

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday, June 6, 2016

A regular meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee was held at 5:00pm on Monday, June 6, 2016 on the 7th floor on the Administration Building located at 308 Fountain Circle.

MEMBERS: John Ofenloch-Huntsville
Todd Slyman-Huntsville
Trent Griffin-Huntsville
Gary Whitley-Huntsville
Russ McDonald-Limestone-Madison County
Bob Devlin-Madison County
Curtis Potts-City of Madison
Tony Smith-Huntsville

STAFF MEMBERS: Dennis Madsen- City of Huntsville Planning Department
Tanjie Kling-City of Huntsville Planning Department
James Vandiver-City of Huntsville Planning Department
James Moore-City of Huntsville Planning Department
Tracy Meshberg-City of Huntsville Planning Department
Paige Colburn-City of Huntsville Planning Department
Kim Smith-City of Huntsville Transportation Department

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ofenloch. Upon call for the adoption of the minutes from January 25, 2016. Mr. Devlin made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was carried by Mr. Griffin and approved by all.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 07-16**; adopts the Draft Fiscal Year 2017 Unified Work Program. Mr. Ofenloch asked for an explanation of the item.

Mr. Moore made a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that the Unified Planning Work Program is the governing planning document, prepared by an Huntsville MPO on an annual basis, which identifies the transportation planning work to be undertaken within metropolitan planning area as required by Federal Law.

Mr. Moore stated that the purpose of the Unified Planning Work Program is to outline multimodal transportation planning activities within a financially constrained budget to be conducted in the Huntsville MPO planning area. He continued that the UPWP was updated each year to provide citizens and stakeholders the necessary transparency to see how federal and state transportation planning dollars are expended by the Huntsville MPO and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

Mr. Moore stated that some examples of tasks performed by the UPWP are as follows; Task I, Administration, covering financial management, public outreach, and the general

management of the MPO; Task II Data Development and Maintenance, covering the collection and maintenance of data, as well as travel demand modeling for the MPO; Tasks III & IV, Short and Long-Range Planning, covering the TIP, the UPWP, and the Long-Range Plan; and Task V, Special Studies, including Air Quality, Greenhouse Gases, and Climate Change.

Mr. Moore stated that the UPWP was developed by the MPO staff in consultation with partner agencies and input from local citizens and stakeholders, and that the documents might be amended to account for changes in funding or project needs.

Mr. Moore stated that the Huntsville MPO's current UPWP, adopted in September 2015, extends through September 30, 2016. When adopted, the 2017 program will fund over \$748,000 dollars worth of planning activities and studies for the Huntsville MPO region.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 07-16; which was duly seconded by Mr. Smith and carried unanimously.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 08-16**; amends the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/National Highway System Bridge Projects and the Other Surface Transportation Projects sections in the adopted FY 2016-2019 TIP to increase funds for right of way acquisition. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Mrs. Kling stated that this amends the adopted Year 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program to accommodate a higher cost estimate of right of way acquisition for the Huntsville Northern Bypass from 1500 feet east of Pulaski Pike to East of US 231\431. This resolution requires federal funds from both the National Highway System program and the Surface Transportation Other program to meet the estimated overruns.

Mrs. Kling stated that this segment of the Huntsville Northern Bypass is nearing the right of way phase. The original right of way cost was estimated about 10 years ago, before any formal design of the road began. At that time it was guesstimated to be about \$5 million to acquire properties needed for the construction of the road. However, during the past decade, the design of the project has progressed to the point where costs are more definitive. There has also been property development in the footprint of the corridor, especially at North Memorial Parkway or 231\431 Highway. This development, in addition to inflation, had caused the right of way cost to be currently estimated at \$11,500,000. Mrs. Kling said she believes there are about 100 tracts of land that need to be purchased. This is a "Restore our Roads" project, and the City of Huntsville has agreed with the State of Alabama to contribute 50% of the right of way cost per their funding arrangement. At the present time, right of way acquisition is tentatively scheduled to begin in July 2016.

Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Kling if the acquisitions are going to be started in July. Ms. Kling stated that the federal money is set to be released in July, but then negotiations must occur and it can take up to 18 months to complete all the of the right of way acquisition.

Mr. Whitley made a motion to recommend approval to Resolution 08-16; which was duly seconded by Mr. Devlin.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 09-16**; amends the Transit Projects section in the adopted FY 2016-2019 TIP to modify FY 2017 capital and operating funds for Huntsville Public Transit. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Kling for an explanation of the item.

Mrs. Kling stated that Huntsville Public Transit is requesting an amendment to Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) pertaining to their fiscal year 2017 budget. The City of Huntsville is a direct recipient of grant funds from the Federal Transit Administration. These transit grant estimates must be programmed into the TIP for the full 4 years covered in the plan. While Huntsville Transit already has estimated amounts listed for fiscal year 2017, there is a requirement that the budget for the upcoming fiscal year be tweaked to better reflect more accurate federal allocations.

Mrs. Kling also explained, based upon the latest information concerning budget amounts for fiscal year 2017, Huntsville Transit requests capital and operating allocations be modified as presented and displayed on the slide.

She said this reflects a total of \$2,537,952 for the operating budget and \$1,773,124 for the capital budget. The City of Huntsville is projected to receive a total of \$2,488,630 from FTA for its transit programs in FY 2017 and the City of Huntsville will be paying a match of \$1,862,716 making the total Transit funding for the City of Huntsville \$4,311,076.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if the budget was based on current available funds. He stated that he assumed it didn't go down.

Ms. Kim Smith of Huntsville Public Transit stated that the capital allocation decreased by \$20,000. She stated that they added two more projects to the TIP. One was a system for the Shuttle buses to announce stops and the other was for Handi-Ride client notification.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to recommend approval of Resolution 09-16; which was duly seconded by Mr. Potts and carried unanimously.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was the discussion of the Capshaw/Old Monrovia Road timeline and US 72 Project. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Kling for update.

Mrs. Kling stated that at the last CAC meeting, Mr. Slyman had inquired about the possibility of expediting the construction of the Capshaw Road/Old Monrovia Road improvements, in anticipation of the construction of the State's planned improvements on US 72 West. She indicated that at the present time, the engineering design of US 72 West is still underway. She said that the local jurisdictions cannot speak for the State in terms of when the design of the corridor or the project will be completed, but we do know that the project will not move quickly through the environmental assessment and right of way acquisition process.

Mrs. Kling said the one pot of money that the MPO can control, provides us with roughly \$6 million per year of discretionary money for projects. Currently, improvements on Old Monrovia Road/Capshaw Road are programmed using our MPO discretionary money for engineering design in 2025, right of way in 2026, and utility relocation and construction in 2028.

Mrs. Kling remarked that the list of road projects that are currently scheduled and funded this year and in the next few years have been reviewed, and it was verified that these are projects already in process or underway. We really cannot stop active projects and start a brand new project. For instance, Zierdt Road is under construction; Church Street from Monroe Street to Pratt Avenue has had design, right of way, and utility relocation in process for nearly a decade and the road bed is about to be prepared for construction; and we are anticipating overruns for various improvements on Winchester Road that is either underway or about to be bid.

Mrs. Kling said that the next projects that are in line for MPO discretionary funds from 2017-2025 are the Northern Bypass from Memorial Parkway to Winchester Road, and Jeff Road from Douglass Rd to Highway 53. These two projects are required to be next in line for funding, because of FHWA policy.

She further explained that the Northern Bypass project has been broken into 2 more fundable segments: from Pulaski Pike to Memorial Parkway, and from Memorial Parkway to Winchester Road. Since these projects are using federal dollars, an environmental assessment is mandated by legislation. Even though the project is broken into two segments, the FHWA has required that the environmental studies or assessment be completed for the entire corridor from East of Pulaski Pike to Winchester Road. The City of Huntsville has been using its own capital money to pay for the environmental studies. Recently, the FHWA held a meeting with Huntsville City Engineering, and FHWA stated that they would not review or approve the environmental assessment/documents or future design plans of the corridor unless the entire project, which is both segments, is programmed for construction in the current 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program or TIP. Since the environmental documents for the entire corridor must be approved before any construction is started on the segment from Pulaski Pike to US 231/431, the MPO staff were given the ultimatum from FHWA to either program and phase-in funding for the Northern Bypass out to Winchester Road during 2016-2019, or they would halt the project; specifically the segment that will have its right of way acquired during next month, and hope to begin building next year. The TIP was amended at our last meeting in January, to program the full project. So we cannot reschedule the Northern Bypass from Memorial Parkway to Winchester Rd to a later date, or we lose the whole project. Additionally, the City of Huntsville has funding agreements and commitments with the State of Alabama pertaining to these Northern Bypass projects. The 2nd segment's right of way is scheduled to start next year.

Mrs. Kling stated that the Jeff Road project is pretty much in the same situation as the Northern Bypass. The County has planned the construction of Jeff Road into 2 more fundable segments: from Capshaw Road to Douglass Road, and from Douglass Road to Alabama Highway 53. Knowing the FHWA's policy of requiring the entire corridor to be studied through an environmental assessment for an entire stretch of road, the County is doing this for Jeff Road from Capshaw Road to Alabama Highway 53. The County received an ATRIP grant from the

State to construct Jeff Road from Capshaw Road to Douglass Road. At the inception of the ATRIP grant program, the State put time constraints on those grant funded projects for completion. While the ATRIP project does not use our MPO dedicated money, there is still a requirement to add the next segment of Jeff Road from Douglass Road to Alabama Highway 53 to the TIP. It is scheduled to begin engineering design in 2019. We cannot reschedule Jeff Road from Douglass Road to Alabama Highway 53 to a later date, or we will lose the entire project.

Mrs. Kling said, for the immediate years after 2019, funding is dedicated to completing the Northern Bypass all the way out to Winchester Road and to completing Jeff Road all the way out to Alabama Highway 53.

She further remarked that the MPO will not have enough discretionary funding right now to pay for any improvements to Old Monrovia Road/Capshaw Road until 2025. She said that is not to say that things cannot change. There may be some type of funding available in the future that could be used to pay for projects that originally have been programmed to use our MPO funds; freeing up additional funding for Old Monrovia Road/Capshaw Road. Also, after the 2020 census, we will hear from the State regarding the statewide distribution of MPO discretionary money, based upon population. Considering the change in distribution of population among Alabama's urban areas, we may receive more funding above our current \$6 million, and some other MPOs may be cut. Mrs. Kling assured the committee that we will continue to monitor the situation in terms of funding improvements at Old Monrovia Road and Capshaw Road, as we constantly keep tabs on our funding.

Mr. Slyman stated that if the State gets pressure to start 72 West and shuts down a lane, he wants this on record that it is going to be a bloody mess.

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