



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Volume 39, Number 9

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**WE HAVE TAP FUNDS AVAILABLE** - deadline extended UNTIL SEPT 3<sup>rd</sup>, and new rail money announced (please see *Funding Opportunities*). There is a Mobile MPO Policy Board meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>, and the second ALDOT Bridge Update to the Joint MPOs is scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM at Five Rivers Theater; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. ALDOT and SARPC seek public input on the State's Public Involvement Plan; see RPO Updates. The House took a break from their break and voted Tuesday to move forward with the Infrastructure Bill in *Legislative Updates*. *In the News* this week... the Birmingham project to nowhere is in the Infrastructure Bill, but our beloved bridge is not (*because B'ham is in the Appalachian Region*). This week's *Just For Fun* is a fast one... Have a great weekend!

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

### MOBILE MPO MEETING SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> (IN PERSON)

On the agenda is a discussion concerning the [Alabama Transportation Infrastructure Bank](#) (ATIB). Mr. Louis Cardinal and Alex Jackson from Thronton Farish will be present to discuss the benefits of the ATIB. The ATIB is a program available to every city and county, and could help the MPO out if we get into a "stacked" project situation in 2024, or the next Transportation Improvement Program (2024-2027).

The Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) met on August 18<sup>th</sup>, and recommended for approval the following changes to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- 100073892 PE SOUTHWEST REGION - Mobile Area Ready Mix Concrete Paving Projects Target Start Date : 8/1/2021 Engineers Estimate : \$250,000.00
- 100074079 CN SOUTHWEST REGION - Mobile Area Ready Mix Concrete Paving Projects intersection improvement at SR 13 and Jackson Road in Satsuma. Removal of deteriorated asphalt using concrete pavement Target Start Date : 8/1/2021 Engineers Estimate : \$400,000.00
- 100068528 ( CN ) Bridge Replacement ( Bin 005712 And Bin 005856) On SR-13 (US-43) Over Cold Creek; Old Target start date : June 30, 2023; New Target start date : January 31, 2025; Total Estimate: \$5,307,600.75
- 100069478 ( CN ) Bridge Painting On Bridges Along I-65. On I-65 Over AL Gulf Coast RR (10195,10196) On I-65/I-65 NB Off Ramp Over US-43 (10197,10198,10199) On I-65 Over 1-65 NB Off Ramp/Norfolk So. RR (10200,10201) On I-65 Over Gunnison Crk (10202,10203); Old Target start date : November 04, 2022; New Target start date : November 08, 2024; Total Estimate: \$2,949,527.15
- 100068523 ( UT ) Bridge Replacement on SR-16 (US-90) over Halls Mill Creek; Old Target start date : November 01, 2021 New Target start date : November 01, 2025; Total estimate \$26,803.39 (*recently added to the agenda, requires 2 week public notice*)
- 100068535 (CN) Additional Lanes with realignment on CR56 from 0.28 Mile West of Eliza Jordan Road to Snow Road; Old Target start date: September 29, 2023 New Target start date: September 27, 2024; \$9,900,000

Other agenda items include a discussion concerning the STP Attributable Table and an update on the CRRSAA projects.

Physically challenged persons who need special accommodations should contact SARPC in advance so arrangements can be made to meet their needs. Additional information may be obtained from the Transportation Planning Coordinator at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, (251)433-6541 or [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org).

### Update on Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project on 9/20/21

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, ALDOT presented to the Mobile MPO and the Eastern Shore MPO an update on Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project at Five Rivers Resource Center in Spanish Fort. This meeting was the first of many updates that ALDOT will provide to both MPOs.

When the Mobile MPO and Eastern Shore MPO both met separately on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, both MPOs amended each Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. Both MPOs passed the amendments unanimously. Both the Mobile and Eastern Shore LRTPs included funding for Phase One to be a toll on heavy trucks, with the potential for voluntary vehicular tolls. All legacy routes would remain free.

It was recognized by the Mobile MPO and ESMPO Chairman, that there needed to be more communication between the two MPOs concerning this project, and more transparency from all those involved. The next time ALDOT reports an update to the joint MPOs will be September 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM in the Fiver Rivers Theater; these are public meetings and will be every two months.

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has created a web site that will house the Joint MPO updates from ALDOT on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project [HERE](#)

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### 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.

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

The Mobile MPO met on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00AM in the SARPC Board Room on the first floor of the GMO Building. Of importance was the Amendment to the Envision 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project which was passed unanimously. This has been advertised since April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, with a Public Meeting held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The deadline for comments to be included into the draft document was May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The draft Amendment and comments can be found below. There were numerous comments in favor of the project, and there are some comments concerning the potential effects of increased truck traffic on Africatown Blvd.; although, hazardous trucks would no longer be signed to Africatown Blvd. There are also several comments regarding the impact to local trucking companies and several organizations submitted full support of the project

#### SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

For the project as proposed: 150

Against the project as proposed: 153 (Against a Toll 111, Against/Safety/Congestion 20, Completely Against w/ no reason 22)

Alternate: 39

Other: 13

[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.

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## 100 % Funding for Resurfacing of Local Roads Through the Mobile MPO with CRRSAA

### LINK TO MAP [HERE](#)

In accordance with the Highway Infrastructure Program Funds Pursuant to the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) dated January 15, 2021 from the Federal Highway Administration, the Mobile Transportation Management Area (TMA) through the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is apportioned \$3,193,942 (FY 2021). In consultation with the State of Alabama, it is the intention of the Mobile MPO to use the Mobile TMA apportioned CRRSAA funding (\$3,193,942) for a one time competitive application award program. This funding can be 100% federal funding with no matching requirements; this presents a rare opportunity for the Mobile MPO.

Some of our municipalities in the Mobile MPO, do not have adequate revenue streams to provide the matching requirements when federal funds become available. Further, some of the smaller municipalities in the MPO only have one Federal Aid Route in their municipal limits (US43, SR181). Rarely do these municipalities have the opportunity to spend federal transportation funds through the MPO. Per the above noted guidance, routine maintenance and preventative maintenance on non-federal aid highways is allowed if Special Authority is given to the MPO by the State.

The State of Alabama has awarded the Mobile MPO the Special Authority to proceed.

The cities of Creola, Satsuma, Saraland, Chickasaw, Prichard, Semmes and Bayou la Batre have provided a prioritized list of roads that need to be resurfaced within their jurisdiction. The CRRSAA Committee is meeting next week to move forward with this program. This is 100 % funding, with no matching requirements. Communication with MPO staff is through the Mayor of each municipality.

Please call Kevin Harrison 706-4635 if there are any questions.

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### **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](#).

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### Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100068534 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 4918

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES WITH REALIGNMENT ON CR-56 FROM 0.28 MILE WEST OF ELIZA JORDAN ROAD TO SNOW ROAD

Old Target start date : January 01, 2023

New Target start date : September 01, 2023

Project : 100073973 ( UT )

Federal aid number : NH 0042 (509)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : SR-42 (US-98) FR MISS LINE TO 0.5 MI EAST OF CR-576 (GLENWOOD ROAD)

Old Engineers Estimate : \$151,500.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$176,750.00

Project : 100052459 ( UT )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : June 01, 2022

New Target start date : January 01, 2023

Project : 100052460 ( CN )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : December 02, 2022

New Target start date : June 30, 2023

Project : 100052458 ( RW )

Federal aid number : STPMB 7533

County : MOBILE

Project Description : DAUPHIN STREET ADDITIONAL LANES FROM SAGE AVENUE TO WEST OF I-65 AT SPRINGHILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Old Target start date : February 01, 2022

New Target start date : August 01, 2022

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## South Alabama RPO Updates

The Alabama Department of Transportation is inviting the public to give input on its draft Public Involvement Plan for Statewide Transportation Planning. The purpose of the plan is to implement effective ways for ALDOT to gather information from the public about their transportation needs. The plan will be on ALDOT's website on August 20, 2021 and all comments must be received on or before October 4, 2021.

ALDOT seeks involvement from diverse groups of people whose input and viewpoints provide valuable insight during the planning of ALDOT projects. Comments on the Public Involvement Plan for Statewide Transportation Planning will help direct how ALDOT will engage in meaningful conversations with communities and incorporate the public's input in the transportation decision-making process.

The South Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is helping facilitate the public involvement process for the ALDOT's updated PIP. The Draft PIP is posted here : <https://www.dot.state.al.us/news/publicinvolvement.html>. The website includes the draft plan, online comment form, descriptive narrated Power Point, as well as contact information about the plan.

The 45-day period will conclude on October 4, 2021. ALDOT is utilizing online services only for the announcement and comments.

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### Rural Transportation Plan

The Rural Planning Organization for the SARPC Region is currently updating the Transportation Plan for the rural areas of Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile Counties. Each year all RPO member governments are contacted concerning the updating of the RPO Transportation Plan and list of Safety Projects. This includes road and bridge projects, intersection improvements and the like, transit projects and bicycle and pedestrian projects. This is an annual process whereby the rural transportation needs and safety issues in the region are identified and submitted to ALDOT. The current list is available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>.

The RPO will meet in the coming weeks to adopt the updated Transportation Plan and the RPO Work Program for Fiscal Year 2022.

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## Projects in Region Let August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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### MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Safety Improvements (Curve Warning Sign Installations) on various routes in the Southwest Region (Mobile Area) as indicated in the plans. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$699,803 to \$855,314 .

### BALDWIN COUNTY



For constructing the Safety Improvements (Curve Warning Sign Installations) on various routes in the Southwest Region (Mobile Area) as indicated in the plans. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$699,803 to \$855,314 .

#### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

For constructing the Safety Improvements (Curve Warning Sign Installations) on various routes in the Southwest Region (Mobile Area) as indicated in the plans. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$699,803 to \$855,314 .

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

## Legislative Updates

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*The House and Senate are on summer recess. The House will briefly return for committee work on August 23, 31 and will be back in session on September 20. The Senate will return to session on September 13.*

### **House votes to advance Biden's jobs and infrastructure plans, breaking logjam**

*To tame a rebellion from centrist holdouts, Democratic leaders offered a Sept. 27 deadline to vote on the Senate-passed infrastructure bill.*

Aug. 24, 2021 By [Sahil Kapur](#)

WASHINGTON — House Democrats voted Tuesday to move forward with President Joe Biden's top legislative priorities after resolving a [standoff](#) between their leaders and centrist rebels, who threatened to block the multitrillion-dollar safety net expansion.

The House voted 220 to 212 on a key procedural motion to instruct committees to write the \$3.5 trillion bill, which can pass both Congressional chambers without any Republican support. To placate the centrist Democratic holdouts, Speaker Nancy Pelosi committed to a Sept. 27 deadline to vote on the \$550 billion [Senate-passed infrastructure bill](#).

Every Democrat voted for the measure, and all Republicans opposed it.

Although the procedural vote was a win for Biden, the last-minute clash provided a glimpse into the challenges that await Democrats as they aim to write a sprawling spending bill and pass it with wafer-thin majorities in both chambers. They have three votes to spare in the House and none in the Senate.

"Never bet against Nancy Pelosi," said Rep. John Larson, D-Conn. "Knowing the enormous amount of work that goes into something like this, and in the very narrow margins that we have, it makes her job even more extraordinary. And she also takes all the heat for being the leader."

Before the vote, Biden and his senior staff called a variety of House members, including centrist skeptics, to advocate for Pelosi's plan; they stressed that both the infrastructure and budget bills are critical to his agenda, a White House official said.

#### **'Going to transform America'**

Biden praised the vote, calling it progress toward passing his proposals and securing a "historic investment that's going to transform America, cut taxes for working families and position the American economy for long-term, long-term economic growth."

The centrist Democrats, led by Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., torpedoed Pelosi's plans to vote on Monday. They wanted to separate the bipartisan infrastructure bill from the party-line budget bill, and to make sure the former wouldn't be held up for months while the party sorted out its plan for the other bill on safety net expansion and tax hikes.

"I am committing to pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill by September 27. I do so with a commitment to rally House Democratic support for its passage," Pelosi said in a statement. "We must keep the 51-vote privilege by passing the budget and work with House and Senate Democrats to reach agreement in order for the House to vote on a Build Back Better Act that will pass the Senate."

In a joint statement, Gottheimer and his eight centrist allies said they have "established a path forward that ensures we can pass this once-in-a-century infrastructure investment by September 27th, allowing us to create millions of jobs and bring our nation into the 21st century."

#### **A warning from progressives**

But while moderate Democrats secured an assured date to vote on the infrastructure bill, that doesn't necessarily mean it will pass the House by Sept. 27 if the larger budget bill isn't done by then.

"As our members have made clear for three months, the two are integrally tied together, and we will only vote for the infrastructure bill after passing the reconciliation bill," Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., the leader of the progressive caucus, said in a statement.

At the heart of the standoff is a bid for leverage over the multitrillion-dollar bill. Progressives say they want to pass a sweeping expansion of the safety net, paid for with tax hikes on corporations and the wealthy. Centrist Democrats say they are leery of the \$3.5 trillion price tag and more skeptical of some taxes. They're eager to pass the separate infrastructure package into law and bank a bipartisan victory.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., told NBC News that the Sept. 27 deadline "a bit arbitrary."

"Personally, I'm not committing to any date," she said, warning that "if reconciliation is not done by that time," Democratic leaders "absolutely should not" assume she will vote for the infrastructure bill.

"I remain committed to voting on these two pieces of legislation together," she said.

Pelosi held meetings late into Monday night as she faced a mutiny from a group of nine moderates. The lawmakers insisted that the \$550 billion infrastructure bill get an immediate vote and be signed into law before they start crafting the larger bill.

"These negotiations are never easy," House Rules Committee Chair Jim McGovern, D-Mass., said as the panel approved the motion. "I think it was Hillary Clinton who says it takes a village. I say it takes a therapist. But the therapy session is over."

The procedural motion also paved the way for the House to vote on the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act as early as Tuesday. The legislation would require states with a recent history of discrimination to receive federal "preclearance" to make changes to their voting laws.

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## FHWA Briefs State DOTs On Highway Trust Fund Contingency Plan

[editor@aaashto.org](mailto:editor@aaashto.org) August 27, 2021 [0 COMMENTS](#)

The Federal Highway Administration held a briefing for state departments of transportation on August 26 regarding its contingency plans for an impending Highway Trust Fund cash flow shortfall due to a continuous and structural cash flow deficit since 2008.

Further complicating HTF cash flow forecasts is the unusual receipt and outlay patterns created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency said.

FHWA currently estimates the Highway Account of the HTF will run out of money around early November the agency does not implement cash management procedures, as outlined in recent [guidance](#). Meanwhile, the HTF's Mass Transit Account is not currently facing an imminent funding shortfall

FHWA said its cash management procedures would allocate HTF Highway Account funding reimbursements to states in proportion to their share of the total unexpended balances of all the states; however, reimbursement of the full requested amount may not be possible based on cash-on-hand.

Thus, under the cash management procedures, each state would only be able to bill against a state-specific cap, with "billing overages" being covered in the future payment cycle.

As was the case with prior HTF cash shortfalls in 2008 and 2014, reimbursement windows would be limited around the sixth and 17th business days each month, which is when the agency receives its twice-monthly deposits of tax receipts from the U.S. Department of the Treasury for the HTF.

If necessary, FHWA said the cash management process could begin as early as this October – not in November – in order to create and preserve a necessary "cash cushion" for the HTF.

"The Highway Trust Fund cash shortfall is an important scenario to be aware of – but also one of many possible scenarios between now and the end of September," said Joung Lee, director of policy and government relations for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

"Of course, the infrastructure bill [the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)] will solve this issue immediately upon passage since it will transfer \$118 billion from the Treasury's general fund to the HTF – with \$90 billion of this amount going to the HTF's highway account," he added.

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## Schumer says infrastructure bills edge U.S. close to Biden climate goals

By Timothy Gardner August 25, 2021

ASHINGTON, Aug 25 (Reuters) - Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said on Wednesday that the United States would be on track to meet its climate goals in the next decade, with measures introduced in two infrastructure bills along with efforts by states and the federal government.

President Joe Biden in April hiked the U.S. target for slashing economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions to 50%-52% from 2005 levels by 2030.

Schumer said in a letter to fellow lawmakers that climate measures in the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill and a [\\$3.5 trillion bill](#) will achieve emissions reductions of about 45% by 2030. Actions being planned by the Biden administration and states including New York, California and Hawaii would help hit the 50% target, he added.

"The bottom line is this: we have very little time to prevent the most horrendous outcomes for our children and grandchildren," Schumer said in the letter. "But if we act

now and act boldly, we can mitigate the worst effects of climate change and own the 21st century clean energy economy."

Two measures in particular in the bills, he said, would help put the United States on the path to dramatically slash emissions: the Clean Electricity Payment Program (CEPP) and the Senate Finance Committee's tax package on clean energy and vehicles.

Both measures are in the wider bill that Democrats in the Senate hope to pass over the next few months using a process called [budget reconciliation](#), which bypasses the chamber's usual rules requiring 60 votes to pass most legislation.

The CEPP is a system of payments and penalties that aims to push utilities to increase power generation from clean energy sources including wind, solar and nuclear power. Many lawmakers and the White House had originally favored a Clean Electricity Standard, which is similar but includes mandates.

The tax package would extend tax breaks for clean energy and clean transportation fuels. It could also abolish tax breaks for oil, gas and coal production - which would be a tough sell for Democrats from states dependent

Schumer also said he looked forward to seeing other ideas from lawmakers for cutting emissions.

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## White House, U.S. Department of Transportation Appoint Port Envoy to Address Supply Chain Disruptions

Friday, August 27, 2021

WASHINGTON – Today, the White House and the U.S. Department of Transportation announced that John D. Porcari will be the Port Envoy to the [Biden-Harris Administration Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force](#).

Envoy Porcari will work closely with Secretary Buttigieg and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as well as the National Economic Council to address congestion at U.S. ports. Disruptions in global shipping and rapid shifts in demand have led the cost of shipping containers between China and the West Coast to grow more than 90% compared to 2019. Containerized cargo volumes rose 40% in the first half of this year compared to the same time last year at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which together handle the largest share of containerized cargo moving through U.S. ports. Envoy Porcari will work with stakeholder and others at the ports to address the backlog and associated delivery delays and product shortages being experienced by American consumers and businesses.

"The Biden-Harris Administration is using a whole-of-government approach to work with labor and industry leadership to identify, reduce and eliminate maritime supply chain issues," said **Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg**. "Envoy Porcari's leadership in both the public and private infrastructure sectors make him uniquely qualified to work with stakeholders and federal agencies to address supply chain disruptions."

Since the launch of the Task Force, Secretary Buttigieg and the Department of Transportation have been engaged in extensive outreach and engagement with port stakeholders including holding a [virtual round table](#) in July with representatives of all aspects of the port supply chain. USDOT leaders have met with the World Shipping Council, representatives and leading companies from the National Retail Federation, Commissioners of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC), labor unions, and stakeholders throughout our entire supply chain to discuss current challenges in cargo movement and opportunities to improve data sharing. Department of Transportation leaders have also been on the ground visiting ports to discuss supply chain disruption issues in [Baltimore](#), [Seattle](#), and [New York](#).

Out of this work, it has become clear that the challenges at our ports—many of which have existed for years—require dedicated focus by experienced, senior leadership to drive toward outcomes that will reduce congestion, improve operations, and set us on a sustainable path for the future. John Porcari is uniquely qualified to take on this role.

"The pandemic has fundamentally disrupted our supply chains which is impacting consumers, workers, and businesses across the country," said **John D. Porcari, Ports Envoy to the Biden-Harris Administration's Task Force on Supply Chain Disruptions**. "I am excited to hit the ground running and get to work immediately with industry, labor, and other port stakeholders to address these challenges and to build a more resilient, future-facing supply chain that powers our economy into the future."

In addition to the Task Force's work, USDOT's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is also working to address supply chain disruptions at ports. Just yesterday, FRA made nearly \$362 million of funding available through its Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program. CRISI funds projects that can help reduce congestion by enhancing multi-modal connections and improving service integration between rail and other modes at port facilities. These grants will help build resilience across the American supply chain, in support of the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing Task Force on Short Term Supply Chain Disruptions.

Further, the Biden Administration is working to secure a historic \$17 billion in investments in port infrastructure as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal. The funding would help address congestion and supply chains over time by investing in repair and maintenance backlogs and reduce congestion and emissions near ports.

"The strength of the U.S. economic recovery has tested the near-term capacity of our supply chains, and the Administration is operating on all fronts to ease bottlenecks and facilitate the flow of goods across the country," said **NEC Director Brian Deese**. "Our country's ports

are the gateways for getting goods to market, which makes the appointment of John Porcari as Ports Envoy an especially important step forward in alleviating these disruptions that are impacting consumers, workers, and businesses alike.”

The Task Force was established in June to address supply and demand mismatches that emerged in several sectors as the economy reawakened following the Administration’s historic vaccination and economic relief efforts. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg leads the Task Force focus on ports and trucking issues. The Task Force’s leadership also includes Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on food and agriculture and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on homebuilding and semiconductors.

## Funding Opportunities

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### Federal Railroad Administration

#### Notice of Funding Opportunity for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and safety Improvements

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO or notice).

SUMMARY: This notice details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for eligible projects under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program, and related Trespass Prevention projects. The opportunities described in this notice are made available under Assistance Listings Number 20.325, “Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements.”

DATES: Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, DATE 90 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. Applications that are incomplete or received after 5:00 p.m. ET on [INSERT DATE 90 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] will not be considered for funding. See Section D of this notice for additional information on the application process.

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### Mobile Urbanized Area FY 2022 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) deadline extended to 9/3/21

The Mobile MPO has extended the deadline for submission of the Fiscal Year 2022 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding.

The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$400,000 federal (\$500,000 Total).

Applicants are welcome to submit more than one project.

Applications are due to [transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org) no later than 3:00 p.m., Friday, September 3, 2021.

The application and other pertinent information is available on our website at <https://www.mobilempo.org/TAP.html>

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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).

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

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### I'M LATE FOR WORK!!

Even though we are hitting another wave of Covid, school is back, and more and more people are not working from home, but commuting to work again. So if you have ever been late for work, and its 8:15AM and you are trying to get to work by 8:00 AM, you will appreciate this video. Along with the milk crate challenge, do not try this at home, or on our streets, or anywhere. This is a professional driver, on a professional course, and is professional nut. Video [HERE](#)





## In the News

### Infrastructure bill winners: Highways conceived decades ago

By Sean Reilly | 08/24/2021 06:06 AM EST



Work on the Birmingham Northern Beltline highway project. Alabama Department of Transportation

When the Senate approved a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package this month, backers praised it as a crucial step to the future in bolstering public works, addressing environmental concerns and rebuilding public confidence in Congress' ability to do its job.

But cradled deep in the fine print is \$1.25 billion for a road program drawn up more than 50 years ago. If lawmakers view proposed funding for the Appalachian Development Highway System as help for a long-beleaguered region, skeptics see it as emblematic of an inability to break with a road-building status quo that encourages sprawl and carbon emissions.

Despite the [inclusion](#) of a climate change program and a historic amount of dollars for mass transit, the bipartisan [package](#) puts "a lot more money into very old ideas, and there is no older idea than the ADHS," said Steve Davis, spokesman for Transportation for America, a research and advocacy group.

The \$1.25 billion, to be spent over five years, would be spread over 11 states on a formula tied to the amount of incomplete stretches on the approximately 3,100-mile network, originally intended to improve transportation and spur economic growth in areas along the Appalachian mountain range.

Of those 11, two — Alabama and West Virginia — would split almost half the pot. In Alabama, most, if not all, of its \$369 million share would go to the Northern Beltline, a 52-mile undertaking intended to create a six-lane loop around Birmingham.

In West Virginia, almost \$195 million would be spent for work on Corridor H, a four-lane road running west to east across much of the state. Both projects have been the target of lawsuits from environmental groups.

Corridor H "goes back to President Kennedy," said Hugh Rogers, a board member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, one of the organizations that sued in the 1990s to win changes to the road's original path.

While the resulting settlement fixed most of its alignment, Rogers said, advocates are now pressing the state to reroute one remaining leg set to be built over Blackwater Canyon, an area in the eastern part of the state freighted with environmental and historical significance.

"There's a good way to do this and a not-so-good way to do this," Rogers said in an interview.



Championing Corridor H is Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), who played a lead role in assembling the Senate version of the infrastructure package and in June introduced [S. 2284](#), a bill titled “Finish the ADHS Act.”

The proposed funding also appears to have counted in winning the support of West Virginia’s other senator, Republican Shelley Moore Capito, who served as the GOP floor manager during the Senate debate before the bill passed 69-30.

Corridor H “is a vital connection in our state for our tourism and our economy,” Capito said in a floor speech three days before the Aug. 10 vote. “It also will open us up even broader to the East Coast.”

Far less advanced is the Northern Beltline, whose origins also date back to the 1960s. With a price tag previously pegged at \$5.3 billion by Alabama transportation officials, it ranks nationally among the most costly highway projects on the books ([Greenwire](#), Dec. 23, 2015).

But only two years after the project’s groundbreaking in 2014, work on an initial 1.3-mile stretch was stalled by money woes. In the last two years, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), now the vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has sought to revive the Beltline with some \$60 million in new funding.

At the Alabama Department of Transportation, spokesman Tony Harris confirmed the money is available, but otherwise had little information on the state’s plans. “We’re working on designs that would allow us to move forward with the next phase of construction,” Harris said yesterday in an email.

Even assuming the proposed Appalachian highway windfall comes through, that would add just 4 to 5 miles, said Sarah Stokes, a senior attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center, which unsuccessfully sued to stop the project, partly on the grounds that it violated the National Environmental Policy Act.

“We keep throwing money at this boondoggle, and the result is only a few miles of road,” she said.

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## Spanish Fort plans street improvements

### City approves transportation plan



**Resurfacing work is planned on Spanish Main as part of the Spanish Fort transportation plan approved Monday, Aug. 16.**

GUY BUSBY

Posted Tuesday, August 24, 2021 4:00 pm

By Guy Busby

SPANISH FORT – A new transportation plan for the city of Spanish Fort calls for improvements on several municipal streets in the upcoming year.

The Spanish Fort City Council voted Monday, Aug. 16 to approve the plan that includes resurfacing on Raphael Semmes East, Raphael Semmes West, General Canby, General Canby Loop and restriping along Spanish Main, according to the resolution passed by the council.

The estimated cost of the work is \$275,000.

Mayor Mike McMillan said city officials have worked with engineering consultants to determine which streets need improvements and repairs. He the work should resolve issues that have troubled residents who drive on those streets for several years.

“It’s a big project,” McMillan said. “It’s a quarter of a million dollars worth. In addition, I’ve had several complaints during the year about Spanish Main, the striping on Spanish Main being a main thoroughfare. We thought that while we have crews out there to restripe Spanish Main because it has reached the point that we can’t see it very well, particularly when it’s raining.”

Councilwoman Mary Brabner said irregularities in some of the streets also need to be fixed when improvements are made.

She said General Canby Loop has several locations where the road dips. Spanish Main also has potholes near Cannonade.

McMillan said the work should include repairs of problems in the roads.

When they resurface, what they do is go from the gutters to everything else and repair everything that’s in the roadbed itself,” McMillan said. “So, we take a complete picture and get it all done.”

City Attorney David Conner said the Rebuild Alabama Act requires cities to approve transportation plans by a certain date. The Monday meeting was the last regular session of the Spanish Fort City Council before the Aug. 31 deadline for the plan for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

McMillan said the city needs to adopt the plan to start work on the roads.

“We do need to adopt the policy so we can move forward with this,” he said.

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## How to start traveling again

(BPT) - For Americans who are planning to travel again, preparation is essential. Before hitting the road or taking to the skies, travelers should take time to research and plan ahead so they are prepared to navigate things like longer security lines or modified health and safety guidelines to ensure a smooth journey.

Getting back into the swing of traveling may feel overwhelming, but with these tips and tricks you'll feel more prepared. For AARP members, a wide range of benefits and discounts can maximize both efficiency and affordability for every part of a vacation. Read on for insights on how to travel again:

**1) Book early and ready yourself for the road.** Utilize the [AARP Travel Center powered by Expedia](#) to book affordably and efficiently. AARP members will receive an additional 10% off at select hotels, up to 30% off select car *rentals*, and a 5% rebate (up to \$350) on eligible group hotel bookings. For road trippers, members have access to [Allstate Roadside](#) assistance plans that start at \$5.17/month to help with jump-starts, 24/7 towing and more.

**2) Make a health and safety check list.** “When booking a trip, it’s incredibly important to plan for any required COVID-19 testing and build in time to receive results,” says Charlotte Yeh, AARP Chief Medical Officer. Some destinations may offer rapid tests on-site (for example, at a resort) with a quick turnaround, so be sure to research all the options. Make a copy of your vaccination card and keep it separate from the original: if you have the original in your wallet, keep the copy in your luggage.

**3) Pack essentials.** Stop at [Walgreens](#) to purchase travel essentials for your trip, including travel size toiletries, snacks and beverages, COVID-19 tests and more. Linking AARP and myWalgreens™ memberships will earn members 10% Walgreens Cash rewards on Walgreens branded health and wellness products, 7% Walgreens Cash rewards on Walgreens branded beauty products and 3% Walgreens Cash rewards on other eligible beauty purchases.

**4) Pack accordingly.** If you're off to do some sightseeing, you'll want to pack everything you need to enjoy it in focus. If you wear contact lenses, make sure you have enough supplies for the duration of your trip, and if you're heading to a sunny destination, don't forget to tuck prescription sunglasses into your carry-on. Your health coverage or memberships like AARP might include vision benefits or discounts that make it easy to stock up. And for longer visits or international trips, fill your other prescriptions before departing to make sure you have enough medication. Thanks to prescription discount programs available at thousands of pharmacies nationwide, you don't have to break your wallet.

**5) Find a nice place to stay.** Finding a lodging site that is both affordable and safe is important. Take advantage of up to 10% off AARP member discounts available at [Hilton](#) branded hotels to vacation in style and feel comfortable knowing safety is prioritized. Whether you stay at an All-Inclusive Resort in Mexico, or one of Hilton's new hotels in Las Vegas, rest assured knowing that Hilton properties have implemented Hilton CleanStay protocols to enhance cleaning standards.

**6) Think ahead, build in extra time and prepare for mishaps.** Consider making advance restaurant reservations and transportation arrangements, which may be in high demand and short supply if you wait until closer to your departure date. Be prepared for longer wait times at the airport and ensure there is plenty of time to arrive, go through security and make it to your gate on time. If traveling internationally, make sure to check country and airline requirements repeatedly ahead of time and consider limiting travel within one country, as the logistics of crossing borders could cost valuable time.

**7) Prep your home for time away.** Being away from home can mean added assistance. There may be some basic house care items to take into consideration such as hiring a pet sitter, contacting a yard care service, or holding mail at the post office. You also will want to ensure your property is secure. Take advantage of AARP member perks from [SimpliSafe](#), and relax on vacation knowing that your home is safe and sound.

Regardless of where you're headed, don't forget to optimize your next adventure by taking advantage of discounts and savings available to AARP members. If you are an AARP member, you can learn more about your saving options by visiting [www.aarp.org/save](http://www.aarp.org/save).

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## Transportation Research



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides a strong foundation of resources for transportation practitioners researching or seeking technical assistance on Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL). In addition to the [FHWA website](#) covered in an earlier [RuralTransportation.org post](#), research institutions and technical assistance centers offer resources, state of the practice data and case studies. This post takes a look at two national resources for environment-related transportation issues: the [Transportation Research Board](#) (TRB) and the [AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence](#).

### Transportation Research Board Snap Searches

TRB offers [Snap Searches](#) that are information sheets on a variety of transportation topics including *Environmental Process*, *Environment and Sustainability* (includes wildlife considerations), and *Natural Resources*. Each **Snap Search** lists research, recent publications, current and upcoming projects, committees and panels, and upcoming events. Research is categorized by the Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP), National Highway Cooperative Research Program (NCHRP), Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), and Special Reports. Here are a few **Snap Search** highlights:

[Environmental Process](#): A current research project scheduled for August 2021 completion is [NCHRP 10-99: Guidebook for Implementing Constructability Across the Entire Project Development Process: NEPA to Final Design](#).



**Environment and Sustainability:** Current research underway includes [NCHRP 20-06/Topic 25-07 Review of Statutory and Case Law on Planning and Environmental Linkages](#). The research aims to produce a digest that answers the questions:

What is the litigation history behind judicial review of purpose and need statements and PEL?

How are the various approaches to PEL different from each other and what deference do courts provide for each?

What legal risks are associated with each approach?

**Natural Resources:** Research underway includes [NCHRP 08-124 Quantifying the Impacts of Corridor Management](#) which will address building a framework that incorporates the range of measures required to evaluate impacts of corridor management, will define what constitutes corridor management, and identify factors that need to be considered to develop an analytical methodology for impact measurement.

#### **Center for Environmental Excellence by AASHTO**

The [AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence](#) was developed in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration. The Center provides technical assistance, partnership-building, training, and resources with a website covering 20 different environmental topics including the NEPA process, air quality, and cultural resources.

In addition to a website, the Center offers a peer exchange, communities of practice, handbooks, and webinars, as well as a library with environment and transportation case law. The Center also connects with Transportation Research Board research and committees through [NCHRP Project 25-25](#). This quick-response research program, which ran through 2020, examined analytical methods, decision-support tools, procedures, and techniques employed by environmental practitioners in environmental streamlining, environmental stewardship, transportation planning, program delivery, and project development. Copies of reports developed under NCHRP 25-25 are available at both the [TRB website](#) and at the Center for Environmental Excellence [website](#).

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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.