



MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

October 16, 2018

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 16, 2018, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County (Policy Board Vice-Chairman)
Councilman Shane Price, City of Abilene (Policy Board Chairman)
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County
Mayor Anthony Williams, City of Abilene

Members Absent:

Mr. Carl Johnson, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Ms. Cheryl Sawyer, TxDOT, Public Information Officer
Mr. Cliff Hallford, TxDOT, Advanced Planning Manager
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene First Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene Asst. City Manager
Ms. Linda Lockhart, General Manager CityLink
Mr. Larry Wright, City of Abilene City Engineer
Ms. Jill D'Entremont, City of Abilene Interactive Media Specialist, Webmaster
Ms. Mari Cockerell, City of Abilene, Communications and Media Relations Manager
Mr. James Rogge, City of Abilene Traffic 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 Price called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

He announced that public comment could be taken on any item appearing on the agenda during the discussion of that item.

2. Consideration and action on the minutes of the August 21, 2018 meeting.

Judge Bolls noted that he had examined the proposed minutes and found them to be a true and accurate reflection of what transpired at the meeting. Judge Bolls made a **motion** to approve the minutes as presented, with a **second** by Mayor Williams. *Motion carried (4-0).*

3. Consideration and action on a resolution for the Performance Measures and Targets for Pavement and Bridge Conditions (PM 2).

Mr. McRoy briefed the Policy Board on this item. He explained that this requirement comes from provisions adopted federally in MAP 21 and the FAST Act. He noted that the PM2 standards address paving and bridge conditions and that the target setting and reporting apply only to facilities designated on the National Highway System (NHS). Mr. McRoy provided a detailed explanation of

the timelines, metrics, and standards used. He pointed out that required targets only apply to pavement and bridge segments rated as “Good” or “Poor”. He then shared information on the most current bridge and paving conditions in the Abilene MPO Area noting that the data used for both on and off system facilities was provided by TxDOT.

Mr. McRoy explained the Board has the option, within 180 days from the State adoption of targets to support the targets adopted by the State or they can set their own targets. He noted MPO Staff supports use of the state-wide targets at this time and that on September 25, 2018 the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval of Resolution R-2018-02 which supports adoption of the state-wide targets locally.

Chairman Price asked if a map in the Board’s packet showing “Almost Good”, “Almost Poor” and “Nearly Good” rated bridges was for project selection. He also asked about the frequency of measurements. Mr. McRoy confirmed that the map was an example of how the data and mapping could be used. He noted that federal standards will now require us to demonstrate that performance measures are being considered in the project selection process. He noted the project selection process is being evaluated for changes by a TAC subcommittee. Mr. McRoy then responded that bridge data is collected every two years and paving information should be annual.

Judge Spurgin asked if good scores might affect funding negatively. Ms. Smetana responded that this seems to be a matter of concern for MPO’s state-wide but no answers are available yet for this.

Judge Bolls asked how local projects not on the National Highway System might be affected by this. Ms. Smetana responded that Category 2 funding is limited to only on-system facilities at this time. She explained that future projects in the long range plan and TIP must identify how they are tied to national performance measures in some way.

Mayor Williams made a **motion** to approve Resolution R-2018-02 as presented with a **second** by Judge Spurgin. *Motion Carried (4-0)*

4. Consideration and action on a resolution for the Performance Measures and Targets for System Performance Reliability (PM 3).

Mr. McRoy informed the Policy Board that the PM3 measures under consideration are a brand new means of evaluating system performance. He clarified that unlike traditional congestion measures that evaluate absolute congestion based on set service levels, these new measures seek only to determine how predictable or consistent travel time is in an MPO area. He noted that this means the new measures create a moving target from year to year such that typical travel time can increase from one year to the next and the roadways may still be determined to be reliable so long as most travelers experience a similar increase during the reporting period. He then provided a detailed explanation of the measures, pointed out similarities and differences between TTR and TTTR, and noted that all the data comes from TTI. Mr. McRoy then noted that since these are very new measures and they are reported on an MPO-Area wide basis it is unclear yet how they might be used for project selection.

Mr. McRoy stated that the MPO Staff is recommending support for the State targets at this time. He reported that the Technical Advisory Committee had considered this matter at their September 25th meeting and also recommended adoption of the resolution supporting the State targets.

Chairman Price asked for further information on the baselines established for the State and the Abilene MPO. Mr. McRoy noted that the baseline information and targets were created by TTI using a mix of hard data from 2014, 2015 and 2016 and predictions for 2017. He shared the TTI

findings for the Abilene MPO area and clarified that the baselines and targets included in the Policy Board Packet were for the state-wide assessment.

Chairman Bolls asked about potential consequences if an MPO does not meet the targets. Ms. Smetana answered that there is currently no provision which would penalize an MPO for a failure to meet locally set targets. She did however note that the measures must be included in locally adopted plans or else the federal authorities might not approve the plans.

Judge Spurgin made a **motion** to approve Resolution R-2018-3 as presented with a **second** by Mayor Williams. *Motion Carried (4-0)*

5. Discussion and direction to staff on defining the roles and responsibilities between the MPO and the City of Abilene.

Chairman Price notified the members that he had requested this item on the agenda. He detailed his recent study of the MPO organization and in referring to the executive director stated, "One thing that struck me is it's odd for a person sitting in her position to be responsible not only to this board but also to fall under different rules within the City." He referenced recent changes made to the DCOA making their Executive Director responsible only to that Board and asked if other members of the MPO Policy Board had an interest in doing that for the MPO.

Mayor Williams indicated support for streamlining the organization. He indicated the current dual supervisory model may not be the most efficient one.

Judge Spurgin stated that from his perspective the Executive Director "... works for the MPO Board and she doesn't work for the City of Abilene...", He referenced extensive discussions about this in the past then mentioned that there appears to be some ambiguity in the agreements between the MPO, the City and the State. He registered concern for places in the agreements that mention "the City acting as the MPO." He acknowledged a need for the City, as a fiscal agent, to be able to bring violations to the attention of the Board, then said that the executive director should not be forced to answer to two different organizations.

Chairman Price stated he did not want to direct the MPO Staff to starting working on making changes unless this was the will of the Board. He then said from what he was hearing the direction of the Board is to direct the staff to go through the MOU and clarify the MPO as "...distinct from the City of Abilene".

Judge Bolls echoed Judge Spurgin's concern with the use of phrase "the City acting as the MPO." He then said the Policy Board works in connection with the City but it is not a City organization.

Ms. Smetana specifically asked if the Board wanted changes to Article 5 Item number 4a which allows the City to take disciplinary action and then later notify the Policy Board Chairman. Judge Spurgin stated from his perspective this is ultimately a Board function. The City should inform the Board of violations and the Board should then take any necessary disciplinary actions. Chairman Price concurred. Mayor Williams also stated his support for this.

Ms. Messer shared her belief that the original action establishing the MPO from the Governor may have said the "City of Abilene shall be the Metropolitan Planning Organization." This will need to be researched carefully. She explained that the DCOA is separate and by agreement the City provides services such as necessary accounting, human resources, employment and fiscal services. She added

that the DCOA currently has their own attorney but they can request legal services from the City and then negotiate compensation for those.

When asked by Mayor Williams, Chairman Price shared that he had recently visited with the City Manager. Chairman Price stated that Mr. Hanna had indicated support for providing needed assistance to the Board. He also indicated that Mr. Hanna saw value in clarifying that disciplinary action is a Board responsibility if this is their desire. With no further questions and no action required, the chairman moved to the next agenda topic. *(No vote taken or action required).*

6. Discussion and review of transportation projects.

TxDOT – Mr. Cliff Hallford updated the Board on the following projects:

Winters Freeway – Project includes guard rail replacement, milling at various locations and seal coating. Project completion expected Spring 2019. Ambler Blvd., Treadaway to Rainy Creek – Project was expected to be complete Nov. 1 but recent rains will likely push this back to Thanksgiving. S. 1st St. /E Hwy 80. – Replacing guardrails, adding VIVIDS, mill and overlay. Project completion expected spring 2019. US 83 Illumination Upgrade - Project runs from N. 10th St. to S. 1st St. Construction expected to begin February 2019. Remington/Clark Overpass Project - includes some mill and overlay to the 83/84 split. Project let in August but will not begin until January 2019 to allow for utility relocation and safety barrier rail.

City of Abilene - Mr. Larry Wright briefed the Board on the following projects:

SODA Phase II - Project is 90 % complete. CBD West – Project is 50% -55% complete. Industrial Blvd – Project is 35% complete. Contractor availability and heavy rain has caused delays.

CityLink - Ms. Linda Lockhart reported that three studies have been conducted. These include 1) customer service survey, 2) time point study, and 3) Cisco shuttle ridership study. Ms. Lockhart reports that ridership for the Cisco shuttle is very low and some actions may be needed in the future about this.

7. Discussion and review of reports:

• **Financial Status**

Ms. Smetana reported that current total authorization is \$440,369.76 with expenditures being \$190,592.44 for a remaining balance of \$249,777.32. Billings for July and August have been received. The August billing has not yet been submitted to TxDOT. FY 2019 began on October 1, 2018 with FTA authorization for \$55,233 received.

• **Operation Report**

Ms. Smetana reported that staff has been working on the Travel Demand Model. She also noted much work has been dedicated to performance measures in the last reporting period. Finally she reported that annual traffic counts for 2016 and 2017 have been updated on the MPO Website.

• **Director's Report**

Year End reports due on December 15 include the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) and Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP). Work continues on the Travel Demand Model. Staff has also been working on an update to the project selection process (PSP). The MPO will soon begin work on an amendment to the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and on a new Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

8. Opportunity for members of the Public to make comments on MPO issues.

None at this time.

9. Opportunity for Board Members, Technical Advisory Committee Members, or MPO Staff to recommend topics for future discussion or action.

None at this time.

10. 551.072 (Deliberations about real property) Discussion and possible action on the lease of the MPO's office space.

Chairman Price recessed the Policy Board into Executive Session at 2:44 p.m. pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, with the following issues discussed during the closed session.

§ 551.072 (Deliberations about real property) Discussion and action on the lease of the MPO's office space.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 3:11 p.m. Chairman Price reported no votes or actions were taken in executive session.

11. Adjournment

With no further discussion, actions, or items pending Chairman Price declared the meeting adjourned. *Meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.*