



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
April 24th, 2012**

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 24th, 2012, in the City Council Chambers at Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene, Chair
Councilman Joe Spano, City of Abilene
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County

Members Absent:

District Engineer Lauren Garduno, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County

Non-voting Members Present:

None

Others Present:

Mr. Chad Carter, City of Abilene
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene
Mr. Blair Haynie, TxDOT, Abilene District
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene
Mr. Stan Smith, City of Abilene
Ms. Chrisy Currier, FHWA
Mr. Brennan Peel, Abilene Reporter News
Mr. Zach Gilbert, Congressman Neugebauer office.
Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT, West Region
Mr. Carl Butler

MPO Staff in attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO Staff
Mr. Thomas Cook, Abilene MPO Staff
Mr. Dean Carter, Abilene MPO Staff

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Archibald announced that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the March 20, 2012 Meeting.

Discussion was held on the Minutes of the March 20, 2012 meeting. The motion to accept the minutes as read was made by Chairman Archibald and seconded by Councilman Spano.

Motion carried.

3. Discussion and Consideration of Approval on the FINAL Fiscal Year 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Cook discussed the four changes from the draft to the final TIP: (1) Highway projects will be grouped as CSJ's; (2) Any comments received from the public on the TIP will be included in Appendix B; (3) the Americans with Disabilities Act; and (4) an update on the status of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Transportation Reauthorization legislation.

One comment was received from the public and discussion was held. The comment, along with the staff response, will be emailed to the Board and also included in the TIP.

Motion was made to approve the Final 2013 – 2016 Transportation Improvement Program by Judge Bolls and seconded by Councilman Spano.

Motion carried.

4. Discussion on the Anticipated \$2 Billion Statewide Funding Allocation for Additional Projects.

Ms. Smetana discussed the funding and where it originated. There are \$750 million in federal funds, \$600 million through refinancing and restructuring the Texas Mobility Fund, and \$650 million in cost-savings from Proposition 12 and Proposition 14 bonds. On April 26th, 2012, there will be action by the Texas Transportation Commission to approve Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) revisions. TxDOT is anticipating receiving funds of \$4.15 million and the Abilene MPO anticipates receiving \$3.971 million, for a total of \$8.121 million for this area. Mr. Haynie noted that District Engineer Lauren Garduno could use TxDOT's 4.15 million anywhere within the 13-County Abilene District, but he was strongly considering using it toward the MPO's Frontage Road projects. The Technical Advisory Committee established a sub-committee to examine possible projects for this money. A TIP Amendment and/or a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) amendment (a July out-of-cycle STIP revision) will have to be made and due to the Districts by June 14, 2012.

This item was for information only; no action required.

5. Discussion and Possible Action on the Frontage Roads Conversion Project and Public Meeting.

Mr. Haynie introduced and discussed the cost of converting three segments of two-way frontage roads to one-way operation. Handouts were provided with detailed information on three of the project's segments: Study Area # 1 is from US 83/277 in North Abilene from IH-20 to FM 3034, with an estimated cost of \$23,870,000.00; Study Area # 3 is Loop 322 from SH 36 to Maple

Street, with an estimated cost of \$11,990,000.00; and Study Area # 4 is US 83/84 from the Waldrop Interchange to FM 707, with an estimated cost of \$3,612,500.00. The total of all three projects is \$39,472,500.00 (please refer to the handout for additional details). As noted above in the middle of item number 4, TxDOT District Engineer Lauren Garduno is strongly considering using it toward the MPO's Frontage Road projects.

Note: The Three study Areas identified above are numbered 1, 3, and 4. This corresponds to the notation at the bottom of the handout page which reads (verbatim): Study Areas correspond with locations identified and used in TxDOT Report, Frontage Road Conversion Feasibility Study, contract number 08-448P50007 prepared in May 2007 by Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, Inc. as an agent to the Texas Department of Transportation.

The sub-committee of the Technical Advisory Committee will analyze projects and bring a recommendation to the Technical Advisory Committee.

Chairman Archbald asked if there was any way that the basic conversions to one-way operation could be implemented faster, and at a future point move or realign the ramps. Mr. Haynie said he would look into this.

This item was for information only; no action required.

6. Discussion and Possible Action on the Railroad Quiet Zones.

Ms. Smetana discussed that there was new information to be considered and asked the Policy Board to table item 6 until a later date.

The Policy Board agreed to table this item.

7. Discussion and Possible Action on the National Ride to Work Day.

Mr. Dean Carter discussed the National Ride to Work day. The MPO wants to provide safe transportation, regardless of the mode, and is encouraging promotion of the Ride to Work day which is set up to help reduce the impact on the environment by saving on fossil fuel, reducing traffic congestion and parking, and increasing safety and awareness of motorcycle. Ms. Smetana mentioned that the MPO wants to become more involved with National Bicycle to Work and School Days and the National Walk to School Day.

The motion to approve the National Ride to Work day, to be held on Monday, June 18th, 2012, was made by Chairman Archibald and seconded by Judge Bolls.

Motion carried

8. Discussion and Update from the Federal Highway Administration.

Ms. Christina (Chrisy) Currier, with the Texas Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in Austin, briefed the Board on the status of the Congressional reauthorization bill. Currently we are under the 10th reauthorization continuing resolution. Last week Congress approved a 90 day extension of the Safe, Accountable, Efficient, Flexible, Transportation Equity

Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). (The extension, known as HR 4348, includes all provisions and the funding is prorated through September 30th). The next funding measure, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) is being drafted and debated. It is unlikely to get a bill passed before the upcoming elections. One big part of MAP-21 (at least at this time) is a great emphasis on the performance measures and standards at the federal, state, and local levels.

The TEMPO meeting is being held May 22 and 23 in Austin. (TEMPO is the state meeting of MPOs). The TxDOT Planning Conference is being held July 17-20 in Dallas. This is being held in conjunction with the Transportation Research Board (TRB), a national organization in Washington, D.C. The Texas APA (Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association,) conference will meet October 3-6 in Fort Worth.

FHWA started an initiative called “Everyday Counts” for all DOTs just over a year ago. This provides greater flexibility for projects to be completed faster, saving money. One example is when a DOT obtains right of way, additional financial incentives are provided to prompt people to move more quickly so the DOTs are able begin work faster.

The next round of competitive TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grants will be approximately \$500 million and should be released fairly soon. MPOs and DOTs can apply for this money for transportation projects.

The status of small MPO in the MAP-21 legislation is not decided at this point but it appears to be not looking good – it all depends on which proposal is finally adopted.

No action was required or taken on this item.

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

Mr. Mike Vandervoort, representing the National Federation for the Blind, came forward to express his concern about the railroad quiet zone issue and how it impacts the visually and mobility challenged communities. He also expressed concern that planning should consider the needs and concerns and give careful thought about the different needs of the disabled communities, especially the blind community. Mr. Vandervoort also complimented Mr. Ben Herr and CityLink for their fine service.

No action was required or taken on this item.

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

The items covered today – the Railroad Quiet Zones, the One-way Frontage Roads, and the \$2 billion funding, will move forward to the next meeting.

No action was required or taken on this item.

11. Adjournment.

Chairman Archibald adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 2:42 p.m.

