



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, November 6th, 2020

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Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>
transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of
Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation
Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

South Alabama
Regional Planning
Commission
110 Beauregard St
Mobile, Alabama
36602
(251) 433-6541

Obviously this week's elections dominate the news in *Legislative Updates*, with the exception of a new House Bill that promotes transportation technologies. Plus, Gas Buddy predicts higher gas prices ([\\$6/gallon maybe, from Bloomberg](#)).

In The News this week, the Mobile County [Pay-As-You-Go passed](#), we mourn the passing of Commissioner Frank Burt while Baldwin County voters reject a toll authority for the Beach Express extension. Also, the Dora Franklin Finley African-American Trail gets recognition while Three Mile Creek Trail gets construction. Under *Funding Opportunities*, the [Rebuild Alabama Act Annual Grant Program](#) deadline is approaching Nov. 30th. This week's *Just For Fun...* take a hike, chicken.

Have a great weekend.

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

www.mobilempo.org



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

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

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

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

Mobile MPO Updates

New MPO Members

The Mobile MPO will have 6 new members once the new mayors take office. The new members will be:

- Councilman, City of Prichard TBD
- Mayor Elect, City of Chickasaw- Mr. Barry Broadhead
- Mayor Elect, City of Satsuma- Mr. Mark Barlow
- Mayor Elect, City of Creola- Mr. Don Nelson
- Mayor Elect, City of Bayou La Batre- Mr. Henry Barnes, Sr.
- Mayor Elect, City of Semmes- Mr. 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](#).

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100040584 (CN)

Federal aid number : NH 0042 (509)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : US-98 EASTBOUND LANES FROM MISSISSIPPI LINE TO 0.5 MILE EAST OF GLENWOOD ROAD. BASE AND PAVE

Old Engineers Estimate : \$24,157,332.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$27,775,000.00

Project : 100070821 (CN)

Federal aid number : IM I010 (348)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RESURFACE WALLACE TUNNEL AND APPROACHES ON I-10

Old Engineers Estimate : \$757,500.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$1,877,781.34

South Alabama RPO Updates

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) met a several weeks ago 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 November 6th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

For the Maintenance Bridge Painting along I-10 on SR-16 (US-98) over I-10 (Site 1); on I-10 over the Fish River (Site 2); on I-10 over Three Mile Creek (Site 3); on I-10 over Cowpen Creek (Site 4); and on I-10 over the Styx River (Site 5). The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,154,733 to \$1,411,340 .

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

McConnell Says Reaching an Economic Stimulus Deal is 'Job One' When Senate Returns

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who just won reelection for a seventh Senate term, said from a news conference in Kentucky that another relief package would be the Senate's chief focus when it reconvenes next week. He also said that state and local aid, a consistent Democratic demand in relief discussions with the White House, could be included in a new bill. It remains to be seen, however, what topline figure McConnell will accept. In recent weeks, McConnell has warned that the potential \$2 trillion package negotiated between Steven Mnuchin and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) may be too expensive to receive support in the Senate. McConnell has repeatedly pushed for a half trillion-dollar proposal, although that effort has so far failed to gain traction among his colleagues in the Senate.

Why a Biden presidency may lead to higher gasoline prices

Published: Oct. 29, 2020 at 1:33 p.m. ET

By [Myra P. Saefong](#)



The impact on gas prices from a Biden White House could be large in the years ahead, says GasBuddy.

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Gasoline hasn't been a big worry for drivers with the pandemic cutting demand for travel and prices down around 19% from a year ago, but the winner of the coming U.S. presidential election could lead to significant changes at pump.

As of late Thursday morning, the average U.S. retail price for regular unleaded stood at \$2.129 a gallon, down 48.9 cents from the \$2.618 average a year ago, [according to GasBuddy](#). Futures prices for gasoline [RBX20 RBZ20, -2.00%](#), meanwhile, were down over 36% year to date as of Wednesday, according to Dow Jones Market Data. Implied demand for motor gasoline has been weak, down more than 10% over the past four weeks ended Oct. 23 compared with the same period a year ago, [according to the Energy Information Administration](#).

Overall, energy demand has slowed as the U.S. continues to suffer from the economic effects of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. More than 81,000 new COVID-19 cases [in the U.S. were recorded Thursday](#), with the nation's death toll edging closer to 228,000.

As of Oct. 26, national average gasoline prices were down for a fourth straight week, in part due to a typical seasonal slowdown in demand, according to GasBuddy. The travel and navigation app also said the 2020 yearly average for prices likely will be at its lowest in over a decade.

Prices could take a significant turn higher, however, if Democrat Joe Biden turns out to be the winner of the Nov. 3 election, according to a recent analysis conducted by GasBuddy.

"A Joe Biden presidency would favor more environmental controls with respect to drilling and emissions, increasing fuel mileage standards, alternative vehicle power like electricity, expanded tax credits benefiting fuel efficient vehicle owners, and evolving from fossil fuels," the report said. On the other hand, if President Donald Trump, a Republican, is re-elected, his policies would be "generally regarded as populist and pro-business, while perhaps marginalizing environmental factors."

Either approach will have "significant implications for the supply/demand balance, which will impact what the average American will pay per gallon," GasBuddy said.

"Traditionally, presidents had limited ability to move the needle at the gas pump, but in recent years that has changed," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, in a recent statement. He also said Biden openly stated that "[he would end drilling](#), curbing U.S. oil production and end fracking, which could potentially send oil prices and thus gas prices higher."

During the final presidential debate on Oct. 22, Biden said he opposed fracking on federal land and underscored how he would transition from the oil industry, to be replaced by renewable energy over time.

"The impact to gas prices from a Biden White House could be large in the years ahead, especially on low-income households and commuters," said De Haan.

"It's challenging to get a full understanding of where Mr. Biden stands on fossil fuel use. It's clear he wants to reduce America's dependence, but if it's not focused on incentives for Americans to reduce their demand and only focuses on reducing supply, Americans could see a return to gas prices that we've not seen in some time," he said.

He explained to MarketWatch that if Biden shuts down existing oil wells, "that could post a problem, especially if/when demand rebounds post-COVID." There's more risk that gas prices become "more volatile under Biden, simply because he leans for more regulation on oil." The gasoline industry already can see the policy effect on prices, with California's "stringent environmental regulations," on gasoline quality and emissions and high taxes on the fuel.

Trump, meanwhile, has been seen as "'friendly' to the oil sector, which has acted to keep production flowing and keeping prices in check," said De Haan. Trump can open federal lands to drilling, "but that doesn't mean companies are required to drill there. If the market demands it, then it becomes an asset."

New House Bill Promotes Transportation Technologies

Eugene Mulero October 30, 2020

Legislation that aims to promote the adoption of new technologies throughout the country's transportation networks recently was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Strengthening Methods to Advance Research and Technology, or SMART, Act, introduced by Rep. Troy Balderson (R-Ohio), would aim to advance innovation, efficiency and new safety programs across transportation corridors.

Specifically, the bill would authorize several programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. The programs pertain to advanced technologies, connected vehicles, automated driving systems and digital construction management systems. Rural areas would be covered under the bill, according to background provided by the congressman's office.

"In central Ohio, we're proud of our history as a national leader in smart mobility and advanced transportation research," Balderson, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said in a statement Oct. 29.

"I've seen firsthand the state-of-the-art research and work being done in this community that will improve road safety and create more efficient transit options throughout Ohio," he said. "I'm excited to continue working with our local transportation thought leaders like DriveOhio and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission to continue these efforts."

The measure was referred to the committee of jurisdiction.

Several stakeholders applauded the legislation's introduction. In a statement accompanying the bill's release, Howard Wood, DriveOhio executive director, noted: "The bill reflects a deep appreciation of our world-class automotive research and development ecosystem. ... As we develop the transportation system of the 21st century, communities and institutions from across the state of Ohio will benefit from this legislation."

Earlier this year, the congressman offered various policy proposals to a Republican version of a multiyear highway bill.

The Surface Transportation Advanced through Reform, Technology, & Efficient Review, or STARTER, Act, sought to:

- Enhance access to freight and commuter corridors.
- Establish a national highway freight program.
- Improve truck parking safety.
- Examine the environmental review process.
- Enhance access to bus facilities.
- Boost technical assistance and workforce development.

"The STARTER Act is a reasonable, common-sense approach to improving our infrastructure that focuses on state flexibility, reasonable regulation reform, traditional core transportation needs, preparing our system for future transportation technologies, and a greater emphasis on rural America's often neglected infrastructure needs," Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) said in June. He is the ranking member on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

"The Senate has worked in a bipartisan manner so far, and House Republicans remain ready to work constructively if this process moves forward in a meaningful way," Graves added. "The [Democratic] majority's bill that was approved in committee today isn't going to get signed into law, and the only path to improving our infrastructure and putting America back to work is through partnership, not partisanship."

Congress, which did not take up the House Republican's highway bill, [approved a yearlong extension of a 2015 highway policy law](#). The committee's leaders — Graves and Chairman Peter DeFazio — insisted they would update the law prior to its expiration next year.

"While we had hoped to reach an agreement between the House and the Senate this year on a modern, multiyear surface transportation bill that moves our country forward, the single most important factor right now is providing certainty to states and local governments that are under the strain of both the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn," DeFazio (D-Ore.) said in a statement in September. "With this one-year extension in place, we can continue work on a long-term, transformational bill that significantly boosts investment in our surface transportation network and moves our transportation systems into the 21st century."

Key House transportation figures win reelection

Leadership figures on Transportation Committee return to Congress, as do two members of Railroads subcommittee

November 4, 2020

Notable federal results with transportation significance from Tuesday's election:

— The three leadership figures on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure all won reelection. In Oregon, [Democrat Peter DeFazio](#), chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, defeated challenger Alek Skarlatos to win the state's 4th Congressional District with 58% of the vote, according to the Oregonian newspaper. Another Democrat, [Vice Chair Salud Carbajal](#), is projected to have won California's 24th Congressional District; as of late Tuesday, with 65% of precincts reporting, he had 62.4% of the vote against Republican challenger Andy Caldwell. And [Ranking Member Sam Graves](#) handily won reelection in Missouri's 6th Congressional District with 67.1% of the vote compared to 30.8% for Democratic challenger Gena Ross.

— That committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials will have a new chair because Democrat Daniel Lipinski lost in the primary for Illinois' 3rd Congressional District. The other two leadership figures, [Vice Chair Colin Allred](#) (D-Texas District 32) and [Ranking Member Rick Crawford](#) (R-Ark. District 1), both won reelection. Crawford ran unopposed.

— Also of note: [Lloyd Smucker](#) (R-Pa. District 11) handily won reelection. Smucker has introduced a bill requiring Amtrak to turn ownership of its Philadelphia-Harrisburg Keystone Line over to the state of Pennsylvania [see ["Digest: Legislation introduced to transfer Keystone Line ..."](#) *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 16, 2020], and was one of four House members who wanted an investigation into Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden's use of an Amtrak campaign train [see ["Four Republican congressmen question Amtrak role in Biden campaign train,"](#) *News Wire*, Oct. 21, 2020].

— None of the key Senate figures on the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, or its Transportation and Safety Committee, were up for reelection; significant change would likely come there only if Democrats gain control of the Senate, which is still possible but seen as unlikely. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) is the chair of the Commerce Committee, with Maria Cantell (D-Wash.) the ranking member; on the Transportation Subcommittee, Deb Fisher (R-Neb.) is the chair and Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) is the ranking member.

Regardless of Election Outcome, Infrastructure Funding Hurdles Will Remain

Both Joe Biden and Donald Trump have put forward big infrastructure plans during their presidential campaigns, promising sweeping improvements to the nation's roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. While the election outcome remains unknown, what we do know is that whoever wins will face the same challenge that has stalled infrastructure proponents in Washington for years: how do you pay for it all? Biden, like Trump, didn't commit in his campaign platform to a concrete way to raise revenue for the struggling Highway Trust Fund which relies on fuel taxes that haven't been increased since 1993. Trump, while pledging to "rebuild our country" has so far been unable to address the infrastructure funding shortfall despite having two years of Republican control of both chambers of Congress. Whoever ends up in the White House will begin their presidency with Congress once again facing a deadline to finish a transportation bill. The success of this bill, as well as other promised infrastructure progress, will hinge on the ability of Congress and/or the president to find a way to pay for it all.

Infrastructure, economy among trucking's major stakes in Trump/Biden clash

Jason Cannon November 2, 2020

Whether it's the clash between Republican incumbent President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger former Vice President Joe Biden or potential turnover in the Senate, the outcome of Tuesday's election will impact the [transportation industry](#).

Aside from appointing a new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) chief the winner of the upcoming election will certainly play a role in driving GDP growth in the coming term, but COVID will be riding shotgun. Increasing infection rates and a potential vaccine will weigh heavily on either a Republican or a Democratic White House.

"Putting that aside for a minute, I think a continuation of the Trump Administration would be marginally better for the economy, for both the consumer economy and the industrial economy, and a lot of that stems from the fact that Mr. Trump is not a conventional politician," said John Larkin, Clarendon Capital Operating Partner. "He comes at it from a different perspective and understands that a lower income tax rate – a lower capital gains tax rate – stimulates a lot of investments. Investment stimulates a lot of economic activity [and] more jobs are created."

Even if a vaccine is developed and deployed relatively soon, JBS Logistics President Alec Gizzi said he thinks the spending habits of the American consumer have changed so much in the last nine months "that I think you're going to need until at least 2024 before things get back to normal – travel and everything else."

"We have not done a good job of controlling the virus and that has led to enormous unemployment – 250,000 less manufacturing jobs now that we had in February," he added. "I'm optimistic that the old Joe Biden will manage the recovery post-COVID, but I'm also more optimistic that Joe Biden can get us out of this COVID situation better than the current president has just because he's still denying it even though he had it."

To read the full article click [HERE](#).

Funding Opportunities

Rebuild Alabama Act Annual Grant Program (deadline November 30th, 2020)

[This document](#) contains information regarding the Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) Annual Grant Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. The RAA Annual Grant Program is administered by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Prospective project-sponsoring governmental agencies are encouraged to thoroughly review this document, as well as the FY 2021 RAA Annual Grant Program Application and FAQ document, when considering developing a project application.

A. ELIGIBILITY:

- Any political subdivision of the State of Alabama (Municipal and County Governments) is eligible to apply for funding under the RAA Annual Grant Program.
- Project applications may be submitted for improvements to any classified public road or bridge owned and maintained by the applicant that is open to public traffic.
- The final eligibility of applications and proposed project activities will be determined by ALDOT upon evaluation of the application submitted.
- RAA Annual Grant Program funds are awarded through a competitive project selection process.

B. COMPETITIVE SELECTION

- RAA Annual Grant Program funds are awarded through a competitive project selection process.

C. PROJECT FUNDING:

- The RAA Annual Grant Program was established by Legislative Act #2019-2. The program allocates no less than \$10 million annually to eligible projects as identified by ALDOT during a fiscal year.
- The maximum funding provided to any project in FY 2021 will be \$250,000.00.
- RAA Annual Grant program funding is only available for eligible construction activities. No Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way, Utility Relocation, Construction Engineering & Inspection or Materials Testing costs will be eligible.
- RAA Annual Grant Program awarded funds will be issued to the sponsoring agency either (1) upon ALDOT's receipt of a Notice of Award from the sponsoring agency to the contractor, or (2) upon ALDOT's receipt of a Purchase Order (PO) from the sponsoring agency issued against a valid, eligible in-place bid contract.
- RAA Annual Grant Program awarded funds cannot be transferred to another project and may only be used to fund improvements consistent with the intent of the original project application.
- RAA Annual Grant Program funds may be combined with other funding sources when approved by ALDOT. In such cases, the more restrictive funding requirements may apply to all funds utilized. Note that RAA Annual Grant funding availability deadlines still apply when combined with other funding sources.
- A sponsoring governmental agency may only submit one project application per application cycle. Each County and Municipality will be viewed as an individual sponsor. Any project submitted by multiple sponsors shall be deemed as the eligible submission for all sponsors.
- Sponsors with an active award may not submit another application until the awarded project has been let to contract or a purchase order utilizing a valid, eligible in-place bid contract has been issued.
- Other funding sources to supplement RAA Annual Grant Program funds are not required, but projects containing a commitment to provide supplemental funding may be given favorable consideration.

D. PROJECT PROGRESS:

- RAA Annual Grant Program funds are available to sponsoring agencies for a period of one (1) year from the notice of award. Funding awarded to a sponsoring agency not either let to contract or a purchase order issued against a valid, eligible in-place bid contract within one year of the notice of award are subject to rescission.
- Any overrun in total project costs above the amount awarded, shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring agency.

E. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS:

- Projects must be let to competitive bid. In-place bids may also be utilized as long as those bids were awarded following all required competitive bid laws for eligibility. No other method of construction, such as force account is allowed.
- Any costs incurred prior to issuance of a Notice of Award or a Purchase Order are not eligible.
- RAA Annual Grant Program funds have reporting requirements. Recipients will be required to furnish any and all requested data to ALDOT or other specified or required entities necessary to satisfy any reporting requirements.

F. APPLICATION SUBMISSION & SELECTION

- All applications must be received by ALDOT prior to close of business on **November 30th, 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?oppId=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.

New CDBG GRANT Program

To Address COVID-19 Impacts (currently no deadline)

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) is in the process of developing a special Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant program to address COVID-19 impacts.

DETAILS: Currently, no application deadline, grant ceilings or other program details have been finalized.

MORE DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED AT A LATER DATE; however, please download the guide below to get started and identify potential partners as needed.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the Quick Guide to CDBG Eligible Activities to Support Infectious Disease Response that will assist applicants to begin thinking about possible project needs.

Please note that applications to the CDBG program must be in the name of a local government as the applicant/grantee.

Partnerships and agreements with other agencies/entities, etc. can be developed as necessary. CDBG projects must also benefit primarily low and moderate-income people and this requirement will likely remain for the new funds.

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Department has technical assistance providers that may be available to assist grantees in their implementation of CDBG Funds for activities to prevent or respond to the spread of infectious disease.

Please contact your local CPD Field Office Director to request technical assistance from HUD staff or a TA provider.

Submit your questions to:

CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov

COVID-19 ("Coronavirus") Information and Resources: <https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>

CPD Program Guidance and Training: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/>

EDA CARES ACT RECOVERY ASSISTANCE (currently no deadline)

OVERVIEW

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, [signed into law](#) by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2020, provides the Economic Development Administration (EDA) with \$1.5 billion for economic development assistance programs to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance, which is being administered under the authority of the bureau's flexible [Economic Adjustment Assistance](#) (EAA) (PDF) program, provides a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to and recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

On May 7, 2020, Secretary Wilbur Ross made EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance funding available with the announcement that EDA had published an Addendum to its FY 2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity. EDA intends to deploy its CARES Act funding as quickly, effectively, and efficiently as possible, and in a manner that meets communities needs.

RESOURCES

- [EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for EDA Economic Development Districts and EDA Indian Tribe Planning Grant Recipients*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Economic Development Districts and Indian Tribes*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: Revolving Loan Fund Awards*](#)
- [EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance Revolving Loan Fund Award Flexibilities Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Scope of Work for University Center Grantees*](#)
- [Specific Award Conditions: University Centers*](#)
- [EDA regional office contacts](#)
- coronavirus.gov
- coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness/
- [CDC.gov/COVID19/](https://cdc.gov/COVID19/)
- [USA.gov/coronavirus/](https://usa.gov/coronavirus/)

* As stated in the CARES Act Recovery Assistance Addendum to the PWEAA NOFO, EDA may invite existing grantees, such as Economic Development Districts and Tribes currently in receipt of Partnership Planning awards, operators of existing EDA funded Revolving Loan Funds, and EDA-funded University Centers, to apply for supplemental awards. These standard Scopes of Work and Specific Award Conditions are for use with these supplemental awards only. Existing grantees who are eligible to apply for these awards will be contacted individually for instructions on how to apply. <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=321695>

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

[Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#)

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

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

Why did the chicken cross the road, er...huh...hiking trail?



November is National Hiking Month, and November 17th is National Hiking Day. Did you know that if you start now on the Appalachian Trail, you can get there in 7 months? The north part of Alabama has mountains that are not just funny, they are ... *hill areas*.

Some tips on hiking this November; don't be first unless you like spider webs, always bring someone in worse shape than you in case of bears, don't forget your phone charger, and whatever you do, [don't cook a chicken over a hot geyser](#). It can be done as people [cook over geysers in Iceland](#), but try it in America and will get you in [some hot water](#), as this one [cooking show](#) proved.

In the News

Baldwin County voters reject toll authority for Beach Express extension

by Cory Pippin November 3rd 2020

BALDWIN COUNTY, Ala. (WPMI) — On Tuesday, Baldwin County voters rejected a bid to build a multi-million dollar toll road connecting the Baldwin Beach Express to I-65.

More than 55% of Baldwin County voters said they do not want to establish a toll authority for the Baldwin Beach Express extension.

The \$200 million project aimed to connect the Baldwin Beach Express to I-65 by building a road nearly 24 miles north through mostly undeveloped land.

Legislators pitched the road as a way to help funnel traffic to the beach, and as a hurricane evacuation route.

However, officials said the only way to pay for it was through establishing a toll authority, which would determine the cost for using the road.

Baldwin County voters shot down a similar proposal in 2016, due to vague wording.

This year, legislators made it clear that the toll authority's power would only apply to this project and no other roads.

However, voters have once again shown they do not favor putting tolls in place.

Baldwin County Commissioner Joe Davis said he's disappointed in the results, and he believes the Mobile River Bridge toll controversy lingered in voters' minds.

"I was hoping that we could explain the difference between these two because they are considerably different, but I think the people were telling us they don't like the word toll," said Davis, "They're afraid of what it could lead to. I believe people are just turned off by the word toll, and I understand that."

Commissioner Davis said the county will continue to work with state officials, and ALDOT, to find alternate ways to either get the road built or expand other highways to ease traffic congestion.

New construction coming soon for Mobile's Three Mile Creek Greenway

By [Lawrence Specker](#) Nov 05, 2020



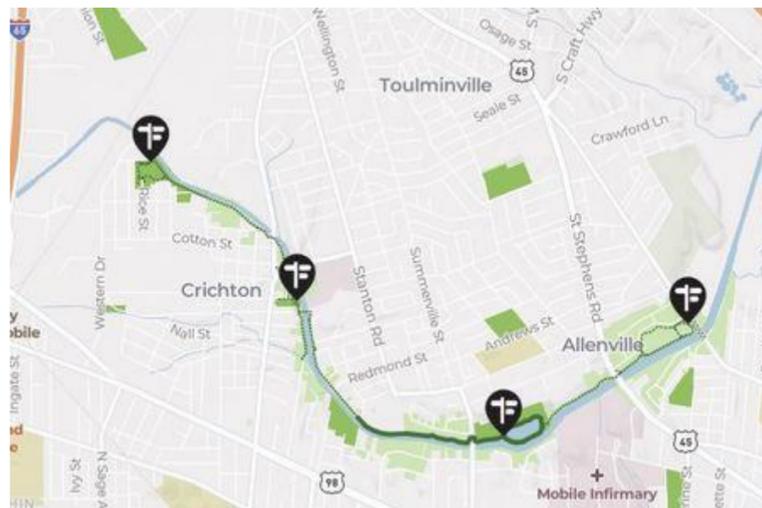
Since 2017, the east end of Mobile's Three Mile Creek Greenway has been at Ridge Road. Soon it will advance along the bank of the creek to a spot near USA University Hospital.

For three years, Mobilians have been able to enjoy the first section of a greenway that could one day provide a corridor across the city. For three years they've been left to wonder when the next visible progress would occur.

The answer, finally, is "soon."

Better yet, in three years there could be a continuous pathway for cyclists and pedestrians going stretching from Bush Park, near the I-65 beltline, to downtown Mobile. Even then, there will be a lot of work left to be done and a lot of potential to be unlocked: The full vision of the project takes it all the way to Langan Municipal Park, which itself is [due for major enhancements](#) over the next few years. The section that exists now was built in 2017. With Mayor Sandy Stimpson backing the vision of a cross-city pathway, City Council members committed funds from their Capital Improvement Plan budgets. Along with money from other sources, including a grant from the Alabama Department of Community Affairs, that paid for a stretch of trail reaching from the eastern edge of Tricentennial Park, westward across Stanton Road to Ridge Road, a street in a neighborhood halfway between the park and USA Health University Hospital.

Factoring in the other amenities already in place at Tricentennial Park -- including parking and the Irmatean Watson Walking Trail that circles Day Lake -- it made for an attractive destination for runners and walkers looking to get in a mile or two. Features included benches and solar-powered lights.



A map taken from the Map for Mobile website shows sections of the Three Mile Creek Greenway expected to be complete by sometime in 2022. The four trailhead markers are, from left to right, at Bush Park, Mill Street Park, Tricentennial Park and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. The darker middle section is the portion of the trail that has already been built.

In spring 2018, the city announced a half-million-dollar grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation. Along with \$139,000 in matching funds from the city, it was earmarked to extend the trail along and past Ridge Road, connecting it to the grounds of University Hospital.

Meanwhile the wheels were turning on a much bigger grant. In March 2018 the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council announced that a \$315 million slate of projects had been selected for funding provided by the RESTORE Act, which shapes the distribution of billions paid in corporate penalties after the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Among the allocations was nearly \$10 million for the Greenway.

While that was fantastic news for Greenway supporters, a complex application and verification process meant many months would pass before the U.S. Department of the Treasury gave final approval.

"They're very thorough, so that's good," said Jenn Greene, Mobile's director of programs and project management. In late September the City Council finally was able to take the final formal step of approving the receipt of the money.

What all this means is that after three years when all the action was out of sight, Greenway development is about to march forward in a very visible way. Greene and Matt Jollit, a city program manager, laid out the timeline that's shaping up. Their projections:

Early 2021: The city will take bids on work to extend the Greenway about half a mile westward, just short of University Hospital. This is the work funded by the ALDOT grant announced in 2018.

Mid 2021: That section of work will be finished, with the new trail open to users. Meanwhile, design work on the next stage will be nearing completion, setting the stage for construction bids.

Late 2021: Work begins on the biggest expansion yet. The east end of the Greenway will be extended from Tricentennial Park to St. Stephens Road and onward to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. On the west end, a new pedestrian bridge near University Hospital will

let the trail cross to the south side of the creek and continue westward, passing behind neighborhoods on the north side of Mobile's Crichton region until it hits Bush Park near the I-65 beltline. A spur also will reach back eastward along the south side of the creek. (Long-range plans call for more trail on the south bank, providing extended loops for walkers and runners.)

Mid 2022: Previously, the Greenway has been mostly suited for recreational use. But now that it spans about three miles, it's opening up useful possibilities for getting across the city by foot or bicycle. Institutions on or near the trail include three hospitals, the Toulminville Branch of the Mobile Public Library and three public parks (Bush, Tricentennial and Mill Street). "In theory you'll be able to go all the way from Bush Park to downtown," using Dr. MLK Jr. Ave, said Jollit. A map of the project to this point can be found at mapformobile.org/3mctrailmap/

Late 2022: Right now, in 2020, the city is conducting a massive overhaul of Broad Street, the boundary between Midtown and Downtown. Funded by a Federal TIGER Grant, this infrastructure upgrade will include cyclist- and pedestrian-friendly features. Greene said the larger Broad Street Revitalization project also includes plans to make improvements along MLK between Broad and the Greenway trailhead. Funding still has to be secured and the design work still has to be done. But she said she hopes that by late 2022 the construction will be under way.

2023: With the work on MLK completed, cyclists and pedestrians coming off the Greenway now have a clear path to Broad Street, where more bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly architecture connect them to downtown.



Currently, Tricentennial Park anchors the eastern end of Mobile's Three Mile Creek Greenway, where the path connects to a loop around Day Lake. Eventually the trail will be extended eastward across St. Stephens Road to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.

Greene describes the Greenway as "an important amenity that will touch every part of the Mobile population." Its myriad benefits include improved health and wellness for those who use it, increased public access to the creek and a practical transportation corridor for people who don't have cars or who want to use cars less.

"It's hard to visualize how transformative this will be," Greene said.

Beyond that, the timeline gets murky. There will still a lot more to be done: City plans envision three sections of Greenway stretching from Langan Park to the beltline. Then there's one last stage, a daunting keystone that ties everything together across the beltline. It must cross a highway (Moffett Road/U.S. 98), an interstate and two railroad tracks. It's complex, to say the least.

Mobile's Three Mile Creek Greenway: Path and promise for a neglected waterway

It'll take years and millions of dollars to finish Mobile's Three Mile Creek Greenway, but it's no longer possible to write it off as a pipe dream. The first section of trail is there. It's real. And it signals a brighter future for a long-neglected waterway.

That section in particular is going to be a challenge. But Greene and Jollit said they think that as the Greenway grows, its benefits will become obvious to more and more people. Every piece built will help create momentum and public demand for the next piece.

"The goal would be to continue to fund and work with the community and get a project done that has been on the books with the community members for 35-plus years," said Jollit. "This is something that goes back a very long time."

Flags fly at half staff Thursday for Commissioner Frank Burt

By [Beth Cann](#) November 5, 2020

Gov. Kay Ivey ordered all flags flown at half-staff in Baldwin county to honor former commissioner **Frank Burt**. Burt, who passed away in his home on October 31, served 30 consecutive years on the Baldwin County Commission. He served from 1988-2018.

In a memo written on November 3, Ivey stated, "Let us remember Commissioner Burt's decades of dedicated service to the people of Baldwin County Commission from 1989-2018. Commissioner Burt was well known as a very dependable leader and was a humble servant to the citizens he represented. I offer my heartfelt condolences and prayers to his loved ones, the Baldwin County Commission, and his beloved community."

Burt was the county's District 1 representative, and the county has been governed by a four-member commission since 2004. Burt started politics as a Democrat but served most of his tenure as a Republican, switching parties in the mid-1990s after U.S. Sen. **Richard Shelby** switched over as a Republican in 1994.

"He came from the county when it had nothing to where it's at today. I remember him telling us stories about the (commission) being worried about how they would pay their bills and stuff like that. But they worked hard to get it to where it's at today," **Charles "Skip" Gruber said**. He added, "Frank, one thing about him is that he had his heart into it."

Senator **Chris Elliot**, who was known for disagreeing with Burt while working on the commission, commented, "He loved his country and county more than anyone I know. He's a true patriot. He's a good guy. He'll be missed."

Elliot wrote on **Twitter**, "Baldwin County cities, businesses, schools, please take a moment to honor former Commissioner Frank Burt today by flying your flag at half staff."

Flags will be flown in Baldwin County today in honor of Burt, followed by a 3 p.m. funeral service at the First Baptist Church in Bay Minette. The family will receive friends from 1-3 p.m. at the church.

Let's build the cities we want to see in 100 years

By [Andrew J. Hawkins](#) Nov 2, 2020

Some of the most important parts of our country are literally falling apart. Our airports are crumbling. Our buses and rail networks are hemorrhaging riders and falling into disrepair. Many of our bridges are so old they're eligible for Medicare. And with the global pandemic crisis driving cities into an unprecedented budget crisis, things are likely to get worse before they get better.

Every four years, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) releases its "Infrastructure Report Card," which assesses everything from ports and dams to transit, schools, and hazardous waste management. In 2017, the group gave the country a D+, the same grade it delivered in 2013. The US is on track to receive the same grade (or worse) in 2021.

Things shouldn't have gotten this bad. Investing in infrastructure is a sure-fire way to juice job numbers in the midst of rising unemployment, with studies showing that every \$1 billion of highway spending supports 13,000 jobs for one year. It's the rare point of bipartisan consensus — and for the last four years, the White House and Democrats in Congress have made repeated overtures to cooperation on an infrastructure deal. But there is still next to nothing to show for it, and much of the national infrastructure is simply four years older.

At this point, a standard bundle of infrastructure money from Congress is no longer enough. We're facing an array of distinct, interconnected crises — the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, rampant income inequality, a national protest movement against white supremacy and police violence — that require enormous changes in our politics as well as our infrastructure. And with technology accelerating a shift in energy generation, transportation, automation, and the nature of work itself, it's fair to assume that any old infrastructure plan isn't going to cut it.

In short, we need an infrastructure revolution — and soon.

When we spend that money, we should do it with an eye toward the future — not just the next election, but the next generation. More than almost anything else the government does, infrastructure is about building for the future. Power plants and bridges and waste treatment facilities need to last for decades, up to and beyond 100 years sometimes. It forces us to answer a hard question: what do we think the country will look like in 2100? What do we *want* it to look like?

Infrastructure is a "long life cycle asset," Gerald Buckwalter, who served on the National Infrastructure Advisory Council within the US Department of Homeland Security for presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, tells me. "Sometimes it's difficult to think out that far because it's too uncertain," says Buckwalter. "[But] the longer our time horizon for our infrastructure investments, the more value our citizens will get from these investments."

Typically, infrastructure plans are measured by price tags. They are judged by the number of miles of roads that are repaved or bridges repaired or airports revived. But wouldn't a better metric be the degree to which the infrastructure plan dilutes the most serious, dangerous effects of climate change? Or helps end housing segregation? Or helps prevent serious public health problems? Or ensures that public transportation is adequately and robustly funded to meet the challenges of a post-COVID world?

In practical terms, that may look less like skyports for flying Ubers and more like bike lanes, pedestrian bridges, and high-speed rails. Facing the grim reality of climate change, infrastructure can help us shift to more sustainable, less polluting means of transportation. That means walking and biking in cities, alongside commuter rail and public transportation in suburban and rural areas.

We also need to focus on not losing the transit systems we already have. Transit agencies in the US are facing historic budget shortfalls as a result of the pandemic. Without at least \$32 billion in additional emergency funding, many public transit agencies will soon be forced to cut services and routes for essential workers as well as furlough frontline workers, leaving our communities without service and jobs during an unparalleled pandemic.

This doesn't mean abandoning highways and other auto infrastructure, but it does mean treating it differently. We can require states to "fix it first" before expanding highways — or even replace most highway-widening projects with bus rapid transit systems. We can renew the electric vehicle tax credit but also give tax breaks for other, lighter weight EVs, like e-bikes and scooters. The tax credit for electrics will go even further if it's paired with a higher gas tax, as a kind of a one-two punch against gas-powered cars.

Infrastructure won't save us from climate change or future disruptions to our economy and public health. But how our infrastructure evolves over the next 50 years will be a major determinant of the impact that climate change will have on civilization. By ignoring that infrastructure, we've dug ourselves into a hole. It's time to support leaders who can dig us out

Mobile trail gives visitors glimpse of city's multicultural beginnings

By Carla Davis November 2, 2020

The Dora Franklin Finley African-American Trail in Mobile includes multiple landmarks, places and story that reveal some of the history of Alabama's most historic city. (contributed)

While conducting a tour of Mobile's historic [Africatown](#), Karlos Finley said his most moving experience was when a group of African visitors realized it was their ancestors who had sold fellow tribesmen into slavery, condemning them to a life of captivity thousands of miles away.

Finley had taken the group from Yoruba, Africa, to visit [Union Baptist Church](#), which was founded and organized by the survivors of the schooner Clotilda.

The last known U.S. slave ship, the Clotilda arrived in Mobile Bay in 1860 with 110 African captives. The ship owner, Timothy Meaher, had made a bet that he could smuggle Africans into the United States, although the importation of slaves had been outlawed for more than 50 years. Soon after arriving in Mobile, the 86-foot schooner was scuttled and burned to destroy the evidence, and the wreck was not uncovered until 2018.

“When I took those people out to Africatown and showed them where the Clotilda survivors went to church and were buried, they dropped on their knees, wailed and wept, and begged forgiveness for selling their brothers into slavery,” Finley said. “It was a transformational experience for them.”

The church is among 45 historic landmarks that make up the [Dora Franklin Finley African-American Heritage Trail](#) (DFFAAHT) in Mobile. The 5-mile trail traces the city’s multicultural heritage by linking significant contributions and events with sites. It preserves the contributions of African Americans in Mobile since the city’s founding more than 300 years ago.

[Dora Franklin Finley African-American Heritage Trail](#) from [Alabama NewsCenter](#) on [Vimeo](#).

“Our greatest strength in Mobile is that we are a rich gumbo, a mixture of diverse peoples that create the unique flavor of our community,” said Finley, president of the DFFAAHT board of directors and brother of the trail’s founder. “The trail represents that tapestry of flavors and showcases the contributions of all Mobilians – African Americans, Native Americans, Creoles and Americans.”

The late Dora Franklin Finley established the trail in 2005 at the request of Mobile City Councilman William Carroll.

While visiting Boston as part of a [Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce](#) fact-finding trip, Carroll took the Massachusetts city’s African American heritage trail tour and quickly realized that Mobile has many contributions that rivaled those in Boston. After returning home, he tapped Dora Franklin Finley to take on the task of creating the trail.

“Dora was the natural choice to lead this endeavor,” said Finley, noting that he and his sister are fourth-generation Mobilians. “Anyone who knew her knew she had this great knowledge of history. Our mother was a high school history teacher, and history was the topic of conversation at our dinner table every night.”

Finley said his sister was a “leader her entire life.” Like her parents, she became a civil rights activist in the late 1960s and, at age 15, was arrested and taken to jail for marching and picketing. As a 17-year-old, she wrote a grant that helped start a student-led civil rights movement in the city.

After living and working in Iowa and Michigan during the 1970s, Dora returned home to Mobile and eventually worked for 25 years in logistical management at Scott Paper /Kimberly Clark. It was after her retirement that Dora accepted Carroll’s challenge to share Mobile’s African American heritage with the world.

Finley said his sister spent hundreds of hours researching Mobile’s history. She pored over materials and resources found through organizations such as the [Alabama Historical Commission](#), [Emory University](#), the [city of Mobile Archives](#), [University of South Alabama Archives](#) and the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#).

Finley said Dora uncovered and shared previously “unspoken of” contributions and information. During their childhood, the siblings learned from their mother the story of the Clotilda and the Africans who lived in squalor aboard the ship. Dora was friends with the great-granddaughter of Kazoola (Cudjo Lewis), who was one of the survivors.

“That story had really been suppressed in Africatown because the Meaher family was very prominent, and anyone who talked about it could be killed,” Finley said. “This is the kind of historical information that had been hidden for more than 300 years until Dora began looking it up.”

Finley said another unforgettable moment came in 2010 when the [Plateau Cemetery](#) was added to the trail. The graveyard in Africatown is the final resting place of many Clotilda survivors.

“When we unveiled that marker at the cemetery, one of the descendants, Lorna Woods, said in a Mobile-Register article, ‘This is our Super Bowl. We didn’t think anyone would ever recognize us,’” Finley said.

The trail begins with a stop at the replica of [Fort Conde’](#), which was built by Mobile settlers and played an important role in the city’s history. Although it was originally made of wood, the fort located in present-day downtown Mobile was replaced with a brick structure. It was designed and built in 1711 with the help of five free African American brick masons.

Finley said the trail ends at another momentous point – the marker that tells the story of Wallace Turnage, who at age 17 gained his freedom after trying to escape slavery four times. He succeeded on his fifth attempt, accomplishing his goal in the midst of wartime Mobile in the 1860s by walking south 25 miles, swimming across two rivers and paddling a rowboat into the Mobile Bay. There, he was saved from drowning by Union soldiers.

Other notable stops along the trail include some of the oldest churches in Alabama, including the [Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception](#), which houses the birth, death and marriage records of Creoles who helped found the city.

County Intersection to Be Changed to 4-Way Stop

Posted on: Nov 5th, 2020 | [NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)[FEATURED NEWS](#)[PRESS RELEASES](#)[ROAD CLOSURES](#)

The intersection of Three Notch-Kroner Road at McFarland Road and Ben Hamilton Road will be changed to a four (4) way stop, beginning the morning of Monday, November 9. This traffic pattern change, along with the speed limit reductions, will provide increased safety for the traveling public at this intersection.

Transportation Research

[New Fact Sheet: Boosting Active Transportation through Regional Transportation Plans](#)

October 29, 2020

The Safe Routes Partnership has released a new *Boosting Active Transportation Through Regional Transportation Plans* [Fact Sheet](#). The fact sheet focuses on helping active transportation advocates and stakeholders understand how regional transportation plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs) set the foundation for cycling, walking, and health-oriented transportation strategies and projects.

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.

Slow Streets Were a Success. Should Cities Keep Them?

A recent study examined projects to reduce car use and increase walking and biking on neighborhood streets in five cities, offering a look into how transportation data can be used to craft similar future projects.

SKIP DESCANT, GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY | OCTOBER 29, 2020

The modification of miles of local streets in cities across the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic cleared the way for bikers and walkers, and allowed neighborhoods to see their streets in all new ways.

New data indicates these moves were largely successful, with residents enjoying the extra space to bike and walk safely with lots of room to properly social distance. In cities like Seattle and Minneapolis, car use on the selected streets plummeted, while other users happily selected these routes.

“We saw a substantial dip in the number of vehicles on them, and we saw a pretty significant uptick in people biking and walking on them,” said Dawn Schellenberg, public affairs manager for the Seattle Department of Transportation. “They seemed to be successful,” she added.

Seattle and Minneapolis, along with three other cities, were part of a review of a modified streets study by INRIX, a transportation analysis firm. Seattle and Minneapolis experienced some of the largest levels of increased activity out of the five cities surveyed in the report: *Utilization of COVID-19 Street Programs in 5 U.S. Cities*. Seattle transitioned some 26 miles of neighborhood streets to its new Stay Healthy Streets program. They were selected, in part, because these corridors were already designated as “neighborhood greenways,” for their friendly walking and biking potential.

In Minneapolis, three routes totaling 11 miles were identified and the city placed traffic control devices to signal to motorists the changed nature of the streets. Like in Seattle, these routes had already been identified as streets suitable for walking and biking, in some cases known as “bicycle boulevards.” In both cities, and many others, the streets were not entirely closed to vehicles, and could be accessed by residents, delivery drivers and other vehicles.

“We didn’t fully close the streets... but we used the traffic control devices to essentially slow down cars, and make it clear that there would be people walking and biking in the streets,” explained Matthew Dyrdaahl, a transportation planner and bicycle and pedestrian coordinator in Minneapolis.

The project in Minneapolis and has been discontinued and the streets have returned to their normal operation. However, the experiment served as a pilot project and a data baseline as the city considers similar biking and walking modifications to right-of-way infrastructure in the future, said Dyrdaahl.

“We consider the Stay Healthy Streets a success,” he added. “And we will consider how the Stay Healthy Streets, or other new ideas, maybe restarted or modified in the future. But it may not look the same.”

The INRIX study, which also examined slow streets programs in Washington, D.C., New York City and Oakland, Calif., presented its findings as a big-data analysis showing how car traffic declined sharply on these streets while other uses expanded.

Non-car activity on restricted streets in New York City saw little change compared to the rest of the city, according to the INRIX study, likely due to the loss of commuter and other activity in the city. Activity on restricted streets in Minneapolis was 133 percent of normal in July, while activity citywide was only at 85 percent.

Transportation data, say INRIX officials, can and should offer a wealth of insights into how transportation infrastructure decisions are made.

“In the past, we had to rely on physical, in-person counts, in-ground loop detectors or video analysis to count the utilization of slow or restricted streets,” said Bob Pishue, a transportation analyst and author of the INRIX report. “Yet, today there are ways to provide data at a fraction of the cost and offer a high degree of accuracy.”

The data and analysis also points down a path of more data-based decision-making because the kind of approaches to restrict car access on one street may not be the best solution in another neighborhood.

“[City transportation officials] could use data to remove, change or make these projects more permanent,” said Pishue. “But the key is also making these projects a better fit from the beginning.”

“Street restrictions are put in place for a number of reasons: to stop cut-thru traffic, allow families to walk and bike in their neighborhood, social distancing, etc.,” he added. “Yet not all street designs and locations are good for all purposes. Data allows transportation officials the ability to implement the best project for that specific need and measure against those goals.”

In Seattle, transportation officials are beginning the process of resident engagement and outreach to learn more from the community about what Stay Healthy Streets solutions worked, or didn’t, and how they could be modified as the city plans to make permanent some 20 miles of restricted car streets in the future.

“We did some really quick back-of-the-napkin analysis to figure out where they might be most beneficial, but let’s go out now and talk to people who have experienced them,” Schellenberg offered. “Would these be a benefit to your neighborhood?”

A community survey seeking input on the project yielded lots of interest, with 9,000 participating in the survey offering some 30,000 “open-ended responses.”

In Minneapolis, the project offered an opportunity to test out various traffic-calming solutions, gather data, and determine how to move efforts like these forward, said Dyrdaahl, adding that a larger mission is to use the momentum generated by these projects to encourage more non-motorized mobility in the future to change behavior and achieve actual mode-shift.

“We use a wide variety of data to determine where we’ll invest in transportation, including walking and biking. We have an evaluation program that looks at sort of before data, and after a project is built,” he added.

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.