



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
May 01, 2023**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m. Monday May 1, 2023, 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 Phil Crowley, Taylor County (1:37 p.m.)
Councilmember Shane Price, City of Abilene (Policy Board Chairman)
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County (Policy Board Vice-Chairman)
Mayor Anthony Williams, City of Abilene (1:45 p.m.)

Voting Members Absent:

None.

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Mr. Seth Bluhm, Dyess AFB Representative-Community Planner
Mr. Scott Chandler, P.E., City of Abilene, City Engineer
Mr. Billy Dezern, TxDOT, Transportation Specialist
Ms. Nellie Doneva, City of Abilene, Videographer
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Paul Norman, Director of Transportation Operations
Mr. Will Ratliff, City of Abilene, Engineer in Training
Mr. Preston “Conrad” Smith, Dyess AFB Representative-Community Planner
Mr. Bryce Turentine, TxDOT, Abilene Area Engineer

MPO Staff in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Mr. James Condry, Former CoA Public Works Administrator
Mr. Bruce Neil, AISD, Transportation Operations Manager
Mr. Evan Steele, Development Corporation of Abilene
Mr. Mark Spurlock, Steamboat Cycling Club

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Price called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. He stated 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 shared this will be the last Policy Board Meeting for Mayor Williams and we wanted to wish him well.

3. Consideration and Take Action on the minutes of the February 21, 2023 meeting.

Judge Spurgin made a *motion* to approve the February 21, 2023 meeting minutes with the one correction of the spelling of Hayter Road, with a *second* by Mr. Allbritton. *Motion carried (3-0).*

4. **Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the Pavement and Bridge (PM 2) Performance Measures.**

Ms. Smetana provided background on the Pavement and Bridge (PM2) Performance Measures. She noted that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) adopted targets for the Pavement and Bridge Condition Performance Measures (PM 2) on February 9, 2023 and the MPO then has 180 days to either accept the report or generate their own targets.

Ms. Smetana identified the Performance Measures for the Pavement and Bridge as:

- Percentage of Pavements of the Interstate System in Good Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the Interstate System in Poor Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the Non-Interstate NHS in Good Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the Non-Interstate NHS in Poor Condition
- Percentage of NHS Bridges Classified as in Good Condition
- Percentage of NHS Bridges Classified as in Poor Condition

Ms. Smetana spoke on the resolution and attachment provided in the package, which contains the six performance measures including the statewide baseline, the two-year and the four-year targets. She stated the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval to the Policy Board at their March 28th, 2023 meeting on the resolution for the Pavement and Bridge (PM 2) Performance Measures. Ms. Smetana said we are requesting approval of the Resolution for Pavement and Bridge (PM 2) Performance Measures to move it on to TxDOT. She noted she would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Price asked if there were any questions, no questions were asked so he requested a motion.

Mr. Allbritton made a *motion* to approve the resolution on the Pavement and Bridge (PM 2) Performance Measures, with a *second* by Judge Spurgin. *Motion carried (3-0)*.

5. **Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Any Action on the Carbon Reduction Program and Projects.**

Ms. Smetana introduced the newly formed Carbon Reduction Program noting it has been authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). She provided details that the available funding for the Abilene MPO is \$1,345,541 for FYs 2022–2024 and then after that it will be approximately \$460,000 available per year. The total available funding for the Abilene MPO for the ten years in the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) is \$5,491,250. Ms. Smetana noted this was presented to the TAC at their March 28, 2023 meeting. She said a subcommittee of the TAC will be meeting on May 19, 2023 to discuss potential projects to be taken back to the TAC. If the TAC agrees then those recommendations will be presented to the Policy Board. She explained that today's presentation is to inform the Policy Board of a new funding category and to hear any direction they would like to give staff on this program. Ms. Smetana spoke on Appendix - A that breaks down the funding allocations, noting it is available in the packet before turning the floor over to Mr. Norman.

Mr. Norman explained that we are in the learning stages of this fast developing program. He said the purpose of the Carbon Reduction Plan is to reduce transportation emissions by funding projects that meet State carbon reduction strategies. He spoke on the funding allotments by population, the requirement for projects to be available for obligation within the first three-year period: FYs 2022, 2023, and 2024, noting any unobligated funds at the end of that period would lapse. Mr. Norman emphasized the need to fast pace our selection thereby allowing us to meet the limited time frame allotted. If we do not meet the time requirement, we would lose the first year funding which amounts to over \$400,000. He noted local participation might be required depending on the type of project,

work, and off-system or on-system. Mr. Norman said if there is a local participation requirement it would most likely be an 80% funded, 20% match dollars. Mr. Norman shared the eligible projects: Traffic monitoring; Advanced truck stop electrification; Surface truck parking; Capital projects for the construction of a bus rapid transit corridor; Dedicated bus lanes; On-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and Replacement of street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives.

Mr. Norman discussed the replacement of street lighting and traffic control devices with LED (light emitting diode) conversions. He stated that TxDOT is currently going through this process with their lights. He identified a complication citywide, since the City does not own many of the lights along their corridors, this would require the owner to be identified, located, and permission obtained. Mr. Norman spoke on the pedestrian and bicycle facilities, noting right-of-ways would have to be obtained, and that is a timely process that excludes it for our first project selection. Mr. Norman suggested the selection of the Intelligent Traffic System (ITS), explaining this meets the criteria, is beneficial to our community and can meet the approaching deadline. Mr. Norman noted the addition of cameras and large message boards placed along the State highways (and possibly on other high traffic roads) would enable traffic flow monitoring, identify problem areas and provide more precise accident locations resulting in faster response time for ambulances, police and the fire department. The large message boards could alert travelers with updated information such as roadwork, lane closures, accidents, traffic slow-downs and closed roads. These message boards would allow drivers up-to-date notification of road conditions allowing them to be prepared and possibly time to seek alternative routes. Mr. Norman spoke about purchasing electric buses but he noted that there is currently no infrastructure available to charge them. He said this would be an option for one of the future projects. Mr. Norman thanked the Board and said he would answer any questions. (*Judge Crowley joined the meeting at 1:37 p.m.*)

Chairman Price asked if the on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists had to be only on TxDOT roads. Mr. Norman stated they do not, they can be off-system but on the National Highway System and there is some potential for that. Chairman Price asked Ms. Smetana if that would be something that the TAC would suggest and it would then be presented at a future meeting. Ms. Smetana confirmed that is correct.

Judge Spurgin requested clarification on Mr. Norman's statement that the city does not own its' traffic signals. Mr. Norman stated he was referring to the streetlights and not the signals. Mr. Norman said he believes that most of the city signals have already been converted to LED Lights.

Chairman Price asked if there were any other questions. No questions were asked. Ms. Smetana said we were reaching out to the Board to see if they had any other recommendations or specific categories they would like looked at more strongly than others. She referred to the listing of eligible projects and asked if the Board wished to give some direction or if it should just be returned to the TAC.

Judge Spurgin asked Mr. Norman to explain surface truck parking. Mr. Norman explained that it is truck parking comparable to that seen on the interstate. A larger rest area with truck parking availability so the trucks are not sitting on the side of the road idling.

Mr. Allbritton stated that he believes the City needs to invest in intelligent transportation type devices such as previously discussed. Mr. Allbritton would like to obtain the equipment necessary to monitor traffic and be able to relay that data back to the emergency dispatch center in town. He said this would allow us to monitor accidents and traffic flow along I20 and some of the other major roadways. Mr. Norman agreed with Mr. Allbritton and shared that there has been some communication between TxDOT, the Counties and the City to discuss the opportunity of video sharing. Mr. Norman said this

system would enable the Emergency 911 Centers the ability to get video feeds. (*Mayor Williams joined the meeting at 1:45 p.m.*)

Ms. Smetana asked Mr. Norman to provide some information on the current installations of cameras and message boards within the area. Mr. Norman stated that seventeen cameras were currently being placed along the freeway; some are located outside the MPO area. Mr. Norman stated that although TxDOT is currently installing some cameras this would be an opportunity to install them in other high traffic areas such as the Loop and on other major roadways. He noted the addition of large dynamic message signs that are used for Amber Alerts and current traffic conditions that would be a part of the system.

Judge Crowley ask Mr. Norman for confirmation of what type of money makes up this program. Mr. Norman stated it is a new funding category for MPOs. He further stated that although transportation funding categories do change, this category is a permanent addition to the Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

Chairman Price asked if there were any other questions. No questions were asked.

Chairman Price then spoke to Ms. Smetana stating with no specific action to be taken but just direction how would she summarize this discussion. Ms. Smetana said from her understanding of the discussion the Board would like the TAC to look at ITS as a possible category. Mr. Allbritton confirmed that would be good. Chairman Price said the City does have a bicycle plan so it would be beneficial to look at ways to supplement and expand that plan. Ms. Smetana noted both recommendations would be brought back to the TAC.

No *action* taken. Discussion and direction only.

**6. Discussion and review of transportation projects.
(TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)**

TxDOT - Mr. Turentine thanked the Board and then shared that last week TxDOT celebrated their work zone safety awareness week. Mr. Turentine thanked and expressed his appreciation to all of the local agencies and their transportation partners for their participation.

Mr. Turentine discussed the Planned Projects. He noted the table for planned projects has increased as new projects were added. Mr. Turentine provided an update by highlighting any changes from the previous meeting. The first four sites **Project #1** US 83 - Construct a bridge from .67 miles north of FM 3034 to .28 miles south of FM 3034, **Project #2** FM 3034 - Widen the road and construct shoulders from US 83 to FM 600, **Project #3** FM 1082 - Construct New Road from west of Cheyenne Creek to east of Dam, and **Project #4** US 277 - Rehabilitate existing Roadway from south end of BNSF Bridge to 3.7 Miles SW of FM 1235 did not change. **Projects #1 and #2** are letting together as one project. **Project #3** is scheduled to let in August 2023. **Project #4** is scheduled to let in November 2023. (**Prior Project #5**: FM 707 - widen road – add lanes and shoulders from FM 89 (Buffalo Gap Rd) to US 83 that had an expected 2025 let date has changed to March 2028). The new **Project #5** I20 - Overlay from Nolan County Line to near Wells Lane is scheduled to let in November 2023. **Project #6** FM 1082 - Widen road and add shoulders from CR 361 to FM 600 had no changes. **Project #7** FM 605 - is located outside the MPO Boundary. **Project #8** SH 36 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements from BU 83D to FM 1750 had no changes. **Project #9** ES 7th Street - Bridge replacement at Cedar Creek is scheduled to let in May 2023. **Project #10** FM 3034 - Rehabilitate existing roadway, had no changes. **Project #11** IH 20 - Widen Road, add lanes and shoulders from Judge Ely Blvd. to SH 351, had no changes. **Project #12** IH 20 – Preventive Maintenance from near Wells Lane to .75 miles east of Hayter Road was let in March. **Projects #13** SL 322 from EN 10th Street to Lytle Creek, **#14** US 83 from FM 707 to .25 mil north of FM 3034, and **#16** (mix of concrete and cable barrier projects) will let together in June 2023.

Project #15 and **Project #17** are also median barrier projects but are scheduled further out. **Project #18** FM 1750 –Intersection Improvements with turn lanes from Industrial Blvd. to 1200’ South of Colony Hill Road, had no change. Mr. Turentine explained that projects **#19, #20, #21, #22, #23** and **#24** are the newly added projects. **Project #19:** US 277 – Overlay from US 83 to FM 3438. **Project #20:** IH 20 - Overlay from Nolan County Line to Near Wells Lane. They are planning to combine **Projects #5 and Project #20**. **Project #21:** FM 1235 - Widen Road and add shoulders from CR 306 to US 277. **Project #22:** SH 36 - Widen Road and add lanes from CR 123 to Callahan County. **Project #23:** Outside MPO Boundary, FM 2404 - Overlay from CR 410 to Taylor County Line. **Project #24:** FM 2833 – Overlay from Jones County to SH 351.

Mr. Turentine stated the Current Projects are the same as they were at last meeting. The following projects are all proceeding: **Project #1** BI 20-R - Safety Improvements from Leggett Drive to Ross Avenue. **Projects #2** FM 89 (Buffalo Gap Road) - Rehabilitation of Existing Road from Near Bettes Lane to Rebecca Lane and **Project #3:** FM 89 (Buffalo Gap Road) - Widen non-freeway from Rebecca Lane to just north of US 83. Mr. Turentine stated that **Projects #4 and #5** are the ITS Project discussed earlier by Mr. Norman. **Project #4** IH 20 - Overlay from West of Old Anson Road to Callahan County Line and **Project #5** IH 20 - Overlay from .75 miles East of Hayter Road to West of Old Anson Road does have material supply issues so they are working with the materials available.

Mr. Turentine asked if there were any questions. Mr. Allbritton said he had no questions but he wanted to highlight some of the projects. **Project #3:** FM 1082 - Construct New Road from West of Cheyenne Creek Road to east of the Fort Phantom Dam is still scheduled to let in September. Mr. Allbritton said there are some issues with the power company with some poles in the way and it may delay the project. **Project #11:** IH 20 - Widen road and add lanes and shoulders from Judge Ely Blvd. to SH 351. He noted the MPO has been working on adding a Judge Ely Overpass on IH 20 and the schematics are now complete. Planning will begin shortly. Mr. Allbritton noted the project shows a let date of 2026 but TxDOT is hoping to accelerate the project if funding is in place. **Project #18:** FM 1750 - Intersection Improvements with Turn Lanes. He said they have been having meetings on this project. Mr. Allbritton noted that **Previous Project #5:** FM 707 from FM 89 to US 83 is not showing on the map but there has been a public meeting for it.

City of Abilene – Mr. Chandler spoke on the projects currently under construction: **#1)** Honeybee Realignment at Lake Fort Phantom is currently on hold due to a water department line replacement; **#2)** Maple Street (Carriage Hills to SL 322) is out to bid. **#3)** N. 6th Street at Cypress Street is 100% done with the planned work but the city has added a fire lane to the scope that has been poured. **#4)** Five Points Roadway Improvements Projects including the relocation of Marigold Street and the improvements to Fulwiler Road is under construction, they had utility relocations; **#5)** EN 10th Street from Treadaway to Judge Ely Blvd. is completed; Judge Ely Blvd. to SL 322 contractors are in and work is proceeding. The goal for the work in front of Taylor Elementary is to have it completed while school is out for the summer; **Work Zones #6)** S9C, **#7)** N2A & N2B and **#8):** S11B, are all out to bid. Contractors have begun working on ADA ramps before beginning milling. **#9)** N 5th Street Two Way Conversion, removing signals along North 5th Street (except at Pine and Grape Streets) and adjusting signals and adding an additional pole for the westbound movement on Pine and Grape Streets. **#10)** Pine Street at North 10th Intersection Street Maintenance (Street Advisory Committee Suggestion) concreting the intersection and signal upgrades.

Mr. Chandler spoke on Projects Under-Design: **#1)** S5 and **#2)** S13 will bid in late June/July 2023 for a fall paving. **#3)** Maple Street (Loop 322 to ES 11th) will be split to: S 27th Street to S11th Street; S 11th Street to SL 322 to bid, plans are 90% complete for both sections and the ES 11th Street to S 27th Street will be bidding in a month or two. Street Maintenance Projects **#4, #5, #6** and **#8** are all in the design stage: **#4)** South Willis Street at South 7th Street and **#5)** North 18th Street at Kirkwood Street and **#6)** North 14th Street at Westwood Drive, **#8)** South 27th Street Improvements Project (Barrow Street to

Danville Drive); #7) South 14th Street Walkability Project, the city is currently working with TxDOT since this is a Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant. It should bid in the next few months.

CityLink - Ms. Smetana provided a brief update noting the micro transit pilot program is currently delayed due to issues with the credit card payment system and planning is ongoing with the Goodman Corporation for the Multimodal Facility.

7. Discussion and review of reports:

Ms. Smetana spoke on the following reports, noting a complete detail is available in the packets.

Financial Status – Ms. Smetana stated the Fiscal Year 2023 financial chart has been provided in the packet. She discussed the January and February 2023 Billings #4 and #5, expenditures to date of \$106,561.26 and the remaining balance of \$172,917.27. She additionally noted the Abilene MPO has not yet received the 2022 Carry-Over Funds of \$256,607.99. Ms. Smetana spoke on the new funding category for the Safety Plans that will be presented to the Board once scope, details and allotments are determined. No questions were asked.

Operation Report – Ms. Smetana noted the full Operations Report was available in the packets. She provided examples of the work accomplished under tasks, training sessions, and meetings.

Director's Report – Ms. Smetana noted the full report was available in the packets and proceeded to update the Board on the following items:

- **MPO Staffing** – The Transportation Planner position has been open since June 10, 2022. We do have some applicants that are being looked at.
- **Year-end Report – Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP)** – Report is due by December 31st to FHWA and FTA to ensure compliance. TxDOT requests that the report be given to them by December 15th to allow time for their review. The information from TxDOT to complete the ALOP was sent out on April 18th with a due date of May 2, 2023 but due to the public involvement the two week due date was deemed unattainable and was adjusted for each of the 23 MPOs to submit as soon as they can. Staff is currently in the process of working on that report.
- **System Performance Measures (PM3)** – TxDOT sent out System Performance Measures (PM3) on February 9th this includes the National Highway System (NHS) travel time reliability freight movement, traffic and congestion. This is due from the MPO in 180 days from the February 9th date. Staff will be working on this to present back to the Board at the June 20th meeting.
- **Unified Planning Work Program FYs 2024-2025** – The draft is due June 5, 2023 and the final is due by July 31, 2023. Staff is in the process of working on that report to present back to the Board at the next meeting.
- **Travel Demand Model 2050** – MPO is currently working with TxDOT and others on updating the Travel Demand Model (TDM). We have submitted the information for the populations and households. We are continuing to work on the employment data and residential projections for each of the 461 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). Staff is additionally working on the 2050 network updates for the model.
- **Abilene Area Safety Plan** - A new requirement for MPOs is to develop a Safety Action Plan. The original due date of May 2023 has been moved to later in the year. We are working with TxDOT and the Texas A & M Transportation Institute to get a plan in place. This will be presented to the Board once everything is ready.
- **MPO Boundary Expansion** - The TAC Boundary Expansion Committee had meetings on the boundary expansion with the help and guidance of the Texas A & M Transportation Institute and TxDOT. This has been placed on hold due to staff limitations. We are hoping to be able to

get it kicked off soon so we may present it to the Policy Board.

- **Public Participation Plan Update** - The Public Participation Plan (PPP) will require an update in the near future to capture virtual meetings and miscellaneous changes to the current public participation activities.
- **Census 2020 Urban Area Designations** - The Federal Register came out for the 2020 Census Qualifying Urban Areas (UA) and the First Criteria Clarifications on December 29, 2022. Staff is working on pulling maps into the 2010 UA to identify changes that may affect our area. We will be utilizing the Census designated boundary maps as a comparison.
- **Safety Awareness Events – Ride of Silence and Ride to Work** – Ms. Smetana noted that Mr. Mark Spurlock was in attendance. She requested permission to allow Mr. Spurlock to speak in regards to the *Ride of Silence*. Chairman Price approved that request. Mr. Spurlock identified himself to the Board as a local member of the Steamboat Cycling Club. He provided a history of the *Ride of Silence* that originated in Dallas 20 years after a well-known cyclist was struck and killed by a school bus. The *Ride of Silence* has grown to a worldwide annual event on the third Wednesday of May. Mr. Spurlock shared that the Steamboat Cycling Club organized the Abilene Ride of Silence six years ago to honor those cyclists who have lost their lives in cycling-related accidents in Taylor and Jones County after partnering with the Abilene MPO and TxDOT (D.R.I.V.E. Safe Coalition). He noted that the cyclist are escorted by the Abilene Police Department (APD) for the five mile ride. Mr. Spurlock thanked Judge Crowley for accepting their request to be this years’ speaker and help them honor the eleven local individuals that have lost their lives cycling. Mr. Spurlock thanked the Board and handed the floor back to Ms. Smetana. Ms. Smetana thanked Mr. Spurlock and noted the *Ride of Silence* is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., May 17, 2023 beginning at McMurry University.

Ms. Smetana moved to the *Ride to Work* stating that this is an annual event that advocates and supports the use of motorcycles for transportation and provides awareness that we all share the road so “Look Twice, Save a Life”. The Ride to Work event is scheduled for Friday, June 23, 2023 at the Taylor County Expo Center beginning at 11:00 a.m. We will be riding from the Taylor County Expo Center to Kent’s Harley Davidson for a free lunch.

Ms. Smetana asked if there were any questions on the Directors Report. Chairman Price noted no questions.

He then asked that we revisit *Agenda Item #2*.

2. Recognition and Proclamation.

Chairman Price once again acknowledged this was Mayor Williams’ last Policy Board Meeting and the Board wanted to wish him well and to present him with this proclamation. He then proceeded to read the proclamation. Mayor Williams thanked the Board. He spoke about the joys of serving the Abilene community. He praised the Abilene MPO, noting the amount of work and the beneficial results from that work have been significant.

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

No comments received.

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

No comments received.

10. Adjournment.

With no further business, Chairman Price adjourned the meeting at 2:09 p.m.