



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 15th, 2020

Volume
34, Number 6

In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- SOUTH AL RPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET April 24th, 2020
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- JUST FOR FUN
- IN THE NEWS
- TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>
transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of
Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation
Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation
Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation
Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

South Alabama
Regional Planning
Commission
110 Beauregard St
Mobile, Alabama
36602
(251) 433-6541

ALDOT has postponed their TAP application deadline until July 1st. The Mobile MPO deadline is noon today. There are several new funding sources announced this week pertaining to the COVID-19 (See *Funding Opportunities*). There are a lot of *Legislative Updates* this week concerning future funding for transportation.

Please help us learn how the shelter-in-place order due to the COVID-19 situation affected how you travel. Dr. Steven Jones from the University of Alabama is conducting a study called "Travel Impacts of the COVID-19 response in Alabama". All information you provide will be anonymous and will remain confidential. In order to participate in the survey please click the link below:

https://universityofalabama.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5dsRKTZ8O8rDIHL

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 Held

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) met virtually using GOTO Meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd, 2020. This was the first time a Mobile MPO meeting was conducted in this manner, and was executed without any problems. There were test meetings to make sure our MPO members were familiar with the technology. It ended up being a largely attended meeting that included the press, and members of the public attending online. Items on the agenda included the adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Plan is required to be adopted every 5 years, and the deadline was March of 2020 for this plan. The March 25th meeting was postponed until the April 22 meeting due to the COVID -19 virus.

The LRTP is multimodal in scope, and is based on public input, and a travel demand forecast model. In 2019, an online survey was conducted with almost 150 respondents. Questions ranged from where is the worst congestion, what roads need improvements, problems with the transit systems, etc. There were a lot of comments about the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and the potential for tolls. Prior to the online survey, staff also conducted a South Alabama Freight Forum, which was an opportunity to hear from large manufacturers and trucking companies, to find out what the top issues are concerning the movement of freight in South Alabama. The Bicycle / Pedestrian plan was updated, and the public transit section was authored by the Wave Transit, less the Demand Response Transit Study currently being conducted (see below).

More information on the new plan can be found at <https://www.envision2045.org/>

The Appropriations Act of 2020 provided the Mobile MPO with \$564,549 (fed). These funds were introduced to the MPO during the MPO meeting, and will be discussed at the next TCC/CAC subcommittee meeting. It could be added to the pot to fund future shortfalls, or could be allocated to a specific project; the committee will decide.

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

SARPC staff is continuing to meet (virtually) with Via, and Goodwyn, Mills, and Cawood, for the feasibility study. The current health crisis has affected the potential outcome of the study. The intent of the study was to find potential local sponsors to match federal funds to create a transit system to operate throughout Mobile County to connect with WAVE Transit. The sponsors would have provided assistance through subscriptions or contracts for commuter trips. The current price of gasoline, and the threat of contracting virus on buses, may put a strain on ridership of a new system. However, there are still people in need of transportation, and there is some thought that regardless of the price of gasoline, there will be an increased number of distressed people due to the economy, that will need transportation. This may be the perfect time to consider transportation throughout Mobile County.

[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 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 : 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 : August 01, 2020
New Target start date : September 01, 2020

Project : 100066703 (CN)
Federal aid number : STPMB 0016
County : MOBILE
Project Description : INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS - CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS - SR-16 (US-90) FROM BROAD STREET TO BANKHEAD TUNNEL
Old Target start date : May 15, 2020
New Target start date : June 15, 2020

Project : 100069998 (UT)
Federal aid number : HSIP-NH 0016
County : MOBILE
Project Description : 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
Old Delete Indicator :
New Delete Indicator : D

Project : 100069997 (CN)
Federal aid number : HSIP-NH 0016
County : MOBILE
Project Description : 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
Old Delete Indicator :
New Delete Indicator : D

Project : 100033461 (CN)
Federal aid number : NH I010
County : MOBILE
Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON I-10 FROM CR-39 TO CR-59 (CAROL PLANTATION RD)
Old Engineers Estimate : \$33,394,046.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$41,047,191.84

Project : 100037215 (CN)
Federal aid number : DBMB-STPMB 7550 (600)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : ZEIGLER BLVD ADDITIONAL LANES FROM ATHEY RD TO FOREST HILL DR
Old Target start date : June 26, 2020
New Target start date : July 31, 2020

Project : 100048499 (UT)
Federal aid number : NH 0042
County : MOBILE
Project Description : SR-42 (US-98) FR 0.5 MI EAST OF CR-576 (GLENNWOOD RD) TO CR-25 (SNOW RD)
Old Delete Indicator :
New Delete Indicator : D

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 postponed 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 May 29th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Micro-Milling, Resurfacing (Micro-Surfacing Seal Coat), and Traffic Stripe on I-10 from 0.280 mile west of the Carol Plantation Road Overpass in Theodore to 1.360 miles east of the of the SR-193 Overpass in Mobile. Length 3.892 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$3,068,532 to \$3,750,429 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Intersection Relocation and Traffic Signal Installation (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, and Signalization) on SR-16 (US-90) at SR-59 in Loxley. Length 0.337 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,438,788 to \$1,758,519 .

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

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

Legislative Updates

The Senate is in session. The House is out until further notice due to coronavirus concerns.

Proposed Phase 4 COVID-19 Relief Bill Contains \$15B For State DOTs

editor@ashto.org May 15, 2020

A \$3 trillion, 1,815-page COVID-19 relief measure proposed by the House of Representatives on May 12 contains \$15 billion in stopgap funds for state departments of transportation – well below the nearly \$50 billion the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials projects state DOTs will need to continue operations in the face of drastic falloffs in motor fuel tax revenues, toll road receipts, and other funding sources.

Specifically, the House’s proposed “Phase 4” COVID-19 bill – entitled the “Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions” or “HEROES” Act – would provide \$15 billion in grants to support the ongoing work of state, U.S. territorial, and Native American Indian tribal DOTs and certain local governments to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the salaries of staff and other administrative expenses.

Transit agencies would get a further \$15.75 billion in operating assistance funding, with \$11.75 billion distributed by formula and \$4 billion available via grants. That money would be in addition to the \$25 billion in emergency relief doled out to transit providers via the \$2 trillion CARES Act passed on March 27.

According to an analysis of the “Phase 4” relief bill by AASHTO, state DOTs would receive \$14.775 billion distributed by formula funding, with tribal DOTs getting \$150 million, Puerto Rico getting \$60 million, and territorial DOTs receiving \$15 million. Additionally, HEROES Act funds would be subject to Surface Transportation Block Grant Program or STBGP eligibilities and be provided at 100 percent federal share, with those funds allowed to cover operational, maintenance, and administrative expenses, including payroll needs.

The Phase 4 proposal also would also provide remaining fiscal year 2020 Federal-aid Highway formula dollars from the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation or FAST Act at 100 percent federal share and allow them to cover operational, maintenance, and administrative expenses, including payroll.

More broadly via the proposed HEROES Act, state governments – as well as those of territories and tribes – would receive \$540 billion in flexible funding to help them cope with the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while local governments would get \$375 billion.

“We want to thank House leadership for acknowledging the challenge facing state DOTs due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic,” noted Jim Tymon, AASHTO’s executive director, in a statement. “While this isn’t the \$49.95 billion we asked for, it’s a good start. We look forward to working with House and Senate leadership to determine a level of funding that will allow state DOTs to continue to meet the needs of a nation and its economy that is getting ready to return to work.”

However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., noted in a statement on May 12 that the House’s bill is “exactly the wrong approach” and is focused on developing a different Phase 4 COVID-19 relief proposal.

Bipartisan support had been growing for the nearly \$50 billion state DOT funding “backstop,” with more than 130 members of the House of Representatives supporting that request in a letter sent on May 11 to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

“Our transportation system is essential to America’s economic recovery, but it is facing an immediate need as the COVID-19 pandemic is significantly impacting states’ transportation revenues,” the letter said. “With millions of Americans following ‘stay-at-home’ orders to reduce the spread of COVID-19, many state governments are facing steep across-the-board reductions in tax revenues.”

For example, Oregon is facing a \$3 billion drop in tax revenues due to the impact of COVID-19 and Governor Kate Brown (D) is directing state agencies to prepare for a 17 percent across-the-board budget cut for the upcoming fiscal year.

“One of the many challenging results of the COVID-19 pandemic is the dramatic impact on our economy,” she said in a statement. “With many Oregon businesses restricted or shut down, travel suspended and jobs lost, we expect the revenue that we receive to fund state services will also be significantly reduced.”

The House members noted in their letter that state motor fuel tax revenues and toll receipts are falling off dramatically as vehicle traffic declines by 50 percent in most parts of the country due to work and travel restrictions.

As a result, state DOTs expect to experience an estimated 30 percent average decline in forecasted revenues over the next 18 months – with some potentially experiencing revenue losses as high as 45 percent – and those revenue losses will be steeper sooner rather than later.

“Due to these grim realities, some states are unable to make contract commitments for basic operations such as salt and sand purchases for winter operations,” the members said. “Both short-term and long-term transportation projects that were previously set to move forward are being delayed, putting construction jobs at risk.

U.S. senators introduce legislation to support aviation manufacturing

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | MAY 15, 2020 |

U.S. Sens. Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Mark Warner (D-VA) have introduced legislation to create a private-public partnership between the U.S. government and aviation manufacturers to help protect the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two senators, co-chairs of the Senate Aerospace Caucus, said the legislation was designed to temporarily support the industry hit hard by the current public health crisis, and to protect the industry’s workforce.

“The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a drastic decline in air travel, and as a result, aviation manufacturing has experienced significant financial losses resulting in widespread layoffs,” Moran said. “Both in Wichita – the Air Capital of the World – and around the country, our aviation manufacturing plays a critical role in both commercial and general aviation, and within our defense community. This legislation would create a program to temporarily support aviation manufacturing in order to prevent more layoffs and allow the industry to make a faster recovery once this crisis has passed.”

According to Warner, the legislation would create a partnership in which the federal government would pay 50 percent of the payroll for at-risk employees in exchange for the company’s commitment to continuing their employment.

The program would ensure the industry maintaining its highly-skilled and experienced workforce.

“This cost-sharing public-private partnership is an important step to support the aviation manufacturing, repair, and supply chain workforce,” said Sen. Warner. “The aerospace industry is essential to Virginia and the nation to ensure a strong economy and national defense.”

Industry leaders supported the legislation.

“As our airline customers suffer, decline in air travel is also reverberating across the aviation manufacturing sector. The result is the cancellation of orders and a decreased demand for maintenance and repairs, which in turn, is helping lead to significant layoffs and furloughs in companies of all sizes,” said Eric Fanning, president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association. “Temporary and targeted assistance is needed to help save these jobs. The private-public investment envisioned in this bill will provide such support by helping to keep at-risk employees on payroll, while also helping to unburden state unemployment programs.”

Restoration of Nixon-Era State and Local Aid Program Proposed

House Ways and Means Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA) told the nation’s mayors last Wednesday that he would try to resurrect a federal revenue-sharing program for cities and states that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. The initiative would be part of a Democratic push to help states and local governments that are bleeding revenue during the economic shutdown. A program known as general revenue sharing, which offered largely unconditional grants to states and local governments, began under the Nixon administration in 1972 and was extended several times as its popularity grew. An aide confirmed the congressman was considering trying to revive some form of that program. By the time it expired in 1986, the program had transferred about \$83 billion from the federal government to state and local governments, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The CRS calculated that this level of assistance would equate to about \$313 billion over 15 years in 2008 dollars.

Emergency Relief Legislation Shifts Focus From Funding Bills

May 14, 2020

Debates on COVID-19-related economic measures, which dominate the agenda on Capitol Hill, are overshadowing must-pass legislation that would keep the government funded through fiscal 2021.

Democrats in the House have outlined guidelines for the consideration of a \$3 trillion pandemic relief package May 15. During the pandemic, Congress has advanced to President Donald Trump's desk about \$3 trillion worth of emergency aid.

Democrats, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), have yet to announce a schedule for considering the funding measures for the federal agencies. One of the bills focuses on operations at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In the Senate, a path forward on the funding bills also has not been announced. Senior senators have pointed to the potential for considering several appropriations bills as early as June. In total, Congress is tasked with considering 12 appropriations bills before the end of September.

Failing to enact the funding measures before the end of the fiscal year or approve a continuing funding resolution results in a shutdown of aspects of the federal apparatus.

The coronavirus upended Congress' legislative business, requiring the temporary adoption of safety guidelines. For instance, lawmakers wear masks and sit apart from each other at a requisite distance during hearings.

The top Republican in the House, California Rep. Kevin McCarthy, had called on Democrats in control of the chamber to proceed with a phased return to legislating by relying on communication tools and enhanced social distancing guidelines, as well as prioritizing bipartisan measures at committees.

Doing so, McCarthy explained, would assist with the advancement of the fiscal appropriations bills, as well as high-profile policy legislation such as a national defense reauthorizing bill.

"We fully appreciate the extraordinary nature of the challenge before us," McCarthy indicated earlier this month, with fellow Republican Reps. Tom Cole of Oklahoma and Rodney Davis of Illinois. "Every avenue should first be explored that preserves enduring institutional rules while prioritizing member health."

"I think [we have the] capability of making this happen, so when these bills come out of committee, you'd be [told] this is the day we're going to vote," McCarthy said in a separate interview. "It is essential that we work."

For DOT in fiscal 2021, the Trump White House has requested \$21.6 billion in discretionary spending, a 13% decrease from the level enacted the previous year. Mandatory contract authority and obligation limitations would receive \$66.2 billion, an 8% increase from the previous-year enacted level. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, a trucking regulator, would receive nearly a 4% increase from the previous year under the request.

The request also proposes for infrastructure and freight grants to each receive \$1 billion, a figure Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao touted on Capitol Hill in March.

"These programs provide federal assistance for critical projects that will spur progress in both rural and urban communities across all modes of surface transportation infrastructure: highways, transit, rail and ports," she said.

Republicans on the transportation funding committees were mostly receptive to the White House's request, while Democrats on the same panels criticized proposed funding levels for transit and Amtrak.

Reps. Lamb, Gibbs challenge members to support state DOT relief

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | MAY 13, 2020 |

An effort to drum up support for struggling state Departments of Transportation has gained extensive support across the transportation industry.

U.S. Reps. Conor Lamb (D-PA) and Bob Gibbs (R-OH) issued a challenge to their colleagues to join them in asking House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) in providing immediate funding of state DOTs in the next proposed stimulus package.

State DOTs are projected to lose 30 percent of their revenues for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 because of the efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19, making funding of critical transportation programs like roadways improvements and public transportation more difficult, the two said in their letter.

The Congressmen asked their colleagues to support a letter they've written to Pelosi and McCarthy that asks for \$49.95 billion in funding for state DOTs.

"Because of revenue already lost, several states have already begun halting planned projects as we enter the summer construction season. We believe it is our responsibility to provide an immediate infusion to state DOTs," the letter to their colleagues said. "We urge you to join us in the attached letter to Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy, encouraging support for state DOTs in the next package of relief legislation. This aid will help critical infrastructure projects move forward, while also keeping other critical state DOT functions operational."

The letter to Pelosi and McCarthy has received support from groups like the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the American Highway Users Alliance, and the AFL-CIO, among more than 130 others.

The Congressmen gave their colleagues until the end of the day on May 8 to sign their letter.

“Providing state DOTs with an immediate relief with immediate infusion of \$49.95 billion in federal funding separate from any additional State and Local relief is not unlike action taken in prior COVID-19 response bills, which provided federal funding for other transportation modes facing reductions in revenue due to decreased travel,” the Congressmen’s letter to Pelosi and McCarthy said. “Supporting state DOTs now will enable the advancement of planned transportation projects in the near-term and allow state DOT employees and transportation construction workers essential to planning and delivering these projects to remain on the job.”

Funding Opportunities

New CDBG GRANT Program

To Address COVID-19 Impacts (currently no deadline)

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) is in the process of developing a special Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant program to address COVID-19 impacts.

DETAILS: Currently, no application deadline, grant ceilings or other program details have been finalized.

MORE DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED AT A LATER DATE; however, please download the guide below to get started and identify potential partners as needed.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the Quick Guide to CDBG Eligible Activities to Support Infectious Disease Response that will assist applicants to begin thinking about possible project needs.

Please note that applications to the CDBG program must be in the name of a local government as the applicant/grantee.

Partnerships and agreements with other agencies/entities, etc. can be developed as necessary. CDBG projects must also benefit primarily low and moderate-income people and this requirement will likely remain for the new funds.

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Department has technical assistance providers that may be available to assist grantees in their implementation of CDBG Funds for activities to prevent or respond to the spread of infectious disease.

Please contact your local CPD Field Office Director to request technical assistance from HUD staff or a TA provider.

Submit your questions to:

CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov

COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”) Information and Resources: <https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>

CPD Program Guidance and Training: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/>

EDA CARES ACT RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

OVERVIEW

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, [signed into law](#) by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2020, provides the Economic Development Administration (EDA) with \$1.5 billion for economic development assistance programs to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance, which is being administered under the authority of the bureau’s flexible [Economic Adjustment Assistance](#) (EAA) (PDF) program, provides a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to and recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

On May 7, 2020, Secretary Wilbur Ross made EDA’s CARES Act Recovery Assistance funding available with the announcement that EDA had published an Addendum to its FY 2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity. EDA intends to deploy its CARES Act funding as quickly, effectively, and efficiently as possible, and in a manner that meets communities needs.

RESOURCES

- [EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for EDA Economic Development Districts and EDA Indian Tribe Planning Grant Recipients*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Economic Development Districts and Indian Tribes*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Revolving Loan Fund Awards*](#)
- [EDA’s CARES Act Recovery Assistance Revolving Loan Fund Award Flexibilities Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for University Center Grantees*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: University Centers*](#)
- [EDA regional office contacts](#)
- [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov)

- [coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness/](https://www.coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness/)
- [CDC.gov/COVID19/](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19/)
- [USA.gov/coronavirus/](https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus/)

* As stated in the CARES Act Recovery Assistance Addendum to the PWEAA NOFO, EDA may invite existing grantees, such as Economic Development Districts and Tribes currently in receipt of Partnership Planning awards, operators of existing EDA funded Revolving Loan Funds, and EDA-funded University Centers, to apply for supplemental awards. These standard Scopes of Work and Specific Award Conditions are for use with these supplemental awards only. Existing grantees who are eligible to apply for these awards will be contacted individually for instructions on how to apply.

Applications are now being accepted for EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance. Please see the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and apply today! For up-to-date info on COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.gov.

CARES Act Grants for Governments

Potential uses: hiring personnel, paying overtime, purchasing protective equipment and distributing resources to hard-hit areas. Funds may also be used to help correctional facilities cover costs related to COVID-19, including, but not limited to, sanitation, contagion prevention and measures designed to address the related medical needs of inmates, detainees and correctional personnel.

The solicitation deadline according to website is May 29th. Subject to Federal rules funds may apply retroactively to January 20, 2020.

For more information <https://bia.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553>.

Awards including ADECA, Huntsville, Gadsden, Jasper, etc. are here: <https://bia.ojp.gov/program/cesf/awards>.

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>.

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

New Deadline July 1, 2020

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 has been extended until Wednesday, July 1, 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)

It's good to be good

Lg2 and BBQ Quebec use a unique grill to reward the kindness of helpful motorists.

By [Josh Kolm](#)



The next time you see someone stopped on the side of the road with car troubles, it might be a good idea to pull over and help them out. Besides being the right thing to do, there might be a tasty meal in it for you.

<https://stimulantonline.ca/2017/06/05/it-pays-to-be-good/>

In the News

MAA to acquire St. Elmo Airport; Frontier flights resume downtown

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) | May 14, 2020

The Mobile Airport Authority will manage the operations of the general aviation St. Elmo Airport, after reaching an agreement with the state, according to a MAA statement.

“We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Governor Kay Ivey, Mayor Sandy Stimpson, Senator Richard Shelby, our regulators at the FAA, as well as to the leadership of the Alabama Department of Transportation, including Mr. John Cooper and Dr. John Eagerton,” MAA President Chris Curry said in a statement. “We appreciate the confidence placed in MAA and pledge to the community that we will manage and we will grow this Airport to serve our community.”

The agreement is the first phase in a two-step process, which will allow the authority to acquire the airport outright, according to the statement. The second step is only awaiting approval from the Federal Aviation Administration, which should occur within the next two months.

“We look forward to the second phase being consummated very soon and appreciate the assurances from the FAA and the State of Alabama that phase-two will happen very soon,” Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said in the statement. “The St. Elmo Airport property will be a very meaningful asset for the Mobile area in the years to come.”

As for other MAA assets, Curry said Mobile Regional Airport is beginning to see an increase in enplanements since the COVID-19 pandemic began to take hold in the country and sent passenger rates plummeting by 80 percent to 85 percent.

The Mobile Downtown Airport saw its first major commercial flight since Frontier Airlines discontinued its non-stop service to Denver. On Saturday, the discount carrier officially returned with a flight to Orlando International Airport. Although scheduled to begin April 18, the airline cancelled its previous two attempts to fly out due to low demand caused by the pandemic. Curry said the passenger load wasn’t great for the flight on Saturday, but it was encouraging.

[Curry believes Frontier will continue the flight, at least, through September to take advantage of the summer months.](#)

A “V-Shaped Recovery” for Driving?

[SANDY SMITH](#) | MAY 14, 2020

Whatever else might be said about the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, this much is clear: in the United States, the return to a “new normal” will not happen quickly, nor will the recovery be the rapid “V-shaped” one many economists hoped for after the country went on lockdown. But news from abroad suggests that one of the things we should prepare for as the economy recovers is an outcome that will dismay open-streets, pedestrian and bicycle advocates: commuters getting behind the wheel instead of returning to the buses and trains. Meanwhile, transit systems are beginning to restore service cut at the start of the lockdown, and they’re asking Washington to send them more money to help them provide what is now being reframed as [an essential social service](#) for those who need it most.

As Cities Reopen, Fearful Transit Riders Take to the Roads Instead

Advocates for reclaiming streets for non-auto uses may face an uphill battle to achieve their goals if early figures from cities now reopening around the world are any guide. According to charts published in [a Washington Post feature](#), the COVID pandemic has sent

transit ridership plunging in large cities everywhere, with drops of anywhere from 70 to 90 percent from year-ago levels on most of the world's large transit systems.

But as these cities lift restrictions on travel and business activity, transit ridership isn't recovering as fast as driving is. Bloomberg News [reports](#) that traffic-clogged roads have returned to several global cities, especially in China, that have lifted shutdown orders while riders continue to avoid their subway and bus networks. "Driving has emerged as the socially distant transportation mode of choice," the article states. Several riders-turned-drivers quoted in the article cited fear of contracting the virus as a reason for their mode shift, and one worker in Frankfurt noted that her company was urging employees to avoid public transportation altogether.

And Quartz [reports](#) that while Americans are "driving like it's 1999," with vehicle miles traveled having fallen to that year's level, states are already reporting increases in VMT even before lockdowns are lifted, a stat Massachusetts' state transportation secretary attributes to "quarantine fatigue."

Another factor keeping riders off public transit: The shift to work from home. While only 40 percent of all U.S. jobs can be performed remotely, the share of workers who can work from home who actually do will likely remain higher even after the pandemic passes, according to [an Atlantic article](#) examining likely post-COVID work trends.

Notwithstanding all this, the complete- and open-streets advocates aren't giving up the fight to reclaim space given over to cars for other uses. But they are sounding pessimistic in the near term: In an essay in Outside, bicycling reporter Eben Weiss wonders, "[Could the Pandemic Kill Car Culture?](#)" His conclusion: Maybe, if cities stick to previously announced plans to shift their transportation policies to favor pedestrians and bicyclists and de-emphasize car travel, but not in the near term thanks to those drivers getting back on the road.

Report: Rural roads, bridges expect to see decreased funding despite \$211B backlog

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | MAY 12, 2020 |

A new report from TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit in Washington, D.C., estimates that rural roads and bridges face a backlog of improvements, but could see a decrease in funding due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The report, "Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America's Heartland," looks at the condition and safety of U.S. rural roads and bridges. According to the report, the rural road transportation system faces a \$211 billion backlog in needed improvements to improve deficiency, reduce crash and fatality rates, and correct inadequate connectivity and capacity.

But, at the same time, the report finds, states and local governments face a \$50 billion loss in revenue from decreased travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 30 percent reduction in revenue over the next 18 months.

The report ranked Rhode Island as the state with the largest percentage of rural roads in poor conditions and the most rural bridges in poor condition. Oklahoma, Hawaii, West Virginia, and New Mexico rounded out the top five states with the most rural roads in poor condition. West Virginia, Iowa, South Dakota, and Pennsylvania rounded out the top five states with the largest percentage of rural bridges in poor condition.

According to the report, South Carolina had more than three times the number of accidents on rural roads than it did on all other roads. The state had 3.44 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled on rural roads compared to 1.12 vehicle miles traveled on all other roads.

According to the report, traffic crashes and fatalities on rural non-Interstate roads are double what they are on all other roads. In 201, the report said, non-interstate rural roads had a traffic fatality rate of two deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled, compared to .88 death per 100 million vehicle miles travel on all other roads. Narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, pavement drop-offs, steep slopes, and limited clear zones alongside roadways were causes for the high fatality rate, the report said.

"This report reinforces what many rural Americans already know – our country's rural infrastructure is crumbling. The competitiveness of our farmers and ranchers relies on an aging network of roads, bridges, waterways, and railways that need an immediate infusion of investment dollars," said Todd Van Hoose, president and CEO of the Farm Credit Council. "That's why we have partnered with more than 250 national, state, and local organizations through the Rebuild Rural Coalition. Previous funding opportunities have overlooked our rural infrastructure in the past. We must invest in the transportation network that drives the base of our economy. We must invest in all aspects of rural infrastructure. And we must do it before we lose our competitive advantage."

U.S. Department of Transportation Modernizes Hours of Service Rules to Improve Safety and Increase Flexibility for America's Truckers

Thursday, May 14, 2020

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today published a final rule updating hours of service (HOS) rules to increase safety on America's roadways by updating existing regulations for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers.

“America’s truckers are doing a heroic job keeping our supply chains open during this unprecedented time and these rules will provide them greater flexibility to keep America moving,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

“The Department of Transportation and the Trump Administration listened directly to the concerns of truckers seeking rules that are safer and have more flexibility—and we have acted. These updated hours of service rules are based on the thousands of comments we received from the American people. These reforms will improve safety on America’s roadways and strengthen the nation’s motor carrier industry,” said FMCSA Acting Administrator Jim Mullen.

First adopted in 1937, FMCSA’s hours of service rules specify the permitted operating hours of commercial drivers. In 2018, FMCSA authored an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) to receive public comment on portions of the HOS rules to alleviate unnecessary burdens placed on drivers while maintaining safety on our nation’s highways and roads.

Subsequently, in August 2019, the Agency published a detailed proposed rule which received an additional 2,800 public comments.

Based on the detailed public comments and input from the American people, FMCSA’s final rule on hours of service offers four key revisions to the existing HOS rules:

- The Agency will increase safety and flexibility for the 30-minute break rule by requiring a break after 8 hours of consecutive driving and allowing the break to be satisfied by a driver using on-duty, not driving status, rather than off-duty status.
- The Agency will modify the sleeper-berth exception to allow drivers to split their required 10 hours off duty into two periods: an 8/2 split, or a 7/3 split—with neither period counting against the driver’s 14 hour driving window.
- The Agency will modify the adverse driving conditions exception by extending by two hours the maximum window during which driving is permitted.
- The Agency will change the short-haul exception available to certain commercial drivers by lengthening the drivers’ maximum on duty period from 12 to 14 hours and extending the distance limit within which the driver may operate from 100 air miles to 150 air miles.

FMCSA’s final rule is crafted to improve safety on the nation’s roadways. The rule changes do not increase driving time and will continue to prevent CMV operators from driving for more than eight consecutive hours without at least a 30-minute break.

In addition, FMCSA’s rule modernizing hours of service regulations is estimated to provide nearly \$274 million in annualized cost savings for the U.S. economy and American consumers. The trucking industry is a key component of the national economy, employing more than seven million people and moving 70 percent of the nation’s domestic freight.

The new hours of service rule will have an implementation date of 120 days after publication in the Federal Register.

The complete final rule is available here: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hours-service/hours-service-drivers-final-rule>

Truckers have played a key role in getting America through the COVID-19 public health emergency. FMCSA has provided regulatory relief to commercial drivers to get critically important medical supplies, food, and household goods to Americans in need. The nation’s truck drivers have been on the front lines of this effort and are vital to America’s supply chain. The latest information, declarations, and resources on FMCSA’s response to the COVID-19 are available at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/COVID-19>

Transportation Sec. works on ‘common sense relief’

Posted: May 6, 2020

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — With the focus for the past two months being about public health and trying to control a pandemic — a lot of areas of the economy have been negatively impacted and will need help to reboot as the country begins to reopen.

One such area will be transportation.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao told News 8 she is keenly aware of some of the needs as the country starts to emerge from the stay at home orders bit by bit.

The airline industry has been hard hit with major reductions in flights and impending new “clean” protocols that it will be facing when more flights resume. Chao says her department will help those companies navigate the new realities.

From airlines to mass transit to cargo being shipped overland, Chao says the administration is trying to keep the transportation system moving.

She says one issue her department has addressed is truck drivers and those with commercial driver’s licenses and concerns with licensing while the Secretary of State’s office is closed.

“Truck drivers are on the job and we are doing everything we can to provide regulatory relief, common sense relief that will give them greater flexibility, “ she said. “The things that are being discussed, renewal of drivers license. Well, that can’t happen because so many state DMVs are closed so we are giving temporary waivers for those whose driver’s licenses are in danger of expiring we have given a temporary waiver until June 30 and that includes training of all kinds. For transporting hazardous materials, that training has to occur every three years. Well, this is not obviously a good time for that to occur, so we have given temporary waivers. We’ve also given temporary waivers for people with learners permits.”

She said the department has taken these actions in an attempt to keep truckers working and the supply chain open during the pandemic.

Chao said overall, the goal is to keep the transportation system open, operational and safe.

Transit Management of Mobile

D/b/a The Wave Transit System

The Wave Transit System, GM&O Transportation Center, 110 Beauregard Street, Ste. 104 Mobile, Alabama 36602, 251-344-6600

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Graphic Design Services **Project Number: WTS-05-1120**

Issue Date: May 11, 2020

Deadline for Questions:

Request for Information Due Date:

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Friday, May 29, 2020, 5:00p.m. (CST)

Transit Management of Mobile D/b/a The Wave Transit System (The Wave) is seeking information from qualified vendors or individuals for graphic design services. Graphic design services will include a re-design The Wave Transit Systems bus route guides.

Interested parties should contact Gerald E. Alfred, Director of Planning & Capital Projects at 251-344-6600, extension 225 or via email at galfred@thewavetransit.com.

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. It does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for information does not commit The Wave to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, The Wave is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Respondee are advised that The Wave will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party’s expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued. If a solicitation is released, it will be synopsisized on The Waves website at www.thewavetransit.com local media outlets and vendors registered on The Wave bidder’s directory. It is the responsibility of the potential offerors to monitor these sites for additional information pertaining to this requirement.

The Scope of Services may include but is not limited to:

- Design proposal templates in Word, as required.
- The design colors will be white paper with black imprint. (weight TBD)
- Create custom Maps, Schedules, Illustrations, and other graphics
- Import content into approved template
- Provide final compilation of documents in print and electronic formats (PDF).
- (Quantity to be determined)
- Provide photography retouching and editing

Other

- The contractor will provide all labor equipment and materials to perform the services.
- The Waves branding artwork will be provided to ensure consistent branded materials are created.
- Work may be completed remotely.
- Travel time and expenses are not anticipated in the scope of the contract.

Contractor Requirements:

- Strong understanding and experience in graphic design for above scope
- Expertise in design of templates in InDesign and Word
- Expertise in graphic design using Adobe Creative Suite
- Expertise in route maps designs
- Ability to furnish tools, equipment, and materials needed to perform the services

RFI Proposal Requirements:

The Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) for this RFI may not exceed five (5) pages. The proposal should be submitted electronically as a PDF to galfred@thewavetransit.com. Technical capabilities, fees, and work examples should address the scope of work.

Cover Letter

Letter should introduce you / your company and provide a summary of your qualifications. Briefly describe any project approaches or ideas that make you / your company unique

Attachments

- Statement of Interest and Technical Capabilities
- Fee Schedule (Hourly Rate)
- List of recent experience in RFI subject matter area mentioned in Scope
- 2 samples of self-performed graphics design, including at least one proposal example for the Airport Route (Route 1). Please visit the website at www.thewavetransit.com (Routes and Schedules) to view proposal example.

Summary

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY to identify sources that can provide Graphic Design Services. The information provided in the RFI is subject to change and is not binding on The Wave. The Wave has not made a commitment to procure any of the items discussed, and release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Are Encouraged To Apply

Transportation Research

Study Finds COVID-19 Wipes Out Traffic Congestion in U.S. Cities

SANDY SMITH MARCH 25, 2020

It turns out that the travel restrictions ordered by mayors and governors around the country to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus have sped up travel and reduced traffic congestion dramatically for those who must remain on the roads. And, according to [a report](#) on the study in Smart Cities Dive, the restrictions have also led some cities to implement measures advocates for reduced auto use have long advocated.

How dramatic is the congestion reduction? According to the study conducted by mapping software and transportation analytics company INRIX, enough to speed up travel into the core of Chicago by 77 percent and Los Angeles by 53 percent. The study, which examined average travel speeds in 25 of the country's most populous cities during the week of March 11-18, found increases in travel speed ranging from that 77 percent figure in Chicago to a mere 16 percent in Atlanta.

"Dramatic changes in travel speed continue to spread across the country," Trevor Reed, INRIX transportation analyst, said in a emailed statement on March 19. "If current trends persist, it is probable major congestion will cease to exist in the country's most congested cities within the week."

In addition, the article notes, some cities have turned parking spaces into loading zones for curbside restaurant pick-ups, and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has called on Mayor Bill de Blasio to ban auto travel in the city in order to allow pedestrians to walk while maintaining a safe distance from one another.

It goes without saying that a reduction in traffic is the smallest of silver linings in what is now a global crisis. The CDC [reports](#) that there are more than 44,000 confirmed cases of the virus in the United States, and 544 people have died.

Transit Agency Heads Send Bigger Relief Bill to Congress

This column [reported last week](#) that the American Public Transportation Association had asked Congress to include \$12.75 billion in relief for mass transit agencies dealing with a dramatic drop in ridership thanks to the coronavirus pandemic.

This week, a letter signed by the heads of 10 of the country's largest transit systems, including the largest one, says to Congress that that figure is too small by half.

Metro Magazine [reports](#) that the letter, sent March 23 to the leaders in both houses of Congress, seeks at least \$25 billion in assistance for the country's mass transit systems.

"Federal aid, utilizing federal formulas, must be directed to areas of the country that have had significant financial impacts and where essential workers rely most heavily on public transit," the letter states. "While emergency personnel need our infrastructure to do their jobs, overall ridership on our systems has plummeted every day – dropping as much as 90 percent in some cases. Combined with falling tax revenues and dramatically increased cleaning costs, this collapse of revenue has resulted in immediate and enormous funding gaps."

Pointing out that their agencies cannot cut service enough to close the budget holes without damaging their ability to provide that essential service, the letter complains that assistance promised to date is merely a stop-gap measure and demands "comprehensive, permanent solutions that put public transportation first."

The letter was signed by the heads of the following 10 agencies:

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority of the State of New York, which had asked for \$4 billion in aid in a separate letter last week
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- New Jersey Transit Corporation
- Chicago Transit Authority
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority
- Bay Area Rapid Transit District (San Francisco/Oakland)
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

- Dallas Area Rapid Transit
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
- King County Metro (Seattle)

Breakthrough in Sydney: Harbor Subway Tunnel Is Complete

In Australia, where construction work has not been stopped to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, the International Railway Journal reports that the Sydney Metro City and Southwest construction project has reached a major milestone.

On March 18, Kathleen, the boring machine digging the tunnels that will carry the Sydney Metro Northwest across Sydney Harbor and into the city center, broke through the sandstone at the north end of the second tube. With that, all tunneling work on Australia's first rapid transit subway through a city center was completed.

Kathleen's northbound trip took one month less to complete than the southbound one thanks to lessons the contractor learned on that first pass. Those included modifying the cutter head and revising processes to better handle the clay that lay beneath the harbor bottom.

In all, the five tunnel boring machines that worked on this project dug 31 km (19.3 miles) of tunnel in 17 months. The tunnels will connect the already-in-service Sydney Metro Northwest line with an existing regional rail line heading southwest from central Sydney. This 13-km (8.1-mile), 11-station line will be reconfigured to handle the metro trains. The new tunnels will add a 15-km (9.3-mile), seven-station central section to the line.

The entire line is scheduled to open in 2024. A second metro line headed west from the city center to Parramatta is in the planning stage.

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](tel: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.

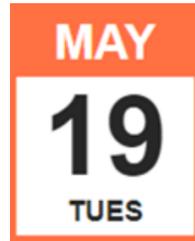
Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.

Coming Next Week: AL, LA, MS, NC, SC, and TN Economic Census Update

This webinar will provide an update on the largest of the business programs conducted by the Census Bureau, the Economic Census. The status of the release of the data for AL, LA, MS, NC, SC, and TN will be discussed,

as will some key findings to date. Finally, the webinar will provide tips and tricks on how best to access these data on data.census.gov and how to use the materials on [the Economic Census web site](#).

[Join Us](#)



- **Date:** May 19
- **Time:** 2:00 p.m. ET
- **Dial In:** 888-989-6415
- **Passcode:** 6561361
- **Link:** [Log In Details](#)