

# Abilene MPO Insider

The Official Newsletter of the Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization

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# MODES OF TRANSPORTATION



Whether you go by car, bike, plane, train, or good old-fashioned walking, we all use a mode of transportation.

Early American settlers traveled by horseback. At the turn of the 19th century, the United States saw many improvements in modes of transportation. You no longer needed to travel for hours by horse. Humanity could move further and faster with the invention of new forms of transportation.

One of the earliest bicycles was called a hobby horse. It was invented by Karl Von Drais in 1817. Made almost entirely from wood, it did not have pedals and was moved by foot. In the 1860s, the bicycle saw many improvements. Wooden wheels were replaced with steel and pedals were added. This new invention was called a velocipede. By the end of the 1800s, bicycles were being manufactured with the safety and comfort of riders in mind. Later, cars and railways surpassed bicycles as people's primary form of transportation.

Passenger trains would not be used in the United States until 1827. In 1830, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company would complete the first mechanical passenger train, introducing the modern railroad industry to America.

It isn't clear who actually invented the first automobile. There have been many different types and styles invented over the years.

The Duryea brothers are credited with establishing the first automobile manufacturing company in the United States. They invented the first successful gasoline powered car in 1893. The automobile industry has continued to grow since then. There are now 14 major global companies who own more than 60 different auto makers.

As for planes, it is commonly known that the Wright brothers invented and flew the first airplane in 1903. Commercial air travel dates back to 1914 when the world's first scheduled passenger service set off from Florida. Commercial aviation grew in popularity after WWII, as ex-military aircraft was initially used to transport both people and cargo. Though they were first seen in battle, the B-29 and Avro Lancaster were later converted into commercial aircraft.

*(Information gathered from [HistoryofInformation.com](http://HistoryofInformation.com))*

## MEET THE BOARD



*Judge Downing Bolls, Jr.*  
Taylor County Judge

Judge Bolls came to Abilene in 1972. He attended McMurry College for one year before transferring to Southwest Texas State University, where he majored in Journalism and minored in Political Science. After graduating, Judge Bolls returned to Abilene and worked at KFMN Radio before becoming a news reporter for KRBC Radio in 1976. He spent a combined 33 years with KRBC Radio and Television before enrolling in Abilene Christian University Online to pursue a Master's Degree in 2006. Judge Bolls received his Master's Degree in Conflict Management and Resolution and became a certified mediator. In 2010, he sought the office of Taylor County Judge and is currently serving in his third term. Judge Bolls joined the Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board after his election as a Taylor County Judge and is currently serving as Vice-Chairman to the Board. He is a married father of two grown children and grandfather to two. He serves on numerous committees as County Judge. In his free time, Judge Bolls enjoys historical research, collecting movie soundtracks, and playing guitar.

# What's your Sign?

Many drivers take road signs for granted. When you've driven the same road multiple times, the road signs can fade into the background. However, when you're driving somewhere unfamiliar, traffic signs are very necessary. Traffic signs weren't always as prevalent as they are today. With more drivers on the road than ever before, road signs have saved multiple lives. The United States currently has over 164 thousand miles of highway and four million miles of public roads. Imagine trying to navigate your way across the country without traffic signs to guide you.

Traffic signs date back to ancient Rome. The Romans placed mile

markers at intersections to show the distance left to travel before you reached Rome.

In the U.S., early signs were made out of wood and put on iron

columns. In 1915, Detroit installed the first stop sign. A standard for traffic signs was created in 1922. Sign standards have been constantly revised ever since.

For the City of Abilene, the Signs and Markings Division of the Traffic Services Department installs, maintains, and occasionally even makes traffic control and street name signs. There are as many as 15,000 traffic control signs and 9,000 street name signs throughout Abilene.

# CHECK THIS OUT



This picture shows corresponding signs in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, and Australia. You may be surprised to find that they look pretty similar to each other!



# Let's talk about performance measures

In order to provide more transparency in the selection and prioritization of transportation projects, federal legislation stipulates that a performance measurement framework must be used in the development of the Transportation Improvement Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Texas Department of Transportation, also known as "TxDOT," sets targets for performance measures. MPOs must set their own targets or agree to the targets set by TxDOT.

TxDOT has set the 2021 Safety (PM1) targets in its Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The Abilene MPO signed a resolution adopting those targets during the Special Called Meeting of the Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board on March 05, 2021. There are five targets set in PM1, but let's take a

closer look at the target for Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries. Non-motorized covers pedestrians either walking or riding a bicycle.

Check out the map in the right corner. It shows the locations in the City of Abilene of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries from 2017 to 2020.

During that time there were 45 total crashes. Of those crashes 13 were fatal, and 32 had serious injuries. In 2017, there were 2,157 non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries in the state of Texas. By 2019, that number jumped to 2,305.

## Get In the Know with the MPO



### AS A PEDESTRIAN/ BICYCLIST:

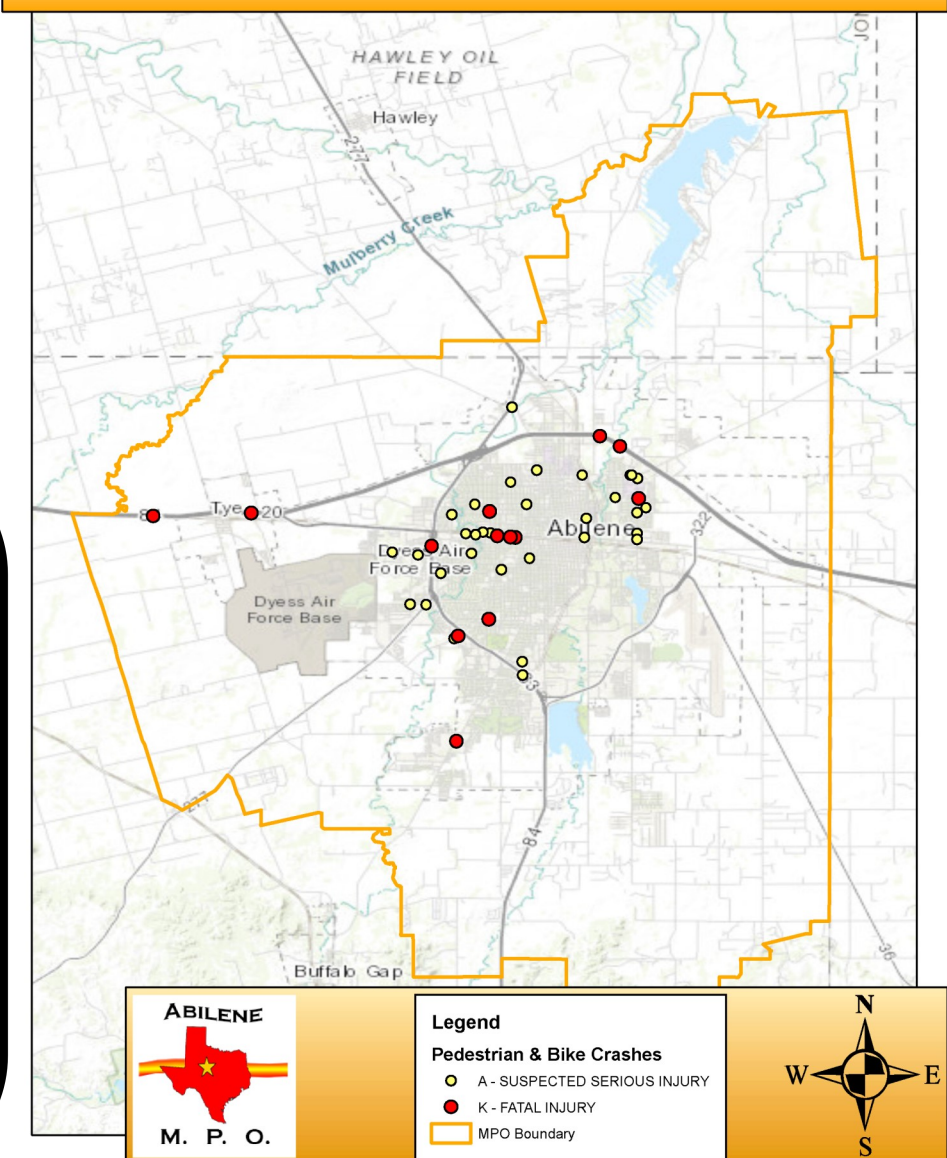
- Follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
- Walk on sidewalks whenever they are available.
- If there is no sidewalk, walk as far from traffic as possible.
- Cross streets at designated crosswalks whenever possible.
- Never assume a driver sees you. Make eye contact with drivers to make sure you are seen.
- Wear bright/reflective clothing.
- Always wear a helmet when riding your bike.
- When walking you should walk facing traffic; when riding a bike you should ride with traffic.

### AS A DRIVER:

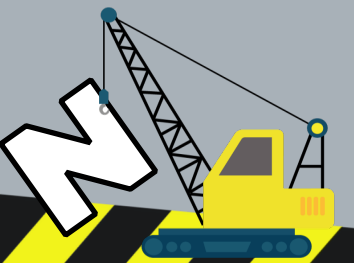


- Look out for pedestrians everywhere, at all times.
- Use extra caution when driving at night or in bad weather.
- Slow down and be prepared to stop at crosswalks.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk.
- Don't drive under the influence.
- Go the speed limit and follow the slower speed limits in school zones and neighborhoods with children present.
- Be careful when backing up.
- Yield to bicyclists as you would motorists.

Non Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries from 2017-2020



# CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTION



Come see what's happening in the area!



Construction of an overpass at Clark Rd. & US 83/84



Construction of a frontage road from FM 707 to Antilley Rd.



Construction of sidewalks at Texas Ave. & US 277



## #EndTheStreakTX

End the streak of daily deaths on Texas roadways.

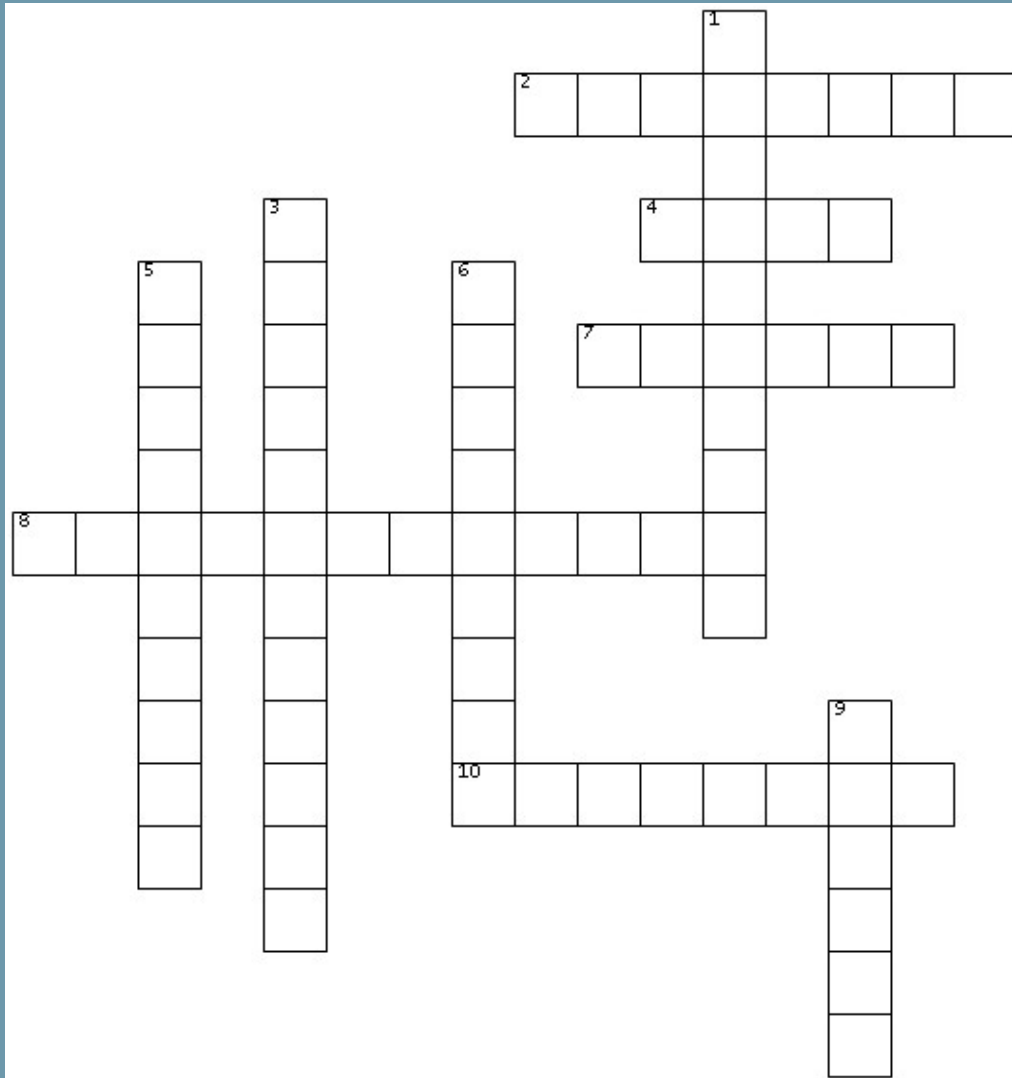
**TxDOT needs your input. Take their  
ADA Accessibility survey today!**

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ABL\\_ADA\\_Accessibility](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ABL_ADA_Accessibility)

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ABL\\_ADA\\_Accessibility\\_Spanish](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ABL_ADA_Accessibility_Spanish)

# Fun & Games

## MPO Insider Investigation



### DOWN

1. Adding pedals and steel wheels, the next early bicycle was called...
3. The earliest bicycle, also known as the hobby horse, was invented by...
5. At Southwest Texas State University, Judge Bolls majored in...
6. A graphic on page 5 compares signs from the Netherlands, U.K., U.S., and...
9. When riding your bike, always wear a...

### ACROSS

2. If they are available, you should always walk on the...
4. Early U.S. street signs were made out of...
7. A fan of music, Judge Bolls enjoys playing...
8. On page 7, a map shows the location of fatalities and serious injuries that were...
10. There is a frontage road being constructed from FM 707 to...

## Transportation Quiz

What is the most popular car color?

- A. Blue
- B. Black
- C. Red
- D. White

What is the most traveled bridge in the United States?

- A. The Golden Gate Bridge
- B. The George Washington Bridge
- C. The Brooklyn Bridge
- D. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

## *How can I get involved?*

Don't forget, MPO Policy Board meetings are open to the public! Members of the public are encouraged to join meetings and voice your concerns and opinions on transportation.

Can't come in person? No problem. All MPO Policy Board meetings are streamed live on the Abilene Television Network, or you can watch a meeting by visiting the City of Abilene's website at [www.abilenetx.gov/561/Live-Archived-Video](http://www.abilenetx.gov/561/Live-Archived-Video).

Our next meeting will be on August 17, 2021. For more details, visit [abilenempo.org/meetings](http://abilenempo.org/meetings).

## *Come Visit us!*

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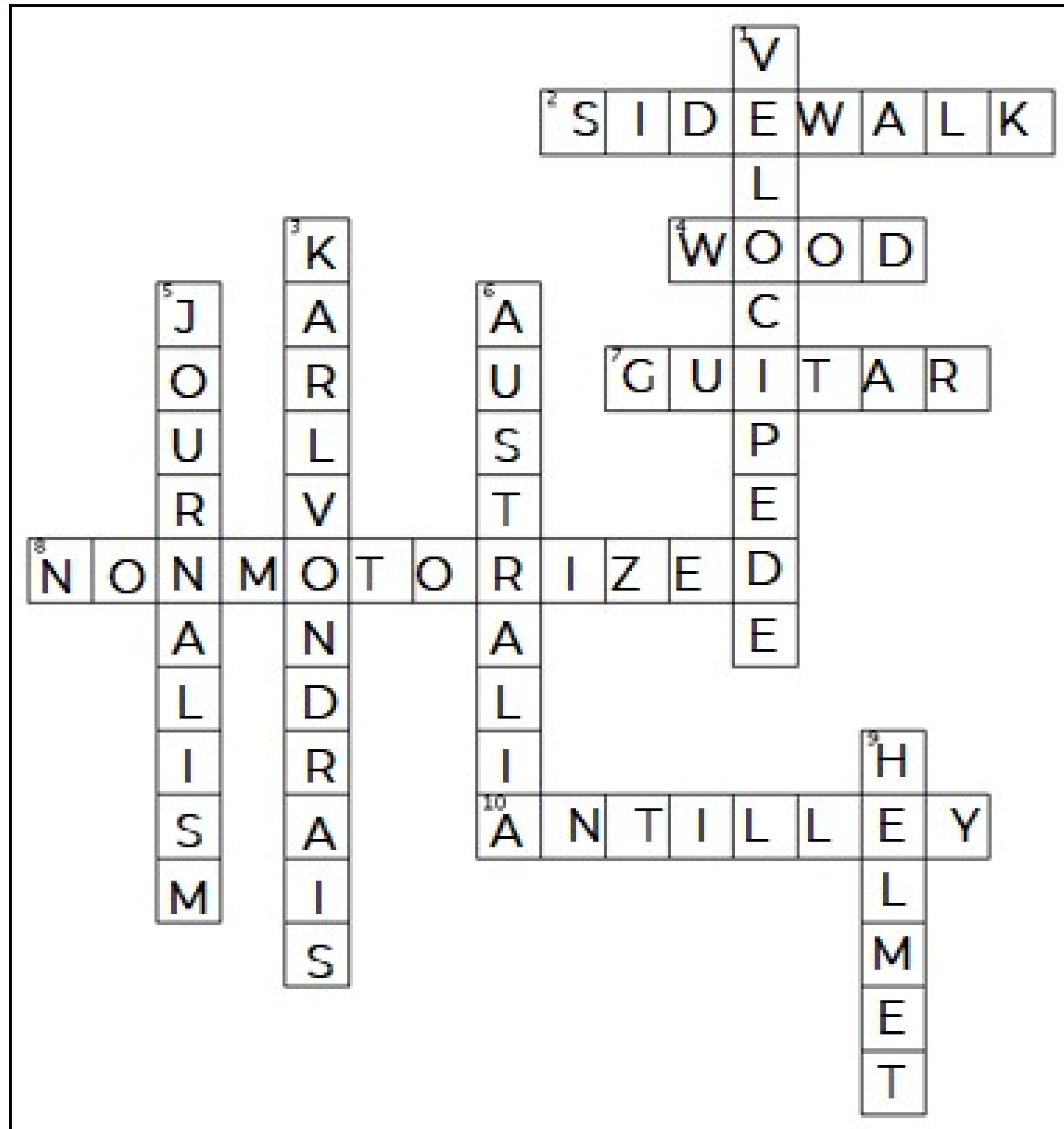
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**ABILENE**

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

# answer key:



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