



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, April 17th, 2020

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The Mobile MPO will conduct its MPO meeting by **VIDEO CONFERENCE** on April 22nd, 2020 at 10:00 AM via GOTOMEETING.COM and is open to the public; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*.

The Whitehouse guidelines for [Opening Up America Again](#) have been established and nonessential travel can resume.

Congress has passed The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (H.R. 748), see Legislative Updates for an analysis of the CARES ACT. Also, see Funding Opportunities as there is 100% transit money available under the CARES ACT. Congress is in recess but the Dept. of Treasury and other committees are at work; see legislative Updates. This week's Just For Fun is supersonic. Traffic is WAY DOWN and the Highway Trust Fund is taking a hit; see In The News;

The SARPC staff is currently working remotely. Our phones, emails, are seamless and if you need us we are here.

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 MPO Policy Committee Meeting

The Mobile MPO will conduct its MPO meeting by **VIDEO CONFERENCE** on April 22, 2020 at 10:00AM via GOTOMEETING.COM. If you are not available to be present via video conference, I will still need a proxy from you; I need a quorum. There will be more communication on this as we get closer to the date. Please see the agenda items below. The meeting will be open to the public via Gotomeeting.

Mobile MPO Policy Board Meeting
Wed, Apr 22, 2020 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CDT)

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/SARPC/mobile-mpo-policy-board-meeting>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3122](tel:+16467493122)

Access Code: 567-878-165

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/567878165>

AGENDA ITEMS

The agenda items include [the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan](#) (with no I-10 Mobile River Bridge at this point), and several items to add to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- I sent you the link to the Plan in February, and those that requested hard copies have them (subsequent minor grammatical changes). The 2045 LRTP has been available online for review and at 40 locations around Mobile County for over a month, it has been advertised as being available, we have had a public meeting on it with minimal written comments (bike/ped), and reviewed the Plan with the TCC/CAC on March 4th with a recommendation to approve.
- The items to include into the TIP are:

FY 2019 Urban FTA 5310

<u>Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Funding</u>		<u>Funding (fed)</u>
100071593	The Independent Living Center-14 passenger bus and one ADA compliant mini-van	\$81,000
100071594	AltaPointe four small 14 passenger buses that are ADA compliant	\$149,844
100071595	Via Health, Fitness, and Enrichment Center- one small ADA Compliant bus	\$45,600
100071596	The City of Satsuma – Operating Funds	\$31,675
100071599	SARPC Program Administration	\$31,736

REMOVED from Agenda:

<u>National Highway Funds</u>	<u>Total Funding (tot)</u>
100069998 Safety Project to Install Two Way Left Turn Lane and Bicycle/Pedestrian Friendly Shoulders on SR 16 (US 90) From the East End of Cochran Bridge to West of Bankhead Tunnel; Utilities	\$1,562,470
100069997 Safety Project to Install Two Way Left Turn Lane and Bicycle/Pedestrian Friendly Shoulders on SR 16 (US 90) From the East End of Cochran Bridge to West of Bankhead Tunnel; Construction	\$15,209,166.00

The 25 Year Long Range Transportation Plan (*Envision 2045*) is on the agenda for adoption. There was a public meeting concerning the LRTP *Envision 2045*, on January 29th with very limited comments. The draft plan, and all of the comments from the early public involvement can be found at www.Envision2045.org. If you would like a hard copy of the plan to review, please let me know. At this point, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is not in the fiscally constrained LRTP, yet is a Visionary Project.



Envision2045
Invest in your transportation Future
Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan
<https://www.envision2045.org/public-involvement.html>

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is currently updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Mobile Urban Area. LRTPs are multimodal plans that set priorities for spending federal funds on transportation projects in the Mobile Urban Area over the next 25 years. Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, and projects include improvements to highways, roads, bridges, transit facilities and service, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and related enhancements. 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.

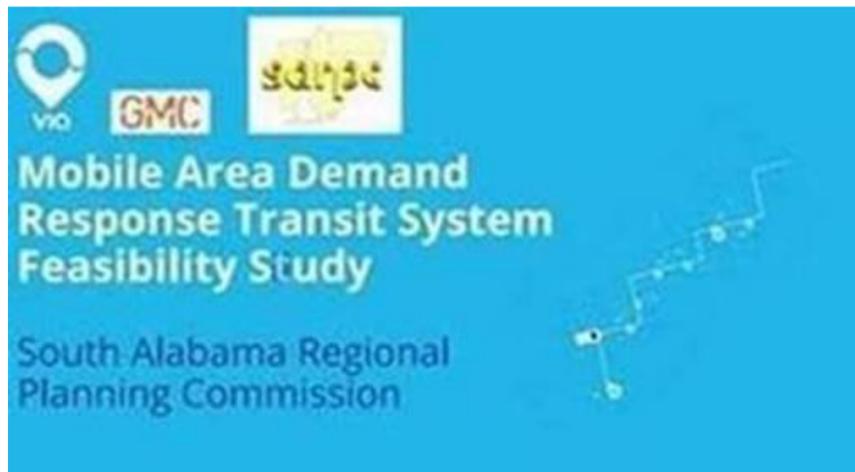
SARPC conducted an online survey in 2019 to give the public a chance on to comment on what is most important in terms of transportation in the Mobile Urbanized Area, to help guide the 25 Year LRTP. **Click [HERE](#) for Full Results.**

A public input meeting on the draft *Envision 2045 LRTP* was held Wednesday, January 29th from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm, providing the public a chance to provide input.

Participation and input is encouraged from the community. If you would like a chance to comment, you may send your comments to transportation@sarpc.org.

More information on the new plan can be found at <https://www.envision2045.org/> or by contacting Kevin Harrison, Director of Transportation, SARPC, at (251)433-6541 or kharrison@sarpc.org.

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY is underway



Over the years, the viability of transit in the underserved segments of Mobile County has been an important task to consider. The ability to connect those populations with daily needs and employment could be an important step in improving the quality of life for residents.

Recent advancements in technology have given rise to new transit opportunities, and the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization / South Alabama Regional Planning Commission are currently engaged in studying the feasibility of a demand response transit model for our County. The demand response transit model uses a technology system to connect those in need of a ride with the provider based on the most efficient route and timing of other riders as well.



An important step in determining the feasibility of such a system includes talking with important stakeholders in the county. To future these efforts, a stakeholder roundtable meeting was held earlier this week. It is our hope that participating in this roundtable will help our consulting group gather information on the populations in need of improved transit access in Mobile County.

SARPC staff and Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood met with the LeMoyné Citizen Advisory Panel (LCAP) and presented the study last month. It was somewhat well received, with mixed emotions about commuting for shift employees. The further we dig into discovering possibilities of transit outside the WAVE, the more challenges we seem to be finding.

Via is currently working on funding scenarios, and peer reviews. This week there were conversations with ALDOT, SARPC and VIA concerning funding scenarios.

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

Mobile MPO Perspective

Although the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is commonly mentioned in the above LRTP comments, currently the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is in the LRTP as a Visionary Project. This means it is NOT in the fiscally constrained LRTP, it is on a wish list of sorts as there is not available funding identified. The Bridge is also not in the current Transportation Improvement Program ([TIP](#)); it has to be in the LRTP in order to be on the TIP.

When the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast citizens, and the local elected officials agree on how the project can be funded, ALDOT will have a better idea on what type of project can be afforded. Once this happens, and I am confident it will, the Mobile MPO can amend the *Envision 2045 LRTP*, and the TIP to include the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The Mobile MPO would like to know the facts, like how much funding is available, and where does it come from, before adopting a resolution supporting a plan.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100069442 (CN)

Federal aid number : NH 0042 (538)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : INSTALLATION OF NEW GENERATOR TO REPLACE EXISTING GENERATOR FOR BANKHEAD TUNNEL AND ITS DEVICES

Old Target start date : May 29, 2020

New Target start date : June 26, 2020

South Alabama RPO Updates

[USDA Unveils Tool to Help Rural Communities Address the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue unveiled a one-stop-shop of federal programs that can be used by rural communities, organizations and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. [The COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide](#) is a first-of-its-kind resource for rural leaders looking for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic. Secretary Perdue announced, "This resource guide will help our rural leaders, whether they are in agriculture, education, health care or any other leadership capacity, understand what federal assistance is available for their communities during this unprecedented time."

HSCTP Public Meeting Postponed

In consideration of health concerns of participants regarding COVID-19, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission will postpone the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public Meeting that was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th at the GM&O Building. The meeting will be rescheduled at a later date. We welcome your comments and questions regarding the plan. If you wish, you may contact us via email at transportation@sarpc.org or by phone at (251) 433 6541.

As part of this effort we are surveying transit providers, riders, and other stakeholders in our region. Please take a moment to answer the following questions and email them back to us.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Name of your Organization:

Does your organization operate a transit vehicle? If so,

How many vehicles?

How many seats per vehicle?

What is/are the funding sources for your vehicle(s)?

What is your service area?

Do you use or need transit services to get around? If so, which one(s)?

What unmet needs are there in your area?

Things like later hours, rural areas where transit service is needed but isn't available, etc.?

Do you have any suggestions as to how these needs could be met?

Will you be applying for 5310 funding? If so, what will you be applying for?

Projects in Region Let April 24th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- For constructing the Bridge Repairs and Overlay (Grading, Drainage, and Pavement) on SR-41 over the Conecuh River to include the Demolition of Existing Bridges on SR-41 in Riverview. Length 0.826 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$4,240,029 to \$5,182,258 .

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

Legislative Updates

Congress is out on recess due to COVID-19 precautions until at least April 20th.

[Treasury Department Provides Application Information for State and Local CARES Funding](#)

The Treasury Department is beginning to roll out state and local payments from the \$150 Coronavirus Relief Fund included in the CARES Act. States, the District of Columbia, territories, and eligible units of local government will need to fill out [an application](#) to receive funds, which can then be used for COVID-19-related expenditures that were incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020 that were not already accounted for in recently-approved budgets. Amounts paid to States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and eligible units of local government are based on population as provided in the CARES Act. View the Treasury's [Census Data and Methodology information](#). A unit of local government eligible for direct payment includes a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level with a population that exceeds 500,000. View the Treasury's [list of eligible local government units](#).

[Small-Business Funds Dwindle as Virus Aid Package Sputters](#)

According to the latest projections, the Small Business Administration's \$349 billion CARES Act appropriation for loans to eligible small businesses could run out of money by this Friday. White House and Republican leaders want to boost that amount to \$600 billion to give more small businesses an opportunity to get relief before the funding dries up. However, Democrats see an opportunity to fix flaws in the Paycheck Protection Program that have been identified since its April 3 rollout, as well as tack on hundreds of billions of dollars more for state and local governments and hospitals that are still bleeding cash. Talks between top Democratic leaders and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin got off to a positive start last Friday but have slowed partly due to the holiday weekend. Over the weekend, GOP leaders called on Democrats to drop their [objections to a two-page bill](#) that would provide additional small business money but would not include other funding provisions.

[Here's How Some Committees are Working During the Coronavirus Shutdown](#)

House committees are staying busy making information requests, reviewing documents, and eyeing less-formal proceedings to get around rules requiring in-person hearings during the long recess caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Committees can hear from live witnesses in "non-hearing" events like briefings, round tables, or panels, and some continue to seek information and letters from the agencies they oversee. Guidance on virtual hearings circulated by the House Rules Committee and obtained by CQ Roll Call states hearings require "physical presence." House rules simply do not allow for virtual hearings where lawmakers typically make motions, mark up bills, or hear sworn testimony and can't be changed until the body reconvenes. The House will not reconvene until April 20, at the earliest, but may remain out of session until a later date.

Chair DeFazio Statement on Newly-Released Bridge Report Highlighting 1 in 3 U.S. Bridges are in Need of Repair April 13, 2020

Washington, DC – Today, Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR) highlighted the American Road & Transportation Builders Association's (ARTBA) newly-released analysis that shows 230,000 U.S. bridges are in need of repair and 46,000 are "structurally deficient" and in poor condition as another example of why we can't wait to invest in our infrastructure. Chair DeFazio has long urged significant Federal investment in the Nation's crumbling infrastructure and is pushing for a massive infrastructure package to be included in an upcoming economic stimulus package.

"This analysis is sobering, but unfortunately, not all that surprising given the fact the Federal government has ignored the infrastructure needs of our country for decades," said Chair DeFazio. "We're attempting to run a 21st century economy on a 1950s-era transportation system, which simply does not work and it shouldn't take a bridge or economic collapse to get the Federal government to pay attention. My Moving Forward Framework released earlier this year is a launchpad for making transformational investments to not only make our bridges and other infrastructure smarter, safer, and made to last, but also to create millions of jobs and support American manufacturing, something that will be badly-needed in the coming months as we deal with the economic fall-out of COVID-19. I am again encouraging President Trump and my Congressional colleagues to work together to finally pass wide-sweeping legislation to bring our transportation infrastructure into the 21st Century. The cost of doing nothing is too high."

Funding Opportunities

AARP Community Challenge Grants - May 15 Deadline

AARP's annual Community Challenge is on! Funding is available for eligible government agencies and nonprofit organizations to improve civic engagement, create vibrant public spaces, deliver a range of transportation options, support accessible housing, use Smart Cities data applications, and initiate other community improvements. The grant amount depends on project size.

[Learn more about the Community Challenge and apply.](#)

Innovations in Accessible Mobility Grant - May 1 Deadline

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) is funding up to 10 communities for projects designed to increase accessible transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities, including projects related to Coronavirus response. Grants of up to \$30,000 each will be awarded. Recent Accessible Mobility grantee INCOG Area Agency on Aging (Tulsa, OK) and its Creating Access to Nutrition Program will be featured during a half-hour [April 23 webinar](#) (12:30 pm Eastern/ 9:30 am Pacific).

[Learn more about the grants and apply.](#)

FTA has extended the deadlines for four competitive grant programs with active notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs). The affected grant programs are the Accelerating Innovative Mobility Program (new deadline 5/18/20), Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Program (new deadline 6/3/20), Buses and Bus Facilities Program (new deadline 4/29/20), and the Passenger Ferry Grant Program (new deadline 4/29/20). NOFOs are available at [transit.dot.gov](#).

The [HOPE program](#) supports planning, engineering and technical studies, or financial planning to improve public transportation services in areas experiencing long-term economic distress. The funding may be used toward coordinated human service transportation planning to improve transit service or provide new services such as rides to opioid abuse treatment and recovery.

Eligible applicants must come from counties with more than 20 percent of the population living in poverty for 30 years or more, as measured by the U.S. Census, or the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Eligible applicants are defined as eligible recipients or sub-recipients of Section 5307, Section 5310 or Section 5311 funding. A state department of transportation may apply on behalf of eligible entities within its state.

U.S. DOT updates its COVID-19 Resource page as new information is available.

[transportation.gov/coronavirus](https://www.transportation.gov/coronavirus)

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao Announces \$25 Billion to Help Nation's Public Transportation Systems Respond to COVID-19

Thursday, April 2, 2020

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced [a total of \\$25 billion in Federal funding allocations](#) to help the Nation's public transportation systems respond to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Funding is provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2020.

"This historic \$25 billion in grant funding will ensure our nation's public transportation systems can continue to provide services to the millions of Americans who depend on them," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

FTA is allocating \$25 billion to [recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds](#), with \$22.7 billion allocated to large and small urban areas and \$2.2 billion allocated to rural areas. Funding will be provided at a 100 percent Federal share, with no local match required, and will be available to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

Further, operating expenses incurred beginning on January 20, 2020 for all rural and urban recipients, even those in large urban areas, are also eligible, including operating expenses to maintain transit services as well as paying for administrative leave for transit personnel due to reduced operations during an emergency. Answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about this funding are available on FTA's web site.

"We know that many of our Nation's public transportation systems are facing extraordinary challenges and these funds will go a long way to assisting our transit industry partners in battling COVID-19," said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams. "These Federal funds will support operating assistance to transit agencies, including those in large urban areas as well as pay transit workers across the country not working because of the public health emergency."

In addition to the \$25 billion funding allocation announced today, FTA has taken a number of steps to support the transit industry during this public health emergency, including [expanding the eligibility of Federal assistance](#) available under FTA's Emergency Relief Program to help transit agencies respond to COVID-19 in states where the Governor has declared an emergency. All transit providers, including those in large urban areas, can now use Federal formula funds under the Urbanized Area Formula Program and Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program for emergency-related capital and operating expenses. This includes the provision of personal protective equipment or special-purpose trips.

FTA also established an [Emergency Relief docket](#) that allows transit providers in States where the Governor has declared an emergency related to COVID-19 to request temporary relief from Federal requirements under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 as well as any non-statutory FTA requirements.

Additionally, FTA [recently announced](#) that it would provide a 30-day extension of the deadline for current competitive grant program funding opportunities, including: FTA's Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program; Passenger Ferry Grant Program; Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) Challenge Grants; and Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Program.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is working closely with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and other Federal partners to provide guidance to the public transportation industry in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). FTA has held regular conference calls with transit stakeholders and posted [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) regarding COVID-19 on its web site.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao Announces Availability of \$1 Billion to Upgrade American Infrastructure (deadline May 18, 2020)

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 discretionary grant funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program.

"BUILD grants will upgrade infrastructure across America, making our transportation systems safer and more efficient," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

As the Trump Administration looks to enhance America's infrastructure, FY 2020 BUILD Transportation grants are for planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. BUILD funding can support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

Projects for BUILD will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental sustainability, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership.

To better address the needs of rural America, which has historically been neglected, DOT intends to award 50% of BUILD Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas that deliver positive benefits for these communities, consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative. For this round of BUILD

Transportation grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the appropriations act.

To provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2020 BUILD grant application process. A webinar on how to compete for BUILD Transportation Grants for all applicants will be held on February 25, 2020. Further details will be made available at <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>. The deadline to submit an application is May 18, 2020.

For more information, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>.

Transportation Alternatives Program Grants

Deadline May 15th, 2020

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcome to submit more than one project.

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

This year applications will only be accepted electronically. Applicants should email their complete application to transportation@sarpc.org.

Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2020.

Electronic versions of the applications are available online at <http://mobilempo.org/TAP.html>

Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

If you have any questions please call the SARPC Transportation Planning Department at (251) 433 6541.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program (TAP) for FY 2021.

The guidelines and the application can both be found on the ALDOT website, on the Local Transportation Bureau page under the Operations Section.

<https://www.dot.state.al.us/ltweb/operations/index.html>

The deadline for submission of FY 2021 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, May 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Federal Lands Access Program

Deadline June 16, 2020

Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) will be conducting another Call for Projects for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in Alabama for Federal Fiscal Years (FY) 2020 through FY 2022. All final project approvals will be contingent upon the availability of funds in the year for which they are being requested. **Funding beyond 2020 is dependent on reauthorization of the Access Program by Congress.**

The Call for Projects application period opens March 16, 2020 and runs through June 16, 2020.

An estimated total of \$1.5M will be available for programming in your State.

EFLHD has found that a higher level of outreach at local levels has increased both the number and the quality of competitive applications submitted and ultimately recommended for project programming and implementation. We ask that you provide the widest circulation possible of this announcement to provide a robust pool of applications. **Please feel free to use any of the materials included in with this message to assist in your outreach efforts. The Federal Lands Access Program website is: <https://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>**

Federal Land Management Agencies: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach to your units and gateway communities regarding this program opportunity.

FHWA Federal Aid Division Office: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to the MPOs and RPOs in your state via email or on your website.

State DOTs: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to your District staff and Local Agency Program Coordinators (if applicable), Public Information Officers, via email and/or on your websites.

Local Agency Representatives: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to other County, MPO and Local agencies in your state via email and/or on your local websites.

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.

[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](#)

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)

This week, airport's across the country received some help, including the Mobile Airport Authority receiving \$15 Million. The airlines have taken a hit because of this virus. Which got us thinking about what can bring back the airline industry. Boeing has developed an [airplane that can travel 4,000 mph](#). There WAS a supersonic airplane called the Concorde, made by a much superior airplane manufacturer now called AIRBUS. The Concorde was grounded for a bunch of valid reasons; in fact, [HERE](#) is a great video about it. One could leave London, and arrive in New York prior to the London departure time.



Boeing's new airplane could get you from New York to London in TWO hours. However, one of the reasons the Concorde was grounded was because supersonic travel could only happen over water because of the constant sonic booms. It really limited the trip patterns. *Just For Fun*, the Boeing engineers also intend to use the supersonic airplane for time travel. It would take 10 hours to circle the earth, and the engineers suspect that if they go backwards against the rotation of the earth, they will be in the day before, like in the movie superman. But really, it would just be 10 hours later...



In the News

COVID-19 closures lead to efficient road projects

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) | Apr 15, 2020

While the local economy has slowed almost to a halt during the COVID-19 pandemic, road work in the city might be the most efficient it has ever been.

Projects slated to take months are now taking weeks, thanks to a combination of light traffic and almost perfect weather conditions over the last couple of weeks, city engineer Nick Amberger said.

“We’re trying to do as much as we can,” Amberger said. “Hopefully people can come back to a much nicer situation downtown.”

Resurfacing streets is usually a tough job, with traffic being a main consideration, but with fewer cars on the road, crews don’t have to worry as much about blocking a street and thus can work faster, Amberger said.

“It’s usually so disruptive to resurface with businesses open,” he said. “It’s more like ripping a Band-Aid off quickly without having to impact business.”

The city had planned to resurface Dauphin Street downtown and were set to begin toward the end of 2019. It was part of larger improvements around the city, including portions of Airport Boulevard, Canal Street, Hillcrest Road and Knollwood Drive, Amberger said. More streets were added because of the efficiency with which the projects were being completed, he said.

“Everything from a road contractor perspective is perfect,” Amberger said. “We’ve had decent weather, no traffic; it almost doesn’t get better.”

Folks downtown have noticed the unusually steady pace of these contractors as well. Carol Hunter, a spokesperson for the Downtown Mobile Alliance, said crews will be milling down a street one day and paving it the next. They’re just going block by block like that, she said.

“There’s never a good time to do this type of infrastructure work,” Hunter said. “This is certainly the best time. I appreciate the city recognizing that.”

Like Amberger, Hunter acknowledged the bulk of the work initially was going to be Dauphin Street, but as the work got finished more and more side streets were added.

“Downtown is going to have a whole new fresh look when this is over,” she said.

Matthew Golden, owner of LoDa Bier Garten downtown, said he appreciates the work the city is doing on the streets, even if his restaurant will be forced to close temporarily due to COVID-19.

“They’re running and gunning to get it done,” he said. “Projects that should’ve taken two to three months are taking only days and weeks.”

Parking

While the city has been working with contractors to resurface streets downtown, Hunter said the alliance has lobbied for on-street parking, specifically on the north side of Dauphin Street.

While parking is allowed there now for roughly 13 hours per day, starting at 6 p.m., Hunter said the alliance is hoping to allow parking on the north side of the street all day, every day. On-street parking all the time would help that side of Dauphin Street develop as much as the other side, she said.

“It seems counterintuitive, but one of the best ways to aid development is to allow on-street parking,” Hunter said. “It will let the area develop that sidewalk café feel.”

From Bayou or Washington streets to Franklin Street, downtown could add about 70 additional parking spaces, Hunter said. One issue, she said, is allowing fire trucks the ability to move around more easily.

Mobile-area traffic plummets by as much as half as coronavirus restrictions kick in

[Brendan Kirby](#)

Updated Apr 10, 2020 | Posted on Apr 10, 2020

MOBILE, Ala. (Ala.) – Traffic along interstate highways in Mobile and Baldwin counties plummeted by as much as half last week compared to the same period last year, according to the Alabama Department of Transportation.

Responding to questions from FOX10 News, the agency reported that traffic along Interstates 10 and 65 in the coastal counties was down between 30 percent and 40 percent from Monday through Friday. Weekend traffic compared to the same period in 2019 was down 40 percent to 50 percent, according to ALDOT.

The reduced traffic mirrors the rest of Alabama. ALDOT says traffic statewide has averaged a decline of about 35 percent, based on markers located at key spots.

“It’s certainly an unprecedented time,” said Allison Green, a spokeswoman for the department. “We’re keeping a close look at the traffic volumes.”

Ordinarily, Good Friday would be a busy travel day, with motorists jamming the roads ahead of Easter.

Not this year.

Experts say reduced traffic likely will last as long as the coronavirus-inspired restrictions do.

The reduced traffic offers an indication of how closely people are following guidelines to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus and the economic toll that government-imposed restrictions have had.

The reduced weekday traffic occurred before Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey’s [statewide stay-at-home order](#) took effect. That order came on top of a previous order temporarily [closing certain non-essential businesses](#). Even before that, some local governments had imposed restrictions, and the Mobile County Health Department had prohibited bars and restaurant dining rooms from operating.

And for weeks, many companies have encouraged or required their employees to work from home.

All of those steps taken together mean that fewer people are working, fewer people are traveling and less to do when people do leave their homes. The traffic numbers confirm that.

“The numbers vary from around the country,” said Steven Polunsky, director of the Alabama Transportation Policy Research Center at the University of Alabama. “We’re seeing traffic in Alabama’s a little higher than it is in other states. But the general trend is less traffic.”

Rendi Murphree, the top epidemiologist at the Mobile County Health Department, said a briefing Friday that her agency is focused on tracking infections, not traffic.

“I’ve been driving, and I can tell you from personal experience that the traffic on I-10 is definitely reduced,” she said.

Other data point to the same conclusion. Google, for instance, has been preparing [mobility reports](#) based on user data to measure where people are going. It’s most recent report on Sunday showed a 50 percent drop compared with a baseline from Jan. 3 to Feb. 6 in use of Alabama retail and recreation locations like restaurants, theaters and theme parks. There were drops for transit stations, workplaces, parks – and even grocery stores and pharmacies.

The only category to see an increase was residential, which was up 12 percent statewide.

The numbers were similar for Mobile and Baldwin counties.

Gina Maiola, Ivey’s spokeswoman, said in an email that the governor appreciates the efforts Alabamians have been making.

“She continues to urge Alabamians to take this virus seriously and to stay home in order to keep themselves and their neighbors healthy,” she wrote. “When we stay home to mitigate the spread, we are doing our part to flatten the curve.”

Reduced car traffic has been a hallmark of the global pandemic. The [South China Morning Post](#) reported this week that a mega bridge linking Hong Kong with Zuhai and Macau in China had experienced a 90 percent drop in February.

In March, [Newsday](#) reported that New York State Department of Transportation data pointed to a decline in traffic on Long Island by as much as half as normal.

The data tracking firm TomTom reported traffic congestion in New York City at 8 a.m. on a Monday after the mayor and governor issued executive orders had decreased by about a third, according to [Crain’s New York Business](#).

Polunsky told FOX10 News that steeper traffic declines in other parts of the country do not necessarily indicate a greater commitment to stopping the spread of the virus.

“It’s not a cause-and-effect relationship,” he said. “There’s a lot of factors at play. ... There’s a lot of pieces to it.”

Those factors include the distance people must drive to work and stores, their ability to work from home and access to the internet, Polunsky said.

The pandemic has few historical precedents when it comes to the disruption it has caused to daily travel. Polunsky compared the reordering of the supply chain – and the transportation it requires – to the retooling that took place during World War II.

Just as plants converted to make war machines, factories now are adjusting to produce ventilators, masks and other supplies.

Polunsky said the changes to travel are far greater than during a more recent shock – the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001. That sparked an immediate drop in air travel, but he noted that the decline in highway travel was temporary and brief. And unlike now, he added, 9/11 produced no reductions in rail travel and trips by older people.

Highway Users urges Congress to invest in infrastructure in next stimulus package

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | APRIL 14, 2020 | [FEATURED](#)

In a letter to Congress, the American Highway Users Alliance (Highway Users) urged lawmakers to provide funding for infrastructure in the next COVID-19 relief package.

The group of more than 300 organizations, trade associations, safety advocacy groups, and motoring clubs, asked Congress to increase federal aid for highway funding with an infusion of \$50 billion to state Departments of Transportation to be used for any surface transportation block grant program-eligible project.

The group also called on Congress to reauthorize FAST Act funding before it expires at the end of September.

“Focusing on our highway and transportation infrastructure in a relief package will help with our recovery effort and, at the same time, would infuse a long overdue investment that is cost beneficial to every American,” the group said in its letter. “In fact, the 23rd edition of the USDOT’s Conditions and Performance Report on Highways, Bridges and Transit identifies a \$786.4 billion backlog of highway and bridge investments. The Highway Users strongly encourage the preservation of the 80/20 split for highways and transit due to the truly massive needs that exist on our highways and bridges.”

Highway Users said that without federal aid, the backlog would grow because of problems with the economy struggling to recover after being shut down due to the coronavirus. The group also urged Congress to address the Highway Trust Fund.

“The HTF, which provides a steady source of investment for our essential transportation infrastructure, needs to be shored up as revenues decline from reductions in fuel consumption and sales tax revenue due to COVID-19. Congress should make a significant investment in the trust fund to pay for a long-term transportation authorization and help our Nation with its recovery.”

The investment into the infrastructure would create jobs that pay well and are performed in safe distances away from co-workers.

Mobile Airport Authority to receive over \$15 million in CARES Act funding

by Lindsey Bullard

Wednesday, April 15th 2020



(WPML) Mobile Airport Authority to receive over \$15 million in CARES Act funding

MOBILE, Ala. (WPML) — The Mobile Airport Authority [announced Wednesday](#) that it will receive more than \$15 million in grant funding for its two airports from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a result of the CARES Act.

The [Mobile Regional Airport](#) will receive \$15,103,747 and the [Mobile Downtown Airport](#) will receive \$69,000.

The Mobile Airport Authority will receive more than \$15 million in grant funding as part of the CARES Act. In total, the CARES Act allocated \$10 billion in funds to provide economic relief for airports around the country.

“We especially want to thank U.S. Senator Richard Shelby for his help securing this funding during these difficult times,” said Mobile Airport Authority President Chris Curry in a statement. “We will apply the money to good use when operating and managing the two airports within our system.”

[President Donald Trump](#) signed the CARES Act, also known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, into law on March 27.

The CARES Act is a more than \$2 trillion economic relief package, [with \\$10 billion allocated for airport improvement grants](#).

The grants will provide economic relief to airports around the country affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

In a [press release](#), U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao said, “This \$10 billion in emergency resources will help fund the continued operations of our nation’s airports during this crisis and save workers’ jobs.”

The following airports in our viewing area are also getting grant money:

MOBILE COUNTY

St. Elmo -- \$30,000

Dauphin Island -- \$20,000

BALDWIN COUNTY

Fairhope -- \$69,000

Foley -- \$30,000

Gulf Shores -- \$69,000

Bay Minette -- \$20,000

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Atmore -- \$20,000

Brewton -- \$30,000

CLARKE COUNTY

Jackson -- \$1,000

MONROE COUNTY

Monroe County -- \$30,000

CONECUH COUNTY

Evergreen -- \$20,000

You can view a list of all Alabama airports receiving funding [on this interactive map](#), along with funding for all U.S. airports on the FAA’s website.

Highway Trust Fund Taking a Hit

The Federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF), already gasping for air due to declining revenue, is now getting hit with a case of COVID-19 as fewer vehicles on the road as a result of the pandemic means less money from fuel taxes.

The HTF, which uses revenue collected from gasoline, diesel fuel and the retail sale of trucks to pay for roads and bridges, has been relying on transfers from the U.S. Treasury's general fund to stay solvent for years. Those transfers have so far totaled roughly \$144 billion. Without a funding reauthorization, the highway account is scheduled to be exhausted in 2022.

"The federal highway trust fund was already essentially going broke before this pandemic, between more efficient vehicles and just the loss to inflation over the last 25 years," said Matthew Chase, executive director for the National Association of Counties (NACo) during a press conference on April 15.

"At a local level, states like Alabama have already contacted us. The counties rely heavily on their local sales and gasoline taxes for their infrastructure. You can imagine as people are driving less, revenues are plummeting."

Gary Moore, Judge/Executive for Boone County, Kentucky (outside Cincinnati, Ohio), is in charge of a fast-growing county that is relying on gas tax money to fund new roads and widen existing roads.

"The gas tax receipts are really taking a hit in the early days of [the pandemic]," Moore said, pointing out that most of the county's major roads are state highways that are funded with state and federal revenue. "If the state does not have the road-fund dollars to match the federal dollars, the federal dollars don't help us," he said. "So the lack of driving is going to be a major impact."

Chase said that while the [CARES Act](#) signed into law March 27 provided needed relief for transit agencies and airports, "what we're going to have to look for is what we do on the road and bridge side as we move forward."

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) sent [a letter](#) to the U.S. Congress last week requesting \$50 billion in the next COVID-19 relief package in direct assistance to state departments of transportation (DOTs) that are seeing "a dramatic decrease" in revenues due to the pandemic.

"State DOTs are forecasting a significant reduction in state transportation revenues that will challenge their ability to maintain and operate our transportation system in a way that can support the COVID-19 response," said AASHTO executive director Jim Tymon. "Some state DOTs are already furloughing workers due to funding shortfalls and more will be faced with the same difficult decision about projects and people, unless Congress takes action."

In addition, to address a longer term backlog of \$902 billion in total investment for roads and bridges as well as stimulate the economy, AASHTO asked Congress to double the amount of surface transportation funding in the highway bill (currently \$226 billion over five years) and reauthorize it for at least six years. The current highway bill legislation, known as the FAST Act, is set to expire at the end of September.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association also wants policymakers to use highway infrastructure as a means of boosting the economy in the wake of the pandemic. An annual survey [released by the group this week](#) estimates that 231,000 bridges in the U.S. – 37% of all U.S. bridges – need to be repaired or replaced at a cost of nearly \$164 billion.

Transportation Research

IIHS: 'Centerline Hardening' For Streets Helps Protect Pedestrians

editor@aaashto.org April 10, 2020

Bollards and rubber curbs that prevent drivers from cutting across intersections at a diagonal can make streets safer for pedestrians, according to a [new study](#) from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The group said such "centerline hardening" forces drivers to turn more slowly at close to a right angle by blocking the diagonal path through the crosswalk. In Washington, D.C., such infrastructure changes reduced the number of times drivers had to swerve or brake suddenly or pedestrians had to dodge out of the way by 70 percent, according to Wen Hu, IIHS senior research transportation engineer and author of the study.

The calming infrastructure also resulted in a reduction in average left-turn speeds and decreased the odds that drivers made the turn at speeds exceeding 15 mph.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

ModalPEX:

the multimodal freight peer exchange

This May, the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Operations will hold a national peer exchange focused on helping State DOTs, MPOs, and their partners plan and deliver multimodal freight projects—and you are invited!

Attending ModalPEX will help you:

- Identify best practices in selecting, prioritizing, and delivering multimodal infrastructure and how to incorporate these concepts into State Freight Plans during the next round of required plan updates;
- Learn innovative multimodal freight data analyses strategies;
- Improve your understanding of multimodal freight networks/supply chains via bus tour of several Memphis freight facilities; and
- Network with your freight stakeholders and peers.

Formal details and RSVP request forthcoming.

Contact: Tiffany Julien (tiffany.julien@dot.gov; 202-366-9241)
DJ Mason (dj.mason@dot.gov; 617-494-3968)

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 12-13, 2020
University of Memphis

Retiring American

FactFinder: March 30

The U.S. Census Bureau has retired American FactFinder (AFF), its statistics and information search engine after 20 years. AFF will remain as an archive system for data and functionality that are not yet available in data.census.gov until March 30, 2020.

After March 30, 2020, our American FactFinder will be decommissioned and no longer available.

Alabama Center for Business and Economic Research April 2020

A note from our office:

During these complex times, CBER remains committed to serving you and helping you navigate the COVID-19 landscape. Currently, we are following UA's directive to telecommute and social distance, but CBER is continuing to work hard to provide you with insightful data and information. Please reach out to us at 205-348-6191 or uacber@culverhouse.ua.edu with any project needs. We are here to serve you!

COVID-19's Impact on the Economy

In the midst of the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, CBER's experts are here to offer some insight. Sam Addy, Ph.D. and Ahmad Ijaz, CBER's Executive Director & Director of Economic Forecasting, weigh in with what we can expect from our local and national economies in the coming months. Click [here](#) to read more.

CBER Shines in 2020 Census Count Review

Thanks to the hard work of CBER staff, 200 group quarter addresses and 21,470 housing units were added to the Census Bureau's Master Address File for Alabama to include people who otherwise would not have been counted during the 2020 Census. Read more about the 2020 Census Count Review [here](#).

Q2 2020 ABCI Results Released April 15

The second quarter 2020 Alabama Business Confidence Index (ABCI) results will be available April 15. Business leaders throughout Alabama are invited to register and participate in this unique forecasting tool. Find more details on the [ABCI webpage](#).

Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook

Sustainability is often an element that informs decisions made during the planning, programming, and design phases of highway construction projects. However, the construction phase of a highway project is also an opportunity to advance sustainability.

The TRB National Cooperative Highway Research Program's *NCHRP Research Report 916: Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook* provides clear and practical information on what constitutes sustainability in the context of highway construction and how to evaluate any proposed construction practice for its sustainability potential.

The guidebook supports implementation by describing ways to explicitly advance sustainability in procurement and contracting and how to develop a sustainability management plan for the construction phase.

An overview of NCHRP Research Report 916 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#). A separate publication, [NCHRP Web-Only Document 262: Sustainable Highway Construction](#), describes the research process and outcomes used to develop NCHRP Research Report 916.

A summary of NCHRP Web-Only Document 262 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Project: [Project Information](#)

DOI: [10.17226/25698](#)

Project Number: 10-91A

E-Newsletter Type: [Recently Released TRB Publications](#)

TRB Publication Type: [NCHRP Report](#)

The Department of Transportation has identified transportation assets that fall within Opportunity Zones with the goal of driving investment of all types to these important areas.

Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

- [Housing and Urban Development: Implementation Plan for The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#)
- [The IRS: Tax reform creates opportunity zone tax incentive](#)
- [Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)

The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in communities by granting investors extensive Federal tax advantages for using their capital gains to finance new projects and enterprises. There are more than [8,700 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories](#). Of the Qualified Opportunity Zones 40 percent are in rural census tracts, 38 percent are in urban tracts, and 22 percent are in suburban tracts.

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/906/build-fact-sheet2019.pdf>

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.
