

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday, January 5, 2015

A regular meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee was held on Monday January 5, 2015 at 5:00 on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Administration Building located at 308 Fountain Circle.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bill Weaver – City of Madison  
John Ofenloch – City of Huntsville  
Gary Whitley, Jr. – City of Huntsville  
Bob Devlin – Madison County  
Todd Sylman – City of Huntsville  
Jennifer Nelson – City of Huntsville  
Luis Ferrar – City of Triana

**STAFF MEMBERS:** Dennis Madsen – City of Huntsville Planning  
Tanjie Kling – City of Huntsville Planning  
James Moore – City of Huntsville Planning  
James Vandiver – City of Huntsville Planning  
Thomas Nunez – City of Huntsville Planning  
Michelle Jordan – City of Huntsville Planning  
Tracy Meshberg – City of Huntsville Planning

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kim Smith-Parking and Public Transit City of  
Huntsville Transportation  
Kathy Martin – City of Huntsville Engineering  
Lucas Blankenship-TARCOG

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Weaver. Upon call for the adoption of minutes from January 5, 2015. Mr. Ofenloch made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and approved by all.

Mr. Weaver said there were comment sheets up front for everyone to write comments down regarding the long range transportation plan, or they could e-mail them to Ms. Kling or Mr. Moore.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 1-15** to amend the Urbanized Area Boundaries, Study Area Boundaries and the Functional Classification Map for the Huntsville MPO. Mr. Weaver asked Mr. Moore for an explanation of the item. Mr. Moore stated that he added the following roads to the Functional Class Map: Harvard Road Extension: Located between Governors Drive and Monroe Street, Holladay Blvd: Between US 72 West and Brownsferry Road, Greenbrier Parkway: Between Interstate 565 and Old Hwy 20, Church Street

Extension: Between Monroe Street and Oakwood Avenue, and Resolute Way on Redstone Arsenal.

Mr. Ofenloch asked Mr. Moore why Athens was not in the MPO. Mr. Moore explained they choose not to be in the MPO.

Mr. Ofenloch made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 1-15; which was duly seconded by Mr. Devlin and carried unanimously.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 2-15**; to adopt the Draft Year 2040 Transportation Plan for the Huntsville MPO Study area. Mr. Weaver asked Ms. Kling for an explanation of the item. Ms. Kling did a presentation of the plan. She stated that the Long Range Transportation Plan or Metropolitan Transportation Plan is required by federal regulations (23 CFR 450) every 5 years for MPOs that are at attainment, or MPOs that do not have any air quality issues like Huntsville. The plan is a precursor to the Transportation Improvement Program or TIP, a separate plan that identifies what projects are to be funded within a 4-year time period. All projects in the TIP must be in the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Long Range Plan provides a menu of various projects that can be funded when money is identified. The Long Range Plan also identifies projects to be constructed in the next 25 years plus other improvements to the network for the next 25 years.

She further remarked that there are several types of projects identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan: Capacity Projects and Maintenance & Operations Projects. Capacity Projects are widening projects that increase capacity of the roadway. Maintenance & Operations Projects are those projects that improve access, mobility, safety, and throughput by improving intersections, adding overpasses, replacing bridges, resurfacing roads & signalization. Other projects identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan are bike and pedestrian projects. There are several differences when comparing the 2035 Transportation Plan to the 2040 Plan. The most significant difference is funding availability. The Alabama Department of Transportation selects a majority of the road projects to be funded & the MPO directs one category of funds for road improvement projects. ALDOT informed us when conducting this plan update, that their policy now is to limit Federal/State construction dollars to the years 2015 until 2024. Any monies anticipated for projects beyond the year 2024 will be reserved for maintenance and operations activities only. For this MPO area, Federal and State projects without any local financial contributions or local matching funds will construct 1 project: Alabama Highway 53 from South of Jeff Road to North of Harvest Road. All other projects that are shown as funded in this plan are done so through a mixture of Federal, State, and Local monies or funded 100% locally. So a majority of transportation improvement projects that are planned for the next 10 years involve heavy local government investment.

Ms. Kling stated that the MPO traditionally has always dedicated the one category of funds they control, to capacity adding projects. The MPO staff communicated to the State that this has always been our policy, and that we do not wish to limit our funding availability to a 10 year period. Since we want to continue to plan out our road construction projects for the full 25-year time frame, ALDOT agreed to allow this local policy for the MPO's dedicated funds to continue until the year 2040. This enables the MPO to continue with plans to keep projects such

as the Northern Bypass, Slaughter Rd, and Jeff Rd on schedule, that were previously approved at the April 2014 MPO meeting. It also allows the MPO to program projects beyond year 2030 based upon anticipated funding levels.

She explained that based upon the remaining funds anticipated between 2031 and 2040, 2 projects were added to the funded list (or financially constrained list) using MPO dedicated money. These projects are Slaughter Road from Old Madison Pike to US 72, and Capshaw Road from Jeff Road to Old Railroad Bed Road. These projects are not only multi-jurisdictional and regionally used corridors that will see future degradation of service, but they complete and/or complement other projects that have been planned by the MPO for earlier years, such as Slaughter Rd from Highway 20 to Old Madison Pike, and Jeff Road from Capshaw Rd to Douglass Road. Another difference between the 2035 Plan and the 2040 Plan is the project list. Some new capacity projects were added, and some were realigned, such as improvements on Cecil Ashburn Dr from Sutton Rd to Carl T Jones Rd. This project was previously in the City of Huntsville's Capital Plan. Now it is a "Restore Our Roads" Project and the funding has been identified as such. Both the Greenbrier Parkway Improvements, Phases 2 through 4; and the I-565 Interchange Modification at Madison Blvd for Resolute Way at Redstone Arsenal are being funded through the City of Huntsville's Capital Plan. They have been added to the long range plan only because they are regionally significant projects. The following projects have been previously identified in the Year 2035 Transportation Plan – but have new alignments: Alabama Highway 53 Relocation from Pinedale Rd to I-65 Interchange; and Arsenal East Connector, Phases 1 through 4. The project was previously called the Southern Bypass in 2035 Plan; but the new alignment hugs the Arsenal Boundary and the Northern Bypass from Winchester Rd to US 72.

Ms. Kling stated that the third difference between the 2035 plan and the 2040 plan is a more extensive listing of Maintenance & Operations Projects. Both FHWA and ALDOT required that all M&O projects be listed in their own category. These include interchanges, bridge replacements, safety projects, and intersection improvements.

She explained that the principal driver of the long range transportation plan is the financial availability or the anticipated funding to implement selected projects. If there is no future funding identified for a project, it cannot be planned for construction. The Year 2040 Plan takes into account all projects that have been previously planned by the State and locals, and programs them based upon cost and need. Like previous years, the Year 2040 Transportation Plan consists only of projects that are funded or "Financially Constrained". The transportation model supports the construction of those projects. Financially Constrained Projects are defined as improvements that are funded with a dedicated and available source of money. These projects are shown in plan maps as "blue" projects. Visionary Projects are those that are desired, but not funded. They are shown for illustrative purposes only. In case funding becomes available, the project may be moved from "Visionary" to "Financially Constrained." These projects are shown in plan maps as "red."

Ms. Kling stated that a total of 105 Capacity Projects and 20 Maintenance and Operations Projects were identified as either Financially Constrained or Visionary Projects, requiring about \$3 billion in federal funds to complete. There is funding available for only 29 Capacity Projects

and 13 Maintenance and Operations Projects with a planned expenditure of \$342.8 million in Federal Funds. Locally, the City of Huntsville, City of Madison, and Madison County are providing 100% funding for 8 of those projects, committing an additional \$138.7 million. There is a shortfall of about \$2.7 billion to construct all remaining projects.

Ms. Kling stated that essentially, the plan narrative focuses on the Financially Constrained Modeled Network. The MPO staff requested the consultant to perform various model scenarios and to develop Socio-Economic Data for the plan. She introduced Scott Rumble, from the consulting firm of Atkins North America, and explained that he will discuss the socio-economic data, and the model work they have accomplished. Ms. Kling turned the floor over to Scott Rumble, for further discussion.

Mr. Rumble stated that Atkins was contracted by the City of Huntsville to assist with the development of socioeconomic data projections and travel demand model analysis for the Year 2040 Transportation Plan.

He further stated that socioeconomic data primarily consists of households and employment and is a critical input to the travel demand model. With respect to household and employment projections, growth is expected to continue in the Huntsville MPO study area due to a diversified economy, the positive impact of future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) transfers in the Huntsville area, and a solid foundation in aerospace and defense technology. We based our growth projections on local knowledge of near-term growth, University of Alabama Center for Business and Economic Research (CBRE) data, Alabama Department of Labor data, and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Mr. Rumble explained the analysis of expected growth in socioeconomic data resulted in the following projections for households and employment in the Huntsville MPO study area: Households are expected to grow from 152,890 in 2010 to 220,756 in 2040, which is a growth of +60%. Retail and non-retail employment are reported separately because retail employment generates more trips per employee than non-retail employment. While there will certainly be pockets of growth throughout the Huntsville MPO study area in the future, there are some general growth trends that can be expected. Household growth is generally expected to occur in the north and west areas. Retail employment growth is also generally expected to occur in the north and west areas and the non-retail employment growth is generally expected to occur in the south and west areas.

The travel demand model for the Huntsville MPO study area includes a number of inputs. It includes all functionally classified roads and includes all households, employers and schools. The model estimates all daily trips made by residents, employees and students, which is a process called Trip Generation. The model then estimates the start and end of every trip, which is a process called Trip Distribution. Finally, the model estimates the road(s) that every trip uses, which is a process called Trip Assignment. The model was first calibrated using known 2010 data and was then used to estimate future 2040 conditions.

A total of five scenarios were analyzed by the travel demand model. The first scenario modeled was the Base Year 2010 model. Next, four future alternatives were modeled.

Alternative 1 consisted of 2040 socioeconomic data and only included Existing-Plus-Committed projects (No-Build). Alternative 2 consisted of 2040 socioeconomic data and the planned Financially Constrained and Visionary projects but did not include the Memphis to Atlanta Highway project. Alternative 3 consisted of 2040 socioeconomic data and the planned Financially Constrained and Visionary projects and did include the Memphis to Atlanta Highway project. Alternative 4 consisted of 2040 socioeconomic data and the planned Financially Constrained Projects only.

To summarize the impact of the 2040 socioeconomic data on the future roadway network, we have provided a comparison of the 2010 Base Year network and Alternative 4 which has the planned Financially Constrained projects only. Based on a comparison of these two models, road capacity by will increase by 6%, total travel in miles will increase 50% by 2040, total travel in hours will increase 71% by 2040, and average travel speed will decrease 13% by 2040. The list of Financially Constrained Plan projects will certainly have a positive impact on the highway system, but the expected growth in socioeconomic data will out-pace the region's limited ability to increase roadway capacity due to limited available funding.

Mr. Rumble turned the floor over to Ms. Kling for further discussion of the Year 2040 Transportation Plan. She highlighted several other transportation elements in the plan: Transit, Congestion Management, Safety Management, Security of the System, Freight, and Bike/Ped. For the Transit Element – an assessment of Transit Services and Needs was performed. The 25 year need for services revolves around expansion and frequency of services. The Freight Element highlights airport, truck, rail, and waterway facilities and operations. The Congestion Management, Safety Management, Security of the System Section highlights Congestion Measures and Identified Top 10 Congested Corridors and Corrective Actions. It also provides and overview of ALDOT's Safety Management through the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and provides an overview of strategies in place to secure the transportation network.

Ms. Kling stated that the next step for final approval requires the MPO to approve the draft plan. Both ALDOT and FHWA will conduct a final review of the plan, and public comments will be addressed. Required changes will be made, and final approval of the plan shall be completed by March 24. She stated the goal is to complete the final plan as soon as possible; however, it is dependent upon the length of time it takes for ALDOT and FHWA to review and submit their final comments; then for the staff to respond.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 2-15; which was duly seconded by Mr. Ofenloch to be placed on the floor for discussion.

Ms. Jennifer Nelson and Mr. Gary Whitely asked the consultant about the transportation model, especially if other modes were modeled such as transit. Mr. Rumble stated that ALDOT does not require other modes such as transit to be modeled, because other those modes of transportation are not utilized heavily Statewide. Ms. Nelson stated that she had additional comments to make concerning the plan; however, would be submitting them by e-mail to the staff before the deadline of January 16. Ms. Kling stated she would look forward to her comments and would publish them in the plan.

Discussion on the item was closed, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 3-15:** to amend the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects section in the adopted FY 2012-2015 TIP to add funds for the State of Alabama: Memorial Parkway from north of Whitesburg Drive to south of Golf Road (Mainline), for Construction. Mr. Weaver asked Ms. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Ms. Kling stated that this resolution provides for the construction of the mainline, not the service roads for the Memorial Parkway improvement project from north of Whitesburg to south of Golf Road. This is a “Restore Our Roads” project; a project selected by the Mayor of Huntsville as a priority project, and is one of the projects that the City of Huntsville will be splitting the cost with the State DOT on a 50/50 cost basis. The total cost of the project is \$24,753,688. Adoption of this resolution allows the construction project for this phase of work to be tentatively bid in March of 2015.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 3-15; which was duly seconded by Mr. Ofenloch and carried unanimously.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 4-15:** to amend the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects section in the adopted FY 2012-2015 TIP to add funds for the State of Alabama and City of Huntsville: I-565 and Madison Blvd (Exit 13) Interchange Modification for Resolute Way Access at Redstone Arsenal, for State Support Services. Mr. Weaver asked Ms. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Ms. Kling stated that during the last MPO meeting, the staff was directed by the MPO Board to insure that this project be added to the 2040 Transportation Plan. The City of Huntsville has initiated a proposal for a corridor study to be done for the project, to better define the alignment of the road. Approval of this resolution will allow funding in the amount of \$100,000 to be expended for the State’s review of the plans associated with this project.

Mr. Slyman made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 4-15; which was duly seconded by Ms. Nelson and carried unanimously.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 5-15:** to amend the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects section in the adopted FY 2012-2015 TIP to add funds for the State of Alabama and City of Huntsville: Huntsville Northern Bypass from 1.2 Miles east of Pulaski Pike to 1,500 feet east of US 231/431 Intersection, for Right of Way. Mr. Weaver asked Ms. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Ms. Kling stated that this resolution allows for the purchase of right of way to occur for this portion of the Northern Bypass – with a tentative date of June 2015. This is another “Restore Our Roads” project, in which the Mayor of Huntsville has identified this as a priority corridor and has

agreed with the State of Alabama to split the cost of this project on a 50/50 cost basis. The total estimated cost of the right of way is \$5,000,000.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 5-15; which was duly seconded by Mr. Ofenloch and carried unanimously.

Mr. Weaver stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 6-15:** to appoint TARCOG as the designated recipient and distributor of FTA Section 5310 Grant Funds Mr. Weaver asked Ms. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Ms. Kling stated that this resolution is to appoint TARCOG as the designated recipient and distributor of FTA Section 5310 Grant Funds. Ms. Kling stated that Lucas Blankenship from TARCOG was present to answer any questions concerning this item. Mr. Blankenship deferred to Ms. Kim Smith of Huntsville Public Transit. Ms. Smith stated that the funds are the Federal Transit Administration's Elderly and Disabled transportation funding source for human services agencies such as the Mental Health Center and the Opportunity Center. Previously those funds passed through ALDOT. Ms. Smith stated that FTA now requires funds to be distributed locally and not through not the State. Mr. Blankenship stated that TARCOG currently has procedures in place to assume this responsibility. TARCOG is required to submit a letter to the Governor formalizing approval, as well as a signed resolution of approval by MPO, and the legal assurances.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.