



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 13, 2016

Volume 18, Number 7

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The [I-10 Mobile River Bridge](#) is in today's (*In The News*) as it is listed as the second most needed project in the State by TRIP. May 31st is Rural ADA Day, 10:00 AM in SARPC Board Room. Please register if you plan on attending (*See RPO Updates*). We will have speakers discussing what is required of an ADA Transition Plan. The Mobile MPO announced the availability of it's **Mobile Urbanized FY 2016 TAP funding and the (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program ; both are due June 3rd- THERE ARE A LOT OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.** There will be a MPO meeting on June 1, 2016 and TCC/CAC meeting on May 18th (*see Mobile MPO Updates*). This week's *Just For Fun* is because of today's date...

Have a great weekend!

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Meeting June 1st, 2016; TCC/CAC Meeting on May 18th

There will be a MPO meeting on June 1st, 2016 to go over the Draft Unified Planning Work Program. The TCC/CAC will review the document on May 18th. The 2017 UPWP will be in the folders at these meetings and members will not get a copy mailed until later this summer. It must be adopted by September 15th, 2016. We did not have a quorum on March 2nd, those items that were on the March 2nd agenda will be on the agenda at the June 1st meeting.

MPO FUNDING

The Mobile MPO apportionment was increased with the passing of the new FAST ACT Transportation Funding Bill. The per capita amount was \$6.8 Million per year under the bill MAP-21. That has been increased to \$7.1 million per year, which equates to being able to program almost \$9 million per year once the 20% local match is included. Our Attributable funding schedule has been moved around a bit; however, even though we had an increase in potential funding, we are still negative in terms of budgeting projects in year 2020 and 2021.

FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Designated Recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 *Urban Area Funding* for the Mobile Urban Area. Our funding under the FAST ACT has been increased to \$314,000 annually.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. FTA provides funding for transit related services that assist the Mobile Urban Area's population of seniors & individuals with disabilities.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission by **noon on June 3, 2016**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. **Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.**

ADA TRANSITION PLANS

The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline (July 20th, 2016). Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator which creates a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The inventory is complete for all urban local governments within the Mobile MPO, and the consultant is now working with the ADA Coordinators on the text of each of the ADA documents, grievance procedures, and the potential for a full ADA Transition plan, not just Public Rights of Way. The deadline for Mobile County and the cities within the Mobile MPO to have an adopted ADA Transition Plan for public Rights of Way, is July of this year.

RPO Updates

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
Americans with Disabilities Workshop (ADA)
May 31, 2016, 10:00 AM, SARPC Board Room

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, cities and counties must remove barriers to provide access to programs and services in existing municipal / county facilities; this includes sidewalks and ramps. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission would like to provide a workshop to its RPO member governments to educate local agencies on the importance of having an ADA Transition Plan, and being compliant with the ADA.

Some common problems local governments may have (from ADA.GOV)

- Local governments often have failed to ensure that the whole range of the city's services, municipal buildings, and programs meet Title II's program access requirements.
- Local governments may believe that they have no duty to make changes to historically significant buildings and facilities to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Local governments often do not provide necessary curb ramps to ensure that people with disabilities can travel throughout the city in a safe and convenient manner.
- Local governments often fail to provide qualified interpreters or assistive listening devices for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at public events or meetings. In addition, local governments often fail to provide materials in alternate formats (Braille, large print, or audio cassettes) to individuals who are blind or have low vision.
- Local governments may fail to consider reasonable modifications in local laws, ordinances, and regulations that would avoid discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

We will have several speakers concerning ADA Compliance as it pertains to local governments. Please register with Monica Williamson at mwilliamson@sarp or (251)706-4613. Lunch will be provided, so there will be a \$15 registration fee cash or check. Please register by 5/28/2016.

Projects Within Region Let May 27th, 2016

Mobile County

For constructing the Demolition of Building Structures and Site Improvements on Old Water Street, Eslava Street, Royal Street, and Water Street in Mobile. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$163,960 to \$200,396

Baldwin County

There are no projects at this time.

Escambia County

There are no projects at this time.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Bad roads, bridges could pare \$4T from GDP in a decade

[John W. Schoen | @johnwschoen](#)
Thursday, 12 May 2016 | 9:41 AM ET

America is falling apart. And the repair bill is getting bigger.

That's the conclusion of the latest "report card" on American roads, bridges, airports, power grid and other critical infrastructure from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Over the next decade, it would cost more than \$3.3 trillion to keep up with repairs and replacements, but based on current funding levels, the nation will come up more than \$1.4 trillion short, the group says. When projected to 2040, the shortfall is expected to top \$5 trillion, unless new funds are allocated.

Without that investment, the group said in its report this week, Americans can look forward to more highway traffic jams, airport bottlenecks and potential power outages. The deterioration of U.S. ports, roads, trains, water and electric facilities will also take an economic toll, the engineers said, cutting payroll growth by some 2.5 million jobs and some \$4 trillion of gross domestic product in lost sales and higher costs.

"America is currently spending more failing to act on its infrastructure gap than it would to close it," said Greg DiLoreto, the society's past president and chairman of the Committee for America's Infrastructure.

The funding gap hasn't escaped the attention of the three remaining presidential candidates. In a rare example of consensus, both Republican Donald Trump and Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders agree that the U.S. needs to make a substantial investment in rebuilding.

Sanders has proposed spending \$1 trillion to create more than 13 million new jobs to rebuild highways, airports and other public infrastructure, noting that these "are jobs that cannot be shipped offshore or outsourced overseas."

Clinton wants to commit \$275 billion in public funds over five years, including \$25 billion for a national infrastructure bank to generate another \$225 billion in direct loans, loan guarantees and other forms of credit.

And while Trump has not proposed a specific funding level, he says he's in favor of major public investment in infrastructure repair and expansion.

"We're spending billions of dollars protecting countries that should be paying us to do the job yet we can't build roads in our own cities, he wrote in "Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again." "If we do what we have to do correctly, we can create the biggest economic boom in this country since the New Deal when our vast infrastructure was first put into place. It's a no-brainer."

Funding Opportunities

FRA Announces \$25 Million Available for Rail Infrastructure Safety Upgrades Administration has requested \$2.3 billion in FY2017 budget: due June 14th

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that it is accepting applications from local governments, states and railroads for \$25 million in competitive grants to increase rail safety. Applicants can request funds for safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, including railroad crossings, track, tunnels, bridges, yards and other areas. The funding is made available from the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act that funds DOT.

"As the country's population increases, rail will play a larger role in transporting more people and more freight. To do that safely, we must invest in our rail infrastructure," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "These funds will help address some of the improvements that are essential for safe, reliable, and efficient railroad operations, and I encourage applications that achieve the maximum benefits possible with this limited funding."

FRA will accept applications until 5 PM EDT on June 14, 2016.

"To safely move tons of freight and millions of passengers each day in this country, we need to continually invest in safety. These dollars will help get us closer to that goal," FRA Administrator Sarah E. Feinberg said. "We hope to receive applications that can make these limited funds go as far as possible."

The Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvements Grant program can fund safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, but the focus of a project must be safety improvements. This includes the acquisition, improvement, or rehabilitation of intermodal facilities; improvements to track, bridges, and tunnels; upgrades to railroad crossings; and the separation of railroad crossings and roads.

FRA requested a total of \$2.3 billion for rail infrastructure safety upgrades as part of the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal. This includes \$520 million for competitive local rail facilities and safety project grants and \$1.8 billion for competitive rail infrastructure and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance grants.

2016 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Announcement - due June 3, 2016

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as the recipient of Urban Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, is announcing the availability of the FY 2016 TAP funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal) and the minimum match is 20%. Due to limited funding, only one application per entity will be accepted, and **only cities and counties that are members of the Mobile MPO may apply.**

New this round of funding is that estimates for the application's budget must be developed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Alabama.

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.

Ten (10) copies of the application are due no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, June 3, 2016. Applications (paper only) are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) at:

SARPC
110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207
Mobile, AL 36602

You can pick up an application at our offices, or we can mail you the application and guidelines. Electronic versions of the applications are available online at www.mobilempo.org. Click the Mobile MPO tab, then the Transportation Alternatives tab.

EVERY PLACE COUNTS DESIGN CHALLENGE- Deadline June 3rd, 2016

The Ladders of Opportunity **EVERY PLACE COUNTS DESIGN CHALLENGE** seeks to raise awareness about bifurcated neighborhoods, identify innovative practices to reconnect communities, and inform the transportation life cycle.

Community Teams led by local and tribal government officials will compete to receive on-site technical assistance in a 2-day design session that seeks to improve access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for disconnected communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas with DOT and experts in the field.

Official Challenge Notice

Download the challenge notice with complete application information [HERE](http://www.transportation.gov/opportunity/challenge/notice):
www.transportation.gov/opportunity/challenge/notice.

EDA releases FY 2016 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Funding Opportunity, announces new grant process to stream application process

EDA recently released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice announcing the availability of funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. The Public Works program is designed to provide funding for design, construction, or renovation of critical public infrastructure needed to create or retain jobs in a locality. The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program provides resources for both design, construction and renovation as well as technical assistance to support long-term job creation/retention in cases of sudden and severe economic events.

This funding solicitation also announced that EDA is moving towards a two-step application process where applicants can submit a proposal at any time to determine alignment with EDA priorities before submitting a full application. This means there are **no longer any quarterly deadlines for the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact EDA's state representative to develop their project and EDA application. To learn more about EDA's grant programs and opportunities, please feel free to contact Diane Burnett at dburnett@sarpc.org.

Federal Highway Administration Announces \$60 Million in Grants for Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies- Deadline June 3rd

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced \$60 million in grants to fund cutting-edge transportation improvement technologies that will improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure return on investment.

"This program will take technological innovation to a new level and help to make the entire transportation network more reliable for commuters, businesses, and freight shippers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "An efficient transportation system is the foundation of a strong economy."

The new program—Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD)—is aimed at addressing the concerns outlined in *Beyond Traffic*, the USDOT report issued last year that examines the challenges facing America's transportation infrastructure over the next three decades, such as a rapidly growing population and increasing traffic. Gridlock nationwide is expected to increase unless changes are made soon.

"Innovative technologies offer exciting solutions that can help meet the challenges outlined in *Beyond Traffic* and can improve safety and efficiency of transportation across the nation," said Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "This new program will help harness and support these technologies and push the boundaries of what is possible for the future of transportation in our country."

ATCMTD technologies are intended to improve the return-on-investment of safety, efficiency, system performance and infrastructure improvements, including the enhanced use of existing transportation capacity. The awards may be used for projects that use real-time traveler information, traffic data collection and dissemination, vehicle-to-infrastructure and an array of other dynamic systems and intelligent transportation system technologies.

ATCMTD was established under the "Fixing America's Surface Transportation" Act. State departments of transportation, local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations and other eligible entities are all invited to apply under the program.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published today is available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/funding.cfm

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Transit Core Capacity Improvement Projects

FTA announced the availability of \$20.5 million in competitive grant funds to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects that are seeking or have recently received funding through FTA's Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program. The grant funds are provided through FTA's Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. Please see the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and a summary of the funding opportunity with links to application materials is available on the [FTA website](#). **Applications are due at midnight Eastern time on June 13, 2016.**

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$266 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Bus Service Nationwide - deadline May 31st, 2016

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$266 million in competitive grant funding for bus programs nationwide. The funding consists of \$211 million in grants for buses and bus facilities projects, as well as \$55 million specifically for FTA's Low and No Emission (Low-No) bus program, which promotes technologically-advanced and environmentally-friendly buses. These investments will help advance the President's vision for a cleaner, 21st century transportation system that reduces carbon emissions while expanding transportation options for families.

"Transit buses are a lifeline to opportunity for countless Americans, but too often these buses are outdated and unreliable," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "As demand for transit grows and our nation's population continues to expand, these much-needed funds will help bring communities the latest technologies to strengthen and improve their bus infrastructure."

Eligible projects include those that replace, rehabilitate, lease, and purchase buses and related equipment as well as projects to purchase, rehabilitate, construct or lease bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance.

“Our state and local partners across the country will benefit from the increased funding and flexibility available through this program,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. “With a large and growing maintenance backlog throughout the public transportation industry, it is vital for local agencies to have additional resources to address their community’s needs.”

FTA will award the grants to eligible transit agencies, state transportation departments, and Indian tribes on a competitive basis. Projects will be evaluated by criteria outlined in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), including the need for investment in bus transit systems, benefits to the community (including economic and workforce development), implementation of low and no-emission technologies, and integration with local and regional long-term planning.

Transportation contributes about 27 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and the Administration has committed to major reductions in emissions. The FTA funds to help public transportation agencies purchase advanced technology, clean and efficient buses will help to reduce transportation emissions.

The Low-No Bus Program is a down payment on the administration’s 2017 budget proposal. Over a 10-year period, the “21st Century Clean Transportation Plan” invests an average of nearly \$20 billion per year in new funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide new ways for families to get to work, to school, and to the store. The Budget would expand transit systems in cities, fast-growing suburbs, and rural areas; make high-speed rail a viable alternative to flying in major regional corridors; modernize our freight system; and expand the successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program to support high-impact, innovative local projects.

The [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in December 2015, restored FTA’s competitive Bus & Bus Facilities Program, authorizing it through 2020. The FAST Act also made the Low-No program, previously funded and managed under FTA’s research programs, a subset of the larger competitive bus program.

The previous round of Low-No funding was [announced](#) in September 2015, and project selections are expected in the coming months.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$5.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Mobility Focused on Healthcare

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the availability of \$5.3 million in competitive grant funds to improve public transportation options that increase access to healthcare for those who lack good transportation choices.

“We know it can be challenging for many people to travel to medical appointments, and missing them can lead to re-hospitalizations and poorer health,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “This new grant opportunity sets the stage for transit agencies and community organizations to develop local solutions that provide ladders of opportunity, improve health outcomes, and reduce health care costs.”

FTA’s Rides to Wellness Demonstration and Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grants will help build partnerships between health, transportation and other service providers to develop strategies that connect patients with public transportation options. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) appeared in today’s Federal Register.

The grants will further FTA’s Rides to Wellness initiative, which emphasizes public transportation as a strategy for people to access health services, resulting in greater preventive care, fewer unnecessary hospital readmissions, and lower costs. The initiative focuses on improving outcomes for those with chronic conditions and ensuring that at-risk populations can get to wellness visits, healthy food, and community services.

In part to help people take advantage of the healthcare expansion made possible by the Affordable Care Act, Rides to Wellness Coordinated Access and Mobility grants will encourage partnerships between public transportation agencies and the healthcare industry to devise solutions to access challenges.

“We’re excited at this opportunity to fund creative ideas that will result in solutions to the healthcare transportation puzzle,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan, who launched the Rides to Wellness initiative last year. “We know that when people have consistent, affordable transportation options to get to their healthcare providers, they receive appropriate preventive care instead of using emergency rooms and suffer fewer costly setbacks.”

The grants will focus on communities demonstrating mobility management, technological solutions, and effective partnerships. Grant applicants must include participating groups with stakeholders from the transportation, healthcare and human service sectors.

The [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), signed into law in December, authorizes a pilot program for innovative coordinated access and mobility that augments FTA’s Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. The FAST Act initiated the program with an initial \$2 million in first-year funding, expanding to \$3.5 million per year by Fiscal Year 2019. FTA supplemented the pilot program with funds from FTA’s Research Program.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces Notice of Funding Availability for Infrastructure Projects

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the availability of credit assistance for critical infrastructure projects across the country through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. Secretary Foxx encouraged states and cities across the country to submit letters of interest for direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit through TIFIA as a result of the recently enacted Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

“The TIFIA credit program has a strong record of success in stimulating local economies and bringing critical transportation projects to

communities that need them,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “This year, the added flexibility and streamlined review process should make it easier for a variety of applicants to take advantage of the funding opportunities, and to bring significant infrastructure developments to their neighborhoods.”

The FAST Act authorizes \$1.435 billion in capital over five years for the TIFIA credit assistance program. Historically, one dollar of TIFIA Program funds supported a TIFIA loan of approximately 14 dollars and resulted in infrastructure investment of up to 40 dollars, when taking into account other state, local and private sector investments.

A wide range of surface transportation infrastructure is eligible for TIFIA credit assistance, including highways, passenger and freight rail, public transit, intermodal freight facilities, and international bridges and tunnels. The FAST Act expands eligibility to include transit-oriented development and the capitalization of a rural projects fund within a state infrastructure bank.

In addition, for eligible small projects, the FAST Act allows TIFIA to reserve funding to offset the fees charged to applicants by TIFIA for financial and legal services. Because of the flexibility provided by the TIFIA programs, many qualified, small-scale and large-scale projects that might otherwise be delayed or shelved can move forward quickly, providing an immediate boost to jobs while laying a foundation for continued economic growth.

To date, the TIFIA program has provided \$22.7 billion in credit assistance to support more than \$82.5 billion in transportation infrastructure investments to help build 56 major transportation projects around the country. Updated information regarding TIFIA’s loan portfolio is available [here](#).

DOT’s Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC), which was announced in 2014, has expanded TIFIA’s ability to meet the needs of the nation’s transportation system. BATIC serves as a single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities, and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs, and explore ways to access private capital in public private partnerships (P3s). Since BATIC’s formation, DOT has closed over \$8 billion in financing to support \$21 billion in projects.

BATIC has also increased the number of non-traditional DOT credit program applicants, most significantly TIFIA-eligible inside-the-gate port projects. BATIC has facilitated interdepartmental coordination for mega-projects that need to access multiple DOT credit programs. It is also providing project finance capacity building resources for states and municipalities in conjunction with the BATIC Institute: An AASHTO Center for Excellence, which includes best practices papers, a P3 case study webinar series, and peer to peer exchanges on finance and development.

The TIFIA Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is available [here](#). Additional information about the TIFIA program is available at <http://www.transportation.gov/tifia>.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

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

It is Friday the 13th

Are you Superstitious? Here is a spell that is claimed to protect you in your car, using a plastic dragon. The dragon is an ancient mythical animal that is a symbol of protection.



[Hold the dragon in your hand. Charge it with the power of your thoughts. Visualize it protecting your car from accidents, theft, vandalism, storms and tickets. Hang the dragon from your windshield and ask the spirit you have invoked to be inside it to protect you and the car at all times. Then visualize the entire car surrounded in white lights. Use the car spell for protection so that you can enjoy your vehicle without the worry of keeping it safe.]

There are some pretty superstitious folks in Louisiana. When they dredged the Vermilion River in Lafayette,

they found ["bottle spells" that littered the river](#). They need some Dog River liter traps to prevent the Vermilion River from being....spellbound.

Answers to last week's *Just For Fun* riddles:

1. A map.
2. The letter A.
3. They all make right turns.
4. The cars are traveling in opposite directions.
5. Six, four for the road, one to steer with, and a spare in case of a flat.
6. The black car was a hearse on the way to a funeral.
7. So they cannot fall through the hole

In the News

The Top 50 Highway Projects to Support Economic Growth and Quality of Life in Alabama

Founded in 1971, TRIP[®] of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

TRIP has identified the 50 highway projects that are most needed to support Alabama's economic growth. These projects are located throughout the state.

- The most needed highway improvements in Alabama include projects to build, expand or modernize roads, highways and bridges throughout the state. These improvements would enhance economic development opportunities throughout the state by increasing mobility and freight movement, easing congestion, and making Alabama an attractive place to live, visit and do business.
- TRIP evaluated each project based on the following criteria: short-term economic benefits, including job creation; the level of improvement in the condition of the transportation facility, including safety improvements; the degree of improvement in access and mobility; and the long-term improvement provided in regional or state economic performance and competitiveness.
- The needed highway projects identified in the TRIP report would require an investment of \$4.6 billion to complete.
- The needed improvements identified in this report include 10 widening projects on 63 miles of Alabama's Interstate highway system. Based on forecast traffic growth, approximately 630 miles of Alabama's Interstate Highway System are currently or will become congested and will need additional capacity to accommodate economic growth in the state. • Alabama's 20 most needed highway projects to support economic development in the state as determined by TRIP follow. Additional details for these and all 50 projects can be found in the report's Appendix.

Here are the TOP 4 OF 50:

1. **Adding lanes to a portion of I-65 in Shelby County.** This \$54 million project would add lanes to 3.5 miles of I-65 from US 31 to CR-52. This suburban commuter route experiences frequent congestion, traffic delays and resulting safety issues. Added capacity will facilitate continued growth in the area, improve mobility and reduce traffic delays while enhancing safety.
2. **Capacity improvements on I-10 from downtown Mobile across the Mobile Bay.** This \$850 million project would expand the capacity of 1.5 miles of I-10 in Mobile from Texas Street to the Eastern Shore. I-10 is a critical freight route carrying large volumes from Gulf of Mexico ports across the nation. Traffic is currently constricted by a fourlane tunnel, causing delays, frequent congestion and safety concerns. Added capacity will 3 facilitate continued growth in the area, improve mobility and reduce traffic delays while enhancing safety.
3. **Expand capacity of I-59 in Birmingham.** Improvements are needed to expand capacity and enhance mobility on 8.5 miles of I-59 in Birmingham from 1st Avenue North to Chalkville Road. This urban interstate route is experiencing growth and frequent congestion, delays and safety issues. Added capacity will facilitate continued growth in the area, improve mobility and reduce traffic delays while enhancing safety.
4. **Widening US 98 to four lanes from the Mississippi State Line to Mobile.** This \$36 million project would widen 12 miles of US 98 to four lanes from the Mississippi state line to Mobile. This corridor is one of the highest volume two-lane roads in the state. Crashes occur at a high frequency and commuters experience daily delays during peak travel periods. Widening will ease congestion, reduce delays, improve safety and enhance the economic potential for the route

http://www.tripnet.org/docs/AL_Economic_Development_TRIP_Report_February_2016.pdf

As a side note, [this](#) is interesting.

As summer looms, I-10 bridge clamor builds anew



By [John Sharp | jsharp@al.com](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on May 11, 2016 at 2:36 PM

Memorial Day weekend is the symbolic start of summer in the coast, a time of flip-flops, backyard barbecues and weekends on the

water. It's also the start of the annual Interstate 10 Wallace Tunnel bottleneck in Mobile as tens of thousands of vacationers travel to and from the beaches in Alabama and points east.

Mobile area civic leaders remain focused on the ultimate solution to this problem: An \$850 million [new bridge over the Mobile River and a widening of the I-10 Bayway](#).

A lot of work needs to happen before construction crews arrive. In the short-term, local officials are waiting on a series of reports they believe will provide more insight into how much the project will ultimately cost.

"The conversation often comes down to financing," acknowledged Mike Lee, chairman of the "Build the Bridge" coalition.

A series of deadlines are approaching, Lee said, for Daphne-based Thompson Engineering to provide reports. Among them is a storm surge analysis that looks into the impact hurricanes might have on a newly reconstructed Bayway.

An Alabama Department of Transportation official said that the analysis – along with a host of other studies related to the project – will be in public hands this fall. That's when a tentative report on the final environmental impact study could also be released.

"We want to get through this process and unveil it all at once," said Matt Erickson, assistant region engineer with ALDOT.

Among the other studies is one gauging the feasibility of a toll to pay for portions of the bridge construction. Also, [Thompson Engineering](#) and ALDOT plan to look into the possibility of adding bike or walking paths to the bridge. Erickson said there will be public meetings on that issue later this fall.

Another ongoing assessment, Erickson said, is the configuration of the I-10 interchanges and on/off ramps between Virginia Street and U.S. 98 in Daphne. "There is a lot going on," he said.



[As planning for the I-10 Bridge project inches forward, Baldwin County officials ask: What about us?](#)

The environmental impact study released by the federal government in July had the \$850 million Interstate 10 project terminating at the Route 90/98 interchange in Daphne. But officials acknowledge that the expansion of I-10 will likely have to extend farther east in order to prevent more bottlenecks from occurring.

'Finance this'

Lee said timing is crucial. If a funding mechanism isn't in place by January 2017, "you'll slow things down," he said.

"Federal highway officials came down here to talk to our officials and ALDOT back in the fall, and they laid out several ... a half-dozen ways to finance this," Lee said. "There is no question there is a way to do this. But you need the political will to pick one."

Local leaders were emboldened by [an August visit to Mobile from U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx](#), who touted creative financing packages being explored by the federal government to help pay for major infrastructure projects like I-10.

But Foxx's tenure with the department is likely short-lived, and a new presidential administration will be in place by the time financing talks heat up.

Also at issue is the long-term status of Gov. Robert Bentley, who has expressed interest in moving the project forward. Bentley [could face impeachment](#) for a scandal involving his relationship with former political adviser Rebekah Caldwell Mason.

"Certainly we don't need to get caught into limbo here and lose another one and a half years," Lee said. "There is no excuse for not picking (a financial plan) and going forward. I think the 'Build the Bridge' coalition will be strongly pushing that with all of our political leadership."

ALDOT announced last week it was submitting an application for a \$500 million [FASTLANE grant](#), which is a federal discretionary program scheduled to be announced later this month. But the program is providing only up to \$800 million total for projects throughout the U.S.

Erickson said, "If we don't get this grant this year, we'll have plans to apply for next year." He said the Federal Highway Administration will debrief applicants on what the agency likes and dislikes about their projects, allowing them to make new, more favorable submissions.

The approval of a six-year transportation spending bill last year also looms as [a potential source of assistance](#). The \$4.5 billion bill establishes grants for "nationally significant freight and highway" projects. Local officials believe that I-10 fits the criteria.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, and a staunch proponent of the I-10 project, said money coming into Alabama from the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) can be applied for hurricane route construction, and could also be tapped for the bridge and the Bayway widening. GOMESA money is expected to be available to Alabama by next year.

Transportation Research

Guidebook for Developing Pedestrian and Bicycle Performance Measures

This new FHWA [guidebook](#) discusses how communities can measure bicycle and pedestrian investments and the data required. It provides several performance measures and examples of communities currently using the measures.

Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects

This FHWA [report](#) provides guidance for transportation agencies interested in integrating bicycle facilities into their resurfacing program. Guidance includes methods for fitting bicycle facilities onto existing roads, cost considerations, and case studies.

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts

An upcoming public webinar will provide an overview of FHWA's forthcoming *Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts* report. This resource will highlight examples of design flexibility as a follow-up to FHWA's [Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility Memorandum](#). It will cover planning and design solutions for reducing conflicts between modes, enhancing access to opportunity, achieving connected pedestrian and bicycle networks, and reconnecting communities. The webinar will provide an overview of core concepts in the final report, anticipated to be released in May 2016. The webinar on April 11th will focus on planning and design strategies to reduce conflicts between modes.

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts – Webinar 2 (Reducing Conflicts between Modes) (Open to the Public)

April 11, 2016: 2:00-3:30 pm (Eastern Time)

Registration is now open. To reserve your seat, please visit

<https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=955>

If this link does not work, please copy the link and paste it into your browser.

Building Healthy Places Toolkit

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) released [Building Healthy Places Toolkit: Strategies for Enhancing Health in the Built Environment](#) to provide guidance on creating healthy, vibrant communities. The toolkit builds on previous ULI efforts, including the [Building Healthy Places Initiative](#) and [Healthy Corridors Project](#).

[See the Future of Transportation](#)