



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 16th, 2021

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WE HAVE TAP FUNDS AVAILABLE (please see *Funding Opportunities*). There is a Mobile MPO meeting on July 28th; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. In *Legislative Updates*, things get complicated with the Infrastructure Bill, and Senator Shelby has two earmark requests for Mobile. In *the News* this week, Mayor Stimpson met with President Biden, and there is talk of Amtrak and the WAVE. This week's *Just For Fun* will BEARLY give you a laugh.... Have a great weekend!

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

Update on Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project

The Mobile MPO and Eastern Shore MPO both met separately on June 2nd, 2021. Of importance on each agenda, was the amendment to 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. 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. At the June 2nd Mobile MPO meeting, Chairman Mayor Stimpson called for frequent updates from ALDOT to both MPOs on the progress of the project. The first of those meetings will be [Tuesday, July 27th, at 2:00 PM at Five Rivers Delta Resource Center](#) in Spanish Fort. Seating is limited, as all members from both MPOs are invited and expected to be present. There will be no actions taken at this meeting, this is for ALDOT to report an update on the project to both MPOs.

Mobile MPO to meet on July 28th, TCC/CAC met this week

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizen Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) met on Wednesday, July 14th, 2021 at 10:00 am. The meeting was held at the GM&O Building located at 110 Beauregard Street, Mobile, AL 36602. There were several items on the agenda to review and recommend to the MPO. The Committee have reviewed and recommended for approval the following changes to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Modify the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program to include:

- 100073698; BR Funds; PE; BRIDGE WIDENING ALONG I-65 OVER SR-158; Target Start Date: 7/1/2021; \$120,800
- 100073692; BR Funds; CN; BRIDGE WIDENING ALONG I-65 OVER SR-158; Target Start Date: 7/29/2022; \$1,220,080
- 100052601; UT; McGregor Avenue Widening from Airport Boulevard to Dauphin Street and Installation of a Roundabout at Dauphin Street; DELETE \$1,500,000
- 100052602; CN; McGregor Avenue Widening from Airport Boulevard to Dauphin Street and Installation of a Roundabout at Dauphin Street; Old Est: \$3,382,410; 3/25/2022; New Est. \$8,602,100
- Modify the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program to include the following projects with TAP Funds:
100072735; CN; 78 ADA Curb Ramps located throughout Pecan Point, Brooklyns Way, Torrington Place, Raphael Court, Stone Hedge, Irongate, Rachael Plance and Carrington Place; \$200,000 federal \$50,000 match; 12/15/2021
100072733; CN; 80 ADA Compliant Curb Ramps Located Throughout Chesterfield Place, Browning Place, Summerlake, Hunters Park, Woodberry Forest, Augusta Place, Charlanda Estates, Bradshire and Bradbury Unit One \$200,000 federal \$50,000 match; 12/15/2021

Other agenda items reviewed and recommended for approval [the DRAFT FY2022 Unified Planning Work Program](#). Also, The 7 CRRSAA projects will now have 7 PE projects, and 7 CN projects with detailed descriptions below:

100073667; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON SEMMES COURT, SEMMES DR. NORTH, SEMMES DR. EAST, ROWELL COURT, ROWELL LANE, WHISTESTONE DR. AND GRAYSTONE DR. IN THE CITY OF SEMMES; Target Start Date : 4/29/2022 Engineers Estimate : \$356,469.00

100073661; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON STATE DOCKS RD. FROM SHELL BELT RD. TO CITY OWNED PROPERTY, POWELL AVE. FROM LITTLE RIVER RD. TO SEAFOOD HOUSE RD., AND LOTTIE AVE. FROM E. ALBA ST. TO HEMLEY RD. IN THE CITY OF BAYOU LA BATRE; Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate : \$256,223.00

100073665; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON W. EVERETT AVE., RUSSELL ST., BECKMAN AVE., RUBEN AVE., PONCE DE LEON, CEDAR ST. AND LUCILLE ST. IN THE CITY OF SARALAND; Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate : \$517,869.00

100073666; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON OLD HWY 43 FROM BAKER RD. TO JUNIPER AVE., AND TWO INTERSECTIONS ON HARRISON AVE. AT THOMAS RD. AND AT NORTON DR. IN THE CITY OF SATSUMA; Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate : \$293,014.00

100073664; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON SHORT LOTT RD., SUGARMILL RD., OAK CLIFF DR., CLANCEY DR., GATTI AVE., MEAHER AVE., GARRISON AVE., RICH AVE., MEADOW AVE. AND SOUTH ATMORE AVE. IN THE CITY OF PRICHARD Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate : \$610,427.00

100073662; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON GRAND BLVD., HILL ST., 4TH ST., HOWELL ST., AND 5TH AVE. IN THE CITY OF CHICKASAW; Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate : \$294,410.00

100073663; CN; CRRSAA-RESURFACING OF CITY STREETS ON DEAD LAKE RD. FROM SR-13 (US-43) TO EXIT 22 OF I-65 IN THE CITY OF CREOLA Target Start Date : 4/29/2022; Engineers Estimate: \$285,074.00

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board will vote on the recommendations by the TCC/CAC at a meeting on Wednesday, July 28th, 2021 at 10:00 AM at the GM&O Building located at 110 Beauregard Street, Mobile, AL 36602.

Mobile Area Major Road Plan

This week was a follow up to 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

The Mobile MPO met on June 2nd 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 28th, 2021, with a Public Meeting held on May 19th, 2021. The deadline for comments to be included into the draft document was May 26th, 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. *In The News* below this week has several new articles concerning the meeting.

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.

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.

[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area. The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are

programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

None this week

South Alabama RPO Updates

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) met in October using the GoToMeeting app. The agenda included:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting (these will be sent out soon)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program** (available for review online at: <http://mobilempo.org/RPO/RPO%20Documents/2021%20Documents/Draft%20FY%202021%20RPO%20Work%20Program.pdf>)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan** (available for review online at: <http://mobilempo.org/Documents/Planning/FY2021/2020-2023%20HSCTP%20for%20SARPC.pdf>)

The RPO Transportation Plan Project List (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>) SARPC Rural Planning Organization

Projects in Region Let July 30th, 2021

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Concrete Barrier, Traffic Signs, and Traffic Stripe) on I-10 from the CR-39 Interchange to the CR-69 (Plantation Road) Overpass in Mobile. Length 4.748 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$21,633,085 to \$26,440,437 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Connector Road (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Bridge, Fence Installation, Traffic Lighting, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on SR-161 from the junction SR-180 to a point north of the junction of CR-4 (Cotton Creek Drive) in Gulf Shores. Length 1.078 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$33,901,483 to \$41,435,146 .

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

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

Legislative Updates

Earmarks that added \$1.4 billion to THUD bill may not add votes

Republicans placing earmarks in the spending measure say won't vote for it if its overall spending levels are too high

By Jessica Wehrman

Posted July 15, 2021 at 7:56am

When the House Appropriations Committee takes up the fiscal 2022 Transportation-HUD spending bill Friday, it may help decide the fate of the Jefferson City Memorial Airport Air Traffic Control Center in Missouri.

It could help build sidewalks for Kelseyville, Calif., or redesign an intersection in downtown Pineville, N.C. It could plan and design a new commuter rail stop in Revere, Mass., on the Newburyport/Rockport line and create a pedestrian connection at that stop to the MBTA Blue Line intermodal transit facility approximately 1,000 feet to the east.

Those projects were among 975 earmarks added to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD fiscal 2022 draft spending bill. Subcommittee Chairman David E. Price, D-N.C., said there were more than 1,000 requests.

While earmarks were once viewed as a sort of legislative grease to get members to vote for legislation they might not otherwise support, many of the Republicans who placed earmarks in the House bill or are trying to get them in the Senate version say they won't vote for the bill if its overall spending levels are too high.

In all, the subcommittee folded in \$1.4 billion worth of earmarks, according to the House Appropriations Committee. Of that, \$427.5 million was set aside for highway projects, while nearly \$80 million was set aside for airport grants. Some \$923.5 million was set aside for HUD-related economic development projects.

A \$5 million limit for individual earmarks set by the subcommittee for that bill stands in sharp contrast to member requests for transportation and housing projects made in the Senate, which is not as far along in its appropriations process.

The difference between the two chambers is stark. Sen. Richard C. Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee, requested two earmarks of over \$100 million: a \$132.7 million for the Alabama State Port Authority to design, plan and build

docks, wharves and piers as well as repair and expand existing docks, wharves and piers in Mobile, and a \$100 million earmark for the Mobile Airport Authority for improvements at the Mobile Downtown Airport including a new terminal.

“They’re substantive,” said Shelby. “They’re substantive needs and wants and easily defensible.”

But that doesn’t mean he’s inclined to vote for the bill if his earmarks are included.

“Oh, no, no, no,” he said. “Ultimately, you see what’s in the bill. Even if it might be some of your stuff, if it’s bad, you want to take it down.” Continue [HERE](#)

GOP's Thune warns \$3.5T deal 'complicates' bipartisan infrastructure bill

BY JORDAIN CARNEY - 07/14/21 11:40 AM EDT

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) warned Wednesday that the Democratic agreement for a \$3.5 trillion price tag for their party-line infrastructure bill “complicates” GOP support for a separate bipartisan deal.

“Having the budget resolution conversation around this complicates the issue and makes it clear what the Democrats ultimate objectives are and if able to achieve those, yeah, it creates a lot of heartburn for our members,” Thune told reporters.

He added that Democrats' willingness to use reconciliation on a second Democratic-only bill “adds a context to the conversation around the [bipartisan] infrastructure bill that is not conducive to getting more Republican votes for it.”

Thune’s comments come after Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Budget Committee Democrats, led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), said they had agreed to a budget resolution with a \$3.5 trillion price tag.

Democrats still need to sketch out many of the details and unify their members but the budget resolution will include instructions for passing a Democratic-only bill through reconciliation, which allows Democrats to bypass a GOP filibuster.

Democrats are pursuing a two-track infrastructure plan: On one path, a bipartisan group is drafting a \$1.2 trillion plan, and on the other, Democrats will try to go it alone for their \$3.5 trillion bill.

To pass the bipartisan bill, Democrats need the support of at least 10 Republican senators.

Schumer hasn’t said which he’ll move first. But Thune, on Wednesday, signaled the bipartisan deal should move first and encouraged Democratic leaders to avoid rhetorically linking the two issues or risk threatening GOP support.

Liberal lawmakers praise Senate Democratic budget deal

BY HANNA TRUDO - 07/14/21 07:07 PM Editably put downward pressure on Republican votes that might otherwise be there,” Thune said.



© Greg Nash

Progressive lawmakers are praising the Senate’s \$3.5 trillion budget deal, arguing that if it moves through Congress along with a separate \$1.2 trillion bipartisan deal, it would amount to a historic effort to reshape the economy.

“There are a lot of things that are positive about the bill,” Rep. [Ro Khanna](#) (D-Calif.) said during an appearance on MSNBC. “I think there is a lot of enthusiasm.”

On an afternoon call with reporters, Rep. [Pramila Jayapal](#) (D-Wash.) called the measure “excellent momentum” and said she was pleased that top policy concentrations outlined by the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) were kept intact.

Progressives were particularly happy that the bill included more spending toward clean energy and other climate initiatives, home care and education, affordable housing, and a roadmap for some undocumented immigrants to become citizens.

They also liked that it significantly expanded some critical Medicare components for seniors, a key constituency for the party.

“We’re still looking at all the details, but we certainly see this as important movement forward,” said Jayapal, who chairs the CPC, during the briefing.

The final deal is much less than the \$6 trillion that liberals had said was necessary, but Jayapal in an interview with CNN said “perfect is not going to be the enemy of the good.”

In truth, if Congress approves a separate bill being put together by a bipartisan group of senators that could cost as much as \$1.2 trillion over eight years, the total spending would be around \$4.7 trillion. That’s not so far from the \$6 trillion figure.

Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) is also the progressive who worked out the \$3.5 trillion deal. He called the agreement “transformative” and “huge,” and his stamp of approval goes far on the left.

"The legislation that the president and I are supporting will go further to improve the lives of working people than any legislation since the 1930s," said Sanders, the party's progressive standard-bearer in two presidential campaigns who was [President Biden's](#) last serious challenger in the 2020 Democratic primary. He is now the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.

Multiple progressive sources on Wednesday were not arguing that the spending was too little.

"He got a lot more than I thought he'd get, honestly," said one former aide who worked closely with Sanders in the Senate.

But some outside activists were notably more muted.

"We've been calling for \$10 trillion over the next decade, \$1 trillion per year, because that's just what climate change requires at this point," said Ellen Sciales, the communications director of the Sunrise Movement

Manchin draws red line in infrastructure talks

BY JORDAIN CARNEY - 07/13/21 12:52 PM EDT

Sen. [Joe Manchin](#) (D-W.Va.) warned on Tuesday that he wants both a bipartisan infrastructure bill and a separate Democratic-only bill to be fully paid for.

"I think everything should be paid for. We've put enough free money out," Manchin told reporters.

Manchin's demand, if he sticks to it, could create real problems in Democratic negotiations.

The party in a matter of weeks is seeking to exercise a complicated legislative goal of winning Senate approval of both a bipartisan infrastructure measure opposed by many progressives and a budget resolution that will tee up a larger Democratic bill filled with spending priorities. The latter bill will not win any GOP support and will need to pass with just Democratic votes, including Manchin's.

A group of 22 senators, including Manchin, agreed to a framework for a bipartisan infrastructure deal that would spend \$1.2 trillion over eight years. But there are concerns among Republicans that the bill isn't fully paid for, threatening GOP support for it.

Republican negotiators in the group have warned that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) could lowball the amount of revenue the proposal will raise.

"I know there are some things that we're relying on as pay-fors that will probably not receive a CBO score but nonetheless are real," Sen. [Mitt Romney](#) (R-Utah) told reporters.

Meanwhile, Democrats are trying to agree to a price tag for their larger bill.

In order to pass the reconciliation bill, Democrats will have to have total unity from all 50 of their members for a budget resolution, which would include the top-line figure and instructions for the Democratic-only bill, and the subsequent infrastructure bill itself. The measure under Senate rules cannot be filibustered, meaning the GOP can't block it.

He met with Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee on Monday night but didn't get an agreement. They'll meet again on Tuesday night.

Senate Budget Committee Chairman [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) has thrown out \$6 trillion, paying for roughly half, as where he would like to go on the Democratic-only bill.

Funding Opportunities

Mobile Urbanized AREA FY 2022 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) deadline 8/6/21

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of a second round 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 no later than **3:00 p.m., Friday, August 6, 2021**.

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

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)

I CAN BEARLY TAKE IT

A staff member here at SARPC is currently on an adventure, primitive camping out West to see some of this Nation's great national parks; and probably will see some bears. Bear sightings have increased in Baldwin County, and of course Saraland has it's bears, including the infamous [three legged bear](#). BTW, this does not mean 3 back legs and 2 arms; bears have front legs, and back legs (if it has a hand, it is an arm, if it has a paw, it is a leg).

With all of these bear sightings, there is a new trend.... DO NOT LEAVE SNACKS IN YOUR CAR. Car break-ins are on the rise, but so are bear sightings; coincidence? Bears have been reported scoping vehicles for goodies. Look at these bears, one is working a "jimmy", and another is taking off with a Vera Bradley bag. [HERE](#) is more video evidence... *Just For Fun...*



In the News

Mayor Stimpson meets with President Biden to talk about infrastructure needs

SHELBY MYERS

UPDATED 16 HRS AGO | POSTED ON JUL 14, 2021



MOBILE, Ala. (WALA) -- Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson went to the White House on Wednesday to meet with President Biden to discuss infrastructure needs.

Stimpson was among a group of bipartisan governors and mayors meeting with the President and Vice President Harris.

The mayor said the meeting lasted about an hour and 15 minutes. Stimpson said he didn't get to talk about specific projects, like the I-10 bridge over the Mobile River, but he said the President knows there is a need.

"He does definitely understand that there are projects of regional significance that have national importance. He definitely understands that, so I don't know how they will score these projects. I know that there are a lot of people at the table and they will have their guns loaded and all their data to prove why they should be the recipient of it," Stimpson said.

FOX10 News asked Stimpson why he was among the mayors and governors picked to go to Washington. He said he believes he was chosen because members of his administration have contact with the Biden administration and they talk every week.

The mayor stopped short of saying he approves of the President's infrastructure bill, but said he will relay what happened in the meeting to the local Congress members.

"This meeting was more about the president explaining to us why this bill was important to him, the country, to everybody and he wanted some people out in the cities and the states to be able to amplify what he was saying," said Stimpson.

AL: Mobile unveils new buses as mayoral candidates pitch transit plans

The new buses are being purchased directly by the transit agency via funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act which was enacted during the early days of the pandemic.

John Sharp
al.com (TNS)
Jul 13th, 2021



A new WAVE Transit bus pictured on Monday, July 12, 2021, outside the Mobile Civic Center in Mobile, Ala.
John Sharp/jsharp@al.com (TNS)

Mobile is adding new buses to its fleet thanks to last year's coronavirus pandemic-related relief money. But questions continue on whether the WAVE Transit system should operate bus routes into nearby Mobile County cities like Prichard, Chickasaw and Saraland.

The candidates for Mobile mayor also have their views on the future of Mobile's public transportation agency. Two candidates running for Mobile mayor on August 24 believes a fleet of electric buses or an environmentally friendly solution should be considered as part of future operations.

Public transit issues arose Monday following a news conference outside the Mobile Civic Center in which incumbent Mayor Sandy Stimpson and Wave Transit general manager Damon Dash announced the new buses to the city's fleet. The buses, each estimated to cost around \$500,000 each, are being purchased directly by the transit agency via funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act which was enacted during the early days of the pandemic.

"This is a huge step in the right direction of things needed for a long period of time," Stimpson said, standing in front of one of the new buses. Four new buses will be added to the city's fleet by the end of July, and an additional five buses will be purchased and added to the city's routes by next April.

Dash said that once the five buses are added next year, at least two-thirds of the city's fleet will be "less than two to three years" old.

In addition, WAVE Transit is purchasing 10 "mobility vans" that will provide door-to-door service for people in need. Those vehicles are expected to be purchased and placed into the city before the end of the year.

WAVE Transit, last June, received \$8.8 million from the CARES Act that was signed into law by former President Donald Trump.

The new buses are arriving at a time when WAVE Transit is still recovering from the pandemic. Ridership, according to Dash, is down approximately 40 percent from its pre-pandemic levels.

"But the good thing about buses and (new benches) and the passenger experience is that all of those items will be there regardless of riders," said Dash. "We're still evaluating the system and ridership. Our focus has shifted to capital (purchases)."

Stimpson said the city's focus, heading into the fiscal year 2021 budget, is to be "supportive and work with WAVE Transit" on "what needs to be done" regarding capital purchases and the ridership experience. The city is also promoting the MyWAVE card, or the WAVE Transit Mobile app. MyWAVE cards are \$4 and can be reloaded for up to three years.

Regional routes

The two challengers for mayor believe more routes should be considered five years after the council decided to roll them back.

Mobile cut back the routes WAVE Transit runs outside the city limits in 2016. Those cuts completely stopped buses from running to Chickasaw, Theodore, and Eight Mile. Also, routes into Prichard were cut back.

Karlos Finley, a Mobile municipal judge, said the city could utilize some of its American Rescue Plan money to add additional routes through collaborations with other municipalities and the Mobile County Commission. The Stimpson administration's proposed \$58.2 million plan for the rescue act money does not include funding for WAVE Transit, but the Mobile City Council has yet to authorized a final proposal for the federal COVID-19 relief funds.

Finley said he is supportive of a regional public transportation initiative.

"When we look to municipalities in other areas of the country as well as here in the state, public transportation is the way to go," said Finley. "Often times, especially in larger cities, a vehicle is a liability. Most people use public transportation. Here in Mobile, it's safe to say we have a stigma for public transportation. It's a socio-economic stigma we need to get over as a community and as a culture."

He also said that a more robust transit system will help curb emissions.

Mobile City Councilman Fred Richardson said he would like to establish a committee to look in the WAVE Transit's operations to see where improvements can be made.

But Richardson said he doesn't support extending the services outside of Mobile's city limits if other cities are not willing to financially support the system.

"There should be cooperation from those municipalities," he said.

Stimpson, in a statement to AL.com, said the city reached out to Prichard and other communities in 2016, but "did not receive any interest" in a partnership to keep the WAVE Transit service operating outside of city limits. The Wave Transit system operates 29 buses along fixed routes throughout Mobile.

Said Stimpson, "We are still open to exploring those options, but our priority is always the citizens of Mobile." Continue [HERE](#)

Prichard taxpayers consider taking pothole problems into their own hands

by Justin Moore Tuesday, July 13th 2021



PRICHARD, Ala. (WPMI) — It's like an obstacle course without the cones on Hanes Street in Prichard. Drivers swerving to dodge water filled potholes while dodging other drivers.

Shirly Walker lives right in front of several of those holes. She witnessed countless number of drivers damaging their cars from the holes. Walker said her and her husband who's a mechanic helped at least a dozen drivers.

"We deserve better," Walker said.

Just down the street Valentino Arso stacked tires in two holes on Hanes to give drivers a heads up. It's just not this neighborhood dealing with potholes. They are all over Prichard. Arso's wife recently damaged her Toyota in the Whistler area.

"That costed me and her, \$1,955.46," Arso said.

Neighbors told NBC15 for decades the city has only patched the holes and when it rains, they reopen. Many in the community say they are fed up.

Prichard Spokesperson TJ Pettway sent NBC15 a statement.

"We are working to address the concerns and to come up with a solution to fix the issue," it said.

Arso said he's considering filling the potholes himself.

"I got a good friend of mine who I used to work at the concrete place with, I'll fill it up full of concrete," Arso said.

Taxpayers like Arso told us they won't let this go until Prichard elected officials repave the streets.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) anticipates shifting traffic into the newly constructed northbound lanes on SR-181 between just south of the SR-104/SR-181 junction to just south of the SR-181/CR-64 junction Monday morning, July 12.

Motorists will still have a lane of travel in each direction. A flagging operation will be implemented at the SR-181/SR-104 junction during the shift while signals are repositioned. Once traffic is shifted, the southbound lanes will be closed in this area so that crews can complete drainage operations related to the widening project.

South Alabama Mega Site receives \$5.5 million from the Growing Alabama Tax Credit Program



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Submitted

The Growing Alabama Commission recently approved the South Alabama Mega Site for an investment of \$5.5 million for additional site improvements, which include the construction of an on-site rail spur on the existing rail bed and construction of the wye, connecting the on-site rail spur to the CSX mainline.

This funding brings the total investment to \$12.5 million from the Growing Alabama Tax Credit program, which uses private dollars to improve publicly owned sites for economic development purposes.

“The South Alabama Mega Site is a prime location for a high-impact economic development project within the Gulf Coast region, and these new improvements will make the Baldwin County site even more competitive when it comes to strategic corporate investment decisions,” said Greg Canfield, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce. “This is another example demonstrating that the Growing Alabama Tax Credit Program is an effective tool in our team approach to facilitating economic growth in the state.”

The Growing Alabama Tax Credit program allows for taxpayers who make contributions to economic development organizations for approved qualifying projects to receive a tax credit. The program is managed by the Alabama Department of Commerce and allows private companies and individuals to get a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for investing in preparation and infrastructure improvements to industrial sites. Along with support by the Growing Alabama Commission and the Alabama Department of Commerce, the investment in this phase of the site’s infrastructure improvements are made possible by donations from Regions Bank and CSX Transportation. Continue [HERE](#)

Amtrak gains access to freight rail lines; asks feds to speed up decision on Gulf Coast service

Updated Jul 10, 2021; Posted Jul 09, 2021

By [John Sharp | jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)

Amtrak has access to CSX and Norfolk Southern freight rail lines along the Gulf Coast, and is once again urging federal officials to “expedite” a decision that would allow passenger service to resume between Mobile and New Orleans within six months.

The latest filings to the U.S. Surface Transportation Board, which will determine whether Amtrak can operate a twice-daily service between the two cities, illustrate Amtrak’s push to operate the service by New Year’s Day.

According to a filing on Tuesday, Amtrak views the restoration of passenger rail between the two cities – with four stops in cities along Mississippi’s Gulf Coast – as “an important piece of a national vision to make intercity passenger rail services a more vital part of the nation’s transportation system, offering connections between heavily populated corridors across America” while also alleviating “worsening congestion on highways and service reductions in the aviation system” and also “encouraging use of a more sustainable, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly means of travel than other modes.”

“The residents of the Gulf Coast have already waited many years to have their passenger rail service restored such that this vision can become a reality,” the filing reads.

Amtrak’s push for an expedited decision also came with support from CSX that allows Amtrak access to their property and personnel. Amtrak wanted access to the CSX line so they could, in part, “conduct a survey for an interim layover track in Mobile.” In addition, the passenger rail operator wants to undertake repairs to stations in Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula and Mobile.

Andy Daly, senior director of passenger operations with CSX, in a letter dated June 30, granted Amtrak access to their properties and resources to “complete activities in preparation for the possible commencement of new passenger service on the Gulf Coast.” [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

[Roundabouts vs Traffic Lights](#)

Jun 1, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ0pnCx76Nk>

Hate it when you’re the only car stopped at a light?

Roundabouts are a solution to that, and more.

Roundabouts are “safer. They save lives. They cost less!” Carmel, Indiana mayor Jim Brainard explains.

He’s replaced nearly every stoplight in his town with a roundabout. His town now accounts for about 2% of all roundabouts in America.

Roundabouts are safer.

A study in Wisconsin found that when roundabouts replaced typical intersections, deaths fell 38%. Crashes actually rose 12%, but they were more minor crashes. “Instead of a T-bone, you get a sideswipe,” Brainard explains.

Roundabouts pass cars through intersections faster, they look nicer, save tax money, and pollute less. Yet America's politicians have been slow to adopt them. Europe has about 200,000 roundabouts — compared to America's roughly 6,000. Why so slow? I ask Jim Brainard in the video link above.

BTS Releases Spring 2021 Updates to National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD)

04/29/2021

National Transportation Atlas Database Spring 2021 Includes New Pipeline Dataset, 8 Other Updates

The Spring 2021 update to the [National Transportation Atlas Database \(NTAD\)](#) was released today with the new pipeline intermodal freight facility layer and eight updated datasets.

The pipeline addition brings to 89 the total number of geospatial datasets in the NTAD collection representing the nation's transportation infrastructure, containing roadways, railways, waterways, and airports. An additional 27 ancillary data tables can be used in this Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) compilation.

The updates in this release include:

- National Bridge Inventory with 2020 characteristics;
- National Tunnel Inventory with 2020 characteristics;
- Alternative Fueling Stations including electric vehicle charging stations;
- National Parks;
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries;
- Military Bases;
- Marine Highways; and
- Strategic Ports.

The pipeline intermodal freight facility layer includes information on the mode (truck, rail, and/or waterway) a pipeline terminal connects to, what commodity the facility can manage (crude oil, refined petroleum products, petroleum chemicals, natural gas liquids, gasoline, biodiesel, jet fuel, and ethanol), and its storage capacity.

The map below shows the location of the ethanol intermodal pipeline terminals in the Midwest, specifically those that connect to truck facilities. The highest number of ethanol intermodal pipeline terminals in the U.S., 164 out of 463, are in the Midwest, the region with the top 10 corn producing states. In the U.S., ethanol is largely produced from the starch in corn grain.



NTAD is available for download in comma separated values (CSV), Keyhole Markup Language (KML), and shapefile formats through the [BTS Geospatial Data Catalog](#). Additionally, Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standard [Web Feature Services \(WFS\)](#) (including Web Mapping Services (WMS)) are available for all NTAD datasets. Also available are optimized services that allow for fast rendering of full NTAD datasets, and vector tile services for 13 of the largest NTAD datasets. These full NTAD datasets and their respective [faster services](#) are designated by service names ending in "DS" for each layer, and the vector tiles service names ending in "VT".

BTS now uses a dynamic NTAD publication cycle, making updated data available throughout the year when they become available from their respective government agencies. Follow [@TransportStats](#) on Twitter for announcements of additional dataset releases throughout the year. Contacts: Press: Dave Smallen: (202) 366-5568. For technical information and questions: Dominic Menegus: (202) 366-8717, or email ntad@dot.gov.

Opportunity Zones

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

Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—

Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

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

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

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



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

Transportation Dictionary

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

Search Tips

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

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