



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, February 2, 2018

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There is a **Mobile MPO Policy Committee meeting** on **ASH WEDNESDAY at 2:00PM**, please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. It looks like another gas tax increase is being knocked around - See *Legislative Updates*. Today is Ground Hog Day and Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, so it looks like we're in for six more weeks of winter, so bundle up and get out and enjoy some Mardi Gras parades!

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

MOBILE MPO Meeting 2/14/2018 at 2:00PM

Safety Performance Measures

The Mobile MPO, and the Eastern Shore MPO, will have to adopt Safety Performance Measures by February 27th, 2018. The Alabama Department of Transportation has already developed performance measures for the State of Alabama, and the MPO has the option of supporting the state's Safety Performance Measures or adopting their own. The performance measures are baselines and targets for:

- Number of Fatalities
- Fatality rate (VMT)
- Number of Serious Injuries
- Serious Injury rate (VMT)
- Number of Bicycle/Pedestrian injuries

All of the federally funded transportation projects must work towards the goals set by the MPO, and the State of Alabama. At the TCC/CAC meeting this past Wednesday, these were discussed and recommended for adoption at the upcoming MPO Policy board meeting. Also, project 100060153 (CN) SR-158 Extension from 0.5 Mile East of Glenwood Road to West of Lott Road (SR-217). Grade Drain, Base, Pave has a new cost estimate from \$17,721,177 to \$30,005,229 that requires a MPO resolution. This cost estimate increase is a result of creative shifting of federal funds within ALDOT.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please be sure MPO staff has a proxy for you.

US 45 Feasibility Study

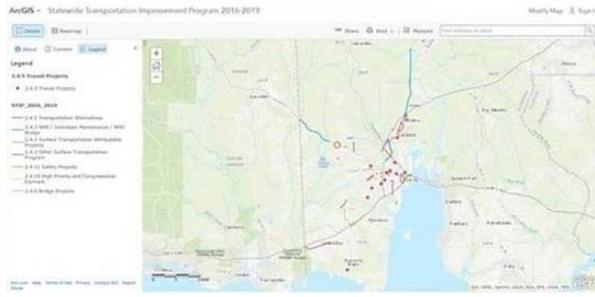
There were six submittals for the US 45 Feasibility Study last month. The Consultant Selection Committee reviewed the six firms RFQ's, and graded them accordingly. The three firms that were shortlisted by the Consultant Selection Committee were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Neel-Schaffer and Volkert. Presentations and interviews were last Friday and the committee selected Volkert to compete the work. The contract is under negotiation and we will begin work soon; we will keep you posted.

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](#)



Comprehensive, Cooperative, and Continuing Agreement Concerning Mobile's Transportation Planning Process

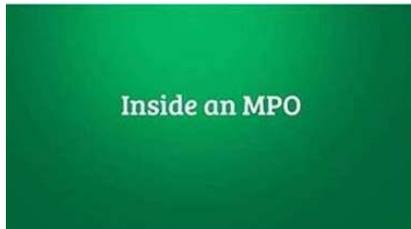
The Mobile MPO 3-C Agreement has been finalized and executed. [HERE](#)

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.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100067527 (PE)
Federal aid number : IM I010 (341)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE LOAD TEST PROGRAM
Old Delete Indicator :
New Delete Indicator : D

Projects Within Region Let January 26, 2018

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- None at this time

-

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Roadway Extension (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, and Bridge) on SR-158 from a point east of SR-217 (Lott Road) to the junction of Schillinger Road in Semmes. Length 1.544 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$17,475,217 to \$21,358,599 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

- None at this time

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Republicans and the White House are reportedly discussing a gas tax hike to fund infrastructure plan

- White House economic advisor Gary Cohn discussed raising the federal gas tax with congressional Republicans during a GOP retreat, Axios reports.
- The hike would help pay for President Donald Trump's infrastructure plan, which aims to generate \$1.5 trillion in improvements.
- The proposal reportedly faces opposition from Republicans reluctant to increase the tax burden on the middle class after they passed tax cuts at the end of last year.

White House economic advisor Gary Cohn and Republican lawmakers on Thursday discussed hiking the federal tax on gasoline in order to pay for an infrastructure plan, according to political news website Axios.

The Trump administration will soon release its plan to generate \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure spending and streamline the permitting process.

Rep. Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania pressed fellow conservatives to consider upping the federal gas tax in a meeting with Cohn during a Republican congressional retreat, a source who attended the gathering tells Axios.

While Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, said the administration is open to all options for drumming up revenue, Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming voiced opposition to a gas tax hike, Axios reports.

The issue first came up in May, when President Donald Trump said he might support a gas tax increase to underwrite investments in U.S. infrastructure, a statement the White House later walked back. Cohn reportedly told lawmakers in October they would have an opportunity to raise the federal fuel levy during infrastructure negotiations.

The federal government currently taxes gasoline at the pump at 18.4 cents per gallon, a level that has not changed since 1993. Funds raised through the charge go to the Highway Trust Fund and pay for road construction and investments in mass transportation.

The odds of raising the gas tax look remote right now because the GOP just passed massive tax cuts and the party doesn't want to give the impression of burdening the middle class, top Republican sources tell Axios.

States say Trump's infrastructure plan banks on them picking up more of the tab

DAVID A. LIEB

When President [Donald Trump](#) called for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure investment in his [State of the Union address](#), he didn't pledge that the federal government actually would provide that much money for roads, bridges, rail and waterways.

To the contrary, Trump's plan counts on state and local governments working with private investors to come up with much of the cash.

Exactly how that would work remained unclear Wednesday, as state transportation officials noted that Trump's proposal could put more pressure on them to raise taxes, fees and tolls just to qualify for a share of his infrastructure program.

Questions surrounding Trump's plan are likely to leave costly projects, such as plans for a new Hudson River tunnel connecting New York and New Jersey, in limbo.

"The Trump administration has issued a charge that sounds a lot like 'show me the money,'" said Missouri Department of Transportation Director Patrick McKenna, who is president of the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials.

In his speech Tuesday night, Trump called upon Congress to pass a plan "that generates at least \$1.5 trillion" for infrastructure.

"We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways and waterways all across our land," he said.

He did not provide a roadmap on how to achieve that or give specifics on how it would be funded.

The Republican president said only that "every federal dollar should be leveraged by partnering with state and local governments and, where appropriate, tapping into private-sector investment."

The federal government typically provides 80 percent of the funding for capital expenditures on highways, with state and local governments coming up with the rest. On transit projects, the federal share typically ranges from 50 percent to 80 percent, according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

A six-page summary of Trump's plan, which was widely but unofficially distributed a week ahead of his speech, indicates that Trump is envisioning a significant shift of financial responsibility.

Half his proposed federal money would go toward competitive grants for a wide range of infrastructure, including various transportation modes, hydropower, and drinking and wastewater facilities.

But the federal grants would cover no more than 20 percent of project costs while requiring applicants to commit to “new, non-federal revenue.”

To participate in Trump's plan, Missouri likely would have to ask voters to raise taxes for transportation, McKenna said. That's because the state transportation department already is spending at a deficit of roughly \$80 million a year to meet its current federal highway match. Neighboring Arkansas is in a similar predicament.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson's budget proposal seeks to transfer \$16 million from surplus general revenue to the transportation department in order to meet its current federal highway allotment. Qualifying for Trump's plan could require a new revenue source.

“We're shaking the couch cushions out to see where we can find the rest of it,” said Republican state Rep. Dan Douglas, who has backed various unsuccessful transportation funding bills.

Over the past five years, about three-fourths of the states have taken some sort of step to boost transportation funding, including 26 states that have raised motor fuel taxes.

Trump has suggested a greater role for public-private partnerships, in which a private entity helps finance and construct a major public infrastructure project in exchange for collecting tolls or fees from the users for years to come. But some states don't allow such projects. Tennessee doesn't use tolls or bonds to finance roads, making it difficult to undertake public-private partnerships without a change in state policy.

“It would be kind of sad to me that the federal government, who is in debt up to their ears, puts pressure on states who aren't in debt to go into debt to build roads,” said Tennessee Transportation Commissioner John Schroer, president of the state highway association.

So far, Trump's plan hasn't identified any particular priority projects nor how much money would be devoted to one type of infrastructure compared to others.

One of the most costly projects on the drawing board is an estimated \$13 billion rail tunnel under the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey.

Under an agreement with then-President [Barack Obama](#), a Democrat, the two states would pay for half the tunnel, with the federal government picking up the rest.

But the Trump administration has criticized the project's cost while questioning the Obama-era funding plan. In a letter to the states last December, a top federal transportation official referred to it as a “non-existent ‘agreement.’”

Nationwide, the American Society of Civil Engineers has projected a funding gap of over \$1.4 trillion through 2025 to address infrastructure needs for road, rail and transit systems, water and sewer systems, the electric grid, airports and inland waterways.

Trump said during his State of the Union speech that his plan would “permanently fix the infrastructure deficit.”

Robert Puentes, president and CEO of the Washington-based Eno Center for Transportation, cast doubt on that claim. He said some states could see a net loss in federal funding if Trump's plan fails to fill a shortfall in the federal transportation trust fund while simultaneously asking states to put up a greater share to participate in his program.

“There is some switcheroo that seems to be happening where it looks like it's a big federal initiative that's going to result in more funding, but really what we're looking at here is a financing package for infrastructure,” Puentes said.

Lawmakers left with more questions than answers on Trump infrastructure plan

BY MALLORY SHELBOURNE AND MELANIE ZANONA

President Trump is pressing Congress to take action on an infrastructure plan, but lawmakers say they remain confused over how the project would be funded, what it would include and how grand it will really be.

Trump's pitch for a national rebuilding program has grown significantly in size since the campaign trail, where he initially called for a \$550 billion infrastructure package.

In Tuesday's State of the Union address, he called for a plan of at least \$1.5 trillion, after earlier this month suggesting an investment between \$1.7 and \$1.8 trillion during an interview with [The Wall Street Journal](#). Regardless of the cost, Trump has not yet identified any offsets or funding sources to accompany the rebuilding initiative.

That has left lawmakers in both parties questioning how the administration will be able to reach its goal of securing over \$1 trillion for infrastructure.

“I think there's going to be a strong push for a significant infrastructure package. I don't know if at the end of the day you actually get to the trillion and half a dollars. That's a new number,” Rep. [Mark Sanford](#) (R-S.C.), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said after Trump's inaugural State of the Union speech.

“What you've heard traditionally over the last couple of weeks is more in the order of \$1 trillion, which would be a hard enough lift. Trillion and a half is a really tough lift, because the difficult question is: how do you pay for it?”

Rep. [John Delaney](#) (D-Md.), who sits on the Joint Economic Committee, which has been critical of the administration's suggestions, on Wednesday told reporters that “a substantial amount” of the funding must come from direct federal investment.

“But the real discussion has to be, and this is where there was no clarity from either the president or congressional Republicans, which is what's the amount of money that's going to come from the federal government,” Delaney said.

The White House has floated several figures for an overall infrastructure package and blown through numerous deadlines to release particulars about a potential plan, but the federal government is only expected to chip in \$200 billion, with the hope that the private sector and local governments will pay for the rest of the tab.

Details are slowly trickling out from the administration, which included additional information Tuesday night in an email to reporters during Trump's address.

The fact sheet lined up with a document that leaked last week and purported to reveal the White House's infrastructure plan. Both memos said half of the federal seed money would go toward an incentive program to encourage local governments to invest in infrastructure projects, while a quarter would be allocated toward a pot for rural regions.

While lawmakers are largely encouraged that infrastructure is on the table, Democrats are pushing the federal government's historic role in building projects, arguing state and local governments cannot afford the efforts and private entity investment won't make up for any shortfall.

"To some extent, all of these numbers are kind of made-up," said Delaney. "The number that is really relevant is the amount of federal dollars that go into a variety of programs."

Trump has long called for an investment to repair U.S. roads, bridges, airports and other public works, but his critics were quick to point out that his speech to Congress lacked details.

"So we were all quite looking forward to hearing some details last night from President Trump," Sen. [Jeff Merkley](#) (D-Ore.) told a conference call of reporters the day after Trump's address. "But he completely failed to lay out a competent vision for such infrastructure investment."

Merkley, who sits on both the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee, slammed the GOP's push for a focus on public-private partnerships, arguing this strategy will ultimately help Wall Street and hurt Americans. The concerns, however, are not purely partisan. Republicans are also questioning how Congress can craft a package and provide funding to rebuild.

"I wanted more details, but that's going to come," Rep. [Sam Graves](#) (R-Mo.) told The Hill after the president's speech.

Graves, also a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said the latest White House figure is "bold," but still expressed optimism that Congress can work toward a bipartisan solution to fix the nation's ailing infrastructure.

"We'll have to find out how we get there. It's realistic if we can find the funding, but it's a strong number," he said.

Some lawmakers and industry groups have proposed an increase to the federal gas tax to contribute to an infrastructure overhaul. Money from the 18.4-cent tax goes into the Highway Trust Fund to pay for road projects, but that levy has not been raised since 1993, eroding the fund's purchasing power over time.

That option has received mixed reviews from lawmakers in both parties. While the tax increase is deeply unpopular among many Republicans, Democrats argue raising the gas tax won't be enough to finance a package.

Rep. [Jim Himes](#) (D-Conn.), who chairs the New Democrat Coalition, said the gas tax must be an "important part of the overall mix of revenue," but declined to offer a full-throated endorsement of a hike.

"We think of ourselves as forward-looking. And any hesitation on our part is associated with the fact that more and more vehicles out there aren't burning gas," Himes said at a press conference, adding that the gas tax is "a fading source of revenue."

Still, industry and business groups have rallied behind a push to increase the federal gas fee, noting the Highway Trust Fund needs a boost in revenue to remain solvent.

"The ball is in Capitol Hill's court," the American Road & Transportation Builders Association said in a statement after the State of the Union.

"If scientists can clone monkeys, Congress ought to be able to figure out how to raise federal dollars to fix the Highway Trust Fund and modernize our choking National Freight Network. Those are the top two infrastructure priorities."

Funding Opportunities

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

Several months back, Kevin's trusty truck "Trigger" with over 300k miles on it, broke down in the Bankhead Tunnel. ALDOT's ASAP was there ASAP, and there were no incidents and no traffic delay created. However, Trigger did have to get towed to the ranch. So *Just For Fun*, here are some incorrect towing situations....



Apparently there's a third option between burial and cremation.





In the News

Transportation Stakeholders Curious About Trump Infrastructure Package

Win McNamee/Bloomberg Finance

Much of the transportation community — freight and business executives, the construction sector, local leaders and experts — said President Donald Trump's call for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill that also would streamline project permitting to two years during his State of the Union address left them with more questions than answers, particularly on the matter of funding.

They agree Trump's topline request is not deemed as sufficient to cover costs to repair the country's transportation network, which includes more than 54,000 structurally deficient bridges.

Trump's plan, White House officials say, is expected to consist of \$200 billion in direct federal funding to incentivize private-sector investments capable of achieving the \$1.5 trillion mark.

"The transportation priorities that were laid out, which is that funding has to be shared by state and localities, private sector have a role in this — all of these are good but I don't know that this is [a] sufficient amount of money to do the job the nation needs," said Mitchell Moss, director of Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management, calling the amount "quite modest" over a decade. The center is at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Marcia Hale of infrastructure advocacy group Building America's Future acknowledged the important role private investors could play in certain big-ticket projects. However, the White House and Republican leadership in control of Congress must dedicate federal funds for the system to guarantee projects get built.

"Eventually we have to come up with some money to do this," Hale said. "And we have to not only maintain our 65-year-old highway system, but we have to start building it for the future."

Jeff Robinson, U.S. Public Interest Research Group's senior director of transportation, is calling on the White House to prioritize funding for projects focused on reducing growth in vehicle-miles traveled. Doing so, would "account for the public health, environmental and climate benefits as well as the reduced need to increase road capacity in the future," Robinson said.

Traditional infrastructure stakeholders say they are looking to Congress to legislate on whatever guiding principles the White House offers about its infrastructure plan sometime in mid-February.

These groups — such as American Trucking Associations, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, roadbuilders, state transportation officials and engineers — are aligned in pushing for an increase in federal fuel taxes (currently 24.4 cents per gallon for diesel, and 18.4 cents for gasoline) to boost the federal Highway Trust Fund.

"If scientists can clone monkeys, Congress ought to be able to figure out how to raise federal dollars to fix the Highway Trust Fund and modernize our choking national freight network," said Pete Ruane, president of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

The American Society of Civil Engineers last year gave the country's infrastructure a D+ grade. Kristina Swallow, the group's president, also urged congressional action on fixing the Highway Trust Fund.

"This bill should make investments that provide substantial, long-term benefits to the economy, consider the cost of a project over its lifespan, and be built sustainably and resiliently to maximize investment," Swallow added.

The Highway Trust Fund assists states with maintenance projects. The fuel taxes set in 1993 no longer are sufficient for maintaining the fund's solvency. White House officials say Trump has not ruled out pushing for a fuel tax hike. Republican leaders, however, are adamantly against it.

Nearly two dozen states in recent years have increased fuel taxes amid federal inaction on long-term infrastructure funding. With a vast portion of the roadway system falling under the purview of local governments, Matthew Chase with the National Association of Counties stressed a willingness to "reinvest in our communities." Counties, he noted, own and operate 46% of public road miles and 39% of the bridge inventory.

"Partnerships are critical when it comes to fulfilling our nation's infrastructure needs," Chase said. "Investing in infrastructure means investing in every American community."

City of Mobile Offers Survey to Develop Medal of Honor Park Plan

Mobile, Ala. -- In order to develop a Medal of Honor Park implementation plan, the City of Mobile is requesting citizens fill out a survey to help identify priorities and decide on future developments for the park.

The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. It will ask information about what activities you prefer at Medal of Honor Park including sports, special events and the playground. They survey will also request information on what improvements need to be made including safety and maintenance. Citizens can choose a variety of priorities such as the fields, playground, restrooms and other site amenities.

The survey will help shape the Implementation Plan that will provide a framework for near-term park improvements and future development of facilities over the next 15 years.

"I encourage all of our citizens to take part in this survey—especially those who regularly utilize this park," said Mayor Stimpson. "We want your insight as we create the vision for Medal of Honor Park for years to come."

Twenty-seven States Introduced Nearly 100 Transportation Funding Bills in First Month of 2018

by [Carolyn Kramer](#)

Four states— Hawaii, Missouri, Mississippi, and Nebraska— have proposed raising taxes on motor fuel in order to fund needed transportation infrastructure improvements, with more expected to follow as additional states begin their 2018 legislative session in February.

Continuing the trend from previous years, electric vehicle fees remain a hot topic. Eight states are considering legislation to implement a new registration fee for electric motor vehicles to ensure these drivers pay their fair share for wear and tear on roads and bridges. Six of those states also included new hybrid motor vehicle fees in the proposal.

States are also exploring options outside of traditional transportation funding. Three states— Kentucky, New Hampshire, and New York— have proposed road usage charge pilot programs to increase transportation funding.

The largest categories of proposed transportation funding legislation include local funding (24 bills in 10 states) and non-fuel tax recurring revenue (22 bills in nine states).

[Click to Read the report.](#)

Opinion: Let's Build Something Great Together

Trump and Congress should work toward a 21st century infrastructure system

By Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO)

2017 was a record year for our economy. Thanks to tax reform, and this administration's aggressive regulatory reduction, our economy is growing at an exponential rate. 2018 presents a great opportunity to push the throttle on our economic growth as we move to our next big priority: infrastructure.

Infrastructure is pure commerce. Everything in this country moves. So an efficient transportation network is vital to our economic future. However, federal funding for infrastructure is not unlimited.

With that in mind, the Trump administration is expected to prioritize new, innovative proposals to encourage additional investments in infrastructure that warrant serious consideration.

No new or existing program is going to be the silver bullet that fixes every one of our infrastructure needs. But coupling these new ideas with improvements to current federal transportation programs will make a meaningful impact.

An integral piece of the administration's proposal will be to address the current federal permitting process. Anyone who defends the status quo has never been a part of any project — big or small — involving the federal government.

The president understands this. He has been building large projects his entire life, giving him firsthand knowledge of just how unnecessary and costly the process can be. We can no longer afford to let the federal process delay projects and drive up prices, which ultimately hurts workers, commuters and our economy.

Most importantly, we need to address how we pay for our infrastructure. In May 2017, a bipartisan majority of both parties in the House expressed support for fixing the highway trust fund. An infrastructure package is an ideal opportunity to address this problem.

Doing so would provide long-term certainty beyond 2020, when the trust fund, our primary source of federal infrastructure investment, will again be insolvent. We must break the cycle of bailouts for the highway trust fund. It simply isn't good policy.

Finally, we must look toward the future.

Technology is rapidly developing, but our infrastructure does not yet reflect those advancements. That needs to change.

It will require a soft touch from regulators to realize the full potential of American innovation. Local leaders also need to find new opportunities to work in tandem with private enterprises. And it will require the federal government to make smarter, more efficient investments in infrastructure.

Infrastructure drives every aspect of our economy. This president is a builder, and Congress should work with him to build something great together — an infrastructure system that brings the United States into the 21st century.

Rep. Sam Graves is a Republican representing Missouri's 6th District. He chairs the Transportation Highways and Transit Subcommittee,

which oversees the development of a national transportation policy and focuses on improving America's highway system.

Transportation Research

National Transit Database Provides Key Stats on Public Transportation in the U.S.

Posted by The Federal Transit Administration

Did you know that Americans took 10.2 billion trips on public transportation in 2016 and that transit ridership has increased 26 percent during the last 20 years?

These facts come from the [National Transit Database](#) (NTD), a trove of statistics and information about public transportation in the United States. Established by Congress in 1974, the NTD is the nation's primary source of publicly available data on transit systems across the country. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) manages the NTD and uses the data to allocate Federal funds. In addition to FTA, a variety of groups and individuals use the database, including state and local governments, researchers and students, the media, and industry associations.

The NTD provides answers to a range of questions about transit, from the most general to highly specialized. For example:

Question: What forms of public transportation do Americans use?

According to the data, Americans most commonly ride the bus, but they also ride subways, light rail, bus rapid transit, monorails, aerial tramways, cable cars and ferries. Some Americans even ride a funicular or inclined plane, which is a railway operating on a steep slope and powered by moving cables. Pittsburgh's "Incline" is the oldest funicular in the U.S., built in 1870.

Question: How are advances in technology affecting bus operations?

Answer from the NTD: There has been a growing trend toward buses that run on advanced technology, and the number of public transportation vehicles powered solely by electric battery has increased 210 percent since 2010.

The NTD contains a wealth of information about more than 1,000 transit agencies and providers. Examples of information available from the database include:

- Funding
- Capital and operating expenses
- Ridership
- Service characteristics, including modes and vehicle revenue miles
- Age of vehicles and maintenance facilities
- Fuel usage
- Safety, including collisions, injuries and fatalities

Transit agencies and providers are required to report data to the NTD if they receive formula grants from FTA. The type of data required varies according to the size of the transit agency, as well as the modes it operates and the funding it receives. FTA offers training to help transit agencies understand how to report their data.

FTA uses data from the NTD to distribute federal funds to transit agencies according to formulas set by Congress that are based on ridership and population.

The NTD is available [here](#) on FTA's website, along with instructions for use. We encourage you to use it to better understand public transportation in the U.S.

PM3 Analysis Tools and Enhanced NPMRDS Datasets

INRIX and the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology (UMD CATT) Laboratory have created tools and additional datasets to simplify PM3 target-setting, tracking, and reporting. The three available options provide a range of functions for analyzing the NPMRDS dataset and include access to a peer network user group. An informational webinar will be held February 14

February 14, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Every state DOT and MPO has several new responsibilities with the May 2017 federal rule regarding congestion and freight system performance reporting requirements (PM3). FHWA has made the NPMRDS travel time dataset – created and delivered by the INRIX/UMD CATT Laboratory team – available to DOTs and MPOs at no cost. Still, there is much to do to translate this dataset to meet the PM3 reporting requirements. INRIX and the UMD CATT Laboratory have extended their partnership beyond generating NPMRDS datasets to offering tools and additional datasets that simplify PM3 target-setting, tracking, and reporting.

2018 USDOT Webinar Series: What's New in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Deployment

February 20, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

March 6, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

March 27, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

USDOT ITS Joint Program Office will host a new three-part webinar series highlighting the latest trends and developments in ITS deployment. To measure the deployment of ITS technology nationally, the USDOT's ITS Deployment Tracking Project surveys transportation agencies in the largest U.S. cities on a regular basis. The ITS Knowledge Resources Portal summarizes the benefits, costs, deployment levels, and lessons learned for ITS deployment and operations from over 20 years of ITS evaluation studies, research syntheses, handbooks, journal articles, and conference papers tracking the effectiveness of deployed ITS. The webinar series will provide an overview of these resources to support informed decision making on ITS investments, highlight recent additions to the survey, and solicit feedback from participants on

how best to redesign the portal to improve its usability and value.

BTS Releases Pocket Guide to Transportation Mobile App

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has released a new dynamic mobile app for the [Pocket Guide to Transportation 2018](#) – a quick reference guide to transportation statistics. This popular guide provides the latest transportation statistics at your fingertips in mobile app and printed formats. It covers data on major trends, moving people and goods, system use and performance, the economy, safety, infrastructure, and the environment. [Download](#) the app now to access all the features of the classic Pocket Guide plus enhanced navigation, sharable graphics to social media and email, and dynamic data updates to highlight the most recent up-to-date statistics. The app is available on the App Store and on Google Play (keyword: BTS Pocket Guide). To access the *Pocket Guide*, go to [BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation](#) or text USDOT BTSPG to 468311. This publication can also be obtained by [ordering online](#), by contacting BTS by phone at 202-366-DATA or by e-mail at answers@dot.gov. For inquiries other than placing orders contact Dave Smallen: david.smallen@dot.gov or 202-366-5568.

FTA Joint Procurement Clearinghouse

This [new tool](#) will enable FTA grant recipients to communicate about procurement needs and solicit partners interested in pooling resources for a joint purchase. USDOT was directed to create this forum under the FAST Act to allow public transit operators to engage in joint procurements for rolling stock (including buses, railcars, and ferries) to achieve economies of scale. FTA produced training materials, which can be found on the JPC webpage, to help users navigate the tool.

Making a Model a Good Predictive Tool

A basic part of travel demand model validation is running the model for a “base year” and comparing the outputs to observed data. In this [FHWA project](#), two model versions for each of two metropolitan areas were run twice each: 1) the more recent version for its base year and a backcast scenario (for the base year of the earlier model version), and 2) the earlier version for its base year and a forecast scenario (for the base year of the later model version). This research was intended to produce useful data on which model components are most stable over time and their sensitivities to the factors affecting travel demand that vary over time. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations for planning agencies.

New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

Download it Today



<http://www.vueworks.com/sidewalks-and-curb-ramps-application/>

- 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.