



# TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY



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## News & Notes: TMA Certification Review coming this February

### February: TMA Certification Review



Every four years, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a joint review and evaluation of the transportation planning process carried out for the Transportation Management Area (TMA) of the Huntsville-Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This review and evaluation concludes with a comprehensive certification review meeting in Huntsville, AL. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for **February 15 and 16, 2017**.



The prior review, in 2013, concluded that the Huntsville Area MPO made several improvements to its transportation planning process since 2009 and certified the MPO for 4 more years. The MPO instituted a number of noteworthy practices which may be used as examples for other MPOs. The 2013 review also identified one corrective action, several recommendations, and suggested improvements. Each of these was addressed by the MPO and progress will be evaluated this year. After this February review, the FHWA and FTA will jointly certify the transportation planning process for the Huntsville-Area MPO, subject to the MPO addressing any new corrective actions and recommendations identified.



### How to be involved in the TMA Review

There will be opportunities for public involvement in the upcoming Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review process. A special MPO meeting will be held by FHWA officials tentatively scheduled on **February 15, 2016**, in the evening, in downtown Huntsville. The purpose of the meeting will be to receive feedback about the MPO from the public. The location and times are TBD, but keep checking local media, contact the MPO Staff at 256-427-5100, or visit: [www.huntsvillempo.org](http://www.huntsvillempo.org) for more details.



Huntsville Area  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization

The MPO writes plans, finds funds and oversees the schedules of these transportation projects for our local member jurisdictions:



⇒ **Bridges: replacements and new additions**



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



⇒ **Intersections: Plus additional lanes**



⇒ **Greenways: Plus more pedestrian options**



⇒ **Road Maintenance and Beautification**



⇒ **Interstates: Lane additions, on/off ramps**



⇒ **Public Transit: Shuttle, TRAM, and Handi-ride**



⇒ **Redstone Arsenal and Research Park Access**



## **Bridges of Madison County: Old Madison Pike Bridge to be updated**

At the MPO meeting in December, 2016, a project on AL-255/ Research Park Blvd / Rideout Road was discussed. This project will affect the Old Madison Pike bridge crossing AL-255 at Bridge Street Town Center. Many residents called City Hall, the City Engineering office, and MPO staff about this bridge. There are several neighborhoods on the east side of Research Park Blvd with residents who'd like to walk or bike to Bridge Street on the west side, with this bridge being the most direct route. Motorists called after seeing pedestrians crossing the bridge and complained how dangerous the journey is. This bridge will be updated to include a wider sidewalk/multi-use path across the bridge as part of the upcoming AL-255 widening project. See article below in Rockets & Research.



Image capture: Jul 2016; © 2016 Google



## **Bicycle Advisory and Safety Council (BASC) seeks Bike Friendly Businesses**

Does your business want to be a Bicycle Friendly Business? Can your employees and customers easily bike to and from your location? The Bicycle Advocacy and Safety Council (BASC) is looking for local candidates to apply for Bike Friendly Business status and be recognized for their bicycle friendliness. There are currently three Bicycle Friendly Businesses in the state of Alabama, as designated by the League of American Bicyclists, and one of them is in Huntsville. Bicycle Cove bike shop in Hampton Cove is Huntsville's first and only Bicycle Friendly Business. Discussions are underway between BASC and large companies such as Huntsville Hospital, and smaller, but very active businesses like Straight to Ale. There are opportunities for everyone! Contact 256-427-5188 for more information.



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



## **Safety and Maintenance: Completed Projects**

**I-65:** Median crossover protection from Norfolk Southern Railroad overpass (MM 341.4) to S of US-31 (MM 354.1) and .1 mile median protection at TN State Line, is complete with the exception of landscaping. The project took four months to complete and cost \$1.6 M.

**Memorial Parkway:** Utility Work from North of Whitesburg Drive to Golf Road is complete. The project cost \$5.2M and took over a year to complete.

**I-565:** Median crossover protection from Spring Branch in Limestone County to the overpass at Madison Blvd is complete. The project cost \$1.1M and took several months in 2016 to complete.

## **Potholes? Service Request?**

**Huntsville Connect app:**

[huntsvilleal.gov/huntsvilleconnect/](http://huntsvilleal.gov/huntsvilleconnect/)

**City of Madison:**

Call: 256-772-0000 or [madsional.gov](http://madsional.gov)

**Madison County:** Call your Commission District office. Find numbers here:

[madisoncountyal.gov](http://madisoncountyal.gov)



## **Rockets & Research: Widening Research Park Boulevard**

At the MPO meeting in December 2016, a new Restore Our Roads project was discussed, voted on, and approved by the MPO Board. Huntsville desired that a portion of Restore Our Roads funds be allocated to this new project and ALDOT agreed, prompting changes to the project in both the Year 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This project will widen Research Park Blvd, (aka AL-255 or Rideout Road), by one lane both north and south from Old Madison Pike to US HWY 72 (University Drive). As discussed above in the Bridges section, this project will also include updates to the Old Madison Pike. Preliminary engineering for this project will begin in 2017. The project is scheduled to begin construction in 2019 and will cost \$13,900,000.





## **Intersections & Additional Lanes : Projects Coming Soon or Under Construction:**

**Madison County: Winchester Rd**– construction began to widen Winchester from the Flint River to just past Bell Factory Road in August, 2016. Construction is currently 35% complete. The project costs \$4,000,000.

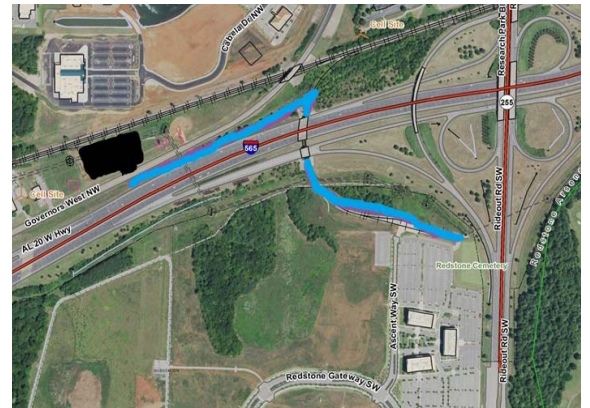
**City of Madison: Balch Road**– preliminary engineering is scheduled to design a two foot safety widening project on Balch Road in Madison, from Browns Ferry Rd to Gooch Lane. The MPO will meet in the Spring to add this new project to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Engineering design will begin in 2017 and will cost \$150,000.

**City of Huntsville: Maysville to Epworth**– a construction project to build a connecting road between Maysville Road and Epworth Drive in the City of Huntsville, near the point on Chapman Mountain where I-565 merges with and becomes HWY 72. This is a Restore Our Roads project. It is scheduled to begin in 2017 and cost \$5,252,000.



## **A Greenway under I-565 connecting Research Park to Redstone Arsenal**

At the December MPO meeting, the MPO Board discussed, voted on, and approved the addition of a parking lot to a new greenway scheduled to begin construction this year. The greenway will connect Governors West, which runs south of Cummings Research Park, by Cabela's, to Redstone Gateway, a mixed-use complex south of I-565 near Gate 9 of Redstone Arsenal. The newly approved parking facility will be north of Governors West, south of Cabela's. See image to the right. Greenway is in light blue, parking lot in black.



## **Interstate Updates : Check Out the MPO's Congestion Management Plan (CMP)**

One of the requirements of any good transportation policy or plan is the reduction of traffic congestion. Per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements, the Huntsville-Area MPO regularly updates and maintains a Congestion Management Plan (CMP). This document was once a stand-alone plan, but in 2015, it was incorporated into the Year 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as an appendix. In the Fall of 2016, for easier public access to this plan, the MPO staff created a dedicated page on the MPO website for the CMP. Check it out online, here:

<http://www.huntsvillempo.org/congestion-management-plan/> .

For a printed copy of the CMP, call 256-427-5188.



## **Public Transit : Coordination Between the Transit Providers in our MPO area**

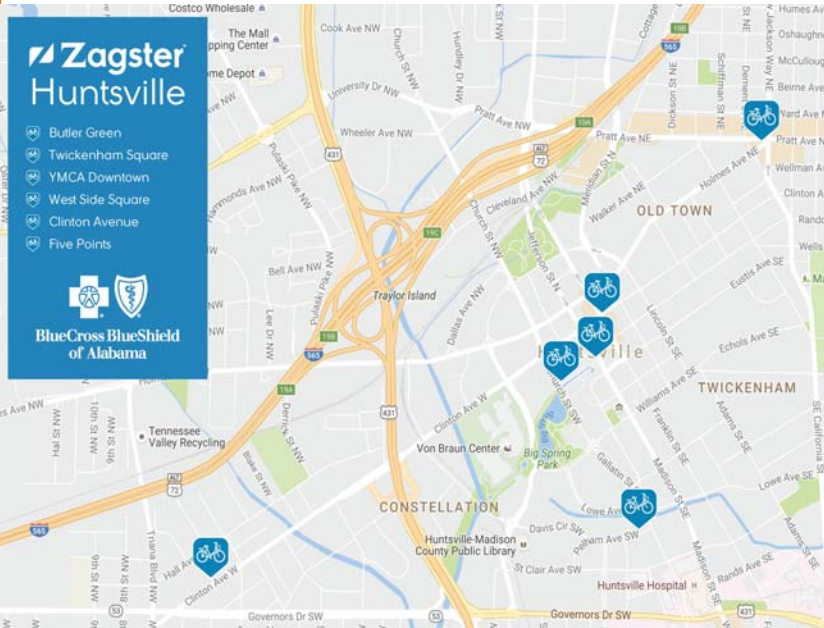
For the TMA certification review, discussed on the cover, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) will conduct an assessment of the MPO area's two federally funded transit providers. With its Huntsville Shuttle, the City of Huntsville is the area's only fixed-route transit system. The city also provides an on-call system, Handi-Ride. Madison County is the other transit provider that receives federal funds from FTA for their Transportation for Rural Areas of Madison County (TRAM). During prior reviews, the most important topic was the coordination between transit providers. For example, TRAM may carry a County resident to a doctor's appointment in Huntsville. TRAM operators and Handi-Ride or Shuttle operators may coordinate on the timing if the rider has to use Huntsville transit services and TRAM in one day; the same scenario applies with City of Madison residents coming into Huntsville. Madison's MARS transit is city funded, so it is not reviewed by FTA.

## Bike Share Program Starts March 2017 in Downtown Huntsville!

This Spring, the City of Huntsville, Downtown Huntsville, Inc., and Zagster, Inc. will launch Downtown Blue Bikes presented by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. This bike-share program will provide all Huntsville residents and visitors with a convenient, affordable, and healthy way to get around downtown.

Starting March 1, 2017, 40 cruiser bikes will be available at six stations for members to use for on-demand, local trips between downtown destinations and attractions. See station map, below.

Using a Zagster app, riders will be able to pick up bikes without interacting with a kiosk. Bikes will be lightweight and versatile.



## Meet Autonomous Mini Bus “OLLI”



Courtesy: <https://localmotors.com/olli/>

The Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville-Madison County recently submitted a proposal to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to have Cummings Research Park (CRP) designated as an Autonomous Vehicle Proving Ground. This designation would be the first of many steps in a visionary idea for autonomous vehicles to provide transportation in CRP.

This futuristic system could link many businesses and corporate campuses, as well as Bridge Street Town Center. Local Motors, an autonomous vehicle manufacturer in Knoxville, TN, recently held a presentation in Huntsville about using their OLLI vehicles as public transit in pilot programs around the country. There are many legal, public safety, and legislative steps in this process, but it is possible CRP could one day have autonomous vehicles operating as a pilot program for public transportation.

### Transportation Quarterly Goals:

1. Report news of multi-jurisdictional transportation projects in the cities of Huntsville, Madison and throughout Madison County in a 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 area.

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 our Monthly Blog!** : <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/category/tqr/>