Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 8, 2016 Volume 16, Number 12

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Recently Completed Planning Studies

Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones
Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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We're Back! We hope you all have had a happy and safe holiday. We've got an Omnibus Appropriations bill in the works. (*see Legislative Updates*). Don't forget to apply for ALDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant (*see Funding Opportunities*). The Southern Rail Commission has released an Amtrak study looking into the feasibility of returning passenger rail service to the Mobile Area (*see In the News*). And Mardi Gras is kicking off this weekend with the Krewe de la Dauphine parade on Dauphin Island tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

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

www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

ADA Transition Plans

The Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA) hosted an ADA Day in Birmingham on October 29th. The Federal Highway Administration gave a presentation on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Transition Plans, then each urban are in the State gave a brief benchmark report as to where they are in developing the Transition Plans for each local government in an Urban Area, if they did not already have them. The afternoon was a question/answer period with a panel of ALDOT and FHWA officials. For a copy of those questions and answers, and the FHWA ADA Presentation, please see HERE.

SARPC has contracted with Neel-Schaffer to conduct the municipal ADA Transition Plans for Public Rights of Way, and assist Mobile County in conducting their ADA Transition Plan for Public Rights of Way. The consultant is well underway in the surveying of the sidewalks and ramps for condition and compliance in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act within the MPO Study Area. ALDOT has provided us with State and US "shielded" routes and cross sections that they have inventoried.

The ADA Transition Plans are moving along, and we will keep you posted. Please keep in mind, that every city and county in the State, should have an ADA Transition Plan for not just public Rights of Way (sidewalks), but all public buildings and open spaces. It is your responsibility to have the ADA Transition Plans in place.

Projects Within Region Let December 4th, 2015

Mobile County

None at this time

Baldwin County

- For constructing the Bridge Replacement (Bridge Culvert) and Approaches on CR-55 over an Unnamed Branch of Polecat Creek west of Summerdale. Length 0.151 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from $828,021 to $1,012,026.
- For constructing the Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Drainage Structure Replacements on CR-32 at various sites from the intersection of CR-73 to the junction of CR-83 in Summerdale. Length 0.173 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from $733,627 to $896,655.
- For constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on CR-34 over Negro Creek east of Summerdale. Length 0.317 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from $1,303,136 to $1,592,722 .

Escambia County

South Alabama Regional
Planning Commission
110 Beauregard St
Mobile, Alabama 36602
(251) 433-6541

None at this time

What's Under Construction?

Legislative Updates

2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill

Congress passed the 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill to keep the government open through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2016. The legislation includes funding for virtually the entire federal government, totaling approximately $1.15 trillion. The bill avoided the automatic spending cuts set back in 2013 (known as sequestration) in addition to some last minute controversial amendments that would have sunk the agreement and threatened federal government shutdown. The bill includes funding for key local government programs, mostly at current spending levels.

In a separate last minute action, lawmakers were able to agree on a bill extending tax incentives that include several local priorities. Although Congress avoided some of the more controversial amendments, Republican lawmakers made it clear that they would continue to fight administration environmental and energy rules, including the Waters of the United States wetlands pollution rule as part of the FY 2017 appropriations effort.

The final bill includes $567.6 billion for the 2016 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) program. The THUD bill adopts the policies and funding levels from the newly-passed FAST Act while reversing cuts from the TIGER grant program to maintain the current $500 million funding level. The package continues a restriction on double trailer trucks on the national highway system, even though it was in both appropriations bills. Transit commuters earned a huge win when the bill restored parity between parking and transit benefits, making the change permanent. Both will now receive up to $255 per month. Lawmakers cut the high-speed rail program and funded Amtrak at $1.39 billion. Transit programs were funded with $2.2 billion for New Starts grants, full funding for local small starts grants, and an additional $870 million for transit operating assistance.

With the exception of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) that remained at current spending levels, all U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs received increases. The breakdown includes: $3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant Program (at current spending levels); $950 million for the HOME Investment Partnership program ($50 million above FY15); a $115 million increase for Homeless Assistance Grants to $2.25 billion; a $45 million increase to $125 million for Choice Neighborhoods; and a $115 million increase for Public Housing and Rental Assistance to $26.9 billion. Congress also created a permanent extension of the nine-percent Low-Incoming Housing Tax Credit and extends the New Markets Tax Credit for five years as part of the "tax extender" bill.

In regards to energy, $3.4 billion is slated for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (same as 2015 enacted level; $25 million more than the House version) and $2.073 billion for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy ($160 million more than last year). The spending package extends authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund by three years – without any program changes and increases funding with an additional set aside for a competitive urban parks grant program.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency programs remained level or below FY 15 levels. The Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund was cut by $50 million to $1.394 billion; Brownfields programs were funded at last year's level – $80 million; and Superfund projects remained funded at $1 billion. Congress failed to halt implementation of EPA's Waters of the U.S. rules, but lawmakers promised to fight the rule during next year's budget discussions.

The U.S. Department of Justice programs increased funding for state and local grant programs by $174 million to $2.5 billion, including $187 million the COPS program; $70 million for programs to improve police-community relations, including $22.5 million for the purchase of body-worn cameras for police; and $476 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants.

The. U.S. Department of Homeland Security funding includes $2.5 billion for first responder grants ($10 million more than last year), including $1.5 billion for state and local grants; $690 million for Assistance to Firefighter Grants; $350 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants; $50 million for programs coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help states and local communities prepare for, prevent, and respond to emergent threats of violent extremism and complex, coordinated terrorist attacks.

Funding Opportunities

2015 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program

Approx. Grant Amount: $155,000

The DERA program provides public and/or private on-road and off-road diesel fleet owners and operators funding to help reduce diesel emissions within the State of Alabama. Reducing diesel emissions, such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and particulate matter will help improve air quality and human health in Alabama. We would like to partner with fleet owners/managers to retrofit 2006 or older on-road diesel engines and 2009 or older off-road engines with diesel emissions control devices and/or anti-Idling systems.

Diesel Emissions Exhaust Control Devices and Anti-Idling Systems Used in Previous Projects:

- Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOC)
- Closed Crankcase Ventilation (CCV)
- ZTR Smartstart II (Locomotive Anti-idling System)
- Tri-Pac (Long Haul Truck Anti-idling System)
- Arctic Breeze (Long Haul Truck Anti-idling System)

All devices and systems must be EPA and/or CARB-certified.

Entities awarded funding under this program must secure vendors and contractors through a competitive bidding process required by the U.S. EPA and the State of Alabama.

Interested parties should contact:

Anthony Smiley
Office Number: 334-271-7803
Email: asmiley@adem.state.al.us

Dale Hurst
Office Number: 334-271-7882
Email: adh@adem.state.al.us

Alabama Department of Environmental Management
1400 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36110-2059

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2016.

This year you will find the TAP application and instructional information for completing the application on the ALDOT web site. The web site address is: http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/specialprograms_section.htm. After clicking on this page you will see the TAP Application listed. The types of improvements eligible for TAP funding are listed on page 2 of the instructional information. The deadline date for submittal of FY 2016 TAP applications and support documents is Friday, January 29, 2016 at 5:00 PM.

Some major application requirements of the TAP are as follows:

- Only cities, towns and county commissions can apply for funding ;
- Due to limited funding, there is a cap on the amount of Federal Funds that a sponsor can apply for and that amount is $400,000.00;
- Due to limited funding, an eligible sponsor can submit only one application for possible funding;
- The funding ratio for TAP projects is 80% federal funds and 20% sponsor funds and the sponsor is responsible for the cost of the required preliminary engineering;
- Public involvement is optional;
- Fifty (50) percent of the TAP funds are sub-allocated to the MPO's by population and fifty (50) percent is distributed to any area of the state by ALDOT;
- All TAP projects have to be selected by a competitive application process administered by ALDOT ;
- Landscaping as an independent project is not eligible;
- Transportation museums are not eligible;
- For cities/towns that are located within the six largest MPO's (Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, Mobile, Columbus, GA and Pensacola, FL), the TAP funds that are being administered by ALDOT are completely separate from the TAP funds that are dedicated to the stated MPO's.

Please contact Bob Kratzer with ALDOT at (334) 353-6442 if you have questions regarding this matter

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SMART CITY CHALLENGE

On Monday December 7th, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced a Smart City Challenge to create a fully integrated, first-of-its-kind city that uses data, technology and creativity to shape how people and goods move in the future. The winning city will be awarded up to $40 million from the USDOT (funding subject to future appropriations) to implement bold, data-driven ideas by making transportation safer, easier, and more reliable. Additionally, Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Inc., has announced its intent to award up to $10 million to the USDOT winner of the Smart City Challenge. The winning city will need to work with Vulcan to secure this funding.

The Smart City Challenge builds on the USDOT's Beyond Traffic draft report issued in February of 2015. Beyond Traffic reveals that our nation's aging infrastructure is not equipped to deal with a dramatically growing population in

new regions throughout the country and the need for increased mobility options in developing megaregions. This public-private collaboration represents the USDOT and Vulcan Inc.'s joint belief that creativity and innovation will be absolutely essential to meeting the significant transportation challenges of the future. Lessons learned from this competition will be used in other cities to improve networks nationwide and demonstrate a practical path to replacing carbon-based fuel consumption. The USDOT welcomes the participation of other entities who share the vision and goals in the Notice of Funding Opportunity found at Smart City Challenge website: https://www.transportation.gov/smartcity

"This is an opportunity for the winning city to define what it means to be a 'Smart City' when it comes to transportation. We encourage cities to develop their own unique vision, partnerships and blueprints to demonstrate to the world what a fully integrated, forward-looking transportation network looks like," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "America can remain the global leader in maintaining the safest, most efficient system in the world: I am looking for mayors who share that belief to join us in pushing the boundaries of what is possible."

The USDOT is kicking off its Smart City Challenge today by inviting cities to submit a high-level description of their vision of a Smart City by February 4, 2016, consistent with the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The USDOT will then announce five finalists in March 2016, who will then compete for up to $40 million to be awarded to one city in June 2016. The Smart City Challenge will allow the selected city to demonstrate how advanced data, technologies, and applications can be used to reduce congestion, keep travelers safe, protect the environment, respond to climate change, and support economic vitality.

The following are attributes of the ideal Smart City Challenge candidate:

* Mid-sized city with a population between approximately 200,000 and 850,000 people within city limits as of the 2010 Census;
* A population density typical of a mid-sized city using 2010 Census data;
* Represents a significant portion (more than 15 percent) of the overall population of its urban area using 2010 Census data;
* An established public transportation system;
* An environment that is conducive to demonstrating proposed strategies;
* Leadership and capacity to carry out the demonstration throughout the period of performance.

"Transformative innovation takes ambitious support from both the government and the private sector. That's why we're partnering with the DOT to inspire innovative, scalable, proof-of-concept solutions to address some of our planet's most urgent challenges," said Vulcan President and Chief Operating Officer Barbara Bennett. "We hope that together we can spur change by demonstrating what is possible through replicable models."

Applicants are invited to submit ideas - designed to address or enhance community needs - across a range of innovation and data-driven platforms. Critical system improvements that increase safety, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance mobility are especially encouraged for review. Specifically, these innovations will connect people, vehicles, public transportation, and infrastructure through ITS, sharing economy, and other technologies that improve the way Americans move, whether it be to drop off kids at school, pick up their groceries, get to work, and receive critical services.

Secretary Foxx will host a national webcast on December 8, and a Smart City Forum will be web streamed on December 15 to discuss this funding opportunity, the application requirements, and the award selection process, and to answer relevant questions from interested parties. Participation in the webinars is not mandatory to submit an application under this solicitation.

The Smart City Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available online at www.grants.gov at the following direct link: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=280384. It is also been posted on the Smart City Challenge website: https://www.transportation.gov/smartcity

Please refer interested parties to the information available online and let them know they can submit questions to: SmartCityChallenge@dot.gov

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Microsoft Co-Founder Backs Contest to Find Traffic Solutions

The tech billionaire Paul Allen and the U.S. government together are offering a $50 million prize Monday to encourage cities to come up with innovative solutions to traffic and transportation problems, reports Seattle TV station **KOMO**.

The Microsoft co-founder will put up $10 million for the winner-take-all competition, which is open to cities with populations of 200,000 to 850,000. The goal of the competition is to develop and implement futuristic solutions to worsening congestion and accompanying environmental problems.

Barbara Bennett, president of Mr. Allen's company, Vulcan, said the contest will "enable the most innovative, ambitious, and forward-thinking city in America to show just how practical and rewarding it really is to start transitioning from carbon-based fuels to clean and renewable energy sources."

EDA releases FY 2016 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Funding Opportunity, announces new grant process to stream application process

EDA recently released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice announcing the availability of funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. The Public Works program is designed to provide funding for design, construction, or renovation of critical public infrastructure needed to create or retain jobs in a locality. The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program provides resources for both design, construction and renovation as well as technical assistance to support long-term job creation/retention in cases of sudden and severe economic events.

This funding solicitation also announced that EDA is moving towards a two-step application process where applicants can submit a proposal at any time to determine alignment with EDA priorities before submitting a full application. This means there are **no longer any quarterly deadlines for the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact EDA's state representative to develop their project and EDA application. To learn more about EDA's grant programs and opportunities, please feel free to contact Diane Burnett at dburnett@sarpc.org.

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

Just For Fun

So now it looks like we’ve got to start planning for magic carpet rides

A video of Aladdin taking a seemingly real-life magic-carpet ride through the streets of New York City has gone viral, amassing nearly two million views since it was published. Dressed as Disney’s street rat-turned-prince, Jesse Wellens rides through the city on a magic carpet hovering just above the ground — to the shock and amusement of New Yorkers on the street. Click **HERE** to see the video.

In the News

U.S. Transportation Secretary: Self-Driving Car Rules Are Coming — Eventually

By Mark Bergen
January 8, 2016, 5:00 AM PST

If tech companies keep burrowing into the car industry, they should get to know Anthony Foxx.

Foxx, the secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation since 2013, is certainly itching to know tech. He spoke at CES on Thursday and will keynote South by Southwest in March. He has been holding court with Silicon Valley titans, whose businesses are increasingly aimed at remaking transit.

And he's trying to spur this remaking on his own. His CES appearance came on the heels of a splashy $50 million DOT Smart City Challenge — a first-of-its-kind Federal grant to a mid-sized metropolis that shows particular gusto in envisioning a tech-savvy urban future. On Thursday, the DOT announced it would be gifting autonomous systems for buses to the winning city, courtesy of Israeli firm Mobileye.

Foxx, who is likely to be heading out with the Obama Administration, also appears intent on setting national self-driving policies before he departs, particularly on vehicle-to-vehicle communication standards. For now, robot car rules are left to the states. The first draft regulation to come out, from California, drew the ire of Google for its prohibition on fully driverless cars. Foxx strongly suggested that his agency may deploy overriding Federal rules, but stopped short of giving specifics. "We're a little ways away," he said.

Re/code caught up with the Secretary very briefly after his keynote on Thursday.

Mark Bergen: What's your central message for tech companies involved in transportation?
Secretary Anthony Foxx: Historically, we may seem like a foreign creature to many of the tech companies that are used to doing great innovation and moving it directly to the marketplace. In the automobile area, there's a very elaborate rule-making and regulatory framework.

What we're trying to do is to find out where there are touch points in our regulatory system that would prevent innovation happening in the automobile space. And trying to get ahead of that and smooth that out before we have a situation where the technology is ready to go and we've not figured out how to help it get there.

Right now, there are two competing camps with self-driving cars. There's Google, which thinks cars should be fully driverless, and the automakers, which support an incremental implementation. Where do you sit? Is there a point where you need to step in? And how so?

On these types of questions, we as an agency should produce guidance on how we are going to approach this technology — and how we want the industry to approach it. And that guidance is being worked on as we speak. I expect in the next days and weeks I'll be able to make some announcement about that.

What do you think of the recent California draft rules?

That's a case in point where guidance from U.S. DOT might help resolve some of the issues that are there. So we'll see.

Like some of the objections from tech?

Yeah, we're listening to the tech community. We have gone out to many of the companies and said, "Look at our rules and tell us where we're going to be at loggerheads. Let's see if we can do something ahead of that to work together." Of course, we cannot compromise on safety. But if it's a matter of methods and means that don't implicate safety, then we have a shot at trying to sort those out.

Do you see more innovation coming from the Valley or from Detroit?

Well, I see both.
We have to be agnostic here. It's actually a little new for us, because automakers have been largely in the business for decades and decades. But there are these new entrants that are coming in, either as suppliers or manufacturers, and we have to adjust to the environment.

When will we see fully autonomous cars on the road?

I think we're going to see it within five years. That doesn't mean 100 percent penetration; that just means market availability. But I actually think we're going to see it within five years.

Southern Rail Commission releases Amtrak study of feasibility for return to Mobile

Posted: Jan 06, 2016 10:23 AM CST Updated: Jan 06, 2016 10:45 AM CST
By Mike Brantley, Digital Content Producer
MOBILE, AL (WALA) -
The Southern Rail Commission has released an Amtrak study looking into the feasibility of returning passenger rail service to Mobile.

A new timetable was announced last month on when Amtrak service could resume on the Gulf Coast.

Passenger rail service disappeared through Mobile in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina. There have been discussions about resuming an east-west route from New Orleans to Jacksonville or Orlando.

Amtrak officials delivered a preliminary report to a meeting of the Southern Rail Commission in December, laying out options for restoring passenger rail service to the Gulf Coast. Commission Chairman Greg White said then, "There are conversations of 36 to 60 months as being realistic."

Now the full report has been made available. The following is provided by the Southern Rail Commission:

Amtrak has identified a range of feasible service options and produced an analysis of ridership levels, projected revenues and associated costs.

While infrastructure capital costs are not included in this evaluation, these service options provide a starting point for a detailed analysis of the capital needs associated with each option.

Of the five evaluated alternatives and sub-alternatives, Amtrak identified Alternatives A/A1 as providing the best balance of operating costs and ridership benefits:

• Alternatives A and A1: Extend a portion of the City of New Orleans consist from New Orleans to Orlando, with (Alternative A) or without (Alternative A1) a single daily state-supported train, priced under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, Section 209 methodology (PRIIA 209) between New Orleans and Mobile. o Alternative A would generate annual ridership of 153,900 passengers and would require an annual operating (and PRIIA 209 Equipment Capital) funding commitment of $9.49 million. This alternative provided the highest total ridership of any analyzed alternative. o Alternative A1 would generate annual ridership of 138,300 passengers and require an annual operating funding commitment of $5.48 million. This alternative provided the Report for the Southern Rail Commission December 2015 | 5 second highest ridership of all the analyzed alternatives, but the lowest level of identified operating need. In addition, Amtrak evaluated two alternate service plans:

• Alternatives B and B1: Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile, to be priced and funded by the state partners under the PRIIA 209 methodology without (Alternative B) or with (Alternative B1) a Thruway bus connection from Mobile to Amtrak service at Jacksonville. o Alternative B would generate annual ridership of 38,400 passengers and would require an annual PRIIA 209 operating and equipment capital funding commitment of $6.97 million. o Alternative B1 would generate annual ridership of 43,400 passengers and would require an annual PRIIA 209 operating and equipment capital funding commitment of $8.26 million.

• Alternative C: One daily long distance round trip between New Orleans and Orlando. This alternative would generate annual ridership of 69,100 passengers and would require an annual operating funding commitment of $14.4 million. Alternatives A and A1 yield superior ridership demand and cost efficiency over Alternatives B and B1 and C due to the availability of daily "one-seat ride" service between the Gulf Coast stations and points on the current City of New Orleans route, eliminating the need to change trains in New Orleans for travel between the current City of New Orleans route and Gulf Coast points. Since the number of passengers who are willing to make a single connection is greater than those willing to make two connections to continue a trip, ridership also increases on additional Amtrak services which connect to both the future Gulf route as well as the existing City of New Orleans. Cost efficiencies are also present, as a run-through operation requires less additional equipment than a stand-alone New Orleans-Orlando passenger train with dedicated equipment.

To proceed with any of the proposed alternatives evaluated here, Amtrak and the SRC will need to:

• Approach the host railroads (chiefly CSXT) to identify any infrastructure needs for the proposed service.

• Identify and develop operating and capital funding mechanisms to support any proposed service.

• Identify and build support from institutions which are likely to benefit from, and attract riders to, the proposed Gulf

Coast service. • Work with communities on plans to revitalize station facilities.

• Refine service proposals as a clearer picture emerges of the infrastructure environment and as marketing opportunities are developed along the route.

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Five public meetings planned on Alabama gasoline tax

By Mike Cason | mcason@al.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on December 15, 2015 at 6:01 PM

A legislative committee plans to hold five regional meetings in January about a possible proposal to increase the state gasoline tax to support road construction and maintenance.

Rep. Mac McCutcheon, chairman of the Permanent Joint Transportation Committee, said the committee will meet in Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa as it considers whether to propose raising the state gasoline tax for the first time in 24 years.

McCutcheon, a Republican from Huntsville, said there's not yet a final draft of a bill. He said the purpose of the meetings is to collect facts and figures about road projects and determine the level of need.

"I want to make sure we're sensitive to needs and we're not just trying to use low fuel prices to get more revenue," McCutcheon said.

The legislative session begins Feb. 2.

Gov. Robert Bentley last week told the Alabama Asphalt Pavement Association that he would support an increase in the gasoline tax.

The state gasoline tax hasn't changed since 1992, when the Legislature raised it by a nickel, to 16 cents a gallon.

"We're operating and trying to build and repair roads on 1992 revenue," McCutcheon said.

Also, improved vehicle fuel efficiency means that drivers pay less per mile than they did two decades ago because the tax is based on volume, not price.

Sen. Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, vice chairman of the Joint Transportation Committee, said that trend is bound to continue.

The Obama administration has issued standards requiring cars and light duty trucks to get the equivalent of 54.5 miles per gallon by model year 2025.

"We eventually have got to do something," Dial said.

There is some support in the business community for raising the gas tax.

Business Council of Alabama President William Canary said the BCA "believes that it is past time for Alabama to address this growing problem with a reasonable long-term solution that puts Alabama's transportation infrastructure back in working order and allows us to invest in our future."

"Specifically, we support a solution to fix our roads and bridges and invest in Alabama's future that includes reforms and is dedicated to road and bridge construction and maintenance," Canary said in a statement.

Tom Layfield, executive director of the Alabama Road Builders Association, said if the gasoline tax had been indexed for inflation in 1992, it would be 11 cents higher today.

"It's coming up on 24 years since the last time we addressed transportation infrastructure funding," Layfield said. Continue HERE

Governor Robert Bentley supports the gas tax increase HERE

Follow this link for the City of Mobile Final FY2015-FY2016 Capital Improvement Plan
http://www.cityofmobile.org/2015_cap_imp_projects.php

Transportation Research

Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is currently developing a Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Team received over 1500 responses from its online survey, and the Team is currently processing survey responses. This is an important tool to assess existing conditions and future needs of bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

The next step in this process is the five scheduled workshops - one in each of ALDOT's regions. Organized as open houses, those attending will have an opportunity to review findings and ask questions.

Workshop Schedule

- January 19, 2016, 4 – 7 PM
  23445 US Highway 431
  Guntersville, Alabama 35976
- January 20, 2016, 4 – 7 PM
  1020 Bankhead Highway West
  Birmingham, Alabama 35204
- January 21, 2016, 4 – 7 PM
  2715 East Skyland Boulevard
  Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405
- January 26, 2016 4 – 7 PM
  1701 W I65 Service Rd North
  Mobile, Alabama 36618
- January 24, 2016 4 – 7 PM
  1525 Coliseum Boulevard
  Montgomery, Alabama 36110

Pedestrians and Cyclists: Cities, States, and DOT Are Implementing Actions to Improve Safety

The Government Accountability Office released a new **report** highlighting the growing number of traffic fatalities to pedestrians and cyclists. The report interviewed cities and states to learn more about their challenges with this problem and how to solve it.