



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 12, 2015

Volume 14, Number 10

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Recently Completed Planning Studies

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The Mobile MPO Policy Committee will meet next week, Wednesday, June 17th, and the ALDOT STIP Public Meeting is Monday night, June 15th, (*please see Mobile MPO Updates*). There are a couple of transit funding opportunities out there, and more to come; see *Funding Opportunities*. This week's "Just For Fun" is "electrifying".

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable weekend!

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

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Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Policy Board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 17th, 2015 at 10:00 am.

The Mobile MPO Meeting was postponed from this week to next week, due to the potential for a lack of quorum. Please plan on attending next week on June 17th.

The first item on the agenda will be to review the 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, we will be reviewing the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which will include a self-certification resolution. The TCC/CAC met last week and developed a balanced STP Attributable Schedule for the 2016-2019 TIP. Those members of the Mobile MPO and TCC/CAC were mailed the funding schedule and minutes of the last meetings. Lastly, there will be a discussion pertaining to scheduling our Urban TAP Funds.

Both the draft UPWP and the draft TIP are being submitted to ALDOT for comment prior to public comment. 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. A final item on the agenda will be an update on the Downtown Mobility Study.

STIP Public Meeting

South Alabama residents will get the chance to learn about the many projects under way for the Alabama Department of Transportation next week, as well as voice any questions or concerns they have about the road work in their county. ALDOT will hold two public meetings for South Alabama next week in hopes of gathering any input regarding the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), with one of those being hosted at the ALDOT Southwest Region office.

5-7 PM SOUTHWEST	June 15, 2015 Monday DOT Office	1701 I-65 West Service Road North Mobile, Alabama Edwin Perry (251) 470-8243
	June 16, 2015 Tuesday	129 Grove Hill Avenue East Grove Hill, Alabama

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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](#).

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/>



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

Projects Within Region Let June 26th, 2015

Mobile County

None at this time

Baldwin County

None at this time

Escambia County

For constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Various Routes in Brewton as indicated in the plans. Length 4.038 mi. the Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$619,367 to \$757,004 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

House Ways and Means to Hold Transportation Funding Hearing

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) announced this week his committee will hold a hearing to discuss sustainable long-term Highway Trust Fund financing options. The hearing is scheduled for June 17 at 10:00 AM. Current funding is expected to run out sometime later this summer, so Congress will have to identify new funding even if it intends to do another short-term extension.

House Passes THUD

The House narrowly passed the FY2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 2577), commonly referred to as THUD, by a mere six votes. The \$55.3 billion funding measure was wrought with amendments and faced opposition on both sides. The conservative Heritage Action group opposed the bill for appropriating too much deficit spending for infrastructure projects, and all but three Democrats opposed the bill for cutting funding for Amtrak, TIGER grants, and Transit Capital Improvement grants. The Senate version of the THUD bill introduced in May would allocate \$376 million more overall.

Foxx Promotes GROW America at NARC Conference

At NARC's 49th Annual Conference & Exhibition in Raleigh, North Carolina, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx addressed the mounting challenges faced by MPOs due to a lack of certainty in federal funding. Foxx painted a dire picture of deteriorating infrastructure strained by population growth and increasing freight demand, and of a long list of necessary maintenance and expansion projects either stalled or waiting in the queue for federal funds. The Administration's GROW AMERICA Act would, according to Foxx, increase investment in all modes of surface transportation and give large MPOs a greater share of federal funding and well as greater control over the allocation of that funding.

Funding Opportunities

CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR FUNDING TRANSIT SERVICES FOR FY 2016 (July 1st deadline)

Proposed budgets must be emailed to ALDOT no later than June 12, 2015.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Modal Programs Bureau is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program and the Section 5317 New Freedom (NF) Program. These Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs provide funding for transit related services that assist the state's population of low income and disabled individuals.

The following organizations are eligible to apply for the Sections 5316 & 5317 programs:

1. Private nonprofit organizations
2. State or local governmental bodies; and
3. Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

Federal funds administered through ALDOT are only extended to organizations providing transit services in the small urban and rural areas of the State.

Available federal funds for the Section 5316 JARC program are approximately \$550,762 for small urban areas and \$1,023,502 for the rural areas. Available federal funds for the Section 5317 NF program are approximately \$611,584 for small urban areas and \$690,884 for the rural areas.

A 50% local match is required for operating funds and a 20% local match is required for capital and planning funds.

The selection process will be based on the following criteria: statement of need and organizational capacity; project budget and cost effectiveness; coordination and program outreach; implementation plan; and customer service and accessibility. Projects funded through these programs must be derived from a locally regional coordinated transportation plan.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and state management plan can be found at <http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/transit.htm>.

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Planning Council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed. Each Regional Planning Council must review grant applications to ensure compliance with federal coordination requirements prior to formal submission to ALDOT. Only those grant applications submitted for funding consideration by the Regional Planning Councils will be considered for funding. The deadline for submissions to the appropriate regional planning council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed is **5:00 P.M. on July 1, 2015**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. **Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.**

After applications are reviewed, prioritized, and approved by ALDOT, applications will be submitted to the FTA Region IV office for funding consideration.

For questions or comments concerning the grant application or if the information is needed in another language contact: Sharon Coats, ALDOT, Modal Programs Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110; (334) 353-6443 or coatss@dot.state.al.us.

Proposed budgets must be emailed to ALDOT no later than June 12, 2015.

ALDOT does not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, or national origin.

FY 2016 SECTION 5310 NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (June 17th deadline)

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 Federal funds administered through ALDOT are only extended to agencies providing transit services in the small urban and rural areas of the State.

Available federal funds for the Section 5310 program are approximately \$2,218,584 for small urban areas and \$3,187,286 for the rural areas. A local match of 20% is required for this capital program. The selection process may be based on the following criteria: financial and management capability; service needs; proposed services; utilization of requested equipment; and service coordination. Projects funded through these programs must be derived from a locally regional coordinated transportation plan. The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and state management plan can be found at <http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/transit.htm>. Completed grant applications must be submitted to the appropriate regional planning council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Section 5310 transportation services are proposed.

Each regional planning council must review grant applications to ensure compliance with federal coordination requirements prior to formal submission to ALDOT. Only those grant applications submitted for funding consideration by the Regional Planning Councils will be considered for funding. The deadline for submissions to the appropriate regional planning council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Section 5310 transportation services are proposed is 5:00 P.M. on June 17, 2015. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned.

Postmarked submissions will not be accepted. All applications will be reviewed, evaluated, prioritized, and approved by ALDOT prior to the development and submission of a consolidated grant application to the FTA Region IV office for funding consideration. If there are questions or comments concerning the grant application or if more information is needed in another language or alternative formats, contact Sharon Coats, ALDOT, Modal Programs Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110; (334) 353-6443 or coatss@dot.state.al.us

Incentive Opportunities

As the third round of the Every Day Counts initiative moves into high gear, the Federal Highway Administration is offering incentives and technical assistance to help the highway community mainstream innovations.

Fiscal year 2015 assistance is now available from the [State Transportation Innovation Council Incentive program](#). The program provides resources—technical assistance and funds—to help STICs make innovations standard practice. States can get up to \$100,000 a year for activities such as implementing system process changes, organizing peer exchanges and developing guidance and specifications. Contact the state FHWA Division Office or Mary Huie at (202) 366-3039 for information.

The Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program continues to accept applications through Grants.gov. Incentive funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects using innovation on any aspect of highway transportation, including planning, financing, environment, design, construction, materials, pavements, structures and operations. See the [AID Demonstration Web page](#) or contact Ewa Flom at (202) 366-2169 for details.

[Section 1304](#) of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act allows an increase in the federal funding share of up to 5 percent on eligible projects that use innovations.

Just For Fun

This week in year 1752 is when Benjamin Franklin flew his kite and made history when discovering that lightning is electricity. Although there are [naysayers](#), we have come a long way in over 260 years. In fact, the [University of Alabama is in strong showing in the first year of the nation vehicle contest](#). There are [FAST electric cars](#), and there are electric cars that can go [long distances](#) by BMW. It is all fascinating where we have been, and where we have to go.....



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5mzFb2hhHY>

And then there is this idiot, and that is *Just for Fun* .



In the News

Uber arrives in Mobile ahead of City Council vote

By: DALE LIESCH

Mayor Sandy Stimpson next Tuesday will introduce an amendment to an ordinance to allow ridesharing service Uber to begin operating in the city.

The amendment, which is also sponsored by Councilman Levon Manzie and applies to all Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), would allow the service and its drivers to operate under conditions similar to taxicabs, or other car-for-hire services.

For instance, Uber drivers would be required to get a permit from the city for an annual fee of \$500 and the vehicles must be inspected by a mechanic before being used for the service. Also, drivers must have, at least, the state minimum of liability insurance and Uber will also cover drivers with an additional \$1 million in coverage.

Amelia Easterling, operations manager for Mobile Bay Transportation Company, said she's concerned over the insurance regulations because they change depending on whether the driver has the application turned on or off.

"Many drivers get around this because they will pick passengers up while the (application) is turned off," she said.

In addition, the proposed amendment ensures drivers will be given a background check through Uber. This differs from other cab regulations, as those background checks are normally done locally by the Mobile Police Department. Stimpson's Chief of Staff Colby Cooper said MPD Chief James Barber would have oversight on those background checks, but didn't elaborate on what that oversight might entail. Continue [HERE](#)

Coastal officials want passenger rail service back on track



By [John Sharp | jsharp@a1.com](mailto:jsharp@a1.com)

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

on June 12, 2015 at 7:00 AM, updated June 12, 2015 at 7:07 AM

"All aboard!" is something that hasn't been shouted in these parts for a decade.

But despite political pressure in Washington, D.C. over Amtrak's funding, local officials and consultants are hopeful that passage of passenger rail reauthorization legislation could signify a milestone toward restoring activity along the Gulf Coast.

"This isn't about nostalgia or rail fans, it's about economic development and it's about commerce," said John Robert Smith, chairman of the board with Transportation for America – a non-profit alliance that pushes for grassroots support of progressive transportation policy in the U.S.

"It's about security and evacuation and movement of goods in and out before and after tropical storms and hurricanes," Smith, a former long-time mayor of Meridian, Miss., added. "It impacts southerner's lives on many different levels."

Congressional action

The eyes of passenger rail supporters will be fixed on the U.S. Senate on June 24, when its version of a passenger rail reauthorization bill surfaces. A House version, approved earlier this year, requires the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a study into what kind of service can be restored east of New Orleans, what markets could be served, how much it costs and how it could be financed.

The House version of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 calls for a working group to evaluate restoring service between New Orleans and Orlando. A similar group is expected to be included in the Senate version.

Under the House legislation, the group's membership would include representatives of Amtrak, the states and communities along the proposed route, regional transportation and metropolitan planning organizations, the Southern Rail Commission (SRC), and freight railroads whose tracks may be used for the passenger trains.

If the legislation is passed in the Senate, the group would have nine months to complete its review. If legislation is not approved, the FRA could opt to still do a study of restoring the Gulf Coast rail, but the timeline to do so could last up to two years, Smith said.

"The House passed legislation that they will have to study this anyway," Beth Osborne, senior policy advisor with Transportation for America, said. "This planning is to restart service that really should not have ended and really should have been up and running once the system was fixed, post-Katrina." Continue reading [HERE](#)

2015 International Paris Air Show

There is lots of talk about Alabama's presence in Paris next week for the 2015 International Paris Air Show.

[Alabama's aerospace sector flying high into 2015 International Paris Air Show](#)

[U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne on 2015 Paris Air Show: 'We aren't talking in the abstract anymore'](#)

[Alabama aerospace leadership needs exports](#)

Transportation Research

Investing in a Time of Climate Change

A major new global financial report finds that investors who remain ignorant of or deny climate science will be big money losers compared to those who are climate-savvy.

The Mercer Research report, "[Investing in a Time of Climate Change](#)," details the prospects — and the pitfalls — of various climate scenarios. For the report, "Mercer collaborated with 16 investment partners, collectively responsible for more than US\$1.5 trillion, to produce the report," including Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and "the private sector arm of the World Bank Group."

A Bloomberg [column](#) by investment guru Barry Ritholtz summed up the report: "In the real world, climate-change deniers are and will be giant money losers."

The report has several key findings. Clearly, "climate change will give rise to investment winners and losers." Some industries, like coal, will likely see average annual returns over the next decade "eroding between 26% and 138%," depending on how aggressively the world attempts to fight climate change. Other industries, like renewables, could see average annual returns increase by up to 97 percent over the 10-year period — if the world does seriously move toward a 2°C pathway

coming out of the Paris climate talks this December.

The report identifies three phases investors may go through — “Climate-Unaware Future Takers,” “Climate-Aware Future Takers,” and finally “Climate-Aware Future Makers.”

Driving Topped 262 Billion Miles In March, New Data Show

U.S. Drivers Set New Record with Miles Traveled

WASHINGTON – New estimates released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) show that Americans drove 261.7 billion vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) in March of this year, which is the most ever driven in March. Throughout the first quarter of the year, the nation drove 720.1 billion VMT – the highest for any year’s first quarter. The increase in travel on America’s roads underscores the need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure.

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration announced a plan to help build and maintain America’s roads with a \$478 billion, six-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the [GROW AMERICA Act](#). The plan would increase state funding levels to \$317 billion; an increase of about 29 percent over current levels, and makes critical investments in infrastructure needed to promote long-term economic growth, enhance safety and efficiency, and support jobs for the 21st century.

The 720.1 billion VMT driven on U.S. roads in the first quarter of the year beats the previous record of 705.7 billion set in 2006, and doubles the 345.5 billion VMT of the first quarter of 1982. Continue [HERE](#)
