



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

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**WE HAVE TAP FUNDS AVAILABLE** (please see *Funding Opportunities*). There is a TCC/CAC meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup>, and a Mobile MPO meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup>; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. In *Legislative Updates*, there are numerous bills introduced and the House passes a \$706 Billion package. In *the News* this week ALDOT tries an innovative approach to Holiday traffic and diverts commercial truck traffic from the tunnel, while Congressman Carl discusses the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. This week's *Just For Fun* will get you lost in laughter. Have a great weekend and be safe celebrating Independence Day!

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 to Meet on July 28<sup>th</sup>, TCC/CAC on July 14<sup>th</sup>

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizen Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) will meet on Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10:00 am. The meeting will be held at the GM&O Building located at 110 Beauregard Street, Mobile, AL 36602. There are several items on the agenda to review and recommend to the MPO. The Committee will review and recommend 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
- 100052602; STPMB Funds; MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET; Old Engineers Estimate : \$3,382,411.00 New Engineers Estimate : \$8,602,100; Target Start Date: 3/25/2022

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 include to review and recommend for approval [the DRAFT FY2022 Unified Planning Work Program](#).

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

## Mobile Area Major Road Plan

A couple of weeks ago was 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 this week on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00AM in the SARPC Board Room on the first floor of the GMO Building. Items on the agenda are [HERE](#). 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. 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.

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

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. 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**

NONE THIS WEEK

## South Alabama RPO Updates

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

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting (these will be sent out soon)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program** (available for review online at: <http://mobilempo.org/RPO/RPO%20Documents/2021%20Documents/Draft%20FY%202021%20RPO%20Work%20Program.pdf>)
- Review and adoption of the **Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan** (available for review online at: <http://mobilempo.org/Documents/Planning/FY2021/2020-2023%20HSCPT%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 June 25th, 2021

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### **MOBILE COUNTY**

None at this time.

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

None at this time.

### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-113 (US-29) from the Florida State Line to the junction of SR-3 (US-31) northeast of Flomaton. Length 0.799 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$432,574 to \$528,701.

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

## Legislative Updates

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### House passes \$760B package, hoping to sway infrastructure debate

BY [CRISTINA MARCOS](#) AND [MIKE LILLIS](#) - 07/01/21

The House on Thursday passed a roughly \$760 billion proposal to fund transportation and water projects that's meant to shape parts of the broader infrastructure package — a top priority of [President Biden](#) — currently under discussion in the Senate and White House.

Lawmakers passed the legislation largely along party lines in a 221-201 vote with just two Republicans voting for the package.

Democrats hailed it as a monumental shift toward more sustainable infrastructure projects, with Republicans warning of lost jobs and a skyrocketing federal debt.

The bill "not only builds the infrastructure of America, but helps to rebuild the middle class," said Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.). "It does so in a transformative way."

The measure would reauthorize surface transportation programs that are set to expire on Sept. 30, as well as invest in liberal priorities like promoting electric vehicles, strengthening drinking water standards and making utilities more durable against the impact of climate change.

Thursday's vote came as Biden is fighting to keep GOP senators on board with a bipartisan infrastructure framework while assuring progressives that a larger, Democratic-only package — expected to include elements of his economic agenda like subsidized higher education and paid family leave — is still on the way.

As the Senate and White House grapple over the particulars of their fragile agreement — a plan that has not yet been drafted into legislation — House Democrats are battling to ensure that some of their priorities find their way into whatever final product emerges from the talks.

"This bill is designed to be a part of the president's jobs bill. It is not a substitute for the jobs bill," House Majority Leader [Steny Hoyer](#) (D-Md.) emphasized this week.

Democrats are hoping to use the legislation passed on Thursday to make it easier to include some of their priorities in the bipartisan package that's still being negotiated.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman [Peter DeFazio](#) (D-Ore.) suggested that adopting some of the policies of the House package could help speed up the Senate process given the Democrats' ambitious timeline for passing an infrastructure package, since his panel now has legislative language ready to go. Indeed, he's urging Senate Majority Leader [Charles Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) to do just that.

"[Schumer] would like to move quickly. And I said, 'Well, it took my staff seven months to write the policy. I don't know how quickly you can write policy over there. So I would suggest that you look at our policies and we adopt significant portions of those,'" DeFazio said.

Most Republicans voted against the bill, even though it included funding for specific projects — known colloquially as earmarks — that many had requested for their districts.

The legislation includes funding for 403 projects requested by House GOP lawmakers, out of a combined 1,473 projects between the two parties.

Yet Republicans opposed the legislation on the grounds that it was overly partisan and costly.

"Voting for this bill is an implicit endorsement of the Speaker's overall strategy to ram through a \$6 trillion tax-and-spend plan," said Rep. [Sam Graves](#) (Mo.), the top Republican on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. [HERE](#)

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### Sens. Kelly, Cruz introduce Highway Formula Modernization Act

BY LIZ CAREY JUNE 29, 2021

U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Ted Cruz (R-TX) recently introduced legislation that would direct the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to re-evaluate how federal highway funding is distributed — the first such reevaluation in 16 years.

Both legislators criticized the current policy as not providing enough highway funding to their states.

"For decades, Arizona has received less than its fair share in federal funding for the highways, roads, and bridges we use every day," Kelly said. "The Highway Formula Modernization Act will ensure that growing states like Arizona are no longer shortchanged and receive the funding needed to make investments in the critical infrastructure Americans rely on."

The current formulas to allocate highway funding have not been updated since 2005, despite population growth in states like Arizona and Texas. Nearly all federal highway dollars are allocated to states and local governments using the 2005 formula to fund roads, bridges, and other critical transportation infrastructure.

"Texas continually receives proportionally less funding from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) than any other state, even as we contribute the most in gas tax revenue to the HTF every year," he said. "Texas taxpayers deserve better, and Texas highways deserve their fair share of infrastructure development funding. I am proud to join Sen. Kelly on this commonsense bill calling for a study to modernize the formula to ensure we invest properly in Texas highways and highways across the nation."

According to the ENO Center for Transportation, in 2017, Texas not only paid more into the Highway Trust Fund per capita than most states but was also the only state to get less than 100 percent of every dollar that it put into the trust fund.

In 2017, 28.3 million taxpayers in Texas paid \$141.04 per capita in excise taxes into the Highway account. Compare that to 39.5 Californians who paid an estimated \$86.53 per capita. While every other state in the country in 2018 got more money in funding back than it put in – case in point Alaska, which got 680 cents of highway formula funding for every dollar of tax it paid in 2017 – Texas got 95 percent of the money it paid into the trust fund.

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## White House Releases State-By-State Infrastructure Guides

Jennifer Epstein July 1, 2021

President Joe Biden’s team is intensifying its pressure on Republicans opposed to a bipartisan infrastructure agreement by spotlighting crumbling roads and bridges on a state-by-state basis that the funding could be used to rebuild.

Local fact sheets, [released July 1](#), also highlight states’ needs for improving water quality and expanding broadband internet.

The White House is seeking to win public support for a bipartisan deal reached by a group of senators and to turn up pressure on lawmakers by quantifying the level of infrastructure disrepair in each state. Many Republicans are expected to oppose the bipartisan framework as too costly, while House Democrats are seeking to make changes through informal negotiations in coming weeks.

### Infrastructure Stories

The Senate’s bipartisan bill — which amounts to \$579 billion in new spending, or \$973 billion when regular maintenance spending is factored in — initially won support from 21 senators, including 11 Republicans — enough for it to pass by regular order in that chamber. Some of those GOP senators have since objected, after it was linked by Biden to a bigger, Democrat-only budget bill.

The bipartisan framework doesn’t specify state-by-state funding levels, leaving the White House unable to specify which projects would be completed if the package does get enacted. A White House official noted that specific programmatic details within each category continue to be negotiated in Congress.

“These state-by-state fact sheets will help folks localize the impact of these dollars, and better understand how these investments will make life better for their communities across the country,” White House spokeswoman Emilie Simons said in a statement.

Biden’s team this week has focused on maintaining support from Democrats amid their concerns that the framework does not adequately address climate change.

The fact sheets note that while the framework is a “critical step” in achieving the goals Biden laid out in his infrastructure-focused American Jobs Plan and the social spending-based American Families Plan, “there is more work to do” to boost the economy, create jobs, raise living standards and reduce pollution, some of which can be tackled in the second bill that Democrats are drafting.

Biden “will work with Congress to build on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework in legislation that moves in tandem, laying the foundation for a robust and equitable recovery for all Americans,” the documents say.

Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell hasn’t endorsed the infrastructure plan, saying he needs to see how much it will cost and that it’s credibly paid for.

The fact sheet on McConnell’s state of Kentucky says there were 1,033 bridges and more than 1,322 miles of highway in poor condition as of April. Drivers pay \$444 per year on average in costs related to driving on roads in need of repair, according to the data released by the White House.

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## House Considers Highway Policy Bill This Week

Eugene Mulero June 28, 2021

Legislation designed to update the country’s surface transportation policies is scheduled for floor consideration this week, likely Tuesday or Wednesday, in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The leadership of the chamber’s Democratic majority touts the legislation as a key piece of President Joe Biden’s infrastructure agenda. They intend to advance the bill prior to July 4 to demonstrate a sense of urgency. The five-year, \$547 billion bill would reauthorize a federal highway policy law, which expires at the end of September.

“This legislation is an important step in reauthorizing surface transportation programs that expire in September and modernizing our nation’s roads, bridges, rail, and transit,” said Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.). “It also contains critical provisions to ensure safe drinking water and includes measures to address water infrastructure needs.”

Proponents point to the bill’s potential for realizing a modernization of freight and commuter mobility networks, as well as improvements to transit systems large and small. Specifically, the bill would approve \$343 billion in funding for highways and about \$100 billion for transit. Sponsors also highlight climate change proposals meant to respond to severe-weather events that have exposed vulnerabilities across infrastructure systems. The chamber’s transportation leader, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), told us as much earlier this month: “There’s certainly an overwhelming desire among Americans to deal with climate change. So, that’s one key component.”

Various trucking-centric provisions are included in the legislation, such as a grants program to expand parking for truckers (see: “Legislative Docket”). The bill would direct the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to accelerate the modernization of the agency’s information technology and management systems, complete outstanding statutory mandates and undertake a new Large Truck Causation study.

House passage of the bill would likely not include significant support from Republicans. And its chances of reaching the president’s desk remain uncertain. Observers point to the possibility for the highway measure to find a home in a larger legislative package.

A recent bipartisan deal between Biden and several senators on infrastructure policy raised questions about the president’s agenda. Biden clarified his support for the bipartisan deal as moderate lawmakers continued to express support for infrastructure and highway policy bills. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), meanwhile, insisted she would pursue a two-track maneuver to pass a bipartisan \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill and a budget-centric measure lacking Republican support. As she put it, “If there is no bipartisan bill, then we’ll just go when the Senate passes a (budget) reconciliation bill.”

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## Biden’s infrastructure plan would cut U.S. debt and slightly increase economic growth, Wharton study finds

THOMAS FRANCK WED, JUN 30 2021

A bipartisan infrastructure deal reached by President Joe Biden and a group of senators would not only add to economic growth, but also lower the national debt, according to a new study from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School.

Researchers at the Wharton School said the additional \$579 billion in new infrastructure spending would increase domestic output by 0.1% and decrease the U.S. debt by 0.9% by 2050.

“Over time, as the new spending declines, IRS enforcement continues, and revenue grows from higher output, the government debt declines relative to baseline by 0.4 percent and 0.9 percent in 2040 and 2050 respectively,” the Wharton team wrote.

Speaking to CNBC on Tuesday, Wharton senior economist Jon Huntley said improvements to public capital (roads, bridges and other physical infrastructure) makes private capital (trucks and trains hauling goods for companies) more productive over time.

Fewer potholes and rail service interruptions, when summed over years, increase U.S. economic activity and encourage further investment from the private sector.

The projected uptick in GDP and concurrent reduction to the national debt, though fairly modest, are likely welcome news to the Democrats and Republicans who brokered the agreement with the White House.

The entire package endorsed by the bipartisan group of senators and the Biden administration authorizes \$1.2 trillion of spending over the next five years. The incremental \$579 billion includes more than \$300 billion for transportation projects, while \$266 billion would be allocated to digital, disaster, environmental and energy infrastructure investments.

Biden is in the middle of a roadshow to tout the plan, and on Tuesday told crowds in Wisconsin that it's "going to make the world of difference for families" in the Badger State.

The deal will "make sure [high-speed broadband] is available in every American home, including for the 35% of rural families who currently go without it," he added. The president is expected to travel to Michigan this weekend to offer further praise for the agreement.

Still, Biden's cross-country mission to generate support for the measure highlights the fragility of even a bipartisan effort to repair the nation's transportation infrastructure. The president himself nearly doomed the agreement last week, when he said he would veto the infrastructure bill if it wasn't passed in tandem with a larger bill backed exclusively by Democrats.

He later backed away from that pledge when it became clear that the comments had upset Republicans.

The latest Wharton study comes months after the school analyzed the Biden administration's first infrastructure proposal, known as the American Jobs Plan. That original plan included about \$2 trillion in spending over eight years and was estimated by Wharton to decrease economic output by 0.8% in 2050.

Asked why the bipartisan plan would increase GDP over the next 29 years whereas the initial Biden plan wouldn't, Huntley explained that the latest legislation does not include edits to the corporate tax rate and a minimum tax on book income.

By scrapping the corporate rate increases in the bipartisan plan, lawmakers have reduced negative tax-based distortions that would have ultimately reduced firms' incentives to invest and disincentivized saving by households.

## Funding Opportunities

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### **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](mailto: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>

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## Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) GRANTS

(deadline July 12, 2021)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### **Opportunity Zones**

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

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

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### **Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307),

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#)

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

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

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Missing couple found alive after reportedly lost driving in Lake Forest Subdivision for 11 days



Monday afternoon a Daphne resident reported to authorities that a man and woman were partially nude and going through his mailbox in the Lake Forest subdivision. When police arrived they discovered the elderly male and female were the visiting parents of a Daphne family that had been reported missing nearly 2 weeks prior.

Tommy Glisson and his wife Judith were traveling from Columbus Ohio, with intentions of seeing their sons new home purchased in Lake Forest recently. Tommy told TFI "I was using my GPS robot, but when I got in to that darn neighborhood it started smoking!". The couple tried calling their daughter in law as well, but Judith had just upgraded to an iPhone 7, and did not quite trust Siri just yet.

Jump to 11 days later. The Glissons had long since run out of fuel and food. They soon resorted to foraging through mailboxes eating utility bills and the occasional Blue Apron package. The hunger and solitude did not help their mental state either. They were found nearly nude, only covered in tribal markings made with motor oil. They slept in pot-holes to stay safe.

Although the Glissons have been reunited with their family, the search continues. Tommy has reported that they encountered several other lost families during their escapade in Lake Forest. He says lost visitors have joined together in large tribes that protect each other as they try to find their way out of the labyrinth . They say some have been wondering the Forest since 1991. Credits to the [Fairhope Inquisitor](#)

(last week's Just For Fun answer: ALL ROADS WERE ON PLAN!!!)

## In the News

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### ALDOT diverts big rigs from Mobile tunnel, trucking industry raises concerns

by Cory Pippin Thursday, July 1st 2021

MOBILE, Ala. (WPML) — A decision by the Alabama Department of Transportation to divert trucks off the Bayway, away from the Wallace Tunnel, is raising concerns from those within the trucking industry.

The Wallace Tunnel is off limits to commercial truckers during peak hours on Thursday and Friday, as state transportation officials work with Mobile Police to reroute big rigs across the Cochrane Bridge, into Africatown, and onto I-65.

"We're anticipating 90,000 to 100,000 vehicles per day traveling through the Wallace Tunnel this weekend. It's just to help maintain the speeds through the tunnel and move more passenger vehicles," said Matt Ericksen, Southwest Region Engineer with ALDOT.

Ericksen said the number of expected travelers is up from around 70,000 per day as COVID 19 restrictions relax nationwide.

The diversion has been done before, Ericksen said, during evacuations for Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Michael.

"The traffic around the city of Mobile brought all the streets to a gridlock as everybody tried to find a detour around the Wallace Tunnel.

We worked with the city of Mobile, developed and are implementing a contingency plan," Ericksen said.

But the move is raising safety concerns this time from those within the state trucking industry.

Mark Colson, President and CEO of the Alabama Trucking Association, drivers often didn't know to merge until it was too late, due to poor communication from ALDOT.

"The delayed notification required truckers in the far-left hand lane to have to merge across 3 lanes of busy traffic. If they missed the signage or didn't divert, then they had to stop or an officer stopped them in the road," said Colson.

Colson believes the congestion that remains despite the diversion shows why the proposal to use a truck-only toll to build a new I-10 River Bridge isn't a good idea.

"Trucks are just 10% of the traffic. As you can see now, if you just remove less than 10% of the traffic on a holiday weekend like this, it doesn't solve the congestion problem, and neither will a truck only toll bridge," Colson said.

Colson said better communication with the trucking industry is needed from ALDOT in the future.

ALDOT officials urge motorists to use extra caution as the new route will be ongoing again on Friday between noon and 6 p.m.

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### Carl warns against 'false hope' of I-10 Mobile Bay Bridge in infrastructure package — 'It is not'

Hope springs eternal for some on financing for the potential construction of a new I-10 Mobile Bay Bridge coming out of Washington, D.C., especially as Congress is debating a potential multi-trillion dollar infrastructure bill.

However, U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl (R-Mobile) warns against such notions, calling them “false hope.”

During an appearance on Mobile radio FM Talk 106.5’s “The Jeff Poor Show,” Carl said he did not expect that line item to be included in the bill currently being discussed on Capitol Hill, and said he expect House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) to have other ideas in mind as far as so-called infrastructure goes.

“You’re going to see the Republican House bow up and say, ‘No, we’re not going to do it. We’re not going to support it.’ So, I think that’s where it is going. Everyone up here wants an infrastructure bill, especially me. Now, I don’t want anyone to get false hope and think that our bridge is in that infrastructure package. It is not. So don’t think if we vote it down, we gave away the bridge. That’s not true. We don’t know what that money is going to be spent — particular projects, per se — what it would be spent on. That part we haven’t even gotten to yet. Right now, we’re just arguing on the money. We’re trying to keep money that we’ve already borrowed. We’re trying to utilize money left over from COVID, which there is about \$600 billion left over. So, the Republican side is trying to focus on just using that. Nancy Pelosi will not have that. She wants to borrow all new money. And she wants about a \$2 trillion package.”

“It’s going to be hard for her to get support, enough support to get it,” Carl added. “I mean, even her own people are rebelling. You got the gang that is fighting her. They want about a \$6 trillion package. They want the original package or nothing at all. So, for her to raise enough votes is going to be tough — really tough.”

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## **Gulf Shores donating 26 acres of right of way for new road Waterway Bridge planned route to Baldwin Beach Express**

(OBA®) – Gulf Shores, AL – During the June 28 session of the Gulf Shores City Council, the city agreed to the donation of more than 26 acres of land for right of way for a new spur road from the Beach Express south of Coastal Gateway Boulevard to a bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway onto Canal Road near the city’s eastern boundary.

This portion of the right of way is mostly for future work but City Engineer Mark Acreman said during the meeting that the first part of the project – construction of the bridge – will be on the Alabama Department of Transportation bid-letting list for July.

“The bridge itself is scheduled to let for bid July 30 of this year per ALDOT’S schedule of projects,” Acreman said. “We’re very excited about the prospect of the bridge coming in the very near future and the first phase would be to construct a roadway from County Road 4 all the way to Canal Road with the bridge included in that first phase.”

Although the right of way the city is giving up is on the portion from County Road 4, or Cotton Creek Drive, north to the Beach Express, Acreman said having the right of way in hand will be important to ALDOT’s pursuit of funding with the first phase of the project.

“It’s important that right of way be continuous from two major arterials for ALDOT to receive federal funds to go for the funding of the bridge project,” Acreman said. “This will be a future phase but they have to secure the right of way upfront because it creates the conduit for them to receive federal funds for the bridge construction.”

Acreman said he believes this project will be an important relief valve for burgeoning traffic all over the island.

“This right of way in this project will be built at a later phase but will eventually have a connection between the Foley Beach Express to Canal Road east,” Acreman said. “It will give a third bridge onto the island and help distribute some of the traffic congestion that we’re seeing at the Beach Express and Highway 59.”

Also, during the meeting, the city expanded its scope of work on the new gym being built at the high school after it was decided to make the new facility larger.

“When we entered into a contract to build the new gymnasium at the high school, we looked at that and increased the scope working with the finance committee and the school board from a half gym to a whole gym that can get full play now for two volleyball matches going in the gym, basketball and also wrestling,” City Administrator Steve Griffin said.

The council amended architectural/professional services contract with Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood to include an additional \$60,000 for topographic/boundary survey, geotechnical, construction materials testing, inspection and commissioning which were inadvertently omitted from the original contract, city documents state. That pushes the total for this contract to almost \$454,000.

“Because of the increased footprint we had to enlarge the geotechnical work that was necessary, the inspection work,” Griffin said. “What this contract does the council had previously authorized a cost not to exceed which of \$393,897. This increase for the added footprint and work and geotechnical inspection is another \$60,000. I’m asking the council to consider amending the contract for GMC in an amount not to exceed \$453,897.”

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## **Gov. Ivey says road work proves gas tax hike was right thing to do for Alabama**

by: Jeff Sanders Posted: Jun 28, 2021

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (WIAT) – It’s been two years since the state legislature approved a hike in the state’s gasoline tax to help fund road and bridge projects across the state.

The Rebuild Alabama Act was passed in 2019. It raised the state’s gas tax by six cents, with an additional two cents per year until it reaches 10 cents later this year.

“For years in Alabama we have woefully underfunded the transportation needs both at the state level and on the local level,” said Tony Harris with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

According to Harris, the Rebuild Alabama Act has generated about \$200 million into grants programs for Alabama’s highways and bridges. Local cities and counties can apply for grants from the Rebuild Alabama Act in two ways. One is designed to pay for work along state and federal highways in a local community, and the other is for any road or bridge work in that community.

Governor Kay Ivey pushed hard for the gas tax increase.

Despite criticism from many in her own party when it was passed, Ivey said Rebuild Alabama was the right thing to do for the state.

“This is just something everybody talked about it for years and years. Finally, that’s getting done and more and more, like I said, you’re seeing the blue and white signs going up to show people their dollars are being spent on roads and asphalt,” Ivey said.

The last two cents increase in the gas tax is scheduled to take effect in October of this year.

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

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## The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) sets meeting schedule

The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board will meet for a Work Session on Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the Commission Chambers at the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse at 1100 Fairhope Avenue, Fairhope, AL 36532.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 9:00 AM in the Commission Chambers at the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse at 1100 Fairhope Avenue, Fairhope, AL 36532.

The Citizens Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 1:00 PM in the Commission Chambers at the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse at 1100 Fairhope Avenue, Fairhope, AL 36532.

The Technical Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the Commission Chambers at the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse at 1100 Fairhope Avenue, Fairhope, AL 36532.

The Policy Board will meet for its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the Council Chambers at the Daphne City Hall at 1705 Main Street, Daphne, AL 36526.

The proposed combined agenda for each meeting may be viewed on the Eastern Shore MPO website: (<http://www.easternshorempo.org>) fourteen days prior to the meeting. For more information regarding the meetings listed above, please contact the Eastern Shore MPO at 251-990-4643.

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## Transportation Research

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### [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.

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## 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.

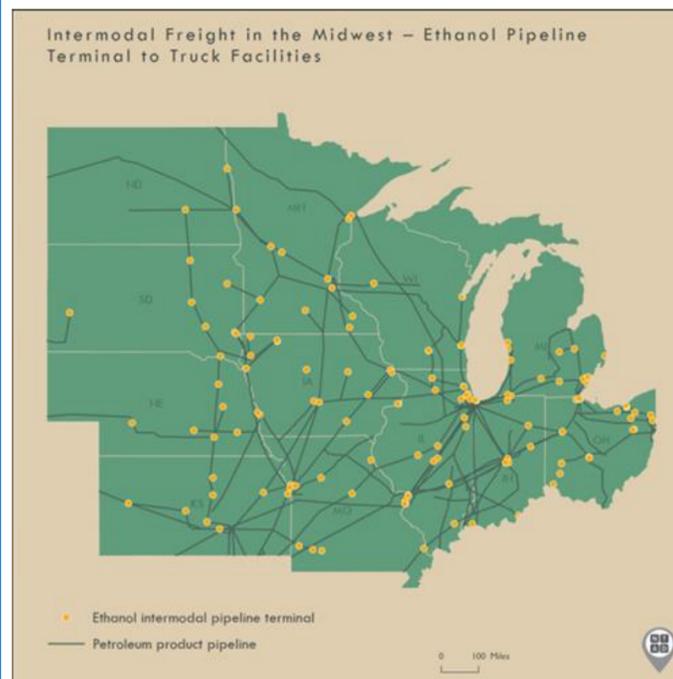
The pipeline addition brings to 89 the total number of geospatial datasets in the NTAD collection representing the nation’s transportation infrastructure, containing roadways, railways, waterways, and airports. An additional 27 ancillary data tables can be used in this Bureau of Transportation Statistics (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 Smullen: (202) 366-5568. For technical information and questions: Dominic Menegus: (202) 366-8717, or email [ntad@dot.gov](mailto: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.