



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 11th, 2020

Volume 35, Number 9

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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

New funding opportunities announced: [ATRIPII](#), FTA 5310 Urban, and rail crossing; see *Funding Opportunities*. There is a RPO Meeting announced AND a [Human Services Coordination Transportation Plan Public Meeting](#) announced; See *RPO Updates*. The final VIA report is out in *Mobile MPO Updates*. COVID-19 pandemic impacts Alabama's gas tax and the FAST ACT ends September 30th, 2020 in *Legislative Updates*. this week's *Just For Fun* is for New York.

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

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

We are nearing the end of Fiscal Year 2020, and VIA has completed The [MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT](#)

There was a stakeholder meeting several weeks ago 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.

Tasks 1, 2 and 3 are [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

Project : 100067957 (FM)

Federal aid number : STPAA 0188 (505)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-188 FROM LAKELAND DRIVE TO THE IRVINGTON BAYOU LA BATRE HIGHWAY
Old Target start date : November 06, 2020
New Target start date : December 04, 2020

South Alabama RPO Updates

Online RPO meeting 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2020

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) will host an online Public Meeting of the Rural Planning Organization to be held at **10:00 am on Thursday, September 24th, 2020** using the GoToMeeting app. Please see invite below. The agenda includes:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting (these will be sent out soon)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program** (available for review online at:
<http://mobilempo.org/RPO/RPO%20Documents/2021%20Documents/Draft%20FY%202021%20RPO%20Work%20Program.pdf>)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan** (available for review online at:
<http://mobilempo.org/Documents/Planning/FY2021/2020-2023%20HSCTP%20for%20SARPC.pdf>)

Updating the RPO Transportation Plan Project List (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>) SARPC Rural Planning Organization
Thu, Sep 24, 2020 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CDT)

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

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/565927541>

You can also dial in using your phone.
(For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

United States: +1 (872) 240-3212
- One-touch: <tel:+18722403212,,565927541#>

Access Code: 565-927-541

SARPC to Host Human Services Coordinated Plan Meeting

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is updating the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan which details which projects are eligible for Federal Transit dollars for Elderly and Disabled, Job Access and Reverse Commute projects, or those transit projects that go above and beyond the requirements of ADA. This plan covers all of Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile Counties.

The Draft Plan is available for review online at:

<http://mobilempo.org/Documents/Planning/FY2021/2020-2023%20HSCTP%20for%20SARPC.pdf>

If you are interested in, utilize, or provide transit or would like to apply for federal transit dollars for special needs transit services through the FTA 5310 program, please attend an online Public Meeting to be held at **10:00 am on Thursday, September 17th, 2020** using the GoToMeeting app. Please see invite below.

Please contact the Transportation Planning Department at SARPC at 251-433-6541 if you have any questions or would like a printed copy of the draft plan mailed to you.

SARPC - Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan
Thu, Sep 17, 2020 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CDT)

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

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/290722085>

You can also dial in using your phone.
(For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

United States: +1 (408) 650-3123
- One-touch: <tel:+14086503123,,290722085#>

Access Code: 290-722-085

Projects in Region Let September 25th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Bridge Replacement on SR-163 over Perch Creek from MP 3.931 to MP 3.983. Length 0.340 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$3,114,592 to \$3,806,724 ..
- For constructing the Facility Upgrade (Generator Replacement) on SR-42 (Bankhead Tunnel) in Mobile. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$844,515 to \$1,032,185 .
- For the Maintenance Bridge Painting on SR-193 (North Bound Lane) over the CSX Railroad. Length 0.107 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$288,336 to \$352,410 .

BALDWIN COUNTY
None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

COVID-19 pandemic impacts Alabama's gas tax

By Brittany Dionne | September 8, 2020

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (WBRC) - Alabama's gas tax collections took a hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state leaders were worried they wouldn't generate enough money to fund planned road improvements.

The 2019 Rebuild Alabama Act will increase the state gas tax a total of 10 cents by 2021; a portion of the new revenue goes to the state, counties, and cities.

Because the COVID-19 pandemic affected travel when the state shut down in March causing fewer folks to fill up their gas tanks, April took a financial hit. In May, the state's gas tax collections dipped by about \$2.5 million.

By law, local governments must submit plans for road improvement projects a year in advance.

Sonny Brasfield, executive director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, said they were worried the tax wouldn't generate enough money to fund projects.

"We're probably going to do about 90% of the work that had been estimated. That's still an amazing amount of construction. Especially when you look at the previous year. Our projections were that we'd do about 140% more roadwork and 60% more bridge replacement than normal. So, we're still on pace to have an excellent year for sure," said Brasfield.

Brasfield said lower gas prices helped ease the impact of the gas tax on consumer wallets. The gas tax will increase by \$0.02 in October then another \$0.02 in 2021.

Infrastructure Stakeholders Press Congress for Highway Law Extension



Interstate 80 and Interstate 15 intersecting in Salt Lake City. The FAST Act was signed into law in 2015 and expires Sept. 30. (grandriver/Getty Images)

[Stay on top of transportation news: [Get TTNews in your inbox.](#)]

Groups representing nearly every aspect of the country's infrastructure networks recently called on congressional leaders to approve a yearlong extension of a soon-to-expire highway law.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, and the American Society of Civil Engineers were among dozens of stakeholders pressing for an authorizing extension of the five-year 2015 FAST Act, which expires Sept. 30.

In addition to the extension, the groups asked the leadership on Capitol Hill to approve more than \$30 billion in emergency funding for both state departments of transportation and public transit agencies, as well as guarantee the solvency of a federal highway funding account during the extension. The account, known as the Highway Trust Fund, relies on dwindling revenue from fuel taxes. [HERE](#)

Senators ask Congress not to raise liability minimums

BY LIZ CAREY | SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 | FEATURED

A group of U.S. Senators, led by Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT), is asking that Congress not include any increases in liability minimums for commercial truck drivers in the next transportation reauthorization bill.

The letter, sent to the leaders of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, asks the committee leaders to not further burden owner-operators and independent truck drivers by increasing the minimum of liability insurance from \$750,000 to \$2 million per truck.

"The only thing this would do is destroy small trucking businesses," said Lewie Pugh, Executive Vice President of Owner Operator Independent Driver Association (OOIDA), who spent 22 years as an owner-operator. "Trial lawyers are simply trying to increase their payouts at the expense of those deemed essential, including truckers, farmers, and manufacturers."

In the letter, the lawmakers argue that the increase in liability coverage would impact any business that transports property, including a wide range of industries including truckers, farmers, and manufacturers, and would do little to increase highway safety.

"Research done on a federal level has indicated that an increase in minimum insurance requirements is unnecessary. In 2014, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) commissioned the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center to research this subject in greater detail, and that study found that '[t]he vast majority of CMV-caused crashes have relatively small cost consequences, and the costs are easily covered with the limits of mandatory liability insurance [emphasis added].' Volpe continued, 'A small share exceed the

mandatory minimum but are often covered by other insurance or assets.’ This study showed that the current minimum insurance level adequately covers damages in 99.94% of crashes,” the senators wrote. The legislation would cost jobs, the senators argued.

“Increasing insurance rates on our hard-working folks who transport goods across our nation would destroy jobs in our transportation industry,” Daines said. “During these challenging times, we must promote economic recovery and growth for our truckers, farmers, and manufacturers, not burden them by increasing insurance rates further.”

Funding Opportunities

Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II)

(deadline October 30th, 2020)

The purpose of this program is to rehabilitate and improve transportation infrastructure by funding projects of local interest, proposed by one or more local governments, related to the state-maintained highway system. Projects may include local roads and bridges essential to such projects. The program's goal is to address critical needs projects across the state to rehabilitate and improve the in-place facilities and in some cases provide new facilities at locations throughout the state. The program's focus is an emphasis on the public safety, economic growth, and stability of the state and its roads and bridges.

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

[ATRIP-II Procedural Guidelines](#)

[2021 ATRIP-II Project Application](#)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Mobile Urban Area) (deadline October 22nd, 2020)

The Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Funds for FY 2021 grant applications is now available. The 5310 program is intended to assist private or designated public nonprofit agencies in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is responsible for the management and administration of the **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program** for the Mobile Urban Area. The application and guidelines for submittal can be found at <http://mobilempo.org/5310.html>

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission by NOON on October 22nd, 2020

U.S. Department of Transportation Seeks Applicants for Railway-Highway Crossings Grants (deadline October 26, 2020)

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>

ALDOT Rail-Highway Safety Program Grade Crossing Hazard Elimination Application

The Rail-Highway Safety Programs Group of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) as part of the ALDOT Rail State Action Plan is strategically engaging local agencies, ALDOT Region and Area Offices, railroad companies, and other stakeholders in an effort to improve safety at public grade crossings by eliminating hazards and fulfilling the program's goal of reducing fatalities and incidents at crossings. Our office is now accepting Grade Crossing Hazard Elimination Applications for funding request. This application process will provide an opportunity for entities to identify and request funds for crossing locations that demonstrate a significant hazard to the traveling public.

Please find attached guidelines and application form. Submission **deadline is Friday, October 16th by 5:00 PM CST**. If this application is not applicable in your respective location, please disregard. This application is currently not available online. Feel free to forward the guidelines and application as needed. For application aldotrail@dot.state.al.us

Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Program (deadline November 2, 2020)

The Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program (NSFLTP) of The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (Pub. L. 114-94, section 1123), provides funding for the construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of nationally-significant projects within, adjacent to, or accessing Federal and tribal lands. This Program provides an opportunity to address significant challenges across the nation for transportation facilities that serve Federal and tribal lands. [HERE](#)

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)

Today is a solemn day of remembrance, we shall never forget, 9/11/01.

Coincidentally, on September 11, 1609 – Henry Hudson lands on Manhattan Island and meets the indigenous people living there. He landed in North America on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, and explored the region around the modern New York metropolitan area. Looking for a Northwest Passage to Asia on his ship Halve Maen ("Half Moon"), he sailed up the Hudson River, which was later named after him, and thereby laid the foundation for Dutch colonization of the region.

It is interesting that the Dutch East India Company was a transcontinental employer and a corporate pioneer of outward foreign direct investment, at the dawn of modern capitalism. In the early 1600s, by widely issuing bonds and shares of stock to the general public, VOC became the world's first formally listed public company, and it "discovered" Manhattan.



The Dutch East India Company, (Dutch: Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie; VOC;

In the News

FHWA Redistributes Fiscal Year 2020 Highway Funds

editor@ashto.org September 4, 2020 0 COMMENTS



The Federal Highway Administration began redistributing more than \$4.76 billion in obligated federal highway funds [on August 28](#). When states or other federal entities funded through the HTF do not fully use those federal funds in a given year, the FHWA makes those funds available to states that have successfully obligated their allotment of federal dollars.

[Above photo by the South Dakota DOT.]

As a result, the FHWA's redistribution of FY 2020 obligated funding is proving a boon to several state departments of transportation across the country.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation, for one, is receiving an additional \$41.5 million in re-distributed federal highway funding, awarded after it met all its fiscal year deadlines for federally funded projects.



Darin Bergquist

"This is the highest amount of additional funding the department has received and is above and beyond the funds the department is allotted through normal distribution of the federal-aid program," noted Darin Bergquist, South Dakota DOT secretary, in a [statement](#).

"From 2017 through 2019, the department has averaged about \$32.4 million per year of redistribution by ensuring our federal transportation program is delivered by letting projects prior to federal deadlines," he said.

"This money will greatly enhance our overall funding used to build and preserve our states highways and bridges," he added. "I commend our employees who work diligently to meet project deadlines, allowing us the opportunity to receive these critical federal funds."

I-10 resurfacing project from Theodore to Mobile starting Sunday

[MOBILE COUNTY](#)
by: [WKRG Staff](#)

Posted: Sep 9, 2020 / 04:29 PM CDT / Updated: Sep 9, 2020 / 06:15 PM CDT

MOBILE, Ala. (WKRG) — The Alabama Department of Transportation anticipates beginning a resurfacing project on Interstate 10 on Sunday, Sept. 13.

The scope of the project includes performing roughly four miles of milling, paving, and striping operations on I-10 from just west of the Carol Plantation Rd. Overpass in Theodore to just east of the SR-193 overpass in Mobile.

Motorists can expect weekly nighttime, alternating lane closures, Sunday through Thursday, from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Drivers are required to always maintain a safe, reasonable and prudent distance when trailing other vehicles, and to obey work zone speed limits. These laws exist to protect construction workers, motorists and personal property from hazards that may exist in work zones and on roadways in general.

The \$3.4 million-dollar project was awarded to H.O. Weaver and Sons Inc. and is anticipated to be complete by the end of the year, weather permitting.

Six communities receive \$250,000 grants for road projects

Updated Sep 09, 3:49 PM; Posted Sep 09, 3:49 PM

By [Mike Cason](#) | mcason@al.com

Six local governments will receive \$250,000 each for road projects from grants announced today by Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

The \$1.5 million is the last round of grants awarded this year under a program set up by the Rebuild Alabama Act, which the Legislature passed last year to [raise the state fuel tax](#) for road projects.

The law required ALDOT to set up a program setting aside \$10 million from the new gas tax revenue for local road and bridge projects.

The six grants bring the total amount awarded this year to \$10.2 million, the governor's office said, including \$7 million awarded in January and \$1.7 million in June.

The six grants announced today will fund projects totaling \$2.2 million including the local funds provided.

The projects are:

- Widen and resurface six roads in Elberta in Baldwin County.
- Repair and remediate the Avenue I bridge over Alabama 150 in Bessemer.
- Replace the bridge on Thatch Road over an unnamed branch in Limestone County.
- Resurface six roads in Excel in Monroe County.
- Resurface sections of County Road 9 and 19th Street in St. Clair County.
- Resurface 17 sites in Vincent in Shelby County.

The Rebuild Alabama Act raised the gas tax and diesel by 6 cents a gallon last year. The law will add another 2 cents a gallon in October followed by another 2 cents in October 2021, for a total increase of 10 cents.

The grant program receives a small slice of the money from the tax increase, which is expected to generate about \$320 million a year when the 10-cent total is implemented.

U.S. ports busier than ever as East-West shipping rebounds

Justin Ho Sep 9, 2020

The pandemic and trade tensions slowed global trade to a crawl earlier this year. So it may be kind of surprising to learn that in the last few months, imports to the U.S. have been surging. A report out today from the National Retail Federation states import volumes may have hit record levels in August.

This year, the Port of Los Angeles went from handling the lowest container volumes it had seen in over a decade to taking in near-record levels of imports.

"August will be one of the best months we've had in our port's history," said Gene Seroka, the port's executive director. "And September, right now, is looking to be looking very strong as well, from our forward indications."

That's because supply chains have started to come back. Big-box retailers are restocking shelves. Plus online shopping jumped [over 30%](#) in the second quarter.

"So those inventories have to be replenished," Seroka said.

People have also been buying a lot of bulky items to set up home offices — desks, chairs and computer monitors. And that filled a lot of shipping containers, too.

Jonathan Gold follows supply chain policy for the National Retail Federation. He said this is also the time of year when retailers start preparing for the holiday season, when, during normal times, we buy each other a lot of stuff.

"Whether it's apparel, consumer electronics, furniture, home goods, toys: all that comes from the Asia market," Gold said.

But these are not normal times.

Dale Rogers, a professor of supply chain management at Arizona State University, said by building up their inventories, stores are betting that the consumer will feel comfortable buying things this holiday season.

"There's a belief that the consumer is going to be there," Rogers said. "But they're not necessarily there yet."

Still, consumers have fewer ways to spend their money this year. Travel is still difficult, and restaurants have limited capacity.

Eswar Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University, said for those who have a holiday budget, "people have to spend their money on something."

Prasad said when we can't spend much on experiences and other services, we're likely to spend more on goods.

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>

2020 Alabama Road Safety Conference

The 2020 Alabama Road Safety Conference will be held virtually on October 19-22, 2020. The move to a virtual conference has not affected its purpose or content. The ARSC is designed to strengthen the knowledge of available tools, countermeasures, and processes to improve safety within your jurisdiction.

The program will run from 10:00 am to 11:30 am and 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm on Monday through Thursday during the week of October 19. It will provide an opportunity to earn up to 12.0 Professional Development Hours (PDHs). Session themes include Safety Assistance Programs, Roadway Maintenance, Rail Crossing Safety, Transportation Technology, Safety Planning, Intersection Safety, Safety Resources, and Vulnerable Road Users.

Attendees will be able to attend any combination of sessions they choose, and then submit that information to ATAP so their attendance certificates can reflect the correct number of PDHs. Certificates will be emailed upon completion of the PDH electronic form.

Registration for the conference may be made at the following link. <https://aub.ie/registerARSC2020>

Fees:

\$35.00 Early Bird Registration until September 30, 2020

\$50.00 Registration beginning October 1, 2020

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.