



*Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham • 1731 First Avenue North Suite 200 • Birmingham, Al 35203
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November 17, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Technical Committee

FROM: Mr. David Hunke, Chairman /s/

**SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2010**

A meeting of the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) was held on Wednesday, November 17, 2010, 10:00 a.m., RPC 1st Floor Conference Room, 1731 1st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Greg Dawkins, Vice-Chairman, City of Birmingham Traffic Engineer
Ms. Wytangy Peak, 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
Mr. Fenn Church, Trucking Representative
Mr. Phillip Garratt, P.E., At-Large
Mr. Chris Hatcher, Operation New Birmingham
Mr. Doug Hale, Bicycle / Pedestrian Representative
Mr. Tom Magee, City of Birmingham Chief Planner
Mr. Al Folcher, At-Large
Mr. Lance Taylor, ALDOT Preconstruction Engineer – Birmingham
Ms. Kim Fort, UAB Parking Services Dir. of Auxiliary Services
Mr. Randy Kemp, City of Birmingham
Mr. Rod Long, City of Hoover Engineer
Mr. Robert Portera, At-Large
Mr. Chris Reeves, At-Large
Ms. Denise Hornbuckle, Traffic Safety Representative

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY PROXY

Mr. David Hunke, Chairman, At-Large
 Represented by Mr. Eric Womack
Mr. Charles Malone, ALDOT Maintenance Representative-Birmingham
 Represented by Mr. Jessie Miller
Ms. Sheila Chaffin, UAB Exec. Dir. Campus Planning and Facilities Programming
 Represented by Ms. Kim Fort
Mr. Richard Darden, At-Large
 Represented by Mr. Tom Magee
Mr. John Tally, CLASTRAN Transportation Mobility Manager
 Represented by Mr. Fenn Church
Mr. Jason Howanitz, Jeff. County Dept. of Health Chief Meteorologist - Air Division
 Represented by Mr. Sam Bell
Mr. Richard Caudle, At-Large
 Represented by Mr. Chris Reeves

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Ms. Alfredo Acoff, ALDOT Environmental Coordinator – Montgomery
Ms. Mary Margaret Nicholson, At-Large
Mr. Scott Holladay, Shelby County Highway Department Representative
Mr. Wallace McCord, At-Large
Mr. Ken Boozer, Jefferson County Dept. of Roads and Transportation Representative
Mr. Scott Cothron, Sain Associates
Mr. Andrew Sullivan, At-Large
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. Mike Kaczorowski, RPC
Mr. Harry He, RPC
Ms. Laurel Land, RPC
Ms. Cissy Crowe, RPC
Mr. Randy Sain, Sain and Associates
Mr. Blair Perry, Gresham Smith and Partners
Mr. George Henry, City of Alabaster

Vice-Chairman Greg Dawkins called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The meeting proceeded with the scheduled agenda items.

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Attendees introduced themselves. With no additions or corrections, the October 27, 2010 minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Bill Foisy presented a report on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) actions. The MPO approved a Transportation Improvement Program modification for resurfacing on U.S. 78 and funding for the Resurfacing Program for FY 2011. The MPO also received an update on the Alabama Partners for Clean Air program, including information on the Car Care Program, proposed new ozone standards for the 8-hour standard and the initiatives and projects of the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition, including highlighted projects in Hoover and alternative fueling stations in the MPO area. Mr. Foisy noted that if anyone had recommendations for alternative fueling stations to contact the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DOCUMENTATION

Ms. Cissy Crowe presented the public involvement documentation for the air quality conformity determination for the 24-hour particulate matter standard for the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan and the Rebalanced FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. The meeting documentation included outreach procedures, information presented at the meeting, as well as a summary of comments and questions received. The report can be viewed on line at <http://www.bhammpo.org/upcomingevents.htm>

Mr. Foisy discussed the importance of transportation conformity in that a lapse in conformity would result in highway capacity projects being ineligible to be let to construction. Foisy also noted that when the new ozone standard is issued, an updated transportation conformity in accordance with a new emissions budget will have to be made on the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Sam Bell discussed air quality issues in the Birmingham area. Birmingham is currently in compliance for ozone and PM 2.5 for the first time since 1990. When the new ozone standard is issued, the area will again fall into non-attainment along with most other urban areas in the country.

Ms. Ouida Fritschi noted that the TCC recommended moving the document forward to the MPO for adoption.

Mr. Al Folcher made a motion to move the PI document forward to the MPO for adoption. Mr. Fred Hawkins seconded the motion that passed on a voice vote.

JOBS ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) AND NEW FREEDOM GRANTS

Ms. Laurel Land presented a report from the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Committee. A request for proposals was issued in October 4, 2010. The Committee met on October 26, 2010 to review seven proposals for projects to be funded with Jobs Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and/or New Freedom (NF) grant money. The JARC Program supports the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. Funding under the New Freedom Program is for projects that overcome barriers and/or expand transportation mobility options available to individuals with disabilities.

The Committee declined four projects, including:

- Yellow Cab (2 projects)
- Alabama Kidney Foundation (1 project)
- Travelers Aid (1 project)

Yellow Cab projects were declined due to ineligibility for operational funds. Alabama Kidney and Travelers Aid were put on hold for future consideration once previously awarded money has been spent.

The Committee recommended three projects for funding, including:

- Tender Care Transport - \$32,000 for one lift-equipped vehicle (New Freedom)
- Aletheia House - \$247,758 (\$182,958 for operation; \$64,800 for three 15-passenger vans) (JARC)
- Lovelady Center - \$64,000 for two 15-passenger vans, one lift-equipped

The estimated balance will be \$800,000 for JARC and \$65,000 for New Freedom after payment to the three agencies.

Questions asked by the Committee included:

- What service does Tender care provide?
- Is Kid One eligible?
- When is the next application cycle?
- How do you monitor these awards?

Mr. Chris Reeves made a motion to recommend approval of funding for the three projects as recommended by the Coordinated Human Services Committee. Mr. Fenn Church seconded the motion that passed on a voice vote.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Mr. Mike Kaczorowski presented a request from ALDOT to modify the 2008-2011 TIP to include the following projects:

FTA3C-5309()	100055845	Section 5309, American Village, Transit, Capital, Construction Project	12/8/2010	TR	1/14/2011	2011	\$417,039	Exempt	Transit Projects	9
DE-A194()	100055720	Revitalization along SR-75 in the City of Center Point; scope includes: pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping at various locations along SR-75	12/8/2010	PE	1/14/2011	2011	\$18,500	Exempt	Other Federal and State Aid Projects	12

These projects are exempt from regional emission analysis under 40 CFR 93.126. Table 2.

APD-0471(534)	100055382	Demolition and structure removal at three locations on SR-4 (Corridor X) from 1.5 miles west of I-65 to SR-3 (US-31)	12/8/2010	CN	1/14/2011	2011	\$18,200	Non-Exempt	Appalachian Highway System Projects	4
HPP-AL16(900)	100055393	Demolition and structure removal at 13 locations along the Northern Beltline (SR-959) in Pinson from west of SR-79 to east of SR-75	12/8/2010	CN	1/14/2011	2011	\$69,680	Non-Exempt	High Priority and Congressional Earmark Projects	14
NH-0005(536)	100055397	Demolition and structure removal at 10 locations along SR-5 (US-78) for widening of SR-5 from I-59 to Finley Blvd.(Phase 1)	12/8/2010	CN	1/14/2011	2011	\$73,840	Non-Exempt	National Highway System	3

These projects are non-exempt from regional emission analysis. These projects are part of larger projects which were included in the adopted and approved regional emissions analysis. See pages 5C-16 & 17 of the Birmingham 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

CTGR-CMAQ-FAUP-CN11()	100055911	Norfolk Southern Birmingham Regional Intermodal Facility, McCalla	12/8/2010	CN	12/15/10	2011	\$52,500,000	Exempt	High Priority and Congressional Earmark Projects	14
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This project is exempt from regional emission analysis since it does not add highway capacity and therefore is not subject to transportation conformity.

Mr. Mike Kaczorowski then presented a report from the MPO TIP Subcommittee that met November 3, 2010. Information discussed by the TIP Subcommittee included:

Resurfacing Program

The TIP Subcommittee reviewed the distribution of funds for the Resurfacing Program and discussed the issue of who would pay for Preliminary Engineering (PE). Several of the Subcommittee members proposed that 5% of the total amount be programmed into a PE phase for each jurisdiction. The PE funds would be used for ALDOT's cost to review and let the projects, and could potentially be used for the design and engineering costs at the discretion of the project sponsors.

The TIP Subcommittee also reviewed and commented on a letter drafted by Subcommittee members and addressed to Don Vaughn, ALDOT's Chief Engineer and Deputy Director. The purpose of the letter is to consider several modifications to the design and review requirements for the resurfacing projects that will be developed from this program in order to expedite project implementation. The letter was approved by the Subcommittee and will be signed by engineers from all four jurisdictions receiving funds from the program.

Homewood Broadway Street Sidewalk Project

The TIP Subcommittee reviewed a request from the City of Homewood to increase federal funding for a sidewalk project on Broadway Street. The project is programmed for \$172,992 of Surface Transportation Program Birmingham Attributable (STPBH) funds. The low bid for the project was higher than the programmed amount. ALDOT has instructed Homewood to obtain MPO approval for an additional \$109,000 of STPBH funds. The TIP Subcommittee discussed the merits of the project and approval was recommended for the funding requests.

Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility

The Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility proposed in McCalla has received a TIGER grant in the amount of \$52.5 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation. In order to receive these funds, the project must be formally added to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). ALDOT has requested that the project be added to the TIP for the TIGER grant portion of the project.

In addition to the \$52.5 million from the TIGER grant, the ALDOT has also requested, on behalf of Norfolk Southern, \$8.0 million in Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program (CMAQ) funding for FY 2011 for supportive automated gate and lift equipment. The RPC noted that a revised dollar amount and timeline for these activities are \$3.35 million in FY 2012 and \$3.22 million in FY 2013.

The TIP Subcommittee agreed to recommend the TIGER grant portion of the project for the current FY 2008-2011 TIP, and to consider the request for supportive automated gate and lift equipment in the development of the FY 2012-2015 TIP, scheduled for the spring of 2011.

Balance of CMAQ Funds

A rescission of nearly \$2.7 million of CMAQ funds in September 2010 has resulted in a negative balance of about \$2 million for the program. The TIP Subcommittee reviewed the current list of CMAQ projects and agreed to move four projects to fiscal year 2012 based on project readiness.

Mr. Kaczorowski noted that the Norfolk Southern environmental study has been completed and can be found at www.mccallacan.com.

Ms. Virginia Williams made a motion to approve the TIP modifications included in the ALDOT request and the TIP Subcommittee recommendations. Mr. Fred Hawkins seconded the motion. Ms. Ouida Fritschi noted that the TCC agreed to move the requests forward to the MPO for consideration with the following concerns to be addressed:

- Resurfacing of McAshan Drive
- Pollution concerns over the amount of daily incoming truck traffic
- Need for interchange improvements at I-59/20 and McAshan Drive
- Safety (police traffic enforcement / accidents)

The motion passed on a voice vote.

POLICIES, PROCESSES AND PROJECTS

Mr. Darrell Howard gave a presentation on Step 1 in the development of the FY2012-2015 Birmingham Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Information presented at the meeting included the following:

- Insight / background information about the need for a set of policies to guide MPO actions, the basis for each policy and their intended accomplishment, the Policy Development process, and continuing challenges with implementation and approaches / strategies.
- Initiate a wider discussion about the appropriateness of policies in preparation for FY 2012-2015 TIP Development.
- To obtain feedback / guidance for “tweaking” policies including language / semantic changes, threshold changes, timeframe changes, application changes, or eliminate all together.

Background

- Why Are Written Policies Needed?
 - Transparency / Consistency (express “unwritten” policies, ensure equal application / treatment, manage expectations)
 - Preserve Institutional Knowledge
 - Encourage Rational Planning Practices (think about a project’s “purpose and need”, encourage opportunities for early and often public participation)
 - Support financial accountability while minimizing costs
 - Help project sponsors to help themselves and in some cases save them from themselves
 - Situational Guidance
- What are the policies based on?
 - Vision for transportation system development, key principles i.e. beliefs (the MPO’s) about how the transportation system should develop, operate, and be maintained and goals and objectives.
- Who was Involved in Policy Development?
 - Birmingham MPO Staff
- Who was Involved in Policy Development?
 - Regional Transportation Plan Working Group (TTC Chair and Members, MPO Subcommittee and TIP Subcommittee Representatives, ALDOT (3rd Div. & Montgomery), professional transportation planning community, other user communities)
- When will the policies be implemented?
 - Policies were adopted in June 2010 along with RTP. Some policies are already being implemented e.g. TIP amendment process, continuous monitoring of transportation

system, project status, and financial capabilities, project documentation and projects on state highways and other ALDOT controlled roadways.

- How will the policies be implemented?
 - Processes have either been developed or are under development (Congestion Management Committee, Regional Thoroughfare Planning and Functional Class Amendment)
 - Some Policies are Still Being Flushed Out (reasonable progress, Complete Streets, cost overruns, financial planning / financial accountability)

FY 2012-2015 TIP Development

- How does a (any) project / program get into the RTP (Policy 1)?
 - Project / program is identified in an adopted plan, project / program emerges from the Congestion Management Process e.g. regional / local thoroughfare plan operations, management, & maintenance, and / or project emerges from an active / ongoing planning process e.g. corridor study, comprehensive plan, neighborhood / area plan, etc. Intended outcomes include consistency / transparency, encourage a rational planning process i.e. think about the purpose of the project and why it is needed, and minimize “seat of the pants” planning by encouraging the use of planning tools
- How does a capacity project get into the TIP (Policy 3)?
 - Project emerges from the congestion management process e.g. regional / local thoroughfare plan, is included in the adopted RTP and has completed an Advanced Planning Report. Intended outcomes include adherence to federal guidance re: congestion management, emphasize the importance / use of the RTP, encourage a rational planning process and use of planning tools (APR), helps project sponsors (and MPO staff) identify / articulate purpose and need e.g. what’s the purpose of the project and why is it needed, address environmental concerns / issues early in the PE process, and provides consistent information for comparison.
- When is it not worth it to pursue federal funding (Policy 4)?
 - Minimum project thresholds i.e. federal ask include non-construction projects (\$250,000) ex. signal system retiming, repaving, safety projects, etc. and construction projects (\$500,000). Intended outcomes include protect project sponsors from bureaucratic nightmares (smaller projects end up costing the project sponsor more), administrative streamlining frees MPO staff to monitor / work with larger, regional projects and policy language needs to be amended to include non-capacity projects (recommended threshold is \$250,000).

Going Forward

Tweaking the Policies

- How should the MPO address cost overruns? (Policy 6)
- What constitutes “reasonable progress” (Policy 7) and how do we (should we) hold project sponsors accountable?
- How can compliance with the CMP be ensured? (Policy 8)
 - Address access management in the planning process (Policy 9) and Complete Streets - how far should we go (Policy 10).

- How do we avoid “Placeholder Projects” in the TIP? Policies in the RTP are an attempt to address:
 - Realistic project schedules and budgets (Policy 11) and project sponsor financial commitment (Policy 12).
- How do you demonstrate adequate public participation? (Policy 14)
 - Is there ever too much public involvement? When should it occur? How often should it occur?
- The TIP Subcommittee, beginning December 2010, will review policies and make recommendations for changes. Recommendations will be brought back to the TTC for concurrence and the MPO Subcommittee will be asked to advance modifications to full MPO for action (Concurrence with Policy Modifications)
- The Congestion Management Committee is developing tools including Regional Thoroughfare Plan and Local Thoroughfare Plan Guide, Project Development Guide (Resource for Project Sponsors) and Advance Planning Report Requirements/Format.

Ms. Ouida Fritschi expressed the need for the TCC to be involved in the public involvement process.

OTHER

Vice-Chairman Greg Dawkins reviewed the list of meetings of interest to the committee that included:

- Transportation Citizens Committee, Tuesday, December 14, 12:00 Noon, RPC.
- Announcement of next Technical Committee meeting for Wednesday, December 15, 10:00 a.m., RPC.
- MPO Subcommittee, Thursday, December 16, 1:30 p.m., RPC

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

DH:cb

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APPROVED:

Mr. David Hunke, Chairman
Transportation Technical Committee

Date