



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

September 20, 2013

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 9:00 a.m., Friday, September 20, 2013, in the Abilene City Hall, City Council Chambers, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

**Members Present:**

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene Mayor and Policy Board Chairman  
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County  
Mr. Doug Eichorst, P.E., TxDOT Interim Abilene District Engineer  
Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene  
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County

**Others Present:**

Mr. Chad Carter, P.E., City of Abilene City Engineer  
Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT West Region MPO Coordinator  
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene Traffic & Transportation Administrator  
Mr. Ben Herr, City of Abilene CityLink Transit General Manager  
Mr. Paul Hoelscher, TxDOT Abilene District Supervisor of Construction  
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Area Engineer  
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene Director of Planning and Development Services  
Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E., City of Abilene Traffic Engineer  
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene Director of Public Works  
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, Abilene MPO Executive Director  
Mr. Thomas Cook, Abilene MPO Transportation Planner  
Mr. Dean Carter, Abilene MPO Transportation GIS Technician

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Archibald called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the July 22, 2013 Meeting.**

Mayor Archibald asked for approval of the minutes of the July 22, 2013 meeting as presented.

The motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Spano and seconded by Judge Spurgin.

*Motion carried.*

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

Ms. Smetana began by saying each year about this time we look at our budget to see where we are over or under in each category. According to our MPO/TxDOT Planning Agreement if a category is over or under by twenty-five percent (25%) we have to look at that item and adjust it for the year-end closing. The current FY 2013 UPWP expires on September 30 and there are two

subtasks that need to be adjusted: Subtask 3.1 [the Transportation Improvement Plan, or TIP] needs to increase by \$15,000 and Subtask 4.2 [Travel Demand Modeling] needs to decrease by \$15,000. Mayor Archibald asked if these are the only categories being adjusted. Ms. Smetana replied yes these are the only two categories that will need adjustment. She continued that each year we prepare the UPWP prior to the beginning of the federal fiscal year and this is why near the end of the fiscal year adjustments sometimes have to be made. There are times that we don't get as much work done in a particular subtask as we anticipate and more gets done in other subtask than initially planned for. Judge Bolls commented that this happens every year in Taylor County also.

Judge Spurgin made the motion to approve this budget amendment change and it was seconded by Judge Bolls.

*Motion carried.*

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

Ms. Smetana introduced each of the respective staff members:

- Mr. Hufstutler, the Abilene District Area Engineer, discussed the status of TxDOT projects:
  - (1). FM 2833 (E. Lake Road) is complete.
  - (2). US 83 from Antilley Road to Iberis Road is complete.
  - (3). The work on I-20 Frontage Roads between Pine Street and Loop 322 is progressing. We're running into a few challenges with some details in the plans that we need to make adjustments on. These are slowing down the change to get traffic on the inside and get all the ramps open between Pine Street and SH 351.
  - (4). The bridge replacement on Old 80 about 1/8 mile east of Loop 322 over Rainey Creek is going well. The project is about 20% completed in Phase 1 of the construction. Once the deck and bridge rail is poured traffic will be switched over to the other side of the bridge.
  - (5). The Main lanes on Loop 322 from IH 20 to the Waldrop interchange hot mix overlay is on schedule.
  - (6). The two Frontage Road Conversion projects, both MPO priorities, have been let. Contract Paving will be working on the Loop 322 project from Lytle Creek to the Waldrop interchange, and J.H. Strain will work on the US 83/84 project from Canyon Rock to Iberis Road.

- Mr. Chad Carter, the City Engineer, described the status of City of Abilene projects as of September 12, 2013:

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 1<sup>st</sup>, North 10<sup>th</sup>, Buffalo Gap Rd, Treadaway, Danville, South 27<sup>th</sup>, Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. North 10th, Ambler, Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. Hwy 80, E. North 10<sup>th</sup>, and Sayles, Treadaway, South 14th, South 7<sup>th</sup>.

South 1<sup>st</sup> from Locust to Butternut (enhancement with landscaped medians) – August 2013.

Public Works Projects Bid But Not Awarded

Engineering Division Miscellaneous Repair Work – Fall 2013-2014 (bid received from Bonke Brothers and awarded but not submitted to City Council).

Public Works in the Design Phase:

Cockerell Neighborhood – Fall 2013

EN 13th Street from Treadaway to Judge Ely – Fall 2013

Cobb Park Westwood Richland Street Rehabilitation – Fall 2013

2014 Seal Coat – Fall 2013

• **Mr. Herr, the CityLink General Manager, discussed the status of CityLink projects:**

- 1) Bike racks were ordered and are being installed on the front of every-fixed route bus. Each rack can hold two bikes. At this time there are only four racks remaining to be installed and may be completed as early as today. This is really due to customer demand.
- 2) An order for six bus shelters was placed. They have been shipped but have not arrived yet. Two priority locations have already been selected and engineering studies have been completed for one near an apartment complex on Cherry Lane and one on Mockingbird near the public library. The remaining four sites are being evaluated and locations are to be determined.
- 3) Bus benches: CityLink has been working with the Jaycees, and the Jaycees have hired a person to help build bus benches. Mr. Herr has given them a list of thirty locations and they requested additional information on specifically where CityLink wants to place them. Benches potentially could be placed at more than the thirty locations.
- 4) The FTA Triennial Review: Every third year the FTA comes to CityLink offices and audits through their records (financial, vehicle maintenance, purchasing, and so forth) to determine how well they are following the federal guidelines. The FTA also sent a list of specific questions in about eighteen subject areas that CityLink and the MPO have to answer and send back to the FTA. This part of the Triennial Review is called a "desk review". The FTA will review all of the answered questions and all requested documents. Then a consultant team will come to CityLink on November 12 and 13 for a site visit.

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

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

• **Financial Status**

Ms. Smetana said the MPO's financial status is included in the packet. The bottom row shows (as of September 2013), the year-to-date total amount authorized, \$483,353.72, total expenditures, \$211,342.68, and the total remaining balance, \$272,011.04.

• **Operation Report**

Some of the major activities the MPO staff completed from July 13<sup>th</sup> through September 18<sup>th</sup> are listed below. The full list is included in the packet.

- Assisted CityLink in preparing for their Triennial Review
- Revised draft Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- Revised draft Project Selection Plan (PSP)
- Partnered with TxDOT, Texas Department of Public Safety, Abilene Police Department, and Keep Abilene Beautiful in staffing and dissemination information about the MPO, transportation and safety at the West Texas Fair and Rodeo September 6<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>
- Working with City staff in developing Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan Update
- Working with City staff in developing sidewalk layer in GIS

- Starting draft of Annual Performance and Expenditures Report (APER)
- Starting draft of Annual Listing of Projects Report (APL)
- **Director's Report**

**Delegation of Certain State Highways to Municipalities**

This was discussed in detail at the August 29<sup>th</sup> TxDOT Transportation Commission (TTC) meeting. Ms. Smetana discussed the excerpts taken from TxDOT's slides where TxDOT staff explained their reasoning, goals, and benefits for returning the State highways back to municipalities. Ms. Smetana then asked Mr. Eichorst to discuss this matter from TxDOT's perspective.

Mr. Eichorst said each district was given the task to go out to their urban areas and identify roadways that look like and function as urban highways. Mr. Bickley and Mr. Haynie talked to the City of Abilene and to Taylor and Jones Counties about these roadways. Mr. Eichorst said he too wants to meet with these officials to look at these roadways from a different approach: Do these roads function more as urban streets or for the state system as a highway? Another meeting is scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup> with City staff to discuss this and the Board or anyone else from the City is invited to attend. There may be areas where we can compromise and come up with a good plan to work together on. Mr. Phil Wilson sent a second letter saying there may be incentives to those municipalities who want to voluntarily begin on this. This would include such items as paying for some of the maintenance for portions of the roadway over a time period. This is a huge impact to communities right after they have completed their budgeting process. TxDOT recognizes this and they are trying to have discussions with those involved.

Ms. Smetana said the Texas Association of MPOs (TEMPO) is having a meeting with TxDOT top division staff sometime in the first part of October and this will be the main topic. Some of the MPO's concerns are how this affects the funding because Category 1 (Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation) funding and also our PL (MPO planning) funding, have lane miles as part of the funding formula. This becomes a major concern to the smaller MPOs who stand to lose significant funding. More information will be given out as soon as it is received.

Mr. Eichorst said this issue is not really on hold – rather, at this point TxDOT is looking for volunteers – local cities and communities to consider this.

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

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

Ms. Smetana stated that Mr. Mike Vandervoort noticed on the agenda the Delegation of Certain State Highways to Municipalities and he could not be present at this meeting so he sent a letter that Ms. Smetana read expressing his concerns. As a citizen he opposes this for the following three reasons: 1) there is no budget transfer but there is increased cost to the city, 2) there is no cost-share agreement, and 3) how this affects TxDOT enhancement projects and the ability to fund sidewalks and other amenities built here. He's very concerned about sidewalks and how this would impact that ability to build them in the future. He also commented that there are a number of folks who want the SH 351 project to move forward.

Ms. Smetana continued that she sent out a letter she received from Mr. Sam Chase via email to the Policy Board regarding his concerns about SH 351. Mr. Chase was concerned about the traffic lights, the proposed median turn lanes, Enterprise Drive, and installing a weight-activated signal

system triggered by truck weight. She said Mr. Wright at TxDOT stated that he has talked with him and Mr. Chase now seems to be more comfortable with the project after this discussion.

No other comments were received.

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

Councilman Spano said the Council has received an email from a citizen about the path over Elm Creek. He knows the MPO is working on it but this is a safety problem and he encouraged us to speed this up. Mayor Archibald agreed this is serious because children are walking on the frontage road on the bridge. Ms. Smetana said we will get the committee back together, speed the process up, and come back with ideas for the next meeting.

Judge Spurgin said he would like to discuss the issue of a quorum – is it a meeting when someone is making a presentation to the public? This can prevent Board members from attending when they just want to gather information. In addition, Judge Spurgin asked the question about the issue of public meetings and whether or not postings are legally required if three Policy Board members show up for this meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> pertaining to delegation of roadways to municipalities. The Policy Board asked Mr. Stanley Smith to submit a legal finding about this topic for the next meeting.

Ms. Smetana said she sent out a notice about the Bankhead Highway Public Outreach Meetings. This will be held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Elks Art Center, 1174 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. They are asking for the historians in towns to bring their pictures and attend. They are putting together a booklet on the Bankhead Highway and want to capture items in the community that people and family members have such as pictures of cars and events held along the highway.

Mr. Eichorst announced that Mr. Phil Wilson, the TxDOT Executive Director, will be in Abilene for a town hall meeting on Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at Abilene Christian University Welcoming Center at 10:30 a.m.

No other suggestions or comments were received.

**8. Adjournment.**

Our next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. With no further business, Mayor Archibald adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 10:00 a.m.