



TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY



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News & Notes: TMA Certification Review Findings

Federal Review Recommends Multi-Modal Transportation Options



Courtesy ALDOT



The Huntsville-Area MPO received a positive report from the FHWA and FTA after the Transportation Management Area (TMA) certification review. The report included ten recommendations. Of these, six were related to planning and infrastructure for public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. The FTA recommended the MPO incorporate more transit planning in the annual budgetary Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In response, the MPO proposed an area-wide transit study in its Draft FY 2018 UPWP. Transit planning is to be expanded in the Year 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), during its 2020 update. A goal of the FY 2018 transit study will be to inform the 2020 update of the LRTP. The FHWA recommended greater participation of bicycle and pedestrian representatives on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and a more structured grant process for Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds, which pay for greenways, sidewalks, and bike infrastructure. In response, the MPO opened CAC membership to any resident of the MPO Area who volunteers to participate and streamlined the TA process on the MPO website.

TMA Certification Review Response

The MPO Staff took several actions in response to the TMA Certification Review. The FHWA recommended periodic workshops for the MPO Board and committee membership. MPO Staff organized an MPO 101 workshop with speakers from FHWA and ALDOT in April, 2017. Bicycle and pedestrian planning was a primary topic on the agenda. The MPO staff is working on big ideas for multi-modal networks, including a regional greenway, enhanced transit service options, and a new MPO-Area wide bike plan. Another recommendation involved regularly scheduled MPO meetings.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS the next MPO meetings:
June 7, 2017, Huntsville City Hall, first floor, 4pm;
Aug 30, 2017, Huntsville City Hall, first floor, 4pm.



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: Ditto Landing Planning Bike & Pedestrian Bridge

The implementation of the Ditto Landing Master Plan is coinciding with the City of Huntsville's Greenway Master Plan update. This may give new life to a historic steel truss bridge which spans Aldridge Creek. There are many stories and rumors around the bridge itself, including a 100 year old murder mystery piece of historic fiction. The bridge was closed in August, 2007 due to the collapse of a similar truss bridge in Minneapolis, that year. The goal of the Huntsville-Madison County Marina and Port Authority is to reopen the bridge exclusively for bikes and pedestrians to access a greenway envisioned on the west side of Memorial Pkwy. The greenway has not yet been approved by all the entities with authority of the property. Ditto Landing leadership are working with engineers to safely reopen the bridge.

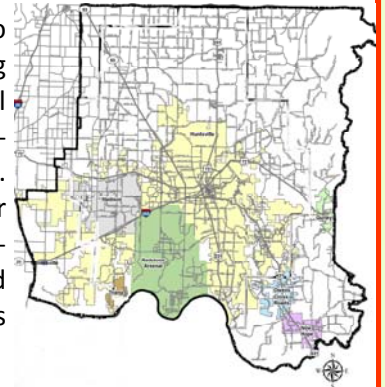


Courtesy : J.R. Manning



Bicycle News: Metropolitan Planning Organization begins MPO-wide Bike Plan

MPO Staff have partnered with the MPO Multimodal Technical Committee to create an MPO Bike Plan. This suggestion came from the FHWA and FTA during the 2017 TMA Certification Review of MPO processes. The MPO Multimodal Technical Committee includes Engineers and Planners from Redstone Arsenal, City of Madison, Madison County, Research Park, Community Development, and Huntsville Traffic Engineering. The purpose of the MPO Bike Plan is to create safe travel routes to various destinations for all kinds of cyclists based on level of skill. The plan may include recommendations for additional bike infrastructure within the MPO area, which includes all of Madison County and portions of Limestone as shown on the map at right. The plan will include suggested routes currently ridden by commuter cyclists, charted on a new MPO area-wide bike map.



Safety and Maintenance: New ALDOT Projects

Several new resurfacing and maintenance projects were added to the upcoming Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) roster this Spring; locations, costs, and timelines are as follows:

- **HWY 53**– resurfacing from north of Taurus Drive to Limestone County Line to begin in July, 2017 and cost \$2.6 Million dollars.
- **HWY 431**– patching the northbound outside lane from west of Parkhill Road SE to east of Governors Dr; to begin in June, 2017; cost \$50,000.
- **US HWY 72**- resurfacing from the intersection of Memorial Parkway to the intersection of I-565; to begin in December, 2017; cost: \$1.2 Million.

Potholes? Service Request?

Huntsville Connect app:

huntsvilleal.gov/huntsvilleconnect/

City of Madison:

Call: 256-772-0000 or madsional.gov

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

madisoncountyal.gov



Rockets & Research: New Rideout Road and Gateway Blvd developments

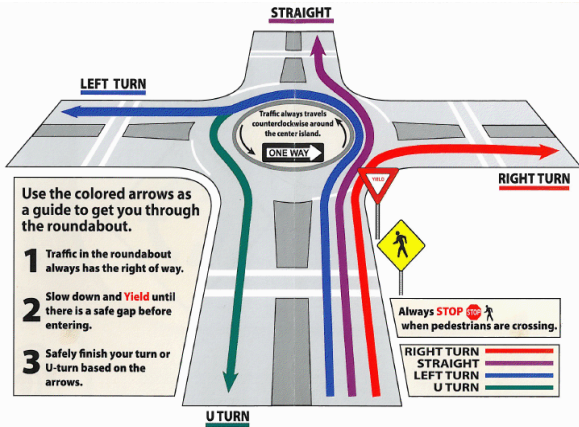
The Redstone Gateway development will soon be more accessible as the City of Huntsville plans for a new intersection at Rideout Road and Gateway Blvd, as well as an additional lane in each direction on Rideout Road from Gate 9 to I-565. These two projects are scheduled to begin construction at the end of summer 2017. Around the same time, Redstone Arsenal will complete the movement of Gate 9 to accommodate greater traffic numbers and reduce congestion at the I-565 interchange with Rideout Road. The approximate costs for these projects are as follows: Gateway Blvd Extension: \$1 Million; Northbound lane: \$1.5 Million; Southbound lane: \$600,000.





Intersections & Additional Lanes : City of Madison Plans a new Roundabout

The city of Madison is designing and installing a new traffic circle (roundabout) as a countermeasure to improve traffic at the intersection of Balch and Gillespie Roads using State Highway safety funds. This intersection currently has a four-way stop with a red blinking light to caution drivers. However, over the past five years, 17 traffic accidents have occurred at this intersection. The majority of these accidents were cited as a failure to yield the right-of-way to other motorists and resulted in what we all refer to as a “T-Bone” impact (90-degree side impact). Although four of the incidents resulted in personal injuries none resulted in fatalities. Both roadways are classified as Collector streets and rush-hour traffic volume can be quite high, causing congestion at the four way stop. With the addition of the roundabout, traffic movement should substantially improve and provide safer travel for motorists. For more info, contact Gary Chynoweth, P.E., Director of Engineering at (256) 772-8431.



Aldridge Creek Greenway Extension Construction Begins, New Greenlink Discussed

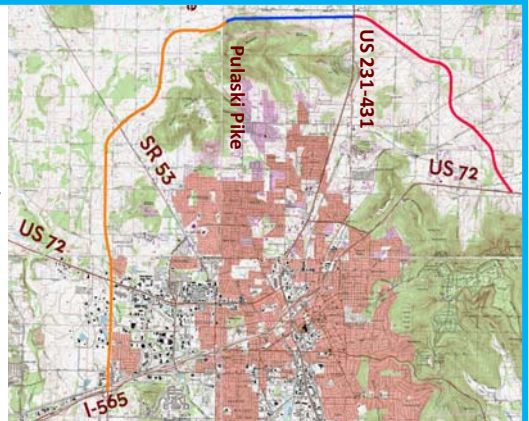
In late April, construction began on the long-anticipated Aldridge Creek greenway extension from Weatherly Road to Esslinger Drive, along the creek, ending at the Valley Hill golf course. See image to the right, taken just north of Weatherly.

In addition, the City of Huntsville began to study and plan for a Greenlink connecting the existing Aldridge Creek greenway to this new segment. The Greenway Master Plan defines a “Greenlink” as existing street infrastructure, typically sidewalks, that users can take from one greenway or trail to the next. The new Greenlink, potentially a 12 foot wide multi-use path, will be on the east side of Bailey Cove Road.



Interstate Updates: Progress of the Northern Bypass

The image to the right depicts three sections of the Huntsville Northern Bypass. The completed section, known as Rideout Road, Research Park Blvd, or Martin Luther King Blvd, is in orange. The section in blue, from Pulaski Pike, near the Toyota Plant, to Memorial Pkwy (Hwy 231/431 N), will begin construction in Spring 2018. Preliminary Engineering is 70% complete and Right of Way acquisition has begun for the blue section. The red section from Memorial Pkwy to US 72 will be divided into two phases. The first phase will end at Winchester Road and is scheduled to begin construction in 2021. The second phase, completing the bypass to US 72, is not yet funded.



Public Transit: New “Low Floor” Buses on “Top of the Hour” Huntsville shuttle routes

Two new “Low Floor” buses just arrived in April, 2017 at the City of Huntsville’s Department of Public Transit. The accompanying image shows the new low-floor bus (left) and the older bus on the right. Notice the older bus's cumbersome lift system for riders with disabilities, with the middle two doors raised high off the curb. The new Low Floor buses allow for expedited wheelchair loading, level with the sidewalk. With the addition of these two new buses, all fixed route “Top of the Hour” shuttle buses are now Low Floors. Seating capacity remains 28-29 seats per bus on the new buses.



Complete Streets in Downtown Master Plan

In March and April, the City of Huntsville, Downtown Huntsville Inc., and planners with Urban Design Associates (UDA) presented preliminary materials for the new Downtown Huntsville Master Plan. This is the first Downtown Master plan in over ten years. Complete Streets are proposed on Spragins, Clinton, Monroe, and Williams. See images of Monroe/Williams in front of the Von Braun Center, as it is currently (top image) and as an envisioned Complete Street (bottom).

See more of the Downtown Master Plan here:

bigpicturehuntsville.com/downtown-master-plan-update/



Land Trust of North Alabama hosts Greenway Master Plan meetings

A series of public meetings in early May allowed the community to see several large maps of greenways planned for the City of Huntsville. These meetings introduced the public to existing and proposed trails, greenways, and greenlinks. Greenlinks are defined as on-street neighborhood connectors, such as sidewalks, between existing and planned greenways and/or trails. The maps showed greenways scheduled to be built within the next five years as well as visionary projects which will take longer. For more information and to comment on the plan, visit:

www.bigpicturehuntsville.com



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

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