

**WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**  
**Technical Advisory Committee**  
Minutes

Wednesday, October 4, 2006

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***Voting Members Present:***

Lin Barnett – Wichita Falls MPO, MPO Director, TAC Chairperson  
Danny Brown – TxDOT, Director of Trans. Planning and Development  
James Kelley – TxDOT, Area Engineer  
Joe Anderson – TxDOT, Director of Construction  
Mark Beauchamp – City of Wichita Falls, Traffic Superintendent  
Karen Montgomery-Gagné – City of Wichita Falls, Comm. Development Planner III

***MPO Staff:***

Carolyn Askins – TxDOT, Transportation Planning Assistant  
John Burrus – City of Wichita Falls, Director of Aviation, Traffic, & Transportation  
Donnie Arbeau – Wichita Falls MPO, Transportation Planner II

***Highway Needs Committee Members:***

***Visitors:***

Nora Hodges – NORTEX Regional Planning Commission, Transportation Planner

***Absent:***

Dave Clark – City of Wichita Falls, Dir. of Community Development  
Tim Hertel – TxDOT, Director of Operations

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**I. Welcome & Introduction**

Mr. Barnett called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone present.

**II. Review and Approval of the July 12<sup>th</sup> Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the July 12<sup>th</sup> TAC minutes. None were received. Mr. Kelley motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**III. Review and Comment Regarding the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) July 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required***

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the July 26<sup>th</sup> TPC minutes. None were received. The board moved on to the next item of business.

#### **IV. Review and Prioritization of the 2006/2007 Transportation Roadway List of Projects Generated from the September 2006 Environmental Justice Public Meetings**

Mr. Barnett asked to move this item to the end of the meeting, which was agreed upon by TAC members in attendance.

Members went through the task of prioritizing the list of roadway projects. Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the revised list to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the October 18, 2006 TPC Meeting. Mr. Anderson made the motion to approve. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **V. Update and Discussion of SAFETEA-LU Compliance Issues**

Mr. Barnett supplied the board with hand-outs of information concerning the Wichita Falls MPO and SAFETEA-LU compliance. The updated handout covered all the compliance tasks to be completed before submittal to TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. Mr. Barnett indicated that the updated information came from the TEMPO meeting on Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in Austin, TX. Mr. Barnett highlighted the fact that the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) must be completed by October 2007. As a result, the MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) must be completed by May 2007, two months earlier than previously anticipated.

Mr. Barnett advised the committee that the Federal Highway Administration was looking to eliminate inconsistencies between the STIP and the TIP by having all MPOs use the TELUS Transportation Information Database System or a standardized Excel spreadsheet for comparison purposes. Mr. Barnett stated that elections were also held at the TEMPO meeting to replace the outgoing Executive Director and the Deputy Director. Mr. Dan Kessler of the Dallas/Fort Worth NCTCOG was voted the new executive director of TEMPO. The new Deputy Director is Brian Roe from Midland-Odessa.

Mr. Barnett asked for comments. None were received.

#### **VI. Other Business:**

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

**City Report:** Mr. Barnett informed the committee that Public Works Director, Scott Taylor, and Davis Powell, new City Engineer, were unable to attend the meeting due to a meeting at SAFB. Because of this there was nothing to report at this time.

**TxDOT Report:** Mr. Kelley reported that work on the ITS systems was complete; the Cypress Bridge over the drainage ditch was complete; the Plum Creek project will be complete in about a week; the Falls Flyover is about 72% complete; installation of a flashing beacon at Scott St./Galveston/BU 287J is about 65-70% complete; overlay of SH 240 from Missile Rd. to SP 325 are complete; FM 1740 culvert project is behind schedule at 54% completion; rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Seymour/5<sup>th</sup> Street exit from SB Central Freeway is stalled awaiting traffic equipment to be delivered; the BU 287J / FM 367 rehabilitation project has been let after a 3 week delay.

Ms. Montgomery-Gagné expressed concerns of residents and Planning Commission members in regards to the future alignment of the intersection at Seymour/5<sup>th</sup> Street exit from SB Central Freeway. Mr. Kelley responded that the current set-up was only temporary and the future intersection alignment would be improved over the previous set-up. Mr. Beauchamp and Mr. Burrus added that the new set-up would provide even greater flexibility for phasing and handling westbound traffic than before, which was a key issue.

### **B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY 2006 – April, May, June)**

Mr. Barnett presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report on MPO expenditures, stating that everything appeared to be tracking well. He asked for comments. There were none.

### **C. Transit Study Progress Report**

Mr. Arbeau handed out the latest Moore and Associates progress report that included proposed route maps for the WFTS. Mr. Barnett informed the committee that the City and MPO were focusing on adopting a new system based on a fixed route / paratransit system. However, Mr. Burrus added that three options would be presented to City Council for their review, choosing the best option of the three. The first option was to keep and expand the route deviation system, which is currently in use by WFTS. The second option would be a fixed route/paratransit system, with the Wichita Falls Transit System providing both services in-house. The third option would have the City contract out the paratransit service to a private company specializing in this type operation while WFTS would operate and maintain the fixed-route system. Mr. Burrus continued by stating that the maps and information presented were conceptual in nature. He stressed the importance of continuing to optimize route alignment for future service areas.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on the different types of transit service being considered. In response Mr. Burrus outlined the transit service options and the fact that traditional transit systems in the U.S.A. were predominately fixed route/paratransit. He also added that the operational costs of paratransit were very high and well documented which has lead to an increase or return to route deviation systems, in part. "Dial-a-ride" service is a preferred method to offset the high costs of paratransit because of fewer regulations than formal paratransit. Dial-a-ride service is based on the availability of buses and equipment. Through coordinated fixed route and dial-a-ride services, ADA eligible riders are transported to and from their destination of choice. The City would be responsible for overseeing the program if a third party vendor were selected.

Mr. Burris mentioned that he was quite pleased with the study progress and the high level of media coverage for Transit as it continues to move forward. He also announced that Mr. Dennis Burket was chosen as the new Transit Administrator for the WFTS.

Ms. Askins inquired as to the FTA requirements for a possible third party vendor, which Mr. Burris acknowledged and mentioned the two regional providers TAPS and Sharplines. These two agencies provide FTA compliant service for ADA and the elderly in the north Texas region. He finished outlining the option of keeping it in-house or using a private vendor. Both had advantages and disadvantages that needed to be considered.

Mr. Kelley inquired if the consultant analyzed transit service from the stand point of expanding road network facilities where new construction would benefit service. Mr. Barnett stated this was beyond the scope of the study and that only existing and "under construction" facilities were being factored in the analysis. Mr. Barnett and Mr. Burrus outlined the development of new transfer points within the City of Wichita Falls and noted that analysis has not been done concerning transportation infrastructure development and improvements. The new system will have improved connectivity and reliability. Mr. Barnett added that a fixed route system with improved connectivity (additional transfer points) would add a level of dependability that many workers, student, and riders need from public transportation system. The discussion then led into the issue of operating costs, fare box revenue, and FTA allocations.

In recent years, the WFTS has turned back a significant portion of their FTA allocation. The committee agreed this was a key point in addressing concerns over paratransit service and higher operating costs. Mr. Burrus talked about the expected growth in ridership with the new system that would help offset a portion of this cost. Additionally public and private grants are also available. That notwithstanding, Mr. Burrus was quick to note that the Wichita Falls City Council was very sincere in their desire to improve public transportation service and were aware of the possibility of increasing funding (80/20, FTA/City of Wichita Falls) to achieve that goal. Mr. Burrus surmised it by stating that the key in the whole process is maximizing available options to pay for the increased local portion of improved service.

Committee members were encouraged to review the first draft of the study. Mr. Barnett asked for additional comments. None were received.

#### **D. Other**

Mr. Beauchamp presented a proposal outlining the purchase of a comprehensive set of traffic engineering, planning and modeling tools for improving traffic operations and signal optimization in Wichita Falls and the MPO. He highlighted the cost sharing, equipment, training, and items needed to do this as opposed to hiring a consultant. The committee discussed the proposal and came to the same agreement that the cost savings were clear and the projects outlined had a significant impact on the MPO area, not just the City of Wichita Falls.

The committee agreed that the proposal should be submitted to Austin, first, and then FHWA for comment and review before submitting it to TPC for consideration. Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the proposal for review and then onto the TPC for their consideration, and possible approval, at the October 18, 2006 TPC Meeting. Mr. Brown made the motion to approve. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **VII. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda**

No comments were received.

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

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Irvan F. (Lin) Barnett Jr.  
MPO Transportation Planning Director  
Wichita Falls MPO