



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 19th, 2018

Volume 25, Number 3

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There is a **Mobile MPO Policy Committee meeting** on **ASH WEDNESDAY at 2:00PM**. Also the Mobile MPO TCC/CAC will meet on January 31st at 10:00 am, please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. There is a lot of hub bub about gas tax at both the state and federal level; see *Legislative Updates*. This week's *Just For Fun* is not all it's cracked up to be, and what happens if the government shuts down? See *in the News*. Stay Warm!

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. These will be discussed and adopted at the upcoming TCC/CAC and MPO Policy board meetings. 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 these meetings, please be sure MPO staff has a proxy for you.

US 45 Feasibility Study

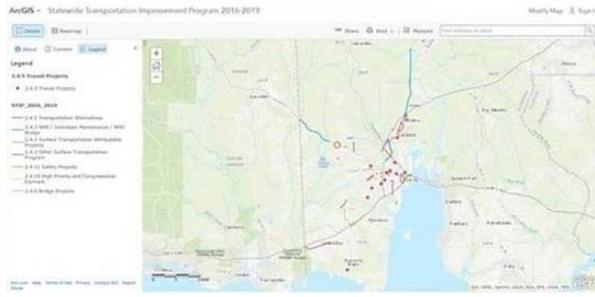
There were six submittals for the US 45 Feasibility Study last month. The Consultant Selection Committee reviewed the six firms RFQ's, and graded them accordingly. The three firms that were shortlisted by the Consultant Selection Committee were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Neel-Schaffer and Volkert. Presentations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

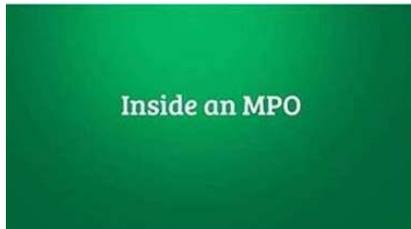
The Mobile MPO 3-C Agreement has been finalized and executed. [HERE](#)

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

None at this time

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

Are Earmarks the Answer?

Every so often, there is a spirited conversation about whether Congress should bring back earmarks. A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House have approached Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) to request they be allowed to insert earmarks in fiscal year 2019 spending bills, and in a future infrastructure package. This comes approximately one year after the House nearly approved the return of the controversial practice. The House Rules Committee held two hearings on the subject this week, to hear from both members of Congress and outside stakeholders.

Earmark supporters – including Representative Don Young (R-AK) and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) – argue that the current moratorium on earmarks has ceded congressional control over the distribution of funds to local areas and left it in the hands of unelected bureaucrats at federal agencies. Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (R-TX) has acknowledged “intense interest” among members to resume the practice that was stopped by then-Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) in 2011. Others, including President Trump, have acknowledged that bringing back earmarks could help build bipartisan support for legislation.

Opponents worry that the return of earmarks would mean a return to pork barrel spending. Some believe the previous abuse of earmarks is the reason they should remain forbidden. Still, others reject the view that the return of earmarks would bring increased comity to Congress, without giving individual members buy-offs to do so.

No matter where you come down on the practice, the solution is relatively simple. House rules do not prohibit earmarks. Rather, House Republicans changed their own rules to outlaw the practice. Democrats made changes to the earmarking process in 2008 and 2009, requiring additional disclosure by members and preventing private firms from receiving earmarks. Those practices would remain in place or could be modified if the Republicans lift their own rule forbidding earmarks. The Senate earmark ban also occurred in 2011 at the urging of then-President Obama, with the chamber still in Democratic control. Republicans have continued the moratorium under their control.

Gas tax increase back in talks as Alabama lawmakers descend on capitol

by Lauren Walsh
MONTGOMERY, Ala. —

As state lawmakers prepare to return to Montgomery Tuesday, a conversation about increasing Alabama’s gas tax is renewed. Alabama hasn’t increased its gas tax since 1992, and some believe an increase would be the answer to the state’s infrastructure needs. Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh’s office has been leading meetings about improving Alabama’s roads and bridges. Marsh said he expects an infrastructure plan to formulate by the end of this year’s legislative session, with the revenue stream (potentially a gas tax) worked on in 2019. But, Marsh acknowledges that if President Donald Trump’s infrastructure plan comes to fruition sooner, Alabama may need to act quicker to have the money to bring down matching federal dollars.

“Of course, we all need gas and we’re going to pay it anyway,” expressed Kyndria Jones, an Alabama driver. Jones says she likes Alabama’s low gas prices the way they are.

“Gas is kind of already high for some people already,” she said. But some state leaders are calling for an increase to fund needed infrastructure improvements.

“I would say it’s a growing crisis,” said Drew Harrell, executive director of the Alliance for Alabama’s infrastructure, led by the Business Council of Alabama. The alliance supports a plan to raise the state’s gas tax, which could be used by both the state and local governments to fix roads.

“At the state level, they’re struggling to maintain the current road and bridge system we have today,” said Harrell. “...At the city and county level, they’re way behind as far as maintenance goes on their roads and bridges. You have some counties actually tearing up paved roads and turning them into gravel because they simply don’t have the money to maintain that road.” David Karn is one driver who’s willing to pay more at the pump, a decision he bases on safety.

“Everybody wants to complain, I don’t want my taxes to go up,” said Karn. “But yet, when their child is riding around on these roads and hits a pot hole and causes them to lose control of the vehicle, all of a sudden it’s the government’s fault.” Although controversial issues like tax increases are often avoided during election years, President Trump’s infrastructure plan may force quicker action for state lawmakers.

“If they do see a need to put a plan forth because we see the possibility of losing money the federal government is providing to us, then I think that’s worth looking at,” said Harrell. One idea mentioned Monday by both Senator Marsh and Senator Cam Ward was the idea of a special session dedicated to infrastructure, if a federal plan requires swift state action.

Chamber to Push for Gas Tax Hike for Road and Bridge Upgrades

By Mark Niquette
January 16, 2018, 11:40 AM CST

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce will call for increasing the federal gas tax by 25 cents a gallon over the next five years to help pay for rebuilding U.S. roads and bridges as part of its push for a federal infrastructure initiative this year.

The proposed increase of 5 cents per year during the next five years, including indexing the levy to inflation, would generate more than \$375 billion during the next decade, according to the chamber.

The idea is one of the recommendations the business lobby plans to unveil at an infrastructure event in Washington on Thursday, said Stacy Day, a spokeswoman for the chamber.

The details of the proposed gas tax increase were reported earlier by the Washington Post.

President Donald Trump had promised an infrastructure initiative last year but focused on trying to overhaul health care and passing a tax bill. Now, Congress and the administration are mired in a fight over immigration, budget spending and a potential government shutdown as early as Friday.

Read more: [Why Trump's Infrastructure Push Might Stall Again](#)

Chamber President Tom Donohue highlighted the need for more investment to upgrade and modernize U.S. infrastructure during his annual speech on the state of American business on Jan. 10.

"This year can and must be the year of major infrastructure investment," Donohue said in the speech. "We have the political will, the bipartisan support -- and we certainly have the need."

The chamber has previously called for increasing the federal gas tax as the simplest, fairest and most straightforward way to raise more money for projects.

The federal per-gallon taxes of 18.4 cents on gasoline and 24.4 cents on diesel were last raised in 1993. Since then, the revenue they generate has declined as inflation has reduced their purchasing power and the average fuel economy of passenger vehicles increased.

The Trump administration, which is preparing to release principles of a plan to invest \$1 trillion to upgrade infrastructure, hasn't endorsed an increase in the gas tax but hasn't ruled it out.

Dem senator: I'm 'optimistic' we can pass an infrastructure bill

BY MALLORY SHELBOURNE - 01/17/18 05:35 PM EST

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) said he is optimistic that lawmakers can pass an infrastructure package, as the Trump administration's impending plan nears getting pushed into February.

"So I'm optimistic about most things, including being able to pass infrastructure legislation, with a big piece of that being transportation infrastructure," Carper told Politico's Money podcast.

Carper, the ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said "there's a good track record" for the panel, suggesting it bodes well for an agreement to fix America's trains, bridges and roads.

"We have a good record, in the Environment and Public Works Committee though, of Democrats and Republicans working together," he said.

Carper's remarks come as President Trump's infrastructure package may not come to fruition until next month.

Lawmakers are currently focused on striking a deal to keep the government's lights on, a fight that has largely focused on immigration and border security.

The administration, late last year, had promised to produce "detailed legislative principles" on an infrastructure plan in January.

Trump has also suggested that Republicans and Democrats may be able to work together on infrastructure, saying in December that it "would be a perfect place to start."

Funding Opportunities

The Road to Zero Coalition's 2018 Safe System Innovation Grant

The deadline to submit is Jan 26, 2018. Target applicants are locals who will implement the activities and treatments in the list of Proven Safety Countermeasures.

[Click here 2018 grants applications](#)

The Road to Zero Grant Program:

The focus of the Road to Zero Grant Program is to support the implementation of innovative evidence-based highway safety countermeasures.

- Proposals shall cite the evidence of effectiveness of the selected countermeasure and describe the innovative implementation approach.
- Proposed projects that link behavioral, roadway and/or vehicle elements will be given special consideration (e.g., incorporating roadway or vehicle strategies to change safety behaviors).
- Proposed projects shall have measurable objectives and generalizable results. Projects shall demonstrate innovative approaches that could be replicated in other locations.
- There is no limit on the number of grant proposals an organization can submit.
- Proposals from past awarded Road to Zero grants are eligible acceptable but they must include new elements to be considered. For example, an additional innovation to the project is eligible but a continuation of the past project is not eligible to be considered for funding.
- **Eligibility**
 - Applicants must be a [Road to Zero Coalition Member](#). (There is no charge for membership.)
 - Applicant must be a non-profit organization such as a 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6).
 - State, local and municipal Governments Governors' safety offices, state and local departments of transportation, universities, law enforcement, public health, etc. are eligible to apply.
 - Proposed programs must operate within the United States.

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

You can bet your cold butt that this recent ice/freeze will cause some potholes in South Alabama, but:

HOW ARE POT HOLES FORMED, AND HOW ARE THEY FILLED?



Potholes are caused by the expansion and contraction of ground water after the water has entered into the ground under the pavement. When water freezes, it expands. If it has a chance to freeze, water will take up more space under the pavement, and the pavement will expand, bend, and crack, which weakens the material pavement. Then when ice melts, the pavement contracts and leaves gaps or voids in the surface under the pavement, where water can get in and be trapped. If the water freezes and thaws over and over, the pavement will weaken and continue cracking.

Just For Fun, here are some ways to not fill a pot hole.....





In the News

What happens if the government shuts down

BY TIMOTHY CAMA AND LYDIA WHEELER - 01/19/18 05:40 AM EST

Federal agencies are bracing for a government shutdown as Congress fights to reach a short-term spending deal before funding runs out at midnight on Friday. Government shutdowns are rare, especially when one party controls both chambers of Congress and the White House. The last shutdown was in 2013 and lasted 17 days. If a shutdown happens, many major federal responsibilities, like sending Social Security checks and operating the military, would continue. Each federal agency has a shutdown plan, written in consultation with the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the administration would have some wiggle room in what it does.

In general, government operations and employees deemed "essential," like those in the military and law enforcement, would continue to report to work. It's a label that applies to more than half of the 2.1 million or so non-postal federal employees. Those workers would still get paid, but not until after the shutdown ends. During the 2013 shutdown, 850,000 individuals were furloughed per day, according to the OMB.

Employees in "non-essential" government functions, meanwhile, would stay home and actually be prohibited from showing up. Congress acted to pay those employees after previous shutdowns, but pay is not guaranteed. Some government programs, such as Social Security payments, are not subject to the appropriations process. Those would continue, though some functions, like processing new Social Security applications, would shut down.

In 2013, federal permitting and environmental reviews were put on hold, along with the processing of import and export license applications and federal loans for small business, families and rural communities. According to the OMB, the shutdown also delayed almost \$4 billion in tax refunds.

Here's how some federal agencies plan to weather a shutdown: continue [HERE](#)

Bienville Square Envisioning Event

Many Mobilians consider historic Bienville Square to be the true heart of our city...the living room for all citizens to enjoy. It is an urban oasis in the midst of all the concrete and a respite from the hustle and bustle of city life. Or at least it could be. Surveys and feedback from park users tell us "the square is not very inviting; it's dark and scary; there's no reason to enter the park unless there's an event going on."

If you want to help make Bienville Square a welcoming public space for the 21st century, join the Downtown Parks Conservancy and City of Mobile for a workshop that's open to anyone who cares about the future of Mobile. And everyone should care because great public spaces are a critical component to creating successful cities! The workshop will be led by designers from Carbo Landscape Architecture and Nimrod Long, two of the country's leading urban park planners.

Bienville Square Public Workshop

January 24, 2018

6:00 PM

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

451 Government Street

(Free parking behind the building!)

Poll: Majority of Americans worried about sharing roads with driverless cars

BY MALLORY SHELBOURNE - 01/16/18 12:10 PM EST

A recent poll found that a majority of Americans are worried about operating cars on the same roads as driverless vehicles. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed said they are concerned about sharing the streets with driverless vehicles, according to a poll from Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety. Thirty-four percent of Americans surveyed said they were not concerned, while 2 percent of those polled said they did not know.

Results of the survey come after the House last year passed the bipartisan Self Drive Act, meant to speed up the development of driverless vehicles and provide a set of federal laws for the technology. After receiving approval from the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, a similar bill in the Senate had been pushed to 2018, Bloomberg BNA reported in December.

"These poll results should be an urgent wake-up call to change course," Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety President Cathy Chase said in a release.

"One of the most important findings of this poll is that nearly two-thirds of respondents are concerned about sharing the road with driverless cars. Today, we urge our nation's leaders to listen carefully to the concerns of the American people and to take an immediate course correction to address significant safety shortcomings and serious public concerns revealed in the poll."

A majority of those polled, 73 percent, also back Transportation Department safety standards for driverless vehicles. Nearly a quarter of Americans, 23 percent, oppose the department's mandated safety features. Four percent of those polled said they did not know. Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety commissioned the poll, which was conducted by ORC International. The poll of 1,005 individuals across the country was conducted Dec. 7-10 and has a margin of error of 3.09 percentage points.

House 'Problem Solvers' Call for Fixing Highway Trust Fund for Long Term

A bipartisan group of 48 House members calling themselves the [Problem Solvers Caucus issued an infrastructure plan](#) that among other things would "ensure sustainable and long-term funding for the Highway Trust Fund."

[Their report recommended](#) accomplishing that by raising the federal gasoline tax, indexing all HTF fuel taxes to inflation and considering new dedicated funding such as from fees on electric vehicles and freight shipments.

However, Politico reported that "[very few caucus members – and neither of its co-chairs – support a gas tax hike.](#)" It included quotes in opposition to a fuel tax increase from Reps. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., and Tom Reed, R-N.Y.

The caucus, whose members are split evenly between Republican and Democratic lawmakers, also called for a number of actions to boost project investments across a wide range of infrastructure categories.

Their report said an "Infrastructure Working Group" of the caucus "explored issues including but not limited to our highways, roads and bridges, transit and railways, ports and airports, water and sewer systems, energy systems and the power grid, and broadband and communications networks."

They urged expanding the U.S. Department of Transportation's long-term, low-interest TIFIA loan program under which the USDOT lends at the government's cost of borrowing, and fixing a similar but little-used rail loan program that requires borrowers to pay an upfront risk premium charge while the government itself pays the risk premium for TIFIA borrowers.

They agreed on a number of other measures popular with many transportation stakeholders but which do not move forward in Congress.

Those include having Congress spending all money collected from the harbor maintenance tax on actual harbor projects, instead of diverting some of the revenue to other budget items.

They also favored incentivizing states to expand the use of public-private partnerships to take on more projects, pushing the USDOT to implement streamlining provisions Congress called for in surface transportation laws, and preserving and expanding the use of tax-advantaged infrastructure bonds.

Mobile County ADA upgrades could cost millions

Posted by Jason Johnson | Jan 17, 2018 | Bay Briefs | 0 |

It's been 28 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress, and while it has helped improve access and working conditions for millions, complying with the law can be expensive, not only for businesses but for local governments as well.

In the last fiscal year, the Mobile County Commission has put more than \$1 million into projects and evaluations aimed at bringing its sidewalks, walkways and public buildings into compliance with the federal law. Over the next few years, those costs are expected to increase.

"In July 2016, the commission committed to achieving ADA compliance in all county-owned facilities, rights of ways and the provision of services as a countywide priority," Commissioner Connie Hudson said. "We pledged to budget \$500,000 a year to accomplish necessary improvements."

As part of that commitment, the county created an ADA transition plan in 2016 that, according to Katherine Eddy, the commission's director of public affairs, "spells out the county's intent to achieve ADA compliance through specific projects, such as curb ramps and sidewalks and in the normal ongoing work the county performs."

In 2016, 519 curb ramps throughout the county were identified as needing replacement in order to comply with the ADA — the majority in more rural areas. The county has since awarded a \$248,756 contract to Sunset Contracting Inc. to install ADA-compliant curb ramps in various locations. Today, there are still 105 curb ramps in need of replacement along county right-of-ways and subdivisions. Continue [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Release of Automated Vehicle Requests for Public Comment

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao today discussed the Department’s progress in advancing the release of Federal Automated Vehicle Policy (FAVP) 3.0, also known as A Vision for Safety 3.0, during her remarks at CES in Las Vegas, Nevada.

“Autonomous vehicle technologies will have a tremendous impact on society in terms of safety, mobility, and security,” Secretary Chao said.

FAVP 3.0 will emphasize a unified, intermodal approach to automated driving systems (ADSs) policy. It will enable the safe integration of surface automated transportation systems, including cars, trucks, light rail, infrastructure, and port operations.

“Policy makers need to preserve the creativity and innovation that is part of the American tradition and allow innovation to flourish,” Secretary Chao added.

As part of its efforts, the Department today published several automated vehicle notices for public comment on the [DOT Website](#) and submitted them to the Federal Register. The Department is seeking public input from across the transportation industry to identify barriers to innovation and shape initiatives.

Secretary Chao said, “Getting input from the public will help identify which Departmental regulations need to be updated and changed to encourage innovation.”

The published notices include:

- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):**

- o [Request for Information \(RFI\) on Integration of ADS into the Highway Transportation System](#): To better understand what is needed to accommodate ADS technologies, and maximize their potential benefits, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) seeks the public’s input through a formal RFI to supplement strategy development. Advancing the next generation of America’s transportation network can only happen with input from an array of informed sources, including stakeholders, industry experts and the public at large.

- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA):**

- o [Request for Comments \(RFC\) on Automated Transit Buses Research Program](#): This RFC will obtain transit industry comment regarding the current and near-future statuses of automated transit buses and related technologies. Comments received will assist FTA in developing future Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) for transit bus automation demonstrations with respect to the industry’s ability and interest. Concepts for the NOFOs on demonstrations and evaluations of transit bus automation usage will be defined in FTA’s Strategic Transit Automation Research (STAR) plan. A premise of the STAR plan is to leverage and apply commercially available technology and products to the public transit industry to hasten early demonstrable outcomes.

- o [RFC on Removing Barriers to Transit Bus Automation](#): This RFC will obtain transit industry comment regarding current or potential institutional, regulatory, or other policy barriers to the development, demonstration, deployment, and evaluation of automated transit buses and related technologies. Some Federal policy issues are addressed in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (US DOT’s) Automated Driving Systems (ADS): A Vision for Safety 2.0. Information from the second RFC will help inform FTA’s approach to the planned update of this document, which may include additional multi-modal considerations. Information from the RFC will also provide critical feedback on potential modifications of FTA rules, regulations, and agency guidance.

- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):**

- o [RFC on Removing Regulatory Barriers for Automated Vehicles](#): The National Highway Traffic-Safety Administration (NHTSA) seeks comments to identify any unnecessary regulatory barriers to Automated Safety Technologies, and for the testing and compliance certification of motor vehicles with unconventional automated vehicles designs, particularly those that are not equipped with controls for a human driver. Further, NHTSA seeks comments on the research that would be required to remove such regulatory barriers.

The Department intends to publish additional automated vehicle notices for public comments, as part of FAVP 3.0, on the [DOT Website](#). They should be also be published in the [Federal Register](#).

Performance Based Planning and Programming Webinar

January 25, 1:00 – 3:30 PM ET

FHWA and FTA speakers will provide an [overview of the Performance Based Planning and Programming Requirements](#), along with implementation timelines. Peer Presenters will share how they are coordinating and collaborating with key partners such as state DOTs, MPOs, and transit operators on Performance Based Planning and Programming. The goal of the webinar is to share the latest information and best practices to ensure consistency nationwide when implementing these requirements.

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
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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.