



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday May 12th, 2017

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South Alabama Regional

There will be a Mobile TCC/CAC meeting on May 17th, at 10:00AM; please see (*Mobile MPO Updates*). The Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Funds call for Projects have been announced (**please see *Funding Opportunities***). Creekfest in Mobile is tomorrow so get out and support the Three Mile Creek biking and walking trail (See *In The News!*)

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

TCC/CAC meeting May 17th, 10:00 AM, Mobile MPO meeting June 7th, 10:00 AM

There will be a TCC/CAC meeting on May 17th. The results of that meeting will go before the MPO on June 7th. There are two items amending and modifying the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). One is to Extend the Eastbound Bridge on SR 42 (US98) over Big Creek, and the other is to unfortunately delete a TAP project that the PE was never completed. Also, it is budget season, so we will be presenting the DRAFT Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). A line item in the FY 2018 UPWP will be a Feasibility Study for US 45. Further, I have received communication from two members of the City of Mobile City Council with requests for funding, this also may be a topic of discussion

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for the Mobile Area

The Project listed below has been placed in PLAN status:

Project: 100066877 (TR)
Federal aid number: NFIGR TR17
County: MOBILE
Project Description: SECTION 5317 TRANSIT MOBILE ARC NEW FREEDOM OPERATING FY 2017
Target start date: 6/1/2017
Engineers Estimate: \$332,424.00

The Projects listed below has been adjusted:

Project: 100037215 (CN)
Federal aid number: DBMB-STPMB 7550 (600)
County: MOBILE
Project Description: ZEIGLER BLVD ADDITIONAL LANES FROM ATHEY RD TO FOREST HILL DR
Old Target start date: September 29, 2017
New Target start date: January 26, 2018

Project: 100052812 (CN)
Federal aid number: NH 0042 (517)
County: MOBILE
Project Description: CONSTRUCT BRIDGE ON GLENWOOD ROAD OVER SR-42 (US-98)
Old Target start date: September 29, 2017
New Target start date: January 25, 2019

Project: 100065845 (FM)
Federal aid number: NH 0013 (603)
County: MOBILE
Project Description: RESURFACING ON SR-13 (US-43) FROM DOGWOOD DRIVE TO COLD CREEK BRIDGE
Old Engineers Estimate: \$3,774,026.00
New Engineers Estimate: \$2,999,453.67

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

By July 1, 2017, ALDOT should have developed the statewide performance measures for safety. The Mobile MPO, and all MPO's including the Eastern Shore MPO, will have until February 27th, 2018 to either adopt ALDOT's methodology for performance measures, or adopt their own. There are five safety performance measures:

- number of fatalities
- rate of fatalities
- number of serious injuries
- rate of serious injuries
- number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries combined

The Mobile MPO will have to develop targets for these five performance measures (using ALDOT's methodology or our own) and create an annual *System Performance Report*, and then decide on whether we have met our targets or not. Statewide, if ALDOT does not meet the targets of the performance measures, they will lose the flexibility of their safety funding. At the MPO level, if we do not meet are targets, well, we must try harder.

Performance measures and targets must be specified for Safety (see above), Transit (ALDOT Multi-modal), Freight (ALDOT and MPO) and Highway (ALDOT contracted with Jeff Carroll of South Carolina). The LRTP and the TIP must be modified as it must be explained how each project in both documents are working towards achieving all performance measure targets.

3-C Agreement To Be Updated

To all members of the Mobile MPO, we have to update our 3-C agreement. This is the agreement between SARPC, ALDOT, the WAVE Transit, the eight Urban Area cities and Mobile County that actually creates the Mobile MPO. In order to execute this agreement, we will need a resolution from Mobile County and each city in the next month or so. If you are a new mayor, your staff is familiar with this as we did this last Spring. Because there is a new federal transportation act "the FAST ACT", the language has changed and we must update the agreement. We sent notifications to each MPO member. Please call Kevin if there are any questions.

Projects Within Region To Be Let April 28th, 2017

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-42 (US-98) from the Mississippi State Line to the junction of Snow Road west of Semmes. Length 10.479 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,717,581 to \$2,099,266 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Intersection Improvements (Turn Lane Installation) on CR-13 at the intersection of Sehoy Boulevard and Longue Vue Boulevard in Daphne. Length 0.227 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$558,416 to \$682,509 .
- For constructing the Intersection Improvements (Roundabout Installation) on CR-30 at the intersection of CR-13 in Fairhope. Length 0.394 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$835,082 to \$1,020,656 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Alabama General Fund budget on way to Gov. Kay Ivey

By Mike Cason

The state budget for next year is on its way to Gov. Kay Ivey.

The Alabama House of Representatives voted 93-6 tonight to accept changes [made by the Senate](#) and give the budget final approval.

The budget calls for spending \$1.85 billion from the General Fund, the same as this year. Most agencies would receive about the same amount as this year.

Budget chairman Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, said the plan reserves \$93 million to carry over for 2019 or to use as a contingency against possible changes coming out of Washington that could affect Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. The budget approved tonight includes a \$105 million one-year boost for Medicaid as a result of a BP oil spill settlement.

Clouse said the fact that the BP money won't be available in 2019 was another key reason to carry over the \$93 million reserve.

The budget approved tonight includes \$3.3 million for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to hire 30 additional state troopers.

Lawmakers in Budget Accord Reject Transportation Program Cuts White House Sought

Congress in its budget agreement for fiscal 2017 rejected a number of cuts in transportation programs that the White House had urged lawmakers to implement, cuts that President Trump has also said he will pursue in his budget proposal for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

[As previously reported](#), the White House Office of Management and Budget on March 24 sent Congress a list of suggested 2017 budget cuts, recommending among other things that lawmakers zero out the Department of Transportation's TIGER infrastructure grant program and cut \$400 million in Federal Transit Administration "new starts" funding.

The OMB also reportedly proposed cutting \$100 million from the Army Corps of Engineers' water resources budget.

Instead, appropriators included in the 2017 funding agreement a new round of \$500 million in TIGER grants. Lawmakers not only included FTA new starts funding but increased it, and wrote into the legislation a detailed list of federal contributions for congressionally supported transit projects that do not yet have full funding grant agreements with the agency. They also increased the Corps of Engineers' funding by \$49 million.

The 2017 government funding bill also keeps or increases other programs that President Trump has signaled he wants to cut in 2018.

[His "skinny budget" blueprint for 2018](#) also called for ending TIGER, limiting funds for new transit projects and cutting \$1 billion from the Corps of Engineers.

It proposed ending federal subsidies for Amtrak's long-distance passenger rail service outside the busy Northeast Corridor. The president also called for ending the Federal Aviation Administration's Essential Air Service program that provides subsidies to help maintain passenger operations to smaller and rural airports. And he proposed eliminating the Economic Development Administration, a Commerce Department agency that often awards grants to help build or improve transportation systems to support regional business operations.

But Congress in the fiscal 2017 measure showed its support for all those programs. It funded Amtrak's long-distance service as well as the NEC, continued the Essential Air Service program and increased both the EDA grants and an EPA grant program that retrofits or replaces old diesel transportation equipment.

Trump Budget Proposal Sneak Peek

A full fiscal [2018 budget proposal](#) being crafted by White House officials aims to balance the federal budget in 10 years through \$800 billion in cuts to means-tested, mandatory spending programs including Medicaid. Trump's plan would require passing comprehensive tax reform to jump start the economy, which he says will spur significant economic growth. Means-tested, mandatory spending programs include: food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, child nutrition programs, and the Pell Grant program, but it is not clear which programs would be cut. Trump's full budget is expected to be released the week of May 22.

Congress Completes Deal That Protects Transportation Funds, Implements FAST Act Increases

Under an agreement to fund all government agencies for the rest of the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30, Congress approved 2017 appropriations to maintain highway, transit, aviation, rail and waterway programs and provide another \$500 million for the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER infrastructure grants.

The House passed the omnibus funding measure May 3 and the Senate on May 4, both by solid bipartisan majorities, sending it to President Trump to sign into law before the latest stopgap funding resolution was due to expire on May 5.

The measure allows state DOTs and transit agencies to finally gain access to this year's scheduled funding hikes that Congress previously authorized and paid for in the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, increases that total [about \\$1 billion for highway programs and nearly \\$400 million for transit](#) and have been delayed since the Oct. 1 start of this budget year.

Governors and state DOT executives have told Congress that the seven-month delay in allowing those fiscal 2017 funding increases to take effect could leave some states or transit agencies challenged to put those funds to work in the current construction season. That is especially the case for states in cold climates that have a short window to bid out and complete roadway projects, where officials have warned they might have to delay some projects they would otherwise have begun this year.

Congress provided the Federal Highway Administration with an additional \$528 million for its emergency relief account, on top of \$100 million already in the FAST Act. The agency taps that account to provide state DOTs and federal land agencies with quick-release funds to help pay early repair costs when disasters damage their road and bridge infrastructure.

[A summary of the 2017 funding bill's highlights](#) for the USDOT said the bipartisan agreement – which was negotiated by appropriators and leaders of both chambers and parties – includes \$43.27 billion for the Highway Trust Fund's federal-aid highways programs, consistent with FAST Act levels.

However, the legislation rescinds \$857 million of unobligated contract authority held by state DOTs, as a budgetary offset to other spending areas and to be removed proportionally from specified highway program accounts. This rescission will be based on those program balances as of May 31, and take effect on June 30.

The bill also allows the DOTs to repurpose old, unused project earmark funds with certain restrictions; those amounts are yet to be determined.

It provides \$12.4 billion to the Federal Transit Administration, of which \$9.7 billion is for formula grants out of the trust fund. It also provides \$2.413 billion for other capital investment grants, above the \$2.302 billion that was authorized in the FAST Act. Lawmakers provided that funding to both cover transit projects that already have full funding grant agreements with the FTA and to set aside specific federal contributions for a list of congressionally supported projects in the pipeline that are nearing the formal agreement stage.

The bill also includes \$199 million for the FTA to help commuter railroads deploy crash-avoidance systems.

It funds the Federal Railroad Administration with \$1.85 billion, an increase of \$173 million from 2016. That includes \$1.17 billion for Amtrak's national passenger rail network and \$328 million for its Northeast Corridor, plus \$98 million for FRA railroad improvement grants and \$258 million to support rail safety and research programs.

The Federal Aviation Administration is funded at \$16.4 billion or \$127 million above the 2016 level. The summary said that provides full funding for all air traffic control personnel and the FAA's Contract Towers program, plus more than \$1 billion for its Next-Generation traffic control systems to help ease system congestion. It also continues support for the "Essential Air Service" program that subsidizes rural airport operations in many states.

The USDOT's Maritime Administration receives \$523 million under the bill, including \$5 million to support "marine highways" that help mitigate roadway congestion by moving more cargoes by water.

The bill also provides \$644 million to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that regulates trucking and bus operations on the nation's highway. And it sets aside \$3 million for the USDOT's National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau, which was created by the FAST Act to promote efficiency by creating a "one-stop shop" that consolidates several DOT grant and loan programs.

Outside of the DOT, the bill increases a grant program the EPA uses to help ports, state agencies and others convert older diesel-burning vehicles, marine vessels and other equipment to use cleaner-burning new engines or alternative fuels. And it increases a Commerce Department grant program that often aids transportation infrastructure projects that support economic development.

It funds the Army Corps of Engineers at [\\$6.038 billion, an increase of \\$49 million above 2016](#). That includes \$2.66 billion for navigation projects and studies, of which \$1.3 billion is from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund that pays for federal dredging projects. And it makes full use of estimated annual revenues from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund that supports lock and dam improvements. It supports six new waterway project construction starts and up to six new studies, and provides \$1.72 billion to support storm damage reduction activities.

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

Funding Opportunities

TAP Funds

Below is the call for projects for the [Mobile Urbanized Area TAP Funding](#). This is different than the State TAP funding, which the application is generally due in December. If you are within the Mobile MPO (see [HERE](#)) you are eligible to apply. If not, you will have to wait for the State TAP application, which will be posted under this section of the Transportation Friday Newsletter.

Transportation Alternatives Program Funding (URBAN) *deadline June 2, 2017*

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcomed and encouraged to apply for funding for both fiscal years.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Friday June 2, 2017. [Electronic versions of the applications are available online](#) at mobilempo.org.

Click the Mobile MPO tab and then the Transportation Alternatives tab. Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

If you have any questions please call the SARPC Transportation Planning Department at (251) 433 6541

FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area *deadline June 2, 2017 no later than NOON*

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is responsible for the management and administration of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urban Area Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Transportation program in the Mobile Urbanized Area. The goal of the 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. The FTA 5310 Program provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

This program provides grant funds for capital, mobility management, and operating expenses for:

- Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;
- Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and
- Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities and with transportation.

SARPC will accept grant applications until June 2, 2017 at noon for Fiscal Year 2018 Mobile Urban Area 5310 funds. Please read the guidelines and application before attempting to complete it. The guidelines and application can be found online at <http://mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Technical assistance is available on an as needed basis. If you questions or to request technical assistance, please contact Monica Williamson at (251)706-4613 or email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$55 Million Funding Opportunity for Clean-Energy Transit Bus Projects

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [today announced the opportunity](#) to apply for up to \$55 million in competitive grant funds through FTA’s Low or No Emission (Low-No) Bus Program. The Low-No program supports projects sponsored by local transit agencies to bring advanced, American-made bus technologies such as battery electric power and hydrogen fuel cells into service nationwide.

“FTA is proud to support investment in the next generation of transit buses, which will help riders across the country get to work, school, and other important destinations more comfortably and efficiently,” said FTA Executive Director Matthew Welbes. “The Low-No program exemplifies FTA’s commitment to spurring innovation in public transportation.”

FTA will award the grants to eligible transit agencies, state transportation departments, and Native American tribes on a competitive basis. Projects will be evaluated by criteria defined in federal law and in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), including the applicant’s demonstration of need; the project’s anticipated reductions in energy consumption compared to standard buses; and local strategy and capacity for implementing the project.

The application deadline is June 26, 2017. Project selections will be announced within 75 days of the closing of the application period, and no later than September 30, 2017.

Federal public transportation law (49 USC § 5339(c)) authorizes FTA to solicit proposals through the competitive Low-No program. The authorized funding level is up to \$55 million per year through Fiscal Year 2020.

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

Happy Limerick Day!!!

Limerick Day celebrates the birthday of Writer Edward Lear (1812-1888). It also, of course, celebrates Limerick poems. Limericks were popularized by Lear in 1846 in his Book of Nonsense".

This day is a time to enjoy and get your fill of Limerick poems. We are so glad that it came along to brighten up our lives. Celebrate Limerick Day in style by writing a Limerick or two of your own. Or, sit down and read a few humorous Limericks. They are guaranteed to make you smile.

A Limerick is a humorous verse or poem. It is five lines long. Its name comes from the city of Limerick, Ireland. The first two lines rhyme with the fifth line rhyme. The third and fourth lines rhyme.

Here is a limerick to get you started!!

We all have our favorite mode
Of how we travel the road
Be it by bike or car
It depends on how far
Or maybe how heavy the load.



Did you know? Limerick is the third largest city in Ireland.

In the News

Creek Fest 2017 - Saturday, May 13, 10AM - 2PM

This event will be a free, family-friendly celebration that will take place tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The family fun day will be filled with music from Molly Thomas, food, fellowship, environmental exhibits, canoe and kayak rides in the creek, cane-pole fishing tournament in Day Lake for children 16 years and younger, and merit badge opportunities for Boy Scouts. Chief Meteorologist Jason Smith of WALA-Fox10 will again serve as the master of ceremonies.

The event will be held at **Tricentennial Park, 2121 Lake Drive, Mobile, AL 36617**

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Why Alabama lawmakers could still consider a gas tax increase

By John Sharp

Back in 1992, when gasoline cost about [\\$1.13 per gallon](#), the Alabama Legislature hiked the state's fuel tax by a nickel. It hasn't been touched by state lawmakers since.

"We worked real hard and it barely passed," recalled Mack Roberts, who was then the assistant director at the Alabama Department of Transportation before heading up the department in 1993.

He was an advocate of a fuel tax increase then, and remains so today.

"Somewhere down the line, we have to do it," said Roberts, now vice-president of engineering with American Roads in Montgomery.

But a quarter-century later, the Legislature is likely to leave Montgomery this spring without having approved a fuel tax increase to pay to improve roads and bridges. It would leave the state's levy at the same 18-cent-per-gallon rate it has been at since Guy Hunt was governor.

House Speaker Mac McCutcheon [declared a gas tax increase dead in April](#), and he hasn't budged since. "The legislation will not come up again this session," his spokeswoman said on Monday.

'Business decision'

Despite McCutcheon's decree, a laundry list of state officials and organizations are holding out hope that something can be done in the waning and frantic final days of the spring legislative session. The session reconvenes Tuesday.

Most of the backers support a measure sponsored by Rep. Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, that would increase the tax on gas and diesel 4 cents a gallon on Sept. 1, another 2 cents a gallon on Sept. 1, 2019, and allows for an option to increase it 3 cents a gallon on Sept. 1, 2024.

The revenue would be used to support a \$2.45 billion bond issue to pay for road and bridge upgrades, with \$1.25 billion going to county and municipal governments.

The new transportation program is called "ATRIP-2," named after 2013's Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program, or ATRIP, which was financed through long-term borrowing.

More than 600 projects throughout Alabama were paid for through ATRIP. The remainder of those projects financed through the program, are anticipated to be out for bid before the end of 2017.

Supporters of a fuel tax increase include newly-minted Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey. [It's become one of her top priorities](#), and is the only tax she has publicly come out in favor of since taking over as governor on April 10.

"I strongly support the gas tax and I encourage the members of the House to do likewise," said Ivey, during a visit to Mobile on Friday. "Our commerce needs good transportation. It's a business decision. I'm a conservative. I'm a Republican. I got the facts. Who better to make a business decision than a conservative Republican who has all the facts? That's the message and I hope all Democrats and Republicans will step up to the plate and let's do business for Alabama."

Trump effect

Aside from Ivey, there is another new twist in the gas tax push: President Donald Trump, and his pledge to roll out a massive nationwide infrastructure program.

Trump, recently, [signaled his support for an increase in the federal gasoline tax](#) to support a sweeping federal infrastructure program. The federal gasoline tax has remained at 18.3 cents a gallon since 1993.

"I think that is a game changer," said state Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, who is also backing, via referendums, whether they support a fuel tax increase within county boundaries. Orr classifies those two pieces of legislation as an "alternative" to Poole's proposal in case it meets McCutcheon's predicted fate.

"If there is a required match, I know that would definitely influence the disposition of the Legislature for any gas tax," said Orr, referring to the likelihood that a federal transportation program would require matching funds from state governments. Sonny Brasfield, executive director of the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama, put it this way: "There will be an infrastructure program. We're not talking about 'if,' we're talking about 'when' and the folks at ALDOT will say Alabama, at the state level, is not prepared to match federal money. This won't be free money."

Opinion polls show that most Americans are supportive of a major infrastructure program. [A CNN/ORC poll](#), released in

March, showed that 79 percent of U.S. adults back increased spending on infrastructure.

"I strongly support the gas tax and I encourage the members of the House to do likewise." - Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey

[A Gallup poll](#), earlier this year, showed that among Trump's campaign priorities, a "major spending program" supporting infrastructure at No. 1 with 69 percent support. Repealing and replacing ObamaCare, comparatively, was backed with 46 percent support.

The Alabama legislation, if approved, would bolster ALDOT's funding which has been limited for new road projects, such as widening lanes on congested roads.

That limitation has been blamed on two circumstances since the last time the state's fuel tax was increased: The soaring cost of building roads, and the increase in fuel efficient vehicles that require fewer trips at the pump.

"(A fuel tax increase) is a tax so it takes money out of consumer's pockets," said Amah Ijaz, executive director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration. "But it's a necessity, too, because the more fuel efficient cars get, the less money that goes into the highway trust funds."

Ijaz said with fuel prices still at affordable levels about five years after reaching all-time highs for many cities and states in 2012, the timing could be good to pitch an increase.

"You don't want to impose the tax when prices are, say, at \$4 a gallon," he said. "So if you have to do it, it's better to do it when the price of gas is low."

Raising taxes

Nearly two dozen states have pushed forward with their own gas tax increases in recent years as a way to finance big-spending highway and bridge projects.

Tennessee is among the most recent. After not touching its fuel tax since 1989, [Republican Gov. Bill Haslam signed into law last month](#) a plan to raise the tax by 6 cents per gallon over the next three years to raise \$355 million for road and bridge projects.

To offset the increase, Tennessee lawmakers agreed to drop its tax on food and ingredients by 1 percentage point. Tennessee's state tax on gasoline was 21.4 cents per gallon before the increase.

Groups like the conservative-leaning Alabama Policy Institute support a similar plan for Alabama. Said spokeswoman Taylor Dawson: "Our position is we are opposed to an increase in taxes without a decrease somewhere else. We are looking at, right now, solutions that are alternatives to the gas tax."

Alabama's tax, while set at 18 cents per gallon by the Legislature in 1992, is actually more around 22.9 cents per gallon, according to an in depth analysis by the American Petroleum Institute which takes into account additional fees for underground storage tanks, environmental transportation fees and additional levies by cities and counties.

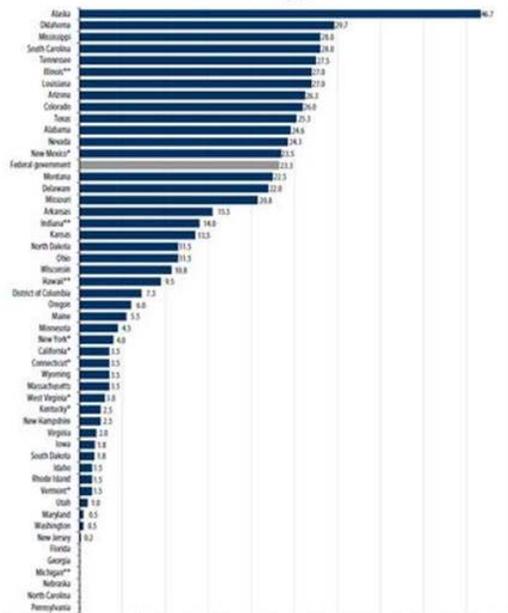
Alabama's tax is below the national average, and it currently ranks at No. 37, [according to the Tax Foundation](#). The most expensive fuel tax is in Pennsylvania, which levies a 58.2 cent tax on fuel purchases.

In the Southeast, Alabama's fuel tax is cheaper than neighboring Georgia and Florida. Both of those states adjust fuel taxes based on the annual rate of inflation.

Mississippi and Louisiana both have cheaper fuel taxes than Alabama. [Neither state has touched their taxes in at least 27 years.](#)

Carl Davis, a research director at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy in Washington, D.C., said the recent wave of states adopting fuel tax increases comes more as a necessity than anything as aging infrastructure continues to deteriorate nationwide.

Years Since Last Gasoline Tax Increase As of January 1, 2017



* These states have experienced gas tax rate cuts since their last increases were enacted. This typically occurs when the tax rate is tied to fluctuations in the price of fuel.
 ** Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan apply their general sales taxes to gasoline and thus are ongoing changes in their overall gas tax rates based on changes in the price of gas. This chart includes these price-based fluctuations and records back only of these states' motor taxes on gasoline.
 † This state includes price-based fluctuations and records back only of these states' motor taxes on gasoline.

Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP)

Years since the last gas tax was implemented. Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

A recent national report indicated that more than 56,000 bridges in the U.S. are structurally deficient, [with 1,000 of them in Alabama labeled as in poor condition](#). According to [national transportation research](#), Alabama records 1.26 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, which is considerably more than the national average.

Davis said Alabama, and other states, cannot wait on Congress to enact a federal gas tax increase if it expects to address its own infrastructure woes.

"I haven't seen signs yet at the federal level that there is much of a commitment to the idea that President Trump or legislative leaders in Congress will put in the push needed to get a gas tax across the line," he said.

On the state level, Davis said that the most successful efforts are backed by governors, such as the cases in Tennessee and Maryland.

Tom Layfield, executive director of the Alabama Road Builders Association, said it's been "huge" to have Ivey's backing for a fuel tax increase, even if he's skeptical anything can get done anytime soon.

Aside from this session, lawmakers are unlikely to vote on a fuel tax increase next spring ahead of the 2018 legislative races.

"We are in Alabama," said Layfield. "We have to be forced by the federal government to take a positive step forward. That's what we'll have to wait on."

Brasfield said it could be dangerous for Alabama lawmakers to sit back and wait before addressing a gas tax increase. He said that if Congress moves forward with a Trump-backed infrastructure initiative, the state won't have matching funds.

"We are about as unready as anyone can be," said Brasfield. "The president has said a couple of times that there will be priorities given to states that are ready. Waiting to react is ignoring everything we've been told."

Twenty-two States Increased Gas Tax for Transportation Investment Since 2013

by Carolyn Kramer

[Since 2013, 22 states have increased taxes on motor fuel to support needed transportation investments.](#) Additionally, Kentucky and North Carolina adjusted their variable-rate gasoline tax formula during this time in order to preserve or increase revenue for roads, bridges, transit, and more (Vermont and Utah also adjusted their recently-approved formulas during this time).

Looking back to 1997, 30 states and the District of Columbia have increased motor fuel related taxes 49 times. [Read](#) a summary of each state gas tax increase approved 2013 through 2017.

Transportation Alternatives Annual Report

As part of FAST Act requirements, FHWA created a [report](#) on the transportation alternatives (TA) projects. Their interactive map shows each state with details on the projects awarded and applications received.

FACT SHEET: City of Mobile Presents the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan

April 25, 2017

"The Capital Improvement Plan has enabled us to attack the estimated \$250 million backlog of infrastructure projects and position Mobile for a new era of growth and a higher quality of life. Our commitment remains that we will listen to our citizens as we identify projects and that we will be transparent with every dollar we spend. The City Council and I hear every day how much our citizens appreciate the improvements in our sidewalks, streets and parks. I am proud of our progress but there's still a lot of work to do. As we move forward with the 2018 CIP, please know that we welcome citizen engagement as we build a better future for our city. Mobile is undergoing a transformation, and the best is still yet to come." -- Mayor Stimpson

City Action:

The Mobile City Council unanimously approved the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan during Tuesday's regular Council meeting. Moving forward, the Administration is extending its planning horizon from a one-year view to a 5 to 10 year view – a best practice learned from other cities with successful capital programs. For the 2019 – 2024 planning period, the City will be developing a citywide "Program of Projects" in several major categories such as Traffic and Congestion Management, Roadway Reconstruction and Resurfacing, Stormwater and Drainage and Parks and Greenways. The work will continue to touch every area of Mobile, but the longer term view will allow for better alignment with partners such as Mobile County, so the City can leverage the CIP with their Pay as You Go program, or with the potential RESTORE money that will be released to this area for specific projects and programs.

Citywide Streets Assessment

- Completes a citywide roadway condition assessment.
- Prioritizes repairs based on current road condition.
- Develops predictable resurfacing cycles based on level of use.

Parks and Youth

- Addresses critical maintenance and repair needs in parks including drinking fountains, tables, grills, bleachers and athletic fields.
- Establishes new amenities, including a NFL Play60 playground in Trimmier Park and an outdoor pavilion in James Seals Park.
- Implements Parks ADA Accessibility Plan.

Three Mile Creek Greenway Trail

- Continues effort to create a 12 mile multi-modal pathway, connecting Langan Park to Downtown Mobile.
- Leverages additional funding (ex. RESTORE, CDBG, private-sector donations) for trail design and construction.
- Constructs and expands additional trails such as the Crepe Myrtle Trail.

Government Street Signal System Improvement

- Partner with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and ALDOT.
- Improves traffic flow along Government Street from Broad St. to the Bankhead Tunnel.

Reconstruction Designs

- St. Louis Street
- Texas Street (Ann St. to Broad St.)
- Glenwood Street (Airport Blvd. to Old Government St.)

Sidewalks

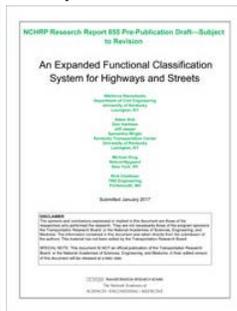
- Repairs existing sidewalks in addition to installing new sidewalks.
- Recent and upcoming areas of new sidewalk installation include:
 - Michael Blvd. (completed)
 - McGregor Ave. (under construction)
 - Navco Rd. (design work to begin in 2018)

Snapshot of 2016-2018 Capital Improvement Program:

- Roadway Resurfacing, Striping and Reconstruction - \$14,934,118
- Stormwater Management and Drainage Projects - \$13,374,000
- Parks and Recreation Facility Repairs and Improvements - \$12,590,728
- Sidewalk Repair and New Installations - \$5,086,071
- Traffic and Signal System Improvements - \$5,304,061
- Facility Repairs and Improvements - \$4,893,001
- Assessments, Program Management, and Contingencies - \$4,543,021
- MAWSS Joint Projects - \$1,350,000
- Bridge, Culvert, and Guardrail Repair - \$925,000

Transportation Research

An Expanded Functional Classification System for Highways and Streets



 [VIEW THIS PDF](#)

An Expanded Functional Classification System for Highways and Streets

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) has released a pre-publication, non-edited version of Research Report 855: An Expanded Functional Classification System for Highways and Streets. This report builds upon preliminary engineering of a design project, including developing the purpose and need. In particular, it provides additional contexts beyond urban and rural, facilitates accommodation of modes other than personal vehicles and adds overlays for transit and freight. Two case studies illustrating application of the expanded system to actual projects are included.

Project: [Project Information](#)

DOI: [10.17226/24775](#)

This Summary Last Modified On: 4/28/2017

Fostering Innovation in Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Pooled Fund Study

Call for participants ends May 31

Transportation agencies across the country are seeking ways to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility. However, existing research programs that advance innovation, such as the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, cannot meet the growing needs for pedestrian and bicyclist research. This Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) study will supplement existing research venues and fill an important missing gap by emphasizing short turnaround practical research on issues immediately relevant to practitioners. It will address national goals and priorities identified through input from local, state, and national partners in FHWA's Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation. The pooled fund will provide a mechanism for federal, state, regional, and local transportation agencies; academic institutions; foundations; private firms; and other stakeholders to collaboratively fund and implement pedestrian and bicycle research.

New FHWA Courses Available

A new FHWA course, [MAP-21 Transportation Performance Management Overview \(Including FAST Act Updates\)](#) is now available through the National Highway Institute. The one-day instructor-led course, FHWA-NHI-138004, provides an overview of TPM provisions of MAP-21 and the FAST Act; describes the responsibilities that agencies—federal, state, MPOs, RTPOs, and transit—have in delivering these requirements; highlights the importance of data in meeting performance management provisions; and shares noteworthy practices. The course is highly recommended for those interested in taking more detailed system-specific TPM implementation training. Practitioners may also be interested in [Transportation Performance Management Awareness – Federal Aid Version](#). This web-based course, FHWA-NHI-138001, provides an introduction to performance management, explains the critical role that the planning process plays in implementing a performance management program, and addresses what performance management means to FHWA.

BTS' National Transportation Statistics Updated

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) last Friday updated [National Transportation Statistics](#) (NTS) – a web-only reference guide to national-level transportation data. NTS, updated quarterly, includes a wide range of national transportation information. NTS consists of more than 260 tables of national data of which 36 were updated today. This quarter's updates are [Transportation System](#) (System Mileage Within the United States, U.S. Oil and Gas Pipeline Mileage, Condition of U.S. Bridges, U.S. Vehicle-Miles and U.S. Passenger-Miles); [Safety](#) (Transportation Fatalities by Mode, Injured Persons by Transportation Mode, Motor Vehicle Safety Data, Passenger Car Occupant Safety Data, Fatalities by Highest Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) in Highway Crashes); [Economy](#) (U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Attributed to For-Hire Transportation Services, Price Trends of Gasoline v. Other Consumer Goods and Services and Average Passenger Revenue per Passenger-Mile); and [Energy and the Environment](#) (Gasoline Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Sales, Energy Intensity of Passenger Cars, Other 2-Axle 4-Tire Vehicles, and Motorcycles, Average Fuel Efficiency of U.S. Passenger Cars and Light Trucks and Estimated National Emissions of six pollutants). The next quarterly update is scheduled for July 2017. [NTS](#) contents are available on the [BTS](#) website.

Upcoming Webinars to Focus on Multimodal Networks

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center is leading two webinars during the month of May that will focus on measuring, visualizing and developing multimodal transportation networks.

Incorporating Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

1:00-2:30 pm Eastern Time

[PBIC's May 10 webinar](#) will explore opportunities for bicycle network developing through regular resurfacing programs. With limited funds available to implement bicycle plans, communities are challenged to take advantage of ongoing maintenance and resurfacing efforts to support bicycle network development. This webinar will provide participants with a strategy for integrating bicycle facilities into their routine resurfacing programs, specifically through the use of Road Diets. Peter Lagerwey and Jeremy Chrzan from Toole Design Group will lead this session, which is based on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guide [Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects](#).

Measuring and Visualizing Multimodal Networks

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

1:00-2:30 pm Eastern Time

[The May 17 session](#) will document strategies agencies can use to measure and visualize their nonmotorized transportation networks. Eliot Rose of ICF and Dan Goodman of FHWA will share early findings and examples from a guidebook that FHWA is producing to help transportation agencies select connectivity measures based on the data and technical tools available, the scale of analysis, and point in the planning process at which measures are applied. Eli Glazier of Toole Design Group will share the results of an effort to document the variety of ways communities choose to visually represent their bicycle networks, drawing from FHWA's [Bike Network Mapping Idea Book](#).

New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

Download it Today



<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.