

DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

February 15, 2011

1. Call to Order

Chairman Archibald called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

Mr. Archibald expressed interest in making the city council chambers the permanent MPO Policy Board meeting place because of its facilities, including microphones, adjacent meeting room for executive sessions, ability to have technical committee chair sit on the podium, and monitors for viewing presentations.

2. Approval of Minutes for December 21, 201 Meeting

Approval of minutes was deferred to the next Policy Board meeting.

3. Consideration of Selection of Project to Use Category 3 Urban Mobility Funds

Mr. Condry presented background information:

- TxDOT recently said there is approximately \$410,000 available in the District
- has to be obligated by end of this fiscal year
- fairly wide variety of projects eligible
- only state roads
- technical committee prepared a list of potential projects
- even as we discuss, things (costs) are changing

Mr. Condry stated that there is a short time period to identify, prepare, and let projects, so we have listed (in packet materials) issues, such as environmental (various projects have various durations of environmental work to be performed), costs listed are very general, and there is a column of information regarding other work that must be done.

The technical committee made a priority list of projects that contains more projects here than funds, because there are issues that may make individual projects not feasible for the deadlines.

Mr. Garduno stated that this money is the remainder of funds that TxDOT Administration said is available. I was given the opportunity to trade for Category 1, but Blair and I spoke and figured it was best to let the MPO choose Category 3 project(s).

The Policy Board discussed various projects as summarized below:

- Mr. Archibald stated that having a signal at the Expo would be a major safety improvement and confirmed that some preliminary work for that has been accomplished. Mr. Condry clarified that the \$100,000 figure is a best estimate, but can be decreased by approximately \$20,000, because wiring was previously taken care of.

- Mr. Haynie stated that there have been concerns at the Clack @ Antilly intersection with traffic backing up from the stop signs. A free-right-turn would be a very appropriate fix for that intersection. We would possibly have to purchase right-of-way (ROW) from Abilene Regional Medical Center (ARMC); but we have determined that we could shift things and do it within our existing ROW. Mr. Archibald confirmed that this improvement would be compatible with future one-way frontage road conversions. There was discussion about whether anyone needed to contact (ARMC) about potential donation of ROW. It was determined that would not be necessary. The only environmental concern would possibly be the pond; it could be addressed hydraulically, but the environmental issue would have to be investigated. It would be a 1 ½ to 2 month process to prepare the environmental document. Mayor – if you are turning right and the car in front is going straight, you have to wait a while.
- Item 7 is now estimated at approximately \$420,000, so it is over the funds available.

Mr. Spurgin confirmed that we can move down the list as projects have problems.

Mr. Haynie – we can have signal warrants completed within couple of weeks.

- Item 2 – there is going to be a new waste facility near the Dyess Air Force Base that will generate additional traffic. Mr. Archibald stated that there will be a very large number of refuse trucks using that intersection.
- Item 3 – there have been lots of accidents and fatalities – residents in that area will appreciate a signal; it is a high-speed road. Mr. Haynie mentioned a person who has reported concerns about people driving through his fence there.

Mr. Garduno clarified that if the total expenditures on the projects slightly exceed the estimated \$410,000, it will not be a problem.

Mr. Archibald – 2 safety factors are 3 and 4, if you do 1 and 2, you hit 430k, so over by ~20k. Does that amount make those projects doable?

Yes.

Mr. Archibald – I think your priorities are right on target – addressed safety and increased traffic at the waste facility.

Mr. Garduno – maybe we ought to look at the top four, but if the warrants fall out, then we could move to the next two and still be able to do enough projects to spend the money.

Mr. Condry stated that was the rationale of the technical committee.

Mr. Spurgin asked for clarification about signal warrants.

Mr. Garduno stated there are numerous considerations; engineers look at all of them and determine if they are met. The warrants are not designed to have signals turned off part of the time and turned on for special events.

There was discussion about the need to potentially synchronize signals when one is added.

Can they all be done simultaneously or should they be prioritized?

Mr. Condry – some preliminary work is being done simultaneously, but we should prioritize them.

Mr. Garduno – would there be any heartburn on technical committee if we moved 1-4 around?

Mr. Condry – they were grouped, not necessarily in order of priority.

Mayor – I would put 3 and 4 at top of list based on safety issues.

Mr. Garduno made a motion to work off list of priorities from technical committee, looking at their priorities, and working down the list to spend the available funds, putting 1, 3 and 4 first for safety purposes, followed by 2, 5, followed by 6 if money until funds are expended or other possibilities arise. Mr. Spurgin seconded the motion. *The motion passed.*

There was clarification and consensus that additional ROW from ARMC we won't be needed.

4. Consideration of Issues Related to Preparation of FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program and Revision of FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Condry explained that this item relates to the FY 2012 UPWP and is included to offer the Policy Board an opportunity to provide any input they desire into the draft UPWP. He stated that if members don't have any input today, please communicate any issues or concerns to staff. You can go to web site and look at UPWP. Staff needs comments by mid-March, for a draft to be submitted by April technical committee and Policy Board meetings.

There was discussion regarding public involvement related to the UPWP. It was pointed out that there are no public involvement requirements for UPWP, but that it may be a good idea to do some anyway, including the draft UPWP. Mr. Garduno is going to look into the potential benefits of having public involvement in the UPWP development process.

Other points made include that you can look at the UPWP as a budget and that people may not be interested in the specifics of the UPWP, but that it may be good to get public input on what they would like to see studied related to transportation. Such activities will likely yield competing interests representing every part of the community.

Mr. Condry pointed out that this is mainly a discussion item, but the Policy Board can take action by directing staff any way it sees fit.

There was discussion about the content of the UPWP not changing significantly over many years and that the MPO's type of work has not changed much from year to year in that time period. The bulk of what we do is the same type of work from year to year. It was pointed out that if there are special equipment needs or studies, then those issues are different and need discussion.

Mr. Condry stated that the MPO staff anticipates another UPWP very similar to this one, with an emphasis on the travel demand model update related work.

Mr. Allen stated that there have been discussions regarding the potential need to get a consultant to help with demographic projections, especially with the current transition in staff.

Mr. Spurgin confirmed that staff is looking at census information.

Mr. Allen stated that staff uses projections performed by a state agency and then will determine where the population will grow specifically in the Abilene area.

Mayor said that the MPO should consider public involvement for the UPWP process so the public has the opportunity to provide input.

Mr. Garduno stated that we do have public involvement for projects in the TIP.

Mr. Spurgin stated that it would be important to explain exactly what we are trying to accomplish with the public meetings.

Mr. Garduno suggested that the UPWP can include an item to help educate the public on what the MPO is and does.

5. Consideration of MPO Staffing Issues

Mr. Archibald said that the Policy Board will go into Executive Session to discuss a position that has been advertised. With only 3 members present (Mr. Spano had to leave the meeting early), we may postpone that.

Mr. Condry stated that the MPO has advertised for the transportation planner position – a couple of applications will be forwarded to Mr. Condry soon.

6. Consideration of Open Meetings Act Issues

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. Consideration of Issues Concerning MPO Technical Committee and Management Structure

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Financial Status and Planning Work Progress Report

Mr. Condry explained that the MPO is still trying to work with Finance to get the report the Policy Board desires. The meeting packet included a spreadsheet that is the same as what the City provides to TxDOT. We do not currently track expenses by subtask.

Mr. Garduno asked TTI to put together examples of how this is done around the state. Mr. Clark will put together how the other six MPOs in the West Region do this. It was stated that it would require some changes if the Board wants expense tracking by subtask.

Mr. Garduno stated that at some point, the public is probably going to want to know how the money is being spent. It was stated that the MPO staff could possibly put that together instead of from the City. It was pointed out that the MPO expenses are trending well so far through this fiscal year. Mr. Garduno stated that we should be able to explain why no money is budgeted for certain tasks.

Mr. Allen reported that MPO staff has accomplished substantial amount of work on creating a table of equivalencies for census geography and traffic analysis zones (TAZs). An announcement was made last week that Census Bureau redistricting data will be available this week; it will include housing counts and population. Mr. Allen has received first set of questions about network and TAZs from TPP and has begun addressing them. We have been working with Bill Frawley of TTI to make the staff transition smooth and keeping all work efforts moving forward.

9. Discussion of Status of Transportation Projects

Mr. Condry gave a summary of each project:

- Drainage project completed.
- Frontage roads and related concrete work is going well, even though delayed by weather – probably about 3 weeks later than originally predicted.
- Curb ramp construction is finished in Abilene.
- Pavement markings project has been delayed by weather, other work, materials availability, and maintenance going on. This work was primarily result of public input through web site, according to Alan.
- Wayfinding project is very nearly complete; Mr. Archibald stated that public feedback has been great.
- Landscaped median on Pine street is underway.
- Alley work in Champions Subdivision – one piece done.
- Transfer lane rehab project – painting fixtures, etc. – is underway.
- Bus shelter project is still being developed.

Mr. Spurgin asked if recent rain event was handled well by work on Winters Freeway frontage roads – Alan said it seemed to be. Mr. Garduno said that the project did what we wanted it to do (per discussion with another engineer).

10. Opportunity for Board Members to Recommend Topics for Future Discussion or Action

Mr. Spurgin stated that there should always be an agenda item to get public input.

The Policy Board convened in Executive Session for personnel issue updates pursuant to Open Meetings Act provisions at 2:47 pm.

Chairman Archibald reconvened the Open Session at 3:04 pm.

No action was taken in Executive Session. The Policy Board will likely conduct MPO Executive Director interviews between now and next meeting in April.

11. Adjournment

Chairman Archibald adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.