

Minutes
of the
Transportation Policy Committee
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
March 16, 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 March 16, 2009.

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, Mayor, City of Lubbock
L.C. Childers, Mayor, City of Wolfforth
Paul R. Beane, City Council, City of Lubbock
Lee Ann Dumbauld, City Manager, City of Lubbock
Doug Eichorst, District Engineer – TxDOT Lubbock District

Visitors/Staff: David Jones, Lubbock MPO
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO
Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO
Bryan Green, City of Lubbock
Steve Warren, TxDOT, Lubbock District
Jerry Cash, TxDOT, Lubbock District
Gerald Sturdivant, MACTEC Engineering
Randy Henson, City of Lubbock
Tommy Fondren, Citizen
Neil Welch, City of Lubbock

Call to Order.

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.

Ms. Jones acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Policy Committee.

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 all guests to the meeting.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Approval of the February 16, 2010 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting.

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

Tom Martin made a motion to approve the February 16, 2010 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting. Doug Eichorst seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Hold Public Meeting on revisions to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2032.

Ms. Jones opened the public meeting at 8:32 a.m. Mr. Tommy Fondren from Crosby County asked to speak before the Transportation Policy Committee.

Mr. Fondren stated that he was representing Crosby County and appreciated the opportunity to speak. He said that it is unusual for them to ask Lubbock County for anything but they are asking for the completion of the East/West Freeway. Mr. Fondren said it is very important for the route to extend from IH-27 to the East Loop. Mr. Fondren stated that it would benefit the ambulance route to the medical complex here in Lubbock.

Mr. Fondren said that the rural counties are becoming smaller and have fewer medical choices. He said that the ambulances are trying to have a "fast run" to Lubbock. He said they have been asking for this change to be made since 1994. The completion was included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2025 and MTP: 2030. He said that it was removed in the MTP: 2032 and they are asking simply to have it put back on the MTP: 2032.

Mr. Martin asked Mr. Fondren how far east of IH-27 he was requesting. Mr. Fondren said it was two and one half miles from IH-27 to the East Loop. He said this change would provide good access to Lubbock at three points. Mr. Martin pointed out that the Idalou Highway was just past the East Loop as a connector. Mr. Fondren said that it is a good road and he does appreciate it. He pointed out that ambulances coming from Floyd and Dickens Counties at this time take the North Loop to Quaker Avenue and come back in to the hospitals. Mr. Fondren said it would take less time to come straight through from the East Loop to Marsha Sharp Freeway and not have to double back.

Mr. Eichorst stated that at this time it does not appear that there will be funding available to put this project on the plan and thought there could be some intermediate steps taken to help the ambulance routes. He said that one option would be through the City of Lubbock's Traffic Department to have the operational system change to green for emergency vehicles ensuring a quicker route. Mr. Eichorst said that this might be a less expensive first step to solving the problem.

Mr. Martin pointed out that the request cuts through the middle of the Parkway/MLK Jr. Blvd. area of Cherry Point. Mr. Martin stated there are a number of commercial businesses as well as the residents who opposed the Freeway coming into their neighborhood. Mr. Beane questioned if the ambulance drivers had timed trips going both routes, by way of the North Loop and by way of 4th Street and MLK. Mr. Fondren reported that it is longer to go the North Loop to Quaker Avenue but is faster and safer.

Ms. Jones acknowledged that she has seen the number of letters in the rural areas requesting this change, but wondered about "putting it back on the plan". She thought that it was talked about in the early stages of the plans but wondered if it had ever been "on the plan". Mr. Warren stated that it had been on the illustrative (or wish) list in the previous plans. Ms. Jones thanked Mr. Fondren for coming and speaking at the meeting.

Ms. Jones asked for further speakers and hearing none, closed the public meeting at 8:48 a.m.

Discuss and take action on revisions to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2032.

Mr. Jones reviewed the need for the revision of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2032 to bring the plan into compliance to allow for a fiscally constrained Statewide Transportation Plan. Mr. Jones explained the addition of the Climate Change chapter to the plan as FHWA stated that no new plan or revision would be approved unless a chapter was included to show how the MPO is dealing with greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Jones stated that in addition to this morning's public meeting a prior meeting was held at Citibus' Downtown Transfer Center to satisfy the Participation Plan and the requirements of Title VI. Mr. Jones also presented the plan at the February Planning and Zoning Meeting. Mr. Jones presented a summarized sheet of the comments received from the three meetings. Mr. Jones asked the Transportation Policy Committee for a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2032.

Tom Martin made a motion to approve the revisions of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2032 to send to the Texas Department of Transportation. Lee Ann Dumbauld seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and take action on the MPO's participation in the Chamber's Business Expo May 16, 2010.

Mr. Jones explained that to satisfy the recommendation of the Federal Certification Review in 2008 to further expand our public participation; the MPO participated in the Chamber of Commerce's Business Expo last year. Mr. Jones felt that it helped to get our name and faces out into the public and requested approval to participate again in 2010. Mr. Jones explained that the initial documentation he received listed the date as May 16; however, in reality the date is actually May 13th. Ms. Jones asked if the participation raised the awareness of the public to who the MPO is. Mr. Jones said that he felt it did. He explained that a great number of people stopped at our booth. Mr. Beane asked if we had handouts. Mr. Jones verified that TxDOT had generously given us several things to hand out in addition to our brochures and flyers. Mr. Jones stated that we left empty-handed and he had hopes that TxDOT would be able to assist us again this year.

Tom Martin made motion approve the MPO's participation in the Chamber's Business Expo on May 13, 2010. L.C. Childers seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports

A. TxDOT

- Avenue A and 50th Street Exchange
- Category 2 Trade Fair Results
- TxDOT Town Hall Meeting
- Outer Route Feasibility Study Update

B. Director

- Status of Surface Transportation Funding

TxDOT

Mr. Warren stated that he could finally check another thing off of his "bucket list" for retirement. He stated that the exchange at Avenue A and 50th Street was approved by the Commission. It will align with FM 835 and will officially no longer be a "Spur". Mr. Warren stated he was glad that challenge was complete.

Mr. Warren said that he attended the Category 2 Trade Fair two weeks ago. Mr. Warren said that Lubbock was the "small dog" in the fight. He said that our only project was moved from 2014 to 2020 and then back to 2014. He stated that the ultimate hope would be that there might be enough Cat 2 funds to fund Phase 5 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway.

Mr. Eichorst reminded everyone of the Town Hall Meeting to be held March 31st. He stated that it would be an opportunity to have the Administration listens to our requests. Mr. Eichorst pointed out that the MPO would be hosting two meetings in the afternoon prior to the Town Hall Meeting. He also reminded everyone that the groundbreaking for the Marsha Sharp Freeway Phase 4 would occur at 10:00 a.m. and a round table discussion provided by the Chamber luncheon. He stated that the Town Hall meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and end when they quit receiving comments. Four of these meetings have been held and two additional meetings will be held after the Lubbock meeting. Mr. Beane asked if there would a time limit on the comments. Mr. Eichorst said that they might consider enforcing one if the comments got out of hand.

Mr. Warren explained that an Outer Route study began last May funded by the City of Lubbock, Lubbock County and the MPO. He stated that two public meetings had been held and that the one in September at Frenship was well attended. Mr. Warren said that projecting out to 2030 it does not appear that an Outer Route would be necessary so they are looking out to 2050. He said that 40 years out gets a little fuzzy. It would appear that the best buck approach at this time would have a route going from North to South on the West side of the City. Mr. Warren said the second meeting was held in the Cooper area and was not well attended. There were few comments from that meeting.

Mr. Warren stated there could be three possible options to loosely define a route. He said there could be a no build, a low build with four lane divided where you come back later and build main lanes, or a full freeway. He said that the consultants need to decide which of these would be feasible if they determine there is a need to move forward.

Mr. Warren said that they will receive the end result of the Feasibility Study on May 31st in the form of a report from MANTEK. If there is a recommendation to move forward TxDOT will do a full blown route study in house. A final meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 27th and they may go back to Frenship. Mr. Warren stated that he looks forward to the final report.

Mr. Eichorst stated that he wished to welcome the two visitors who had dropped into the meeting. Mr. Eichorst introduced Texas Transportation Commissioner Fred Underwood and TxDOT Assistant Director for Engineering Operations John Barton.

Director

Mr. Jones stated that Mr. Martin had updated the TPC on the status of the Surface Transportation Funding.

Mr. Jones reminded everyone about the Town Hall Meeting. He said that invitations are out and RSVP's are being received. He stated that people from 17 Counties in the District will be coming to Lubbock for the County Judge and the City Official meetings that will be held during the afternoon.

Meeting Adjourned.

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee adjourned at 9:25 a.m.