



projects will be happening in your area.

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## Funding Opportunities

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL FUNDING (SRTS)

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<http://www.dot.state.al.us/adweb/Industrial%20Access.htm>

## Legislative Updates

Both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate are not currently in session.

The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** gave their annual **State of American Business** speech yesterday and highlighted the need for Congress to address both the outstanding air and surface transportation authorizations. Click **HERE** for more information.

The **Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety** are **advocating for the passage of 348 total safety laws on the state and federal levels.** The group is advocating for laws that cover primary enforcement seat belt laws, impaired driving laws, according to the group's report, full graduated licensing programs meant to ease new teen drivers into the responsibility of being behind the wheel and interlock device laws for motorists convicted of driving under the influence.

## What's Ahead for Transportation in 2012?

It's time to consider what lies ahead in the New Year for the transportation community -- federal and state legislators, state departments of transportation, and the industry at large. Many of these issues mirror the challenges facing the entire nation: job creation, funding shortfalls, integrating new technology into

older systems, and aging infrastructure.

**Enacting a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill:** The eighth extension of the 2005 transportation law known as "SAFETEA-LU" expires March 31. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has advanced "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century," a bill reauthorizing the nation's surface transportation system for two years; and the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee approved the legislation's four safety, freight, and research components. Action by the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee on the transit title is pending. The legislation awaits a revenue title from the Finance Committee before moving to the Senate floor.

In the House, Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica, R-Florida, have pledged to move a multiyear reauthorization bill early in the year.

"Enactment of a bill is a significant priority for state departments of transportation and the industry as a whole," said AASHTO Executive Director John Horsley. "We know that transportation has both short-term and long-term benefits for our country -- immediate job creation that fixes real problems facing drivers every day and benefits that also create stronger economic development opportunities while promoting a better quality of life in our communities. In 2012, let's finish the job!"

**Managing in lean times -- how states address the problem of the nation's aging bridges, highways, and transit systems with stagnant or reduced funding:**

The situation is obvious -- a transportation system built largely in the 1970s and 1980s is deteriorating faster than our ability to keep up. The primary funding mechanism -- the federal gas tax -- has not been increased since 1993, and states are facing severe budget shortfalls that are adding pressure on their ability to match federal funds. Absent increased funding, state DOTs are using innovation, new technologies, smarter management practices, and a host of other tools to ensure their scarce resources address the key problem areas. Many states are also refocusing their priorities on preserving and maintaining the existing system.

**Responding to and planning for natural disasters:** From snowstorms and 500-year floods to massive tornadoes, rock slides, and earthquakes, state DOTs must quickly respond to natural disasters. In 2012, more planning will take place for climate adaptation and disaster response. States will also continue to use new technologies such as the snow tow-plow and increase use of their 511 systems and Twitter to keep the public informed.

**Reducing traffic deaths:** 2010 marked the lowest number of vehicle fatalities in the past 61 years. Although nonfatal crashes also declined, the number of injury crashes increased slightly. The number of people killed in crashes involving large trucks rose almost 9% from 2009 to 2010, and pedestrian and motorcycle-related fatalities also increased. In the year ahead, look for more bans or restrictions on texting and cellphone use while driving, new and improved safety features in automobiles and fleets, targeted investments in infrastructure to save lives, and continued public-awareness campaigns about distracted driving. Watch for action this year by stakeholders on the campaign "Toward Zero Deaths."

**Generating new ways to fund transportation:** How to fund transportation will be a key consideration for many state legislatures in 2012, particularly as the cost of construction materials begins to rise after falling or remaining flat for several years. Issues on the table will include raising the state portion of the gas tax, automatically adjusting the existing rate for inflation, expanded use of tolling, and state infrastructure banks. At the federal level, TRIP bonds and ways to generate more public/private partnerships could be considered. Studies on new user-fee mechanisms are also expected.

**Engaging the business community in support of transportation:** In 2011, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce led the business community in voicing strong support for a more reliable transportation system. The business sector is quickly recognizing that American industry and the economy will falter without a strong,

safe, and modern network of ports, railroads, and highways. Watch for companies to become more vocal in the year ahead about the linkage between transportation and staying competitive in a global economy.

**Serving a growing elderly population, both rural and urban:** About 13% of the country's population -- more than 40 million people -- is aged 65 or older. Almost one out of eight live in rural areas. Solutions to serving this population -- such as increased transit in cities and rural areas, and educational programs for older drivers -- will become more necessary in the year ahead to ensure that this segment of the population remains mobile.

Source: The latest edition of the AASHTO Journal

## In the News

### Transportation Planning for Bicycles and Pedestrians

#### The Metropolitan Planning Organization Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

On November 30, 2011 the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization voted unanimously to recommend that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) be established as a permanent standing subcommittee of the MPO. The BPAC will typically meet prior to the MPO TCC/CAC and Policy Committee meetings, which are usually held once a quarter unless needs dictate more. Currently staff is developing draft bylaws which will send out electronically for review. We will also need to have an election of Chair and Vice-chair. Any other recommendations for the agenda would be appreciated.

#### Emerging Technologies for Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Webinar

The Association of Pedestrians and Bicycle Professionals is hosting a webinar on January 18, 2012 from 3:00-4:15pm ET on Emerging Technologies for Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning. Among the presenters is the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and you can register by clicking [HERE](#).

#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning in the Region

**FAIRHOPE, Alabama** — The executive director of the **Walkable and Livable Communities Institute** recently visited Fairhope to discuss Bicycling and Pedestrian planning.

[http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/national\\_expert\\_offers\\_advice.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/national_expert_offers_advice.html)

**MOBILE, Alabama** -- Walkability, mixed land-use and other Smart Growth principles are now officially part of Mobile's master plan, which is meant to guide development in the city.

[http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/mobile\\_changes\\_master\\_plan.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/mobile_changes_master_plan.html)

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## Census Bureau Geographic Programs – Request for Comments

This notice is primarily for our member governments that have GIS staff that can/will submit their address and geospatial information to the Census Bureau to help improve the

TIGER database and the Master Address File (MAF).

The purpose of the Federal Register notice is a request for comments. This summary identifies the ways and places that locally produced geospatial and address information can help our local areas have better data in the future. It's good to know these things, even if you don't want to submit an official comment for the record.

[Federal Register: January 4, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 2)]

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, Census Bureau

## **Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Geographic Partnership Programs**

### **Background**

The mission of the Geography Division within the Census Bureau is to plan, coordinate, and administer geographic and cartographic activities. The Geography Division manages programs to update features, boundaries, addresses, and geographic entities in the Master Address File (MAF) and the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing System (TIGER), which are together called the **MTDB** database.

Geographic Partnership Programs (GPPs) allow designated participants to review, update, and suggest modifications to addresses, features, boundaries, and geographic entities to maintain the Census Bureau MTDB and to ensure accurate reporting.

The Census Bureau recognizes that tribal, state, and local governments usually have the most authoritative data for addresses, features, and geographic boundaries in their jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions benefit in sharing that information with Census Bureau's geographic programs by getting more accurate results from Census Bureau censuses and surveys.

This notice is for a generic clearance that will cover a number of activities required for updating the MTDB with participant-provided address and other geographic information, or obtaining address and spatial data for research and evaluation purposes.

The Census Bureau will develop guidelines and procedures for tribal, state, and local government submissions of address data and geographic boundaries, and will outline the mutual roles and responsibilities of each party within each Geographic Partnership Program. The list below includes typical geographic partnership programs, but is not exhaustive of all activities that may be performed under this generic clearance.

### **A. Geographic Support System Initiative (GSS-I)**

The GSS-I is a program designed to improve address coverage, obtain continual spatial feature updates, and enhance the quality assessment and measurement for the MTDB. The Census Bureau plans on a continual update process for the MAF/TIGER throughout the decade to support current surveys, including the American Community Survey.

## **B. Redistricting Data Program**

The law requires that the Census Bureau allow those having responsibility for apportionment or districting of each State be given the opportunity to specify geographic areas for which they wish to receive decennial census population counts.

The States had the opportunity to verify the inclusion of their voting districts and suggested tabulation block boundary features during 2009 and early 2010, to ensure the voting district boundaries that were used by the Census Bureau are consistent with their submissions.

In Phase 4 of the 2010 Redistricting Data Program, scheduled to extend through 2012 and into 2013, States submit new plans for updated congressional and state legislative districts that will be used for retabulating the 2010 Census data to these new redistricted boundaries.

## **C. School District Review Program (SDRP)**

The Census Bureau conducts the SDRP every two years under contract from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. The Census Bureau invites state education officials to participate in the review of its national inventory of school district boundaries. State education officials collaborate with local superintendents on their responses.

The Census Bureau uses the updated school district information along with the most current Census population and income data, current population estimates, and tabulations of administrative records data, to form the Census Bureau's estimates of the number of children aged 5 through 17 in low-income families for each school district. These estimates of the number of children in low-income families are the basis of the funding allocation for each school district under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law (Pub. L.) 107-110.

### **Request for Comments**

Comments are invited on:

- (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility;
- (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information;
- (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before March 5, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to  
Diana Hynek,  
Departmental  
Paperwork Clearance Officer,  
Department of Commerce, Room 6616,  
14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230  
(or via the Internet at [dHynek@doc.gov](mailto:dHynek@doc.gov)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to  
Gregory Hanks,  
U.S. Census Bureau,  
Washington, DC  
20233-7400, (301) 763-3093

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## Transportation Research

The **Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety** released their [\*\*\*9th Annual Roadmap to State Highway Safety Laws\*\*\*](#). This report details the type and quantity of laws that are intended to protect individuals who are traveling on U.S. highways and roads.

AARP released the report, [\*\*\*Transportation Funding Reform: Equity Considerations for Older Americans\*\*\*](#), which discusses the inequity of current and proposed transportation funding sources for low-income people, rural residents, people with disabilities or older adults at all levels of government.

The **Transportation Research Board (TRB)** released [\*\*\*Planning 2011: Volume 1\*\*\*](#), a compendium of a number of planning related research papers that cover topics like climate change, land use and commuting times.