



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 3, 2016

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Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>
transportation@sarpc.org

Kevin Harrison, PTP
Director of Transportation
kharrison@sarpc.org

Tom Piper
Senior Transportation Planner
tpiper@sarpc.org

Monica Williamson
Transportation Planner
mwilliamson@sarpc.org

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
110 Beauregard St

Today, FY 2016 TAP Applications are due, as are FY 2016 FTA 5310 applications. That is almost \$1 Million that will be awarded to our member governments from SARPC.

This week the Mobile MPO met (please see *Mobile MPO Updates*), and we had a workshop for our all of our member governments concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act (please see *RPO Updates*). There are a lot of funding opportunities with deadlines this week and next week, (please see *Funding Opportunities*). June 14th there will be public meeting for I-10 Eastbound Water Street On-Ramp Closure and improvements to Canal Street, Claiborne Street, and Texas Street Interchange, (please see *In The News*).

We hope everyone has a great weekend!

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

MPO Meeting June 1, 2016

The Mobile MPO Policy Committee met this past Wednesday. The Draft 2017 UPWP was provided to MPO members at the meeting and members will get a final copy later this summer once we receive comments from FHWA, ALDOT and FTA. The UPWP must be adopted by September 15, 2016. Other items on the agenda included several amendments to the FY 2016 – 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and a review of the Mobile MPO's Attributable Funding Schedule.

MPO FUNDING

The Mobile MPO apportionment was increased with the passing of the new FAST ACT Transportation Funding Bill. The per capita amount was \$6.8 Million per year under the bill MAP-21. That has been increased to \$7.1 million per year, which equates to being able to program almost \$9 million per year once the 20% local match is included. Our Attributable funding schedule has been moved around a bit; however, even though we had an increase in potential funding, we are still negative in terms of budgeting projects in year 2020 and 2021.

FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Designated Recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 *Urban Area Funding* for the Mobile Urban Area. Our funding under the FAST ACT has been increased to \$314,000 annually.

Today, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) received applications for funding consideration through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. FTA provides funding for transit related services that assist the Mobile Urban Area's population of seniors & individuals with disabilities.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and program management plan can be found at <http://www.mobilempo.org/5310.html>.

Completed grant applications must have been submitted to the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission by **noon today**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. **Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.**

ADA TRANSITION PLANS

The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline (July 20th, 2016). Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator which creates a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The inventory is complete for all urban local governments within the Mobile MPO, and the consultant is now working with the ADA Coordinators on the text of each of the ADA documents, grievance procedures, and the potential for a full ADA Transition plan, not just Public Rights of Way. The deadline for Mobile County and the cities within the Mobile MPO to have an adopted ADA Transition Plan for public Rights of Way, is July of this year.

RPO Updates

This past Tuesday, SARPC hosted an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Workshop. As you may be aware, the Federal Highway Administration has ramped up enforcement of ADA laws as they pertain to federal funding for road, bridge, sidewalks, and the like.

Many of our member governments have been coming to us with ADA questions. There was a lot of good discussion that helped clear up what is expected in order to receive federal funding. One of the speakers was Mr. Graham Sisson, the Executive Director of GOOD, (Governor's Office on Disability). He will be speaking on the city/county responsibilities of municipal/county buildings, properties, etc. There were presentations on the ADA requirements of public ROW (sidewalks) and vertical, or buildings side of it as well.

Projects Within Region Let May 27th, 2016

Mobile County

For constructing the Demolition of Building Structures and Site Improvements on Old Water Street, Eslava Street, Royal Street, and Water Street in Mobile. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$163,960 to \$200,396

Baldwin County

There are no projects at this time.

Escambia County

There are no projects at this time.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Overview

The [final rule](#) on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning, published on May 27, 2016, implements changes to the planning process, including:

requiring a performance-based approach to planning a new emphasis on the nonmetropolitan transportation planning process, by requiring states to have a higher level of involvement with nonmetropolitan local officials and providing a process for creating regional transportation planning organizations adding a structural change to the membership of large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to include transit provider representation adding a framework for voluntary scenario planning implementing new authority for integrating the planning and environmental review processes as well as programmatic mitigation plans Performance management and performance-based planning and programming increases the accountability and transparency of the federal aid program and offers a framework to support improved investment decision-making by focusing on performance outcomes for national transportation goals. State DOTs and MPOs are expected to use the updated regulations to make better-informed transportation planning and programming decisions. The new performance aspects of the federal aid program allow FHWA and FTA to better communicate a national performance story and more reliably assess the impacts of federal funding investments. Learn more about the [transportation planning process](#).

FHWA and FTA will issue supplemental guidance to support implementation and provide assistance and technical support to state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and providers of public transportation. To learn more, register to attend an FHWA/FTA-hosted webinar, 1-2 p.m. EDT Tuesday, June 14.

Background

FHWA and FTA have worked in partnership since June 2012 to prepare this final rule, with input from MPO's, state Departments of Transportation, transit agencies and stakeholder groups.

The rule implements the changes to the planning process established by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The changes make the regulations consistent with current statutory requirements. MAP-21 transformed the federal aid program by establishing new requirements for performance management and performance-based planning and programming to ensure the most efficient investment of federal transportation funds. The FAST Act continued the performance management and performance-based planning and programming requirements of MAP-21 with minor changes.

The final rule is the sixth in a series of rules that FHWA and FTA are issuing to establish the performance management framework introduced by MAP-21 and continued by the FAST Act:

FHWA published [Final Rules](#) that established safety performance measures and integrated performance management into the Highway Safety Improvement Program (March 2016)

FHWA published an NPRM to propose performance measures to assess condition of bridges and pavements (January 2015)

FHWA published an NPRM proposing a process for the development of State Asset Management Plans (February 2015)

FHWA published a [System Performance/Freight/CMAQ Performance Measures NPRM](#), with a comment period open until August 20, 2016. (April 2016)

FTA published an NPRM to propose the requirements for the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (February 2016)

FTA published an NPRM on Transit Asset Management to establish performance measures to assess state of good repair of transit agency vehicles and facilities and equipment (September 2015)

House Panel OKs 2017 Funding Bill for USDOT; Provisions Draw Veto Threat

The House Appropriations Committee advanced a spending bill for the 2017 budget year starting Oct. 1 that funds the Department of

Transportation's highway and transit formula programs at levels consistent with the five-year FAST Act Congress passed in December. It also includes \$19.2 billion in USDOT funding subject to annual appropriations, which the committee said is \$540 million above the level enacted for fiscal 2016.

In all, the panel said its bill "provides [\\$76.9 billion to improve and maintain our nation's transportation infrastructure.](#)" However, it also provides trucking workweek provisions that safety advocates say could put more tired truckers on the nation's highways, by preventing the USDOT from implementing a regulatory change to off-duty time requirements until the department can prove it would benefit drivers' health.

The Obama administration [issued a veto threat May 16](#) that cited its concerns for highway safety, along with some other issues. The Senate passed its version of the 2017 spending bill May 19. It includes a provision that would force state departments of transportation to cut \$2.211 billion of past, unused contract authority that the DOTs were prevented from using due to annual obligation limits imposed by Congress.

The DOTs would have to apply that proposed rescission across a narrow group of federal program categories, which combined with a \$7.6 billion rescission in the recently passed FAST Act, could cause them to lose actual funds by the year 2020. A coalition of organizations representing state governments has [called on Congress to remove that rescission.](#)

The House bill would not rescind any highway funds for 2017, and the two chambers would need to negotiate differences to agree on any final funding measure.

Among its provisions, the House bill would cut the USDOT's wide-ranging TIGER infrastructure grants program by 10 percent to \$450 million next year from \$500 million now. The committee in its report language also prodded the USDOT to "fully obligate amounts available for credit assistance" under its TIFIA loan program that has often been criticized for being slow to approve loans.

In its major spending categories, the bill would provide \$44 billion for the federal-aid highway programs in the Highway Trust Fund, as authorized by the FAST Act. That is \$905 million above the 2016 level, the committee noted.

Programs under the Federal Aviation Administration would receive \$16.3 billion, which is \$69 million more than this year and \$450 million more than President Obama requested in his budget proposal.

The bill would provide \$12.5 billion in total transit funding, up by \$743 million from 2016. That includes \$9.7 billion in formula grants to transit agencies in line with the authorized level.

It would fund the Federal Railroad Administration at \$1.7 billion, up \$42 million from this year, with \$420 million directed into Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and \$1 billion to support its national network. It provides no funds for high-speed rail.

And the committee said its bill "continues reforms to ensure the best use of tax dollars, such as requiring overtime limits for Amtrak employees to reduce unnecessary costs, and prohibiting funds from being used to subsidize losses associated with Amtrak's food and beverage service."

[Politico reported](#) that committee Democrats tried to strip out the Amtrak food service language along with some other so-called "policy riders" including the trucker hours' provision, but said the GOP majority defeated that effort on a party-line vote.

The bill includes \$483 million for the Maritime Administration, up \$84 million from 2016. Various USDOT safety programs – for highway traffic, commercial vehicles and pipelines or hazardous materials – would total \$918 million for a \$49 million increase.

T&I Advances Water Projects Bill to Upgrade Locks, Deepen Harbors, Fight Floods

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously agreed May 25 to advance the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, clearing for consideration by the full House the second major water projects bill in two years.

It would authorize 28 new lock, harbor and flood control infrastructure projects worth \$5 billion, and offset that cost by deauthorizing \$5 billion worth of old projects Congress had approved but which were not built. The new projects are those that have already been vetted for funding by the Army Corps of Engineers.

A number of state departments of transportation have direct roles in supporting their deep-water or river barging seaports. In addition, putting heavy cargoes such as bulk commodities on waterways can take some pressure off highway and rail systems, and flood control projects protect highway and transit infrastructure that DOTs maintain.

Passing WRDA through the committee achieved a major goal of T&I Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Pa., who along with other relevant House and Senate committee leaders had pledged to put water projects legislation back on a two-year cycle when they pushed through the 2014 measure that was the first since 2007.

"WRDA 2016 gets Congress back to basics and the business of regularly addressing the needs of our ports, waterways, lock and dam systems, flood protection, and other infrastructure," [Shuster said in a statement](#) after his committee acted.

Ranking T&I Member Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., said: "This legislation will create and sustain jobs, strengthen our coastal communities, and ensure that funds collected in the Harbor Maintenance Fund will be used for their intended purpose – harbor maintenance."

Congress has traditionally used some money collected by the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund on other budget areas, but the House bill would end that practice by fiscal 2027.

The Waterways Council, which represents the barge industry, praised the committee for [rejecting proposed lockage fees or river traffic tolls](#) to finance public-private partnerships. That group favors the current method of funding lock projects through a tax on fuel used by towboats that push the barges.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved its version of WRDA on April 28. Once the two chambers complete action on their versions, the House and Senate committee leaders can negotiate a final bill for congressional passage.

Kurt Nagle, president of the American Association of Port Authorities, said: "Ensuring the viability and effectiveness of our nation's deep-draft navigation infrastructure is [fundamental to a sound economy.](#) WRDA 2016 helps do that by getting Congress back to the

business of regularly addressing the needs of our ports and other waterway infrastructure."

Nagle also urged "both the House and Senate to bring their respective WRDA bills to the floor as soon as possible to ensure final legislation is enacted this year."

Funding Opportunities

FRA Announces \$25 Million Available for Rail Infrastructure Safety Upgrades Administration has requested \$2.3 billion in FY2017 budget: due June 14th

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that it is accepting applications from local governments, states and railroads for \$25 million in competitive grants to increase rail safety. Applicants can request funds for safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, including railroad crossings, track, tunnels, bridges, yards and other areas. The funding is made available from the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act that funds DOT.

"As the country's population increases, rail will play a larger role in transporting more people and more freight. To do that safely, we must invest in our rail infrastructure," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "These funds will help address some of the improvements that are essential for safe, reliable, and efficient railroad operations, and I encourage applications that achieve the maximum benefits possible with this limited funding."

FRA will accept applications until 5 PM EDT on June 14, 2016.

"To safely move tons of freight and millions of passengers each day in this country, we need to continually invest in safety. These dollars will help get us closer to that goal," FRA Administrator Sarah E. Feinberg said. "We hope to receive applications that can make these limited funds go as far as possible."

The Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvements Grant program can fund safety improvements to railroad infrastructure, but the focus of a project must be safety improvements. This includes the acquisition, improvement, or rehabilitation of intermodal facilities; improvements to track, bridges, and tunnels; upgrades to railroad crossings; and the separation of railroad crossings and roads.

FRA requested a total of \$2.3 billion for rail infrastructure safety upgrades as part of the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal. This includes \$520 million for competitive local rail facilities and safety project grants and \$1.8 billion for competitive rail infrastructure and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance grants.

2016 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Announcement - due TODAY by 4:00 p.m.

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as the recipient of Urban Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, is announcing the availability of the FY 2016 TAP funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is \$200,000 (federal) and the minimum match is 20%. Due to limited funding, only one application per entity will be accepted, and **only cities and counties that are members of the Mobile MPO may apply.**

New this round of funding is that estimates for the application's budget must be developed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Alabama.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Ten (10) copies of the application are due no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, June 3, 2016. Applications (paper only) are due to the Transportation Planning Department of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) at:

SARPC
110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207
Mobile, AL 36602

You can pick up an application at our offices, or we can mail you the application and guidelines. Electronic versions of the applications are available online at www.mobilempo.org. Click the Mobile MPO tab, then the Transportation Alternatives tab.

EDA releases FY 2016 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Funding Opportunity, announces new grant process to stream application process

EDA recently released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice announcing the availability of funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. The Public Works program is designed to provide funding for design, construction, or renovation of critical public infrastructure needed to create or retain jobs in a locality. The Economic Adjustment Assistance Program provides resources for both design, construction and renovation as well as technical assistance to support long-term job creation/retention in cases of sudden and severe economic events.

This funding solicitation also announced that EDA is moving towards a two-step application process where applicants can submit a proposal at any time to determine alignment with EDA priorities before submitting a full application. This means there are **no**

longer any quarterly deadlines for the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact EDA's state representative to develop their project and EDA application. To learn more about EDA's grant programs and opportunities, please feel free to contact Diane Burnett at dburnett@sarpc.org.

Transit Core Capacity Improvement Projects

FTA announced the availability of \$20.5 million in competitive grant funds to support comprehensive planning associated with new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement projects that are seeking or have recently received funding through FTA's Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program. The grant funds are provided through FTA's Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. Please see the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and a summary of the funding opportunity with links to application materials is available on the [FTA website](#). **Applications are due at midnight Eastern time on June 13, 2016.**

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$5.3 Million Funding Opportunity to Improve Mobility Focused on Healthcare

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced the availability of \$5.3 million in competitive grant funds to improve public transportation options that increase access to healthcare for those who lack good transportation choices.

"We know it can be challenging for many people to travel to medical appointments, and missing them can lead to re-hospitalizations and poorer health," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "This new grant opportunity sets the stage for transit agencies and community organizations to develop local solutions that provide ladders of opportunity, improve health outcomes, and reduce health care costs."

FTA's Rides to Wellness Demonstration and Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grants will help build partnerships between health, transportation and other service providers to develop strategies that connect patients with public transportation options. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) appeared in today's Federal Register.

The grants will further FTA's Rides to Wellness initiative, which emphasizes public transportation as a strategy for people to access health services, resulting in greater preventive care, fewer unnecessary hospital readmissions, and lower costs. The initiative focuses on improving outcomes for those with chronic conditions and ensuring that at-risk populations can get to wellness visits, healthy food, and community services.

In part to help people take advantage of the healthcare expansion made possible by the Affordable Care Act, Rides to Wellness Coordinated Access and Mobility grants will encourage partnerships between public transportation agencies and the healthcare industry to devise solutions to access challenges.

"We're excited at this opportunity to fund creative ideas that will result in solutions to the healthcare transportation puzzle," said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan, who launched the Rides to Wellness initiative last year. "We know that when people have consistent, affordable transportation options to get to their healthcare providers, they receive appropriate preventive care instead of using emergency rooms and suffer fewer costly setbacks."

The grants will focus on communities demonstrating mobility management, technological solutions, and effective partnerships. Grant applicants must include participating groups with stakeholders from the transportation, healthcare and human service sectors.

The [Fixing America's Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#), signed into law in December, authorizes a pilot program for innovative coordinated access and mobility that augments FTA's Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. The FAST Act initiated the program with an initial \$2 million in first-year funding, expanding to \$3.5 million per year by Fiscal Year 2019. FTA supplemented the pilot program with funds from FTA's Research Program.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces Notice of Funding Availability for Infrastructure Projects

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the availability of credit assistance for critical infrastructure projects across the country through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. Secretary Foxx encouraged states and cities across the country to submit letters of interest for direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit through TIFIA as a result of the recently enacted Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

"The TIFIA credit program has a strong record of success in stimulating local economies and bringing critical transportation projects to communities that need them," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "This year, the added flexibility and streamlined review process should make it easier for a variety of applicants to take advantage of the funding opportunities, and to bring significant infrastructure developments to their neighborhoods."

The FAST Act authorizes \$1.435 billion in capital over five years for the TIFIA credit assistance program. Historically, one dollar of TIFIA Program funds supported a TIFIA loan of approximately 14 dollars and resulted in infrastructure investment of up to 40 dollars, when taking into account other state, local and private sector investments.

A wide range of surface transportation infrastructure is eligible for TIFIA credit assistance, including highways, passenger and freight rail, public transit, intermodal freight facilities, and international bridges and tunnels. The FAST Act expands eligibility to include transit-oriented development and the capitalization of a rural projects fund within a state infrastructure bank.

In addition, for eligible small projects, the FAST Act allows TIFIA to reserve funding to offset the fees charged to applicants by TIFIA for financial and legal services. Because of the flexibility provided by the TIFIA programs, many qualified, small-scale and large-scale projects that might otherwise be delayed or shelved can move forward quickly, providing an immediate boost to jobs while laying a

foundation for continued economic growth.

To date, the TIFIA program has provided \$22.7 billion in credit assistance to support more than \$82.5 billion in transportation infrastructure investments to help build 56 major transportation projects around the country. Updated information regarding TIFIA's loan portfolio is available [here](#).

DOT's Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC), which was announced in 2014, has expanded TIFIA's ability to meet the needs of the nation's transportation system. BATIC serves as a single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities, and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs, and explore ways to access private capital in public private partnerships (P3s). Since BATIC's formation, DOT has closed over \$8 billion in financing to support \$21 billion in projects.

BATIC has also increased the number of non-traditional DOT credit program applicants, most significantly TIFIA-eligible inside-the-gate port projects. BATIC has facilitated interdepartmental coordination for mega-projects that need to access multiple DOT credit programs. It is also providing project finance capacity building resources for states and municipalities in conjunction with the BATIC Institute: An AASHTO Center for Excellence, which includes best practices papers, a P3 case study webinar series, and peer to peer exchanges on finance and development.

The TIFIA Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is available [here](#). Additional information about the TIFIA program is available at <http://www.transportation.gov/tifia>.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#)

Just For Fun

We are in full swing of baseball season. As a matter of fact, on this very day, June 3rd, 1888, the [Might Casey Struck Out!!](#)

*Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
the band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
and somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
but there is no joy in Mudville — mighty Casey has struck out.*

So please be careful where you park your vehicles at ballparks this year,



And for the love of all things baseball, please do not drive your vehicles on the ballfields !!! *Just For Fun*, guess what might happen....

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



In the News

I-10 Eastbound Water Street On-Ramp Closure and improvements to Canal Street, Claiborne Street, and Texas Street Interchange

You are cordially invited to attend the Public Involvement Meeting scheduled by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) on the proposed project listed above. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, **June 14, 2016, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.**, in the Killian Room at the International Trade Center located at 250 North Water Street, Mobile, AL 36602. The meeting will be a "walk-in" information session with exhibits of the proposed project on display. It will follow an "open house" type format. There will be no speeches or formal presentations, so you may attend anytime between the above-mentioned hours. Representatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation will be on hand to discuss the project with you and answer questions. Comment sheets will be provided, which you may fill out and turn back in at the meeting, or send to us by mail, fax, or e-mail to swinfo@dot.state.al.us within ten business days after the meeting.

AASHTO Panel to Update Road Design Guidance for Rise in Bike/Ped Demand

Citing the growth in volume of pedestrians and bicyclists on the nation's roads "along with corresponding increases in collisions and fatalities," AASHTO's Standing Committee on Highways voted to develop "robustly researched guidance" to roadway engineers on how best to [incorporate varied travel modes when designing roads and streets](#).

The committee approved a resolution May 25 at the AASHTO spring meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, that said its Subcommittee on Design will develop the guidance, and that it will incorporate peer-reviewed design flexibility standards for the next edition of the association's widely used "Green Book."

[The committee resolution](#) called the Green Book "the preeminent design guidance for streets and roadways in the United States."

"We have seen consistent growth in walking and biking throughout the country, and we also have seen an increase in crashes and fatalities involving them," said Kirk Steudle, Standing Committee on Highways chair and director of the Michigan Department of Transportation. "Our state agencies need robustly researched guidance on how to best incorporate all modes of travel when designing safe and efficient roadways that serve all users."

The committee is made up of top design engineers from various state departments of transportation, and brings together best-practices expertise from around the nation to review new methods or technologies for various publications including the Green Book.

AASHTO said that publication, formally named "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets," consists of research-based, peer-developed guidance that serves as the basis for design of roads on the National Highway System, as well as many state and local roads. It is used by state DOTs, local agencies and companies that contract to design and build roads.

The committee is in the early stages of one of its periodic updates to the Green Book, and as a result of the committee's resolution that update will focus more guidance on designs that meet the growing demand for bike and pedestrian lanes and how to protect them from collisions with motor vehicle traffic.

In the resolution, the committee noted there is a lack of the type of quality design guidance in the marketplace that this Green Book update can bring. "Other publications provide examples for multimodal street design, but there does not exist research-based, peer-reviewed design guidance that fully address the technical design-related aspects of these issues," it said.

Bud Wright, AASHTO's executive director, said that "multimodal design philosophies have been described using a variety of names, including context-sensitive solutions, practical design and complete streets. Regardless of the name, the ultimate goal is always to design a safe transportation system that supports a greater quality of life and robust economy."

Planning Commission approves Publix center

By: [DALE LIESCH](#) |

The Mobile Planning Commission on Thursday unanimously approved the rezoning and planned unit development for a Midtown shopping center anchored by Publix.

Because the plans include a rezoning from residential to business, the Mobile City Council will have final say on the development. Planning Commission Chairman Jay Watkins recused himself from the vote along with commission members John Vallas, Shirley Sessions and Thomas Doyle, leaving eight members to vote in favor of the plan.



A developer has released the latest plans for shopping center anchored by Publix.

The development at the site of the former Augusta Evans School was approved on the recommendation of planning staff, despite calls from neighbors and a Midtown advocacy group to move some of the buildings on the site plan closer to the street. The move, opponents said, would block a number of parking spaces and fall in line with both the new Map for Mobile guidelines and the character of the neighborhood.

“We want streetside shops with parking parking lots behind the buildings,” Grand Boulevard resident Betsy Swinson told the commission.

“The shops are too close to our homes.”

Swinson said the proximity of the buildings in one section of the plans and an added drive-through would create too much noise. She asked for a residential buffer along Grand Boulevard, similar to the brick wall proposed along Edington Drive, another adjacent street lined with homes.

“We’re not against Publix, or the development,” Swinson said. “We’re against this PUD, as it’s planned.”

Casey Pipes, an attorney representing developer John Argo, said there’s already a 150-foot buffer between the back of the commercial buildings in question and the residential properties. In addition, the developer will add an 8-foot wooden privacy fence.

Ashley Dukes, president of the Midtown Mobile Movement, said some changes to the plans could result in more adherence to the guidelines highlighted in the new Map for Mobile comprehensive plan.

For instance, Dukes said parking spaces in front of the proposed retail buildings closest to Old Shell Road could be removed and a wider sidewalk could be added to aid in the walkability of the development. Dukes also recommended moving the three shops closest to residential areas west, along Florida Street to help further hide the parking lot.

Pipes argued movement of the parking spaces or the buildings would likely cause a conflict with Publix, as it would result in a loss of parking spaces at the anchor building and space to move delivery trucks in and out.

Pipes told commissioners Publix requires a certain number of parking spots and that the plans meet those requirements. Any change in parking could cause a problem, he said.

Planner Bert Hoffman defended the staff recommendation for approval during the hearing, suggesting the existing plans would increase the walkability of the site and noted it includes outdoor seating and more green space than is required by the zoning ordinance.

He added the drive-throughs in question did not include menu boards and no additional lanes would be added to either Old Shell Road or Florida Street, except for adjustments for better turning.

The proposal will likely be held over by the City Council to allow for more public participation.

Transportation Research

Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development

by Carrie Kissel

In March 2016, the NADO Research Foundation held a focus group on the link between transportation and economic development, and how state departments of transportation and regional planning and development organizations can work together to better plan for those issues in an integrated way. The focus group participants included regional, state, and federal agency staff and others with experience in both transportation and economic development programs. During the conversation, the focus group participants developed a definition of economic development that emphasizes doing economic development and transportation planning differently, and can be used to help frame related planning efforts:

Economic development in transportation involves deliberate interventions to produce tangible benefits that are specific to the context, are sustained over time, and make a place more resilient.

This new report, [Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a National Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development\(PDF\)](#), explores how the participants' definition of economic development can be applied in transportation planning. The report documents the themes of the focus group discussion, including economic development impacts, resilience, and state department of transportation (DOT) and regional planning and development organization roles in working together. Read about the highlights of the discussion and about noteworthy practices shared by participants that can institutionalize consideration of transportation and economic development together.

Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning

FHWA released a new [report](#) for transportation practitioners and decision-makers on considering equity in transportation planning. The paper defines equity in the bike and pedestrian program context, highlights recent research, and shares best practices and resources for fixing inequity.

2015 American Community Survey Release Schedule Announced

The U.S. Census Bureau has announced it will release the [2015 one-year American Community Survey \(ACS\) census data](#) on September 15 and the 2011-2015 five-year estimates on December 8. Census will release supplemental materials on July 21 with the 2014 ACS 1-Year Supplemental Estimates and 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Replicate Estimates. The supplemental estimates will consist of 58 detailed tables and will be released on American FactFinder (AFF) and the application program interface (API). The replicate estimates will consist of the original estimate and the 80 replicate estimates for 107 tables and will be released on the FTP site with links available on AFF.

[See the Future of Transportation](#)