

Metropolitan Planning Organization
Meeting Minutes

March 29, 2010

Voting Members

Mayor Jim Byard, Chairman, City of Prattville
Mayor Todd Strange, Montgomery
Mr. Ken Groves, Secretary, City of Montgomery
Mr. John Lorentson (ALDOT)
Mayor Jon Chapman, Town of Coosada
Mayor Jerry Willis, City of Wetumpka
Commissioner Elton Dean, Montgomery County Commission
Councilman Charles Jinright, Vice Chairman, City of Montgomery

Non-Voting Members

Mr. Kelvin Miller, MATS

Guests

Mr. Richie Beyer, Elmore County
Mr. Bryan Fair, ALDOT
Mr. Walter Herron, ALDOT
Mr. David Bollie, ALDOT
Mr. Jerry Peters, Millbrook
Mr. Stuart Peters, Landmark Engineering
Mr. Kleob Loflin, Wetumpka
Mr. Derril Strickland, Goodwyn, Mills, and Cawood
Mr. Max Vaughn, Goodwyn, Mills, and Cawood
Mr. Stan Cauthen, Johnson and Associates
Mr. Joel Duke, Prattville
Mr. William Perkins, Montgomery
Mrs. Jennifer Anderson, CARPDC
Mr. Reginald Franklin, CARPDC

MPO Staff

Mr. Robert Smith
Mr. Kindell Anderson
Mr. James Askew

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on March 29, 2010 at 11:30 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Intermodal Transfer Facility, Montgomery, Alabama, the aforementioned members were present. Mayor Byard stated that a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order. Guests were also recognized.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 4 and asked Robert Smith to report on the TCC/CAC Advisory Actions. Mr. Smith reported that the TCC approved all TIP amendments and that the CAC approved all TIP amendment projects except those on pages four and five which are I-85 and I-65 sign rehabilitation projects. They believe the signs look fine and the approximately \$5 million could be better spent on resurfacing or some other work. Mayor Byard asked what the status or authority the CAC or TCC has. Mr. Smith explained that the two are purely advisory committees. Mr. Groves stated that their recommendations are not binding on the MPO Committee and that the MPO can take their advisories or not. The money is for Interstate Maintenance work only so it could be used on bridges, resurfacing, signs, or other items on the interstate system for the purposes or maintenance only.

Mr. Smith recognized the Approval of Minutes was not listed on the Agenda. He asked to revise the Agenda and add Item 4-A: Approval of the previous Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 4-A: Meeting Minutes and resolutions from the last meeting. There was no discussion about the minutes. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 5: Consider Amendments to the FY-2008-2011 TIP.

Mr. Smith described the following amendments.

Page 1) includes Bridge repair on I-65 bridges 1-8, 11 and 12 with IM funds. This includes girders, caps, and bearing pads. It will cover 5.5 miles and is for PE and CN. The PE date will change to April 2010 while the CN estimated date is likely still accurate. The total cost will be \$1,650,000.

Page 2) includes Geotechnical Investigation of all bridges and will use IM funds. This project is located at the I-65/SR-8 (US-80) interchange (Exit 167 Montgomery Airport) and will cover .70 miles. This is for PE and the start date will move to April 2010. The total cost is \$200,000 and is an 80% / 20% split.

Page 3) includes transit funding for the Autauga Rural Transit System. This will be for Transit Operating Assistance and Transit Administration Assistance for FY 2010. The total cost is \$296,074. The project includes an In-Kind Match.

Page 4) includes Sign Rehab on 92.47 miles of I-65 from Conecuh County to Chilton County. This covers almost all of the ALDOT 6th Division. This will use IM funds for the PE and CN. The PE date will move to April 2010 while the CN date is accurate. The total cost is \$3,220,000.

Page 5) includes more Sign Rehab on I-85 from I-65 to the Lee County line. This will cover 47.46 miles and use IM funds. Rehabilitation includes refacing, replacing faded signs, updating ones with old or missing information, bringing old signs up to date, meeting reflectivity standards. Mr. Jinright asked if restaurants and gas stations participated in the cost of having their business posted on the signs. Mr. Lorentson commented that each company pays for their sign on the mother board and they also pay a fee to the DOT to administer the program. This also maintains a minimum standard for the signs. The money in this project is not for any advertisement type of sign.

This project cost is \$2,260,000.

Page 6) this project is for more Interstate Maintenance work and will include Pavement Preservation/Preventative Maintenance, associated Interstate Maintenance, and Safety requirements. The project covers 4.45 miles on I-65 from the north end of Crescent Lake Bridge to the Autauga County line. The preliminary engineering date will move to April 2010 but the construction date is still accurate. The total cost is \$4,560,000.

Mayor Strange asked if this was recently done and why the ALDOT was proposing to do it again. Mr. Lorentson stated that this portion is in Elmore and Autauga County and will be resurfacing. It has been patched but needs the resurfacing. It was last worked on about 10 years ago according to Mr. Groves. Mr. Lorentson added that, with a new surface, ALDOT gets about 14 years under a higher traffic volume. This is resurfacing and would be what ALDOT calls a Mill and Fill with a minimum amount of pavement.

Page 7) is for the Autauga County Rural Transportation System. This will include ARRA Stimulus Funds for operating assistance. This is 100% Stimulus Funds and the total is \$33,737.

Mayor Strange asked if this was Autauga County's portion of the Stimulus Money which came through the County Commission Association. Mr. Smith replied that it was not. He stated that ALDOT had received about \$15,000,000 in Section 5311 Rural Transit Funds for economic stimulus in the State of Alabama and that this \$33,737 is a portion of the total amount that Autauga County Rural Transit System had requested from the ALDOT. ALDOT gave the money out to all existing rural transit systems in the State of Alabama. Montgomery didn't get any of this money because it does not operate a rural transit system. Mayor Strange asked why Autauga County has rural transit while Montgomery and Elmore do not. Mr. Smith replied that it is because Autauga County is willing to pay for it. The problem has always been the local match money. Mr. Smith said that anytime Montgomery County or Elmore County wants to have their own system or if we were to combine into one regional system they would have to put up the local match money and pay for the service that would get. Mr. Smith further said that sometimes the counties can't afford the local match money, which is why most haven't attempted to create a rural transit system. Mr. Smith said that it's a 50/50 split for operating match to pay for the drivers and the daily operations and an 80/20 split on capital purchases, and of course there are capital purchases associated with paying for new buses if a rural system or program is created.

Mr. Smith stated that if Montgomery or Elmore County wants a rural system then they would just have to file the necessary paperwork with the ALDOT and get the process started with getting approvals from the Federal Transit Administration. Mr. Smith said that each rider that uses the Autauga County Rural Transit System pays for each trip they take. The Autauga system is not self-sustaining. Mayor Byard commented that this goes back to the Montgomery busses not being able to go outside the city limits. It would be nice if the communities got together and could do something about this. It makes sense for us to do it as a

unified metro area instead of having separate ones. Mr. Smith and Groves said that in order to get this started will be the decision to do it, creating the entity, decide if we want to take the MATS system and expand it to a regional system, then we'll need an inter-regional agreements. Each entity will agree to provide a certain share of the operating cost and the match money for capital equipment. We'll need some State enabling Legislation. It would take about 3 to 4 years if we started today. It was agreed that the committee should talk about a rural system some more. Mr. Groves offered that we gather some essential facts and present that at the next meeting.

Page 8) includes an existing project for the City of Montgomery and will use STP funds for the widening and relocation of Ann St. to align with Federal Dr. This will widen the road to 5 lanes and cover .59 miles. We have an existing PE contract with Barge, Waggonner, Sumner, and Cannon. There is an engineering cost increase of \$34,984. The total cost will rise from \$334,913 to \$369,897 for engineering only.

Page 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) include projects for the Outer Loop. Mr. Smith stated that he had received an e-mail on March 23, 2010 stating that ALDOT does not have any funding for the Outer Loop. FHWA said not to include these in the TIP because the funds are not available. Mayor Strange commented on the fact that this was the second time we've done this. We got a letter on January 13 telling us to put the Outer Loop in. Mr. Smith commented that he understood it was dependant on Stimulus Funds coming in from the last round of funds called TIGER. It was a competitive grant process and the one project in Alabama which got funded was an Intermodal Freight Rail project in the Birmingham area. ALDOT requested the Outer Loop be funded in its entirety but didn't get any TIGER stimulus funds to pay for it. Mr. Lorentson added that the stimulus money (TIGER) just didn't come through. That money went to something else. If we had gotten the TIGER grant money, ALDOT wanted to have everything lined up through the MPO and through the STIP so that we could let the projects. They are ready to let. The money didn't come so we are asking you to take the Outer Loop out. Other engineering work continues because ALDOT has plenty of PE projects. These are funded, apparently, from a continuing authorization through Senator Shelby's office which amounts to about \$3 million. Mayor Strange wanted to make sure that if funds became available then the MPO would have time to react. Mr. Smith said we could do it in a minimum of seven days and a special, called meeting if needed. Mayor Byard asked for a vote to amend all of the projects except those on pages 9-13 for the Outer Loop. The amendments passed unanimously.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 6: MPO Separate Agreement and Operations Manual Update. Mr. Smith stated that the current Operations Agreement is dated from 1996 and it needs to be updated ASAP. There are no major changes but it needs editorial changes because we have had members come and go. In order to get this done, we'll need to get signatures and County Commission, Municipality, and town

resolutions passed. This Operations Agreement gets put into, and is just a part of, the Operations Manual. The Operations Manual Committee consisted of Mr. Joe Faulk, Mr. Frank Houston, Mayor Byard, and Mr. Jinright. Mayor Byard said that the old committee members that were not there would be replaced by existing elected officials serving. No vote was taken on the measure. Mayor Byard asked to wait on voting so that everyone could review and understand the document. Members voted affirmatively to delay voting on the Operation Manual, but gave the OK to update the three c's (3C's) agreement, as it is required that the MPO do this.

Mayor Strange asked about previous comments in other meeting about whether having another MPO in the area would be beneficial. Mr. Groves replied that we need the results from the 2010 Census to make a good decision about other options. Preliminary counts should come out pretty soon. The census will also be counting prison populations this year. Mr. Smith pointed out that a minimum population of 50,000 is needed to create an MPO. He said and demonstrated that the urbans clusters of Prattville, Millbrook and Coosada may be combined, along with other unincorporated portions and between all of that there might be enough population to form a new north river MPO.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 7: Amtrak Gulf Breeze High-Speed Rail Grant Match Request. Mr. Smith reported that the grant request to ADECA was approved for \$200,000. ADECA and the City of Montgomery are leading or pushing for the rail study. Now the MPO will need to come up with a 50% match. We drafted a letter to all 6 cities in the corridor with an original stop along Amtrak in 1995. Our idea was to make this a three way split of \$66,666 or six way split of \$33,333. The cities include Mobile, Montgomery, Birmingham, Brewton, Atmore, and Greenville. With budget constraints, however, we wanted to open it up to create partnerships to lessen the amounts each city would pay. Mayor Strange said he has not heard from anyone else except Sam Jones, Mayor of Mobile and said that Mayor Jones said that if they could then they would. He asked if the MPO is willing to share the cost on a pro-rata basis with each individual entity. Mayor Byard commented that he thinks we should all share because even though the train stop would be in Montgomery, it is still his train stop as much as anyone else's. He agreed that a pro-rata basis should be the way to divide the cost. Mr. Groves commented that there was a lot of interest from the contacted cities but no pledges of support for funding as of yet. He suggested actively campaigning for the money. We need to arrive at some reasonable dollar amounts for all the other jurisdictions that will benefit, sending those requests out and encouraging them to participate. If we can't get them to pledge in a reasonable period of time we'll decide if we can handle the cost ourselves. Mr. Jinright asked who was in charge of the plan. Mr. Groves said that our MPO is leading it but partnering with Mobile, Birmingham, and ADECA. ADECA wrote the application so another possibility is we could ask the Governor to pay the match from state funds. Mayor Strange said a letter needs to be sent to Brewton because there was not one sent originally.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 8: Transportation Projects Status (ALDOT). Mr. Bollie stated that all of the MPO stimulus projects have now been let. All but one of them came in at much lower cost than expected. ALDOT had hoped that some other states would not obligate their funds by the deadline but they all did. Since all funds were obligated by the deadline there will not be any redistribution of funds. If there are any funds left over from your individual projects, on a project by project basis, then you have until September 30, 2010 to use it for any overruns on that project or authorize it to start work on a new project. It is 100% “free” money. Madison Avenue won’t have any money left over but Perry Hill Road certainly may. It will not be a shift of money between projects because they all stand alone. Be aware of that and be ready to obligate it if you have money left over. You need to have a contract. It cannot be used for design, but construction only.

Mayor Strange asked what kind of projects the shortfall money, between the allocated and the bid amount, could be used on. It can be used on P.E. work, resurfacing. The work must be done on Functionally Classified roads and it must go through the MPO process. Mr. Smith said he believes that it could also be spent on Transit.

Mayor Strange asked if there was any updates on the Maxwell Boulevard project. Mr. Lorentson commented that there were delays due to the drainage and utility issues and those types of issues will continue while doing ground work. ALDOT is dealing with different claims by the contractor. The contract is for 300 days from the Let date. There have been some time suspensions for up to 60 days and there may be more. It is going to be a long, drawn out project due to dealing with an old city street and not knowing what all is in the ground. Mr. Lorentson did not think a year would be long enough to finish the project. He estimated it closer to 1.5 years. Mayor Strange thanked ALDOT for helping to make the roadway more presentable for the Maxwell Air Show. He then asked if the road work was nearly complete from the Alabama River Bridge to the I-65 / I-85 interchange. ALDOT reported that it has a deadline of May 15, 2010. Mr. Lorentson said it will have traffic on it by then. There have been some short delays but it should be complete by the end of June, 2010.

Mayor Byard moved to Agenda Item 9: Other Business, Mr. Smith reported the LRTP is moving along. Public Hearings were held in February at several locations in the MPO area. All of the information we have, such as Permitting or Socio-Economic, is on the website www.montgomerympo.org . You can follow the link “2035 LRTP” if you would like to see the presentation or a forecast or other information.

Mayor Strange asked about using city busses or the trolley in other counties for transporting people to events. Mr. Groves commented that the practice was stopped via a Cease and Desist Order from the Federal Transit Administration Attorney in Atlanta. The only way to do it is if we have an elected official and we’re looking at transportation related issues or if it’s an official need. We could take all the elected

officials to a transportation related event in Atlanta, as an example. We basically have to let private charters do all the rest. Mayor Strange estimated about 110,000 people attended the air show at Maxwell and that perhaps 60% of them parked and rode busses to the Maxwell Base. Mayor Byard commented that a Park and Ride option is not for everyone but when gas prices approach \$4.00 per gallon it may makes a good alternative. We also have the Ride Share program which provides an emergency ride so people will not be stranded in one location. Mr. Groves commented that he received many calls when gas was at \$3.00 per gallon. We should all be thinking about the future and our relationship to personal automobiles which will have to change at some point.

There were no other comments. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.