Kennon: "We need our own group to express and fight for our needs."

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$1 Billion in Emergency Relief for Road and Bridge Repairs

Funds to states for damage from a variety of events in states across the country and U.S. territories

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced more than \$1 billion in Emergency Relief (ER) funds to help 32 states, several U.S. territories and Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMA) repair roads and bridges damaged by storms, floods and other unexpected events.

FHWA's ER program reimburses states, territories and FLMAs for eligible expenses associated with damage from natural disasters or other emergency situations. The funds help to pay for the reconstruction or replacement of damaged highways and bridges along with the arrangement of detours and replacement of guardrails or other damaged safety devices.

"The Administration is helping states and territories repair and rebuild their infrastructure in the wake of last year's hurricanes and other disasters across the country," said **U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao**.

At approximately \$263.7 million, more than a fourth of the total amount provided today will be used to repair damages caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. This includes awards of \$75,000,000 to Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey; \$97,000,000 to Florida as they repair damage from Hurricane Irma; and \$70,000,000 to assist in Puerto Rico's rebuilding after Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

"We stand with all those who have been impacted by a natural disaster from the time of the emergency and until all repairs are completed," said Acting Federal Highway Administrator Brandye L. Hendrickson. "The funding announced today will serve the traveling public by reimbursing local communities that have made repairs to damaged critical surface transportation infrastructure."

FY 2018 Emergency Relief Program Funding

State	Event	Funding	Subtotal by State
Alabama	February 2013 Severe Flooding	\$848,000	\$11,108,515
	June 18, 2013 Sinkholes on SR-21 in Talladega County	\$60,515	
	April 28, 2014 Storms and Flooding	\$6,100,000	
	December 24, 2015 Heavy Rains and Severe Flooding	\$3,000,000	
	June 22, 2017 Tropical Storm Cindy	\$1,100,000	

To see the full list click [HERE](#).

Group organizes to support, promote Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, the most bio-diverse body of water in the world

A new group is organizing to support Alabama's Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, the most bio-diverse body of water in the world.

The Alabama Delta Alliance is coming together to promote the delta, which is America's second largest Delta at about 406 square miles,

has a watershed that includes the vast majority of Alabama and has been designated a National Natural Landmark.

Individuals, organizations and businesses who want to promote and enhance the ecological wetland are coming together to organize the group.

"The Alabama Delta Alliance is a group that shares a deep appreciation for the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta and the many benefits it offers the people of this state," said Britton Bonner, chairman of the board of the Coastal Alabama Partnership. "Our goal is to build a robust, diverse coalition and effort focused solely on promoting the MTRD region —now and in the future."

The delta is one of Alabama's main remaining natural terrains and has been at the center of disputes between conservationists and developers and business interests.

Including parts of Baldwin, Clarke, Mobile, Monroe and Washington County, the area has a footprint that spans a huge chunk of South Alabama.

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson called the initiative "an idea whose time has come."

"The delta is a hugely untapped resource for eco-tourism," he said.

Dozens, if not hundreds, of interconnected stream systems, floodplains, swamps, bayous, lakes and forests paint the land in the delta and create a maze of natural wonders that are home to more than 500 plant species, 300 birds, 126 fishes, 46 mammals, 69 reptiles and 30 amphibians.

"Our newly created effort will serve as a resource to further educate the public on the biological and ecological diversity of the MTRD, the expansive flora and fauna, as well as the many recreational opportunities available to all regardless of interest or income level," said state Rep. Randy Davis, whose legislative district abuts the delta. "A major goal of our effort will be to catalog the many access points, boat ramps, trails, local businesses and other important destinations the public will want to have at their fingertips when planning a trip in the MTRD."

One goal of the Alabama Delta Alliance is to encourage people to learn more about the delta in the hopes they will be inspired to visit the area.

The Alliance has created a new website as a tool for both visitors and residents alike, at www.alabamadelta.com, with the goal of promoting ecotourism in the area.

The website includes a history of the delta, places to visit and information about alliance and steering committee members who are committed to the area.

"Our website will be representative of the diverse people and organizations that are working with us," said Russell Ladd, a steering committee member. "The interactive map will serve as a great resource that we can promote through social media and other digital channels, encouraging more visitation and driving ecotourism in the region."

The organization has the support of more than 40 members from across the state and a steering committee made up of what the new alliance says are "long-time delta supporters."

Despite concerns from conservationists who are worried about the effects of upstream dams on stream pollution, stream flow, sediment loads, a decline in fish populations and the effects of invasive plant and animal species, steering committee members are said to believe that state and local management practices are enough to protect and expand access to the MTRD region.

The alliance says that federal designations and oversight come with limitations on access and management of those properties.

The group argues that it's important to maintain the quality of life and outdoor recreational heritage by continuing to allow the state to manage the delta.

"Our goal is to protect the many natural resources and the vast biological diversity that the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta enjoys," Ladd added. "By getting involved in our effort, people are ensuring that we can continue to provide these important lands all throughout the region for future generations to enjoy."

ALDOT to resurface portion of I-10 beginning Sunday

MOBILE, AL (WALA) -

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will begin a maintenance resurfacing project on I-10 in Mobile County beginning Sunday April 22, 2018.

The project scope includes resurfacing 4.8 miles of Interstate 10 from McDonald Rd. (MP 10.0) to Carol Plantation Rd. (MP 14.8). Furthermore, this project includes the addition of cable guiderail within the project limits to help improve safety along I-10.

Motorists can expect nightly alternating lane closures each Sunday through Thursday from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Motorists are encouraged to slow down and obey all reduced speed limits within the construction zone. ALDOT asks that drivers use extra caution and avoid distracted driving.

The \$7.9 million-dollar project, awarded to John G. Walton Construction Co. Inc, is expected to be completed by spring 2019.

Uber to acquire bike-sharing company

Uber is set to acquire an electric bike-sharing start-up, the company announced on Monday.

Uber CEO [Dara Khosrowshahi](#) said in an [online post](#) that it has reached an agreement to buy JUMP Bikes, which currently operates in San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

"We're committed to bringing together multiple modes of transportation within the Uber app—so that you can choose the fastest or most affordable way to get where you're going, whether that's in an Uber, on a bike, on the subway, or more," Khosrowshahi said. Uber said it has been conducting tests in San Francisco on the JUMP bikes.

"Our hometown pilot is off to a very strong start, with riders enjoying a convenient and environmentally friendly way to cruise up and down our trademark hills," said Khosrowshahi.

JUMP formally rolled out its first bike-share in 2017 and plans to expand to other cities before the end of this year.

Transportation Research

[FTA's 2018 Comprehensive Review Guide](#)

This FTA *Comprehensive Review Guide* strives to streamline FTA review programs and outlines the minimum compliance requirements for grant recipients. Part of the effort in putting the guide together was to ensure that all requirements relate directly to "specific, citable, written requirements." This will help grantees know exactly how FTA will determine compliance, what is expected during a Triennial or State Management Review, and the reasons behind a deficiency finding.

[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! AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications, 8th Edition

Check out this video for details about the new 8th edition of the *LRFD Bridge Design Specifications*, including information on the major updates that have been made to the Specifications since the 2014 7th edition.

For more information or to purchase a copy, visit the AASHTO Bookstore online at <https://bookstore.transportation.org>, and search by the item code, LRFD-8.



Bicycle Safety Survey

ALDOT is conducting a research project "Comprehensive Investigation of Bike Crash Causes, Patterns and Countermeasures in Alabama". Please help us share this link to participants (both drivers and bicyclists). This survey is being conducted by the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) on behalf of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The main objective of this survey is to identify the status of drivers' and bicyclists' understanding of cycling regulations and rules in Alabama. The survey results will help design the appropriate outreach programs to better educate both drivers and bicyclists.

https://uah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_exhrpcjAXEaijWl

[FHWA Publishes Guidance on TPM Travel Time Metric Data Reporting to HPMS](#)

The third performance measure regulation in the National Performance Management Measures requires state DOTs to submit performance metric and related data to the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) by June 15, 2018 and annually thereafter. The national travel time-based performance measures include the: Interstate Travel Time Reliability Measure, Non-Interstate NHS Travel Time Reliability Measure, Freight Reliability Measure, and CMAQ Peak Hour Excessive Delay Measure. FHWA released a document with information and guidance on complying with these requirements

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.