

EASTERN SHORE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY BOARD MEETING
DAPHNE, ALABAMA
JANUARY 22, 2020
10:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE/INVOCATION.

- Chairperson Mayor Dane Haygood called the meeting to order at 10:08 A.M.
- Invocation was said by Councilmember Ron Scott.
- Pledge was led by Mr. Robert Davis.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Sarah Sislak, MPO Coordinator, called the roll.

- **Members present:** Councilmember Jack Burrell, City of Fairhope; Councilmember Ron Scott, City of Daphne; Mayor Dane Haygood, City of Daphne; Mr. Chester Patterson, City of Spanish Fort; Mr. Robert Davis, Town of Loxley; Commissioner Joe Davis, Baldwin County; Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood, Baldwin County; Mr. Brian Aaron, ALDOT
- **Members absent:** Mayor Karin Wilson, City of Fairhope
- **Others present:** Mrs. Sarah Sislak, MPO Coordinator; Mrs. Katrina Taylor, ESMPO Technician; Mr. Scott Mosley, Mr. Joey Nunnally, Mr. Cliff McCollum, Mr. Jim Zeigler, Dr. Lou Campomenosi, Mr. Robert Cummins, Mr. Charles Brevik, Mr. Adam Labrato, Mr. Bob Scivicque, Mr. Jeff Hester, Mr. Mattie Mendenhall, Ms. Linda Pitts, Ms. Anita Matchett, Ms. Gloria Pettis, Mr. Alec Thigpen, Mr. Phillip Jones, Mrs. Betty Jones, Ms. Melissa Schilling, Ms. Pamel Stubler, Ms. Christine Greene, Mr. Stewart Rein, Mr. Jeff Hester, Mr. Guy Busby, Mr. Edwin Perry, Mr. Scott Hutchinson, Mr. Eddy Leon, Mr. Tony Stocker, Mr. Blake Brown, Mr. Brandon Bias, Mrs. Andrea Ramey, Mr. John Sharp, Mr. Gabriel Tynes, Mr. Andrew Ankrom, Ms. Christina Hellmich with the Youth Leadership of Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: By Commissioner Joe Davis to approve the September 2019 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ron Scott.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

NEW BUSINESS

1. Action – Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Members (All)

Mrs. Sislak stated that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has two vacant positions and MPO staff received two applications for these vacancies. Ms.

Meredith Montgomery to represent the City of Fairhope and Mrs. Valery Smith to represent Baldwin County.

MOTION: By Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood approve the BPAC member appointments. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jack Burrell.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

2. Action – Statewide Highway Safety Improvement Program Targets (PM1) (All)

Mrs. Sislak explained that Fixing Americas Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) requires that MPO Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) include Performance Management Measures and Targets for urbanized areas. These are the FY 2020 Statewide Highway Safety Improvement Program Targets (PM1) and MPO staff recommends the Policy Board adopt the Statewide Highway Safety Program Targets.

MOTION: By Councilmember Burrell to adopt the Statewide Highway Safety Improvement Program Targets (PM1). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Underwood.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

3. Action – State Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (All)

Mrs. Sislak stated the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) requests the following changes be made to the FY20-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- Project: 100065560 (CN) Federal aid number: TAPAA TA16 (934) County: BALDWIN.
Project Description: SR-225 SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE CITY OF SPANISH FORT. Old Target Start Date: 9/15/2019; New Target Start Date: 10/15/2019

This project was on the FY16-19 TIP but the change in the start date carried it into FY20.

MOTION: By Councilmember Scott to adopt the State Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

- 4. Action – Obligating Transportation Surface Funds to the City of Spanish Fort (All)**
Mrs. Sislak stated that the City of Spanish Fort submitted a project for the use of transportation surface funds. The Jimmy Faulkner Boulevard Multi-Use Trail project was a FY 2017 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant award. The City is requesting MPO funds to cover overruns in the amount of \$120,000 (\$96,000 MPO, \$24,000 Spanish Fort).

MOTION: By Councilmember Scott to obligate transportation surface funds to the City of Spanish Fort. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis.

- Discussion: A member asked Mrs. Sislak what the current balance of the transportation surface funds is and if it would impact the approved FY20-23 TIP projects. Mrs. Sislak confirmed this project will not interfere with any approved projects and an email of the current funds will be sent out to all board members following the meeting.
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

- 5. Action – Amending 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)(All)**

Mrs. Sislak explained that in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, the Eastern Shore Policy Board adopted Resolution 2019-09 amending the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan to include specific funding and project details regarding the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Widening project. Section 3.6 of the 2040 LRTP contains details regarding the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project that are inconsistent with the action taken by the Eastern Shore MPO Policy Board on August 28, 2019. This action would nullify Resolution 2019-09, rescind associated amendment to the 2040 LRTP, and update section 3.6 of the LRTP with the following: The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project is a proposal to increase capacity along the I-10 corridor and bayway to meet existing and projected future traffic volumes. Funding for the bridge has not yet been determined. However, the project is a priority for the State of Alabama and the Eastern Shore MPO.

MOTION: By Councilmember Scott to amend the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

- 6. Discussion – Traffic Counts (All)**

Mrs. Sislak explained that there was discussion at previous Work Sessions regarding traffic counts, their locations, and frequency of counts. MPO staff created a map of existing traffic counts. Mrs. Sislak explained ALDOT conducts traffic counts on local roads and there are tools online on ALDOT's website that contain historical count data. No board members requested additional counts at this time.

7. Informational – MPO Coordinator's Report (All)

- Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Sislak informed the Policy Board that the Baldwin County Commission no longer has a contract with the previous court reporter. MPO staff will complete the minutes in summary form versus verbatim. Board members showed interest in videoing the meetings and staff is receiving cost estimates to purchase the equipment to video record the minutes.

- ALDOT Project Update

Mr. Brian Aaron provided ALDOT's project update:

- SR 181 Widening – roadway grading and draining work is occurring just north of SR 104, utility relocation is still underway. The project is expected to be complete mid-year 2021.
- US 31 – new curb and gutters are being installed on the widened section of the roadway. The project is anticipated to be complete in 2021.
- SR 181 and I-10, Diverging Diamond – lane closures on SR 181 are occurring while draining on US 90- widening of the north bound lanes will start in the next week or so. ALDOT has a FB page 'Eastern Shore Diverging Diamond Interchange' to inform drivers of work occurring. The project is expected to be complete in the summer of 2020.
- Intersection Alignment at US 90/SR 59 – right-of-way acquisition is 90% complete, letting of the project is anticipated for the spring of this year to begin construction.

- Loxley Municipal Park Transit Project

Mrs. Sislak informed the Board that the Town of Loxley is planning a transit project at the Municipal Park that will be brought to the April Agenda after their conceptual design and cost estimate is complete.

- Planning and Development Update

Mrs. Katrina Taylor gave an update for the 2019 calendar year.

OTHER DISCUSSION:

Mayor Haygood explained that the City of Daphne had an agenda item on the Policy Board Work Session that was tabled. The City of Daphne was requesting the use of transportation surface funds to cover the overrun construction cost on the Pollard Road sidewalk project with a total cost of \$455,000 (MPO \$364,000, Local \$91,000). The City is examining other funding sources at this time to cover the overrun cost but wanted Board members to be informed if this is brought back at a later time.

Councilmember Burrell informed the Policy Board members that he wanted to amend the Agenda to add a Resolution supporting a proposed scope across Mobile River and Mobile Bay.

MOTION: By Councilmember Burrell to amend the Agenda to add Resolution 2020-06 supporting a proposed scope for the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Scott.

- Discussion: None
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: None
- Result: Passed

8. Action – Resolution Supporting a Proposed Scope Across Mobile River and Mobile Bay (Policy Board)

Mrs. Sislak read Resolution 2020-06 into the record as follows:

“RESOLUTION NO. 2020-06 Resolution Supporting a Proposed Scope Across Mobile River and Mobile Bay

WHEREAS, the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the organization designated by the Governor of the State of Alabama as being responsible, together with the State of Alabama, for implementing the applicable provisions of 23 USC 134 and 13 (amended by FAST Act, Sections 1201 and 1202, December 2015); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93; and

WHEREAS, the U. S. Department of Transportation requires all urbanized areas, as established by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, doing area-wide urban transportation planning that involves more than one Department of Transportation operating administration, to submit a Long Range Transportation Plan as a condition for meeting the provisions of Title 23 USC 134; and

WHEREAS, it has been requested that the Coastal Alabama region provide an alternative plan for the capacity needs to the transportation network across the Mobile River and Mobile Bay; and

WHEREAS, an alternate concept of constructing the new Mobile River Bridge together with new capacity across Mobile Bay in the form of an “expressway” that would augment the existing capacity provided by I-10 and the Causeway has been re-introduced as a potential basis for such a solution; and

WHEREAS, an expressway based concept has merit as it provides much needed additional capacity at a cost much lower than previous solutions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby:

1. adopts the attached scope found in Exhibit “A” as an ESMPO supported solution to the additional capacity need across the Mobile River and Mobile Bay;
2. appeals to ALDOT to further investigate the feasibility of a project based on this scope and if feasible, undertake steps to move the concept to a more defined project;

3. encourages the state legislature and ALDOT to identify funding sources for the project so that an acceptable funding plan may be developed for the project;
4. suggests that all citizens, organizations, governmental entities and elected leaders in Coastal Alabama become familiar with this scope and endorse a scope that they believe will lead to a consensus for a solution within the Coastal Alabama region;
5. adds the engineering (PE) phase for a project based on the adopted scope to the ESMPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) should ALDOT find it desirous and agrees in writing to be sponsor of said PE project;
6. will consider adding the construction (CN) phase to the TIP once ALDOT develops a more defined project based on the adopted scope;
7. requests the Mobile MPO to consider adopting this scope in order to achieve consensus between the two MPOs and foster a true Coastal Alabama consensus plan;

invites ALDOT to bring forward the ESMPO for consideration any alternate ideas, concepts, or plans it may deem as a more viable solution; The foregoing resolution was adopted and approved on the 22nd day of January 2020, by the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board.

Mrs. Sislak read Exhibit A into record as follows:

“Mobile River Bridge and Expressway Concept – Project Scope

1. Project Description.

The segment of Interstate 10 (I-10) between Mobile and Baldwin Counties has been identified as one of the greatest bottleneck on I-10. Further, the traffic counts and associated traffic congestion on this segment is on par with the worst in the Southeast. With the strong regional growth being experienced in Coastal Alabama, it is critical to address the aging and limiting transportation network traversing Mobile Bay and the Mobile River to handle the rapidly growing local traffic in addition to the growing interstate traffic traversing to this area. To increase capacity, the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (Mobile MPO) and the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (Eastern Shore MPO) propose the Mobile River Bridge and Expressway project. This high-priority project involves three major components:

- Mobile River Bridge: a new cable stay bridge built to provide six lanes of travel over the Mobile River
- Expressway: 7.5 miles of new bridges over Mobile Bay built above the 100-year storm surge level that will supplement the existing I-10 route over Mobile Bay
- Access: Limited access along the Expressway with mid-bay egress to address safety and access concerns

2. Design Parameters.

The Project has been conceived and intentionally designed to utilize the same routes as the Original Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project with the intent of leveraging the existing Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) which was received in 2019 for the Original Project.

Design Factors/Constraints:

Mobile River Bridge: The design for the main span Mobile River Bridge shall be consistent with the original design from the original ALDOT Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project.

Expressway: A four lane, divided expressway with two travel lanes in each direction to be constructed from the termination of the Mobile River Bridge to the Eastern Shore in Baldwin County and between the existing Eastbound and Westbound Bayway bridge spans.

Access:

1. A new diverging diamond interchange at Virginia Street on Interstate 10 in Mobile.
2. The existing access to US Highway 98 (Exit 35A) and US Highway 90 (Exit 35B) from Interstate 10 to remain accessible as well as be accessible from the eastbound Expressway route.
3. The existing Causeway (Exit 30) access from Interstate 10 to remain, as well as access to the Causeway from Expressway be provided.
4. The Expressway to be accessible from US Highway 98 on the Eastern Shore to enable local traffic to utilize the Expressway.

3. Budget.

Since an estimate of cost is a required for a MPO to add a project to it's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or it's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), it is necessary to develop an estimate of cost for a project based on this project scope. Building upon existing plans and cost estimates available from prior Expressway concepts, and the recent efforts by state Senator Albritton to highlight an Expressway based concept as a potential solution, engineers have produced a proof of concept that meets objectives set forth in the project scope provided here within. Cost estimates for the proof of concept were generated and are estimated at \$1.227 billion. A detailed cost estimate is provided in Exhibit B. The proof of concept represents one potential design and it will be necessary for ALDOT to produce a design that satisfactorily balances the complex array of design parameters that accompany a project of this nature. For reference purposes, the proof of concept generated by the engineering team is provided in Exhibit A.

4. Funding.

Detailing source(s) of funding is required for a project to be placed on the TIP by a MPO. Ultimately, a funding plan for this project will need to be developed by ALDOT in parallel with the development of a more detailed project. Generally speaking, the project is intended to be funded utilizing state funding, Federal Grant programs (e.g., INFRA) and federal financing programs (e.g. TIFIA, private activity bonds). Given the large-scale nature and cost of this project, it is understood that ALDOT, together with the executive and legislative branches of the state, will need to work to identify and earmark funding, likely consisting of a combination of one-time allocations as well as recurring funding sources, for construction of the project, with the hope that the project can be funded without the use of tolling.

5. Legacy Routes.

- (i) Free and available. The existing Interstate 10 route across Mobile Bay (the "Bayway") together with the I-10 tunnel traversing the Mobile River (the "Wallace

tunnel”) as well as the US Highway 90/98 route across Mobile Bay (the “Causeway”) together with the US Highway 90/98 tunnel traversing the Mobile River (the “Bankhead tunnel”) (collectively, the “Legacy Routes”) shall remain in-place, in-service and usable by the public without any toll or fee.

(ii) Maintenance. No restrictions may be placed that prevent maintenance of the Legacy Routes to ensure that they remain in good working order.

(iii) Substitution of Free Routes. In the unlikely event it becomes necessary to remove one or more of the Legacy Routes from service, or a portion thereof, due to (i) costs to repair Legacy routes become economically undesirable; (ii) federal requirements prevent the continued use of a particular route or structure; or (iii) the State of Alabama find it determine it to be advantageous to abandon any portion of the Legacy Routes for any reason, the Legacy Routes being removed from service shall be replaced equivalent with a new route of a similar travel path and travel time with equal or greater traffic capacity. The replacement route shall be subject to the same provisions as the original Legacy Route being replaced.”

MOTION: By Councilmember Scott to adopt Resolution-2020-06 supporting a proposed scope across Mobile River and Mobile Bay. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis.

- Discussion: The ALDOT representative explained that ALDOT is willing to work with the Eastern Shore MPO and Mobile MPO to come up with a scope of work that pleases all three entities. The fellow board members applauded Mayor Haygood, Mayor Stimpson, and Senator Albritton for putting a plan on the table to move the project forward. Mr. Jim Zeigler spoke on behalf of the ‘Block the Mobile Bayway Toll’ facebook group thanked the Policy Board for coming forth with a proposal with no tolling. Reducing the project to \$1.2 billion is a substantial improvement from our local officials, and they should be commended. Mr. Charles Breddick spoke about ALDOT’s proposal A. He stated that was unacceptable and they should have brought more than one plan to the table. He had questions regarding the 215-foot bridge clearance, the ships draft that will impact the George Wallace Tunnel, and the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on ALDOT’s proposal. He emphasized the scope details need to focus on the capacity building of the project. Dr. Lou Campomenosi stated that Montgomery has been the problem in providing an acceptable plan to the citizens that work and live here. He hopes that the two MPO’s can look at the “consensus plan” to alleviate funding issues. He expressed that Senator Albritton’s plan did not have Exit 35 and this is a critical aspect for local traffic. He requested to create a Town Hall Forum for local citizens to be included in creating the scope of the project. Board members informed the citizens that the framework is still being resolved for the issues identified.
- Abstain: None
- In favor: All
- Opposed: Brian Aaron

- Result: Passed

OTHER DISCUSSION: Board Members requested a Special Called Policy Board Meeting be scheduled for February 19, 2020 at 10:00 AM at the Baldwin County (Fairhope) Satellite Courthouse.

NEXT MPO MEETINGS (All)

- **Policy Board Work Session: Wednesday, April 8, 2020; 10:00 AM; Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse (Fairhope)**
- **BPAC Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2020; 9:00 AM; City of Fairhope Council Chambers**
- **CAC Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2020; 1:00 PM; City of Fairhope Council Chambers**
- **TAC Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2020; 10:00 AM; City of Fairhope Council Chambers**
- **Policy Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 22, 2020; 10:00 AM; City of Fairhope Council Chambers**

PUBLIC FORUM (All)

- **Members of the Public:** No comments
- **Members of the Press:** No comments
- **Board/Committee Members:** Councilmember Burrell noted that the project's parameters do include Exit 35A and Exit 35B for access to US 98 and US 90.
Mayor Haygood stated that finding the funding is the key element to moving this project to a reality.

ADJOURNMENT (All)

Meeting adjourned at 11:24 A.M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.