

Date: May 28, 2004
To: I-85 Corridor Initiative Executive Council
From: Larry Fillmer
I-85 Corridor Initiative Program Manager
Subject: May 27, 2004 Executive Council Meeting Minutes

The I-85 Corridor Initiative Executive Council convened at 9:00 a.m. CDT on Thursday, May 27th at the Valley Community Center. We thank Valerie Gray and the Valley Community Center for your hospitality and for hosting the meeting.

The attendees at the meeting were:

1. Margaret Bentley – Alabama Power
2. Jerry Clement – Batson-Cook (Educational Services Cluster)
3. Cary Cox – Auburn Training Connection – City of Auburn
4. Ralph Foster – Office of Outreach – Auburn University
5. Al Giffin – Center of Transportation Research – Auburn University
6. Valerie Gray – Industrial Development Authority – Chambers County
7. Margaret Gunter – Alabama Commission on Higher Education
8. Dean Matheson – Interport/SDS
9. Les Porter – Tuskegee University
10. Brian Ransom – Panther Technologies Group
11. Christie Sellers – Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce
12. Jenci Spradlin – City of Opelika
13. Andrew Smith – OTF Group
14. Joe Sumners – Economic Development Institute – Auburn University
15. Ray Vaughan – Wildlaw
16. Larry Fillmer – I85 Corridor Initiative

Larry Fillmer and Andrew Smith gave the Executive Council a status report on the initiatives and programs that had been outlined for the I-85 Corridor Program in the *Guiding Strategy Document*. They also reviewed the progress on draft concept papers that are in process for the East Alabama Innovation Partnership Center (IPC) and the East Alabama Program for Tourism and Sustainable Development. Andrew committed to provide the Executive Council with the latest copies of the draft concept papers as well as a copy of his presentation under separate cover.

Andrew also reported that the I-85 Corridor Initiative *Guiding Strategy Document* was now complete and all comments and changes had been incorporated. Andrew will also

electronically distribute copies of the document to the Executive Council shortly. As part of its work, OTF has proposed to the Executive Council an off-site *Leadership and Competitiveness* training program for the Executive Council and other leadership members of the I-85 Network. While this program is now only in the discussion stage it will continue to be a priority for Q3 2004.

Larry and Andrew also discussed with the Executive Council the need for an I-85 Network Meeting. The last meeting of the I-85 Network was held in Montgomery in early February 2004. The meeting has been tentatively planned for July 8th in Auburn. The agenda for the meeting will include the following:

- I-85 Corridor Initiative Update
- Cluster Updates
 - Regional Branding in Transportation Technology
 - I-85 Leadership in Sustainability and Environmental Tourism (Tourism and Community Development Cluster)
 - Business Development in the I-85 Corridor
- Guest Speaker - TBD

Executive Council members were encouraged to bring forward other agenda items that they feel should be discussed at this broader group meeting. Early next week an email will be sent out to members of the I-85 Network asking them to reserve the date on their calendars. A more formal invitation letter will be sent out from David Wilson and Les Porter in early June.

Larry Fillmer led the Executive Council through a discussion regarding the possibilities of creating a *Charter and Articles of Incorporation* for the I-85 Corridor Initiative. The reasons for this discussion are outlined in detail in the concept document that was distributed to the Executive Council prior to the meeting. In summary, there are basically three models that have been observed regarding how other regions are handling these types of initiatives. The following summarizes the three models:

1. The first is a continuation of the implementation model outlined by the OTF Group in its *Guiding Strategy Document*. This includes the formation of an Executive Council, which has been accomplished, and the establishment of a Governing Board to oversee the major programs of the I-85 Corridor Initiative. While the Governing Board membership has been proposed, it has been difficult to obtain involvement from key leaders due to the level of attention required for other high priority issues at this time. Because Auburn University's financial obligation to the program is completing, remaining with this model will require the identification of another benefactor to fund operating and capital expenses that are inevitable requirements to establish permanence for the I-85 Program.
2. The second approach is to create a "loosely coupled" alliance of interested parties who provide a limited amount of funding, basically to support a web site and some marketing material describing the capabilities of the region. This model is currently employed by the I-59 Technology Corridor <http://www.i-59ms.com> in Mississippi and by the I-99

Innovation Corridor <http://www.i99.org> in central Pennsylvania. In both of these cases, contact coverage regarding answers and replies to inquiries (telephone, email and regular mail) is provided by one of the regional development offices. Funding for the web site is provided by a private organization.

3. The third option is to create a non-profit entity (501c.3), which is funded by the private, public and university sectors. This structure would have a small permanent staff, including a Program Manager/Executive Director, and would be governed by a Board of Directors or Trustees. This structure has been adopted by the Team NEO in Northeast Ohio.

Larry recommended that the Council Members consider these options over the course of the next month and proposed that a decision regarding which option to adopt be considered at the June 24th Council Meeting. Given the time that may be required to establish the by-laws and gain IRS recognition of the 501c.3 status., the Executive Council recommended and approved that Larry Fillmer and Ray Vaughan proceed with preparing a *draft* document which would cover the articles of incorporation. Larry was also requested to provide the Executive Council with a potential annual operating and capital budget, if the decision was made to proceed ahead with the articles of incorporation.

Brief reports were provided by Jerry Clement and Dean Matheson regarding the Educational Services Cluster and the formation of an Infrastructure Cluster. Jerry reported that he and Larry Fillmer had met with Ed Castille, AIDT and Cary Cox of the Auburn Training Connection. Both meetings were very helpful in identifying the need to re-examine the role of the Educational Services Cluster and the programs that it might undertake. Jerry will convene the necessary follow-up meeting(s) with the Educational Services Cluster to gain consensus on the redirection of this cluster's efforts.

Dean Matheson reported that an initial meeting of the Infrastructure Cluster had been held. So far the companies expressing interest in the Infrastructure Cluster are: Interport/SDS, Alabama Power, Batson-Cook, ITC Deltacom, Federal Express, Averitt Transportation, AMSouth Bank, and Porter Properties. At the initial meeting, an overview of the I-85 Corridor Initiative was presented and each of the participants agreed to follow-up discussions. Dean will begin to take the steps to organize this cluster and identify the initiatives and programs that will be identified for the cluster.

Larry Fillmer also reported on the "*Taste of the Corridor*" program held in Tuskegee on May 8th. An I-85 Corridor Booth was present along with representatives from the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and Auburn-Opelika Convention Bureau. Additionally, the Capitol Inn of Montgomery and Whispering Oaks Restaurant participated.

Brian Ransom from Panther Technologies attended the meeting and gave a presentation on what would be involved in developing a more extensive and interactive web site for the I-85 Corridor Initiative. Some of the concepts had been discussed at earlier meetings

and the Executive Council had requested an update on what the next steps might be. Brian's presentation is attached and although no specific action was taken by the Council regarding the approach, it was accepted that there will be a need for an extensive requirements study to be performed before specific design work begins on the more interactive web site. The Executive Council thanks Brian for his efforts and for the time and consideration put into his presentation.

The next meeting of the Executive Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 24th from 8:00-10:00 a.m. CDT. The tentative location for the next meeting will be the National Center for Asphalt Technology in the Auburn Technology Park on South College Street. An agenda and confirmation of meeting location will be sent to the Executive Council in mid-June.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. CDT.