



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

August 17, 2021

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 17, 2021, in the South Branch Library Conference Room, 4310 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene, Texas.

Policy Board Members Present:

Mr. Glenn Allbritton, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County Judge
Councilman Shane Price, City of Abilene (*Policy Board Chairman*)
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County Judge (*Policy Board Vice-Chairman*)

Policy Board Members Absent:

Mayor Anthony Williams, City of Abilene

TAC Voting Members Present:

Mr. Jeff Boyd, City of Tye, Public Works Director
Mr. Scott Chandler, P.E., City of Abilene, City Engineer
Mr. Don Green, City of Abilene, Transportation Director
Mr. Michael Haithcock, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene TP&D
Mr. Greg McCaffery, P.E., City of Abilene, Director of Public Works
Mr. Paul Norman, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene Engineer
Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E., City of Abilene, Traffic Engineer
Mr. Bobby Sharpe, CityLink General Manager
Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO Executive Director – Chair
Ms. P.J. Sumner, Environmental Program Coordinator, WCTCOG
Mr. Ben Williams, Dyess Air Force Base (*Designee for Mr. Downing*)
Commissioner Randy Williams, Taylor County – Vice-Chair

TAC Voting Members Absent:

Mr. Tommy Downing, Dyess Air Force Base Community Planner
Mr. Tim Littlejohn, City of Abilene, Interim Director of Planning and Development Services
Mr. Dan Richardson, TxDOT, Abilene Director of Operations
Mr. Doug Williamson, Abilene Chamber of Commerce Director Gov./Mil. Affairs Community Partnership

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Mr. Billy Dezern, TxDOT, Transportation Specialist (*Designee for Mr. Haithcock*)
Mr. Max Johnson, P.E., City of Abilene, Assistant Director of Public Works (*Designee for Mr McCaffery & Mr. Chandler*)
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene, Assistant City Manager

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Emma Darby, Abilene MPO, Office Assistant III
Mr. Benjamin LaBorde, Abilene MPO, Transportation Planner I

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Matt Miller, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)
Ms. Julie Rogers, TxDOT

Ms. Cheryl Sawyers, City of Abilene, Planning Services Manager
Mr. Brandon Vinson, TxDOT

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Price called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. He announced that public comment could be taken on any item appearing on the agenda during the discussion of that item.

2. Consideration and Take Action on the minutes of the June 15, 2021 meeting.

Judge Spurgin made a **motion** to approve the June 15, 2021 minutes as presented, with a **second** by Judge Bolls. *Motion carried (4-0).*

3. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the amendment to the FY 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Ms. Smetana presented the amendment and began to tell the board which changes had been added. First, she pointed out that the date had been added to the cover page. Ms. Smetana highlighted that Subtask 5.1 was changed from “Comprehensive Planning Studies” to the more specific “Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study: Loop 322/SH 36.” Additionally, Subtask 5.2 was added to include the Transit Multimodal Facility. The FY 2021 Budget Summary was updated to reflect the aforementioned changes. The member pages were updated as well. Listing the final change, Ms. Smetana told the Board that an update was made to the History of Amendments/Revisions. She then informed the Board that the amendment, which includes all changes listed, was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at their July 27, 2021 meeting. The TAC recommended approval to the Policy Board. Chairman Price then opened the floor for questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Judge Bolls made a **motion** to approve the amendment to the FY 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as presented, with a **second** by Judge Spurgin. *Motion carried (4-0).*

4. Discussion and review of transportation projects.

(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)

TxDOT – Mr. Paul Norman briefed the Board on the following projects:

- *Current Construction:* Mr. Norman began by pointing out that the first five sites were all part of the same widening project on FM 707, which runs from near I20 to US 83. The project is near completion; they are working on signs and expect to finish up in September. Mr. Norman then described the next project using sites 6 and 7—the regrade of a vertical curve on US 83. Mr. Norman added that this was their Clark Road project on the south side of town. The main lanes are now open for traffic, but there is still work to be done on the intersection. They are a bit behind schedule, but are in the process of wrapping up. The pedestrian project on SH 351 is also behind schedule. They are starting some bridge widening currently. They expect to finish in October of this year. The next project is the construction of frontage roads on US 83 near Antilley Road. The new frontage road is completed and opened and they have some work left on the ramp connection. They are looking to have that completed in late September. They did a change order for the flashing beacon project at FM 1750 to add a full-functioning signal at Industrial. This signal should be in full operation this upcoming Thursday (August 19, 2021). Other than that there are only little things to wrap up on the project. The next project is the mill and overlay on FM 1750 and SH 36. The paving is done and they are working on signs and striping. This project should close in the fall. The last current construction project is the installation of a flashing

beacon on BU 83-D, which is at Treadaway and Hill Street. The project is lagging in construction and they are waiting on building materials; they are expecting to start this fall.

- *Planned Projects:* The first planned project Mr. Norman discussed was the construction of new roadway lanes at FM 89 and FM 707. Both sites just let and they are expected to start in about 3 months after acquiring materials. The next project is the road widening and lane additions on FM 89 near the freeway (US 83) and Rebecca Lane and on to Bettes Lane. This just let and will start work late in January after the holiday season. The next project on FM 3438 also just let and they are in the process of getting it awarded. Running from I20 to near US 277, this is predominantly a paving project. FM 600 from FM 1082 to FM 3034 is a mill and fill project that just let and should start this fall. There will be some structure widening and some lane closures associated with the project. The next planned project is the construction of a bridge on Landfill Road. This is scheduled to let in 2023. There will be an overlay project on I20 from west of Old Anson Road to the Taylor County Line. This is a mill and fill project that will also let in 2023. There is an intersection regrading project on Antilley Road scheduled for 2023. The last two listed sites are both part of the interchange improvement project at US 83/84 “Y” and include the widening of US 83 from US 84 to CR 160. Both are scheduled to let in 2024.

After thanking Mr. Norman, Chairman Price noted that, while driving along Ambler, he had seen that many of the sidewalks which run adjacent to the curb and gutter are often overgrown with weeds. Chairman Price asked if there would be any filler added to minimize weed growth in those areas as part of the pedestrian construction. Mr. Norman said that they would look into the problem.

City of Abilene – Mr. Scott Chandler briefed the Board on the following projects:

- *Current Construction:* The Airport Boulevard project is complete, along with the Pine Street area project. The Southwest Drive project, which has thus far been done at night, is almost complete; the new mix has been put down, the surfaces put down, and they are about to put pavement markers down. They are about to get driving lanes on Griffith Road and then the project will progress on with drainage improvements. The TASA sidewalk project around Southwest Drive is wrapping up; most of the concrete work is done and all that is left are some handrails and punch list items. Downtown, they are within three weeks of getting the concrete work repaired and completed. The downtown striping project has been released and they are marking the re-layout wherever the concrete work has been completed. As soon as the concrete contractor is finished, the striping contractor will come in and finish the downtown parking. The south portion of the general work zone resurfacing is being completed, while the north zones will start in about 2-3 weeks. There has been some difficulty getting asphalt for both. They have been able to use the leftover savings from the bids on the north and south work zones to add two more work zones, which will start within 3-5 weeks.
- *Planned Projects:* They released bids on South 27th between Sayles and Barrow this morning. The North 6th and Cypress Street parking lot project is in the initial phase and they are doing some of the prep work that is involved with the downtown hotel project. Additionally, they are working on a set of design drawings for converting North 5th from a two-way to a one-way. Other than that, they are working on their design projects for the next coming years.

Pointing to the project on E. N. 10th Street, Chairman Price asked Mr. Chandler if it began at Treadaway or Almond Street when running to Loop 322. In reply, Mr. Chandler informed the Board that there are two big projects they are looking at. Mr. Chandler said one of the projects is from Treadaway to Loop 322. Mr. Chandler continued, stating that they are also looking at Maple Street running from FM 707 to E. S. 11th. They have a developer agreement in place already that brings them up to Carriage Hills.

They think they are going to split from Carriage Hills to the Loop as one phase of the project, then from the Loop to E. S. 11th as the next phase.

CityLink – Mr. Bobby Sharpe briefed the Board on the following projects:

- CityLink is currently working on programming grant funds for the purchase of two large replacement buses. They currently own 34 buses, and the two being replaced are a 2001 model and a 2007 model. They should be ready to present to City Council within the next month or so. Recently, CityLink has submitted a grant application for RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) funds—formally BUILD or TIGER funds—to help build a multimodal transit facility in Abilene. USDOT has lots of funds for that so they are hoping to use a portion of that to improve transit and the overall passenger experience. CityLink is also working to implement a transportation program for senior citizens that will replace the current service that was provided by the City of Abilene prior to COVID. They have already received partial funding from TxDOT with a FTA 5310 grant, and they have received matching funds from the WCTCOG Area Agency on Aging.

Chairman Price then closed the item to move to the next. *Discussion only—No vote taken.*

5. Discussion and review of reports:

- Financial Status
 - Pointing to the chart provided in the packet, Ms. Smetana informed the Board that the April, May, and June billings were included. This brings the total authorization to \$443,718.92, total expenditures to \$167,597.53, and leaves a remaining balance of \$276,121.39. She then offered to answer any questions.
- Operation Report
 - Ms. Smetana told the Board that the provided report runs from June 5th through August 6th. She highlighted the work that had been done to organize the now fully-staffed office, as well as the various maps that had been created. She also pointed out the MPO’s work with the City of Abilene to help submit two Transportation Alternatives projects. Ms. Smetana then gave the Board details on the Ride to Work Day event. After that, she discussed working with the RCTP (Regional Coordinating Transportation Plan) in interviews and Request for Proposals.
- Director’s Report
 - Ms. Smetana began the Director’s Report, first discussing the recent release of the 2020 Saturation Counts. She asked Mr. LaBorde to pull up the map portion of that. Using a link to the Abilene MPO website, Mr. LaBorde showed the Board the maps that he had made and added, as well as the TxDOT maps that were provided through the site. The Traffic Counts map was up-to-date with the 2020 data. Mr. LaBorde also highlighted the Crash Data Dashboard, which was also updated with 2020 data. This information could be sorted by various categories, including year, person, causation, severity, and more. The 2015 City of Abilene Bike Plan is also available on the website, and Ms. Smetana mentioned that the displayed plan had been approved by the Council. Also included on the website are the Abilene MPO Boundary Map, Neighborhood Map, and Transit Map.

Chairman Price asked if the Neighborhood Map was created using data from the City of Abilene Planning Department. Mr. LaBorde replied that the information was taken from the City’s GIS Department. Chairman Price asked if this was part of the comprehensive planning work they were doing. Ms. Sawyers said yes; she was not sure if the super neighborhoods would look exactly the same after the comprehensive plan. Ms. Smetana told the Board that, if there were any maps they would like to see, they can email and request them.

- Finally, Ms. Smetana informed the Board that the floor in her office had been replaced. She

warned that this could cause some delay in finding certain documents until everything is organized and returned to its rightful place. *Discussion only—No vote taken.*

6. Opportunity for members of the Public to make comments on MPO issues.

None presented.

7. Opportunity for Board Members, Technical Advisory Committee Members, or MPO Staff to recommend topics for future discussion or action.

None presented.

8. Workshop of the Transportation Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee.

Chairman Price reminded the Board and those in attendance that, although this was a Policy Board Meeting and was being recorded live, they were now going to transition to the Workshop portion. The meeting would recess briefly so that they could grab food, and then would reconvene for the Workshop. As long as there is a quorum, it will remain a Policy Board meeting and continue to be broadcast. He asked that Policy Board members inform him if they wish to leave, reminding the group that, if they lose quorum, the meeting will adjourn and cease recording.

Chairman Price recessed the meeting at 12:31 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 12:42 p.m.

• Introductions and Workshop Overview

- Noting the recent addition of several new members, Ms. Smetana asked the attendees to individually introduce themselves to the room. After giving an overview of what would be discussed in the Workshop, Ms. Smetana reminded the group that this would be a more informal and interactive process, so questions and comments are encouraged.

• MPO Vision Statement: *To provide cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing short and long-range transportation planning which promotes safe and reliable movement of people and goods in the Abilene Metropolitan Area.*

• MPO Overview

Ms. Smetana gave Mr. Miller a short introduction, listing his career experience, professional qualifications, and several personal details, then gave him the floor.

– MPO Background

- Mr. Miller described the legislative background of MPOs, including its origins in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962. He explained that these laws are changed over time with federal transportation bills and authorization acts that cover multiple years. Mr. Miller highlighted three influential acts: the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).
- Mr. Miller continued, turning to the federal and state regulations that impact and delineate the operations of the MPO. He informed the group that this slide was mainly referential, and they could look into more details later, should they choose.
- Mr. Miller then discussed the MPO and its purpose, describing the duties and emphasizing the importance of each group that is involved: the Transportation Policy Board, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the MPO staff.
- Next, Mr. Miller listed the core functions of the MPO, as well as the various documents and planning products that are prepared through them. In his explanation, Mr. Miller pointed out that mobility—as addressed in the planning factors of the MTP—relates not only to volume-reducing strategies, such as road widening, but also maintenance and reinforcement.

- Funding Sources and Categories
 - Mr. Miller described the different sources of planning funds, explaining that these are used to both operate the MPO and fund regional studies and planning-related activities within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB). He also mentioned that there are a few exceptions in which the project impacts the transportation system within the MAB.
- Planning, Project Selection, and Programming
 - Mr. Miller used several figures from the 2021 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) to help inform the group as to how Transportation Planning investments are made across several different funding categories.

Judge Spurgin asked how the MPO deals with and anticipates future funding, such as infrastructure bills that are currently being debated, in order to plan while ensuring the new legal rules and regulations are being followed. Mr. Miller replied that they are often filtered into the actual funding picture, and otherwise the plans are tweaked and changed. He also said that often new bills and legislation are attached to planning factors that are already in existence. Ms. Smetana added that the MPO looks at and works with the TxDOT formulas to determine where their funding comes from. Judge Spurgin told them that there were many discussions, some 5-10 years ago, in which projects were shovel-ready and the plans were complete, but they were just waiting on funding. Mr. Miller said that this greatly involves how the MTP and 10-Year Plan are created. The goal is to get projects shovel-ready and avoid delays.

Mr. Miller then asked the group to name specific local goals and targets that are incorporated into the planning and the project selection process. Chairman Price cited the recently discussed goal of connecting North Judge Ely across I20, stating that a good opportunity presented itself while TxDOT was widening I20 because of the availability of environmental studies, impact studies, and other data related to the area. Mr. Miller asked if the alignment opportunity for this project had been used before, and Chairman Price replied that the potential collaboration was a goal for the future.

Next, Mr. Miller asked the group to name planning and development challenges they have experienced, and suggest ways to overcome said challenges. Ms. Smetana said that money was always an issue. Judge Bolls offered an example, telling Mr. Miller about a sidewalk project years ago that was funded in two phases: connecting corners at intersections and rehabilitating or creating stretches along the road. Judge Bolls described the public's confusion at the way in which these projects were worked on - seemingly out of order. Summarizing the point for Mr. Miller, Judge Bolls stated that one of the main challenges experienced by the group was a misunderstanding of long-range projects and confusion over money allocation from the public. Mr. Miller noted that miscommunication is a large factor in this problem, and the disjointed nature of funding is difficult to understand.

Another question presented by Mr. Miller concerned the benefits of the planning process. Commissioner Williams expressed his appreciation for fully understanding what funding a project is eligible for during the planning process. He added that this has been done recently, and it is very helpful in prioritizing projects based on available funding. Judge Bolls agreed, but pointed out a potential problem if the top priority funding conflicts with the projects that are most needed in the community. He observed that the differences result in a constant reorganizing of project priorities. Mr. Miller acknowledged that this dynamic is common between planning and programming. Chairman Price added that the public aspect of the project selection process allows those who are funding or affected by projects to be directly involved in the process; whether the project is local, state, federal, or it is being paid for by local taxpayers. Mr. Miller asked if public participation had changed over the years. Ms. Smetana answered that COVID-19 precautions had made public participation easier and more convenient, and they had experienced more participation than before the pandemic. Judge Spurgin emphasized the importance and impact of public input, regardless of challenges. He added that there needs to be clearer communication to the public that their input is heard, appreciated, and used.

Chairman Price brought up the City's Street Maintenance Citizens' Advisory Board as an example of gaining public input on priorities and projects. Ms. Smetana complimented the local TxDOT representatives on their ability to receive and respond to public input.

Mr. Miller went over several of the key planning documents developed or worked on by the MPO. After this overview of planning documents, Ms. Smetana explained how they relate to and work with one another. Mr. Sharpe was then asked to speak on local transit improvements. Mr. Sharpe began by pointing out the various areas and times serviced by CityLink and other forms of public transit. He also mentioned the disability-specific transportation, the evening bus service, and the immediate response ride program. Mr. Sharpe then named the other transit services available, such as rural transportation, before giving the group an overview of the different technological improvements that have been implemented to aid in trip planning and ride tracking. Finally, he described the local projects that are currently being worked on: Transloc, Bus/Equipment Purchases, Bus Shelters/Transit Stops, and Facilities/the New Multimodal Station.

– MPO Boundary Expansion

- Ms. Smetana defined the different terms that are used when identifying the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB): an Urbanized Area (UZA) is designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, then amended by the MPO to become a more logical Smoothed UZA, then finally combined with areas that are developed and tie into the UZA to become the MAB—which encompasses both areas that are urbanized and those which are anticipated to become urbanized within 25 years. She also included a map to visualize these areas.
- Mr. LaBorde explained another map that displayed the area growth information without boundary lines. Ms. Smetana informed the group that this presentation displayed currently identified growth areas, but—should they think of unrepresented areas—suggestions from PB and TAC members could be added. Using a different map on screen, Mr. LaBorde identified Potosi as an area of high growth in Taylor County, and Hawley as an area of high growth in Jones County.

Ms. Smetana and Mr. LaBorde asked the group for input regarding local areas of high growth. Commissioner Williams suggested that they contact Commissioner Brad Birchum of Precinct 3. Ms. Smetana said they would do so. Judge Spurgin suggested they look into Callahan County—which is located to the East. Mr. Rice asked Ms. Smetana what was considered “growth” in this context. She explained that, in Taylor County, they are looking at the number of septic tanks combined with population density, and in Jones County they are considering addresses combined with population density. Mr. LaBorde confirmed this. When asked by Ms. Smetana if his question was answered, Mr. Rice replied that it was, but followed by suggesting that this would not apply inside the city limits (particularly in reference to the use of septic tanks). She confirmed this, explaining that growth—in this context—is more in reference to potential; the goal is to predict boundary expansion that would eventually include areas of growth outside the current boundary. As the city is completely inside the MAB at present, it is not considered in regards to boundary expansion. Ms. Smetana asked Mr. Rice if there was a particular area within the city that would require different traffic options or roadways; he answered yes. Ms. Smetana and Mr. Rice agreed to meet and discuss this at another time.

Commissioner Williams asked if they got the address information from 9-1-1. Judge Spurgin said yes, Mr. Lynn Sessions with the West Central Texas Council of Governments has a database that contains information on the counties for which he provides 9-1-1 Addressing. Commissioner Williams asked if it included the date on which the data was added. Judge Spurgin assured that the date was included, and it covered the last three years. Mr. Rice pointed out that Jones County 9-1-1 is different than Taylor County. Commissioner Williams asked if Taylor County has a similar database. Mr. Rice answered that they have the ability to show addresses as they receive address requests from both inside and outside

the city; they have a separate process if it is within the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). He told Commissioner Williams that they could also look at those resources and not be limited to the ones they have previously used. Ms. Smetana announced that this concluded the MPO Overview.

Chairman Price recessed the meeting for a break at 2:12 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 2:18 p.m.

- TxDOT Project Management

- Project Management

- Mr. Haithcock asked the group to turn to the last page of their packet, which listed twelve TxDOT projects he wanted to cover before beginning the presentation. Though no specific decisions needed to be reached, Mr. Haithcock encouraged informal discussion and input on the advantages and disadvantages of each project.
 - The first two projects, FM 89 (also known as Buffalo Gap Road) from Winters Freeway to Rebecca Lane, are to be let and begin construction in the near future. According to Mr. Dezern, the projects total at about \$23,744,000 dollars and—by Mr. Brandon Vinson’s estimation—520 construction days. Mr. Haithcock gave more detail, informing the group that the work included 10 inches of concrete and shifting the traffic. He added that Buffalo Gap Road is the most heavily-trafficked area in the Big Country—including I20—at around 40,000 cars a day. Mr. Haithcock complimented Mr. Vinson on his efficient work on these projects, and stated that this has been the MPO’s top project since 2008. Construction will begin January 2022. Mr. Allbritton, noted that the project’s low bid (specified earlier) was over 2 million more than the 21.65 million allocation in Category 2 (CAT2) funds. He explained that he and other TxDOT team members studied the bid and concluded that re-letting the project would not yield cheaper results.
 - Some scoping has been done on project five—which is FM 89 at Antilley Road—and the cost is estimated to be 8 million dollars. There will be significant impacts to the church on the corner. Mr. Haithcock expressed that they are hesitant on whether the cost and impact are worth completing the project, and invited the group to discuss this.

Chairman Price inquired if this project will reduce peak traffic congestion. Asked by Mr. Haithcock to provide a synopsis, Mr. Vinson clarified that they had looked at two different scenarios: raising Antilley, or lowering Buffalo Gap. The drainage around the corner near the church leads directly onto Antilley Road, and Mr. Vinson explained that fixing the drainage and removing the retaining wall would be difficult, expensive, and would cause two of the church’s driveways to be removed—with the third and only remaining driveway also having to change locations. The project will be removed from the TIP.

- Projects six and seven—identified by Mr. Haithcock as the second prioritized MPO project—is still in environmental schematic. They have requested updated traffic counts. The problem is not FM 3034, but the interchange at US 83 to FM 3034. The current cost estimate is up to \$20,700,000. They are still looking at options, but Mr. Haithcock speculates that they will ask the MPO for more CAT 2 funding if they are unable to find a way to stay in budget.
 - Project nine on FM 1082 is the relocation of the Fort Phantom dam roadway and construction of a new bridge to allow the dam to be replaced. Mr. Vinson explained that, after considering all factors, they are planning to relocate the roadway to the north of the dam. The biggest issue is timing, and they need to work out agreements because the land is all city-owned. Mr. Norman gave more detail, informing the group that relocating and rebuilding the road as a bridge crossing in this location

would effectively separate the city-owned dam from the TxDOT-owned road, thus making maintenance easier for both.

Mr. Rice noted that this road was built to the current standard of the time, which is nowhere near present-day standards. He explained that problems with the dam affect the road and vice versa, so the City agrees that this relocation is the cleanest solution. The old road can be closed to the public and used as an access road for maintenance. It is still necessary to allow traffic through the area, as going around would take significantly more time. To follow-up, Mr. Allbritton expressed that, by combining funding and resources, he hopes to build that project sooner, rather than later.

- Mr. Haithcock asked Mr. Norman to discuss projects ten and eleven. For reference, Mr. Norman pointed out that the hot spot on the previously-viewed population growth map involves these two projects. Both FM 707 and FM 1750 are roads that lead out to the fast-growing Potosi area and have experienced an increase in traffic as a result. Projects ten and eleven focus on mitigating the traffic problems and other capacity issues. Mr. Norman informed him and the rest of the group that there has already been communication and coordination between TxDOT and the City to avoid any construction problems.
- Moving to project twelve on Loop 322 and SH 36, Mr. Haithcock explained that there will be potential congestion due to the multiple developments happening in the area. Though a temporary solution has been discussed, he expressed that he would prefer something more long-term.
- Mr. Haithcock gave a brief overview of his resources, emphasizing Mr. Vinson. He then described how the previously-listed projects are prioritized while giving additional details for each. Starting with the top priority, Mr. Haithcock discussed the following:
 - Buffalo Gap Rd. will have many complicated changes that will require extensive work and funding. This project will also encounter utilities challenges.
 - Landfill road has been a priority for a long time and needs a solution soon.
 - The Roscoe interchange will let in August 2022.
 - The project at I-20 and US 84 is a 75-million-dollar project that will run all the way to Lubbock.
 - The Fort Phantom dam project is next, as—according to Mr. Rice—there is a potential time limit for the provided City funds. This would probably be let in January 2023.

Mr. Haithcock asked for input concerning future construction past what he had listed, as TxDOT would ideally want to work off of a 10-Year Plan. He also informed the group that his consultant budget has been slashed by 20%, as well as many other funding categories. He again asked for any input or discussion concerning the twelve confirmed projects as described. Mr. Allbritton brought up that he had left the I-20 project off the list, including the overpass at Judge Ely and the six-lane section from the Taylor County line to Old Anson Rd. Mr. Haithcock added more detail, stating that they are still in the environmental schematic for the project and will bring it to the public around November. They have 60 million dollars, but he estimates that they need 300 million to open the entire stretch of road. The plan is to complete the Judge Ely section first, which will provide connections and bridges, rather than the six-lane widening.

Mr. Haithcock then asked Mr. Rice which of the twelve projects are the most important to the City. While he agreed that all were important, the dam road project was identified as the most significant for the needs of the City due to its effect on public safety. Two projects were tied for Mr. Rice's second and third priorities. At SH 36 and Loop 322 there has been a sharp increase of activity. This includes multiple new schools, work at the Abilene Zoo, and the upcoming Great Lakes Cheese Factory, to name

a few. There have been some signal improvements in the area, but probably not enough to combat the eventual congestion. Considering need, FM 707 between U.S. 83/84 and FM 1750 is important because there has been an explosion of housing in the area near Maple St., and many commercial properties are planning to also go into the area. Mr. Rice also mentioned other areas within the project score where both residential and commercial property were likely to increase. When asked, Judge Bolls discussed Taylor County's focus on the subdivision areas south of the city down U.S. 83/84 where traffic is increasing. On the subject of Jones County, Judge Spurgin stated that subdivision areas were a concern for them as well. He named the Landfill Road as one of their main priorities because of safety concerns. Chairman Price agreed with Mr. Rice's prioritization. As many of the concerns surround areas with incomplete construction, it will be difficult to obtain traffic data beforehand. Gaining new perspective from Mr. Haithcock, Chairman Price said that he would probably place FM 707 higher than SH 36 because it is less complex. Judge Spurgin asked Mr. Haithcock to share his thoughts on the Judge Ely structure. Mr. Haithcock replied that it would most likely connect to I-20. Judge Spurgin asked if the City predicted any growth north of I-20 that would be beneficial for the connection. Mr. Rice explained that the interstate is a wall, which makes it difficult to get back on without driving a significant distance. Mentioning that Mr. Dezern and Ms. Smetana already meet once a month, Mr. Haithcock proposed that a three to five year tenured plan that considers all factors be created and presented within the next several months. He then identified Fort Phantom Rd. as the MPO project most likely to be addressed next.

Mr. Haithcock then gave his presentation over Project Management. He gave an overview of the federal laws that MPO projects must adhere to, as well as how projects are selected. He then gave time estimations for all steps, including consultant selection, negotiation, contract, and kickoff. Next, Mr. Haithcock outlined an example of project, consultant, and construction costs. The concept stage can take anywhere between 6-12 months. Using Landfill Road as an example, he showed how some projects take even longer, requiring more models, more work, and more money. All projects are subject to an Environmental Process that can take 18-24 months, as well as a Right of Way Planning that can take 12-24 months. After listing all steps, Mr. Haithcock informed the group that total project development will typically take 70-110 months. He also discussed potential risks and obstacles.

– Funding – *Billy Dezern*

- After thanking Mr. Miller for his comprehensive funding coverage earlier, Mr. Dezern went over Advanced Funding Agreements. Standard (Fixed Price) is the most common. Total project cost does not affect it; if the cost is under budget, the leftover amount will not be lost, but if over budget, none is added. He also described how local matches are factored in.
- Next, Mr. Dezern covered funding percentages based on project type, as well as projects that are off-system.

– Design – *Brandon Vinson*

- Mr. Vinson presented on Project Design as it specifically pertains to MPO projects. He emphasized the following sections:
 - Define Survey needs.
 - Define additional Data Needs.
 - Verify Design Criteria from Concept Stage.
- He then gave an overview of federal and state design criteria using personal experience and visual aids.
- Next, Mr. Vinson discussed contract creation.

– Consultant Management – *Julie Rogers*

- Ms. Julie Rogers explained the TxDOT Professional Engineering Procurement Services (PEPS) division, including its nine service centers.

- She also described the federal and state laws that impact how consultants are selected.
 - A Fiscal Year Procurement Plan is used by each district to determine contracting needs. Ms. Rogers explained Fiscal Year Waves in relation to PEPS planning.
 - Next, she explained how consultants are selected and by who. Ms. Rogers then went over the documents used when advertising and hiring.
 - After that, she used a graphic to walk through the lengthy contracting process.
- Discussion of current and future TxDOT and MPO projects, and also related projects.
 - Ms. Smetana began discussing Bankhead Highway, noting its structural damage. She also mentioned the confusion over ownership, as three separate groups are said to own the property. Mr. Allbritton highlighted the state-owned sections and explained the points where ownership breaks in greater detail. Commissioner Williams explained that 4-6 years ago he began receiving complaints about the state of this highway, but it was still unclear as to which organization was responsible for the road. Rather than contacting TxDOT, the City of Abilene, and the City of Tye separately, he gathered representatives from each group to discuss the problem. Due to lack of funding, no action was taken. Commissioner Williams stated that, if no repairs were made, the highway should be marked off from drivers until made safe. All members present at the 2015 meeting are no longer involved, therefore he saw fit to bring the problem up again and attempt to reach a resolution. Mr. Jeff Boyd added that heavy trucks driving through the area only continue the degradation of the road. Mr. Norman pointed out that, though the highway has historical relevance, it could not be funded that way. Mr. Allbritton informed the group that TxDOT has documentation and paperwork of previous discussions surrounding the area and would find and share them with interested parties as soon as possible. It was agreed that a later meeting would be scheduled so that representatives from all involved organizations could discuss ownership, future repairs, and potential closing of Bankhead Highway.
 - Workshop Wrap-up.
 - After ensuring there were no more topics or projects to discuss, Ms. Smetana and Chairman Price thanked everyone for attending and participating in the workshop.

9. Adjournment.

With no further business, Chairman Price adjourned the meeting at 3:39 p.m.