



In This Issue

- [MOBILE MPO UPDATES](#)
- [PROJECTS LET MAY 31st, 2013](#)
- [LEGISLATIVE UPDATES](#)
- [FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)
- [JUST FOR FUN](#)
- [IN THE NEWS](#)
- [TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH](#)

Recently Completed Planning Studies

[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
ajohnson@sarpc.org

South Alabama Regional
Planning Commission

We hope everyone has had a great week. There are still grants available like The TIGER FUNDS and the deadlines are quickly approaching so be sure to check out Funding Opportunities below. The TCC/CAC met this week and there is a MPO meeting on June 5; see Mobile MPO Updates for a summary. Journalist Robert McClendon proposes an interesting mayoral candidate essay request; please see *In the News*.

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

Mobile MPO Updates

TCC/CAC MEETING

There was a Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) meeting this Wednesday and there was a good amount of discussion. These 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 was:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Recommend approval of DRAFT 2014 Unified Planning Work Program
- III. Recommend approval of various ALDOT projects in the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program
- IV. Recommend approval of FY 2011 FTA Program of Projects
- V. Recommend approval of MPO support of Bicycle/Pedestrian facility on I-10 Mobile River Bridge (per BPAC)
- VI. Discussion of Public Involvement Procedures
- VII. Review of STP Attributable funding schedule in the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program
- VIII. Review of socio-economic data for LRTP
- IX. Old Business
- X. New Business
- XI. Adjourn

The items that were recommend for approval to be included in the TIP were:

- Audible pavement stripings of various State routes in Mobile and Baldwin Counties: CN \$416,158
- Curb and Ramp Installation on various State Routes: PE \$75,000, CN \$750,000
- SR 158 Extension from Lott Rd to Schillinger Rd: CN \$19,000,000
- SR 58 Extension from .5 mile east of Glenwood to West of Lott Rd: CN \$17,200,000
- Reconstruction and widening of Broad St from 15th Ave N. for 3,600 feet: CN \$4,370,000

There was also a lot of discussion concerning bicycle / pedestrian facilities on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge project. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the bridge is not out yet, and a public meeting is expected in the next several months. The Mobile MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) voted last week to recommend to the MPO to support some form of facility on the bridge, or mitigation of a facility. Whether or not the Policy Board of the MPO will support a facility on I-10 Mobile River Bridge (or at least mitigation of a facility), will be on the agenda at the June 5 MPO meeting.

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



Congressman Jo Bonner announced he will be retiring from Congress on August 15th in order to take a newly-created position of Vice Chancellor for Government Relations and Economic Development at The University of Alabama System.

[\[HERE\]](#)

Congressman Bonner has worked hard for our Region, and we thank him for his diligence, his work ethic, and commitment to the Region. The list is growing on who is interested in his seat [\[HERE\]](#). Whoever it is, we hope transportation funding for the region, will be a priority.

U.S. Senate Commerce Committee Vets U.S. DOT Secretary Nominee: On May 22, 2013, the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee held a [hearing](#) to consider the nomination of Charlotte, NC Mayor Anthony Foxx to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Mayor Foxx fielded a wide range of questions including the role and funding needs of a future federal transportation program. Mayor Foxx stressed the need to reach down into the state and local governments to highlight best practices in these areas. Chairman Rockefeller (D-WV) has issued a [statement of support](#) for the Mayor's nomination, whereas Ranking Member Thune's (R-SD) [statement](#) indicated neither support nor opposition. Additionally, the National League of Cities issued their [statement of support](#) for his nomination.

President Obama Proposes to Streamline Project Review Process, Benefits Infrastructure: Last Friday, President Obama signed a [Presidential Memorandum](#) that will integrate best management practices throughout the regulations, policies and procedures of various federal departments and agencies. This builds on a government-wide [Executive Order](#), signed in March, 2012, to improve the efficiency of federal review and permitting of infrastructure projects. The results of the first year of this effort are detailed in [Rebuilding America's Infrastructure: Cutting Timelines and Improving Outcomes for Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects](#). Click [HERE](#) for more information from the U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Director Sylvia Burwell, of the President's Office of Management and Budget.

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.

Just For Fun

FRACTURE CRITICAL!

The bridge collapse in Washington State this week, might have some of us on bridge alert. Come to find out the bridge collapse in Washington was due to a truck hitting the bridge, and nothing to do with the structure failing. With all of the bridge collapses in the world [\[there are a lot of them\]](#), we thought it would be fun to go on a bridge inspection via youtube [\[here\]](#). There has only been one bridge collapse in Alabama, and that was Bayou Canot that was struck by a barge. Actually, the majority of bridge failures are not related to structure failure at all, it is from an external force striking the bridge.



In the News

Making Mobile a place where people want to be, an open letter to the mayoral candidates (Robert McClendon)



By [Robert McClendon | rmcclendon@al.com](mailto:rmcclendon@al.com)



Mobile's development in the last 50 years has resulted in a nasty environment for pedestrians and walkers, and it's not much to look at, either.

(please note the following is from Robert McClendon, not the MPO)

After I finished graduate school, two newspapers called me up to tell me they were interested in giving me a job. One was the Press-Register, the other a much larger paper in the Northeast.

On my interview visit to Mobile, I rode into town on Airport Boulevard. Traffic, I'm sure you will be shocked to find out, was gridlocked. Happily, I had plenty of time to take in the view – baking seas of asphalt in every direction. Few trees, no people walking dogs or riding bikes, and nothing but the smell of exhaust fumes in the air.

I was already rehearsing ways to respectfully decline if the Mobile brass offered me a job.

But then a strange thing happened. Airport Boulevard transformed into Government Street, and the strip malls gave way to shops built close to wide sidewalks. A canopy of oaks cast cool shadows over the street. Dogs barked. Birds chirped.

I was sold.

The difference? Mobile's old neighborhoods were laid out in the era before the automobile dominated city planning, leaving blocks and blocks of beautiful, walkable neighborhoods with calm traffic and distinct character. Since that era, though, the city lost its way, and developed with one ethos in mind: Make life as comfortable as possible for drivers and as hostile as possible for pedestrians and cyclists.

I want to know what the mayoral candidates would do to reverse this, to make west Mobile more livable and make old Mobile the showcase it deserves to be?

In your opinion, what kind of built environment makes for a high quality of life? How would you implement that from the mayor's office? Please dispense with the bromides and be specific.

Here are some questions to help get you started.

- Bicycle advocates lament the lack of bike lanes and trails in the city. There have been multiple studies and proposals for how to improve the cycling environment in Mobile, but they gather dust. Since adding bike lanes frequently means reducing the lanes of traffic dedicated to automobiles, would you be willing to implement road diets on some Mobile streets to accommodate them where it makes sense?

- West Mobile neighborhoods are dominated by subdivisions that are not interconnected in any meaningful way. For example, take two wealthy subdivisions off of Hillcrest Road. There are two houses, one in each subdivision, that are less than 50 yards apart, as the crow flies. To walk from one house to the other on surface roads, though, you have to cover 1.4 miles. What would you do to the city's planning ordinances to prevent this type of development from proliferating?

- Improving the urban environment means holding property owners accountable. Large swathes of downtown Mobile have become blighted. What would you do to return vacant land downtown to productive use?
 - What are other obstacles to a more walkable, bicycle-friendly city and what would you do to overcome them?
- Look around the country. Places where people want to be have one thing in common, a welcoming built environment and a sense of place. If Mobile wants to join the ranks of the Southeast's great cities -- Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans -- it needs a mayor who understands that.
- (Note: Mayoral candidates Sam Jones and Sandy Stimpson have committed to answering these question in essays that we will post and print in a future edition of the Press-Register)*
-

Lower Gas Prices Memorial Day Weekend?

Transportation costs will take about 28 cents of each dollar travelers spend during Memorial Day weekend, AAA predicts. In Alabama, gasoline prices overall shouldn't bend budgets as much as last year, AAA Alabama spokesman Clay Ingram said. As of Thursday morning, the statewide average price per gallon for regular gasoline was \$3.29.

For a map of gas prices across Alabama, click [\[HERE\]](#). There are 34.8 Million Americans expected to travel this weekend [\[HERE\]](#). Either way, it is still going to cost you money to be idling at a crawl to get through the Wallace Tunnels!

Transportation Research

USDOT Developing New Guide for Bike and Pedestrian Safety Standards

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), which sets the design standards of roadways through rulemakings, is looking to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood recently announced that in the Federal Highway Administration's new round of rule making, USDOT will set its own bicycle and pedestrian safety standards for the first time. USDOT is in the process of gathering information and feedback through Regional Bicycle Safety Summits. Outcomes from the summits, as well as existing guides and other resources, will inform rulemaking that will serve as the basis of USDOT's guide to communities across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.dot.gov/bikesafetysummits>.

New Safety Data Reports Released

Posted by Carrie Kissel, Associate Director, RPO America

The National Traffic Safety Highway Administration (NHTSA) has released three new fact sheets related to traffic fatalities, including 2012 fatality estimates, and 2011 data on bicycling and young drivers. The [Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities](#) (PDF) shows that 34,080 people died in 2012, an increase of 5.3 percent over 2011 but down significantly from the 43,510 fatalities recorded in 2005. Vehicle miles traveled also increased in 2012 by about .3 percent.

NHTSA's [Bicyclists and Other Cyclists Fact Sheet](#) (PDF) presents 2011 data showing that cycling fatalities as a share of all traffic crashes increased slightly, from 1.9 percent in 2010 to 2.1 percent in 2011. Of the 677 total cycling fatalities, 31 percent occurred in rural areas in 2011. The largest share occurred during 4 p.m. – 7:59 p.m. at 30 percent, with another 21 percent occurring from 8 p.m. to midnight.

The [Young Drivers Fact Sheet](#) (PDF) shows that the number of young driver fatalities decreased 48 percent from 2002 – 2011, to 1,987 fatalities in 2011. Drivers between ages 15 – 20 are 6 percent of all licensed drivers in the U.S., but made up ten percent of the fatalities in 2011.

In addition, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) has released the report [Motorcyclist Traffic Fatalities by State: 2012 Preliminary Data](#). GHSA estimates that motorcyclist traffic fatalities in the United States increased about 9 percent from 2011 to 2012. This increase may be in part due to a recovering economy that may make motorcycle purchases feasible, as well as high gasoline costs encouraging motorcycle trips to save fuel. The report also suggests a number of strategies to reduce motorcyclist fatalities.