

WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Technical Advisory Committee
Minutes

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

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

MPO Staff:

Carolyn Askins – TxDOT, Transportation Planning Assistant
Donnie Arbeau – Wichita Falls MPO, Transportation Planner II
Ralph Self – TxDOT, P.E.

Highway Needs Committee Members:

Visitors:

Absent:

Dave Clark – City of Wichita Falls, Dir. of Community Development
Karen Montgomery – Gagné – City of Wichita Falls, Comm. Development Planner III
Tim Hertel – TxDOT, Director of Operations

I. Welcome & Introduction

Mr. Barnett called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. and welcomed everyone present.

II. Review and Approval of the April 12th Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Meeting Minutes

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the April 12th TAC minutes. None were received. Mr. Beauchamp motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Review and Comment Regarding the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) April 26th and May 15th Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required*

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the April 26th and May 15th TPC minutes. None were received. The board moved on to the next item of business.

IV. Review, Discussion and Recommendation of the Texas Urbanized Mobility Plan for 2006

Mr. Barnett presented the final draft of the Texas Urbanized Mobility Plan for the Wichita Falls Metropolitan Area. He discussed the conventions used to gather the information and the data supplied to him by the local TxDOT District. He outlined the structure of the document beginning with the Executive Summary and ending with the supporting appendices. Mr. Barnett explained the findings of the TUMP, and their significance, and then opened the floor for comment.

Mr. Self explained how he used the guidelines established by the Texas Transportation Institute to generate the data used in the plan. He commented that the guidelines were rather broad in scope, but that the estimates developed from the data were solid. Mr. Brown commented that the document appeared to be well prepared, given the amount of time available for preparation, and commended staff for their hard work. Mr. Kelley concurred with Mr. Brown's assessment and complimented staff for a job well done.

Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the final draft to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the July 26, 2006 TPC Meeting. Mr. Anderson made the motion to approve. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

V. Review and Discussion of SAFETEA-LU Compliance Issues

Mr. Barnett supplied the board with hand-outs of information concerning how the Wichita Falls MPO would need to address SAFETEA-LU compliance issues involving the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Barnett outlined all of the areas and steps needed to bring the MTP and TIP into compliance. He discussed the requirement to develop the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and additional language that will be needed in all existing transportation plans and programs. Mr. Barnett stated that some of the requirements were already being met and that staff would continue to make sure this did not change. He discussed the requirement to implement "visualization techniques" into public meeting presentations. Mr. Arbeau informed the board of the new aeriels that had recently been flown and that should be ready for use by the end of the year for this type of work. He also discussed the different software expansion "modules" that could be purchased through annual software maintenance to perform 3-D modeling and spatial analysis in order to meet the "visualization techniques" requirement.

Mr. Barnett told the board that today's meeting was for informational purposes only and that no other action was required. He stated that staff would soon begin working to comply with all of the issues and that he would keep the board informed of their progress and any future public meetings. There was no other discussion on this item.

VI. Discussion Concerning Future Traffic Signal Optimization Studies

Mr. Barnett talked about the recent success of the 2006 Traffic Signal Optimization Study on Kemp Blvd. and Southwest Pkwy. and how it had been mentioned at the last TAC and TPC meetings that the MPO could do some intersections on its own. Mr. Beauchamp discussed how he and his staff had come up with a list of 54 intersections that they felt they could analyze and optimize, given they had the tools and training to do the job. He pointed out that there are 10 thoroughfares included in the list of intersections. Mr. Beauchamp commented that these 54 intersections are much simpler to optimize than the intersections on Kemp and Southwest Pkwy. He pointed out some of the more prominent intersections, in the list, that are in desperate

need of optimization. He then presented to the board a list of software, training and literature, and their costs, that would allow him and his staff to perform the same functions as did the consultant, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to achieve the desired results of traffic signal optimization. Mr. Beauchamp stated that, based on the comparison of what it would cost to bring in another consultant to optimize these 54 intersections, he and his staff could do the same job at a cost savings of \$111,776¹. Mr. Beauchamp stated that he and his staff gained a lot of experience working with Kimley-Horn and that they were there during every step of the process and implementation procedures, and that they provided all of the data that Kimley-Horn used during the job. He did state that this should not preclude retaining a consultant for some of the more difficult intersections that may need to be optimized sometime in the future.

The board agreed that the idea had merit, but that it needed to be researched further and that FHWA and TxDOT would need to be contacted, first, to see if planning funds could be used for purchasing the software, literature and training. Ms. Askins commented that the City and the MPO might be able to share the costs in order to better diversify the expense. Mr. Barnett stated he would work with Mr. Beauchamp to come up with a viable plan for making the recommendation to TPC, FHWA and TxDOT. The committee tabled the item until the next quarterly meeting.

VII. Review, Discussion and Recommendation of the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Barnett presented the recently completed draft of the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program to the committee. He stated that he had received a letter from John Bendele detailing a few minor items in the document that needed to be addressed prior to the mail-out of the meeting packets. Mr. Barnett stated he had addressed those items and the document was now ready for TAC review. Ms. Askins recommended making some minor changes to page 4 concerning the new SAFETEA-LU planning factors. Mr. Barnett then reviewed the Budget Summary page with the committee. He then asked for comments on the FY 2007 UPWP.

Mr. Brown asked about money set aside for future traffic signal optimization studies. Mr. Barnett stated Subtask 5.3 contained funding for a future study, either done in-house or by an outside consultant. He also commented that funding was set aside in Subtask 5.4 to for the update to the Socioeconomic Data and Forecast Study, which was due to be RFP'd in early 2007.

Mr. Brown asked where training and travel were covered in the UPWP. Mr. Barnett stated that all training, travel, registration and educational costs for GIS training, conferences, seminars, TEMPO meetings, etc. were covered in Subtasks 1.3 and 1.4 along with the costs associated with annual software maintenance and technical support. Mr. Brown recommended separating out all training, travel, registration and educational costs from both subtasks into a separate travel budget document for anyone wanting to see how much money the MPO spends on these items. Mr. Barnett agreed and stated that he would develop a separate document that breaks down the costs of Subtask 1.3 and 1.4.

Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to forward the amended document to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the July 26, 2006 TPC meeting. Mr. Kelley motioned to send the document to TPC, as amended. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

¹ This amount based on an estimated cost of \$136,000 to hire a consultant to do all 54 intersections versus the job being done in-house at a total cost \$24,224 for software, training and literature.

VIII. 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 because of recent staff shortages in the City's Public Works Department, there was nothing to report at this time.

TxDOT Report: Mr. Kelley reported that work was progressing on the ITS systems; the Cypress Bridge over the drainage ditch was complete; the Plum Creek first phase project is about 50% complete; the Falls Flyover is currently putting steel girders up and the job is still on schedule, however, it has slowed down considerably because of the girders; installation of a flashing beacon at Galveston/BU 287J has begun; overlay of SH 240 from Missile Rd. to SP 325 will begin shortly; FM 1740 culverts have been extended and widening of the roadway will begin this fall; rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Seymour/5th Street exit from SB Central Freeway is currently underway; culvert on BU 287J and on FM 367 rehabilitation and straightening of the curves to help reduce motorists accidents.

B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (2nd Quarter FY 2006 – January, February, March)

Mr. Barnett presented the 2nd quarter report on MPO expenditures, stating that everything appeared to be tracking according to plan. He also reported on the currently open and recently closed FTA transit grants. Currently, there are three open grants. Mr. Brown encouraged everyone to think "outside the box" on new ideas for uses of MPO funds involving transportation planning or feasibility studies within the MPO boundary.

C. Transit Study Progress Report

Mr. Barnett handed out the latest progress report sent to him from Moore and Associates, the consultant for the study. He informed the committee of the upcoming focus group meetings scheduled for the week of July 17th, which will involve six main focus groups: i.e. Medical/Health Care, Special Needs/Social Services, Key Employers, Elderly/Assisted Living, Education/Youth, Recreation/Entertainment, and several other specific target groups. Each focus group meeting will consist of approximately eight attendees from the community representing the needs of their particular focus. The meetings will be conducted over a four day period beginning July 17th.

Mr. Barnett also informed the committee that the telephone survey had been completed as of July 7th and that the on-board bus survey would be conducted during the week of the 17th. Other tasks currently under way to help increase ridership (re-branding) include: new color transit schedule brochures separated into each individual route to make it easier to understand the route structure; 8.5" X 24" bus stop information units are on order to be distribute along each route to better inform riders of the times and days the transit system operates. Each information unit is laminated and is attached to a route indicator pole using a steel frame.

D. Other

Mr. Brown asked if we were getting any “hits” on the MPO’s new website. Mr. Arbeau stated he would check with Lighthouse Teknologies, the site developer, to see if any statistics were available. He also informed the committee that the transit survey would be available, on-line, for the general public to fill out, if they so desired.

IX. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda

No comments were received.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Lin Barnett
MPO Transportation Planning Director
Wichita Falls MPO