



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, September 19th, 2014

Volume 11, Number 11

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Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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It looks like the group that went to Washington DC [made an impact](#). It was a historic event to have that many local elected officials in DC meeting with legislators about a single topic. Next week begins the I-10 Mobile River Bridge public meetings. If your city, county or agency has a passed resolution, please be prepared to submit to ALDOT during these meetings (*See Mobile MPO Updates*). Bumper Stickers are now available through <http://www.buildthei10bridge.com/>.



Final Rule is out on the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. What is that? States control the NEPA process (Please see *Legislative Updates*) Check out what is new under *Funding Opportunities* and start honking in *Just For Fun*.

Have a great weekend!

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



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Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Update

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) hosted a meeting of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Committee last week at the Baldwin County Central Annex in Robertsedale, Alabama. Items on the agenda included adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting, adopting the Fiscal Year 2015 Work Program, updating the RPO Transportation Plan and Safety Needs List of Projects, and a discussion with ALDOT of current and future transportation projects in the rural areas of Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia Counties. The Work Program for Fiscal Year 2015 and the updated RPO Transportation Plan are available for review on the RPO website [\[HERE\]](#). The minutes of the meeting will be made available on the website as well, once they are transcribed.

Mobile MPO Updates

Earlier this week a group of 26, including 16 local elected officials, went to Washington DC to talk with legislators about the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the legislators that were met with, felt it was a historic and impressive group. The group was not surprised

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when the Majority Whip, Steve Scalise (R-LA) said that he is very familiar with the congestion at the Wallace Tunnels as he regularly vacations in in South Baldwin County.



(Majority Whip, Steve Scalise (R-LA) talking with group at the Capital)

The FHWA suggested some ideas on funding, and tolls were a part of the discussion. A two day workshop on innovative financing techniques that caters to the bridge was offered, and we are trying to get that scheduled now. Congressman Bradley Byrne was extremely gracious to the group, and gave a lot of his time to us, as did Senator Jeff Sessions.

Sessions said that the biggest challenge of the Public Works Committee is that there is not enough money for the current highway bill. They need a definite answer on a final bill, not gimmicks. There is no way the federal government can pay for everything, including this bridge, but he will work with us to get it done.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge was approved by the FHWA and ALDOT is hosting two public hearings next week. Officials will be on site to answer questions about the proposed bridge and Bayway widening and solicit comments and concerns from the public. Please see <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/> where you can view the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Under the Documents Tab) and keep up with the latest developments.

You must sign in to speak (2 min) and all comments must be on ALDOT's comment form. There will be a court reporter as well.

Public Meetings:

Tuesday, September 23, 2014 - 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.
Alabama Cruise Terminal
201 S. Water Street
Mobile, AL 36602
<http://www.shipmobile.com/>

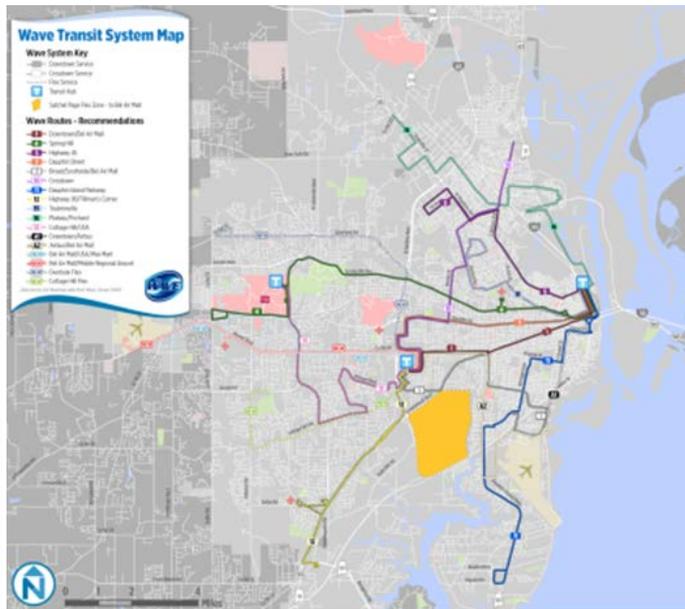
Monday, September 29, 2014 - 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.
Five Rivers Delta Resource Center
30945 Five Rivers Blvd, Spanish Fort, AL 36527
<http://www.outdooralabama.com/outdoor-adventures/5rivers/>

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

Future Year Recommendations



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 Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on CR-2 (Gulf State Park Road 2) from the junction of SR-135 to the junction of SR-182 in Gulf Shores. Length 3.013 mi.
- 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

Some background on **Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program:**

Section 6005 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), 109 Public Law 59, 119 Stat. 1144, 1868-1872, codified at section 327 of title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.), established a pilot program allowing the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) to assign and for certain States to assume the Federal responsibilities for the review of highway projects under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other actions required under any Federal environmental law pertaining to the review. The pilot program was limited to five States and was set to expire on September 30, 2012. Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327(b)(2), FHWA promulgated regulations in part 773 of title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR),

which set forth the information that States must submit as part of their applications to participate in the pilot program (72 FR 6470, Feb. 12, 2007).

Final Rule Issued on [Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program Application Requirements](#): The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a final rule on Tuesday that amends the application requirements for the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. This rulemaking is prompted by the enactment of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), which converted the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program into a permanent program, allowed any state to apply for the Program, created a renewal process for Program participation, and expanded the scope of the Secretary's responsibilities that may be assigned and assumed under the Program to environmental review responsibilities for railroad, public transportation, and multimodal projects, in addition to highway projects. Click [HERE](#) for details.

House T&I Panel Releases Report on P3s: The U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee's special panel on Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) released its final report on Wednesday, recommending several steps to increase the use of P3s. The Committee's Vice Chairman, Rep. John J. Duncan, Jr. (R-TN), led the P3 Panel, and Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA) served as its Ranking Member. The final report makes recommendations to grow public sector capacity to improve agreements and ensure the needs of the public sector are adequately protected. It also proposes improvements to traditional procurement processes to ensure better outcomes for all projects. The report includes a series of recommendations for eliminating barriers to P3s, and changes to federal programs to encourage P3s. The report also recommends steps to ensure transparency and accountability for P3s. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will use the Panel's recommendations as a resource when considering future legislation. Click [HERE](#) for report.

House T&I Committee Approves Passenger Rail Reform Legislation: On Wednesday, the House T&I Committee approved the [Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act \(PRRIA\)](#), or H.R. 5449, by voice vote. The legislation reauthorizes Amtrak programs for four years. The proposal replaces Amtrak's current budget structure, and creates a new two-pronged budget structure with a Northeast Corridor capital and operating account and a separate National Network account (for all projects not on the NEC). There is no similar legislation in the U.S. Senate and the House is unlikely to take further action on this bill in a lame duck session, thus punting the issue until the next Congress. Click [HERE](#) for details.

Funding Opportunities

DRA Workforce Development Capacity Building & Technical Assistance Fund

Round 1 Submissions Close: July 23 – October 2

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

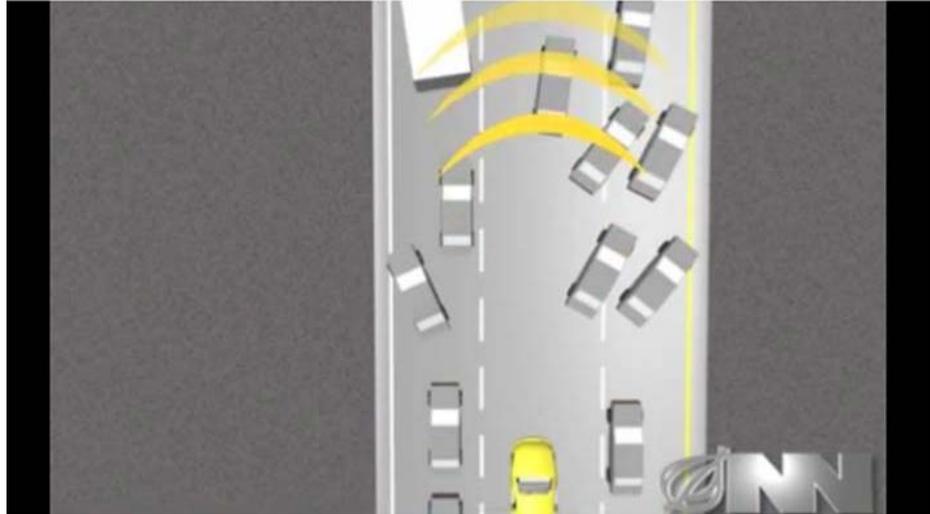
Deadline: November 12

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

Traffic is a real problem for commuters, and this will not only solve everything, but it is *Just For Fun...*



http://www.theonion.com/video/tired-of-traffic-a-new-dot-report-urges-drivers-ho_14144/

In the News

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces 72 TIGER 2014 Recipients

Demand Demonstrates Need for Greater Transportation Investment through GROW AMERICA Act

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced that the Department of Transportation would provide \$600 million for 72 transportation projects in 46 states and the District of Columbia from its TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) 2014 program.

The Department received 797 eligible applications from 49 states, U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, an increase from the 585 applications received in 2013. Overall, applicants requested 15 times the \$600 million available for the program, or \$9 billion for needed transportation projects.

“As uncertainty about the future of long-term federal funding continues, this round of TIGER will be a shot in the arm for these innovative, job-creating and quality of life-enhancing projects,” said Secretary Foxx.

“We’re building bridges from Maine to Mississippi. We’re creating ladders of opportunity for the middle-class and those seeking to enter the middle-class by investing in transit, road and rail projects from Los Angeles to Detroit to New York City, increasing access to jobs and quality of life. For every project we select, however, we must turn dozens more away – projects that could be getting done if Congress passed the GROW AMERICA Act, which would double the funding available for TIGER and growing the number of projects we could support.”

[\[HERE\]](#) to see who was funded. Alabama fell short....

Obama transportation chief to visit Mobile as part of I-10 Bridge lobbying efforts



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on September 17, 2014 at 3:34 PM, updated September 17, 2014 at 3:39 PM



MOBILE, Alabama – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has agreed to come to Mobile and witness, firsthand, the transportation concerns in Mobile and Baldwin counties along Interstate 10 as lobbying efforts ramp up for a proposed bridge over the Mobile River.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, in an interview Wednesday with AL.com, said he met with Foxx earlier in the day and that the transportation secretary agreed to come to Mobile.

Byrne said he will work with Foxx's staff on the trip. Byrne said he hopes the visit occurs before the end of the year.

It will be the first time since someone in the Obama Administration came to Mobile to discuss the bridge project since former Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, during a 2012 visit, said the bridge was "absolutely going to happen."

"They are committed to working with us to find a solution, which is very important," Byrne said.

Byrne's comments come as a group of 16 local mayors and county commissioners are set to leave Washington, D.C. Wednesday following a three-day trip to meet with local congressmen and Federal Highway Administration officials during a lobbying effort for a proposed \$850 million I-10 Bridge.

"It made a big impact on everyone that they met up here and that there was such a big delegation of county commissioners and mayors on both sides of the (Mobile) Bay that were saying the same thing," Byrne said.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, meets with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2014, in Washington, D.C. Byrne said Wednesday that Foxx has agreed to visit Mobile, Ala., to witness, firsthand, the transportation issues along Interstate 10 in Mobile and Baldwin counties. The group met with several congressmen along the Gulf Coast, including U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Mobile. The meetings included: House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), Florida Republican Reps. Steve Southerland and Ted Yoho and Mississippi Republican Rep. Steven Palazzo.

The group also met with the staff for U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa.

"This is a regional problem. The congressmen I've talked to see it that way," Byrne said. "(The local mayors and commissioners) are building this regional support."

Scalise, in particular, has expressed to Byrne his problems in traveling across Mobile Bay during summer months.

"Congressman Scalise and his family regularly come to Orange Beach to vacation," Byrne said. "He's been stuck in his car with his children when traffic is backed up going through the (Wallace) Tunnel."

The mayors and commissioners, "didn't have to paint a picture for him."

Byrne said the focus will be on speeding up the bridge's design process after the public comment period is completed on the environmental impact study that was released in July. He said that month that he was "hopeful" the bridge could be completed in six years.

"It's moving as rapidly as you can make it happen," Byrne said. "It's more now about how quickly we can get the design done. The design (process) is important and it will take a couple of years. We need to speed this up and hopefully narrow it down to a year's bit of time. Every year that goes by, the problem gets worse."

The public comment period lasts until Nov. 7. Hearings will take place on Tuesday at the Alabama Cruise Terminal and Monday, Sept. 29 at the Five Rivers Delta Resource Center, both from 4pm-8pm.

Royal Street expected to reopen, work to begin on I-10/Causeway onramp



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on September 19, 2014 at 5:30 AM, updated September 19, 2014 at 6:20 AM

MOBILE, Ala. -- Close to two months after a fiery accident, work repairs will begin Monday, Sept. 22 to the Causeway/Interstate 10 on-ramp.

The on-ramp was damaged on July 31 when a tanker truck hit the guardrail and burst into flames. The driver, Carlos Lyles, escaped the truck with minor injuries.

The work is expected to have minimal impact to traffic and should be completed in about two months. Newell and Bush, Inc., out of Montgomery, holds the contract for the project.

Transportation Research

When Adding Bike Lanes Actually Reduces Traffic Delays

A big reason for opposition to bike lanes is that, according to the rules of traffic engineering, they lead to car congestion. The metric determining this outcome (known as "level of service") is quite complicated, but its underlying logic is simple: less road space for automobiles means more delay at intersections. Progressive cities have pushed back against this conventional belief—California, in particular, has [led the charge against level of service](#)—but it remains an obstacle to bike lanes (and multi-modal streets more broadly) across the country.

But the general wisdom doesn't tell the whole story here. On the contrary, smart street design can eliminate many of the traffic problems anticipated by alternative mode elements like bike lanes. A [new report](#) on protected bike lanes released by the New York City Department of Transportation offers a great example of how rider safety can be increased even while car speed is maintained.

To see what we mean, let's take a look at the bike lanes installed on Columbus Avenue from 96th to 77th streets in 2010-2011. As the diagram below shows, the avenue originally had five lanes—three for traffic, one for parking, and one parking-morning rush hybrid. By narrowing the lane widths, the city was able to maintain all five lanes while still squeezing in a protected bike lane and a buffer area.



NYC DOT

Click [HERE](#) for more

SURVEY: Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Deadline: September 29

The AASHTO Standing Committee on Planning invites your participation in a brief survey covering current and future planning activities at state DOTs, MPOs, and regional organizations. The insights and responses you provide will be used to develop a quarterly series of "snapshot" publications. Snapshots will highlight current practices, trending topics, best practice examples, and other information on the survey topics. A series of snapshots are being developed through NCHRP 8-36 to address timely topics and provide a resource for planners, executives, legislators, and others interested in planning practices. The snapshots will be made available through the Transportation Research Board and at www.planningsnapshots.camsys.com. Click [HERE](#) for the survey.

1ST ANNUAL ALABAMA RURAL ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE September 29-October 2, 2014

The Alabama Rural Road Safety Workshop and Conference is for engineers, planners and others who are responsible for the design, maintenance, and safety of rural roads. It will strengthen your knowledge of available tools, countermeasures and processes to improve safety on your roads, and includes a one-day eight hour Workshop followed by a one and one half day Conference. The Workshop explains how road safety may be integrated into rural/ local transportation projects at all stages including planning, design,

construction, operation, and maintenance. The Conference emphasizes methods to identify rural road safety issues and appropriate countermeasures. Participants may attend either the Workshop or Conference, or both. For more information click [HERE](#).

A Useful Resource: Roadway Safety Guide: A Primer for Community Leaders

The Roadway Safety Foundation is a non-profit organization created in 1995 whose mission is to “...reduce the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities through improvements to roadway systems and their environment.” Earlier this year, the RSF released an updated version of its Roadway Safety Guide: A Primer for Community Leaders, available online [HERE](#).

The guide is intended to be a document that is useful for people who are not highway safety professionals (such as elected officials and other community leaders). The guide begins by providing a context for highway safety issues and a general primer on roadway safety. This is followed by a series of stories on case studies and best practices. There is a chapter on vulnerable users – older drivers, young drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists, and suggestions on resources for funding and further information.
