



*Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham • 1731 First Avenue North Suite 200 • Birmingham, Al 35203
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October 27, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Technical Committee

FROM: Mr. David Hunke, Chairman /s/

**SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2010**

A meeting of the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) was held on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, 10:00 a.m., RPC 1st Floor Conference Room, 1731 1st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. David Hunke, Chairman, At-Large
Mr. Greg Dawkins, Vice-Chairman, City of Birmingham Traffic Engineer
Mr. Richard Caudle, At-Large
Ms. Rhonda Siserir, BJCTA Representative
Mr. Eric Womack, Shelby County Development Services Representative
Mr. Fred Hawkins, EDT
Mr. Matthew Cobb, City of Homewood Engineer
Ms. Virginia Williams, At-Large
Ms. Alfredo Acoff, ALDOT Environmental Coordinator – Montgomery
Mr. Fenn Church, Trucking Representative
Mr. Phillip Garratt, P.E., At-Large
Mr. Chris Hatcher, Operation New Birmingham
Ms. Mary Margaret Nicholson, At-Large
Mr. Doug Hale, Bicycle / Pedestrian Representative
Mr. Richard Darden, At-Large
Ms. Sheila Chaffin, UAB Exec. Dir. Campus Planning and Facilities Programming
Mr. Tom Magee, City of Birmingham Chief Planner
Mr. Jason Howanitz, Jeff. County Dept. of Health Chief Meteorologist - Air Division
Mr. Al Folcher, At-Large

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY PROXY

Mr. Lance Taylor, ALDOT Preconstruction Engineer – Birmingham
Represented by Ms. Cindy Hill
Mr. Charles Malone, ALDOT Maintenance Representative-Birmingham
Represented by Mr. Lionel Harbin
Ms. Kim Fort, UAB Parking Services Dir. of Auxiliary Services
Represented by Ms. Sheila Chaffin
Mr. Scott Holladay, Shelby County Highway Department Representative
Represented by Mr. Clay Aderholt
Mr. Randy Kemp, City of Birmingham
Represented by Mr. Jim Crews
Mr. John Tally, CLASTRAN Transportation Mobility Manager
Represented by Mr. Fenn Church

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Mr. Rod Long, City of Hoover Engineer
Mr. Wallace McCord, At-Large
Mr. Ken Boozer, Jefferson County Dept. of Roads and Transportation Representative
Mr. Robert Portera, At-Large
Mr. Scott Cothron, Sain Associates
Mr. Chris Reeves, At-Large
Mr. Andrew Sullivan, At-Large
Ms. Denise Hornbuckle, Traffic Safety Representative
Mr. John Stewart, At-Large
Dr. Emmanuel Oranika, ALDOT Metropolitan Planning Engineer - Montgomery
Mr. Ron Gore, ADEM (Non-Voting Member)
Ms. Holly Peterson, FTA (Non-Voting Member)
Mr. Dave Harris, FHWA (Non-Voting Member)
Ms. Nan Baldwin, Birmingham Business Alliance (Non-Voting Member)

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Foisy, RPC
Ms. Cynthia Barton, RPC
Mr. Darrell Howard, RPC
Mr. Steve Ostaseski, RPC
Mr. Mike Kaczorowski, RPC
Mr. Richard Amore, RPC
Mr. Philip Amthor, RPC
Mr. Tom Maxwell, RPC
Mr. Blair Perry, Gresham Smith and Partners

Chairman David Hunke called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. The meeting proceeded with the scheduled agenda items.

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Attendees introduced themselves. With no additions or corrections, the September 22, 2010 minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Bill Foisy presented a report on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) actions. The MPO approved the TIP modification recommended by the TTC as well as the Resurfacing Program allocation for FY2011. The MPO viewed a presentation on the Air Quality Program, including information from the Jefferson County Health Department, Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition, Policy Exchange Foundation and the Waste Reduction and Technology Transfer.

Mr. Foisy noted that a public involvement meeting was held on October 20, 2010 for the 24-hour particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) standard for the 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan and Rebalanced FY2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. The comment period is open until November 10, 2010. Mr. Foisy also noted that the MPO has been notified of a \$3 million CMAQ rescission by ALDOT.

Chairman Hunke asked if CMAQ funds will be redistributed throughout the state when the standards are lowered or if more money will be allocated to the state. At this time it is unknown.

U.S 280 CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY

Mr. Mike Kaczorowski gave an update on the U.S 280 Corridor Transit Study and conducted an interactive exercise to collect information on land use and development plans. Information presented included:

Examples of Transit-Supportive Land Use

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is compact mixed use development, located within an easy walk of a transit stop, generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities designed for pedestrians, without excluding the auto. -- *APTA Transit Resource Guide*

Successful Ingredients of TOD:

- Pedestrian connectivity
- Medium to high density development
- Compact, nodal development
- Within a 5-minute walk to transit
- Short blocks
- Excludes inappropriate uses
- Supportive parking regulations

INDEX Modeling

INDEX is a GIS-based software tool that estimates the impacts of alternative land use scenarios. INDEX can compare existing land use with several proposed future land use scenarios using “indicators”. INDEX can also calculate a wide variety of transportation, land use and demographic indicators. Different indicators require different types and quality of input data.

Recommended INDEX Indicators for US 280

Population	Employment
Land Use Balance	Jobs/Housing Balance
Transit Adjacency	Employment Density
Open Space Share	Internal Street Connectivity
Street Network Density	Home based Trips per Day
Home based VMT per Day	

These indicators will be calculated and compared for alternative land use scenarios for three selected transit nodes in the US 280 Corridor. Recommended INDEX study areas include Brookwood Mall, Chelsea Town Center and Downtown Homewood. Possible alternatives include US 280 and SR 119 or US 280 and SR 55.

The purpose of a Land Use Analysis is assessment of existing land use conditions, future land use plans and zoning regulations, development of two land use scenarios for modeling (“business-as-usual” vs. compact transit-supportive development), comparison of Index nodes to show ridership benefits of targeted land use changes and an Integrated Transportation and Land Use Plan to recommended land use changes, transit-supportive policies and modifications to plans and zoning regulations.

Review of Transit Technologies

Urban Bus Service: Typically operated along a fixed route on a fixed schedule. Buses may deviate from the route to pick up/drop off passengers, but must return to the established route. It serves local destinations along the route at very low operating speeds, usually operates at 30- to 90-minute intervals and is powered with diesel and / or alternative fuels.

Premium Bus Service: Services are designed to operate faster and make fewer stops than traditional urban bus service. This service typically operates on fixed routes and connects outlying communities to downtowns or major activity centers. Many riders access the system via park-and-ride lots or kiss-and-ride. Some services operate transit coaches with more rider amenities. Operating speeds are similar to urban buses except on expressways with HOV lanes or bus-only lanes. Higher quality of service is related to higher fares.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Frequent, high-capacity service operated to replicate rail service. BRT uses various ways to provide buses with priority in travel, including dedicated busway, grade-separated busway, HOV Lane, Queue Jump Lanes, high quality vehicles and higher operating speeds than urban buses. Rubber-tired bus vehicles are powered by diesel or alternative fuels and BRT stations are not as costly as rail stations.

Light Rail Transit (LRT): Streetcar system with extensive priority signal systems at intersections and at least 30% of its route operating in “reserved rights-of-way.” May be grade separated, but must retain ability to operate in mixed traffic. LRT is a frequent high-capacity service with high quality vehicles, more expensive stations and facilities, relatively smooth ride and easy to board. LRT is typically powered by overhead power supply and speeds are slow in congested urban areas, but can reach 60 MPH in dedicated rights-of-way.

Overview of Alternatives Screening Process

The Alternatives Screening Process provides a systematic method for identifying all transit alternatives to meet specific US 280 corridor needs, eliminating Transit Alternatives with “Fatal Flaws.” The process also evaluates the Best-Performing Alternatives and reaches consensus on the “Locally Preferred Alternative.”

An interactive exercise was performed to solicit feedback from the Technical Committee on some of the issues in the corridor. The feedback will be passed on to the project team for their consideration.

Mr. Kaczorowski announced two public workshops to be held November 12, 2010 at the Cahaba Grand Center Convention Center. The workshops will be held 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM PROJECTS

Mr. Philip Amthor and Mr. Richard Amore presented information on the completed and on-going Building Communities Program projects. The purpose of the Building Communities program is to promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns and address the relationship between transportation and land use, recognizing that land use decisions have impacts on the transportation system and vice-versa. The Building Communities program provides grants to local communities within the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Area to support land use integration, economic vitality, safety and security, accessibility and mobility, environmental/air quality improvement, and system preservation.

Projects that have been completed or are ongoing include:

Graysville – Form-Based Code

1. Corridor X, Cherry Avenue widening and intersection realignment.
2. Preserve and enhance the Main Street and historical downtown area of Graysville.
3. A tool to guide future development that is consistent with the charm of the existing main street.

Birmingham - City Center One Way Street Conversion Study

1. Project came out of City-Center Master Plan – investigate the feasibility and effects of conversion of one-way to two-way streets.

2. Priorities of City, businesses and downtown residents included easier downtown navigation, bicycle lanes, pedestrian friendly environment, improved street lighting and sidewalks, and on-street parking as well as increase of diagonal parking.
3. Engineering study conclusions noted no adverse impacts on traffic circulation are expected due to a potential street conversion, the proposed two-way street design along with optimized signal timings is expected to improve traffic operations in the Birmingham downtown network, no intersection is at risk for deterioration of service, proposed design adds on-street parking and accommodates bike needs, and reduction in stops and miles traveled shows a positive effect on air quality.

Birmingham – Fountain Heights 16th Street Corridor Plan

1. Responds to future north bound interchange at Interstate 65 and 16th Street North.
2. Examined the 16th Street North Corridor and offered a context sensitive design solution.
3. The plan results in physical changes along the corridor, including the type and location of safe pedestrian crossings, improvements to slow traffic, type and location of new street trees, ways to improve transit access, and ways to make the street look better through landscaping, street furniture, signage, and public art.

Birmingham – Collegeville Plan and Access Study

At a Finley Boulevard Extension public involvement meeting, the community made clear that access into and out of the Collegeville Neighborhood for residents and emergency vehicles would still be an issue even with the proposed roadway extension project. The RPC partnered with the Auburn Urban Design Studio to develop a Neighborhood Plan for revitalization to capitalize on historic Bethel Baptist Church for historic recognition and tourism, connect to the Civil Rights Trail running through the City of Birmingham, to connect to the Village Creek Greenway, and to form brownfield remediation strategies.

Birmingham – Highland Park Neighborhood Assessment and Zoning Code Review

The neighborhood sought a plan and regulation to address the redevelopment pressure on the existing neighborhood infrastructure. The plan presented a vision and land development regulation that will preserve the unique neighborhood character and build upon the diverse housing stock, its beautiful parks, and strong retail opportunities within the neighborhood, while providing safe pedestrian, transit and vehicular transportation accommodations.

Birmingham – Concept Feasibility for I-20/59 Lowering

This analysis was conducted in response to the Birmingham City Center Master Plan in 2004 that recommended the lowering of the portion of the interstate currently on elevated structure. The community benefits cited in the plan include connectivity benefits between the expanding Civic Center District and downtown Birmingham, safety and capacity improvements, and air, noise and vibration impact reductions. Proposed interchange improvements could allow 20 plus acres of land to be reclaimed in an area with expanding development opportunities.

Calera – Comprehensive Plan Update

Calera needed to address its land use and transportation planning needs that have occurred over the past decade of rapid growth. This project included three inter-related components: The Comprehensive Plan update, the Downtown Plan update, and Development Regulations that

are intended to strengthen the City's ability to address ongoing growth in the context of currently planned and desired transportation improvements.

Chelsea – Major Street Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulation Update; Smart Code Overlay

A vision was created and outlined for Chelsea in their Comprehensive Plan. The Building Communities Program helps develop the tools to implement the vision. The Chelsea Plan Elements include a map of all proposed connections and access management corridors and a graphic depiction of all recommended typical sections. Update of the ordinance provisions to reflect the various components of land use are recognized in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan also calibrates a form-based code for downtown Chelsea.

Fairfield – Comprehensive Plan

Major Plan Elements include Miles College expansion, Aronov Drive redevelopment, downtown redevelopment, and a neighborhood redevelopment model.

Bessemer – Transportation/Transit Plan, Smart Code, Master Plan Update, Form-Based Code Overlay

1. Transit access from existing neighborhoods to new retail.
2. Greyfield redevelopment strategy for vacant or partially vacant highway retail sites.
3. Abandoned houses, neighborhood redevelopment.
4. Incorporation of US11 Transit Alternatives Analysis – transit service from downtown Birmingham to Academy Drive exit on I-20/59.
5. Downtown redevelopment – new merchants' association, gateways and complete streets.

Leeds – Master Plan Update and Major Street Plan

The purpose of the project is to address the future growth and development in the City. The master plan is currently underway and staff is in the process of establishing a vision and goals for the future that meet the needs of Leeds' current and future residents while preserving and enhancing the unique qualities of their community.

Vestavia Hills - Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulation Update

The city sought to improve their post WWII suburban development pattern by encouraging future land use and land development patterns that encourage non-motorized travel and that are compatible with mass transit use. This project helps the City to update its zoning and subdivision regulations to implement the transportation-related development strategies of the City's recently prepared Comprehensive Plan.

Vestavia Hills - Cahaba Heights Neighborhood Plan

The City of Vestavia Hills sought to develop a Neighborhood Plan for Cahaba Heights, as recommended by the City's Comprehensive Plan. The project's three primary goals are to evaluate opportunities for reinvestment, infill and redevelopment in the community's business area, to address the impacts of recent and proposed transportation changes affecting the area, and to establish priorities for public investment that are desired to improve safety, accessibility, and mobility.

Five Mile Creek – Strategic Plan for Implementation of the Trail Location Study

1. Detailed mapping of potential routes and assets.
2. Will become a “reference book” on how to implement regional trail plans in Alabama.
3. Develop advocacy, enforcement and marketing programs.

Irondale – U.S. 78 Corridor Study

Purpose and goals include analysis of demographic trends in the area by RPC and the Business Analysis Lab at UAB’s School of Business and to ascertain the area’s strengths and weaknesses in order to identify appropriate economic development options. Methodology included census research and focus group surveys of developers and area residents.

Recommendations:

1. Consider creating an access point to Ruffner Mountain and market the area to hikers and outdoor enthusiasts.
2. Improvements in lighting, street signs and landscaping to make the community more visually appealing would be well received by potential developers and residents alike.
3. Recruit grocery store along US 78 as well as create a destination shopping area at Garden Ridge, centered on home construction and décor.

Birmingham – Concept Feasibility for I-20/59 Lowering

This analysis was conducted in response to the Birmingham City Center Master Plan in 2004 that recommended the lowering of the portion of the interstate currently on elevated structure. The community benefits cited in the plan include connectivity benefits between the expanding Civic Center District and downtown Birmingham, safety and capacity improvements, and air, noise and vibration impact reductions. Proposed interchange improvements could allow 20 plus acres of land to be reclaimed in an area with expanding development opportunities.

The project fulfills a City Center Master Plan objective of providing improved connectivity between the Civic Center and Downtown Districts and for the development of “green streets” and improved pedestrian amenities while providing significant congestion relief, travel time reduction and improved safety along the I-20/59 corridor.

Montevallo – Development Regulations in support of the City’s Comprehensive Plan

The City of Montevallo seeks to develop land development regulations to implement the vision of their recently adopted comprehensive plan. The project will develop a Scenic Overlay district for State Route 119 and a special district for Downtown Montevallo. The project will develop a new zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and architectural design guidelines

Mr. Bill Foisy then discussed the process for development of Building Communities Program projects with local entities.

Project Identification and Development

- RPC public outreach
- Negotiated with local jurisdiction
- Support SAFETEA-LU planning factors (transportation and land use integration)
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Corridor Transportation Plan

- Sub-Area Plans (Neighborhood)
- Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- Administration and Regulatory Tools (subdivision regulations/zoning ordinance)

Program Implementation

- Capital projects identified in Plans
- Line item to be developed by MPO in FY 2012-2015 TIP
- Eligible projects consistent with Surface Transportation Program/Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program guidance.
- Application process
- Technical Committee guidance on development policies in 2035 RTP

Mr. Foisy noted a need to establish an application process and guidelines for Building Communities Implementation. A need for feedback and vetting process was noted for approval and implementation as well as the need to establish a category similar to the new Resurfacing Program for inclusion in the TIP.

It was noted that all plans discussed are available online at www.rpcgb.org.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN POLICIES

Mr. Darrell Howard discussed the need for revised policies in advance of the FY 2012-2015 TIP's development so that they might be applied in the development of the FY 2012-2015 TIP.

Previously, staff presented reasons for pursuing policy development. There was agreement about the need for a set of policies that established clear expectations and guidance for both the MPO's and project sponsors' actions, including guidance about financial management, strategies for fiscal accountability, directions for project considerations, and expectations for project advancement. No agreement was reached about how far some of the policies should go or how they should be applied.

In order to accomplish this, detailed work sessions will be hosted by the Birmingham MPO staff with the MPO's TIP Subcommittee in order to address a set of identified issues. These work sessions will result in revisions to policy language and guidance for application of the policies through the Transportation Improvement Program. Work sessions will be held between November 2010 and February 2011 with policies anticipated to be finalized no later than February 2011.

Concurrently, work sessions will be held with the Congestion Management Committee (CMC) in order to complete the standardization of a project development process. This project development process was generally described in the Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, and is meant to be a tool for project sponsors and other parties that may be considering pursuing projects through the MPO's funding process.

A rough draft of the process was circulated over the last year and a half with potential project sponsors to gauge their reaction to the potential changes. A rough draft of a proposed project

development process was also presented to the Congestion Management Committee in May 2010. Based on the CMC's discussion during their May 2010, guidance was given to Birmingham MPO staff to provide additional background information in order to help frame the discussion about the project development process going forward.

The MPO staff will prepare a general overview of the policies for presentation at the November TTC meeting, and engage the Committee in a general discussion in order to get them to assist in identifying key concerns with the policies. Staff will then ask that the Committee empower the TIP Subcommittee to address the identified key issues, and provide staff with guidance about how to change the policies. It is anticipated that the changes will be administrative in nature.

OTHER

Chairman David Hunke reviewed the list of meetings of interest to the committee that included:

- Thoroughfare Plan Steering Committee Meeting, October 27th, 1:00 p.m.
- Transportation Improvement Program Subcommittee, November 3rd, 1:30 p.m., RPC.
- U.S. 280 Public Involvement Meetings, November 12, 2010, Cahaba Grand Conference Center.
- Transportation Citizens Committee, November 16th, 12:00 Noon, RPC.
- Announcement of next Technical Committee meeting for Wednesday, November 17th, 10:00 a.m., RPC.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

DH:cb

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APPROVED:

Mr. David Hunke, Chairman
Transportation Technical Committee

Date