



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Volume 36, Number 9

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There is a new Safe Routes to Parks funding opportunity announced this week; see *Funding Opportunities*. *Legislative Updates* is chock full of nuggets, including Rahm Emanuel for DOT Secretary? Do you want to comment on the new NEPA Process? Check out *In The News* there is a Notice of Proposed Rule Making announced and available for comment. This week's *Just For Fun* is an idea for the newly acquired City Property.

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

[www.mobilempo.org](http://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

### New MPO Members

The Mobile MPO has 6 new members:

Councilman, City of Prichard Hon. George McCall, Jr.

Mayor, City of Chickasaw- Hon. Barry Broadhead

Mayor, City of Satsuma- Hon. Mark Barlow

Mayor, City of Creola- Hon. Don Nelson

Mayor, City of Bayou La Batre- Hon. Henry Barnes, Sr.

Mayor, City of Semmes- Hon. Brandon Vanhook

To Councilman Lorenzo Martin of Prichard, Mayor Byron Pittman of Chickasaw, Mayor Thomas Williams of Satsuma, Mayor William Criswell of Creola, Mayor Terry Downey of Bayou la Batre, and Mayor David Baker of Semmes- Thank you. Thank you for participation in not just the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization, but the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission as well. Your passion for your communities is not unnoticed, and it has been a pleasure to work with each one of you. We are always here if you ever need anything from SARPC.

### The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

VIA and its sub-consultant, Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, have completed The [MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT](#)

There was a presentation by VIA at the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan public meeting on October 1, and a stakeholder meeting several weeks ago concerning the study. VIA presentation potential types of operators and potential operating budget is [HERE](#). A big challenge is going to the local community support and matching funds.

The current health crisis has affected the potential outcome of the study. The intent of the study was to find potential local sponsors to match federal funds to create a transit system to operate throughout Mobile County to connect with WAVE Transit. The sponsors would have provided assistance through subscriptions or contracts for commuter trips. The current price of gasoline, and the threat of contracting virus on buses, may put a strain on ridership of a new system. However, there are still people in need of transportation, and there is some thought that regardless of the price of gasoline, there will be an increased number of distressed people due to the economy, that will need transportation. This may be the perfect time to consider transportation throughout Mobile County.

All documents pertaining to his study are [HERE](#).

### ENVISION 2045 IS THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

The LRTP is multimodal in scope, and is based on public input, and a travel demand forecast model. In 2019, an online survey was conducted with almost 150 respondents. Questions ranged from where is the worst congestion, what roads need improvements, problems with the transit systems, etc. There were a lot of comments about the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and the potential for tolls. Prior to the online survey, staff also conducted a South Alabama Freight Forum, which was an opportunity to hear from large manufacturers and trucking companies, to find out what the top issues are concerning the movement of freight in South Alabama. The Bicycle / Pedestrian plan was updated, and the public transit section was authored by the Wave Transit, less the Demand Response Transit Study. The Climate Change element, or Extreme Event Planning, remained almost unchanged from *Destination 2040* LRTP.

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

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

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

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area. The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

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### Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100069500 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4919 (251)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-41 (CELESTE ROAD) FROM FOREST AVENUE TO JUST WEST OF I-65

Old Target start date : November 01, 2021

New Target start date : January 01, 2023

Project : 100069499 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4919 (251)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-41 (CELESTE ROAD) FROM FOREST AVENUE TO JUST WEST OF I-65

Old Target start date : June 01, 2021

New Target start date : August 01, 2022

Project : 100052601 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7508 (600)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET

Old Target start date : January 01, 2021

New Target start date : May 01, 2021

Project : 100052602 ( CN )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7508 (600)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET

Old Target start date : May 28, 2021

New Target start date : November 05, 2021

Project : 100052459 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : June 01, 2021

New Target start date : June 01, 2022

Project : 100052458 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : April 01, 2021

New Target start date : February 01, 2022

Project : 100055881 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (602)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) FROM CR-70 (TANNER WILLIAMS RD) TO CR-31 (SCHILLINGER RD)

Old Target start date : January 01, 2021

New Target start date : February 01, 2021

Project : 100070126 ( FM )

Federal aid number : STPAA 0016 (528)

County : BALDWIN

Project Description : RESURFACING AND STEEL BLOCKOUT REPLACEMENT ON SR-16 (US-90) FROM 0.19 MI EAST OF TENSAW RIVER BRIDGE TO THE EAST OF BLAKELEY RIVER BRIDGE

Old Engineers Estimate : \$3,843,191.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$4,156,863.1

Project : 100052460 ( CN )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : December 03, 2021

New Target start date : December 02, 2022

## South Alabama RPO Updates

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The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) met last month using the GoToMeeting app. The agenda included:

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

The RPO Transportation Plan Project List (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>) SARPC Rural Planning Organization

## Projects in Region Let December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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### MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Steel Blockout Replacement, and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from 0.340 mile east of the Cochrane Bridge to 0.360 mile west of the Tensaw River Bridge in Mobile. Length 2.935 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,051,743 to \$2,507,686 .
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-188 from MP 4.640 to the junction of the Bayou La Batre - Irvington Highway in Bayou La Batre. Length 3.845 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$738,956 to \$903,169.

### BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-182 from the West City Limits of Orange Beach to the Perdido Pass Bridge. Length 3.283 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,476,709 to \$1,804,866.
- For constructing the Micro-Milling, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-180 from a point near the Fort Morgan Historical Site (MP 0.000) to the junction of SR-59 in Gulf Shores. Length 20.779 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,197,622 to \$2,685,982 .

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

## Legislative Updates

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### Neal eyes massive coronavirus relief, climate and infrastructure package

#### The House Ways and Means chairman wants to 'go big'

By [Doug Sword](#)

Posted November 23, 2020 at 7:00am

House Ways and Means Chairman [Richard E. Neal](#)'s attitude toward legislating under a Democratic-led White House might aptly be described as "never let a crisis go to waste."

The Massachusetts Democrat wants to take a page from his party's 2009 playbook, when the Obama administration took office amid the wreckage of the financial crisis and enacted a nearly \$800 billion stimulus that went as far afield as clean energy and infrastructure spending.

President-elect Joe Biden oversaw that effort as vice president, and Neal sees potential to reprise something like it on a grander scale.

"I do think with a President Biden that stimulus linked to climate change and linked to infrastructure go hand in hand," Neal said in an interview. "Why don't we wrap them into one big bill, and given the Fed's determination to keep interest rates low, we can do some borrowing."

Based on proposals House Democrats have put forth since this summer, the cost could go north of \$4 trillion over a decade. That includes a \$2.4 trillion coronavirus aid package and a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure and climate measure.

Neal said the size and scope could be influenced by whatever Congress and the outgoing Trump administration can get done in the lame-duck session on COVID-19 relief.

Neal allows that "I think there are some revenue offsets we could use" if lawmakers get cold feet about racking up all that debt. But he points to all the unpaid-for tax cuts enacted under GOP administrations going back to President Ronald Reagan in 1981 as a contrast to the investments he thinks are necessary.

"I think that the federal government is positioned to do the necessary obligation we have, and that is to build infrastructure," Neal said. "I think Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson had the same argument. It's not like it just burst on the scene."

**Maximizing support**

Getting such an expansive bill through the Senate would be difficult. Republicans are favored to control the chamber next year, though they still need to win at least one of the two Georgia Senate runoffs on Jan. 5. Even if Democrats retake control with a 50-50 split and a tiebreaking Vice President [Kamala Harris](#), it's not clear there would be enough support.

But Neal said his energy tax package, for example, is designed to attract bipartisan backing by framing efforts to curb greenhouse gases as tax cuts to boost a lackluster economy. Instead of a carbon tax or big-spending Green New Deal proposals, for instance, Neal included a roughly \$150 billion package of clean energy tax incentives in the infrastructure bill the House passed July 1.

About half of that cost would be extending credits for installing solar, geothermal, fuel cell and other renewable power systems, while expanding the credits to defray expenses associated with energy storage technology, like batteries. Other provisions would boost the availability of tax credits for electric vehicle purchases and residential home energy and efficiency improvements; and create new tax credits for labor costs associated with installing renewable and energy-efficient property.

There are also extensions of popular tax credits for wind-powered electricity and biodiesel fuel made from soybeans, which enjoy support on both sides of the aisle. And renewable power developers would be able to set up structures known as "master limited partnerships" that can raise capital in public equity markets but aren't subject to corporate tax. So-called MLPs are popular in the oil and gas industry but haven't been available for investors in wind, solar and other alternative energy companies.

"My belief is that the best way to attack climate change is now going to have to be through tax incentives," Neal said. "I think that if we used tax incentives on the climate side there might be a more receptive audience given some of the intransigence that we've witnessed."

Neal also says tax incentives for domestic manufacturing may have a place in pandemic relief or other legislation. Biden has proposed a 10 percent tax credit for domestic investments, for example, which the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center estimates would cost \$230 billion over a decade.

Neal didn't elaborate on specific proposals, but noted that "one of the things the pandemic has reminded [us of] is that America was caught back-footed on some of the manufacturing issues, including the masks and ventilators."

And predating COVID-19 by decades was the decimation of industries like the hand tool manufacturers in Western Massachusetts who gradually migrated to Asia in search of lower costs. "I do think that it makes some sense to talk about some tax incentives to bring back whatever domestic manufacturing we can," Neal said.

#### **Retirement savings, refundable credits**

Neal also is looking to move a bipartisan retirement savings bill and to renew expiring tax breaks.

The retirement bill was negotiated by Neal and ranking member [Kevin Brady](#), R-Texas. It is a collection of proposals meant to induce Americans to save more for their retirement, including a proposed increase in the age for required minimum distributions from 401(k)s and other tax-favored retirement plans from 72 to 75 years old, and an expansion of the saver's credit for lower-income households.

Meanwhile, the annual squabble over renewing expiring tax breaks could take on extra significance next year. There are more than 30 tax breaks expiring at the end of this year, including an end to big excise tax cuts for small brewers, wineries and distillers. Then there are the temporary tax breaks added in March as part of a big coronavirus relief package, including the suspension of aviation excise taxes for the struggling airline industry.

An expansion of child tax credits and earned income tax credits for lower-income households has long been a top priority for Neal and House Democrats. They've pushed a variety of bills over the last two years to expand both credits, and to make the child tax credit fully refundable. Top Democrats since last year have tried to tie the renewal of business tax extenders to expanding the refundable credits, and have pushed their GOP counterparts to agree to include them in the next coronavirus aid package.

"I hesitate to put anything out there until we've got some idea of what the big package is going to look like," Neal said.

Additionally, general tax breaks for businesses in the 2017 tax code overhaul are nearing their sunsets. Companies have been able to fully expense their research and development expenses since 2018, but that ends in 2022. Likewise, bonus depreciation, which allows companies to immediately write off 100 percent of certain expenses normally depreciated over years, begins phasing out in 2023.

"The tax staff, we're talking about it," he said. "We want to, I think, negotiate based on the backdrop of the pandemic. So, whatever we do there I hope will have a stimulant effect as well."

Whatever doesn't get done in the lame-duck session will get held over until the 117th Congress, when Neal has a new dance partner at the Senate Finance Committee: [Michael D. Crapo](#), R-Idaho, if Republicans hang onto the Senate, or [Ron Wyden](#), D-Ore., if Democrats take over.

Neal knows Wyden well and got along with current Finance Chairman [Charles E. Grassley](#), R-Iowa, over the past two years. But he said he knows little about Crapo, who's coming over from the Banking Committee he's led since 2017.

Neal blames the different structures in the House and Senate and within the two parties; in the House, members tend to focus their work on one committee and stick with that. On the other hand, in the Senate there's a "pretty wild" system among Republicans in that chamber due to term limits, Neal said.

"I must tell you I'm fascinated by parts of it where you just rotate from committee to committee because your time comes up," Neal said. "Where I spent a career working on the Ways and Means Committee trying ever so hard to master pretty arcane tax policies."

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## **Rep. Peter DeFazio Selected by Colleagues to Return as Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

December 03, 2020

**Washington, DC** – After being selected to return as Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the 117th Congress, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) issued the following statement:

“From the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic seaboard, the work of the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee touches every corner of America. Modernizing our infrastructure is critical to strengthening the economy, creating and sustaining millions of jobs, fostering safer and more resilient communities, and meaningfully addressing climate change, the existential crisis we must take on with bold action at the Federal level.

“But our work is not just about enacting transformational policy. As the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, our efforts in the Committee must be matched by our strong support for the transportation workers who have kept our country moving amid the pandemic—from transporting medical supplies and groceries, to getting essential workers to their place of work. That is why I am pleased our Committee was able to continue producing results despite the obstacles of COVID-19. We wrote key parts of relief bills to help keep workers on payrolls, advanced transformational infrastructure legislation through the full House, passed bipartisan water resources legislation and a Coast Guard Authorization Act, carried out a major investigation into the Boeing 737 MAX, and moved a bipartisan overhaul of aircraft certification through the House, in addition to advancing numerous bills and conducting critical oversight that will help make the Federal government work better for the American people.

“As Chair of the T&I Committee in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, I will continue to be a tireless advocate for commonsense policies that help ensure America’s infrastructure and transportation systems work for all communities, urban and rural alike. I also look forward to working with the incoming Biden administration—and my Democratic and Republican colleagues—to bring America’s infrastructure out of the 1950s and into the modern era, which means smarter, safer, greener infrastructure that cuts carbon pollution and is made to last. And make no mistake, I will continue to balance this with my duty to provide reasonable and responsible oversight over implementation of laws under the Committee’s jurisdiction.

“I am once again humbled by the support of my colleagues to continue leading our caucus on the T&I Committee, and I know that together, we can lay the groundwork for infrastructure investment that delivers for generations to come.”

#### **BACKGROUND**

Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR) has served as the Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure since January 2019 and has been a member of the Committee since he first came to Congress in 1987. During his time on the Committee, he has served as Ranking Member of the full Committee, and Chair or Ranking Member of four of the six subcommittees: Aviation, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Highways and Transit, and Water Resources and Environment.

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### **Former DOT Secretary LaHood backs Emanuel for job he once held**

**Emanuel, former Obama chief of staff, faces fierce opposition from progressive Democrats over his tenure as Chicago's mayor**

By [Jessica Wehrman](#)  
Posted December 2, 2020

Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has received scathing reactions from critics who worry that he might be tapped to serve as President-elect Joe Biden’s Secretary of Transportation — but a high-profile ally stepped forward.

Former Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, who served as secretary from 2009 to 2013, said late Tuesday that he reached out to Biden’s chief of staff Ron Klain about 10 days ago to offer a strong endorsement of Emanuel for the position he once held.

“I think he would be hands-down the best secretary of Transportation that President-elect Biden could nominate,” LaHood said in an interview.

LaHood, who now serves as co-chair of Building America’s Future, an organization devoted to pushing for infrastructure investment, said Klain immediately responded to LaHood’s lengthy email recommending Emanuel for the job. “He knew exactly what I was talking about,” he said.

All three worked in the Obama White House, where Emanuel served as chief of staff from 2008 to 2010.

Emanuel, 61, is the most frequently mentioned of a pool of names being floated to run the Transportation Department. Among others named are Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and former Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg.

But progressive Democrats have been outraged by the notion that Emanuel would be picked. Rep. [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#), D-N.Y., told The New York Times that he would be “a pretty divisive pick” that would “signal, I think, a hostile approach to the grass-roots and the progressive wing of the party.”

In particular, progressives are critical of how he handled the 2014 police shooting of Laquan McDonald, who was 17 when he was shot 16 times by police as he walked away. Ocasio-Cortez, in a Nov. 23 tweet, called it “shameful and concerning that he is even being considered.”

Incoming Reps. Mondaire Jones, D-N.Y., and Cori Bush, D-Mo., have also criticized his handling of the case. “That he’s being considered for a cabinet position is completely outrageous and, honestly, very hurtful,” Jones tweeted.

But LaHood, in an interview, defended Emanuel’s record as mayor, saying “any big city mayor could have that same kind of criticism labeled against him.” He said Garcetti and Buttigieg have faced similar criticism in their mayoral roles.

### Longtime friends

“Rahm and I have been friends for 20 years,” he said, saying they served in Congress together as well as in the White House. “He’s one of my best friends. ... As soon as I learned he was interested, I immediately sent an email to Ron Klain. I did it with the idea that he is, like, 1,000 percent qualified for the job.”

He cited Emanuel’s work overhauling the Chicago transit system, his expansion of Chicago O’Hare International Airport and his implementation of a comprehensive bike system as evidence of his success in transportation.

“He accomplished an enormous amount for transportation,” he said. “There’s no other person in America, in my opinion, that really has earned the right to be secretary of Transportation.”

Stacy Davis Gates, vice president of the Chicago Teachers Union, disagreed.

“He covered up the murder of a 17-year-old child,” she said. “And then when it was clear it was going to come down, he did not take responsibility. That is disqualifying. You don’t get to cover up the murder of a child, then wind up serving in one of the highest levels of our world.”

She also criticized Emanuel’s decision to close more than 50 largely low-income schools in 2013 and his role in a 2012 teacher’s strike, the first in a quarter century for the city.

“It is absolutely perplexing to me why any of us are talking about this,” Gates said of Emanuel being a potential appointee. “I’m disappointed that this is even a conversation.”

Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, also questioned why Emanuel is being considered, particularly given Biden’s ambitious infrastructure agenda.

“There are a ton of people who are more qualified than Rahm Emanuel to do this job,” she said, saying “there are really qualified people” on Biden’s transition team who could do the job.

She said prior administrations have undervalued the job.

“We do not need an incrementalist or a corporate excuser in these positions,” she said. “Particularly if we’re going to move forward on the agenda Joe Biden has set.”

LaHood, though, cited Emanuel’s past legislative experience as a selling point.

“If President-elect Biden is looking for someone who can help assist in the passage of a major transportation and infrastructure economic development package, there’s nobody better than Rahm Emanuel,” he said. “He’s got the experience to do it.”

## House Democrats Set to Pick New Appropriations Chairwoman

Beneficiaries of more than \$1.4 trillion in annual federal funding will find out this week who will be steering the ship as Appropriations Committee chairwoman for the 117th Congress. The heir to retiring Appropriations Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey, the New Yorker who’s been the panel’s top Democrat for eight years, will be at the forefront of trying to implement President-elect Joe Biden’s agenda both domestically and internationally. Marcy Kaptur of Ohio is the most senior panel member in line for the job. Connecticut’s Rosa DeLauro, who’s second in seniority, has the most impressive list of endorsements. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida is further down the seniority list, but she’s the most prolific party fundraiser. Observers say the race is too close to call at this point, though DeLauro may be a slight front-runner. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

## Funding Opportunities

### Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities Grants

Safe Routes to Parks is accepting applications for its [Activating Communities Program](#).

Seven community non-profit organizations working in coordination with local agencies will receive funding and technical assistance from the Safe Routes Partnership to increase equitable walking, biking, or transit access to parks and green space. Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. PT on December 18, 2020.

## FY2021 Effects of Sea Level Rise (ESLR) (deadline 1/8/21)

There is a notice of funding opportunity concerning the effect of sea level rise that has a relatively short time frame to submit a letter of intent. This is the link to the grant program, <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=328992>.

NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2021-2006594  
FY21 Effects of Sea Level Rise (ESLR)  
Department of Commerce

This solicitation is to improve adaptation and planning in response to regional and local effects of sea level rise and coastal inundation through targeted research on key technologies, natural and nature-based infrastructure, physical and biological processes, and model evaluation. The overall goal of the ESLR Program is to facilitate informed adaptation planning and coastal management decisions through a multidisciplinary research program that results in integrated models of dynamic physical and biological processes capable of evaluating vulnerability and resilience under multiple SLR, inundation, and management scenarios.

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## 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.

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[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](#)

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To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

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## Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

This week, it was announced that the USA Gulf Pines Golf Course property was purchased by the City of Mobile and the State of Alabama. This is such great news, although some of us would like to bring back the after 4:00 PM, 9 hole special at Gulf Pines; we all can't get what we want. It was not specified what may happen to the property, but if there is a park involved, there will be thrill seekers trying to "get buzzed". With the airport moving to Brookley, [Plane Spotting Park](#) has a nice ring to it...

[HERE](#)



## In the News

### No tolls, only a ‘vision’: Mobile, Baldwin officials reassure I-10 opponents

Updated Nov 24, 2020; Posted Nov 23, 2020

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

Rebuilding Interstate 10 between Mobile and Baldwin counties was once Alabama’s No. 1 transportation project. Right now, the project is struggling to get written into plans that prioritize regional planning for the next 25 years.

The latest I-10 project twist is focused on the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – consisting of county commissioners, local mayors and council members in Baldwin County – who voted in August 2019, to put a halt to the Alabama Department of Transportation’s plans to build the \$2.1 billion I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project and pay for it with tolls.

The Eastern Shore MPO, in January, will consider whether to place the project on a long-range transportation plan that lists the region’s transportation priorities to 2045. Within that plan, which is what will be voted on, is a list of projects considered “visionary.” The MPO wants to include the I-10 project as a “vision” that recognizes the project’s need but also confirms there is no agreed upon plan to pay for it.

“A visionary list is step one,” said Fairhope City Council President and MPO policy board chairman Jack Burrell. “I think everyone would envision a new bridge across (Mobile) Bay. No one on the Eastern Shore MPO opposes a new bridge. Every single member recognizes the need for one.”

He added, “But we want everyone to understand that (even though) we put it on the visionary list, it does not mean we are endorsing \$6 tolls or only tollways across the river.”

The following is a map produced by the Alabama Department of Transportation that shows the length of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project. Listed on this map is an illustration on the proposed toll and toll free route connecting Mobile with Baldwin counties.



Under ALDOT's former \$2.1 billion project, the entire span of the Bayway would be assessed a toll on users, including the Wallace Tunnel. (photo from ALDOT's corridor hearing summary report dated on June 2019).

The project is already added into the Mobile MPO's version of their long-range plans as "visionary." That plan was adopted in April, with little discussion, and remains structured similar to what the Eastern Shore MPO is considering – that is, including the I-10 project that identifies its need but does not include any agreed upon financing.

Indeed, an I-10 project remains a high priority for mayors, county commissioners and city council members in the two counties. The Bayway, before the coronavirus pandemic hit, was often congested during summer months and holidays. Mobile's Wallace Tunnel, for instance, was often overloaded with traffic and Bayway standstills were not uncommon. Opened in 1973, the tunnel had a design capacity to handle 35,000 vehicles; present-day traffic is around 75,000 vehicles trying to get through the tunnel daily.

Kevin Harrison, director of transportation planning with the Mobile MPO, said there is a portion of the long-term plan where projects are listed with agreed upon funding sources from local officials and ALDOT. He said that ALDOT has yet to support any alternative financing plan for the I-10 project than the one that was previously pitched and was shot down last year by the Eastern Shore MPO. The Eastern Shore MPO's move was met with a declaration from Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey that the entire project was "dead."

"We are kind of at the mercy of the state," said Harrison.

#### Short-term problems

The project had moved its way into the short-term plans for both MPO's, called a "Transportation Improvement Plan" or TIP for short. The Eastern Shore MPO's decision to remove the project from its TIP was viewed by ALDOT as a critical blow to the I-10 project, because inclusion in the short-term plans are required for road projects to receive federal funding. Without the ability to secure federal funds, the state opted it had no viable way to proceed with financing the massive development.

Tony Harris, a spokesman with ALDOT, said that several local officials recently expressed interest in trying to move forward with some version of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project. He said, "ALDOT is always willing to listen to ideas from local officials for a solution because the only way for a project to move forward is with local support."

State officials were adamant in support of on their prior proposal that would have charged a \$6 one-way toll for future I-10 and Wallace Tunnel users, while keeping a toll-free route along the Spanish Fort Causeway and the Bankhead Tunnel.

The state also pitched discounts, such as a \$90 monthly pass for frequent I-10 users, but their efforts came under fire from local politicians who were hearing from irate citizens on social media.

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## Thanksgiving traffic fatalities down 30 percent from 2019, Alabama troopers say

Updated Dec 03, 2020

By [William Thornton | wthornton@al.com](mailto:wthornton@al.com)

Traffic fatalities across Alabama dropped by nearly 30 percent over the Thanksgiving Day holiday travel period, according to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Highway Patrol Division.

ALEA Troopers investigated only eight traffic-related deaths from last Wednesday through Sunday, as compared to 11 during the same holiday travel period in 2019.

The fatal traffic crashes occurred in Colbert, Coosa, Jefferson, Morgan, Russell, Tuscaloosa and Walker counties. One pedestrian and a motorcyclist were among the eight individuals killed. Of the six who were killed while traveling in vehicles equipped with seat belts, three were not wearing them at the time of the crash, troopers said.

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## New President, Same Infrastructure Problems. Here's Why It's Different This Time

[JORDAN JUSTUS](#) OP-ED DECEMBER 4, 2020

Another presidency has passed, four more years during which grandstanding over America's crumbling infrastructure problem once again produced very few results. Our bridges still need fixing. Yes, our airports are falling apart. But as these projects languish, the very way we use our cities and transportation networks has been changing. New technologies are providing new answers to old problems. The election of Joe Biden brings a conversation about infrastructure that has long been waiting in the wings to center stage.

Biden ran on promises to address the long overdue repair and modernization of highways, roads, bridges and airports. However, his administration's ambitions go further, with a plan to address the infrastructure America will need both to combat climate change and modernize urban transportation. This includes a plan for 500,000 public charging stations for electric vehicles, changes to our cities that allow drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and others to safely share the road, and investment in critical clean energy technologies.

This isn't our parents' infrastructure plan, but we've long left behind the world that many of our aging politicians are clinging to, and at an impasse for doing anything about. We need to adapt our infrastructure to match our changing cities and create the future our country and planet needs. Thirty-seven million city-dwellers are expected to change the way they travel over the next ten years. Passenger vehicle use is expected to decrease by 10 percent while cycling, walking, public transit, and ride sharing increase. The increasing demand for ecommerce delivery is expected to result in 36 percent more delivery vehicles on inner city streets by 2030. The pandemic has only accelerated these trends.

Simply put: infrastructure today is not just about filling potholes and repaving. Of course, when we can't even pass an infrastructure bill despite it being the one issue that Democrats and Trump could agree on during his term, it might seem difficult to imagine how we will get from being unable to fix critical roads to the lofty goal of zero emissions by 2050. But frameworks are already in place, and many of the infrastructure projects we need do not bear the kind of price tags that traditional infrastructure upgrades do.

For example, curbside technology that optimizes the way delivery vehicles stop has the potential to reduce tons of carbon emissions every year. Idling cars and trucks produce 130,000 tons of carbon dioxide each year in New York City alone. Pilot programs have cut down idling vehicles by up to 6 percent. Other programs funded jointly by incubators and local governments have incentivized delivery companies to switch to electric vehicles. Amazon's plan to have a fleet of 100,000 electric delivery trucks by 2030 alone will cut its annual carbon

emissions by four million metric tons. If these kinds of projects were extended broadly through larger government funding and private-public partnerships across the country, they would save vast amounts of carbon annually.

This same technology can be deployed to make our streets work better. By analyzing parking patterns and incentivizing parking turnover, the average American would save 17 hours per year searching for parking, at an estimated cost of \$345 per driver in wasted time, fuel and emissions. After shifts were made in approaches to public parking on one college campus, the number of cars driving around in search of parking went down by 20 percent. Using one study's estimate that 30 percent of all traffic is people searching for parking, this translates into a 6 percent overall reduction in traffic. It also means a great reduction in emissions and greenhouse gases, when you extrapolate across the country.

Investing in Smart City infrastructure projects can also address increasing traffic congestion. These kinds of infrastructure initiatives leverage technological advancements to improve the flow of traffic and save energy. In 2016, under the Obama administration's Smart Cities initiative, the DOT granted Columbus Ohio \$40 million to prototype the future of urban transportation. By 2019, Columbus had doubled the number of mobility services in the city, and was vastly outpacing national rates of Electric Vehicle adoption. Advances are also being made to create roads that harvest energy, smart intersections that reduce accidents, and street lights that use sensors to save energy.

Other, simple, easy-to-implement infrastructure projects can have huge bang for the buck. Reconfiguring city streets to favor zero emission micro-mobility options such as bikes and e-scooters have a relatively low price tag. The average price of a bike lane in the US is \$130,000 per mile, with huge implications for public health, safety, and reducing pollution. To put that number in perspective, the price tag for the same mile of subway line is around \$1 billion.

There's no denying that \$2 trillion is a hefty price tag. But spending this money will save us money in the end. In 2015, the Department of Transportation released a report estimating that between lost time, wasted fuel, and emissions, the total cost of congestion neared \$160 billion per year.

These infrastructure projects also save lives and healthcare costs. In one Vision Zero initiative, the Seattle Department of Transportation launched a collaborative process to review conditions along one mile of city streets. After one year, crashes were reduced 15 percent overall, with injury crashes down 30 percent and pedestrian and bicycle crashes down 40 percent. Columbia University researchers ran a cost-benefit analysis revealing that the gain in quality adjusted life years vastly outweighed the monetary cost of implementing a 45.5 mile bike lane in NYC. A British study found that active commuting such as cycling and walking was associated with a lower risk of Cardiovascular disease, cancer, and all causes of mortality. In Copenhagen, the cycling population contributes \$261 million a year in public health savings — enough to pay off the cost of protected bicycle infrastructure in under five years.

Despite the promising return on investment, with a divided government, Biden's infrastructure plan faces an uphill battle. But as we rebuild our urban centers in a post-pandemic world, there is an opportunity for a reset. We have seen a shift towards cycling and scooting over driving, we've changed the way we get the goods we need, and we've transformed streets into people-centric pavilions. We have begun the process of getting from where we are to the less car-dependent world we know we need to create.

It is in all of our interests to invest in that future now, no matter which side of the aisle we sit on. Policymakers need to act quickly to ensure the policies and infrastructure investments surrounding city streets — from real estate allocation for commercial vehicle parking and loading zones to expanded space for cyclists and pedestrians — reflect the changing needs of our cities and towns.

Let the cities and streets we all walk on together be the one political issue we can unite on, as we continue forward into this new era.

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### Comment Period Open for U.S. DOT NEPA Update

The U.S. Department of Transportation is accepting comments through December 23, 2020 on a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (NPRM) that would update U.S. DOT's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures in response to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) final rule updating its NEPA procedures and incorporate provisions of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21); and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act related to the U.S. DOT's environmental review process. More information on the draft proposed rule is available in a DOT [fact sheet](#). View the [Federal Register](#) for a description of the NPRM and for instructions on submitting comments.

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## Transportation Research

### FHWA Proposes More Flexible Design Standards to Repair the Nation's Freeways and Interstates

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

FHWA 28-20

Contact: Nancy Singer

Tel.: 202-366-0660

WASHINGTON – The Federal Highway Administration today published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to allow State departments of transportation more flexibility with design standards to repair the nation's freeways and interstate highways.

"The FHWA proposes to provide regulatory relief to States to address the immediate repair needs of our nation's roadways without compromising safety and efficiency," Federal Highway Administrator Nicole R. Nason said.

The rule would allow States to develop design standards for resurfacing, restoration and rehabilitation projects—commonly known as RRR—for freeways, including those on the interstate system, which has been a longstanding practice for non-freeway projects.

Consistent with federal law, RRR standards would be required to preserve and extend the service life of the existing road and enhance highway safety. This change would allow States to develop RRR freeway projects using a performance-based, flexible approach.

The RRR standards developed by States would be subject to FHWA approval. FHWA would continue to work with state departments of transportation as they develop RRR design standards that integrate safety and cost-effectiveness.

The rule also proposes to incorporate by reference the latest versions of design standards and standard specifications that have been previously adopted.

[The NPRM is available here.](#)

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## USDOT announces first-ever plan targeting pedestrian injuries, fatalities

BY [DOUGLAS CLARK](#) | NOVEMBER 25, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) said its recently released Pedestrian Safety Action Plan seeks to address the reduction of pedestrian injuries and fatalities on America's roads.

"This unprecedented comprehensive safety effort is focused solely on protecting pedestrians because crossing a street should not be lethal for thousands of adults and children every year," Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao said.

Under the guidance of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Administrator Nicole R. Nason and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Deputy Administrator James Owens, the plan targets NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System findings revealing 17 percent of all traffic fatalities last year involved pedestrians – noting 6,205 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes, representing 44 percent more than in 2010.

"Reducing pedestrian fatalities is a team effort that requires collaboration between federal, state, and local transportation leaders," Nason said. "We need safer roads and this plan provides a road map to get us there."

The USDOT maintains the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan endeavors to promote expanded use of countermeasures, technology, and data-driven practices to address pedestrian fatalities and injuries.

"At some point in the day, we are all pedestrians – especially right now, when everyone wants to get outside for some fresh air," NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens said. "Everyone has a role to play in ensuring pedestrian safety, and this Pedestrian Safety Action Plan will help communities, drivers, and pedestrians take steps to save lives."

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## NHTSA Releases Pedestrian Safety Playbook and Active Transportation Data Visualizations

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released a playbook with social media strategies and resources to support Pedestrian Safety Month activities. It provides information on vehicle speed enforcement and Walk to School Day activities; distracted drivers and impaired pedestrians; illegal school bus passing; and conspicuity/Day Light Saving Time, and older pedestrians. NHTSA also developed two interactive data visualization dashboards displaying pedestrian and bicyclist fatality data between 2010 and 2018. Based on Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, the dashboard allows users to view key data by State, year, month, time of day, age group, and land type. Click [HERE](#) to see the Playbook.

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## FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS:

### States and Local Governments Reported Benefits to Federal Highway Fund Swapping, but Impacts Cannot be Definitively Determined

GAO-21-88: Published: Oct 20, 2020. Publicly Released: Nov 19, 2020.

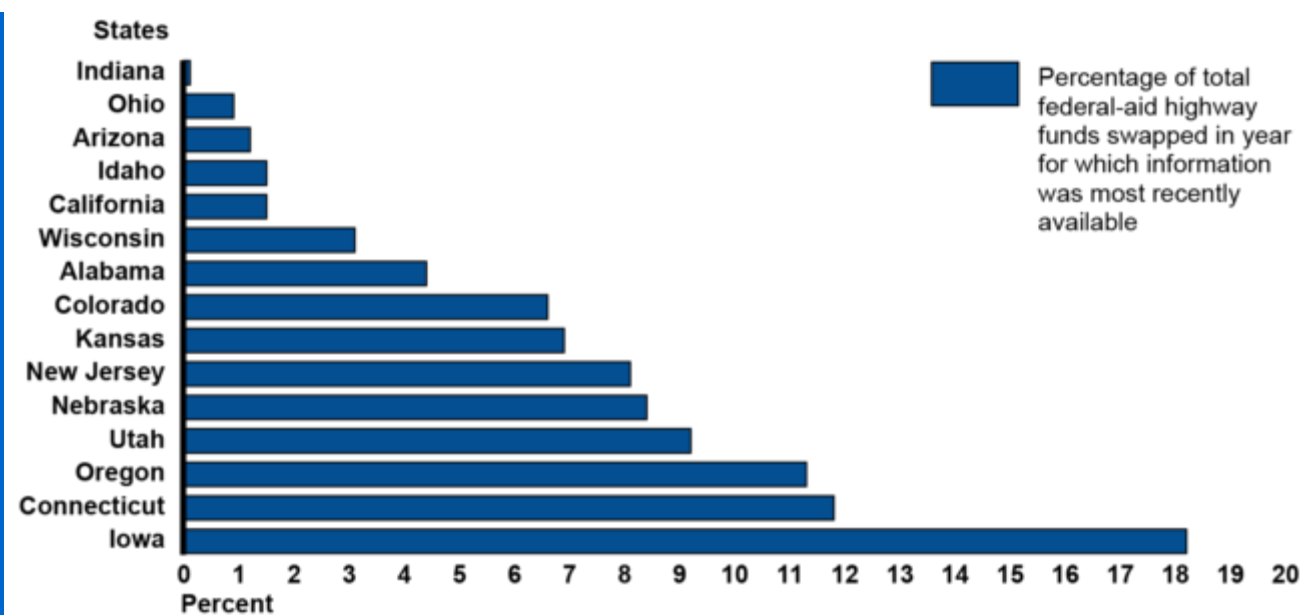
The Federal Highway Administration provides funding to states to build and maintain the nation's roads. When using federal dollars states must follow federal standards such as paying prevailing wages. Some states established programs in which local agencies swap federal for state dollars. When they do, they follow state instead of federal standards.

In the last 5 years, 15 states reported swapping programs. The amount of highway funds swapped ranged from less than 1% (Indiana) to about 18% (Iowa). Reports were mixed on whether this meant lower wages for workers and on other potential effects.

#### What GAO Found

In the past 5 years, 15 states reported they had fund swapping programs, which allow local agencies, such as cities and towns, to swap their state's proposed suballocation of federal-aid highway funds for state transportation funds. This exchange allows local agencies to undertake local projects with state funds, rendering the projects subject to applicable state and local, rather than federal, requirements. For most states, the reported amount of federal funds swapped is a relatively small portion of the state's overall federal-aid apportionment, ranging from less than 1 percent to 12 percent. However, Iowa swapped about 18 percent (or about \$97 million) of its federal-aid funds in 2019. See figure.

#### Percentage of States' Federal-aid Funds Swapped for State Funds



Source: GAO analysis of information from state DOT officials and FHWA data. | GAO-21-88

Note: Data are for 2019, except for Alabama, Colorado, New Jersey, and Wisconsin where GAO presents the most recent data these state DOT officials had available.

Officials GAO interviewed from state departments of transportation (DOTs) and selected local agencies said that they participate in fund swapping because it increases project flexibility for local agencies and may result in time and cost savings. Obstacles officials cited included a lack of sufficient state funds to swap with local agencies and the absence of state law authorizing fund swapping.

The impact of fund swapping on wages and other federal requirements cannot be definitively determined because, among other reasons, state DOTs generally do not track data needed to measure these impacts. For example, state officials said that federal funds swapped by local agencies are combined with other federal funds, so they cannot identify which projects were funded with swapped federal dollars. State officials offered mixed views of the impact of swapping on workers' wages and other federal requirements. For example, officials in two states that told GAO their states do not have prevailing wage laws said wages paid were not impacted by the lack of federal prevailing wage requirements because of economic conditions in their states. Officials in two other states said that the lack of a state prevailing wage law potentially enabled contractors to pay their workers less than the federal prevailing wage on swapped projects.

#### Why GAO Did This Study

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides funding to states to build and maintain the nation's roadways and bridges. States must follow applicable federal standards such as laws that require contractors to pay locally prevailing wages. States can make federal funding available to local agencies for projects, but the ability of local agencies to comply with federal requirements is a well-documented risk area. Some states have established "fund swapping" programs where local agencies swap proposed federal funding with the state in return for state dollars. FHWA does not directly oversee these programs, and no federal statutes or regulations authorize or prohibit fund swapping.

GAO was asked to review swapping of federal-aid highway funds and its impact. In this report, GAO describes: (1) the extent to which states and local agencies engage in fund swapping; (2) factors affecting whether state and local agencies engage in federal fund swapping; and (3) what is known about the impact fund swapping has on prevailing wages paid to workers and other federal requirements. GAO reviewed relevant regulations and reports; sent a questionnaire to officials in 50 states; and interviewed officials from 15 state DOTs that reported having swapped funds in the past 5 years and 3 local agencies selected for program size and other factors.

The U.S. Department of Transportation provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Repko at (202) 512-2384 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov).

## Opportunity Zones

The Department of Transportation has identified transportation assets that fall within Opportunity Zones with the goal of driving investment of all types to these important areas.

Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

- [Housing and Urban Development: Implementation Plan for The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#)
- [The IRS: Tax reform creates opportunity zone tax incentive](#)
- [Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)

The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in communities by granting investors extensive Federal tax advantages for using their capital gains to finance new projects and enterprises. There are more than [8,700 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories](#). Of the Qualified Opportunity Zones 40 percent are in rural census tracts, 38 percent are in urban tracts, and 22 percent are in suburban tracts.

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/906/build-fact-sheet2019.pdf>

## Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

### Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
  - None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
  - The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym. For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.
- Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.