



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

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**MPO MEETINGS ANNOUNCED** (see *Mobile MPO Updates*) Virtual MPO meeting 3/10/21 at 10:00AM, Virtual TCC/CAC Meeting 2/24/21 at 10:00AM. With the Biden inauguration this week, the *In The News* and the *Legislative Updates* out shadow the lighting of Perdido Pass. The Buttigieg confirmation hearings are also this week, and Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., said he was "quite certain" that Buttigieg would be confirmed and cordially invited the nominee to come to Mississippi and see the Amtrak route along the Gulf Coast.

Also *In The News*, ALDOT is estimated to receive \$189 M from CARES ACT. There are no new *Funding Opportunities*, and this week we are vetting the new President, *Just For Fun*.

Our prayers go out to the Hank Aaron family. Hammerin Hank was a Mobile icon, and we will always remember him at the "Hank Aaron Loop".

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

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



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

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

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

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

## Mobile MPO Updates

### Meetings announced: The Mobile MPO will meet virtually on March 10, 2021, 10:00AM

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizen Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) will meet on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10:00 am via GoToMeeting.com, to make recommendations to the MPO Policy Board. The tentative agenda is as followed:

- Add project to 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) STPAA, Mobile County, 100044866 Gopher Tortoise Mitigation Habitat Development \$300,000
- Move project out of 2020-2023 TIP: 100059791 (CN) STPMB- New Alignment of CR-25 (McFarland Road) From CR-28 (Old Pascagoula Road) to CR-358 (Three Notch Road) \$13,100,000
- Approval of the [FY2020-2023 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan](#)
- Review report of the Mobile MPO Pubic Participation Process.
- Approve modification to the [Mobile MPO Public Participation Plan \(PPP\)](#), which outlines the public involvement procedures for the Mobile MPO transportation documents, to include the Limited English Proficiency Plan.
- Modification of the 2021 Unified Planning Work Program to account for a Mobile Area Wide Major Road Plan, in regards to Mobile County and it's connectivity to all municipal planning documents.
- Approve updated performance measures for Transit Asset Management, Transit Safety, PM1 (Safety), and PM 3 (Congestion and Freight)
- Review and approve the Program of Projects for the Mobile Urban Area FY2021 5310 funds to include:
  - City of Satsuma (\$33,085 Federal/\$33,085 Local); Via Health and Fitness Center (\$38,400 Federal/\$9,600 local) and the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission for program administration (\$31,736 Federal/\$0 Local)
- Discussion on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge (guests Dr. Don Epley, Mr. Steve Russell)

### Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects Available Online

The federal metropolitan transportation planning statute states:

"In metropolitan planning areas, on an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State, public transportation operator(s), and the MPO(s) shall cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year."

The Federal Highway Administration defines obligation as the federal government's legal commitment (promise) to pay or reimburse states or other entities for the federal share of a project's eligible costs. Thus, an obligated project is one that has been approved by the federal government for reimbursement, though not necessarily reimbursed yet. The obligated project cost reflected in this report also may not equal final project cost.

This report responds to the directive set forth in statute. It lists all federally-funded transportation projects in the Mobile Area Transportation Study (MATS) Area that were obligated in federal fiscal year 2020 (October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020). The MATS Report is available online [HERE](#).

SARPC staff have been working on statistics concerning how COVID-19 has affected travel patterns in the Mobile Urbanized area. For information on these statistics and travel patterns please contact [ajohnson@sarpc.org](mailto:ajohnson@sarpc.org)

## MOBILE MPO

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON TRAVEL PATTERNS

### Relative Change in Weekly Average Crashes



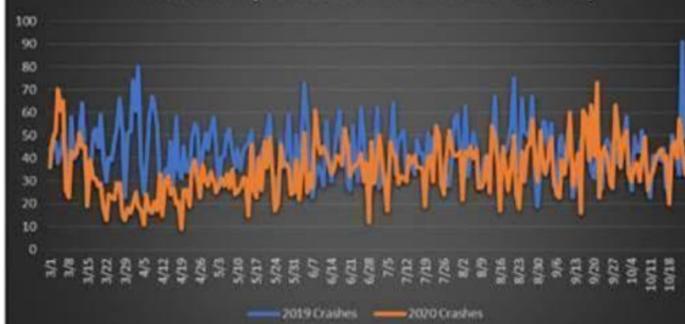
## MOBILE MPO

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON TRAVEL PATTERNS

### Relative Change in Weekly Average Traffic Volumes



### Total Daily Crashes in Mobile County



### Average Daily Traffic Volumes in Mobile County



### 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 : 100059790 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4918 (250)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : NEW ALIGNMENT OF CR-25 (MCFARLAND ROAD) FROM CR-28 (OLD PASCAGOULA ROAD) TO CR-358 (THREE NOTCH ROAD)

Old Target start date : December 01, 2021

New Target start date : November 01, 2022

Project : 100059791 ( CN )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4918

County : MOBILE

Project Description : NEW ALIGNMENT OF CR-25 (MCFARLAND ROAD) FROM CR-28 (OLD PASCAGOULA ROAD) TO CR-358 (THREE NOTCH ROAD)

Old Target start date : November 04, 2022

New Target start date : November 03, 2023

Project : 100059789 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4918 (250)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : NEW ALIGNMENT OF CR-25 (MCFARLAND ROAD) FROM CR-28 (OLD PASCAGOULA ROAD) TO CR-358 (THREE NOTCH ROAD)

Old Target start date : April 01, 2021

New Target start date : April 01, 2022

## South Alabama RPO Updates

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The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) met in October 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 January, 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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### **MOBILE COUNTY**

for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Steel Blockout Replacement, Curb & Gutter Installation, Sidewalk Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from the junction of Lawrence Street to the junction of Water Street and Telegraph Road in Allenville. Length 0.670 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$516,796 to \$631,639 .

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

None at this time.

### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

None at this time.

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

## Legislative Updates

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### **Buttigieg cites gas tax hike at hearing, but aide walks it back**

*Transportation secretary nominee's most common answer was an expressed willingness to work with senators on their concerns*

By [Jessica Wehrman](#) Posted January 21, 2021

Former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg on Thursday put a gas tax hike on the table of ways to pay for federal highway programs, only to have a spokesman later rule out that possibility

Buttigieg, testifying before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee at his confirmation hearing to be secretary of Transportation, was pressed on a gas tax increase by Sen. [Rick Scott](#), R-Fla., one of several Republicans eager to put him on the record supporting a tax hike.

"Would you support gas tax increases, and if so, how much?" asked Scott.

"I think all options need to be on the table," Buttigieg replied. "As you know, the gas tax has not been increased since 1993 and it's never been pegged to inflation, and that is one of the reasons why the current state of the Highway Trust Fund is that there's more going out than coming in."

Later, under questioning from Sen. [Mike Lee](#), R-Utah, Buttigieg said it was "possible" the federal government could raise the gas tax. "Certainly many states have taken that step, including my own, but it's not the only approach," he said.

A Buttigieg spokesman later walked that statement back, telling reporters that a "variety of options need to be on the table to ensure we can invest in our highways and create jobs, but increasing the gas tax is not among them."

Buttigieg added that Congress has solved the trust fund shortfall in the past by making periodic transfers from the general fund. "I don't know whether Congress would want to continue doing that, and I think in the near term, we need a solution that can provide some predictability and sustainability," he said.

In ruling out raising the gas tax, Buttigieg would be at odds with a variety of transportation stakeholders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Trucking Associations, the AFL-CIO and the American Automobile Association. It also puts him at odds with Rep. [Peter A. DeFazio](#), D-Ore., the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

President Joe Biden has not specifically endorsed hiking the gas tax, but his campaign website says that "the Highway Trust Fund has for far too long been grossly underfunded," and that Biden "will ensure new revenues are secured to stabilize" the fund.

Others, including Rep. [Sam Graves](#), R-Mo., the ranking member of the House Transportation Committee, have advocated a financing measure based on vehicle miles traveled. Buttigieg suggested a similar method during his 2020 presidential run but acknowledged technological and privacy barriers that keep it from being a short-term solution.

### **Perennial debate**

The standoff over whether to raise or even index the federal gas tax, now an 18.4-cents-a-gallon federal gas tax and 24.4-cents-a-gallon diesel tax, has become a perennial one.

“Transportation infrastructure investment around here has always been an area for bipartisan cooperation,” said Sen. [John Thune](#), R-S.D. “The other thing that enjoys bipartisan popularity around here is not paying for it.”

Buttigieg acknowledged during the hearing that there are a variety of models and timelines to consider, including adjusting the gas tax, connecting it to inflation or moving toward a model based on vehicle miles traveled.

“I think there’s a recognition that we don’t have adequate national resources going into roads and highways and that we need to look at any responsible viable revenue mechanism we can all agree on to do something about that,” he said.

Despite repeated questions about highway financing, Buttigieg faced a largely friendly panel, with many eager to win cooperation from the former Democratic presidential candidate on their pet transportation projects.

Incoming Chairwoman [Maria Cantwell](#), D-Wash., pushed the importance of the Interstate 5 Columbia River Bridge replacement and other bridges in her state. Sen. [Richard Blumenthal](#), D-Conn., urged Buttigieg to support the \$30 billion Gateway Program, a multifaceted infrastructure project on Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor that includes rebuilding the Hudson Tunnel between New York and New Jersey. Sen. [Kyrsten Sinema](#), D-Ariz., urged his support for work on Interstate 11 in her state.

For those projects and the other legislative proposals, agenda items and wish lists offered by the senators, Buttigieg was amenable, promising to work with the senators and study what they asked him to study. His most common answer during the three-hour hearing was an expressed willingness to work with senators on their concerns.

The strategy worked. “You have put on a clinic on how a nominee should work and act,” said Sen. [Jon Tester](#), D-Mont. “You haven’t avoided the questions. You’ve been straightforward, and you know what the hell you’re talking about. And that’s really pretty damn refreshing.”

#### **GOP pushback**

But at least two Republican senators offered mild pushback on Biden’s decision to revoke the Keystone XL pipeline permit.

Without targeting Buttigieg directly, Sens. [Dan Sullivan](#), R-Alaska, and [Ted Cruz](#), R-Texas, both criticized the decision, saying it would eliminate thousands of jobs.

Buttigieg defended the decision.

“We are very eager to see those workers continue to be employed in good-paying union jobs, even if they might be different ones,” he said.

Cruz was dissatisfied, arguing that the Keystone XL decision “is the front end of a whole series of regulatory decisions, one after the other after the other, that will be eliminating union jobs, that will be eliminating manufacturing jobs, that will be eliminating energy jobs.”

“I think the answer is that we’re going to create more good-paying union jobs,” Buttigieg replied. “And we can do that while recognizing the fact that when the books are written about our careers, one of the main things we’ll be judged on is whether we did enough to stop the destruction of life and property due to climate change. I’ve got to believe we can do both of those things.”

Even before the hearing ended, Buttigieg had stated support from Sens. [Edward J. Markey](#), D-Mass., and [Jacky Rosen](#), D-Nev., who urged the committee “to facilitate a swift confirmation of Mr. Buttigieg so he can immediately get to work on all the things that our colleagues on this committee have asked for for our nation and their states as well.”

Outgoing Chairman [Roger Wicker](#), R-Miss., praised Buttigieg’s “impressive credentials” and said he was “quite certain” that Buttigieg would be confirmed.

If confirmed, Buttigieg could become familiar with the committee quickly. Congress faces an October deadline to reauthorize federal highway programs. Last year, Congress extended the current highway law for a year.

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## **Buttigieg gets favorable reception in confirmation hearing for transportation secretary role**

**Nicholas Wu** USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Pete Buttigieg, President [Joe Biden's](#) nominee to lead the Department of Transportation, met a favorable reception and drew praise from both sides of the aisle Thursday on Capitol Hill Thursday his confirmation hearing before a key Senate panel.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., said Buttigieg “put on a clinic on how a nominee should work and act,” lauding his straightforward answers to senators’ questions.

And in a nod to bipartisanship, Buttigieg’s fellow Hoosier, Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., introduced him to the Senate Commerce Committee. Praising Buttigieg’s background in Indiana, Young said he would “look forward to working with him” to improve the nation’s infrastructure.

[Buttigieg](#), the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., and a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, fielded questions from senators on myriad of transportation-related issues and the rebuilding of the nation’s crumbling infrastructure. Several senators asked Buttigieg about infrastructure projects important to their states or regions.

“I’ve heard this loud and clear from you and your colleagues in the region,” Buttigieg told Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who had asked about the status of the Gateway Project, a huge project to replace aging rail infrastructure on the nation’s busiest passenger rail corridor.

Buttigieg faces challenges as secretary to both safeguard the nation’s transportation networks against COVID-19 and to implement Biden’s ambitious infrastructure plan if Congress passes it.

The Department of Transportation distributes billions of dollars in federal highway funding and regulates aviation, railroads and busing. Biden’s infrastructure and clean energy plan has proposed placing 500,000 charging stations along highways and changing federal vehicles to electric power. And on Thursday, Biden is expected to sign an executive order [requiring](#) the wearing of face masks in airports, on certain public transportation, and on many trains, planes, and buses.

Buttigieg told senators his background as a mayor gave him a "bottom-up perspective on transportation programs and funding," reflecting on infrastructure programs he had administered in the city like the revitalization of the city's downtown and the revamping of its train system and airport.

He was asked by several Republican senators how the federal government would pay for billions in proposed infrastructure spending, and Buttigieg told them the financing would depend on how the economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In what was likely a first for a Cabinet confirmation hearing, Buttigieg introduced his husband, Chasten Buttigieg, whom he thanked for his "many sacrifices" and support. If confirmed, Buttigieg would be the first openly gay Cabinet secretary confirmed by the Senate. Former President Donald Trump's acting director of national intelligence, Ric Grenell, was the first openly gay Cabinet-level official, but Grenell was never confirmed by the Senate.

Buttigieg was the nation's youngest mayor of a city South Bend's size or larger when he took office in 2012. He envisioned his hometown as a "beta city," the perfect size to use his data-driven background with the consulting firm McKinsey to test big ideas. That included the "smart sewers" that saved South Bend an estimated hundreds of millions of dollars and became a template for a product now sold to cities all over the world.

In 2018, South Bend beat out more than 300 other cities for a Bloomberg Mayor's challenge grant to expand a ride share service the city piloted.

## **New Administration Pledges Billions for Transportation as COVID Continues to Wreck Budgets**

[SANDY SMITH](#) JANUARY 20, 2021

Today marks the beginning of another chapter in the American experiment — the outwardly peaceful transfer of power from one president to another. That peaceful transfer has been marred by an insurrection most blame on the outgoing President's rhetoric, and as a result, the main reason this transfer will be "peaceful" is because the center of Washington has been turned into a fortress. Adding to the tension surrounding this transfer is the raging pandemic that has now claimed 400,000 American lives and counting.

That pandemic has thrown the entire economy into a hole it has yet to climb out of, and the transportation sector is no exception. And since mobility remains essential to our economy's smooth functioning, both President Biden and his choice for Secretary of Transportation, former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg, have pledged to spend huge sums on transportation overall and urban mass transit in particular. Biden's plan focuses on applying a tourniquet to bleeding transit balance sheets while Buttigieg has put forth an even bigger commitment to infrastructure spending in the longer run.

Not only urban transit systems, but state transportation departments can still use the help. The transit systems are still dealing with depressed ridership that has likewise depressed revenues, and the transportation departments have to cope with greatly diminished revenue from motor fuel taxes in many cases. (And as many states use some of those fuel taxes to help pay for mass transit, that creates a double whammy for urban transit agencies' balance sheets.) Reports from Texas and Seattle show the degree to which COVID has thrown budgets out of whack.

Meanwhile, we continue to get around using the infrastructure and transit service we still have. In most cities, bike lanes, often protected by buffers or physical barriers, have become key elements of that infrastructure. Some of those bicyclists use the lanes to get to their jobs at city restaurants that have taken over curbside parking spaces in order to keep going during the pandemic. One such restaurant in New York has now put bicyclists' safety in danger by building an enclosed shed with multiple doors right in the buffer zone of a curbside bike lane. At least one New York bicyclist is worried about the prospect of being doored... by a building.

### **Biden Promises Fast Transportation Relief; Buttigieg Ups the Ante for the Longer Haul**

Both President Joe Biden and Transportation Secretary nominee Pete Buttigieg have already laid large sums of money on the table to address the problems plaguing transit and transportation across the country.

Biden's pledge came during an address he made Thursday, Jan. 14. [As reported in Mass Transit](#), Biden is including \$20 billion in upfront relief for "the hardest hit public transit agencies" as part of a larger, \$1.9-trillion "American Rescue Plan." A fact sheet released after the address explained the aid this way: "Safe and dependable public transit systems are critical for a robust and equitable economy recovery. This relief will keep agencies from laying off transit workers and cutting the routes that essential workers rely on every day while making these transit systems more resilient and ensuring that communities of color maintain the access to opportunity that public transportation provides."

As of now, there are no details as to which agencies would qualify as the "hardest hit" or how the funds would be allocated among them. The "American Rescue Plan" is a short-term relief measure, and Biden has yet to go into detail on what his longer-term "Build Back Better" package would contain. But Buttigieg may have revealed a part of that plan in his infrastructure spending proposal, announced Jan. 10. ITS International [reports](#) that his plan, which carries a \$1 trillion price tag, will include \$150 billion for public transit.

According to the report, the former South Bend mayor will leave it up to the cities and states to determine how best to spend the money they get. After criticizing the Trump administration's lack of commitment to keeping up the nation's transportation infrastructure, Buttigieg said, "Under my administration, local governments will finally have a partner in Washington. As a former mayor, I know that priority-based budgets made locally are better than budget-based priorities set in Washington."

Other parts of his transportation spending plan aim to reduce the rising fatality counts on the nation's roads. Most of these fatalities now occur in cities and involve pedestrians or bicyclists getting hit by cars. Buttigieg's road-safety plan will require state transportation departments to commit to plans to reduce road fatalities in line with national Vision Zero goals.

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Crafting COVID-19 Relief, Infrastructure Plan**

[editor@ashto.org](mailto:editor@ashto.org) January 22, 2021

The newly installed Biden-Harris administration said it is working on a "two-step plan of rescue and recovery" plan to provide more COVID-19 relief funding — especially for transit agencies across the country — alongside a major infrastructure investment program.

“The first step — the [American Rescue Plan](#) — will tackle the pandemic and get direct financial assistance and relief to Americans who need it the most,” noted President Joe Biden in a [statement](#).

Then, “in my first appearance before a Joint Session of Congress, I will lay out the second step, my Build Back Better Recovery Plan. It will make historic investments in infrastructure and manufacturing, innovation, research and development, and clean energy,” the president said — an approach he said would create more than 18 million jobs.

“It’s time to stop talking about infrastructure and finally start building it,” President Biden emphasized. “Millions of good-paying jobs that put Americans to work rebuilding our roads, bridges, and ports to make them more climate resilient, to make it faster, cheaper, and cleaner to transport American-made goods across our country and around the world.”

According to a 19-page synopsis of the proposed \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, some \$20 billion in relief is included for the “hardest hit” public transit agencies — aimed at preventing transit worker layoffs and reduction in routes essential workers rely on every day for transportation to and from their jobs.

Meanwhile, the administration said transit agencies could use those funds to make their systems “more resilient” while “ensuring that communities of color maintain the access to opportunity that public transportation provides.”

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## Infrastructure Investment Key To Economic Recovery, Groups Say

[editor@ashto.org](mailto:editor@ashto.org) January 15, 2021

Recent reports released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and Florida Department of Transportation illustrate the critical role transportation infrastructure investment will play in helping the U.S. economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his annual [State of American Business](#) speech on January 12, Thomas Donohue — CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — outlined the path for a widespread economic recovery through infrastructure investments, workforce “re-skilling,” immigration reforms, and re-energization of America’s global competitiveness. Additionally, he warned that excessive regulations and anti-competitive taxes would undermine the recovery.

“Our lawmakers should enact a fiscally and environmentally responsible infrastructure package that focuses on urgent needs like roads and bridges, modernizes our critical networks, and upgrades and expands technology like broadband,” Donohue explained in his speech, noting that such a package is the “one way to raise productivity, create jobs, and drive up incomes in a hurry.”

“Ten months after COVID-19 caused an unprecedented disruption in economic activity, some industries have fully recovered while others are in the equivalent of a depression,” added Neil Bradley, the Chamber’s executive vice president and chief policy officer, in a [separate statement](#).

“The full reopening of the economy that widespread vaccinations will make possible offers a light at the end of the tunnel, but we will be dealing with the fallout from the pandemic for years to come,” he explained. “As we rally for recovery, it is critical that policymakers pursue pro-growth policies that can help business, families, and communities fully recover.”

To that end, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Bipartisan Policy Center, along with more than 140 national and local organizations, including AASHTO, launched the [Build by the Fourth of July](#) infrastructure campaign on January 14. That effort aims to convince newly elected and re-elected members of Congress to enact a fiscally and environmentally responsible infrastructure package by the July 4, 2021. The ASCE highlighted the importance of infrastructure to the U.S. economic recovery in a report released January 12 entitled [Failure to Act: Economic Impacts of Status Quo Investment Across Infrastructure Systems](#). ASCE said its report quantifies how “persistent failure to invest in our aging infrastructure” affects the U.S. economy, including gross domestic product, jobs, personal disposable income, and business sales.

The group found that with an increased investment of \$281 billion a year the U.S. can “eliminate this drag on the economy.”

A key focus of ACSE’s report is the fallout from a lack of surface transportation funding, with preliminary findings showing that losses to households and industries would amount to \$677 billion over the 2020–2029 period and \$1.5 trillion during the 2030–2039 decade, the group said.

By contrast, the Florida DOT’s 39-page [macroeconomic analysis](#) found that the state’s transportation projects should yield an average \$4 of benefits for every dollar invested in all transportation modes, including highway, transit, rail, airports, seaports and waterways, and spaceports.

That translates into \$164 billion worth of economic benefits over the next 30 years — roughly \$5.4 billion per year — in terms of economic value as measured by gross state product over the next three decades (\$61 billion), increased personal income (\$72 billion), and increased industry output (\$99 billion).

The Florida DOT also determined via its analysis that the \$4 return per transportation infrastructure dollar invested held steady despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic — reinforcing the durable nature of economic gains of transportation system investments.

“Investing in transportation is key as we plan for our state’s future,” explained Kevin Thibault, Florida DOT secretary, in a [statement](#). “The department is proud to make vital investments in Florida’s transportation system that will create essential jobs, provide long-term economic benefits, and keep Florida moving for decades to come.”

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## Biden Infrastructure Plan Pushes Better Roads, EV Chargers, Mass Transit

[Jim Henry](#) Contributor Jan 20, 2021

The Biden Administration has plans for massive spending on the nation’s infrastructure, via a newly friendly, “light-blue” Congress, on the order of \$2 trillion-plus.

A lot of that is headed for the auto industry and the transportation infrastructure, like roads and bridges, plus public transportation, electric utilities, and related jobs in all those fields — especially electric vehicles and their specialized infrastructure, like charging stations.

That's in addition to around \$900 billion in Covid-19 relief spending Congress already passed, plus any additional economic stimulus Congress may approve this year.

"After Georgia, we definitely have a government with a light-blue hue," said Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for Cox Automotive, in a recent webinar, referring to the Democrats flipping the U.S. Senate by winning both Georgia seats.

#### **Congress Is Blue Enough to Pass Bills**

It's only light blue, because it's a majority of one vote, including Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris. But even a thin Senate majority makes it a lot more likely Biden can get his plans passed, instead of facing a hostile Senate majority. "We are likely to see more stimulus than the \$900 billion," Smoke said.

Biden appointees Janet Yellen, his pick for Treasury secretary, and Pete Buttigieg, the Transportation secretary-designate, have plugged Biden's infrastructure plans in general terms, in recent appearances.

"President-Elect Biden has proposed an ambitious, Build Back Better program that involves infrastructure, it involves clean energy, investing in manufacturing, R&D, training," Yellen said in her confirmation hearing Tuesday, according to C-SPAN. She added, "We've yet to decide exactly how that's going to be financed."

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) said in the hearing that the economy needs, "a World War II-level investment ... to defeat the pandemic and build a better economy."

Separately, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said in a recent interview on WOWK-TV that infrastructure spending is "the most important thing" the government could do to create jobs. Manchin is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"Do big infrastructure. Spend two, three, \$4 trillion over a 10-year period on infrastructure," Manchin said. "You want to put everybody back to work? There's a lot of people who lost their jobs, and those jobs aren't coming back. They need a place to work, to make a living. Every state could start infrastructure programs."

#### **Jobs Bill with "Good-Paying Jobs"**

Buttigieg met with labor leaders last week, according to an official account of the meeting on Biden's web site, [buildbackbetter.gov](https://www.buildbackbetter.gov). Biden's infrastructure plan puts a priority on "good-paying jobs with a choice to join a union."

According to the account, "Secretary-designate Buttigieg talked about how investing in our infrastructure and our workers is an enormous opportunity to lead the world. He reiterated the Biden-Harris administration's goals for DOT, including safe transportation, creating millions of good paying jobs at home, fighting for equity in transportation policy and taking on climate change."

During the campaign, Biden introduced a heavily "green" automotive, transportation, and energy agenda, with a price tag of at least \$2 trillion for his first term.

As part of a larger green agenda, Biden is also reportedly planning to kill the Keystone XL oil pipeline. He has also pledged to re-enlist the United States in the Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gases, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The pipeline would run from Alberta, Canada to Nebraska and link to pipelines to Texas and Illinois refineries.

The United States quit the Paris Agreement under the Trump Administration, but that action only took effect in November 2020.

Biden's infrastructure plan includes, "1 million new jobs in auto manufacturing, auto supply chains, and auto infrastructure," including the electric-vehicle recharging infrastructure. Again, those would be "good-paying jobs with a choice to join a union."

Biden's plan stops just short of endorsing union jobs per se, but the Biden organization does maintain that declining "union density" in the United States is a major reason pay increases have not kept up with productivity increases. Going back to the 1980s, the UAW has had very little success organizing auto and auto supplier plants in the South.

In the long run, rewarding U.S. auto workers with better pay would make the U.S. auto industry more competitive with China, in the race to dominate the global market for electric vehicles, according to the Biden organization.

Biden's automotive scheme is heavy on high-tech, pushing electric and autonomous vehicles, and Internet-connected "smart" highways and an extensive recharging infrastructure.

#### **More Places to Plug In**

One key Biden proposal is to add 500,000 electric vehicle chargers. That would be a huge increase to the existing network.

To put that in context, Electrify America LLC, a subsidiary of [Volkswagen](https://www.volkswagen.com) Group of America which was launched in 2017, is a leading U.S. network of DC (direct current) fast chargers, as opposed to slower chargers that are often installed in people's homes or workplaces.

Electrify America is investing over \$2 billion over 10 years in zero-emissions vehicle infrastructure, and it expects to have 800 total charging stations with about 3,500 DC fast chargers, by the end of 2021.

Biden has also said he plans to rebuild the conventional transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, rail, and public transportation. The Biden campaign talked in terms of creating "millions" of jobs in total, according to the campaign website.

Biden's automotive plan borrows many of the features of a "Clean Cars for America" initiative co-sponsored in October 2019 by Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), then the Senate minority leader, and other Senate Democrats. Schumer likely becomes majority leader, which helps the outlook for the legislation.

As of 2020, there were 26,000 EV charging stations in the U.S. with 84,000 plugs, according to The Department of Energy. In comparison, the U.S. has 168,000 gasoline stations.

### Carbon-Neutral Program

The Clean Cars initiative calls for government fleets to switch to electric vehicles, plus the possible extension, or addition to, consumer tax credits for purchasing electric vehicles. Electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids currently qualify for a \$7,500 income tax credit for the first 200,000 electrified vehicles sold. Tesla and General Motors have both capped out.

The Biden infrastructure plan also includes a proposal for “high-quality, zero-emissions public transportation options.” Those include light-rail networks and infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians, on top of existing transit and bus lines, for roughly the 300 biggest cities in the United States.

The goal is for the U.S. government to achieve “a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035.”

## Funding Opportunities

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### FY 2021 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Application Workshop Announced RTP Application due March 3, 2021

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) will be conducting a virtual application workshop for FY 2021 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds due to public safety concerns regarding COVID-19. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 9:00 am.

Join from a video system or application

Dial [1772540392@al.gov.webex.com](tel:1772540392)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

RTP applications for FY 2021 will be accepted beginning Wednesday, January 13, 2021, through 12:00 Noon on Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

For more information email: [latoya.edwards@adeca.alabama.gov](mailto:latoya.edwards@adeca.alabama.gov)

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### New CDBG GRANT Program

To Address COVID-19 Impacts (currently no deadline)

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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

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

Submit your questions to:

[CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov](mailto:CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov)

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

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

EDA CARES ACT RECOVERY ASSISTANCE (currently no deadline)

OVERVIEW

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

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

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### Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

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

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

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

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

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

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### Vetting the new president.

The now president Biden (the above statement and this video is when he was VP) is the original owner of a 1967 corvette, and likes to drive it fast. How fast? Watch the [video](#) below.



“There’s a lot of reasons to run for president, but there’s one overwhelming reason not to run for president,” Biden said at the United Auto Workers’ annual legislative conference in Washington. “I’d like to get that Z06 with zero to 60 in 3.4 seconds. Three point four seconds.” The secret service never let him drive his 67 corvette; he only drove it 3 times in seven years!

## In the News

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### U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Biden Appointees Ready to Work on Behalf of the American People

Thursday, January 21, 2021

WASHINGTON – Today, the Biden Administration announced key members of its U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) leadership, many of whom are already at work in the opening days of the new Administration. This diverse and experienced team will bring unique perspective and vast expertise to the job. This group will help USDOT civil servants already hard at work on behalf of the American people advance President Biden’s agenda to build our country back better. With the safety of the traveling public and America’s workers at the center of its mission, the team will work toward economic recovery, racial equity, and combating climate change.

“This experienced team looks forward to getting right to work on behalf of the American people to deliver on policies and projects that will create jobs, equitably serve all Americans, and meet the climate crisis,” said Carlos Monje Jr., Senior Advisor to the Secretary and acting Chief of Staff. “President Biden has been clear: stronger infrastructure is a key to building our country back better than it was before.”

Lana Hurdle, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget & Programs, will serve as Acting Secretary of Transportation until Secretary-Designate Buttigieg is confirmed. While additional people will be named later, the initial team (starting on January 20 or soon after) includes:

**Amit Bose**, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

**Ann Carlson**, Chief Counsel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**Florence Chen**, Special Assistant for Policy

**Casey Clemmons**, Special Assistant, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

**Steve Cliff**, Deputy Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**Christopher Coes**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy

**Nuria Fernandez**, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

**Robert Hampshire**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology

**Maurice Henderson**, Senior Advisor

**Danielle Hirshberg**, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations

**Justine Hong**, Director of Executive Secretariat

**Robin Hutcheson**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy

**Subash Iyer**, Chief Counsel, Federal Transit Administration

**Meera Joshi**, Deputy Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

**Tatjana Kunz**, Special Assistant for Policy

**Lucinda Lessley**, Deputy Administrator, Maritime Administration

**Diana Lopez**, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

**Irene Marion**, Director, Departmental Office of Civil Rights

**Edward McGlone**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs (House)

**Philip A. McNamara**, Assistant Secretary for Administration

**A. Bradley Mims**, Deputy Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration

**Carlos Monje Jr.**, Senior Advisor and Acting Chief of Staff

**Allie Panther**, White House Liaison

**Alex A. Peña**, Special Assistant to the General Counsel

**Carol A. (Annie) Petsonk**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs

**Stephanie Pollack**, Deputy Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

**John Putnam**, Deputy General Counsel

**Will Rasky**, Special Assistant for Governmental Affairs

**Courtenay Raymond**, Director of Scheduling and Advance

**Andrew Rogers**, Chief Counsel, Federal Highway Administration

**Laura Schiller**, Chief of Staff

**Michael Shapiro**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy

**Sophie Shulman**, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy

**Dani Simons**, Assistant to the Secretary and Director of Public Affairs

**Charles Small**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs

**Mohsin Syed**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs (Senate)

**Charlene Wang**, Special Assistant, Federal Highway Administration

**Victoria Baecher Wassmer**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance and Budget

**Vinn White**, Senior Advisor for Implementation

**Laurence Wildgoose**, Assistant Administrator for Policy, International Affairs, and Environment, Federal Aviation Administration

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## **Safety, Infrastructure Touted At USDOT Secretary-Designee Hearing**

[editor@aaashto.org](mailto:editor@aaashto.org) January 22, 2021

Pete Buttigieg – former 2020 Democratic candidate for president and mayor of South Bend, Indiana – touted safety and infrastructure investment as his key priorities during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on January 21 to be the 19th U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

“Safety is the foundation of the department [of transportation’s] mission, and it takes on new meaning amid this [COVID-19] pandemic,” Buttigieg said in his [written testimony](#). “We must ensure all of our transportation systems – from aviation to public transit, to our railways, roads, ports, waterways, and pipelines – are managed safely during this critical period, as we work to defeat the virus.”

Nominated to be USDOT secretary by President Biden in [December 2020](#), Buttigieg also stressed that investment in transportation infrastructure will play a critical role in both restoring and growing the U.S. economy.

“We need to build our economy back, better than ever, and the Department of Transportation can play a central role in this by ... creating millions of good-paying jobs, revitalizing communities that have been left behind, enabling American small businesses, workers, families and farmers to compete and win in the global economy, and tackling the climate crisis,” Buttigieg said.

“Infrastructure can be the cornerstone to all of this, and you have my commitment that I will work closely with you to deliver the innovation and growth that America needs in this area,” he emphasized.

“This is our opportunity to literally do the ‘building’ within the Build Back Better agenda,” Buttigieg noted during question and answer portion of the hearing.

“While there is still a lot of conversation before that [investment] happens not only within the administration but within Congress on how to shape and fund that opportunity, this is part and parcel of what has to happen for the economy to recover,” he pointed out.

“Certainly, there are challenges for every mode of transportation,” Buttigieg added. “We know, for example, that more is going out of the Highway Trust Fund than going into it and that Congress is maintaining it through general fund transfers. So there we need a more stable and predictable means of funding. However, we must also remember we have a historic opportunity here on both sides of the aisle and with the public for transportation investment, whether we are talking about trains, planes, and automobiles or next generation transportation.”

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## How much federal funding will each state DOT receive?

***State departments of transportation are set to receive funds totaling \$9.8 billion from the COVID-19 emergency relief measure.***

Zachary Phillips Jan. 20, 2021

State departments of transportation are set to receive funds totaling \$9.8 billion as a result of emergency aid from the \$900 billion COVID-19 relief measure passed late last year.

That number is a part of nearly \$10 billion total earmarked for transportation spending, and experts say the funds are much needed.

“Since the early response to the pandemic, state DOTs have faced severe losses in state transportation revenues as vehicle travel declined,” Jim Tymon, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, said in a statement. “This COVID relief bill enables state DOTs to stay on track and support the efficient movement of critical goods and services as they maintain their transportation systems.”

The Federal Highway Administration must apportion the funds for state DOTs within 30 days of the bill’s enactment, according to AASHTO. President Donald Trump signed the bill into law Dec. 27. Each state’s portion will be based on the state’s share of obligation limitations within the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation or FAST Act, according to AASHTO.

Here is a sortable look at how much money each state will receive from the COVID-19 relief measure:

### Estimate of apportionment for state DOT

**STATE** Alabama  
**AMOUNT** \$189,474,297  
**SHARE** 1.93%

California and Texas will receive the most money with \$918 million and \$914 million, respectively. Those totals are far ahead the third most for Florida, which will receive \$473 million.

Washington, D.C., will receive the least amount of funding (\$39 million), although among states, the bottom three amounts are for small states: New Hampshire (\$41 million), Hawaii (\$42 million) and Delaware (\$42 million).

State DOTs can use the relief money to fund Surface Transportation Block Grant-eligible projects, preventive and routine maintenance, operations, employee and contractor salaries, debt service and availability payments and coverage for other revenue losses, according to AASHTO. Additionally, the relief funds — which will be available until Sept. 30, 2024 — could be transferred to public tolling and ferry agencies for all of the same costs as state DOTs.

Of the remaining funds for transportation, \$115 million will go to the Tribal Transportation Program, \$36 million to the Puerto Rico Highway Program, and \$9 million to the Territorial Highway Program, according to ForConstructionPros.

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## Lighting of the Perdido Pass Bridge

(OBA®) - Orange Beach, AL - A team of Orange Beach, AL volunteer citizens are undertaking a multimillion-dollar community project to add decorative LED lighting technology to the Perdido Pass Bridge, with support from the City of Orange Beach. Adding LED lighting technology to our bridge will capture the attention of hundreds and thousands of people, residents and visitors alike, while bolstering the identity of Orange Beach as the premier beach destination on the northern Gulf Coast.

LED bridge lighting is among the most energy-efficient options a city can choose when deciding ways to improve the community. LED lighting is widely known for using less power than traditional lighting and rarely needs to be replaced, providing an eco-friendly lighting option with an extremely long lifespan. It is possible the low amount of power required to light the bridge can be generated via solar energy technology and that option is currently being investigated.

We are also working closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, for Turtle Safety, and the AL Department of Transportation for bridge enhancement. The Orange Beach, AL Perdido Pass Bridge Lighting Project, a nonprofit organization with 501-C-3 IRS status, has been established and we are actively building the marketing, fundraising and the necessary network to achieve our goal by 2023.

### Contact Info:

Visit [LightOurBridge.com](https://LightOurBridge.com) for more information.

[Facebook Page](#)

Contact Email: [Tom@LightOurBridge.com](mailto:Tom@LightOurBridge.com)

Phone: 251-330-0346

## Fundraising begins to light Perdido Pass Bridge

ASHLYN IRONS UPDATED JAN 20, 2021

Perdido Pass has been a local hotspot for years.

A newly formed non-profit is working to make it that much brighter.

The Perdido Pass Bridge Lighting Project, made up of Orange Beach locals, got the green light from the city this week to move forward with fundraising for the estimated two million dollar project.

All paid for by crowd sourcing through sites like Go Fund Me, PayPal, and Venmo.

Two million dollars may seem like a lofty goal, but Project Founder Tom Clark believes they can get it done.

"There's a lot of tourism here, there's a lot of citizens that like this concept, I'm not bashful about that number at all, not one bit," said Clark.

The City of Orange Beach is working with project leaders to make their dream of lining the pass with LED lights a reality, creating a public-private partnership they hope will put the Baldwin beach town on the map.

"I think it creates a lot more activity to make people want to stay that few more hours, maybe stop and eat," said Orange Beach City Administrator, Ken Grimes.

One major concern already voiced about the project: its impact on the environment.

Experts say certain kinds of light can often times disorient sea turtles during nesting season.

Even though the project is still in very early stages, we're told officials are already in talks with local conservation groups and Alabama Fish and Wildlife to make sure impacts are only positive.

"We're not going to do anything that causes disruption. I think if its a possibility and can happen, then it will definitely be done the right way," said Grimes.

Project organizers are looking at solar power as an option to further reduce impact on the environment, and are considering only lighting the north side of the bridge, or reducing lights during sea turtle nesting season.

They are hoping to move forward with the project in the next few years.

[If you'd like to learn more or donate to the project, click here for more resources.](#)

## Transportation Research



### Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility

Instructed by Ronald W. Eck, Ph.D., P.E.

#### What is covered in this webinar?

- PROWAG & ADAAG
- Street Furniture & On-Street Parking
- Characteristics of Pedestrians with Disabilities
- Detectable Warnings & Pedestrian Crossings
- Legal Requirements
- Pedestrian Access Routes
- Curb Ramps and Other Transitions
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals

**March 9 - 10, 2021**  
**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM CDT**

This webinar has a fee of \$100 and earns participants 6.0 PDHs.  
For more information and registration please visit [eng.auburn.edu/atap](http://eng.auburn.edu/atap)

ATAP • 202 Ramsay Hall Auburn, AL 36849 • (800) 446-0382 • [atap@auburn.edu](mailto:atap@auburn.edu)

## U.S. Department of Transportation Releases Draft Strategic Plan on Accessible Transportation

Friday, January 15, 2021

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) this week published a draft of its first [Strategic Plan on Accessible Transportation](#) (Accessibility Strategic Plan), a noteworthy step in making America’s transportation system more accessible for all travelers. The draft Accessibility Strategic Plan is available for [public review and comment](#), and will be announced this month in the Federal Register.

“This first-of-its-kind Accessibility Strategic Plan creates a unified vision for the Department to achieve access and mobility for all in transportation,” said Acting U.S. Secretary of Transportation Steven Bradbury.

The draft Accessibility Strategic Plan reflects ongoing and future initiatives across the DOT’s operating administrations to enhance accessibility and remove barriers in transportation for people with disabilities. It represents a unified vision for progress in accessible transportation that will guide the DOT’s efforts in Fiscal Years 2021-2025.

DOT also released a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) regarding the launch of an [Inclusive Design Reference Hub](#) to establish a library of resources for accessibility in automation, and to work with outside experts to study voluntary best practices for ensuring accessibility in automated vehicles. Responses to the RFI are requested no later than 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on February 19, 2021.

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## U.S. Department of Transportation Releases “Hyperloop Standards Desk Review”

Friday, January 15, 2021

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) today released the “[Hyperloop Standards Desk Review](#),” sponsored by the Department’s Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council. This document serves to assess the status of hyperloop standard development; begin a dialogue for future hyperloop standardization efforts; and identify stakeholder perspectives on the applicability of existing standards to domestic testing and deployment.

In July 2020, the U.S. Department of Transportation released *Pathways to the Future of Transportation: A Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council Guidance Document (Pathways to the Future of Transportation)* to provide a framework for the Department’s approach toward non-traditional and emerging technologies, including hyperloop. In response to Pathways to the Future of Transportation, stakeholders shared that it would be helpful for the Department to consider the applicability of international or private sector standards to hyperloop systems in the United States.

The “Hyperloop Standards Desk Review” provides a preliminary mapping of existing standards and regulations to specific hyperloop systems components, but is not intended to be comprehensive, prescriptive, or definitive. To that end, the USDOT will soon publish a Request for Comment on the “Hyperloop Standards Desk Review,” which will allow the public to comment and provide feedback on the document.

The NETT Council was established in March 2019 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.

More information on the NETT Council’s work can be found at:

<https://www.transportation.gov/nettcouncil>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released a playbook with social media strategies and resources to support Pedestrian Safety Month activities. It provides information on vehicle speed enforcement and Walk to School Day activities; distracted drivers and impaired pedestrians; illegal school bus passing; and conspicuity/Day Light Saving Time, and older pedestrians. NHTSA also developed two

interactive data visualization dashboards displaying pedestrian and bicyclist fatality data between 2010 and 2018. Based on Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, the dashboard allows users to view key data by State, year, month, time of day, age group, and land type. Click [HERE](#) to see the Playbook.

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## 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>

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## 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.