

Connections Update

July 1, 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

A Joint RPC Finance Committee and Program Budget 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 and a draft 2009 budget.

RPC Board of Directors meeting announcement

The next meeting is July 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

CommuteSmart helps Birmingham breathe easy

July brings hot summer weather and an increased risk for bad air days. CommuteSmart is working hard to keep ozone levels down this smog season by eliminating vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) and encouraging clean commutes. CommuteSmart has reduced nearly 2,500,000 VMTs since the beginning of 2008 and continued its efforts by adding 323 commuters who carpool, take transit, telework, walk or bike. Employer Partners have also shown an increased interest in improving air quality and helping employees beat high gas prices. Twenty three commuter events were held at 14 employers Partner worksites in June, with increased interest in CommuteSmart programs. This ozone season, Greater Birmingham residents and workers were informed about CommuteSmart's incentive programs and free ridematching service for carpools and vanpools through 22 print and broadcast media placements that generated more than 9,000,000 impressions. Interested commuters can fill out an application at a CommuteSmart event, visit www.commutesmart.org or call 1-87-RIDEMATCH to get started.

Beltline Intersecting Roadways Plan final report

The Final Report of the Northern Beltline Intersecting Roadways Plan for the cities of Hueytown, Graysville and Clay has been completed. The plan includes a Land Use Vision, a Transportation Network Vision and a Major Street Plan for each city. The Major Street Plan can be adopted as component of each city's comprehensive plan. To view the report visit: www.rpcgb.org. For additional information contact Mary Grace Lewandowski, mgl@rpcgb.org

Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approves Transportation Improvement Plan amendments

At the June 11, 2008 MPO meeting, the FY 2008 – 2011 TIP was amended to include the following projects.

- ALDOT: Addition of auxiliary lanes on I-65 from CR-17 (Valleydale Road) to I-459 and ramp modifications; Preliminary Engineering \$550,000; FY 2008; Interstate Maintenance Program.
- ALDOT: Addition of auxiliary lanes on I-65 from CR-17 (Valleydale Road) to I-459 and ramp modifications; Construction \$4,160,000; FY 2009; Interstate Maintenance Program.
- ClasTan: Flexible Funds Transfer to FTA for Paratransit Consortium; \$312,500; FY 2008; Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program

If you have any questions, contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at mgl@rpcgb.org

Auntie Litter, Inc. initiated a new “Idle Free Zone” program

Auntie Litter, Inc., a member of the **Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA)**, has initiated a new “**Idle Free Zone**” program to help reduce emissions and protect the health of children in all 13 school systems in Jefferson and Shelby Counties. By posting 18” x 24” graphically attractive signs in school carpool lanes that read “Do Your Share for Cleaner Air, Turn the Key Be Idle Free”, parents and bus drivers will be reminded to turn off their ignitions while waiting for school dismissal. With the support of the State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Joseph B. Morton, installation of the signs has begun in Jefferson County Schools, Leeds City Schools, and Bessemer City Schools. Support is being requested from the Boards of Education for Hoover, Mountain Brook, Vestavia Hills, Homewood, Birmingham, Fairfield, Midfield, Tarrant, Trussville, and Shelby County. If you have any questions, contact Pat Mitchell, AuntieLitter@bellsouth.net

Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (HARPO) meetings

The Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization will hold a meeting to discuss the update of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. New federal regulations require a coordinated transit plan be in place prior to the use of certain federal transit funds. Any agency that intends to pursue a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 - Elderly and Disabled Program, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program or Section 5317 - New Freedom Program grant must participate in the plan development / update. Otherwise, their grant will not be eligible for funding under these programs. For additional information contact Darrell Howard, (205) 264-8441, dhoward@rpcgb.org

Chilton County

July 17, 2008, Clanton City Hall, Clanton, Alabama, 9-11am

Blount County

July 22, 2008, Frank Green Building, Oneonta, Alabama, 9-11am

St. Clair County

July 22, 2008, Administration Building, Commission Chambers, Ashville, Alabama, 1-3pm

Walker County

July 24, 2008, Community Health Services Building, Jasper, Alabama, 9-11am

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) Steering Committee meeting

The next meeting of the Alabama Partners for Clean Air Steering Committee is Thursday, July 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

On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan - Transportation Priorities Survey – Corrected web address

The On Course: Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan has launched its project website accessible at <https://sharepoint.rpcgb.org/oncourse>. 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

2008 emissions testing schedule for July

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. See below for the July schedule. For days beyond July visit www.alabamacleanair.org For additional information contact Scott Tillman, stillman@rpcgb.org

Express Oil Homewood	1717 27th Court South, Homewood	Tuesday	7/1/08 *
Express Oil Highway 150	2325 Highway 150, Hoover	Tuesday	7/08/08 *
Express Oil Alabaster	136 1st Street North, Alabaster	Friday	7/11/08 *
Express Oil Chelsea	16971 Highway 280, Chelsea	Tuesday	7/15/08 *
Express Oil Valleydale	2644 Valleydale Road, Birmingham	Friday	7/18/08 *
Express Oil Rocky Ridge	2556 Rocky Ridge Road, Birmingham	Tuesday	7/22/08 *
Texaco Xpress Lube	6975 Cahaba Valley Road, Birmingham	Wednesday	7/23/08 *
Express Oil Hueytown	600 Allison-Bonnet Drive, Dolomite	Friday	7/25/08 *
Express Oil Vestavia	1479 Montgomery Highway, Vestavia	Tuesday	7/29/08 *

Building Communities

Town of Locust Fork

The Locust Fork Planning Commission met June 5th to begin the process of updating their Town's Master Plan. RPCGB will be doing the project for the Town of Locust Fork and Senior Planner Richard Amore will be the project manager for the effort. Richard came to the RPCGB from the Design Workshop, Inc. in Santa Fe, NM and has Master's Degrees in both Landscape Architecture and Community Planning. Richard is very excited to be part of this project. For additional information contact ramore@rpcgb.org

Town of Harpersville

RPCGB staff and members of Jacksonville State University's Archaeological Resource Laboratory met with Mayor Perkins in Harpersville on Tuesday June 23rd to kickoff the Historical Assessment Study for the Town of Harpersville. Lindsay S. Smith, Senior Planner and Dr. Marcus Ridley and Rebecca Turley Ridley toured Harpersville and prepared for developing the Historical Assessment of the town. Lindsay, who recently joined RPCGB, will serve as project manager for the effort. The RPCGB staff along with staff from JSU will be collecting and tabulating an oral history of Harpersville on Saturday August 2 at the Town Hall. For additional information contact Lindsay Smith lsmith@rpcgb.org

Building Communities projects gaining momentum

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham and the Birmingham MPO are pleased to announce approval from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to enter into contracts with third party consultants for Building Communities projects.

Contracts with third-party consultants are executed for the following:

- City of Calera Comprehensive Plan Update and Regulations
- City of Vestavia Hills Cahaba Heights Neighborhood Plan
- City of Vestavia Hills Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Update

Contracts are being negotiated with third party consultants for the following based upon ALDOT's audit approval process:

- City of Fairfield Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Development
- Highland Park Neighborhood Plan and Zoning Code Review
- City of Graysville Form Based Code for Downtown Graysville

Watch your *Connections Update* for the announcement of a next round of Request for Proposals. The Building Communities program is designed to provide funding to local governments in the MPO region (Jefferson and Shelby Counties) in order to assist them in developing and implementing comprehensive plan documents which place strong emphasis on the relationship between transportation and land use as well as advancing regional planning goals and objectives.

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

RPC's Senior Employment Program - Employers Wanted

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Senior Employment Program is seeking Unsubsidized Employment for its senior participants. This is how we ensure that the maximum number of eligible individuals participate in the Senior Employment Program; each participant is obligated to use all reasonable means to seek job opportunities in the public or private sector. During enrollment orientation each participant is encouraged to search and apply for unsubsidized jobs. When any participant is qualified and meets the standards for a job opening in their assigned host agency, they are encouraged to apply when there is a vacancy. Participants are required to register with the employment services in active pursuit of an unsubsidized job. All participants are required to carryout active job search on a weekly basis. Most program participants are seeking part-time employment, but a percentage wants full-time work. Employers who hire these workers can expect to gain employees who are: **Experienced, Dependable, Committed, Hardworking, Loyal.**

With these 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**

Community/Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update

RPC kicked off its 2008 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning process with its first meeting on Tuesday, June 24, 2008. At the meeting, committee members gave feedback to assist in the generation of a vision and goals for the CEDS document. A call for projects will be sent to RPC member governments the first week of July. This call will ask for project proposals that serve an economic development goal. The next CEDS committee meeting will be held July 22, 2008. For more information, please contact Yvonne Murray at (205)251-8139 or YMurray@RPCGB.org.

RPC's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) receives grant

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham was awarded a \$200,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant to recapitalize the RPC's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The RLF provides supplemental financing for expanding and new businesses located in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties whose projects will result in the creation of new permanent jobs. For additional information contact Ray Morris, rmorris@rpcgb.org.

Grant and Workshop Information

2008 Retail Day - Save the Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2008

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham in partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Marketing & Industrial Distribution and the Alabama Retail Association invite you to MARK YOUR CALENDAR for **Tuesday, Sept. 23!** That is the date for the **2008 Retail Day**. The program will include a morning panel discussion from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, focusing on **"Retail as Economic Development."** The keynote speaker for the awards lunch will be **Martin MacDonald** with **Bass Pro Shops**. The morning seminar, luncheon and awards program will be at The Club, 1 Robert Smith Drive, Birmingham. The panel discussion on "Retail as Economic Development" will dig into the issues that concern many emerging communities. The panel will discuss relevant topics in today's retail market including,

- What are retailers with a centralized plan going to do to withstand the economic conditions and gas prices?
- Can we expect to see smaller stores pop up closer to where people live?
- Will we see more neighborhood markets and fewer super centers?
- What can we do to entice retailers to blaze new trails into our more rural trade areas while we are in an economic downturn – without giving away the bank?
- The future of Brick and Mortar vs. Internet Retailing
- Importance of retail development in a community's economic well being
- Strategies for retail economic development in Alabama

The cost for the day's activities will be \$75 for the Retail Awards Luncheon and the panel discussion. For more information, contact: Cassandra Walker walkerc@uab.edu 205.934.8840

New seminar opportunity

With the rise in popularity of Homeowner's Associations it is important for Planning Commissioners and city Administrators to be familiar with how they operate. This Lorman course offering in September could be very helpful. the Lorman website for additional information is www.lorman.com, the course is titled "Legal Aspects of Condominium and Homeowners' Associations" and it will be offered Thursday September 11, 2008. All registration is accomplished through the Lorman organization.

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 Transportation 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