



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, July 24, 2015

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Recently Completed Planning Studies

Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones
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Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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Congratulations to the Thompson team of engineers for being selected by the local committee to design the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. Please see *In The News*. The deadline for a new transportation bill or continuing resolution is July 31st, and the Senate debate on a long term bill has begun; see *Legislative Updates*. Why is this Senate Bill important to the Mobile MPO? See *Mobile MPO Updates*. This week's *Just For Fun*, will bug you...

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

Importance of New Bill to the Mobile MPO

(Please see *Legislative Updates* below for more information on the DRIVE act.)

Senators Wicker and Booker have filed their amendment (#2289) to increase the overall funding for STP and increase the share of STP that is distributed by population. The result of these changes would provide local areas with an additional \$1 billion in STP in the first year of the legislation compared to the existing base bill. It is vital that this amendment be accepted, because the base bill (DRIVE Act) actually represents a decrease in STP funding distributed to local areas. The Wicker/Booker amendment (SARPC has already contacted Senator Sessions and supported) would provide the Mobile MPO with an extra million dollars for our STP Attributable Funding program.

Mobile, AL 2015 annual federal Attributable: \$6,865,639

FY16 STP Suballocation (DRIVE Act): \$6,463,357 (\$402,282) -6.22%

FY16 STP Suballocation (Wicker Amdt): \$7,943,466 \$1,077,827 15.70%

ADA Transition Plans

SARPC staff is reaching out to each local government in the Mobile MPO to set up meetings next week to talk about ADA Transition Plans, funding, and requirements. Each City and Mobile County has to have an appointed ADA Coordinator. We would like this done ASAP prior to our meeting with you, your City Clerk (or County Admin), and the ADA Coordinator. Please call Kevin Harrison if there are any questions.

MPO Policy Board met last 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

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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 will be out in the next couple of weeks for public involvement, and the TCC/CAC and MPO Policy board will see these documents prior to adopting at **August 19th MPO Meeting.**

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](#).

A selection committee chose the Mobile-based firm Thompson Engineering Thursday to oversee the design process for the Interstate 10 bridge and Bayway widening projects. Thompson will assist the Alabama Department of Transportation with completing the environmental impact study required by the federal government in order to build the bridge, in addition to other structural design work. That will include studying storm surge for the two-lane widening of the Bayway, termination points in Baldwin County, a vibration analysis for historic structures and providing information for a bicycle-pedestrian path, said Vince Calametti, region engineer for the department of transportation.

Transportation officials interviewed the first round of six candidates, which was winnowed down to the final three. In addition to Thompson, Volkert, Inc and Michael Baker International each made it to the last round of the selection process. The local selection committee included Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Cartledge Blackwell with the Mobile Historic Development Commission; Mobile County Commission President Jerry Carl; Baldwin County Commissioner Chris Elliott; Jimmy Lyons, executive director for the Alabama State Port Authority and Casi Callaway with Mobile Baykeeper.

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

Debate Has Begun

The Senate voted Wednesday to proceed the debate on a transportation reauthorization bill. The combined package maintains the moniker of the "DRIVE Act" moniker, the name given to it by the EPW Committee (which deals primarily with roads). Despite its single-mode title, the bill contains funding for transit, transportation safety, bicycles, pedestrians, planning, and roads and bridges. A whirlwind process led to creation of the bill. The transit title, under the purview of the Banking Committee, was never marked up and no hearings were held to assist in its creation. The Commerce Committee only recently passed its bill, on a strictly party-line vote. And the Finance Committee piece of the puzzle, which is what funds the whole operation, was revealed only when the entire package was introduced. This chaotic approach resulted in a 1,000 page bill, and most Senators didn't receive a copy until about an hour before the first cloture vote, which failed. A second cloture vote Wednesday was successful, so debate began. You can find the most recent version of the bill [HERE](#).

Bill Analysis

Most importantly, this bill reflects much of what National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and other local government groups asked for, including: 100% suballocation of TAP, an increased share of STP funding (though this is a hollow victory, which can be turned into a real victory with passage of the Wicker-Booker amendment, as discussed above), funding for on-system, non-NHS bridges, and a fix for the requirement that transit be given a vote on the board of every MPO that represents a TMA.

If you've read the analysis of the EPW-passed bill, not a whole lot has changed from that version to this final version. The newest version of the bill requires that 50% of the expanded bridge set-aside be obligated to off-system bridges; and allows states to use up to 5% of their "anywhere in the state" STP funding on border-related projects. Otherwise, there aren't a lot of additional changes.

In terms of transit, as mentioned above, we had not seen the transit title until the full package was released. The good news for transit is that funding increases across the board for all programs. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) created a [helpful chart](#) to outline what the funding is for programs during the life of the bill. One important change is a significant increase in funding for the "bus and bus facilities" program, including the creation of a discretionary program. You can find an overview and section-by-section analysis prepared by the Banking Committee [HERE](#). As for the MAP-21 requirement that transit be given voting representation on MPO boards, the Senate bill would fix this by clarifying that this governance change is intended to take place within the existing state enabling statute or MPO by-laws; and that elected officials can wear "two-hats" when it comes to this requirement. We feel that short of removing the requirement all together, this language should reduce dramatically the negative unintended consequences of the requirement, and are pleased it was included.

Funding Opportunities

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

QUIT BUGGING ME

Mobile has it's termite swarms, and as far as I know, emergency crews have never had to shut a road down because it. Yesterday (7/23/15), in Iowa, the mayflies were so bad, they had to close the road! Millions of them piled knee deep in the road. They swarmed a police vehicle, and the noises of the passenger being attacked? Well that's *Just For Fun*....



<http://kdvr.com/2015/07/23/knee-high-piles-of-mayflies-force-iowa-bridge-to-temporarily-close/>

In the News

Thompson Engineering chosen to lead design team for I-10 Mobile River Bridge



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

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on July 23, 2015 at 6:21 PM, updated July 23, 2015 at 7:06 PM



A selection committee chose Mobile-based firm Thompson Engineering Thursday to oversee the design process for the Interstate 10 bridge and Bayway widening projects.

Thompson will assist the Alabama Department of Transportation with completing the environmental impact study required by the federal government in order to build the bridge, in addition to other structural design work.

That will include studying storm surge for the two-lane widening of the Bayway, termination points in Baldwin County, a vibration analysis for historic structures and providing information for a bicycle-pedestrian path, said Vince Calametti, region engineer for the department of transportation.

Transportation officials interviewed the first round of six candidates, which was winnowed down to the final three. In addition to Thompson, Volkert, Inc and Michael Baker International each made it to the last round of the selection process.

The local selection committee included Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Cartledge Blackwell with the Mobile Historic Development Commission; Mobile County Commission President Jerry Carl; Baldwin County Commissioner Chris Elliott; Jimmy Lyons, executive director for the Alabama State Port Authority and Casi Callaway with Mobile Baykeeper.

"Our first step is to negotiate this contract and once the contract is negotiated we'll be moving full speed toward that final environmental impact statement," Calametti said. Department of transportation officials said the agency has decided to "fast-track" to the contract allowing Thompson to begin work before a formal agreement is finalized.

The Federal Highway Administration approved the draft environmental impact statement for the project one year. The bridge was envisioned as a way to ease snarled traffic on the busy roads that cross the Mobile River and Mobile Bay. The bridge would start at what is currently Virginia Street and extend east to Baldwin County.

Jimmy Shumock, chief executive of Thomson Engineering, said leading the design for the bridge is an opportunity to deal with traffic, but is also a way to "reconnect them."

"Obviously we need to design an iconic bridge that represents Mobile and the history and we need to protect the environment as we do all of that. We need to be creative about solutions that gets traffic through here and makes Baldwin County better too." Continue [HERE](#)

Mobile, Baldwin delegation working on 'compromise' to recoup potentially half of General Fund-bound \$1B in BP settlement



By [Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com](mailto:Kelli.Dugan@al.com)

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on July 17, 2015 at 2:24 PM, updated July 17, 2015 at 2:25 PM

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne has not been shy about his displeasure with coastal Alabama's direct cut of expected BP oil spill settlement funds, and at least one member of the area's local legislative delegation contends talks are ongoing to increase Mobile and Baldwin counties' share.

State Rep. Margie Wilcox, R-Mobile, told a capacity crowd at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Forum Alabama breakfast Friday the local delegation is "trying to reach a compromise" with state representatives "to get at least half" of the \$1 billion...redirected to Mobile- and Baldwin-specific projects.

Specifically, she said, the delegation is targeting prime transportation projects in its negotiations with state leaders, including the proposed Interstate-10 Bridge and Bayway expansion project, completion of the long-stalled U.S. Highway 98 project and a long-discussed hurricane evacuation route that would connect south Mobile County with U.S. 98.

At issue is the distribution of nearly \$1.9 billion the state as a whole will receive for the months-long 2010 oil spill that ravaged its Gulf Coast beaches, communities and economy. Per the current arrangement, the state's General Fund is slated to receive more than half of that total figure – or \$1 billion, paid out over 18 years – while the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council is slated to receive only about \$308 million in Clean Water Act penalties resulting from the spill.

Wilcox' comments came after an audience member asked keynote speaker Byrne to offer guidance on how interested parties should proceed in making certain southwest Alabama counties receive their fair share of compensation.

Byrne, who reiterated his personal irritation with how Mobile and Baldwin counties have been treated throughout the settlement process to date, said the next moves fall squarely on the shoulders of state and local representatives.

"For the life of me, I can't understand why we would let \$1 billion get away from the coast," Byrne said, asking audience members to consider the outrage had one cent of aid been diverted to state or federal coffers following the April 2011 tornado outbreak in the north-central portion of the state.

"Unfortunately, at this point I can't do anything about it as a federal official. It's up to the state officials," he said, after which Wilcox took the floor.

Orange Beach mayor, sick of clogged traffic, talks building halt



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

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on July 17, 2015 at 3:45 PM, updated July 17, 2015 at 3:50 PM

With condominium development pressing on the beach and new residential projects dotting its back-bay areas, Orange Beach has reached a tipping point, according to Mayor Tony Kennon.

Unless the city gets traffic relief, he said, "We're really going to have to start considering a building moratorium of some kind."

He said that the summer gridlock is putting the city's quality of life under siege.

City leaders continue to push for a bridge over Wolf Bay to open a new throughway. But funding hasn't materialized, and even if construction started now, the bridge would be years away.

The Alabama Department of Transportation is working to ease congestion with new roadway projects near The Wharf and at the intersection of Canal Road and Alabama 161.

But a larger concern for the city is the intersection of Alabama 161 and Perdido Beach Boulevard.

Alabama 161 is the city's sole northbound beach connection; Perdido Beach Boulevard is the east-west beach highway that crosses into Florida.

On the Gulf-side heel of that intersection, two condo towers are being proposed, the 37-story Ascension and 36-story Grace. Nathan Cox, who heads the development company, GCOF Orange Beach Gulf Front LLC, is working with ALDOT and Orange Beach to consider traffic options before seeking a hearing before the City Council.

ALDOT's director, John Cooper, will be involved in the conversation next week, according to Kathryn Schulte, spokeswoman with the agency's Southeast Region. Continue [HERE](#)

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.JasIPCI7.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.