

**West Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization
West Memphis City Hall
205 South Redding, West Memphis, AR 72301**

**Joint Policy and Technical Committees Meeting
February 14, 2017
Minutes**

MPO Policy Committee Members Present...

The Honorable William Johnson, Mayor, City of West Memphis
The Honorable Frank Fogleman, Mayor, City of Marion
Cannon Callicott, AHTD (Proxy for Rex Vines)
Mike Demster, City of Marion
Paul Luker, City of West Memphis
Paul Simms, AHTD (Proxy for Jessie Jones)
Phillip Sorrell, City of West Memphis
Rhonda Standridge, City of West Memphis
Ramona Taylor, City of West Memphis

MPO Technical Committee Members Present...

The Honorable, William Johnson, Mayor, City of West Memphis
Eddie Brawley, MPO Study Director
Mike Demster, City of Marion
Ed Cain, City of Marion
Cannon Callicott, AHTD (Proxy for Rex Vines)
Sajid Hossain, Memphis MPO, (Proxy for Pragati Srivastava)
Paul Luker, City of West Memphis
Paul Simms, AHTD
Phillip Sorrell, City of West Memphis

Other Individuals Present

Richard Booth, Southland Gaming and Racing
Tracy Brick, City of Marion Chamber of Commerce
Robert Harper, City of West Memphis
Amy Heflin, FHWA
Judy Jackson, MPO
Harry Patel, Citizen
Mike Patel, Citizen
Mark Patel, Citizen
John Rech, Evening Times
Martin Smith, Ecological Design Group, Wynne, AR

Somer Smith, City of West Memphis
Philip Rodgers, Crisp Construction
Bobby Williams, MPO
John Wintermantel, Southland Gaming and Racing

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and introductions were made.

Minutes

Mayor Johnson presented the minutes of the November 15, 2016 Joint Policy Committee and Technical Coordinating Committee meeting. Motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Reports

Committee Meetings

Mr. Brawley gave a brief report of the February 7, 2017 Citizens Advisory committee meeting. The committee had met as scheduled and discussed all items on today's agenda. The 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) draft was discussed and recommended for approval.

FY 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Regarding Southland Drive extended project, Mr. Sorrell stated the shoulder work is still incomplete but with favorable weather conditions the project should be completed within 3 weeks.

Mr. Luker stated that, with favorable weather conditions, work should begin soon on the Delta Regional River Park Trail project.

Mr. Sorrell stated that right-of-way issues have delayed the project but that it will probably be bid in April with work beginning in June.

Mr. Callicott stated work is continuing on the I-40 project and that tentative completion is scheduled for late summer.

Mr. Brawley presented an amendment to include Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) projects to the current FY 2016-2020 TIP. Initially the MPO had also included the interchange safety project at I-40 Service Road/College Blvd. (Hwy 118) interchange. However, AHTD requested that it be removed and Mr. Simms related that AHTD hopes to have it ready for the FY 2017-2021 TIP. A motion was made to revise the TIP to include the FLAP projects. The motion was seconded and passed.

I-55 Bridge Closing Update

Mr. Brawley reported that he had received an e-mail from Tennessee indicating that the project has been suspended for 9 to 12 months.

2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Mr. Brawley presented the Imagine 2040 MTP and Conformity Report for approval. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to approve the MTP and the Conformity Report. The motion was seconded and passed.

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Projects

Mr. Brawley reported that the MPO received only one application for the TA funds. The project was submitted by the City of West Memphis and Mr. Luker explained the project to the committees. A motion was made to approve the application and accept the project. The motion was seconded and passed.

Air Quality

Mr. Brawley related that there are currently no air quality concerns. He reminded the committees that Crittenden County is now in attainment and re-designated as a maintenance area. Further, he said that the average ozone readings for the past 3 years show that the area is in compliance with the new ozone standard of 70 ppb and will, hopefully remain in compliance this year.

Transit

Mr. Luker reported that with the transit route realignment, ridership is still down but that there are efforts underway to increase ridership. Efforts to secure permanent funding are ongoing.

Other Business

Several motel owners from West Memphis addressed their concerns about pedestrians crossing the interstate near their locations and the Southland Gaming and Racing facility. The owners asked AHTD if there is anything that could be done to discourage this from happening noting that this has resulted in 5 deaths in the last 5 years. Mr. Simms said that he would take their concerns back to the safety and security division of AHTD to look into and have them contact Mr. Brawley with the results of their findings.

Mr. Brawley related that AMPO has requested letters of support asking Congress to rescind the MPO planning regulation that mandated the consolidation of several MPOs

including the West Memphis MPO and the Memphis MPO. A motion was made that directed Mr. Brawley to compose the letter listing the Mayors and the County Judge as signatories. The motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Martin Smith with Ecological Design Group, Wynne, AR was introduced and he gave a presentation on the Downtown Marion Master Plan Update.

Announcements

Mr. Brawley pointed out to the committee that a recent article in an engineering journal published a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Treasury showing the third bridge over the Mississippi River as one of 40 proposed U.S. Transportation and Water Infrastructure Projects of Major Economic Significance. Upon hearing the report, the Policy Committee authorized Mr. Brawley to contact our congressional representatives with this information.

Mr. Brawley announced that AHTD is now taking applications for their TA program. He also mentioned that AHTD will hold seminars in Little Rock on February 23rd and March 15th for anyone who might be interested in learning more about the program.

Mr. Simms announced the Arkansas MPO Transportation Planning Conference will be held in Fayetteville in April 18th and 19th and encouraged the Policy Committee members to attend.

Mr. Brawley also suggested moving future MPO meetings to the newly renovated Civic Center. There was a consensus approving this idea if the logistics can be worked out.

Adjournment

With no other business the meeting was adjourned.
The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 9, 2017

An audio file of this meeting is available upon request.