



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

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 24, 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
District Engineer Lauren Garduno, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County

Members Absent:

None

Non-voting Members Present:

None

Others Present:

Mr. Joe Clark, TxDOT West Region, MPO Coordinator
Mr. Chad Carter, City of Abilene
Mr. James Condry, City of Abilene
Mr. Jon James, City of Abilene
Ms. Megan Santee, City of Abilene
Mr. Stanley Smith, City of Abilene
Mr. Mike McMahan, Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Alan Hufstutler, TxDOT Area Engineer
Ms. Mindy Patterson, City of Abilene Finance Director
Ms. Christina Moscarelli, City of Abilene Finance Department
Mr. John Mangalonzo, Abilene Reporter-News

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.

The meeting of the Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Board was called to order at 1:30 p.m. Chairman Archibald announced that all Board members were present and noted there were several guests in the audience. Mayor Archibald informed everyone that at the conclusion of this meeting there would be an Executive Session, and following the Executive Session the Board would return to be adjourned.

2. Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the June 11, 2012 Meeting.

The question was asked if there were any corrections, additions, or deletions to the minutes as presented of the June 11, 2012 meeting. Hearing none, the motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Garduno and seconded by Judge Spurgin.

Motion carried.

3. Discussion and Consideration of Approval of the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Ms. Smetana explained that the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed the draft Plan at their June 26th meeting and were asked to provide comments back to us as rapidly as possible. The TAC's changes included adding information on the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the functional classification of roadways, urbanized area boundary adjustments, and to ensure that the planning area map stated it was based on the 2000 Census data. These changes have been incorporated into this final draft. The final draft is being presented to the Policy Board today and the UPWP must be submitted to TxDOT by August 1. TxDOT had a working group that was looking at making changes to the format of the UPWP so staff was waiting to see if there would be any further direction thus causing a delay in processing the document.

It was noted that there is a typographical error in the UPWP introduction where it shows that the MAP-21 legislation was signed on July 5. The actual date is July 6 so staff will adjust that date in the FINAL UPWP.

The following are the major changes in comparison to the FY 2012 UPWP:

- Paragraph E - Planning Issues and Emphasis has been expanded;
- Task 1.1 - Program Coordination and Administration Support has been expanded;
- Task 2.1 - GIS Database Development - some new items were added;
- Task 2.2 - Website Enhancement and Maintenance has been given its own category;
- Task 3.5 - Access Management Planning is new and intended to promote safety and increasing mobility on arterial streets. This is a beginning process to get staff trained and involved, with the ultimate goal of developing a safe and effective access management plan in the future;
- Task 4.5 - Transit Planning - concentrates on various aspects of transit planning;
- Task 4.6 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning is new;
- Task 4.7 - Texas Urbanized Mobility Plan (TUMP) is included because TxDOT may again require updates to this Plan. If this should occur, it is already identified so we would not have to amend the UPWP.
- Appendix F - Self-Certification
- Appendix G is a broader list of acronyms; and
- Appendix H is the history of the UPWP and Amendments.

Ms. Smetana went over the Funding Summaries at the end of each of the five tasks explaining the MPO's Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) consisting of PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 and CityLink's FTA Section 5307 and matching local funds. The total budget for FY 2013 is \$378,300. It is important to note that the funding amounts are estimates only. The final figures from TxDOT have not been determined at this time.

Initial funding estimates indicate the MPO budget will be short by about \$48,902. Currently, there is an estimated unexpended carryover of \$308,449 from which we will need to use \$48,902 to balance the budget. The FTA Section 5307 column shows a total of \$92,400 with local funds of \$23,100. These numbers match the numbers in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The FTA/TxDOT Section 5303 Budget Worksheet for FY 2013 is simply a clearer, more detailed breakdown worksheet on how the \$49,524 will be spent in the respective tasks.

Next year the MPO would like to submit a 2-year (FYs 2014-2015) UPWP. We could not do it this year because we have to get on the same schedule as the other MPOs. This will be far easier on staff, the TAC and the Policy Board.

The motion was made to approve the FY 2013 UPWP with the single correction of changing the date from July 5 to July 6 and the FTA/TxDOT Section 5303 Worksheet for FY 2013 by Judge Spurgin and the second by Mr. Garduno.

Motion carried.

4. Discussion and Consideration of Approval of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP).

Mr. Cook explained that the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) is an FTA requirement for every agency receiving Section 5303 funds. The plan requires each agency to determine, from Census data, both the number and percentage of people who speak, read, write and understand English either “not very well” or “not at all”.

Mr. Cook stated this is very similar to our Public Participation Plan (PPP), which is currently being updated, where we identify and employ various methods and techniques to reach all citizens. Because this is essentially a restatement of our Public Participation Plan, we are planning to incorporate the LEP as an Appendix into our PPP at a later date. The PPP will be monitored to insure we are reaching as many citizens as possible. The PPP and the LEP will be updated periodically and modified as appropriate to use the best and latest techniques, methods, and technology to reach all citizens.

Due to a short turn-around time - the MPO submitted a draft plan to TxDOT on May 31st. The final draft was presented to the TAC on June 26th. The final LEP document is due to FTA by August 31st.

The motion to approve the LEP plan as presented was made by Judge Bolls and the second was by Councilman Spano.

Motion carried.

5. Discussion and Review of Transportation Projects.

Mr. Hufstutler discussed the status of several TxDOT projects: FM 2833 (East Lake Road) has resumed effectively and hopes to have it finished in the next 2 or 3 months. The maintenance contract to rebuild wheelchair ramps through Abilene was complete last week. The Fort Phantom Hill project (Visitors' Center) is about 90% completed. The contractor has six months remaining on the contract so they should finish well ahead of schedule. FM 600 has just started this past month from IH 20 to FM 3034. Most of the sidewalk work is finished and actual pavement should

begin next week. The emergency crossovers on IH 20 between Roscoe and Putnam is going well and they should be working in Abilene during the next 2 or 3 weeks, with all the work to the west completed. They have about 2 months of time remaining so they should finish ahead of schedule. The preventive maintenance paving project on IH 20 from Wells Lane to Shirley Road is ahead of schedule with paving and markings complete. Contractor is finishing up the final clean-up of items. They have about 2 months of time remaining so they will be finishing well ahead of schedule. The FM 89 project is moving slowly ahead and still on schedule with base processing and widening finishing up on the west end of the job from FM 126 to about 3 miles west. Project should last another 6 months or so completing base work and widening from 3 miles west of FM 126 to US 277 followed by placement of the final seal coat surfacing and striping. They have about 7 months of time remaining so they should finish on or a little ahead of schedule.

Mr. Garduno asked Mr. Hufstutler about the status of the I-20 ramp project. He replied there were some issues with the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) portions of the contract which held up the contract but he expected a pre-construction meeting in late August, with work expected to begin around the middle-to-late September.

Mr. Chad Carter described the work going on in the City of Abilene: on the South Side Miscellaneous Streets Phase II is about 95% complete with the curb and gutter work on this project. The first part of next month they should move into the planning operation of those streets and then paving. The Miscellaneous Seal Coat Project is almost completed and will be closing out this month. There is the on-going Water Department Street and Miscellaneous Repair work caused by water main breaks. The next two projects will follow behind the seal coat project: drainage, street, and sidewalk improvements and some paving in the Leggett, South 7th, Danville, South 14th area. Following the above project, drainage, street, and sidewalk improvements and some paving will be done in the Mockingbird, North 10th, Grape, and North 1st area. The designing of next year's seal coat plan is underway. The South 1st Street Enhancement Project from Locust Street to Butternut Street is in the design phase. It was originally scheduled to be completed this year but will be delayed until July 2013. City Council awarded the contract for the EN 13th Street project from Treadaway to Judge Ely. This should be underway by the latter part of next year.

There was no report from CityLink.

No action was required or taken on this item.

6. Discussion and Review of Reports:

- **Financial Status, FY 2013 Budget Estimates, and MPO Billings**
- **Operation Report**
- **Director's Report**
 - **Transportation Reauthorization Bill/Legislative Update**
 - **MPO Website Update**
- **Financial Status, FY 2013 Budget Estimates, and MPO Billings**

Ms. Smetana said the FY 2012 spreadsheet in the agenda packet is the same spreadsheet that was in the May packet. The last billings were submitted on May 18 and the numbers have not changed.

The FY 2013 Budget Matrix estimates that the Abilene MPO will receive \$181,785 in PL-112 funding in 2012, but the estimated amount in FY 2013 drops to \$152,114.21, a projected decrease of \$29,671. This drop is due to the change in the urban area

population in the 2010 Census on which the formula was based. This information was received today in an email and is the most up-to-date information that we have showing the funding levels. Currently there is approximately \$360,000 to \$370,000 in carryover funds which could be used to subsidize the current and future budgets for a few years, depending on the total amount approved in the Reauthorization Bill.

The Section 5303 funds of \$49,524.00 should be the correct amount but we are still waiting on the Transportation Commissions' formal approval.

On the MPO billings, we received a letter from TxDOT dated July 5, 2012 discussing the delay in billings and the need to get the billings submitted in a timelier manner. Ms. Smetana asked Mr. Clark, from the TxDOT West Region, to address the Board regarding the letter he submitted to the MPO. He stated that the MPO billings should be submitted on a monthly basis as per the contract and processed for payment as quickly as practical in order for the City to be reimbursed. Ms. Smetana stated that MPO staff has met with City staff to discuss the best way to accomplish this. Ms. Patterson, the Director of the City of Abilene's Finance Department, addressed the Board and described the steps Finance is taking to help expedite the processing of the MPO's billings faster and smoother. Another meeting will be held next week between the MPO, the Finance Department, and TxDOT to help work out details to streamline and expedite the process. The results of this meeting will be presented to the Policy Board on how this issue will be resolved.

- **Operation Report**

The Operation Report is included in the packet but two highlights include: Ms. Carolyn Cook, with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in Austin, spent the entire day of June 7th inspecting each railroad crossing in Abilene, Tye, and Clyde. She analyzed each crossing and concluded that all of the crossings in Abilene would qualify for the Quiet Zone designation, if and when the City applied for this designation. Tye and Clyde had some issues relating to the physical distance between the tracks and the adjoining street. She is going to do some further research on our crossings and get back to us later. The second highlight, the Ride to Work Day, was a success with about 70 motorcycles participating. A moment of silence was held in remembrance of Officer Holder.

- **Director's Report**

- **Transportation Reauthorization Bill/legislative Update**

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century transportation funding bill was passed on July 6th. This authorizes transportation investments through September 2014. One of the funding concerns is that new Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Transportation Management Areas (TMA) are being created, which means there are more entities competing for ever-decreasing resources.

- **MPO Website Update**

At the March 20th Policy Board meeting the Board approved the contract with In-Focus Digital in Abilene for the redesign of the MPO's website. The contract was signed on May 31, and includes an extensive Scope of Services. A draft version was presented and various points and features were described, explaining how this new website would contain much more information, be more user-friendly and be designed to encourage public participation. The tentative pages are: Public

Participation, Meetings (current and previous, with agendas and minutes), Members and Staff, Documents, Projects, Maps, Studies, and Links (to local and Federal agencies). Also maybe links to Upcoming Events, Traffic Saturation Counts, and MPO Transportation Plans, and other relevant information. The contract has a deadline of July 31 to be completed.

Ms. Smetana also discussed one other item of business - the TxDOT/MPO Planning Contract (now called the "Agreement") that is coming up for renewal in September. The current proposed agreement has areas of concern, such as the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and the Maritime requirements that are not applicable to the majority of the smaller MPOs as it is currently written. The TEMPO Executive Committee is meeting with TxDOT to try and resolve these issues prior to the September deadline.

No action was required or taken on this item.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Interlocal Lease Agreement. (Executive Session)

This item was considered in Executive Session after Items 8 and 9. The Policy Board went into Executive Session at 2:35 p.m.

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

No comments were received.

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

No comments were received.

10. Adjournment.

After reconvening from Executive Session at 2:56 p.m., Chairman Archibald stated for the record that there were no votes or actions to be taken on Item 7. With no further business to come before this Board, he adjourned the MPO Policy Board Meeting at 2:57 p.m.