

MPO Minutes

June 2, 2021

MPO Members Present:

Hon. William S. Stimpson
Hon. Connie Hudson
Mr. Bryan Kegley
Hon. Fred Richardson
Hon. Jimmie Gardner
Hon. Barry Broadhead
Hon. Howard Rubenstein
Hon. Brandon Van Hook
Gerald Alfred for Damon Dash
Matt Ericksen
Rob Middleton
Bryan Fair for Brad Lindsey
John F. "Rickey" Rhodes
Hon. Mark Barlow
Hon. George E. McCall, Jr.
Hon. Henry Barnes, Sr.
Nick Amberger for Hon. John Williams

MPO Members Not Present:

Hon. Don Nelson

TCC/CAC Members Present

Edwin Perry
Brian Harold
Nick Amberger
Gerald Alfred
Mary Beth Bergin
James DeLapp
Jennifer White
Ricky Mitchell
Kim Sanderson

TCC/CAC Members Not Present

Hon. Margie Wilcox	Shayla Beaco
Bob Harris	Mike Black
Shilo Miller	John Blanton
Jennifer Denson	Donald Watson
Christienne Gibson	Merrill Thomas
Dr. Laura Cepeda	Frank Williams
Rhonda Gullede	Dennis Sullivan
Essie Johnson	James Jacobs
Fernando Billups	Chris Curry
Nancy Hewston	Jason Franklin
Cade Kistler	Jeff Zoghby

Guests Present:

Dr. Lou Camponosi	Missi Shumer
Kevin Spriggs	Anita Henderson
Ricardo Woods	Edith Loudon
Candace Cooksey	Lula Albert
Lawrence Batiste	Sarah Sislak
Mike Lee	Judith Adams
Mark Colson	Dale Liesch
John Driscoll	

Staff Present:

Kevin Harrison
Tom Piper
Anthony Johnson
Monica Williamson

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Stimpson.

There was a roll call as the meeting was being held both online and in person.

The second item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of the March 10th, 2021 MPO meeting. Motion was made by Mayor Broadhead with a second by Councilmember Richardson to approve the minutes. Motion was approved.

The third item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of the May 19th, 2021 TCC/CAC meeting. There was not a quorum present for the TCC/CAC. The minutes for the May 19th, 2021 TCC/CAC meeting will be adopted by the TCC/CAC at the next meeting.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with STPAA funds, a 5-year Regional Traffic Operations TSMO for 130 Signalized Intersections in the amount of \$1,632,160 and \$832,483, Resolution 21-011.

Mr. Harrison said so the first item in your folder is resolution 21-011. And for those of you new to the planning process in the room, anytime there's federal transportation dollars to be spent in the Mobile Urbanized Area, it has to be approved by this board. So, whether it's for bridge, whether it's resurfacing, or adding lanes, or intersections, those funds have to be approved by this board. First it has to go to the subcommittee which it did earlier in May. This particular project is a pot of money called STP Any Area Funds that's funds that spent at the Sate's discretion. It's actually for about 130 different intersections throughout the region. Some of them are in the Mobile Urbanized Area. At the TCC meeting, it was requested by one of the members that we add US 45. There were several US98 and US 43 locations. Since that time, ALDOT has reworded this description to what it reads now. It's two separate projects for 130 intersections using TSMO which is transportation systems management operations. The first one is \$1.6 million. The second one is \$832,000. ALDOT is here if anybody has any questions concerning this? This was properly advertised since April 28 with no comment. And was recommended by the TCC for approval at the May meeting.

Motion to approve Resolution 21-011 was made by Bryan Kegley with a second by Nick Amberger. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with REBUILD ALABAMA funds for adding a turn lane on McCrary Road onto access road for \$250,000 and additional lanes on I-10 from CR-39 to CR-59 new estimate of \$34,519,007 from old estimate of \$40,238,400; Resolution 21-012.

Mr. Harrison said the next resolution is 21- 012. This is REBUILD Alabama funds This is actually not federal funds. But these are state funds provided through us by the REBUILD Alabama act and thank you legislators for providing this opportunity to us. These are projects of regional significance that we want to see in the TIP. Even though these are not federal funds into state funds. This is a county project and in turn lane on McCrary Road for \$200,000 construction. And then additionally from I-10, has a different cost estimate, which went from \$40 million to \$34. 5 million. Anytime there's a change in cost estimate either up by 5 million or reduced by 5 million, it still requires action from this board. These were recommended for approval at the Technical/ Citizens Committee and was advertised since April 28. ALDOT is here if anybody has any questions concerning those projects.

Motion to approved Resolution 21-012 was made by Mayor Van Hook with a second by Commissioner Hudson. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with FTA 5310 Funds for the Mobile Urban Area, Resolution 21-013.

Mr. Harrison said resolution 21-013 is for Federal Transit Administration 5310 urban funds. This federal pot of money is for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. It's transit funds that the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is a direct recipient of those funds. We had a call for projects. The deadline was May 13. And we actually had enough money to fund all the applications and these are the three that applied with the May 13 deadline. So, we have Mercy Life for capital van; the City of Satsuma for capital and the Learning Tree for mini-vans for \$144,000. So, these were as a result of competitive process. Part of the application is a public meeting as a part of the application. So, this has been advertised this was not only advertised since April 28 but also brought before the Technical/Citizens Committee and recommended for approval.

Motion to approve Resolution 21-013 was made by Councilmember Richardson with a second by Mayor Barnes. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with HRRR funds for Safety Improvements on Celeste Road, Resolution 21-014.

Mr. Harrison said this is High Risk Rural Road funds. This is actually safety improvements on Celeste Road all the way to Citronelle. But part of this project is in the Mobile Urbanized Area so it requires action from this board. This project is from Janwood Court to Taylor Road. It is for \$447,983. Again, this was advertised since April 28. And at the May 19 meeting, the Technical/Citizens subcommittee recommended for approval.

Motion was made by Mayor Rubenstein with a second by Mayor Barlow to approve Resolution 21-014. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program with CRRSAA funding for PE and construction for each of the seven Municipalities.

Mr. Harrison said 21-015 is CRRSAA funding, which is the Corona relief funding that we were awarded \$3.19 million dollars. A lot of MPOs or large and MPO's that received this money, it can be used for anything, a lot of them use it for debt service. And we have heard our MPO members in the past come into these meetings, voting on money to be spent in the City of Mobile and Mobile County. What the board decided to do was use this for the smaller municipalities. It is 100% funding to resurface only local streets. We had to get special authority for ALDOT to do this. They gave us special authority with some caveats in there, they're going to administer the project, but we're able to do about \$2 million with the resurfacing on local streets in some of our smaller municipalities. If you look at 43 of Creola, Chickasaw, Saraland, Satsuma, Prichard, 43 goes, you know, that's the only function classified road in Creola and for the most part Satsuma. Bayou la Batre as well. We have State Route 188 going through Bayou la Batre. That's the only functionally classified road in Bayou la Batre that is eligible for federal funds. So, what we're able to do with this money is to go through to some of these municipalities with 100% funding, no match required and we're able to resurface some of the local streets in these municipalities. So, I want to thank the Chair and Vice Chair for allowing us to do this. And this was recommended at the Technical/Citizens Advisory Committee on May 19, for approval, and advertised since April 28. So, I do have a list if anybody's interested. I want to thank the CRRSAA committee, Nick Amberger, Bryan Kegley. And Brian Aaron for reviewing all of the submittals for resurfacing photographs were included. Y'all took the time and decided what needed to be done. So, thank you for that. This PE will allow us to get going on that. And I think by August Brian, maybe we'll be able to get and you'll put that up for one bid. Have we decided on that?

Brian Aaron said yes.

Kevin Harrison said anyway, it's a great project 100% funding for local streets in the smaller municipalities.

Motion was made to approve Resolution 21-015 by Mayor Barnes with a second by Mayor Broadhead. Mayor Stimpson called for any questions or comments.

Councilmember Richardson said I would just like to put this out there. What you will not see is any item dealing with the section east of I-65. (Inaudible) We have 100,000 citizens that live east of I-65. You are not going to see them on this list. I have 708 streets that need to be resurfaced. I'm not opposed to Chickasaw getting a street

Kevin Harrison said Councilmen, we have \$7 million in your district for Dauphin Street. It's been there several years. Councilmember Richardson and how long has it been there.

Kevin Harrison said It's been there several years. It is under design now.

Councilmember Richardson We've had a billion dollars in the last 20 years, and it has not been spent east of I-65.

Mayor Stimpson said Any other comments or questions?

Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was to review the draft of the fiscal year 2022 unified plan working problem.

Kevin Harrison said this is essentially our budget. It's basically the same every year. some of the things that have changed in our budget, the 2020 census is coming out this year. So, I've increased items 3.2 data collection and analysis for the census info. I decreased the long-range plan, item 3.6.1 as the long-range plan has been adopted. And I don't plan on amending it again. the education and training are for travel. I increased that because with COVID and being able to travel more have increased that. 3.8.1 is a Mobile area major road plan. We just gave Volkert the notice to proceed on that project. So, it'll begin really from June 1 until next May. It's included in our budget, and it's a \$75,000 Award. And that's really for the City of Mobile when they pulled the planning jurisdiction and left that part of the county, the County needed a major road plan to preserve right of way. It ought to be a pretty good document for Mobile County. On the other side, Table three is the total funds the federal with the matching funds for our budget. The does receive Wave Transit 5307 funds. You can see there, the \$75,000 for that study. We will have 62,000 in carryover funds from previous years. I'm expecting carryover from this year so the next budget I'll be able to put in another planning study. The City of Mobile had a study for University of South Alabama football stadium with traffic study. COVID kind of killed that study. And I'd like to probably try to award that if it's possible in 2023. But no action required on that. This is just a summary of the budget. It's a large document, you will see it this again in September. It'll be advertised and y'all will see this again. Before I submitted to ALDOT, I've always liked to review with y'all. Does anybody have any questions on the Unified Planning Work Program?

With no resolution needed, the next item on the agenda was to amendment to the Envision 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan concerning Phase one of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project.; Resolution 21-016.

Mayor Stimpson said okay, the next item, which is number 10 on your agenda, and that's resolution 21-016 that has to do with the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project as does the next two resolutions, 21-017 and 21-018. From a procedural standpoint, what we're going to do is that we're going to allow three speakers to speak that express concerns for the project, bridge funding, and then three speak for, in support of and then we will give the committee members an opportunity to express themselves. The idea is to be transparent and hear everybody that has concern either for or against. We will ask that in making the comments for those speaking, expressing their concerns, we would ask they each take three minutes. We will actually have a timer. Prior to the meeting, Dr. Lou asked me if he could split his time with Kevin Spriggs which I agreed to allow him to do so. So, they'll take the three-minute allotment which was originally Dr. Lou but the two of them will divide that up. That's in the spirit of trying to give opportunity for the voices to be heard. After that, we will and the Chairman gives a few remarks, then we will vote on that first resolution, which is the first of the three, which is 21-016. So, at this time, is Major Womack here? Okay, so we reached out to Major Womack who represents the Africatown community and given him the opportunity to speak. And obviously he is not here this morning.

Kevin Harrison said I sent y'all the document. Our comment period ended the 26th and all the comments are in the back that y'all have had since last week. Major Womack did send us his comments which are included in the back of your folder. So, in the back of your folder, even though the comment period ended the 26th, we did receive comments up to last night so we do have additional comments in the back. Major Womack's comments are provided here that he had concern of Africatown. We also, which I submitted to y'all, a National Geographic article with the history of Africatown that was submitted through information which y'all should have received. That was a pretty good article on Africatown. So, with him not being here, I just wanted to let you know that we did receive his comments prior to today's meeting.

Mayor Stimpson said Kevin are there any more points that you would like to point out about the public participation plan?

Kevin Harrison said so y'all received a document. We've actually had 508 hits as of this morning to the website that has the document. So, a lot of people have reviewed it. The amendment, as provided to y'all last week, we summarized all the comments. Page six, really quick, the project is \$125 million with the federal INFRA grant. There's \$250 million from the state subsidy, and 350 300 million from the TIFIA loan. This is for phase one of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project financed by state funding, \$125 million federal grant, and loans and bonds to be paid back with toll revenue. ALDOT has preliminarily considered various toll schemes, including a toll only on large trucks, with use the bridge along with a toll on other vehicles that choose to use it as well as other combinations. That is how it's laid out in plan. The funding for phase one is there. The public involvement section 1.7, we have summarized all the comments. They are in Appendix A. Every comment that we received, you had last week in front of you copied as part of Appendix A. Several organizations submitted comments as well. As of the deadline to be submitted into the document, we had for the project, as is, 150 comments; against the project was 153. So, we're 50/50. But of those 153, 111, were just against any total, against the total period. We had 20 that had safety, congestion concerns for the Bayway, and we had 22 people that were just against it for no reason at all. We had 39 people that provided us alternatives and 13 other types of comments. So, you were all provided with those comments. That's kind of a summary of the comments. I do want to mention as well, the amendment does not only just include the bridge, it does include the visionary phases. Phase two and phase three is included in the visionary. Phase Two is the second span and phase three is a new Bayway to the Eastern Shore. Our visionary map has been updated. There's been a lot of recent interest in US 45. US 45 is a State Route. It's the responsibility of the state to be improved. There's not enough funding for US 45, but we recognize it as a road that needs to be improved so we've included that in the visionary list, as well as West Lee street in Chickasaw to be improved all the way to US 45. So those two projects are on the visionary list as well.

Mayor Stimpson said so at this time chair will entertain a motion. What I liked to do is put this on the floor and then we'll listen to the comments. We're not going to vote to approve until after we hear all the comments.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hudson with a second by Nick Amberger. We have motion and the second now we'll have discussion.

Mayor Stimpson said at this time, we will ask Kevin Spriggs, and because Mr. Womack is not here, Mr. Spriggs if you would like to take three minutes, go ahead.

Kevin Spriggs said I do have concerns about the project. I'm not against the resolutions that are in front of me, because they should be approved because we desperately need to get visibility of this project back in front of the federal government to obtain funding to complete it. In general, I would say that this bridge should be paid for by the federal government. And that's why kind of against tolls for this particular project. But the federal government

makes me do a lot of things that I don't like to do. And understand, you know, we live in a world where we have to be politically compromised to actually make progress. But also, I think that our ALDOT is a little bit lite on the funding here. \$200 million like I said in public meetings before, that's a good start, and I want to thank the state, for coming to the table with that. But \$400 million would be better, and perhaps allow us to do both segments of the bridge simultaneously, as opposed to those to be broken into three phases. And I would also like to raise concerns at this point about the phase three. Even though you know, this is coming down the road, but I don't want us to get pointed in the wrong direction. I really believe that in order for phase three to be realistically accomplished, that it needs to be broke out into other phases and use the expressway concept. The reason for that is segments of the bridge can be completed for a smaller dollar amount, given the funding constraints that we're going to be up against. So again, please vote for the resolution so that we can get this project moving forward again. And then we can come back and address some of these other issues as they come up at public meetings in a public comment period. publicly.

Mayor Stimpson called on Dr Lou Campanosi.

Dr. Campanosi said I really appreciate the MPO Board allowing us to speak. As Kevin said, we are supportive of going forward. I've made this point to the Eastern Shore MPO too. We think that the age of Bayway is a fact has to be considered. And we can't allow something to happen here that you saw in Birmingham, which created a crisis for ALDOT to fix the major project or fail. I think that we need to move forward. We do have concerns. We think that safety is an issue with restriping. It is particularly an issue when you have (inaudible) on the Bayway. I think we need to think carefully about that. We also think that cars should be included in any plan going forward. The fact of the matter is, if it's a small toll, we can deal with that. I understand that there's the no tolls, you're going to have that opinion, no matter what. Our concern, the last time around was for a \$6 toll. That's what drove the whole issue. We think that you can get through this with a lower total, the Eastern Shore MPO is talking about a \$2 toll. We think that that's reasonable. Those are things that we can consider. I also think that ALDOT has learned some lessons from the last time around. And I think that it's critical for trust going forward, that a major change to this truck bridge plan has to include the MPO's input. You can't operate in a vacuum like you did last time. Last time it was my way or the highway, and then that certainly, you know, did not work out very well. So, we think that going forward, there's a great deal to be said for where we're going with this. And I think we can all work together to make it happen.

Mayor Stimpson called on Mark Colson from the Alabama Trucking Association.

Mr. Colson said

Mayor Stimpson and members of the MPO, I thank you opportunity to present to you today on behalf of Alabama trucking community. As the mayor said, I'm Mark Colson, and I'm privileged to serve as our presidency of the Alabama Trucking Association. Trucking in Alabama represents about 109,000 working Alabamians. Not a lot of people know that. It's about one in 15 jobs in our state and in the Mobile, Baldwin County communities. These are essential jobs for transportation and logistics and for trucking and we have a great number of companies that call Mobile county home that employs 1000s of residents here. And it's a little bit odd to speak in opposition to a plan that you support. The trucking industry has been, which is building a bridge to relieve congestion on I-10. The trucking industry has been on the record for years and years wanting to be collaborative, to be supportive of a solution. Our Association did file public comments that are pages A-1 through A-4 in your packet with the Mobile MPO and the Eastern Shore MPO on behalf of the trucking industry. While only trucks being 10% or less than other traffic, we believe is not fair and equitable solution. Currently, under this concept, the trucking industry is being asked to pay the same amount as the state and federal governments combined to kick off phase one of this project. In addition to fairness, we're also concerned about safety, as well as the prospect of pursuing a plan that may not alleviate the congestion in the short and near future, yet add toll costs for trucks, not raise enough money to pay

off and fund the project. And by constitutional challenges via lawsuits, all of which will have the potential to delay or completely eliminate the prospects of a bridge which we all agree, we need. The details of these concerns and questions can be found in a public comment. I hope you'll take a moment to review those in detail because I think there's some important points made in there. We ask that the MPO here and on Eastern Shore continue to study how to construct and pay for a bridge and we strongly encourage you to take these concerns to heart. And we're willing and continue to be willing to work collaboratively to find real solutions that are fair and equitable to all stakeholders. And also, don't target one sector of the business community or sub sector of the trucking community. So, thank you for the opportunity to talk to you today. And I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mayor Stimpson called on Director Batiste, the Public Safety Director for the City of Mobile to speak in support of the resolution from a public safety standpoint.

Director Batiste said good morning to the Chair and members of the MPO. I'm Lawrence Batiste, the director of public safety for the City of Mobile. I stand before you this morning to discuss three primary concerns that I have as public safety director and the impacts in the City of Mobile and maybe some of other communities around. First, I'll talk about the idea of traffic congestion. On any given day here in the city of Mobile, traffic from George Wallace Tunnel on Interstate 10 beginning about noon. Congestion ultimately impacts traffic flow throughout the city and the immediate area of Interstate 10 West. You have motorists that attempt to avoid gridlock by using an alternate through downtown which creates traffic congestion downtown that impedes the ability emergency vehicles to assess critical structures should an emergency arise. Secondly, I would like to talk about the all hazardous materials take an alternate route which is through Africatown. This is because hazardous material is not allowed through the tunnel and finally the impact of an accident that takes place in the tunnel. It is not uncommon for there to be several accidents in a given week. When this occurs, it takes several hours to clear the accidents, thereby again creating a strain on our interstate system. It forces us to reroute traffic once again towards the Africatown. Bridge. The impact, the impact of having an alternate route for the traffic across the Bayway really assist in lightening the burden. In particular, the Mobile police department, when it has to place officers out there to help redirect traffic. In particularly 20 to 30 officers shouldn't be having, in a catastrophic event that occurs in this area, in order to make sure we get any hazardous truck or large truck and potentially block the tunnel. It takes a lot of manpower to redirect and route traffic. That is the reason I stand before you to discuss those three, my primary concern is congestion, rerouting because of hazardous material, and then ultimately, the fact that particularly when we have accidents in those tunnels, it creates a major burden on the impact of the City of Mobile. Thank you.

Mayor Stimpson called on the next speaker, Mike Lee from I-10 Bridge Coalition.

Mike Lee said Thank you for a chance to speak today. I am Mike Lee, president of Page and Jones, an international shipping company here in town, and but also come to you today as chairmen of the Build the I-10 Mobile River Bridge Coalition. The coalition has been working on this for just about as long as I can remember. So, we're very pleased to see you get to this point today. The coalition is made up of almost 100 organizations who have signed on over the last few years. And they range, they very in range from things like the University of South Alabama system, the Mobile Infirmary system, realtors, home builders, every economic development group, in the region, every tourism development group in the region. We all feel that there's no one project that affects so many things in a negative way that could be improved from quality of life, to economic development, to safety and evacuation routes. So, we're a big proponent of this and appreciate this chance today. We just wanted to stress again and first of all, I'd like to say, I think in the duration of all this, I've never heard as many good, sensible comments today, on all sides of the issue and things that have been considered going forward. We stress again, as a coalition this is our chance to protect some funds. For many years working on this, we had no possible source of funds except tolling, and those solutions, you know, we're not acceptable to the community. So, this is a chance with somewhere around \$375 million on the table, that we stand to lose if we don't move forward by putting this back in the plan. If we can get this done, and it also makes us eligible and project ready and what the federal government considers a shovel

ready project. We may be at a point where we have a generational opportunity because of spending at the federal level. And if we don't get this, we miss that chance. That is our only chance to totally eliminate the tolls to totally come up with an equitable solution to truckers and passenger cars. That benefits everybody. So, again, we want to grab this opportunity while we can. I think another very significant point is that, and I think it was brought up well. And Kevin, that explanation this morning. You can do this without giving up any control of plans and the modifications and changes are coming. We all know there's not a perfect plan. We all know this is going to need substantial changes along the way. But this gives us a starting point. We can't even plan if we don't get this back in program. In conversations with Mark this morning about the Trucking Association, the coalition will absolutely support and work alongside the trucking industry to come up with an equitable solution. We believe there is one there that's equitable for both truckers and passenger cars. We firmly believe we can come up with a solution that they cannot just live with but will embrace in the long term. So that's where we are right now. We think it's an important step. And we encourage you in every way to get this back on the plan to move forward to the community.

Mayor Stimpson called on John Driskell, director of the Alabama State Port Authority.

John Driskell said Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the MPO it's a pleasure and an honor to be here today. My name is John Driscoll, the Director of the Alabama State Port Authority. On behalf of your seaport, the Alabama State Port Authority, we urge you to include Phase 1 of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project in your long-range plan as well as the Eastern Shore Metropolitans long range transportation plan. We think this is critical. As far as economic development, the Alabama State Port Authority serves regional and statewide shippers that help drive Alabama's economy. So, this is a critical infrastructure for us and for the region and state. Your port supports regional economic efforts to retain, expand and attract new investments and jobs. So, it's critical that an infrastructure that is modern, efficient, is essential to the success and competitiveness is for all of our businesses, but a lot of them in our state like agribusiness, manufacturing, retail distribution, and so much more that comes through our gateway requires a really excellent competitive infrastructure system. As far as investments, the Port Authority, the state of Alabama and federal government together, we've invested over \$1.3 billion in infrastructure in your port since 2000. That includes terminals, federal Ship Channel, and many other things. We have on the books to invest another \$700 million that is in process. These investments attract employers that generate tax revenues, and jobs for the region and the state. The region is home to the States' only Deepwater seaport with inland connectivity, available land, and capable workforce earnings and competitive wages. One of the largest obstacles today is what we're talking about. It is the I-10, corridor and congestion, which will only get worse, and really will be detrimental to this community, what we've built to foster growth and prosperity. I've been, from a personal note, I've been relocated about 11 times in my career. But coming most recently, from the US West Coast seaport systems, I've really seen, I've seen firsthand how congestion and what that does and that drives the business away. Northern California is where I came from. And we literally drove the business away because of the interstate system and congestion and not doing anything and letting it lapse. So, the port and the constituents that I represent, urge your vote to include this important project in your transportation plan so that together, the region can work towards identifying fair and equitable solutions to resolve this decade's problem. So, thank you for the time.

Mayor Stimpson then gave each MPO Member an opportunity to comment.

Due to the recording and there not being a microphone near every MPO member, the following comments are a synopsis of what each MPO Board member said.

Matt Erickson said we appreciate all the comments and support and understand some of the concerns that were addressed. We look forward to getting back to work to further develop the concept and initiating the project and working with the community associations.

Mayor Rubenstein stated that he had not read all the comments, but has concerns over the restriping and the structure of the project, but ultimately, we need to move forward and this is a reasonable option to get things going.

Mayor Barlow stated that he had similar concerns of Mayor Rubenstein, but doing nothing is not an option.

Councilmember Richardson commented on the miles and miles of traffic that he sees from his office window daily and the question is not whether to do the project, but how soon can we do the project.

Nick Amberger pointed out that the tunnels have a shelf life and we need to move forward with a bridge.

Gerald Alfred stated that he totally supports the project.

Mayor Barnes suggested that restriping doesn't always work and doesn't like the toll with no explanation of where the toll will go but that we need to do something.

Bryan Kegley stated that doing nothing is not an option and that he stands behind ALDOT and FHWA.

Rob Middleton stated that not doing anything is not an option.

Mayor Broadhead said that lack of action leads to stagnation that leads to decline so he is in favor of proceeding.

Mayor Van Hook stated that small business in his community is dependent on traffic flow and he is in favor of the project.

Councilmember McCall stated that chokeholds in certain areas causes problems for the rest of the county and is in favor of the project.

Mayor Gardner stated that he knows the impact of the traffic in the area and action is needed now, but Africatown, I-65 and US 45 is also infrastructure that is deplorable and discussion is needed on that.

John F. Rhodes said this is a needed project and thanked the MPO board for all they do for our region.

Commissioner Hudson said thank you, Mr. Chairman. Connie Hudson, I'm a member of the Mobile County Commission. I am so grateful for everyone's input today. I don't think I'm hard press to disagree with anything I've heard really, the concerns that were stated, I think are shared by people that are on this board. The need for the larger share of federal contribution to the project? Absolutely. You know, I'm not satisfied with it either. I think after this is approved today, and we all do everything we can to use our influence to move forward and try to influence the federal government. Senator Shelby, you know, we have an opportunity with him in his office to maybe look at some additional infra grant money or the infrastructure bill that is still being debated. This is, as Mike Lee said, a generational opportunity to be able to identify additional funding, because ultimately, we don't want this bridge built in phases. We want to build all at once, we want it to move forward and not stop. We don't want to have to wait 25 years to get a Bayway built. So, I think we're all on that same page. And this is our opportunities. But if we don't take the step today, we won't get any more federal help and we'll lose what we have already in the queue. As far as being in a trunk only toll bridge. I don't we don't envision it that way. That's why we have an amendment in what is before us today, we've amended it to read the other vehicles that can be included as well, and with a base fee of \$2. And so, you know, the idea was to be reasonable with that, but the trucks shouldn't be it shouldn't be 100% truck bridge, you know, that's only alleviating a portion of the whole congestion and small portion overall. So, we're we have to be, we have to look to the future, we have to build this with the future in mind and what it's going to do. And the whole point is to relieve congestion for the future. And so, I think this is the starting point. There's a lot of work to be done. But I think that there, there is opportunity here after today, we're going to link arms with the eastern shore MPO, and do everything we can to move forward and get a greater share of funding and get this thing built sooner as opposed to later.

Mayor Stimpson said I join the consensus of what's been said here today. My remarks would be though, that our key to success is really going to be transparency, and an ongoing conversation at each step of the way. The way this amendment reads, and the way the MPO works is that anytime something comes from ALDOT for funding, this MPO

and the Baldwin County MPO have to approve that. So, we're not abdicating our responsibility by agreeing to put this project on the TIP. I think that another thing in this amendment, we're saying that there will be future public meetings. I'm going to suggest that this MPO meet again in early August to get an update from ALDOT, on the status of the project. There may be nothing for us to vote on, but we will have a meeting so that we understand the progress that's being made. And then going forward, I would like to put on everybody's calendar a meeting each month. Now, we may change that because they'll be a period of time where it won't be necessary for us to convene do that. But the point is, is that by being transparent by communicating, you know that we will be able to move this process along, and nobody will be surprised about where it stands.

As motion had previously been made, Mayor Stimpson called for vote to approve Resolution 21-016. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program concerning Phase of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge; PE, \$44,500,00; CN \$665,000,000; Resolution 21-017.

Kevin Harrison said Now that phase one of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is in the long-range plan, it's now eligible to be put into the short-range plan, the Transportation Improvement Program. And that's what resolution 21-017 does. The preliminary engineering allows for \$44.5 million dollars and the construction for \$665 million. ALDOT is certainly here if anybody has any questions concerning that, but allows him to get into the Transportation Improvement Program.

Motion was made by Mayor Broadhead with a second by Mayor Barnes to approve Resolution 21-017. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was consider amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program concerning the Bicycle and Pedestrian Shared Use Paths Along US-90/Africatown Blvd; PE \$75,000; CN, \$7,000,000, Resolution 21-018.

Kevin Harrison said Resolution 21-018 is part of the bridge project. If you all recall, the last time the bridge is brought up ALDOT committed to having some form of bicycle pedestrian facility as part of the bridge. There was a lot of discussion concerning this. And ALDOT is still committed to have some kind of shared path is part of this project. It's 75,000 for the preliminary engineering and the construction is \$7 million. And this is going to be for bicycle pedestrian shared use path along Africatown. Boulevard and on Africatown Bridge.

Motion was made by Nick Amberger with a second by Mayor Gardner to approve Resolution 21-018. Motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda was a review of STP Attributable Schedule.

Kevin Harrison said in your folders is an 11 by 17. Every time we meet, I like to review this within this is your money. We've had some revisions since the last time we met. Obviously, Ziegler Boulevard, Forrest Hill to Athey, the number one project has been authorized in 2020. Number six, the right of way for Zeigler Boulevard, Schillingers to Tanner Williams has been authorized. And the utilities has actually been moved to 2022. There you can see that McFarland Road has been pushed one year further. The right of way, utilities, and construction 1.5. Airport Boulevard, Snow Road to Eliza Jordan road, that right of way, it's been pushed to year 2022 for \$1.5 million. And I also want to point out that the project that I think was just starting for Government Street, the signals on Government Street, that project is a MPO project as part of the congestion management process. You can see down here Government Street, CMP, 2017, and 2020. So that's a million in federal dollars going towards that Government Street intersection signalization. So, I always like to provide this to y'all. It looks like we have a lot of money \$20 million in 2023. But we're negative \$6 million in 2024. So, we don't have enough money to do all the projects that we have scheduled

in 2024. For the next TIP, we'll have to shuffle projects around to fund everything that we had. So, I always like to provide this to you.

Mayor Rubenstein said I noticed our Saraband project shifted again. And now we're in this column that doesn't even have a date for construction. And I would just like to urge this board to really consider this. We've waited our turn. This project is very badly needed. And I would be much happier if Fiscal Year 2024 had a heading right now.

Kevin Harrison said Okay, until the TCC gets together and decides with the County, some decisions are going to have to be made for McFarland and Celeste Road on which project to move forward for 2024. We can do that the next TCC meeting.

The next item on the agenda was old business.

Mr. Harrison said that the MPO turns 50 years old on June 23rd.

With there being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Chairman, TCC



Chairman, MPO

Date

7/28/21

Date