



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

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## In This Issue

- RPO UPDATES
- MOBILE MPO UPDATES
- PROJECTS LET September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- 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

## Contact Us

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**BIG NEWS! EPA's new standard for ozone is 70 ppb**, and that is GREAT news for us. Our three monitors average highest percentile reading over the last 3 years is below 70 ppb. The average readings from 2013 to 2015 for the Bay Road and Fairhope monitors are 64 ppb and the Chickasaw monitor is 62 ppb. In fact, everyone in the State of Alabama is below the new threshold, because believe it or not, our air is getting cleaner. Please see *In The News*.

As Boehner leaves, what does that mean for transportation? Please see *Legislative Updates*. Build a bridge in this week's *Just For Fun*. The SARPC Annual Meeting is set for December 10-11, 2015 and the Norman Walton award is seeking nominations; please see *In The News*.

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

## Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Updates

### The Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee met last week

Items on the agenda included a review and adoption of the Work Program for Fiscal Year 2016, which is the program budget for the transportation planning staff for the rural areas of the SARPC region; a review and adoption of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan which details the transit needs of the elderly, disabled, and low income populations of both the rural and urban areas; an update of the RPO's Transportation Plan and List of Safety Needs; and a presentation of ALDOT's current and future transportation projects in Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia Counties. The presentation included bridge projects, capacity projects, interstate maintenance projects, and resurfacing projects. Some of the projects discussed included a bridge replacement over Conecuh River in Escambia County, a divergent diamond interchange at Interstate 10 and 181, completing the new US 98 from Schillinger west to the state line, an update of the Interstate 10 Mobile River Bridge, and resurfacing several shielded routes throughout the three counties. The documents mentioned above are all available on our [website](#).

### 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](#).

## Mobile MPO Updates

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### ADA Transition Plans

We are expecting by the end of the day to have all of our ADA ducks in row, and hopefully give Neel-Schaffer Notice To Proceed for the *ADA Transition Plans for Public Rights of Way for the Mobile MPO*. The scope of work is [HERE](#)

The FHWA has required that every city and county in the state have an ADA Transition Plan, and Urban Areas will have a one year deadline. The ADA Coordinators create a nine member ADA Subcommittee of the MPO. The first task was to select a consultant through the ALDOT Alternative Consultant Selection Procedures. The available ADA Coordinators have met, and selected Neel-Schaffer to do the work. We are currently negotiating a contract with Neel-Schaffer, and will keep you posted on the progress of this study. Once we have a signed contract with Neel-Schaffer, we will have to have a meeting of the ADA Coordinators; we will keep you posted.

*(for areas outside the boundaries of an MPO, ALDOT is working on a time line for you, and you will not follow the same timeline as the Urban areas)*

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### FTA 5310 ( Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Awards

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Designated Recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 *Urban Area Funding* for the Mobile Urban Area. In July, we awarded \$265,410 of federal funds for both operating and capital. We had almost \$500,000 remaining of un-awarded funds for capital only, so we re-advertised the call for projects. The FTA 5310 Project Selection Committee met on September 11, 2015 and awarded the following for capital projects:

AGENCY	FEDERAL AMOUNT	CAPITAL / OPERATING
Mobile ARC	\$163,886	Capital
City of Saraland	\$43,200	Capital
City of Satsuma	\$24,800	Capital
Goodwill Easter Seals	\$43,200	Capital
City of Prichard SAIL Center	<u>\$43,200</u>	Capital
	\$318,286	

This coming summer we will have another round of funding. There will only be around \$100,000 for operations (paying your drivers) and about \$300,000 for capital (vehicles).

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Toole Design Group is finalizing the recommendations of the *Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile*. Toole sent us the final draft and some minor changes are currently being made to the document. Once we received the final document with revisions, we will send it out. 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](#)

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### 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>

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### 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](#).

## Projects Within Region Let September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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### **Mobile County**

for constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on CR-23 (Padgett Switch Road) over Carls Creek in Bayou La Batre. Length 0.467 mi.

### **Baldwin County**

None at this time

### **Escambia County**

for constructing the Bridge Replacements (Grade, Drain, Base, Pave, and Bridges) on SR-41 (Conecuh River and Relief) in Riverview. Length 0.826 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

## Legislative Updates

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### **Quite a Week in Congress**

The sudden resignation announcement late last week of House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) cleared the way for Congress to pass a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open until December 11, so now attention turns to transportation reauthorization. There has been speculation that Speaker Boehner may deliver a number of "parting gifts" before he leaves his seat at the end of October, including a multi-year transportation bill. Boehner's departure is timed almost perfectly with the expiration of the current transportation bill extension on October 29, raising hopes that a long-term deal could be in place before another extension is required. If that doesn't happen, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), who is widely expected to replace Boehner as Speaker, has vowed to pass a six-year bill with a tax reform bill tacked on. McCarthy opposes increasing the gas tax.

Meanwhile, congressional tax committee members announced earlier this week that they hope to finish talks by the end of today with a decision on whether to proceed on a plan to use a tax overhaul package to create a one-time revenue boost that will be used to pay for a long-term transportation bill. Meetings between House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Rob Portman (R-OH), both on Senate Finance, have been ongoing, but Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-AL) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) have rejected the idea thus far. This has led to some speculation that the House may be open to accepting the package of offsets included in the Senate's DRIVE Act proposal, which has enough funding for a three-year bill.

No matter which funding package Congress chooses, it is highly unlikely that a final package will be ready before the October 29 expiration. With the Columbus Day holiday coming up, there are only a few legislative days left to complete a package. House Transportation Committee Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR) expressed pessimism that a bill could be finished before an extension is required, indicating that disagreements over funding are unlikely to be resolved quickly. And with no announced markup of a House bill for next week, they would be into the week of October 20 before anything could happen. This leaves a tiny window to finalize such a large bill with so many moving parts.

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### **Durbin to Boehner: Pass highway bill before you hit the road**

By [Keith Laing](#) - 10/01/15 04:54 PM EDT

Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin said Thursday that Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) should bring a long-term highway bill up for a vote before he leaves office.

The Illinois Democrat noted the Senate has already passed a measure that contains three years' worth of guaranteed infrastructure funding.

Boehner has announced that he is resigning his Speakership at the end of October.

"While the House of Representatives sits on a long-term transportation bill passed by the Senate this summer, states and businesses lack the certainty and resources to move forward on critical infrastructure projects that will make us more competitive in the global economy and create thousands of jobs in the process," Durbin said in a statement.

"American workers cannot wait," he continued. "American businesses cannot wait. It is time for the House to follow the Senate's lead and act."

Durbin and other Senate Democrats have sought to put pressure on House Republicans to pass a six-year highway bill after they rejected the Senate's bill during the summer because it only contained six years' worth of transportation commitments, but only three years' worth of funding.

The House instead passed a three-month highway bill that is set to expire on Oct. 29, which the Senate was forced to accept to prevent an interruption in federal transportation spending.

Boehner has made clear that he wants to "clear the decks" for his successor as Speaker, who is widely presumed to be Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.).

McCarthy, meanwhile, has vowed to pass a long-term highway bill early in his tenure as Speaker if Boehner does not.

"We're going to make sure we get the highway bill done," said McCarthy on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Tuesday, when asked how he would differ from the departing Boehner.

Durbin's office said Thursday it is time for the House to end a long streak of temporary transportation funding measures that has lasted a decade.

"Since the previous long-term transportation bill expired in 2009, Congress has passed 34 stop-gap measures to keep the country's major transportation and infrastructure programs from shutting down."

## Funding Opportunities

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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

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### It's all about building bridges...

Here is a fun bridge building game. It is quite difficult. If you get past level 6, you are my new hero. Send me a screen shot and you will win a copy of *Destination 2040*, the Long Range Transportation Plan...

[http://www.engineering.com/content/g12/cargo\\_bridge.html](http://www.engineering.com/content/g12/cargo_bridge.html)



(disclaimer: Please do not play this while you should be working. Wait until this evening, and challenge the children. They will probably beat you anyway)

## In the News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 1, 2015

### **EPA Strengthens Ozone Standards to Protect Public Health**

***Science-based standards to reduce sick days, asthma attacks, emergency room visits, greatly outweigh costs***

**WASHINGTON** – Based on extensive scientific evidence on effects that ground-level ozone pollution, or smog, has on public health and welfare, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion (ppb) from 75 ppb to protect public health. The updated standards will reduce Americans' exposure to ozone, improving public health protection, particularly for at risk groups including children, older adults, and people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma. Ground-level ozone forms when nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) react in the air.

"Put simply – ozone pollution means it hurts to breathe for those most vulnerable: our kids, our elderly and those suffering from heart and lung ailments," said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "Our job is to set science-backed standards that protect the health of the American people. Today's action is one of the most important measures we can take for improving public health, reducing the costs of illness and protecting our children's health."

EPA examined nearly 2,300 studies in this review of the ozone standards including more than 1,000 new studies published since the last review of the standards in 2008. Scientific evidence shows that ozone can cause a number of harmful effects on the respiratory system, including difficulty breathing and inflammation of the airways. The revised standards will significantly improve public health protection, resulting in fewer premature deaths, and thousands fewer missed school and work days and asthma attacks. For people with lung diseases like COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) or the 23 million Americans and 6 million children living with asthma, these effects can aggravate their diseases, leading to increased medication use, emergency room visits and hospital admissions. Evidence also indicates that long-term exposure to ozone is likely to be one of many causes of asthma development. And studies show that ozone exposure is likely to cause premature death. The public health benefits of the updated standards, estimated at \$2.9 to 5.9 billion annually in 2025, outweigh the estimated annual costs of \$1.4 billion.

Local communities, states, and the federal government have made substantial progress in reducing ground-level ozone. Nationally, from 1980 to 2014, average ozone levels have fallen 33 percent, while the economy has continued to grow. And by 2025, EPA projects that existing rules and programs will bring the vast majority of the remaining counties into compliance. Advances in pollution control technology for vehicles and industry along with other emission reduction standards, including "Tier 3" clean vehicle and fuels standards, the Clean Power Plan and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, will significantly cut smog-forming emissions, helping states meet today's updated ozone standards.

To ensure that people are alerted when ozone reaches unhealthy levels, EPA is extending the ozone monitoring season for 32 states and the District of Columbia. This is particularly important for at-risk groups, including children and people with asthma because it will provide information so families can take steps to protect their health on smoggy days.

EPA also is strengthening the "secondary ozone standard" to 70 ppb, which will improve protection for trees, plants and ecosystems. New studies since the last review of the standards add to evidence showing that repeated exposure to ozone reduces growth and has other harmful effects on plants and trees. These types of effects have the potential to harm ecosystems and the benefits they provide.

The Clean Air Act provides states with time to meet the standards. Depending on the severity of their ozone problem, areas would have until between 2020 and 2037 to meet the standards.

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to review the ozone standards every five years to determine whether they should be revised in light of the latest science. Today's action comes after a thorough review and public comment process. The agency received more than 430,000 written comments on the proposed standards and held three public hearings.

More information: <http://www3.epa.gov/ozonepollution/>

To view the video: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6chllb59zA>

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### **Norman J. Walton, Sr. Regional Award**

It is time once again to nominate, at your discretion, your government for the annual South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) Norman J. Walton, Sr. Regional Award. There are five award qualification criteria: Problem Solving, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Innovation, Benefit to Regional Quality of Life, and Cost Effectiveness. The Norman J. Walton, Sr. Regional Award provides a great opportunity to give such recognition in these areas. SARPC encourages all member governments, municipalities and counties, to submit a nomination

form for this award. The nomination form and any supporting documentation should be compiled and submitted to SARPC's office **no later than November 13, 2015**. The award will be **presented on December 10, 2015** at a meeting of the Full Board of Directors and membership of the Commission during the SARPC Annual Meeting conducted at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama.

## Transportation Research

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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

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### **USDOT Safer People, Safer Streets Update Meeting**

Yesterday marks the one-year anniversary of the launch of the USDOT Safer People, Safer Streets Initiative. NARC met with USDOT officials and other stakeholders in a roundtable today to discuss progress on the pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative and to identify continuing opportunities to coordinate and elevate pedestrian and bicycle safety activities. This conversation aimed to help frame the next steps of the initiative, which include gathering information on policy effectiveness, identifying policy evaluation gaps, and supporting safer road user behavior and infrastructure planning. One resource developed as part of the initiative, Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding, Design, and Environmental Review: Addressing Common Misconceptions, debunks several myths about the federal rules regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and attempts to distinguish between federal standards and state and local practice.