



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 11th, 2015

Volume 15, Number 10

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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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Increase in Alabama Gas Tax? That is In The News. The House has delayed the new authorization bill, but it looks like the Highway Trust Fund will be good until June 2016; there are several *Legislative Updates* as they are back in Session. There is a **RPO meeting** scheduled Wednesday, September 23, 2015 at 2:00 PM at the Baldwin County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Street in Robertsedale. This week's *Just For Fun* is going fishin....

Remember today, and what happened on 9/11/01.

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

ADA Transition Plans

Each City in the Mobile MPO Study Area and Mobile County now has an appointed ADA Coordinator, thank you for your cooperation. 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.

(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)



Toole Design Group is finalizing the recommendations of the *Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile*.

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

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

Recently, the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 Project Selection Committee met and awarded the following:

Agency	Federal Amount	Capital/Operating
Mobile ARC	\$189,758	Operating
Independent Living Center	\$22,470	Operating
Mobile Bay Transportation	\$9,982	Capital
Goodwill Easter Seals	\$43,200	Capital

These projects were adopted by the MPO in a document called the "Program of Projects" at the August 19th

MPO meeting.

The second round of capital FTA 5310 for FY 2015 and FY 2016 deadline was this week. The committee met this morning and recommended projects for funding. We will announce the awardees in the next Transportation Friday Newsletter, once we have notified the applicants. We will keep you posted...

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](#).

Projects Within Region Let September 25th, 2015

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

House Delays Transportation Bill Release

Despite initial indications that a House transportation reauthorization bill would be released yesterday, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) said Wednesday night that they were still working out the details and the release would be delayed, possibly until next week. No word on what this means for next Thursday's expected, but not yet officially announced, markup. Reports are surfacing that a faction of House Republicans are unhappy with the idea of marking up a policy bill without identified funding. It is hard to get a read on whether this is the first indication that the transportation bill is slipping down the priority list or whether a temporary delay is really all that is needed to get a bill released in the near term.

Transportation Infrastructure Panel Advocates Long-term Planning and Funding

At a National Press Club Newsmakers panel on Wednesday, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Teamsters President James P. Hoffa, and former Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour (R) discussed the need for infrastructure growth and expressed shared frustration over the current trend of short-term extension bills. Secretary Foxx encouraged Congress not to see a solvent Highway Trust Fund (HTF) as the goal of a reauthorization package, but as a tool for addressing our infrastructure needs. All three speakers emphasized the importance of a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill and the need to improve America's infrastructure, as opposed to focusing solely on system maintenance.

XPEDITE Initiative

FTA launched an online dialogue to discuss its new Expedited Public Transportation Improvement (XPEDITE) Initiative. XPEDITE seeks to speed up planning, approval, and delivery of FTA supported capital investments as well as support innovative financing methods. FTA seeks to increase the transit industry's access to new

technologies, proven methods to speedup project delivery, and enhanced financing opportunities through public-private partnerships and "value capture." FTA specifically seeks feedback from MPOs on XPEDITE. The online dialogue will run through October 16.

GOP bill would allow states to decide on heavier trucks

House Republican lawmaker has filed legislation that would allow states to decide whether they want to allow heavier trucks on their roads in an attempt to end a bitter fight over truck weights that has raged for years in Washington.

The measure, from Rep. Reid Ribble (R-Wis.), would allow states to decide whether they want to increase a current limit of 80,000 pounds for cargo trucks to 91,000 pounds, which is the level being sought by the trucking industry.

Ribble said Thursday that allowing states to decide for themselves would end a standoff between truck companies and safety advocates that has intensified as lawmakers have sought to include provisions about the industry in a highway bill being crafted by Congress.

"The reality is that our roads are already overcrowded with families heading to school and work, and trucks carrying the things we buy across the country," Ribble said in a statement. Continue [HERE](#)

Feds: Highway Funding Will Last Until June 2016

According to the latest estimates by USDOT, the HTF is expected to have adequate funding resources until June of 2016, six months later than previously thought. After Congress transferred funds to the HTF in its most recent extension, estimates had this carrying the account until December. But with outlays lower over the winter, available funding is expected to go much longer. This estimate has caused concerns regarding the fate of a long-term bill, as this revelation eases the pressure on Congress to get something done by the end of 2015.

Funding Opportunities

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

What does a bike, plane, train, car, and fish have in common?

(free Long Range Transportation Plan *Destination 2040* to the first person to respond to Kevin Harrison with correct answer...)



There are five houses with the outside walls painted in five different ways. David, Ed, Nick, Nicola and Nigel each live in one of the houses. They each drink a certain type of coffee, have a preferred mode of transport and keep a certain pet. No owners have the same pet, the same preferred mode of transport or drink the same type of coffee.

WHO OWNS THE FISH?

Nicola lives in the tartan house.

Ed has a guinea pig

David drinks mochaccino

The paisley house is on the left of the gingham house

The owner of the paisley house drinks flat whites.
The person who drives by car has a squirrel.
The owner of the striped house travels by bike.
The person living in the center house drinks double espresso.
Nick lives in the first house.
The person who travels by train lives next to the one who has a pitbull.
The person who has a badger lives next to the person who travels by bike.
The person who travels by plane drinks chai latte.
Nigel goes everywhere by foot.
Nick lives next to the polka dot house.
The person who travels by train has a neighbor who drinks decaf.

In the News

Gas tax increase gets nod from Alabama House committee

By Tim Lockette, Star Staff Writer, tlochette@annistonstar.com

MONTGOMERY — A committee in the Alabama House of Representatives gave its approval Monday to a bill that would add a 5-cent-per-gallon tax to gasoline and diesel fuel. The bill, which now moves to the full House for a vote, would automatically add a 2-cent-per-gallon increase in some years, if the price of gas falls within a limit set by a complex formula outlined in the bill. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R- Huntsville, said the state hasn't increased the per-gallon tax since 1992 and can't continue to operate on 1990s revenue levels.

"We've got two-lane roads that carry thousands of cars per day," he said. "We've got counties that don't have a four-lane road in them." Opponents said the bill would add to the cost of living for everyone in the state.

"We're opposed to the bill," said Jim Sizemore, a representative of the Alabama Trucking Association. "It is a massive increase, and it's not good for the economy." The per-gallon approach to gas tax has long bedeviled policymakers at both the state and federal levels, who say revenues from the tax don't keep up with the cost of road construction. Alabama, like most states, sends gas tax revenues directly to the Transportation Department and local governments for road maintenance.

McCutcheon's bill would yield an estimated \$100 million in 2016 and \$150 million in 2017, with about one-third of the revenue going to local governments. The bill comes as lawmakers consider significant tax increases to shore up the state's General Fund, which faces a \$200 million shortfall next year. The gas tax wouldn't directly affect the General Fund, though the Transportation Department has in the past been called on to transfer money to the General Fund. Committee members approved the bill in a voice vote. It could come before the full House as early as this week.

Drill, baby, drill: The first physical steps emerge in the long odyssey of the I-10 Bridge



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

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

on September 09, 2015 at 2:59 PM

No, the bridge won't be under construction anytime soon.

South Alabama motorists are going to have to continue enduring the miles-long backups on Interstate 10 as they share a congested road with beach-bound vacationers from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and elsewhere.

But if there is a silver lining from the Labor Day smog of bumper-to-bumper traffic jams, it's this: The first milestone in what could be one of the most transformational road and bridge projects in Mobile's history was met Wednesday as workers began drilling into ground near Aupalala.

For the first time since the bridge project became a concept in the late 1990s, actual physical activity has started.

"We're drilling down deep into the ground to determine what's in there ... we're testing the soil all the way down, very deep," said Jimmy Shumock, CEO of Thompson Engineering – the company selected last month to lead the design of the bridge.

Shumock spoke to the local media Wednesday at Cooper Riverside Park in downtown Mobile to provide an update on the early engineering and design work that is considered a crucial component toward the completion of a final environmental impact statement.

A final statement is needed before any actual construction of the bridge can begin.

"We need to know what we find there," Shumock said about the drilling that could go as deep as 300 feet into the ground at the location where one of the bridge's support pilings could go. "It's not something we're worried about in the outcome. Our designers are capable of dealing with any particular information we find. This is so we can get the right design for the right situation."

Shumock said aside from the drilling, his team is currently focusing on two other engineering necessities: Traffic analysis and storm surge studies.

The traffic analysis took place over Labor Day weekend. Shumock said it's important for his team to gather traffic results from a holiday weekend, when traffic is its most congested over the Bayway, to determine bridge design and configuration.

Kathryn Schulte, spokeswoman with the Alabama Department of Transportation's Southwest division, said traffic counters are being picked up Wednesday and that data will be compiled next week. Continue [HERE](#)

Football Season has officially started.

College football officially gets kicked off this weekend with Alabama playing the Wisconsin Badgers and Auburn playing the Louisville Cardinals. Although these are not SEC games, it is the start of a new chapter for a lot of Alabamians. But how much does it cost to be a fan? It is slightly more expensive to be an Auburn fan...

[How much does it cost to be an Alabama fan? From opening kickoff to the national championship](#)

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Money for roads and bridges paves way to bright future

By Jim Page, CEO of the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce and spokesman for the Partnership for Alabama's Vision for Economic Development, also known as PAVED

Alabama's great successes in economic development over the past 20 years have transformed our economy from one rooted almost exclusively in the agriculture and textile industries to one that is leading the nation in 21st century job sectors like automobile manufacturing, rocket building, and aerospace development.

These long-lasting, high-paying, state-of-the-art industries were attracted here because of our committed and skilled workforce and a road and bridge system that was ideal for transporting parts and products.

Over the decades, Alabama has invested heavily in intensive training programs that ensure our workforce remains highly developed, but, at the same time, our transportation infrastructure has crumbled into disrepair.

Unless a concerted effort is made to repair, replace, and maintain our road system, industrial recruitment will slow dramatically, job expansion will likely grind to a halt, and companies already located here may soon go looking for areas more hospitable to their needs.

For these reasons, a statewide group of economic developers, chamber of commerce executives, public officials and others have joined together and formed the Partnership for Alabama's Vision for Economic Development, or PAVED. Our mission is to increase Alabama's job creation efforts through improvements in our road and bridge network.

Adequate federal funding for infrastructure needs has become less reliable, so it is vital that the state begins to shoulder more of the responsibility. The members of PAVED believe it is time to make the necessary investment.

States like Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida, all of which have Republican-led legislatures like Alabama, have already pursued this change because of its importance to their future economic growth.

For almost 25 years, Alabama's gas tax has remained 16 cents per gallon, and during that same period, technology has led to cars getting significantly better gas mileage, which means consumers fill their tanks less often. As a result, revenues into our Public Road and Bridge Fund are declining while natural inflation is driving the cost of road construction higher and higher.

If you have recently driven down a public highway and pounded your steering wheel in frustration or turned to your passenger and commented on the poor condition of the road, then you have firsthand experience of what results when roadbuilding revenues decline.

Alabama has more than 20 two-lane roads with more than 15,000 cars traveling on them daily, which is considered "grossly overcrowded," and 13 counties do not have four-lane access to an interstate highway, which leaves them at a sizable competitive disadvantage in economic development.

But if we invest now, we can finally begin to make the needed and necessary investments in construction and repairs. Continue [HERE](#)

Transportation Research

Data-Driven Safety Analysis

The Every Day Counts innovation of the month for September is data-driven safety analysis. The Federal Highway Administration is encouraging broader use of two approaches to analysis—predictive and systemic—to better target highway safety investments and reduce crashes.

Predictive approaches combine crash, roadway inventory and traffic volume data to provide more reliable estimates of an existing or proposed road's expected safety performance, such as crash frequency and severity. Results of the analysis can be used in roadway safety management and project development decisions and safety countermeasure selection.

Systemic approaches screen a road network for high-risk features associated with severe crashes, such as certain types of horizontal curves, and identify low-cost safety treatments. These techniques are helpful when crashes occur over a wide area, such as on rural and local roads, and for specific crash types, such as those involving vulnerable road users.

Learn more about data-driven safety analysis:

- Register for the Selecting the Right Systemic Safety Treatments webinar from 1 to 3 p.m. ET on September 29.
- View the Data-Driven Safety Analysis presentation on predictive and systemic approaches.
- See the EDC Exchange: Data-Driven Safety Analysis webcast for details on how agencies are integrating safety performance into highway investment decisions

Strategic Issues Facing Transportation

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 750: Strategic Issues Facing Transportation, Volume 4: Sustainability as an Organizing Principle for Transportation Agencies includes an analytical framework and implementation approaches designed to assist state departments of transportation and other transportation agencies evaluate their current and future capacity to support a sustainable society by delivering transportation solutions in a rapidly changing social, economic, and environmental context in the next 30 to 50 years.

NCHRP Report 750, Volume 4 is the fourth in a series of reports being produced by NCHRP Project 20-83: Long-Range Strategic Issues Facing the Transportation Industry. Major trends affecting the future of the United States and the world will dramatically reshape transportation priorities and needs. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) established the NCHRP Project 20-83 research series to examine global and domestic long-range strategic issues and their implications for state departments of transportation (DOTs); AASHTO's aim for the research series is to help prepare the DOTs for the challenges and benefits created by these trends.