



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 9<sup>th</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*, a Senate candidate mentions the I-10 Bridge, while the House has a rocky start on the Surface Transportation Bill. In *the News* this week ALDOT hears comments on the successful diversion of commercial truck traffic from the tunnel, while Gulf Shores donates to ALDOT. This week's *Just For Fun* is.... HOT! Have a great weekend!

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)



Check us out on FACEBOOK; SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

- [Planning and Community Development](#)
- [Area Agency on Aging](#)
- [Employment and Economic Development](#)

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP

## Mobile MPO Updates

### Mobile MPO to meet on July 28<sup>th</sup>, TCC/CAC meets 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
- 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 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 on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00AM in the SARPC Board Room on the first floor of the GMO Building. Of importance was the Amendment to the Envision 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include Phase One of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project which was passed unanimously. This has been advertised since April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, with a Public Meeting held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The deadline for comments to be included into the draft document was May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The draft Amendment and comments can be found below. There were numerous comments in favor of the project, and there are some comments concerning the potential effects of increased truck traffic on Africatown Blvd.; although, hazardous trucks would no longer be signed to Africatown Blvd. There are also several comments regarding the impact to local trucking companies and several organizations submitted full support of the project. 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. The CRRSAA Committee is meeting next week to move forward with this program. This is 100 % funding, with no matching requirements. Communication with MPO staff is through the Mayor of each municipality.

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

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### **FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE**

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area. The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

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

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### **Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile**

Project : 100052602 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 7508 (600)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET  
Old Target start date : November 05, 2021  
New Target start date : March 25, 2022

Project : 100071557 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 4920  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ALONG UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD FROM OLD SHELL ROAD TO USA DRIVE AND ALONG OLD SHELL ROAD FROM MITCHELL CENTER DRIVE TO UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD  
Old Target start date : November 05, 2021  
New Target start date : May 27, 2022

Project : 100052812 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : NHF 0042 (517)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : CONSTRUCT BRIDGE ON GLENWOOD ROAD OVER SR-42 (US-98) GRADE, DRAIN, BASE AND PAVE, BRIDGE AND RETAINING WALLS  
Old Engineers Estimate : \$9,618,285.00  
New Engineers Estimate : \$9,714,469.23

Project : 100073658 Federal aid number : UMTAC TR21 County : MOBILE Scope : TR  
Project Description : SECTION 5310 TRANSIT CITY OF SATSUMA (URBAN) CAPITAL ROLLING STOCK FY 2021  
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE  
Target Start Date : 8/1/2021  
Engineers Estimate : \$64,000.00

Project : 100073659 Federal aid number : UMTAC TR21 County : MOBILE Scope : TR  
Project Description : SECTION 5310 TRANSIT MERCY OF LIFE (URBAN) CAPITAL ROLLING STOCK FY 2021  
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE  
Target Start Date : 8/1/2021  
Engineers Estimate : \$45,000.00

Project : 100073657 Federal aid number : UMTAC TR21 County : MOBILE Scope : TR  
Project Description : SECTION 5310 TRANSIT THE LEARNING TREE (URBAN) CAPITAL ROLLING STOCK FY 2021  
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE  
Target Start Date : 8/1/2021  
Engineers Estimate : \$144,000.00

Project : 100049566 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : BRF 0016 (522)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : REPLACE BRIDGE, BIN 008714, SR-16 (US-90) WESTBOUND OVER TENSAW-SPANISH RIVER. (SUFF=49.7, STATUS=SD)  
Old Target start date : September 24, 2021  
New Target start date : March 25, 2022

Project : 100071557 ( CN )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 4920  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ALONG UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD FROM OLD SHELL ROAD TO USA DRIVE AND ALONG OLD SHELL ROAD FROM MITCHELL CENTER DRIVE TO UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD  
Old Target start date : May 27, 2022  
New Target start date : September 15, 2022

## 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%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

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### 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

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### Democrats race to bring bipartisan infrastructure deal to the Senate floor

BY GRACE SEGERS, SARA COOK

JULY 8, 2021 / 3:41 PM / CBS NEW

With just weeks left before Congress leaves Washington for its August recess, Democrats are pushing to bring the bipartisan infrastructure deal endorsed by President Biden to the Senate floor as early as the week of July 19, a White House official confirmed to CBS News.

"As Leader Schumer has said, he wants to move on both the bipartisan plan and the budget resolution during the upcoming July/August Senate session," the official said, referring to Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. "Our understanding is that the process could begin as early as the week of 7/19, given that committees are still finalizing legislative text for both the budget resolution and the bipartisan bill. We of course support going forward as fast as possible, but it would be a mistake to think of July 19 as anything more than the opening of a window."

Relevant committees are currently crafting the legislative text for the bill while both houses of Congress are out of town for the 4th of July recess. The full Senate will return to Washington next week.

The deal was agreed to by more than 20 senators from both parties and backed by Mr. Biden late last month. It would cost around \$1 trillion over five years, with \$579 billion in new spending, and focus on "traditional" infrastructure such as roads, bridges, airports, transportation and broadband.

Lawmakers and staff now have to translate the fuzzy details of the framework into legislative text, as well as incorporating proposals to pay for the measure. Some of the proposed pay-fors could face opposition from conservatives, such as accruing revenue through tax-gap enforcement.

Congressional Democrats are also moving forward with a reconciliation bill to address some of Mr. Biden's priorities not addressed in the bipartisan bill, including some so-called "human" infrastructure measures like child care, health care and education. The reconciliation process allows legislation to pass with a simple majority in the Senate. Many Democrats have also called for the large infrastructure package to include provisions related to combating climate change and green infrastructure.

Schumer has said that he intends to move forward with both the reconciliation bill and the bipartisan deal at the end of July, giving the Senate little time to act ahead of the August recess. A source familiar with the matter confirmed that the Senate could move on the bipartisan bill as early as the week of July 19, as part of the two-track strategy to move both bills through the Senate in the upcoming work period.

Republicans bristled at the implication that the bipartisan deal and the reconciliation bill were linked, leading Mr. Biden to issue a statement last month reaffirming his commitment to passing both measures.

The Senate Budget Committee, which is chaired by progressive Senator Bernie Sanders but whose Democratic membership runs the gamut of ideological diversity, is currently crafting a budget resolution, which will lay out the rules for the reconciliation process. It is unclear how much the reconciliation package will cost, as Sanders has suggested it could be up to \$6 trillion but moderate Democratic Senator Joe Manchin has signaled that he is unwilling to go above \$2 trillion.

Meanwhile, House Democrats may wait to see what the Senate Budget Committee comes up with before taking action on a budget resolution. Speaker Nancy Pelosi told reporters on Thursday that "we are awaiting the budget number from the Senate."

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## The rocky road ahead for the House surface bill

By SAM MINTZ 07/06/2021 10:00 AM EDT

### QUICK FIX

**A COMPLICATED CONFERENCE:** Now that the House has passed a surface transportation bill, its leaders have to start thinking about how to hash things out with the Senate. With a deadline just under three months away, things could start to get dicey as the process gets dragged into the fierce riptide of Washington infrastructure politics and reconciliation talk.

**Regular order:** Under typical circumstances, House Transportation Chair Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) would start sitting down with his Senate counterparts on various committees about how to meld their bills together. The Environment and Public Works Committee has approved its own surface bill, but it's pretty different from what DeFazio is proposing, largely maintaining a status quo of highway funding, whereas the House bill sets new limitations on how states can spend their money. It also doesn't include millions in earmarked projects, as the House's version does. Then there's the transit problem: The Senate Banking Committee has jurisdiction over the authorization of transit spending but has yet to produce its piece of the legislation.

**The bipartisan deal:** DeFazio, who is a veteran policymaker and can tell which way the wind is blowing, has expressed a desire to mash up his bill with a bipartisan deal that a group of senators has hashed out with President Joe Biden. But there are a number of issues and barriers with that way forward. For one, there's no legislative text yet, even though the White House and the bipartisan group agreed on a framework. Also, that process is currently tied to a separate budget reconciliation proposal, which is still in its infancy, and has intense political implications that have made progress slow and negotiations contentious.

**The outlook:** All of this would suggest that the surface transportation authorization could come down to the last minute, a familiar situation in the Capitol Hill sausage factory. And it's absolutely still well within the realm of possibility that lawmakers might need to extend the deadline, which was already pushed a year from last September, to give them more time to figure out how to bring together the various competing visions for infrastructure.

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## GOP U.S. Senate hopeful Katie Britt on new I-10 Mobile Bay bridge: 'It can't be a toll'

The nearly-hundred-year saga of overcoming challenges for southwestern Alabamians crossing from the Mobile side of the bay to the Baldwin County side of the bay seems to be at somewhat of a standstill as policymakers debate the best path forward.

While reported discussions are ongoing about what to do next, a debate continues about whether or not tolling is a proper mechanism to finance the bridge. However, former Business Council of Alabama head Katie Britt, a Republican candidate for Alabama's U.S. Senate seat up in 2022 rejects a toll option.

During an appearance on Wednesday's broadcast of "The Jeff Poor Show," Britt said it would take all levels of government to rectify what she called a "federal bottleneck."

"I think it absolutely has to be a coordination, and this is one of those things that we've got to do — is work from a local, state and federal level together to address the issues of Alabama," she said. "You probably have better stats than I do with regards to that, that has been a federal bottleneck and has been acknowledged as that for years. So this is a federal road that we need to make sure we invest properly in. It can't be a toll. It needs to be done and done the right way. And we need to make sure that there is partnership on the local, state and federal levels. So I would certainly make sure that Mobile has a seat at the table and that we are fighting for that."

Britt pointed to other areas along the Gulf Coast where Interstate 10 travels and where when needed due to natural disasters and other events, had bridges replaced that did not include tolling.

"I don't," Britt replied. "I want to find a way to go a different route here. I think we have to take a look at everything. If you look at what other communities have had right there on I-10 — different bridges and causeways and things they've had to replace after various hurricanes and different things like that — there's clearly been improvement all across. It is clear that in order to fix this bottleneck, we have to have improvement there at the I-10 bridge. And I think you've got to roll up your sleeves and figure out how you make that happen on a local, state and federal level."

## Problem Solvers Caucus backs bipartisan infrastructure deal

BY [NAOMI JAGODA](#) - 07/06/21 12:47 PM EDT



© Greg Nash

The Problem Solvers Caucus of House moderates on Tuesday backed the infrastructure framework that [President Biden](#) and a bipartisan group of senators announced last month, and urged the House to hold a stand-alone vote on legislation based on the deal.

"The bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus strongly supports the Senate infrastructure framework, which is closely aligned with our own 'Building Bridges' proposal released last month," the group said in a statement Tuesday.

"In light of the bipartisan, bicameral genesis of the framework, we encourage an expeditious, stand-alone vote in the House and thank our bipartisan Senate partners and the Biden Administration for working so closely with us to demonstrate that cooperation is still possible in Washington," the statement continued.

The endorsement from the Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of 58 lawmakers equally divided between Republicans and Democrats, comes as many lawmakers are seeking to enact infrastructure legislation this year but face challenges in doing so.

Biden is [backing a bipartisan framework](#) that calls for \$579 billion in new spending over five years and \$1.2 trillion in total spending over eight years. The framework calls for the infrastructure spending to be paid for through mechanisms such as strengthening enforcement of tax laws and repurposing unused funds from coronavirus relief legislation.

The president and congressional Democrats also want to pass a Democrat-only bill through the budget reconciliation process that would include spending in areas such as education and child care and would be paid for through tax increases on the wealthy and corporations.

House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.) [has emphasized](#) that she doesn't want the House to vote on a bipartisan package until the Senate also passes a reconciliation bill, a sentiment also supported by many progressives.

But the Problem Solvers Caucus thinks that a bill based on the bipartisan framework should get a vote on its own. Rep. [Josh Gottheimer](#) (D-N.J.), a co-chair of the caucus, predicted that a vote solely on a bipartisan measure would receive enough votes to pass.

"I think we'll get the Democrats. If we had a standalone vote on this tomorrow, this would pass," [he said on MSNBC](#) on Friday. "I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together. We should get this done. It doesn't mean we can't, of course, also do reconciliation next."

## **Buttigieg: Infrastructure bills are 'linked in people's lives'**

Meanwhile, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said the bipartisan package was not tied to the Democratic reconciliation bill.

By [QUINT FORGEY](#)  
06/29/2021 08:41 AM EDT

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg argued on Tuesday that the recently brokered bipartisan infrastructure package is "linked" in the lives of Americans with a potentially party-line reconciliation bill being advanced by congressional Democrats.

The remarks from Buttigieg represent the latest example of the Biden administration's efforts to tiptoe around questions about its posture toward the twin proposals, and they came as Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm offered a less nuanced explanation on Tuesday morning — definitively saying the pair of bills were not tethered.

"We want to get both [bills] through," Buttigieg said in an interview on MSNBC. "Because we view them as — in people's lives, these things are linked, right? You don't think about your cost of transportation one month, and then the next month, you think about the cost of child care. People are living these things all at the same time, and Congress is dealing with these things all at the same time."

The Transportation secretary also pushed back against the notion of legislative linkage that has dominated Capitol Hill in recent days, prompting President Joe Biden on Saturday to walk back what Republican lawmakers viewed as a threat to veto the bipartisan package he had agreed to last week if it was not delivered alongside a Democratic reconciliation bill.

"I'm not sure it's clearly defined — other than people who are interested in the process — what that even means," Buttigieg said. "I mean, is it going to be linked in the sense of this being one single piece of legislation that moves all at once? No, I don't think it is."

But Buttigieg also said that "of course" the bills were linked "in terms of different members of Congress car[ing] about getting them both done," and he added: "Are they linked for us? I mean, they're linked in people's lives."

Meanwhile, in an interview on CNN, Granholm was pressed directly on whether the bipartisan package was tied to a second, Democrats-only measure. The Energy secretary's response was seemingly unequivocal.

"No," she said. "[Biden] wants both bills, as he said, and he's going to campaign for both bills. But he did not issue — or he wanted to make clear — he wasn't issuing a veto threat."

## 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).

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

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There is currently a heat wave in the US that is melting everything, including ice cream trucks (why would you have a truck made of ice cream?). It is so hot...(how hot is it) that a seat belt becomes a branding iron.... cows are giving evaporated milk.... I saw a funeral procession pull thru a Dairy Queen.... But, what happens when it is really, really hot?



What if you ran over HOT LAVA? For example, what if you were, IDK, caught driving near a volcano that was pouring hot lava onto the street, and you decided to just go for a joy ride through hot lava? [HERE](#)



In this second video [HERE](#), the “researchers” not only drive through hot lava, but *Just For Fun*, they pour hot molten copper onto a car from 10 feet in the air. That could really happen, driving along and hot molten copper falls from the sky. Y’all be careful out there....



## In the News

### Diverting big rigs cut Mobile tunnel congestion in half, ALDOT says

BRENDAN KIRBYUPDATED JUL 2, 2021 | POSTED ON JUL 2, 2021



MOBILE, Ala. (WALA) – Holiday travelers stuck on Interstate 10 Friday might not have noticed, but Alabama transportation officials say diverting big rigs the past two days reduced bottlenecks at the two tunnels underneath the Mobile River.

Alabama Department of Transportation officials said the diversion, which forced tractor-trailers to exist I-10 and cross the river at the Cochrane-Africatown USA Bridge, only took about 13 percent of the vehicles off of the interstate. But they said it had an outsized benefit.

“It had a huge impact on moving traffic through the tunnels, and we saw congestion reduced by around 50 percent yesterday,” said Daniel Driskell, transportation safety management operations engineer for the Alabama Department of Transportation.

The Fourth of July holiday is one of the heaviest traffic times of the year along I-10. Driskell said he expected at least 100,000 vehicles to use the Wallace Tunnel on Friday.

“Today is probably going to be the highest traffic volume that we’ll see,” he said.

That’s compared to an average of 70,000 to 80,000 vehicles on a typical weekend.

Wallace Tunnel traffic

Traffic through the Wallace Tunnel in Mobile, Alabama, at about 5 p.m. on Friday, July 2, 2021 was snarled in the westbound lanes but moving swiftly in the eastbound direction. Alabama transportation officials said diverting truck traffic dramatically reduced congestion. (Brendan Kirby/FOX10 News).

Driskell monitors it all from the department’s Traffic Management Center near the Wallace Tunnel. ALDOT has 140 cameras through the Mobile area, and the TMC can display 96 at a time, responding quickly to accidents or other incidents – like an 18-wheeler that got stuck at the entrance to the Bankhead Tunnel Friday morning. Or a tractor-trailer pulling storage sheds that jack-knifed off U.S. 98 in Daphne.

Workers also can adjust traffic lights from there, based on changing traffic volumes.

Driskell said there are specific reasons why one truck has a far greater impact on traffic congestion than a passenger car.

“They don’t operate like a car, so when they get into the tunnel and the traffic slows down, and they have to slow down with the traffic – as they’re coming up that steep grade out of the tunnel, they can’t accelerate like other vehicles,” he said.

This is the first time ALDOT has diverted trucks from the Wallace Tunnel except during hurricane evacuations. On Thursday, the re-routing lasted from noon until 6 p.m. Driskell said that was the plan for Friday, as well. But he added that officials implemented it at about 11:15 a.m. Friday after watching the road clog.

“Our best guess was that traffic was gonna pick up around 12 like yesterday, and this morning we saw it, it was picked up at 8 o’clock,” he said.

ALDOT informed truckers to the change with signs on the interstate and also sent an alert to smart phones. Mobile police officers also helped enforce the rule.

Driskell said a majority of the people using the tunnel this weekend are out-of-state residents on their way to and from the beach or other vacations destinations. Travelers filling up at the Buc-ees in Baldwin County said they either experienced the tunnel bottlenecks – or were bracing for them.

“Once you hit the tunnel, it got a little crazy,” said William Childs, a Houston man who was on his way to Virginia to celebrate the birthday of his girlfriend’s mother. “And then up until this point.”

Matthew McCormick said he was on his way from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to Orange Beach.

“It was bad,” he said. “Usually, we come down here, (it is) about a three-hour drive. (Friday took) five hours. The tunnel was backed up.”

Ross Lehman had not yet encountered the Wallace Tunnel backup when he stopped for gas at Buc-ees. He was driving west from his home in Ocala, Florida, on his way to Jackson, Mississippi.

“I’ve experienced it before but was hoping to avoid it this time,” he said.

He added: “Got a daughter up there and we’re trying to have dinner with. So I’d like to get up there before, you know, the wee hours of the morning.”

While some questioned whether the temporary truck diversion was a sort of test run for a proposed toll bridge mandated for commercial trucks, ALDOT officials said that is not the case.

“It is not related to the Mobile River bridge project at all,” said ALDOT spokeswoman Katelyn Turner.

And Driskell said it is no long-term solution to the congestion on I-10.



“This is definitely a Band-Aid,” he said.

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## Gulf Shores donates 26.37 acres to ALDOT

Posted Tuesday, July 6, 2021 12:00 pm

By **Melanie LeCroy** / [melanie@gulfcoastmedia.com](mailto:melanie@gulfcoastmedia.com)

Gulf Shores City Council unanimously approved the donation of 26.37 acres of public right of way to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) during the June 28 regular council meeting. The right of way is needed for the construction of the proposed new roadway and bridge from Foley Beach Express to State Highway 180 East.

“It is important that the right of way be continuous from two major arterials for ALDOT to receive federal funds for the funding of the bridge project. This will be a future phase, but they must secure the right of way upfront. It creates the conduit for them to receive federal funds for the bridge construction,” explained City Engineer Marc Acreman.

Gulf Shores has incorporated the proposed roadway and bridge into the Waterway East and Canal Road Realignment RESTORE grant projects and provides three future connections to the city’s planned education campus.

According to Acreman, the bridge is scheduled to open for bids July 30 per ALDOTS schedule of projects. The first phase would be to construct a roadway from County 4 all the way to Canal Road with the bridge included in the first phase.

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

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## Truckers fume as Alabama detoured them from I-10 tunnel

JULY 5, 2021



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MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — Trucking officials are unhappy after the Alabama Department of Transportation moved with little notice to divert trucks from the Interstate 10 tunnel in Mobile.

The state announced Thursday that trucks had to detour from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday to try reduce traffic on I-10 before the July 4 holiday.

Traffic commonly backs up for miles on I-10 through Mobile as tourists make their way to and from Gulf of Mexico beaches. There are sharp curves at each end of the George Wallace Tunnel and eastbound I-10 narrows to two lanes as it prepares to plunge under the Mobile River. The worst backups are usually on Saturdays.

“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,” Alabama Department of Transportation engineer Matt Ericksen told WPMI-TV.

Trucks are being rerouted to the north to the Cochrane Africatown USA Bridge, the route that’s already required for hazardous material carriers.

It’s the first time outside of a hurricane evacuation that Alabama has routed truck traffic away from the tunnel.

Mark Colson, president and CEO of the Alabama Trucking Association, said state officials have botched the move, not notifying trucking groups in advance, requiring trucks to quickly exit, and placing an officer in the middle of the highway to flag down trucks that missed the notification.

“The decision that was made was implemented very poorly and created some serious safety hazards, one of which was an officer standing in the middle of two lanes of the interstate, which was not safe for him or surrounding motorists and caused unnecessary and unsafe backups,” Colson told AL.com.

Mobile Public Safety Director Lawrence Battiste said the city did not learn of the decision until after state officials made it. Tunnel traffic spills into city streets as motorists try to drive north to the bridge or use the older Bankhead Tunnel in downtown Mobile.

Alabama is considering a \$725 million truck-only bridge over the Mobile River to relieve congestion after a plan for a larger \$2.1 billion bridge collapsed over opposition to projected tolls. The truck bridge would be finance by a \$10 to \$15 toll on trucks. Colson opposes the bridge, saying it’s unfair to toll only trucks.

“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.

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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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## Rainy weather postpones SR-181 traffic shift until July 19

MOBILE, Ala --Due to rainy weather, the contractor has postponed the SR-181 traffic shift until Monday, July 19.

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.

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.

The widening project is on track to be completed in late Summer 2022 with traffic utilizing all four lanes by Spring 2022.

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## 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.

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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.

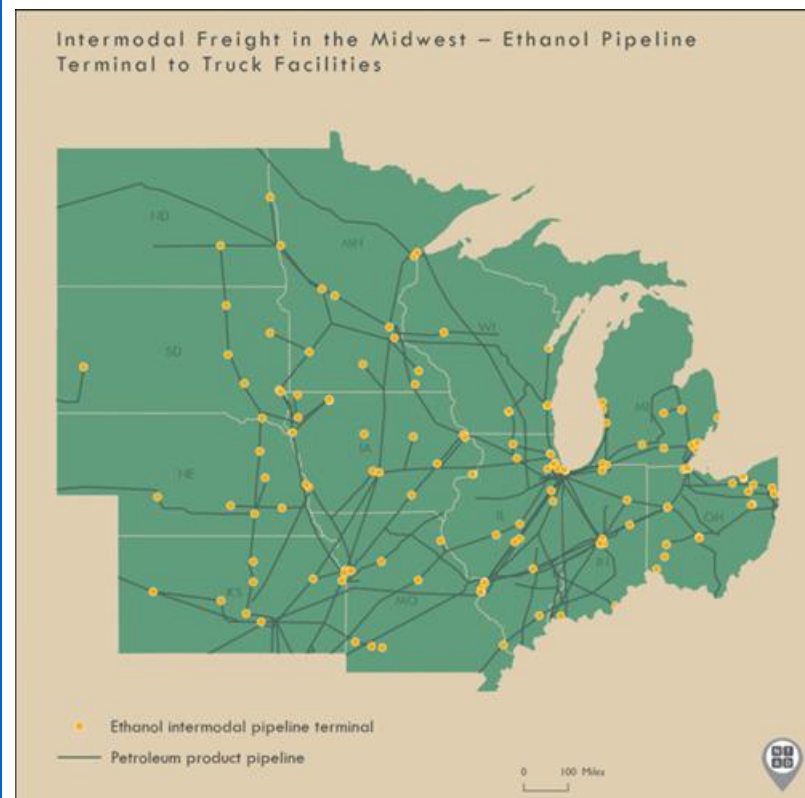
The updates in this release include:

- 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>

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## Transportation Dictionary

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

### Search Tips

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

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