

MINUTES

AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Policy Committee for the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization met at 1:30 p.m., July 18, 2013, in Room 306 of City Hall, 509 South East 7th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas.

Voting members present were: Paul Harpole, Brian Eades, Jarrett Atkinson, Kyle Ingham, Dick Davis, and Stan Swiatek.

Voting members not present were: Ron Johnston, Arthur Ware, H.R. Kelly, Ernie Houdashell, and Mark Benton.

Staff coordinators were: Gary Holwick and Travis Muno.

Item 1. Consider approval of the April 18, 2013 meeting minutes.

Paul Harpole, Mayor, City of Amarillo, advised the minutes of the previous meeting on April 18, 2013 were ready for consideration. Mr. Harpole asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; there were none.

Kyle Ingham, Local Government Services Director from PRPC, made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Dick Davis, Chamber of Commerce, seconded the motion. A vote of 6:0 carried the motion.

Item 2. Consider the FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program.

Gary Holwick, MPO Director, presented the FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), shown in Attachment A. He first spoke to the Committee about what purpose the MPO serves and briefly summarized the major planning programs for which the MPO is responsible. Mr. Holwick explained the purpose of the UPWP and discussed each of the work elements contained in the UPWP. He said that the UPWP is a federally required document which serves as a guide for transportation planning activities to be conducted over the course of specified fiscal year. He talked about the source of planning funds from both FHWA and FTA. He told the committee that funding was again limited and little had changed from the preceding fiscal year's UPWP. He said no comments were received during a 30-day public comment period for the FY 2014 UPWP. He told the committee that when approved, the UPWP would be submitted to TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

Stan Swiatek, TxDOT Amarillo District TP&D, asked about the funding levels in Task 2 and what is being done in sub-task 2.2 and 2.3. He questioned why there seemed to be no change in the funding level from year to year and what was being accomplished in the sub-tasks. Mr. Holwick stated the tasks were to collect and report on collision and traffic count data. Dick Davis said historically these tasks have always been for staff to perform the work associated with data collection. Mr. Holwick said that was true, the funding was utilized for staffing and equipment.

Mr. Swiatek asked about funding level changes in Task 4, sub-task 4.1. Mr. Holwick said efforts performed under this sub-task were for the development of the 2015-40 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Kyle Ingham asked about carryover funds and if those could be reclaimed by the funding source. Mr. Holwick told him that those funds had been accumulated over several years and now that funding levels were lower the MPO was using the carryover to continue operating at previous funding levels. Mr. Swiatek wanted to know if the carryover could be used for the Loop 335 Study. Mr. Holwick said yes the funds could be utilized for such a study; however the loss of that reserve could mean there would come a time when diminished funding might not support the MPO's current operating level or workload. He said at that time decisions would need to be made whether to lay off staff, go to part-time staffing, or find other sources of funding for the local transportation planning initiative. Mr. Ingham cautioned a large amount of carryover could be lost, since it may be seen by others as something to be used for their needs.

Dick Davis asked if additional funds would be needed for the preparation of the next MTP. Mr. Holwick told him that the MTP would be done in house and he felt the task was adequately funded.

Dick Davis made a motion to approve the FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program as presented. The motion was seconded by Brian Eades, City Commissioner, and carried 6:0.

Item 3. Consider revision of the 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Travis Muno, MPO Senior Planner, explained the need for a revision of the 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program. He said this revision affected the FY2013 Amarillo City Transit project, adjusting line item amounts for operating expenses and vehicle replacement. He asked Judy Phelps, Amarillo City Transit Manager to provide greater detail about public transportation funding. Ms. Phelps stated the Amarillo City Transit (ACT) will receive a \$3.382 million allocation for the 2012/13 year, \$1.585 million will be spent for capital items, and \$1.796 million in operating expenses (approximated amounts).

Mayor Harpole asked what capital items were included. Judy said the revision included line items for computer equipment & software purchases, support vehicle, increased funding for installing new bus benches, and the use of capital funding for operating expenses such as fuel & preventative maintenance.

Ms. Phelps answered questions about the items for purchase of service and travel training. She spoke of the increased demand for Spec Trans and fixed-route bus services due to state funds for agencies no longer available, increased demand for health services, aging population, and the economy. She thought the movement of rural populations into the City of Amarillo was driving this demand.

Mayor Harpole spoke about the increasing need for public transportation in the City and the current long wait times for travel by public transportation. Judy said all routes have at least 45-minute headways for travel. She said ACT receives 11,000 -14,000 calls per month for service. The Mayor said reduced funding, high operating costs, and increased demand would require a hard look at additional sources of funding for the future of Amarillo City Transit.

Mr. Muno said the revision would require action by the Committee to be implemented in the TIP. Details of the TIP revision are shown in Attachment B.

Jarrett Atkinson, City Manager, City of Amarillo, made a motion to approve the 2013-16 Transportation Improvement Program revisions as presented. The motion was seconded by Dick Davis and was approved 6:0.

Item 4. Open Forum, time reserved for anyone to speak on any transportation related item; however, no action can be taken on items not on the agenda.

Mayor Harpole proposed meeting with TxDOT officials to review Rails to Trails, the Old Soncy Roadbed, and future plans for bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Mayor Harpole asked to meet with TxDOT officials to discuss the weeds along the highways inside the City and the future mowing plans for Amarillo. He said he had recently received many negative telephone calls about how bad the weeds looked along the highways. Stan Swiatek offered to have Ron Johnston, the TxDOT Amarillo District Engineer, call Jarrett Atkinson to discuss these issues.

Item 5. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned with no further business to discuss.



Gary Holwick
Director, Amarillo MPO