

**Mobile Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization and
Technical Citizens Committee Meeting
June 1, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
SARPC Board Room**

MPO Members Present

Commissioner Sam Jones
Ms. Betty Donald (Rep. Mayor Ken Williams)
Mr. Bob Williams
Mr. Jim Doolin (Rep. Mr. Bob Jilla)
Mr. Bill Metzger (Rep. Mayor Mike Dow)
Mr. Jackie Glasgow (Mr. Ron Poiroux)
Ms. Shayla Jones Beaco (Rep. Mayor Ron Davis)

TCC Members Present

Mr. Bill Metzger
Mr. Kevin Harrison
Ms. April Guthrie
Kit Gallup (Rep. Alfredo Acoff)
Ms. Shayla Jones Beaco
Ms. Betty Donald
Mr. Larry Cook
Mr. John Murphy
Mr. Jackie Glasgow
Ms. Margie Wilcox
Mr. Donald Watson
Mr. Bert Hoffman (Rep. Ms. Laura Clarke)
Mr. Christopher Azubuikwe (Rep.
Dr. Emmanuel Oranika)

Guests:

Dr. Burt Eichold, Mobile County Health Department
Mr. Ron Adler, Alabama State Port Authority
Mr. Cliff Wright, Alabama State Port Authority
Mr. Craig Thomas, ALDOT Multimodal Transportation
Mr. Lee Reach, ALDOT 9th Division
Mr. Les Brown, Mobile Area Water and Sewer System
Mr. James Foster, Mobile County

MPO Members Absent

Councilman Reggie Copeland
Mayor Jim Trout
Councilman Thomas Sullivan
Mr. Norman Walton
Mayor William Bush
Mr. Russell Wimberly
Mayor Stan Wright
Mayor Don Nelson
Mr. Joe Wilkerson

TCC Members Absent

Mr. Russell J. Wimberly
Mr. John Bell
Ms. Sandra Forbus
Mr. Dave Harris
Mr. Cornell L. Tatum
Mr. Bob Vogtner
Mr. Joe Ruffer
Mr. Len Lacour
Mr. Bill Sisson
Mr. Vic McSwain
Ms. Joyce Robinson
Mr. Joseph Threadcraft
Ms. Ginny Russell
Mr. Bay Haas

Commission Jones called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., June 1, 2005. Motion was made by

Mr. Bob Williams to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2005 MPO/TCC meeting as mailed.

Mr. Kevin Harrison said we have one correction on the Minutes. Mayor Harben from the City of Prichard, his name is on there. It will be corrected on the minutes to show Mayor Ron Davis..

Comm. Jones said any other corrections. If not we need a vote to approve the minutes with revisions. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Bob Williams, second by Mr. Jackie Glasgow. Motion was approved unanimously.

Comm. Jones called to order the third item on the agenda, Consider Revisions to FY 2004 Transportation Improvement Program as Proposed by ALDOT (Resolution).

Mr. Harrison said in your folders you will find a resolution revising the 2004 Transportation Improvement Program. There are two projects. The first is a City of Prichard Capital Grant for \$39,764, and the second is to the City of Chickasaw for \$36,340. They are both FTA Section 5309 Funds and they are for Senior vans for both municipalities. That is all that I know about it.

There were no further discussions, motion to approve Consider Revisions to FY 2004 Transportation Improvement Program as Proposed by ALDOT (Resolution) was made by Jackie Glasgow, second by Bill Metzger. Motion passed unanimously.

Comm. Jones called to order the fourth item on the agenda, Consider Amendment to the 2030 Transportation Long Range Plan (Resolution).

Mr. Harrison said in your folders you will find a resolution amending the Long Range Plan. If you remember, on February 23, we adopted the Transportation Long Range Plan. We are amending it today for a project that includes new alignment and partial widening of State Route 188 from I-10 to US90, and it was not included in the Long Range Plan by accident. If you recall the 2000 census included Bayou La Batre as part of the Mobile Urban Area and our study area has to include not only the census designated but also what is expected to be urban by the 25 year horizon. Since Grand Bay is a Census designated Urban Cluster, we included it our study area to be urban within the next 25 years. The Grand Bay Urban Cluster and the Mobile Urban Area right now are separated by 2.75 miles. Since our study area boundary changed since the last Long Range Plan Update to include Bayou La Batre and Grand Bay. We looked only five years out for any projects that might start because that was the time frame of our current TIP. We failed to look any further than that. This project was in the system with construction set for 2010. It was already in the system during the development of the Long Range Plan. It was just an oversight. State Route 188 from I-10 to US90 is estimated to be about 1.3 miles long. It has an estimated cost of 6 million dollars. The counts for the year 2000 for this section of 188 is 8,500 average vehicles per day. The no build scenario volume for the year 2030 was 14,800 which is the capacity of that section of road. The model was rerun and the system-wide statistics were recalculated to include the project, and it showed minimal change. The benefit-cost ratio did not change at all since it was a 6 million dollar project out 976 million dollars for the total system. In your folders you will find a summary of Amendment One to the Long Range Plan, and once it is approved, I will send out an official amendment to the Long Range Plan and it will include a new cover sheet for you three ring binders with a revision date.

There were no further discussions, motion to approve consider the amendment to the 2030 Transportation Long Range Plan (Resolution) was made by Jackie Glasgow, second by Bill Metzger. Motion passed unanimously.

Comm. Jones called to order the fifth item on the agenda, Review Draft FY2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Harrison said the next two items on the agenda do not require any action. We have to submit a Draft UPWP and a Draft TIP to ALDOT by June 15. Normally, we have always adopted these documents in June. The UPWP, we adopt every year in June. The TIP every two years normally in June. This time around, we are going to submit two draft documents to ALDOT by June 15 to get their comments, advertise it for public comments, and submit the two MPO adopted documents by the September 1 deadline. We are going to have a meeting this summer to adopt both of these documents part of this reason is the highway bill. Most likely our funds are going to change to our advantage in the next couple of weeks. The House and the Senate passed an extension to the end of June and the President was supposed to sign off on that extension at the end of business last night, which I hope he did. For right now we just need to review both these documents, and you will have about a week or so before they are submitted to give me your comments on it. The TIP is in the new format using the software Telus. It is a standardized TIP software developed for ALDOT so all the MPOs in the state will basically have the same Transportation Improvement Program. If you turn to page 3 in the document, this is the Mobile Attributable funding schedule or our funding summary. There are two items here. One is the total funds, which includes the local match, and the bottom one is the federal funds. The apportionment federal funds only, the 5,381,737, hopefully that number is going to change in the next couple of weeks. This document only has to be balanced for three years, and in 2008 we are balanced with federal funds of 76,000 dollars. The next pages 4,5,6 are maps of all of our projects of all the Mobile STP attributable projects. Page 10 is the funding summary for all of the other federal funds. This was done at the request of FHWA to include a summary to show that all the other funding categories are balanced as well. Also we can compare how much money we have planned in our area compared to what is available throughout the state. This both page 10 and 11 and this is for all other funding categories. On page 11, the Attributable projects Mobile area only is really a repeat of what is on page 3, the federal funds only. It is pretty thick document. All the funding categories are sorted by sponsor, so it would be ALDOT, the City of Mobile, the City of Prichard, Mobile County. I want to review with you the STP Attributable funds. Everyone will have a week or so to review the entire document before I send it in. Turn to page 23, those are the MPO's projects and again they are sorted by sponsor. This schedule, we had a technical Coordinating Committee meeting on April 26. This schedule of funds is a result of that meeting. ALDOT has four projects, Schillinger add lanes from US98 to Lott Road, Zeigler Boulevard adding lanes from Schillinger to Cody, Schillinger Road adding lanes from Three Knotch to Cottage Hill Road, and Theodore-Dawes Road adding lanes from Old Pascagoula to Schillinger Road and from Theodore to Three-Knotch. Go all the way to page 26. On page 25 there are three projects that have additional funding from the state. The top project is Old Shell from Hillcrest to Schillinger that construction has additional funds and it is listed again on page 20, as is the five laning of Hillcrest from Three Notch to north of Halls Mill Creek that construction has additional funds. The five laning of Airport Boulevard from Flave Pierce Road to Snow Road is also listed on page 20 because that construction. Those funds for those three

projects the construction is split between our money and the state's money. Page 28. These are the transit projects. The Section 5309 funds are listed first, which we have several for the Alabama Port Authority, the City of Mobile, MARC. We have a programming glitch, we have some old projects in here. Page 29. If you recall in the past TIP, we had several different line items for all of our transit projects and to standardize the TIP throughout the state, we reduced the transit line items to really only five items. One is operating which we do not receive any funds for operating so it is not listed here. For every year in the TIP, we have Mobile Transit Bus Facilities and Equipment, Transit Buses, Transit Preventative Maintenance, which is on the next page, page 30, and Transit Enhancement. We have those scheduled for all five years for those four categories. Moving on to page 32. This is a schedule of just a schedule of local projects that are being approved on a federal aid route but these are being completed with 100% local funds, whether it be municipal funds or county funds. The last part of the TIP is a list of authorized and this is as of yesterday, as of May 31, these are all the projects that have been authorized for year 2004 and 2005. I will probably submit these or mail them up there on the 10th or 11th if anybody has any comments, you are welcome to get them back to me you will have week or so to review this document and give me your comments before I submit it to ALDOT. ALDOT will give me their comments and then this summer we will put it out for public comment and we will adopt it probably in August of this year. Are there any questions on that?

Mr. Jim Doolin said good job on that.

Mr. Harrison said thank you sir.

Mr. Harrison called to order the sixth item on the agenda, Review Draft FY2006 Unified Planning Work Program. The next item again requires no action but it is the same thing as the TIP. We have to submit a draft UPWP which details all of the planning activities in this area for the next fiscal year. We have to submit the draft by June 15 again. We will wait for ALDOT's comments. We will put it out for public comment for the review period of 30 days, and then in August we will probably adopt this. This is the same budget as last year in pretty much the year before. Nothing has really changed. The only thing that has changed. On page 5, task 1.5, I took some of the money from our long range planning effort because we just adopted our Long Range Plan in February, and I shift it to computer support and assistance. I want to create an Mobilempo.org full blown web page. All of our documents will be available on the Internet. All of our minutes. The additional money for the webpage was shifted from the Long Range Plan. Page 12 of UPWP, we have the Wave Transit Transit Development Plan update. We just received today the three proposals from the firms short-listed. We only had three submit. We received their detailed proposals today. We are going to have presentations at the end of the month. The Transit Development Plan for the Wave probably will not be completed until March of 2006, in next years budget. That is really the UPWP. If you have any comments on either of these documents just let me know in the next couple of weeks before I submit them to ALDOT as a draft, and then we will vote on it sometime in August. Any questions on that?

New Business.

Mr. Harrison said I have actually one item under new business. It has been recognized that Mobile MPO does not have bylaws. We are the only MPO in the state that does not have bylaws.

Right now we use what's called the Three C Agreement, which is really the document signed by the Governor that made up the MPO back in 1969. I am going to send out in the next couple of weeks a draft set of bylaws for everyone to review, but in the mean time I wanted to know if there are any experiences that you may have had from your own agencies that would be valuable input to our MPO bylaws. Right the MPO membership is made up of the mayors of all the cities and towns located in the study area, the voting members, the 9th Division Engineer, the general manager of the Wave Transit System, two representatives of Mobile City Council selected by the Mayor of Mobile, one member of the full commission of the Regional Planning Commission to be selected by the Executive Director, and one representative of the Mobile County Commission selected by the Mobile County Commission. We have three non-voting members, the State Planning Engineer from the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Executive Director here at the Regional Planning Commission, and the Division Administrator for FHWA. Changes to the composition of the MPO can be decided by the voting members of the MPO and approved by the Governor. I am going to put in the bylaws that we are going to need proxies, so that anytime we have a representative of a voting member, we are going to need a written proxy. The MPO chairman must be a voting member of the MPO, an elected official, and elected by all voting members of the MPO. The MPO member will hold the office of chairperson as long as they hold their publically elected position unless a majority of the MPO voting members request a special election, so Mayor Jones could still be the MPO Chairman. The MPO is represented by the Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizen's Advisory Committee by the Executive Director who is the chairman of those committees. Right now, I am only going to put in that we have a quorum of three, three voting members of the Metropolitan Organization or their proxies. Because as long as I can remember we have not had any less than that. In the next couple of weeks, I am going to finish drafting the bylaws for the MPO. If you have any input or past experience that you would like to put in there, please let me know. I will send those out and you can review those. We are going to advertise those. We are going to let ALDOT look at it. We are going to get comments from everybody. We probably adopt those also at the meeting that we have in August. That is all the new business that I have.

Comm. Jones said do we have another further new business.

Dr. Burt Eichold said I would like to Commissioner Jones to consider the west end of the Wallace Tunnel in the Long Range Plan calls for improvements to I-10. It seems that the estimate will be 8-10 years before any structural bridge can be built and the cars go across it. Should we not consider having some improvements to the west end of the tunnel in our plans because for the next 8 to 10 years it is going to continue being a problem and I think there are probably solutions that may not cost a lot of money. Maybe traffic controls or something like that instead of trying to merge on the fourth of July holidays coming from downtown Mobile to get into the Wallace Tunnel. You are engineers but I do not think people would say that would be a good idea looking at the volume of traffic that goes through the tunnel. 60,000, 70,000, 80,000 cars are trying to merge lanes in only 100 feet. If there is something we can do or recommend be done to improve traffic flows.

Comm. Jones said I think we should let ALDOT speak to that. I am sure they have done extensive studies on the tunnel.

Dr. Eichold said should that be in our plans to be at least 8 to 10 years before a solution.

We have plenty of these (pamphlets) which is the Long Range Plan as adopted in February. It does not have the new section that was just amended. It does have an improvement to the river crossing, which I think constitutes as capacity improvement whether it be tunnel or new bridge, no matter where it actually is finally located. What you are saying is almost a safety improvement and I am not sure how we would put that into the Long Range Plan.

Dr. Eichold said if it is safety it does not have to go in the Long Range Plan. I think something could be done in the interim to allow the safety of more cars that transit the area and not have some of the problems we have. Maybe improving or limiting the ramp on the west side of tunnel and on the east end, somehow make that a fast moving exit. Having driven through the tunnels many times, people put on their turning signal at the bottom of the tunnel and ride their brakes as they climb it back up; it just slows everything down. These people are merging and getting off, it is not a rapid exit. During those time periods, is there something that can be done, something to get a better use of it, or is that just the way it is?

Mr. Harrison said right now I do not think there is anything that can be done with the MPO Attributable money. It is scheduled out for the next 5 years. Jackie I do not know if there is.....

Mr. Jackie Glasgow said I will tell you what Dr. Eichold may be referring to is an old plan that was a number of years ago that was dropped. My understanding was because we would have to modify the ramps on the west end around the convention center. It did not add any capacity. There are some safety features to it, but there are not enough to justify the cost compared to trying to solve the overall problem.

Dr. Eichold said so it is not financially feasible to do anything. My thought would be like limiting where you would merge like have traffic controls on the Great New Orleans bridge saying US Highways federal dollars on certain days said you could not add traffic controls, they were broadcast on the radio where you could not merge onto the Greater New Orleans Bridge on certain accesses in order to expedite traffic going across. That just seems like that might be something that could be done. If you had arrows that lights up, letting people through.

Mr. Glasgow said that part of that is the ITS Plan the State been working on along. In the next phase of that is for signing on the Bayway and I-65 to address those problems and detouring traffic. We started building the new traffic center at the tunnel, so we can monitor all the lanes out there and eventually part of that will be all the way up I-65, down I-165 and I-10 west to 65.

Dr. Eischold said that is what is out there now, there is a lot of good signage giving you direction on where to go, but what about the idea of merging lanes? Is that engineering, do you design that for traffic needs today, going into the tunnel? Eastbound, if it was out there today, would that be a good idea knowing what you know? Would some detour signage on lets say July 4th weekend rerouting people down Virginia Street, could that help alleviate some of the problem? We aren't spending a lot of money and making the system more efficient. Is this something the committee needs to think about or is it something to say oh well, we shouldn't do it. Is this done in other parts of the country?

