



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, April 12, 2013

Volume 6, Number 2

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Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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

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We hope everyone has had a great week.

If you are applying for Rural Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom funds (FTA 5316 and 5317), please pay attention to *Funding Opportunities*, budget deadlines are the 15th of April. Also, Governor Bentley has signed into law \$25 Million for new RAMP Funds.

President Obama released his FY 2014 [budget](#) which includes \$53 billion in resources towards our highway, transit, and highway safety programs. It also includes the preliminary study of a \$40 million channel widening project [\[HERE\]](#) for the Alabama State Docks. The Budget also means we are in for another round of **TIGER funds**, so get ready (Please see *Legislative Updates*).

It's going to be a beautiful weekend, so get out and explore the region! [Loxley Strawberry Festival](#), [L.A. Gumbo Festival](#) in Orange Beach, Escambia County [State Lake](#), the [South Sounds Music Festival](#) in Mobile, the [Semmes Heritage Festival](#) Have a great weekend!

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison
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Mobile MPO Updates

Mobile MPO TCC/CAC

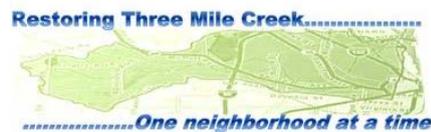
Now that the MPO has approved the Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternative Programs (TAP) process and applications are available, it should be noted that the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission cannot write the grants for our member governments. In the past we have written and assisted with several transportation grants, but because the MPO is the administrator of the programmed funding and our Director of Planning is on the project selection committee, it would be inappropriate for us to write the grants for our member governments, and then administer project selection.

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

We already have items to be placed on the next Mobile MPO meeting agenda, so please look for those dates to be at the end of May or early June. All MPO documents, dates, and updates are available at www.mobilempo.org.

BPAC MAKING STRIDES

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has been meeting quarterly for a little over a year now. Its membership has grown to include City, County, and State engineers and planners, members from local development organizations, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups and avid cyclists and walkers. The BPAC has given these individuals from these varied backgrounds a common ground to meet and have face to face interaction and discussion. We are just beginning to see the fruition of these efforts. As part of resurfacing projects, the State is widening the shoulder from two feet to four feet along sections State Routes 188 and 193 with the rumble strip confined to the white paved line instead of in the shoulder itself. This will accommodate local cycling enthusiasts as well as the cyclists that are following the national bike route that passes through our area. We are also seeing curb cuts going in around downtown Mobile and lots of new pedestrian striping at crosswalks along Government Street as part of the resurfacing efforts. Granted we still have a long to go towards becoming a bicycle and Pedestrian friendly area, but we are definitely heading in the right direction and we have great group of people coming together to steer us along.



The Three Mile Creek corridor is one that was mentioned on numerous occasions during the development of the [Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle Pedestrian Plan](#). The corridor would provide pedestrians and cyclist with a separate East - West facility from downtown to Municipal Park.

If you think Bicycle and pedestrian trail along Three Mile Creek would be a valuable asset to the City of Mobile then please consider

voicing your opinions at one of several community meetings regarding plans for the creek watershed. http://www.mobilebaynep.com/images/uploads/library/Three_Mile_Creek_Watershed_Community_Meeting_Schedule_2013_Flyer.pdf

Projects Within Region Let April 26th, 2013

BALDWIN COUNTY

- Constructing the Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, Bridge (Precast) and Seawall Replacement on SR-182 over Little Lagoon Pass (Lee Calloway Bridge) in Gulf Shores. Length 0.378 mi.
- Constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from the intersection of SR-16 (US-90) West and SR-59 North (MP 54.320) to 0.05 miles south of CR-55 (MP 55.811) in Loxley and on SR-59 from the intersection of SR-59 North and SR-16 (US-90) West (MP 27.830) to 0.07 miles south of Flowerwood Rd (MP 28.945) in Loxley. Length 2.606 mi.
- Constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-59 from 0.4 miles south of I-10 in Loxley to the junction of SR-3 (US-31) and 0.2 miles north on SR-3. Length 6.148 mi.

Legislative Updates

President Obama Releases FY14 Budget Request.

On April 10, 2013, President Obama released his fiscal year 2014 federal budget request, which included \$77 billion for the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT). A central feature of the transportation proposal included a \$40 billion, up front request for the fix-it-first initiative that the President announced in his State of the Union speech last January. Additional [highlights](#) of the U.S. DOT budget request are online, as is U.S. DOT's [budget justification](#).

The President's budget also includes the preliminary study of a \$40 million channel widening project. The project, which would widen a section of the ship channel from 400 feet to 550 feet, would allow larger ships to pass by each other while exiting or entering the channel. The wider waterway would eliminate the wait time incurred when the port restricts the channel to one-way traffic to allow one larger ship to pass through. The White House budget office, OMB called the office of U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa, at midnight to inform him the funds for the preliminary engineering and design study would be included, according to Shelby's aides. Shelby had specifically requested the money in a personal meeting with the OMB director earlier this year.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Holds Hearing on McCarthy Nomination.

Today, Chairman Boxer (D-CA) held a [hearing](#) to review the nomination of Gina McCarthy for Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). While Chairman Boxer expressed her support for the nomination, Ranking Member Thune focused his comments on the [concerns expressed](#) by the Committee's Republicans on the transparency of the U.S. EPA activities. Click [HERE](#) for McCarthy's testimony.

House Transportation Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Amtrak Budget Request.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a [hearing](#) on April 11, 2013, to examine Amtrak's FY2014 budget request. This includes the \$373 million for operations and \$2.27 billion for its capital program. The Subcommittee also reviewed the rail service's on-going reorganization and the upcoming reauthorization of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA).

Chairman Shuster Releases Statement on President Budget Request.

Chairman Shuster (R-PA) of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure released this [statement](#) Wednesday to express his concern about the lack of identified funding for the President's infrastructure requests and the Chairman's desire to work toward reforming the program, focusing resources and building consensus.

Funding Opportunities

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

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

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

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

ALDOT TAP APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

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

MOBILE URBAN AREA APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

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

1. Construction of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, transportation related trails, streetscapes (combination of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and landscaping) and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Construction of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.
5. Community improvement activities including Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising; Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; Vegetation management practices in transportation right-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and; Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.
6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to Address storm water management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.
7. Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

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

Transportation Enhancement Funding Announcement

Application Due: May 3, 2013

The Transportation Enhancement Program was not continued under the new transportation bill MAP-21. ALDOT has a small balance of TE funds for a few additional TE projects. It is ALDOT's desire to use this remaining TE Funds to correct Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Deficiencies. Therefore, to utilize all of the State's TE funds, ALDOT is soliciting applications for a few additional projects for FY 2013. The deadline is May 3, 2013 and an application can be picked up at SARPC, or please call Mr. Kevin Harrison at SARPC(251)706-4635, or Mr. Cecil Colson at ALDOT (334)353-6403. The eligible projects under this particular application are for:

1. Streetscapes to achieve compliance with ADA guidelines. A streetscape can include items such as sidewalk replacement, improvement for ADA compliance, pedestrian lighting and landscaping.
2. Projects to make sidewalks ADA Compliant, such as curb cuts.

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

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

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

If there are questions, please contact Sharon Coats directly. Contact information is included below.

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RAMP FUNDS

On Wednesday Gov. Robert Bentley signed into law a bill to authorize borrowing up to \$25 million to help more counties participate in a road and bridge improvement program. The bill, by Sen. Paul Bussman, R-Cullman and Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R-Huntsville, established [the Rural Assistance Match Program](#).

RAMP will be available to counties that are unable to provide the 20 percent matching funds required to participate in the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program. The governor established ATRIP to help local areas access funding for road and bridge improvements, according to the news release.

Under RAMP, counties and cities that are unable to meet the 20 percent local funding match required to leverage federal ATRIP funds can receive up to \$1 million in state funds to match an additional \$4 million in federal funds.

The bill the governor signed today will authorize the Alabama Highway Finance Corporation to borrow up to \$25 million by selling bonds to provide the money for RAMP. "ATRIP is improving public safety by replacing old bridges and repairing and widening outdated roads," Bentley said in the news release. "Better roads and bridges help a community attract new jobs."

Since Bentley unveiled his ATRIP initiative, 439 road and bridge projects have been announced, according to the news release. Sixty-one of Alabama's 67 counties have received ATRIP funding for road and bridge projects.

The six counties that have not received ATRIP projects so far are Fayette, Hale, Lawrence, Marengo, Wilcox and Winston. Other counties that have received limited ATRIP funding and are also eligible for RAMP assistance are Barbour, Bibb, Bullock, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Lowndes, Marion, Perry, Pickens and Randolph. In all, 22 counties are eligible to participate in RAMP based on current local funding needs.

"Thanks to this legislation, those counties now have the resources available to participate in ATRIP and receive much-needed improvements," the governor said in the news release.

Just For Fun

If you or someone you know owns a motorcycle, a scooter, a bicycle, or even a small car, you've probably noticed that it's easy to get stuck at traffic lights. An understanding of why it happens can reveal some methods that will help turn any red light to green. This will (supposedly) save time, gas and frustration by you not having you wait what seems like forever at a red light that has no ongoing traffic. Plus, knowing how the inductive-loop traffic detector works, is some pretty good info.



In the News

Congratulations to Fairhope for being Top Business Friendly City!



Among Alabama's 50 largest cities, Fairhope has earned the title of being the most business-friendly, according to a new report released by the Alabama Policy Institute. Pitted against the likes of Montgomery (8th), Hoover (33rd), Mountain Brook (35th), Mobile (40th) and Birmingham (47th) through research of each city's tax policy, costs of living, crime rates, population and job growth, Fairhope rose to the top. [HERE!](#)

Infrastructure for AIRBUS

After this week's ceremony at the future Airbus manufacturing site was over and the shovels were collected, public officials will get to work in getting Brookley Aeroplex upgraded for its new \$600 million occupant.



Tax-funded road projects will be the big focus in the coming months as city workers will be on an aggressive time table to kick start engineering and construction work. Chief among those is the reconstruction of Broad Street from Interstate 10 to Michigan Avenue. The \$2.5 million construction project is paid for by both the state and the city with \$493,010 coming out of tax money from local gasoline sales. You'll see an active site," Mobile Mayor Sam Jones said. "You'll see a lot of things shaping out and the contracts bid out and we'll see a lot of people working at a construction site." [\[HERE\]](#)

CDC and HHS Asking for Public Feedback on Walking: Until April 30, 2013, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will collect information from the public on their priorities as it relates to increasing walkability. The Surgeon General of the United States will use this to frame an anticipated Call to Action on this issue. Click [HERE](#) for the Federal Register notice and [HERE](#) for the *Every Body Walk Collaborative* campaign on this issue. Your organization may submit comments through either site.

U.S. DOT to Host Transportation Data Palooza: The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) is hosting Transportation Data Palooza on Thursday, May 9, 2013 from 9:00am-3:00pm ET at U.S. DOT Headquarters in Washington, DC. The purpose of this event is to showcase innovative technology solutions that leverage data to improve decision making. Click [HERE](#) for additional information

Transportation Research

Welcome to Active Transportation and Demand Management

<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/atdm/index.htm>

Web Site: *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Operations*

FHWA has launched a web site with links to material to aid in the development and evaluation of Active Transportation and Demand Management (ATDM) programs. Examples of Active Traffic Management measures include dynamic lane use control, dynamic speed limits, queue warning, and adaptive ramp metering. Active Demand Management measures include dynamic ridesharing, on-demand transit, dynamic pricing, and predictive traveler information. Active Parking Management measures include dynamically priced parking, dynamic parking reservation, dynamic way-finding, and dynamic parking capacity. FHWA is also sponsoring a research project to develop new and/or updated methodologies, data sets, and content for the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) that will better reflect the demand and traffic flow behavior that results from the application of ATDM strategies.

Announcing the Best Complete Streets Policies of 2012

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2013/04/08/announcing-the-best-complete-streets-policies-of-2012/>

Report: *Smart Growth America*

The report summarizes the examination of Complete Streets policies adopted in 125 communities during 2012. The report recognizes ten cities for their exceptional work: Indianapolis, IN; Hermosa Beach, CA; Huntington Park, CA; Ocean Shores, WA; Northfield, MN; Portland, ME; Oak Park, IL; Trenton, NJ; Clayton, MO; and Rancho Cucamonga, CA.

Improving the Safety of Heavy Vehicles in Urban Areas - A Crash Analysis and Review of Potential Infrastructure and Intelligent Transport System Countermeasures

<https://www.onlinepublications.austrroads.com.au/items/AP-R425-13>

Research Report: *Austrroads*

The research includes a review of literature and analysis of crash data at intersection and mid-block locations and outlines the primary contributing factors in heavy vehicle crashes on urban roads. The report evaluates treatments that are used to address safety deficiencies for heavy vehicle safety. Full report can be downloaded after free site registration.

Counting Bicyclists and Pedestrians to Inform Transportation Planning

<http://www.activelivingresearch.org/bikepedcounts>

Research Brief: *Active Living Research, University of California, San Diego*

The research brief describes types of technologies available for counting bicyclists and pedestrians and the benefits and challenges

associated with different approaches. The brief also explains how bicyclist and pedestrian count data can be used to inform transportation planning and present trends in levels of bicycle and pedestrian activity.

BTS' National Transportation Statistics Updated

Friday, April 12, 2013 - The U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), a part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), today updated [National Transportation Statistics \(NTS\)](#) – a web-only reference guide to national-level transportation data. NTS, updated quarterly, includes a wide range of national transportation information. NTS consists of more than 260 tables of national data on [the transportation system](#), [safety](#), [the economy](#) and [energy and the environment](#), of which 51 were updated today. NTS also includes 11 [modal profiles](#), compilations of all NTS data related to a single mode or subject. The next quarterly update is scheduled for July. [NTS](#) can be viewed on the BTS website. Contact: Dave Smallen (202) 366-5568.