



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 9th, 2014

Volume 10, Number 6

In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET MAY 30TH, 2014
- 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

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

The [South Alabama Highway Funding Conference](#) was held last Friday, and was an informative look into funding scenarios. All of the presentations can be found at the website. Those that attended, thank you. Please see *Mobile MPO Updates*.

The [GROW AMERICA ACT](#) was introduced last week and is promising, but requires tax reform. This bill has to pass the House and Senate, and would take the place of MAP-21 which was only a 2 year bill. Please see *Legislative Updates*. We had a TCC/CAC of the Mobile MPO meeting last week; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*; there is a Mobile MPO meeting on May 21st. Finally, this week's *Just for Fun* is"seedy".

It is officially National Bike Month, so get out there.

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



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

Mobile MPO Updates



ALL PRESENTATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE ARE [HERE](#)

South Alabama Highway Funding Conference

Last Friday was the **South Alabama Highway Funding Conference**. It was widely attended and very informative. Mr. Matthew Brown discussed issues of the Eastern Shore MPO and Mr. Kevin Harrison discussed why there was a projected federal funding shortfall within the Mobile MPO. Mr. Don Arkle, P.E. discussed ALDOT's current funding situation, and where the federal dollars go throughout the State.

The County Engineer Forum consisted of Mr. Bill Bridges, P.E., Escambia County Engineer, Mr. Joe Ruffer, P.E., Mobile County Engineer, Mr. Cal Markert, P.E., Baldwin County Engineer, and Mr. Vince Calametti, P.E., SW Region Engineer, ALDOT. Although each county has its problems, there was an underlying theme that there is not enough money to fix everything. That was the tone among the MPOs, the counties, and the State.

U.S. Representative Bradley Byrne was the Luncheon Speaker, and was very informative. Congressman Byrne seems to be in tune with the problems we are facing, and willing to help. His presentation to the group was timely and enlightening not just on transportation issues, but other congressional issues at hand.

Mr. Frederick Werner, who is a Project Finance Manager with the FHWA Office of Innovative Program Delivery, offered some enthusiasm to innovative finance. He suggested that innovative funding is as

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

easy as “3 Ts”. There is either a tax, a toll, or time (meaning you are sitting in congestion). There are a variety of bonding and loan programs offered through the FHWA:

- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)
- Public Private Partnerships (P3s)
- State Infrastructure Banks (SIBs)
- Section 129 Loans
- Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEEs)
- Private Activity Bonds (PABs)

Beth Osborne is a Senior Policy Advisor for Transportation 4 America and is an expert in funding issues at the federal level. She discussed why the Highway Trust Fund is broke, and offered several funding options that are available.

WRAP UP

The wrap up of the conference consisted of a brain storming of ideas among participants. Keep in mind that these were just “ideas” or possibilities to generate revenue to fund some of our road projects. Some ideas thrown out there were real estate reissuance fee, TIFD (Tax Increment Financing District), Neighborhood Revitalization Act, a storm water tax, a lottery, tolls, a VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) tax, Restore Act funds, gas tax and others.

The conference was an opportunity to let our local elected officials know just what is out there in terms of potential funding sources. Whether local elected officials are in favor of them or not, was not discussed.

The conference achieved its goal as it was only meant to be an informative venue to identify problems, and offer solutions. The solutions are not easy, and will require leadership and community buy-in. Joe Ruffer pointed out during the Engineer Forum, that the Mobile County Pay-As-You-Go Program is an example of a successful solution; it takes community support which is achieved by being project specific.

ALL PRESENTATIONS FROM THE SOUTH ALABAMA HIGHWAY FUNDING CONFERENCE ARE [HERE](#)

TCC/CAC of the Mobile MPO met last week

The Mobile MPO TCC/CAC met last week and recommended a funding schedule for a FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (annual budget). Also they rebalanced the STP Attributable Funding Schedule, and recommended the following items to will be including into the TIP:

National Highway Funds:

Resurfacing on SR 17 (US 45) from north of I-65 to 17 miles north of SR-158; \$2,905,922

FTA 5310 Funds:

Mobile ARC Capital Vehicles(4); \$317,450

Independent Living Center Capital Vehicles(1); \$46,200

HSIP Funds:

Intersection Improvements on Tanner Williams Rd at Eliza Jordan Rd, Utilities: \$2,500

FTA 5307 Funds:

Mobile Transit Operating Assistance for FY 2015 \$1,500,000 Federal \$1,500,000 match

Mobile Transit Operating Assistance for FY 2016 \$650,000 Federal \$650,000 match

The Program Management Plan, which outlines the FTA 5310 process, was briefly reviewed and will be mailed to MPO members next week with the minutes of the TCC/CAC meeting. Ms. Monica Williamson gave a brief update on the Transit Development Plan, and the Committee deliberated for some time on which projects to include into the Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Projects Within Region Let May 30th, 2014

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Old US-31 (Section located on the west side of the existing SR-3/US-31) from the junction of SR-3 (US-31) north of Pollard to the

junction of SR-3 (US-31) near Keego. Length 2.935 mi.

BALDWIN COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Windsor Drive and Ridgewood Drive from North Main Street to Bayview Drive in Daphne. Length 1.226 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

What the GROW AMERICA Act will do

- Address the shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund and provide \$87 billion to address the nation's backlog of deficient bridges and aging transit systems;
- Create millions of new jobs to ensure America's future competitiveness;
- Increase safety across all modes of surface transportation, including increasing the civil penalties the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) can levy against automakers who fail to act quickly on vehicle recalls;
- Provide certainty to state and local governments that must engage in long-term planning;
- Reduce project approval and permitting timelines while delivering better outcomes for communities and the environment;
- Bolster efficient and reliable freight networks to support trade and economic growth; and
- Create incentives to better align planning and investment decisions to comprehensively address regional economic needs while strengthening local decision-making.

We have been pleased to see that members of both parties are already working together to solve these challenges, and we look forward to continuing our discussion and to supporting and building on the good work that's already been done.

Hearings:

Surface Transportation Reauthorization: Progress, Challenges, and Next Steps

Secretary Foxx Testifies before Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Yesterday, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx gave testimony regarding the reauthorization of surface transportation programs, and the Administration's recently released surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the GROW AMERICA Act. Secretary Foxx began by stressing the urgency of this year's transportation reauthorization, given the looming HTF shortfall. He indicated that the highway account will not make it through the summer; the transit account will be insolvent by October. Without a solution, Foxx indicated that transportation projects will have to be slowed or stopped. In regard to the reauthorization proposal, Foxx highlighted that the proposal would increase overall investment and system safety, improve freight and project delivery, and better connect communities. The hearing can be found [HERE](#)

Senate Transportation Bill Coming Next Week:

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) committee is poised to release on Monday its version of transportation authorization legislation. The EPW committee will hold a markup of the bill on Thursday, May 15 at 10:00am ET. We'll share more details as we learn them.

Senate Finance Committee Considers Transportation Funding Options:

The Senate Finance Committee this week held a hearing to consider how to fund the nation's highway and transit systems in future years. This conversation is especially important because the nation's transportation checking account – the HTF – is facing insolvency by the end of summer and has too few deposits from fuel taxes to cover even current spending levels. Perhaps most striking was the testimony delivered by Dr. Joseph Kile, Assistant Director for Microeconomic Studies Division at the Congressional Budget Office, who spelled out in stark terms the options facing Congress over the next decade:

- Reduce spending to match expected gas tax receipts. This would require NO new obligations for one year to allow the HTF accounts to "catch up;" after which spending from the highway account would be cut 30% and from the transit account by 65%.
- Increase revenue. Other options exist, but the most likely – a gas tax increase – would have to be 10 to 15 cents per gallon to maintain current spending.
- Continue to transfer funds from the Treasury. As it has done for several years now, Congress

would have to transfer \$18 billion in fiscal year 2015 and \$13-18 billion each year after to keep the HTF solvent.

Funding Opportunities

Walk Friendly Communities Now Taking Applications

CHAPEL HILL, NC — The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) has opened the eighth round of the Walk Friendly Communities (WFC) application process. Communities are able to submit applications to the program by visiting <http://www.walkfriendly.org/assessment>.

Applications are due by June 16, 2014.

PBIC recently named Boulder, Colo., Denver, Colo. and Lakeland, Fla. as new Walk Friendly Communities and re-designated Charlottesville, Va. as a Gold Level community. Currently, 47 communities nationwide have earned Walk Friendly status.

To assist applicants in collecting and preparing their responses, PBIC offers an interactive version of the application. This text version can be circulated among an application team to facilitate the internal review process prior to submission on June 16. All applications must still be submitted through the online application system by creating an account. To download the text version of the application, please visit http://www.walkfriendly.org/get_started.cfm.

WFC is a national recognition program to encourage towns and cities across the United States to establish or recommit to a high priority for safe walking. Assessing the communities' commitment to improve conditions related to walking, including safety, mobility, access and comfort, PBIC makes designations based on a Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze level, and all communities receive detailed feedback on where and how they can improve. A list of current Walk Friendly Communities is available at www.walkfriendly.org/communities.

Officially launched in October 2010, the WFC program is funded by FedEx Corp. and the Federal Highway Administration. For more information, visit www.walkfriendly.org, or direct your questions to info@walkfriendly.org.

About the WFC Program

The Walk Friendly Community designation, awarded from bronze to platinum, is given to applicant communities that have demonstrated a commitment to improving and sustaining walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies. At the core of the WFC program is a comprehensive assessment tool that evaluates community walkability and pedestrian safety through questions related to engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and planning. The assessment tool questions are intended to both evaluate conditions for walking and provide communities with feedback and ideas for promoting pedestrian safety and activity.

Modeled after the League of American Bicyclists' "Bicycle Friendly Communities," WFC distinguishes cities and towns that are leading the way in walkability. WFC is the first program to highlight communities for their walkability initiatives and programs, while also offering feedback to assist communities in improving walkability.

JARC New Freedom Funding (rural / small urban);

CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR FUNDING TRANSIT SERVICES FOR FY 2015

5:00 P.M. on May 16, 2014.

(budget deadline was April 18th)

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Modal Programs Bureau is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program and the Section 5317 New Freedom (NF) Program. These Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs provide funding for transit related services that assist the state's population of low income and disabled individuals.

The following organizations are eligible to apply for the Sections 5316 & 5317 programs:

Private nonprofit organizations

State or local governmental bodies; and

Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

Federal funds administered through ALDOT are only extended to organizations providing transit services in the small urban and rural areas of the State.

Available federal funds for the Section 5316 JARC program are expected to total \$1,792,092 for small urban areas and \$1,251,841 for the rural areas. Available federal funds for the Section 5317 NF program are expected to total \$898,303 for small urban areas and \$640,484 for the rural areas. A 50% local match is required for operating funds and a 20% local match is required for capital and planning funds. The selection process will be based on the following criteria: statement of need and organizational capacity; project budget and cost effectiveness; coordination and program outreach; implementation plan; and customer service and accessibility. Projects funded through these programs must be derived from a locally regional coordinated transportation plan.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and state management plan can be found at:

<http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/transit.htm>.

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Planning Council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed. Each Regional Planning Council must review grant applications to ensure compliance with federal coordination requirements prior to formal submission to ALDOT. Only those grant applications submitted for funding consideration by the Regional Planning Councils will be considered for funding. The deadline for submissions to the appropriate regional planning council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed is **5:00 P.M. on May 16, 2014**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned.

Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.

After applications are reviewed, prioritized, and approved by ALDOT, applications will be submitted to the FTA Region IV office for funding consideration. For questions or comments concerning the grant application or if the information is needed in another language contact: Sharon Coats, ALDOT, Modal Programs Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110; (334) 353-6443 or coatss@dot.state.al.us.

All proposed budgets should have been emailed to ALDOT no later than April 18, 2014.

Just For Fun

La Tomatina is a festival that is held in the Valencian town of Buñol, a town located 30 km from the Mediterranean, in which participants throw tomatoes and get involved in this tomato fight purely for fun. It is held on the last Wednesday of August, during the week of festivities of Buñol. It's like Mardi Gras, but with tomatoes, and a huge food fight, in the streets.

I covet and care for my home grown tomatoes, and the thought of spreading 150,000 (or 40 metric tons) [tomatoes on the streets](#) is mind boggling. I prefer mine with salt and pepper, maybe a little mayo.

The La Tomatina festival is held in August, so why is it in Today's *Just For Fun*?

Because: Today, May 9th, 1893, The Supreme Court of the United States rules in Nix v. Hedden that a tomato is a vegetable, not a fruit, under the Tariff Act of 1883. Let's keep these veggies off our streets.....



In the News

Public Hearing on Form Based Code

5/13/14

10:30 a.m.

Free

Government Plaza Auditorium

www.downtownmobile.org

The Mobile City Council will hold a public hearing on the final version of the Form Based Code during its meeting. The code calls for new zoning guidelines inside the Henry Aaron Loop, with the goal of creating a more walkable, vibrant downtown. Created s by the international planning firm Duany Plater-Zyberk, the guidelines have been in development for almost two years.

Congratulations to the Mobile Infirmary

Congratulations to the Mobile Infirmary for becoming the first Bicycle Friendly Business in the state. Who will be second? Auburn is the only Bicycle Friendly Community in the state. If your organization is interested in becoming a Bicycle Friendly Business or Community click [HERE](#).

Baldwin County flood recovery: Debris collection, road repairs, disaster help

Thyrie Bland | tbland@al.com By Thyrie Bland | tbland@al.com

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on May 06, 2014 at 6:37 PM, updated May 06, 2014 at 6:55 PM



Baldwin County is getting some help when it comes to picking up debris and trash related to last week's rain storm. CrowderGulf, a disaster recovery and debris management company, will begin helping the county with its debris collection effort on Wednesday. Baldwin County Development and Environmental Director Teri Graham said the county's call center has received about 1,600 solid waste-related calls the past few days.

"That might not all be storm-related but probably a lot of it is," she said.

Graham said a lot of residents have requested a schedule indicating when debris in their neighbor will be collected. She said that will be too difficult for the county to provide.

"I think if we just tell them we are going to start and maybe give them an idea of how it's going to flow that might be the best we can do," she said.

The county is asking residents to put debris in piles and separate them into the following categories:

household garbage, construction debris, vegetation, household hazardous waste, white goods and electronics. White goods — items such as refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, stoves and dryers — and hazardous waste will not be picked up by CrowderGulf, Graham said. She said the county will make sure the items are collected.

If you want to make sure the county knows about debris in your neighborhood, call 972-6878.

Storm forces closure of Daphne's Gator Alley; repairs could take months



By [Marc D. Anderson | manderson@al.com](mailto:manderson@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on May 05, 2014 at 3:07 PM, updated May 05, 2014 at 3:10 PM

Following the severe rain and flooding that pounded Baldwin County early Wednesday -- funneling massive amounts of stormwater to waterways including D'Olive Creek -- residents and visitors alike who frequent one of the city's most popular attractions may have to wait up to three months before the park reopens.

About a quarter of the newest section of the park's boardwalk, which traverses the creek under U.S. 98, washed away.

"It was hanging in there at 2:30 in the morning but it gave up the ghost approximately 6:10 on the morning of the 30th," Public Works Director Richard Johnson said.

The damaged section had just opened in July on the west side of U.S. 98 thanks to a \$80,000 state trails grant. Johnson said since Gator Alley is a recreational facility it does not rise to the emergency-funding level of other projects, such as the washed-out section of Ridgewood Drive that was repaired over the weekend and Camellia Lane, which will be repaired this week. .

"Basically, in the case of Gator Alley, we're going to have to do some assessment because we had some damage also to the eastern boardwalk that tied into it and we're going to move on that one as well as some other issues we've got that weren't as high priority as the two closed roads," Johnson said. The park not only serves as a popular alligator-sightseeing spot but it is also part of the more than 30-mile Eastern Shore Trail that stretches from USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park along the Causeway in Mobile to Weeks Bay.

City Council President Randy Fry said officials realize the importance of Gator Alley but the city's focus will be on repairing roads first.

"We'll be getting on that as we have the resources available," Fry said of Gator Alley. "We certainly want to get that reopened. It's one of our most popular attractions."

Johnson said repairs to Gator Alley will likely be more than \$50,000, which means the city will have to bid out the work under state law. Following the proper channels, Johnson said he hopes the city will be awarding a bid for the project sometime in mid to late June.

"I really think that in following that (bid) process we're six to seven weeks before there's a contract and getting ready to mobilize to repair that," Johnson said. "And then it'll probably be a 30-day project."

The repairs will likely not affect other improvements that were already planned for the park, Johnson said. Over the past six months, Daphne officials have been working with plans to use

\$320,000 in federal transportation funds awarded to the city along with nearly \$93,000 in matching funds to expand the Gator Alley through extensive improvement to the parking lot off North Main Street and through the creation of a natural drainage system. Johnson said the upgrades continue to be on track with construction slated for early summer.

"In reality, hopefully that will be under construction by the time the other is getting fixed and it will all come back brand new all in one piece pretty much at one time," Johnson said. "That would be an ideal situation."

Transportation Research

U.S. Census Bureau Releases: "Modes Less Traveled - Bicycling and Walking to Work"

The U.S. Census Bureau released the report, "Modes Less Traveled — Bicycling and Walking to Work in the United States: 2008-2012," which highlights the trends and socio-economic and geographic differences between motorized and non-motorized commutes. This report — the Census Bureau's first focusing only on biking and walking to work — is one of many that examines specific aspects of commuting, including workplace location, working from home, long commutes and specific travel modes.

The figures in this release come from data collected from questions in the Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS). The questions asked include:

- How did this person usually get to work last week? If this person usually used more than one method of transportation during the trip, mark (X) the box of the one used for most of the distance.
- How many people, including this person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van last week?
- What time did this person usually leave home to go to work last week?
- How many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work last week?

Organizations use the statistics from the ACS to design programs that ease traffic problems, reduce congestion and promote carpooling. In addition, police and fire departments use ACS statistics to plan for emergency services in areas where many people work.

The ACS provides local statistics on a variety of topics for even the smallest communities.

Highlights include:

- The West had the highest rate of biking to work at 1.1 percent, and the South had the lowest rate at 0.3 percent.
- Among large cities, Portland, Ore., had the highest bicycle-commuting rate at 6.1 percent.
- The Northeast showed the highest rate of walking to work at 4.7 percent of workers, whereas the South had the lowest rate at 1.8 percent. Several of these places were "college towns," including Ithaca, N.Y., where about 42.4 percent walked to work.
- Among large cities, Boston was one of the highest walking-to-work cities at 15.1 percent.

The U.S. Census Bureau new Quarterly Workforce Indicators Web Tool

The Census Bureau has recently released a beta version of a web-based analysis tool, called [QWI Explorer](#), for accessing its Quarterly Workforce Indicators data. Over time, the QWI Explorer is expected to replace the QWI Online and Industry Focus tools. Learn more at the Census webpage for [QWI Explorer Help and Documentation](#).

10 TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR BIKE MONTH BETTER!

To get things rolling in your community or improve longstanding events with new ideas, the League created a step-by-step guide that will help you in creating a successful Bike Month event in your organization, workplace, city, or state. While we commonly refer to Bike to Work Day events, because they've been the most popular historically, the tips and techniques will help you plan **any** Bike Month event, from a citywide ride to a small gathering within your own company or organization. [\[Here\]](#)

Combined Intelligence - Working Together for Smarter Transportation

In September of 2014 the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS), the Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITSFL) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Georgia (ITSGA), will come together for a joint annual meeting. Join us in 2014 for the ITS 3C Summit.



ITS 3C Summit

The conference will be held **September 14-17, 2014** at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center along the waterfront in Mobile, Alabama.

Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center

One South Water Street

Mobile, AL 36602
