

Tuscaloosa County Road Improvement Commission (TCRIC)
Meeting Minutes - - - September 28, 2020
Tuscaloosa County Annex Auditorium

Commission Member Attendees: Judge Rob Robertson – Chairman; Mayor Walt Maddox; Mayor Donna Aaron – Vice-Chairman, Jim Page, Randy Skagen, Rep. Rich Wingo; Rep. Chris England; James Brown (ex officio)

Other Attendees:

Nicole Hampton; Kelly Johns; Kim Palm; Scott Anders; Paul Reed; Ashley Adams; Mike Mahaffey; Eddie Pugh; Tera Tubbs; Glenda Webb; Susan Snowden; Doug Varnon; Jack McGuire; Wallace McAdory; Brad Darden; Russell Ware; Clay Randolph; Tito Carlo; Dennis Stripling; Zach Wolfe; Steven Polunsky; Gerald Allen; Craig Williams; Brad Matthews; Josh McCoy (via telephone)

Judge Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Vote: Minutes of the August 31, 2020 TCRIC Commission meeting and the September 15, 2020 TCRIC Special Commission meeting were unanimously approved after a motion by Randy Skagen, seconded by Rep. Rich Wingo.

Officer Elections

Pursuant to TCRIC by-laws, officer elections are held each September.

Vote: After a brief discussion, Mayor Maddox nominated Judge Robertson to serve as Chairman. Rep. Wingo seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

Judge Robertson nominated Mayor Maddox to serve as Vice-Chairman. The nomination was seconded by Randy Skagen, and passed unanimously.

Update: Validation Petition for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Jack Warner Parkway Improvement Project (MLK/JWP)

Nicole Hampton (Rosen Harwood) reported: The City has filed a validation petition in advance of bond issue for a larger set of projects, including the MLK/JWP roadway project. The final hearing on the validation has been set for October 15, 2020.

Financial Report

Kim Palm presented the accounting report. The September 2020 deposit (from July 2020 sales tax collected) was \$719,800, which was a 1% decrease from September 2019. The ledger balance as of September 21, 2020 was \$9,114,845.81.

The actual deposits from October 2019 through September 2020 is \$9,127,197 and the budgeted deposit total during that same time is \$9,318,963. The actual and projected expenditures from October 2019 through September 2020 were \$4,996,061 and \$12,375,247, respectively.

Project Updates: SR-69 South Intersection Improvements

Timeline of Obligations

Nicole Hampton presented a summary of the TCRIC/ALDOT funding agreement and structure of the SR-69 South at SR-7 project. The funding agreement specifies that:

- ALDOT will fund the preliminary engineering costs (less \$900,000 paid by TCRIC).
- TCRIC will fund Right-of-Way (ROW) and Utility costs.
- ALDOT will fund 62% of the total project and TCRIC will fund the remaining 38%. That calculation will be based upon the construction bid less the contributions previously made by ALDOT and TCRIC.

To date, TCRIC has paid \$900,000 for engineering, \$1,879,702 for ROW, and \$1,708,231 for utilities. Based on the March 2019 agreement between ALDOT and TCRIC, the total estimated contribution from TCRIC is expected to be \$25,000,000.

Finance Advisor Update & Report from Finance Committee

Josh McCoy (PFM) gave the financial advisor update. Bryant Bank confirmed recently that the line of credit proposal previously provided in 2019 has expired; McCoy is communicating with Bryant Bank staff to determine what is needed to renew the proposal.

There was discussion regarding the timeline for financing, and if ALDOT would require the full agreement amount to be in hand prior to letting. James Brown reported that he would expect ALDOT to require the full amount.

Because letting is tentatively expected in September 2021, but funds will first be needed for ROW and utilities, there was discussion of first using a line of credit, and then pursuing long-term funding closer to the time of letting.

Mayor Maddox reported that a draft budget for Fiscal Year 2021 will be presented by the Finance Committee at the October 26, 2020 TCRIC meeting.

ALDOT Project Timeline (SR-69 South Intersection Improvement)

Brad Darden (ALDOT) shared a Gantt chart of the project schedule and critical path between now and project letting (tentatively September 2021). All dates shared are tentative and subject to change. The project is currently in ALDOT ROW acquisition. Following this, the City of Tuscaloosa and Alabama Power Company will need to acquire utility ROW and relocate utilities. The presented schedule shows the ALDOT ROW to be completed October 31, 2020, and the utility relocation spanning from late October 2020 through April 2021.

Darden stated that the engineering plans are complete and have been vetted for cost and project timeline efficiency by an outside consultant.

There was discussion regarding the ingress/egress of business locations during construction. ALDOT confirmed that all business entrances will remain open and accessible. TCRIC requested that ALDOT provide more detailed information regarding business ingress/egress at the next TCRIC meeting. There was also discussion of communicating the plans and traffic impact to businesses near the project area.

Resolution 20-015: Resolution Authorizing Reimbursement of \$1,129,702 to the Alabama Department of Transportation for Right-of-Way Expenditures on SR-69 South at SR-7

Vote: After discussion, a motion was made by Jim Page to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mayor Maddox, and passed unanimously.

Update on Traffic Relief for SR-69 South Intersection Improvements

Kelly Johns reported that ALDOT, County engineering, and TCRIC legal counsel have been reviewing projects that may relieve traffic during the SR-69 South Intersection Improvement project.

- Bobby Parks Dr to Waco Rd.: connecting the existing roads will require a temporary railroad crossing over a KCS line. KCS will not consider a permanent crossing unless three existing crossings are closed. However, KCS will consider a temporary crossing, and will require KCS to perform to work over the railroad line. The current cost projection for this project is \$300,000 to \$500,000. There is also a concern over the source of payment for this option since it does not involve an HB600 roadway. Hampton will continue to investigate the compliance question.
- Bear Creek Cutoff Rd.: ALDOT has performed a model of extending the left-turn lane on Bear Creek Cutoff Rd at Highway 215. In order to extend the turn lane, the roadway will need to be widened. This will require a City of Tuscaloosa water line to be relocated. Johns will continue to gather information on the cost of this project option.
- Old Greensboro Ave to Kauloosa: Motorists currently drive from Old Greensboro Ave, through a grassed area running parallel to SR-69, to access Kauloosa Ave. Previously, ALDOT reviewed an option to connect Old Greensboro to Whigham Place (which connects to Kauloosa Ave). However, this project would require ROW acquisition through at least 5 parcels, and over 1,000 feet of roadway to be built. A project cost has not been determined, but ALDOT believes it would exceed \$500,000.

Additional Project Updates

Johns provided additional project updates:

- Union Chapel Road project is ongoing, and expected to be complete by the project contract deadline (October 30, 2020).
- US-82/SR-69 Intersection: ALDOT has recently selected a consultant, and will begin preliminary engineering.
- US-82/University Blvd: ALDOT met with the designer/engineer in late August 2020, and reviewed four options. Later this month, ALDOT will select one of the four options, and then the engineer will begin the design plans.

McWright's Ferry Road: Randy Skagen asked if the information on the TCRIC website for the McWright's Ferry Road project is current. There was discussion regarding communication with the public for the project plans and status. Mayor Maddox reported that the project requires 47 tracts to be acquired. Initial letters have been sent to property owners and the appraiser is in the field for processing. Currently, Maddox expects construction to begin in FY 2022.

Brad Darden (ALDOT) provided additional project updates:

- SR-69 South Turn Lane Additions: A request has been made to ALDOT to extend the project deadline to October 17, 2020; the contractor ordered signal structures in May 2020, however, due to COVID-19 production delays, the signals have not been procured.
- US-82 (SR-69 to Rice Mine Road): As previously reported, ALDOT has done a feasibility study on slope changes, and has removed some of the major retaining walls previously proposed. The project is currently in ROW acquisition.

- I-59/I-20 (not a TCRIC project): ALDOT reported that ongoing work includes painting the underside of bridge this week. The replacement arches are expected to arrive this winter, and be in place in Spring 2021.
- Lurleen Wallace Blvd (not a TCRIC project):
 - Mayor Maddox shared safety concerns for motorists entering Lurleen Wallace North, from 15th street on-ramp, and then turning left. ALDOT will monitor, and has recently added signage to address this.
 - Randy Skagen shared concerns regarding the new location of signal poles on Lurleen Wallace Blvd North. Signal poles are now located in-line with the left-turn lanes; the turn lanes do not continue from one intersection to the next. Skagen suggested ALDOT evaluate and consider making signal poles more apparent (i.e., add reflective material).

Public Comment

Judge Robertson opened the session for public comment.

Senator Gerald Allen suggested the Commission provide additional information to the public regarding the McWright's Ferry Rd project by way of a mailer or a public meeting in the future.

Next Meeting

The next TCRIC Commission meeting date was previously set for October 26 at 7:30 am, at the Tuscaloosa County Annex Auditorium.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41am