

# **Connections Update**

**February 4, 2008**

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**Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham  
1731 First Avenue North Suite 200- Birmingham, Alabama 35203  
For RPCGB meeting schedules and information visit our  
website at [www.rpcgb.org](http://www.rpcgb.org)**

## ***Headlines in this issue:***

### ***Working Together***

- RPC Finance Committee and meeting announcement
- RPC Program Budget Committee
- RPC Board of Directors meeting announcement
- RPC elects new Board members at annual conference January 30, 2008

### ***Regional Transportation, Planning and Development***

- New Officers elected for the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Congestion Management Process Task Force meeting scheduled
- Beltline Intersecting Roadways Plan – Scenario Refinement Meetings on February 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) update
- Trains and Birmingham's Collegeville Neighborhood
- Help Your Heart – And Your Commute
- Call for Projects” to be funded with FTA Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Funding
- Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (HARPO) Committee meeting
- CommuteSmart 2007 report
- Car Care Program provides exhaust system testing and repairs
- Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) Draft Public Participation Plan Public Involvement Meeting scheduled
- In-Town Transit Partnership (ITP) Newsletter available
- Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) Marketing Committee meeting

### ***Building Communities***

- Awards ceremony to be held February 13, 2008 for RPC Community Planning Assistance Grant Program
- Argo Land Use Plan
- Water Resource Assessment

### ***Grant and Workshop Announcements***

- CAWACO RC&D Council's FY2008 grant window is now open!
- Brownfield Redevelopment Workshop – Anniston
- Water quality sampling training for Five Mile Creek Supporters
- Northeast Brownfields Development Forum]
- 2008 BrunerLoeb Forum
- Legacy "State of the Environment" Conference
- Watershed Leadership Conference
- Dates set for 2008 Your Town Alabama (10 Years Strong in 2008)

# Working Together

## **RPC Finance Committee and meeting announcement**

The RPC Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Conference Room A, 1731 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. The purpose of the meeting is to review RPC financials.

## **RPC Program Budget Committee**

The RPC Program Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2008, 8:30 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Conference Room A, 1731 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. The purpose of the meeting is to review work program and budget modification.

## **RPC Board of Directors meeting announcement**

The next meeting is February 20, 2008, 10:30 a.m., First Floor Conference Room, Center for Regional Planning and Design, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, 35203. The primary purpose of this meeting is to consider reports and recommendations from Committees. For meeting information, including postings of any meeting notices and cancellations please visit the RPCGB website at [www.rpcgb.org](http://www.rpcgb.org)

## **RPC elects new Board members at annual conference January 30, 2008**

The following are newly elected RPC Board members who will serve a term of **2008-2010**:

Mayor Larry Langford, City of Birmingham  
Commissioner Bobby Humphries, Jefferson County  
Commissioner Jim Carns, Jefferson County  
Commissioner Robbie Hayes  
Commissioner Stan Batemon, St. Clair County  
Commissioner David Standridge, Blount County  
Mr. Tim Westoven, City of Hoover  
Mr. Chester Jolly, City of Warrior  
Mr. Ray Hamilton, Town of Vincent  
Mayor Theoangelo Perkins, Town of Harpersville  
Mayor Eddie Reed, Town of Jemison  
Mayor Michael Johnson, City of Fairfield  
Mayor, Charles McCallum, City of Vestavia Hills

They join the current Officers and Board members serving **2007-2008 term**:

Councilor Valerie Abbott, City of Birmingham, RPC Chairman  
Mayor J. O. Whitfield, City of Leeds, RPC Vice-Chairman  
Commissioner Bettye Fine Collins, Jefferson County, RPC Secretary  
Mr. Reginald Holloway, Shelby County, Treasurer  
Councilor William Bell, City of Birmingham  
Commissioner Bruce Hamrick, Walker County  
Commissioner Joe Headley, Chilton County  
Mayor Delor Baumann, City of Hueytown  
Mayor B. J. Driver, City of Clanton  
Mayor Ricky Buckner, City of Springville

Mr. Randall Gammon, City of Cordova  
Mr. Waymon Pitts, Town of Cleveland  
Mr. Richard Dickerson, City of Birmingham

## **Regional Transportation, Planning and Development**

### **New Officers elected for the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization**

On January 9, 2008, the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) elected new Officers for 2008. They are: Mr. Randy Cole, Shelby County, Chairman; Mayor Doug Brewer, City of Graysville, Vice-Chairman; and Mayor Tom Henderson, City of Center Point, Secretary.

### **Congestion Management Process Task Force meeting scheduled**

A meeting of the Congestion Management Process Update Task Force will be held on Monday, February 25, 2008, 1:30 p.m., RPC 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room. The meeting will focus on review of field data collected, identifications of congested corridors, and potential mitigation strategies. For more information contact Harry He at [hhe@rpcgb.org](mailto:hhe@rpcgb.org)

### **Beltline Intersecting Roadways Plan – Scenario Refinement Meetings on February 12<sup>th</sup>**

In January, community involvement meetings were held in the Cities of Graysville, Hueytown and Clay to develop a vision for the intersecting roadways with the future Northern Beltline. A community preference survey allowed participants to identify the development types they prefer ranging from commercial, residential and mixed use development. Participants broke out into small groups around maps to create development scenarios. Another opportunity for community involvement will be on February 12, 2008 when a scenario summarizing the input from each respective City's meetings will be presented. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, attendees will be asked to review and refine the scenario from their city.

The schedule of meetings on February 12, 2008 is as follows:

- City of Graysville at 6:00 p.m. at the Graysville Public Library focusing on US 78.
- City of Hueytown at 7:00 p.m. after the City Council Meeting at Hueytown City Hall focusing on Warrior River Road.
- City of Clay at 6:00 p.m. at the Clay Community Center focusing on Old Springville Road.

For additional information contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at [mgl@rpcgb.org](mailto:mgl@rpcgb.org)

### **Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) update**

1. The Alabama Partners for Clean Air is soliciting proposals to conduct projects that pertain to the APCA mission and meet the eligibility requirements of the program guidance for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program whose purpose is to contribute to attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. APCA anticipates awarding a total of up to \$50,000 with each project

costing between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Each recipient will be required to provide a 20% match for the total cost of the project. The proposals have to be submitted to the Regional Planning Commission by 12:00 p.m. on February 15<sup>th</sup>. An electronic version of the RFP can be found at:

[www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm](http://www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm).

2. The January 10<sup>th</sup> APCA meeting included the end of year report from CommuteSmart, release of the Special Projects RFP, and an update from all the partners. The next APCA meeting will be at 1:30 on February 14<sup>th</sup>.
3. WRATT, who performs emission testing for the APCA program, has had over 5 events at various Express Oil Change locations. So far it has been very successful with over 100 cars tested. By the end of March all 32 locations will have had an emission testing event.

For additional information contact Scott Tillman at [stillman@rpcgb.org](mailto:stillman@rpcgb.org)

### **Trains and Birmingham's Collegeville Neighborhood**

The University of Alabama Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility has produced a short documentary called "Trained-In" that highlights the problems of blocked railroad crossings limiting regular and emergency access to the Collegeville Neighborhood. The Birmingham MPO's Transportation Citizens and Technical Committee's has reviewed the video and met with representatives of the CSX, Norfolk Southern and Burlington Northern Railroads and the U.S. DOT's Federal Railroad Administration to review switching operations. The Transportation Citizens Committee has committed to promote the completion of forms that note intersection blockages which could help to trace and improve the dispatching of trains. For additional information contact Bill Foisy at [bfoisy@rpcgb.org](mailto:bfoisy@rpcgb.org)

### **Help Your Heart – And Your Commute**

February is American Heart Health month, and CommuteSmart is working with employers and commuters to help reduce commuting stress. CommuteSmart currently has 4,410 commuters signed up in its ridematch database and another 56 employer Partners that have signed up to help their employees find a better way to work. While reducing stress during Heart Health month might be a great reason to set commuters on the right track, a little monetary incentive never hurts either. More than 200 people have already signed up for GetGreen and Commuter Club, two incentive programs that reward commuters to use commute alternatives. Call 1-87-RIDEMATCH or visit [www.commutesmart.org](http://www.commutesmart.org) to learn more about CommuteSmart and its programs.

### **Call for Projects” to be funded with FTA Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Funding**

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham on behalf of the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization has issued a “Call for Projects” to be funded with FTA Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Funding. For the Full Application, visit: [www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm](http://www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm). An application workshop February 6, 2008 at 9:00 am 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference room at the RPC, 1731 First Avenue

North, Birmingham, AL 35203. For more info contact Darrell Howard at [dhoward@rpcgb.org](mailto:dhoward@rpcgb.org)

### **Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (HARPO) Committee meeting**

The Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (HARPO) has scheduled a joint meeting for the HARPO Executive Committee and Technical Committee on February 20, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, First Floor Conference Room, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. The Committees will review information to be presented in each County in March. Information at the next set of public meetings will include mapping and charting the potential projects and solutions to issues and needs that were identified at the Winter meetings in Blount, Chilton, St. Clair and Walker Counties. ALDOT will also review the projects included in the FY 2008-2111 State Transportation Improvement Program that will address some of the issues and needs identified at the public meetings. For additional information, please contact Bill Foisy (205-264-8440), [bfoisy@rpcgb.org](mailto:bfoisy@rpcgb.org).

### **CommuteSmart 2007 report**

Last year was a breakout year for CommuteSmart. Thanks to the program's strong carpool and vanpool services, more than 4.4 million miles and 114,000 trips were eliminated from Birmingham roadways. For its efforts, CommuteSmart was awarded the 2007 Outstanding Planning Award by the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association. CommuteSmart currently has 4,410 commuters signed up in its ridematch database and another 56 employer Partners that have signed up to help their employees find a better way to work. Seventy-four on-site employer events were held to get commuters on the right track, but a little monetary incentive never hurts either. More than 200 people have already signed up for GetGreen and Commuter Club, two incentive programs that reward commuters to use commute alternatives. Call 1-87-RIDEMATCH or visit [www.commutesmart.org](http://www.commutesmart.org) to learn more about CommuteSmart and its programs.

### **Car Care Program provides exhaust system testing and repairs**

A new Car Care Program from Alabama Partners for Clean Air will help local drivers make needed repairs to their cars' exhaust systems and in turn improve air quality in Jefferson and Shelby counties. The Car Care Program will provide free exhaust emissions testing at Express Oil Change & Service Centers throughout the area and also provide 80% of necessary exhaust system repairs, up to \$1,000, for qualified automobiles. Emissions testing dates are scheduled at 25 Express Oil locations from Feb. 5 through April 29. A pilot program for testing was completed in January at five Express Oil locations resulting in 135 cars being tested for emissions problems. "We are now ready to roll out a three-month schedule for free testing and payments for needed repairs on cars up to 15 years old," according to Danny Patterson, Executive Director of the Waste Reduction and Technology Transfer (WRATT) Foundation, an APCA partner. The first testing date is Feb. 5 at the Gardendale Express Oil location. For a complete listing of test dates visit [www.alabamacleanair.com](http://www.alabamacleanair.com). Qualified repairs covered by the Car Care Emissions Program include oxygen sensors, catalytic converters, diagnostics or other repairs considered necessary by the Car Care Program shop. With appropriate

documentation, repairs may be made at any Express Oil Change & Service Center in Jefferson or Shelby County or at Carl's Car Care Clinic in Cahaba Heights. Alabama Partners for Clean Air, sponsor of the program, is a consortium of 14 public, private and nonprofit organizations working together to improve air quality in Jefferson and Shelby Counties.

### **Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) Draft Public Participation Plan Public Involvement Meeting scheduled**

The public involvement meeting will be held in February 20, 12:00 Noon, Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA), Public Meeting Room, 1735 Morris Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35203. The new Public Participation Plan was developed in cooperation with the MPO's Transportation Citizens Committee (TCC) Public Involvement Subcommittee. The new Public Participation Plan expands on the current Plan to meet the federal guidelines under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). To view the Draft Public Participation Plan visit [www.bhammpo.org](http://www.bhammpo.org), "Public Involvement, How To Get Involved" link. For more information contact Cissy Edwards Crowe at [cedwards@rpcgb.org](mailto:cedwards@rpcgb.org)

### **In-Town Transit Partnership (ITP) Newsletter available**

Volume 4 of the In-town Transit Partnership newsletter is now available. The newsletter provides a description of the community connector workshops that were held this past fall. It also identifies the agreed upon "locally preferred alignment" (LPA) for the bus rapid transit corridor that will be advanced for environmental evaluation and subsequently submitted to the Federal Transit Administration for funding. Stakeholders on both the MPO public involvement list and those that signed up for the ITP mailing list while attending an event will receive copies of the newsletter via US mail. Hard copies are available in the RPC offices, and electronic copies are available at [www.itp-project.com/publications](http://www.itp-project.com/publications). For additional information contact Darrell Howard at [dhoward@rpcgb.org](mailto:dhoward@rpcgb.org)

### **Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) Marketing Committee meeting**

A meeting of the APCA Marketing Committee will be held on February, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 1:30 p.m., RPC 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, 1731 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North Birmingham. The following agenda items are scheduled: Welcome and Introductions, Presentation about APCA, 2007 Media Campaign Review, 2007 End of Year Survey Results. For additional information contact Scott Tillman at [stillman@rpcgb.org](mailto:stillman@rpcgb.org)

## **Building Communities**

### **Awards ceremony to be held February 13, 2008 for RPC Community Planning Assistance Grant Program**

RPC will hold an Award Ceremony for the Community Planning Assistance Grant Program recipients on February 13, 2008, 10:00 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's office, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL

35203. The RPC received 21 applications and 17 were selected. The grant program is designed to assist county and municipal governments within RPC's planning area which includes Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker Counties with planning assistance for the development of **comprehensive plans**, **area plans** such as town center and neighborhood studies, and **management tools** such as zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. Funds can also be used to undertake relevant studies and analyses including economic, retail/market, historic preservation, and transportation-related analyses. Each local government was required to match the dollars requested in its grant applications. For additional information on the awards ceremony contact Cissy Edwards Crowe at [cedwards@rpcgb.org](mailto:cedwards@rpcgb.org)

### **Argo Land Use Plan**

The City of Argo, located along I-59 and US 11 in St. Clair County, has completed the development of a draft future land use plan. This plan is the basis for a zoning ordinance that the RPC is assisting the city to develop. The zoning ordinance along with a subdivision regulations are expected to be completed by April 2008. For additional information contact Darrell Howard at [dhoward@rpcgb.org](mailto:dhoward@rpcgb.org)

### **Water Resource Assessment**

The Regional Planning Commission, under contract with Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs/Office of Water Resource, is holding educational work sessions on water resources. The sessions are tentatively scheduled for March 2008. Each work session will be geared towards informing local decision-makers on the assessment and recommendation report produced by Malcolm-Pirnie for the region. For additional information contact Yvonne Murray, [ymurray@rpcgb.org](mailto:ymurray@rpcgb.org)

## **Grant and Workshop Information**

### **CAWACO RC&D Council's FY2008 grant window is now open!**

Cawaco Resource & Development Council, Inc. is seeking grant proposals for the Challenge Grant **and** ACES Educational Grant Programs in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties. *To be considered, proposals must be RECEIVED by March 31.* Check [www.cawaco.org](http://www.cawaco.org) for complete details, guidelines, forms and a list of recently approved projects.

### **Brownfield Redevelopment Workshop**

The City of Anniston and the East Alabama Regional Planning Commission is hosting a Brownfield Redevelopment Workshop on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, 8:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., Anniston Museum of Natural History, Anniston, Al, \$10.00 Registration fee: Lunch Provided. For more information contact the Anniston City Manager at 256-236-3422.

### **Water quality sampling training for Five Mile Creek Supporters**

If anyone is interested in being trained for water quality sampling in Five Mile Creek, please respond to the link below. The training is offered on Sunday February 10 from 10-4pm by Alabama Water Watch. It would be great to have a few dedicated volunteers

spend 1 hour a month measuring water quality on Five Mile Creek. There are many sampling stations to choose from. Five Mile Creek will pay the costs of training and materials. You just need to supply dedication and transportation to the site. Regular water quality monitoring is very important to the health of the creek.

Cut and past this link for the certification:

<https://fp.auburn.edu/icaae/WorkshopRegD.aspx?ID1=175&Ct=1>

For more information contact Francesca Gross, Five Mile Creek Coordinator, [fgross@rpcgb.org](mailto:fgross@rpcgb.org) or visit web site [www.cawaco.org/fivemilecreek](http://www.cawaco.org/fivemilecreek)

### **Northeast Brownfields Development Forum**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Present the Northeast Brownfields Development Forum February 12, 2008 Philadelphia Marriott Hotel. To register please visit ICSC's website at:

[http://www.icsc.org/apps/meeting\\_display.php?meeting=2008S03](http://www.icsc.org/apps/meeting_display.php?meeting=2008S03)

The morning will feature educational sessions on contaminated property redevelopment including financing, the regulatory environment, obstacles and incentives. The afternoon property transaction forum will give property owners, redevelopment agencies, and communities an opportunity to market their contaminated properties to the retail industry.

### **2008 BrunerLoeb Forum**

**Leadership Birmingham** and **Region 2020**, working in partnership with Cathy Crenshaw, a recent Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, invite you to attend the **2008 BrunerLoeb Forum** on **February 8<sup>th</sup>** from 8:30 to 4:00 at the **Birmingham Museum of Art**. Birmingham was recently chosen as the host city for this year's collaboration between two of the most preeminent national programs in the field of the urban environment. The Birmingham event will include presentations and interaction with nationally renowned professionals on projects and ideas that are relevant to Birmingham's current initiatives and pertinent issues including **local and regional open space planning; sustainable development; public transportation; and the relationship between local government and design**. Presenters include among others **Walter Hood** of Walter Hood Design, Oakland, California and **Maurice Cox**, recently appointed Director of Design for the National Endowment of the Arts and former Mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia. Limited space makes it important for you to let us know if you are interested in attending. Contact Jessica at [jessica@region2020.org](mailto:jessica@region2020.org)

### **Legacy "State of the Environment" Conference**

Legacy will be holding their 2008 Environmental Partnership Conference on February 27-29 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. This year's topic is the "State of the Environment." To register visit - <http://www.legacyenvd.org>

### **Watershed Leadership Conference**

The Alabama Rivers Alliance will be holding their annual Watershed Leadership Conference on March 14-16, in Fairhope, Alabama at Camp Beckwith on Week's Bay. For conference details visit <http://www.alabamarivers.org> .

**Dates set for 2008 Your Town Alabama (10 Years Strong in 2008)**

Any Alabama Citizen is eligible to participate in Your Town Alabama. Deadline is usually about 30 days prior to the next workshop but last year's class filled up way before the deadline. Next workshop is June 18-20, 2008 at Camp McDowell. Watch [www.yourtownAlabama.org](http://www.yourtownAlabama.org) for news that we are accepting applicants.

*If you would like to include information in the RPCGB Connections Update contact Cissy Edwards Crowe, Public Information Officer, at [cedwards@rpcgb.org](mailto:cedwards@rpcgb.org) or call (205) 251-8139. If you would like to be removed from this distribution please email [cedwards@rpcgb.org](mailto:cedwards@rpcgb.org)*