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

April 22, 2009

Present:

Lanham Lyne, City of Wichita Falls, Mayor, Chairperson	◆ Members
Charles Elmore, City of Wichita Falls, City Council Representative	◆
Danny Brown, TxDOT, Proxy for Larry Tegtmeyer	◆
Dennis Wilde, NORTEX Regional Planning Commission, Executive Director	◆
Fred Hill, Wichita County, Proxy for Judge Woody Gossom	◆
Michael Smith, City of Wichita Falls, City Council Representative	◆
Russell Schreiber, City of Wichita Falls, Director of Public Works	◆
Steven Halloway, Lakeside City, Mayor	◆
Donnie Arbeau, WFMPO, Transportation Planner II	◆ Staff
Lin Barnett, WFMPO, Transportation Planning Director	◆
James Kelley, TxDOT, Area Engineer	◆
◆ Ex-officio	
Jerrie Sowards, Representative Farabee's Office	◆ Guests
John Burrus, City of Wichita Falls, Director of Aviation, Traffic & Transportation	◆
Jeff Watts, City of Pleasant Valley, City Representative	◆ Absent

I. Welcome & Introduction

Mayor Lyne called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Chairperson informed the Policy Board that Mr. Danny Brown would be the acting proxy for Mr. Larry Tegtmeyer and that Mr. Fred Hill would be the acting proxy for Judge Woody Gossom. Introductions were then made around the room.

II. Public Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Mayor Lyne asked if any citizens or stakeholders had signed up to speak about anything on the agenda. There were no speakers. The Chairperson then moved on to the next agenda item.

III. Review and Approval of the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) January 28th and February 25th, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Lyne asked for any comments or changes to the January 28th TPC minutes. There were none. Mayor Lyne then asked for any comments or changes to the February 25th TPC minutes.

There were none. He then asked for a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Mayor Holloway made the motion to approve. Mr. Wilde seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mayor Lyne then moved on to the next agenda item.

IV. Review and Comment Regarding the April 8, 2009 Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required*

Mayor Lyne asked for comments on the April 8th TAC minutes. Mr. Barnett informed the Policy Board that the TAC committee would work throughout the year to develop one or two projects for submission at the next call by TxDOT for their Pass-Through Financing program. He commented that the TAC committee discussed several possibilities including the "gap" project west of FM 369 on US 82, and FM 890 as potential projects for submission. Mr. Barnett stated that with all the work done on getting projects ready for the ARRA funding there simply wasn't time enough to put something together for the May 12, 2009 deadline for submission of a Pass-Through Finance project. There were no other comments. Mayor Lyne then moved on to the next agenda item.

V. Review and Approval of the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program Amendments Based on TxDOT (Austin) Revised Funding Authorizations

Mr. Barnett directed the Policy Board's attention to page 50 of the meeting packet where the amendments were located. He informed the Policy Board that in a letter dated January 21, 2009 from the TP&P Division of TxDOT in Austin it was made known to him that the Wichita Falls MPO would receive its full Transportation Planning Fund (TPF) authorization for FY 2009 along with its full FY 2008 carry over funding amount. He stated the original amount of FY 2009 TPF funding was estimated at \$317,056.95, but that the actual amount, as indicated in the letter, was now \$398,280.50. Mr. Barnett stated this would increase the overall FY 2009 MPO Budget by \$81,223.55.

Mr. Barnett then related to the Policy Board the discussion at the April 8th TAC meeting and of the proposal to combine Subtasks 5.3 and 5.4 together, along with the Rhea\Lawrence\Call Field Road intersection, into one comprehensive mobility study of the area west of Kemp Blvd. He stated that the revised Subtask 5.3 would combine the study of the Beverly Drive, Avenue "H", and Kemp Street thoroughfare connection along with the viability of building a connector between Seymour Road and Seymour Highway, where Lebanon Road intersects Seymour Road, with research of the Rhea\Lawrence\Call Field Road intersection into one comprehensive mobility study. Mr. Barnett stated that, with the TAC committee's support, he had programmed \$121,280.50 into Subtask 5.3 to RFP and hire a qualified consulting firm to perform the study. He stated the study would be used to identify the best way to increase north and south mobility through the area by examining the quantity and cost of Right-of-Way needed; the number of businesses and residences that would be affected; and the estimated construction costs for the three areas in question.

Mr. Schreiber asked where the remaining funding for Subtask 5.3 was coming from since the budget was increasing by only \$81,000. Mr. Barnett stated that he had rolled the \$10,000 allocated for the separate study of Beverly Drive, Avenue "H" and Kemp Street in with the original \$10,000 programmed for the Seymour Road to Seymour Highway connector study and combined them with the \$20,000 dollars remaining from the downtown transit center study to achieve the total \$121,280.50 set aside for the revised Subtask 5.3 large area study. Mr. Barnett stated there were only two amendments to be approved and that he was seeking the Policy Board's approval to go do the work previously described.

Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to approve the amendments as presented. Councilor Elmore made the motion to approve. Councilor Smith seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VI. Review and Approval of ARRA Based Transit TIP Amendments: Includes Four Replacement Buses and Purchase of Capital Bus Resources

Mr. Barnett discussed the proposed transit amendments located in the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. He informed the Policy Board that \$1,340,000 was programmed into FY 2009 of the TIP for the purchase of four (4) new 35-ft, 12-yr, 500,000 mile, low-floor buses and that the remaining \$430,192 would be programmed into FY 2010 for the purchase of additional capital bus resources. These capital items included: farebox system upgrades, replacement A/V security cameras, AVL/GPS locator units, automatic-stop street annunciators and bus route furnishings such as benches and shelters. He then directed their attention to the Transit Financial Summary page of the TIP where the totals for fiscal year's 2008 through 2011 were located. He commented that no state or local match money was required to accept the ARRA funding. He also stated that City Council had passed a resolution to accept the ARRA funding on April 7th and that he had presented the ARRA transit grant application to the Texas Review and Comment System or TRACS for review and favorable comment that same day. He stated that with the 4 additional ARRA buses combined with the 4 buses from the FY 2008 transit grant order; Falls Ride would be able to modernize two-thirds of its existing fleet.

Councilor Smith asked if the MPO had researched the street annunciators used at bus stops to alert passengers to the approach of a bus. Mr. Barnett stated that the on-board annunciators were new technology to the Wichita Falls Transit System, but that he suspected they would begin looking at new bus stop technology in a few short years.

Councilor Elmore asked about the progress in locating a suitable site for the downtown transit center. Mr. Barnett stated the site had been narrowed down to one primary location and that was why he had been able to move \$20,000 into the large area mobility study discussed in the previous agenda item. Councilor Elmore asked if the City had funds available to buy the location. Mr. Burrus stated "yes" there were funds available and that he had been working with the state's Texas Historical Commission to determine if there was any reason to preserve the building since it was over 50 years old. He did not foresee any problems with getting clearance for demolition of the building. He also informed the Policy Board that the Categorical Exclusion document on the site had been completed and sent to FTA and was currently being processed. Once approved by FTA, and the Texas Historical Commission then work should begin acquiring the property for demolition and reconstruction.

Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to approve the amendments as presented. Councilor Elmore made the motion to approve. Mr. Hill seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. Review and Discussion of TAC Recommendations for MPO Director Evaluation Process

Mr. Barnett informed the Policy Board that he had complied with the board's request from the January 2009 meeting to research other similar sized MPO's as to how they evaluate their MPO Directors. This request came about during the revising of the Wichita Falls MPO By-Laws at the January meeting when Mr. Tegtmeyer commented that in Article II, Section II-14, Paragraph 8 the By-Laws state that one of the functions of the Transportation Policy Committee was to "evaluate the MPO Director." Mr. Barnett stated that he had presented his research and

recommendations to the TAC committee and had asked Mr. Brown to moderate this issue during the April 8th meeting. He then asked Mr. Brown to present the TAC recommendations to the Policy Board.

Mr. Brown stated this issue was being addressed because the contract between the MPO and the State, and the Wichita Falls MPO By-Laws, were unclear as to how the MPO Director was hired, terminated and evaluated. He commented that the TAC committee looked at how other MPO's of similar size evaluated their MPO Directors. Mr. Brown then presented the TAC recommendations as follows:

1. Amend the contract between the Wichita Falls MPO and the State of Texas as follows:
 - a. Extract and eliminate from Article 4, Responsibilities of the MPO Policy Committee, Paragraph 4 the following statement: "The MPO Policy Committee shall have sole responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate the Transportation Planning Director."
 - b. Insert into Article 5, Responsibilities of the Fiscal Agent, Paragraph 3 an addendum that states: "Provide human resources to the MPO, including the sole responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate the Transportation Planning Director. The Fiscal Agent, that being the City of Wichita Falls, shall be required to consult with and allow input by the MPO Policy Committee in the development of the MPO Director's performance plan and annual evaluation."
2. Amend the Wichita Falls MPO By-Laws in Article II, Section II-14, Paragraph 8 as follows:
 - a. "Provide input to the Fiscal Agent concerning the MPO Director's performance. It shall be the responsibility of the Fiscal Agent to consult with the Transportation Policy Committee concerning the MPO Director's performance plan and annual evaluation."

Mr. Brown commented that these amendments to the state contract and to the MPO's By-Laws would allow the Policy Board to provide some items for the initial performance plan and the later evaluation of the MPO Director. He also commented that the language would require the Fiscal Agent, that being the City of Wichita Falls, through Mr. Barnett's supervisor, that being Mr. Burrus, to seek input from the Policy Board. Mr. Brown pointed out that the changes were not being made because of any problems, but because there needed to be a clear process of evaluation for the MPO Director. To the contrary, Mr. Brown stated that things were going very well with the current director, Mr. Barnett.

Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to amend the contract between the MPO and the State and to amend the Wichita Falls MPO By-Laws according to the recommendations made by the TAC committee. Councilor Smith made the motion to approve. Mr. Wilde seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII. Discussion of Youth Transportation Needs Within the City of Wichita Falls

Mr. Barnett informed the Policy Board that this was an item that Mr. Burrus had asked come before the committee for discussion. He commented that Mr. Burrus, Mayor Lyne and Judge Gossom had communicated with each other and felt this qualified as an important issue for

discussion. Mr. Barnett then turned the discussion over to Mr. Burrus.

Mr. Burrus commented that with the cut in donations for area youth agencies such as the United Way and Camp Fire and other worthy agencies that it was leaving them without a means to transport children to their various programs. He stated that his staff had been working with the Boys and Girls Clubs to spear head a pilot program to help transport children to the various Boys and Girls Clubs around town free of charge. The pilot program would allow any child age 10 or older, holding a valid Boys and Girls Club membership card, to ride Falls Ride free of charge from a bus stop near their home to and from one of the clubs here in Wichita Falls. This would require the parents to sign a release form for their child to ride the bus system and to follow the ride rules.

Mr. Burrus asked the Policy Board for guidance on how to proceed with the program and permission to use MPO resources to measure its effectiveness and to make recommendations on ways to improve it. He stated there was a need for this type of program and that there was a void that needed to be filled. He then asked if this was something the board would support and if they had any input they wanted to share.

Mayor Lyne commented that this was usually a time of day when the Falls Ride buses were at their least passenger capacity and that it would be a good use of resources. He commented that Falls Ride was funded in large part by the Federal government and that it does serve the public. Mayor Lyne stated that an investigation needs to be done on how to best coordinate Falls Ride resources with the other area agency resources in transporting children around Wichita Falls. He also pointed out the safety factor that Falls Ride offers compared to the vans that the area youth agencies use.

Mr. Schreiber asked if this program would remove the liability and responsibility from the area youth agencies for the cost of operating their vans. Mr. Burrus stated that "no" it would not necessarily do so, but that his intent was to provide an opportunity for the area agencies to access an underutilized resource. He commented that in conversations with Judge Gossom there might be a means to create a local organization supported by one of the area foundations that would focus exclusively on transportation for children. The area youth agencies would then pay a per person charge for the children transported. Mr. Burrus commented that some people may debate whether the MPO should be addressing this problem, but that it certainly needed to be looked into by some organization. Mr. Burrus asked if there was any opposition to using MPO resources and if the Policy Board felt this was something they would support.

Councilor Smith asked about the pilot program with the Boys and Girls Clubs. Mr. Burrus stated it would run from May 30th through August 22nd as a summer time transportation program for children. The MPO would evaluate the results after completion of the pilot program. Mayor Lyne commented that while Falls Ride should not relieve the agencies of their liability and responsibility, this would help them with their capital costs on transportation. He stated that he did not want to build in an entitlement mentality, but that a small charge could be assessed to the area youth agencies based on ridership while still helping them to reduce their capital costs.

Councilor Smith stated he felt this was great idea and that it would help to create a generation of bus riding adults. The rest of the Policy Board agreed with his assessment. Councilor Elmore informed Mr. Burrus that he should pursue this initiative. Mayor Lyne agreed stating that the MPO needed to weigh the pros and cons of this initiative, but that it should go forward. The rest of the Policy Board agreed as well. The pilot program was given support to go forward and the MPO would evaluate it after completion, then report back to the Policy Board. Mayor Lyne then

moved on to Other Business.

IX. Other Business:

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

TxDOT Report: Mr. Kelley reported that on the Falls Flyover US 82 westbound ramp braces had been welded and steel tied into place and that pouring of concrete on the deck was taking place; Kell West has 65% of the concrete paving down and the construction company was finishing up on the bridges; Loop 11 was waiting for electrical tie-ins for lighting, but otherwise was considered complete; all the off-system bridges were done, the Old Iowa Park road culvert bridge was waiting for hot mix, rail and stripes to finish; there were several HES projects that had been completed; the annual seal coat program should get underway in the latter part of June; there were several concrete patch repair projects going on throughout the area; on US 287, from SP 325 to FM 368, a Novachip project will be done once the weather gets warmer; and there was a bridge maintenance repair program about to start that would include the Holliday bridges on the frontage road. Mr. Kelley commented that he had two additional projects to report. He stated that a contract had been let to fix bridge joints on several bridges and perform bridge maintenance and there was also another concrete patch repair scheduled for SP 325 in the cloverleaf area.

City Report: Mr. Schreiber reported the Maplewood Phase II extension project was nearly complete and the ground breaking would be April 23, 2009; 10th Street and Harrison received a new faux brick stamped concrete structure; traffic flow improvements on northbound Kemp at Callfield, Maplewood at Elmwood, Elmwood at Southwest Parkway, provide left turn lanes was complete; Gregg Rd. at Langford Rd. reconstruct existing street was nearly complete; Colonial Park drainage improvement was a little more than 60% complete with installation of storm sewer drains along Granada, Haiti and Antigua streets; the alley rehabilitation project was nearing completion and should be done in the next three weeks; the 2009 street rehab project had contracts going out that day with work to begin soon probably sometime in June; the Faith Village drainage phase II and III projects were scheduled to begin construction around June 1st and should last 18 months; the Holliday Creek Hike and Bike trail was still in the design phase and the 7th Street at MLK Boulevard intersection would receive upgrades to the ADA ramps to better serve the blind pedestrians that work at the Beacon Lighthouse and to improve the overall look of the intersection.

Mr. Brown informed the Policy Board that the Holliday Creek Trail project was still on schedule and that many things were happening very quickly. He stated that Pat Hoffman, the City's Property Manager, had closed on the four properties needed for trail right-of-way. He stated the environmental assessment was going well as was the movement of utilities. Mr. Brown stated the schedule was very tight and that the project needed to go to construction soon before the ARRA funding ran out. He stated the estimate was a little bit over the \$2.9 million set aside for the project, but that Matt Benoit ACM was working with TxDOT on a solution to cover any overages.

B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (1st Quarter FY 2009 – October, November, December)

Mr. Barnett presented the financial report for the FY 2009 first quarter expenditures commenting that most of the expenditures were for advertising of the ARRA transit grant public hearings. He asked for comments or questions. Mr. Wilde asked if the red ink used for the final total represented a shortage of funds. Mr. Barnett explained that the use of red was only to draw attention to what was spent during the quarter. He stated that he would change that to green or some other color for future reports. There were no other comments.

C. 2010 - 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update: Progress Report

Mr. Barnett reported that Kimley-Horn had informed him they were having some problems getting the remaining components of the Wichita Falls Travel Demand Model from the Transportation Planning and Programming Division in Austin, but that they had received what they needed on April 21st on CD. Kimley-Horn informed him they were about 30-days behind schedule because of this, but that they would catch up. Everything else concerning the MTP update was going according to plan and there was a meeting at 2:00 p.m. that afternoon between the oversight committee and Kimley-Horn to finalize goals and objectives and to establish public meeting dates for May and June. He stated there would be workshops as well for groups like the Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizens Advisory Committee.

Mr. Arbeau informed the Policy Board that he had been working with Sandy Monson with Streams and Valleys to GPS the off-road dirt trails inside Lucy Park. Ms. Monson had stated that once the Holliday Creek Trail was complete that it would be one of the longest continuous trails in the state of Texas. She stated that they would use that in their Streams and Valley promotion to encourage more races to come to Wichita Falls.

D. Other items

Councilor Smith complimented Mr. Burrus and his sign-shop employees on the fabrication and installation of the way-finding tourism signs installed in downtown Wichita Falls.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Honorable Lanham Lyne
Mayor Wichita Falls