



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday April 7, 2017

Volume 22, Number 1

In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET APRIL 7TH, 2017
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- JUST FOR FUN
- IN THE NEWS
- TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

Recently Completed Planning Studies

- Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Toole Design Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile
- 2017 Unified Planning Work Program
- 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>
transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

The Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Funds call for Projects have been announced (please see *Funding Opportunities*). The Draft Statewide Transportation Plan is available for review (see *MPO Updates*), and Transportation Secretary Chow says we may have a new infrastructure plan by May (see *Legislative Updates*).

Have a great weekend! And check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

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

www.mobilempo.org  check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

MARCH 15th, 2017 MPO POLICY MEETING

The Mobile MPO Policy Board met on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 10:00 am at the GM&O Building in the Board Room at 110 Beauregard Street. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the modification of the 25 year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to create a funding program for the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP will be funded through the Mobile MPO and will be for intersection type improvements that aim towards alleviating congestion. The program will be an annual federal funding amount of \$500,000. In order to accommodate this program, a large interchange at Airport Blvd and McGregor Ave was removed from the LRTP. In addition, there was a lengthy discussion concerning the I-10 Mobile River Bridges' Bicycle component, that was part of an update to the MPO concerning the recent BPAC meeting. The MPO also voted to approve the following modifications to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program:

TIGER FUNDS

100066564 (PE) ONE MOBILE - COMPLETE STREET INITIATIVE TIGER GRANT FOR THE BROAD STREET CORRIDOR; \$1,570,000.00; 4/1/2017

100066565 (CN) ONE MOBILE - COMPLETE STREET INITIATIVE TIGER GRANT FOR THE BROAD STREET CORRIDOR; \$21,000,000; 2/15/2019

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS FUNDS

100066702 (PE) CMP Corridor Government St, from Broad Street to Bankhead Tunnel; FY 2017; \$62,500
100066703 (CN) CMP Corridor Government St, from Broad Street to Bankhead Tunnel; FY 2017; \$562,500

100066704 (PE) CMP Corridor Dauphin St, from Sage Ave. to Springhill Hospital; FY 2018; \$62,500
100066705 (CN) CMP Corridor Dauphin St, from Sage Ave. to Springhill Hospital; FY 2018; \$562,500

100066706 (PE) CMP Corridor Airport Blvd. from University Blvd to Hillcrest Rd; FY 2019; \$62,500
100066707 (CN) CMP Corridor Airport Blvd. from University Blvd to Hillcrest Rd; FY 2019; \$562,500

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

The Project listed below has been placed in PLAN status:

Project : 100066726 (MC)
Federal aid number : 99-509-491-017-701
County : MOBILE
Project Description : PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT ON SR-17 (US-45) SOUTH OF MYERS ROAD
Target start date : 7/28/2017
Engineers Estimate : \$200,000.00

The Draft Statewide Transportation Plan is available for review

<http://www.dot.state.al.us/tpmpweb/mp/swtp.html>

A long range transportation plan is a tool used by federal, state, and local entities to evaluate transportation assets and to plan for future needs. The Statewide Transportation Plan is a long-range plan that assesses the State's multimodal transportation system and presents plans for improvement and maintenance. The plan will forecast a minimum of 20 years, and will involve engagement with both public and private entities. The plan is designed to meet the goals and other requirements required by federal legislation, including the new FAST Act with its emphasis on performance management.

The Statewide Transportation Plan will include both a document and a travel demand model. The document will provide a means to display the State's current assets and examine where work will be needed in the future. The travel demand model will be used to forecast traffic to help identify future needs. Alabama's transportation infrastructure includes the highway system, transit and rail lines, bicycle and pedestrian operations, freight operations, airports, and river and seaports.

This website will continue to be updated as the development of the Statewide Transportation Plan gets underway. Deliverables will include interim reports, mapping, and other related information. The previous statewide transportation plan is available [here](#). An assessment of the existing transportation system was also performed in 2008 and that document is available [here](#).

Your comments are important to us - please continue to let us know about transportation related concerns that you think will help us to improve the Alabama transportation program. Please send your comments to: altransplans@dot.state.al.us.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

By July 1, 2017, ALDOT Should have developed the statewide performance measures for safety. The Mobile MPO, and the all MPO's including the Eastern Shore MPO, will have until February 27th, 2018 to either adopt ALDOT's methodology for performance measures, or adopt their own. There are five safety performance measures:

- number of fatalities
- rate of fatalities
- number of serious injuries
- rate of serious injuries
- number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries combined

The Mobile MPO will have to develop targets for these five performance measures (using ALDOT's methodology or our own) and create an annual *System Performance Report*, and then decide on whether we have met our targets or not. Statewide, if ALDOT does not meet the targets of the performance measures, they will lose the flexibility of their safety funding. At the MPO level, if we do not meet are targets, well, we must try harder.

Performance measures and targets must be specified for Safety (see above), Transit (ALDOT Multi-modal), Freight (ALDOT and MPO) and Highway (ALDOT contracted with Jeff Carroll of South Carolina). The LRTP and the TIP must be modified as it must be explained how each project in both documents are working towards achieving all performance measure targets. . The performance measures used by the Mobile MPO, and the Eastern Shore MPO will be discussed at length in the next several months, and the topic is on the agenda at the Alabama Transportation Planners Association Conference (ATPA) March 23-24 in Florence, AL. Please contact Kevin Harrison if you have any questions pertaining to Performance Measures.

3-C Agreement To Be Updated

To all members of the Mobile MPO, we have to update our 3-C agreement. This is the agreement between SARPC, ALDOT, the WAVE Transit, the eight Urban Area cities and Mobile County that actually creates the Mobile MPO. In order to execute this agreement, we will need a resolution from Mobile County and each city in the next month or so. If you are a new mayor, your staff is familiar with this as we did this last Spring. Because there is a new federal transportation act "the FAST ACT", the language has changed and we must update the agreement. We sent notifications to each MPO member. Please call Kevin if there are any questions.

Projects Within Region Let April 7th, 2017

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-213 from the intersection of SR-17 (US-45) in Prichard to the junction SR-158 in Saraland. Length 2.966 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$508,565 to \$621,580

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-104 from the junction of SR-42 (US-98) in Fairhope to the junction of SR-59 in Robertsedale. Length 10.490 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,523,790 to \$1,862,410 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Appropriations

House and Senate appropriators continue to try to reach an agreement on a stopgap spending measure to avert a government shutdown after the current continuing resolution (CR) expires on April 28. The plan is to file legislation after lawmakers return from recess on April 24. Still unknown is whether appropriators can agree on an omnibus spending bill or have to resort to extending the CR through the of fiscal year 2017 (September 30). Military services have been warning Congress that another stopgap measure would force the Navy to cancel ship deployments and shut down air wings. They'll have a chance to reinforce that argument Wednesday when the four service chiefs plan to testify at a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee. Lawmakers are weighing in on several NARC priority programs, including a "Dear Colleague" letter in support of the Community Development Block Grant and continued funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. House and Senate authorizing committees will begin the process of developing a major infrastructure package with hearings on transportation programs. The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee will hold a hearing on implementation of the FAST Act with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and witnesses from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Witnesses will be asked about the use of public private partnerships for funding transportation. Last week, the House T&I Committee held a hearing on reauthorization of federal brownfields legislation with local government witnesses. Tomorrow, the House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold their own hearing on the program. NARC will be submitting testimony for the record in support of the program and its benefit to regional economic development.

Chairman Hopes to Quickly Advance Nomination of Rosen as USDOT Deputy to Full Senate

Sen. John Thune, chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, said he wants to have the committee "mark up" or vote next week on the nomination of Jeffrey Rosen to be the next deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

[Politico reported](#) that Thune, R-S.D., made the comment during Rosen's March 29 nomination hearing.

Presently, Secretary Elaine Chao is the only appointee of President Trump in a USDOT position that requires Senate confirmation, as other agency officials fill in temporarily at the department's various modal administrations. Rosen, a former USDOT general counsel, would hold the second-highest USDOT position if confirmed.

That could help the USDOT catch up to a number of pending regulatory issues, and to advance such investments as the pending 2017 round of transportation grants authorized by the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act.

The Obama administration in its final months took applications for this year's pool of \$850 million in what it called Fastlane grants, which are carved out of the Highway Trust Fund's highway account, but it did not select grant recipients as the Trump administration was about to take office. So state DOTs and other stakeholders are waiting for the new USDOT leaders to make the decisions and release those grant funds.

Politico also reported that Rosen at the hearing "faced some sharp questioning . . . as lawmakers mostly tried to gauge his support for Trump's proposed budget cuts to DOT, with a special focus on TIGER grants and the Essential Air Service program. Rosen mostly answered by noting it's his job as a nominee to support the administration's priorities."

Trump has proposed ending, for the 2018 budget year, both the TIGER infrastructure grants and the program that supports aviation in smaller-market or rural areas, while also cutting major new transit project grants and funding to the Army Corps of Engineers that maintains the nation's navigation channels. His budget office has also urged lawmakers in their talks on current-year spending levels to consider targeting the same programs for cuts.

Chao Says Infrastructure Plan By May; Advocates Question Path Forward

DALLAS – Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said Tuesday that the administration may release infrastructure legislation as soon as May, causing most advocates to applaud the momentum but wonder whether it will move forward quickly.

Speaking at a White House town hall with business leaders, Chao said, "We're working on a legislative package that will probably be [announced] in May or late May, or something like that."

"We're very much aware of the need for legislation, she added."

The infrastructure plan will be large and it will focus on funding for projects that can get underway soon, President Trump also told the executives.

"So we have to build roads. We have to build highways. We're talking about a very major infrastructure bill of a trillion dollars, perhaps even more," Trump said.

"We're going to be very strong that it has to be spent on shovels and not on other programs," he said. "If you have a job that you can't start within 90 days, we're not going to give you the money for it. I don't want to send \$1 billion to New York and five years later find out it was never spent."

Reform of regulations that slow down construction projects will be a big part of the infrastructure proposal, Trump said.

"We are absolutely destroying these horrible regulations that have been placed on your heads," Trump said. "Getting a building approved in New York is a horrible, horrible thing. And that's nothing compared to when you get into the highways and the dams."

Details on the \$1 trillion, 10-year infrastructure plan have been sketchy since the proposal was unveiled by the Trump campaign in late October. That proposal included \$137 billion of federal tax credits that proponents said could leverage billions of dollars in private investments in revenue-producing infrastructure such as toll roads.

But Chao said in January that some direct federal funding would be included in the administration's infrastructure plan during her testimony at her confirmation hearing before a Senate committee. She and Trump would support more direct federal funding for infrastructure beyond what is in the five-year Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act adopted in late 2015, Chao told lawmakers on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

Gary Cohn, director of the White House National Economic Council, told the business executives that the administration's infrastructure policy would cover a wide variety of projects, including an upgraded air traffic control system and a modernized electric power grid.

"We have taken the broadest interpretation of infrastructure," he said.

Private investors will be sought to help rebuild rail systems to accommodate faster trains, he said.

"We don't have a lack of ingenuity," Cohn said. "We have a lack of desire to really figure out what to do."

It makes sense to move infrastructure up the priority list after the failure of healthcare reform, said transportation financing consultant Jack Basso of Peter J. Basso & Associates LLC.

"I think it (healthcare reform) makes the need for more urgent ... to move up an infrastructure measure," said Basso, a former chief operating officer of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. "However, the congressional leadership still seems lukewarm to moving this year. I believe the tax reform bill is the best shot."

Moving the infrastructure package up to May looks like an effort by the Trump administration to get some positive momentum, said Jack Schenendorf, of counsel with the Covington & Burling law firm.

"They ran into problems with healthcare reform and tax reform is going slowly," he said. "Infrastructure might be what moves the story forward."

Moving infrastructure ahead of tax reform "doesn't make a lot of sense," said Schenendorf, who spent almost 25 years on the staff of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

"If the plan is close to the order of magnitude discussed during the campaign of \$1 trillion over 10 years, it be very unusual for Congress to move an infrastructure bill forward without the revenue," he said.

"A tax reform bill would be needed to carry the financial provisions of the infrastructure plan, whether those are tax credits, fees, an increase in the gasoline tax, or repatriated overseas profits," he said.

"Whatever is going to make that happen is almost certainly going to come from tax reform."

An infrastructure package in May is a distinct possibility, said Norman Anderson, president of infrastructure consulting firm CG/LA Infrastructure.

"Clearly we are not talking about asking Congress for \$1 trillion, of course. This Congress is not going to write a \$1 trillion check for anything," he said.

"What is likely to happen is a real focus on private projects, and on clearing out the regulatory underbrush that is holding those projects back. By our calculations that could address as much as 50% of the projected investment," Anderson said. "What does it matter whether the Congress writes a check, or if, by the administration's actions, the private sector is enabled to make massive investments?"

"This is the first time that anyone's heard of it being that soon," said Jeff Davis, a senior fellow at the Eno Center for Transportation. "Just last week the director of OMB said it wouldn't move until the fall."

Trump Proposes Immediate End to TIGER Grants, Cut Transit 'New Starts' Capital Project Funding

President Trump proposed that Congress strip from the 2017 budget the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER

infrastructure grants program, and limit the Federal Transit Administration's "New Starts Program" to transit projects the department has already committed to fund.

Trump had earlier put those programs plus some other transportation spending on the chopping block in his summary of proposed budget changes for the 2018 fiscal year that begins next Oct. 1.

But by asking lawmakers to cut those accounts immediately he is hoping they will act by April 28 to strip both TIGER and any pending New Starts projects – those that do not already have signed, full-funding FTA grant agreements in place – when Congress extends its funding resolution for the rest of the current budget year.

Trump included those programs in a spreadsheet of various suggested 2017 budget cuts that the White House Office of Management and Budget sent to Congress late on March 24, news services reported.

If Congress did as the president asked, removing those two programs alone would reduce federal spending on transportation in 2017 by about \$900 million, since it would remove \$400 million in FTA funding and about \$500 million for TIGER.

Last September, as Congress was unable to complete a full-year 2017 budget agreement before the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year, lawmakers first extended 2016-level agency spending into December and then further extended it to April 28. If Congress does not pass another extension by then government agencies could shut down for lack of spending authority, but Republican leaders have said they will avoid a government shutdown.

In addition, since congressional appropriators have already been working behind the scenes to negotiate agreements on many areas of the budget ahead of that April 28 deadline, the president's proposed cuts in discretionary spending for 2017 may have come too late to produce many changes for the rest of this year.

The USDOT has not yet solicited project applications for a 2017 round of TIGER grants, amid uncertainty over how much money Congress might allocate for an annual program that has maintained solid support on Capitol Hill since it first emerged as part of the 2009 economic stimulus package.

[Eno Transportation Weekly commented](#) that "the Appropriations committees are certainly not going to kill the TIGER program on their own – it was created by appropriators in 2009 and has been sustained by them ever since in the absence of any authorizing law."

However, Congress in 2015 carved a new, larger infrastructure grant program out of the Highway Trust Fund's highway account, intending much of it to go toward freight-related projects and making non-highway multimodal applicants eligible as well. By contrast, Congress pays for TIGER out of general funds.

Trump's "skinny budget" document for fiscal 2018 referred to that new grant program, which the USDOT has called Fastlane, in calling for an end to TIGER next year. It also said the TIGER program "awards grants to projects that are [generally eligible for funding under existing surface transportation formula programs](#)."

The Eno story said the OMB's new list of proposed 2017 infrastructure spending cuts also would take \$100 million out of the Army Corps of Engineers' water resources program.

Eno also said that by asking Congress to stop new FTA New Starts funding for any pending major projects that do not already have final grant agreements, "this means the Trump administration does not intend to sign the full funding grant agreements for the Maryland Purple Line or the Caltrain electrification project in 2017."

The Maryland project, to build a light-rail system for commuters in the state's suburbs outside Washington, D.C., was days away from finalizing its \$900 million FTA grant agreement last August when a court case delayed it. The Caltrain system, which wants to convert its San Francisco-area commuter trains from diesel power to electric, was ready to launch the project this month when the FTA said it was delaying action on an expected grant of \$647 million.

The Trump administration says local transit projects should rely on local funding, but transit advocates say suddenly removing a major federal funding source could stop many projects in their tracks. New Starts grants can cover up to 50 percent of the cost of qualifying major projects.

A halt to approving such new FTA capital grants could also [derail an extension of the commuter rail system in the Minneapolis area](#). Its transit authority expected to count on an FTA grant of \$895 million for a project it also planned to launch this year.

[50 YEARS OF US TRANSPORTATION CHECK IT OUT!](#)

Funding Opportunities

Transportation Alternatives Program Funding (URBAN) *deadline June 2, 2017*

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcomed and encouraged to apply for funding for both fiscal years.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Friday June 2, 2017. [Electronic versions of the applications are available online](#) at mobilempo.org. Click the Mobile MPO tab and then the Transportation Alternatives tab. Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

If you have any questions please call the SARPC Transportation Planning Department at (251) 433 6541

FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area *deadline June 2, 2017 no later than NOON*

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is responsible for the management and administration of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urban Area Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Transportation program in the Mobile Urbanized Area. The goal of the 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. The FTA 5310 Program provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

This program provides grant funds for capital, mobility management, and operating expenses for:

- Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;
- Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and
- Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities and with transportation.

SARPC will accept grant applications until June 2, 2017 at noon for Fiscal Year 2018 Mobile Urban Area 5310 funds. Please read the guidelines and application before attempting to complete it. The guidelines and application can be found online at <http://mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Technical assistance is available on an as needed basis. If you questions or to request technical assistance, please contact Monica Williamson at (251)706-4613 or email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation.

The FHWA continues the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP) under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The AID Demonstration provides incentive funding for any project activities eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C. in any phase of a highway transportation project between project planning and project delivery including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction that address the TIDP goals. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published on September 1, 2016 (<https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-21063>) requests grant applications and provides selection criteria, application requirements, and technical assistance with Grants.gov during the grant solicitation period.

Link to Additional Information: [FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Grants page](#)

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for

all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#)

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available click [HERE](#) or type www.grants.gov in your browser.

Just For Fun

Let's talk about bridges, Just For Fun

The word "bridge" is actually a very old word. In the caveman days "log over creek" was too difficult and long, so they shortened it to a variety of different "br" words; see below.

bridge (n.1) Look up bridge at Dictionary.com"

*"causeway over a ravine or river," Old English brycge, from Proto-Germanic *brugjo (source also of Old Saxon bruggia, Old Norse bryggja, Old Frisian brigge, Dutch brug, Old High German brucca, German Brücke), from PIE root *bhru "log, beam," hence "wooden causeway" (source also of Gaulish briva "bridge," Old Church Slavonic bruvuno "beam," Serbian brv "footbridge")*

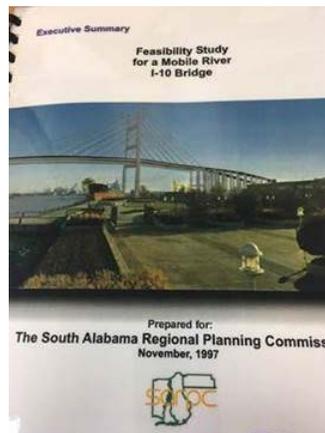
But what about bridges in Alabama, bruh? Interestingly enough, and *Just For Fun*, there are some incredible bridges in Alabama like the Cochrane Bridge here in our backyard.



[HERE](#) are some other great bridges in Alabama. And believe it or not, the bridges in Alabama are in great condition compared to other States. In fact, according to [the 2040 Alabama Statewide Transportation Plan](#), of the 5,752 bridges in Alabama only 1.6% are considered in poor condition, while 61.5% are in fair condition and 36.9% are in good condition.



However, those statistics most likely do not include the forgotten bridges of Alabama: [HERE](#). There are quite a few forgotten bridges in the State; however, there are several future bridges in the State of Alabama as well (like the [I-10 Mobile River Bridge](#)). That leads us to the contest portion of this week's installment of...*Just For Fun*.



The first person to correctly answer the following question, gets a free Executive Summary of the 1997, original *Feasibility Study for a Mobile River I-10 Bridge*. The question is: if one were to add up the amount of space, of all the 5,752 bridge decks in operation in Alabama today, how many acres would that be? Please email your answer to kharrison@sarpc.org

In the News

Upcoming Street Closures:

-

Church Street Closing for Steeple Installation

The stately Christ Church Cathedral has been without a steeple for more than a century, ever since the devastating hurricane of 1906 swept across Mobile. By the end of the month, however, a new steeple will grace the historic church that has been serving as a place of worship since the 1820s. Beginning Monday, April 17th, the steeple will arrive on six tractor-trailer rigs, and will be installed over the following two weeks. A service to dedicate the restored church is scheduled for May 7th.

Church Street between Jackson and Royal streets will be closed from April 17 - 28, however the parking areas along the street may be accessed via the following:

St. Anthony Street Closure

One lane of St. Anthony Street between St. Joseph and Conception streets is scheduled to be closed for about three weeks from April 17th to May 5th, so that Alabama Power will be able to make upgrades to its equipment.

The work will be in the sidewalk area with the equipment staged in the closed lane of traffic. When work is not underway (nights and weekends), the exposed area will be covered with steel plates and both lanes of traffic will be open.

Mobile City Council to vote on creek greenway contracts next week

Author: Dale Liesch

The Mobile City Council delayed a vote on a series of contracts that will begin the first phase of work on a Three Mile Creek biking and walking trail.

Councilors appeared to be supportive of the work, but by council rules all new items that are not routine are held over for one week.

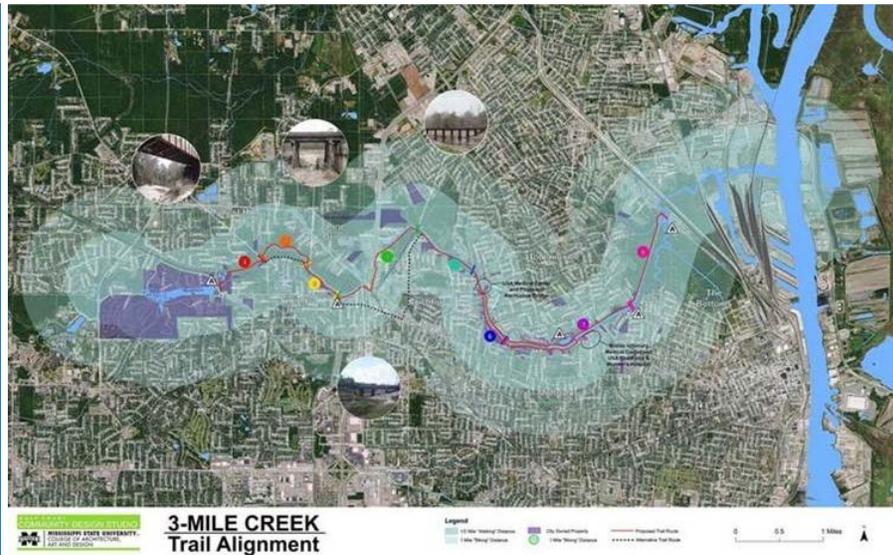
The work on the nearly one-mile stretch of the trail, from the east side of Tricentennial Park to West Ridge Road, will cost roughly \$1.2 million to complete. The work will include engineering and design, as well as construction on the first segment, Executive Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Capps said.

The work would include installation of a 10-foot sidewalk for walking, hiking and biking, as well as solar lighting and benches, Capps said. The installation of a kayak launch at the park would also be included.

The project will be paid for through a variety of grants and expenditures. The first portion of the trail will rely on a \$105,000 Community Development Block Grant, a \$386,525 grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs with an equal local match, \$204,951 from a "local foundation" and \$514,284 in capital improvement plan, or CIP funds.

Contracts for the work will make up part of the expenditures. Those items include: a \$447,647 performance contract with James H. Adams & Son Construction Company and a \$40,000 contract with Dorsey & Dorsey, which will serve as project manager.

The council is expected to vote next week on the ADECA grant and the contracts for the project.



Councilman Levon Manzie said he is in support of the project, but openly hoped the administration could continue to find grant funding for the project in the future. He noted the bulk of the expenditure for the first phase came from citywide CIP funds.

“We have pressing other needs ... ,” Manzie said. “I don’t know how long the appetite for it will continue.”

He reiterated he supports the project overall.

“I’m not against it,” Manzie said. “I’m for this trail.”

Capps told Manzie the administration would continue to look for grants, but once the contracts for construction are approved it would make getting grants for the project easier.

The city hopes to extend the trail 12 miles, from about a mile east of Tricentennial Park to just west of Langan Park. Councilman Fred Richardson said the beginning of this project helps realize a dream he had for Three Mile Creek when he first took office in 1997.

“My dream for what Three Mile Creek could be is coming true before my eyes,” Richardson said during the council’s announcement period at the end of the agenda. “This is exciting.”

Council President Gina Gregory echoed Richardson’s comments.

“The greenway is very exciting,” Gregory said. “I can’t wait to see this project completed.”

In other business, the city’s zoning consultants presented a draft future land use map and major streets plan to councilors Tuesday. Mark White, of White & Smith LLC., described the new documents as guidelines for future zoning ordinances to follow. He said the document falls in line with the Map For Mobile comprehensive plan framework, which has already been approved by the Planning Commission and council.

The city’s current land use document was drafted as part of a comprehensive plan created in 1998. White described the current plan as “very broad,” with three basic land-use classifications, including residential, commercial and industrial.

The plan proposed by the consultants has a total of 12 land-use categories, including two for residential and two for industrial, White said. The plan also calls for a number of commercial categories, as well as a parks category and a waterfront category, which would provide rules for waterfront access, he said.

The major streets map, which has been in use since 1968, was also updated. White said the new plan would include a new classification system. He said some street have been declassified, while others have been added due to population shifts.

The plans will be presented in depth to residents on Thursday at 6 p.m. in the gymnasium of Government Street Baptist Church. After the presentation, residents will be able to give input on the draft plans, Executive Director of Build Mobile Shayla Beaco said.

States Waiting on This Year’s FAST Act Funding Increases as Construction Season Begins

It is time for new infrastructure projects to get under way across the nation as the spring of 2017 commences and winter’s storms and frozen ground fade into memory. But state departments of transportation are still waiting to access hefty amounts of funds left frozen by Congress.

The dilemma is that Congress authorized the extra funding in a 2015 multiyear surface transportation law but is refusing to release the additional money until lawmakers can hammer out this year's federal budget.

Caught in the middle are stakeholders like state DOTs. The amounts of frozen funding vary for each state based on a formula, but they total more than \$1 billion nationwide when looking at the entire fiscal year. In each state, however, the extra funding would be enough to have launched more projects this spring if the money was already cleared to use.

The Alabama DOT cannot yet use nearly \$17 million in highway funding known in budget parlance as obligation limitation, or "oblim" for short, according to a [staff analysis by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#).

Oblim represents the ceiling on how much federal funding a state may commit in a year on its federal-aid highway projects.

Indiana is still waiting to plug \$20.7 million of new oblim into its 2017 project cycle. Arizona cannot tap into \$16.3 million that is sitting there, authorized but not yet appropriated. For Florida the amount tops \$42.2 million.

The amount of money Congress is keeping so far this year from Texas, on the high end, totals \$82.7 million. Wyoming, near the low end, is waiting to use nearly \$5.5 million.

"This really adds up for state DOTs, and is now starting to cause headaches for some that face tight deadlines to wrap up their 2017 project budgets and lock in construction contracts," said AASHTO Policy Director Joung Lee.

"Particularly for states in northern areas with short construction seasons, not having their full federal funding assured by late April makes it harder for them to put federal funds to work," he added.

All of this is because Congress authorized – and fully paid for – modest annual increases in highway funding to state DOTs in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act it passed in December 2015. States absorbed their fiscal 2016 increases soon after. But when the first of the remaining annual hikes was due to kick in last Oct. 1 with the start of the 2017 budget year, lawmakers instead passed the first of so far two continuing resolutions that kept funding most government operations at 2016 levels.

The latest stopgap funding measure expires April 28, and both appropriators and congressional leaders have said they want to complete a new measure that can fund the government for the rest of 2017 and end the freeze seven months into this budget year.

But until they pass a new budget accord and the president signs it into law, state DOTs and other stakeholders are waiting to see if they will get the money they've been expecting. State officials have been telling Congress that the delay is hurting them.

South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard, at a March 1 Senate Commerce Committee hearing, said his testimony also represented the views of transportation departments in nearby states of North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.

"We are frustrated," Daugaard said, because while the federal government is under a continuing resolution, FAST Act funding levels for this year "are not in effect. We have a short construction season in South Dakota. [So a funding delay of a few weeks can sometimes translate to a year's delay in delivering a project.](#)"

David Bernhardt, commissioner of the Maine DOT and this year's AASHTO president, carried that message to a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing March 8. "Missing the construction window due to a less than full-year obligation limitation can mean that some projects are delayed," he said.

Transit agencies around the country are in a similar situation, since the FAST Act authorized a nearly \$400 million increase in federal transit formula allocations for 2017 that have also been frozen. And the FAST Act set aside \$199 million, for 2017 only, to help fund crash-prevention positive train control systems for commuter and passenger rail lines – money left untouched so far.

The delayed funding increases also come as the transportation sector faces a possible reduction in the USDOT's TIGER grant program this year, which Congress in recent years has funded at \$500 million. President Trump has proposed to strip TIGER completely out of his 2018 budget, and is urging lawmakers to also zero it out of the 2017 budget deal they are trying to complete, but appropriators could decide to continue TIGER at some level for the rest of this year.

In addition, the industry is waiting for the administration to award \$850 million in new FAST Act-authorized grants for projects of regional and national significance including freight projects that are paid for out of the Highway Trust Fund's highway account. The Obama administration accepted applications for what it called those Fastlane grants late last year, and it is up to the Trump administration to submit to Congress a list of proposed award winners.

Will Uber return to Alabama's beaches? Coastal cities reconsidering service

By [John Sharp](#)

In early 2016, as the ride-sharing behemoth Uber began showing up along Alabama's beaches, the cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach had questions and basic demands.

Among the inquires was whether the California-based company would obtain business licenses and strike franchise arrangements with the cities. Also, would it agree to have its drivers submit to annual background checks?

Uber wasn't interested in having the cities looking over its shoulder, and pulled out once Gulf Shores sent a cease-and-desist order.

"People wrongly thought the city was denying Uber to operate," said Grant Brown, spokesman with Gulf Shores. Instead, he added, "They said they weren't coming."

But [booming tourism on the beaches](#) is bringing a rising clamor - from visitors and locals -- for ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft.

And next week, the Gulf Shores City Council is poised to approve an ordinance that establishes regulations specific to "Transportation Network Companies." Basically, it would open the way for Uber and kindred services to roll in Gulf Shores.

"Of all the emails I get from our visitors to town complaining about something we don't have, this is No. 1," said Mayor Robert Craft, during a City Council meeting on Monday in which the ordinance was discussed. "We have to listen to the visitors coming here. We don't want them going somewhere else because we don't have something."

The ordinance, as proposed, includes the following requirements:

- Companies must obtain annual business licenses and annual franchise agreements.
- Vehicles must undergo annual inspections, and cannot be more than 10 years old.
- Drivers must be over age 21, submit to annual background checks and have liability insurance that provides \$1 million in coverage.
- All rides must be pre-arranged on a digital platform.

The ordinance would automatically repeal itself on Dec. 31, 2018, unless extended by the council.

Taxi revolt

Craft readily admits that the ordinance is likely to rub coastal Alabama's existing cab services the wrong way. Indeed, some of those are already criticizing the ordinance as unfair and as a potential killer for small-time start-up cab operators.

Similar arguments have already been voiced on a national scale by the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association, which represents cab-industry interests and [has established a website dedicated to revealing problems with the ride-sharing rivals](#).

"It's very seasonal around here and when you start shutting down these small cab companies, who will pick up these people?" said Jeff Beach, who owns and operates A Better Cab. His taxi service has ferried riders along the beach for the past five years and employs six drivers.

If a bar patron gets too drunk, Beach said, the bartender calls a cab. The bartender can't call Uber, he said, since contact must be made via an app.

"That's our problem with Uber. It's very seasonal and we have people who depend on us every day," Beach said.

Greg Jones, who operates Coast Cab, dismissed the city's ordinance with the words: "They are bending over for Uber."

Uber has long held that its service shouldn't be treated the same as a cab company because its drivers use their personal vehicles. In instances where cities have pushed for greater scrutiny of drivers, such as in Austin, Texas, the company has simply departed. In Austin, [the city implemented a regulation requiring Uber and Lyft drivers to be fingerprinted](#).

Statewide remedy

Uber, founded in 2009, has grown into one of the most formidable tech start-ups in recent times. Its service is active in approximately 80 countries, and it reportedly has 40 million monthly users, mostly in metropolitan areas, who take to a cell phone app to find a driver. The company is also testing self-driving cars in cities like Pittsburgh.

In Alabama, Uber arrived when cities such as [Birmingham, Homewood, Mountain Brook, Trussville and Mobile passed ordinances to set ride-sharing parameters](#).

It hasn't always gone smoothly. Uber pulled out of the city of Auburn in January 2015 [after the City Council approved an ordinance requiring the company to follow the same regulations as cab companies](#). The city approved an ordinance last year [that mirrors what other cities, like Tuscaloosa](#), currently have on the books and Uber has since returned. Uber is now counting on the Legislature to let it roll in cities statewide.

One bill, HB283, would give state lawmakers the sole authority of regulating Uber and similar companies. It would prohibit counties, cities and other local entities from taxing or requiring business licenses from the operators, their drivers or the drivers' vehicles.

Each Transportation Network Company like Uber would have to be licensed by the Alabama Public Service Commission, provide details about fare pricing and require background checks on drivers.

HB283 hasn't moved out of an Alabama House committee, and some city officials including Gulf Shores Revenue Supervisor Marcy Kichler are skeptical it could pass this session.

Uber spokeswoman Evangeline George, when asked about the interest by Gulf Shores and elsewhere in crafting ordinances, replied: "While we are pleased that cities are responding to the great interest for Uber in their communities, it's time to pass a statewide framework for ride-sharing in Alabama. There should not be 400 different rules for ridership in Alabama - and a statewide law will ensure residents and tourists can have the access to Uber's reliable rides and flexible work opportunities they deserve."

Uber, [on its website](#), notes that 39 states have enacted a statewide framework regulating ride-sharing.

Also backing HB283 is Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), which views a statewide framework as a "consistent, clear regulatory mechanism" providing a new alternative in taking drunken drivers off the road.

For now, the bill is mostly backed by lawmakers hailing from central and north Alabama. None of the coastal Alabama delegation has signed on as co-sponsors to HB283.

The Mobile City Council and Mayor Sandy Stimpson, last month, [united in opposition to the bill and said it represents meddling by lawmakers in city affairs](#).

In Orange Beach, the City Council is likely to hold off on approving its own ordinance until it sees what happens in Gulf Shores and with HB283, according to Ken Grimes, city administrator.

It's background checks that pose the critical obstacle to welcoming Uber and others, he said. "Their background checks only go back seven years and we do a more thorough check on a taxi driver. That's where we've been hung up for a long time," he said.

Grimes added, "We've made that point, but citizens still request the service."

As he acknowledged, demand for ride-sharing service is growing, especially during big shows at The Wharf and the popular Flora-Bama club, and during giant events in Gulf Shores such as The Hangout music fest in May and the National Shrimp Festival in October.

"There are so many people at peak times when you have to wait and cannot depend on getting a taxi cab," said Grimes. "But we are just trying to make sure, long-term, we know how to protect those citizens."

Transportation Research

Fostering Innovation in Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Pooled Fund Study

Call for participants ends May 31

Transportation agencies across the country are seeking ways to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility. However, existing research programs that advance innovation, such as the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, cannot meet the growing needs for pedestrian and bicyclist research. This Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) study will supplement existing research venues and fill an important missing gap by emphasizing short turnaround practical research on issues immediately relevant to practitioners. It will address national goals and priorities identified through input from local, state, and national partners in FHWA's Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation. The pooled fund will provide a mechanism for federal, state, regional, and local transportation agencies; academic institutions; foundations; private firms; and other stakeholders to collaboratively fund and implement pedestrian and bicycle research.

New FHWA Courses Available

A new FHWA course, [MAP-21 Transportation Performance Management Overview \(Including FAST Act Updates\)](#) is now available through the National Highway Institute. The one-day instructor-led course, FHWA-NHI-138004, provides an overview of TPM provisions of MAP-21 and the FAST Act; describes the responsibilities that agencies—federal, state, MPOs, RTPOs, and transit—have in delivering these requirements; highlights the importance of data in meeting performance management provisions; and shares noteworthy practices. The course is highly recommended for those interested in taking more detailed system-specific TPM implementation training. Practitioners may also be interested in [Transportation Performance Management Awareness – Federal Aid Version](#). This web-based course, FHWA-NHI-138001, provides an introduction to performance management, explains the critical role that the planning process plays in implementing a performance management program, and addresses what performance management means to FHWA.

The Transit-Walkability Collaborative: An Inter-Modal Strategy for Creating Strong Neighborhoods

April 18, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This [webinar](#) will include presentations and discussion from several members of the Transit-Walkability Collaborative, a partnership that aims to promote the benefits of walkable, transit-rich communities; to bring together transit and walkability advocates at the local, state, and national level; and to identify and implement programs and policies that simultaneously expand walkability and transit services in communities across the U.S. The webinar will highlight the release of a fact sheet providing critical data to support walkability and transit advocacy, and the launch of a national survey designed to collect information about existing local collaborations.

Exploring the Outdoors: Partners in Outdoor Spaces Webinar

April 12, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

The outdoors offers beautiful places to walk and be physically active. How can we work with our friends and allies to make sure every person has the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits of being in nature? [Join America Walks](#) and some of their partners to learn about the tools, resources, and work being done to make sure every community member has safe, accessible, and enjoyable places to be physically active outside.

January 2017 Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI)

Press Release Number:

BTS 12-17

Date:

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Media Contact:

Dave Smallen, 202-366-5568

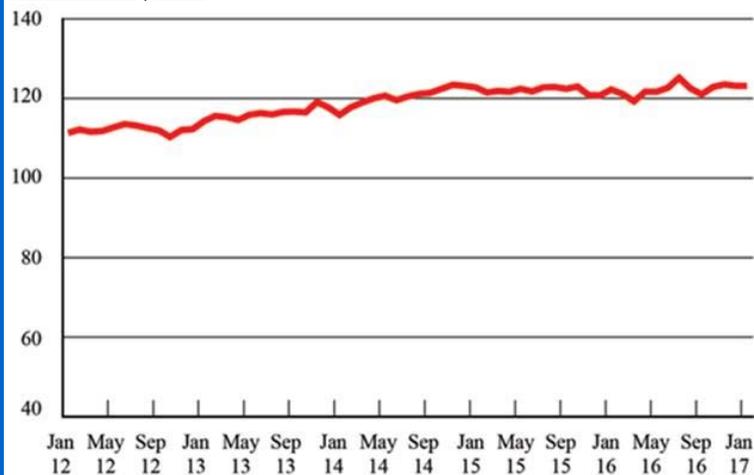
[PDF](#) | [Excel](#)

The Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI), which is based on the amount of freight carried by the for-hire transportation industry, remained unchanged in January from its December level, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS). The January 2017 index level (123.2) was 30.1 percent above the April 2009 low during the most recent recession (Tables 1, 2, and 2A).

Freight Transportation Services Index, January 2012 - January 2017

(Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly Average of 2000 = 100)

[Table Version](#) | [Excel](#)



New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

Download it Today



<http://www.vueworks.com/sidewalks-and-curb-ramps-application/>

- Simple to Use
 - Download from Apple Store or Google Play
 - Collect information at your pace
 - Gathers ADA Compliance inventory and condition information
 - Location is automatically collected in GIS
-

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.