

Connections Update

August 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 August 13, 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 August 20, 2008, 10:30 a.m., First Floor Conference Room, Center for Regional Planning and Design, 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, 35203. The primary purpose of this meeting is to consider reports and recommendations from Committees. For meeting information, including postings of any meeting notices and cancellations please visit the RPCGB website at www.rpcgb.org

Regional Transportation, Planning and Development

I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters Project

The I-65/US31 Mobility Matters Project will identify improvements that will promote mobility, accessibility, economic growth and improve capacity along the I-65 and US31 corridors from Valleydale Road in Shelby County north to I-20/I-59. Improvements to be analyzed in the corridor include High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Open Houses are scheduled for September 2008. For more information on the project, and for times and locations of the open houses, visit <http://www.i65-us31mobilitymatters.com/>.. For additional information contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at mgl@rpcgb.org

ITP Completes Transit District Planning Process

The In-town Transit Partnership project's consulting team has completed the project's Transit District Plan task. The Transit District Plan included a combined land use element and urban design element, and a parking strategy for a 2 block area surrounding the ITP corridor. The Transit District Plan includes recommendations for action by the various governing bodies, administrative agencies, and other stakeholders who either own or have control over property and parking facilities within the proposed transit district area. The draft final plan document will be accessible on Friday August 2 at either <https://sharepoint.rpcgb.org/ITP-project> or from the publications page of the project website www.ITP-project.com. For additional information contact Darrell Howard at dhoward@rpcgb.org

On Course Birmingham Progresses

The On Course Birmingham 2035: Regional Transportation Plan is progressing well. Approximately 80 online surveys of regional transportation needs have been completed and staff is currently testing a revised project prioritization criteria. For additional information contact Darrell Howard, dhoward@rpcgb.org

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA) Steering Committee Year End Report

At the July APCA Steering Committee meeting the committee reviewed the 2007-2008 Annual Report. The report is available at www.alabamacleanair.org. The next meeting of the Alabama Partners for Clean Air Steering Committee is Thursday, August 14, 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

New Park & Ride Lot added but more are needed

The RPCGB has recently completed an agreement with First Baptist Church Trussville for the use of 45 spaces in the lot that faces Church Street. The Church is located off I-59 north at 128 N. Chalkville Road in Trussville.

Park & Ride locations are still needed in the following transportation corridors: US 280, I-65 North and I-20 East. For additional information or to suggest a location, please contact Lindsay Smith at lsmith@rpcgb.org or 264-8421.

Check out the current Park and Ride lots:

- First Baptist Church of Pelham (at U.S. 31 south), 2867 Pelham Parkway, Pelham
- Hueytown Baptist Church (at I-20/59 south), 3000 Dwaine Ave., Hueytown
- Forestdale Church of God (at U.S. 78 west), 1433 Tomahawk Road, Birmingham
- United Methodist Church of Center Point (at Alabama 75 north), 2129 Center Point Parkway, Birmingham.
- Northpark Baptist Church (at I-59 north), 5700 Deerfoot Parkway, Trussville
- Greater Emanuel Temple (at I-59 north), 7901 Second Avenue South in East Lake
- Interstate 65, at exit 284 northbound and exit 219 southbound

For carpool or vanpool information, log on to www.commutesmart.org or contact Sean Saffle, ssaffle@rpcgb.org , 264-8429.

Birmingham Employers Sign Up With CommuteSmart

In just the past three months, CommuteSmart has partnered with 14 more employers throughout Jefferson and Shelby Counties, bringing the total number of Partners to 75 and offering more than 65,000 collective employees a better way to get to work. New partners report that CommuteSmart has been the solution to high gas prices, and environmentally conscious employer Partners are pleased with the reduced emissions that carpooling and vanpooling bring. All of CommuteSmart's employer services, including its ridematch database, are provided to Birmingham employers free of charge. For more

information on the employer program, please visit www.commutesmart.org or call 1-87-RIDEMATCH.

New employer Partners are: American Family Care; Balch & Bingham, LLP; Consumer Financial Education Foundation of America (CFEFA); CVS/Caremark; Mason Corporation; Molton, Allen & Williams, LLC; Moore-Handley, Inc.; Regions Financial Corporation; Sain Associates, Inc.; Sheraton Birmingham Hotel; The University of Alabama; U.S. Pipe & Foundry; University of Alabama Health Services, Foundation, PC. and Vulcan Materials Co. For additional information contact Sean Saffle at ssaffle@rpcgb.org

2008 emissions testing schedule for August

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 August schedule. All emissions testing locations are subject to change due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. For information beyond August visit www.alabamacleanair.org. At this time, 2049 vehicles have been tested and 75 vehicles repaired. For additional information contact Scott Tillman, stillman@rpcgb.org

Express Oil Downtown	2008 2nd Avenue South, Birmingham	Friday	8/1/08 *
Express Oil Eastwood	5101 Oporto-Madrid Blvd., Birmingham	Tuesday	8/5/08 *
Express Oil Mountain Brook	407 Hollywood Blvd., Mountain Brook	Friday	8/8/08 *
Express Oil Huffman	1123 Huffman Road, Birmingham	Tuesday	8/12/08 *
Express Oil Trussville 1	5975 Chalkville Mountain Road, Trussville	Friday	8/15/08 *
Express Oil Pelham	2874 Highway 31, Pelham	Tuesday	8/19/08 *
Texaco Xpress Lube	1282 Oak Grove Road, Homewood	Wednesday	8/20/08 *
Express Oil Inverness	502 Cahaba Park Circle, Birmingham	Friday	8/22/08 *
Express Oil 3rd Avenue West	737 3rd Avenue West, Birmingham	Tuesday	8/26/08 *
Express Oil Trussville 2	425 Main Street, Trussville	Friday	8/29/08 *

Building Communities

Cahaba Heights meeting scheduled

Cahaba Heights Neighborhood Plan Public meeting set for Thursday, August 7 at the Cahaba Heights Elementary School Cafeteria from 6:30 pm to 8 pm. For additional information contact Lindsay Smith at lsmith@rpcgb.org

Town of Harpersville history lesson

RPCGB staff and members of Jacksonville State University's Archaeological Resource Laboratory met with the Harpersville Historic Commission the night of July 17. The RPCGB staff along with JSU will be collecting and tabulating an oral history of Harpersville on Saturday August 2 at the Town Hall. For additional information contact Steve Ostaseski at sostaseski@rpcgb.org.

City of Hueytown designating a tax increment district

The City of Hueytown, through funding assistance from the RPC's Community Planning Assistance Grants, is in the process of designating a tax increment district. A public hearing will be held in late August or early September, so interested parties should be on the lookout for the advertisement of that date. For more information, contact Yvonne Murray (205)251-8139 or YMurray@rpcgb.org.

Alabama Water Watch training hosted in Jasper

On July 24, Jasper residents met at Maddox Middle School for an Alabama Water Watch certification workshop. Margaret Vandiver discovered there is always something new to learn about protecting the environment at the Alabama Water Watch certification workshop Thursday. Vandiver has been a soil conservation technician for 28 years. She has worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is currently employed with the Walker County Soil and Water Conservation District. On Thursday, Vandiver, and fourteen other participants learned how to monitor water quality by measuring pH, temperature, total alkalinity, total hardness, dissolved oxygen and turbidity. "I've been working with ph tests for years, especially when I was with NRCS. This one was a little more sophisticated than what I've been used to, and I enjoyed that. It was more updated," Vandiver said. Katherine Patton, district administrative coordinator for the Walker County Soil and Water Conservation District, said she will use what she learned in the workshop in outdoor classroom activities sponsored by her office. "My goal is to be very active with the school system," Patton said. The six-hour workshop was held at Maddox Middle School and conducted by Patti Hurley of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Participants spent some time in the classroom, but they also took a field trip to nearby Town Creek to evaluate water quality and study some of the animals in the creek. Town Creek underwent an extensive revitalization this summer. Paul Kennedy, executive director of the Walker Area Community Foundation, said the Town Creek project provided an ideal setting for environmental workshops and outdoor classrooms. It also attracted outsiders who came in to work on the project and left praising the support they received from community members. "It's bringing people in," Kennedy said. "People have a preconception of what Walker County is. We can't dispel that unless we get them in the county. Once they get in here once, like those contractors, they want to come back." If you would like more information about the Warrior Clean Water Partnership or Alabama Water Watch, check out the websites at www.warriorcwp.com or <https://aww.auburn.edu/>

Cawaco works for communities

Cawaco Resource Conservation & Development, Inc., is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) that plans and implements activities that increase conservation of natural resources, supports local development and enhances the environmental standard of living within the council

area. Cawaco covers the following counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker. Cawaco works to support educational and community development projects that will make a significant difference to communities. Types of projects previously supported include:

- Educational Programs for Children and Adults
- Community Planning
- Projects to Implement a Completed Community Plan
- Support of First Responders
- Support of Economic and Community Development
- Preservation of Historical and Cultural Sites
- Environmental Restoration and Enhancement
- Development of Local Tourism and Recreation

For more information about Cawaco or to let us know what you'd like to see happen in your community go to www.cawaco.org or email patti@rpcgb.org

Community/Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy update:

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee will meet Tuesday, August 19, at 8am in the first floor conference room at RPC. The draft of the CEDS document will be made available for comment following this meeting. Communities are invited to fill out requests for projects that promote economic development on the RPC web site; forms can also be requested in print format. For more information, contact Yvonne Murray (205)251-8139 or YMurray@rpcgb.org.

Governor's Region 4 Workforce Development Council update

The Governor's Region 4 Workforce Development Council is meeting on a monthly basis to identify and voice the needs of our region in terms of workforce development projects and initiatives. The Council has been charged with an advisory capacity to support the State Office of Workforce Development. The Region 4 vision is:

"In the year 2018, Region 4 will have emerged as the State of Alabama's hub for skilled workers and competitive salaries through its diversification of labor clusters, its investment in all stages of education, and its widespread cooperation among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors."

The Region 4 Council goals are as follows:

- (1) Identify and facilitate programs to address current workforce gaps for existing industry.
- (2) Identify and facilitate programs to provide skill improvement opportunities and employment-related support services for unemployed and under-employed workers.
- (3) Identify and facilitate programs to address projected workforce needs, beginning at the K-12 level.
- (4) Regularly engage private-sector employers in developing and implementing solutions to workforce development-related challenges.

For more information on the Region 4 Workforce Development Council, contact Yvonne Murray (205)251-8139 or YMurray@rpcgb.org.

Grant and Workshop Information

RPC Workshop Survey – we need to hear from you

RPC is setting their workshop schedule for 2009 and would like to know your areas of interest and workshop topics. Please visit www.rpcgb.org and take our survey. It is easy and simple to do! Thank you for your participation.

RPC's Community Planning Assistance Grant Program FY2009 funding cycle – Visit www.rpcgb.org for application - Deadline to apply September 5th

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. Grant documentation is posted on website www.rpcgb.org.

Retail Day 2008: Retail as Economic Development INFORMATION – IMAGINATION – INSPIRATION

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 the **2008 Retail Day** on **Tuesday, Sept. 23!**

Place: The Club, 1 Robert S. Smith Drive, Birmingham, Alabama

Program: Retail as Economic Development Panel Discussion

- Jeffrey Bayer, CEO, Bayer Properties
- David Carrington CEO, racingusa.com and Council President, City Of Vestavia Hills
- Hugo Isom, Partner, The Shopping Center Group
- Cam Ward, Alabama State Legislator, Alabaster

Keynote Luncheon Speaker: Martin Macdonald, Bass Pro Shops

Register now – visit www.rpcgb.org , “What’s Hot” for brochure which includes registration form!

2008 Building Communities Conference - Gateway to Greenspace: Connecting Citizens, Governments and Businesses

Thursday October 2, 2008, 8am – 3pm

McWane Science Center – Downtown Birmingham

Topics:

- *Greenprinting for Growth*
Rick Wood, Trust for Public Land
- *Metro Birmingham Land Conservation In Action*

- Brian Rushing, Director of Land Conservation, Freshwater Land Trust
- *Metro Atlanta Greenways – Past, Present, and Future*
Ed McBrayer, Executive Director, PATH Foundation
 - *Preserving the Visual Qualities of Byways & Parkways*
Kevin Fry, President, Scenic America
 - *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*
Edward T. McMahon, Senior Resident Fellow, Urban Land Institute
- Registration will be coming your way soon. For more information contact Tom Maxwell, tmaxwell@rpcgb.org

Legal Aspects of Condominium and Homeowners' Associations seminar

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

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

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