



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, February 23rd, 2018

Volume 25, Number 8

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A proposed bill ties [internet infrastructure](#) to highway projects, and some money is added to the ALDOT by the Alabama Senate; please see *Legislative Updates*. There are some new rail grants in this week's *Funding Opportunities*. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has completed introductory videos for each department, and you can check out the Transportation Department's video under Mobile MPO Updates, and <https://mobilempo.org/>. This week's *Just For Fun* is Music to Your Ears, and *In The News* SR 158 is on the move.

Finally, congratulations to our very own **Rep. Margie Wilcox** for being appointed to the [Alabama Toll Road, Bridge, and Tunnel Authority](#).

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

NEW SARPC Transportation Video



[HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

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

MOBILE MPO met last week

Safety Performance Measures

The Mobile MPO, and the Eastern Shore MPO, will have to adopt Safety Performance Measures by February 27th, 2018. The Alabama Department of Transportation has already developed performance measures for the State of Alabama, and the MPO has the option of supporting the state's Safety Performance Measures or adopting their own. The performance measures are baselines and targets for:

- Number of Fatalities
- Fatality rate (VMT)
- Number of Serious Injuries
- Serious Injury rate (VMT)
- Number of Bicycle/Pedestrian injuries

All of the federally funded transportation projects must work towards the goals set by the MPO, and the State of Alabama. At the TCC/CAC meeting, these were discussed and recommended for adoption at Wednesday's meeting. Also, project 100060153 (CN) SR-158 Extension from 0.5 Mile East of Glenwood Road to West of Lott Road (SR-217). Grade Drain, Base, Pave has a new cost estimate from \$17,721,177 to \$30,005,229 that required a MPO resolution. This cost estimate increase is a result of creative shifting of federal funds within ALDOT.

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project Announces Shortlist

MOBILE, AL. – On Tuesday, the Alabama Department of Transportation announced the shortlist of three project teams to respond to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Alabama Department of Transportation's (ALDOT) Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project, which will provide relief to one of the region's most congested areas.

In November 2017, four teams responded to a request to provide ALDOT with Submittals of Qualifications (SOQ). Upon review of the SOQs, the shortlisted teams moving forward in the RFP process are:

I-10 Mobility Partners

- Equity Members: Cintra and Meridiam
- Lead Engineering Firm: Parsons
- Lead Contractor: Ferrovial Argoman and Parsons
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: Cintra and Meridiam

Gulf Coast Connectors

- Equity Members: ACS, Macquarie, Hochtief, and John Laing
- Lead Engineering Firm: T.Y. LIN International
- Lead Contractor: Dragados, Lane Construction, and Flatiron
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: Gulf Coast Connectors

Mobile River Bridge Group

- Equity Members: InfraRed Capital Partners, Shikun & Binui, Astaldi, and Southland Holdings
- Lead Engineering Firm: Figg Bridge Engineers
- Lead Contractor: A Joint Venture of Astaldi, Johnson Bros, and Shikun & Binui
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: InfraRed Capital Partners (InfraRed Infrastructure V), Astaldi, and Southland Holdings

The project will be completed with the use of a Public-Private Partnership (P3), which is a way to use public and private funds to accelerate the delivery of the project. P3 financing allows ALDOT to utilize private sector technical, management and additional financial resources to help achieve the project's objectives.

The selected team will not only build the bridge but also take over the maintenance of the project. Therefore, the team will be expected to enter into a 55-year contract. The funding of this project will include revenues generated from all electronic tolling, a public subsidy and equity from the concessionaire.

The three teams – deemed qualified after a thorough technical and financial capability review that included past project experience – will submit proposals for the design, build, finance, operations and maintenance of the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway. Proposals will be due this fall, with the selected team expected to be chosen by the end of the year.

The project will be built under the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

About the Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority:

The powers of the Authority include the ability to give consent and approval for ALDOT to build toll road, bridge or tunnel projects in places that are deemed desirable, practicable, and economically feasible.

Members:

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Director of Transportation
- Director of Finance
- Chair of the House Government Appropriations Committee
- Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee
- Two At-Large Members

About the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

This critically important, high-priority transportation project will involve constructing a new six-lane bridge across the Mobile River to increase Interstate 10's capacity and replace the existing four-lane Bayway with an eight-lane facility at an elevation above the 100 year storm surge event to reduce traffic headaches for thousands of commuters each day by saving motorists time.

The Wallace Tunnel currently averages 75,000 vehicles per day, reaching up to 100,000 vehicles during the peak tourism season. With almost double the daily traffic originally anticipated for the crossing, heavy congestions and longer travel times impact motorists, businesses, and the quality of life in the region. ALDOT expects this project to:

- **Reduce travel time between Mobile and Spanish Fort/Daphne.**

- Increase reliability in travel times and accessibility to jobs, educational facilities, medical services, and recreational activities.
- Facilitate access to/from major industries and freight destinations in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and provide hazardous material vehicles a direct route away from the downtown district.
- Take all efforts to preserve and protect the Mobile Bay so that generations to come can enjoy the view and natural beauty from the bridge.

Hyperlinks within the advisory:

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project: <http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally and economically sound transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit www.dot.state.al.us.

US 45 Feasibility Study

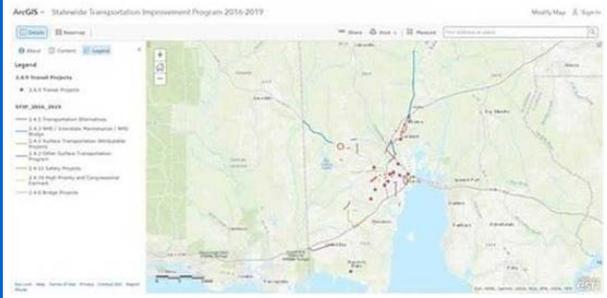
Last week, Volkert was given the Notice To Proceed on the *US 45 Feasibility Study*. The study will have its own web site and will begin shortly as the kick off meeting has yet to be set. Public participation is important for this project, so we expect our stakeholders to be heavily involved. We will keep you posted with the progress of the Study.

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](#)



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

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 : 100060153 (CN)
Federal aid number : NHF 0158 (508)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : SR-158 EXTENSION FROM 0.5 MILE EAST OF GLENWOOD ROAD TO WEST OF LOTT ROAD (SR-217). GRADE DRAIN, BASE, PAVE, AND BRIDGE (EB COLLINS CREEK, EB MCCRARY ROAD, AND EB COLLINS CREEK TRIBUTARY)
Old Target start date : May 25, 2018
New Target start date : July 27, 2018

Project : 100060154 (CN)
Federal aid number : NHF 0158 (505)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : SR-158 EXTENSION LOTT ROAD OVERPASS AND JUG HANDLE. GRADE, DRAIN, BASE, PAVE, AND BRIDGE (EB SEABURY CREEK TRIBUTARY AND PARTIAL LOTT ROAD)
Old Target start date : June 29, 2018
New Target start date : August 31, 2018

Project : 100043178 (UT)
Federal aid number : DBMB-STPMB 7550 (600)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) ADD LANES FROM ATHEY RD TO FORREST HILL DRIVE
Old Target start date : March 01, 2018
New Target start date : August 01, 2018

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 : \$2,269,542.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$2,530,833.15

Projects Within Region Let February 23rd, 2018

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Sowell Road from south of the junction of Rankin Street to the intersection of Gordon Lane in Brewton. Length 1.135 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$917,893 to \$1,121,869 .

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MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Cable Guiderail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on I-10 from west of the CR-39 (McDonald Road) Interchange to the CR-59 (Carol Plantation Road) Underpass. Length 4.569 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$7,096,527 to \$8,673,534

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-59 from the junction of Windbigler Drive north of Foley to the junction of CR-54 in Robertsdale. Length 9.062 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$3,061,371 to \$3,741,676 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Sen. Cory Gardner's bill aids rural broadband development

Bill ties internet infrastructure to highway projects

By Andrew Eversden Herald Staff Writer

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2018 4:19 PM

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of senators, including Cory Gardner, introduced a bill that would expand broadband in rural areas where the internet access is either slow or inaccessible.

Gardner, R-Colo., joined Sens. Steve Daines, R-Mont., Kristen Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., as sponsors of the “Streamlining and Investing in Broadband Infrastructure Act,” which cuts regulation for companies and local governments trying to expand broadband in rural areas.

The bill requires broadband infrastructure technology be included in federal transportation projects in rural areas, such as the construction of new highways and lane additions. It requires that when broadband technology is put in place it can accommodate multiple broadband providers so more people have access.

“Access to broadband is access to the modern economy,” Gardner said in a joint news release. “This bill would make federal construction projects more efficient by encouraging simultaneous construction of transportation and broadband infrastructure.”

The bill pushes broadband policy known as “dig once,” in which construction workers lay fiber broadband conduits alongside road repairs, avoiding the need to dig up a road a second time.

Coordinating the expansion of broadband conduits on federal transportation projects would reduce the cost of laying cable and conduits by 90 percent because a second excavation wouldn’t be required, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

A similar program is in place with the Colorado Department of Transportation on state transportation projects in Southwest Colorado, said Miriam Gillow-Wiles, executive director of the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments. The challenge with that setup, she said, is expanding broadband access along state highways that cross into another state.

“In practice, if we just work with CDOT to put infrastructure along highways in Colorado that doesn’t necessarily solve an issue when it crosses into another state,” she said.

The bill also includes language encouraging the expansion of broadband on federal lands, an issue Gardner has supported. This legislation helps companies, states and local governments by instructing federal agencies to establish a standard fee for these groups to build or maintain broadband infrastructure on the federal agency’s property.

In Colorado, many people in rural areas either have insufficient access or no access to broadband. According to the Federal Communications Commission, sufficient broadband access is minimum download speed of 25 megabytes per second and minimum upload speeds of 3 mbps. The FCC’s 2016 broadband report showed 39 percent of rural Americans lacked access to sufficient Internet speeds. Another FCC report shows that 39 percent of the La Plata County population isn’t served by a provider that offers sufficient broadband access. In Montezuma County, 37 percent of the population doesn’t have sufficient internet access.

Lack of access to sufficient broadband threatens the economic strength of La Plata County, with more than 2,300 home-based workers, according to the La Plata County Economic Development Alliance.

“(The effect) is not just for businesses,” Gillow-Wiles said. “You’ve got education and you’ve got health care.”

Federal funding in broadband expansion is imperative to establishing a rural broadband network that can support sufficient broadband speeds and access, Gillow-Wiles said.

“Across the board there is very little financial support for local government to develop broadband on their own,” Gillow-Wiles said. “Both the federal and state support goes toward businesses.”

Daines, Gardner and Klobuchar introduced a similar bill in 2015. It never received a vote. The continuous stalling of federal broadband expansion legislation hampers the ability of rural development groups like the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments to expand access because they can’t rely on local governments.

“Funding is hard to come by to develop (broadband) infrastructure if you’re a state or local government,” Gillow-Wiles said.

Senate adds more money for prisons, passes General Fund

And \$4.5 million for the Department of Transportation for road projects

Updated Feb 20; Posted Feb 20



(Julie Bennett/jbennett@al.com)
mcason@al.com

The Alabama Senate voted to add \$4.7 million to the state budget today to start a program to help state prisoners reenter society at a vacant private prison in Perry County.

That would expand a program that operates at a private facility in Columbiana. Officials say inmates who receive the therapeutic training

are less likely to return to prison after their release.

The change became the main topic of debate today before the Senate voted 26-2 to [pass a budget](#) that calls for spending \$2 billion from the General Fund, about \$165 million more than this year.

Overall, the budget would boost funding for Alabama's troubled prison system by about \$56 million, to \$472 million next year.

Sen. Trip Pittman, R-Montrose, chairman of the Senate budget committee, said he expects a \$30 million supplement to this year's prison budget to also pass, which would give the Department of Correction a total boost of about \$86 million over two years.

DOC Commissioner Jeff Dunn has said the additional money will be mainly used to improve mental health care and health care for inmates and to hire more correctional officers.

A federal judge ruled last year that the state's mental health care for prisoners failed to meet constitutional standards. The DOC has proposed roughly doubling its mental health staff in response. The case is ongoing.

The Senate did not vote today on a bill that would give state employees a 3 percent cost of living increase.

Pittman said the vote was delayed because of negotiations about whether to add a cost of living adjustment for state retirees.

The pay raise bill has appeared to have broad support and was included in Gov. Kay Ivey's budget plan.

The Senate's approval of the budget sends it to the House.

Sen. Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, proposed the amendment to add the funding for the Perry County prison program. The prison is in his district.

Singleton said he expects the House to keep the Perry County program in the budget because he said the one in Columbiana has worked.

"People see that this makes sense," Singleton said. "They see that this is something that we need to be doing and we believe in that program up there. This is an evidence-based program that is showing us results."

After the Senate approved Singleton's amendment, it approved another by Pittman adding \$4.5 million for the Department of Transportation for road projects.

Pittman said the \$4.5 million would be good for economic development and job creation.

Even with the additions today, Pittman said projected revenues should cover the expenditures. The budget is for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

Local officials warn Congress against bigger trucks

BY MALLORY SHELBOURNE - 02/22/18 01:38 PM EST

Local officials are urging members of Congress to steer clear of any provisions that would allow longer or heavier trucks to operate on roads.

A group of 1,000 local leaders, including current mayors and county officials, argued in a letter to lawmakers that allowing heavier or longer trucks on roads will destroy infrastructure that their governments cannot afford to repair. "Allowing heavier and longer trucks will most certainly set us back in our efforts," the letter reads.

"Longer and heavier trucks would cause significantly more damage to our transportation infrastructure, costing us billions of dollars that local government budgets simply cannot afford, compromising the very routes that American motorists use every day," the leaders add.

The push from local officials comes as Congress aims to pass an omnibus spending bill by March 23. The letter was distributed to lawmakers' offices on Thursday.

Safety advocates have long argued that larger, heavier trucks are a danger and take a toll on roads and bridges. But companies like FedEx have pushed to increase the twin tractor-trailer length from the current 28-foot standard to 33 feet. The issue has been the subject of debate within the trucking industry. The Truckload Carriers Association, which represents members of the freight industry, is adamantly opposed to any legislation backing a 33-foot standard, arguing it would increase the costs for truckers who would need to update their fleets.

Meanwhile, a majority of Americans oppose bigger, heavier trucks. The Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT) in a poll released last month found that a majority of respondents, 79 percent, oppose "longer and heavier trucks" operating on the road.

"One issue often overlooked during these bigger-truck discussions is that truck traffic does not load or unload on the Interstate — they end up on local roads, and those roads take a beating," CABT communications director Shane Reese said in a statement about the letter to lawmakers.

"We're asking Congress to hear the concerns of community leaders and infrastructure experts across the country, and to oppose any bigger truck proposals."

The letter also comes after President Trump unveiled an infrastructure plan that would rely on state and local governments, in addition to

the private sector, to foot much of the bill for a rebuilding effort. Democrats have denounced the administration's plan, arguing that cash-strapped localities cannot afford to fund the projects to overhaul American public works.

The Mississippi Transportation Commissioner, who signed the letter, said the budgets for local governments are already "on life support."

"We just don't have the revenue coming in to fund our infrastructure, and it's been that way for a long time," Dick Hall said in a statement. "Bigger trucks would only further damage our infrastructure system and impact safe driving conditions."

[At Long Last, Administration Releases \\$200 Billion Infrastructure Package](#)

Last Monday, the White House released its long-anticipated "[infrastructure package](#)." The *Legislative Outline for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America* would provide funding for an array of infrastructure projects – transportation, water, wastewater, Superfund, brownfields, and more. Though many of the headlines indicate that the package is worth \$1.5 trillion, the administration actually calls for a far more modest \$200 billion investment; state, local, and private sources would be expected to contribute the remaining \$1.3 trillion. The outline also contains detailed streamlining provisions to reduce the amount of time it takes projects to go through the federal approval process and creating a process where just one federal agency would take the lead on a project's review. Response to the release was mostly underwhelming.

The outline proposes a total federal funding level of \$200 billion. By requiring significant local and state shares and encouraging private investment through expansion of existing financing mechanisms, the administration projects the resulting total infrastructure investment would be \$1.5 trillion. Despite the call from a wide variety of organizations, associations, and others, the bill does not specifically contain any funding to help preserve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund, which will run short of funding starting sometime in 2020. Nor does the proposal contain a specific offset for the administration's proposed funding.

The proposed funding is distributed through several new programs:

- \$100 billion for the Infrastructure Incentives Program, with funding distributed by USDOT, EPA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Local and state share of funding would be at least 80%, with additional credit given to projects with a higher non-federal share and from state or local funding sources that were raised most recently.
- \$50 billion for the Rural Infrastructure Project, \$40 billion of which would be distributed as block grants by formula to states based on total mileage of rural roads and rural population. The remaining \$10 billion would fund "rural performance grants" for states that have prepared comprehensive reports of rural infrastructure.
- \$20 billion for Transformative Projects Fund to support innovative projects that would otherwise have a hard time attracting private capital. Would support three tracks of projects: demonstration projects (30% federal share), planning (50% federal share), and capital construction (80% federal share).
- \$20 billion for Infrastructure Financing Programs, including \$14B for existing financing programs (TIFIA, WIFIA, RRIF) and \$6B for expansion of PABs.
- \$10 billion for Federal Capital Financing Fund, a funding mechanism to address current issues with real property acquisition by federal agencies.
- Establishes the Interior Maintenance Fund, up to \$18 billion to pay for capital and maintenance needs of public lands infrastructure. Funding is not included in \$200 billion total because it is drawn from additional revenues from mineral and energy development on federal lands and waters.

Other interesting policy changes proposed include:

- Removing restrictions on tolling existing Interstates.
- Raising the cost threshold for designation of "major project" from \$500 million to \$1 billion.
- Allowing utility relocation in advance of NEPA review completion.
- Requires use of "value capture" for transit projects under New Starts.
- Applying FAST Act streamlining provisions to rail projects.
- Additional provisions regarding water infrastructure, VA facilities, brownfields rehabilitation, and Superfund cleanup.
- An extensive array of streamlining provisions intended to achieve the administration's goal of reducing the length of time it takes for federal agencies to review and approve infrastructure projects, with a goal of two years.

The full text can be found [HERE](#).

What does it mean for Alabama? [HERE](#)

Funding Opportunities

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant programs

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (FY 2017)

CRISI program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT, June 21, 2018*.

More information on FRA's CRISI website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1079>

Overview: This program will fund projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of passenger and freight rail. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11301 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24407. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$65,232,400

Restoration and Enhancement Grants Program (FY 2017)

REG program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT May 22, 2018*.
More information on FRA's REG website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1081>

Overview: This program will fund operating assistance grants for initiating, restoring, or enhancing intercity rail passenger transportation. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11303 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. No. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24408. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$4,796,500

Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#).

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

Some people say that hearing a car engine purr, is music to their ears. Then again, other people just mix things up completely; like Kevin's fiddle...



This fiddle was stripped to white wood, then **French polished with asphalt**, shellac, and high proof alcohol; it's the only asphalt fiddle in the world. So just For Fun, let's mix music- with transportation-



[Like a CAR ALARM on a fiddle...](#)



[The Trombone Motor Bike](#)



[Making the CAR the instrument \(crazy kids\)](#)



[This guy that creates car horn orchestras](#) and [HERE](#)

Talk about a *CRASHENDO*, geez....

In the News

After Nearly a Decade, U.S.-98, SR-158 Extension Resumes

THU FEBRUARY 22, 2018 - MIDWEST EDITION #4

CINDY RILEY – CEG CORRESPONDENT

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After almost a decade of inactivity, construction of the U.S.-98 and SR-158 extension projects in Mobile County, Ala., has resumed, beginning with work on the Big Creek Bridge. (Volkert photo)



After almost a decade of inactivity, construction of the U.S.-98 and SR-158 extension projects in Mobile County, Ala., has resumed, beginning with work on the Big Creek Bridge. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is overseeing the current effort, which

is expected to be completed by fall 2018.

"During construction of the original U.S.-98 project, ALDOT ran into some environmental issues that resulted in the need to include some redesign in the future projects," said Don Powell, P.E., ALDOT operations engineer, Mobile area. "Some areas where the redesign was needed resulted in additional right-of-way to be purchased. All of that takes time."

The project scope includes building the foundation and performing the earthwork for four lanes, paving two lanes and creating interchanges. ALDOT will pursue the ultimate divided four-lane design with fully functional freeway type interchanges, as funding is made available. The ongoing bridge extension work, part of a lawsuit settlement, is needed because Big Creek is the major tributary to Big Creek Lake, which is the Mobile drinking water supply.



"Extending the bridge within the Big Creek watershed will greatly limit the amount of earthwork required to construct the road," said Powell. "The bridge extension project was the first project, because it was the one set of plans that were already complete and ready to be let to construction."

According to Brian Aaron, ALDOT assistant region engineer for the southwest area, "The main reason for the time between projects was a lack of dedicated funding. Thanks to the current BP settlement, the Alabama legislature earmarked approximately \$40 million to go specifically to this route. In turn, ALDOT officials agreed to dedicate some additional federal funding to add to this earmark amount. This new BP funding enabled ALDOT to start construction again."

Like all federally funded projects, ALDOT is required to follow federal and state regulations on the project.

"The largest and most time-consuming is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for federal projects, which ensures that projects are addressing all of the environmental issues, and how to minimize the impacts with the proposed project," said Aaron. "This involves considering different alignments for the project, different wetland impacts, endangered species, etc. The preliminary engineering phase for the new realignment began in 1998, and took about four years to complete the NEPA evaluation. Right-of-way purchasing for the main four-lane highway began in 2003, and still continues today for several interchanges along the route."

The estimated cost for all seven projects to complete two lanes is \$110 million. The funding is a combination of the BP settlement, federal and state dollars. An additional \$80 million is needed to complete the remaining two lanes, bridges and interchanges, so that a new four-lane highway could exist from the state line to Schillinger Road.

The work now taking place includes adding an additional 1,400 linear ft. of bridge on U.S.-98 over Big Creek. The structure will be equipped with a runoff containment system and tall barrier rail for water quality and watershed protection purposes. The project was awarded to Tanner Inc. from Laurel, Miss., with Volkert serving as the construction manager.

The Big Creek Bridge extension, among the seven projects required to complete the two-lane facility from the Mississippi State Line to Schillinger Road, is only the beginning. The second section, beginning east of Lott Road to Schillinger Road, is scheduled to get underway in early 2018. ALDOT anticipates construction of the two-lane route to be completed by 2023.

Future projects to complete the route will be constructed as six separate undertakings. ALDOT officials don't envision the current schedule changing, but acknowledge a lot can happen over the course of five years. Construction will be done in phases, as each separate project is let. Aaron noted it's easier to fund less expensive projects over the course of several years than to support one or two much costlier projects over a two-year period.

"The projects are scheduled over the next several years, such that those that can be completed and open to traffic will function immediately," said Aaron. "Those that cannot will be completed around the same time to correspond with the completion of the entire route."

Even though the extension project has been on hold indefinitely, Powell said there haven't been any major issues.

"It's not difficult to resume work on projects that have been dormant for this long. It has actually been easy, because these projects are really needed, and the community is behind the work and is excited that it has begun.

"The biggest challenge for this project would be working in and around wetland areas with the Mobile drinking water watershed. That's why the project was designed to limit land disturbance as much as possible."

Current work is moving along at a steady pace, with no snags in construction.

"The contractor has driven 75 percent of the piling, and is currently adding inserts to his boom to increase the length, so he can handle the longer piling," said Joey Fresolone, Volkert project manager.

The first of the concrete bent caps was set to be poured in mid-January, and ALDOT expects to pour two to three a week. Another crew made plans to mobilize in an effort to begin setting girders and placing the sway bracing on the piling.

Work began on the bridge extension project in mid-September 2017. The estimated completion date is December 1, 2018.

"Things are going well," said Fresolone. "The bridge extension project is on schedule."

The clearing operations and removal of previously placed fill material have already been completed. The pile driving is ongoing, and are 75 percent complete. The work on the bridge substructure (bent caps) has just recently begun. Weather has already been a factor.

"Hurricane Irma caused delays, due to the extremely heavy evacuation traffic on existing U.S.-98, which delayed the delivery of material and equipment," said Fresolone. "The current cold weather has slowed the placement of concrete due to temperature requirements having to reach 40 degrees prior to making a pour."

Key tasks yet to be carried out include the completion of the pile installation and the pouring of 30 bent caps and 1,800 yds. of bridge deck concrete. Crews also must place 8,000 ft. of girders and construct and install the bridge deck containment system.

The condition of the job site prior to work getting underway was wooded and wet. In order to add an additional 1,400 linear ft. of bridge on U.S.-98 over Big Creek, a variety of heavy equipment is required, including large cranes with long boom lengths capable of driving 85-ft. piles with a reach of approximately 75 ft. Competent personnel, cooperative contractors and timely decision making also are considered crucial during the construction process.

Because the bridge will be equipped with a runoff containment system and tall barrier rail for water quality and watershed protection purposes, attention to detail is critical.

"Since Big Creek is the major contributor to the Mobile drinking water supply, the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS) was concerned about possible crashes or spills that could affect Big Creek. The containment system is in place to contain any spills, and the tall barrier rails are in place to keep vehicles on the bridge," said Fresolone.

The existing bridge is 366-ft. long. The extension is 1,350-ft. long, and together the bridge will span 1716 ft. The bridge extension will consist of 30, in total, 45-ft. simple spans. The sub-structure will consist of 29 pile bents, and two abutments. Each pile bent will be constructed using six 14x73 H-piles that range from 70 to 90 ft. long. The top half of the piling is required to be galvanized to help prevent rust. There are 7,973 ft. of AASHTO Type I girders, with six 43-ft., 9-in. girders being placed per span.

The decks will consist of 45-ft. simple spans, making up four 270-ft. and two 135-ft. continuous decks. All joints will be sealed to ensure all drainage is placed in the bridge drainage containment system. The barrier rail is 3 ft., 9 in., compared to the normal rail of 2 ft. and 8 in. This will help ensure vehicles involved in crashes do not leave the bridge. The bridge ranges from 10 to 24 ft. in height.

Currently, there are 15 employees working for the contractor, with four Volkert employees inspecting the progress. Crews typically work 10 to 11 hour work days. As for the schedule, the contract has used 21 percent of the 240 days, with 26 percent of the work being completed, to date.

Approximately 3,500 cu. yds. of material has been removed during construction. The material was placed on the previous project, to bring the area under the proposed bridge extension back to its natural state.

Main materials needed will include 490,000 lbs. of steel reinforcement, 13,500 ft. of piling, 2,100 cu. yds. of concrete, 50,000 lbs. of structural steel and 7,973 ft. of type-1 girders. All items are delivered to the job site by truck.

Heavy equipment required during construction includes two cranes for the bridge work and two man lifts to access work areas. Two excavators also are required to remove the fill and move the crane mats. A D-30 APE pile hammer to drive piles is on site as well, along with a small dozer to dress disturbed areas. Miscellaneous equipment includes pickups, welding machines, air compressors and hand tools.

Numerous safety precautions have been taken during construction, with the contractor providing effective working platforms with fall protection for employees and the inspector. Because the project is new alignment, there will be no impact on traffic.

As for the most delicate part of the bridge extension project, Fresolone said the bridge super structure and bridge drainage system will take a great deal of time.

"The bridge decks will require all of the drainage system pipe hangers and drains to be placed and secured prior to concrete being poured. The plans are very detailed, with very little tolerance of error," said Fresolone.

As part of its commitment to keep the public more involved and better informed, ALDOT created a community outreach group for the U.S.-98 project. Private citizens volunteered to work with officials to ensure that the project was headed in the right direction. Participants provide feedback to plans, offer alternatives, ask questions and keep the community updated. The group was recommended by an independent panel that included members from Mobile County Government, Fish and Wildlife and the Chamber of Commerce.

For Powell and the other team members involved, resuming work on the languishing project is extremely significant. Powell is looking forward to the continued progress.

"It's something ALDOT has been working on now for two decades. The route is very important in relation to tourism travel, freight travel in and through the state, as well as, and more important, making the U.S.-98 route safer for the traveling public and community. It is very rewarding to see these projects finally moving forward, and getting the funding boost it needed to keep it advancing."

White House economist says gas tax not designed for modern era

By S.A. Miller - The Washington Times - Thursday, February 22, 2018

The White House's top economist Thursday pushed back against President Trump's idea of raising the federal gasoline tax to help pay for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan, calling the levy an outdated approach.

Kevin Hassett, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said the gas tax that currently finances highway projects simply isn't designed for the 21st century.

"Suppose that everyone in this room and all of society had an electric car," he told reporters at the White House. "If we are all driving around in Teslas who is going to pay to fix the pot holes because there is no one using gasoline any more."

Mr. Trump reportedly endorsed a 25-cent increase to the gas tax during a closed-door meeting on infrastructure.

A White House official wouldn't confirm it but said the idea had "pros and cons."

The federal gas tax, currently 18.4 cents a gallon for gasoline and 24.4 cents for diesel, has not increased since 1993.

The idea was also slammed by low-tax crusader Grover Norquist, who championed the tax cuts that Mr. Trump signed into law in December.

"A gasoline tax would claw back as much as 60 percent of the benefits from the Trump tax cuts," he said. "Every second day or every third day [when filling up your gas tank] you'd be reminded you were screwed."

Mr. Hassett stressed that Mr. Trump wasn't singularly focused on the gas tax, saying the president was perusing a long menu of methods to finance a massive program to rebuild America's highways, bridges, airports and inland waterways.

"He's basically instructed everybody to think creatively about how we are we going to finance that to make sure that the legislation becomes law and all of the possible tools are on the table," he said.

Mr. Trump has been casting about in search of a means to pay for the infrastructure plan.

His proposal is to use \$200 billion in federal spending over 10 years, coupled with cutting the federal red tape that slows project and innovative financing options, to leverage a total investment of \$1.5 trillion from state and local governments.

The infrastructure plan was a prominent campaign promise from Mr. Trump in 2016 campaign and it is near the top of his agenda for his second year in the White House.

Capitol Hill Democrats have been cool to the proposal. They prefer direct federal spending of at least \$1 trillion.

They also accuse the president of trying to shift the burden of paying for infrastructure to cash-strapped state and local governments.

Some of the other ideas being floated include user fees imposed by states, such as tolls and high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, in which motorists pay to use a less congested lane of highway.

The annual Economic Report of the President, which the council released Wednesday, highlighted a pilot program in Oregon for a tax motorists based on the number of miles they drive.

The Oregon program charges motorists who volunteer to participate in the program a 1.7 cents per mile for travel on roads and highways inside the state, with rebates or credits for state fuel taxes paid, according to White House officials.

"Though small, the program offers tangible evidence that a tax on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a promising alternative to relying on fuel taxes," said the report.

Mr. Norquist said user fees should be approached cautiously. He warned that the money collected is often diverted to projects other than the road or bridge where they are collected, effectively converting the fee into a tax.

"You really have to check and see if it is a disguised tax," Mr. Norquist said.

Here are the states that are fighting back against ELDs

Six states are taking a stand against ELDs.

By **Ashley**

February 20, 2018

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's electronic logging device (ELD) mandate has become one of the trucking industry's most controversial regulations — and several states are taking action to fight back against it.

Six States Working To Undermine Federal ELD Regulations

So far, at least six states have introduced legislation that would work to undermine the ELD Mandate that went into effect in December of 2017. These states are Tennessee, Missouri, Wyoming, Idaho, Alabama, and South Dakota.

Tennessee

In Tennessee, [lawmakers are at work advancing a bill](#) that would prevent the use of state funds for ELD regulation enforcement. The law was brought forth by [Rep. Dale Carr](#) and was assigned to the state's Transportation Subcommittee earlier this month.

Missouri

In Missouri, Rep. Mike Moon introduced [HB 2437](#), which would forbid "the implementation, enactment, promulgation, codification, or enforcement of any law, rule, or regulation that requires drivers of commercial motor vehicles to utilize electronic logging devices." The bill has not yet advanced to the House Calendar.

Wyoming

Wyoming lawmaker Wyatt Agar has introduced [SF 0092](#), which would work by "specifying that federal rules requiring electronic logging devices are not required under Wyoming law; preventing Wyoming officers from enforcing specified federal requirements." The bill has eighteen co-sponsors and has been referred to the Transportation Subcommittee.

Idaho

Idaho's Sen. Mark Harris has asked the FMCSA to permanently extend a 90 day exemption from ELD requirements for livestock haulers. In an [op-ed on the bill](#), Harris writes:

"Managing driving time for livestock haulers is crucial to getting livestock to their destination within a timely manner. Drivers often wait for hours before they can load and get on their way. This time spent waiting, uses up time they could be driving. The US Department of Transportation has given livestock haulers a 90-day exemption. We are finding out other independent owner operators and businesses that haul things besides livestock are also running into problems with the federal mandate. The cost alone can put a burden on a small trucking company. As a result, some of us in the Idaho Legislature are working on contacting the Federal Department of Transportation and the US Congress to get rid of the federal mandate. We will do all we can here in Idaho to help with this issue."

Alabama

Alabama's Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow [has asked the FMCSA for review of current ELD and Hours of Service Regulations](#) and for flexibility in regulations, particularly for truckers hauling agricultural products.

South Dakota

In South Dakota, [numerous lawmakers have called on the FMCSA](#) to reverse the ELD Mandate and to work with the trucking industry to come up with a reasonable solution for modifying existing regulations.

Transportation Research

NEW! AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications, 8th Edition

Check out this video for details about the new 8th edition of the *LRFD Bridge Design Specifications*, including information on the major updates that have been made to the Specifications since the 2014 7th edition.

For more information or to purchase a copy, visit the AASHTO Bookstore online at <https://bookstore.transportation.org>, and search by the item code, LRFD-8.



Bicycle Safety Survey

ALDOT is conducting a research project "Comprehensive Investigation of Bike Crash Causes, Patterns and Countermeasures in Alabama". Please help us share this link to participants (both drivers and bicyclists). This survey is being conducted by the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) on behalf of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The main objective of this survey is to identify the status of drivers' and bicyclists' understanding of cycling regulations and rules in Alabama. The survey results will help design the appropriate outreach programs to better educate both drivers and bicyclists.

https://uah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_exhrpcJAXEaijWl



Sign up today to attend the [2018 SDITE Annual Meeting](#) to be held in Mobile from April 8 - 11, 2018. Since our section is hosting, we need to have great representation from all our section members. The Early Bird Registration rate of \$350 ends soon.

[FHWA Publishes Guidance on TPM Travel Time Metric Data Reporting to HPMS](#)

The third performance measure regulation in the National Performance Management Measures requires state DOTs to submit performance metric and related data to the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) by June 15, 2018 and annually thereafter. The national travel time-based performance measures include the: Interstate Travel Time Reliability Measure, Non-Interstate NHS Travel Time Reliability Measure, Freight Reliability Measure, and CMAQ Peak Hour Excessive Delay Measure. FHWA released a document with information and guidance on complying with these requirements

[2018 USDOT Webinar Series: What's New in Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\) Deployment](#)

February 20, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET
March 6, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET
March 27, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

USDOT ITS Joint Program Office will host a new three-part webinar series highlighting the latest trends and developments in ITS deployment. To measure the deployment of ITS technology nationally, the USDOT's ITS Deployment Tracking Project surveys transportation agencies in the largest U.S. cities on a regular basis. The ITS Knowledge Resources Portal summarizes the benefits, costs, deployment levels, and lessons learned for ITS deployment and operations from over 20 years of ITS evaluation studies, research syntheses, handbooks, journal articles, and conference papers tracking the effectiveness of deployed ITS. The webinar series will provide an overview of these resources to support informed decision making on ITS investments, highlight recent additions to the survey, and solicit feedback from participants on how best to redesign the portal to improve its usability and value.

[BTS Releases Pocket Guide to Transportation Mobile App](#)

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has released a new dynamic mobile app for the [Pocket Guide to Transportation 2018](#) – a quick reference guide to transportation statistics. This popular guide provides the latest transportation statistics at your fingertips in mobile app and printed formats. It covers data on major trends, moving people and goods, system use and performance, the economy, safety, infrastructure, and the environment. [Download](#) the app now to access all the features of the classic Pocket Guide plus enhanced navigation, sharable graphics to social media and email, and dynamic data updates to highlight the most recent up-to-date statistics. The app is available on the App Store and on Google Play (keyword: BTS Pocket Guide). To access the *Pocket Guide*, go to [BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation](#) or text USDOT BTSPG to 468311. This publication can also be obtained by [ordering online](#), by contacting BTS by phone at 202-366-DATA or by e-mail at answers@dot.gov

For inquiries other than placing orders contact Dave Smallen: david.smallen@dot.gov or 202-366-5568.

[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.

[New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App](#)

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

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

[Transportation Dictionary](#)



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

Search Tips

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

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