



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Volume 16, Number 6

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## Recently Completed Planning Studies

Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones  
Mobile County  
Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan  
Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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The deadline for a new Federal Transportation Bill is November 20<sup>th</sup>. There has been a lot of movement this week, and what does that mean for Urban Areas? Please see *Legislative Updates*. As part of this bill, Congressman Bradley Byrne touts the I-10 Mobile River Bridge as a “nationally significant freight and highway project”, and the new bill may help fund part of it; (please see *In The News*). The TCC/CAC for the Mobile MPO met this week; please see *Mobile MPO Updates*. ALDOT’s TAP Grants (See *Funding Opportunities*), a lot of people are upset about potential transit cuts (see *In The News*) and finally this week’s *Just For Fun* will...make your knees weak....

Finally, best wishes to Kathryn Schulte with ALDOT as she moves on to pursue her career.

Have a great weekend.

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

[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)  check us out on FACEBOOK

## Mobile MPO Updates

### TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)/CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The Mobile MPO Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizen Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) met this week had have passed several recommendations to the MPO Policy Board; the MPO will meet on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Of the items recommended for approval were:

#### STP Any Area Funds

- Widening, resurfacing, guardrail and striping Dawes Rd (CR-33) from Three Notch Rd (CR-32) to pavement joint south of Scott Dairy Loop Rd; 12/4/2015; \$1,010,000
- Resurfacing on SR-16 (US 90) from ALMS state line to pavement joint just east of Ramsey Rd; 5/27/2015; \$2,524,016

#### National Highway Funds

- Resurfacing on SR-13 (US 43) form joint just south SR-16(US 90) to joint just north of SR-158; 2/26/2015; \$2,302,241

#### State Funds

- Additional lanes on Schillinger Rd South (CR-31) from Three notch Rd (CR-32) to south of Halls Mill Creek; 10/15/2015; \$10,000,000

#### Human Service Coordinated Transportation Plan (please see *Rural Planning Organization Updates* below)

#### Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

There was a lot of discussion at Wednesday’s meeting pertaining to the TAP Program in terms of recent FHWA certification review findings. ALDOT’s call for TAP projects has a deadline of January 2016 (see *Funding Opportunities* below). Typically the MPO TAP call for projects has coincided with ALDOT’s. The TCC/CAC decided that it would make more sense to have an April 2016 deadline for MPO TAP applications. We will officially announce the Mobile MPO TAP call for Projects in January. It looks like the TAP program will remain, as it is included in House version of the new Transportation Bill; see *Legislative Updates* below.

#### ADA Transition Plans

The Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA) hosted an ADA Day in Birmingham on October 29<sup>th</sup>. The Federal Highway Administration gave a presentation on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Transition Plans, then each urban are in the State gave a brief benchmark report as to where they are in developing the Transition Plans for each local government in an Urban Area, if they did not already have them. The afternoon was a question/answer period with a panel of ALDOT and FHWA officials. For a copy of those questions and answers, and the FHWA ADA Presentation, please see [HERE](#).



(251) 433-6541



Toole Design Group has finalized the *Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile*. Thank all of you that had a part in creating this important plan for downtown Mobile.

For anyone interested in the Power Point given by Ernie Boughman with Toole Design Group, please see [HERE](#)

For anyone interested in the FINAL REPORT (large document), please see [HERE](#)

#### 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...

<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](#).

## Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Updates

#### Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (HSCTP)

Staff recently completed the FY 2016-2019 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. Meetings were held in July and August - one in each county of the region to gather input about the current transportation services and needs. Federal Transportation Law Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) requires that specialized transit projects for the elderly, the disabled, and people with low incomes be included in a locally developed, coordinated human service transportation plan. The goal of the Plan is to enhance access to transit service in Southwest Alabama through the coordination of existing and future services. The key elements of a Coordinated Plan include the following:

- Identify common origins and destinations for targeted populations
- Inventory existing transit services
- Identify unmet needs
- Identify possible wasteful duplication of efforts
- Recommend provisions for cost-efficient transit services

The final document is available on our website [HERE](#).

## Projects Within Region Let November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

#### Mobile County

None at this time

#### Baldwin County

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Fairhope Avenue from the intersection of Bancroft Street to the intersection of SR-181 in Fairhope. Length 2.609 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$909,215 to \$1,111,262.
- For constructing the Culvert and Outfall Repair on I-10 at D'Olive Creek in Daphne. Length 0.189 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$582,503 to \$711,948.
- For constructing the Modifications to various driveways and side streets on SR-59 from the junction of SR-182 to the intersection of 20th Avenue in Gulf Shores. Length 1.723 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$637,164 to \$778,755.

#### Escambia County

None at this time

## Legislative Updates

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### House Approves Reauthorization Legislation

By a [363 to 64 vote](#), the House yesterday overwhelmingly approved a six-year transportation reauthorization bill, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act (H.R. 3763). This vote came after two marathon days of debate regarding amendments to the legislation. The STRR Act would provide \$325 billion in new contract authority for the nation's infrastructure, renew the controversial Export-Import Bank, and make it a real possibility that a long-term transportation bill could reach the president's desk.

Of particular note, the bill:

- Contains six years of policy reform, but only three years of funding. But wait! An amendment approved on the House Floor from Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) – which replaces two of the Senate's more controversial offsets with a provision that makes funds currently contained in "surplus funds" of Federal Reserve Banks available to the HTF – seems to solve the problem of only three years of funding. Early indications are that this amendment will provide significantly higher funding than contained in the base bill.
- Provides a modest increase in the Surface Transportation Program's funding level and increases the portion of the program suballocated by population from the current 50% to 55% by FY2020. This will provide nearly \$5.0 billion in additional funding for local priorities compared to existing funding levels.
- Preserves the Transportation Alternatives Program, though it makes it a set-aside under STP. The new TAP would be funded at a flat \$819 million annually in each of the bill's six years. This funding level is slightly below the Senate's \$825 million annual level. The Senate bill also suballocates 100% of the program, but the House leaves it at 50% suballocated.
- Increases funding for metropolitan planning by more than \$120 million over the life of the STRR Act.
- Makes on-system bridges that are not on the National Highway System (half of which are owned by counties and cities) eligible for funding under the National Highway Performance Program. This is a vast improvement from the Senate's DRIVE Act reauthorization bill, which funds these bridges (along with off-system bridges) by taking 15% off the top of STP.
- Increases funding for urban and rural public transportation, including a new competitive grant program under the Bus and Bus Facilities Program.
- Contains the same provision as the Senate's DRIVE Act to fix the MAP-21 requirement that transit receive a voting position on the boards of MPOs that represent TMAs. This new provision clarifies that no changes in state law or enabling agreements are required, and explicitly allows an elected official to serve as the designated "transit representative" on the MPO board. These are changes NARC sought from lawmakers in both the Senate and the House. The fact both bills contain this provision dramatically increases the probability that it will be in the final agreement.

Up next is a conference process between the House and Senate to resolve differences between the two versions. The funding for the program will remain a sticking point. Lawmakers on both sides of Capitol Hill are optimistic that they can complete a bill before November 20, 2015 (the expiration of the current extension of the program). This constrained timeline is more difficult due to a House recess next week, but there is no doubt that the possibility of a long-term bill on the president's desk sometime this year has increased tremendously, and now appears to be the most likely outcome. This is a watershed change from where we were just three months ago, when it seemed the prospects for a bill were approximately zero. The text of the bill is [here](#) (although the text does not include the many amendments that were accepted, most were minor).

## Funding Opportunities

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### The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for FY 2016.

This year you will find the TAP application and instructional information for completing the application on the ALDOT web site. The web site address is: [http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/specialprograms\\_section.htm](http://www.dot.state.al.us/moweb/specialprograms_section.htm). After clicking on this page you will see the TAP Application listed. The types of improvements eligible for TAP funding are listed on page 2 of the instructional information. The deadline date for submittal of FY 2016 TAP applications and support documents is [Friday, January 29, 2016 at 5:00 PM](#).

Some major application requirements of the TAP are as follows:

- Only cities, towns and county commissions can apply for funding ;
- Due to limited funding, there is a cap on the amount of Federal Funds that a sponsor can apply for and that amount is \$400,000.00;
- Due to limited funding, an eligible sponsor can submit only one application for possible funding;
- The funding ratio for TAP projects is 80% federal funds and 20% sponsor funds and the sponsor is responsible for the cost of the required preliminary engineering;
- Public involvement is optional;
- Fifty (50) percent of the TAP funds are sub-allocated to the MPO's by population and fifty (50) percent is distributed to any area of the state by ALDOT;
- All TAP projects have to be selected by a competitive application process administered by ALDOT ;
- Landscaping as an independent project is not eligible;
- Transportation museums are not eligible;
- For cities/towns that are located within the six 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 stated MPO's.

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

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### 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

### FROM THE MINISTRY OF SILLY WALKS

*"I have a silly walk, and I would like to obtain a government grant to help me develop it"*

The Ministry of Silly Walks, a classic Monty Python skit, is becoming a reality. A couple of cities are installing street signs encouraging "silly walks" at pedestrian crossings. These walking styles have to be approved by the Ministry of Silly Walks, and must be ADA compliant. If one goes to Dauphin Street late on a Saturday night, perhaps these types of silly walks can be witnessed....

Ctrl+Click photos for story



[HERE](#)

You can watch the original Monty Python Ministry of Silly Walk skit on this page:  
<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/sparks-street-and-the-silliest-idea-to-ever-come-out-of-ottawa>

## In the News

### Rep. Bradley Byrne: House-approved transportation and defense funding bills could be a 'great big deal for Mobile'



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Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)  
on November 05, 2015 at 6:59 PM, updated November 06, 2015 at 8:58 AM



A new [six-year transportation spending bill](#) and a proposal authorizing the construction of three more littoral combat ships highlighted "probably the biggest day I've had here for my district" in the U.S. House for Rep. Bradley Byrne.

The approval of both bills, Byrne said, are a two-prong boost for Mobile: The transportation funding could infuse much-needed federal funding into the \$850 million [Interstate 10 bridge over the Mobile River](#) and a federal defense act could provide more work at the city's Austal USA shipyard.

"This is a great big deal for Mobile," said Byrne, R-Fairhope.

The biggest development on Thursday came with the House approval of a \$325 billion long-range transportation bill. A similar bill passed the Senate in July, but congressional leaders will have to meet in the coming weeks to hammer out differences before sending it President Barack Obama for approval before a Nov. 20 deadline.

[The House passed its transportation bill with a 363-64 vote.](#) Of Alabama's seven House representatives, only U.S. Reps. Mo Brooks, R-Huntsville, and Gary Palmer, R-Hoover, voted against it.

Within the latest plan are grants for projects deemed as a "nationally significant freight and highway project," which Byrne believes the I-10 Bridge would qualify under.

The program would infuse \$4.5 billion annually for interstate highways and other roads designated as freight corridors to increase capacity and relieve bottlenecks, and a grant program of more than \$700 million a year for the nationally significant highway and freight projects.

Only the first three years of the six-year plan has funds dedicated for the road program, and none of it includes an increase in the federal gasoline tax. The fuel taxes, which are the main source of revenue for the near-depleted federal Highway Trust Fund, were last raised in 1993.

The lack of a funding structure for the entire six years prompted Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx [to tell The Associated Press that "the result will be more traffic."](#) He has said \$400 billion over six years is minimum needed to prevent traffic matters from worsening.

Byrne said he believes Foxx's Federal Highway Administration would approve appropriations to Alabama for the development of the bridge if the final proposal is signed into law. Foxx was in Mobile in August [to talk about federal options to fund the bridge.](#)

Continue reading [HERE](#)

## JOIN THE FIGHT FOR TRANSIT FUNDING

Thousands of citizens in the cities of Mobile, Prichard and across the entire State of Alabama rely on buses each day. Yet many can't get where they need to be because bus service is being slashed. There isn't enough money to fund public transit. Please come to the Public Transit Town Hall Meeting to let your voice be heard and join the important fight for more public transit funding.



### Public Transit Town Hall Meeting

**When:** Saturday, November 7th at 10 am

**Where:** William Bill Clark Family Life Center  
2501 W. Main Street, Prichard, Alabama



### Mobile's city-wide planning map, a first in decades, aims at making city more walkable



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

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)  
on November 06, 2015 at 10:15 AM



A planning map for the entire city of Mobile, a first for South Alabama's largest city in years, will go before the Mobile City Council Tuesday for consideration.

It was approved by the city's Planning Commission Thursday following a round of mostly positive comments from people who were involved in the nine-month creation process.

"I want to thank the Mobile Planning Commission for adopting Map for Mobile as a framework that can be used to guide decisions in the years to come," said Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson in a statement. The plan was a top priority for Stimpson, who was elected mayor a little more than two years ago.

"We will be working together to implement this plan and use it as a 'living document' with action plans developed and reviewed on an annual basis," he added.

The plan, referred to as the "Map for Mobile," outlines methods and approaches the city will follow starting in 2016 to implement zoning, land use, code and ordinance changes and capital improvement priorities.

"Our intent is, little by little, to use input from the citizens to drive decisions we make in the future," said Dianne Irby, the city's executive director of Planning & Development. "We want to make sure it's something that can be implemented and reviewed on a regular basis."

The city is encouraging the public to review the draft plan online at [www.mapformobile.org](http://www.mapformobile.org). Nearly 2,000 citizens participate in the actual planning process during workshops held throughout the city. Continue [HERE](#)

### Baldwin County hires two lobbying firms to put the county's 'flag in the sand'



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

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)  
on November 03, 2015 at 1:11 PM, updated November 03, 2015 at 6:06 PM

Baldwin County's rapid growth has produced challenges such as congested roads and limited money to build new ones, stressed infrastructure and crowded schools. To combat these challenges and others, Baldwin County Commissioners are banking on help from lobbyists. The commissioners approved spending \$85,500 this fiscal year to hire two lobbying firms that will join Ray Cole in helping to sway lawmakers in Montgomery and Washington, D.C.

Both contracts run from Jan. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016, at which time they can be reconsidered as part of a new budget. The county's fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

"If we don't have someone working the halls for us, we're not part of the conversation," Commission Chairman Tucker Dorsey said. "We've got to do what we can to put the flag in the sand." The agreements include \$6,000 a month to Adams and Reese LLP and \$3,500 a month to Christie Strategy Group. The tax money to pay each company was included an approximately \$200,000 budgeted item for lobbying efforts in the county's fiscal year 2016 budget.

Commissioner Chris Elliott said he believed the lobbying contracts could pay off for Baldwin County with regard to economic development matters.

"Our needs are diverse and they include folks that understand fully the economic development opportunities that are really at the tipping point in Baldwin County right now," Elliott said. "I think Adams and Reese have been heavily involved in that on the state level and they bring about a significant amount of economic development experience."

He added, "While (the contracts are) not inexpensive, it's expensive if you don't end up successfully negotiating whatever economic package there is in the near future." The commission's vote was 3-1, with long-time member Frank Burt opposing. Continue [HERE](#).

## Transportation Research

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### Regional Models of Cooperation

The Every Day Counts innovation of the month for November is [regional models of cooperation](#).

These models offer a framework and process for transportation departments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies and other groups to collaborate on multijurisdictional transportation plans.

The Federal Highway Administration is working with the Federal Transit Administration to encourage transportation stakeholders to think beyond traditional borders when planning transportation projects and programs. This EDC-3 effort focuses on bringing entities together to support common goals on topics such as congestion management, safety, freight and commerce.

The EDC Regional Models of Cooperation Innovation Deployment Team offers technical assistance and training, including peer exchanges and workshops. For details, contact [Jody McCullough](#) or [David Harris](#) at the FHWA Office of Planning or [Tonya Holland](#) at the Federal Transit Administration.

View the [FDC Regional Models of Cooperation presentation](#) for an overview of the regional models approach.

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### FHWA Seeks Comment on New Proposal to Encourage Design Flexibility

Comment Period Closes: December 7

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced proposed revisions to encourage the design of lower-speed roads to align better with community and environmental needs. This represents the start of several proposed regulatory and program policy changes at the agency to allow more flexibility for state, city, and county engineers in the design of highway projects. FHWA proposes to reduce the number of design criteria in order to allow engineers to design projects with multimodal and locally-oriented solutions. For more information click [HERE](#).

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### New Innovative Center to Increase Options for Investment in Transportation Infrastructure

USDOT unveiled its new Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC) this week as a resource for states, municipalities, and other project sponsors. AASHTO is partnering with USDOT to create the BATIC Institute to help state DOTs and other agencies find financing solutions for transportation projects. The Institute will provide specialized education to leaders and decision-makers online as well as in-person