

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

MINUTES

Regular Meeting - June 10, 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. Houston Matthews	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	Manager 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 March 18, 2024, 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, the city of Huntsville, the city of Madison, the town of Triana, or the town of Owens Cross Roads.

There were no responses.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Draft FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Resolution No. 05-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this resolution adopted the Draft FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He said this was how the MPO planned its annual budget, for the allocation of funds for different tasks, and it also facilitated the day-to-day operations of the MPO. He said this was a Draft FY 2025 UPWP, and the Total Budgeted Funding was \$1,329,769. He said they had an increased budget due to 2024 carryover, and increased funding for LRTP, Congestion Management, Data Collection and Analysis, and also Administration Management.

Mr. Mason asked if this would be to adopt the draft budget or if it was just approval of the draft budget.

Mr. Bernard said this was for approval of the draft.

Mr. Mason said he had not seen this, and he asked if it had been on the website.

Mr. Bernard replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Matthews asked if the draft would become final at the passing by the MPO Board or what the process was in it going from draft to final.

Mr. Bernard said they would have comments, such as they were discussing at this time, and any changes they would have at the August meeting, to make this final.

Mr. Mason asked if they would be able to find the final report on the MPO website.

Mr. Bernard replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 05-24, adopting

the Draft FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment, Resolution No. 06-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said Resolution No. 06-24 adopted and amended the FY 2024 UPWP, to include a Transit Oriented Development Planning task. He said the city of Huntsville had been selected by the Federal Transit Administration for a pilot program for Transit Oriented Development, that this was an annual grant that provided funding to integrate land use and transportation planning with a new high-capacity transit project. He said one such transit project had been approved by the MPO in the prior year, and this was to look at a variety of housing options, along with a future high-capacity transit program.

Mr. Ofenloch asked what Mr. Bernard meant by "housing."

Mr. Bernard said it was housing for residents.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if the Transit Plan was funding housing.

Mr. Mason said it was looking at developing density around a transit system so there would be more ridership.

Ms. Gleason said one of the objectives of the FTA's grant program was available transportation, and equity, that part of the Biden Administration's equity plan was access from affordable housing to transit facilities. She said this was an objective as far as this program was concerned.

Mr. Ofenloch asked which would come first, the low-cost housing or the bus stop.

Mr. Mason said that was what the plan was all about, that that was why they tried to plan it, so they would have a way of knowing that if they started putting transit in, they would have the density to support it.

Mr. Vandiver said this was not all the grant was about.

Mr. Bernard said the grant was to prepare a planning study for a future high-capacity transit corridor, and he said he believed it was in May of the prior year that they had looked at such a corridor. He said there were three areas of concentration this grant would look at, which would be Northwoods Housing Development, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and MidCity. He said this was the high-capacity transit corridor they were looking at. He said this grant would examine various policies for different housing needs, based on location. He said that for this particular grant, the FTA stipulated they would like to have a resolution or they would put it in the UPWP. He said there was no local funding that was required, no local matches, by the City or the MPO, and the grant was for \$850,000, to look at these various options, at these locations.

Mr. Mason asked if it was going to specifically look at those areas.

Mr. Bernard replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Matthews asked if the MPO and the City staff would be the ones conducting the study or if there would be an RFP for consultant input, or how that would work.

Mr. Bernard said they were still in talks in-house about how to best approach this, and hiring a consultant was part of the consideration. He said that when they had those discussions, they would definitely share that with the CAC.

Mr. Vandiver said the FTA was waiting on them to get this amendment,

and they would be giving them instructions on whether or not to do an RFP, et cetera.

Mr. Mason recommended approval of Resolution No. 06-24, amending the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), to include the \$850,000 FTA grant to the City of Huntsville under a new task (Task 3.4.3- "Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning"), as required by the FTA as a condition of the award.

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item was FY 2024-2027 TIP Amendment, Resolution No. 07-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said Resolution No. 07-24 adopted and supported the addition of projects #100078168 and #100078591 to the Other State and Federal Aid Projects section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Bernard said this project was located between Meridianville and Hazel Green, off 231, that it would be Intersection Improvements at 231 and Walker Lane, and Walker Lane turned into Grimwood Road. He said this improvement would be for additional turning lanes and also traffic signal improvements, for a total cost of \$2 million.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 07-24, amending the Other Federal and State Aid Projects section of the FY 2024-2027 TIP, to add projects #100078168 (PE phase) and #100078591 (CN phase) of the "INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT SR-1 (US-231) AND WALKER LANE/GRIMWOOD ROAD."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and was unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item was an FY 2024-2027 TIP Amendment, Resolution No. 08-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said Resolution No. 08-24 adopted and supported changes to the NHS/Interstate Maintenance/NHS Bridge Projects section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program, pertaining to projects #100061845, #100061846, and #100061847.

Mr. Bernard said this project was a Highway 72 West widening project, that the scope of the project was from Providence Main Street west to County Line Road, and it had been broken into three phases, and the first phase would be from Providence Main Street to Huntsville Memory Gardens, just east of the Mazda and Audi dealership; the second phase would be from Huntsville Memory Gardens to Walnut Street, close to Home Depot; and the third phase, the final phase, would be from Walnut Street to County Line Road.

Mr. Bernard said this new phase would include the bridge, and they had a revised estimate. He said this resolution was for Phase 1, and that the old cost, for all phases, was \$41,237,812, and this new phase, with the new scope, was projected at \$17,816,000.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if they had a cost estimate on Phase 2 and Phase 3.

Mr. Bernard said they did not have that at this time. He said the overall cost remained the same, that they were just taking this out of it.

Chairman McDonald asked if there was a start date for this.

Mr. Bernard said that this year, there would be the right-of-way acquisition, utilities, and construction.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 08-24, amending the NHS/Interstate Maintenance/NHS Bridge Projects section of the 2024-2027 TIP, to modify projects #100061845, #100061846, and #100061847, for “ADDITIONAL LANES ON SR-2 (US-72) FROM COUNTY LINE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE MAIN STREET IN THE CITY LIMITS OF HUNTSVILLE.”

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

(Scrivener’s note: The above resolution, Resolution No. 08-24, was not considered by the MPO Policy Board at their meeting on June 12, 2024, having been delayed to a future meeting.)

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was an FY 2024-2027 TIP amendment, Resolution No. 09-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this resolution adopted and supported changes to the NHS/Interstate Maintenance/NHS Bridge Projects section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program on projects #100075284, #100078228, and #100071157.

Mr. Bernard said this project was at the intersection of Cambridge Lane and Highway 72 West, that it was a new project that had been added to the Urban Area, and this was why they had included it by this amendment, and it involved intersection improvements and traffic signals.

Mr. Vandiver said this was beyond Mooresville Road, very near Athens.

Mr. Griffin inquired as to the total cost of this project.

Mr. Bernard said there was the right-of-way acquisition, the relocation of utilities, and construction, and it was \$200,000 for right-of-way acquisition, \$550,000 for utilities, and \$2,525,000 for construction, for a total cost of

\$3,275,000.

Mr. Mason recommended approval of Resolution No. 09-24, amending the NHS/Interstate Maintenance/NHS Bridge Projects section of the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add projects #100075284 (RW Phase), #100078228 (UT phase), and #100071157 (CN phase) of the "INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING THE INSTALLATION OF A TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT SR-2 (US-72) AND CAMBRIDGE LANE."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was an FY 2024-2027 TIP Amendment, Resolution No. 10-24,

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this resolution adopted and supported the addition of project #100078492 to the Other State and Federal Aid Projects section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Bernard said this project was located in the town of Owens Cross Roads, that they had been the recipient of a Rebuild Alabama grant, for Fiscal Year 2024, in the amount of \$188,270,00, and this was a resurfacing project for Owen Road, from Brockway Road to US 431.

Mr. Ofenloch recommended approval of Resolution No. 10-24, amending the Other Federal and State Aid Projects section of the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add Project #100078492 (CN phase) "RESURFACING OWEN ROAD FROM BROCKWAY ROAD TO SR-1 (US-431)."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Mason and unanimously approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee members present.

Chairman McDonald said the next item was an FY 2024-2027 TIP

Amendment, Resolution No. 11-24.

(Mr. Bernard made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bernard said this resolution adopted and supported changes to the Surface Transportation Attributable Projects section of the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program on projects #100062240, #100062253, #100062254, and #100062255.

Mr. Bernard said this was for intersection improvements at the base of Slaughter Road, where it intersected with Madison Boulevard.

Mr. Bernard said the old scope of this project included Slaughter Road improvements from Madison Boulevard to Madison Pike, but this project had been downsized to just intersection improvements at this specific location. He said the MPO would provide 80 percent of the funding, and the City of Huntsville would provide 20 percent of the funding for this project.

Mr. Mason asked what the improvements would be.

Mr. Bernard said he believed it would be turning-lane improvements and traffic signaling.

Mr. Mason said there were already traffic signals, and he asked if this would be changing the signals.

Mr. Bernard said he thought there were some timing issues, as well as some circulation issues, at particular times of the afternoon, and on different days, so they would look at improving the circulation, and also start the widening process from that point when they would have future phases.

Mr. Mason asked if that would be widening Slaughter Road.

Mr. Bernard said that was the original scope, and what they had effectively done, similar to Highway 72, was to break it up into phases, so they were going to start at this point, and they would have future improvement

phases to follow.

Mr. Ofenloch asked if they knew why the continuation of widening Slaughter was being pulled.

Mr. Vandiver said the old cost was supposed to go toward widening Slaughter Road to five lanes, for approximately \$14.2 million. He said that was a tough road, that there was a railroad crossing there, and some topography, so that cost was not going to cover the cost of that widening, so with the last TIP, they had looked at that, and they had put it in as intersection improvements for Old Madison Pike, to Madison Boulevard, to make it as a placeholder, and they made it clear there would probably be intersection improvements along there, but in further discussions with the City of Huntsville, they wanted to look further at Madison Boulevard and Slaughter Road, that they were going to look at double left-turn lanes from Slaughter Road to Madison Boulevard going eastbound, and he believed they would also be doing some double left-turn lanes off Madison Boulevard. He said they were going to keep all the improvements south of the railroad crossing, that they would not be tearing down bridges and increasing the costs.

Mr. Vandiver said the reason they were doing this resolution was twofold, (1), to clarify the scope of the project, and (2), with the reduced cost, this would allow them to look at the old fiscal year versus the new fiscal year, that it would allow them to put construction in the current TIF, so that this project might be started in the next three years rather than further down the road.

Mr. Griffin recommended approval of Resolution No. 11-24, amending the Surface Transportation Attributable Projects section of the FY 2024-2027 TIP with the cost and scope changes to #100062240 (PE phase), #100062253

(RW phase), #100062254 (UT phase), and #100062255 (CN phase) of the "INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ON SLAUGHTER ROAD FROM MADISON BOULEVARD TO OLD MADISON PIKE."

Said motion was seconded by Mr. Ofenloch and 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 there were several Administrative Modifications, items (a) through (e).

Mr. Bernard said Administrative Modification (a) was new locally funded project phases: Projects #100078691 and #100078766. He said these PE and Right-of-Way phases were all new projects and all local funds, at a total cost of \$500,000.

Mr. Bernard said Administration Modification (b) was project #100074624, and there was a decrease in the project cost, that the old cost was \$5,593,250, and the new cost was \$4,176,209.91.

Mr. Bernard said Administration Modifications (c), (d), and (e) were all new level-of-effort projects. He said Administration Modification (c) was sign replacement on I-65, from the Tennessee River to the Tennessee state line; and Administration Modification (d) was the resurfacing of State Road 251 just north of East Limestone Road to State Road 53. He said Administration Modification (e) was also a resurfacing project, the resurfacing of State Road 251 from US 31 to north of East Limestone Road.

Mr. Mason asked what the first two projects were, under Administrative Modification (a).

Mr. Bernard said that was engineering costs and right-of-way acquisition.

Mr. Vandiver said those projects were part of the PARC project, the Pedestrian Access Redevelopment Corridor, what they called the "Skybridge," between downtown and Lowe Mill. He said the CAC members may have heard that the City of Huntsville had received a \$27 million federal grant to help with the construction of not only the bridge but also drainage improvements along Pinhook Creek. He said as a requirement of the grant, they were to put the right-of-way phases into the TIP, even though they were locally funded, to put both of these project into their TIP, to work with ALDOT to make sure the City of Huntsville would not lose out on this funding. He said the PE was \$2 million, and that was all the City of Huntsville's.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Agency Reports, the Alabama Department of Transportation.

(Mr. Vandiver made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Vandiver said the first project was the Northern Bypass from Pulaski Pike to US Highway 231/431, the section west of the Parkway. He said construction had begun on the project, and it was approximately 10 percent complete. He said they were doing utility and grading work at this time, and the project cost was approximately \$43 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Martin Road between Zierdt Road and Laracy Drive, that the first phase was complete, and for the second phase, utility relocation was under way, grading and drainage work was to begin soon, and the total cost, for both phases, was \$42 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was North Parkway at Mastin Lake Road, and it was also under way and was approximately 20 percent complete,

and the project cost was \$44,200,000.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was access management on US 231 between Weatherly Road and Hobbs Road, that the plans were 85 percent complete, the right-of-way acquisition would begin the current year, and the total cost was \$15 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Winchester Road from Dominion Circle to Naugher Road, that the plans were 90 percent complete, and right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation should begin soon, with an anticipated start date of FY 2025, at an estimated cost of \$28 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was State Route 255 (Research Park Boulevard), widening from US 72 to south of Old Madison Pike, that the status was Substantially Complete, with a cost of \$23,415,000.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was US 72 West between Providence Main and County Line Road. He said that as Mr. Bernard had mentioned earlier, this project was being split into three phases, and Phase 1 would be from Providence Main Street to Huntsville Memory Gardens, the second phase would be from Huntsville Memory Gardens to Walnut Street, and the third phase would be from Walnut Street to County Line Road. He said the CAC had approved the first phase cost earlier in this meeting, and the second phase and third phase were still to be determined, and the CAC would consider those at future meetings. He said Phase 1 construction was anticipated to start in FY 2025.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was SR-53 Widening from Taurus Drive to Harvest Road, that the plans were 90 percent complete, at an estimated cost of \$10 million, and an anticipated start date of FY 2025.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Madison Boulevard from

Westchester Road to Flagstone Drive, that the plans were complete, that it was scheduled to bid in the current month, and construction should begin by early fall of the current year, and the estimated cost was approximately \$5 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Four Bridge Replacements on Old Highway 431, that this project had been complete for some time, and the project cost was \$13.5 million.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was I-565 Additional Lanes from County Line Road to Wall-Triana Highway, that bids had been received a couple of weeks prior, and the estimated cost was \$38 million, and construction should begin in August or September of the current year.

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, and right-of-way acquisition was anticipated to begin in the current fiscal year, with a projected start date of FY 2026.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Widening Blake Bottom Road from Jeff Road to SR 255, that the plans were complete, right-of-way acquisition was complete, and the construction was to be bid by the County in FY 2025, with an estimated cost of \$20,805,000.

Mr. Vandiver said the next project was Intersection Improvements on SR 53 at Harvest, McKee, and Old Railroad Bed roads. He said work was under way, that the contractor was working on installing new signal equipment, and the cost was \$3.7 million.

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

Mr. Vandiver said the total amount of work in design and construction

was \$415,720,000.

Mr. Vandiver was asked to again display the slide concerning the Arsenal East Connector, and there was a discussion of the possible route.

Mr. Mason asked if it was correct that the design documents had not been done for this project.

Mr. Vandiver said he had not seen any.

Mr. Mason said that, then, they still did not know how they were going to treat the bike paths and the pedestrianways there at Bob Wallace and Sparkman. He said there was a public meeting, and he did not think anyone had seen any results from that public meeting, or what the decision was.

Mr. Vandiver said they could certainly check on that, reiterating that he had not seen any designs on it.

Mr. Mason asked if there would be another public meeting.

Mr. Vandiver said they could look into that.

Mr. Mason said they would like to see the design.

Mr. Vandiver said this was not a design committee, that it was a funding committee, but they could check on the status.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was Opportunity for Public Comment, and he asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to comment at this time.

Chairman McDonald said the next item on the agenda was CAC Member Comments.

Mr. Ofenloch said many people were appointed to this committee, and they had had a discussion six or seven years prior about attendance, and he thought there was something about if a person did not attend three meetings in a row, or something, such person would be notified, but he did not think they

had ever enforced that. He said he thought if people wanted to be appointed to this committee, they should show up for the meetings, and he would suggest that if people did not attend for a couple of meetings, they should get a letter, and their sponsor should be notified that they needed someone else to represent them.

Mr. Matthews said he assumed there were bylaws that addressed the membership, et cetera.

There was further discussion of the matter, and Mr. Vandiver said they could certainly look into it.

Mr. Griffin said he had seen the first accident he had seen since they had put up the lights, et cetera, at Steger Road, and the accident had not looked that bad, so he thought there had been improvements there.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m. on June 10, 2024.)