



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 13th, 2019

Volume 31, Number 10

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Contact Us

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Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of
Transportation

The Mobile MPO has developed a Transportation Planning Survey

This survey has been created to supplement our existing public participation portion of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks in the Mobile urban area. Answers to this survey are noncommittal, but will serve as a baseline for public input and further data analysis. Please take a few minutes to take our survey [HERE](#).

In other news, URBAN FTA 5310 funds have been announced; please see *Funding Opportunities*. The SARPC Rural Planning Organization (RPO) will be meeting next week; see *South Alabama RPO Updates*. Congress is back in session; please see *Legislative Updates*. The proposed I 10 Mobile River Bridge is still a hot topic; see *In The News*.

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



Envision2045

Invest in your transportation Future

Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan

Please help up by providing input on your transportation priorities and projects for the Mobile Urbanized Area. The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization(MPO) is seeking your input via an online survey. The Mobile MPO, comprised of locally-elected officials, sets regional transportation policy and determines where to allocate federal funds.

Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. 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.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission(SARPC) invites decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the general public to participate in the survey. SARPC is seeking feedback on transportation major infrastructure projects, initiatives and policies. Transportation priorities such as congestion, freight, transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian, and other transportation modes will be addressed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Your comments can help SARPC's planners to develop a wide-ranging, action-oriented transportation plan. The **Envision2045** plan being developed will also serve as a basis for allocating limited federal money aimed at roadways, bridges, and public transportation facilities.

To complete the survey, please visit: <https://www.envision2045.org/>.

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MPO MEETING

There was a Mobile MPO meeting recently. Staff received 88 comments concerning the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to the Tuesday, August 20th noon deadline for comments. The comments were presented to the MPO Policy Board members that afternoon prior to the MPO meeting on August 21st. A motion was made and approved by the Mobile MPO to “table” any projects that had tolling as a revenue source pertaining to the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. The next meeting of the Mobile MPO will be determined at a later date. The tabled item was subject to the outcome of the October 7th meeting of the Alabama Toll Bridge and Tunnel Authority, which has been canceled by Governor Ivey. We will keep you posted.

MPO 101 Seminar



The recent MPO 101 Class was held at Five Rivers and it was very well attended. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and The Eastern Shore MPO jointly conducted the class for our committee members. The Federal Highway Administration also presented. This class was intended for committee members of the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, or MPO Policy Board for either the Mobile MPO or the Eastern Shore MPO. This class was held two years ago for just the Mobile MPO, and was well received.

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Two weeks ago, the consultant selection committee listened to presentations from the three shortlisted firms concerning *Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study*. The groups that presented were, Burk-Kleinpeter, Mott-MacDonald, and VIA Mobility. All firms did a great job at presenting, and were scored and ranked by the committee. The consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin Mills and Cawood as a sub consultant. We would like to get the study under way as soon as the new fiscal year begins and are currently awaiting approval to enter contract negotiation. We will keep you posted.

Click on link below to see the Scope of Work

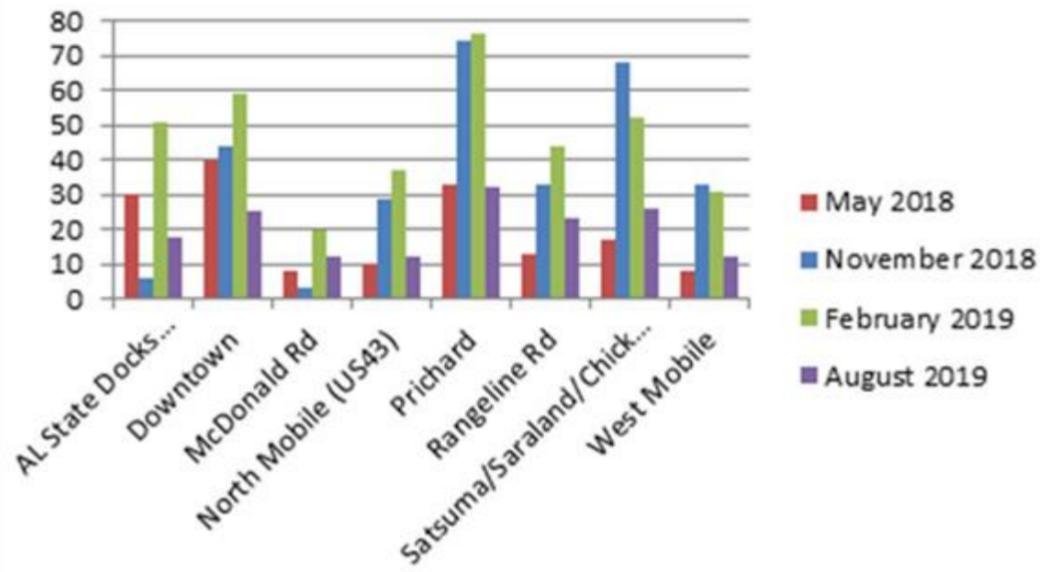
[Mobile Area Demand Response Transit System Feasibility Study \(6/27/19\)](#)

If you would like to be part of this study, please call Kevin Harrison for details.

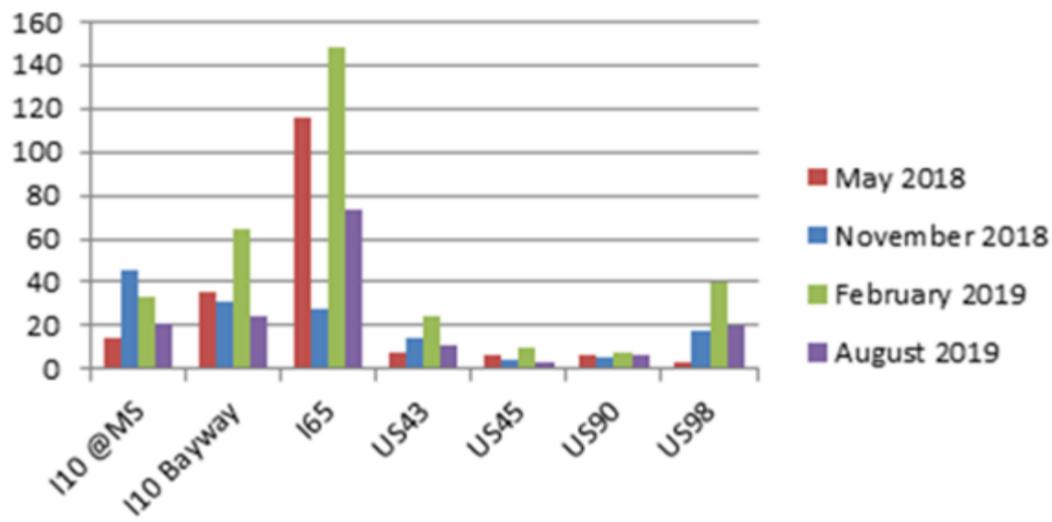
FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their fourth quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for two days APM Terminals had on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from and where they are going. APM Terminals will continue to gather this information quarterly for our benefit of validating truck data for the travel demand forecasting model.

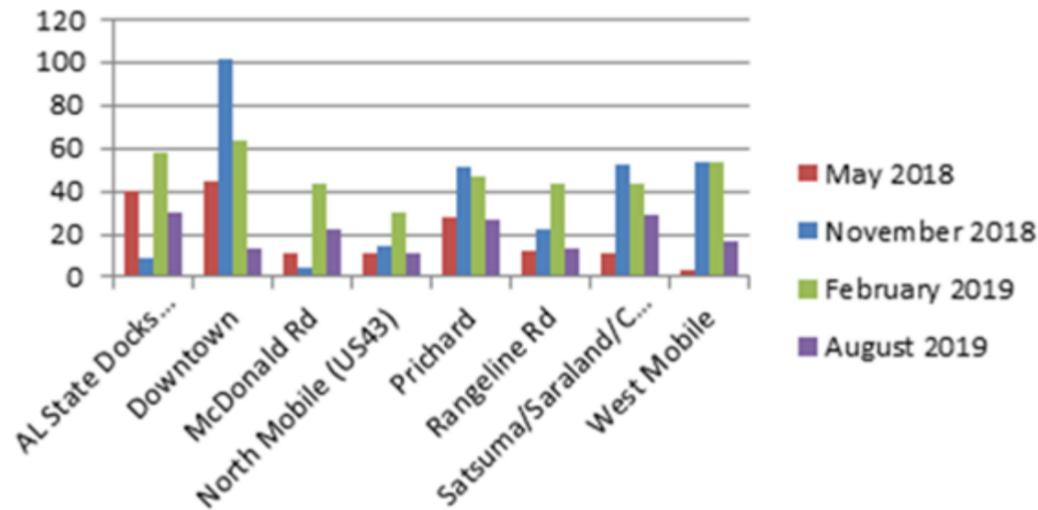
Trips Originating within Mobile County



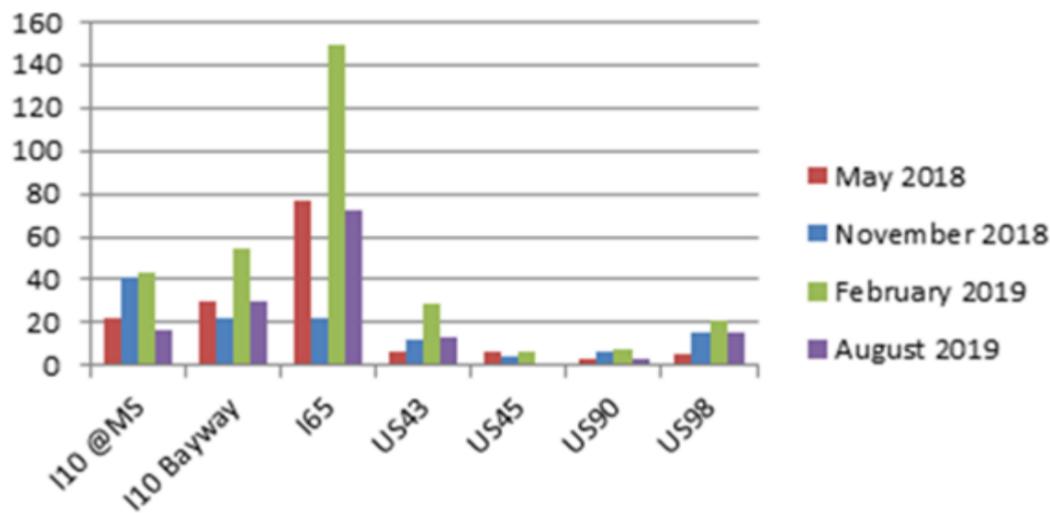
Where Trips Originating outside of Mobile County Are Entering



Where Trips are Dropping Off within Mobile County



Where Trips Dropping Off outside of Mobile County are Exiting



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

The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) 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 [Destination 2040](#). 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. 2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#).

NOTE: There are currently two Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) on the website. The 2016-2019 TIP runs through September 30, 2019. The 2020-2023 TIP goes into effect on October 1, 2019.

Up To Date on the 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.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100037215 (CN)

Federal aid number : DBMB-STPMB 7550 (600)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ZEIGLER BLVD ADDITIONAL LANES FROM ATHEY RD TO FOREST HILL DR

Old Target start date : December 06, 2019

New Target start date : January 31, 2020

Project : 100067959 (FM)

Federal aid number : STPAA 0213 (504)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON SR-213 (SHELTON BEACH ROAD) FROM SR-158 TO SR-13(US-43)

Old Engineers Estimate : \$988,940.00

New Engineers Estimate : \$889,085.76

Project : 100069442 (CN)

Federal aid number : NH 0042

County : MOBILE

Project Description : INSTALLATION OF NEW GENERATOR TO REPLACE EXISTING GENERATOR FOR BANKHEAD TUNNEL AND ITS DEVICES

Old Target start date : January 31, 2020

New Target start date : February 28, 2020

Project : 100054816 (CN)

Federal aid number : TCSP-HSR TC03

County : MOBILE

Project Description : CR-26 (HAMILTON BOULEVARD) NEW BRIDGE OVER CSXT RAILROAD.

Old Target start date : September 25, 2020

New Target start date : January 31, 2025

Project : 100052601 (UT)

Federal aid number : STPMBF 7508 (600)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : MCGREGOR AVENUE WIDENING FROM AIRPORT BOULEVARD TO DAUPHIN STREET AND INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT DAUPHIN STREET

Old Target start date : November 01, 2019

New Target start date : May 01, 2020

Project : 100054816 (CN)

Federal aid number : TCSP-HSR TC03

County : MOBILE

Project Description : CR-26 (HAMILTON BOULEVARD) NEW BRIDGE OVER CSXT RAILROAD.

Old Delete Indicator :
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South Alabama RPO Updates

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Meeting Planned

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) will host a meeting of the **Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee** at **10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsedale, Alabama.**

There will be a discussion of current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of our region by the ALDOT Southwest Regional Office.

Other items on the agenda include:

- Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Review and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (attached and available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)

If you have any questions or comments regarding the above or attached, feel free to call me at (251) 706- 4622.

Projects in Region Let September 27th, 2019

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Safety Improvements (Pavement Markers, Pavement Markings, and Traffic Stripe) on CR-4 (Bradley Road) from the intersection of SR-15 (US-29) to the Covington County Line. Length 17.746 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$161,519 to \$197,413 .

MOBILE COUNTY

For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on CR-656 (Zeigler Boulevard) from the intersection of CR-372 (Schillinger Road) to the intersection of CR-429 (Cody Road) west of Mobile. Length 1.433 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$8,706,751 to \$10,641,584 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

For constructing the Guardrail Installations on CR-87 over the Styx River (Site 1); on Hoyle Bryars Road over I-65 (Site 2); and on Scrange Road over Horseneck Creek (Site 3). Length 0.287 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$188,741 to \$230,683 .

[What's Under Construction? Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session.

Congress Returns to Washington

Congress is back on Capitol Hill, faced with the challenge of striking a balance between meeting fiscal year deadlines and addressing hot-topic issues. Arguably the biggest hurdle Congress faces in the coming weeks is fiscal year (FY) 2020 federal appropriations. While the House has passed most of their FY 2020 bills on the House floor, the Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to approve one bill. The Senate is planning on marking up four bills this week: Department of Defense; Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education; Energy and Water Development; and State and Foreign Operations. But with only 15 legislative days before October 1, time is running out to pass all 12 appropriations bills through both chambers with time to conference out any bill differences.

There are also several other programs facing a September 30 deadline. Besides the *Older Americans Act* (OAA) reauthorization, which we go more into detail in the next section, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) also faces reauthorization uncertainty. The program has already received 12 short-term reauthorizations since 2017, with no foreseeable end in sight unless federal lawmakers can find a way to modernize and enhance the administration of the program. Other issues and programs expiring at the end of this fiscal year include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, (which received a short-term extension back in July);
- The *National Defense Authorization Act*, the annual defense policy bill that [lawmakers are reportedly trying to get to a floor vote in each chamber before the end of the month](#); and
- Certain job training and support grants for those working in the healthcare field, as well as funding for the National Health Service Corps.

The multiple shootings that occurred during summer recess and subsequent public outcry have brought gun legislation to mind for congressional leadership. The House has already passed several related bills ([HR 8](#); [HR 1112](#)), with several others are already on the docket for [tomorrow afternoon's House Judiciary Committee meeting](#). Meanwhile, the Senate is working on a bipartisan bill to help states adopt "red flag" laws. But it all comes down to

what President Trump will support, as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says that will set the stage for what is brought to a vote in the upper chamber.

Between finishing the work on FY 2020 appropriations and the upcoming 2020 election, the likelihood that we'll see a lot of major legislation passing through Congress isn't high. But there has been surprising momentum around addressing high prescription drug costs, small fixes to the 2017 GOP tax law, and a retirement savings bill ([HR 1994](#)).

Senate eyes EV fees to pay for highway bill

[Geof Koss](#) and [Maxine Joselow](#), E&E News reporters E&E Daily: Thursday, September 12, 2019

Key senators are considering imposing new federal user fees on electric vehicles to help pay for the chamber's \$287 billion surface transportation bill.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), the ranking member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, told E&E News he was looking at various state approaches to charging user fees on EVs — including annual fees or registration fees — as a means of raising revenue to pay for the five-year highway bill that passed the panel before the August recess.

"The principle is those who use roads, highways and bridges should help pay for them," Carper said yesterday. "Those who use vehicles that don't use any gas or diesel need to find a way to help pay for it. The states have already experimented with that. So we have a lot of good examples from what states are doing."

EPW Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), who has sought to eliminate the federal EV tax credit, confirmed that new user fees are in the mix of possible pay-fors for the highway bill.

"There are a number of ways to do it, and we're looking at that now," he told E&E News yesterday.

Twenty-six states have enacted legislation requiring a special registration fee for hybrid or plug-in electric vehicles, according to a *Consumer Reports* [analysis](#) released yesterday.

Many states were motivated to adopt the new fees because of declining gas tax revenue, which helps fund road repairs. EVs don't pay the gas tax because they run on electricity rather than gasoline.

But *Consumer Reports* said in its analysis that state EV fees "won't dent state highway funding shortfalls but will hurt consumers."

Chris Harto, a senior policy analyst at *Consumer Reports* and co-author of the analysis, said he would oppose new federal EV fees to fund the surface transportation bill.

"We generally don't think that EV fees are the most efficient way to deal with this challenge," Harto said. "Congress hasn't raised the gas tax in 26 years or to keep up with inflation or improvements in fuel economy."

"So they need to deal with bigger challenges than the small fraction of cars that are currently EVs, which make up well under 1% of the current fleet," he said.

Gina Coplton-Newfield, director of the Sierra Club's Clean Transportation for All campaign, agreed with this assessment.

"Overall, we believe that now is the time to incentivize people to make the switch to cleaner vehicles, not penalize them for making that switch," she said.

Still, Coplton-Newfield praised EPW leaders for including the first-ever climate change title in the highway bill, which would provide \$10 billion for improving the resilience of infrastructure, reducing transportation emissions and building EV charging stations along highways ([Greenwire](#), July 29).

The highway bill would also establish a 50-state pilot program that aims to transfer highway funding from the gas tax to a vehicle-miles-traveled approach, but in the interim Carper said new EV fees can help fund road construction.

"That's 10 years from now or so," he said. "We'll figure out a way in the interim for those vehicles that don't use gasoline to pay their fair share."

Earlier in the week, Carper also said that hydrogen and natural gas-powered vehicles also "need to make some payment" toward road upkeep.

Funding disagreement

Although the highway bill sailed through the EPW Committee without opposition in July, there is less agreement on how to pay for the measure.

The Highway Trust Fund will pay for part of the \$287 billion measure, but lawmakers will still need to find more than \$100 billion in offsets to cover the gas tax shortfalls. The tax has not been increased or indexed for inflation since 1993.

Carper, also a member of the Finance Committee that will have to come up with offsets, has declined to say how much revenue must be raised.

But the Congressional Research Service last week estimated the shortfall for just the highway provisions in the Senate's five-year bill at \$79 billion. The service noted that amount will rise when public transit provisions — funded by a separate mass-transit Highway Trust Fund account — are included.

Lobbyists say Senate tax writers are looking to raise about \$110 billion overall to pay for the bill. House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) this week estimated lawmakers would need \$100 billion "just to maintain inadequate status quo funding and continue to watch the system deteriorate and become more congested."

Senate Finance Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) is resisting calls to raise the gas tax, citing the opposition of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) as well as President Trump ([E&E Daily](#), Aug. 1).

Carper and Barrasso said this week that talks with Grassley about paying for the measure will continue.

Carper, who also said he planned to talk with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao about the highway bill this week, has declined to rule out some form of a gas tax increase.

"I think everything's on the table," he told reporters earlier in the week.

'Stuck on stupid'

On the other side of the Capitol, House lawmakers are also working on a surface transportation reauthorization bill, albeit at a slower pace. DeFazio has said his panel will seek to draft legislation by the end of this year or early next year.

At a hearing yesterday held by the T&I Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, DeFazio expressed frustration that Congress can't seem to agree on funding.

"Around here, we're paralyzed," he said. "My God, we can't figure out how we're going to pay for this."

He added, "The Senate passed a bill; it's got some decent policy in it. It's got a little more spending. But the leaders of the Senate have said, 'Oh, it's impossible to pay for. We don't know how we're going to pay for that.'"

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), chairwoman of the subcommittee, lamented the fact that Senate Republicans remain resistant to raising the federal gas and diesel tax.

Norton noted that in the absence of federal action, a number of states have recently moved to increase their own gas taxes, including red states like Indiana, Nebraska and South Carolina.

"How come in red states, they're not afraid to raise the gas tax, but they send people to Congress who are?" she asked. "So we're stuck on stupid when it comes to revenue."

Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) pushed back, saying he would have trouble convincing his constituents to back a gas tax hike, especially if it would primarily benefit cities in other parts of the country.

"It's very difficult for me to go back to North Carolina ... and suggest that what we're going to do is raise taxes so that you can have less congestion in your cities," said Meadows, a leader of the conservative Freedom Caucus.

Chairs DeFazio, Norton Statements from Hearing on "Pricing and Technology Strategies to Address Congestion on and Financing of America's Roads"

September 11, 2019

Washington, D.C. — *The following are opening remarks, as delivered, from Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR), and Chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) during today's hearing titled "Pricing and Technology Strategies to Address Congestion on and Financing of America's Roads."*

Chair DeFazio: "Thanks, Madam Chair. You both made points that Congress needs to pay attention to. The cost of congestion on an annual basis are about four times our Federal investment in surface transportation and transit. Just think about that. We're wasting four times as much money as we're investing on an annual basis year after year after year.

But around here we're paralyzed! We can't figure out how we're going to pay for this...how are you ever going to pay for this?

Oh, let's see. We haven't adjusted the gas and diesel tax since 1993. I've proposed something that's so de minimis, that it's just embarrassing that we can't do it. Let's just index the gas and diesel tax and do some bonding and limit the annual increase to one and a half cents a gallon a year.

And I keep saying, 'You think you're going to lose your election if gas goes up one and a half cents a gallon?'

When you drove to work today you drove by the gas station—it probably went up a nickel or down a nickel on the digital sign. No one's going to notice that. And people around the country have shown that they are willing to pay to get out of congestion.

But Congress hasn't got the message. The White House hasn't got the message. They love to talk about a big infrastructure bill, we were up to two trillion dollars for three weeks and then we were down to zero.

In fact, the proposals in the President's budget consistently cut transportation investment.

The states can't do it on their own. They're trying, the states are trying. A lot of all red states have raised their gas tax, raised their registration fees and states that have mixed governments and blue states.

It's not a partisan issue out there in America. Just seems to be a partisan issue here in Washington, D.C..."

Chair DeFazio's full remarks can be found [here](#).

Chair Norton's full remarks can be found [here](#).

House panel debates merits of congestion pricing

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

Several stakeholders testifying during a House hearing regarding traffic congestion agreed that the nation is facing a major problem. However, the panel and lawmakers were split on whether or not congestion pricing such as tolling is the right way to address the issue.

On Wednesday, Sept. 11, the House Highways and Transit subcommittee held a hearing titled "Pricing and Technology Strategies to Address Congestion on and Financing of America's Roads." Lawmakers and six stakeholders debated whether tolling, congestion pricing or even a fuel tax is the best way to solve congestion across the nation.

The panel of witnesses weighed in:

- Oliver Gilbert III, mayor of Miami Gardens and chairman of Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization.
- Travis Brouwer, Oregon Department of Transportation assistant director for public affairs.
- Tilly Chang, executive director of San Francisco County Transportation Authority, on behalf of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America.
- Darren D. Hawkins, CEO of YRC Worldwide Inc., on behalf of the American Trucking Association.
- Timothy J. Lomax, Ph.D., PE, Regents Fellow at Texas A&M Transportation Institute.
- Marc Scribner, Senior Fellow at Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Although all agreed the country is facing a congestion problem, not everyone could agree on tolling. On the other hand, the majority of those present recognized the need to increase the federal fuel tax.

Tolling

During opening remarks, Chairwoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., pointed out that some supported greater tolling flexibility for states and localities. However, others think there should be more barriers. That appeared to be a major theme during the hearing.

In submitted testimony, Hawkins explained why toll roads are a poor revenue source for highways. To start, collection costs are extremely high compared to other sources of revenue. In 2016, the Pennsylvania Turnpike spent more than \$200 million to collect about \$1 billion in tolls, or about 20%. Conversely, the cost to collect a federal fuel tax is just 0.2% of revenue.

Second, tolls lead to traffic diverting to neighboring roadways not equipped to handle the additional traffic. This is especially true for trucks.

"Specifically with regard to the trucking industry, whether a carrier decides to avoid a toll road depends on a number of factors, including the type of load, delivery deadline, whether the driver or carrier determines route choice, and whether the driver or carrier is responsible for toll costs," Hawkins testified. "Note that the critical missing element here is the shipper. With few exceptions, the shipper is not directly billed for toll costs. Therefore, the carrier usually bears the cost of the toll and has to attempt to recover these costs by either improving efficiencies or increasing rates across the carrier's entire customer base."

Lastly, Hawkins referred to what he called "unfair subsidization." Meaning, because only a fraction of the roads can be tolled, a small minority of motorists are essentially paying the costs of an entire state's surface transportation system.

Hawkins also pointed out that YRC pays \$750,000 each year for Rhode Island's truck-only toll alone.

"Providence is as the 130th largest city in the United States," Hawkins stated. "What would happen to our nation's supply chain, truck drivers and economy if just half of the largest 100 cities in America implemented similar tolls?"

During his testimony, Mayor Gilbert touted the success of express lanes on Interstate 95 known as 95 Express. Norton questioned that success by showing a picture of stopped traffic next to an empty express lane, suggesting perhaps people are not willing to pay for tolls:

Tolling fatigue

Chairman of the Committee on Transportation Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., referred to "tolling fatigue" in Texas, pointing out a tolling moratorium in the state. Essentially, Lomax agreed with DeFazio that the tolls have not shown to solve any of the congestion problems.

DeFazio also pointed out how high variable toll pricing can get.

"We're talking about \$1.70 (in Miami Gardens)," DeFazio said. "We've seen almost \$5 a mile in D.C. What kind of public acceptance do you think that's going to have?"

Other lawmakers were also sympathetic to the trucking industry when it comes to tolling. Rep. Carol Miller, R-W.V., commented that tolling disproportionately affects the trucking industry. Rep. Sharice Davids, D-Kan., asked Hawkins how all this affects trucking:

[In a letter to the subcommittee](#), the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association echoed that sentiment:

“Research has shown that tolling of any variety is an extremely wasteful method of funding compared to fuel taxes. Additionally, tolled roads consistently fail to meet revenue projections, creating unanticipated funding shortfalls and inevitable rate increases. Furthermore, congestion pricing would simply impose yet another fee on truckers, who already pay more than their fair share for infrastructure investment through federal and state fuel taxes, International Registration Plan taxes, federal excise taxes on new trucks, trailers, and tires, existing toll road taxes and numerous other state and local levies.”

Several lawmakers were also skeptical of what motivates congestion pricing. More specifically, Brouwer suggested that congestion pricing encourages motorists to choose different schedules. However, lawmakers and other witnesses were quick to point out that most workers do not have that kind of flexibility with work schedules.

The Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates also sent a letter to the subcommittee on the subject:

“History has shown that, when given full consideration, states recognize what all the impacted industries have always known – that tolling interstate lanes which drivers now freely access is not only unpopular, it is an inefficient financing mechanism that is the worst possible approach to raising transportation revenue. Imposing tolls on existing interstates will increase shipping costs for goods, suppress consumer activity, waste revenues on bureaucratic administration, double-tax businesses, divert traffic onto local roads, and negatively impact residents and communities located around toll facilities.”

Federal fuel tax increase

While there was some lively discussion about tolls, most agreed that the federal fuel tax is long overdue for an increase.

“Around here, we’re paralyzed,” DeFazio said. “My god, we can’t figure out how we’re going to pay for this. ‘How are you going to ever pay for this?’ Oh let’s see, we haven’t adjusted the gas and diesel tax since 1993.”

DeFazio noted that people have shown that they are willing to pay to get out of congestion. He pointed out that red and blue states alike have increased fuel taxes and registration fees with no political fallout.

Norton stated that a modest fuel tax increase would cost only \$100 a year for the average motorist, which is better than being late for work. On the other side of the aisle, Rep. John Katko, R-N.Y., also threw his support behind a federal fuel tax increase.

A few dissenters included Marc Scribner, who did not agree with a fuel tax increase. Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., went on an emotional rant questioning why North Carolina should have to pay a federal tax for a project that may not benefit them at all.

Regardless of the solutions Congress may come up, Timothy Lomax made one thing clear: “Doing nothing is not free.”

[Shelby Stresses Importance of Adherence to Budget Agreement During FY2020 Appropriations Markup](#)

09.12.19

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) today [convened](#) the first full committee markup for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations process. During the meeting, the Committee members are slated to consider the 302(b) subcommittee allocations, the FY2020 Department of Defense Appropriations Act, and the FY2020 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act.

[Continue Reading](#)

Just days after beginning work, appropriators delay scheduled votes on measures to fund agencies past September

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Hopes that Senate lawmakers would act quickly to pass spending bills and reduce the odds of a shutdown this fall were dashed this week, as appropriators immediately ran into roadblocks when they started the process to set line-by-line funding for agencies across government.

The Senate Appropriations Committee canceled a series of markups this week—both preliminary votes at the subcommittee level and final approval before the full panel scheduled for Thursday—over a dispute on which policy riders would be attached to the funding measures. Senate leaders in both parties subsequently raised concerns about the chamber’s capacity to work quickly to approve the required spending bills, with each pointing fingers at the other side for engaging in overtly political maneuverings. Current funding for agencies across government lasts through Sept. 30.

At issue is a handshake agreement to avoid “poison pill” add-ons to appropriations bills. The agreement was struck as part of the bipartisan [budget deal](#) President Trump signed into law earlier this summer to set the top-line spending levels. Lawmakers said the agreement would avoid thorny issues, such as abortion and blocking the Trump administration from shifting funds to pay for barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border. Washington Democratic Sen. Patty Murray said, however, that she planned to introduce an amendment to block the administration’s rule that restricted Title X family planning grant recipients from discussing abortion with patients, and the committee declined to move forward with a vote until lawmakers sorted out how to proceed with riders.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said on Wednesday that Democrats were failing to uphold their end of the bargain.

“With only a few weeks to go until the end of September, we have no time to waste when it comes to appropriations,” McConnell said from the Senate floor. “Everyone on both sides agreed there would be no poison pills, no partisan wrenches thrown into the gears. Unfortunately, yesterday brought some disturbing signals that Democrats may be rethinking that commitment.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., similarly sounded the alarm on the lack of progress, but blamed Republicans for setting the top-line spending level for each of the 12 annual appropriations bills without consulting Democrats. He also condemned a proposal to add \$12 billion for border wall funding.

“Already we’re running into trouble with those allocations this time around,” Schumer said Wednesday morning. “Step one in the appropriations process and the spirit of bipartisanship necessary for this work might be, might be melting away.”

He added Republicans “know very well this will not fly with Senate Democrats.” The Democrats are “not going to vote for a budget that is partisan, attempted to be jammed down our throats that puts an additional \$12 billion in the wall,” he explained. “Forget that.”

The House has passed most of the required annual spending bills for fiscal 2020, but lawmakers still must reconcile them with the Senate, which has yet to approve any appropriations bills for the upcoming fiscal year. The upper chamber delayed work on the spending bills until top-line funding levels were established under the budget deal that Trump has signed into law. A Senate subcommittee on Tuesday approved a Defense Department spending bill for fiscal 2020. The full panel is set to approve that bill on Thursday, but has delayed scheduled votes on two bills to fund the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and State, as well as other agencies.

Despite the early hiccups, both sides remained cautiously optimistic they could put their differences aside and avoid another government shutdown. Both McConnell and Schumer acknowledged a continuing resolution would likely be necessary to avoid a shutdown in October, which House leaders have [already called](#) unavoidable.

“I maintain hope that [Appropriations Committee leaders] can oversee a smooth process, that we can move all 12 appropriation bills in a bipartisan fashion,” McConnell said. “Both sides have every reason to want a smooth appropriations process to proceed as we have planned. I hope that’s exactly what happens in committee this week and on the floor soon thereafter.”

Schumer said there is “still time to get this back on track.”

“Certainly our side wants to avoid a Republican shutdown and we hope our Republican colleagues will have the good sense not to let President Trump lead them into that cul-de-sac once again,” he said. “So let’s sit down and make this work.”

[Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY2020 Subcommittee Allocations](#)

09.12.19

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Committee on Appropriations today approved Chairman Richard Shelby’s (R-Ala.) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 subcommittee allocation proposal [during the first full committee markup](#). Consistent with the [2019 Bipartisan Budget Agreement](#), the FY2020 allocations total \$666.5 billion in defense funding, \$621.5 billion in non-defense funding, and \$79.5 billion in funding for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO).

Funding Opportunities

FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area

Fiscal Year 2020 Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Grant Applications Now Available

The 5310 funds are for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is the designated recipient for the Mobile Urban Area. The application for FY2020 funds can be found on the Mobile MPO website [HERE](#). For more information, email mwilliamson@sarpc.org.

Here is the schedule for the competitive application process.

DATE	ACTIVITY
August 30 th , 2019	Program Announcement and dissemination of grant applications

September 10 th , 2019 at 10:00 am	Information Session – GM&O Building at 110 Beaugard Street, Mobile, AL 36602 (2 nd floor training room)
October 11 th , 2019 by NOON	Deadline for submission of applications
October 2019	Selection committee convenes to review applications
TBA	Awards Announced
TBA	Grant application to FTA vis TRAMS
TBA	Vehicle Order Submission

For more information, email mwilliamson@sarpc.org

[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)*

Frustrated Nation Calls For Updated Zip-Line Infrastructure

WASHINGTON—Offering vocal criticism of the aging transit network and its continued failure to meet their transportation needs, frustrated citizens nationwide are calling upon federal officials this week to at long last update the country’s obsolete zip-line infrastructure.

Advocates for reform, whose demands have grown louder in recent years, have assailed America’s decades-old system of ladders, poles, platforms, and galvanized steel rope as inadequate, arguing that the current infrastructure provides limited and inconvenient options for low-altitude carabiner-and-cable-based travel across the United States.

“As it stands, our current zip-line infrastructure must be rebuilt from the ground up if zip-lining is to remain viable for the millions of workers, students, and business travelers who rely on it every day,” American Public Transportation Association president Michael Melaniphy told reporters. “Right now, if someone wants to travel by zip-line, they must crowd into long lines and wait for extended periods before riding along a patchwork of rusty cables and end posts, many of which haven’t been refurbished since they were first erected in the 1950s. Frankly, the fact that we’re still commuting on the same zip-line technology our grandparents used is embarrassing for a nation as advanced as ours.”

“We can and must do better than this,” Melaniphy continued. “Ideally, anyone should be able to throw on a helmet and a pair of close-toed shoes, take a deep breath, and let gravity zip them away to their home or place of business without having to walk miles to their nearest launch platform or face interminable delays due to antiquated lines’ weight limits.”

According to several recent surveys, the public’s frustration stems largely from the aerial transit system’s failure to accommodate the growing number of harnessed and strapped-in travelers. Additionally, transportation experts cite the network’s degrading cable clamps, frequent maintenance-related delays, and multipage liability waivers as further reasons why the nation’s zip-line network must be updated.

“All I want is a simple, hassle-free transit system that will let me soar above the tree canopy to the places I need to go, and maybe also a camera to snap my picture as I stick out my tongue and flash a ‘hang loose’ sign while I’m at it.”

As part of their calls for modernization, travelers have also demanded such innovations as greater inclines for faster zips, high-capacity cables that can send hundreds of passengers sailing through the air at the same time, and zip-lines with grippable T-bars that come to an abrupt halt mid-line, causing riders to lose their handhold and plunge into bodies of water below.

“Every morning when I clip myself to the cable before work, I know I’m going to be standing up there on the platform forever just waiting for my turn,” said Oakland, CA resident Matthew Marshall, adding that, even after he leaps off, he too often finds himself stuck dangling in place when his zip-line sags. “If they could just put in one direct, high-speed zip-line across the bay so that I could quickly get between here and my job in San Francisco, it would make my life so much easier and shave hours off my zip-line commute each day.”

“Unfortunately, installing new zip-lines between major cities seems to be our elected officials’ lowest priority,” he added.

Experts claim that failing to modernize the nationwide zip-line grid is likely to have a number of negative and costly repercussions beyond simply inconveniencing the millions who currently use the gravity-propelled transit system as their primary form of transit. In particular, environmental watchdog groups have warned that the lack of fast, reliable zip-lines will inevitably lead millions to turn to such fuel-intensive modes of transportation as dune buggies, hovercraft, and zeppelin-share programs.

A number of independent reports published in recent years have recommended that the U.S. take cues from the extensive zip-line infrastructure in Europe, where citizens regularly swoop from city to city while gliding beneath a five-eighths-inch steel wire.

“All you have to do is look at all the people zipping through the air above France and Germany to realize just how far behind we are,” said Cincinnati resident Marsha Adams, referring to the comprehensive network of ultrafast zip-lines that have been carrying passengers between London, Paris, Stockholm, and thousands of other locations across the continent since the early 1980s. “It’s the 21st century, for God’s sake. All I want is a simple, hassle-free transit system that will let me soar above the tree canopy to the places I need to go, and maybe also a camera to snap my picture as I stick out my tongue and flash a ‘hang loose’ sign while I’m at it.”

“Honestly though, with the way things are now, it usually makes more sense to just fork over the extra cash and strap on a wingsuit,” she added.

In the News

Plan to enlarge Mobile Ship Channel cleared to proceed

By [Lawrence Specker | lspecker@al.com](#)

Updated Sep 09, 2019; Posted Sep 09, 2019



A Corps of Engineers map shows the Mobile Ship Channel that connects the port of Mobile to the Gulf of Mexico.

A plan to widen and deepen the Mobile Ship Channel has received approval that will allow the Corps of Engineers to proceed with the project, with work expected to begin in late 2020.

The operations of the fast-growing port are linked to the Gulf of Mexico by a 45-foot-deep channel that allows deep-draft ships to transit relatively shallow Mobile Bay. Ships have grown bigger in recent decades as the Panama Canal has been expanded; port leadership asked the Corps several years ago to study a possible enlargement, saying it was necessary for the port to remain competitive. The Corps settled on a nominal depth of 50 feet as the new standard.

Jimmy Lyons, director and CEO of the Alabama State Port Authority, has said the channel enlargement would be particularly beneficial to Mobile's container terminal, the subject of an ongoing series of expansion projects that have added new cranes, new dock space and new storage yards.

"With completion of the Phase 3 expansion, the port and its partner, APM Terminals, will have nearly \$500 million in container intermodal assets to serve our customers," Lyons said. "As demand dictates, we're positioned to respond quickly to further expansion."

The Corps' findings that the project will cause no harm [have raised objections in some quarters](#). Environmentalists and some marine scientists have questioned the Corps' methodology, saying it may downplay risks to marine life. Advocates for Dauphin Island have challenged the Corps to use sand from the dredging to combat erosion of the island's beaches, saying the channel weakens the island by disrupting the natural flow of sand. The plan does make some provision for such "beneficial use."

Jeff Collier, mayor of the town of Dauphin Island, said he and other Island advocates haven't opposed to port improvements or the economic benefits that might come from them. But said he's felt since the beginning of the process that there was an opportunity for the Corps to commit to using sand from the dredging in a way that do the most good for the island's beaches.

"I just feel like we should be able to accomplish that," he said. "I think it's unfortunate that we haven't been able to connect those dots."

To the extent the Corps has been willing to support beneficial use, that's good, he said. "I just think there's more that could have been done."

The Corps announced Monday that Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, Commander of the South Atlantic Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, had signed the Record of Decision for the Mobile Harbor General Reevaluation Report (GRR) with Integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

The GRR/SEIS presents a project that is estimated to cost \$387.8 million dollars; Judith Adams, the Alabama State Port Authority's vice president for marketing, said that may not include several million dollars of incidental costs for things such as relocation of navigational aids. The plan calls for easing some bends, creating a wide section to serve as a passing zone, extending a turning basin and deepening the channel by 5 feet to a nominal depth of 50 feet. Altogether, that work will involve moving 24 million cubic yards of material.

The lion's share of the project, roughly three-quarters, will be paid for with federal funds. A bond issue expended to be in the range of \$150 million will pay for the state's portion of the project, Adams, said. That bond issue, in turn, will be paid off with [an earmarked portion of the state gas tax increase](#) approved earlier this year.

The Corps' study process took four years and cost \$7.8 million.

According to information provided by the Corps of Engineers, the Corps will now seal a "design agreement" with the Port Authority and begin engineering and design work. Actual dredging could begin in late 2020, according to the Corps.

"We anticipate it being a three- to four-year program," Adams said, meaning the channel's new dimensions would be fully implemented by 2024.

According to the Corps, "The recommended plan also includes a minimum of 1.5 million cubic yards of suitable new work dredged material for beneficial use projects that have been approved and permitted by the proponents through the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012, (RESTORE), NOAA's Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), or National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) programs."

Collier said that over the course of the project, he and others will continue to push for changes to make such projects "a little more meaningful, a little more tangible."

"If it's going to change, it's going to have to change politically," he said.

Toll opponents fear 'Lazarus' moment as efforts continue to keep I-10 project 'dead'

By [John Sharp | jsharp@al.com](#) Posted Sep 11, 5:24 PM

Yogi Berra is credited with first coining the phrase, "it ain't over till it's over" in 1973, and it's been used as a never-say-die mantra for politicians, sports fans, and inspiring personalities ever since.

In coastal Alabama, the famous phrase has been muttered in the past 15 days to symbolize the skepticism toll opponents have about the \$2.1 billion Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project and a plan to assess tolls to pay for it.

Simply put, they are concerned the project really isn't "dead."

"I think people are not against the bridge, but we are against the tolls," said July Smith of Fairhope. "It's not dead."

About 30 people showed up for the latest public hearing on Tuesday into a short-term plan called the "Transportation Improvement Plan" (TIP) that is scheduled to be voted on by the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization on Sept. 25.

The TIP has been the subject of much scrutiny in the past month after the Eastern Shore MPO – following a four-hour meeting in Fairhope on Aug. 28 – voted to remove the I-10 project from its TIP that runs from fiscal years 2020-23. The fiscal year starts on Oct. 1.

Shortly after the MPO's vote, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey issued a news release that stated there was no path forward for the project, [and declared it "dead."](#) Removing the project from the TIP prevents state officials from pursuing crucial federal sources for financing the project, though a project can be added back into the TIP even if it's removed.

The Eastern Shore MPO's vote was an emphatic 8-1 to remove the project, and there has been no indication that the group plans reverse itself and place the project back into the TIP by Sept. 25. The group doesn't have another meeting scheduled until January 2020.

An Ivey spokeswoman, on Tuesday, referred back to the governor's Aug. 28 statement in which she declared the project's death and also canceled an Oct. 7 meeting of the Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority. The meeting had been previously scheduled to discuss alternatives toward assessing tolls to finance the large project.

But in the nearly two weeks since, a Facebook page titled "[Block the Mobile Bayway Toll](#)" has continued to provide updates on meetings in which the toll project could be discussed including Tuesday's public comment session hosted by the Eastern Shore MPO in Spanish Fort. Another public comment meeting is scheduled from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept 17, at the Fairhope satellite courthouse.

Alabama Auditor Jim Zeigler, who administers the Facebook page, has posted that toll opponents must "stay vigilant" and avoid any "Lazarus" project to make sure the project doesn't "rise again." Zeigler's comment is a biblical reference that is recounted in the Gospel of John about a miracle in which Jesus brought Lazarus of Bethany back from the dead four days after his burial.

Zeigler has also cited concerns about what he believes is the project's undead status [based on an Aug. 30 public notice on the Federal Register](#). That notice was related to the final approval of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) that occurred on Aug. 15, when the project was still under consideration by state officials. The public notice was released two days after Ivey's declaration about the project's death. Federal and state transportation officials have since said the Federal Register notice was simply a "routine procedural step" unrelated to the decisions that led to the project's unraveling.

Lou Campomenosi, president of the Common Sense Campaign in Baldwin County, said he believes there are aspects of the project that are not truly "killed off," and his organization is continuing to push out anti-toll radio spots. In coastal Alabama, the group has an advertisement on FM Talk 106.5 in which Campomenosi urges listeners to contact members of the Mobile City Council and urge them to adopt a resolution in opposition of the toll plan.

That radio spot comes after [AL.com](#), in an article published Saturday, quoted Council Vice President Levon Manzie as saying the reason a resolution didn't come before the council for a vote was because he felt there was not enough support for an anti-toll measure to pass.

"I think this is part of what we think is necessary in order to have a united front," said Campomenosi. "Daphne, the Baldwin County Commission and other municipalities came out with 'no toll.' Why doesn't Mobile do the same thing? We need a united front."

Campomenosi also said that toll opponents realize there will have to be alternative projects pitched to address the concerns about I-10 traffic in the coming years. The Alabama Department of Transportation and Ivey's office pushed for the \$2.1 billion project that would be financed with tolls out of concern over future projects of persistent gridlock along I-10.

"We have to have some sort of solution to the traffic we know will be coming in the future," he said. "At this particular juncture, we'd like to salvage the plan minus the tolls."

Celia Waters of Fairhope and Marty McArthur of Daphne – both active users on the Facebook page – said the concerns about the project's return boils down to distrust of the governor's office.

"We are here and we are not going away," said McArthur. "We are the voters. Our representative should do what their constituents want. Not what they want."

[New APTA Report Outlines the Public Transportation Challenges Late Shift Workers Face](#)

Late shift workers now make up more than 17 percent of the workforce in metropolitan areas according to a new American Public Transportation Association (APTA) study analyzing the needs of late-shift commuters and the ways public transit providers and decision-makers can improve commuting options for this segment of the workforce. The report calls for policymakers to create funding programs dedicated specifically to funding late shift public transit operations, as well as investing in state of good repair, which limits the need for large windows of time needed for maintenance and inspections at night.

Gov. Ivey: Figures to replace Elliott on statewide infrastructure committee

Posted by [Jason Johnson](#) | Sep 11, 2019 | [Bay Briefs](#)

Gov. Kay Ivey announced this week she would be terminating Sen. Chris Elliott, R-Fairhope, from a position on a statewide infrastructure committee and replacing him with Democratic Sen. Vivian Figures of Mobile. (Photos by contributed)

Less than two weeks after declaring the Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway "dead," Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has removed one of the opponents of her funding proposal for the project from a newly established statewide infrastructure committee.

The governor's office confirmed Sept. 9 that State Sen. Chris Elliott, R-Fairhope, had been removed from the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program II (ATRIP II) committee at Ivey's discretion and will be replaced by State Sen. Vivian Figures, D-Mobile.

Advertisements

“Serving on ATRIP II is a privilege, not an entitlement,” Ivey said in a statement. “It also carries with it significant responsibilities and as such, I have asked Senator Vivian Davis Figures — the most senior senator from the Mobile/Baldwin County delegation — to take my appointment to this committee.”

The eight-member committee, which was formed after the Legislature passed Alabama’s new gas tax increase earlier this year, is tasked with overseeing how some of the resulting revenue will be used to support infrastructure projects around the state through the existing ATRIP program. The committee is expected to handle \$30 million to \$50 million annually as revenue from the gas tax continues to grow.

Figures will join the committee at its meeting Friday, Sept. 13, along with fellow members Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Director John Cooper; State Sens. Arthur Orr and Garlan Gudger; State Reps. Bill Poole, Steve Clouse and Debbie Wood; and Tony Cherry, president of the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama.

However, the local shakeup comes less than two weeks after ALDOT’s plan to build the much-anticipated Mobile River Bridge unraveled amid local opposition to funding a large portion of the \$2.1 billion project with tolls — fees ALDOT said could have started as high as \$6 each way.

That particular proposal, which Ivey strongly endorsed, met its fate during a meeting of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (ESMPO) in late August after its Policy Board voted to remove the project from its 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) altogether.

That decision effectively ended the potential for federal funding being used to support the bridge’s construction, and within a few minutes, Ivey published a statement bluntly stating: “This project is dead.”

While Elliott wasn’t on the policy board that voted to “kill” the project, he had abandoned his previous support for the project in the months leading up to the vote, due to the groundswell of local opposition to the tolls.

Elliott had supported the project in the past — even with some tolling — but sponsored legislation to lower costs for the state and concessionaires earlier this year, which he hoped would lower the overall cost of the project. Elliott said he let the governor’s office know ahead of time he was not going to continue to support the project if an alternative funding source wasn’t identified, and eventually made good on that promise.

Now, Elliott believes his removal from the ATRIP II committee is a retaliatory move by Ivey.

“I was disappointed to learn through media reports of the governor’s decision to remove me from ATRIP, but unfortunately this action did not come as a surprise. It’s clear the governor’s office is disappointed with my decision to withdraw my support for her flawed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway proposal,” Elliott told Lagniappe on Monday. “I’ve long been and will remain a proponent of finding a solution to the I-10 corridor, but not a solution that will be on the backs of the people I represent. I respect the governor’s decision in this matter, but I hope she understands I will always vigorously advocate for the people I represent first.”

Elliott said he first learned about his appointment being terminated from media reports and wasn’t notified by Ivey’s office ahead of time. A few minutes after speaking to Lagniappe, he posted a copy of a letter he received from the governor on Monday notifying him of the decision.

The comments on Elliott’s post indicated that many agreed with the senator that the move was retaliatory, with some continuing calls for Ivey to resign, which originated as part of the backlash to the toll proposal. It’s also worth noting that it was Ivey who made the original decision to appoint Elliott — a newly elected state senator — to the ATRIP II committee, which only met for the first time in May.

Despite the optics, Ivey has rejected the notion that Elliott’s removal was somehow retaliatory. A spokesperson for her office said the shakeup was about Figures’ qualifications as “one of the most senior members of the local legislative delegation,” not Elliott’s stance on the I-10 bridge project.

“Senator Figures has a proven track record of seeking progress and finding ways to bring people together who are seeking common ground,” Ivey said. “Given that South Alabama has so many priorities reflecting the growth and activity in this region, I thought it was better to have someone who knows how to get things done and has a record of working with everyone.”

In March, Figures was one of the senators who opposed Ivey’s 10-cent gas tax increase, saying it would hurt the poor. The gas tax increase passed overwhelmingly and was signed into law by Ivey. Calls and emails to Figures seeking a comment her appointment to the ATRIP II committee did not receive a response as of this publication’s press deadline.

Why Mobile didn’t vote against I-10 toll plan? Not enough votes, councilman says

Updated Sep 07, 2019; Posted Sep 07, 2019

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

The Mobile City Council didn’t vote on a resolution last month opposing the state’s toll plan for the proposed Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project because there weren’t enough votes to get it passed, Council Vice President Levon Manzie said Saturday.

“I think we would’ve had three to four members who would’ve supported it,” Manzie said. “But in our form of government, it takes five. I’m not in the business and practice of bringing resolutions to the council that don’t have the required support to pass.”

Manzie, in early August, said [he was interested in having the council vote on a resolution “in the very near future”](#) on the proposed toll plan. His comment occurred around the same time when cities in Baldwin County were voting on resolutions opposing a plan by the Alabama Department of Transportation to assess tolls to help finance a \$2.1 billion bridge and new I-10 Bayway from Virginia Street in Mobile to the U.S. 98 exit in Daphne.

Spanish Fort, Daphne, Loxley and the Baldwin County Commission all adopted resolutions opposing the state's toll plan during the months of July and August.

"There were people wondering why cities in Baldwin County were passing these resolutions and the bottom line to it is that it's not my practice to bring forward items that I don't know for certain have the requisite support," he said.

Manzie said he felt his opposition to tolls "was very public." A proposed, the state was pitching a \$6 one-way toll for the entire use of the new I-10 bridge and Bayway. The Wallace Tunnel in downtown Mobile would also be tolled under a plan that [has since been declared "dead" by Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey](#).

Manzie said his opposition stemmed partly from concerns about traffic diversion off I-10 and to the Cochrane-Africatown USA Bridge. He was also concerned about the \$6 one-way fee.

Manzie said he wrote letters to state officials inquiring how they planned to "mitigate issues" of increased traffic through the Africatown neighborhood north of downtown Mobile. He said he didn't get any response.

Manzie said he didn't feel pressured by anyone not to bring forward a resolution. However, he said he was concerned that a resolution addressing the I-10 project would get changed and "watered down" similar to what he said happened with a resolution on returning passenger rail to Mobile.

The council voted July 9 on a resolution that encouraged "responsible state, county and city officials" to "examine the feasibility of a return of passenger rail to the Gulf Coast." It was a change from an original resolution, which Manzie backed in June, that supported the return of passenger rail to the Gulf Coast.

Manzie was absent from the council's July 9 meeting. The council voted 6-0 on the new resolution.

"I didn't want a resolution like the train resolution where we get to it and then are taking this out and taking that out and when you get down to it, you have seven to eight lines of nothingness," Manzie said. "I think the (I-10 toll project) deserved better than that."

Alabama Auditor Jim Zeigler, who administers the Facebook page "[Block the Mobile Bayway Toll](#)," said a resolution from the Mobile City Council was not an "essential part of the process" on whether the project is revised or remains "dead."

Zeigler said that anti-toll advocates are continuing to provide comments to the Eastern Shore MPO this month to ensure that the group's final Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is voted on later this month without the I-10 project in it.

The Eastern Shore MPO voted 8-1 on Aug. 28 to remove it following four hours of public testimony opposing the project and tolls. The Mobile MPO voted on Aug. 21, [to table the project from inclusion in its TIP](#) until the state had a chance to consider alternative proposals during an Oct. 7 meeting of the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Ivey canceled the meeting after she declared the project dead.



Ride the Wave

Public Service Announcement

RE: Ride the "New" Wave (SERVICE MODIFICATIONS)

Release Date: August 28, 2019

Are you looking for a safe, reliable and cost effective option to transportation in the City of Mobile? Well, look no further and Ride "The New" Wave. The Wave Transit System is AFFORDABLE (only \$1.25 per ride); CONVENIENT (Thirteen (13) Routes providing prompt and professional transportation service); RELIABLE and overall the best deal in town!

And if that wasn't enough, beginning, Tuesday, September 3, 2019, the Wave will add services to include the following locations:

- Mobile Regional Airport
- The New Department of Human Resources location on Mel Showers Drive
- Additional services to The Shoppes at Bel Air

SEE THE CHART BELOW FOR DETAILED INFORMATION

ROUTE	ROUTE NUMBER	ACTION
Airport	#1	Modify weekday and Saturday bus service with direct service along Airport Boulevard from the Shoppes at Bel Air to include Providence Hospital, Schillinger Road and Mobile Regional Airport's Airport Station.
Dauphin Street	#7	Modify inbound route to include services to Midtown Walmart.
Crosstown Malls	#10	Modify inbound route, discontinuing bus services to Atlanta Bread Company. Modify outbound route to include services to the new Department of Human Resources on Broadcast Drive.
Dauphin Island Parkway	#11	Modify weekday bus service with continuous service along Dauphin Island Parkway to include, Fullbrook Shopping Center, Mobile Public Library, B.C. Rain High and Boykin Boulevard.
Highway 90-Tillmans Corner	#12	Modify weekday and Saturday bus services to include The Shoppes at Bel Air.

"Ride the New Wave....."Get on Board"

For Additional Information call 251-344-6600 or visit the website at www.TheWaveTransit.com

Transportation Research

[FHWA Webinar on 9/26 to Address Virtual Public Involvement](#)

Date: September 05, 2019

On September 26, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will present a webinar on Virtual Public Involvement, one of the agency's featured initiatives through the Every Day Counts program to promote innovation. This webinar is the third in a series and will focus on story maps, online tools in the field, and creative use of short videos, with speakers representing state and regional agencies that have direct experience with conducting virtual public involvement. Learn more and register online [here](#).

Experts Emphasize Communication, Teamwork in Transportation Planning

Eleanor Lamb August 22, 2019

Fruitful partnerships between state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations depend on communication, collaboration and inclusion, according to transportation experts.

Darryl Fields, senior transportation planner at the Mid-America Regional Council, said successful projects come from frequent collaboration with government agencies and planning organization partners. MARC serves the Kansas City metropolitan area, representing two states, two Federal Highway Administration divisions and eight counties (four each in Kansas and Missouri). Fields spoke at a webinar hosted by FHWA on Aug. 21, which was held as part of the agency's Talking Freight seminar series.

Kansas City is an important freight hub, containing four intermodal hubs, a massive rail center and an inland waterway. Fields said past collaborative successes include the reconstruction of the interchange linking interstates 435 and 470 to U.S. Route 71 south of Kansas City and flyover rail crossings.

"An important aspect in any business are successful relationships. We, as public policy providers, must maintain agency cooperation and participation," Fields said. "Freight has no boundaries."

Yatman Kwan, chief of the California Department of Transportation's Office of Freight Planning, agreed with Fields, stating that regular collaboration fosters better work between transportation agencies and planning groups. Kwan and his team developed a survey geared toward state DOTs and metropolitan planning organizations. The purpose was to learn how often these entities regularly interacted, the extent of their involvement in one another's work and their biggest concerns related to freight.

From the survey, Kwan determined that the best practices are found in MPOs and DOTs that frequently reach out to each other and maintain reliable points of contact. State agencies reported various ways in which they work with MPOs. For example, MPOs are represented on Michigan DOT's task teams devoted to developing long-range transportation plans. Tennessee DOT created an Office of Community Transportation, which regularly communicates with members of planning organizations.

Challenges remain for smaller MPOs that sometimes feel overlooked, according to the survey results. A few MPOs reported they don't have regular meetings with their DOT counterparts.

"[Some] small MPOs feel neglected in statewide efforts and meetings. Some MPOs felt some DOTs are very siloed," Kwan said. "[They] would like to see more ongoing conversation."

Kenneth Kao, principal planner within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Programming and Allocations Section, said he and his team work closely with Caltrans, holding quarterly meetings with the agency's Freight Advisory Committee. MTC covers the San Francisco Bay area, encompassing 7.5 million people and nine counties. MTC and Caltrans work together to identify common goals (a recent example was the assignment of critical urban and rural freight corridors).

The Northern California megaregion, which includes San Francisco, Monterey Bay, Sacramento and the northern San Joaquin Valley, is an important area for freight movement, according to Kao. Specifically, the area facilitates the movement of various agricultural products and goods from the Port of Oakland.

"We're linked very closely with transportation and economic links within our region as well as with neighboring MPOs," Kao said. "Northern California is an important part of the national freight movement puzzle."

FHWA's next Talking Freight seminar will be held Aug. 28 and focus on using real-time information to improve supply chain efficiency.

Traffic Congestion Keeps Climbing, Says Latest Urban Mobility Report

editor@aaashto.org August 23, 2019

Gridlock on America's roadways is increasing, according to the [2019 Urban Mobility Report](#) published by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute – in part due to job growth that is "exacerbating" the nation's traffic woes.

The United States added 1.9 million jobs from 2016 to 2017, TTI note in its report – slower growth than the 2.3 million-plus growth in four of the five previous years, but more than enough keep pushing vehicle traffic volumes upwards.

The group added that its data – gathered from 494 urban areas across all states and Puerto Rico and supported by INRIX, a provider of transportation data and analytics – extends back to 1982.

Since that time, the number of jobs in the nation has grown almost nonstop by just over 50 percent to 153 million currently – adding that the 2008–2009 recession produced only a brief pause in traffic congestion growth, which bounced back at an even quicker pace than the associated job recovery. As a result, over that 26-year period from 1982 to 2018:

- The number of hours per commuter lost to traffic delay has nearly tripled, climbing to 54 hours a year.
- The annual cost of that delay per commuter has nearly doubled to \$1,010.
- The nationwide cost of gridlock has grown more than tenfold to \$166 billion a year.
- The amount of fuel wasted sitting in stalled traffic has more than tripled to 3.3 billion gallons a year.

“No single approach will ever solve this complex problem,” said Tim Lomax, a report author and TTI regents fellow, [in a statement](#). “We know what works. What the country needs is a robust, information-powered conversation at the local, state, and national levels about what steps should be taken. We have many strategies; we have to figure out the right solution for each problem and a way to pay for them.”

That includes squeezing as much efficiency out of the existing system as possible, reducing demand through telework, better balancing demand and roadway capacity by adjusting work hours, smarter land use, and building “more of everything” when it comes to transportation infrastructure – roads and transit system capacity alike.

Simply put, travel demand is growing faster than the system’s ability to absorb that demand, the report noted. “The problem affects not only commuters, but also manufacturers and shippers whose travel delay costs are passed on to consumers,” explained Bill Eisele, a report author and TTI senior research engineer.

For example, “while trucks constitute only 7 percent of road traffic, they account for 12 percent of congestion cost,” he said.

“The value of investing in our nation’s transportation infrastructure in a strategic and effective manner cannot be overstated as these added costs impact our national productivity, quality of life, economic efficiency and global competitiveness,” noted Marc Williams, deputy executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation, which funded the TTI research. “Eventually, we’re talking billions of wasted hours, and the cost of delay at that scale is just enormous.”

ADECA seeks public input into 2020 Census Grant Program

With the 2020 Census drawing closer, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is seeking public input for a grant program to assist with local outreach efforts.

Alabama’s goal for the 2020 Census is to obtain high participation in every Alabama community, municipality and county. ADECA issued the Request for Information related to \$1 million in funding allocated to the agency in the 2020 Education Trust Fund budget for the 2020 Census Grant Program. The RFI is available on the [ADECA website](#). The public comments about the grant program will be accepted in writing until 5 p.m. on Friday, July 12.

The one-time grant funding is to be expended by ADECA, in coordination with the State Department of Education, to assist local community outreach efforts designed to encourage Alabama residents to complete the 2020 Census count. All grants will be awarded by Dec. 31 in preparation for the census count in March and April 2020.

After the public comment period, ADECA will work to design the full process and establish deadlines for this grant program which will provide funding assistance to help with local, grassroots outreach efforts, specifically those in hard-to-count areas and groups. The agency will host a grant application workshop once all the procedures are in place and applications are ready to be accepted.

Direct link to Request for Information:

document: <http://adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/2020%20Census%20Grant%20Program%20RFI.pdf>

ADECA has set the date for the 2020 Census Grant Program application workshop on Wednesday, September 4 at 10 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. in the Alabama Center for Commerce in Montgomery. At this workshop, we will release the details of the grant program and give an overview. The application period is planned to open on the same day as the workshop.

Please note that preregistration is required and seating is limited. ADECA will also record the workshop and post the video to www.census.alabama.gov for those unable to attend.

TRB TCRP Report on Dialysis Transportation

The Transportation Research Board’s (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) has released a pre-publication version of [Research Report 203: Dialysis Transportation: Intersection of Transportation and Healthcare](#). The report responds to major concerns of public transportation agencies

about the rising demand and costs to provide kidney dialysis trips and about experiences showing these trips require service more specialized than public transportation is designed to provide.

The report documents the complicated relationship of two different industries—public transportation and healthcare, each with its own perspective and requirements—to highlight problems, identify strategies addressing concerns, and suggest options that may be more appropriate for dialysis transportation.

Accompanying the report are a supplemental report and Excel spreadsheet. The [Supplemental Report](#) includes, along with a literature review and results from the project's surveys, an assessment of the comprehensive data provided by the U.S. Renal Data System. The community data tool is an [Excel forecasting tool](#).

[Learn more and access the reports and tool here.](#)

Red light deaths at 10-year high

BY [TAL AXELROD](#) - 08/29/19

The number of deaths caused by drivers running red lights has hit a 10-year high, sparking AAA to urge both drivers and pedestrians to exercise increased caution at traffic signals.

AAA [told The Associated Press](#) that two people are killed every day by drivers who don't stop for signals. It added that, according to a study of the most recent data available, 939 people were killed in 2017 by vehicles blowing through red lights. AAA says that's the highest death toll since 2008, and 28 percent higher than 2012.

"Drivers who decide to run a red light when they could have stopped safely are making a reckless choice that puts other road users in danger," David Yang, executive director of AAA's Foundation for Traffic Safety, told the AP.

AAA also told the news service that it found that 28 percent of crash deaths at intersections with signals occurred because a driver passed through a red light.

The association said it is unsure why the numbers are on the rise, particularly considering that the total number of highway fatalities has only increased 10 percent since 2012.

Brian Tefft, a senior researcher for the AAA Foundation, told the AP that the fact that more people are driving farther distances since the Great Depression does not account for the spike in red-light deaths. He suspects that distracted driving, along with poorly timed traffic lights, plays a role.

"I wish we had a better answer than we do," he said, adding that the answer likely lay beyond the bounds of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's study of fatal crash data.

To reverse the rise, AAA recommended that governments boost the use of red light cameras to increase enforcement. It encouraged drivers to tap their breaks when approaching a light to warn other drivers of a possible stop and waiting for a moment after a light turns green to proceed through an intersection.

AAA urged pedestrians and cyclists to try to remain visible, make eye contact with drivers if possible and avoid wearing headphones while walking or riding.

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.