

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - SOUTHERN DISTRICT**

*April 30, 2009 - 10:00 a.m.
ALDOT Division 4 Office – Alexander City*

Members in Attendance:

Mayor Oscar Crawley, City of Lanett (represented by Mr. Jerry Thrower)
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. William D. McDaniel, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Mr. Jerry Thrower, City of Lanett
Mr. Don Hoyt, Chambers County Commission
Mr. Daryl Howard, 1st District, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. John C. Trimble, 3rd District, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Eric M. English, 4th District, ALDOT Division 4
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Ms. Dawn Landholm, acting as Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Under “Old Business”, Ms. Landholm asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the November 19, 2008 or January 22, 2009 meetings. Mr. Don Hoyt moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Mr. Bill Curtis seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

Ms. Landholm informed the committee that the sections of the State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP, that had been distributed at the January RPO meeting are now outdated. A copy of the new STIP has not been posted on ALDOT’s website. Even if the new STIP was available, it would become outdated once the stimulus projects are announced. Therefore, the unprogrammed needs assessment that was discussed at the January meeting will be delayed until the post-stimulus STIP is released.

Under “New Business”, no officers were present to report.

Ms. Landholm stated that she is still in the process of recruiting a new staff member to replace former RPO Program Facilitator Patrick Hall. Mr. Hall had left East Alabama to work for Chattanooga’s Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Mr. William McDaniel, of ALDOT's 4th Division, gave an update on ALDOT's projects in Chambers, Coosa, Randolph, and Tallapoosa Counties. Mr. McDaniel distributed handouts listing current projects, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Mr. McDaniel began with a review of County and City projects. There are several projects under different stages of development in Chambers County. The bridge over Oseligee Creek on County Road 1289 is scheduled to be let in May. Plans for the industrial access road at the Cusseta Industrial Park should be ready in a few months. Mr. McDaniel commended Chambers County Engineer Henry Hawkins on his use of an innovative paving technique for the County Road 1267 reclamation project. As long as the road has a good base, this process is more cost-efficient than using plant mix. Chambers County also has submitted six bridge projects in the event additional funding becomes available. Mr. Hoyt explained that the County had gotten several projects "shovel ready" in preparation for the stimulus funds. Mr. McDaniel added that each county received \$265,000 in stimulus funds in addition to the annual \$500,000 in Federal Aid.

Mr. McDaniel then discussed this year's Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant cycle. He stated that \$15 million of Alabama's stimulus funding has been allocated to the TE program. Recipients of the stimulus funds will not be required to provide local matching funds. The regular TE program will fund a project using 80% federal monies and 20% local matching funds. ALDOT determined that 109 projects were eligible to compete for the stimulus funds. Plans for these projects must be submitted to ALDOT by October 2, 2009. The stimulus funds will be distributed on a first-come first-served basis. Local governments not receiving stimulus funds will compete for the regular TE funds. Mr. Hoyt stated that he has been talking with the City of LaFayette about applying for TE funds for downtown improvements. Mr. McDaniel informed him that the 2009 application cycle has ended, but ALDOT will begin accepting applications for the 2010 TE cycle in May 2010. This year, the City of Valley submitted a TE application to fund a connection for its rail-trail. The City of Roanoke has submitted an application for downtown streetscaping. The City of Alexander City has submitted a TE application to fund sidewalks north of the City Hall. Local governments in all but Coosa and Cleburne Counties submitted a TE application.

Ms. Landholm asked when the County Road 7 resurfacing project would begin since the contract has been awarded. Mr. McDaniel responded that construction should begin within the next couple of months. Clay County also will receive funds to resurface part of County Road 7. Another project in Coosa County is resurfacing County Road 41 from Stewartville to the Talladega County line. That project is still in the design phase.

Ms. Landholm asked about the public hearing on the re-routing of AL Highway 22, which was recently held in Roanoke. Mr. Eric English replied that it was one of the better public hearings he has attended. Overall, people are in favor of the new route. Continuing with Randolph County, Mr. McDaniel explained that HRRR is a Federal Aid program for safety projects such as striping, super elevation of curves, new signage, guard rails. Randolph County has submitted five applications for HRRR projects. Design work for the Randolph County Road 82 resurfacing project is nearing completion, and construction should begin in the near future.

In Tallapoosa County, contracts are being executed with East River Construction for the County Road 21 resurfacing project. The Transportation Enhancement project on Broad Street in Alexander City is nearing completion. The Adams Drive project at the Thweatt Industrial Park was funded through the Industrial Access program and is awaiting final inspection.

Regarding the handout on US and State Route projects, Mr. McDaniel asked the committee to review the projects, and ALDOT staff would respond to questions. Regarding the new letting dates for the Osanippa bridge replacement and I-85 welcome center projects, Mr. McDaniel explained that the dates were moved due to lack of funds. Ms. Landholm asked about the location of the welcome center. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard informed her that the new welcome center will replace the existing facility on I-85 southbound, at which time the Tourism Department will move into the facility. Ms. Landholm commented on the US Highway 431 projects. Local governments have expressed a desire for additional lanes. Mr. Leonard stated that, although no lanes will be added, left turn lanes will be added at major intersections during the resurfacing projects. Ms. Landholm added that the passing lanes in Randolph County do an adequate job of keeping traffic moving; however, in Chambers County, it is very difficult to pass slow-moving vehicles due to the short distance between no-passing zones. Mr. Leonard stated that the Division has passed along concerns about the need for passing lanes on US Highway 431 in Chambers County, including identifying locations where passing lanes would be feasible.

Mr. McDaniel and Mr. Leonard informed the committee that the State received less stimulus money than anticipated. Alabama received just over \$500 million. After suballocating funds to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and the counties, about \$413 million remained. About half that amount has to be let to contract in 120 days. The remaining funds, including MPO and county funds, must be authorized by March 1, 2010.

There were no motions or resolutions.

There was no "other new business."

The "special program" on the stimulus funding was addressed under "new business."

Under "persons wishing to be heard on matters not included in the agenda", Ms. Landholm asked if the State had any plans to improve AL Highway 50 or county roads paralleling Highway 50 between LaFayette and the Alabama/Georgia state line. Highway 50 being a two lane highway with no direct alternate route appears to have been affecting LaFayette's chances of attracting a Kia supplier. General consensus was that no passing lanes are scheduled to be constructed on Highway 50, and no county roads parallel Highway 50. Mr. Hoyt informed the committee that two companies that located in the Cusseta Industrial Park were offered large incentives to locate in LaFayette, but they did not want to move away from the Interstate.

Under "Open Discussion and Announcements", Ms. Landholm announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee for the Central District is scheduled for Thursday, July 23, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in the ALDOT Division 4 office in Alexander City.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.