



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 9, 2015

Volume 13, Number 2

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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)

Anthony Johnson  
Transportation Planner  
[ajohnson@sarpc.org](mailto:ajohnson@sarpc.org)

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

Please plan to join us at the SARPC Annual Meeting planned for January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Hotel at Point Clear (See In the News). There will be a MPO Policy Committee meeting March 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the GM&O Building in Mobile (see MPO Updates)

Today is the 50th anniversary of the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park (see Just For Fun). We hope you're all keeping warm!  
Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP



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

## Mobile MPO Updates

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### MOBILE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEETING

The Mobile MPO Policy Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 10:00 am at the GM&O Building in the Training Room at 110 Beaugard Street. The purpose of the meeting is to rebalance the STP Attributable funding schedule, review the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and discuss adding the following item to the Transportation Improvement Program.

#### HSIP Funds

Construct offset left turn lanes and a WB right turn lane US98 at McCrary Road; 4/24/15; \$780,000

Additional information may be obtained from the Transportation Planning Coordinator at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, 433-6541. Written comments regarding the projects are welcome and may be submitted to:

Transportation Planning Coordinator  
South Alabama Regional Planning Commission  
P. O. Box 1665  
Mobile, AL 36633-1665  
(FAX 433-6009).

Physically challenged persons who need special accommodations should contact SARPC in advance so arrangements can be made to meet their needs.

#### Non-motorized Mobility study for Downtown Mobile

We have given Toole Design Group Notice to proceed on the Non-motorized Mobility study for Downtown Mobile. If you would like to be stakeholder, please let us know. There is going to be plenty of time for public input as laid out in the scope of work [HERE](#).

#### I-10 Mobile River Bridge

Although the comment period is over, please stay tuned to the following web sites for details and information about the I-10 Mobile River Bridge.

For more information on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge:  
ALDOT'S Web Site: <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/>  
Build The I-10 Bridge Coalition Web Site: <http://www.buildthei10bridge.com/>

#### DESTINATION 2040

The MPO Staff is wrapping up the Draft 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan titled Destination 2040. The Draft Plan and Travel Demand Forecast Model have been submitted to ALDOT for review. Once we hear back from ALDOT we will open the public comment period and have a public meeting to present the draft plan. The objective of the plan is to identify, to the maximum extent feasible, the multi-modal transportation improvements which will be needed in the Mobile urban area between now and the year 2040 in order to maintain an acceptable level of mobility. The plan is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to other modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. You can learn more about the plan [HERE](#).

## Projects Within Region Let January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### Baldwin County

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-42 (US-98) from just north of the intersection of Scenic Route US-98 to just west of CR-65. Length 10.482 mi.
- for constructing the Intersection Improvements (Grade, Drain, and Pave) at SR-180 and SR-161 in Orange Beach. Length 0.303 mi.
- for constructing the Planning, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-287 from the junction of SR-3 (US-31) to the intersection of SR-59 in Bay Minette. Length 1.925 mi.
- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on CR-2 (Gulf State Park Road Two) from the junction of SR-135 to the junction of SR-182 in Gulf Shores. Length 3.013 mi.

### Mobile County

- for constructing the Widening, Drainage Improvements, Resurfacing, Guardrail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on CR-70 (Tanner Williams Road) from the junction of CR-5 (Wilmer Road North) to a point 1200 feet west of the junction of Eliza Jordan Road North. Length 4.795 mi.
- for constructing the Widening, Drainage Improvements, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Dawes Road from the intersection of Grand Bay - Wilmer Road to the junction of Three Notch Road. Length 4.765 mi.

## [What's Under Construction?](#)

### Legislative Updates

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#### Senators Put Gas Tax Increase on the Table

In recent days, several Senate Republican leaders have indicated their belief that a gas tax should be on the table as Congress seeks new sources of funding for transportation. Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chair of Senate Finance; James Inhofe (R-OK), Chair of Senate EPW; and John Thune (R-SD), Chair of Senate Commerce, have all indicated that gas tax should be part of the conversation. Though far short of actual support of the idea, their statements represent a potential shift in Republican thinking, at least in the U.S. Senate. Also this week, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), Democratic Leader in the Senate, said that it is time to raise the gas tax.

#### FHWA Issues Climate Change and Extreme Weather Resilience Order:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order 5520, *Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events*, states that it is FHWA policy to integrate consideration of climate and extreme weather risks into its planning, operations, policies, and programs. This new Order formalizes FHWA's commitment to this issue, guides the agencies' implementation of relevant MAP-21 provisions and recent Executive Orders, and identifies how the agency intends to continue to lead the transportation industry in making the nation's highways more resilient. Click [HERE](#) to read the entire order.

### Funding Opportunities

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#### The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Funding Opportunity

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium is accepting pre-proposals for one- to two-year innovative research projects that address one of these coastal issues: Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture or Resilient Communities and Economies. Funding requests of no more than \$75,000 per year are recommended and the deadline is Feb. 20, 2015. For more information, please [click here](#).

#### 015 Five Star/Urban Waters Restoration Program

Application Deadline: February 3

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is offering grants through the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program, which provides financial assistance to local partnerships for wetland, riparian, forest, and coastal habitat restoration, urban wildlife conservation, stormwater management as well as outreach, education, and stewardship. Projects should focus on water quality, watersheds, and the habitats they support. NFWF anticipates that approximately \$2,100,000 in combined total funding will be available for this round of grants. Click [HERE](#) for details.

#### U.S. Forest Service – Community Forest Program Funding

Deadline: January 16, 2015

The Community Forest Program is a grant program that authorizes the U.S. Forest Service to provide financial assistance to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits. Click [HERE](#) for the funding opportunity.

#### HUD \$1 Billion National Disaster Resilience Competition

Application Deadline: March 2015

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently launched a National Disaster Resilience Competition, which makes \$1 billion available to communities that have been struck by natural disasters in recent years. The competition promotes risk assessment and planning, and will fund the implementation of innovative resilience projects to better prepare communities for future storms and other extreme events. Representatives from eligible communities will have the opportunity to attend Rockefeller-supported Resilience Academies across the country to strengthen their funding proposals. Click [HERE](#) to apply.

#### HUD – Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants

**Applications Due: February 9, 2015**

The Choice Neighborhoods program supports locally driven strategies to address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. Choice Neighborhoods is focused on three core goals:

- Housing: Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood;
- People: Improve educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth with services and supports delivered directly to youth and their families; and
- Neighborhood: Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community.

Click [HERE](#) for more information

### Just For Fun

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#### USS ALABAMA BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK OPEN FOR 50 YEARS IN MOBILE

January 9, 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of USS ALABAMA (BB-60) Battleship Memorial Park. Eighteen years to the day since she last ran under her own power, the World War II heroine was dedicated in Mobile, Alabama to the memory of Alabama veterans of all branches of the armed services, Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine. Click [HERE](#) to go to the Park's website. [HERE](#) is a great video about how the cooks made meals for the 2,500 soldiers, on the 180,000 horsepower Mighty "A".



Kent Whitaker - Chow Line USS Alabama



2,872

### In the News

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#### South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) Annual Meeting

Please plan to join us at the SARPC Annual Meeting planned for January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Hotel at Point Clear. The annual meeting provides representatives of SARPC's thirty-two member governments as well as other interested citizens an opportunity to participate in a day and a half conference that features informative presentations and information exchanges on a variety of public policy issues confronting the South Alabama region. Please contact Ms. Grace Crawford or Ms. Paula McGlasker at (251) 433 – 6541 for further information.

**2015 ANNUAL MEETING**  
GRAND HOTEL MARRIOTT RESORT, POINT CLEAR, ALABAMA

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2015**

2:00 PM	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	10:00 AM	TRANSPORTATION SESSION MR. VINCE CALAMETTI, DIVISION ENGINEER ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
3:00 PM	FULL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING		
5:00 PM	REGISTRATION/CHECK-IN	11:00 AM	EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SESSION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE Mr. Sydney Raine, Mobile Works Ms. Laura Chandler, SAWDC
6:00 PM	PRE-DINNER RECEPTION ENTERTAINMENT BY PHIL PROCTOR		
7:00 PM	DINNER / PROGRAM AWARDS PRESENTATION	12:00 PM	LUNCH BUFFET PLANNING SESSION TOURISM UPDATE & ECONOMIC IMPACT PRESENTATION MR. HERB MALONE, CEO GULF COAST VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2015**

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	REGISTRATION CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	1:30 PM	WRAP-UP / CLOSING REMARKS STAFF CONSULTATIONS (IF NECESSARY)
8:30 AM	WELCOME Mayor Tim Kant, City of Fairhope  INSPIRATIONAL/MOTIVATIONAL WARM-UP Dr. Ted Mashburn, University of Mobile		
9:00 AM	AGING SESSION: Lara Barber, MPP, Director Hunger Initiatives National Council on Aging		

## Restoring Alabama: Green groups collaborate on 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' for conservation funding after oil spill

By [Dennis Pillion.1.dpillion@al.com](mailto:Dennis.Pillion.1.dpillion@al.com)

MOBILE, Alabama -- While the [2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill](#) represented an unprecedented environmental crisis in the Gulf of Mexico, the influx of funding earmarked for coastal restoration projects now represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make lasting impacts on the region impacted by the spill.

As the government restoration process moves from theory into practice, many of the environmental groups who've worked on the spill since 2010 have shifted their focus to form what they call the Alabama Renewal Group, a collaboration of like-minded organizations hoping to help the state get the most positive economic, environmental and community benefit from its undetermined pool of oil spill fine money and to offer a unified voice from several organizations.

Environmental projects long hoped for but hard to pay for may finally get a chance to become reality. The list of proposed projects is already long and getting longer each week, however, as more are submitted.

Group members meet once a week to discuss the latest developments, look at newly proposed restoration projects and try to raise support on the council and among the public for the projects they believe are most beneficial. The group is comprised of Mobile Baykeeper, Ocean Conservancy, the Alabama Coastal Foundation, Oxfam America, the Conservation Alabama Foundation, the Gulf Restoration Network, The Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation and Birmingham Audubon.

### Helping the economy by helping the environment

The group has developed a concept of a "triple bottom line," the belief that restoring the economy, environment and building healthy, safe communities go hand-in-hand and that projects that promote all three objectives should be given priority. They point to the state's \$3.6 billion tourism industry and \$1 billion commercial and recreational fishing activity as evidence that a healthy environment will lead to more economic opportunity.

"We really don't see either/or in any of this," said Kellyn Garrison of The Nature Conservancy. "We know everything is connected so tightly to this triple bottom line of environment, economy and community."

The group, which met with Press-Register/AL.com reporters and editors Thursday, is much less supportive of strictly economic projects that create no benefit to the environment, or even cause harm to the coastal ecosystems the fine money is meant to restore.

"(The oil spill) was an environmental disaster and what stood out to me was how deeply and thoroughly this community recognized that an environmental disaster wrecked, destroyed our economy," said Casi Callaway, executive director of Mobile Baykeeper. "We are forgetting. That's where we're going to an 'or' instead of 'and.'"

Rather than endorse or object to specific projects, the groups created a spreadsheet evaluating each project submitted to the [state web portal](#), evaluating how many of their 32 criteria each project meets. The criteria are grouped into one of four categories: best practices, economic priorities, community priorities and environmental priorities.

**RELATED: See the full list of projects evaluated by the Alabama Renewal Group**

The **Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council** -- consisting of Gov. Robert Bentley, the mayors of Mobile, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Orange Beach, Dauphin Island and Bayou La Batre, as well as county commissioners from Mobile and Baldwin counties and the executive director of the Alabama State Port Authority -- will have the authority to award an undetermined amount of oil spill fine money paid by BP and the other companies involved in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The council is still evaluating projects and is still [weighing the merits of economic and environmental](#) proposals.

### Public input is key

Both those on the council and on the outside looking in have said repeatedly that public input is crucial in proposing and evaluating restoration projects. With the exception of the Port Authority director, each council member is an elected official who will depend on feedback from their constituents to make decisions.

But the evaluation process is still a work in progress for a council created by the federal statute. There is no template to rely on. Some are concerned about a lack of transparency throughout the process, arguing that the council's decisions are reached behind closed doors and explained after the fact in the public meetings.

"They meet for several hours and then they have a short meeting with the public, so we don't know everything they're thinking or talking about," Callaway said. "We would like to, but that's the challenge."

**Here's the Coastal Alabama road projects you could run into on Friday, Jan. 9**

By [Angela Levins | alevins@al.com](mailto:Angela.Levins@al.com)

MOBILE, Alabama -- Linholm Road in Baldwin County should reopen to traffic by 5 p.m. Friday. AL.com is also monitoring the Mobile Bay Ferry, which should be open sometime Monday. Here is a look at the road projects underway in Mobile and Baldwin counties:

**Mobile:**

Royal Street: Between Dauphin and Conti streets, work on the Van Antwerp building continues to hamper traffic from time to time. Be cautious of pedestrians and workers.

Satchel Paige Drive: Satchel Paige Drive between Government and Bolling Brothers boulevards is closed to traffic. The road is being widened to a four-lane divided road. Work is expected to take about three months. The road project is part of the McGowin Park Shopping Center construction.

**Mobile Bay Ferry:**

Closed until at least Monday, Jan. 12 for mechanical repair.

**Mobile County:**

Jackson Creek Bridge: Old Pascagoula Road is closed between Ramsey Road and March Road. Bridge being replaced. Project estimated to last a year.

**ALDOT Mobile County:**

I-10: Resurfacing and bridge work from Halls Mill Creek to the west end of the George C. Wallace Tunnel. Drivers should expect nighttime closures Sunday to Thursday from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m. Work is expected to be completed next summer.

U.S. 90: From Halls Mill to Pine Hill Drive. Lane closures will be at night. Project manager reports the work has been delayed by weather. Completion date is January 2015 now. ALDOT will update when project is complete.

Welcome Center: The Welcome Center at the Alabama/Mississippi line is shut down until at least spring 2016.

**ALDOT Baldwin County:**

I-10: CR 68 connector to Baldwin Beach Express. Work is about 95 percent complete. Drivers may see an occasional lane closure on CR 83 for completing remaining work.

Little Lagoon Pass bridge remains under construction. ALDOT reports that the work is about 65 percent complete. There is a detour bridge next to the Little Lagoon Pass bridge. Expect minimal traffic delays.

**Baldwin County:**

Linholm Road: Impassable starting 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 5 until 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9 for drainage improvements.

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**ALDOT Study Looks at Roundabouts at SR-158 and U.S. 45**

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are studying a proposal to replace the signalized intersections of State Route 158 (New U.S. 98) on/off ramps at U.S. 45 with roundabouts (Project HSIP-0017(554)). ALDOT is investigating all aspects of this proposal in order to determine its feasibility. ALDOT is very much interested in the views of public officials and agencies concerning this proposed highway facility. Public input concerning the project's purpose, need, and alternatives is welcome. You may contact ALDOT Southwest Regional Office for further details.

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## Transportation Research

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**Freight Congestion:**

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) recently released the findings of its 2014 *Congestion Impact Analysis of Freight-Significant Highway Locations*. The research assesses the level of truck-oriented congestion at 250 locations on the national highway system, and is developed in conjunction with the FHWA-sponsored Freight Performance Measures (FPM) initiative. The locations detailed in this latest ATRI report represent the top 100 congested locations. Click [HERE](#) to see the complete list.

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**WEBINAR: Climate/Weather Risk Tools – Learning from the Gulf Coast**

January 22, 2:00–3:30 PM

Over the past five years, the U.S. Department of Transportation has been conducting a groundbreaking climate change vulnerability assessment pilot in Mobile, Alabama. Commonly known as Phase 2 of the Gulf Coast Study, this project's mission was to develop methods, resources, and tools that will assist transportation agencies with conducting climate change vulnerability assessments and evaluating facility-level adaptation options. This new assessment tool it is definitely worth checking out. Click [HERE](#) to register.

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**WEBINAR: National Performance Measures Research Data Set**

February 5, 2015, 1:00 PM

FHWA's Office of Freight Management and Operations is hosting its next Quarterly Technical Assistance Webinar for the National Performance Measures Research Data Set (NPMRDS), which is the probe data that FHWA is using internally for passenger and freight analysis and making available to States and MPOs. At this webinar, FHWA and its contractors will provide an overview of the probe data set, demonstrate data applications, and respond to technical assistance questions. Click [HERE](#) to register, and [HERE](#) for more information on the data set.

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**Proposed Rule on Bridge and Pavement Condition**

January 22, 2:00-4:00 PM

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will hold a free webinar to provide information on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding bridge and pavement condition. For more information on this NPRM, please see the related article. Click [HERE](#) to register.

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**FHWA is offering an 8 hour workshop on the New FHWA Roadway Lighting Handbook.**

The purpose of the event is for participants to learn about roadway lighting design and the requirements from the new Handbook. Presentations and discussion will focus on:

**The impact of New Solid State LED Lighting technology**

**Lighting Design Standards from the FHWA, AASHTO and the IES**

**Warranting and the Impact of Lighting on Roadway Safety**

**New Innovative approaches to Roadway Lighting Design**

The workshop presenters will be:

**Dr. Ronald Gibbons, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute,**

**Paul Lutkevich, Parsons Brinckerhoff and**

**Dan McLean, DMD and Associates**

Date/Time: January 20th, 1pm – 5pm,

January 21st, 8am to Noon

Questions? Joseph Cheung - FHWA Office of Safety

202-366-6994 [Joseph.Cheung@dot.gov](mailto:Joseph.Cheung@dot.gov)