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# TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE (TPC) MEETING WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

January 20, 2005

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## Present:

Mayor Bill Altman, Chairperson	◆ Members
Dennis Wilde, NORTEX Regional Planning Commission	◆
Larry Tegtmeyer, TxDOT, District Engineer	◆
Scott Taylor, Director of Public Works	◆
Jeff Watts, City of Pleasant Valley	◆
Carolyn Askins, TxDOT, Transportation Planning Assistant	◆ Staff
Darron Leiker, ACM, Director of Traffic, Transportation & Aviation	◆
Danny Brown, TxDOT, Director of Trans. Planning and Development	◆
Dave Clark, Director of Community Development	◆
Donnie Arbeau, Transportation Planner I	◆
James Kelley, TxDOT, Area Engineer	◆
Lin Barnett, Transportation Planner III	◆
Jim Berzina, City Manager	◆ Ex-officio
Bettye Tanner-Shelby	◆ HNC
Tim Kroeker, Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc	◆ Guests
Charles Elmore, City Council Representative	◆ Absent
Don Sheppard, Lakeside City	◆
Linda Ammons, City Council Representative	◆
Woodrow (Woody) Gossom, County Judge, Vice-Chairperson	◆

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## I. Welcome & Introduction.

Mayor Altman began the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

## II. Approval of the October 20<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup> TPC Meeting Minutes

Mr. Wilde motioned to approve both sets of minutes as presented. Mr. Watts seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **III. Review and Comment Regarding TAC's January 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes - No Action Required**

No comments were received.

### **IV. Review, Discussion and Approval of the 2005-2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update**

Mr. Leiker began the discussion by addressing the revisions to the project list in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He commented that all the changes and comments received by staff were now incorporated into the document. These revisions involved correct spelling of streets, the proper location of projects in the correct tables of the MTP project list, and the inclusion of comments and responses from the January 12, 2005 MTP Public Hearing. Mr. Leiker then directed the board's attention to the Public Involvement Protocol handout stating, the document was developed as a recap of the timeline illustrating all of the work involved, and the commitment to informing the public about the MTP. He began with the TPC appointment of a Steering Committee in October 2003 and ended with the MTP Public Hearing held in the Wichita Falls Public Library in January 2005. Mr. Leiker also discussed the milestone chart handout and pointed out key milestones achieved throughout the MTP development process. He stated all efforts, to this point, had been made to have the MTP document ready for approval and adoption by TPC at today's meeting. Mr. Leiker then asked Mr. Kroeker to recap the changes made to the document since the release of the CD's.

Mr. Kroeker briefly outlined the major changes to the document since the CD was mailed out. He commented that he had received excellent feedback, because of good participation, and the changes to the final working draft were not excessive. He stated the major changes were to the project funding tables and funding numbers. Some of the ID numbers had to be changed; some of the City projects were mixed in with the TxDOT projects and vice a versa. The tables were reconstructed so that every project fit in the proper place. The City of Wichita Fall's recently adopted Thoroughfare Plan<sup>1</sup> was added as an appendix in Chapter 5 under Area Transportation Issues. The next changes were made to the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Kroeker stated he received comments and concerns about some of the preferred routes on the bicycle plan. It was determined that realignment to some of the preferred routes should be made to the plan. Several comments received indicated that a preferred route should be added for cross-town traffic to allow bicyclists to travel from the north, near SAFB, to the southern part of Wichita Falls. An interim route was also added to allow traversal around the Wichita Falls Country Club. He stated the Public Hearing comments and responses were added to Chapter 6, under Special Needs, as an appendix in the Public Involvement Process section. Additional explanatory information was also added to the Traffic Control Section of Chapter 7. Mr. Kroeker then gave everyone present a handout of the PowerPoint presentation used at the MTP Public Hearing. He stated the Public Involvement Protocol would be added as an appendix before going to print, thus providing readers a detailed explanation of the steps taken from beginning to end of the MTP process.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Wichita Falls updated Thoroughfare Plan was adopted by City Council on January 4, 2005.

Mayor Altman asked for comments. Mr. Taylor stated that the document was well constructed and complemented all involved in the development of it. Mr. Berzina inquired as to the current availability of federal funds for completion of some of the bicycle trails. Mr. Leiker stated the City was waiting for the announcement of the next round of transportation enhancement project grant opportunities. He stated the City would need to be prepared for submission of projects when the opportunities became available.

Mr. Tegtmeyer stated the new federal legislation coming out of Washington D.C. might be ready by Easter as a bill. He commented the current extension would run through May 2005. He stated the climate was favorable for legislation to be passed by April, May or June of 2005. Mr. Berzina asked if the climate was favorable for bicycle trail funding. Ms. Askins stated her contacts in Austin indicated the same timeline, with favorableness, as Mr. Tegtmeyer had previously stated. Mr. Taylor stated he believed enhancements would be included in the legislation because of their inclusion in past legislation. Mr. Tegtmeyer conferred with Mr. Taylor's statement commenting that when the call for projects was issued by the state, that the MPO should have its best projects ready for submission. Ms. Askins stated when information became available that a public meeting would be called to gather input for the projects.

Mayor Altman asked for a motion to approve the 2005-2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan update as presented. Mr. Taylor motioned for approval of the document as presented. Mr. Wilde seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

## **V. Discussion and Recommendation Concerning the Appointment of a Permanent MPO Director**

Mr. Tegtmeyer asked the board to consider discussing the transition from an "interim" MPO Director to a "permanent" or "full-time" director. Mayor Altman asked what the basis would be for justifying a full-time director. Mr. Tegtmeyer stated a full-time director would be able to focus 100% of their time and attention on MPO business. He explained that MPO's located within Transportation Management Areas (TMA's) are required to have a full-time MPO director. Mr. Tegtmeyer went on to say the Wichita Falls MPO is located within a non-TMA zone; therefore a full-time director is not required. He stated the MPO was functioning quite well, but that the interim status needed to be addressed. He also asked the board to consider discussing the benefit between having a full-time director, as opposed to a part-time director.

Mr. Taylor inquired how other MPO's of comparable size handled this issue. He stated his concern over the interrelationship between the MPO and the City if a full-time MPO director were to be hired. Mr. Wilde asked if the City of Wichita Falls was the recipient of the grant. The board agreed that it was. Mayor Altman stated he found it hard to justify hiring a full-time director because the MPO was functioning well at this time. He stated that if inadequacies began to appear in the system then the subject of a full-time director should be revisited. Mr. Taylor asked if the title "interim" was the cause of concern. Mr. Tegtmeyer stated that TxDOT would like to see a permanent director put

into place. He stated that because Wichita Falls is a small MPO, possibly someone already working within the organization could take on the role of director. He advocated utilizing available MPO resources to their best potential, but not to make any unnecessary changes.

Mayor Altman asked for comments on the hiring of a full-time director. Mr. Watts stated he did not see any reason for hiring a full-time director considering the current effectiveness of the MPO. He asked if a title change for Mr. Leiker would be more palatable for the state. Mr. Tegtmeier responded saying the state would be more comfortable with a permanent part-time director than with the continuation of an interim director. Mayor Altman asked who, at the state level, was suggesting this and for what reason. Mr. Tegtmeier responded stating the request came from the Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) department in Austin.

Mr. Watts inquired if Mr. Leiker was not in line to be appointed as MPO Director. Mr. Berzina stated it was his understanding that it was still within his purview to appoint the MPO director for Wichita Falls. He stated the appointment of Mr. Leiker as Interim Director was to allow time for comments, recommendations and observations to be forwarded to his office. Mr. Berzina stated he had not received any comments thus far, but that, if the board were comfortable with his decision, he would officially appoint Mr. Leiker as MPO Director. Mr. Wilde stated, in his opinion, the decision of part-time versus full-time should rest with the City Manager since the City of Wichita Falls was the grant recipient. Mr. Berzina commented on the significant progress that had been made since the interim status began as compared to the period of time before it began. He stated he had received several positive and complimentary comments both within and outside the organization as to how the MPO was functioning.

Mr. Tegtmeier inquired if the Policy Committee would feel comfortable with the City Manager making the appointment or should the candidate be proposed by the City Manager and adopted by the Policy Committee. Mayor Altman stated it was his understanding that the City Manager has always had authority to appoint the MPO Director.

Mr. Leiker discussed and advocated the use of an evaluation procedure for the MPO Director, an issue that had been discussed in previous MPO meetings. Mr. Watts stated he would feel more comfortable evaluating the performance of the MPO as a board and to allow the evaluations and disciplinary actions of the MPO Director to stem from the City Manager. He stated he did not feel that a change in course was necessary concerning how the MPO Director would be evaluated, that it should be left to the City Manager's discretion. Mr. Wilde agreed stating evaluation of the MPO system overall should be left to the Policy Committee; furthermore, since the City of Wichita Falls is the grant recipient, the City Manager should have authority to appoint and evaluate the MPO Director. Mr. Leiker brought forth the fact that fourteen of the twenty-five state MPO's operate similarly to the Wichita Falls MPO, whereby city staff provide MPO services.

Mr. Tegtmeier asked staff to investigate for proper procedures on the appointment of the MPO Director in order to avoid any flaws or conflicts within the system. Mr. Berzina stated he would wait for the results of the review and take the appropriate action when called upon.

**VI. Review and Comment on the 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Draft – No Action Required, For Informational Purposes Only**

Mr. Leiker commented this was only a draft and that final approval would not be needed until the April TPC meeting. Ms. Askins commented there may be other changes made before final submittal to the state. There were no other comments made.

**VII. Review and Comment on the FY 2004 Annual Performance and Expenditure Report – No Action Required, For Informational Purposes Only**

Mr. Leiker gave a brief overview of the Expenditure Report stating the MPO accomplished many of its goals and objectives while staying within budget. Mr. Brown commented that the MPO's TPP representative was pleased with how the MPO had utilized the funds entrusted to it, stating that several MPO's sent unspent funds back to the state. No other comments were made.

**VIII. Initial Discussion and Recommendation of Subtasks for the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Leiker discussed the reasons for beginning the process early in the year and asked the members to bring forward any projects they would like to have included in the FY 2006 UPWP. He outlined the materials in the meeting packet that were included to help the board members formulate ideas for the UPWP. He stated those ideas would be incorporated into a draft UPWP for presentation to TAC and TPC at the April meetings.

Mayor Altman discussed staff's recommendation sheet included in the packet, specifically about retiring The Planning Review newsletter and its replacement. He stated staff should try to email the newsletter whenever possible in order to preserve resources.

**IX. Other Business:**

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

City Report: Mr. Taylor stated the City had completed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) overlay project, the 2003-2004 overlay project was currently under construction, and a budgeted \$1.6 million overlay project would be let in April or May of this year. He reported that the City was currently training personnel to use new pavement evaluation software. Mr. Taylor commented City crews were in the process of evaluating another section of town and that he would be making a presentation of the street inventory to City

Council in the future. He stated the McGrath Creek (Faith Village) drainage project was nearing 80% completion on plans, with hopes of bidding the project in early summer.

TxDOT Report: Mr. Kelley stated that FM 2380 was nearing completion; the Scott Street Bridge would soon have the barricades removed from it, the landscape projects at Maureen Street and Jacksboro Highway were still progressing, and the bathroom facility at Sikes Lake had increased in cost, but was on schedule.

#### **b. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (4th Quarter – Jul, Aug, Sep)**

Mr. Leiker outlined the final quarter for FY 2004 and commented on the fact that the MPO stayed within budget throughout the entire year. There were no other comments.

#### **c. Update on Wilbur Smith Associates Socioeconomic Data Forecast and Study – *Resolution of List of Comments Generated by TxDOT Demographers***

Mr. Leiker discussed the problems associated with the final document received from Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA). He stated the final document was sent to Austin for the TxDOT demographers to inspect. The errors they sent back were then forwarded to WSA with a request for resolution. To this point, no corrections had been made. He directed the board's attention to the letter in the back of the packet that was sent the week before to WSA expressing the MPO's displeasure with their performance. Austin received a copy of the letter, as well as the local TxDOT District Engineer. Mayor Altman suggested that a letter be mailed to WSA stating that if these issues were not resolved in a timely manner, a copy of the first letter would be mailed to every MPO Director in the state to express dissatisfaction with their services.

Discussion then centered on the weighting criteria to be used for future consultant selections and the ability to exclude WSA based on historical performance.

#### **d. Other**

Mr. Leiker alerted the members to the possibility of a Special Called meeting in early February. The purpose being to approve the Functional Classification maps that staff was currently working on due into the state by February 23, 2005.

### **X. Public comment on any item not on the agenda**

There were no comments.

## **XI. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.