



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 10, 2015

Volume 15, Number 1

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Planning Study

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We have a special called meeting of the **Mobile MPO this Tuesday at 2:00 PM**. Please plan on attending. It involves everyone's ADA Transition Plan and the tabled agenda item, our Self-Certification Resolution. On July 30th Toole Design will be here. As a side note, next week marks 50 years of the Mobile MPO. Please see *Mobile MPO Updates*

President Obama says long term transportation bill, Paul Ryan says short bill likely; see *Legislative Updates*. The selection for a Design Team for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge has been shortlisted to three, for next steps please see *In The News*.

This week's *Just For Fun* is so good, you won't be able to get over it.

Congrats to Coach Tom Piper for [winning the 2015 Cal Ripken League Alabama State Championship](#) Tournament on Tuesday. The Matthews Park 8-year-old All Star Baseball Team is headed to regional tournament play in Hattiesburg, Mississippi next week to represent the State of Alabama! Coach Monica Williamson's Team is also headed to Girls Fast Pitch 18 Under World Series next week!

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable weekend!

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



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

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Policy Board to meet this Tuesday (7/14) at 2:00PM in the SARPC Board Room

At the last MPO meeting on June 17th (below), the Self-Certification resolution was tabled until next meeting. The reason it was tabled involved the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plans that are a requirement of the Self-Certification process, and required for each municipality, and county in the country. The FHWA has directed us to execute the Self-Certification, and we will have a year to complete everyone's ADA Transition Plan. Some funding will be available to do these plans, and this will be discussed in detail on Tuesday; please plan on attending.

MPO Policy Board met Wednesday June 17th, 2015

Items on the agenda for the Mobile MPO Policy Board included a review of the Draft 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which is essentially our budget for next year. This is a draft document that will be adopted in August. Also, they reviewed the Draft 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which will include a self-certification resolution. This resolution was tabled until we have further clarification from the Federal Highway Administration regarding the member governments having ADA Transition Plans. There was a discussion pertaining to scheduling our Urban TAP Funds, and a brief summary of the Non-motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile.

Both the draft UPWP and the draft TIP are being submitted to ALDOT for comment prior to public review. Once we receive comments from ALDOT, both documents must go through the public involvement process, and the TCC/CAC and MPO Policy board will see these documents again this summer.

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FY 2015 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grants Awarded

The TAP Project Selection Committee met last week. Three applications were recommended to be funded.

- Mobile County - Sidewalks on Old Pascagoula Rd. from Horseshoe Lane to Theodore Dawes, sidewalks on Howell's Ferry Rd. from Allentown Elementary to Snow Rd.
- City of Semmes - Sidewalks along US 98 from Illinois St. to Firetower Rd., Along Illinois St. from US 98 to Public Works Facility, along Church St. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd., and along Park Ave. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd.
- City of Mobile - Sidewalks along DIP from Levene Rd. to Cedar Park Drive

Six applications were received. Unfortunately, due to funding limitations, there was only enough funding available to fund three projects. We thank everyone for their submissions and congratulate those that were recommended to be funded. The applications will be submitted for ALDOT for final approval.

GIS online

We are upgrading and starting to utilize our online GIS capabilities. Please check out some of the current interactive maps we have been working on. Many more to come...

<http://mobilempo.org/maps.html>

DESTINATION 2040

The Mobile MPO [Long Range Transportation Plan](#), Destination 2040, has been adopted, subsequent comments from ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA. The DRAFT document that was out for public review and reviewed with MPO and TCC/CAC members may have some slight modifications in the FINAL Document. The FINAL will be out next week.

The plan is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to other modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. You can learn more about the plan [HERE](#).

I-10 Mobile River Bridge

ALDOT has released the I-10 Mobile River Bridge Corridor Hearing Report Summary and it is now available online at www.mobileriverbridge.com. This report summarizes all of the comments that were received during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement public comment period in the Fall of 2014. The document suggests most of the support was for the B prime route. Although we are moving closer and closer to having a bridge, there are still several hurdles to cross, including funding, [tolling is an option](#).

On June 25th, the Alabama Department of Transportation named the three design team finalists that will be reviewed in July by a Mobile-area selection panel for the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge design contract.

Michael Baker, LLC, Volkert, Inc., and Thompson Engineering, will make presentations to a seven member panel composed of local officials and community leaders. The panel will give a recommendation to the Director of Transportation, who is expected to name the selected design team following the presentations.

For more information on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge:

ALDOT'S Web Site: <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/>

Build The I-10 Bridge Coalition Web Site: <http://www.buildthei10bridge.com/>

Downtown Mobile Non-Motorized Mobility Study

The Downtown Non-Motorized Mobility Study will meet on Thursday July 30th. Toole Design Group will be here to vet final recommendations with the Steering Committee and anyone interested. Notices will go out shortly concerning that meeting.

Stayed Tuned for all of the details http://mobilempo.org/Mobility_Study.html

Projects Within Region Let June 26th, 2015

Mobile County

None at this time

Baldwin County

None at this time

Escambia County

For constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Various Routes in Brewton as indicated in the plans. Length 4.038 mi. the Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$619,367 to \$757,004 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

WH: Obama has 'strong preference' for long highway bill

By Keith Laing - 07/09/15 03:43 PM EDT

The White House said Thursday that President Obama has a "strong preference" for a long-term highway bill, a day after Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx hinted at a potential veto of a temporary patch.

Foxx said Wednesday that he might recommend that Obama veto a temporary extension of a highway funding measure that is currently scheduled to expire at the end of the month because "we're quickly getting to the point where the value of another extension may be less than the value of breaking the cycle."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Thursday that "our strong preference is that Congress get to work on a longer-term agreement that would allow the federal government to make a long-term commitment, a long-term investment in America's infrastructure.

"For the specifics of Secretary Foxx's comments, I'd encourage you to check with his office. But based on the way that you've recounted them, I'm not sure they're materially different than what I've described as our position, which is that it is our view that the repeated use of short-term extensions does have a negative impact on our economy and on our ability to make tangible, critically needed investments in our nation's infrastructure," he said.

Lawmakers are scrambling to beat a July 31 deadline for the expiration of federal transportation funding, and they have been unable to come up with a way to pay for a long-term extension for infrastructure spending.

Congress has been grappling since 2005 with a transportation funding shortfall that is estimated to be about \$16 billion per year, and lawmakers have not passed a transportation bill that lasts longer than two years in that span.

The 18.4 cents per gallon federal gas tax has been the main source of transportation funding for decades, but it has not been increased since 1993, and more fuel-efficient cars have sapped its buying power.

Continue [HERE](#)

Paul Ryan: Short-Term Highway Funding Fix Likely

By [James Arkin](#) - July 9, 2015



Rep. Paul Ryan, the chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, said Thursday that there isn't enough time for a long-term highway funding bill to pass Congress before the August recess, and that a shorter fix through the end of the year is likely.

Congress has already passed one short-term highway fix this year — a funding “patch” ends on July 31 — and there have been more than 20 similar fixes over the past decade. Both parties have expressed interest in a six-year bill funding the nation's highways, but Ryan said the limited time left before the deadline isn't adequate to make that happen. We will have to do an extension through the year this month because it is impossible to put in place a six-year financing package for highways in the next two weeks, and we're trying to impress this point upon our colleagues,” Ryan said at a breakfast hosted by Politico. “We want a six-year highway bill, we want a long-term highway bill, we want to give states the ability to plan ahead, but that means we have to come up with a way to do long-term financing.”

For that financing, Ryan reiterated his opposition to raising the gasoline tax, which is how highway projects have long been funded. Ryan said the top plan, or “Plan A,” for financing long-term infrastructure improvements would be using tax repatriation on corporate profits overseas.

“That's what our first preference is and we're in discussions with our colleagues on how to do that,” Ryan said. “If we can't get an agreement on that, then we go to a Plan B.” The Wisconsin Republican didn't elaborate on what the backup plan would involve.

There seems to be growing bipartisan consensus behind the international tax plan. Sen. Chuck Schumer, the third-ranking Democrat in the upper chamber, and Republican Sen. Rob Portman released the framework of an international tax reform bill earlier this week that would allow the profits to fund the nation's highways. Ryan applauded that framework, which he said follows what the House has been trying to do. Schumer, at a press conference Thursday afternoon, said he and other Democrats “couldn't agree more” with Ryan that the tax reform should be “Plan A.” Continue Reading [HERE](#)

New FHWA Guide on Public Involvement in Transportation

Planning and project development requires meaningful input from the public for successful outcomes. FHWA recognizes that many members of the public are genuinely interested in what is happening in their community, but don't know how they can effectively provide input to influence the outcome of transportation plans or projects. To help transportation agencies encourage and facilitate public involvement, FHWA's Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty has produced Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision making. This guide provides a variety of tools to increase public interest, involvement, and input.

Funding Opportunities

FY 2015 and FY 2016 FTA SECTION 5310 NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. FTA provides funding for transit related services that assist the Mobile Urban Area's population of seniors & individuals with disabilities.

The following organizations are eligible to submit an application for the Section 5310 program:

1. Private nonprofit organizations
2. Governmental agencies that provide certifications to SARPC that transit services furnished by nonprofit organizations are not readily available in the area
3. State or local governmental authorities
4. An operator of public transportation that receives a Section 5310 grant indirectly through a recipient. Private operators of public transportation that provide shared-ride taxi service are eligible subrecipients. Taxi companies that provide exclusive-ride service are not eligible subrecipients, however, may participate as contractors under contract to an eligible subrecipient or designated recipient.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FY 2015 and 2016 GRANT CYCLE

Date	Activity
• June 19, 2015	• Program announcement and dissemination of grant applications.
• July 8, 2015	• Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan meeting 2:00 pm at GM&O Building. All applicants should attend.
• July 23, 2015	• Deadline for submission of applications
• July/August 2015	• Selection committee convenes to review applications; schedule site visits
• TBA	• Grant Application to FTA via TEAM
• TBA	• Awards Announced
• TBA	• Vehicle Order Submission

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Incentive Opportunities

As the third round of the Every Day Counts initiative moves into high gear, the Federal Highway Administration is offering incentives and technical assistance to help the highway community mainstream innovations.

Fiscal year 2015 assistance is now available from the [State Transportation Innovation Council Incentive program](#). The program provides resources—technical assistance and funds—to help STICs make innovations standard practice. States can get up to \$100,000 a year for activities such as implementing system process changes, organizing peer exchanges and developing guidance and specifications. Contact the state FHWA Division Office or Mary Huie at (202) 366-3039 for information.

The Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program continues to accept applications through Grants.gov. Incentive funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects using innovation on any aspect of highway transportation, including planning, financing, environment, design, construction, materials, pavements, structures and operations. See the [AID Demonstration Web page](#) or contact Ewa Flom at (202) 366-2169 for details.

[Section 1304](#) of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act allows an increase in the federal funding share of up to 5 percent on eligible projects that use innovations.

Just For Fun

Why do we need a transportation funding bill?

Here are 41 bridges that for one reason or another go nowhere; [a road to nowhere](#) due to lack of funding. Some are obviously damaged from natural causes, some were stopped during construction, and some are just inexplicable. [41 bridges](#) to nowhere...

Here are some of my favorites:



Better run through the jungle... just not very far.



WHY would this even be built without a road?



It's either a tunnel through nothing, or a bridge to nowhere, and that's *Just for Fun*

In the News

Three Design Team Finalists Selected for I-10 Mobile River Bridge

The Alabama Department of Transportation has named the three design team finalists that will be reviewed in July by a Mobile-area selection panel for the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge design contract.

Michael Baker, LLC, Volkert, Inc., and Thompson Engineering, will make presentations to a seven member panel composed of local officials and community leaders. The panel will give a recommendation to the Director of Transportation, who is expected to name the selected design team following the presentations.



Daphne roundabout work will block major intersection for up to six weeks starting Tuesday



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

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

on July 07, 2015 at 7:53 AM, updated July 07, 2015 at 10:47 AM

The heavily traveled intersection of Baldwin County 64 and 13 in Daphne was closed in all directions Tuesday morning as the last leg of a \$1.7 million roundabout construction project ramped up.

The intersection was scheduled to close at 8 a.m. with work expected to take four to six weeks to complete.

As of 9:45 a.m., according to Daphne Public Works Director Richard Johnson, traffic was backed up as some motorists ignored signs and had to turn around, backtracking to the detour.

H.O. Weaver & Sons Inc. of Mobile was awarded the \$1.17 million low-bid contract in November for the joint project between Daphne, the Baldwin County Commission and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

A county-issued detour map shows that motorists traveling west on county road 64, needing to go north on county road 13, can take Capital Drive, just west of the intersection, to Rand Avenue, which connects back to county road 13.

The biggest impact will be on other directions. A motorist traveling eastbound toward Alabama 181 will have to take the long detour of Pollard Road north to Whispering Pines Road and east toward Alabama 181. That route is reversed for those heading eastbound to U.S. 98. Continue [HERE](#)

25 percent of Alabama roads in bad shape, but that's good compared to rest of US



By [Howard Koplowitz | hkoplowitz@al.com](mailto:hkoplowitz@al.com)

on July 09, 2015 at 4:36 PM, updated July 09, 2015 at 4:42 PM

A quarter of Alabama's roads are in bad shape, but that percentage puts the state among the least deficient in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. The infrastructure statistics on all 50 states were released as national highway funding is set to expire at the end of the month.

One in four Alabama roads are in poor or mediocre condition, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2013 Report Card, the most recent statistics by the group. That percentage is the fourth lowest in the country. By contrast, about 75 percent of roads in Wisconsin are in such condition.

Alabamians also pay the third lowest amount in vehicle repairs and operating costs due to driving on roads in need of fixing, according to the society and the DOT. Drivers in Alabama pay \$530 million for such repairs, or \$141 per motorist.

The state's bridges don't fare as well. About 22 percent of Alabama bridges were found to be structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, or about 3,608 bridges out of 16,078 in the state. That puts Alabama in 21st place out of 50 in that category. Rhode Island has the worst bridges, with 56.5 percent deemed

structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

The Highway Trust Fund, which is used to allocate federal transportation dollars, will run out of money July 31st unless Congress agrees to refill the fund by that date. Congress has used stop-gap measures to keep the fund afloat for the last six years, but the DOT has argued for lawmakers to pass a long-term bill.

The Obama administration is proposing an increase in transportation funding that would raise the state's federal highway aid from \$740 million to \$905 million over six years. The legislation would allow states "to effectively plan and start construction on projects that will support millions of good paying jobs over the next several years and improve our economy and global competitiveness," according to the DOT.

Alabama would also see its Federal Transit Administration money grow from \$53 million to \$81 million, the agency said.

Transportation Research

U.S. Driving Nears 1 Trillion Miles In First Four Months of 2015 Nation's Driving Increases for 14th Month in a Row

WASHINGTON – New estimates released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) show that Americans drove 987.8 billion miles for the first four months of the year, topping the previous record – 965.5 billion – set in April 2007.

The new data, published in FHWA's latest "Traffic Volume Trends" report, a monthly estimate of U.S. road travel, show that Americans drove 267.9 billion vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) in April – the most ever driven in April and the highest mileage for the first quarter of any year – underscoring the need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure.

The April estimates show that the nation's driving has increased steadily for 14 consecutive months.

The April 2015 report also includes seasonally-adjusted data, which enable VMT comparisons with March and any other month in any year, from the USDOT's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Analysis of seasonally-adjusted VMT is an alternative to analysis of unadjusted VMT, which traditionally uses comparisons of a month to the same month in previous years to determine trends.

The seasonally-adjusted vehicle miles traveled for April 2015 were 262.4 billion miles, a 3.7 percent increase – or 9.5 billion more VMT – compared to the previous April and a 1.1 percent increase – or 2.9 billion more VMT – compared with March 2015. The estimates include passenger vehicle, bus and truck travel.

- See more at: <http://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-driving-nears-1-trillion-miles-first-four-months-2015#sthash.JasIPCI7.dpuf>

Citizen Reporting of Current Road Conditions By Ms. Michelle Birdsall

In recent years, DOTs have increasingly used the practice of crowdsourcing to gather real-time information on weather and road conditions as a supplement to other road condition reporting techniques (e.g., field personnel reports and ITS devices). In a new report, [Citizen Reporting of Current Road Conditions](#), the Road Weather Management Program has documented five DOTs' experiences with a particular type of crowdsourcing: one in which the DOTs build the interface and train citizen reporters. Because these citizen reporting programs involve the training of recruited reporters, the quality and frequency of the road condition data is often more usable relative to data from other crowdsourcing techniques, such as mining social media. Moreover, because the data ingest system is built by the DOT, the reports can often be seamlessly ingested and disseminated through existing internal data management systems or traveler information outlets. An upcoming report (expected in the fall) will document key similarities and differences between three different crowdsourcing approaches: citizen reporting, social media mining and third-party smartphone applications.