



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 20th, 2014

Volume 10, Number 12

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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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We hope you all are enjoying this last day of spring. Tomorrow is the Summer Solstice. This is the day the sun shines directly on the Tropic of Cancer and the day the northern hemisphere has the most hours of light for the year with nearly 15 hours of daylight. So get outside and soak up some sun.

Have great weekend

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



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

Mobile MPO Updates

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

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

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

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

Projects Within Region Let June 27th, 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

House Passes FY 2015 Transportation Appropriations Measure

The House of Representatives last week passed its fiscal year 2015 funding measure for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, which provides \$71 billion in funding for the U.S. Department of Transportation. The measure passed the House by a vote of 229-192.

The measure, which passed out of the House Appropriations Committee last month, provides \$40.3 billion for the Federal-aid Highway Program (provided Congress passes a bill reauthorizing the surface transportation programs and ensures the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund), equal to the FY 2014 level. The measure also includes \$15.7 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration (\$7.3 million less than the FY 2014 enacted level), which provides funding for FAA's Next Generation Air Transportation Systems and Contract Towers. In this measure, \$1.4 billion goes to the Federal Railroad Administration, a cut of \$193 million from the FY 2014 enacted level, and \$10.5 billion for the Federal Transit Administration (\$253 million under the FY 2014 enacted level). Transit formula grants would be funded at the FY 2014 level of \$8.6 billion, while New Starts funding would be reduced by \$252 million to \$1.7 billion in FY 2015. The bill provides \$824 million to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (up \$5 million from FY 2014 levels) and \$572 million for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The bill would cut Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants from the enacted FY 2014 level of \$500 million to \$100 million and also stipulates that the grants be used for roadway, bridge, port, and rail/intermodal improvements only.

Dozens of amendments were adopted before the final passage of the measure, including one by Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA) that prohibits funding for high-speed rail in California or for the California High-Speed Rail Authority (adopted by a vote of 227-186), two pertaining to Amtrak funding (one to prohibit funds to subsidize food and beverage service and another to prohibit funding to support "Amtrak's route that sustains the highest financial loss"), and one to prohibit funding to administer the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Roadside Survey (passed by voice vote).

"This is a sensible, balanced bill that prioritizes funding on important transportation programs that will help to boost our economy and improve our quality of life, while also providing housing options to those Americans most in need," said House Appropriations Committee Chair Hal Rogers in a statement upon the bill's passage. "This is a critically important, fiscally accountable piece of legislation, and I am pleased that the House today gave it our stamp of approval."

The Senate Appropriations Committee last week approved its own FY 2015 transportation funding measure, providing \$72 billion for transportation (see related AASHTO Journal story [here](#)).

The House THUD bill is available [here](#). A list of amendments adopted before the measure's final passage is available [here](#).

Highway Trust Fund: Short-Term Fix, Part One: Earlier this week, U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) announced his intention to develop a short term infusion into the rapidly diminishing Highway Trust Fund (HTF), to keep it operating past the anticipated late July default. Sen. Wyden's approach would extend the HTF for another six months, at a cost of approximately \$10 billion. The missing piece is how Sen. Wyden intends to pay for the patch, but Ranking Member Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has stated he believes that workable, short-term HTF funding solutions exist.

Highway Trust Fund: Short-Term Fix, Part Two: One funding idea that has already died on the vine is the U.S. House of Representatives' proposal to pay for the HTF patch by eliminating Saturday mail service. This proposal has a number of practical problems, and when numerous rank-and-file Republicans opposed it, leadership decided to look for other solutions. Rep. Eric Cantor's (R-VA) primary defeat and imminent departure from leadership gave House Republicans the opportunity to abandon this already unpopular idea. Yesterday, newly chosen Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) indicated that they plan to move in a new direction.

Highway Trust Fund: Long-Term Solvency, Part One: This week, Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Bob Corker (R-TN) floated a plan to increase the nation's fuel tax by twelve cents over two years, and index the tax rate for inflation. This increase would help erase the purchasing power erosion of the gas tax that has occurred since the tax was last increased in 1993. The Senators' plan would offset the increased fuel tax by making permanent several currently temporary tax provisions, though no details are available at this time. Legislative language has not yet been released. Click [HERE](#) for Sen. Corker's release, [HERE](#) for Sen. Murphy's

release, and [HERE](#) for a one-page summary of the proposal.

Highway Trust Fund: Long-Term Solvency, Part Two: Last week, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) introduced an alternative plan to provide long-term increased funding to the HTF. His proposal, *The Repeal and Rebuild Act* (HR 4848), would repeal the federal gas tax and replace it with a wholesale tax on barrels of oil that are processed into gasoline at \$6.75 per barrel (indexed to the National Highway Construction Cost Index and to CAFE standards to account for decreased fuel consumption attributed to the fuel economy standard). The diesel tax would remain in place and be indexed. In addition, Rep. DeFazio's plan would bond the future revenue to make up the looming HTF shortfall. The resulting changes would allow for a \$324 billion six-year authorization, and a near-term reduction in the price that consumers pay in fuel tax (eventually, the indexing will increase what drivers contribute at the pump from current levels, however). Click [HERE](#) for two-page summary of the proposal, and [HERE](#) for a video of DeFazio discussing his proposal.

The Shortfall: In follow-up to testimony given by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) before the Senate Finance Committee in May, CBO provided detailed answers to questions posed by Senators. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) asked how the looming shortfall impacts local governments' ability to plan for the future. CBO stated in part, "The possibility of such reductions [in federal funding]—and even larger ones in some years—creates uncertainty that makes program planning difficult for state and local governments and for private contractors, and it adds to the risk that some planned projects will not be started and that work on some ongoing projects might be delayed." Read the rest of the answer to Sen. Bennet's question and all of the questions that were posed to CBO [HERE](#).

Funding Opportunities

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

Deadline August 4th.

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

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

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

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

2014 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA)

Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program

Approx. Grant Amount: \$60,000

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

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

- Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOC)

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

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

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

Interested parties should contact:

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

Just For Fun

With the growing popularity of roundabouts in our region we've often wondered do they work better than traditional four way stops. The guys at MythBusters set out to answer that very question. The answer may surprise some of you. Click [HERE](#) to see their test.

In the News

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



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

PLATEAU COMMUNITY CENTER 850 EDWARDS STREET, MOBILE, ALABAMA

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

Scheduled Activities Include:

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

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

Baldwin Beach Express construction nearing the end of the road

By John Underwood independent@gulfcoastnewspapers.com

ROBERTSDALE, Ala. -- After nearly eight years, the Baldwin Beach Express, stretching from Interstate 10 to its connection with the Foley Beach Express, is nearing completion.

"It's been a long project, but overall it's gone faster than some other major projects in the past," said Baldwin County engineer Cal Market. "Our county and state leaders have done a good job working together to get the project done as fast as they did."

Just over one year ago, in March of 2013, local, county and state officials, including Gov. Robert Bentley, former Gov. Fob James and former U.S. Rep Sonny Callahan, broke ground for the Baldwin Beach Express and Interstate 10 interchange at the intersection of the Baldwin Beach Express and U.S. Highway 90.

The 12.8 mile Baldwin Beach Express began with the first initial study, completed in 2006 and work on the Baldwin Beach Express phases began shortly after that.

The total project cost for the Baldwin Beach Express corridor stretching from the Foley Beach Express to the Interstate 10 Interchange totaled just over \$86.7 million. The projects were funded with federal, state and county funding.

The Baldwin Beach Express was divided into design phases which included the corridor study totaling just under \$147,000, and then began with the first phase from Foley Beach Express to County Road 32 totaling \$5.6 million.

The third phase, stretching from U.S. Highway 90 to County Road 64, totaling \$16.7 million, and fourth phase, from County Road 64 to the Interstate 10 interchange, totaling \$16.2 million, were completed last year.

The second phase, which has been the largest and has taken the longest to complete, stretches seven miles and included the construction of 10 bridges, Market said.

That phase, which spanned from County Road 32 to U.S. Highway 90, totaled \$48,041,515.57, and was officially opened to traffic at around 10:15 a.m. on Thursday.

"Construction crews are finishing up the striping today if it doesn't rain," Market said on Wednesday, "and we should be opening up sometime on Thursday."

The final phase of the project, the \$10.6 million Interstate 10 interchange, will be completed around the end of July or the first of August, Market said, linking the interstate to the existing Foley Beach Express.

Alabama Coastal Foundation Hosting Crepe Myrtle Trail Bike Ride



Bikers of all ages are welcome to celebrate the beauty of coastal Alabama with the free 11-mile Crepe Myrtle Trail Ride on Saturday, June 21st!

The riders will travel from Arlington Park (1814 15th Street, Mobile 36615) with registration starting at 8:30 am and the ride kicking off at 9:00 am. This beginner-paced ride (8-12 mph) is designed to connect cyclists with the beauty and biodiversity of the western coast of Mobile Bay and is an informational tour about the ecology, economics and history of the area. Speakers at the ride will cover salt marshes and wetlands, birds and other estuarine animals; oyster reefs/living shorelines, and the history of the Brookley Aeroplex along with the economic impacts of Airbus.

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

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

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

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

Mobile County to Build Second Roundabout

Mobile County will start work Wednesday on the county's second roundabout at the intersection of Three Notch Road, Dawes Lane and Dawes Lane Extension. The \$536,000 intersection project for the one-lane roundabout will take up to seven months to complete. Detours will be in place and motorists are asked to exercise caution in the area.

Mobile County was the first county in the State of Alabama to receive federal dollars for construction of a roundabout under the High Risk Rural Road Program. It led to the construction of the roundabout at Grelot and Cody Roads.

The county had sought funding for the Three Notch and Dawes intersection to reduce the numbers of right angle crashes that occurred there and will receive federal assistance through the Federal Highway Safety Administration.

The roundabout can eliminate right-angle and head-on crashes because traffic flows in one direction. At the same time, the configuration forces a reduction in speed and eliminates the delays associated with stop-and-start traffic that occurs at a signalized intersection.

According to the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, roundabouts have delivered a 67 to 80 percent reduction in fatalities or incapacitating injuries and a 35 percent reduction in all crashes.

Transportation Research

Wetlands Compliance Workshop

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

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

Combined Intelligence - Working Together for Smarter Transportation

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

ITS 3C Summit

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

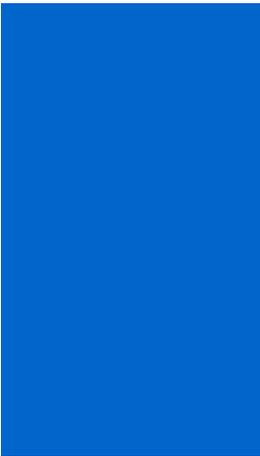
Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center

One South Water Street

Mobile, AL 36602

EPA Releases EnviroAtlas Ecosystem Mapping Tool

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) recently released [EnviroAtlas](#), a web-based interactive tool



that integrates over 300 data layers to help decision makers understand the implications of planning and policy decisions on ecosystems and the communities who depend on goods and services from these ecosystems. EnviroAtlas combines hundreds of data layers from EPA, the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), the [U.S. Forest Service](#), several universities, and other federal, state, and nonprofit organizations. Using powerful web application tools, it lets users generate customized maps and images that show the condition of their local community's air, water, and landscape, as well as population density and other demographic data. Users can investigate land cover patterns, see how ecosystem services reduce pollution, and compare indicators across selected communities. The data, maps, and information available through EnviroAtlas can help users learn about ecosystems and the benefits they provide—from clean air and water to protection from severe weather to materials for food, clothing, and pharmaceuticals—and visualize how decisions impact ecosystems and their ability to provide goods and services.

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