

MEETING MINUTES

Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)



Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 10:30
Gulf Regional Planning Commission
1635-G Popp's Ferry Road ~ Biloxi MS 39532



I. Call to order

Mr. Buz Olsen (Chairman)
Mr. Wayne Miller
Mr. Daniel Boudreaux
Ms. Chandra Nicholson
Ms. Rhea Vincent
Mr. Jeff Curtis
Mr. Perry Brown
Mr. Jim Foster
Mr. Ed Shambra
Ms. Tammy Wisco
Ms. Jaci Turner
Mr. Brian Fulton
Mr. Kelly Castleberry
Mr. David Taylor
Mr. Kenneth Yarrow

Mr. Damon Torricelli
Mr. Joseph Spires
Mr. David Seyfarth
Mr. Claiborne Barnwell
Mr. Jeffrey Altman
Ms. Necole Baker
Ms. Elaine Wilkinson
Mr. Jeff Taylor
Mr. Kris Riemann
Mr. Richard Rose
Mr. Patrick Bonck
Mr. Joe O'Neal
Mr. Randy Jansen
Ms. Stephanie Plancich

II. Introductions

III. Public Comment

Approval of Minutes from September 2013

Recommendation to adopt September 12, 2013 minutes.

*Motion made by Jeff Taylor. Second by Jaci Turner. No Comments, **Passed***

IV. TIP Update

David Taylor, referring to the printed copies of the TIP project listing, discussed with the TCC members the "obligation authority" concept. He explained that for this year our region was allocated \$6.2 million in STP funds. MDOT in seeing that our TP project exceeded that allotment, reviewed our plans and have adjusted the obligation to about \$9.5 million to cover the projects we have listed.

Jeff Altman clarified that there is not an infinite pool of funds. The state gets a lump sum to cover all projects annually, so when we exceed our initial authority and MDOT approves an increase it actually removes funds planned for other projects across the state. This is why it is critical that we spend the money we say we are going to in the year that we request it. Or if we find out that a project has hit an unforeseen barrier, we must inform MDOT as soon as possible.

David Taylor reiterates that early and continuous communication is going to be the key in moving forward and receiving the funds needed to make the TIP projects happen as they are currently

scheduled. He also made it clear that if a project will not occur in the year it was scheduled, there is no entitlement that it will shift into the next year. We are booked out into 2018. It is not always fair or in the best interest of the region to cancel a planned project for a project that did not meet its deadlines.

The MPO Sub-Committee will be meeting more regularly to review project progress and maintain communication with MDOT. Updates, as needed, will then be brought to the TCC for recommendations to the TPC.

V. City of Diamondhead as MPO member

The MPO Sub-Committee discussed the option to include Diamondhead as a member of the MPO or to deny their request. The suggestion to the TCC is to recommend that Diamondhead be included.

Overview of the discussion.

1. Diamondhead, as the newest city in our region, is currently classified as an urban cluster, but will likely become a part of our urbanized area (UZA) in the 2020 census
2. They are already receiving some planning support from the MPO staff
3. They may still apply for a separate state pool of funds if a project should arise while they are classified as a cluster
4. MPO staff are working to draft a smoothed UZA that will incorporate them based on our regional long-range projections
5. Diamondhead brings no additional funds to the table until the census classifies them as part of our UZA, until then they'd be competing for existing funds
6. The city would like to be a participating member of the regional transportation planning process
7. The city has no large projects on the horizon and doesn't plan to compete for funds at this time
8. The MPO members already vote to determine which projects get funded on the TIP – should they apply for project funds, they would still have to be voted on by the TCC and TPC membership

The TCC carries the recommendation forward from the MPO sub-committee

Recommendation to the TPC that the City of Diamondhead be added as a new MPO member and to allow the planning staff to complete any necessary actions to make it happen.

*Motion made by Damon Torricelli (Sub-Committee Chair). Second by Jaci Turner. No Comments, **Passed***

VI. STP Funding Eligibility

The MPO Sub-Committee also discussed the option of using STP funds to reimburse for ROW acquisitions.

Randy Jansen (FHWA) confirmed that this is an eligible expense under the Special Match Credit program.

Jeff Altman (MDOT) noted that other MPOs are also looking at using these funds in this way. The main difference is that our TIP is not just full, but is over full for the next 4 years at minimum. The other MPO areas are in an opposite position, they do not have enough planned road projects to use up their annual obligation so these reimbursements will help them spend their annual funding obligation.

David Taylor cautioned that allowing reimbursement to become a part of regular MPO practice could be detrimental in that improvement funds would instead be used for ROW.

Jaci Turner clarified that under current MPO policy, reimbursement is not an eligible funding request. She supports a recommendation that would make it eligible for consideration on a case by case basis. Not that there is any guarantee for reimbursement. She also noted that, like other MPOs, should we

find ourselves in a situation where we may not meet our annual funding obligation, for whatever reason, this could be a way to ensure that we do spend what we said we would in each fiscal year.

Recommendation to the TPC that reimbursements for ROW expenses be made an eligible STP expenditure on future projects (not already on the TIP) and that the MPO staff will provide suggested modifications to the TIP handbook to incorporate the consideration of reimbursement in the project application process. No reimbursement will be guaranteed. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis.

Motion made by Jaci Turner. Second by Kris Riemann. Comments: MPO staff will have a draft for review at the May 29th TCC meeting, for recommendations at the June 26th TPC meeting. **Passed**

VII. MDOT Update

Kelly Castleberry provided as overview of the project progress across the gulf coast. All or on time and on target with progress expectations.

VIII. Old/New Business

A flier was distributed for the upcoming events and workshops hosted by the MPO. Stephanie Planchich highlighted the required MPO annual civil rights workshop scheduled for April 9th, 2014. This is a 2 ½ hour event focused on increasing Environmental Justice awareness.

The new MPO meeting calendar is released. Major change is that TCC and TPC meeting will be separated by a month going forward. This allows staff to take adequate actions, as needed, between meetings.

TCC Schedule:

Feb 27

May 29

Aug 28

Dec. 11

TPC Schedule:

March 27

June 26

Sept 25

Dec 11

* December 11th is a joint MPO meeting/Annual Meeting (Review FY2014 and FY2015)

The subject of activating projects that were approved by the MPO but not yet approved by MDOT came up. Jeff Altman told us that he could activate them if we sent a letter.

IX. Adjournment - **Motion made by Patrick Bonk. Second by Jeff Taylor. No Comments. Passed**