



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Volume 10, Number 11

## In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET JUNE 27TH, 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](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org)

Kevin Harrison, PTP  
Director of Transportation  
[kharrison@sarpc.org](mailto:kharrison@sarpc.org)

Tom Piper  
Senior Transportation Planner  
[tpiper@sarpc.org](mailto:tpiper@sarpc.org)

Monica Williamson  
Transportation Planner  
[mwilliamson@sarpc.org](mailto:mwilliamson@sarpc.org)

There is an informative video in this week's *Legislative Updates* concerning the Highway Trust Fund, and for this week's *Just for Fun*: go eat a strawberry. Congratulations to Mobile for making the list of [Z Pint Size Towns That Deliver Big On Fun](#). This weekend is the Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival in Foley.

Have great weekend

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



[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)

check us out on FACEBOOK

706-1CAR

## Mobile MPO Updates

The Mobile MPO met May 21<sup>st</sup>. 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.

### Carryover Funds

One of the items that was discussed was that the MPO send a letter to ALDOT discussing the recent decrease in our STP Attributable carryover funds. That letter was sent last week, and all MPO and TCC/CAC members were copied.

### 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](#).

### FTA 5310

Although applications were due to us April 30<sup>th</sup>, the applications are still under review for the FTA 5310 Urban Area funding. As most of you know we are now the Designated Recipient (DR) for the dedicated FTA 5310 funds for the Mobile Urban Area. We had several applications submitted prior to the deadline, and they are currently under review. Awards should be announced shortly. Those that applied, we have been in contact with you, and thank you for your patience.

Anthony Johnson  
Transportation Planner  
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

## Projects Within Region Let June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

---

### MOBILE COUNTY

for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on West Lee Street from Grand Boulevard to Kansas Street in Chickasaw. Length 0.435 mi.

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

## Legislative Updates

---

**President Obama's proposed \$302 billion transportation bill has been introduced in the House, though the chamber is unlikely to do much with the measure.**

By Keith Lang

The bill, which has been dubbed the Grow America Act, would extend federal transportation that is currently scheduled to expire at the end of September for four years.

The measure is being sponsored by Washington, D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) and Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis.), who is retiring at the end of his term. It calls for using approximately \$150 billion from a corporate tax reform proposal that has stalled on Capitol Hill to help pay for transportation projects.

Norton said in a statement that Petri was introducing Obama's bill at her request because it was important to give the president's proposal a full hearing in the lower chamber.

"With the goal of trying to get greater focus on surface transportation reauthorization before the Highway Trust Fund becomes insolvent, I was in touch with Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx about introducing the administration's bill," she said. "He agreed, and, subsequently Chairman Tom Petri, as a courtesy, agreed to introduce the bill at the request of the administration."

Lawmakers are trying to find a way to close a shortfall in transportation funding that is estimated to be as high as \$15 billion before the Department of Transportation runs out of money for its Highway Trust Fund, which budget analysts have said could happen in August without congressional action.

The traditional source for transportation funding is revenue that is collected by the federal gas tax, which has been stagnant since 1993 and was not indexed to inflation. The tax only brings in about \$34 billion per year, however, and the current level of transportation spending infrastructure is about \$50 billion annually.

Transportation advocates have pushed Congress to increase the gas tax for the first time in two decades to close the gap, but lawmakers have been reluctant to raise taxes in the middle of an election year.

Obama has said his proposal would provide enough money to increase the amount of annual transportation to approximately \$75 billion.

Norton said Thursday that the administration's "four-year bill is a timely contribution as Congress works towards passage of a long-term surface transportation authorization, and should provide guidance and ideas as we develop legislation to set the future course of these vital programs."

"The Grow America Act recognizes that we have fallen behind, and calls for increasing investments in modernizing the nation's roads, bridges, railways, and transit systems," Norton said. "We cannot address our infrastructure deficit by just continuing to provide baseline levels of funding."

The title of Obama's proposal stands for Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America.

---

### Fix The Trust Fund

Posted by Patrick Natale, P.E.

When I go to Capitol Hill, too many Congressmen tell me they aren't hearing from their constituents on

infrastructure issues. I then ask, “But are they calling about losing their jobs? Or not being able to make ends meet?”

The Congressmen always reply, “Of course.”

As I often tell our elected leaders, these issues are not mutually exclusive; they are one and the same! Federal funding for roads, bridges, and transit is set to go over a cliff by the end of August. If it does, projects will stop, jobs will be lost, prices will go up, and public safety will be jeopardized.



The pending insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund is a complex funding issue that only Congress can solve. Yet, the consequences of the Highway Trust Fund issue aren't complex whatsoever—they will have a massive impact on American families and businesses.

The question is simple: how can we convince the public to tell Congress that going over the Highway Trust Fund funding cliff is simply not an option?

This week, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) launched FixTheTrustFund.org—a new grassroots campaign for families and business, giving them the tools they need to motivate Congress and find a sustainable, long-term funding solution to America's surface transportation funding crisis.

## Funding Opportunities

---

### **The Federal Transit Administration (FTA): Ladders of Opportunity Initiative**

**Deadline August 4<sup>th</sup>.**

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	Dale Hurst
Office Number: 334-271-7803	Office Number: 334-271-7882
Email: <a href="mailto:asmiley@adem.state.al.us">asmiley@adem.state.al.us</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:adh@adem.state.al.us">adh@adem.state.al.us</a>

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

---

## **Walk Friendly Communities Now Taking Applications**

CHAPEL HILL, NC — The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) has opened the eighth round of the Walk Friendly Communities (WFC) application process. Communities are able to submit applications to the program by visiting <http://www.walkfriendly.org/assessment>.

Applications are due by June 16, 2014.

PBIC recently named Boulder, Colo., Denver, Colo. and Lakeland, Fla. as new Walk Friendly Communities and re-designated Charlottesville, Va. as a Gold Level community. Currently, 47 communities nationwide have earned Walk Friendly status.

To assist applicants in collecting and preparing their responses, PBIC offers an interactive version of the application. This text version can be circulated among an application team to facilitate the internal review process prior to submission on June 16. All applications must still be submitted through the online application system by creating an account. To download the text version of the application, please visit [http://www.walkfriendly.org/get\\_started.cfm](http://www.walkfriendly.org/get_started.cfm).

WFC is a national recognition program to encourage towns and cities across the United States to establish or recommit to a high priority for safe walking. Assessing the communities' commitment to improve conditions related to walking, including safety, mobility, access and comfort, PBIC makes designations based on a Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze level, and all communities receive detailed feedback on where and how they can improve. A list of current Walk Friendly Communities is available at [www.walkfriendly.org/communities](http://www.walkfriendly.org/communities).

Officially launched in October 2010, the WFC program is funded by FedEx Corp. and the Federal Highway Administration. For more information, visit [www.walkfriendly.org](http://www.walkfriendly.org), or direct your questions to [info@walkfriendly.org](mailto:info@walkfriendly.org).

## Just For Fun

---

Today is Friday the 13th and a [full moon](#), and that [won't happen again until 2049](#)....

The Dutch Centre for Insurance Statistics (CVS) on June 12, 2008, stated that "fewer accidents and reports of fire and theft occur when the 13th of the month falls on a Friday than on other Fridays, because people are preventatively more careful or just stay home. Statistically speaking, driving is slightly safer on Friday the 13th, at least in the Netherlands; in the last two years, Dutch insurers received reports of an average 7,800 traffic accidents each Friday; but the average figure when the 13th fell on a Friday was just 7,500."

It is also the full moon and what is called the "[Strawberry Moon](#)". Weird things can happen on full moons, especially considering today's date. And strawberry's are weird; they are the only fruit that wear their seeds on the outside, and they are member of the rose family. So this week's *Just for Fun*, is weird, as it relates to strawberries, and transportation.



## In the News

---

**President signs bill authorizing maritime-related projects at the Port of Mobile**



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

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

on June 10, 2014 at 2:15 PM, updated June 10, 2014 at 2:16 PM

MOBILE, Alabama -- A bill signed by the president would allow federal support for dredging and other maritime-related activities at the Port of Mobile.

President Barack Obama placed his signature on the Water Resources Reform and Development Act at a ceremony at the White House early Tuesday.

The law authorizes Congress to appropriate funding for infrastructure projects along waterways across the country, including \$5 million for dredging in Mobile. The port is also in line to receive [funding under a special designation for so-called energy transfer ports](#).

Any port that handles more than \$40 million worth of cargo, with at least 25 percent of it used for commercial energy production is eligible. Ports in five states -- Alabama, Virginia, Maryland, Texas and Louisiana -- were selected.

The law is passed primarily to support the Army Corps of Engineers' activities in flood control and harbor maintenance. However, it does not allocate any funding. Congress appropriates funding in another transportation bill that has not yet been passed.

---

### **Battling beach traffic: Gulf Shores, Foley pursue \$2.8M in high-tech signal upgrades**



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

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

June 09, 2014 at 3:34 PM, updated June 09, 2014 at 9:38 PM

GULF SHORES, Alabama -- While record-breaking tourism numbers and a rebounding economy are good for south Baldwin County, Ala. 59 -- the main beach-bound highway -- is overloaded more often than not during the summer months.

In order to improve the situation, officials in Gulf Shores and Foley are working toward a goal of implementing a high-tech traffic signal system at 30 intersections on Ala. 59, stretching from the Beach Express down to the Baldwin's sandy beaches.

The upgrades would be based on an integrated computer software system that links cameras at each intersection, adjusting signal times based on real-time traffic flow.

A study conducted by Birmingham-based Skipper Consulting Inc. estimated the project would cost \$2,849,000. Gulf Shores having 13 out of the 30 signals would be responsible for \$958,000 and Foley with 17 signals would take on \$1,891,000. Each city would be required to pay pre-construction and engineering/inspection fees on top of about 50 percent of the construction costs. The Alabama Department of Transportation would pick up the rest. Continue [\[HERE\]](#)

---

### **Mobile Regional ups the digital ante**



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

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

on June 12, 2014 at 7:00 AM, updated June 12, 2014 at 7:04 AM

Mobile Regional Airport has launched both an enhanced website and phone app network, designed in concert to improve the customer experience.

"We believe this partnership (with DigiPro Media) provides Mobile Regional Airport with a digital presence that is an effective, scalable tool to tie in our community's air travel needs with commerce and tourism as we embrace the economic growth facing our community," said Roger Wehner, the Mobile Airport Authority's executive director.

"It will provide valuable exposure across the entire Gulf Coast region while connecting local business professionals and proprietors with tourists and business travelers visiting Mobile," he said.

You can download the app on Google Play or iTunes, and click [here](#) to check out the new website.

Specifically, the new site provides real-time flight status, up-to-the-minute route tracking, integrated flight check-in functionality and ground transportation services. Additionally, the new platform incorporates an interactive directory that ties local businesses and organizations together using multi-screen optimized technology. New features include a portal to purchase airline tickets online, community and airport events, promotions and instant site updates for late breaking news.

---

### 'Dolly Parton Bridge' repairs, lane closures to begin Sunday, highway officials report



By [Emily Hill Lehill@al.com](mailto:Emily.Hill.Lehill@al.com)

[Follow on Twitter](#)

on June 12, 2014 at 6:18 PM, updated June 12, 2014 at 7:39 PM

MOBILE, Ala. -- The Alabama Department of Transportation is set to award a construction contract Friday and repairs to the Interstate 65 Gen. W.K. Wilson Jr. Bridge are to begin Sunday, June 15. ALDOT South West Region Traffic Engineer Daniel Driskell said traffic will be re-routed and the repairs could involve contractors working from a barge in the Middle River. Repairs will take about five weeks, he said.

Beginning Sunday, one lane of the southbound side of the bridge, known locally as the "Dolly Parton Bridge," will be closed. The following week the northbound side of the bridge will be closed and the southbound side will have north and south bound lanes.

ALDOT Southwest Region Public Information Officer Kathryn Hamlett said the area isn't as traveled as other areas, with the average daily traffic count of the I-65 bridge about 30,000 cars per day compared to the George Wallace Tunnel's 75,000 cars per day (90,000 during the summer travel season). However, in each direction, Hamlett said there will be a little more congestion. Continue [HERE](#)

## Transportation Research

---

### 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

---

### The League of American Bicyclists publishes new report of Bicycle Safety

Last week, The League of American Bicyclists released a new report cataloging findings from a year of tracking bicyclist fatalities. For a 12-month period, they set about the grim task of tracking and documenting every fatal traffic crash involving a bicyclist. They also wanted to offer a place to remember the victims and raise the hope that their deaths would at least inform efforts to prevent such tragedies in the future. The result was the Every Bicyclist Counts initiative. Over the course of the project they documented 628 fatal bike crashes. You can read more and find the report [HERE](#).