



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 11th, 2021

Volume 38, Number 11

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- The Mobile MPO is scheduled to meet on July 28th with the TCC/CAC meeting on July 14th and there will be a joint Mobile MPO and Eastern Shore MPO informative meeting about the bridge on July 27th, Please see *Mobile MPO Updates*.
- This week the Eastern Shore MPO amended the 25 Year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to include Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project, and don't forget to head out to Creek Fest tomorrow *In The News*.
- In *Legislative Updates*, \$5.6 Billion in earmarks are included in the House Transportation Bill.
- Aging infrastructure is hampering economic growth in *Transportation Research*.
- This week's *Just For Fun* is explosive!

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

Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project are added to LRTP and TIP

This week, the Eastern Shore MPO voted unanimously to include Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project into their Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) AND Transportation Improvement Program. (TIP). Now, we can begin work on this important project.

At our MPO meeting on June 2nd, you may recall our Chairman's desire for frequent updates from ALDOT concerning the Bridge Project. The first of these updates will be a Joint Mobile/Eastern Shore MPO [Bridge Information Only](#) meeting on July 27th at 2:00PM at Five Rivers.

Also, the following day July 28th is a formal Mobile MPO meeting at our regular location in the SARPC Board Room. We have an agenda that is being developed. The TCC/CAC will have a meeting on July 14th at 10:00 AM in the Transportation Dept. of SARPC. Recommendations from that meeting will go to the MPO on July 28th. The agenda is being developed. If you have any questions or want to add anything to the agenda, please let us know.

July 14th 10:00 AM Mobile TCC/CAC meeting

July 27th 2:00 PM Five Rivers- Joint (Mobile/Eastern Shore MPO) Bridge Information Only Meeting

July 28th 10:00AM Mobile MPO meeting

[HERE](#) is the Amendment with update Section 1.7 that summarizes the public comments.

[HERE](#) is APPENDIX A with all of the comments we received prior to deadline

[HERE](#) is a National Geographic article on Africatown that was presented as information.

Volkert Developing Mobile County Major Road Plan

Volkert has been given notice to proceed on the Mobile Area Major Road Plan. This is intended to be a complete Major Road Plan with regulatory components, current practices, case studies, and guidance for Mobile County and Municipalities within Mobile County. The Plan will include methods and tools for acquiring and preserving right-of-way in the context of expediting the environmental clearance process and review how corridors are prioritized, designated, and adopted for management or preservation. We are excited to get this project moving.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

None this week

Projects in Region Let May 28th, 2021

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on SR-158 from MP 7.750 to the junction of Spartan Drive in Saraland. Length 0.555 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,941,386 to \$3,595,027 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time.

Legislative Updates

[Support for the INVEST in America Act Grows as Transformative Infrastructure Bill Advances Through Committee](#)

June 10, 2021

The \$547 billion surface transportation bill would make transformational investments to create good paying jobs bringing America's roads, bridges, transit, and rail into the modern era Washington, DC - The list of groups coming out in support of the INVEST in America Act (H.R. 3684) continues to grow. The bill, introduced by Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), and ... [Continue Reading](#)

Bipartisan group of U.S. senators says it has a deal on infrastructure framework

David Morgan Susan Cornwell

A bipartisan group of 10 U.S. senators said on Thursday it had reached agreement on a framework for a proposed infrastructure spending bill that would not include any tax increases.

The group of five Republicans and five Democrats gave no details, but a source familiar with the deal said it would cost \$974 billion over five years and \$1.2 trillion over eight years, and includes \$579 billion in new spending.

The senators said they were discussing their approach with their colleagues and the White House, and they were optimistic about getting broad support.

"Our group ... has worked in good faith and reached a bipartisan agreement on a realistic, compromise framework to modernize our nation's infrastructure and energy technologies," the lawmakers said in a statement. "This investment would be fully paid for and not include tax increases." To read the full article click [HERE](#).

\$5.6B in Earmarks Included in Transportation Bill

By Andrea Noble June 9, 2021

More than 1,400 local projects are included in the surface transportation bill the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee advanced early Thursday.

The list of projects, which equate to roughly \$5.6 billion in earmarks, were chosen from more than [2,400 project requests](#) submitted by members of Congress. The projects span 46 states and several territories and range from complicated transit center developments to construction of sidewalks or roundabouts.

The earmarks are included in House Democrats' [\\$547 billion transportation proposal](#), which would allocate funding for bridges, roads, transit and railways over the next five years.

Oft-criticized earmarks have not been included in a surface transportation bill since 2005, but lawmakers have taken steps this time to incorporate more documentation and transparency into the process, said Susan Howard, the program director for transportation finance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

The largest of the [1,473 earmarks](#) included in the bill is \$25 million for San Diego, California's Central Mobility Hub, a project that would create a transportation center adjacent to the San Diego International Airport. The bill would provide \$20 million to another 25 other projects, including three in California, Minnesota and Texas, and two in Florida and Nebraska.

Lawmakers did not nominate projects in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming, according to the project database, and no awards were granted for projects in those states.

Many local projects included in the bill received more modest amounts, including:

- \$5.6 million for replacement of a [232-foot-long bridge](#) in Superior, West Virginia.
- \$774,000 for construction of [electric vehicle charging stations](#) in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- \$800,000 for [a paved bike lane](#) in Woodbine, New Jersey.
- \$5.3 million for [road widening](#) and reconstruction in Ammon, Idaho.

California had the most earmarked projects (218), followed by Illinois (115) and New York (86). The list of projects is included in [an amended version](#) of the bill that transportation committee Chairman Peter DeFazio, an Oregon Democrat, released Monday. (The list of projects spans 133 pages in the 1,383-page bill.)

DeFazio and Ranking Member Sam Graves, a Missouri Republican, agreed to reinstitute the earmark process, but are requiring more documentation and transparency on nominated projects. Nominating lawmakers were required to provide letters of support for the projects, to disclose other sources of funding and the full cost of the projects, and to provide information on the planning stage and phase of the projects.

"I believe this process has allowed us to elevate the greatest needs of communities across the country—each of whom have real infrastructure needs and are entitled to have those needs supported by this legislation," DeFazio said Wednesday at the start of the markup.

Lawmakers considered [dozens of amendments](#) to the bill during Wednesday's markup hearing, which continued into early Thursday.

The committee ultimately approved the bill in a 38-26 vote on Thursday morning after a marathon 19-hour markup hearing. The bill will now go before the full House. The Senate would also have to approve the bill, but it's unclear whether senators intend to support the inclusion of earmarks, Howard said.

Earmarks on transportation projects have been problematic in the past. Some deviate from state transportation priorities or are awarded to projects too early in the design stage, Howard said.

AASTHO provided technical assistance to lawmakers as they sought to nominate projects, and [the organization advocated](#) for additional guardrails to help guide the process to ensure it did not undercut state and local prioritization of projects.

Funding Opportunities

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) GRANTS

(deadline July 12, 2021)

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 discretionary grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. RAISE, formerly known as BUILD and TIGER, has awarded over \$8.935 billion in grants to projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico since 2009.

"In communities across the country, there is tremendous need for transportation projects that create high-quality jobs, improve safety, protect our environment, and generate equitable economic opportunity for all Americans," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. "With RAISE grants, we are making those needed investments in our communities' future."

Projects for RAISE funding will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Within these criteria, the Department will prioritize projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial equity, reduce impacts of climate change and create good-paying jobs.

For this round of RAISE grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the appropriations act. Up to \$30 million will be awarded to planning grants, including at least \$10 million to Areas of Persistent Poverty.

To ensure that the benefits of infrastructure investments benefit communities large and small the Department will award an equitable amount, not to exceed half of funding, to projects located in urban and rural areas respectively.

The program is highly competitive with 680 projects funded out of over 9700 applications. It is one of the few DOT discretionary programs for which regional and local governments can directly compete for multimodal transportation funding.

To provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2021 RAISE grant application process. To register for the webinars visit www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach. The deadline to submit an application is July 12, 2021 at 5pm Eastern.

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces More Than \$10 Million Funding Opportunity for Transit Planning to Address Climate Change and Equity in Communities Nationwide *(deadline , June 21, 2021)*

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Priority will be given to projects that help improve air quality, advance environmental justice, promote housing affordability

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the availability of approximately \$10 million in competitive grant funds through a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for FTA's [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\) Planning](#). The funds will support comprehensive planning efforts that help connect communities, improve access to public transportation and affordable housing, and support President Biden's call to combat climate change, advance environmental justice, and promote equitable delivery of benefits to underserved communities.

"When people can move safely and easily by public transit, foot, bike, wheelchair, or any other means, it can change a community for the better," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "This type of investment can save residents money and time, and reduce pollution impacting our neighborhoods. We are thrilled to help more local governments plan creatively around transit, so their communities can benefit from the good jobs, affordable housing, and economic revitalization that accompany it."

In support of the President's January 20, 2021 Executive Orders on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis (EO 13990) and Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985), FTA will prioritize projects that will help improve air quality in non-attainment and maintenance areas for certain criteria pollutants under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and promote equitable delivery of benefits and services to underserved communities. This consideration will further the goals of the Executive Orders, including the goal to prioritize environmental justice.

"This announcement comes at an especially fitting time, coinciding with the celebration of Earth Day. Equitable transit-oriented development helps those at the local level respond to climate change and affordable housing challenges, particularly in underserved and overburdened communities," said FTA Deputy Administrator Nuria Fernandez. "The TOD planning program will encourage mixed-use, mixed income development around new transit projects to increase access to opportunities and improve mobility for residents."

FTA's Pilot Program for TOD Planning funds comprehensive planning to increase transit access and to encourage ridership with mixed-use and mixed-income development near public transportation projects. Examples of eligible projects include comprehensive planning studies around station areas for new fixed guideway projects, such as light-rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, or bus rapid transit systems that have a designated right-of-way. Information on previously funded projects can be found [here](#).

In order to apply for program funding, an applicant must be an existing FTA recipient – either a project sponsor of an eligible transit project or an entity with land use planning authority in the project corridor. To ensure that work meets the needs of the local community, transit project sponsors and land use planning authorities must partner to conduct the planning work. The application period will close on Monday, June 21, 2021.

FTA's TOD Pilot Program was established under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and amended by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The program is authorized through Fiscal Year 2021.

RAISE grant application process. To register for the webinars visit www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach. The deadline to submit an application is July 12, 2021 at 5pm Eastern.

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)

Today's *Just For Fun* is brought to by ACME Dynamite, or as JJ from Good Times would say DYNO- MITE. It is memorizing to watch how pipelines are prepared for digging; they blow it up. Building roads, explosives, loud bangs... throw in a football game and this would be a Father's Day dream event. Watch the video below, or [HERE](#), for the power of dynamite, under a road bed.



In the News

Creek Fest Tomorrow at Tricentennial Park



You won't believe how much this year's Creek Fest is bigger and better than ever!!!

Hosted by the [3Mile Creek](#) and the [City of Mobile: Parks & Recreation](#) on:

Sat. June 12th 10am-3pm

[TRICENTENNIAL PARK](#)

The revamped event will feature:

- Live Music
- Outdoor fun for the whole family including:
- A fishing tournament hosted by a local celebrity
- Free kayaking
- An assortment of food trucks
- Free raffles with thousands of dollars of premium prizes
- More than 40 Pop-up shops, local artists, and exhibitors

Also stay tuned for more information about the after party and other event surprises!

And above all— while you're at it— learn about MBNEP's exciting and extensive plan for revitalization of the whole 3 Mile Creek Watershed!

<https://www.mobilebaynep.com/.../three-mile-creek-watershed>

[Coastal Alabama officials solidify plans to advance I-10 truck bridge project](#)

By John Sharp Updated Jun 09, 2021

More than 21 months after the original Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project [was declared "dead,"](#) a new bridge proposal is officially back in the plans.

The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Commission, with a unanimous vote Wednesday, approved placing an alternative I-10 truck bridge project into its long- and short-term plans. The vote comes one week after the [Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization agreed to similar measures](#) which now means multi-phased approach to addressing the interstate's traffic congestion moves to the Alabama Department of Transportation for additional studies.

"Everyone agrees the worsening traffic congestion is a threat to the economic future of the region and the quality of life for all those who live and work there," said Tony Harris, spokesman with ALDOT. "The concept developed and supported by local leaders will move people and goods more smoothly and efficiently through the area." To read the full article click [HERE](#).

Cities Need More Than Rescue Aid to Fix Their Roads

Nearly a quarter of municipalities surveyed by the National League of Cities took on fewer infrastructure upgrades over the past year, and projects are still in need of funding.

By Amanda Albright June 10, 2021

The White House's multibillion-dollar rescue package to U.S. cities won't solve their infrastructure challenges, underscoring the case for more support as Congress debates a federal infrastructure plan, according to a report by the National League of Cities.

The lobbying group released its [State of the Cities report](#) on Thursday that uses survey data from about 600 communities and mayoral speeches, finding that some city infrastructure upgrades have fallen by the wayside during the pandemic. Funding for those projects ranked as one of the top challenges facing cities and a top mayoral priority for 2021, according to the report.

The findings bolster the case for more federal funding for roads, bridges and other projects, with nearly a quarter of cities experiencing fewer infrastructure upgrades over the last year, according to the group. The path to a bipartisan plan got more complicated this week after [talks ended](#) between President Joe Biden and Republican Senator Shelley Moore Capito, who couldn't agree on the scope of spending or how to pay for it.

"Infrastructure and related budgets have been some of the hardest hit during the pandemic," according to the report, which was written by a group including Christiana McFarland, the research director for the National League of Cities. "Indeed, 91% of officials in the State of the Cities survey indicate that insufficient funding" was a primary factor for infrastructure decisions.

Eastern Shore MPO endorses 'truck bridge' plan

Posted by [Gabriel Tynes](#) Jun 9, 2021

The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (ESMPO) voted in favor of a resolution to add Phase 1 of the Mobile River Truck Bridge to its long and short range planning documents this morning, following a similar measure made by the Mobile MPO last week. Now, the estimated \$725 million project can seek federal funding.

Today's hearing did little to assuage lingering concerns about some details of the proposal, including but not limited to the timeline of its phased construction approach, the proposed \$15 tolls on all large trucks, an option to allow passenger cars to pay a toll, a potential new bottleneck created at Exit 35 in Daphne and Spanish Fort and the impact the project may have on Africatown, the focus of a burgeoning tourism campaign and historic case study on environmental justice.

It's a lot to unpack, the MPO members admitted, but the resolution will allow those details to be worked out as the project confronts its biggest hurdle: how to pay for it.

Phase 1 will include the construction of a four-lane, two-way bridge over the Mobile River, which will tie into the existing Bayway. Shoulders on the Bayway will be eliminated and engineers plan to restripe each span from two lanes to three.

Priced at \$725 million, about half the funding for the project would come from state and federal sources. Around \$400 million would come from a \$15 fee charged to trucks 46 feet and longer using the bridge. Existing routes including the Bankhead Tunnel, the Wallace Tunnel, the Bayway and the Causeway will remain toll free.

Nearly the same speakers who appeared at the [Mobile MPO meeting](#) signed up to make the same remarks in Daphne Wednesday morning, including Alabama Trucking Association President Mark Colson, who said it creates an unfair burden on the industry. He agreed a solution to the congestion was needed for the route, but warned "constitutional challenges" are likely with the existing proposal. Still, he pledged to be part of whatever solution could be reached going forward.

Joe Womack, a resident of Africatown, said the tolls would likely divert traffic through his neighborhood, one that is currently attempting to capitalize on its history as the home for Clotilda descendants. He said any increase in traffic will be detrimental to efforts to increase tourism in the neighborhood, and noted the Biden administration will be interested in environmental justice aspects of the project.

Baldwin County Commission Chairman Joe Davis said he continues to have safety concerns about the restriping plan, and how little room for error drivers will have.

"I'm thinking about a truck and two large SUVs side-by-side ... and it scares me to death," he said. "There's virtually no room to make a mistake."

Mike Lee of logistics firm Page & Jones, former president of the Build the Bridge coalition, said the area has a "generational opportunity" to pursue federal funding this year, with Congress considering infrastructure proposals and Sen. Richard Shelby as vice chair of the appropriations committee until his retirement next year.

Lee said "we have over \$400 million on the table ready for us to take or lose with the decisions we make today."

"This resolution is a great one because it has so much flexibility," he said. "The MPO retains complete control on modifications as we go forward."

MPO Chairman Jack Burrell said the plan will also be defined to put a lifespan on the toll, and ensure all toll revenue collected is used to pay debt on the project, or for maintenance or repairs.

Meanwhile, no proposals have been made to pay for the other two, more expensive, phases of the project: a second span over the Mobile River and rebuilding and raising the Bayway, but Burrell said the ESMPO should reiterate its desire to complete all three phases "in a timely manner."

"We hear your concerns but we want to make sure it stays on the straight and narrow as well," he said.

Transportation Research

July 13-14 Transportation Funding Advocacy Workshop Is Free & Virtual

Posted on June 9, 2021 by Carolyn Kramer Simons

The annual National Workshop for State & Local Transportation Advocates is America's best forum on how to conduct successful referendum and legislative campaigns for infrastructure investment.

This year's event will feature six in-depth sessions:

1. Road to Recovery? How State Transportation Investment Programs Are Faring Post-Pandemic
2. Closing Loopholes: Ending the Diversion of Transportation User Fees
3. Timing is Everything: Strategies for When to Introduce Infrastructure Investment Campaigns
4. A Gas Tax Increase 25 Years in the Making: How Missouri Got it Done in 2021
5. Making a Road Usage Charge Reality
6. Biden Administration's Infrastructure Plan, Congressional Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill, and State & Local Funding Trends

The 2021 Workshop is free and will be held virtually on the Remo Conference Platform. Space is limited, so [reserve your spot today](#). [View the agenda](#).

RSM survey finds aging infrastructure hampering economic growth

BY LIZ CAREY JUNE 11, 2021

A survey done by RSM US and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has found that executives at middle market businesses agree that the state of the U.S. infrastructure is hampering economic growth nationally, locally, and within their organizations.

According to the RSM US Middle Market Business Index (MMBI) Infrastructure Special Report, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of executives surveyed said the American infrastructure is restricting the growth of the national economy, and 60 percent said it restricted growth in their local economies. More than half (54 percent) said it was hurting their own businesses.

However, 64 percent of the survey respondents said they believe meaningful actions over the next three years will result in tangible infrastructure enhancements.

“Executives are telling RSM that there is an urgent need to shore up what makes the American economy tick,” said Joe Brusuelas, RSM US LLP chief economist. “The results of this survey send a clear message to lawmakers and policymakers that middle market businesses are ready to invest and want to participate in the rebuilding of America’s infrastructure. We rarely see this kind of agreement in our society anymore, and this is the real economy communicating to the policy community that something different has to happen.”

The survey also found that middle market executives are looking for infrastructure improvement initiatives across the board. Nearly two-thirds of the executives (63 percent) said initiatives like improving roads and communications networks would benefit their company’s day-to-day operations. Executives also said they wanted to participate in infrastructure rebuilding, and more than half said they were likely to participate in the vendor selection process.

“Our nation must launch a massive investment program to modernize America’s infrastructure,” said Ed Mortimer, vice president, transportation and infrastructure, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “Rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure is not only one of the fastest and most direct ways to create new jobs and spur economic growth now, but also it will sustain our modern economy and improve the quality of life for every American. Infrastructure is not a partisan issue—there is strong bipartisan support to invest in our nation’s future, and we now need our elected leaders to come together and show the American people they can enact fundamental, good policy.”

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.

