



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, October 9th 2020

Volume 36, Number 2

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The REBUILD Alabama ACT Annual Grant Program is ANNOUNCED (*See Funding Opportunities*). Infrastructure and Transportation Reauthorization still a hot topic in *Legislative Updates*. Some new MPO members in *Mobile MPO Updates*, and this week's *Just For Fun* is truckin.... *In The News* this week, more infrastructure is needed, like the Beach Express Extension. The 2020 Census deadline has been extended to October 31st. Please make sure that you and yours respond at Census.Alabama.gov.

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 municipal run-off elections were this week, and the votes have been tallied. 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](#).

Human Services Coordinated Plan Meeting

There was a public meeting pertaining to the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan this week via GOTO meeting. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) has updated the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan which details which projects are eligible for Federal Transit dollars for Elderly and Disabled, Job Access and Reverse Commute projects, or those transit projects that go above and beyond the requirements of ADA. This plan covers all of Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile Counties.

The adopted Plan is available online at:

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

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

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 : 100049566 (CN)

Federal aid number : BRF 0016 (522)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : REPLACE BRIDGE, BIN 008714, SR-16 (US-90) WESTBOUND OVER TENSAW-SPANISH RIVER. (SUFF=49.7, STATUS=SD)

Old Target start date : January 29, 2021

New Target start date : June 25, 2021

Project : 100068763 (CN)

Federal aid number : RASTPAA 4915 (251)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : WIDENING, RESURFACING AND STRIPING ON DAWES ROAD (CR-33) FROM SCOTT DAIRY LOOP ROAD SOUTH TO DIBERVILLE DRIVE WEST

Old Target start date : January 29, 2021

New Target start date : March 26, 2021

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 : December 01, 2020

New Target start date : January 01, 2021

Project : 100055882 (UT)

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 : July 01, 2021

New Target start date : May 01, 2022

South Alabama RPO Updates

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) met this week 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%20HSCPT%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 September 25th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

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

BALDWIN COUNTY
None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY
None at this time

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

Legislative Updates

Sen. Cardin Urges Transportation Reauthorization

Eleanor Lamb | Staff Reporter
October 8, 2020

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) expressed optimism about the passage of a long-term bill supporting transportation and infrastructure during a [virtual symposium](#) hosted by Transport Topics and CQ Roll Call.

The symposium was webcast Oct. 8, one week after President Donald Trump signed a temporary funding measure to avert a federal government shutdown. The stopgap measure funds the government through Dec. 11, and included in the law is a one-year extension of the [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#) that was due to expire Sept. 30.

Cardin explained that, although the FAST Act has been extended with a continuing resolution, Congress still needs to pass a long-term reauthorization. He said transportation projects, especially large-scale ones, depend on reliable, long-term legislative support.

"I'm very optimistic that we can get a transportation or infrastructure bill passed," Cardin said. "Infrastructure brings us together. We need the predictability of a long-term reauthorization. Transportation projects take more than one year or more than a few months to get done."

As an example of a large transportation project, Cardin pointed to the Howard Street Tunnel reconstruction effort. Maryland received a \$125 million Infrastructure For Rebuilding America grant in July 2019 to support the project. The Howard Street Tunnel is a freight train route in Baltimore that currently has height restrictions for railcars. The project will raise the vertical clearance of the tunnel, allowing trains to double-stack shipping containers.

"That's a major long-term project to replace that tunnel to do double stacking," Cardin said. "All that can't be done on a continuing resolution. You need to have a long-term commitment to get that done."

Cardin, who serves on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, said Congress will address climate-related considerations in the next reauthorization. He noted transportation issues impact both the environment and the economy. Cardin said Democrats, Republicans and the business community understand the costs of avoiding adaptation to climate-related concerns.

"We need a win-win," Cardin said. "We need to improve our transportation, but be respectful of our environment. We very much need to be attentive to it. We need to do that not just because of the direct impact on our environment. It's also the impact on our economy."

Cardin, who lives in Baltimore and commutes to Washington, said his trip has been significantly shorter during the pandemic, which has forced many people to work from home.

However, he acknowledged that road and transit systems shouldn't be neglected when the country emerges from the pandemic.

"The volumes will increase again on our roads," Cardin said. "We have to make sure that we have the bridge replacements that are necessary. It's important for safety, but it's also important for commerce."

In the early days of the pandemic, supply chain concerns extended to essential goods, protective equipment and testing kits. Cardin said the Defense Production Act, which is designed to speed and expand the supply of materials and services from the country's industrial base to support national defense, should be relied on more.

"Clearly, COVID-19 has pointed out a real security issue for America on supply chain issues," Cardin said. "Yes, Congress can do something about this. That's why we have the Defense Production Act, to make sure that we have the domestic capacity to deal with what is needed in this country to keep America secure and safe. We need to utilize that more aggressively than it's been done under this administration."

Rep. Davis introduces legislation to waive state, local funding share of highway projects

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | OCTOBER 5, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.) introduced legislation Thursday that would allow the U.S. Department of Transportation to fully fund federally-funded highway projects through 2022.

The Highway Relief Act would essentially waive the state and local share in funding these projects.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has put great financial strain on state government budgets, including state departments of transportation," Davis said. "My legislation will protect and create new construction jobs and provide a much-needed cash infusion to ensure state highway projects continue as planned. This is just one of many ways the federal government can assist state DOTs. I'd like to thank Congressional leaders for including a one-year extension of surface transportation reauthorization in the (Continuing Resolution), but as we negotiate and debate another comprehensive COVID-19 relief package, we must absolutely include additional relief for state DOTs so we can continue to make investments in our nation's infrastructure."

Davis said the bill would ease the burden on state and local DOTs, all of whom continue to see their revenues decrease because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Congressman said that decreased revenues hamper a state's ability to provide matching funds for federally funded projects.

The bill provides the U.S. Secretary of Transportation with the discretionary authority to increase the federal cost-share of projects to 100 percent for fiscal year 21-22.

The bill is supported by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and

"While having Congress provide much-needed direct federal funding to state departments of transportation is AASHTO's top priority in any COVID relief bill, the ability to utilize 100 percent federal share for transportation projects is a critical policy provision to help manage state transportation revenues hit hard by the pandemic," said Jim Tymon, Executive Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Extension Shoves Hot Infrastructure Issue to Back Burner

Eugene Mulero | Senior Reporter
October 5, 2020

With less than one month to go before the presidential election, the condition of the nation's highway infrastructure — and the need to upgrade it — has once again been spotlighted.

The [American Society of Civil Engineers](#) recently projected that \$4.1 trillion will be needed from 2020 through 2039 to sustain the country's surface transportation. "Chronic underinvestment in our surface transportation infrastructure bears severe economic consequences," the group said. "Subpar roadway conditions and transit that does not meet a state of good repair produces direct costs to businesses and households, as well as to the national economy."

While the [recent enactment of a yearlong extension](#) to the country's premier highway policy law is a positive step, it also arguably takes the pressure off of the candidates and lawmakers to focus on transportation during the elections.

In fact, little mention was made of transportation policy during the Sept. 29 debate between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden, save for a mention from [Biden on the potential benefits of adding 500,000 charging stations](#) to the nation's electric-vehicle charging infrastructure.

With the coronavirus pandemic still dominating the national discussion, it is, perhaps, understandable that other issues are not garnering as much attention as they might under different circumstances. The recent positive diagnoses of the president, first lady, White House staffers and some U.S. senators have justifiably shifted the national discussion to the health and well-being of this democracy's political representatives. On both personal and political levels, effective treatment for all battling the virus — within government and across the country — is essential to moving the nation forward.

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.

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

(deadline October 30th, 2020)

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

[ATRIP-II Procedural Guidelines](#)

[2021 ATRIP-II Project Application](#)

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

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

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

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

Tuesday, August 25, 2020
FHWA 17-20
Contact: Neil Gaffney
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity that provides up to \$50 million in grants for commuter rail agencies working to improve safety at railway-highway crossings. Applications will be accepted until October 26, 2020. “This \$50 million federal investment in commuter rail grade crossing safety will protect pedestrians, reduce vehicle accidents, and save lives in rural and urban areas across our country,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, appropriated \$50 million to be awarded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Commuter Authority Rail Safety Improvement (CARSI) Grants Program.

Under CARS, the FHWA – in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – will provide competitive grants to commuter rail authorities working to eliminate hazards at railway-highway crossings. Eligible projects include those that separate or protect grades at crossings; rebuild existing railroad grade crossing structures; relocate highways to eliminate grade crossings; and eliminate hazards posed by blocked grade crossings due to idling trains.

“Safety is always our top priority at the Department under the leadership of Secretary Chao,” said Federal Highway Administrator Nicole R. Nason. “These grants will help our state, local and regional transportation partners better protect the lives of those traveling on America’s roads and rails.”

“FRA is always working toward a benchmark of zero fatalities at railway crossings, and such safety improvements to our nation’s infrastructure will go a long way toward that goal,” said Federal Railroad Administrator Ronald Batory.

“Working together with FHWA and FRA, we can improve safety around highway-rail crossings and prevent collisions, injuries and fatalities,” said Federal Transit Administration Deputy Administrator K. Jane Williams. “Rail safety includes encouraging safe behavior around all rail crossings; it’s about making sure the American public is safe near all rail tracks.”

By statute, an eligible commuter authority must have experienced at least one accident investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2018, and for which the NTSB issued an accident report.

The NOFO, and information on how to apply, is available at

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=328801>

ALDOT Rail-Highway Safety Program Grade Crossing Hazard Elimination Application

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

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

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?oppld=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)

This week, new research came out that ***“Males in pickup trucks at higher risk for traffic deaths”***, please see *Transportation Research* below. It is interesting this article came out right before hunting season, when a lot of males will be in pick-up trucks. That is similar to saying that most vehicle crashes are within 5 miles of your home; well duh, most of your trips are within 5 miles of your home... But, it is not our job to question the validity of any transportation research. In that regard, we have supplemented the research that ***Males in pickup trucks at higher risk for traffic deaths...***



In the News

Coalition formed to support toll plan for Beach Express extension

Posted by [Gabriel Tynes](#) | Sep 29, 2020

State and local officials are launching a campaign to support the toll plan for the Baldwin Beach Express II (BBEII), a local amendment that will appear on the General Election ballot in Baldwin County in November. The plan, which would extend the Baldwin Beach Express roughly 24 miles north between Interstates 10 and 65, also will provide additional access to the undeveloped Baldwin County Mega Site.

State Sen. Chris Elliott explained during the launch of the “Choose2Coalition” Tuesday that unlike the highly unpopular toll plan for the Interstate 10 Bridge and Bayway project, the BBEII toll will be restricted to the length of the new roadway and would primarily be the burden of visitors to the area.

“The Baldwin County Commission has spent several years laying the groundwork for this project. Now we just need funding to support it,” he said. Funding details or a proposed toll have yet to be disclosed, but the project is estimated to cost \$200 million. Some groundwork and [rights of way acquisitions](#) have already been completed.

State Rep. Steve McMillan sponsored [a companion bill in 2019](#) to create a nonprofit toll authority that will “adopt, alter, amend and repeal [its own] bylaws, regulations, policies, procedures and rules” and will be responsible for every aspect of the project’s planning, design, financing, contracting, use and maintenance. The volunteer board will be appointed by the County Commission to six-year terms.

A similar measure was defeated by 52 percent of Baldwin County voters in 2016, but McMillan said the new proposal is more defined.

“There was some misunderstanding before because people were under the impression it gave the County Commission authority to place tolls on any road,” he said. “So, this time around we have placed language five or six times in the proposed amendment that limits any powers of the toll authority strictly to the project area.”

McMillan said plans were still fluid, but suggested there may only be a single toll booth on the extension, somewhere around its intersection with U.S. Route 31 in Bay Minette. If approved by voters, McMillan believes board members would be appointed by early next year and BBEII could be constructed in a two- or three-year timeline.

“The users will pay for it — that’s 100 percent — and most of those users will be visitors,” he said. “Local people will still have plenty of access roads and it’s a question of convenience if they pay for it, if they want that immediate access to [Interstate 65]. Otherwise, they could vote to defeat it again and keep the traffic patterns we have now. And I can tell you traffic is building up big time and more and more we need to divert traffic off Highway 59.”

Bay Minette Mayor Bob Wills acknowledged there may be some pushback from business owners along Highway 59 who may not want traffic to decrease. But he believes the long-term benefits of BBEI will outweigh any short-term effects of less traffic on Highway 59.

“Baldwin County has been and will continue to grow rapidly,” he said. “In order to take advantage of the growth and opportunity, it’s imperative we support this initiative. There are some concerns BBEI will take away traffic on Highway 59, but overall growth from added infrastructure will more than compensate for traffic lost in that area and benefit the businesses there now.”

Wills noted both Foley and Loxley have benefited from the added infrastructure of the original Baldwin Beach Express, which was completed more than 20 years ago. Transportation plans have long called for its extension to Interstate 65, but funding has never been earmarked.

The [Choose2Coalition](#) is described as “a growing group of more than 50 local businesses, organizations, public entities and elected officials joining forces to support Baldwin County’s future” by promoting Amendment 2. Member Tommy Lee, CEO of Vulcan Inc., said Baldwin County has grown by 45 percent since Hurricane Ivan. And using Hurricane Sally as an example, he suggested BBEI will also serve as an additional evacuation route and ingress for disaster response.

“County data show our evacuations take 18-45 hours — time we do not have under evacuation order,” he said. “Our future is here now. We can either take advantage of this opportunity or let it pass us by.”

Amendment 2 will appear on Baldwin County ballots Nov. 3 along with three [countywide amendments to create landmark districts](#) in unincorporated Josephine, Rosinton and Barnwell. If approved, neighboring cities would be prevented from legislative annexations within the districts without the residents’ approval.

There is also a local amendment to transfer some equity cases to the probate court, a measure McMillan said was intended to relieve the caseloads on the district and circuit courts.

Elaine Chao: Long-Term Plan Needed for US Infrastructure

[Dan Ronan](#) | Associate News Editor

October 8, 2020

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said the nation’s lawmakers must take a long-range view of addressing the country’s pressing infrastructure needs, and do the work needed to craft a funding measure more far-reaching and comprehensive [than the one-year highway bill extension](#) that recently advanced.

“We should be thinking strategically and long-term to address the infrastructure needs of our country, to address our economic competitiveness and productivity,” Chao said Oct. 8 during [the Future of Freight and Supply Chain Management Symposium](#), a virtual event co-hosted by Transport Topics and CQ Roll Call. “We stand ready to work with Congress on a long-term measure to address our nation’s infrastructure needs. Certainly, for the states, the long-term transportation future is very important,” Chao said.

The newly extended FAST Act will shore up the ailing Highway Trust Fund with a \$13.6 billion infusion of cash from the general fund, with \$10.4 billion allocated to the roads and bridges account, and another \$3.2 billion earmarked for mass transit. It’s money that Chao said is desperately needed, but she noted that infrastructure planning demands more than one year. “A road or a bridge doesn’t take a year to be built, it takes several years,” Chao said.

The one-year extension of the transportation measure was tucked into legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump that keeps the government funded through Dec. 11. Transportation leaders on Capitol Hill said they ran out of time to write a longer, five-year reauthorization bill.

Chao said the extension gives lawmakers time to produce a significant new highway policy bill and address the country’s infrastructure needs. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of these needed upgrades has never been more clear, she added, noting that trucking has performed a valuable service to the nation in transporting groceries, personal protective equipment and other items to battle the coronavirus. “I think we’re going through a very difficult time in our country, and I wish we could thank the first responders, more and not less,” she said. “I know these have been very challenging times for truck drivers.”

Chao discussed the steps DOT took to assist the trucking industry during the early months of the pandemic.

“Going into New York City, the truckers were facing a 14-day quarantine period. That made no sense. We negotiated, on their behalf, with the city and state of New York, to enable truckers to come in and out of New York to have truckers deliver the essential items that New Yorkers want,” she said. “We worked with local and state governments.”

Chao is now serving in her second presidential administration; she spent eight years as Secretary of Labor in the George W. Bush administration, and has been Trump’s DOT chief since the beginning of his term.

Should Trump win in November, she is optimistic infrastructure will move to the forefront of a second-term agenda. “While we have not been able to have an infrastructure bill, the department has distributed well over \$200 billion to enhance, repair and rebuild America’s infrastructure,” she said. “I suspect that this will continue to be a huge topic for the next Trump administration.”

AASHTO LETTER RENEWS CALL FOR CONGRESSIONAL EMERGENCY AID TO STATE DOTs

AASHTO previously requested the same amount in COVID-19 relief back in July

OCTOBER 07, 2020

The [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#) (AASHTO) renewed its call for Congress to provide \$37 billion in emergency funding for state DOTs across the country.

An Oct. 5 letter from AASHTO Executive Director Jim Tymon to Congressional leadership requests [COVID-19](#) funding assistance to help prevent cancellations and delays of vital transportation projects as well as potential job losses both in the state DOT workforce and the private sector. AASHTO previously requested the same amount in COVID-19 transportation relief [in a July 20 letter](#) to Congress.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, state DOTs continue to face severe losses in dedicated user fee revenues including motor fuel taxes," [the letter states](#). "These transportation-specific revenues are outside of a state's general fund and comprise the foundation of every statewide transportation investment program. With the prolonged erosion of state transportation revenues, the ability of state DOTs to carry out their core functions such as delivering capital and construction programs, safely operating their transportation systems, maintaining a state of good repair, and meeting payroll and administrative needs remain threatened."

The letter to Congress emphasizes gratitude from the association for the passage of a [one-year FAST Act extension](#). However, the letter states, without the requested \$37 billion in additional federal funding assistance, the important surface transportation program stability provided by this extension could be jeopardized.

In the July letter, AASHTO said the association estimates state transportation revenue losses of \$37 billion over five years, with an estimated loss of \$16 billion in FY 2020.

ALDOT Introduces New Look to ASAP Trucks in Birmingham Area

October 6, 2020

(BIRMINGHAM, Ala.) -- The Alabama Department of Transportation is rolling out a new look this week for its Alabama Service Assistance Patrol (ASAP) trucks in the Birmingham area. The new vehicles will be white trucks with large green arrows and a visible ASAP logo on the sides.

Stranded motorists along the interstate that have had a tire changed or battery jumped off by an ASAP driver are familiar with some of the motorist assistance that ALDOT provides at no cost to the motorist. Highway safety is ASAP's mission. ASAP works to quickly restore traffic flow after an incident, which reduces the likelihood of secondary crashes.

Larger, more visible ASAP truck graphics and signage were created for the safety of the ASAP drivers and those driving nearby. ASAP trucks will also be outfitted with additional equipment to help clear the roadway of obstructions.

As an incident responder, ASAP drivers often work alongside law enforcement, fire and rescue personnel, emergency medical services and others to protect those working a vehicle crash scene and to provide safe passage for other motorists. Reporting abandoned vehicles and removing debris along the interstate are other ways that ASAP drivers help keep interstate traffic moving and prevent crashes.

Birmingham drivers will be the first to see the new ASAP look. ALDOT will continue to update its ASAP trucks across the state over the coming months. In addition to Birmingham, ASAP operates along the interstate in Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa.

More information about the ASAP program is available at

<https://www.alabamatim.org/asap.html>

DOT campaign targets rail grade crossing safety

BY [DOUGLAS CLARK](#) | OCTOBER 8, 2020

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) officials said the agency has launched this year's "Stop. Trains Can't." public education campaign as a means of bolstering rail grade crossing safety.

The DOT indicated the \$6.6 million effort would run through Nov. 8. and include radio, digital and social media messaging designed to educate drivers while also targeting high-risk highway-railway crossings in Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Indiana, Tennessee, and Texas.

"So many fatalities at highway-railway crossings are preventable; this campaign aims to raise public awareness and save lives," Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao said.

Per the DOT, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) manage the campaign.

Over the past five years, 798 people have died while trying to drive across railroad tracks, and last year, 126 people were killed and 635 people injured at railroad crossings. Of the fatalities, officials noted, about 75 percent died after the driver went around lowered crossing gate arms.

"A train can't swerve out of the way or stop on a dime," NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens said. "We all have a responsibility to be safe while on the highways, and that means drivers must always look carefully before driving across train tracks and obey any warning signals or lowered crossing gate arms. Trying to beat a train could cost you your life."

TRANSIT MANAGEMENT OF MOBILE, ALABAMA D/b/a
THE WAVE TRANSIT SYSTEM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
Project Number: WTS-10A-2020
Professional Architectural and Engineering Services
COST ESTIMATOR, COMPARISON & CONSTRUCTION DESIGN

Transit Management of Mobile D/b/a The Wave Transit System ("The Wave") is seeking qualifications from qualified consultants to provide Professional Architectural and Engineering Services to develop Cost Estimates, Comparisons and Construction design for the conversion of The Wave Transit Systems Paint & Body Shop located at 1224 West I-65 Service Road, South, Mobile Alabama 36609, into a Multi-Purpose Building.

The selected firm will be expected to start promptly, devote sufficient time, and expedite successful and timely completion of the Project. The award of the consultant contract will be dependent on funding. Once the contract is executed, the work shall begin immediately.

A complete copy of the solicitation is available for download on the website at www.thewavetransit.com. Also, recognizing COVID-19, bidders may request a copy of the solicitation via email to jmosley@thewavetransit.com. Please reference in the subject line: **RFQ, Project Number: WTS-10A-2020**

Questions concerning this Request for Qualifications should be directed to Mr. Gerald E. Alfred at (251) 338-0100 or galfred@thewavetransit.com. Responses will be received until **3:00 p.m. (CST) on Wednesday, November 4, 2020**. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE's) are encouraged to apply

Submission information may be emailed or provided in hard copy to:

The Wave Transit System
Attn: Mr. Gerald E. Alfred, Manager of Planning & Capital Projects
GM&O Transportation Center
110 Beauregard Street, Suite 104
Mobile, Alabama 36602
Email Address: galfred@thewavetransit.com

Transportation Research

Males in pickup trucks at higher risk for traffic deaths



Did you know that most of the state's traffic fatalities are men? That deadly statistic can be attributed to a lack of seat belt use, particularly among young male pickup truck drivers.

Preliminary 2020 data shows that male drivers account for 77% of the pickup truck fatalities so far this year – 83% percent of those male pickup truck drivers killed were unbuckled.

MoDOT and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety are stepping up efforts to reach males and those driving pickup trucks with this potentially life-saving information.

Already this year, there have been 717 traffic fatalities - that's 76 more lives lost compared to the same time last year. Unfortunately, 68% of those were unbuckled. If everyone involved in these crashes had been buckled, more than 180 people who were killed might still be alive today. Read more.

A new video hopes to encourage pickup truck drivers to buckle up - <https://youtu.be/obmulMOYK6g>

[HERE](#)

Transportation Planning to the Extreme for Weather and Climate Change

More intense and more frequent extreme precipitation events are projected in a warming climate. With this risk comes possible detrimental outcomes based on what has happened in the past. Water rises over bridges. Homes, businesses, and roads on steep hills fall away in a landslide. Tornadoes rip through towns. Planes are grounded. Coastal areas are underwater.

The U.S. Gulf Region is dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Laura and California is beginning to get a handle on wildfires that have been raging for weeks. This fall TRB is offering webinars to help strengthen the transportation industry's resilience to these events. On October 6, TRB hosts A Resilient Path Forward for the Marine Transportation System and on October 7, Weathering the Storm - Climate Resilience at Airports.

State departments of transportation (DOTs) are also taking changing climate and extreme weather into account when making infrastructure decisions, but they are not always using a formal set of tools for cost-benefit analysis to address climate resilience. A TRB National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) guidebook was developed to fill the gaps in the routine use of cost-benefit analysis and other decisions-making tools in light of extreme weather.

Extremes are not rare

It's become common to hear that "one-in-a-hundred-year events" are occurring in five-, 10-, and 15-year periods. Scientists identify these extreme weather events based on the historical record of weather in a particular region. A "return time" is a commonly used metric of probability; for example, a 100-year return time means that in any given year, there is a 1-in-100 chance of the threshold being reached.

Eight cases of diverse weather events in the U.S. from 2007-2012 highlighted the broad and evolving nature of keeping up with transportation infrastructure. NCHRP's Response to Extreme Weather Impacts on Transportation Systems offers in-depth lessons learned and effective practices for addressing this specific challenge.

Research leadership from TRB

In April 2020, TRB offered webinars on environmentally sustainable funding and financing at the intersection of federal surface transportation authorization and realignment of state transportation spending. Going further in preventative measures, an April 30 webinar explored the role of ecology in sustainable transportation.

TRB has provided practitioners with research findings of potential impacts of climate change and extreme weather on the U.S. Highway system for years. The 2014 Strategic Issues Facing Transportation research showed the need for a solid foundation to plan for the impacts of climate change through 2050. The increasing demands for highway reconstruction and rehabilitation happening now provide an opportunity to incorporate climate adaptation strategies.

Speakers at a 2018 TRB conference on freight analytics impacts on the Marine Transportation System addressed the role of sea level rise on the field. One presenter specifically spoke on using the expert elicitation of port authorities to assess the vulnerability and the adaptive capacity of ports to the rising threats of extreme weather and sea level rise.

Professionals in the aviation industry are also keeping a step ahead of preparations for extreme weather events and climate change. TRB's Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) provides Climate Resilience and Benefit-Cost Analysis: A Handbook for Airports to assess the benefits, costs, and financial feasibility of infrastructure projects designed to improve resilience. Case studies of airports in Phoenix, Boston, New Orleans, and Little Rock explore how extreme weather events can affect small and large airports. In summary, evaluating climate resilience at airports may be wisely considered part of the overall risk management processes. ACRP also offers Integrating Sustainability Planning and the Environmental Review Process as a manual for planners who are integrating the environmental review and sustainability planning processes at airports. The fields of sustainability planning and environmental review share overlap, providing another opportunity for planning and infrastructure enhancement in transportation.

Extreme weather effects reach from the sky to deep underground, requiring preparations that are unique to each aspect of transportation. TRB's Transit Cooperative Research Project (TCRP) offers a series of reports on Improving the Resilience of Transit Systems Threatened by Natural Disasters with practices for all sizes of transit systems to absorb the impacts of disaster, recover quickly, and return rapidly to providing the services that customers rely on to meet their travel needs. It notes resilienttransit.org as a resource to identify tools to help plan for natural disasters.

Escalating preparations from basic to extreme

At TRB's Marine Board Spring Meeting, Suzanne Lemieux of the American Petroleum Institute mentioned the lessons learned from Harvey in terms of resilience, working from home, and managing systems for dealing with the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The 2020 hurricane season started unseasonably early, so the industry was already preparing for facing the dual threats of hurricanes and COVID-19 as early as May.

TRB continues to look to the future to better incorporate extreme event and climate change into transportation planning. An active NCHRP project aims to provide guidelines for response planning, assessment, and rapid restoration of service of bridges in extreme events.

'Walk and Bike Safely' roadway safety video teaches kids new safety habits

by Danielle Moody Wednesday, August 5th 2020

SAN ANTONIO— Vision Zero San Antonio has created an important new learning tool for area children through a child-friendly, animated video that teaches children critical roadway safety lessons.

"Creating an animated video that teaches roadway safety can arm parents, teachers, and with an easy way to save lives," said Bianca Thorpe, Capital Programs Manager, Transportation Planning & Programming for Public Works. "Teaching children how to cross the street is a good start, but we can't stop there when preparing them for how to interact with a dynamic transportation system. Through this video, we were able to capture so much of what children need to know in a simple but engaging way."

The concern for safety is at an all-time high right now during the warmer months when children are riding their bikes and playing outdoors. In the fall, many children will walk or ride the bus to school.

Walk and Bike Safely, the fifteen minute video, was created with Safe Kids San Antonio and University Health System. It is designed to help children learn important safety habits.

Just some of the lessons your child will learn through the video are:

- Making eye contact with drivers – never assuming a driver sees you
- Always staying alert when on or near a roadway
- The safest place to walk when there is no sidewalk
- The safest place to cross the road
- How to use a pedestrian signal crossing
- How to safely cross the street in front of a parked bus
- Increasing visibility when near or on a road after dark
- Bicycle safety rules and best practices
- How to inspect a bicycle to ensure it is roadway ready
- Hand signals for riding bicycles on roadways
- Safe practices for railroad crossings

You can watch the video by [CLICKING HERE](#).

DOT Unveils Applicant Toolkit for Rural Communities

Eleanor Lamb July 28, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation created a toolkit intended to help those interested in participating in the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success program.

Known as ROUTES, the program was [created in October 2019](#), and it is meant to help connectivity in rural communities. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao on July 27 unveiled the toolkit, which provides information and resources. Its purpose is to help rural applicants understand and navigate DOT's discretionary grant funding opportunities.

Specifically, the toolkit outlines applicant requirements and sorts grant programs by applicant type and eligible project activities. The toolkit was designed for applicants with varying levels of experience.

"This toolkit will help both the beginner and the experienced better understand, identify and navigate discretionary grant funding opportunities for rural transportation projects," Chao said during a video announcement. "There are a lot of rural communities who just don't have the resources to hire an army of dedicated staff and contractors to compete for these federal funds.

"We hope that this toolkit will be a reference and a road map to opportunities and resources at the U.S. Department of Transportation that will benefit your community and our country."

Rural roads make up 70% of America's road miles, according to DOT. Maintaining these roadways can be a challenge for rural communities that have thin financial resources. Although geographically sprawling, rural communities generally have low population densities, meaning fewer people to support investment.

Chao noted that infrastructure upgrades can improve safety, which also can be a challenge in rural areas. She said that although 19% of the population lives in rural areas, 45% of highway fatalities occur in rural areas.

In terms of economic activity, Chao said rural communities play an important role. According to Chao, two-thirds of freight moving by rail comes from rural areas, and nearly half the distance traveled by trucks takes place on rural roads.

"Rural transportation is important to our economy and our way of life," Chao said. "Manufactured goods, raw materials and agricultural products travel through rural areas on their way to global markets."

The ROUTES initiative's steering council includes representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration.

DOT has placed an emphasis on rural community needs through some of its popular grant programs. For example, the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America grant program directs a certain amount of funds toward rural projects. In the latest round of INFRA grants, [announced June 18](#), 53% of the funding was devoted to projects in rural areas.

In the latest round of Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grants, [issued in November 2019](#), half of the \$900 million in funding was awarded to projects in rural areas.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Chao Releases Pathways to the Future of Transportation

Thursday, July 23, 2020

WASHINGTON – One year after announcing the launch of the Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today released [Pathways to the Future of Transportation](#) – a policy document that is intended to serve as a roadmap for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department.

"Pathways to the Future of Transportation guidance on new, cross-modal technologies will help address legitimate public concerns about safety, security and privacy without hampering innovation," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

This policy document is the U.S. Department of Transportation's first step in providing a clear path for innovators of new cross modal technologies to engage with the Department. It lays out a process for innovators and stakeholders to approach the Department with their plans and proposals for emerging technologies.

Secretary Chao announced the creation of the NETT Council last year as an internal deliberative body to identify and resolve jurisdictional and regulatory gaps that may impede the deployment of new technologies, such as potential advances in tunneling technology and hyperloop. Pathways to the Future of Transportation intends to help private sector innovators understand the purpose, structure, and function of the NETT Council; lay out the principles guiding the Department's policies and posture toward transformative technologies; and deliver a high-level overview of the federal framework for supporting non-traditional and emerging technologies.

DOT will publish a Request for Comment on Pathways to the Future of Transportation, which will allow the public to comment and provide feedback on the document. More information on the NETT Council's work can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/nettcouncil>.

Opportunity Zones

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

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

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

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

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

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



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

Transportation Dictionary

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

Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
- The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym.

For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.