



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 18th, 2018

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Mobile MPO Meeting next week. The Mobile MPO will meet on Wednesday May 23rd at 10:00 AM in the SARPC Board Room of the GMO building. The Southern Rail Commission will be there to brief the MPO on the CRISI application for funds (*See Funding Opportunities*). This week's Just For Fun is turtle-y awesome, and politics as usual in *Legislative Updates*.

Have a great weekend!

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

FREIGHT DATA

As most of you know, the Mobile MPO has been trying to update its freight plan as an element to the Long Range Transportation Plan. We purchased data from INRIX 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. To help validate the truck data, we are working with APM Terminals to try and nail down where the container trucks are coming from and going to. One day a quarter, APM Terminal will have on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from, where is their return trip, if they came in from outside of Mobile County, which direction did they come from, etc; the data is exciting and interesting. Below is a flow map from the survey data in terms of container trucks going to the container terminal at Choctaw Point. Click the map to link to the survey results. <http://www.mobilempo.org/freightplanning.html>

Container Trucks Going To Choctaw Point



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MEETINGS

The Mobile MPO will meet on May 23rd, and the TCC/CAC Advisory Committee met last week. Also, the Mobile MPO web site has had a makeover. Please let us know what you think <http://mobilempo.org/>

There are several items on the agenda. The Long Range Transportation Plan needs to be modified (this will happen at the Summer meeting) to accurately portray the I-10 Mobile River Bridge in terms of a considered toll, environmental justice considerations, and the bicycle/pedestrian component. This will be discussed at the meetings but will not happen until later this summer. Also, we will be discussing a draft 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and there are some revisions to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Bridge Funds

100049566 (CN) Replace Bridge, Bin 008714, SR-16 (US-90) Westbound over Tensaw-Spanish River.

Old Engineers Estimate: \$19,062,500.00; New Engineers Estimate: \$24,595,731.22

National Highway Funds

100068084 (UT) SR-158 Extension Lott Road Overpass and Jug Handle. Grade, Drain, Base, Pave and Bridge (EB Seabury Creek Tributary and Partial Lott Road); \$30,000, FY 2018

100060154 (CN) SR-158 Extension Lott Road Overpass and jug handle. Grade, Drain, Base, Pave and Bridge (EB Seabury Creek Tributary and partial Lott Road); New Estimate \$36,727,650; Old Estimate: \$15,351,484; FY2018

STP ATTRIBUTABLE FUNDS

(New Project) (PE) Airport Blvd, additional lanes from Snow Road to 1.46 miles West to just past Eliza Jordan Road, FY 2019, \$1,300,000

Interstate Maintenance Funds

100055398 (CN) Southwest Region, Mobile Area Sign Replacement on I-10, I-65 and I-165 from FY 2019 to FY 2021

\$5,601,338.92

We will be continuing our discussion of performance measures, and we must adopt a resolution supporting a Transit Asset Management Performance Measure for the WAVE Transit. Finally, the Southern Rail Commission will be present (5/23/18) to briefly bring the MPO up to date on the status of the initiative to return passenger rail to the Gulf Coast.

The Mobile MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met at the GM&O Building several weeks ago. Mr. Edwin Perry with ALDOT was on hand to give an update on Bike/Ped accessibility over the Mobile River. The meeting focused heavily on discussing the inclusion of Bike/Ped facilities on the proposed I10 Mobile River Bridge. The committee voted to amend the Bike/Ped section of the Long Range Transportation Plan to include: a detailed description of a Belvedere on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; Bike/Ped Facilities on the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge; and Value Added Options. The Value Added Options include: a 12 foot wide shared use path on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; a 12 foot wide shared use path from the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to Beauregard Street; a shared use path from the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to Battleship Memorial Park; an elevator and stair tower on the east main span pier of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; and connecting the Bike/Ped path from the Battleship Memorial Park to the Eastern Shore. Also discussed were upcoming road projects that will include bike/Ped facilities, including the Dog River Loop of the Crepe Myrtle Trail in the Bike/Ped section of the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the TAP Grants that were received by the Mobile MPO this past Tuesday. The LRTP will be modified later this summer, and will include a Value Added Option "D" to account for the connection to Daphne as part of the Bridge Project.

NEW SARPC Transportation Video



[HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

[Planning and Community Development](#)

[Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Employment and Economic Development](#)

US 45 Feasibility Study

The next meeting is schedule to be at the Toulminville Library on May 30th from 5:00PM to 6:00PM. Last week MPO staff, Volkert and CERM met with the City of Prichard City Council at Prichard City Hall. It was a very informative meeting and we gained some insight into the needs of the project.

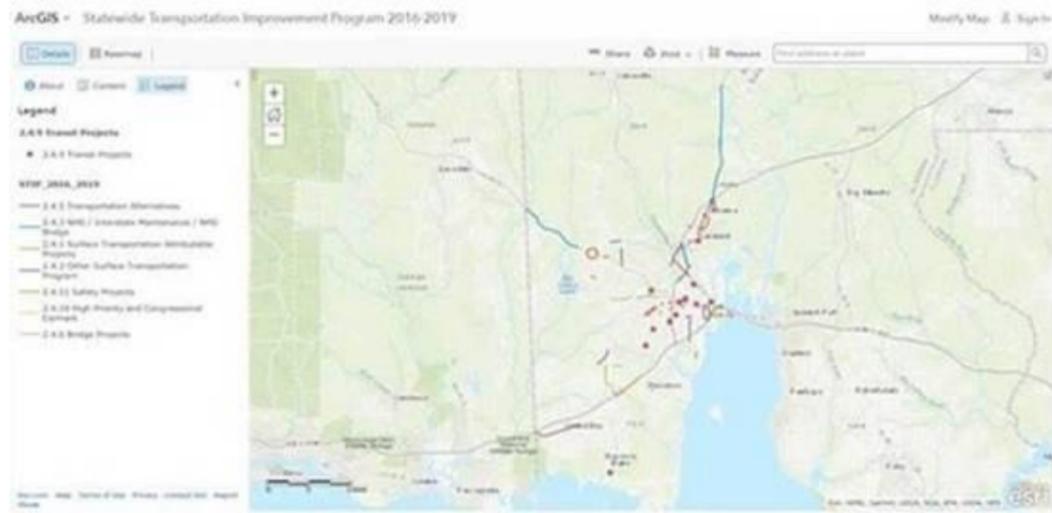
The Advisory Committee kick off meeting was held April 17th at the GM&O Building. The project consultants Volkert and CERM gave a short presentation on the goals of the project to a selected list of stakeholders that make up the Advisory Committee. There was a discussion about project expectations and public involvement at the meeting. If you are interested in serving on the Advisory Committee, please contact Kevin Harrison.

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](#)



Mobile MPO 101

Here are a couple of great videos that were produced by our counterpart in Birmingham (Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham). The videos are a summary of the MPO planning process and are below:



Funding a Project with an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210829210>



Inside an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210825997>

[HERE](#) are the slides and presentations of the Mobile MPO 101 training.

Stay UP To Date on the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:
<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

This critically important, high-priority transportation project will involve constructing a new six-lane bridge across the Mobile River to increase Interstate 10's capacity and replace the existing four-lane Bayway with an eight-lane facility at an elevation above the 100 year storm surge event to reduce traffic headaches for thousands of commuters each day by saving motorists time.

The Wallace Tunnel currently averages 75,000 vehicles per day, reaching up to 100,000 vehicles during the peak tourism season. With almost double the daily traffic originally anticipated for the crossing, heavy congestions and longer travel times impact motorists, businesses, and the quality of life in the region. ALDOT expects this project to:

- **Reduce travel time between Mobile and Spanish Fort/Daphne.**
- **Increase reliability in travel times and accessibility to jobs, educational facilities, medical services, and recreational activities.**
- **Facilitate access to/from major industries and freight destinations in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and provide hazardous material vehicles a direct route away from the downtown district.**
- **Take all efforts to preserve and protect the Mobile Bay so that generations to come can enjoy the view and natural beauty from the bridge.**

Hyperlinks within the advisory:

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project: <http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally and economically sound transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit www.dot.state.al.us.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

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

Project : 100060154 (CN)
Federal aid number : NHF 0158 (505)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : SR-158 EXTENSION LOTT ROAD OVERPASS AND JUG HANDLE. GRADE, DRAIN, BASE, PAVE, AND BRIDGE (EB SEABURY CREEK TRIBUTARY AND PARTIAL LOTT ROAD)
Old Engineers Estimate : \$15,351,484.00
New Engineers Estimate : \$36,727,650.37

Project : 100046895 (CN)
Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (601)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) ADD LANES FROM CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) TO CR-429 (CODY RD)
Old Target start date : August 31, 2018
New Target start date : September 28, 2018

Project : 100055398 (CN)
Federal aid number : IM MR15 (901)
County : AREAWIDE
Project Description : SOUTHWEST REGION, MOBILE AREA SIGN REPLACEMENT ON I-10, I-65 AND I-165
Old Target start date : November 02, 2018
New Target start date : November 06, 2020

Projects in Region Let May 25th, 2018

MULTIPLE COUNTIES

For constructing the Median Barrier Protection (Cable Guiderail Installation) on I-65 from the SR-59 Interchange to the Railroad Bridge at MP 75.500 (Site 1) and on I-65 from the SR-158 Interchange to north of the CR-41 Interchange (MP 16.900) in Saraland (Site 2). Length 45.698 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,376,096 to \$2,904,118.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Interior Lighting on SR-42 (US-98) in the Bankhead Tunnel in Mobile. Length 0.641 mi.
The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,300,658 to \$1,589,693
- For constructing the Bridge Deck Replacement (Partial) on Airport Boulevard over I-65 in Mobile. Length 0.052 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$256,844 to \$313,920.

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Additional Lanes (Grading, Drainage, Pavement, Traffic Signals, and Traffic Stripe) on SR-181 from south of the intersection of SR-104 north of Fairhope to south of the intersection of CR-64 in Belforest. Length 3.979 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$17,874,500 to \$21,846,611.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on I-65 from the Dyas Creek Bridge to the Escambia County Line. Length 7.319 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$8,461,432 to \$10,341,751.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-59 from the intersection of CR-12 in Foley to the junction of Windbigler Drive. Length 6.469 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$2,410,810 to \$2,946,546.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-182 from the junction of West Lagoon Avenue to the East City Limits of Gulf Shores. Length 4.062 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,383,581 to \$1,691,043.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on I-65 from the Dyas Creek Bridge to the Escambia County Line. Length 7.319 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$8,461,432 to \$10,341,751 .

What's Under Construction?

Project Status

Legislative Updates

Trump's infrastructure plan hits a dead end

BY MALLORY SHELBOURNE - 05/17/18 06:00 AM EDT



© Greg Nash

President Trump's legislative framework for a sweeping overhaul of the nation's infrastructure appears all but dead in Congress.

Lawmakers are focused on other legislative matters, and Democrats say the latest "infrastructure week" that started Sunday has done little to reinvigorate the president's plan.

"The infrastructure week's been overtaken by the latest tweet," quipped Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.), a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "There's just no energy left in it."

Senate Democrats appeared to throw in the towel last week, posting an "in memoriam" video tribute to infrastructure week that shows White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders casting doubt on the potential for a bill this year.

“I don’t know that there will be one by the end of this year. Certainly, the administration, as you mentioned, secured some funding for infrastructure projects,” Sanders said last week when asked about the likelihood for an overarching piece of legislation.

“We’re going to continue to look at ways to improve the nation’s infrastructure. But in terms of a specific piece of legislation, I’m not aware that that will happen by the end of the year,” she added.

The press secretary’s remarks added to growing pessimism that Congress can put together and pass a large package aimed at rehabilitating America’s roads, bridges and airports, something Trump had identified as a priority for his first term.

Rep. [Peter DeFazio](#) (D-Ore.), the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, told The Hill Wednesday that there has been no movement on a bill with Chairman [Bill Shuster](#) (R-Pa.).

“As far as I know, it’s been shredded, or burned, or something. It doesn’t exist,” DeFazio said Wednesday of the president’s rebuilding blueprint.

The White House plan, unveiled in February, was meant to provide lawmakers with a framework to craft legislation. But it quickly met opposition from Democrats, who argued the administration’s emphasis on funding from the private sector and state and local governments was the wrong approach to infrastructure.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle immediately questioned how to pay for the president’s proposal, which calls for \$200 billion in federal money with the goal of sparking a \$1.5 trillion investment by incentivizing private and local investors.

“The only thing we need is funding and [Paul Ryan](#) is opposed to any additional funding,” said DeFazio, referring to Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.).

“I told the president that — when I was at the White House — if he wants a bill, he’s got to push the Republican leadership for funding. He didn’t. They won’t. That’s it. Done. Dead,” he said.

While members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee have long clamored for an extensive infrastructure package, Republican leadership has shown no appetite for pursuing additional legislation.

Ryan in March said the president’s plan would come about in “five or six different bills,” throwing cold water on the push for a comprehensive overhaul.

Lawmakers Stress Highway Funding, but an Infrastructure Bill Remains Months Away



Sam Graves Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) addresses the Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors meeting May 16. (Eleanor Lamb/Transport Topics)

WASHINGTON — An infrastructure package will probably take a back seat to bills relating to the Federal Aviation Administration, farming and water resources, which will continue

to dominate Congress' attention in the coming months, according to Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.).

Graves, who serves as chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, delivered remarks at the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) meeting May 16. His statement echoed that of White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, who announced one week earlier that Congress will probably not pass infrastructure legislation this year. CAGTC's meeting was one of many events recognizing Infrastructure Week, which is marked nationally by education and advocacy sessions that highlight the state of roads, bridges, rails, ports, airports and more.

Various lawmakers and experts agreed with Graves on the sluggish status of the infrastructure bill. Sanders' announcement was "just kind of belaboring the obvious," according to Jeff Davis, senior fellow for the Eno Center for Transportation. According to Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have often discussed raising revenues to fund infrastructure, but they have yet to act on any piece of legislation.

"I don't think there's going to be any major infrastructure bill at all in this Congress. Nothing moves forward," Lowenthal said. "We are not going to end up with an infrastructure bill, unless I'm in total shock and all the points come together."

Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) said his main concern is compiling an infrastructure package that is less significant than the proposal President Donald Trump introduced Feb. 12. Denham, chairman of the Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, said the package would lose gusto if it were divided into separate, smaller pieces to address various issues, such as dedicated truck lanes and tolling.

"Our biggest issue is going to be the infrastructure package itself. I think it's critical to put everything in there and have the full debate now. That is the debate we need to have," Denham said. "We need to be bold. We need to have a big package. Ultimately, I would expect an infrastructure package to be bipartisan as well." [HERE](#)

Minimal Transportation Cuts Included in Trump's \$15.4B Rescission Plan

While it may seem like hundreds of millions of transportation-related dollars are being targeted for cuts by the Trump administration as part of a \$15.4 billion, 41-page [rescission request](#) made by the Office of Management and Budget on May 8, in reality, aims to "eliminate" monies that are unlikely to get fully spent.

Under the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, the Trump administration seeks to formally zero-out allocated yet unspent funds from a variety of older programs under what the White House is describing as "the first of several" rescission requests.

In terms of direct transportation project funding, cut requests include:

- Slashing \$179 million from Federal Highway Administration programs dating back to 2001, including monies earmarked for highway projects in Appalachia. However, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials stressed one key point about that funding: most of it was dedicated to specific projects designated by Congress; projects that, for one reason or another, didn't move forward. And since it was earmarked money, state departments of transportation could not re-allocate it to other projects.
- Cutting more than \$53 million appropriated in 2010 for a high speed rail corridor project linking Chicago and Iowa City, Iowa.
- Eliminating more than \$47 million from transit formula grants appropriated from the general fund in fiscal 2005 and earlier; monies that are now funneled through the Highway Trust Fund's mass transit account.

There are also a number of other transportation-related funding cuts included in the rescission request as well, such as removing \$4.3 billion from the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program (which has not made a loan since 2011, according to

the White House) and eliminating \$133 million from the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Extended Benefits program that expired in 2012.

Industry Leaders Lament Infrastructure Delays at Roundtable

WASHINGTON — If the prevailing wisdom seems to be in favor of getting on with repairing old and building new U.S. infrastructure, why does the nation seem to be in a state of inertia in getting the job done?

That was the first question posed on May 17 to a panel of business, labor and congressional leaders at a Business Roundtable event for Infrastructure Week, which is marked nationally by education and advocacy events that highlight the state of roads, bridges, rails, ports, airports and more.

The answers ranged from the usual complaints that bureaucratic red tape is stalling construction projects to Congress' reluctance to raise the gas tax to fund road and bridge projects.

Business Roundtable CEO Joshua Bolten said that in the realm of U.S. economic policy three areas stand out: taxation, regulation and infrastructure.

The recent tax reform legislation is fixing the tax problem, and the Trump administration has made strides in alleviating the burden of over-regulation, Bolten said.

"But progress on the third leg of the competitive stool, infrastructure, is hard to find," Bolten said. "Today, America's infrastructure ranks well behind our biggest developed country competitors. Businesses, workers and family lose billions of hours and dollars every year as they deal with the burdens of our antiquated infrastructure. And the problem is compounding every year."

Democratic Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, who said he has proposed bills to increase the gas tax on three occasions, blamed the stall on a "reluctance on the other side to raise taxes or either user fees."

But Rep. Rodney Davis, Republican of Illinois, called the infrastructure problem a bipartisan one.

"This is an issue that I came to Washington five years ago campaigning as a Republican on investing more in infrastructure," Davis said. "What I found out when I got here (even the folks on my side) it doesn't matter what plan we put in place, if we charge one federal dollar it's too much."

Brendan Bechtel, CEO of Bechtel, a global engineering, construction and project management company, said the core question surrounding infrastructure comes down to this: "Do we want to invest in ourselves as a nation and get more competitive, or do we want to continue to muddle along and fall further behind?"

Larry Willis, president of AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, said that despite low unemployment numbers, the nation is not taking advantage of creating additional jobs for infrastructure.

"You have too many people in this country that face killer commutes," Willis said. "We have jobs that are being created, but too often, especially in city centers, that they don't have access to. We need to fix that if we're going to grow our economy."

"When President Kennedy said we would put a man on the moon, eight years later a man was walking on the moon," JPMorgan Chase & Co. CEO Jamie Dimon. "Now when someone says we're going to build a bridge, eight years later we're still trying to get permits to build it. It's a disgrace."

Dimon added, “Bad infrastructure is bad for everybody. It’s hurting more and more over the years and it’s getting worse.”

Funding Opportunities

U.S. Department of Transportation Launches BUILD Transportation Program, Announces \$1.5 Billion Notice of Funding Opportunity

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1.5 billion in discretionary grant funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program.

BUILD Transportation grants will replace the pre-existing Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program. As the Administration looks to enhance America’s infrastructure, FY 2018 BUILD Transportation grants are for investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. BUILD funding can support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

“BUILD Transportation grants will help communities revitalize their surface transportation systems while also increasing support for rural areas to ensure that every region of our country benefits,” said Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Projects for BUILD will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental protection, state of good repair, innovation, partnership, and additional non-federal revenue for future transportation infrastructure investments.

To reflect the Administration’s Infrastructure Initiative, DOT intends to award a greater share of BUILD Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas that align well with the selection criteria than to such projects in urban areas. The notice highlights rural needs in several of the evaluation criteria, including support for rural broadband deployment where it is part of an eligible transportation project.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 made available \$1.5 billion for National Infrastructure Investments, otherwise known as BUILD Transportation Discretionary grants, through September 30, 2020. For this round of BUILD Transportation grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$150 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the FY 2018 Appropriations Act. At least 30 percent of funds must be awarded to projects located in rural areas.

To provide technical assistance to a broad array of stakeholders, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2018 BUILD grant application process. A webinar on how to compete for BUILD Transportation Grants for all applicants will be held on Thursday, May 24; a webinar for rural and tribal applicants will be held on Tuesday, May 29; and a webinar on how to prepare a benefit cost analysis for a BUILD application will be held on Thursday, May 31. All webinars will take place from 2:00-4:00 PM EDT. Details and registration information regarding these webinars will be made available at <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>. The Department will schedule additional webinars on these topics in June.

The deadline to submit an application for the FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program is July 19, 2018.

[BUILD Grant Webinars](#)

May 24, [How to Compete for BUILD Transportation Grants – All Applicants](#)

May 29, [How to Compete for BUILD Transportation Grants – Rural/Tribal Applicants](#)

May 31, [Preparing a Benefit-Cost Analysis for a BUILD Application](#)

For 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants, USDOT is offering a series of special topic webinars that delve into various aspects of the BUILD application process. These webinars are a great resource for anyone considering applying to BUILD this year or those preparing a BUILD application, as the webinars come from the funding source and share the expertise of USDOT to prospective applicants.

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant programs

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (FY 2017)

CRISI program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT, June 21, 2018*.

More information on FRA's CRISI website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1079>

Overview: This program will fund projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of passenger and freight rail. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11301 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24407. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$65,232,400

Restoration and Enhancement Grants Program (FY 2017)

REG program: Applications are due no later than *5:00 p.m. EDT May 22, 2018*.

More information on FRA's REG website: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1081>

Overview: This program will fund operating assistance grants for initiating, restoring, or enhancing intercity rail passenger transportation. See the [FY 2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 11303 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Pub. L. No. 114-94 (2015); 49 U.S.C. § 24408. Funding under this program was made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No. 115-31, Division K, Title I. **Amount:** \$4,796,500

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 click [HERE](#) or type www.grants.gov in your browser.

Just For Fun

Next week on May 23rd, it is World Turtle Day. We sheldom have this much fun, so in order to shell-ibrate and not have a turtle disaster of a *Just For Fun*, we are turtle-y talking turtles. So how can we tie turtles to transportation, besides... you know... the Causeway. ZENO'S PARADOX! Which, the story involves a tortoise, not a turtle, but it just so happens the May 23rd is World Tortoise Day also. The Tortoise and the Hare is actually a story over 2,500 years old from a Greek philosopher named Zeno, and it first involved a soldier and a tortoise. [VIDEO](#).



Achilles, the fleet-footed hero of the Trojan War, [is engaged in a race with a lowly tortoise](#), which has been granted a head start. Achilles' task initially seems easy, but he has a problem. Before he can overtake the tortoise, he must first catch up with it. While Achilles is covering the gap between himself and the tortoise that existed at the start of the race, however, the tortoise creates a new gap. The new gap is smaller than the first, but it is still a finite distance that Achilles must cover to catch up with the animal. Achilles then races across the new gap. To Achilles' frustration, while he was scampering across the second gap, the tortoise was establishing a third. The upshot is that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. No matter how quickly Achilles closes each gap, the slow-but-steady tortoise will always open new, smaller ones and remain just ahead of the Greek hero.

Zeno's Paradox also suggests that if you take a number and half it, and continue to this, you will never reach zero. It's like reverse infinity, 80, 40, 20, 10, 5, 2.5, 1.25, .625, .3125, on and on and on. Zero is unobtainable.

In the News

Municipalities Tasked With Climate-Resilient Infrastructure, FEMA Says

WASHINGTON — Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Brock Long said although the agency takes into account rising seas when preparing for disasters, advancing resilient infrastructure projects begins at municipalities.

"I do believe that the key to resiliency is at the local level of government — not with FEMA," Long said at the kickoff of [Infrastructure Week](#) on May 14. "If you're dependent on FEMA to make your community resilient, well that's the wrong approach because so much of what we have is reactive to the disasters."

Infrastructure Week is marked nationally by education and advocacy events that highlight the state of roads, bridges, rails, ports, airports and more.

The frequency of severe weather events in recent years, specifically along coastal regions and islands, has destroyed freight and passenger corridors built decades ago. FEMA and the U.S. Department of Transportation have provided emergency funds to those local governments.

At a separate panel hosted by the National Association of Counties, Shoshana Lew, chief operating officer of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, suggested determining the most efficient role technology plays in responding to environmental threats.

"There's a sort of tendency to think about new, innovative technologies as being better for the environment, a tendency to think of autonomy and electrification in the same breath. That could be. It is not necessarily the case," Lew said on May 15. "And again, it's a space where we have to think about how we are trying to achieve these ends and how we sort of steer them in a way that complements."

Prior to her tenure in Rhode Island, Lew was the chief financial officer at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The destruction of roadways and transit systems after hurricanes and subsequent flooding has prompted key policymakers to consider rebuilding transportation grids capable of withstanding Mother Nature's force.

Democrats on Capitol Hill, from districts where infrastructure systems could be vulnerable to rising sea levels, are engaging in debate about ways to build climate-resilient infrastructure. Last fall, the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus in the House added six members. The caucus is dedicated to exploring policies that would assess the impact of the changing climate.

"As a New Yorker, I was there five years ago when Superstorm Sandy devastated our city. Now, this year, an unprecedented set of hurricanes have hit Houston, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands," said Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.). "I believe climate change will present mounting challenges in the years ahead."

"By working together across party lines, we're leading the fight to reduce our carbon footprint, create well-paying clean energy jobs, and support research that addresses the threat to our communities," added Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.). "Florida must continue to lead the way in the development of alternative and renewable energies, and I'm working to ensure our beautiful state lives up to its full potential."

IIHS Study Calls for Roadway Changes to Help Reduce Pedestrian Deaths

According to a [new study](#) by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, pedestrian deaths are up 46 percent since 2009 as vehicle crashes involving pedestrians have become both "deadlier and more frequent."

As a result, the IIHS argues that "broader reconfigurations" of roadway designs will be required – along with other safety initiatives – to reverse the upward trend in pedestrian fatalities.

"Understanding where, when and how these additional pedestrian crashes are happening can point the way to solutions," IIHS President David Harkey noted in a statement. "This analysis tells us that improvements in road design, vehicle design and lighting and speed limit enforcement all have a role to play in addressing the issue."

For this new study, IIHS researchers looked at pedestrian crash trends from 2009 to 2016 to pinpoint the circumstances under which the largest increases occurred. Using federal fatality data and crash numbers, the group's researchers looked at roadway, environmental, personal and vehicle factors to see how they changed over the study period, while also examining changes in the number of pedestrian deaths relative to the number of pedestrians involved in crashes.

The researchers found that not only did pedestrian crashes increase over that seven year period, they also became deadlier. Deaths per 100 crash involvements increased 29 percent from 2010 to 2015 – the most recent year that data on all crashes, including non-fatal ones, were available. A total of 5,987 pedestrians were killed in crashes in 2016, accounting for 16 percent of all crash fatalities.

From 2009 to 2016, IIHS found that pedestrian deaths increased 54 percent in urban areas, which include both cities and what most people consider suburbs. They also increased 67 percent on "arterial" roads (busy roads designed mainly to funnel vehicle traffic toward freeways), 50 percent at non-intersections and 56 percent in the dark.

The large increase in pedestrian deaths on arterials isn't surprising, noted Harkey, as those roads often have a shortage of "convenient and safe" crossing locations.

"When people are forced to walk long distances to the nearest signalized intersection, they are more likely to choose the riskier option of sprinting across multiple lanes of traffic," he explained. "Communities can improve safety by providing more options to safely cross."

Such improvements IIHS highlighted in its report include: pedestrian hybrid beacons, which stay dark until a pedestrian pushes a button, at which point it flashes yellow, and then moves to solid yellow before activating two solid red lights; curb extensions or median crossing

islands, which can shorten the distance people must walk across or allow them to traverse just a couple of lanes and a single direction of traffic at a time; adding sidewalks; and reducing vehicle travel lanes, dubbed a "road diet," which not only reduces the number of lanes pedestrians must cross but lowers vehicle speeds as well.

Johnathan Adkins, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association, [pointed out](#) that in regards to this IIHS study, reducing motor vehicle speed "is essential" to both avoid and mitigate the severity of pedestrian crashes.

"We know that enforcing speed limits through traditional and automated means can have a dramatic effect at getting drivers to slow down," he explained. "Speed can no longer be a forgotten issue if we are going to significantly reduce deaths and injuries for all road users."

Reducing alcohol impairment is also important, Adkins noted, as when comparing 2009 and 2016, the IIHS study revealed a 38 percent increase in pedestrians killed in crashes where the driver's blood alcohol content [BAC] was .08 or higher.

Adkins also emphasized the need for roadway design changes as a way to reduce pedestrian fatalities. "Education and enforcement efforts must work in tandem with infrastructure improvements, utilizing tools such as roundabouts and road diets to decrease driver speed and consider the safety of all road users as roadways are designed and re-engineered," Adkins stressed.

Why Is It So Hard to Figure Out When the Bus Is Coming?

LAURA BLISS

It takes a volunteer army of student mapmakers to build a better transit tracker.

On a glorious 75-degree afternoon in early May, students at the University of Maryland, College Park sprawled in tank-tops and bathing suits on the quad, hatching post-finals plans. But not all students: In a windowless computer lab in the geography building, a handful of industrious undergrads were glued to banks of monitors, mapping buses.

Stop by stop, pick up by drop off, they traced the trajectories and timetables of a Loudon County, Virginia commuter bus service into the backend of Moovit, a partially crowdsourced transit navigation app. Or at least they were trying to. "I was in the wrong Virginia!" shouted Kurt Willson, a freshman GIS major, as he clicked through OpenStreetMap for the location of a stop on the online platform.

Soon enough, he found it: a church on the corner of 33rd and Main St. in Purcellville. He hovered his cursor over the spot on the map and clicked to add the bus stop icon. Later he'd enter in all of the headways for the Washington, D.C.-headed route he'd been assigned. "One down"—Willson cocked his head to scan the Loudon County website for the timetable he'd pulled up—"29 to go." He groaned goodheartedly.

Moovit relies on these kinds of mapathons—often student-led—to help power their transit app, which company representatives say is available in 2,000 global cities. (I also recently wrote about this effort in [the MapLab newsletter](#).) Like competitors such as Transit and CityMapper (which cover 125 and 39 cities, respectively), Moovit uses transit schedule data to display information and suggest the best routes across several non-driving modes: buses, trains, bikeshare, walking, and ride-hailing. It also tries to predict bus arrival times more accurately, thanks to algorithms that pull in from information from GPS trackers onboard buses, as well as variables like the historic performance of a route, the weather that day, ridership patterns, and [crowdsourced incident updates](#).

To do that accurately, Moovit requires meticulously accurate maps for its estimated 4.7 million bus stops. That's where the UMD kids come in. Many of them are members of the UMD chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, a geography honors society. In 2017, as one mapathon among many throughout the school year, the club had entered the university's own extensive bus network onto Moovit; this year, the students targeted Loudon County coaches after Moovit conveyed requests it received from commuters there.

Although none of them had ever used these particular buses, many understood the importance of a decent transit app. “The D.C. Metro app is really, really bad,” Joseph Cunningham, a senior studying GIS, told me. “They never update it, and it’s always crashing on my phone.” Cunningham was painstakingly plotting each stop along the route he’d been assigned. “Just looking at this already, I feel like it makes things more user-friendly,” he said.

In that sense, these students were one block in a long chain of human and computer labor marshaled in the pursuit of a still-elusive goal: a transit app that really works for bus riders, everywhere. Anyone who has ever stood at a bus stop knows how interminable the anticipation can feel when there’s no indication of when the vehicle is coming. Even systems that have “real-time” bus information, thanks to onboard GPS trackers, can still be highly unreliable. Server crashes, traffic incidents, slow passenger boardings, and the weather regularly mess up arrival estimates. shows that bus waits actually feel longer when riders lack reliable information at hand.

The reverse is also true. Kari Watkins, an assistant professor at Georgia Tech who has researched transit rider behavior, led a [Seattle-based study](#) that found that simply adding real-time information decreased riders’ perceived wait time by 0.7 minutes. That information came in the form of OneBusAway, an open-source software that Watkins helped develop, which combines location data from the buses and a predictive algorithm. A number of cities have adopted OneBusAway as the basis for their own apps, and have seen positive results: For example, [New York City saw an increase in weekday ridership of nearly 2 percent](#), attributable to real-time mobile updates, in 2011 to 2013. “When you’re gaining a sense of control over your trip, it helps you feel more willing to take it,” Watkins told me.

That might count for a lot right now. Public transportation systems, especially buses, are in trouble. Ridership has dropped to its [lowest point in 30 years](#) on the nation’s rubber-tired workhorses. Several factors seem to be pushing people off, including cheap gas prices, the popularity of ride-hailing, and service cuts along important routes that haven’t been restored. And in cities where traffic is getting worse, buses are getting slower and less reliable, which is feeding a vicious cycle.

Meanwhile, an expanding universe of multimodal navigation apps and predictive software is trying to address that uncertainty, both for consumers and transit agencies themselves. Optibus, for example, is a firm that works with cities to plan bus systems using artificial intelligence that can catch inefficiencies and redundancies. Part of the benefit, they say, is that the oft-unreliable “real-time” data that is given to the public becomes more accurate. Moovit also has several products that it sells to transit agencies, one of which is a similar “real-time data” solution.

It’s hard to say which transit apps and prediction services are the most reliable. “To my knowledge, no one has done a scientific comparison of times shown within apps,” said Sean Barbeau, the principal mobile software architect at the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida. What’s more, with the exception of OneBusAway, which uses open-source software, they’re all “black boxes”—their algorithms are proprietary and haven’t been assessed by researchers. Moovit likes to call itself the “Wikipedia of transit maps” because, according to representatives, it crowdsources about 60 percent of its data from millions of volunteer transit mappers around the world. (Its competitors do not.) But unlike Wikipedia or, for that matter, OpenStreetMap (which Moovit uses as one of the layers for its editing platform), it’s not actually open-source.

At UMD, however, none of the students seemed fazed that they were donating their time to build the underpinnings of what is ultimately a private service. For many of them, the motivation was simply to help transit users, or “to give back,” as Willson put it.

That, and a sheer love of maps. “Everything has a place and a reason why it’s there,” said Andrew Lazara, a junior majoring in geography who helped coordinate the event, as he quickly mapped his route. “Connecting each of these points, you’re sort of making history. And you’re creating the ability for other people to form future connections, too.”

American Roadtrippers to Face \$3 a Gallon Gas This Summer

U.S. drivers might be feeling flush after getting tax cuts amid a growing economy as they embark on the summer driving season, but road trips will cost more this year.

Drivers are already paying an average of \$2.90 for a gallon of regular gasoline. There may be no relief in sight as oil in London topped \$80 a barrel May 17 on tightening global supplies. The traditional Memorial Day holiday kickoff of summer driving season may test the strength of the economy and consumers' desire to hit the road as temperatures rise.

Prices have risen for nine days straight, according to AAA.

While average costs aren't expected to approach the record \$4.14 a gallon reached in July 2008, there's a 75% chance they will soon reach \$3, Patrick DeHaan, head of petroleum analyst at GasBuddy, said in a phone interview May 17.

For the three months of summer, assuming prices don't rise any more, Americans will pay an average \$100 more for gasoline than a year earlier, DeHaan said.

"I think people may cut back on fast casual dining or McDonald's on the way to the lake," DeHaan said. "I don't know that we will see a net drop in demand. While this may curb or slow down discretionary demand, it will be offset by the strength of the economy. And I think the worst-case scenario is \$3.15 to \$3.20."

The higher prices aren't expected to stop Americans from hitting the road. AAA projects a 4.7% jump in travel by automobile over the U.S. Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Retail gasoline prices "are going up," Ashley Petersen, lead oil analyst at Stratas Advisors in New York, said in a phone interview. "Hopefully, you took your road trip last year because it is going to be more expensive this year."

CREPE MYRTLE TRAIL RIDE 2018

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Mobile United and other local groups to host the 5th Crepe Myrtle Trail Bicycle Ride along Mobile Bay.

- **WHEN:** Saturday, May 19, 2018; 8:00 a.m. registration; 8:30 a.m. ride;
- **WHERE:** Starts at Arlington Park, 1814 15th Street South, Mobile
- **COST:** \$10 riders 13 and up until May 17th at midnight; \$15 day-of; Riders 8-12 are free.

The new date of the Crepe Myrtle Trail Bicycle Ride, presented by Mobile United, is Saturday, May 19, 2018. The Ride will begin in Arlington Park near downtown Mobile. This event offers an historic opportunity to ride the Mobile Bay-side of the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, and through the Peninsula of Mobile's Bayfront Road.

This ride is special because it is the only time during the year that people on bikes have access to this portion of the proposed Crepe Myrtle Trail. Thanks to the Mobile Airport Authority and the University of South Alabama Foundation for allowing access to the Brookley by the Bay and Airport property.

All riders are encouraged to register online at by midnight on Thursday, May 17th. On-site registration will be also available starting at 8:00 am on the morning of the ride.

Here are a few important details for 2018:

- Registration is \$10 for people ages 13 and up until May 17 at midnight; \$15 day-of registration fee; Children 8-12 are free (restrictions apply). Limited scholarships are available for riders unable to pay the registration fee. Please contact Mark Berte at mberte@joinACF.org before May 16 for more information about scholarships.
- No riders are allowed under age 8 unless in a trailer or tag-a-long. **Helmets and safety gear are required. No training wheels are allowed.** Children should be experienced riders and able to ride the full 10.6 miles in potentially warm and/or windy weather.
- The official turn-around spot is at McNally Park. The ride is expected to run from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.



Mobile United's Natural Resource Committee organized the inaugural ride in 2014 in an effort to draw awareness to the proposed Crepe Myrtle Trail Bike and Pedestrian Path. The Crepe Myrtle Trail is an integral part of the Mobile Greenway Initiative, a multi-use waterfront trail stretching from the University of South Alabama and Langan Park along Three Mile Creek to Dog River and eventually, Dauphin Island.

Bankhead Tunnel opens for pedestrians, cyclists Saturday

Mobilians will have a chance to walk, run or bike through the Bankhead Tunnel on Saturday, as the Alabama Department of Transportation continues a series of recreational closures.

According to information provided by ALDOT, the tunnel will be closed to vehicular traffic from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. this Saturday,. The department has been conducting the closings intermittently since summer 2016. Hundreds of people usually take the chance to traverse the tunnel, and crowds have topped 1,000.

The tunnel is about three-quarters of a mile long with a 6 percent grade at either end.

ALDOT has released a statement saying that it plans to open the tunnel to recreational use "every other Saturday morning for the next several weeks." The times of those events are subject to change "as ALDOT evaluates public involvement and traffic impacts.

As it refined its approach to the events, ALDOT added lane guidance to help avoid close encounters between fast-moving cyclists and pedestrians. You can share your pictures of taking advantage of this event by using the hashtag #BikePedBankhead.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!! ALABAMA RECREATIONAL TRAILS LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

**Thursday, June 7, 2018
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**Orange Beach Community Center
27235 Canal Road
Orange Beach, Alabama 36561**

A fun and informative gathering for those who plan, develop, and manage recreational trails in Alabama.

[FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)

Transportation Research

National Dialogue on Highway Automation

FHWA launched a [National Dialogue on Highway Automation](#) this week. The program includes five upcoming workshops hosted around the country concerning different areas of highway automation. FHWA plans to include a broader range of stakeholders to inform FHWA's role in automation and national research, policy, and programs to aid in the development of the technology. The Launch Workshop will be in Detroit, Michigan on June 7. The first issue workshop, which will focus on policy and planning, will be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania June 26-27.

Strategic Transit Automation Research Plan

FTA has published its final [Strategic Research Transit Automation \(STAR\) Plan](#). The STAR Plan outlines an FTA research agenda for transit bus automation over five years and provides a framework for the transit industry to pursue transit bus automation. Additionally, it defines activities in the areas of enabling research, integrated demonstrations, and strategic partnerships. The plan focuses on stakeholder engagement, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance to ensure that complementary work being done by the public sector, private sector, and academia is effectively communicated and leveraged.

[Identification of High Pedestrian Crash Locations](#)

This FHWA guidebook presents a process to help state and local agencies identify high pedestrian crash locations and includes a literature review, case studies, and other research needed to develop a five-step process.

New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App

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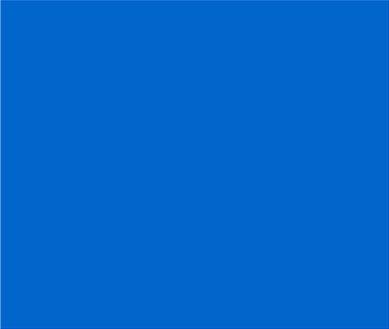
- Simple to Use
 - Download from Apple Store or Google Play
 - Collect information at your pace
 - Gathers ADA Compliance inventory and condition information
 - Location is automatically collected in GIS
-

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.