

MINUTES
AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Policy Committee for the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization met at 8:30 a.m., September 17, 2020, Via Zoom.

Voting members present were: H.R. Kelly, Kyle Ingham, Blair Johnson, Kit Black, Tim Sorrells (For Ernie Houdashell), Eddy Sauer, Joe Price, Mark Benton and Nancy Tanner.

Voting members not present were: Ginger Nelson, and Jared Miller.

Non Members Present were: Russell Washer

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 Meeting Times for the Policy Committee Meetings

After a short discussion, it was discussed that the third Thursday at 1:30 would probably be the best time, and that the MPO would be contacting the policy board members to verify.

Item 3. Discuss FY 21 Project Priority list

Travis explained that the Priority list is a list of projects that is turned in to the Transportation commission showing what projects the Amarillo Area entities deem most important to fund and start.

Kit Black went over the current funding that the Amarillo MPO has received based on the 2021 UTP. In Category 2U the MPO has \$96.71 Million, in Category 4 Urban, \$44.49 Million, and in Category 12, \$169.62 million, making the total federal funding for a ten year period \$310.82 Million.

Kit took a short time to explain everything that the MPO has done to date on the Loop 335 project, before showing the new priority list. Kit then went through each project in general detail.

Project #1 SL 335 B-1 Phase II the tie in project, will construct both loop frontage roads and main lanes. Almost \$30 Million project, and would have construction starting in Spring of 2021.

Project #2 – IH 27 Operational Improvements. This project has multiple funding sources, and is scheduled to let next May. This project has MPO funding, as well as TxDOT funding from safety funds. The whole project is \$27.90 million, but the MPO portion would be \$11.70 million. Any overages would be covered by TxDOT. The operational improvements the MPO would be funding would include a replacement of current ramps, as well as auxiliary lanes to assist with merging on and off the highway.

Project #3 – SL335 C-1 Phase I is frontage roads from SW 9th to FM 1719 (Western St.) construction cost estimate is \$82.50 million, and is fully funded. In progress of ROW acquisition, and letting is scheduled for December 2022, and construction would start Spring 2023.

Project #4 is the expansion of main lanes of I-27 from four lanes to six lanes. The cost estimate is \$117 million, and it is fully funded by the Transportation Commission. TxDOT is working on environmental document and expects it to be finished by Summer of 2021, and there should be

very little if any ROW acquisition. This project is scheduled for letting in 2024, unless able to get funds sooner.

Project # 5 - Kit went over a few questions that would help in acquiring more funding through the Transportation Commission. Can the existing available funds go to construction any sooner? Can the planned expansion projects be opened to traffic (completed) any sooner? Is there any means to improve connectivity sooner or more efficiently? The TAC committee believes that the new Project #5 SL335/I-27 Interchange Phase II will answer those questions positively. The cost would be \$114 million, inflated for the predicted cost in 2025. The environmental document is complete, environmental clearance has been achieved, and ROW has all been acquired. This project would build direct connectors from I-27 main lanes to SL 335 main lanes rather than taking frontage roads. The other portion is constructing SL 335 main lanes over I-27. Kit explained with a graphic that currently there is quite a bit of the west SL 335 that is four lane divided uninterrupted highway save at the interchanges, and that putting in this direct connect would be more efficient in opening up traffic and connectivity. Moving the money currently allocated to the current priority project number 5 which was the interchange at I-40. While that project is currently fully funded, and moving the funds would make the new project number 5 only partially funded, the hope would be to receive the rest of the funding from the 2022 UTP.

Kit then explained he knew the policy board was all thinking, what happened if the funding was not given in the UTP like they were hoping for. Kit explained that if it wasn't awarded, they would know in August, and the funding wouldn't go away, but the money moved to the other project would still reside with the MPO to use as they saw fit. Currently there was already a project on I-40 so they would not be able to start the project there until the 2024 once the first one was finished, so if the funding was not received, they would be able to put the money back on the previous project number 5 next year, so there would be no delay, no negative or positive impact at all.

Project #6 - SL 335/ I-40 West Interchange Phase II (the previous #5) Building the main lanes over I-40.

Project #7 – FM 2590 Operational Improvements is a new project that the TAC thought was important. The estimated cost would be around \$11.4 million and would be intersection improvements and turning lanes. TxDOT would begin the Schematic and Environmental documents in January of 2021. Joe Price explained that most of the comments that he gets about road projects in Canyon, were on 2590 specifically. Kit gave a reminder that the big change was the MPO boundary expansion, and now that this entire corridor was in the MPO boundary it made more sense to put this on the priority list. Joe Price said prior to this being put on the list, this road was too close to a highway, and was asking if that was still the case. Kit explained that had changed a little bit, that in the past it had been classified as the lowest classification of roadway, and wasn't eligible to receive federal funds, however in the past few years that had changed, and is now eligible for federal funding. Joe explained that two individuals asked about this project as well as the I-27 expansion, and Joe gave that information to them, hoping that would help. Kit explained a major concern was that with all the development on 2590 people are going to need a way to get home at night. Tim Sorrells explained that Randall county was thinking about purchasing some land for a fire station, and would be a good move to have fire trucks and ambulances out that way.

Project #8 SL 335 B-2 Phase II is the main lanes from 34th and Soncy to Southwest 9th, as well as Ramps and grade separations. The project is \$59.4 million, and could move to construction fairly quickly, as ROW and Environmental documentation are already done, but there is

construction out there currently, and would have to start construction after that was finished, however currently project number 8 is unfunded.

Project # 9 – IH27 is an upgrade of main lanes on IH-27 from four lanes to six. This project would also convert frontage roads from rural to urban, including curb and gutter, put in sidewalks etc. This project is currently unfunded, and has a hefty price tag of \$232 million, but the schematic and environmental documents were planned to be finished in the Summer of 2021, which would put them in a position more ready for letting should funding become available.

Project # 10 – SL 335 B-2 Main lane Phase will construct main lanes, ramps, and grade separations from FM 2590 and going west and around North to 34th Ave. \$76.5 million cost, and schematic and environmental documentation are complete as of July of 2017 but is currently unfunded.

Project #11 – FM 2590 operational improvements from I-40 to 81st, this project would include access control, traffic signals, and turning lanes. This project has a cost estimate of \$7.25 million. While it's on the list, TxDOT has not started project development on this project yet, as they feel like they need to finish the phase I projects of the SL335 and have that open to see the impact it will have on the traffic on this section of road.

Project #12 – West IH 40 from Hope Road to Soncy Road, this project entails converting the frontage roads from rural to urban, meaning upgrading with curb and gutter, sidewalks, and all the ADA accessibility with a cost estimate of \$26.30 million. This project is unfunded and project development has not been started.

Project #13 - West IH 40 from Hope Road to Soncy Road, this project would be expanding the main lanes to a 6 lane facility. This project has a cost of \$90.6 million, is unfunded, and development has not been started other than getting the new loop across I-40 and that is under construction.

Project # 14 – RM 1061 is a new project, from Coulter to RM 2381, this is the road that goes into Bushland. This project would include Super 2 lanes, entailing adding passing lanes, and widening shoulders, as well as intersection improvements. The cost estimate is \$14.7 million, and TxDOT has just started project development, with the hope that this project will be funded somehow, but is currently unfunded.

Project #15 - SL335 A-3 Operational Improvements from FM 1541 (Washington St) to I-40. This project would include intersection improvements, passing lanes (Super 2) and adding left turn lanes at select arterials. This is not the full build or expansion, but more of a short term project. This is not funded, but could be developed fairly quickly and moved to construction should funding become available.

Project #16 – FM 1541 is a new project to the MPO, starting at 58th Ave, going South over the railroad tracks, and ending at what would be future city arterial tie in. The main purpose of this project is to get better access to non motorists from East side of the railroad tracks to the West side of the railroad tracks. The issue that they've heard is housing developments is on the East side of the railroad tracks, and the middle and high school is on the west side of the railroad tracks. There is an existing overpass, and this would add an adjacent shared use path over that overpass.

This list is the recommendation from the TAC committee, and Kit explained would take questions at this time if there were any. There were no questions, so Kit moved on to the next steps. The step taken this day was to review, discuss, and adjust the priority list, following that, in October, there would be an action item to adopt the new project priority list for 2021. Unless there were any suggested or recommended changes, the list would be what was presented in this meeting. After that, in November, the MPO would have to submit the changes for the 2022 UTP, and the timeline ends with the adoption of the 2022 UTP by the Texas Transportation Commission in August of 2021. Travis asked if there were any questions, and as there were none, he stated that if any questions came up, to contact their TAC member, but that it would go to the Policy Board as an action item in October.

Item 8. Discuss Future Agenda Items.

Nancy Tanner asked for upcoming Agenda Items. Travis explained that the next Policy Board would be in October, and there would be an update from the consultant on the multimodal plan. The consultant has just gotten started on the thoroughfare plan. They had been working on the multi modal aspect of it, but they would be updating everyone on the progress thus far. In January the MPO would need to update the safety performance measures, and TxDOT would be updating their road and bridge condition measures, so that would also need to be looked at in January.

Kit Black explained that as of December 1st, Blair Johnson was named as the new District Engineer.

Item 9. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned with no further business to discuss.

Ginger Nelson, Chairman
Amarillo MPO