

Minutes
of the
Transportation Policy Committee
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
February 19, 2008

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was held in Room 103 at 1625 13th Street, at 8:30 a.m. on February 19, 2008.

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, Representative, City of Lubbock
Tom Head, County Judge, Lubbock County
John Wilson, General Manager, Citibus
LeeAnn Dumbauld, City Manager, City of Lubbock

Visitors/Staff: Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO
Marsha Reed, City of Lubbock
Amy Sims, City of Lubbock
James Loomis, City of Lubbock
Larry Hertel, City of Lubbock
Steve Warren, Texas Department of Transportation
H. David Jones

Call to Order.

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

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. Ms. Jones welcomed the guests.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Approval of the January 15, 2008 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting.

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

Tom Martin made motion to approve the January 15, 2008 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting. Tom Head seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Reports

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

Cities and County

City of Lubbock

Ms. Reed updated the Metropolitan Planning Organization on the Safe Routes To School contract with Texas Department of Transportation which was approved by the City Council. She stated that the Pavement Management System was also approved by City Council on January 24, 2008. She said they would have the "kick off" with the consultant, who is HVJ Consultants, next week. She said the contract would include fifty miles of streets outside the City of Lubbock city limits as part of the contract for future annexation purposes and if Lubbock County can use that information it would be great as well.

Ms. Reed said that she would brief the LMPO on the Northwest Passage. She said the City Council was briefed on January 24, 2008. Ms. Reed stated LeeAnn Dumbauld, Jeff Yates and herself went to Austin in December to visit with Mr. Amadeo Saenz. She said that they discussed the negotiations of the Northwest Passage. Ms. Reed said that as everyone knows TxDOT is in a funding crunch. She said a letter came back from Mr. Saenz in January stating that there was no money available for pass through negotiations. Ms. Reed said they would continue based on the discussions with him during negotiations.

Ms. Reed said the entire Northwest Passage included all of the Loop 289 projects, Erskine, Slide Road, and taking Slide Road to the Clovis Highway. It also included the four interchanges on the Loop. She stated the total package cost would have been approximately one-hundred fifty million dollars. Ms. Reed said the final option discussed with Mr. Saenz was the construction of the Slide Road Bridge as that has been the number one priority of the City of Lubbock for a number of years. She said the estimate on that was about thirty-four and one half million dollars.

Ms. Reed said that the City of Lubbock would put a portion of those projects out to bid shortly. She said they are moving forward with Erskine from Frankford to Salem, and Slide from Erskine to the Loop, and the Loop to 4th Street on Slide Road, as well as the Slide Road Interchange. She said TxDOT would reconstruct the 4th Street Bridge with the project. She said both bridges would be done in the area which should make a huge improvement in the northwest transportation of the City.

Ms. Reed said that they agreed that the City of Lubbock's application would remain in place in case future funding becomes available and they would then return to the table with TxDOT for the remainder of the Northwest Passage. TxDOT agreed to work with the City Of Lubbock on Slide Road. Ms. Reed said that on January 24, 2008 the Lubbock City Council approved a revision to the advance funding agreement to the Marsha Sharp Freeway removing twelve and one half million from that project. The City of Lubbock originally proposed twenty-five million and the removal of twelve and one half was part of the negotiation.

Ms. Reed said they are working on an agreement with TxDOT currently for twenty-five million dollars maximum that the City of Lubbock would put into the Slide Road overpass construction. TxDOT agreed to assist in lowering the overall cost of the project by helping with the design and the inspection of the construction in-house and the City Of Lubbock will be paying for Slide Road from 4th Street to the North Loop and it can hopefully be combined into one project. Ms. Reed said they had hoped to get the Slide Road agreement on the next Council agenda but there was a delay so they will look at bringing that to the City Council on March 13, 2008. Ms. Reed said she and Mr. Warren are meeting tomorrow to discuss changes to that agreement.

Ms. Reed said that if everything goes as scheduled they are looking at March or April to bid out the Erskine and Slide projects. She said they are still waiting on information regarding utility conflicts but are hopeful to get that out to bid no later than April. She said March 2008 through the Fall 2009, TxDOT would be doing the engineering and design of the Loop 289 overpasses and the City Of Lubbock will be doing the design of Slide Road from the Loop to 4th Street. Ms. Reed said that they hope to have construction under way on the interchanges by Fall 2009. Early 2010 should be the completion of Erskine and Slide and hopefully by the Summer of 2011 the completion of the Loop overpasses and the remaining portion of Slide Road would be complete.

Ms. Jones said that after seeing the full Northwest Passage she has questions about the North Quaker/Loop 289/ Erskine section. Ms. Reed said that with the application remaining in place with TxDOT would at least give us a "leg up" if funding became available. She did caution, however, that the City Of Lubbock has other projects that they need to do besides this one so it would be prioritized at that time. She was hopeful that Texas Tech might get involved. Ms. Jones said she was concerned with the amount of rooftops in the area, and as she travels in that area frequently she has noticed a backup of traffic. Mr. Warren said that environmental clearance was given on the total package and if funding does become available, they would be ready to go with design and everything. He felt that the Slide Road project would relieve a lot of the congestion and it would be an opportunity to see how it flows and allow them to revisit what needs to be done with Quaker and Erskine.

Mr. Warren said it is important for the Transportation Policy Committee to understand that as a result of the changes the LMPO would need to make some new priorities as well because the twelve and one half million that came out of Marsha Sharp has to be replaced. The funding now has to come from allocations. He said that Mr. Saenz indicated that it should come out of Category 2 which is the big category. He said these funds have been delayed Statewide and as the Lubbock MPO is already deep in the red in this category, they would also be looking at Category 7 funding, some of which would probably have to be allocated from Phase 4 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway to the Northwest Passage. Mr. Warren stated that you can't just build the bridge at Slide Road because there is a difference in grade and we do not want a bunch of throwaway cost out there. He said if they just build the bridge at Slide Road, they would have to tear out a lot of it if they came back and built more of the street later so they will go ahead and go forward with the 4th Street project with the bridge and widening 4th Street to the Loop as part of the project. He said the estimate at this time for both of those is around forty to forty-two million dollars. He said that twenty-five million would come from the City of Lubbock with the other seventeen million coming from MPO funding. He stated this would take money away from Phase 4 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway.

Mr. Martin said that he assumed the bridges at Slide Road and 4th Street would handle six lanes of traffic in the future. Ms. Reed affirmed. Mr. Martin asked if the scaled down project would do anything about the entrance and exit ramps for westbound North Loop traffic and if they would be included. Ms. Reed said they are included in the project. Mr. Martin asked if the bridge at Slide would have Texas turnarounds under it. Mr. Warren said the northeast side would and he believes it will relieve congestion in the area. Mr. Martin asked if the construction contract on the design on both overpasses and turnarounds would all be bid as one contract. Mr. Warren said that is a part of their talks. Mr. Martin said that there has been some concern about the availability of contractors in the future that can handle big projects like this. He said the Spur 327 project was awarded to Austin Bridge and he felt that it was good to see another major contractor come into the market. He said in the next couple of years the large contractors might be exiting the market here and felt that something like this might help to forestall that. Mr. Warren said the fall of 2009 is pretty aggressively scheduled and he said his team is working on a timeline. He said the biggest hold up would be the bridge division in Austin as they like a twelve-month window and are having budget cuts as well. Mr. Martin said the good part is that the environmental requirements are complete on the entire project. Mr. Martin thanked Mr. Warren and Ms. Reed.

City of Wolfforth

No report.

Lubbock County

No report.

TxDOT

Steve Warren stated that he is sure everyone read in the paper this weekend about the funding crunch having little effect on West Texas and he felt it was a little misleading. He said that Mr. Hopmann asked him to make the TPC aware there was a pretty significant effect. He said it did not affect any of the projects under construction and that was a good thing. He said that due to the efforts of the City of Lubbock and the TPC a lot of projects have been advanced as well as many of the projects on the Marsha Sharp Freeway but the funding crisis is going to have an affect on advancing further. He said that as mentioned before Phase 4 is getting hit pretty hard right now and he said that the Northwest Passage is another victim. He said the Outer Loop study had to be put on hold. He said projects are affected in West Texas.

He said in 2009 most of the big construction projects will be wrapping up and unless something changes he does not see a lot of heavy construction going on for a while so he felt it is important for the TPC to understand where they are. He said the Lubbock District has got to refocus what funds are available to take care of the system already in place. He said 2009 would be a very lean year for Lubbock and the entire seventeen County District. He said it looks as though they would only be able to go to bid on about twenty million dollars in rehab projects for all seventeen counties.

He also wanted to assure everyone that the one billion dollar accounting error was not money that disappeared or was misappropriated but was over projection of available funds. The sale of bond proceeds was counted twice which led them to think they could put more projects on the street. He said there would be a video teleconference tomorrow over the Transportation Improvement Program and making sure that everyone is in compliance with the year of expenditure requirements. The teleconference will begin at 2:00 p.m. at TxDOT.

Citibus

No report.

Interim Director

Mr. Westmoreland stated the MPO included the Certification Review Schedule in the packet. He said that it is set for June of this year.

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 8:54 a.m.

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

The TPC reconvened at 9:04 a.m. Mr. Martin stated a subcommittee was appointed by the TPC consisting of two TPC members, Randy Hopmann and himself, and three members from the Transportation Advisory Committee, including Nick Olenik, Frankie Pittman and Marsha Reed in order to review applications for the position of Director of the LMPO. He stated that they conducted interviews over a month ago and this resulted in the subcommittee's recommendation of their top final applicant, David Jones, to the TPC at the January meeting.

They then began the process of negotiating a Professional Service Agreement with Mr. Jones and was happy to announce the recommendation for approval of David Jones as the Director of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Tom Martin made motion to approve the Professional Service Agreement with David Jones to manage and to carry out other executive services of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization. LeeAnn Dumbauld seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Transportation Policy Committee welcomed Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones stated that he was glad to be there. Mr. Martin stated the Lubbock MPO is in good shape and has received top billing. He told Mr. Jones he had an excellent staff in Darrell Westmoreland and Tera Davis. He stated that the TPC is proud to welcome Mr. Jones aboard.

Meeting Adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.