



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

May 20, 2014

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 20, 2014, in the Abilene City Hall, City Council Chambers, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

### **Members Present:**

Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County  
Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene  
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County, and Policy Board Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Stan Swiatek, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer

### **Members Not Present:**

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene Mayor and Policy Board Chairman

### **Others Present:**

Mr. David Bell, Lytle Lakes Water Control and Improvement District  
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene Traffic & Transportation Administrator  
Ms. Kelly Daniel, TxDOT Public Transit (PTN)  
Mr. Texas Fitzgerald, Interested Citizen/Homeowner  
Mr. Blair Haynie, TxDOT Abilene District Trans. Planning & Development Director  
Mr. Ben Herr, City of Abilene CityLink Transit General Manager  
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Area Engineer  
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene Director of Development Services  
Ms. Julia Jerome, TxDOT Austin Office of Public Involvement (OPI)  
Mr. Jay Moseley, Interested Citizen/Homeowner  
Mr. Dennis O'Connell, Director, Lytle Lakes Water Control and Improvement District  
Mr. Gary Robinett, Abilene Industrial Foundation/Chamber of Commerce representative  
Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E., City of Abilene Interim City Engineer  
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene Public Works Director  
Mr. Stanley Smith, City of Abilene Legal Department

### **MPO Staff in Attendance:**

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

#### **1. Call to Order.**

Vice-Chairman Spurgin called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. He noted that for the first time the meeting is being video recorded.

#### **2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 2014 and April 15, 2014 Meetings.**

Ms. Smetana noted three corrections, all in the March 18 minutes: Under, Members Present, District Engineer Stan Swiatek, the Abilene District Engineer, was incorrectly listed as "Interim". Ms. Jill Collett, TxDOT's Traffic Safety Specialist for the Abilene District, was inadvertently omitted. Ms. Darah Waldrip, TxDOT's Public Information Officer was listed as attending but her title was omitted. There were no changes to the April 15 minutes. With these three changes, the

motion was made by Judge Bolls and seconded by Councilman Spano to approve the minutes of both meetings.

*Motion carried.*

**3. Discussion and Any Action on the Timeline, Survey, and Additional Data for the FY 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan MTP).**

Ms. Smetana explained that we have been, and are, working on the 2015–2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The deadline for submission of the Plan is January 2015. We will soon be holding public meetings, asking for public input on projects they would like to see throughout this time period. Included in the packet is a timeline and survey. At the May 6<sup>th</sup> Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) some changes to the survey were suggested that we've incorporated. We have also received some additional changes to the survey but these changes have not yet been included. This public survey is to assess the transportation needs of Abilene and will be distributed in two ways: first, simply as a survey available wherever we can place the survey, such as at the libraries, on our website, at other specific locations around town, at public meetings, on the transit busses and at the Transit Terminal, and mailed/mailed to interested citizens to complete and return. The second method is to contact one of the colleges or universities and have graduate students perform a statistically valid survey. The "regular" survey would tell us what the general public thinks the transportation needs are (e.g., sidewalks or vehicular signals) while the statistically valid survey would tell us the priorities of each of the projects involved. There was some discussion at the TAC meeting on Survey Point 5, "What is the most important transportation problem", and Point 12, "What priority level would you give to each of these elements in the Long-Range Plan". We have received some emails in the last few days and need to add some information to these two points.

Ms. Smetana also explained that a TAC subcommittee has been working on the Project Selection Process (PSP) but at this time it is not ready to move forward so we will be using the old process for the plan. We will continue working on the new PSP and hopefully have it ready in a couple of months. Also, looking at the timeline, each month there is information we have to complete in order to meet these deadlines. The timeline is very tight so at every meeting we will be discussing or presenting some part of this Plan. Today we are asking the Policy Board to approve the timeline and to approve the concept of doing a survey. The timeline and survey do not require Board approval but we want the Board to be fully informed what we are doing and make sure that everyone is in agreement in how we move forward on the MTP.

The motion to approve the concept of the survey and to approve the timeline to be used in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2015-2040 was made by Councilman Spano and seconded by Mr. Swiatek.

*Motion carried.*

**4. Discussion and Any Action on the Loop 322 Committee Recommendations.**

Ms. Smetana began by providing a brief history, starting with the formation of the Loop 322 and Southeast Abilene committee. The committee met twice – once in August 2013 and in March 2014. TxDOT presented some ideas and the committee narrowed them down to two potential solutions that would benefit this area. Mr. Blair Haynie gave an update to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) but they did not take any action on this item at that time.

At this point Ms. Smetana asked Mr. Blair Haynie to update the board on this project. Mr. Haynie said TxDOT presented four options at the committee meeting. He stated that with the help of the four aerial photos and by going over the positives and negatives of each option, the

committee unanimously concluded that a combination of Option A and Option C are the best solutions. In addition, U-turns would also be built at SH 36.

At this point Ms. Smetana introduced Ms. Julie Jerome, with TxDOT Austin's Office of Public Involvement. Ms. Jerome facilitated the March 2014 meeting.

The board had considerable discussion about these options and how each would affect the residents in this area and asked Mr Haynie what the next steps were. Mr. Haynie said the next step is to hire a consultant to get the plans completed, then move into taking care of the environmental work. He also wants to move forward soon with public involvement. The stakeholders' group has been very involved and well represented. He wants to take these options back and present them in a public hearing and let the citizens see what they are moving forward with.

He noted that right now there is funding to complete the plans. The goal is to have this ready to go in FY 2016 but at this time there is no funding for the project.

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

At this point Vice-Chairman Spurgin offered the public the opportunity to express their comments regarding the Loop 322 project.

Mr. Texas Fitzgerald and Mr. Dennis O'Connell expressed favorable comments about both the process and the options available. Mr. O'Connell asked Mr. Haynie if he (or TxDOT) could provide traffic projections regarding Option A to the next stakeholders' meeting.

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

Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., with TxDOT, described the status and progress being made on the following projects:

*Contract Paving: LP 322 one-way frontage road (Lytle Creek to Maple) is slightly behind schedule. They should be completing retaining walls for turn-a-rounds soon and expected to get back on schedule in the next 2 - 3 months. J. H. Strain: IH 20 one way frontage roads is on schedule and expected to be completed this fall. Reece Construction: bridge replacement on East 80 (BI 20-R) is slightly behind schedule with Phase 2 work approximately 25% complete. J. H. Strain: one-way frontage roads by Abilene Regional Hospital – US 83 between Canyon Rock Road and south of Iberis Road is on schedule with plans to start work related to Iberis Road crossover this month.*

Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E. the Interim City Engineer, described the status and progress being made on the following projects (the complete details are in the packet):

The Cockrell Neighborhood sidewalk project will start very soon – Council approved it at their last meeting. The Miscellaneous Repair Contract is still available around the City. The South 1<sup>st</sup> Street landscaping project is 48% complete. Water Department Street Repair Contract is about 57% complete. Fourteen subdivision streets and roads will be turned over to the City within the next 2 to 3 months.

Mr. Ben Herr, the General Manager of CityLink Transit, described the status and progress being made on the following:

There are several items in the planning stages but no specific details are available at this time. We expect two grants to be awarded to the City of Abilene next week from TxDOT for transit-related projects. As soon as these are awarded we will put together the specifics and provide updates at a future meeting.

**6. Discussion and Review of Reports:**

- **Financial Status**

Ms. Smetana explained that this has not changed from the last meeting. The January billing was received yesterday and was submitted to TxDOT. The February, March, and April billings have also been received. As soon as these are reviewed they will also be submitted to TxDOT.

- **Operation Report**

The full report is in the packet. Here are three highlights: We just got through the Harley Owner's Group ("HOG") rally, partnering with Ms. Jill Collett (with TxDOT's Safety Coalition) promoting motorcycle awareness and safety at the Expo Center. On June 16<sup>th</sup> we will be conducting the Ride to Work, which also promotes motorcycle safety and awareness. We made a presentation to the Southwest Rotary Club on, "*What is an MPO*".

- **Director's Report**

- **FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Transportation Enhancement Project**

The Transportation Improvement Program was approved at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. After the approval TxDOT received an email from FHWA instructing TxDOT to make an Administrative Amendment to include Preliminary Engineering for the South 11<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Enhancement Project. TxDOT then instructed the Abilene MPO to make these changes. Mr. Cook explained the funds for Preliminary Engineering (PE) were already incorporated into the total amount awarded. TxDOT wanted the PE to be split out, so instead of strictly a Construction project, we added PE under the Phase column and added \$154,275 under the Preliminary Engineering column, in the Total Project Cost Information section of the DCIS (Design-Construction Information System) form. The award is for both PE and Construction. The PE is for TxDOT's administrative oversight on this project. Mr. Cook stated that this does meet the criteria for an Administrative Amendment.

In the Highway Financial Summary, the City match of \$236,555 was originally put in the Local Match category. However, we found out after this was done that this should be in the Category 3 – Local Contributions category (this is a different, separate category from Local Contributions). The amount of \$236,555 was simply moved down one row into Category 3. The Self-Certification was also changed. We received an email attachment on April 4<sup>th</sup> regarding Self-Certification Guidelines. The sentence in bold beneath each category explains how the MPO is going to address that particular requirement. This information was submitted to TxDOT by the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

**FHWA Functional Classification Review**

We had our Functional Classification Review on May 12<sup>th</sup>. We especially want to thank Mr. Condry for his help in this. We looked at the entire system and, at the request of FHWA, some changes were made. Staff is in the process of compiling this information and this will be presented to the Policy Board. This review is being done

statewide, including TxDOT Districts.

- **TxDOT Organizational Changes**

As of mid-April the new TxDOT director is Lt. General Joe Weber. Also, TxDOT no longer has Regions. MPO coordination is now under System Planning. Mr. Joe Clark is still our contact.

At this point Ms. Smetana introduced Mr Gary Robinett. He is Vice President of Economic Development at the Abilene Industrial Foundation. Mr. Robinett will be taking the place of Mr. Jason Smith, the President of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, on the Technical Advisory Committee.

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

Comments noted under Item 4 on the Loop 322 Committee. No additional comments were received.

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

Ms. Smetana said we will be bringing back some information from legal on the direction on the quorum issue and the Open Meetings Act. Hopefully we will have this information at the next meeting. No other suggestions or comments were received.

**9. Adjournment.**

Vice-Chairman Spurgin adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 2:37 p.m.