



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

July 22, 2013

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013, in the Abilene City Hall, City Council Chambers, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene Mayor and Policy Board Chairman  
Mr. Herbert Bickley, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer  
Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene

Members Absent:

Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County  
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County

Others Present:

Ms. Leah Beltran, Disability in Action Executive Director  
Mr. Chad Carter, P.E., City of Abilene City Engineer,  
Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT West Region MPO Coordinator,  
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene Traffic & Transportation Administrator,  
Mr. Ben Herr, City of Abilene CityLink Transit General Manager,  
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, P.E., TxDOT Area Engineer, Abilene District  
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene Director of Planning and Development Services,  
Ms. Mary Kindrick, Abilene Chapter, National Federation for the Blind  
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene Director of Public Works,  
Mr. Stanley Smith, City of Abilene Legal Department  
Ms. Darah Waldrip, TxDOT Public Information Officer, Abilene & Brownwood Districts  
Mr. Mike Vandervoort, Abilene Chapter, National Federation for the Blind

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Mr. Thomas Cook, Abilene MPO Transportation Planner  
Mr. Dean Carter, Abilene MPO, Transportation GIS Technician

MPO Staff Not in Attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO Executive Director

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Archibald called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. He stated that Judge Spurgin could not be here today and that Judge Bolls may join the Board later, but a duly certified quorum of three is present. He also said that Ms. Smetana could not be with us today as she was called out of town.

**2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the May 21, 2013 Meeting.**

Mayor Archibald asked for approval of the minutes of the May 21, 2013 meeting as presented. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Spano and seconded by Mr. Bickley.

*Motion carried.*

**3. Discussion and Consideration of Approval of the FINAL Fiscal Years 2014-2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).**

Chairman Archibald began by drawing everyone's attention to the first page of Item # 3 in their packets which outlined the five main task categories. On the second page of this section are the comments and changes that are being incorporated into the final document. The few changes are found on pages 4, 7, 14, 15, 28, and 37 and have been highlighted. Mayor Archibald said these changes, in his opinion, are very minor changes or clarifications; they are more like minor corrections that need to be made.

Mayor Archibald asked Mr. Cook if he had any comments. Mr. Cook explained that the Federal Highway Administration is considering having each MPO show their respective funding amounts for the work expected to be performed under each subtask of the five main task categories. Nothing is definite at this time; if it should happen, we think it would be difficult to come up with reasonable financial projections to budget for each subtask without having to amend the UPWP throughout the year. This may also increase our indirect costs and we're already using carryover funds to balance our annual general budget. Our Unified Planning Work Program was written for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015. Depending on if, or when, the Federal Highway Administration decides to implement this change we may have to re-write all or part of the 2015 UPWP to keep in compliance. Mr. Cook continued that TxDOT's Public Transportation Department (PTN) commented that CityLink is doing a good job of being involved with the MPO in their public involvement process.

Mayor Archibald said the Technical Advisory Committee has recommended to the Policy Board that they approve this final document. He then made the motion that the Policy Board approve the final form of the UPWP as it has been presented, which will move the UPWP forward to TxDOT for their final approval. Councilman Spano seconded the motion.

*Motion passed.*

**4. Discussion and Possible Action Related to the Annual Performance Evaluation of the Executive Director.**

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

**5. Discussion and Review of Transportation Projects.  
(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)**

Mr. Hufstutler discussed the status of several TxDOT projects:

- (1). FM 2833 (E. Lake Road) is undergoing some blade patching.
- (2). US 83 from Antilley Road to Iberis Road is complete.
- (3). The work on I-20 Frontage Roads between Loop 322 and Pine Street is progressing well, and plans are to switch traffic between SH 351 and Loop 322 to the inside lanes this month.
- (4). The bridge replacement on Old 80 about 1/8 mile east of Loop 322 over Rainey Creek is underway.
- (5). The main lane hot mix overlay on Loop 322 from IH 20 to the Waldrop Interchange is on schedule.
- (6). FM 89 from Coronado's Camp to the Nolan County line is finished.

Mr. Chad Carter, the City Engineer, described the work going on in the City of Abilene:

**Water Department Street & Misc. Repair Work 2012-2013:**

Drainage, Street, and Sidewalk Improvements - Leggett, South 7th, Danville, South 14th. Includes South 7th and Leggett intersection, Leggett St., Richmond from Danville to Pioneer, Fairmount from Danville to Pioneer, Waldemar from Danville to Pioneer, Potomac from Pioneer to Leggett, Buccaneer from Potomac to S. 7th, and sidewalks on Pioneer from S. 14th to 1202 S. Pioneer.

**Engineering Division Miscellaneous Repair Work 2012-2013:**

Miscellaneous Seal Coat Project 2013  
Streets between Danville, Mockingbird, North 1<sup>st</sup>, North 10<sup>th</sup>  
Buffalo Gap Rd, Treadaway, Danville, South 27<sup>th</sup>  
Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. North 10th, Ambler  
Treadaway, Judge Ely, E. Hwy 80, E. North 10<sup>th</sup>  
and Sayles, Treadaway, South 14th, South 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Works in the Design Phase:**

South 1st from Locust to Butternut (enhancement with landscaped medians) – Summer 2013,  
Cockerell Neighborhood – Fall 2013  
EN 13th Street from Treadaway to Judge Ely – Fall 2013  
Cobb Park Westwood Richland Street Rehabilitation – Fall 2013  
Engineering Division Miscellaneous Repair Work – Fall 2013  
2014 Seal Coat – Fall 2013

Mr. Herr, with CityLink, updated the Board that an order was placed for six bus shelters. He continued that he received official notification last week from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) about their Triennial Review. Every three years the FTA comes to CityLink offices and looks through their records (financial, vehicle maintenance, purchasing, and so forth) to determine how well they are following the federal guidelines. He explained that both the MPO and CityLink have several questions to answer in writing and send in to FTA within four weeks. In October or November representatives from the FTA will then visit onsite and inspect and review everything CityLink is doing. The Triennial Review applies to all transit companies receiving any type of federal funding.

*Informational only; no action was required or taken on this item.*

**6. Discussion and Review of Reports:**

- **Financial Status**

Mr. Cook noted there are two negative numbers in the Financial Status report: one entry under Work Order #3, for (\$316.00) and one under Work Order # 5 for (\$250.00). Because there are new MPOs this year, TxDOT has more ways to divide a limited amount of money. TxDOT took back some funds (rescission) from several MPOs and redistributed the money to other MPOs. We wanted to point out the negative numbers and explain why they are negative. We have submitted the May billing and things are now moving much smoother and faster. Additional information can be found in the packets.

## **Operation Report**

Some of the major activities the MPO staff completed from May 18<sup>th</sup> through July 12<sup>th</sup> are listed below. The full list is included in packet.

- Worked on the Functional Classification by re-entering all changes in TxDOT's Geographic Information System (GIS) online system, changed Excel spreadsheet, and have completed documents ready to submit to TxDOT.
  - Wrote draft FY 2014-2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), submitted to TxDOT, and added changes requested by TxDOT to the final document.
  - Prepared Thoroughfare Plan, Multimodal and Transit Buffer Zone, and other maps for Planning Division and CityLink.
  - Organized and held a Ride to Work motorcycle/scooter event on June 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - Updated the MPO website with project information and pictures, meeting notices, and other pertinent information including creating a virtual meeting page.
  - Prepared an MPO newsletter for distribution later this month.
- **Director's Report**

Mr. Cook offered the following reports and project updates:

- **Update on Ride to Work Day – June 17<sup>th</sup>**  
The MPO along with the City of Abilene, TxDOT, Kent's Harley Davidson, Abilene Safety Instruction, the Bear Radio, Radio Abilene and others hosted the Ride to Work Day on Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. Motorcycle and scooter riders met in front of City Hall and rode to Kent's to heighten motorcycle and scooter awareness in the community and make Abilene a safer place to ride. Kent's graciously provided free lunch for everyone for the second straight year.
- **Public Participation Plan**  
The MPO has been engaged in rewriting the Public Participation Plan. The current plan is from June 2007. The draft version was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee for their review and comments. We will incorporate any appropriate suggestions or changes and plan to present this at the September meeting.
- **Abilene Functional Classification**  
Mr. Joe Clark, with TxDOT, came to the MPO office on July 19 and we sat down and went over each proposed change. The spreadsheet was updated with more accurate beginning and ending points, and more accurate descriptions/reasons why a segment was changed to its respective designation. Every entry made in the TxDOT GIS on-line mapping software had to be deleted and all data re-entered along with redrawing the road segments. This revised Functional Classification project has been sent on to TxDOT Austin.

### **MPO Projects**

- **Project Selection Process**  
We have a subcommittee comprised of Mr. James, Mr. Condry, Mr. Haynie and the MPO staff. We will be holding another meeting soon to get this moving forward and presented to the Board.

### **South Clack Street at Elm Creek**

The Technical Advisory Committee formed a subcommittee to evaluate options for improving the South Clack Street at Elm Creek area for pedestrians and to try and find funding. This committee is made up of Mr. Herr, Mr. James, Mr. Haynie, Mr. Hufstutler, Mr. Wright, and the MPO staff. Initially the thinking was to try and incorporate it into a vehicular bridge. This isn't feasible due to the design of the bridge. Now the main focus is on a pedestrian bridge to move pedestrians over a deep ravine and keep them from having to walk in the busy traffic lanes on S. Clack Street. We will be meeting again to see what solutions are available.

- **Frontage Road Conversions (Loop 322)**

TxDOT held a Meeting with Affected Property Owners ("MAPO") in the Lytle Lake area on June 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss their concerns. Some of their concerns and suggestions have been incorporated into the design element. The committee will be meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup> to start delving into the concerns and coming up with solutions.

- **Texas Public Information Act**

The Texas Public Information Act (PIA) and the Open Meetings Act (OMA) certifications are legal requirements for certain types or levels of office, position, or activity. We encourage all members who do not already have the certifications to take the training on the Attorney General's website as soon as practical. At the end of the training sessions you type in your name and information to receive your certification from your printer on the spot and then submit a copy of your certificate(s) to the MPO. We have to keep current records of who is in compliance.

- **State Highway 351**

Two public meetings were held: the June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting had approximately 84 people in attendance and the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting had approximately 56 people attending. Many good comments and suggestions came out of both meetings.

- **Railroad Quiet Zones**

We are working on this and will just offer a word on this for today – there is a specific calculation that a community uses to determine if they are, or are not, eligible to apply for Quiet Zone status. This is based on the total number of crashes resulting in vehicular damage only, the number of people injured and the number of fatalities. On the Union Pacific line over just the past two years there have been three people killed. More information will be presented at the September meeting.

- **Collision Data Report**

Staff is working with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Abilene Police Department to map high crash areas. Analyzing high crash areas may help develop solutions (e.g. engineering, education, enforcement). The PD has different software with different formats and this is causing compatibility issues. TxDOT has their Crash Records Information System (CRIS). It is anticipated that within the next twelve to eighteen months or so all or virtually all PDs statewide will have to submit crash data in the CRIS format.

By having one specific format data can be managed as a single universal system and can be extracted out to determine what efforts may be useful to help reduce crashes.

- **MPO Identity/Branding**  
This item is still under consideration. Staff will continue to research ways to proceed with establishing an MPO identity for the Abilene area.
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning**  
MPO staff will be working with the City of Abilene staff and others to update the City of Abilene's Bicycle Plan.

**7. Opportunity for Members of the Public to Make Comments on MPO Issues.**

Mr. Mike Vandervoort, with the Abilene Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, expressed his enthusiasm about the SH 351, not only because of the public participation, but because it's a very positive project. Mr. Vandervoort said he represents mainly those who do not or cannot drive a car. He said he hopes this area expands dramatically over the years, and especially with the shale oil-related businesses popping up around the area. His concern pertained to the apartments on the north side past the part where the street construction is proposed to stop. With apartments comes a large number of kids, and he thinks the kids will be attracted to the many convenience stores, restaurants, and other destinations. His concern is to include safety improvements, such as crosswalks, into the design to keep everyone as safe as possible. Mr. Vandervoort anticipates a lot of citizens and kids both walking around in the area and also bicycling in the area.

Mr. Vandervoort spoke in support of Councilman Spano's concern about the lack of, and need for, a pedestrian bridge over Elm Creek by South Clack Street.

He is very pleased that the City is working to build more sidewalks, but expressed concern that Wylie ISD got a sidewalk waiver from City Council. He said it is his understanding that Wylie was granted the waiver because it would be cost-prohibitive to install storm sewer lines and other factors necessary to install sidewalks. He offered his opinion that perhaps the City could have partnered with the School District in fixing this situation so the sidewalk could have been installed.

No other suggestions or comments were received.

**8. Opportunity for Board Members or MPO Staff to Recommend Topics for Future Discussion or Action.**

Councilman Spano asked Mr. Hufstutler about the status of the fence along Flintrock Drive. Mr. Hufstutler replied that he, Mr. Chad Carter, and Mr. Condry met to discuss the issue. He said they are going to schedule another meeting with the property owners. Mr. Hufstutler said TxDOT would like to partner with the City in arriving at a solution that everyone can be happy with.

No other suggestions or comments were received.

**9. Adjournment.**

Our next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. With no further business, Chairman Archibald adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 3:11 p.m.