



# MEETING MINUTES

## Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization

*Joint meeting of the TCC and TPC*

Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 (10:30-1:00)

GRPC Conference Room: 1635-G Poppo Ferry Rd, Biloxi MS



### I. Call to Order

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Mayor Bass (TPC Chairman)	Long Beach	Bill Cork	Hancock Co Port & Harbor
Clay Jones (TPC Vice Chair)	D'Iberville	Dana Feurstein	Bay St Louis
Kris Riemann (TCC Chairman)	Gulfport	Mayor Favre	Bay St Louis
Brian Fulton (TCC Vice Chair)	Jackson Co	Sue Wright	Moss Point
Patrick Bonck	Harrison County	Tasha Golson	Keesler
Wendy Barnes	Jackson County	Cheryl Samander	Keesler
Carlos Bell	Port of Gulfport	Win Ellington	Sen. Cochran's Office
Jody Spires	Harrison County	Wayne Miller	Gulfport
Kini Gonsoulin	Long Beach	Necole Baker	MDOT
Carolyn Martin	Ocean Springs	Perry Brown	MDOT
Mayor Dobson	Ocean Springs	Sedrick Durr	MDOT
Kourtnei Frazier	Moss Point	David Seyfarth	MDOT
Jacquelyn Davis	Moss Point	Chuck Starita	MDOT
Chandra Nicholson	Pascagoula	Jeff Altman	MDOT
Jen Dearman	Pascagoula	David Taylor	GRPC
Mike Reso	Diamondhead	Kenneth Yarrow	GRPC
Ed Shambra	Biloxi	Stephanie Plancich	GRPC
Mayor McDermott	Pass Christian	Jeff Loftus	GRPC
Amy Rishel	Pass Christian	Elaine Wilkinson	GRPC
Christy Lebatard	Biloxi		
Jeremy Harrison	Gulfport	<b><u>Guests/Consultants</u></b>	
Leslie Robertson	D'Iberville	Jason Chiniche	Craig High
Cody Dickerson	Gautier	Ed Elam	Doug Rackley

### II. Introductions

### III. Public Comment

### IV. Approval of Minutes

December 14, 2017 annual meeting

**MOTION made by Mayor McDermott. Second by Mayor Bass. No Comments. PASSED.**

### V. TPC Elections for Chair and Vice Chair

The TPC members nominated Mayor George Bass (Long Beach) to be the TPC Chairman, and City Manager Clay Jones (D'Iberville) to be the committee's Vice Chairman. **MOTION made by Mayor McDermott. Second by Mayor Favre. No Comments. PASSED.**

The new leadership acknowledged Kris Reimann, The TCC Chair, for his support of the MPO and thanked him for filling in to facilitate the last few TPC meetings until these elections could be held.

## VI. Freight Program Update (Kenneth Yarrow)

Kenneth informed the MPO that the City of Pascagoula was requesting to adjust our region's current Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC) to include portions of Market St. and Ingalls Ave.

Jen Dearman explained that this designation was required to allow the City to apply for a DOT INFRA grant. She requested a motion to adjust our current CUFC designations to accommodate their request.

**MOTION to include the specific road segments in Pascagoula was made by Bill Cork. Second by Carolyn Martin. Comments focused on which roadways to remove from the existing network in order to accommodate Pascagoula's request. It was determined after looking at Kenneth's corridor map and spreadsheet that the MPO would remove MS 609 and MS 57 from the list, as well as a small portion of MS 53 to free up the requested 1.93 miles of designated roadway. PASSED.**

## VII. Development of the 2019-2022 TIP (Kenneth Yarrow)

The 2018 TIP call for projects will run from March 1<sup>st</sup> through 5pm on May 31<sup>st</sup>. MPO staff are available to help jurisdictions to develop applications as needed. Applicants can view and download all needed materials on line at:

<http://www.grpc.com/tip-application-materials/>

- **TIP Handbook revisions:** In October and again on February 8<sup>th</sup>, the TCC sub-committee met to discuss the TIP development process. Collectively, five policy recommendations were developed for discussion and adoption into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
  1. **Create a new Bridge Group.** MPO will set aside a maximum amount of \$300,000 per Fiscal year to be spent on priority bridge improvement projects. Creating this group supports regional goals as well as FHWA's performance goal for infrastructure condition. The MPO staff will get copies of the 2017 bridge inspection reports and compile a bridge database for the region. This is a maximum amount to be allocated for bridge replacement and repair per year. Projects within this group will receive either the \$300,000 max award or 80% of the total improvement cost, whichever is less. This group will be able to support overall bridge integrity objectives and address bridge related emergencies and closures as they arise. **MOTION is to create a new bridge group and allocate \$300,000 of the MPO STP funds to it annually. Unused funds will revert back into the general STP pool at the end of each fiscal year.**
  2. **Control for Drainage Costs.** It was discussed that the MPO should still allow some portion of drainage in its selected road projects or many projects would never be built. The Cities/Counties need this support. To accommodate this need while ensuring that MPO funds are not all being spent underground, the sub-committee recommends that drainage be addressed in the project prioritization process. This support our goal to improve cost per mile efficiency. **MOTION is to apply negative evaluation points (-10) to projects whose total project cost includes over 50% for drainage work.**
  3. **Project Opportunity.** In the effort to ensure that all jurisdictions have equal opportunity and access to MPO federal funds, it is recommended to utilize the project scoring process to spread limited federal funds amongst LPAs.

The Sub-Committee talked extensively about options to help control project costs. This includes overages, discussed below, but also that the backlog of obligation authority our MPO has had since Katrina has been depleted (which is a great thing) but what it means is that we expect greater competition amongst the jurisdictions for available federal funds and are seeking a procedural option that not only helps control costs but increases fairness in the application process.

### TIP Development Schedule

Mar 1<sup>st</sup> -May 31<sup>st</sup>

Project application period for new projects and studies

June-July

Project evaluations & field reviews  
Advisory committee meetings  
TCC Committee meetings

July 16-August 31

Public review period  
(Public meeting dates TBA)

August 31<sup>st</sup>

TPC meeting

\*Adoption of FY19-22 TIP

The group did not want to create a project cap and inadvertently limit the MPO's ability to ever fund a large-scale project, so to level the playing field the recommendation is to use the project evaluation process to control costs. **MOTION is to spread limited funds between LPAs through the MPO evaluation process by giving 5 points to projects requesting federal funds under \$1,500,000, Zero points to projects between \$1,500,00 and \$3,000,000, and negative 20 points to projects over \$3,000,000.** There was some comment about this motion, specifically regarding the negative points applied to large scale projects. MPO members questioned how large projects would ever be constructed and asked why there was emphasis on smaller projects now. It was explained that there is not a preference for smaller projects, but jurisdictions with smaller budgets need to have equal opportunity to use MPO funds and that larger projects that include significant other scoring criteria, like complete streets concepts, will generate points that a simple road widening, sidewalk and striping projects cannot.

4. **Control of Project Costs.** This topic has Two parts.

First is the fact that engineering estimates are often significantly inaccurate and MPO projects regularly require federal funding increases over 20%, in some cases of over 50%. The Sub-Committee explained that a good estimate is hard to develop prior to the consultant coming on board and then evaluating and designing the project. To encourage better cost estimates the recommendation is to encourage completing a study or other activity resulting in preliminary engineering development which will then be used to develop a new TIP application. **MOTION is to apply 5 points for project readiness in the project scoring process for projects that have completed an MPO study and/or have PE completed through another method at the time of application.** Second, The MPO realizes some cost overages may occur, but hopes to mitigate the impact on the region's budget by limiting all cost overages to a maximum amount of 20% for all new projects. For existing projects, the 20% limit applies to the currently allocated amount of federal funds. For all projects, should an increase of greater than 20% be required, a presentation to the MPO will be provided and those awards would be discussed and approved on a case by case basis. **MOTION is to limit new project cost increases to a maximum amount of 20% above the original federal funding allocation, and to accept the conditions for existing projects and exceptions as presented.**

5. **Studies & Projects Group.** In the Sub-Committee meetings, there was support for the inclusion of bonus points for projects that have had preliminary engineering completed through an MPO study or similar activity. With the expectations that more LPAs will take advantage of the set-aside funds for studies the MPO staff recommend increasing the Study Group annual allocation from \$400,000 to \$500,000.

There was comment about the amount of study money currently being utilized and what happens with unused funds. Kenneth explained that in 2017, \$210,104 was allocated to studies and that all unused study funds revert to general funds available for other projects or to mitigate emergency transportation situations. For example; the remaining unused portion of the 2017 Study/Project group funds is being requested by the City of Pass Christian to address a sudden closure of the Clark Ave Bridge.

It was asked how Study funds are allocated. Answer: LPAs submit an application specific for studies and send it with a request letter to David. The funds are awarded on a case by case, first come-first served basis, so long as the study proposed would result in a project supported by our long-range goals and objectives.

There was concern that MPO staff have the ability to award study funds without getting TPC approval first. A limit to that ability was recommended and the motion reflects the change.

MOTION is to approve the Studies & Projects group set-aside amount of \$500,000 per year, and to approve the MPO staff in allocating requests for funds up to \$50,000 without TPC approval. Requests or allocation over \$50,000 will require Policy Committee approval.

Motion to adopt the 6 proposed TIP Handbook revisions as listed above made by Bill Cork. Second by Mayor Dobson. No further comment. PASSED.

- **Status of TAP funding:** The MPO was alerted a few months ago that TAP funding is coming to an end. We do not know if the new transportation funding bill will cover all of the same type of projects that TAP does, but what we do know is that TAP is slated to end in September 2019 and all unused funds in the program will be rescinded. We currently have several projects on the TIP that are scheduled to use TAP funds. It is imperative those projects move forward and obligate on time in FY2018 and FY2019. For new projects, if you are planning to apply for TAP type projects in this application period, know that all awards must obligate in 2019. 12 months is very hard to pull off with the LPA process being what it is. Your projects must be as close to shovel ready as possible. That means no right of way is needed, that there are no environmental issues, etc. Start now, don't wait until the new TIP is adopted in August.  
To ensure that we do not have any funding rescinded, MPO staff request the ability to allocate available TAP funds to eligible projects. This will not require an amendment process. Swapping funding sources in an administrative modification that the MPO can do as needed. **MOTION to forgo the standard call for TAP project applications and instead allow the MPO staff to make TIP funding source changes and assignments to eligible projects likely to obligate through FY2019 made by Mayor McDermott. Second by Patrick Bonck. No Comments. PASSED.**

#### VIII. **FY2017-2020 TIP** (David Taylor)

- **Amendment**  
The City of Biloxi is requesting \$429,000 in additional STP funds for the Popps Ferry Bridge Submarine Cable Replacement project. (\$749,000 STP to \$1,178,000 STP) Public review was completed from February 19-28, 2018. **MOTION to approve the cost increase made by Christy Lebatard. Second by Kris Reimann. Only comment was to note that this is a 57% increase above their awarded amount. This is the type of overages we are working to mitigate. PASSED.**
- **Other TIP action**  
**Pass Christian, replacement of the Clark Ave Bridge added to Studies/Projects Group** – Discussed above, the City is requesting whatever MPO funding support we can offer to replace a bridge recently closed without notice. The MPO staff would like to allocate \$190,000 of remaining 2017 Studies & Project Group funds to this project. **MOTION to approve by Mayor Favre. Second by Kris Reimann. No Comments. PASSED.**  
**Diamondhead, study on E. Aloha Dr. from Veteran's Dr. to Kalani Dr. added to Studies/Projects Group** – The City is requesting a study on E. Aloha Drive with FY 2018 Study funds. This will be used to develop an improvement project on the segment for the Fy19-22 TIP. **MOTION to approve by Bill Cork. Second by Mayor McDermott. No Comments. PASSED.**

**IX. Harrison County Multimodal Corridor Project** Elaine Wilkinson provided the MPO with an overview of progress in developing the Harrison County East-West multimodal corridor. This project is expected to be a major economic development generator for the Coast. It includes transit-oriented development strategies and is currently looking at infill opportunities to support planned attractions and bring in new investments. The corridor will truly be multi-modal, and will be designed to reflect our communities cultural and historic values. **MOTION to recognize the East-West corridor as a regionally significant project by the MPO made by Kris Reimann. Second by Carolyn Martin. No Comments. Passed.**

#### **XI. MDOT Update**

David Seyfarth provided project updates on the Coast and likely to impact Coast residents. Projects include an overlay on Hwy 605 from Hwy 90 to Pass Road. Bridge improvements in D'iberville on Sangani Road. A new Pedestrian bridge over Hwy 90 near Beau Rivage, completion of the Lamey Bridge 7 Hwy 15 roundabout, completion of the I-10 widening to three lanes in Jackson County, Overlay planned on East bound lanes of 5 mile bridge, the singing river bridge to RRX at Market street, and the reopening of Hey 57 bridge in 2019. Sedrick Durr announced a Public Meeting planned in Diamondhead (flier shared on MPO website and Facebook page) to talk about the I-10 interchange updates.

Jeff Altman updated the MPO on Senate Bill 3046- the Bridge Act and MDOT's concerns and questions being raised. Will update us again after the legislative session ends. (*\*Update: Act Died in Conference on March 24<sup>th</sup>.\**)

#### **XIII. Old/New Business**

David Taylor addressed a project being coordinated between the MPO and MDOT to bring Lidar services to the Gulf Coast which would help develop pavement management databases for each participating community. The MPO became aware that another local agency is currently offering similar services and several cities have signed up or are considering it. David let the attendees know that we hope to have the system developed and in place this year but are months from finalizing the process. If you need data immediately, we won't be able to do that, but as you plan later in the year and into future years, we wanted to make each MPO member aware of this service with our staff. We will update as new information is available.

#### **XIV. Next Meetings**

- TIP Progress meeting - April 26th 10:00am
- TPC Meeting - May 31st 10:30am

#### **XV. Adjournment – MOTION to adjourn by Brian Fulton. Second by Kini Gonsoulin. No Comments. PASSED**