



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 23rd, 2014

Volume 10, Number 8

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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

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

The Mobile MPO met this week, and Mobile Urban Area TAP awards were announced; please see *Mobile MPO Updates. Funding Opportunities* just got slim with all the application deadlines now past, and in *Legislative Updates*, the House would like to reduce TIGER funding. Don't Google this week's *Just for Fun*, you'll poke your eye out.

It is officially National Bike Month, and it's Memorial Day Weekend, so let's remember "why" it is [Memorial Day Weekend](#).

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



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

Mobile MPO Updates

The Mobile MPO met this week

The Mobile MPO met Wednesday, May 21, at 10:00 AM in the SARPC Board Room.

The board approved the Draft funding schedule for a FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (annual budget) that the TCC/CAC recommended. Carryover Planning funds will fund a study for Downtown Mobile that will be in cooperation with and parallel to, the ALDOT Water Street modifications, Bring Back Broad Street Initiative, and various other needed bicycle pedestrian projects downtown. (Please see *In The News* below).

Also, Several items were included into the 2012 -2016 Transportation Improvement Program.

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:

City of Mobile Transit Operating, FY 2015: \$1,600,000

City of Mobile Transit Operating, FY 2016 \$1,300,000

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 reviewed and adopted. Ms. Monica Williamson gave a brief update on the Transit Development Plan, and projects of the Destination 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan were reviewed.

Anthony Johnson
Transportation Planner
ajohnson@sarpc.org

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

Finally, there was an issue with the Mobile MPO STP Attributable Funds and the status of the carryover from previous years. The board decided a letter should be authored and sent to ALDOT HQ to inquire about this matter, and prevent it from happening again.

TAP PROJECTS RECOMMENDED

The committee to select projects for the FY 2014 Mobile Urbanized Area Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funding met this week and recommended 4 projects to be funded with the FY 2014 TAP Funds. The projects require 20% local match and are:

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

The total award amount for FY 2014 with Mobile Urban Area funds is \$581,942 (federal). Keep in mind that we had \$86,801 (fed) remaining from FY 2013. So, the total for FY 2014 was \$86,801 + our apportioned FY 2014 amount of \$521,335 (fed) = \$608,136 (fed). The remaining FY 2014 federal TAP funds (\$26,194) will be carried over to be awarded in addition to the FY 2015 program.

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.

Water Resources Bill Advances: This week, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate both passed H.R. 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), by significant margins. The bill now awaits the President's signature. The bill creates a new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), to provide loans or loan guarantees through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Corps of Engineers (Corps) for eligible water infrastructure projects, including water and wastewater, that are larger than \$20 million (with a lower threshold for rural communities of less than 25,000 residents). The program is modeled on the similar Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which receives \$1 billion each year for surface transportation projects.

The bill authorizes EPA and Corps each to receive \$175 million over five years for loans and loan guarantees and makes programmatic changes to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program, but does not reauthorize the program or include new funding. Click [HERE](#) for conference report and related bill documents. Click [HERE](#) for the National League of Cities' press release.

House Committee Moves Transportation Funding Bill: The House Appropriations Committee earlier this week approved the fiscal year (FY) 2015 funding bill for the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by a 28-21 vote. The bill makes available \$105.5 billion in discretionary budgetary resources, including \$53.5 billion in contract authority approved from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). As previously discussed, the bill makes significant changes to the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, reducing funding to \$100 million and preventing funding of mass transit, passenger rail, bike paths, and other transportation alternatives. An amendment offered by Rep. David Price (D-NC) would have restored funding to \$600 million (FY14 levels); Betty McCollum's (D-FL) amendment would have restored the eligibility of transit, rail, and other projects. Both were defeated.

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.

Just For Fun

DON'T GO GOOGLE GOGGLING WHILE GRINDING GEARS

Texting and driving is a no-no, but what about Google Glassing and driving? First, one needs to understand what Google Glasses are:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1uyQZNg2vE>

They can do basically everything cool that the smart phones can do, but you can do it hands free. You know, for when you are occupied by skiing, or sky diving, or driving. In fact, the only time I am too

occupied to operate the buttons on my smart phone is when I should NOT be using a personal device like when I am driving, riding a bike, playing a musical instrument or wrestling alligators.

The folks in Illinois say NO to driving and Google Glassing [HERE](#), because Google Glasses are... *Just for Fun*.

In the News

Commission to budget federal funds for downtown Mobile walkability study



Traffic moves along Water Street in downtown Mobile, Ala. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson wants to make Water Street more pedestrian friendly and the city's waterfront more accessible. (Press-Register/Mike Kittrell)

[Print](#)



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

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

on May 22, 2014 at 10:04 AM, updated May 22, 2014 at 2:35 PM

MOBILE, Alabama – Walkability in downtown Mobile is a challenge, but none bigger than at the corner of Water and Beauregard streets.

The intersection, configured in the early 1990s, was once referred to by an official with the [National Center for Bicycling and Walking as "one of the worst intersections" around](#).

The rest of Water Street is no treat, either. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, in an effort to draw more pedestrians to the city's waterfront – home to the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center, the future GulfQuest National Maritime Museum and Cooper Riverside Park – wants to examine better pedestrian availability along the six-lane Water Street.

Other walkability and bicycling issues abound downtown. To address them, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission's Metropolitan Transportation Organization will include a downtown Mobile walkability/accessibility plan in its fiscal year 2015 budget.

Kevin Harrison, director of transportation with the commission, said unspent planning money will go toward the plan, which could begin sometime in the fall. The money comes from federal tax sources, and cannot be spent on capital projects.

Harrison said the plan is needed because of several factors: Stimpson's interest in making the downtown area more pedestrian friendly, the city's application for a federal TIGER II grant to reconstruct Broad Street and add more pedestrian/bicycling access to it and the city's pursuit of more federal money to make sidewalks downtown handicap-accessible.

Stimpson, [who has pushed for making Water Street more walkable since attending the Mayor's Institute on Design in Texas in March](#), will discuss the plans to make downtown more walkable during a noon news conference at the University of South Alabama's Shelby Hall.

"This is an important opportunity to partner with the SARPC/MPO to identify ways that we can make Mobile more walkable," Stimpson said on Wednesday. "Easy access to the city's wonderful resources and cultural destinations is paramount to becoming the most business and family-friendly city in America."

Harrison did not provide an estimated cost to the plan. The commission's annual budget will be approved in September, and funding also has to be approved by the Alabama Department of Transportation. [continue [HERE](#)]

Mayor Sandy Stimpson says changes are coming to Water Street



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

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

on May 22, 2014 at 3:01 PM, updated May 22, 2014 at 3:14 PM



Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson speaks before a crowd of about 70 people following a presentation from two California-based urban street designers on Thursday, May 22, 2014. Stimpson wants to make Water Street more pedestrian friendly. (John Sharp/jsharp@al.com).

MOBILE, Alabama – As the Alabama Department of Transportation moves toward a design on a massive reconfiguration project of interchanges in downtown Mobile, Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson has one request: Include Water Street.

"There will be a reconfiguration of Water Street, in my opinion, on the number of lanes," Stimpson told the local media following a two-hour presentation from two urban designers on how to make downtown's streets more pedestrian friendly. "I know that probably sends shockwaves through people who don't really understand how you can control traffic. But we can get the same traffic through or more traffic through with fewer lanes. That's the belief at this point."

While the exact type of changes to Water Street are unknown, and a design on **the ALDOT project** is yet to be released, the Stimpson administration is wanting to [make Water Street more pedestrian friendly so people can better access the city's waterfront](#).

[Changes to Water Street](#) could be included in ALDOT's downtown project, which includes reconfiguring the ramps onto and off Interstate 10 to the Wallace Tunnel. Work on that project could begin in late 2015.

"We got to figure a way to make sure that (Water Street) is not an impediment to use them," Stimpson said, referring to downtown pedestrian access to the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center, Cooper Riverside Park and GulfQuest National Maritime Museum.

Daniel Iacofano, CEO of the 32-year-old company, and Mukul Malhotra, a principal and director of urban design, discussed a variety of community-based street functions before a crowd of about 70 people at the University of South Alabama's Shelby Hall. The two-hour meeting was hosted put together by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

Malhotra, who called Water Street a "game changer" because it is one of the first streets people coming into downtown Mobile experience, urged the city to consider lessening regulations to allow for a more "complete street" design concept that incorporates all users.

"Less is more in terms of regulations," Malhotra said. [Continue reading [HERE](#)]

Federal highway fund shortfall could delay Mobile's I-10 interchange project



Changes are coming to the on and off ramps of I-10 in downtown Mobile. Those changes, however, depend on whether the Highway Trust Fund is funded this year. (file photo)



By John Sharp | jsharp@al.com

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

on May 22, 2014 at 4:01 PM

A reconfiguration of Interstate 10 interchanges leading to and from the Wallace Tunnel in downtown

Mobile depends on how Washington, D.C. resolves a potential crisis with the Highway Trust Fund.

The fund that pays for highway and infrastructure work, and is supported by gasoline taxes, is supposed to run out of money by the end of summer. As such, thousands of projects throughout the U.S. could be on hold if Congress and the Obama Administration do not come up with a solution to provide more funding beyond the gasoline tax.

"The highway trust fund is projected to be in a deficit later this summer, so it's a hard question to answer," Vince Calametti, an engineer with the Mobile division of the Alabama Department of Transportation, said Thursday. "(The project) is in our program and is in our priority and we are moving ahead, but it's contingent on proper funding."

The approximately \$30 million reconfiguration to the ramps leading to I-10 will be 80 percent funded by the federal government; 20 percent funded by the state.

If funding is available, the project is scheduled to be out for bids by early 2015. Construction would then begin later in the year, and Calametti said it could take two years to complete.

He said there will always be at least two lanes of I-10 opened during construction.

"With the Highway Trust Fund ... if that is resolved, (the project) should go the first of the year," Calametti said.

It's not an easy solution since the cost of road projects exceed how much gas taxes bring into the fund.

A little more pedal to the metal: Higher max speed limits on Alabama interstates draw support



This map shows max speed limits on interstates in each state. Florida just approved upping its speed limit to 75, a move some of you favor for Alabama



By [Charles J. Dean | cdean@al.com](mailto:cdean@al.com)

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

on May 20, 2014 at 7:00 AM, updated May 20, 2014 at 7:14 AM

I noted last week that lawmakers in neighboring Florida recently approved giving the state's transportation department the authority to up the speed limit on interstates from 70 to 75 mph.

In a poll I asked if you thought the time has come for Alabama lawmakers to look at doing the same thing.

Most of you responded by putting the pedal to the metal and voted overwhelmingly in support of not only moving from 70 to 75 miles per hour, but on rural stretches of interstates to push the limit up to 80 miles per hour.

Only a little over 13 percent of you voted to leave the max limit at 70, saying that increasing the speed limit to 75 would increase the chances of deadly crashes.

Just over 35 percent of you voted to move just to 75. But 51 percent voted to move the speed limit to 80 in rural areas.

Altogether, 86 percent of you favor increasing the speed limit.

The max speed limit on interstates in Alabama is 70 mph. The vast majority of you who took the Connecting Alabama poll voted to increase it to 75 and to 80 in rural areas

It's been almost 20 years since Alabama lawmakers voted to increase speed limits on interstates. I know of no lawmaker who supports increasing the limit.

But with results like these, maybe one will emerge to champion such a move.

Transportation Research

Pretty cool little creatures... the Armadillo



UK-based [Cyclehoop](#) has found a way to use pieces of recycled plastic to keep [cyclists](#) safe on the road. Their clever "Armadillo" lane dividers can be easily installed on roads to divide bike lanes from traffic and gently remind cars to steer clear of cyclists. The affordable solution could significantly help improve [road safety](#) and reduce accident

[HERE](#)

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
