



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
October 15, 2024**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 15, 2024 in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut St., Abilene, Texas.

Policy Board Members Present:

Mr. Glenn Allbritton, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer
 Judge Phil Crowley, Taylor County (in @ 1:32pm)
 Mayor Weldon Hurt, City of Abilene
 Councilman Shane Price, City of Abilene (Policy Board Chairman)
 Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County (Policy Board Vice-Chairman)

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Mr. Jeff Duebner, City of Abilene, Assistant Director Public Works
 Mr. Billy Dezern, TxDOT, Advanced Planning Manager/GIS Coordinator
 Mr. Michael Haithcock, P.E., TxDOT, Transportation Planning & Development Director
 Mr. Max Johnson, City of Abilene, Public Works Director
 Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene, First Assistant City Attorney
 Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene, Assistant City Manager
 Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization, Executive Director
 Ms. Lauren Stevens, City of Abilene, CityLink, General Manager
 Mr. Bryce Turentine, P.E., TxDOT Abilene Area Engineer

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Rita Ryan, Abilene MPO, Office Assistant III

Others in Attendance:

Mr. James Condry, Abilene, Citizen
 Mr. Richard Harbert, City of Abilene, Public Works. Professional Engineer
 Judge Nicki Harle, Callahan County
 Ms. Jennifer Pacheco, City of Abilene, Stormwater Education and Keep Abilene Beautiful Coordinator
 Mr. Bruce Neil, AISD, Transportation Operations Manager

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 on the agenda.

Chairman Price acknowledged the attendance of Judge Nicki Harle, Callahan County Judge and thanked her for attending.

2. Consideration and Take Action on the Minutes of the August 20, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Allbritton made a *motion* to *approve* the minutes of the August 20, 2024 meeting, with a *second* by Judge Spurgin. *Motion Carried (4-0).*

3. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the Election of Officers.

Chairman Price stated that the by-laws require the Policy Board to bi-annually elect a Chairperson

and a Vice-Chairperson from the voting members of the Policy Board. He explained the Vice-Chairman assumes the duties of the Chairperson upon their absence. The term of office is two federal fiscal years. Chairman Price opened the floor for nominations.

Judge Crowley made a *motion* to nominate Chairman Price to service as the Chairperson, *seconded* by Mr. Allbritton.

Judge Crowley made a *motion* to nominate Mayor Hurt to service as the Vice-Chairperson, with a *second* by Judge Spurgin.

Motions Carried (5-0).

4. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program.

Ms. Smetana discussed and explained the following: the background of the program, Phase I along the Alternative Fuels Corridors, Phase II among County seats, and the funding available for the program. She noted that we are currently in Phase II. She explained TxDOT will have a Grant Program to allow nominees to submit their applications. TxDOT will then select the winning awards for the areas. Ms. Smetana identified that TxDOT is asking the MPO two questions: Does the Policy Board want to look at the whole MPO Planning Area or narrow it down to smaller study areas within the MPO Planning Area? Does the Policy Board want Level II Chargers or DC Fast Charging Ports? Ms. Smetana shared that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval of the entire MPO Planning Area as the study area and the DC Fast Charging Ports at their September 24, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Smetana explained the differences in power levels, noting the grant proposals must be within the study area, and the on-and-off the Fuel Corridors requirements. Ms. Smetana stated that the industry switched to the Northern American Charging System (NACS) connector, and this change is accounted for in the Texas Electric Vehicle (EV) Plan. She ended her presentation and stated that TAC's recommendation of the study area being the whole MPO Planning Area Boundary and the DC fast charging stations is the action requested. She asked for any questions.

Chairman Price stated he spoke with Michael Rice, City of Abilene Assistant Manager and confirmed that you can place a residential charging port anywhere within the city but, a commercial charging port may only be placed within a commercially zoned area. Ms. Smetana reminded the Policy Board that when the MPO Boundary changes then the additional areas will be included in this program if the whole planning area is selected.

Mr. Allbritton asked if there was a date for expenditure of the funds. Ms. Smetana stated no we do not have a date at this time but we do know that we have to make a decision on whether we want the whole MPO Planning Area quickly because they are going to take it to their commission in November. She believes the parameters will then be put in place on timelines.

Judge Crowley recommended we approve the whole MPO Boundary Area for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program Study Area. Judge Crowley made a *motion* to select the whole MPO Planning Area for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program Study Area, *seconded* by Judge Spurgin. ***Motion Carried (5-0).***

Chairman Price clarified that the Policy Board's selection of the full boundary area will include the expanded boundary once it is approved by the Governor.

Chairman Price addressed the second question stating: Do we want to focus on the Fast Charging Stations or on the Level II Charging Stations. Judge Spurgin stated after looking at the Charging Station Guide and the TAC recommending the Fast Charging Ports that he would recommend the Fast Charging Ports based on the rate described per hour. Ms. Smetana noted that some of the older car have a different connection than the Fast Charging but it is easy to obtain an attachment to use the fast charging system. Judge Spurgin asked if the car owner had to be in possession of the attachment or if it would be available at the station. Ms. Smetana stated it will not be available at the charging station because they frequently disappear, so the car owner would have to obtain their own attachment. Judge Spurgin then asked if the charging stations would be on private property with a local agreement in place. Ms. Smetana responded yes. She explain the chargers would be placed at the location with a five-year maintenance agreement. The contract states if after the five years the property owner decides they do not wish to maintain past those five years it can be switched to another person for ownership or for continued maintenance.

Judge Spurgin made a *motion* to select the DC Fast Charging Ports for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program, *seconded* by Judge Crowley. *Motion carried (5-0)*.

5. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the Goals and Objectives for the FYs 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Ms. Smetana stated included in the packet is the draft goals and objectives for the FYs 2025-2050 MTP, due in December of 2024. The consultants are asking the Policy Board to review the goals and objectives and to approve them. Ms. Smetana noted the goals and objectives are very similar to our last MTP. She stated these goals and objectives may be adjusted slightly from now until the document is presented to the Policy Board in December due to the usage of the TxDOT software program: Decision Lens. She shared there may be a few tweaks added to the performance measures and goals so we would like to get the boards overall view of these goals. She discussed each of the five main goals.

Ms. Smetana stated the TAC recommended approval of these at their September 24, 2024 meeting with the knowledge that they may change slightly based on the Decision Lens performance based planning methods. She said she would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Price requested clarification that this was not an action item but rather a request for direction. Ms. Smetana concurred. Chairman Price asked the board if there was any concerns about continuing on as the TAC recommended. No concerns raised. He then addressed Ms. Smetana stating the board is supportive of continuing what the TAC has recommended.

6. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on Special Studies for the Metropolitan Planning Area.

Ms. Smetana discussed the FYs 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), last amended on February 20, 2024 and valid through September 30, 2025. Ms. Smetana stated with the potential expansion of the MPO Area Boundary this is a good opportunity for us to look at other needs within our area. Ms. Smetana said we are looking for recommendations on other ideas for special studies that may need to be included within the work program. Ms. Smetana spoke on the new proposed MPO Boundary and the studies included within the UPWP (Complete Streets, Resiliency Plan, and Safety Action Plan). She stated that TxDOT was coordinating the Safety Action Plan. Ms. Smetana spoke on the potential studies and suggestions provided during the TAC September 24, 2024 meeting that included **Corridor Planning**: FM 89 going towards Buffalo Gap, Loop 322 extension from I 20 to SH 351 to US 83, and Oldham Lane from East South 11th Street to FM 707; **Freight**

Planning: Treadaway Blvd. Corridor, and East Highway 80 Corridor; **General Planning:** Consolidate Title VI & Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA & Participation Plans (Airport (driven by FAA), City of Abilene (under development by HR), CityLink (driven by FTA), MPO (driven by FHWA), and other entities.

Ms. Smetana said we would like to have a direction ready and in place if additional funding become available. She opened the floor by requesting any suggestions or requests for additional studies to be added to the UPWP.

Chairman Price noted that all but one of the suggested items was located within the city limits of Abilene. He asked Judge Crowley and Judge Spurgin if they had any suggestions, recommendations, or requests for special studies outside of the City of Abilene. They each responded no, not at this time. Chairman Price spoke to Judge Harle, County Judge for Callahan County, if she had suggestions, recommendations or requests for special studies in Callahan County. Judge Harle replied no, not at this time.

Judge Spurgin asked Mr. Allbritton if there was anything on State Highway 36 that could be considered. Mr. Allbritton stated none that would not require substantial funding and we are not there yet. There was discussion on various ideas for studies including freight planning and the importance of the safety plans. Mr. Allbritton asked if the Safety Plan is a requirement. Ms. Smetana stated it is. Mr. Allbritton said that safety from a TxDOT position is a very high priority. She noted that TxDOT has hired a consultant and is doing the Safety Plan statewide for a majority of the MPOs. Ms. Smetana shared that some of the MPOs have taken the \$50,000 provided for the planning work and added some funding to it which is something we can look at in the future. Chairman Price asked when a final direction was required. Ms. Smetana stated we are going to put the information together, then come back to the Policy Board with a UPWP Amendment for action to be taken. We are presenting this today to allow us to gather some ideas. Chairman Price said if the board comes up with some ideas or suggestions to email Ms. Smetana so they may be added to the discussion. He spoke to Judge Harle inviting her to also email Ms. Smetana if she had something she would like to be added for Callahan County.

Chairman Price requested confirmation from Ms. Smetana that this was just a discussion item. Ms. Smetana stated it was and noted she will put all of the ideas together and then present them back to the Policy Board for future action.

7. Discussion and review of transportation projects.

(TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)

TxDOT – Mr. Turentine discussed Current Construction: Sites 1 and 15 are part of the same rehabilitation of existing roadway project (**1**) FM 18, from SH 36 to the Callahan County line and **15**) FM 2833, from Jones County to SH 351); **2**) SL 322 from North 10th Street to Lytle Creek; **3**) SL 322 Hazard Elimination and Safety from North 10th Street to US 83; **4**) FM 89 widen roads add lanes from near Bettes Lane to just north of US 83; **5**) South 7th Street Bridge Replacement located at Cedar Creek; **6**) Bus 20 replacing rail and signal at various locations; **7**) South 14th Street Construct Pedestrian Infrastructure on South 14th Street from Pioneer Drive to Barrow Street; **8**) IH 20 Preventive Maintenance from Nolan County Line to near Wells Lane; **9**) US 83 Hazard Elimination and Safety from Bus 83 Interchange to 1300' north of Ambler Avenue; Sites #10 and #11 are the same project **10**) US 83 Widen Road add Shoulders from Jones County Line to Taylor County Line and **11**) US 83 Hazard Elimination and Safety from FM 707 to 0.25 miles north of FM 3034; **12**) FM 3034 Widen Road add Shoulders from US 83 to FM 600; **13**) FM 1082 Construct New Road from West of Cheyenne Circle to East of Dam; and **14**) FM 1082 Surfacing and Roadway Restoration

from East of Dam to FM 35222

Mr. Turentine discussed newer Planned Projects: **2)** FM 707 Widen Road add Lanes and Shoulders from US 83 to FM 1750; **3)** FM 1750 Intersection Improvements w/ left and/or right turn lanes from Industrial Blvd. to 1200' south of Colony Hill Road; **4)** SL 322 Bridge Replacement at Maple Street; **5)** SL 322 Intersection Improvement from North of SH 36 (BI 20) to FM 1750; **6)** SL 322 Preventive Maintenance from IH 20 to US 83; **7)** SH 36 Hazard Elimination and Safety at Maple Street; **8)** SH 36 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements from BU 83D to FM 1750; **12)** US 277 Resurface Roadway from FM 3438 to South end of BNSF Bridge; **17)** IH 20 Hazard Elimination and Safety at Exit 285 east bound; **18)** IH 20 Hazard Elimination and Safety at West Bound Entrance Ramp Old Anson Road; **20)** BU 83D Intersection Improvement at Pine Street; and **21)** IH 20 Widen Freeway from FM 600 to SH 351.

Chairman Price referred to Project #2 inserting lanes and shoulders on FM 1750 and asked if the project would be starting prior to 2027. Mr. Turentine stated it is in the planning stages and is scheduled to let in 2027.

City of Abilene – Public Works – Mr. Johnson discussed Current Projects:

#1 Honey Bee Re-alignment 93% complete; **#2** Maple (Carriage Hills to Loop 322) 79% complete; **#3** Five Points Roadway Improvements (Fulwiler Rd and Marigold St) 93% complete **#4** S 14th St Walkability Project (Sidewalks/Pedestrian Bridges) 82% complete; **#5** Festival District 83% complete; **#6** S 27th Signal Improvements (Treadaway to Catclaw) 5% complete; **#7** Cypress Street Reconstruction 45% complete; **#8** Antilley and Memorial Traffic Signal Improvements 9% complete; **#9** Work Zone N6B (Pasadena Heights) 84% complete; **#10** Work Zone S10A (West of Rose Park) 0% complete; **#11** N. 18th St. Grape to Mockingbird (includes N. 18th & Kirkwood intersection) 0% complete; **#12** S. 7th St. (Danville to Pioneer) Street 0% complete; **#13** Corsicana Ave. (S. 7th to Benbrook) 0% complete.

Chairman Price asked about the scheduling of South 7th Street. Mr. Johnson stated ground breaking will be February of 2025.

Mr. Johnson discussed Projects Proposed for Construction:

1A) Maple (S. 27th to ES 11th) 95% Designed, **1B)** Maple (Loop 322 to S. 27th) 95% Designed; **2)** S7th (Lytle Estates) 100% Designed; **3)** S10B (C.W. Gill Park) 30% Designed; **4)** Rebecca Ln. Phase I (Catclaw Dr. to Buffalo Gap Rd.) 30% Designed; **5)** S. 14th St. Phase II (Willis to Sayles) 30% Designed, **6)** N. 18th St. (Willis to Mockingbird) 30% Designed, **7)** Andy Street Culvert 50% Designed.

CityLink – Ms. Stevens provided the following updates:

Feasibility Study for the Multimodal Facility has been completed. **Parking lot project** is on hold pending a set of signed and sealed drawings and a bid packet with estimated quantities is required. **Employee restroom repairs and remodel project:** Repairing the underground plumbing is completed. Repairs/remodeling the three restrooms are the next steps. **Shop exhaust fans:** Parts have been ordered. Waiting for installation to be scheduled by vendor. **Concrete project for the transfer lanes:** Completed Oct 3, 2024.

8. Discussion and review of reports: Ms. Smetana presented the following reports.

- **Financial Status** –Ms. Smetana discussed the FY 2024 billings, expenditures and remaining balance. She noted we do have the August billing but lack the September billing so we are

unable to close out FY 2024. She ended the presentation and no questions were forthcoming. She said we still have not received the FY 2023 carryover funds.

- **Operation Report** – Ms. Smetana noted the full report was available in the packet. She highlighted a few items contained in the Operation Report.
- **Director’s Report**
 - **Work Tasks**
 - **MPO Staffing** - Ms. Smetana noted we still have an opening for the Transportation Planner position. She shared that the selection panel has conducted numerous interviews. We are still working through the process.
 - **MPO Planning Area Boundary Update** – Ms. Smetana stated we received a technical memo on June 25, 2024 stating the revised boundary information was submitted to TxDOT. We were notified on October 3, 2024 that TxDOT has submitted the boundary expansion request to the Governor’s Office and they are in the process of reviewing the submittal and providing the final sign-off.

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

No comments forthcoming.

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

No comments forthcoming.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

11. Receive a Report, Hold a Discussion, and Take Action on the Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director.

Chairman Price noted it was 2:23 p.m. and the Board would adjourn into Executive Session.

Chairman Price stated it was 2:53 p.m. and the board reconvenes from Executive Session. He noted no votes or action was taken during the Executive Session.

12. Adjournment.

Chairman Price thanked everyone for their participation, noting the next meeting was on December 17, 2024. Chairman Price *adjourned* the meeting at **2:54 p.m.**