

CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from the
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

March 2011

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[RPCGB Program Budget
Committee Meeting](#)
CANCELED

[Metropolitan Planning
Organization Meeting](#)
CANCELED

[RPCGB Board of
Directors Meeting](#)
CANCELED

[Transportation Citizens
Committee Meeting](#)
March 16, 2011
RPCGB Office
Noon, 1st Floor Conf.
Room

[Transportation Technical
Committee Meeting](#)
March 23, 2011
RPCGB Office
10:00am, 1st Floor Conf.
Room

[MPO Subcommittee
Meeting](#)

Mural Project Beautifies Neighborhood

In coordination with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), the 16th Street Corridor Plan is currently being implemented by the Fountain Heights Neighborhood Association. As part of the plan, the Fountain Heights Neighborhood Association has worked in collaboration with the RPCGB, the City of Birmingham and the Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) in beautifying the street scape along 16th Street North. Students from the ASFA painted murals along the retaining walls on 16th Street during the week of February 14th. The murals highlight the character and heritage of the community and allowed the students to showcase their creative talents. Read more about the [mural project](#) and its impact on the community.



March 24, 2011
RPCGB Office
1:30pm, 1st Floor Conf.
Room

For meeting information,
including postings of any
meeting notices and
cancellations please visit
the [RPCGB website](#).



U.S. 280 Study Stakeholders Meeting Update



The U.S. 280 Corridor Transit Study held a Stakeholder meeting on February 24th, at which time the results of the fatal flaw analysis were presented. The analysis showed that the light-rail alternative was infeasible for the corridor and the Stakeholders agreed with the results of the analysis. It was stated that light-rail could be an option in the future and the remaining transit alternatives to be studied could be a stepping stone to an eventual light-rail system. The four transit alternatives that will continue to be analyzed are:

- Enhanced Local Bus Service
- Premium Bus Service with queue jump lanes
- Premium Bus Service with two managed lanes in each direction
- Bus Rapid Transit in dedicated path

In addition to these transit alternatives, lane use alternatives are also being modeled and analyzed as part of the Study. For additional information please visit the [project website](#).

Forums Held for Southwest Corridor Study



The Southwest Corridor Transit Study (US 11/Bessemer Super Highway Transit Alternative Analysis) formally started the week of February 21. Three (3) community forums were held within the study corridor. These forums were held on:

February 22 at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
February 23 at the Bessemer YMCA
February 24 at the City of Brighton Community Center

The forums introduced the community to the project and solicited feedback on the types of transit services that should be explored for the corridor as well as areas that needed to be connected via transit. About 60 people participated over the three days that forums were held. Participants included residents, business owners, property owners, and elected officials.

Some of the ideas provided by participants included:

- Improvements to existing public transit services
- Improvements to the pedestrian and cycling environment
- Consideration of both Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail
- Consideration of Commuter Rail
- Gearing potential services towards student mobility
- Gearing potential services to both complement and support new development of housing, retail and trails

For additional information about the project and to find out about upcoming events, please visit the [project website](#).

RPCGB Sponsors Cycling Certification

The RPCGB sponsored a 3-day League Cycling Instructor (LCI) course hosted by the League of American Bicyclists on the last week of February. About 16 cyclists from around the southeast traveled in to Birmingham to secure their certification and begin teaching bike safety in their communities. The Birmingham area now boasts 4 LCI certified cyclists. If you are interested in becoming LCI certified, be on the lookout for more opportunities on our website for certification in the future!



CommuteSmart Adds New Partner



CommuteSmart would like to welcome our newest partner, the **Jefferson County Commission**. CommuteSmart will work with the Commission to promote the benefits of the CommuteSmart program to all county employees. Both CommuteSmart and the Commission are excited about working to reduce traffic congestion and improving air quality in our region.

Rising Gas Prices Call for Smarter Commuting

Did you know that you can save gas and get paid by taking an alternative commute to work?

February marked the highest month ever for gas prices. With gas prices projected to reach over \$4.00 a gallon by the summer CommuteSmart would love to set up an informational table, speaking presentation or host an event to promote the benefits of our program to your company's employees!

Please contact your Outreach Coordinators, Allison Nichols or Jeniese Hosey by phone at (205) 264-8410 or (205) 264-8406 or by email anichols@rpcgb.org or jhosey@rpcgb.org for more information and visit www.commutesmart.org

Community Updates

Census Data Available

The 2010 Census data was released in February, 2011. Data for Alabama shows that the five most populous incorporated places and their 2010 Census counts are **Birmingham, 212,237**; **Montgomery, 205,764**; **Mobile, 195,111**; **Huntsville, 180,105**; and **Tuscaloosa, 90,468**. Birmingham decreased by 12.6 percent since the 2000 Census. Montgomery grew by 2.1 percent, Mobile decreased by 1.9 percent, Huntsville grew by 13.8 percent, and Tuscaloosa grew by 16.1 percent.

The largest county is Jefferson, with a population of 658,466. Its population decreased by 0.5 percent since 2000. The other counties in the top five include Mobile, with a population of 412,992 (increase of 3.3 percent); Madison, 334,811 (increase of 21.0 percent); Montgomery, 229,363 (increase of 2.6 percent); and Shelby, 195,085 (increase of 36.1 percent).

To find out more about the 2010 Census data, please visit the [RPCGB website](http://rpcgb.org).

City of Leeds Master Plan

The RPCGB is moving forward with the City of Leeds Master Plan. The RPCGB partnered with Freshwater Land Trust to co-host a greenways meeting with the Leeds Area Chamber of Commerce on February 17th. The meeting provided insightful input into the recreation and greenways component of the Leeds Master Plan and the County-wide greenway system, Our One Mile. The RPCGB will conduct an advisory committee meeting next month to develop the concepts for redevelopment for the three target areas in the Leeds Master Plan. The City of Leeds has requested assistance from the RPCGB through the Building Communities Program to complete the master plan for the city. *For additional information please contact Richard Amore, Senior Planner with the RPCGB at ramore@rpcgb.org*

City of Graysville Master Plan Update

The RPCGB has completed the City of Graysville Master Plan Update. The Graysville Planning Commission and Graysville City Council adopted the Master Plan on February 15th, 2011. The City of Graysville Master Plan has also been approved in accordance to the Alabama Communities of Excellence program guidelines to move the City of Graysville closer to graduating from the Alabama Communities of Excellence program later this year. *For additional information please contact Richard Amore, Senior Planner with the RPCGB at ramore@rpcgb.org*

Titusville North Neighborhood Plan

The RPCGB is excited to announce that it is working with the Titusville North Neighborhood on a Neighborhood Plan. The RPCGB is working with the Titusville North Neighborhood Association, the City of Birmingham and Auburn University Urban Studio in developing the Neighborhood Plan for Titusville North. The first kick-off meeting was on Saturday, February 19th at the Titusville North Neighborhood Association monthly meeting. The meeting provided quality public input into the Titusville North Neighborhood planning process. The RPCGB is working with the Titusville North Neighborhood Association on hosting a formal public kick-off meeting next month. The Titusville North Neighborhood Association has requested assistance from the RPCGB through the Building Communities Program. *For additional information please contact Richard Amore, Senior Planner with the RPCGB at ramore@rpcgb.org*

Trees and Development Workshop

The Trees and Development Workshop was a huge success. The educational workshop was a cooperative effort between Auburn University's Cooperative Extension System, CAWACO RC+D and The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The workshop took place at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and had over 70 attendees. The keynote speaker, James Urban, a leading landscape architect and tree preservation specialist from Annapolis, Maryland, informed the audience on tree preservation strategies and best management practices dealing with urban trees. We would like to thank you all for supporting the Trees and Development Workshop and if you have any additional questions, *please contact Richard Amore, Senior Planner with the RPCGB at ramore@rpcgb.org*



To see a list of community planning projects completed over the last year, visit the Community Planning section of the [RPCGB website](#).

SmartCode Corner

SmartCode is an effort by dedicated professionals to develop a responsive form-based unified development code. The SmartCode section of "Connections" intends to inform our member governments of new concepts in regulatory code. This month we examine emerging influences that inform the need for and the makeup of evolving codes.

Anyone with municipal responsibilities was paying attention to the statistics released February 24th by the U.S. Census Bureau. At an individual level, municipal officials examined gains and losses of population.

Interestingly, there are numbers within the numbers, patterns within the information collected over time through the census. There are several factors that will begin to have a dramatic effect on the demand for housing; one of those factors is the aging population.

Housing and development demands will morph in response to changing demands. Households with children will drop from 45 percent in 1970 to 27 percent in 2030. Households without children will rise sharply; aging baby boomers will be the majority. Three million people turn 65 each year. The aging population contributes to the lower demand for home ownership. The propensity for home ownership slows as people age. At the national level, home ownership rates have declined from a high of 69.2 percent in the second quarter of 2004, to 67.3 percent in the first quarter of 2009. The home ownership rate of those aged 45 to 55 went from 77 percent to 74.6 percent in the same time span. The home ownership rate of those aged 55 and older went from 82.4 percent to 79.8 percent in that same period.

As the economy emerges from the recession the nation's approach to home ownership will evolve. In coming months we will continue to examine the aspects that impact community development and discuss regulatory changes in response to the evolving market.

If you have SmartCode questions, please contact Steve Ostaseski, Richard Amore or Philip Amthor at the RPCGB. Steve may be reached by phone at 205.264.8422 or by email at smo@rpcgb.org. Richard may be reached by phone at 205.264.8447 or by email at ramore@rpcgb.org. Philip may be reached by phone at 205.264.8421 or by email at pamthor@rpcgb.org

CONNECTIONS is brought to you by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
Find out more at www.rpcgb.org

