



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 11th, 2014

Volume 11, Number 1

In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET JULY 25TH, 2014
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- JUST FOR FUN
- IN THE NEWS
- TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

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

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

ALDOT has a call for projects for the rural FTA 5310 funding and applications are due to SARPC August 14th, please see *Funding Opportunities*. The House and Senate Committees approved differing short-term HTF fixes in this week's *Legislative Updates* and it is interesting what Oregon did with its **VMT tax**; please see *Transportation Research*. Were you stuck in traffic last weekend? Check out *Just For Fun*. The Gen. W.K. Wilson (Dolly Parton) Bridge opens today and is back to normal speed limit and other news items in this week's *In The News*.

Have great weekend

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



www.mobilempo.org

check us out on FACEBOOK

706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

Some of you may remember, that on November 13, 2013, we had [Airsage](#) capture cell phones that were on the Bayway that day. This was fascinating information as it allowed us to graphically display the average location (state) of those devices. Which means, we captured all the folks from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and even a percentage from the pacific coast (we assume these are long haul truckers). The November 13th data gave us a good middle of the week snap shot of who is on our beloved Bayway. When we compared the cell phone data to the traffic counts for that day, we were able to assume a percentage of vehicles that were external to external trips (folks driving straight through our area).

We have asked Airsage to capture this data for us again, for July 2nd. This is peak travel for the July 4th weekend. To maintain data for a "typical" day, we are collecting on a Wednesday, but you can bet your cell phone that the tunnels will be congested by folks from all over the country. This data is not only an innovative way to estimate data needed for our travel demand forecast model, but it is real data. Data that one day, may be able to provide a glimpse into who would really be paying a toll, "if" a toll was ever placed on let's say... a new bridge over the Mobile River...



The power of where and when

ALDOT HAS ANNOUNCED TAP GRANT AWARDS

Once again, the counties of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has a great percentage of TAP applications to get funded. Statewide, about half of the applications that were submitted to ALDOT were funded and of the 42 applications funded, 9 applications were from cities within the SARPC region. That is over 20% of the State's awarded applications coming from our region. Congratulations to all that were awarded, and South Alabama!

- City of Robertsdale – Sidewalks - College Av., Fairground Rd \$389,126.00 Federal funds
- City of Atmore – Sidewalks along AL 21 and Various Streets \$400,000.00 Federal funds

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

MOBILE URBAN AREA TAP PROJECTS

Today and yesterday, ALDOT conducted pre-agreement meetings with the infamous Cecil Colson and project sponsors, for those TAP projects that were awarded with Mobile MPO TAP funds.

- Mobile County, for construction of a sidewalk along Burroughs Lane from Washington Boulevard to Burroughs Elementary School; \$126,534 (fed)
- City of Mobile, for construction of sidewalks on the North side of Old Shell Road from the Springhill Shopping Center to the intersection of Old Shell Road and Myrtlewood Lane; \$161,015 (fed)
- City of Chickasaw, for construction of sidewalks on 2nd Street from Johnston Street to West Lee Street; \$136,392 (fed)
- City of Prichard, for construction of sidewalks on the Historic Whistler Street Area from N. Price Avenue to N. Shelton Beach Road; \$158,001 (fed)

FTA 5310

Last week the Project Selection Committee for the Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Funds met and selected five projects to recommend for approval. The projects selected include:

- The City of Bayou La Batre - \$44,600 federal funds for a 15 passenger van
- Mobile ARC \$173,000 federal funds for operating assistance for public transit for disabled clients
- AHEPA - \$40,000 federal funds for a 15 passenger van
- Mercy Life - \$64,000 federal funds for a 28-30 passenger bus
- Mobile Bay Transportation Company - \$64,964 for two vans and \$21,563 for operating assistance for public transit for elderly and disabled clients

Mobile MPO

The Mobile MPO met May 21st. The board approved the draft funding schedule for a [FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program](#) (annual budget) which was submitted to ALDOT for comment last week. The full document is being developed and will be made available for public review later this summer. The UPWP will include carryover planning funds that will be used to fund a study for Downtown Mobile that will be in cooperation with and parallel to, the ALDOT Water Street modifications, Bring Back Broad Street Initiative, and various other needed bicycle pedestrian projects downtown.

Destination 2040

The MPO Staff is continuing to develop the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan titled Destination 2040. 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 July 25th, 2014

MOBILE COUNTY

for constructing the New Concrete Loading Ramp to include General Improvements to the Boat Docking Facilities for the Mobile Ferry Dock

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Deere Creek Road from the intersection of James Road to the intersection of Jones Road (Site #1) and on James Road from the intersection of Jones Road to the intersection of SR-3 (US-31) (Site #2). Length 1.969 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

House and Senate Committees Approve Differing Short-Term HTF Fixes:

Yesterday morning, the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee passed a stopgap bill (H.R. 5021 – Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014) to extend HTF solvency until May 31, 2015. The one-time \$10.8 billion (B) measure transfers \$8.8B to the Highway Account (including \$1B from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund) and \$2.0B to the Mass Transit Account, offset by so-called pension smoothing provisions and extension of Customs user fees. The bill was approved in Committee today by voice vote, raising hopes the bill will pass under “suspension of the rules” early next week. The bill can be found [\[HERE\]](#)

Yesterday afternoon, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee took up its own measure to provide a HTF patch. The modified Finance version (Preserving America’s Transit and Highways Act of 2014) provides the same \$10.8B in funding, including a \$1.0B LUST transfer and similar – though not identical – offsets. The Senate bill is bipartisan, with support from Chairman Wyden (D-OR) and Ranking Member Hatch (R-UT), and passed by voice vote with Sen. Carper (D-DE) voting “no.” Sen. Carper’s “no” vote stems largely from his opposition to the additional funding that was added to the bill, carrying it through the end of next May. He feels a shorter duration would hold Congress to completing a longer-term reauthorization bill during the lame duck session; his amendment on this failed 10-14. More information about the Senate Finance bill is [\[HERE\]](#)

Though the bills differ, their similarities in total funding and offsets indicate a path toward compromise on an extension that carries through May 2015, rather than through the end of 2014.

State and Local Elected Officials Support Long-Term Transportation Funding

In a letter to House and Senate leadership, leaders from a number of national associations that represent state, county, and municipal officials – including the National Association of Counties and the National League of Cities – urged Congress to solve the impending HTF crisis and pass a long-term reauthorization to replace MAP-21. The letter cites the need for a strong commitment from the federal government and the uncertainty that arises from short-term extensions and temporary patches. Click [\[HERE\]](#) for letter.

Funding Opportunities

FY 2014-2015 SECTION 5310 NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Modal Programs Bureau, is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding for transit related services that assist the state’s population of seniors & individuals with disabilities.

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

1. Private nonprofit organizations
2. Governmental agencies that provide certifications to ALDOT that transit services furnished by nonprofit organizations are not readily available in the area
3. Governmental agencies approved by the ALDOT to coordinate transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Applications are due to us (SARPC) by 5:00 PM August 14th, 2014. Applications and guidelines can be found [\[HERE\]](#)

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA): Ladders of Opportunity Initiative Deadline August 4th.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces [\[HERE\]](#) the availability of prior year Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities Program discretionary funds for the Ladders of Opportunity Initiative in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014.

FTA will make available approximately \$100 million from recoveries from the Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities Program authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Public Law 109-59 and prior authorizations. Additional recoveries or other unallocated program funding may result in additional funding for proposals submitted under this notice. This notice solicits proposals to compete for funding under the aforementioned program and initiatives, and includes the priorities established by FTA for these discretionary funds, the criteria FTA will use to identify meritorious projects for funding, and the description of how to apply for funding under these discretionary programs. This announcement is available on the FTA Web site at: <http://www.fta.dot.gov>.

A synopsis of this funding opportunity will be posted in the FIND module of the government-wide electronic grants Web site at <http://www.GRANTS.GOV>. FTA will announce final selections on the FTA Web site and may also announce selections in the Federal Register.

DATES: Complete proposals are due by 11:59 p.m. EDT on August 4, 2014; all proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV APPLY function. Any agency intending to apply should initiate the process of registering on the GRANTS.GOV

2014 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program

Approx. Grant Amount: \$60,000

The DERA program provides public and/or private on-road and off-road diesel fleet owners and operators funding to help reduce diesel emissions within the State of Alabama. Reducing diesel emissions, such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and particulate matter will help improve air quality and human health in Alabama. We would like to partner with fleet owners/managers to retrofit 2006 or older on-road diesel engines and 2009 or older off-road engines, with diesel emissions control devices and/or anti-Idling systems.

Diesel Emissions Exhaust Control Devices and Anti-Idling Systems Used in Previous Projects:

- Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOC)
- Closed Crankcase Ventilation (CCV)
- ZTR Smartstart II (Locomotive Anti-idling System)
- Tri-Pac (Long Haul Truck Anti-idling System)
- Arctic Breeze (Long Haul Truck Anti-idling System)

All devices and systems must be EPA and/or CARB-certified.

Entities awarded funding under this program must secure vendors and contractors through a competitive bidding process required by the U.S. EPA and the State of Alabama.

Interested parties should contact:

Anthony Smiley
Office Number: 334-271-7803
Email: asmiley@adem.state.al.us

Dale Hurst
Office Number: 334-271-7882
Email: adh@adem.state.al.us

Alabama Department of Environmental Management
1400 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36110-2059

Just For Fun

Stuck in traffic...and time....



Around the town of Chatillon, Belgium, the end of World War II left a few creepy hallmarks of the armistice in the form of long lines of cars left abandoned by the hundreds in the woods. While one theory goes that the cars belonged to Americans who left them in a hurry on their way off the continent, Bored Panda points out that no one really knows for sure. While there were initially four giant pileups with over 500 cars, only one remains rotting in the woods, a monument to the inexorable creep of entropy.

Photos [\[HERE\]](#) and [\[HERE\]](#).

In the News

I-10 bridge environmental study expected within one week



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

on July 07, 2014 at 5:00 PM, updated July 08, 2014 at 9:03 AM

MOBILE, Alabama – Motorists might not appreciate it after spending hours in traffic jams this weekend, but there could be some relief in the long gridlock that is the Interstate 10 bridge project.

A spokesman with the Federal Highway Administration said Monday that the long-awaited environmental impact study into the I-10 bridge project will be completed sometime late this week or early next week.

The study, which will be released to state transportation and historic preservation officials, will precede a series of public meetings that could take place by August or September.

Doug Hecox, spokesman with the FHWA, said within the next "two to three weeks," the Alabama Department of Transportation could be positioned to schedule public hearings into the details of the study's findings. The meetings will be held in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

"The whole point is to make sure the public can have a look and provide input," Hecox said.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, who called on federal highway officials in May to release a draft of the study by July 1, said he's been assured the study will be completed soon. Continue [\[HERE\]](#)

Does Alabama fuel tax discriminate against railroads? U.S. Supreme Court to again hear appeal



By [Kent Faulk | kfaulk@al.com](mailto:kfaulk@al.com) on July 07, 2014 at 8:34 AM, updated July 07, 2014 at 8:35 AM

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – For the second time in nearly four years the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to weigh in on CSX Transportation Inc.'s lawsuit that says the State of Alabama discriminated against it and other railroads by forcing them to pay sales taxes on fuel while their competitors - trucking and barge companies – are exempt.

At stake for the state is at least \$5 million a year in sales tax revenues and potential refund claims of more than \$10 million, according to the state.

Last week the U.S. Supreme Court granted the State of Alabama's request to hear its appeal of an 11th Circuit Court of Appeals decision in the case. That 11th Circuit ruling last year stated "the sales tax is indeed discriminatory and that the state has not offered a "sufficient justification" for exempting CSX's competitors. Continue [\[HERE\]](#)

Speed limit on Gen. W.K. Wilson, Jr. Bridge back to 70 mph, concrete barriers removed



By [Michael Finch II | mfinch@al.com](mailto:mfinch@al.com)

on July 10, 2014 at 5:45 PM, updated July 10, 2014 at 6:19 P

MOBILE, Alabama -- Workers pulled up the final barrier needed dividing the two southbound lanes of the Gen. W.K. Wilson, Jr. Bridge on Interstate 65 late Thursday, allowing traffic to flow freely since workers completed much-needed repairs.

A fatal accident involving two semi-trailers damaged parts of the road's top surface called the bridge deck on May 22. The final piece of the temporary concrete wall was removed around 5 p.m., said Kathryn Hamlett, spokeswoman for the Alabama Department of Transportation's southwest office.

After weeks of road work and a speed limit reduced to 45 mph, Hamlett said drivers commuting on the busy highway are now allowed to drive at 70 mph. The U.S. Department of Transportation allocated about \$1 million in emergency relief funds for the bridge project, the agency announced on June 6. The work was completed on July 4, but the total cost is still unknown.

The WAVE Transit is Hosting the 2014 Transit Awareness Day Celebration.



SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2014, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00p.m.

PLATEAU COMMUNITY CENTER 850 EDWARDS STREET, MOBILE, ALABAMA

Transit Vehicle Showcase, Vendors, Face Painting, Balloons, Music and FREE Refreshments!!!

Scheduled Activities Include:

Exhibition Basketball Games featuring Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the Mobile Patriots Wheelchair Basketball Team & Others!!!!

For more information call 251-344-6600 or visit www.thewavetransit.com

The Alabama Department of Transportation's Compliance and Business Opportunities Bureau Presents a Series of Informational Sessions on Title VI-Nondiscrimination Sub-Recipient Responsibilities

(August 6th, 2014)

As a recipient of US Department of Transportation (USDOT) financial assistance, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is committed to promoting fairness and equity in federally assisted programs and activities.

In August and September of this year, ALDOT will present a series of informational sessions to outline the basic Civil Rights responsibilities of all ALDOT sub-recipients (and future sub-recipients) of Federal financial assistance to include emphasis on ***Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program.***

Please click [HERE](#) for the date and time an informational session will be held in your area. Any questions or comments regarding these sessions may be directed to ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator, **Mr. Cornell Tatum at (334) 213-1274 or TatumCl@dot.state.al.us.**

Transportation Research

New Publication Detailing Oregon's Per-Mile Charging Program Released

Oregon is a leader in innovative transportation funding measures, and recently established the nation's first ever Road Usage Charge Program for light vehicles. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has just released a report, Road Usage Charge Pilot Program 2013 & Per-Mile Charge Policy in Oregon, that details how Oregon successfully designed and completed its second per-mile charge pilot program and ultimately passed legislation to establish a fully operational road usage charging program, to launch July 1, 2015. Other states and even Congress are sure to take notice, as the so-called vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax is a hot topic among those looking for alternatives to the current per-gallon gasoline tax. [\[HERE\]](#) for details.

Wetlands Compliance Workshop

The next Wetlands Compliance Workshops are scheduled and registration is open. Mobile County will have theirs on Thursday, July 31 and Baldwin County will take place on Tuesday, August 19. These workshops serve to guide professionals involved in land use issues and to provide current and accurate information on issues dealing in wetland regulation, permitting, and compliance regulations. The cost to attend is \$30 and after completing the full course, you will receive a certificate of CEU.

The Mobile Workshop will be at the Mobile Area Association of Realtors and the Baldwin Workshop will be at the Weeks Bay Reserve Resource Center. [Click here](#) to register for your workshop and you can [click here](#) for a brochure with full information on who is presenting, subjects being covered, and other details.

Combined Intelligence - Working Together for Smarter Transportation

In September of 2014 the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS), the Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITSFL) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Georgia (ITSGA), will come together for a joint annual meeting. Join us in 2014 for the ITS 3C Summit.

ITS 3C Summit


The conference will be held **September 14-17, 2014** at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center along the waterfront in Mobile, Alabama.

Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center

One South Water Street
Mobile, AL 36602

EPA Releases EnviroAtlas Ecosystem Mapping Tool

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) recently released [EnviroAtlas](#), a web-based interactive tool that integrates over 300 data layers to help decision makers understand the implications of planning and policy decisions on ecosystems and the communities who depend on goods and services from these ecosystems. EnviroAtlas combines hundreds of data layers from EPA, the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), the [U.S. Forest Service](#), several universities, and other federal, state, and nonprofit organizations. Using powerful web application tools, it lets users generate customized maps and images that show the condition of their local community's air, water, and landscape, as well as population density and other demographic data. Users can investigate land cover patterns, see how



ecosystem services reduce pollution, and compare indicators across selected communities. The data, maps, and information available through EnviroAtlas can help users learn about ecosystems and the benefits they provide—from clean air and water to protection from severe weather to materials for food, clothing, and pharmaceuticals—and visualize how decisions impact ecosystems and their ability to provide goods and services.

Click [here](#) to access EnviroAtlas. No special software is needed to use it. EnviroAtlas is currently not optimized for smartphone or tablet use, but a mobile-friendly version is planned for the future.