



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 27, 2016

Volume 18, Number 9

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SARPC is having an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Workshop on May 31st. (See *RPO Updates*). We will have speakers discussing what is required of an ADA Transition Plan. There will be a MPO meeting on June 1, 2016. (See *Mobile MPO Updates*). There are several grant applications due next Friday June 3rd, including the Mobile MPO's Urbanized FY 2016 TAP funding and the (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (See *Funding Opportunities*).

We hope everyone has a safe Memorial Day weekend!

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Meeting June 1, 2016

There will be a MPO meeting on June 1st to go over the Draft Unified Planning Work Program. The TCC/CAC met and reviewed the document this past Wednesday. The Draft 2017 UPWP will be provided at the meeting and members will get a final copy later this summer. The UPWP must be adopted by September 15, 2016. We did not have a quorum on March 2nd, so those items that were on the March 2nd agenda will be on the agenda at the June 1st meeting in addition to a couple of TIP amendments. We have a new TCC/CAC member, Ms. Carletta Davis was appointed to the Citizen's Advisory Committee by the City of Prichard. We welcome her and look forward to working with her.

MPO FUNDING

The Mobile MPO apportionment was increased with the passing of the new FAST ACT Transportation Funding Bill. The per capita amount was \$6.8 Million per year under the bill MAP-21. That has been increased to \$7.1 million per year, which equates to being able to program almost \$9 million per year once the 20% local match is included. Our Attributable funding schedule has been moved around a bit; however, even though we had an increase in potential funding, we are still negative in terms of budgeting projects in year 2020 and 2021.

FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Designated Recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 *Urban Area Funding* for the Mobile Urban Area. Our funding under the FAST ACT has been increased to \$314,000 annually.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. FTA provides funding for transit related services that assist the Mobile Urban Area's population of seniors & individuals with disabilities.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission by **noon on June 3, 2016**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. **Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.**

ADA TRANSITION PLANS

The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline (July 20th, 2016).

Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator which creates a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The inventory is complete for all urban local governments within the Mobile MPO, and the consultant is now working with the ADA Coordinators on the text of each of the ADA documents, grievance procedures, and the potential for a full ADA Transition plan, not just Public Rights of Way. The deadline for Mobile County and the cities within the Mobile MPO to have an adopted ADA Transition Plan for public Rights of Way, is July of this year.

RPO Updates

SARPC is having an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Workshop on May 31st. As you may be aware, the Federal Highway Administration has ramped up enforcement of ADA laws as they pertain to federal funding for road, bridge, sidewalks, and the like. Many of our member governments have been coming to us with ADA questions. There will be a lot of good discussion that will help clear up what is expected in order to receive federal funding. This is a 2 hour workshop with lunch (\$15), and one of the speakers is Mr. Graham Sisson, the Executive Director of GOOD, (Governor's Office on Disability). He will be speaking on the city/county responsibilities of municipal/county buildings, properties, etc. We will have speakers on the ADA requirements of public ROW (sidewalks) and vertical, or buildings side of it as well.

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
Americans with Disabilities Workshop (ADA)
May 31, 2016, 10:00 AM, SARPC Board Room

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, cities and counties must remove barriers to provide access to programs and services in existing municipal / county facilities; this includes sidewalks and ramps. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission would like to provide a workshop to its RPO member governments to educate local agencies on the importance of having an ADA Transition Plan, and being compliant with the ADA. Some common problems local governments may have (from ADA.GOV)

- Local governments often have failed to ensure that the whole range of the city's services, municipal buildings, and programs meet Title II's program access requirements.
- Local governments may believe that they have no duty to make changes to historically significant buildings and facilities to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Local governments often do not provide necessary curb ramps to ensure that people with disabilities can travel throughout the city in a safe and convenient manner.
- Local governments often fail to provide qualified interpreters or assistive listening devices for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at public events or meetings. In addition, local governments often fail to provide materials in alternate formats (Braille, large print, or audio cassettes) to individuals who are blind or have low vision.
- Local governments may fail to consider reasonable modifications in local laws, ordinances, and regulations that would avoid discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

We will have several speakers concerning ADA Compliance as it pertains to local governments. Please register with Monica Williamson at mwilliamson@sarpc or (251)706-4613. Lunch will be provided, so there will be a \$15 registration fee cash or check. Please register by 5/28/2016.

Projects Within Region Let May 27th, 2016

Mobile County

For constructing the Demolition of Building Structures and Site Improvements on Old Water Street, Eslava Street, Royal Street, and Water Street in Mobile. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$163,960 to \$200,396

Baldwin County

There are no projects at this time.

Escambia County

There are no projects at this time.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Senate Approves FY2017 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill

The Senate approved their fiscal year (FY) 2017 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) Appropriations bill last Friday by a vote of 89 to 8. The bill was paired with the FY2017 Military Construction and Veteran's Affairs Appropriations bill for consideration on the Senate floor. The bill totals \$56.5 billion, an \$827 million decrease from the FY2016 enacted level. The bill provides highway and transit dollars consistent with the levels included in the recently-enacted surface transportation bill, the FAST Act. It recommends \$525 million for National Infrastructure Investment (known as TIGER) grants, \$25 million above the FY2016 enacted level and \$725 million below the President's FY2017 budget request. For HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the bill provides \$3 billion (level funding with last year and \$200 million above the President's FY2017 budget request). The bill provides \$950 million for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (level funding with last year and the President's FY2017 request).

House Appropriations Committee Releases FY2017 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill

Last week, the House Transportation and Housing Urban Development (T-HUD) Appropriations Subcommittee approved by voice vote its fiscal year (FY) 2017 spending bill. The bill totals \$58.2 billion, a 1.5 percent increase over current levels. The bill provides highway and transit dollars consistent with the levels included in the recently-enacted surface transportation bill, the FAST Act. It provides \$450 million for National Infrastructure Investment (known as TIGER) grants, \$50 million below the FY2016 enacted level and \$800 million below the President's FY2017 budget request. For HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the bill provides \$3 billion (level funding with last year and \$200 million above the President's FY2017 budget request). The bill provides \$950 million for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (level funding with last year and the President's FY2017 request).

Graves, Norton Push for House Tax Writers to Include Trust Fund Fix in Tax Reform Plan

The chairman of the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee said he and his ranking member are mounting an effort to convince the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee to include a long-term revenue fix for the Highway Trust Fund in any tax reform measure it considers.

Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., who chairs the subcommittee that is part of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, made his remarks in the T&I hearing room May 16 during an "Infrastructure Week" panel on emerging disruptive technologies, sponsored by AASHTO and the Eno Center for Transportation.

Before he joined that panel for discussion, Graves told the audience that in the five-year FAST Act Congress passed in December lawmakers left undone the issue of how to bolster the trust fund for more than a few years at a time. Instead, lawmakers paid for that surface transportation bill with short-term provisions unrelated to transportation.

"We do have to find a long-term solution to keep the Highway Trust Fund healthy for a long time to come," Graves said. "So we are asking the Ways and Means Committee to come up with those ideas."

Graves said he and Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., his subcommittee's ranking Democrat, are seeking co-sponsors and industry support for a bipartisan "dear colleague" letter to Ways and Means leaders. Graves said that as of May 16 about "30-plus" members of Congress had signed on.

AASHTO is among industry groups supporting the effort, said Jim Tymon, the association's chief operating officer.

It also comes as the American Road & Transportation Builders Association has been [urging its members and others to call on Congress](#) to make a permanent trust fund fix part of any tax overhaul. ARTBA is also among the groups that have specifically endorsed the Graves-Norton letter.

The efforts are under way now because Ways and Means is [expected to issue a "blueprint" in June](#) for a broad tax reform plan its leaders would introduce as legislation in 2017.

A draft of Graves-Norton letter said that "over the past 30 years, all HTF revenue enhancements have been made as part of larger tax and deficit reduction packages . . . Accordingly, as the [Ways and Means] committee pursues tax reform over the coming months and years, we urge you to consider the sweeping impact tax policy has on the HTF and our transportation network. Not only do our roads and highways depend on a positive, long-term solution, but the American economy does as well."

Among long-term funding options, Graves told the Infrastructure Week audience that "everything's on the table," but he made clear he does not favor

relying on the gas tax – currently the main source of dedicated trust fund receipts.

Graves said the motor fuel tax is regressive, in that it hits lower-income drivers hardest, and no longer adequately serves as a road user fee for the growing fleet of high-efficiency or alternative-fuel vehicles.

He said he also wants to hear from state officials about what they think Congress should be considering.

The range of funding options include "everything from tolling to vehicle miles traveled to, we've heard, tire tax," he said. "There's a variety of different things, and we are looking at those alternatives."

Graves said he thought taxing vehicle miles traveled "probably has the most promise," but that "we're trying to figure out how to do that." He noted that VMT ideas range from GPS tracking to other options for those concerned about driver privacy, such as paying a flat fee or a yearly tax based on difference in odometer readings.

House Bill Would Delay Ozone Standard Implementation

The House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced a [controversial bill](#) this week that would delay implementation of the Administration's latest ozone air quality standards. The bill would delay the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone from 2017 until 2025 in addition to changing the timeline for future EPA reviews from every five years to every ten years. Supporters of the *Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2016* argue that states need more time and flexibility to implement 2008 standards before complying with new ones.

Funding Opportunities

FRA Announces \$25 Million Available for Rail Infrastructure Safety Upgrades Administration has requested \$2.3 billion in FY2017 budget: due June 14th

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that it is accepting applications from local governments, states and railroads for \$25 million in competitive grants to increase rail safety. Applicants can request funds for safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, including railroad crossings, track, tunnels, bridges, yards and other areas. The funding is made available from the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act that funds DOT.

"As the country's population increases, rail will play a larger role in transporting more people and more freight. To do that safely, we must invest in our rail infrastructure," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "These funds will help address some of the improvements that are essential for safe, reliable, and efficient railroad operations, and I encourage applications that achieve the maximum benefits possible with this limited funding."

FRA will accept applications until 5 PM EDT on June 14, 2016.

"To safely move tons of freight and millions of passengers each day in this country, we need to continually invest in safety. These dollars will help get us closer to that goal," FRA Administrator Sarah E. Feinberg said. "We hope to receive applications that can make these limited funds go as far as possible."

The Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvements Grant program can fund safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, but the focus of a project must be safety improvements. This includes the acquisition, improvement, or rehabilitation of intermodal facilities; improvements to track, bridges, and tunnels; upgrades to railroad crossings; and the separation of railroad crossings and roads.

FRA requested a total of \$2.3 billion for rail infrastructure safety upgrades as part of the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal. This includes \$520 million for competitive local rail facilities and safety project grants and \$1.8 billion for competitive rail infrastructure and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance grants.

2016 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Announcement - due June 3, 2016

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as the recipient of Urban Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, is announcing the availability of the FY 2016 TAP funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal) and the minimum match is 20%. Due to limited funding, only one application per entity will be accepted, and **only cities and counties that are members of the Mobile MPO may apply.**

New this round of funding is that estimates for the application's budget must be developed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Alabama.

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

Ten (10) copies of the application are due no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, June 3, 2016. Applications (paper only) are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) at:

SARPC
110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207
Mobile, AL 36602

You can pick up an application at our offices, or we can mail you the application and guidelines. Electronic versions of the applications are available online at www.mobilempo.org. Click the Mobile MPO tab, then the Transportation Alternatives tab.

EVERY PLACE COUNTS DESIGN CHALLENGE- Deadline June 3, 2016

The Ladders of Opportunity **EVERY PLACE COUNTS DESIGN CHALLENGE** seeks to raise awareness about bifurcated neighborhoods, identify innovative practices to reconnect communities, and inform the transportation life cycle.

Community Teams led by local and tribal government officials will compete to receive on-site technical assistance in a 2-day design session that seeks to improve access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for disconnected communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas with DOT and experts in the field.

Official Challenge Notice

Download the challenge notice with complete application information [HERE](#):
www.transportation.gov/opportunity/challenge/notice.

EDA releases FY 2016 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Funding Opportunity, announces new grant process to stream application process

EDA recently released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice announcing the availability of funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. The Public Works program is designed to provide funding for design, construction, or renovation of critical public infrastructure needed to create or retain jobs in a locality. The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program provides resources for both design, construction and renovation as well as technical assistance to support long-term job creation/retention in cases of sudden and severe economic events.

This funding solicitation also announced that EDA is moving towards a two-step application process where applicants can submit a proposal at any time to determine alignment with EDA priorities before submitting a full application. This means there are **no longer any quarterly deadlines for the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact EDA's state representative to develop their project and EDA application. To learn more about EDA's grant programs and opportunities, please feel free to contact Diane Burnett at dburnett@sarpc.org.

Federal Highway Administration Announces \$60 Million in Grants for Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies- Deadline June 3rd

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced \$60 million in grants to fund cutting-edge transportation improvement technologies that will improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure return on investment.

"This program will take technological innovation to a new level and help to make the entire transportation network more reliable for commuters, businesses, and freight shippers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "An efficient transportation system is the foundation of a strong economy."

The new program—Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD)—is aimed at addressing the concerns outlined in *Beyond Traffic*, the USDOT report issued last year that examines the challenges facing America's transportation infrastructure over the next three decades, such as a rapidly growing population and increasing traffic. Gridlock nationwide is expected to increase unless changes are made soon.

"Innovative technologies offer exciting solutions that can help meet the challenges outlined in *Beyond Traffic* and can improve safety and efficiency of transportation across the nation," said Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "This new program will help harness and support these technologies and push the boundaries of what is possible for the future of transportation in our country."

ATCMTD technologies are intended to improve the return-on-investment of safety, efficiency, system performance and infrastructure improvements, including the enhanced use of existing transportation capacity. The awards may be used for projects that use real-time traveler information, traffic data collection and dissemination, vehicle-to-infrastructure and an array of other dynamic systems and intelligent transportation system technologies.

ATCMTD was established under the "Fixing America's Surface Transportation" Act. State departments of transportation, local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations and other eligible entities are all invited to apply under the program.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published today is available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/funding.cfm

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

Transit Core Capacity Improvement Projects

FTA announced the availability of \$20.5 million in competitive grant funds to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects that are seeking or have recently received funding through FTA's Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program. The grant funds are provided through FTA's Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. Please see the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and a summary of the funding opportunity with links to application materials is available on the [FTA website](#). **Applications are due at midnight Eastern time on June 13, 2016.**

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$266 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Bus Service Nationwide

- deadline May 31st, 2016

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$266 million in competitive grant funding for bus programs nationwide. The funding consists of \$211 million in grants for buses and bus facilities projects, as well as \$55 million specifically for FTA's Low and No Emission (Low-No) bus program, which promotes technologically-advanced and environmentally-friendly buses. These investments will help advance the President's vision for a cleaner, 21st century transportation system that reduces carbon emissions while expanding transportation options for families.

"Transit buses are a lifeline to opportunity for countless Americans, but too often these buses are outdated and unreliable," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "As demand for transit grows and our nation's population continues to expand, these much-needed funds will help bring communities the latest technologies to strengthen and improve their bus infrastructure."

Eligible projects include those that replace, rehabilitate, lease, and purchase buses and related equipment as well as projects to purchase, rehabilitate, construct or lease bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance.

"Our state and local partners across the country will benefit from the increased funding and flexibility available through this program," said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. "With a large and growing maintenance backlog throughout the public transportation industry, it is vital for local agencies to have additional resources to address their community's needs."

FTA will award the grants to eligible transit agencies, state transportation departments, and Indian tribes on a competitive basis. Projects will be evaluated by criteria outlined in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), including the need for investment in bus transit systems, benefits to the community (including economic and workforce development), implementation of low and no-emission technologies, and integration with local and regional long-term planning.

Transportation contributes about 27 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and the Administration has committed to major reductions in emissions. The FTA funds to help public transportation agencies purchase advanced technology, clean and efficient buses will help to reduce transportation emissions.

The Low-No Bus Program is a down payment on the administration's 2017 budget proposal. Over a 10-year period, the "21st Century Clean Transportation

Plan” invests an average of nearly \$20 billion per year in new funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide new ways for families to get to work, to school, and to the store. The Budget would expand transit systems in cities, fast-growing suburbs, and rural areas; make high-speed rail a viable alternative to flying in major regional corridors; modernize our freight system; and expand the successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program to support high-impact, innovative local projects.

The [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in December 2015, restored FTA’s competitive Bus & Bus Facilities Program, authorizing it through 2020. The FAST Act also made the Low-No program, previously funded and managed under FTA’s research programs, a subset of the larger competitive bus program.

The previous round of Low-No funding was [announced](#) in September 2015, and project selections are expected in the coming months.

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

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$5.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Mobility Focused on Healthcare

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the availability of \$5.3 million in competitive grant funds to improve public transportation options that increase access to healthcare for those who lack good transportation choices.

“We know it can be challenging for many people to travel to medical appointments, and missing them can lead to re-hospitalizations and poorer health,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “This new grant opportunity sets the stage for transit agencies and community organizations to develop local solutions that provide ladders of opportunity, improve health outcomes, and reduce health care costs.”

FTA’s Rides to Wellness Demonstration and Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grants will help build partnerships between health, transportation and other service providers to develop strategies that connect patients with public transportation options. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) appeared in today’s Federal Register.

The grants will further FTA’s Rides to Wellness initiative, which emphasizes public transportation as a strategy for people to access health services, resulting in greater preventive care, fewer unnecessary hospital readmissions, and lower costs. The initiative focuses on improving outcomes for those with chronic conditions and ensuring that at-risk populations can get to wellness visits, healthy food, and community services.

In part to help people take advantage of the healthcare expansion made possible by the Affordable Care Act, Rides to Wellness Coordinated Access and Mobility grants will encourage partnerships between public transportation agencies and the healthcare industry to devise solutions to access challenges.

“We’re excited at this opportunity to fund creative ideas that will result in solutions to the healthcare transportation puzzle,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan, who launched the Rides to Wellness initiative last year. “We know that when people have consistent, affordable transportation options to get to their healthcare providers, they receive appropriate preventive care instead of using emergency rooms and suffer fewer costly setbacks.”

The grants will focus on communities demonstrating mobility management, technological solutions, and effective partnerships. Grant applicants must include participating groups with stakeholders from the transportation, healthcare and human service sectors.

The [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), signed into law in December, authorizes a pilot program for innovative coordinated access and mobility that augments FTA’s Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. The FAST Act initiated the program with an initial \$2 million in first-year funding, expanding to \$3.5 million per year by Fiscal Year 2019. FTA supplemented the pilot program with funds from FTA’s Research Program.

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

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces Notice of Funding Availability for Infrastructure Projects

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the availability of credit assistance for critical infrastructure projects across the country through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. Secretary Foxx encouraged states and cities across the country to submit letters of interest for direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit through TIFIA as a result of the recently enacted Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

“The TIFIA credit program has a strong record of success in stimulating local economies and bringing critical transportation projects to communities that need them,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “This year, the added flexibility and streamlined review process should make it easier for a variety of applicants to take advantage of the funding opportunities, and to bring significant infrastructure developments to their neighborhoods.”

The FAST Act authorizes \$1.435 billion in capital over five years for the TIFIA credit assistance program. Historically, one dollar of TIFIA Program funds supported a TIFIA loan of approximately 14 dollars and resulted in infrastructure investment of up to 40 dollars, when taking into account other state, local and private sector investments.

A wide range of surface transportation infrastructure is eligible for TIFIA credit assistance, including highways, passenger and freight rail, public transit, intermodal freight facilities, and international bridges and tunnels. The FAST Act expands eligibility to include transit-oriented development and the capitalization of a rural projects fund within a state infrastructure bank.

In addition, for eligible small projects, the FAST Act allows TIFIA to reserve funding to offset the fees charged to applicants by TIFIA for financial and legal services. Because of the flexibility provided by the TIFIA programs, many qualified, small-scale and large-scale projects that might otherwise be delayed or shelved can move forward quickly, providing an immediate boost to jobs while laying a foundation for continued economic growth.

To date, the TIFIA program has provided \$22.7 billion in credit assistance to support more than \$82.5 billion in transportation infrastructure investments to help build 56 major transportation projects around the country. Updated information regarding TIFIA’s loan portfolio is available [here](#).

DOT’s Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC), which was announced in 2014, has expanded TIFIA’s ability to meet the needs of the nation’s transportation system. BATIC serves as a single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities, and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs, and explore ways to access private capital in public private partnerships (P3s). Since BATIC’s formation, DOT has closed over \$8 billion in financing to support \$21 billion in projects.

BATIC has also increased the number of non-traditional DOT credit program applicants, most significantly TIFIA-eligible inside-the-gate port projects. BATIC has facilitated interdepartmental coordination for mega-projects that need to access multiple DOT credit programs. It is also providing project finance capacity building resources for states and municipalities in conjunction with the BATIC Institute: An AASHTO Center for Excellence, which includes best practices papers, a P3 case study webinar series, and peer to peer exchanges on finance and development.

The TIFIA Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is available [here](#). Additional information about the TIFIA program is available at <http://www.transportation.gov/tifia>.

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

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](#).

Just For Fun

Pedestrian Crossings Turned Into Urban Art and Ads

Most of the people in the U.S. live in big cities surrounded by concrete and glass. Those with artistic souls and who enjoy a bit of color in their lives may feel trapped surrounded by all that grey and are constantly searching for ways to express themselves. That's where street art and urban art step in.

Many people associate urban art with graffiti, that are mostly illegal and many might find offensive. But there are plenty of other ways to give a fun twist to the dull city, one of which is using what you already have and making it more fun, like the pedestrian crossing or the crosswalk. That white-lined section designed for a safe crossing of the road simply begs for a makeover. And in recent years it's been getting it all over the world.

The potential of transforming the crosswalk into something more eye catching has even caught the attention of various marketing companies, using crosswalks as a form of an advertising billboard. [The results are some fine works of urban art.](#)





In the News

I-10 Eastbound Water Street On-Ramp Closure and improvements to Canal Street, Claiborne Street, and Texas Street Interchange

You are cordially invited to attend the Public Involvement Meeting scheduled by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) on the proposed project listed above. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, **June 14, 2016, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.**, in the Killian Room at the International Trade Center located at 250 North Water Street, Mobile, AL 36602. The meeting will be a "walk-in" information session with exhibits of the proposed project on display. It will follow an "open house" type format. There will be no speeches or formal presentations, so you may attend anytime between the above-mentioned hours. Representatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation will be on hand to discuss the project with you and answer questions. Comment sheets will be provided, which you may fill out and turn back in at the meeting, or send to us by mail, fax, or e-mail to swinfo@dot.state.al.us within ten business days after the meeting.

FASTLANE Grant Applications Totaling Nearly \$9.8 Billion

212 Applications Received for Infrastructure Projects

WASHINGTON – Last Friday, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation has received 212 applications totaling nearly \$9.8 billion for grants through the newly-created Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program.

The huge wave of interest in the first year of this program – with states and localities requesting over 13 times more funding than was available through FASTLANE – underscores the continuing need for infrastructure investment across the country.

"Transportation creates jobs and makes jobs of the future possible. We know there is pent up demand for projects that will speed up the delivery of goods and make America even more competitive. Today, we have even more evidence," said Secretary Foxx. "We're going to do our best to support high impact transportation projects that will lay a new foundation for job creation and exporting American made goods throughout the world."

Of the 212 applications received, 136 represent projects in urban areas, while the remaining 76 would support rural projects. The deadline for submitting applications was April 14, 2016. The Department of Transportation is currently reviewing all eligible applications.

The FASTLANE program was established in December 2015 as part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to fund critical freight and highway projects across the country. FASTLANE grants provide dedicated funding for projects that address major issues facing our nation's highways and bridges. For the first time in the U.S. Department of Transportation's 50-year history, the program establishes broad, multiyear eligibilities for freight infrastructure, including intermodal projects.

FASTLANE grants will address many of the challenges outlined in the USDOT report Beyond Traffic, including increased congestion on the nation's highways and the need for a strong multimodal transportation system to support the expected growth in freight movement both by ton and value. It is also in line with the Department's draft National Freight Strategic Plan released in October 2015, which looks at challenges and identifies strategies to address impediments to the efficient flow of goods throughout the nation.

For more information about FASTLANE grants, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/FASTLANEgrants>

States Ask Congress to Drop Plans to Rescind Billions in Highway Funds

Associations representing state departments of transportation, legislatures and the nation's governors worked this month to head off a Senate appropriations provision that could potentially take away billions of dollars in already-authorized highway funds.

The groups sent joint letters to Senate and House appropriations committee leaders warning that a proposed rescission of \$2.211 billion in contract authority for state DOTs, for the federal fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, could "[force states to cut actual highway expenditures](#) at a time when we need to be investing in our nation's infrastructure."

They also said the proposed fiscal 2017 rescission plus another \$7.6 billion in rescissions already scheduled to hit in 2020 under the five-year FAST Act have the effect of "potentially eliminating the modest investment gains made in the FAST Act."

The May 11 letters were signed by the executive directors of the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The Senate passed its appropriations bill May 19 that covered Department of Transportation spending, and which contained the \$2.2 billion rescission for the coming year.

AASHTO posted copies of the letters to appropriators on its [FAST Act portal](#).

The threat facing state highway spending stems from arcane federal budget procedures, and how Congress "scores" legislation against 10-year spending projections, said AASHTO senior staff officials. But the state groups warned congressional appropriators that the rescissions issue "is not a simple and harmless budgetary maneuver."

Jim Tymon, AASHTO's chief operating officer and formerly a federal budget specialist and staff director to the Highways and Transit Subcommittee for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, told the AASHTO Journal the Senate's proposed 2017 cut poses a stronger threat to states than many past rescissions. That's because of how quickly it would take effect and how narrowly it would apply.

State DOTs have already drawn up project lists for the year ahead, and most are on budget years that start in July instead of the federal year that starts in October. Many state legislatures have also wrapped up their year-ahead budgets, so they would not be able to quickly deal with any sudden federal funding cuts. And the Senate would apply the cuts to just a portion of federal highway programs.

"The Senate's proposed 2017 rescission would cause big programming headaches for state DOTs," Tymon said, "because many states have planned for projects that would be funded from the specific federal program categories that would be subject to that rescission."

AASHTO officials explained that Congress has traditionally, through long-term surface transportation bills such as the FAST Act, authorized the many highway account programs supported by the Highway Trust Fund to receive specific "contract authority" levels that are apportioned to states under a formula.

But to hold to agreed spending goals in annual appropriations bills, lawmakers also held states to lower levels of "obligation limitation" that capped what each state could actually spend in a given fiscal year – with that limit historically set about 10 percent below the contract authority amount, AASHTO staff said.

Over time, the gap between the authorized contract authority and the lower annual obligation limitation that states could actually use created a book-keeping balance of unspent highway contract authority that carried over from year to year, even though state DOTs could not reach into that balance and spend the so-called "excess" funds beyond their annual limits.

And in 14 times between 2002 and 2011, AASHTO staff said, Congress pulled back or "rescinded" some of that unspent balance of authorized authority to offset other federal spending or to reduce the overall deficit in lawmakers' long-term projections.

Now, in addition to targeting only the state DOTs' portion of unspent contract authority – as opposed to also applying the rescission more broadly to federal lands, earmarks and other types of highway funds – the Senate provision would force state DOTs to remove the unused contract authority funds in a uniform percentage across a specific portion of highway program categories.

AASHTO staff said that would prevent each state from protecting its highest-priority program allocations from the rescission – in other words, prevent states from spending actual dollars where they need them most, to make up for past contract authority they were not allowed to use.

The FAST Act's 2020 rescission of \$7.6 billion would also apply the contract authority cuts across a narrow range of programs, and could disrupt project plans for state DOTs unless Congress drops that requirement well ahead of the 2020 budget year.

The state groups provided a [state-by-state breakdown showing the potential total dollar losses](#) from the proposed 2017 cut and the FAST Act's 2020 rescission, and updated that breakdown May 23 based on new federal data.

For example, it shows that Arkansas, where a special legislative session is trying to find more road funding, could lose about \$28 million in a 2017 rescission and \$95 million more in 2020. A bigger state like Texas would face larger cuts of about \$172 million next year, \$590 million in 2020.

Tymon noted the proposed House appropriations bill that covers the U.S. Department of Transportation did not include the 2017 highway funds rescission, a development that gives states some hope the Senate provision might not become law for the year ahead.

But he warned that any eventual House-Senate conference on a final spending bill – or on a broader "omnibus" bill to fund the entire government – could still include some form of a rescission unless Senate appropriators agree to remove the provision.

He also said that what Congress is doing with the contract authority and rescissions appears to be unique to highway programs. While some other federal budget accounts provide contract authority to pay for construction programs, including those under the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, Congress has not rescinded contract authority from those programs the way it has from the highway program.

Low Gas Prices Expected To Fuel Surge In Memorial Day Traffic

By David Owens

The lowest Memorial Day weekend gas prices in a more than a decade are expected to increase the number of people hitting the road for the holiday weekend.

Nationwide, more than 38 million people are expected to travel and most of them will go by car. About 1.72 million New Englanders will be among those traveling and more than 1.5 million will be driving, according to AAA. More people are working and have a little extra money and that's prompting people to travel too, AAA said.

"The great American road trip is back thanks to low gas prices," AAA spokeswoman Amy Parmenter said.

The national average price for gasoline is \$2.31, 43 cents less than a year ago. In Connecticut, the average price is \$2.44, down about 42 cents from a year ago, according to AAA. Most drivers will pay the lowest Memorial Day gas prices since 2005, Parmenter said.

Transportation Research

Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development

Posted on: May 20, 2016 by Carrie Kissel

In March 2016, the NADO Research Foundation held a focus group on the link between transportation and economic development, and how state departments of transportation and regional planning and development organizations can work together to better plan for those issues in an integrated way. The focus group participants included regional, state, and federal agency staff and others with experience in both transportation and economic development programs. During the conversation, the focus group participants developed a definition of economic development that emphasizes doing economic development and transportation planning differently, and can be used to help frame related planning efforts:

Economic development in transportation involves deliberate interventions to produce tangible benefits that are specific to the context, are sustained over time, and make a place more resilient.

This new report, [Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a National Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development\(PDF\)](#), explores how the participants' definition of economic development can be applied in transportation planning. The report documents the themes of the focus group discussion, including economic development impacts, resilience, and state department of transportation (DOT) and regional planning and development organization roles in working together. Read about the highlights of the discussion and about noteworthy practices shared by participants that can institutionalize consideration of transportation and economic development together.

Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning

FHWA released a new [report](#) for transportation practitioners and decision-makers on considering equity in transportation planning. The paper defines equity in the bike and pedestrian program context, highlights recent research, and shares best practices and resources for fixing inequity.

[See the Future of Transportation](#)