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

April 25, 2007

Present:

Woodrow (Woody) Gossom, Wichita County Judge, Vice-Chairperson	◆ Members
Charles Elmore, City of Wichita Falls, City Council Representative	◆
Dennis Wilde, NORTEX Regional Planning Commission, Director	◆
Jeff Watts, City of Pleasant Valley	◆
Larry Tegtmeyer, TxDOT, District Engineer	◆
Linda Ammons, City of Wichita Falls, City Council Representative	◆
Scott Taylor, City of Wichita Falls, Director of Public Works	◆
Steve Halloway, Lakeside City	◆
Carolyn Askins, TxDOT, Transportation Planning Assistant	◆ Staff
Davis L. Powell, City of Wichita Falls, City Engineer	◆
Donnie Arbeau, WFMPO, Transportation Planner II	◆
John Burrus, City of Wichita Falls, Director of Aviation, Traffic, & Transportation	◆
Lin Barnett, WFMPO, Transportation Planning Director	◆
Danny Brown, TxDOT, TP&D Director	◆ Ex-officio
Jerrie Sowards, State Rep. David Farabee Office	◆
Rhonda Poirot, Senator Craig Estes Office	◆
Darron Leiker, City of Wichita Falls, City Manager	◆
Jon Moller, Stakeholder	◆ Guests
Paul Bata, Wichita County Appraisal District	◆
Lanham Lyne, City of Wichita Falls, Mayor, Chairperson	◆ Absent

I. Welcome & Introduction

Judge Gossom called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. and assumed the position of TPC chairperson due to Mayor Lyne's absence.

II. Review and Approval of the January 24th Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC) Meeting Minutes

The chairperson began by asking for comments on the January 24th TPC minutes. None were received. Mr. Watts motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Tegtmeyer seconded his motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Review and Comment Regarding the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC's) April 4th Meeting Minutes - No Action Required

The chairperson asked for comments on the April 4th TAC minutes. No comments were made.

IV. Review, Comment and Approval of SAFETEA-LU Compliance Issues Concerning the 2005-2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Mr. Barnett gave a brief overview of the SAFETEA-LU changes to the MTP document. Changes are noted in the left-hand column of the MTP for Chapter 1. The new SAFETEA-LU Addendum is in Chapter 4 and it includes new planning factors for economic vitality, safety, and security. Environmental mitigation along with consultation and coordination are also key additions to the addendum. Judge Gossom asked for comments or questions. None were received. The chairperson then asked for a motion to approve the changes to the document. Councilor Elmore motioned to approve the amendment as presented. Mr. Wilde seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

V. Review and Comment Concerning the SAFETEA-LU Required Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Mr. Barnett stated the requirement for a Public Participation Plan was based on SAFETEA-LU legislation. Mr. Taylor asked if the PPP replaces the current Public Involvement Policy (PIP) for the MPO. Mr. Barnett replied that both plans will work in conjunction and the PIP will not be replaced. Mr. Moller and the committee asked for clarification on the differences between the two plans. The PPP has clear goals and objectives that are outlined in SAFETEA-LU. Mr. Barnett also touched on education outreach and an improved public input process. Evaluation methodology and indicators are outlined to better measure the level of public feedback. Judge Gossom asked for additional comments on the new plan. None were received.

VI. Review and Approval of May 2007 TIP Revisions to the 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Barnett went over the TIP revisions for the Kell West main lanes. Judge Gossom asked for a motion to approve the revisions. Ms. Ammons made a motion. Mr. Tegtmeyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. Review, Comment and Approval of the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The MPO Director discussed improvements to the TIP document for 2008-2011. SAFETEA-LU changed the time period for TIP programs to 4 years. The document features new SAFETEA-LU planning factors, progress reports, and project maps. Mr. Tegtmeyer mentioned that FM 890 in FY 2009 is in jeopardy if Kell West is let in the interim. The committee was in agreement that the priority for building the Kell West mainlines was understood and justified even with the negative impact it may have on projects like FM 890.

Mr. Leiker inquired about the bridge project at IH 44 and FM 890. Mr. Tegtmeyer indicated that it was included in the Loop 11 project to begin in January 2008. Judge Gossom asked if there were any further discussions on the new TIP program. None were received. Mr. Taylor motioned to approve. Ms. Ammons seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII. Discussion and Recommendation Concerning a Passenger Demand Analysis of Air Travelers within the Local Air Service Market of the MPO Area

Mr. Barnett informed the committee he felt the project merited the attention of the MPO and TPC. The MPO's share in the demand analysis project is 66% (\$6,530) of the total, which directly reflects the population of the MPO in relation to the defined service area for Municipal Airport. Mr. Burrus added the study was necessary in acquiring an additional commercial airline provider for the Wichita Falls market. In discussions with industry representatives, Mr. Burrus conveyed to the committee that most major airlines will not consider entering a market unless a Passenger Demand Analysis is done by a qualified consulting group. Mr. Taylor asked why ZIP code areas in Oklahoma were excluded from the identified service area. Simply put, Mr. Burrus replied the Oklahoma areas are overlapping with the Lawton, OK, service area.

Mr. Burrus stated he viewed Wichita Falls Municipal Airport as a potential connector hub for commercial airline providers in major centers. Flights to Oklahoma City, Austin, and Houston show promise and will be carefully analyzed. He also alluded to the fact that data from the study could also attract charter business.

Judge Gossom asked if there were any further discussions. None were received. Mr. Watts motioned to approve. Councilor Elmore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IX. Discussion and Recommendation Concerning Shared Aerial Pictometry with the Wichita County Appraisal District

The MPO has been presented with an opportunity to participate in a pictometry project and commit funding (\$7,500) for access to oblique imagery for the MPO area. Mr. Bata of the Wichita Falls Appraisal District gave a short presentation on the pictometry package and associated software interface. With the software, parcel properties, buildings, and transportation facilities can be viewed from four (4) different sides at a 40 degree angle. Mr. Barnett stressed to the TPC that pictometry was of primary interest to the MPO for the purposes of 3D visualization and SAFETEA-LU compliance. Members were impressed with the data and capabilities of the software.

Judge Gossom asked for a motion to recommend the MPO participate in the pictometry project. Mr. Watts motioned to approve the recommendation. Mr. Tegtmeyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

X. Discussion of Kell West Main Lanes and Category 3 Funding

Mr. Brown spoke of on-going issues surrounding the building and timeframe for the Kell West main lanes. First, he mentioned documents, both state and federal, that reference the Kell West project. TxDOT lists the project in the statewide Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) and the Statewide Mobility Plan (SMP). The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is a Federal document. Currently the Kell West job is listed in these documents for construction in FY 2009, but rescission factors are creating doubt whether the job will be started before 2018.

The first set of factors is the decline in gas tax revenue, increased efficiency in vehicles, and higher gas prices. Mr. Brown stated the result is motor fuel tax shows only a slight increase over the next 5 years. Funding is only marginally sufficient for maintenance and rehabilitation, but with no accounting for inflation. As a result, federal reimbursements fall short for mobility and added capacity projects. From 2001 to 2010, funding for mobility and added capacity jobs (Kell

Freeway) flatten out significantly.

Mr. Brown spoke about a second issue facing TxDOT. Federal allocations for state Departments of Transportation were projected too high in SAFETEA-LU. Now, along with other donor states, TxDOT is required to repay \$288,000,000 to \$300,000,000 to the Federal government. Mobility projects are the target for repayment.

The last factor Mr. Brown mentioned is pavement scores across Texas are dropping and the cost to maintain the system is increasing. Funding for maintenance and rehabilitation projects needs to increase to keep pace. Once again, added capacity and mobility projects are being cut by the Texas Highway Commission to reallocate the needed funds and offset the lower scores for the entire system, which means less money for mobility jobs like Kell West.

Under the statewide mobility program (SMP) for TxDOT, Kell West is listed as a Category 3 project and the plan still lists Kell West for FY 2009. The window of opportunity is that most changes to the SMP will not take place until FY 2008 or 2009. Most TxDOT Districts are submitting plans and documentation to Austin before the affects of rescission are felt. The hope of Mr. Brown and Mr. Tegtmeier is that Kell West will be moved into the current TIP and approved in FY 2007 ahead of next years statewide mobility plan. Mr. Brown gave no odds or percentages for that happening. However, Mr. Tegtmeier reiterated a point that the earlier the project is let, the better the chances of it being built.

Judge Gossom inquired what the committee could do to assist with the process. Mr. Tegtmeier commented that letters of support from various entities to Austin would be welcome. There were no further comments.

XI. Other Business:

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

Mr. Taylor began with City projects. The City has two road projects currently under design – Gregg Rd. and Langford Rd. In addition, four intersections at the locations of Kemp/Midwestern, 11th/Brook, Elmwood/Maplewood, and Elmwood/Southwest Parkway are to be redesigned. Faith Village drainage improvements have been revised to tie into a TxDOT project along Southwest Pkwy. The Street Overlay Program needs \$4,000,000 for maintenance and rehabilitation of City streets. Specifically, most brick streets need to be completely replaced. Funding and the availability of skilled workers capable of this type of work are pressing issues. Mr. Taylor finished with a statement that any new asphalt reconstruction in the City will be done with concrete.

Mr. Brown provided a brief update for TxDOT. The Falls Flyover should be completed in September of 2007 and is on schedule. Mr. Moller raised the issue of the exit ramp at Brook Street. Mr. Brown responded that issues have been raised by the public about removing the current on-ramp and installing an exit ramp. Mr. Taylor added that Brook St. is not designed to handle the increased traffic that could be generated. A public meeting is set for May 3rd at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the issue. It will be held at TxDOT District offices. Mr. Tegtmeier added that the northbound exit at Galveston would also be discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Hallaway thanked TxDOT and the MPO for the recent project in Lakeside City. No other comments were made.

B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (1st Quarter FY 2007 – October, November, December)

Mr. Barnett referred the board members to the financial report. The MPO spent 12.26% (\$32,368) of the total allocation. He informed the committee that the new socio-economic update is slated for the latter part of FY 2007. The MPO has set aside \$55,000 to retain a consultant to do the study. Lastly, FTA grants for 2004 and 2005 have been spent and closed out. There was no other discussion on this issue.

C. Transit Study Progress Report

Mr. Burrus stated the initial draft from Moore & Associates had issues dealing with poor utilization of information from the public outreach process. When Mr. Burrus is pleased with the final report, he will present it to TPC and City Council. There was no other discussion on this issue.

D. Other

Mr. Barnett thanked Mr. Halloway for his participation and welcomed back Mr. Watts to the TPC. Mr. Tegtmeyer mentioned that on July 31st, 2008, the Texas Transportation Commission will hold their meeting in Wichita Falls. Lastly, Mr. Arbeau mentioned improvements to the website (www.wfmipo.com). The MPO Director forwarded a comment from FHWA representative, Justin Luther, mentioning that the WFMPO website "is one of the best he has seen". No additional items were brought up for discussion.

XII. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda

Mr. Moller felt the WFMPO warranted some type of recognition under the mandate of Best Practices for their fine work. His comments were duly noted by the committee. There were no additional comments.

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Honorable Lanham Lyne
Mayor Wichita Falls