



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 22, 2015

Volume 14, Number 7

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Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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There are a couple of meetings announced for Mobile MPO and TCC/CAC; June 3rd and June 10th (please see *Mobile MPO Updates*). Memorial Day Forecast: Heavy Traffic, Deteriorating Infrastructure, the House passed a 2 month extension (see *Legislative Updates*). Those crazy Europeans... that's *Just for Fun*... There is open application for rural FTA 5310 grants through ALDOT (See Funding Opportunities).

It is Memorial Day Weekend, please take a moment to remember the people who died while serving in the country's armed forces.

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



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

Those of the Mobile MPO process, there are a couple of meetings coming up, please put them on your calendar. There is a:

- **TCC/CAC meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 3rd, 2015 at 10:00 am.**

If you are a TCC/CAC member please plan on attending. The results of the TCC/CAC meeting will go before the:

- **MPO Policy Board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 10th, 2015 at 10:00 am.**

The first item on the agenda will be to review the 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which is essentially our budget for next year. This is a draft document that will be adopted in August, and will be handed out at the June meetings.

Also, we will be reviewing the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is the Mobile MPO discretion funds (STP Attributable schedule). We will discuss a realignment of projects in order to have positive TIP balance for years 2016-2019. Also, there will be a discussion pertaining to **scheduling our Urban TAP Funds**. This also is a draft document that will be adopted in August.

Both the draft UPWP and the draft TIP are being submitted to ALDOT by June 15th for comment prior to public comment. Once we receive comments from ALDOT, both documents must be go through the public involvement process, and the TCC/CAC and MPO Policy board will see these documents again this summer. A couple of other items on the agenda include a self-certification, and an update on the Downtown Mobility Study.

GIS online

We are upgrading and starting to utilize our online GIS capabilities. Please check out some of the current interactive maps we have been working on. Many more to come...

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<http://mobilempo.org/maps.html>

DESTINATION 2040

The Mobile MPO [Long Range Transportation Plan](#), Destination 2040, has been adopted, subsequent comments from ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA. The DRAFT document that was out for public review and reviewed with MPO and TCC/CAC members may have some slight modifications in the FINAL Document. The FINAL will be out next week.

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](#).

I-10 Mobile River Bridge

ALDOT has released the I-10 Mobile River Bridge Corridor Hearing Report Summary and it is now available online at www.mobileriverbridge.com. This report summarizes all of the comments that were received during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement public comment period in the Fall of 2014. The document suggests most of the support was for the B prime route. Although we are moving closer and closer to having a bridge, there are still several hurdles to cross, including funding, [tolling is an option](#).

For more information on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge:

ALDOT'S Web Site: <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/>

Build The I-10 Bridge Coalition Web Site: <http://www.buildthei10bridge.com/>



Stayed Tuned for all of the details http://mobilempo.org/Mobility_Study.html

Projects Within Region Let May 29th, 2015

Mobile County

- **for constructing the Historic Whistler Bike Trail (Bike Path along an abandoned Railroad Corridor) along SR-17 from a point near the I-65 Interchange to a point near the SR-158 Interchange in Prichard. Length 1.293 mi.** The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$623,244 to \$761,743 .
- **For constructing the Intersection Improvements on CR-19 (Irvington-Bayou La Batre Highway) at the intersection of CR-24 (Half Mile Road). Length 0.148 mi.** The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$805,388 to \$948,363 .

Baldwin County

None at this time

Escambia County

- **for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Medical Park Drive/Martin Luther King Drive from the junction of West State Line Road to the junction of Johnson Street. Length 2.975 mi.** The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$641,982 to \$784,645 .
- **for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from north of**

the intersection of old US-31 (MP 64.710) to the south end of the Burnt Corn Creek Bridge (MP 68.954) in East Brewton. Length 4.244 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,330,991 to \$1,626,767 .

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

Memorial Day Forecast: Heavy Traffic, Deteriorating Infrastructure

Thursday, May 21, 2015 - 1:30pm Written by

[Janet Kavinoky](#)

Ready to hit the road this weekend? So is everyone else. AAA is forecasting that 33 million Americans will travel by car this long weekend, a 5.3 percent increase compared to last year's Memorial weekend and the highest volume in ten years.

The vast majority of travelers will take to the roads vs. air, bus or cruise ship, presumably because of pent up travel enthusiasm after rough winters and lower gas prices. If you're joining the masses, by all means, be safe, but also think about the roads and bridges on which you'll be traveling - and specifically the fact that, while they might work to get you where you need to go this weekend, Congress is doing them no favors.

Even as holiday travelers make their way using America's highway and transit networks, Congress has opted to temporarily "patch" the Highway Trust Fund - which pays to maintain and progress those systems - with a short-term extension to the expiring current law, keeping it barely funded for two months rather than giving it the real commitment and support it needs in the form of a long-term, fully funded bill. (The short-term Band-aid should be finalized by this weekend.) So if Dad is on the side of the road this weekend, fixing a flat after hitting a pothole ... you know who to blame!

Here's what we told Congress about their approach in a letter we sent to them Tuesday: "Kicking the can" down the road in this way has costs - companies can't plan for hiring; projects that need multi-year funding commitments are delayed; and opportunities for economic development and economic growth are lost. It's no way to run a country. We need a thoughtful, sustainable solution and we need it now.

House Passes Transportation Extension

With a looming May 31 deadline and Congress ready to leave D.C. for a week-long break, the House earlier this week passed a 2-month extension (HR 2353) of the nation's transportation program, by a 387-35 vote. This came in the wake of efforts in both chambers to find the \$10-11 billion necessary to extend the program through the end of the year. In advance of the vote, President Obama issued a Statement of Administration Policy expressing displeasure with the short-term extension, but did not issue a veto threat of the legislation. House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) released a statement immediately after the vote indicating that the House will continue to work toward a long-term reauthorization. Senate action on the proposal could come as early as today, but it may not have any option other than to accept the House-passed extension since the House will be out of session early in the afternoon.

Renacci Going Against the Grain

Representative Jim Renacci (R-OH) favors indexing the gas tax hike to fund the highway program through 2016, a generally unpopular position among his Republican colleagues. According to his staff, Renacci's bill would only cost the average American driver \$2.83 per year, which many pay for coffee on a daily basis. Eight Republicans and twenty-two Democrats have signed onto his legislation. In addition, Renacci is part of a group - along with Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT), John Carney (D-DE), and Reid Ribble (R-WI) - collecting signatures from colleagues vowing to vote against any short-term transportation extension, though it appears they plan to hold back on the letter until the next deadline arises, at the end of July.

Funding Opportunities

FY 2016 SECTION 5310 NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (June 17th deadline)

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Modal Programs Bureau, is now accepting Applications for funding consideration through the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding for transit related services that assist the state's population of seniors & individuals with disabilities. The following organizations are eligible to submit an application for the Section 5310 program:

1. Private nonprofit organizations
2. Governmental agencies that provide certifications to ALDOT that transit services furnished by nonprofit organizations are not readily available in the area
3. Governmental agencies approved by the ALDOT to coordinate transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities Federal funds administered through ALDOT are only extended to agencies providing transit services in the small urban and rural areas of the State.

Available federal funds for the Section 5310 program are approximately \$2,218,584 for small urban areas and \$3,187,286 for the rural areas. A local match of 20% is required for this capital program. The selection process may be based on the following criteria: financial and management capability; service needs; proposed services; utilization of requested equipment; and service coordination. 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 Section 5310 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 Section 5310 transportation services are proposed is 5:00 P.M. on June 17, 2015. Applications received after the established deadline will be returned. Postmarked submissions will not be accepted. All applications will be reviewed, evaluated, prioritized, and approved by ALDOT prior to the development and submission of a consolidated grant application to the FTA Region IV office for funding consideration. If there are questions or comments concerning the grant application or if more information is needed in another language or alternative formats, contact Sharon Coats, ALDOT, Modal Programs Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110; (334) 353-6443 or coats@dot.state.al.us

New Round of TIGER Announced

Pre-Applications Due: May 4 (required)

Final Applications Due: June 5

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has announced \$500 million in available funding for transportation projects across the country under a seventh round of the highly successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. Click [HERE](#) for more information. The USDOT will host a [TIGER summit](#) at its headquarters on April 16, and a [series of webinars](#) to assist applicants on a number of facets of the process.

Incentive Opportunities

As the third round of the Every Day Counts initiative moves into high gear, the Federal Highway Administration is offering incentives and technical assistance to help the highway community mainstream innovations.

Fiscal year 2015 assistance is now available from the [State Transportation Innovation Council Incentive program](#). The program provides resources—technical assistance and funds—to help STICs make innovations standard practice. States can get up to \$100,000 a year for activities such as implementing system process changes, organizing peer exchanges and developing guidance and

specifications. Contact the state FHWA Division Office or Mary Huie at (202) 366-3039 for information.

The Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program continues to accept applications through Grants.gov. Incentive funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects using innovation on any aspect of highway transportation, including planning, financing, environment, design, construction, materials, pavements, structures and operations. See the [AID Demonstration Web page](#) or contact Ewa Flom at (202) 366-2169 for details.

[Section 1304](#) of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act allows an increase in the federal funding share of up to 5 percent on eligible projects that use innovations.

Just For Fun

Funny stuff going on in Europe....



I don't think this is ADA Compliant....



You are not doing that right....



Whether you turn or don't turn, please yield

Some more good'uns [HERE](#)

In the News

Map for Mobile Framework for Growth

Map for Mobile Framework for Growth concluded a series of workshops this week. Five basic strategies for transportation from the workshop emerged.

1. Embrace a Complete Streets approach to roadway design.
2. Update the Major Streets Plan so it integrates with the Guiding Principles.
3. Allow transportation decisions to be influenced by the character of the area.
4. Create transit ready environments and opportunities for premium transit.
5. Recognize the realities of limited transportation revenues.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx coming to Mobile to discuss I-10 Bridge project



By [John Sharp | jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on May 12, 2015 at 12:03 PM, updated May 12, 2015 at 12:57 PM

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx will visit Mobile on May 26 to learn more about the Interstate 10 Bridge project.

The [anticipated visit](#) comes on the Tuesday after Memorial Day weekend, which is one of the busiest summer travel dates of the year and is often one of the most congested along the I-10 Bayway from west of downtown Mobile and into Baldwin County.

"This is obviously an important visit to get the Secretary of Transportation to the Gulf Coast to see the need of the bridge project, first hand," Seth Morrow, spokesman with U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, said.

Morrow said the timing is also good for emphasizing the need for continued highway transportation funding. Foxx, last year, [was in Birmingham during a stop along his bus tour, to express concerns about the potential insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund.](#)

Transportation funding issues have federal lawmakers scrambling for solutions before the end of the month, when the current highway and transit bill expires.

A bipartisan group of Congressmen are considering some short-term solutions that could keep the funding in place to the end of 2015.

[According to USA Today](#), there's bipartisan support in Congress for lowering the tax rate on overseas profits earned by U.S. corporations as a way to "repatriate" that money. Tax revenue from such repatriation would replenish the highway and transit trust funds.

Some leading Republicans want oppose repatriation as the only solution.

"The House, we expect will act on something before we recess for Memorial Day," Morrow said.

"It's a timely visit to emphasize the funding of our nation's highways."

Morrow said there is no set agenda yet for Foxx's visit to Mobile, although the I-10 Bridge and Bayway widening project will be a key focus.

The proposed \$850 million project calls for the construction of a new bridge southwest of downtown Mobile expanding across the Mobile River and leading toward an expanded Bayway taking eastbound motorists to Baldwin County.

In Baldwin County, transportation officials plan to redesign the U.S. 98 interchange in Daphne. [They are also considering whether to extend an expanded Bayway toward the Ala. 181 interchange with I-10 in Spanish Fort.](#)

Foxx's visit also comes as Alabama Department of Transportation officials study whether tolls will be a feasible solution in raising money to pay for the project.

[CDM Smith is contracted for \\$260,000 to do an analysis that is expected to be completed by summer.](#)

Foxx, the former mayor of Charlotte, N.C., is the second transportation secretary in the Obama Administration to visit the Port City. Former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood came in September 2012.

LaHood, while in Mobile, said the I-10 Bridge [would "absolutely happen" and that Washington, D.C. would help area leaders find the resources to make it happen.](#)

Baldwin has 10 of Alabama's 30 fastest-growing cities; Mobile shrinks again



By [Brendan Kirby | bkirby@al.com](mailto:bkirby@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on May 21, 2015 at 7:30 AM, updated May 21, 2015 at 8:56 AM

Elberta's 1.9 percent growth rate between the middle of 2013 and the middle of last year placed it among Alabama's 30 fastest-growing municipalities but only No. 10 in its own county.

Such is the nature of Baldwin County's phenomenal growth, which is swelling populations in every city and town, as well as the unincorporated areas. The county also is home to nine of the 30 fastest-growing municipalities since the 2010 census.

[\[Check your city's population estimates\]](#)

The statistics come as no shock to Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant, whose city is in the top five over the past year and since 2010. The city has added 2,763 people since the last census and now stands at 18,089, according to the latest Census Bureau estimate.

"We are almost getting back to where we were before the recession," said Kant, who added that his city issued 350 new building permits last year and is on track to beat that this year, compared to an annual average of 500 before the housing collapse.

The downturn forced Fairhope to transfer some employees from its building department to other parts of city government and lay others off. To prevent that, Kant said, the city is considering privatizing part of its building permit operations to handle the overflow.

[Click here to view the charts if you are reading in the AL.com app](#)

Continue [HERE](#)

Like Taking Pictures?

AASHTO Announces 'Faces of Transportation' Photography and Video Contest

Tony Dorsey
202-412-3690
Tuesday, May 19, 2015

WASHINGTON - The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials today announced the start of its 11th annual Faces of Transportation photography contest with new categories, and a video section open to all participants. The national competition gives state DOT employees and private citizens the opportunity to submit photographs and videos of people, projects, and personal experiences that demonstrate the benefits of transportation in America. This year's competition, themed "The People Who Power Transportation in America," includes seven awards. Five will be presented in the photography section and two prizes will be awarded in the video portion of competition.

Photography: Photographs will be judged in three new transportation-themed categories: "People Building America," "People Touring America," and "Innovators in Transportation." A \$125 cash prize will be awarded to the best photograph in each of the three categories. \$500 cash prizes will be presented to the winners of both the People's Choice and the Best Overall Photograph award.

Video Section: Videos will be judged on two levels and in two separate categories. Amateur or novice videos must demonstrate travel experiences in a category called Safe, Innovative and/or Fun. Professionally produced videos will be judged in a category called Innovation in Motion.

The videos (one winner in each category), as selected by AASHTO, will each be awarded \$150 cash prizes. The winners, along with other submitted videos, may be featured on AASHTO's Transportation TV.

Winning video and photography submissions must prominently feature people designing, constructing, using and enjoying the nation's transportation systems. All entries must represent the positive effects of all modes of transportation on individuals and communities. Photographs and videos which include recognizable individuals must be accompanied with a model release form regardless of category; all photos and videos must include a caption that describes the scene. Failure to meet these requirements may lead to disqualification.

All entries must be received by July 31, 2015. Judging will begin on August 10, 2015. The general public will vote for the People's Choice Award photograph at the Faces of Transportation web site, www.facesoftransportation.org. Judging will begin August 10 and end August 31, 2015.

The winners of the 2015 Faces of Transportation competition will be announced at the AASHTO Subcommittee on Transportation Communications (TransComm) annual meeting in Annapolis, Maryland in September. Entry forms and contest rules are available at www.facesoftransportation.org.

Mobile's Volkert acquires Rodriguez Transportation Group division, expands Texas presence



By [Kelli Dugan | kdugan@al.com](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on May 21, 2015 at 2:02 PM

Mobile-based Volkert Inc. has acquired the Construction Engineering Inspection division of Texas-based Rodriguez Transportation Group.

Perry Hand, president and chief executive officer of the employee-owned engineering firm, called the acquisition an "exciting opportunity" for Volkert to grow its presence in Texas and better serve clients.

"We are a client-oriented company and we are always looking for opportunities to grow and increase our services and geographic reach," Hand said in a prepared statement.

RTJ operates offices in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas.

The acquisition, financial terms for which were not disclosed, involves 24 employees in the CEI division and is expected to augment Volkert's existing presence in the Austin, Houston and Fort Worth areas.

In its 90th year of business, Volkert operates a total of 31 offices in 11 states and the District of Columbia. The firm employs a total of 825, including 169 in Mobile and 283 in Alabama.

Engineering News Record ranks Volkert as 98th among the Top 500 Firms in the United States for 2015, marks the company's 50th year on this list.

Transportation Research

FHWA 37-15

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Contact: Doug Hecox

Tel: 202-366-0660

Driving Topped 262 Billion Miles In March, New Data Show

U.S. Drivers Set New Record with Miles Traveled

WASHINGTON – New estimates released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) show that Americans drove 261.7 billion vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) in March of this year, which is the most ever driven in March. Throughout the first quarter of the year, the nation drove 720.1 billion VMT – the highest for any year's first quarter. The increase in travel on America's roads underscores the need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure.

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration announced a plan to help build and maintain America's roads with a \$478 billion, six-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the [GROW AMERICA Act](#). The plan would increase state funding levels to \$317 billion; an increase of about 29 percent over current levels, and makes critical investments in infrastructure needed to promote long-term economic growth, enhance safety and efficiency, and support jobs for the 21st century.

The 720.1 billion VMT driven on U.S. roads in the first quarter of the year beats the previous record of 705.7 billion set in 2006, and doubles the 345.5 billion VMT of the first quarter of 1982.

Continue [HERE](#)

Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool

May 28, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

June 3, 3:30 – 5:00 PM ET

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will provide two more webinars to overview and demonstrate their new [EJSCREEN](#) tool, which is designed to highlight places in the U.S. that may

have higher environmental burdens and vulnerable populations. The tool offers powerful data and mapping capabilities that display environmental and demographic information at a high geographic resolution across the entire country.

Bridging the Gap between Freight, Infrastructure Protection and Traffic Incident Management

May 28, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

FHWA and the Transportation Incident Management (TIM) Network will sponsor this [webinar](#) to examine the multi-agency traffic incident management practices being conducted in the Philadelphia area, and discuss how TIM stakeholders are working to engage freight transportation stakeholders in that region. Presenters will also share information about the New Jersey State Police's unique, federally funded Incident Management Unit and the important role it has played in dramatically reducing incident clearance times in the state.

Advancing a Sustainable Highway System

May 28, 2:00 PM ET – Access and Affordability

June 25, 2:00 PM ET – Linking Asset Management and Planning

July 29, 2:00 PM ET – Sustainable Pavements

The Sustainable Transport and Climate Change Team within FHWA's Office of Natural Environment will present a series of webinars based on the [Advancing a Sustainable Highway System: Highlights of FHWA Sustainability Activities](#) report produced by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center last year. The report illustrates how sustainability is incorporated into a wide variety of FHWA programs, projects, policies, processes, and partnerships. Each webinar will focus on a particular section of the report and will feature specific FHWA activities that advance sustainability.