

**Minutes Of The  
Transportation Advisory Committee  
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization  
March 3, 2009**

The meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was held 916 Main, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, at 2:00 PM on March 3, 2009. Required notices were given to the members of the Committee and the public. The following Transportation Advisory Committee members were present:

Bill McCay, Lubbock County  
Mark Heinrich, Lubbock County  
Frankie Pittman, City of Wolfforth  
Marsha Reed, City of Lubbock  
Steve Warren, TxDOT – Lubbock  
Sharmon Owens, City of Lubbock  
Melinda Harvey, Citibus  
Nick Olenik, Lubbock County

Visitors/Staff: David Jones, Lubbock MPO  
Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO  
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO  
Doug Eichorst, TxDOT - Lubbock

**Call to Order.**

Mr. McCay called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

**The Committee moved to the next item.**

**Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.**

Mr. McCay acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. Warren introduced Doug Eichorst who is the new District Engineer for the Lubbock TxDOT District. Mr. Eichorst comes to Lubbock from the Midland/Odessa area. He has worked for TxDOT for twenty plus years. Mr. Eichorst told the TAC that he is glad to be here. He stated that he wanted to come to the TAC meeting to begin meeting the people who work “behind the scenes”. Mr. McCay welcomed Mr. Eichorst.

**Approval of the February 3, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee.**

Mr. McCay asked for any corrections to the February 3, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee. No corrections were made.

***Melinda Harvey made motion to approve the February 3, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee. Marsha Reed seconded and the motion passed unanimously.***

**The Committee moved to the next item.**

**Discussion and action on changes to the Transit projects listed in the proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2032.**

Mr. Jones stated that the backup tells the complete story. It shows on the left-hand side what Citibus submitted previously and the right-hand side shows what they are proposing. Mr. Jones

said the changes are the ones highlighted in gray. Mr. Jones said the new total is about 656,000 thousand dollars less than the original request.

Ms. Harvey said that she apologizes for coming back with new figures but that it has been a confusing process and for a while they didn't know how much money they were getting and exactly what they would be able to spend it on. She stated that when the original figures were submitted they were not aware that the money could be spent on Preventive Maintenance, which is a regular line item that they use every year. They dropped a couple of things out and added Preventive Maintenance and a Bus Shelter project at the request of Councilman Klein who wants Citibus to continue to place shelters at a fairly rapid rate across the route system.

Ms. Harvey stated that they dropped the land acquisition because of some concerns that were voiced last time regarding the speed at which they could actually purchase the land. She stated that after looking at everything, they felt it was prudent to spend money on Preventive Maintenance rather than on land acquisition. She stated they have gotten the contract for the bus wash replacement, which will be funded out of the current grant so that dropped out. Ms. Harvey stated that she would be glad to answer questions.

***Marsha Reed made motion to approve the changes to the FY 2008 – 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2032 as presented. Steve Warren seconded and the motion passed unanimously.***

**The Committee moved to the next item.**

**Discussion and action on Public Comments received on the proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2032.**

Mr. Jones said that pursuant to the LMPO's Public Participation Plan, with regard to the economic stimulus projects, the LMPO did hold their first public forum on February 24, 2009 at Patterson Library. Three MPO staff members were there along with one from City of Lubbock Engineering, one from Citibus, and one from TxDOT. There were nine citizens. Two of those were bicycle enthusiasts, one representing the West Texas Cycling Association and another representing the Lubbock Bicycle Club. One Lubbock County Commissioner attended, Mr. Gilbert Flores. Two representatives from KCBD, Channel 11, and a representative from Monterey High School's student newspaper also attended.

Five letters have been received at this time and Mr. Jones included copies of the letters in the agenda packet. Mr. Jones stated that two of the letters represent the bicycle interest. They are seeking to reinstate the pedestrian overpasses, primarily the one at South Loop 289 and Memphis. They would also like to include the pedestrian overpasses on the South Loop and Avenue U and at Slide Road. They have quite a bit of interest although there are only two letters. Mr. Jones felt there might also be some interest at TxDOT to reinstate those in the plan. Mr. Jones stated they fully realize that those projects aren't going to be funded unless someone could do a set of plans rapidly and could intervene in the political process because, as Mr. Jones understands, these types of projects are considered as "Enhancements" which have already been submitted to TxDOT in previous calls, and selected for funding. Mr. Jones stated they have some enhancement projects that go back to the 90's that were prepared, processed and approved but not funded. He said there are also a lot of projects from the 2007 call.

Mr. Jones stated that in the grand scheme of things it is not likely that these projects will be funded and they understand that, but their intent is to go ahead now in this process and make a request to get those projects back in the plan. Mr. Warren has visited with them on a number of occasions. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Warren if he wanted to fill anything in. Mr. Warren stated that he would add that in this current TIP revision, the main concern is economic stimulus funding proposed for the two projects on the Loop, the Northwest Passage and West Loop. Mr. Warren said if the Commission selects both of those projects it will take all of the LMPO allocation. Mr.

Warren stated that if there is any money still on the table they could take a look and see what could be done as far as these overpasses on the South Loop are concerned. Mr. Warren stated that he is surprised to see the projects are no longer in the Bicycle Plan as he did not realize that the Plan was updated since 1995. Mr. Warren thought that the LMPO was updating it this year. Mr. Westmoreland stated it was done in September 2007. Mr. Warren stated these are integral parts of the Bicycle Plan and he felt the projects need to stay in the Plan, but as far as funding in the immediate future, he does not see that but you cannot get there if it is not in the plan. Mr. Warren thought that we should be open to discussing those projects if something happens to the two Loop projects. Mr. Warren said that at this time as far as this TIP revision goes, all we are addressing are the changes that have already been proposed. He stated that we would have to come back and do another TIP revision at that time if it were decided to go in that direction. Mr. Warren stated that he feels confident the Commission will select both projects.

Ms. Reed stated that she didn't realize that the overpass had been removed. Mr. Westmoreland asked which overpass they were talking about. Ms. Reed stated the Memphis overpass. Mr. Westmoreland stated that it is still in the Bicycle Plan. Mr. Boon stated the overpasses west of Slide Road, that would allow access from the apartments across the Loop to the mall area, were removed. Mr. Westmoreland stated that he didn't realize there was an overpass in the plan at Slide Road. Mr. Boon stated that there was a large bubble that went from Chicago to Aberdeen that indicated an overpass somewhere in the area. It didn't designate a specific street. Mr. Boon said the thinking on that was there are three high density apartment complexes, as well as a major traffic generator on the other side of the Loop, and there are people who try to cross the Loop to get to the mall. Otherwise they get in their cars and congest the intersection at Slide in that one area trying to get to the mall. Mr. Boon stated that Chicago connects almost to FM 1585 to the south now. Mr. Boon said that project was important because of those aspects. Mr. Boon said the one on Memphis is probably the highest importance as the land is available as there are parks on both side of Loop 289 and Memphis connects two other major traffic generators, Texas Tech University and the hospital district, and this would allow for access all the way from the outside of the Loop. Mr. Boon said that with the land available for the construction there is no reason that should have ever been taken off. Mr. Boon said that Mr. Warren had once proposed it as an enhancement project and got turned down in favor of north University landscape.

Mr. McCay asked if he was talking about pedestrian overpasses. Mr. Boon stated that it would be bicycle/pedestrian overpasses from one side of the Loop to the other. Mr. Boon said there is also an issue with Murfee Elementary as some of the students live on the outside of the Loop. Mr. Westmoreland stated the Memphis overpass is still in the plan. Mr. Boon stated that it is and he is talking about the possibility of speeding this up if the other funding doesn't go through, having it available to put into the project immediately as it is a pretty high priority project. Mr. Boon stated another one is Avenue U. Atkins Junior High is inside the Loop and students just outside of the Loop go to that school. Mr. Boon reminded the TAC that a student was even killed on the Loop trying to cross to get to band practice. Mr. Boon said that Avenue U is also one of the few streets that connects North/South all the way across the City and with the pedestrian/bicycle over passes on the Marsha Sharp Freeway, it won't be long until it actually connects all the way to the Canyon Lakes from one end to the other with the only major barrier being the South Loop. Mr. Boon said if you look at the traffic generators and look at where people are actually trying to get to, these three overpasses are very important. Mr. Boon said there are others including the West Loop where a major generator, LCU, where a lot of the students are living outside the Loop. Mr. Boon said that is more of a pedestrian issue than it is a bicycle issue.

Ms. Reed reminded that if you are talking about building these with stimulus money to remember that it has to be done quickly and, although Mr. Boon is correct in saying the adjacent land is park land, they are also lakes and under the jurisdiction of the Corp of Engineers and it is unlikely that everything could be done in time to use economic stimulus funding. She stated it is certainly worth discussing. Mr. Warren said that, for the purpose of this agenda item, that the TAC receive these comments and maybe address them again based on the results of what happens on

Thursday as it may all be a moot point. Mr. Warren said he is not against open discussion on these issues.

Mr. Jones said the other three letters come from folks who are interested in extending the leg of the Marsha Sharp Freeway that goes from I-27 east to the East Loop where the Idalou Road intersection is. Mr. Jones said that the letters say that it is a safety concern. The letters come from Idalou, Lorenzo and the areas around them. Mr. Jones summarized one of the letters from a person who is a volunteer for an ambulance service who stated that if they had a straight shot into the hospital district it would be safer than having to take a route along the north Loop. Mr. Jones said they think too if the freeway is extended in that direction it might even help the economies of some of those small communities as more people might tend to go in that direction. Mr. Jones said the rest of the conversation at the meeting included things like extending the interstate south beyond Lubbock. Mr. Jones said that Commissioner Flores, for example, wanted to know where the East 19<sup>th</sup> Street project was that he remembered being in the plan. Mr. Jones said he talked with Mr. Cash and Mr. Warren only to find out that the project is still in the plan. He said it was previously a Category 7 project and when all that money went away, TxDOT reconsidered all of that and put it into the grouped category and it is now a maintenance project and it is still there. Mr. Jones stated that he has not yet had a chance to speak with Commissioner Flores about it but that he would. Mr. Warren stated that it is on the letting schedule for next spring.

Mr. Jones summed up the requirements of the Public Participation plan saying that you must be able to demonstrate how you accommodate the public input and that there are three or four actions that could be taken. Mr. Jones said they could acknowledge for the record that the comments were received and take no action. Mr. Jones said the second thing the TAC could do is to table the discussion but should be aware that if it is tabled it must be taken off the table at the next meeting and take some action at that time. Mr. Jones said they could also vote to continue the discussion, but if it is continued it must be to a "date certain". He said you could continue it until the next TAC meeting. He said that Mr. Warren made a good suggestion when he said that if the Commission decides not to fund both of the priority projects, and we do have to reconvene and figure out another strategy, this discussion could be picked up, but it would need to be in a slot ready to talk about. Mr. Jones said that might be a good strategy to continue it to the next meeting, and if at that time we don't need to do anything with it then, or if you want to talk about it some more for whatever reason you might have, you could open it up and talk about it or you could continue it again to the next meeting until we know exactly if the Commission is going to fund our projects. Mr. Jones said you can also go ahead and take action on the projects and send it up to the Transportation Policy Committee and let them deliberate the issue; however, understand that if you do that, the act says that we have to restart our public participation process and extend it for another ten days because those considerations would be substantially different than those that we had out on the table for the public to consider. Mr. Jones said if the TAC is looking for a recommendation, it would be his recommendation to just continue this discussion for the bicycle issues and even for the extension of the Marsha Sharp Freeway to the next meeting and we will deal with it there and decide if you want to continue it again or develop some kind of dialog with the proponents or take whatever other action you want to.

***Marsha Reed made motion for the Transportation Advisory Committee to acknowledge the comments for the record without any continuation of this item. Steve Warren seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.***

**The Committee moved to the next item.**

**Discussion and action for revision of the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2032 to make a final recommendation to the Transportation Policy Committee.**

Mr. Jones showed a presentation on the economic stimulus projects and the funding amounts. He also covered the requirements that the LMPO followed during the public participation process,

including Title VI and Environmental Justice. A couple of things that the LMPO did that we have not done before included a Spanish translation on our website and in the West Texas Hispanic News and an appearance on a Spanish television show, Si Se Puede, as well as an invitation to the North and East Community Development Council.

Mr. Warren stated that he had to leave due to a scheduling conflict and wanted to ensure that a vote was taken if his departure would cause an issue with a quorum. Mr. Warren was assured that there would still be a quorum present. Mr. Warren stated that his recommendation would be to adopt the TIP amendments as presented.

Mr. Jones pointed out that at this time Marsha Sharp Freeway is the first priority for the Lubbock area. Ms. Reed stated she was confused as she thought on the ramp reversal project that the developer was paying the cost of it. Others stated that they thought the developer put in \$500,000. Ms. Davis stated that it was in the previous minutes. Ms. Reed wondered when that project was added as she had left early from the last meeting. Mr. Jones stated that these are the same projects that TxDOT suggested from the very beginning. Ms. Reed asked if the Transportation Policy Committee had voted on it. Mr. Jones affirmed they did. Mr. McCay stated he did not recall discussing it. Ms. Harvey stated it was in there but that Mr. Warren had talked about so many things at the previous meeting she felt it might have gotten lost. Mr. Jones stated that his entire presentation was based on economic stimulus. Ms. Davis said that the developer contribution is on page eight of the minutes, third full paragraph down.

Mr. Jones said that in summary he would submit that each of the projects presented here collectively as the "amendments" are consistent with the requirements set out in 23 CFR 450 as well as the public participation plan and SAFETEA-LU. Mr. Jones recommended approval of the amendments as recommended and to send it to the Transportation Policy Committee for further consideration. Mr. Jones stated he would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. Jones stated that these projects are already before the Commission. On Thursday they are scheduled to approve projects for this economic stimulus funding. Ms. Reed stated that she felt the LMPO did a very good job with the public involvement process. Ms. Reed stated that the forum was attended and comments were received and she stated "hats off" to the LMPO.

***Ms. Reed made motion to adopt the revisions to the amendments and recommend the amendments of the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan to the Transportation Policy Committee. Melinda Harvey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.***

#### **Reports**

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

#### **Cities and Counties**

##### **City of Lubbock**

Ms. Reed said that if you have been by the Tara house lately, brick is gone and trees are gone and they are getting ready to move the Tara house. Ms. Reed said they take bids on the Slide Road portion from 4<sup>th</sup> to the Loop tomorrow, so bids will be open tomorrow. Ms. Reed said there is still some right-of-way to purchase on that project and they are in negotiations for that. She was unsure of a start date at this point, pending the issues that are still out there.

Ms. Reed said the Gateway Streets projects are moving forward fast and furiously. She said that one thing she did want to bring up, as maybe a discussion item for the next meeting, is that they

will be tying in a seven-lane thoroughfare to FM 1585. She said they have some changes that have been approved by TxDOT; however, no one has any funding to make those changes yet. Ms. Reed feels these changes are very important for safety when you tie in a seven-lane thoroughfare to a state roadway. Ms. Reed said the City of Lubbock would be willing to bid it as an alternate and if they have the money would probably pursue it at the time. She said if not, she felt we need to think about it, especially as the road is a high-speed facility.

Ms. Reed said the City Council appointed a Citizen's Advisory Committee at their last meeting to look for projects for the next bond election and a big portion of that package will be related to transportation so they will be looking at those projects in the next few months.

### **Lubbock County**

Mr. Olenik said that he would like to report that as far as Lubbock County's GIS project with the LMPO is concerned, the computer is failing and they are in the process of upgrading it. He said they should be shipping the computer to their consultant soon.

### **Citibus**

Ms. Harvey said that the only thing she had to report is on the advise of the Federal Transit Administration they have gone ahead and submitted their grant proposal as they advised that sooner was better than later to get that grant in the pipeline for approval. She said that Citibus was the first in the whole region to get their grant in and it is moving forward.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Jones said that at the last TPC meeting, there was a consensus to make some changes in the agenda format and he wanted to follow up with the TAC as well. Mr. Jones said the TPC wanted us to shorten the minutes, and figure out a way to number the agenda items. Mr. Jones said that this is a trial run and asked for feedback.

Mr. McCay stated that he likes the minutes, as the details are sometimes very important. Mr. Jones stated that he comes from an environment where often times those minutes will save your life and you need a detailed set. He stated that if we cut them down, we have the tapes to go back and verify something. Mr. McCay said that he thinks it is great to have detailed minutes and feels it is a benefit to have them. Ms. Pittman said that they are also beneficial if you have to miss a meeting as you can read them and don't feel like you have missed anything. Mr. McCay said it is his personal preference to keep them the way they are, and that it could be discussed at another meeting. Mr. Jones said that we will further talk about the changes and perhaps they could even be done in two different ways. Mr. McCay agreed.

Mr. Jones said that Fred Underwood has been reappointed to the Texas Transportation Commission for a full term. Senator John Corona has filed his bill to create transportation areas within the communities to fund infrastructure based on local option. He said we would be following up on that.

Mr. McCay asked about the VMT where you would be taxed by the vehicle mile. Mr. Jones said there has been some talk about it but he didn't think anyone had filed anything yet. Mr. Jones said it is meeting some opposition. He said that in fact there is an experiment going on in Oregon right now in regard to VMT as a basis to levy taxes. Mr. Jones stated that was all he had. Mr. McCay thanked everyone for being there and adjourned the meeting.

### **Meeting Adjourned.**

***Mr. McCay adjourned the meeting at 3:21 p.m.***