



Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization

Working Together



Handbook



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Produced by
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A Quarterly Review of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization

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SAFETEA-LU—The New Transportation Act



President George W. Bush at the Caterpillar Plant in Montgomery, IL, on August 10, 2005.

On August 10, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU) at the Caterpillar Plant in Montgomery, IL. The act authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety and transit for the five year period 2005-2009.

SAFETEA-LU incorporates changes aimed at improving and streamlining the environment process for transportation projects. These changes, however, come with some additional steps and requirements on transportation agencies. The provisions include a new environmental review process for highways, transit, and multimodal projects, with increased authority for transportation agencies, but also increased responsibilities.

The Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization is in the process of updating all documents to include the requirements set by SAFETEA-LU. At the August 1, 2008 meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee the revised Public Involvement Plan, now called the Participation Plan, was approved. This document is intended to bring public participation into the Transportation Planning process as well as setting time limits for the public to make comments on documents including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

Marsha Sharp Freeway project schedule

Phase 1

Widening West Loop 289—main lanes and frontage roads—from Slide Road to 34th Street, building the 50th Street interchange and the frontage roads on US 62/82 from Chicago to just past the Loop. This project finished early this year.

Phase 2

Includes building the entire freeway—frontage roads, interchanges and main lanes from Salem Avenue to Avenue L. This project kicked off in May of last year and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2008.

Phase 3A

Building the main lanes from Chicago Avenue to about a mile past the West Loop and the construction of two major flyovers at US 62/82 and the Loop. This project started last year and will wrap up at the end of this year.

Phase 3B

This project includes building the 34th Street and Slide Road interchange and the main lanes from Chicago Avenue to Salem Avenue. This project is scheduled to let in February 2007 and is scheduled for completion in late 2008.



Phase 4

Construction of the interchange at IH27 and Fourth Street. This project is scheduled to begin in 2009 and complete in late 2011 or early 2012.

Phase 5

Construction of main lanes and frontage roads from Lubbock to Wolfforth. This project is scheduled to begin in 2012 and complete in late 2014 or early 2015.

Mobility in View

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If you would like to receive copies of our quarterly newsletter, please call our office and we will be happy to add your name to our mailing list.



**Lubbock Metropolitan
Planning Organization**

HANDBOOK

A Quick Reference to the MPO

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Welcome to the MPO

This handbook is intended for members of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the public. Its purpose is to answer questions about what MPO is and what it does, what authority it has, what kinds of decisions it makes, and what the responsibilities are of the members of its committees. It is also intended to provide a brief introduction to the planning and funding of transportation projects in the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization region.

What is the MPO?

Every metropolitan area with a population of more than 50,000 persons must have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation to qualify for federal highway or transit assistance. Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization is the MPO for the Lubbock Metropolitan area including the City of Lubbock, Lubbock County and the City of Wolf-
forth.

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) relies on the MPO to ensure that highway and transit projects that use federal funds are products of a credible planning process and meet local priorities. USDOT will not approve federal funding for urban highway and transit projects unless they are on the MPO's program. Thus, the MPO's role is to develop and maintain the necessary transportation plan for the area to assure that federal funds support these locally developed plans. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) greatly strengthened this responsibility by placing the MPO in a primary role for the programming of transportation projects to be carried out in any given year.

The MPO has also been given the responsibility to involve the public in this process through expanded citizen participation efforts. SAFETEA-LU, the transportation bill signed in 2005 increased those responsibilities with the new Participation Plan requirements.

Since the MPO is made up of those agencies responsible for carrying out transportation programs in the region, the process puts all units into partnership with one another to carry out the programs. Any agency can, however, carry out its own transportation projects with its own funds independent of the MPO.

Transportation Advisory Committee

Voting Members:

Three designated representatives— City of Lubbock

Three designated representatives— Lubbock County

One designated representative—Citibus

Director Of Transportation Planning and Development
TxDOT Lubbock District

City Manager—City of Wolfforth

Director of Public Works, City of Lubbock

One designated representative—Lubbock Police Department

One designated representative—Texas Department of Public Safety

One designated representative—Texas Tech University

Non-Voting Members:

One representative of the TP&P Division, TxDOT, Austin

One representative of the Federal Highway Administration

One representative of the Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

One representative of the South Plains Association of Governments

One representative of the Lubbock County Sheriff's Department

One representative from the Freight Community

One representative from the Airport Authority

Two representatives from the City of Lubbock's Traffic Commission

One representative from Texas Tech University

Transportation Policy Committee

Voting Members:

One Elected County Official

County Judge

Three Appointed City Officials/Representatives

City Manager, City of Lubbock

District Engineer, TxDOT, Lubbock District

General Manager, Citibus

Mayor, City of Wolfforth

Non-Voting Members:

One representative from the Federal Highway Administration

One representative from the Federal Transit Administration

One representative from the Texas Department of Transportation's Transportation Planning and Programming Division

One representative of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

Any State legislators, or United States Congressmen, whose districts include the study area and who desire to serve in an ex-officio capacity.

Members of the MPO

The decision-making body of the MPO is a nine-member Transportation Policy Committee comprising of:

One Elected County Official
 County Judge
 Three Appointed City Officials/Representatives
 City Manager, City of Lubbock
 District Engineer, TxDOT, Lubbock District
 General Manager, Citibus
 Mayor, City of Wolfforth

Technical support to this committee is provided by the Transportation Advisory Committee. Staff support to both of these committees is provided by the MPO staff.

What does the MPO do?

The MPO carries out three major work activities to meet specific federal requirements. These are:

1. The development and maintenance of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) through a "continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C)" planning process.
2. The biennial development of a four-year program for highway and transit improvements. This program is known as the Transportation Improvement Program or TIP.
3. The annual adoption of a comprehensive one-year planning program: the Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP that describes and coordinates the individual transportation planning activities of all agencies in the area.

These activities are necessary for the eligibility of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization to qualify and receive federal transportation funds.

The Lubbock Metropolitan Transportation Plan; 2032 is a planning tool designed to outline the transportation needs for the Lubbock Metropolitan Area over the next twenty-five (25) years. The means for achieving this goal are both the short and long-term projects, included in the LMTP, designed to anticipate future conditions and meet area transportation needs.

While the MTP looks some twenty years into the future, the MPO also develops a biennial TIP that identifies those projects that will be carried out in the next four years. This process involves solicitation of projects' requests from those agencies responsible for providing transportation services and facilities, cooperatively ranking them into their merits, and selecting those highest priority projects that will fit into the estimated available funding.

The UPWP is similar to the TIP in that an annual solicitation of ideas is requested that are then ranked and fit into an estimated budget. The difference is that instead of specific transportation projects, the program consists of planning studies that are necessary to carry out the program. While most of the programs are carried out by the MPO's staff, a portion is assigned to other participating agencies in accordance with their own skills and responsibilities. The UPWP is adopted in August for each new federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30), while the TIP is adopted in May.

What the MPO does not do

You may have some questions about the type of transportation issues that the MPO is not involved in. Below is a list of what the MPO does not do:

The MPO does not design roads.

The MPO does not repair potholes in roads.

The MPO does not adjust traffic signal timing.

The MPO does not enforce traffic laws.

The MPO does not determine zoning issues.

You will need to contact your local city or county offices to make inquiries into the issues above.

What Other Information is Available?

This booklet has given you a brief introduction to the MPO. If you would like to learn more about the issues the MPO deals with and the services it provides, you may wish to visit the MPO office. The MPO also maintains a library that contains several publications on transportation and related subjects. Visitors' may read any of the library's publications while at the office and may make copies at cost. However, most publications cannot be removed from the office. The MPO staff is also available to make presentations or to speak to organizations or groups of citizens on any subject of mutual interest.

How Do I Contact the MPO?

If you have any questions or comments, you may visit, write, fax, e-mail, or call the MPO office to contact any member of the MPO staff.

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The proposed UPWP is then submitted for approval of the Transportation Policy Committee. The draft is then reviewed by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The MPO staff incorporates the comments of the state and federal agencies and presents the final document to the Transportation Policy Committee for approval.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is required to list all transportation projects in the MPO region using federal funds. This includes highway and transit projects and other necessary enhancements such as bicycle and pedestrian projects. The MPO entities propose eligible projects. The MPO staff and the TAC evaluate the proposed projects and rank them in accordance with a process.

The comments received during public meetings are made as part of the process. The ranking of the projects consistent with funding constraints and public comments are presented to the Transportation Policy Committee for final selection of projects for a TIP.

What is Expected of Me?

Whether you are a member of the MPO or a private citizen, you have a role to play with the MPO. The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) makes difficult decisions in a cooperative manner. However, TPC's responsibilities do not begin and end with making decisions. TPC members are ultimately responsible to the residents of the region for the quality of transportation services and for the impact of transportation on their overall quality of life. This means the TPC members share the responsibility for making sure that major transportation issues of today and tomorrow are dealt with fairly and properly. The citizens are encouraged to participate in the transportation planning process during the monthly meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Committee. Citizens requiring special assistance for the public meeting should make their request known 24 hours in advance by calling

775-1676.

How is the MPO Organized?

There are two aspects of the MPO organization. First is the formal structure of the MPO as committees and the second is the arrangement between its staff and the staff of the participating agencies.

The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) meets on the Third Tuesday of each month unless canceled. Meetings normally begin at 8:30 a.m. and are currently held in the City of Lubbock Municipal Building, 1625 13th Street, Room 103, Lubbock, Texas. At these meetings current transportation issues are discussed and status reports on transportation studies and projects are given. After these discussions are completed, policy actions are taken that include adoption of the TIP and UPWP, revision to these documents or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and adoption of resolutions related to current transportation issues.

The technical oversight of the MPO's work is delegated to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), a working group composed of professional staff members of the MPO's organizations. The Transportation Advisory Committee meets on the First Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the Lubbock County Courthouse Annex at 916 Main Street, in the 8th Floor Conference Room, Lubbock, Texas. The members review and approve technical and planning reports and brief their TPC members on items they will take up at their own meeting.

A third partner in the process are the citizens. Considerable time is devoted to assure that the public is informed of the MPO's programs and activities and that interested citizens have an opportunity to participate in them.



Issues and Activities

The MPO is particularly interested in issues involving long range transportation planning, development of intermodal connections, reducing reliance on automobile, and land use options to reduce trips. Current activities of the MPO include:

1. Collecting and maintaining comprehensive data. The data includes demographic and employment information, traffic counts and congestion, and land use information. The MPO is making a major effort to initiate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enhance the analysis.
2. Working with various interest groups to deal with the full range of transportation issues.
3. Carrying out the recommendations of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
4. Maintaining working relationships with the city planning organizations to integrate the land use planning and development of the region with its necessary transportation planning and development.
5. Developing intermodal planning activities.

Funding for Highway, Transit & Other Projects

Construction Funds

Nearly all major transportation projects in the MPO region involve some federal funding. ISTEA has placed the MPO in a major partnership position with the transportation providers to determine how the federal funds should be allocated to the many competing projects. These federal funds are provided to the region under several program categories. In the highway area, funds are identified as Interstate, National Highway System (NHS), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). Transit funds are provided through various sections of transit programs for operating and capital expenses for urban and rural needs.

Despite the specification of funds to a particular program area, there is considerable flexibility provided to the MPO in making final determination of the projects to be funded and the source of funding. Though some funds are specifically restricted for one particular type of project or another, a large portion of them may be transferred from one program to another, including the transfer of funds from highway to transit projects and vice-versa. This provides the MPO with significant latitude in shaping the programs to meet local priorities. In addition to the federal programs, the State of Texas provides the required matching funds for federal highway projects. Many projects are funded completely by the State of Texas.

Many transportation projects on city and county roads are financed through local funds. The Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) of the cities and counties provide this information.

Planning Funds

The MPO uses planning funds to meet federal requirements for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and specific studies addressing area wide and local issues. These funds are obtained as PL (planning) funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Section 5303 (MPO Planning) funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The use of these funds is identified in the annual UPWP.

How is a Project Included in the UPWP and TIP?

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP lists all the studies to be undertaken during the coming year. These studies may involve any aspect of transportation including highways, transit, and the needs of the transportation disadvantaged. A study may be proposed by any participating entity of the MPO. Some studies are proposed in response to federal or state requirements while others are included responding to local needs. The list of proposed studies is reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Committee. A selection is made of those studies to include in the coming year's UPWP based on the MPO priorities, the need to satisfy state and federal requirements, and funding constraints.

