

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
HUNTSVILLE-AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting - March 18, 2024 - 5 p.m.

Huntsville, Alabama

Committee Members:

Mr. Russ McDonald	Chairman, City of Huntsville
Mr. Trent Griffin	City of Huntsville
Mr. John Ofenloch	City of Huntsville
Mr. Todd Slyman	City of Huntsville
Mr. Taron Thorpe	City of Huntsville
Mr. Gary Whitley	City of Huntsville
Mr. Larry Mason	City of Madison

MPO Staff Members:

Mr. James Vandiver
Mr. Kevin Bernard
Mr. James Moore

Also Present:

Ms. Jo Beth Gleason	Planning Department, City of Huntsville
Mr. John Autry	Manger of Transportation, City of Huntsville

The meeting was called to order by Chairman McDonald at the time and place noted above.

The minutes of the meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee on November 13, 2023, were approved as submitted.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Jurisdiction Reports, and he asked if there was anything to be reported from Madison County or the City of Huntsville.

There was no response.

Chairman McDonald asked if there was a report from the City of Madison.

Mr. Mason said that after a couple of years of complaining about the widening and improvements on Hughes Road, he could report that after a year of actually seeing it in practice, that, as advertised, it was a speed trap. He said people liked to speed down Hughes Road, that it was a wide, level surface. He said they needed to really start kind of closing in on roads, making road diets.

Chairman McDonald asked if there were reports from the Town of Triana or the Town of Owens Cross Roads.

There was no response.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was MPO Functional Classification Updates, Resolution No. 18-23.

(Mr. Vandiver made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Vandiver said this resolution adopted the revised ALDOT Functional Classification Map for the Huntsville MPO study area. He said their functional classifications were basically categorizations of road types, noting the CAC members had probably heard of things like arterials and collectors and expressways and interstates.

Mr. Vandiver said what was important to them was to update this map every few years, because if they did not, state and federal funding could not be used on local roads, those that were not functionally classified, that that had to be used on functionally classified roads. He said in areas where there was a lot of growth, they had to make sure this map was continually updated. He said it had been a while since they had done a full-scale update of this map, that they did incremental updates every once in a while, and the last one was in June of 2020, when they had added Town Madison Boulevard to the functional

classification map.

Mr. Vandiver said during the TIP process the prior year, they had asked for jurisdictions to submit changes to them, based on the functional classification map, based on the growth they had seen, based on the traffic counts they were collecting in their areas. He said they had a number of changes they had submitted to ALDOT the prior year, and 30 changes had come back as approved, which he noted was a pretty large number for one update.

Mr. Vandiver said he would zoom in on the displayed map and show the CAC members some of the changes. He said he also had a map available if some of the members would want to look at it more closely.

Mr. Vandiver said the area he was indicating was the Monrovia northwest part of the MPO area, noting that there was 72, 53, and Research Park Boulevard. He said they were in red, which meant they were major arterials, and purple indicated major collectors. He said there were quite a few more purple lines on the 2024 map than the 2020 map. He said when they were doing a review of the classifications, they had noticed that roads such as Douglass Road, Mt. Zion Road, Nance, Pettus, Pine Grove Road, and Sam Thomas Road were not considered functionally classified. He said these were fairly major roads in this part of the county, so they had added all of them to the map, and that further completed the road network in this part of the MPO area.

Mr. Vandiver said another area where they had done some changes was in the southwestern part of the MPO area, that there was the Madison and the Greenbrier area of Limestone County. He said Greenbrier Parkway, in 2020, was considered a minor collector, and it stubbed out at the Mazda Toyota Plant. He said the Greenbrier Parkway was a very high-speed, divided highway at this

time, and it was completed all the way to Huntsville Brownsferry Road, so they had reflected that in this new update, that it was now a minor arterial. He said all the roads in green on the displayed map were minor arterials, like County Line, Madison Boulevard, and Wall-Triana Highway, south of 565. He said they had also upgraded Zierdt Road to a minor arterial, that this was a fairly similar situation, that it was now a divided road, between Martin and Madison Boulevard.

Mr. Vandiver said the City of Madison had also submitted some changes, especially out in Limestone County. He said most of the roads in Limestone County were considered local, in the Madison part of Limestone County. He said Hardiman Road, Segers Road, Powell Road, and Bowers Road were all considered local roads, and now they had classified them as minor collectors, based on traffic counts in that area, so they were all eligible now.

Mr. Vandiver said they had downgraded a few streets, with one being Production Avenue, near Madison. He said it was considered a minor arterial, which was on the same level as County Line and Madison Boulevard, that it was primarily an industrial street that ran through the industrial park, so while it should be functionally classified, it probably did not meet the criteria of a minor arterial, so they had downgraded that, based on Madison's input, to a major collector.

Mr. Vandiver said the last area he wanted to point out was in Research Park, especially around the MidCity area, and he indicated on the displayed map Research Park Boulevard, 565, and University Drive. He said they had added a couple of minor collectors in MidCity, based on the City of Huntsville's input, including Old Monrovia Road, Sanderson Street, and Holmes Avenue west of Sparkman Drive. He said they had also added a major collector,

Governors West, which was previously considered a local road.

Mr. Vandiver said there were 30 changes in total, that there were a couple of other small changes throughout the MPO area, including Haysland Road, which was a new road in South Huntsville, which they had classified as a major collector. He said there was also Patterson Lane in Meridianville, noting that Meridianville had seen a lot of growth, so they had looked at that area as well, and they had classified Patterson Lane as a major collector.

Mr. Vandiver said those were most of the major changes, and he said he would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Griffin said getting them classified would make them more eligible for matching funding.

Mr. Vandiver said that was correct, and he said the hierarchy really mattered. He said it was classified based on traffic counts, on the road width, the cross section of the road, and a divided highway would be classified higher than, say, a two-lane road. He said that was where the hierarchy of arterials, collectors, and interstates came in.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 18-23, adopting the revised Functional Classification Map as prepared and presented.

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin.

Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Vandiver if Blake Bottom Road was a functionally classified road.

Mr. Vandiver replied in the affirmative. He said they had gotten a BUILD Grant a couple of years prior, that they had federal funding allocated for that road, and it was a major collector.

Mr. Vandiver said he had forgotten to mention that Old Indian Creek Road, north of Blake Bottom, had not been considered a functionally classified

road, but now it was.

Mr. Griffin said Blake Bottom had turned into a parking lot in some hours of the day, that he had not realized traffic was going to increase that much.

Mr. Slyman asked if when roads were considered major collectors, that meant they were on the list to be widened.

Mr. Vandiver replied in the negative, stating it just meant they met the criteria for a major collector, in terms of traffic counts and street width.

Chairman McDonald called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Resolution No. 01-24.

Mr. Kevin Bernard introduced himself to the CAC members, stating he was the newest addition to the MPO staff, and he would be handling some of the coordination of the MPO projects.

Mr. Bernard said Resolution No. 01-24 adopted and supported the addition of Project #100076466 to the "Other State and Federal Aid Projects" section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program. He said this was a new project that had been added, and it was Zierdt Road Guardrail Installation.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said where he was indicating on the displayed map was Barren Fork Creek, and he indicated Wall-Triana Highway to the west and Eagle Lane to the south. He said this was the area that crossed the creek, all the way down to Triana.

Mr. Bernard said this was being funded by a Rebuild Alabama grant, and

the total cost of the project was \$289,096.50, and there was a \$39,096.50 local match, with the grant funding being \$250,000.

Mr. Ofenloch asked where 565 was on the screen.

Mr. Bernard said it was to the north.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if this was south of Martin Road.

Mr. Vandiver replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Slyman recommended approval of Resolution No. 01-24, amending the Other Federal and State Aid Projects section of the FY 2024-2027 TIP, to add Project #100076466 "GUARDRAIL INSTALLATION ON ZIERDT ROAD AT BARREN FORK CREEK BETWEEN BEADLE LANE AND NATURE VALLEY DRIVE."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin.

Chairman McDonald called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Resolution No. 02-24.

Mr. Bernard said this resolution adopted and support updated traffic performance measures for Huntsville Transit.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said the MPO approved transit performance measures for Huntsville Transit on an annual basis. He said this performance measurement included fatalities, injuries, safety events, and distance between mechanical failures for fixed routes and demand response transit service.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if it was their goal to increase the injuries or what. He said he just did not understand this.

Mr. Bernard said it would be to decrease those injuries and to have better

safety events, in order to keep all residents safe.

Mr. Bernard said John Autry was in attendance at the meeting, and if there were any really technical questions, he could answer them.

Mr. Mason asked what kind of injuries they would get in the demand response.

Mr. Autry said it would be rare. He said if the CAC members would look at the middle table on the sheet in their packet, they would see there were 22 safety events, and a little more than half of those were non-preventable, and only one of the 22 was what they would consider a major accident. He said they had someone on a bus that was involved in an accident, and they claimed an injury, and that was where the one came from.

Mr. Autry said, as to the other question, that it was a federal requirement that also ran through ALDOT's statewide safety plan, that they had an established baseline, and reported the actual numbers, and then with a combination of the two, they would set the targets for the next year. He said that was why they would see this, that there was one injury in calendar year 2023, and there was the new performance target. He said that was because it was based on a five-year average of the baseline numbers.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if this said they projected eight injuries on a bus in the current year.

Mr. Autry said the target was eight, but he would project zero.

Mr. Autry said the good news was that for the last three years, the numbers had gone down. He said the requirements also included the formation of a safety committee, made up of an equal number of front-line employees and management employees, to look at safety, not just from vehicle accidents but to also look at the workplace environment and try to take

proactive steps in preventing workplace injuries as well.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if there were any financial repercussions from the state or the feds if they were above or below the projection.

Mr. Autry said there were not any at this point, that there was a training review, that the federal government sent an audit team every three years, similar to the review the MPO went through. He said they would look to see if they had a program, if they were measuring all the data that was required and reporting it to the CAC, and updating it, updating their targets. He said that was what they were doing at this time.

Mr. Griffin recommended approval of Resolution No. 02-24, concurring with the recommendation of the Technical Coordinating Committee and adopting and supporting the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Performance Measurements and Targets, as approved by Huntsville Transit.

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Ofenloch.

Chairman McDonald called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Resolution No. 03-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this resolution approved the transit measurement performance for Huntsville Transit. He said that annually, when it was updated, the performance measurement included the age and condition of the transit fleet and its facilities.

Mr. Slyman asked if they were saying 35 percent needed to be replaced.

Mr. Bernard said it said it should not exceed 200,000 miles on the fleet.

He said as of February 2024, it was 35, but it was the beginning of the year, and it was expected that they would work toward bringing that number down to 30 or less.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if that would be by replacing vehicles.

Mr. Autry said this was another federal requirement, that they report the condition of their paratransit fleet, their fixed-route bus fleet, and the stations and facilities. He said the 35 percent represented 35 percent of the fleet had exceeded 200,000 miles, so they were a little over their target as of the end of February. He said they could see the second category would be bigger buses, engine replacements, extending the life. He said they were well within the 30 percent target there. He said that on the facility assessment, they were at 3.0 on that. He said they were just reporting that to the MPO board.

Mr. Slyman asked if they had a budget to replace buses.

Mr. Autry said they had a budget, and sometimes that was adequate to get them within the target, and sometimes it was not. He said that was something they went to the City Council with once a year, and hopefully they would get those numbers right. He said the cost and lead time of the buses had changed significantly since 2020.

Mr. Slyman asked if this was just a reporting mechanism.

Mr. Autry said they were just reporting the condition of their assets.

Mr. Slyman asked if, then, it was correct that they would not be coming back with a request for funding.

Mr. Autry said they would not. He said the funding was in the TIP that the CAC reviewed annually.

Mr. Mason asked if they were replacing the engines on some of the fixed-route buses

Mr. Autry replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Mason asked if they were all still fossil fuel driven.

Mr. Autry replied in the affirmative. He said the replacement buses, which they would be buying in the future, would be hybrids, on the big bus style, and on the paratransit, they would be starting to phase in battery. He said it would be a long process to transition all the way to zero, but they had a plan, and they had already started on that plan.

Mr. Griffin asked if the 35 percent, where they were at this time, meant these buses were being utilized more than they had anticipated them to be used or if they were just being put into service longer than they had anticipated.

Mr. Autry said they were not replacing the buses with newer buses quite as fast as they had planned, that that was what that said. He said that would be taking older buses out of service and procuring new buses. He said the paratransit fleet had historically been more reliable, that it was mostly a Ford E-350 product, which had proven to be much more reliable than the Cummins diesel buses, but with that said, they had set their target at 30, and they did not meet that target, so they were going to try to buy more of the smaller vehicles, and hopefully that would happen through this next grant application.

Mr. Ofenloch asked how they defined fixed routes, and he asked what was the useful life, in years. He asked if when they replaced an engine, they would redefine the useful life.

Mr. Autry said the original useful life of a vehicle was defined through FTA, that they had a bus testing facility in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and for any bus manufacturer to be able to sell to a transit agency, that vehicle had to be tested and approved through that facility ahead of time. He said there were

different sizes, medium duty, heavy duty, and different types of vehicles.

Mr. Ofenloch said that, then, they would develop a table, that this type of bus would last so long.

Mr. Autry said that was correct, that one would be 5 years, and one 10, and one 12. He said it was definable.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if when they replaced an engine, that would extend the useful life.

Mr. Autry replied in the affirmative. He said that was why they were reporting that zero percent of the entire fleet exceeded its useful life. He said the cost and lead time for new transit buses had gone up significantly, so for a fixed route bus, they were looking at, just with a regular diesel, in excess of \$600,000, and they could buy an engine right at \$40,000 and extend the life for 2 1/2 years, so it was a much better use of taxpayer dollars sometimes to rehab a bus they already had, to replace an engine, a transmission, or suspension, brakes. He said it was not always better, but in a lot of cases, it was better to put in a new engine.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 03-24, concurring with the recommendation of the Technical Coordinating Committee and adopting and supporting the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Performance Measurements and Targets, as approved by Huntsville Transit.

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin.

Chairman McDonald called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Resolution No. 04-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this was for the widening and resurfacing of I-565, from just east of County Line Road to west of Wall-Triana Highway. He said they needed a resolution on this because the old estimate had come down, and the new estimate was approximately \$5,187,353 less than the original estimate. He said this was a revision to the estimate, prior to authorization. He said the scope of work remained the same, that it was still the original distance, from County Line Road to Wall-Triana Highway.

Mr. Thorpe recommended approval of Resolution No. 04-24, amending the National Highway System/Interstate Maintenance section of the 2024-2027 TIP with the total cost change on Project #100068982, "ADDITIONAL LANES AND RESURFACING ON I-565 FROM WEST OF COUNTY LINE ROAD TO EAST OF WALL TRIANA HIGHWAY."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Mason.

Mr. Slyman asked what the timeline on this was.

Mr. Vandiver said the bid date would be coming up in April, and that was why the estimate had been revised.

Mr. Vandiver said April 26 was the bid date, and that usually about three months after the bid date, if they had a contractor and the contractor was lined up, and had all the labor and was good to go, then they would start work.

Mr. Ofenloch said that, then, they would come back and add another \$5 million to it.

Mr. Slyman said this estimate was not based on bids, that this estimate was based on what was internal.

Mr. Vandiver said it was an ALDOT internal estimate.

Mr. Vandiver said this was all federal and state funds, that these were not MPO funds on this project.

Mr. Ofenloch asked what the significance was of lowering the estimate before they got a bid. He asked why they would even vote on something like this.

Mr. Vandiver said it was an ALDOT requirement.

Mr. Ofenloch said that, then, if the bid came back greater than five million, they would have to go back and get it right.

Mr. Vandiver said if the bid was greater than \$5 million, that would be a possibility.

Chairman McDonald called for the vote on the above motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee Members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was FY 2024-2027 TIP Administrative Modifications.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said the 17 projects being displayed were being deleted, that they had been concluded, and ALDOT, in doing their housekeeping, was deleting these projects from the list.

Mr. Griffin asked if the projects had been completed or if they had run out of funding.

Mr. Bernard said the funds had been expended. He said, for want of a better term, it was a closeout.

Mr. Ofenloch asked how the intermodal was doing budgetwise.

Mr. Autry said he did not know the exact numbers, but they were within the original budget. He said he thought it was around \$12.5 million for that project.

Mr. Autry said what was displayed were all older projects that had been completed.

Mr. Vandiver said these were all allocations that Huntsville Transit received from the FTA, with the last two being exceptions. He said those were Alabama A&M low/no emission grants the FTA had given them. He said those projects had been completed.

Mr. Bernard said the next one was a clarification of local match funds on Transit projects, and the first one was #100077415. He said this was an A&M low/no emissions grant, for the school year 2023. He said this was a local match of 15 percent, and the federal was an 85 percent contribution.

Mr. Bernard said the second one, #100077419, was a Huntsville Transit Operating Assistance, FY 2023, and the federal contribution was 50 percent, and the local match was 50 percent.

Mr. Bernard said this was just clarifying the local match requirements for these projects.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Agency Reports, ALDOT Projects Update.

(Mr. Vandiver made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Vandiver said the first project was the Northern Bypass from Pulaski Pike to US Highway 231/431. He said this was the section that was currently under construction, that utility work was ongoing, and they were doing grading work and drainage. He said the project was bid in the prior fall, and the total project cost was approximately \$43 million.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if that included the overpass at 231.

Mr. Vandiver replied in the negative. He said all the intersections on the Northern Bypass were going to be at grade.

Mr. Ofenloch said that, then, there would be no bridge at 231.

Mr. Vandiver said 231 and the Northern Bypass would be an at-grade

intersection, that there would be intersection improvements but no overpass at this time.

Mr. Ofenloch said that, then, that would be the next step.

Mr. Vandiver said that would be the next step.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Martin Road between Zierdt Road and Laracy Drive. He said these were two separate projects, that the first one was from Zierdt Road to Old Jim Williams Road, and that project had been completed, and the second phase was from Old Jim Williams Road to Laracy Drive. He said that project had been bid, and it should be starting soon. He said the total cost was \$42 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was North Parkway at Mastin Lake Road, and it was under construction and approximately 15 percent complete. He said this was the overpass at Mastin Lake Road, and it would also include service road extensions, and the total cost of the project was approximately \$44 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Access Management on US 231 between Weatherly Road and Hobbs Road. He said the plans were 85 percent complete, and right-of-way acquisition would begin sometime in the current year, and the estimated cost of the project was \$15 million, and construction was anticipated to begin in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Winchester Road from Dominion Circle to Naugher Road, that the plans were 90 percent complete, that they were still working on right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation should start in the current fiscal year. He said the estimated cost was \$28 million, and construction should begin in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Research Park Boulevard

widening from U.S. 72 to south of Old Madison Pike, that the project was substantially complete, and the project cost was approximately \$23 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was U.S. 72 West between Providence Main and County Line Road. He said a draft environmental impact statement was to be submitted soon, and he said the project was being broken into multiple phases, and Phase 1 was currently scheduled for construction in FY 2025, and the last time he had heard about this, it was going to be from Providence Main Street to Jeff Road. He said that was Phase 1, that they wanted to get that bridge over Indian Creek, and the estimated cost was \$85 million.

Mr. Whitley asked if that was for the whole thing, not just Phase 1.

Mr. Vandiver said it was for the whole thing, and he believed Phase 1 was approximately \$50 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Alabama 53 widening from Taurus Drive to Harvest Road, that this was the next segment of Alabama 53 widening, and the plans were 90 percent complete, the estimated cost was around \$10 million, and the anticipated start date was the upcoming summer.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Madison Boulevard from Westchester Road to Flagstone Drive, that this was a resurfacing project and intersection improvement project at Wall-Triana Highway, that the plans were 90 percent complete, and the estimated cost was \$5,600,000, with the anticipated start date being the current year.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Four Bridge Replacements on Old Highway 431, that the project was substantially complete, at a cost of \$13.5 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was I-565 Additional Lanes from

County Line Road to Wall-Triana Highway, that this was a project they had discussed earlier, that the plans were 95 percent complete, with an estimated cost of just over \$41 million. He said it was currently scheduled for bid in April, so it would be a projected start date in the current summer.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Jeff Road Additional Lanes from south of Capshaw Road to north of Douglass Road, that the plans were 85 percent complete, that an environmental document had been submitted, and the right-of-way acquisition was anticipated to begin in the current fiscal year, with a projected start date of FY 2026 for construction.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Intersection Improvements on Wall-Triana Highway at Graphics Drive, and this had been accepted for maintenance, which meant it was pretty much completed, and the cost was just under \$1.9 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Widening Blake Bottom Road from Jeff Road to SR 255, that the plans were complete, that right-of-way acquisition was almost complete, and utility work should begin in the current fiscal year, and construction in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Intersection Improvements on SR 53 at Harvest, McKee, and Old Railroad Bed roads, and the work was anticipated to begin soon, at a cost of \$3.7 million. He said this would include new turn lanes at these intersections.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was the Arsenal East Connector, that the preliminary engineering, the design, was still under way, that the estimated cost was \$30 million, with an anticipated start date of FY 2028.

Mr. Vandiver said the total amount of work in design and construction was just under \$421 million.

Mr. Vandiver said this presentation would be on the MPO website on the upcoming Wednesday.

Mr. Vandiver said that next there was the Regional Development Review. He said this was something they had started doing the prior year. He said Huntsville had been doing this for about 40 years, doing a report on residential construction data, so they thought it would be good to combine Madison's and Madison County's data into a report and show some regional trends,

Mr. Vandiver said in 2023, there were 7,161 permits issued in the entire MPO area, noting this was down from 2022, but it was above pre-pandemic levels. He said there were 652 permits issued in Census Tract 106.12, which was 72 West, between Jeff Road and Old Railroad Bed Road, and Capshaw to 72 West, that it was basically the Clift Farms area, and also some of the surrounding areas of Huntsville and Madison.

Mr. Vandiver said that on the residential certificates of occupancy side, there were 7,998 granted, which was an increase of 27.9 percent over 2022, one of the highest numbers ever. He said that, also, 72 West had the highest number of COs at 948. He said they also had some significant growth in areas such as Triana, Town Madison, Cummings Research Park, and Meridianville. He said there were 6,910 homes sold, and the top tract was in Meridianville. He said the average sales price in the MPO Study Area was 381,480 for single-family homes, and that was up about 2 percent from 2022. He said the growth rate there had slowed down, looking at previous trends.

Mr. Vandiver said they had a total number of housing units at this time of about 210,756, which was an increase of over 24,000 since the 2020 Census, almost four years prior.

Mr. Vandiver said they would have a full report of all these numbers on

the MPO website later in the current week.

Mr. Vandiver said they were starting to work on the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, and they would be using the data from the development review to work on their 2050 projections. He said they had a deadline of March 31, 2025, for their next plan. He said they would be talking to the jurisdictions in the next couple of months on defining the project list, making sure they had all the projects they needed to have in the Long Range Transportation Plan, because if they got state or federal funding for a project, the project needed to be in the Long Range Transportation Plan. He said they wanted to make sure they had a complete and accurate plan.

Mr. Vandiver said they would have a draft at the November meeting. He said if any of the members had any questions about this plan, to let them know.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Opportunity for Public Comment.

There was no response.

Chairman McDonald said the next item was CAC Member Comments.

Mr. Slyman asked if there was anything on the widening of Capshaw and Monrovia.

Mr. Vandiver said there were no new updates since the last meeting. He said it was considered a priority project by the MPO Board, but there had not been any movement on it since the last meeting, in November.

Mr. Vandiver said he did not have a date on it. He said that would be something in the Long Range Transportation Plan process, that one of the things they would be doing was to prioritize projects based on projected congestion. He said Capshaw was pretty high on the list the last time, and they would have to see how it shaped out this time. He said he had no doubt it

would be very high on the list.

Mr. Mason said he did not know where else the public would have input into the MPO process, so he had chosen this particular spot. He said he thought it was important for the MPO to start thinking about a lot of alternative transportation planning that needed to be going into the Long Range Plan. He said he was thinking specifically of Bike Share and how Bike Share, as shown in other cities in other jurisdictions, could reduce traffic congestion, and all those types of things.

Mr. Mason said he saw with all the new apartments and all the influx of residential mixed-use areas, they were going to start gaining a lot better connectivity between these kinds of projects. He said, first of all, they were going to have a new Bike Share system in Cummings Research Park in the next two months, noting that it had already been approved, and they had the funding for it. He said there would be 20 bikes in Cummings Research Park for sharing, like the ones in downtown Huntsville.

Mr. Mason said, concerning how they would like to see Bike Share work, one of the things he had had several questions about was how they would connect Providence to MidCity and Cummings Research Park, in a non-car or multimodal way. He said a lot more needed to be done about moving people with buses and transit. He said a lot more could be done in terms of strategic planning and Bike Share.

Mr. Mason said he thought the City kind of thought Bike Share was a entrepreneurial, private enterprise kind of thing, that they needed to have a Bike Share company come in and do Bike Share, but in other jurisdictions, like in Pennsylvania, Colorado, California, and in a lot of cities, the cities were actually taking a very strategic role in how they would set up Bike Shares that

would actually serve the populations that needed Bike Share. He said there were a lot of people who needed Bike Share, just as there were a lot of people who needed transit. He said they needed to determine how they would fund those things, and not necessarily with taxpayer money, but maybe some subsidies in there, whatever, but the City needed to take a more active role in actually planning where Bike Share systems and Bike Share hubs would be, rather than just saying they would let the private side of free enterprise decide where the bike stations would be. He said what they needed was for the City to actually say they needed Bike Share in North Huntsville, that they needed Bike Share in South Huntsville.

Mr. Mason said he just wanted to inject that he thought the MPO should take a more active role in planning and thinking of how they might expand not only bikes but all alternative transportation, how they would connect.

Mr. Mason said that from a City planning point of view, 10 years prior, he would have liked any one of the mixed-use developments they had at this time, and he liked what was going on at MidCity and at Providence, that those were all great, that they were all new, urbanized-type developments, and they were really cool, but they needed to connect them, that they could not just drive from one hub center to another hub center, that they needed alternative modes of transportation.

Mr. Slyman said one of the things they had always heard was once they changed the bridge west of Providence that went over Indian Creek, the greenway would pass under that new bridge, and it would eventually connect to Research Park, which would make that connectivity.

Mr. Slyman asked Mr. Vandiver if that was in the works.

Mr. Vandiver replied in the affirmative, and he said Ms. Gleason could

add more to this if she would like.

Ms. Gleason said that was correct. She said they were working on the alignment, that she had just had a meeting with Kathy Martin and Marie Bostick about the Dry Creek Greenway and connecting that to the Indian Creek Greenway and the Providence area, and their next step would be working with Madison County on this, that they were looking at that whole area and prioritizing that project. She said it was a visionary greenway at this time, but they were going to try to make it a 25-year project. She said that was all she could tell them at this time.

Mr. Slyman said there had been some designs on that, and if they wanted to get together to talk about that, they could make sure they were all on the same page.

Mr. Griffin said he had made a comment to the MPO previously, from seeing someone almost get hit on a main street on a bicycle, that he had indicated they could exponentially increase the bike paths in the city by converting sidewalks to dual use. He said he did not know how that was received or if there was any interest in looking into how quickly they could make that a dual-use thing. He said some streets had bike lanes right next to traffic, and it was kind of scary riding in those lanes because it was the same level as the street. He said the sidewalks were very underutilized, and he thought more people would ride bicycles if they felt a lot safer riding those bicycles. He said what it would take to do this would be mainly signage and flattening out the transitions between streets, where it was not a hard curb.

Mr. Griffin asked if anybody was still interested in looking at that. He said they could exponentially increase bike paths by allowing that kind of dual use. He said he thought it was illegal at this time for bikes to ride on a

sidewalk.

Ms. Gleason said they were looking at that in the MPO bikeway plan that was under way.

Mr. Mason said that needed some discussion. He said bikes and pedestrians were no better mixed than bikes and cars. He said he could not speak for everyone, but he thought they needed to think of other ways to keep people safe and not necessarily have to mix bicycles and pedestrians.

Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Mason if he was equating the safety aspects of bicycles and pedestrians with bicycles and cars.

Mr. Mason said as a bicycle rider, pedestrians got in his way.

Mr. Griffin said he understood getting in his way, but he had barely, if ever, heard of a cyclist killing a pedestrian, but he had been hit in the street.

Mr. Mason said if everything was slowed down, there would be no fatalities.

Mr. Griffin said the cars would not be slowing down, and they weighed 5,000 or 10,000 pounds. He said he would rather a pedestrian be in his way, on a bicycle, than for him to be in the way of a 1,000 horsepower car trying to get somewhere. He said he understood Mr. Mason's perspective, and he understood Mr. Mason was an avid rider, and he was an amateur rider. He said he would not want to take his bicycle on a main street because he had seen how people drove and chided cyclists when they were on the road.

Ms. Gleason said one of their biggest priorities in the MPO bike plan would be safety, that that was part of their Mission Zero effort as well. She said there had to be safety for the riders.

Mr. Autry said there were some super cool, innovative ways to shrink the size of the roadways, and they could make dedicated transit, pedestrian, and

bicycle lanes, all separate, and all very safe, that there were a lot of cool designs that were being implemented in Europe and in Asia. He said these things did not happen overnight, but it started with citizen advisory groups just like this one, and, hopefully, there would be better safety.

Ms. Gleason said they would be looking into all of this.

Mr. Vandiver said the next meeting would be on June 10, at 5 p.m., and he was not exactly sure where it would be, but it would be in the new City Hall. He said he would let everyone know as soon as he knew.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m. on March 18, 2024.)