

Minutes
Of the
Transportation Advisory Committee
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
December 4, 2007

The meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was held at 916 Main St, Suite 722, at 2:00 PM on December 4, 2007.

Required notices were given to the members of the Committee and the public. The following Transportation Advisory Committee members were present:

Jere Hart, City of Lubbock
Bill McCay, Lubbock County
Ysidro Gutierrez, Lubbock County
Steve Warren, TxDOT - Lubbock
Frankie Pittman, City of Wolfforth
Nick Olenik, Lubbock County
Marsha Reed, City of Lubbock
Theresa Drewell, Texas Tech University

Visitors/Staff: Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO
Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO
Diane Lann, TxDOT - Austin
Sherman Phillips, Texas Bicycle Coalition
Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration

Call to Order.

Mr. Hart called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.

Mr. Hart acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

Approval of the July 10, 2007 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Mr. Hart asked for any corrections to the July 10, 2007 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee. No corrections were made.

Bill McCay made motion to approve the July 10, 2007 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee. Steve Warren seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Discussion of the use of Unified Planning Work Program funds for a Comprehensive Speed Limit Study.

Ms. Reed asked Mr. Hart to present this agenda item. Mr. Hart stated that in accordance with the speed limit manual that the Texas Department of Transportation puts out the speed limits are supposed to be studied every three to five years. He stated there are significant places in the City of Lubbock, both on and off the system, that haven't been studied in quite a while. Mr. Hart said the thought was to try and get some uniformity to some of the speed limits. He said that some

inner parts of the city have speed limits of thirty-five to forty miles per hour where further out towards the edge of the city the same road has speed limits of forty-five and fifty miles per hour and yet the volume of traffic in both areas are similar.

Mr. Hart said that his thought was that since it would be beneficial to the entire community he would recommend that someone go out and do all the counts necessary to give the eighty-fifth percentiles everywhere and make some recommendations and bring it back to the group.

Ms. Reed said that he might remind the Transportation Advisory Committee that he gets a lot of requests for speed limit changes. Mr. Hart agreed. Mr. Hart said he felt it would be beneficial to do a comprehensive study. He said they are looking at arterials and that it has been several years since the South Loop has been looked at.

Mr. Gutierrez asked who could tell the TAC what the Unified Planning Work Program fund is? Mr. Westmoreland stated that it is the annual planning budget. He said that it was approved last in June for the FY 2008 fiscal year. Mr. Westmoreland asked what type of cost it would be. Mr. Hart said it would depend on how much you have them do versus the data. He stated approximately thirty to fifty thousand dollars. Mr. McCay asked if that would be a total. Mr. Hart said somewhere in that range.

Mr. Westmoreland said his thoughts were that Lubbock County is scheduled to do a speed study for this year and maybe the City of Lubbock could do one during the upcoming fiscal year with the City of Wolfforth the following year. He felt if it were rotated it might be a good way to approach it. Ms. Reed stated that she asked for these to be put on as discussion items for now. Mr. Gutierrez asked what Mr. Hart meant by comprehensive. Mr. Hart stated not just Slide or Quaker but to look at all of the major arterials.

Mr. Warren wanted to verify it would be nothing less than arterials because two things had jumped out at him and he said that as local roads are not eligible for funds no study could be done on those. He said the other question he would ask is, for the Transportation Policy Committee's purpose, what is the connection to the planning process or would it just be to fulfill what the City's manual said must be done. He said if it does not tie back into a useful planning tool, it is not part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's mission. Mr. Hart asked why it was being done for Lubbock County. Mr. Warren said he is asking what the connection is. Mr. Westmoreland stated that the information would be put into the Travel Demand Model. Mr. Westmoreland said that the Travel Demand Model might be using more time and resources. Mr. Warren verified the eighty-fifth percentiles would be data entries into the Model. Mr. Warren asked Mr. Fauver if he thought that would be an eligible expense? Mr. Fauver stated that it would be at an eighty/twenty match.

Ms. Reed asked if it would have to be a cash match? Mr. Fauver stated that it would. Mr. Gutierrez asked who would perform the study. Mr. Hart stated that it would be completed by a contract. Mr. Hart said that they are trying to keep up with the counts on the roadway and signalized intersections. He said the City is not keeping up with the resources they have and staffing they are using. Mr. Warren stated that he could also see it tying into the safety-planning factor to make sure there are not inappropriate speed limits. Mr. Hart agreed. Mr. Fauver asked when the next Travel Demand Model update would be complete. Mr. Warren stated that it is under way at this time. Mr. Hart said it would probably be completed by 2009.

Mr. Westmoreland said that at the last meeting it was requested to expand the Traffic Analysis Zones out to the County line. He said that he has a draft of it with a before and after scenario. Mr. Warren asked if the City of Lubbock is looking to having the Comprehensive Speed Limit Study put into the FY 2009 UPWP or just for discussion at this point. Ms. Reed stated that it was just for discussion at this time. Mr. Hart said they are looking ahead to what needs to be done in the planning process and that by talking about these items now the TAC would have some ideas for the next UPWP.

Mr. McCay asked what the City's current procedure is for setting the speed limits and who makes the final decision. Mr. Hart said that by State law the City Council makes the final decisions in the City and outside it is the Commissioners. He stated that if the limit is over 60 miles per hour, the only people who can designate that is the State Transportation Commission. Mr. Hart said Staff does most of the study and then make recommendations to the Citizen's Traffic Commission. The CTC then forwards the recommendation to the City Council and they have to enact an ordinance with two readings as there are fines associated with the change. He said that the County Commissioners would do something similar.

Mr. McCay said the Commissioner's Court could pick and choose as long as it doesn't exceed the 60-mile per hour speed limit. Mr. Hart said that according to State law a procedure must be followed and what rationale must be used. Mr. McCay stated it is in the Statutes that the Commissioner's Court can pick and choose. Mr. Hart said that the Statutes must be followed. Mr. Warren said you could not arbitrarily do that. Mr. McCay said they follow the manual. Mr. Warren said the idea is to keep a uniform speed on each road. Mr. McCay said it is prudent to follow the eighty-fifth percentile. Mr. Hart said the TxDOT manual gives the rationale that justifies lowering a speed limit and spells out the frequency of the driveways, the number of crashes that have occurred, schools, libraries and things like that and horizontal and vertical alignment of the roadway. Mr. McCay asked if that criterion was used by the City when setting the speed limits. Mr. Hart agreed that they did. Mr. Warren said that the contractor who does the study would provide a report and any recommendations on speed limit changes.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Discussion of the use of Unified Planning Work Program funds for an update to the ITS Regional Architecture Plan.

Mr. Hart said almost three years ago the City of Lubbock, Lubbock County, and the Texas Department of Transportation adopted an ITS Regional Architecture Plan that was developed by a consultant for TxDOT. One of the things in the Plan was a provision that said it should be updated on about a three-year basis and put the joint responsibility for that update on the City and TxDOT. Mr. Hart said that to some significant degree it would have an impact on everyone at the table. Mr. Hart said that because the Marsha Sharp Freeway was extended to Wolfforth, the provisions for ITS would also be extended. He said some of the ITS Plan reaches near the city limits and there are several significant impacts on the Texas Tech University campus.

Mr. Hart said that a presentation was made to this group but not all were members at that point in time. He said ITS essentially stands for Intelligent Transportation Systems, which includes traffic signals, variable message signs, cameras on the roadway, intelligent interaction between vehicles and the roadway, emergency response vehicles and the comp to comp system that is all over the City that the Fire Department, EMS and the Police Department utilize. He said that other elements are automatic tracking of public works vehicles and emergency response vehicles. He said he understands that Lubbock County's Dispatch system is already utilizing some of that technology with the Sheriff's Department going to the automatic location of the vehicles.

Mr. Hart said the idea is to have an integrated system so that everyone can share elements as feasible and is not putting in something that doesn't work with another piece of the system. He said it also provides a good communication tool for letting the entire MPO know what is going on and what is available. Mr. Hart said this is not to fund any ITS projects but the overall planning tool to be kept up to date and to keep everyone informed of what is happening. He said there would probably be at least one stakeholder meeting as a part of that along with the update. Mr. Hart said what he would envision is to use the same consultant that developed the plan to begin with for TxDOT as they know how to put everything together and are very efficient in doing that. He said he is guessing about fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars up to one hundred thousand. He said before we actually put the budget together an estimate could be obtained from the consultant as to what would be involved there.

Mr. Hart asked if a new Request for Proposal would need to be obtained or if there was a way to piggyback on the previous contract. Mr. Warren said a new RFP would need to be done. Mr. Hart said that an RFP would be done and obviously the consultant that did the previous one would have an inside advantage but would still have to compete. He said the database is available to anyone and in fact there is a website with all the information on it.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if TxDOT would be taking care of the City of Wolfforth and Lubbock County to keep it consistent. Mr. Hart said the overall plan is for the whole Lubbock District of TxDOT. He said that it just so happens that the City of Lubbock has the lion's share in terms of ITS but the Master Plan covers the entire Lubbock region and also includes provisions for the next two largest cities after Lubbock. He said it also includes the Transit and all the communication that goes on in tracking transit vehicles. He said that Citibus was one of the stakeholders as well as Plainview, Texas Tech, Lubbock County and a couple of regional transit systems. He said there were about twenty different organizations but probably ninety percent of what is going on is TxDOT and the City of Lubbock.

Mr. Hart stated it is a regional planning tool and fits within the concept of what the LMPO does. He said the LMPO was also one of the people who signed on as a partner in the process and signed the Transportation Policy Committee signed an endorsement letter of the ITS Plan. Mr. Hart asked for any questions or any feelings of the TAC to determine if they wanted to consider doing it. Mr. Fauver said that as part of the Federal Certification Review next year ITS will be looked at. Although it would not be complete before the Review the LMPO can show a "good faith effort" if it is put into the budget for the following fiscal year.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Discussion of the use of Unified Planning Work Program funds for Permanent Traffic Count Stations.

Mr. Hart said that TxDOT has several permanent count stations within the Lubbock Region and within Lubbock County. Mr. Hart said he thought there were around five or six in Lubbock County. He said there are not as many in the growth area to the Southwest. He said they were going to suggest the possibility of looking at a few locations. Mr. Warren asked if there is not a permanent traffic count element built into the ITS on the South Loop. Mr. Hart stated there would be three on the South Loop and two on the Marsha Sharp Freeway. He said what they were looking at was the possibility of one on Slide Road because of the continual growth there and to better identify the fluctuation of the traffic on an annual basis.

Mr. Hart said they have done some counts in the past and have gotten as much as fifty percent increase in traffic in November on Slide between 50th and 69th Streets. He said they would like to get a little better handle on what that is for planning purposes to develop better Congestion Management in that area. Another one would be to look at something more along 82nd Street to the west of Frankford as growth continues to go out in that area. Mr. Gutierrez asked if there was an estimate on how much this would be.

Mr. Hart said we are probably looking at something in the range of twenty-five to forty thousand dollars apiece. They would be continuously recording twenty-four hours a day and get volume, speed, and classifications, and the information would be developed so it could be put on a website where anyone could access it at any time. Ms. Lann asked how many he wanted to put up. Mr. Hart said he was being sensitive to the funding available and would say start with two or three. Mr. Gutierrez said he would say six or seven as it really impacts on safety and congestion. Mr. Westmoreland asked if he was planning on using City of Lubbock Staff to do this. Mr. Hart said yes they would be built with City Staff. He said video detectors would be put into the correct locations and have a traffic-controlled cabinet that all data is fed into which is connected to the

City's system and downloads it. He said the central software is already set up for a lot of this information and it can be archived automatically. He said they don't have to add anything new to the central system as it even has count station software built in. He said there is a lot of the system setup that is already in place and even if it were outside the area of where there is fiber or twisted copper cable you can send the message back by radio as well. He said that radio towers are already set up in multiple locations throughout the City and an agreement with TxDOT to be on their new tower that is being built at the District Headquarters.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if there were an hourly breakdown like an A.M or P.M. peak? Mr. Hart said that you could gather the information on as small a basis as necessary. Mr. Gutierrez asked if it were "real time". Mr. Hart said it could report real time as well as continuous data. He said a map could be on the website that actually shows the speed at certain locations in the City continuously. Mr. Hart said if he remembers correctly there is some of this called for in the current transportation plan. Mr. Fauver said it would be a way to document visualization in the planning process as a way to reduce congestion. Mr. Hart said he would recommend they be put into a couple of places where we know there is some of the heaviest traffic volume and congestion and could be a significant tool in some of the heaviest growth areas. He said it could be as little as seventy-five thousand and as much as two hundred thousand and could be set up to have more added on an annual basis.

Mr. Gutierrez said that he would think that the permanent traffic count systems would be well worth the expense and bear directly on planning. Mr. Hart felt it would be a tremendous boost to some of the planning tools. Mr. Warren said he felt it would be a valid expense to the UPWP. Mr. McCay said he felt all three items would contribute towards planning and safety and the utilization of technology available.

Mr. Hart requested that all three of these items be added to the February meeting agenda for additional discussion and prioritization to go forward. Mr. Westmoreland said we need to look at cost and see if some of this could be spread out over time. Mr. Hart said cost could be looked at in further detail. Mr. Hart asked to be reminded in mid-January and he would help put together some of the cost.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Director's Report

- A. TxDOT
- B. Cities and County
- C. Citibus
- D. Director's

TxDOT

Mr. Hart said on the Marsha Sharp Freeway, the piece going over the West Loop is, he believes, scheduled to open this week. He said the flyovers, last time he checked with them a week ago, they are talking about trying to have the flyovers open just before Christmas. He said the flyovers would have the automatic de-icing equipment operational before they open them.

Mr. Warren said they had hoped to open this last week but that this week might be accurate. He said the flyovers would be delayed a little longer than hoped. Mr. Hart said hopefully before Christmas. Mr. Warren said there are problems with the joint seals and the anti-icing and they don't want to open them only to close them again so they will wait until it is fixed and would be opened after the first of the year.

Mr. Warren said that he was sure that some have probably read in the paper that TxDOT is going through massive budget cuts at this time. He said it has been going on for the last three weeks

and he is sure that Ms. Lann has been going through it as well. He said it is a statewide effort to reduce costs at TxDOT across the board. He said that they, as well as Ms. Lann's division, is under a directive to develop a plan by December 15th on how they will reduce operating costs this fiscal year by ten percent. He said that it is just salaries, travel, paperclips and toner cartridges and stuff like that. He said they are working on that plan and it has turned out to be a harder challenge than first thought to cut ten percent and still try to maintain service to the travelling public. He said they have pulled all roadway materials off the table. He said they would not cut back on the roads themselves and are looking at other things they can cut.

Mr. Warren said that on Friday he sat through a videoconference and was informed that the consultant budget had been cut by about fifty-seven percent across the board statewide so every District was cut by that amount. He said the right-of-way budget was cut by a similar percentage. He said they have to back off and look at reprioritizing everything they are doing at this point. He said that Wolfforth is still on track right now. He said as far as construction they have dodged a bullet at least for nine more months but statewide they will let no more Category 2, 3 or 4 projects this year. Those are freeway type projects so Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Austin will not let any freeway projects. Lubbock did not have any projects in this fiscal year as Phase 4 of the Marsha Sharp is the remaining project in Category 2 and is scheduled for FY 2009. He said it has not been delayed, but given the fact that one billion dollars worth of projects have been moved out of this year to FY 2009 you can imagine the effect that might have on our little forty-four million dollar project. He said there is a real likelihood that Phase 4 would get hard but do not know the magnitude of it at this time, but is unlikely that it would go to bid in FY 2009.

Mr. Gutierrez asked how that would affect the push through financing. Mr. Warren said that it is a minimal effect statewide on the pass through financing because all the ones that have been negotiated are in place and moving forward and to his understanding there are only two remaining to be negotiated and Lubbock is one of them. Mr. Saenz has said not to send any further application, as no other ones will be considered. Mr. Warren said it would have an effect as they are looking at the cash flow and the TxDOT checkbook is starting to bounce off the red zone considerably. He said that any pass through that goes through has an impact for ten to fifteen years on that cash flow so they would be looking at how much they can afford to pay out for ten to fifteen years. He said that he cannot tell exactly what the effect will be to the Lubbock pass through but he is sure it would have an effect. Mr. Warren said that, in turn, would have a lot of effects on the City and he and Ms. Reed have had a lot of talks about this. He said there is a point that neither side can afford to do it. He said they are meeting in Austin on Monday. He said the City is going down for a second negotiation with Mr. Saenz and hopefully come up with a project. He said it would not be the entire project as neither side has enough money to do that. Mr. Warren said the City is struggling to figure out how they can front the money at this time. He said it would be better to wait until after Monday to try and find out more.

Mr. Warren said another effect is on the rehab side. He said they were told Friday that starting with the February letting, any rehabilitation project in this District that is programmed with FY 2010 dollars, which in our case is all of them, would be delayed. He stated that the effect on Lubbock to that is that they would have to delay the bridge rehab jobs planned. He said the District wide striping programs would also be delayed. He stated that, at this time, they have not cut the Mobility Funds so FM 179 is still on the table as well as 50th Street. He just said to be warned that something could happen to change that.

Mr. Warren said that what has happened is that, like those who have credit cards, you borrow a lot of money and get to your credit limit and then all you can do is pay things off instead of putting stuff on it. He said that the tools that the Legislature gave several years ago to borrow money to advance projects, along with the rescissions that we have already gotten, which has already been over six hundred million dollars that Texas has had to give back to the Feds and another six hundred million looming in FY 2009 and the talk of the Federal Highway Trust Fund going belly up in FY 2009, all these things are coming into play. Proposition 14 Bonds that were sold have the debt being paid down now, and the Texas Mobility Fund has been fully utilized this point, so

there was a huge wave of lettings that were being funded with all this new money. Mr. Warren said it wasn't really new money but money borrowed from our future and it is coming down the backside now so lettings will drop off. He said for about eighteen months his answer would be "I don't know". He said they are going to continue to get Phase 4 ready to go. He said that all these other projects that were done were ready when the funding came available and so they would move forward to get Phase 4 ready to take advantage in case any money comes up. He said this is not the first time TxDOT has been in dire straits and he doubts it would be the last but just wanted the TAC to be aware. Mr. Olenik asked if this would affect his Woodrow project. Mr. Warren said it should be okay as there is no rehab money involved only Federal and Local funds.

Cities and Counties

Mr. Olenik, Lubbock County, said David Warren called with the maintenance division and said they would be doing some work on U.S. Highway 84 and were going to divert traffic to County Roads. Mr. Olenik said this is not typical but they will deal with it. He said next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday they hope to do some work on the rails. The traffic going northwest will be diverted onto North County Road 1900 (Slide Road) and they will repair any damage the traffic does to that road. He stated it was kind of interesting that they are using a County road for their detour.

Mr. Hart asked if this was a railroad crossing. Mr. Olenik said on U.S. Highway 84 where the train track crosses as you leave town, where it crosses before you get to Frankford is where the work will be done. He said they will be turning traffic north on what would be north Slide Road which is County Road 1900 to FM 2641 and then west back to U.S. 84.

Citibus

No report.

Director's Report

Mr. Westmoreland said he handed out the Traffic Analysis Zone maps that show a before and after look at what is going on there. He stated he believes it was in July when the TAC directed the LMPO to extend the Traffic Analysis Zones out to the County limits. He said that this is in draft form right now as Mr. Buckberry is working on the demographics and would provide those to TxDOT. He is allowing two months for that. Mr. Westmoreland said it should come together in the next four or five months.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he also printed off some of the saturation counts that TxDOT did. He said that these are done every five years. He stated that the City Of Lubbock is broken out into four quadrants and if anyone wants a copy he would print them in the office. Mr. Warren said they do Average Daily Traffic Counts on all roads every five years. Ms. Lann asked if the MPO normally draws up their own TAZ or if the Traffic Section of the TPP does it. Mr. Westmoreland said that David Buckberry gave Laura Norton a draft, split out to the County line and Ms. Norton provided the details, as she wanted them smaller than Mr. Buckberry had them.

Mr. Fauver asked if he could ask a question. Mr. Hart agreed. Mr. Fauver said that with the passing of Sam Woods if they were thinking about naming a bike or pedestrian trail in memory of his work with the LMPO. He stated he thought it would be a good idea to put a plaque up as Sam suffered with diabetes and those types of outdoor activities are known to help in the reduction of problems with diabetes. Mr. Hart said we could look at this. He said he would talk with Randy Truesdell and look at some of the trails within the parks. Mr. Westmoreland pointed out that Mr. Phillips was very familiar with the trails. Mr. Phillips said that the Canyon Lakes trails might be appropriate. Mr. Hart stated that it would probably take action by the City Council.

Ms. Lann said that she has a draft cover letter and minute order in the Division Head's office for the MAB expansion and is hoping that she can get it on the Commissioner's Agenda for January.

Meeting Adjourned.

Mr. Hart adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.