



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Volume 25, Number 1

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## Recently Completed Planning Studies

- Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Toole Design Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile
- [2018 Unified Planning Work Program](#)
- 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program
- Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

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There is a Mobile MPO meeting on **ASH WEDNESDAY at 2:00PM**. Also a TCC/CAC meeting of the Mobile MPO on January 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am. Please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. Trump will push Republicans to make infrastructure top 2018 priority in *Legislative Updates*, this week's *Just For Fun* are resolutions, and *In The News* are some great articles about the history of crossing the Bay, and a construction outlook for 2018. 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](http://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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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

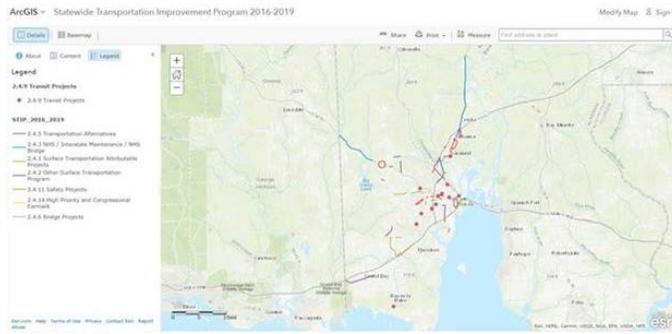
There were six submittals for the US 45 Feasibility Study last month. The Consultant Selection Committee reviewed the six firms RFQ's, and graded them according. The three firms that were shortlisted by the Consultant Selection Committee were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Neel-Schaffer and Volkert. Presentations and interviews will take place in January, and we will get started with the firm that is selected as soon as possible on this important project. 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](#)



## List of Authorized Projects for FY 2017

The Mobile MPO is currently advertising that the public can review all federally funded transportation projects that were authorized in Fiscal Year 2017 at the offices of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. Those interested in reviewing these projects can also view and download it online [HERE](#). In terms of dollars, there were over \$51.5 Million worth of federally assisted transportation projects authorized in FY 2017 for the Mobile MPO Study Area.

## 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 : 100066916 ( RW )  
 Federal aid number : NH 0042 (517)  
 County : MOBILE  
 Project Description : CONSTRUCT BRIDGE ON GLENWOOD ROAD OVER SR-42 (US-98)  
 Old Target start date : January 01, 2018  
 New Target start date : February 01, 2018

Project : 100052600 ( RW )  
 Federal aid number : STPMB 7508 (600)  
 County : MOBILE  
 Project Description : MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET  
 Old Target start date : March 01, 2018

New Target start date : May 01, 2018

Project : 100066565 ( CN )

Federal aid number : TIGER-FAUP 4917

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ONE MOBILE - COMPLETE STREET INITIATIVE TIGER GRANT FOR THE BROAD STREET CORRIDOR

Old Target start date : February 15, 2019

New Target start date : January 15, 2018

## Projects Within Region Let December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

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### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

- None at this time

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### **MOBILE COUNTY**

- For constructing the Load Test Program on I-10 at the Mobile River Bridge in Mobile. Length 8.332 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,983,792 to \$2,314,634 .

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

- For constructing the Offset Left Turn Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Base, and Pavement) and Traffic Signals on SR-42 (US-98) from 1000 feet south of the intersection of Parker Road to 1000 feet north of the intersection of Parker Road in Fairhope. Length 0.258 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$546,215 to \$667,596 .

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

### [Project Status](#)

## Legislative Updates

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### **At Camp David, Trump will push Republicans to make infrastructure top 2018 priority**

[Heidi M. Prybylska](#), USA TODAY Published 5:00 a.m. ET Jan. 5, 2018 | Updated 8:46 a.m. ET Jan. 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — President Trump plans to press Republican congressional leaders this weekend at Camp David to make a major infrastructure package their top legislative priority this year, as his administration readies a blueprint he'll tout in the State of the Union address on January 30, according to two White House officials.

The White House will release a proposal in mid to late January that will call for a wholesale change in the way the U.S. approaches big infrastructure projects, according to the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly because the plan is being finalized.

Trump's pledge to renew the country's roads, bridges and airports was a major populist promise from his 2016 presidential campaign. But it was put on hold as GOP congressional leaders pursued traditional Republican agenda items in his first year in office, including tax cuts and failed attempts to repeal and replace Obamacare.

At a presidential retreat in the Maryland mountains this weekend, one official said Trump will make clear that House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., should put infrastructure above other priorities including Ryan's push to overhaul entitlement programs.

Signing the tax bill late last year, Trump challenged Democrats to work with him on infrastructure in 2018. "I really believe infrastructure can be bipartisan," Trump said Dec. 22. "I actually wanted to save the easy one for the one down the road."

Yet Trump's confidence that Democrats — and Republican fiscal conservatives — are willing to play ball on infrastructure may be overblown. The main pothole on the road to infrastructure improvements will be securing funding, which will be even more challenging after Republicans pushed through a tax bill expected to add \$1 trillion to the national debt over the next decade along party lines.

"There's a desire among legislators in both parties to accomplish something significant in the area of infrastructure," said Dave Schnittger, a former deputy chief of staff to ex-House Speaker John Boehner, an Ohio Republican. "But the idea of doing a large scale package begs the obvious question, which is 'how do you pay for it?'"

Trump's plan would move the country away from a "project-based" system in which the federal government identifies infrastructure needs and gives money. The White House now plans to delegate that role to states and private investors, who would also provide the bulk of the funding.

The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that some \$2 trillion is needed to upgrade the country's transit systems and address solid and hazardous waste, levees, ports, railways and schools.

The Trump plan aims to generate \$1 trillion for improvements, including a \$200 billion federal funding commitment, according to the White House officials. The rest would be made up by state and local governments and private investors.

The federal dollars will go toward incentives for private investors, rural projects, and "transformative" projects such as high-speed rail or major tunnels, according to the officials. It will also include money for workforce development.

The plan to boost private sector participation would be a big change from the country's previous approach.

According to the nonprofit research group Rand Corporation, 97% of the funding for U.S. highways, bridges and roads comes from public sources. What's more, Trump's own budget request for fiscal 2018 cut infrastructure spending overall by \$55 billion.

Unlike with taxes, which passed with a simple majority, Trump will need to reach a 60-vote threshold in the Senate to pass infrastructure legislation – which means he'll need at least nine Democrats to sign on board. And many have said they are skeptical of placing so much responsibility for public works in the hands of private investors and localities. Continue [HERE](#)

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## Congressman Byrne Says Look For Continued 'Chips' Funding (and discusses I-10 Mobile River Bridge)



By [Bill Riales](#) Published: January 3, 2018, 11:40 pm

While the U.S. Senate reconvened today, the U.S. House is set to convene on Monday. Before that, Alabama Representative Bradley Byrne discussed some of the issues important to the Gulf Coast. He spoke with News 5 This Morning's Jessica Taloney and Bill Riales.

Byrne said he expects long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, 'CHIP,' to be approved. The program allows parents who don't qualify for Medicare to buy affordable insurance for their children.

"We re-authorized that and put some money into it that will get us through the next several weeks—but, we need to have a long-term deal, I think we're very close to having that—this program enjoys very strong bipartisan support. I do not anticipate that there's going to be a problem with that at all," Byrne said.

The program affects some 85 thousand children in Alabama and about 9 million nationwide.

There may also be a welcome relief from traffic congestion for Gulf Coast drivers in about a year. Byrne says he expects a plan for a new bridge over the Mobile River and other highway improvements to move forward. It's a plan that has been discussed for more than a decade between federal and state transportation officials. The Alabama Department of Transportation will build the bridge using mostly federal money.

Byrne said, "They've got four or five different what they call 'concessions,' groups of companies that work together to do it. They'll have a competitive process with them and they'll pick one of those concession groups and they'll start building that bridge in about a year from now."

ALDOT is leaning toward a plan to make the bridge a toll bridge to help pay for it.

Byrne said he also believes that Republicans will retain control of the House after the mid-term elections. He concedes however they may not have as big a majority.

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## Funding Opportunities

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### 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.

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### 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](#)

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### 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](http://www.grants.gov) in your browser.

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## Just For Fun

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### Top Ten News Year's Resolutions for driving in South Alabama

1. Do not block the intersection at Dauphin Street and Springdale...



2. Do not make a new exit lane on I-65 at Moffett...



3. Do not take up more than one parking spot...



4. Do not drive something too big into the Bankhead Tunnel...



5. Do not use oncoming lane as a dual left turn lane at Semmes Walmart...



6. Do not TEXT AND DRIVE EVER, ESPECIALLY ON AIRPORT BLVD!!



7. Do not go, just because the second light in front of you went green



8. Do not zoom real fast on US31 in Spanish Fort in order to jump in front of everyone before the lane drops...



9. Do not brake in the Wallace Tunnel!!!



10. Stay in the left lane unless passing...



## In the News

The Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization will hold two public workshops to gain input for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in Florida and the Lillian and Orange Beach areas of Baldwin County, Alabama.

Here's the schedule:

- Jan. 9, 5:30 p.m. at Lexington Terrace Community Center, 900 S. Old Corry Field Road, Pensacola
- Jan. 11, 5:30 p.m. at Perdido Key Community Center, 15500 Perdido Key Drive, Pensacola

Each workshop will supply comment cards, maps and information about the plan to collect input from community members.

Florida-Alabama TPO Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan staffers will use collected information to evaluate existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and develop a shared non-motorized transportation vision for the plan area.

Visit Move Safe Emerald Coast on Facebook for more information.

Alternatively, call Brittany Ellers at 332-7976, ext. 220.

## Crossing Mobile Bay – a century-old problem for southwest Alabama

- WRITTEN BY [JEFF POOR](#)
- ON JANUARY 3, 2018 AT 11:30 AM CST



For well over a hundred years, southwest Alabamians have grappled with getting from Mobile across the Mobile Bay to Baldwin County and back, and that is a problem that predates the founding of the state.

If you have made that journey recently, you would know there are a number of ways to cross the bay. Most people use Interstate 10, which includes the Wallace Tunnel to get to a series of bridges known as the Bayway. Some use U.S. 90-98, which consists of the Bankhead Tunnel and the causeway built in 1926.

Another option is the Cochrane–Africatown USA Bridge, the designated truck route, to get to the Causeway or the Bayway via Prichard.

For those with a little more time, you opt to head north on Interstate 65 and cross the “Dolly Pardon Bridge,” then head back south to Spanish Fort. Finally, if you’re feeling up for a scenic excursion, you can head down to Dauphin Island and take a \$16 ferry ride to Fort Morgan across the Mobile Bay.

Either way you go, the 400-plus square mile geographic water barrier is evident. And now in 2018, all those routes are inadequate for the area’s transit needs.

In the early days of automobile transportation in Alabama, the primary means to get from Mobile to Baldwin County’s Eastern Shore was by ferry. It was expensive, and that made Baldwin County isolated from Mobile.



From the 1925 Alabama State Highway Department Map

In 1927, the Cochrane Bridge, a vertical lift bridge, opened. It connected Mobile to the newly built Causeway, and ultimately ferry transit was no longer needed.



From the State Road Map of Alabama, Fall of 1928

Other east-west means of crossing the Mobile River opened in the decades to follow. The Bankhead Tunnel came in the 1940s, providing a more direct approach than the Cochrane Bridge to the Causeway from downtown Mobile.



From the 1942 Alabama Highway Department road map

In the 1970s, both I-10 and I-65 were completed, offering travelers those two routes from the north and east into the city.



From the Official 1977-78 Alabama Highway Map

The latest addition to crossing the Mobile Bay came in the early 1990s with the cable-stayed Africatown-Cochrane Bridge that replaced the above mentioned Cochrane vertical lift bridge.



Cochrane-Africatown USA Bridge, Mobile, Ala. / Wikipedia

Even with all these means to cross Mobile Bay, traffic is still an issue for the primary route, which is the Interstate 10 Bayway. At the time of the construction, the Eastern Shore cities of Spanish Fort, Daphne and Fairhope in Baldwin County weren't expected to be the bedroom communities for Mobile that they are today.

Now in addition to the usual east-west traffic that is making the trek on I-10 to points anywhere from Jacksonville, Fla. to Los Angeles, Calif. you have commuters headed back and forth from home to work.

Tuesday in an appearance on Mobile radio's FM Talk 106.5, Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Fairhope) hinted the latest iteration of the solution to crossing Mobile Bay could be part of President Donald Trump's infrastructure plan.

Byrne told host Sean Sullivan that Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao was familiar with the region's need for a new crossing but was waiting to see if it would indeed be part of Trump's plan.

"I can't give you the precise particulars because we haven't seen the president's infrastructure plan," he said. "But I think you're going to see the president – we'll be working with him and the Department of Transportation prioritizing our bridge project because it fits exactly in with what he's trying to do."

Given the state would have to offer up a portion of the financing for the bridge, a new I-10 bridge will likely include a toll, Byrne said.

"Yes, it will be [a toll bridge] because the state is trying to come up with its money and the state's been very clear that they're going to come up with their money by putting the toll on the bridge."

If completed as a toll bridge, the new I-10 bridge would be Alabama's most significant toll project by far.

There are already a few toll bridges in Alabama – bridges crossing the Alabama and Tallapoosa Rivers north of Montgomery, the Joe Mallisham Parkway near Tuscaloosa and the Foley Beach Expressway headed from mainland Baldwin County to Orange Beach.

A new toll I-10 bridge would easily dwarf these projects in size given the amount of traffic it would serve. The latest figures estimate at least 53,000 automobiles in both directions enter in and out of the western side of the Wallace Tunnel daily, and that is likely to increase. Will this bridge be enough to last at least for the next 100 years?

Given the prior solutions have not lived up to long-term expectations (at least by highway standards in the United States), one has to ask if in the year 2050 the government will once again be seeking another solution.

Whatever the current solution is, it is long overdue. Accidents on I-10 headed in and out of the Wallace Tunnel are a daily occurrence that results in traffic backing up several miles.

Even though it wasn't a big issue in the last U.S. Senate special election, making a new I-10 bridge priority is something voters in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, the second- and sixth-most populous counties respectively, could be swayed by in the upcoming gubernatorial election later this year.

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## 2018 construction outlook: National optimism tempered in Alabama

Updated Jan 3, 3:14 PM; Posted Jan 3, 3:10 PM

By Lawrence Specker [lspecker@al.com](mailto:lspecker@al.com)

In the construction industry, optimism is rampant that 2018 will be a good year - but in Alabama, those high hopes seem to be more modest.

That's based on information from the Associated General Contractors of America: On Wednesday the industry association released a survey of its membership in which more than a thousand firms shared their expectations for the new year.

The general sense of optimism was obvious, with 75 percent of the responding firms saying they expect to hire more people in 2018. But they also voiced some concerns: It's gotten hard to hire qualified people, many say. And while the Trump administration has been business-friendly so far, builders are still waiting to see whether it'll deliver on the president's promised wave of infrastructure spending.

One key question asked firms to compare their 2018 hopes to their 2017 experience in "the available dollar volume of projects you compete for in 2018." This was broken down into more than a dozen separate categories, such as higher education, manufacturing, highway, transportation and multifamily residential.

On the national level, there was optimism across the board. On the whole, the number of those who expected more money on the table overwhelmingly outnumbered those who expected less. That held true of every individual category. For all categories combined, 53 percent said they expected more dollars to be up for grabs, 37 percent expected about the same, and only 9 percent expected a leaner year ahead.

The pattern was very similar for the South as a region: Contractors said they expected growth in every category. Overall, 57 percent expected bigger things, 35 percent expected 2018 to be about the same, and 8 percent expected a contraction.

Alabama's overall results were superficially similar: 53 percent said they expected a big year, 40 percent said about the same, 7 percent saw a tighter 12 months. But that masked some extreme variations in the various categories.

Alabama's contractors were more bullish on federal projects, manufacturing projects, power projects and water/sewer construction. But pessimists outnumbered optimists when it came to a handful of categories: Hospitals and multifamily residential sites (17 percent better/ 25 percent worse/ 58 percent same); retail/warehouse/lodging (15 percent better, 31 percent worse, 54 percent same); higher education (17 percent better/ 33 percent worse/ 50 percent same); and public buildings (9 percent better/ 36 percent worse/ 55 percent same).

### 5. Compared to 2017, do you expect the available dollar volume of projects you compete for in 2018 to be:

Market	Higher	Lower	Same	Net*
All projects	53%	7%	40%	47%
Manufacturing	50%	17%	33%	33%
Water/Sewer	42%	17%	42%	25%
Federal (e.g., VA, GSA, USACE, NAVFAC)	33%	17%	50%	17%
Highway	42%	25%	33%	17%
Transportation (e.g., transit, rail, airport)	42%	25%	33%	17%
Power	31%	15%	54%	15%
Private Office	29%	21%	50%	7%
K-12 School	25%	25%	50%	0%
Hospital	17%	25%	58%	-8%
Multifamily Residential	17%	25%	58%	-8%
Retail, Warehouse, Lodging	15%	31%	54%	-15%
Higher Education	17%	33%	50%	-17%
Public Building	9%	36%	55%	-27%

\*Net equals difference between number of "Higher" and "Lower" responses as percent of total.

Translation: Alabama contractors expect to be busy in the year ahead, but in a market with some definite hot and cold spots.

According to the Associated General Contractors of America, its Alabama results were based on responses from 18 members, whose 2017 work volume ranged from less than \$10 million to more than \$500 million.

Of the Alabama firms, 61 percent said they planned to hire more people in 2018. At the regional and national level, about 75 percent of firms said they planned to increase their workforce.

At all levels, firms said it was hard filling key openings, particularly for craft positions, and that they expected that difficulty to continue or even get worse. Many firms said they have sweetened the pot with higher base pay, bonuses or improved benefits; more than half said they expect to spend more on training and development.

And despite the sense that the administration is business-friendly, many continue to keep a wary eye on Washington, waiting to see if tax cuts actually will stimulate the economy and if deregulation will continue.

"While workforce issues remain their top concern, many contractors are also worried about competition and the impact of decisions made in Washington on their operations," said Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist. He said 28 percent of firms listed growth in federal regulations as one of their top concerns and 24 percent said one of their concerns was a lack of new infrastructure investments.

"The administration must also deliver on its promise to boost investments in infrastructure," said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association's chief executive officer. "And Congress and the Trump administration need to take steps to address chronic workforce shortages by passing a new Perkins Act and making it easier for local officials to set up construction-focused career and technical education programs."

Sandherr said the association would continue to lobby for "new federal, state and local measures to rebuild the pipeline for recruiting and preparing the next generation of construction professionals," and would work with administration officials "to help identify regulations that can be improved and others that can be removed."

(this should be Just For Fun)

## America is laughing at Oregon for having to pump its own gas

[Brian Manzullo](#), Detroit Free Press Published 12:09 p.m. ET Jan. 3, 2018 | Updated 12:35 p.m. ET Jan. 3, 2018

**Oregon passes a state law allowing self-service at rural gas pumps, which some residents fear is too 'hazardous' and may cause them to smell like gasoline**



(Photo: FeelPic, Getty Images/iStockphoto)

CONNECT TWEET 8 LINKEDIN 29 COMMENT EMAIL MORE

Jan. 1 was a monumental day in the state of Oregon, and not just because it rang in a new year.

A brand new state law went into effect that day, and it's a big one. It's a first for the Beaver State. And it's sending shock waves across all 98,000-plus square miles and all 4 million residents as we speak.

For the first time — in counties with fewer than 40,000 people — [Oregonians are allowed to pump their own gas](#).

Reread that last sentence. Take a moment to process it. *Oregon didn't pump its own gas*. And it still won't in its major counties. The only other state that doesn't allow you to pump your own gas is New Jersey.

► [Expect higher Michigan gas prices in 2018](#)

For Michigan — the birthplace of the automobile — this is unthinkable. Heck, for the rest of *America*, this is unthinkable. What's so complicated about pumping gas?!

It gets worse.

At least several Oregonians [are freaking out](#) about the new law.

Case in point: KTVL CBS 10 News in Medford, Ore., [posted this Facebook poll](#) on Dec. 29, asking followers if Oregon should allow self-serve gas stations statewide.

Here are some of the, um, more concerned responses, and they're all quite serious:

◆ "Not a good idea, there are lots of reason to have an attendant helping, one is they need a job too. Many people are not capable of knowing how to pump gas and the hazards of not doing it correctly. Besides I don't want to go to work smelling of gas when I get it on my hands or clothes. I agree Very bad idea."

◆ "I don't even know HOW to pump gas and I am 62, native Oregonian....I say NO THANKS! I don't want to smell like gasoline!"

◆ "I've lived in this state all my life and I REFUSE to pump my own gas. I had to do it once in California while visiting my brother and almost died doing it. This a service only qualified people should perform. I will literally park at the pump and wait until someone pumps my gas. I can't even"

So, to recap: Pumping your own gas is too difficult. It's too hazardous. It's too unsafe. And, heaven forbid, you might end up smelling like gasoline afterward. (Somewhere out there, Brian Fantana [is smiling at that](#) last one.)

To be fair, these Oregonians have a point: Pumping gas is a pretty difficult task, right up there with scraping your windshield and turning the heat on. And the fear of smelling like fuel is all too real when there isn't enough time in the day to shower.

Look, Oregon, if you're reading this, we're here to help. Here's [a handy guide from roadandtrack.com](#) on how to pump your own gas. It's only 13 steps long.

In the meantime, while the rest of us point and laugh, maybe don't proclaim [you're a better state than Michigan](#) for a while. Okay?

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## Transportation Research

### Connected Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles (CV/AV)

Connected Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles (CV/AV) present new opportunities, uncertainties, and challenges for planning agencies with respect to identifying, prioritizing, and evaluating projects and programs. To help answer some of the questions we've been hearing, the Office of Planning has launched a [focus area webpage](#) to address this topic.

The CV/AV Focus Area Webpage is a starting point to help planners better understand these technologies and their impact on transportation planning, as well as methods for addressing these technologies in the planning process. This Focus Area Webpage has a range of resources covering a general introduction to the technologies as well as advanced planning techniques that are applicable to CV/AV and other emerging technologies. Basic level resources include the [Connected Vehicle Impacts on Transportation Planning: Primer](#), which illustrates how connected vehicles may be considered across the range of transportation planning processes and products developed by states, metropolitan planning organizations, and local agencies. The webpage also provides links to advanced resources in *Planning for Operations, Performance-Based Planning and Programming and Scenario Planning*. Finally, the webpage offers a list of upcoming and recent events related to Planning for CV/AV.

Planning for CV/AV is an emerging hot topic, so we encourage you to check back on this webpage periodically for updates and new information. The FHWA Office of Planning and Office of Policy will also release guidance on scenario planning for automated driving systems in 2018, and other projects related to modeling and data analysis for connected and automated vehicles will also be available within the next year.

### 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.

### FTA Strategic Transit Automation Research Plan Roadmap

Earlier this month, FTA released its five-year [Strategic Transit Automation Research \(STAR\) Plan](#), which defines a research agenda with three work areas to explore the use of automated driving systems in bus transit. The three focus areas that the research projects fall into are: enabling research, integrated demonstrations, and strategic partnerships. The plan lays out each year and gives a brief description of each project. For example, year one has a project that will explore user acceptance of automation for transit involving bus drivers, passengers, and other transit users. Additionally, FTA will publish seven notice of funding opportunities for demonstration projects over the course of the plan.

### 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.vieworks.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.