

RPO Meeting September 24, 2020

Members Present:

Matt Ericksen, ALDOT

Connie Baggett for Mayor Lovelace, City of Brewton

Brad Wittmann, Mobile County

Lawrence Wilson

Vince Beebe, ALDOT

Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood, Baldwin County

Sarah Sislak, Baldwin County Commission

Staff:

Anthony Johnson

Kevin Harrison

Tom Piper

Monica Williamson

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood.

The second item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of the September 26th, 2019 RPO meeting.

Motion was made by Matt Erickson with a second by Rickey Rhodes. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program.

Tom Piper said yes, this is the Work Program. It's pretty much been the same every year since 2006. This is basically the budget for our staff so that if we are doing something in the rural areas outside of the MPO area, like in Baldwin County, or Escambia County or rural Mobile County, then we have to be able to charge our time to this program. It is funded at 80/20. Eighty percent of funding comes from state planning funds, and then the rest comes from member dues. It's about \$60,000 a year. Last year, we did the public meetings for the State Transportation Improvement Program, the STIP and that's been adopted. That's not on the Work Program this year, but if someone needs like traffic counts or an accident report or something like that, they call us and anytime we go out to public meetings in those areas, that's what this funding is for.

Motion was made by Matt Erickson with a second by Connie Baggett to approve the FY 2021 Work Program.

The next item on the agenda was to approve the 2020-2023 Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

Tom Piper said this is a plan that we do every four years. It's the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. It focuses on public transportation for the elderly, the disabled, and low-income populations throughout the region, and including the Eastern Shore MPO, the Mobile MPO, and the rural areas of Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia County. Basically, the nuts and bolts of this thing, is if you

have an agency or a city or county that wants to apply for funding for public transportation for bus or anything to do with public transportation for the elderly, or disabled, through the 5310 programs, or the there's also through the 5311 and 5307 in the urban area. It's for JARC, projects, job access, reverse commute, if you want to apply to those funds, you have to reference this plan in your application. There's a section called action items. And then there's a section called strategies. There's a place in the application where you have to say what action you're addressing and what strategy you're going to use to address that action. So, that's really what this plan is all about; it's meeting the federal requirements so that agencies can apply for those funds.

Motion was made by Connie Baggett to approve the plan with a second by Rickey Rhodes. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was the Transportation List of Projects discussion

Tom Piper said also as part of this process, we put together transportation plan that covers the three-county region that has a list of road projects, bridge projects, bike/pedestrian projects, public transportation projects, anything that is on the radar for any of the member governments, the counties or the cities, RPO members basically. If they want to put a bug in ALDOT's ear basically that is what this is for. This is a list we update every year. If you have something you want to add, you can just email it to me. The list of projects is online. I emailed it out as well. It's the 2019 Transportation Plan. So, if anybody has anything they want to add, delete, or update, send me over a list. So anyway, that's just I just wanted to talk about it. There's no action needed.

Commissioner Underwood called for any questions or discussion.

Kevin Harrison said I know that this storm, did some damage to some of the infrastructure in Baldwin County. I know, county road 87 had some washout. Is there any of that? And this is really for our ALDOT and the county engineers, is there any storm related damage that ALDOT needs to include into this plan of projects that need to be prioritized or are those going to be with emergency relief funds or something like that? Is there an assessment of any system damage from the storm that might need to be the plan?

Vince Beebe said Kevin, this is Vince Beebe with ALDOT and I'll try to address the question with you. And I'll let Matt fill in or add to as needed. But I know we're still kind of going through a lot of the areas that were damaged and kind of getting an inventory of I know, we've had some talks here, I've had some talks here locally about some possible improvements. You know, but I don't think we've got a full list yet. I've talked to the safety engineer here. And we, you know, he's looking at possibly combining, you know, some funds with some of the ER funds that might come in to help improvements, infrastructure, improvements, you know, maybe things like mass arm polls and things like that. But I don't think we've got quite as far just yet as being able to identify everything and knowing exactly what all is there. But I would expect that we would have some improvements that we can be looking at in the future. It's just too early to tell from what I know right now.

Kevin Harrison said are those ER funds strictly for on system routes? Do you know?

Vince Beebe said I don't know, I don't know, as far as if they're strictly for those routes or not.

Kevin Harrison said because I noticed there's some roads and bridges in Baldwin County that were hit by the storm. I know like I said, County Road 87 and Lindholm Road in Baldwin County. I know there's others in Baldwin County and Escambia County, but I don't know if emergency relief funds are for federal aid routes only. And county roads, I'm not sure which ones they are.

Vince Beebe said yeah, I'm not sure either about those specific funds. I do know that the county engineer was riding with FEMA yesterday to look at damage assessment. So maybe there is some federal dollar. I don't know if it's ER funding that's available. But you know, it seems like there's probably some funding available, seeing that it's been declared a disaster area. So, our team has done that with us, everybody.

Kevin Harrison said alright, well, ER projects are exempt from the MPO plan. So perhaps they're exempt from this process as well, but it is something to consider. Thank you, Vince.

Matt Erickson said this is Matt. We are only damage to our infrastructure that we've been able to find so far is we had some slides on 59 at the Intercoastal Bridge that's already been repaired. And our underwater bridge inspectors, they've been on site for a couple of days now and they're doing all the inventory. So, it'll be a while till we get those inspections complete to see if we had any scour. I'm with you, I believe this would all fall under FEMA and ER, so we shouldn't have to do anything with the RPO.

Commissioner Underwood said all right. I know that our county staff is very plugged in with FEMA. We were with them yesterday. And like you said, they were riding around with the county engineer and our solid waste director. And so, I know that we are very plugged in with everything going on. So, appreciate the comments, especially since they pertain to my county. And there's no other questions that was just a discussion item only. We can move on to old business, is there any old business to bring up?

Tom Piper said well, usually, as part of this process, ALDOT will give a presentation on their projects they have going on in the RPO areas. But because of this whole online thing, we just decided we would just have a discussion. If anybody has any questions about projects in their area they want that they'd like for ALDOT to speak about, they're here to answer questions, but we're not going to do a presentation this time.

Commissioner Underwood said we're so busy with everything that is going on that, you know, it's amazing right now that we're able to get this much accomplished. I believe, not to rush anybody, but I'm just it's been real and it ain't over. I don't want to cut anybody short. But if there's not anything you want to discuss, then we can move on. Is there any new business?

With no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chairman: *Sarah Hart Sialak*

Attest: *Jessica Mays*

Date: *09/23/21*