

# MEETING Minutes

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



Thursday, June 26, 2014 at 10:30am  
Gulf Regional Planning Commission  
1635-G Popp's Ferry Road ~ Biloxi MS 39532



### I. Call to order:

#### **ATTENDEES:**

##### Long Beach

Mayor Skellie (TPC Chair)

##### Waveland

##### Diamondhead

Mayor Schafer  
Richard Sullivan

##### Bay St. Louis

Buz Olsen

##### Pass Christian

Mayor McDermott

##### Gulfport

Wayne Miller  
\*Project Consultants: Doug &

##### Ben

##### Biloxi

Mayor Holloway  
Damon Torricelli  
Ed Shambra

##### D'Iberville

Jeff Taylor

##### Ocean Springs

Mayor Moran  
Carolyn Martin

##### Gautier

Samantha Abell

##### Moss Point

##### Pascagoula

Joe Huffman  
Jaclyn Turner (GRPC Chair)

##### Hancock County

Vic Johnson

##### Harrison County

Kim Savant  
Joseph Spires  
Kelvin Jackson  
Robyn Ladner

##### Jackson County

Brian Fulton

##### Coast Transit Authority

Kevin Coggin

##### Port of Gulfport

Carlos Bell

##### Federal Highway Administration

Don Davis  
Randy Jansen  
Claiborne Barnwell

##### MS Dept. of Transportation

Mike Merry  
Perry Brown  
David Seyfarth  
Jeff Altman  
Kelly Castleberry  
Necole Baker

#### **GUESTS:**

#### **MPO STAFF:**

David Taylor  
Kenneth Yarrow  
Stephanie Plancich  
Elaine Wilkinson  
Ken Holland

### II. Introductions:

Vic Johnson – MPO representative from Hancock County

### III. Public comment: None

#### IV. Approval of Minutes from March 2014

Motion to adopt the March 27, 2014 minutes.

Motion made by Jaci Turner. Second by Kelvin Jackson. No Comments, **Passed**

#### V. Transportation Improvement Program

##### 1. TIP Amendments

- Ocean Springs – Remove Project. Porter Avenue/Martin Avenue to Howard Avenue.  
Discussion: None
- Jackson County – Remove Project. Hwy 57/Old Spanish Trail to US 90.  
Discussion: None
- CTA – Purchase replacement mobile surveillance equipment. \$128,000 (FTA) \$32,000 (CTA) Add Project.
- CTA – Expansion of the Gulfport Transit Center Intermodal Hub. \$6,560,000 (FTA) \$1,640,000 (CTA) Add Project.

Discussion: Kevin Coggin provided an overview of the two CTA amendments. These funds will be used to replace and upgrade surveillance equipment over the next 3-4 years. This equipment is vital in providing a safe environment for both employees as well as CTA participants. The intermodal hub is being planned at the old library building in D'Iberville. The structure will remain intact but be upgraded to meet the needs of CTA and its riders.

Other CTA projects include the installation of new shelters along the Biloxi and Gulfport fixed route system and continued efforts developing the new transit center in D'Iberville. In addition, Kevin is looking forward to working with the jurisdictions as we again move into funding discussions for the next fiscal year.

Motion to amend the TIP to reflect the four proposed changes.

Motion made by Jeff Taylor. Second by Samantha Abell. No Comments, **Passed**

##### 2. Obligation Authority for 2015 projects

David Taylor explained that the MPO staff have begun working closely with MDOT to reduce the FY2015 TIP project cost from over \$16.5 million to \$10 million or less.

The two main reasons:

1. Our obligation authority is expected to be similar to this years at \$6.5 million. So asking for \$16.5 million may be unreasonable.
2. There is a lot of fiscal uncertainty with MAP-21 expiring soon. FHWA staff note that we may see programs funded in weekly allocations depending on how the transportation bill evolves. In this scenario, keeping our request for funds down increases the likelihood of moving projects forward no matter what climate we end up in.

The initial review of our TIP program shows that several large scale projects are planned to occur over 2 or more fiscal years. Staff is looking into the possibility of allocating funds per year of expected use instead of all upfront in a single fiscal year.

For example: Your jurisdiction is on the 2015 TIP for a project that costs \$4 million and will take 18 months to complete. It is set to start in January of 2015. In this scenario half of the project will occur in 2015 costing an estimated \$2.75 million. The other \$1.25 million is scheduled to be spent in 2016 to conclude the project. By separating these amounts into their expected year of use would result in a lower request for funds in 2015.

David acknowledges that they are early in the evaluation process and that this example is not very scientific, but he assures the MPO members that they are doing their best to reduce our funding needs without reducing the project roster.

## **VI. Gulf Coast Functional Classification System Revisions**

A poll vote of the TPC members was conducted in May to adopt the revised functional road classifications. The updates have been passed and are now being approved by FHWA and FTA. Final copies will be placed on website for view and download. If you see a need for changes in the future talk with David Taylor. Each jurisdiction has a copy of their listing and maps for review and use.

## **VII. MPO Planning Update**

Gulf Coast TOD development: Ken Holland provided a brief overview of the work being done to incorporate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) concepts into our regional planning process. He shared an overview of TOD principles and practices and then displayed a map of our region where MPO staff have identified the areas (activity centers) most likely to respond well to TOD planning efforts. Most top priority areas are located near existing fixed route transit lines, but there are also areas highlighted in Moss Point, Long Beach, East Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, etc. By employing this concept into our planning process we will effectively be creating enhancements which will support region-wide mobility, environmental protection goals, economic development objectives as well as improving a the social experience of community members.

## **VIII. MPO Special Studies Funding and Process**

Elaine Wilkinson provided a handout to the group (in meeting folder) that explained the process for requesting a study to help support a jurisdiction's planning efforts. She discussed several examples of recent studies completed, or in progress, on behalf of our local jurisdictions via the MPO study process. These included the Hwy 49 Median Study, Beachview Drive assessment and the West Biloxi circulation study and the Hwy 57 and I-10 road expansion study.

These types of activities are funded through an annual set aside of STP funds, similar to the 10% set aside for projects contained in the Safety Group and Bike/Ped/Transit Group. For more information or to discuss a project that may benefit from a study, contact David and/or Kenneth.

## **IX. MDOT update**

Status of projects in Gulf Coast region: Kelly Castleberry spoke for MDOT: He noted that the HWY 49 north Gulfport bridge replacement project is moving forward on schedule. One half has been completed and the second half in underway. The removal of the Big Ridge Road bridge over 1-110 went off without a hitch last weekend. One member asked why the bridge had to come down before the new one was put in place. Kelly responded by explain that the new bridge will be placed in part of the existing bridges footprint. It will have a different shape, height etc. but will use the same ground. They will have it back up asap. The rest of the project is progressing well.

He noted they are working with the railroad on making the improvements needed for the Hwy 611 industrial corridor, will be starting an I-10 widening project expanding 3 lanes from exit 50 further to 57, the utility agreements are being made for the Hwy 57 expansion, but ground breaking is still a couple years out. Mayor Moran asked about progress on the HWY 90 project in Ocean Springs. Kelly informed the group that they have completed the access assessment and are just starting the design phases. They are still working on other studies including the pedestrian facilities assessment.

## **X. Old/new business**

- Maintenance training classes in July: 1) Sign Installation and Maintenance, 2) Pavement Management
- MPO Safety Program GET TO B: two-day training event: "Intersection Safety" Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>
- Selected of The Focus Group to design the GET TO B brand including website & social media

- Stephanie will be in touch with those jurisdictions that have projects listed on the TIP for FY 2015-2017. We will have a scheduling and project progress meeting in early August.  
FOLLOW -UP: The Project meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. Stephanie will contact individual jurisdictions to schedule meeting time slots.
- MPO partnership with MDOT on railroad crossing safety improvements: David reiterated our ability as the MPO and local leadership to make policy and spend our money in ways that will save lives. One area in which we are revisiting as part of the GET TO B safety program is improving safety at railroad crossing locations. We recently met with MDOT rail safety team to discuss how the MPO may be able to support their efforts to reduce incidents across the coast.  
In the late 1990s we, as the MPO, participated in many discussions based on a program initiated by MDOT and CSX Railroad toward improving rail crossing safety by closing unnecessary crossings. The plan was to identify crossings that could be closed with minimal impact on residents and businesses, and then to upgrade the remaining crossings (crossing surface, signals and gates). CSX and MDOT would pay to close the crossings agreed upon by the local jurisdictions, and would make the upgrades at nearby crossings that would remain open. There were many issues to be considered and dealt with, but Biloxi and Gulfport eventually presented a list of crossings that they would consider closing. CSX withdrew from the collaborative effort, indicating that they did not have the funds budgeted to proceed. Think about the accidents that have occurred since then. Think about the lives that could have been saved if we had followed through back then. MPO staff are revisiting this program and will be working with MDOT to determine how best we can make positive impacts now. Staff will be talking with different jurisdictions over the next year or so. We recognize that the public education and awareness piece of the process must be bolstered so that we can hope to have supporters in the community and not just nay-sayers and critics.  
A new trend in local communities is the development of quiet zones for train traffic. In order to develop a zone, every railroad crossing must be fully signed, signalized and gated. The most cost effective way to do this, in many cases, is to close one and receive support to improve others. MDOT has a priority list for updating, closing and otherwise improving existing crossings. We have the list and hope to create a coast-wide plan for implementation. We plan to work toward improving at least one crossing per year in addition to those being improved by MDOT. David asked the MPO members to consider supporting renewed efforts to improve RR crossing safety. He asked them to show the will and maximize the use of available funds to do everything we can to save lives.

**XI. Adjournment – MOTION to adjourn made by Kelvin Jackson. Second by Buz Olse. No comments. Passed.**

- Next TCC meeting is August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Next TPC meeting is September 25<sup>th</sup>.