

Metropolitan Planning Organization
Meeting Minutes

MPO Minutes August 12, 2009

Voting Members

Mayor Todd Strange, City of Montgomery
Mayor Jim Byard, MPO Chairman
Mr. Ken Groves, Secretary, City of Montgomery
Mr. Jon Lorentson, ALDOT Sixth Division
Mayor Jerry Willis, City of Wetumpka
Mayor John Chapman, Town of Coosada
Councilman Charles Jinright, Vice Chairman, City of Montgomery
Mayor Al Kelley, City Millbrook

Non-Voting Members

Mr. Kelvin Miller

Guests

Mr. Dwight H. Davis, ALDOT
Ms. Tricia S. Grier, Hudson International Inc.
Mr. Steve Yuhasz, City of Brewton
Ms. Francine Wasden, Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Barbara Hendricks, ALDOT
Mr. David Bollie, ALDOT
Mr. Todd Stennis, Amtrak
Ms. Jill Nolin, Montgomery Advertiser
Mr. Chris Lewis, BJCTA
Mr. Dan Dealy, City of Mobile, Mayor's Office
Ms. Barbara Lawson, BJCTA
Mr. Joel Duke, City of Prattville
Mr. Richie Beyer, Elmore County Engineer
Mr. Tom Littlepage, ADECA
Ms. Brenda Jones, ADECA
Mr. Noah Flanagan, Southern High Speed Rail Commission
Mr. Dave Harris, FHWA

MPO Staff

Mr. Robert Smith
Mr. James Askew
Ms. April Delchamps
Mr. Kindell Anderson

At the regular scheduled meeting of the Montgomery Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on August 12, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. in the City of Montgomery Intermodal Transportation Facility, located at 495 Molton Street, in the Conference Room, Montgomery, Alabama, the aforementioned members were present. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jim Byard, MPO Chairman.

Mayor Byard recognized guests who were in attendance and announced that a quorum was present. The new Mayor of Coosada, John Chapman, was welcomed to the meeting. Mayor Byard proposed drawing up a resolution honoring Mayor Sam Houston's accomplishments and achievements. Mayor Byard said after Mayor Folmar and Chairman Joseph, Mayor Houston was the last remaining original signee of the Montgomery MPO. There were several guests in attendance from Brewton and Greenville. They are cities that would be on an Amtrak route from Montgomery to Mobile. Mr. Dan Dealy of Mobile is representing Mobile Mayor Sam Jones. In addition, Mr. Noah Flanagan, a member of the Southern High Speed Rail Commission, is here to discuss Amtrak possibilities for Montgomery and the representatives from around the state. Mr. Flanagan lives in Millbrook. Mr. Todd Stennis of Amtrak was in attendance as well and will do a presentation .

A motion was made to resubmit amended minutes from the previous meeting for approval at the next MPO meeting because a project for the Wetumpka Riverwalk submitted for consideration by Mayor Willis was not noted in the Minutes. The project was submitted in writing to Mr. Robert Smith. In addition, Mayor Willis was present, which is not noted in current minutes.

The next item on agenda is the consideration of the Draft 2010 UPWP, which was enclosed in the mail out for this meeting. A brief summary of the 2010 UPWP was handed out at the meeting. The following information is from the FY 2010 UPWP summary.

- \$465,101 in Federal Highway and Transit Administration Planning (PL) Funds Estimated for FY-2010, as compared to \$439,854 in FY-2009. \$180,000 in carryover (unspent funds from FY-2009).
- Total FY-2010 Draft UPWP budget is \$581,375, with Local Match being \$116,275, as compared to \$549,818 total in FY-2009 with match being \$109,964.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5303 Planning Funds have been combined with Federal Highway Administration Planning Funds to be one (1) fund for better management.
- Funds pay for 5 full-time staff person's salaries, planning and programming work related to required documents, MPO administration and other Federal requirements, general operating costs for meetings, advertising for meetings, public hearings and various other activities.
- \$56,559 in Federal Highway Administration Planning (PL) Funds, with match of \$14,140 for continuation in the development of the year 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Other consulting assistance will be acquired for a transit ridership, passenger count and general opinion survey for the Montgomery Area Transit System for planning and modeling purposes for 2010 base year and 2040 LRTP.

- MPO Staff to perform work in continued updating of the 2035 LRTP with consulting assistance from Jacobs Engineering Group and JR Wilburn and Associates in the initial existing conditions assessment with MPO and Advisory Committees and general public, analysis of projects from previous plan, 2035 no build network, 2035 E+C network, 2035 Network with 2030 Plan Projects and 2035 Build Network, Multiple Scenario Testing, balancing of projects and financing, public hearings and final document preparation.
- Fiscal Years 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Maintenance as needed and annual rebalance in FY-2010 and start the development of the 2011-2014 TIP.
- Update of the MPO Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Various other transportation planning duties such as, prior year authorized projects list report and advertisement, overall GIS database update and maintenance, traffic count updates, report writing, grant writing, etc....

The Draft 2010 UPWP was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is the proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program. A revised copy was handed out to the MPO members and guests.

Page 1: ALDOT project to resurface SR 143 from I-65 to the Elmore County line. The total cost is \$435,000 and a length of 1.02 miles. Only state funds are used for project.

Page 2: ALDOT project to resurface SR 143 from Alabama River Parkway to Coosada Road. The total cost is \$844,805 and a length of 1.73 miles. Only state funds are used for project, so no federal dollars.

Page 3: Project on I-65 bridge to retrofit and repair bridge joints between the Montgomery County line to just south of the Cobbs Ford Road exit. The total cost is \$432,640. This is a federally funded project. There was some discussion on ALDOT Bridge Maintenance Program.

Page 4: Montgomery Outer Loop project in the area north of I-85 interchange. It is for Phase 3, grade, drain, base, pave and bridge on relocation of SR 126. Project is also for the widening of I-85 southbound bridge over Millies Creek, and to grade and drain portions of ramps 1 and two. The total distance is 0.11 miles with a total cost of \$15,335,836. This is a federal high priority project.

Page 5: Montgomery Outer Loop Phase 5 from south of SR 110 to the I-85 interchange. Phase 5 BSP Outer Loop service road ramps at SR 110 and I-85 interchange. The total distance is 2.9 miles and the total cost is \$12,712,617. The project is for construction. This is a federal high priority project.

Page 6: Shoulder widening project on CR-4 (Rifle Range Rd) from CR-8 (Redland Rd) to CR-234 (Mitchell Creek Rd). The total distance is 6.61 miles. The total cost on the project is \$476,911. The project is funded with Stimulus funds. This project was submitted to use stimulus funds that became available from the shortening of the project on page 9, resurfacing of the Alabama River Parkway from SR 143 to Jackson Lake Road. The project was originally to the Alabama River Parkway Toll Road, but federal regulations will not allow federal funds to be spent on a road leading up to a Toll Facility.

Page 7: The project is a City of Millbrook project, a Transportation Enhancement project for the sidewalk construction on the southern side of Chapman Road from the intersection of Chapman and Main Street East to the Millbrook City School entrance. The total cost is \$99,475 of stimulus federal funds. The total distance is 0.45 miles.

Page 8: The project is an Auburn University of Montgomery, a Transportation Enhancement Project for landscaping along SR 271/Taylor Road with a total cost \$12,972 of stimulus funds. The project will consist of an irrigation system project and trees.

Page 9: A stimulus funds project for the resurfacing of the Alabama River Parkway resurfacing project from SR 143 to Jackson Lake Road. The total cost is \$619,000. The total distance is 1.69.

Page 10: City of Montgomery project for the resurfacing, drainage, and sidewalk improvements on South Court Street from Fairview Avenue to South Boulevard. The total distance is 1.72 miles. The scopes included are preliminary engineering, right-of-way, utilities, and construction for a total cost of \$2,025,000.

Page 11: City of Montgomery project proposed to be deleted. It is for resurfacing of High Street from Hall Street to Court Street. The city has a new rating system for determining resurfacing roads. The project did not rate bad enough to qualify for resurfacing, so we are deleting it and replacing it with another project. The total cost was \$1,000,560.

Page 12: City of Montgomery project proposed to be deleted. It is for resurfacing of Adam Avenue from Hopper Street to Court Street. The total cost \$787,405. This project also did not rate bad enough to qualify for resurfacing using the new city rating system.

Page 13: City of Montgomery project proposed to be deleted. It is for resurfacing of Federal Drive from Atlanta Highway to Congressman W.L. Dickenson Drive. The total cost \$3,800,000. This project also did not rate bad enough to qualify for resurfacing using the new city rating system.

Page 14: City of Montgomery project for the resurfacing and improve drainage on South Perry Street from Arbor Street to Fairview Avenue. It is for preliminary engineering and construction at a total cost \$1,868,500.

Page 15: City of Montgomery project for the resurfacing, landscape and streetscape improvements on West Fairview Avenue from South Court Street to I-65. The project goes with the Fairview Avenue Improvement Plan. It is for preliminary engineering and construction at a total cost \$1,868,750.

Page 16: City of Montgomery project for the resurfacing and improving drainage, where necessary, on Washington Avenue from Decatur Street to South Court Street Adams Avenue from Decatur Street to South Court Street. It is for preliminary engineering and construction at a total cost \$1,868,750.

Page 17: Project is for the construction of a new roadway from Ray Thorington Road to Taylor Road. It is a City of Montgomery project. One piece has already been constructed. It is currently named New Park Drive. The road is for construction from the end of New Park Drive to Taylor Road. The total distance is 2.1 miles. The preliminary engineering and construction cost is \$3,312,500. The estimated total cost on construction is between 10 and 15 million. The City of Montgomery is only providing \$3,312,500 towards the preliminary engineering and construction, and a group of developers is responsible for the balance of funds for the project.

Page 18: City of Prattville project for the resurfacing of East Main Street from US 31 to Virginia Street. The total cost is \$219,780. The total distance is 0.6 miles.

Page 19: City of Prattville project for the resurfacing of East Main Street from Shady Oak Lane to McQueen Smith Road. The total distance is 1 mile. The total cost is \$440,000. The funds are federal funds.

Page 20: Resurfacing of East Main Street from McQueen Smith Road to US 82 sponsored by the City of Prattville. Te total distance is 0.09 miles. The total cost is \$396,000.

Page 21: Elmore County Commission project to widen shoulders on Redland Road from Rifle Range Road to Marshall Road. The total distance 7.7 miles. The total cost is \$555,555.

Page 22: Pave shoulders and traffic striping on CR 59 (Firetower Road) from CR 8 (Redland Rd) to SR 14 at a total cost of \$279,942. The total distance is 3.88 miles.

Page 23: City of Wetumpka project for the construction and extension of the existing Riverwalk from (?) on Tallassee Street to the recreational complex on Coosa River Parkway. The total cost is \$577,113 for preliminary engineering and construction. The total distance is 0.05 miles.

The last few projects were added yesterday in the TCC meeting. It was approved unanimously. After the vote, it was noted that just because the Outer Loop projects were approved, does not mean funds are available. Mr. Dave Harris of the FHWA said that the Outer Loop Projects amended into the TIP could not be added in because a reasonably expected funding source wasn't identified. The Outer Loop projects are state projects, not MPO municipal member projects, but they have to go through the same process as all other projects. It was said by Mr. Lorentson that the ALDOT was applying for economic stimulus funds to construct the unfunded portions of the project and that if funds weren't available he realized that the FHWA would authorize the projects. Mr. Smith stated that the federal regulations further stated that a source only had to be possible source and not set in stone.

The discussion on Amtrak was moved to the end of the agenda.

The next item in the agenda is an ALDOT projects update and status. The MPO was updated on projects around the tri-county area. In addition, two classes coming up. The Speed Management is on August 25th at the Gunter Annex. The other class is on Relocation under the Uniform Act. The classes are free. A reminder was given of necessity of getting stimulus project plans to ALDOT by the deadline in October.

Mayor Willis requested that his project be moved from 2011 to 2010 because there is currently a 3 million dollar carryover. Robert Smith noted that the project's preliminary engineering is scheduled for 2010. The Mayor requested that he be given the opportunity to try to complete PE in 2010 and begin construction in 2010. Mr. Smith suggested that the project construction be left in 2011 until it is shown that the preliminary engineering will be complete in 2010. If the PE is completed in 2010, then move the construction to 2010 could be accommodated.

Mr. Dave Harris of FHWA wanted to clarify the possible repercussion of passing the Outer Loop projects when funding is not secured. A project cannot be approved dependent on funds being available. If funds are unavailable then the TIP cannot be balanced. The projects could endanger all other TIP projects approved today because the TIP is unbalanced. Mr. Lorentson of ALDOT said that they will not do anything to endanger the MPO municipal member projects. If the funds are unavailable, then the Outer Loop projects will be removed from the TIP.

Mr. Smith wanted to note that an authorized projects list for the fiscal year through July 16, 2009. Fifty million dollars in projects have been through the MPO process.

The next item on the agenda is a discussion on Amtrak. Mr. Todd Stennis presented a PowerPoint Presentation on Amtrak and Amtrak in Alabama. The PowerPoint is available upon request. Mr. Stennis expressed the need for a State of Alabama Rail Plan. The current Plan is merely an inventory of freight railway in Alabama with no passenger rail component. The steps that need to be taken to advance Amtrak in Alabama were detailed in the presentation. First a new Rail Plan that actually plans for passengers needs to be completed. The Rail Plan needs to identify possible, viable routes. Feasibility studies need to be completed on the routes. The host railroad, CSX in Alabama, and Amtrak, if they are going to operate the trains, need to be involved in the planning. The State Rail Plan does not need to be complete to do a feasibility study. They can be completed together but it always helps to have a State Rail Plan. The next thing that needs to be done is to begin to identify the funding mechanisms for capital and operating expenses. Where is the money going to come from? The study must be complete to identify how much money is needed. The next critical step is enabling legislation that authorizes a specific body to manage a passenger rail contract and manage the development of the organization. It could be ADECA, ALDOT, but Mr. Stennis urged looking at the Southern High Speed Rail Commission. Currently the Southern High Speed Rail Commission has authority to complete studies, but they do not have the authority to enter operating agreements for passenger rail service. That can be changed by enabling legislation of the state. The reason they are mentioned is that all but one route crosses state lines so Alabama is going to have to enter agreements with other states. The easiest way to do that is through a body that already exists, but the body has to have the authority. The Southern High Speed Rail Commission is ready to help.

Information was requested on the Alabama State Rail Plan situation. Mr. Stennis suggested that a group go to North Carolina and observe what they have done. ADECA was tasked with updating/completing a new Alabama State Rail Plan. There was further discussion on the future of passenger rail in the state.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m.