



# TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY



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## News & Notes: How the MPO spent our summer



The Atlanta Beltline, above, is a greenway plus multi-modal corridor that, while incomplete, already generates millions in new economic development. Learn more: <http://beltline.org/>  
See the Back Page for our upcoming Atlanta Beltline speaker!

### Step by Step: Transportation Projects

There's more to making rubber meet the road than you think!

Here's all the steps:



**PE:** Preliminary Engineering: designing the road and conducting an environmental study, if needed.



**UT:** Utility Relocation: Moving water, gas, phone, cable, fiber, electrical lines & poles from project's path.



**RW:** Right of Way: Purchasing property required to make road improvements.



**CN:** Construction: Bulldozers on the ground.

In July, we made a visual graphic displaying the status of FY 2015 transportation projects along this timeline. Also, don't forget to check out our interactive project status map! Find both online here: [huntsvillempo.org/news/project-status/](http://huntsvillempo.org/news/project-status/)

## What does the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) do?

We write plans, find funds and oversee the schedules of all these transportation projects for Huntsville, Madison & Madison County:



⇒ **Bridges:** replacements and new additions



⇒ **Bicycle Lanes, Bicycle Plans, Bicycle options**



⇒ **Intersections:** improvements as well as additional lanes to roads & highways



⇒ **Greenways:** Master Plan and more pedestrian options



⇒ **Road Maintenance:** such as pot holes and streetscapes (beautification).



⇒ **Interstates:** updates, new on/off ramps, new lanes



⇒ **Public Transit:** buses, TRAM, Handi-Ride, future ideas like Light Rail



⇒ **When we talk transportation, never forget we put a man on the moon!**



Huntsville Area  
Metropolitan Planning  
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[www.Huntsvillempo.org](http://www.Huntsvillempo.org)



## The Bridges of Madison County

The Hole-y Bridge—Carriger Road has a hole-y bridge. There is a hole in the middle span of the bridge. Repair options were weighed by the County, ALDOT and the MPO staff. At this time, negotiations for how and when to repair the bridge, and how much it will cost, are ongoing.

Upcoming: The MPO borders extend beyond Madison County to include portions of Limestone County inside the Huntsville-Area Transportation Study, boundaries set by the FHWA to make up our MPO. Two bridges in the northern part of Limestone County within our MPO were added to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) this summer. One is on Thach Road, the other is just off Thach Rd on Liberty Way. The bridges will cost \$289,000 for Thach and \$609,000 for Liberty. These costs will be split 80% federal and 20% Limestone County funds. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2016. See maps and financial breakdown of both here: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/plans-and-reports/>



## MPO Staff learns about Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant

Two MPO staff members traveled to Montgomery in July for the ADECA Recreational Trails grant which 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.” The MPO is thinking of partnering with outside agencies to create a large RTP grant for FY 2016, next summer’s application deadline.

Cyclists in North Huntsville submitted Chapman Mountain as their priority greenway project through a citizen-led survey. We want to know: What’s Your Recreational Trail Priority? Keep in mind the maximum grant is only \$100,000. Let us know: [paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov](mailto:paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov)

Learn more about Huntsville Cycling & Safety! [BikeHuntsville.com](http://BikeHuntsville.com)



## Maintenance - New ALDOT Maintenance Project:

Twelve miles of I-65 in Limestone County will be improved by ALDOT in the coming year. The maintenance work will begin and end in 2016. The project stretches from I-565 to HWY 72 or Exit 340 to Exit 351.

## How to report a pothole or any service request:

**Huntsville:** Easy to use app= [huntsvilleal.gov/huntsvilleconnect/](http://huntsvilleal.gov/huntsvilleconnect/)

**Madison:** Call: 256-772-0000 or [Let us Know](http://Let us Know) at madsional.gov

**Madison County:** Call your County Commission District office.

Find their number here: [madisoncountyal.gov](http://madisoncountyal.gov)

**\$ Every new mile or additional lane = more maintenance money \$**



[www.gatissluka.com/](http://www.gatissluka.com/)



**Rockets & Research:** Highlighted here are projects directly affecting Redstone Arsenal, MSFC, Research Park or all of the above. We’ll also discuss MPO transportation research.

**Town Madison:** Providing access to new amenities close to Gate 7, the City of Madison and Madison County are constructing a road between Zierdt Rd and the upcoming Kellner Road extension. Here’s a completed section, at right. Hughes Road- note in the background, red roof of Furniture Row - will soar over Madison Blvd. and I-565 and connect to the new road near here.







## Intersections & Additional Lanes

North Huntsville and Alabama A&M will be impacted by the upcoming project on Memorial Parkway, extending the elevated sections, adding lanes and adding an overpass at Mastin Lake Road.



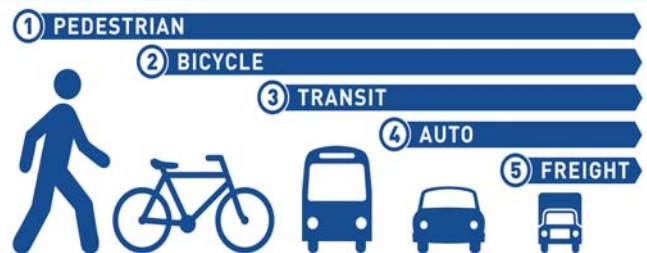
A public hearing was held about this project on September 1, 2015. Several members of the public expressed concern about the loss of medians on this stretch of Parkway, because pedestrians use the medians to cross; the loss of community for the impacted residential areas; and whether or not the elevated portions by Alabama A&M would be aesthetically pleasing, as that section is a very attractive drive. There was also interest in adding sidewalks. If you wish to comment or have questions about this project, contact ALDOT at [bellt@dot.state.al.us](mailto:bellt@dot.state.al.us) or call 256-505-6141.



## Memphis' Complete Streets put Pedestrians First

The MPO staff was invited by the City of Huntsville Traffic Engineering Dept. to learn about Complete Streets in July and August in a series of webinars. We discovered our neighbor to the west, Memphis, TN adopted the 500th Complete Street Policy in the country with a very detailed Complete Street Design Program here: [bikepedmemphis.com](http://bikepedmemphis.com) The document contains this graphic, prioritizing pedestrians *first* in Memphis.

### City of Memphis Order of Considerations for Travel Modes



Check out the **Greenways Master Plan**, 180+ miles of greenways: [bigpicturehuntsville.com/greenways/](http://bigpicturehuntsville.com/greenways/)



## Interstate Updates

I-565 is growing wider, from mile marker 11.1 to 13.22, including widening four bridges, to accommodate Town Madison, described in the "Rockets and Research" section. The City of Madison and Madison County are also adding a new I-565 interchange near Hughes Road. Note the plans at the right are not official. This is a draft until Preliminary Engineering is finished in 2016. At that time, a public meeting will be held to gather comments on the plans.



## Public Transit : Increase Capacity by Decreasing Demand

The goal of improving our MPO's public transit is to increase capacity of our highways by decreasing the demand for them; i.e. the number of cars needing the roads at any given time. Short trips of less than 5 miles taken by transit rather than car reduces road congestion. Speaking of increasing capacity, check out the big news from City of Huntsville's public transit system, at right.

Public Transit partners: Two non-profits, The ARC of Madison County and Ability Plus, who serve the MPO will receive new buses or vans to transport people with disabilities this year. Visit their websites:

<http://hsvarc.org/> and <http://web.abilityplus.org/>

After a zero-cost restructuring of the Shuttle system in 2012, ridership increased significantly-- from an average of 1,092 daily riders in 2009 to **2,500 in 2013**. Buses were **58 percent occupied** in 2013, up from 28 percent in 2009.

## No One is Coming to Take Your Car Away!

The Big Picture staff loves our cars. All this talk of bike lanes, greenways, and public transit has some people spooked that the City of Huntsville is ready to give up on cars in favor of some unrealistic, car-free future. No need to worry! We love roads and driving on them. We just know there are cheaper, more efficient ways to reduce congestion on our highways besides adding more highways. It's been proven repeatedly that more lanes= more traffic. For sources on congestion relative to new lanes, contact: [paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov](mailto:paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov)

### So, why do a Mobility Study?

A mobility study is an analysis of ALL the modes in a network – cars, bikes, transit, pedestrian – and how they are working (or not working) together. Doing isolated sidewalk plans, or street plans, or transit studies, does not capture how all the modes interact. A mobility plan focuses on how streets need to be designed to accommodate every mode, and how a network links all forms of transportation. The Big Picture team wants to conduct a mobility study because the potential benefits go beyond reduced congestion for motorists.

### Let's Talk Money.

“Property values within 500 feet (approximately one block) of the Trail have **increased 148% from 2008 to 2014**, an increase of \$1 billion in assessed property value,” a quote from the “Reasons to love the Indianapolis Cultural Trail” study on the impact of Indianapolis’ 40 miles of greenways connecting several city sectors: <http://indyculturaltrail.org/impact/>

A 2004 study, using bike/pedestrian trails in Nebraska to reduce health care costs associated with inactivity, concluded that **for every \$1.00 spent on trails, almost \$3.00 of public health was produced**. People often preach the public health

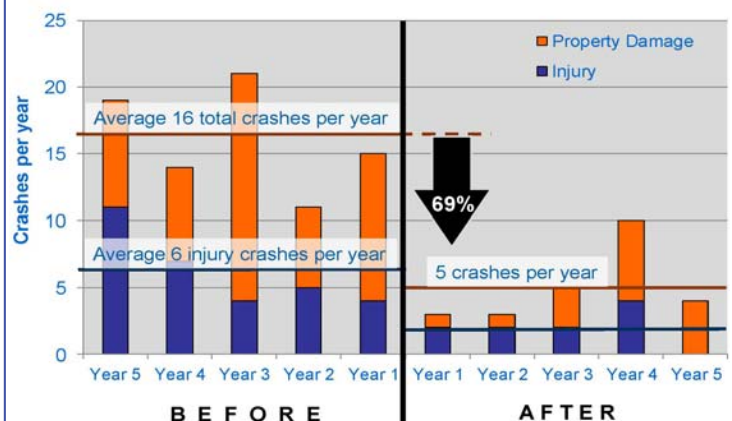
## Atlanta Beltline Greenway Speaker



Ryan Gravel, who envisioned the **Atlanta BeltLine**, will speak **September 29th at Merrimack Hall (3320 Triana Blvd. SW) at 6:30PM**. The event is free to the public. The beltline is a 22-mile greenway circling central Atlanta that, when completed, will include light rail, 1,300 acres of new parkland, 5,600 units of affordable housing, and 1,000 acres of remediated brown fields. See the cover image.

benefits of walking and biking, but it takes on new meaning when these transportation modes create dollars and cents. Read the study: <http://hpp.sagepub.com/content/6/2/174.abstract>

The Virginia Department of Transportation, says investing in road diets, i.e. fewer and narrower lanes, plus adding bike/pedestrian lanes, reduced accidents on Lawyers Road in Reston, VA:



Consider the cost savings to respond to fewer accidents and repair less accident-related damage to roadways. It all adds up!

### Transportation Quarterly Goals:

1. Report multi-jurisdictional transportation projects in Huntsville, Madison & the County in user-friendly, easy to digest and visually pleasing format.
2. Educate the public on transportation plans and connect transportation projects of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with the BIG Picture Huntsville visions and goals for the Huntsville regional area.

For more information, see the MPO website: [huntsvillempo.org](http://huntsvillempo.org). Or, with questions or comments, call me, Planner Paige, at 256-427-5188 or email me at [paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov](mailto:paige.colburn@huntsvilleal.gov)

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**CHECK OUT: Transportation Review Blog—Monthly at:**

<http://www.huntsvillempo.org/category/tqr/>