



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, December 1st, 2017

Volume 24, Number 7

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2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program
 Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

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The SARPC Annual meeting is December 7-8, and the deadline for a Norman J. Walton Award for your community is today; please submit an application today if you are interested. There is a Mobile MPO meeting scheduled for December 13th, and the Mobile MPO TCC/CAC met this week. There is a lot going on in Congress, and Trump proposes a cut to highway funding (See *Legislative Updates*). *Just For Fun* this week is picture of a sandwich, and *In The News* is the four groups submitted for RFQ for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, and *How do Alabama Roads Compare?* Have a great weekend!

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

FTA 5310 Awards announced (Second Round of Funding)

Before Thanksgiving was the deadline for second round of funding of Traditional FTA 5310 Capital Funding only. The first round of funding for FY 2018 was in June, 2017 and we did not have enough applications for the amount of capital funding available. That is the reason for the second round of funding this month. The next round of FTA 5310 funding will be in June of 2018.

We received several applications and the following were awarded.

- Mobile Association of Retarded Citizens (Capital); \$33,820
- City of Satsuma (Capital); \$5,489
- Mercy Life (Capital); \$55,000

MOBILE MPO Meetings Announced

There will be a meeting of the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on December 13th, 2017 at 10:00 AM in the SARPC Board Room at the GMO Building. Prior to that meeting, the Technical Coordinating Committee / Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) will meet on November 29th, 2017 at 10:00 AM on the second floor of the GMO building. We have quite a few changes to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as proposed by the agenda items below:

ADD

- 100066183 (CN) Resurface on SR-16 (US90) from I-165 Approximately 3 miles East to MP 34; \$1,286,987 with Interstate Maintenance Funds
- 100067749 (CN) Sidewalks along the South Side of Airport Boulevard between Hillcrest Road and Regents Way in Mobile with Urban TAP Funds
- 100067750 (CN) Sidewalks along the North Side of Old Shell Road from the West Side of Parkway Drive to University Boulevard in Mobile with Urban TAP Funds
- 100067788 Mobile Association of Retarded Citizens (Operating); \$173,634; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067789 City of Satsuma (Operating); \$45,966; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067790 Mobile Association of Retarded Citizens (Capital); \$33,820; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067791 City of Satsuma (Capital); \$5,489; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067792 Mercy Life (Capital); \$55,000; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067793 Learning Tree (Capital); \$111,000; FTA 5310 Urban
- 100067794 SARPC Program Administration; \$31,371; FTA 5310 Urban

REMOVE From Urban TAP Funds

- 100067398 (CN) Sidewalks and Multi-use Path along SR 42/US 98 from Firetower Rd to East of Oak Hill Dr in Semmes
- 100067419 (CN) Sidewalks and Multi-use Path along SR 42/US 98 from East of Oak Hill Dr. Walmart in Semmes

MOVE

- 100055752 (UT) I-10 Interchange Modifications from Texas Street (Exit 25A) to West Tunnel Entrance from December 01, 2017 to October 1, 2019 with Interstate Maintenance Funds.

ADOPT

- Resolution concurring with City of Mobile Resolution 60-300 from May 2005 as the FTA 5307 Designated Recipient.

DISCUSS

The Mobile and Eastern Shore MPO will be required at some point to amend their Long Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs to include, but not limited to, the Public Private Partnership including all finance mechanisms being sought or

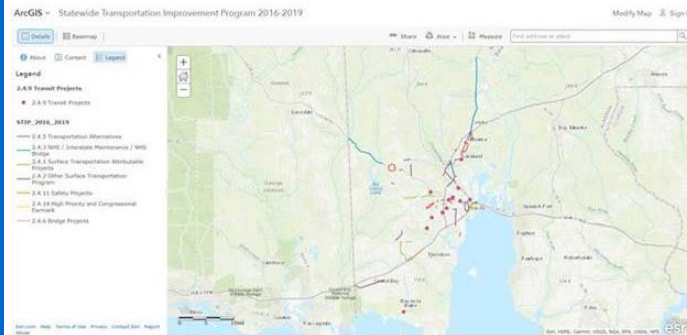
planned for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge once it is finalized. The plans must be amended and adopted before FHWA can sign the final/EIS record of decision.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE

The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) 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 [Destination 2040](#). 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.

2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#)



List of Authorized Projects for FY 2017

The Mobile MPO is currently advertising that the public can review all federally funded transportation projects that were authorized in Fiscal Year 2017 at the offices of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. Those interested in reviewing these projects can also view and download it online [HERE](#). In terms of dollars, there were over \$51.5 Million worth of federally assisted transportation projects authorized in FY 2017 for the Mobile MPO Study Area.

Comprehensive, Cooperative, and Continuing Agreement Concerning Mobile's Transportation Planning Process

The Mobile MPO 3-C Agreement has been finalized and executed. [HERE](#)

Mobile MPO 101

Here are a couple of great videos that were produced by our counterpart in Birmingham (Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham). The videos are a summary of the MPO planning process and are below:



Funding a Project with an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210829210>



Inside an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210825997>

[HERE](#) are the slides and presentations of the Mobile MPO 101 training.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100049566 (CN)
Federal aid number : BR 0016
County : MOBILE
Project Description : REPLACE BRIDGE, BIN 008714, SR-16 (US-90) WESTBOUND OVER TENSAW-SPANISH RIVER. (SUFF=49.7, STATUS=SD)
Old Target start date : December 07, 2018
New Target start date : March 29, 2019

Project : 100066630 (FM)
Federal aid number : NH 0013 (607)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-13 (US-43) FROM THE COLD CREEK BRIDGE TO THE CEDAR CREEK BRIDGE
Old Engineers Estimate : \$2,263,945.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$2,269,542.25

Project : 100066183 (FM)
Federal aid number : NH 0016 (523)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-16 (US-90) FROM I-165 APPROXIMATELY 3 MILES EAST TO MP 34.087
Old Engineers Estimate : \$1,186,987.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$1,875,470.63

Projects Within Region Let December 1st, 2017

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Load Test Program on I-10 at the Mobile River Bridge in Mobile. Length 8.332 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,983,792 to \$2,314,634 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Offset Left Turn Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Base, and Pavement) and Traffic Signals on SR-42 (US-98) from 1000 feet south of the intersection of Parker Road to 1000 feet north of the intersection of Parker Road in Fairhope. Length 0.258 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$546,215 to \$667,596 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Trump Seeks \$44B in New Disaster Aid Including USDOT, With \$1B Cut in Highway Funds

President Trump asked Congress Nov. 17 to appropriate another \$44 billion in supplemental disaster aid that includes funds for storm-damaged transportation systems, but would help offset that new spending by stripping \$1 billion from normal federal-aid highway funds.

White House Budget Director Mick Mulvaney submitted [the lengthy budget request](#) that seeks funding to pay for damage to facilities for a number of executive departments.

Added to earlier disaster-aid legislation that totaled more than \$50 billion, this one would put the federal costs for this year's series of unusually severe events close to \$100 billion. And Mulvaney indicated that additional funding would be needed for relief and recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, where "damage assessments are ongoing."



Among other provisions, the administration requested \$415.5 million for the Federal Highway Administration's emergency relief program, saying the money "is needed for the repair, protection and reconstruction of federal-aid highways, roads and bridges damaged by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria."

It asked for \$198.5 million for the Federal Transit Administration's public transportation emergency relief program, to pay "for restoration of damaged capital assets such as buses and shelters, ferry terminals and rail system stations" affected by those storms.

And it requested \$71.9 million in emergency supplemental funds for the Federal Aviation Administration to pay for hurricane damage to FAA-owned facilities and equipment such as air traffic control roofs, approach lighting systems at airports, electrical equipment, radars and navigational aids.

The White House proposed that Congress make more than \$59 billion in budget cuts across federal agencies as offsets for the emergency costs.

Of that, it proposed rescinding \$1 billion of federal-aid highways funds that go to state departments of transportation on a formula basis to help pay for road and bridge projects.

The administration said recipients of federal contract authority have "a four-year period of availability that allows states flexibility in long-term planning for transportation infrastructure projects." The proposal would take back \$1 billion in prior-year contract authority that DOTs have not yet obligated, although the White House said that "states will continue to have sufficient federal aid balances to meet their construction plans for 2018."

As a comparison, such a rescission would be twice the size of the annual pool of infrastructure grant funds that Congress sets aside for the TIGER program, which helps fund various types of transportation projects.

The board of directors of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has also called on Congress to halt a pattern in recent years of trying to [rescind highway program contract authority to help offset other budget costs](#), saying this can disrupt and delay needed projects.

Surface Transportation and Public Area Security Act of 2017 Introduced

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), vice ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, introduced the *Surface Transportation and Public Area Security Act of 2017* this week. The legislation aims to better protect mass transit and public spaces from terrorism by strengthening critical programs and encouraging federal partnerships with state and local stakeholders. Coleman's measure would authorize \$400 million for the Transit Security Grant Program, increase bomb-sniffing dog teams, and restore funding for the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program. It would also direct a review of best practices for preventing vehicle-based attacks and reevaluate personal gun carrying rights in public transit space

Bipartisan lawmakers ready infrastructure report amid questions over White House plan

BY MELANIE ZANONA - 11/30/17 04:31 PM EST



© Greg Nash

The congressional Problem Solvers Caucus is readying a bipartisan infrastructure report that lawmakers hope will serve as a blueprint for President Trump's rebuilding proposal, members of the moderate group said Thursday. The caucus has held five meetings on

infrastructure over the last two months, including one with the administration, to gather input from stakeholders about the best — and most bipartisan — path forward on a rebuilding initiative. The latest meeting came Thursday with former Gov. Ed Rendell (D-Pa.) and former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who co-chair Building America's Future. The duo outlined potential funding offsets, such as a gas tax hike or charging for the number of vehicle miles traveled, and emphasized the need to include a broad range of infrastructure projects in any plan.

"What I said in there: this year has been a missed opportunity for infrastructure," LaHood told reporters after the meeting. "If this Congress, the White House and the leadership had started out with infrastructure and a way to pay for it, that bill would have been passed and hundreds of people would have been working on bridges and roads."

About 25 Problem Solvers Caucus members attended the hour-long session in the Capitol. Some of the ideas discussed could be incorporated into the group's infrastructure report, which will identify potential funding offsets and other ideas. The small group of lawmakers actually working on the document hope to have it finished in the next two weeks, at which point the entire caucus would then vote to approve the document.

"The process we've developed is to basically do what regular order is supposed to do," Rep. [Elizabeth Esty](#) (D-Conn.) told reporters. "We're meeting with people, we're shopping ideas and proposals, vetting them within subcommittees, and then we vote on them. It actually works."

She said their infrastructure ideas align pretty closely with the administration, which has yet to unveil further details about its plan, though it has a 70-page memo of infrastructure principles it has been circulating internally. But doubts have been growing about the timing of Trump's infrastructure plan, which was once billed as a 100-day priority for Trump but has taken a back seat to other GOP priorities this year. The White House said it would unveil its rebuilding plan as soon as Congress finishes with tax reform, but Trump also said he wants to address welfare reform and revisit the health-care debate after taxes.

Another source of anxiety that came up during Thursday's meeting is that the House tax plan would eliminate the deduction on tax-exempt private activity bonds — a critical tool used by local governments to finance infrastructure projects. Killing the bonds would be "destructive" for infrastructure, Rendell told reporters Thursday.

But Esty said she recently received assurances from Transportation Secretary [Elaine Chao](#) that they would "fix" the issue in an infrastructure bill.

There's also a chance that the bonds remain intact in the final tax measure, since the Senate version keeps their preferential tax treatment.

The GOP Tax Bills Are Infrastructure Bills Too. Here's Why.

The tax code overhaul includes several major changes to financing mechanisms used for infrastructure. Several association directors, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, have expressed disappointment in the missed opportunity for including transportation tax incentives and revenue sources in the tax bill, like resolving Highway Trust Fund solvency problems. Governing outlines some key issues in the tax bill that infrastructure advocates are watching:

Private Activity Bonds (PABs) and Advance Refunding Bonds: The Senate approach on this issue is favored as it does not eliminate PABs, while the House version calls for elimination. Historically, these tax-exempt bonds have financed infrastructure, affordable housing, and hospitals — they are also key components for driving public-private partnerships. Both bills eliminate advance refunding bonds, which allow governments to refinance debt earlier than they would have otherwise so that they can take advantage of lower interest rates years sooner. Many industry groups, including water infrastructure, say the bonds are an important tool for reducing costs.

Ending Electric Vehicle and Wind Tax Credits: The House bill would eliminate a \$7,500 credit for consumers purchasing electric vehicles, which would severely impact future purchases. The House plan would also change the rules for how companies qualify for the investment or production wind tax credits. It would also reduce the value of the production credit, which jeopardizes the construction of current and planned wind farms.

Sports Stadiums: The House tax overhaul would eliminate municipal bond tax exemptions for sports stadiums, whose biggest supporter is the National Football League. The Senate also has traction on this issue with support from Cory Booker (D-NJ). [HERE](#)

Funding Opportunities

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2018.

The TAP application and instructions are located on the ALDOT website at:

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

The TAP application is available on this page and on page two (2) of the instructional information is a listing of eligible improvement projects for TAP funding. The deadline for submission of FY 2018 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, December 15, 2017 at 5:00p.m.

Some major application requirements of the TAP are:

1. Only cities, towns and county commissions can apply for funding;
2. Only one application can be submitted by an eligible sponsor due to limited funding;
3. This year, the total amount that a sponsor of a project can apply for will be increased to \$800,000; (\$640,000 federal and \$160,000 local match);
4. The funding ratio for TAP projects is 80% federal funds and 20% sponsor funds;

5. The sponsor is responsible for the cost of required preliminary engineering;
6. Public involvement is optional;
7. Fifty (50) percent of the TAP funds are sub-allocated to the MPO's by population and fifty (50) percent is distributed to any area of the state by ALDOT;
8. All TAP projects are selected by a competitive application process administered by ALDOT;
9. For cities/towns located within the six (6) largest MPO's (Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, Mobile, Columbus, GA, and Pensacola, FL), the TAP funds that are being administered by ALDOT are completely separate from the TAP funds that are dedicated to the aforementioned MPO's.

Please contact Bob Kratzer at (334) 353-6442 if you have questions regarding this matter.

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

This is a fascinating look at transportation of the future, including **the fire trucks of the future!** This form of transportation is called gyroscopic transport, and is based on "gyroscopes". My only question is: Is it pronounced "Jī-roh-scopic" or is it a "YEE-roh-scopic" or is it a "GEE-roh-scopic"? Either way, the video is worth watching. [HERE](#)



Mmmmm.



In the News

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project Receives Response to Request for Qualifications

For Immediate Release: November 17, 2017 Contact: Allison Gregg, 251-604-9790 | agregg@mobileriverbridge.com

Mobile, AL –The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) announced today that four teams submitted Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) in response to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for delivering the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project –a 12-mile project that will increase capacity along the Interstate 10 corridor in South Alabama.

“ALDOT is pleased with the industry’s response to this key project,” Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project Director Matt Ericksen said. “This is a major milestone in the procurement process that will lead to the delivery of the much needed project that will provide relief to commuters, travelers, and the freight industry.”

Teams submitting applications:

-I-10 Mobility Group

Equity Members: Cintra Global Ltd. and Meridiam I-10 Infrastructure, LLC

Lead Engineering Firm: Parsons Transportation Group Inc.

Lead Contractor: Ferrovial Agroman and Parsons Construction Group Inc.

Lead O&M: Cintra Group Ltd and Meridiam 1-10 Infrastructure LLC

-Gulf Coast Connectors

Equity Members: ACS Infrastructure Development Inc.; Macquarie Capital Holdings Pty Limited; HOCHTIEF PPP Solutions, GmbH; and John Laing Investments Limited

Lead Engineering Firm: T.Y. LIN International

Lead Contractor: Dragados USA, Inc.; The Lane Construction Corporation; Flatiron Constructors Inc.

Lead O&M: Gulf Coast Connectors

-Mobile Bay Link

Equity Members: Acciona Concesiones S.L., Aberdeen Global Infrastructure GP II Ltd., DIF Infra 5 US LLC, Societa Italiana per Condotte d’Acqua Spa.

Lead Engineering Firm: COWI North America and Michael Baker International Inc.

Lead Contractor: Acciona Construccion S.A.; Societa Italiana per Condotte d’Acqua Spa.

Lead O&M: Acciona Concesiones S.L., Aberdeen Global Infrastructure GP II Ltd., DIF Infra 5 US, and Societa Italiana per Condotte d’Acqua Spa.

-Mobile River Bridge Group

Equity Members: Infra Red Capital Partners Limited, Shikun & Binui Ltd, Astaldi S.p.A., and Southland Holdings LLC

Lead Engineering Firm: Figg Bridge Engineers, Inc.

Lead Contractor: AJS Contractors: A Joint Venture of Astaldi S.p.A, Johnson Bros. (A Southland Company), and Shikun & Binui Ltd (Acting through Shikun & Binui America Inc.)

Lead O&M: Infra Red Capital Partners Limited acting in its capacity as manager of Infra Red Infrastructure V (1) LP / Shikun & Binui Ltd. (Acting through Shikun & Binui Concessions USA Inc.)/ Astaldi S.p.A. / Southland Holdings LLC

ALDOT issued the RFQ for the MRB project on September 22, 2017, and the deadline for response was November 17, 2017. The proposed project has three major components: a new, aesthetically pleasing cable-stayed bridge over the Mobile River; replacement of the existing Bayway; and five interchange modifications. The Mobile River Bridge will be a six lane facility with a minimum vertical clearance of 215 feet over the Mobile River to assure the viability of Mobile’s maritime industry. The reconstructed Bayway provides eight lanes of travel for 7.5 miles and will be built to an elevation above the 100-year storm surge level. The interchange modifications will assure safe and easy access to the Interstate and surrounding infrastructure.

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project will be ALDOT’s first Public Private Partnership (P3). A P3 allows industry to bring innovation and expedite the project to assure timely delivery. In addition, ALDOT will use the Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain (DBFOM) model for the MRB. Used successfully by public agencies throughout the nation and internationally to build critical infrastructure projects, the DBFOM model enables shared risks and rewards, and can help ensure project completion dates.

ALDOT will review the SOQ responses to determine which teams will advance to the Request for Proposal (RFP) process of the project.

Release of both a Short List of selected proposers and the Draft RFP is set for early 2018. For more information about the proposed Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project, visit www.mobileriverbridge.com.

How Alabama Roads Compare

Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama has created very detailed comparison of roads in Alabama

Full Document [HERE](#)



Interesting to note the cost of congestion in Mobile compared to other Alabama cities.

Urban Area	Annual Excess Fuel Consumed		Annual Hours of Delay		Annual Congestion Cost	
	Total Gallons (000)	Gallons per Auto Commuter	Total Delay (000)	Hours per Auto Commuter	Total Dollars (million)	Per Auto Commuter (\$)
Birmingham, AL	9,105	16	19,385	34	\$501	\$891
Mobile, AL	4,865	14	10,396	30	\$236	\$670
Montgomery, AL	3,071	11	6,494	24	\$149	\$553
Huntsville, AL	3,125	10	7,253	23	\$159	\$510
Tuscaloosa, AL	1,191	8	2,563	17	\$61	\$403
Dothan, AL	574	7	1,236	15	\$30	\$370
Auburn, AL	565	7	1,272	15	\$30	\$356
Columbus, GA-AL	1,879	7	4,190	15	\$93	\$325
Florence, AL	595	7	1,232	14	\$28	\$326
Gadsden, AL	452	7	962	14	\$23	\$342
Anniston, AL	458	5	987	11	\$23	\$260
Decatur, AL	374	5	753	10	\$17	\$237

Alabama on short list for auto plant

By Mary Sell Montgomery Bureau Dec 1, 2017 Updated 9 hrs ago 0

MONTGOMERY — Alabama is reportedly a finalist for a massive automotive plant, and one area official says it has a good chance — though it could require an equally large incentive package. The publication Bloomberg earlier this month reported Alabama and North Carolina are vying for a \$1.6 billion, 4,000-job collaboration between Toyota Motor Corp. and Mazda Motor Corp. after several other states were struck from the list of potential sites. A final decision is expected early next year.

In August, officials in Lawrence and Limestone counties said they had potential sites for the plant. There were also others around the state. State Rep. Lynn Greer, R-Rogersville, said Wednesday he's talked to local and state officials about the project.

"Most folks think we have an excellent shot at it," he said. "I hope so."

Greer said the automakers want \$1 billion in incentives from the state they choose. Bloomberg also reported the \$1 billion figure.

"To me, that's a tremendously good investment," Greer said. "If we can get the plant, I think we could come up with \$1 billion."

It's unclear what a \$1 billion incentive package could look like. Gov. Kay Ivey's office referred the question to the Alabama Department of Commerce, which declined comment. Both offices said they don't comment on pending projects. Other automakers in the state have received large incentive packages, but nothing near \$1 billion. Automotive News last week compared the advantages of Alabama and North Carolina. Among Alabama's are its automotive history and incentives. Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Hyundai already have facilities here. The state also has more than 150 tier 1 and tier 2 suppliers.

"From a production cost point of view, the advantage would go to Alabama," Gregg Wassmansdorf, site-selection consultant and senior managing director of Newmark Knight Frank told Automotive News. "The other advantage that they would likely have, just based on

historical precedent, is their ability to provide economic incentive. They have historically been very aggressive when it comes to incentives for automotive."

But in North Carolina, the Toyota-Mazda plant may not have to compete for workers. That state doesn't have a light vehicle plant. It has developed four potential sites.

"This plant would have to find some new sweet spot in the state of Alabama that they feel comfortable is not going to be competing for all the other talent that's already dedicated to OEMs, or the supplier network," Wassmansdorf said.

John Boyd, a site-selection consultant and principal at The Boyd Co. in Princeton, N.J., told Automotive News he gives a slight edge to North Carolina because of several factors, including its larger congressional delegation than Alabama.

"This new joint manufacturing facility will be producing some very sophisticated, highly regulated electronic vehicles," Boyd said. "There will be a myriad of legislative priorities and lobbying efforts, so clout in Washington, D.C., I think, is a site-selection driver."

Automotive News also said North Carolina's less unionized labor force, 3 percent compared to Alabama's 8.1 percent, is an advantage for the Tar Heel State. In August, Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield spoke generally about this state's advantages.

"Alabama has several sites that offer the acreage, workforce availability, utilities infrastructure, transportation access and other assets that are compatible for automotive (original equipment manufacturer) projects," he said then.

"Over the years, we have learned a great deal in partnering with Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Hyundai as they have grown and prospered in Alabama," Canfield said. "We can replicate this same success should another vehicle-producing automotive OEM make the decision to locate in Alabama."

Huntsville Mayor and 2018 gubernatorial candidate Tommy Battle couldn't comment on economic development projects due to non-disclosure agreements, his office said this week. Huntsville recently made a pitch for the new 50,000-employee Amazon headquarters, along with more than 200 cities nationwide, including Birmingham. Kelly Schrimsher, communications director for Battle's office, said this week the mayor has made statements related to Amazon, promoting Huntsville as a good location for business. Huntsville is a smaller city than what Amazon said it wanted in a new home.

"In his experience, it is important to 'throw your hat into the ring' and let companies know about your strengths and assets," Schrimsher said. "While a city may not land the project, they may plant a seed of interest for a future one."

Trump Administration Aims To Loosen Obama-Era Truck Safety Rules

By [DAVID SCHAPER](#) · NOV 29, 2017

The Trump administration is hitting the brakes on a range of Obama-era trucking safety regulations, and some truckers are hoping for a last-minute reprieve from another safety mandate scheduled to take effect next month.

But advocates worry this rolling back of safety rules will make highways more dangerous.

Truckers, who complain they work in one of the nation's most over-regulated industries, will make the case for deregulation at a House Small Business Committee hearing today that is meant to "explore ways to provide regulatory relief to the industry." Dubbed "Highway to Headache: Federal Regulations on the Small Trucking Industry," the hearing will feature testimony from individual owner-operators as well as owners of small trucking firms.

"Federal regulators simply don't have a clue," says Todd Spencer, executive vice president of the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, a trade group. "They don't have a clue what truckers do, how they go about doing it, the environment that they live in, the schedules and things like that, the demands of the job."

Take the federal hours of service rule, for example, which limits truckers to driving for 11 hours per day within a 14 hour period, followed by 10 hours of rest.

"Once your work day starts, then 14 hours later, it has to end," Spencer says. "It doesn't take into account delays that you may encounter at a shipper or receiver, or as a result of construction or congestion, or maybe a crash on the road."

Such delays can waste several hours while a driver is on the clock — and that's a huge problem for truckers because most are paid not by the hour, but by the mile. So while most truck drivers are working around the schedules of everyone else, Spencer says "the regulations sort of fly in the face of that. It's just nuttiness."

And in a few weeks the government may be able to better track truckers' hours, because they'll be required to use electronic logging devices, or ELDs. In the process, the industry will eliminate the use of old paper log books to track hours, a system that dates back to the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s. The documents sometimes are called "comic books" because they're so easily fudged.

Many midsize and bigger trucking companies are on board and already use ELDs across their fleets, but many independent drivers and owner-operators balk at the mandate, citing the cost of the devices — the most popular of which run nearly \$500. They're asking the Trump administration for a delay and exemptions for drivers with good safety records.

Safety advocates say there is good reason for the ELD mandate: Fatigue is a common factor in truck-related crashes.

"We see these issues in crash after crash, and we're tired, yes we are tired, of seeing commercial drivers being tired," said Robert Sumwalt, chairman the National Transportation Safety Board. He made the comments at a recent NTSB hearing on a horrific crash involving a tour bus and a semitrailer outside of Palm Springs, Calif., in October of 2016. Continue [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

“How to Leverage FAF4 Freight Data for Transportation Analysis: Example Cases from the Oregon and Tennessee DOTs”

Thursday, December 14th
1:00-2:30 PM Eastern

To attend the webinar, please register using the below link. You will receive details on how to log into the webinar after registering.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-leverage-faf4-freight-data-for-transportation-analysis-example-cases-from-the-oregon-and-tennessee-registration-39956769774>

Overview:

This webinar will feature the following speakers:

Becky Knudson, Senior Transportation Economist, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)

Ms. Knudson will discuss ODOT’s use of FAF data to support transportation investment decision-making in Oregon, including how ODOT has used FAF4 data for bottlenecks, commodity flows, and freight flow forecasting analyses.

Casey Langford, Policy Office Supervisor-Long Range Planning Division, Tennessee DOT (TnDOT)

Kevin Teagarden, Policy Planning Specialist-Long Range Planning Division, TnDOT

Sabyasachee Mishra, Assistant Professor-Department of Civil Engineering, University of Memphis

Mihalis Golias, Associate Professor-Department of Civil Engineering, University of Memphis

Dr. Langford, Mr. Teagarden, Dr. Mishra and Dr. Golias will discuss a joint effort by TnDOT and the University of Memphis to develop a resource allocation model using FAF4 and other datasets. By applying this model, TnDOT identified low-cost, high-impact transportation projects as well as when, where, and which projects should be implemented. The speakers will also discuss how FAF4 data and the resource allocation model support TnDOT’s overall transportation planning and policy decision-making activities.

Contact Information:

Please contact FAF@dot.gov with any questions.

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Additional Notes:

This webinar is aimed at practitioners with basic or no knowledge of the FAF but who would like to move to the next experience level. This webinar will also provide a useful foundation for future FAF webinars. Please feel free to forward this invitation to interested colleagues. We hope you will be able to participate!

FTA Joint Procurement Clearinghouse

This [new tool](#) will enable FTA grant recipients to communicate about procurement needs and solicit partners interested in pooling resources for a joint purchase. USDOT was directed to create this forum under the FAST Act to allow public transit operators to engage in joint procurements for rolling stock (including buses, railcars, and ferries) to achieve economies of scale. FTA produced training materials, which can be found on the JPC webpage, to help users navigate the tool.

BTS Releases Geographic Databases for 2016

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s [Bureau of Transportation Statistics](#) (BTS) released the 2016 edition of the [National Transportation Atlas Database](#) (NTAD) this week. The NTAD is a compilation of datasets representing the nation’s transportation infrastructure, including more than 500,000 miles of roadway, over 600,000 bridges, and in excess of 19,000 airports. This year’s NTAD consists of over 60 individual data layers, most of which have been updated within the last year. The NTAD also includes several new features: the U.S. portion of the North American Rail Network, truck parking, and road and airport noise layers. The 2016 NTAD marks the end of the traditional annual update. BTS will now begin using a dynamic publication cycle, making updated data available throughout the year, allowing for more timely delivery to users. Also new this year, NTAD will be available exclusively online. To offer larger and more complex data sets and enhanced functionality, DVDs have been eliminated. The enhanced online NTAD datasets allow for customizable downloads and APIs. They are available as GeoJSON and GeoServices (REST) services and are also available for download as shapefiles, kml and csv files. Contacts: Press: Dave Smallen: (202) 366-5568. For technical information: Dominic Menegus: (202) 366-8717.

Making a Model a Good Predictive Tool

A basic part of travel demand model validation is running the model for a “base year” and comparing the outputs to observed data. In this [FHWA project](#), two model versions for each of two metropolitan areas were run twice each: 1) the more recent version for its base year and a backcast scenario (for the base year of the earlier model version), and 2) the earlier version for its base year and a forecast scenario (for the base year of the later model version). This research was intended to produce useful data on which model components are most stable over time and their sensitivities to the factors affecting travel demand that vary over time. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations for planning agencies.

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Transportation Dictionary

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

Search Tips

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

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