



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
December 13, 2022**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 13, 2022, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut St., Abilene, Texas.

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Member Absent:

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. Don Green, City of Abilene, Transportation Director
Mr. Michael Haithcock, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene TP&D
Mr. Max Johnson, City of Abilene, Director of Public Works
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney
Ms. Lauren Stevens, CityLink, ParaTransit Supervisor
Mr. Bryce Turentine, P.E., TxDOT Abilene Area Engineer

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Executive Director
Ms. Rita Ryan, Office Assistant III

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Hiron Fernando, P.E., Kimley-Horn
Ms. Abby Axelson, P.E., Kimley-Horn
Mr. James Condry, Former CoA Public Works Administrator
Mr. Bruce Neil, AISD, Transportation Operations Manager
Ms. Tracy Kennedy
Mr. Richard Kennedy

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Price called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. He announced that public comments would be taken on any item appearing on the agenda during the discussion of said item.

2. Recognition and Proclamation.

Chairman Price stated that this is Judge Bolls' last MPO Policy Board meeting since he is retiring. He then presented Judge Bolls with a plaque of appreciation and recognition for the twelve years (five years as Vice-Chair) serving on the board. Judge Bolls accepted the plaque and graciously thanked the Abilene MPO, the Board Members, and everyone in attendance for the opportunity to serve the community.

3. Consideration and Take Action on the minutes of the October 18, 2022 meeting.

Judge Bolles made a **motion** to approve the meeting minutes as presented, with a **second** by Mr. Allbritton. *Motion carried (4-0).*

4. Receive an Update, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on Meeting Dates for 2023.

Chairman Price discussed the Policy Board meeting dates for 2023. Upon hearing no conflict or changes requested, the dates stand as presented.

No action taken.

5. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study: Loop 322/SH 36 (Traffic Impact Analysis). (Mr. Hiron Fernando, Kimley-Horn).

Ms. Smetana gave a brief background, stating that the study began in 2021 and encompasses the entire corridor of Loop 322 and SH 36/FM 18. Ms. Smetana noted the numerous meetings and draft reports that had been completed. She also announced that Kimley-Horn was here to present. Ms. Smetana said the final report contains three volumes: *1) the main part of the document, 2) the appendix with the roll plot exhibits and 3) the appendix with the background and miscellaneous information.* Ms. Smetana noted that any future projects resulting from this study would go through the appropriate public participation as part of the Project Selection Process. The TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) recommended approval to move forward to the Policy Board with suggested changes. Ms. Smetana turned the floor over to Mr. Fernando of Kimley-Horn.

Mr. Fernando introduced himself and his associate Ms. Axelson. He thanked the MPO, Ms. Smetana and the Policy Board for the opportunity to be a part of the project. He began presenting the final report. Mr. Fernando explained that his team worked closely with stakeholders, which included TXDOT representatives, the Abilene MPO, the city of Abilene, Dyess AFB and Abilene Regional Airport. He said there are three primary objectives: *1) evaluating methods to improve safety along the two-way frontage roads, 2) installing a continuous frontage road along SL 322 and 3) evaluating transportation enhancements for short and long-term improvements based on future developments in the area.* He noted that TxDOT assisted in the generation of the traffic counts. Mr. Fernando explained the projected numbers were calculated by adding layers to current flows and future projected usage due to development. He said the report has 2022 counts and projected counts for 2027 and 2032.

Mr. Fernando spoke on the four options that are contained in the report. He displayed and discussed slides and the options and areas covered within the study. Mr. Fernando noted the commonalities between the four options. He identified Option 2 as the Preferred Option and Option 3 as the Interim Option Alternative. Option 2 contains a separate frontage road and has a jug-handle that allows a turn onto Expo Drive. Mr. Fernando said that although Option 3 is more cost effective it does not have a continuous frontage road west of SL 322.

Mr. Fernando stated the study has warranted that four traffic signals based off of future projections will be required: *1) FM 18 extension at SH 36 at the future airport entrance (required in 2027), 2) the intersection along FM 1750 North (required in 2027), 3) FM-1750 South (required in 2027) and 4) FM 1750 at 27th Street (required in 2025).* Mr. Fernando then spoke on traffic analysis and the roll plot exhibits.

Chairman Price asked Mr. Fernando why the entrance ramp location was not moved to the one-way. Mr. Fernando said they wanted to show different alternatives. He explained that each of the four options can be individually piecemealed together. Judge Spurgin noted Option 1 was a similar situation. Judge Spurgin referred to Option 3 and asked when exiting off of Expo Drive, are you able to access SL 322? Mr. Fernando stated yes this maintains and provides good access for the neighborhood and the area. Judge Spurgin asked if there was data available on moving the access ramp further north. Mr. Fernando replied that all traffic would be accessing SL 322 without using a jug-handle if the ramp was moved. Chairman Price noted the neighborhood would have to access SL 322 by traveling to SH 36 or from

the ramp south of East South 27th Street. Mr. Fernando concurred that the neighborhood would have options but no direct access. Mr. Fernando resumed his presentation and discussing Option 4 that creates a continuous frontage road from SH 36 to FM 1750 with a T-intersection located on the west side of SL 322. He noted this removes the sweeping curve and creates a stop-controlled intersection. Mr. Fernando discussed the projected costs for each option. Chairman Price asked what Alternate-A entailed and Mr. Fernando explained it is for FM 18 at SH 36, creating a left-hand turn bay into the future developments, a right hand turn bay and a signal. The improvements would be just at the intersection not on the airport property. Mr. Fernando summarized his presentation by stating Option 2 is the recommendation and Option 3 is the interim alternative.

Chairman Price referred to the traffic counts slide and informed Mr. Fernando that Great Lakes Cheese Factory currently employs over 200 employees, is expected to reach over 500 employees and noting that the peak time count seems low. Mr. Fernando explained that the estimate was based on I.T.E. (Institute Transportation of Engineers) Code which is based on the square footage of the facility and not employment. That number can be adjusted but the percentage increase would be negligible based on the total number of trips for the full day. He further stated that they would look into the projections.

Mr. Allbritton inquired about short-term options. Mr. Fernando suggested the southbound left turn bay at SL 322 and SH 36, the jug-handle located at Expo Drive and SL 322 and the traffic signal at FM 1750 and East South 27th Street. Judge Spurgin referred to Exhibit #9, and inquired if there was data available on the traffic percentages for the northbound west-side frontage road SL 322, if northbound traffic turns on Expo Drive then all traffic north of Expo Drive is just southbound. Is there speculation on the percentages that would route away or continue down onto Lytle Way and the impact or need for a signal at Expo Drive? Mr. Fernando said that was discussed internally but is outside the scope of the study but he does believe it would be a good candidate for a peak hours signal study.

Chairman Price asked Ms. Smetana for the public request card. The Chairman then moved the meeting to the Public Hearing Portion. Ms. Smetana directed the Chairman to Richard and Tracy Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy introduced himself as a resident of the neighborhood that would be impacted by any changes made to the west side of the SL 322 frontage road. Mr. Kennedy stated he would be greatly concerned if the entranceway to SL 322 was moved north of Expo Drive and thus forcing traffic into the neighborhood. He said he knows and appreciates that a lot of work and time has gone into planning this project but this is a quiet older neighborhood with limited streets that would be greatly impacted by that moving or removing that ramp. Ms. Kennedy introduced herself and explained she has similar concerns as Mr. Kennedy. She requested information on vehicle wrecks (e.g. number, type of wreck), that have occurred at the two-way intersection. She said as a nine-year resident of the neighborhood, she was unaware of even one accident. She noted there are events every weekend at the Taylor Telecom Center. She said people already have a difficult time getting in and out of that area now. Ms. Kennedy noted that with two exits: **1)** an exit onto SH 36 that would come down the access road and **2)** an exit over the bridge would allow the neighborhood to miss all the horse trailers and trucks.

Chairman Price asked Mr. Fernando to respond to Ms. Kennedy's questions. Mr. Fernando noted there were four options provided to demonstrate potential possibilities. Mr. Fernando acknowledged her concern and said Option 2 does not move the ramp. Mr. Fernando said TxDOT maintains a database which includes all reported crashes for the State of Texas. They do have the capability to obtain the data for this specific area. Mr. Fernando advised that the Texas Institute of Transportation has done extensive studies on two-way frontage roads. The results show two-way frontage roads have a substantially higher amount of crashes than one-way frontage roads. Mr. Fernando said based on those findings and the safety factor is the main reason for removing the two-way frontage road.

Judge Bolts asked if we are having difficulties because of how we handle two-way access roads. He said if all of the access roads were one-way and everybody knew they are all one-way; we would not have as many collision points. He said they have been trying to get all of the access roads one-way for

a long time now. He noted that it is a real concern but also we need to do anything we can to keep the traffic out of those neighborhoods. He explained that the streets in this particular area do not have curbs, it is a very rural setting and it was designed that way. He is unsure if this is a viable option but he does know we will have to get this done and in the safest and most efficient way possible.

Judge Spurgin inquired about Option 3, specifically the southbound SL 322 exit onto the west SL 322 Frontage Road and asked if they were being changed? Mr. Fernando responded no changes for the off-ramp north of Expo Drive. Judge Spurgin inquired about Option 2, noting we would have a one-way frontage road and a bridge over Lytle Creek but the traffic numbers associated are very small. Mr. Fernando agreed but stated it was to have a continuous frontage road for neighborhood convenience along with emergency vehicle access allowing for continuity and safety. Judge Spurgin then inquired about a continuous frontage road and possibility of future development on the East SL 322 Frontage Road. Chairman Price noted Mr. Green was present and Judge Spurgin could ask him directly. Mr. Green, Director of Transportation Services, referred the board to the slide/exhibit 6, noting development in area B would be where development would begin soonest. He said they are hoping to have an agreement to the City Council in January to erect a convenience store on the proposed road. He believes this will be a catalyst to future development. Mr. Green mentioned they are working on finding grant opportunities to continue the road to Airport Blvd. Judge Spurgin asked if there were plans to move the airport entrance up to an intersection of FM 18. Mr. Green stated it would be the preferred entrance once signalized but they have no plans to remove Airport Blvd.

Chairman Price noted we are still in the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and asked if anyone else present wished to address this topic. Hearing no one, Chairman Price closed the public hearing and asked Ms. Smetana for clarification and then requested a motion be made to accept the report as presented.

Judge Bolls made a **motion** to accept the report as presented, with a **second** by Judge Spurgin. ***Motion carried (4-0).***

6. Discussion and review of transportation projects).

(TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)

TxDOT - Mr. Turentine said the following projects have been completed: Ambler sidewalks and ramps project, FM 600 rehab project in Jones County and FM 89 and FM 707 Safety Improvement Projects.

Mr. Turentine spoke on current construction projects: **#1** Safety Illumination Project on S 1st Street is in a contract delayed start for material procurement with a projected start date of late January/early February, **#2** Buffalo Gap Road Project is approximately 25% complete, and **#3** I20 Overlay Repave Project is 25% to 30% complete.

Mr. Turentine discussed the Planned Projects: **#1** and **#2** US 83 and FM 3034 (Land Fill Road) - PS&E has begun and they are approximately 50% through the design phase. **#3** FM 1082 (Dam Road) Project has the Design Concept Conference (DCC) scheduled for this month. **#4** US 277 Pavement Rehab Project with safety treatments is looking good. **#5** FM 707 the first public meeting has been held and the project is moving along. **#6** FM 1082 is a safety project, **#7** FM 605 resurfacing project is just getting started. **#8** SH 36 sidewalks and ramps on South 11th Street - PS&E has just begun and TxDOT is receiving assistance from TxDOT Austin Design Division on those plans. **#9** East South 7th Street Bridge Replacement at Cedar Creek is going well, the design is approximately 75% complete. **#10** FM 3034 is the other section of the Land Fill Rd Project, to the east of the overpass, **#11** I20 (the breakout project for the 6 lane widening of I20) on the stretch around Judge Ely Blvd and SH 351 we are approaching the procurement process for the PS&E. **#12** I20 Preventive Maintenance near Wells Lane, overlay project. **#13, #14, #15, #16 and #17** are Safety Projects and Call for Median Barrier (cable or concrete) Installation and **#18** FM 1750 and Industrial Blvd, intersection improvements planning is underway.

City of Abilene - Mr. Chandler spoke on the projects currently under construction: **#1** North 6th at Cypress Street improvements - a meeting is set to coordinate with the hotel to allow access for work to continue behind the safety barrier erected by the hotel. **#2** East North 10th St. Improvements Project for Treadaway Blvd. to Judge Ely Blvd. requires striping and bridge maintenance to reach 100% complete. **#3 and #4** two Projects have been bid and awarded: The Honey-Bee realignment at Lake Fort Phantom and the Five Points Roadway Improvements for the relocation of Marigold St. and Fulwiler Rd. improvements. He noted that an alternate to improve Marigold St. back to Arnold Blvd. was included, making it a complete concrete section street from end to end. **#5** Maple Street Project from Carriage Hills to SL 322 - bids have been received and it will be going to council in January.

Mr. Chandler addressed Projects Under-Design stating that the Work Zone Projects **#1, #2** and **#3** will begin rolling out in January 2023 for Spring paving. He noted that after contacting the Street Advisory Committee, two additional work zones were added: **#4** S5 and **#5** S13 will bid late June/July 2023 for a Fall paving. **#6** East North 10th St./Judge Ely Blvd to SL 322 Project is nearing 100%, a final design meeting is scheduled and the project will advertise on January 8, 2023. **#8** North 5th St. two-way conversion Project is 100% designed and a contract preparation to advertise is in process. Mr. Chandler said the Street Advisory Committee selected four intersections for improvements creating Projects **#9, #10, #11, and #12**: South Willis St. at South 7th St., Pine St. at North 10th St., North 18th Street at Kirkwood St. and North 14th St. at Westwood Dr. **#13** South 14th Street Walkability Project - design will be soon and the project will be bid in May 2023. **#14** South 27th Improvements Project from Barrow St. to Danville Dr. will be designed and set to bid in January 2023. Mr. Chandler then discussed the Maple St. SL 322 to East South 11th St. Project (**#7**), noting the full corridor will be designed but to avoid having both sides of SL322 simultaneously under construction the project will be phased.

CityLink - Ms. Stevens said CityLink has partnered with First Transit and Spare to implement a pilot project for the northwest portion of Abilene, to replace the underperforming Route 10. The project will introduce passengers to ride hailing technology that allows them to schedule their own rides on demand basis. She noted a similar service: the on-call demand response service; has been in operation in southwest Abilene for 4 years. The pending implementation date is February 2023.

Ms. Stevens noted that the two large buses scheduled for a January 2023 delivery have been delayed due to supply chain issues and a lack of parts to complete the build at this time. The new delivery date is April 2023.

Ms. Stevens was pleased to announce the Automated Voice Announcement (AVA) System has been installed in all of the fixed route buses. The system is fully functional and some minor refinements are being made.

7. Discussion and review of reports:

Ms. Smetana reviewed the following reports that are available in the packets:

Financial Status - Ms. Smetana advised that the fiscal year-end Financial Status detail for 2022 was available in the packet. She noted the first Work Order for 2023 (normally received in October) has not yet been received. She said TxDOT was revamping how they are distributing that by giving a charge order to each of the MPOs. Ms. Smetana spoke with TxDOT and relayed they are hoping to have that work order within the next week. Ms. Smetana offered to answer any questions on the financial report, no questions asked.

Operation Report – Ms. Smetana advised the Operation report for date October 12, 2022 to December 2, 2022 was available in the packet. She highlighted several tasks that were accomplished during this period. No questions asked.

Director's Report – Reminding the Board that a full, detailed copy was included in the packet, Ms. Smetana covered the topics under the Director's Report.

Work Tasks:

MPO Staffing - Ms. Smetana noted the Office Assistant position with the MPO had been open from May 26, 2022 until October 26, 2022 when Ms. Rita Ryan joined the MPO. Ms. Smetana noted the Transportation Planner position open since June 10, 2022 has not been filled but interviews have been conducted.

Year-end Reports - Annual Performance and Expenditure Report and the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects – Ms. Smetana stated that every year the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) and Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) are due by December 31st to FHWA and FTA to ensure compliance. TxDOT requests that reports be given to them by December 15th to allow time for their review. TxDOT is in the process of preparing the information for the ALOP. She said that the MPO staff is in the process of preparing the APER by the December 15th deadline.

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

Chairman Price opened the floor for any public comments. None were presented.

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

None were presented.

10. Adjournment.

With no further business, Chairman Price adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.