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There are lots of new grants available for local governments (See *Funding Opportunities*). We have a new National Highway Freight Network Map (See *Legislative Updates*). The Crepe Myrtle Trail Ride is tomorrow, so dust off that bicycle and get on it and ride! Oh yeah, it's April Fool's Day, so be on your toes and don't get fooled!

Have a great weekend!

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO FUNDING

The Mobile MPO apportionment was increased with the passing of the new FAST ACT Transportation Funding Bill. The per capita amount was \$6.8 Million per year under the bill MAP-21. That has been increased to \$7.1 million per year, which equates to being able to program almost \$9 million per year once the 20% local match is included. Our Attributable funding schedule has been moved around a bit; however, even though we had an increase in potential funding, we are still negative in terms of budgeting projects in year 2020 and 2021.

FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Designated Recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 *Urban Area Funding* for the Mobile Urban Area. We are well underway with this program, and have already purchased our first vehicle for Mercy Life. Congratulations to all that have been awarded. We are working diligently to get all procurements completed as fast as possible. We will most likely advertised in April for the new call for projects for the FTA 5310 Urban Program. Our funding under the FAST ACT has been increased to \$314,000 annually.

ADA TRANSITION PLANS

The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline (July 20th, 2016). Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator which creates a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The inventory is complete for all urban local governments within the Mobile MPO, and the consultant is now working with the ADA Coordinators on the text of each of the ADA documents, grievance procedures, and the potential for a full ADA Transition plan, not just Public Rights of Way. The deadline for Mobile County and the cities within the Mobile MPO to have an adopted ADA Transition Plan for public Rights of Way, is July of this year.
(for areas outside the boundaries of an MPO, ALDOT is working on a time line for you, and you will not follow the same timeline as the Urban areas)

Projects Within Region Let March 25th, 2016

Mobile County

for constructing the Intersection Improvements (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, Additional Lanes, and Utilities Relocation) on CR-70 (Tanner Williams Road) at CR-523 (Eliza Jordan Road) west of Mobile. Length 0.367 mi.

for constructing the Widening, Resurfacing, Guardrail Replacement, and Traffic Stripe on CR-33 (Dawes Road) from the junction of CR-32 (Three Notch Road) to the pavement joint 350 feet south of the intersection of Scott Dairy Loop Road South in Dawes. Length 1.864 mi.

Baldwin County

No projects scheduled to be let at this time.

Escambia County

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the pavement joint just south of the Escambia County Line (MP 81.196) to the junction of SR-12 (US-84) near Evergreen. Length 11.673 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Both chambers are on recess this week. The Senate will return next week and the House on April 12.

National Highway Freight Network Map

The **Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)** repealed both the Primary Freight Network and National Freight Network from Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), and directed the FHWA Administrator to establish a National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) to strategically direct Federal resources and policies toward improved performance of highway portions of the U.S. freight transportation system.

The NHFN, including individual State maps and tables, have been posted on the [National Highway Freight Network Webpage](#).

National Highway Freight Network



Funding Opportunities

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces \$500 Million in Eighth Round of TIGER Funding (Due April 29th, 2016)

WASHINGTON –Today, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced \$500 million will be made available for transportation projects across the country under an eighth round of the highly successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program.

"The TIGER program funds vital transportation projects that provide real benefits to communities all across the country. Every year, we see hundreds of compelling applications that have the potential to improve people's access to economic opportunities, make people safer, and improve their well-being," said Secretary Foxx. "I am proud that for seven rounds, TIGER has been able to make a valuable contribution to improving our nation's transportation infrastructure, and I look forward to this year's competition."

Like the first seven rounds, FY 2016 TIGER discretionary grants will fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and will be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region.

The 2016 TIGER grant program will continue to make transformative surface transportation investments by providing improvements over existing conditions. The grant program will focus on capital projects that generate economic development and improve access to reliable, safe and affordable transportation for communities, both urban and rural.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, does not provide dedicated funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects; however, these activities may be funded as part of an overall construction project. Continue [HERE](#)

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Application Workshop

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is sponsoring a second RTP application workshop on **Monday, April 4, 2016**, at the Center for Commerce, 401 Adams Avenue, Room 342, Montgomery, Alabama. Registration will begin at 12:00 Noon and the workshop will begin at 1:00 p.m. and end by 4:00 p.m. Participants can access the Center for Commerce parking deck from the South Decatur Street entrance by entering the code 3705#.

Registration is required. To register, please call Kim Martin at (334) 353-3151 or email her at kim.martin@adeca.alabama.gov by Thursday, March 31, 2016. Please provide the name(s) of the workshop attendees and the organization they will be representing.

Please Note: This workshop is being held to accommodate individuals unable to attend the first RTP application workshop held on March 22, 2016. It is not necessary to attend both workshops.

The workshop will be accessible to all persons. If you have a disability that requires special services, materials, or assistance please notify Ms. Martin when you preregister. We look forward to working with you during the next funding cycle.

USDOT Opens Applications for \$800 Million in New "FASTLANE" Freight Grants Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation [began soliciting applications for \\$800 million in freight project grants for fiscal 2016](#) that were authorized in the FAST Act, setting in motion the process for state departments of transportation and other agencies to tap this new funding program.

"Our nation needs a strong multimodal freight system to both compete in the global economy and meet the needs of consumers and industry," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said in announcing the grant applications Feb. 26. "We now have an opportunity to fund high-impact projects that address key challenges affecting the movement of people and freight."

Deputy Transportation Secretary Victor Mendez had told state agency CEOs at the AASHTO Washington Briefing on Feb. 24 to soon expect [that formal notice of funding opportunity](#), which would activate the initial round of what will be five years of freight-related competitive grants.

The department also issued a three-page [set of fact sheets](#) that sum up how the program works.

While state project planners knew the grant pool would be available under the new surface transportation law, they could not actively seek the funds until the notice was issued that opened applications and spelled out the details.

That notice also comes days after the department opened applications for [this year's separate TIGER infrastructure grants program](#), which provides a \$500 million grant pool in 2016 and can help fund a wider array of projects.

The FAST Act called the new program "Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects." The department is calling them FASTLANE grants, an acronym that stands for "Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies."

It is the first program in the USDOT's 50-year history that establishes broad, multiyear eligibilities for freight infrastructure projects including intermodal.

The USDOT announcement said FASTLANE applications will be due by 8 p.m. eastern time on April 14, and more information will be included in a series of webinars on the <https://www.transportation.gov/fastlanegrants/webinar-series>

Those eligible to seek the grants include state DOTs, metropolitan planning organizations, port authorities, tribal governments and other agencies. Eligible project categories, the notice said, include various freight-related types of work plus projects that add capacity and mobility to the interstate highway system in a national scenic area.

Of the \$800 million in available 2016 funding, 25 percent or \$190 million is reserved for rural projects and 10 percent or \$76 million for smaller ones. Over the five years of the FAST Act, the program will provide \$4.5 billion in project grants.

The USDOT said the FASTLANE grants will fund large projects equal to the lesser of \$100 million or a certain specified statutory percentage of the project state's fiscal 2015 apportionment that are eligible for a minimum award of \$25 million. Smaller projects below the minimum large-project size are eligible for awards of at least \$5 million.

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

EDA recently released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice announcing the availability of funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. The Public Works program is designed to provide funding for design, construction, or renovation of critical public infrastructure needed to create or retain jobs in a locality. The Economic Adjustment Assistance

Program provides resources for both design, construction and renovation as well as technical assistance to support long-term job creation/retention in cases of sudden and severe economic events.

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

Federal Highway Administration Announces \$60 Million in Grants for Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced \$60 million in grants to fund cutting-edge transportation improvement technologies that will improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure return on investment.

"This program will take technological innovation to a new level and help to make the entire transportation network more reliable for commuters, businesses, and freight shippers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "An efficient transportation system is the foundation of a strong economy."

The new program—Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD)—is aimed at addressing the concerns outlined in *Beyond Traffic*, the USDOT report issued last year that examines the challenges facing America's transportation infrastructure over the next three decades, such as a rapidly growing population and increasing traffic. Gridlock nationwide is expected to increase unless changes are made soon.

"Innovative technologies offer exciting solutions that can help meet the challenges outlined in *Beyond Traffic* and can improve safety and efficiency of transportation across the nation," said Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "This new program will help harness and support these technologies and push the boundaries of what is possible for the future of transportation in our country."

ATCMTD technologies are intended to improve the return-on-investment of safety, efficiency, system performance and infrastructure improvements, including the enhanced use of existing transportation capacity. The awards may be used for projects that use real-time traveler information, traffic data collection and dissemination, vehicle-to-infrastructure and an array of other dynamic systems and intelligent transportation system technologies.

ATCMTD was established under the "Fixing America's Surface Transportation" Act. State departments of transportation, local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations and other eligible entities are all invited to apply under the program.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published today is available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/funding.cfm

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$266 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Bus Service Nationwide

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$266 million in competitive grant funding for bus programs nationwide. The funding consists of \$211 million in grants for buses and bus facilities projects, as well as \$55 million specifically for FTA's Low and No Emission (Low-No) bus program, which promotes technologically-advanced and environmentally-friendly buses. These investments will help advance the President's vision for a cleaner, 21st century transportation system that reduces carbon emissions while expanding transportation options for families.

"Transit buses are a lifeline to opportunity for countless Americans, but too often these buses are outdated and unreliable," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "As demand for transit grows and our nation's population continues to expand, these much-needed funds will help bring communities the latest technologies to strengthen and improve their bus infrastructure."

Eligible projects include those that replace, rehabilitate, lease, and purchase buses and related equipment as well as projects to purchase, rehabilitate, construct or lease bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance.

"Our state and local partners across the country will benefit from the increased funding and flexibility available through this program," said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. "With a large and growing maintenance backlog throughout the public transportation industry, it is vital for local agencies to have additional resources to address their community's needs."

FTA will award the grants to eligible transit agencies, state transportation departments, and Indian tribes on a competitive basis. Projects will be evaluated by criteria outlined in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), including the need for investment in bus transit systems, benefits to the community (including economic and workforce development), implementation of low and no-emission technologies, and integration with local and regional long-term planning.

Transportation contributes about 27 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and the Administration has committed to major reductions in emissions. The FTA funds to help public transportation agencies purchase advanced technology, clean and efficient buses will help to reduce transportation emissions.

The Low-No Bus Program is a down payment on the administration's 2017 budget proposal. Over a 10-year period, the "21st Century Clean Transportation Plan" invests an average of nearly \$20 billion per year in new funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide new ways for families to get to work, to school, and to the store. The Budget would expand transit systems in cities, fast-growing suburbs, and rural areas; make high-speed rail a viable alternative to flying in major regional corridors; modernize our freight system; and expand the successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program to support high-impact, innovative local projects.

The [Fixing America's Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in December 2015, restored FTA's competitive Bus & Bus Facilities Program, authorizing it through 2020. The FAST Act also made the Low-No program, previously funded and managed under FTA's research programs, a subset of the larger competitive bus program.

The previous round of Low-No funding was [announced](#) in September 2015, and project selections are expected in the coming months.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$5.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Mobility Focused on Healthcare

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the availability of \$5.3 million in competitive grant funds to improve public transportation options that increase access to healthcare for those who lack good transportation choices.

"We know it can be challenging for many people to travel to medical appointments, and missing them can lead to re-hospitalizations and poorer health," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "This new grant opportunity sets the stage for transit agencies and community organizations to develop local solutions that provide ladders of opportunity, improve health outcomes, and reduce health care costs."

FTA's Rides to Wellness Demonstration and Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grants will help build partnerships between health, transportation and other service providers to develop strategies that connect patients with public transportation options. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) appeared in today's Federal Register.

The grants will further FTA's Rides to Wellness initiative, which emphasizes public transportation as a strategy for people to access health services, resulting in greater preventive care, fewer unnecessary hospital readmissions, and lower costs. The initiative focuses on improving outcomes for those with chronic conditions and ensuring that at-risk populations can get to wellness visits, healthy food, and community services.

In part to help people take advantage of the healthcare expansion made possible by the Affordable Care Act, Rides to Wellness Coordinated Access and Mobility grants will encourage partnerships between public transportation agencies and the healthcare industry to devise solutions to access challenges.

"We're excited at this opportunity to fund creative ideas that will result in solutions to the healthcare transportation puzzle," said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan, who launched the Rides to Wellness initiative last year. "We know that when people have consistent, affordable transportation options to get to their healthcare providers, they receive appropriate preventive care instead of using emergency rooms and suffer fewer costly setbacks."

The grants will focus on communities demonstrating mobility management, technological solutions, and effective partnerships. Grant applicants must include participating groups with stakeholders from the transportation, healthcare and human service sectors.

The [Fixing America's Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), signed into law in December, authorizes a pilot program for innovative coordinated access and mobility that augments FTA's Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. The FAST Act initiated the program with an initial \$2 million in first-year funding, expanding to \$3.5 million per year by Fiscal Year 2019. FTA supplemented the pilot program with funds from FTA's Research Program.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces Notice of Funding Availability for Infrastructure Projects

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the availability of credit assistance for critical infrastructure projects across the country through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. Secretary Foxx encouraged states and cities across the country to submit letters of interest for direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit through TIFIA as a result of the recently enacted Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

"The TIFIA credit program has a strong record of success in stimulating local economies and bringing critical transportation projects to communities that need them," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "This year, the added flexibility and streamlined review process should make it easier for a variety of applicants to take advantage of the funding opportunities, and to bring significant infrastructure developments to their neighborhoods."

The FAST Act authorizes \$1.435 billion in capital over five years for the TIFIA credit assistance program. Historically, one dollar of TIFIA Program funds supported a TIFIA loan of approximately 14 dollars and resulted in infrastructure investment of up to 40 dollars, when taking into account other state, local and private sector investments.

A wide range of surface transportation infrastructure is eligible for TIFIA credit assistance, including highways, passenger and freight rail, public transit, intermodal freight facilities, and international bridges and tunnels. The FAST Act expands eligibility to include transit-oriented development and the capitalization of a rural projects fund within a state infrastructure bank.

In addition, for eligible small projects, the FAST Act allows TIFIA to reserve funding to offset the fees charged to applicants by TIFIA for financial and legal services. Because of the flexibility provided by the TIFIA programs, many qualified, small-scale and large-scale projects that might otherwise be delayed or shelved can move forward quickly, providing an immediate boost to jobs while laying a foundation for continued economic growth.

To date, the TIFIA program has provided \$22.7 billion in credit assistance to support more than \$82.5 billion in transportation infrastructure investments to help build 56 major transportation projects around the country. Updated information regarding TIFIA's loan portfolio is available [here](#).

DOT's Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC), which was announced in 2014, has expanded TIFIA's ability to meet the needs of the nation's transportation system. BATIC serves as a single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities, and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs, and explore ways to access private capital in public private partnerships (P3s). Since BATIC's formation, DOT has closed over \$8 billion in financing to support \$21 billion in projects.

BATIC has also increased the number of non-traditional DOT credit program applicants, most significantly TIFIA-eligible inside-the-gate port projects. BATIC has facilitated interdepartmental coordination for mega-projects that need to access multiple DOT credit programs. It is also providing project finance capacity building resources for states and municipalities in conjunction with the BATIC Institute: An AASHTO Center for Excellence, which includes best practices papers, a P3 case study webinar series, and peer to peer exchanges on finance and development.

The TIFIA Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is available [here](#). Additional information about the TIFIA program is available at <http://www.transportation.gov/tifia>.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#).

Just For Fun

Transportation Secretary Calls For \$200 Billion In Funding To Repair Nation's Ricketty Wooden Bridges

WASHINGTON—Saying such infrastructure improvements were necessary to ensure citizens could continue to pass safely over the nation's dangerous river rapids and precipitous chasms, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx called for \$200 billion in funding Wednesday to repair the country's ricketty wooden bridges. "A recent survey of wood-and-rope bridges throughout the United States found that most are unsafe for travel due to heavily frayed ropes and planks that have decayed to the point of imminent collapse, putting far too many adventurous and treasure-seeking Americans in danger," said Foxx, adding that any wooden bridge repair bill put forth by Congress must include a substantial investment to fix the many long gaps of broken and missing slats that Americans can only currently traverse via treacherous leaps. "Sadly, there have already been numerous reports of these frail, swaying bridges falling in various parts of the country, oftentimes just mere moments after an individual finishes crossing them, typically leaving their traveling companion stranded on the other side, or worse, clinging precariously to a sheer cliff face. This is simply unthinkable in a nation as advanced as ours." Foxx added that, unless sufficient funding was authorized in the near future, he would have no choice but to close many of the ricketty wooden bridges nationwide, forcing Americans to make longer and more difficult commutes over rushing rivers by walking across the backs of full-grown crocodiles.



In the News

Publix project in midtown Mobile creates stir

By [John Sharp](mailto:John.Sharp@al.com), jsharp@al.com.

A [proposed development anchored by a Publix grocery store](#) in a long-established Mobile neighborhood is causing a stir among residents. They believe the plans are something commonly found in the suburbs and not in a dense urban area.

The developer, however, claims that his group is ready to move forward with a project he believes is a "good addition" to midtown Mobile. The project includes a redevelopment of approximately 9 acres of the former [Augusta Evans School that was closed in 2014](#).

The two sides are likely to clash in the near future. The Mobile Planning Commission could host a public hearing about the development in May. The Mobile project is one of several the Florida-based supermarket chain has planned for Alabama highlighted by a new Southeast distribution center in Jefferson County.

'A village concept'

"I think both parties are trying to persuade the other than their viewpoint has more merit perhaps," said John Argo, a representative of the Mobile project's developer, MAB American Management LLC of Charlotte, N.C. "We're confident that the plan we got addresses some of the concerns (the residents have) raised."

Said Sam Dennis, co-founder of [Midtown Mobile Movement](#) – a group of mostly 30-something year old residents who are pushing for a more walkable neighborhood – said: "We'd like to see a village concept where you have a place to arrive at. The citizens are excited to see Mobile grow in a way that is a cool and trendy city. We're tired of being second to Charleston and Savannah."

More than 200 residents, including representatives with Midtown Mobile Movement, showed up to a public hearing on Monday at the New Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church to learn more about the proposed development. Some left disappointed with what they saw.

On [Midtown Mobile Movement's website](#) is a host of comments complaining about the proposal. Critics said the plan looks more like a strip mall and less like an urban development where store fronts are located closer to streets. Additional concerns include the project's parking lot (some residents claim there is too much asphalt in the proposal), a lack of trees and the inclusion of a retention pond "disguised as a rain garden/fountain," among other things.

"We saw this plan six months ago, and it just didn't align with what we wanted," said Dennis. "We don't want to be the 'no, no, no group,' but we want to see it done the right way so it's something that lasts. These strip mall developments are run down within 15 years."

'A good addition'

Argo and Dennis said both sides have an open dialogue. Argo said the talks are "healthy" and that MAB is taking comments his group has heard "under consideration" and that some changes will be incorporated in the plan that will be submitted to Mobile's Planning & Development Department.

"We're making revisions and tweaks based on the comments we received," Argo said. "Once those are incorporated, the plans will put into the printed forms." He added, "Our whole goal is for folks to make their mind up on what is being proposed and done. We think once they learn about the project they will think it's a good addition to midtown."

The project is relatively unique for Publix, which typically builds larger grocery stores in suburban or highly commercialized areas. In Mobile, the most visible Publix store is at Airport and University boulevards – the busiest intersection in the city.

Argo said the midtown Publix is about "30 percent" the size of the Airport/University store. He said the size of the midtown store has been reduced from its initial concept, from 45,000 square foot to the current 39,000-square-foot design.

"This is a strong neighborhood retail location and the format being used here is being sized properly to that orientation," Argo said. An additional three "free standing" retail buildings will be added to the development's immediate foot print. He said none of the buildings will be attached, thereby eliminating the "strip mall" concern.

He said there is the potential for up to a dozen stores.

"It's not one big long mass of buildings," Argo said. "They are all distributed as individual retail buildings. They will be divided into smaller spaces for shops, restaurants, services and such."

The development also has plenty of "green space," Argo said. "The accommodation of landscaping and open space is about 24 percent of the site, which will be left green. We're only developing three-quarters of it. It's a pretty healthy ratio from a neighborhood standpoint."

'Voice for the community'

Dennis and Midtown Mobile Movement said the project is the first and largest development in Mobile's inner city since [the Map of Mobile was created by Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson's administration and approved by the City Council in November](#).

That plan, which cost \$150,000 to create last year, focuses on the physical design of the city, cleaner and greener neighborhoods, transportation flow improvements, historic preservation and more walkability.

Midtown Mobile Movement is a relatively new group, formed in early 2015 and consists of residents who favor so-called "New Urbanism," a popular design movement in the U.S. that promotes more walkable areas in urban areas.

Dennis, himself, has a master's degree in urban planning from Auburn University.

"We felt the (development) wasn't in line with the Map for Mobile," Dennis said. "That's basically it. We're just trying to be the voice for the community and make it a better place." City officials, meanwhile, are urging patience and that everyone continue communicating.

"It is extremely important that we all work together toward making this project what we want it to be," Mobile City Councilman Fred Richardson, who represents the area, said. "No one will have everything desired, and still we can have a great venue for citizens of midtown and beyond."

Laura Byrne, a spokeswoman for Stimpson, said: "At this point, we're encouraging the developer to work with the community to find a project that benefits everyone."

'Important part of the city'

Argo acknowledged that a long process awaits. The development requires rezoning, a planned unit development and approval of the project's plat. If the Planning Commission endorses all three, MAB will then apply for a building permit.

He said the "best case" scenario is for construction to commence in September or October. It takes 10 months to build the grocery store, which could open by late summer 2017.

Aside from the Mobile project, a similar urban neighborhood [Publix is being planned at 20 Midtown in Birmingham](#). The supermarket chain is also moving ahead with new stores in Troy, Cullman, Muscle Shoals, Moody, and Rainbow City. The Birmingham project, which is part of a mixed-use development that includes apartments and a Starbucks, is backed with \$6.4 million in incentives from the city.

The Jefferson County Commission, last year, [awarded up to \\$400,000 in tax abatements to lure a new Publix distribution center slated to be built at the Jefferson Metropolitan Park in McCalla](#). The \$34 million center is expected to add 200 new jobs.

The midtown Mobile project requires the city to widen Old Shell Road and Florida Streets. Richardson has previously said that the city's infrastructure investment would be capped at around \$1 million, with the MAB paying any additional costs.

Argo said the midtown Mobile area is an "important part of the city" in need of a new grocery store.

"It's densely populated, is home to 70,000 residents and 50,000 employees," he said. "So in addition to the resident population, there is a huge daytime population."



Mobile United and other local groups to host the third Crepe Myrtle Trail Bike Ride along Mobile Bay

Contacts: Katherine Pitman, Executive Director or Casi Callaway, Chair, Natural Resources Comm. and Executive Director, Mobile Baykeeper
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When and Where?

- WHEN: Saturday, April 2, 2016; 8:00 a.m. registration; 8:30 a.m. ride
- WHERE: Starts at Arlington Park, 1814 15th Street South, Mobile

MOBILE, Ala. -- The Crepe Myrtle Trail Bike Ride, presented by Mobile United, is planned for 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 2, 2016, beginning in Arlington Park near downtown Mobile. This event offers an historic opportunity to ride the Mobile Bay-side of the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

This ride is special because it is the only time during the year that people on bikes have access to the proposed Crepe Myrtle Trail. Thanks to the Mobile Airport Authority, the USA Foundation and Mobile Area Water & Sewer Service, for access to the Brookley by the Bay and Airport property, and other portions of the trail are granted for the event.

Fun and educational talks about the Crepe Myrtle Trail and other important environmental topics will be featured during this fun event. While the ride is free and open to the public, **registration is required.** To register before the event online, visit www.crepemyrtleride.com through March 31, 2016. Registration will also be available starting at 8:00 am on the morning of the ride.

The 185+ participants who took part in the 12-mile group ride last year said it was a unique experience that offered beautiful views of Mobile Bay. The ride is expected to run from 8:30 to 11 a.m. *No training wheels will be allowed.* Children should be experienced riders and be able enough to ride the full 12 miles in potentially warm weather. Helmets are strongly encouraged for adults and required on riders under 16.

Mobile United's Natural Resource Committee organized the inaugural ride in 2014 in an effort to draw awareness to the proposed Crepe Myrtle Trail Bike and Pedestrian Path. The Crepe Myrtle Trail is an integral part of the Mobile Greenway Initiative, a multi-use waterfront trail stretching from the University of South Alabama and Langan Park along Three Mile Creek to Dog River and eventually, Dauphin Island.

This ride is made possible by Mobile United, Delta Bike Project, Alabama Coastal Foundation, Keep Mobile Beautiful, Mobile Airport Authority, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Mobile Baykeeper, Partners for Environmental Progress (PEP), Dog River Clearwater Revival, Mobile County Health Department, Bicyclemobile.org, Downtown Mobile Alliance, USA Foundation, Mobile County Sheriff's Office, National Park Service, Mobile Area Water & Sewer System (MAWSS), The Peninsula of Mobile, Brookley By the Bay, the City of Mobile, Wrico Signs and other partners.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. on the day of the ride at Arlington Park. For more information, call Casi Callaway, Chair of Mobile United's Natural Resources Committee at 433-4229 or Katherine Pitman, Mobile United Executive Director, 432-1638.

Bike Ride info:

COST: Free, with required registration www.crepemyrtleride.com
 LENGTH: 12 miles
 SPEED: Beginner friendly pace, 8-12 mph
 WHEN: Saturday, April 2, 2016; 8:00 a.m. registration; 8:30 a.m. ride
 WHERE: Starts at Arlington Park, 1814 15th Street South, Mobile
 DIRECTIONS: From I-10, south on Broad Street for 0.8 miles, then left into Arlington Park
 Notes: No training wheels allowed, T-shirts are \$20 before the event and \$25 on April 2.

CREPE MYRTLE TRAIL

BIKE RIDE

4.2.2016

PRESENTED BY



Mobile United
Empowering change. Improving tomorrow.



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BRING YOUR HELMET!

Steve Perry Memorial Ride



REGISTER AT:
crepemyrtyleride.com



Transportation Research

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts

Two upcoming public webinars will provide an overview of FHWA's forthcoming *Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts* report. This resource will highlight examples of design flexibility as a follow-up to FHWA's [Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility Memorandum](#). It will cover planning and design solutions for reducing conflicts between modes, enhancing access to opportunity, achieving connected pedestrian and bicycle networks, and reconnecting communities. The webinars will provide an overview of core concepts in the final report, anticipated to be released in May 2016. The first webinar on April 7th will focus on design flexibility, and the second webinar on April 11th will focus on planning and design strategies to reduce conflicts between modes.

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts – Webinar 1 (Applying Design Flexibility) (Open to the Public)

April 7, 2016: 2:00-3:30 pm (Eastern Time)

Registration is now open. To reserve your seat, please visit

<https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=954>

If this link does not work, please copy the link and paste it into your browser.

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts – Webinar 2 (Reducing Conflicts between Modes) (Open to the Public)

April 11, 2016: 2:00-3:30 pm (Eastern Time)

Registration is now open. To reserve your seat, please visit

<https://collaboration.fhwa.dot.gov/dot/fhwa/WC/Lists/Seminars/DispForm.aspx?ID=955>

If this link does not work, please copy the link and paste it into your browser.

Building Healthy Places Toolkit

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) released [Building Healthy Places Toolkit: Strategies for Enhancing Health in the Built Environment](#) to provide guidance on creating healthy, vibrant communities. The toolkit builds on previous ULI efforts, including the [Building Healthy Places Initiative](#) and [Healthy Corridors Project](#).

USDOT Launches National Transit Map Initiative

USDOT has launched a new [initiative](#), asking transit agencies to voluntarily allow them to collect data from their websites to create a [National Transit Map](#). This map will display important information such as stops, routes, and schedules for all participating transit agencies and will be used to identify gaps in access to public transportation. The first version of the National Transit Map will be released this summer.

[See the Future of Transportation](#)