

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- MPO Updates
 - MPO Meetings
- RPO Updates
 - FY22 Meetings
- ADLOT Statewide Public Involvement Plan Draft
- Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan
- Projects Proposed to Let
- CEDS Strategy Committee
- Upcoming Funding Opportunities & Deadlines
- Calendar of Meetings

East Alabama Region MPO & RPO Transportation Monthly Newsletter

October 2021 Issue

Calhoun Area MPO Updates

❖ MPO Meetings

With the improvements to Covid numbers in the Calhoun County area, **October MPO meetings will be scheduled as in-person meetings.** Remote attendance will still be an option. The call-in number to attend virtually or by phone is 1-866-899-4679 with an access code of 312-611-237 OR you may join by computer or smartphone using the following link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/132611237> .

If you are not currently on the MPO notification mailing list and would like to attend, please email Libby at elizabeth.messick@earpdc.org. All MPO meetings are open to the public.

East Alabama RPO Updates

❖ FY 2022 RPO 1st Quarter Meetings will be held in October

- Northern Counties (Etowah and Cherokee): October 7 @ 11:00
 - Central Counties (Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, and Talladega): October 14 @ 11:00
 - Southern Counties (Chambers, Coosa, Randolph, and Tallapoosa): October 21 @ 10:00
- Further information regarding the meetings TBA.

All meeting minutes and materials can be found at <http://www.earpdc.org/pages/?pageID=29>.

If you have any suggestions on where to house future RPO meetings in your area, please contact Lattisha Royal at lattisha.royal@earpdc.org or 256-237-6741. We would love to have these meetings be both beneficial and enjoyable for all involved.

ALDOTs Statewide Public Involvement Plan Draft

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has prepared a *DRAFT* Statewide Public Involvement Plan (PIP) and is seeking the public to provide comments to this document. This plan updates the ALDOT's PIP that

support Alabama’s Statewide Transportation Planning Process. The purpose of the plan is to implement effective ways for ALDOT to gather information from the public about their transportation needs. Comments will help direct how ALDOT will engage in meaningful conversations with communities and incorporate the public’s input in the transportation decision-making process.

The *DRAFT* Statewide PIP will be available for review and comment at the following website:

<https://www.dot.state.al.us/news/publicinvolvement.html>

Online forms are available on the site and written comment forms should be forwarded to:

State Office Engineer
Planning Studies Section
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd, Room E-101
Montgomery, AL 36110

Comments will be accepted up to on or around **October 4, 2021**. For additional information, please visit <https://www.dot.state.al.us/news/publicinvolvement.html> or email: aldotstatewideplanning@dot.state.al.us.

Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

- The Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan has been completed.
- Annual update meetings will be held concurrently with RPO meetings in January 2022.
- Annual updates/summary reports will be completed and published on earpdc.org in March 2022 and 2023.
- If you have any suggestions, comments, or questions, please contact Libby Messick at 256-237-6741 or elizabeth.messick@earpdc.org.

CEDS Strategy Committee

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS, is a regional planning and implementation process designed to create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, improve living conditions, and provide a mechanism for guiding and coordinating the efforts of people and organizations involved in economic development.

As we begin the CEDS update, **we invite you to join us on the Strategy Committee!** We are seeking diverse and broad-based stakeholder participation including public sector, private sector, nonprofits, workforce development boards, higher education institutions, labor groups, and more!

If interested, please reach out to Shelby Brown at shelby.brown@earpdc.org.

Projects Proposed to Let September 24, 2021

Calhoun County
none

Chambers County
none

Cherokee County

none

Clay County

none

Cleburne County

none

Coosa County

none

Etowah County

none

Randolph County

none

Talladega County

- ❖ HSIP-0038(548) & ST-061-038-002 for constructing the access management (grading, drainage, pavement, and traffic stripe on SR-38 (US-280) in Childersburg from south of the Coosa River Bridge to 0.850 mile north of the SR-21 underpass in Sylacauga. Length 7.710 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,927,747 to \$2,356,135.

Tallapoosa County

none

Upcoming Funding Opportunities & Deadlines

It's not too early to be thinking ahead!

- ❖ **FTA Section 5307 and Section 5311 recipients and subrecipients** may apply for **American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act [Additional Assistance funding](#)** through a discretionary process. Eligible expenses are operating costs related to operations, personnel, cleaning, and sanitization on transit systems, and debt service payments incurred to maintain operations and avoid layoffs and furloughs as a result of COVID-19. More information can be found here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/notices-funding/american-rescue-plan-additional-assistance-fy-2021-notice-funding-opportunity>. The proposal deadline is **November 8, 2021**.
- ❖ In partnership with Main Street America and Smart Growth America, T-Mobile is committing \$25 million toward small town grants over the next five years through its **[Hometown Grants program](#)**. The program will award up to 100 towns per year with project funding grants of up to \$50,000 each. The program will focus on revitalizing community spaces in towns with 50,000 people or less. Main Street programs are encouraged to apply. For more information on the program and to apply go to <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>.
- ❖ **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development** is seeking applications for loans and grants to support rural water and waste disposal systems. Applications are accepted year-round, and technical assistance is available. USDA's **[Water and Environmental Programs](#)** can assist with constructing or improving infrastructure through loans, grants, and loan guarantees. USDA can also partner with rural water and waste service providers to finance infrastructure that aims to protect the cyber security of their facilities. The Water and Environmental Programs at USDA were recently expanded, and guaranteed loans are now available to smaller communities that have the financial strength to take advantage of conventional credit as well as larger communities with populations of up to 50,000. USDA also has technical assistance resources available through

partnering organizations. USDA's resources are not limited to communities that have already received a loan or grant through Rural Development. Any water or waste disposal system in an eligible rural area may benefit from technical assistance. For more information on the resources available reach out to your local [USDA Community Program Specialist](#). Applications can be submitted through [RDApply](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rd-apply) (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rd-apply>).

- ❖ The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) have announced calls for the Traffic and Safety Operations Section's (TSOS) **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** applications. **Deadlines are April 1st, July 1st, October 1st, and January 1st. Max funding amount per agency for reducing rural land departures is \$2,000,000; for intersection related projects is \$2,000,000, and for safe transportation for every pedestrian (STEP) is \$200,000.** They are also announcing a new Local Roads Safety Initiative within the Alabama HSIP. The initiative will be open to cities and counties for both rural and urban non-State maintained roadways with significant safety risks. Applications submitted through this initiative must be in accordance with the most recent Alabama Strategic Highway Safety Plan and applicable Local Road Safety Plans if one has been developed by the county that the location falls within. The TSOS is also making available Road Safety Review (RSR) service for those cities or counties that have an identified location(s) but would like some assistance in ensuring the most effective countermeasures are chosen. Applications under this initiative will be submitted electronically to the ALDOT State Traffic and Safety Operations Engineer. PE, ROW, UT, and CN phases are eligible for funding, but may make the application less competitive compared to those with only CN phases requested. Contact John-Michael Walker at 334-242-6123 or walkerjoh@dot.state.al.us with any requests for assistance or questions about the program.
- ❖ The **Economic Development Administration (EDA)** has made available \$587 million to eligible grantees in communities effected by natural disasters in 2018 and floods and tornadoes in 2019. Applications should provide long-term, regionally oriented, and collaborative development strategies designed to generate economic growth and resilience. No application deadlines apply, and the EDA will continue to accept applications on a rolling basis. For more information can be found [here](https://www.eda.gov/disaster-recovery/): <https://www.eda.gov/disaster-recovery/>.
- ❖ The **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** is accepting requests for Technical Assistance (TA) under the **Distressed Cities Technical Assistance (DCTA)** Program. The TA program is specifically designed to assist communities with populations under 40,000 that are struggling to recover from natural disaster and economic decline. DCTA may be used to build capacity around: financial management, economic revitalization; affordable housing development; disaster recovery and resiliency planning; cross-sector partnership building; and utilizing federal development programs. To learn more, visit the [Distressed Cities Technical Assistance](#) page on the HUD Exchange (<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/dcta/>).
- ❖ The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** has released FY 2020 Notices of Funding Opportunity for **eight DHS preparedness grant programs totaling nearly \$1.8 billion**. The grant programs provide funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as transportation authorities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector, to improve the nation's readiness in preventing, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. The grants focus on funding for programs that address the nation's immediate security needs and ensure public safety in our communities.

Funding opportunities are available for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP), Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), Intercity Passenger Rail- Amtrak (IPR) Program, Port Security Grant Program (PSGP), Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP), and Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP). For more information on DHS's preparedness grant programs visit www.grants.gov or www.fema.gov/grants. Final submissions must be made through the Non-Disaster (ND) Grants system located at <https://portal.fema.gov>. Contact the Office of External Affairs, Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs Division at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov with any questions.

- ❖ The U.S. Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) announced that it is providing funds to rural projects that support regional economic and community development planning. This [Strategic Economic and Community Development \(SECD\)](#) funding is authorized for applications submitted through the [Community Facilities Loans, Grants and Loan Guarantees](#), [Water and Waste Disposal Program Loans, Grants and Loan Guarantees](#), [Business & Industry Program Loan Guarantees](#), and [Rural Business Development Grants](#) programs. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships, and innovation. For more information in this opportunity, visit here: https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDARD_SA_SECD02282020_.pdf.
- ❖ **The Environmental Finance Center Network** is offering technical assistance free of charge to small drinking water systems serving 10,000 or fewer people. Services include a resource help desk, financial health check-up, water and wastewater rates analysis tool, and a financial resilience dashboard. See https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TechnicalAssistanceEFCN_COVID.pdf for more information.
- ❖ **Community Heart & Soul is offering \$10,000 in Seed Grant Funding** to small cities and towns. This program provides startup funding for resident-driven groups in communities with populations of 2,500 – 30,000 to implement the Community Heart & Soul model which engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love the most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it. See <https://www.communityheartandsoul.org/seed-grants/> for more information and to apply.
- ❖ The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently initiated the **Mentoring, Assistance, Training, and Communication Help (MATCH) Program** to provide free, broad-based technical assistance to local and tribal agencies facing roadway challenges. This program connects agencies requesting assistance with volunteers that have specific expertise to help successfully address and identify challenges. The program consists of Mentors, who are transportation safety professionals that have specific expertise related to local or tribal road safety, and Mentees. All tribal and local agencies are eligible to apply for technical assistance by a Mentor, but requests must be submitted by a local agency. For more information on this program or to apply to be a Mentor or Mentee, see https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/match/.
- ❖ The United States Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) Rural Development is accepting applications for [Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees](#). This program offers financial

assistance to eligible service providers that will construct, improve, or expand telecommunication and broadband networks in rural areas. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

More information regarding deadlines will be distributed as it becomes available. Please don't hesitate to contact Tyler Ferrell, EARPDC Director of Planning and Development, at 256-237-6741 or tyler.ferrell@earpdc.org for more information.

October 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Northern RPO meeting @ 11:00	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day	12 Transit Advisory Board (TAB) meeting @ 9	13 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting @ 10	14 Central RPO meeting @ 11	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10 Southern RPO meeting @ 10	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Transit Advisory Board (TAB) meeting @ 9	10 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting @ 10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting @ 10	18 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving	26	27
28	29	30				