

Connections Update

April 2, 2008

**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**

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Working Together

Joint RPC Finance Committee and Program Budget Committee meeting announcement

The Joint RPC Finance Committee and Program Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, First Floor Conference Room, 1731 1st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. The purpose of the meeting is to review RPC financials and budget modifications.

RPC Board of Directors meeting announcement

The next meeting is April 16, 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

Regional Transportation, Planning and Development

Request for Proposal (RFP) for a program assessment and evaluation

The Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a program assessment and evaluation of the CommuteSmart rideshare program. The due date for proposals will be April 25, 2008. For more detailed information about the RFP visit the MPO website at www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm. If there are any questions contact Scott Tillman at 264-8420 or stillman@rpcgb.org.

Transportation Planning Process Public Involvement Meeting

Purpose: This meeting is part of a review that will assess compliance with Federal regulations pertaining to the transportation planning process conducted by the Birmingham MPO, Alabama Department of Transportation, Birmingham/Jefferson County Transit Authority, and units of local government in the Birmingham area.

Hosted By: Representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Alabama Department of Transportation, Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Tuesday, April 29, 2008, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

**Center for Regional Planning and Design, 1731 1st Avenue North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203**

If you are not able to attend the meeting, please address your comments to: Federal Highway Administration, Alabama Division, 500 Eastern Blvd, Suite 200, Montgomery, AL 36117. Anyone requiring special accommodations should advise Cissy Edwards Crowe (205-251-8139) at least one week in advance. For additional information concerning the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) visit www.bhammpo.org

Congestion Management Process

The Birmingham MPO's Congestion Management Task Force met on 17 March 2008 to review and discuss the results of the completed data collection efforts of Jacobs Carter-Burgess for the Birmingham Congestion Management Process Update. Information was presented about the impact of refinements in the analysis methodology on the overall results. A sampling of the final results was presented in order to illustrate how data would be presented in the final documentation as well as to show how information could be used to inform the discussion of strategies in the congestion management process. The draft final CMP documentation will be delivered in April for the Congestion Management Task Force's review and comment. Concurrently, Birmingham MPO staff is preparing a CMP application policy for review and comment from the Congestion Management Task Force. This application policy will describe (a) how the CMP will be used in the preparation of both the long range and short range transportation planning process i.e. the RTP and TIP, and (b) how the CMP is to be applied in project preparation. For more information contact Harry He at hhe@rpcgb.org or Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) update

The next APCA Steering Committee is April 10, 2008, 1:30 p.m., Regional Planning Commission, First Floor Conference Room, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL
For additional information on APCA contact Scott Tillman at stillman@rpcgb.org

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2008 authorizations to date

The Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and individual projects sponsors worked together in FY 2007 to advance Surface Transportation Program – Birmingham Attributable (STPBH) and the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ) projects in the Transportation Improvement Program to the point of federal funds authorization. The group was successful in getting nearly \$30 million authorized under these two programs. So far in FY 2008, ten projects have been authorized for a total of \$2.2 million. The MPO TIP Subcommittee meets bi-monthly to monitor progress on projects programmed in the FY 2008 – 2011 TIP and works towards advancing projects while maintaining a balanced TIP. For additional information contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at mgl@rpcgb.org

Intown Transit Partnership kickoff meeting

The Intown Transit Partnership kicked off its final two tasks on February 18 and February 19th respectively. These two tasks, the development of a Transit District Plan and the development of an Intown Parking Strategy, have been busy collecting data during the month of March as well as preparing initial recommendations based on their findings. The next ITP meetings for both the Transit District Plan and the Parking Strategy will be held on April 21. The Transit District Plan stakeholder group will meet at 10:30 am, and the Parking Strategy stakeholder group will meet at 2:00 pm. For more information, please contact Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org.

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) to receive EPA Award for Education

The Alabama Partners for Clean Air will receive the EPA Clean Air Excellence Award for Education on May 28, 2008 at a special ceremony in Washington, DC. Receiving the award on behalf of APCA is Ms. Pat Mitchell, Executive Director and Founder of Auntie Litter, Inc. Since 1998, Auntie Litter, Inc. has served our community as the lead Education Partner for APCA. Each year, this organization has created and developed new programs and materials to teach students and their families about the importance of clean air and the harmful effects of ground-level ozone and particle pollution. From live presentations in schools by an Auntie Litter educator to musical plays and music videos, this organization has reached tens of thousands children in Jefferson and Shelby County schools with important messages on protecting our air and our health. Currently, Auntie Litter, Inc. is developing and implementing an Idle Free Zone program for area schools to reduce emissions. For additional information contact Scott Tillman at stillman@rpcgb.org

Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (HARPO) county outreach meetings scheduled

The public is invited to review and discuss maps and charts of the potential projects and solutions to issues and needs that were identified at the Winter meetings. The Alabama Department of Transportation will review the projects included in the FY2008-2011 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The following are meeting dates:

- Walker County, April 8, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., CHS Building, Jasper, Alabama
- If you have any questions, please contact Cissy Edwards Crowe, (205) 264-8402, email cedwards@rpcgb.org

Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approves Transportation Improvement Program amendment

The MPO approved the following TIP Amendment request submitted by the Alabama Department of Transportation to the TIP at the March 12, 2008 meeting.

- Corridor X from CR-105 to CR-77, Preliminary Engineering, \$449,638 and Construction \$4,472,000 funded under the Appalachian Development Highway System.

For additional information contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at mgl@rpcgb.org

On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan

The On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan officially kicked off during the March 12 meeting of the Birmingham MPO. On Course will replace the Birmingham 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan as the region's adopted, fiscally constrained guide for allocating federal transportation dollars for the next 25 years. Three (3) committees and the Congestion Management Task Force will assist the Birmingham MPO to develop the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The first committee will focus on modifying the existing Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan to distinguish strategies specifically for the urbanized area from those that are applicable in the rural areas. The second committee will focus on identifying an array of overall transportation system strategies and policies to include:

- Methodologies to identify and quantify transportation system needs
- Evaluation criteria for LRTP projects by project type
- Recommendations for projects that match preferred land development scenarios
- Transportation infrastructure financing

The third committee will focus specifically on developing a preferred land development and / or land use scenario for the urbanized counties. This will also include policy recommendations for the Birmingham MPO and its investment of funding that supports the preferred land development scenario. For additional information, please visit the RTP website at www.bhammpo.org/oncourse.html or contact Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for marketing campaign

The Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) will be posting a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the campaign development and production services of its next marketing campaign. The RFQ will be posted at www.bhammpo.org/publicinvolvement/doingbusiness.htm. Please contact Scott Tillman at 264-8420 or stillman@rpcgb.org if you have any questions.

CommuteSmart hires new vanpool manager

CommuteSmart is pleased to announce that T. Ray Mauldin is the new Vanpool Manager to manage the current 37 vanpools in operation and continue to grow the vanpool program. Mauldin has been in the banking industry for a number of years. He previously held positions with First Commercial Bank and SouthTrust Bank as branch manager and loan officer. He is active in the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce as well as other community organizations. Mauldin holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from The University of Alabama. Please don't hesitate to contact him at 264-8462 for any vanpool questions.

Comment period open for Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) Draft Public Participation Plan

The draft Public Participation Plan was developed in cooperation with the MPO's Transportation Citizens Committee (TCC) Public Involvement Subcommittee. The new Plan expands on the current Plan to meet federal guidelines under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). To view and to submit

comments on the Draft Public Participation Plan visit www.bhammpo.org, “Public Involvement, How To Get Involved” link. The deadline for comment submission is April 7, 2008. For more information contact Cissy Edwards Crowe at cedwards@rpcgb.org

Revision to the national ambient air quality standards for ozone

(prepared by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, March 2008)

Background

- The existing standard, set in 1997, is 84 parts per billion (ppb) over an 8 hour average.
- The format of the standard is a rolling 3-year average.
- Counties not meeting the current standard include: Jefferson and Shelby
- On June 20, 2007, EPA proposed to tighten the national ambient air quality standards for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog.

EPA Revisions to the 8-Hour Ozone Standard – March 12, 2008

- EPA revised the standard to 75 ppb. In practice, an area meets the standard if the rolling three-year average is 75 ppb or lower.
- Counties **not** meeting the new standard include: Baldwin, Clay, Madison, Mobile, Morgan, Jefferson, Shelby, and Tuscaloosa, based on the 3-year average from 2005-2007.
- EPA’s presumptive ozone nonattainment area boundaries can include all counties in a consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) with a violating ozone monitor and all counties in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) with a violating ozone monitor. Based on this worst-case assumption, the following counties could also be designated as nonattainment for the new ozone standard: Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Cullman, Greene, Hale, Lawrence, Limestone, St. Clair, and Walker.

For additional information contact Scott Tillman at stillman@rpcgb.org

CommuteSmart teams up with Birmingham employers

In the past six months, CommuteSmart has partnered with 12 employers throughout Jefferson and Shelby Counties, bringing the total number of Partners to 58. With gas prices near record levels, employers working with CommuteSmart to strengthen their commute options programs have emerged as trendsetters when it comes to money-saving transportation solutions for employees. The resources to get employees carpooling and vanpooling, as well as registered in CommuteSmart’s ridematching database, are all provided to Birmingham employers free of charge. More information about employer partnership is available at www.commutesmart.org or by calling 1-87-RIDEMATCH.

2008 emissions testing schedule

There is still time to have your vehicle checked for emissions. If your vehicle fails the test, there is money available to assist with repairs based on eligibility. To check out the schedule visit www.alabamacleanair.com, on the left side of the page click on the block for voluntary emissions testing schedule. For additional information contact Scott Tillman, stillman@rpcgb.org

Building Communities

Town of Brookside begins master planning process

As the Community Planning Assistance Grants move towards full swing, the Town of Brookside has officially begun its master planning process. The Regional Planning Commission's community planning staff is updating the existing data available, brainstorming ideas for helping the community develop, and have made a casual site visit to photograph the community. Meetings are anticipated to begin next month. For more information, please contact Yvonne Murray (YMurray@rpcgb.org) or Steve Ostaseski (SMO@rpcgb.org).

Water Resource Assessment meetings

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. Each work session will be geared towards informing local decision-makers on the assessment and recommendation report produced by Malcolm-Pirnie for the region. Schedule is as follows:

- Walker County, April 8, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., CHS Building, Jasper, Alabama
- Shelby/Jefferson County, April 24, 2008, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., Hoover Public Safety Center, Hoover, Alabama

For additional information contact Yvonne Murray, ymurray@rpcgb.org

Town of Argo planning update

RPC is working with the Town of Argo to assist them with the creation of a Sketch Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. On Thursday, April 23, 2008 Senior Transportation Planner, Darrell Howard and Planner, Robyn Jackson are meeting with the town's Planning Commission for the second reading of the Draft Zoning Ordinance. The Sketch Plan was approved in February 2008. Upon approval and adoption of the town's first Zoning Ordinance, RPC will begin drafting the town's Subdivision Regulations. For any information contact Robyn Jackson at rjackson@rpcgb.org

City of Homewood grants easement to Freshwater Land Trust

Here is a wonderful public/private partnership in Homewood, Alabama. On February 11th, the Homewood City Council unanimously approved to grant a conservation easement on 65 acres of the city-owned "Homewood Forest Preserve" to the Freshwater Land Trust. This action guarantees that the Preserve will be held in perpetuity as green space for the protection of the environment and the enjoyment of local citizens. Homewood Mayor Barry McCulley signed the conservation easement on March 3rd. Located adjacent to Samford University and Homewood High School, the Preserve will provide opportunities for outdoor nature education. The Preserve is also home to the city's annual Salamander Festival. (*Information courtesy of Bama Environmental News*).

Brookside Greenway Festival

Saturday, April 5, 2008

New this year-Metric Half Century Bicycle Race – the Frenchie Negron Classic

Duathlon run-bike-run – Wild Boar Duathlon. All proceeds go to support the Brookside Greenway! Watch www.brooksidealabama.com web site for the latest information about the festival.

Mature employees available

The SCSEP program has many worthwhile objectives relating to both providing community service and to helping senior citizens find satisfactory employment. After gaining valuable training in host agencies, most participants leave the program for employment with the private sector businesses or non profit agencies.

Benefits to employers

Employers who hire these workers can expect to gain employees who are:

- Experienced
- Dependable
- Committed
- Hard-working
- Loyal

Most program participants are seeking part-time employment, but a percentage wants full-time work. Potential employers can select from a pool of mature workers with diverse work backgrounds. Some examples are listed below.

Skills and experience:

- Clerical
- Secretarial
- File/Record Clerk
- Receptionist
- Appointment / Information Clerk
- Mail Clerk
- Customer Service
- Data Entry
- Food Service
- Housekeeping
- Sitter/Companion
- Adult/Child Care
- Custodial
- Teacher Aide
- Cashier

For any information contact Sheila Baker at sbaker@rpcgb.org

Community/Economic Development

Legacy Project: Homeless Connect

On Saturday, April 5 approximately 500 volunteers, public servants, non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, and citizens will assemble under one roof to help people who are homeless in our community through Project Homeless Connect. This innovative one-day event is about breaking the cycle of homelessness, increasing access to services and ending chronic homelessness in Central Alabama. For one day, Project Homeless Connect will give people experiencing homelessness the opportunity to access an array of services in a system which is often difficult to understand and navigate. Project Homeless

Connect (PHC) links homeless individuals, veterans, and families to housing, medical services, identification services, veterans' services, employment services, pet care and haircuts. Be a part of Birmingham's solution to homelessness. For more information contact Hands on Birmingham at www.handsonbirmingham.org.

Economic Development Tip Business Demand Online Information

A 2005 study shows that online sources of information have dramatically increased their influence on the perceptions of site location professionals. Online sources grew 144 percent and had the largest growth of any information source compared to the same survey conducted in 2002. The largest increase in effectiveness of all marketing techniques was 56 percent growth for Web sites. Assuming this trend continues, the Internet/Web site will become the No. 1 most effective marketing technique this year, even surpassing economic developers visiting corporate real estate executives. Quality information about a community is critical for corporate real estate professionals as they gather data relevant to their business expansion or relocation projects. Site selection experts rely on the speed and accessibility of the Internet for community information because the timeline for making business expansion or relocation evaluations has dramatically shortened in recent years. Says Gene DePrex, leader of Global Location Strategies/Plant Location International for IBM Business Consulting Services: "The Internet and GIS, as well as other electronic means of developing a virtual scan of a region and community, will become ever more important in screening long lists of candidate areas. This driven both by the speed of corporate and investor decision making, but also by the need to find niche opportunities in locations that may not be as well known or documented."

Excerpts taken from the Business Expansion Journal February 2006 retrieved at the IEDC 2008 Economic Development Marketing Training

Existing Business Team (EBT)

The Existing Business Team (EBT), which focuses on business retention and expansion, is a partnership of Economic Development Professionals in the Birmingham region. These organizations work closely with the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and partners with utilities, government offices, and non-profit organizations to retain and expand small businesses. Chaired by Deborah McGill, Executive Director of the Jefferson County Economic and Industrial Development Authority, the Chamber's EBT one of the most sophisticated business retention and expansion programs in the southeastern United States thanks to our partners: AT&T Alabama, Alabama Gas Corporation, Birmingham Water Works Board, The City of Birmingham, Shelby County, Jefferson County, The Metropolitan Development Board, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The EBT has just begun its visit year and plans to visit over 200 companies in 2008. For more information on specific aspects of the Existing Business Team, contact Patricia Mattison at pmattison@birminghamchamber.com.

Grant and Workshop Information

Health Action Summit 2008 – Register by April 4th

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 7:30 a.m., BJCC East Meeting Rooms

Create a Climate for Change - Get together • Get informed • Get vocal

You can now join this exciting movement that is changing how we do business in public health. This day is packed with dynamic speakers and opportunities for grassroots agencies as well as public health experts to network, learn, and create an advocacy agenda for Jefferson County. **Register online** at www.jcdh.org for a guaranteed seat! The **\$25 registration fee** includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and program materials. For more information, contact JCDH at 930-1431 or 930-1401.

Innovative workshops scheduled for Jasper

The City of Jasper and the Black Warrior Clean Water Partnership will be hosting two innovative workshops to improve water quality. For more information or register online visit the Partnership's website at www.warriorcwp.org.

- *Stormwater Best Management Practices Academy* – April 16, 2008
Topics in the Stormwater BMP Workshop will include : Overview of Stormwater wetlands, bio-retention, permeable paving and green roofs; Functions, regulations, engineering standards, and vegetative requirements of stormwater BMPs
- *Stream Restoration Construction* – April 17, 2008
The workshop will center on Town Creek Tributary, an urban stream in the City of Jasper bordering Maddox Middle School and will be conducted during construction of an urban stream restoration project at the School. Participants will learn about plan sheet development, construction specifications, permitting, and construction oversight while observing channel grading and structure installation. The workshop will be split between classroom and extensive field work.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Tentative timetable - FY2008 State of Alabama CDBG Program

The Alabama Department of Economic Development (ADECA) held its 2008 CDBG Program Training and Information Workshop in Mobile, Alabama in January. The tentative CDBG applications deadlines of grant categories are:

- County large and small city funds (New Submissions)— Noon May 15
- Economic development fund (Roll Forward)—Continuous
- Community enhancement fund - noon August 1
- Planning fund—noon August 15

For additional information regarding the 2008 CDBG funding process please contact Karen McCoy at 205-264-8405 or kmccoy@rpcgb.org

2008 National Clean Water Policy Forum

May 4 - 7, 2008, Renaissance Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC

Join your colleagues in Washington, DC, for the 2008 National Clean Water Policy Forum, where on May 4 – 7, the Water Environment Federation and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) will provide an exceptional opportunity to access the latest federal legislative, regulatory, and legal developments in the Nation's

capital. The Forum is well-timed as the 2008 campaign season will be in full-swing this May. The shift to a Democratic-led House and Senate last year has resulted in increased attention to clean water issues — including Clean Water Act jurisdiction, sewer overflow notification, chemical facility security, clean water funding, and climate change. Policy Forum panelists and speakers will discuss and debate these and other issues, providing attendees with a level of detail and insight only available at the Forum. In addition to a program focused on critical issues with current information, the Policy Forum will include opportunities for networking and discussion. The Technical Roundtable Breakfast will feature key policymakers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies as breakout session leaders on specific clean water issues, and the Utility Executives Forum will provide a unique occasion for top utility leaders to explore priority issues. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about current and emerging legislative and regulatory issues being considered by our Nation's leaders today that may impact clean water utilities tomorrow. Plan now to attend! A detailed preliminary agenda and online conference registration will be available soon at www.wef.org and www.nacwa.org

2008 Your Town Alabama workshop is scheduled for June 18 – 20, 2008 at Camp McDowell

This is our 10th year anniversary! The workshop consists of highly informative community development presentations and problem-solving activities for participants. It is also a wonderful opportunity to network with other community leaders and make contacts with presenters who work throughout Alabama in the planning, design, economic development, and resource preservation fields. The focus of the workshop aims specifically to introduce small town and rural technical assistance providers and decision makers to the role of design in community planning. Former participants remark that the workshop is FUN and invigorating and opened their minds to many possibilities. If you or other community leaders are interested in attending this workshop, please complete the application on the Your Town website (www.yourtownalabama.org) and return by May 31, 2008.

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