



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

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The SARPC Transportation Planning Staff met with other Gulf Coast MPOs this week and the Mobile MPO has had a one-time \$500,000 increase in STP Attributable funds, and it's time once again to update the Mobile MPO's 3-C agreement (see MPO Updates). Transportation Secretary Foxx has released his exit memo, and he has appointed the first Executive Director of the Build America Bureau (see Legislative Updates). Take a look at Just for Fun for an innovative way to get cyclists and pedestrians across the Mobile River.

Stay warm and have a great weekend! And check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

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

www.mobilempo.org  check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

Gulf Coast MPO Collaboration Meeting

This week, a meeting was held that the Mobile MPO staff initiated termed the "Gulf Coast MPO Collaboration" meeting. Staff from the Gulfport/Biloxi MPO, the Mobile MPO, the Eastern Shore MPO, and The TPO's of West Florida all met and discussed commonalities and differences. The collaborative meeting was to let each other know what is going on in each region, and what our priorities are, like the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The meeting was very productive and will most likely become an annual event. There are certainly a lot of commonalities, but examples of the differences between how things are done in other states, is that both Florida and Mississippi MPOs have Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP) that are for every two years, instead of annually. That sounds nice... Florida TPO's seem to have more State influence into the STP Attributable projects, and Mississippi MPOs generally have TIP amendments only twice a year. Florida TPO's revisit their project priorities every year and Mississippi has several STP Attributable set asides for Bike/Ped, Safety, Transit, and Studies. The Mobile MPO has only funded large capacity type projects with its STP Attributable, until just recently at the last MPO meeting the Mobile MPO approved to have \$500,000 set aside for the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The Gulfport/Biloxi MPO does their own traffic counts, and the Florida TPOs are quite popular on social media (we have taken some good ideas from that). Also, public meetings are at held non-government facilities, and actually in the neighborhoods in Florida. We discussed freight planning and performance measures, and as the FAST ACT demands, all four MPOs will have both freight and performance measures in their future.

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. Please be on the lookout from notification from Mobile MPO staff.

Recent scheduling changes

The Mobile MPO has had a \$500,000 increase in the MPO STP Attributable funding carryover from 28,735,503 to 29,267,809, please see [HERE](#).

Also, the target start date or project engineers estimated amount has changed for the following:

Project : 100055881 (RW)
Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (602)
Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) FROM CR-70 (TANNER WILLIAMS RD) TO CR-31 (SCHILLINGER RD)
Old Target start date : March 01, 2017
New Target start date : June 01, 2017

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 9th 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 January 27, 2017

Mobile County

None at this time

Baldwin County

For constructing the Parking Lot Lighting Installation at the Mobile Bay Ferry Dock in Fort Morgan. Length 0.074 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$118,843 to \$145,252 .

Escambia County

None at this time

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Secretary Foxx's Exit Memo

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx released his [Cabinet Exit Memo](#) today, highlighting his time in office and record of progress. Foxx focuses on the advancements in technology, such as automated vehicles and connected infrastructure, and ways USDOT has assisted in their deployment through the Smart City Challenge and Federal Automated Vehicle Policy. He emphasizes the importance of safety and ways USDOT has improved aviation safety, including drone policy, with the Federal Aviation Administration. The Secretary closes with his vision for the future: calling for better funding, continued focus on technology advancement, and using transportation to address economic inequality.

Transportation in the New Administration

U.S. Transportation Secretary-designate Elaine Chao will have her confirmation hearing next Wednesday, January 11, with the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Chao's confirmation process is expected to go smoothly and without controversy – it is one of several hearings that day.

With less than two weeks before President-elect Trump takes office, attention is turning from appointments to what will be accomplished during the new administration's first 100 days. While Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package has received a lot of attention, [top lawmakers say](#) this will not be an immediate priority. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) indicated that Congress will figure out the pay-fors before writing a proposal. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) indicated some reluctance to the idea of a large infrastructure proposal. In a letter to President-elect Trump, Peter DeFazio (D-OR) [urged the President-elect](#) to make a "down payment" on his commitment to infrastructure by making the \$9 billion balance of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund immediately available to dredge ports and inland harbors.

Secretary Foxx announces the First Executive Director of the Build America Bureau

WASHINGTON - U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced that Martin Klepper will join the USDOT Build America Bureau (Bureau) as the initial executive director. The Bureau is a newly created entity within the USDOT that streamlines access to federal credit and grant opportunities while providing technical assistance to project planning, financing, delivery, and monitoring. The Bureau will also help state and local governments develop and finance public-private partnership transactions (P3's) for transportation facilities.

Klepper is a senior partner in the Energy and Infrastructure Projects Group at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP, where he is known for developing, financing, acquiring and selling transportation, energy, and other large infrastructure projects in the United States and abroad. Over his career, he has closed more than 100 major transactions totaling more than \$20 billion. Klepper has worked with both federal and state governments on energy and infrastructure financing matters, as well as with banks, underwriters, equity investors, multilateral lenders, and export credit agencies in various capacities.

"We are pleased to have someone with Martin's significant experience and expertise at the helm of the Bureau," said Secretary Foxx. "Under his leadership, the Bureau will be a driving force in financing transportation projects across the country."

The Build America Bureau combines the following DOT programs: the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF), the private activity bond (PAB) program, the Outreach and Project Development functions of the BATIC, and the Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program.

Since the beginning of the Build America series of initiatives in 2014, DOT's Credit Programs have closed nearly \$13 billion in financing for 24 projects with \$31 billion in total project costs.

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Funding Opportunities

Deadline Extended for Recreational Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund Pre-applications

Due to the threat of severe weather, the deadline for the submission of the Recreational Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund Pre-applications has been extended to [Noon on Tuesday, January 10, 2017](#). For further information contact Crystal Davis (334) 353 2630. www.adeca.alabama.gov

FHWA Soliciting INVEST Implementation Projects - Round 3

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is pleased to announce an applied research funding opportunity for transportation agencies to use the Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) to evaluate the sustainability of their projects and programs, identify areas for improvement, analyze options for improving sustainability, and document results.

The funding opportunity is available to State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and Federal land management agencies (FLMAs). Funding levels for applied research projects may vary depending on the depth and extent of analysis proposed as well as the potential benefit to FHWA and the recipient. FHWA anticipates making approximately four to six awards.

Agencies that would like to apply should send letters of interest to Robert Hyman (Robert.hyman@dot.gov) and their corresponding FHWA Division Office by January 5, 2017. For more information about eligibility and funding, please visit: www.sustainablehighways.org.

FY2016 – FY2019 EDA Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program

Through its Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) assists eligible recipients in developing economic development plans and studies designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. The Planning program helps support organizations, including District Organizations, Indian Tribes, and other eligible recipients, with Short Term and State Planning investments designed to guide the eventual creation and retention of high-quality jobs, particularly for the unemployed and underemployed in the Nation's most economically distressed regions. As part of this program, EDA supports Partnership Planning investments to facilitate the development, implementation, revision, or replacement of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), which articulate and prioritize the strategic economic goals of recipients' respective regions. [The Local Technical Assistance program](#) strengthens the capacity of local or state organizations, institutions of higher education, and other eligible recipients to undertake and promote effective economic development programs through projects such as feasibility studies and impact analyses.

DOT seeks proposals for Beyond Traffic Innovation Centers

Posted by Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx

Our release of the draft [Beyond Traffic](#) report in early 2015 launched a national conversation around the critical challenges that our country's transportation system will face over the next 30 years. Our educational institutions are critical to helping us solve these challenges, and today, building on that conversation, I am announcing a call for applications for entities who want to join this effort as officially designated U.S. DOT Beyond Traffic Innovation Centers.



[Continue Reading DOT seeks proposals](#)

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

Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Deadline: Rolling

Grants made under these programs will leverage regional assets to support the implementation of regional economic development strategies designed to create jobs, leverage private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Through the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) solicits applications from rural and urban communities to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions. EDA is employing a new two-phase review process for proposals/applications submitted under this FFO. Proposals will be reviewed by EDA within 30 days of receipt; and following the proposal review, full applications will be reviewed within 60 days of receipt.

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](#)

Just For Fun

Gondolas Aren't Just for Ski Resorts Anymore



The people of Albany, NY may soon have another transportation option for crossing the Hudson River.

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Instead of fighting traffic or waiting for a taxi, rail travelers arriving at New York's capital may one day soar across the Hudson River in glassy pods suspended from cables.

That futuristic image could become a reality if an engineering firm's urban gondola plan comes to fruition. It's one of several aerial cable projects being pitched in cities from Austin, Texas, to Washington, D.C., to solve public transportation problems by going above the existing maze of congested highways, bridges and rails.

"We haven't seen any major adoption in North America, but there has been so much change and such growth in the technology in the last decade that it's only a matter of time," said Toronto-based urban planner Steven Dale, who created The Gondola Project to provide technical assistance for such ideas.

Cable-propelled urban gondolas are similar to those used for decades to transport skiers up mountains. While there are only a couple used for public commuter transit in the U.S. — Portland, Oregon's Aerial Tram and New York City's Roosevelt Island Tramway — the technology is quickly gaining traction in European countries such as Italy, Germany, Portugal and France.

Medellin, Colombia, launched the first aerial gondola mass transit system in South America in 2004, and Mexico City inaugurated its

new Mexicable gondola transit system in October.

In the U.S., gondola projects have been proposed, with varying degrees of interest, over the Potomac River between Georgetown and Rosslyn, Virginia; across the center of Austin, Texas; from downtown Miami to the Marlins ballpark; across New York City's East River; and along an 8-mile route from Branson Landing to Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri.

In Albany, the gondola is aimed at a specific problem: The city's busy Amtrak station is actually located across the Hudson River in the city of Rensselaer, a 1.3-mile cab ride from the downtown government and entertainment district where most people are headed. Travelers have long complained there are never enough taxis and people often have to wait or share.

"I took Greyhound from New York City and thought I'd walk from the Albany bus station to the train, since it's only a mile," said Rosemary Scheibel of Auburn as she waited for a train on Friday. When she discovered there's no way to walk along the elevated highway and bridge over the river, "I had to pay \$13 for a taxi," she said.

The gondola plan would offer up to 1,200 riders an hour the chance to soar 100 feet above the Hudson in enclosed, air-conditioned eight-person cabins with an expansive view of the river and Albany's skyline. The trip would take about five minutes, and like a ski lift, the cars would move continuously, slowing enough that even people in wheelchairs can easily get on and off.

"It's an elegant solution," said Albany Democratic Mayor Kathy Sheehan. "There are those who say, 'Why do we need it?' But there has been more interest than skepticism."

West Nyack, New York-based McLaren Engineering Group, which pitched the idea, estimated construction at between \$17 million and \$20 million, with annual operating costs of about \$2.4 million. If approved by a series of state and federal agencies, McLaren says costs could be covered by a mix of private and public funds, ticket revenue and advertising.

"The purpose is twofold," said Peter Melewski, national director of strategic planning for McLaren. "One is to solve a transportation problem. The other is as a natural draw for tourism."

Gondola proposals have been slow to gain traction in the U.S., with objections including "pie-in-the-sky" skepticism, political opposition and residents' concern about privacy with commuters peering down on their homes. Dale said a lack of accessible research was another roadblock before he launched his information center.

"And no city wants to be first," Dale said. "They want to be able to point to someone and say 'We can do it, too.'"

Will Handsfield, transportation director for the Georgetown Business Improvement District, which is promoting the Potomac project, said cable gondolas provide an alternative in areas where new highways or rail systems are too expensive or impossible to fit.

"I think it would be useful," said 19-year-old Abbey McGrath as she waited for a train. "And it would be super interesting."

In the News

Gas prices up: Why fuel costs have surged and why they will go higher

By Leada Gore

If you've had to fill up your tank in recent days, you've probably noticed the price of gasoline has gone up.

Don't look for the costs to fall anytime soon.

The price of gasoline is up 6 cents from last week to an average of \$2.36 per gallon, [according to fuel tracking site GasBuddy.com](#).

Alabama's fuel prices are up 5 cents from last week to \$2.14 per gallon, an increase of 16 cents from the same time last month and 39 cents from last year's average.

The average price per gallon is the highest since June 2016, according to GasBuddy data.

The price spike is caused by OPEC's decision to cut oil production in an effort to boost prices.

"In 2016, motorists spent an average \$2.13 per gallon on gasoline, the cheapest yearly average since 2004, and 28 cents lower than 2015; but if motorists made a resolution to pay less in 2017, they either broke it already or aren't planning on driving for a while," said Patrick DeHaan, senior petroleum analyst for GasBuddy. "While nearly 100,000 gas stations in the country were selling for \$1.99 per gallon a year ago, fewer than 3,000 are today."

Motorists shouldn't expect any major price drop in the near future, DeHaan warned.

"Though we may see rising gas prices take a brief break in early February, we're unlikely to come anywhere close to last year's low levels," he said.

The higher prices will translate into \$52 billion more spent on gasoline by U.S. consumers in 2017 as compared to 2016.

In the summer, when gasoline switches from "winter blend" to "summer blend" as mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air Act, motorists will see a price spike of as much as 60 cents per gallon. That increase will occur between mid-February and May, GasBuddy said.

The price hike is even worse in seven states where gas tax changes took effect on Jan. 1: Pennsylvania saw a 7.9 cent per gallon increase in state gas tax while Michigan saw a 7.3 cent hike. Other states raising gas taxes were: Nebraska (1.5 cents), Georgia and North Carolina (0.3 cents), Indiana (0.2 cents) and Florida (0.1 cent).

Gas taxes fell in two states: New York (down 0.8 cent) and West Virginia (down 1 cent).

Seven Ways Cities Can become More Equitable, Vibrant and Affordable

BY MATT HOFFMAN

For those of us working in the social and economic justice space, the 2016 presidential election result is a reminder that nothing is inevitable. Whether one is happy about a President-elect Donald Trump or not, his win demonstrates that what might seem impossible or implausible can be achieved. And conventional, time-tested tools and means are not the only pathway to success.

As we think and prepare for how to engage in the battle of ideas that inevitably comes with a new federal administration, now is the time to take stock of our core principles, what we believe we can contribute to the greater good, and the vision that we want others to share and help build.

While federal policy and resources are essential to setting the framework for the nation and enabling a lot of public good activity at the local level, cities are where most people experience the realities of life and interface with government.

With that in mind, here are seven things cities can do to become more equitable, vibrant and affordable.

1. Make public transit free to ride.

The more people who use public transit, the more people who benefit, whether they are riders or not, due to reduced congestion and pollution and increased potential for productivity. Eliminating fees to use public transit (rail and bus) would entice more riders to use the system and would reduce cost burdens on low-income families. How would transit budgets be covered? By paying for it out of the city budget, the same way we do with roads and public education, thereby sharing the cost across all taxpayers. This is the fairest solution since non-riders also are gaining benefit from the transit system.

2. Crack down on the housing black market and empower tenants.

Most cities require landlords to register units that they are renting, whether a single unit in their house or a large multifamily apartment building. Furthermore, landlords are expected to meet codes that protect the life and safety of tenants as well as provide an overall livability that preserves health and provides a decent place to live. But the enforcement of registration and code is woefully inadequate in many jurisdictions as powerfully illustrated in Matthew Desmond's recent book, "[Evicted](#)." What we see in Milwaukee and elsewhere is that there is a sizeable segment of the housing market that operates outside of the bounds of government oversight, often preying upon the most vulnerable in our society who are so desperate for shelter that they are willing to put up with otherwise intolerable conditions. From a market perspective, this black market housing increases the cost to legitimate landlords, who are competing for property against people who have lower costs due to non-compliance. If cities could eliminate this black market housing and shift that stock over to code-compliant units, then the housing supply will increase and overall prices will decrease. Cities need to make the cost of non-compliance much higher than it currently is if you get caught, and they have to make the chance of getting caught much higher.

3. Use municipal property for housing.

Especially in cities where housing costs have escalated so sharply, cities should inventory and carefully evaluate how to use vacant land and land with existing municipal structures for housing purposes. Too often, cities sell their land to private developers and lose control for the long-term of how that land will be used, even as cities continue their inevitable dynamic evolution. And for land that is already purposed for a library or school or police station, imagine some of the creative synergies that can be achieved through unique mashups like elementary schools and senior living apartments, police stations and apartments for domestic abuse victims, and libraries and housing for civil servants.

4. Put the "best" schools in the "worst" neighborhoods.

Nothing is more powerful to transform a neighborhood than having a world-class school that people want their kids to attend. While much of the school choice movement has been focused on allowing kids to leave their neighborhoods to attend better schools, what if we flipped the script? If a city's best schools were in its most challenged neighborhoods, and kids living in that neighborhood were automatically eligible to attend while others needed to apply, the neighborhood would quickly receive the investments and attention that it needs to become less challenged. Careful consideration would need to be paid to preventing the displacement of low-income families as neighborhoods become more desirable and housing costs rise.

5. Think and act interjurisdictionally to prevent race to the bottom.

While local boundaries matter to governments, they don't to people who are looking for the best place to live that they can afford and get good schools, public safety and services. When multiple jurisdictions with sizable populations abut each other and policies are not aligned, then perverse incentives are created. When one jurisdiction acts to improve its schools or provide better services to homeless but the nearby jurisdictions do not follow suit, then people will flock to the place with the better services putting a cost burden on that jurisdiction. So while collective action is in everyone's interest, political differences and points of view create a competitive environment where first movers are punished and laggards are rewarded, leading to an inevitable race to the bottom. Jurisdictions need to find new ways to solve problems regionally where costs are shared and nearby jurisdictions are viewed as collaborators and not competitors.

6. Free the data and ask citizens to help.

Cities need to make all the data they collect publicly available in real time (stripping out any personally identifiable information, of course). Rather than fearing criticism or failure, cities should welcome engagement by citizens, advocates and experts to help solve problems by understanding the current state of play and being able to see what is working well and what needs attention and improvement. By clearly defining the challenges that the city is facing and enlisting open source techniques to engage citizens to participate in the governance process, cities can foster a new wave of civic innovation and engagement.

7. Prepare for the future, not the past.

Cities need to help citizens understand what the future could be by creating and sharing grand plans for what the city can look like, how it will function, and why it will be a great place to reside there. In a city where people are collectively focused on a grander vision of a place that is more livable, healthier, equitable, opportunistic and engaged, innovations that enable the vision will become more commonplace.

The next few years will be transformational for many cities. The key will be to be visionary, adaptive, collaborative and innovative. While the politics of 2016 were ugly, they do not define the possibility of our future, wherever we live. The challenge for all of us is to see beyond the immediacy of the near term and pursue the possibility of what we can be.

Matt Hoffman is Vice President of Innovation for Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of SARPC Staff.

Jan. 3: Nine States Adjust Gas Tax Jan. 1

by Carolyn Kramer

The New Year brought adjusted motor fuel taxes to nine states, with seven states increasing their motor fuel taxes and two states decreasing the tax.

Of the states that increased their motor fuel taxes, three of them—Florida, Georgia and North Carolina—did so based on automatic adjustments based off of the variable-rate calculation of their state motor fuel taxes. All three states index their gas tax either wholly or in part to changes in the Consumer Price Index. Both North Carolina and Georgia increased their state gas tax by 0.3 cent-per-gallon, and Florida raised its gas tax by 0.1 cent-per-gallon.

Two states—Michigan and Pennsylvania—raised their gas tax due to legislation from previous years. Legislation approved in 2015 will raise Michigan's gas tax by 7.3 cents-per-gallon, as well as increase registration fees and impose a new annual hybrid and electric vehicle fee. Pennsylvania's 8 cents-per-gallon increase is the last increase of a gradually phased-in transition (approved in 2013) from a flat excise tax to a variable-rate tax that adjusts based off of the average wholesale price of gasoline.

Nebraska also raised its state gas tax a total of 1.5 cents-per-gallon due to a combination of 2015 legislation that raised its flat excise tax on gasoline gradually by 6 cents-per-gallon over four years, an additional variable-rate component of the state motor fuel tax that adjusts based on changes to the average wholesale price of motor fuel, and a third component that is adjusted as needed by the state legislature to ensure adequate funding for transportation projects.

Indiana's sales tax on gasoline is collected at 7 percent of the average price of gasoline. With the recent increase in gasoline prices, the sales tax has increased this month by an amount equivalent to 0.2 cents per gallon.

Additionally, two states—New York and West Virginia—decreased their state motor fuel tax rates, which are both determined based off of the average wholesale price of fuel. West Virginia's 1 cent-per-gallon decrease (which will result in a \$12.5 million loss to the state's road budget) and New York's 0.8 cent-per-gallon gas tax decrease are both the result of low fuel prices.

Two states—Vermont and Virginia—did not adjust their motor fuel taxes at the scheduled time due to low fuel prices. Both states have a floor in place that requires the variable-rate tax only be adjusted if the price of fuel is above the floor, or minimum price, in place.

New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

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- 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 Research

BTS Statistics Release: October 2016 North American Freight Numbers

Three transportation modes – air, vessel and truck – carried less U.S. freight by value with North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners Canada and Mexico in October 2016 compared to October 2015 as total freight on all modes decreased 3.6 percent to \$93.2 billion in current dollars, according to the annual TransBorder Freight Data released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS).

The total value of cross-border freight has declined from the same month of the previous year in 21 of the past 22 months beginning in January 2015 with only an increase of 0.7 percent in August 2016.

Freight by Mode

The value of commodities moving by truck decreased 6.1 percent; vessel by 7.0 percent and air by 12.7 percent while the value of freight carried on pipeline and rail increased 21.8 percent and 6.2 percent respectively.

Trucks carried 65.3 percent of U.S.-NAFTA freight and continued to be the most heavily utilized mode for moving goods to and from both U.S.-NAFTA partners. Trucks accounted for \$31.9 billion of the \$50.3 billion of imports (63.4 percent) and \$29.0 billion of the \$42.9 billion of exports (67.6 percent).

Rail remained the second largest mode by value, moving 15.8 percent of all U.S.-NAFTA freight, followed by vessel, 5.4 percent; pipeline, 5.0 percent; and air, 3.8 percent. The surface transportation modes of truck, rail and pipeline carried 86.0 percent of the total value of U.S.-NAFTA freight flows.

U.S.-Canada Freight

From October 2015 to October 2016, the value of U.S.-Canada freight flows fell 2.5 percent to \$46.5 billion due to decreases in the value of goods moved by vessel (down 31.1 percent), air (down 8.8 percent) and truck (down 3.1 percent). The value of freight carried on pipeline and rail increased 21.7 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. During this 12-month period, much of the mineral fuel freight between Texas and Canada shifted from vessel to pipeline as the value of mineral fuel shipments carried by vessel between Texas and Canada decreased while the value of pipeline shipments rose. Texas-Canada mineral fuel trade made up about 25.5 percent of all U.S.-Canada mineral fuel shipments in October 2016.

Trucks carried 60.8 percent of the value of the freight to and from Canada. Rail carried 16.1 percent followed by pipeline, 9.2 percent; air, 4.6 percent; and vessel, 2.9 percent. The surface transportation modes of truck, rail and pipeline carried 86.0 percent of the value of total U.S.-Canada freight flows.

U.S.-Mexico Freight

From October 2015 to October 2016, the value of U.S.-Mexico freight flows fell 4.7 percent to \$46.6 billion due to decreases in the value of goods moved by air (down 18.0 percent) and truck (down 8.5 percent). The value of freight carried on three modes increased: pipeline, by 23.6 percent; rail by 10.4 percent; and vessel by 6.9 percent.

Trucks carried 69.9 percent of the value of the freight to and from Mexico. Rail carried 15.4 percent of the value of freight to and from Mexico followed by vessel, 7.9 percent; air, 3.1 percent; and pipeline, 0.8 percent. The surface transportation modes of truck, rail and pipeline carried 86.0 percent of the value of total U.S.-Mexico freight flows.

See [BTS Transborder Statistics Release](#) for summary tables and additional data. See [North American Transborder Freight Data](#) on the BTS website for additional data for surface modes since 1995 and all modes since 2004.

MPO Guidebook for Using Safety as a Project Prioritization Factor

FHWA released a [guidebook](#) to identify the state of the practice among MPOs using safety as a project prioritization factor. The guidebook includes six approaches and details potential criteria, analysis methods, pros/cons, data, and resource needs for implementing these approaches at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. FHWA interviewed nine agencies including Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and the San Diego Association of Governments.

NEW FHWA COURSE

A new FHWA course, [Performance-Based Planning and Programming](#), is now available through the National Highway Institute (NHI).

This two-day instructor-led course, FHWA-NHI-138007, familiarizes transportation agencies with the key elements of a performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) framework; how PBPP supports Transportation Performance Management (TPM); and how both PBPP and TPM relate to the requirements for transportation planning and transportation performance.

The course is recommended for transportation professionals at State Departments of Transportation (DOT), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regional planning organizations (RPOs), transit agencies and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) who are responsible for developing and implementing performance-based plans and programs and those who are responsible for integrating and linking related requirements. Participants should have knowledge of the planning process and the collaboration needed for it.

To host a course or sign up for upcoming session alerts, please visit the NHI site.

You can learn more about other TPM-related courses in development at the FHWA TPM web site; to learn more about PBPP, please visit the FHWA Planning web site.

Pocket Guide to Transportation Statistics

If you need transportation statistics at a moment's notice – for example, if you want to see a list of the most congested urban areas or if you want to find the busiest Amtrak stations – the Bureau of Transportation Statistics has a solution for you.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, BTS is introducing its most innovative product yet – a smartphone app for the [Pocket Guide to Transportation](#).



[Click Here to continue reading Introducing the Pocket Guide to Transportation App](#)

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.