



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 10th, 2020

Volume 34, Number 13

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There is a Mobile MPO Policy Board meeting scheduled for August 19th via GOTO meeting; prior to the MPO meeting there will be a TCC/CAC meeting of the Mobile MPO on July 29th via GOTO meeting, see *Mobile MPO Updates*. An American Infrastructure Bonds Act is introduced, and it looks like the INVEST ACT may be DOA; see *Legislative Updates*. There is a new technology grant offered by the Federal Highway Administration, see *Funding Opportunities*. The State has its first operating Diverging Diamond Interchange on SR-181 *In The News*, and this week's *Just For Fun* is dedicated to the air traffic controller...

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

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

There is a Mobile MPO Policy meeting scheduled for August 19th via GOTO meeting; prior to the MPO meeting there will be a TCC/CAC meeting of the Mobile MPO on July 29th via GOTO meeting.

The agenda is to include the following:

- Adoption FY 2021 [Unified Planning Work Program](#) (planning budget)
- Modify 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program
- 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
- Cost estimate change for 100033461 (CN) ADDL lanes on I-10 from CR-39 to Carol Plantation, from \$33.4M to \$41M, FY 2021
- 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
- Update Performance Measures
- Review of Financial Agreement
- Review of Demand Response Transit Study
- Potential TAP projects

DRAFT 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is now available for review.

The Draft 2021 UPWP is essentially the budget of the Mobile MPO staff. Typically in June of every year, MPO staff reviews the draft document with MOP Policy Board Members and the subcommittees, prior to submitting the draft UPWP to ALDOT and federal agencies for review. Because of the COVID-19 virus disruption our MPO meeting schedule, the draft document was submitted to ALDOT to review without committee review. The document is almost identical to the current UPWP, with the exception of no new third party contracts. The DRAFT 2021 UPWP is available for review [HERE](#).

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 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](#).

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

No Changes 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 July 31st, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Steel Blockout Replacement, and Traffic Stripe on SR-41 from the intersection of SR-3 (US-31) in Brewton to a point north of Burnt Corn Creek. Length 2.349 mi.
The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$595,041 to \$727,272 .

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

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session

Wicker, Bennet Introduce American Infrastructure Bonds Act

By YallPolitics Staff -July 8, 2020

U.S. Senators Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and Michael Bennet, D-Colo., today announced the introduction of the “American Infrastructure Bonds Act of 2020,” legislation that would create a new class of “direct-pay” taxable municipal bonds to help struggling governments finance critical public projects in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The senators’ proposed “American Infrastructure Bonds (AIBs)” would improve upon the model of “Build America Bonds (BABs)” that were issued after the 2008 financial crisis to attract more investment in public infrastructure.

“Empowering our local leaders to start important infrastructure projects is a proven, cost-effective way to help our communities emerge from severe financial hardship with assets that provide value to the area for years to come,” Wicker said. “The American Infrastructure Bonds Act of 2020 would improve upon previous efforts to expand investment in the state and local bond market by increasing flexibility for communities and adding assurances for the bondholder.”

“This bipartisan proposal will support locally-driven efforts to revitalize our infrastructure, create jobs, and improve quality of life in communities across Colorado,” said Bennet. “American Infrastructure Bonds are a proven, successful model for drawing much-needed investments that are critically important for creating stronger and more resilient communities – from improving roads, bridges, public transit, and tunnels to renovating hospitals and school buildings.”

The senators’ legislation would allow state and local governments to issue taxable bonds for any public expenditure that would be eligible to be financed by tax-exempt bonds. These bonds could be used to support a wide range of infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, water systems, and broadband internet. The bonds would be modeled as a “direct-pay” taxable bond, with the U.S. Treasury paying a percentage of the bond’s interest to the issuing entity to reduce costs for state and local governments. These payments would encourage economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic by subsidizing AIBs issued through 2025 at a higher percentage of the bond’s interest. The payments would revert to a revenue neutral percentage for projects after 2025, reducing long-term costs for the federal government and providing a permanent financing option for localities.

In plain terms, the senators’ legislation is expected to boost investment in infrastructure and other important public projects at a critical time by providing affordable access to the large taxable bond market. The higher interest rates offered by the taxable AIBs increase the expected value of the bonds to some types of investors, such as pension funds and foreign investors, who do not receive the tax advantage from traditional tax-exempt bonds. Expanding the market for municipal bonds increases private investment in the public sector and equips local governments with more options for financing projects. Importantly, AIBs would incentivize private capital to invest in rural areas, where financing can often be harder to secure.

The senators’ legislation provides important flexibilities to state and local governments. With AIBs, local communities can develop their infrastructure strategically without the burden of a centralized bureaucracy or the constraint of a state cap on allocation. As an additional benefit, the payments from the U.S. Treasury to issuers would be exempt from sequestration, which would increase the confidence of the bondholder and bond issuer alike.

The American Infrastructure Bonds Act of 2020 is supported by: The National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the Government Finance Officers Association, the American Public Gas Association, the National Association of Bond Lawyers, the Bond Dealers of America, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Council on Education, the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, and the American Planning Association.

What’s next for the INVEST Act?

9 Jul 2020 | Posted by Jenna Fortunati | 0 Comments | INVEST Act

Last week, the House of Representatives passed the Moving Forward Act, an infrastructure package that included the INVEST Act. The INVEST Act is a long-term transportation authorization that takes a markedly different approach to transportation policy: it fundamentally changes the programs at the heart of federal transportation policy to help communities improve access, safety, and their maintenance backlogs.

But President Trump and the Senate majority have already signaled that they won’t support the bill, and Senate Democrats are supporting a far more inferior reauthorization proposal passed in a committee last summer. And with Congress focused on other pressing issues such as another COVID-19 relief bill, there’s not much time left on the Congressional calendar for Senators and Representatives to agree on a massive infrastructure package. The INVEST Act is likely dead on arrival.

But all of our research and reports, your calls and messages to legislators, the op-eds, the group and individual sign-on letters, the fact sheets, the social media campaigns, the blogs and more had a major impact. The hard work that made the INVEST Act a new kind of transportation bill laid a powerful foundation for future transportation legislation, making a better final product—whenever one finally passes—far more likely.

“You think nothing is happening on the Hill, and then it all happens in two days,” said Chris Rall, T4America’s Outreach Director. While the actual legislating only occurs over the course of a few weeks, the work that goes into that first draft bill takes months—years, even. T4America has been laying the groundwork for this new kind of transportation bill for at least the last year, launching our three principles for transportation success in October 2019—all three of which were included in the INVEST Act.

“One chamber of Congress just voted to make fundamental reform, and that’s a significant victory,” said T4America policy director Scott Goldstein. “The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee did the hearings, research, and outreach. Votes were cast and it’s forever in the Congressional record. And once things are written down, they stick around and become normalized. That’s massive.”

This victory is worlds away from the process that produced MAP-21, a transportation authorization that Congress passed in 2012. During those negotiations, the House attempted to kick public transportation entirely out of the highway trust fund, undoing the political compromise forged by President Reagan in the 1980s to raise the gas tax and devote a portion to transit. A rapid, massive group sign-on letter organized by T4America ultimately prevented the House from passing their calamitous reauthorization proposal, leading House legislators to enter conference with the Senate with only a draft.

Unlike MAP-21, the FAST Act that replaced it in 2015, and all other transportation authorizations, the INVEST Act starts the work of finally connecting federal funding to the outcomes Americans want—rather than the Senate’s approach of simply pouring more money into the same old broken systems and hoping for better results.

The INVEST Act almost certainly won’t become law this year. But when lawmakers are able to focus on an infrastructure package, the INVEST Act—a bill that updates our broken federal transportation program by prioritizing maintenance, safety, access, climate, and equity—will be the template for the House. That’s a success in our books.

Survey: 50% Support Mileage Fees, 75% Support Gas Tax Increase

July 9, 2020 • by HDT Staff

Image: Mineta Transportation Institute



What Do Americans Think About Federal Tax Options to Support Transportation? Results from Year Eleven of a National Survey



According to the Mineta Transportation Institute’s recently released annual national transportation tax survey, half of respondents supported a “business road-use fee” that would be assessed on the miles that commercial vehicles drive on the job.

The national survey — What Do Americans Think about Federal Tax Options to Support Transportation? — is in its 11th year.

“Roughly half of American adults support some form of a mileage fee,” says Dr. Asha Weinstein Agrawal, one of the study’s authors and director of the Mineta Transportation Institute’s National Transportation Finance Center. “For example, 49% supported replacing the gas tax with a ‘green’ mileage fee that charges an average rate of a penny per mile, with lower rates for less polluting vehicles and higher rates for more polluting vehicles.”

The study’s co-author, Dr. Hilary Nixon, broke it down even further, explaining, “54% of people supported such a fee on delivery and freight trucks, and 52% supported such a fee on either taxis or ridesharing vehicles.”

The survey also asked respondents if they would support raising the federal gas tax rate by 10 cents per gallon, with 75% supporting the increase in the gas tax if the revenue raised is dedicated to maintenance projects. Only 44% support the same increase if the money is used more generally to maintain and improve the transportation system.

Other key 2020 findings include:

If Congress were to adopt a federal mileage fee to replace the gas tax, more than three-quarters would prefer to pay monthly or at the time they buy fuel or charge a vehicle, while 23% preferred to pay an annual bill.

Respondents thought mileage fee rates should be lower for electric vehicles than for gas and diesel vehicles.

A majority valued the idea of using the gas tax revenue on improvements across different transportation modes, including for both road and public-transit-related projects.

Only 3% of respondents knew that Congress had not raised the rate of the federal gas tax since 1993.

This survey comes on the heel of an announcement from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that it awarded \$15.1 million in Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives grants to seven projects in Delaware, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming to explore new ways to fund highway and bridge projects.

The program’s goal, according to the FHWA, is to test ways to supplement the federal gas tax and “provide long-term support for the Highway Trust Fund.”

“These seven pilot projects will help provide valuable insight into potential new sources of revenue to support highway and bridge improvements nationwide,” said Federal Highway Administrator Nicole Nason.

The grants will fund projects that test the design, implementation and acceptance of user-based alternative revenue tools, such as mileage-based fees.

Funding Opportunities

Federal Highway Administration Makes \$60 Million Available for Advanced Transportation Technologies Grants DEADLINE AUGUST 31st, 2020

FHWA 12-20
Contact: Nancy Singer
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$60 million in Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD) grants to fund new technologies that improve transportation efficiency and safety.

“These grants promote the use of advanced technologies to address critical safety issues and efficiency throughout our nation’s transportation network,” said Federal Highway Administrator Nicole R. Nason. “This program helps unleash technological potential to improve travel for all Americans.”

Created in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the ATCMTD program works to improve the performance of U.S. transportation systems, reduce traffic congestion, and improve the safety of the traveling public. Now in its fifth year, the ATCMTD program has provided more than \$206 million for projects in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

The program provides funding to help develop model deployment sites for the large-scale installation and operation of advanced technologies that improve safety, efficiency, and system performance. It has funded innovative projects such as Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s Bay Area Mobility-On-Demand (MOD) Project to reduce traffic congestion on the I-680 Corridor and surrounding communities in California, the Florida Department of Transportation’s Sunstore integrated data system for travelers, and the Texas Department of Transportation’s I-10 Corridor Coalition Truck Parking Availability System.

State departments of transportation, local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, and other eligible entities are invited to apply under the program.

The NOFO is available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=327953>

Fiscal Year 2021 Section 5310 Capital Award

Application(statewide) is now open (deadline is 5:00PM, July 17th at SARPC office)

[HERE](#) is the application and guidelines for ALDOT’s FTA 5310 Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities funding.



Key Ivey
Governor

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1409 Coliseum Boulevard Montgomery, Alabama 36110

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION BUREAU



John R. Cooper
Transportation Director

May 15, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Section 5310 – Statewide Applicants
FROM: D. E. Phillips, Jr., P. E. *Kasey Rogers for D.E.P.*
State Local Transportation Engineer
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2021 Section 5310 Capital Award Application (Statewide)

The annual statewide award application for federal capital assistance provided through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program is open for FY-2021. All projects funded through Section 5310 must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process. ALDOT has designated the 12 Regional Planning Councils to coordinate transportation services in their regions.

Please note that the one year sit out rule will be waived for FY-2021. Any eligible applicant can apply for an ALDOT Section 5310 capital award.

Please see the application and related documents on the Alabama Department of Transportation website at <https://www.dot.state.al.us/tweb/transit/index.html> under the Section 5310 tab. Please read the application in its entirety as there are time-sensitive requirements that need immediate attention.

Completed award applications must be submitted before 5:00 p.m. on **July 17, 2020**, to the appropriate Regional Planning Council (contact information is found in Appendix C) in the geographic area of the state where Section 5310 transportation services are proposed.

Technical assistance is available on an as needed basis. If you have any questions or need technical assistance with the application development process, please contact Kasey Rogers at (334) 242-6764 or email at rogersk@dot.state.al.us.

DEP:KR/cr

USDOT announces more than \$291M in grants available for rail projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is now accepting applications for more than \$291 million in grants for railroad capital projects.

Wednesday, the USDOT issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Grant Program that will allocate funds to help repair or rehabilitate intercity passenger railroad assets.

“This Administration has continuously emphasized the importance of investing in the safety and efficiency of our Nation’s rail infrastructure, and these federal dollars will help make grade crossings safer and enhance service reliability,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

The money stems from the Fiscal Year 2020 Partnership Program, as well as from funds that were left over from the Partnership Program’s Fiscal Year 2019 funding.

Eligible projects will support the repair, replacement, or rehabilitation of qualified railroad assets to reduce the backlog of maintenance issues while improving intercity passenger rail performance.

“All eligible parties should take full advantage of this opportunity to leverage private, state, and local investments that boost capital projects, including those that enhance safety in track and equipment and improve safety at highway-rail grade crossings or otherwise grade-separate rail intersections,” said FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory.

The department said that grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, taking into consideration the project’s objectives, how the project leverages federal funds, how the project uses innovative approaches to enhance safety, and how the grant recipients are held accountable for achieving specific outcomes. The federal share of the project’s funding must not exceed 80 percent, the department said.

Applications are due no later than 5 p.m. EST, July 27.

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

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

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

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)

Happy Birthday America

July 4th was last weekend, and you know what that means, another day of launching cars off of a cliff in Glacier View, Alaska; population 274. For a town that has a little population, they have a big party every 4th of July, and launch vehicles off a cliff at full speed. *Just For Fun*, it gives an entire new meaning to "vertical clearance", or "jump a car off", or "that car was flying"... [VIDEO HERE](#)



In the News

Diverging diamond interchange opens



Traffic crosses the diverging diamond interchange at Alabama 181 and Interstate 10.

Posted Tuesday, July 7, 2020 5:00 am

By Guy Busby

SPANISH FORT – After two years of construction and a major interstate exit being closed for more than two days the diverging diamond interchange at Malbis opened early on the morning of Wednesday, July 1.

The interchange is the first of its type in Alabama. The design is intended to flow more smoothly on the interchange between Interstate 10 and Alabama 181, Katelyn Turner, spokeswoman for the Alabama Department of Transportation, said.

In the design, traffic going north and south on Alabama 181 crosses from right to left to allow vehicles to move on and off the interstate.

Going north from Malbis, traffic moves in three lanes. After vehicles pass the exit for I-10 east, traffic comes to a stop light. When oncoming traffic is stopped, the northbound vehicles cross over to the left side of the highway to allow cars to exit onto the westbound lanes of the interstate.

“It’s gone smoothly,” Turner said Thursday. “We haven’t had any reports of problems by anyone using it and it actually was completed and reopened ahead of the scheduled time Wednesday morning.”

Work began on the \$7.3-million project in March 2018. On June 28, the interchange was closed while crews finished work to allow the traffic pattern to shift.

The route is used by emergency responders from both Spanish Fort and Daphne. Spanish Fort Fire Chief Roger Few said officials and police and fire representatives from both cities met with ALDOT several times before the closing to discuss how the work would affect traffic and operations.

“They accommodated us very well,” Few said. “They assured us that if we needed to get through on an emergency call while the work was going on, we could do it. We only had one call and before they got there, the call was canceled.”

Few said tow trucks were stationed at the site during the closing to assist with any wrecks or breakdowns that might have blocked traffic while work was going on, but no accidents were reported.

Turner said that while most of the project is complete, some work will still be done on the site. Some lanes may be closed to allow paving work to be finished. ALDOT officials are also studying traffic flow and will install additional signs and lane markings as needed to help motorists understand how to use the interchange.

While the interchange was closed, traffic was diverted to alternate routes including US 31 north of the interstate and US 90 to the south.

While the project in Spanish Fort and Daphne is the first diverging diamond in Alabama, the design has been in place in other areas of the country and similar designs are planned for other parts of the state, including I-10 in Mobile east of the Wallace Tunnel, according to reports.

First-of-its-Kind Dashboard Highlights Benefits of Federal Highway Investment in Alabama

National and state-by-state data available: artbahighwaydashboard.org

American Road & Transportation Builders Association

Jul 08, 2020, 12:19 ET

WASHINGTON, July 8, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Alabama leveraged \$731.4 million in federal funds to advance \$902.6 million in highway improvements during fiscal year (FY) 2018, according to an interactive tool that for the first time provides the public and elected officials a clear look at how and where the state invests its transportation tax dollars.

Obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association's (ARTBA) "Highway Dashboard: A 50-State Guide to the Benefits of Federal Investment" displays information on more than 367 Alabama projects that moved forward in FY 2018. Based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) data, the dashboard provides the same information for all states.

The top five projects receiving federal funding in the state during 2018 included:

I-65 ADD LANES FROM SR-3 (US-31) TO CR-52 (8-LN)(PHASE 2)

PAVEMENT REHABILITATION ON I-459 FROM SOUTH OF CR-52 AT MCCALLA TO NORTH OF SR-150

SR-8 (US-80) REPLACE BRG BIN 002783 AND RELIEF BRG BINS 002781 002782, OVER LITTLE UCHEE CREEK (SUFF=42.8, STAT=FO, 2001 HBRRP LIST)

SR-158 EXTENSION FROM EAST OF LOTT ROAD (SR-217) TO SCHILLINGER ROAD GRADE, DRAIN, BASE, PAVE AND BRIDGE

I-85 PAVEMENT PRESERVATION/PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE FROM SR-8 (US-80, EAST BYPASS EXIT 6) TO SR-8 (US-80, MITYLENE EXIT 11)

"This dashboard helps shift the conversation from how much each state gets to specific outcomes and benefits," ARTBA President Dave Bauer says. "Such transparency and accountability will help residents better understand the value they are getting from infrastructure investments."

The current federal FAST Act surface transportation law expires September 30. As Congress continues working on a new long-term bill, the dashboard will help members of Congress and their staffs to learn more about projects and how federal funds are being utilized in their respective states, ARTBA says.

"The dashboard spotlights the important role the federal highway program plays in our state," says Tom Layfield, executive director of the Alabama Road Builders Association. (ARBA). "Passage of a long-term bill by Congress with increased investment is the right medicine to significantly boost our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic."

In FY 2018, 74 percent of projects costs were for reconstruction or repair work on existing highways, according to the ARTBA analysis. Added capacity (13 percent of funds), planning, design and construction engineering (4 percent) and right of way purchases (2 percent), are among 12 ways the state spent its transportation dollars.

Compiled by ARTBA Chief Economist Dr. Alison Premo Black, the ARTBA Highway Dashboard features the top projects dating back to 1950. This data is submitted by states as part of FHWA's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS).

The Alabama Road Builders Association, founded in 1947 and based in Montgomery, is the only Alabama association that exclusively represents the collective interests of all sectors of Alabama's transportation construction industry. Alabama's transportation construction industry generates more than \$1 billion in economic activity annually and provides employment for more than 36,598 Alabamians.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) brings together all facets of the transportation construction industry to responsibly advocate for infrastructure investment and policy that meet the nation's need for safe and efficient travel. ARTBA also offers value-added programs and services providing its members with a competitive edge.

SOURCE American Road & Transportation Builders Association

Google Maps releases new features to help people navigate coronavirus hot spots

By Alaa Elassar, CNN

Updated Jul 4, 2020 | Posted on Jul 4, 2020 0

Google Maps releases new features to help people navigate coronavirus hot spots

The Google map application displaying medical facility or a COVID-19 testing center on a smartphone in Arlington, Virginia.



(CNN) -- Google Maps has launched new features to help users safely get around during the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 11 million people worldwide have contracted the virus, according to Johns Hopkins University, and 500,000 have died. Countries and regions have implemented varying restrictions, depending on the severity of their outbreaks, and that has complicated travel.

"COVID-19 has certainly impacted the way that we move around in the world," Google Maps product management director Ramesh Nagarajan said in a news release in June.

"As cities and countries across the globe adapt, we're committed to bringing the most pertinent information right to your fingertips. So when you're ready and able to, you can safely venture out," Nagarajan said.

To assist travelers, Google Maps is collecting data from local and national agencies and governments and alerting users to pertinent information.

Here's what users can expect:

Restriction alerts

Google Maps users will receive driving alerts to notify them of Covid-19 checkpoints when crossing national borders, as well as varying restrictions along their routes.

Drivers will see the alert on the directions screen if they are entering an area impacted by certain restrictions, such as a mask mandate or social distancing regulations.

Testing alerts

When someone is driving to a medical facility or coronavirus testing center, they will receive alerts reminding them of eligibility and facility guidelines, "to avoid being turned away or causing additional strain on the local healthcare system," Nagarajan said.

Alerts for medical facilities are available in Indonesia, Israel, the Philippines, South Korea and US. Testing center alerts are available in the US.

Public transit alerts

When using Google Maps to navigate public transportation in an area affected by Covid-19 restrictions, travelers will receive alerts from local transit agencies with reminders of regulations, like mask requirements or if government mandates are impacting transit services.

Transit alerts are rolling out in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, France, India, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the US.

In 2019 Google Maps introduced crowdedness predictions for public transit using millions of contributions from riders to show people how crowded bus lines or trains are. Now it's easier for people to submit their own crowdedness experience and check out how busy a train or bus they are about to take tends to be.

This will help commuters practice social distancing by avoiding crowded rides and planning their trip around times that aren't as busy.

Transportation Research

Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Programming

[FHWA-NHI-151055](#)

The National Highway Institute (NHI) is pleased to announce the launch of the new transportation planning course:

[FHWA-NHI-151055 - Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Programming](#)

Are you a transportation planning or programming professional interested in learning about metropolitan transportation improvement programs? If so, this web-based training is for you!

This new course provides introductory-level information on the process and requirements for developing and implementing metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs). The training includes administrative modifications and amendments, public involvement, financial planning and performance-based planning and programming (PBPP).

The training highlights the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements for statewide, non-metropolitan, and metropolitan transportation planning and programming processes.

The three-hour, web-based training (WBT), will help you to learn the following:

- Recognize how metropolitan areas and States reach decisions on transportation policies, plans, and programs.
- Identify major funding sources and the flexibility to use funds in addressing metropolitan and statewide transportation needs.
- Identify the role of key documents in transportation decision-making.
- Define the concept of fiscal constraint in relation to financial planning and programming.
- Identify how projects are selected and programmed in the STIP/TIP.
- Identify processes related to transportation program approval and implementation.

Transportation planning and programming professional will learn the connection between long-range transportation planning and prioritizing projects within TIPs and STIPs. You will also earn 0.3 continuing education units (CEUs) for certification.

Improve your organization's transportation decision-making process and register for this course today!

[Register Now](#)

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](#).

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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.