

Metropolitan Planning Organization
Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2007

Voting Members

Mayor Bobby Bright, MPO Chairman, City of Montgomery
Mr. Randall Estes, ALDOT Sixth Division
Mr. Todd Strange, Montgomery County Commission
Mayor Jo Glenn, City of Wetumpka
Mayor Frank Houston, City of Coosada
Mayor Jim Byard, MPO Vice Chairman, City of Prattville
Mr. Joe Faulk, Elmore County Commission

Non-Voting Members

Mr. Bill Tucker

Guests

Mr. Kelvin Miller, MATS
Mr. Jerry Peters, City of Millbrook
Mr. Richie Beyer, Elmore County
Mr. David Bollie, ALDOT
Mr. Greg Clark, CARPDC
Mr. Randy Sain, SAIN Associates
Ms. Carla Kruger, City of Montgomery, Citizen
Mr. John W. Lambert, Citizen
Mr. Roger Collier, Johnson & Associates
Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Barnes, Citizen
Mr. Emmanuel C. Oranika, ALDOT
Ms. Maria I. Chappell, Citizen
Mr. Bill Chappell, Citizen
Mr. John V. Smith, Jr., Citizen
Mr. Chris Conway, City of Montgomery
Mr. Patrick Dunson, City of Montgomery
Mr. Wyman Higgins, Citizen
Ms. Pat Harris, Citizen
Mr. Crews Reaves, Citizen
Ms. Suzanne Reaves, Citizen

MPO Staff

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

At the special called meeting of the Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 20, 2007 at 11:00 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. Mayor Bright asked Mr. Robert Smith if a quorum was present and if there were any introductions of guests. Mr. Smith confirmed that a quorum was present to conduct business. Two guests: Ms. Carla Kruger and Ms. Pat Harris were recognized. Mr. Mayor stated that they could express their views during the General Session portion of the Agenda.

Mayor Bright moved to Agenda Item #4 and asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes from the August 30, 2007 meeting. There was a motion to adopt, seconded, and the minutes were adopted.

Mayor Bright moved to Agenda item #5 – Final FY 2008-2011 TIP, Public Involvement Summary, and Environmental Justice Report documents. Mr. Smith noted that there was a 14 day public comment period which ended on September 14, 2007. Advertisements went out to all three counties in newspapers and the document went to all review sites and one public involvement meeting was held. He said that a total of 39 comments were received on the draft TIP document; most comments were opposing the Perry Hill Rd. project from Harrison Rd. to Atlanta Highway and other comments were in support of Ann St. and Zelda Road projects. He also said that the TCC met yesterday and approved the final TIP document and supporting documents. He said that the CAC did not have a quorum yesterday but did discuss the document and at the previous meeting the draft TIP document was approved by an 8-2 vote. Mr. Smith explained the purpose of the environmental justice report document and noted that it was a cursory look at each TIP project's potential impact on the environment, if any at all. He said that most of the projects would have a separate environment process if required during the preliminary engineering stage and that some of the initial information would change as needed.

For the TIP itself, Mr. Smith gave a breakdown of projects and cost by jurisdiction. There are 33 MPO jurisdiction related projects that total up to \$37,150,312.00 and multiple projects on the State of Alabama side in various other categories totaling \$216,306,000. Mayor Bright asked if there was any further discussion on any project or the TIP document as a whole. Commissioner

Strange stated that he had received a phone call about the Perry Hill project from Harrison to Atlanta Highway and wanted to know whether it was a City or State project. Mr. Estes of ALDOT stated that the project was indeed a City of Montgomery project and had met all the necessary requirements to be included in the TIP document. Mr. Strange stated that he was concerned about the project and wanted to be sure that the acquisition of land from persons living on this roadway to complete this project was in the best practice of the process. Mayor Bright asked that everyone who was in attendance about the Perry Hill project to raise their hand. Mayor Bright then stated that he has been concerned about the widening but that the Perry Hill project has been discussed before he was Mayor and people were working toward that goal to widen and make Perry Hill more accessible to traffic and eliminate congestion in that corridor. Mayor Bright stated that today is a continued exploration of the interest of trying to improve that artery of traffic. Mayor Bright stated that the engineers did give him a report of their assessment to widen the road. But it is still his opinion that he is not in favor of widening a road unless absolutely needed. While he is not sold on the project it has been on the table for the City of Montgomery and MPO for some time. Mayor Bright noted that the concern is on Perry Hill Road from Harrison to Atlanta Highway and not the Perry Hill at I-85 interchange project or that segment to Harrison Rd. He noted that the process, as it stands now, is to continue with the plans to fix the Perry Hill Road interchange and widen the segment to Harrison Rd, and after which a traffic analysis and additional public involvement meeting will be conducted to determine if action on Perry Hill Rd. from Harrison to Atlanta Highway needs to be taken. At this time he is in agreement with this process and there is no need to interfere with the project or process at this time due to the steps in the process that are already in place. Mayor Bright asked Mr. Smith and Mr. Estes if his assertion was correct and they both agreed. Mayor Bright stated that more asphalt is not always the answer within a residential area although about half of the affected area is commercial, institutional, or churches. It still does not mean widening is necessary and I am not entirely sold yet. However, the project does need to keep moving.

Commissioner Strange asked would it be appropriate that any motion made be articulated with the proper language that we (MPO) insist that before the next step takes place, in regards to this project, it comes back to the MPO? Mayor Bright stated yes. Mr. Smith explained that based on the language of the letter from ALDOT on April 26, 2007 from the May 2, 2007 public involvement process that the proper steps were already in place. Commissioner Strange asked would the decision come back to the MPO? Mr. Smith stated yes, that it would come back to the

MPO and the City for approval. Commissioner Strange stated that he would like final approval. Mayor Bright agreed and stated that he would also like to make sure it comes back to the MPO. Mayor Bright reiterated his belief that widening may not always be the answer.

A gentleman asked the question of once the interchange project at Perry Hill Rd is finished does it not make it an easier process to complete the widening from Harrison to Atlanta Highway. Mayor Bright stated that yes I have asked that question, but the Perry Hill interchange at I-85 has a different purpose of unclogging the interchange than that of the Harrison to Atlanta Highway project. But your question is correct. Mr. Barnes stated that his fear is that once the interchange project is complete, the Harrison to Atlanta Highway project would be an open door. Mayor Bright stated that 90% of the persons who attended the public forum wanted the improvements to continue to Harrison Rd. saying that it was needed. Based on the comments received the majority still wanted the improvements to take place at the interchange to Harrison. Mr. Barnes stated that people are currently driving at high speeds and current residents have a hard time getting out into the road as it is now, so if the road is widened the conditions may only worsen.

Commissioner Strange noted that we are already committed to the improvements on the interchange. Mayor Bright clarified the Commissioners statement. Mr. Smith stated that no new traffic would be added but the project at the Perry Hill interchange would unclogged congestion that is already there.

Mr. Chris Conway stated that the two projects are being designed so they can function independently for a time, so that traffic can be assessed to determine future action northward on Perry Hill. There are still traffic generators such as Goodwyn Jr. High, the Veterans Administration Hospital, which have no access from any other road and we (the City) also have a responsibility to provide the persons using those facilities with access.

Mayor Bright asked if there was any more discussion about the Perry Hill road project. Ms. Greta Duckett stated that she lives across from the VA Hospital and does not have trouble getting out of her driveway. Mayor Bright asked if there was a particular time of the day in which she had trouble. Ms. Duckett stated that she didn't really, the only time would be when school lets out the traffic gets backed up. Mayor Bright stated that another portion of the project was to improve the intersection at the school. Ms Duckett stated that the traffic would still be backed up

due to the crossing guard. Commissioner Strange stated that his commitment to the gentleman that contacted him was that he would vote against going ahead with this project at Harrison, but heard what he has heard today about having the project revisited and reviewed at a later time meets his concerns. Mayor Bright stated that it is not time to vote on the project, and the project approved at this time to go ahead is the Perry Hill interchange project and widening to Harrison Rd. Anything further is as the State recommended which requires performing a traffic assessment. Ms. Duckett stated that it is in the TIP and has \$8 million dollars allotted to it. Mr. Smith stated that although it is in the TIP, a project is not finally approved until the City has signed off on the contract with the State to proceed. Mayor Bright stated that they would not push a project on people if they didn't want it.

Mayor Bright asked was there any other action to be taken on the document. Mr. Smith explained the rest of the changes to the Final document. Mayor Bright asked if there were any questions or issues. Mr. Reaves asked if the interchange improvements at Perry Hill were being done to add turn lanes, widen roads or for the Loop? Mr. Smith stated it was for the Loop ramp. Mayor Bright asked for any other questions and if not was there a motion to approve as amended. There was a motion to approve as amended, seconded, and the FY 2008-2011 TIP document was approved as amended

Mayor Bright moved on to Agenda item No. 6. Mr. Smith then asked Mr. David Bollie (ALDOT) to give an update of the current projects in progress. Mr. Bollie stated that:

- SR14 at SR 143 (Town of Elmore): A preferred alignment has been decided on and a public hearing will be held as soon as the environmental assessment is completed.
- Tallapoosa River widening on US 231: scope of work is complete, the survey is complete Currently we (ALDOT 6th Div.) are reviewing proposals for the design consultant.
- Perry Hill Rd. from I-85 to Harrison Rd.: 30% review should be taking place next month.
- Various Streets in the TIP: Has turned into Madison Ave, and it is almost time to perform the 30% review on that project.
- Coosada Parkway on Coosada Road to SR 14: Construction should be starting today.

- Fort Toulouse Road: Bike lanes are close to being finished.

Commissioner Joe Faulk asked when would be a reasonable time frame for the public hearing to take place for the SR 14 and SR 143 project. Mr. Bollie stated that the environmental assessment period can take a couple of months to complete, it could be 6 months and then it is approved by the FHWA and it could be sent back and forth until it's right. Mayor Jo Glenn, of the City of Wetumpka, asked was there any way to fast track the process. Mr. Bollie stated that that decision would come from the federal government. Mayor Bright noted that while there have been several meetings in the past couple of months, they have been needed to approve this document.

Mayor Bright moved to Agenda Item #7 – General Session. Mr. Smith noted that Mr. David Sikes, Chairman of the CAC, wanted to address the MPO. Mr. Sikes noted that there are 8 vacancies on the CAC and that is one of the reasons for the lack of a quorum at the last CAC meeting. Of the vacancies, 5 are in Montgomery, 2 are in Prattville, and 1 is in Autauga County. He said that the CAC Bylaws require that re-elections take place in January and he would like to have the names for nominations of the new committee by the next meeting (currently scheduled for November 13, 2007). Mayor Byard asked if Mr. Smith could send him the Bylaws for selecting new persons to be appointed to the CAC committee and a current list.

Ms. Greta Duckett stated that she wanted to thank the committee for considering the public's comments, and still thinks that more could be done to include the general public about the activities of the MPO. However, the CAC does a good job of keeping people informed. She said that at the last meeting she volunteered to serve on the CAC, but they meet on days that she cannot get away from work. She said that she will continue to do her part and said thanks for taking everyone's comments into consideration.

Ms. Harris stated that she also appreciates the consideration but thinks that there are alternatives to make the traffic flow better on Perry Hill Road. Additionally, the crossing guard working at Goodwyn School keeps the traffic moving while the one at St. Bede Catholic School does not have a conception of traffic. Ms. Harris stated that as the traffic and school procedures have changed it has gotten worse but believes that something can be done to fix this. Mayor Bright

requested that she submit a written proposal and they (City) would see what they could work out with the school.

Mayor Bright entertained a motion to adjourn. The motion was made, seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.