

MINUTES

AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Policy Committee for the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization met at 8:30 a.m., January 21, 2021, Via Zoom.

Voting members present were: Ginger Nelson Jared Miller, Kit Black, Dan Reese (for Joe Price), Kyle Ingham, Blair Johnson, Eddy Sauer, Mark Benton, and Nancy Tanner.

Non Members present were: Leslie Schmidt, Sonja Gross, Corky Neukam, David Lebas, and Joe Shehan

Staff coordinators were: Travis Muno, Cody Balzen, and Devin Jones

Item 1. 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.

Joe Shehan made a public comment about a section of the C-1 Project. Joe works for George Chapman, and he wanted to bring up safety concerns about Coulter, and how it keys into the loop project there at the intersection. Joe explained that the loop cut through Mr. Chapman's property, and had been going back and forth with TxDOT and the city about this piece of property. Mayor Nelson asked if Joe Shehan was staying until this portion of the meeting came up. Joe stated that he would. Mayor Nelson asked that questions were deferred until they reached that portion of the meeting so the policy members could speak on it. Joe said he was fine with that.

David Lebas was also in the meeting, and just explained that he was also here in connection with Joe Shehan, but said that he understood that those questions were going to be held until later in the meeting.

There were no further comments.

Item 2. Discuss and Consider Approval of the October 15th, 2020 meeting minutes.

Dan Reese mentioned there were a few minor spelling errors that needed to be corrected. Tim Sorrells name, as well as Eddy Sauer in item two. Ginger asked for a movement to accept the minutes once those minor corrections were made. Dan Reese moved to approve with corrections, seconded by Kyle Ingham. The Motion passes unanimously 9-0

Item 3. Discuss and Consider Adoption of the 2021-2024 TIP

While Travis got his presentation ready, Mayor Nelson stated that this was where she anticipated the questions posed by Joe Shehan to be answered. That Travis would give his presentation first, and questions would be answered afterwards. Travis explained that this would be approval of the next four years of projects. Once all the TIPs were sent in to TxDOT and

reviewed, TxDOT noticed there were too many projects scheduled for 21-24, and have asked the MPO's to make some adjustments and move projects out into later years. The main change that has been made, is that two projects have been removed. The two projects in the TIP are the Tie In Project, at I-27 and Hollywood, will tie in to B-2, as well as the C-1 project.

Kyle Ingham asked what projects were taken out, and where the money went for those projects that were being removed. Travis explained that was his next point, and moved on to explain the answer.

The two projects removed from the TIP were a project that money had been moved to that was not fully funded at I-27 and Hollywood, so as it was not fully funded, it could not be put into the TIP. It has been requested to finish funding in the 21 UTP from TxDOT. The second project was the widening of I-27 from Sundown to US60 split. Travis explained that the money has not been lost, the project has just been moved out to fiscal year 25 instead of 24. It's still fully funded, but has simply been delayed a year. Kyle asked why it had been delayed. Travis explained when all the TIPS were submitted, there were too many projects in FY 23-24, so TxDOT asked everyone to fiscally constrain. Kyle asked if those funds specifically were fiscally restrained within the allocations received. Travis explained that was a ten year allocation, the money is still there, it's just been asked to move to a different year due to a cash flow issue, and differed to Blair and Kit to explain better.

Blair Johnson explained that in that ten year allocation of funds, everyone was wanting to do their projects in the first four years of the ten year period, so to adhere to Federal Highways, the project had to be delayed. Kyle asked what that year delay was going to do on the back end of the loop's 20 year timeframe. Blair explained that as a year ends, a new year's funding is made available, and it's something that has to be continuously monitored.

Kyle stated it just feels better to have four projects in a four year period than two. Travis explained there are more projects in this document, they're just group projects, the two are the individually listed projects.

Travis ended his presentation and opened the floor back up to questions. Ginger asked that the board circle back and now discuss the issue brought up by Joe Shehan. Blair explained that this project was still in the TIP, but like all the other projects, it was about laying the frontage roads first, and coming back in later with the main lanes. Kit explained that the map shown was a representation of Phase 1 of construction on the C-1 project at the discussed location. As most pieces of the loop, this piece would have to be constructed over multiple phases. The first objective for phase 1 was to get a 4 way divided roadway for the loop. The method that was most feasible was to build the frontage roads. Because there is both a creek and a railroad, the frontage roads can't be continuous over the railroad, so that is why they're switching east of Coulter building the main lane structures. Ginger asked Kit to expound more on why TxDOT didn't extend that to the Coulter intersection, and why that's coming in a later project. Kit explained much like the southwest quadrant of the loop, the MPO was able to fund the frontage roads doing them at grade level. Ginger asked if there were any arterial crossover that they have not done it frontage roads first using safety or traffic needs to going directly to building the overpass.

Kit explained that yes there is, the south loop at Coulter, both the frontage roads, and main lane projects were going in, as well as Soncy, Bell St. Western, and Georgia. Ginger asked if the same process was used to determine whether those were needed as opposed to this particular overpass not being necessary. Kit explained that Bell, Western, and Georgia were built in a different era, with a different thought process, and that out on Helium road, they've taken an identical approach to the road in question. Ginger asked what the timing was for this overpass. Kit explained that it's currently unknown. Ginger stated that that meant it was not in our ten year plan, which Kit confirmed. Jared mentioned that could change should the MPO gain more funding. Ginger stated from her understanding, if it was not in the ten year plan, that it was basically at the back of the list of projects to be done. Kit explained that was one way to look at it, that another way to look at it, was that the priority project list was reevaluated once a year. Ginger asked if Kit could explain why this project was prioritized so low. Kit explained there were a few reasons. The main objective of phase one of the Loop project was to get a four lane divided highway out there. It was fully funded at 82.5 million dollars, for that specific objective. There was an economic restraint there, as well as looking at traffic volumes, as well as crash history and safety. Ginger asked what about this particular intersection did not meet that criteria, and if it didn't have the same traffic as Bell street near Randall High School. Kit said that was correct, and that it was well below a thousand vehicles a day the last time he saw traffic counts, but he didn't have the numbers with him right then. Ginger asked what that goal would be to meet the need for the overpass there. The traffic counts they would need are around South Coulter and the loop, to need an overpass there immediately.

Kyle said though he didn't have the priority list in front of him, he believed this project was prioritized to have a continuous roadway for hazardous material from North to South. Kit explained that it was a priority to get a four-lane highway route from North to South that wasn't the four downtown dispersal streets, mainly for freight, including hazardous cargo, but just freight in general. Kyle verified that objective would be achieved without the overpass. Kit confirmed.

Jared Miller asked for a summary of the question, as he was not able to catch the full explanation in the beginning. Ginger Nelson asked Joe Shehan to summarize his question for the board one more time. Joe explained that there is a long extension from Tascosa road on the main lanes east, coming back towards this area. What they were wanting to do, was ask to extend the main lanes over Coulter to move parts of what was already planned to spend into something more beneficial for the project. He stated he saw the four bridges where they are building the main lanes, and the frontage roads, over and wondered why there was not one going in at the intersection. Stated that he realized that there was a lot TxDOT had to consider, but they thought that there was simply a better way to shuffle things around within the budget to allow for that overpass to be built. He stated the traffic counts are low, because the people that they deal with, and others possibly, know to avoid that intersection, because it's difficult to be safe and get on or off. It will help, what is being proposed, but an intersection is an only sure way to make it safe.

Ginger asked if any other board members had questions for Joe Shehan or David LeBas.

Kyle asked, if Joe were to move the overpass, where he saw it being moved. Joe explained they weren't asking to move the overpass, simply extend the main lane construction to have the

overpass within this project. He spoke about a 3000 foot extension from Tascosa Road to make the overpass at Coulter. Ginger and Kyle both asked for a little more clarification on where exactly he was talking about this, and asked Travis to show them on the displayed map. Jared asked again for clarification, if they were wanting a bridge to go from the railroad tracks, and wanting Coulter to have a bridge over the loop. Joe explained the overpass they wanted was for the loop to go over Coulter. Ginger asked, if they were just wanting the overpass to be moved up in the timeline. Joe explained yes, and that they were proposing a way to do that. Ginger asked Blair if he could speak to Joe's idea about moving the 3000 feet. Asked if was feasible, if TxDOT would suggest that, as the Policy Board could not exactly see what Joe was asking, but assumed that Blair knew what Joe was saying.

Blair verified that Joe was simply asking for the overpass to be constructed within the C1 project, and asked where the 3000 foot was coming from. Joe explained when looking at a particular map of C1-Phase 1 that it extends from Tascosa Road to a section down the road, which he was looking for to give specifics. Blair said he wasn't quite understanding why Joe was proposing taking this 3000 feet away, as it will run from 9th to almost Western. Joe explained that there is nothing tying in to the frontage roads, or the main lanes from Tascosa Road to where the main lanes end. So the schematic shows they are building over 3000 foot of main lane over Tascosa Road and while it needs to go over the road, he doesn't feel like it needs to extend as far as it's shown. Blair stated that those 3000 feet is to get tied back in around the curve, and that it doesn't feel like an excessive amount to do so. Joe commented on the schematic shown on screen that you could get off of the main lanes, and get on to the frontage road, and not have to go all the way over where they are showing the main lanes going. And in those main lanes, they are building four bridges over the creek. They are simply asking if it's possible to extend the main lanes so that the overpass at Coulter can be built, because there is no intersections with the frontage road or main lanes in this area.

Jared asked how much money the MPO would need in order to construct that overpass so that it would be put into perspective for the policy board how much the project would have to be reduced to put in the overpass.. Blair asked Kit for a ballpark figure. Kit stated that the preliminary look at an overpass was an additional \$16 - \$18 million. Jared asked if it was feasible to reduce the cost of this area, that Blair had mentioned that it didn't seem excessive, but that he just wanted to see if this sort of thing was feasible. Mentioned that the Policy Board was quite out of their element at the moment. Ginger stated that she was wondering if putting this on the agenda as a stand alone item, approving the TIP as brought up for revisions, and then having this conversation moving forward about being in the next TIP, which will be brought up in June and asked Travis if that was correct. Travis stated that the TIP could be updated at any time, however the MPO staff would be starting the process for a new TIP at the end of this fiscal year. Ginger stated that she would prefer giving TxDOT some time to talk directly with Joe, and see what his proposal was, and bring everything back not with spit ball numbers, but schematics prepared for the board to be able to see what Joe Shehan is proposing, with correct figures. She stated that she hoped everyone knew the board was supportive, that they need to have an overpass at Coulter, it was simply an issue of timing, and what had been prioritized before this overpass at Coulter. Kyle asked if when that was brought back, if they could get the chronology of the different segments, because he was trying to remember off the top of his head, but he couldn't quite remember. But the center lanes don't start going down until years 8-10 of the MTP. Ginger asked if Joe would be willing to have those conversations with TxDOT.

Joe said he would be happy to. Ginger then asked Blair if they would be willing to sit down. Blair said yes, that it would give them time to sit down and look at the proposal, and get their facts straight. That they would reach out to Joe and set up a meeting.

Ginger asked for it to be better explained when they brought this back to the policy board, to help the members better understand the criteria that went into deciding the recommendation, because she could understand people not using it because of the safety concerns, but actual data is what they base a lot of it on. Ginger asked if there was anything else Joe wanted to say before she closed discussion. Joe thanked the board for listening to them, and said that they would be happy to give more history when this was brought back to the board, because they had been working with TxDOT for a number of years on trying to get all of George Chapman's properties connected, and that things keep getting drug out further, and this looked like a good opportunity to start the discussion. Ginger asked if there was anything David LeBas wanted to add to that. To which he responded no in the chat. Ginger then asked Travis to place it on the Agenda once Blair and Kit were ready to put it on for discussion with the proper information to show the board.

Ginger asked for a motion to approve the TIP as presented. Nancy Tanner moved, Jared Miller Seconded. The Motion passed 9-0

Item 4. Discuss and Consider Update of the FY 21 Safety Performance Measures

Travis explained that the Performance measures were required for state funding. The safety measures have been pretty consistent as far as the state measures go. The state has changed the way they do their forecast. Previously the state had been looking over a five or six year period to get a baseline, and projected the timeline out to 2022. Originally they had reduced the fatality target by 2%. The goal is zero fatalities by 2050. The state originally looked at the timeline and measured it out evenly until 2050. Travis showed a chart showing the different targets, and 5 year average.

In the past the board has always supported the state standards for multiple reasons, one of which is because this is statewide, not locally, as well as otherwise having to produce a methodology and maintain the data collection. The TAC recommended to continue to adopt the state standards. Ginger asked for a motion after there were no questions.

Nancy Tanner requested to make a statement that it was sad that the board has to target how many deaths there will be, and that it just seemed sad that we were setting a target for 3,300 people to die. Kyle Ingham said for the past few years that the board has been adopting these safety measures it always feels awkward, because they are guided by the state on the targets to adopt and there is 'not a lot of teeth in the targets'. That the board has to do what the board has to do, but it is awkward for the reasons that Nancy mentioned, and others. But he moved to adopt the state standards for the Safety Performance Measures. Jared Miller Seconded.

Kit Black did want to mention that as a state, they are setting the goal at zero. That you can't go immediately from 3,300 to zero, and that it has to be done incrementally. Travis did say that over the last four years, the numbers have decreased. Nancy explained it just felt wrong to say 'we have a target of 3,300 deaths.' Blair said that the transportation commission has taken this

as a huge initiative, especially Commissioner Ryan. They have also dedicated 600 million dollars towards reaching this goal of zero fatalities by 2050, and that Amarillo has received some of those safety dollars. He realizes it's kind of awkward, but there is a funding at play here as well.

The motion passed 9-0

Item 5. Discuss and Consider Update of the FY21 Road and Bridge Condition Performance Measures

Travis explained that these are similar to the Safety measures, in that they are looked at state wide, but they are a little different as they are four-year targets instead of annually. The Road and Bridge Condition Performance measures were originally adopted in 2018 and the target was set for 2022. Federal Highways has allowed the states at the two-year mark, to adjust the measurements and targets.

For good road condition reports on the Interstate Highways, they have adjusted the target up, because we did better than expected. For poor condition, they have adjusted down, as there were less than expected. For non-Interstate Highways, in good condition they have adjusted the targets up, and the poor condition down. Even though they have been adjusted, we are still meeting those standards.

For bridge conditions, in poor condition, here we were not doing as well as we had hoped, so they are adjusting the number up to accommodate those numbers. On good condition, the state was about even, so they left the target where it was.

Kyle asked if since we have added Canyon, if those numbers were included in the numbers provided. Travis showed a graph with both Amarillo and Canyon. Travis explained that there were no bridges left in the poor category, as the ones we had have been taken down, however they have not been rebuilt yet, so they cannot add on to the good conditions yet, and that this should include the Canyon bridges. Dan asked about what was not shown in the good column. Travis explained anything not good or poor was listed under fair other than the ones that have not been built yet.

Kyle Ingham motioned to approve. Eddy Sauer seconded. The motion passed 9-0

Item 6. Discuss and Consider Update of the 2020 Travel Time Performance Measures

Travis explained that there are three travel time reliability categories. The targets have been adjusted up as our reliability is better than projected. Amarillo too is well within that target.

For the Truck Travel Time Reliability, they are adjusting the target down, however Amarillo is better than even the state reported value. Most of the less reliable travel time is around construction, so there is the ability to improve that reliability with time.

Jared Miller moved to approve. Dan Reese seconded.

Eddy Sauer asked the definition of reliability. Cody Balzen explained that the percentages listed

were roads under the 1.5 mark. The 1.5 measurement means that it took one and a half times as long to travel that length of roadway. Travis explained that the formula shows what it takes most people to travel that roadway, as opposed to with delays. This shows the amount of roads that are beneath that one and a half time measurement. Cody explained further, if it takes you one minute to typically travel that road, and in peak hours it took a minute in a half, then the score is 1.5.

The motion passed 9-0

Item 7. Discuss and Consider Update of the FY 21 Transit Asset Management Performance Measures

Travis explained, these are yet another annual number to look at. Rolling stock pertains to the busses we are actually using, and the percentage shown is the number of vehicles past their useful life. The Equipment category is support vehicles and other vehicles that are used in daily activities. Facilities are any facilities or buildings used in the transit system, including housing facilities and bus washes.

Currently we have an order in for new busses, and those should hit the assembly line next week. By the end of the year, should reduce this to the 10% target. On the equipment side, they have in the budget to replace a maintenance vehicle as well as support vehicles which should bring them down to their 25% target. For facilities, the 33% represents the bus wash, which has been redecorated and revamped, so at the end of the year, they should reach their 0% target.

Jared moved to approve; Eddy Sauer seconded. Motion passes 9-0

Item 8. Update on Multi-Modal Plan

Travis explained that since the last update in October, the MPO and Kimley Horn have opened up the first public meeting for input on the document. It's still virtual, but it's a little bit different than the previous website. On that site, it follows TxDOT's virtual meetings. A 15-minute presentation on what has been done so far, and what is planned, as well as a timeline, workshops, maps to download, a place to make comments, and a link to the original website for the surveys, and to leave comments on the original map that was set up.

Ginger asked what it is exactly that we're asking for the public to comment on. Travis explained that we were asking for input on hike and bike paths, transit, and any kind of information they would like to see put into this plan. Ginger commented that citizens use what the MPO works on every single day, but like many household staples, they are expected to work, and that she thinks that the community does want to give input they just don't know the discussion is happening. Ginger said she is going to work hard to make sure the information is put out there. Travis explained that the information is already on the city social media pages.

Jared asked if the MPO is actively promoting, Travis explained that yes, he is, and that it has been sent to TxDOT and the Libraries, as well as it having to be sent to the media as well. Dan said that he would check with management to make sure it was on all Canyon's websites as well.

Dan stated that they had met with HDR recently, which is the people working on the widening project, and that the ultimate build of that project includes a 10 foot multi use sidewalk. Ginger gave a thank you to TxDOT for their assistance on getting those sidewalks put in place. Dan explained it may be 10 years out, but it is on the ultimate build.

Item 9. Update on Current Construction Projects

While there were some technical difficulties to get the presentation to load for the TxDOT current construction update, Mark Benton gave an update on where Randall County was at since the passing of Judge Houdashell. They have interviewed four potential candidates, out of 16 applicants. They will be making a decision on Tuesday, and make an appointment. Of the four interviewed, three are definitely qualified for the job. They are making the appointment for the last 23 months of Judge Houdashell's term, and if they so desire, can seek reelection for a full four-year term. It is not an interim position; it will be a full judge's position.

Ginger also asked after the health of Commissioner H.R. Kelly. Nancy Tanner said he was doing much better, that he is home and getting stronger every day.

Corky Neukem gave the Current Construction Projects.

IH 40 bridges at Whitaker, Lakeside, and Pullman. Currently the MPO has spent \$36 million on the project. Corky included Burn rates which is the rate of construction, and explained that on a 50 million dollar project, it's difficult to keep a burn rate up, and that in the winter when construction is less, the burn rate goes down. Traffic was switched from East bound lanes to west bound lanes on Sept 18th of 2020, they have completed drill shafts and columns on Whitaker, and Lakeside, and they are working on the center median concrete barrier from Pullman out to the 287 split. Their goal is to complete median, stripe and remove work zone traffic control from Airport Blvd to US 287 split by Spring Break of 2021. They are planning to hang beams this weekend on Whitaker, and the next weekend at Lakeside.

The next project is the loop and FM1541. There is bad news, it was supposed to be finished on October 31st, however there was some aggregate issues, and had to winter the project. They'll finish it early in the spring as soon as there are warmer temperatures.

The next project is B1 phase 1 project. The Loop interchange and Coulter Bridge. Currently they have paid \$34 million. They have tied in the stakeholders which TxDOT is excited about. The Main lanes are open, the new Bell exit is open, and the Intersection Installed and the bridge beams are currently being installed. The MSE wall is about 75% completed. The goal is to pour the bridge deck in the first quarter of 2021.

The next project is B2 phase 1, where the frontage roads connect to FM 2590. The Northbound frontage road has been striped to help the construction team for the new high school going in.

The Northbound frontage road bridge has been completed. They have been installing frontage road and curb and gutters.

The next project is B2 phase 2 – The SL 335 Frontage Roads from IH-40 to the SW 9th tie in. They have demolished the bridge, dug it out, completed the drill shafts, columns and have hung beams. They have spent about 19million so far. They have also started installing drainage and pavement.

The final project was the B1 phase 2 project, it let in December, a successful bid of about \$26 million. It will take about 684 days to complete. They got the notice to proceed this week.

Ginger said once we can meet in person again, she would like for the board to get on a bus, and get Corky's presentation at each site. Corky encouraged everyone to follow TxDOT on twitter, as they have constant updates every day. Nancy asked if there was any idea when we could meet in person again. Ginger said at the very least a few more months, and that we are hopeful by April. Jared said that what they are looking at in the city, is if we have good vaccinations within the body of the city staff, but that wouldn't want to put anyone unnecessarily at risk.

Item 10. Discuss Future Agenda Items.

Travis explained that in the coming months would have the Annua List of Projects. It's the document that shows all the projects done within the last fiscal year. Usually, it is presented around the end of the year, but because of the adjustments needed on the TIP, it was running a little late. Last Travis had heard, was that they were going to try to get those out around the end of January.

Additional Performance Measure for safety in Transit.

In July, usually adopt the Unified Planning Work Program, which is the budget for the next year, the staff will start working on the next month.

No further future agenda items were discussed.

Item 11. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned with no further business to discuss.

Ginger Nelson, Chairman

Amarillo MPO