



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 21st, 2015

Volume 15, Number 7

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Recently Completed Planning Studies

Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones
Mobile County
Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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The Mobile MPO met this week, as did the Mobile MPO BPAC. Toole Design Group was at both meetings presenting the findings of the [Downtown Mobility Study](#); please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx was in Mobile this week; please see *In The News*. **There is a lot of un-awarded FY 2015/FY 2016 FTA 5310 CAPITAL ONLY funding available**, please see *Funding Opportunities*. *Just For Fun* this week, will "strike" you as frightening....

Have great weekend.

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



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Mobile MPO Updates

JOINT MOBILE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)/ TECHNICAL COORDINATING AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Mobile MPO met on Wednesday. The purpose of the meeting was to adopt the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The FTA FY 2015 Program of Projects (POP) was adopted (see FTA 5310 below), and there was a [resolution supporting the return of Passenger Rail to the Gulf Coast](#).

There is currently a lot of momentum in trying to restore rail to the Gulf Coast. The Mississippi Governor is trying to use some of the MS BP money to help in this effort, and there is movement in both the US House and the Senate as well. Included in H.R. 749 was the establishment of the Gulf Coast Working Group charged with evaluation of restoring intercity passenger rail service in the Gulf Coast region between New Orleans and Orlando. The Working Group would also study the Feasibility Assessment and Economic Impact of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service. Further, there may be potential funding (\$1.54 Million) to apply for from the Southern Rail Commission, to improve station amenities. This is a 50/50 match pot of funds, and could further enhance an Amtrak Station at the Maritime Museum of the Gulf....if applied for.

The final fiscal year [2016 Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#), which details the federally funded transportation planning activities to be undertaken in the Mobile urban area in FY 2016 by the Alabama DOT, the Wave Transit System, and the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and the [2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program](#) were available for public review and comment between Tuesday, August 4, and Tuesday August 18, 2015 at 43 locations around the study area. There were no public comments on these documents.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee met Wednesday and discussed Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants, reviewed the road projects for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reviewed recent crash data involving cyclists and pedestrians. Toole Design Group presented to both the Mobile MPO and the Mobile BPAC on Wednesday, and detailed some final recommendations of the *Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile*.





For anyone interested in the Power Point given by Ernie Boughman with Toole Design Group, please see [HERE](#)

FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Awards

Recently, the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 Project Selection Committee met and awarded the following:

Agency	Federal Amount	Capital/Operating
Mobile ARC	\$189,758	Operating
Independent Living Center	\$22,470	Operating
Mobile Bay Transportation	\$9,982	Capital
Goodwill Easter Seals	\$43,200	Capital

These projects were adopted by the MPO in a document called the "Program of Projects" at the August 19th MPO meeting.

NOTE: The Mobile MPO had \$823,000 FTA 5310 funding for FY 2015 and FY 2016. The majority of that HAS to be used for traditional 5310 activities (capital for vans) and 10 % for administration. We have a lot left over (almost \$500,000) that can only be spent on capital, please see *Funding Opportunities* below. If your agency is within the Mobile MPO, and you need a van for the elderly or disabled, now is your chance.

ADA Transition Plans

Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator, thank you for your cooperation. The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline. The ADA Coordinators create a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The first task was to select a consultant through the ALDOT Alternative Consultant Selection Procedures. The available ADA Coordinators met this week, and selected Neel-Schaffer to do the work. We will keep you posted on the progress of this study.

(for areas outside the boundaries of an MPO, ALDOT is working on a time line for you, and you will not follow the same timeline as the Urban areas)

FY 2015 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grants Awarded

The TAP Project Selection Committee met and three applications were recommended to be funded.

- Mobile County - Sidewalks on Old Pascagoula Rd. from Horseshoe Lane to Theodore Dawes, sidewalks on Howell's Ferry Rd. from Allentown Elementary to Snow Rd.
- City of Semmes - Sidewalks along US 98 from Illinois St. to Firetower Rd., Along Illinois St. from US 98 to Public Works Facility, along Church St. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd., and along Park Ave. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd.
- City of Mobile - Sidewalks along DIP from Levene Rd. to Cedar Park Drive

Six applications were received. Unfortunately, due to funding limitations, there was only enough funding available to fund three projects. We thank everyone for their submissions and congratulate those that were recommended to be funded.

Recently, SARPC staff held the pre-agreement meetings with each of the project sponsors. The next step will be the funding agreements between ALDOT and the sponsor. We will keep you posted.

GIS online

We are upgrading and starting to utilize our online GIS capabilities. Please check out some of the current interactive

maps we have been working on. Many more to come...

<http://mobilempo.org/maps.html>

DESTINATION 2040

The Mobile MPO [Long Range Transportation Plan](#), Destination 2040, has been adopted, subsequent comments from ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA. The DRAFT document that was out for public review and reviewed with MPO and TCC/CAC members may have some slight modifications in the FINAL Document. The FINAL will be out next week.

The plan is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to other modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. You can learn more about the plan [HERE](#).

I-10 Mobile River Bridge

ALDOT has released the I-10 Mobile River Bridge Corridor Hearing Report Summary and it is now available online at www.mobileriverbridge.com. This report summarizes all of the comments that were received during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement public comment period in the Fall of 2014. The document suggests most of the support was for the B prime route. Although we are moving closer and closer to having a bridge, there are still several hurdles to cross, including funding, [tolling is an option](#).

A selection committee chose the Mobile-based firm Thompson Engineering to oversee the design process for the Interstate 10 bridge and Bayway widening projects. Thompson will assist the Alabama Department of Transportation with completing the environmental impact study required by the federal government in order to build the bridge, in addition to other structural design work. That will include studying storm surge for the two-lane widening of the Bayway, termination points in Baldwin County, a vibration analysis for historic structures and providing information for a bicycle-pedestrian path, said Vince Calametti, region engineer for the department of transportation.

For more information on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge:

ALDOT'S Web Site: <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/>

Build The I-10 Bridge Coalition Web Site: <http://www.buildthei10bridge.com/>

Projects Within Region Let August 28th, 2015

Mobile County

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Baker Road beginning from a point approximately 2930 feet west of the I-65 West Service Road to include the Bridge Replacement over Hartley Branch in Satsuma. Length 0.553 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$513,297 to \$627,363.

Baldwin County

None at this time

Escambia County

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on various city streets in Brewton as indicated in the plans. Length 2.790 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$485,115 to \$592,918.

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on various city streets in Brewton as indicated in the plans. Length 3.344 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$623,607 to \$762,186.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Congress is not in session. The House and Senate will return on September 8.

Funny Math in the Senate's DRIVE Act

One of the largest "offsets" in the Senate's DRIVE Act reauthorization bill passed last month is a proposal to sell more than 100 million barrels of crude oil from the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). The SPR is a 700 million barrel oil reserve maintained by the federal government for use during times of crisis. Some argue it is a relic of the past, now that a much larger share of the nation's oil is derived from domestic sources as compared to production during the 1970s energy crisis.

Regardless of how you feel about the reserve itself, there is no doubt that it has become a target of those in Congress

looking for legislative pay-fors (the Senate DRIVE Act was not the first piece of legislation to propose selling oil from the reserve). This is an indication not only of Congress' desperation to find dollars, but of its willingness to exaggerate numbers for the purpose of passing a bill. In the DRIVE Act, Congress assumes oil will sell for \$90 per barrel, providing more than \$9 billion for the Highway Trust Fund. The current price of oil is about half of that, around \$45 per barrel. Congress is able to do this because the Congressional Budget Office predicted, back in December when oil was \$65 a barrel, that the price of oil was going to rise. They were wrong, but in the quirky world of congressional budgeting, prediction trumps reality.

Funding Opportunities

FY 2015 and FY 2016 FTA SECTION 5310 CAPITAL ONLY TRADITIONAL 5310 PROJECTS NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (deadline September 9th)

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program for Traditional 5310 Capital Projects. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>. **THERE WILL BE NO OPERATING AWARDED THIS APPLICATION CYCLE.**

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission by noon on September 9, 2015. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.

Pre-submittal conference.
August 24, 2015 at 10:00 am
2nd floor training room at the GM&O Building
All applicants should attend.

[Funding Opportunity for FY2015 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants](#)

Application Deadline: August 28, 3:00 PM ET

FEMA announced \$180 million in funding available through two Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs: Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM). These two grant programs assist state, local, tribal, and territorial governments in strengthening our nation's ability to reduce the potential cost of natural disasters to communities and their citizens. Both HMA FY2015 Funding Announcements can be found at www.grants.gov. Eligible applicants must apply for funding through the Mitigation eGrants system on the FEMA Grants Portal accessible at <https://portal.fema.gov>.

Just For Fun

On Wednesday of this week, a Delta flight landing in Atlanta got struck by lightning. The lightning passed through the metal exterior and exited from the right landing gear (clearly visible). No one was injured...although new pants likely required for most of the passengers.



In the News

US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx visits Mobile



U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx was in the Port City yesterday, even taking a field trip through the Bankhead and Wallace tunnels to get a better understanding of traffic congestion in the Port City, and why the Mobile River Bridge is needed now more than ever. Although the Secretary did not offer any funding for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, he did offer some encouraging thoughts. He appreciated the spirit here in Mobile and Baldwin Counties terms of collaboration. He said that "we have our act together, hopefully Washington will get their act together". He spoke about the importance of a six year transportation bill, and the Highway Trust Fund being short every year.

Foxx spoke to business and political leaders at the chamber Thursday morning, and addressed the need for the project. After a quick meeting, he then went on a brief tour with Congressman Bradley Byrne.

Secretary Foxx said he recognizes the need here for a new bridge and expansion of the Bayway, and was very candid that it's probably going to take creative funding get it done, and mentioned a federal program that gives loans. When asked how the project ranked for him on a national level, this was his response:

"We are aware of how big a deal this is to the region, how critical it is to the economy, to the quality of life for the people who live here, and that is why I'm here and also why I'm committing our focus as an agency to figure it out," Foxx said.

If a funding source was identified right now and if the permitting process was streamlined, which can be done, we would still at least be two years away from even construction starting.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx touts creative financing for I-10 Bridge during Mobile

visit



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

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on August 20, 2015 at 2:34 PM, updated August 20, 2015 at 4:07 PM

Creative financing programs should be explored by local and state leaders in paying for the Interstate 10 Bridge project, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said during a visit to Mobile Thursday.

Among the programs Foxx touted during two stops in Mobile was a 35-year loan repayment program under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) that has, to date, supported nine projects in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

The financing ideas are being pushed by Foxx and others at a time when Congress is stalled in moving forward with a six-year federal highway transportation funding program.

"I'm pivoting the way our country (pays for) infrastructure," Foxx said. "We have projects in this country that just can't wait. You here in Mobile don't have time to wait."

The TIFIA program is included in the creative financing solutions the Federal Highway Administration is exploring under the Build America Investment Initiative to help pay for large-scale infrastructure projects.

If a massive loan was utilized to pay for the bridge, it would require a revenue source for repayment and at least one leading bridge supporter believes that some sort of toll system would have to be considered.

"There are probably going to move more and more to the forefront," said Mike Lee, co-chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Build the I-10 Bridge Coalition. "The state can simply bond the money to build the bridge and use tolls to pay it back so you don't have to dip into the Highway Fund."

'Appetite' for a loan

Kathryn Schulte, spokeswoman with the Alabama Department of Transportation's Southwest Region that includes Mobile, said that the state would need a dedicated funding mechanism to repay a TIFIA loan or another funding program.

"We are still looking into all options, including a TIFIA loan," she said.

During a stop at APM Terminals, Foxx said it will be up to local leaders to consider whether a loan is the right way to go. "This is more of a ... conversation on what the community's appetite is to look at something like that."

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said the appetite could increase in the coming years if more bottlenecks snarl I-10 traffic between Mobile and Baldwin counties.

"Without knowing how much we're talking about or how it's paid back, it's too early to speculate on that," Stimpson said. "But three years from now and (there is no) bridge and we have a pathway that says we can borrow 'x' amount of money and you continue to see traffic backed up to the Mississippi line and Florida, you may be willing to do something that today you are not willing to do." Continue [HERE](#)

Mobile, Baldwin county officials discuss growing responsibilities



By [Theresa Seiger | tseiger@al.com](mailto:tseiger@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on August 18, 2015 at 6:31 PM, updated August 18, 2015 at 6:47 PM

Officials from Mobile and Baldwin counties appeared at Government Plaza with the recently elected president of the National Association of Counties (NACo) to discuss the county's growing role in ensuring development and safety for the public.

"Over time the work of county commissions in Alabama and nationwide has expanded and become far more complex," said Mobile County Commissioner Merceria Ludgood.

"To achieve that goal (of providing reliable public resources) we must build strong collaborative relationships at all levels of government, with our state legislators and our U.S. senators and representatives."

For Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran, such collaborations have been key to ensuring the effective management and operation of the county jail.

"We work cooperatively with our other elected officials and never so more than in the recent past," he said, citing the push for prison reform across the country and recent state legislation passed in response in Montgomery.

The Sheriff's Office has worked with the County Commission to ensure "policy change and law changes there (in Montgomery) will not adversely impact us in the county," he said.

"That came about -- and that only about -- through the cooperative efforts of the Sheriff's Association and the County Commission Association in Alabama working with our elected officials in Montgomery."

In addition to ensuring the jail is adequately run, county officials play a "vital role" in providing public services, maintaining roads and bridges, supporting public health and responding to emergency situations, said NACo president Sallie Clark.

"Counties truly are on the front lines," she said. "We're there before an incident happens, we're there during the incident and guess who gets to clean up the mess? Guess who gets to give the support to your local citizens who've lost their homes, who are still at risk."

Baldwin County Commissioner Tucker Dorsey said officials in Mobile and Baldwin counties often find themselves working together for the safety of the Gulf Coast region.

"We're on the front line of things that are happening here on the county level but we also have to work across the region during tropical events and training events," he said.

"We oftentimes work with Mobile County and Baldwin County hand-in-hand to prepare for the disasters that may come our way."

Mobile County Commissioner Connie Hudson noted both counties have adopted a "regional approach" to working together which has benefited them both.

"Economic development is a major focus of collaboration here in Mobile County," she said. "Our southeastern region of the country has developed into a hub of industry clusters," she added, noting among them aviation and aerospace, chemicals, oil and gas, maritime and shipbuilding, steel manufacturing, health care and information technology.

"An extremely important component to those successes and the continuous success that we have in working with our partners in economic development is our ability to provide transportation infrastructure in building, upgrading and maintaining our roads and bridges."

According to Clark, counties own 61 percent of all public roads and 54 percent of bridges in the state.

"That is a monumental task for Mobile County and it's critical to the future viability of our region," Hudson said.

The meeting was part of NACo's Safe and Secure Counties Initiative, aimed at educating the public on and supporting the work counties do to protect public safety, preserve public health and well-being and promote local economies.

"We help to build healthy, vibrant and safe counties across America because stronger counties create a stronger America," she said.

NACo advocates for 3,069 counties nationwide on the federal level.

Booming Orange Beach longs for traffic relief



By [Marc D. Anderson | manderson@al.com](mailto:manderson@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on August 14, 2015 at 1:11 PM, updated August 14, 2015 at 1:15 PM



Being a tourism magnet has proved a blessing and a curse for Orange Beach. Development is roaring ahead. Revenues are breaking records. Condos and hotels lining the beach highway offer 9,000 rooms, and their numbers are growing.

Yet more visitors and relentless growth mean more traffic for a very small area that in essence became a man-made island, along with Gulf Shores, when the government built the Intracoastal Waterway in the 1930s.

The lone north-south corridor off the island is a privately owned toll bridge on the Foley Beach Express. To avoid the toll, many drivers head to Gulf Shores, via the beach highway and Canal Road, to travel Alabama 59.

The result, couple with growing development, is mile after mile of congestion in the resort city, particularly during the summer season.

Various solutions have been on the table for at least a decade: widening Canal Road, building a bridge over Wolf Bay, or constructing an elevated north-south road through Gulf State Park. But funding and support have lagged.

"If I'm right, we've exceeded our capacity to move people in the summer," Mayor Tony Kennon said, referring to expected results of an exhaustive traffic study that's under way. "We could not evacuate the island in 24 hours. A lot of times I think Montgomery continues to forget about the possibility of a significant disaster if a storm popped up out of nowhere."

He said, "We're trying to get a hold on where we were at and where we're going and attack the problem now and not waiting to see what happens."

The city sent out surveys to over 4,500 residents to seek their opinions and ideas on priorities for development and growth management. Meanwhile, the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting last week to discuss traffic remedies.

"It's a fairly exhaustive survey trying to get a feel for where everybody is at," Kennon said. Continue [HERE](#)

Mobile Greenways Initiative (MGI) Gains Momentum

There will be two public meetings on the first leg of the Three Mile Creek Biking and Walking Trail on August 24th from 6-8pm and August 25th from 1-3pm - both at the Toulminville Public Library. The trail is scheduled to have construction begin on the first phase by the end of this calendar year.

Three Mile Creek Biking & Walking Trail

Community Engagement Meetings

Three Mile Creek Vicinity, Project 601 Stanton Rd, Exhibit A, City of Mobile, GIS

Toulminville Public Library
601 Stanton Road, Mobile 36617

Monday, August 24, 2015 6:00-8:00 p.m.
&
Tuesday, August 25, 2015 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Please join us at the Community Engagement meeting to set the vision and design of the first phase of the Three Mile Creek Biking & Walking Trail. The objective is to create a design that supports a vision to transform Three Mile Creek into a community asset that would eventually include a 12-mile greenway system which connects diverse neighborhoods with existing and planned park facilities utilizing fitness trails, kayak launches, and low-impact recreational development.

CITY OF MOBILE – DORSEY & DORSEY ENGINEERING

FUNDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS

Transportation Research

Long-Term Pavement Performance Committee Letter Report: August 3, 2015

On August 3, 2015, TRB's Long-Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) Committee sent its 36th letter report to Gregory G. Nadeau, acting administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Frederick G. "Bud" Wright, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The committee's reports to the FHWA and AASHTO are aimed at supporting the further success of the LTPP program, securing the future of the LTPP database, and facilitating the fulfillment of the program's promise of better roads through the development and utilization of LTPP's products.

The report's recommends that the FHWA's vision of the long-term future of the LTPP be included during one-on-one state site visits, and that state agency chief executives reconfirm the identity and roles of the LTPP state coordinators to their staff; the LTPP State Coordinators meeting be reviewed and revised; the theme, categories, awards, timeline, and paper guidelines for the 2016 ASCE-LTPP Data Analysis Contest be established by October 1, 2015; and that the FHWA reexamine the form and content of the Strategic Plan for LTPP Data Analysis.

E-Newsletter Type: [Recently Released TRB Publications](#)

TRB Publication Type: [Letter Reports](#)

U.S. DOT turning to social media to push Congress to fix failing infrastructure

Posted: Aug 04, 2015 12:25 AM CDT Updated: Aug 04, 2015 1:48 AM CDT

By Jonathan Lowe

Tired of potholes, ripped up streets or bumpy bridges in your town? Now you can take your traffic issues right to the top with social media.

Instead of passing a long-term plan to fund our failing infrastructure, critics, including those in the trucking industry, say Congress has decided to kick the can down the road.

Monday, it certainly felt hot enough to melt rubber. But auto experts say jacked-up roads actually damage tires the most.

"Tires go through rigorous bouts of training, so the heat is negligible," explained Sean Hortan, a manager at a Phoenix Community Tire location. "It's really the condition of the roads that would cause issues with the tires."

RELATED: Damaged roads costing motorists hundreds of dollars a year

The U.S. Department of Transportation says we can all do the nation's infrastructure and, by extension, our vehicles a big favor in the month of August.

"People take our infrastructure for granted," said Tony Bradley, president of the Arizona Truckers Association. "I think it's good to show the problems."

U.S. DOT announced Monday that it's putting pressure on elected leaders with the hashtag #ShowUsYourInfraWear. In other words, take a picture of aging, deteriorating roads and bridges, and then Tweet or Instagram it using the hashtag and U.S. DOT handle, @USDOT.

SOCIAL: @USDOT on Twitter | @USDOT on Instagram

"We do have these infrastructure needs in Arizona that need to be addressed," Bradley said.

The campaign comes after transportation officials called out Congress for passing a three-month, short-term extension to crucial highway funding. Then Congress left for August recess. How crucial is that funding? Arizona gets 70 percent of its highway funding from the federal government.

"It's sad that that is one of the responsibilities that they have is highway funding," Bradley added.

If you need proof of failing infrastructure, just remember that bridge on I-10 that collapsed a couple of weeks ago. That closure cost about \$2.5 billion -- per day.

"This is an opportunity for the public to say, 'Here's a problem that I see every day,'" Bradley said. "'Policymakers, please take a look.'"

A 2013 inventory found there are 716 bridges in Arizona using outdated standards and old design features. But the government says they are still safe.

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