



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 9th 2016

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In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- South AL RPO Updates
- PROJECTS LET August 26th, 2016
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- JUST FOR FUN
- IN THE NEWS
- TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

Recently Completed Planning Studies

- Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Tooie Design Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile
- 2016 Unified Planning Work Program
- 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program
- Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

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New Funding Announced for FTA JARC and New Freedom (That's SAFETEA-LU); See *Funding Opportunities*. The Mobile MPO meeting is September 14th at **9:30 AM** in the SARPC Board Room, and the TCC/CAC met last week (please see *Mobile MPO Updates*). There is a South Alabama RPO meeting scheduled (See *South Alabama RPO Updates*). There will be a Public Meeting concerning Alabama's 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan on September 27, 2016, and the FAST ACT required some *fast work* of the Gulf Coast Working Group to restore passenger rail on the Gulf Coast (Please See *In The News*). Don't speed to it, but check out this week's *Just For Fun*.

Have a great weekend! And check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel; you can read what is on the message signs!

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

www.mobilempo.org  check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

The Mobile MPO will meet at 9:30 Wednesday Sept 14th

The TCC/CAC met last week and recommended several agenda items to the MPO Policy Board which will meet on **September 14th, 2016 at 9:30 AM**. One of the items on the agenda was the Self Certification resolution. You may recall this was on the agenda in July of 2015. However, because of the ADA Transition Plans not being completed, we could not in good faith self-certify ourselves. One year and few months later, we do have nine adopted ADA Transition Plans for Public ROW. The TCC/CAC noted at Wednesday's meeting that the City of Mobile had not had their ADA Transition Plan adopted, and recommended approval of the Self Certification subsequent the adoption of the City of Mobile's Plan. Since Wednesday's meeting, the City of Mobile has adopted their Plan. The Self Certification will be on September 14th Agenda. A couple other items include the adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program and an amendment to the TIP for FTA 5310 funds. There was a lengthy discussion on the Urban TAP Funds, however that discussion was tabled. A committee will most likely be comprised and we will seek guidance from the FHWA and ALDOT concerning the TAP funds and the FHWA recommendation for a multi-year schedule of projects. We will keep you posted.

Also, the Mobile MPO Congestion Management Process (CMP) is in need of an overhaul. Staff has been contemplating on what the CMP is lacking, and how to improve it. Next week is a workshop in Birmingham on integrating operations and maintenance into the MPO Planning Process to help us with our thought process. We are also looking into HERE data to replace the laborious travel time studies that we have conducted for the past 20 years. With today's technology and cell phone/GPS data, that data is already collected.

Recent scheduling changes

Project : 100043178 (UT)

Project Description : CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) ADD LANES FROM ATHEY RD TO FORREST HILL DRIVE

Old Target start date : October 01, 2016

New Target start date : December 01, 2016

Project : 100065368 (CN)

Project Description : CLEARING AND GRUBBING ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BOULEVARD) FROM ATHEY ROAD TO FORREST HILL DRIVE

Old Target start date : December 02, 2016

New Target start date : February 24, 2017

Project : 100065216 (CN)

Project Description : INSTALLATION OF PRECAST CONCRETE PAVEMENT SYSTEM ON I-165 SB SERVICE ROAD LEFT TURN LANES JUST WEST OF BAY BRIDGE ROAD SR-16 (US-90)

Old Target start date : December 02, 2016

New Target start date : January 27, 2017

Project : 100055108 (CN)

Project Description : I-10 ROADWAY LIGHTING REHAB FROM SR-16 (EXIT 27) TO SR-16 (EXIT 35) ALONG THE BAYWAY BRIDGE

Old Target start date : November 04, 2016

New Target start date : November 03, 2017

Project : 100052448 (RW)

Project Description : MCDONALD ROAD (CR-39) ADDITIONAL LANES FROM NORTH OF I-10 TO OLD PASCAGOULA ROAD.

Old Target start date : November 01, 2016

New Target start date : January 01, 2017

Project : 100058747 (CN)

Project Description : RESURFACING I-65 FROM MAIN STREET TO NORTH OF SR-158

Old Engineers Estimate : \$8,180,260.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$11,371,481.93

Project : 100065216 (CN)

Project Description : INSTALLATION OF PRECAST CONCRETE PAVEMENT SYSTEM ON I-165 SB SERVICE ROAD LEFT TURN LANES JUST WEST OF BAY BRIDGE ROAD SR-16 (US-90)

Old Engineers Estimate : \$606,000.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$742,250.70

MPO Safety Performance Measures Fact Sheet

FHWA recently announced the availability of four new resources online to help states and other stakeholders implement the Safety Performance Management Measures Final Rule. The resources include a safety performance targets timeline and a list of data resources and training support. In addition, the [MPO Safety Performance Measures Fact Sheet](#) summarizes the requirements for MPOs and compares the different responsibilities with state DOTs.

ADA TRANSITION PLANS

The ALDOT deadline of July 20th to have an adopted ADA Transition Plan for Public ROW within an Urban Area has been extended until September of this year. We will have an MPO meeting on September 14th to adopt the Mobile MPO Self-Certification, as we can say with sincere honesty, that yes we have nine ADA Transition Plans for Public ROW. We are currently working on a Mobile MPO ADA Web page that will eventually have links to the nine plans, and ADA Coordinators.

The inventory is complete, public meetings have been had, and final plans have been adopted. I want to thank everyone for getting these plans adopted as fast as you have been. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Harrison.

FTA 5310 FUNDING

The Mobile MPO is the Designated Recipient of the FTA 5310 Urban Area funding. Available this fiscal year was \$110,042 (federal) for operating and \$387,964 (federal) for capital. The Independent Living Center, City of Satsuma, and the Mobile ARC were awarded operating funds for FY 2017. Mobile ARC, The Learning Tree, Independent Living Center, and Alta Pointe were awarded capital grants totaling \$377,164 federal dollars for 2017. Congratulations to the grantees.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDING

The Mobile MPO is also the Designated Recipient of Urban Area TAP funds. We had available this fiscal year \$551,000 in federal funds. Congratulations to Mobile County for their ADA Compliance TAP Project, and the City of Mobile for Sidewalks along Bit and Spur form Old Shell Rd to University Blvd and Old Shell Rd Sidewalk Improvements from Union Ave to Hyland Avenue.

The FHWA has recommended to us that we schedule it much like our STP Attributable funds. This could mean our next call for projects will be for those three years. There was a lengthy discussion at the August 31st TCC/CAC meeting, however that discussion was tabled. A committee will most likely be comprised and we will seek guidance from the FHWA and ALDOT concerning the TAP funds and the FHWA recommendation for a schedule of projects. We need to think about the funding agreements, a ranking methodology much like the TIP Project ranking methodology, funding agreement extensions, etc.

South Alabama RPO Updates

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) will host a meeting of the **Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee** at **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsdale, Alabama.**

Items on the agenda include adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting, the election of a vice-chairperson, review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2017 Work Program, updating the RPO Transportation Plan and list of Safety Needs, and a discussion of current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia Counties.

If you want to add items on the agenda or if you have any questions or comments regarding the above information, feel free to call us at (251) 706- 4622.

If you are a voting member and are unable to attend the meeting you may send a proxy in your place.

Projects Within Region Let August 26th, 2016

Mobile County

- For constructing the Partial Bridge Deck Repair/Replacement on I-65 Northbound and Southbound Bridges over Cottage Hill Road in Mobile. Length 0.232 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,180,941 to \$1,443,373 .

Baldwin County

- For constructing the Median Improvements and Beautification (Widening, Resurfacing, Traffic Stripe and Signals) on SR-182 from near the junction of Loop Road (MP 12.264) to just east of the Cotton Bayou Beach Access (MP 13.343). Length 1.032 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,633,329 to \$3,218,513.
- For constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on CR-10 (Keller Road) over Boggy Branch south of Foley. Length 0.769 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$648,376 to \$792,459.
- For constructing the Adaptive Signal Installations along SR-42 (US-98) at various locations as indicated in the plans. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,793,964 to \$2,192,622.

Escambia County

There are no projects at this time.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Alabama House approves BP, Medicaid settlement

SOUTH UNION STREET
Brian Lyman, Montgomery Advertiser 5:25 p.m. CDT September 7, 2016

The Alabama House of Representatives Wednesday voted 87 to 9 to approve a compromise BP settlement that would allocate \$400 million of the estimated \$639 million settlement to repayment of state debts. That should free \$70 million for the Medicaid program in 2017. The bill would also allocate \$15 million of the money directly to Medicaid, which would give the program the funding it says it needs to maintain services next year, and \$105 million in fiscal year 2018.

The agreement -- which still needs approval of the Senate -- would also allocate \$120 million for road projects in Mobile and Baldwin counties. That was and continues to be a point of dispute between north Alabama legislators, who pushed for a higher debt payment to free more long-term money for the Medicaid program, and south Alabama legislators, who said their region needed the money after bearing the brunt of the damage from the oil spill.

"This is best report you can see and the alternative to this would be nothing," said Senate Finance and Taxation General Fund chairman Trip Pittman, R-Montrose, the only member of the conference committee from coastal Alabama.

Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, who pushed a substitute that eliminated the road money for coastal Alabama in order to provide more Medicaid funding, was the only conferee who refused to sign the report. Orr and other senators say there should be more money for the future needs of the Medicaid program, which could request \$865 million in state money in 2018, about \$165 million more than their current request. The senator said that was particularly pressing with the chamber's stated resistance to new taxes, transfers out of the Education Trust Fund or gaming, the chamber had to make that choice.

"We're looking at a fiscal cliff, and I don't think there's any disagreement about that," he said.

Medicaid covers 1 million Alabamians, the vast majority of whom are children, elderly and the disabled. The program also plays a key role in keeping the state's hospitals and primary care providers, particularly pediatric offices, open. The agency is slated to receive \$85 million less than officials say it needs in the 2017 General Fund budget, which goes into effect Oct. 1. The deficit has led the agency to [cut reimbursements to doctors](#), which has forced some primary care providers to lay off employees and could increase waiting times for both Medicaid recipients and those with private insurance.

There was plenty of pessimism Tuesday about the chances of getting a compromise out. But Wednesday morning, legislative leaders tried to sound optimistic.

The road money element is the main source of contention. Mobile and Baldwin counties were hit hardest by the 2010 Gulf oil spill, which not only wrecked the tourism and seafood industries but led to elevated levels of depression in the area for years after the disaster. Coastal legislators say that billions of dollars that have done to the coast went mainly to clean-up and recovery efforts, and done little for the economic suffering of the area.

Under a proposal sponsored by Clouse and passed by the House last month, Mobile and Baldwin counties would have received \$191 million for two road projects in south Alabama -- one to improve Highway 98 and the other for the Baldwin Beach Express.

That gave some legislators pause. With the Senate defeating a lottery proposal that could have given at least a few years of stability to the General Fund and Medicaid, a handful of north Alabama senators -- joined by six of the eight members of the Democratic Caucus -- pushed to reduce or eliminate the road money for south Alabama and move those funds to Medicaid, to provide at least a few years of stability for the program and possibly allow implementation of regional care organizations (RCOs), which aim to slow cost growth in the program by moving Medicaid recipients into a managed care type setting.

The Senate voted 21 to 9 Tuesday to adopt a substitute sponsored by Orr that eliminated the road money for coastal Alabama. It allocates \$161 million to completely pay back money borrowed from the General Fund's Rainy Day Fund in 2009 and \$162 million to pay back an estimated \$422 million still outstanding from \$437 million borrowed from the Alabama Trust Fund in 2012. It also provided \$135 million to Medicaid in 2018 and \$150 million to the program in 2019.

Sen. Rodger Smitherman, D-Birmingham, said the Democratic caucus would be looking for multiyear Medicaid funding in any compromise that emerges. That, he said, is what drew Democrats to Orr's bill.

"It provides additional revenue above and beyond what Clouse's bill is proving," he said.

The conference committee report allocates more money to debt repayment than Orr's bill. It maintains the \$161 million to the Rainy Day Account -- which must be paid by 2020 -- but increases the payment to the Alabama Trust Fund to \$238.4 million. Of the road money, \$65 million would go to improve Highway 98 and \$55 million would go to the Alabama Department of Transportation district in Baldwin County, where the beach express is located. Continue [HERE](#)

Local leaders react to BP oil spill settlement bill

BY MURIEL BAILEY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH 2016



<http://local15tv.com/news/local/local-leaders-react-to-bp-oil-spill-settlement-bill>

BALDWIN COUNTY, Ala. (WPML) — If Governor Bentley signs the current BP oil spill settlement bill Mobile and Baldwin counties will get \$120 million. That's \$71 million less than originally planned. Baldwin County Commissioner Tucker Dorsey says it's not what they anticipated but it's better than nothing.

"This is a blessing at this point," Dorsey said. "We're glad it's behind us and we can get to work with a known quantity instead of trying to guess on what we'll be able to do and accomplish and move forward on these road projects locally."

Baldwin county will use the money for road projects throughout the county. Like Highway 181, County Road 31 and Canal Road. Mobile will work on HWY 98. Dorsey says the money should be enough to get a good bit done.

"I think we can work with the ALDOT director to try and accomplish some transportation needs we have here in coastal Alabama," he said.

Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon says Mobile and Baldwin counties should have gotten all of the money.

"All that money was ours," he said. "It wasn't there's to begin with, that's what bothers me."

He says Alabama's beaches got hit pretty hard during the oil spill and the settlement money is necessary to keep not only coastal Alabama thriving but the state as a whole.

"For folks that think that this is a selfish need just for the people of Orange Beach is just wrong," he said. "This is about the beaches of Alabama which is a huge revenue source for the state of Alabama."

Where do infrastructure dollars produce the most gain?

By **Scott Tong**

September 06, 2016 | 12:57 PM

There's at least one economic issue both candidates for president support — spending money on infrastructure. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton proposes to spend \$275 billion on building and upgrading roads, bridges, electricity and water systems. Republican Donald Trump said he would spend at least twice that.

Better roads, power lines and water systems help us produce more things and more service for less money, according to several studies. They boost the economy. A 2014 International Monetary Fund report found "increased public investment raises output in both the short and long term."

One rule of thumb: "\$1.3 billion in, gets you \$2 billion in growth," said economist Heidi Crebo-Rediker, CEO of the consultancy International Capital Strategies and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "The compelling case is that the dollar in on a macro basis results in more than a dollar out."

A report from Standard & Poor's estimates a \$1.3 billion investment would deliver 29,000 construction jobs and cut the nation's deficit by \$200 million.

Still, the details matter, as some bridges lead somewhere and others go nowhere. Benefits vary widely. A national-level list of projects with the highest return on investment would be handy, but it doesn't exist, in part because the country's money tends not to flow from Washington, D.C.

"About three-quarters of our infrastructure is funded through the municipal bond markets, through our state and local governments," Crebo-Rediker said. "And that's the way that we are structured."

Though it's hard to make national comparisons, the good news for empiricists is that more infrastructure decisions are merit-based, incorporating cost-benefit analyses. It turns out big, cement-pouring projects to deliver new long-distance highway or rail networks tend not to deliver the highest benefit. Robert Puentes, CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation think tank, said the country's nation-building phase is in the past.

"We were connecting the country within, we were getting farmers unstuck from the mud," Puentes said. "That was a long time ago. A lot of those big trends have played out. The big challenge that we have is because all that the stuff was built in the '50s, '60s and '70s, it's got to be rehabilitated, it's got to be maintained."

The maintenance list grows longer by the day. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the nation's power grid suffers more than 300 big outages a year. One in nine bridges is deficient. Every year brings 240,000 water main breaks. Shipping barges on inland waterways have an average 52 service interruptions a day.

According to Puentes, a dollar spent on upkeep, on preventing billion-dollar catastrophes, makes for a great investment.

"It's easier to allocate money for new, shiny projects than for fixing things," Puentes said. "But we do know from that it's always

cheaper and it's always better in the long run to maintain the existing system than wait until it has to have wholesale rehabilitation."

In his view, the way to prioritize projects is to ask: What are you trying to achieve? If you want to transport more people to more jobs, you might buy more buses. If you want to build a workforce for the next generation, you might build new schools.

"Are we trying to boost international competitiveness? Well, that's going to lead you to projects around probably freight movement, or ports," he said. "If we're trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then you would probably look at projects that are going to get people to choose something other than the single-occupant vehicle. Biking, or walking, or taking mass transit."

The challenge is when the ideal world of investments crashes into the one we have today. Infrastructure money is political. A lot of spending inertia remains in the system.

"There's a tendency to keep spending the way you spend," said transportation consultant Alan Pisarski, "and giving 13 percent to this region, this region gets 9 percent, instead of saying, 'what does the region as a region need?'"

And, Pisarski said, statistics in a political setting are open to opportunistic fudging. One old trick is what's known as "optimism bias" — proposing to build something and over estimating how many people will use it.

"There's a tendency to be positive about 'Yes, this is really going to work.' Especially when you're using other people's money, strangely enough, that bias comes in."

In addition to the politics of money and infrastructure, an added challenge is predicting where and how we'll live in the decades to come. Will there be a return to downtowns? How many Americans will continue to own and drive personal vehicles? What will happen to the outer suburbs?

"This is the most volatile and difficult period for forecasting travel activity," Pisarski said. "Autonomous vehicles, Uber, auto ownership, walking, biking. The drama, if you will, is substantial."

Funding Opportunities

STATEWIDE COMPETITIVE NON-URBAN GRANT *(deadline October 5th, 2016)*

Job Access & Reverse Commute Program (Section 5316 • JARC) and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317 - NF) Fiscal Year 2017

Dissemination Date: September 6, 2016

Date to Submit Applications to Regional Planning Councils: October 5, 2016

Date for Regional Planning Councils to Submit their Applications to ALDOT: October 5, 2016

Date for Regional Planning Councils to Submit Endorsed Applications to ALDOT: October 12, 2016

ALDOT has announced the grant application for federal assistance provided through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute and Section 5317 New Freedom Programs. The "Vehicle Inventory Form" is provided in the application in Word, but is upon request also available electronically in Excel. The applications are available through ALDOT or SARPC can email you one. Please let us know.

All projects funded through Sections 5316 and 5317 must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process. ALDOT has designated the 12 Regional Planning Councils to coordinate transportation services in their regions.

Please read the application in its entirety before starting to complete it. Immediate attention must be given to the public hearing requirements, authorizing resolution, and the required Regional Planning Council endorsement.

Completed grant applications must be submitted on or before 5:00 p.m. on October 5, 2016, to the appropriate Regional Planning Council in the geographic area of the state where Section 5316 and/or Section 5317 transportation services are proposed. Regional Planning Councils preparing applications will submit their applications to ALDOT on or before 5:00 p.m. on October 5, 2016.

Technical assistance is available on an as needed basis. If you have any questions or need technical assistance with the application development process, please contact Wiley Brooks, at (334) 353-6417 or email him at brookswi@dot.state.al.us.

ALDOT TAP FUNDING *(deadline December 16th, 2016)*

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2017.

The TAP application and instructions are located on the ALDOT website at:
http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/specialprograms_section.htm

The TAP application is available on this page and on page two (2) of the instructional information is a listing of eligible improvement projects for TAP funding. The deadline for submission of FY 2017 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, December 16, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Some major application requirements of the TAP are:

1. Only cities, towns and county commissions can apply for funding;
2. Due to limited funding, there is a \$400,000 cap on the amount of federal funds that a sponsor can apply for;
3. Only one application can be submitted by an eligible sponsor due to limited funding;
4. The funding ratio for TAP projects is 80% federal funds and 20% sponsor funds. The sponsor is responsible for the cost of required preliminary engineering;
5. Public involvement is optional;
6. Fifty (50) percent of the TAP funds are sub-allocated to the MPO's by population
1. and fifty (50) percent is distributed to any area of the state by ALDOT ;
7. All TAP projects are selected by a competitive application process administered by ALDOT ;
8. Independent landscaping projects are not eligible;
9. Transportation museums are not eligible;
10. For cities/towns located within the six (6) largest MPO's (Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery , Mobile, Columbus, GA, and Pensacola, FL), the TAP funds that are being administered by ALDOT are completely separate from the TAP funds that are dedicated to the aforementioned MPO's.

Please contact Bob Kratzer at (334) 353-6442 if you have questions regarding this matter.

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

USDOT Announces \$7 Million in Funding for Innovative Research to Improve Public Transportation *(Deadline October 14, 2016)*

The FTA and USDOT announced the \$7 million Safety Research and Demonstration (SRD) program this week. The SRD program provides assistance for transit agencies to pursue cutting edge technology and innovative approaches to safety. This year the program aims to help transit agencies prevent collisions, enhance safety design elements, and evaluate potential solutions. Applications are due October 14. [HERE](#)

Creative Placemaking Grants and 2017 Guidelines Announced

[Creative Placemaking Grants](#)

Application Deadline: *September 12, 2016*

Creative placemaking is increasingly a tool of choice for those working to forge solutions to community development challenges. As one of the leaders in the creative placemaking field, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announces its latest round of funding through its signature creative placemaking program, Our Town. NEA will award \$4.3 million in grants to fund 64 projects in 36 states in cities ranging from Los Angeles, California to Lewiston, Maine. [Guidelines and application materials](#) for 2017 Our Town funding are posted on NEA's website. [All 2016 Our Town projects](#) are available in the related content section.

The Big Jump Project

[The Big Jump Project](#) applications Due: *October 28, 2016*

Building on the momentum of the Green Lane Project, The Big Jump will put bikes at the center of connecting people to the places where they live, learn, work and play. Through a mix of on-the-ground infrastructure, smart outreach and community engagement, The Big Jump will partner with community leaders in the U.S. to identify opportunities for improvements specifically tailored to each community's needs. The Big Jump Project is a three-year effort to help 10 places achieve a big jump in biking – a doubling or tripling of people riding – by building a network of safe and comfortable places to ride and engaging the community. The goal is also to validate a core concept: that if a city does all the right things, more people will ride and the community will be a better place to live, work and play. The Big Jump team is looking for 10 places that will achieve great things for biking between now and 2020.

Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets Extended

September 2016

Last year, Secretary Foxx challenged city leaders to raise the bar for bicyclist and pedestrian safety by joining a year-long Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets effort. Mayors and other elected city officials created local action teams to advance safety and accessibility goals by taking on challenge activities. Over the course of the year, USDOT invited Challenge Cities to participate in forums, webinars, and learn about available resources to help them accomplish their goals. The challenge is now open until September

2016. Interested cities can still join the more than 200 Challenge cities committed to improving walking and biking by emailing pedbikesafety@dot.gov

Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Deadline: Rolling

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

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#).

Just For Fun

Grandma Stuns Traffic Cop With Her Strange Reason For Driving Below The Speed Limit

When it comes to driving, we all like to think that we're obeying the traffic laws to the best of our ability! After all, when you first get your license at 16 or so, you make a commitment to adhering to the speed limit, obeying parking regulations, and generally following the rules of the road.

Of course, plenty of these rules change and get updated over time. For example, we now have lots of important laws and PSAs about texting while driving, even though many of us got licensed long before texting even existed. In fact, as we get older, a lot of changes are bound to develop that affect the way we drive, from new rules and regulations to changes in our own physical health.

That's why it's so important to stay on top of health issues, like worsening eyesight. For those of us that intend to stay behind the wheel, any potentially problematic conditions need to be treated quickly and effectively. By the same token, it's also important to recognize when driving just isn't a good option anymore! After all, nobody wants to be remembered as the lady who drove fifty miles with her left blinker on!

Case in point? The story of the gaggle of grandmas that set off on a road trip, and were stopped in the nick of time by a traffic cop with a heart of gold! I'm just glad they were not on SR181 in Baldwin County!!!!

Check out the video below to see this silly story in action!

Play [HERE](#)



In the News

Gulf Coast Working Group sends Interim Letter to Restore Passenger Rail

Section 11304 of the FAST Act required the Secretary of Transportation to convene a working group to evaluate the restoration of improved intercity passenger rail service between New Orleans and Orlando, FL. Section 11304 also requires the working group to submit a report to Congress (Report) within nine months of enactment of the FAST Act (September 4, 2016) that includes a preferred

option for restoring service; the reasons for selecting that option; a prioritized inventory of capital projects; the infrastructure, costs, and benefits associated with restoration of service; and potential funding sources; as well as any other related information.

[This letter](#), or status update, describes the GCWG's progress in determining the infrastructure requirements and associated costs needed to restore passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast. This status update also outlines the next steps to finalize the Report, which will be submitted in 2016.

State's long-range transportation plan subject of meeting

By Russ Corey Staff Writer

HUNTSVILLE — A series of meetings beginning later this month will give members of the public an opportunity to learn more about the state's transportation system and provide input for Alabama's 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan.

The closest meeting to the Shoals is in Huntsville on Sept. 20, from 5-6:30 p.m., at the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments, 5075 Research Drive N.W. A presentation by the Alabama Department of Transportation will take place at 5:30 p.m.

Other public meetings will be held in Tuscaloosa on Sept. 21, Hoover on Sept. 22, **Mobile on Sept. 27** and Montgomery on Sept. 28.

The long-range plan summarizes the current conditions of the state's transportation system and its needs and priorities for the next 25 years. It addresses all modes of transportation for passengers and freight, roads and bridges, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, rail, air travel and waterways.

For more information, contact Jim Doolin at 334-242-6097.

Pedestrian bridge planned for Gulf State Park over beach road

Span would connect planned Interpretive Center to the main part the park



The bridge would go over Alabama 182, or beach road, just west of the Gulf State Park Pavilion.

GULF STATE PARK PROJECT RENDERING

BY JOHN MULLEN johnm@gulfcoastmedia.com

GULF SHORES — When planners involved in the Gulf State Park Project go to ask for a permit to build a pedestrian bridge over Alabama 182, they won't face the usual number of hoops to jump through.

There would be only one permit required to put the bridge over a state highway, according to state officials.

"From what I was told it wasn't starting or ending on state right of way," Engineer Vince Calametti said. "It would just go over it. So it's more of an air draft permit they would require from us rather than an actual permit to be on state property."

Calametti is the Southwest engineer for the Alabama Department of Transportation. He said the Foley bridge across Alabama 59 just north of U.S. 98 required more permitting.

While the master plan for the project has no mention of a pedestrian bridge over Alabama 182, the August update calls for one to be built just west of the Saltwater Pavilion as part of the proposed Interpretive Center.

It would connect the new center to be built on the beach side of Alabama 182 to the trail system north of the state roadway.

"It's something that evolved through study of the movement of the pedestrians and bikers," Leon Barkan of Volkert Engineering said. "It was important for us to create some connectivity between the amenities south of Gulf Beach Highway and connected to the trail network and the amenities north of it."

Barkan is the principal in charge for Volkert on the Gulf State Park Project and also a vice president for program and construction management.

"The Interpretive Center is designed as a gateway to the rest of the park," Barkan said. "Our hope is to have folks come in and learn all about the great things that the Gulf has to offer."

"Once they learn about it to use that as a kickoff point then to the rest of the park and all the interpretive experiences they'll have

along the trail network. It's going to be awesome."

Barkan said workers will return to the lodge site to begin phase two of the work on that part of the project. Little work has taken place on the beach front site in the past two weeks.

"We've done the foundation package for the lodge," Barkan said. "It's complete. We've bid and contracted the next phase of the lodge project which is the shell and core.

"Essentially this contractor will be doing all the site infrastructure, all the structural components of the building, all of the exterior component. The windows, the siding, the roofing, getting the building weather tight."

Also completed are several miles of trails and dune restoration.

"We finished the first phase of the trails which included a significant amount of paved trails, some elevated boardwalk trails, landscape improvements along the trails," Barkan said. "At the same time we did that we bid the shell and core package for the lodge, we bid the second phase of the trails package."

The plan is to open bids on the Interpretive Center and Learning Campus early next year, Barkan said.

"The Interpretive Center and Learning Campus are in the process of being designed," he said. "We anticipate January or February for them going to the bid market."

The controversial \$135 million project faces at least three lawsuits over funding and a judge ruled the state couldn't use a \$58 million grant from National Resource Damage Assessment monies for a lodge and convention center.

Former Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Director Charley Grimsley's suit was thrown out by a Montgomery circuit court in July, but he has vowed to keep fighting the use of BP money for the project.

Pensacola Bay Bridge intersection made top priority

Will Isern, wisern@pnj.com 6:21 a.m. CDT September 9, 2016

Plans for a flyover and roundabout at the Pensacola landing of the new Pensacola Bay Bridge may become a reality after a regional transportation planning board moved the intersection at the foot of the bridge to the top of its list of priorities.

The Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization voted 10-2 Wednesday during its annual priorities meeting to move the intersection at 17th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway from 30th to first on its list, sending a message to the Florida Department of Transportation to aggressively pursue funding for the project.

An early diagram for the intersection presented at Wednesday's meeting resembled what one local group has been advocating for the intersection for years. Vision Pensacola, led by urban planner Alan Gray and landscape architect Steve Dana, were the first to propose a roundabout and flyover for the intersection five years ago.

Under Vision Pensacola's plan, drivers coming into Pensacola from the bridge could choose to either enter into the roundabout to travel up 17th Avenue or onto Bayfront Parkway, or pass over the intersection entirely and continue on to either Bayfront Parkway or East Gregory Street.

Pensacola Bay Bridge designs

Drivers approaching the bridge from either Bayfront Parkway or 17th Avenue would enter into the roundabout beneath the flyover to navigate the turn or continue up onto the bridge via a ramp. Drivers coming from Bayfront Parkway would also have the option to bypass the roundabout to travel directly onto the bridge.

Pensacola Bay Bridge accidents up 20 percent

Dana said he was happy to see after years of work by his group that FDOT's consultant studying the intersection had taken Vision Pensacola's suggestion into consideration.

"The whole community came together on this to tell them that we need to address this," Dana said. "We're very encouraged by where we are and how far we've come."

It's been estimated that improving the intersection will cost \$20 million. The design-build contract for the new bay bridge was recently awarded to Skanska USA Civil Southeast at a bid price of \$399 million, well below the project amount of \$460 million. The left-over money, however, cannot be used to fund the intersection improvement, according to FDOT spokesman Ian Satter.

State reps: Don't mess with bridge process

"They're separate projects," Satter said. "They're side-by-side, but the bridge project is a standalone project."

Funding for the intersection improvements will instead have to come from savings realized from other projects around the state. If the funding isn't secured by Sept. 7, 2017, the intersection project will be automatically moved to 13 on the list of priorities.

Satter said FDOT will purse what monies are available, but not a specific amount. Like all other projects, he said, the intersection will have be added to FDOT's five-year work plan.

TPO members, who are elected officials in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Baldwin, Alabama, counties, said they hope to see the intersection improvements completed in as close conjunction with construction of the new bridge as possible.

“You can’t build a bridge and not have a landing,” said TPO chairman and Escambia County commissioner Grover Robinson. “It’s a one-time thing, it either works or it doesn’t work and I think DOT will see that.”

USEDA announces \$1.9M grant for Rivercane

By [Don Fletcher](#) / September 2, 2016

The U.S. Economic Development Administration has approved a \$1.6 million grant to help put in place or strengthen the infrastructure at Rivercane Industrial Park, bringing to \$4.1 million the total federal, state, regional and private funds allocated to the project.

Announcement of the newest grant was made Friday morning (Sept. 2) by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Matt Erskine, who toured the Muskogee Technology manufacturing facility in Atmore before heading to Mobile for a press conference to announce an industrial grant there.

Christopher A. Masingill, who serves as federal co-chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), joined Erskine on the visit to South Alabama. DRA had earlier approved a \$200,000 grant for the Rivercane project.

The grant money allocated to developing and expanding the industrial park’s infrastructure also includes about \$1.6 million from the Alabama Department of Transportation and \$300,000 from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

The city will reportedly be responsible for about \$600,000 in matching funds.

Southern Light, a Mobile-based fiber optics company, will also chip in an amount equal to “between \$50,000 and \$60,000” of in-kind services by digging trenches for and otherwise making the area ready for installation of fiber optics systems to any company that locates within the local industrial park.

The grants are part of the federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership. The Mobile area, which includes Atmore, is one of only 24 geographic regions in the country that are part of IMCP.

For more details on the grant announcement and its impact on the city and surrounding area, read next week’s Atmore News.

Traffic Deaths Are Up, and DOT Asks the Public to Investigate

BY JEN KINNEY | SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

The U.S. Department of Transportation is asking for big data help after 2015 numbers released this week showed that traffic deaths were up 7.2 percent last year, the largest annual increase in half a century. Reversing a recent historical trend that saw fatalities decreasing every year, 35,092 people died while walking, biking and driving on U.S. streets in 2015. The department released the data three months early, along with a call to action, asking nonprofits, tech companies and citizens to help interpret the data and use it to prevent future deaths.

“What we’re ultimately looking for is getting more people engaged in the data ... matching this with other publicly available data, or data that the private sector might be willing to make available, to dive in and to tell these stories,” Bryan Thomas, communications director for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, told FedScoop. “It’s a very, very rich data set, there’s a lot of information there. ... Our own ability is, frankly, limited to investigate all of the questions that you might have of it. And so we want to get the public really diving in as well.”

The call to action includes several questions DOT thinks are worth exploring. “How might improving economic conditions around the country change how Americans are getting around?” it asks. “How might climate change increase the risk of fatal crashes in a community?” At least four private firms, including Waze, have already committed to release additional traffic data or to utilize DOT’s data to inform the public. Mapping platform Mapbox, for example, will launch an app that shows crashes over the past five years overlaid on a user’s commute, showing contributing factors like alcohol use or speeding.

One trend the data shows clearly is that while traffic deaths rose for nearly all types of road users, pedestrians and bicyclists fared particularly poorly. According to Fortune, even though the number of cyclists injured in traffic collisions dropped 10 percent to 45,000 people in 2015, more of those involved fatalities. Cyclist deaths increased 12.2 percent to 818 people last year, the highest level since 1995. Pedestrian fatalities increased 9.5 percent to 5,376, the highest since 1996.

Job growth and low gas prices are obvious forces behind an increase in driving overall and therefore accidents too. Vehicle miles traveled in 2015 rose 3.5 percent over 2014, according to Fortune, the largest increase in 25 years. But while some are ready to dismiss the uptick in traffic deaths as a blip resulting from cheaper gas, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) released a statement this week putting the numbers in an urban planning context.

“Focusing on one year’s count ignores that disproportionately high numbers of people have been dying on U.S. streets every year for decades,” said Executive Director Linda Bailey. “Even comparing against our safest year in recent history, 2010, the U.S. traffic fatality rate was almost double that of our industrialized peers.”

NACTO also published its own call to action of sorts — aimed at state and federal government. “Federal and state standards incentivize building wide streets that allow cars to go fast but create dangerous conditions for everyone,” reads the statement. “Good street design can make sure that a mistake or a distraction does not result in a death. Cities must redesign their streets to save lives, and they need to be supported by their state and federal governments as they do so.” Continue [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

BTS Releases First-Ever National Transit Map Data

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) today released National Transit Map data, a geospatial database containing the information submitted by almost 200 transit agencies that provides open, machine-readable data about their stops, routes, and schedules.

The national, openly available map of fixed-guideway and fixed-route transit service in America will allow the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to demonstrate the importance and role of transit in American society and to identify and address gaps in access to public transportation. It will also support research, planning and analysis on the benefits of transit, such as the economic impacts of transit on a community's economic development, or on reducing poverty in low-income neighborhoods.

The national Transit Map can be used to support DOT's [Ladders of Opportunity](#) initiative to promote the use of existing transportation networks to connect residents to jobs, education, health, government, and other essential services.

The initial [National Transit Map](#) consists of General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data feeds registered with BTS in response to a March 2016 request for the data from U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. Almost 200 transit agencies responded, submitting data on over 385,000 stops and stations and [nearly 10,000 routes](#). Development of the National Transit Map is a continuing process and another update is expected to be released by the end of 2016.

This first version of the National Transit Map contains data for 84 percent of the top 25 urban transit agencies with fixed route service, 74 percent of the top 50 agencies, and approximately one-third of all urban transit agencies with fixed route service. DOT is currently working to bring additional transit agencies on board for the second version of the map, scheduled to be released in late 2016.

BTS has worked jointly with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the DOT Office of the Chief Information Officer to develop and release the inaugural map.

The National Transit Map includes the National Transit Layer – national data feeds that provide open, machine readable spatial and tabular data about the nation's transit systems stops, routes, and schedules. It also has a National Participation Map that shows which agencies have volunteered to take part in the National Transit Map. In addition, Interactive Mapping Apps that provide tools such as calculators for distances from transit stops, trip frequency and time of day coverage will be released shortly.

The National Transit Map will be a National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) within the [National Transportation Atlas Database \(NTAD\)](#), a set of nationwide geographic databases of transportation facilities, networks, and associated infrastructure. It will be a substantial update to the previous transit-focused map, which was released in 2004 and only included the location of fixed-guideway transit such as rail systems. The new map includes fixed route systems such as bus.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Safety is pleased to announce the availability of several new resources to help States implement the [Safety Performance Management Measures](#) Final Rule under 23 CFR 490. These resources, available at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsp/spm/>, include:

- **State Serious Injury Conversion Tables:** assist States in reporting serious injuries per the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) 4th Edition attribute for "Suspected Serious Injury (A)." States that do not currently use the MMUCC 4th Edition attribute should use the conversion tables to convert the equivalent data from their State's Motor Vehicle Crash Database. The conversion tables also provide the equivalent definitions for pedestrian and pedalcyclist as defined in the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) D16.1-2007 for States to report the required number of non-motorized serious injuries.
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Safety Performance Measures Fact Sheet:** highlights the requirements specific to MPOs and provides a comparison of MPO and State DOT responsibilities.
- **2018-2019 HSIP Safety Performance Targets Timeline:** provides important dates for the safety performance target process, including coordination, target establishment, reports, and assessment of significant progress.
- **Safety Performance Measures Resources and Support:** provides a list of training opportunities, tools, and capacity-building resources.

Pocket Guide to Transportation Statistics

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

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



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

AASHTO Releases Federal Surface Transportation Authorization Portal

AASHTO has developed a portal for information on federal surface transportation authorization. This is a regularly updated resource on MAP-21 reauthorization and implementation of the **Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act**. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development

by Carrie Kissel

In March 2016, the NADO Research Foundation held a focus group on the link between transportation and economic development, and how state departments of transportation and regional planning and development organizations can work together to better plan for those issues in an integrated way. The focus group participants included regional, state, and federal agency staff and others with experience in both transportation and economic development programs. During the conversation, the focus group participants developed a definition of economic development that emphasizes doing economic development and transportation planning differently, and can be used to help frame related planning efforts:

Economic development in transportation involves deliberate interventions to produce tangible benefits that are specific to the context, are sustained over time, and make a place more resilient.

This new report, [Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a National Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development\(PDF\)](#), explores how the participants' definition of economic development can be applied in transportation planning. The report documents the themes of the focus group discussion, including economic development impacts, resilience, and state department of transportation (DOT) and regional planning and development organization roles in working together. Read about the highlights of the discussion and about noteworthy practices shared by participants that can institutionalize consideration of transportation and economic development together.

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.