

# CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from the  
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

April, 2009

## In This Issue

CEDS Holds Educational Session on  
Recovery Act

Article Headline

CommuteSmart's...Two for the  
Road...Promotion Extended

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### [RPC Finance Committee Meeting](#)

April 1, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
9:00am, Conference Room A

### [Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization - Walker County](#)

April 7th, 2009  
205 19th St., East - Jasper, AL  
35501  
10:00am, CHS Activity Center

### [RPC Program Budget Committee Meeting](#)

April 8, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
10:00am, Conference Room A

### [Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting](#)

April 8, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
1:30pm, 1st Floor Conf. Room

### [Alabama Partners for Clean Air Steering Committee Meeting](#)

April 9, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
1:30pm, 1st Floor Conf. Room

### [National Charrette Institute Charrette System Training](#)

April 14-16, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
9:00am - 4:30pm

## Letter from the Executive Director

Spring has finally arrived and with it change is in the air. A new President has been sworn into office and shortly after the inauguration, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was passed, causing quite a stir across the region and here at the Commission.



In March, the Commission held two widely attended meetings that discussed the stimulus bill and its potential impacts. While the benefits of the bill may not be felt for sometime to come, rest assured your Commission is doing all that it can to ensure that the region is prepared to take advantage of any funding that may become available. To that end, we are redeveloping our communications strategy and one of the first pieces to undergo major renovation is the Connections newsletter. As you can see from this issue, our format has drastically changed. I hope that you find it easier to read and that the content is more pertinent to your daily activities.

Over the next few months, we will be unveiling our new website design and several other methods for ensuring our members receive the best and most reliable information regarding transportation, community planning, and economic development. I hope you find these changes as exciting as I do.

*Charles Ball*

1st Floor Conf. Room

[Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization - St. Clair County](#)

April 14th, 2009  
2900 Daniel Drive, Moody, AL 35004  
11:30am, Moody City Hall

[RPC Board of Directors Meeting](#)

April 15, 2009  
BJCTA  
1735 Morris Avenue  
10:30am, Public Meeting Room

[Transportation Citizens Committee Meeting](#)

April 21, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
Noon, 1st Floor Conf. Room

[Transportation Technical Committee Meeting](#)

April 22, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
10:00am, 1st Floor Conf. Room

[Metropolitan Planning Organization Subcommittee Meeting](#)

April 23, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
1:30pm, 1st Floor Conf. Room

### CEDS Holds Educational Session on Recovery Act



The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee held an educational session on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Dr. Samuel N. Addy, Director of the

University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) gave a comprehensive presentation on the state of the Alabama economy in relation to the potential ARRA money that the state would receive.

A discussion panel was held allowing meeting attendees to have a dialogue with former Chief Justice Drayton Nabers representing the Governor's office, Mr. Andrew Benefield representing the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Mr. Bill Foisy representing RPC transportation, Mr. Ray Morris representing RPC community and economic development, and Dr. Addy representing CBER. This session was repeated during the MPO meeting later in the afternoon. Dr. Addy's PowerPoint presentation and a video of the meeting can be found at [the RPC website](#).

### MPO Subcommittee Adopts \$23 Million in Projects

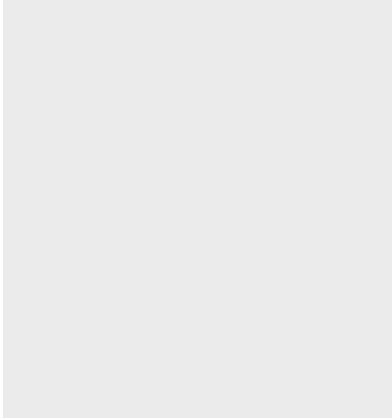
The Metropolitan Planning Organization Subcommittee adopted nearly \$23 million in transportation projects during the March 26th meeting. The projects will receive 100% funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. MPO's consideration for adoption will occur on April 8th. A list of all projects receiving funding can be located by [clicking here](#).

### Employee Profile -- Lindsay Smith, Senior Planner I



*Each month, we will look at the profile of an RPC employee. This month's profile is Lindsay Smith, Senior Planner I*

**Hometown:** Birmingham, AL  
**Education:** 2003 graduate of Vanderbilt University; Bachelors in Urban Studies, Minor in Art History  
**How long have you been with the RPC?:** June 2008  
**Name a few projects to you lead/work on:** Pinson



Master Plan and Zoning Code Update, Harpersville Historic Assessment, Birmingham Regional Park & Ride Locations.

**What is your favor part of your job?:** A planner has a chance to learn a little bit about everything. To be a community or urban planner one must have a comprehension in many fields: transportation, urban design, environmental, land use and zoning, historic preservation, etc.

**Tell us one thing we don't know about you:** I love to go bird and deer hunting with my dad in South Alabama.

**Finish this sentence: "Ten years from now, I hope to be...":** A certified urban planner, a civic activist, and on the board of a local municipal planning commission.

**CommuteSmart's *Two for the Road* Promotion Extended**



Now more than ever, commuters could use a free ride to work, and so CommuteSmart announced that the vanpool promotion will continue until all of its vans are on the road.

Since the *Two for the Road* promotion launched, more than 100 commuters have contacted CommuteSmart, and one new van is already on the road. There are currently 10 vans remaining, and they will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Two for the Road* lets commuters get to work for free, for two weeks. With a minimum of four people (including a driver), CommuteSmart will provide commuters with a free van for their ride to work. Additionally, CommuteSmart is still offering \$40 worth of gas cards to get the van started.

To sign up or get help forming a new vanpool, please contact T. Ray Maudlin at 205-264-8462 or [tmauldin@rpcgb.org](mailto:tmauldin@rpcgb.org).

**Senior Planner Moves On**



The RPC said goodbye to one of its planners during the month of March. Mary Grace Lewandowski, Senior Planner II, has left the RPC after more than five years of outstanding transportation planning service and moved back home to St. Louis. She coordinated corridor level and local level projects for ARC Corridor X/I-22, for the cities of Clay, Hueytown and Graysville along the proposed Northern Beltline, and for all Transportation Improvement Program projects funded by the Metropolitan Planning Organization on behalf of local governments and the Alabama Department of Transportation. RPC staff will certainly miss her calmness, innovativeness, and positive attitude.

## SmartCode Corner

This month's SmartCode Corner explores some of the attributes of the SmartCode. One of the marks of great communities is connectivity. Avoiding isolation is paramount in preventing the community fragmentation we often see in a suburban setting. Enhancing connectivity may be as simple as delineating safe places to cross streets, calming traffic on busy thoroughfares, or instituting better pedestrian pathways. SmartCode can allow a municipality to achieve this in one easily administered code.

SmartCode includes some very specific language about the importance of street connectivity. SmartCode language points to the importance of connectivity, "All Thoroughfares shall terminate at other Thoroughfares, forming a network. Internal Thoroughfares shall connect wherever possible to those on adjacent sites. Cul-de-sacs shall be subject to approval by warrant to accommodate specific site conditions only".

SmartCode helps to promote community and connectivity as opposed to isolation. If your product is privacy and exclusivity, every subdivision subtracts from the attribute you are marketing. When you're selling community, every new house and every new lot adds to the appeal.

*If you have SmartCode questions please contact Lindsay Smith or Richard Amore at RPC. Lindsay may be reached by phone at 205.264.8421 or by email at [lsmith@rpcgb.org](mailto:lsmith@rpcgb.org). Richard may be reached by phone at 205.264.8447 or by email at [ramore@rpcgb.org](mailto:ramore@rpcgb.org).*

## Community Updates

### Highland Park Neighborhood Plan - Public Meeting

The Highland Park Neighborhood Plan held a public meeting on March 10 to receive comments on the draft plan created by Gresham, Smith & Partners, which included a neighborhood assessment, zoning review and form-based zoning code. *For additional information contact Lindsay Smith, RPC Senior Planner, [lsmith@rpcgb.org](mailto:lsmith@rpcgb.org).*

### Town of Harpersville Update

A "Harpersville Heritage Area" has now been listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. Maps of the driving tour of the historic area will be available at the Town Hall. *For additional information contact Lindsay Smith [lsmith@rpcgb.org](mailto:lsmith@rpcgb.org).*

### Town of Locust Fork Master Plan

The Town of Locust Fork Planning Commission adopted The Locust Fork Master Plan on March 3, 2009. The Town Council also adopted the Town of Locust Fork Master Plan on March 10th 2009. *For additional information contact Richard Amore, RPC Senior Planner, [ramore@rpcgb.org](mailto:ramore@rpcgb.org).*

### City of Graysville Public Workshop

The RPC along with consultants Robert and Company conducted a successful public workshop on March 31, 2009, in the City of Graysville. Robert and Company presented a final draft of the Form Based Code for downtown Graysville to the public and City Council of Graysville. *For additional information contact Richard Amore, RPC Senior Planner, [ramore@rpcgb.org](mailto:ramore@rpcgb.org).*

### City of Calera updating Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations

The KPS Group conducted a successful Public Meeting on March 17th to update Calera's comprehensive plan and development regulations. The update to the city's comprehensive plan and development regulations are funded by the RPC through the Building Communities Grant

Program. This was the second meeting of a series of meetings held at City Hall over the next few months. The next meeting is on April 21st at 6:00pm at City Hall. We encourage the citizens of Calera to attend this meeting as public input is vital to the success of the City of Calera's planning efforts. *For additional information contact Jason Fondren with the KPS Group, [jfondren@kpsgroup.com](mailto:jfondren@kpsgroup.com) or Richard Amore, RPC Senior Planner, [ramore@rpcgb.org](mailto:ramore@rpcgb.org).*

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