



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, October 10, 2014

Volume 12, Number 2

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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

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Tom Piper

We hope everyone is enjoying this nice fall weather we've been having. If you're in Mobile this evening be sure to go downtown for the LODA Art Walk. And if you're in the mood for some seafood head down to Gulf Shores this weekend for the 43rd Annual Shrimp Festival. There is a level of effort project that MPO members have five days to comment on. Please see *Mobile MPO Updates*.

Have a great 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 state has proposed the following change in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). We have five days to comment.

100063100 CN	Construct offset left turn lanes and a westbound right	4/24/2015
\$780,000		
HSIP-0042	turn on SR-42 (US 98) at the intersection McCrary Road	

Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Update

Several weeks ago, we gave you an update on the status of the FTA 5310 grant as we are now the designated recipient of these funds. Because of the new fiscal year, FTA closed out 2014 and by next week we will be ready to continue the approval process. Once this happens, we will be able to begin the procurement process for those awarded FTA 5310 vehicles and operating assistance. We will keep you posted.

Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge Information Site

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The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Widening project is a proposal to increase the capacity of I-10 by constructing a new six-lane bridge with 215 feet of Air Draft Clearance (ADC) across the Mobile River and widening the existing I-10 bridges across Mobile Bay from four to eight lanes. The proposed project would be located in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, Alabama.

The official comment period for the proposed Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Widening Draft Environmental Impact Statement is [HERE](#).

Please take a moment to fill out a comment form, due by 5 pm on November 7. You may include additional pages but you must fill out and submit the comment form as well.

[COMMENT FORM](#)

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the Mobile MPO study area is complete and is a rather large document. This TDP summarizes the existing Wave Transit system and provides a series of phased recommendations that comprise the ten-year TDP. The chapters of the TDP include:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – Market Analysis
- Chapter 3 – Existing Transit Services
- Chapter 4 – Transit Standards
- Chapter 5 – Transit Improvement Program Summary
- Chapter 6 – Phased Transit Improvements
- Chapter 7 – Public Participation
- Chapter 8 – Evaluation of Existing Routes
- Chapter 9 – FTA Section 5311 Program

The TDP is going to be the focus of the Transit Element of the *Destination 2040* Long Range Transportation Plan, and will be adopted as part of LRTP. The document is over 300 pages and 75 mb on disk. If you would like a copy of the TDP, just let us know, copies are available.

DESTINATION 2040

The MPO Staff is continuing to develop the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan titled Destination 2040. The objective of the plan is to identify, to the maximum extent feasible, the multi-modal transportation improvements which will be needed in the Mobile urban area between now and the year 2040 in order to maintain an acceptable level of mobility. 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](#).

Projects Within Region Let September 26th, 2014

Baldwin County

- for constructing the Roadway Extension (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Signals) on Pride Drive from SR-59 (Gulf Shores Parkway) to the intersection of CR-20 and Roadway Improvements on CR-1186 (Juniper Street) from the junction of CR-20 to just north of the Pride Drive Extension in Foley. Length 2.527 mi.
- for constructing the Widening, Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on CR-20 from the intersection of South Hickory Street to the intersection of SR-59 in Foley. Length 0.996 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

New Report Focuses on Transportation Funding Challenges

According to a new report recently released by Pew Charitable Trusts, as part of its *Fiscal Federalism in Action* series, transportation spending at all levels of government has declined over the last decade. The report highlights the stark funding challenges that all levels of government face in providing adequate resources for infrastructure, and counters the notion that local funding sources can make up for the recent decrease in federal funding. The report examines the role that each level of government plays in surface transportation funding. Click [HERE](#) for the report.

Funding Opportunities

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance projects

Deadline: October 17, 2014

EDA invites applications for job-creating construction projects for upcoming grant cycles. **EDA's next grant deadline for Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance projects is October 17, 2014.** EDA invites applications for projects that will foster job creation and attract private investment, advance a region's economic development objectives, align with the priorities outlined in the region's CEDS, and have committed and available Matching Share funds at the time of application. Applications need to have either a commitment from a regional employer verifying job creation/retention potential of investment or economic impact study verifying projected impact of investment in order to be competitive. Please don't hesitate to contact me or to refer your regional partners to me to discuss a potential project – it is my pleasure to work with you to ensure EDA's grant requirements and processes are clear and that applicants have all the information necessary to develop a competitive application. If you have any question regarding the EDA funding opportunities or need additional information please contact Chris Miller at cmiller@sarpc.org or me at dburnett@sarpc.org, or 251-433-6541.

DRA Workforce Development Capacity Building & Technical Assistance Fund

Round 2 Submissions Close: August 25 – November 4

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has announced that it will establish a competitive, technical assistance and capacity building investment program, which will allow rural counties/parishes and states to develop a connected workforce development system at the local level. DRA will make funds available as a first step in economic development which is needed for growth in the Delta region. Click [HERE](#) for application instructions.

New! NOFA for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Pilot Program

Proposal Deadline: November 3

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is making \$19.98 million in funding available for its Pilot Program for TOD Planning. This program helps support FTA's mission of improving public transportation for America's communities by providing funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning with a transit capital investment that will seek funding through FTA's *Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Program*. Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website by **midnight Eastern Time on November 3, 2014**. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

USDA – Grants for Increased Economic Opportunity and Improved Quality of Life in Rural Areas

Deadline: November 12

On August 13, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a press release announcing the availability of nearly \$6 million in grants to qualified organizations under the *Rural Community Development Initiative*. These grants will be offered to qualified intermediary organizations that will provide financial and technical assistance to recipients to develop their capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or community and economic development that will support the community. Submissions must be made to the USDA Rural Development state office where the applicant's headquarters are located. Click [HERE](#) to apply.

Just For Fun

The World Is A Weird Place, According To Google Earth. These 18 Images Are Awesome And Wrong



This type of glitching happens because of how Google Earth creates its images. The process is called texture mapping. It entails overlaying a flat satellite image with a 3D terrain map. It's a lot like putting a label on a soda bottle.

This works pretty well most of the time, but every so often, Google's algorithms mess up trying to stretch a 2D image over a 3D landscape. The result is a pretty crazy distortion of the landscape. Check it out [HERE](#).

In the News

RESTORE Act Public Meetings Scheduled

On behalf of the State of Alabama, a member of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (aka "Federal" Council), the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) is hosting a public meeting on October 9th to provide information about the RESTORE Act and to seek input from the public as to the questions listed below presented by the Federal Council and posted on its website at www.restorethegulf.gov/resources/public-input.

Meeting Details:

Date: Thursday, October 9, 2014

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Daphne Civic Center, 2603 U.S. Highway 98, Daphne, AL 36526

ADCNR will also be providing opportunities to learn more about the RESTORE Act and the Federal Council through webinars on the following dates:

Date: Monday, October 6, 2014

Time: 2:30 – 4:00 pm

To register: [Click Here](#)

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Time: 3:30 – 5:00 pm

To register: [Click Here](#)

In addition to providing your input in person at the October 9th meeting, you can submit your thoughts on the following questions to the Federal Council at any time via email to restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov

1. What 5 words or phrases best describe your vision for a healthy Gulf of Mexico ecosystem in 5 years? 50 years?
2. People care about restoration, protection and enhancement of our natural resources for many different reasons. Why is ecosystem restoration important to you? What outcomes of restoration activities are most important to you?
3. What three activities do you most rely on or enjoy that depend on healthy natural resources in the Gulf of Mexico? Examples include: fishing, hunting, seafood, cultural heritage activities, bird watching, swimming, etc.

If you have any questions regarding registration for the webinars, please contact Bethany Kraft at Bethany.kraft@restorethegulf.gov or (504) 444-3434.

For more information about the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, please visit www.restorethegulf.gov. For additional information regarding Coastal Restoration efforts in Alabama and to sign up for email updates, please visit: www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org

Scout your route: Mobile Bay Ferry in shop another day, roundabout construction nearing end

By [Angela Levins | alevins@al.com](#)

MOBILE, Ala. -- The Mobile Bay Ferry remains out of commission for at least another day. The Fort Morgan ferry has been down since the beginning of the week for the clutch to be repaired. The hope is the ferry will be up and running by mid-morning on Saturday. We'll keep you updated.

Work is moving right along on Mobile County's second roundabout in West Mobile.

The contractor is currently working on constructing the curb and gutters. Weather permitting, Dena Pollard the Public Information Officer for the Mobile County Commission, said the contractor anticipates opening Three Notch Road and Dawes Lane during the first week in November.

Also, be aware, roadwork and re-paving on Hwy 45 from Roberts Road to the Washington County line will be underway through early 2015.

Below are other road projects underway in Mobile and Baldwin Counties:

Mobile:

Roundabout: The intersection of Three Notch Road at Dawes Lane and Dawes Lane Extension will be closed for two months.

Satchel Paige Drive: Satchel Paige Drive between Government and Bolling Brothers Blvd. is closed to traffic. The road is being widened to a four-lane divided road. Work is expected to take about three months. The road project is part of the McGowin Park Shopping Center construction.

Airport Blvd: At Alverson Road, inside lanes closed for three weeks from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Drainage and road improvements.

ALDOT Mobile County:

SR-163: Resurfacing work is completed. Delays should be minimal as crews wrap up the project.

I-10: Work begins Monday on the interstate 10 ramp leading to Battleship Parkway that was damaged in a fiery accident on July 31. Work is expected to take about two months.

I-10: Resurfacing and bridge work from Halls Mill Creek to the west end of the George C. Wallace Tunnel. Crews are working on eastbound inside lanes this week and retrofitting guardrail at the DIP ramps, where drivers should expect nighttime closures. Work scheduled to be complete by next summer. Drivers can expect lane closures with minimal or no delays Sunday to Thursday from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m.

U.S. 90: From Halls Mill to Pine Hill Drive. Drainage work ongoing throughout project. Resurfacing began this week, lane closures will be at night. Drainage repairs could temporarily detour traffic at times. Work is expected to be complete by December.

ALDOT Baldwin County:

I-10: CR 68 connector to Baldwin Beach Express. Work is about 90-93 percent complete. Drivers may see an occasional lane closure on CR 83 for completing remaining work.

AL 181: From U.S. 31 to south of U.S. 90. Resurfacing work is completed. Delays should be minimal as crews wrap up the project. Work should be complete by October.

Little Lagoon Pass bridge remains under construction. ALDOT reports that the work is about 50 percent complete. There is a detour bridge next to the Little Lagoon Pass Bridge. It's expected to be in place until the end of 2014. Expect minimal traffic delays.

SARPC New Officers and Board Members

Congratulations to SARPC's new officers for the remainder of 2014. In July 2014, Mayor Sandy Stimpson of Mobile was elevated to serve as the Chairman of the SARPC Board of Directors and Mayor Tim Kant of Fairhope was selected to serve as Vice-Chairman of the SARPC Board of Directors. Escambia County Commissioner Larry White remains the Secretary/Treasurer of the SARPC Board of Directors. The SARPC Executive Committee also has two new members to join the three officers named above (Chairman Mayor Stimpson, Vice-Chairman Mayor Kant and Secretary/Treasurer Commissioner White) and Mr. John Murphy, Chairman of the Personnel/Nominating Committee. The new members are Mr. Lee Lawson with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance appointed as Chair of the SARPC Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Baldwin County Commissioner Skip Gruber selected as Chair of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.

Finally Congratulations are also in order for Mr. Al Thompson of Bay Minette who has been appointed by Governor Bentley to replace Ms. Tracy Roberts as the District One representative to the State School Board. With his appointment to the State School Board Mr. Thompson will serve on the SARPC Board of Directors. Congratulations also to Mr. Troy Strunk of Baldwin County who was recently appointed to the SARPC Board as the Baldwin County Commission's "private citizen" representative.

No need to drive 55: Mobile City Council adopts ordinance to make almost all of Bayway 65 mph ordinance to make almost all of Bayway 65 mph

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

MOBILE, Alabama - Motorists who abide by the posted 55 mph speed limit along a portion of the Bayway in Mobile can step on the gas a little more.

The City Council, with unanimous vote Tuesday, supported the Alabama Department of Transportation's suggestions to raise the speed limit on a section of eastbound and westbound lanes of Interstate 10 east of the Wallace Tunnel.

The ordinance change increases the speed limit along I-10 about 1-1/2 miles closer to the Wallace Tunnel on the Bayway side of the tunnel.

The Bayway currently is 65 mph, but it changes to 55 mph near the Tensaw River. Motorists are required to drive at the reduced speeds through the tunnel in both directions, before arriving to the 65 mph markers.

"Basically, the speed limit would be changing closer to the tunnel," Kathryn Hamlett, spokeswoman with ALDOT's Southwest Region, said.

Congestion problems along I-10 prompted ALDOT to consider the change following a traffic study that the department claims is for internal use only.

"The issue has been spotlighted because of all of the congestion discussions associated with the tunnels and the proposed [Mobile River Bridge](#)," Hamlett said. "ALDOT examined the current situation to see if something could be done immediately to help traffic flow. That's how this all came about."

The speed limit through the Wallace Tunnel remains the same - at 55 mph.

"The tunnel speed would stay the same," Hamlett said. "ALDOT has completed a speed study on the Bayway and found that the speed could be raised to 65 closer to the tunnel."

Jennifer White, the city's traffic engineer, said motorists are likely not to experience much of a change. The state will be in charge of making changes to speed limit signs.

"It's a minor adjustment," she said. "You probably won't even notice it. You can safely drive (that short section of the city limits) at 65."

More sidewalks coming to Village of Spring Hill

By [Sally Pearsall Ericson | sericson@al.com](mailto:Sally.Pearsall.Ericson@al.com)

MOBILE, Alabama -- The Village of Spring Hill has secured a \$160,000 grant from the State Department of Transportation to build another stretch of sidewalks.

The new pathways will be installed on the north side of Old Shell Road from McGregor Avenue east toward Myrtlewood Lane. The sidewalks will be a \$200,000 project; the DOT grant requires 20 percent in matching funds, according to a media release from the neighborhood nonprofit.

TVSH will contribute \$55,000 to the new sidewalks and will cover engineering costs, using money raised in the 2014 Sidewalk-A-Thon and a donation from the J.L. Bedsole Foundation, according to officials with the nonprofit.

The grant application was made through the city of Mobile, which was the same process followed with the nonprofit's two previous sidewalk grants. City officials will accept bids on the new sidewalks and be responsible for their construction.

The new sidewalks will go in next spring. When the project is completed, TVSH will have initiated and constructed more than \$800,000 in sidewalk infrastructure in the Spring Hill community, according to the media release.

It's been about eight years since TVSH began the sidewalk effort, and more than 63,360 square feet of sidewalks have been installed along Old Shell Road. The first set of pathways, from Lavretta Park to Ridgelawn Drive West, were installed in 2012.

Others were constructed along the south side of Old Shell Road from University Boulevard to McGregor Avenue and on the north side of Old Shell [from Ridgelawn Drive West to McGregor](#).

Transportation Research

FHWA releases new BIKESAFE guide as part of DOT's effort to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) released its new Bicycle Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System (BIKESAFE). This resource helps support the U.S. Department of Transportation's new [pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative](#).

BIKESAFE is an online guide for implementing countermeasures to improve the safety and mobility of bicyclists. It provides practitioners with information and tools to review and select engineering and roadway infrastructure improvements to reduce bicyclist injuries.

BIKESAFE is comprised of four sections: A guide of basic information, specific countermeasure details, case studies, and an expert system tool for countermeasure selection, as well as links to dozens of other helpful web resources.

Guide: This section helps practitioners better understand the issues facing bicyclists, how to analyze crashes, and how to implement new treatments.

Countermeasures: The Countermeasures section includes a comprehensive list of 46 engineering, education, and enforcement countermeasure options, as well as details of each countermeasure, including its description, purpose, considerations, safety effect, and cost.

Case Studies: There are 34 case studies, or success stories, that document one or more of the countermeasures that have been implemented, along with the background of the problems, bicycle safety solutions selected, and the results of the treatments.

Selection Tool: The expert countermeasure selection system allows users to input the basic safety problem and site conditions. The expert system will propose a "short list" of candidate treatment options that likely would be suited to address the specific bicyclist safety problem for that situation.

This online version of BIKESAFE updates an eight-year-old version and is now available as an interactive tool, usable on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. BIKESAFE can be found at <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/BIKESAFE>.

Webinar (October 22, 2014)-Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program

The FHWA Office of Human Environment is sponsoring a webinar on the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program. Representatives from each of the four [Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program](#) pilot communities will discuss the strategies they used to promote bicycle and pedestrian projects and the lessons learned. The Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program was established in SAFETEA-LU [Section 1807](#) and provided over \$25 million each to four communities ([Columbia, MO](#); [Marin County, CA](#); [Minneapolis Area, MN](#); [Sheboygan County, WI](#)) to demonstrate how walking and bicycling infrastructure and programs can increase rates of walking and bicycling.

Webinar Presenters:

Gabe Rousseau, FHWA Office of Safety

Dan Goodman, FHWA Office of Human Environment

Dan Dawson, Marin County Department of Public Works

Hilary Reeves, Communications Director, Minnesota Transit for Livable Communities

Emily Vetting, Sheboygan County Planning & Conservation Department

Ted Curtis, City of Columbia

Webinar Information:

Date: October 22, 2014

Time: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

LINK TO REGISTER FOR THE WEB CONFERENCE:

https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/webconference/web_conf_learner_reg.aspx?webconfid=27822

*Once registered, participants will receive an email with instructions on how to access the webcast.

CDC Report on Cost of Car Crashes

A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the 2.5 million people who visit emergency rooms following car crashes each year cost the economy more than \$50 billion. In the report, the CDC urges states to enact and enforce seat belt laws and sobriety checkpoints, and to push the use of booster seats for children. Click [HERE](#) for the report.
