

**Minutes**  
**of the**  
**Transportation Policy Committee**  
**Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**December 18, 2007**

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was held in Room 103 at 1625 13<sup>th</sup> Street, at 8:30 a.m. on December 18, 2007.

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

Patti Jones, Commissioner, Lubbock County  
Tom Martin, City of Lubbock Representative  
Tom Head, County Judge, Lubbock County  
L. C. Childers, Mayor, City of Wolfforth  
Jim Gilbreath, City Council, City of Lubbock  
John Leonard, City Council, City of Lubbock  
John Wilson, General Manager, Citibus  
Randy Hopmann, District Engineer, TxDOT

Visitors/Staff: Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO  
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO  
Jere Hart, City of Lubbock  
Durwood Mayfield, Bike Texas Safe Routes to School  
Marsha Reed, City of Lubbock  
Melinda Harvey, Citibus  
Mitch Satterwhite, City of Lubbock  
James Loomis, City of Lubbock  
Larry Hertel, City of Lubbock  
Steve Warren, Texas Department of Transportation  
Bryan Wilson, Texas Department of Transportation  
Norma Ritz Johnson, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce  
Theresa Drewell, Texas Tech University

**Call to Order.**

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Ms. Jones asked the guests to introduce themselves.

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

**Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.**

Ms. Jones acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC).

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

**Public Comment Opportunity / Acknowledgment of Guests**

Ms. Jones asked for any comment from the public. No comment was made.

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

**Approval of the October 16, 2007 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting.**

Ms. Jones asked for any corrections to the minutes. No corrections were made.

***L.C. Childers made motion to approve the October 16, 2007 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting. Tom Head seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.***

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

**Presentation and Discussion by the Texas Department of Transportation regarding funding issues.**

Mr. Randy Hopmann spoke about the financial hardship that Texas Department of Transportation is facing. He stated that the affects of this hardship are Statewide and include letting of projects, construction, right of way and operations. He pointed to the handout that TxDOT supplied as to the reasons for this financial crisis. Inflation has increased in the last ten years by one hundred percent.

Mr. Hopmann spoke of the need to increase funding for maintenance, as the Commission wants to ensure that the roads that we have do not deteriorate further. Mr. Hopmann said that \$1.5 billion has been moved from the gas tax fund to pay for public education and for the Texas Department of Public Safety. He stated that federal rescissions in the next two years will total \$950 million dollars and, added to the \$666 million already rescinded, this will mean that a total of around \$1.6 billion has been returned to Congress.

Mr. Hopmann stated that fortunately Lubbock was aggressive in advancing projects, taking bids and getting under contract and these projects will proceed. He said the exception to that would be Phase 4 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway. He said that although it is scheduled for FY 2009 it would be delayed until 2010 or even 2011. He said that on their consultant side they have had a fifty percent cut and right of way has also been cut by fifty percent. He said that there will not be a lot of immediate effects in the Lubbock District but it will catch up to us in two, or three or even five years from now. Mr. Hopmann suggested that everyone read the information in the handout so that they can answer questions if asked and said that he would be glad to answer any questions.

Mr. Leonard asked if this would affect the Gateway projects including Slide Road, the Erskine interchange and Quaker. Mr. Hopmann said it would and has affected those projects. He stated that representatives of the City of Lubbock and he travelled to Austin a week ago and spoke with the Executive Director of TxDOT. At that meeting it was mutually agreed that the City of Lubbock would not pursue pass thru financing on the Northwest Passage and would seek other alternatives. He stated that City Of Lubbock intended to move forward and put a plan in place.

Mr. Gilbreath said that the City would go forward with the Erskine and Slide Road project. Mr. Martin asked how soon. Ms. Reed said that the plans are supposed to be in this month and that she anticipated late spring. Ms. Reed asked if Ms. Dumbauld had briefed the City Council yet. Mr. Gilbreath said she had not. Ms. Reed said that Ms. Dumbauld would visit with Council upon her return and that this could be returned later to the LMPO. Mr. Martin asked if the City would do the entire Erskine/Slide project. Mr. Gilbreath stated that it would. Mr. Hopmann stated that TxDOT would be completing the engineering and construction of the Slide Road interchange on Loop 289.

Mr. Martin said that he wanted to check the affects of projects in the current Transportation Improvement Program. He asked about the Slide Road project from 98<sup>th</sup> Street to FM 1585. Mr. Hopmann said they are ready to hold the preliminary engineering hearing. Mr. Martin asked about the right of way. Mr. Hopmann said that they are doing the engineering in house and not with a consultant and reminded that ten percent of the right of way would need to be worked out by the City of Lubbock. Mr. Hopmann said there could be a delay but that the funding used for this project is Discretionary funding and not MPO funds.

Mr. Martin asked about FM 179 in Wolfforth. Mr. Hopmann said they are acquiring the remaining right of way and the engineering is complete. He said they would take bids in March and start as soon as school was out. Mr. Martin asked about the Outer Loop. Mr. Hopmann said a consultant has been hired. He said

that because the consultant budget was cut in half it would take longer to complete but that at this time that is not a huge sacrifice as progress would still be made.

Mr. Martin asked about 50<sup>th</sup> from Slide Road to Loop 289. Mr. Gilbreath said that the right of way was just completed. Mr. Martin asked if it had been resized. Mr. Warren stated that it had not at this time. Ms. Reed said that Mr. Hertel has sent information to utilities and they will begin the relocation of the utilities after the first of the year. Mr. Martin stated that it seemed that these projects were still ongoing even though perhaps more slowly as funding was cut in half. Mr. Hopmann said the East 19<sup>th</sup> Street rehabilitation project would be affected. He said they are still having engineering issues and it would be delayed.

Mr. Martin said that when the federal rescissions are spoken of in the emails he receives there is always a mention of calling back funding to support the war in Iraq. He wanted to clarify that the government was diverting Federal Highway Trust funds to pay for other things. Mr. Hopmann said that he could not shed any light on that but that it is good question. He said they were also being told the money was used to fund the war and also to rebuild from the hurricane damage. Mr. Loomis said they have done the same with aviation funding by taking money from the trust funds.

Mr. Martin asked about Proposition 12 and if they would attach restrictions to that funding. Mr. Hopmann said that Mr. Martin is correct that the legislature may come back and direct TxDOT on how or how not to spend the money. He said they could attach restrictions to the money as they have in the past where they would not allow the funding to go to build the Trans Texas Corridor.

Mr. Martin asked what the MPO could do to help TxDOT getting funding and weather this storm. Mr. Hopmann said exactly what the MPO is doing now. Mr. Hopmann said to understand and participate. Mr. Hopmann said you are never sure what the legislature as a body considers being a concern and that there are those who do not believe transportation is in a crisis. He said there needs to be a long term solution to the transportation funding problems. He said that, with the Presidential Election coming up, he feels if history repeats itself not much will happen until the election.

Mr. Gilbreath asked if the relationship between the Commission and the Legislators has become contentious. Mr. Hopmann said he has not seen a change. Mr. Gilbreath felt that was a problem. Mr. Hopmann said that transportation is a key factor in the quality of life as it creates jobs and business communities. He said it would be a good thing if they realize the importance. Mr. Gilbreath stated that as Mr. Martin had alluded, if the legislature puts restrictions on Proposition 12, it could become more political and exacerbate the problem. Ms. Jones said that it would be important to get documentation out to the general public educating them further. Mr. Hopmann agreed that it would take a grass roots effort.

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

## **Reports**

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

### **Cities and County**

City of Wolfforth

Mr. Childers stated that the City of Wolfforth would just like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

City of Lubbock

The City of Lubbock said they would also like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

Lubbock County

No report.

Citibus

Mr. Wilson stated that he did not think everyone had received a copy of the Technical Study so each member received a full copy.

Mr. Wilson stated that he had received some questions about the fare increase for Citibus. He stated that City Access revenue was up thirty percent after the fare increase went into effect on November 5, 2007. He said that the ridership remained the same.

Mr. Wilson said that as far as the Fixed Route went the first five weeks showed no increase but since that time there has been an average of seven percent. He stated that this is just what went into the fare box and does not include and passes. He said Citibus had been proactive in getting information out to the public. He said that they have new signs that show what time the bus will arrive at each location and they are receiving less calls. He said that in January they are starting a campaign with employers and hope to increase numbers in that way.

Ms. Jones asked how programs like Election Day when voters may ride free to vote show up on the totals. Mr. Wilson said they only show up in ridership. He said that everyone could ride free to vote by showing their Voter ID card so there is no association of cost. He stated that they also provide free rides to jury duty. Information on this is sent in the jury summons.

Interim Director

Mr. Westmoreland stated that the MPO is currently working on End of Year reports.

Mr. Westmoreland also wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas from the LMPO.

Mr. Hopmann asked if he could mention the fact that yesterday afternoon a portion of the Marsha Sharp Freeway was opened at the West Loop. He stated that few people are using it, as they appear unsure of what to do. He stated it would take time for them to get used to it. He stated that Direct Connect bridges would not open until January, as there have been issues.

**Hold an executive session in accordance with the V.T.C.A. Government Code, Section 551.074(a)(1), to discuss personnel matters.**

The TPC adjourned to executive session at 9:13 a.m.

**Discussion and action concerning the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization's Executive Director position.**

At 9:22 a.m., the Transportation Policy Committee reconvened from Executive Session to the Open Meeting. Ms. Jones stated that if there were no further questions or comments the meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

*The meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.*