



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014

Volume 9, Number 8

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## 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](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org)

Kevin Harrison, PTP  
Director of Transportation  
[kharrison@sarpc.org](mailto:kharrison@sarpc.org)

Tom Piper  
Senior Transportation Planner  
[tpiper@sarpc.org](mailto:tpiper@sarpc.org)

Monica Williamson  
Transportation Planner  
[mwilliamson@sarpc.org](mailto:mwilliamson@sarpc.org)

I hope everyone is ready for the Boom Boom, it's [Mardi Gras](#). The Technical/Citizens Committee for the Mobile MPO met this week, please see *MPO Updates*. Pressure for a new bill, alternative fuels and trucks are in Obama's crosshairs; see *Legislative Updates*. Don't forget TAP Funds in *Funding Opportunities* and this week's *Just For Fun* is brought to by- Amazon.com...

Have a great weekend.

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



[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org) check us out on FACEBOOK  
706-1CAR

## Mobile MPO Updates

### The Mobile MPO TCC/CAC met this week

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating/Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) met this past Wednesday. The recommendations of the TCC/CAC will go before the Mobile MPO Policy Board on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in the SARPC Board Room.

### National Highway Funds

CN Resurfacing on SR-158 from west of SR 213 to SR 13 (US 43) FY 2014 \$1,639,613

### New Freedom (Rural/State)

TR Mobile Bay Transportation, Rural, Capital FY 2014 \$73,012

TR Mobile Bay Transportation, Rural, Operations FY 2014 \$164,250

TR Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations FY 2014 \$489,060

TR Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations FY 2015 \$513,512

TR Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations FY 2016 \$539,188

### JARC Funds (Rural/State)

TR Mobile Bay Transportation Rural, Operations FY 2014 \$146,000

There was discussion on the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), the Destination 2040, and the recent Climate Change Study. Currently, The Mobile MPO STP Attributable Funding Schedule is balanced, which was discussed as well.

### Climate Change Workgroup Meeting and Regional Climate Change Workshop

Anthony Johnson  
Transportation Planner  
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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



Last week there were meetings concerning *The Gulf Coast Study, Phase 2*. On Wednesday the Climate change Workgroup met for the last time, and Thursday was a workshop with attendees from all over the Gulf Coast. The tools that the team created <http://mobilempo.org/climatechange.html> will provide the Mobile MPO with a Vulnerability Score for each “critical” facility. This score can be incorporated into the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. One of the “stressors” used was storm surge. The scenarios were A) Hurricane Katrina (Base), B) Hurricane Katrina direct hit, and C) Hurricane Katrina Direct Hit at a Cat 5. Don’t believe in Climate Change? If you remember Katrina was a category 5 before it was downgraded to a 3 when it hit landfall, just west of us...

The project, *Impacts of Climate change and Variability on Transportation Systems and Infrastructure: The Gulf Coast Study, Phase 2*, involved identifying critical transportation systems, projecting the local impacts of climate change, developing scenarios for planning, evaluating vulnerability for key links and assets across all modes of transportation, and evaluating engineering options for adaptation. This study is coming to a close and will allow us these tools:

- **CMIP Climate Data Processing Tool:** An Excel-based tool for utilizing state-of-the-art climate model information in transportation planning. The tool pulls best available climate model information and translates outputs into terms that are relevant to decision makers (e.g., frequencies of extremes).
- **Vulnerability Assessment Scoring Tool:** This Excel-based tool serves as a framework for conducting a quantitative, indicator-based vulnerability screen. The tool is intended for state DOTs and MPOs interested in assessing how components of their transportation system may be vulnerable to climate stressors.

We are hoping for a final roll out of the project by Summer.

## Projects Within Region Let February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### BALDWIN COUNTY

- Constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from just east of the I-10/SR-16 (US-90) Eastbound Ramp (MP 44.748) to just west of SR-181 (MP 47.978). Length 3.229 mi.

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- Constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-21 from 0.2 miles south of I-65 (MP 7.947) to the south abutment of the Little River Bridge. Length 10.760 mi.
- Constructing the Resurfacing (High Performance Chip Seal) and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31/Twin Bridges Road) from 0.39 miles east of the Railroad Overpass at MP 57.950 to 0.27 miles west of the Little Escambia Creek Bridge east of Flomaton. Length 1.150 mi.

### MOBILE COUNTY

- Constructing the Intersection Improvements for CR-358 (Three Notch Road); CR-328 (Dawes Lane); and CR-328 (Dawes Lane Extension) in Mobile. Length 0.100 mi.
- Constructing the Sidewalks and Crosswalks on 12th Avenue and Kansas Street in Chickasaw. Length 0.794 mi.
- Constructing the Welcome Center Replacement (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, Demolition, Building, Lighting, Landscaping, Sewer, and Lagoon Removal) on I-10 at the

Alabama/Mississippi State Line.

- Constructing the Reconstruction (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, Signing and Signals) of Wilson Avenue from SR-17 (St. Stephens Road) to 12th Avenue in the Cities of Prichard, Mobile, and Chickasaw. Length 2.477 mi.
- Constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-16 (US-90) from the Halls Mill Creek Bridge to the Pavement Joint at Pinehill Drive in Mobile. Length 5.203 mi.

### **What's Under Construction?**

## Legislative Updates

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### **Senate EPW May Act on New Transportation Bill As Soon As April**

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) announced this week that she hopes to have a new transportation authorization before her committee by April in an effort to give the Senate Finance Committee ample time to consider funding options for a new surface transportation bill.

Sen. Boxer's comments came during the Senate EPW hearing, "MAP-21 Reauthorization: The Economic Importance of Maintaining Federal Investments in our Transportation Infrastructure," which included testimony from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials President and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Secretary Mike Hancock, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Thomas Donohue, American Road and Transportation Builders Association President and CEO Pete Ruane, National Association of Manufacturers President and CEO Jay Timmons, and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

"It is critical for our nation to continue investing in our aging infrastructure. Therefore, preserving the Highway Trust Fund needs to be our number one priority in this committee, in other committees, and in the Senate and the House," Boxer said. "We must work together to find the sweet spot for a dependable, bipartisan source of funding for the Highway Trust Fund."

Hancock told the committee that the impending insolvency of the federal Highway Trust Fund poses a threat to state budgets, the construction industry, and the overall economy that is real and that is even closer than originally estimated.

In his testimony, Hancock emphasized the importance of federal funding for necessary transportation improvements and noted that recent efforts at the state level to increase funding for transportation are not a substitute for a strong federal program.

"We could face serious economic disruptions as early as this summer if the U.S. Department of Transportation delays reimbursements to states for projects already completed," Hancock said. "Also, unless Congress acts to either increase Highway Trust Fund revenues or provide additional General Fund support, the states will be unable to obligate any new federal funds in Fiscal Year 2015."

Hancock said the Federal-Aid Highway program apportions about \$40 billion a year to state transportation departments for road and bridge construction projects. In Kentucky, federal funding accounts for roughly half of the state's surface transportation construction program. If Kentucky were unable to obligate any new federal funding in FY 2015, Hancock said the state would be required to postpone more than \$350 million in FY 2015 construction lettings and delay the state's entire FY 2015 capital program for one year. [Webcast here](#)

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### **Highway agency moving toward new alt fuel rules**

By Tim Devaney

The Obama administration is moving forward with another fuel efficiency rule that would cost automakers more than \$14 million each year, according to government estimates. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced Wednesday it is considering a new rule that would require car manufacturers to indicate which vehicles can operate on alternative fuels and explain which alternative fuels they can use, such as ethanol, biodiesel, vegetable oil, hydrogen or electric batteries.

The NHTSA said the rules, which come from the Energy Independence and Security Act, would help move the nation toward energy independence. "Renewable alternative fuels produced in the United States are less vulnerable to supply disruptions and price variability associated with imported fuels," the agency wrote in the Federal Register. "Helping the public to better understand the benefits of these alternative fuels and to better recognize the vehicles that use them should increase their use, thereby replacing petroleum use and increasing national energy security." [\[continue\]](#)

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### **Obama: Trucks are 'the next step' for fuel efficiency standards**

By Keith Laing

President Obama said Tuesday that he was pushing to increase the fuel efficiency requirements for large freight trucks because they are the "next step" in his administration's effort to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. Against a backdrop of a Safeway grocery store distribution center in Upper Marlboro, Md., Obama announced that his administration would raise the number of miles per gallon that will be required for big rigs, semi trucks, buses and other heavy-duty vehicles above levels in current rules scheduled to expire in 2018.

Under those rules, which were adopted in 2011 and took effect this year, administration officials say reduced fuel consumption by trucks is expected to save 530 million barrels of oil and reduce emissions by roughly 270 million metric tons. The Obama administration has separately required cars to achieve a mileage rate of nearly 55 miles per gallon by 2025. Obama said Tuesday that improving fuel efficiency standards for trucks would make a big dent in overall U.S. gasoline consumption.

"Heavy-duty trucks account for just 4 percent of all the vehicles on the highway," the president said. "I know when you're driving sometimes it feels like it's more, but they're only 4 percent of all the vehicles. But they're responsible for about 20 percent of carbon pollution in the transportation sector."

Obama said that trucks were the "next step" in his administration's efforts to improve the fuel efficiency of all vehicles that travel on U.S. roads. [\[continue\]](#)

## Funding Opportunities

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### **FY 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program –TAP FUNDS**

**Deadline:** May 2, 2014

Only cities and counties can apply for TAP funds, and your jurisdiction will determine your application for TAP Funds. If you are in the Mobile Urbanized Area, you are eligible for the Urban Area TAP Funds available through the Mobile MPO at South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. If you are outside of the Mobile Urbanized Area you will apply to ADLOT for TAP funds (see below). The applications, guidelines and funding limits between the STATE TAP and the URBAN TAP *are slightly different*. Please be aware, and if there are any question please do not hesitate to call us. The federal guidance on TAP funds is here: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

### **MOBILE URBANIZED TAP FUNDS**

The Mobile MPO announces the availability of the FY 2014 Transportation Alternates Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal). The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. Applications for Mobile Urban Area TAP Funds can be found [\[HERE\]](#)

### **ALDOT TAP FUNDS**

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) announced application availability for the FY 2014 Transportation Alternates Program (TAP) funding. The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. **ALDOT TAP Funding applications can only come from ALDOT [HERE].**

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**GRANT: Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Funding Opportunity**

The *Health Impact Project* is planning to launch a call for funding proposals this month. Grants will support HIA demonstration projects and the development of HIA programs integrating health in decision-making. HIA help to identify and address likely benefits and risks of a decision made in a field outside of the health sector. Eligible organizations include nonprofits, state, local and tribal agencies, and educational institutions. [HERE](#) for additional information

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**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) is soliciting proposals** that achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions in terms of tons of pollution produced by diesel engines and diesel emissions exposure, from fleets operating at marine and inland water ports. Eligible diesel emission reduction solutions include verified emission control technologies such as exhaust controls and engine upgrades, verified idle reduction technologies, certified engine repowers, and/or certified vehicle or equipment replacement. Additional information can be found [HERE](#).

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**Economic Development Administration**

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>

EDA provides strategic investments that foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas of the United States. Under this FFO, EDA solicits applications from both rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets to support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. Link to Additional Information: EDA's website Please contact Diane Burnett of SARPC staff for questions 706-4621. Also, don't forget SARPC has a revolving fund loan program. <http://www.sarpc.org/rif.asp> The RLF is a locally controlled source of capital used to finance small business start-up and expansion whose projects will create permanent jobs. By combining RLF and bank financing the borrower can realize an effective rate well below market rates.

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## Just For Fun

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Highways, streets, queuing... You would think we were talking transportation, and we are in a sense. Here is a look into how Amazon.com runs their warehouse, and it is fascinating. Smart.



## In the News

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### **Airbus milestone: Last of the city projects approved ahead of plant's 2015 opening**



Roads are closed to traffic during construction near the \$600 million Airbus assembly plant project. (John Sharp/[jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)).

*John Sharp*



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

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**MOBILE, Alabama** – Quietly achieving a milestone of sorts, the Mobile City Council this week unanimously approved the last city-related road contracts connected to the redevelopment of the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, home to the Airbus plant under construction. Under the \$1.4 million deal, Gulf Equipment Corp. will launch improvement work on Baker Street, a significant link between the Alabama state docks and the Airbus assembly plant. The project, which could begin next week, is expected to be under construction through "mid-to-later summer," City Engineer Nick Amberger said Thursday. Brookley's road network is the focus of an approximately \$20 million taxpayer investment ahead of the Airbus plant's 2015 opening. "They are all progressing nicely," Amberger said. "We want to have the projects definitely done by the end of this fiscal year. We prefer a little sooner." The fiscal year ends on Sept. 30. The Baker portion is arguably one of the more challenging jobs because it involves a complete overhaul to a street that is [presently configured with a 90-degree turn at Yeend Street](#). Continue reading [\[HERE\]](#)

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### **Fort Morgan Road Trail to get makeover as Gulf Shores continues pedestrian-friendly improvements**

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

GULF SHORES, Alabama -- Thanks to a \$100,000 state grant the oldest section of the Fort Morgan Road Trail will soon be widened from 6 to 10 feet.

Stretching from Ala. 59 west along the north side of Fort Morgan Road, the trail is more than five miles long. The grant will cover improvements on a 1.25-mile section of the trail, according to Gulf Shores Planning Director Andy Bauer.

The grant was awarded through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs but is funded by the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program. The city is also required to contribute a \$40,000 match.

A recent Gulf Shores-funded extension of the Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail links a network of 11 miles of paved paths through Gulf State Park with the Fort Morgan trails.

Another project in the works this year is the widening and addition of more than a mile of sidewalks along Ala. 59 between Windmill Ridge Road and Fort Morgan Road. The project will widen the existing 5-foot-wide sidewalks on the highway's west side to 8 feet and it will add 8-foot-wide sidewalks on the east side, which currently has none.

The project is funded by a \$400,000 grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation through the Transportation Alternatives Program. The city is responsible for a match of about \$160,000.

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#### **SARPC HOSTING GPS WORKSHOP**

The SARPC Transportation Planning Department will host a free half day GPS orientation class for users of Trimble GPS units. The class will be offered on March 19, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the SARPC Training Room on the second floor of the GM&O Building in downtown Mobile at 110 Beauregard Street.

The class will focus on GPS fundamentals using Terrasync and Pathfinder Office software workflow and will include Data Dictionary Creation, Data Collection an Attribution, Point, Line, and Polygon creation, Nesting and Segmenting, Post Processing, Data Exportation to GIS format, and File Geodatabase Creation. Seating is limited to twenty participants. If you are interested in participating you may register with Instructor David Wright at (256) 665-5589 email: [david\\_wright@neigps.com](mailto:david_wright@neigps.com).

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#### **Magnolia Springs continues to make strides as young town with new sidewalk on way**

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

Motorists travel over the Magnolia River on Baldwin County 49 in Magnolia Springs, Ala., on Friday, Feb. 7, 2014. The town received a federal transportation grant to build a nearly mile-long sidewalk on the county road. Lanes on the bridge will be shifted to accommodate a mixed-use lane for pedestrians and bicyclists.

MAGNOLIA SPRINGS, Alabama -- Eight years ago, the community nestled on the Magnolia River voted to incorporate because of concerns over the expansion of Foley and a need to preserve its quality of life.

Summing up the feelings of most of the community prior to the incorporation vote, one Gulf Shores transplant said, "I would rather wake up and look at the birds and the bird feeder than how many more condos and cars are coming."

The town, with a population hovering just over 700, has made many strides since 2006 such as the preservation of "The Springs" park -- of which the community's name is rooted -- on Magnolia River and the establishment and enforcement of its own rules and regulations aimed at guiding growth.

The city is now prepared to take another step toward forging a stronger and more connected community thanks to a federal transportation grant. Officials received word late last year that the municipality was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Program, or TAP, grant to build a nearly mile long sidewalk along Baldwin County 49/Magnolia Springs Highway, the main north-south corridor that runs through town over the river.

Aside from a very short stretch of sidewalk in front of Jesse's Restaurant on Oak Street, the project will construct the town's first significant path. According to Mayor Ken Underwood, it will be 5 feet wide, running along the west side of the county road from U.S. 98 to the Village Green subdivision.

While the original grant came in at more than \$300,000, the town, which is required to cover a

20 percent match, whittled the cost down by removing a plan for a separate pedestrian bridge. To allow more space on the bridge for the path, the Alabama Department of Transportation has agreed to shift the lane striping to the east, Underwood said.

The grant will cover about \$147,000 for construction and the city will be responsible for roughly \$71,000 to cover the match and engineering costs.

"One of the good things is that it will connect both sides of the river, the individual communities," Underwood said. "They're in the town but right now to get across you walk across the bridge and there's just not a good, safe walking area."

The mayor said he's hopeful that construction will begin in the summertime and finish before fall. "I don't think that's being too overly optimistic," he said with a chuckle.

Once complete residents on both sides of the river will have an more welcoming way to walk through town to get to the post office and stores or add to their routine strolls along Oak Street with its picturesque canopy of live oaks.



<http://aldotapps.dot.state.al.us/preconstruction/index.html>

ALDOT has announced its second annual Preconstruction conference held APRIL 2-4, 2014. All attendees will walk away with a better understanding of the pre-construction process and the role each Bureau, Division and Region has in this process. The Pre-Construction Conference is a great opportunity for you to network with your peers in the transportation engineering field, allowing you to share and gather knowledge.

## Transportation Research

### What Do We Get and How Do We Pay For It?

*Examining the Economic Tradeoffs of Transportation Infrastructure, Investment, and Funding Options*

**Date:** February 26, 2014      **Time:** 1:00 p.m. ET

**Duration:** 60 minutes      **Complimentary**

<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/7633/99897>

Transportation is a critical element of success for competing in today's global economy. Public and private leaders seek to invest in transportation systems that will ensure their region's success in global markets at a time when investment demands are greatly outpacing revenue from traditional sources. To garner support for increased funding, planners and decision-makers need clear, rigorous, and timely analysis of economic tradeoffs of alternative infrastructure investment levels as well as alternative funding mechanisms.

The presenters will examine the economic tradeoffs of investment choices and funding options by presenting the framework and findings from the Economic Assessment of Alternative Funding Options for I-95 in North Carolina. This case study examines:

- the economic cost of doing nothing;
- the economic costs of alternative funding options;
- the role of stakeholder involvement;
- a process that demystifies the "black box" of economic models;
- success factors for gaining credibility;
- common pitfalls in conducting and selling economic analysis; and

effective communication and use of results.

Join Cambridge Systematics to gain valuable insights about this ground breaking study and how economic analysis can enhance your efforts.

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### **Trucks, Buses, Motorcycles, and Mopeds 2013**

TRB's Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 2388 consists of 10 papers that explore occupational drivers' accident involvement; the accommodation of large trucks in roundabouts; driver gap acceptance behavior at modern roundabouts; potential safety benefits of stability control systems for motorcoach buses; injury outcomes of crashes involving heavy vehicles; motorcycling costs and benefits in the United States; rider trajectory and injury outcome in motorcycle-to-barrier crashes; use of powered two-wheelers in an Melbourne, Australia; motorcycle and motor scooter use in Victoria, Australia; and motorcyclists' attitudes and behaviors.

E-Newsletter Type: [Recently Released TRB Publications](#)

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