



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD  
April 19, 2022**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 19, 2022, in the Abilene Public Library, South Branch, Mall of Abilene, 4310 Buffalo Gap Road, 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 (Policy Board Chairman)  
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County Judge (Policy Board 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  
Mr. Michael Haithcock, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene TP&D  
Mr. Max Johnson, City of Abilene, Interim Director of Public Works  
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Paul Norman, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene Engineer  
Mr. Bobby Sharpe, CityLink General Manager  
Mr. Mansour Shiraz, TxDOT, TP&P MPO Coordinator  
Mr. Glen Pugh, Representative for Senator Buckingham  
Mr. Tremain Jackson, City of Abilene, Library Technology/Multimedia Manager

**MPO Staff in Attendance:**

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

**Others in Attendance:**

Ms. Tracey Kennedy

**1. Call to Order.**

Chairman Shane Price called the meeting to order at 1:30 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 February 15, 2022 meeting.**

Mr. Glenn Allbritton made a **motion** to approve the February 15, 2022 minutes as presented, with a **second** by Judge Dale Spurgin. *Motion carried (5-0).*

**3. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion and Public Hearing, and Take Action on the FINAL FYs 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

After introducing the item to the Board, Ms. E'Lisa Smetana gave the floor to Mr. Ben LaBorde to give an overview of the FINAL FYs 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Before he began, Mr. LaBorde informed the group that the document had not changed much from the draft presented at the previous meeting. Today's date (April 19, 2022) was added to the cover page with

pending approval. The same information was added to Appendix B. In the top paragraph on page 9, a notation acknowledging the new infrastructure bill was added, and more information will be put in the same space once available. The “Public Participation” section on the same page was changed to include the most recent public comment, lasting from March 09, 2022 to April 19, 2022. Additional wording was added to reflect that more input can be given later in the meeting. However, they have yet to receive any comments.

Referencing the additional handout provided, Mr. LaBorde gave a breakdown of the Highway Project Funding. For the FY 2023 FM 1082 dam relocation project, the MPO is providing \$3,000,000, TxDOT is providing \$1,000,000, and the City is providing \$3,000,000 in funding. There are two US 83 and FM 3034 projects—which include an interchange and an overpass. TxDOT is contributing \$13,520,000 of funding in the US 83 portion, and \$2,600,000 in the FM 3034 portion from the MPO. The MPO is providing \$7,840,000 towards construction costs for the FY 2025 FM 707 project. In FY 2026, the first phase of the I-20 widening project has \$20,000,000 from the MPO. TxDOT is contributing \$47,199,999. Mr. LaBorde then pointed out the location of each project on the Funded Highway Projects Map. The FY 2023 projects are marked in red and located on the north side of Abilene, the FY 2025 project is marked in green and located on the south side of town, and the FY 2026 I-20 project is marked in yellow and located on the northeast side of town. No changes were made to the Grouped Projects CSJs sections. However, Mr. LaBorde did bring attention to the note that highlights the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program project on S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The MPO has received an award of \$1,749,126 in Federal Funds and a local match of \$437,281 from the City—which, combined, results in a total of \$2,186,407 of funding for the project. The Transit Projects section was not changed, nor was the Transit Financial Summary section; all numbers are the same as they were in the previous draft.

Having finished the overview, Mr. LaBorde informed the Board that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval. Chairman Price opened the floor for any questions from the Board. Then, Chairman Price opened the Public Hearing for final comments on the TIP. Seeing that no members of the Public wished to come forward, he called for a motion. Judge Spurgin made a **motion** to approve the FINAL FYs 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as presented, with a **second** by Mayor Anthony Williams. *Motion carried (5-0).*

**4. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the 2022 Meeting Dates.**

Ms. Smetana opened the item, explaining to the Board that the meeting dates are usually confirmed in December, but they have been running behind. The first upcoming meeting is scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup>. This is to accommodate for Juneteenth—a holiday recognized by the City of Abilene on June 20<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting is scheduled for August 16, and the meeting after that is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Smetana told the Board that, although the December meeting is currently scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup>, there is an option to move the date to the 13<sup>th</sup>. She then asked if any members had a conflict with the proposed meeting dates. Hearing none, Chairman Price then asked whether the Board would like the December meeting to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 13<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Price, Judge Spurgin, and Mayor Williams all wanted to schedule the meeting for the 13<sup>th</sup>. With the December date decided, Ms. Smetana informed the group that there was no action required for this item and ended the discussion. *Discussion only—no action taken.*

**5. Receive an Update and Hold a Discussion on the Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study: Loop 322/SH 36 (Traffic Impact Analysis).**

Ms. Smetana presented the item and told the Board that this item would require no action; it is just an update. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) for the study was issued on March 10<sup>th</sup>, and the kick-off meeting was on March 15<sup>th</sup>. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, TxDOT provided numerous traffic counts at intersections within the study area. There are a few more locations for which they will be providing count information over the next few weeks. Ms. Smetana added that they will be giving Kimley-Horn (the consultant) the date

and time of several upcoming events within the study area that might bring in heavy traffic. These include the Western Heritage Festival and local high school graduations. The total cost for the study is \$60,700. The MPO is paying for \$48,700 and the City of Abilene is paying \$12,000 for the additional intersection at SH 36 and FM 18. Ms. Smetana informed the Board that the MPO funding that will be used comes from the Planning Funds, and this study would not be possible without carryover funds from previous years. The draft report should be done by July, and the final will be presented at the combined Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee workshop scheduled for August 16, 2022. Chairman Price then opened the floor for questions. Saying that he has recently been contacted by Callahan County landowners about a study, Judge Spurgin asked if the scope for the study will be going that far. Referencing the map onscreen, Ms. Smetana answered that, the red dots represent the key intersections, the blue layer represents the study area, and the green layer represents the extra area added by the City. The whole area will be analyzed. Hearing no further questions, Chairman Price moved to the next item. *Discussion only—no action taken.*

**6. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the FY 2021 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) and the FY 2021 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER).**

Ms. Smetana introduced the item by informing the Board that both the ALOP and the APER are due to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) every year on December 31<sup>st</sup>, and due to TxDOT on December 15<sup>th</sup> for review. The ALOP includes all transportation and transit projects that used federal funding (found in the TIP), while the APER looks at the UPWP and describes what work the MPO did over the previous year. Both documents are based on Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 420.117 and require Federal approval prior to publication. The MPO received all the information for the ALOP from TxDOT on January 11<sup>th</sup>, and submitted the ALOP for review on January 24<sup>th</sup>. The ALOP was approved by TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA on April 6<sup>th</sup>. The APER was submitted to TxDOT on December 15<sup>th</sup>. It was then approved by TxDOT on February 28<sup>th</sup>, FHWA on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and FTA on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. LaBorde went over the ALOP, which was included in the packet. He began with the Summary of Projects section. There were no highway projects in the FY 2021 ALOP, which resulted in \$0 of funding; \$5,980,848.73 went to grouped projects, \$2,000,000.00 in federal funding was for bicycle projects, and \$3,558,669.00 went to transit projects. This resulted in a total of \$11,539,517.73 of obligated federal funds. Mr. LaBorde added that the proceeding tables provide a breakdown of all funds, and the Transit Projects table is the largest, as it contains the most projects.

Ms. Smetana then went over the APER, which is comprised of five tasks. Task 1, Administration and Management, includes four subtasks, which Ms. Smetana listed: Subtask 1.1 Program Support and Administration; Subtask 1.2 Professional Development Training and Travel; Subtask 1.3 Public Participation, Education, Title VI, and Environmental Justice; and Subtask 1.4 Transit Planning Management. The Task 1 Funding Summary table was discussed. Ms. Smetana explained to the Board that a lot was done in the 2021 Fiscal Year, which resulted in a total expenditure of 87.39%. Moving to Task 2, Data Development and Maintenance, she again listed each subtask: Subtask 2.1 Geographic Information System (GIS) and Data Development; Subtask 2.2 Performance Measures; Subtask 2.3 Transit Planning Data; and Subtask 2.4 City of Abilene's GIS Division Staff Support. Referencing the Task 2 Funding Summary Table, Ms. Smetana pointed out that the total expenditure for Task 2 was 75.16%. She added that the justification for any spending under 75% or over 125% is written under the table. Next, Ms. Smetana went over Task 3, Short Range Planning. This includes Subtask 3.1 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); Subtask 3.2 Transit, Bicycle, and Multimodal Planning; and Subtask 3.3 Short-Term Transit Planning. The Task 3 Funding Summary Table was discussed.

Ms. Smetana then gave an overview of Task 4, Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Subtask 4.1 is Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and details the document itself. Mr. LaBorde proceeded, explaining the other two subtasks. Subtask 4.2, Travel Demand Model (TDM), covers the update of the

TDM, as well as the review, collection, and analysis of data. Subtask 4.3, Long-Range Transit Planning, provides support for long-term planning projects and focuses on modernization of the transit system and facilities. The Task 4 Funding Summary shows 5.63% expenditure. Task 5, Special Studies, includes two subtasks: Subtask 5.1 Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study: Loop 322/SH 36; and Subtask 5.2 Transit Multimodal Facility. The breakdown of funds for Task 5 was discussed. Ms. Smetana informed the Board that neither project started in FY 2021, so the expenditure was 0%. Pages 32 and 35 contain tables that breakdown the funding from each category. Ms. Smetana pointed out the total expenditures as written in each table. The percent expended for the Total Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) was 65.46%. With the exception of the Special Studies, the percent of Local Planning Funds expended was 100%. FTA (Sec. 5307) Funds were expended by 100%. As previously mentioned, there was 0% expended for FTA (Sec. 5304) Funds due to the study not beginning during FY 2021. Ms. Smetana then opened the floor for questions.

Judge Spurgin asked Ms. Smetana to explain the \$110,000.00 balance in Local Planning Funds under the Special Studies task. She told him that, due to the 0% expenditure in the Special Studies category, all available funds remained at the end of the fiscal year. In Local Planning Funds, Tasks 1, 2, 3, and 4 each had an amount of expenditure, but Task 5 did not. The total expenditure for Local Planning Funds—if Special Studies are included—is 2.65%. However, all other tasks in the category were expended 100%. Hearing no further questions, Chairman Price asked Ms. Smetana what action was requested. She clarified that the MPO is requesting recognition of both documents from the Policy Board. Mayor Williams made a **motion** to recognize the FY 2021 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) and the FY 2021 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER), with a **second** by Judge Bolls. *Motion carried (5-0).*

## 7. 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:* Site #1 is the construction of a pedestrian infrastructure contracted with Bontke Brothers Construction Company and located on SH 351 (Ambler Ave.). The project is significantly behind schedule and estimated completion is early July. The remaining work is mostly from Judge Ely Blvd. to I-20. Mr. Norman explained that they have set beams on the bridge, but nonetheless the progress is slow. A little work is left near Treadaway, but it is mostly completed. The next site is the construction of frontage roads from FM 707 to Antilley Rd. Mr. Norman told the Board that the project is completed, and they are currently finalizing the last few tasks. Site #3 is preventative maintenance on FM 3438 and Arnold Blvd. The majority of the paving is complete, and all that is left is the bridge rail at US 277. The project should be completed in 6-8 weeks. Site #4 is the installation of a flashing beacon on Business 83 at Hill St. The project is complete, and Mr. Norman informed the Board that all that is left are closing tasks and the final checklist. Sites #5 and #6 are the early stages of a 2-year roadway rehabilitation project on FM 89. Mr. Norman gave more details, saying that the project is currently on-track and they should have Industrial Blvd. open to all lanes this week (April 17-April 23). They will have to close lanes for traffic control once the work moves farther down to the south near Buffalo Gap Rd. in the next few weeks. Sites #7 and #8 are both roadway rehabilitation on FM 1082 and part of FM 600. The paving is completed on the main lanes, but they have some small work left and a few minor things on culverts. Both projects are 3-4 weeks from completion. Sites #9 and #10 are two intersections: one is at Iberis Rd. and the other is at FM 707 and Maple St. They are halfway complete with the base layer with construction on one side, and the project should be finished on time. The N. 18<sup>th</sup> bridge replacement at site #11 is currently open to traffic, but they are sorting out some pedestrian rail issues. Chairman Price asked Mr. Norman if the sidewalks along the south side of SH 351 and Ambler up to the railroad tracks were stopped because of the new car wash. Mr. Norman answered, saying that the work by the railroad area is all that is left on that project.

*Planned Projects:* Mr. Norman only discussed 3 planned projects. First, he discussed the preventative maintenance on I-20 near Hayter Rd. and west of Old Anson Rd. at sites #3 and #4. The work on the section let earlier in April, and construction is planned to begin in June or July. Mr. Norman also mentioned site #13, which is an illumination installation on S. 1<sup>st</sup> between Leggett Dr. and Ross Ave. The project is scheduled to let in August.

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

*Under Construction:* S. 27<sup>th</sup> Sayles to Barrow has been under construction for the past few months and is now down to just the crosswalk and reflectors. The Maple Street project is similar. The section from FM 707 to Carriage Hills is done and they have completed the planned work with the subdivision development partner. There are a few guard rail issues, and the remaining work is mainly on the shoulder. In the past week at the S25 work zone, they tried a new sealing product. They want to see how the product performs, and then later decide if it is a good move for future projects and if it properly preserves the streets. After strategically shutting down the roads for a 24-hour period, the project should be complete on Thursday (April 21<sup>st</sup>). Earlier today, they had preconstruction meetings for both the north and south work zone repaving. These projects were bid out to Bontke Brothers Construction Co., Inc. and are scheduled to begin in May. The north work zones should take 4-6 weeks, and the south work zones will begin afterwards—which Mr. Chandler estimates will be the middle or end of June. The Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program (TASA) Sidewalk Project is finished. They are waiting on the AFA review from TxDOT. Additionally, they are doing some more scoping on the project, and pedestrian bridges have been planned. Mr. Chandler added that they will have to check the prices because of recent supply shortages.

*In Design Phase:* Moving to future projects, Mr. Chandler informed the Board that they are working on the E. North 10<sup>th</sup> St. plans. The goal is to put plans between Treadaway and Judge Ely out for bid soon. This section is not widening, rather, they are going to smooth out the section by the railroad. Beyond that, they will be working from curb and gutter to curb and gutter. That should be out for bid and under way in June or July. Meanwhile, the Utility Department will be working on utility relocations between Griffith Rd. and Loop 322. By October, the utilities should be complete and they will bring in a contractor to begin the second widening phase. They will use a similar approach when working on Maple St.; there are some minor utility relocations needed from Carriage Hills Parkway to the Loop, but they hope to have the project out for bid and beginning construction in October. Finishing his report, Mr. Chandler added that they plan to progress north from Maple, and the design work between Loop 322 and E. S. 11<sup>th</sup> will continue. They want to discuss how to potentially break the work into phases and coordinate with the utility company.

**CityLink** – Mr. Bobby Sharpe gave the Board the following update on CityLink:

CityLink has completed their first meeting with the Goodman Corporation for architectural and engineering services for the feasibility study and design for a new multimodal facility. They will be meeting for a second time tomorrow (April 20<sup>th</sup>), as the corporation is coming in to town for a site visit at the present facility and at other sites that were evaluated and selected through the 2013 Environmental Assessment. They are creating a detailed Scope of Work and Work Plan in preparation for negotiating a contract to recommend and present to City Council at a later date. They will also be working through some capital rehabilitation and renovation projects to the current CityLink facility as another phase in the plan. Mr. Sharpe then reported to the Board that CityLink has made changes to its Route 6 by removing it from South Clack. They began a detour and realignment on April 11<sup>th</sup>. It has been removed from South Clack all the way from Catclaw Dr. to the Mall of Abilene. The now-removed section had significant traffic congestion, which caused several accidents and near misses with CityLink busses. Additionally, there were no bus stops in the area, and therefore no reason for CityLink to run that area. The route will now travel up Catclaw Dr. through the Shops of Abilene area—which is one of the largest and busiest retail sections of the city. It will then proceed south on Catclaw to Rolling Green, where it will turn left and head east before meeting with the mall parking lot and intersecting with



CityLink's on-call service. They have been using this new route for about a week now, and have experienced a much safer drive and good ridership.

Last week (April 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>), CityLink received approval from City Council to purchase new cutaways. The original approval was in June 2021, but recent supply-and-demand issues with the manufacturer caused them to permanently close their business in February 2022, thus shutting down production and cancelling CityLink's order. The new cutaways that have been purchased will be created on a Dodge Promaster chassis platform with a cutaway body. The earlier complications, as well as more-recent price increases, are both due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, CityLink is unable to purchase as many vehicles as originally planned. Mr. Sharpe expressed that there is a possibility that CityLink could receive the new chassis by the end of May 2022; the vehicles are built with a 5-week manufacturing process. Referencing the judge's recent order regarding masks, Chairman Price asked Mr. Sharpe if CityLink's policies have changed. He replied that yes, they began that process this morning and removed the mask requirement. Mr. Sharpe added that they are still optional, and signage has been changed to reflect that.

#### **8. Discussion and review of reports:**

Ms. Smetana asked the Board to reference the provided packets and then began to discuss and review the following reports.

**Financial Status** – The financial status as represented in the packet covers October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Ms. Smetana pointed out to the Board that the Work Orders that were pending at the previous meeting are now entered; Work Order #2 was received on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for the amount of \$159,904.00. Additionally, both the January (#4) and February (#5) billings were submitted since the last meeting. The January expenditures totaled \$27,994.71 and resulted in a remaining balance of \$131,449.13, while the February expenditures totaled \$18,212.03 and resulted in a remaining balance of \$113,237.10. Therefore, the present remaining balance is \$113,237.10. Ms. Smetana also let the Board know that the MPO has still not received their carryover funds from the previous fiscal year, and they still do not have the final PL112 and 5303 funds. As such, there will be more funding coming in as the year progresses. Chairman Price asked when they should expect the carryover funds, to which she replied that it would hopefully be soon now that the APER has been approved. Ms. Smetana also mentioned that Mr. Mansour Shiraz—who would present himself during the public comment period, might also have an update on when to expect the carryover funds.

**Operation Report** – As included in the packet, the current Operation Report runs from February 5<sup>th</sup> to April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The listed items detail what MPO staff has been working on since the last meeting. Ms. Smetana highlighted several tasks, including the preparation and presentation of the final contract for the Comprehensive Transportation Corridor Study, the creating and distribution of the March 2022 issue of the Abilene MPO Insider newsletter, the submission of the FY 2022 PM 1 Safety Performance Measure, the earlier-presented TIP, and the creation of several maps by Mr. LaBorde.

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

*MPO Staffing:* Ms. Emma Darby will be leaving soon, therefore the Office Assistant III position will become open in May. Ms. Smetana informed the Board that they are currently working to post the position in the hopes of allowing time for cross-training.

*Travel Demand Model:* Moving to the Travel Demand Model (TDM), Ms. Smetana told the Board that they began looking at updates and there is a kick-off meeting scheduled for June 27, 2022. They have already had several preliminary meeting in which they discussed scheduling. The MPO will be working with TxDOT and several other to develop a 2050 Forecast Model. She explained that they will be using the 2015 data, as there are too many issues with the 2020 data due to COVID-19 travel patterns. They

will also be updating the network and demographics during this process, but those will be based on the 2015 data as well. This will be completed in September of 2023, which will allow the model to be used for the MTP update due in December 2024.

*Boundary Expansion and Census Information:* A subcommittee of the TAC met, and a person from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute came to help, courtesy of TxDOT. Ms. Smetana reported that the meeting went very well, and they will bring several suggestions to the TAC before presenting a recommendation to the Policy Board at a later date. She then opened the floor for questions. Judge Bolls asked for more clarification and details regarding the decision to use the 2015 Census date, rather than the 2020 data. He theorized that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data showed that ridership was extremely low in comparison to other years. Ms. Smetana explained that some of the data was down and some of it was up, but, overall, the numbers and locations shown in the 2020 data did not make sense. Hearing concerns about the data, the consensus was to use 2015 data instead. Hearing no further questions, Chairman Price moved to the next item.

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

No members of the Public came forward, but Ms. Smetana invited Mr. Mansour Shiraz to introduce himself to the Board. Mr. Shiraz works with TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming, and he is the MPO Coordinator for Abilene, Texarkana, Victoria, Wichita Falls, and other areas. He is based out of the office in Austin where he is part of the district division, however he works remotely from the Houston district. Mr. Shiraz expressed that he was glad to meet everyone and excited to participate in the future.

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

None.

**11. Adjournment.**

With no further business, Chairman Price adjourned the meeting at 2:12 p.m.