



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 16th, 2014

Volume 10, Number 7

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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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Anthony Johnson

If you are applying for rural JARC or New Freedom funds through ALDOT, the deadline is TODAY here at SARPC by 5:00 PM. There is a Mobile MPO meeting scheduled for this coming Wednesday, please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. Our folks in D.C. are trying to figure out the funding crisis; please see *Legislative Updates*. If you want to do your part in making the next US census easier, please see *Transportation Research*; Today's *Just For Fun* is in the Twilight Zone....

It is officially National Bike Month, and it's HANGOUT FESTIVAL this weekend.

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



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

Mobile MPO Updates

The Mobile MPO will meet next week

The Mobile MPO will meet this coming Wednesday, May 21, at 10:00 AM in the SARPC Board Room. We had an issue come up this week in terms of our MPO STP Attributable funding schedule. At the TCC/CAC meeting a couple of weeks ago, we made a correction to a cost estimate on a project scheduled in 2015; that action kept us in balance. Just this week, we have had over \$1 million removed from our STP Attributable carry over funds. We are now way out of balance, and we will have to correct this at the MPO meeting. The following projects have had cost adjustments to them:

100037214 PE Zeigler Blvd from Forrest Hill to Athey from \$300,000 + **\$640,000** = \$940,000
 100007693 ROW Grelot Rd from Cody Rd to Schillingers Rd from \$891,000 + **\$20,078** = \$911,078
 100007695 UT Grelot Rd from Cody Rd to Schillingers Rd from \$135,644 + **\$2,685** = \$138,329
 100007696 PE Grelot Rd from Cody Rd to Schillingers Rd from \$662,830 + **\$445,428** = \$1,108,258
 100053509 CN Sidewalk Improvements along SR 188 from Hurricane Blvd to Shrine Rd \$122,013 - **\$33,370**=\$88,643

These cost carryovers took \$1,074,821 from our STP Attributable funding, causing us to be unbalanced. Some of these projects were authorized almost 20 years ago (10007696 was authorized in 1997). This seems to be a continuing problem we are having. We are not able to keep a balanced TIP because of the cost increases of projects that are completed and on the ground, some of them decades old. This is a problem. BE PREPARED TO SHUFFLE STP ATTRIBUTABLE PROJECTS ON WEDNESDAY.

Also, we must approve the funding schedule for a FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (annual budget) and the TCC/CAC recommended the following items to will be including into the TIP:

National Highway Funds:

Resurfacing on SR 17 (US 45) from north of I-65 to 17 miles north of SR-158; \$2,905,922

FTA 5310 Funds:

Mobile ARC Capital Vehicles(4); \$317,450

Independent Living Center Capital Vehicles(1); \$46,200

FTA 5307 Funds:

Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

City of Mobile Transit Operating, FY 2013: \$1,250,000 (fed)

City of Mobile Transit Operating, FY 2014 \$1,700,000 (fed)

HSIP Funds:

Intersection Improvements on Tanner Williams Rd at Eliza Jordan Rd, Utilities: \$2,500

TAP Funds:

Thompson Blvd sidewalk from John Dotson Park to Johnston St in Chickasaw; \$314,609

Extension of sidewalk along US98 from Ed George Rd to Semmes Comm. Center; \$335,629

Bridge Funds: (new project)

Bridge Replacement and approaches on Old Pascagoula Rd over Jackson Crk: \$1,296,885

The Program Management Plan, which outlines the FTA 5310 process, was briefly reviewed and will be mailed to MPO members next week with the minutes of the TCC/CAC meeting. Ms. Monica Williamson gave a brief update on the Transit Development Plan, and the Committee deliberated for some time on which projects to include into the Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Mobile MPO Climate Change Study Highlighted

Some of you may have read about the FHWA Climate Change Study that was conducted for the Mobile MPO in this week's news. AL.com picked it up on several articles, and was even mentioned in this week's J.D. Crowe cartoon. The spin doctor (I mean author) interviewed me by phone, took liberties, then put the piece together for Bloomberg News.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-05-12/alabama-avoids-preparing-for-rising-seas-menacing-mobile.html>

Projects Within Region Let May 30th, 2014

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Old US-31 (Section located on the west side of the existing SR-3/US-31) from the junction of SR-3 (US-31) north of Pollard to the junction of SR-3 (US-31) near Keego. Length 2.935 mi.

BALDWIN COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Windsor Drive and Ridgewood Drive from North Main Street to Bayview Drive in Daphne. Length 1.226 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Secretary Foxx Warns States That Payments May Be Delayed:

To prepare state transportation officials, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx sent a letter detailing the current state of the highway trust fund (HTF) and possible measures U.S. DOT would take if Congress doesn't act. The Department may have to institute cash management strategies – including delayed reimbursements – to keep the HTF solvent. [HERE](#) is the Letter and [HERE](#) is the Highway Trust Fund Ticker.

The House is Silent on Funding

By Keith Laing

The House is staying quiet in the debate over a new transportation funding bill despite a flurry of action by senators and the Obama administration.

Senate leaders this week unveiled a six-year, \$265 billion road and transit funding package bill that will be marked up in committee on Thursday morning.

Meanwhile, the administration is pressing for action after releasing its own plan for a four-year, \$302 billion transportation measure. President Obama and Vice President Biden both delivered speeches Wednesday to tout the proposal.

"If they don't act by the end of the summer, federal funding for transportation projects will run out," Obama said in front of the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York.

"There will be no money. The cupboard will be bare. And all told, nearly 700,000 jobs would be at risk over the next year — that's like the population of Tampa and St. Louis combined."

The House has stayed out of the fray, focusing instead on a recent agreement it reached with the Senate on a smaller \$8.2 billion bill to boost U.S. port and waterways.

[HERE](#)

Senate panel backs transport bill to maintain funding

(Reuters) - A U.S. Senate committee passed a six-year transportation bill on Thursday that would keep federal spending on highways and mass transit at current levels but does not tackle the looming shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted with bipartisan support to advance the legislation, which would spend about \$53 billion a year and adjust for inflation, to the full Senate. It is not clear when the Senate will consider the bill.

Other committees in the Senate and House of Representatives are working on ways to pump money into the trust fund, which pays for about 45 percent of what U.S. states spend on roads and bridges and is forecast to run out of money by the end of August.

Senator David Vitter, the senior Republican on the Environment and Public Works Committee, said it would be tough to find a way to fund the legislation. "A bipartisan finance solution is critical to the success of this bill," Vitter said.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx warned this week that 700,000 jobs could be lost if Congress lets the trust fund run dry, which would hamper efforts to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure.

The gas tax that supports the fund hasn't been raised since 1993 and covers only about \$35 billion a year of the approximately \$53 billion in annual federal highway and mass transit spending.

Since 2008, Congress has transferred about \$54 billion from general tax revenues to the fund, which was intended to be self-sustaining. With Americans driving less and using more fuel efficient vehicles, the fund hasn't kept pace with spending.

Groups ranging from the AFL-CIO labor federation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have lobbied Congress to boost fuel taxes, currently at 18.4 cents a gallon for gas and 24.4 cents for diesel. But there is little appetite among lawmakers to raise the tax in an election year.

Other ideas for plugging the funding hole also have not gained traction on Capitol Hill, including a proposal from Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, a Democrat, to replace the gas tax with a levy on oil at the wholesale level.

The Obama administration has proposed spending about \$75 billion annually over the next four years, a significant boost from the Senate bill. To pay for it, the administration would complement the existing gas tax with money from ending some business tax breaks.

Foxx this week criticized the Senate bill. "America has been waiting on a bigger solution," he said.

The American Society of Civil Engineers also said the bill fell short. "Regrettably, while the bill may reflect political realities, it does not go far enough in addressing our country's investment gap," ASCE said in a statement.

In its 2013 report card, ASCE said one in nine of the country's bridges were structurally deficient and 42 percent of its major urban highways were congested.

But the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials welcomed the bill's six-year time frame, saying it helped state officials plan long-term projects.

The current transportation bill, which is due to expire at the end of September, was enacted just two years ago.

Funding Opportunities

Walk Friendly Communities Now Taking Applications

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

Applications are due by June 16, 2014.

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

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

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

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

About the WFC Program

The Walk Friendly Community designation, awarded from bronze to platinum, is given to applicant communities that have demonstrated a commitment to improving and sustaining walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies. At the core of the WFC program is a comprehensive assessment tool that evaluates community walkability and pedestrian safety through questions related to engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and planning. The assessment tool questions are intended to both evaluate conditions for walking and provide communities with feedback and ideas for promoting pedestrian safety and activity.

Modeled after the League of American Bicyclists' "Bicycle Friendly Communities," WFC distinguishes cities and towns that are leading the way in walkability. WFC is the first program to highlight communities for their walkability initiatives and programs, while also offering feedback to assist communities in improving walkability.

JARC New Freedom Funding (rural / small urban); CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR FUNDING TRANSIT SERVICES FOR FY 2015 5:00 P.M. on May 16, 2014. (budget deadline was April 18th)

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Modal Programs Bureau is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program and the Section 5317 New Freedom (NF) Program. These Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs provide funding for transit related services that assist the state's population of low income and disabled individuals.

The following organizations are eligible to apply for the Sections 5316 & 5317 programs:

Private nonprofit organizations

State or local governmental bodies; and

Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

Federal funds administered through ALDOT are only extended to organizations providing transit services in the small urban and rural areas of the State.

Available federal funds for the Section 5316 JARC program are expected to total \$1,792,092 for small urban areas and \$1,251,841 for the rural areas. Available federal funds for the Section 5317 NF program are expected to total \$898,303 for small urban areas and \$640,484 for the rural areas. A 50% local match is required for operating funds and a 20% local match is required for capital and planning funds. The selection process will be based on the following criteria: statement of need and organizational capacity; project budget and cost effectiveness; coordination and program outreach; implementation plan; and customer service and accessibility. Projects funded through these programs must be derived from a locally regional coordinated transportation plan.

The application package provides specific eligibility requirements, match requirements, and eligible activities. The application and state management plan can be found at:

<http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/transit.htm>.

Completed grant applications must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Planning Council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed. Each Regional Planning Council must review grant applications to ensure compliance with federal coordination requirements prior to formal submission to ALDOT. Only those grant applications submitted for funding consideration by the Regional Planning Councils will be considered for funding. The deadline for submissions to the appropriate regional planning council in the respective geographic areas of the state in which Sections 5316 and/or 5317 transportation services are proposed is **5:00 P.M. on May 16, 2014**. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned.

Postmarked submissions will not be accepted.

After applications are reviewed, prioritized, and approved by ALDOT, applications will be submitted to the FTA Region IV office for funding consideration. For questions or comments concerning the grant application or if the information is needed in another language contact: Sharon Coats, ALDOT, Modal Programs Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110; (334) 353-6443 or coatss@dot.state.al.us.

All proposed budgets should have been emailed to ALDOT no later than April 18, 2014.

Just For Fun

Solar-powered roads: Coming to a highway near you?

This is an interesting concept, but I am sure way more expensive than traditional pavement to construct, and maintain.



So in your mind, think of the television show “the Twilight Zone” intro, and in Rod Sterling’s voice: “Imagine if you will, roads, generating electricity from solar panels, that create enough energy, to propel an electronic vehicle. In 100 years, passengers will be propelled through electromagnetic transfer, from energy created..... by the very road in which it travels.”



<http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/12/tech/solar-powered-roads-coming-highway/>

In the News

Congressman Byrne calls proposed I-10/Mobile River Bridge a 'national priority'; says inaction endangers public safety, economic development



Bradley Byrne tweeted four photos of what the I-10 bridge over Mobile could look like.

Cassie Fambro | cfambro@al.com

Print Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com By Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com

on May 12, 2014 at 4:50 PM, updated May 12, 2014 at 5:26 PM

MOBILE, Alabama – U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne called construction of an Interstate-10 bridge over the Mobile River a “national priority” and said he has “thrown a stick in the sand” asking the Federal Highway Administration to release the project's draft environmental impact study by July 1 or provide a concrete reason for its continued delay.

“They've been working on (the I-10/Mobile River Bridge) for 20 years. We put a man on the moon in less time,” Byrne, R-Fairhope, told AL.com following a Monday roundtable at the AIDT Maritime Training Center in Mobile to discuss the long-stalled project.

Members of the media were informed upon arrival at the meeting they would not be allowed to provide live coverage of the event. The press release announcing the event did, in fact, list a “media availability” with Byrne following the roundtable, but such sessions traditionally provide one-on-one time for direct follow-up questions, rather than serving in lieu of event coverage.

“I wanted people to be completely candid, and we told everybody who came this was going to be off the record,” Byrne said, adding, “sometimes people don't say things (when the media are present) we need to hear.”

Bridge specifics

What was said, however, continues the on-again, off-again conversation that's been taking place since the mid-1990s, regarding the ongoing push to ease congestions in the Port City's overburdened twin-tunnel system and across Mobile Bay.

Specifically, four potential routes – each with its own supporters and detractors – have been proposed, but a final decision cannot be made until the draft environmental plan is released and a series of public meetings regarding the potential \$1 billion project are conducted on both sides of the bay.

The clear local favorite is what is often referred to as route "B Prime," a hybrid variation melding two former contenders in an attempt to cause the least disruption to local businesses and activity along Mobile's waterfront. The route starts just past the Virginia Street exit where the Alabama State Port Authority's new container terminal is expected to aggravate traffic.

The proposed bridge would then run just south of the Alabama Cruise Terminal, include the possible addition of footings on Austal USA's property and terminate just north of the site of Monday's roundtable – the AIDT Maritime Training Center on the Causeway – which feeds directly into the existing bayway that would be widened to eight lanes as part of the project.

Continue Reading [\[HERE\]](#)

Bridge raising closes Michigan Ave. over I-10 in Mobile

Print Angela Levins | alevins@al.com By Angela Levins | alevins@al.com
on May 13, 2014 at 1:50 PM, updated May 13, 2014 at 11:14 PM



The Michigan Ave. bridge over I10 will be closed for the next eight weeks for ALDOT crews to raise the bridge. (Courtesy ALDOT)

MOBILE, Ala. -- The Alabama Department of Transportation is giving the Michigan Avenue Bridge over Interstate 10 a facelift, so to speak.

During the next eight weeks, the bridge will be raised to meet federal standards.

ALDOT Operations Engineer Lee Reach said that over time, the clearance between I-10 and the bridge has lessened as the road has been resurfaced.

There has been no trouble with trucks clearing the bridge, he said. The only trouble spot he pointed to was on the very right hand side of the road when you are headed westbound.

Reach said the raising of the bridge will only take a couple of nights. The rest of the eight weeks slated for the job is to rebuild the approaches to the bridge on Michigan Avenue.

Drivers may detour the road work by using Exit 24 at Duval and Broad Street.

The bridge work is part of ALDOT's I-10 maintenance and resurfacing project that extends from Halls Mill Creek to the west end of the Wallace Tunnel. The project also includes removing the pedestrian bridge between Texas Street and Canal Street.

Reach reminded drivers to watch for lane closures. Law enforcement will be patrolling the area.

Has the time come to increase the speed limit to 75 on state interstates?

Print Charles J. Dean | cdean@al.com By Charles J. Dean | cdean@al.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on May 16, 2014 at 7:00 AM, updated May 16, 2014 at 7:20 AM

PRATTVILLE – I had just crossed the Alabama River driving north on I-65 out of Montgomery on the way to Birmingham and I had just reached my "typical" cruising speed – 72, or 73 mph,

And, also typically, any number of cars were steadily passing me.

It was nothing new. It happens no matter the interstate or the city or town I'm near. The posted speed limit, 70, is probably the most violated thing I can think of in Alabama.

I'm thinking about this because I noted our Florida lawmakers recently voted to give that state's transportation department the authority to increase the speed limit on some stretches of interstates to 75.

It's been a growing trend, especially out west. In some states, notably Texas, the speed limits on isolated stretches of interstates has jumped to 80.

It got me to thinking has the come for the Alabama Legislature to sanction what a lot of drivers are already doing on most stretches of interstates, namely drive at 75...at least.

Would it increase the chances of serious injury or death in crashes? I suppose it could. The truth is that danger has been there since many drivers are already ignoring the limit.

Some might worry it would reduce revenue from speeding fines. Well, my guess is you will always have speeders and my hunch is that troopers write most of their tickets for drivers doing over 75 now.

Anyway, what do you think? Has the time come to increase the common speed limit on state interstates from 70 to 75? Maybe you would like to see it go to 80 on some stretches.

City-to-city express bus company Megabus.com expands Mobile routes to 3 Florida cities, offers \$1 one-way fares



Print Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com By Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on May 15, 2014 at 12:07 PM

MOBILE, Alabama – Mobile's budget travelers have a new option for reaching the Sunshine state beginning today as city-to-city express bus company Megabus.com expands its routes to and from the Port City into Florida.

With one-way fares from \$1 – plus a reservation fee of \$1.50 regardless of distance – Mobile residents can now travel the Coach USA subsidiary to and from Orlando, Tallahassee and Gainesville, Fla., on six daily arrivals/departures. Tickets can be purchased at www.megabus.com.

"Not only do Mobile residents have additional route options, but megabus.com's expansion will make it possible for more than 236,000 new travelers to visit Mobile during the first year alone," said Mike Alvich, vice president of marketing and for megabus.com/Coach USA

Mobile has been a megabus.com city since November 2011, with the introduction of Atlanta routes to and from the GM&O Transit Center at 110 Beauregard St. In February 2012, the company expanded the Port City's services with direct routes to both Montgomery and New Orleans.

The Florida expansion makes Orlando megabus.com's 14th North American hub, with the company

now serving more than 10 million customers in more than 120 cities annually. [\[HERE\]](#)

Transportation Research

The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting research to develop new methods to make the next census easier, more convenient, and less costly for taxpayers.

The survey will take 10 minutes or less to complete [\[HERE\]](#)

U.S. Census Bureau Releases: "Modes Less Traveled - Bicycling and Walking to Work"

The U.S. Census Bureau released the report, "Modes Less Traveled — Bicycling and Walking to Work in the United States: 2008-2012," which highlights the trends and socio-economic and geographic differences between motorized and non-motorized commutes. This report — the Census Bureau's first focusing only on biking and walking to work — is one of many that examines specific aspects of commuting, including workplace location, working from home, long commutes and specific travel modes.

The figures in this release come from data collected from questions in the Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS). The questions asked include:

- How did this person usually get to work last week? If this person usually used more than one method of transportation during the trip, mark (X) the box of the one used for most of the distance.
- How many people, including this person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van last week?
- What time did this person usually leave home to go to work last week?
- How many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work last week?

Organizations use the statistics from the ACS to design programs that ease traffic problems, reduce congestion and promote carpooling. In addition, police and fire departments use ACS statistics to plan for emergency services in areas where many people work.

The ACS provides local statistics on a variety of topics for even the smallest communities.

Highlights include:

- The West had the highest rate of biking to work at 1.1 percent, and the South had the lowest rate at 0.3 percent.
 - Among large cities, Portland, Ore., had the highest bicycle-commuting rate at 6.1 percent.
 - The Northeast showed the highest rate of walking to work at 4.7 percent of workers, whereas the South had the lowest rate at 1.8 percent. Several of these places were "college towns," including Ithaca, N.Y., where about 42.4 percent walked to work.
 - Among large cities, Boston was one of the highest walking-to-work cities at 15.1 percent.
-

10 TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR BIKE MONTH BETTER!

To get things rolling in your community or improve longstanding events with new ideas, the League created a step-by-step guide that will help you in creating a successful Bike Month event in your organization, workplace, city, or state. While we commonly refer to Bike to Work Day events, because they've been the most popular historically, the tips and techniques will help you plan **any** Bike Month event, from a citywide ride to a small gathering within your own company or organization. [\[Here\]](#)

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

