



Memorandum

TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: July 15, 2014

SUBJECT: **Next Meeting-July 22, 2014**

Please be advised that the business of the CMCOG Technical Committee will be conducted on July 22nd at 9:00 a.m. in the CMCOG Conference Room. Enclosed, please find an agenda and support materials for your review.

The CMCOG would like to thank you for your continued service and participation. The Technical Committee serves as an integral part of our transportation planning process and is often the first step for review and approval of transportation projects which affect our region. Your continued dedication has been admirable and appreciated.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 803-744-5133 or by email at rsimmons@centralmidlands.org. I look forward to meeting with you on July 22nd, please don't forget to mark your calendars!

Enclosures

AGENDA

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MEETING: TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2014

9:00 AM TO 10:00 AM

CMCOG CONFERENCE ROOM

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Call to Order R. Simmons**

2. **Project Updates..... R. Simmons**
SCDOT will provide an update on existing highway, interstate, bridge, and intersection improvement projects.

ACTION



3. **Air Quality Pledge R. Simmons**

CMCOG, in partnership with the City of Columbia, Richland County, Lexington County and SCDHEC, have formed the Central Midlands Air Quality Coalition to increase awareness of air quality issues in the central midlands region. As part of this effort, CMCOG will request approval of an air quality pledge which will be issued to city and county governments, businesses, institutions, and organizations from across the central midlands region to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of the Central Midlands Air Quality Action Plan and Clean Air initiative. (Enclosure 1)

ACTION



4. **TIP Amendment – Bluff Road Sidewalk Project..... R. Simmons**

SCDOT, in coordination with the Richland County Transportation Committee, City of Columbia, USC, SC Fairgrounds, and the COATS MPO, is in the process of developing the Bluff Road Sidewalk Project. The purpose of this project is to enhance pedestrian safety and transit accessibility along Bluff Road from the front entrance of the Fairgrounds to George Rogers Boulevard. Staff will request to amend the FY 2013-2019 TIP to add \$300K to the Bluff Road Sidewalk Project. (Enclosure 2)

5. **Bike/Ped Public Meetings R. Simmons**

CMCOG in coordination with the City of Columbia is developing a Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan and Bike Share Plan. Alta Planning + Design is the selected consultant. During the week of July 28th, four (4) public meetings will be held. Staff will provide a flyer regarding those public meeting. (Enclosure 3)

6. **Status of the Highway Trust Fund..... R. Simmons**

The Highway Trust Fund is on the brink of insolvency. Without new money for the Highway Trust Fund, the US Department of Transportation has said it will start to cut back federal funding for projects by nearly a third starting on Aug. 1, the same day Congress begins a five-week summer recess. Staff will provide the latest update on the status of the Highway Trust Fund. (Enclosure 4)

7. **Old/New Business R. Simmons**

8. **Public Comments..... Open**

9. **Adjourn R. Simmons**



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TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: July 22, 2014

SUBJECT: **Air Quality Pledge**

REQUESTED ACTION

The Central Midlands Council of Governments staff will request a recommendation of approval to adopt the Central Midlands Air Quality Pledge.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Air pollution is becoming a more significant issue in South Carolina as we are faced with the challenges of complying with more stringent national air quality standards. It is imperative that we meet these standards while still promoting the economic well-being of our state and enhancing the quality of life of our citizens. The Central Midlands Air Quality Coalition was formed to serve as a regional forum to discuss air quality concerns and ideas in the central midlands region.

With the increase in pollution sources and air quality standards becoming more stringent, it is vital to obtain input from stakeholders as we work to address these issues in the most effective manner. One of the first steps in the process is to ask our city and county governments, businesses, institutions, and organizations from across the central midlands region to adopt our pledge to improve air quality which is in support of the development, implementation, and maintenance of the Central Midlands Air Quality Action Plan and Clean Air initiative.

ATTACHMENTS

Air Quality Pledge

Central Midlands Air Quality Pledge of Support

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as required by the Clean Air Act, will "review and, if necessary, revise air quality standards every five years to ensure that they protect public health with an adequate margin of safety." Accordingly, it is expected that EPA would propose actions and finalize any National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) revisions in the near future.

Here in the Central Midlands of South Carolina, we recognize that improving air quality and maintaining clean air that is in attainment of the NAAQS established by EPA is critical to both the physical health of residents and the economic vitality of the region. Therefore, we join other city and county governments, businesses, institutions, and organizations from across the central midlands region to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of the Central Midlands Air Quality Action Plan and Clean Air initiative.

We are committed to supporting outreach and education efforts as well as identifying the specific actions that our organization can implement as part of collaborative efforts to ensure that the Central Midlands maintains a level of air quality that allows our region to reach its full potential as a great place to live, learn, do business, and raise a family.

Local Government/Business/Institution: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Primary Contact Person: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

(As part of the pledge, we will identify from the Central Midlands strategies/actions list those actions that our local government/business/organization can work on moving forward. We commit to having a member of our staff work with the Central Midlands Air Quality Advisory Committee and DHEC to ensure that our efforts are captured as part of the Clean Air report to EPA's Ozone Advance Program)





Memorandum

TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: July 22, 2014

SUBJECT: **Bluff Road Sidewalk Project**

REQUESTED ACTION

The Central Midlands Council of Governments staff will request a recommendation of approval to amend the 2013-2019 TIP to add \$300,000 to the Bluff Road Sidewalk Project.

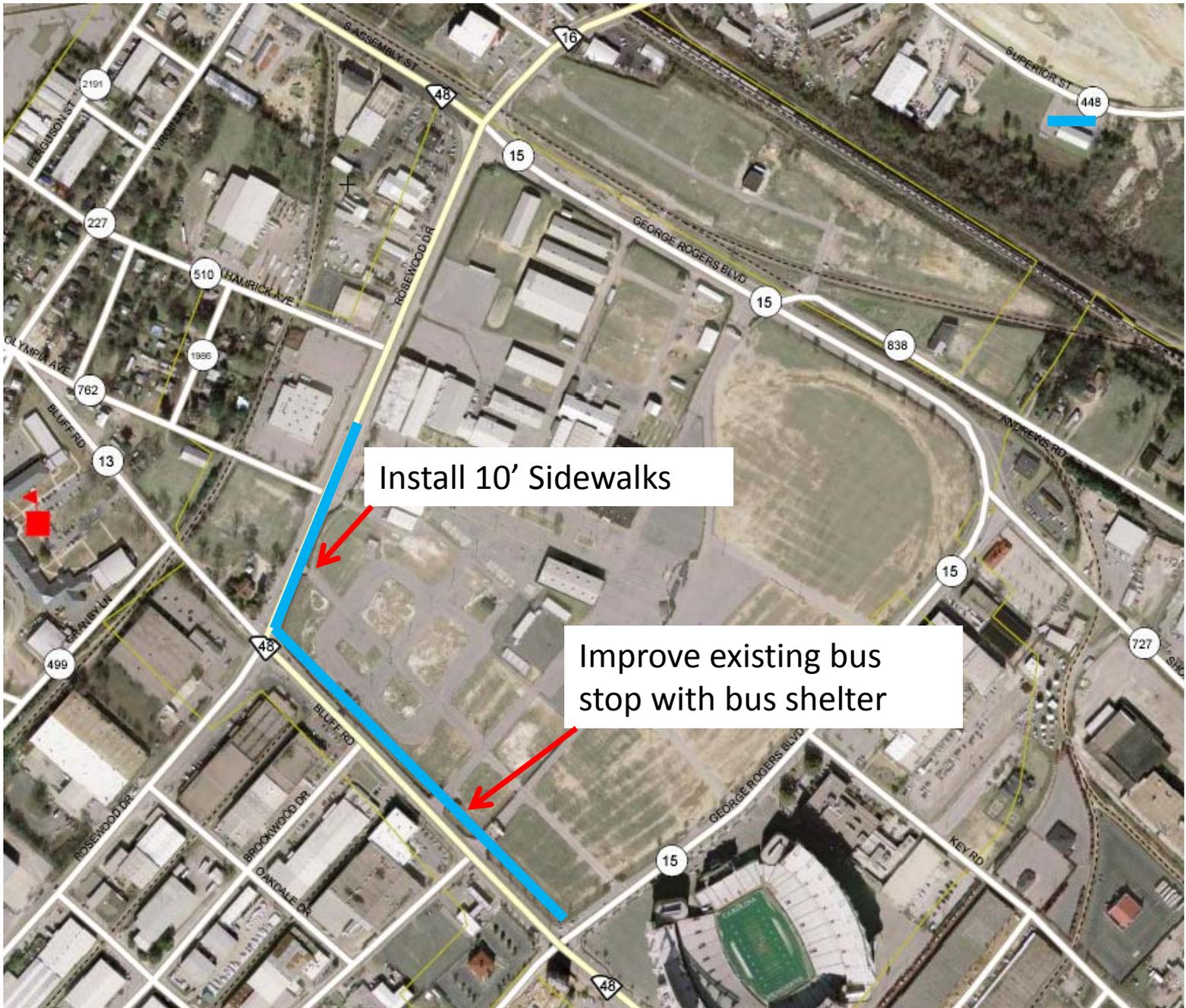
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Bluff Road Sidewalk Project is designed to install 10 ft. wide sidewalk along one side of the Rosewood Drive from the entrance to the Fairgrounds to Bluff Road and then continue along Bluff Road from Rosewood Dr to George Rogers Blvd. The purpose is to provide safe pedestrian access to the existing bus stop and to the many of the events held at the fairgrounds and the football stadium. This sidewalk will also improve traffic flow during major events since the outer northbound lane of Bluff Road is forced to close due to high pedestrian traffic. The project is currently scheduled for construction during the spring and early summer of 2015. The current budget is approximately \$1.3 million (\$600K Richland CTC, \$700K COATS). SCDOT has previously issued the project for bid and received the lowest bid at approx. \$1.7 million. In order to address this increase in funding, the Richland CTC is proposing to add an additional \$200,000 to the project. COATS is requesting to add \$300,000. SCDOT plans to re-bid this project in the fall based on an anticipated \$1.7 million budget.

In coordination with the sidewalk project, USC is planning pedestrian improvements at the intersection of George Rogers Blvd and Bluff Road. These improvements will be done in conjunction with improvements to Williams Brice Stadium. USC's project is scheduled to begin in the winter of 2014/2015. SC Fairgrounds also plans to replace the existing chain link fence with a decorative railing along with pedestrian scale lighting for the sidewalk project.

ATTACHMENTS

Project Map



Install 10' Sidewalks

Improve existing bus stop with bus shelter

WALK BIKE COLUMBIA

A Project of Central Midlands Council of Government and City of Columbia, SC

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

To share your vision for walking, biking, and transit in Columbia, drop-in at anytime during one of four upcoming public workshops. The workshops are part of Walk Bike Columbia, a pedestrian and bicycle master planning effort for the City of Columbia. Find out more and fill-out our 5-minute online survey at www.WalkBikeColumbia.org!

For questions or assistance with special needs, call the City of Columbia Planning Department at (803) 545-3181.

Tuesday
7.29

Public Meeting- District 1
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm
Eau Claire Print Building
3907 Ensor Street

Wednesday
7.30

Public Meeting- District 2
11:30am- 1:30 pm
Capstone (Campus Room)
898 Barnwell Street

Wednesday
7.30

Public Meeting- District 3
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm
MLK Park Community Center
2300 Greene Street

Thursday
7.31

Public Meeting- District 4
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm
Woodland Park Community Center
6500 Olde Knight Parkway

BUS



Why the Highway Trust Fund is running out of money, in 5 graphs

By [Philip Bump](#) July 7

The economics of building and repairing the nation's highways is relatively simple. You drive a car. You buy gas for that car. A portion of what you pay for the gas is directed to the federal Highway Trust Fund. That money goes (mostly) toward highway work.

This system worked reasonably well for a long time as a way of having people pay their share of the costs of upkeep. It no longer does. The Obama administration now estimates that [the fund could go broke](#) as soon as August, which could put at risk as many as 700,000 jobs.

Wonkblog [spoke with Rep. Earl Blumenauer \(D-Ore.\)](#) about his proposal to remedy the situation over the long term. But how did the problem reach this crisis point in the first place?

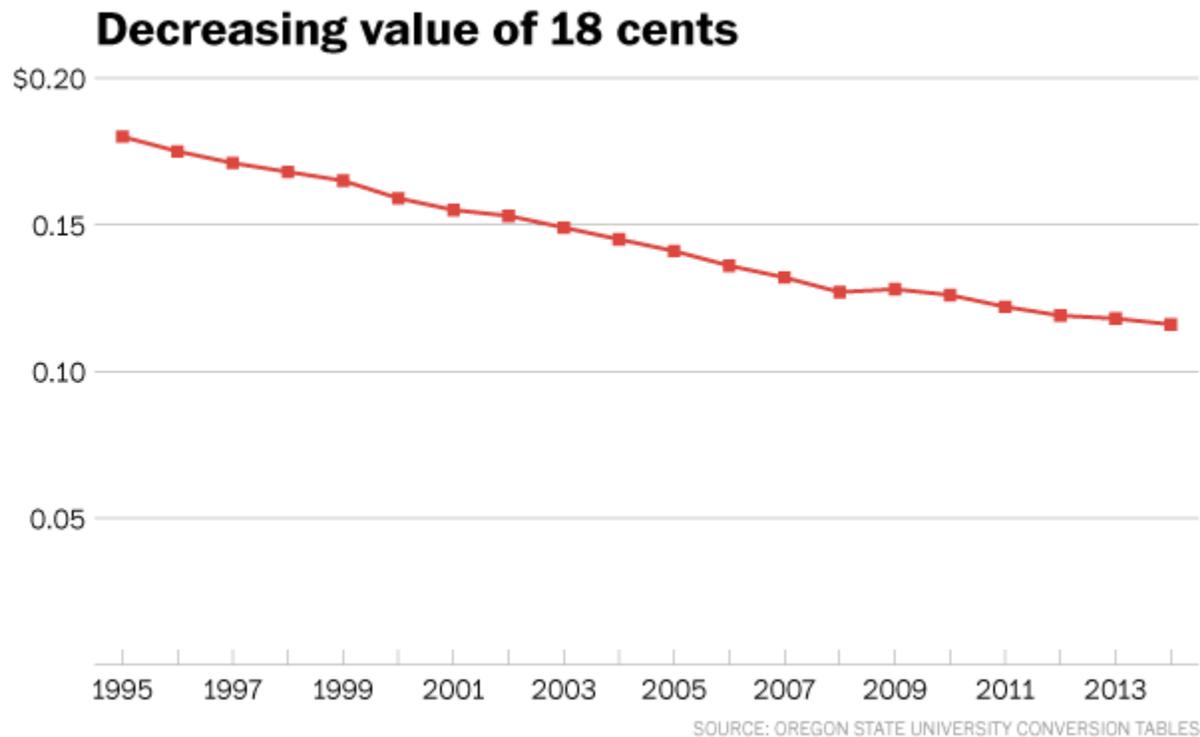
There are a number of factors at play.

1. The gas tax hasn't been increased in two decades

The Congressional Research Service [put together a good history](#) of the Highway Trust Fund in 2012 (as the government was debating whether an extension or an increase was warranted). Partly as a deficit reduction measure, the gas tax was increased at the beginning of the Clinton administration to about 18 cents per gallon. Eventually, the money that was going to the deficit went back into the Highway Trust Fund.



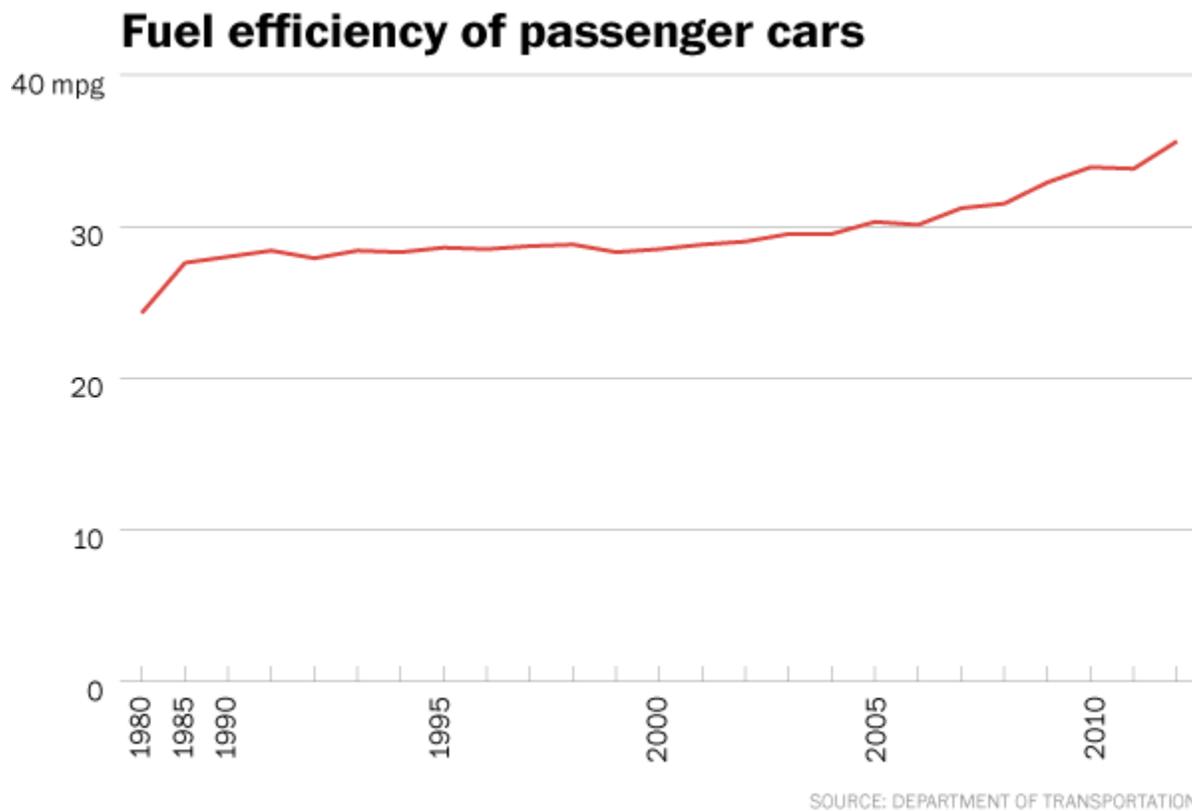
Ever since, the amount of the tax has stayed flat. Even as the price of gasoline has increased ([graph via GasBuddy.com](#)) ...



... And even as the buying power of those 18 cents has decreased. (The graph below converts from the 1995 value to 2013 dollars, but you get the point.)

2. Cars are more fuel efficient

At the same time, the amount of gas used by American vehicles has dropped. This is what the average fuel efficiency of a passenger car has done since 1980, via [the Department of Transportation](#).



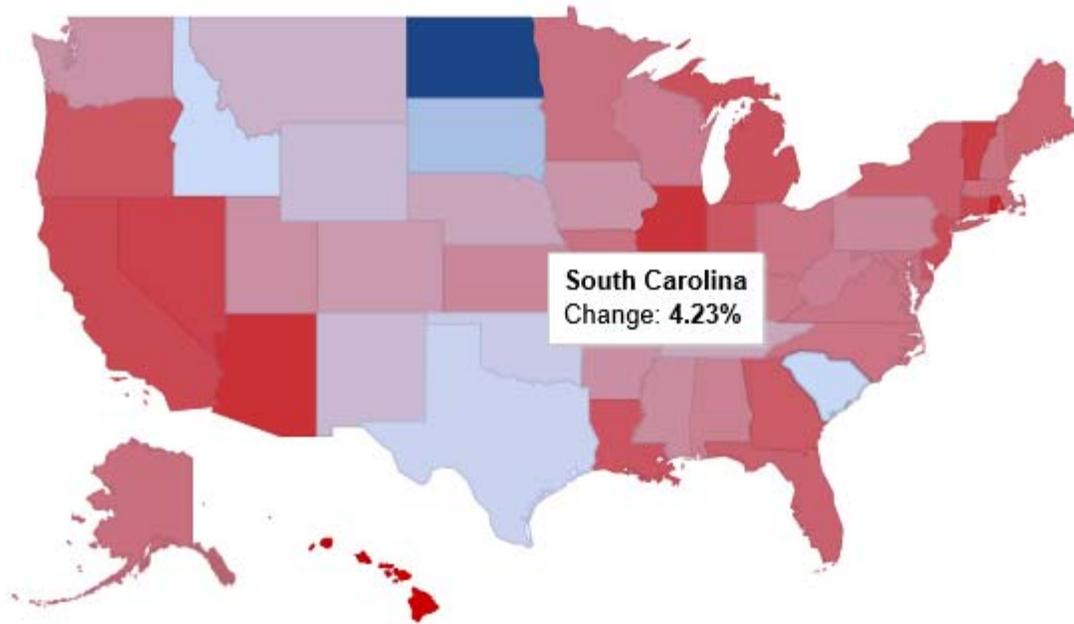
That's in part because cars are getting more efficient, and it's in part because [people are buying smaller cars](#).

By 2025, that efficiency should increase rapidly, given the 2012 rule [mandating 54.5 miles-per-gallon](#) for cars and light-duty trucks by that year.

3. States are buying less gasoline

In part due to increased efficiency, the amount of gas people buy is down almost 4 percent since prior to the recession. Here's the net change in each state between 2007 and 2012. The redder the state, the bigger the drop in

gasoline usage. (North Dakota saw a big *increase* in gas used, largely due to the surge in its population that stemmed from -- wait for it -- increased oil and gas drilling.)

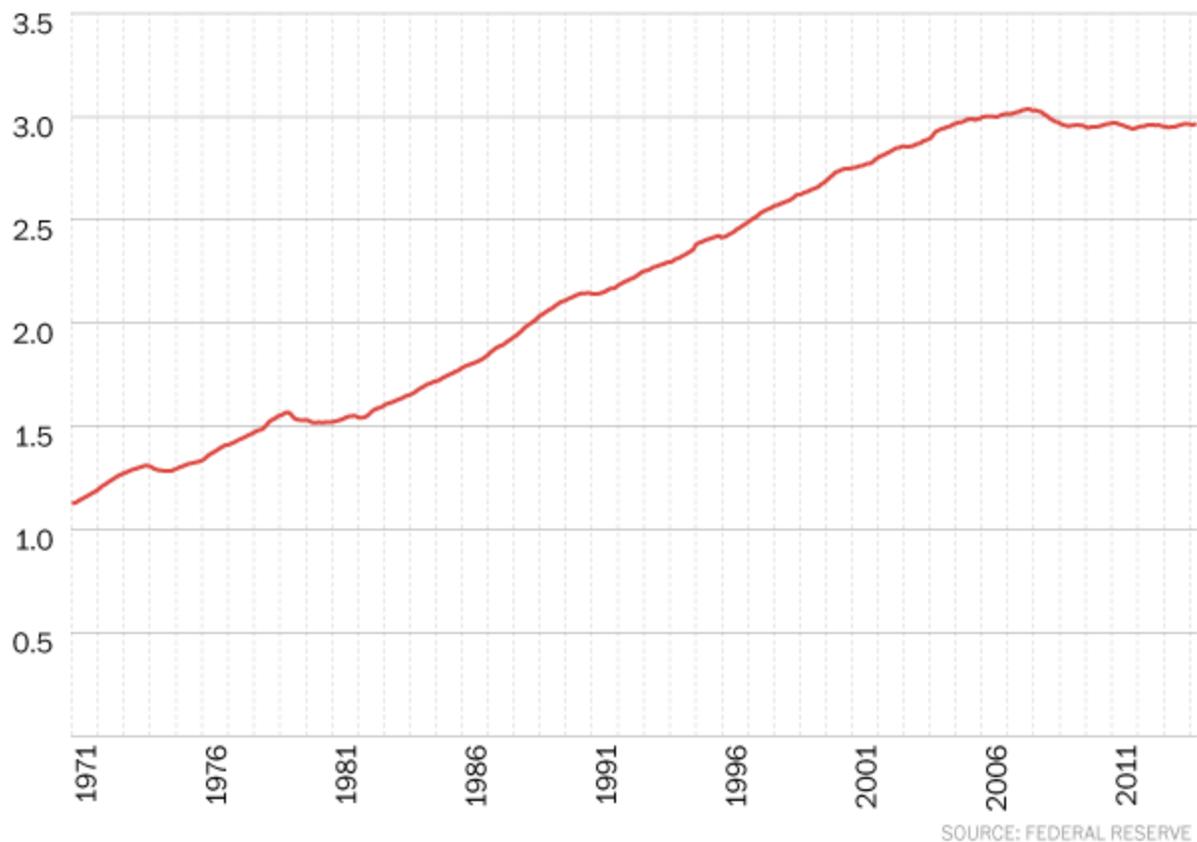


Less gas being bought means less money headed to the fund.

4. People are driving less

But it's not only because of increased fuel efficiency that less gas is being purchased. People are also driving less. Or, at least, the amount that people drive hasn't increased at its pre-recession rate.

Trillions of vehicle miles traveled per month



Drive less and you buy less gas. And again, the fund gets less money.

Blumenauer's proposal, as articulated to Wonkblog, is one that's been echoed in other states as the American automotive fleet transitions to more hybrids and more efficient vehicles: Tax miles driven, not gas used. That has its own problems, as the last graph above shows. And it's a longer-term answer to what President Obama argues is a very, very short-term problem.

Philip Bump writes about politics for The Fix. He previously wrote for The Wire, the news blog of The Atlantic magazine. He has contributed to The Daily Beast, The Atlantic, The Daily, and the Huffington Post. Philip is based in New York City.

House Passes Interim Fix for Highway Trust Fund

By [JONATHAN WEISMAN](#) and [PETER BAKER](#), JULY 15, 2014

Inside
Photo



President Obama tried out a simulator car as he toured the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Va., before speaking on transportation and the economy on Tuesday. Credit Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The House on Tuesday easily approved a short-term fix to the nearly depleted federal highway trust fund, as the prospects of hundreds of thousands of job losses and stalled road construction in August overwhelmed the protests of conservative groups that opposed the bill.

The [367-to-55 vote](#) was more grudging than it appeared. Democrats, led by [President Obama](#), denounced Congress's failure to pass a multiyear transportation bill that likely would have needed tax increases to fund the nation's infrastructure needs. Conservatives — and some liberal Democrats — called the funding mechanisms for the \$11 billion House bill gimmicks that masked the true cost.

Related Coverage

[Obama Presses Congress for Long-Term Transportation Bill JULY 15, 2014](#)

But on August 1, the Transportation Department was prepared to cut construction spending by 28 percent. Without the federal help, states were already planning to halt and delay thousands of projects, putting as many as 700,000 people out of work just as the job market was showing signs of life. Even the White House got behind the House's stopgap measure, although the president tried to use it as a political cudgel.



Obama on Transportation and the Economy

The president spoke Tuesday about the importance of federal highway funding after touring the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Va.

“On the whole, this bill is good news for workers and taxpayers, and we appreciate the president’s support for our responsible approach,” Speaker John A. Boehner said. “We certainly hope he will urge Senate Democrats to pass this bill so we can prevent highway projects from shutting down in a matter of weeks.”

Mr. Obama, visiting a transportation research center in the Washington suburb of McLean, Va., declined to hand out kudos.

“Congress shouldn’t pat itself on the back for averting disaster for a few months, kicking the can down the road for a few months, careening from crisis to crisis,” the president told workers at the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center. “We should be investing in the future.”

In April, Mr. Obama sent Congress [a proposed transportation program](#) that would spend \$302 billion over four years, financed both by traditional gasoline taxes and the elimination of some corporate tax breaks. Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee, and Senator Christopher S. Murphy, Democrat of Connecticut, also proposed an increase in the gas tax to make up for more efficient cars and trucks that have sapped tax revenues as infrastructure needs have soared.

But Republican leaders have adamantly opposed anything that looks like a tax increase. Few Democrats have embraced Mr. Obama’s plan in an election year either.

The path to averting a funding crisis now appears clear, Senate Democratic and Republican aides say. With legislative days running short, Senator Harry Reid, Democrat of Nevada, the majority leader, is likely to ignore the bipartisan highway funding bill that emerged last week from the Senate Finance Committee and put the House’s version to a vote, likely just before the long August recess. That would obviate the need for House-Senate negotiations to iron out the differences between the bills.

The House’s overwhelming passage — 181 Republicans joined 186 Democrats to vote yes — was another in a series of defeats for conservative groups like Club for Growth and Heritage Action, the political arm of the Heritage Foundation, both of which had said they would score lawmakers negatively for voting for it. The most ardent conservatives have said the highway fund should go broke and responsibility for highways and bridges should return to state and local governments.

“No one really believes today’s bill, which is chock-full of gimmicks and revenue raisers, represents good policy,” Dan Holler, a spokesman for Heritage Action, said. “But the specter of a crisis, no matter how overstated, occasionally causes solid conservatives to cast votes based on factors other than the underlying policy.”

The president’s speech on Tuesday was part of a week of White House activities intended to focus attention on the roads-and-bridges debate. On Monday, the White House released a report on the economic benefits of transportation investment. On Wednesday, Mr. Obama will make public comments about the impact of climate change on the nation’s infrastructure. On Thursday, he will travel to Delaware to discuss private-sector investment in infrastructure.

Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Anthony Foxx, the transportation secretary, have also been making speeches on the issue. Mr. Foxx, a former mayor of Charlotte, N.C., introduced Mr. Obama at Tuesday’s speech.

House passes highway bill as deadline looms



Getty Images: Robyn Beck, AFP
People drive on Highway 134 at the end of the evening rush hour in Glendale, California.

AP 22 hr ago By JOAN LOWY of Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With an August deadline looming, the House voted Tuesday to temporarily patch over a multibillion-dollar pothole in federal highway and transit programs while ducking the issue of how to put them on a sound financial footing for the long term.

The action cobbles together \$10.8 billion by using pension tax changes, customs fees and money from a fund to repair leaking underground fuel storage tanks to keep the federal Highway Trust Fund, which pays for transportation programs nationwide, solvent through May 2015. The vote was 367 to 55. A similar bill is pending in the Senate.

Without congressional action, the Transportation Department says that by the first week in August the fund will no longer have enough money to cover promised aid to states, and the government will begin to stretch out payments. Congress has kept the highway trust fund teetering on the edge of bankruptcy since 2008 through a series of temporary fixes because lawmakers have been unable to find a politically acceptable long-term funding plan.

The most obvious solution would be to raise the federal 18.4 cents a gallon gasoline and 24.4 cents a gallon diesel tax, which haven't been increased in over 20 years. But lawmakers are reluctant to raise taxes in an election year — especially Republicans for whom a vote in favor of any tax increase could trigger a backlash from their party's base.

As a result, Congress has had to look elsewhere for transportation money while not increasing the federal deficit. The bill by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp, R-Mich., relies on tax changes that are forecast to generate revenue over 10 years, but provide only enough money to keep the highway and transit programs going for another 10 months.

The largest chunk of the money, \$6.4 billion, results from allowing employers to defer payments to their employee pension plans. Funding pension plans normally results in a tax savings for companies, and deferring those payments means they will pay more in taxes and increase federal revenue. But several lawmakers suggested the revenue from the pension changes is illusory.

"Come on, really, it's pretty phony stuff," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore. "Let's get real about how we're going to fund our transportation" programs.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, defended the bill while acknowledging its limits. "Listen, these are difficult decisions in difficult times in an election year," he said. "The long-term problem is still there and needs to be addressed."

President Barack Obama, touring a transportation research center in Virginia, said he supports the House and Senate bills to keep aid flowing to states, but wants more.

"All this does is set us up for the same crisis a few months from now. So Congress shouldn't pat itself on the back for averting disaster for a few months," he said. Earlier this year, Obama offered a \$302 billion plan to increase transportation spending and keep programs going for another four years. The plan, which was paid for by closing business tax loopholes, was received coolly by Republicans.

Democrats and some Republicans complained that it won't be any easier under the GOP bill to reach a compromise on sustainable, long-term means to pay for programs by pushing off a decision until next year when the presidential campaign is heating up. Republicans, however, may be in a better position to shape a transportation bill to their liking next year if they re-take control of the Senate in this fall's midterm elections.

Republicans are divided over transportation policy. A significant minority of the party's more conservative House members want to slash federal gas and diesel taxes, dramatically scale back transportation aid and leave it to states to come up with the money to pay for roads, bridges, buses and trains.

The conservative Club for Growth and Heritage Action for America, which are influential with Tea Party Republicans, urged lawmakers to vote against the Camp bill. But as a sop to conservatives, House GOP leaders allowed an amendment by Rep. Tom Graves, R-Ga., that says Congress should "increase the authority and responsibility of the states" to fund and manage their transportation systems.

But Democrats said greater federal spending is needed to repair and replace the nation's aging infrastructure, meet the needs of a growing population and keep pace with other nations like China which are spending a greater share of their economies on transportation than the U.S.

States have been told to expect an average 28 percent reduction in aid if Congress doesn't act. The fund is expected to reach a zero balance by the end of August. Some states already have begun to delay or cancel construction projects due to the uncertainty of federal money.

The House defeated along party lines a motion by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., that would reduce the money in the bill to about \$8 billion — just enough to pay for highway and transit aid through Dec. 31 — in the hope that another quick deadline would force Congress to come to an agreement on a long-term funding plan this year.

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor and Nedra Pickler contributed to this report.
