

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday, December 5, 2016

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

MEMBERS:

John Ofenloch -Huntsville
Gary Whitley, Jr. -Huntsville
Jennifer Nelson- Huntsville
Russ McDonald – Limestone County
Todd Slyman - Huntsville
Bob Devlin – Madison County
Trent Griffin – Huntsville

STAFF MEMBERS:

Tanjie Kling - City of Huntsville Planning Department
Paige Colburn - City of Huntsville Planning Department
James Vandiver - City of Huntsville Planning Department
Michelle Jordan - Director of City of Huntsville Planning Department

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ofenloch. Upon call for the adoption of the minutes from August 22, 2016, Mr. Slyman made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. McDonald and then carried.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 19-16**; adoption of the Draft 2017 Public Participation Plan. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Colburn to explain this resolution. Mrs. Colburn stated that this resolution was the 2017 Draft Public Participation Plan. This FHWA required plan documents the MPO's public outreach policies and procedures. The Draft 2017 Public Participation Plan (PPP) updates the Final 2013 PPP and includes updated forms of outreach, such as social media, the MPO website, the TQ newsletter and TQR blog.

The PPP also includes the Title VI Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) as an appendix. This required document was also updated from the 2013 version to include new partner agencies such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs and to update demographics of the non-English speaking population.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of **Resolution 19-16**; which was duly seconded by Mr. Slyman and carried unanimously.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 20-16**, Amendment to the Year 2040 Transportation Plan. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Colburn to explain this resolution. Mrs. Colburn stated, this resolution amends the adopted Year 2040 Transportation Plan to change two projects from visionary or unfunded to funded projects. These two projects are Project #46: Memorial Parkway from Lakewood Drive to Hollow Road, with overpasses at Stallworth Drive and Winchester Road; and Project #80: Research Park Boulevard from Old Madison Pike to US 72.

Both of these projects are being funded as part of the Restore Our Roads initiative. As discussed in previous meetings, the City of Huntsville and the State of Alabama have agreed to cost share various projects, and are contributing \$125 million each for these road improvements. One project that is currently in the environmental study stage is Memorial Parkway from Sparkman Drive to Mastin Lake Road, with an overpass at Mastin Lake Road.

When the environmental documents for this project were being developed, the Federal Highway Administration required that the area of study be extended from its original ending north of Mastin Lake Road, to Hollow Road, which is north of Winchester Road. The State of Alabama and City of Huntsville complied with this internal policy. During the latest FHWA environmental documents review with the State of Alabama and the City of Huntsville, the FHWA set forth another requirement that the next phase of Memorial Parkway shown in the environmental documents, being from Lakewood Drive to Hollow Road with overpasses at Stallworth Drive and Winchester Road, be shown in the long range plan as a funded project. FHWA stated that if the Phase 2 project is not shown as funded, then the current projects at Memorial Parkway from Sparkman Drive to Mastin Lake, including an overpass at Mastin Lake, would be halted. The Mastin Lake project is a high priority project for the State and the City, and is almost ready for the right of way acquisition phase.

In order for the Mastin Lake Project to progress, the State of Alabama has agreed to provide funding for Project #46: Memorial Parkway from Lakewood Drive to Hollow Road, with overpasses at Stallworth Drive and Winchester Road. Section 4 of the Year 2040 Transportation Plan was amended to show the project as funded.

Also the Financial Section of the plan was amended to show the project as programmed for the future funding with National Highway Performance Program funds as detailed below:

PE design scheduled in 2037 in the amount of \$2,638,651

Right of way acquisition scheduled in 2037 in the amounts 5,750,000

Utility relocation scheduled in 2038 in the amount of \$2,631,651

Construction scheduled in 2038 in the amount of \$48,960,852.

During the development of the original Year 2040 Transportation Plan, the State of Alabama committed to only fund capacity projects for the ten year period 2015-2024. In the case of project #46, a special exception was made to increase the amount of funds dedicated for National Highway Performance Program projects, so that the Memorial Parkway/Mastin Lake overpass project that is currently underway could be completed.

The next project to be shown as funded is Project #80: Research Park Boulevard from Old Madison Pike to US 72. As noted earlier, the City of Huntsville and the State of Alabama have each agreed to appropriate \$125 million for the construction of priority roads in the City. According to the latest amended agreement between the City and the State, there were some additional funds remaining to be programmed for overruns and other critical projects. The City of Huntsville requested that the Research Park Boulevard project, from Old Madison Pike to US 72 be funded with some of this remaining money. The State of Alabama has permitted the City of Huntsville to allocate \$15 million in

local funds towards this project, and will apply or count the \$15 million dollar amount towards its \$125 million match for transportation projects. Federal funds are not being used for this project. An agreement between the State of Alabama and the City of Huntsville was approved by both parties on September 2016, to legally allow this to occur.

The estimated cost for this project is:

Preliminary engineering, fiscal year 2017 - \$7,000,000

Right of way, fiscal year 2018 - \$300,000

Utility relocation, fiscal year 2018 - \$1,000,000 and

Construction, fiscal year 2019 - \$13,900,000

The project is being added to the Year 2040 Transportation Plan, because it is a regionally significant project and is in close proximity to I-565 and terminates at US 72 West. Because this segment of Research Park Blvd. runs between two federal roads, it is anticipated that FHWA will be involved.

Mr. Ofenloch called for a discussion of **Resolution 20-16**.

Committee members had the following comments pertaining to this resolution:

In relationship to project #46: Where is Stallworth Drive? Is there a reason there needs to be an overpass there? It was noted that the location of the project and the fact that FHWA required the overpass in this location in order to meet NEPA requirements related to the current MPO project at Mastin Lake Road.

In relationship to project #80, there was a comment concerning coordinating timing of the interchange improvements at HWY 72 and timing the Research Park Blvd. improvements to coincide with these interchange improvements. Mrs. Kling responded the HWY 72 interchange improvement is 20 years from now, and will certainly be re-evaluated during Year 2045 Transportation Plan development.

One concern was to re-evaluate utility relocation costs for both projects to include Google Fiber.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of **Resolution 20-16**; which was duly seconded by Mr. Griffin.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 21-16**; an amendment to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program to add two Regionally Significant Projects, funded 100% by the City of Huntsville. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Colburn for an explanation of the item.

Mrs. Colburn stated that the first project is Cecil Ashburn Drive from West of Donegal Drive to West of Taylor Road, and the second project is Research Park Boulevard from Old Madison Pike to US 72. Both of these projects are in the Year 2040 Transportation Plan, and are added to the TIP for consistency.

Cecil Ashburn Drive is a special Restore Our Roads project. As stated earlier, the State of Alabama and City of Huntsville agreed to contribute \$125 million each towards road improvements, as

part of Restore Our Roads. ALDOT allowed the city to count the \$15 million Cecil Ashburn Drive improvements towards the City's \$125 million contribution. The City is paying for 100% of the project and no federal money is involved. A well-attended Public Involvement Meeting regarding this project was held by the City of Huntsville at Hampton Cove School on September 13, 2016.

The Engineering design of the project began in 2015. Right of Way in the amount of \$200,000 is scheduled for 2017. Utility relocation is scheduled for 2017 in the amount of \$50,000 and construction is scheduled for 2018 in the amount of \$13,900,000.

Research Park Boulevard's design is scheduled for fiscal year 2017 in the amount of \$7,000,000. Right of Way, fiscal year 2018 \$300,000 and construction, fiscal year 2019 - \$13,900,000.

The addition of Cecil Ashburn Drive and Research Park Boulevard projects brings the local commitment of funding for regionally significant projects through the year 2019 to \$148.2 million.

Mr. Ofenloch called for discussion of **Resolution 21-16**.

The Committee recommended that utility relocation costs for both projects be re-evaluated to include Google Fiber.

The Committee was concerned that increasing the number of travel lanes on a roadway often increases the speed of vehicular travel observed. On Cecil Ashburn, incidents occurring at higher speeds would be more likely to be catastrophic, as there is little room for error due to the geography and geometry of the roadway.

The Committee also voted to split the Resolution into 2 parts: Part A for Cecil Ashburn Drive, and Part B for Research Park Blvd. For Part B: Research Park Blvd; the CAC requested interchanges at Research Park Blvd/I-565 and Research Park Blvd/ US 72 be addressed.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to recommend approval of **Resolution 21-16 part A**;

Regarding Part A, Cecil Ashburn, the Committee made a "Motion to recommend non-approval for the TIP as written and consider targeted operational improvements at or in proximity to intersections and on Sutton Road, instead of capacity increases between Donegal Drive and Old Big Cove Road; due to safety concerns, lack of traffic volume-based justification for additional corridor capacity; and unrealistic funding numbers presented." To summarize their resolution, one committee member said: "Don't four-lane it, just fix the ends."

Mrs. Kling stated: There had been an engineering study and analysis of the corridor that shows the road is near, or at capacity-requiring improvements, and since funding is available for the project, it is an opportune time to construct the improvements.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to recommend approval of **Resolution 21-16 part B** which was duly seconded by Mr. McDonald.

The Committee voted in favor of the **Resolution 21-16 part B** Research Park Blvd. improvements.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 22-16**; an amendment to the Transportation Alternatives section of the adopted FY 2016-2019 TIP to add funds for a parking facility at the EUL Greenway. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mr. Moore for an explanation of the item.

Mr. Moore stated that this project was requested by the BASC committee several years ago. Mrs. Colburn added that although this is a greenway, it is not part of the Greenway plan because it is part of the bicycle network and this project was specifically requested by the cyclists.

CAC members chose to table the resolution pending receipt more information from BASC to be provided by James Moore.

Mr. Ofenloch stated that the next item on the agenda was **Resolution 23-16**; an amendment to the Transit Projects section of the adopted FY 2016-2019 TIP to add funds for Madison County Public Transit. Mr. Ofenloch asked Mrs. Colburn for an explanation of the item.

Mrs. Colburn stated the State of Alabama has informed the MPO staff of the official County or Rural Transportation funding amounts for fiscal year 2017. All transit providers receiving federal funds are required to estimate amounts of funding for a four year period, and once the amounts are official, the TIP is amended to reflect the corrected amounts. The State of Alabama DOT is a pass through agency for rural transportation funds. Madison County operates TRAM, a demand response transportation service. Madison County TRAM's operating assistance funds for fiscal year 2017 will be \$338,090 and the administration assistance amount will be \$56,135. The funds were verified with County Transit and they are in agreement with the amount.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to recommend approval of **Resolution 23-16**; which was duly seconded by Mr. Griffin; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS- It was announced that Mrs. Kling was retiring and this was her last CAC meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.