

Minutes
of the
Transportation Policy Committee
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
August 18, 2009

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 August 18, 2009.

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

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

Visitors/Staff: David Jones, Lubbock MPO
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO
Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO
Steve Warren, TxDOT-Lubbock
Mitch Satterwhite, City of Lubbock
Bryan Wilson, TxDOT - Lubbock
Randy Henson, City of Lubbock
Sharmon Owens, City of Lubbock
Bruce Carswell, West Texas & Lubbock Railway
Darrell Newsome, City of Wolfforth
Todd Reno, Reese Technology Center
Patrick Aten, City of Lubbock
Mary Whistler, U. S. Rep. Neugebauer
James Loomis, City of Lubbock

Call to Order.

Mr. Leonard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.

Mr. Leonard acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Policy Committee.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Public Comment Opportunity / Acknowledgment of Guests

Mr. Leonard asked for any comment from the public. No comment was made.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Approval of the June 16, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting.

Mr. Leonard asked for any corrections to the minutes. No corrections were made.

Patti Jones made a motion to approve the June 16, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting. L.C. Childers seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

General Discussion of the Feasibility of Passenger Rail in Lubbock.

Mr. Jones said that he is bringing up this topic for discussion after speaking with Mr. Leonard. Mr. Jones said there has been a lot of publicity regarding high speed/passenger rail as a result of the stimulus bill that provided \$8 billion for rail infrastructure. The President's vision for passenger rail is set out in the Administration's Strategic Plan. Mr. Jones said that, at this time, Lubbock has no plan for high speed/passenger rail and he felt it might be prudent to discuss if there would be interest or resources to formulate a plan in order to be able to take advantage of any future funding programs.

Mr. Leonard was not sure if a plan would be practical and wanted some discussion on what position the Lubbock MPO would take on the future of high speed/passenger rail. Mr. Henson stated that the reinstatement of passenger rail in Lubbock was not likely as we cannot generate the "numbers" necessary.

Mr. Martin stated that this topic has previously been discussed. Mr. Martin stated that there is no real direct line from DFW through Lubbock to Denver and many of the spur lines no longer exist. Mr. Martin said that passenger train travel at this point in time is nothing more than nostalgic thinking. Mr. Martin added that the Lubbock MPO has worked with TxDOT on a West Texas Rail Study. Mr. Warren stated that the study would be presented at the September TPC meeting. Mr. Leonard stated that if there was interest after TxDOT presents the study further discussion could be held to formulate a plan for future funding. Mr. Jones stated that if anyone wanted a copy of the President's Strategic plan they can let Ms. Davis know and she would get a copy to them.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Consider and take action on an Interlocal Agreement between the Texas Department of Transportation and the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization regarding NEPAAssist web-based application for environmental review and planning.

Mr. Jones explained that this Agreement would allow three logins for the Lubbock MPO staff to access EPA's data base in order to enhance the environmental review step for any project. Mr. Jones stated that he and Mr. Westmoreland had already attended the required training session but an agreement needs to be executed with TxDOT to continue. Mr. Jones explained that the logins were paid for by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Tom Martin made motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement between TxDOT and the Lubbock MPO regarding NEPAAssist web-based application. Tom Head seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Consider and take action concerning re-statement of 2010 Revenues and Expenditures.

Mr. Leonard stated that Ms. Dumbauld had recommended that some changes be made to the 2010 Revenues and Expenditures form. Mr. Jones stated that Ms. Dumbauld recommended that the top line title be changed from "revenues" to "sources" and to move the money from the undesignated fund balance to the "available for future programming" line. Mr. Martin verified this is due to the fact that there is no physical possession of funds. Mr. Jones agreed.

Mr. Wilson made motion to approve the changes to the re-statement of the 2010 Revenues and Expenditures form. Mr. Childers seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Consider and take action to Commit FY 2010 Allocation of Category 7 Funding to the East 19th Street Project.

Mr. Jones stated that Mr. Warren or Mr. Eichorst would present this agenda item. Mr. Eichorst said that Mr. Warren would talk about the newest allocations given to the district regarding the funding of TxDOT projects. Mr. Warren explained that the project should actually be called the "Idalou Highway" as Hwy. 62/114 becomes the Idalou Highway where this project is. Mr. Warren explained that TxDOT thought that this project would be let in FY 2010 as a full rehab project at \$12.5 million but reduced funding levels will not cover this project.

Mr. Warren stated that TxDOT is proposing to commit their Category 11 District Discretionary Funding to this project and is asking that the MPO commit their Category 7 funding to the project. Mr. Warren explained that it would not be advisable to put this project off as the pavement is deteriorating. Mr. Warren stated that the project scope will be reduced to the amount of available funding. Mr. Warren is asking the TPC to commit the FY 2010 MPO Category 7 funds to this project Mr. Warren said that Mr. Wilson would be happy to answer any questions on the project.

Mr. Childers asked for an explanation of Category 11 funds. Mr. Warren explained that these are funds to be spent at the discretion of the District Engineer. The funds can be for on system or off system projects. Mr. Gilbreath asked if alternative locations had been looked at for this funding. He verified that 4th Street was still on board. Mr. Warren said that the E. 19th Street project is ready to let, and that it continues to deteriorate at an accelerated rate.

Mr. Martin asked how soon the TPC would need to make a decision. Mr. Warren said that he needed a decision by next month. Mr. Martin stated this is the first time they have realized there were \$3.8 million dollars in urban mobility funding and that there are other local projects that have been shelved due to lack of funding. Mr. Martin said that the Idalou Highway has been planned for six years and every time TxDOT gets close there is a delay.

Mr. Leonard stated that the TPC would look at this again next month and make a decision of where to put the Category 7 funding. Mr. Warren said he would appreciate an answer next month as TxDOT is going to pursue funding regardless of the TPC's decision.

No action was taken

The Committee moved to the next item.

Consider and take action on letters of support for Tiger Grant Applications.

- Northwest Passage Final Phase
- MOTRAN/Ports to Plains
- Citibus

Mr. Jones explained that The Texas Transportation Commission did not recommend projects for TIGER grant funding at their July meeting. Instead, the Commission directed the Staff to advise all project sponsors that they needed to apply directly to USDOT and that the Staff should be ready to assist all applicants. The sponsors of these applications are looking for letters of support.

Jim Gilbreath made motion to approve the letters of support for Tiger Grant Applications for the Northwest Passage Final Phase, MOTRAN/Ports to Plains, and Citibus. Tom Martin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

REPORTS

- A. **City of Lubbock**
 - **Status of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendation for pending bond election.**
- B. **TxDOT**
 - **Outer Loop Study**
 - **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Projects**
 - A. **West Loop 289**
 - B. **Northwest Passage**
 - **Phase 4 Marsha Sharp Freeway**
- C. **Director's**
 - **Ports to Plains Annual Meeting in Lubbock**
 - **Transportation Legislation**
 - **Workplace Survey**
 - **Executive Summary of the Texas Transportation Institute's 2009 Urban Mobility Report.**

City of Lubbock

Mr. Jones stated that Ms. Reed could not be here today and asked Mr. Martin if he could update the TPC on the recommendations of the CAC. Mr. Martin said that the Citizen's Advisory Committee recommended a package of \$60.5 million in capital improvements to be put on the ballot for the November election.

TxDOT

Mr. Warren stated that he wanted to remind the TPC when they choose how to use the Category 7 funding that was discussed earlier, all federal guidelines must be followed as these are federal funds.

Mr. Warren said that Phase 4 is scheduled to go to bid next month. He stated that the City of Lubbock has moved the utilities and it is ready to go. He said that they will look at the estimates as many have come in below. This project is being done with Prop 14 funding.

Mr. Warren said that the Northwest Passage projects are underway and will hopefully be completed in about fourteen months.

Mr. Warren said that the West Loop project should be let in January. There is a September 14th public hearing for the owners in that quadrant. The project will convert the ramps to the traditional diamond ramps. Mr. Warren stated he did not expect any opposition from the owners.

Mr. Warren said there was a Stakeholder Meeting on July 21st for the Outer Loop Study. The first public hearing will be on September 1, 2009 in Wolfforth. Mr. Warren said that Phase I of the study should take about one year to complete.

Mr. Gilbreath said that he had visited with Kevin Glasheen, who is a property owner on both sides of the west Loop. He spoke of a contract to build a two hundred unit apartment complex and that a mall is planned for the future. Mr. Gilbreath felt that the Northwest Passage projects are of vital importance to complete because of bottleneck issues in the traffic. Mr. Warren stated that he agrees and that once Slide Road is complete there will be an alternate route to alleviate some of that traffic.

Directors

Mr. Jones reminded the TPC that the Annual Ports to Plains conference will be September 30th through October 2nd and that early registration will come to a close on August 31st. Sponsors from the Province of Alberta will be here and there will be a reception at Jones AT&T Stadium.

Mr. Jones stated that the legislature approved HR 3357 which is the \$7 billion dollars that will keep the highway trust fund solvent through the end of this fiscal year. He stated that they did not deal with the rescission of \$8.7 billion. Mr. Jones said there is a proposal to extend SAFETEA-LU until March 31, 2011 to allow further time to work out a new transportation bill.

Mr. Jones said that the Workplace Survey has started. This is one component of the larger survey that is done every five years for the Transportation model. It is on schedule and going well.

Mr. Jones went over the Urban Mobility Report done by the Texas Transportation Institute and TxDOT. This report profiles traffic problems since 1982 and up through 2007. The most notable observation reported was that in 2007, congestion cost \$87.2 billion across the nation.

Mr. Martin had a question on the transportation legislation. He asked if the restrictions on the urban transit funds would be eliminated in a new transportation bill. Mr. Wilson said that he believes the restrictions will change on the use of transit funding for operations.

Mr. Martin reminded the TPC that five years ago the MPO adopted a local funding option and agreed to put \$75 million into local funding. Mr. Martin said that the City of Lubbock has far exceeded the amount that they agreed to in the local funding. Mr. Martin said that Lubbock County had agreed to put local funding into Phase 5 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway. Mr. Martin felt that Mr. Eichorst should get with the Lubbock County officials to work out possible local funding for Phase 5.

Meeting Adjourned.

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee adjourned at 9:30 a.m.