

**Mobile Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization and
Technical Citizens Committee Meeting
January 10th, 2007, 10:00 a.m.
SARPC Boardroom**

MPO Members Present

Mayor Sam Jones
Mr. Russell J. Wimberly
Mr. Norman Walton
Mayor Ron Davis
Mr. Joe Ruffer
Mr. Jackie Glasgow (Rep. Mr. Ron Poiroux)
Councilman William Carroll
Ms. Paul B. Dicks (Rep. Mr. Bob Williams)
Commissioner Mike Dean
Ms. Betty Donald (Rep. Mayor Ken Williams)
Mr. Bill Couch (Rep. Mr. Robert Jilla)
Mayor Jim Trout
Mr. Dave Harris (Rep. Mr. Mark Bartlett)

TCC Members Present

Mr. Kevin Harrison
Ms. April Delchamps
Ms. Betty Donald
Mr. Tom Piper
Mr. Russell J. Wimberly
Mr. Craig Thomas
Ms. Margie Wilcox
Mr. Joseph Threadcraft
Mr. John Bell
Ms. Jennifer White
Ms. Ginny Russell
Mr. Jackie Glasgow
Mr. Bill Metzger
Mr. John Murphy
Mr. Donald Watson
Mr. James Foster
Mr. Bob Vogtner
Ms. Sandra Forbus
Mr. Dave Harris
Mr. Chris Azabuke (Rep. Dr. Emmanuel Oranika)

Guests:

Mr. Dan Murtaugh, Press Register
Mr. Dwight S. McGough, MAWSS

MPO Members Absent

Mayor William Bush
Mayor Don Nelson
Mayor Stan Wright
Councilman Reggie Copeland

TCC Members Absent

Ms. Alfredo Acoff
Mr. Bill Sisson
Mr. Bay Haas
Mr. Larry Cook
Mr. Bay Haas
Mr. Bert Hoffman
Mr. Cornell L. Tatum
Ms. Shayla Jones Beaco

Mr. Devereaux Bemis, MHDC
Mr. Randy Delchamps, Mobile Chamber Transportation Coalition
Mr. Joe Tucker, City of Chickasaw
Mr. Gerald Easley, City of Chickasaw
Mr. A.W. "Skeeter" Fillingim, City of Chickasaw
Ms. Tiffany Miller (Rep. Casi Calloway), Mobile Baykeeper
Councilman Troy Ephriam, City of Prichard
Mr. Paul Griggs, Volkert

Mayor Sam Jones called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m., January 10, 2007. Motion was made by Mr. Norman Walton to approve the Minutes of the August 30, 2006 MPO/TCC meeting as mailed, second by Mr. Jackie Glasgow. Motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Jones called to order the third item on the agenda, Approve Minutes of December 20, 2006 TCC/CAC Meeting.

Mr. Kevin Harrison said this was our December 20th Technical Coordinating Committee meeting, any TCC/CAC member can make a motion for those minutes.

There were no further discussions, motion to Approve Minutes of December 20, 2006 TCC/CAC Meeting was made by Ms. Ginny Russell, second by Mr. John Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Jones called to order the fourth item on the agenda, Updating the Adopted FY 2006 - 2010 Transportation Improvement Program as Part of the Mobile Area Transportation Study (Resolution).

Mr. Harrison said in your folders you will find several items. First is a fully updated copy of the TIP. Second is a two page sheet of the changes since we last met. If I can get everybody to turn to page seven of the updated TIP. This is the schedule of the Attributable funds, the funds that the Mobile MPO is in charge of scheduling. As a results of the December 20th TCC, there were several changes made to this. The first is project number two, Old Shell, Hillcrest to Schillinger, the \$400,000 utilities was moved from 2008 to 2009 and the construction for that project, 8.15 million dollars, was moved from 2010 to 2009. There is some state money tied to that project, 2.5 million dollars, in the State Any Area Funds. The 2.5 million dollars was pushed to 2010. At the TCC meeting we decided to push our section back and that whole project is in 2009. Project number five, Ziegler Boulevard, from Forest Hill to Athey Road, the \$457,000 was moved back to 2007 from 2008. On page 8, project number 11, Airport Boulevard signal interconnection, that project was added to the TIP at August 30th meeting and at the TCC meeting on December 20th it was recommended that the project be pushed from 2009 to 2007. That was the Attributable funding schedule. For the rest of the TIP that starts on page 21, the 2 page document that you have in your folder has all the changes which is why we are considering this an update otherwise we would have a resolution for all these changes. It has been advertised for three weeks at over 40 places around the county for the public to review so we are acting as if it is a full adoption. Some of the changes in here. If you look at Other Surface Transportation Projects, Mobile Street was pushed back from 2007 to 2009. SR 158 extension from 98 to Schillinger, construction, has been pushed up to 2009. Several of the National Highway System Projects have been pushed out. There have been some resurfacing projects introduced into

the TIP for the interstate system. There are several new bridge projects put into the system, replace the bridge over I-10 over US90, westbound over Tensaw-Spanish River, westbound over Chickasaw Creek on Industrial Parkway, and over North Creek on State Route 213. On State Funded Projects, I-10 Wallace Tunnel, replace portal, was out and is currently in 2007. On the second page of that, Enhancement Projects, there is a new project, a sidewalk project, phase one in the City of Prichard. Commanders Drive relocation Bayfront has been deleted. It was a 2003 earmark for a veterans cemetery at Brookley. That project has been deleted from the system. For Transit Projects, the remainder of the projects were updated from 2006 to 2007. That is really all that I have for the TIP.

Mayor Ron Davis said as you know, I know this one project has been a grave concern of mine for two years since I have been in office about the projects. These projects that I asked to be considered are some road projects in Prichard. It has been a very discouraging process here as far as what we have been trying to do in the city. I asked two years ago that they evaluate some of our projects to be inserted into this five year project. It has been a very, very frustrating process to try to get this board to look at the dollars that are coming in to get projects done inside the city. Quote not everything that somebody else wants to happen in Prichard but looking at what the city leaders want to see happen where this board may be able to help the city in some of those areas. It appears that ever since I have been here, it has been a focus on everybody wanting to do what they would like to see done in Prichard rather than try to do what needs to be done as far as on a jointly basis what the city needs to have done in the city. I have been on a continuous basis trying to find ways to enhance and improve the communities that I am responsible for along with the other leaders. I would like you to know this sidewalk project is not new dollars, these are dollars that they we actually sent to the governor and asked to be reprogrammed for sidewalks from the old Casey Jones fund. These are not new dollars that we are getting from any entity, any of these dollars that is coming in. I supplied, I wrote a letter asking that we have some projects looked at. I understand in talking to Kevin some time ago that those projects were looked at and I have not been able to get any reconsideration as far as making sure that Prichard has some of those sights looked at. Some of them are unsafe and some of them just need a lot of work done. I just felt that, and this is my belief, that sitting here every week voting and seeing projects go elsewhere when it appears all my cries are landing on deaf ears. What I would like to know from the projects that I submitted is there any projects that can be, because when I came the first thing I asked, day one I came in 2004, could any of these projects be revised when I came into the first meeting. I was told that it could be. I understand that there are revisions being done pretty much every meeting so I am saying is there anything that we could put in here for Prichard other than the dollars that we actually reallocated for sidewalks for Prichard, that we can get to come in here. Now I understand, I have heard all the stories about these projects have been on the table for umpteen years and what have you, but I was also told that we looked at needs and priorities when it comes to these funds coming in here and if I don't if somebody at this table or in this room can tell me that there is not a need and there are some priorities in Prichard that needs to be addressed, then I think they need to tell me now. I want to know from everyone is there anything especially with US 45. Highway 45 has turned into a disaster. People are having accidents, turning left across traffic and they are having accidents almost daily. We have been continuously asking to get some traffic signals, some type of turning lanes or something to help in this area. Is there anything that you are going being able to do to help the City of Prichard with the needs that we have before we continue to be in a position were lives are lost because of the need that we have there.

Mr. Harrison said well we have US45 from Wilson Avenue to I-65 in the Long Range Plan. It is the sponsors responsibility, either the state or the City of Prichard, whoever decides to tackle that project for the scheduling of that project. For north of I-65, that is not in the Long Range Plan for additional capacity and me and you have talked about this, but the Attributable money, which is only 5.7 million dollars a year is available to you. But we need Prichard to come to the Technical Coordinating Committee, and bring a specific project to the table to be entered into the TIP. Then the MPO will vote on that project with Attributable funds.

Mayor Davis said we have been to those committees and we give specific projects at those committees. The same projects I am talking about.

Mayor Jones said what portion of Highway 45?

Mayor Davis said I am talking about from Wilson Avenue all the way through Eight Mile. I understand you have to start somewhere.

Mayor Jones said so you have Wilson Avenue to I-65 already on the plan.

Mr. Harrison said that is correct.

Mayor Jones said it is the other side of I-65.

Mayor Davis said but that is not in this plan.

Mayor Jones said Wilson Avenue to...

Mr. Harrison said at I-65 is where it drops a lane and is currently not in the long range plan because it is four-laned.

Mr. Russell Wimberly said but Wilson Avenue to I-65 is in the Long Range Plan.

Mr. Harrison said that is correct. As far as scheduling of that project that is up to the sponsor either the state or the City of Prichard, whoever pays the match for that project.

Mayor Davis said well we won't mind taking our options but if we cannot even get a project on the agenda, to the table.

Mayor Jones said on this particular project what is necessary for that project to get on the way.

Mr. Jackie Glasgow said I guess it would depend on the sponsor.

Mayor Jones said for the match. What is the match?

Mr. Glasgow said I do not have that.

Mr. Tom Piper said we need cost estimates. That is one thing that we've got to have. The cost

estimates for preliminary engineering, utility relocation, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. We need an engineer to get us those numbers that way the TCC can have numbers in front of them.

Mayor Jones said for the purpose of the information the match is generally 20% of the cost of the project. Can we get that information on what 20% of that particular project would be. Can we get that to the city. The mayor, as it relates to those projects, the 20% match that is going to be required on any one of the projects, whether it be from Wilson Avenue to I-65 or from I-65 up to Eight Mile, there is still going to be a 20% match required so what we need to do is let him know what that match requirement is so that at least this particular project that is on the plan we could move forward.

Mr. Glasgow said I have not seen the list of the others up in Eight Mile north of I-65. If you have a copy, did you send that letter to Montgomery?

Mayor Davis said I sent it to Ronnie Poiroux and I sent one to...I sent the letter for the extension from 65 north all the way through Eight Mile to Ronnie Poiroux and that letter was sent to him as a request back in 2004.

Mayor Jones said was that resurfacing?

Mayor Davis said it was widening and making turn lanes, we also talked about the traffic signals where there are accidents all the time where people try to turn left and go across two lanes each way and people just having accidents out there almost on a daily basis. The only thing that I am saying is I have been here for two years and this information should have been provided when I asked for it two years ago. If you can get it to me readily available now, when you give the information to me then I can do the things that I need to do to make things happen. But if I cannot get the information to get it on the table that is very difficult as far as me trying to make sure that something happens and gets done.

Mayor Jones said has it been taken up in the TCC?

Mr. Harrison said I do not recall the City of Prichard bringing a project with cost estimates to the TCC.

Mayor Davis said we brought that one.

Mayor Jones said you had the cost estimates?

Mayor Davis said well maybe not the costs estimates because I did not ask about the cost. I brought the project to the table.

Mr. Harrison said in order for it to get into the TIP, we need the sponsor to provide cost estimates for preliminary engineering, right-of-way and construction and the TCC can discuss it and whether to recommend it to the MPO to vote on it to include it into the TIP with that 5.7 million dollars in federal funds.

Mayor Jones said lets have a clear understanding of who is responsible for providing the costs

estimates on a specific project to the TCC?

Mr. Harrison said the sponsor.

Mayor Jones said whether it be the state or the City of Prichard.

Mr. Harrison said that is correct.

Mayor Davis said with that said which is a valid question if I have to do all the preliminary to do that then what is the purpose of me bringing it to you? Why do I not just take it to the people that do the project and give it to them if we have to do it ourselves.

Mayor Jones said every jurisdiction that sponsors a project has to give an estimate on the cost of the project. That is the only way they can put it in the TIP is to attach money to it. The only way they can do that is to have an estimate on the cost of the project and then they make a determination. The TCC looks at it and makes a recommendation to the MPO. For instance, if the City of Mobile has a project we have to give them an estimate, the scope of the project and the estimate on the total cost of the project, then it is taken up by the TCC or any other city.

Mr. Piper said then the money would come down through the MPO, if the MPO approves the project.

Mayor Davis said well you are a state agency and you are a county/regional agency, what technical assistance do you give communities for that. When you have smaller communities that do not have that capacity what?

Mr. Wimberly said we are not an engineering company or firm. That is what you are talking about. You are talking about an engineering firm coming in and giving you cost estimates. Volkert or whoever your engineering of record is.

Mr. Glasgow said to have an engineer look at it and provide the information in order to be considered. Same thing with any of the cities or the county, any of the projects that we have going currently is generated by the local agency that has jurisdiction in the area and then we can go from there. They provided you either an engineering house or a consultant that can look at it and the limits and the span of the project that you want to considered to work up an estimate of the cost based on that.

Mayor Davis said if that is what I need to do, I do not mind doing it, but tell me if I did all that what is the purpose of me not just going to the powers that be that can make sure that these funds come here. True enough my understanding of the process that just like these sidewalk dollars that come to the MPO and is voted on but then again those are dollars that I asked and went to the governor to get transferred so if I am going to do all the engineering, what is the purpose of me being it here other than just send that project down there. I go out and fight for my funding and make sure my project gets funded. If I am going to go out there and get all my engineering and everything else done then...

Mayor Jones said it really is not the engineering of the project. The engineer company comes strictly to give you an estimate and then that includes what the engineering cost is going to be for the project. Once the project is funded then the funding pays for the design and the construction of the project.

Mr. Harrison said 80% of it.

Mayor Davis said and I understand that.

Mayor Jones said what I am trying to determine during the TCC and the mayor has some staff people coming to the TCC, has that staff person been informed of what was necessary to get a project considered. In terms of them having to have an estimate on a specific project.

Mr. Harrison said yes. Well I guess just by the general process. We had a TCC meeting in August and the City of Mobile requested that we put a signilization project in there. The TCC discussed it and recommended that the MPO vote on it and on August 30th it was included into the TIP.

Mr. Wimberly said Kevin, who developed the cost estimates for that signilization? Do you know?

Mr. Harrison said the City of Mobile.

Mr. Wimberly said the City of Mobile did it internally, so they have the internal engineering staff.

Mayor Jones said and most small cities do not have the engineering staff. What generally happens is an consultant engineer has to come up with those estimates.

Mayor Davis said and all that is here, I understand. I do not have any problem with that process, but I am asking this question and this is a valid question. If I am going to have to go out there and get all these things and a cost estimate and get all these things that is the same thing I have to bring to you, why is it not beneficial where I can just take it to the people that are going to make the funding and try to get the funding to this community and get that project specifically funded.

Mayor Jones said because they are going to send it right back to this table.

Mayor Davis said I understand that and it is going to be voted on because these are allocated dollars for that specific project.

Mr. Wimberly said in the process that has to be accomplished by everybody.

Mr. Piper said mayor there are different pots and this board has obligational authority over the Attributable funds which is one funding mechanism to pay for this project, but they have to approve it. If you go to ALDOT and ask for funding through some other pot of money, then all they have to do here is say yes that is fine with us. Rubber stamp. But if you want to get the Attributable money then it has to be approved by the, the MPO policy committee has to vote on it. It just depends on which pot you are going to go after.

Mayor Jones said I think the one thing to point out is there are several different pots of money. There is some funding that the Director of Transportation makes the decision on it without going through this process. So there are different pots, but in this particular pot of money, the Attributable funds, that is the process we are talking about. We are not talking about the process for all funding because all funding is not handled the same.

Mayor Davis said Okay. But can you answer this for me, these Attributable funds that you all are recouping in this to distribute them out on specific projects are those projects set up prior to you asking for the funding or there is a certain mechanism of funding or certain funding because of the needs of this region.

Mr. Piper said it is a set amount. The MPO gets 5.6 million dollars a year that they can say we want to obligate it to this project and this policy committee votes on. So it is 5.6 million a year.

Mr. Harrison said it is 7.1 plus a total match. If you look on page 7 and 8 that is the projects that we are talking about with Attributable funds. 7.1 annual allocation is the federal and the local match. All these projects were discussed by the TCC and then voted on the MPO. As you can see in 2010 we have a backlog of projects that have been in the system for some time waiting to get pushed up.

Mr. Wimberly said each MPO in the State of Alabama has a pot of money, like Tom was saying, and how many MPOs are there, 12. Each one has to go through this process and I would say it is usually quote unquote competitive within those Attributable funds. It is incumbent on each municipality or each MPO member to come to the TCC to pledge there need.

Mayor Davis said okay. So you just answered my question that I have been asking. So you are telling me that these funds are brought down here and the City of Prichard needs to come here and compete with other municipalities for these funds.

Mr. Wimberly said I use the word compete because all of the projects come to the table and then they there is a priority developed by the TCC with a recommendation to the MPO to vote on it.

Mayor Jones said probably any municipality could spend five million dollars. Anyone in here could. That is why the word compete is being used. Everybody has a project and those projects go to the TCC and the priority is set on the project to be funded and that is what is recommended to the MPO. But it is the same process for every municipality in the county. Every municipality. You are right, there are some municipalities that have more technical expertise in terms of engineers on staff than others but they still have the same process. As I said earlier, there are other options. There is other types of funding in the Department of Transportation where the Transportation Director makes those decisions and it does not go through that priority process. Some of the projects that you might be interested in might be better suited for some of those other pots of money, than through this pot. Because through this pot there is always going to be a whole lot more requests than there is money. That is why it goes through 2010 and we will probably never fund all those projects by 2010 with 5 million dollars a year.

Mr. Harrison said there is 28 million dollars of projects scheduled in 2010. I am sorry 39 million dollars worth of projects. On page 4 and 5 details the other pots of money that the state has available

other than the 5.7 million.

Mr. Wimberly said let me make an administrative announcement. I apologize for the acoustics in this room. We are saddled with the historic nature of this room and because of that we cannot hide the way it looks, so I would ask you to speak up when you speak so that we can capture what you have to say.

Mayor Jones said can we at some point, can we consider getting a PA system.

Mr. Wimberly said we do have a PA system but it does not work it makes the echo worse. I am coordinating with the lease agent to try to fix this acoustic system and still abide by the historic rules, so we are in the process of doing that but I ask you indulgence and I ask for your voice to speak up. I am sorry Bill.

Ms. Margie Wilcox said in the future you may need the chair and everyone in the middle of the room, it would not be the haves and have nots at every meeting.

Mr. Bill Couch said I have been with the Department a long time. I work for transportation planning. We mark the funds that come to the MPO. The funds that come to the MPO cannot be spent anywhere else. The state does not have any control. They can't be spent anywhere but in this urban area or the study area. It's 6.5 million for 2007, federal money, instead of 5.7 million. What you need to do, I do not know what you have done in the past or anything, I do not know anything about 2004. What you need to do is write a letter to the Director, Mr. Don Vaughn, Chief Engineer, and spell out your request and send Mr. Poiroux a copy of it and request that the Department consider this project and come up with an estimate. US 45 is a state route correct? It is our route, whether it goes through Prichard or where ever it goes but you need to write a letter to the Director, send Mr. Poiroux a copy, make sure you copy him, and ask for this project to be considered for whatever needs to done and with the Director, your letter is going to get an answered. It might have been taken up there before in 2004. I do not know, but if you write that letter, you will get a response to it. Most of the time, he will send it to the design bureau and do an estimate or our office or whatever, now the matching money if the state does not have the money to go in there and somebody will write back with his signature stating that we do not have the money for this at this time. I do not make that decision, the Director makes that decision. That is what you need to do to get your project, to get that project in this system. The MPO, the project is going to get in there, it is going to eventually come to the MPO and this MPO will have to approve it. Any federally funded transportation projects that is done in this area, whether it comes out of state pot or MPO pot or who sponsors it. That is what you need to do. Write the Director. Send Mr. Poiroux a copy asking for this to be consider widening whatever you want to do with it on 45 from where ever to where ever.

Mayor Davis said do they do the engineering then.

Mr. Couch said they do not do the engineering. When you are talking about that they can do an estimate, a rough estimate, they will not do the preliminary engineering.

Mayor Davis said why would the City of Prichard be responsible for doing engineering on 45?

Mr. Couch said I did not say that. I said to send it requesting that this project be added to the system be added to the system and a preliminary estimate, that is not the preliminary engineering now, the preliminary engineering is once it gets in the system and identify the project, it will have preliminary engineering then you put a plan to work. You do not get in the detail of how many lanes and all of that. That is what we are going to come up with. The design bureau in Montgomery will come up with a rough estimate of what the project will cost and then that is when you come if they approve that project they approve being funded in the five year plan, then that is when we will come to the MPO and tell them this project needs to be entered into the TIP. The first thing you need to do is write the letter to the Director requesting that this project be considered in the state five year plan and then you will get a response back I can guarantee you that.

Mayor Davis said one thing I can say every time I have written the governor or Mr. McInnes or anyone from Montgomery I have gotten response unlike locally. I have gotten a response and most of my responses have come from them to get it locally to be responded to. I think that is a disservice.

Mr. Couch said when you get a response from him. He is going tell you whether we have got the money to do it in this five year plan or what. You will get a response and he will tell you whatever the response is. He will say maybe he says we do not have the money to do it in this five year plan but we will consider it for the next update. We update the five year plan every year. We add a year to it and drop just like these projects where moved from 2006 to 2007. They obviously did not occur in 2006 and they had to be moved to 2007 because it did not get done in 2006.

Mayor Jones said one thing that should be pointed out on Highway 45 that is probably the only person that can give you a response. It is there highway. It is a state highway.

Mr. Couch said it could be funded out of this Attributable money but there is not enough money there to fund probably what you need to do if you want to add lanes and all.

Mayor Jones said it is not going be funded unless the Director considers it a priority, regardless of what we say here.

Mr. Couch said it would if you add that project in Attributable. Pay for it with Attributable money but you are not going to have enough money to do it.

Mayor Davis said what I am trying to do is get the help. The thing is and once I get the information I need then I will go anywhere I got to go to do what I need to do to try to get the funding and whatever else and do whatever we need to do to get it.

Mayor Jones said I might be incorrect, but I think when I wrote you the letter about the MPO. One of the first things I said in the letter is that the Highway Director should be contacted concerning this.

Mayor Davis said he was contacted.

Mayor Jones said I mean about the problems you have with 45.

Mayor Davis said he was. I wrote a letter to Ronnie Poiroux about 45.

Mayor Jones said that is not the Highway Director. Mr. McInnes.

Mayor Davis said you are talking about Mr. McInnes. Well maybe I need to do that to him because he has been very responsive to all my other needs.

Mayor Jones said he is the person I am referring too. The Department of Transportation Director.

Mr. Couch said the letter you sent to Mr. Poiroux, he is going to send it up there because it needs to go addressed to the Director and you will get a response from him. It might not be the response you want but you will get an answer. That is what you need to do. What that will do is either send it to the Division or the design bureau. They got some people that can go out and do a rough estimate of what it will cost. They are not going to have a detailed estimate of how preliminary engineering, they will give you an estimate.

Mayor Jones said I think we have talked about it at the table here once before. The issue of widening Highway 45 has been probably been discussed for the last 15 years off and on. Before the late J.E. Turner passed, it was one of the things that he had a real interest in and there were a lot of considerations made for that in fact there was proposed a study to look at 45 all the way up to Citronelle. Four lane it all the way up to Citronelle. There were various things that happened. A lot of them had to do with right-of-way, a lot of it had to with a lot of different issues and what started happening is they started trying to take it in just areas because of the massive cost of doing the whole thing. There is a lot of interested people on the other end, on the Citronelle end had an interest also in widening 45. It has been discussed a long time.

Mayor Davis said and just one last thing to move away from 45. The other street was Wilson Avenue that we talked about so if I get my engineering cost and get that to you because every time I talked about based upon my conversations with Kevin, it is about capacity. It was not the engineering of it and cost estimate of getting done is part of the MPO role so what I am saying is I want to get the correct information on what I need to do, not conflicting information that is saying that this is one way to get the project in and if it do not meet this you cannot get it in, rather than just saying I need to go get some engineering studies done and make a request. Then try to get them in.

Mr. Harrison said Wilson Avenue is not on the Long Range Plan.

Mayor Davis said which other streets are in Prichard.

Mr. Harrison said 45 from Wilson Avenue to 65 is in the Long Range Plan. The section of 45 that is already four laned is not in the long range plan and then the section where it is two laned all the way out past the study area is in the Long Range Plan. Starting this March, they are going to be counting for our new Long Range. We are going to updating it and most likely that section of 45 will be in the Long Range Plan, which will be adopted in 2010.

Mayor Jones said I think we missed it.

Mr. Ephriam said excuse me one second. You mentioned something about expansion of Highway 45. Is there no more opportunity to have that project funded by the MPO if cost and there may not necessarily be enough money on the surface but and preliminarily looked at. Is it possible to go after additional funding?

Mayor Jones said that is one of the reasons I was saying that the Director of Transportation should be the person consulted. It is a State highway. The State has some interest in it just like everyone else and I think that you might find that they got a lot of data that have not been put on this page that they have already worked up so I would suggest, I think it would be good to have a meeting with him and Don Vaughn about that so they got a lot of numbers.

Mayor Davis said that will be done but the other streets that are part of the MPO in Prichard. What are they?

Mr. Piper said the functionally classified roads in Prichard.

Mr. Harrison said Lott Road, Shelton Beach, Prichard Avenue. I do not have a map with me.

Mayor Davis said Prichard Avenue is one of them. We also made a request about Lott Road about that curb. I tell you what when is the next TCC?

Mr. Harrison said it is not scheduled yet. We generally have TCC meetings about once every quarter.

Mayor Jones said why don't we do this. If the Mayor has some estimates that he wants to put together to present to the TCC, all you need to do is let Kevin know when you think you are going to have them together and he can schedule.

Mayor Davis said I have the one on Prichard Avenue right now.

Mayor Jones said is that the only one you want to meet on.

Mayor Davis said no.

Mr. Harrison said widening of Prichard Avenue has got to be part of the Long Range Plan.

Mayor Jones said he is trying to get it on the plan.

Mayor Davis said I am trying to get it on the agenda.

Mayor Jones said he has something he wants to get in the plan and what has been determined is you need an estimate of the specific project to bring to the TCC for consideration to get in the plan.

Mayor Davis said and that is all I have been trying to find out. I just want to get them on the agenda so they can be voted on by this board to be placed in the program.

Mayor Jones said well that is all you need is a specific project and the estimate.

Mr. Wimberly said and we could schedule a meeting.

There were no further discussions, motion to approve the Updating of the Adopted FY 2006 - 2010 Transportation Improvement Program as Part of the Mobile Area Transportation Study was made by Mr. Norman Walton, second by Mr. Jackie Glasgow. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION

MOBILE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (MATS) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

Updating the Adopted FY 2006 - 2010 Transportation Improvement Program as Part of the Mobile Area Transportation Study

WHEREAS, certain provisions of Title 23 USC and provisions of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) governing urban transportation planning under the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration require the preparation and adoption of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which sets forth the types and amounts of funds to be used for transportation projects in the study area; and,

WHEREAS, consistent with the criteria enumerated therein, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, The Wave Transit System, and officials and agencies of general purpose local government, prepared a draft Transportation Improvement Program, Mobile Area Transportation Study for the years 2006 - 2010 and adopted said draft document on September 7th, 2005, and did revise on November 30th, 2005, April 26th, 2006, June 14th, 2006 and August 30 2006; and,

WHEREAS, public comment on the proposed updated Transportation Improvement Program has been solicited for a period of 21 days; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that after review, evaluation, and study, the MATS Metropolitan Planning Organization in session this 10TH day of January, 2007, does hereby endorse and update the 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program as part of the Mobile Area Transportation Study.

Mayor Jones called to order the fifth item on the agenda, Public Involvement Year in Review (No Resolution Needed).

Mr. Harrison said as part of our public participation plan, we like to at the end of the year we like to give a brief recap of how much we have spent on public participation and if our public involvement procedures are effective or not. April Delchamps with our staff is going to give a brief recap of our public involvement procedures.

Ms. April Delchamps said every year we want to quantitatively release our results from our public involvement program. As most of you know with public involvement its not always easy to quantify it so the way we chose to do it is by tracking our website, tracking telephone, email, or in person, or letter, by inquiry and also tracking the amount of money we spend advertising to the public. In addition, when we release our report we go over where we release our report, and where we put documents, where our public notices are posted and also the amount of money we put in any other area of public involvement. In closing, in your folders we put the actual numbers so if you would like to refer to that you are more than welcome to and if you have any questions, just let me know.

Mr. Harrison said basically we spent about \$5500 hundred dollars on advertising this year. It is probably going to increase next year. Because we are probably going to go to display ads to get more participation. That is all we have on that item.

Mayor Jones said any discussion on public involvement.

Old Business.

Mr. Harrison said I have a couple of items. As most of you know I mentioned that we initiated a rideshare program. It is a CommuteSmart internet based carpooling matching program. We have awarded that contract to Bellwether to help us with that and Mobile Bay Transportation Company won the award for the Emergency Ride Home. The second item I have under old business is there was an article in last weeks paper about the bridge over Mobile River, the I-10 bridge. I invited Paul Griggs, the project manager, here. Most of you know Paul with Volkert Engineers to give us just a brief update as to where we are on the I-10 bridge.

Mr. Paul Griggs said thank you. We are getting closer. We are at this point in time finishing up the studies that are necessary to prepare and submit the draft EIS. Those include historic studies, view shed studies from about 40 locations and historic districts downtown and on the Eastern Shore. Underwater archeology has been approved by the SHPO. The maritime historic district is under review by SHPO and under archeology felt as though we were recovered necessary for the piers for the bridge itself so that is conceded. There has been an economic impact study that was accomplished by a sub-consultant that worked for us. That is pending a final approval from the department for release. It will also be an appendix to the EIS documentation. The cost estimate has been updated. Everybody has talked about the increase in construction costs. Between the three alternates that we have now, A, B and C, there is less than a 3% variation in the cost. They are all three very comparable and in the 600 million dollar range. The preliminary draft EIS will be submitted to ALDOT and the Federal Highway Administration about mid-February is what we are looking for right now. In order to expedite the review, we have an agreement with FHWA to conduct an onboard review. What that will be is a verified probably two day review page by page of the document will be conducted with Volkert, FHWA, and ALDOT. The purpose of that is to get it done so that we can get it to Atlanta for a legal sufficiency review that is the one thing that we do not have as much control over. That is probably going to be sometime in March itself. It may take quite a bit of time but we are trying to do everything we can to speed that process up too. That will be done by FHWA in Atlanta. Therefore, probably the very earliest that we could advertise for public hearing and circulate the document to the agencies is going to be the first of April, which would mean the public involvement, or the public hearings that would be provided for the bridge itself would be

sometime in May and that is the current schedule that we are working on now. The city has provided us with more up to date ariel photography which we appreciate. We have put the alignments on it. I have it here if somebody wants to look at it after the meeting. We have also updated the traffic volumes. We do not have them for 2006 total but the annual average for 2005 was 66,312 and the highest count day was the Friday before the Fourth of July in which there was 88,000 vehicles that went through the Wallace Tunnels. If there is any questions, I will be glad to entertain them.

Mayor Jones said the public hearing that you are working towards. What is the purpose of that hearing?

Mr. Griggs said that is the public hearing that would be for the environmental document itself. We prepare and submit that environmental impact study statement document to the agencies for review and to the public for review for 30 days prior to the public hearing. The public hearing is set up for the public to be able and other people and agencies and others to be able to provide input into the decision making process as to which alternative would be selected for the selected alternate.

Mayor Jones said when do you expect to select an alternate.

Mr. Griggs said it will be after that hearing.

Mayor Jones said you do not have a prospective date.

Mr. Griggs said based on the schedule that I gave to you, we will give probably about two weeks for comments to come in after the hearing and after that point, we would evaluate all the information that was received and Volkert would prepare a recommendation to submit to the Department of Transportation, FHWA and we would all get together and evaluate those results and a decision would be made.

Mayor Jones said would that be within this fiscal year.

Mr. Griggs said hopefully so. Yes sir. We are fast tracking the project just as quickly as we can go. We were delayed somewhat by the process of getting the studies done with the maritime industry and the impacts on the maritime which the city participated also from the standpoint of the cruise industry and the State Docks participated. As I said, when that study is complete, pending approval for release. One other thing that we are going to do, or that we are evaluating to do, is putting the environmental document on a website online so that it would be available to the public that is one thing that Mr. Poiroux has requested that we look at and to make the document more available to the general public.

Mr. Norman Walton said is your design going to accommodate letting the approaches separate bridge where we could use a massive part of this cost is going to be on the bridge but the local contractors can participate on the approaches.

Mr. Griggs said I am sure the cost of the project will be great enough that they will want to split it up into different pieces and approaches. I would think so.

Mr. Walton said we would highly recommend that.

Mr. Griggs said yes sir, I think we would recommend that too. I am sure the department is thinking along those lines.

Mr. Jackie Glasgow said it has been discussed when we first got some consultants on board for preliminary design. We held off on that, but it is looking at anywhere from three to five projects.

Mr. Griggs said the widening of the bay way itself could be a stand alone completely separate project not even part of the big construction.

Mayor Jones said any other questions on the bridge alignment. Thank you. At one time there was a study done on the entrance to the Wallace Tunnel for some proposal to one time to do that realignment, whatever happened to it?

Mr. Glasgow said never was funded.

Mayor Jones said never was funded, but there was one...

Mr. Glasgow said are you talking about along the west end, west side next to the auditorium.

Mayor Jones said coming around I-165 coming into the tunnel that curve going into the tunnel.

Mr. Glasgow said there was a project at one time that we were looking at it before we built I-165 that would have brought all the way down Water Street and tied in to the interchange there at the tunnel.

Mayor Jones said well I think the one I am talking about is the problem of the curve going into the tunnel.

Mr. Glasgow said the loop around most of the historic district.

Mr. Griggs said we did the design on that project and it came back over into the Civic center parking lot area itself and it flattened the curve out coming into the tunnel. The cost was very, very high. At the time it was done which was probably close to 20 years, 15 to 20 years ago, I think the cost was in the range of 60 to 70 million dollars as I recall. Is that right Jackie? Something like that and I think the thinking was that is a lot of money to put into a band-aid when we may be able to pursue something that fixes the problem itself which is the capacity of the tunnel.

New Business.

Mr. Harrison said I have several items under new business. First, our certification review which is our tri-annual review, which is kinda like an audit to make sure the MPO is doing everything they are supposed to be doing is April 4th. I invite everyone April 4th. Put it on your calendar. We will probably have an MPO meeting and we will probably have public hearings as well. FHWA, ALDOT, FTA will be here to do our certification review that is April 4th and 5th. Also I would like

it to be recorded in the minutes that I am making Casi Callaway a member of our Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizens Advisory Committee member. If there are no objections to that. Is there any objections to that? I would like that recorded in the minutes. Also our bylaws at the next meeting will most likely have to be updated because Mr. Ruffer is now a voting member of the MPO, likewise the City of Prichard. We had a request that they drop out of the MPO which we are working on. The letter was written to Mayor Jones. Mayor Jones wrote a letter back to Mayor Davis. We have written a letter to Mayor Davis about reconsidering his position to opt out of the MPO. Right now we are waiting on a City Council resolution from the City of Prichard to opt out. Then we will write a letter to the Director and he makes the final decision. Depending on how that works out, our bylaws may have to be changed as well. I have all three of those letters if anybody would like a copy of those letters, our letter, Mayor Jones' letter and Mayor Davis' letter. Chickasaw is here today. Mr. Easley has a project that he would like to make the board aware of. Mayor Trout.

Mayor Jim Trout said okay. Thank you Kevin. We have a project that we want to introduce today that we are very interested in. We think it could help not only our city but also Mobile County and the City of Prichard. With the advent of the race track coming up 158, the north end of the county, we expect to see quite a bit of change in the next few years, economically. We would like for this organization as well as the TIP to consider the possibility of a feasibility of putting another exit off 165 just south of Chickasabogue Creek. This would be in the area of the 11 or 12 mile. We feel like an exit here would not only provide access to some unaccessible land right now within our city which could be developed for commercial park, motels, restaurants, tourist type of venues, but it would also open up the Chickasabogue Park to a lot easier access. They are going to be needing a lot more RV camping grounds and Chickasabogue park is right there already developed with that. This exit would put the people off right into Chickasabogue Park. The swimming facilities, the canoeing, the kayaking, all the other facilities that the county is part of the delta tours and things like that and they are all right there and be ready and available, easy access off of I-65 for the tourist coming into our area. This would also open up another easier access to Highway 45. It is not very far from Highway 45 which could also lead into another entrance into the park, the race park.

Mayor Jones said you initially said 165, you mean 65.

Mayor Trout said I-65. I am sorry, I-65. We feel that this will be a perfect location for this and it would benefit everybody up in the north end of the county. As I said it could possibly be another access into the motor park through Highway 45. We are very excited about it and I was trying to listen to Ron and some of the next steps we should take and Russ or Kevin, I will get with you, Mayor Jones, to see what our next step should be as far as presenting it to the highway department and getting their support and interest in this and then bringing it back to this board and the TIP.

Mayor Jones said I think that is a project that should be considered mayor. As we see more development and expansion in the area, there is going to be more of a need to work within this planning process to address some of the needs and infrastructure and I think that is one of them especially in that north end corridor that you are talking about. I expect that you are going to see some tremendous need for infrastructure and changes up there.

Mayor Trout said we feel that too and for that reason we want to try to get it on the agenda as quickly as possible to kinda coincide with the development of the park up there and get these things

started along those lines.

Mayor Jones said one of the things and I wanted to mention since we are under new business, this is good time to mention it. One of the things that we got to do and I do not know if we need to kinda outline this but the process of putting a project on the table before the TCC. I think we need to outline that clearly and get that to all of the member cities and organizations so that there will be no question about what is required to do that.

Mayor Trout said I agree.

Mayor Jones said I think we need to do that. Let them go to the TCC in the proper form so they can be acted on because if they do not come in the proper form they are not going to be acting and they are not going to be taken up.

Mayor Trout said a good thing about this area where we are talking about is the frontage on I-65 on both sides is already owned by the county and so access to it and right of way should be no problem.

Mayor Jones said where is this?

Mayor Trout said this is just south of Chickasabogue Creek where Chickasabogue comes into I-65 between Chickasabogue Creek and the Chickasaw Exit. About halfway between there is where we are talking about.

Commissioner Mike Dean said Mayor, I wanted to say I feel confident that the county commission would endorse project also because there is a lot growth coming in and economic development opportunities such as industrial parks and other economic development projects too.

Mayor Trout said that is right. It would open up that as well as there commercial business that is going to be developed out along Highway 45 is the loop 158 and the loop around.

Mayor Jones said I do not think there is any doubt that there are a lot of opportunities up there and that would certainly enhance the ability to take advantage of them.

Mayor Trout said I will I guess get will Russ and Kevin to find out what our next step would be on it, either going Ronnie Poiroux.

Mayor Jones said at some point what I want to do is get us to send out just what the process is to getting projects before the TCC, so everyone will understand that and we won't....you know I think that is one of the problems that we have had in the past. Mostly the cities and the county who have engineers understand what they have to do to do but some of the cities that do not have that kind of technical assistance really need that process in hand.

Ms. Wilcox said I would like to put that in the form of a motion for today if it is at all possible?

Mr. Harrison said if I can make a suggestion, what Tom, April and I have been talking about, now this will make it come to fruition is a once a year Mobile MPO public hearing were we will have this

room available all day and the process, the plans, everything will be open to the public. It will be advertised. We will invite the State, FHWA, to come down to go over the process with everybody.

Mayor Jones said the only thing that I am suggesting here is that every member of the MPO and the Planning Commission should have that process. We should be able to explain what that process is. It would not take a lot. I think one sheet of paper would kinda outline the process and what I would like to do is get the staff to send that out to everyone of the members so we have that in hand. I know you have explained it several times, I have been here when you explained it. But that really does not register to someone who has not gone through that process a lot you have to have it on paper in some form.

Mr. Wimberly said Margie made a motion.

Mayor Jones said Margie made a motion do we have a second.

Mayor Trout second the motion.

Ms. Wilcox said my motion was to have this one sheet white paper. I wanted to make sure to clarify that.

Mayor Jones said it has been moved and properly second that we outline the process for putting projects before the TCC and have that process sent out to every member of the MPO and the Planning Commission. Those in favor say aye, opposed. Motion carries.
There is no resolution for this action

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

ATTEST:

Chairman, MPO

Chairman, TCC