



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
JOINT MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD and
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 28, 2012**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee held a joint meeting at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 28, 2012, in the Basement Conference room in the Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Policy Board Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene, Chairman
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County
Abilene District Engineer Lauren Garduno, P.E., Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Policy Board Members Absent:

Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene

Technical Advisory Committee Members Present:

Mr. Chad Carter, City of Abilene City Engineer
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene, Director, Traffic and Transportation Department
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene, Director, planning and Development Services
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene, Director, Public Works Department
Mr. Mike McMahan, Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Area Engineer
Mr. Blair Haynie, P.E., TxDOT TP&P
Mr. Ben Herr, CityLink Transit
Mr. Tommy Downing, Dyess AFB Engineering Designee
Mr. Tom Smith, WCTCOG Executive Director

Technical Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Mr. Roy Wright, P.E., TxDOT
Mr. Don Green, City of Abilene Airport Director
Mr. Randy Williams, Taylor County Commissioner
Mr. Gaito Taylor, Jones County Commissioner
Ms. Nancy Moore, Mayor of Tye
Mr. Jack Sharp, Mayor of Impact
Mr. Jerry Perkins, City of Tye Public Works Director

Others Present:

Ms. Sylvia Leal, Congressman Neugebauer's Office
Mr. Stanley Smith, City of Abilene, Assistant City Attorney
Ms. Darah Waldrip, TxDOT Public Information Officer
Mr. Mike Vandervoort, National Federation for the Blind
Ms. Mary Kendrick, National Federation for the Blind
Ms. Debra Turner, National Federation for the Blind

MPO Staff Present:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO Staff
Mr. Thomas Cook, Abilene MPO Staff
Mr. Dean Carter, Abilene MPO Staff

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Archibald noted that Councilman Joe Spano is unable to attend this meeting and called the joint meeting of the Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Board and the Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. He noted that there was only one item on the agenda to consider.

2. Discussion and Consideration of a Recommendation for Project Rankings for the Transportation Enhancement Program.

Chairman Archibald asked if the Technical Advisory Committee had discussed the projects and were ready to share their recommendations.

Ms. Smetana said this was presented to the Technical Committee and they haven't taken official action on it so we are having this joint meeting today to make a recommendation. She said she would discuss the project and Mr. Haynie will discuss the scoring criteria.

Ms. Smetana explained that on September 14th TxDOT announced a program call for candidate Transportation Enhancement projects. There is about \$35 million available for statewide funding for the smaller MPOs. The Abilene TxDOT asked the MPO to help them with the ranking of projects in the MPO area. As of the deadline, November 16th, there was only one project within the MPO area. The project was submitted by the City of Abilene and it is for the South 11th Street Transportation Alternatives Project from Treadaway Blvd. west to Elmwood Drive. There will be a continuous sidewalk along one side of the street and bike routes will run both directions the entire project length. The total project cost is \$1,182,775. Ms. Smetana stated that she has submitted a letter stating that if the funds are granted the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be amended to include this project.

Also included in the packet is the 2012 Texas Transportation Enhancement Program Guidelines which show provisions for pedestrians and bicycles. Paragraph B, Federal TE Categories, Point 1, titled, Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, which states: "Activities in this category must be principally for transportation rather than recreation. Successful projects are those that connect people to places in their communities, i.e. construct walking and biking trails to link communities, shopping, schools, businesses, and parks. Amenities that enhance these facilities such as lighting, landscaping or street furnishings are also eligible activities".

Mr. Haynie said there is about \$70 million available, half of which went to the Transportation Management Areas, or TMAs (the large MPOs). The other \$35 million will be divided up among the Districts which could be used by the TMAs competing with the smaller MPOs. Mr. Haynie said he and Mr. Garduno sat down and discussed the process and both thought it was a good idea to invite the MPO to participate by helping TxDOT in the decision-making process. This is not a requirement across the state – this is something Mr. Garduno wanted to do in the Abilene District. TxDOT is looking for priorities in ranking the projects. The form that is shown in the agenda packet is basically the TxDOT form used to rank the projects they see within the Districts.

TxDOT received two projects – the South 11th Street Transportation Alternatives Project and one from Clyde which does not enter the MPO boundary, so these projects will be ranked separately.

TxDOT wants to make sure that the MPO and the Policy Board are comfortable with this project being submitted and want it to move forward. Mr. Haynie said we can go through the entire scoring process but since we only have the one project it really would not be necessary to spend

time doing this. TxDOT simply wants to know if this is the project we want to move forward with and if it is our top priority.

Mr. Garduno commented that this appears to be a good candidate for Safe Routes to School funding, since it ties several schools and neighborhoods together. Ms. Smetana referenced the map that was included in the packets which shows that this project was part of the Abilene Safe Routes to School Plan.

Ms. Smetana addressed the Technical Advisory Committee asking for a motion stating that this project does meet the scoring criteria and they would like to recommend it moving forward to the Policy Board. This motion was made by Mr. Jon James and the second was by Mr. James Condry.

The Technical Advisory Committee motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Archibald asked the Policy Board members if anyone had any questions or thoughts, or reasons why we should not pursue this grant application, to speak up.

Mr. Garduno commented that he thinks this is a sound project.

Chairman Archibald stated that when he thinks of pedestrians he thinks of this project as meeting lots of needs. He said there are many traffic segments, vehicle and pedestrian, that go north and south. This will help greatly because it goes east and west cutting across segments where there are elementary schools, parks, activities, and so forth. This reaches out to a good cross-section of the city.

Judge Bolls asked Mr. James if there will be any taking of property for right-of-way. Mr. James responded that he believes the City already has sufficient land to do this project. Judge Bolls also asked whether property owners will be required to share part of the construction cost for the portion that crosses their respective parcels of land. Mr. James stated that when a property owner buys the land it is up to the developer to include any sidewalk cost in at the time of development. Long-term maintenance does however fall to subsequent owners of the land.

Chairman Archibald asked for a motion to accept the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee to proceed with the submittal of the Transportation Enhancement project as it has been outlined. Judge Spurgin made this motion and the second was by Mr. Garduno.

Motion passed.

Mr. Haynie stated TxDOT will be submitting the projects with their scoring to Austin next month. Ultimately the Transportation Commission will be selecting the projects statewide for funding. He thought this would be in April.

Chairman Archibald asked if there were opportunities to speak to the Commission in favor of a project. Mr. Garduno said this has been done in the past. Mr. Haynie replied that he was not sure but he would find out and let the Board know.

12. Adjournment.

Chairman Archibald said the next scheduled meeting of the Policy Board is scheduled for January 22nd. Ms. Smetana said the MPO might be moving in January so this date may have to be rescheduled. If it has to be rescheduled, the MPO would let everyone know.

With no further business, Mayor Archibald adjourned the joint MPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee meeting at 1:54 p.m.