



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD  
November 15, 2012**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Thursday, November 15, 2012, in the Basement Conference Room in the Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

**Members Present:**

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

**Members Absent:**

None

**Others Present:**

Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT West Region, MPO Coordinator  
Ms. Darah Waldrip, TxDOT Public Information Officer  
Mr. Chad Carter, City of Abilene City Engineer  
Mr. James Rogge, City of Abilene Traffic Engineering  
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene, Director, Public Works Department  
Ms. Theresa James, City of Abilene, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Tom Smith, WCTCOG Executive Director  
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Area Engineer  
Mr. Blair Haynie, P.E., TxDOT TP & P  
Ms. Chris Moscarelli, City of Abilene, Finance Department  
Mr. Mike Vandervoort, National Federation for the Blind  
Ms. Debra Turner, National Federation for the Blind

**MPO Staff in Attendance:**

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 called the meeting of the Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Board to order at 1:35 p.m.

**2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the September 18, 2012 Meeting.**

Chairman Archibald asked if there were any corrections, additions, or deletions to the minutes as presented of the September 18, 2012 meeting. Hearing none, the motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Judge Spurgin and seconded by Councilman Spano.

*Motion carried.*

**3. Discussion and Consideration of Approval on an Amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).**

Ms. Smetana referenced a Federal Highway Administration letter, dated September 14, 2012, that was handed out at the meeting. This letter added some requirements that the UPWP be amended by December 1, 2012 to show work to be done under Task 4 for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Staff has made those changes and in addition, has added a change to Task 1.6 (Office Mobilization) in preparation for the MPO office relocation that asks for an outside company to expedite the move of offices. In the Budget Summary for Section 1.6, the amount has been changed from \$10,000 to \$18,000, and the corresponding totals changed from \$144,000 to \$152,000, and the total budget from \$180,500 to \$188,500. This amount also includes the possible increase in rent and utilities associated with office relocation. Ms. Smetana discussed the corresponding change in the Budget Summary sheet for FY 2013 including a reduction in the estimated carryover amount to \$300,449.

Ms. Smetana stated that the Technical Advisory Committee recommended approval of these amendments at their November 6, 2012 meeting.

Mayor Archibald asked for a motion to approve these amendments to the FY 2013 UPWP. The motion to approve this FY 2013 UPWP Amendment, as stated above, was made by Councilman Spano and the second was from Mr. Garduno.

*Motion carried.*

**4. Discussion and Consideration of Approval on the FY 2012 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER).**

Ms. Smetana said that the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) is an annual requirement and it is based on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The APER takes those task we said we would accomplish in the UPWP and shows how those were done. The APER is normally due by December 31<sup>st</sup>, but we received a letter from TxDOT dated October 22<sup>nd</sup> requesting that the APER be submitted to TxDOT Regional by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Smetana explained that in the APER what was in the UPWP is in black and below that, in blue, is the work product (what the MPO has accomplished in that particular task). There are three budget summaries: the Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) are comprised of FHWA PL-112 funds plus FTA Section 5303 funds (MPO funds); the FTA Section 5307 funds (CityLink Transit funds); and Local funds which are used as match for the 5307 Transit funds.

Further discussion was held on the funds programmed, authorized, expended, and the remaining balances in each respective category. In Task 4.1, Travel Demand Modeling, the amount spent in this category is 4.63% of the total amount programmed. Any time there is an expenditure of less or more than 25% of the programmed amount we have to justify why. We will add an explanation/justification for this task that due to new staff members, necessary training, and staff spending time performing required work in Tasks I, II, and III, thus, resulting in the amount programmed in Task IV not being optimized. It is not unusual for different tasks to reflect less than programmed amounts from year to year because each year the principle focus may shift to a different task.

Ms. Smetana noted the TAC had concerns regarding the nearly identical percentages of funds spent in Tasks I, II, and III in both 5307 and Local funds. The City's Finance Department

provides the Section 5307 and the Local funding information and numbers directly to the MPO. We asked them about these numbers and percentages, and all are correct. There was discussion on the numbers, percentages, and other details. Ms. Moscarelli from Finance addressed the questions and concerns, and explained the current accounting process. She commented that some categories appear to be over-budget, but in fact all of the line items are within budget. The problems were the result of amounts programmed being submitted by different transit personnel and then not periodically updated as it should have been. Ms. Smetana stated that the MPO has a meeting scheduled in December with Finance and CityLink to streamline the process and to set-up a timeline to get information faster and to keep the numbers up-to-date to avoid the appearance that we overspent in any given task. Identifying situations such as these will allow the MPO to amend the UPWP much faster if or when it becomes necessary.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recommended approval of this FY 2012 APER at their November 6, 2012 meeting.

The motion to approve the FY 2012 Annual Performance and Expenditures Report (APER) as presented was made by Chairman Archibald and the second was by Judge Spurgin.

*Motion carried.*

**5. Discussion and Consideration of Approval on the FY 2012 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (APL).**

Ms. Smetana stated that the APL is similar to the APER report but the information comes from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This report tracks the work obligated in the TIP.

Mr. Cook stated that the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (APL) is also a required document that is due by December 31<sup>st</sup> but TxDOT Regional wants it by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The information pertaining to the Highway Projects Section was provided to the MPO by TxDOT and the Transit Section information was provided by CityLink.

He explained this is an obligation report. The FTA defines “obligation” as the time when the transit funds are awarded. The FHWA defines it as the point when a contract is signed or executed. This is an important distinction. The obligation date determines which projects need to be included in this report. When an FHWA project is obligated it may not be completed for two or three years, but it will appear only for the fiscal year the project was obligated. Both the APER and the APL reports are Federally-required documents but strictly speaking they do not have to be approved by the Policy Board but this is a good way to keep the Board informed of the work accomplished and the financial status of the MPO. Mr. Cook further explained the individual line items and that the total cost for highway projects was \$18,513,544 and transit was \$3,787,360 which equaled a grand total of \$22,300,904. Further discussion was held.

Ms. Smetana said the TAC recommended approval of this APL report at their November 6, 2012 meeting.

Judge Spurgin made the motion to approve the FY 2012 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects report and the second was by Mr. Garduno.

*Motion carried.*

**6. Discussion and Any Recommended Action on the MPO/TxDOT/City of Abilene Planning Agreement.**

Ms. Smetana explained that the current planning contract expired on September 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. At the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting the Policy Board approved the MPO to move forward with the contract that was provided at that time. City Council approved that contract on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The contract was submitted to Austin and their legal staff has asked for additional revisions to the contract.

There are a couple of changes we wanted to make you aware of. On page 2, Article 1.B, TxDOT legal counsel took out that portion where the City of Abilene had the option to extend the contract, so that now it states it is at TxDOT's sole discretion to extend the agreement if they want to.

Article 26.A refers to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) section. The City's legal staff removed this section entirely and sent the agreement to TxDOT for their review and comments, and TxDOT reinserted the total, original requirements back into the agreement. The FHWA sent a letter to the MPO dated July 26 stating the DBE provisions do not apply to MPOs because the MPOs perform planning work and PL-112 funds do not have any DBE requirements. However, Section 5303 funds do have this requirement and this is why this provision has to be in the agreement. At the TEMPO meeting a couple of weeks back it was noted that some MPOs had taken this section out completely and received signed contracts, while other MPOs had this section reinserted in its entirety. There seems to be considerable inconsistency, and considerable confusion, on how this section is or is not applied. We are leaving the language in place but recommending adding the phrase, "The requirements of the DBE Section pertains to the MPO *as applicable*". At this time we have not heard back from TxDOT Legal.

In Section 39 of the Agreement, Single Audit Report, specifically Point C, is a repetitive requirement. If the MPO exceeds the \$500,000 then you just do this automatically. Plus, it does not identify the person or department to submit the report or letter to. At this time, we are in a wait-and-see mode to see TxDOT's response to the proposed changes. This revised agreement from TxDOT was emailed out to the Policy Board on October 25<sup>nd</sup>.

*Informational only; no action was required or taken.*

**7. Discussion and Review of Transportation Projects.  
(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)**

Mr. Hufstutler discussed the status of several TxDOT projects: (1) FM 600 from IH-20 to FM 3034 was completed and accepted last month. (2) FM 2833 (E. Lake Road) from SH 351 to Jones County Line – all work was completed with the exception of the final seal coat and pavement markings last month. In order to place the hot rubber final seal coat in acceptable weather conditions time charges were suspended until May 15, 2013 or earlier if TxDOT deems weather conditions are favorable. Time charges and work will resume at that point and it should take a couple of weeks to finish. (3) Fort Phantom Hill Visitor's Center – basically complete, but there is still a couple of "punch list" items that need some work and we are waiting for a required Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR, Architectural Barriers Section) inspection that has been requested. He anticipates it will take about a month to receive their response. (4) FM 89 between US 277 and the Nolan County line – west end completed last month except the final surface seal coat - working on the 3 miles between Richey Creek and the completed west end. This should be completed this month and work will move to the section

between US 277 and Richey Creek. It is still slightly ahead of schedule. (5) I-20 Frontage Roads Project – is off to a good, strong start and progressing well – it will not require work on the ramp or travel lane closures until after Christmas. (6) US Hwy 83 between FM 707 (Antilley Drive) and Iberis Road has approximately \$300,000 in repairs but had not yet started due to an emergency within the contractor’s organization. Base failure repair work is anticipated to start in the next couple of weeks. Once started it should be completed in about 3 or 4 weeks, and then around next mid-May they will finish up the seal coat; (7) Another project is to fix some roads at the State School which will start after Christmas and will consists of performing some rehabilitation work that is mandated.

Ms. Smetana informed everyone there was a hand-out describing the City of Abilene’s projects that was not included in the packets.

Mr. Chad Carter, the City Engineer, then described the work going on in the City of Abilene:

(1) Water Department street and miscellaneous repair work: on-going throughout the city and throughout the year as they repair pavement cuts for water line work; (2) Drainage, street, and sidewalk improvements including work at Leggett and South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, down to Danville, then to South 14<sup>th</sup>); (3) There is a list of streets that will be resurfaced with hot mix; (4) There will also be improvements to the intersection at Leggett and South 7<sup>th</sup> Street; (5) they will be doing some sidewalk work around Bonham Elementary School, and then paving the street between Pioneer Drive Baptist Church and Bonham. Miscellaneous repair work: (1) reconstructing the low water crossing on Ben Richey Drive; (2) worked on Industrial at Treadaway; (3) some new sidewalks around Abilene High School; (4) rebuilding the intersection at Robertson at Arrowhead; (5) repairing miscellaneous bridge rails that have been struck. Miscellaneous seal coat projects: (refer to handout to see the limits of the area where that work will occur); (2) right now there is nothing that has been bid but not awarded by City Council. Projects in the design phase: (1) South 1<sup>st</sup> Street from Locust to Butternut (enhanced with landscaped and lighted medians). They just had a 50% review by TxDOT and they are in agreement with the design at this point; (2) Cobb Park-Westwood-Richland Street rehabilitation - this is a hot mix project to go along with next year’s seal coat project (the hot mix is for the higher volume streets); (3) repaving and installing some sidewalks along EN 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Treadaway to Judge Ely.

Mr. Herr with CityLink was unable to attend this meeting and will update the Board at a later meeting.

*Informational only; no action was required or taken on this item.*

## 8. Discussion and Review of Reports:

- **Financial Status**
- **Operation Report**
- **Director’s Report**
  - **Transportation Enhancement Program**
  - **Event – Walk to School Day October 3<sup>rd</sup>**
  - **MAP-21 Use of Performance Measures in the MPO Process**
  - **Schedule for the 2013 Policy Board Meetings**
  - **Transportation-Related Events for 2013**

- **Financial Status**

Ms. Smetana presented the financial information and stated that in the packet is the closeout spreadsheet for FY 2012 which matches the APER report that was approved

earlier in this meeting. The totals are: \$532,218.31 authorized, \$250,038.59 expended, thus leaving a balance of \$282,179.72 for carry-over. Also included are the August and September billing summaries. We have received our first authorization for FY 2013. The first Work Order is for FTA 5303 funds in the amount of \$49,524.00.

- **Operation Report**

Ms. Smetana stated the detailed Operation Report is for the period of September 15<sup>th</sup> through November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The detailed list is lengthy and is included in the packet but a few highlights include: the Walk to School Day on October 3<sup>rd</sup> which was very successful; we completed the APER and APL reports; helped with the Transportation Enhancement call for projects; held access management discussions on SH 351; researched office space locations and negotiated contracts; prepared maps and attended training.

- **Director's Report**

- **Transportation Enhancement Program**

Ms. Smetana explained that on September 14<sup>th</sup> TxDOT announced a call for Transportation Enhancement projects. The Abilene City Council, at their November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, approved application for the South 11<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Alternatives Project from Treadaway Blvd. west to Elmwood Drive. There will be a sidewalk primarily on the north side between Elmwood Drive. Bike routes will run both directions the entire distance. (This is a bike *route*, which uses the existing vehicular travel lane, versus a bike *lane*, which has a striped, dedicated portion of the lane ROW exclusively for bicyclists). The total project cost is \$1,182,775, with 80% (\$946,220) derived from federal funds. The 20% local match of \$236,555. The MPO Executive Director will provide a letter stating that if the funds are granted the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be amended to include this project. TxDOT has asked the Abilene MPO to help rank the projects received within the MPO boundaries. Transportation Management Areas, or TMAs, are the larger MPOs and will receive about \$35 million of the approximately \$70 million available. The TMAs will be ranking projects in their respective areas, but they can also compete for funds from the remaining \$35 million. The deadline for submittal of projects is November 16<sup>th</sup>.

- **Event – Walk to School Day**

Ms. Smetana said we are happy to report we had a Walk to School Day on October 3 and everyone considered it very successful, with approximately 150 students participating. There were many great partnerships throughout the town, and considerable media exposure. This year we concentrated on two schools – AISD's Jackson Elementary and Wylie ISD's Junior High. We plan on expanding to include additional schools next year. We had great partners including both school districts, the City of Abilene Police, Fire, Planning, Traffic and Transportation Departments, Melvin Martin Center for Children's Safety, TxDOT, many media outlets, and citizens. The main purpose was to get the message out that there are children walking to school and to make drivers aware so they will be more cautious.

- **MAP-21 – Use of Performance Measures in the MPO Process**

This is included to draw your attention to, and be thinking about performance measures criteria that MAP-21 requires MPOs to come up with. Additional

information can be found at [www.dot.gov/map21/](http://www.dot.gov/map21/). More information will be progressively forthcoming from Federal Highways to TxDOT, and from TxDOT to the MPOs.

○ **Schedule for the 2013 Policy Board Meetings**

**TECHNICAL**

**ADVISORY**

(Normally 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday at  
1:30)

January 8

March 5

May 7

July 9

September 10

November 5

**POLICY BOARD**

(Normally 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at  
1:30)

January 22

March 19

May 21

July 23

September 24

November 19

At this time no one had any anticipated conflicts with any of the TAC meeting dates. If a conflict arises, that particular meeting date can be changed accordingly.

Mr. Garduno, the Abilene District Engineer, commented that TxDOT has four regional support centers across the state (Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Lubbock) and a General Services division that oversees the whole fleet, procurement and facilities statewide, plus consultant contracting and MPO coordination with the Regions. TxDOT is consolidating all of these activities under one department and he has been promoted to the Chief Programs Officer dividing his time between Austin and Abilene as he oversees this operation.

Mr. Garduno will remain on the Board until he is replaced by whoever is selected as the Abilene District Engineer. This will probably happen in December or January. Mayor Archibald highly commended his service to the Board and the citizens.

○ **Transportation-Related Events for 2013**

We plan to concentrate on these four events in 2013, and in the foreseeable future:

- Bike to School Day (May 8)
- Bike to Work Day (May 9) (bicycles)
- Ride to Work Day (June 17) (motorcycles/scooters)
- Walk to School Day (October 8)

We plan to do other events/activities during the year as appropriate and as time permits, with some potentially becoming annual events. Some possibilities are:

- Partner with CityLink and the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) National "Dump the Pump Day" in June
- National White Cane Day – October 15<sup>th</sup> annually

*Informational only; No action was required or taken on this item.*

**9. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Interlocal Lease Agreement. (Executive Session)**

Chairman Archibald announced that the Interlocal Lease Agreement, will be held in open session, not in Executive Session.

Ms. Smetana said the MPO staff is happy to report that the MPO has signed a lease with Prosperity Bank (formerly the American State Bank) at Cypress and 4<sup>th</sup> Street and are hoping to move in January. We will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor – the area with the offices will be in Suite 519 and the conference room will be just down the hall in Suite 509. The bank is making some ADA improvements to the building by installing an automatic entrance door opener and modifying restrooms to be compliant. They have until March 2013 to complete the ADA requirements.

Ms. Smetana stated that we have received estimates from moving companies and the estimates range from \$800 to \$1,400. We will evaluate the estimates and companies to see which one will provide the best service. Our rent will increase about \$100 per month. Other expenses we will incur are Internet service (currently provided by the City), one-time fee for an Internet firewall, and our phone system, which will run about \$2,800. The Bank is putting in new walls and re-arranging doors so we will all have offices. The conference room is very nice with lots of storage and even a small break room.

*Informational only; No action was required or taken on this item.*

**10. Opportunity for Members of the Public to Make Comments on MPO Issues.**

Mr. Mike Vandervoort, with the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) thanked TxDOT, the City, the MPO, and all the folks in government that he's been working with and is thankful that progress is being made. He thanked everyone for paying attention to the needs of those with disabilities. He has emailed and talked to a number of folks that, as a member of the public, he is still confused as to who does what when it comes to specific projects. He said there is a need for an audible signal to get from North 1<sup>st</sup> Street under the tracks to South 1<sup>st</sup> Street to have one fully accessible pathway from one side of town to the other. He knows that is not part of the South 1<sup>st</sup> Street project funding. His question/concern is, who do we ask? TxDOT? The City? The MPO? Who do we go to and how do we get the funding necessary to get these signals? Mr. Vandervoort said we (the blind community) would like to spend the time talking with the right agency or department. The blind community is requesting one fully protected crossing between the north and south parts of town. They aren't particular where it is located, just so they have a safe crossing on the South 1<sup>st</sup> Street project. Mr. Chad Carter told Mr. Vandervoort he is the person he needs to talk to. Mr. Carter explained that two audible crossing signals will be installed when this project is constructed – one at Oak Street and one at Butternut. Mr. Vandervoort said this is fantastic.

Ms. Smetana told Mr. Vandervoort that if he is ever in doubt about who or what agency to contact, do not hesitate to contact the MPO and we would help him coordinate with the appropriate agency or person.

**11. Opportunity for Board Members or MPO Staff to Recommend Topics for Future Discussion or Action.**

Ms. Smetana said the following will be presented at the next meeting:

- Public Participation Plan Update



- Project Selection Process
- Collision Data Report

Councilman Spano asked if there are any plans to do anything on South Clack Street (at Nonesuch Road, where pedestrians have to walk in travel lanes on South Clack Street because there is no pedestrian bridge over Elm Creek). Mr. Spano said 3 people have approached him in the last month about school children from the apartments that have to go to a bus stop and they're walking in the street because there is no place to cross the creek. He said he doesn't know if anything can be done in the near future, but he would like to discuss this issue.

Ms. Smetana said when the City was evaluating projects for the Transportation Enhancement grant this site was looked at.

**12. Adjournment.**

With no further business, Chairman Archibald adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 3:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2013.