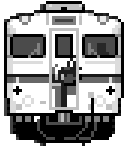


MOBILE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

March 2004

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Ferry/Light-Rail Study Progress

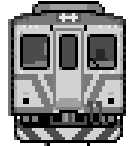


Public Meetings were held December 10 and 11 throughout Baldwin County and Mobile County to present background information on the scope and current direction of the Passenger

Ferry Study on the Mobile Bay and the Transit Connection between Mobile CBD and the Regional Airport. The consultants presented information on Mobile and Baldwin Counties, including population trends, and travel characteristics. Then information on the progress of the study was presented, including the travel demand model, the ferry service considerations and the transit connection approach. The results of the travel survey were also presented. A total of fifty-three individuals attended the series of six meetings. The next series of public meetings were held on Wednesday March 10 and Thursday March 11. A total of 66 citizens attended the first meeting in Fairhope. Twenty-five citizens attended the meeting at Government Plaza, and 12 individuals attended the meeting at the West Regional Library. During the open format meetings, citizens were able to ask the consultants questions regarding either study, and they were able to fill out comment sheets.

During the public meetings the consultants presented preliminary findings on both aspects of the study. They have neared completion of the employee/employer surveys and the travel demand model. In regards to the ferry, they have determined the best operating characteristics for a Mobile Bay ferry, potential operators, and potential sites. The consultants preliminary recommendations call for operating three ferries, two in service and one spare, between Mobile and Fairhope during the morning and evening peak hours. The proposed vessels are 63 passenger catamarans capable of a 40 knot cruising speed. The commute trip should take 35

minutes on average. Operators from across the country have shown interest in operating the Mobile Bay ferry. Throughout the study, the consultants have researched various potential terminal sites in both Mobile and Baldwin Counties. Five potential sites were determined to be most feasible: Fairhope, Daphne, Point Clear, Gulf Shores and Fowl River. These sites were chosen based on various components including demand and local attractions. One interesting aspect of the Gulf Shores and Point Clear locations is the possibility of using Job Access Reverse Commute funding to bring Mobile workers to employment in Baldwin County. The recommended uses for the ferry are commuting during the peak travel periods and for tourist /recreational uses during off-peak periods. The ferry has the potential to enhance to the ever-growing economic boom in Mobile. Between the new cruise terminal, the Maritime Museum, the RSA Tower and the ferry, downtown Mobile is on the way to becoming the heart of Mobile once again.

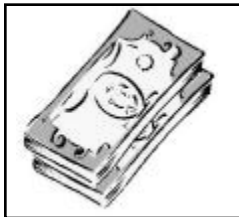


In the transit study, the consultants have narrowed the recommended technologies to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU), determined potential markets, and determined two potential alignments and station locations between the Mobile Regional Airport and downtown Mobile. The two recommended technologies, BRT and DMU, are based on cost and potential ridership; however, both technologies have the ability to grow with Mobile into light rail transit. The consultant has determined the preferred alignments to be Government Street/Airport Boulevard (BRT Route) and an existing railroad to the north of Airport Boulevard with a new airport connection (DMU

Continued on Page 2...

Metropolitan Planning Organization News

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) met on January 28, 2004. The MPO reviewed and adopted Modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program. Multiple changes were made by the Alabama Department of Transportation to balance the first two years of the program, and the Alabama State Docks requested that \$22.5 million of FTA Section 5309 funds be added for the new Intermodal Complex. Another item on the agenda was to review changes to the Functional Classification Map for the area's federal aid highway system. The last agenda item covered the recent MPO Planning Certification Review.



During the meeting, representatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) explained the reasons for postponing several projects. The first step when creating a five year plan is to estimate the revenues to be received. In previous plans, the estimated revenue has included the unobligated balance of federal funds from prior years. The state has about \$500 million in unobligated federal funds because of spending limitations and authorization bills. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ALDOT decided to remove the unobligated federal funds to create a more realistic plan. Unfortunately, this forced many projects into later years or out of the TIP.

Projects which were delayed or moved out of the 5-year TIP included the proposed I-10 Bridge at the Mobile River (postponed one year), Mobile Street widening between Springhill Avenue and USA Medical Center (out of the TIP), US 45

widening between Wilson Avenue and I-65 (out of TIP), Rangeline Road widening between Hamilton Boulevard and Laurendine Road (out of TIP), Industrial Parkway widening between I-65 and US 43 (out of TIP), Hamilton Boulevard widening between Dauphin Island Parkway and Rangeline Road (out of TIP), and drainage projects on US 43 in Saraland and on US 90 in Theodore (out of TIP).

The MPO also reviewed various corrections to the Functional Classification Map, including the new study area boundary as determined by the Census Bureau. The map was approved.

The last item discussed was the MPO Planning Certification Review. From January 25 to 27, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a review of the policies, procedures and practices of the Mobile MPO and staff. During the review, they analyzed all aspects of the program including the Public Involvement Program, the Congestion Management Program, Environmental Justice, the Long Range Plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The MPO program was certified, subject to addressing three minor recommendations.

The MPO also met on March 10 to receive a briefing on the Proposed Modifications of the Metro Transit Route System (see page 3) and on the FY2003 Public Involvement Status Report. No resolutions were adopted.

...Continued from Page 1

Route). These routes were analyzed using market demand and feasibility. Along the BRT Route, possible stations include Airport, Schillinger, Cody, Hillcrest, University, Azalea, Mall, Florida, Government/Airport, Lafayette, Broad, Claiborne, the Convention Center, and the GM&O. Along the DMU Route possible stations include the GM&O, the Convention Center, Augusta, I-10, Michigan, Airport/Government, Dauphin, Spring Hill, Forest Dale, Howell's Ferry, Zeigler,

Schillinger, and the airport. The transit connection would give Mobilians transit options within the city as well as the ability to connect to the world.

There will be another set of public meetings towards the end of April. The meetings will be advertised in the Mobile Register. For further information please visit the study web page at www.sarpc.org/framelink-ferry.htm or contact:

April Guthrie

Transportation Planner

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission

251-433-6541 X413

Metro Transit System Route Changes

On May 5, 2004, Metro Transit will implement numerous changes to the route system. Some notable changes include the implementation of two crosstown routes in Prichard. The first will serve the area east of Wilson Avenue (Route 16) and the second will serve the area west of Wilson Avenue to the Eight Mile Shopping Center (Route 17). On Route 1, there will no longer be service to the Hillsdale Heights or Cody Road area; however, this area will be served by the new Schillinger/Airport Neighborhood Route. Routes 2, 6, 8 and 13 were eliminated. Route 4 was modified to end at University, and Saturday service to the University of South Alabama was eliminated. One block of Lawrence Street and three blocks of Congress Street lost service on Route 5, and the route now interlines with Route 7 downtown. On Route 7, service was eliminated on South, Emogene and Sage, but service was added to Springhill Hospital. On Route 9, service will be eliminated on Pinehill, Senator, Euclid, Halls Mill and Holcombe. The Route will operate on Government to DIP to Duval. On Route 10, there will be no service on Kansas, Spruce, Lanier and West Lee Streets, and



service will stop at Craft Highway and Wilson Avenue. Service will be extended into Mobile Infirmary. Route 11 will now operate from Claiborne to Canal to Washington to Virginia to

Houston to Duval to DIP. Four trips in the morning and afternoon will go to Staples, but all other trips will turn around at Old Military Road. Route 12 will now run from Government St. to Pleasant Valley to Bel Air Mall to I-65 Service Road to Government Blvd. to Girby to Knollwood Hospital to Girby to Government Blvd. to Rangeline to Wal-Mart. There are no changes to moda! (Route 14). Route 15 will now service the Woman's and Children's Hospital, and the route will now run in the same direction. The new Route 18 will service the Cottage Hill and University of South Alabama areas. Routes 19 and 20 will be a Demand Response Service for the Schillinger/ Airport area and the Tillman's Corner area, respectfully. For any questions regarding the new service, please contact:

Ron Tanner
 Director of Planning and Capital Projects
 Metro Transit
 251-344-6600

Senate TEA-3



On February 13, 2004, the United States Senate passed TEA-3, their version of the Transportation Bill. The Bill has a budget of \$318 billion, which is \$62 million more than the Administration bill.

Some notable highlights include \$70 million a year for Safe Routes to School and \$4.79 million over six years for Transportation Enhancement Grants.

After the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the House of Representatives reviews TEA-LU, their version of the bill, it will be voted on by the entire House of Representatives. Then a conference committee will reconcile the two bills.

Bicycle & Pedestrian News



In early 2004, a new off-road bike trail is set to open along Montlimar Canal from Airport Boulevard to Micheal Boulevard. It runs behind numerous businesses including Home Depot,

Outback Steakhouse, Sonic, Pep Boys, Mobile Fixtures, and numerous offices. The trail is beautifully landscaped and includes a bridge, bike racks., and benches. For more information on bicycling and walking in the Mobile area, please contact:

April Guthrie
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 South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
 251-633-6541

**MOBILE AREA
TRANSPORTATION
STUDY
SOUTH ALABAMA REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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MPO Voting Membership

- * Mobile County Commissioner - Hon. Samuel Jones, Chairman
 - * Mayor, City of Bayou La Batre - Hon. Stan Wright
 - * Mayor, City of Mobile - Hon. Michael Dow
- * Councilman, City of Mobile - Hon. Reggie Copeland
- * Councilman, City of Mobile - Hon. Thomas Sullivan
 - * Mayor, City of Prichard - Hon. Charles Harden
 - * Mayor, City of Chickasaw - Hon. Jim Trout
 - * Mayor, City of Saraland - Hon. Ken Williams
 - * Mayor, City of Satsuma - Hon. William Bush
 - * Mayor, Town of Creola - Hon. Cleo Phillips
- * General Manager, Metro Transit - Mr. Bob Williams
- * Ninth Division Engineer, ALDOT - Mr. Ron Poiroux
 - * Member, SARPC - Mr. Norman Walton