



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

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There is a Technical Coordinating and a Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) meeting scheduled on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 AM and the Mobile MPO will meet on March 15<sup>th</sup> in the SARPC Board Room. The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) will meet next week on February 15<sup>th</sup> at noon in the SARPC Board Room. (please see *Mobile MPO Updates*). There have been some interesting proposals for the next Highway Funding Bill (see *Legislative Updates*). Mardi Gras parades kick off this weekend in Mobile with the Conde Cavaliers rolling tonight at 6:30 and more parades tomorrow.



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](http://www.mobilempo.org)  check us out on FACEBOOK

## Mobile MPO Updates

### Mobile MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting 2/15/2017

There will be a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting at the GM&O Building in the board room on Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. This will be a bring your own, brown bag lunch meeting. It is open to the public. The minutes of the meeting are available online [HERE](#). If you have anything you would like to be included on the agenda please let us know.

### TCC/CAC Meeting 2/22/2017; MPO Meeting 3/15/17

There will be a TCC/CAC Meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup> in the SARPC Board Room. We have several items to discuss including the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and it's update in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Also, the TIGER grant for Bring Back Broad Street that was awarded to the City of Mobile will have to be included into the 2016 -2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Finally, there will be a discussion concerning the STP Attributable Funding Schedule. Please put it on your calendars, and a notice will go out next week.

### 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 last week to each MPO member. Please call Kevin if there are any questions.

### Performance Measures

On January 18, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published in the Federal Register final rules for the last two national performance management measure regulations. One rule establishes regulations to assess the condition and performance of bridges on the National Highway System (NHS) and of pavements on the Interstate and non-Interstate NHS. The other establishes regulations to assess the performance of the NHS, Freight Movement on the Interstate System, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. All MPOs will have 6 months after each State finalizes their state Performance Measures. 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

### Congestion Management Process (CMP)

One of the items that was discussed at the TCC/CAC and the MPO meeting is a reinvention of the Mobile Urban Area CMP. Prior to FY 2017, the Mobile CMP was a thorough process for monitoring congestion, developing improvements, and prioritizing improvements; however, it was inefficient, and ineffective. The current federal transportation funding bill, the FAST ACT, has introduced requirements for performance measures for projects and processes. As a performance measure, projects not being implemented through a Congestion Management Process, is an indicator that it is time to reinvent the process.

Our intention is create a new funding program out of the STP Attributable Funds of \$500,000 (federal) annually for strictly intersection type improvements. These can be new adaptive signals, access management strategies, roundabouts, etc. It has to be additional capacity,

as that is what the STP Attributable Funds are for, but the new program would concentrate on intersections. The projects would have to be justified, with performance measures. These performance measures would be included in the project ranking process, and would include a travel time index (free flow / congested speed), a roadway congestion index (capacity index), and a rear-end collisions per mile factor. We have developed this for some corridors and presented them to the TCC/CAC on November 9<sup>th</sup> with a lot of discussion. The Long Range Transportation Plan *Destination 2040* will have to be modified to account for this new program. The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has to be fiscally constrained, which means this \$500,000 has to come from somewhere. The LRTP identified a grade separated interchange at Azalea Rd and Airport Blvd. Rather than spending \$14 Million on such a large project that may not be well received with the business owners, we are proposing to use that money in the mean time for smaller intersection type improvements all over the Urban Area.

The Mobile MPO approved for staff to move forward with this, so we will be modifying the LRTP and the TIP, which will require MPO adoption at the next meeting.

## Projects Within Region Let February 24, 2017

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### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the intersection of Florida Highway west of Canoe to MP 55.300 in Flomaton. Length 10.299 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,941,862 to \$2,373,387 .
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Bridge Rail Retrofit, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the Baldwin County Line to the intersection of Florida Highway west of Canoe. Length 11.000 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,254,214 to \$2,755,150 .

### MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from east of the intersection of Ramsey Road in Grand Bay to the west end of the Fowl River Bridge west of Theodore. Length 7.310 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,674,778 to \$2,046,951.
- For constructing the Precast Concrete Pavement System on I-165 (Southbound Service Road Left Turn Lanes) just west of the intersection of Bay Bridge Road (SR-16/US-90). Length 0.121 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$673,347 to \$822,980.
- For constructing the Bridge Girder Repair (Collision Damage) on CR-39 (McDonald Road) over I-10. Length 0.340 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$306,703 to \$374,860 .

### BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on CR-13 from the intersection of CR-48 in Fairhope to the roundabout at CR-30 (Site 1) and from north of the roundabout at CR-64 to the junction of Ottawa Drive in Daphne (Site 2). Length 1.646 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$510,400 to \$623,822

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

### [Project Status](#)

## Legislative Updates

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### **Sen. Fischer, Rep. DeFazio Propose Separate Revenue Plans to Bolster Highway Trust Fund**

Two members of Congress – a Senate Republican and a House Democrat – offered separate transportation proposals Feb. 1 that include shoring up revenues for the Highway Trust Fund beyond 2020, when current multiyear authorization and funding legislation expires.

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., who chairs the Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, [unveiled a "Build USA Infrastructure Act"](#) to require that for the five-year period starting Oct. 1, 2020, the first \$21.4 billion of revenues collected each fiscal year by U.S. Customs and Border Protection would be deposited into the Highway Trust Fund to cover a projected shortfall between the HTF's dedicated tax receipts and projected spending.

Meanwhile, Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., ranking Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called for Congress to index federal motor fuel taxes to construction cost inflation and use that new revenue to back 30-year infrastructure bonds, as part of a three-part plan to increase investment in highways and transit, harbors, and airports.

In the biggest part of his plan, DeFazio called for indexing the federal "gas tax," though he later made it clear he also included diesel fuel as well as gasoline. He said indexing the existing federal motor fuels tax would allow issuance over 30 years of \$500 billion in bonds for highway, bridge and transit improvements, or \$23 billion a year in added federal spending on those projects.

Fischer had recently signaled, during the Jan. 11 confirmation hearing of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, that she would soon offer a [proposal to help keep the HTF solvent](#) after the current surface transportation law runs out in 2020.

She told the Omaha World-Herald that her plan would [essentially fund trust fund projects with user fees](#), since it would receipts from customs charges levied on freight and passengers at air, land and water ports of entry.

And with a goal of helping get infrastructure projects moving faster, her measure would also let states establish voluntary "remittance

agreements" with the Federal Highway Administration, to let states "exchange a portion of their federal highway dollars for greater control over certain aspects of federal regulatory approval for highway projects."

In a press release, Fischer said that "funding challenges and the burdensome federal regulatory approval process have delayed infrastructure projects across America for decades. It's time for a new approach." She said her legislation is modeled after "proven successes in accelerating major transportation projects throughout Nebraska. The Build USA Infrastructure Act is a responsible, forward-looking proposal to strengthen roads, bridges and highways."

In the House DeFazio, besides his fuel tax indexing proposal, also urged Congress to dedicate all of the nation's annual harbor maintenance tax receipts to actual harbor projects, instead of diverting much of it as now to other budget areas, and letting large airports increase passenger facility charges to cover bonding for improvement projects.

"Here's three steps we could take to put nearly \$600 billion to work, some of it tomorrow," [he said at a Feb. 1 T&I hearing](#) on the subject of "Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America."

[Politico reported](#) that DeFazio is developing a formal proposal and described its broad outlines at the hearing.

Excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel provide the largest shares of user-generated revenue to the Highway Trust Fund, but fall far short of covering all its authorized highway and transit spending. DeFazio said under his fuel tax indexing proposal "we would make the trust fund whole through the next three authorizations, and we would bring the nation's infrastructure to a state of good repair in 14 years."

He added: "That's all we'd have to do – index the gas tax, dedicate it and issue 30-year bonds."

He emphasized that two of his proposals would not require Congress to raise taxes, but would require congressional action to release harbor tax receipts for their stated purpose and to let airports raise the fees they add to airfares of passengers using their facilities.

Regarding the harbor maintenance tax, DeFazio said U.S. consumers pay it in the price of imported goods they buy. Only about half is actually used on harbor projects while the rest is diverted to other budget needs but listed for budget purposes as maintaining a theoretical \$9 billion trust fund balance.

He said if Congress would spend that balance and the full annual HMT receipts over the next 10 years for their intended purpose "we could spend \$32 billion on our harbors," to deal with a backlog of projects to make U.S. port areas ready for the largest container ships and make jetty improvements.

He said allowing big airports to add \$2 per ticket in added passenger facility fees would let them make major upgrades while letting Congress spend more of its airport improvement funding on smaller facilities.

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### More Funding Discourse on the Hill

President Trump's plan to use repatriation to pay for infrastructure gained a major proponent this week when House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) expressed his support for the idea. At present, U.S. companies have an estimated \$2.6 trillion in profits that were earned overseas and being held there. These profits aren't taxable in the U.S. until they return the income from abroad. To entice companies to return these profits, Trump and House Republicans are asking for lower tax rates on the profits. Support exists for applying this windfall to infrastructure and transportation projects, but there are lots of other ways Congress could choose to proceed, including to help offset the cost of broad-based tax reform.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee heard from rural transportation leaders yesterday that direct federal funding is necessary for their surface transportation needs. The officials echoed the skepticism of the Chairman, John Barrasso (R-WY), about relying on public-private partnerships and the lack of population in rural areas to draw private investment. The Wyoming Transportation Director suggested that the best solution for rural areas is to distribute new money through formulas in the FAST Act to ensure that rural states are not passed over.

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### Transportation Committee Launches #Building21 Effort to Promote its Vision of a 21st Century American Infrastructure

The key to America's future competitiveness is making investments in an infrastructure that is ready to take on the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That's the central message Chairman Bill Shuster and members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee delivered during the Committee's first full hearing of the 115th Congress last week. To communicate this vision beyond the beltway, the Committee has launched an informational campaign entitled "Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure for America," or #building21.

"America's infrastructure is the backbone of our economy and we must invest to meet the challenges of today while preparing for the opportunities of tomorrow," said Shuster (R-PA). "The #building21 initiative is designed to explain our vision for America's infrastructure that promotes job creation, encourages economic development, and prepares the Nation for the breakthroughs in mobility that are around the corner."

Integral to the #building21 initiative is the launch of a new website, which will focus attention on policies that will build a 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure. The [site](#) went live today featuring perspectives from Chairman Shuster and Committee Members, as well as a vision statement for the initiative.

"This isn't simply a website," Shuster added. "The Committee will continue to hold hearings, listening sessions, and roundtables throughout the Congress as part of our agenda to explore what system users, manufacturers, and consumers need to truly develop an infrastructure and transportation network that is second to none."

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### DOT Inspector General Outlines Management Challenges Facing Department

At a hearing scheduled by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on Wednesday, DOT Inspector General Calvin L. Scovell III outlined the [top management challenges](#) facing the Department. Scovell identified the safe integration of emerging technologies such as driverless cars and Unmanned Aircraft Systems as well as the implementation of mandated and recommended safety improvements as major challenges. He also discussed the need for protection of DOT's financial and infrastructure investments, which includes enhancing the resilience of the National Airspace System and safeguarding our IT systems from increasingly complex cybersecurity threats. He closed by emphasizing their role in preventing fraud and their strong record of identifying weaknesses and recommending enhancements to DOT's internal controls.

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

## Funding Opportunities

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### **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

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### **FY 2017 NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program**

*Proposals Due: March 15*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Coastal Resilience Grants Program](#) is intended to build resilience by reducing the risk to coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems from extreme weather events and climate-related hazards. Projects that build resilience include activities that protect life and property, safeguard people and infrastructure, strengthen the economy, and/or conserve and restore coastal and marine resources.

NOAA has identified \$15,000,000 to support projects in a new funding round, and anticipates that typical awards will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000. The NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program will support two categories of activities:

- **Strengthening Coastal Communities:** activities that improve capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions (states, counties, municipalities, territories and tribes) to prepare and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards; or
- **Habitat Restoration:** activities that restore habitat to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

Proposals focused on improving capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions should identify and describe how the project will address: the vulnerability, issue(s) or problem limiting the resilience of coastal jurisdictions to be addressed; the proposed project's expected outcomes and the actions to be undertaken; and how the proposed actions will enhance resilience within the jurisdictions expected to benefit from the project.

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### **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](#)

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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

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### **Perdido River Canoe Trail Now Open!**

The Alabama State Lands Division has launched its new canoe trails website, [www.alabamacanoetrails.com](#). The site features information and maps needed to plan an adventure on the Bartram Canoe Trail or the newly opened Perdido River Canoe Trail. The site also makes it easy for paddlers to make overnight camping reservations for both trails.

The Perdido River Canoe Trail features a 19-mile segment of the Perdido River in Baldwin County. This section of the river is characterized by gently flowing brackish water over coastal white sand. The river's many sandbars provide opportunities for paddlers to take breaks, camp or have lunch. There are multiple access points along the river including two launches and one boat ramp. Paddlers can also reserve one of six camping shelters that accommodate up to eight people each.

Opened in 2003, the Bartram Canoe Trail system provides paddling opportunities on the rivers, streams, lakes, sloughs and bayous of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. The State Lands Division maintains six day-use trails and six overnight trails on the Bartram. There are two land-

based campsites and four floating platform campsites available for the overnight routes. The land-based camping areas are open on a first-come, first-served basis. The floating platform campsites are limited to groups no larger than eight and are available by online reservation only. Additional pile-supported, land-based camping shelters will be constructed in the coming months.

Both trails are open to canoes and kayaks only. The Perdido River Canoe Trail is accessible via the Perdido Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Baldwin County. The Bartram Canoe Trail is accessible from the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort or one of many local landings. Overnight camping reservations (\$26.50 per night) for both the Bartram and Perdido Canoe Trails are limited to paddlers only. This project is funded with qualified outer continental shelf oil and gas revenues by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of the Interior.

Paddlers are encouraged to check water levels and weather while planning their trips on the Perdido and Bartram trails. More planning tips can be found on the Alabama State Lands Division Canoe Trails website, [www.alabamacanoetrails.com](http://www.alabamacanoetrails.com).

In addition to the Perdido River Canoe Trail, the Perdido River WMA Hiking Trail is being constructed through a partnership between the Alabama State Lands Division and the Alabama Hiking Trail Society. The trail is blazed in yellow and is a mixture of WMA roads and newly constructed path that follows the river for most of the hike. For more information about the hiking trail, visit [www.hikealabama.org](http://www.hikealabama.org).

Alabama State Lands is a Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and performs a broad range of land management activities relating to state-owned land. Most lands managed by the Division are trust lands managed for a specific purpose.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources through four divisions: Marine Resources, State Parks, State Lands, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR, visit [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com).

## In the News

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### StoryCorps coming to Mobile

StoryCorps is a traveling recording studio with a mission: to record and archive the stories of people all around the country. Through a partnership with Alabama Public Radio, the folks at StoryCorps will be spending over a month in the Port City, documenting stories of Mobilians young and old. And you can participate.

StoryCorps is partnering with Alabama Public Radio to record, preserve, and share the stories of Mobile, Alabama, from February 9 – March 12, 2017. Appointments open to the public on Thursday, January 26th at 10 AM CST. Sign up to share your story on the link below.



[Mobile Stop: Mobile, AL](#)

Stories from people of all backgrounds and beliefs  
[STORYCORPS.ORG](http://STORYCORPS.ORG)

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### Industry Groups Emphasize Need for Long-Term Revenue Fix to Highway Trust Fund

A coalition of hundreds of state and national industry groups called on President Trump to include a dedicated, long-term revenue stream for the Highway Trust Fund in his upcoming infrastructure investment plan.

They also told Trump that while private investment can help finance more projects, it cannot replace the role of public funding through the trust fund.

The group – which included the National Association of Manufacturers, Associated General Contractors of America, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, U.S. Chamber of Commerce – [made its case in a Feb. 1 letter to the president](#) that the coalition also sent to members of Congress.

It was delivered the same day the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held [its first hearing this year on the nation's infrastructure needs](#), in what is expected to be a series of hearings to help the panel develop an investment proposal by early summer.

The signers told the president that "as a broad coalition representing a vast cross section of our economy, we all agree that our nation's infrastructure systems are insufficient to support American competitiveness. New investment is required to improve upon the stopgap efforts of the last decade."

Much of the letter dealt with the signers' view that Congress and the president need to include a long-term fix to the Highway Trust Fund,

which currently depends on large transfers of general revenues to cover a persistent gap between its dedicated excise tax receipts and authorized spending on highway, transit and multimodal projects.

Because of that revenue gap, before Congress passed a five-year surface transportation bill in 2015 it had gone through years of stopgap funding measures, which spread project planning uncertainty among state departments of transportation, transit agencies and others in the industry.

"An infrastructure initiative led by your administration," the letter said, "is a generational opportunity to end the cycle of uncertainty that has plagued America's infrastructure network, and usher in a new era of stability and improvements we so desperately need."

The coalition said improvements are needed to the full range of infrastructure and should include large projects "that make our businesses more competitive by reducing shipping, commuting, water and energy costs."

However, it said, "at the same time, your administration and Congress must restore solvency to the Highway Trust Fund to ensure that the federal government can maintain a state-of-the-art infrastructure system. This will require a commitment to a long-term, reliable, dedicated, user-based revenue source for the Highway Trust Fund and the effective surface transportation programs it supports."

The group said although recent surface transportation laws "greatly improved the effectiveness and efficiency" of the federal programs they cover, they did not fix the trust fund's long-term solvency beyond 2020. Unless the trust fund is fixed before then, they said, policymakers will have to either pass additional short-term stopgap measures to prop it up or find major budget offsets.

"Absent long-term stability for the Highway Trust Fund," they wrote, "many projects critical to the efficient movement of people and goods have the real potential to be backlogged or never built. Further, mounting deferred maintenance could cause current infrastructure to fall into an even greater state of disrepair."

The group said its signer believe the president's leadership "is necessary to pass a balanced infrastructure investment plan that will lift our nation's economy and improve our transportation network."

Noting that administration officials have talked about enticing more project spending by private investors to help finance the investments, the group said "it is critical that your infrastructure plan not only encourages greater participation from the private sector in infrastructure projects and reduces needless red tape, but also provides real revenue for the Highway Trust Fund that will help the users and beneficiaries of America's transportation and freight network. Private financing, while important and needed, cannot replace the role of public funding and federal leadership."

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### Trump Administration Budget Outlook

As with the last three presidents, a delay until April or May is expected in the release of President Trump's budget. The president is required to submit a budget to Congress the first Monday in February, but former President Obama released his first full budget in early May and former President Bill Clinton submitted his in early April. Some experts, however, believe the administration will forgo submitting a budget outline in late February. Trump is still awaiting confirmation of the director of the Office of Management and Budget. White House officials are reportedly working on an executive order related to the budget submission, but few details are available.

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### GOP Senator Floats New Highway Funding Bill

Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE), chair of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee's surface transportation subcommittee, introduced a new idea to pay for highway and other transportation projects. Fischer's [Build USA Infrastructure Act](#), unveiled this week, would temporarily divert freight cargo and passenger revenue from Customs and Border Patrol to the Highway Trust Fund. The result would be \$21.4 billion annually for five years into the HTF, but is temporary and restricted to use only on road projects. It remains unclear how President Trump and his team will proceed on infrastructure, and whether he plans to address the broader issue of long-term highway funding. The administration is expected to take the lead on an infrastructure package and work with GOP lawmakers to shape it.

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The [Mardi Gras Eco-Team Volunteer Registration](#) is now live! The Mardi Gras Eco-Team is in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of recycling and needs your help to create a cleaner, greener carnival atmosphere! Volunteers are needed for the final four days of the Mardi Gras season, Saturday, February 25 through Tuesday, February 28, and a variety of shift options are available. Please [sign up](#) to be a part of this fun and festive volunteer opportunity.

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### Save the Date!

Crepe Myrtle Trail Ride 2017  
April 1 - Arlington Park  
[www.crepemyrtleride.com](http://www.crepemyrtleride.com)

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## Transportation Research

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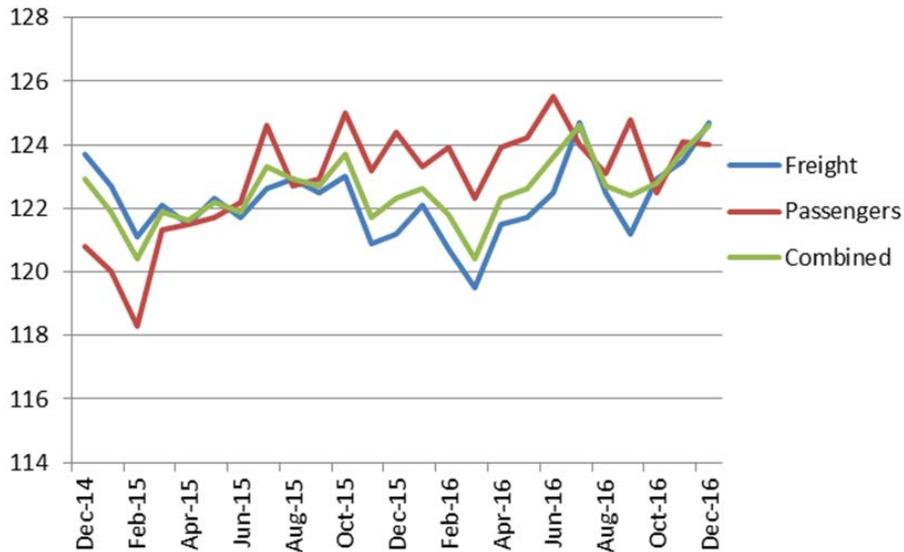
### Freight Shipments Rebounded in 2016 from 2015

*Posted by US DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics*

On Wednesday, the final 2016 [Transportation Services Index](#) (TSI) from the [Bureau of Transportation Statistics](#) (BTS) showed activity in the for-hire freight sector at a [record high](#) in December. The December peak – equal to the all-time high in July – capped a rebound in 2016 freight activity from a 2015 decline that left the measure of freight shipments slightly above the December 2014 level.

The index has climbed 31.7 percent since the low point of the recession in April 2009, but it rose only 0.8 percent in the two-year period since the end of 2014. That period couples a 2.0 percent loss in 2015 with a 2.9 percent gain in 2016. During 2016, the index peaked in both July and December.

**Transportation Services Index Dec 2014-Dec 2016**  
(Seasonally Adjusted, Year 2000 Average = 100)



BTS research shows that changes in the TSI occur before changes in the economy, making the TSI useful for predicting economic trends.

In 2016 the fastest growing freight mode was rail intermodal which grew by 6.9 percent, but there were increases in all other freight modes – for-hire trucking, other railroad freight services, inland waterways, pipeline and air freight.

The 2016 increases were a rebound from 2015 when all modes decreased except for truck and pipeline, with rail carloads decreasing the most – by more than 15 percent. For the two years combined, rail carloads and water declined while all other modes rose. Pipeline was the fastest growing mode, increasing by 7.9 percent.

During 2016, the Freight TSI rose in eight out of 12 months. The month with the fastest growth was July 2016 when Freight TSI grew by 1.8 percent. This growth contrasted with 2015, when Freight TSI declined by 2.0 percent, decreasing in six out of 12 months.

During the past 13 years, the TSI has shown the monthly changes in transportation activity in the for-hire freight and passenger sectors. Each index is an economically weighted, seasonally adjusted, and includes a combination of different modes of for-hire transportation.

Unlike the freight index, the passenger index rose 3.0 percent in 2015 and then declined by 0.3 percent in 2016, resulting in two-year rise of 2.6 percent. The passenger index rose in six months and fell in six months of 2016. The passenger index consists of local transit, intercity passenger rail, and passenger air transportation.

A combined index, designed to look at the entire for-hire transportation sector, showed a pattern closer to the freight index, growing by 1.9 percent in 2016, and increasing in eight months. It declined by 0.5 percent in 2015, decreasing in seven months.

For a webinar on the TSI, see [Past Webinars](#)<sup>[external link]</sup>. For a video explanation of the TSI, see [Overview of the Transportation Services Index](#). A BTS report explaining the TSI, [Transportation Services Index and the Economy](#), is available for download. See [Seasonally-Adjusted Transportation Data](#) for numbers for individual modes. TSI includes data from 2000 to the present.

### Intermodal Freight Connectors – Issues and Needs

February 15, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Intermodal connectors are key components of the U.S. roadway network, and are critical for enabling freight shipments handled by major non-highway based freight facilities (i.e. intermodal rail yards, marine ports, large commercial airports, etc.) to be transferred to or from trucks. These connectors are critical in enhancing the efficiency of the first and last mile truck shipments to or from intermodal freight facilities. However, intermodal connectors often do not receive the funding needed to maintain or improve their physical condition, or in some cases enhance their connectivity between intermodal freight facilities and the rest of the U.S. roadway network. [This webinar](#) will feature a discussion about a nearly completed national-level freight intermodal connector study, and regional coordination efforts between public sector agencies and intermodal facility owners to monitor and address intermodal connector needs.

### BTS Releases Transportation Statistics Annual Report 2016

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) released the [Transportation Statistics Annual Report 2016](#) (TSAR). The [21st edition](#) of this congressionally-mandated report presents key transportation indicators along with an overview of the transportation system. It also includes data and statistics on passenger travel, freight movement, transportation and the economy,

system reliability, safety, energy use and environmental impacts. In addition, the report focuses on closing data gaps and improving the ways in which transportation statistics are collected, compiled, analyzed, and published. TSAR is a report of the BTS director to the President and Congress. The complete report or individual sections may be [downloaded directly](#) from the [BTS website](#). Printed copies are also available upon request via e-mail through [orders@bts.gov](mailto:orders@bts.gov). Email links icon or online through the [BTS Bookstore](#).

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  - 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.