

MINUTES OF THE  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING  
HELD SEPTEMBER 24, 2014  
AT 4 P.M.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization met on  
September 24, 2014, at 4 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the  
Municipal Building, Huntsville, Alabama, there being present:

Metropolitan Planning Organization Members Present:

Mr. Dale Strong, Chairman	Chairman, Madison County Commission
Mayor Tommy Battle	City of Huntsville
Mayor Troy Trulock	City of Madison
Mr. John Olshefski	Huntsville City Council
Mr. Johnny L. Harris	ALDOT/Guntersville

Metropolitan Planning Organization Members Absent:

Mayor Mary Caudle	Town of Triana
Mayor Tony Craig	Town of Owens Cross Roads

Staff Members Present:

Ms. Tanjie Kling	Huntsville Planning Division
Mr. James Moore	Huntsville Planning Division
Mr. James Vandiver	Huntsville Planning Division
Mr. Thomas Nunez	Huntsville Planning Division
Ms. Connie Graham	Huntsville Planning Division
Ms. Tracy Meshberg	Huntsville Planning Division

Chairman Strong called the meeting to order.

Chairman Strong stated that the first item on the agenda was Approval of the minutes of the prior meeting.

The minutes of the MPO meeting held on June 25, 2014, were approved as submitted.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda concerned the Unified Planning Work Program, that the resolution would adopt the Final Fiscal Year 2015 Unified Planning Work Program.

Chairman Strong recognized Mr. James Moore of the Planning Staff.

Mr. Moore stated that what was before the MPO was the final document that had been thoroughly vetted by ALDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. He stated that this was their UPWP, Unified Planning Work Program, their Business Plan for the year. He stated that there had been a few minor corrections, but that other than that, it had been thoroughly vetted and approved, both by ALDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

Mr. Olshefski read and introduced a resolution adopting the Final Fiscal Year 2015 United Planning Work Program, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 34-14)

Mr. Olshefski moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Mayor Battle.

Chairman Strong asked if there was any further discussion

concerning this resolution.

There was no response.

Chairman Strong called for the vote on the above resolution, and it was unanimously adopted by the MPO members present.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda concerned the Transportation Improvement Program. He stated that the resolution would amend the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects Section in the adopted TIP to add funds for the I-65 Median Crossover Protection from Bibb Garrett Road to Browns Ferry Road.

Chairman Strong recognized Ms. Tanjie Kling of the Planning Staff.

Ms. Kling stated that this resolution would add a safety project to the Transportation Improvement Program on Interstate 65 from .70 mile south of Bibb Garrett Road to 1.85 miles south of Browns Ferry Road. She stated that the project sponsor was the Alabama Department of Transportation, Second Division. She continued that the project involved the installation of four miles of cable rail in the median to prevent vehicles from crossing over into the opposing lanes of traffic. She stated that the engineering design for the project was scheduled for FY 2014, in the amount of \$50,000, and that the installation of the cable rail was currently scheduled for FY 2015 and was estimated to cost \$624,000.

Chairman Strong asked Ms. Kling if it was correct that none of these funds would be coming from MPO-directed funds, that it was being directly funded by the State of Alabama.

Ms. Kling stated that that was correct.

Mr. Olshefski read and introduced a resolution amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects Section in the adopted FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program to add funds for the I-65 Median Crossover Protection from .70 mile south of Bibb Garrett Road to 1.85 miles south of Browns Ferry Road for the State of Alabama, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 35-14)

Mr. Olshefski moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Mayor Battle.

Chairman Strong called for the vote on the above resolution, and it was unanimously adopted by the MPO members present.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda concerned the 2035 Transportation Plan, amending the year 2035 Transportation Plan to change the I-565/Zierdt Road Interchange from an unfunded to a funded project for the City of Madison.

Chairman Strong recognized Ms. Kling.

Ms. Kling stated that during the April 2014 meeting, the MPO had approved an amendment to the Year 2035 Transportation Plan, adding an interchange on I-565 near Zierdt Road for the City of Madison. She stated that at that time the project had

been added as an unfunded, visionary project. She continued that the City of Madison and Madison County had since that time secured funds for this project through the Town Madison Cooperative District and had requested that the project be shown as funded. She stated that, additionally, the estimated project cost had decreased, that originally the construction cost had been approximately \$35 million, but that at this time the estimated cost was approximately \$26 million. She stated that it was anticipated that as the engineering design further progressed, the cost estimates might decrease even more. She stated that the City of Madison and Madison County had committed that any potential project cost overruns would be paid for by additional bonds.

Mayor Trulock read and introduced a resolution amending the Year 2035 Transportation Plan to change the I-565 Interchange near Zierdt Road from an Unfunded Project to a Funded Project for the City of Madison, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 36-14)

Mayor Trulock moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Mr. Olshefski.

Chairman Strong asked if there was any further discussion on the above resolution.

There was no response.

Chairman Strong called for the vote on the above resolution, and it was unanimously adopted by the MPO members present.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda concerned the 2040 Transportation Plan, a resolution directing the MPO Staff to add a project requested by Redstone Arsenal to the Year 2040 Transportation Plan.

Chairman Strong recognized Ms. Kling.

Ms. Kling stated that several months prior, the MPO Board had received a letter from Lt. Gen. Patricia McQuiston, the Senior Commander at Redstone Arsenal, requesting support for mitigating traffic congestion near the intersection of I-565 and Rideout Road. She stated that this intersection fed directly into Gate 9, the main access to Redstone Arsenal and the Gateway Office Park, and that congestion from commuters had routinely caused traffic to back up onto I-565 during peak hours. She continued that while access improvements had been made to the north and southbound lanes on Rideout Road, and intersection improvements made to the junction of Rideout Road and Goss Road, and there were also plans to relocate Gate 9, that these improvements would not totally correct this problem. She stated that, basically, the Arsenal had requested that an access road be constructed to divert traffic from the I-565 interchange into the Redstone Gateway Office Park. She stated that at the present time, a conceptual design had been developed for the access road, which road would be called "Resolute Way." She stated that she was displaying a schematic of this road.

Ms. Kling stated that at the present time, the City of

Huntsville was initiating a proposal for a corridor study to be done for the project, to better define the alignment of the road.

Ms. Kling stated that the approval of this resolution would basically direct the MPO staff to add this corridor to the year 2040 Transportation Plan, which she noted was currently under development. She stated that they had already provided this information to the consultant so that it could be modeled, pending this approval.

Mr. Olshefski read and introduced a resolution directing the MPO staff to incorporate a Road Improvement into the Year 2040 Transportation Plan that would mitigate traffic congestion near the intersection of I-565 and SR-255/Rideout Road to support Redstone Arsenal, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 37-14)

Mr. Olshefski moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Mayor Battle.

Chairman Strong asked if there was any further discussion of this resolution.

There was no response.

Chairman Strong called for the vote on the above resolution, and it was unanimously adopted by the MPO members present.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda was a report on the Year 2040 Plan Update.

Chairman Strong recognized Ms. Kling.

Ms. Kling stated that, as the MPO members were aware, the staff was working on the Year 2040 Transportation Plan, which she noted was due to the Federal Highway Administration and ALDOT by March of 2015. She stated that the consultant was continuing with the modeling work and they hoped to have that completed by the middle of October. She stated that they were also working on chapter development. She stated that they hoped to have a meeting of the MPO to adopt the draft Plan in December, hopefully December the 10th, for the TCC and the MPO.

Ms. Kling stated that they would be holding public meetings concerning this at four different locations, and that the tentative dates were the first and second weeks of December. She stated that they hoped to have meetings at the Showers Center in Huntsville, the City of Madison City Hall, the Town of Owens Cross Roads, and also the Harvest-Monrovia area, noting that Chairman Strong had requested that this be held possibly at the Rec Center on Allen Drake Drive. She stated that she believed they could accommodate this with their staff. She stated that, of course, they wanted to incorporate the comments from the public meetings into the Final 2040 Plan, and that that would be done, and that they hoped to have the Final Plan adopted in February 2015.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda was Public Comment and stated that the floor was open for anyone who would like to address the Metropolitan Planning Organization.



Ms. Jamie Miernik, 1010 Humes Avenue, appeared before the MPO, stating that she had served on the CAC for the prior 10 years. She stated that while she had read in the minutes that the MPO staff reported to the MPO what the CAC members had discussed and recommended, she did not believe they ever had any real input, as far as advising.

Ms. Miernik stated that another thing she had read on the Huntsville MPO web site was one of the three bullets that described the TCC, the Technical Committee, and that this was "To recommend alternate transportation plans and programs to the MPO." She stated that she was wondering if they had ever done this, or if there was anyone in this group that knew about things such as this that perhaps rode a bike. She stated that she was wondering about this because she did not see this as a function of that group. She suggested that someone on the TCC should be assigned to that function, perhaps an engineering person who rode a bike.

Ms. Miernik stated that she would also like to comment on something she had read in the MPO minutes from April of the current year. She stated that Mr. Andrews, the FHWA representative, had said in his MPO review of the Transportation Alternatives Program, which he stated he understood was under way, that this was the new Transportation Enhancement Program to do sidewalks, bike paths, historical restorations, et cetera. She continued that Mr. Andrews had stated that each MPO should have its own program on this, and

it needed to be started. She stated that Mr. Andrews had stated that FTA funding was available for expanding shelters and sidewalks within a half mile of bus stops and within three miles of bike facilities, around bus stops and such.

Ms. Miernik questioned when it was going to be started. She stated that it had been two years that the MPO had been receiving \$451,000 a year to use for Transportation Alternatives. She questioned if any of the MPO members knew anything about this. She stated that she realized Huntsville Planning usually took care of matters for the MPO, but noted that this was kind of a new thing, that they had not previously had Transportation Alternatives money for the MPO, that this was all handled by ALDOT, that they would be sent items, and they would make a decision statewide and tell them yes or no. She reiterated that at this time every year they were supposed to have \$451,000, so that in two years, they had received \$900,000, and they had not spent a penny of it yet.

Ms. Miernik stated that she had been trying to work with Planning on this. She continued that she had surveyed all the other MPOs in the state of Alabama, and she had found that in Montgomery they had a brand-new 2012 MPO Bike/Ped plan and that Mobile had a Bike/Ped plan and a standing Bike/Ped Advisory Committee, with by-laws dated 2012. She continued that since MAP-21, the new Transportation Highway Bill that had been passed in 2011 and had gone into effect in 2012, these MPOs had taken action on this matter. She stated that she had surveyed

several other MPOs throughout the state, including Decatur, Tuscaloosa, Gadsden/Etowah, Calhoun, Dothan, and Birmingham, and that with the exception of the Birmingham MPO, the rest of them were way ahead of the local MPO.

Mr. Miernik stated that the MPO should take action on this, that they should form a Bike/Ped committee to determine how to get this money spent, and that within six months they should have something under way. She stated that there were a few projects in the mill, and she was sure that persons could think of others.

Ms. Miernik stated that at this time they had the City of Huntsville Bicycle and Safety Committee, which had a few City employees on it and six or seven civilians who were persons who were very interested in making Bike/Ped planning a priority. She suggested that they might make this group an MPO group and get a couple of planners from Madison and the County and a few more people from Madison and the County and put them on there and get this done.

Ms. Miernik stated that this was her suggestion and that she was putting it to Chairman Strong, that perhaps he could make some kind of an action with someone in the room that could work on this.

Chairman Strong stated to Ms. Miernik that he appreciated her comments, that they had been very informative. He stated that the MPO would take this under advisement. He stated that he would like for this to be added as an agenda item for the

next MPO meeting, which he noted was tentatively scheduled for December 10, 2014. He stated that he believed there should be an information-gathering time between this date and the date of the next meeting.

Ms. Miernik asked Chairman Strong who would be working on this.

Chairman Strong reiterated that he wanted to have the opportunity to gather some more information concerning this and that it would be brought before the MPO at their next meeting.

Chairman Strong asked if there was anyone else in the audience who would like to address the MPO at this time.

There was no response.

Chairman Strong stated that the next item on the agenda was Other Business. He asked if there was any other business to come before the MPO.

There was no response.

Chairman Strong stated that there was one thing he would like to add to the agenda for future MPO meetings, being that they would have a status update on the Transportation projects with ATRIP and the matching funds. He stated that by doing this, they could be assured they were keeping the public aware of what exactly was going on with the projects.

Chairman Strong asked if any MPO members had anything they would like to add at this time.

Mr. Olshefski stated that this would be his last meeting.

Chairman Strong stated that he appreciated Mr. Olshefski's

service to the Metropolitan Planning Organization and stated that he was sure they would see him around frequently.

Chairman Strong stated that if there was no further business to come before the MPO, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman,  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

ATTEST:

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Secretary,  
Metropolitan Planning Organization