



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 17, 2015

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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

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50 YEARS of the MOBILE MPO! Happy Birthday to us. We had a special called meeting of the Mobile MPO this week, the next MPO meeting is August 19th, and on July 28th Toole Design will be here; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. The House and Senate agree to disagree on a transportation bill; please see *Legislative Updates*; yet Sec. Foxx told Director Cooper that a long term bill is needed. Please see *In The News*. Finally, this week's *Just For Fun* is a curve ball. Really... Congratulations to Ms. Monica Williamson and Mr. Tom Piper of our staff on being fantastic coaches in leading their teams to victory in the world series of girls 18 under fast pitch softball and regional playoffs of Cal Ripken 8 year olds.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable weekend! Good luck to all the anglers of the 82nd Dauphin Island Fishing Rodeo.

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK
 706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Policy Board met this week

At the previous MPO meeting on June 17th (below), the Self-Certification resolution was tabled until next meeting. The reason it was tabled involved the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plans that are a requirement of the Self-Certification process, and required for each municipality, and county in the country. The Self-Certification resolution was executed at Tuesday's MPO Meeting. The FHWA has directed us to execute the Self-Certification, and we will have a year to complete everyone's ADA Transition Plan. Some funding will be available to hire a consultant to do the ADA Transition Plans, and we will need one person from each local government to be a part of the consultant selection committee. We will keep you posted.

MPO Policy Board met Wednesday June 17th, 2015

Items on the agenda for the Mobile MPO Policy Board included a review of the Draft 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which is essentially our budget for next year. This is a draft document that will be adopted in August. Also, they reviewed the Draft 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which will include a self-certification resolution. This resolution was tabled until we have further clarification from the Federal Highway Administration regarding the member governments having ADA Transition Plans. There was a discussion pertaining to scheduling our Urban TAP Funds, and a brief summary of the Non-motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile.

Both the draft UPWP and the draft TIP are being submitted to ALDOT for comment prior to public review. Once we receive comments from ALDOT, both documents must go through the public involvement process, and the TCC/CAC and MPO Policy board will see these documents again this summer.

FY 2015 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grants Awarded

The TAP Project Selection Committee met and three applications were recommended to be funded.

- Mobile County - Sidewalks on Old Pascagoula Rd. from Horseshoe Lane to Theodore Dawes, sidewalks on Howell's Ferry Rd. from Allentown Elementary to Snow Rd.
- City of Semmes - Sidewalks along US 98 from Illinois St. to Firetower Rd., Along Illinois St. from US 98 to Public Works Facility, along Church St. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd., and along Park Ave. from Illinois St. to Wulff Rd.
- City of Mobile - Sidewalks along DIP from Levene Rd. to Cedar Park Drive

Six applications were received. Unfortunately, due to funding limitations, there was only enough funding available to fund three projects. We thank everyone for their submissions and congratulate those that were recommended to be funded.

This week, SARPC staff held the pre-agreement meetings with each of the project sponsors. The next step will be the funding agreements between ALDOT and the sponsor. We will keep you posted.

GIS online

We are upgrading and starting to utilize our online GIS capabilities. Please check out some of the current interactive maps we have been working on. Many more to come...

<http://mobilempo.org/maps.html>

DESTINATION 2040

The Mobile MPO [Long Range Transportation Plan](#), Destination 2040, has been adopted, subsequent comments from ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA. The DRAFT document that was out for public review and reviewed with MPO and TCC/CAC members may have some slight modifications in the FINAL Document. The FINAL will be out next week.

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](#).

I-10 Mobile River Bridge

ALDOT has released the I-10 Mobile River Bridge Corridor Hearing Report Summary and it is now available online at www.mobileriverbridge.com. This report summarizes all of the comments that were received during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement public comment period in the Fall of 2014. The document suggests most of the support was for the B prime route. Although we are moving closer and closer to having a bridge, there are still several hurdles to cross, including funding, [tolling is an option](#).

On June 25th, the Alabama Department of Transportation named the three design team finalists that will be reviewed in July by a Mobile-area selection panel for the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge design contract.

Michael Baker, LLC, Volkert, Inc., and Thompson Engineering, will make presentations to a seven member panel composed of local officials and community leaders. The panel will give a recommendation to the Director of Transportation, who is expected to name the selected design team following the presentations.

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/>



The Downtown Non-Motorized Mobility Study will meet on Tuesday July 28th at the Downtown Alliance offices. Toole Design Group will be here to vet final recommendations with the Steering Committee and anyone interested. Notices will go out shortly concerning that meeting.

Stayed Tuned for all of the details http://mobilempo.org/Mobility_Study.html

Projects Within Region Let July 31st, 2015

Mobile County

for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail, Cable Guiderail, Bridge Rail Retrofit, Weigh Station Improvements, and Weigh-In-Motion Station Installation on I-10 from the Mississippi State Line to Exit 10 (CR-39/McDonald Road) Interchange north of Irvington. Length 10.081 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$8,749,344 to \$10,693,642

for constructing the Slide Repair on the Westbound Lane of I-10 at Exit 17 (Range Line Road) in Mobile. Length 0.056 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$109,742 to \$134,130 .

Baldwin County

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from just east of the junction of Eastern Shore Boulevard (MP 3.950) north of Malbis to just west of the junction of SR-3 (US-31) and SR-59 (MP 9.670) south of Stapleton. Length 5.720 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$990,659 to \$1,210,806 .

Escambia County

None at this time.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

House Approves Five-Month Transportation Extension

In advance of MAP-21's expiration at the end of this month, the House passed on July 15 a short-term extension of the nation's transportation program by a vote of 312 to 119. The Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015, Part II (HR 3038) extends the existing authorization until December 18. This bill necessitates a transfer of general funds into the Highway Trust Fund, which would otherwise face insolvency later this summer. The \$8.1 billion in funds are offset largely with changes in tax compliance and miscellaneous fees, a package introduced by Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI). Despite previous reservations about another short-term extension, the Administration issued a Statement of Administration Policy supporting the bill.

Senate Charges Forward on Reauthorization

Meanwhile, in the Senate, the action has taken a different tone. Senate leadership would prefer an extension through the 2016 presidential election. Instead of crafting a traditional extension of that length, the Senate is pursuing a reauthorization package, which can ultimately be scaled in length based on the funding offsets the chamber can find, so most likely two or three years. Earlier this week, the Senate Finance Committee outlined \$88 billion worth of possible offsets that could pay for a reauthorization package, but due to opposition to certain options, the total has shrunk to \$50 billion. The current list includes \$7 billion from selling oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and \$17 billion from reducing the interest rate the Fed pays to member banks.

On Tuesday, the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) expects the Senate to vote to take up a House-passed bill (since this reauthorization must originate in the House) on an unrelated topic that it will strike and rewrite as its long-term reauthorization proposal. The proposal will include:

- The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's (EPW) six-year bill covering highways, which passed unanimously out of committee;
- The Senate Commerce bill covering highway safety, intermodal freight, and passenger rail, which passed out of committee yesterday on a party-line vote (more details below);
- A Senate Banking bill covering transit (which is not expected to be marked up in committee) inserted in a manager's amendment; and
- The Finance Committee piece to fund the bill.

Though the EPW and Commerce bills were passed as six-year reauthorizations, they will require upwards of \$100 billion in offsets. Since the Senate is considering barely half of that amount, the final form of the Senate bill will have to be shorter in duration. How long is not yet known.

Senate Commerce Committee Approves Transportation Safety Bill

At Wednesday's markup session, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation narrowly approved a six-year rail and safety reauthorization bill, the Comprehensive Transportation and Consumer Protection Act (S.1732), on a 13-11 party-line vote. Developed and sponsored by Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Jerry Moran (R-KS), the bill includes key reforms for consumer safety and regulatory relief, including improvement of the accuracy and accountability of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's vehicle safety oversight; increased accountability of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for the accuracy of its publicized records and rulemakings; and, through the bipartisan Railroad Reform Enhancement and Efficiency Act, improvements in rail safety. Several amendments were proposed by Democrats, and nearly all were rejected along party lines. Notable exceptions were Senator Joe Manchin's (D-WV) amendment to allow trucking companies to use hair samples for employee drug testing and Senator Claire McCaskill's (D-MO) amendment to prohibit rental car companies from renting vehicles with recall defects that have not been repaired. A provision to authorize the TIGER discretionary grant program as a freight-only program was stripped in the chairman's mark.

Funding Opportunities

FY 2015 and FY 2016 FTA SECTION 5310 NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. FTA provides funding for transit related services that assist the Mobile Urban Area'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 SARPC that transit services furnished by nonprofit organizations are not readily available in the area
3. State or local governmental authorities
4. An operator of public transportation that receives a Section 5310 grant indirectly through a recipient. Private operators of public transportation that provide shared-ride taxi service are eligible subrecipients. Taxi companies that provide exclusive-ride service are not eligible subrecipients, however, may participate as contractors under contract to an eligible subrecipient or designated recipient.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FY 2015 and 2016 GRANT CYCLE

Date	Activity
• June 19, 2015	• Program announcement and dissemination of grant applications.
• July 8, 2015	• Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan meeting 2:00 pm at GM&O Building. All applicants should attend.
• July 23, 2015	• Deadline for submission of applications
• July/August 2015	• Selection committee convenes to review applications; schedule site visits
• TBA	• Grant Application to FTA via TEAM
• TBA	• Awards Announced
• TBA	• Vehicle Order Submission

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Funding opportunities from the ADECA Energy Division

Funding opportunities from the ADECA Energy Division are listed below. All proposals are due by Friday, August 21, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eligibility should be verified before submitting a proposal.

[Energy Codes Training RFP](#) *Soliciting proposals from qualified applicants to provide training on the statewide commercial and residential energy codes*

[Energy-Efficient Retrofits of Agriculture Facilities RFP](#) [Addendum - Agriculture Facilities RFP](#) *Soliciting proposals from agriculture facilities and farms in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements in their facilities*

[Energy-Efficient Retrofits of Non-Profit Organizations RFP](#) [Addendum - Non-Profit Organizations RFP](#) *Soliciting proposals from non-profit organizations in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements to their buildings*

[Energy-Efficient Retrofits of K-12 Schools RFP](#) [Addendum - K-12 Schools](#) *Soliciting proposals from public school systems in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements in K-12 schools located within their jurisdiction*

NOTE: The documents in this .zip folder apply to all Energy Division RFPs above. Click here: [Attachments](#)

Just For Fun

MAGNUS EFFECT

A bunch of guys decided to try and make a world record basketball goal shot. What happened to the ball is called the "magnus effect". The magnus effect creates the "curveball" in baseball. But how does it relate to transportation? That is *Just For Fun* ... Because watching a basketball drop 415 feet is just an awesome thing to watch.

What does this:



Have to do with this:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OSrvzNW9FE>

In the News

Congressman Bradley Byrne at Forum Alabama



Congressman Bradley Byrne (R-AL) was the keynote speaker at a Forum Alabama breakfast hosted by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce this morning.

Congressman Byrne gave a brief, fascinating history of Mobile, its port and international culture. He spoke of the importance of trade, and how the United States needed the world, and the world needs the United States, "the Mobile port is known worldwide, and voting on the TPA, trade agreements, it is an American issue. Half of a million people in Alabama are employed by trade, and 3900 business imported or exported in Alabama in 2012. It is in our best interest that we maintain being leader of the world. Being an international country, and being an international city, is the most American thing we can do."

In terms of military, Congressman Byrne said "we have a lot to lose if we pull back our military. The US Navy protects the sea lanes of the world. China would love to control the sea lanes. The best way to protect the sea lanes of the world, is Littoral combat ships that are built right here in Mobile, AL."

If anything, there are at least three things that his fellow legislatures know about Congressman Byrne, and those three things are those ships, those fish and that bridge. Thank you Congressman Byrne for all that you do for our city, our region and our country.

Alabama will lose transportation money unless Congress acts



By [Howard Koplowitz | hkoplowitz@al.com](mailto:Howard.Koplowitz@al.com)

on July 14, 2015 at 11:02 AM, updated July 14, 2015 at 11:11 AM

Alabama won't be reimbursed by the federal government for transportation projects unless Congress reauthorizes transportation funding set to expire at the end of the month, U.S. Transportation Department Secretary Anthony Foxx warned in a letter Tuesday to Alabama DOT Director John Cooper.

Foxx also used the letter to urge Cooper to lobby Congress on a long-term transportation bill. Federal lawmakers have been using stop-gap measures to provide transportation funding for the last six years.

"We need your help explaining to Congress why a short-term bill that perpetuates chronic underinvestment is unacceptable," the transportation secretary said.

If Congress doesn't pass a long-term bill or another extension, Alabama won't have access to federal transportation employees to approve state projects, authorize new ones or change existing projects, Foxx said. The state also won't be reimbursed for projects.

"Congress's failure to pass a long-term bill is of great concern to all of us who are engaged in the work of building and maintaining our nation's transportation infrastructure," he continued. "Careening from self-inflicted crisis to self-inflicted crisis undermines our system."

Without congressional action, the Federal Highway Trust Fund "will approach critical cash balance levels in August, requiring the implementation of cash management protocols," according to Foxx. The Transportation Department will try to fully reimburse Alabama's projects under that scenario, but might not be able to if the fund becomes insolvent.

The Obama administration has proposed funding surface transportation at \$478 billion over six years. Alabama would experience an increase in Federal Transit Administration funding, from \$53 million to \$81 million.

U.S. 98 poised to get a traffic signal reboot by 2016



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

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on July 15, 2015 at 2:57 PM, updated July 15, 2015 at 2:58 PM

Whether it's post-high school football game traffic filling out of Fairhope Municipal Stadium or everyday rush hour traffic creating bottlenecks, U.S. 98 can be a congested mess for Eastern Shore motorists.

Elected officials hope by late 2016, the highway can be less of a pain for motorists.

The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization – a group of elected officials and engineers who coordinate federal money for transportation projects – will vote July 22 on a \$3.3 million project to install adaptive traffic signals at 28 spots along U.S. 98 from Spanish Fort Boulevard south to Baldwin County 32.

If approved, it will be the largest project undergone by the planning group since its inception in late 2012.

"I'm proud it's coming to fruition," Baldwin County Commissioner and MPO Policy Board member Chris Elliott said Wednesday. "There had been some discussion as to whether (the Alabama Department of Transportation) was or wasn't going to pay for it. The important part is it's getting done."

The Eastern Shore MPO, which has amassed \$3.6 million since 2012, will spend \$2.58 million on the project that synchronizes traffic lights according to traffic volumes.

The balance of the funding includes \$586,344 from ALDOT, \$31,726 from the city of Fairhope, \$42,154 from Daphne and \$6,062 from Spanish Fort.

The overall cost, Elliott said, is much cheaper than making any physical changes to U.S. 98 or its intersections. Continue [HERE](#)

Changes afoot for Eastern Shore MPO as road project suggestions surface



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

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on July 14, 2015 at 3:34 PM, updated July 14, 2015 at 3:35 PM

Since its formation in 2012, the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization has amassed \$3.6 million in federal funding to chip away at a growing list of expensive transportation needs in the ever-growing Baldwin County.

So far, very little has been spent although the county is pitching three larger projects for approval this month.

In addition, questions continue on how the MPO will move forward as its future as a county-supported entity could be in doubt. The group's Policy Board will likely discuss the MPO's future when it meets at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Daphne City Hall.

The future of the group is in flux. The MPO's only coordinator, Matthew Brown, will likely be moved from his position into a design engineer's job within the Baldwin County Highway Department. The position change, which will not affect Brown's annual \$72,448 salary, will be voted on by commissioners during their July 21 meeting.

Sara Hart, Brown's assistant, remains with the MPO as the only person to oversee the group. Brown will not oversee Wednesday's meeting.

"I expect that we will see some changes with the MPO administration as far as reduction in administration," Baldwin County Commissioner Chris Elliott said. "MPO is up and running. I'm not sure if we require two staff members there. I think we'll look at that."

Baldwin County taxpayers have funded the fledgling organization since the fall of 2012, but there has been interest cited about having the Eastern Shore's transportation needs administered by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. Continue [HERE](#)

Three Design Team Finalists Selected for I-10 Mobile River Bridge

The Alabama Department of Transportation has named the three design team finalists that will be reviewed in July by a Mobile-area selection panel for the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge design contract.

Michael Baker, LLC, Volkert, Inc., and Thompson Engineering, will make presentations to a seven member panel composed of local officials and community leaders. The panel will give a recommendation to the Director of Transportation, who is expected to name the selected design team following the presentations. Presentations are next week.



Transportation Research

U.S. Driving Nears 1 Trillion Miles In First Four Months of 2015 Nation's Driving Increases for 14th Month in a Row

WASHINGTON – New estimates released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

show that Americans drove 987.8 billion miles for the first four months of the year, topping the previous record – 965.5 billion – set in April 2007.

The new data, published in FHWA's latest "Traffic Volume Trends" report, a monthly estimate of U.S. road travel, show that Americans drove 267.9 billion vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) in April – the most ever driven in April and the highest mileage for the first quarter of any year – underscoring the need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure.

The April estimates show that the nation's driving has increased steadily for 14 consecutive months.

The April 2015 report also includes seasonally-adjusted data, which enable VMT comparisons with March and any other month in any year, from the USDOT's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Analysis of seasonally-adjusted VMT is an alternative to analysis of unadjusted VMT, which traditionally uses comparisons of a month to the same month in previous years to determine trends.

The seasonally-adjusted vehicle miles traveled for April 2015 were 262.4 billion miles, a 3.7 percent increase – or 9.5 billion more VMT – compared to the previous April and a 1.1 percent increase – or 2.9 billion more VMT – compared with March 2015. The estimates include passenger vehicle, bus and truck travel.

- See more at: <http://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-driving-nears-1-trillion-miles-first-four-months-2015#sthash.JaslPCl7.dpuf>

Citizen Reporting of Current Road Conditions

By Ms. Michelle Birdsall

In recent years, DOTs have increasingly used the practice of crowdsourcing to gather real-time information on weather and road conditions as a supplement to other road condition reporting techniques (e.g., field personnel reports and ITS devices). In a new report, [Citizen Reporting of Current Road Conditions](#), the Road Weather Management Program has documented five DOTs' experiences with a particular type of crowdsourcing: one in which the DOTs build the interface and train citizen reporters. Because these citizen reporting programs involve the training of recruited reporters, the quality and frequency of the road condition data is often more usable relative to data from other crowdsourcing techniques, such as mining social media. Moreover, because the data ingest system is built by the DOT, the reports can often be seamlessly ingested and disseminated through existing internal data management systems or traveler information outlets. An upcoming report (expected in the fall) will document key similarities and differences between three different crowdsourcing approaches: citizen reporting, social media mining and third-party smartphone applications.