



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

May 21, 2013

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 21, 2013, in the Abilene City Hall, City Council Chambers, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene, Chairman
Mr. Herbert Bickley, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene District Engineer
Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County

Members Absent:

Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County

Others Present:

Mr. Chad Carter, P.E., City Engineer, City of Abilene
Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT MPO Coordinator, West Region
Mr. James Condry, Traffic & Transportation Administrator, City of Abilene
Mr. Ross Davis, Jones County Commissioner
Mr. Blair Haynie, P.E., TxDOT TP & D Director, Abilene District
Mr. Ben Herr, General Manager, CityLink Transit
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Area Engineer, Abilene District
Mr. Jon James, Director of Planning and Development Services, City of Abilene
Ms. Mary Kindrick, National Federation for the Blind
Mr. Ed McRoy, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services, City of Abilene
Ms. Michelle Nall, Disabilities in Action
Mr. James Rogge, P.E., City of Abilene Traffic Engineering
Ms. Megan Santee, Director of Public Works, City of Abilene
Mr. Stanley Smith, City of Abilene Legal Department
Ms. Darah Waldrip, TxDOT Public Information Officer, Abilene & Brownwood Districts

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Executive Director, Abilene MPO
Mr. Thomas Cook, Transportation Planner, Abilene MPO

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Archibald called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. He stated that Judge Bolls could not be here today but a quorum was present.

2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the March 19, 2013 Meeting.

Chairman Archibald asked for approval of the minutes of the March 19, 2013 meeting as presented. The motion was made by Councilman Spano and seconded by Judge Spurgin.

Motion carried.

3. Discussion and Consideration of Approval of the DRAFT Fiscal Years 2014-2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Ms. Smetana explained that the UPWP is the MPO's budget and includes the MPO and transit planning activities. The UPWP has historically been an annual document, although Federal law permits UPWPs to be written for two fiscal years. This is the first time the Abilene MPO is writing a two-year UPWP which will save a lot of staff time next year since it will already be written and approved. Ms. Smetana further explained that depending on the tasks and subtasks, some work items will not change from year to year while others may be included in only one year. One important point to note is the funding amounts are estimates only – they are good estimates from TxDOT but no official figures are available at this time. The Federal funding for FY 2014 will decrease to an estimated \$201,361, and for FY 2015 the amount is projected to decrease to about \$191,687. Last year the MPO spent about \$250,000 and carryover funds had to be used. As funding levels continue to decrease, the unobligated carryover funds will have to be used to supplement the budget but this can only continue for maybe four or five more years. This draft is being submitted to the Policy Board today and then will go to TxDOT by June 3rd. TxDOT will provide any comments back to the MPO by July 1st. The final UPWP will go to the Technical Advisory Committee on July 9th, the Policy Board on July 23rd, and to TxDOT by August 5th.

Ms. Smetana further discussed specific parts of the UPWP:

Task 1.1, Computer Hardware/Software: We are researching opportunities to better improve customer relations and staff time and we are looking at dual screen monitors, smart screens, and/or tablets. We are also currently borrowing an older network server from the City. We have been having issues and we are not sure if it is the server that is causing the slow response times and other problems. There is a possibility that we might have to order one, so it is included in the UPWP. Subtask 1.8, Performance Measures: This is a new requirement of MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) and has been included so we can take care of this. All MPOs are required to account for their planning through the use of performance measures review. Subtask 2.1, Geographic Information System (GIS) and Data Analysis: The Travel Demand Model (TDM): This task focuses on getting ready and having everything necessary on board so we have an updated TDM. This is the GIS portion of the TDM – there is a different section of GIS primarily for other mapping tasks. Subtask 3.1, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Task focuses on the new fiscal years 2015-2018 TIP development. Subtask 3.5, Access Management: We are looking at ways to increase safety and mobility, especially on Arterial streets and highways. Subtask 4.1, Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): Update will be due in January of 2015 and staff will be working towards this. Subtask 4.6, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning: The MPO will be helping the City Planners with a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Ms. Smetana continued by explaining the UPWP Funding Summary for each of the five major tasks and their respective subtasks, and the funding for each. In the past we have had to complete the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) 5303 form. They are no longer needed but the task breakdowns are in the funding summary. There are five different tasks and each one has a breakdown of funding. The funding summary for FY 2014 shows an estimated \$151,837 from FHWA, \$49,524 from FTA Section 5303 funds for a total of \$201,361. To make the budget balance we will have to use about \$78,639 in unexpended carryover funds, for a total FY 2014 budget of \$280,000. The funding summary for FY 2015 shows an estimated \$142,163 from FHWA, \$49,524 from FTA Section 5303 funds for a total of \$191,687. To make the budget balance we will have to use about \$68,313 in unexpended carryover funds, for a total FY 2014 budget of \$260,000. After subtracting out the carryover funds used to balance the FY 2015-2015 budgets, an estimated \$158,195 in unexpended carryover funds remains.

Mayor Archibald made the motion to approve the draft as presented here today and to send it on to TxDOT. Councilman Spano seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

4. Discussion and Consideration of Approval of the Amendment to the Fiscal Years 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Smetana began by saying the TIP lists the projects that are going on in our MPO area. This can include such undertakings as trail projects, pedestrian walkways, vehicle, and bicycle facilities. This is an amendment to include the City's South First Street Project. This was included in the previous TIP, and the reason for this amendment is to include it in the current TIP so we can move forward on the project.

Mr. Cook said that in the FY 2011-2014 TIP the dollar amounts shown were \$597,118 Federal plus \$149,280 City of Abilene, for a total amount of \$746,398. Since the money was received during the then-current TIP it was thought unnecessary to carry it forward into the new TIP. Mr. Cook further explained that on the day of this meeting, we received additional information from TxDOT that the \$746,398 number was not correct. The amounts should be \$701,675 (Federal, 80%) and \$175,419 (the City of Abilene's 20%) match, for a total of \$877,094, plus 100% of all costs over-runs. The estimated City cost is \$175,419 (the regular Local 20% match) plus \$261,925 (Local Contribution, or LC; all costs above the 20%) for a total of \$437,344. The new total projected cost is \$1,072,488.

Mr. Haynie came to the podium and explained how and why the TxDOT numbers changed. Then Mr. Chad Carter came up to the podium and explained how the revised engineering costs and other factors pushed the total cost higher than what was first approved. Mr. Jon James explained that the City funded this project from a number of different sources, such as the Sidewalk Funds, discretionary funds of the Engineering department, and other identified sources so all of the potential "overrun costs" had specific, identified sources of funding prior to submitting the TE application so there should be no actual additional costs to the City.

Mr. Haynie noted that this amendment needed approval today if it was to be included in TxDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Ms. Smetana said that if approved, the MPO has to advertise that it is available to the public for 10 calendar days to provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on it, and arrange a public hearing. If it was not approved today, it could not be submitted to TxDOT until the next amendment call, which would delay the start of construction for several additional months and could potentially result in the loss of these funds. She also noted that if there was opposition or other problems or concerns, the project could be withdrawn at a later time. Mr. Haynie said that it could be withdrawn at any time up to the time that it goes to letting.

Mr. Spano asked Mr. Haynie, if the Policy Board approves this draft amendment today, could he and Mr. Chad Carter provide accurate figures at the next Policy Board meeting? Mr. Haynie replied that all TxDOT needs are revised estimates from Mr. Carter.

Mayor Archibald asked, if this is the City's project and the grant was from TxDOT, why is the MPO involved? Ms. Smetana answered that the Policy Board is not approving any money or funding – the Board is approving the MPO's TIP amendment to include this project into our current TIP so it can be integrated into the Statewide TIP.

Chairman Archibald made the motion to approve the South 1st Street Project TIP amendment and that we move this forward for publication and submission to the State for their review to meet the August 31, 2013 deadline. Councilman Spano seconded the motion.

Mayor Archibald noted that receiving final figures the morning of a meeting and requesting immediate action is not a good way to do business.

Motion carried.

5. Discussion on the Census Designated Urban Area Boundary Adjustment and the Abilene Functional Classification.

Ms. Smetana said at the January 22 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting a subcommittee was appointed to look at the functional classification of the roadways and also the urban area boundary. The subcommittee, comprised of Mr. Haynie, Mr. Hufstutler, Mr. Condry, Mr. McMahan, Mr. Clark, Ms. Smetana, Mr. Cook, and Mr. Dean Carter, met twice. The submittal date to TxDOT for the packets was April 30th. The information was provided at the March 1st TAC meeting and the March 19th Policy Board (PB) meeting. The packets were sent to the TAC and the PB on April 26 for their review and then submitted to TxDOT. We received comments back from TxDOT and the subcommittee will meet this week to discuss their comments. There was one change made after the information was sent out. Antilley Road, from Twin Oaks Drive west to FM 707, was originally listed as a Minor Collector. Commissioner Williams pointed out that it functions as a Major Collector but it was overlooked by mistake. This segment was upgraded from Minor Collector to Major Collector. The segment from FM 89 to Twin Oaks Drive was upgraded from a Major Collector to Minor Arterial.

The major change in the urban area boundaries pertains to Air Base Road in Tye. It has been left out from the edge of the city limits of Abilene to the edge of the city limits of Tye, but once it enters Tye it is included in the urban area boundary. Also, part of the Potosi area has been included because of the new growth. There was also a mapping error in the Robertson Prison area. When the maps were updated in 2000, changes were drawn in by hand. Someone added the Geographical Information System layer to the map and Mr. Dean Carter had to make some corrections to this layer. There were eleven changes total to the boundary smoothing.

This is an update only; no action was required or taken.

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

Mr. Hufstutler discussed the status of several TxDOT projects:

(1) FM 2833 (E. Lake Road) from SH 351 to Jones County Line – time resumed last week and the final surface seal coat work started Monday of this week. This job should be completed by the end of June; (2) FM 89 From US 277 to FM 126 – time charges resumed May 15 and the seal coat work started Friday. This job should also be complete by the end of June; (3) US 83 from Antilley Road to Iberis Road – time charges resumed May 15 and the seal coat work is planned for the week of May 20. This job should also be complete by the end of June; (4) I-20 Frontage Roads between Loop 322 and Pine Street – work is progressing well, still planning to change traffic to the inside lanes this fall; (5) State School project was completed last month; (6) Bridge replacement on Old 80 about 1/8 mile east of Loop 322 over Rainey Creek – this project is expected to start sometime this month. There are some issues in Austin related to Disadvantage

Business Enterprises (DBE) approval affecting release of work authorizations for this project. This will close one lane in each direction for about a year; (7) Main Lane Hot Mix Overlay Loop 322 from IH 20 to the Waldrop Interchange – this project is expected to start sometime this month, there are some issues in Austin related to DBE approval in Austin affecting release of work authorizations for this project.

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

Water Department Street & Misc. Repair Work 2012-2013: Drainage, Street, and Sidewalk Improvements (Leggett, South 7th, Danville, South 14th) Includes South 7th and Leggett Intersection, Leggett St., Richmond from Danville to Pioneer, Fairmount from Danville to Pioneer, Waldemar from Danville to Pioneer, Potomac from Pioneer to Leggett, Buccaneer from Potomac to S. 7th, and Sidewalks on Pioneer from S. 14th to 1202 S. Pioneer. **Engineering Division Miscellaneous Repair Work 2012-2013:** Miscellaneous Seal Coat Project 2013 (streets between [Danville, Mockingbird, North 1st, North 10th], [Buffalo Gap Rd, Treadaway, Danville, South 27th], [Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. North 10th, Ambler], [Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. Hwy 80, E. North 10th], and [Sayles, Treadaway, South 14th, South 7th]). **Public Works in the Design Phase:** South 1st from Locust to Butternut (enhancement with landscaped medians), Cockerell Neighborhood, EN 13th Street from Treadaway to Judge Ely, Cobb Park Westwood Richland Street Rehabilitation, and 2014 Seal Coat.

Mr. Herr, with CityLink Projects: Bus shelters – should be completed by next May.

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

7. Discussion and Review of Reports:

- **Financial Status**

Ms. Smetana discussed that we are on track for our billings. We received our April billing and this will be submitted to TxDOT soon. Expenditures to date are \$123,384.47 and our current balance is \$360,219.25. Additional information can be found in the packets.

- **Operation Report**

From March 16th through May 17th the Abilene MPO completed the following:
Some major highlights are listed below. The full list is included in packet.

- Worked on the Functional Classification and Urban Area Smoothing, convened subcommittee meetings, prepared maps, documents, etc., and submitted completed documents to TxDOT.
- Partnered with TxDOT and Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) to conduct functional classification, thoroughfare maps, land-use, access management, and urban area boundary training with approximately 25 attendees from Cities, Counties, and other organizations in and around Abilene.
- Organized and partnered with numerous agencies and private businesses to promote the Bike to Work and Bike to School Day and had approximately 20 and 55 participants, great partners, and wonderful speakers.

- **Director's Report**

- **Bike to Work and Bike to School Day – May 17th**

About 55 children rode their bikes at Dyess Elementary. There was a press conference with several speakers, partners, and other participants. About 20 bicyclists rode from City Hall to the Center for Contemporary Art for lunch. Officer Tracy Gates with the Abilene Police Department was the keynote speaker addressing

safety and awareness, the establishment of the Abilene PD's Bicycle Patrol Officers, and the Melvin Martin Center for Children's Safety.

- **Ride to Work Day – June 17th**
Motorcyclists will be riding from City Hall to Kent's Harley Davidson where Kent's is graciously providing free lunch for everyone for the second year.
- **Frontage Road Conversions**
On May 14th Mr. Haynie with TxDOT met with the Lytle Lake Water Control and Improvement District Board of Directors and invited the MPO to attend. They discussed issues that affected property owners were having. TxDOT will be having a separate Meeting of Affected Property Owners ("MAPO") in June. This meeting is to discuss the project in more detail and to address their concerns
- **South Clack at Elm Creek**
The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has formed a subcommittee to evaluate options for improving this area for pedestrians.
- **State Highway 351 Project**
The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has formed a subcommittee to study options to reduce the number and severity of collisions. TxDOT has been asked to look at possible safety improvements. TxDOT has a consultant under contract and several preliminary designs/options have been created for consideration.

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

Mr. Mike Vandervoort, with the Abilene Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, was not able to be present at today's meeting but he submitted a letter requesting that the City and MPO study and resolve demand/capacity problems with CityLink Paratransit Service. (A copy of his letter was given to the Policy Board members).

In summary, CityLink has peak demand periods and there are issues with some riders not being able to ride when they need to. This is largely due to budgetary constraints. Mr. Vandervoort is concerned that CityLink needs to receive the funding to provide this service to the citizens.

He is also asking that a task force or committee be formed to explore what options are available to remedy this situation. One of his suggestions is for CityLink to have more flexibility in how they spend some of their funding. Mr. Vandervoort thinks CityLink is doing a great job – he just wants to help them improve the system because the demand is so great and ever-increasing. He's looking at better and cheaper ways to reduce the peak demand.

Mr. Herr, with CityLink, approached the podium and said he has talked to Mr. Vandervoort regarding this letter. His concerns were talked about and were discussed at the last Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Herr said Mr. Vandervoort is correct in that this is a capacity issue and CityLink has been struggling with this for quite some time. The bottom line is that demand is high and CityLink has constrained resources. What happens is that a customer may need pick-up at 9:00 but no busses or drivers may be available right then so they have to negotiate with the customer – they may have to go a little earlier or later. Mr. Herr said he is allowed to do this under the American Disability Act (ADA), but he can only do this one hour before or one hour after. Mr. Herr further noted that CityLink struggles with this and does not always meet these parameters. Mr. Herr commented that the cost difference between fixed-route service and door-to-door paratransit service is \$0.25. There are ADA requirements and guidelines to qualify,

however. The general public cannot use this service. One criteria, among many, is that the customer has to have some type of disability that prevents them from riding the fixed-route service. Once qualified, they are eligible to ride paratransit for *any* reason – a medical appointment, shopping, going to a fast-food restaurant, and so forth all have to be handled the same as a medical appointment. CityLink cannot prioritize the customer's destinations. He commented that the fixed-route and paratransit service issues that CityLink and the City of Abilene are facing are the same issues that virtually every city with both services have to deal with; they are not unique to Abilene.

No other suggestions or comments were received.

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

Ms. Smetana introduced Mr. Ross Davis, the new Jones County Commissioner that was in attendance in the audience.

She also mentioned that the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for July 23rd but this date may have to be moved (the City of Abilene's budget sessions are scheduled for the 23rd, 24th, and 25th). Tentatively the date will be Monday, July 22nd at 1:30 p.m.

No other suggestions or comments were received.

10. Adjournment.

With no further business, Chairman Archibald adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 3:11 p.m.