



MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

October 18, 2016

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 18, 2016, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene Mayor and Policy Board Chairman
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County
Councilman Bruce Kreitler, City of Abilene
Mr. Stan Swiatek, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer

Members Absent:

Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County, and Policy Board Vice-Chairman

Others Present:

Mr. James Oliver, CityLink General Manager
Mr. Wayne Ekdahl, TxDOT Abilene Area Engineer
Mr. Larry Wright, City of Abilene City Engineer
Mr. Bill Frawley Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)
Mr. Dan Richardson, TxDOT Abilene Director of Operations
Mr. Michael Haithcock, TxDOT Abilene District TP&D Director
Mr. Brandon Vinson, TxDOT, Engineering Assistant
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene Public Works Director
Mr. James Childers, City of Abilene Assistant City Manager
Mr. Dana Schoening, City of Abilene, Director of Planning and Development Services
Ms. Danette Dunlap, City of Abilene, City Secretary
Ms. Alaisha Guerra, City of Abilene, Communications Medial Relations Manager
Mr. Cliff Hallford, TxDOT Project Controller II
Ms. Kelly Messer, City of Abilene Assistant City Attorney

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO, Executive Director
Mr. Ed McRoy, Abilene MPO Transportation Planner II

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Archibald called the meeting of the Abilene MPO Policy Board to order at 1:32 p.m. He noted that a quorum was duly present.

2. Consideration and action on the Minutes of the June 21, 2016 Meeting.

Chairman Archibald called for any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes as they were presented. Hearing none, he asked for a motion. Councilman Kreitler made the **motion** to approve the minutes as presented with a **second** by Judge Bolls.

Motion carried.

3. Consideration and possible action on an MPO Visioning, Goal Setting, and Training Workshop.

Ms. Smetana introduced Mr. Bill Frawley of the Texas A & M Transportation Institute to discuss this potential workshop with the Board. Mr. Frawley made a brief presentation regarding his role, the purpose for the workshop and the timeliness of the effort given new funding opportunities pending.

Ms. Smetana stated that she had already looked at some potential dates coordinating with Mr. Frawley's schedule. These dates were November 1, 3, 16, and 17. After discussing several potential dates and the conflicts members might have with them, Wednesday, November 30, 2016 emerged as a likely potential date. Mayor Archibald requested Ms. Smetana check with the members to determine their availability on this date. Ms. Smetana noted that the Policy Board portion of the program would likely run from approximately 10:00 am until noon. She went on to note that following lunch the event program would primarily relate to Technical Advisory Board material but that Policy Board members would be welcome to stay on for this part of the program.

Item Closed. No Motion or vote taken.

4. Discussion on MPO Funding, Project Selection, and HB 20 Ten-Year Plans.

Ms. Smetana briefed the Board on various categories of transportation funding noting that the Abilene MPO receives Category 2 funding for Metro and Urban area corridor projects. She informed the Board that we are expected to receive approximately \$65 million in funding over the next 10 years including Proposition 1, Proposition 7 and Category 2 funding.

Ms. Smetana informed the board that the Texas House Bill 20 established a new requirement that MPO's and TxDOT Districts must now develop ten-year plans. She noted that this is a new requirement so there are still a number of details to be determined. She said she has been meeting and conferring with various officials on this new requirement. She then noted that MPOs across the State have been meeting to rework funding formulas for the anticipated \$38.3 billion in new funding anticipated over the next ten years. She then answered question from board members regarding the current funding formula. Councilman Krietler specifically asked about the MPO's role in project selection and prioritization. Ms. Smetana and Mr. Swiatek discussed the coordination and consultation needed between the MPO and TxDOT on this. Mr. Swiatek identified that project schedules must at times be amended due to things such as ROW acquisition, environmental reviews and resource limitations. Some projects can therefore be constructed sooner than others and project priorities can change over time.

Ms. Smetana indicated she anticipates the Technical Committee will soon be looking at project selection in the near term as a part of the new ten-year plan requirement. Mr. Krietler asked to receive notice of future Technical Committee project meetings.

Item Closed. No Motion or vote taken.

5. Consideration and possible action on an Amendment to the MPO By-Laws (requires 2/3 vote).

Mayor Archibald explained that this proposal is to have the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee appointed by the Policy Board rather than having this position fixed as the MPO Executive Director. He then declared that due to one member being absent it will require a unanimous vote of all the members present in order to approve the proposed change today. Ms. Messer affirmed this and added that although the by-laws could be changed today, the Board would

need to wait until a subsequent meeting to make such an appointment due to notification requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Ms. Smetana explained in detail the specific changes being proposed. In addition to the change regarding how the Chair is appointed/selected she noted that references to “chairman” are being changed to “chairperson” throughout the By-laws.

Mr. Krietler made a **motion** to approve the proposed changes as presented with a **second** by Mr. Swiatek.

Motion carried.

6. Consideration and possible action on the Buffalo Gap Road Phase I Project

Mr. Haithcock introduced Mr. Brandon Vinson, to discuss the project, noted that the design presented today is preliminary and he hoped they could begin the public review on Nov 1, 2016. Mr. Vinson stated the purpose of the project was to relief congestion, enhance drainage and to improve safety. He said that in Phase 1 a median is proposed to control left-turning access, an additional travel lane will be installed and a protected U-turn will be established at the intersection of Rebecca Lane and Buffalo Gap Road.

Councilman Krietler asked about the U-turn at Rebecca and its use by trucks. Mr. Vinson responded that this would be a protected movement by traffic signal. He also stated that a dual left turn would be added for northbound traffic on Buffalo Gap Road that turns west onto Rebecca. He noted that this would require an additional lane and the acquisition of additional ROW. Finally he stated that the addition of an underground storm sewer is proposed to replace the above ground ditches currently in place.

Councilman Krietler asked if the sidewalk would need to be removed in order to add the additional turning lane on Rebecca. Mr. Haithcock noted that they would replace any removed sidewalk and that they are proposing additional sidewalks along both sides of Buffalo Gap Road.

Mayor Archibald compared the project to South 14th Street and stated that he believes the addition of medians might inconvenience some people but it will make for a better and safer area. Mr. Swiatek stated that the closing of the ditches and replacing them underground will make a significant difference in reducing standing water and improving the appearance of the area. He also noted that initial focus on inconvenience perceived by drivers will likely fade over time as drivers become accustomed to the improvements.

The first public meeting is scheduled to be held on November 1, 2016 from 4 pm – 8 pm at the Champions Church site. Mr. Swiatek noted that in addition to this meeting TxDOT would be engaging in conversations with interested parties.

Item Closed. No motion or vote taken.

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

Mr. Ekdahl reported that they have two projects under construction. The first is SH 351 which they hope to complete paving on sometime in November. The second project is the repaving of Treadaway Blvd. which they hope to complete in November. A lead abatement project for the

bridges at SH 351 and I-20 has been let and construction should begin in February.

Mr. Larry Wright discussed the status of a number of projects including:

Catclaw Rd. - is under construction with an anticipated opening very soon. N 5th and Victoria – should be wrapped up approximately by November 1st. S 11th St Sidewalk project is under construction. Intersection N 10th and Mockingbird – (concrete intersection) expected to go out to bid by end of the year. Rebecca Ln Bridge Railing at Elm Creek – Pre-construction meeting held today. Elm Creek pedestrian bridge on Clack – easements are still being acquired. Ambler Ave will be the first project next year. N 3rd, Texas, S 20th and Hardwick will also be started next year. CBD (Central Business District) and SODA (South Downtown Area) both hot mix asphalt and concrete projects are expected sometime next year.

Mr. Oliver reported that after an extensive process Citylink has received approval to raise transit rates effective October 1. New 35' transit busses delivery is expected in April of 2017. FTA 5339 funding from State has been received which should allow replacement of 3-4 ADA buses

8. Discussion and Review of Reports:

• Financial Status

May, June and July billings have been processed. From Oct 1, 2015 thru Sep 30, 2016 authorized funding was \$384,363.34. Expenditures to date have been \$197,481.64 leaving a remaining balance for the fiscal year of \$186,881.70.

The fiscal year 2017 began on “October 1, 2016. The first FTA work order has been received rendering an authorization of \$53,007.00

• Operation Report

Full report is included in the packet.

• Director's Report

Full Report is included in the packet.

– Staffing Levels: The previously vacant Transportation Planner II position has been filled by Edward McRoy. One vacancy remains.

– Indirect Cost: Until recently, the Abilene MPO indirect costs have been increasing over the past few years. By partnering with the City on certain functions this is expected to drop to \$7,305 in FY 2017.

– Travel Demand Model: We have initiated planning on the Abilene MPO Travel Demand Model. We will be working on securing an updated, valid model for the area. This will be about a 1½ to 2 year process to complete.

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

No comments received.

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

Ms. Smetana announced the appointment of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Technical Advisory Committee would be placed on the Policy Board's agenda for their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Mayor Archibald reported that the next meeting is scheduled for the week of Christmas on December 20, 2016. He asked if members would prefer to move this and after hearing no objections suggested that it be moved to Monday December 12, 2016 at 1:30 in the City Council Chambers.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm on a **motion** by Mayor Archibald and a **second** by Judge Bolls with the concurring vote of the other members.