Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, December 13th , 2013 Volume 8, Number 10

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Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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South Alabama Regional Planning Commission

We received some data this week concerning trip patterns on the Bayway, we are conducting a sidewalk survey and the Mobile BPAC met this week; please see *Mobile MPO Updates.* On another note, the consultant selected to do the Transit Development Plan (TDP) has been given the Notice To Proceed, and SARPC has been approved to be the Direct Recipient of the FTA 5310 Funds (we will keep you posted on these items).

This week's *Just For Fun* is…. timely given today's date.

Tomorrow go stuff a bus (*See In The News*) and tonight is City of Mobile ARTWALK! Have a great weekend!

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

www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK
706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

Who is on the BAYWAY?

Most of you are familiar with the work we did for the Mobile Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones. The same company Airsage that collected the data for us now receives 15 Billion points a day, and archives them. The applications of this type of data are becoming more and more useful in the transportation realm, and we need to capitalize on those types of applications. As another pilot type project, we asked if they could give us the home location of all the cell phones, or single anonymous encrypted frequencies, that were on the Bayway for a typical weekday. November 13th was that weekday, the data was collected and we just received it.

The data was presented to us in the form of proportions of total overall trips. So for the purpose of representation, the 2011 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for the Bayway (62,660 AADT) was applied to the proportion of traffic to look at estimated traffic numbers. (*It should be noted that these volume numbers have increased since 2011. We used the latest AADT (2011) because we do not have available a traffic count for the Bayway for November 13th, but the ALDOT count in the permanent counters for the Wallace Tunnels for November 13th is 62,390 (excludes the Bankhead traffic), with speeds being 53 mph - 54 mph.)*

It is interesting to see the amount of traffic from the West Coast. We are assuming these are long haul trucks coming in from the Pacific. Another big find is that there is an estimated over 27,000 trips on the Bayway that have a home location in Baldwin County. There will be more to follow with this data in *Destination 2040.*

Click the maps below to see data.

110 Beauregard St
Mobile, Alabama 36602
(251) 433-6541

Mobile MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

There was a Mobile MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting this past Wednesday. Congratulations to Mr. John Blanton who was elected as the new Chairman, replacing Dr. Duncan Scott who has moved to Florida. Ms. Jessica Melton retained her position as Vice-chairperson. We thank all of these individuals for their time and dedication to advocating bicycle and pedestrian needs in the transportation planning process.

Mr. Mike Lee with the Mobile Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation on the current state of the proposed Intestate 10 Mobile River Bridge and the Chamber's efforts to move the project forward. Hopefully public meetings for the bridge should take place early next year. Anyone interested in this subject should attend the meetings and sign up to speak in the public forum. Once the venue for these public meetings is set, we will post them in our newsletter.

Also at the meeting Mr. Scott Tillman, the Director of Planning and Operations for the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, gave a presentation on their efforts to develop a bike share program for the downtown Birmingham area. There is an effort underway to do the same for downtown Mobile.

Other items on the agenda included a review of upcoming road projects for bicycle and pedestrian facilities including the City of Mobile's Ann Street project which is being funding in part by the Community Development Block Grant program and the McGregor Avenue Project, which is being funding in part by Mobile MPO Attributable funds. There was also a review of recent traffic accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians. The committee was made aware of the upcoming public meetings for the Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, and there was a brief discussion about bicycle parking needs in downtown Mobile. This will be addressed further at the next BPAC meeting. The specifics of this meeting will be available in the meeting minutes, which will be forthcoming.

Sidewalk Survey

As part of our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update (*Destination 2040*), staff is updating the sidewalk portion of the Bicycle / Pedestrian Element of the Plan. As some of you may recall the *Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* we conducted 2 years ago outlined recommendations in terms of sidewalks and bicycling projects. Something that could have used some further investigation was the buffer areas around schools and the recommendation for sidewalks within this buffer. So to further develop the identification of the need for sidewalks, we are updating that portion of the LRTP.

With full support of the Mobile County Public School System, SARPC staff surveyed every school principal of every school in Mobile County this week. The survey is an online survey located [HERE]. We have had great response, and some great projects developed from this process. Not only will this help with the LRTP, but keep in mind that since MAP-21 created the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) that took the place of Safe Routes to School, there is no more school specific project development mechanism. SARPC staff is currently conducting this survey for all three counties within our region. We will keep you posted of the results.

Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Meeting

A date has not been set but the Mobile MPO TCC/CAC will need to meet sometime in January. The cost estimate for the Right of Way for McGregor Avenue was significantly increased, creating a negative balance in our Attributable schedule of funds. We will keep you posted but it looks like we have to rebalance the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Also, SARPC (the Mobile MPO) is now the Designated Recipient of the FTA 5310 funds. These are Formula Grant Funds for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. The Mobile Urban Area will receive about $360k annually for these types of projects. There are still some loose ends to tie up before we announce the availability of these funds to you; we will keep you posted.

Destination 2040

Destination 2040 is a public relations campaign to try and encourage public input into our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). For decades we have been doing the same thing, in terms of collecting public input in our plans. Most of the time it is difficult to get attendance to a public meeting concerning a long range plan. However, this LRTP we are going to ask the public: "Where do you want the roads to be widened", "Where do you want new transit routes?", "Where do you want the bicycle routes to be?", "Where do you think the growth projections should be?"

Destination 2040 is different because normally we ask the public for input after we have done the draft plan, to basically seek their approval of the plan. However, this will be a means to get the public involved with the development of the plan, and let their concerns be addressed in the plan from the very beginning. We have done the math, and we can tell you what the travel demand forecast models tell us in terms of where growth should go and what roads need to be built or widened. Anything the public wants us to test in the model, we can do that. So whatever future projects the public can conjure, we want to address them in the LRTP.

Two Destination 2040 meetings will be held on January 7th and 8th, 2014 with a web page and plenty of chances to comment. We will keep you posted; please see brochure.

Climate Change Update

The Federal Climate Change Team has sent us and the Mobile MPO Climate Change Workgroup documents to review. The Gulf Coast Study is almost complete and this February will be a roll out of the final plan. There will a multi-state/MPO Climate Change workshop as part of the closing of this study. We will keep you posted on these dates. The Vulnerability Assessment Report (Task 3.1) review documents are a 3.1 Final Report Peer Review (PDF), 3.1 Final Results Table (Excel) and a Stakeholder Review Template (PDF). The spreadsheet provides the complete asset-by-asset vulnerability scores and results. Please see here to review the documents. http://mobilempo.org/climatechange.html

A big thanks goes out to all of the Climate Change Workgroup and the participation you have given.

Projects Within Region Let December 6th, 2013

BALDWIN COUNTY

- For constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-180 from 0.28 miles west of the Foley Beach Express to east of SR-161 in Orange Beach. Length 3.3 mi.
- For constructing the Maintenance Dredging at Little Lagoon Pass in Gulf Shores.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- None at this time

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Video Wall Upgrades at the Traffic Management Center and at the Southwest Region Construction Office in Mobile.
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail, Bridge Jacking, Pedestrian Bridge Removal, Signals, and Bridge Rail Retrofit on I-10 from Halls Mill Creek to the west end of the George Wallace Tunnel. Length 8.6 mi

What's Under Construction?

Legislative Updates

Both chambers are in session this week, scrambling to complete their work so they can adjourn for the remainder of 2013. The House is expected to vote on the budget agreement.

Budget Compromise Introduced: After extended negotiations, House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Senate Budget Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA) this week released a joint budget agreement that sets top-line numbers for fiscal years (FY) 2014 and 2015. This paves the way for getting an omnibus appropriations measure in place for the rest of FY14 and perhaps a return to more regular order for FY15. Read NARC's analysis of the deal HERE.

Water Resources Bill Won't Happen this Year: Though conference negotiations are underway, both sides have acknowledged that the end of the year scramble makes it impossible to finalize a deal this year.

Bipartisan P3 Caucus Holds First Meeting: A bipartisan congressional caucus met for the first time to explore how to expand the use and role of public-private partnerships (P3) in the development and deployment of infrastructure projects. This will include exploring the use of P3s in transportation, defense, energy, technology, and water. The caucus was organized by Reps. Mike Rogers (R-AL) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA).

Blumenauer Pushes for Gas Tax Increase: In a move that received a lot of attention last week, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) introduced the UPDATE Act of 2013, which would follow the recommendation of the Simpson-Bowles deficit reduction report and increase the federal gasoline tax by 15 cents per gallon, nearly doubling it to 33.4 cents per gallon. The federal gas tax has remained unchanged for more than two decades; Blumenauer's proposal would put the tax slightly higher than it would be had it been indexed for inflation in 1993. You can read more about this proposal HERE

Funding Opportunities

Round 3 of the Implementation Assistance Program SHRP2, Deadline February 14, 2014:

FHWA recently released the recipients of Round 2 grants and announced the schedule for rounds 3 and 4. These

grants are intended to help transportation agencies deploy new products developed under the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2). If you would like additional information or have questions about the program, please contact Carin Michel, FHWA SHRP2 Implementation Manager at goSHRP2@dot.gov or 410-962-2530. Click HERE to read the release about the upcoming rounds.

Economic Development Administration

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html

EDA provides strategic investments that foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas of the United States. Under this FFO, EDA solicits applications from both rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets to support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. Link to Additional Information: EDA's website Please contact Diane Burnett of SARPC staff for questions 706-4621. Also, don't forget SARPC has a revolving fund loan program. http://www.sarpc.org/rlf.asp The RLF is a locally controlled source of capital used to finance small business start-up and expansion whose projects will create permanent jobs. By combining RLF and bank financing the borrower can realize an effective rate well below market rates.

Just For Fun

Without looking at the calendar to find out exactly what the date of today is, this Week's *Just For Fun* is all about luck. In terms of transportation safety, this is an educational video to see how fast things can go wrong. ***A warning, some of these videos are graphic, in fact reminds of a Friday the 13th movie, but everyone turns out OK….SCARY INDEED***

http://vitaminl.tv/video/1517

In the News

U.S. Census Bureau: Rescheduled American Community Survey Block Group Data Webinar

Federal facilities were closed on Tuesday, December 10th due to inclement weather in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. As a result, the "Accessing Block Group Data with the American Community Survey Summary File" Webinar has been rescheduled for **Monday, December 16th at 2:00 PM (EST)**. New log-in details can be found below.

ACS Webinar: Accessing Block Group Data with the American Community Survey Summary File
Date: Monday, December 16th
Time: 2:00-3:30 PM EST

Description: The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that generates estimates on social, economic, housing, and demographic topics. Data users can access these estimates down to the block group level of geography through the ACS Summary File. This presentation will cover background information about the ACS, an explanation of the ACS Summary File, and a demonstration of accessing block group data using the ACS Summary File.

Presenter: Gretchen Gooding, American Community Survey Office

Learn how to log-in by visiting the Census Bureau's Educational Resources page.

The ACS provides reliable statistics that are indispensable to anyone who has to make informed decisions about the future. These statistics are required by all levels of government to manage or evaluate a wide range of programs, but are also useful for research, education, journalism, business and advocacy. If you

have questions about this survey, please call the Customer Services Center on 1 (800) 923-8282.

WAVE TRANSIT STUFF THE BUS

It is The Wave's 7th year to Stuff the Bus!!! This year we will be stuffing the bus for children who attend the Nina Nicks Joseph Child Development Center on Washington Avenue in Mobile.
This agency is the oldest child day care center in Mobile, open since 1945. They currently serve 120 children.
82% of those are from the lower socio economic group, and receive funding from the state for their care.
The children that they serve are 6 weeks to 12 years old.
Please bring by an unwrapped gift for children in this age group to our Wave bus which will be parked in front of the Midtown Wal-Mart on Saturday, December, 14, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
People making donations will get a chance to meet the staff of Nina Nicks Joseph Child Development Center, and the Wave Transit System and ask them both questions about their services.
If bringing a gift to the location of Wal Mart Midtown, is not convenient, you can drop off a gift at the Nina Nicks Joseph Center, or at the Wave offices either at 1224 W. I-65 Service Rd South, or 110 Beauregard St., Suite 104.

For more information, call Paula B. Dicks at the Wave at 251-338-0099 or contact her at **pdicks@thewavetransit.com**

Transportation Research

SDITE 2014 Annual Meeting in GA - Hotel filling up fast!

The Southern District ITE 2014 Annual Meeting is being held on March 30 - April 2 in Greensboro, GA at the Ritz-Carlton Lodge (Reynolds Plantation). For information on the meeting, visit www.sdite2014.org.

The hotel rooms at the Ritz-Carlton Lodge are actually filling up very fast, so if you are planning on attending the meeting, you will want to go ahead and reserve your hotel room very soon! Visit www.sdite2014.org and click on "Conference Hotel" at the top of the page, or simply click here

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ITE 2014 Technical Conference and Exhibit

ITE is pleased to invite you to attend our 2014 Technical Conference and Exhibit, taking place March 9-12, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency Miami, Miami, FL, USA. This is a not-to-be missed conference of 2014 for anyone in the transportation profession seeking to learn about how to address the critical topics in our industry and grow their professional skills.

This year's conference – ***Applying Innovation and Technology to Transportation*** - will focus on the challenges and opportunities of working with multidisciplinary teams to meet customer, community and political expectations for the creation of vibrant regions to safely live, commute, work, and play. The program will include plenary sessions from nationally recognized transportation and policy professionals as well as presentations, peer-to-peer exchanges, technology showcases and workshops focused on safety, design, operations and planning considerations.

The ITE 2014 Technical Conference and Exhibit delivers significant return on investment. Over four days, attendees will receive the immediately actionable tools and techniques and hear about latest industry trends and topics shaping and transforming the transportation landscape. As a focal point of the conference, the ITE Exhibit Hall showcases the latest technology, products, and services for the transportation industry. In addition, technical tours allow participants to see first-hand the practical application of some of the topics presented in the sessions. These technical tours are being finalized. Watch your inbox for an email update shortly.

Fiscal Constraint and Financial Planning

A new set of tools and other resources for financial planning and determining fiscal constraint for transportation plans and programs is now available. You can access these resources on the Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program website, under the "Peer Learning" tab or through the Fiscal Constraint and Financial Planning "TPCB Focus Areas" tab. With support from the Volpe Center and review and feedback from several FHWA Field Office Planners, these materials were developed to provide State DOTs, MPOs, and transit agencies with additional methods to develop realistic financial plans for transportation system planning, programming, and project development.

The key component of these resources is the set of spreadsheets that allow agency staffs to test and clearly

demonstrate fiscal constraint over a few or several years. The spreadsheets can also be used to develop various transportation revenue and project expenditure scenarios or otherwise assist in broader financial planning. The recently posted resources also include an overview description of the tools, a guide to help transportation agencies cooperatively develop revenue forecasts, and a literature scan of noteworthy financial planning practices. We ask that you share this information with your State DOT and local transportation partners. If you have any questions about the Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint Tools, please contact Robin Smith at robin.smith@dot.gov or 720-963-3072. If you have any feedback on the "FHWA/FTA Transportation Planning Update" Newsletter or would like to suggest topics for future issues, please contact Rae Keasler at rae.keasler@dot.gov or 202-366-0329 or Ben Williams at ben.williams@dot.gov or 404-562-3671.