

WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Technical Advisory Committee
Minutes

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Voting Members Present:

Lin Barnett – Wichita Falls MPO, MPO Director, TAC Chairperson
Allan Moore – TxDOT, Director of Construction
Danny Brown – TxDOT, Director of Trans. Planning and Development
Dave Clark – City of Wichita Falls, Dir. of Community Development
Davis Powell – City of Wichita Falls, City Engineer
James Kelley – TxDOT, Area Engineer
Mark Beauchamp – City of Wichita Falls, Traffic Superintendent
Tim Hertel – TxDOT, Director of Operations

MPO Staff:

Donnie Arbeau – Wichita Falls MPO, Transportation Planner II
Tammy Marlow – TxDOT, Funding Administrator

Visitors:

Jon Möller – Citizen Stakeholder
Nora Hodges – Nortex Regional Planning Commission

Absent:

Karen Montgomery-Gagné – City of Wichita Falls, Comm. Development Planner III

I. Welcome & Introduction

Mr. Barnett called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone present. The Chairperson immediately commenced with the next order of business.

II. Review and Approval of the January 16th Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Meeting Minutes

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the January 16th TAC minutes. None were received. Mr. Kelley motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Powell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Review and Comment Regarding the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) January 30th, 2008 Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required*

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the January 30th TPC minutes. None were received. The board moved on to the next item of business.

IV. Review and Comment Regarding the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) February 6th, 2008 Special Called Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required*

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the February 6th TPC minutes. None were received. The board moved on to the next item of business.

V. Discussion of Current and Future Funding of TxDOT Transportation Projects

Mr. Brown updated the TAC on the current funding situation for the local District office and TxDOT. He mentioned much of the information presented at previous TAC meetings remains unchanged. The local District will see a dramatic reduction in funding with a final total of \$27 million in CAT 3 funding available for programming for the next 3 years (2008-2010). Mr. Brown added that repairs to the Falls Flyover will come out of CAT 3 funding, so that amount will reduce available funding even more. Across the board it is very tight and available funding needs to be utilized in the most cost effective manner. Therefore, available CAT 1 funds will be put towards the seal coat and maintenance program for this area. This typically averages \$10 million, but with only \$27 million available the funding shortfall will also affect maintenance.

Commenting on options to improve the current situation, Mr. Brown noted that Federal and State legislators are looking into the possibility of raising the Gas Tax which could provide some added funding to TxDOT. However, this is not the preferred way for a number of reasons. Mr. Barnett commented that Texas is considered to be a donor state and receives a disproportionate return on the tax dollars that it sends to Washington. Mr. Brown commented that even with a gas tax rate increase it may be quite sometime before the additional revenues begin to have an effect on programming.

At present, the total rescission for Texas is 1.1 billion. TxDOT has instituted stricter accounting practices to maximize every dollar spent. Options like bonding projects are under review and being discussed. To conclude, Mr. Brown felt that regardless of any short term solutions put in place, the next 3 years will be a very slow and difficult period for TxDOT. The hope is after the 3-4 year slow down that new funding mechanism will turn the current situation around.

VI. Review, Discussion and Recommendation of the Draft 2008 Update to the Socioeconomic Data Collection and Forecast Study

Mr. Barnett reviewed the 2008 Socioeconomic Update process for the WFMPO. Then, Mr. Arbeau touched on the final report submitted by BWR and stated the final dataset looked very good. Two minor issues still need to be corrected and those are in the works. The first error was a simple oversight in the data columns. The second issue was brought to light by Mr. Greg Lancaster and his staff at the Texas Transportation Institute or TTI. A few weeks ago his office was sent the data for their review and comment. The one issue raised was in regard to the growth rate of 1% used by BWR. The state average is closer to 0.5%, which Greg thought was more realistic. Mr. Arbeau will follow-up with BWR and TTI to develop a consensus to finalize the dataset and Socioeconomic Update.

In regards to the final BWR report and the information presented, Mr. Arbeau informed the TAC committee that a small report utilizing GIS maps would be prepared to better display the information developed in the study. This will provide a clearer picture of the data and projected growth trends. Mr. Hertel inquired whether the consultant could prepare these maps and presentation materials for the WFMPO. Mr. Arbeau stated this was not included with the original RFP and the process could be easily completed in house. This update will require a 45-day

public comment period before being adopted by the TPC. Staff expects this to happen at the July 23, 2008 TPC meeting.

VII. Review and Recommendation to Amend the FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program Due to Programming Rescissions

Mr. Barnett highlighted the areas of the document needing to be updated in the UPWP due to the recent Federal rescissions. The estimated carryover of PL 112 funds from FY 2006 and FY 2007 was revoked because TxDOT could not provide the required in-kind matching funds due to the rescissions. It reduced PL 112 funds from \$279,186.00 to \$224,112.32 which is a reduction \$55,073.68. The funds were taken out of sub-tasks 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5. Sufficient funding was left in sub-task 5.2 to cover the remaining costs of socioeconomic study.

Mr. Barnett made mention of developments that came out of the recent TEMPO meeting and the issue of transportation development credits, also known as toll credits. The larger MPO's in Texas have asked the TTC (Texas Transportation Commission) to allow all the MPO's in the state to use these credits as replacement for the loss of TxDOT's in-kind matching funds in order to secure the FY 2006/2007 PL 112 carryover funds. The Texas Transportation Commission did approve the measure at their last meeting. Mr. Barnett was informed that the WFMPO would recover a large portion, if not all, of their carryover PL 112 funds. How this will be implemented remains to be seen. Next year, the WFMPO will begin preparing the next MTP Update for 2010. These carryover funds are integral to securing professional consulting assistance and completing the document. It is a large undertaking.

Mr. Barnett asked for further comments on the changes to the UPWP. None were received. Mr. Clark motioned to approve and forward the changes to TPC for review and approval. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. Review, Discussion and Recommendation of Revisions and Amendments to the WFMPO By-Laws Including: SAFETEA-LU Compliance, Term, Member Proxy, Quorum, and Conflict of Interest

The TAC committee reviewed the revisions and amendments to the WFMPO By-laws highlighted in the agenda. SAFETEA-LU compliance, term, member proxy, quorum, member attendance, conflict of interest were discussed in detail. Changes were noted and those will be added to the WFMPO By-Laws. Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to forward the WFMPO By-Laws with noted revisions to TPC for their input and review. After TPC review on April 23, 2008, the revisions to the By-Laws will need to be made available for public comment for 45-days. The By-Laws will then come back before the TAC and TPC committees for approval in July, 2008. Mr. Kelley made a motion. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. Other Business:

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

City Report: Mr. Powell began with projects under construction. He reported the Maplewood Phase II project was let for construction in January 2008. The Transfer Station Bridge project was let in conjunction with the Maplewood Phase II project. The estimated completion date for both projects is February 2009. The Street Rehab

program for various locations around Wichita Falls was let in February 2008. That program is now 20% complete. Gregg Road and Langford Road project (\$2.5 million) was let to Tom McGrath and will be awarded at the next City Council meeting. Construction on that will begin in the next couple of months.

Under Scheduled Projects, Mr. Powell stated the 10th Street and Harrison/ Speedway Intersection project will replace the old brick with faux brick. Traffic Flow Improvement projects (Kemp at Callfield, Maplewood at Elmwood, and Elmwood at Southwest Pkwy) are scheduled for a May 20th award. Next, the Alley Rehab for various locations will be let in May 2008. Lastly, the Faith Village Drainage Phase II & III (\$3.4 million) is scheduled for a June 2008 award. The right-of-way has been cleared, but a few utility issues remain. That concluded his report.

TxDOT Report: Mr. Kelley reported that the project to repair the faulty ramp that connects US 82 to US 277 has finished removing the concrete deck. Scans of the structure will be completed next, but no timetable has been set for completion. However Mr. Kelly is optimistic the repair will be completed by the summer of 2008. The concrete repaving project on IH 44 is behind schedule (72% of the time has passed while only 55% of the work is completed). Loop 11 project has cleared some land and a couple of utilities need to be moved. Demolition on the FM 890 project should begin next week. This will have an impact on IH 44 traffic. The Kell West project is on schedule. And lastly, nova chip (seal coat) projects for portions of SH240, LP 473, and SP 325 will begin shortly. That concluded Mr. Kelley's report.

B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (1st Quarter FY 2008 – October, November, December)

Mr. Barnett reported that the first quarterly report for FY 2008 showed the WFMPO spent 22.33% of allocated funding. Corrections for PL 112 funding reductions are incorporated into the report. He asked for comments and questions on the quarterly report. There were none.

C. Update of Wichita Falls Transit System - Progress Report

Mr. Barnett was pleased to announce that the 2008 Transit Plan was accepted by the Mayor and City Council on March 18th at the City Council Meeting. The new system will begin operations on July 7th, 2008. Mr. Burrus commented that the public participation process was an outstanding success. As well, local concerns over adding a paratransit option to the new system will be approached carefully given the loss of a large employer and rising fuel prices. Route deviations will increase from 2 blocks to a quarter mile either side of the route. He finished by stating the Transit System will never again be a stagnant operation and will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness. That concluded his comments.

D. Urban Area Neighborhood District Option Stakeholder Presentation

Mr. Barnett prefaced the UAND presentation by stating that on February 11, 2008, Mr. Moller, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jim Biggs, Councilor Elmore, Councilor Smith, Mr. Bill McGregor and he sat in on a teleconference call with FHWA Representatives Kirk Fauver, Justin Luther and TTI Engineer, Brian Bochner to discuss the UAND program. Mr. Moller was then given the floor.

Mr. Moller spoke about TAZ 72, how he had divided it up into subsections, the principles of the UAND program, and the proactive approach needed to promote the program for stakeholder land redevelopment. He began by identifying localized traffic control issues in the area and the potential of modifying the City's Thoroughfare Plan to influence future land redevelopment. Mr. Moller stated that infrastructure improvement and land use are key issues in regards to the challenge facing redevelopment of stakeholder properties located within TAZ 72 and the surrounding areas. Mr. Moller stated it should be a duty of the WFMPO to hold a public meeting using the maps provided by Mr. Moller to gauge the level of interest in the UAND program and redevelopment of this area.

One specific thing Mr. Moller requested of the WFMPO was a deeper analysis of TAZ 72 from a socioeconomic point of view. Mr. Barnett stated that after consulting with BWR he was notified that the current socioeconomic study could be extended for \$3,500 to look at TAZ 72 and the surrounding areas in greater detail. Mr. Moller asked the TAC to consider supporting an initiative to extend the current study. Mr. Barnett asked Mr. Moller how the acquisition of more data would lead to attracting interested investors to consider investing in the zone. Mr. Moller responded that it would provide a stronger base of knowledge about the profile of neighborhood groups. Mr. Moller then asked the TAC to accept his map as a base map for the UAND project proposal. Mr. Barnett opened the floor for discussion and recommendation.

Mr. Clark asked whether the UAND project was focusing on redevelopment or the clearing of properties. Mr. Moller indicated both were possible. He continued his response in highlighting the level of demolition that occurred during construction of the elevated freeway and the large number of existing properties that have been cleared in recent years. Mr. Moller was hopeful his program could show neighbors and fellow stakeholders that there are business opportunities available, at a fair value, through what he described as entitlement of redevelopment. Mr. Clark followed up by asking how the Wichita Falls TAC and TPC fit into his UAND program. Mr. Moller touched on the access to information various TAC members have at their disposal, including Mr. Clark and land use. Mr. Moller stated that he could get access to Federal Highway funds to do the study if it relates to the following: environmental justice, socio-economic forecasting, and traffic analysis. Mr. Moller stated that the MPO is a consensus building organization and that it provides him with the best representation possible, according to the way the law is written, for public participation.

Mr. Powell made a few comments regarding traffic control and management within the TAZ 72 area. He stated there was no problem with traffic volume or access in that area and that he did not see how a traffic analysis study would affect or change the redevelopment of the area. He stated that any changes should be developer driven by private investment. Mr. Powell commented that the area has good thoroughfare access via Brook Street as well as 11th Street, which serves the hospital. No mobility hindrance (or issue) is present to warrant a traffic study. Mr. Powell stated the MPO should not spend their limited funds on traffic analysis for an area needing redevelopment. Corridors with congestion or problems with traffic flow should be the priority. Mr. Moller responded by pointing out access management issues for Clark Street. Mr. Powell answered: if the characteristics of Clark Street were changed or a pending development was in the works, then a traffic study should be discussed, but not based on a "what if" scenario. Mr. Moller then countered with the FHWA's willingness to spend money on scenario planning public meetings. Mr. Brown was quick to note that there were quite a

few qualifiers for that to happen. The MPO Director outlined the requirements issued by Mr. Kirk Fauver, Statewide Engineer for FHWA: the UAND Option must address collector streets and above, no residential streets to be included; and, a demonstration of how the UAND Option will benefit the on-system transportation network and the MPO as a whole. The TAC committee determined that no collector or arterial streets are currently located within the identified UAND project area. Mr. Moller then posed a question asking TAC members what the City (of Wichita Falls) expects to see if the redevelopment scenario plays out and asked, "is a collector at Clark Street a good idea?" Mr. Clark stated, "Developers are to do development, principally." He also added the point that the WFMPO has eliminated corridor studies like Lebanon and Avenue H due to funding shortages caused by recent Federal rescissions. Mr. Clark stated that he did not think the UAND Option proposal should be a MPO project.

Mr. Moller asked the WFMPO to put the UAND option into the context of stakeholder meetings using the maps that he was providing. He highlighted the importance of the WFMPO public participation plan, transportation and mobility improvements, and the need to help citizen stakeholders. He stated the TAZ 72 area is in a permanent state of decline. Mr. Clark stated that he did not feel that transportation and mobility improvements would improve the current state of decline. Mr. Clark commented that the issue of decline is an issue that many neighborhoods across the nation are facing. Mr. Clark commented that traffic planning is not the solution, "encouraging economic development, having a pressure for development, and a pressure for the reuse of property is the big picture." Mr. Clark commented that he would very much like to see development happen at the location in question because it is becoming mostly vacant. He commented that the hospital and their expansion may have interest in this area. Mr. Moller asked why it could not come out of the MPO and why Mr. Clark did not feel the MPO was the appropriate group. Mr. Kelley answered stating that investor development should drive any action of the WFMPO and not vice-versa. Mr. Kelly further stated that it is not advisable to establish precedence for one sector that other developers would notice; such as the Loop 11 project.

Mr. Burrus suggested that Mr. Moller should first hold round table meetings with his fellow stakeholders and invite City, TxDOT and MPO staff to come and discuss the issues of transportation and how they relate to the redevelopment of the area in question. Mr. Powell emphasized the importance of such meetings and the necessity of active participation by staff. He stressed his support of the new redevelopment as did Mr. Clark. However, Mr. Clark did stress the point that MPO and Planning staffs are not charged with doing the work of developers. Mr. Moller stated he was not a developer, but a stakeholder who simply wanted "the MPO to give it an under pinning" for the information collection he felt was needed to promote the UAND proposal. Mr. Moller stated that he was a stakeholder representing the people living in the neighborhood and was trying to bridge a gap between (stakeholders and developers) for the redevelopment of stakeholder owned properties. Mr. Moller commented that he was trying to unite stakeholders and land parcels into a larger scale issue "inside the purview of the MPO that might be good for business in Wichita Falls". Mr. Moller commented that he hoped the TAC, and eventually the TPC, would "let the MPO take a hand" in helping him with his UAND Option initiative.

Mr. Barnett stated that based on the current discussion and the opinions of his TAC committee members present; he must conclude that the TAC committee would not support the UAND Option because it did not meet the FHWA requirements in its present

form. Mr. Barnett commented that the TAC supports transportation related redevelopment and stakeholder meetings and is always willing to meet and discuss transportation issues with local stakeholders. In response, Mr. Moller stated that the TAC was passing or putting their responsibility to citizen stakeholders onto him. Mr. Clark replied that "transportation movement (in that area) does not have a problem". Mr. Moller responded by stating that the conversation of TAZ 72 redevelopment is how the MPO should engage the public through their Environmental Justice process. Mr. Burrus pointed out the fact that Environmental Justice guidelines and procedures were created to protect socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of low-income and minority populations from the potential adverse affect of new transportation projects through various means (i.e. avoidance, minimization, mitigation or enhancement of the project). Mr. Barnett commented that during the teleconference of February 11th, Mr. Fauver had stated that Environmental Justice could not go back and fix past adverse impacts on area neighborhoods. Mr. Moller pointed out that the 1965 decision to condemn portions of the neighborhood and create right-of-way for infrastructure for the Kell Freeway created a huge Environmental Justice adverse impact that is now the responsibility of the stakeholders living nearby. Mr. Barnett reiterated the point that only future transportation projects are the focus of Environmental Justice and that no future projects are planned for that area. Mr. Barnett stated that the MPO was willing to work in support of redevelopment, but not in the form of the UAND proposal. Mr. Moller inquired whether the proposal could be put on the MPO's agenda for stakeholder awareness and scenario building; and, whether the TAC felt it was a valid or worthwhile program to pursue. Mr. Barnett recommended to Mr. Moller that he rework his proposal so that it could be clearly understood by others. He also recommended that Mr. Moller encourage his fellow stakeholders to attend future TAC and TPC meetings. Adding to that point, Mr. Clark stated the issue was philosophical and the MPO should not be expected to provide neighborhood planning for an area that has no new roads planned in the foreseeable future. Mr. Clark stated that the Context Sensitive Solutions criteria are not being met with the UAND Option. Mr. Clark then mentioned that the hospital expansion and support infrastructure, like apartment complexes, might provide an opportunity for potential investors.

Mr. Burrus, speaking on behalf of the City of Wichita Falls, stated the juncture at which they could assist with the project was after stakeholders united in support of the project to market the idea to an interested developer. Mr. Moller asked whether the City could stimulate that stakeholder meeting for TAZ 72 and the answer was "no". The TAC committee, and Mr. Burrus, reiterated their support of the overall concept and all agreed they would attend stakeholder organized meetings to support the endeavor. The TAC committee agreed that the MPO, City, and FHWA could lend staff and expertise to stakeholder meetings.

Mr. Moller asked TxDOT and MPO staff again about the current use, future use, and traffic analysis of Clark Street. Mr. Brown stated that TxDOT's policy dictates they take action on development plans for an area, only at such time they are developed and presented. Adding to that point, both Mr. Kelley and Mr. Brown said "no" it (the UAND) was not the business of the MPO. Mr. Brown continued stating the MPO should not spend money to produce information for the type of project being proposed. Mr. Clark stated his office would gladly work with interested stakeholders and developers on any pending developments. He commented that a Tax Increment Finance District could also be an option for this area. Touching on Mr. Moller's original question, Mr. Powell spoke about the complexities and legalities involved with upgrading a facility like Clark Street,

both positively and negatively.

Mr. Barnett brought the discussion to a close. The final determination was that the TAC committee would encourage staff to participate in any stakeholder organized meetings. However, without an interested developer the TAC committee did not see how the UAND Option proposal would benefit the on-system transportation network in and around the TAZ 72 area.

There were no further comments.

IX. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda

Mr. Burrus notified the TAC that the Commission on Highway Transportation Needs will be dissolved. The Commission last met in the summer of 2006. Moving forward, the TPC can and will appoint special Citizen Advisory Committees as the need arises.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:41 noon.

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