

The Transportation Plan

I. Summary

The Transportation Plan is one of three principal components of the adopted, Comprehensive Plan of the City of Mobile. Transportation Planning has long been a cornerstone of the Comprehensive Plan. The long lead time necessary to plan and construct major transportation facilities requires planners to look ahead and anticipate future problems so that the transportation infrastructure is in place to alleviate these problems before they occur. Due to changes in policy, technology, financial constraints, land use patterns and other factors affecting transportation, this Plan should be continually monitored and updated so that it can effectively serve as a guide for future investments. In addition to the transportation element of this Plan, another document focusing on transportation planning in the Mobile region is the Mobile Area Transportation Study Plan (MATS). The MATS Plan, created by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), focuses on the coordination of the regional transportation process.

II. The Major Street Plan

Mobile, like most other cities in the United States, has, in the past 50 years, created a city which is almost entirely dependent upon the automobile. Originally, most streets were laid out in a minor fashion to give access to individual properties. However, as the City pushed further west, major thoroughfares were constructed to carry the traffic. The Major Street Plan element of the Transportation Plan is an attempt to develop a street network which can handle existing and future traffic capacities. Street by street, the Major Street Plan identifies a web of main east-west thoroughfares and north-south crosstown loops and recommends a minimum right-of-way for each major street. As land is subdivided or rezoned to accommodate new development, a land owner will dedicate or leave vacant a portion of his or her land to provide for the future widening of the major street. In addition to a text description of Mobile's major streets, a Major Street Plan Map shows, graphically, the planned network for our transportation system. The following are the some of the primary goals of the Major Street systems:

- Provide safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around Mobile.
- Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic and discourage non-residential traffic from using neighborhood streets.
- Provide for more continuous major street design by eliminating awkward connections and intersections, "bottlenecks", jogs and dead ends.
- Provide adequate amounts of off-street parking.

- Coordinate local and major streets with the regional and national systems.
- Integrate with other transportation types such as water, air, rail and transit.

III. Alternative Modes of Transportation: Bicycle, Pedestrian and Mass Transit

As mentioned previously, most Mobilians prefer to use their own cars, and will use public transportation only when forced to do so by intolerable traffic and parking conditions, or personal financial limitations. However, the prospect of an increased population and the continuation of the largely scattered suburban-style development will increasingly strain the existing single-occupancy transportation system. Therefore, the continual study of alternate modes of transportation is warranted.

In addition to the existing public bus system, a trolley system for the downtown area is currently being considered. Looping through downtown, the proposed trolley will eventually end its route at a proposed transportation hub at a refurbished GM&O building. In addition to these transportation options, pedestrian and bicycle corridors have also been proposed; specifically, the Crepe Myrtle Trail as part of the Western Shore Waterfront Access effort. Also, to provide for pedestrian access, all new developments in Mobile are required to provide sidewalks. A city-wide bicycle and pedestrian strategy is outlined in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, prepared by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. This plan offers specific policy statements as well as specific pedestrian/bicycle projects that could be implemented to provide Mobilians these transportation alternative throughout the city.