



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, November 18th, 2016

Volume 20, Number 6

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There will be no **Transportation Friday E-Newsletter** next week, as staff will be off for the Thanksgiving Holiday. Happy Thanksgiving!

There was a Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) for the Mobile MPO meeting this week, there will be a meeting of the *Mobile MPO Policy Board on November 30th* with six (6) new members, and we are proposing to update the Mobile MPO Congestion Management Process (CMP); please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. Big plans and big money in Baldwin County; please see *In the News*. This week's Just For Fun is a staring competition between you, and your computer...It will build "character".

Have a great weekend! And check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

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

www.mobilempo.org  check us out on FACEBOOK

Mobile MPO Updates

We have Six Members to the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board

- Mayor Tom Williams; City Satsuma
- Mayor Jimmie Gardner; City of Prichard
- Mayor David Baker; City of Semmes
- Mayor Terry Downey; City of Bayou La Batre
- Mayor William Criswell; Town of Creola
- Mr. Bryan Kegley, PE, (*County Engineer's Office*)

SARPC staff is meeting with these mayors next week to go over roles and responsibilities as Policy Board members of the Mobile MPO.

MPO Meeting 11/30/2016

Some of the items on the agenda for the MPO meeting on November 30th include the CMP (*below*), and the TAP (*below*). Also on the agenda are some minor amendments to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program:

National Highway Funds

- 100060153 SR-158 Extension from .5 mile east of Glenwood Road to west of Lott Road move out of TIP from 2019 to 2020; \$18,077,373
- 100066178 Resurfacing of SR-42 (US-98) from the Mississippi State Line to Snow Road; 4/28/2017; \$3,391,091.00

Bridge Funds

- 100064691 PE Replace Bridge on SR16 (US90) westbound over Tensaw –Spanish River; \$707,000; 11/1/2016

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting

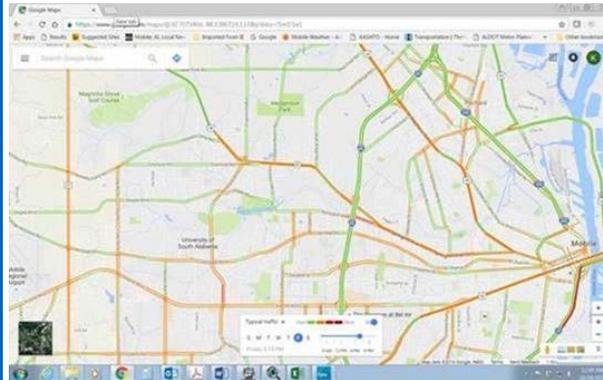
The Mobile MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met this past Wednesday. Elections were held and Mr. Jeff DeQuattro was elected as the new chairperson and Mr. Hanlon Walsh was elected as the vice chairperson. We would like to thank these gentlemen for stepping up and taking on this responsibility. We would also like to thank Mr. John Blanton for his previous service as the BPAC chairperson. The changes to the Mobile MPO's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants were discussed. The meeting also included a discussion about several projects in the MPO area that have bike/ped components, including the City of Mobile's Broad/Beauregard Street TIGER project, the Water St. project, the road diet on Springhill Ave. from Broad to Ann, and the proposed I10 Mobile River Bridge. Recent crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians were also discussed. The minutes of the meeting are being transcribed and will be posted on the BPAC webpage soon.

Congestion Management Process (CMP)

One of the items that was discussed at the TCC/CAC meeting to bring before the MPO Policy Board meeting, is a reinvention of the Mobile Urban Area CMP. Prior to FY 2017, the Mobile CMP was a thorough process for monitoring congestion, developing improvements, and prioritizing improvements; however, it was inefficient, and ineffective. The current federal transportation funding bill, the FAST ACT, has introduced requirements for performance measures for projects and processes. As a performance measure, projects not being implemented through a Congestion Management Process, is an indicator that it is time to reinvent the process.

Below is a Google Traffic snapshot of the "Typical" PM peak periods in the Mobile Urban Area. This is the first iteration of reviews to determine congested arterial corridors. Our intention is create a new funding program out of the STP Attributable Funds of \$500,000 (federal) annually for strictly intersection type improvements. These can be new adaptive signals, access management strategies, roundabouts, etc. It has to be additional capacity, as that is what the STP Attributable Funds are for, but the new program would concentrate on intersections. The projects would have to be justified, with performance measures. These performance measures would be included in the project ranking process, and would include a travel time index (free flow / congested speed), a roadway

congestion index (capacity index), and a rear-end collisions per mile factor. We have developed this for some corridors and presented them to the TCC/CAC on November 9th with a lot of discussion. The Long Range Transportation Plan *Destination 2040* will have to be modified to account for this new program. The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has to be fiscally constrained, which means this \$500,000 has to come from somewhere. The LRTP identified a grade separated interchange at Azalea Rd and Airport Blvd. Rather than spending \$14 Million on such a large project that may not be well received with the business owners, we are proposing to use that money in the mean time for smaller intersection type improvements all over the Urban Area.



TIP Projects modified this week

Project : 100057687 (PE)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : INSTALL INTERSTATE MEDIAN CABLE BARRIER FROM MP 13.0 TO MP 16.9 IN MOBILE COUNTY
Target start date : 2/1/2017
Engineers Estimate : \$50,000.00

Project : 100057688 (CN)
County : MOBILE
Project Description : INSTALL INTERSTATE MEDIAN CABLE BARRIER FROM MP 13.0 TO MP 16.9 IN MOBILE COUNTY
Target start date : 8/25/2017
Engineers Estimate : \$315,000.00

End of the Fiscal Year

We just wrapped up Fiscal Year 2016, and the Mobile MPO had four projects totaling over **\$8.6 Million** authorized to be spent in FY 2016 out of the STP Attributable Funds. Considering we can program \$8.9 Million per year, I would say we are doing pretty good. Those four projects are:

CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) ADD LANES FROM SR-42 (US-98) TO SR-217 (LOTT RD), UT, \$243,946
CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) ADD LANES FROM SR-42 (US-98) TO SR-217 (LOTT RD), CN \$2,440,547
CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) ADD LANES FROM SR-42 (US-98) TO SR-217 (LOTT RD), CN, \$5,105,061
CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) ADD LANES FROM CR-372 (SCHILLINGER RD) TO CR-429 (CODY RD),RW, \$835,000

The MPO met 4 times in FY 2016 approving federal spending in the Mobile Urbanized Area with funds spent at the State's discretion, from: Interstate Maintenance Funds, Surface Transportation Funds, National Highway Funds, High Priority Funding, Bridge Funds and Transportation Alternative Program Funding. The total amount approved by the Mobile MPO to be included in the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was **\$56,781,580**.

Of those funding categories above, there were 37 projects that were already in the TIP that were authorized to be spent in FY 2016 in the Mobile Urbanized Area totaling **\$50,268,574**.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDING

TAP Funding Open Discussion

On September 27th there was an open discussion with the FHWA concerning the Mobile Urban Area Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The group talked about the FHWA Certification Recommendation to have a multi-year scheduling of TAP projects. What came out of the meeting, was that there was an agreement to have a two year award for a call for projects that will have a June, 2017 deadline. This call for projects will be for FY 2017 and FY 2018. It will give us the ability to move a project up if another project has fallen behind. There will be no extensions for the Preliminary Engineering to be completed within the two year time frame. Also, the group talked about the criteria that ranks the projects and that a local government can apply for more than one project, but only be funded one per year with the Mobile Urbanized Area TAP (this does not apply to ALDOT TAP). The amount of points given to a project that has multiple funding sources (donated) was also discussed to be decreased.

These modifications to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) process, were presented and discussed at the TCC/CAC meeting, and will go before the MPO at the upcoming November 30th meeting.

South Alabama RPO Updates

SARPC's RPO Program is finalizing the list of the current transportation projects and safety needs for the RPO area. This list is broken

down by County and by Category (roadways, bridges, bike/ped, and transit). If there is anything you would like to add or delete or if there is a project listed that has been completed please let us know.

This list is an amendment to the RPO Transportation Plan and list of safety needs that we update each September. This comprehensive list of projects will be submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation as a list of prioritized transportation needs for the rural areas of our region.

Further information is available on our [website](#).

Projects Within Region Let December 2nd, 2016

Mobile County

For constructing the Clearing and Grubbing on CR-656 (Zeigler Boulevard) from the junction of Athey Road to the junction of Forest Hill Drive in Mobile. Length 2.764 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$105,386 to \$128,805 .

Baldwin County

For constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-3 (US-31) from the junction of SR-16 (US-90) to west of the junction of Spanish Village in Spanish Fort. Length 0.735 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$368,617 to \$450,531 .

Escambia County

None at this time

[What's Under Construction?](#)

[Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

115th Congressional Leadership Taking Form on Capitol Hill

Following last week's elections, Congress began shuffling around committee and leadership positions. Current Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (RWI) has support from the Republican Conference to stay in that position, with Kevin McCarthy (RCA) as Majority Leader. House Republicans also elected Steve Scalise (RLA) as Majority Whip and Steve Stivers (ROH) as leader of the National Republican Congressional Commission. Senator Mitch McConnell (RKY) will serve a second term as Senate Majority Leader with his whole team. For the Democrats, Nancy Pelosi (DCA) officially announced her candidacy for House Minority Leader with Joe Crowley (DNY) and Tim Ryan (DOH) as potential opponents. House Democrats have pushed back their elections to November 30 to sort out their legislative agenda before choosing leaders, but Pelosi is expected to hold her position. In the Senate, Chuck Schumer (DNY) is the newly elected Democratic leader following Harry Reid (DNV), who is retiring at the end of this Congress. Schumer added Bernie Sanders (IVT) and Tammy Baldwin (DWI) to his ten person leadership team. Senator Dick Durbin (DIL) remains the second highest ranking Democrat in the Senate. Changes to committee leadership are also coming into focus. Senator Patrick Leahy (DVT), who was expected to retain his post on the Judiciary Committee, will instead become Ranking Member on the Appropriations Committee. Dianne Feinstein (DCA) will take his place as Ranking Member on the Judiciary Committee ahead of the Supreme Court nomination, making her the first woman to hold the position. Tom Carper (DDE) will replace retiring Senator Barbara Boxer (DCA) as Ranking Member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and Clair McCaskill (DMO) will move into Carper's position on the Homeland Security Committee.

Funding Uncertainty in 2017

With the current continuing resolution (CR) set to expire on December 9, House Appropriations Chairman Harold Rogers (RKY) stated that his committee will work to extend the CR through March 31, 2017. President-elect Trump's transition team asked Congress to push final funding decisions until next year. This short-term spending bill will fund the government through March at current funding levels, leaving the new Congress and President-elect Trump's Administration to finish the annual funding bills next year. This week President-elect Trump's transition team said they are currently talking about creating a national infrastructure bank to fund infrastructure investments. Trump's campaign previously criticized Hillary Clinton's proposed infrastructure bank as being controlled by Washington and funded by a huge tax increase. Additionally, President Obama tried to set up a bank several times through budget proposals. In Congress, the idea of an infrastructure bank is met with thoughts of combining it with tax reform and mild enthusiasm from both sides, but not as the saving grace for infrastructure in the U.S. The transition website states that the Trump Administration seeks to invest \$550 billion but does not provide further detail.

Not So Fast on Earmarks

Despite some optimism among rank and file Republicans in the House, Speaker Ryan put the brakes on a proposal this week that would reverse the ban on earmarks in congressional spending bills. During debate among the Republican Conference in a closed door meeting this week, Ryan urged members not to make a final decision on the matter so soon after President-elect Trump was ushered into office on a "drain the swamp" message, but promised to hold a vote on the matter in the first quarter of 2017. The ban was put in place by then Speaker Boehner (ROH) in 2010 – and despite some grumblings about their return, no serious effort has been mounted to reinstate the practice.

Republicans Fear NHTSA May Slow Driverless Car Technology

On Tuesday, the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee held a hearing on self-driving cars where they expressed concerns about the government slowing down technological advances. Republicans questioned National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on their move to request letters from manufacturers outlining their compliance with a safety checklist and their ability to enforce compliance and protect information. NHTSA Administrator Mark Rosekind testified that this checklist allows manufactures to meet

safety standards in whatever way works best for them. He stated that it lists 15 areas to address, but not how to get there. Members of both parties asked questions about cybersecurity and emphasized its importance.

Transportation Issues to Watch

The House and Senate each passed versions of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and now must reconcile the differences to put a bill in place. However, leadership is not making any promises and the chances of passage are unclear at this point. Both chambers in Congress held hearings this week on driverless car issues and USDOT is expected to issue a rule on vehicle-to-vehicle technology by the end of the year. Other issues to watch include TSA funding levels, the proposed trucking hours of service cap, and a new FAA drone rule regarding flight over crowds.

[50 YEARS OF US TRANSPORTATION CHECK IT OUT!](#)

Funding Opportunities

FHWA Soliciting INVEST Implementation Projects - Round 3

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is pleased to announce an applied research funding opportunity for transportation agencies to use the Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) to evaluate the sustainability of their projects and programs, identify areas for improvement, analyze options for improving sustainability, and document results.

The funding opportunity is available to State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and Federal land management agencies (FLMAs). Funding levels for applied research projects may vary depending on the depth and extent of analysis proposed as well as the potential benefit to FHWA and the recipient. FHWA anticipates making approximately four to six awards.

Agencies that would like to apply should send letters of interest to Robert Hyman (Robert.hyman@dot.gov) and their corresponding FHWA Division Office by January 5, 2017. For more information about eligibility and funding, please visit: www.sustainablehighways.org.

A webinar will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2:30 – 3:30PM EST to inform interested parties about the Round 3 funding opportunity. Register at www.sustainablehighways.org.

ALDOT TAP FUNDING (*deadline December 16th, 2016*)

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2017.

The TAP application and instructions are located on the ALDOT website at: http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/specialprograms_section.htm

The TAP application is available on this page and on page two (2) of the instructional information is a listing of eligible improvement projects for TAP funding. The deadline for submission of FY 2017 TAP applications including support documentation is Friday, December 16, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Some major application requirements of the TAP are:

1. Only cities, towns and county commissions can apply for funding;
2. Due to limited funding, there is a \$400,000 cap on the amount of federal funds that a sponsor can apply for;
3. Only one application can be submitted by an eligible sponsor due to limited funding;
4. The funding ratio for TAP projects is 80% federal funds and 20% sponsor funds. The sponsor is responsible for the cost of required preliminary engineering;
5. Public involvement is optional;
6. Fifty (50) percent of the TAP funds are sub-allocated to the MPO's by population
1. and fifty (50) percent is distributed to any area of the state by ALDOT ;
7. All TAP projects are selected by a competitive application process administered by ALDOT ;
8. Independent landscaping projects are not eligible;
9. Transportation museums are not eligible;
10. For cities/towns located within the six (6) largest MPO's (Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery , Mobile, Columbus, GA, and Pensacola, FL), the TAP funds that are being administered by ALDOT are completely separate from the TAP funds that are dedicated to the aforementioned MPO's.

Please contact Bob Kratzer at (334) 353-6442 if you have questions regarding this matter.

FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation

Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Deadline: Rolling

Grants made under these programs will leverage regional assets to support the implementation of regional economic development strategies designed to create jobs, leverage private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Through the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) solicits applications from rural and urban communities to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions. EDA is employing a new two-phase review process for proposals/applications submitted under this FFO. Proposals will be reviewed by EDA within 30 days of receipt; and following the proposal review, full applications will be reviewed within 60 days of receipt.

Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#)

Just For Fun

This week there have been the **New City –Wide Zoning Code Open Houses** across the City of Mobile. It was met with a lot of interest and participation from citizens. Congrats to the City of Mobile staff for getting this done. One of the topics that came up this week was the "character" of Mobile's streets. Can we have Mobile's downtown character everywhere? What kind of signage should be allowed? What do people want their neighborhoods and shopping to look like?

Below, are two different views of "Mobile's Character", see if you can find the 6 differences. As a bonus, you can tell people you are doing the mannequin challenge, while you try to find the 6 differences. The first person to email kharrison@sarpc.org the 6 differences, gets a free satsuma orange.





In the News

BANKHEAD TUNNEL CLOSED FOR MAINTENANCE

The following information has been provided by the City of Mobile Traffic Engineering Department:

As per a discussion with Mr. David Johnson with ALDOT, we are formally notifying all parties of our intentions to shut the Bankhead Tunnel down (for all traffic; foot & motor vehicle) on the following dates to facilitate repairs to the parallel 4" Oil Static Line(s), currently providing power to downtown Mobile:

Friday, November 18, 2016 (starting at 9:00 PM) thru Monday morning, November 21, 2016 (ending at 5:00 AM)

Friday, December 2, 2016 (starting at 9:00 PM) thru Monday morning, December 5, 2016 (ending at 5:00 AM)

Friday, December 9, 2016 (starting at 9:00 PM) thru Monday morning, December 12, 2016 (ending at 5:00 AM)

Baldwin Co. Commission to put \$35 million towards road projects

Posted: Nov 17, 2016 5:23 PM CST Updated: Nov 17, 2016 5:23 PM CST

By Hal Scheurich, FOX10 News Reporter

SPANISH FORT, AL (WALA) -

Drivers in some parts of Baldwin County will be seeing a lot more road construction in upcoming months. Tuesday, November 15, 2016, the Baldwin County Commission approved a plan to contribute more than \$35 million dollars towards road improvements over the next several years.

The County Commission agreed to pay its share to get several major and much needed road projects completed. Most of the \$35.8 million dollars will not come from taxpayer money. It will be money from the Restoration Council, related to the BP oil spill.

"As the Chairman of the Commission, I sit on the Restore Council, we hope that our Baldwin County contingent can put this forward on the table and say, this is Baldwin's plan," said Baldwin County Commission Chairman, Chris Elliott. "We've signed it and we're ready to go."

ALDOT will be matching the county's money and contributing an additional \$55 million dollars in BP money to fund the projects. The projects identified are all predominately state roads; Highway 31 in Spanish Fort, Highway 181 from County Road 64 to County Road 32 and Canal Road in Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

Highway 31 and part of 181 will get the green light first. The reason it's staged that way is some of the projects are already ready to go while other will still take some time.

"Highway 31 in Spanish Fort will be first, mainly because it is ready to go," Elliott explained. "The utilities are moved already. The right-of-way is acquired. This is a project that has been on the books for over a decade."

Drivers in Spanish Fort are glad to hear that.

"This is the first I'm hearing about it so I don't know enough to say one way or another, but I know this project needs to be done," one driver said. "I'm glad it's not being done with a lot of taxpayer money."

Jeff Burgess owns Spanish Fort Barber Shop on Highway 31 and has seen the traffic increase drastically over the past decade. He wants to see the job done as efficiently as possible.

"As having a business here on the road, I hope they don't drag it out for months and months and months and months and disrupt business, but for the commuter and the people trying to get back and forth from Mobile, they're going to love it," Burgess said.

Construction on the Highway 31 project is expected to start in around six months. Completion for all of the projects could take four to six years.

Free bus shuttle stops in Prichard on Tuesday

Thursday, November 10th 2016, 10:55 pm CST

By Rudy Harper, FOX10 News Reporter

PRICHARD, AL (WALA) -

Newly elected Prichard Mayor Jimmie Gardner attended his first city council meeting. He defeated incumbent Mayor Troy Ephraim in a run-off last month and previously served as a police chief in Prichard. Residents say they are concerned about public safety, but they're also worried about public transportation. Bus routes throughout the city stopped after cuts to the WAVE Transit system, which is funded by the city of Mobile. For the last six months, a temporary bus service has been offered to citizens free of charge. It stops on Tuesday. To keep the bus service we're told the city would have to pay \$6,500 a month which would go towards bus repairs, labor, and insurance.

"I really think we need to consider mass transportation across the entire county," Gardner said. "So, I'm going to be reaching out to some of the other mayors."

Several council members have pledged to work together to bring back public transportation.

Poll workers finish pay-as-you-go re-count Thursday

Posted: Nov 17, 2016 4:55 PM CST Updated: Nov 17, 2016 4:55 PM CST
By Rebekah Hoeger, FOX10 News Reporter

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Photo by FOX10 News Reporter Steve Alexander

MOBILE, AL (WALA) -

Poll workers have finished re-counting pay-as-you-go votes, and a preliminary total will be finished Thursday evening but will not be released until Friday, according to a Mobile County Probate Court spokesperson.

The county started recounting votes Wednesday. FOX10 News started asking questions election week after discovering unusual results for the pay-as-you-go issue.

Probate Court says all of the ballots have been counted, but Thursday evening they have to put together the numbers from the high speed counting machines, the provisional ballots, and any ballots that were damaged and couldn't be read electronically. They expect to finish that Thursday night.

Elections systems and software (ES&S), the company that prints the ballots and programs the machines, announced earlier this week that a company mistake caused it to appear that no one voted no on the pay-as-you-go issue on Election Day. ES&S said the rest of the races on the ballot are correct.

ES&S says it is paying for the recount. No word yet on how much it might cost. Poll workers are paid \$150 per day.

A Probate Court spokesperson said Judge Don Davis will not be giving any interviews until Friday at 1 p.m. when the canvassing board meets to certify the results.

Check back with FOX10 News for the official results Friday.

ALDOT, FHWA Beat Enviro Suit Over \$450M Highway Project *(in B'ham, but still relevant to S.AL)*

By [Linda Chiem](#)

Law360, New York (November 16, 2016, 3:33 PM EST) -- The [Alabama Department of Transportation](#) and the [Federal Highway Administration](#) scored quick wins in an environmental suit from Birmingham residents seeking to block a \$450 million highway bridge replacement project, after a federal judge ruled Tuesday that officials properly vetted alternatives and measured the project's impact. Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge John E. Ott granted the Alabama DOT's and FHWA's cross-motions for summary judgment, saying both agencies fully complied with National Environmental Policy Act requirements in their review of the Interstate 59/20 Corridor Improvements Project in Jefferson County, Alabama, which calls for replacing a bridge and elevated six-lane highway in Birmingham's central business district.

"The court is more than satisfied that the agencies took a hard look at the potential impacts of the project on the human environment and made a convincing case for their finding of no significant impact," Judge Ott said. "The court is also satisfied that the agencies evaluated a reasonable range of alternatives to the project."

Local residents had sued alleging that given the scope of the bridge replacement project, officials should have completed a full environmental impact statement, not just an environmental assessment. And the "finding of no significant impact" that the FHWA issued in June 2015 merely rubber-stamped that insufficient review, the local residents claimed in their suit.

Judge Ott ruled that the two agencies' signed off on the project after reviewing and addressing land use and socioeconomic impacts, cultural and historic resources, management of hazardous materials, air quality, noise, and traffic impacts.

"The plaintiffs have not shown that this conclusion was arbitrary or capricious," the judge said. "Their assertion that the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact do not address social, economic and health factors 'at all' is simply not accurate."

The judge also said it wasn't enough just to allege that the project was highly controversial because the plaintiffs and "numerous other members of the community" have raised concerns about how the project would affect their neighborhoods and redevelopment in the city of Birmingham as a whole.

"Such public opposition, without more, does not constitute a substantial dispute about the 'nature, size or effect' of the project so as to trigger the need for an EIS," Judge Ott said.

In Tuesday's ruling, Judge Ott denied the Alabama DOT's and FHWA's motions to dismiss, saying the plaintiffs had standing to bring suit and their concerns that the bridge replacement would create a concrete cave-like barrier cutting off economic growth fit within NEPA's zone of interests.

But the judge ended up granting the agencies' cross-motions for summary judgment, saying they followed the letter of the law in [taking a hard-enough look](#) at other alternatives and weighing the environmental and community impacts of the project design they ultimately picked.

The state DOT and its director, John R. Cooper, [moved for summary judgment](#) in June, arguing that the residents were using trumped up environmental claims as a front for their concerns about the project's impact on economic revitalization in the city. [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

Talking Freight November 2016

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 12:00:00 PM CST - 1:30:00 PM CST

The State Freight Plan FAST Act guidance was published in the Federal Register on October 14, 2016. The guidance outlines the requirements for States to prepare FAST Act-compliant state freight plans, and to ensure they are eligible to continue to obligate the new National Highway Freight Program (FAST Act Section 1116) formula funds after the two-year anniversary of the FAST Act on December 4, 2017. The FAST Act State Freight Plan guidance builds upon the MAP-21 State Freight Plan interim guidance many States used to prepare plans prior to enactment of the FAST Act. In addition to discussing the statutory requirements for state freight plans, the new guidance also provides State Freight Advisory Committee recommendations.

This webinar will provide information to aid States in complying with the FAST Act requirements relating to State Freight Plans and Freight Advisory Committees. Participants are encouraged to ask questions.

[Register Now](#)

[TRB Webinar: Safety on Low Volume Roads](#)

TRB will conduct a webinar on Tuesday, November 29, 2016, from 1:00PM to 2:30PM ET that will feature selected papers from TRB's 11th International Low Volume Road Conference, which was held in July 2015. Presenters will discuss traffic signs, treatments of trees on rural roads, and a retroreflectivity field inspection kit.

This webinar was organized by the TRB Standing Committee on Low Volume Roads. Participants must register in advance of the webinar, and there is a fee for non-TRB Sponsor or non-TRB Sustaining Affiliate employees. A certificate for 1.5 Professional Development Hours (PDHs) will be provided to attendees who register and attend the webinar as an individual.

Webinar Presenters

- Paul Carlson, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Karla Lechtenberg, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Geoff Scott, Cornell Local Roads Program

Moderated by: Ron Eck, West Virginia University

Webinar Outline

1. Can traffic signs be too bright on low volume roads?
2. Cost-effective safety treatment of trees on low volume rural roads
3. Retroreflectivity field inspection kit for local agencies
4. Question and answer session

The first 60 minutes of the webinar will be for presentations and the final 30 minutes will be reserved for audience questions. The Registered Continuing Education Program (RCEP) categorizes this webinar activity as relating to health, safety, and welfare including core technical.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Evaluate which types of sign materials can improve safety by reducing glare
- Evaluate methods for managing trees along low volume roads
- Understand methods to comply with standards for sign retroreflectivity through the use of the field inspection kit

Registration Information

There is no fee for employees of TRB Sponsors or TRB Sustaining Affiliates who register using their work email address. In addition to employees of TRB sponsor organizations, the following are eligible to receive complimentary webinar registration:

- TRB and National Academies employees;
- Chairs of TRB standing committees, sections, or groups;
- Members of the media;

- Employees of tribal governments; and
- Members of Congress or their staff.

Other sites must pay \$55 per site. View our pricing page for details.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Safety is pleased to announce the availability of several new resources to help States implement the [Safety Performance Management Measures](#) Final Rule under 23 CFR 490. These resources, available at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/>, include:

- **State Serious Injury Conversion Tables:** assist States in reporting serious injuries per the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) 4th Edition attribute for "Suspected Serious Injury (A)." States that do not currently use the MMUCC 4th Edition attribute should use the conversion tables to convert the equivalent data from their State's Motor Vehicle Crash Database. The conversion tables also provide the equivalent definitions for pedestrian and pedalcyclist as defined in the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) D16.1-2007 for States to report the required number of non-motorized serious injuries.
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Safety Performance Measures Fact Sheet:** highlights the requirements specific to MPOs and provides a comparison of MPO and State DOT responsibilities.
- **2018-2019 HSIP Safety Performance Targets Timeline:** provides important dates for the safety performance target process, including coordination, target establishment, reports, and assessment of significant progress.
- **Safety Performance Measures Resources and Support:** provides a list of training opportunities, tools, and capacity-building resources.

Pocket Guide to Transportation Statistics

If you need transportation statistics at a moment's notice – for example, if you want to see a list of the most congested urban areas or if you want to find the busiest Amtrak stations – the Bureau of Transportation Statistics has a solution for you.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, BTS is introducing its most innovative product yet – a smartphone app for the [Pocket Guide to Transportation](#).



[Click Here to continue reading Introducing the Pocket Guide to Transportation App](#)

Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
- The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym. For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.