



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, June 7, 2013

Volume 6, Number 10

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[Click Here](#) to see when and where federal and state projects will be happening in your area.

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South Alabama Regional
Planning Commission

Now that all of the schools are out, we hope everyone is having a good summer break.



We now have a Facebook page , and currently it is in its simplest form. We would like comments as we are going to build on it, and hopefully people will "like" it. We will still maintain www.mobilempo.org as that is our main page. The MPO met this past Wednesday; see *Mobile MPO Updates* for a summary. Friday, June 28th is the deadline for both the State's and our TAP grant Applications, so we're getting down to the wire if you are seeking those funds. Also, please see *In The News*, there is a lot of bridge talk....

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison
www.mobilempo.org
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Mobile MPO Updates

There was a joint MPO Policy Committee and Technical Coordinating / Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) meeting this past Wednesday and there was a good amount of discussion. The agenda included:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approve the minutes of the May 22, 2013 TCC/CAC meeting
- III. Approve the minutes of the March 27, 2013 MPO meeting
- IV. Recommend approval of DRAFT 2014 Unified Planning Work Program
- V. Modification to the FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program as requested by ALDOT for Reconstruction and widening of Broad St. from 15th Ave. North to I-10
- VI. Modification to the FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program as requested by ALDOT Curb and ramp installation only on State routes at various locations in Mobile
- VII. Modification to the FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program as requested by ALDOT SR-158 Extension from Lott Road to Schillingers Road. Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Bridge
- VIII. Modification to the FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program as requested by ALDOT SR-158 Extension from .5 miles East of Glenwood Rd to west of Lott Road Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Bridge
- IX. Recommend approval of FY 2011, FY2012 Program of Projects (FTA 5316 & 5317)
- X. Approval of Resolution of Support for the Mobile MPO to support a Bicycle/Pedestrian facility (or mitigation of) on I-10 Mobile River Bridge
- XI. Review of STP Attributable funding schedule in the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program
- XII. Review of socio-economic data for LRTP
- XIII. Old Business
- XIV. New Business
- XV. Adjourn

All resolutions passed, including the resolution to recommend to the Department of Transportation that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be included on the future Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge or that if deemed unfeasible that mitigation alternatives to crossing the river be included in the Environmental Impact Statement. This resolution along with all comments, letters, and petition the MPO has received will be formally submitted to ALDOT during the upcoming comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which should take place later this year.

TAP FUNDING APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

The Mobile MPO is now accepting applications for the Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funds, *Please see Funding Opportunities below.* These TAP funds are the previously Safe Routes To School, Recreational Trails and the Transportation Enhancements programs. [Please SEE HERE](#) for the TAP process. The deadline for the Mobile MPO TAP funds **AND** ALDOT's TAP funds is June 28th. If you need help, please let us know.

Projects Within Region To Be Let June 28, 2013

BALDWIN COUNTY

for constructing the Widening, Resurfacing, Bike Lane Addition, and Traffic Stripe on CR-4 (Cotton Creek Drive) from the intersection of SR-59 to Cotton Creek Bridge in Gulf Shores. Length 2.262 mi.

for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Bayview Drive and Ridgewood Drive East of North Main Street in Daphne. Length 1.894 mi.

for constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on CR-71 (College Avenue) over Rock Creek in Robertsdale. Length 0.183 mi.

for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-42 (US-98) from SR-104 (MP 43.685) to CR-98 (MP 52.241) in Barnwell. Length 8.555 mi.

for constructing the Widening (Grade, Drain, Base, and Pave) on SR-181 from south of CR-48 to south of CR-30 in Fairhope. Length 1.188 mi.

MOBILE COUNTY

for constructing the Access Improvements (Widening and Lighting Relocation) on the Service Road south of the Bankhead Tunnel going onto SR-16 (US-90/98) in Mobile. Length 0.123 mi.

Legislative Updates

Longtime N.J. Senator, Transportation Advocate, Sen. Lautenberg (D-NJ) Passes: This week, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Chairman of the Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; and also Member of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee passed away. New Jersey first elected him to the U.S. Senate in 1984 and since that time Sen. Lautenberg championed a number of laws including, legislation to raise the national drinking age to 21, a law which was credited with preventing over 25,000 drinking and driving fatalities. The last living World War II veteran in the U.S. Senate, he was eulogized at the Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan on June 5, 2013 and will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The *New York Times* has more [HERE](#).

House Transportation Panel Announces More Freight Hearings: The U.S. House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials announced the next in its series of field hearings to examine the state of the nation's freight infrastructure. The next field hearing will be held tomorrow, June 7, 2013, [The Importance of the Northeast Corridor](#), will examine efforts to upgrade and modernize the systems most profitable Amtrak line. The next roundtable, [Impact of Rail in Illinois](#), will take place in Springfield, IL on Tuesday June 11. This will follow a roundtable examining the [progress of the CREATE project](#), held on Monday, June 10 in Chicago, IL.

Funding Opportunities

TIGER GRANTS

DOT is authorized to award \$474 million in TIGER Discretionary Grants pursuant to the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6, March 26, 2013). This appropriation is similar, but not identical to the appropriation for the "TIGER" program authorized and implemented pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the "Recovery Act"). Because of the similarity in program structure, DOT will continue to refer to the program as "TIGER Discretionary Grants." As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY 2013 TIGER program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to look through Frequently Asked Questions, webinars and other guidance at the [Application Resources page](#).

Applications now Available for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): ALDOT AND URBAN AREA APPLICATIONS

ALDOT TAP APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

ALDOT has announced the release of their application process; applications are due to the State by June 28th. Only cities and counties are eligible to apply for the TAP funding, and the Alabama Department of Transportation has mailed the application to each city and county in the SARPC region. ALDOT TAP Applications are only available at ALDOT. If you are a city or county and have not received an application, please let us or ALDOT know. Mr. Cecil Colson is the program manager for the TAP funds; his phone number is (334)353-6403.

MOBILE URBAN AREA APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 28th

The application the Mobile MPO Transportation Alternative Program Funds is [available \[HERE\]](#) and due to the SARPC by 5:00 PM, June 28th. You must be a municipality within the Mobile Urban Area or Mobile County to apply for these funds. Eligible Activities are:

*If you are a city within the Mobile MPO or Mobile County, and have a project in mind, it is possible to apply for the

Mobile MPO TAP funds, **AND** the ALDOT Statewide TAP funds. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Just For Fun

Google has developed driverless cars. To see a video...click [HERE](#)



In the News



The Institute of Transportation Engineers, Alabama Section held their annual conference this week. For the second year, the organization gave a Transportation Professional of the Year Award to the member or affiliate who, over a period of years, had contributed significantly to the advancement of transportation engineering and to the Alabama section, has also continuously demonstrated such personal traits as integrity, morality and leadership, and is suitably employed as a transportation professional within Alabama. This year, Mr. James Foster received the award. Mr. Foster has been employed with Mobile County Traffic Engineering Department for almost 31 years where he has been involved in all areas of traffic maintenance, was the personnel safety coordinator for the road and bridge department, developed a vegetation management program, developed various RRR and Design Manuals for the Mobile County Commission and ALDOT's County Road Design Policy, and has helped in the development and continued progression of the Pay-As-You-Go Program for Mobile County since 1992 which to date has produced over \$580 million work of roadway projects since 1977 using local funds. Currently, Mr. Foster is the Mobile County Traffic Manager, where he reviews all roadway design projects, commercial site plans, subdivision plans and helps to develop future projects and programs for Mobile County. Mr. Foster also serves on the Technical Coordinating Committee for the Mobile MPO. Congratulations!

Should the new I-10 bridge include a path for cyclists, runners and walkers? (Poll)

[Print](#)



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on June 03, 2013 at 6:25 AM, updated June 03, 2013 at 5:27 PM

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Cooper River Bridge in Charleston.

A recent [al.com/Press-Register editorial](#) urged the Alabama Department of Transportation to include a biking/walking trail as part of the proposed I-10 bridge across the Mobile River.

But would the public support such an addition?

Some reasons to NOT include a path for cyclists and pedestrians:

- The path would be very expensive, costing untold millions. It would probably have to start at Texas Street Park, perhaps terminating at Battleship Park or along the Causeway further to the east.
- There would be some risk for those using the path. The bridge will require about 200 feet of clearance over Mobile River, so the slope of the approaches will have to be steep. Descending cyclists could move with such velocity that collisions with pedestrians or other cyclists might even be fatal.
- The path would be an additional distraction to motorists, and would require additional supervision by law enforcement.

Some reasons to include a biking and walking/running trail:

- We're worth the expense. The path's cost will be trivial compared to the overall project price tag, which must include the addition of traffic lanes to the entire length of the I-10 Bayway.
- The challenge of such a trail would attract athletes, Boy Scouts and other adventurous types from around the South, increasing tourism.
- The trail would provide a ready platform for exercise to a community that could stand to drop a few pounds.
- It would offer stunning views of the working man's part of our harbor, from the alpine splendor of the vast coal and woodchip mounds, to freighters from every corner of the world unloading cargo at the State Docks, to the majestic aluminum warships under construction at Austal, what an exotic waterscape!

But what do you think? Take this informal survey:

Click [HERE](#) for the survey.

Mobile MPO votes to recommend bike/pedestrian facilities on I-10 Bridge

by [Mobile Bicycle Pedestrian Advocacy Committee](#)

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board, chaired by Mobile Mayor Sam Jones, voted to recommend that ALDOT include bike/pedestrian facilities on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge at their meeting on June 5th after this petition was submitted to them.

Click [HERE](#) to view the petition

This article appeared in the June 5th edition of The Lagniappe.

MPO voting on bike, pedestrian lanes for proposed I-10 bridge

By Brandy Jones

Issue#

JUNE 5, 2013

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will vote on a bicycle and pedestrian facilities petition for the proposed Mobile River I-10 Bridge today.

Dr. Edward R. Flotte, a member of the Mobile Bicycle Pedestrian Advocacy Committee drafted the petition after Alabama Department of Transportation officials decided against including a pedestrian and bicycling path in the environmental draft submitted to the Federal Highway Association (FHWA).

Flotte said a possible reason for ALDOT not including the bicycle facilities in the first environmental draft could be because they were not sure if the public would support the facilities.

"It is important for the public to know that federal transportation funds would be used on this project, not additional tax money. This would be a small fraction of FHWA's budget," Flotte said.

"The FHWA budget will be used one way or another and if not here then in another city. And since we are ranked number 49 in the country in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure you would be hard pressed to say that anyone needs it more than us," Flotte added.

Director of Transportation Planning, Kevin Harrison, agreed the funds needed to add bike/pedestrian paths to the bridge would not come from local tax dollars. He also pointed out that currently no specific amount of money has been set aside for the bridge. In fact, currently no specific route has been selected for the bridge, something that has been a matter of controversy due to the effects the bridge footings might have on historical structures downtown.

"Generally funding for interstates is usually around 90 percent federally funded and 10 percent locally funded. But at this time no budget has been allocated for the bridge," Harrison said.

Harrison said that because of the "No hitchhiking" signs on the interstate that he was under the impression that bicycles weren't allowed on the interstate, but that he has learned that is not the case.

"No hitchhiking and the like is a municipal regulation, not a federal one. There isn't a federal law prohibiting pedestrians on the interstate," Harrison said.

According to the FHWA website, there is a federal aid program set up for implementing bicycle and pedestrian facilities into transportation zones such as bridges.

In a document by the League of American Bicyclists, the FHWA is quoted as saying: "Federal surface transportation law places a strong emphasis on creating a seamless transportation system that all users can enjoy and use efficiently and safely."

Flotte says if a bridge project is funded with federal money it is required to have a bike and pedestrian path.

"If its using federal funds the facilities are required unless a waiver is granted. And a waiver is only granted if the cost is over 20 percent of the project. These facilities would be around five percent of the cost of the bridge," Flotte said.

Harrison agrees the overall cost of the facilities will be less than 20 percent.

"The cost of the bridge will be around \$800 million and the facilities would cost an additional \$30 to \$45 million," Harrison said.

"Even if ALDOT decides not to do it for one reason or another the FHWA has the power to make it happen," Harrison said.

Flotte said that even if the decision for support is turned down by the MPO that the petition campaign will remain ongoing until the final environmental draft is submitted to the FHWA and then it will go up for public comment during a 45-day review period this summer.

As for the facilities, if they were to be completed both Flotte and Harrison said they would bring in tourism and connect bike trails from Mobile to Baldwin County.

"Specifically the facilities would tie into the Eastern Shore National Recreation Trail and the Crape Myrtle Trail," Harrison said.

The Eastern Shore National Recreation Trial begins around Alligator Alley in Daphne and ends near Fish River in Fairhope. Tie the Eastern Shore trail into the Crape Myrtle Trail and then the possible Mobile Bridge Bicycle facilities and they can take you all the way around the bay. The bridge's facilities would have a four percent grade hill that is similar to the one that is on the connection of Old Shell Road and University Boulevard around the University of South Alabama's Mitchell Center.

Harrison said the Mobile River bridge wouldn't be too steep for bicyclists or pedestrians and pointed out the I-64 Dunbar South Charleston Bridge, that connects Kentucky to West Virginia, bicycle and pedestrian facilities' have a five percent grade steep.

The goal of the petition is to get as many votes as possible so it can be presented with signatures and comments to ALDOT during the 45-day review.

"This project will not take away from other projects. Mobile uses essentially zero of the funding for these facilities compared to other big cities in the past," Flotte said.

U.S. DOT Releases Annual Sustainability Scorecard: U.S. DOT [reports](#) that the Department has been able to increase their sustainability impacts across five categories over the last three years, according to the annual sustainability scorecard, published recently by the Office of Management and Budget.

Get Help Rightsizing Your Street

— Adam Regn Arvidson

From the boroughs of New York to the Sierra highlands of California, communities are rightsizing their streets, and

now they have a central resource they can use in their efforts. Rightsizing is a major trend in transportation planning right now. It refers to the transformation of streets to better accommodate all modes of transportation, as well as other community uses, such as markets and festivals. The most common type of rightsizing involves the simultaneous reduction of vehicle lanes and addition of some kind of bicycle facility.

Though rightsizing projects are popping up everywhere, they can still be a tough sell for planners and community groups. Gary Toth, the director of transportation initiatives at the nonprofit Project for Public Spaces, has done several presentations on the topic and says that he has received numerous informal requests from planners who wanted to see what other communities had done.



So Toth and his organization created the Rightsizing Resource, an online overview of 10 case studies that cover the gamut of techniques for transforming roads. Each case study includes before-and-after pictures (in itself a powerful tool), a summary of the planning process, design cross-sections, and other information.

PPS envisions the resource, which went live in January, growing as other communities add their own case studies. See for yourself at www.pps.org/reference/rightsizing.

Arvidson is a freelance design and planning writer based in Minneapolis.

[Transportation Research](#)

The **U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** released, [Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2012](#), a fact sheet summarizing statistical projections of traffic fatalities in 2012.

Bloomberg has [reported](#) that delays at the U.S.-Mexico border crossings are costing the U.S. economy \$7.8 billion in 2011 and could reach \$14.7 billion annually by 2020 if growth continues as predicted. While *Bloomberg's* analysis focuses primarily on the immigration implications, the article does discuss the implications for truck crossing delays and their impact on the U.S. economy.

The **Transportation Research Board's (TRB) National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP)** released, [Freight Data Sharing Guidebook](#), which provides a series of guidelines for sharing freight data, primarily between public and private freight stakeholders. It also identifies barriers to successful data sharing, offers guidelines and examples for freight data sharing, and provides two successful case study examples.

The **U.S. FHWA** released, [Public Roads May/June 2013](#), which highlights developments in federal highway policies, programs, and research and technology.

TRB's second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2) released, [Incorporating Greenhouse Gas Emissions into Transportation Planning and Decision Making](#), a project brief that summarizes the results of SHRP 2 Capacity Project C09,

Incorporating Greenhouse Gas Emissions into the Collaborative Decision-Making Process.

The **New Zealand Transport Agency** has released, *[Development of a Public Transport Investment Model](#)*, a report that develops an economic modeling tool for making public transport investment decisions, including one for estimating optimal public transport subsidies.



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