



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Volume 39, Number 11

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September 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM there will be an update from ALDOT to the Joint MPOs at Five Rivers in the Theater; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. There is transit money announced this week in *Funding Opportunities*. This week in *Legislative Updates*, more talks on the Infrastructure Bill. *In The News* this week is the letter that both MPO Chairman signed and submitted to ALDOT concerning the Bridge. *Just For Fun* is good old fashioned journalism. Have a great weekend!

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

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



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

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

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

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

## Mobile MPO Updates

### MOBILE MPO MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

The Mobile MPO Policy Committee met this past Wednesday. Some items on the agenda included the following:

- Approval of ALDOT requested modification to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program; REBUILD ALABAMA FUNDS ; [Resolution 21-025](#)
- Approval of ALDOT/ MPO requested modification to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program; Bridge Funds; [Resolution 21-026\\*](#)
- Approval of ALDOT/ MPO requested modification to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program; National Highway Funds; [Resolution 21-027](#)
- Approval of ALDOT/ MPO requested modification to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program; STP Attributable Funds; [Resolution 21-028\\*](#)
- A [Discussion of 2020-2023 TIP](#)
- A discussion of the Alabama Transportation Infrastructure Bank with Mr. Louis Cardinal.
- An update on the CRRSAA Program

\*new item requiring public comment period beyond MPO Policy Board meeting date. These resolutions can be approved, but will be held for submittal to ALDOT until public comment period is over, and no comments are submitted.

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

There was also a letter drafted, in cooperation with the Eastern Shore MPO, to ALDOT Director Cooper requesting that ALDOT broaden the study of I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project to report back to the MPOs as to what financial structure would be required to build all phases of the project simultaneously.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Mobile Area Major Road Plan

The Plan is for better integration and connectivity of land use and transportation planning, to ensure existing and future on-system corridors are managed and/or preserved as part of the long-range comprehensive planning efforts and as development occurs. A complete Major Road Plan to include regulatory components, current practices, case studies, and guidance for Mobile County and Municipalities within Mobile County. The Plan will include methods and tools for acquiring and preserving right-of-way in the context of expediting the environmental clearance process and review how corridors are prioritized, designated, and adopted for management or preservation. This will require coordination with all planning jurisdictions in Mobile County.

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

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, a letter was submitted to ALDOT from both the Eastern Shore MPO and the Mobile MPO, requesting that ALDOT investigate the possibilities of building the project in less than the three phases.

ALDOT has agreed to provide formal updates to both MPO's every two months. The first Update was held July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Five Rivers, and the next update will be on September 20<sup>th</sup>, at Five Rivers at 2:00PM in the Theater. Anticipated at the September 20<sup>th</sup> Joint MPO Update is ALDOT's reply to the above mentioned letter. The Mobile MPO will house all of the slide presentations from these ALDOT Updates at [www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org).

The next step is that ALDOT will authorize the Preliminary Engineering (PE) that was approved as part of the project, and begin a Toll and Revenue Study to further hone in on potential tolling revenues. These tolling revenues will not be from just trucks, but voluntary vehicles willing to pay the toll as well; all legacy routes will remain free.

Moving forward, at a minimum, we have a way to build a bridge. The federal government, federal legislature, and new administration are currently developing numerous bills that potentially may help us move past this "at a minimum" scenario.

[HERE](#) is the Amendment with update Section 1.7 that summarizes the public comments.

[HERE](#) is APPENDIX A with all of the comments we received prior to deadline

[HERE](#) is a National Geographic article on Africatown that was presented as information.

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

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

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

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 PE projects (design projects) have been sent to FHWA for fund authorization. Once authorized, this will provide the Notice To Proceed (NTP) to Neel Shafer to begin design activities for the projects. Neel Shafer and ALDOT have negotiated design fees at this point and are waiting to approve those fees once the NTP is issued.

Shortly after approval, the cities will begin to see activities in terms of some survey work, geotechnical work, etc.. on the streets proposed for resurfacing. Also, Neel Shafer will soon begin the process of reaching out and working with the cities to provide the necessary documents required for the federal funds to be spent. This include documents such as the ROW certification, encroachment notices, etc...

As of now, due to the scope of these projects, the proposed letting date is sometime late spring/early summer in 2022, assuming no issues with the city certifications, etc.

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

## South Alabama RPO Updates

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The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) will host an online Meeting of the Rural Planning Organization to be held at **10:00 am on Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021** using the GoToMeeting app. The invite is below.

One item on the [agenda](#) is to amend the [Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program](#) to include assisting ALDOT by facilitating the public involvement process for ALDOT's draft Public Involvement Plan for Statewide Transportation Planning. The purpose of the plan is to implement effective ways for ALDOT to gather information from the public about their transportation needs. The plan will be on ALDOT's website on August 20, 2021 and all comments must be received on or before October 4, 2021.

ALDOT's Draft PIP is posted here:

<https://www.dot.state.al.us/news/publicinvolvement.html>.

Other items on the [agenda](#) include:

- Approve the [minutes of the previous RPO meeting](#)
- Review and Adopt the [Fiscal Year 2022 Work Program](#) which includes a new task of assisting ALDOT by hosting public meetings for the Statewide Long Range Transportation Process
- Amend the [RPO's Public Involvement Procedures](#) to include online virtual meetings when necessary
- Amend the [Annual Transportation Plan List of Projects](#)

If you would like to add items on the agenda or if you have any questions or comments regarding the above information, feel free to call us at (251) 706- 4622. If you are a member and are unable to attend the meeting you may send a proxy in your place. You may join our meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/633829053>

You can also dial in using your phone. (For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

United States: +1 (571) 317-3112

- One-touch: <tel:+15713173112,,633829053#>

Access Code: 633-829-053

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### Rural Transportation Plan

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

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

## Projects in Region Let September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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### MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Bridge Replacement over Bennett Creek and Bridge Culvert Removal on SR-17 (US-45) in Citronelle. Length 0.463 mi.
- The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$3,575,219 to \$4,369,712 .
- For constructing the Safety Improvements (Centerline Scoring) on SR-17/SR-57 (US-45) from the SR-158 Interchange in Prichard to the Mississippi State Line. Length 48.214 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$371,150 to \$453,628 .

### BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

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

## Legislative Updates

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### GOP pressure to block bipartisan infrastructure bill builds in the House

By Lauren Fox and Melanie Zanona September 8, 2021

House Republicans could face increased pressure to vote against a [bipartisan infrastructure package](#) when they return to Washington later this month with outside groups and conservatives already ramping up the campaign against a \$1.2 trillion package they say would be akin to writing Democrats a blank check to restructure the social safety net.

The dynamic in the House is far different than the one in the Senate just last month [when 19 Republicans](#)-- including the Minority Leader Mitch McConnell -- voted to pass legislation that enables the rebuilding of America's roads and bridges, bolsters the nation's broadband network and gives Republicans and Democrats alike a rare opportunity to point to a bipartisan accomplishment on the campaign trail next fall.

For House Republicans, voting "yes" on the bipartisan bill later this month could be far more of a liability. Former President Donald Trump, who still carries unrivaled sway over the conference, has urged members to vote against it. Members of the hardline House Freedom Caucus have threatened to campaign against GOP colleagues who vote "yes," and outside conservative groups like the Club For Growth have already alerted members that they are urging a "no" vote.

Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia -- who has already threatened to campaign against her "weak" Republican colleagues who back the \$1.2 trillion package -- said GOP lawmakers should be "shamed and never voted for again" if they support the plan.

Texas Rep. Chip Roy said he agreed, calling it "absurd" that 19 Senate Republicans backed the bill.

Even the top Republican, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California, has made clear he's opposed to the bipartisan bill in its current form, potentially forecasting an effort by leadership to sink the bill.

To read the full article, click [HERE](#).

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## House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Announces Markup

September 10, 2021

**Washington, DC** – Today, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure announced that it will hold a markup on **Tuesday, September 14 at 10:00 AM EDT** to consider the following measures:

Legislative proposals to comply with the reconciliation directive included in section 2002 of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022, S. Con. Res. 14

Other matters cleared for consideration.

Members will appear by videoconference or in person in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building. Additional details can be found [here](#) once available. The markup will be livestreamed through the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's [YouTube page](#)

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## House Democrat proposes vaccine or testing mandate for trains and planes

BY [CELINE CASTRONUOVO](#) - 09/09/21 04:07 PM EDT

Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) on Thursday unveiled legislation to require all airline and train passengers in the U.S. to provide proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in order to travel.

The legislation, called the Safe Travel Act, calls for all passengers, employees, contractors and subcontractors of Amtrak and commercial airlines to show that they have either been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or tested negative for the virus within 72 hours of travel.

While the Biden administration has implemented a federal mask mandate for all public transportation, which the Transportation Security Administration extended last month through Jan. 18, the federal government has not made testing or vaccinations for travel.

Beyer, who sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, said in a statement Thursday that "requiring airport and Amtrak travelers and employees to provide a proof of COVID vaccine or negative test is just common sense."

"These are easy steps we can take to make travel safer, as companies like United have already demonstrated with responsible policy changes," he added, referring to the airline's requirement for all U.S. employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The company told its staff Wednesday that those who are granted religious exemptions under the policy could be placed on temporary unpaid leave.

Beyer argued that "Americans want a return to normal that includes traveling for business or pleasure, and Congress can help make people comfortable traveling again by putting basic requirements in place that prevent the spread of Covid."

The legislative proposal comes less than a month after Beyer introduced the Protecting Vulnerable Patients Act, which would require healthcare workers who see Medicare or Medicaid patients to be vaccinated following the full approval of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Days after Beyer introduced the legislation, which has not yet seen any movement in the House, the Food and Drug Administration granted full approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for people aged 16 and older.

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## State Rep. Garrett: Electric vehicle revolution supplies good news for Alabama's future

[State Rep. Danny Garrett](#)

September 9, 2021



(Danny Garrett/Contributed, YHN)

Electric vehicle announcements came fast and furious in the last year as major automobile manufacturers announced plans to accelerate electrification.

Mercedes-Benz and Volvo are planning to phase out gas-powered vehicles by 2030, and General Motors is preparing to go fully electric by 2035. Honda targets 2040 as the date to be all-electric while Toyota has announced 70 electrified models will be available from all its brands by 2025. Ford is investing \$29 billion in EVs through 2025 and is releasing its F-150 Lightning pick-up truck in 2022.

According to the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, automakers across the country are putting some [\\$250 billion toward EV development](#). Likewise, Alabama automakers have announced a conservative estimate of \$1.88 billion in new investments aimed at advanced vehicle technologies since 2018.

The message is clear: The electric vehicle revolution is here.

The good news is that the Alabama Legislature, along with Gov. Kay Ivey and her administration, recognize this certain and imminent shift and we are preparing Alabama to continue in its role as a national auto-manufacturing leader. This effort is vitally important for Alabama jobs and Alabama's economy.

In July, Gov. Ivey announced the [Alabama Mobility and Power \(AMP\) Initiative](#), a collaborative effort of the University of Alabama, Alabama Power Company and Mercedes-Benz U.S. International to create a research and development hub for electric vehicles. The new facility, housed at the university and supported with \$16.5 million in funding from the Alabama Public School and College Authority, is expected to produce "future leaders in the electrification of the transportation network," [according to a university news release](#).

That's good news for the state. Continue [HERE](#)

## Funding Opportunities

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### U.S. Department of Transportation Announces the Availability of \$2.2 Billion in American Rescue Plan Funding to Help Transit Agencies with Additional Service Needs *DEADLINE November 8, 2021*

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for \$2.2 billion in competitive grant funding for transit systems demonstrating additional pandemic-associated needs. Funding is provided by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021.

[Additional Assistance Funding](#) may be awarded to transit systems demonstrating additional assistance is needed to cover operating expenses related to maintaining day-to-day operations, cleaning and sanitization, combating the spread of pathogens on transit systems and maintaining critical staffing levels.

"As public transit systems continue to recover from the devastating financial and public health impacts of COVID, they must have the resources they need to keep trains and buses running, especially in heavily transit-dependent communities," said U.S. Transportation Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg. "The funding opportunity we are announcing today will help connect people to jobs, services and opportunities, while supporting crucial health and safety measures for the traveling public and our nation's dedicated transit workforce."

FTA will review applications based on the level of financial need, including projections of future financial need to maintain service as a percentage of the 2018 operating costs. Funding that is requested by an eligible applicant must not have been replaced by funding made available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) of 2021, and other ARP funding.

"The Additional Assistance Funding will support transit agencies demonstrating a continuing need for assistance in maintaining daily operations," said FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez. "Public transportation connects people to jobs, education and vital services, and this program will help transit agencies continue to provide critical transit services in communities that need it most."

The NOFO will be placed on public inspection at the Federal Register on Wednesday, September 8, and published on Thursday, September 9. An unpublished version of [the NOFO can be viewed here](#). Applications must be submitted electronically through the [Grants.gov](#) website by 11:59 PM ET November 8, 2021.

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## Federal Railroad Administration

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

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

(DOT).

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

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

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

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## 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)

In the past several years, journalism has been given a black eye for stretching the truth, trying to be the first to report, and just trying to get more people to read their print; I think the word is sensationalism...

sen-sa-tion-al-ism/sen<sup>l</sup>sāSHən|īzəm/

*noun*

1. (especially in journalism) the use of exciting or shocking stories or language at the expense of accuracy, in order to provoke public interest or excitement.

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## [HERE](#) IS SOME HONEST TRAFFIC JOURNALISM, *JUST FOR FUN*....



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## In the News

### Local MPOs ask ALDOT director to study simultaneous bridge solution

Posted by [Gabriel Tynes](#) | Sep 8, 2021 | (reprinted with permission from the LAGNIAPPE)



The chairmen of the Mobile and Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) sent a joint letter to Alabama Transportation Director John Cooper recently, urging him to study the financial feasibility of a single-phase Mobile Bridge and Bayway project.

In June, members of both organizations [voted to add Phase I](#) of the Alabama Department of Transportation's (ALDOT) proposed three-phase project to their planning documents, but the Sept. 1 letter indicates local officials are weary about safety during construction, and the length of time it may take to complete.

"As you know, MPO members from both Mobile and the Eastern Shore have expressed concern about the three-phase approach," the letter read. "The first concern is that restriping the Bayway may compromise safety as the lanes would be narrowed and the shoulders would be eliminated. Also of major concern is that it will likely take at least 12-15 years to complete the entire project. MPO members are hopeful a feasible way can be found to build the phases concurrently, which would eliminate these concerns. Accordingly, both MPOs request that ALDOT broaden its study to enable it to report back to the MPOs as to what financial structure would be required to build all three phases simultaneously."

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson chairs the Mobile MPO, while its Eastern Shore counterpart is chaired by Fairhope City Council President Jack Burrell.

Reached by phone today, Burrell said ALDOT is currently studying financing for the project as if it were to be built in phases, and the request is simply that they also provide options for if the project is completed all at once. ALDOT's initial single-phase proposal broke down in 2019 after the [Eastern Shore MPO refused to adopt the funding plan](#), which included tolls of as much as \$7 each way for passenger cars.

Burrell said the three-phase "truck bridge" proposal introduced earlier this year was "a means to an end," after neither ALDOT nor local officials proposed a more palatable, comprehensive solution.

"In their defense, I don't think they were married to that idea, but it was something that would work," he said. "But we need it to be further studied to find out whether or not that's the best option for us."

Burrell said the MPOs are communicating openly with ALDOT and members of the governor's administration, but believe a comprehensive project will require the cooperation of the federal government. He has previously proposed [his own financing framework](#), hinging on a substantial federal loan, which would bring tolls down to as low as \$2.10 per vehicle, with a discount for daily commuters and existing routes that remain free.

"Now my concern is that since the time they predicted it would cost \$2.1 billion, what has the price of materials done? We know the price of concrete and steel have skyrocketed," he said. "Still, all those numbers depend on us getting a very low interest loan from the federal government, and that's going to be a tall task, but it is one that I think we absolutely must pursue."

As of Tuesday afternoon, Cooper had not responded to the letter. But Mobile MPO Director of Transportation Planning Kevin Harrison said the subject will likely be discussed during a joint meeting later this month.

"Nothing is concrete, and if anything changes other than the current path (truck bridge), it will have to be advertised and the MPOs will have to approve it," Harrison said.

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## Commissioner Joe Davis discusses State of the County

By Jessica Vaughn September 9, 2021

FOLEY - County Commissioner Joe Davis discussed the State of the County during the Thursday, Aug. 26 South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce Leadership Series. The event marked the first time a presentation of this nature has been made, and Davis said he would like to continue addressing the state of the county during future events.

"What we're going to talk about is what I refer to as paradise," said Davis, speaking of Baldwin County. "One of the things that we're pushing for is the ability for the fastest growing counties, there's about five of us, we need the chance to sit down with the sitting governor ... to talk about the unique things that the growing counties have going on."

Within the last few years, Davis said the county has released a ten-year strategic plan that is not cast in stone, but rather will grow and adapt moving forward. Along with implementing the strategic plan, Baldwin County has recently got an upgraded branding.

"We've got a story to tell, and first we've got to tell it in the county, because so many of our people are new, but then we also have to tell it in other places like Montgomery and Washington," said Davis.

According to surveys conducted during the process, 49.75 percent of survey participants have lived in Baldwin County for more than 20 years, while 25.41 percent of participants have lived in Baldwin County their entire life. Of those surveyed, 13.76 percent felt Baldwin County was crowded. The increased growth in Baldwin County is one of the main points of the county's strategic plan, which focuses on growth and infrastructure balance, public safety, economic prosperity and workforce, protecting the natural environment and county government.

Davis said with the population growing, key issues to be addressed include improved internet service throughout the county, communication between the county and municipalities on individual community needs and improved connectivity and roadways. A project he hopes to see come to fruition is the Baldwin Beach Express Two, which would provide a way to get motorists to Buc-ee's due north to I-65. Another project Davis wants to see expand involves using the county's BRATS system to get workers back and forth between work and their lodgings.

Despite COVID-19 and Hurricane Sally's devastation last year, Davis says many of the county's nature parks and waterways are being improved upon, something that will continue in the future.

"We know that COVID has changed virtually everything we do and sometimes how we do it, but we have the resolve, just like you do, to let's figure out how to make things go forward," said Davis. "Because as we get bigger, doggonit we're going to get better, and we're going to have the people that live here enjoy it, and we're going to have more people come and visit with us."

"It's truly an honor and a privilege to be part of making paradise even better," he said. "This is paradise, and it's paradise because of all of us working together ... I hope you understand that [the commissioners] don't have the answers, we want to hear from you, and we try to develop plans and strategies based on information, good information, and we are genuinely trying to get better as we get bigger."

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## ALDOT to resurface the I-10 Wallace Tunnel Sep. 13

by Emily Pounds

Monday, September 6th 2021



MOBILE COUNTY, Ala. (WPMI) — Weather permitting, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) anticipates beginning a project to resurface the Wallace Tunnel Monday night, September 13.

The project scope includes resurfacing operations and guardrail improvements followed by the application of a high friction surface treatment to the new asphalt. The project extends the length of the Wallace Tunnel as well as roughly 600 ft on either side.

This project includes weekly, alternating lane closures Sunday through Thursday from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. while work is performed.

This \$1.68 million-dollar project was awarded to Mobile Asphalt Company, LLC and is estimated to be completed by late November 2021.

## Transportation Research

### ASDC Fall Data Conference

The Alabama State Data Center (ASDC), housed in the University of Alabama's CBER, is hosting a second Census data conference this fall on Thursday, October 7 from noon to 4:00 p.m. The virtual conference will include presentations on how to access the latest 2020 decennial Census results from [Data.Census.gov](https://data.census.gov), the innovative Census Pulse Survey, the Count Question Resolution (CQR) program, and the economic products available from the U.S. Census Bureau. Registration is free and all are welcome to attend. To register, click [here](#).

### 2020 Census Redistricting Easier-to-Use Data Release

The U.S. Census Bureau will be releasing the 2020 Census Redistricting data in a much more accessible format on September 16, 2021. These data will consist of the same 2020 Census population counts by race, Hispanic origin and voting age, as well as housing unit data for counties, places, census tracts and blocks, but it will be already formatted and easily searchable. Click [here](#) for more information.

## 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.