



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 22nd, 2020

Volume 34, Number 7

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Native Mobilian Finch Fulton is nominated for senior-level post at the U.S. Department of Transportation, approved by Senate; See *Legislative Updates*. Airport Blvd signals are improved and ALDOT is considering allowing law enforcement agencies access to ALDOT rights-of-way and structures to install license plate readers and other surveillance equipment, see *In The News*. This week's *Just For Fun* is butter. 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.

Please review the Tasks 1, 2 and 3 that are underway [HERE](#).

[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 : 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 : June 26, 2020

New Target start date : July 31, 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 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.

Trump Transportation Nominees Finch Fulton, Diana Furchtgott-Roth Advance to Senate Floor

Transportation Nominees



From left: Fulton via Senate Commerce Committee, Furchtgott-Roth via Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg News
[Stay on top of transportation news: Get TTNews in your inbox.]

Nominees for senior-level posts at the U.S. Department of Transportation were approved by the Senate Commerce Committee on May 20.

Senators approved the nominations of Finch Fulton and Diana Furchtgott-Roth to assistant secretary of transportation positions. The panel gave voice vote approval to Fulton, while Furchtgott-Roth's approval vote was 14-12 along party lines.

Their nominations advanced to the floor of the Senate. The Republican managers who set up floor proceedings have yet to announce votes to determine their confirmations.

COVID-19 has been a wakeup call to many businesses. Knowing the location and status of freight makes all the difference in navigating uncertainty. Host Seth Clevenger speaks with supply chain visibility experts Glenn Koepke and Francis Roy. Hear a snippet, above, and get the full program by going to RoadSigns.TTNews.com.

Earlier this year, Fulton told the committee he would focus on assisting with regulatory guidelines for autonomous vehicles.

He told the committee in a prepared statement, "Technology holds great potential to improve the safety, efficiency, and economic impact of our transportation system, but it is not a 'silver bullet.' The developments in automated vehicles, drones, hyperloop systems, commercial space launch and reentry, and even data initiatives can dramatically change the way people and goods are moved about the country. Many of these technologies challenge the department in new or more sophisticated ways on methods both to prove and to improve levels of safety, or in determining what mechanisms are best suited in the department for providing oversight."

Fulton went on, "I believe that we can utilize the public processes and mechanisms that are in place to consider these questions, and include input from all relevant sources, to ensure the long-term health of and to realize the great potential for these new technologies."

Furchtgott-Roth also has appeared before the Commerce Committee. Responding to a questionnaire from the committee, she outlined her policy vision: “Nothing is more important to the economic health of America than getting the private sector involved in rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure. As an economist with over 30 years of experience, I have studied the provision of infrastructure and transportation extensively.”

In describing challenges at DOT, she declared that they included, “making sure that the quality of the research is as high as possible.”

“This is particularly difficult given the rapidly changing technology, such as autonomous vehicles and drones,” she asserted in the same questionnaire. Continue [HERE](#)

Chairs Maloney, DeFazio, and Connolly Urge Immediate Reinstatement of Former DOT IG

May 19, 2020

Washington, D.C. (May 19, 2020)—Today, Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, the Chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, Rep. Peter A. DeFazio, the Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, the Chair of the Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations, sent a letter to Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao opposing President Donald Trump’s removal of former Acting Inspector General Mitch Behm and demanding he be reinstated immediately.

“We oppose President Trump’s removal of long-time public servant Mitch Behm from his position as Acting Inspector General of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and urge that he be immediately reinstated,” the Chairs wrote to Chao. “Mr. Behm’s removal is the latest in a series of politically motivated firings of Inspectors General by President Trump. This assault on the integrity and independence of Inspectors General appears to be an intentional campaign to undermine their ability to expose corruption and protect taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse.”

On May 15, 2020, President Trump designated Howard R. Elliott, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), to replace Mr. Behm—while Mr. Elliott keeps his political post at PHMSA at the same time. Mr. Elliott appears to have no investigatory or law enforcement experience. In contrast, Mr. Behm has served in the office since 2003 and has received numerous awards for his contributions to audits and reviews.

Maloney, DeFazio, and Connolly also sent a letter to Mr. Elliott raising concerns about the conflicts of interest created by his simultaneous roles as PHMSA Administrator and Acting Inspector General.

“This inherent conflict of interest would prohibit you from having the independence necessary to conduct fair and rigorous oversight of the Department and the Secretary,” the Chairs wrote to Mr. Elliott. “Your dual appointment could severely chill whistleblower disclosures to the Office of Inspector General because whistleblowers might fear that their identities could become known to an official still serving in the Department. It also may chill communication within the Office of Inspector General if auditors or investigators are concerned that you will share information with Secretary Chao before it is appropriate.”

In their letters, the Chairs requested information regarding ongoing audits, inspections, investigations, evaluations, reviews, or other engagements, as well as any communications regarding the removal of Mr. Behm and Mr. Elliott’s qualifications for Inspector General by June 1, 2020.

Huge New Coronavirus Relief Bill Heads to Senate, Uncertain Fate

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) moved the HEROES Act, a new \$3 trillion coronavirus aid package, through the House last Friday night. The vote closely followed party lines and the bill now heads to the Republican-controlled Senate where it is not expected to gain significant traction. The HEROES Act includes \$915 billion in aid to local and state governments as well as \$435 billion for more direct payments to households and \$100 billion to provide emergency assistance for low-income renters at risk of eviction. The bill now faces an uncertain fate, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) providing sharp criticism of it and the White House issuing a veto threat.

A Stimulus Proposal Emerges from The Ashes with GOP Support: Infrastructure Spending

Jack Brewster Forbes Staff May 21, 2020

Several prominent Republican lawmakers are expressing support for including infrastructure spending in the next coronavirus relief bill, a proposal that could become a unifying factor for both parties currently at an impasse over a fourth major stimulus package.

WASHINGTON, DC - MAY 04: KEY FACTS

Congress has been divided on how to proceed on further stimulus relief after the Democratic-led House passed a \$3 trillion stimulus bill Friday that stands no chance of passing in the GOP-controlled Senate: Democrats see the next relief bill as a way to tide Americans over as the economy begins to reopen, while Republicans would prefer to use further stimulus to incentivize work.

Republicans have also expressed hesitation at jumping headfirst on more coronavirus relief; “I don’t see the need right now,” House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) told CNN reporter Manu Raju Tuesday.

But this week, several GOP lawmakers — such as Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) — broke ranks, stressing the need for more infrastructure spending in a bill that they say could get done in the next month or so; “I think June doesn’t need to come and go without a phase four,” said Wicker, referring to a fourth stimulus bill.

“I want to do infrastructure,” Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) told CNN Wednesday night, adding he told President Trump that “this is the time” to get infrastructure done.

Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have expressed interest in funding infrastructure investment in recent weeks as well, a rare area of agreement between the two foes.

In a tweet on April 21, Trump called on Congress to fund projects for “bridges, tunnels, and broadband.”

CRUCIAL QUOTE

“It really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give a facelift to the country,” Sen. Graham told CNN about infrastructure spending.

KEY BACKGROUND

Democrats and Republicans see the next relief bill much differently. Republicans prefer incentivizing work with proposals such as a payroll tax cut and liability insurance for employers, while Democrats want the next relief bill to tide Americans over as the economy begins to reopen. The shifting priorities reflect how differently the two parties view an American recovery: Republicans predict a quick, sharp rebound, while Democrats foresee a slow, painful road back. After House Democrats passed the \$3 trillion stimulus bill on Friday, Republicans were under pressure to offer an alternative package. The support from Graham, Wicker and Blunt indicates the party could coalesce around infrastructure as a new baseline for a fourth major package.

CHIEF CRITIC

Pelosi has accused Republicans of dragging their feet on further relief, and hurting Americans in the process. “It’s always interesting to me to see how much patience some people have with the pain and suffering of other people. Let’s take a pause? Do you think this virus is taking a pause? Do you think that the rent takes a pause?”

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](#)
- [coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness/](#)
- [CDC.gov/COVID19/](#)
- [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://bjao.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553>.

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

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)

Why is this week's Just For Fun butter? Because it's on a roll... 3D printers are now being used to print airless tires, car tires, bike tires, anything tire. They cannot be punctured and are low maintenance.



Now they are being used for airless bicycle tires also...



3D printing tires is a new idea, but airless tires is not a new concept. The 1905 Herrenrad Victoria bicycle had springs for wheels and was used in WWI. It really made the soldiers...spring into action especially in the spring time. When the enemy saw them, it sprung on them...I can keep going, I'm on a roll, a spring roll...*Just For Fun*



In the News

Watch Mayor Stimpson explain the project, and drive on the improved Airport Blvd [HERE](#)



Airport Boulevard is new and improved

Traffic lights are now synchronized on Airport Boulevard

by: Amanda DeVoe



Posted: May 18, 2020 / 01:47 PM CDT / Updated: May 18, 2020 / 02:17 PM CDT

MOBILE, Ala. (WKRK) – Officials said the traffic nightmare on Airport Boulevard should be over and it's all because of a change in the stoplights. [HERE](#)

“New lines, new switches, new sensors. The entire system was rebuilt,” said Councilman Joel Daves.

The two-mile stretch of synchronized lights on runs from Sage Avenue to McGregor Avenue.

Councilman Joel Daves says the process of doing a study and making the changes took about four years.

The traffic light system hadn't been updated since the 1960s.

It's something city engineers were aware of but it wasn't in the budget to fix.

The \$700,000 project was made possible using funds through the Mobile Penny Sales Tax, which was established in 2012.

The changes have been in place for about four months but the city just released a video of Mayor Stimpson cruising down Airport without having to stop at every single light.

"Here's the main thing people need to know in order to optimize the experience you have to go the speed limit. It's set up so that a car starting at Sage is moving along at the speed limit. If you go fast you'll catch more lights," said Councilman Daves.

The city said to can expect lights to be synchronized in different parts of the city in the near future.

ALDOT considering allowing police cameras, plate readers

May 22, 2020 at 9:05 AM CDT - Updated May 22 at 9:05 AM

By MARY SELL, Alabama Daily News

The Alabama Department of Transportation is considering allowing law enforcement agencies access to ALDOT rights-of-way and structures to install license plate readers and other surveillance equipment.

At least one Alabama lawmaker said legislation may be needed to regulate the use of the devices and information they collect.

Tony Harris, government relations manager for ALDOT, told Alabama Daily News the proposed rules are a result of recent requests from multiple police agencies.

"It will be our practice to limit the use of those devices to law enforcement and public safety," Harris said.

"... We're looking for a way to provide that access (to law enforcement) if we can while still managing the use of our rights-of-way."

A public notice about the proposed "public safety sensors" says ALDOT will only grant permits for the devices on ALDOT property to incorporated municipalities, county governments or other state agencies or institutions.

"...The use of accommodated sensors and all collected data shall be strictly limited to law enforcement or public safety purposes, whether maintained or stored by the governmental entity or any private service provider," the notice says.

Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, said he's gotten calls from concerned constituents about the proposal.

"This reminds me of 'big brother' and the police state," Orr said. "I'm all for helping law enforcement catch criminals, but we must be careful that it doesn't lead to gathering information on everyone else."

"... I'm concerned about going down this road without any limitations or restrictions or accountability on the government to use these monitoring devices."

A sample application provided in the public notice lists license plate readers, gunshot detection devices and legacy surveillance cameras as allowable devices. Agencies can also submit other uses on their applications.

Agencies would have to apply to ALDOT and permits will be valid for three years. The department will not charge fees, Harris said. Data collected by agencies cannot be monetized, the public notice says.

Harris compared the devices to those seen on television police dramas. Plate readers can help locate vehicles used in suspected crimes.

Several Alabama cities already use some the devices ALDOT is considering. In 2018, the city of Huntsville put gunshot detectors and surveillance cameras on a few streets to deter crime. Montgomery and Birmingham have used gunshot detectors for several years to locate and track gunfire.

A spokeswoman for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency said it has no plans to access ALDOT property at this time.

"Other states have been ahead of the curve on this," Harris said. "This is our way of accommodating law enforcement as they begin to adopt these devices in Alabama."

As of early 2019, 16 states, including Georgia, Tennessee and Florida, had statutes about the use of automated license plate readers that capture computer-readable images, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Several of those states limit the usage of the devices to law enforcement and set parameters on how the information can be used and how long it can be stored.

"Because other states have limitations on the use of this information, I will definitely have legislation ready for filing that will reign in unfettered use by government," Orr said. "Though my preference is we don't have this privacy intrusion at all."

A public comment period ends May 29. A review process follows.

ALDOT says no construction-related lane closures over Memorial Day weekend, but you still need to use caution

The Alabama Department of Transportation is expecting many more people on the roads this holiday weekend. Because of this, from noon Friday to 11:59 p.m. Monday, ALDOT will have no construction-related lane closures.

So the work zones you usually drive through won't be active over the weekend.

It's important to note that although work zones won't be active there will still be work zone materials around, and ALDOT says people still need to follow the reduced speed limits that are posted in the work zones.

Rest areas are still open and the restrooms are accessible. ALDOT says the areas that are most used by travelers are sanitized regularly, like door handles, counters, faucets, and toilets. They are also encouraging people to social distance.

Increased traffic expected for Memorial Day weekend

Posted Thursday, May 21, 2020

SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

Memorial Day weekend is expected to bring increased traffic volume to Alabama roads as summer vacation travel begins for some.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is doing its part for road safety by having no temporary construction-related lane closures on Alabama interstates after noon on Friday, May 22, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, May 25.

Although ALDOT construction work zones will not be active during the holiday, drivers should drive alert around work zone materials and follow reduced speed limits that are posted in work zones.

"Now is the perfect time for drivers to commit to safe driving," said Allison Green, Drive Safe Alabama coordinator for ALDOT. "The number of vehicles on the road is increasing each day with the start of summer travel and the opening up of more businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Safe roads start with safe drivers."

Travelers are urged to practice social distancing and follow the public health guidelines set forth by state and local agencies, as the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak continues. The latest state public health order can be found at <https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/covid-19/>.

ALDOT rest areas are open

Restrooms remain open at ALDOT rest areas and welcome centers across the state. Throughout the day, the staff cleans and sanitizes the areas used most frequently by travelers, including door handles, counters, faucets and toilets. In addition, deep cleanings are performed on the restrooms each week.

While rest area employees are focused on cleaning at this time, a phone number is posted at each rest area and welcome center for travelers to call if they need information or assistance.

ALDOT also offered these holiday travel tips:

- Buckle up. Surviving a crash is much more likely when wearing a seat belt. Latest stats from Drive Safe Alabama show that more than 50 percent of people dying in crashes on Alabama highways are not wearing a seat belt.
- Slow down. Speeding is a leading contributing factor in fatal crashes on Alabama roads.
- Keep right, except to pass. Drivers on Alabama interstates must travel in the right lane. Drivers are not allowed to be in the left lane for more than 1.5 miles unless the driver is passing another vehicle. There are exceptions for road hazards, traffic congestion and moving over for emergency response vehicles.

More safe driving tips are available on the Drive Safe Alabama Facebook page.

Motorists planning their holiday travel route can find Alabama traffic and road condition information, including live traffic camera feeds, at www.ALGOtraffic.com or by downloading the ALGO Traffic app. ALDOT asks motorists to use ALGO Traffic responsibly. Drivers should never text, tweet, or use a mobile device while operating a vehicle.

Transit Management of Mobile

D/b/a The Wave Transit System

The Wave Transit System, GM&O Transportation Center, 110 Bearegard 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:

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 synopsized 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

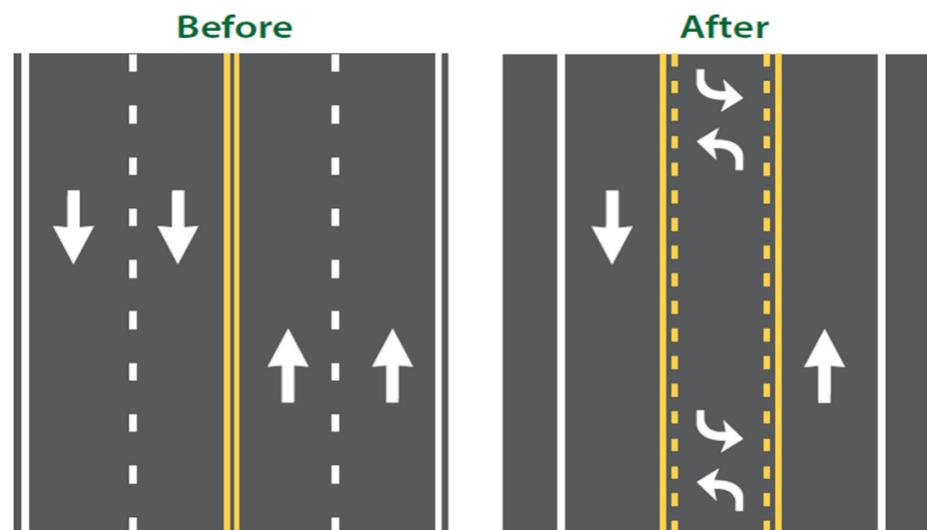
- Statement of Interest and Technical Capabilities
- Fee Schedule (Hourly Rate)
- List of recent experience in RFI subject matter area mentioned in Scope
- 2 samples of self-performed graphics design, including at least one proposal example for the Airport Route (Route 1). Please visit the website at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

ONLINE WORKSHOP: Road Diet (Lane Reconfiguration)



Sometimes referred to as a “Road Diet”, the reconfiguration of travel lanes on an existing roadway can allow transportation agencies to reallocate the existing roadway pavement width to better utilize the road space for new purposes such as to create turn lanes, or on-street parking, or to improve service for other travel modes such as providing bicycle lanes, transit lanes, or creating wider sidewalks. Lane reconfigurations may come in many different forms to serve the various goals and objectives that a community may have for improving the safety, function or purpose of a street. This workshop will introduce participants to the important considerations for potentially applying lane reconfigurations to make better use of the roadway cross sectional area by implementing features that improve safety, create spaces that are more livable, contribute to economic development and support a community-focused “Complete Streets” context. When implemented in conjunction with street resurfacing projects, lane reconfigurations can be achieved at low cost. This workshop will show examples of where lane reconfigurations have been successfully applied around the country and provide guidance about implementation including factors for selecting candidate locations and public outreach and awareness.

This technical workshop, **led by Mark Doctor of the Federal Highway Administration**, is aimed at professional staff of local and state transportation agencies that implement road improvements as well as consulting engineers. The workshop may also be of interest to policy leaders, community advocates and other stakeholders involved in influencing the planning and decisions for street improvements.

This is a two-part online workshop that will be held Tuesday, June 16 and Wednesday, June 17 from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM CST, respectively.

[ONLINE WORKSHOP: Road Diet \(Lane Reconfiguration\) brochure](#)

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.

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](#)

