



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, May 31, 2013

Volume 6, Number 9

## In This Issue

- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2013
- LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
- FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- JUST FOR FUN
- IN THE NEWS
- TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

## Recently Completed Planning Studies

[Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones](#)

[Mobile County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#)

[Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study](#)

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

## Contact Us

<http://www.mobilempo.org>  
[transportation@sarpc.org](mailto:transportation@sarpc.org)

**Kevin Harrison, PTP**  
Director of Transportation  
[kharrison@sarpc.org](mailto:kharrison@sarpc.org)

**Tom Piper**  
Senior Transportation Planner  
[tpiper@sarpc.org](mailto:tpiper@sarpc.org)

**Monica Williamson**  
Transportation Planner  
[mwilliamson@sarpc.org](mailto:mwilliamson@sarpc.org)

**Anthony Johnson**  
Transportation Planner  
[ajohnson@sarpc.org](mailto:ajohnson@sarpc.org)

We hope everyone has had a great week. We can't believe it's about to be June, summer is here.



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](http://www.mobilempo.org) as that is our main page. The TCC/CAC met last week and there is a MPO meeting next week on June 5; see *Mobile MPO Updates* for a summary. Monday, June 3rd is the deadline for 2013 TIGER Applications, so you better hurry 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](http://www.mobilempo.org)

706-1CAR

## Mobile MPO Updates

### MPO MEETING

There will be a MPO Policy board meeting on June 5, 2013 in the SARPC Board Room. The agenda includes:

- 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Schillinger 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

There was also a lot of discussion at the TCC/CAC meeting concerning bicycle / pedestrian facilities on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge project (*by coincidence, please see in the news*). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the bridge is not out yet, and a public meeting is expected in the next several months. The Mobile MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) voted a couple of weeks ago to recommend to the MPO to support some form of facility on the bridge, or mitigation of a facility. Although it has the blessing of the BPAC and TCC/CAC, whether or not the Policy Board of the MPO will support a facility on I-10 Mobile River Bridge (or at least mitigation of a facility), is at the discretion of the policy board.

### 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 28<sup>th</sup>. If you need help, please let us know.

## Projects Within Region Let May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

---

### MOBILE COUNTY

constructing the I-65, Frontage Road Relocation and the Roadway Improvements (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Signals) on SR-158 in Saraland. Length 0.950 mi.

## Legislative Updates

---

*The House and Senate are currently in their District and State Work Periods. They will reconvene on Monday, June 3, 2013.*

**House T&I Examines Freight Movement in Southern California:** On May 30, 2013, the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a [field hearing](#) to examine freight challenges that southern California experiences and their impact on the rest of the nation. NARC Board of Directors Member Hasan Ikhata (and Chair of NARC's Goods Movement Transportation Subcommittee) is [representing the voice of regionalism](#) on the panel.

## 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 28<sup>th</sup>

ALDOT has announced the release of their application process; applications are due to the State by June 28<sup>th</sup>. 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 28<sup>th</sup>

The application the Mobile MPO Transportation Alternative Program Funds is **available** [\[HERE\]](#) and due to the SARPC by 5:00 PM, June 28<sup>th</sup>. 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

---

**New meaning for a "shower curtain"**



Sydney has been having a big problem with oversized trucks driving into tunnels that are too low (**HEY THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR**). So Sydney needed a stop sign that is absolutely impossible to miss. Here it is and it's amazing.

It's a curtain of water with a stop sign projected onto it. You can have as many overhead stop signs as you want, but as this 10 News video report shows, truck drivers still crash their trucks into these low-overhead tunnels. Sydney was tired of the delays, the costs of the damages, and the threat that a truck crash would get someone killed.

That's why in 2007 they put in this water curtain sign on its harbor tunnel, designed by light show company Laservision.

## [In the News](#)

---

### **Let's turn our new I-10 bridge into a destination**

(an editorial from Mike Marshall). Please read the editorial [\[HERE\]](#)

[Print](#)



By [Mike Marshall | mmarshall@al.com](#)

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

Email



Cooper River Bridge in Charleston.

We are too fat.

We are too flat.

And Mobile should be much more portly.

The coming I-10 bridge over the Mobile River could be a solution to all three problems. We just need to show a little gumption. We need to demand a walking/biking path along with that new bridge. For years, the Alabama highway department and its contractor, Volkert Engineering, have dismissed this idea as impractical.

But it would be impractical for us NOT to include a walking/biking path.

- Mobile has a 33.7 percent obesity rate, fourth highest among metropolitan areas in the U.S. Mobile United/Leadership Mobile is spearheading a health initiative called [Live Better Mobile](#), but we will have to learn to live better in one of the least walkable, least bike-friendly cities in America. This bridge could provide instant relief. Just include a walking/biking path, and it would become the Pikes Peak of Coastal Alabama, attracting athletes from all over the south. Meanwhile, 33.7 percent of Mobile's population could use the slow lane to get back into shape.
- We Mobilians are flatlanders, so there is no way to enjoy sweeping vistas of our town, no way to get up high and behold our city. Our two skyscrapers have no view that's open to the general public, no

observation decks where a family can go gaze out on a Sunday afternoon. Imagine a trail 200 feet high over the river, with rest stops where you could munch on a sandwich while taking in our skyline.

- We call ourselves the Port City, but folks can come to Mobile and drive around for days without ever seeing our port, the reason Mobile exists. Except for Cooper Riverside Park and the impending maritime museum, our working man's harbor has been walled off from view by the Alabama State Docks. When you drive through our tunnels, your head might be 20 feet away from the hull of a freighter from Hong Kong, but you'd never know it. Neither will motorists traveling over the new bridge. They'll get a grand glimpse of Mobile Bay to the south or the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to the north, but they won't see the State Docks and they won't see Austal or the Mobile Convention Center. The bridge itself will be in the way. A walking/biking path will allow us to properly celebrate our port.

[\[continue reading editorial HERE\]](#)

---

### Speaking of Bridges, BAD BRIDGES?

Before reading the next couple of articles and gasping about Alabama Bridges, please make note that Alabama is ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in the country as far as structurally defiant bridges [\[HERE\]](#). That's actually pretty good. So it is not all doom and gloom as Mr. Smith would like to portray. Although Mobile and Baldwin counties are listed as having a high number of structurally deficient bridges in the State, keep in mind that we are on the coast, with the most bridges! And environmental factors that northern counties do not deal with. Just a thought.....

### At least 127 bridges in Alabama need significant repair; some you drive every day

[Print](#)



By [Mike D. Smith | msmith@al.com](mailto:miksmith@al.com)

Email



Interstate 20/59 in downtown Birmingham is among the most heavily traveled, state-maintained bridges rated as "structurally deficient." A planned \$300 million project will replace the Interstate 20/59 twin bridges and alter nearby streets. *The Birmingham News file photo*

They cross creeks, rivers, streets and railroads along some of Alabama's busiest highways as well as its less-traveled backroads. Records show 127 state-maintained bridges are listed as "structurally deficient," or in need of significant maintenance and repairs to remain in service. There were 942 state-maintained bridges listed as "functionally obsolete," or built to certain capacities that no longer match their amount of use according to data which shows bridges that have been inspected as recently as this month. The figures come from the roughly 35 percent of Alabama's 16,000 bridges that are state-maintained, and does not include bridges maintained by cities or counties.

Those lists include some of Alabama's most heavily traveled roadways. Bridge conditions are back in the national spotlight since a section of Interstate 5 collapsed Thursday evening near Seattle, Wash. Reports state the bridge was considered to be in "average" condition. ALDOT officials say current funding levels are adequate for maintaining bridges, which are inspected regularly as required. The department issues permits for oversized and overweight vehicles on roadways, and the Alabama Department of Public Safety enforces those rules.

[\[continue reading article HERE\]](#)

---

### How Mobile and Baldwin counties are addressing deficient bridges



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

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

Email



A structurally sound bridge replaced one that was labeled as deficient on Emogene Street near Interstate 65. The bridge takes motorists from

midtown to the nearby Wal-Mart, Lowe's and other stores that abut the interstate. (John [Sharp/jsharp@al.com](mailto:Sharp/jsharp@al.com))

**MOBILE, Alabama** – Daisy Wade was glad to see the small yet critical bridge that carries about 6,000 vehicles a day replaced last year with a stronger, more reinforced structure. Wade, a 10-year resident near Emogene Street – a residential midtown street leading motorists to shopping centers near Airport Boulevard and Interstate 65 – says the old bridge wasn't the safest for heavy truck loads. "They were afraid of trucks coming through there," Wade said.

The **Emogene Street bridge** is one example of a project city, county and state officials addressed in either repairing or replacing bridges described as structurally deficient.

Mobile and Baldwin counties have 35 bridges listed as structurally deficient by the Alabama Department of Transportation and posted on the [Transportation for American website](#), which is operated by a coalition of professionals from multiple disciplines who push for improved infrastructure in the U.S. Some of the bridges on the list have been or are currently under repair. For the most part, the deficient bridges in Mobile and Baldwin counties are in good shape and are not at risk of suffering the same fate as the [Interstate 5 bridge that collapsed two weeks ago into Washington's](#)

[\[continue reading article HERE\]](#)

## [Transportation Research](#)

---

### Trucking Continues as Dominant Freight Transportation Mode

May 29, 2013



A new report [\[HERE\]](#) issued by the American Trucking Associations shows trucking continues to be the dominant mode of freight transportation in the United States as even more goods were delivered by truck.

Among the findings in the ATA American Trucking Trends 2013:

Trucks moved 9.4 billion tons of freight in 2012, or 68.5% of all domestic shipments. Both figures are up from the previous year. In 2012, trucking generated \$642.1 billion in gross freight-related revenues, or 80.7% of the nation's freight bills, also increases from 2011. There are 6.9 million people employed in trucking-related industries.

The majority of trucking companies are small businesses – with 90.5% operating six or fewer trucks. Only 2.8% of fleets operate more than 20 trucks. Class 6 through 8 trucks traveled 137.2 billion miles in 2011, up 4.7% from the previous year. The trucking industry paid \$36.5 billion in federal and state highway user fees and taxes in 2011, a 10.3% increase from 2009.

---

### **USDOT Developing New Guide for Bike and Pedestrian Safety Standards**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), which sets the design standards of roadways through rulemakings, is looking to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood recently announced that in the Federal Highway Administration's new round of rule making, USDOT will set its own bicycle and pedestrian safety standards for the first time. USDOT is in the process of gathering information and feedback through Regional Bicycle Safety Summits. Outcomes from the summits, as well as existing guides and other resources, will inform rulemaking that will serve as the basis of USDOT's guide to communities across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.dot.gov/bikesafetysummits>.

---

### **New Safety Data Reports Released**

*Posted by Carrie Kissel, Associate Director, RPO America*

The National Traffic Safety Highway Administration (NHTSA) has released three new fact sheets related to traffic fatalities, including 2012 fatality estimates, and 2011 data on bicycling and young drivers. The [Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities](#) (PDF) shows that 34,080 people died in 2012, an increase of 5.3 percent over 2011 but down significantly from the 43,510 fatalities recorded in 2005. Vehicle miles traveled also increased in 2012 by about .3 percent.

NHTSA's [Bicyclists and Other Cyclists Fact Sheet](#) (PDF) presents 2011 data showing that cycling fatalities as a share of all traffic crashes increased slightly, from 1.9 percent in 2010 to 2.1 percent in 2011. Of the 677 total

cycling fatalities, 31 percent occurred in rural areas in 2011. The largest share occurred during 4 p.m. – 7:59 p.m. at 30 percent, with another 21 percent occurring from 8 p.m. to midnight.

The [Young Drivers Fact Sheet](#) (PDF) shows that the number of young driver fatalities decreased 48 percent from 2002 – 2011, to 1,987 fatalities in 2011. Drivers between ages 15 – 20 are 6 percent of all licensed drivers in the U.S., but made up ten percent of the fatalities in 2011.

In addition, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) has released the report [Motorcyclist Traffic Fatalities by State: 2012 Preliminary Data](#). GHSA estimates that motorcyclist traffic fatalities in the United States increased about 9 percent from 2011 to 2012. This increase may be in part due to a recovering economy that may make motorcycle purchases feasible, as well as high gasoline costs encouraging motorcycle trips to save fuel. The report also suggests a number of strategies to reduce motorcyclist fatalities.