

**Mobile Area Transportation Study
Technical / Citizens Committee Meeting
January 21, 2009, 10:00 a.m.
SARPC Boardroom**

TCC/CAC Members Present

Mr. Nick Amburger
Mr. Bill Metzger
Ms. Jennifer White
Mr. Bert Hoffman
Ms. Shayla Jones Beaco for Ginny Russell
Mr. Gerald Alfred
Mr. George Crozier
Mr. James Jacobs
Mr. James Foster
Mr. John Murphy
Mr. Jackie Glasgow
Mr. Steve Perry
Ms. Lindsay Hutchission
Ms. Tywanda Jackson
Ms. Margie Wilcox
Ms. Mary Mullins
Mr. Samuel Laughlin
Mr. Bryan Kegley
Mr. Russell Wimberly
Mr. Hunter Winton

Guests:

Mr. Tyrone Parker

Staff:

Mr. Kevin Harrison
Mr. Tom Piper
Mr. Thomas Michie
Ms. Monica Williamson

Mr. Russ Wimberly called the meeting to order at 10:00 am, January 21, 2009. Because of the number of new members, everyone introduced themselves.

He turned the meeting over to Mr. Kevin Harrison.

Mr. Harrison said we have some new TCC members in here today so we are just briefly going to go over who you are and what your responsibilities are. The MPO is a fifteen member board. Sam Jones is our chairman. The division engineer, Tyrone Parker, Commissioner Dean is a MPO member and all the mayors in the region. It is their

responsibility to vote on every Federal Transportation dollar that comes to the area whether it is resurfacing, building a new road, building a bridge or transit money, they have to vote on every federal transportation dollar that comes into our study area which is about three quarters of Mobile County. Before they vote on their federal funds, what the TCC does is as a 35 member committee is we look at the agenda and we develop recommendations for the MPO to vote on. One of the things that we do is we create the transportation long range plan. Every five years we develop this long range plan as a 25 year horizon. Any project that requires federal funds, that requires additional capacity, has to be derived from that long range plan. We are at the stage right now of the long range plan developing it socio-economically. What the plan is, is basically a travel demand forecast model. The input to the model is households, socioeconomic data. We run the model to calibrate with traffic counts that we have all over the county. Once the model is calibrated, you forecast that socioeconomic data - households, number of employees. We rerun the model and that tells what roads in 25 years are going to be or at least should be over capacity. That's the long range plan.

The short range plan is call the Transportation Improvement Program which is what we are going to go over in just a minute. That's the five year schedule of funds. The long range plan is the 25 year schedule of funds.

(Mr. Harrison showed a map on power point) Real briefly, to get your bearings, this is Mobile County with Airport Boulevard running through. This is the 1990 Households according to the U.S. Census. The reason that I am showing ya'll this is that we've collected all of our socioeconomic data to run the base year. I'm going to need your help in developing some projections. The 25 year projections. That's kind of what I want to go over with you. So this is the 1990 according to the U.S. Census number of households for traffic zones. Each one of those boundaries that you see on that map is a Traffic Analysis Zone. That area is our study area. It doesn't encompass the entire county, but it covers the area. In 2000, households per traffic zone, you can see it gets darker using the same criteria to the west. Kind of like the outer loop around the study area, the houses get more concentrated. That's 2007. When we are trying to develop our household projections, we use a trend line analysis. We can see how Mobile County is getting more and more concentrated with households. How we developed the 2007 households, we took the building permit data from every municipality in the county, geocoded them, put them on a map and added them to the 2000 census houses per traffic zone. So that's how we got the 2007 households.

There is the increase from 2000 to 2007 and it really is kind of that outer loop. We can use this we do our projections, but what I'm going to want from ya'll from your municipalities and the county is that if you know that we need to include in our projections, I've got a little worksheet that I am going to go over in just a second. That's the households.

Employees, we did the exact same thing. Those are employees per traffic zone using the same criteria. We also added employees from retail, industry, service, and other which include manufacturing. 2007 using the same criteria, you can see the different between

the 2000 and 2007. It is more concentrated still in that outer band of the study area. These are the same methodology. Those are the 2007 employers within the study area and we've actually added the employers to each traffic zone. And that's the difference between 2000 and 2007. Greens being the positive numbers for employees and red are actually a loss of employees. What we have always done in the past, is that we developed these projections in a vacuum. We did them upstairs, we looked at aerial photographs and using University of Alabama data, but what I want from you is I want input from the county, I want input from the cities when we develop the 25 year projections. So what we have is an aerial photograph of every jurisdiction with city limits of municipalities with traffic zones. Starting next week, I want to make appointments with every MPO member, their planning director, the building inspector and chairmen of the planning commission so we can go over this and fill out a worksheet that kind of looks like this. I'm using Saraland as an example. In the left column is traffic zone number, then the number of households for 2000, the number of households for 2007, the new households, we use a trend line for like 254, it's 18%. Of course, we can't just put 18% every year so I'm going to want from Saraland is what they think the 2035 household numbers and the percent change. And I want to know why they think there should be an increase. So it's going to be a little workshop that Tom and I are going to set up with each one of the jurisdictions.

Mr. Harrison continued I'll do the same thing with number of employees per industry. I want to get with the Chamber, the County and the municipalities. If anybody else has input, you're welcome to do that as well. Any questions? That's going to start probably next week.

Mr. Perry asked Kevin where you fit in the chamber and other economic development work that may be five years out that nobody knows about.

Mr. Harrison said we are going to use what they know about now. Now, the University of Alabama has a number which we will probably use as a target number for year 2035. For households, for number of employees per industry. We will probably use that target number, but we will distribute the households and number of employees based on the data we collect here.

Mr. Piper said there's no way to know about everything.

Mr. Perry said oh yeah, but we need to make sure we're putting something in to what we do know, or half way think we know or a quarter of what we think we know.

Mr. Harrison said right, with Prichard for example, when the racetrack comes in, we will be able to know, they will be able to give us the data, the percent increase, households and retail number of employees and service number of employees. That data that comes from them, will be useful which is not what happened in the past. Every five years we would just kind of do this, but I want input from everybody before we do this.

Mr. Alfred asked the study we did on the intersections last year. Would that be an interest in this also? The various intersections.

Mr. Harrison said Gerald is talking about the Congestion Management System. We surveyed all the intersections in the study area. Some of them meet a certain criteria, then our staff, we have GPS transponders and we drive each road 6 times each direction. We are able to monitor the speed of all the roads. There is also an intersection portion where we come up with some improvements to try to make this travel time better. And no those projects are not included in here. Those are part of the congestion management system.

Mr. Crozier asked Kevin on the University of Alabama models, do they try to adjust those in terms of vehicle miles traveled where we have seen decline over the last year.

Mr. Harrison said their model is strictly socioeconomic.

Mr. Crozier said how will our community do this on the projection of reduced vehicle miles traveled. What's that going to do to the planning process?

Mr. Harrison said we need your input. Are there any other questions?

With no other questions, the TCC/CAC began discussing the TIP.

Mr. Harrison said everybody has a copy of the TIP. For the new TCC members, this is the five year schedule of funds. If you notice on page 2 the balance in 2009 is negative. There is a parenthetical \$1,563,258 and every year past that is negative as well. We are required to have a positive balance on our attributable funds. The attributable funds, the STP, is made up of several pots of money – the National Highway System, Interstate Maintenance Funds, but the attributable money is the money that the MPO actually gets to spend. It is their money. It's about \$6.6 million in federal funds a year and then you see on the second page the annual allocation is \$8,489,000 and the years after that it is 8.3 million, that's total number of dollars. That's the federal plus the local share and that is estimated for every year. This is the money that the MPO gets to spend. They get to schedule it based on the recommendations that we make here today. What I am asking from the committee, especially from the city and the county is that we need to balance this budget.

Mr. Harrison said so I've got up here the spreadsheet that is actually in your hands and as we modify this spreadsheet we will be able to see a positive balance up here.

Airport Boulevard as of October, actually Old Shell Road as of October was I think \$10.4 million and now it is \$11.9 million so it increased the cost estimate by \$1.5 million as did Airport Boulevard and Flave Pierce, Snow Road.

Mr. Murphy said but Kevin we know the bid now on Airport Boulevard and it is tremendously lower than what was estimated to the amount that we could do away with the imbalance. So can't we just change the numbers to what we know what the bid was.

Mr. Piper said that is actually lower the 4.7 and 1.7 is less than what we had originally.

Mr. Murphy said but the state is supposed to be adding \$2.5 million that is not attributable funds to that project. The bid last Friday was \$6 million and \$70,000 and if you add to this 6.2 you are up to 8 something if you take the actual bid and you've done away with the difference that we are trying to get rid of.

Mr. Metzger said if we change it and do away with some of these projects and you realize after Old Shell Road is bid, if it comes in considerably lower, can we add it right back in.

Mr. Harrison said yes and we should be able to do that with administrative change.

Mr. Murphy said that's is supposed to be bid at the end of next month and if the trend is that the bids are coming in 25 to 30% lower because people need work out there right now. That's what we've been seeing in our bids and I just hate to adjust and kick something out that we know we don't really need to kick out right now based on the bids that we are getting.

Mr. Harrison said if we kick a project back to 2010, we should be able to move that project back up without having a MPO meeting.

Mr. Crozier asked if you kick it, it doesn't matter is you increase your deficit in '10?

Mr. Harrison said no, we need to have a positive balance in the year 2009, 10 and 11.

Mr. Crozier replied oh so you have to balance them all.

Mr. Harrison said 2012 is basically the wish list.

Mr. Metzger said so you just keep pushing out.

Mr. Murphy said but that one bid can balance all of it. All four years. And we know that number so I don't understand the idea of making this judgment right now quite frankly.

Mr. Piper said well the state just gave us new numbers today for what is coming out of attributable and they said they were putting money in also so that doesn't make sense since if the bid came in different.

Mr. Murphy said we're worried that maybe the amount of attributable is disappearing. If the amount of attributable is disappearing then you have to have 6 million here. But what they got there adds up to the bid and 12 ½% handling fee that they charge would be about 6.4 which is about what you got there between those two, but were supposed to be having 2 ½ million of non attributable funds allocated to that project.

Mr. Harrison said I am hoping that they made a mistake here, but if they didn't we need to go ahead and balance these funds, but if they did make a mistake then that's going to, that 1.7 if that's the state part, that will take up the 1.5 million negative balance. Then I can let everyone know about that in an email before the MPO meeting. So we probably need to proceed and figure out what in 2009 can we slide back to 2010 and create a positive balance.

Mr. Metzger said the smallest project that would do it is Airport Boulevard, Flave Pierce Road the construction on that and then maybe come down and take Zeigler Blvd to Cody and Schillinger section and take out, move back the utilities on that one year.

Mr. Harrison said say that again, Airport Blvd?

Mr. Metzger said Airport Boulevard, the 1.749.

Mr. Murphy said that's the one that was bid Friday. We aren't shoving that one back. You aren't going to get no votes on that from this side of the table.

Mr. Metzger said I'm sorry.

Mr. Murphy said yes, that was the one that was bid last Friday. I mean you know, if you're just playing games, the number 5 and number 6 gets rid of the 1 ½ million in 2009. Number 5 and 6.

Mr. Piper asked 6.6 million, is that what the bid was on Airport.

Mr. Murphy said \$6,070,000 is what we were told.

Mr. Piper said okay, \$6, 070,000.

Mr. Murphy said and some odd 100s of dollars.

Mr. Piper said I'm going to call right now.

Mr. Harrison said can we slide Zeigler Boulevard, Cody to Schillinger's Right of Way and Utilities back?

Mr. Metzger said yeah.

Mr. Murphy said if you put the utilities back in number 5, Kevin, that would balance 2009. I don't know what you got to do to '10 though.

Mr. Harrison said slide utilities back to 2011.

Mr. Murphy said '10.

Mr. Harrison said I switched the Right of Way and Utilities for Zeigler, Cody to Schillinger to 2010.

Mr. Murphy said right, and then the, you got to get rid of a million 5 right?

Mr. Harrison said right. That's still gives us a negative balance.

Mr. Murphy said so what I was suggesting is that on number 5, the Schillinger Road take the utilities and slide it back to 2010. That would clear up 2009. Then you got to do the same thing in 2010.

Someone asked you can't leave the Zeigler Construction in 09 and move the right of way to '10.

Mr. Harrison said if we move the Zeigler Right of way and utilities back to 2010 and utilities for Schillinger, we now have a positive balance in 2009. Now we got a negative balance of 2.9 million in 2011, I mean 2010.

Mr. Harrison said if we slide construction back for Schillinger's we're still going to have a negative balance in 2011 of \$2.4 million. So either we can slide some of the smaller projects out to 12 or 13.

Mr. Murphy said well the only thing you can practically do is the construction, we don't want to do it, but the construction on number 5, you got to move it. It's the only way you're going to get 2.9 million. It's the only item on the whole thing that is that amount. You can't add up the rest of them and get the 2.9.

Mr. Metzger said plus you have moved the utilities already which are going to slow the project down starting.

Mr. Piper said okay they said on top of the 6 million there is a 15% engineering fee and 11.7% cost of doing business and direct charge, but that they don't know what the total will be. It may still go down, but they haven't lowered those numbers in there.

Mr. Murphy said that just gets you the 6.8.

Mr. Piper said right, so it should come down, but it hasn't in the system yet.

Mr. Harrison said so if it does come down and we are waiting for the Old Shell Road bid to come in and that's down, then I should be able to move everything back up, but as for today, we need to balance at least through these years. So right now in 2010 we have 4.8. We have to balance in that outer year 2011. We moved Schillinger, 98 to Lott Road and we still have a \$2.4 million negative balance.

Mr. Murphy said in 2011 if you moved the whole 7.9 million over to 2011 you still got a negative balance.

Mr. Harrison said negative 2.4.

Mr. Kegley said that doesn't make sense.

Mr. Harrison said we could move Zeigler, Cody to Schillinger back a year that 3.9 million. So we have already moved the right of way and utilities number 6, Zeigler, Schillinger, if we move the construction of 3.9 that would give us a positive balance in all 3 years or 4 years.

Mr. Harrison said John, do you have any thoughts on that sliding back Zeigler, Cody to Schillinger from 2011 to 2012.

Mr. Metzger said we are working on 2011 now Kevin.

Mr. Harrison said right.

Ms. Wilcox said how does it relate traffic count wise to the other projects.

Mr. Harrison said I don't have the traffic volumes with me, but there is a high volume of traffic here.

Ms. Wilcox said compared to the other ones. My opinion is to keep the ones that have the highest traffic volume.

Mr. Harrison said even if we move the Three Notch projects out, that's still not going to account for the deficit. We've got almost \$3 million worth of projects that we have to slide back.

Mr. Murphy said and we know in 45 days that we are going to slide it all back forward.

Mr. Piper said maybe.

Mr. Metzger said Kevin are you saying that you have to move 5 and 6 to 12 is that what you are saying.

Mr. Harrison said just 6. If we just move the construction for Zeigler, Cody to Schillinger, back to 2012, that would cover the deficit of 2.8 million. So each time we slide one of these projects back we have to add 4%. As an alternative I could, we could take the right of way and utilities for 9, 10 and we could see how much that would be.

Mr. Murphy said you are either going to move one project or you have to move everything else out.

Mr. Harrison said that's what I'm trying to figure out now.

Someone said basically we have to move 6 million out of these 3 years to 12, isn't that right?

Mr. Harrison said so we are still a million in the whole if we move the right of way and utilities from both projects in 10 and 9. So that's our alternative, we either move Zeigler, Cody to Schillinger construction back to 2012 or move right of way, utilities for 9 10, and then PE for 11, 12, 13, and 14 out. We can move one project or we can everything.

Mr. Metzger said let's move that one.

Mr. Harrison said okay, so now we have a positive balance in all three years. Is that agreeable to everybody?

Someone asked did you put Zeigler back in.

Mr. Harrison said Zeigler is now back in 2012 for 3.9 million which is actually the outer year so that doesn't have to be fiscally constrained that outer year. That is why it is negative 19 million.

Ms. Wilcox said I don't mean to belabor the point, but can you engineer type guys explain to me did we just do this because it was just the easiest thing to do? Or is it because it would jumble up all the other projects and mess up 5 projects? Are we just shuffling papers or..

Mr. Murphy said well I think we did both Margie because right now, we know that the bid came in less and we are going to cover the deficit with that one project. And the next project that is bid in February we are anticipating it to come down a couple of million under the estimate so we are going to be to the good. Practically we know it's going to be to the good. We are doing a paperwork shuffle right here, right now so why not do it the easy way, but as far as, I would vote to move that one project, especially since it's in the City of Mobile, and keep the 5 projects that we have going in the county moving at least a little bit versus the practicality of whether they are going to get the construction ready by that time.

Ms. Wilcox said I apologize for being late. I didn't realize that we felt like that we are going to have lower bids come in.

Mr. Murphy said I'm sorry I didn't know that you didn't hear. We took bids on the Airport Boulevard job, at least the state took bids on the Airport Boulevard jobs last Friday and the estimate was 9 million and the bids came in at 6,070,000 so we anticipate and hopefully also there were several bidders as there were a lot of bidders out there needing work and our experience that we have taken in the last month or two, we have seen a 30% decrease in the prices because there is a lot of contractors out there who don't have work right now and they are just begging for some work.

Mr. Harrison said I developed this yesterday assuming those numbers were correct.

Someone asked when is Old Shell supposed to be bid?

Mr. Murphy said it is supposed to be at the end of February, the letting.

Mr. Piper said I think that CTMS just hasn't caught up with the latest bids because the state money is contractual.

Mr. Murphy said we got a letter.

Mr. Harrison said its \$2.5 million right.

Mr. Murphy said yes on that one and 2 ½ on Airport and 2 ½ on Old Shell of discretionary money, non attributable money. We just want to make sure that 5 million doesn't go away.

Mr. Harrison said alright well this is the attributable schedule that will be recommended to the MPO to vote for on February 4th. We also have numerous projects to be added to the TIP with other pots of money, Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System Funds, that the MPO will vote on as well.

Mr. Murphy said, Kevin by February 4th, if we know that numbers have changed, are you going to make the adjustments moving this stuff back?

Mr. Harrison said yes.

Ms. Wilcox said do we need a motion to recommend this?

Mr. Harrison said yes.

Motion was made by Ms. Wilcox to present the changes to the MPO with a second by Mr. Murphy. Motion passed.

Mr. Wimberly said last order of business I want to recognize Margie and Mobile Bay Transportation as being selected as Small Business of the Year at the Chamber meeting last night.

Meeting was adjourned.