

MEETING MINUTES

Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization *Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)*



Thursday, October 24, 2013 at 10:30
Gulf Regional Planning Commission
1635-G Popp's Ferry Road ~ Biloxi MS 39532



I. Call to order

TPC VICE CHAIRMAN: MAYOR SKELLIE

TCC CHAIRMAN: MR. BUZ OLSEN

MR. PERRY BROWN (MDOT)

MR. JEFF ALTMAN (MDOT)

MS. LESLIE ROBERTSON

MR. KRIS RIEMANN

MS. ROBYN SHAW

MR. JOSEPH SPIRES

MR. TJ MORAN

MS. JACLYN TURNER

MS. CHANDRA NICHOLSON

MS. LESLIE ROBERTSON

MS. ELAINE WILKINSON

MPO STAFF: DAVID TAYLOR, KENNETH YARROW, STEPHANIE PLANCICH, JEFF LOFTUS,
KEN HOLLAND, JASON ZIMMER

GUESTS: MAYOR TOMMY SCHAFER AND MR. RICHARD ROSE (DIAMONDHEAD)

MR. PAUL WAIDHAS (BURK-KLIENPETER)

MS. JENNA BENNETT (HARRISON COUNTY)

MR. RANDY JANSEN (FHWA)

MR. MIKE MERRY (MDOT)

MR. KELLY CASTLEBERRY (MDOT)

MAYOR CHIPPER MCDERMOTT

MR. KIM SAVANT

MR. KELVIN JACKSON

MR. WIN ELLINGTON

MR. DAMON TORRICELLI

MR. DON SHEPLEY

MR. JOE O'NEAL

MR. AL GOMBOS

MR. JOHN MCKAY

MR. JIM FOSTER

II. Introductions

III. Public Comment

IV. Approval of minutes from July 2013 –

Recommendation to adopt July 24, 2013 drafted minutes.

Motion made by Mr. Olsen. Seconded by Mr. Jackson. No Comments, **Passed**

V. TIP update

STP – TIP Update

Mr. Yarrow reviewed the TIP update process with members.

- August 2, 2013 – deadline for TIP project applications
- August 2nd - 28th – Project Evaluations Completed
- August 29th – TIP Sub-Committee met to review evaluations and make recommendations
- Sept. 26th – TCC reviewed recommendations and approved them for public & TPC consideration
- Oct. 14-24th – Public review of TIP recommendations
- Oct. 24th – Today's TPC meeting to review and adopt the updated TIP

Copies of the evaluation worksheet, project score sheet and public notices made available for review.

The TIP recommendations under consideration include a change to a five year instead of a 4 year program. This doesn't change the schedule of regular TIP reviews. The TIP is reviewed every 6 months and any amendments or modifications are made at that time. (Complete TIP project listing made available for member review.) There are no extra funds available at the reviews but program adjustments can be made.

New Project (amendment)

1. Gulfport – Pass Road Traffic Signals/16 intersections - \$444,000 STP
2. Jackson County – Hwy 609/Old Fort Bayou Rd - \$1,493,640 STP
3. D'Iberville – Big Ridge Rd & D'Iberville Blvd/1-10, Dewey Lawrence, South - \$2,938,778 STP
4. Jackson County – Lemoyne Blvd/Brittany Ave - \$308,000 STP
5. Gulfport – Courthouse Rd/Pass Rd to US 90 - \$2,683,532 STP
6. Bay St. Louis – Old Spanish Trail Lighting/Main St to City Limits - \$640,640 STP
7. Jackson County – Old Spanish Trl – Bike Lanes, OS Middle School to OS High School

Increase Funding (amendment)

1. Biloxi - Pops Ferry Rd/Cedar Lake Rd to D'Iberville Blvd - Add \$5,000,000 STP for a total of \$7,204,800 STP
2. Pascagoula – Hospital Rd/Old Mobile Hwy to US 90 – Add \$1,798,817 STP for a total of \$2,293,217 STP
3. Gautier – Martin Bluff Rd/Gautier-Vancleave Rd to Frontage Rd – Add \$2,392,005 STP for a total of \$3,328,005 STP

Remove Project (amendment)

1. Pascagoula – Ingalls Ave/Chicot Rd. & Martin St. \$396,000 STP
2. Harrison County – Hwy 605 Frontage Rd./Lorraine Rd to 2000' North - \$726,800 STP
3. D'Iberville – Automall Pkwy & Rodriguez St./D'Iberville Blvd to I-110 - \$200,000 STP
4. Gulfport – Seaway Rd Pedestrian Path/Three Rivers Rd to Lorraine Rd - \$788,304 STP

Recommendation to adopt the TIP recommendations as produced by the TCC.

Motion made by Ms. Turner.

Comments/Discussion:

1. What types of changes are usually done during review? Can we add a new project? Typical changes include a change in start dates, shifting of one project with another, termini changes, etc. New projects can be added but no more funding is available so one project must be removed in order for a new one to be added.
2. Where do removed projects go? Postponed but still viable projects are held in a queue and can be reviewed and considered again for inclusion every two years when more money is available for allocation.

Seconded by Mr. Olsen. Passed

MDOT – TIP Amendment

MDOT is requesting an amendment to one project on the TIP. Mr. Castleberry provides a project overview. Project is the SR 43 Kiln Bypass from I-10 to North of Kiln. It has been conducting environmental assessments for three years and is now ready to begin the design phase with a consultant. This amendment is for that PE phase.

Recommendation to adopt the MDOT amendment for SR 43, Kiln Bypass.

Motion made by Ms. Wilkinson. Seconded by Mr. Olsen. No Comments, Passed

CTA – TIP Amendment

CTA has submitted their TIP amendment for 2014-2018. Although we are required to include this information in the TIP it is important to note that these funds do not impact the STP allocation discussed for our improvement projects. The funds represented on the TIP pages are from other funding sources.

Recommendation to adopt the CTA 2014-2018 TIP pages.

Motion made by Ms. Wilkinson. Seconded by Mr. McKay. No Comments, Passed

VI. MPO update (David Taylor)

Mr. Taylor announced that the planned Safety Summit has been cancelled. The event is being reworked into smaller 1 and 2 day workshops that represent the planned breakout sessions of the Summit. We are partnering more closely with MDOT's LTAP program to host the events at a manageable price. The first workshops in the safety series are scheduled for December.

December 10th from 9am-5pm is the how to conduct a road safety audit. We will be recruiting a team for each county including members of each jurisdiction. Members will include law enforcement, public works, community advocates, transportation engineers and planners

December 11th from 9am-Noon is the introduction workshop for the safety circuit rider program.

Circuit rider is a technical assistance program managed through the MDOT LTAP program. There are three regional coordinators. Mr. Ryan Tice, who spoke at the last TCC meeting, represents the gulf coast and will be the instructor for the meeting. 2 hours will be workshop and 1 hour will be in the field. Each jurisdiction is required to complete this overview training before attending or requesting additional circuit rider support. The TCC asked GRPC to coordinate a group workshop to simplify this requirement so this workshop satisfies the request. (Registration forms for both events were provided to the meeting members.)

The MS Gulf Coast MPO will be hosting the next statewide MPO meeting in February/March and it will be coordinated in conjunction with the next workshops in the safety series. More information will be sent as it becomes available.

VII. Transit update (Kenneth Yarrow)

Mr. Yarrow gave a presentation to the members on proposed CTA service changes. He explained that the operating funds generated from Katrina recovery grants expired in March 2013. CTA needed local jurisdictions to commit more support in order to maintain current levels of service. The needed funds were not generated so CTA has no choice but to reduce services to reduce costs. Service reduction recommendations include:

1. Eliminate Rt. 31 (East Biloxi)
2. Eliminate All Sunday Services
3. Eliminate Saturday Service on Rt. 37 and 38
4. Adjust Rt. 37 to remove Airport and add Dedeaux
5. Eliminate Mon-Thur Service on Rt. 24

The public review period will run from Nov. 1st to Dec. 6th and will include public meetings and on-board rider surveys conducted by CTA and GRPC staff. If we stay on schedule public comments will be factored into the recommendations and the CTA board will vote to adopt the changes in December and the changes would go into effect in January 2014.

Comments/Discussion:

A large portion of the community served by Rt. 31 is low income and minority. Has that been considered? Yes – the most eastern portion of the route is identified protected populations. There will be some streets that are

no longer serviced but a majority of the community still has reasonable access to transit on the casino hopper route. The casino hopper may even be a better option since its headways are only 20 minutes.

Is the Sunday elimination not enough? No – the Sunday cuts were the first recommendation since most regional transit providers do not offer any Sunday service, and Sundays have the overall lowest ridership system wide. But more cuts had to be made to get closer to the funding shortages.

There is a disconnect between CTA and the community. There is a lack of faith in current services and these service reductions will not help CTA's reputation. People will be hurt by these changes. This is not the way to build community trust. CTA and GRPC have tried to be as cautious as possible in generating these recommendations. The choice to end Sunday service instead of cancelling morning loops was made partially because those early and late riders are going to work. They need the transportation. Cuts have to be made, and these recommendations represent countless hours reviewing data to harm the least amount of people, especially those who need the services the most.

The key to more ridership is reliability. Shorter travel times + Shorter headways = greater ridership. Having an hour headway is not new, the old Biloxi to Pass Christian bus was not a quick ride but it was always on time and could be counted on to be on time. That really mattered and helped it be full most of the time.

It is noted that there is a lot of dead space on current fixed routes mainly due to Katrina and the relocation of community members. Where the bulk of riders used to be centered along the coast line there is now a second shift above 1-10 that needs to be serviced as well. Causes a lot of dead travel time in the middle. During future discussions to reduce headways how will this be addressed? We don't have detailed answers at this time but our goal is to try and reduce the current headways of 45 and 90 minutes to 30 and 60 minutes. This is at least a year away. Right now we are focused on the current changes.

Other CTA Update Questions:

What alternative fuels/energy programs are being followed to help reduce operating costs?

What percentage does the fare box cover?

How much are we short in local level funding?

VIII. MDOT update

Mr. Castleberry provided a list of current and proposed projects on the gulf coast.

1. The earlier discussed project on SR 43, Kiln Bypass road
2. I-10 repaving projects with improved pavement treatments
 - a. Jackson Co. to Alabama Line was just completed
 - b. Near Jordan River from Gulfport to Biloxi next year
3. Hwy 609 to Hwy 57 – widening project in next 2-3 years
4. Drawbridge repair in Pascagoula in progress
5. I-110 Bridge repair in progress, new shoulders are next phase
6. Rodrigues intersection improvement are planned in next year
7. I-10 ramps in D'Iberville are under construction
8. Popp's Ferry and Big Ridge set for March 2014
9. Biloxi river bridge on Hwy 49 getting new deck
10. Hwy 15 and Lamey Bridge is a roundabout project – needs ROW purchased
11. Widening of Hwy 90 from Washington St in Ocean Springs to Dolphin St in Gautier, Environmental assessments currently underway. Public meetings will be held in next phase. There will be no frontage roads as previously discussed due to lack of funding. May be revisited at later time.

Comments/Discussion:

Are bike lanes or at least widened shoulders being considered on these projects? Especially on the Hwy 90 widening project? Hwy 605 would be a good model to follow from a rider's perspective. Yes – bike/ped is being considered. Much of the Ocean Springs roadway will have curb and gutter since it is already there, but there is more flexibility in Gautier. There needs to be a wide shoulder for safety especially if there are rumble stripes. Riders do not like rumble stripes, they cause crash danger for them. MDOT considers the rumble strip a viable safety option for reducing roadway departures. So not including them is not likely.

IX. Old/new Business

Diamondhead Membership Request:

Mr. Taylor introduced Mayor Tommy Schafer. The Mayor and City Manager of Diamondhead are requesting to become members of the MPO. Their current transportation needs are mainly in learning the process and getting planning support from GRPC staff, but they recognize a need for improvement funds in the next 4-6 years. Any help available to them in the project planning process is appreciated. The Mayor thanked MDOT for the I-10 repaving, rumble strip changes and off ramp improvements and Mr. Rose thanked those involved in the Biloxi bridge improvement project.

Mayor Schafer informs the members that two main transportation concerns include the amount of congestion and the accident rates at the I-10 interchange and that there is also some concern that there are only two exits from the city. When one is blocked the other route is unmanageable even for first responders. The Mayor and City Manager, Richard Rose, acknowledge that they are not currently in the smoothed planning area and that they do not bring additional funds to the table so it would be up to the existing membership to include them in the MPO or not.

Mr. Taylor explains that it makes sense to include Diamondhead as a member but there are considerations. Currently, Diamondhead can apply for state STP funds for projects since they do not have access to our allocated funds. They will pay dues to the MPO like other jurisdictions to receive the support of MPO staff. If they are fully added to the MPO, then STP funds will be applied to 15 jurisdictions instead of the current 14.

Comments/Discussion:

Is there a documented process for adding a new city to the MPO? No- it is up to the current MPO membership to determine their eligibility. Once the smoothed boundaries are updated and the next census is published they may automatically be added at that point but there is nothing stopping us from bringing them into the fold before that time.

Recommendation to have a meeting with TCC sub-committee and Diamondhead leadership to discuss eligibility and determine a membership process. All data for the city will be presented, a pro and con list will be written and a recommendation will be drafted for the TCC to consider and send to the TPC in 2014.

Motion made by Ms. Turner. Seconded by Mr. McDermott. No Comments, Passed

MPO staff will coordinate the sub-committee meeting before the next TCC meeting.

Selection of TPC leadership:

The TPC committee needs to elect a new chairman since Mayor Schloegel is no longer an acting member of the MPO.

Mayor Skellie is nominated to be the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) Chairman.

Motion made by Mr. Olsen. Seconded by Mr. McDermott. No Comments, Passed

Mr. Kim Savant is nominated to be the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) Vice Chairman.

Motion made by Mr. Skellie. Seconded by Mr. McKay. No Comments, Passed

Special Match Credit Reminder:

Mr. Riemann requests that the discussion on the possibility of using Special Match funds for ROW purchase be revisited at the sub-committee meeting as well. It was planned for discussion at the previous meeting, but the agenda was full and the discussion was postponed. Mr. Riemann requests recommendations for using the special match credit be brought to the next TCC for further discussion and TPC recommendations.

X. Adjournment

Motion made by Mr. Olsen. Seconded by Ms. Wilkinson. No Comments, **Passed**