

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

**Regular Meeting - May 19, 2021 - 3 p.m.**

**Huntsville, Alabama**

**Committee Members:**

Mr. Tommy Brown	City of Huntsville, Director of Parking and Public Transit
Mr. Nicholas Nene	City of Huntsville, Traffic Engineering
Mr. Thomas Nunez	City of Huntsville, Manager of Planning Services
Mr. Steve Dinges	Madison County
Ms. Kaela Hamby	Redstone Arsenal, Community Planner
Mr. Rodney Ellis	Alabama Department of Transportation
Mr. James Giles	Alabama Department of Transportation

**MPO Staff Members:**

Mr. James Moore  
Ms. Shontrill Lowe  
Mr. James Vandiver

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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 February 24, 2021.

Mr. Brown moved for approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee on February 24, 2021, which motion was duly seconded by Ms. Hamby and was unanimously approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was an informational item, the TMA Certification Review.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

Ms. Lowe stated that she would first like to read into the record the following: "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 made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that the TMA Certification review was every four years, and their last review was in May of 2017. She stated that they had just completed their review back in April, and she thanked everyone who had participated in it. She stated that if there was anyone who had not participated and would like to do so, the slide that was displayed at this time showed the Federal Highway Administration contact information.

Ms. Lowe stated that the prior week they had turned in a questionnaire that should have been turned in before then, but it had been given to them kind of late. She stated that the draft report should be completed and sent to them around late June or early July. She reiterated that if persons had not participated but would like to do so, the contact information for FHWA was displayed, and she asked that they jot it down and send their comments about the MPO to Ms. Vontra Giles.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was another informational item, OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and Census Updates.

Mr. Moore recognized Mr. Vandiver.

(Mr. Vandiver made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Vandiver stated that the TCC members might have heard in the news

lately that the federal government was proposing changes to the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and urban area criteria for use once the 2020 Census data was published. He stated that some of their jurisdictions had asked about these changes and the possible implications to MPO operations, and they wanted to brief the boards on the proposed changes and answer any questions anyone might have.

Mr. Vandiver stated that the different boundaries that the MPO, the state, and federal authorities used could be a bit overwhelming. He stated that what was displayed were the current urbanized, urban, and study area boundaries that the MPO adopted in 2015. He stated that the purple area was determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, based on population density results from the 2010 Census, to include all blocks in the area that had 1,000 people per square mile or greater. He stated that the Huntsville urbanized area included parts of the city of Huntsville, the city of Madison, Redstone Arsenal, and the unincorporated areas of Madison and Limestone counties.

Mr. Vandiver stated that the green area was drawn by the MPO, to encompass all of the urbanized area, plus areas that the MPO believed might become urban over the next 25 years. He stated that the MPO urban area included the jurisdictions he had just mentioned, plus the towns of Owens Cross Roads and Triana.

Mr. Vandiver stated that beyond that, the area outlined in blue was the MPO study area, which was the extent to which the MPO approved projects and collected data for transportation plans.

Mr. Vandiver stated that on top of all that, the Metropolitan Statistical Area for Huntsville included all of Madison and Limestone counties, and it was based on commuter patterns.

Mr. Vandiver stated, concerning the changes being proposed, that in January, the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) released their recommendations for MSA designations over the next 10 years, and they proposed a schedule for changes to be released. He stated that previously, the changes were announced every five years or so, but with little warning beforehand. He stated that the next major update was scheduled for the summer of 2023, and this update would be the only time when changes to the "central" county, or counties, of an MSA would be considered in this decade. He stated that that was interesting because a county was considered "central" once there was enough of an urban population in the county to be a draw for commuters from throughout the metro area. He stated that there were also outlying counties of an MSA, and they were included if enough of their workforce commuted into the central counties.

Mr. Vandiver stated that the most controversial change the OMB proposed was an increase to the urban area population threshold for MSA designation. He stated that currently the minimum was 50,000, but the proposed rules would set it at 100,000.

Mr. Vandiver stated that the impact of these changes to the Huntsville MPO would be minimal at worst. He stated that something they were going to keep an eye on was due to the industrial and residential growth going on in Limestone County, they were going to see if Limestone County would become a "central" county in the next update, in 2023, which would make things quite interesting for the MSA, that they could see a major expansion of their area.

Mr. Vandiver stated that the population threshold increase would not affect them, as Huntsville's urban area population was over 300,000 people; however, many of their neighbors, such as Florence and Decatur, would be

relegated to "micropolitan" areas, such as Albertville and Scottsboro were currently, if this change was approved. He stated that more than 900 comments were received by the OMB regarding these changes, so there was likely to be some discussion of this over the next few months.

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide, and he stated that in February, the Census Bureau had released major changes to the urban area criteria for the 2020 Census. He stated that in prior updates, a Census block was considered "urban" if the population density was greater than 1,000 people per square mile. He continued that the proposed criteria would consider housing density rather than population, 385 housing units per square mile, which he noted was the national equivalent to the 1,000 persons per square mile used previously. He continued that since the Census Bureau updated its housing unit database annually, as opposed to every 10 years with population, they would be able to update the urban area boundaries more frequently. He stated that this would also allow the delineation of urban areas to be free from potential concerns about the accuracy of the population numbers coming from the 2020 Census.

Mr. Vandiver stated that jumps were used to connect urban blocks that were separated by low-density areas, via roads or other physical features. He stated that the Census Bureau proposed that the maximum length of jumps would be reduced from 2.5 miles to 1.5 miles, reverting to a standard used after the 2000 Census. He stated that the bigger jumps created overlapping issues, where cities "ran into" each other, noting that this was a very common problem in the northeastern United States. He continued that, also, the low-density blocks between urban areas would not be included in the proposed criteria, so there would be non-contiguous urban areas. He stated that the smaller jumps and non-contiguous boundaries would make urban areas smaller this time

around.

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide, and he stated that other changes proposed by the U.S. Census Bureau included a new policy on merging or splitting urban areas, which would be determined using commuter data. He stated that the minimum threshold for urban areas would be increased to 10,000 population, or 4,000 housing units. He stated that this would be the first time this would be changed since urban areas were first designated after the 1950 Census. He continued that, finally, there would no longer be urban clusters and urbanized areas. He stated that urban clusters were areas under 10,000 urban population, and urbanized areas were greater than that. He stated that all of these would be called "urban areas."

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide, and he stated that unlike the MSA changes, there were significant implications to the Huntsville MPO if these criteria for urban areas were approved as proposed. He stated that the potential for urban areas to be updated as frequently as every year would create uncertainty in funding and project planning, as these were determined by urban area population and boundaries. He stated that because of the population and housing growth in the area since 2010, they did not anticipate too many changes from the modifications to jumps and low-density blocks. He stated that the largest jumps in the 2010 urban area were now filled with housing.

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide, and he stated that the MPO staff had sent a letter to the U.S. Census Bureau on May 10th, addressing their concerns over the potential for frequent, unscheduled updates to the urban area boundaries. He continued that they had recommended a schedule of no fewer than five years between changes to existing urban areas. He stated that

this would line up well with their LRTP updates, which occurred every five years. He stated that they had also recommended that a set schedule be released with the final criteria, similar to what the OMB proposed with the MSA updates.

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide, and he stated that this was a quick Timeline. He stated that this winter, the Census Bureau would unveil the final urban area criteria for 2020, and the following summer they would release the new boundaries. He stated that by the fall of 2022, the MPO's PL funding would be adjusted, based on the 2020 Census population of their new urban area. He stated that starting around this time, the MPO would also be drawing new urban and study area boundaries, based on the Census urban area, and they would need to include all of the Huntsville urban area within their MPO boundary, plus any other urban area immediately adjacent, or touching, their urban area boundary.

Mr. Vandiver displayed another slide concerning the Timeline, and he stated that in June of 2023, the OMB would release a major update to the MSA boundaries, including an update to the central counties of each MSA, noting that that was where they would be watching for Limestone County and their status. He stated that in the summer of 2023, the MPO would adopt the next TIP, and that this was also their target date for having MPO boundaries approved by the boards, the state, and FHWA. He stated that the absolute deadline for the new MPO boundaries was at the time of their next LRTP update, which would occur in the spring of 2025.

Mr. Vandiver stated that he would be happy to answer any questions that any of the members might have, either at this time or after the meeting.

Mr. Moore asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Vandiver for the presentation.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was the adoption of the Final FY 2021 UPWP Amendment, Resolution No. 13-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe displayed a slide, and she stated that Resolution No. 13-21 adopted and supported the FY 2020 carryover funding into the Final FY 2021 UPWP. She stated that the current total of the FY 2021 UPWP was \$967,200, that the carryover from FY 2020 was \$115,662, so the new FY 2021 UPWP total should be a little over \$1 million, minus the FY 2021 expenses. She stated that if they would look in the box displayed, they would see that for FY 2020, they had spent a little over \$450,000. She stated that most of the time, their totals ran about the same for an FY, unless there was some drastic plan or consultant work they had going on.

Mr. Brown recommended approval of Resolution No. 13-21, amending the FY 2021 UPWP by adopting carryover funds from FY 2020.

Said motion was duly seconded by Ms. Hamby.

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 the adoption of Draft FY 2022 UPWP, Resolution No. 14-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 14-21 adopted the Draft



FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). She stated that these were annual plans that encompassed the transportation planning activities of the MPO. She stated that a couple of those activities were Administrative tasks, which covered most of the salaries and public outreach and general management of the MPO. She stated that Task II was the data development and maintenance, such as the socioeconomic forecasts and travel demand models, and such information that they gathered. She stated that Task III and Task IV were short-range and long-range planning activities, which encompassed the TIP, the UPWP, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, air quality, planning, et cetera.

Ms. Lowe displayed another slide, and she stated that the current UPWP, FY 2021, ran from August 2020 through September 30, 2021. She stated that the FY 2022 apportionment was approximately \$454,000, and that this figure also included the FTA portion for 5303 Planning Funds. She stated that they would take that into consideration, and their UPWP for FY 2022 was a total of \$567,900 of different planning activities, such as the continuation of the comprehensive regional transit/rail planning project. She stated that new projects were updating the public participation plan and updating the ADA accessibility plan.

Mr. Brown moved to recommend approval of Resolution No. 14-21, adopting the Draft Unified Planning Work Program for Fiscal Year 2022.

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 an FY 2020-2023 TIP amendment, Resolution No. 15-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 15-21 adopted and supported the project name change of Resolution No. 10-21, which was brought before them in February. She stated that this was Phase 2 of the I-565 Interchange at Zierdt Road/Town Madison. She stated that in that particular resolution, they had named it the "I-565 Interchange at Zierdt Road." She continued that this resolution, Resolution No. 15-21, would change the name to "I-565 Interchange at Town Madison Development Road (Flyover Bridges for Westbound On/Off Ramps)." She stated that this resolution would also give this project a project number within the system, 100073420. She stated that there was no funding change or phase change, or anything like that.

Mr. Brown recommended approval of Resolution No. 15-21, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/Bridge Section of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with the correction of Project #100073420 description name, Phase 2 of the New I-565 Interchange at Town Madison Development Road (Flyover Bridges for Westbound On/Off Ramps) to connect with Phase 1 of the New I-565 Interchange at Town Madison Development (EB On/Off Ramp).

Said motion was duly seconded by Ms. Hamby.

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 FY 2020-2023 TIP amendment, Resolution No. 16-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 16-21 adopted and supported the addition of a new project, which was an advanced corridor management TSMO (Transportation Systems Management Operations) project, on I-565 from County Line Road to the end of route, which was up toward Moores Mill Road. She stated that this project was costing about \$400,000, and it was due to start the design phase at the end of May.

Ms. Lowe stated that the slide she was displaying at this time was a graphic of the location of this particular project.

Mr. Nunez moved for approval of Resolution No. 16-21, amending the National Highway System Interstate Maintenance/Bridge Section of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with the addition of Project #100073190 (TE phase) Advanced Corridor Management TSMO on I-565 from County Line Road to End of Route.

Said motion was duly seconded by Mr. Brown.

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 FY 2020-2023 TIP amendment, Resolution No. 17-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 17-21 adopted and supported a new project, the Design Phase, adding north and southbound left-turn lanes and traffic signals on State Road 53, at Harvest Road, McKee Road, and Old Railroad Bed Road. She stated that the Design Phase was approximately \$10,000 in cost. She stated that this was a state-funded safety project, the reason it was in their TIP.

Ms. Lowe stated that the slide that was displayed at this time was a location map for this project.

Mr. Brown moved to recommend approval of Resolution No. 17-21, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/Bridge Section of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with the addition of Project #100072838 (PE phase), "ADDING NORTH AND SOUTH BOUND LEFTTURN LANES AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS ON SR-53 AT HARVEST ROAD, MCKEE ROAD, AND OLD RAILROAD BED ROAD."

Said motion was duly seconded by Ms. Hamby.

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 FY 2020-2023 TIP amendment, Resolution No. 18-21.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that Resolution No. 18-21 adopted and supported a new project, the Construction Phase of the previous project. She stated that this was a total cost of \$1.9 million. She stated that this was also a state-funded

safety project.

Ms. Lowe stated that the slide she was displaying at this time was a location map for the project.

Mr. Brown moved to recommend approval of Resolution No. 18-21, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance/Bridge Section of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with the addition of Project #100073306, (CN phase), "ADDING NORTH AND SOUTH BOUND LEFTTURN LANES AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS ON SR-53 AT HARVEST ROAD, MCKEE ROAD, AND OLD RAILROAD BED ROAD."

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 adopted by the Technical Coordinating Committee members present.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was FY 2020-2023 TIP Administrative Modifications.

Mr. Moore recognized Ms. Lowe.

(Ms. Lowe made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Lowe stated that the TIP Administrative Modifications needed no action. She stated that these were particular projects, et cetera, that had come in between the MPO quarterly meetings.

Ms. Lowe stated that the first Administrative Modification was the Coronavirus Relief Act Funding letter. She stated that this particular letter described the request that that funding be utilized for Phase 2 of Martin Road.

Ms. Lowe stated that the next modification was the Dry Creek time extension letter. She stated that this was a request for a time extension to

begin construction on the Dry Creek Greenway, utilizing TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) funding.

Ms. Lowe stated that the next modification was a support letter for a Huntsville & Madison County Railroad Authority project. She stated that they were looking to apply for a CRISI grant for the Peter Fagan bridge replacement near the VBC.

Ms. Lowe stated that the next Administrative Modification was for the Northern Bypass project, and that this was to increase the funds by \$5,000, from \$175,000 to \$180,000.

Ms. Lowe stated that the next Administrative Modification was a support letter for Redstone Arsenal. She stated that they were looking into a military construction grant for Gate 7, Martin Road West, that they were looking to make some lane improvements, et cetera.

Ms. Lowe stated that the next Administrative Modification was concerning Resolution No. 16-20, and it pertained to changes in the text in the resolution. She stated that there were a couple of target dates that were off, and this would change those target dates to the correct dates.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was Jurisdiction Reports.

Mr. Moore asked if there were any reports from Madison County, the City of Huntsville, the City of Madison, the Town of Triana, or the Town of Owens Cross Roads, respectively.

There were no responses.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was Agency Reports.

Ms. Lowe stated that the Alabama Department of Transportation would present a report at the MPO meeting.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was Opportunity for Public Comment. He stated that anyone who wished to comment at this time could go to a microphone.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore stated that the next item on the agenda was TCC Member Comments. He asked if anyone wished to comment.

There was no response.

Mr. Moore stated that if there was nothing further to come before the Technical Coordinating Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m. on May 19, 2021.**