

Connections Update

June 6, 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

RPC Finance Committee meeting announcement

The RPC Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for July 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.

RPC Program Budget Committee meeting announcement

The RPC Program Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Conference Room A, 1731 1st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. The purpose of the meeting is to review budget modifications.

RPC Board of Directors meeting announcement

The next meeting is June 18, 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

RPC welcomes two planners

RPC is pleased to announce the hiring of Lindsay Smith as a Senior Planner I and Richard Amore as a Senior Planner I. Their start date is June 16, 2008.

Lindsay has been employed since 2003 as a Land Planner with Gresham Smith & Partners (GSP) in Birmingham and in Nashville. Two of her current projects with GSP, the Northern Beltline Intersecting Roadways Plan and the Park & Ride Program have allowed her to develop working relationships with a number of our employees. She also has experience with developing comprehensive plans and neighborhood plans. Lindsay has a BS degree in Urban Studies from Vanderbilt.

Richard has been employed for the past two years as Project Manager / Community Planner for Design Workshop, Inc. in Santa Fe, NM. He has worked as an architect with Goodwin, Mills and Caywood in Montgomery. Richard has Masters Degrees in Community Planning and Landscape Architecture from Auburn. He has a Bachelor degree in Environmental Design from Auburn.

As you can see, they are a tremendous asset to the planning activities of RPC.

Regional Transportation, Planning and Development

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) Steering Committee meeting

The next meeting of the Alabama Partners for Clean Air Steering Committee is Thursday, June 12, 2008, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham,

First Floor Conference Room, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL. For additional information contact Scott Tillman, stillman@rpcgb.org

In-town Transit Partnership

There will be a meeting of the entire In-town Transit Partnership's (ITP) Transit District stakeholders group on Monday, June 30, 2008. The entire stakeholders group consists of the subgroup that has been working on developing both the land use recommendations and parking strategies recommendations. The meeting will begin at 10am and will be held in the 1st floor conference room of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's offices, 1731 1st Avenue North. The ITP project team will present the results of their six month long effort along with draft final recommendations for both land use and parking. Please contact Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org or 205.264.8441 for additional information. Also visit the project website at www.ITP-project.com.

CommuteSmart adds to their participants

Infinity Insurance started its first vanpool Monday June 3rd commuting from Gardendale to the Colonnade area. Thanks to Sean Saffle and Jaime Simmons with CommuteSmart for their efforts in working with Infinity to help start the vanpool. Infinity is making a great effort to "Go Green" by participating in the CommuteSmart Vanpool program. Infinity's plans to start another vanpool from the Alabaster area within the next month. For more information visit www.commutesmart.org

On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan - Transportation Priorities Survey

The On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan has launched its project website accessible at www.bhammpo.org/oncourse.html. The website contains two (2) surveys. The first survey asks visitors to identify their priorities for the development of the transportation system. The second survey asks website visitors to rate the importance of the proposed vision for the development of a regional transportation system and the importance of a set of draft transportation system development goals. Please take a moment to visit the website and take these surveys. In addition to the surveys, the website also offers information on the update to the long range transportation plan, descriptions of the plan elements, project news, and coming events. For additional information contact Darrell Howard, dhoward@rpcgb.org

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) website has a new look and new web address

Check out the new look of the APCA website at www.alabamacleanair.org. An important addition to this new look is the opportunity to sign up for Air Quality Alerts. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sponsors a method called EnviroFlash. All you have to do is visit APCA's website and click on "Sign up for alerts now" and it will connect you to the subscriber page. For more information about APCA contact Scott Tillman at stillman@rpcgb.org

Congestion Management Process Task Force and RTP Transportation Strategies Work Group Joint Meeting

There will be a joint meeting of the Congestion of the Transportation Management Process (CMP) Task Force and the Regional Transportation Plan's Transportation Strategies Work Group on Monday, June 9, 2008 at 1:30pm. The meeting will be held in the 1st floor conference room of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's offices, 1731 1st Avenue North. The final outputs of the CMP as well as both technical and policy recommendations will be provided to attendees. These recommendations will be followed by a presentation of the revised project prioritization and selection process for the RTP and Transportation Improvement Program. Regional Planning Commission staff will lead discussions about these components. Please visit the document libraries of the Congestion Management Process and the Transportation Strategies Work Groups' sharepoint site at <http://rpcsp/oncourse/transtrategies/default.aspx> or <http://rpcsp/oncourse/congestion/default.aspx>, respectively, to download the agenda, the technical reports, presentations, and handouts. For additional information you may contact Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org or 205.264.8441 or Harry He at hhe@rpcgb.org or 205.264.8443.

Commute savings fuels family vacations

School is out and summer is almost in full swing, but many families are finding themselves penny pinching to fill the gas tank *and* take the planned summer vacation. As of June 3, gas prices in Birmingham have risen to \$3.85, up 32 cents in the last month (AAA). One solution: **get paid to commute!** CommuteSmart will pay you \$2 per day, up to \$120, for each day you use a qualified commute, such as carpooling, teleworking, transit, walking or biking. Not only will you save money with the new commute, you'll also make a few dollars. It's not too late to join in on the savings. If you don't have a carpool partner, CommuteSmart has an online ridematch database with more than 5,000 commuters also looking for a match. Signing up is easy. Applications are available at www.commutesmart.org or by calling 1-87-RIDEMATCH.

Alabama Partner's for Clean Air (APCA) partner Auntie Litter, Inc. wins EPA Clean Air Excellence Award

Auntie Litter, Inc. will received the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Air Excellence Award for Education & Outreach for its original program *Life Is A Breath of Fresh Air*. Executive Director and Founder of Auntie Litter, Inc. Pat Mitchell accepted the award from EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson at a special ceremony held at 6 p.m. on May 28, 2008 at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. The annual awards program recognizes and honors both individuals and organizations that have undertaken the risks of innovation, served as pioneers in their fields, and have improved air quality by either directly or indirectly reducing emissions of criteria pollutants or hazardous/toxic air pollutants. Further, award winning programs must be able to demonstrate that it is replicable and sustainable. *Life is a Breath of Fresh Air* is a comprehensive educational program created for children in grades K-5 in Jefferson and Shelby counties. A musical comedy play, public service announcements, and school presentations by an Auntie Litter Educator, are segments of this award

winning program. Auntie Litter, Inc. is the lead education organization for the Alabama Partners for Clean Air. "We are honored that the EPA will recognize our work to educate children in the greater Birmingham area impacted by ground-level ozone and particle pollution," said Pat Mitchell. "This community has a long way to go before these environmental and public health issues are resolved, but we have come a long way and we ARE making progress." Auntie Litter, Inc is a national award winning non-profit organization founded in 1990 by Ms. Mitchell, a former teacher. The organization is dedicated to providing environmental education and has won numerous awards for its innovative educational programs based on the anti-litter character, "Auntie Litter." For media inquiries or to schedule interviews with Pat Mitchell, Auntie Litter, Inc., please contact LaShanna R. Tripp at 205-879-3009 or LTripp@AuntieLitter.org.

Building Communities

Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) allows more cities eligibility

In 2009, Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) will have many newly eligible cities as per the new population range of 2,000 to 18,000 people. Among the newly eligible cities are four RPC communities: **Hueytown, Pelham, Jasper, and Trussville**. ACE serves as a technical assistance provider to help communities ensure long-term economic success. For more information, go to [Http://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org](http://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org) or call toll free (866) 557-0007.

Town Creek Stream Restoration Update - Jasper, Alabama

Partnerships do make a difference. The cooperative efforts of key players have led to a ground-breaking Stream Restoration Construction project in Jasper, Alabama. In January, The City of Jasper received a \$500,000 grant to improve eleven-hundred linear feet of Town Creek that runs from the 18th Street bridge to beyond the 1939 historical footbridge. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management provided the grant that funded the project. The grant was awarded to the city and **Cawaco Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.** Improvements included more pools and swift-flowing areas in the urban stream, an enhanced floodplain and the addition of a stormwater wetland to be used as a learning environment for Maddox Middle School students. Town creek was channelized, or straightened, in the 1940's. In the 1970's, much of the floodplain behind Maddox Middle School was filled in to be used for parking. Channelization interrupts a stream's natural flow by making it straighter, filling it and/or altering its width or length. The EPA reports that channelized streams are more prone to bank erosion and flooding, and have decreased water quality and species diversity. North State Environmental, a North Carolina company that specializes in stream restorations, was contracted for the project. The city of Jasper contributed in-kind labor and equipment. Construction on the project began May 22 and was completed May 29. Greg Jennings, a professor at North Carolina State University who worked on the restoration effort, said several changes were made to Town Creek. "We've added a series of boulder and log structures to the stream to improve the oxygen, the nutrient quality, the ability of the stream to carry sediment and to prevent excess sediment from getting into the stream," Jennings said. A stormwater wetland was also constructed near Maddox Middle School. The wetland will improve the water quality in Town Creek because

stormwater that once ran from the school parking lot into the stream will now be diverted into the wetland before draining into the creek. The diverse plant and animal life that will be drawn to the wetland will provide educational opportunities for local students. "The natural environment that occurs in that stormwater wetland is very complex. It's a life cycle that includes plants, insects, frogs, salamanders, turtles. It gives a very good learning laboratory for children to understand nature," Jennings said. More native plants will be installed in the fall. For more information go to www.warriorewp.org or www.flickr.com/photos/warriorcwp

The Year of Alabama Small Towns & Downtowns

Governor Bob Riley invites you to celebrate your town in 2010 by participating in the statewide promotion of The Year of Alabama Small Towns & Downtowns.

- Invite former residents back for a special Homecoming Weekend
- Unveil a locally written historic marker on the history of the town.
- Lead a walking tour of the historic area.
- Dedicate a completed civic project, such as a new park or restored landmark building or other needed public project.

The Alabama Tourism Department will publish an attractive book that features photographs and a brief history of each participating town. The books will be sold in stores all over Alabama. **Submission Deadline:** Submit your celebration date in 2010 by the deadline of December 1, 2008 to be certified as an official "Year of Small Towns and Downtowns" participant. **The Homecoming Weekend:** If you have a popular annual event, declare that date in 2010 to be your town's Homecoming Weekend and make it even bigger. If your town doesn't have an annual event, you need one and this is the perfect way to start. When your committee does the event once, you'll find out how easy it is to do again in 2011. An annual citywide event builds pride and cooperation within the community. Rent booths to food vendors and athletic booster clubs to help cover the costs of putting on the event. Rent booths to local civil clubs and political candidates, if you choose. After all, it is an election year and candidates will support your event to help draw a crowd. **Here are fun options that will help perpetuate the history of your town**

- Plan a panel discussion at a local elementary school of older residents. Think how much fun it will be hear "local legends" talk about growing up here and how things have changed over the years.
- Interview older residents of the town on tape prior to your special weekend in 2010. It will be duplicated by Alabama Tourism and donated to your local public library and the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

The Office of the Governor, The Alabama League of Municipalities, The Alabama State Chambers of Commerce and Alabama Tourism Department are sponsoring the program.

To see the full brochure visit www.alalm.org

Community/Economic Development

Brownfield Task Force Meeting

June 25th, 2008, 1:30 PM

Alabama Power Company Headquarters Building

600 18th Street North, Birmingham, Al. 35203, Media Room

Reservation Deadline: June 23rd

Wendy Jackson- Executive Director Freshwater Land Trust is the featured speaker. Her topics are The Five Mile Creek Greenway Partnership: 2008 Region 4 Phoenix Award for Excellence In Brownfield Redevelopment. Alabama Power Company will host the June 25th Task Force meeting. Due to security regulations, attendees will be required to check-in at the information desk located in the main lobby of the Power Company Headquarters Building. Nametag and security badge are required to gain access to the meeting. Please respond with a meeting reservation if you plan to attend. A follow-up notice and meeting agenda will be distributed on June 20th. Deadline for Reservations is June 23rd.

For additional information contact Bob Wilkerson, RWWilkerson@bwsc.net

Birmingham International Airport Redevelopment Plan update public forum

A public involvement forum will be held by the Birmingham Airport Authority June 10, 2008 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, 5000 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. N., Birmingham, AL 35212. Two open house format meetings will be held: 11am - 1pm and 5pm – 7pm. The same exhibits and information will be presented at each meeting. If you have questions or need special arrangements, please email L'Tryce Slade, lslade@sladetp.com or call toll free to 866-925-5742.

Grant and Workshop Information

Free Workshops – Learn how your schools can make the switch to the cleaner diesel fuel

Come to one of five FREE workshops in June and learn how your schools can make the switch to the cleaner diesel fuel – soy biodiesel - for your kids sake! Soy biodiesel, a renewable fuel made from Alabama and U.S. soybeans, is the cleaner, cost-effective alternative to traditional petroleum diesel. By using soy biodiesel in Alabama school buses, we could significantly reduce the harmful emissions that our children are exposed to every day. Register today for the FREE two-hour workshop in your area and learn how your schools can take advantage of the many benefits of soy biodiesel. Just go to www.AlabamaCleanFuels.org/Schoolbus to register.

Workshops Will be held		
date	place	Time
Monday, June 23	Calhoun Community College	9:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.
Tuesday, June 24	Hoover High School	9:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.
Tuesday, June 24	Alabama State Department of Education	2:30 p.m – 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, June 25	Enterprise City Schools Service Center	9:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.
Thursday, June 26	Monroeville Water Tower Conference Center	9:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.

Presented by the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition in cooperation with the Alabama Soybean Association and the United Soybean Board.

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Recreation Trails Program – FY2009 Funding Cycle

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was created in 1998 to assist in acquiring, developing, or improving trail and trail-related resources. Eligible applicants include federal and state agencies, local governments and private sector organizations (see eligible organizations and agencies). Applications submitted during this funding cycle will be competing for appropriations from fiscal year 2009 beginning October 1, 2008. All eligible project sponsors are notified of the timing and application procedures, in writing, at the beginning of the cycle. The applications are reviewed, rated, and ranked by ADECA program staff and up to four members of the Alabama Recreational Trails Advisory Board. Applications will be accepted from May 1, 2008, through September 2, 2008. Eligible applicants are Local Governments, State Agencies, Federal Agencies, and Private Organizations (with a public co-sponsor). Applications may be submitted for the following activities:

- Development of urban trail linkages near homes and workplaces. This category includes trail linkages to schools, parks, and existing trails.
- Maintenance of existing recreational trails.
- Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails and back country terrain.
- Development of trail-side and trail-head facilities that meet goals identified by the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee. This includes trail components or associated facilities which serve the purpose and safe use of the recreational trail and may include but are not limited to the following: 1) Drainage, 2) Crossings, 3) Stabilization, 4) Parking, 5) Signage, 6) Controls, 7) Shelters, and 8) Water, Sanitary, and Access Facilities.
- The provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.
- The acquisition of easements for trails, or for corridors identified in a state trail plan.
- The acquisition of fee simple title to property from a willing seller. The construction of new trails on state, county, municipal, or private lands, where a recreational need for such construction is shown. Only as otherwise permissible, and where necessary and required by a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), construction of new trails crossing federal lands, where such construction is approved by the administering agency of the state, and the federal agency or agencies charged with management of all impacted lands, such approval to be contingent upon compliance by the federal agency with all applicable laws. Purchase of trail maintenance equipment (certain restrictions apply). Please contact ADECA's Recreation Programs staff if you are interested in obtaining more information about the Recreational Trails Program or require technical assistance. For additional information contact Rob Grant, Recreation Programs Director Phone: 334-242-5483 Fax: 334-242-3381 E-mail: rob.grant@adeca.alabama.gov Jody Waites, Program Supervisor Phone: 334-353-4384 Fax: 334-353-4311 E-mail: jody.waites@adeca.alabama.gov or visit www.adeca.alabama.gov

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Land and Water Conservation Fund Program – FY 2009 funding cycle

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program was created in 1965 "...to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to all citizens of the United States of America of present and future generations ...such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation..." The LWCF Program provides matching grants to states, and through the states to local governments, for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. FUNDING CYCLE: All eligible project sponsors will be notified of the

timing and application procedures, in writing, at the beginning of the funding cycle. Applications for FY2009 funding will be accepted from May 1, 2008, through September 2, 2008. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** All political subdivisions of the state are eligible to participate in the LWCF program. As such, municipalities, counties, state agencies, and state authorities created by the legislature may apply for LWCF assistance. However, state or local educational institutions are prohibited from participating. **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:** LWCF assistance can be used to acquire land and water interests for park purposes, develop new outdoor recreation facilities, and, in certain instances, renovate existing recreational facilities. Virtually all public outdoor recreation activities are eligible for assistance under the program including playgrounds, ball fields (including lights [concrete poles only]), court sports, picnic areas, camping areas, tracks, trails, swimming facilities, etc. In addition, support facilities such as concession stands, comfort stations, park access roads, parking areas, utilities, and site preparation necessary to make a recreation activity area usable may qualify for assistance. The project sponsor must either own or have a perpetual interest in land that is developed with LWCF assistance. **GRANT LIMIT:** The maximum grant size is determined by the amount of the state's apportionment. A maximum grant amount of \$100,000 is anticipated during this funding cycle. However, ADECA may award a lesser amount for a part or all of the items contained in the project scope. **MATCHING SHARES:** The LWCF program provides 50% matching assistance to project sponsors. The project sponsor may provide the remaining 50% of the project cost in the form of cash or in-kind/donated services. Grant funds are distributed to project sponsors on a cost-reimbursable basis. **PROGRAM CRITERIA:** The following program criteria apply to all applicants seeking LWCF assistance: a. Existing outdoor recreation facilities must be owned and managed by an eligible project sponsor; be well maintained; and the need for LWCF assistance documented in Alabama's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. b. The project sponsor must agree to manage and operate its LWCF assisted site for outdoor recreation purposes in perpetuity. c. The project sponsor must agree to comply with all other laws, rules and regulations associated with the LWCF program. **FUNDING CRITERIA:** The following examples represent the type of criteria that are used to assess the relative merits of project applications submitted for LWCF assistance: a. Relative need for the proposed activity in the project service area. b. Project feasibility. c. Recreation delivery system. d. Operation and maintenance of existing recreation facilities. e. Site location and accessibility. If you are interested in obtaining more information about the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program or require technical assistance in determining project scope or with the application process contact Rob Grant, Recreation Programs Director Phone: 334-242-5483 Fax: 334-242-3381 E-mail: rob.grant@adeca.alabama.gov Jody Waites, Program Supervisor Phone: 334-353-4384 Fax: 334-353-4311 E-mail: jody.waites@adeca.alabama.gov or visit www.adeca.alabama.gov

RPC's Community Planning Assistance Grant Program FY2009 funding cycle

By July 2008 RPC member governments should receive their FY2009 funding packet which will include an application to participate in the FY2009 funding cycle. This 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 the development, adoption, and implementation of various community planning projects. Grant funds will be used to provide local governments 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 will be required to match the dollars requested in its grant applications. In addition to direct mail, information will be posted on our website www.rpcgb.org by July 1, 2008.

FY2009 Transportation Enhancement grant

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is soliciting applications for Transportations Enhancement (TE) projects for FY2009. Applications were mailed to Mayors of Cities and Towns, County Commission Chairmen, Presidents of Universities and Colleges. Enhancements (TE) activities are federally funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. TE projects must be one of 12 eligible activities and must relate to surface transportation: 1. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities; 2. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities; 3. Acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites; 4. Scenic or historic highway programs including tourist and welcome centers; 5. Landscaping and scenic beautification; 6. Historic preservation; 7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities; 8. Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails; 9. Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising; 10. Archaeological planning & research; 11. Environmental mitigation of runoff pollution and provision of wildlife connectivity; 12. Establishment of transportation museums. For more details on these 12 areas of eligibility visit www.enhancements.org/12_activities.asp. The federal government provides funding for TE projects through our nation's surface transportation legislation. The closure date for submittal of applications and support documents is Friday, October 3, 2008, 5:00 p.m.. If you need further information, please contact Tom Maxwell, tmaxwell@rpcgb.org

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