



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 27th, 2019

Volume 31, Number 12

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Contact Us

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The Mobile MPO has developed a Transportation Planning Survey

A survey has been created to supplement our existing public participation portion of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks in the Mobile urban area. Answers to this survey are noncommittal, but will serve as a baseline for public input and further data analysis. Please take a few minutes to take our survey [HERE](#).

Congress has passed a bill that would avoid a government shutdown, and there is a new bill that would tie FTA funding to housing in *Legislative Updates*. In other news, there is new FTA funding available in *Funding Opportunities*. The Eastern Shore Trail is celebrated, the downtown Mobile airport gets a grant, the Broad Street TIGER grant project breaks ground, and the I 10 Bridge goes on the "visionary list", *In The News*

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



Envision2045

Invest in your transportation Future

Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan

Please help up by providing input on your transportation priorities and projects for the Mobile Urbanized Area. The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization(MPO) is seeking your input via an online survey. The Mobile MPO, comprised of locally-elected officials, sets regional transportation policy and determines where to allocate federal funds.

Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to alternative modes. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission(SARPC) invites decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the general public to participate in the survey. SARPC is seeking feedback on transportation major infrastructure projects, initiatives and policies. Transportation priorities such as congestion, freight, transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian, and other transportation modes will be addressed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

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Your comments can help SARPC's planners to develop a wide-ranging, action-oriented transportation plan. The Envision2045 plan being developed will also serve as a basis for allocating limited federal money aimed at roadways, bridges, and public transportation facilities.

To complete the survey, please visit: <https://www.envision2045.org/>.

Please contact Kevin Harrison at kharrison@sarpc.org with any questions or requests for further information.

MPO MEETING

There was a Mobile MPO meeting recently. Staff received 88 comments concerning the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to the Tuesday, August 20th noon deadline for comments. The comments were presented to the MPO Policy Board members that afternoon prior to the MPO meeting on August 21st. A motion was made and approved by the Mobile MPO to "table" any projects that had tolling as a revenue source pertaining to the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. The next meeting of the Mobile MPO will be determined at a later date. The tabled item was subject to the outcome of the October 7th meeting of the Alabama Toll Bridge and Tunnel Authority, which has been canceled by Governor Ivey. We will keep you posted.

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

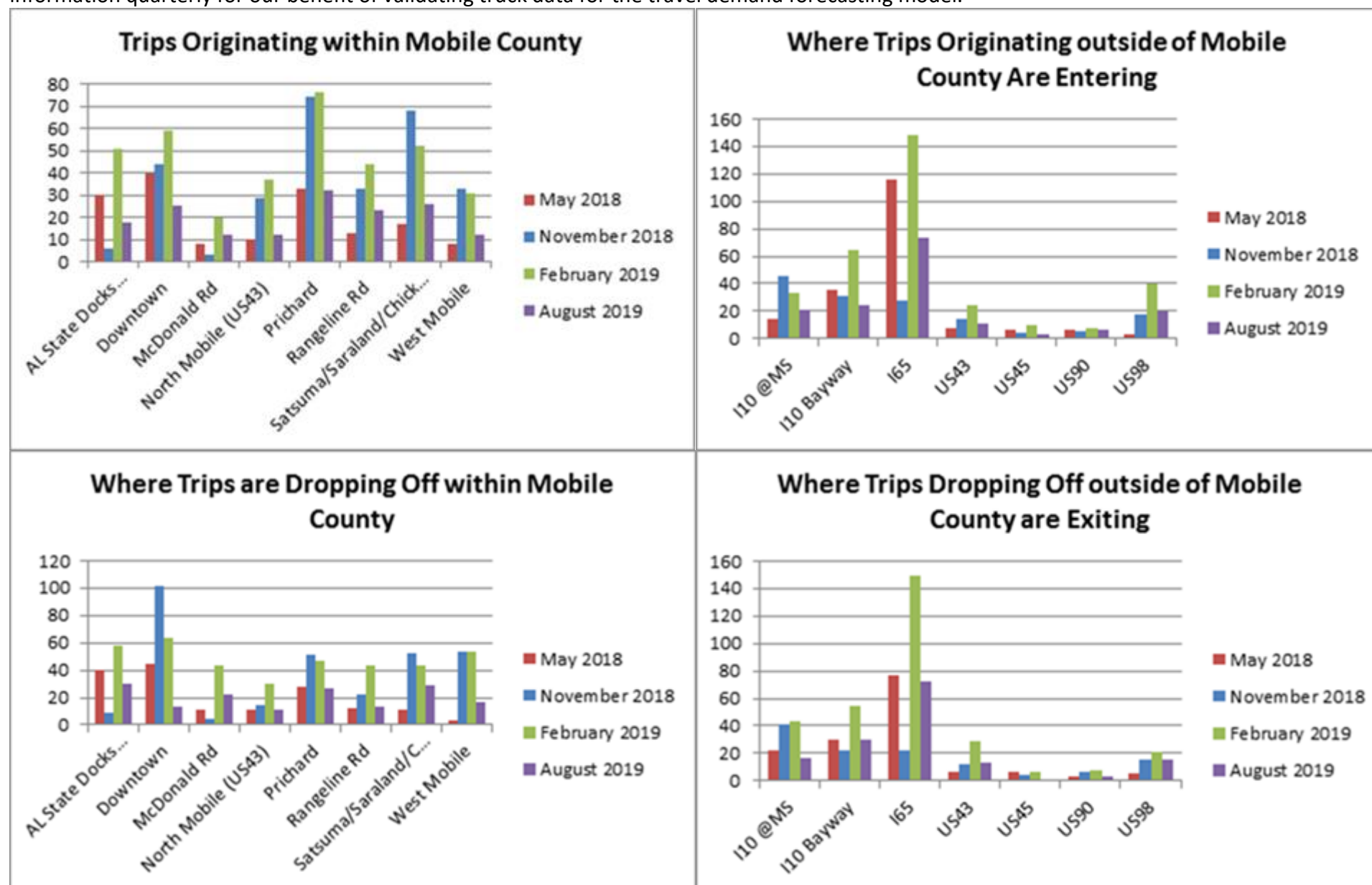
Recently the consultant selection committee listened to presentations from the three shortlisted firms concerning *Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study*. The groups that presented were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Mott-MacDonald, and VIA Mobility. All firms did a great job at presenting, and were scored and ranked by the committee. The consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin Mills and Cawood as a sub consultant. We would like to get the study under way as soon as the new fiscal year begins and are currently in contract negotiation. We will keep you posted.

Click on link below to see the Scope of Work
[Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study \(6/27/19\)](#)

If you would like to be part of this study, please call Kevin Harrison for details.

FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their fourth quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for two days APM Terminals had on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from and where they are going. APM Terminals will continue to gather this information quarterly for our benefit of validating truck data for the travel demand forecasting model.



[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) 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 [Destination 2040](#). 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. 2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#).

NOTE: There are currently two Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) on the website. The 2016-2019 TIP runs through September 30, 2019. The 2020-2023 TIP goes into effect on October 1, 2019.

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project would reduce congestion on I-10 in South Alabama through the addition of additional capacity: a new six-lane bridge over the Mobile River, full replacement of the existing Bayway with an eight-lane structure, and redevelopment of seven interchanges. The project would run from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com.

The Alabama Department of Transportation on August 28, 2019 ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100068380 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPAA TA18 (923)

Project Description : TRAIL LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THREE MILE CREEK FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA MEDICAL CENTER TOWARDS STRICKLAND YOUTH CENTER

County : MOBILE

Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100068379 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPAA TA18 (922)

Project Description : VARIOUS ADA UPGRADES AT AND AROUND THE PRICHARD CITY HALL

County : MOBILE

Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067750 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA17 (950)

Project Description : SIDEWALKS ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF OLD SHELL ROAD FROM THE WEST SIDE OF PARKWAY DRIVE TO UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD IN MOBILE

County : MOBILE

Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067420 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA18 (902)

Project Description : ADD SIDEWALKS ALONG WHISTLER STREET FROM NORTH SHELTON BEACH ROAD TO NORTH PRICE AVENUE IN PRICHARD

County : MOBILE

Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067749 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA18 (903)

Project Description : SIDEWALKS ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF AIRPORT BOULEVARD BETWEEN HILLCREST ROAD AND REGENTS WAY IN MOBILE

County : MOBILE

Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067397 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA17 (947)
Project Description : SIDEWALKS ON OLD SHELL ROAD BETWEEN DURANT STREET AND UNION AVENUE IN MOBILE
County : MOBILE
Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067418 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA18 (900)
Project Description : ADD SIDEWALK ALONG OLD SHELL ROAD FROM MYRTLEWOOD LANE TO WEST I-65 SERVICE ROAD NORTH IN MOBILE
County : MOBILE
Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100067315 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPAA TA17 (938)
Project Description : SIDEWALKS ON DAUPHIN ISLAND PARKWAY BETWEEN THE I-10 INTERCHANGE AND OLD MILITARY ROAD IN MOBILE
County : MOBILE
Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

Project : 100065881 (CN) Federal aid number : TAPMB TA16 (947)
Project Description : OLD SHELL ROAD SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CITY OF MOBILE
County : MOBILE
Old target start date : September-15-2019 New target start date : October-15-2019

South Alabama RPO Updates

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Meeting

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) had a meeting of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee last Thursday, September 19, 2019 at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsdale, Alabama.

Items discussed were current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of our region by the ALDOT Southwest Regional Office.

Other items on the agenda included:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (attached and available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)

Projects in Region Let September 27th, 2019

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Safety Improvements (Pavement Markers, Pavement Markings, and Traffic Stripe) on CR-4 (Bradley Road) from the intersection of SR-15 (US-29) to the Covington County Line. Length 17.746 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$161,519 to \$197,413 .

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on CR-656 (Zeigler Boulevard) from the intersection of CR-372 (Schillinger Road) to the intersection of CR-429 (Cody Road) west of Mobile. Length 1.433 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$8,706,751 to \$10,641,584 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Guardrail Installations on CR-87 over the Styx River (Site 1); on Hoyle Bryars Road over I-65 (Site 2); and on Scrange Road over Horseneck Creek (Site 3). Length 0.287 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$188,741 to \$230,683 .

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

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session.

Congress Clears Temporary Federal Funding Bill for Trump

A tense political climate on Capitol Hill did not distract the U.S. Senate on Sept. 26 from approving legislation that would ensure funding for the federal government through late November.

In an 82-15 vote, the Senate cleared legislation for President Donald Trump's signature to avert a shutdown of federal agencies.

The legislation would maintain funding at current levels until Nov. 21, in order to afford congressional funding leaders additional time to finalize the fiscal 2020 appropriations process. Current funding authority expires Sept. 30.

The White House has indicated Trump would support the short-term funding bill, often referred to as a continuing resolution, or CR.

"As we close out this month, we must acknowledge the progress we have made, while also recognizing that we still have a long way to go in fulfilling our duty to fund the government," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) on Sept. 26. "Ultimately, the factors determining our success in fulfilling that obligation will have to be decided through bicameral, bipartisan negotiations — not by the Senate alone."

The House had reported the funding extension bill Sept. 19.

"It is critical that we avoid another government shutdown, which would harm our economy and hardworking Americans," House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) said soon after the House had passed the bill. "Our continuing resolution will keep government open and provide families, businesses and communities with much-needed budget certainty while we negotiate long-term funding for key priorities. Democrats will negotiate responsible spending bills that uphold our values and give working families a better chance at a better life."

The Senate vote occurred a few hours after a House panel reviewed allegations of impropriety with regard to Trump's conversation over the summer with the leader of Ukraine. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) announced an impeachment inquiry of the president Sept. 24.

Earlier this month, a Senate committee advanced a fiscal 2020 transportation bill that would provide \$679 million for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The Senate bill also would prohibit funding for the enforcement of the electronic logging device mandate for livestock haulers. Additionally, a report accompanying the bill encouraged the Federal Highway Administration to complete a study on the impact that automated vehicles have on highway infrastructure. In the report, senators acknowledged a shortage of commercial drivers while encouraging FMCSA to examine ways to expand the commercial driving workforce.

In a report accompanying a separate fiscal 2020 funding bill, senators reminded the Department of Health and Human Services of a directive that required them to produce scientific and technical guidelines for hair testing to deter usage of controlled substances. Besides directing the department to finalize such guidelines, the panel would require the secretary to provide Congress with a report.

The House's version of the fiscal 2020 transportation funding bill would require FMCSA to proceed with annual inspections of rear underride guards. Also, it would require the agency to publicly post certain Compliance, Safety, Accountability program information online, and it would deny funding for FMCSA's review of an industry concern regarding state meal-and-rest-break laws.

House Passes Continuing Resolution Without Key Rescission Repeal

Last week, the House passed a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government open through November 21. Unfortunately, the CR bill does not contain language to stop a \$7.57 billion rescission of contract authority that is included in the FAST Act authorization and is currently set to go into effect on July 1, 2020. Despite support from Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso (R-WY) and Ranking Member Tom Carper (R-DE) to include language in this CR to stop the rescission, the pair will now push to have it included in the next CR or omnibus or even as a standalone bill, which EPW introduced at the same time it introduced its transportation reauthorization bill ([S. 1992](#)). This option received a boost last month when the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released an [analysis of S. 1992](#) which shows that the bill creates no discretionary budget authority and no discretionary outlays, so it could pass without impacting budget caps or requiring a spending offset. That makes it a matter of getting it before each chamber of Congress, which, while no small feat, would have been basically impossible had it not received this score from CBO.

Stopgap Spending Bill Passes House and Receives Support from President

According to [Roll Call](#), a senior White House official has indicated that the president plans to sign [H.R. 4378](#), the continuing resolution (CR) that was passed by the House last week and is expected to move through the Senate this week. The signing of this bill would prevent a partial government shutdown, at least for the next 51 days. Even if the bill passes, issues regarding funding of border wall construction and other partisan spending items remain and will need to be resolved before the CR expires shortly before Thanksgiving.

New Bill Would Tie Federal Transit Funding to Housing Production

[JARED BREY](#) SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

Each year, the Federal Transit Administration doles out [more than \\$2 billion](#) to help build new rail, streetcar and bus rapid transit systems through its Capital Investment Grants Program. Much of that money is distributed as part of the "New Starts" program, which gives grants for projects that cost more than \$300 million in total, or which are seeking at least \$100 million in federal money. In order to justify that much investment, cities and regional transit authorities need to show that the project will improve mobility, reduce congestion, and produce environmental and economic-development benefits. A new bill from Rep. Scott Peters, a Democrat from San Diego, would add housing to the list.

The [Build More Housing Near Transit Act](#) was introduced by Peters this month. It would amend the rules for New Starts funding by requiring applicants to create "housing feasibility studies" showing the opportunities for more housing production in the area around the project, and by encouraging cities

seeking funding to adopt land-use plans that accommodate more housing. Peters has been working with various advocacy groups on the legislation since the spring, according to this office.

“The goal of this bill is to use the leverage of federal funds to get cities to make affordable housing near transit projects a priority,” Peters said in an email response to questions. “It’s the right thing to do to meet our housing needs and to reduce air pollution from cars.”

The findings section of the bill refers to a national shortage of housing, the “underproduction” of 7.3 million needed housing units since 2000, and the severe burden of housing costs for people living in poverty. Low-income families are often forced to endure long commutes to get to work, but those who live near public transit have lower cost burdens, the bill says. It also notes that transit ridership is higher when there is more housing near transit stations. New housing built near stations “should target middle-income families, particularly those with 60 to 100 percent area median income,” it says.

“As we laid out in the findings section of the bill, we wanted to emphasize the importance of building housing for low-income and middle-income families, who benefit the most from transit-served areas,” Peters said. “This number isn’t prescriptive; we know that transit agencies aren’t the ones approving particular developments, but we included the number to signal to cities and local jurisdictions that we need to focus on building affordable housing.”

In addition to Peters, the bill is co-sponsored by Democratic representatives Denny Heck of Washington, Donald Payne of New Jersey, and Katie Hill of California. It also has two Republican co-sponsors: Cathy McMorris Rogers of Washington and Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin. The legislation has also been endorsed by a range of independent groups, including the American Planning Association, Enterprise Community Partners, Habitat for Humanity, the National Multifamily Housing Council and the Regional Plan Association.

The legislation is also a priority for Up for Growth, a D.C.-based nonprofit that lobbies for policies that increase production of affordable and market-rate housing. The group is membership-based, with a range of housing advocacy and “social justice” groups that pay dues, but the bulk of its funding currently comes from large real-estate trade organizations and individual developers and property owners, according to Mike Kingsella, the group’s executive director. The Build More Housing Near Transit Act is one of a handful of bills the group is currently pushing that are aimed at advancing a pro-growth agenda, Kingsella says.

“We’re singularly focused on eliminating barriers of all kinds to housing for all people,” Kingsella says.

According to Kingsella, the way the FTA funds projects through the New Starts program hasn’t been creating dense housing projects near transit stations, where they can offer residents better commutes and reduce vehicle miles traveled. One of the problems is that the FTA looks at each factor in isolation, Kingsella says. A project might score high if it appears to show potential for economic development, even if the potential is just based on land-use regulations and not an actual market for development. Adding a housing feasibility study into the mix would let officials judge how likely a project would be to support housing production based on a range of factors, Kingsella says. And it would give city planners and transit planners a better opportunity to coordinate.

While California state legislators have tried and failed for multiple years to pass bills that would upzone areas near transit, Kingsella believes the federal approach to the problem has more of a chance. The federal legislation is based more on incentives than previous efforts in California that have sought to force cities to zone for dense housing near transit nodes.

“The beauty is that we are trying to craft the federal evaluation criteria for these projects so that FTA is able to reward and incentivize [more housing production] in these transit areas, but not prescribe the approach,” Kingsella says.

Peters’ office acknowledged that the bill is not likely to pass as a standalone piece of legislation, but could be incorporated into a larger transit bill next year. Kingsella says the bipartisan support for the bill shows that there are some ways for the federal government to support better housing development.

“Nothing in Washington, D.C., and Congress comes easy, but what I do believe is there’s a political window that is open right now,” Kingsella says. “There is bipartisan interest in the discourse around eliminating barriers to housing.”

Funding Opportunities

FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area

Fiscal Year 2020 Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Grant Applications Now Available

The 5310 funds are for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is the designated recipient for the Mobile Urban Area. The application for FY2020 funds can be found on the Mobile MPO website [HERE](#). For more information, email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

Here is the schedule for the competitive application process.

DATE	ACTIVITY
August 30 th , 2019	Program Announcement and dissemination of grant applications
September 10 th , 2019 at 10:00 am	Information Session – GM&O Building at 110 Beauregard Street, Mobile, AL 36602 (2 nd floor training room)
October 11 th , 2019 by NOON	Deadline for submission of applications
October 2019	Selection committee convenes to review applications
TBA	Awards Announced
TBA	Grant application to FTA vis TRAMS
TBA	Vehicle Order Submission

For more information, email mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning 2019 Notice of Funding

Date Posted: 9/18/2019 Date Closed: 11/18/2019

Opportunity ID:

FTA-2019-010-TPE

Grant Program:

[Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning – Section 20005\(b\)](#)

Opportunity Announcement TXT:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/html/2019-20192.htm>

Opportunity Announcement PDF:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-09-18/pdf/2019-20192.pdf>

Details:

09/18/2019. Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the availability of approximately \$19.19 million in Pilot Program for TOD Planning funding to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects. FTA may award amounts ranging from \$250,000 to \$2,000,000. Synopses and full announcement are posted on Grants.gov site as opportunity [FTA-2019-010-TPE](#). Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 18, 2019.

Summary: The Pilot Program for TOD Planning provides funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning in new fixed guideway and core capacity transit project corridors. As required by statute, any comprehensive planning funded through the pilot program must examine ways to improve economic development and ridership, foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility, improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations. The statute also requires that the planning work be associated with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit project as defined in Federal transit statute (49 USC 5309(a); also see the NOFO for the definitions).

Consistent with statutory direction, FTA is seeking comprehensive planning projects covering an entire transit capital project corridor, rather than proposals that involve planning for individual station areas or only a small section of the corridor. To ensure that planning work reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community and results in concrete, specific deliverables and outcomes, FTA is requiring that transit project sponsors partner with entities with land use planning authority in the transit project corridor.

[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](#)

FTA Providing \$19.2M In Comprehensive Planning Grants

The Federal Transit Administration is making \$19.2 million in grant funding available to support “comprehensive planning” for public transit projects by encouraging ridership, improving transit access, or supporting economic and mixed-use development near public transportation projects.

The agency issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) on September 18 for that grant money, noting that applicants must be an FTA grantee; either a project sponsor of an eligible transit project or an entity with land use planning authority in the project corridor. The deadline for grant applications is November 18.

“Convenient and safe access to public transportation for all is a priority for FTA,” said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams in a statement – adding that these grants are being offered through the agency’s Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development or TOD planning.

“This program is an excellent opportunity for communities to plan transit-oriented development that improves mobility for citizens and captures the value associated with new transit projects,” she said.

Last year, FTA said it awarded \$16.6 million in grants to 20 organizations for such comprehensive planning efforts, such as making zoning changes to encourage development along a proposed bus rapid transit line in Indianapolis and conducting an analysis of multi-modal access to stations along a proposed light rail line in Maryland.

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)

This week, was the Alabama Roadway Safety Conference at the Grand Hotel in Pt. Clear. SARPC Staff presented at the conference, in terms of what Mobile and the other MPOs and RPOS around the State of Alabama did in terms of safety. SARPC has access to C.A.R.E. which is probably one of the best reporting environments for crash data in the country. We can utilize the data to identify high incidents areas and report it to our member governments.

Do you know what would be a good indicator of high crash frequency location? *Where photographers sit in the woods and wait for people to crash*, on a rural winding road in the mountains.... The “Dragon” is a portion of US129 in Tennessee that features 318 curves in 11 miles. Riders and drivers from all over the world visit the Dragon in hopes of conquering its many twists and turns. It is a beautiful road, and deadly. Motorcyclists account for the lion’s share of the traffic mishaps on “The Dragon” — of the 708 vehicles involved in accidents from 2011 to 2016, 545 of them were motorcycles. Of the 16 traffic fatalities over that same period, 14 were motorcycle pilots or passengers. There is a “Tree of Shame,” that is now a fixture at the Deals Gap Motorcycle Resort. The tree is covered in parts from motorcycles that have crashed, or been “bitten by The Dragon,” at some point in time. It bears a sign that reads “No gain & a lot of PAIN!” Deals Gap Resort now asks riders to turn in their motorcycle parts to management with a date and signature, rather than affixing them to the tree themselves. There are some real speed demon idiots out there, and we have spared you the disturbing pictures, and there are a lot of them. *Just For Fun*, we are going to continue to promote safety, and work towards our safety performance measures here in Alabama.



In the News

Alabama counties post road construction plans for 2020

Updated Sep 23, 2019; Posted Sep 23, 2019

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

Alabama counties have released their road construction plans for next year as required by the law that increased the state gasoline and diesel tax by 6 cents a gallon on Sept. 1.

The Association of County Commissions of Alabama announced that the county plans were available [on the association's website](#).

"We have consistently said that it's essential the public have immediate access to how the new revenue will be used," ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield said in a press release. "County governments have worked collectively so they can be responsible and accountable with each dollar."

The law required local governments to adopt by Aug. 31 an annual transportation plan listing the projects for the coming year and to make the list available to the public.

Brasfield said the ACCA will release more information later, including a statewide overview and project specifications and bid announcements when those are available.

"The Association is committed to providing the public with timely and accurate information now and moving forward," he said.

The Legislature [approved the increase](#) in state fuel taxes during a special session in March. It was the first increase in the tax since 1992.

The 6-cent increase raised the state gasoline tax to 24 cents a gallon and the state diesel tax to 25 cents a gallon. The tax will go up by 2 cents each of the next two years. The total increase of 10 cents a gallon is projected to raise about \$320 million a year that will go into a new Rebuild Alabama Fund that will be distributed to the Alabama Department of Transportation (67 percent), counties (25 percent) and municipalities (8 percent).

Baldwin County Trailblazers Celebrate the Eastern Shore Trail

Last night (9/26/19) at the Fairhope Brewery, the Baldwin County Trailblazers had a birthday party of sorts, for the Eastern Shore Trail. The Trail was part of a vision of the Trailblazers founder, Teco Wiseman. Teco founded the Trailblazers in 1995, and left a legacy when she died in 2011. The "Toast to the Trail," was well attended as they celebrated 21 years since the groundbreaking of the Eastern Shore Trail.

"A public party is a fitting tribute to the Trail and to the Trailblazers' late founder Teco Wiseman, whose idea was to build community by connecting towns along the Eastern Shore," says Jeremy Portillo, Trailblazers board member. "We hope trail users will stop by to meet others, trade stories, and toast to Teco and all the visionaries and early supporters who made the trail a reality"

The Baldwin County Trailblazers is inspiring group of advocates, and they have prioritized work that still needs to be done, like a bridge at Point Clear. That project still needs funding. SARPC staff was on hand to join in the celebration. There was music, food, and drinks as part of the celebration; congratulations to the Baldwin County Trailblazers!



Baldwin County Trailblazers Board of Directors



Board of Directors 2019

Jennifer Vestal – President

Mary Hopkins Chamblin – Vice President

Casey Rodden – Treasurer

Jeremy Portillo – Secretary

Charlene Lee – Director, Walking School Bus

Nancy Johnson

Ken Niemeyer

Josh Warren

Chris Riley

Christopher Grant

Michelle Melton

Cindy Wilson

Dione Heusel

Jane Hill – Administrator

Baldwin officials put final ‘nail in the coffin’ on I-10 toll project

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By [John Sharp](#) | jsharp@al.com

The last bureaucratic hurdle toward killing off the state’s \$2.1 billion Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project was cleared Wednesday with little fanfare.

Elected officials in Baldwin County, however, expressed “cautious optimism” about what might come next in exploring alternative ways of alleviating predicted gridlock on I-10.

With voice approval, the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Commission adopted its fiscal year 2020-23 Transportation Improvement Plan, or TIP. The plan is a crucial document that details transportation priorities for the next four years.

That finished plan excludes the I-10 Mobile River Bridge project, preventing it from receiving any federal funding.

The Eastern Shore MPO had removed the I-10 project on Aug. 28 following a lively four-hour meeting at which more than 30 people spoke out against the state’s plan to toll motorists. Immediately after the MPO voted that day, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey’s office issued a [news release declaring the project to be “dead.”](#)

“We believe the Eastern Shore MPO has put the final nail in the coffin on the I-10 toll plan,” said Alabama State Auditor Jim Zeigler, who led social media opposition against the project.

On Wednesday, MPO members and Alabama Department of Transportation Southwest Region Engineer Matt Ericksen expressed interest in moving on from the hard feelings that publicly erupted last month.

“ALDOT looks forward to meeting with both MPOs in the future,” Ericksen said, referring to both the Eastern Shore and Mobile MPOs. [The Mobile MPO voted on Aug. 21 to remove the I-10 project from its TIP until after an Oct. 7 meeting with the Alabama State Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority.](#) The meeting was canceled by Ivey after she declared the project dead.

“We agree there is a need for it,” said Ericksen, referring to a new bridge over the Mobile River and a widened Bayway connecting downtown Mobile to Daphne and Spanish Fort. “We look forward to coming up with a resolution to make sure this moves forward.”

‘Move the ball’

Ericksen declined comment after the meeting, other than to say he would have abstained from voting on the TIP had there been a roll call vote. Ericksen was the only “No” vote during last month’s MPO meeting when a roll call was taken.

An Ivey spokeswoman said that the Governor’s Office had no additional comment.

Daphne Mayor Dane Haygood, the MPO’s chairman, said he believes there is a “willingness” to work on new approaches to pay for the I-10 project. ALDOT’s plan for a \$6 one-way toll to travel the entire length of the project had generated fierce opposition on social media throughout the summer months.

Haygood also said that Eastern Shore communities enjoy good relations with ALDOT’s Southwest Region office.

But there has been little, if any, communication among the Eastern Shore MPO members – mayors, city council members and county commissioners – and state officials based in Montgomery.

"I think it will be a difficult process and will take a commitment from the local officials, both the MPOs and ALDOT," said Haygood, referring to interest in looking at alternative ideas for the I-10 project.

"Quite frankly, there is a distrust that exists right now," said Haygood, referring to ALDOT. "We have to acknowledge that and accept that."

Baldwin County Commissioner Joe Davis said that during a recent trip to Washington, D.C., a delegation of coastal Alabama lawmakers was greeted by representatives from Sens. Richard Shelby and Doug Jones who expressed interest in finding ways to restart an I-10 project.

"I'm cautiously optimistic we'll find a way to get a bridge to connect our counties without having to deal with the proposal that was on the table," said Davis.

Fairhope City Council President Jack Burrell openly invited the state to "sit down" with the coastal officials and discuss solutions.

"Let's move the ball," he said.

Haygood said the I-10 project could be reincluded into the TIP at any time. But, he said, it would only resurface if state officials accepted a project without financing that included tolls.

"If the state would have just committed to a no toll solution, we would never have taken it out of the TIP," said Haygood. "It can go back in at any time once that guarantee is made. That has been state since Day 1."

Retaliation

At the same time, there are concerns about retaliation following a rare instance in which Ivey faced opposition from a Republican-friendly area over a major policy initiative.

State Sen. Chris Elliott, R-Daphne, has said that Ivey retaliated against him for his public opposition to the state's I-10 project ahead of the MPO's actions last month. Elliott was removed from an influential eight-member Alabama Transportation Improvement Program (ATRIP) II committee on Sept 9, and was replaced by Democratic state Sen. Vivian Figures of Mobile.

Elliott, speaking to the MPO board, said the committee voted on Tuesday to authorize \$800,000 of highly-competitive ATRIP-II funds for a turn lane project on a busy stretch of U.S. 98 and Gayfer Road in Fairhope.

"The competition is very fierce, as you might imagine, so I was pretty pleased to see we were able to bring it home even with the current situation," said Elliott, who noted that the committee no longer has a Baldwin County representative on it.

Haygood also said it was nice to see an Eastern Shore project funded with state money less than one month after the contentious vote to remove the I-10 toll plan from the TIP.

"The scope is pretty small so they have to do the best they can to spread it out over the state," Haygood said about the ATRIP-II program. Elliott said there is about \$30 million available this year for projects statewide.

Zeigler said he believes retaliation against the coastal counties remains an issue of concern.

He said if there are any instances, the "Block the Mobile Bayway Toll" Facebook page will "point them out and take the appropriate steps to oppose."

Long-range focus

Zeigler said the toll opponents who vehemently fought against the state's plans are being encouraged to participate in an online survey addressing the Mobile MPO's long-range plans.

The long-range plan, titled "Envision 2045," will be part of public hearings early next year before it's voted on in March 2020. The long-range plan will offer a blueprint on projects in the Mobile region for the next 25 years.

The MPO survey's, which isn't specific to I-10, will be available through Friday, Oct. 11, and responses will be incorporated into the planning process.

"That won't be as passionate as the initial opposition to the toll plan, but there is a need for continued citizens involvement," said Zeigler.

The long-range plan is expected to include an I-10 project, but it will be listed as a "visionary" idea that won't have a dedicated funding source attached to it.

The Eastern Shore MPO will also take up its long-range transportation plan next year. The current long-range plan expires in June, and the organization is moving forward with planning a new one with a consultant, J.R. Wilburn Associates Inc.

Zeigler said the attention will shift to the process involving those two plans soon. For now, he's skeptical about moving on from a battle that generated so much attention this summer.

ALDOT has not hinted at any interest in pursuing an alternative plan or a reduced tolling option to resurrect the project. The team that was assembled to oversee the project to its next stages has long been disbanded.

"We will remain observant and vigilant in case there is some effort from Montgomery to come back with perhaps a small toll or some other kind of toll plan, which we will oppose," he said.

Grant coming to Mobile's downtown airport

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) | Sep 20, 2019 |

The Mobile Downtown Airport is getting more than \$1 million to repair the area where airplanes are parked, boarded or refueled — space that dates all the way back to when Brookley was first used as an Air Force base.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne announced the \$1,080,000 U.S. Department of Transportation Grant in a statement released Friday morning.

"I am thrilled to announce this grant of over \$1 million to the Mobile Downtown Airport," Byrne wrote. "As Southwest Alabama continues to grow, the downtown airport will become increasingly important to our economic development efforts. I appreciate what Mayor Stimpson and the Mobile Airport Authority set out to do when deciding to revitalize the Mobile Downtown Airport, and I applaud all of their hard work on this important project."

Mobile Airport Authority President Chris Curry said the grant begins the organization's commitment to repairing and replacing much of the aging apron, runways and taxiways.

"That's part of our overall plan to improve infrastructure," he said.

The grant will provide funding for the design of the apron this year, with construction beginning next year, per Federal Aviation Administration rule. "You do the design one year and the construction the next," according to Curry.

In other airport news, Frontier is pulling its seasonal direct flight from Mobile to Chicago, beginning Nov. 13 — a move that has been expected for some time now.

However, Curry said he believes the airline, which is the only one currently operating out of the downtown airport, should bring the flight back in April when the weather in the Windy City is more temperate.

"When Frontier came into Mobile, both the Denver and Chicago flights were seasonal," he said. "They made Denver year-round because the response was higher, and Denver is their primary hub. You can still fly Frontier to Chicago from Denver if you desire."

Curry said the Chicago flights typically left the downtown airport at 80-percent of their capacity, while flights to Denver took off 90-percent full on average. Those "load factor" numbers are both good, especially considering the A320 aircraft Frontier uses holds 186 passengers, he added.

"We're hopeful they bring back the Chicago flight and an additional destination," Curry said. "I think it's a good possibility."

Seasonal flights for Frontier are nothing new. The airline traditionally puts assets where they will be most popular during different seasons.

For instance, Frontier is temporarily stopping its direct flight from Huntsville to Denver in November, but leaving its Orlando flight. The same for Nashville, Curry said. The airline is also moving many flights to Phoenix during cooler months, he said.

From death to 'visionary': An unfunded I-10 project likely to resurface in long-range plans

Updated Sep 22, 2019; Posted Sep 22, 2019

By [John Sharp](#) | jsharp@al.com

The \$2.1 billion plan for the Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project that would have included a [controversial toll](#) will be officially [removed from a critical short-term planning document](#) on Wednesday.

Any expansion will then become a "vision" for, perhaps, a new generation to tackle.

Members of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will vote Wednesday - at 10 a.m. in Spanish Fort - to authorize a fiscal year 2020-23 ["Transportation Improvement Plan,"](#) or TIP, that won't include the I-10 project.

A few weeks ago, on Aug. 28, the same MPO axed the I-10 project from the TIP's roster of short-term priorities, effectively disqualifying it from federal funding and [leading Gov. Kay Ivey to pronounce it "dead."](#)

The August meeting took place in a blaze of media attention. This time around, there's little hubbub.

"I expect it to be uneventful and passed as is," said Daphne Mayor Dane Haygood, the chairman of the Eastern Shore MPO, which consists primarily of mayors, council members and county commissioners in Baldwin County.

'Visionary' project

But a longer-range, 25-year transportation planning document will soon be on the agendas for the Eastern Shore MPOs and its counterpart in Mobile — and some sort of new I-10 project seems likely to appear.

Both MPOs are expected to vote next year on their transportation priorities through 2045. And those documents are expected to reference a reconstruction of the I-10 Bayway, labeling it as a “visionary” development that has no funding attached.

According to MPO officials, keeping an I-10 project in the long-range pipeline recognizes the need for improvements along the interstate stretching from downtown Mobile into Baldwin County.

Mobile’s Wallace Tunnel, for instance, is often overwhelmed by traffic. Opened in 1973, the tunnel has a design capacity to handle 35,000 vehicles a day; at present, 75,000 vehicles are trying to get through on any given day.

How to find funding for a new project will be a key question, of course.

The state’s I-10 project team has been dismantled and there have been no talks among coastal officials or the Alabama Department of Transportation about reviving the notion of a public-private partnership (P3) that would necessitate tolls.

“At this point, until we hear from the state of Alabama, it looks like the bridge has to be visionary,” Kevin Harrison, director of transportation planning with the Mobile MPO. “That may change. Anything can happen.”

Still, Harrison said, “The bridge will be in the long-range plan because it’s a needed project.”

He added, “There are a lot of projects that we just don’t have money for and that is why they are listed as visionary projects.”

Envision 2045

The Mobile MPO is scheduled to vote on what is being called the “Envision 2045” document in March, and public hearings are being planned for early 2020.

The Mobile MPO has posted [an online survey](#) in which the public can weigh in with its opinions about traffic issues and road construction priorities. That survey will be available through Friday, Oct. 11, and responses will be incorporated into the planning process.

“We encourage all public comments, but this is not a survey about the bridge,” said Harrison. “This is a survey about our overall transportation network and the public’s opinion about where the problems are and where the money should be focused.”

Envision 2045 will replace a 25-year plan that is named “Destination 2040,” and was adopted in March 2015, but is scheduled to expire in early March 2020.

The plan was amended in October 2018, [to include the toll plan for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project](#). Initially, the plan didn’t include tolling because the state hadn’t determined a funding mechanism for the bridge.

City kicks off Broad Street project

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) | Sep 19, 2019

The city Mobile, on Thursday, began the first phase of a \$14.5 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant project aimed at a complete rebuild of the Broad Street area.

Amongst the orange cones and trucks meant to signify the beginning of construction, Mayor Stimpson told members of the media standing near the main campus of Bishop State Community College it was “very gratifying” to see this work starting.

“A big part of TIGER is connections to opportunities,” Stimpson said. “When it’s finished, this project will help connect these communities here to new jobs being created at the Brookley Aeroplex.”

The city will begin the project with the first phase, from Lawrence Street to Canal Street, Stimpson said, which has a two-year timeline. A second phase continuing from Canal to Brookley will take another two years, Stimpson added.

The city took some criticism earlier this year for the way work on a drainage project along Florida Street was handled. At the time, Stimpson said the city has learned from mistakes made on that project. At Thursday’s press conference, he had Public Works Director Jim DeLapp explain the tweaks that will be used over the course of the TIGER project.

DeLapp said the city will better communicate with business owners and the community as work progresses than it did during the Florida Street project, which disrupted operations for a number of businesses along the highly-trafficked midtown road.

Better communication would mean a better understanding of the project phases and the shifts in traffic that will be needed during the two-year window, DeLapp said.

In a statement earlier this week, city officials warned travelers along Broad and Beauregard streets to look out for construction crews. When construction is finished those same travelers can expect to see two lanes in each direction, instead of the current three as well as roadway surface improvements, separated bike lanes, wide sidewalks, landscaping, drainage improvements, utility updates and new signals and lighting.

Mobile City Council Vice President Levon Manzie, who represents the area impacted by the construction of phase one, praised the city for its efforts to go for the federal grant, even after failing to secure the funding in two previous attempts.

“The third time’s the charm,” he told reporters.

According to Manzie, the project will be positive not only for Broad Street, but also for residents and businesses along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue.

“This is a great day not only for Mobile, but for the residents in District 2,” he said. “I’m impressed with how this corridor will be revitalized.”

While he described the news as positive, Manzie did ask residents for their patience as construction on the TIGER grant project progresses over the next four years.

Transportation Research

FHWA Research Showcase Highlights Transportation Innovations

editor@aaashto.org September 20, 2019

Drones, a virtual reality bicycle simulator, 3-D printers, and new roadway materials, plus a bevy of autonomous vehicle or AV projects formed just some of the highlights of the 2019 Federal Highway Administration Research showcase; a first of its kind event at the U.S. Department of Transportation’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., on September 18.

[Left to right in photo above: FHWA’s Tom Everett, Jim Tymon – executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials – and FHWA Administrator Nicole Nason are briefed at the agency’s research showcase on the advances in Ultra High-Performance Concrete.]

FHWA associates on hand at the showcase said state departments of transportation, construction firms, highway contractors, and other industry stakeholders are the intended user group for those and other innovations displayed at the showcase – the first time FHWA has ever held event of this scale at USDOT headquarters.

For example, the virtual reality bicycle simulator demonstrated at the event is being used by FHWA to develop and test a multimodal alert system that would tap into Dedicated Short Range Communications or DSRC wireless networks to send warnings to bicyclists via smartphones regarding roadway hazards – including work zones, poor roadway conditions, and potential collisions with vehicles.

The agency also highlighted its work with ultra-high performance concrete formulas to provide a stronger and longer-lasting material for bridge construction that could eventually be more cost-effective over the life-cycle of the structure.

FHWA also showed off several drone models it is using to conduct bridge and highway inspections to keep workers out of harm’s way, as well as gather critical data to help speed up infrastructure construction processes.

Those drones – in both airplane and helicopter configurations – are also being used in emergency response situations, to conduct overflights of infrastructure damaged by natural disaster such as hurricanes and floods as a way of reducing risks posed to recovery workers.

USDOT Secretary Elaine Chao noted in a speech at the FHWA event that the agency’s research initiatives – “conducted via partnerships with universities, startups, and industry stakeholders” – help advance transportation innovation.

“This work includes the development of innovations in materials, designs, operations, and safety,” she said. “This has enabled the highway safety system to move people and freight more safely and has contributed to the economic success of our country.”

Nicole Nason, FHWA’s administrator, added that her agency’s autonomous vehicle research has “truly been a multimodal effort” and “only scratches the surface” of what is being deployed to improve the nation’s transportation system.

“Our Cooperative Automotive Research Mobility Application or CARMA program is helping make autonomous vehicles of the future ‘road ready,’” she explained in an interview with the AASHTO Journal at the event.

“It is also important to demystify the technology; people need to see it and understand it. That takes some of the tension and anxiety out of the fear of what is coming,” Nason explained. “It always makes people nervous when there is new technology on the market. So the more events where we can publicly share and show what we are doing – like this one – the greater the confidence of the public and the sooner we can bring the benefits [of autonomous vehicles] to our roads.”

[Jim Tymon, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, added in a separate interview that making autonomous vehicles truly “road ready” also means preserving the 5.9 GHz wireless communication channel for their use so they can communicate with one another and the infrastructure around them.]

To further that goal, the USDOT [officially awarded](#) nearly \$60 million to eight autonomous driving system or ADS projects in seven states during the FHWA event – which [includes efforts](#) spearheaded by the [Ohio Department of Transportation](#), the [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#), and the [Iowa Department of Transportation](#) – to help speed up development and deployment of self-driving vehicles on U.S. roads.

“What we see happening in the future of transportation has me incredibly excited,” explained Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., during the event; one of several members of Congress attending the research showcase.

“Nearly 40,000 die on our highways every year [but] the technology on display here can help eliminate them [those deaths]; that’s a really big deal,” he said. “Technology like self-driving cars will transform our whole society. And it is up to us make sure such changes are positive and that anyone, no matter where live, can take advantage of them.”

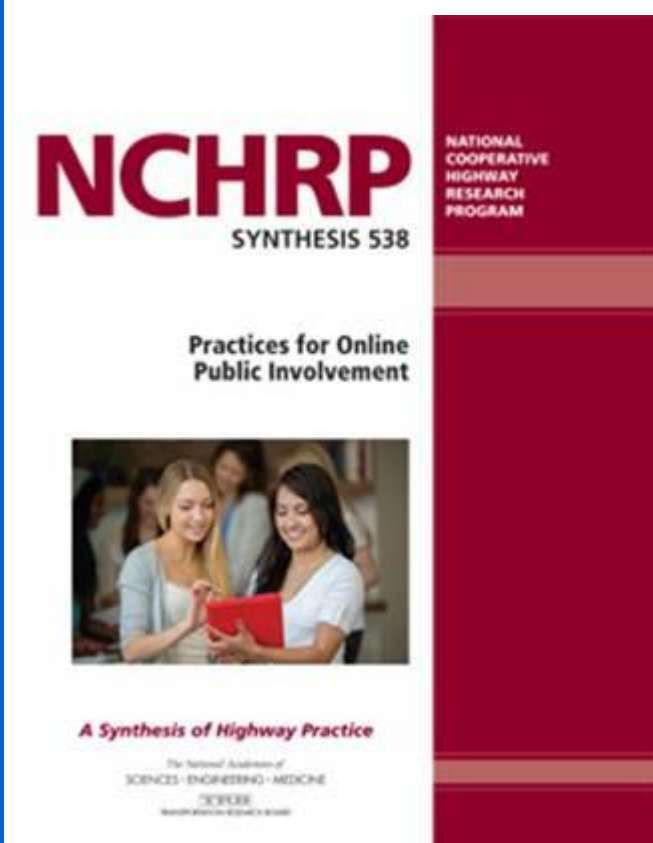
Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, added that “it takes push, commitment from the top” to encourage such innovation to occur and that “all the answers are not here in Washington, D.C.; and we thank the Secretary for recognizing that.”

He noted that this new round of ADS funding “makes a huge difference to our state and our country,” emphasizing that rural transportation needs – which will be the focus of the Ohio DOT’s autonomous vehicle research – “are often overlooked by autonomous driving systems” today.

That’s why Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., stressed that supporting such transportation research is critical to maintaining the economic vitality of the country. “We need to keep working together to keep America at the forefront of transportation innovation,” she added.

A thorough look at how state DOTs use online public involvement

One of the most exciting opportunities offered to government agencies by social media was the potential to increase how well they communicated with the general public. After more than 10 years of Facebook and Twitter, and dozens of other social media channels, the question is worth asking: Are we any better at engaging with the public than we were at the turn of the century?



The National Cooperative Highway Research Program recently published a look at common state department of transportation [practices related to online public involvement](#).

State departments of transportation, and other state and local transportation agencies have long used social media channels to communicate about road conditions, transit disruptions, weather impacts, project meetings and safety messaging. In fact, we celebrate many of their efforts here at Talking Transportation, highlighting the bold, the funny, the thoughtful and the impacting.

For the sake of brevity, I’ll suggest that government agencies are doing a good job of sharing information about the basic elements of operating a transportation system.

But I think there are serious questions about whether the online world has much improved the specific process we call “public involvement.”

A recently completed research synthesis report offers some interesting insight into the question. The [National Cooperative Highway Research Program Synthesis 538 “Practices for Online Public Involvement”](#) is comprised of a thorough literature review and the results of an extensive survey of state department of transportation officials.

Experts Emphasize Communication, Teamwork in Transportation Planning

Fruitful partnerships between state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations depend on communication, collaboration and inclusion, according to transportation experts.

Darryl Fields, senior transportation planner at the Mid-America Regional Council, said successful projects come from frequent collaboration with government agencies and planning organization partners. MARC serves the Kansas City metropolitan area, representing two states, two Federal Highway Administration divisions and eight counties (four each in Kansas and Missouri). Fields spoke at a webinar hosted by FHWA on Aug. 21, which was held as part of the agency's Talking Freight seminar series.

Kansas City is an important freight hub, containing four intermodal hubs, a massive rail center and an inland waterway. Fields said past collaborative successes include the reconstruction of the interchange linking interstates 435 and 470 to U.S. Route 71 south of Kansas City and flyover rail crossings.

"An important aspect in any business are successful relationships. We, as public policy providers, must maintain agency cooperation and participation," Fields said. "Freight has no boundaries."

Yatman Kwan, chief of the California Department of Transportation's Office of Freight Planning, agreed with Fields, stating that regular collaboration fosters better work between transportation agencies and planning groups. Kwan and his team developed a survey geared toward state DOTs and metropolitan planning organizations. The purpose was to learn how often these entities regularly interacted, the extent of their involvement in one another's work and their biggest concerns related to freight.

From the survey, Kwan determined that the best practices are found in MPOs and DOTs that frequently reach out to each other and maintain reliable points of contact. State agencies reported various ways in which they work with MPOs. For example, MPOs are represented on Michigan DOT's task teams devoted to developing long-range transportation plans. Tennessee DOT created an Office of Community Transportation, which regularly communicates with members of planning organizations.

Challenges remain for smaller MPOs that sometimes feel overlooked, according to the survey results. A few MPOs reported they don't have regular meetings with their DOT counterparts.

"[Some] small MPOs feel neglected in statewide efforts and meetings. Some MPOs felt some DOTs are very siloed," Kwan said. "[They] would like to see more ongoing conversation."

Kenneth Kao, principal planner within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Programming and Allocations Section, said he and his team work closely with Caltrans, holding quarterly meetings with the agency's Freight Advisory Committee. MTC covers the San Francisco Bay area, encompassing 7.5 million people and nine counties. MTC and Caltrans work together to identify common goals (a recent example was the assignment of critical urban and rural freight corridors).

The Northern California megaregion, which includes San Francisco, Monterey Bay, Sacramento and the northern San Joaquin Valley, is an important area for freight movement, according to Kao. Specifically, the area facilitates the movement of various agricultural products and goods from the Port of Oakland.

"We're linked very closely with transportation and economic links within our region as well as with neighboring MPOs," Kao said. "Northern California is an important part of the national freight movement puzzle."

FHWA's next Talking Freight seminar will be held Aug. 28 and focus on using real-time information to improve supply chain efficiency.

Traffic Congestion Keeps Climbing, Says Latest Urban Mobility Report

editor@aaashto.org August 23, 2019

Gridlock on America's roadways is increasing, according to the [2019 Urban Mobility Report](#) published by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute – in part due to job growth that is "exacerbating" the nation's traffic woes.

The United States added 1.9 million jobs from 2016 to 2017, TTI note in its report – slower growth than the 2.3 million-plus growth in four of the five previous years, but more than enough keep pushing vehicle traffic volumes upwards.

The group added that its data – gathered from 494 urban areas across all states and Puerto Rico and supported by INRIX, a provider of transportation data and analytics – extends back to 1982.

Since that time, the number of jobs in the nation has grown almost nonstop by just over 50 percent to 153 million currently – adding that the 2008–2009 recession produced only a brief pause in traffic congestion growth, which bounced back at an even quicker pace than the associated job recovery. As a result, over that 26-year period from 1982 to 2018:

- The number of hours per commuter lost to traffic delay has nearly tripled, climbing to 54 hours a year.
- The annual cost of that delay per commuter has nearly doubled to \$1,010.
- The nationwide cost of gridlock has grown more than tenfold to \$166 billion a year.
- The amount of fuel wasted sitting in stalled traffic has more than tripled to 3.3 billion gallons a year.

“No single approach will ever solve this complex problem,” said Tim Lomax, a report author and TTI regents fellow, [in a statement](#). “We know what works. What the country needs is a robust, information-powered conversation at the local, state, and national levels about what steps should be taken. We have many strategies; we have to figure out the right solution for each problem and a way to pay for them.”

That includes squeezing as much efficiency out of the existing system as possible, reducing demand through telework, better balancing demand and roadway capacity by adjusting work hours, smarter land use, and building “more of everything” when it comes to transportation infrastructure – roads and transit system capacity alike.

Simply put, travel demand is growing faster than the system’s ability to absorb that demand, the report noted. “The problem affects not only commuters, but also manufacturers and shippers whose travel delay costs are passed on to consumers,” explained Bill Eisele, a report author and TTI senior research engineer.

For example, “while trucks constitute only 7 percent of road traffic, they account for 12 percent of congestion cost,” he said.

“The value of investing in our nation’s transportation infrastructure in a strategic and effective manner cannot be overstated as these added costs impact our national productivity, quality of life, economic efficiency and global competitiveness,” noted Marc Williams, deputy executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation, which funded the TTI research. “Eventually, we’re talking billions of wasted hours, and the cost of delay at that scale is just enormous.”

ADECA seeks public input into 2020 Census Grant Program

With the 2020 Census drawing closer, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is seeking public input for a grant program to assist with local outreach efforts.

Alabama’s goal for the 2020 Census is to obtain high participation in every Alabama community, municipality and county. ADECA issued the Request for Information related to \$1 million in funding allocated to the agency in the 2020 Education Trust Fund budget for the 2020 Census Grant Program. The RFI is available on the [ADECA website](#). The public comments about the grant program will be accepted in writing until 5 p.m. on Friday, July 12.

The one-time grant funding is to be expended by ADECA, in coordination with the State Department of Education, to assist local community outreach efforts designed to encourage Alabama residents to complete the 2020 Census count. All grants will be awarded by Dec. 31 in preparation for the census count in March and April 2020.

After the public comment period, ADECA will work to design the full process and establish deadlines for this grant program which will provide funding assistance to help with local, grassroots outreach efforts, specifically those in hard-to-count areas and groups. The agency will host a grant application workshop once all the procedures are in place and applications are ready to be accepted.

Direct link to Request for Information:

document: <http://adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/2020%20Census%20Grant%20Program%20RFI.pdf>

ADECA has set the date for the 2020 Census Grant Program application workshop on Wednesday, September 4 at 10 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. in the Alabama Center for Commerce in Montgomery. At this workshop, we will release the details of the grant program and give an overview. The application period is planned to open on the same day as the workshop.

Please note that preregistration is required and seating is limited. ADECA will also record the workshop and post the video to www.census.alabama.gov for those unable to attend.

TRB TCRP Report on Dialysis Transportation

The Transportation Research Board’s (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) has released a pre-publication version of [Research Report 203: Dialysis Transportation: Intersection of Transportation and Healthcare](#). The report responds to major concerns of public transportation agencies about the rising demand and costs to provide kidney dialysis trips and about experiences showing these trips require service more specialized than public transportation is designed to provide.

The report documents the complicated relationship of two different industries—public transportation and healthcare, each with its own perspective and requirements—to highlight problems, identify strategies addressing concerns, and suggest options that may be more appropriate for dialysis transportation.

Accompanying the report are a supplemental report and Excel spreadsheet. The [Supplemental Report](#) includes, along with a literature review and results from the project’s surveys, an assessment of the comprehensive data provided by the U.S. Renal Data System. The community data tool is an [Excel forecasting tool](#).

[Learn more and access the reports and tool here.](#)

Red light deaths at 10-year high

BY [TAL AXELROD](#) - 08/29/19

The number of deaths caused by drivers running red lights has hit a 10-year high, sparking AAA to urge both drivers and pedestrians to exercise increased caution at traffic signals.

AAA told The Associated Press that two people are killed every day by drivers who don't stop for signals. It added that, according to a study of the most recent data available, 939 people were killed in 2017 by vehicles blowing through red lights. AAA says that's the highest death toll since 2008, and 28 percent higher than 2012.

"Drivers who decide to run a red light when they could have stopped safely are making a reckless choice that puts other road users in danger," David Yang, executive director of AAA's Foundation for Traffic Safety, told the AP.

AAA also told the news service that it found that 28 percent of crash deaths at intersections with signals occurred because a driver passed through a red light.

The association said it is unsure why the numbers are on the rise, particularly considering that the total number of highway fatalities has only increased 10 percent since 2012.

Brian Tefft, a senior researcher for the AAA Foundation, told the AP that the fact that more people are driving farther distances since the Great Depression does not account for the spike in red-light deaths. He suspects that distracted driving, along with poorly timed traffic lights, plays a role.

"I wish we had a better answer than we do," he said, adding that the answer likely lay beyond the bounds of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's study of fatal crash data.

To reverse the rise, AAA recommended that governments boost the use of red light cameras to increase enforcement. It encouraged drivers to tap their breaks when approaching a light to warn other drivers of a possible stop and waiting for a moment after a light turns green to proceed through an intersection.

AAA urged pedestrians and cyclists to try to remain visible, make eye contact with drivers if possible and avoid wearing headphones while walking or riding.

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.