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Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 10, 2013 Volume 6, Number 6

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Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

Click Here to see when and where federal and state projects will be happening in your area.

Contact Us

http://www.mobilempo.org

transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner

We hope everyone has had a great week. Today is the deadline for Rural JARC and New Freedom funds. The application is due to SARPC, TODAY BY 5:00PM. There are still grants available like The TIGER FUNDS and the deadlines are quickly approaching so be sure to check out Funding Opportunities below. Several meetings coming up; the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has a meeting scheduled for **May 15th**, the TCC/CAC meets **May 22nd** and MPO Policy committee will be meeting on **June 5th**.

We have a Facebook poll in MPO Updates. A big thank you to the 5 people that voted, but I am not sure that is enough response rate to justify the commitment of maintaining a Facebook page; please give us your thoughts, this is the last day of the poll.

We encourage all Local Public Agencies to download, ***Practices and Performance Measures for Local Public Agency Federally Funded Highway Projects***. This report reviews the performance measures, delivery practices, strategies, and tools currently used on federally-funded local public agency highway project development and delivery, and how they are used to measure success in project administration.

COASTAL SEAFOOD CRAZE

Planning going out to dinner tonight? Tonight is the Alabama Coastal Foundation's Coastal Seafood Craze, and ***has been moved indoors at the Temple because of the rain***. $20 ticket will get you some of the best local seafood, and all sorts of
fun. Check out the menu: [HERE] Have a great weekend.

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison
www.mobilempo.org
706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO and TCC/CAC MEETINGS SCHEDULED

There is a TCC/CAC meeting scheduled for May 22, 2013 at 10:00 in the SARPC Training Room on the Second floor. The results and recommendations from the TCC/CAC meeting will be brought in front of the MPO Policy board on June 5, 2013 in the SARPC Board Room. The agenda for both of the meetings includes drafting a FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), adopting the FTA JARC Program of Projects, and including several items into the TIP. Please plan on attending if you are on these committees.

BPAC MEETING SCHEDULED

The Mobile MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee will meet May 15, 2013 at noon in the board room of the GM&O building at the corner of Water Street and Beauregard Street. This will be a bring your own brown bag lunch meeting. If you have something you would like to suggest for discussing, please feel free to contact us.

Yay or Nay?

The Transportation Staff here at SARPC has been debating for some time to develop a Facebook page. We have looked at other MPOs across the country, and some urban areas with millions of people, have a couple dozen

ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

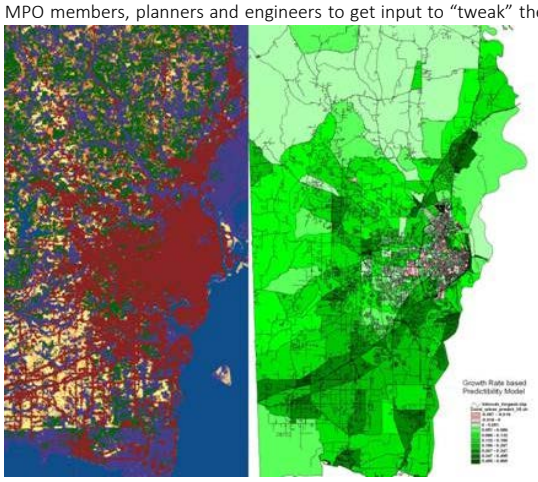
"likes". Yet on the other hand, it is a free way to disseminate information through social media. There are some Facebook users out there that use Facebook as their only source of news and information. What do you think?

Click here to vote

THE FUTURE IS OURS….

Our preliminary results of the S.L.E.U.T.H. model are in. If you recall, our Travel Demand Forecast Model has been validated to 2010 base year traffic counts, and our gravity model has been calibrated to data collected from the Mobile Origin-Destination Cell Phone Study. It's time to project our socio-economic data (travel model input; households, employees, etc.) to rerun the model for the future year (year 2035) traffic volumes. We used the complicated S.L.E.U.T.H. urban predictability model to assist us with this, and we are one of only a handful of urban areas in the country to do this.

From archived aerial photographs, historical census data and remote sensing from archived satellite imagery, we were able to create " a prediction" of what may be urban in the next 25 years. Imagine archived aerial photographs, stacked on top of one another, and creating a 3-dimensional urban trend analysis, allowing growth only on property that is possible to become urban (left photo). This gave each of our traffic analysis zones an individual growth rate (right photo), which some are zero (pink) because the zone is built out. We are currently meeting with each of our MPO members, planners and engineers to get input to "tweak" the results.



TAP FUNDING APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

The Mobile MPO is now accepting applications for the Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funds, *Please see Funding Opportunities below*. These TAP funds are the previously Safe Routes To School, Recreational Trails and the Transportation Enhancements programs. Please SEE HERE for the TAP process. The deadline for the Mobile MPO TAP funds ***AND*** ALDOT's TAP funds is June 28th. If you need help, please let us know.

Projects Within Region Let May 31st, 2013

MOBILE COUNTY

constructing the I-65, Frontage Road Relocation and the Roadway Improvements (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Signals) on SR-158 in Saraland. Length 0.950 mi.

Legislative Updates

U.S. DOT Conducts Public Session on Truck Size and Weight Limits. On May 29, 2013, from 12:30-4:30PM ET, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) will conduct a public input session that will inform their MAP-21 required, comprehensive truck size and weight limit study. The Study will evaluate and compare the differences between trucks loaded at or below current federal truck size and weight limits to those operating in excess of those limits and produce findings on a variety of factors that would result if Federal truck size and weight limits were to change. You can register for this as a webinar HERE or if you are in Washington, D.C. and would like to attend in person, you may register by emailing CTSWStudy@dot.gov.

Chairman Rockefeller to Advance Foxx Nomination ASAP. Speaking with reporters on the recent nomination of Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx to replace outgoing Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Chairman Rockefeller (D-WV) of the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee indicated that the nomination will receive consideration by his committee as soon as possible. As the Senate Commerce Committee has broad jurisdiction over

transportation, this is the committee of jurisdiction for the nomination of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee would confirm the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Development confirm the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration.

Senate Water Resources Bill Makes Changes to Harbor Trust Fund. The Water Resources and Development Act currently under consideration by the U.S. Senate, increases the money available from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for eligible projects, starting at $1 billion in fiscal year 2014 and increasing annually until fiscal year 2020, when all the money directed toward the fund would need to be available for dredging and other port activities. Currently, only about $900 million of the $1.6 billion collected annually is spent on such projects. The Senate will continue to debate and possibly hold a vote on passage next week.

Funding Opportunities

TIGER GRANTS

DOT is authorized to award $474 million in TIGER Discretionary Grants pursuant to the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6, March 26, 2013). This appropriation is similar, but not identical to the appropriation for the "TIGER" program authorized and implemented pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the "Recovery Act"). Because of the similarity in program structure, DOT will continue to refer to the program as ''TIGER Discretionary Grants.'' As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY 2013 TIGER program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to look through Frequently Asked Questions, webinars and other guidance at the Application Resources page.

Applications now Available for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): ALDOT AND URBAN AREA APPLICATIONS

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was created in the new federal transportation law, MAP-21 (P. L. 112-141), which combines three previously separate programs—Transportation Enhancements, the Recreational Trails program, and the Safe Routes to School program. Most, but not all eligible activities from these earlier programs have been preserved in the new program (Preliminary Engineering is *not* an allowable activity). Overall, funding has been reduced by about $300 million compared to FY2012 apportionments, down to $814 Million nationwide. TAP funding will comprise about 2 percent of total federal highway spending over the next year.

The State of Alabama will receive about $16,670,000 in federal funding. This funding is all subject to a 20% match. $1,700,000 will be set aside for the Recreational Trails program through ADECA. The large urban areas (with a population over 200,000) will have $2,670,000 set aside. Of this, the **Mobile MPO will receive $513,441 federal funds for the Mobile Urban Area**. The remaining $12,300,000 will be administered and applied through ALDOT, and will be divided between Small Urban Areas ($1,600,000), Rural Areas ($3,200,000) and statewide ($7,500,000) with one ALDOT application mentioned below.

Local Governments and other local or government entities with responsibility for oversight of transportation (other than State agencies and metropolitan planning organizations) are eligible for TAP funding. School districts, Colleges and Universities, nonprofits, public land agencies, transit agencies, and Tribal governments are not eligible. Click here to view FHWA's Transportation Alternatives Program interim guidance.

ALDOT TAP APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

ALDOT has announced the release of their application process; applications are due to the State by June 28th. Only cities and counties are eligible to apply for the TAP funding, and the Alabama Department of Transportation has mailed the application to each city and county in the SARPC region. ALDOT TAP Applications are only available at ALDOT. If you are a city or county and have not received an application, please let us or ALDOT know. Mr. Cecil Colson is the program manager for the TAP funds; his phone number is (334)353-6403.

MOBILE URBAN AREA APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

The application the Mobile MPO Transportation Alternative Program Funds is ***available*** [HERE] and due to the SARPC by 5:00 PM, June 28th. You must be a municipality within the Mobile Urban Area or Mobile County to apply for these funds. Eligible Activities are:

1. Construction of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, transportation related trails, streetscapes (combination of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and landscaping) and transportation projects to achieve

compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

2. Construction of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.

3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.

4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.

5. Community improvement activities including Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising; Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; Vegetation management practices in transportation right-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and; Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.

6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to- Address storm water management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.

7. Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

*If you are a city within the Mobile MPO or Mobile County, and have a project in mind, it is possible to apply for the Mobile MPO TAP funds, ***AND*** the ALDOT Statewide TAP funds. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Rural Area Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) & New Freedom (NF) Request for Grant Applications

The following information applies to public and private providers of public transportation that are not in the Mobile Urban Area. If you are unsure if you are eligible, just give us a call at SARPC and we will assist you.

For those eligible entities interested in applying for JARC and/or NF funds, the FY 2014 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) & New Freedom (NF) "*Call for Projects*" Announcement, Cover Letter, and Grant Application is available on the RPO website (Here). Applicants must submit grant applications to SARPC Transportation Planning by **5:00 p.m. on May 10, 2013.** Prior to submitting the completed grant applications, **all applicants must have submitted proposed budget(s) to ALDOT by 5:00 p.m. on April 15, 2013**. This is a special requirement for the FY 2014 grant application process that is being imposed in order for ALDOT to facilitate the development and submission of its FY 2014 draft JARC and New Freedom grant applications to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by April 30, 2013. **Applicants will not be eligible for funding consideration if proposed budgets are not received by April 15, 2013**.
If there are questions, please contact Sharon Coats directly. Contact information is included below.

Sharon Coats
ALDOT
1100 John Overton Drive
Montgomery, AL 36110
334 353-6443
coatss@dot.state.al.us

Just For Fun

Your Prius does not impress them. Workers commute via excavators [HERE]

Think your commute is fraught with peril? Check out what these workers in Siberia go through to get to their jobs. This video is a few months old, but it's getting renewed interest, thanks to a segment on "Today." In the clip, bridge builders take turns climbing into the scooper of an excavator and taking a trip across a body of water. Why, you ask? Because clearly, the bridge they're building is not quite done. Necessity, meet invention. With a basket full of workers, the machine operator navigates the scooper until it's halfway over the flooded path. Enter the second excavator, which is on the other side of the river. The operator of that one lines up that scooper with the first. And, voila! Workers climb out of bucket number one and into bucket number two. Once aboard, the second operator brings them across to dry land.

In the News

T4America Hosts Webinar on State Transportation Funding Proposals. On May 16, 2013, at 2:00PM ET, Transportation for America (T4America) will host a webinar that updates participants on the ways in which states are funding transportation. Click HERE for more information and to register.

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2 weekend closures announced for Bankhead Tunnel maintenance

By **Theresa Seiger | tseiger@al.com**
Email the author | **Follow on Twitter**

(Press-Register file photo)

MOBILE, Alabama -- The Bankhead Tunnel will be closed for the weekend starting at 9 p.m. Friday, according to the Alabama Department of Transportation. Weather permitting, the closure is scheduled to last until 5 a.m. on Monday, May 13, the department said in a press release. Workers will paint the tunnel's portals and walls and perform routine maintenance to the concrete during the closure. Motorists planning to cross the Mobile River over the weekend are asked to consider alternate routes and adjust travel times if necessary. Traffic will be detoured onto the Wallace Tunnel on Interstate 10. The department said Bankhead will be closed again starting at 9 p.m. on Friday, May 17. It will be closed to traffic until 5 a.m. on Monday, May 20, to complete work from this weekend.

After dismal cycle rating, local officials tout gains in friendliness for walkers and bikers

By **Robert McClendon | rmcclendon@al.com**
Email the author | **Follow on Twitter**

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Newly striped crosswalk and sidewalk cuts on Government Street were the result of input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Alabama may rank poorly compared to other states when it comes to accommodating and encouraging cycling and walking, but local advocates are making strides to change that, officials said. AL.com recently asked Tom Piper, a transportation planner with the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization about the state's dismal ranking in a recent cycle-friendliness study. According to the League of American Bicyclists, Alabama is the **second-worst state in the country for cycling.** Since the MPO makes decisions about where and how to spend federal transportation dollars, it is in a position of influence when it comes to infrastructure for walkers and bicyclists. [HERE]

Cellphone study shows more trips downtown than previously thought

By **Robert McClendon | rmcclendon@al.com**
Email the author | **Follow on Twitter**

View full size
Airport Boulevard at rush hour, viewed from the intersection at University Boulevard.

MOBILE, Alabama --Downtown Mobile is not as sleepy as you might think, according to a new traffic study that tracked 192,000 cellphones over a month in 2012. Census records show that about 12,000 people work downtown, but the cellphone data shows that there were about 25,000 trips to and from it every day, according to the report.

The cell-phone study was commissioned by the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization, which will use the data to help refine its traffic forecasts, in turn helping it make decisions about where to spend millions in federal transportation money. Kevin Harrison, the MPO's director, said that the cellphone study is the first of its kind. Today's smart phones communicate constantly with cellphone networks, leaving bits of data that reveal their geographic location as their owners move about. Airsage, the contractor who compiled the report, collected the anonymous data and used it to map where people were coming from and going to.

Harrison said the study cost $150,000.

Public input wanted on last stretch of Eastern Shore Trail

By **Thyrie Bland | tbland@al.com**
Email the author | **Follow on Twitter**

A May 16 meeting has been scheduled to get input from the public on the completion of the Eastern Shore Trail. The meeting is set for 6 p.m. in a conference room at the Fairhope courthouse, 1100 Fairhope Ave. in Fairhope.

The Baldwin County Trailblazers is hoping to get grant money to add a 1.5-mile stretch to the Eastern Shore Trail between County Road 13 and Alabama 181 in Baldwin County. (file art)

The trail is a walking, running and bicycling path that stretches from the Battleship USS Alabama Memorial Park to Weeks Bay Reserve in Baldwin County. It is continuous save for a 1.5-mile stretch between County Road 13 and Alabama 181. **The Baldwin County Trailblazers** is trying to get a grant to help with the cost of the project. It is estimated to cost $435,675. The organization has asked Baldwin County to apply for a Transportation Alternatives Program grant on its behalf. One of the grant qualifications is to put up 20 percent in matching funds. The organization has raised about $100,000 for the project. The group wants the county to cover the engineering fees for the project. The trail was the brainchild of the late Janice "Teko" Wiseman, 83, who founded the railblazers in 1996. The organization is trying to make sure Wiseman's dream is completed. If you have questions about the meeting, contact the Baldwin County Grants Coordinator Clair Dorough at 580-1623, or

email her at cdorough@baldwincountyal.gov.

Transportation Research

The **Transportation Research Board (TRB)** released the prepublication, non-edited version of the final report, ***Incorporating Reliability Performance Measures into the Transportation Planning and Programming Processes***, that reviews domestic and international literature on the state of travel-time reliability in transportation planning; summarizes survey results from state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations on the current state-of-the-practice of using travel-time reliability in transportation planning; summarizes case studies of agencies that are incorporating reliability into their transportation planning processes; among other information. TRB also released the following documents in support of this report:

Guide to Incorporating Reliability Performance Measures into the Transportation Planning and Programming Processes
Guide to Incorporating Reliability Performance Measures into the Transportation Planning and Programming Processes: Technical Reference

TRB released, ***Practices and Performance Measures for Local Public Agency Federally Funded Highway Projects***. This report reviews the performance measures, delivery practices, strategies, and tools currently used on federally-funded local public agency highway project development and delivery, and how they are used to measure success in project administration.