



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 21st, 2018

Volume 27, Number 12

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There will be an Mobile MPO meeting on October 31st, 2018 at 10:00 AM, TCC/CAC meeting on October 17th, 2018 at 10:00 AM, and BPAC meeting on October 3rd, 2018 12:00 PM. There is an RPO meeting on September 28th. There's lots to report in *Legislative Updates*, and this week's *Just For Fun* we are going to paint the town.

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

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

www.mobilempo.org  Check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

Mobile MPO meetings

There will be an Mobile MPO meeting on October 31st, 2018 at 10:00 AM, TCC/CAC meeting on October 17th, 2018 at 10:00 AM, and BPAC meeting on October 3rd, 2018 12:00 PM. Items on the agenda include modifying the Long Range Transportation Plan to more accurately portray the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, and numerous TIP Revisions:

PROJECTS ADDED TO STIP:

Interstate Maintenance Funds

100067506	PE	Resurfacing on I-65 from 1.1 Miles North of SR-13 (US-43) to SR-225
100067507	CN	Resurfacing on I-65 From 1.1 Miles North of SR-13 (US-43) to SR-225

PROJECTS MOVED OUT OF CURRENT TIP:

Mobile MPO Funds

100052459	UT	Dauphin Street Additional Lanes from Sage Ave. to West of I-65 at Springhill Memorial Hospital
100052460	CN	Dauphine Street Additional Lanes from Sage Ave. to West of I-65 at Springhill Memorial Hospital
100052462	RW	Three Notch Rd. (CR-32) Additional Lanes from Schillinger Rd. to McDonald Rd.
100059789	RW	New Alignment of CR-25 (McFarland Rd.) from CR-28 (Old Pascagoula Rd.) to CR-358 (Three Notch Rd.)

Interstate Maintenance Funds

100056331	PE	I-10 East Tunnel Interchange Bridge Bearing Rehabilitation
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Other Funds

100062410	RW	I-10 Mobile River Bridge and I-10 Bayway Widening from Exit 24 (Broad St.) to Mobile County Line
100068576	CN	SR-158 Extension form .5 Mile East of Glenwood Rd to West of Lott Rd (BP Funds)

South Alabama Freight Forum (SAFF)

Recently, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission housed a freight forum which consisted of staff of local governments, and individuals that are involved in the freight community in South Alabama. The idea of the forum is to find out the problems in the freight community, and develop solutions. There is A LOT going on in Mobile right now with the channel to be dredged, Walmart, Airbus, Austal, and it all leads to trucks, and more trucks; they are the backbone of this country. In fact some key takeaways of the Federal Freight Conditions and Performance Report are:

- By the year 2045, the total value of freight in the United States is expected to nearly double that of 2012.
- Trucks move 64 percent of freight by ton and 69 percent of freight by value—by far the single largest mode.
- Intermodal Connectors provide the “last mile” linkage between freight facilities and the NHS.
- Since the year 2000, States have designated approximately 182 new freight intermodal connectors.
- The lack of safe truck parking in all States, and especially in and around large metropolitan areas, is a growing concern to truckers.

The forum was also an opportunity to inform the freight community about various surface infrastructure projects like Water Street, McDonald Road Extension, and the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. That agenda item actually seemed to have the most interest from the freight community; what projects are going to be done, and when.

In our efforts to update the freight element of the Long Range Transportation Plan, we have developed a freight survey to be shared with the freight community. The results and data from this survey, will compliment data we purchased from INRIX, and the APM Terminal Survey, to give a snap shot of where trucks are coming from and going to. In the travel demand modeling world, this is an important piece of information.

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Below is the link to online freight survey (*which goes live today*) and the presentations. Please forward the link to anyone that may have interest in providing input.

<http://www.mobilempo.org/freightplanning.html>

US 45 Feasibility Study

Two weeks ago, the final stakeholder meeting was held for the *US 45 Feasibility Study*, with a disappointing turn out. However, we do appreciate Mayor Gardner of Prichard and Mobile Councilmember Fred Richardson for all of their participation in the study. We would also like to thank Kelly Warren, Director of Prevention and Wellness for the Mobile County Health Department for her participation and support of this study. The presentation and maps can be found [HERE](#), and by the end of the September the final report will be available as well.

On August 1st there was a public input meeting at the Prichard City Hall, with an introduction from the City of Prichard Mayor, Mayor Jimmie Gardner. Despite the weather, we had a pretty good turnout. Several comments were made pertaining to the study, and we gained some good input. June 28th was the first public meeting for the US 45 Feasibility Study, and was held at Leflore High School. The meeting was well attended by nearly 70 people. Mobile City Councilman Levon Manzie was on hand to guide the meeting and answer questions. Nick Amberger, the City of Mobile Engineer was also present and assisted in answering questions posed by the public. Mr. Drew Davis with Volkert and Mr. Clifton Lambert with CERM presented the attendees with preliminary ideas developed in previous Advisory Committee meetings. These included road diets, sidewalk improvements, bike lanes, and roundabouts at key intersections.

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](#)

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](#)

Stay Up To Date on the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100068532 (PE)

Federal aid number : STPMB 4918

County : MOBILE

Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES WITH REALIGNMENT ON CR-56 FROM 0.28 MILE WEST OF ELIZA JORDAN ROAD TO SNOW ROAD

Old Target start date : October 01, 2019

New Target start date : January 01, 2019

RPO Updates

RPO meeting 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 26, 2018

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) will host a meeting of the **Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee** at **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 26, 2017** at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsdale, 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 2019 Work Program (available for review online at <http://www.mobilempo.org/RPODocuments.html>)
- Updating the RPO Transportation Plan with Project List (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 us at (251) 706- 4622.

Projects in Region Let September 28th, 2018

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

For constructing the Drainage Structure Repairs on SR-41 at MP 9.100 in Brewton. Length 0.015 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$85,355 to \$104,322 .

MOBILE COUNTY

None at this time

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Transportation Bill Could Be Next Up After Senate Sends House Defense Bill

Eugene Mulero | Staff Reporter Transport Topics
September 20, 2018 12:15 PM, EDT

The U.S. Senate has gained more time to finalize a transportation measure that includes a key trucking provision prior to a Sept. 30 deadline now that it has approved a fiscal 2019 defense funding bill.

The Senate on Sept. 18 advanced a legislative package that would provide funding for the Department of Defense, and a short-term continuing funding resolution valid through Dec. 7 designed to avoid a partial government shutdown. The House is expected to clear the measure for President Donald Trump's signature when lawmakers return to Washington on Sept. 25.

And with the start of the new fiscal year Oct. 1, transportation leaders continue to express optimism about finalizing a four-bill legislative package, before then, that includes the transportation measure.

Tucked in the versions of the transportation bill each chamber has crafted is a provision that would deny funding for the electronic logging device mandate for certain livestock haulers. The House has not considered the transportation proposal. The Senate approved its version in August.

Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), the chamber's top appropriator, emphasized on Sept. 18 his colleagues are close to agreeing on the four-bill funding package.

"While we still have differences to resolve on each of the bills, none of them are insurmountable, in my judgment," Shelby said. "So we will continue to work diligently, and hopefully return to the floor soon with yet another conference report in hand."

Appropriations Committee ranking Democrat, Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, echoed Shelby's sentiment.

"We are very close to an agreement. We should not delay this package over unrelated policy matters that have no place on must-pass spending bills," said Leahy, referring to the transportation measure as the "nation's infrastructure bill."

"The funds provided not only help us rebuild our crumbling bridges and roads and invest in our communities, but they create jobs for thousands of workers across this country," Leahy added.

While the ELD exemption has garnered support from Republican leaders, a small number of senior House Democrats argue the provision does not belong in an appropriation bill.

The ELD congressional mandate, which requires carriers to equip trucks with the devices to track drivers' hours of service, became effective in December 2017. A short-term funding law in the spring of this year directed the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration not to enforce the ELD rule for agriculture-related transportation through Sept. 30.

At a meeting on Sept. 13 between House and Senate appropriation leaders, transportation funding leader Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), repeated his support for the ELD provision. His Senate counterpart, Maine Republican Susan Collins, said she was confident her colleagues would finalize the four-bill package prior to Sept. 30 and avoid a short-term funding fix for transportation programs.

"I am convinced that we can get all of these bills across the finish line. And we must," Collins said. "We can't come this far and not achieve the goal."

Appropriations Update: Stopgap Passed, Signature Required

Today, President Trump will sign a package of three appropriations bills that includes Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs. The Senate has passed a second package of bills that includes Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, plus a stopgap measure to ensure remaining agencies are funded through December 7. This would avoid a partial government shutdown, but only if the President signs it. Yesterday Trump indicated he would consider vetoing the bill to put pressure on Congress to provide additional funding for a border wall. There is time to work things out, however. The House returns on Tuesday and will take up the bill then. An extension would be required by September 30 to avoid a partial shutdown.

A Workhorse and a Hard Charger Aim for Transportation Top Spot

Sam Graves and Jeff Denham mostly align on policy, but couldn't vary more in style

Posted Sep 18, 2018 1:00 PM

Jacob Fischler @fischlerCQ

The personalities of the two candidates angling to be the next top Republican on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee may be the starkest difference between them.

As Steering Committee members decide committee leadership posts later this year, they'll have to choose between behind-the-scenes operator Sam Graves of Missouri and Jeff Denham, a hard-charging Californian best known for nearly forcing House leadership's hand on immigration votes by advancing a discharge petition earlier this year.

Though similar in policy positions, the two could hardly be more different in style.

The soft-spoken Graves, 54, seems in his element discussing transportation policy. In an interview this month, he highlighted work on past surface transportation bills, noting most of his contributions were made outside the spotlight.

"I'm a workhorse," Graves said in an interview. "I'm not a show pony."

Denham, 51, is larger physically than Graves and his deep voice easily fills a room. He's been in Congress for 10 fewer years than Graves, but he's never been content to wait his turn. He makes no apologies for his ambition or style, which he said would be a benefit for the committee.

"I don't want to see other committees steal jurisdiction because we're moving slow, nor do I want the American public to suffer because we couldn't pass an infrastructure bill," Denham said. "Look, I'll take the criticism from some of my colleagues. The same thing could be said of our immigration debate: We weren't going to have one, and I was willing to put it all out on the line and force a vote on it." [HERE](#)

Senate Appropriators Net Agreement On FY 2019 Energy And Water Development Spending

editor@aaashto.org

The Senate Appropriations Committee reached a "bipartisan agreement" on the first of three fiscal year 2019 "minibus" spending packages on Sept. 10, with the first package – [H.R. 5895](#) – including key funding increases for ports and waterways projects via Energy and Water Development legislation.

Initially advanced in late May, the fiscal year 2019 Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill includes more than \$44.6 billion in spending, to support U.S. Department of Energy programs and critical infrastructure projects administered by the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation – including funding necessary to "improve and maintain flood control projects and ensure the viability of national and regional ports and waterways."

The finalized, bipartisan measure specifically provides the Army Corps of Engineers with more than \$6.9 billion, which is \$100 million above fiscal year 2018 funding levels. It also provides more than \$1.2 billion specifically for the construction of river and harbor projects, flood storm damage reduction, shore protection, aquatic ecosystem restoration, among other endeavors, the committee said.



Sen. Richard Shelby

“Striking a balance between both chambers and parties is never easy, but I am pleased to say we have accomplished that,” noted Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, R-Ala., [in a statement](#).

“I strongly urge my colleagues in the Senate to support final passage this week so we can get this bill to the President’s desk and move to the next minibuses in the queue,” he added. “If we continue to work together in a bipartisan manner we can successfully fund nearly 90 percent of the federal government on time through regular order – something Congress has not been able to do in many years.”

“Boy Scouts shouldn’t get a merit badge for telling the truth, and senators shouldn’t get an award for passing an appropriations bill: that’s what we are supposed to do,” emphasized Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and chairman of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, in a statement.

“But it is worth noting that for the first time in nearly 10 years, these appropriations bills are on time, and they are also within the budget,” he pointed out. “They will help to keep our country first in science, technology, supercomputing, and will build the ports and waterways that create jobs.”

The White House praised the agreement [in a statement](#) on Sept. 12, noting that President Trump “looks forward to signing this legislation and continuing to work with Congress to enact fiscal year 2019 funding ... while continuing to show fiscal restraint.”

Funding Opportunities

USDOT Announces \$6.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Access to Healthcare

(deadline November 13, 2018)

FTA announced the availability of \$6.3 million in Access and Mobility Partnership Grants, competitive funds for transit coordination projects that improve non-emergency healthcare accessibility. Through this grant program, FTA encourages innovative partnerships between the healthcare industry and public transportation agencies for improved coordination. These partnerships support the needs of transit-dependent riders and improve options for people with limited transportation choices. [HERE](#)

[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](#)

FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration’s Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation.

The FHWA continues the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP) under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The AID Demonstration provides incentive funding for any project activities eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C. in any phase of a highway transportation project between project planning and project delivery including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction that address the TIDP goals. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published on September 1, 2016 (<https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-21063>) requests grant applications and provides selection criteria, application requirements, and technical assistance with Grants.gov during the grant solicitation period.

Link to Additional Information: [FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Grants page](#)

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

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

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

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

Just For Fun

Going to "Paint the Town"

The definition of one "painting the town" means to *[To go out into a city or town and have an enjoyable time, typically by visiting various establishments, such as bars, restaurants, clubs, etc.]* In fact, last night in downtown Mobile was the THROWDOWN, where five local artists competed to create works of art in just 90 minutes. Guests enjoyed live art, a silent auction, entertainment by Yeah, and local drinks and food; they painted the town while painters painted downtown, with painting paint.

BUT there is a guy in Ann Arbor, Michigan (*pronounced "meat-chicken" if you are playing bingo at the FloraBama*), that is literally painting the town, with chalk. David Zinn does 3-D chalk drawings all over the streets and sidewalks of Ann Arbor, and some of them are so creative and artistic, it is *Just For Fun*. video [HERE](#).



In the News

Walmart Doubles Spending in Battle for Truckers

Walmart Inc., pinched by the worsening shortage of truckers, plans to double its spending on attracting and retaining drivers by year-end.

The retailer will offer referral bonuses of up to \$1,500, shorten the on-boarding process for new hires by more than a month and broadcast its first national TV ad focused on its 7,500 truckers. The program, which coincides with National Truck Driver Appreciation Week beginning Sept. 10, aims to fill vacancies and improve the image of long-haul driving as a career amid a tight labor market.

Walmart, which has about 6,500 trucks, ranks No. 3 on the [Transport Topics Top 100 list of the largest private carriers](#) in North America.

“To be candid, right now I could hire a few hundred drivers,” Tracy Rosser, Walmart’s senior vice president of transportation, said. “It is getting tougher and tougher to find qualified drivers. It’s a really serious situation right now.”

The dearth of drivers swelled to a record 296,311 in the second quarter, according to researcher FTR Transportation Intelligence. Combine that with wage hikes, rising diesel-fuel prices and higher freight demand, and the result was that June saw the biggest monthly uptick in long-distance trucking costs in nearly a decade. Those expenses have crimped Walmart’s profit margins for three straight quarters, one reason why its shares are down so far this year amid broader gains in the stock market.

A Big Deal

Truckers are a big deal for Walmart — indeed, its path to retail dominance was plowed by its drivers. Founder Sam Walton began building his own private truck fleet in the 1970s after large trucking companies declined to deliver to Walmart’s mostly rural stores, located far from established trucking routes. Walton would show up at the drivers’ break room at 4 a.m. with doughnuts and talk to them for hours to get a fresh view of how his stores were faring.

Today, Walmart’s truckers take goods from massive distribution centers around the nation and deliver them to its 4,700 stores in a hub-and-spoke system that allows it to replenish goods quickly.

Two of Walmart’s past CEOs, Lee Scott and Mike Duke, rose up through its transportation department, and current CEO Doug McMillon spent his first day on the job doing a ride-along in a Walmart truck.

Rising Turnover

Walmart only enlists seasoned drivers — with at least 30 months experience over the prior three years — and new hires can earn about \$86,000 a year with as many as 21 paid vacation days. That, Rosser said, has kept driver turnover as low as 7% historically. This compares with a turnover rate that hovers around 90% for longhaul truckers, with more than a third of new hires leaving after three months, according to American Trucking Associations and driver-retention consultant Stay Metrics.

But Walmart’s turnover has risen slightly in recent months, Rosser said, amid cutthroat competition for drivers. Some carriers have boosted wages as many as three times over the past year and are handing out signing bonuses of as much as \$10,000. The average age of a Walmart driver is 55, so the company also is losing many to retirement. Over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire approximately 898,000 new drivers, or an average of nearly 90,000 per year.

To fill the gap, Walmart is hiring nontraditional drivers such as Aurelia Yoho, 44, a mother of two from Chicago’s South Side who joined in 2016 after a stint in the Army and four years driving trucks for other carriers. She hauls loads five days a week from Walmart’s distribution center in Woodland, Pa., going as far north as Vermont or down through the Carolinas. She thought Walmart never would respond to her application, but once she came on board she has “kept the left door closed,” which is trucker jargon for working long and hard.

Still, she found the hiring process “tedious,” so Walmart’s Rosser said he wants to reduce that time from 70 days to 30, and pilot programs to do that are underway in Indianapolis and the company’s hometown of Bentonville, Ark. Walmart also will boost its marketing spending, spread across billboards, satellite radio and a new TV spot, set to the tune of Chris Stapleton’s country hit “Traveller,” that features drivers who are noticeably not 50-something white men.

“Trucking is not just a job, it’s a lifestyle — but it does not work for everyone,” said Gary Mars, a 15-year veteran of Walmart’s fleet. “Quite honestly, nobody wants to drive a truck anymore. But we have to have ’em. Without trucks, America stops.”

Mayor Stimpson Supports Expansion of the Mobile Harbor Channel

September 11, 2018

Mobile, Ala.-- Mayor Sandy Stimpson expressed strong support on behalf of the City of Mobile for a federal plan to widen and deepen the Mobile Harbor Channel.

"Advancing the Port of Mobile is critical to driving economic success for the State of Alabama and the Gulf Coast region," Stimpson wrote in a letter to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The widening and deepening of our harbor channel will serve as a catalyst for economic development, increase our global competitiveness, create jobs and promote an environment in which all citizens can prosper."

Stimpson's letter was submitted to the Corps as part of the comment period on the Draft General Reevaluation Report & Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate improvements to the Mobile Harbor Federal Navigation Channel.

Stimpson said the significance of this generational project "cannot be overstated."

The Port of Mobile is one of the largest economic engines in the state, with a \$22.4 billion economic impact

Since 2002, more than \$1 billion in public/private funding has been invested into infrastructure improvements at the Port of Mobile, with approximately half of that total coming within the past decade

The Port of Mobile is one of the 10 largest full-service seaports in the United States, with over 28.7 million tons of good and 318,889 shipping containers handled port-wide.

Expansion of the ship channel is vital to maintaining the port's growth and long-term sustainability because of the increasing size of container ships. The Corps' plan is to deepen the channel by five feet to a depth of 50 feet, widen the channel for three nautical miles to allow two-way traffic, expand the Choctaw Pass turning basin to accommodate safe turning of the larger vessels, and ease the existing bend in the Bar Channel.

"This project is a top priority of my Administration and we commit to working closely with the members of our U.S. House and Senate delegation both to maintain their support and to secure necessary funding," Stimpson said. "The City of Mobile recommends this transformational project be completed because of the significantly positive impact it will have on our citizens, businesses and the Port of Mobile's ever-expanding role in the global supply chain."

FTA Launches Pilot Program To Help Expedite Transit Projects

editor@aaashto.org September 14, 2018 0 COMMENTS

The Federal Transit Administration began accepting what it called "expressions of interest" from transit project sponsors on Sept. 12 for a pilot program for expedited project delivery, accompanied by a [notice](#) in the Federal Register.

"Expediting transportation projects is a key part of meeting our nation's infrastructure needs," said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams [in a statement](#). "This Pilot Program's streamlined federal review provides an excellent opportunity for transit providers to demonstrate accelerated project delivery, and innovative financing arrangements, in order to speed up transit improvements for the public."

She added that FTA's [Pilot Program for Expedited Project Delivery](#) is aimed at enabling "faster delivery" of new transit capital projects that by law must use public-private partnerships or P3s, be operated and maintained by employees of an existing public transportation provider, and have a federal share not exceeding 25 percent of the project cost. The deadline for submitting expressions of interest is Nov. 13, the agency added.

FTA said it intends to work with "selected" project sponsors to further define the steps that must be completed before a construction grant can be awarded under this pilot program, adding that it is "particularly interested" in working with project sponsors that are considering "value capture techniques" as part of their project financing.

The FTA's focus on "value capture" has been part of a broader issue regarding changes the agency made to the federal cost share formula for transit projects, which Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., described during [a Congressional hearing on July 11](#) as a "push for more private sector financing for public infrastructure projects," which in her view "makes it more difficult to build major transit projects and ends up making them more expensive."

Transportation Research

Survey: Ride-Hailing Going 'Mainstream,' Desire For Vehicle Ownership Declining

A [mobility study](#) published by Cox Automotive Aug. 23 indicates that the desire to own vehicles is dropping steeply among younger consumers, while awareness and demand for ride-hailing services such as those provided by Uber and Lyft are rising quickly – particularly among those living in urban centers.

The study – conducted online by Vital Findings with 1,250 U.S. consumers in May for Cox – also delved into the growing adoption of the [mobility-as-a-service](#) or MaaS concept, which focuses combining and accessing on-demand transportation options, such as car-sharing, ride-hailing and [public transit](#), via a single digital platform

Cox's survey found that "access to mobility" is viewed as "necessary" by consumers, but not owning a vehicle, according to 39 percent of respondents, which represents a 4-percentage point increase over a similar poll conducted by the firm in 2015. For urban consumers, 57 percent indicate access to mobility is more important than vehicle ownership, which is a 13-point increase since 2015, Cox noted in its report.

And that view is growing among younger generations, the company said. While 34 percent of 37 to 53-year-olds, and 28 percent of 54 to 72-year-olds don't feel owning a vehicle is important, according to Cox's survey, 55 percent of 12 to 22-year-old respondents and 45 percent of 23 to 36-year-old respondents feel that way. That may be in part because the cost of owning or leasing a vehicle is perceived as "becoming too high" by 48 percent of respondents, noted Joe George, president of Cox's Mobility Solutions Group.

It may also be why usage and awareness of ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft has now attained "mass market appeal," the company said, as 88 percent of respondents in its poll said they were "aware" of this mobility option regardless of where they live, with 55 percent of 37 to 53-year-olds using this service.

By contrast, car-sharing services such as Zipcar and Maven have experienced slower and more "pocketed" growth with awareness at 54 percent of those polled by Cox. The firm noted that lack of widespread adoption is due in part to car-sharing being significantly "less accessible" than other alternative transportation methods, with only 44 percent of consumers finding it accessible versus the 85 percent of consumers that find ride-hailing accessible.

“Private ownership still dominates the automotive landscape, but options like ride-hailing and subscription programs are increasingly popular with young urban dwellers,” noted Michelle Krebs, executive analyst for Autotrader – which is owned by Cox – in a statement.

“The trend line for these programs could drastically alter this industry over the next five to 10 years,” she added.

Studies Say Lower Speed Limits Will Help Improve Roadway Safety

[New research](#) conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety indicates that lowering the speed limit by 5 mph on city streets can improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists alike, while a [separate study](#) conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation convinced the agency to reduce speed limits along certain stretches of two major highways by 10 mph.

The IIHS study focused on Boston, Massachusetts, which lowered the default speed limit on city streets from 30 mph to 25 mph beginning January 9, 2017, after the Massachusetts legislature amended state law in 2016 to allow cities and towns to lower speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph on municipal roads in densely populated areas or business districts. Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit on all Boston roadways is 25 mph, the group noted.

IIHS said its researchers looked at vehicle speeds in Boston before and after the lower limit took effect and compared them to control sites in Providence, Rhode Island, where the speed limit remained the same.

The study sites in both Boston and Providence included arterials, collectors and local roads and the group noted all of the sites were similar in that they had no more than one lane per direction and were located away from intersections on relatively flat, straight road segments and at least a half-mile away from any school or speed feedback sign.

IIHS researchers evaluated changes in the odds of vehicles exceeding 25 mph, 30 mph and 35 mph associated with the new speed limit and found there was a 29.3 percent decline in the odds of speeding for vehicles traveling faster than 35 mph. The odds of speeding fell by 8.5 percent for vehicles going faster than 30 mph and 2.9 percent for vehicles exceeding 25 mph.

The group said high travel speeds increase the risk of crashing and the risk of injuries when a crash occurs and that speeding – defined on police crash reports as exceeding the posted speed limit, driving too fast for conditions, or racing – has been a factor in more than a quarter of U.S. crash deaths for more than 30 years. In 2016, IIHS noted that the percentage of U.S. crash deaths related to speeding was higher on roads with 35 mph or lower speed limits than on roads with higher speed limits; some 33 percent vs. 26 percent.

“Speeding occurs on roads of all types, not just highways and freeways,” added IIHS President David Harkey in a statement. “Even on lower speed roads, speeding can have deadly consequences, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some cities are lowering speed limits to reduce the risks for these vulnerable road users, who are increasingly dying in crashes.”

The study didn’t examine how lowering the speed limit affected crashes in Boston, but that’s a next step, he pointed out.

The Illinois DOT took that step in its study of speeds on I-74 and I-57 in the Champaign-Urbana area and concluded that, given the current prevailing speeds, crash rates and number of interchanges, a reduction of the posted speed limit from 70 mph to 60 mph along a portion of I-74 connecting to I-57 was justified. “Reducing the speed limit of through traffic to closer to that of traffic from interchanges gives drivers more time to react, thereby reducing the severity of a crash or avoiding one altogether,” the agency stressed.

IIHS said in its research that, outside of urban areas, speed limits are on the rise as 41 states have speed limits of 70 mph or higher on some portion of their roads. The group also noted that [a study it conducted in 2016](#) showed that increases in speed limits from 1993 to 2013 in those 41 states resulted in 33,000 fatalities.

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