



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, March 13th, 2020

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A Mobile MPO meeting is scheduled for March 25th, 2020; please see *Mobile MPO Updates* **BUILD GRANT ANNOUNCED! TAP GRANTS ANNOUNCED! (May deadline)**, lots of grant opportunities; please see *Funding Opportunities*. The Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public meeting is cancelled, but the plan is being updated, please see *RPO Updates*. *In The News* the port hosted it largest bulk carrier ever, and it's time to fill out your census form. This week's *Just For Fun* will keep you guessing...

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

www.mobilempo.org



Check us out on FACEBOOK

SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

[Planning and Community Development](#)

[Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Employment and Economic Development](#)

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

Mobile MPO Updates

Mobile MPO Policy Committee Meeting March 25th

The Mobile MPO will meet on March 25th at 10:00 AM in the GMO Building.

The 25 Year Long Range Transportation Plan (*Envision 2045*) is on the agenda for adoption. There was a public meeting concerning the LRTP *Envision 2045*, on January 29th with very limited comments. The draft plan, and all of the comments from the early public involvement can be found at www.Envision2045.org. If you would like a hard copy of the plan to review, please let me know. At this point, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is not in the fiscally constrained LRTP, yet is a Visionary Project.

Also on the agenda is a transit Program of Projects for the FTA 5310 funding.



Envision2045

Invest in your transportation Future

Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan

<https://www.envision2045.org/public-involvement.html>

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is currently updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Mobile Urban Area. LRTPs are multimodal plans that set priorities for spending federal funds on transportation projects in the Mobile Urban Area over the next 25 years. Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, and projects include improvements to highways, roads, bridges, transit facilities and service, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and related enhancements. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to alternative modes. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region.

SARPC conducted an online survey in 2019 to give the public a chance on to comment on what is most important in terms of transportation in the Mobile Urbanized Area, to help guide the 25 Year LRTP. **Click [HERE](#) for Full Results.**

A public input meeting on the draft *Envision 2045 LRTP* was held Wednesday, January 29th from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm, providing the public a chance to provide input.

Participation and input is encouraged from the community. If you would like a chance to comment, you may send your comments to transportation@sarpc.org.

More information on the new plan can be found at <https://www.envision2045.org/> or by contacting Kevin Harrison, Director of Transportation, SARPC, at (251)433-6541 or kharrison@sarpc.org.

The MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY is underway



Over the years, the viability of transit in the underserved segments of Mobile County has been an important task to consider. The ability to connect those populations with daily needs and employment could be an important step in improving the quality of life for residents. Recent advancements in technology have given rise to new transit opportunities, and the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization / South Alabama Regional Planning Commission are currently engaged in studying the feasibility of a demand response transit model for our County. The demand response transit model uses a technology system to connect those in need of a ride with the provider based on the most efficient route and timing of other riders as well.



An important step in determining the feasibility of such a system includes talking with important stakeholders in the county. To future these efforts, a stakeholder roundtable meeting was held earlier this week. It is our hope that participating in this roundtable will help our consulting group gather information on the populations in need of improved transit access in Mobile County.

SARPC staff and Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood met with the LeMoyné Citizen Advisory Panel (LCAP) and presented the study last month. It was somewhat well received, with mixed emotions about commuting for shift employees. The further we dig into discovering possibilities of transit outside the WAVE, the more challenges we seem to be finding.

Via is currently working on funding scenarios, and peer reviews. This week there were conversations with ALDOT, SARPC and VIA concerning funding scenarios.

[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area. The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project would reduce congestion on I-10 in South Alabama through the addition of additional capacity: a new six-lane bridge over the Mobile River, full replacement of the existing Bayway with an eight-lane structure, and redevelopment of seven interchanges. The project would run from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com. On August 28, 2019 the Alabama Department of Transportation ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

Mobile MPO Perspective

Although the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is commonly mentioned in the above LRTP comments, currently the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is in the LRTP as a Visionary Project. This means it is NOT in the fiscally constrained LRTP, it is on a wish list of sorts as there is not available funding identified. The Bridge is also not in the current Transportation Improvement Program ([TIP](#)); it has to be in the LRTP in order to be on the TIP.

When the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast citizens, and the local elected officials agree on how the project can be funded, ALDOT will have a better idea on what type of project can be afforded. Once this happens, and I am confident it will, the Mobile MPO can amend the *Envision 2045 LRTP*, and the TIP to include the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The Mobile MPO would like to know the facts, like how much funding is available, and where does it come from, before adopting a resolution supporting a plan.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

The target start date, plan status, or project engineers estimated amount has changed for the following:

Project : 100067047 (CN)
Federal aid number : BR 0163 (505)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : BRIDGE REPLACEMENT ON SR-163 OVER PERCH CREEK BIN 011865 FROM MP 3.931 TO MP 3.983
Old Target start date : June 26, 2020
New Target start date : July 31, 2020

Project : 100069060 (CN)
Federal aid number : IM I010 (345)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-10 FROM .28 MILE WEST OF CAROL PLANTATION ROAD TO 1.36 MILES EAST OF SR-193
Old Engineers Estimate : \$1,550,350.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$3,445,156.10

Project : 100070821 Federal aid number : IM I010 County : MOBILE Scope : CN
Project Description : RESURFACE I-10 THROUGH WALLACE TUNNEL
Urban Area : 067 MOBILE
Target Start Date : 1/29/2021
Engineers Estimate : \$757,500.00

South Alabama RPO Updates

HSCTP Public Meeting Cancelled

In consideration of health concerns of participants regarding COVID-19, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission will postpone the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public Meeting that was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th at the GM&O Building. The meeting will be rescheduled at a later date. We welcome your comments and questions regarding the plan. If you wish, you may contact us via email at transportation@sarpc.org or by phone at (251) 433 6541.

As part of this effort we are surveying transit providers, riders, and other stakeholders in our region. Please take a moment to answer the following questions and email them back to us.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Name of your Organization:
Does your organization operate a transit vehicle? If so,
How many vehicles?
How many seats per vehicle?
What is/are the funding sources for your vehicle(s)?
What is your service area?
Do you use or need transit services to get around? If so, which one(s)?
What unmet needs are there in your area?
Things like later hours, rural areas where transit service is needed but isn't available, etc.?
Do you have any suggestions as to how these needs could be met?
Will you be applying for 5310 funding? If so, what will you be applying for?

Projects in Region Let February 28th, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Roadway Extension Overpass (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, and Bridge) and Jug Handle on SR-158 over a tributary of EB Seabury Creek and Partial Lott Road to include the Minor Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-158 from 0.020 mile west of the junction of Schillinger Road to 0.400 mile east of the junction of Schillinger Road in Semmes. Length 1.093 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$17,147,508 to \$20,958,065 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the junction of Crosby Road in Bay Minette to the Escambia County Line. Length 11.308 mi.
The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,982,091 to \$2,422,555 .

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-15 (US-29) from the junction of Finlay Lane to the Covington County Line. Length 18.720 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,962,024 to \$3,620,251 .

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session.

Mnuchin, Neal Tout Infrastructure Plan as Economic Stimulus

Speaking before the House Ways and Means Committee, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin stated that developing a large infrastructure package remains a priority for the administration, particularly if a need to “stimulate the economy” arises from the impacts of the coronavirus. Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) provided his support for that plan, saying that increasing infrastructure spending would have a greater impact on the economy than another round of tax cuts, an idea which has been floated by the administration in recent weeks. “There’s this grand opportunity to talk about infrastructure and make it the serious issue that the country needs and demands,” said Neal. “That plan implemented quickly could provide long-lasting stimulus that would go on for decades. A cut in the payroll tax cannot be based on emotion, it’s got to be based upon a plan. ... And the plan that we offered here today was to proceed with infrastructure.” Click [HERE](#) to read more.

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Holds Hearing on Funding the Freight & Passenger Rail Network

Yesterday, the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held its last hearing before the final drafting of the surface transportation reauthorization bill. Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) spoke on his desire for a \$55 billion investment in rail projects over five years to be included in the next surface reauthorization. Testimony also featured witnesses advocating for the importance of commuter rail and the need for labor protections in any major rail investment. Click [HERE](#) to watch a recording of the hearing.

Congressman calls for NEPA modernization

BY [LIZ CAREY](#) | MARCH 13, 2020

Congressman Sam Graves (R-MO) has added his support to the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) proposal to update the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Graves, the ranking member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, submitted his comments to the White House’s CEQ to affirm his support for modernizing the NEPA to more efficiently handle proposed transportation and infrastructure projects’ environmental reviews, without harming those environmental protections.

“The current NEPA regulations were put in place decades ago to help protect the environment, and while our infrastructure needs, technology, economy, and society have all significantly changed in countless ways since then, NEPA has not,” Graves said. “As a result, projects that would otherwise benefit our infrastructure, safety, and in some cases, the environment itself are often delayed or stopped in their tracks. I commend the Trump Administration for finally proposing to bring our NEPA regulations into the 21st century.”

Calling the system “fundamentally broken,” Graves said in his letter that an estimated \$400 billion in infrastructure investment have to go through the NEPA process. And those reviews take on average four and a half years to complete. Some, he said, take longer. Delays, like one he cited in his letter which took 14 years to get approval for light rail, increase costs for projects, which in turn reduces the amount of resources available for other projects.

Graves said he supports CEQ updates, which would put in place more practical NEPA review timelines; add reasonable, flexible limits to the size of environmental documents; focus on coordination between stakeholders and federal agencies, and get rid of outdated sections of environmental regulations to make them easier to handle.

Funding Opportunities

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao Announces Availability of \$1 Billion to Upgrade American Infrastructure (deadline May 18, 2020)

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 discretionary grant funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program.

“BUILD grants will upgrade infrastructure across America, making our transportation systems safer and more efficient,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

As the Trump Administration looks to enhance America’s infrastructure, FY 2020 BUILD Transportation grants are for planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. BUILD funding can support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

Projects for BUILD will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental sustainability, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership.

To better address the needs of rural America, which has historically been neglected, DOT intends to award 50% of BUILD Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas that deliver positive benefits for these communities, consistent with the Department’s R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative. For this round of BUILD Transportation grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the appropriations act.

To provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2020 BUILD grant application process. A webinar on how to compete for BUILD Transportation Grants for all applicants will be held on February 25, 2020. Further details will be made available at <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>. The deadline to submit an application is May 18, 2020.

For more information, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>.

Transportation Alternatives Program Grants

Deadline May 15th, 2020

The Mobile MPO has announced the availability of the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for per project with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). Applicants are welcome to submit more than one project.

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.

This year applications will only be accepted electronically. Applicants should email their complete application to transportation@sarpc.org.

Applications are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) no later than 12:00 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2020.

Electronic versions of the applications are available online at <http://mobilempo.org/TAP.html>

Project budgets should be itemized and completed by a Professional Engineer that is certified by the State of Alabama.

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

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program (TAP) for FY 2021.

The guidelines and the application can both be found on the ALDOT website, on the Local Transportation Bureau page under the Operations Section.

<https://www.dot.state.al.us/ltweb/operations/index.html>

The deadline for submission of FY 2021 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, May 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Federal Lands Access Program

Deadline June 16, 2020

Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) will be conducting another Call for Projects for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in Alabama for Federal Fiscal Years (FY) 2020 through FY 2022. All final project approvals will be contingent upon the availability of funds in the year for which they are being requested. **Funding beyond 2020 is dependent on reauthorization of the Access Program by Congress.**

The Call for Projects application period opens March 16, 2020 and runs through June 16, 2020. An estimated total of \$1.5M will be available for programming in your State.

EFLHD has found that a higher level of outreach at local levels has increased both the number and the quality of competitive applications submitted and ultimately recommended for project programming and implementation. We ask that you provide the widest circulation possible of this announcement to provide a robust pool of applications. **Please feel free to use any of the materials included in with this message to assist in your outreach efforts. The Federal Lands Access Program website is: <https://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>**

Federal Land Management Agencies: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach to your units and gateway communities regarding this program opportunity.

FHWA Federal Aid Division Office: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to the MPOs and RPOs in your state via email or on your website.

State DOTs: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to your District staff and Local Agency Program Coordinators (if applicable), Public Information Officers, via email and/or on your websites.

Local Agency Representatives: We appreciate your efforts in the provision of an expanded outreach regarding this program opportunity to other County, MPO and Local agencies in your state via email and/or on your local websites.

[AARP Offering Community Challenge Grants](#)

Date: February 06, 2020 Deadline April 1, 2020

AARP's Community Challenge provides small grants to fund "quick-action" projects to improve housing, transportation, public space, technology, and civic engagement. Applications are due April 1, 2020. Eligible projects include physical improvements in a community, temporary demonstration projects, and new programs or services. Local government agencies and non-profit organizations are welcome to apply. Grant amounts vary by project. Learn more about the AARP 2020 Community Challenge at www.aarp.org.

FTA Offering New Grant Funding For Transit Bus, Ferry Projects

editor@ashto.org February 14, 2020 Deadline March 30th, 2020

The Federal Transit Administration issued two notice of funding opportunities or NOFOs for fiscal year 2020 on February 7; one via its Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities program and the other via its Passenger Ferry grant program.

The [transit bus NOFO](#) is offering some \$454.6 million in competitive grant funding for transit bus projects that would replace, rehabilitate, lease, or purchase buses and related equipment. Other eligible projects involve purchasing, rehabilitating, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance, FTA said [in a statement](#).

The agency said eligible recipients for that grant money include fixed route bus operators, states and local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, plus Native American tribes – with applications accepted until 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 30.

The FTA also issued a \$30 million [passenger ferry NOFO](#) that will award competitive grants to states and public entities to purchase, repair, or modernize ferry boats, terminals, and related facilities and equipment – both to support existing ferry service as well as establish new passenger ferry service, the agency said in [a statement](#).

FTA noted that eligible projects considered for those grants must be “consistent” with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s R.O.U.T.E. Initiative, launched [last October](#), as well as the FTA’s Accelerating Innovative Mobility program, kicked off in [January](#).

The agency added that applications for both of those grant programs will be accepted up until 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 30.

Lastly, FTA made \$9.3 million worth of [research grants](#) available on February 13 to support the study of “innovative projects” aimed at improving rail transit and bus operator safety.

That pool of grant funding includes \$7.3 million for projects that demonstrate and evaluate new technologies, safer designs, and practices to improve rail transit safety, with the remaining \$2 million reserved for projects that redesign transit bus operator compartments to improve safety for bus operators and the passengers they serve.

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

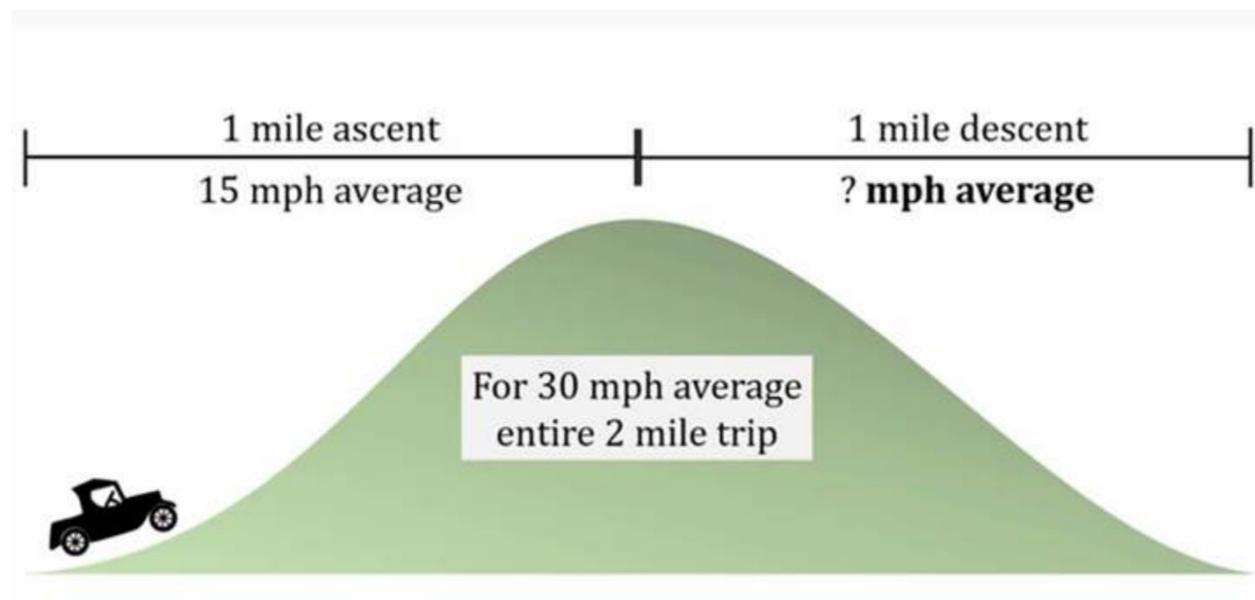
[Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

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

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

It’s a little early for April Fool’s Day, so we are going see how smart you are; Albert Einstein even had trouble with this simple transportation related question:



Before you watch the video, try and figure it out.

<https://youtu.be/q398AqtTEL8>

In the News

Port of Mobile welcomes its largest bulk carrier ever — Ship exports 133,000 tons of Ala. met coal

The [Alabama State Port Authority](#) announced on Thursday that the largest bulk carrier to ever call on the Port of Mobile loaded over 133,000 short tons of metallurgical grade coal at its [McDuffie Coal Terminal](#).

The Newcastle Max class bulk carrier, “MARAN COURAGE,” reportedly measures 984.2 feet (300 meters) in length overall and has a width of 144.3 feet (50-meter beam). All of the carrier’s cargo loaded at McDuffie consisted of Alabama met coal bound for Asian markets, according to a release.

Jimmy Lyons, director and CEO for the Alabama State Port Authority, noted that the Newcastle Max call — along with a steady increase in Post-Panamax vessels at the port — are due in part to past and ongoing infrastructure investments.

Kay Ivey kicks off 2020 Census

March 12, 2020

Governor **Kay Ivey** kicked off the 2020 census today with Alabama Counts! Chairman **Kenneth Boswell**, Senate Pro Tempore **Del Marsh**, House Speaker **Mac McCutcheon**, State Sen. **Bobby Singleton**, and **Marilyn Stephens** of the Census Bureau’s Atlanta Region Research.

For the first time in the nation’s history, the Census is now live online at [my2020Census.gov](#). Additionally, invitation letters have begun and will continue to arrive across the state through March 20. Alabamians can participate in the 10-question Census online, by phone or via traditional paper form. All participants’ information is protected by strict federal law.

Ivey said, “Since I took office in 2017, it has been a priority to ensure Alabama is accurately counted in the census because of the significant impacts on our state in areas of congressional representation and critical federal funding.

Whether you are filling out your census online at [my2020Census.gov](#), answering by phone or on the traditional paper form, I urge everyone to be counted! The future of our state depends on Alabamians taking just a few minutes to participate in the 2020 Census.”

According to the governor’s office, “Speakers reiterated what the state stands to lose if Alabama’s count fails to reach a maximum level and falls shy of the 72 percent participation rate in the 2010 Census. Potential low-participation effects including the loss of millions of dollars in Census-derived community funding, loss of potential economic development opportunities, and reduced state representation in Congress.”

Chairman Boswell added he and 2020 Census Committee Members statewide encourage participation as soon as invitation letters are received and by April 30; however, there will be a second push for participation in the months following for those Alabamians who have yet to engage.

“The impact of this census will be felt for 10 years, so it is imperative that we all do our part and participate for our children, grandchildren, communities and schools,” said Boswell, who is director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. “We are counting on all Alabamians to participate in the 2020 Census.”

“The census asks very basic demographic information and only takes about six minutes to complete, so we encourage everyone living or staying in Alabama to complete the census as soon as you receive your invitation from the Census Bureau,” Boswell said. “By filling it out as soon as possible, you can fulfill your civic duty and help our state.”

Additional information on Census 2020, Alabama-specific statistic, local community resources and Alabama Counts! campaign assets can be found at [census.Alabama.Gov](#).

Mobile, Daphne Mayors trade views on bridge project

Posted by [Dale Liesch](#) Mar 11, 2020

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson described “misinformation” about tolls and the actions of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy board as catalysts for the failure of the Mobile River Bridge project at a Downtown Mobile Alliance event Thursday morning.

“Nobody in their wildest dreams would’ve thought the project could have been stopped by nine people in Baldwin County,” Stimpson said in response to a question about the bridge project.

Stimpson, who chairs the Mobile MPO policy board, was referring to the body’s Eastern Shore counterpart leaving the bridge off of a short-term planning document last August — making the roughly \$2 billion project ineligible for federal funds.

Amid a large public outcry over proposed tolls that would fund the project, Mobile’s MPO voted to table the issue at a meeting last year. However, Stimpson called reports of a \$6 each-way toll “misinformation” during a “Breakfast with the Mayor” event at the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel.

If the process had been allowed to continue, Stimpson argued, and concessionaires were able to compete with one another, the project would've been less than its \$2 billion estimate.

Relaying information Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Director John Cooper has already stated publicly, Stimpson said the proposed toll would've likely wound up being around \$2 each way when the project was finished, and there would have been deals in place for frequent, local users.

"The process was derailed," Stimpson said. "ALDOT has been trying to get it back on track, but it has not been easy."

Daphne Mayor Dane Haygood, chairman of the Eastern Shore MPO, responded to the criticism by calling on leaders to work together to find a solution.

"I think we need to be focusing on how to go forward," he said. "Trying to rehash it might not be a productive task."

Haygood then took a shot at Mobile leaders, who had yet to endorse a scaled-back version of the bridge project, consisting of an expressway between the lanes of the existing Bayway. He referred to Gov. Kay Ivey asking bridge opponents to come up with solutions.

"I would ask, where is Mobile on answering the governor's call?" Haygood said. "An expressway-based concept seems to have a lot of merit to it."

In January, the Eastern Shore MPO endorsed the \$1.22 billion plan that would be paid for through a combination of state and federal funds with the possibility of it not requiring a user fee.

The previous proposal included a new, eight-lane bridge with 215 feet of clearance over the river, connected to a new, 7.5-mile span across Mobile Bay at an elevation higher than the 100-year storm surge level, with multiple access points. In that case, ALDOT and Ivey approved a funding scheme that would have levied a \$6 toll each way for average commuters.

The new plan preserves the bridge design, but reduces the number of lanes to six and limits access to one ramp on each side of the bay. Further, rather than a new span across the bay, four new expressway lanes, two on each side, would be built between the two existing interstate spans, eliminating the need for additional environmental impact studies and substantial engineering, according to the resolution. The Mobile MPO heard a similar proposal to the one Eastern Shore MPO members did, but did not vote. Stimpson did not call for a vote, at the time, and wanted to hear more about the plan from ALDOT.

Tulsi Gabbard urges Trump to stop cruise ships from docking in any state

BY [JUSTINE COLEMAN](#) - 03/12/20

Rep. [Tulsi Gabbard](#) (D-Hawaii) is urging [President Trump](#) to stop cruise ships from docking in any state as the coronavirus outbreak shakes the country.

Gabbard in a Twitter video on Thursday said she agreed with "much of what" President Trump has proposed to contain the virus, but added that other steps need to be taken, like forbidding cruise ships from docking in Hawaii or any other states.

"These cruise ships are basically floating incubators for this disease," Gabbard said.

One of three Democratic presidential candidates left in the race, Gabbard also said Trump should address "the lack of availability of tests" for the virus and ensure people don't need to pay to get tested.

"These are the things needed right now," she said. "Tests need to be available. People who are taking these tests need to know they're not going to have to pay for them."

She also said she hoped the coronavirus outbreak "does not become politicized."

"We are all in this together," she said.

Gabbard in a letter to the president asked him to "temporarily suspend operations of all cruise lines nationwide" and ensure all people "can be tested and cleared before boarding or disembarking cruise ships."

"We cannot afford to let cruise passengers risk infections in our country, causing mass exposures in our communities or risking another cruise ship being quarantined at sea," she wrote.

Trump [announced](#) Wednesday night that all travel from Europe would be prohibited as an attempt to contain the spreading virus. He also offered several recommendations on how to improve the economy and help small and midsize businesses amid the outbreak.

Several cruise ships that have held U.S. citizens had been quarantined and prevented from docking, notably the Diamond Princess, which was off the coast of Japan for two weeks. At least seven former passengers have died and about 700 were infected on the ship.

At least 21 people on the Grand Princess, which was off the coast of California, contracted the virus, leading to delays in the ship's evacuation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State Department announced Monday that Americans should not board cruise ships during the outbreak. Viking and Princess cruise lines announced on Thursday that they are [suspending](#) their trips.

The coronavirus has infected more than 1,300 people in the U.S. and killed at least 38, with eight recorded recoveries, according to [Johns Hopkins University](#).

Coronavirus outbreak puts pressure North American intermodal volumes

[Joanna Marsh](#) Thursday, March 12, 2020

The coronavirus outbreak could start to be affecting North American intermodal rail volumes on a weekly basis, the [Association of American Railroads](#) (AAR) said.

For the week ending March 7, North American intermodal traffic was down nearly 12% from the same period in 2019, AAR said. While Mexican intermodal volumes fell 3% to 17,114 intermodal units and Canadian intermodal traffic was down 5.3% to 64,025 intermodal units, U.S. intermodal volume fell by double digits percentage-wise, slipping 14.1% to 232,561 intermodal containers and trailers.

The slump in intermodal volumes could be tied to the drop in Chinese manufacturing output and the drop in ocean vessels arriving at [West Coast ports](#), which in turn were outcomes from the coronavirus outbreak that occurred in China, according to AAR's senior vice president John T. Gray.

But other factors, such as weather, can also come into play and affect rail volumes, Gray said.

"Comparing rail traffic from one week to another must be done with caution because many different factors can come into play, especially in the winter when the weather can play a big role," Gray said. "That said, rail intermodal loadings last week were down noticeably more than the norm over the past year."

He continued, "With the number of ships arriving at West Coast ports from Asia down sharply due to the coronavirus, it stands to reason that railroads are beginning to feel an impact too, at least in terms of intermodal. It's impossible to quantify that impact with precision."

On a year-to-date basis, North American intermodal traffic is down 6.2% to 3.3 million intermodal containers and trailers.

Meanwhile, North American carloads are 4.3% lower on a year-to-date basis, at 3.9 million carloads. On a weekly basis, North American carloads were relatively flat, slipping 0.6% to 333,368 carloads.

State DOT Leaders Address Need To Reduce Highway Fatalities

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Despite an ongoing [downward trend](#) in highway fatalities, state departments of transportation are looking to refocus their safety efforts, including those related to traffic safety culture; collaboration with safety partners; and a more aggressive approach to implementing safety countermeasures regarding infrastructure and behavior.

During a panel discussion held during the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials annual Washington Briefing on February 26, several key state DOT leaders emphasized that deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes remain too high – representing a "public health crisis" for the nation.

"We're here because we're losing 100 souls per day on our transportation system," explained Patrick McKenna, director of the Missouri DOT and AASHTO's 2019-2020 president. "Safety is the very basis of transportation [and] that human behavior is the root cause of much of this problem."

He noted, for example, that about 10 percent of the nation's drivers do not buckle up every day – and those drivers represent more than 50 percent of highway fatalities.

That is one reason why McKenna has made highway safety one of the [emphasis areas](#) of his one-year term as AASHTO's president; continuing the organization's role in the Towards Zero Deaths and Vision Zero national coalitions while "facilitating a conversation" with member state DOTs and local communities to consider ways to deploy "innovative infrastructure designs and technologies" to more safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooter users.

"This national health crisis does not leave anyone unscathed," noted Michael Tooley, director of the Montana DOT and the panel's moderator, regarding the more than 36,000 lives lost on the nation's highways in 2018. "We need to motivate the public and state DOTs to make radical changes to the safety programs in the nation aimed at helping that number reach zero."

One way to do that is by creating "modal opportunities" so people can make short trips without having to use a motor vehicle, argued Roger Millar, secretary of the Washington State DOT.

"Some 40 percent of the trips people make are less than 5 miles," he explained. "So there is a great opportunity to improve highway safety while reducing traffic congestion by providing more biking or walking space. That frees up capacity on the highway and creates a 'virtuous circle,' for as people ride and walk more, they get off the [highway] system and thus crashes and traffic congestion go down."

Jeff Marootian, director of the District of Columbia DOT, explained how his agency is "reconstructing our largest assets" in order to add in more pedestrian and bicycle connections plus dedicated transit bus infrastructure as many new residents coming into Washington D.C. who don't own or operate motor vehicles.

"We're also using data to identify where to deploy our resources and assets," he added.

For example, traffic fatality data analysis identified 20 intersections with the highest fatality numbers in the city. As a result, DDOT made infrastructure changes – such as adding bump out curbs, dedicated bicycle lanes, and automated traffic enforcement systems such as red-light cameras – that helped reduce fatality numbers at 16 of those 20 intersections.

"Now we're replicating those strategies across the city," Marootian said. "We're focusing our resources on safety in a way we've not done before [as] we think there is a critical link between roadway safety and state of good repair. And as we repair and build new [transportation]

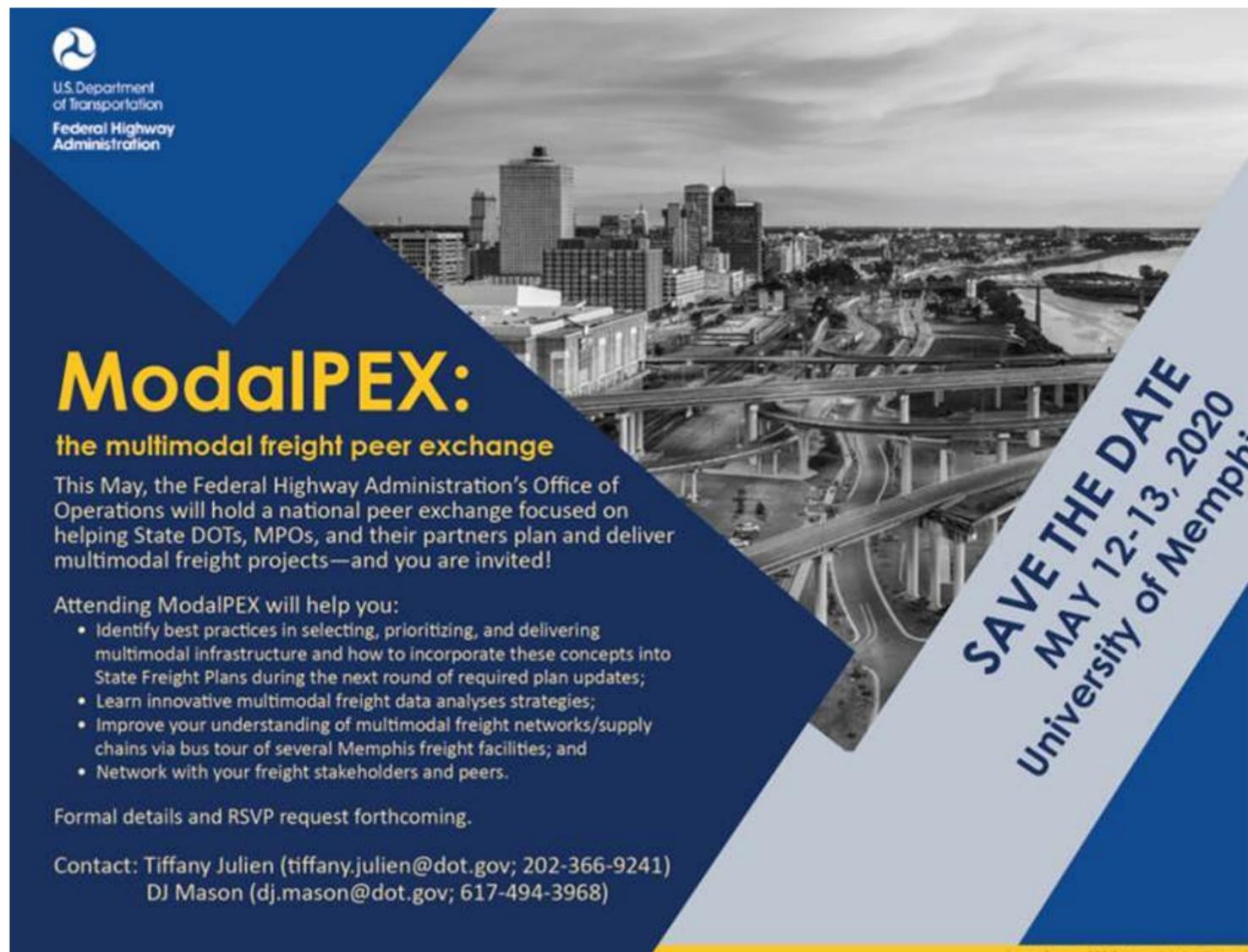
infrastructure, we focus on making improvements to it by adding dedicated bicycle lanes and bump-out curbs, while working in given locations. It is spawning new ways of thinking around ways to reduce traffic fatalities.”

The Texas DOT is making changes of a similar nature to its roadway infrastructure strategy, noted Marc Williams, the agency’s deputy director. He explained that the Texas Transportation Commission adopted a “road to zero” goal of cutting highway fatalities in half and is putting \$300 million toward that effort in fiscal year 2020 with another \$300 million to follow in FY 2021.

“Preventing [fatalities due to] roadway lane departures represents the bulk of those total dollar amounts,” he explained.

“We’re being very deliberate in designing highways and roadways with safety devices incorporated within them: centerline and edge-line rumble strips; upgrades to signs; traffic signal improvements; looking at what we do for pedestrians particularly around school zones; and improving pavement markings,” Williams noted. “We’re also looking at wrong-way driving interdiction initiatives using automated technology as well. All of that is helping us develop a toolkit around how we balance and optimize safety in our roadway design work.”

Transportation Research



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

ModalPEX: the multimodal freight peer exchange

This May, the Federal Highway Administration’s Office of Operations will hold a national peer exchange focused on helping State DOTs, MPOs, and their partners plan and deliver multimodal freight projects—and you are invited!

Attending ModalPEX will help you:

- Identify best practices in selecting, prioritizing, and delivering multimodal infrastructure and how to incorporate these concepts into State Freight Plans during the next round of required plan updates;
- Learn innovative multimodal freight data analyses strategies;
- Improve your understanding of multimodal freight networks/supply chains via bus tour of several Memphis freight facilities; and
- Network with your freight stakeholders and peers.

Formal details and RSVP request forthcoming.

Contact: Tiffany Julien (tiffany.julien@dot.gov; 202-366-9241)
DJ Mason (dj.mason@dot.gov; 617-494-3968)

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 12-13, 2020
University of Memphis

[New FHWA Publication: Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book](#)

Date: February 13, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, has released a new [Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book](#). Part I introduces the planning process, the relationship between transportation planning and decision making, and federal transportation funding. Part II covers products of the transportation planning process—the types of plans that states, MPOs, and RDOs develop, performance measures, public engagement, and planning process considerations related to safety, security, and environmental linkages.

Designed for government officials, planning board members, transportation service providers, and the general public, the book is also a useful resource for new transportation planners.

Visit the Briefing Book web page to download a PDF copy: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/

Highway Administration to Explore How AI and Blockchain Can Transform Transportation



By [Brandi Vincent](#)

Staff Correspondent

FEBRUARY 6, 2020 12:00 PM ET

The Federal Highway Administration launched an Exploratory Advanced Research Program this week to usher in "transformational changes and truly revolutionary advances" in highway engineering and intermodal transportation on roads across the United States.

According to a new [broad agency announcement](#), the administration is accepting research effort proposals—with the deliberate intent of awarding either contracts or cooperative agreements—that address three trendy topics in emerging tech: blockchain for highway transportation, artificial intelligence for highway transportation, and incorporating trashed plastic into asphalt cement to reduce waste.

"This program supports scientific investigations and studies that advance the current knowledge and state-of-the-art in the sciences and technologies employed in the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and management of the nation's highways," officials wrote in the announcement. "Strategically, this research will enable and expedite the development of revolutionary approaches, methodologies, and breakthroughs required to drive innovation and greatly improve the efficiency of highway transportation."

The agency's EAR programs aim to produce strong public-private partnerships that catalyze solutions through "longer-term, higher risk" research. To inform its ultimate intent, FHWA conducted an extensive investigation ahead of the launch, through which it met with a "large number of stakeholders from within and outside the traditional highway research community to identify topics of research that promise transformation and possible breakthroughs in highway technology, processes and policies." With explicitly inherent exploratory aims, the agency doesn't expect the initial results to be immediately implementable but instead plans to further develop them over time.

The agency said it could make multiple awards for each of the following topics:

Blockchain Technology for Highway Transportation

Mostly known for underpinning Bitcoin, blockchain is a record-keeping technology that validates information on a decentralized public ledger. Though it's still nascent, the agency argues that blockchain "has the potential to transform the connected and automated vehicle industry or freight logistics providing a platform to share a variety of information from the infrastructure and vehicles in a secure manner." Further, the agency's hopeful that it can provide "security and scalability at lower costs than current private network solutions" and offer a wide range of new technological functions."

FHWA wants proposals that explore how blockchain applications could enable more secure traffic operations and car-to-car and car-to-infrastructure communications, anonymized freight data management, auction-based mechanisms for highway pricing, and beyond.

Artificial Intelligence for Highway Transportation

The EAR program previously [funded](#) AI-focused efforts that incorporated computer vision and natural language processing, but this time around the agency hopes for projects that empower the use of its growing heaps of data. In this light, the agency said it welcomes proposals that connect traditional and non-traditional highway data to make predictions around the system's performance, improve sensor signal data that are used to evaluate roads and structures, provide decision support in highway system design, and more. [HERE](#).

Please join FHWA to discuss the concept of "right-sizing" highways to better match land use and transportation on existing streets. Right-sizing enables practitioners who are confronted with obsolete, damaged, or deteriorated facilities to develop innovative, context sensitive solutions that use transportation infrastructure to connect neighborhoods, create livable communities, and promote economic development.

FHWA presenters will discuss a research study, white paper, fact sheets, and case studies on the topic posted here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/economic_development/right_sizing/, followed by practitioner presentations, and a question and answer session. Featured case studies include, Seattle Alaskan Way Viaduct, the Rochester Inner Loop, and Milwaukee Park East Freeway. Webinar presenters include, Stefan Natzke and Mike Neathery (FHWA), Alec Williamson (Washington State DOT), Erik Frisch (City of Rochester), Peter Park (Univ. of Colorado).

WEBINAR LOGISTICS:

- **Tuesday, February 25, 2020**
- **2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Eastern Standard Time**

- Registration link: <https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=2254>

For additional information, please contact Mike Neathery, 202-366-1257 or mike.neathery@dot.gov

Webinar Registration Process

Webinar registration is a two-step process. First, non-DOT users including State DOTs must request access to the FHWA External Portal. Second, non-DOT users including State DOTs must login using the email address used to request access to the site and their requested password. Federal DOT staff and DOT-badged contractors do not need to register for an account. DOT users can click on the registration link and use their DOT credentials to access the site.

In the External SharePoint System, EXTERNAL users (those without a @dot.gov email address) will have to request an account before they can register. Here is the link to request an account: <https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/FBA/Register.aspx>. Step-by step instructions on how to request an account can be found here: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/esnnon-dotstaff/>

Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook

Sustainability is often an element that informs decisions made during the planning, programming, and design phases of highway construction projects. However, the construction phase of a highway project is also an opportunity to advance sustainability.

The TRB National Cooperative Highway Research Program's *NCHRP Research Report 916: Sustainable Highway Construction Guidebook* provides clear and practical information on what constitutes sustainability in the context of highway construction and how to evaluate any proposed construction practice for its sustainability potential.

The guidebook supports implementation by describing ways to explicitly advance sustainability in procurement and contracting and how to develop a sustainability management plan for the construction phase.

An overview of NCHRP Research Report 916 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#). A separate publication, *NCHRP Web-Only Document 262: Sustainable Highway Construction*, describes the research process and outcomes used to develop NCHRP Research Report 916.

A summary of NCHRP Web-Only Document 262 is provided in this [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Project: [Project Information](#)

DOI: [10.17226/25698](#)

Project Number: 10-91A

E-Newsletter Type: [Recently Released TRB Publications](#)

TRB Publication Type: [NCHRP Report](#)

FEDERAL TRUST FUNDS AND OTHER DEDICATED FUNDS:

Fiscal Sustainability Is a Growing Concern for Some Key Funds

GAO-20-156: Published: Jan 16, 2020. Publicly Released: Jan 23, 2020.

Every major federal department has at least 2 trust funds or dedicated funds that pay for key programs. The money comes from related taxes, fees, and premiums—e.g., U.S. postage stamp revenue goes to the Postal Service Fund.

The overall federal trust fund balance is expected to start declining in 2022 as balances in the Medicare and Social Security trust funds drop. The government is projected to borrow the difference—which isn't sustainable.

Of our 13 case study funds, 11 received general revenue in addition to dedicated revenue. For example, the 2015 Highway Trust Fund reauthorization provided \$70 billion in general revenue to the fund. To continue reading click [HERE](#).

The Department of Transportation has identified transportation assets that fall within Opportunity Zones with the goal of driving investment of all types to these important areas.

Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner's roles in Opportunity Zones:

- [Housing and Urban Development: Implementation Plan for The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#)
- [The IRS: Tax reform creates opportunity zone tax incentive](#)
- [Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)

The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in communities by granting investors extensive Federal tax advantages for using their capital gains to finance new projects and enterprises. There are more than [8,700 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories](#). Of the Qualified Opportunity Zones 40 percent are in rural census tracts, 38 percent are in urban tracts, and 22 percent are in suburban tracts.

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/906/build-fact-sheet2019.pdf>

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.
