

# CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from the  
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

June, 2009

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

June 3, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
9:00am, 1st Floor Conf. Room

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

June 10, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
CANCELLED

### [RPC Board of Directors Meeting](#)

June 17, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
CANCELLED

### [Transportation Citizens Committee Meeting](#)

June 17, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
Noon, 1st Floor Conf. Room

### [Transportation Technical Committee Meeting](#)

June 24, 2009  
RPC of Greater Birmingham  
10:00am, 1st Floor Conf. Room

## Letter from the Executive Director

Another exciting month has passed, and summer is here. However, at the RPC, there is no time to look back because summer is one of our busiest times of year.

Because summer has traditionally been a time for higher ozone levels, the RPC will continue to support events like our annual Bike-to-Work Day. This year, over 40 cyclists pedaled a six-mile route from Five Points South to our offices in

Downtown Birmingham. This event seeks to raise awareness of our need for cleaner air and alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking and transit.

Additionally, this month has seen the continued promotion of EnviroFlash which provides daily air quality forecasts and Air Quality Alert notifications. EnviroFlash should prompt more residents to take steps to reduce pollution-causing activities and, more importantly, protect their health. Both Bike-to-Work Day and Enviroflash are supported by CommuteSmart and the Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA), both of which are funded by the RPC.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the RPC has just been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham to support a pilot project studying abandoned school reuse and neighborhood revitalization concerning Birmingham City School sites. Property reuse is vital to the overall growth and development of our communities and this grant is a great step in that direction.

More good things are on the way at the RPC. Next month, we will announce our new micro-loan program, the addition of a new transportation planner, and updates on several other region-wide projects or events. Until then, have a great start to your summer!



*Charles Ball*

Metropolitan Planning  
Organization Subcommittee  
Meeting

June 25, 2009

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

### RPC Awarded Grant for Reuse Pilot Project

The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham awarded the RPC with a \$10,000 grant in May to help support a pilot project that would study the abandoned school reuse and neighborhood revitalization relevant to Birmingham City Schools. The grant was awarded in response to a proposal submitted during the spring 2009 competitive grant cycle. The funds are to be used for the reuse study portion of the project.

The project will create an adaptive reuse plan for one abandoned city school. The desire is that a successful conversion will result in plans for all remaining school properties. Reuse projects across the country have included community centers, small business incubators, senior housing, art centers and more.

### Consultant Gives Update on I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters



The Metropolitan Planning Organization heard from a consultant during its April meeting providing an update on the I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters project. Scott Rumble presented the update and discussed his role in analyzing the I-65 and US 31 corridors from Valleydale Road to the City Center / UAB area to identify potential alternatives, including High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.

Last year, a series of informational meetings to introduce the I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters project to the public were held. A survey was conducted to gather public opinion on key issues and potential solutions. The update mentioned that the response was overwhelming and found that additional citizen input is necessary. If you would like to take the survey, please [click here](#).

### Air Quality Awareness Through EnviroFlash



Alabama Partners for Clean Air, the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management want to remind you of the importance of knowing the daily air quality level. The easiest way to learn is through **EnviroFlash**, a FREE service that provides:

- Daily air quality forecasts via automated e-mail.
- 'Air Quality Alert! Day' notifications so residents can take action to reduce pollution and protect health.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) forecast provides information so people can adjust their daily activities to match expected air quality conditions. Those enrolled get only the information they select. Air quality messages are sent at a level you select and when an 'Air Quality Alert! Day' is declared.

Ideal for:

- Parents
- The elderly

- Teachers
- Outdoor workers
- Sports coaches
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- People with heart problems
- People with asthma or other lung problems

All you need to participate is an e-mail address! Sign up at: [EnviroFlash](#)

### Area Projects Receive New Freedom Funding

The RPC awarded three area groups with New Freedom funding earlier this year. The recipients were Cooper Green-Mercy Hospital for \$20,000, Travelers Aid Society for \$50,000 and Glenwood, Inc for \$239,958.

Under an agreement between the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama Association of Regional Councils, the RPC was assigned the responsibilities associated with the development of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHST) for the Birmingham area. Governor Bob Riley has appointed the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) as the designated recipient for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds apportioned to the Birmingham Urbanized Area. Through a separate Memorandum of Agreement between the BJCTA and the RPC, the RPC is charged with administering the project selection process for both JARC and New Freedom funding programs.

Staff reviewed six project requests and recommendations were presented to the MPO Human Service Transportation Committee. The committee voted to recommend these three projects.

Glenwood, Inc. will use the funds to purchase 2 mini-buses with wheelchair stations and lift, hire two drivers, and for operations and maintenance costs.

Travelers Aid Society will use the funds to provide health care access for low income elderly and disabled, screen for need, secure documentation of age and/or disability status, match riders to the most appropriate and cost efficient vendor available and coordinate travel between the rider, the vendor and the medical facility. Coordination for medical transportation will be improved-one source for screening, qualifying, scheduling, and financial aid. Passenger fare subsidies means more elderly and disabled persons will have regular access to transportation for health needs and trips will be provided that might otherwise go unserved.

All six proposals are posted online and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

### Citizens Updated on One-Way Street Conversion Study

The City of Birmingham cooperating with Operation New Birmingham (ONB), the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPC) and the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) hosted a One-Way Streets Conversion Public Meeting on May 19 at the Linn-Henley Research Library. The meeting was attended by over 40 citizens who were interested learning more about the feasibility of converting several downtown streets from one-way to two-way. The feasibility study was conducted by Gonzales-Strength & Associates and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Engineering, and funded by the RPC.

The study looked at converting 2nd Ave., 3rd Ave. and 4th Ave. North, along with 13th through 18th Streets North. and expected changes in geometric design, traffic demand and signalization plans resulting from the introduction of the two-way operations. Recommendations of local residents,

business owners, and property managers were also taken into consideration in the study.

Considering potential confusions and the design complexities, certain two-way conversions have been terminated at the intersection prior to the on/off ramp to/from highways. Third Ave. North would remain as one-way beyond 24th Street North where a ramp carries vehicles onto the Red Mountain Expressway (US 31). Similarly, 17th and 18th Street North conversions are carried out only to 8th Ave. North in order to avoid the redesign of ramps from and to I-20/59.

Parallel parking was converted to diagonal parking in some instances as well as some extra on-street parallel and diagonal parking was introduced at few locations. The study found that the proposed two-way conversions appear to be feasible, with no adverse impacts on traffic operations. However, modifications to the existing signal timings are essential in order to bring about these conversions and to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow through the streets in the downtown grid. The next step is to place a cost of the conversion and present it to the city.

### **U.S. 280 Transit Corridor Study Request for Proposal**

The RPC has opened a Request for Proposals for a U.S. 280 Transit Corridor Study. The commissions recognizes the significance of this corridor to the region's travel and continued growth and development. Key segments of the corridor have been identified as some of the most congested within the Birmingham metro area. The study is intended to provide the RPC and respective jurisdictions along the corridor with agreed upon public transportation alternatives by which to improve travel. This would include alternatives that augment, support, and complement previous recommendations to improve non-motorized travel, expand roadway capacity, and manage access to US 280.

The study should consider and build upon the preliminary recommendations identified in the Birmingham Regional Alternatives Analysis of 2004, the plan that developed the basis of the regional transit system plan. In addition to public transportation alternatives, the study will also provide the previously identified planning partners with land development/redevelopment scenarios along the US 280 corridor as it changes character.

The next project to follow is the U.S. 11/Bessemer Hwy Alternatives Analysis including transit alternates such as commuter rail.

Submittals will be received by the RPC until 12:00 p.m. CDT, Monday, July 6, 2009. *For more information on the RFP or the scope of the study, click [here](#).*

### **CommuteSmart and APCA Updates**



#### **CommuteSmart and APCA on Facebook**

CommuteSmart celebrated its 200th Facebook fan in May, and the number continues to increase. Fans are always the first to know about CommuteSmart's latest promotions, important information and related news. Facebook fans also have access to exclusive contests, photos and videos.

Alabama Partners for Clean Air joined Facebook in May and attracted over 150 Facebook fans in its first month. The page gives periodic updates on air quality and information on methods for improving the air we breathe.

So next time you're online, join the growing number of CommuteSmart and APCA fans and stay connected through Facebook.

#### **Bike to Work Day a Success**

On Friday, May 15, more than 40 cyclists rode a six-mile course through downtown Birmingham to raise awareness for biking to work. The Bike to Work event successfully brought attention to the cycling community and commuters who choose this free and air-friendly commute mode. If you're interested in biking to work, CommuteSmart can get you started. Visit [here](#) and click on Commuter Services to learn more.

### Employee Profile -- Denise Turner, Fiscal Officer I



*Each month, we will look at the profile of an RPC employee. This month's profile is Denise Turner, Fiscal Officer I.*

**Hometown:** Birmingham, AL

**Education:** I have a Bachelor's in Business Administration with a major in Accounting from The University of Alabama.

**How long have you been with the RPC?:** I have been working as contract labor with RPC since November 2008 and was hired permanently on May 21, 2009.

**Give a short overview of your job:** My position is Fiscal Officer I and I am responsible for processing Accounts Payable and Payroll and some HR duties. I also prepare the monthly draw downs for the Senior Aides Program.

**What is your favor part of your job?:** The favorite part of my job is being a part of the RPC team. I have had worked quite a few places and RPC is the best by far.

**Tell us one thing we don't know about you:** Most people do not know that I am pursuing an Associate Degree in Computer Science at Jefferson State Community College.

**Finish this sentence: "Ten years from now, I hope to be...":** I hope to be where I am now. I am very happy in my life and my job.

### Deputy Executive Director Receives ICMA Designation



Ray Morris, RPC Deputy Executive Director, recently received the Credentialed Manager designation from ICMA, the premier local government leadership and management organization. Morris is one of more than 1,000 local government management professionals currently credentialed through the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program.

To receive the prestigious ICMA credential, a member must have significant experience as a senior management executive in local government, have earned a degree, preferably in public administration or a related field, and demonstrated a commitment to high standards of integrity and to lifelong learning and professional development.

Morris is qualified by 12 years of professional local government executive experience, with 6 years of service at the RPC.

ICMA is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional management of local government worldwide. ICMA provides member support: publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 9,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals throughout the world.

### Need a Grant?

### **If you plan on applying for grants, register for Grants.gov today!**

Grants.gov provides information on over 1,000 grants and more than \$500 billion in funding. This web site provides applicants and providers with a medium for transferring information through detailed grant postings and provision of electronic application submission. Additionally, registration for Grants.gov requires registration with Central Contractor Registration (CCR), providing an avenue for transfer of funds post-award. *For additional information, please visit Grants.gov. For any further questions, please contact Yvonne Murray at 205-264-8428 or [ymurray@rpcgb.org](mailto:ymurray@rpcgb.org)*

### **EECBG Grant Pre-Applications**

ADECA is now taking pre-applications for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) for non-entitlement communities. Information can be found at: <http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/>. The deadline for preapplications is 5:00pm on June 12, 2009. Preapplications are not funding applications; they are used by ADECA to gauge what the programmatic categories will be for the Request for Applications (RFA). ADECA's informational release and preapplication for can be found at [RPCED](#). *Any further questions or requests for assistance can be directed to Yvonne Murray at [YMurray@rpcgb.org](mailto:YMurray@rpcgb.org).*

### **An Announcement Regarding CDBG**

The deadline for regular Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds has been pushed back to noon on June 26, 2009. *For more information, visit*

### **Emergency Shelter Grants**

Applications for Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) are now available! *For more information, visit [www.adeca.alabama.gov/C1/ESG%20Manual/default.aspx](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/C1/ESG%20Manual/default.aspx).*

### **Tony Hawk Foundation**

This summer, the Tony Hawk Foundation will be accepting applications for funding assistance of up to \$25,000 for the construction of public skateparks. The deadline for applications is October 1, 2009. *For additional information, please visit*

*For more information on any of the above grants, please contact Yvonne Murray at (205)264-8428 or [ymurray@rpcgb.org](mailto:ymurray@rpcgb.org).*

### **Complete Streets Webinar**

[ContextSensitiveSolutions.org](http://ContextSensitiveSolutions.org) and the Federal Highway Administration are hosting a free webinar on Thursday, June 11, 2:00 - 3:30pm EST. The webinar will discuss the role of Complete Streets in creating safe and efficient transportation options for all users. The webinar will also provide an overview of the Federal Highway Administration's perspective on Complete Streets, including what federal programs and policies are available to support communities in their Complete Streets efforts. *For more information, please contact Aurash Khawarзад at [aurash@pps.org](mailto:aurash@pps.org).*

### **CAWACO Update**



### **Help Save a Historic House**

The Five Mile Creek Local History Committee and CAWACO RC&D Council have relocated a classic miner's house formerly located in Cardiff. The house was to be demolished April 24. Thanks to a loan from the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, the house was moved from Cardiff to the Brookside Municipal complex to be used as a museum and meeting place. We need your donations to pay back the loan for moving and for renovating the house.

Send donations to Brookside Town Hall or CAWACO RC&D Council. Mark your checks "Cardiff House Restoration."

Debbie Keedy, Town Clerk  
2711 Municipal Drive  
Brookside, Alabama 35036

Or

Francesca Gross  
CAWACO RC&D Council  
1731 1st Avenue North, Suite 200  
Birmingham, AL 35203

### **Summer Interns on the Five Mile Creek Greenway**

This summer CAWACO RC&D Council will sponsor three interns to work on Five Mile Creek - Patrick Welch and Lacey Genard from Birmingham-Southern College and Kellie Burns from Samford University. They will be working all over the Five Mile Creek watershed on various projects including: Black Creek water quality, Newfound Creek water quality, Bicycle Rodeo in Tarrant, Lake Profiles in Center Point Reed-Harvey Park and Writing of the "Industrial Guide to Coke Ovens."

### **Graysville Canoe Launch open for Business**

Thanks to the Magic City Chapter of the Alabama Power Service Organization, Graysville has the beginnings of a canoe park. On April 25th, the APSO, City of Graysville, CAWACO RC&D Council and members of the Five Mile Creek Partnership improved the non-motorized canoe launch on Five Mile Creek at the bridge over Old Highway 78. The park and canoe launch is managed Doug Morgan of City of Graysville Parks and Recreation. Local Boy Scouts are busy building a low-impact primitive camp ground on the site. The site is about 9 miles downstream from the Five Mile Creek Canoe Company in Brookside, Alabama. With good water and not too much day-dreaming, the trip takes about 4 hours. *Contact the City of Brookside for reservations of canoes and kayaks - 674-9275. Contact Doug Morgan for access to the park - 438-2902.*

### **SmartCode Corner**

Why are communities turning to SmartCode or Form Based Codes? Community leaders are recognizing that the current method of doing business is not delivering the growth and development they wanted to see in their community. Form based codes are enabling compact, walkable and sustainable communities to be built in Alabama. Here are some examples from around the State.

[Gorham's Bluff, Pisgah](#)  
[Hampstead, Montgomery](#)  
[Metropolitan Gardens, Birmingham](#)  
[Mt Laurel, Birmingham](#)

[Tannin, Orange Beach](#)  
[Providence, Huntsville](#)  
[The Preserve, Hoover](#)  
[The Waters, Pike Road](#)  
[Trussville Springs, Trussville](#)

*If you have SmartCode questions please contact Steve Ostaseski or Richard Amore at RPC. Lindsay may be reached by phone at 205.264.8421 or by email at [smo@rpcgb.org](mailto:smo@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

### **Town of Brookside Master Plan**

The Town Council of Brookside adopted the Town of Brookside Master Plan on May 7th, 2009. *For additional information please 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 May 19th to update Calera's comprehensive plan and development regulations. The next public meeting will occur on Tuesday June 16th. The update to the city's comprehensive plan and development regulations are funded by the RPC through the Building Communities Grant. *For additional information please contact Richard Amore, RPC Senior Planner, [ramore@rpcgb.org](mailto:ramore@rpcgb.org) or Jason Fondren with the KPS Group, [jfondren@kpsgroup.com](mailto:jfondren@kpsgroup.com).*

### **Highland Park Neighborhood Plan**

The Highland Park Neighborhood Plan held a public meeting on May 12 to receive comments and to vote on the final plan created by Gresham, Smith & Partners, which included a neighborhood assessment, zoning review and form-based zoning code. *For additional information contact Steve Ostaseski, [smo@rpcgb.org](mailto:smo@rpcgb.org).*

### **City of Pinson Master Plan**

The City of Pinson Planning Commission adopted the City of Pinson Master Plan on April 23, 2009. The City Council will vote to adopt the City of Pinson Master Plan on May 21, 2009. *For additional information contact Steve Ostaseski, [smo@rpcgb.org](mailto:smo@rpcgb.org).*

CONNECTIONS is brought to you by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham  
Find out more at [www.rpcgb.org](http://www.rpcgb.org)

