

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
OF THE
HUNTSVILLE AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting - August 26, 2020 - 3 p.m.

**City Council Chambers, Municipal Building
Huntsville, Alabama**

Committee Members Present:

Mr. James Moore	City of Huntsville, Planning Division
Ms. Kathy Martin	City of Huntsville, Director of Engineering
Mr. Nicholas Nene	City of Huntsville, Traffic Engineering
Mr. Thomas Nunez	City of Huntsville, Manager of Planning Services
Ms. Brandi Quick	City of Huntsville, Director of Huntsville-Madison County Marina and Port Authority
Mr. Trey Riley	City of Huntsville, City Attorney
Mr. Chuck Faulkner	Madison County, County Engineer
Mr. Steve Dinges	Madison County
Ms. Kaela Hamby	Redstone Arsenal, Community Planner
Mr. Rod Ellis	Alabama Department of Transportation
Mr. Lynn Wood	Alabama Department of Transportation

MPO Staff Members Present:

Mr. Dennis Madsen
Ms. Shontrill Lowe
Mr. James Vandiver

Also Present:

Mr. Robert G. Schiffer
and
Mr. Wade Carroll Metro Analytics

The meeting was called to order by Mr. James Moore at the time and place noted above.

Mr. Moore stated that the first item on the agenda was approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on June 17, 2020.

Mr. Faulkner moved for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee held on June 17, 2020, which motion was

duly seconded by Mr. Nunez and unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was the Draft Regional Commuter Study (Congestion Management Plan).

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Shontrill Lowe.

Ms. Lowe stated that she would first like to read a statement. She read as follows, "The Huntsville-Area MPO holds all public hearings in compliance with Titles VI and VIII of the Civil Rights Act. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status."

Ms. Lowe stated that the first item on the agenda was an informational item, the Draft Regional Commuter Study. She stated that the consultants from Metro Analytics were present, Mr. Rob Schiffer and Mr. Wade Carroll, to go into detail on this.

Mr. Rob Schiffer with Metro Analytics appeared before the Committee, and he stated that Mr. Wade Carroll would also be presenting.

(Mr. Schiffer made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Schiffer stated that he would be doing a quick recap and discussing some additional analysis they had done since their last presentation, on depart from home times, when people would actually leave their house to do their daily activities. He stated that they would also go over a little bit concerning COVID-19 traffic patterns. He stated that Mr. Carroll would speak about the Park-N-Ride locations they had been proposing.

Mr. Schiffer stated that he would then discuss the Study conclusions and some of the next steps.

Mr. Schiffer stated that the purpose of the project was to better

understand worker travel patterns and to use the findings in the MPO's Congestion Management Plan and the Region's Travel Demand Model. He stated that there were three project tasks: Data Collection, Data Presentation, and Data Analysis. He stated that the previous presentations they had made covered these tasks, and at this time they were going to focus on Congestion Management, Park-N-Ride, and other study conclusions, including a discussion of COVID-19 and its impact on travel behavior.

Mr. Schiffer stated that first there was Time of Departure from Trip Origin. He stated that approximately 20 to 21 percent of all tripmaking in the region actually occurred during what they called the "morning peak," running from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m., noting that the greatest amount of this was during the hour of 7 to 8, where about 7 percent of all daily trips occurred. He stated that this was similar to other regions around the country, that 7 percent of daily trips during peak hours was pretty customary. He stated that, obviously, the remainder of the day was about 80 percent tripmaking.

Mr. Schiffer stated that they had also talked with the MPO about doing some analysis of COVID-19 traffic patterns. He stated that StreetLight Data, whom they had been using for the information they had been presenting, had data on pre- and post-COVID-19 shutdown dates. He stated that they had decided to focus on comparing travel patterns of April 2019 to April 2020. He stated that April 2020 was probably the month that had the most amount of shutdown in the country, that almost every place was on some form of lockdown during that time. He stated that they had looked at all 50 origin-destination zones that were in their StreetLight contract, and they had looked at all trips by zone, and they had also looked at truck trips, to see how those were impacted.

Mr. Schiffer stated that the first thing they looked at was how this impacted the time-of-departure information he had just presented. He stated that the previous information submitted on this was for the entire calendar year of 2019. He asked what it meant when one looked at April 2020 versus April 2019, and he stated that what one could see on the display was that there was a pretty significant shift in travel patterns, by time of day. He stated that, in particular, if they looked at the 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. period, which was highlighted, there was a dramatic drop in the percent of trips in 2020 versus 2019 during this time period. He continued that the same happened at the end of the day, from about 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., that there was, again, a significant drop in the percent of trips that were occurring during that time period.

Mr. Schiffer stated that they were essentially seeing a lot of peak spreading occurring in both of these time periods. He stated that there was a general increase in the percent of trips during the non-peak hours as a result of that. He stated that there was a very significant drop in the number of trips. He stated that if they looked at the very bottom of this, they would see that there were about 7.8 million trips per day in April of 2019, and in April 2020 it dropped by approximately 3 million, so there was a very significant drop of trip activity, along with a significant shift of trips out of the peak period.

Mr. Schiffer stated that next they would look at what it meant in the different subareas of the region. He stated that first they looked at the numbers of reductions. He stated that as they had shown in a lot of cases before, because of the districts, that the analysis districts they were using were larger outside the MPO area, that they were generally an entire county or an entire city, the largest numbers of reductions occurred in those zones. He stated that a lot of these were actually outside the MPO area.

Mr. Schiffer stated that they shifted the focus then to the percent of trip reductions, and then they started to see something that he thought was more illuminating, that, for example, the Redstone Arsenal, which he noted had been the focus of a lot of discussion around this Study, trying to find out what commuters to the Arsenal were doing, they found that four out of the top five analysis districts that had the most amount of trip reduction were actually Arsenal located, that, in fact, five of the Arsenal districts, out of six, all ranked in the top 15. He continued that they were pretty dramatic numbers. He stated that they could see that it ranged from 79 percent trip reduction in 2020, at the Marshall subarea within the Arsenal, to minus 61 percent at Gateway. He stated that that was a very dramatic number. He continued that he thought it showed that because of the nature of work at the Arsenal, mostly work that was done in offices, they had been able to do a lot of that work off site, at home.

Mr. Schiffer stated that Research Park was another one that was in the top five, and, likewise, in a high-tech office park, a lot of those people could work at home if need be, and that was clearly what had been happening.

Mr. Schiffer displayed another slide, and he stated that they had also looked at Truck Trips and how those had changed. He stated that similar to the earlier chart on the total trip reductions, there were the larger areas outside the MPO that dominated this list. He stated that, in fact, the entire Top 10 were made up of counties and cities that were outside the MPO area.

Mr. Schiffer stated that when they switched to percentage decrease, then they started seeing something a little more analytical, one could say. He stated that they would start noticing at the top of this list areas that had a large amount of commercial deliveries. He stated that they would see several of the Arsenal sites here; the Medical District, which had a lot of deliveries,

obviously; and Meridianville, which was home to the Toyota Plant, was another one that was near the top of the list. He stated that these were the areas where they had seen a big reduction in truck traffic since the prior year.

Mr. Schiffer stated that he would turn the microphone over to Mr. Carroll to talk about the analysis of the potential Park-N-Ride lots, which was a component of the Congestion Management Plan.

Mr. Carroll stated, concerning the Congestion Management Plan, that with the Park-N-Ride lots, there was kind of a three-step process they had gone through. He stated that the identification of corridors was quite easily done. He stated that since this was a follow-up of the CMP, they wanted to focus their efforts on relieving the congestion along the congested corridors, that the Top 10 corridors was what they had focused on. He continued that those basically ended up being the main arterials that fed the commuter areas, and so forth, that came in and out of the city.

Mr. Carroll stated that based on that, the key was also, then, taking factors, such as where the borders of the congested areas ended and where the population lived, and so forth, and sort of defining a really good nexus between where the population was and where the congestion was because locations obviously needed to be closer to the residents, and beyond that. He stated that the stops were going to be well beyond the corridor, the actual congestion corridor, and they would try to intercept those, and so forth.

Mr. Carroll stated that the third step was looking at ways to identify potential sites. He stated that they had done research, with criteria from several MPOs that had also undergone this process, and they did sort of a first-cut of the sites. He stated that as they went into the presentation, he always wanted to pull a caveat on that, that these were just the first shot across

the bow, and that, obviously, there was a little bit more analysis that would need to be done to kind of hone in on that kind of activity, and the implementation schedule, and so forth.

Mr. Carroll stated that the main areas they had identified were along the US 72 West corridor, as well as the intersection there at Wall Triana. He stated that the criteria that they really used was where were a lot of travelers moving through. He continued that things that they also looked at were the abundance of surface parking, what was out there. He stated that the abundance of surface parking was really an interesting caveat at this time because they were not really sure what was going to happen in the world post-COVID for the brick and mortar. He stated that there was a lot of surface parking, and they definitely wanted to identify that.

Mr. Carroll stated that they had looked at Wall Triana for both US 72 West and I-565 West, as particular locations. He stated that the real reason for looking at I-565 West and Wall Triana was that as part of their local transportation plan for the city of Madison, they actually wanted to see a transit route eventually, moving forward, down Wall Triana. He stated that that was actually one of the corridors that was probably the most suitable for transit service.

Mr. Carroll stated that the third area they had identified was Winchester Road, to intercept some of that traffic that would come in from Meridianville. He stated that when he had done the field work, they really felt like that area out there would be more served with maybe more of a lower scale, sort of a commuter-based parking lot, where it would be a relatively short trip, or if they could do carpooling into the transit area to help better service the transit service. He stated that, obviously, the Showers bus transit

center was quite small, but it did have some parking. He stated that if they did weekdays, they would probably miss most of the recreational traffic that worked there. He stated that there were opportunities at that location as well.

Mr. Carroll stated that the US 231 corridor was probably the most intriguing for the Park-N-Ride and the commuter lot opportunities. He stated that there was quite a bit of vacant, big box commercial along that corridor, as well, that would present opportunities. He stated that Martin Road was a natural kind of intersect there that would be sort of a nice intercept point, but there was really nothing really feasible at that location, given its topographical challenges, and so forth. He stated that then they had really thought of moving it further south, along areas where there was currently some redevelopment going on. He stated that he was aware that there were planned transit amenities down at the Kroger, and also the new Publix shopping center, so those areas would definitely present an opportunity, and, of course, with the transit transfer.

Mr. Carroll stated that another area, because of its length, was the 231 corridor, and with the suburban growth pattern, it extended almost all the way out to the river. He stated that they thought in an outer year, as commute ride-sharing, and so forth, would become more popular, more in demand, that maybe the outer location, along Green Cove, would then serve as an outward location for maybe a potential commute route, which would also serve as an express route, so folks could just have one or two stops all the way into downtown. He stated that that area also had a great deal of large tracts in and around the vicinity and plenty of surface parking as well.

Mr. Carroll stated that, finally, along 431, when they looked at the cross streets, starting to look at those access points, that, really, Sutton Road

was probably the most obvious opportunity there because that corridor was somewhat constrained from significant crossroads because of where it was located, and so forth. He stated that that area fit the criteria they looked for.

Mr. Carroll stated that another criteria, which he had failed to mention earlier, was that they wanted to make these sort of visible from the street and have access, easy access, so they were not too far away from the actual corridors they served.

Mr. Carroll stated that an in-town location they had identified also, because it was a transfer site for a multiple transit route, was the Bridge Street Town Center. He stated that much like the Showers facility, there was a large abundance of surface parking there as well. He stated that he thought the Town Center represented another local inter-commuter, where one could definitely link up if one wanted to shorten the overall trip, or it could serve as a carpooling to transit, in that regard.

Mr. Carroll stated that the next area shown on the display was Winchester at Homer Nance. He stated that that was probably a much longer term commute strategy; however, he thought that given the severe lack of alternatives for commute into Huntsville, a potential Park-N-Ride lot out in that area might actually gain some attention as they moved forward. He stated that he had said a Park-N-Ride lot, but he guessed he should back up. He stated that this was not necessarily meant immediately for transit. He stated that one of the things they could set up initially was carpooling, to help establish these as ride-share lots. He stated that even though "ride share" had another meaning, they would be considered just as commuter traffic lots, things of that nature.

Mr. Carroll stated that then there was the new development on

University Drive, MidCity. He stated that he thought an important part of both Bridge Street and MidCity was they still served that Research Park corridor, which was also quite congested. He stated that University Drive, much like they had talked about the inner and outer service along 231, he thought the same relationship could happen with the Wall Triana commuter lot, and they could have also an inward stop there as well, for a future express route.

Mr. Carroll stated that they should be positive but also be realistic. He stated there was a lot of surface parking that was already out there, with a lot of unbuilt buildings, so it would be interesting to see how that development continued, moving ahead.

Mr. Carroll stated that last but not least was US 72 East. He stated that when he had read through the Transit Report initially, he had thought that was an existing service, and he was caught by surprise that that was actually a reverse commute, that it was actually a seasonal express route that currently ran to the 72 East corridor. He stated that they still proposed maybe looking into using that same lot as maybe a parking lot facility or commute facility, and, also, during that season, they might have the opportunity to actually run a bi-directional express route, since they were already using that as a demo anyway, so they did not have empty buses coming back out. He stated that it might present some service opportunities that way.

Mr. Carroll stated that they would certainly be looking at sites beyond the MPO area, Ardmore, and toward Limestone, and so forth. He stated that he thought there might be opportunities there as well. He stated that one of the things Mr. Schiffer had mentioned during his presentation was that there was quite a bit of traffic that came from well outside of Huntsville to get to Huntsville. He stated that those would be their opportunities.

Mr. Carroll stated that he would now turn the microphone back over to Mr. Schiffer.

Mr. Schiffer stated, concerning the Study Conclusions, that between the Arsenal employment data and the StreetLight InSight data they had been presenting at the last several meetings, they had a solid commuter profile, he would say, that they understood what was going on in the community, where people were coming from and where they were going to. He stated that that was something that had really not existed in the community prior to this Study. He stated that the combined data profile from these two sources had enabled them to enhance the simulation of tripmaking to and from and within the Arsenal properties in the Travel Demand Model.

Mr. Schiffer stated that now they actually had a good feel for where the workers were coming from, and once they got to the Arsenal, where they were actually working. He stated that they had good information from the Arsenal staff on that, so they no longer had to guess at how to apportion those employees. He stated that they had good information on trip generation by the same subareas, so when they looked at the model and saw how it was generating trips in these various areas, they could use this information to make adjustments to the model, whether there would be special generators or another look at the data to make sure it was correct. He stated that this would also be used for validation of the Trip Distribution Model, where people were coming from and where they were going to. He stated that they now knew, in general, what was happening there, so they could actually look at the model and refine that dynamic accordingly.

Mr. Schiffer stated that it also gave them guidance on areas for future model expansion. He stated that one of the things that had been very

interesting to him was seeing how many trips were coming from outside the region into the MPO region. He stated that the map displayed below was an example of this, a large number of trips coming from Athens and Decatur and Morgan County, as well as Lincoln County and Marshall County. He stated that, in fact, when they looked at the data from the Arsenal on employment, there were actually employees going on the Arsenal from an area of, like, 19 counties, in Southern Tennessee and Northern Alabama, so it was a huge catchment area.

Mr. Schiffer stated that this data was also used for identifying key travel corridors for transit. He stated that if one looked at the displayed map, which he thought was very illustrative of the kind of travel pattern they saw on a regular, daily basis, it would seem like it was an arc of sorts, with a lot of trips overlapping within the central core area, roughly between US 72, at the top, I-595 at the bottom, Madison and Greenbrier to the west, and downtown and the medical center to the east. He stated that in that area one could see that there was a tremendous amount of trip origins and destinations that came around that area. He stated that knowing this would help in terms of providing opportunities for route extensions and expansions, looking at premium transit corridors, and the Park-N-Ride locations they had looked at thus far.

Mr. Schiffer stated that, in terms of Next Steps, they had just delivered the Draft Study Report to the MPO earlier on this date, so, thus, the clock would start ticking on a 45-day review and comment period. He stated that they would anticipate then coming back with Revised Study Recommendations and the Final Report. He continued that, also, during that time, they would look at some outlying Park-N-Ride locations, outside the MPO area.

Mr. Schiffer stated that they were right on schedule, that they were

delivering this Draft Report at this time, and in November they would be back for one final presentation on the Study and adoption of the Study.

Mr. Schiffer stated that if anyone had any questions or comments, they would certainly welcome them.

Mr. Moore asked if there were any questions or comments.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Schiffer and Mr. Carroll for the presentation.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was the adoption of the Final FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 24-20 was the adoption of the FY 2021 UPWP. She stated that this was updated every year. She stated that it was basically an outline of planning activities that the MPO would do within the next fiscal year. She stated that just taking a quick caption of the budgets, the 2020 UPWP ended September 30th. She stated that it was approximately \$726,266 in total, and that as of August 1, they had spent approximately \$384,734.

Ms. Lowe stated that the 2021 UPWP would fund approximately \$707,200 of planning activities. She stated that this was somewhat less than the 2020 UPWP funding, simply because of the one-time addition of PL Funds from ALDOT that were awarded to the Madison County Transit Master Plan and the City of Huntsville Memorial Parkway Safety Study. She stated that those two projects would end in 2021, but the budgets would stay within the 2020 UPWP cycle.

Ms. Lowe stated that for the 2021 UPWP, they would add a couple of

additional elements, which were the TMA Certification and Review, which was a task given that FTA and FHWA did every four years. She stated that they would also add the ADA Transition Plan and a more complete Comprehensive Regional Transit/Rail Planning element.

Ms. Martin moved to recommend approval of Resolution No. 24-20, adopting the FINAL Unified Planning Work Program for Fiscal Year 2021.

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Faulkner.

Mr. Moore asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Moore called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was an amendment to the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 25-20 was a funding increase for the Memorial Parkway, Mastin Lake Road to Winchester Road Utility project. She stated that the old amount was simply a placeholder, which was more than likely placed in the TIP in the early '90s. She stated that they would update that number to the \$4 million number, essentially because they had budgeted it for additional costs, and the costs at this time.

Ms. Martin moved to recommend approval of Resolution No. 25-20, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance Section of the Adopted 2020-2023 TIP with funding increases for Project, "SR-1 (Memorial Parkway) from 0.31 mi S of CR-75 (Mastin Lake Rd) to CR-65 (Winchester Rd) including an overpass at CR-75 and access improvements to CR-65 (UT

phase)."

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Faulkner.

Mr. Moore asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Moore called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was an amendment to the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Resolution No. 26-20.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 26-20 was a project deletion of the roundabout project on Balch Road at Gillespie Road. She stated that the City of Madison had decided that it was more cost effective to budget and do the work in-house. She stated that as of this time, the final improvement was to be determined.

Ms. Martin recommended approval of Resolution No. 26-20, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance Bridge Section of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by deleting Project, "Intersection Modifications on Balch Road at Gillespie Road to install a roundabout."

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Faulkner.

Mr. Moore asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Moore called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was an amendment to the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Resolution No. 27-20.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 27-20 was for an additional seven new mini vans for the Arc of Madison County. She stated that at the last meeting, they might recall that there were seven additional mini vans approved for the Arc, with federal funding only. She stated that with the additional seven mini vans, there was both federal and local funding. She stated that the local funding here might be an in-kind match from the Arc. She continued that, therefore, there was a total of 14 new mini vans added to the 26-vehicle fleet of 5310 vehicles, so the Arc would have a total of 40 Section 5310 FTA vehicles.

Ms. Martin recommended approval of Resolution No. 27-20, amending the Transit Section of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by adding Project Nos. 100072338, 100072339, 100072340, and 100072341, "Section 5310 The Arc of Madison County Capital Rolling Stock (7 total mini vans) FY 2020."

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Faulkner.

Mr. Moore asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Moore called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was an amendment to the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Resolution

No. 28-20.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that this was the deletion of a number of Section 5311 Transit Projects. She stated that ALDOT was doing a bit of bookkeeping. She stated that no transit funding had been lost here, that the funding had already been utilized.

Mr. Faulkner recommended approval of Resolution No. 28-20, amending the Transit Section of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with the deletion of specific transit projects.

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Nunez.

Mr. Moore asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Moore called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was TIP Administrative Modifications.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

Ms. Lowe stated that the Administrative Modifications were routine edits that occurred between meetings. She stated that ALDOT had them in the practice of making sure they reported to the Board and staff members on what had happened in between meetings, not necessarily needing action on these items. She stated that the first would be South Parkway Safety Improvements. She stated that at the last meeting, they might recall that this was a new project. She stated that at this meeting they saw a \$2,000 decrease in the construction budget.

Ms. Lowe stated that the second project was a guardrail project on Pulaski Pike. She stated that this was a \$2,000 decrease as well.

Ms. Lowe stated that the third project was the Winchester, Naugher Road, to Bell Factory Road. She stated that they had an \$11,000-plus increase for right-of-way.

Ms. Lowe stated that the last one was the Dry Creek project. She stated that at the last meeting, they had modified the limits of the project, and that at this meeting they would be adding a \$50,000 increase in the budget for this project, with MPO TAP funding.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was Agency Reports. He asked if there was any report from ALDOT.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to comment at this time.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore asked if there were any TCC member comments.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore stated that with no further business to come before the Technical Coordinating Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m. on August 26, 2020.