

Metropolitan Planning Organization
Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2006

Voting Members

Mayor Bobby Bright, MPO Chairman
Mr. Ken Groves, Secretary, City of Montgomery
Councilor Janet May, City of Montgomery
Mr. Randall Estes, ALDOT Sixth Division
Mr. Todd Strange, Montgomery County Commission
Mr. Joe Faulk, Elmore County Commission
Councilor Charles Jinright, City of Montgomery
Mayor Frank Houston, Town of Coosada

Non-Voting Members

Mr. Tim Omick

Guests

Mr. Bill Couch, ALDOT
Ms. Barbara Hendrick, ALDOT
Dr. Emmanuel C. Oranika, Ph.D., ALDOT
Mr. Randy Sain, SAIN Associates
Ms. Carol Hall, ALDOT
Mr. Greg Clark, CARPDC
Mr. Dave Harris, FHWA

MPO Staff

Mr. Robert Smith, City of Montgomery, Transportation Planning Division
Mr. James Askew, City of Montgomery, Transportation Planning Division

At the regular scheduled meeting of the Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on August 17, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall, Montgomery, Alabama, the aforementioned members were present. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bobby Bright, MPO Chairman.

The Chairman (Mayor Bright) recognized guests who were in attendance and announced that a quorum was present. Mr. Randall Estes introduced Ms. Carol Hall from the ALDOT. She was recently appointed County Transportation Engineer for the Sixth Division (6th). Mr. Estes said

that among her other duties that she will coordinate MPO related and city project work and be the new contact. Mr. Groves recognized Mr. Randy Sain of Sain Associates as a guest as well.

Upon Commissioner Strange's request, Mr. Estes explained that his daughter had been in a serious auto accident on Monday in the Piedmont area of Alabama. He said that she was making minimal, optimistic progress each day but had serious brain trauma and was not fully conscious at the time. Mr. Estes thanked MPO members and others for their thoughts and prayers.

Mayor Bright asked if everyone had read the minutes from the July 6, 2006 MPO meeting and if there was any discussion about them. There was no discussion; a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the July 6, 2006 meeting and the minutes were adopted as written.

Mayor Bright went to agenda item five (5) and asked Mr. Ken Groves for an explanation of the final Draft FY-2007 UPWP. Mr. Groves stated that the UPWP document was the document that outlined the MPO Staff's work activities for FY-2007 and also showed how much money was allocated by task. He also said that the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) recommended the Final Draft UPWP document for adoption by the MPO during their meeting on August 15, 2006. Mr. Robert Smith said that the UPWP had not changed since the first draft.

Mr. Robert Smith said that the CAC failed to convene a quorum. Mr. Smith said that the CAC had been briefed on the Draft FY-2007 UPWP at its June 2006 meeting and were re-briefed by members in attendance at the August 15, 2006. Mayor Bright asked if the CAC had taken any action and Mr. Groves and Mr. Smith stated that they made no official action since no quorum was present.

Commissioner Todd Strange said that he read every word of the UPWP document. He then made a statement in the form of a question and said "this only the specific methodology and distribution of the budget and has nothing to do with specific projects that the MPO routinely looks at". Mr. Groves said in response to his question that the UPWP only describes what the MPO Staff does during any given year and how much money is budgeted for a particular task. Mr. Groves said that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was an example of a

document that describes projects and priorities that the MPO Staff develops and gets paid from the UPWP to do the task.

Mr. Smith then explained the highlights of the FY-2007 UPWP in detail. Councilwoman Janet May said that the City of Montgomery had been advertising for the past month or so on minority participation in Transit System contracts and City of Montgomery contracts and that it is at 2%. She then asked why is it only 2%? Mr. Groves stated that it can be any amount you want but that the city, realistically, gets about a 2% certified Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) participation rate. Mr. Groves further said that last year we had it set at 30% but only got about one quarter percent.

Ms. May asked if people were not being hired or just not taking advantage of the program and asked what the problem was. She stated that the 2% is too low and looks ridiculous to have only a 2% participation rate published in the newspaper. She suggested setting the goal higher and going for 30%. Mayor Bright agreed. Mr. Robert Smith stated that they could only count “Certified” disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) and the ALDOT has the list of DBE’s at the State of Alabama. Mr. Smith also gave an example of actual minority involvement and actual DBE participation with the Transit system and said that the majority of the transit system budget goes toward operating the transit system of which is operated by majority African American employees. He said that the employees couldn’t be counted. He further said that the small amount that goes towards capital purchases at the transit system is done by minority businesses, but not certified DBEs.

Mr. Smith also said that the intermodal transfer facility has two minority firms doing work, but said that only one is a certified DBE. Ms. May argued that they are employees and not businesses. Mr. Groves added that the businesses used for transit provide parts, supplies, and fuel to keep buses running.

Mayor Bright asked if it would hurt the city to publish 30% but only attain a quarter of a percent for example. Mr. Groves answered that it could hurt and that city had been investigated, over Civil Rights complaints in the past, for other reasons. He said that the investigation was due to complaints filed by the Transportation Coalition and not due to failure to reach a particular DBE

goal. He said that the complaints filed by the Transportation Coalition were determined to be unfounded.

Mayor Bright asked what the right to do was. Mr. Groves said that the right thing to do was anything that he Mayor Bright wanted, and also said that they had tried setting higher goals in the past, but that the attainment still came in low. Commissioner Strange then asked if the Transportation Coalition had filed a lawsuit because of an advertised DBE goal and the attainment of the goal came in much lower than the goal itself. Mr. Groves then said that the Coalition had filed the complaint due to other unfounded civil right issues, not because of any DBE goal.

Mayor Bright suggested that the City of Montgomery publicize a 30% DBE goal in the newspaper and Ms. May agreed. Mayor Bright asked if the DBE goal is a part of the UPWP document being voted on. Mr. Groves and Mr. Smith said that it was not, and said that it would be handled in a separate process. Mr. Smith said that the majority of the DBE goal attainment could come from intermodal transfer facility construction and some other transit related items. Mr. Groves said that DBE participation would be gotten in the intermodal transfer facility construction later with painting contracts and brick masonry work.

Ms. May suggested that we should be trying to get some participation in that \$20 million project. Mr. Groves agreed and said that the goal is set at 30% but it will not be attained. Ms. May expressed her desire to help the city recruit some DBEs to help reach the goal. Mr. Groves welcomed the idea, but added that the city had done that by hiring consultants in the past to help recruit DBEs. Councilwoman May said that the consultants did not do any good.

Mr. Groves said that anyone that is hired to do work on federal projects had to be someone that had been qualified or willing to be qualified through ALDOT's list. Ms. May said that she is aware of the ALDOT list and is more than happy to work with Planning Staff, and Mr. Groves said that he was happy to take assistance in the endeavor. Mayor Bright suggested that we get Ms. May involved to help recruit more minority involvement.

Mr. Randall Estes offered several comments about the realistic side of the subject. He said that the ALDOT has considerable difficulty reaching 7-8% DBE participation. He said that we needed to go into this with some realism. He said that he was not disagreeing with 30% nor

agreeing with 3%, but through many of the projects including Hyundai, that there is sometimes because of the area of expertise and those businesses that can be certified, ALDOT oftentimes has trouble reaching their goals as well. Ms. May offered to help businesses reach certification. Mayor Bright said the city had helped to reach its DBE goals, with the baseball stadium, through the use of mentoring and joint ventures. He said that the City of Montgomery got more than 30% minority participation on the baseball stadium project.

Mr. Groves stated that he believes most of the contractors, which the city uses, do try to hire minority workers and subcontractors. Mayor Bright further said that he believe that most of the general contractors that are non-DBE see the benefit of hiring minority firms to do subcontracting work with the City of Montgomery if they hire minority firms to do subcontracting work. Mayor Bright also said that the City of Montgomery can't force people to bid or do work for the City of Montgomery. He said that the City of Montgomery does have a more favorability towards trying to diversify projects and promote minority participation, but it is actually getting out there and getting people to do the work. Mayor Bright also said that he has encountered the problem of minority firms not having the general contracting license or bonding requirement to bid on proposals to perform the work on projects. He also said that when most of the general contractors when the bids that they have well over 30% do the work on projects.

Councilor May suggested improving the flow of information so that contractors will know sooner that a project will be coming and, therefore, have more time to prepare bids before a deadline. Mr. Smith said that ASU has a DBE program and the City of Montgomery may be able to have a meeting with them to discuss how to better disseminate information about contracting opportunities with the City of Montgomery.

Mayor Bright asked for, and received, a motion to approve the UPWP. The motion was seconded and carried to approve the FY-2007 UPWP.

Mayor Bright went to agenda item number six (6) concerning the FY 2006-2008 TIP Amendment projects. Mr. Robert Smith explained that project EC-7-AM is being amended for a cost increase from \$400,000 to \$480,609. He said that the project will be to widen, level, and resurface 2.85 miles. Mayor Bright entertained a motion. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the project amendment. It is the only TIP project needing a vote in today's

meeting. Mr. Smith and Mr. Groves explained that the TIP transportation enhancement project TE-2-AM for the Town of Coosada was only for informational use and no vote was needed on it.

Mr. Groves moved into the General Session and reminded everyone of the cost increases taking place in all road projects. He said that the cost of asphalt, alone, is up 40% in just two years. He said that the City of Montgomery can no longer use its own crews for these projects and that that alone causes all of the City of Montgomery projects to have to be increased. Mr. Estes explained that this came about due to enforcement of a rule by the new Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. Groves added that it was the intent of Congress to bid everything in which Federal money was spent on. He asked each MPO member to plan ahead and select their projects carefully. He also asked them be wary of the timetable needed to get projects started and to expect their costs to increase over that time.

Mr. Smith asked to change the agenda item seven (7) to include the Mitylene, Chantilly Parkway/Vaughn Road area improvements for Commissioner Strange. Mayor Bright and Mr. Groves said that that could be handled in general session.

Ms. Carol Hall with ALDOT Sixth Division presented information that she and Mr. Smith gathered and collaborated on projects in the area I-85/Mitylene/Chantilly Pkwy area. Ms. Hall started the discussion with interchange improvements on I-85 on SR-8 (US-80, Mitylene Interchange) and said it would involve reconstruction of the present interchange configuration and moving SR-126 to the north. She said that the intersection of SR-126 (Towne Lakes Blvd.) and US-80 would be redesigned. She said that the cost was estimated at \$12,000,000. She said that the project would be done in several phases.

Commissioner Strange asked for clarification in what will be done to improve traffic flow off of I-85 and onto I-85 from what will be an extremely busy area with banks, shopping and industrial businesses moving in. Ms. Hall commented, again, about the realignment of the roadways and intersections to improve the traffic flow. She said that actual plans will not be known until the preliminary engineering is completed by Goodwyn, Mills, and Cawood, Inc with Skipper Consulting doing traffic engineering work. Mr. Estes said that SR-126 would be tied to Technacenter Drive at a different location further away from Atlanta Highway, due to the limited

location options to move SR-126. Mr. Estes also said that moving the point where SR-126 ties into the next interchange was an option and that it was being looked at.

Mr. Estes was asked if the Indians were planning to assist with a project to make it easier for them to access their land. Mr. Estes stated that the Indians have not made any commitment to assist but that partnering on a project is an option. He went on to explain that there is a possible consideration to add an interchange at Wares Ferry Road between Mitylene and Waugh. He said these are just ideas coming from studies and not planned yet. He added that the interchange could be in addition to the Outer Loop Road interchange but that would take more studies and examination. He said again that those were just ideas at that point.

Commissioner Strange commented that an ALDOT study showed the interchange and Outer Loop Road project, from Waugh to US 231, would cost nearly one hundred million dollars. Mayor Bright added that if we could get the I-85 corridor to Mississippi reprogrammed with the Outer Loop Road it would be a huge benefit. Mr. Groves added that Senator Shelby said he would consider that idea as long it was legal. Mr. Estes gets back to the discussion of the Mitylene exit and reiterated that SR-126 on the north will be reconfigured and US-80 on the south will be relocated and improvements to the interchange will be made.

Ms. Hall then said that the next project of concern which was the intersection of Ryan Road at Chantilly Parkway. She said the concept was to realign Ryan Road so that it comes straight into Chantilly Pkwy. Mr. Groves said that it is not in the TIP but that the city has spoken with some developers about improving access there. Commissioner Strange pointed out the fact that Ryan Road is a county road which ties into a state road located in the police jurisdiction of Montgomery.

Several members commented that the landowners do not want their property altered for fear of it losing some value. Mr. Strange said there was a meeting one month ago with representatives from the City of Montgomery Traffic Engineering, an ALDOT 6th Division Engineering personnel, the County Engineer for Montgomery County, and land owners who agreed something needed to be done. He said he has not seen any action and is concerned that someone will be killed before any action is taken. Mayor Bright commented, again, that the landowners

want top dollar for their investment and are not willing to give up land easily. Mr. Groves suggested that a traffic study (microscopic traffic simulation) be performed on this intersection.

Ms. Hall said the next project would add an additional lane on I-85 from 1.5 miles east of SR-271 (Taylor Rd.) to the Outer Loop Interchange. She said that the project would also involve widening bridges also. She said that the cost would be \$11,700,000 and that the letting date was scheduled for November 2011. She said that the project would be performed in conjunction with the Mitylene Interchange project. She also said that the Preliminary Engineering (PE) portion of the project will cost \$600,000.

She went to the next project, which involves the relocation of SR-8 (US-80) at the I-85 Interchange. She said that the project would move US-80 to the south in order to align with East Chase Blvd at SR-110 (Chantilly Parkway). The relocated section will run .5 miles eastward toward Mt. Meigs and contain 5 lanes. She said that the estimated cost is \$1,200,000.

Ms. Hall then went to the next project that would widen SR-110/Vaughn Rd from Chantilly Parkway (SR-110) to the Montgomery Outer Loop Interchange to five lanes at a cost of \$6,000,000.

She then went to the next project which included the resurfacing of CR-101 in Downing from SR-6 (US-82) to CR-40, then CR-40 from CR-101 to CR-85, south of Pike Road. She said that the project cost is \$994,000 and was complete but not closed out.

In conclusion she said that there was no project currently planned for Ryan Road in Montgomery County.

Mayor Bright asked if there was any more discussion. There was no further discussion or business and the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.