



MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

Tuesday February 21, 2017

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 21, 2017, 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
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County, and Policy Board Vice-Chairman
Mr. Stan Swiatek, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Mr. James Condry
Mr. Bill Frawley, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)
Ms. Alaisha Guerra, City of Abilene, Communications Media Relations Manager
Mr. Michael Haithcock, TxDOT Abilene District TP&D Director
Mr. Cliff Hallford, TxDOT Project Controller II
Mr. Casey McGee, TxDOT Abilene Area Engineer
Ms. Kelly Messer, City of Abilene Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene Public Works Director
Mr. Danial Richardson, TxDOT, Abilene Director of Operations
Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E, Traffic and Transportation, City of Abilene
Mr. Dana Schoening, City of Abilene, Director of Planning and Development Services
Mr. Mike Vandervoort
Mr. Brandon Vinson, TxDOT, Engineering Assistant
Mr. Larry Wright, City of Abilene City Engineer

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. A quorum was duly present.

2. Consideration and action on the Minutes of the December 12, 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 the FY 2016 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects and the FY 2016 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report.

Ms. Smetana presented the reports to the Board. She explained that the Listing of Obligated Projects is tied to the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and shows all projects obligated in the preceding year. The amount of federal funds obligated were \$721,007 for bicycle projects, \$4,534,995 for grouped projects and \$1,106,757 for transit projects for a total of approximately \$6.3 million in obligated federal funds. She then described the APER which relates to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) giving an overview and outcome of 2016 projects. She drew attention to a decline in indirect costs for 2016 and 2017. She also pointed out that explanations must be provided when budgeted and expended amounts vary by 25% more or less. Finally she noted that both documents had already been submitted and cleared by TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

Councilman Krietler asked for an explanation of the Poverty Simulation Workshop. Ms. Smetana stated that this is an exercise that places participants in the position of dealing with transportation challenges faced by impoverished people.

Councilman Krietler asked about the ability of the MPO to obtain Facebook and Twitter performance data. Ms. Smetana responded that we have the ability to get such data.

Judge Spurgin made a **motion** to approve both the FY 2016 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects and the FY 2016 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) as presented with a **second** by Judge Bolls.

Motion carried.

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

TxDOT

Mayor Archibald introduced Mr. Casey McGee to provide an update to the Board. Mr. McGee reported that the SH 351 project is near completion after some minor delays due to recent rains. The Treadaway mill and overlay project is expecting completion in February. The I-20 bridge replacement at SH 351 project should begin in February with one bridge being done at a time. After being questioned he answered that they optimistically hope to complete the project in 18-20 months. Mr. Swiatek noted that the bridge will be constructed wide enough for three lanes in each direction but will only be striped for two.

City of Abilene

Larry Wright reported that the City opened seven bond project bids and had another seven projects in progress representing approximately \$6.6 million worth of work. The Texas Ave. and N 3rd Street projects have begun construction. The S. 20th St., Hardwick and CDB

SoDA hotmix projects will begin soon. The S 11th St. project is nearing completion with TDLR inspection anticipated tomorrow. The N. 10th and Mockingbird St. project is about ¾ complete. He noted that the contract for the Elm Creek Pedestrian Bridge project is under final review so the bid process should be through in just a few weeks. The final bond project of the year should be the CDB Downtown concrete project.

CityLink

No report at this time.

5. Discussion and Review of Reports:

• Financial Status

Ms. Smetana reported that the MPO has submitted three billings for FY 2017 so far and one work order has been received resulting in a current deficit of \$2,567.30. She explained that this negative number is simply because we have not yet received our full authorized allocation.

• Operation Report

Ms. Smetana noted that a detailed operational report has been included in the packet. She noted that Ed has been working on data validation for the pending Travel Demand Model update. Once the 2015 system has been validated future roadway elements will then be added.

• Director's Report

Funding Formula

Ms. Smetana introduced Bill Frawley to discuss this matter. Mr. Frawley explained that the 25 MPO's in Texas have historically split Category 2 funding through a formula that is now being revisited. The 6 largest MPO's are now being proposed to be placed in a group that will receive 87% of this funding with the remaining 19 in a second group to split the remaining 13% of funds. He then went on to explain that Category 2 funding comes from two State sources and one federal source. On this he then stated:

“It was reaffirmed last (sic) two weeks ago at the TEMPO meeting in Austin by Lauren Garduno and Peggy Thurin that the (sic) while they can't say exactly how much of the Category 2 is federal money cause they have kind of intertwined it all they said assume 25% of that is federal money that can be used on or off system. The two Prop 1 and Prop 7 funds can only be used on system.”

In responding to a question from Councilman Krietler, Mr. Frawley repeated:

“They are saying to us (sic) they (sic) TxDOT, TPP Division and Lauren Garduno to assume that 25% of the Category 2 funds are federal. And federal funds can be used on or off the system as long as it is a collector or above federal classification roadway.

Mr. Swiatek noted a concern with the use of the word “assume” given that the

propositions are State Law and we don't want to spend money from Prop 1 or 7 off system. Mr. Frawley explained that State officials are finding it difficult to say exactly how much of Category 2 is composed of federal funds. This is because the State and federal funds have been mixed and the State funding can change since it comes from sales tax and the franchise tax.

Mr. Swiatek again noted a concern with potentially spending money off system that may not be permitted by State Law based on an assumption. He indicated he was OK with using this as a planning target but he would like more definition for expenditure purposes.

Mr. Frawley acknowledged the concern. He stated he has had email messages on this with Mr. Garduno and the 25% was verbalized at the TEMPO meeting.

(INFORMATION NOTE ADDED AFTER THE MEETING: On February 22nd Mr. Stan Swiatek contacted the Abilene MPO stating that this option should be considered on hold until regular Federal Funds are made available and are trackable without making assumptions.

Judge Spurgin asked about reports that the Legislature may not provide some of the funding. Mr. Frawley acknowledged the rumors but could not speculate on if this money might be moved administratively without a new election.

FY 2017 Unified Transportation Program

Ms. Smetana reported that the FY 2017 UTP was approved by the Transportation Commission at their August 25, 2016 meeting.

Updates to the TIP and MTP

Ms. Smetana reported that the required Ten Year Plan has been submitted. An update to the TIP and MTP will be required in order to capture some of the projects from the Ten Year Plan.

Regional Transit Coordination

Ms. Smetana reported that the MPO is considering taking on the lead agency role from the Central Texas Rural Transit District for the West Central Texas Region. Proposed funding cuts at the State are prompting this change. She noted that a lead agency is required in order to receive continued funding for transit.

Councilman Kreitler asked how the MPO would handle this task. Ms. Smetana stated we would roll this under our normal transit planning umbrella. It would require the MPO to prepare and submit some additional reporting. Mayor Archibald stated how important it was for rural residents to have this particularly for access to medical services.

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

Mr. Mike Vandervoort addressed the Board by noting that Medicaid eligible patients have an ability to obtain transportation whereas Medicare patients do not. These people need access to public transportation. He further discussed disparity in public transit services between residents of Abilene and residents outside of the City. On a separate matter he also discussed the need to improve walkability in Abilene and to regularly evaluate this. Finally, he stressed the need to evaluate the usability of facilities for disabled individuals. He suggested that engaging knowledgeable parties during the design stage of projects would be useful.

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

None presented.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 2:25 p.m.