

MINUTES
AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Policy Committee for the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization met at 8:30 a.m., July 16, 2020, Via Zoom.

Voting members present were: H.R. Kelly, Jared Miller, Kyle Ingham, Brian Crawford, Kit Black, Tim Sorrells (For Ernie Houdashell), Ginger Nelson, Eddy Sauer, Joe Price and Nancy Tanner.

Voting members not present were: Mark Benton

Non Members Present were: Kyle Schniederjan, Jon Braut, Sonja Gross, Deangelo Reyes, Dan Reese, Russel Washer, and Katie Perkins.

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.

There was no mentioned business for the open forum.

Item 2. Discuss and Consider Approval of the June 18th, 2020 meeting minutes.

Nancy Tanner moved to approve as written. Kyle Ingham seconded. Motion passed 10-0

Item 3. Discuss and Consider revisions to 2021-2024 TIP

Travis explained the updates for the TIP, and explained that they were transit updates. There was some additional funds for buying buses. Nancy Tanner motioned to approve. H.R. Kelly seconded. Motion passed 10-0

Item 4. Discuss and Consider 2020 UPWP

Travis explained that this is the time of year that the MPO usually has to shift funding to make sure everything is covered. He also explained that the indirect costs have gone up since last year, and that is a big reason the MPO is having to shift money over. Travis explained that the Indirect costs were so high due to the previous MPO Administrator's retirement, and then a year of having a position open. So this fund goes up and down.

Kyle Ingham commented that adding in \$100,000+ plus in something that was less than \$200,000 was about a 50 percent increase, and asked if there was a way to anticipate these changes. Travis explained that he is working with the City of Amarillo finance department to better anticipate these fluctuations in the future, and will start the year with additional funds in this specific task. Kyle asked if there would be any issue with moving money into the indirect cost category, and Travis said no, according to TxDOT everything would be fine moving money into that category. Travis also explained that due to COVID the MPO has had to move money around for this situation. Ginger asked if it was fair to say that the MPO did not anticipate making adjustments like this again in the future, as there are steps being taken to cover any future fluctuations at the beginning of the year. Travis said yes, in next years UPWP the adjustment can be seen of putting more money put into this to negate the need for shifting money around so much.

Joe Price moved to approve, and H.R. Kelly seconded.

Motion carried 10-0

Item 5. Discuss and Consider 2021 UPWP

Travis explained what had changed in all the different tasks as far as funding was concerned. He also explained that the money in task 5 for special research projects is the completion of the multimodal plan. He also explained our reserve should be at \$100,000 by the end of next year.

Nancy Tanner motioned to approve, Eddy Sauer seconded.

Motion carried 10-0

Item 6. Discuss and Consider changes to NHS

Travis explained what the National Highway System is, and that four roads had come into question on whether to be changed or not.

The first to be reviewed was Washington South of I-27 down to Loop 335. According to the National Highway Review committee, the suggestion was to remove this piece of Washington, due to the fact that it did not meet the full criteria for a Principal Arterial. The recommendation was to lower this section of road to a minor arterial. Kyle Ingham asked if lowering this functional classification would remove funding from this road. Travis explained that the road would still be funded through TxDOT, but with it not being on the NHS it would not be held accountable to the MPO performance measures. Kyle asked who's responsibility that was for bridge decks, and Travis explained that it would not change whose responsibility it is for maintenance, simply that it would not impact the MPO performance measures for bridges. Kyle asked if funding were to become available, if it would no longer be eligible for bridge funds through TxDOT, Travis explained it would depend on the requirements for the funding awarded.

Dawood Alani (City of Amarillo Traffic Engineer) requested the traffic volume for this specific road, and Travis explained that last looked there was about 10-20 thousand vehicles on this road.

Kyle Ingham expressed he has no problem with the MPO doing what needs to be done, that his concern was taking this road from a principal arterial down to a minor arterial that the MPO was not transferring this stretch of road from something that might be eligible for federal funding to become the problem for the City of Amarillo or Randall county instead if funding were to become available to fix issues on this stretch of road. He explained that he was just not familiar enough with the process to understand the advantages of lowering the functional classification on this stretch of road. Travis explained, it was recommended to be removed because it didn't meet the criteria of a principal arterial. Ginger Nelson asked for Travis to explain the benefit of fixing this classification outside of a beurocratic tidying of the NHS. Travis said that for consistency is the main benefit. Joe Price clarified that he feels Kyle's question was to make sure that changing this classification would not be detrimental, and that as far as he understood it was not detrimental, simply following the national classification standards. Travis said yes, and explained that the state has never gone through and looked at how the NHS was being applied since 1996, and that the NHS review committee has taken about a year and a half to look over all of this information, and presented the MPOs with these findings. He also said that the TAC committee looked over the classifications and had the same recommendations. Kyle Schniederjan explained that after taking a look at it with the TAC Committee, that when this road was initially listed as a principal arterial, it had a different function. Amarillo did not have SL335 completed in that area, and it was a connector and functioned as a principal arterial, but it does not function that way any longer. He explained that there might be a very specific funding

criteria that this would no longer qualify for, but even then, it would be a very specific situation. The TAC felt like it was better to address how it was functioning now.

Travis moved on to several pieces that were considered Intermodal connectors. For I-40 to Airport Blvd had only information on one criteria, and it did meet it, and so the review board found that this was an appropriate use and suggested to leave it as it was. There were no questions on this section.

The next piece was downtown, how Greyhound bus terminal connects to NHS. The suggestion was to consider modifying connector to make more efficient access to the NHS. Currently it goes down 6th street to Tyler, then down to 7th and down to Adams. The review panel recommended starting at the dispersal street going down 6th to Harrison, then down Harrison to 7th, then back down to the dispersal street, to make a 'U' shape around the terminal.

Jared Miller asked if this was long term plans based around the old terminal. Travis explained that we were not, that this will be reviewed every five years, and that the reroute would be able to be updated to the new location at that time. Ginger asked for clarification for 'at that time' and in about five years, will look at the new area of the loop, but will need to review it as well since it cannot currently be accurately adjusted due to there being no traffic to review. Eddy Sauer expressed concerns that five years was a long time to wait, due to the new terminal being built and projected to have finished before then. Travis explained that we would not have to wait for five years to pass, it would simply have to be approved through Federal Highways with paperwork.

The last piece was up for review was North Western from I-40 to the Diamond Shamrock facility. Has functioned in the past as a connection to the NHS, however Loop 335 now serves this purpose and is shorter, and trucks are taking this route instead. Removing this section was felt to be appropriate. Kyle asked what the timeline was on this section of loop 335. Travis explained this is scheduled to be let in 2023 and finished in 2025.

Travis explained that there was a resolution requested by TxDOT to sign a resolution for these changes.

Jared asked if there was a way to reaffirm the 1998 designation of the I-27 corridor as a high priority. He said he knew this was off topic, but he wondered if this was a good time to put this information out there to reaffirm. Travis explained this was not something that TxDOT was reviewing with this review board. Jared said that he just wanted to find ways to reaffirm the importance of the need for funds for I-27 and the lack there of since 1998, however it might be off topic and if so to focus on relevant information instead. Ginger said it is always good to keep that in mind as it is a large thing of importance to our area.

Jared Miller moved to approve, Nancy Tanner seconded.

Kyle Ingham asked Brian Crawford how this resolution is used, and where it is seen, if it is handled on the state level, or if it is federal. Brian explained it's handled primarily on the state level, but they are in coordination with local FHWA offices. Those are the two offices that would see this document. Ginger asked what purpose this was for. Brian explained it's a requirement before changes that were just talked about could be made. There are several things that need to happen, and the first thing is an endorsement from the Amarillo MPO board. It's an attempt to make sure that everything lined up appropriately with the classifications across the nation.

Ginger said that everyone is simply worried about losing funding. Brian talked about the section that was questioned about losing funding, and said that to his knowledge no, there would be no loss of funding, and that he understood that a lot of this was hard to understand. Kit Black added that funding for maintenance and rehabilitation for these roads is based on a lot of things, but not functional classifications. It's based on things like traffic volume, truck counts, and things of that nature, as opposed to functional classifications. So, will it change how much money received for maintenance? No. Will it change who's responsible for the maintenance? No. They're still TxDOT roadways, and whatever existing agreement with the local government has been made will continue forward regardless of functional classification.

Ginger reiterated that there was a motion and a second, and asked if there were any further questions before a vote. Kyle Ingham asked that the minutes reflect word for word the statement that Kit Black made which have been notated above. Ginger asked for the vote.

Motion passed 10-0

Item 7. Update on Current Construction Projects

Corky Neukam presented information on the current construction projects.

Whitaker bridge is estimated to be finished in November 2021. Lakeside bridge planned to be completed November 2021. Pullman has been complete. Looking at finishing approaches and exit ramps at Pullman bridge.

Looking at doing a mill and overlay on Washington from 1-40 to SL 335. Planned to be finished by October.

B1 Phase 1 project is going well, the Hollywood Bridge construction is completed, Pavement Repairs and HM overlay complete. Planning on switching traffic. The upcoming activities are working on the entrance ramp to be complete NB Hollywood, and looking at NB exit Ramp to be completed. NW Corner of IH27/Hollywood Frontage road tie ins, and working on the coultter Bridge.

B2 Phase 1 project: Have worked on frontage Roads North Bound and South Bound. Have put down new pavement, and curb and gutter. Completed Deck, sidewalks, and all the railing, just need to connect road. Southbound bridge has been finished with concrete pours.

B2 Phase 2 project: Traffic has been opened back up after bridge was demolished and traffic opened back up before 4th of July. Ground squirrels have been relocated, and still working on construction of detention lake.

Item 8. Discuss Future Agenda Items.

Ginger Nelson has requested that we revisit Policy Board Meeting Times.

Brian Crawford wanted to make sure everyone knew that TxDOT is updating Unified Transportation Plan. Top Three Priority projects were submitted for consideration. There is currently a draft out there, but unfortunately those three projects do not look like they are being

added. Mentioned because draft is out there in a public comment period, and can have comments made by Policy board members about the importance of these projects to nationwide system.

Ginger Nelson stated on a future agenda, will have an appointment of a new District Engineer.

Item 9. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned with no further business to discuss.

Ginger Nelson, Chairman
Amarillo MPO