



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, November 15, 2019

Volume 32, Number 7

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Sec. Chao and Gov. Ivey are making announcements *In The News*, as did Senator Shelby with an announcement that includes a new pedestrian bridge over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Gulf Shores! The Final Report on the ***Montgomery to Mobile Intercity Passenger Rail Service Feasibility Study*** is released *In The News*. In *Legislative Updates* we talk about what happens if the FAST Act rescission takes effect in 2020, AND the spending bill. This week's *Just For Fun* is "mine numbing" with the new Minecraft Earth. Stay warm and have a good weekend!

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

www.mobilempo.org  Check us out on FACEBOOK

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](#)

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

Mobile MPO Updates

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY is underway



In August of 2019, a consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin, Mills, and Cawood as a sub consultant. The consultants were given notice to proceed last week, and the kick off was last Friday and there was a teleconference this morning. [HERE](#) is Via's presentation from the kick-off.

There is a lot of work to be done in a short amount of time, and if you would like to be part of this study, we are compiling a stakeholders list. Please call Kevin Harrison for details.



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Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to alternative modes. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region.

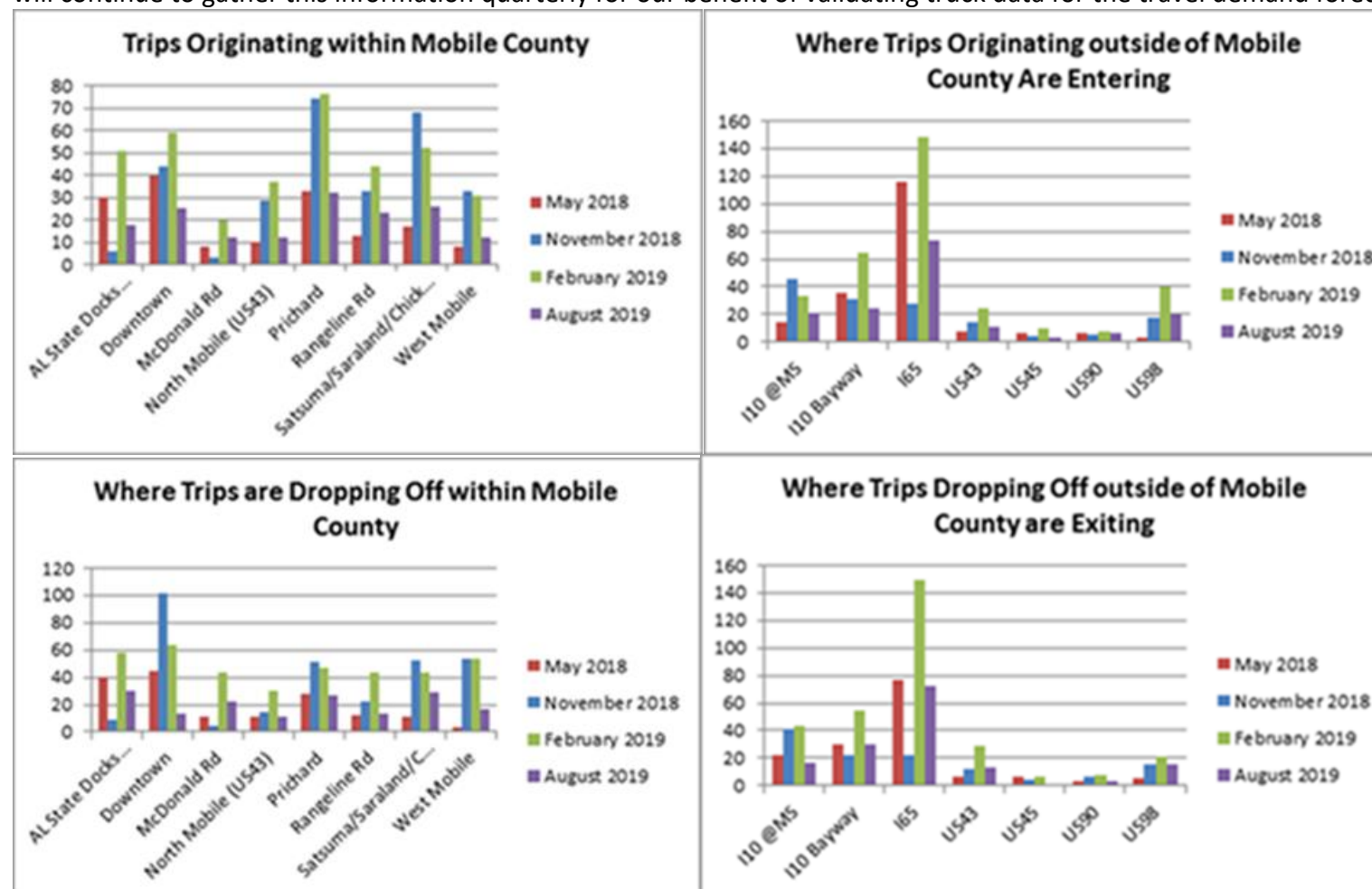
The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission(SARPC) invites decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the general public to participate in the development of the plan. SARPC is seeking feedback on transportation major infrastructure projects, initiatives and policies. Transportation priorities such as congestion, freight, transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian, and other transportation modes will be addressed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Your comments help SARPC’s planners to develop a wide-ranging, action-oriented transportation plan. The Envision2045 plan being developed will also serve as a basis for allocating limited federal money aimed at roadways, bridges, and public transportation facilities. The comment period on the early participation online survey is closed; however, there will be several more opportunities for the public to comment on the plan in the near future.

Please contact Kevin Harrison at kharrison@sarpc.org with any questions or requests for further information.

FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their fourth quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for two days APM Terminals had on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from and where they are going. APM Terminals will continue to gather this information quarterly for our benefit of validating truck data for the travel demand forecasting model.



[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) 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 [HERE](#).

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project would reduce congestion on I-10 in South Alabama through the addition of additional capacity: a new six-lane bridge over the Mobile River, full replacement of the existing Bayway with an eight-lane structure, and redevelopment of seven interchanges. The project would run from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com.

The Alabama Department of Transportation on August 28, 2019 ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100055881 (RW)

Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (602)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) FROM CR-70 (TANNER WILLIAMS RD) TO CR-31 (SCHILLINGER RD)

Old Target start date : February 01, 2020

New Target start date : March 01, 2020

Project : 100070118 (CN)

Federal aid number : RHCH RR19

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RAILROAD CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS, REPLACEMENT OF GATE ARMS ON SR-13 (US-43 / TELEGRAPH ROAD) AT RAILROAD CROSSING DOT NO. 665301H

Old Delete Indicator :

New Delete Indicator : D

South Alabama RPO Updates

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Meeting

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) had a meeting of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee last Thursday, September 19, 2019 at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsdale, Alabama.

Items discussed were current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of our region by the ALDOT Southwest Regional Office.

Other items on the agenda included:

Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting

- Review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (attached and available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)

Projects in Region Let December 6th, 2019

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Steel Blockout Replacement, and Traffic Stripe on SR-59 from the junction of East 29th Avenue to the junction of CR-12 in Foley. Length 5.268 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,691,921 to \$3,290,125 .
- For constructing the Safety Widening, Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-181 from the junction of SR-42 (US-98) west of Barnwell to just south of the junction of Quail Creek Drive in Fairhope. Length 7.065 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,486,034 to \$1,816,264

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session.

States Face Potential Loss of Transportation Funding

If the FAST Act rescission takes effect in 2020, states collectively stand to lose \$7.6 billion in transportation funding.

By [Andrew Soergel](#), Senior Writer, Economics Nov. 14, 2019

A BUDGETARY QUIRK TO A 2015 transportation funding bill is set to slash \$7.6 billion to certain types of national transportation funding in 2020, eating into transportation budget baselines in states such as [Texas](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) by hundreds of millions of dollars.

To help make the final price tag of the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act more palatable, lawmakers at the time included a \$7.6 billion rescission in the bill's text, targeting individual states' unobligated balances. That rescission, set to take effect in mid-2020, essentially allows the federal government to take back nearly \$8 billion in highway contract authority.

In Texas alone, more than \$960 million in contract authority is at stake, according to the [Department of Transportation](#).

"All 50 states and the District of Columbia will be hurt by the rescission, including close transportation partners of these states," a group of more than 40 transportation associations and related groups, including the American Public Transportation Association and the National Governors Association, wrote in a September [letter](#) to congressional leaders. "The planned rescission next summer is already starting to impact project construction, which will delay mobility, quality of life, and economic benefits provided by these projects if unaddressed soon."

The Department of Transportation estimates Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and [Illinois](#) stand to be the most significantly impacted by the planned revocation, based on an unobligated balance of contract authority formula, as laid out by the [Federal Highway Administration](#). More than \$450 million is at risk of rescission in each of the four states.

"If allowed to take place, the rescission will virtually wipe out all remaining contract authority available to states in core highway formula programs," Jim Tymon, executive director of the America Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, wrote in a [letter](#) last month to a group of Senate party leaders and senior members of transportation-related subcommittees. "It is especially critical to repeal this provision in Calendar Year 2019 because in the worst-case scenario, states may be forced to deobligate existing projects in order to provide the necessary amount of contract authority to be rescinded."

In [South Dakota](#), [Montana](#) and [Nebraska](#), meanwhile, rescission amounts aren't expected to eclipse \$8 million each.

10 States With Most at Stake From 2020 FAST Act Rescission

1. [Texas](#) (\$960 million)
2. [New Jersey](#) (\$630 million)
3. [Pennsylvania](#) (\$469 million)
4. [Illinois](#) (\$452 million)
5. [Missouri](#) (\$350 million)
6. [Ohio](#) (\$337 million)
7. [Michigan](#) (\$337 million)
8. [Georgia](#) (\$310 million)
9. [California](#) (\$280 million)
10. [New York](#) (\$235 million)

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., introduced earlier this year [legislation](#) that would repeal the section of the FAST Act requiring the 2020 rescission. The [Congressional Budget Office](#) estimates such a move would increase contract authority for the Federal-Aid Highway Program by \$75.7 billion between 2020 and 2029, relative to the CBO's baseline. That would open the door to more federal support for state highway transportation initiatives, with the U.S. already behind the eight ball in terms of national infrastructure investment.

"Dispensing with the \$7.6 billion rescission involves a host of technical budgetary issues that serve to remind a person why the fundamental structure of transportation contract authority programs needs to be rethought," Jeff Davis, a senior fellow with the Eno Center for Transportation, wrote in a June [blog post](#).

Similar rescission provisions have complicated state highway contract authority in the past. In 2009, a budgetary revocation that was part of a 2005 transportation bill went into effect. It was months before lawmakers successfully repealed the cut.

"The rescission is yet another example of the 'let's put a big funding cut in the final year of a multi-year funding bill and then count on a future Congress to fix it' stupidity that first showed up in the 1978 surface transportation bill," Davis said.

Congress Expects to Pass Another Stopgap Spending Bill to Keep Agencies Open Through December 20th

Lawmakers hope to pass full-year appropriations before the new deadline and avoid another holiday season shutdown.

NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Lawmakers plan to kick the deadline to keep agencies open to Dec. 20, using a second stopgap spending bill to avert a shutdown later this month.

Congressional leaders have agreed to that end date for another continuing resolution as negotiators seek an agreement on full-year appropriations, Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, told reporters on Tuesday. Current funding runs through Nov. 21, and lawmakers hope the additional month will provide sufficient time to reach a resolution on the line-by-line funding for each federal agency.

The House is expected to take up the CR next week, setting up a tight timeline for passage. The White House has indicated President Trump will sign the measure, as long as it does not attempt to block the construction of barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The timing will also coincide with potential votes on Trump's impeachment on the House floor. Lowey announced the new stopgap's expected expiration after meeting with her Senate counterpart, Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala. Appropriations leaders previously [speculated](#) the stopgap would last into February or March, but have bumped up the timeline in hopes of avoiding more CRs later in the year. Most federal agencies are in line for spending bumps over the fiscal 2019 levels thanks to a budget deal Trump signed into law earlier this year.

"I remain hopeful that we can finish our work and fully fund the government before the end of the year," House Majority Leader Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said last week.

The Senate has easily approved a package of appropriations measures to fund the departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, Justice and other agencies. The chamber, however, rejected a second "minibus" that included funding for the departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Labor due to Democratic concerns over wall funding and other issues. The House has approved 10 of the 12 annual appropriations measures, largely along party lines.

In the coming weeks, congressional leaders hope to set allocations for each of the 12 spending bills lawmakers must pass annually. Once those funding levels are set, appropriators can attempt complete the work of writing each bill and resolving the remaining sticking points

Why We Formed the Future of Transportation Caucus

Reps. Pressley, Garcia and Takano outline the need for a new federal vision.

By [Ayanna Pressley](#), [Jesús "Chuy" García](#) and [Mark Takano](#) [Nov 14, 2019](#)

America has arrived at a crossroads in regard to our transportation system: Our roads are crumbling, our public transit systems are failing, and carbon emissions are exacerbating the climate crisis.

Changing the faulty policies that led to this unhappy situation requires strategic, innovative and concerted congressional activism. Otherwise, we simply will perpetuate these problems and inequities plaguing our communities.

It is past time to have a frank conversation about our national transportation policy.

The national challenges we see are the direct result of the antiquated model that we have applied to meeting our transportation and connectivity needs. We need a new model: Simply throwing more money at a deteriorating transportation system will not help us get to the root of the problem, nor will it help us devise smart solutions to address the connectivity challenges facing our communities.

Billions of dollars are spent each year to subsidize modes of transportation that fuel inequities and fail to efficiently connect people of all abilities to critical jobs and services. Providing funding for new roads, while neglecting the maintenance of existing ones, is not an effective way to strengthen our nation's infrastructure. We have to stop measuring success simply by how much we spend on

transportation. If we don't start evaluating how to spend our money more wisely and equitably, our transportation systems will only worsen — hurting our communities and our economy.

That's why we have formed the Future of Transportation Caucus — which is dedicated to convening all communities and stakeholders, especially those most adversely affected by the current system. Collectively, we can create a vision for the future of our transportation system that prioritizes maintenance of our existing infrastructure, safety, and guaranteed equitable access to jobs and services. The three of us, in partnership with members of our caucus, will work together to engage stakeholders and reimagine policy solutions that will meet modern-day demands.

It's time for Congress to create and implement a new vision for transportation, one in which everyone can affordably, reliably, and safely reach their destinations — a progressive, forward-thinking vision that centers on our communities' needs for a more equitable, accessible, and sustainable transportation system that leaves no one behind.

Congress can take bold, transformative steps to significantly improve the role that the federal government plays in determining our national transportation priorities.

We can make our transportation system more equitable — by ensuring that dedicated dollars reach the projects in communities that need them most and by holding states accountable to these directives.

We can make our transportation system more accessible by bringing a diversity of voices to the table and removing barriers that prevent us, including those with disabilities, from safely reaching our destinations.

And we can mitigate the effects of climate change and protect the health of our communities by building a sustainable, resilient transportation system for present and future generations.

Communities across the country are evolving rapidly. Now is the time to challenge the status quo, revisit the core assumptions and policies underlying our transportation system, and fundamentally reimagine transportation solutions that will help us achieve sociopolitical and environmental justice in America.

House Funding Levels for Health and Human Services Programs

Over the next several weeks, the House and Senate will be drafting a final fiscal year (FY) 2020 omnibus appropriations bill in hopes of meeting a November 21 deadline, when the current continuing resolution expires.

The House fiscal year 2020 proposed appropriations bill is overall much more favorable to funding for the *Older Americans Act* (OAA) and other key Health and Human Services programs. It would increase funding for a wide range of human services programs important to regions, especially those regions that are also designated as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). In contrast, the fiscal year 2020 Senate Labor/Health and Human Services (HHS) bill would maintain funding at current levels.

The Senate appropriations bill would level the funding for Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA). The House, in contrast, would increase overall funding by \$151 million; a 10 percent increase over fiscal year 2019. The same is true for Title V programs. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) would be level funded if the Senate fiscal year 2020 appropriations level becomes law; but would increase by about 15 percent if the House funding proposal is adopted.

Other HHS programs such as the Community Services Block Grant and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program would also see a funding increase if the House appropriations bill becomes law. While none of the proposed increases are large, they all represent a movement away from previous fiscal year appropriations, which were either level funded or reduced funding to these programs.

Funding Opportunities

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Funding Opportunity for Roadway Safety Tools

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to build the capacity of state, local, and tribal governments to use innovative data tools and information to improve roadway safety.

“This is part of the Department's ongoing effort to utilize predictive data analytics to identify and address systemic factors contributing to crashes and improve roadway safety in communities across America,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

The NOFO is an important step in the Department's [Safety Data Initiative](#), which helps communities devise policies to reduce roadway fatalities. This funding opportunity makes available up to \$3 million to develop, refine, and deploy safety tools that address specific roadway safety problems. The Department anticipates making awards of \$250,000 to \$500,000 to each successful applicant.

Eligible applicants are state or local governments, metropolitan planning organizations and regional governments, other political subdivisions of a state or local government, and tribal governments. The funding complements existing safety data improvement programs at the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration by focusing on improving data tools practitioners use to inform their policy and decision-making.

The NOFO is available on grants.gov at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=322472>

On December 3, 2019 at 2:30 PM ET, the Department will hold a webinar to provide an overview of this funding opportunity. Information about registering for the webinar is available on the Department's [Safety Data Initiative](#) webpages.

Applications are due by January 17, 2019 at 3:00 PM ET.

[FTA Mobility Program](#)

Applications due by January 6, 2020.

Following Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao's recent [announcement](#) to fund new programs to develop and deploy innovations in technology to improve access and mobility, FTA published a [notice of funding](#) for the [Mobility for All Pilot Program](#), which seeks to improve mobility options and access to community services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

The \$3.5 million grants program will fund projects that enhance transportation connections to jobs, education and health services. A complete list of members and related contact information by clicking [here](#).

AASHTO Releases a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Enhancement and Support of AASHTOWare Bridge Design & Rating

October 21, 2019

A Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit competitive proposals for professional services to complete the development and delivery of the first release of the planned modernized AASHTOWare Bridge Design-Rating system (BrDR 7.0) and to provide ongoing maintenance, support, and enhancements to the AASHTOWare Bridge Design-Rating products.

A project to deliver a modernized version of the AASHTOWare Bridge Design-Rating software was initiated in July 2016. The goals of the original BrDR modernization effort were to redesign the overall system architecture, update the analysis modules and the product's user interface utilizing up-to-date development processes, tools, and programming languages. The BrDR Modernization Project was scoped to deliver the modernized analysis engine (completed and released in October 2018 as part BrDR 6.8.3), and the fully modernized BrDR software with the modernized user interface in a separate release, during a second phase of the project.

The user interface slated for delivery in phase two as part of BrDR 7.0, encompasses all of the bridge design, analysis and rating capabilities in the current product release, and will permit configuration options to meet the user's needs and familiarity with the software. Completion of the software envisioned as part of the modernization project (currently partially-developed) will represent delivery of the fully modernized BrDR system that will include both the modernized user interface, and the previously released modernized analysis engine. As stated, work on the fully modernized BrDR software that includes the updated user interface is partially complete. AASHTO estimated that design activities are 95% complete, development activities 70% complete, and software testing activities 10% complete.

AASHTO seeks a contractor to complete the remaining development tasks for phase two (BrDR 7.0), support the delivery of BrDR 7.0 to the end-user community, and provide maintenance, support, and enhancement services for the last two legacy versions of BrDR (6.8.3 and 6.8.4) as well as BrDR 7.0, once delivered.

Due to the confidential information disclosed in the RFP, a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) must be signed and emailed to Judy Skeen Tarwater at itarwater@ashto.org to obtain a copy of the RFP document. For a copy of the Non-Disclosure Agreement, please [click this link](#).

Please note, all proposals are due by November 25, 4:00 pm ET. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Skeen Tarwater at itarwater@ashto.org.

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning 2019

Notice of Funding

Date Posted: 9/18/2019 Date Closed: 11/18/2019

Opportunity ID:

FTA-2019-010-TPE

Grant Program:

[Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning – Section 20005\(b\)](#)

Opportunity Announcement TXT:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/html/2019-20192.htm>

Opportunity Announcement PDF:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/pdf/2019-20192.pdf>

Details:

09/18/2019. Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the availability of approximately \$19.19 million in Pilot Program for TOD Planning funding to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects. FTA may award amounts ranging from \$250,000 to \$2,000,000. Synopses and full announcement are posted on Grants.gov site as opportunity [FTA-2019-010-TPE](#). Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 18, 2019.

Summary: The Pilot Program for TOD Planning provides funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning in new fixed guideway and core capacity transit project corridors. As required by statute, any comprehensive planning funded through the pilot program must examine ways to improve economic development and ridership, foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility, improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations. The statute also requires that the planning work be associated with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit project as defined in Federal transit statute (49 USC 5309(a); also see the NOFO for the definitions).

Consistent with statutory direction, FTA is seeking comprehensive planning projects covering an entire transit capital project corridor, rather than proposals that involve planning for individual station areas or only a small section of the corridor. To ensure that planning work reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community and results in concrete, specific deliverables and outcomes, FTA is requiring that transit project sponsors partner with entities with land use planning authority in the transit project corridor.

[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](#)

FTA Providing \$19.2M In Comprehensive Planning Grants (deadline November 18th)

The Federal Transit Administration is making \$19.2 million in grant funding available to support “comprehensive planning” for public transit projects by encouraging ridership, improving transit access, or supporting economic and mixed-use development near public transportation projects.

The agency issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) on September 18 for that grant money, noting that applicants must be an FTA grantee; either a project sponsor of an eligible transit project or an entity with land use planning authority in the project corridor. The deadline for grant applications is November 18.

“Convenient and safe access to public transportation for all is a priority for FTA,” said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams [in a statement](#) – adding that these grants are being offered through the agency’s [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development](#) or TOD planning.

“This program is an excellent opportunity for communities to plan transit-oriented development that improves mobility for citizens and captures the value associated with new transit projects,” she said.

Last year, FTA said it awarded \$16.6 million in grants to 20 organizations for such comprehensive planning efforts, such as making zoning changes to encourage development along a proposed bus rapid transit line in Indianapolis and conducting an analysis of multi-modal access to stations along a proposed light rail line in Maryland.

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

MINECRAFT EARTH

Minecraft is a game about placing blocks and going on adventures. It's set in infinitely-generated worlds of wide open terrain - icy mountains, swampy bayous, vast pastures and much more - filled with secrets, wonders and peril! But now, it is set anywhere; including downtown Mobile, or Foley, or Brewton.

Do you remember the mindless zombies walking around with their phones in an augmented reality looking for Pokemons with Pokemon Go? This is about to happen again, with [Minecraft Earth](#). Minecraft Earth uses [Open Street Map](#), which is a free, editable map of the whole world that is being built by volunteers largely from scratch, and released with an open-content license. [HERE](#) is Minecraft Earth



I don't think the AASHTO GREEN BOOK has design standards for zombie pedestrians, but just wait.....

In the News

Shelby Announces \$14.4 Million DOT BUILD Grant for Gulf Shores Highway Infrastructure Project

Posted Tuesday, November 12, 2019 7:42 am GULFCOASTNEWSTODAY.COM



U.S. Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) will award the City of Gulf Shores, Alabama, a federal highway infrastructure improvement grant in the amount of \$14,404,831 for a project to increase the capacity of State Highway 59 in Baldwin County. The grant is made available as part of the DOT Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program, which focuses on economic development and infrastructure upgrades.

“This is excellent news for the City of Gulf Shores and our Gulf Coast region,” said Senator Shelby. “The \$14.4 million BUILD grant from DOT will enhance the safety and efficiency along Highway 59, as well as alleviating excessive traffic. I look forward to working with my colleagues and Transportation Secretary Chao as we continue to prioritize the infrastructure needs of Alabama and the nation.”

The BUILD grant for Gulf Shores, Alabama, will fund a project to:

- Construct approximately 2 miles of a third southbound lane on State Highway 59 between County Road 8 and Alabama State Highway 180;
- Construct a new pedestrian bridge over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway;
- Construct shared-use paths along State Highway 59 from 20th Avenue to County Road 4;
- Expand County Road 6 from a two-lane roadway to a divided four-lane boulevard with dedicated cycling lanes and a shared-use pedestrian path access; and
- Add new two-lane roads, cycling lanes and sidewalks.

“We recognize that multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements are critical to the long-term sustainability of our community. This project will provide safe bicycle and pedestrian routes, ease traffic congestion, improve emergency response and expedite the evacuation process for our residents and the millions of visitors we host annually.” stated Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft. “I would like to thank Senator Richard Shelby and our Congressional Delegation for their assistance with this grant process. This project would not be possible without their unwavering support.”

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao Announces \$900 Million Historic Investment in American Infrastructure

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary Elaine L. Chao today announced that the Trump Administration will invest \$900 million in American infrastructure through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program. The funding has been awarded to 55 projects in 35 states.

“The Administration is targeting BUILD Transportation grants to repair, rebuild, and revitalize significant infrastructure projects across the country,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

Fiscal Year 2019 BUILD Transportation grants are for investments in surface transportation infrastructure and have been awarded on a competitive basis to projects with a significant impact in their local or regional communities. BUILD funding supports roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

The program selection criteria encompassed safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, state of good repair, environmental sustainability, innovation, and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders.

To reflect the Administration’s ongoing effort to rebalance historic underinvestment in rural America, DOT has awarded 50% of BUILD Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas. For this round of BUILD grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$90 million can be awarded to a single State.

View the full list of awards [HERE](#):

Gov. Ivey announces \$2.6 million to enhance recreation in Alabama

MONTGOMERY— Gov. Kay Ivey has announced grants totaling \$2.6 million to improve outdoor recreational facilities in 12 Alabama communities.

The awards, made through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, range from overhauling a public boat landing to upgrading ball fields.

“Alabama’s parks, playgrounds and trails promote healthier lives and happier people,” Gov. Ivey said. “These projects will encourage people to enjoy Alabama’s outdoors, and they will help create memories that will last a lifetime. I commend local leaders for understanding that parks and playgrounds contribute so much to a community’s health and well-being.”

The LWCF program was created by Congress in 1965 to assist states with the development and preservation of outdoor recreational facilities. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs manages the program in Alabama.

“Parks and playgrounds that are well-maintained and frequently used say so much about a community and its people,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “ADECA is pleased to be a partner with Governor Ivey, the National Park Service and these local communities in making these projects a reality.”

Under the LWCF program, recipients are required to equally match the amount of the award with cash or in-kind commitments.

Grants and projects (listed geographically from north to south) awarded are:

- Anderson (\$8,000)- The Lauderdale County town will create an outdoor nature learning center at the Anderson Town Park where children will learn about insects, plants and aquatic life from a nearby stream.
- Rogersville (\$118,766) – Funds will be used to build four tennis courts and rehabilitate two existing courts at the town park.
- Huntsville (\$230,000) – The Huntsville-Madison County Marina and Port Authority will use funds to improve safety, security and access at Ditto Landing by dredging the harbor, installing new docks, refurbishing the boat ramp and improving bathrooms, lighting and the entrance.
- Cullman (\$350,000) – The city will provide an overhaul at Nesmith Park including constructing a splash pad, playground, basketball and pickleball (paddleball) courts, multi-use fields, walking trail and restrooms.
- Springville (\$175,000)- The city will renovate baseball and softball fields at Springville City Park including press boxes and concession stands and add parking.
- Trussville (\$175,000) -The project will include renovating existing baseball and softball fields at Masonic Park/Cahaba Creek Greenway and add outdoor exercise equipment.
- Lincoln (\$350,000)- The city will construct a park on a newly acquired 190-acre site. Development under the grant will include a playground, picnic areas, walking trail, restrooms, parking, signage and landscaping.
- Demopolis (\$247,675) – The city will upgrade two ballfields including lighting and batting cages at Demopolis Sports Plex.
- Pike Road (\$350,000) – The town will build two multi-purpose ballfields, parking and walks on a 5-acre site which is part of a larger tract donated to the town.
- Clayton (\$21,631) – The city will use funds to provide playground equipment at Peanut Butter Hill Park.
- Geneva (\$348,550) – The city plans to construct a soccer complex at C.D. Chapman Memorial Park. The project will include adding a parking lot, restrooms, sidewalks and installation of fencing and lighting.
- Summerdale (\$234,100) – The town will construct four lighted tennis courts and a parking area on a 2.5-acre city-owned site at the intersection of First and East Jefferson streets.

Under the LWCF program eligible applicants may include municipalities, county governments, state agencies and state authorities created by the Legislature. The program can fund projects involving playfields, trails, parks, playgrounds, picnic and camping areas, including related amenities and land acquisition which will be dedicated for recreation use.

ADECA administers a wide range of programs that support law enforcement, victim programs, economic development, water resource management, energy conservation and recreation.

Alabama’s first diverging diamond interchange slated for spring 2020 completion

Updated Nov 09, 2019

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

Alabama’s first public-private partnership transportation project for Interstate 10 might not be coming to coastal Alabama [after Gov. Kay Ivey declared a new bridge and Bayway project “dead”](#) in August.

But the southern region of the state will still host a transportation first next year for Alabama when a new interstate interchange is rolled out in Baldwin County.

Alabama’s first diverging diamond interchange, a \$7.3 million reconfiguration of a congested area surrounded by retail development and a large church, is under construction at Alabama State Route 181 and I-10 in Spanish Fort and Daphne.

State transportation officials aren’t expecting major lane closures or disruptions that would traffic headaches ahead of a critical shopping season. The interchange is a close distance to the Eastern Shore Centre, Lowe’s, Sam’s Club and numerous car dealerships and eateries. The average daily traffic count for the area is 60,281 vehicles.

“During peak holiday times, there are going to be no lane closures,” said Katelyn Turner, spokeswoman with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

But after the holiday season, a full-on public relations blitz will be underway about an interchange most drivers have likely never experienced, and which has created some confusion among motorists where it’s been introduced.

“We’re putting together a PR plan and are getting things in place to re-educate the public,” said Turner. “The bulk of the public information campaign will start early next year.”

The state plans on updating its online [instructional video](#) in January. ALDOT is also planning radio and TV advertisements about the new intersection that will be rolled out closer to when it’s completed.

Right now, construction work is well underway, with crews working on paving and widening I-10 eastbound and westbound on-ramps from Route 181.

Turner said the state has gotten few calls or questions about what is going on at the site. “They see the construction and what’s going on,” she said. “I think people are aware.”

Turner said she’s unsure when the new interchange will open. She said it should be wrapped up during the spring of 2020.

The interchange is designed to improve the traffic flow efficiency and safety by reducing the number of conflict points and traffic signals.

At first glance, the design looks complex but proponents say it’s a relatively simple way to cross a busy interchange. Diverging diamonds, sometimes called “double crossover diamond,” require drivers to cross to the left – or the opposite – side the road through a designed crossover section. Drivers then travel a limited distance before crossing back to the traditional side of the road.

The unconventional interchange has been [embraced by the Federal Highway Administration](#) as transportation officials seek designs that promote safety while decreasing congestion and reducing construction costs.

Diverging diamond interchanges are a French import to the United States, with its first usage occurring just outside of Paris in the 1970s.

The concept was born in the U.S. through a term paper written in 2000 by University of Maryland graduate student Glibert Chleicki. The nation’s first diverging diamond interchange opened in Springfield, Mo., in 2009. The design saved Missouri officials \$13 million on what would’ve been a conventional interchange without the diamond-shape structure.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

REPORT TO FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION ON STATE OF ALABAMA’S *MONTGOMERY TO MOBILE INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FEASIBILITY STUDY*

State of Alabama’s Passenger Rail Feasibility Study: **Phase 2 – Montgomery to Mobile Route**

On behalf of the State of Alabama, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and AECOM Technical Services, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia (AECOM) have produced a Final Report on the *Montgomery to Mobile Intercity Passenger Rail Service Feasibility Study*. This Study and its Report were funded from federal grant funds allocated under the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Railroad Administration. This Study comprises Phase 2 of an overall study concerning the feasibility of returning passenger rail service between the cities of Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile, with Phase 1 involving the Birmingham to Montgomery rail corridor and Phase 2 involving the Montgomery to Mobile rail corridor. This Report summarizes the Study’s revenue, cost, ridership analysis, stakeholder outreach, and service planning activities that were conducted from 2017 through 2019 by AECOM for the Montgomery to Mobile rail corridor. This Report will be available for use in assisting the State when considering and/or determining future plans for establishing an overall Birmingham to Montgomery to Mobile passenger rail system should funding be made available for such establishment at a future date.

The Report may be viewed online at www.adeca.alabama.gov or at the ADECA office at 401 Adams Avenue, Room 500, Montgomery, Alabama 36104, beginning on Wednesday, November 13, 2019. Interested parties may offer public comments on the Report by submitting written comments to ADECA. Any and all written comments should be received in the ADECA office no later than Friday, November 22, 2019. Such comments should be addressed to Dr. Kathleen Rasmussen, ADECA, P.O. Box 5690, Montgomery, AL 36103-5690, or e-mailed to Kathleen.rasmussen@adeca.alabama.gov.

Transportation Research

FHWA To Release Proposed Bridge Inspection Revisions

editor@ashto.org November 8, 2019

The Federal Highway Administration plans to release a notice of proposed rulemaking on November 12 that would overhaul National Bridge Inspection Standards. Key changes for state departments of transportation within the NPRM center on the implementation of a risk-based approach to determining appropriate bridge inspection intervals and the requirement for the collection and use of element level bridge inspection data.

The FHWA said in its [102-page NPRM](#) that its proposed revisions applies to inspections of bridges on all public roads, on and off Federal-aid highways, including tribally and federally owned bridges, as well as private bridges connected on each end by a public road – just as current inspection rules do.

The agency said its proposed “risk-based approach” for bridge inspection intervals means the use of more rigorous criteria could extend routine inspection intervals to between 48 and 72 months compared to the current 24-month interval.

According to a brief analysis by American Association for State Highway and Transportation Officials staff, while the use of this new “risk-based approach” – detailed on pages 29 and 34 of the NPRM – is not a requirement, bridge “owners” including state DOTs, federal agencies, tribal governments, and others may choose to use it on some or all of their bridge inventory.

The second major proposed change is the mandated collection and use of element level bridge inspection data, which is related to the risk-based evaluation for bridge inspection intervals. While there are limited details regarding this change within the NPRM itself, the FHWA offers guidance in documentation attached to its rulemaking:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/131216_a1.pdf.

The agency also seeks to repeal two outdated regulations as part of its proposed rulemaking – the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program and the Discretionary Bridge Candidate Rating – as they are no longer needed.

Finally, the agency emphasized that “in this day of significant technological advancements, other disruptive technologies will be developed that will change the way inspectors perform bridge inspection. As they are developed, FHWA will continue to evaluate these new tools in partnership with our stakeholders and update its bridge inspection guidance documents.”

Those include the use of sonar technologies for underwater bridge inspection and unmanned aerial systems or drones for aerial observance, the agency added, though “new criteria” will be required when using those devices to insure that no defects are missed.

[Side note: The New Jersey Department of Transportation released a video on November 4 that showcases how drones are replacing “boots on the ground” at the agency, “increasing accuracy, speeding up data collection, and providing access to hard-to-reach locations for divisions throughout the department.”]

What is the estimated cost of its new rulemaking? Approximately \$1.65 million annually, FHWA said – adding that while it expects this proposed rulemaking to “result in significant benefits,” those benefits are “are not easily quantifiable.”

Specifically, FHWA expects this proposed rule to result in improved bridge condition-related project, program, and policy choices due to improved data. In addition, the agency expects its proposed rule would “help focus the Federal-aid highway program on achieving improved bridge performance.

NTSB Hearing Seeks Bicycle, Pedestrian Safety Improvements

editor@ashto.org November 8, 2019

A National Transportation Safety Board [hearing](#) on November 5 called for more “concerted action” from federal and state agencies to improve bicyclist safety – and, by extension, that of pedestrians – via improvements to roadway infrastructure, enhanced bicyclist conspicuity, and the “mitigation of head injuries” to bicyclists through mandatory helmet laws.

“Last month, when the fatality numbers were released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, we learned that 857 bicyclists died in crashes with motor vehicles in 2018; that’s a 6.3 percent increase over 2017. And this was a year when total road fatalities were down by about 2.5 percent,” said NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt at the hearing. “So something is askew here.”

Eric Emery, NTSB’s safety research division chief, noted that “bicyclists – like pedestrians and motorcyclists – are considered vulnerable road users because they are unprotected by an enclosed vehicle compartment leaving them more vulnerable to injury or death in the event of a crash with a motor vehicle.”

He added that “although they comprised a small percentage of traffic fatalities overall,” bicyclist fatalities are comparable to deaths resulting from railroad or marine accidents and represented more than twice the number resulting from aviation accidents in that same year.

“Although the NTSB has begun to address safety issues relevant to vulnerable road users it has been 47 years since we have examined bicyclists,” Emery noted. “Consequently, there’s a need to update our understanding of bicycle safety in the United States.”

Ivan Cheung, an NTSB transportation research analyst, noted that improving roadway infrastructure so that motor vehicles are separated from bicyclists, such as with separated bike lanes, would likely reduce the number of the most serious crashes. He added that at intersections, where more than 65 percent of collisions occur, investigators determined treatments that clearly denote right-of-way using color, signage, medians, signals and pavement markings would likely reduce the number of crashes in those environments.

“An effective way to increase adoptions of infrastructure safety measure is to include them in official guidance and standard documents, such as the guide for the development of bicycle facilities which was last published by the American Associations of State Highway and Transportation officials in 2012,” Cheung pointed out in his remarks.

“However, the current edition does not contain information about separated bike lanes and safety treatments of intersection, such as bicycle signal face and two-stage bicycle term box,” he said. “So [NTSB] staff is proposing a recommendation to ensure that bike lanes and intersection treatments are included in the next revision for the [bike] guide.”

According to AASHTO committee staff, revisions to its bike guide are underway. The organization also said that an updated guidebook regarding infrastructure designs for improving pedestrian safety is expected to be published in 2020.

NTSB's Cheung also emphasized that the agency's staff is proposing recommendations to the Federal Highway Administration to include separated bike lanes and intersection safety treatment in the proven safety countermeasure initiative in its Every Day Counts program.

To help improve "awareness" of bicyclists and pedestrians on the part of motorists, Jana Price – NTSB's senior human performance investigator – said the agency is recommending further research into "vehicle to pedestrian" or "V2P" communication systems that can provide alerts to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike, which may increase the likelihood that an action will be taken to avoid potential collisions.

Finally, NTSB's Cheung said the agency will recommend the formation of a "comprehensive national strategy" to increase bicycle helmet use for all ages; one that includes both "legislative and non-legislative intervention methods."

Though the "primary focus" of the agency's report is on crash avoidance, he said that – in those instances when crashes do occur – the use of a helmet was the single most effective way for riders to reduce their chances of receiving a serious head injury.

As its research showed that less than half of bicyclists wear helmets and that head injuries were the leading cause of bicyclist fatalities, the NTSB recommended that all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, require that all persons wear a helmet while riding a bicycle.

"Despite the proven benefits of head injury mitigation, helmet use among bicyclists of all ages is low," he said in his remarks. "Bicycle helmet laws for children and adults are identified as the most and second most effective behavioral safety countermeasures."

NTSB expects to publish a final report encapsulating its bicycle/pedestrian safety ratings in the coming weeks.

UAH to offer free training in highway construction

For The News Courier Nov 7, 2019

The University of Alabama in Huntsville Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering will offer free highway construction training, according to a press release.

The program, which is being offered through a statewide partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation, will allow participants to earn their National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Heavy Highway Construction, Level 1, credential.

Classes begin Monday.

"The NCCER is the leader in construction training, education and workforce development focused on developing skills and knowledge needed in the construction industry," the release said. "Federal and state investment in road construction projects is expected to continue trending upward, translating to a high demand for qualified workers."

Today's highway construction industry requires employees with knowledge in construction safety, rigging and cranes and the ability to work in elements.

This program is targeted to minorities, women, veterans and disadvantaged individuals looking to launch a career in the highway construction industry. Participants have the opportunity to test for their Level 1 credential and advance into ALDOT's full time On-the-Job Training Program.

Visit alhighwayoit.uah.edu for more information or call 256-824-6466 or 256-824-6263.

2020 Alabama Recreational Trails Conference

SAVE THE DATE

February 5-7, 2020
Gulf State Park and Lodge
21196 E Beach Blvd., Gulf Shores, AL 36542

A fun and informative event with mobile workshops and speakers from across Alabama and the United States presenting sessions on the latest trends and ideas in creating recreational trails that are inclusive, accessible, and connected to enhance quality of life and economic development in our state!

Registration announcement coming soon!

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.