

**DIXIE TRANSPORTATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (DTEC)
MINUTES
September 19, 2012**

PRESENT

Jim Eardley, Washington County Commission
Mayor Dan McArthur, St. George City
Mayor Chris Hart, Ivins City
Mayor Karl Wilson, LaVerkin City
Kyle Gubler, LaVerkin City
Gail Bunker, St. George City
Jeff Turek, Washington City
Mike Shaw, Washington City
Cameron Cutler, St. George City
Pam Humphries, Washington City
Arthur LeBaron, Washington City
Myron Lee, Dixie MPO
Dave Demas, Dixie MPO
Jerry Lewis, UDOT Commissioner
Nathan Lee, UDOT
Matt Ence, Santa Clara City
Dean Cox, Washington County

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eardley called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm. A quorum was confirmed.

MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of August 15, 2012

Motion: Motion by Councilman Jeff Turek to Approve the Minutes of August 15, 2012. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Gail Bunker and carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS - None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Introduction to MPO Boundary Review Process

Myron Lee said that discussion of expanding the MPO boundaries to include the RPO

has brought several issues to light: the financial benefits to both entities; other benefits to having a larger MPO; the voting and funding structure (local match monies). The DTAC has asked for some research on these questions, and he presented a rough spreadsheet comparing and contrasting the local matches and voting structures of different MPOs in Utah and the Flagstaff MPO in Arizona. Right now, the Dixie MPO has eight voting members, with \$7,000 per vote share. St. George City has three votes, Ivins, Santa Clara, and Washington City have one vote each, and the County and UDOT each has one vote. The County, however, participates with an in-kind contribution rather than a dollar amount. The funding structure is a contribution per capita. If we were to merge all eight communities into one MPO, we could probably drop the vote share down.

a. Inclusion of Additional Communities

There was a recent suggestion from the County and UDOT to look at the inclusion of Virgin, Rockville, and Springdale within the MPO planning boundary. The guidelines for drawing an MPO boundary are, first, areas that look as if they will become urbanized within the next twenty years (1,000 people per square mile density). Preliminary looks at those three communities do not indicate that they will reach that population in that period of time. The new transportation authorization bill, MAP 21, uses funding formulas that are changing. Using two bubble charts (attached), it is evident that funding will be changed. Previously, the money flowing into the MPOs and Joint Highways was divvied up by population. The new decision from UDOT is to retain the \$40.7 million within UDOT rather than distribute it to Small-Urban areas (5,000 to 200,000 population) or Non-Urban areas (0-5,000), which takes away a significant amount of money from the MPO. A letter to John Njord at UDOT dated August 29, 2012, indicates that over the past five years, under the old model, the MPO allocated over \$5 million to state roads. By taking that option away, it eliminates a partnership opportunity with UDOT for state roads. Mr. Njord's response is that UDOT is determined to follow the letter of the law in its distribution of funds. Further, the goal of MAP 21 over the next two years is to keep the Dixie MPO allocations level at \$2.2 million. For the next two years, then, UDOT will provide the additional \$567,000 to the MPO. In 2015, that will end, and we will be reduced to \$1.6 million.

Nathan Lee clarified that it is a percentage, not a dollar figure, so the MPO funding will be reduced approximately eight percent in 2015, depending upon earmarks and other things that may affect those apportionments over the years. Commissioner Eardley said that this also depends on revenue sources maintaining their current levels in the years to come. Nathan Lee gave a brief history of the MAP 21 bill to the committee.

Previously, UDOT was operating under what was a continuing resolution of the previous bill. Money is programmed through 2014, and UDOT is trying to balance the gap between the new rules of MAP 21 and the old rules of the continuing resolution and keep all the MPOs' operating budgets that are already programmed into the STIP operating at the levels they were previously. From 2014 on, the MPOs have to assume that there will be a new bill or continuing resolution of MAP 21 which will show the reduction of funds that has to be addressed. There are several reasons for the reduction in funds. The total dollars of MAP 21 are not any different from the last bill, so where did the money go? Into the safety category, primarily, for projects that communities and the DOT can apply for.

From there, they changed how money was distributed. MPOs got a different allocation of funding. Now there is an HCPP, or one single pot of money based on arterial route classification. There are routes that are no longer on the state system that now fall within the funding category where they didn't before. Several years ago, UDOT changed its categories to something similar to what is in the MAP 21 bill, where there were Level I and Level II roadway systems.

All projects require a management system which has to address funding issues to be able to apply for funding. Mayor Hart asked what a management system is, and Nathan said it is a process for defining the condition of a road and classifies it for maintenance, replacement, and rehabilitation, to demonstrate that the money used from the federal government goes to the road with the highest need. MAP 21 essentially requires that all roads get treated based upon the management system analysis, not some other method of selective improvement.

Myron Lee directed attention to the TIP spreadsheet and explained that certain amounts were projected, along with certain revenues, and there is now a discrepancy in the balance. The \$900,000 that was anticipated in the past has gone to \$560,000 for 2013-2014. In 2015 and beyond, the number goes to zero. This means that there is nearly a million dollar deficit, and that money needs to be raised some other way.

As we discuss merging the MPO with the RPO, the big question is, What does that do to our funding levels? There may not be any additional funding coming as the result of a merger than what we have used to program already, and the RPO/JHC monies will decrease as well. The MPO will go from programming \$2.2 million worth of projects a year back to \$1.6 million. If we bring the RPO communities into the MPO, then instead of the \$1.6m we would be able to program \$1.9m, which is less than what we're programming now, but more than what we would have separately. Mayor McArthur said we would just spread the money out over more needs. Myron pointed out that we're

talking about \$1.5-2 million per year, which in terms of a road project is not a lot of money. Additionally, there are more than just financial advantages to having a joint planning effort, especially in terms of regional plans.

At this time, DTAC is looking at the vote shares. Right now, the MPO vote share is \$7,000 per vote. In Hurricane, LaVerkin, Toquerville, and Leeds, that is divided up differently: Hurricane is putting \$16,000 into the RPO, LaVerkin is contributing \$8,000, and LaVerkin and Toquerville are each contributing \$4,000. By coming into the MPO, some of the planning money would be taken from the UDOT planning program and moved into the MPO program. The TAC would like to work out some vote share recommendations and bylaw changes, with pros and cons specified. Whatever happens, however, the \$900,000 contribution from UDOT over the past twelve years will be going away. Mayor Hart clarified that UDOT has taken \$600,000 of discretionary money from the MPO/RPO communities and will use it as UDOT deems fit based on the management plan. As shown on the chart, the MPO has lost ten percent and UDOT has gained ten percent.

Nathan Lee said that the State is taking 50% of the total pot of money, and UDOT directs that money to where the management system says it should go. Mayor Hart asked what roads would qualify under the MPO management plan. Nathan said the money would go towards principal arterials, such as St. George Boulevard and SR-9. Commissioner Eardley commented that this is a disturbing trend towards less local control and more centralized decision-making at the state and federal levels. Mayor Hart says it sounds like this plan draws a lot of rural roads into this system that have to be accounted for in the management plan, so it's taking dollars away from certain areas and focusing on others. Nathan said the Transportation Commission has chosen to allocate additional funds to smaller MPO areas, giving the roadways the same value regardless of the category of the roadway. He said he would bring a Transportation Commission presentation next month to show the distribution of funds among the various categories of roads.

Commissioner Eardley emphasized that the topic at hand, the merger of the MPO and RPO, requires further clarification. Mayor Hart asked Mayor Wilson what his views are insofar as the merger is concerned. Mayor Wilson said this issue was discussed in the RPO meeting, and his community is very interested in exploring it. He would like to know the status of the vote share and funding structures and the distribution of money. Myron said that the formulas have now changed, going from a 60/40 to a 50/50 distribution, and large sums of money will disappear in two years, so it's difficult to pinpoint an exact amount. MAP 21 has only been in effect since August 1, and UDOT is still fine-tuning the distribution of funding.

Arthur LeBaron said that the RPO communities have no approved transportation programs, no TIPs, they just meet and recommend projects through UDOT, although they have no funding. If the RPO became part of the MPO, they would bring the small urban money with them to the MPO. Recently, he asked LaVerkin, Toquerville and Leeds if they had ever used their non-urban money for which they are eligible to apply; they said no, we've never used that money. If they entered the MPO, that money would remain here and benefit this area. If the RPO joins the MPO, the biggest benefit in his opinion is that the RPO would have some planning funds available to it, where now there are none. The RTAC desires to be involved in any subsequent discussions concerning this issue.

Mayor McArthur suggested further discussions concerning this matter because there is not enough data to make a decision at this time. The group agreed with this opinion.

Dave Demas said that the MPO met recently with Mayor Grow of Leeds to determine his interest in joining, and he was interested in pursuing the topic to see how his community would benefit, what the costs might be, etc. Myron said that whatever the MPO decides to do in terms of expanding its boundary would need to meet the requirements of the Federal Highway Administration. Essentially, the FHA's position is that if it looks as if an area will urbanize within 20 years, bring it in; otherwise, don't. Also, worth considering is the fact that plans can be amended as circumstances change over time.

UDOT/FHWA BUSINESS

No additional items were presented.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012, in the Downstairs Conference Room of the Washington County Administration Building located at 197 E. Tabernacle St., St. George, Utah, at 12:00 p.m.

Having no other business, Chairman Eardley adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Christine Hall