

MPO Meeting March 10 2021

MPO Members Present:

Hon. William S. Stimpson
Hon. Connie Hudson
Mr. Bryan Kegley
Hon. Fred Richardson
Hon. Jimmie Gardner
Hon. Barry Broadhead
Mr. Mike Black rep. Hon. Howard Rubenstein
Hon. Brandon Van Hook
Mr. Damon Dash
Mr. Matt Ericksen
Mr. Rob Middleton
Mr. Brad Lindsey
Mr. Mark Bartlett
Mr. John F. "Rickey" Rhodes

MPO Members Not Present:

Hon. John Williams
Hon. George E. McCall, Jr.
Hon. Mark Barlow
Hon. Don Nelson
Hon. Henry Barnes, Sr.

TCC/CAC Members Present

Edwin Perry
John Murphy
Nick Amberger
Shayla Beaco
Mary Beth Bergin
James DeLapp
Jennifer White
Mike Black
Shilo Miller
Chris Curry
Nancy Hewston
Ricky Mitchell
Kim Sanderson
Gerald Alfred
Brad Wittman for Richard Spraggins

TCC/CAC Members Not Present

Hon. Margie Wilcox
Bob Harris
John Blanton
Donald Watson
Merrill Thomas
Frank Williams
Dennis Sullivan
Essie Johnson
Fernando Billups
James Jacobs
Jason Franklin
Brian Harold
Jeff Zoghby
Casi Callaway
Dr. Laura Cepeda
Christienne Gibson
Jennifer Denson

Guests Present:

Dr. Don Epley
Vince Beebe
Paul Gilliam
Hon. Merceria Ludgood
Al Thomas
John Dietrick

Staff Present:

Kevin Harrison
Tom Piper
Anthony Johnson
Monica Williamson

Pat Hickox
Tom Zagorski
Stephanie Woods-Crawford
Missi Shumer
Lian Li
Ray Balentine

Mayor Stimpson called the meeting to order. Kevin Harrison called roll.

The second item on the agenda was approve the minutes of the August 19, 2020 MPO Meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Rob Middleton with a second by Commissioner Connie Hudson. Minutes were approved.

The third item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 TCC/CAC Meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Zoghby with a second by Mr. Ricky Mitchell. Motion was approved.

The fourth item on the agenda was to approve Resolution 21-001 as requested by ALDOT with STP Any Area Funds.

Mr. Harrison

This is item number four on our agenda, the first resolution in your folder or in the on line. And normally we've got blue folders and whatnot. But the first agenda is resolution 21-001. This is for STP Any Area funds. That's a pot of money that the state can spend at their discretion. This is Project 100072915 for a gopher tortoise mitigation, habitat development. It's for \$300,000. I understand this is an ongoing gopher tortoise mitigation. As tortoises are found, and right away I think there's a property of Big Creek Lake where there are it's a gopher tortoise resort as I understand. Matt, I don't know if you want to speak on this or if there's anything to speak about, but it is \$300,000 of STP Any Area funds for the gopher tortoise mitigation. It was supposed to be done in January. And we're just now meeting.

Mr. Erickson

I would just say Kevin, it is an environmental commitment from the 98 project, 98 road construction. Motion was made by Commissioner Hudson with a second by Mr. Fred Richardson. Motion was approved.

Mr. Harrison

The next resolution is resolution 21-002. This is for STP attributable funds. This is the MPO pot of money spent at the MPO's discretion. Anytime a project moves past the 2023 mark, it's actually getting pushed out of the TIP the Transportation Improvement Program. It's a we used to say deleted it. But now we're saying move. The project is not being deleted. It's being moved to 2024. I know Bryan Kegley is here on the line if there's any comment concerning this as a timeline to this project. But this project has just being moved from fiscal year 2023 to 2024 for \$13.1 million.

The motion was made by Commissioner Hudson with a second by Mr. Bryan Kegley. Motion was approved.

Mr. Harrison

The next item in your folders. Resolution 21-003. These are bridge funds. This is a project that's actually being deleted. This is to the utilities to replace the bridge on the causeway westbound over the Tensaw Spanish River. This project has actually been deleted, as I understand it was brought up in the TCC/CAC, meeting that the utilities for this project was already complete. I think as far as the construction so the utilities is not required for this project so they're deleting it. In this this project and all the projects were properly advertised and reviewed by the Technical and Citizens Committee on

the 24th and recommended for approval. ALDOT, I don't know if you have any other comments concerning project, but that's what was removed. Just to be clear, the bridge is still being replaced.

Mr. Piper

The bridge is being replaced. It's just the utilities is already done, right?

Mr. Erickson

Yeah, the utility relocations are either put in the project plans or there have been deemed non-reimbursable. So, we do not need the utility project. But yes, the project for the bridge replacement is still on schedule for June a letting.

Councilmember Richardson

This is Fred Richardson. I have a comment. I recommend that these funds be transferred to the St. Stephens Road redevelopment project.

Mr. Harrison

Councilmen, these funds are bridge funds, and it's a pot of money specifically for bridge funds. I don't know that they can do that.

Councilmember Richardson

Can we ask them? Who is providing the funds?

Mr. Harrison

That's an ALDOT question, but I know that these funds are bridge funds for all the bridges in the State. Bridges get inspected every two years. There's a priority for what bridges get completed. And that's what this pot of money is for. To flex that into a different category would probably be a difficult thing. It would have to be taken from another bridge project. I think that would be a difficult thing to do.

Councilmember Richardson

Okay, well, I would like to pursue that avenue. I don't have no choice. I'll pursue any avenue I can to shore up the funds necessary for the St. Stephens Road Redevelopment.

Mayor Stimpson

Thank you, Councilman. So, at this time though, we have the chair I'll entertain a motion to approve resolution 21-003. Motion was made by Mr. Kegley with a second by Commissioner Hudson. Motion was approved. The next item is item number seven.

Mr. Harrison

The next resolution is 21-004. This is for the FTA 5310 funds. The Mobile MPO is apportioned about \$317,000 a year. This is specifically for urbanized area, elderly and individuals with disabilities. We had a call from projects in September and the city of Satsuma applied for operating which is 50/50 match and Via Health applied for an ADA 8 passenger vehicle which requires a 20% match. It was a competitive process. Each one of those agencies had to have a public component as part of that competitive process. They were awarded, and the SARPC Program Administration, off the top we can receive 10% administrator for Monica to administer the FTA 5310 program. We do have money left over for the elderly and individuals' disabilities for the urbanized area. And I think we are going to have a call for projects in April. A certain amount of that money can be used for operating, 35% of hat money can be used for operating and the remainder has to be used

for capital. These were properly advertised and discussed at the February 24. Technical/ Citizens Committee meeting with recommendation for approval. The next resolution is resolution 21-005. This is for the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, the region's is Mobile, Baldwin, and Escambia County. Anytime an agency applies for Federal Transit Administration funds, they have to apply to us. We're the clearinghouse for that. This is mainly for the 5310 funding. In the Human Services transportation plan we identified needs throughout the region. And then when they applied for that funding, we make sure that those applications fit the needs identified in the plan and then we refer those applications to ALDOT. This plan is updated every several years. It's already been adopted by the South Alabama, Rural Planning Organization (RPO). It's been adopted by the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. And because this does affect the urban area, it must be adopted by local MPO as well. It's a rather large document, I sent you all the link. It's on our page. It's on our website. This has been advertised. And we reviewed it at the 24th Technical/ Citizens Committee and was recommended for approval. Motion was made by Mayor Barry Broadhead with a second by Mr. Damon Dash to approve motion 21-004. Motion was approved.

Mr. Piper

We held public meetings for this. This is our regionwide planning. it covers Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia County. We did have public meetings back in the summer for this plan. It's a plan that we have to update it every four years. And then like Kevin said it covers public transportation for elderly people and disabled and low-income populations. And it's if you if you're going to apply for the 5310 programs to the state or through the MPO, your project has to be derived from this plan. Motion was made by Commissioner Hudson with a second by Mr. Dash. Motion was approved.

Mayor Stimpson

The next item is number 9. Kevin, if you can explain what's changed.

Mr. Harrison

So, prior to item 10, which is the public participation plan we're going to have a report of the Mobile Public Participation Process. This is required that we let you all know the effectiveness of our public participation plan and kind of how we quantify it. If August of 2019 is any kind of indication of our success of our public involvement, we had a big bridge meeting, it was pretty effective public involvement process. Monica, with our staff does a review or public involvement process. Monica is going to take a minute to review the report for last fiscal year concerning our public involvement

Monica Williamson

In fiscal year 2020, with our public participation, we used public notices in the newspaper of Facebook page website. And this past year we had 5177 visits to our website, which is an average of 431 visits per month. Our weekly newsletter is sent to 544 individuals. In the past year we've sent out 46 newsletters. The Facebook page has 130 followers, public notices were placed in the mobile press and the lagniappe, for each of the TCC/CAC meetings and the MPO meetings. We had a total of seven public notices this past year for public review and 2020. We had our up WP the tarp and the long-range transportation plan with the long-range transportation plan. We also had an online survey that was completed by 146 respondents. We had 16 citizens attend MPO meetings and two citizens attend the TCC/CAC meetings.

Mr. Harrison

As part of that report, COVID has created some problems for a public participation plan. When we adopted our long-range plan back in April, as part of our public involvement, the long-range plan was at 43 places around the county for public review. That's written in our public participation plan. Anytime you have a long-range transportation plan, that document has to be out for public review at city halls, libraries, various spots around the county, all the housing board offices. With COVID, the city halls, the libraries, they were closed. The public was not able to go review these documents. So, it created

an error or a discrepancy in our public participation. So, we we've gone through and tried to fix that with our public participation to account for any future pandemic, or future hurricanes. We've included electronic meetings such as this one. And the only real issue is that these public participation plans require a 45-day public notice. So, they have been out 45 days at City Halls, libraries, all the locations in the current public participation plan. We did have actually several signature saying people reviewed the documents. And we actually had one written comment. Monica, that written comment, do you have that comment?

Monica Williamson

So, to summarize the comment, it was actually made by one of the librarians, just stating that this was not a good time to have documents for public review in the library because people are limiting their time in the library due to COVID.

Mr. Harrison

Which is why we've updated our public participation plan. So, with that, there is a link to that plan. I've emailed it to everybody numerous times. It's been on our website. It's been in 40 places around the county. It's been advertised for 45 days with that one comment. It's been properly advertised. The Technical/Citizens Committee, they recommended for approval.

Mayor Stimpson

So, Kevin, just to summarize, this is this came about because with COVID, and we realized that we couldn't follow the procedure. So, this is modifying the procedure so that we can have public involvement going forward regardless of what is going on, correct?

Mr. Harrison

That's correct. Motion was made by Commissioner Hudson to approve Resolution 21-006 with a second by Mr. Dash. Motion was approved. The next item in your folders is Resolution 21-007. This is modifying our Unified Planning Work Program, which is essentially our budget. We adopted this in August and we do have carryover funds every now and then. we will have some carryover funds that can only be used for planning studies. In the past, we just did the US 45 feasibility study, we did the sidewalk ADA transition plan, we did the Downtown Mobility study. What we'd like to do for, since we do have the carryover funds, and I'd like to spend it as soon as possible in the urbanized area, is to do a major road plan for Mobile County. This comes as the city has reduced their planning jurisdictions to the city limits. Mobile County, with their subdivision regulations, would like to have a major thoroughfare plan that shows connectivity to all the other subdivision regulations for the cities in the urbanized area. So, I think this is a worthy third-party study. It would start in May. It is 3.8.1.3 in the Unified Planning Work Program, and the language was sent out to everybody and the link is on online as well. It's a \$35,000 third party contract that would be hopefully start in May, if we can get the consultant selection process started. And it would be a yearlong project. And really what the consultant would be doing is a lot of large cities have and counties have major thoroughfare plans. This is to try to preserve the right away for any large roads in the county. We'll say Snow Road, in the next 25, 30, 40 years. This will help preserve that right away for Snow Road and others. Not just local roads, but state roads as well.

Mayor Stimpson

But primarily in the county? In Mobile County?

Mr. Harrison

Motion was made by Mr. Dash to approve Resolution 21-007 with a second by Mayor Broadhead. Motion was approved with abstentions by the Mr. Kegley and Commissioner Hudson. Correct.

Mr. Harrison

The item is Resolution 21-008. Seems like every meeting that we have, we talk about performance measures. There are four of them. They are safety, bridge/ pavement management, system performance, and transit. And, you know, I've kind of combined these and now once a year we will just adopt every performance measure. Every MPO in the state of Alabama has adopted the state performance measures and targets. For an example, the number of fatalities is 961. That's a five-year rolling average of fatalities from 2016 to 2020. To create that target, that's a statewide target, the rate of fatalities, and number of serious injuries, and rate of serious injuries. These are all targets that the state is moving towards. These are federally required. Likewise, the Bridge/Pavement performance measures, system performance measures, the system performance measures is actually based on travel time. And the travel time is collected through the NPRMDS. The acronym escapes me but based on travel time, and how the system performs interstate and non-interstate system performs in terms of reliability, not necessarily congestion, but how reliable those facilities are. The transit performance measures are a reduction of inventory. And then that last one is a Wave Transit performance measures that they adhere to. Really there's no consequence for not meeting these measures. This is the federal guidance. The only consequence is for not meeting the safety performance measures. There is some discussion, there's discussion at the technical citizens meeting about whether the state of Alabama met the safety performance measures in terms of number of fatalities. I'm not sure they have and I still don't have any guidance from that. I don't know if there's anybody online from Alabama DOT that might be able to speak to this. Or if the guidance is out yet. But the only consequence if the state of Alabama does not meet the performance measures, is that that safety money that the state has would have to be spent on safety projects. Right now, as I understand it, 40% of the state of Alabama safety money is flexed into other programs. And if one of those performance safety performance measures is not met, then 100% of that money would have to be spent. Now, how that does that affect you all? If there is 40% money that has to be spent on safety projects, the statewide highway safety improvement program and the HSIP, you could potentially apply for projects in your jurisdiction that could be part of that plan under the HSIP. And we're still awaiting guidance on that from ALDOT. I don't know if there's anybody here that can speak on that. But really what we're adopting today, and we will adopt once a year, every year, our new performance measures, we have to adopt new performance measures. They are based on a five-year rolling average. And that's what we're doing today. And these were discussed, like I said at the subcommittee meeting and was recommended for approval and properly advertised.

Motion was made by Mr. Kegley with a second by Commissioner Hudson to adopt Resolution 21-008. asked for any further discussion.

Councilmember Richardson

For discussion, I just want to say that I sit here at almost all of these meetings and I don't see what nothing that we're voting on is pertaining to the 100,000 citizens living east of I-65. I don't see where we are getting any transportation studies on Springhill where starting around three o'clock to have to crawl all the way past I-65. Same for Dauphin Street. Traffic is just atrocious and yet we keep we keep going leapfrogging way out somewhere else, as no citizens in this area have eliminated and...

Mr. Harrison

Councilmen Richardson this resolution pertains to statewide safety performance measures.

Councilmember Richardson

I know but we talked about transportation study. I want to get that in because I missed out on that. When we get ready to do and more studies I would like for east of I-65 to be included on that.

Mr. Harrison

Thank you. And we did we did just complete the US 45, St. Stephens Road Feasibility Study that produced a lot of good recommendations, cost estimates and potential funding sources for that...

Councilmember Richardson

Stop that we got Springfield Avenue. Dauphin Street has serious transportation problems. And so, I'm saying you can't focus on one something and say we through with you. Just look at how we're spending majors and majors' dollars. They're going on out west, are they going into the county somewhere? The City of Mobile has right at 200,000 citizens. We have 100,000, east of I-65 and 100,000 West, and all deserve equal attention. And I'm not seeing that here. I'm the lone voice and I'll be crying. And I'll be doing all that's in my power to make sure that the citizens in this area receive what is right and just.

Mayor Stimpson

So, any other discussion or questions regarding resolution 21-008? Resolution 21-008 was approved.

Mayor Stimpson

The resolution stands. I'm going to let Kevin speak to the next item, which is item 13. But I would like to weigh in on prior to his remarks. During COVID, over the last year, we recognized that there were meetings that need to be held with the leadership at ALDOT and in some of those meetings, they called and requested that the chairman be present, which I would obviously meet with them. But at the same time, they will be calling for maybe a meeting on the Eastern Shore and they would be meeting with a chairman and vice chairman. The Mobile MPO and our bylaws, there was no provision for having a vice-chair. In the spirit of trying to have more than just one person with the MPO maybe meeting with whether it be ALDOT or FHWA or whomever, it's been recommended that we change the bylaws so that we can have a vice chair in the absence of mean everyone knows, in the absence of the chairman. So, with that, I'll flip it to Kevin to elaborate upon it more, make comment.

Mr. Harrison

Resolution 21-009 is for the creation of MPO vice chairman and adopting or modifying the bylaws. What we are doing is modifying article five of the bylaws. When the position of chairperson becomes vacant, the nominations for the chairperson are to be called on by the TCC/CAC chairman and by majority vote by elected by all voting members of the MPO. Nominations for chair person can be made by any voting member of the MPO. But the chairperson must be a voting member of the MPO and an elected official. That's new, because the we've decided that the TCC chairperson, would call for the nominations. Section 5.2 has been added. I'm going to spare you from reading the entire excerpt there, but the vice chairman does take the position of chairperson. And again, nominations for the Vice Chair are called on by the TCC chair because there could be a situation where both the chair and the Vice Chair are vacant positions. So, in order for protocol, the TCC chair would just call for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. So that's why we put that in the bylaws. That's the resolution before you which is to modify the MPO bylaws.

Mayor Stimpson

At this time the chair of the TCC/CAC is Ricky. Is that correct?

Mr. Harrison

That's correct.

Mayor Stimpson

Okay.

Motion was made by Mayor Broadhead to approve Resolution 21-009 with a second by Mr. Dash.

Mr. Harrison

This does have to be an elected official. Nominations for Vice Chair can be made by a voting member, but the position of VICE CHAIRPERSON does have to be an elected official because, in the capacity of the chairman, the chairman has to be an elected official as well.

Motion was approved.

Mayor Stimpson

The next item is item 14, which is nominating an individual to serve as Vice-Chair.

Mr. Rhodes

I'd like to open the floor for nominations for Vice Chairperson of the Mobile MPO and this can be made by any voting member of the MPO.

Councilmember Richardson nominated Mayor Gardner and Mr. Bryan Kegley nominated Commissioner Hudson. A roll call vote determined in an 8-3 vote that Commissioner Hudson would be Vice-Chairperson of the Mobile MPO.

The next item on the agenda was Resolution 21-010, amending the TCC/CAC Bylaws.

Mr. Harrison

Just like the MPO bylaws, we are amending the TCC/CAC bylaws. We're just adding 5.2. The vice chair will act as the chair when the chair is unable to act. And these nominations can be made by TCC/CAC and voted on by majority vote of the TCC/CAC members present.

Motion was made by Mayor Broadhead to approve the resolution with a second by Mr. Bryan Kegley. Motion was approved.

Ms. Jennifer White nominated Mr. Nick Amberger. There were no other nominations. Mr. Amberger was approved as the TCC Chair.

Mr. Harrison

This first pot of money is for electric charging stations. It's actually already in our attributable funding schedule, Mobile 2021. We've received \$400,000 in 2020 and in 2021, we received \$564,000. This money, the guidance is not out yet. At this time, does ALDOT have any further guidance concerning these funds? This is specifically for to provide necessary charging infrastructure along corridor ready or corridor pending alternative fuel corridors designated pursuant to 22 USC 451. It's a million dollars. And if we've got to figure out what to do with it, we're waiting guidance. It's in our in our funding schedule. I have a pretty good feeling we're going to need to spend this money on what it's meant for; charging infrastructure for electronic vehicles. If that's not the case, there's a possibility we can flex that money. Is there any discussion on that pot of money? The next pot of money is from CRRSAA 3.193, almost \$3.2 million dollars. This is 100% money. I'm showing you here that the state of Alabama, you can see is receiving \$188 million. Sixteen million of that is

going to urban areas over 200,000. So, the state will receive \$171 million. That can be used anywhere in the state. This can be 100% funding, this can be without match. This has to be spent by 2024. And under special authority, which I'm seeking from the State, this money can be used on non-system roads. Right now, the way it's set up, it has to be spent on system roads, which is any road that's functionally classified. So, we've got, you know, a unique situation in South Alabama that US 43 and 188. Those are two federal routes that go through municipalities. And it's the only road that's functionally classified that goes through those municipalities for the most part, Prichard Chickasaw, Saraland, Satsuma and Creola, US 43 is the only federal aid route going through those municipalities. Likewise, Bayou la Batre has 188 and is the only functionally classified road in the municipality of Bayou la Batre. We appreciate the MPO members from those municipalities coming to these meetings and they do vote on large projects out in West Mobile and Mobile. What we are going to try to do with this is money is use it for a competitive application process for maintenance issues for Creola, Saraland, Satsuma, Prichard, Bayou La Batre, Semmes that typically don't get MPO attributable funds. This money cannot be spent per capita. This money just like all of our funds have to be spent on projects justified on need. Before I ask for any approval from ALDOT, I wanted to present this to y'all and get your blessing to move forward with that in that direction.

Mayor Stimpson

I'll pick up from there. I had an opportunity to visit with Kevin about this. This is a very unusual situation for there to be 100% money, no match. So, the amount of money that that's \$3.2 million. Over the years the City of Mobile has been a beneficiary of a lot of funding. We have the ability to match where a lot of the smaller municipalities, they have great projects, but they don't have the ability to match. Commissioner Hudson, and we discussed this and it will be open for everybody's comments, but I would propose that, that the smaller municipalities, as Kevin just said, that they that a creative process be arranged so that they can submit their projects, and the money be divided among them. And so that's, that's my comment, permission, Hudson? Because I know she said, time to think about this. Because this fall, and I'll make this one other comment is that the smaller municipalities will probably need the county engineer to assist them in this. So anyway, Commissioner, I'll flip to you, and then we'll open it up and just started by us make a comment, because we're not trying to determine exactly what to do at this meeting at this time. But by the next meeting, there will be a proposal of what the pathway forward should be or what the recommended path should be.

Commissioner Hudson

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mayor Simpson said, we have had some discussion discussed it with Kevin, this is a very unique opportunity for the smaller municipalities. I know how difficult it is, when you're required to make a match and is just, not financially feasible, in a lot of cases. And so, with this being 100%, this, we decided that this would be a unique opportunity, a great opportunity for smaller municipalities to be able to get some really critical roadwork done that you might not be able to get done otherwise. And, and it just, it just kind of came together. So, the county is very happy to facilitate this process. I think that there are some plans, I know that Brian has been engaged in some conversations as well with Kevin, about perhaps a plan, that would be an economy of scale that would allow all the municipalities to submit grant requests, and then kind of work that under a big umbrella with a consultant and the construction company. We want as much of that money going to roads as we possibly can get in our, in our municipal areas. Again, you know, we're just happy to facilitate in any way we can and to support our municipalities. Thank you.

Councilmember Richardson

Thank you so much. I disagree. I disagree on the grounds that you can't name me one project that happened in the last 10 years that happened at East of I-65. You're going way out there to help the municipalities and I've been begging you for Highway 45. You got Highway 43 going right through Chickasaw. Yes, but you've got Highway 45 coming straight into District One and all through Prichard. No curbs, no gutters, no sidewalk, no trees, no modern light, no nothing. I mean,

just completely ignored. The same thing happened at University. When University starts out at Airport Boulevard, everything is looking good. When University gets over to Moffett road, and heads into Prichard, University squeezes into two lanes and goes all the way over to US Highway45. Get 158. 158 is a four lane through the swamp from Saraland and right on through the swamp all the way up to Schillingers Road. not university because of who live in under. So here we go again. Going back, you're going to bypass all of east of our 65 that we have received. Absolutely. These will literally tell you how different the time was. received this that in other, we receive nothing. I will oppose this. This is this is we already have a packet, we already studied it, we just need some funding. And we try to figure out a way to go away somewhere, when we need the funding right here on US Highway 45. I, I'm not, I'm not against any of these municipalities. But if you sit here and look at the hundreds of millions of dollar bills, on Zeigler road widening, will McGregor Avenue, why are we doing all we can, but we're not going to get nothing. We got a pot of money, we don't need no match, we can just do the project. We're going where your name, how we fought for your name, orange rose. Nobody mentioned Highway 45 like it's off the grid. Please don't mention 45 and I'm the voice crying in the wilderness. And I will do all I can to make sure some of that money is diverted towards us highway 45. If I have to travel all the way to Washington, DC, I'm opposed to I want Highway 45 included and whatever else you're going to do with all these people. I'm not against it. But I want some of that money set aside for US Highway 45? If not now, when? If not me who?

Mayor Stimpson

Thank you for your comments. Other comments? At some point that there will need to be other comments. We'd love to hear what other people say because at some point, there will be a resolution, on how the money should be spent. So, put your brains in gear. And let's see what we come up with.

Mr. Harrison

That has \$3.2 million. I do have to seek approval from ALDOT. I will do that this afternoon now that I've discussed it with you. If that's the way we'd like to move forward with that, I've got to seek special approval to do that. The transit money, there's \$55,000 of transit money. That's 5310 transit. That's also 100% as part of this money. We've discussed this. Monica, with our staff, is developing a program to get homebound seniors vaccinated. We do have an issue here in South Alabama with transportation for our seniors to get doctor's office. And what we think we can use this money for is through our area agency on aging here at SARPC, we have access to individuals that are homebound seniors that have the ability to get vaccinated. So, I think that we've got a program, we've got an idea underway to do that to get seniors vaccinated. So that'll be with the 55,000. With that, so that does not require resolution.

Mayor Stimpson

The next item is in discussion on the Mobile River Bridge. At this time, there's no action that's going to be taken regarding any proposals on I-10 bridge. But if it's prudent for the MPO to listen to what other ideas there are regarding pathway forward on the bridge.

Mr. Harrison

We're fortunate to have a group of several groups of citizens coming forward, trying to figure out something for the bridge. As you all know, on August 2019 what happened. Right now, we do not have the I-10 Mobile River Bridge in our fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan, nor does the eastern shore MPO. In order for the project to move forward, we need a project in that fiscally constrained plan. That project needs to have cost estimates, limits in an identified funding source, that has to be sent to the Federal Highway administration. And that really has to come from ALDOT. There are several ideas being thrown around. And these group of retired citizens, Dr. Eppley, Steve Russell. I don't know if you have a name for your group. We certainly appreciate what you're doing and the thoughts that are presented today. With that,

I'd like to turn the screen over to Dr. Eppley to present y'all kind of what they've come up with, which I think is a pretty good idea in terms of how to move forward.

Dr. Eppley

We appreciate the time. We're going to show you just a few PowerPoints this morning. The information that's in the PowerPoint is also in our report, which is posted on your website. There's a four-page report with a summary. Well, having the PowerPoints. I have two individuals with me today. Joe Marino is here. Joe is from the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce. He's an engineer, and he is recently retired. Steve Russell is here, Steve is also from the mobile Area Chamber of Commerce. Steve is also an engineer and retired. My name is Don Eppley. I'm an economist from USA also currently retired. We began our project in August of 2019 after ALDOT came to town and made its proposal. What we wanted to do was to develop an intelligent response. We began by seeking data, opinions and recommendations from 25 to 30, individuals who had some connection to this project. We also gathered information on traffic counts, construction costs, projected revenue, post financing, commuter counts, and other relevant facts that we can find from anybody or any source who had any information on this project that was offered to us. Back before Christmas, we took a look at what we had because what was coming in appeared to be somewhat repetitious. And we began to see some patterns, trends develop. What we want to present to you today were those four points. First point is that there still seems to be some confusion in the marketplace as to what this project is all about. Our recommendation is that it is a one project with two parts. First part is a six-lane bridge. Second part is an eight lane Bayway, both built consecutively as one project. It's important to remain within the environmental impact statement. Next, we dealt with everything that's free. Our recommendation is all current routes from Mobile to the Eastern Shore, or from the Eastern Shore back to Mobile remain free of charge that includes the Wallace Tunnel. It should never be charged. Wallace Tunnel also should be removed from the I-10 designation. What this does is it results in a free choice. So whatever else we do with regard to point, we still have a free choice. Those folks that don't feel they want to pay a proposed fee, the transfer back and forth, then they will have the existing routes that they have today. By the way, in our report, we never use the word toll. It is correctly described as a user charge and should it exist. If you use it to pay for work. If you don't use it, you don't pay for it. Point three deals with the new bridge. And by the way, this is where the I-10 traffic belongs. And this is where it should be routed. We can't say that a user fee definitely is going to be required. We just don't have enough information on financing in order to make that statement should one be required. We did take a look at our construction data and our maintenance data on an annual basis starting in the year 2025. We projected some revenues, we looked at those costs. And we came up with a rate of payment for 50. Construction or amortization construct in a shorter period of time, but we're going to have about a 50 year pay out. We're recommending the statistical average of \$2 per vehicle for class one vehicles, basically automobiles and pickups and an average of \$10 for all other vehicles that works in our numbers. Please don't go away from this meeting, believing that we're recommending \$2 and \$10. This is an average, which means in category one, some vehicles will pay more and some vehicles will pay less. So where do you get on where you get off time of day and so on. All those details can eventually be worked out by ALDOT. They've got expertise to do that. And we'll let them work that out. This needs to be combined with a frequent traveler discount program that's reasonable. We do have one to propose. It suggests that any vehicle that makes at least 40 one-way trips per month have their charge Reduce by an automatic 50%. So, if your vehicle on I-10 would be charged \$2, you make at least 40 trips automatically would be reduced to \$1. So, you have a new bridge and Bayway, there might be a charge on it. This is what we think works in our numbers. But there is also a free choice for those that don't feel they can afford or don't want to pay. Now the last point is a realization that all of this really depends upon the data and information that we have to do any kind of analysis. And we don't have everything that we need. The fact remains that to do a more detailed response, we've got to have more data. And we've got to have more information, particularly on the financing side. And it must come from Montgomery. Montgomery must help us out. Give us the information we need to make a decision. Those are the four points in our recommendations. Now, what do we want? What are we asking you to do as a group? Why are we taking up your time today, we're not asking that

you go through these four points and debate them to determine if you agree or disagree. What we want you to do is to look at the report as a report to generate a consensus, we've got to have a conversation with the other groups on the coast, we've got to have an intelligent conversation with the folks in Montgomery. So we would like to see you put a cover letter on this four-page document and label it as reasonable. It's a reasonable way to approach this situation and get it going. It is up to ALDOT for them to determine if it's feasible, and they'll look at all the points involved. And they'll respond. And once they're ready to respond, then let's extend to them an invitation to come back to the coast and tell us what they think. To the best of our knowledge, we have not come across any other plan that exists with some definite recommendations. So we hope you will consider this to be a serious approach. It took a lot of time to generate a lot of individual opinion in it. And we would like to see you take action on it. I'm here because I do economic impact studies. We're talking about \$2 billion here, coming back into the community or at least a large chunk of it will come back to the community, and what better time to support our small businesses at a time that they really needed. Thank you for your time. This concludes my presentation. And we have our emails here. If you get home and have some questions, and you want to talk further about any point, be sure and contact us. This is Joe's emails, these email and mine. Thank you, Kevin. And thank you, Mr. Mayor. We appreciate your time. Carefully. Does anybody have any questions of the of their group?

Commissioner Hudson

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to clarify that the you mentioned the environmental impact that the footprint would remain the same and the size and the scope of the bridge in the Bayway project would be the same. And this is taking into account the two plus billion-dollar overall costs. Just wanted to confirm that.

Dr. Eppley

Yes, we understand the environmental impact statement. Your statement is correct.

Mr. Piper

I have a question about the taking the Wallace tunnel off the interstate system Would it become a local road or stay on the highway system?

Dr. Eppley

Our anticipation is that there's a very high probability that once you eliminate it from I-10 most of the traffic is going to be local commuter traffic.

Mr. Piper

No, I mean as far as it's classification. Because right now it qualifies for Interstate maintenance funds, which is you know, the maintenance of the tunnel is expensive in its that's a 10% match with interstate maintenance funds. But if you take it off that then it becomes a local road then it's up to the city of Mobile to maintain the tunnel and that's probably not an expense they want to absorb, wouldn't think. I'm sure ALDOT will be glad to get rid of it.

Dr. Eppley

I'd have to ask ALDOT to answer that question for us. We would we would call the engineering office and ask them for a response. We're trying to get the traffic out of the tunnel. We do have a design for the western end of the tunnel, simply because we were asked a number of questions about it. How do we go from the eastern shore to the airport or the downtown airport or downtown Mobile and so on? We do have an additional report if anybody's interested in that. We're not design people. We didn't approach this project with that in mind. Question is valid. I would refer it to ALDOT.

Mayor Broadhead

Mr. Chairman, a question on the lack of a breakdown lane on the eight lanes of Bayway that's proposed. How would that be handled in terms of servicing vehicles that had issues on the Bayway?

Dr. Eppley

That's a design question and we have some information from ALDOT with regard to that I might bring your attention to the fact that ALDOT, Mr. Cooper has released an animation, what he sees that the bridge of the like, and what the Bayway might look like. That's available currently on the internet. If you send me an email and requested, I can certainly attach that link to you and send it back to you. I didn't answer your question directly. I'd like to look at the animation before I answered your question. Thank you. Thank you, doctor. I'll send you that email. There are other questions. Definitely.

Commissioner Hudson

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to comment that how much I certainly appreciate the time and effort that Dr. Epley and Steve and Joe have taken, they are volunteers. They are concerned about the future of our community and in the movement of traffic and that's why they've spent the time and effort over the better part of the last year because I know I've had several sit-down meetings with these gentlemen. And just wanted to say thank you, and we really as a community, appreciate your concern in everything that you've done.

Mayor Stimpson

Thank you, Commissioner, any other comments? Then I'm going to is anybody else on the line that would like to make another proposal regarding the bridge?

The next item on the agenda was old business.

Mr. Harrison

Okay, I do have some old business. I'm going to share my screen again. Because I want to go back to our attributable funding schedule. I always like to review this with y'all. This is your money. A couple of things have changed. This project right here number 13. We just modified that. And this meeting. That was 575. That's the federal funds for the charging stations that I was talking about for the electronics charging stations that will await guidance on. It looks like we have plenty of money in 2023. But I want you to look at 2024. We're negative \$7.5 million, so we really don't have that much money. McFarland or Celeste road looks like, if not both, will have to be moved out. We have Dauphin Street, which Councilman Richardson I think is in your district. We have \$7 million for Dauphin Street here in 2023. So, this is your current funding schedule. Are there any comments or questions concerning your funding? That's all I have for old business.

The next item on the agenda was new business.

Mr. Harrison

We've got some new news. The census has just announced their intention to change the criteria for urban area. This is proposed. First of all, the 2020 census data is not even out yet. But what they have presented us with is a proposed rule for new criteria for urban area. This is kind of going to be big news, they are no longer going to use population. They will be using housing unit density. For our current urban area that's not that big of a deal, but for Baldwin County that has all those housing units in Gulf Shores and Foley, that can be big news, because population down there is very seasonal, but the housing units are not. Dauphin Island. This could play a part in Dauphin Island. There's a lot of housing units on Dauphin Island, but not a whole lot of populations. This is some other items that they will they're proposing is no longer the urban clusters in urbanized areas. It'll just be one urban area. These are changes that nationally, we're going to be asked to

comment on from a lot of different national organizations. And I anticipate this to be an extremely hot item. It's not necessarily going to affect our urbanized area with the potential of Bayou la Batre. Bayou la Batre is part of the urbanized area. We have anticipated Grand Bay being part of the urban area because it's an urban cluster. These definitions can change all that, but for the core urban area, I don't think it's going to change that much. Again, this is proposed that exclusive of the urban area change. The OMB has proposed to change Metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas to be from 50,000 to 100,000. I understand the MSA are strictly for statistical use. They're not used for funding. So, it's exclusive of the urban area proposed criteria. Coincidentally, yes, but these are two items that we're watching very closely. And we will keep y'all updated on.

Someone asked if there is a website or something that we can that you can share a link with everyone that that could go to?

Mr. Harrison

Yes, the link is actually on the federal register for proposed criteria. And, you know, this is pretty hot news. So, pay attention to my newsletter, every Friday, this will be a hot topic in some of our things. You know, our study area for the MPO is what we expect to be urban in the next 25 years. Well, if they change that criteria, we will probably change our study area.

Mr. Piper

Chairman, I have a new item MPO has opened up the transportation alternatives program grant application, that's the for sidewalk and bypass, the deadline is May 14. And the maximum federal amount this year is 400,000. It has a 20% match.

Mr. Harrison

I have one final item, Mobile MPO on June 23 of 2021 turns 50 years old. anybody has any ideas on how we can celebrate the Mobile MPO being 50? Please let me know.

Meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:


Chairman, TCC


Chairman, MPO


Date

Date