



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 18th, 2021

Volume 38, Number 12

In This Issue

- [MOBILE MPO UPDATES](#)
- [PROJECTS LET MAY 28TH, 2021](#)
- [LEGISLATIVE UPDATES](#)
- [FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)
- [JUST FOR FUN](#)
- [IN THE NEWS](#)
- [TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH](#)

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- Margie Wilcox honored and a new TCC/CAC member, also 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*.
- Mo Brooks says that funding for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is a local issue, not federal, and East Brewton receives Rebuild Alabama Act Funding *In The News*.
- In *Legislative Updates*, Bipartisanship moves the Infrastructure Bill forward.
- Superstitions are in this week's *Just For Fun*.

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

Mobile Area Major Road Plan

This morning is the Kick Off meeting with SARPC and Volkert for the Mobile Area Major Road Plan. The Plan is for better integration and connectivity of land use and transportation planning, to ensure existing and future on-system corridors are managed and/or preserved as part of the long-range comprehensive planning efforts and as development occurs. A complete Major Road Plan to include 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. This will require coordination with all planning jurisdictions in Mobile County.

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

Last 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.

Mobile MPO Member Margie Wilcox Honored



Long time committee member and participant to the Mobile MPO planning process Rep. Margie Wilcox, was honored last night. During last night's Mobile County Municipal Association meeting, Rep. Margie Wilcox was honored with the League of Municipalities "Hometown Hero" award, for her work with the Rebuild Alabama Act. As Chair of the Joint Transportation Committee, Rep. Wilcox worked for transparency of the funding from the Rebuild Alabama Act. Also at the meeting, the Mobile County Commission presented each municipality in Mobile County with a commemorative "plank" from the USS Mobile.

Mobile MPO Member Gerald Alfred Buys One-way Ticket Outta Town

Long time Mobile MPO member Gerald Alfred, Manager of Planning & Capital Projects for the Wave Transit has accepted a new and exciting position in the Birmingham Area. Today is his last day with the Wave. For over fifteen years Gerald has been a fixture of the Wave Transit family and the Mobile MPO TCC/CAC. We wish him continued success.

Jamon Mosley, will succeed Gerald as the newly created Senior Planner.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

None this week

Projects in Region Let June 25th, 2021

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time.

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Planning, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-113 (US-29) from the Florida State Line to the junction of SR-3 (US-31) northeast of Flomaton. Length 0.799 mi.

The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$432,574 to \$528,701 .

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

Legislative Updates

11 GOP senators back bipartisan infrastructure plan, boosting its chances of moving forward

[Jacob Pramuk](#) WED, JUN 16 2021

- Eleven Republican senators now support a bipartisan infrastructure framework, which would give a bill enough votes to pass the Senate if all Democrats get on board.
- Several liberal senators have signaled they could oppose the bipartisan plan, saying it does not go far enough to fight climate change or income inequality.
- Democrats are deciding whether to abandon bipartisan talks to pass a bill on their own, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the Budget Committee would start to set the groundwork to do so as bipartisan talks proceed.
- President Joe Biden said he has not seen the bipartisan plan.

Eleven Republican senators support a bipartisan infrastructure framework, enough for a potential bill to get through the chamber if all skeptical Democrats back it.

In a statement Wednesday, 21 Democratic and GOP senators endorsed the roughly \$1 trillion proposal, which would not raise taxes on corporations or wealthy individuals. The plan would revamp transportation, broadband and water, but would not meet many Democrats' goals for investments in clean energy and social programs.

"We look forward to working with our Republican and Democratic colleagues to develop legislation based on this framework to address America's critical infrastructure challenges," the senators said in a statement.

The proposal serves as the last sustained effort to strike a bipartisan infrastructure deal before Democrats move to pass legislation on their own. A smaller bipartisan group of 10 senators who drafted the plan has tried to win support on Capitol Hill but has not yet earned the blessing of congressional leaders or the White House.

A handful of liberals in the Senate have threatened to vote against the bipartisan deal, which they say does not do enough to fight climate change or income inequality. If any Democrats oppose the plan, more than 10 Republicans would need to back it for it to hit the 60-vote threshold to pass legislation in the Senate.

Some Democrats have suggested their party could approve a physical infrastructure plan with Republican support if skeptics get assurances their priorities will be addressed later. Democrats could then move to pass broader investments in child and elder care, green energy, education and health care on their own through budget reconciliation.

Democrats have to balance concerns from both flanks of their party. The most conservative Senate Democrat, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, has stressed that he wants to pass an infrastructure bill with GOP votes.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Democrats would start the process of drafting a budget resolution Wednesday even as the bipartisan talks proceed. He said a proposal folding in social and climate programs included in President Joe Biden's American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan "will be considered by the Senate even if it does not have bipartisan support."

"There are many items to discuss, but one subject is not up for debate: I will instruct members to ensure that any budget resolution puts the United States on track to reduce carbon pollution at a scale commensurate with the climate crisis," Schumer, of New York, said earlier Wednesday.

Leaving Geneva, Switzerland, after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, Biden said he had not seen the details of the bipartisan plan. However, he noted that his chief of staff, Ron Klain, believes "there's some room" for a deal with Republicans.

White House advisors met Wednesday with the five Democratic senators who negotiated the proposal. In a statement to NBC News after the meeting, White House spokesman Andrew Bates said the officials "found it productive and encouraging."

"They look forward to briefing the President tomorrow after his return to the White House, and continuing to consult with Senators and Representatives on the path forward," he said.

Paying for the infrastructure plan could be an issue. Republicans have insisted they will not touch their 2017 tax law, which cut the corporate rate to 21%. Biden wants to hike the corporate tax to at least 25%.

The president has also promised not to increase taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 per year. A possible revenue raiser in the bipartisan plan — tying the gas tax to inflation — could effectively break his pledge.

The Republicans who signed Wednesday's statement are Sens. Richard Burr, of North Carolina; Bill Cassidy, of Louisiana; Susan Collins, of Maine; Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina; Lisa Murkowski, of Alaska; Rob Portman, of Ohio; Mitt Romney, of Utah; Mike Rounds, of South Dakota; Thom Tillis, of North Carolina, Todd Young, of Indiana, and Jerry Moran, of Kansas.

The Democrats who joined them are Sens. Chris Coons, of Delaware; Maggie Hassan, of New Hampshire; John Hickenlooper, of Colorado; Mark Kelly, of Arizona; Joe Manchin, of West Virginia; Jeanne Shaheen, of New Hampshire; Kyrsten Sinema, of Arizona, and Mark Warner, of Virginia. Sen. Angus King, a Maine independent who caucuses with Democrats, also signed the statement.

Rep. DeFazio to Highlight Road Congestion Remedies

Eugene Mulero June 17, 2021

WASHINGTON — Rep. Peter DeFazio, chairman of the U.S. House transportation committee and author of a comprehensive five-year, \$547 billion highway bill, is very aware that being stuck in traffic is bad for business.

That's why, when his highway policy bill is debated on the floor of the chamber as early as this month, he plans to remind the country the legislation seeks to help everybody — including the commercial transportation sector — spend less time stuck in traffic.

"Companies are losing money because of congestion and delays," DeFazio (D-Ore.) told Transport Topics during a June 16 one-on-one interview in his Capitol Hill office. "This bill is going to be a major investment in — the largest single investment in — surface transportation infrastructure ever."

Specifically, the bill's proposals would assist transportation agencies with alleviating concerns linked to freight supply chains, as well as enhancing infrastructure resilience to severe-weather events. Congestion relief and climate change are primary policy drivers proposed in what would be an update of the nation's surface transportation policies, as well as a pillar of President Joe Biden's infrastructure agenda.

"People are pretty tired of congestion. They're pretty tired of repair costs [because] of potholes. They're tired of detours," DeFazio said.

To attempt to improve connectivity and minimize congestion, DeFazio's highway bill would dedicate \$343 billion for roads, bridges and safety programs, approximately \$100 billion for transit systems and \$95 billion for freight and passenger rail programs. There also is about \$6 billion for projects specific to congressional districts.

Recent findings from the American Transportation Research Institute determined traffic was a contributing factor in slowing trucks on the roads. Freight bottlenecks lead to an annual 1.2 billion hours of lost productivity for the trucking sector, which is an additional \$75 billion to the cost of freight distribution, according to ATRI. Separately, recent studies have found commuters in large cities frequently encounter delays on roadways and transit.

The House highway bill, named the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation, or INVEST, in America Act, is at the moment largely backed by Democrats. The five-year, \$547 billion reauthorization was approved in committee June 10 by a vote of 38-26.

An emphasis on themes outside traditional surface transportation policies, as well as programs linked exclusively to climate change, contributed to the lack of support from Republicans.

DeFazio said he is working with his colleagues across the aisle to bridge the gap when debating terms such as “climate change,” as opposed to “severe-weather resilience.”

“The Republicans say they want [severe-weather] resilience: ‘The sea level is rising. Hurricanes are getting worse. We want resilience.’ And I said, ‘OK, well, then can we deal with climate change.’ They say, ‘No, no, no. That has nothing to do with climate change. Climate change is fake. It doesn’t exist,’ ” DeFazio said. “They’re fully willing to work on those things but they’re not willing to talk about what the root cause might be.”

DeFazio added, “I’m doing resilience. They’re supportive of that.”

Additionally, DeFazio affirmed his bill’s focus on trucking policies that would promote safety and workforce development. Provisions in the House bill related to trucking include approval of \$2.2 billion in contract authority for fiscal 2023 through 2026 for motor carrier safety grants. DeFazio also noted a proposal that would establish a truck leasing task force meant to examine truck leasing agreements, a matter that has been on his radar.

“I held hearings on this years ago. ... So, we’re going to have the secretary of transportation and the secretary of labor set up a truck leasing task force to look into these practices,” he said.

When the highway bill is passed by House lawmakers, DeFazio and fellow House leaders will meet with Senate counterparts to reach a deal on a final highway policy measure. Senators are finalizing their version’s consideration to update a 2015 highway law, which expires in September.

Infrastructure Stories

Neither the House nor the Senate highway bills would set a long-term funding mechanism for federal highway programs. Those highway programs are backed primarily by insufficient revenue from federal fuel taxes. Asked about fuel taxes, DeFazio said the matter belongs to the tax-writing Ways and Means committee. That tax policy panel has yet to legislate on highway funding programs.

In his own words, “The ideas I have are not in sync with what the president [Biden] has. So, I believe that we can work with user fees, indexation, bonding, etc. But, that’s off the table, so just forget about it. Right now, it’s up to the Ways and Means committee.”

The bill also would direct the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s administrator to accelerate the modernization of the agency’s information technology and management systems, and encourage states to participate in a comprehensive information systems management program.

Buttigieg Pushes Transportation Budget Amid Infrastructure Talks

Eugene Mulero June 17, 2021

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg called on senators to fund big-ticket transportation programs as congressional leaders continue to craft comprehensive infrastructure policy measures and prepare to consider a multiyear highway bill.

The secretary asked Senate funding leaders to adopt President Joe Biden’s budget request for transportation operations for fiscal 2022, and pointed to what he described as an urgent need to repair thousands of bridges, improve regional transit operations and expand broadband internet in rural parts of the country.

The White House is proposing \$88 billion in fiscal 2022 for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Separately, the president is asking Congress to approve \$1.7 trillion for climate change-centric infrastructure programs. Biden is calling his infrastructure proposal the American Jobs Plan, which would be backed primarily by raising the corporate tax rate to 28%.

“Our transportation infrastructure and systems are not sufficiently designed to mitigate or be resilient to the impacts of climate change. If we want to grow our economy, remain competitive and address the climate crisis, we need to take swift and bold action,” Buttigieg told members of the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee June 16. The president’s fiscal 2022 budget specifically calls for a discretionary request of \$25.7 billion for DOT, which would be a 14.8% increase for the department’s discretionary programs.

House and Senate appropriations leaders, which manage the annual funding process for federal agencies, have indicated the transportation panels will begin considering their fiscal 2022 funding legislation as early as this summer. The committees’ objective, they explained, is to present the president with a final transportation funding bill prior to the start of the new fiscal year, which is Oct. 1.

The secretary continued: “The details of the president’s budget request advance the vision of the American Jobs Plan, and underscore our commitment to key priorities: Improving safety, building economic strength, addressing the climate crisis, advancing equity and supporting innovation.”

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has pledged to work with appropriators to advance the fiscal 2022 funding measures, as well as proceed with bipartisan negotiations on infrastructure policy. Senate Democrats are considering various legislative avenues for passing Biden’s multitrillion dollar infrastructure plan. Potential legislation includes a must-pass multiyear highway policy bill, which House leaders will schedule for a floor vote prior to July 4. Senators are finalizing their version of the highway bill.

Schumer and his leadership team signaled other ways to advance infrastructure policy, such as budget-centric measures that only require simple majorities for passage, tax policy updates, and bipartisan bills, which are referred to as stand-alone measures.

For instance, a bipartisan group of senators, led by Sens. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio), recently drafted an infrastructure framework that would be slightly less than the White House’s plan. The senators’ plan, however, would need a long-term funding program in order to gain the requisite support.

“We support this bipartisan framework that provides an historic investment in our nation’s core infrastructure needs without raising taxes. We look forward to working with our Republican and Democratic colleagues to develop legislation based on this framework to address America’s critical infrastructure challenges,” the senators said in a joint statement on June 16.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden and his team welcome the debate in Congress on infrastructure policy. She reaffirmed legislative inaction is not an option for the president.

“We’re looking to see where we can find common ground on infrastructure and on areas where there’s overlap and agreement. We are still moving forward with a budget process, which is another path and a simultaneous path to get a range of these ideas passed into law,” she said this month. “We’re moving on both tracks at the same time.”

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)

WHO DO THAT VOODOO THAT YOU DO?



In honor of our new Federal Holiday, Juneteenth, today we are going to explore Benin. The country of Benin is where the last slaves came from on the Clotilda. Today, the official language of Benin is French, but some indigenous languages such as Fon, Bariba, Yoruba and Dendi are still spoken. The largest religious group in Benin is Roman Catholicism, followed closely by Islam, Vodun (commonly referred to as [Voodoo](#)). Did the slaves on the Clotilda bring Voodoo to the US? Human sacrifice was a large part of Voodoo in the [Kingdom of Dahomey](#) (now Benin), so let's be thankful they did not... You can go to New Orleans and get a talisman, and a "gris gris" bag for protection, but what kind of voodoo is there when you are driving? *Just For Fun*, here are a few.

#1: Touching the ceiling when you go through a yellow light

Some drivers believe that you should always touch the ceiling while driving through a yellow light (we do not recommend, just to note – you should keep both hands on the wheel at all times). In fact, some drivers will even kiss

their fingers before touching the ceiling. Why? Some believe that it's a silent way of saying thank you that you made it through said yellow light without being hit by another car or pulled over.

#2: Picking your feet up from the floor when you go over a railroad track or bridge

Another driving superstition states that you should pick your feet up from the floor and pedals when you're going over a bridge or over a railroad track. (If you believe this, you may want to leave it to your passengers – it's not smart to take your feet off the pedals while driving.) Supposedly if you don't, you'll never meet your true love or get married. Some drivers even believe that you'll die young if you don't observe this driving superstition.

#3: Holding your breath as you pass a graveyard

Some drivers believe in the superstition that you should hold your breath when you pass a graveyard. They believe that a) the ghosts are jealous (because you're alive and breathing and they aren't) or that b) if you breathe while driving past, you'll somehow breathe in a spirit and become possessed.

#4: Throwing loose change under the seat of a new car

This one is actually a semi-useful driving superstition – throwing loose change under the seat of a [new car](#) for good luck. No one really knows why people do it, but it's great if you need money for tolls and your wallet is light.

#5: Holding your breath as you drive through a tunnel

Just like passing a graveyard, some drivers hold the superstition that you should hold your breath as you drive through a tunnel. Supposedly, if you can make it the length of the tunnel without breathing, you can make a wish at the end and said wish will come true. (We don't recommend trying it.)

Did you know that even NASCAR drivers profess driving superstitions? A lot of them refuse to drive green cars on the basis that they believe the color green is an omen of bad luck (stemming from the death of a race car driver in the 1920's who was behind the wheel of a green car). Additionally, many of them ban unshelled peanuts from their garages and pits because they see them as unlucky. Why? Apparently before the first World War, a rash of car accidents happened and peanut shells were found in the vehicles. OR WAS IT VOODOO?

In the News

Brooks says bridge funding local issue

GUY BUSBY June 17, 2021

FAIRHOPE – A Republican candidate in the race to replace U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby said he would support local efforts to build a new Mobile River bridge and Bayway, but that funding should be at the state and local level, not federal.

U.S. Rep Mo Brooks of Huntsville addressed the Eastern Shore Republican Women's Club on Thursday, June 9. Brooks is running for the Senate seat being vacated by Shelby in 2022.

In a question after his speech, County Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood, a member of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization, asked if Brooks would support efforts to build the Interstate 10 bridge. She said that at the June 9 MPO meeting, many audience members and officials said federal support is needed for the route that is part of a highway extending from Jacksonville, Fla. to Los Angeles.

Brooks said that he would help project supporters, but funding decisions should not be made in Washington.

"I believe in the 10th amendment," Brooks said. "That means I believe that we ought to shift as much government away from Washington to states and to cities and counties as possible because I believe your best, most responsive government is cities and counties where citizens can get ahold of their people, then state and the worst place is the federal government. So what we have done in Washington is we have sent all of our highway dollars to the states to distribute as they deem best with the exception that we have a certain percentage that has to go to interstates, a certain percentage has to go to U.S. highways, a certain percentage has to be allocated for state roads and so forth."

He said local officials are in the best position to decide how to use funds.

"It's Montgomery that decides where that money is spent, so to a large degree, I like the idea of Montgomery, our state government, determining where the best priorities are for the monies that are coming from the federal government," Brooks said. "They have a highway department that can do all this research and do all these calculations. That's a better way to go."

Brooks also said he opposed earmarking federal funds for specific projects. He said the practice is often used to entice members of Congress to vote for bad bills in exchange for funding for projects in their areas.

"Earmarks corrupt the public policy debate," Brooks said. "We have enough corruption in public policy debate in Washington as it is right now."

Brooks said he has supported projects in Congress and would continue to do so but would not earmark money for specific projects.

"I've been pretty doggone good at marketing the Tennessee Valley as their congressman," Brooks said. "We're exploding with economic prosperity, and I understand that can be the role of a congressman and a United States senator to help extoll the good things about a state and a community to get good-paying jobs to come and I understand that role and I'll fulfill that role. But I'm not going to sell out the United States of America for any part of the state of Alabama if in the long haul it means that Alabama's going to do worse because of the damage that's done by that sellout."

Two other candidates are also running for the Republican nomination for Shelby's Senate seat – Lynda Blanchard, former U.S. ambassador to Slovenia, and Katie Britt, president and CEO of the Business Council of Alabama and former chief of staff to Shelby.

Governor Ivey Announces Local Projects Funded by Rebuild Alabama

JUNE 14, 2021

MONTGOMERY – Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation on Monday announced that \$3.11 million in state funding is being awarded to cities and counties for various road and bridge projects.

The funding is made available through the Annual Grant Program, a program created under the Rebuild Alabama Act. The Rebuild Alabama Act, overwhelmingly passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Ivey in 2019, requires ALDOT to establish an annual program setting aside \$10 million off the top of the state's share of new gas tax revenue for local projects.

"Improving Alabama's infrastructure remains a top priority of the Ivey Administration, and thanks to Rebuild Alabama, we are continually able to put these funds to good use. More and more communities and cities across our state are seeing new road and bridge projects in their areas, and I look forward to that continuing," Governor Ivey said. "When we invest in our roads and bridges, we are investing in our people and our future."

There were 13 projects selected. Of those awarded projects, 12 cities and counties contributed a total of \$2 million in local matching funds. Matching funds are not required to be eligible.

An additional round of local projects is expected later this year. It is anticipated that a number of projects will be under contract by the end of this year. All projects are required to move forward within one year of the awarding of funds.

This is the second round of projects awarded under the Annual Grant Program this year. Earlier this year, \$4.93 million was awarded for 21 local projects in 17 cities and counties. This is also the second year of the Annual Grant Program. Year one of the Annual Grant Program awarded \$10.2 million for local projects in 2020.

For more information about the Annual Grant Program, visit the program's dedicated webpage at <https://www.dot.state.al.us/programs/RAAGrantProgram.html>.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally sound transportation network across Alabama. For additional information, visit www.dot.state.al.us. [Here is a list of projects.](#)

Rebuild Alabama Act pouring millions into state's infrastructure

Jun 15, 2021

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (WIAT) — You've likely seen the signs along highways throughout the state, indicating the route you're traveling is part of the Rebuild Alabama Act of 2019, which raised the state's gas tax in order to repair and expand road and bridge infrastructure.

The act set aside \$10 million in grant money for local cities and counties to apply for each year. On top of that, the Alabama Department of Transportation uses another grant program which will give about \$30 million in grants this year.

Local cities and counties can apply for grants from the Rebuild Alabama Act in two ways. One is designed to pay for work along state and federal highways in a local community and the other for any road or bridge work in that community.

"You have counties in some parts of the state that went underfunded for so long they began to convert some of their paved road back into crushed aggregate or dirt roads," said Tony Harris with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

In announcing the latest round of grants, Gov. Kay Ivey released a statement indicating her belief in the importance of the act: "More and more communities and cities across our state are seeing new road and bridge projects in their areas, and I look forward to that continuing. When we invest in our roads and bridges, we are investing in our people and our future."

It's an investment Harris believes will pay off.

"It's allowing them to do things they otherwise wouldn't be able to do. In some parts of the state, it means they can be more competitive with economic development," Harris said.

The governor's office said another round of Rebuild Alabama grants will be awarded later this year.

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 Cars Want the Streets Back, but the Cities Could Do Better Without Them

SANDY SMITH JUNE 16, 2021

With people flocking to restaurants, bars and museums now that pandemic restrictions have been removed, some business owners and institutions are moving to reclaim the streets and parking spaces that had been given over to things like dining tables, public squares and recreation. The bring-back-the-cars crowd argues that without driving access, businesses and visitor destinations will suffer. But the other

side may have the upper hand in this fight, if people are willing to listen. This week's roundup features an overview of the issue and some data that suggest cities would be better off leaving those pandemic-driven car-free spaces car-free permanently.

An essay in Slate puts the question bluntly in its headline: "Who gets the streets now?"

The suddenness of the switch from car dominance to people dominance once the lockdowns took effect was astonishing. Maybe less astonishing was the way businesses and people took over the spaces the cars vacated. But what may not be astonishing is the way many now want to return to the status quo ante. The pandemic, it seems, hasn't changed the way we think.

In San Francisco, for instance, the museums in Golden Gate Park are pushing the city to reopen the park drive, which was closed when the lockdowns took effect. The museums argue that if their patrons can't drive right up to them, attendance will suffer. The reopening has even been cast as an equity issue: the president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Shamann Walton, said the car-free park was "segregationist polic[y]" and "looks like the 1950s South," and fellow supervisor and Chinatown native Connie Chan also said that letting people drive into the park was a racial-equity issue. Yet city data show that the distribution of visitors to the park by supervisor district has not changed as a result of the closure, bike and pedestrian visits have soared, and 5,000 parking spaces remain accessible.

The essay also noted the speed with which the changes took place: Many of the changes would have taken months to implement at best under normal review processes. And the same changes call into question the way cities regulate the use of space.

But, the essay concludes, if profound transformations in dining could take place in New York by reassigning 8,000 of the city's parking spaces, how much more of a transformation could occur if we repurposed more?

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.

