

WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Technical Advisory Committee
Minutes

Tuesday, January 18, 2006

Voting Members Present:

Lin Barnett – Wichita Falls MPO, MPO Director, TAC Chairperson
Danny Brown – TxDOT, Director of Trans. Planning and Development
Dave Clark – City of Wichita Falls, Dir. of Community Development
James Kelley – TxDOT, Area Engineer
Karen Montgomery – Gagné – City of Wichita Falls, Comm. Development Planner III
Mark Beauchamp – City of Wichita Falls, Traffic Superintendent
Tim Hertel – TxDOT, Director of Operations

MPO Staff:

Carolyn Askins – TxDOT, Transportation Planning Assistant
Donnie Arbeau – Wichita Falls MPO, Transportation Planner II

Highway Needs Committee Members:

Visitors:

John Burrus – City of Wichita Falls, Director of Aviation, Traffic and Transportation
Larry Blowers – City of Wichita Falls, Transit Administrator

Absent:

David Lyne – City of Wichita Falls, Engineering Tech V (Temp. Appointment)
Joe Anderson – TxDOT, Director of Construction

I. Welcome & Introduction

Mr. Barnett called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone present.

II. Approval of the October 13th TAC Meeting Minutes

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the minutes. There were none. Mr. Beauchamp motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Review and Comment Regarding TPC's October 24th and November 16th Meeting Minutes - No Action Required

No comments were received.

IV. Review of the MPO/City/TxDOT Transportation Project List for FY 2006

Mr. Brown began by explaining the process for updating TxDOT project scheduling and how that affects projects listed in the MPO's Transportation Project List. The focus of the presentation was to highlight letting date changes for projects within the MPO area, and in some cases, provide reasons for those modifications. Mr. Brown explained that these scheduling changes were the result of a recent meeting at the TxDOT District office. Letting date adjustments affected projects with the following MPO ID numbers - 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 25, 27, and 28.

An overview of the following was given by Mr. Brown. Project CSJ 0043-09-107 (MPO ID 6), Loop 11 extension was moved from April 1, 2007 to September 1, 2007. Mr. Brown commented that the City of Wichita Falls was working towards a target date of March 1, 2006 for property acquisition and final transfer to TxDOT. This change would allow the project to meet the new September 2007 letting date. IH44 at FM 890, CSJ 0156-07-101 (MPO ID 7), replacing the bridge and approaches was moved from Sept. 1, 2007 to April 1, 2009. Because TxDOT's emphasis on bridge repair focuses on "safety first and not capacity" it was moved back a few months. US 82 / Kell West main lanes, CSJ 0156-04-080 (MPO ID 11), moved from September 1, 2007, to September 2008. Similar to the process of managing and accelerating the Kell Interchange, funding for the project cannot be moved forward to meet the 2007 timeframe. Mr. Brown went on to say that funding for the project is actually tagged for 2016. Because of the fact that the 2007 State Mobility Plan (SMP) can pick-up 2016 funding allocations, the project was moved to 2008 to pick-up the 2016 funding via the 2007 SMP. Mr. Brown was confident the project would be accelerated at that time. Widening FM 890 to a 4-lane divided facility, CSJ 2582-01-016 (MPO ID 10), was moved 19 months from Sept. 1, 2007, to April 1, 2009, due to a lack of funding. Rehabilitation of the bridge and approaches on US 82 at US 281, CSJ 0044-01-923 (MPO ID 15), was moved out 3 years to January 1, 2012, because it does not qualify for Category 6 funding. The bridge is still in good condition. On Maplewood Ave S. the rehabilitation project for bridge and approaches at the drainage ditches, CSJ 0903-03-083 (MPO ID 13), was moved out 2 years to January 1, 2011, because of funding qualification issues. CSJ 2582-01-015 (MPO ID 9), widening FM 890 to a 4-lane divided facility from Spur 325 to SH 240 was moved from Sept. 1, 2007, to April 1, 2009, because the funding is simply not available in 2009, but, will most likely be accelerated after the Kell West main lanes. Relocation of US 287 entrance ramps near Loop 11 and Maurine St., CSJ 0043-09-915 (MPO ID 27), was moved up from March 1, 2010, to September 1, 2008, and will most likely be tied to Loop 11 construction. The Widening and extending of BUS 287J near Loop 11 and FM 368, CSJ 0043-17- 020 (MPO ID 28), moved from Sept. 1, 2010, to January 1, 2007, because safety and structural issues are high on TxDOT's priority list. Lastly, replacing the existing railroad underpass on FM 171, CSJ 0156-10-001 (MPO ID 25), was moved from January 1, 2010, to January 1, 2012. This concluded the updates to the MPO Transportation Project List. Mr. Barnett then complimented Mr. Brown and his staff on their efforts to develop the MPO Transportation Project List.

The committee then discussed developing areas of Wichita Falls that included Turtle Creek Rd., Fisher Rd. (overpass), Midwestern Pkwy., and the new Industrial Park. The updated changes will also be forwarded to the TPC.

V. Review of the February Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revisions and the 2005-2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Revision

Mr. Barnett discussed one revision to the 2006-2008 TIP, FY 2007 by State Category, to CSJ 0043-14-020 and the construction of the Loop 11 Extension. Updated were the construction cost (\$2,555,114) and the letting date (September 1, 2007). The next five sets of revisions were to the 2005-2030 MTP Update. Category 3, FY 2008 (Funded, Prioritized), projects CSJ 0156-04-092 (\$11,529,168) and CSJ 0156-04-080 (\$19,042,763) were changed to reflect updated MPO TIP revisions. Updates for Category 11, FY 2008-2010 (Funded, Prioritized), projects CSJ 0043-14-020 (\$2,555,114), CSJ 0044-01-080 (\$20,720,284), and CSJ 0043-09-090 (\$2,194,369) were noted. These changes are reflected in the 2005-2030 MTP Update Amendments. Mr. Barnett asked for any comments or changes to the revisions. None were made. Mr. Clark motioned to approve the revisions, as presented, for forwarding to TPC for approval. Mr. Hertel seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VI. Discussion Concerning the Upcoming Texas Urbanized Mobility Plan (TUMP) for 2006

Mr. Barnett presented a brief overview and synopsis of the upcoming Texas Urbanized Mobility Plan for 2006. This was based on information he collected from the Hidalgo County MPO. While going over the TUMP synopsis he indicated that the State of Texas, TxDOT, and the Texas Transportation Institute are looking at congestion thresholds for MPO's in Texas, small MPOs to be specific. Mr. Barnett then pointed out the gap in clearly defined procedures for carrying out the program and that better information is needed to inform TAC, TPC, and local officials. Mr. Brown added clarification by suggesting that part of the goal of the program was to define "acceptable and non-acceptable levels of congestion". Then, added that state congestion mitigation funding, distributed on a regional basis, in partnership with local financing would be needed to carry out recommendations in the TUMP Report to alleviate congested areas on a local basis. Mr. Barnett supported Mr. Brown's statement.

Overall, the committee agreed that more information was needed to get a better handle on how the program would work in form and function. Mr. Barnett indicated that he would forward electronic copies of the Hidalgo MPO report to TAC members for their observation.

Mr. Barnett continued and stated that TTI would provide strong support to assist MPOs to complete the study by September of 2006. Mr. Barnett then outlined how the TUMP project needed to be added to Task 2 of the UPWP. He also anticipated that the kick-off of the project and discussion of gap funding strategies would begin in February. Ms. Askins added that more information on the program should also be available at that

time, as well.

VII. Review, Discussion, and Recommendations Concerning the Wichita Falls Transit System Findings Report

Mr. Barnett briefly summarized the contents of the report and the public meetings used to gather public input for the study. He highlighted the recommendations outlined in the report. To provide some clarification for committee members on the current system Mr. Blowers provided background information on the deviation system used by Wichita Falls Transit.

Mr. Burrus stressed the importance of public involvement in the process of studying and improving the Transit system. He also stated that the needs of existing ridership should be of paramount importance and must be considered when making any change to the system. He also outlined the options for proceeding forward by using a consultant or doing it in-house with Central Services, MPO, and Transportation Planning resources.

Mr. Brown asked to what extent recommendations from the 1996 LKC were implemented and whether some of those could still be applied. Mr. Blowers responded by informing the committee about the decisions made after that study was completed, the political culture during the period, and the mandate he was given to follow to keep service running. Mr. Burrus added to the discussion some of the current challenges that the system faces.

Concerning recommendations to improve the system, Mr. Blowers made the suggestion that the system should change how transit riders are picked-up and dropped off by using designated locations. He felt that this modification would improve the systems dependability and route times due to the fact that the current system picks-up passengers anywhere along existing routes. The committee then briefly discussed the Sheppard Express and some of the difficulties it has faced.

Mr. Brown put forth a general comment and asked how the committee could evaluate recommendations brought forth from the Wichita Falls Transit Findings Report in 3-6 months. The discussion then centered on whether or not the MPO, TAC, and TPC, should hire a consultant to assist with developing a new comprehensive study. In response to the question Mr. Burrus stressed the importance of public involvement and working closely with public officials. The committee then discussed the benefits of doing an in-house study as opposed to hiring a consultant. Mr. Kelly made a few points in favor of using a consultant that were well received. The committee then decided that using a consultant was the best approach. Mr. Kelly motioned to approve the recommendation to hire a consultant for forwarding to TPC for final approval. Ms. Gagné seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VIII. Progress Report on the Development of the Wichita Falls MPO Website

Mr. Barnett stated that the new MPO website (www.wfmpo.com) was in development and a finished product would be presented to TAC and TPC at the next set of meetings in April.

IX. Review, Discussion, and Recommendations Concerning the Proposed MPO Internship

Mr. Barnett briefly reviewed the FHWA requirements, OMB Circular A-87 Regulations, which the Wichita Falls MPO adhered to in researching and developing the MPO internship. The committee recommended that staff develop a list of tasks and duties required of the position. As well, it was agreed that an applicant needed to show technical proficiency to carry out the duties of the position. Mr. Beauchamp motioned to approve the proposed MPO Internship for forwarding to TPC for final approval. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

X. Other Business:

a. Discussion & Overview of Progress on Local Transportation Projects – City and TxDOT staff (Quarterly Review)

City Report

There was no report by the City of Wichita Falls. Mr. Scott Taylor, Director of Public Works, should provide an update at the TPC meeting on January 31st.

TxDOT Report

ID 1, 4, & 13 - Mr. Kelley mentioned that three ITS projects will enter the final acceptance stage on February 1; IH 44 (from SP 325 to 8th St.); US 287 (from 8th St. to US 281); IH 44 (at SP 325 interchange).

ID 10, 11 & 12 – US 82 (at US 281); US 82 (0.5 miles west of Fairway Blvd. to Fairway Blvd.); IH 44 (near Bacon Switch Rd.); part of the district-wide safety lighting and illumination project.

ID 5 – BU 287J (at Galveston) contract has been awarded. Contractor has asked for a suspension of time till February 15th.

ID 2 – LP 11 (at BU 287J) upgrade guardrails and SGT.

ID 3 & 9 – US 82 (US 82 at US 281) the direct connect “Falls Flyover”. The project will encounter some challenges in early 2006 but is currently on schedule.

ID 6, 8, 14 – SH 240 (2 miles north of Missile Rd. to Missile Rd.); SH 240 (IH 44 to 2 miles north of Missile Rd.); BU 277A (Fairway Blvd. to US 82) are part of the district wide seal coat plan. Contracts are let and should be completed by summer 2006.

ID 7 – SH 240 (Missile Rd. to Sp 325) overlay project.

ID 16 – Cypress St. Bridge project has been partially accepted because it is linked to the FM 171 (ID 15) at Plum Creek. Contractor has encountered problems with acquiring materials and ID 15 should begin in a short period of time.

Mr. Kelly also mentioned two Safety Bond projects for FM 1740 (widening and making a Safe Route) and US 287 at the Wilson Overpass (constructing a concrete median barrier). As well, safety stripping (rumble striping) was added to US 281 from City limits to the exit at Windthorst Road. Mr. Kelly complimented the City of Wichita Falls on the improved street lighting in that area.

b. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (4th Quarter – July, August, September)

Mr. Barnett informed the board that expenses for FY 2005 met the minimum target percentage.

c. Update on Public Comments Related to the Public Involvement Policy (PIP) Approved at the October 24th TPC Meeting

Mr. Barnett stated the approved PIP was posted and made available for the required 45 day period. No comments were received.

d. FY 2005 Annual Performance and Expenditures Report

No comments.

e. Other

Mr. Clark asked for an update on his open question (from a previous TAC meeting) regarding access issues and US 287 in Decatur, TX. Mr. Brown indicated that he spoke with the Area Engineer for the appropriate District. The intersection and ramps at FM 380 and US 287 will be modified, but no major reconstruction to improve capacity is planned.

IX. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda

Mr. Barnett indicated that the WF MPO submitted their Environmental Justice Report to Barbara Maley, FHWA Transportation Planning Coordinator, for a 2006 Transportation and Environmental Planning, APA Award.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

Lin Barnett
MPO Transportation Planning Director
Wichita Falls MPO