



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Volume 10, Number 13

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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 have contracted with Airsage to do another Bayway cell phone run, **FTA 5310 awards and ALDOT TAP awards**; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. The Highway Trust fund, what are they going to do about it? How about a gas tax increase! Please see *Legislative Updates*. Today is Helen Keller's birthday, and that is *Just For Fun*.

A very special thank you and congratulations to Mr. Cecil Colson with ALDOT who will be retiring in July. Cecil is one of those guys that is always a friend, and always there for us, and SARPC thanks you for your 42 years of service with ALDOT.

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

Some of you may remember, that on November 13, 2013, we had [Airsage](#) capture cell phones that were on the Bayway that day. This was fascinating information as it allowed us to graphically display the average location (state) of those devices. Which means, we captured all the folks from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and even a percentage from the pacific coast (we assume these are long haul truckers). The November 13<sup>th</sup> data gave us a good middle of the week snap shot of who is on our beloved Bayway. When we compared the cell phone data to the traffic counts for that day, we were able to assume a percentage of vehicles that were external to external trips (folks driving straight through our area).

We have asked Airsage to capture this data for us again, for July 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is peak travel for the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. To maintain data for a "typical" day, we are collecting on a Wednesday, but you can bet your cell phone that the tunnels will be congested by folks from all over the country. This data is not only an innovative way to estimate data needed for our travel demand forecast model, but it is real data. Data that one day, may be able to provide a glimpse into who would really be paying a toll, "if" a toll was ever placed on let's say... a new bridge over the Mobile River...



## ALDOT HAS ANNOUNCED TAP GRANT AWARDS

Once again, the counties of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has a great percentage of TAP applications to get funded. Statewide, about half of the applications that were submitted to ALDOT were funded and of the 42 applications funded, 9 applications were from cities within the SARPC region. That is over 20% of the State's awarded applications coming from our region. Congratulations to all that were awarded, and South Alabama!

- City of Robertsdale – Sidewalks - College Av., Fairground Rd \$389,126.00 Federal funds
- City of Atmore – Sidewalks along AL 21 and Various Streets \$400,000.00 Federal funds
- City of Chickasaw – West Grant Street Sidewalk \$232,731.00 Federal funds
- City of Satsuma – Sidewalks along US 43 & Various Streets \$364,426.40 Federal funds

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- City of Semmes – Sidewalks along US 98 & Various Streets \$196,576.00 Federal funds
- Town of Dauphin Island – Sidewalk Improvements \$219,990.00 Federal funds
- City of Citronelle – Downtown Streetscape - N. Main Street \$178,812.00 Federal funds
- City of Bay Minette – Sidewalks along Various Streets \$218,100.00 Federal funds
- City of Fairhope – US 98 & AL 104 Multi-Use Path \$400,000.00 Federal funds

#### **MOBILE URBAN AREA TAP PROJECTS**

Today and yesterday, ALDOT conducted pre-agreement meetings with the infamous Cecil Colson and project sponsors, for those TAP projects that were awarded with Mobile MPO TAP funds.

- Mobile County, for construction of a sidewalk along Burroughs Lane from Washington Boulevard to Burroughs Elementary School; \$126,534 (fed)
- City of Mobile, for construction of sidewalks on the North side of Old Shell Road from the Springhill Shopping Center to the intersection of Old Shell Road and Myrtlewood Lane; \$161,015 (fed)
- City of Chickasaw, for construction of sidewalks on 2nd Street from Johnston Street to West Lee Street; \$136,392 (fed)
- City of Prichard, for construction of sidewalks on the Historic Whistler Street Area from N. Price Avenue to N. Shelton Beach Road; \$158,001 (fed)

#### **FTA 5310**

Last 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

#### **Mobile MPO**

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 two weeks ago, 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](#).

## 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

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### **SEN. CARPER MOVES TO HIKE GAS TAX**

By Keith Laing

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) introduced legislation on Wednesday that would nearly double the amount paid by drivers to fund U.S. infrastructure improvements.

The increase is included in an amendment to a transportation funding stopgap bill that is being considered by the Senate this week.

Carper's proposal would increase the federal gas tax, which is currently priced at 18.4 cents per gallon, by 4 cents each year until it reaches 30 cents per gallon.

The Delaware lawmaker said it was important to debate the potential gas tax increase while lawmakers are considering a temporary measure to extend transportation funding beyond the midterm elections this week.

"Multiple bailouts of the Highway Trust Fund have added more than \$54 billion to our nation's debt since 2009," Carper said in a statement.

"That's why in 2010, former Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio) and I called for a gradual increase in federal gas and diesel taxes – which have not been adjusted since 1993 – as part of any comprehensive deficit reduction plan," he continued. "Today, I still believe that re-establishing the purchasing power of the fuel tax is the best policy for funding our federal transportation program."

Lawmakers are struggling to come up with a way to pay for a transportation funding bill to replace the current infrastructure appropriations bill that is scheduled to expire at the end of September. Continue reading [\[HERE\]](#)

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### **The Senate Finance Committee will mark up a short-term fix to keep highway projects funded until after the midterm elections on Thursday.**

By Keith Laing

Transportation advocates have expressed disappointment in the temporary measure because they have been pushing for a long-term bill that would fund U.S. road and transit projects for several years.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) has said that he can only muster \$9 billion from other areas of the federal budget to carry infrastructure funding until Dec. 31, which would punt the larger funding decision until the lame-duck session after the elections.

Wyden has called his three-month plan an "imperative first step" toward a long-term solution. "Strong transportation and infrastructure are critical to a growing and healthy American economy. I hope to see the committee take decisive bipartisan action and send a clear message that stabilizing the Highway Trust Fund is a priority now," Wyden said in a statement.

"Failure to act now could lead to a transportation shutdown, leaving our roads in disrepair and putting thousands of hard-working Americans out of their jobs," he added. The current federal transportation funding measure is scheduled to expire at the end of September. Complicating matters further, the Department of Transportation has said that its Highway Trust Fund will run out of money in August if Congress does not act.

The traditional funding source for transportation projects has long been collected from the federal gas tax, which is currently set at 18.4 cents per gallon. Infrastructure expenses have outpaced revenue from the gas tax by about \$16 billion annually in recent years, partly due to increases in fuel efficiency and a decline in driving.

Transportation advocates such have pushed for lawmakers to increase the gas tax for the first time since 1993 to pay for a longer transportation bill, but the idea appears to be a non-starter, with many lawmakers and the White House opposed. Continue reading [\[HERE\]](#)

## Funding Opportunities

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### **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

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### **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

## Just For Fun

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Today, June 27<sup>th</sup>, is Helen Keller's birthday (*June 27, 1880 – June 1, 1968*). What does it have to do with transportation? Her story tells us that the impossible can be accomplished....

It is fascinating to watch videos of this incredible Alabamian, and the incredible educators that she had.

Given some of Helen Keller's quotes, I believe she had the right attitude to fund road projects with a dwindling Highway Trust Fund, and that's *Just for Fun*:

*"The true test of a character is to face hard conditions with the determination to make them better."*

*"Faith is a mockery if it does not teach us that we can build a more complete and beautiful world."*

*"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement; nothing can be done without hope."*

*"A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships."*

*"The bulk of the world's knowledge is an imaginary construction."*



## In the News

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### **U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces \$1 Million in Emergency Relief Funds for I-65 Bridge over Alabama's Middle River**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the release of \$1 million in emergency relief funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to the Alabama Department of Transportation for repairs to the northbound I-65 bridge over Middle River in Baldwin and Mobile Counties which was damaged by a truck fire last month.

"These funds are a down payment on our commitment to the people of Alabama," said Secretary Foxx. "This bridge is a hurricane evacuation route for area residents, and replacing it as soon as possible will help all those who depend on it each day, as well as during an evacuation."

On May 22, two commercial trucks collided on the bridge, forcing the shutdown of the northbound lanes. The crash resulted in extensive fire damage to the bridge deck and superstructure. One lane of the northbound bridge remains closed, leaving only one lane open to traffic.

"Emergency relief funding like this makes it possible to fast-track repairs to the bridge," said Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "The people of Alabama deserve to have this critical transportation route restored as soon as possible."

The federal funds provided today will help pay for the temporary repairs needed to quickly restore essential traffic, and begin long-term repairs on the damaged roadway.

The FHWA's Emergency Relief program provides funds for the repair or reconstruction of roads and bridges damaged by natural disasters or catastrophic events. Under the program, ALDOT will be reimbursed for additional work until the bridge is fully repaired.

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## **Bankhead Tunnel height clearance warning system explained after over-sized truck stuck for third time this year**



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

[Follow on Twitter](#)

on June 24, 2014 at 5:52 PM, updated June 24, 2014 at 7:42 PM

MOBILE, Alabama -- The Bankhead Tunnel has seen its fair share of semi-trucks trying to squeeze their way under the 12-foot clearance. The tunnel's latest victim was a Family Dollar truck that got stuck at the westbound entrance Monday evening.

David Johnson, the automated transportation center manager for the Alabama Department of Transportation, said Monday's incident was the third time this year that a truck over the 12-foot clearance has gotten wedged into the tunnel.

Johnson said they're always looking at new technologies, but the warning system in place is "very adequate." "They just need to pay attention. The driver yesterday asked the policeman, 'Do y'all have a sign that says what the height of it is?'"

ALDOT has much more than a sign at the tunnel's entrances.

There is one pole on both sides of the westbound entrance, and the same eastbound. An electronic beam is transmitted across the width of the entrance, from one pole to the other. If a vehicle taller than 12 feet breaks that beam, warnings are immediately displayed and a loud siren goes off.

Red lights flash at the tunnel's entrance and on either side of a message board that reads "STOP DO NOT ENTER!!!" Chains also hang from the message board, and hit anything above 12-feet.

Johnson said the chains were originally bare, but between December 2012 and January 2013 there were five occurrences where over-sized trucks got stuck in the tunnel. After that, PVC pipe was added to the chains, and the pipe was wrapped in bright yellow reflective tape.

At the eastbound entrance of the tunnel, Johnson said truck drivers have about 400 feet, or 7 seconds, of response time from when the warning system initiates to the tunnel entrance.

"If the vehicle is going the posted speed limit, they should have time to respond before entering the tunnel," Johnson said.

When a truck gets stuck, ALDOT's Alabama Service and Assistance Program (A.S.A.P.) responds, along with Mobile police and Mobile Fire-Rescue if needed. Johnson said police get in touch with a towing company.

The tunnel entrance has scratches from the impact, but Johnson said there's no real damage. The concrete block that houses the tunnel's name has a steel beam inside of it that prevents damage.

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**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](http://www.thewavetransit.com)

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**The Alabama Department of Transportation's Compliance and Business Opportunities Bureau Presents a Series of Informational Sessions on Title VI-Nondiscrimination Sub-Recipient Responsibilities (August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

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](mailto:TatumCL@dot.state.al.us)**.

## Transportation Research

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### **What's Next for Bicycling and Walking? 2014 U.S. Benchmarking Report**

When: Wednesday, July 9, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Eastern

Course Credit: 1.5 PDH/.2 IACET CEU/1.5 CM

Background:

The Benchmarking report answers the question, "Who bicycles and walks, and how do we measure and evaluate results?" Definitions of each macro-level benefits will be provided as well, as case studies and illustrations to show real world applications of benefits. This webinar will also discuss the infrastructure and design guidelines that encourage walking and biking.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Demonstrate the public health, safety, and economic benefits of active transportation.
- 2) Identify design elements that increase safety and comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- 3) Articulate ways to maximize available funds for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in communities across the United States.

Instructors: Jeffrey Miller, President / CEO, Alliance for Biking & Walking; Mary Lauran Hall, Communications Director, Alliance for Biking & Walking; Andrea J. Milne, Benchmarking Project Manager, Alliance for Biking &

Walking; Ken McLeod, Legal Specialist, League of American Bicyclists; Linda Bailey, Executive Director, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Fee:

\$75 ITE Individual Member/ \$100 Non-member Individual Fee (Per person rate)

\$125 ITE Member Group/\$150 Non-member Group Fee (Per site fee for training of 4 or more people at one site)

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### **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.

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### **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

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### **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.