



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 28th, 2020

Volume 35, Number 7

In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET AUGUST 28TH, 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

For Congress to be in recess, there are a lot *Legislative Updates*. Municipal elections were this week, and that means some new MPO members, for both the Mobile MPO and the Eastern Shore MPO; that plus lots more *In The News*. There is a new Railway-Highway Crossings Grant in *Funding Opportunities*, and Wii think you will like this week's *Just For Fun*. Have a great weekend.

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

www.mobilempo.org



Check us out on FACEBOOK; SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

- [Planning and Community Development](#)
- [Area Agency on Aging](#)
- [Employment and Economic Development](#)

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

Mobile MPO Updates

There was a Mobile MPO Policy meeting last week (virtually).

The agenda included the following:

- Adoption FY 2021 [Unified Planning Work Program](#) (planning budget)
- Modify 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program
 - i. Cost estimate change for 100040584 (CN) US98, EB lanes from MS state line to .5 Mile East of Glenwood Rd, from \$18.2M to \$23.9M, FY 2022
 - ii. Cost estimate change for 100033461 (CN) ADDL lanes on I-10 from CR-39 to Carol Plantation, from \$33.4M to \$41M, FY 2021
 - iii. 100071946; PE; 5 Year Regional Traffic Operations (RTOP) TSMO for 130 Signalized Intersections Along SR-59, SR-16 (US-90), and SR-42 (US-98) Target Start Date : 8/1/2020; \$2,631,200
 - iv. 100073250; PE; Independent Review of Austal's Proposed Road Improvements Over the Wallace Tunnels and Bankhead Tunnel; 9/1/2020; \$170,000
- Review of Demand Response Transit Study
- TAP projects (*the TCC/CAC recommended to increase the maximum to \$400,000 fed*)

The adopted 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The 2021 UPWP is essentially the budget of the Mobile MPO staff. Typically in June of every year, MPO staff reviews the draft document with MPO Policy Board Members and the subcommittees, prior to submitting the draft UPWP to ALDOT and federal agencies for review. The 2021 UPWP was adopted this week and is available [HERE](#).

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

There was a stakeholder meeting last week concerning the study. VIA presented [HERE](#) potential types of operators and potential operating budget. A big challenge is going to the local community support and matching funds.

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 [HERE](#).

There will be a stakeholder meeting scheduled in the near future to discuss the draft report that came out his week. This will be a GOTO meeting.

The Draft Report is [HERE](#)

ENVISION 2045 IS THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

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. The Climate Change element, or Extreme Event Planning, remained almost unchanged from *Destination 2040* LRTP.

The LRTP *Envision 2045* was adopted by the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization on April 22, 2020.

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

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](#).

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

None this week.

South Alabama RPO Updates

DRAFT 2021 RPO Work Program is now available for review.

The RPO work Program is the staff budget for SARPC Rural Planning Organization. This draft is identical to the current work program. The DRAFT 2021 Work Program is available on the RPO Webpage [HERE](#).

Projects in Region Let August 28th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Culvert Extension, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on Zeigler Boulevard from the junction of Athey Road to the junction of Forest Hill Drive in Mobile. Length 2.762 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$15,625,639 to \$19,098,003 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

Congress is in August Recess

American Highway Users Alliance encourages FAST Act extension

BY [DOUGLAS CLARK](#) | AUGUST 28, 2020

The American Highway Users Alliance (AHUA) is urging federal lawmakers to issue a one-year extension of the FAST Act to ensure projects and safety improvements continue through the construction season.

The AHUA forwarded correspondence to House and Senate leaders, encouraging the action and expressing support for the Senate EPW Committee and the House T&I Committee decision to advance the transportation reauthorization process via congressional bills.

"Due to the limited days remaining in the legislative calendar, the Highway Users urges Congress to pass a one-year extension of current surface transportation law with increased highway investment funding to ensure important road and bridge projects can continue into the new fiscal year and prevent further disruption to America's economic recovery," AHUA President & CEO Laura Perrotta wrote.

The AHUA is also advocating increased highway investment under planned funding levels in transportation reauthorization bills pursued by the Senate and House, while also supporting a multi-year highway bill; efforts to ensure Highway Trust Fund (HTF) solvency and inclusion of \$37 billion in relief to State Department's of Transportation to replace the decline in state fuel taxes and other revenue used for highways.

"Additionally, it is vitally important that the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) retain solvency through the extension at a minimum," Perrotta said. "The

Highway Users urges Congress to transfer funds to the HTF to keep it whole at least through the determined extension length. Due to the pandemic's effects on the economy and compliance with state and local stay-at-home orders, Americans have not been buying the fuel and generating the truck tax revenue they typically would over this period of time, directly curbing receipts to the HTF."

Transportation groups ask White House for \$37B in federal funding relief for state transportation departments

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | AUGUST 21, 2020

A group of 15 organizations associated with the transportation industry recently asked the White House for an "immediate infusion" of \$37 billion in federal funding for state departments of transportation as relief from the pressures put on those departments by COVID-19.

The groups also asked the President to oppose measures to suspend or permanently repeal a dedicated federal user fee that generates revenue for surface transportation improvements.

The letter, sent by groups like the American Concrete Pavement Association, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; the American Society of Civil Engineers; Laborers International Union of North America; National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association; and The Surety & Fidelity Association of America, asked the administration to support state transportation programs by replacing some of the revenues they've lost as a result of the pandemic.

"With millions of Americans following "stay-at-home" orders, many state DOTs are facing severe losses in dedicated user fee revenues on which state transportation programs heavily rely. As a result, the ability of state DOTs to carry out their core functions, including capital construction programs, is threatened," the letter said. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, many state DOTs have imposed furloughs and delayed or cancelled \$10 billion in critical transportation projects. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials estimates state transportation revenue losses of \$37 billion over five years (through FY 2024), with an estimated loss of \$16 billion in FY 2020. An infusion of federal funding for state DOTs to address the revenue shortfall will prevent further disruptions to planned transportation projects and allow state DOT employees and transportation construction workers essential to planning and delivering these projects to remain on the job."

The letter added that the pandemic has negatively affected the Highway Trust Fund. According to the group, the HTF account revenue had fallen by 46 percent by the second half of April, when compared to April 2019. According to the Federal Highway Administration, the HTF will become insolvent sooner than anticipated, the group said.

"Any proposal to suspend or repeal a current HTF user fee without an equivalent replacement would further exacerbate the impending insolvency of the HTF and make finding the federal resources to support the Senate and House surface transportation reauthorization proposals even more difficult," the groups write.

Federal bill seeks to boost investment in rural transit systems

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | AUGUST 25, 2020

Advocates of the nation's rural transit system hope new legislation introduced in U.S. Congress this month would provide the needed funding to keep the system afloat.

U.S. Sens. Tina Smith (D-MN), Mike Rounds (R-SD), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced the Investments in Rural Transit Act, S. 4468, earlier this month, which would increase federal contributions for operating assistance in rural areas with high transit dependency.

While the Federal Transit Administration provides grants to support rural transit organizations, it can be difficult for some rural communities to match those federal dollars to qualify for assistance, the lawmakers said.

"High-quality, reliable public transit systems are important for Minnesotans who count on them to get to work, school, the doctor, and more," Smith said in a written statement. "This legislation will support rural public transit in communities that need it most."

The bill, if enacted, would increase the federal share to 80 percent for operating assistance in certain areas with high transit dependency. In order to qualify, the transit project must serve a county that is an "area of persistent poverty" (designed by the Census as a county in which at least 20 percent

of the population has lived in poverty during the most recent 30-year period), or the project must meet other specific requirements, such as benefit a county where at least 25 percent of the population is over the age of 65.

The measure has drawn support from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), National League of Cities (NLC), Association of Minnesota Counties, League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Public Transit Association and the Minnesota Transportation Alliance.

Margaret Donahoe, executive director of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, said transit systems in rural America are lifelines for those who use them.

“We hear stories all the time of how important these transit systems are for people to be able to get to work, get to doctors, get to school. It allows them to stay where they are and still have jobs. Some of the people we hear from say they would have to move if they didn’t have transit systems,” Donahoe told Transportation Today. “So, obviously, it’s important that these systems remain in place.”

Transit services provide key transportation to millions of Minnesotans, she said. According to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, transit services across the state saw nearly 12 million boardings in 2018. Although that number is down from its record high of 12.2 million boardings in 2015, officials say that is more due to greater efficiency in the system that prevented riders in urban areas from having to use multiple buses in order to get where they wanted to go.

The bill is critical for transit systems as they struggle to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Donahoe said. Like transit systems in larger cities, rural transit systems have seen declines in revenue as people stay home to avoid exposure to the coronavirus or have no school or job to go to.

“More rural transit systems don’t have the same ridership as transit systems in other areas – riders in those areas may be more likely to be disabled, or to be older people, who are much more hesitant to go out in these times,” she said. “And certain facilities have contracts with local transit systems, like colleges contracting to get students from their homes to classes and meat-packing plants contracting to get workers to their jobs. It’s not just the daily fares that generate revenue for these systems.”

That’s why federal funding for rural transit systems is so important, she said, not just for transit systems, but for the communities they serve.

“When the CARES money runs out, because it will eventually run out, bills like these are important to the survival of the system, but also in terms of the survival of the communities they exist in, to the extent that these communities are already struggling financially,” she said. “Losing public transit systems would further damage them as residents would have to move out of those areas.”

Infrastructure Stakeholders to Host Forum in September

August 18, 2020

Groups and institutions consistently urging policymakers to dedicate additional funds for freight and commuter corridors will host a weeklong advocacy forum next month.

The “United for Infrastructure” event, scheduled for the week of Sept. 14, will feature workshops focusing on surface transportation funding, public-private partnerships, technology and innovation, race and equity, and the economic impact resulting from the pandemic. Events will be held virtually.

In a message online, the coalition stated: “In partnership with the business community, labor unions, associations, think tanks and elected officials, we have led the charge for more than eight years to ensure that our nation’s infrastructure meets the needs of every American — both now and for future generations.”

The coalition’s steering committee includes the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Business Roundtable, the National Association of Manufacturers, and Building America’s Future. American Trucking Associations is affiliated with the coalition.

These stakeholders have called on Congress to approve updates to a 2015 highway law prior to its expiration Sept. 30.

As Chamber of Commerce CEO Tom Donohue indicated, “We urge Republicans and Democrats to come together this year to enact legislation to rebuild our core infrastructure platforms, including roads, bridges and transit.”

The chamber has proposed a 25 cents-per-gallon increase to the federal fuel tax to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund. The account, projected to run low in the coming months, is backed by dwindling revenue from the fuel tax.

Trump Touts Infrastructure Permitting Reforms

August 25, 2020 1:30 PM, EDT

President Donald Trump during an address with industry stakeholders touted the administration’s recent aim at advancing infrastructure projects through environmental permitting changes.

At the 2020 Council for National Policy meeting Aug. 21, the president insisted that permitting reforms would help advance large-scale highway projects.

“To build a highway in this country, it could take, in certain places, 18, 19, 20, even 21 years to get approved,” Trump said. “This is not even thinkable. And we’ve got it now down to two, and we’ll have it down to probably one. And it may get rejected for safety reasons or for environmental reasons. That’s OK; it may happen. But we have it down — we will soon have it down to one year from as much as 21 years. We have cases that have just been disastrous.”

“We’ll have it down to one year to build a highway. You can do it all in one year. It doesn’t have to take 21 years and cost 100 times more. Literally, I’ve seen 100 times more,” he went on.

The administration took aim at the National Environmental Policy Act and announced a final rule meant to modernize and accelerate environmental reviews to enhance efficiency and affordability. The move would ideally facilitate a two-year period for completion of certain environmental impact statements. NEPA’s proponents say it plays an essential role.

On Capitol Hill, several Republican policymakers endorsed the administration’s position. They included Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), ranking member on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

“The slow, inefficient and costly federal review and permitting processes continue to be an impediment to the improvement of America’s infrastructure. I commend the administration for its efforts to modernize the decades-old NEPA process,” Graves said in July. “Updating NEPA will save taxpayers money while maintaining necessary protections for the environment, public safety and human health.”

“President Trump is cutting red tape to help get our economy back in the black,” added Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. “These updates will make the National Environmental Policy Act work better for the American people. Right now, important construction projects are being slowed down because of lengthy government permitting processes and lawsuits. The administration is making this process more predictable and efficient. We can protect the environment and move our economy forward at the same time. This rule gets that done.”

Last year, Barrasso’s panel gave bipartisan approval to a five-year, \$287 billion highway policy bill that, among other things, proposed to streamline environmental permitting regulations. The measure, not yet scheduled for a floor vote, also would propose climate change-centric provisions.

On the House side, lawmakers this summer passed a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure measure sponsored by Democrats that included a multiyear reauthorization of a 2015 highway policy law. Congressional Democrats have opposed the administration’s directive on the NEPA process.

“As humanity faces the greatest environmental challenge of our time, the fight to save our planet from climate change, we must work together to find lasting solutions. This highly divisive, harmful and partisan rollback will not last,” said Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), the EPW panel’s ranking member.

Senate Republicans have criticized the House-passed measure as neither the Senate nor the House bills include a long-term funding proposal for highway programs. Meanwhile, the White House this year has not unveiled such a funding proposal for highway programs.

The 2015 highway policy law, called the FAST Act, expires at the end of September.

A federal highway account known as the Highway Trust Fund relies on insufficient revenue from the federal fuel tax. The 24.4 cents-per-gallon diesel tax and 18.4 cents-per-gallon gas tax were set in 1993.

Funding Opportunities

U.S. Department of Transportation Seeks Applicants for Railway-Highway Crossings Grants

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

FHWA 17-20

Contact: Neil Gaffney

Tel.: (202) 366-0660

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity that provides up to \$50 million in grants for commuter rail agencies working to improve safety at railway-highway crossings. Applications will be accepted until October 26, 2020.

“This \$50 million federal investment in commuter rail grade crossing safety will protect pedestrians, reduce vehicle accidents, and save lives in rural and urban areas across our country,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, appropriated \$50 million to be awarded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Commuter Authority Rail Safety Improvement (CARSI) Grants Program.

Under CARSI, the FHWA – in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – will provide competitive grants to commuter rail authorities working to eliminate hazards at railway-highway crossings. Eligible projects include those that separate or protect grades at crossings; rebuild existing railroad grade crossing structures; relocate highways to eliminate grade crossings; and eliminate hazards posed by blocked grade crossings due to idling trains.

“Safety is always our top priority at the Department under the leadership of Secretary Chao,” said Federal Highway Administrator Nicole R. Nason. “These grants will help our state, local and regional transportation partners better protect the lives of those traveling on America’s roads and rails.”

“FRA is always working toward a benchmark of zero fatalities at railway crossings, and such safety improvements to our nation’s infrastructure will go a long way toward that goal,” said Federal Railroad Administrator Ronald Batory.

“Working together with FHWA and FRA, we can improve safety around highway-rail crossings and prevent collisions, injuries and fatalities,” said Federal Transit Administration Deputy Administrator K. Jane Williams. “Rail safety includes encouraging safe behavior around all rail crossings; it’s about making sure the American public is safe near all rail tracks.”

By statute, an eligible commuter authority must have experienced at least one accident investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2018, and for which the NTSB issued an accident report.

The NOFO, and information on how to apply, is available at

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=328801>

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 (currently no deadline)

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. <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=321695>

FHWA - [Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment \(ATCMTD\)](#) (Closing Date - 8/31/2020: [Apply Here](#))

NHTSA - [State Notification to Consumers of Motor Vehicle Recall Status](#) (Closing Date - 9/15/2020: [Apply Here](#))

FHWA - [Accelerated Innovation Deployment \(AID\) Demonstrations](#) (Closing Date - 9/30/2020: [Apply Here](#))

All Federal grants, including transportation grants, can be seen at grants.gov. To find transportation related funding opportunities, select "All Department of Transportation" under the "Agency" menu on the left-hand side.

DOT Funding Opportunities for Rural Projects - [HERE](#)

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)

Mario Kart is usually enjoyed from your couch, not a bench in Central Park. That's why New Yorkers were doing double-takes when they saw Nintendo's Mario and Luigi rolling around the park's paths on karts, tossing [banana peels](#) at one another. And the whole stunt, of course, was done for the only thing that really matters: making people smile, *Just For Fun*. (it is New York, so there is some bad language)

[HERE](#)



In the News

South Alabama Election Results:

<https://myNBC15.com/news/local/southwest-alabama-municipal-election-results>

The Mobile MPO will have 6 new members

Current Mobile MPO Policy Board Members

Mayor, City of Mobile	-	Hon. Sandy Stimpson	(MPO Chairman)
Mobile County Commissioner	-	Hon. Jerry Carl	
Mobile County Engineer	-	Mr. Bryan Kegley	
Councilman, City of Mobile	-	Hon. John Williams	
Councilman, City of Mobile	-	Hon. Fred Richardson	
Mayor, City of Prichard	-	Hon. Jimmie Gardner	
Councilman, City of Prichard	-	Hon. Lorenzo Martin	
Mayor, City of Chickasaw	-	Hon. Byron Pittman	
Mayor, City of Saraland	-	Hon. Howard Rubenstein	
Mayor, City of Satsuma	-	Hon. Thomas Williams	
Mayor, City of Creola	-	Hon. William Criswell	
Mayor, City of Bayou La Batre	-	Hon. Terry Downey	
Mayor, City of Semmes	-	Hon. David Baker	
General Manager, the Wave Transit System	-	Mr. Damon Dash	
Southwest Region Engineer, ALDOT	-	Mr. Matt Eriksen	
Member, SARPC	-	Mr. Rob Middleton	
Bureau Chief, Local Transportation, ALDOT (Non-voting)	-	Mr. Brad Lindsey	
Division Administrator, FHWA (Non-voting)	-	Mr. Mark Bartlett	
Executive Director, SARPC (Non-voting)	-	Mr. John F. "Rickey" Rhodes	

Current Eastern Shore MPO Policy Board Members

Mayor Dane Haygood, Chairman (City of Daphne)
 Councilman Jack Burrell, Vice Chairman (City of Fairhope)
 Councilman Ron Scott (City of Daphne)
 Mayor Karin Wilson, (City of Fairhope)
 Mayor Mike McMillan (City of Spanish Fort)
 Councilman Richard Teal (Town of Loxley)
 Commissioner Joe Davis (Baldwin County)
 Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood (Baldwin County)
 Matthew Ericksen, P.E., Division Engineer (Alabama Department of Transportation)

UC Davis: COVID-19 Having Major Impact On Transportation

editor@aaashto.org August 21, 2020

New research by the University of California-Davis Institute for Transportation Studies indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have a "profound impact" on how much people move around, their means of transportation, and on who gets to stay at home; trends that will create "long-term shifts" in transportation usage across the country.

The researchers conducted surveys targeting 15 regions of the United States and two in Canada – polling more than 11,000 people on an ongoing basis. In the short term, there was a big decrease in travel overall as people followed stay-at-home orders, bringing short-term benefits in reduced pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle collisions.

However, as people began to move around again, car transportation recovered more quickly than public transport, UC-Davis found.

With less ridership, public transportation systems are facing reduced revenues just as local and state government budgets [feel the economic impact](#) of COVID-19 – meaning funding is becoming a big issue for public transport.

The pandemic also seems to be causing “lasting changes” in how people live and work, UC-Davis researchers found – at least for people who are able to work remotely.

They said that, before the pandemic began, people in the top 20 percent of income level were most likely to travel away from home. Yet after the pandemic hit in mid-March, high earners were more likely to stay home — jumping from 25 percent to 45 percent — than people with the lowest 20 percent of incomes.

People at lower income levels are more also likely to have jobs that require them to be physically present, the school’s researchers noted — for example, in restaurants or retail — and are also more likely to have lost their jobs or had hours reduced in the downturn.

On This Road, All the Cars Will Drive Themselves

[SANDY SMITH](#) AUGUST 19, 2020

Michigan to Build a Road for Autonomous Vehicles

Michigan, the state that gave birth to the American auto industry as we know it, is putting down a huge marker on both that industry’s future and its own, with an assist from Silicon Valley.

Smart Cities Dive [reports](#) that on Aug. 13, Michigan’s Democratic governor, Gretchen Witmer, announced that the state would build a 40-mile-long roadway for autonomous and connected vehicles between Detroit and Ann Arbor.

The road will be developed by the Michigan Connected and Automated Vehicle Corridor Project, a public-private consortium led by [Cavnue](#), a subsidiary of Sidewalk Infrastructure Partners (SIP) formed for the purpose of building technology-equipped roads for autonomous vehicles. SIP, in turn, is a subsidiary of Google parent Alphabet formed last year to advance the development of smart-city technology and infrastructure

The project will be overseen by a newly-created unit within the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME).

The project’s first phase, expected to last two years, will examine various technologies and determine the corridor’s feasibility. Jonathan Winer, the co-founder of Sidewalk Infrastructure Partners, [told CNN](#) it was unclear how much it would cost to retrofit roads for self-driving vehicles but his best guess was \$10 million per mile.

The project envisions the roadway as dedicated to shared mobility initially, with autonomous buses its primary users at the outset. It would later be available for use by individual autonomous vehicles.

The project also has the fingerprints of Detroit icon Ford Motor Company all over it. The American automotive giant purchased the deteriorated Michigan Central Railroad station in Detroit and a renovated clothing factory in Detroit two years ago with plans to spend \$750 million to turn them into a laboratory where some 5,000 people would develop the cars of the future. Chairman Bill Ford said at the news conference announcing the project that the building purchases and this project were interconnected: “We must build for the world that we’re moving into, not the world that we’ve known,” he said.

For their part, the public officials present at the [news conference announcing the project](#) touted it as further proof that Michigan was at the forefront of research into the future of mobility. The state is already home to one of the few autonomous-vehicle proving grounds in the country, the [American Center for Mobility](#). Located in Ypsilanti, the center has repurposed Ford’s huge Willow Run assembly plant, built in 1940-42 to manufacture bombers for the American forces in World War II, as a development and testing facility for automated and connected vehicles.

“With the creation of this corridor, we will create change even further with mobility, and we will show the world the reality of an accessible and just transportation system for the future,” U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) said at the news conference.

Get Recall Notices Right When They’re Issued with New NHTSA App

BY [COLIN BERESFORD](#) AUG 27, 2020

Enter in your vehicle and any equipment such as car seats into the SaferCar app, and you’ll get notified whenever a recall is issued.

NHTSA is launching an app called SaferCar for [Android](#) and iOS that lets owners input their vehicle information to get notifications when recalls are issued.

- The app also lets users enter details of equipment they own such as car seats, tires, and jack stands, and get notifications when recalls are issued for those as well.
- NHTSA said that a quarter of vehicles on the road have unrepaired recalls, and the agency sees the app as another way to reach consumers who are unaware of recalls.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is launching an app to make recall notices find their way to owners much, much quicker. With the [SaferCar app](#), owners will be able to input details of their vehicle and any equipment they own such as tires or jack stands and will be notified if any recall is issued for that vehicle or equipment.

Inputting vehicle information will be as easy as scanning your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). Currently, to find out about a recall, owners have to either go to the NHTSA website and look up their car or have to wait until an automaker mails them a notice in the mail.

When the app sends you a notice of the recall, it will also tell you where the closest dealerships are located so that an appointment can be made to get the fix done quickly. With one in four vehicles on the road having unrepaired recalls, NHTSA sees this as another way to reach consumers. "In today's world, smartphones are the tool of choice for many tasks—and the updated SaferCar app is a new safety tool at the public's disposal," NHTSA deputy administrator James Owens said in a [statement](#).

Storms delay work on roundabout for downtown Mobile

Updated Aug 24, 2020; Posted Aug 24, 2020



A detail from a planning map depicts a roundabout planned for the intersection of Broad Street and Canal Street in Mobile. City of Mobile

By [Lawrence Specker | lspecker@al.com](#)

Two tropical storms may be going 'round about Mobile, but they've delayed the start of work on a new roundabout planned for the edge of downtown.

Mobile's Traffic Engineering Department had announced plans to start work Monday at the intersection of Broad and Canal streets. The city has now announced that the start of work had been pushed back a week to Monday, Aug. 31 due to the rainy forecast generated by tropical storms Marco and Laura.

The three-way intersection is the southwest corner of the Hank Aaron Loop around downtown; from it, Broad Street runs southward to I-10 and the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley. While the roundabout is being built, through traffic on South Broad Street will be routed along Washington Avenue via Canal Street and Texas Street.

The city expects the project to be completed by February 2021.

According to information released by the city, the roundabout will "provide safety improvements, reduce speed and allow better access for pedestrians and bicyclists."

The work is part of an extensive redesign and redevelopment of Broad Street funded in large part by a federal TIGER grant. Extensive work on Broad and Beauregard streets north of Spring Hill Avenue has been under way for months. Full information on the project can be found at <https://www.cityofmobile.org/reconnectingmobile/tiger-grant/>.

Transportation Research

Value Capture Strategies: Tax Incremental Finance Districts & Transportation Reinvestment Zones

September 24, 2020

1:00pm-3:00pm ET

<https://bit.ly/2vMB216>

<https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=2288>

'Walk and Bike Safely' roadway safety video teaches kids new safety habits

by Danielle Moody Wednesday, August 5th 2020

SAN ANTONIO— Vision Zero San Antonio has created an important new learning tool for area children through a child-friendly, animated video that teaches children critical roadway safety lessons.

"Creating an animated video that teaches roadway safety can arm parents, teachers, and with an easy way to save lives," said Bianca Thorpe, Capital Programs Manager, Transportation Planning & Programming for Public Works. "Teaching children how to cross the street is a good start, but we can't stop there when preparing them for how to interact with a dynamic transportation system. Through

this video, we were able to capture so much of what children need to know in a simple but engaging way.”

The concern for safety is at an all-time high right now during the warmer months when children are riding their bikes and playing outdoors. In the fall, many children will walk or ride the bus to school.

Walk and Bike Safely, the fifteen minute video, was created with Safe Kids San Antonio and University Health System. It is designed to help children learn important safety habits.

Just some of the lessons your child will learn through the video are:

- Making eye contact with drivers – never assuming a driver sees you
- Always staying alert when on or near a roadway
- The safest place to walk when there is no sidewalk
- The safest place to cross the road
- How to use a pedestrian signal crossing
- How to safely cross the street in front of a parked bus
- Increasing visibility when near or on a road after dark
- Bicycle safety rules and best practices
- How to inspect a bicycle to ensure it is roadway ready
- Hand signals for riding bicycles on roadways
- Safe practices for railroad crossings

You can watch the video by [CLICKING HERE](#).

DOT Unveils Applicant Toolkit for Rural Communities

Eleanor Lamb July 28, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation created a toolkit intended to help those interested in participating in the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success program.

Known as ROUTES, the program was created in October 2019, and it is meant to help connectivity in rural communities. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao on July 27 unveiled the toolkit, which provides information and resources. Its purpose is to help rural applicants understand and navigate DOT’s discretionary grant funding opportunities.

Specifically, the toolkit outlines applicant requirements and sorts grant programs by applicant type and eligible project activities. The toolkit was designed for applicants with varying levels of experience.

“This toolkit will help both the beginner and the experienced better understand, identify and navigate discretionary grant funding opportunities for rural transportation projects,” Chao said during a video announcement. “There are a lot of rural communities who just don’t have the resources to hire an army of dedicated staff and contractors to compete for these federal funds.

“We hope that this toolkit will be a reference and a road map to opportunities and resources at the U.S. Department of Transportation that will benefit your community and our country.”

Rural roads make up 70% of America’s road miles, according to DOT. Maintaining these roadways can be a challenge for rural communities that have thin financial resources. Although geographically sprawling, rural communities generally have low population densities, meaning fewer people to support investment.

Chao noted that infrastructure upgrades can improve safety, which also can be a challenge in rural areas. She said that although 19% of the population lives in rural areas, 45% of highway fatalities occur in rural areas.

In terms of economic activity, Chao said rural communities play an important role. According to Chao, two-thirds of freight moving by rail comes from rural areas, and nearly half the distance traveled by trucks takes place on rural roads.

“Rural transportation is important to our economy and our way of life,” Chao said. “Manufactured goods, raw materials and agricultural products travel through rural areas on their way to global markets.”

The ROUTES initiative’s steering council includes representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration.

DOT has placed an emphasis on rural community needs through some of its popular grant programs. For example, the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America grant program directs a certain amount of funds toward rural projects. In the latest round of INFRA grants, announced June 18, 53% of the funding was devoted to projects in rural areas.

In the latest round of Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grants, issued in November 2019, half of the \$900 million in funding was awarded to projects in rural areas.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Chao Releases Pathways to the Future of Transportation

Thursday, July 23, 2020

WASHINGTON – One year after announcing the launch of the Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today released Pathways to the Future of Transportation – a policy document that is intended to serve as a roadmap for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department.

“Pathways to the Future of Transportation guidance on new, cross-modal technologies will help address legitimate public concerns about safety, security and privacy without hampering innovation,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

This policy document is the U.S. Department of Transportation's first step in providing a clear path for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department. It lays out a process for innovators and stakeholders to approach the Department with their plans and proposals for emerging technologies.

Secretary Chao announced the creation of the NETT Council last year as an internal deliberative body to identify and resolve jurisdictional and regulatory gaps that may impede the deployment of new technologies, such as potential advances in tunneling technology and hyperloop. Pathways to the Future of Transportation intends to help private sector innovators understand the purpose, structure, and function of the NETT Council; lay out the principles guiding the Department's policies and posture toward transformative technologies; and deliver a high-level overview of the federal framework for supporting non-traditional and emerging technologies.

DOT will publish a Request for Comment on Pathways to the Future of Transportation, which will allow the public to comment and provide feedback on the document. More information on the NETT Council's work can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/nettcouncil>.

Opportunity Zones

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.