



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, October 26th, 2018

Volume 28, Number 4

## In This Issue

- [MOBILE MPO UPDATES](#)
- [RPO UPDATES](#)
- [PROJECTS LET NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2018](#)
- [LEGISLATIVE UPDATES](#)
- [FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)
- [JUST FOR FUN](#)
- [IN THE NEWS](#)
- [TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH](#)

## 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](#)

## Contact Us

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Tom Piper

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Committee met last week; there will be a Mobile MPO meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 at 10:00 AM; see *Mobile MPO Updates*. Could there be more spending on ports? see *Legislative Updates*. *In The News*, a better experience for Downtown Mobile parking and a new bridge in Baldwin County. Is there a way to keep birds from grounding airplanes? Find out, *Just For Fun*.

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 meetings

There will be a Mobile MPO meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 at 10:00 AM. The TCC/CAC met on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and recommended the following projects to be brought forth to the Mobile MPO Policy Board. The *Destination 2040* Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be modified to account for the tolling of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. When the LRTP was adopted, tolling was not a financial commitment. To assist in the planning process, the [LRTP will be modified](#) to account for the tolling along with changes to the Bike/Ped Element, the Environmental Justice Element, and the Future Traffic Volumes. Also, the Mobile MPO will review and adopt the PM2 performance measures for bridge and pavement condition, and there are various changes to be made to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program:

#### DEMONSTRATION FUNDS

100062412 (CN) I-10 Mobile River Bridge And I-10 Bayway Widening From Exit 24 (Broad Street) to Mobile County Line; July 26, 2019; \$1,102,000,000  
100062411 (UT) I-10 Mobile River Bridge And I-10 Bayway Widening From Exit 24 (Broad Street) to Mobile County Line, March 01, 2019; \$10,000,000

#### INTESTATE MAINTENANCE

100056331 (PE) I-10 East Tunnel Interchange Bridge Bearing Rehabilitation; DELETE  
100056332 (CN) I-10 East Tunnel Interchange Bridge Bearing Rehabilitation; DELETE  
100067507 (CN) Resurfacing on I-65 from 1.1 Miles North of SR-13 (US-43) to SR-225; 1/25/2019; \$3,232,705  
100067506 (PE) Resurfacing on I-65 from 1.1 Miles North of SR-13 (US-43) to SR-225; \$49,504

#### NATIONAL HIGHWAY

100060154 (CN) SR-158 Extension Lott Road Overpass And Jug Handle. Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Bridge (EB Seabury Creek Tributary and Partial Lott Road) Old Engineers Estimate: \$32,400,000; New Estimate \$20,000,000; 6/28/2019  
100066639 (CN) Resurfacing on SR-42 (US-98) From Magnolia Grove Parkway to Stimpson Lane; 2/22/2019; \$2,386,416  
100066636 (CN) Resurfacing On SR-163 from the North End of the Dog River Bridge; to the South End of the I-10 Overpass; 12/7/2018; \$2,559,851

#### STP ATTRIBUTABLE MOBILE

100037215 (CN) Zeigler Boulevard, Forest Hill Dr to Athey Rd (Additional lanes) FY 2019; Old Cost Estimate \$13,698,359; New Cost Estimate \$17,650,000  
100046895 (CN) Zeigler Boulevard, Cody Rd to Schillinger Rd (Additional lanes) FY 2019; Old Cost Estimate \$4,195,000 New Cost Estimate \$9,400,000  
100052459 (UT) Dauphin Street Additional Lanes from Sage Ave. to West of I-65 at Springhill Memorial Hospital was FY 2019, now FY 2021; \$283,574  
100052460 (CN) Dauphin Street Additional Lanes from Sage Ave. to West of I-65 at Springhill Memorial Hospital was FY 2019, now FY 2021; \$7,070,000  
100052462 (RW) Three Notch Road (CR-32) Additional Lanes from Schillinger Road to McDonald Road was FY 2019, now FY 2021; \$933,346  
100052463 (UT) Three Notch Road (CR-32) Additional Lanes from Schillinger Road to McDonald Road was FY 2019, now FY 2022; \$458,990  
100059789 (RW) New Alignment of CR-25 (McFarland Road) from CR-28 (Old Pascagoula Road) to CR-358 (Three Notch Road) was FY 2019, now FY 2020; \$6,060,000  
100052601 (UT) McGregor Avenue Widening from Airport Boulevard to Dauphin Street and Installation of a Roundabout at Dauphin Street Old Target start date: December 01, 2018, New Target start date: November 01, 2019; \$1,500,000  
100052601 (CN) McGregor Avenue Widening from Airport Boulevard to Dauphin Street and Installation of a Roundabout at Dauphin Street Old Target start date: December 01, 2018, New Target start date: November 01, 2019; \$3,382,411

#### BP FUNDS

100068576 (CN) SR-158 Extension from 0.5 Mile East Of Glenwood Road To West Of Lott Road (SR-217). Grade Drain, Base, Pave, and Bridge (EB Collins Creek, EB McCrary Road, and EB Collins Creek Tributary) 9/14/2018; \$30,005,229

**Congressman Bradley Byrne Keynote Speaker at AARC Conference**

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The Alabama Association of Regional Councils represents Alabama's twelve Regional Councils and Alabama's Area Agencies on Aging. In addition to providing technical assistance to state and local governments our members also provide services to senior citizens.

Each year AARC holds a widely attended conference to exchange information, concepts and ideas to assist in the State's continued growth and development, from concurrent tracks on Planning, Economic Development, Transportation and Senior Services.

The AARC Conference continues to be a major tool in uniting leaders from various governmental entities, civic organizations and the private sector, creating networking opportunities with the primary purpose of improving the lives of our Alabama citizens and communities.

This year the conference was held at Point Clear. Congressman Bradley Byrne was the key note speaker to kick off the conference.



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### **Mobile MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting**

The Mobile MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the GM&O Building this past Wednesday. Mr. Vince Calametti with ALDOT was on hand to give an update on Bike/Ped accessibility over the Mobile River. The meeting focused heavily on discussing the inclusion of Bike/Ped facilities on the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The committee voted to amend the Bike/Ped section of the Long Range Transportation Plan to include: a detailed description of a Belvedere on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; Bike/Ped Facilities on the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge; a shared use path from the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to Beauregard Street; a shared use path from the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to Battleship Memorial Park, and Value Added Options. The Value Added Options include: a 12 foot wide shared use path on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; an elevator and stair tower on the east main span pier of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; and connecting the Bike/Ped path from the Battleship Memorial Park to the Eastern Shore. Also discussed were upcoming road projects that will include Bike/Ped facilities. The LRTP will be modified at the MPO Policy Committee Meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

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### **South Alabama Freight Forum (SAFF)**

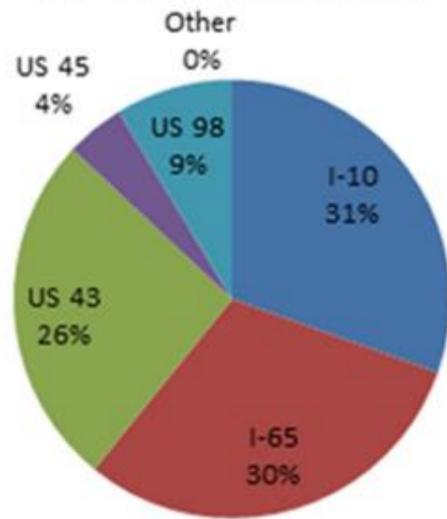
Recently, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission housed a freight forum which consisted of staff of local governments, and individuals that are involved in the freight community in South Alabama. The idea of the forum is to find out the problems in the freight community, and develop solutions. There is A LOT going on in Mobile right now with the channel to be dredged, Walmart, Airbus, Austal, and it all leads to trucks, and more trucks; they are the backbone of this country.

The forum was also an opportunity to inform the freight community about various surface infrastructure projects like Water Street, McDonald Road Extension, and the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. That agenda item actually seemed to have the most interest from the freight community; what projects are going to be done, and when.

In our efforts to update the freight element of the Long Range Transportation Plan, we have developed a freight survey to be shared with the freight community. The results and data from this survey, will compliment data we purchased from INRIX, and the APM Terminal Survey, to give a snap shot of where trucks are coming from and going to. In the travel demand modeling world, this is an important piece of information.

### **SAFF SURVEY RESULTS**

## Preferred Routes



Interstates are the most preferred routes, as it is less congested and it is easily accessible to the ports. This is followed by US Routes; US 43, US 98 and US 45. Even though these are the preferred routes, they have also been identified as having chokepoints along them. Throughout I-10, three chokepoints have been identified at the intersections of I-65, SR181, and all along the Bayway beginning at the tunnels. There were complaints that US 43 gets congested because of the low speed limits, despite it being a four lane divided highway. Rail crossings along the route were also pointed out as being a source of congestion. US 98 near the Mississippi state line was recognized as in need of additional lanes to no longer classify as an area of congestion. Aside from the preferred, the intersection of Springhill and Mobile Street was identified as a chokepoint.

Inquiries included on how the Bayway tolling and Water Street improvements would impact businesses. Some surveyors replied that neither should impact their operations. Most replied that it would increase costs and delays, and some said they would pass the costs to manufactures. There were concerns that the Water Street improvements may restrict access to the ship yards, further impacting operations.

Surveyors rated the area routes as a whole and also commented what Law Enforcement Officers (LEO)s could do to help improve it. Access management and road conditions were rated mostly as neutral but leaning slightly unfavorable. LEOs were highly suggested to enforce texting and driving in the left lane, to reduce distracted drivers and make thru traffic more fluid.

<http://www.mobilempo.org/freightplanning.html>

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### US 45 Feasibility Study

The final stakeholder meeting was held for the *US 45 Feasibility Study*; the presentation and maps can be found [HERE](#)

In FY 2018, we had two public meetings, one in Mobile and one in Prichard with over one hundred citizens participating. In addition to the public meetings, we had four stakeholder meetings. The stakeholder meetings started out strong with over 30 people involved. On August 1<sup>st</sup> there was a public input meeting at the Prichard City Hall, with an introduction from the City of Prichard Mayor, Mayor Jimmie Gardner. Despite the weather, we had a pretty good turnout. Several comments were made pertaining to the study, and we gained some good input. June 28<sup>th</sup> was the first public meeting for the US 45 Feasibility Study, and was held at Leflore High School. The meeting was well attended by nearly 70 people. Mobile City Councilman Levon Manzie was on hand to guide the meeting and answer questions. Nick Amberger, the City of Mobile Engineer was also present and assisted in answering questions posed by the public. Mr. Drew Davis with Volkert and Mr. Clifton Lambert with CERM presented the attendees with preliminary ideas developed in previous Advisory Committee meetings. These included road diets, sidewalk improvements, bike lanes, and roundabouts at key intersections. The final document is complete and may be found [HERE](#).

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### SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

[Planning and Community Development](#)

[Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Employment and Economic Development](#)

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### 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](#)

## Stay Up To Date on the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>



### Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project: 100049566 (CN)

Federal aid number: BRF 0016 (522)

County: MOBILE

Project Description: REPLACE BRIDGE, BIN 008714, SR-16 (US-90) WESTBOUND OVER TENSAW-SPANISH RIVER. (SUFF=49.7, STATUS=SD)

Old Target start date: March 29, 2019

New Target start date: May 31, 2019

Project: 100066180 (FM)

Federal aid number: STPAA 0163 (503)

County: MOBILE

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

Old Engineers Estimate: \$1,288,269.00

New Engineers Estimate: \$1,092,665.10

## RPO Updates

**RPO** The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) held a meeting of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee last week, at the Baldwin County Central Annex in Robertsdale.

The meeting was well attended and there was a lengthy discussion of current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of our region led by the ALDOT Southwest Regional Office. Other items on the agenda include:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2019 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)

The Work Program for Fiscal Year 2019 includes a new task. This task involves assisting the Alabama Department of Transportation with hosting public meetings regarding the upcoming 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Further information about this endeavor will be forthcoming. Please watch our newsletter for more information.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the items mentioned above, please contact us.

## Projects in Region Let November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

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### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

None at this time.

### **MOBILE COUNTY**

For constructing the Relocation of Movable Barriers and Gate Arms on SR-188 at the J.A. Wintzell Memorial Bridge in Bayou La Batre. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,471,184 to \$1,798,114 .

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-182 from the Perdido Pass Bridge (MP 14.818) in Orange Beach to the Florida State Line. Length 2.245 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$978,596 to \$1,196,062 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

## Legislative Updates

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*Congress will return on November 13, after the midterm elections.*

### **WRDA Signed into Law**

On Tuesday, President Trump signed the [America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018](#). The Senate passed the bill on October 10. The bill has several provisions that will help communities upgrade their water and wastewater systems.

### **U.S. Bill Aims to Boost Spending on Ports**

BY MAREX 2018-10-25 18:12:04

U.S. Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.) has introduced a bill (S.3587) to improve the nation's freight systems by making key investments in ports, railways and intermodal hubs by changing the funding arrangements in the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program, which was created as part of Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The bill would allow ports and railways to compete for more grant funding from the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program, or INFRA Grants.

"In the U.S., our freight network moves 49 million tons of goods every day, which are worth more than \$52.5 billion," said Carper. "The economic importance of freight movement cannot be overstated, and our ports, railways, and intermodal hubs are a critical part of the multimodal freight system. Regrettably, as a country, we haven't been making investments in our national transportation system that we need to."

While the discretionary INFRA grants make critical investments in freight projects, they are largely limited to highway projects, he said. "My bill would remove this limitation and allow ports and railways to compete on equal grounds. We should be investing in the best quality projects that will keep our country moving, and that's what I intend to do with this bill."

The bill has been endorsed by the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA).

"The American Association of Port Authorities strongly supports Senator Carper's legislative initiative that repeals the multimodal cap on the discretionary grant program created in the FAST Act," said AAPA President and CEO Kurt Nagle. "Sustainable multimodal funding is a top AAPA priority and the association greatly appreciates the senator's work to advance legislation that is both timely and very much needed."

Currently, of the \$11 billion of freight funding provided in the FAST Act, only \$1.13 billion is multimodal eligible, and of that, only \$200 million in multimodal eligibility remains available for INFRA grants.

CAGTC Executive Director Elaine Nettle said CAGTC supports Carper's call to remove the cap on non-highway freight investments as well as his commitment to increasing transparency in the evaluation and award decision making process. "Freight does not move on highways alone: the multimodal freight network directly supports 44 million U.S. jobs and the indirect benefits extend to every corner of our national economy. However, non-highway projects can compete for just 11 percent of total INFRA program funding currently. Increasing the program's flexibility

by making investments in the best freight projects - regardless of mode - will allow projects with the largest benefit to the goods movement network to be successful.

“The INFRA program is an invaluable tool for freight infrastructure investment. To continue building confidence in the program, it is essential that USDOT disclose more information about its decision-making process both to Congress and the public to produce a program that targets resources effectively and to affirm the integrity of the evaluation process.”

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## Gas tax hike likely to dominate 2019 session

Updated Oct 25, 9:09 AM; Posted Oct 25, 8:00 AM

By John Sharp | [jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, shortly after taking office in April 2017, said she supported an increase in the state’s gasoline tax to fix up state roadways.

But there has been little talk about it on the campaign trail, where the mere hint of the word “tax” can be viewed negatively in a conservative state like Alabama.

Yet the needs are plain, as commuters are painfully aware of overloaded highways funneling into the state’s four largest metros, roadways that back up nearly every work day.

“We definitely need an investment on infrastructure,” Ivey said, when asked about the prospects of increasing the gasoline tax during a campaign stop in Fairhope last week. “I’m on record for supporting an investment on infrastructure on roads and bridges.”

Indeed, most candidates running for office this fall are pushing for more transportation spending once the new legislative session starts in 2019.

Tony Harris, spokesman with ALDOT, said the state is faced with a mounting list of unmet repairs and expansions. “We probably have knocking on the door of \$10 billion of identified capacity needs that go beyond our revenues being adequate to address.”

But what would a new program look like? And how much more would motorists be willing to pay to make it happen?

Lawmakers, such as state Rep. Barbara Drummond, D-Mobile, are holding town halls to gather input from constituents about the possibility of a tax increase. Others, like State Senator Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, are weighing possible alternative funding programs that could include the lottery.

Alabama House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Monrovia, signaled interest last month in pushing forward with an increase to the gasoline tax. Revenue measures, such as gas tax increases, originate out of the Alabama House first before moving to the Senate.

The debate is likely to dominate legislative session next year.

Lawmakers, in 2017, weigh the potential for a gas tax hike  
Lawmakers, in 2017, weigh the potential for a gas tax hike

Alabama Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon says a proposal to increase the gasoline tax is dead this session. But that hasn't stopped a list of politicians and organizations from pushing to get something done. And they are pointing to President Donald Trump as an indication that something should get done soon.

Said Sonny Brasfield, executive director with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama: “From our perspective, there is general consensus that transportation funding will be one of the major issues of 2019.”

### Potential projects

Those big-ticket items on the ALDOT list include a new Interstate 10 Bridge and Bayway widening project in Mobile and Baldwin counties; the completion of the Birmingham Northern Beltline; the Montgomery Outer Loop; and additional lanes along Interstate 565 in Huntsville.

In addition, the price-tag includes lane widening along 20 identified sections of rural two-lane highways and 20 sections of identified needs along federal highways.

Drew Harrell, executive director with the Alliance for Alabama’s Infrastructure, describes Alabama’s transportation needs as a “where do we start” scenario. He said that county governments have little revenue to address an estimated \$400 million shortfall in meeting basic maintenance and resurfacing needs, and that he estimates it would cost around \$390 million annually to begin addressing the state’s largest congestion-related projects.

“For 26 years, we’ve seen congestion grow,” said Harris. “Construction and capacity needs in this state have increased beyond a level of what we can sustain by the available revenues.”

### Federal match

The last time Alabama voted for an increase in the state's fuel tax was in 1992, when gasoline cost about \$1.13 per gallon.

That year, the Legislature agreed to increase the state's portion of the tax by a nickel to 16 cents per gallon. The increase occurred one year before Congress voted in its last increase to the federal gas tax, to 18.4 cents a gallon.

"A gas tax is truly a user-based fee charged to those who use our roads, and Alabama has the 5th lowest state gas tax in the country," said Harrell.

President Donald Trump, after being elected in 2016, pledged to roll out a massive nationwide infrastructure program and signaled support for increasing the federal gasoline tax for the first time since 1993. A federal tax increase would require a state match, something which Ivey has said she wants to support.

"Although there are important issues that our state legislators should be focused on, there are few that enjoy bipartisan support and generally speaking, infrastructure spending is one of those," said Richard Fording, a political science professor at the University of Alabama. "There seems to be widespread agreement that Alabama's roads and bridges are outdated and in need of improvement."

Jess Brown, a retired political science professor at Athens State University, said that if Democrats regain majority status in the U.S. House in November, he could see Trump placing more of an emphasis on ushering through an infrastructure spending plan.

"The states will have to come up with matching dollars," said Brown. "Then suddenly, (anti-tax) Republicans will have a degree of cover that to get the federal money, which is Trump's initiative, we have to get the gas tax increase."

He added, "The Republicans in Montgomery may get a little political cover, in a strange way, if Nancy Pelosi is the Speaker."

#### **Other states**

In total, 27 states have raised or reformed their tax taxes since 2013.

Missouri could make it 28, depending on the outcome of a 10-cent increase, spread out over four years, which voters will get to decide via a statewide referendum on November 6.

Missouri hasn't increased its 17-cent-per-gallon fuel tax since 1996.

Dave Robertson, chairman of the political sciences department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said that the state's GOP-dominated Legislature, which holds a veto-proof majority much like Alabama, felt like they would be "punished in elections for raising taxes."

But the Missouri Legislature, in 2017, created a bipartisan task force that recommended increased funding.

Robertson predicted that even if the referendum fails, lawmakers are likely to vote in an increase.

#### **Maddox plan**

In Alabama, there is no concrete proposal on the table, and no task force in place to weigh proposals.

But there are plenty of ideas, especially during campaign season.

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox, Ivey's Democratic challenger, said he supports an infrastructure funding plan once pitched by the AAI that would hike the state fuel tax by 12 cents per gallon.

Said Harrell: "Citizens, both in Alabama and nationwide, have indicated they are willing to pay more in gas taxes if that money is spent only on the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges."

The Maddox campaign is also criticizing Ivey and past Republican administrations for what they believe is improper diversions of road and bridge funds. According to an Alabama Department of Transportation spokesman, approximately \$63.5 million is diverted annually to fund the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts and to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

Of that, \$35 million is diverted to the Office of Courts.

Harris at ALDOT said the diversions first occurred during former Gov. Bob Riley's final budget at a time of economic struggles when the money was used to balance the state's budget. He said that the money, if no longer diverted, would help prop up ALDOT's maintenance program that includes resurfacing projects and bridge replacements.

#### **Lottery idea**

A gasoline tax increase, though, is no sure bet to handle the financing.

Anti-tax conservatives are expected to provide some obstacles next year. Auditor Jim Zeigler, a favorite among tea party groups, said he plans to roll out in January his own version of a transportation plan that he dubs “Plan Z” – “As in zero tax increase, zero congestion on highways,” he claims.

Orr, chairman of the Senate Education Budget Committee, said there could be a way to tie a transportation program to an educational lottery, which has been floated by Maddox and others during the campaign trail.

Orr said the lottery, if approved by voters, would raise revenues to fund education and, in turn, give the state the flexibility to divert educational budgets to transportation.

“People say, ‘will you vote on the gas tax?’ I don’t know. Show me the bill,” said Orr. “If you tie the lottery in with it, that has to be a vote of the people and you have to amend the Constitution. That means more money for education with a large portion of the money going for infrastructure. And more people might be inclined to vote for it with more money for infrastructure and education.”

Orr, in 2017, also pitched legislation that would have allowed county commissions to ask voters in their counties to raise gasoline taxes for specific road projects.

Brasfield, the head of the county commissions association, said that disagreements over the details of a transportation funding program led to previous downfalls in legislation, in both 2016 and 2017.

“The legislative efforts did, however, raise awareness of the condition of roads and bridges in every county in Alabama,” Brasfield said. “Today, more than half of our county bridges are over 50 years old. And more than 60 percent of our county roads have not even been resurfaced in the last 20 years. waiting any longer will only make these conditions worse.”

Drummond, the state lawmaker from Mobile, said past debates about a gas tax increase excluded revenue for critical programs for urban areas. She said she is unsure on what type of bill will surface next year.

Drummond, who is not facing a Republican opponent in next month’s election, said the timing was right to bring the issue forward to a group of senior citizens at a town hall meeting earlier this month in Mobile.

After polling an audience of approximately 140 people, she said that most appeared to support the concept of a gas tax hike if the money was used for its intended purpose.

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## President Calls For 5 Percent Budget Cut From Cabinet Departments As Deficit Increases

[editor@aashto.org](mailto:editor@aashto.org) October 19, 2018

President Trump asked for a 5 percent across-the-board budget cut from each federal department during a [cabinet meeting](#) on Oct. 17; a budget cut intended to stem the rise of the federal deficit.

“I’m going to ask each of you to come back with a 5 percent budget cut from your various departments,” the president said. “Whether it’s a secretary, an administrator, whatever, I’m going to ask everybody with a 5 percent cut for our next meeting. I think you’ll all be able to do it. Get rid of the fat. Get rid of the waste. It will have a huge impact.”

The request came on the heels of a [report released jointly](#) by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Office of Management and Budget on Oct. 15 that said the federal deficit in fiscal year 2018 increased by \$113 billion to \$779 billion. Overall, the federal deficit now represents 3.9 percent of gross domestic product, the report noted, which is, a 0.4 percentage point higher compared to fiscal year 2017.

President Trump’s cabinet meeting primarily focused on what he called “my administration’s historic and unprecedented effort to remove job-killing regulations” and each cabinet secretary provided a summation of their department’s regulatory-reduction initiatives to date.

USDOT Secretary Elaine Chao noted in the meeting that her agency withdrew 23 regulations that, in her words, “didn’t make sense, that were nonsensical, that were overly burdensome, that were basically red tape. And we’ve added only one significant regulation that was needed, saving the taxpayers more than \$1.2 billion in regulatory cost.”

She added that in 2019, USDOT plans to achieve an additional \$2 billion in regulatory cost savings.

“On the horizon, the [transportation] department will address unrealistic and overly burdensome fuel economy standards to help make newer, safer cars more affordable for working Americans [and] expand the U.S. lead in commercial space ... by streamlining procedures for commercial space launches,” Chao said.

“On the horizon, the [USDOT] will also allow the safe operation of drones over the heads of people, out of the line of sight, and at night, she added. “And we are looking at pilot programs that will give us more information with which to allow this, rather than individual case-by-case waivers for a drone population that is now 1.2 million as of August 12th of this year.”

President Trump also noted during the meeting that his administration still remains focused on reducing the [time required to approve](#) roadway and highway projects.

“We’ve cut them down many, many years. And ultimately, maybe we’ll get down to one, but we are getting very close to two,” the president said.

“And in some cases, you know many stories where they’re 21 years, 22 years, 18 years, 19 years to get just approvals. And in many cases ... after spending tens of millions and hundreds of millions of dollars on the approval process, in many cases they don’t even get approved after so many years,” he continued. “So we’re down to two years. We’ll very soon be down to two years, and maybe we’ll even do better than that. And they may not get approved, and that’s okay, too, but at least you’re going to know if it’s not going to happen.”



Thomas D. Everett

Executive Director

### **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

On October 22, 2018, Mr. Thomas (Tom) Everett was named Executive Director for the Federal Highway Administration, a role in which he manages the daily operations of the agency and its personnel, and advises the Administrator, Deputy Administrator and senior officials throughout the U.S. Department of Transportation on the agency’s programs and priorities.

Since 2016, Mr. Everett has served as the Associate Administrator for FHWA’s Office of Infrastructure. In this capacity, he provided leadership, policy direction, and oversight to guide the administration and implementation of the Federal-aid Highway Program. Tom led key program areas dealing with design, construction, and preservation of pavements, bridges, tunnels, as well as asset management, transportation performance management, emergency relief, consultant services, and construction contract administration. He also served as the suspension and debarment official for the Agency. Prior to becoming Associate Administrator, Tom served as the Office Director for the Office of Program Administration where he guided stewardship and oversight of the Federal-aid program.

Tom has also held positions as the Structural Engineer Team Leader in the Office of Bridges and Structures, Bridge Management/Inspection Engineer in the Resource Center, and other key positions including Technical Programs Team Leader in the Tennessee Division and Structural Engineer in FHWA's former Region 3. Tom joined FHWA in 1985 as a Highway Engineer Trainee.

Tom is a registered professional engineer and holds a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from Rutgers University.

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Walmart Community Foundation’s Community Grant Program**

*Deadline: Rolling*

The [Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program](#) offers up to \$5,000 for local governments and nonprofit organizations to help create impact in communities. Grants can be awarded to organizations working in one of the following areas: hunger relief and healthy eating, health and human service, quality of life, education, community and economic development, diversity and inclusion, public safety, and environmental sustainability.

### **The Home Depot Foundation’s Community Impact Grant Program**

*Deadline: Rolling*

The [Home Depot Foundation](#) offers grant awards up to \$5,000 to nonprofit organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the community. Priority is given to projects serving veterans and/or diverse and underserved communities. Projects should be volunteer friendly, have a strong and lasting impact on the community, and keep the safety of volunteers in mind. Grants are given in the form of Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services and are required to be complete within six months of the approval date.

### **USDA Rural Business Development Grants**

*Deadline: Rolling*

The USDA is currently accepting applications for [Rural Business Development Grants](#). This competitive grant is designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and have less than \$1 million in gross revenue. Rural public entities including, but not limited to, towns, communities, state agencies, nonprofits corporations, federally-recognized tribes, institutions of higher education, and more are eligible to apply. There is no maximum grant amount; however, smaller requests are given higher priority. Generally, grants range from \$10,000 to \$500,000.

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## USDOT Announces \$6.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Access to Healthcare

(deadline November 13, 2018)

FTA announced the availability of \$6.3 million in Access and Mobility Partnership Grants, competitive funds for transit coordination projects that improve non-emergency healthcare accessibility. Through this grant program, FTA encourages innovative partnerships between the healthcare industry and public transportation agencies for improved coordination. These partnerships support the needs of transit-dependent riders and improve options for people with limited transportation choices. [HERE](#)

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## [Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#)

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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](#)

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To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

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# Just For Fun

I *apologize*, but this week's Just For Fun is about scarecrows, for Halloween, and *Just For Fun*.

Edgar Allen Poe, the American writer, was walking with friends through the forest while reading. What did his friends scream to him, while he was not looking, and almost hit a tree? "POETRY!"



We bring up Poe, because scarecrows will stop working, and become... “nevermore”, *quoth the raven*. Birds become desensitized to scarecrows and they become... the wind, and nothing more. That is why airports recently have started using mechanic birds, [like hawks](#), to scare away birds in the path of runways. They would use Airport staff to chase birds, but they become weak and weary, especially upon a midnight dreary.

There several types of mechanical birds, like [a falcon](#), an [INCREDIBLE flying fox](#), an [ibird](#) controlled by your iphone, and the [flying human idiot bird](#).

A mechanical bird is actually called a “ornihopter”, and [HERE](#) is a DIY mechanical bird to keep your kids busy, and frustrated for several weeks.

So can robotic birds lead to safer air travel, or will this be forgotten lore? [Let’s find out... it will be poe much fun.](#)

## In the News

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### Survey: Americans Willing to Pay for Congestion Reduction

A new [public opinion survey](#) from HNTB found that 61 percent of Americans think congestion is worse than last year, and 73 percent are willing to pay to reduce it. The survey also found that if the taxes and tolls are guaranteed to only be used for infrastructure, support increases to 82 percent. Almost half of those who are willing to pay think that tolls should be utilized rather than taxes. HNTB polled 1,011 Americans in September for the survey.

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### ALDOT to begin resurfacing project on SR-59

Updated 19 hrs ago | Posted on Oct 25, 2018 AL.com

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will begin a routine maintenance resurfacing project on a portion of SR-59 in Baldwin County beginning Monday, October 29.

The scope of the project includes resurfacing and striping 6.5 miles of SR-59 from just past CR-12 (MP 7.2) to the junction of Windbigler Dr (just south of the Foley Beach Express at MP 13.7)

Motorists can expect nightly, alternating lane closures Sunday through Thursday from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. Motorists are encouraged to slow down and obey all reduced speed limits within the construction zone. ALDOT asks that drivers use extra caution and avoid distracted driving.

The \$2.9 million project, awarded to H.O. Weaver and Sons, Inc., is expected to be complete Spring 2019.

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### Forum held for jobs building Mobile's new bridge

[Steve Alexander](#) Updated 19 hrs ago | Posted on Oct 24, 2018

Alabama transportation officials are looking for people who want to help build the new Mobile River Bridge.

People interested in filling a number of positions attended a forum in Montgomery Wednesday to find out what type of positions are available and how to apply with the three vying for the project.

Gregory Morris with GBM3 in Mobile provides erosion control and landscaping services.

When asked what interested him about the project, Morris said, "The magnitude of it. And, then, I'm looking at longevity and a future foundation for my grandkids."

About 60 people attended the forum for people in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.

Leo Malone with the Alabama Department of Transportation said, "It requires you to be a minority or a female, and it gives you opportunities in reference to goals set up for projects to perform work."

Allison Woodson with Coastal Environmental and Erosion Control is also hoping to get work for her business.

Woodson said, "We're in Spanish Fort, right close to home. We're very excited about it. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Transportation officials hope to pick the group that will build the bridge project late next year.

Construction on the bridge is expected to begin in 2020 with completion in 2025.

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## **Nov. 15 public hearing to address new bridge over Intracoastal**

*By Mullet Wrapper on October 24, 2018*

### **Nov. 15 public hearing to address new bridge over Intracoastal**

The Alabama Department of Transportation will host a public meeting to review project information concerning a proposed bridge connecting Canal Rd. near the border of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores with the Foley Beach Expressway on Thursday, November 15 from 5-7 p.m. at the Gulf Shores Activity Center, located at 260 Clubhouse Dr. in Gulf Shores.

Orange Beach is already proceeding with plans to build a bridge across the waterway at Orange Beach Blvd. (County Rd. 161) using money collected from bed taxes. The proposed bridge west of the Foley Beach Express, projected to cost \$87 million, will be funded by the State of Alabama.

The meeting format will be formal, where the public may review project information and exhibits on display and will also have an opportunity to publicly speak. People wishing to provide comments during the public hearing should register at the sign-in table. There is a two minute time limit for each person to speak. Representatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will be available to answer questions throughout the meeting. A court recorder will be present to record public comments.

Comment sheets will be provided, and citizens can also comment through e-mail at [swinfo@dot.state.al](mailto:swinfo@dot.state.al), fax at (251) 473-3624 or by mail: Vincent E. Calametti, P.E., Region Engineer, Southwest Region, ATTN: Edwin L. Perry III, P.E., Alabama Department of Transportation, 1701 I-65 West Service Road N; Mobile, Alabama 36618.

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## **City of Mobile to Transform Downtown Parking Experience**

*October 24, 2018*

Mobile, Ala.-- Pending Council approval, the City of Mobile will be installing new parking meters where citizens can pay for parking using a credit card, a mobile app or the traditional coin slot. In addition to the new meters, new signage will better communicate the location of parking spaces, time limits and costs. Parking enforcement times and days will remain Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm.

"This is the next step to move the City's outdated parking system into the 21st Century," said Mayor Stimpson. "Embracing new technology will offer our citizens and visitors a more accessible and user-friendly experience. If your lunch meeting runs long, you can soon add more time to your parking straight from your phone. Our goal is to ensure this transition to a more innovative model is as smooth as possible."

In early 2018, the City released a Request for Proposals for parking management services for on street parking in Downtown Mobile. After a comprehensive review process, the City selected Republic Parking as the new provider. Republic Parking will be responsible for meter installation, payment collection and parking ambassadors among other duties. The contract will be on Tuesday's City Council agenda.

As more people move to Downtown Mobile, the City is also exploring a Residential Permit Program to ensure parking availability for residential areas of downtown. An Employee Parking Program will also address the needs of downtown employees while providing convenient parking for visitors.

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## **City of Mobile Reveals New Montlimar Creek Trail**

*October 24, 2018*

Mobile, Ala.-- The City of Mobile recently opened a new trail alongside Montlimar Creek Trail that extends almost two miles. Plans to provide additional amenities include trail head signage and benches among others.

Mayor Stimpson, the Mobile County Health Department, MAWSS, students from the Government Street Christian School and other members of the community commemorated the new trail with an inaugural walk. For photos and video from the event, click [here](#).

"This new trail encourages fitness, supports recreation and educates our citizens on one of our most precious waterways," said Mayor Stimpson. "This is a part of a larger effort to transform the City by creating a network of biking and pedestrian paths throughout the community. Our goal is to link neighborhoods, businesses and residents across Mobile."

This new trail is in addition to a preexisting one-mile trail on Montlimar Creek that begins on Airport Boulevard and ends on Michael Boulevard. In the future, the City plans to expand its trail system by connecting existing trails and creating additional pathways across the City.

# Transportation Research

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## [The Data Collected by Dockless Bikes is Helping Cities Map Your Movement](#)

Dockless bikes use a combination of GPS, 3G wireless connections, and solar power to transmit their location to providers and consumers. Providers, and the cities they partner with, have unparalleled access to rider behavior and are leveraging this knowledge to meet the needs of their consumers. In South Bend, IN, Lime is providing aggregate statistics on travel and heat maps showing where most riders occur in the city. South Bend used this data to paint drop-off areas for the bikes and is now hoping to use this information to plan for new bike paths and lanes. Lime is also working with cities to identify a format that makes it easy for them to pull data from multiple operators into their databases to analyze with their own tools.

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### REGISTRATION OPEN!

ALABAMA RECREATIONAL TRAILS  
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP  
Thursday, November 8

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Auburn University  
School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences  
602 Duncan Drive  
Auburn, Alabama 36849

Registration Fee \$35 includes light breakfast,  
boxed lunch, optional field trip or training.

A fun and informative gathering for those who plan, develop,  
and manage recreational trails in Alabama.

#### Presentation Subjects:

- Planning, development, and operation of two innovative mountain bike trail systems at Chewacla State Park and Lake Wilmore Park
- Best practices for developing a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Bringing trails and environmental education together at the Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve
- How the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program can help you launch your trail project

#### Optional Field Trips and Training:

- Chewacla State Park Mountain Bike Trails
- Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve
- Recreational Trails Survey and Economic Impact Assessment Training: Required orientation for administrators who wish to participate in a program to gather trail economic impact and usage data throughout Alabama

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## **Studies Say Lower Speed Limits Will Help Improve Roadway Safety**

[New research](#) conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety indicates that lowering the speed limit by 5 mph on city streets can improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists alike, while a [separate study](#) conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation convinced the agency to reduce speed limits along certain stretches of two major highways by 10 mph.

The IIHS study focused on Boston, Massachusetts, which lowered the default speed limit on city streets from 30 mph to 25 mph beginning January 9, 2017, after the Massachusetts legislature amended state law in 2016 to allow cities and towns to lower speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph on municipal roads in densely populated areas or business districts. Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit on all Boston roadways is 25 mph, the group noted.

IIHS said its researchers looked at vehicle speeds in Boston before and after the lower limit took effect and compared them to control sites in Providence, Rhode Island, where the speed limit remained the same.

The study sites in both Boston and Providence included arterials, collectors and local roads and the group noted all of the sites were similar in that they had no more than one lane per direction and were located away from intersections on relatively flat, straight road segments and at least a half-mile away from any school or speed feedback sign.

IIHS researchers evaluated changes in the odds of vehicles exceeding 25 mph, 30 mph and 35 mph associated with the new speed limit and found there was a 29.3 percent decline in the odds of speeding for vehicles traveling faster than 35 mph. The odds of speeding fell by 8.5 percent for vehicles going faster than 30 mph and 2.9 percent for vehicles exceeding 25 mph.

The group said high travel speeds increase the risk of crashing and the risk of injuries when a crash occurs and that speeding – defined on police crash reports as exceeding the posted speed limit, driving too fast for conditions, or racing – has been a factor in more than a quarter of U.S. crash deaths for more than 30 years. In 2016, IIHS noted that the percentage of U.S. crash deaths related to speeding was higher on roads with 35 mph or lower speed limits than on roads with higher speed limits; some 33 percent vs. 26 percent.

“Speeding occurs on roads of all types, not just highways and freeways,” added IIHS President David Harkey in a statement. “Even on lower speed roads, speeding can have deadly consequences, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some cities are lowering speed limits to reduce the risks for these vulnerable road users, who are increasingly dying in crashes.”

The study didn’t examine how lowering the speed limit affected crashes in Boston, but that’s a next step, he pointed out.

The Illinois DOT took that step in its study of speeds on I-74 and I-57 in the Champaign-Urbana area and concluded that, given the current prevailing speeds, crash rates and number of interchanges, a reduction of the posted speed limit from 70 mph to 60 mph along a portion of I-74 connecting to I-57 was justified. “Reducing the speed limit of through traffic to closer to that of traffic from interchanges gives drivers more time to react, thereby reducing the severity of a crash or avoiding one altogether,” the agency stressed.

IIHS said in its research that, outside of urban areas, speed limits are on the rise as 41 states have speed limits of 70 mph or higher on some portion of their roads. The group also noted that [a study it conducted in 2016](#) showed that increases in speed limits from 1993 to 2013 in those 41 states resulted in 33,000 fatalities.

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### **Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO): Transportation Partnerships for the 21st Century**

This work will deliver a historical review and contemporary analysis of the institutional structures and performance of MPOs, producing conclusions and lessons learned that are relevant to current challenges. This research will address ways in which MPOs can respond more nimbly and effectively to rapidly changing transportation demands, conditions, and technologies. It will provide a range of strategies and tools drawn from cases and practice in order to better equip MPOs and MPO-state partnerships in planning, maintaining, and improving transportation systems for U.S. metropolitan areas and the economies reliant on those systems.

Staff Contact: Harlan Miller, 202-366-0847

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### **[Identification of High Pedestrian Crash Locations](#)**

This FHWA guidebook presents a process to help state and local agencies identify high pedestrian crash locations and includes a literature review, case studies, and other research needed to develop a five-step process.

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## **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.