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East Alabama Region Transportation Monthly Newsletter

October 2023 Issue

Calhoun Area MPO Updates

MPO Meetings

All MPO meetings have resumed to in-person with the option to attend virtually. Meeting notifications will reflect any changes if they occur. GoToMeeting has updated their web application and no longer has a call-in function. However, if you would like to attend virtually you may join any of the Calhoun Area MPO meetings from your computer, tablet, or smart phone via this link: <https://meet.goto.com/148309069>

You can also dial in using your phone.

Access Code: 148-309-069

United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679)

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3116](tel:+15713173116)

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://meet.goto.com/install>

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

September Calhoun Area MPO Project Changes

- ❖ #55 CN (100070232) Eulaton Gate Rd. Resurfacing
 - Previous estimate: \$510,302
 - Amount Project Let for: \$518,755.25
 - Increased project by \$8,453.25 for Let.
- ❖ #60 CN (100070245) Bicycle lane, striping and possible 2 ft shoulder widening along south noble street from Chestnut St to 4th St.
 - Old Target Start Date: February 23, 2024
 - New Target Start Date: December 4, 2026
 - New target start date in FY27; moved on TIP spreadsheet and increased 1% each year
- ❖ #57 CN (100070208) Resurfacing on George Douthit Drive SW from Brierwood Pl SW to SR-21
 - Old Target Start Date: December 8, 2023

New Target Start Date: January 26, 2024
-New Target Start Date in same FY; no changes needed.

East Alabama RPO Updates

❖ FY 2024 RPO Quarterly Meetings

- Northern Counties (Etowah and Cherokee): October 5
- Central Counties (Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, and Talladega): October 12
- Southern Counties (Chambers, Coosa, Randolph, and Tallapoosa): October 19

All meeting minutes and materials can be found at www.earpdc.org.

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

Projects Proposed to Let September 29, 2023

Calhoun County

none

Chambers County

- ❖ STPAA-HSIP-0015(544) for constructing the safety widening, resurfacing, bridge guardrail retrofit, guardrail installations, and traffic stripe on SR-15 (US-29) from a point 0.030 mile south of the junction of Judge Brown Rd to a point 1.010 miles south of the I-85 Overpass in Valley. Length 4.316 miles. The bracket estimate on this project is from \$4,960,220 to \$6,062,492.

Cherokee County

none

Clay County

none

Cleburne County

none

Coosa County

none

Etowah County

- ❖ STPAA-NR13(950) for constructing the roadway safety improvements (curb and ramp

installations) on SR-1 (US-431) and SR-74 at various locations southeast of Gadsden as indicated on the plans. The bracket estimate on this project is from \$471,336 to \$576,078.

- ❖ ATRP2-28-2022-028 for constructing the intersection improvements (turn lane installations, traffic signal upgrades, and traffic stripe) on SR-25 (US-411) at Whorton Bend Rd in Rainbow City. Length 0.067 miles. The bracket estimate on this project is from \$381,403 to \$466,160.
- ❖ 99-501-285-000-301 for the maintenance bridge painting on SR-77 over Clear Creek; on the I-59 Northbound On-ramp over Big Willis Creek; on I-759 (Eastbound and Westbound roadways) over the Black Creek Parkway; and on I-759 (Eastbound and Westbound Roadways) over SR-25 (US-4112) in Gadsden. The bracket estimate on this project is from \$1,054,460 to \$1,288,758.

Randolph County

none

Upcoming Funding Opportunities & Deadlines

It's not too early to be thinking ahead!

❖ **DOT Opens Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Program**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) [announced](#) the second round of its [Thriving Communities Program \(TCP\) \(FY 2023\)](#) (www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities) to support low-resourced communities in advancing transformative transportation projects. Communities in need of free technical assistance can submit a Letter of Interest by **November 15**. To learn more, visit the [Information for Communities webpage](#) (www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/information-for-technical-assistance-seekers). **New for 2023:** Technical Assistance Providers can apply for funding to offer assistance to communities within their own regions or at the national scale. Regional technical assistance funding could provide an opportunity for coalitions of RDOs, state RDO associations, or other providers to help their communities conduct planning, pre-development, grant application activities, or other assistance. Read about both the National-level and Regional-level capacity building opportunity on the [Information for Capacity Builders webpage](#) (www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/information-for-capacity-builders). Capacity builder applications are due **November 28**.

- ❖ 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>).

- ❖ 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 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.

More information regarding deadlines will be distributed as it becomes available. **Please don't hesitate to contact Eric Wright, EARPCD Planning and Development Director, at 256-237-6741 or eric.wright@earpcd.org for more information.**

October 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5 Northern RPO Meeting @ 11	6	7
8	9 EAC Closed— Holiday	10 Transit Advisory Board Meeting @ 9	11 MPO Technical Advisory Committee @ 10	12 Central RPO Meeting @ 11	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10 Southern RPO Meeting @ 11	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 MPO Technical Advisory Committee @ 10	9	10 EAC Closed— Holiday	11
12	13	14 Transit Advisory Board Meeting @ 9	15 MPO Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting @ 10	16 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 EAC Closed— Holiday	24 EAC Closed— Holiday	25
26	27	28	29	30		