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

July 25, 2007

Present:

Lanham Lyne, City of Wichita Falls, Mayor, Chairperson	◆ Members
Charles Elmore, City of Wichita Falls, City Council Representative	◆
Dennis Wilde, NORTEX Regional Planning Commission, Director	◆
Larry Tegtmeier, TxDOT, District Engineer	◆
Michael Smith, City Council Representative	◆
Steven Halloway, Lakeside City	◆
Woodrow (Woody) Gossom, Wichita County Judge, Vice-Chairperson	◆
Donnie Arbeau, WFMPO, Transportation Planner II	◆ Staff
Hailey Berend, WFMPO, Intern	◆
Lin Barnett, WFMPO, Transportation Planning Director	◆
Mark Beauchamp, City of Wichita Falls, Traffic Control	◆
Cary Karnstadt, TxDOT, TPP(S) Division, Austin	◆ Ex-officio
Danny Brown, TxDOT, TP&D Director	◆
Darron Leiker, City of Wichita Falls, City Manager	◆
James Kelley, TxDOT, Area Engineer	◆
Jerrie Sowards, State Rep. David Farabee Office	◆
Jon Moller, Stakeholder	◆ Guests
Nora Zarate Hodges	◆
Jeff Watts, City of Pleasant Valley	◆ Absent
Scott Taylor, City of Wichita Falls, Director of Public Works	◆

I. Welcome & Introduction

Mayor Lyne called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Review and Approval of the April 25th Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC) Meeting Minutes

Judge Gossom noted that Mr. Burrus' name was misspelled on page 6 of the minutes. No other comments were made. Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to approve the minutes with the noted correction. Judge Gossom motioned to approve and Mr. Wilde seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Review and Comment Regarding the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC's) July 11th Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required*

The chairperson asked for comments on the July 11th TAC minutes. Mr. Barnett commented that the meeting went smoothly and that he felt the committee would be pleased with the presentation that would be shown later in the meeting on the utilization of the Traffic Signal Optimization Program. There was some discussion concerning when one of the Falls Flyover lanes might open. No further comments were made.

IV. Update on TxDOT Category 3 – Urban Area Corridor Projects – Funding and Programming for the Wichita Falls District (Discussion Item)

Mr. Brown outlined the different funding categories currently in effect by TxDOT for addressing transportation needs around the state. He stated that Wichita Falls will be running a deficit of approximately \$40 to \$50 million because of funding for the Kell West Main Lanes project. Mr. Brown stated that we will need more money to maintain the system we currently have and that funding is being shifted into rehabilitation. He commented that he did not feel that it was a major issue since we have been able to achieve some very some nice projects. He stated FM 890 would be considered a Category 3 project because it would consist of adding lanes, adding capacity and increasing mobility. However, there will not be any Category 3 funding for this project for a long time. Although, there may be other funds that can be found that will help to start the project sooner. Councilor Smith asked if funds for the new bridge for FM 890 were there as stated in the TAC Minutes. Mr. Brown responded stating that funds are available for the bridge on I-44, and that bridge construction along FM 890 shouldn't be hard to fund since funds for them come out of Category 6. He asked for any other questions. There were none.

Mr. Tegtmeyer gave a few comments concerning the future of transportation funding. He stated that new revenues were not being found in state legislation, but they are staying steady. The State Legislature did indicate that municipalities could sell Proposition 14 bonds which are paid back by transportation dollars out of Category 6 funds. This would be money we could spend in the short term but it would have to be paid back in the future. Mr. Tegtmeyer commented that on the Federal level the amount of money allocated for Texas has decreased from the SAFETEA-LU designated original amount and that over \$600 million has been taken away from Texas alone. In addition to this amount another \$72 million recession has occurred in the last few weeks. He stated that discussion is going on at the federal level to increase the fuel tax so that more revenue could be raised. He also stated that there are huge issues concerning transportation funding at both the state and federal levels. Mr. Tegtmeyer assured everyone present that TxDOT is committed to maintaining our existing roadways and that there are funds available to maintain them. Mayor Lyne asked for any other questions. There were none.

V. Review and Approval of the FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Barnett started by welcoming Councilor Smith to the Policy Committee. Councilor Smith was appointed by City Council to replace Councilor Linda Ammons after she left office because of term limits. Mr. Barnett began his presentation by explaining how the UPWP is the annual plan for the MPO on what they hope to accomplish within MPO Boundaries during the next fiscal year. He brought the committee's attention to the fact that the UPWP has been updated to refer to SAFETEA-LU requirements and that there were a few changes to the introduction as well as the Private Sector Involvement to include the recently completed Transit Study and Traffic Signal Optimization Program. Updates were made to the Previous Work Section to reflect on

the MPO's accomplishments for the last year. He stated that a reference to Appendix H, which reflects on estimated travel and training expenses for the MPO staff, was also added. On Task 2, he commented that updates were made to reflect accomplishments over the past year and that subtasks in this category stay relatively the same from year to year. Under Task 3, Mr. Barnett state updates to the Previous Work Section had been made and that a new funding source called PTN Non-Federal share cash match for 5303 planning funds had been added, most of which was used to help with SAFETEA-LU requirement issues. In Task 4, the Previous Work Section was updated to show accomplishments and also to indicate that preparations are underway to be ready for the 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. Mr. Barnett brought the committee's attention to Task 5 were the Previous Work section had been updated and said that there are two continuation projects: the Beverly Dr., Ave H, and Kemp St. Connection Study and the Socio-Economic Data Collection and Forecast Study, in which the results will be used to update the Travel Demand Model which will go into the MTP Update. He said that there were two new projects: the possibility of extending Lebanon Rd. north to connect to Seymour Hwy and examining the cost to realign the Call Field, Rhea, and Lawrence Rd. intersection. He also reviewed the Budget Summary and the FTA Section 53.03 Budget. He then reviewed Appendix H, which is an estimated breakout of travel expenses for FY 2008. He asked for any other questions. There were none. Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to approve the UPWP as presented. Mayor Halloway motioned to approve and Judge Gossom seconded the motion. The UPWP was approved unanimously.

VI. Review and Approval of the SAFTEA-LU Public Participation Plan

Mr. Barnett explained that the Public Participation Plan was a requirement that came out of the SAFETEA-LU Transportation Reauthorization Bill. It was presented at the April TPC Meeting as well as at a public meeting and was posted on the MPO website. He stated that it had been out for the required 45 day public comment period and that no comments or reviews were received. He stated that it was now ready for approval, and once adopted by the TPC, it will be forwarded to FHWA as the final approved copy. Mr. Barnett asked for any other questions. There were no questions. Mayor Lyne asked for a motion to approve and adopt the Public Participation Plan. Mr. Wilde made the necessary motion and Mr. Tegtmeier seconded. The Public Participation Plan was approved unanimously.

VII. Review and Discussion Concerning Environmental Justice Analysis and Transportation Project Nomination Procedures and Prioritization (Nomination Forms Included)

The MPO Director started by reviewing last year's list with the committee. He stated that a protocol had been created to outline the procedures for determining which projects should be prioritized and analyzed. He commented that MPO staff will account for all completed projects and for those in-progress. He stated that staff would only analyze new projects that come in unless something changes in an old project. If something did change, then that project would need to be reanalyzed. There will be public meetings held in September to allow the public to review and submit projects. Mr. Barnett then stated that the Prioritized List will be presented by the TAC Committee to the TPC Committee for approval at the October 24, 2007 Meeting. Once approved a TAC Sub-Committee will perform an Environmental Justice Analysis on the Prioritized List and present the final report for adoption by TPC in January 2008. Once it is adopted it will be the working document until January 2009. Mr. Barnett said that project nomination sheets are available and also said that the MPO will be working with TxDOT to make sure everything comes together as it should. He stated that they are mainly interested in surface transportation projects, but any project will be viewed. He asked for any further

questions.

Mr. Tegtmeyer asked whether they should be within the MPO Boundary. Mr. Barnett responded by saying that they should. Mr. Brown commented that the MPO is leaning towards mobility type projects rather than rehabilitation, however it does not mean a rehabilitation project would not be considered. Mr. Barnett said that they are mainly looking for new, mobility projects. Mr. Arbeau stated that if anyone had concerns whether a project was located within the MPO Boundary that they show contact him so that he could verify whether or not the project is located inside the boundary, even partially.

VIII. Presentation by Traffic Control on the Initial Utilization of the New Traffic Signal Optimization Program (Discussion Item)

Mr. Beauchamp gave a brief description of the changes that could be made using the new software and provided a 15 minute presentation showing the abilities of the new software. He also stated that it is very dynamic software, and he has already had some very positive results. The software was bought a little over a month ago and includes Synchro 7 and SimTraffic. Using this software, traffic control is able to create a running simulated model of a complete intersection system based on the actual data and information from the streets. The software is able to produce alternative modification to the information put in so that the efficiency is increased.

Mr. Beauchamp also stated that after the optimization of the Brook Street System, 28.6 seconds, round-trip, were saved per vehicle. The time saved, when multiplied by the number of vehicle trips on this section of Brook Street, will be significant. Councilor Elmore asked if in the future, as streets are optimized, whether or not Mr. Beauchamp would be able to optimize the opposite direction as well. Mr. Beauchamp said, yes, and that they have software that will allow for grid networking so they can cross-optimize streets. Mr. Beauchamp also commented that they were already collecting count data on the Broad and Holliday Corridors to build an optimization model. Councilor Smith asked if off-peak hours could also be optimized. Mr. Beauchamp said, yes, and that they have software that will generate the best case scenarios at certain hours.

IX. Other Business:

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

Mr. Barnett stated that Mr. Taylor was unable to attend this morning to present the city update. He then referred the committee back to the TAC Minutes where Mr. Powell gave a very detailed description of what was going on concerning City transportation projects.

Mr. Kelley started the discussion by saying this was the smallest construction list he has ever had and that the Kell West Project and the Loop 11 Project will be letting in September. He also said that the overpasses over 368/277/Holliday will be let in October. He commented that the Flyover Project is going well and that TxDOT has received approval from the FHWA for the Brook Street ramp, which is now being paved. He reported that the last update on the ramps from the contractors was that substantial completion should be done by September with final completion in October. He stated that the ramps are in a condition now that they could open soon, but he has not met with the contractors to determine just when that will occur. Councilor Elmore asked about the

lighting for the ramps. Mr. Kelley responded saying that lighting would be indirectly attached much the same way as on the Broad and Holliday overheads.

Mr. Kelley recognized Mr. Beauchamp as being a real asset to the department concerning issues with the lighting and timing of the signals, which have been changing as the traffic changes and that Mr. Beauchamp responds quickly and efficiently to get things fixed right away.

Mr. Kelley continued his report stating that Projects 3-6 were the Arby's Intersection, which is now complete. Project 7 is the I-44 project and will continue once the water has receded. Mr. Kelley stated that expedites for the schools and other business is still currently ongoing. Hopefully, time spent in those areas will be short. He commented that an interesting fact about this project is that some of the pavement has been down since the 1940s and that what they are putting back will be better and should serve the community for another 40-50 years. Project 8 consists of stopping the erosion out on Kell and preventing it from happening in the future. Mr. Kelley asked for any other questions. There were none.

B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (2nd Quarter FY 2007 – January, February, March)

Mr. Barnett started the discussion by reviewing with the committee the MPO Quarterly Financial Statement. He said that the new Year-to-Date Total was somewhat misleading because at the end of May 44% of the budget had been spent. He stated that they are on track with what they usually spend and that they should reach the 75% minimum expenditure by the year's end. Mr. Barnett asked if there were any questions. There were none.

C. Transit Study Progress Report

Mr. Barnett started by saying that they have received the Transit Study about two weeks ago, the day before the TAC meeting. He said the on-board survey and the community survey in the first half were very well done and gives great insight into the area demographics. He commented that Moore and Associates offered three different scenarios, but that staff is considering a fourth using the data provided to them so that they can evaluate the current RD/DR system to see if it can be modified well enough to achieve the City's goal of providing better service.

Councilor Smith asked if a paratransit system was where disabled persons could call in to be picked up. Mr. Barnett stated that it was, but then explained how WFTS performs the same service using current existing deviation routes. Mr. Barnett discussed how other municipalities that have been utilizing the fixed route with complementary paratransit for several years are now looking at route deviation as a cost effective alternative for the expensive paratransit systems. Mr. Barnett commented that before we adopt a fixed-route with paratransit system we should consider improving the current system and make it one of the premier systems within the state. Judge Gossom asked to be kept updated as progress is made. Councilor Elmore asked how many large buses are in the fleet compared to the smaller buses. Mr. Barnett responded stating, at this time, there are only twelve buses with two of those fulfilling the 20% spare ratio requirement. All of the buses are 30-foot, 10-year, ULSD buses. WFTS does not operate anything smaller. Councilor Elmore then asked what capacity was being used

on those buses. Mr. Barnett said the Sheppard Express route carried the most ridership. Councilor Elmore then asked if it was necessary to run large buses on the residential routes when ridership is not as great. Mr. Barnett said that was something they were looking at but, as he pointed out, the smaller buses do wear-out quicker and that is why WFTS utilizes the larger buses. Mayor Lyne asked for any more questions. There were none.

D. Other

Mr. Barnett informed the committee that he had put the Director's Report from the TEMPO Meeting in the packet for anyone interested in the proceedings from the recent TEMPO meeting held in Arlington. Hand-outs were provided concerning recent events with the 80th Texas State Legislature. This information was provided to all 25 MPO's as a courtesy by NCTCOG at the TEMPO meeting. Mr. Barnett asked for any questions on either of the documents. There were no questions.

Mr. Barnett then presented the committee with the Executive Summary of the Passenger Demand Analysis from Mr. Burrus, who was unable to attend. He pointed out that under the Passenger Activity Comparison the domestic origin and destination passengers had decreased at a compounded annual rate of just over 2%. He also pointed out that the report said new air service opportunities appear marginal based on existing market size.

Councilor Smith stated that he would like to see American Eagle bring in a jet service to Wichita Falls. He commented that people get apprehensive when they see the propeller driven aircraft. Councilor Elmore pointed out that the SAAB Aircraft has a better safety record by 3 times its competitors.

Mr. Barnett informed the board members that BWR Corporation had been selected by the TAC subcommittee to perform the Socio-Economic Data Collection and Forecast Study. He said it will cost \$67,700 for them to complete the update, which was considerably less than what he had allocated for the project. Mr. Barnett said the kick-off meeting will be held on August 20, 2007 in the Central Services Conference Room at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Barnett asked if there were any other questions. Mr. Moller asked if there would be any control over the Traffic Analysis Zones that are already present. Mr. Barnett said that BWR Corporation will look at what we have currently and will update them to have the most current information. Mr. Moller asked if the TAZ zones would be put aside. Mr. Barnett said, no, that they are going to be the starting point and will be updated accordingly. Mr. Moller asked when the deliverable would be ready and Mr. Barnett said in about 6 months. Mayor Lyne asked for any other questions. There were none.

X. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda

The committee briefly discussed the La Entrada al Pacifico and the potential impacts of the transportation corridor from Mexico crossing at Presidio, TX, going north to Midland-Odessa east to Abilene, out of Wichita Falls and north to Okalahoma City. Mayor Lyne asked for any other questions. There were none.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Honorable Lanham Lyne
Mayor Wichita Falls