



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

December 14, 2021

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 14, 2021, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mr. Glenn Allbritton, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County Judge
Councilman Shane Price, City of Abilene – Chairman
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County Judge – Vice-Chairman
Mayor Anthony Williams, City of Abilene

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Mr. Scott Chandler, P.E., City of Abilene, City Engineer
Mr. Billy Dezern, TxDOT, Transportation Specialist
Ms. Nellie Doneva, City of Abilene, Videographer
Mr. Michael Haithcock, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene TP&D
Mr. Greg McCaffery, P.E., CoA, Director of Public Works
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Bobby Sharpe, CityLink General Manager

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Emma Darby
Mr. Benjamin LaBorde
Ms. E’Lisa Smetana

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Shane Price called the meeting to order at 1:31 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 August 17, 2021 meeting and workshop.

After opening the item for discussion, Chairman Price informed the Board that he had previously emailed Ms. E’Lisa Smetana a few corrections for the August 17, 2021 minutes and asked her if those corrections were included in the PowerPoint presented on screen. She replied that they were not, but she could summarize the changes verbally now. First, the title of Tim Littlejohn in the attendance section was changed to reflect his status as Interim Planning & Development Services Director for the City of Abilene, effective July 28, 2021. The second and final correction was located on page eight, where a sentence concerning the dam roadway at FM 1082 was revised to increase clarity and prevent confusion and misunderstanding. Judge Dale Spurgin made a **motion** to approve the August 17, 2021 minutes as corrected, with a **second** by Mayor Anthony Williams. *Motion carried (5-0).*

3. Receive a Report and Hold a Discussion regarding possible extension of deadline to choose a consultant for the Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study and the potential need to hold a specially called meeting.

Ms. Smetana presented the item and explained that there are no updates on the selection of a consultant for the Loop 322/SH 36 Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study. At present, Ms. Smetana is

asking for general feedback and suggestions. Noting that none of the presented data collection sites were located inside Loop 322, Chairman Price asked what time the consultants plan to collect data; due to football and the fair, traffic tends to be heavier in the fall than in the spring. Ms. Smetana replied that they are looking at all traffic generators. The overall scope of the study may be narrowed due to funding. Chairman Price asked if any action was desired on this item. Ms. Smetana answered by reminding the Board that this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released on November 4, 2021, and received approximately eight responses. Although the original schedule would potentially require a specially-called meeting, the review period is supposed to be 90 days—which would make the day of action February 4th. As the MPO will be asking for an extension, no action is currently requested or needed. *Discussion only – No vote taken.*

4. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on an amendment to the FYs 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Ms. Smetana presented Amendment 3 to the FYs 2020-2045 MTP. Included in the provided packet were the changed pages of the MTP, beginning with the cover page and followed by the Project Prioritization section. Ms. Smetana discussed the addition of two projects: the intersection improvements at Loop 322—which have not yet been funded—and the dam roadway at FM 1082. The projects were scored using the Performance Measures, each of which were described in detail in the provided packets. In order to avoid disrupting the ranking of the other projects, both of the new projects (highlighted in blue text on pages 81 and 82) were ranked using the numbers 11.5 and 27.5. The Funded and Illustrative Projects Map displays the funded and unfunded projects, and both new projects were added. Ms. Smetana pointed out that the total cost of the FM 1082 project is \$7,362,482 and the provided MPO Cat 2 funding is \$3,000,000. The project on Loop 322 is listed merely as a placeholder until more details can be provided. The Grouped Projects page was updated to include a bridge category. Finally, the Amendment page was updated to list all changes made in Amendment 3. Ms. Smetana said that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had recommended this amendment for approval at their last meeting. Mr. Glenn Allbritton made a **motion** to approve the amendment to the FYs 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), with a **second** by Mayor Williams. *Motion carried (5-0).*

5. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on an update to the 10-Year Plan.

Ms. Smetana presented the item, informing the Board that copies were included in the provided packets, along with bigger sheets that could be unfolded for easier viewing. The amendment to the MTP that was just discussed, in turn, changes the numbers in the 10-Year Plan. Ms. Smetana pointed out that the Abilene MPO funds were highlighted in yellow at the top. The total amount received by the MPO over the next 10 years is estimated to be \$58,061,890 and the changes to the document are indicated with red text. The projects at FM 1082, FM 1750, and SL 322 were added, though the last two listed do not have associated funding categories and therefore have areas left blank. The South 14th St. Walkability Project was also added, despite not using any MPO funds. Ms. Smetana explained that the project was still regionally significant. Drawing attention to the remaining balance and running balance sections, Ms. Smetana pointed out that they would begin 2022 \$34,057 in the deficit. Turning to the explanation on the next page, she said that the values at the end of 2021 resulted in the balance at the beginning of 2022. The project at FM 89 and Antilley Rd. was moved out of the 10-Year Plan due to delays caused by design problems. Hearing no questions, Chairman Price entertained a motion. Mayor Williams made a **motion** to approve the update to the 10-Year Plan as presented, with a **second** by Judge Downing Bolls. *Motion carried (5-0).*

6. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on an amendment to the FYs 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Smetana opened the item, then asked Mr. Ben LaBorde to present the changes to the Board. Mr. LaBorde explained that their packet included two copies of the TIP: one copy contains only the changed pages, and the other is the full document. He then went through the changes included in the most recent

amendment. The coversheet was changed to indicate the addition of Amendment 5, and the Table of Contents was updated with the correct page numbers. Under the Public Participation Process page, a sentence was added to include the public review period—lasting from December 4 to December 13, 2022, the public Policy Board meeting, and the notice posted to Abilene Reporter News. Mr. LaBorde moved on, pointing out that two projects were moved from 2022 to 2021, and the construction costs and revision dates were updated for each. On the 2023 Projects page, they added the FM 1082 Relocation project and updated the costs of the FM 3034 and US 83 projects. The map was updated to include all changes. Although it will not use MPO funding, the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) South 14th Street Walkability Project was added to the Grouped Projects section, along with the \$1,749,126 in provided federal funds and the City-provided match, which results in a total amount of \$2,186,207. Moving to the next page, Mr. LaBorde told the Board that the FTA 5307 American Rescue Plan (ARP) federal funds were added to the 2022 Transit Projects page and the Transit Financial Summary page. Finally, the History of Amendments page was updated with a summary of all the changes. He mentioned that they intend to update the description of Administrative Amendment 4 to show that the grouped CSJs were presented to the Policy Board on April 20th as information only, and no action was taken.

Once Mr. LaBorde finished reviewing the changes, Ms. Smetana emphasized to all present that, though they had not yet received any comments, the public can comment on Amendment 5 during this meeting. Chairman Price asked if there were any questions, but there were none. He then opened the Public Hearing. As no one approached to speak, he closed the hearing. Ms. Smetana concluded discussion of the item, informing the Board that after suggesting a few minor changes that were incorporated; the TAC recommended the approval of Amendment 5 at their previous meeting. Judge Spurgin made a **motion** to approve the amendment to the FYs 2021-2024 TIP as presented, with a **second** by Mr. Allbritton. *Motion carried (5-0).*

7. Discussion and review of transportation projects.

(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)

TxDOT – Mr. Allbritton briefed the Board on the following projects:

The Remington/Clark Rd. project, which includes the construction of an overpass and some ramp relocations, is complete except a few punch list items. They are currently working on the sidewalk near SH 351, and they expect to complete the project in February. The frontage road construction near Antilley Rd. is complete except one signal, which is waiting on installation service. The overlay at FM 3438 is supposed to start next month and finish in August or September of 2022. Next, two mill and overlay projects have recently been completed. The safety project to install a flashing beacon has been delayed due to supply and delivery issues. Construction on Buffalo Gap is scheduled to begin in the first part of January. These two projects were combined into one to make it easier. There are two road rehabilitation projects: one on FM 600 and another on FM 1082. They are currently constructing new left turn lanes at Iberis Rd. and Maple St. The bridge replacement at Catclaw Creek is scheduled to complete in March, but it might be earlier. Mayor Williams asked for clarification regarding the completion date of the last listed project. Mr. Allbritton answered that the estimated March completion accounts for winter weather delays, but no other potential delays have been projected.

The overpass construction received several positive comments. Previously, IH 20 was milled for traction and safety, but they will now resurface the road. The construction of a new road at FM 1082 is scheduled. They are currently seeking public involvement for the project on IH 20 from Old Anson Rd. to the Taylor County line, as well as the upcoming six-lane widening at the Judge Ely Blvd. overpass.

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

The City has finished most of their current construction projects. The 27th St. project between Sayles and Barrow is scheduled to start at the beginning of January. They have already held a pre-con meeting,

and the plan moving forward is to wait until the end of the holiday season and start at the New Year. Mr. Chandler said that they hope to get final plans back to the consultant on the Five Points Roadway improvements project at Fulwiler Rd. and Marigold soon so that the project can go to bid and get started in 2022. The City's 2022 Work Zone projects include zones S9D, S11C, and N15A—which are all mill and fill-type projects taking place in residential areas. Work Zone S25 is located on the south side of town and is a sealing-type project. The first phase of the Maple St. project, running from Carriage Hills to FM 707, is currently under construction. The south piece of the project, running from Carriage Hills to Loop 322, is about to start the design phase, and the section from Loop 322 to E. S. 11th St. is scheduled to be designed at the same time. Due to utility relocations on the north side, the City is pushing to pick up the project right at Carriage Hills to the Loop. Mr. Chandler informed the Board that this will likely be the first project presented to City Council in 2022. This will be followed by the E. N. 10th St. project. Once the south side of the Maple project is complete, they plan to move to the north side. Chairman Price then opened the floor for questions. Hearing none, he moved forward to CityLink's presentation.

CityLink – Mr. Bobby Sharpe provided the Board with the following updates:

The revision process of the Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan has changed; rather than requiring a yearly update, as of October 2022, the TAM plan will only need to be updated every four years. Thus, the updated TAM will be presented to the MPO Policy Board in four years. Mr. Sharpe clarified that, due to its contribution to their annual National Transit Database (NTD) report, CityLink will continue to review and revise the fleet inventory portion of the TAM plan as needed. Mr. Sharpe continued, informing the Board that CityLink will be releasing an RFQ for architectural and engineering consultation/design services. The goal is to rehabilitate and improve CityLink's current facility, while also providing a feasibility study and design for the proposed new multi-modal transit facility. These services will be financed using funding acquired by CityLink and funding provided by TxDOT.

Chairman Price asked about the two buses that are supposed to be ordered and presented to City Council next week. Mr. Sharpe confirmed this, telling him that this update will be read at the upcoming Council meeting and, should everything go according to plan, the purchase order will also be presented. Having been in contact with the bus manufacturer, Mr. Sharpe stated that this bus order has fortunately not been affected by the current worldwide electronic chip shortage. Nonetheless, production time is estimated to take 12-14 months. However, CityLink has also placed an order for some replacement cutaway vehicles, and—as they look and function similar to normal passenger vehicles—these have been affected by the chip shortage. Production would normally take 6-8 months, but the delays will likely add 3-4 more.

Mayor Williams asked if the proposed multi-modal facility will collaborate with Greyhound buses to provide better service to the City. Mr. Sharpe answered that they hope to do so, but that—as was previously the case—working with Greyhound is challenging. The company has been phasing out the majority of their physical storefronts for several years now. Mayor Williams noted that, in Abilene and other communities, Greyhound has chosen to collaborate with convenience stores, and the result has been awkward and confusing. He expressed that collaboration with CityLink is a preferable alternative that would provide greater consistency and stability. Mr. Sharpe agreed that collaboration would be overall beneficial, and stated CityLink's intention to approach Council for support letters at a later date. As there were no further questions, Chairman Price moved to the next item. *Discussion only – No vote taken.*

8. Discussion and review of reports:

Financial Status

Ms. Smetana presented the financial status, which consisted of two tables: one for the previous FY 2021 and the other for the current FY 2022. At the end of FY 2021, the total amount authorized was

\$443,718.92, while the total amount of expenditures was \$223,830.56. Thus, the remaining balance of \$209,888.36 carries over to the new fiscal year. In regards to FY 2022, there has only been one work order authorizing \$57,440.28 so far. Judge Spurgin asked what the carryover balance had been at the end of FY 2020, and Ms. Smetana informed him that the balance that was transferred from FY 2020 to FY 2021 was \$180,508.83.

Operation Report

Ms. Smetana warned the Board that, due to the cancellation of the October meeting, this Operations Report was longer than usual. She highlighted the distribution of their December newsletter, and Mr. LaBorde's work on several maps, which are available to view on the MPO website. The MPO partnered with TxDOT and the D.R.I.V.E. Safe Coalition to run a table at the Abilene Police Department's A.P.D. Night Out event. An evaluation form was created to analyze each candidate who submitted a proposal to the Loop 322/SH 36 Traffic Impact Analysis RFQ, and several important MPO reports had been modified or updated. Ms. Smetana concluded by informing the Board that this Operation Report spanned the time between August 7th and December 3rd.

Director's Report

Ms. Smetana stated that they are currently working on the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) for FY 2021, and it will be submitted by the deadline tomorrow after some tweaking. The Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) will not be submitted by the deadline, as they are currently waiting to receive information from TxDOT. Performance Measure 1 (PM1) data was received December 1st. The Public Transit Agency Safety plan is due in June. The new FYs 2023-2026 TIP is due on June 10th.

Discussion only – No vote taken.

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

None presented.

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

Ms. Smetana asked the Board to look at the handout included in their packets and go over the proposed 2022 Policy Board meeting dates. If no changes are needed, the next meeting will be held on February 15, 2022. No other topics were recommended. *Discussion only – No vote taken.*

Chairman Price advised the Public that the Board would be going into Executive Session, pursuant to 551.074 for personnel matters for the purpose of Evaluation of the Executive Director. He then recessed the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Board reserves the right to adjourn into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any item on the agenda as authorized by Texas Government Code Sections: 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about real property) 551.073 (Deliberations about gifts and donations), 551.074 (Personnel matters), and 551.076 (Deliberations about security devices). After discussion in executive session, any action or vote will be taken in public.

11. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion and Public Hearing, and Take Action on the evaluation of the Executive Director.

The public meeting was reconvened at 2:18 p.m. *No vote or action was taken during the Executive Session.* Chairman Price opened the item and informed the group that the report and discussion were

held during Executive Session. He then began the public hearing. No one came forward. Chairman Price then announced that the Policy Board has approved a pay raise for the Executive Director in alignment with the previous City-approved pay increase that occurred in September 2021.

12. Adjournment.

With no further business, Chairman Price adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.