



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD  
August 20, 2024**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 20, 2024 in the South Branch Library Conference Room, 4310 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene, Texas.

**Policy Board Members Present:**

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

**Policy Board Members Absent:**

Judge Phil Crowley, Taylor County  
Mayor Weldon Hurt, City of Abilene

**TAC Voting Members Present:**

Mr. Michael Haithcock P.E., TxDOT Trans. Planning & Development Director  
Mr. Cody Ellis, Economic & Industrial Development, Tye, (*Designee: Treadwell*)  
Mr. Max Johnson, City of Abilene, Public Works Director  
Ms. Randee Shields, P.E., TxDOT, Director of Transportation Operations  
Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO Executive Director (*TAC Chair*)  
Mr. Preston "Conrad" Smith, Dyess Air Force Base Community Planner  
Ms. Lauren Stevens, CityLink General Manager  
Ms. PJ Sumner, WCTCOG Environmental Program Coordinator.  
Mr. Bryce Turentine, P.E., TxDOT, Abilene Area Engineer (in @ 12:43 p.m.)  
Mr. Doug Williamson, Abilene Chamber of Commerce Director Gov/Mil. Affairs/Comm.  
Prtnrshp

**TAC Voting Members Absent:**

Mr. Don Green, City of Abilene, Transportation Services Director  
Mr. Tim Littlejohn, City of Abilene, Planning & Development Services Director  
Mayor Greg Treadwell, City of Tye  
Commissioner Randy Willams, Taylor County (*TAC Vice-Chair*)

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Ms. Shannon Hawkins, TxDOT, TPP Metropolitan Transportation Planner  
Mr. Babatunde Tugbobo, FHWA, Transportation Planner

**Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:**

Mr. Seth Bluhm, Dyess Air Force Base, Community Planner (*Designee: Smith*)  
Mr. Jeff Duebner, City of Abilene, Assistant Director Public Works (*Designee: Johnson*)  
Ms. Jill D'Entremont, City of Abilene (*virtual meeting City Hall*)  
Ms. Tammye Fontenot, TxDOT, TPP Model Program Manager

Mr. Tremain Jackson, City of Abilene, Multimedia Technology Manager  
Ms. Krystal Lastrape, FHWA, Transportation & Environmental Planner  
Ms. Geena Maskey, TxDOT, Program Manager-Statewide Model Program  
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Paul Norman P.E., TxDOT, Director of Maintenance  
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene, Assistant City Manager

**MPO Staff in Attendance:**

Ms. Rita Ryan, Abilene MPO, Office Assistant III

**Others in Attendance:**

Ms. Genny Abercrombie, City of Tuscola, City Administrator  
Mr. James Condry, Citizen  
Mr. Bill Frawley, Huitt Zollars, Consultant  
Councilmember Sherry Gilmore, Town of Lawn  
Mr. Dave Hogan, Citizen  
Mr. Brian Weaver, City of Merkel, City Manager

**1. Call to Order.**

Chairman Price called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m., he stated that public comments would be taken on any item on the agenda.

**2. Consideration and Take Action on the minutes of the April 16, 2024 meeting.**

Mr. Albritton made a *motion* to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 meeting with a *second* by Judge Spurgin. *Motion Carried (3-0).*

**3. Discussion and review of transportation projects.**

(TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)

**City of Abilene-Public Works** – Mr. Johnson began his presentation with Projects Under Construction: **1)** Honey Bee Road (Lake Fort Phantom), Re-alignment, nearing completion; **2)** Maple Street (Carriage Hills to SL 322), paving is continuing, the final surface is going down from Carriage Hills to Hardison Lane then it changes over to concrete from Hardison Lane to SL 322, completion estimate: one-two months; **3)** Five Points Roadway Improvements (Fulweiler Road and Marigold St) nearing completion; **4)** S 14th St Walkability Project (Sidewalks/Pedestrian Bridges), there is an issue with one of the pedestrian bridges, the city is overcoming that and work is progressing; **6)** S 27<sup>th</sup> Signal Improvements (Treadaway to Catclaw), in the process of ordering all the materials, projects should begin in October or November 2024, a 4-way traffic signal will be placed at that intersection; **10)** Work Zone S23 (Fairways), is completed leaving only minor clean up; **11)** Work Zone N6B (Pasadena Heights), is progressing, completion anticipated within two weeks.

Mr. Johnson discussed Projects in Design: Projects **#2** Work Zone S10A (west of Rose Park) and **#5** Corsicana Avenue (S 7<sup>th</sup> to Benbrook); Three bids received today on **#3** N 18<sup>th</sup>

Street- Grape Street to Mockingbird Lane (includes N18th St and Kirkwood Street) and #4 S 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Danville to Pioneer).

**TxDOT** – Mr. Albritton explained the map, noting projects in red are Current Construction and the projects on the map that contain a small gold star are projects with MPO Funding included. Moving to Current Construction he discussed **9)** FM 1082, construct a new road from west of Cheyenne Circle to east of the Fort Phantom Dam is progressing nicely; **10)** FM 1082, surfacing /roadway restoration from east of Dam to FM 3522 will begin in a few weeks; **7)** US 83, widen road /add shoulders from Jones County Line to Taylor County Line and **8)** FM 3034, widen road /add shoulders from US 83 to FM 600 was recently let and the bid came in at estimated dollars with an estimated start date of December; **#4)** FM 89, widen road/add lanes from near Bettes Lane to just north of US 83. Mr. Allbritton turned the floor over to Mr. Turentine.

Mr. Turentine identified projects that dropped off the list due to completion: I-20, Resurface, US 277 south of View and the east South 7<sup>th</sup> Bridge at Cedar Creek, North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, flashing chevrons from Shelton Street to Kirkwood Street, Rebecca Lane, flashing chevrons from Peppergass Lane to Milliorn Ranch Road.

Mr. Turentine discussed Current Construct Projects: Hazard Elimination Projects: **2)** SL 322 from North 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Lytle Creek, **6)** US 83 from Bus 83 Interchange to 1300' north of Ambler Avenue and **11)** US 83 from FM 707 to .25 mi. north of FM 3034, **3)** IH 20 Preventive Maintenance from Nolan County Line, **4)** FM 89 near Bettes Lane to just north of US 83 - 80% done and includes MPO Funding, Chimney Rock Road (west of Buffalo Gap Road) will be closed for approximately 3-to-4 weeks beginning next week and there will be a detour through Westchester Drive, **9)** FM 1082, construct a new road from west of Cheyenne Circle to east of the Fort Phantom Dam has MPO Funding included, **1)** FM 18, resurfacing from SH 36 to Callahan County limits, **2)** SL 322 (Intelligent Transportation System - ITS Project) Hazard Elimination N 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Lytle Creek project will take a few month due to ordering and receiving materials, MPO Funding is additionally included in Projects **7)** US 83, widen road /add shoulders from Jones County Line to Taylor County Line and **8)** FM 3034, widen road /add shoulders from US 83 to FM 600.

Mr. Turentine spoke on Planned Projects noting some moved over to current construction and other dropped off. He highlighted some of the new projects: **#3** South 14<sup>th</sup> Street construct Pedestrian Infrastructure from Pioneer Drive to Barrow Street, **#7** FM 3438 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements from Military Drive to US 277 and **#10** Old Anson Road construct Pedestrian Infrastructure from West Standford Street to Ambler Boulevard; He spoke on project: **#11** IH 20, widen freeway from FM 600 to SH 351 (MPO Funding). Mr. Turentine ended his presentation.

**CityLink** – Ms. Stevens discussed:

- The Multimodal feasibility study is wrapping up at the end of August.
- Facility repairs/remodeling project for employee restrooms and some plumbing issues.
- Parking lot project on Elm Street and South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; converting the lot into parking for

our vans (not big buses) which will be fenced in and have lighting, is preparing to bid.

- Exhaust fan project for the maintenance shop; installation of up to four exhaust fans in the shop is still ongoing. Due to inflation the prices have risen outside the allotted grant funding forcing a start over and we have three bids and we are moving forward.

**4. Discussion and review of reports:**

- **Financial Status** – Ms. Smetana discussed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 noting completion through June, she explained that we are still awaiting the carryover dollars so they are not included in the totals.
- **Operation Report** – Ms. Smetana stated the complete report is available in the packet She then discussed some of the highlights: The Boundary Expansion is at TxDOT waiting to go on to the Governor; the completion of many maps recently, Resource Data, Inc. is about to come onboard and assist with our GIS work; Budget information was completed and submitted; and we had great collaborations through the Ride of Silence and the Ride to Work Events.
- **Director's Report**
  - Work Tasks - Ms. Smetana discussed the following work tasks.
    - **MPO Staffing** – We are actively attempting to fill the vacant Transportation Planner position.
    - **MPO Planning Area Boundary Update** – The boundary information is at TxDOT and hopefully will be sent on to the Governor soon.
    - **Regional Safety Plan Update** – We will have a meeting in September at the TxDOT Planning Conference.
    - **MTP FYs 2025-2050 Timeline Review** – Ms. Smetana noted Mr. Frawley of Huitt Zollars is present today and will provide an update.
    - **FYs 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – We had to do some administrative amendments on the FYs 2025-2028 TIP. It has been entered into the Electronic Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (ESTIP portal). We are hoping for approval soon.
    - **Year-end Report – FY 2023 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP)**
      - Ms. Smetana stated we are still awaiting the FY 2023 information from TxDOT needed to complete this report.

5. Opportunity for members of the Public to make comments on MPO issues.  
No comments forthcoming.

6. Opportunity for Board Members, Technical Advisory Committee Members, or MPO Staff to recommend topics for future discussion or action.  
No comments received.

A brief recess was taken.

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

- **Introductions and Workshop Overview** – Ms. Smetana noted that included in the packet is the information we will be going over but first she wished to acknowledge a

few of the guests in attendance today: Ms. Lastrape and Mr. Tugbobo of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Ms. Hawkins from TxDOT TPP; Ms. Abercrombie City Administrator for Tuscola; Councilmember Sherry Gilmore from the Town of Lawn; and Mr. Brian Weaver, City Manager of Merkel.

- **Travel Demand Model** (*Presentation by Tammye Fontenot and Geena Maskey – TPP, TxDOT*) – Ms. Fontenot began by giving an overview of the presentation, explaining what a Travel Demand Model (TDM) is and the importance of having one. She provided more detail on the 2050 Forecast TDM for Abilene: Roles and Responsibilities noting that TxDOT takes pride in offering this service to the MPO; Critical Model Input; comparisons between Base Year Model and Forecast Year Models; and Model Validation, and Demographics. Ms. Fontenot then turned the presentation over to Ms. Maskey.

Ms. Maskey discussed Critical Model Inputs; Demographic Database Inputs; Traffic Analysis; Network Database (Transportation System); Abilene Future Year Network (changes from 2015 to 2050); External Travel Estimates (she discussed the 52% increase); the Forecast Application Results (Volume and Volume Capacity of 2050), and Model Interface. Ms. Maskey displayed the working software on screen explaining the multiple scenarios based on the selections chosen (e.g. Files, Network Summary, Demographics, Trip Generation, Trip Distribution, Traffic Assignment, Traffic Validation, Performance Measures and Maps). Ms. Maskey ended the presentation.

Judge Spurgin asked if the online portion of the presentation was available in the packet. Ms. Smetana stated it was not. Chairman Price asked if Ms. Smetana would be able to send that out once it was available for reference. Ms. Maskey stated yes. Judge Spurgin asked if the link is available on the MPO Website or the TxDOT website. Ms. Maskey stated this is a model stand alone software but the MPO does have copies of it. Ms. Smetana stated that on the Hypertext Markup Language (html) file she would be able to send that out. Ms. Fontenot stated they had already generate a summary which holds the information Ms. Maskey just displayed. Ms. Smetana noted the Summary was available in the packet.

Ms. Fontenot discussed the Next Steps: MPO apply model in Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Transportation Improvement Plan (MTP/TIP); MPO maintain list of projects, TPP/MPO develop a timeline for the next model update. She discussed training the MPO staff on use and available application of the model. Ms. Fontenot stated that TxDOT has great training resources and will continue to offer training and technical support. She noted upcoming courses available for the staff and district on how to use the model.

A discussion ensued between Mr. Smith, Ms. Maskey, and Ms. Fontenot concerning: model data, model service incorporation, levels of service types, base years, population, software, data input, data availability and ability to generate requested

reports.

Mr. Albritton requested the date of the next Travel Demand update, curious how the new MPO Boundary would align with the model. Ms. Smetana shared that the MPO has been keeping the modelers informed on the requested boundary expansion. She noted a portion going into Buffalo Gap was already included in this model. When the Governor approves the expansion we will incorporate all of our new MPO area in the next Travel Demand Model. Ms. Fontenot stated it would be two or three years until the next Travel Demand Model would be underway.

Chairman Price ask when looking at the roads to include in the TDM is the focus on city roads, county roads or is it exclusively TxDOT roads. Ms. Forte stated it was Collectors and Arterials. The Chairman then asked about areas in the county, outside of incorporated areas that were mainly county roads. Ms. Fontenot said it is the Facility Type (Rural Two-Lane, Two-Way Roads) and she noted they worked with the MPO to ensure we assign all of the roads that have regional effects. Chairman Price stated he was looking for clarification on the importance of receiving the information when new roads were built, planned or expanded and who was providing that information. Ms. Smetana said normally the information for the surrounding areas would be provided by the MPO Transportation Planner. She explained that the city and the counties maintain their own databases and do have access to submit updates.

Chairman Price asked if the surrounding areas once part of the MPO would have to update their information e.g. Merkel. Ms. Smetana stated that the MPO would be asking if they had any changes or updates on their roadways and that would be entered into the MPO system and fed to TxDOT. She then expressed her gratitude to both Ms. Fontenot and Ms. Maskey for their assistance. Ms. Smetana noted that TxDOT provided this information to the MPO without us having to hire consultants which is so appreciated.

Chairman Price asked if the TDM was limited to the Abilene MPO or if it was statewide. Ms. Maskey stated they have the entire state whether or not they are included in an MPO.

- **TxDOT Project Management** (*Presentation by Michael Haithcock – TxDOT*) – Mr. Haithcock began his presentation. He stated that he really likes the MPO process and how the system works. He then discussed MPO Projects use Federal Funding and Federal Law; \* MPO Project Address: Safety, Congestion, Connectivity; \* Project Management: Complex Environmental Documents, Right of Way Acquisition and Utility Relocation. He stated this is the Hierarchy of Laws and Regulation: Guidance and Policy, Regulations: 23 CFR (Title 23 of Code of Federal Regulations), Law: 23 USC (Title 23, United States Code - Federal Highway Administration) and Act: FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act).



Mr. Haithcock explained the MPO Project Management Process providing detail of the steps taken: Needs Identification, Project Selection, Consultant Selection, Concept Stage, Environmental Process, Preliminary Design, Preliminary Plan Review, Create Right of Way Plans, Acquire Right of Way, Final Plan Review, Relocate Utilities, Let Project to Construction, and Construction. Mr. Haithcock then provided estimated completion times for the MPO Project Management Process.

Mr. Haithcock discussed a few of the MPO Projects currently under construction: FM 89 (Buffalo Gap Road), Taylor County, FM 1082 - Relocate Dam Road, Jones County, and US 83 /FM 3034 Interchange, Jones County. Mr. Haithcock discussed some of the difficulties facing TxDOT due to inflation and economics then spoke of some steps TxDOT is taking to ease and alleviate those complications.

- **FYs 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Project Discussion** (*Presentation by Bill Frawley – Huitt-Zollars, Inc.*) – Mr. Frawley began his presentation to provide an update to the Abilene 2050 MTP. He spoke on the MPO Boundary and the MTP Expanded Study Area and then the 2050 MTP Update Process timeline.

Mr. Frawley discussed: \*Existing Conditions: Pavement Condition, Bridge Construction; Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes; Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes; Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities; Transit; Congestion; Freight; Population; Vulnerable Populations. \*Public Involvement: Delphi Panel; Public Involvement, Survey; Public Meeting #1; Project Recommendations; Draft Plan; Public Meeting #2 on October 10, 2024 to be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Abilene South Branch Library; Final Plan Revisions October-November 2024; and Final Plan Presentation December 17, 2024.

Mr. Frawley discussed MPO Planning Documents: Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP); Ten Year Plan; Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He discussed: Project Solicitation Projects: 2045 MTP Funded List; 2045 MTP Illustrative List; Projects suggested/received from TxDOT and Member Cities; and Public Input. He ended his presentation and asked what other projects should be included.

Ms. Smetana began with the Projects received from Public Input. She noted limited information is available on these projects. They were submitted on the Survey Link (by placing a line on the map, noting: From and To and the requested Work Description). Ms. Smetana noted the Projects from Public Input are not in the packet. She stated she would email these to the Policy Board and TAC members. Ms. Smetana stated the Project Selection Committee will have a meeting and evaluate all the projects. Mr. Allbritton asked for clarification that some of these project were on our list already. Ms. Smetana stated they were but will be evaluated by the Project Selection Committee along with the new projects. The recommendation will move on to Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at that point. Ms. Smetana stated what we really would like from the Policy Board and TAC members is any projects that we are

missing that they think we should add to our listing. The conversation turned to project suggestions.

Councilmember Gilmore from the Town of Lawn suggested an overpass at the Y on US 83/84, Ms. Smetana agreed it is needed and noted it is one of our existing projects. Ms. Abercrombie said she believes it is already on the list but suggested adding a traffic signal at Garza Avenue at Graham Street, Tuscola. Ms. Smetana acknowledged that it is on the list. Mr. Weaver discussed storm water and flooding and stated he would email the MPO the specifics. Judge Spurgin shared that the state now has a statewide flood plan and strategies available. He believes that in the future that could be coordinated in the Water Development Board for some funding in conjunction with some TxDOT projects. Mr. Johnson requested that the city the project is located in be put in parentheses so it would be easier to identify and locate. Ms. Smetana agreed and made note to make the update. Mr. Allbritton requested a map be attached to identify the exact location. Mr. Frawley agreed. Chairman Price asked about the new Airport Access Road, is that located where FM 18 crosses over SH 36. Ms. Smetana stated it is and then it continues on into the Airport Road. He then asked if this was a TxDOT or a City of Abilene project. Ms. Smetana explained that the Access Road is private so it would be the City of Abilene but the crossover would be TxDOT. She explained what they were looking for is intersection improvements on SH 36. She noted that could be using MPO funding as it is located on a state highway. Mr. Allbritton stated he would like to see us eliminate all of the crossovers and have some entrance and exit ramps. He suggested once the MPO Expansion is approved that we continue to go north of Landfill Road, possibly to Hawley, with more of a freeway type setup and eliminate all of the crossovers to those businesses. Ms. Smetana said she thought that TxDOT had placed a metal barrier in that direction. Mr. Allbritton stated yes they were able to get rid of one crossover but there are many on the road. Judge Spurgin suggested an overpass at FM 605 and US 277, Hawley. Mr. Johnson suggested we do a complete project for updates to both North and South 1<sup>st</sup> Street at Treadaway. Mr. Turentine suggested 1) a new Sam Waldrop Interchange at US 83/84 and SL 322, 2) An auxiliary lane where SL 322 comes onto North Winter Freeway all the way up to Buffalo Gap exit ramp, this will require some drainage improvements. Mr. Norman suggested on behalf of Mr. Preston that Dyess AFB has been requesting some bicycle and pedestrian connection between the base and the city center. Mr. Johnson discussed the railroad crossings, temporary and permanent closing along with the new access and traffic flows. He stated the city is working with the railroad and TxDOT and they are trying to share as much information as possible as it becomes available.

- **Workshop Wrap-up**

Ms. Smetana thanked everyone for their contribution.

**8. Adjournment.**

Chairman Price thanked everyone for their attendance and with no further business at hand called for Adjournment at 2:59 p.m.