

MINUTES

AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Policy Committee for the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization met at 1:30 p.m., April 15, 2021, Via Zoom.

Voting members present were: 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 thanked the MPO Policy Board for listening to their comments and concerns about the C-1 project at Coulter. He returned to this meeting to listen in on the discussion about that area again and they are still asking for the overpass at Coulter to be considered, as well as between Hester and Western along Loop 335.

David Lebas added to Joe Shehan's comment that the development in the area on SL335 and Coulter is currently at a standstill until the roadway can be built. Was asked by Mr. Chapman who owns the land to urge the MPO to fund this roadway and provide support. Jared Miller asked what support Mr. Chapman was looking for from the MPO. David Lebas responded that Mr. Chapman is looking for guidance and commitment for a time frame for those two roadways. Jared Miller commented that there was a schedule for that projected roadway and asked Kit Black for clarification on that schedule. Kit explained that the preliminary build is fairly set and there would be discussion for that later in the meeting. David stated that might answer any questions he might have raised.

With no other speakers Jared Miller moved on to the next item.

Item 2. Discuss and Consider Approval of the January 21st, 2021 meeting minutes.

Jared asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dan Reese moved to approve the minutes as presented. Nancy Tanner seconded the movement.

The motion passed unanimously at 9-0.

Item 3. Discuss and Consider Performance Measures from the ACT Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan

Travis stated under the current transportation act which is the FAST Act, that the MPO is supposed to incorporate a performance based approach to planning. The MPO is doing that by utilizing the performance measures. Over the last several years the MPO has implemented many of these performance measures. The ones being discussed was the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Transit presented the PTASP at the workshop in March, the plan identified four different safety measures, fatalities, injuries, safety events, and system reliability. This is broken down into two systems, the fixed route system and on demand, which is the Spectrans system. The performance measures went before City Council in December of 2020, and were adopted by them. It was also sent to the TAC which recommended the approval of these targets. Transit is required to update these annually, and the MPO is required to adopt them within 180 days within Council adopting but the MPO is not required to look at them again until the long range plan. However, best practices are that if Transit adopts a change with the measures, the MPO Policy Board should review and adopt them as well. Travis explained since Canyon was brought into the MPO, but is served by a rural transit system, that they are not required to adopt these safety measures until a later date. The measures were based on historic numbers. Something to consider on System Reliability, it's the distance between major repairs and Transit is receiving new busses this year, so that will reduce the time with better busses.

Kyle Ingham asked since the MPO has taken on Canyon, if there was a grace period before it was needed to incorporate their transit into these safety measures. Travis explained that theirs had been postponed by Federal Transit at this time, because they are under a different funding category.

Jared asked if there were any other questions. There were none. Jared called for a motion.

Eddie Sauer motioned, HR Kelley seconded. Motion carried unanimously 9-0

Item 4. Presentation on the Annual Listing of Projects

This is a required report on all the projects that have received funding in the last year, or a project for a previous year that received additional funding. Normally this is done at the end of the calendar year for the previous fiscal year, but the information had been delayed. The transit listings include Highway projects, Transit projects, and group projects. Travis explained what things might be included in each project type. The dollar amount listed is only the federal dollars put towards each project. The item does not require any action, but it is a required reporting.

Kyle asked what SL435 was. Travis explained that the SL435 designation is for River Road. Jared asked what an Environmental Justice Area was. Travis explained it's a low income and minority area.

Item 5. Update on Discussion about Loop 335 and Coulter Project

Kit Black gave a presentation on the SL 335 expansion to help explain the project, and the build out at North Coulter. Kit explained that the need and purpose of SL 335 is to improve safety, and provide an alternate route for freight traffic. This reduces freight traffic downtown. This is achieved through a multiple phase project. Phase 1's main objective is to get a four lane divided highway around the west side completed. This is what the MPO has been moving towards with Planning and funding etc.

The first phase of this build out is to basically make the frontage roads, leaving space between for the main lanes in later phases. The loop main lanes would then be added in the middle, so that it wouldn't cause issues with any development once the frontage roads were added in. As these main lanes have not been funded yet, there is no set schedule for them to be completed. Kit also showed a map of the different sections, and when they would be completed.

Kit went on to talk about a generic arterial intersections and that they were already working on grade separations at Coulter. However this stretch at Coulter had a traffic count of nine thousand vehicles per day and the grade separation would be at 2590. Jared Miller asked if there were any plans to connect North Coulter to Coulter. Kyle Schniderjan said that yes and one of the things the body would consider with the multimodal/thoroughfare plan would look at multiple expansions of arterials. It is being considered and added to the thoroughfare plan. Jared asked if the Right of Way was acquired and Kyle stated that it had not been yet. Jared asked if there was a desire from the property owners for that connection. Kyle stated yes there was and a piece of that was dedicated with the new Soncy subdivision that went in West of Tascosa Road and the Right of Way was dedicated as part of that platting process, but the middle space was yet to receive development pressure.

Kyle Ingham asked what the goal was based on Joe Shehan's questions. Jared explained that it was to develop North of SL 335. Kyle summed up that the request was for a more comprehensive overpass at that intersection. Jared asked Kit if there was a comparison financially for what was proposed by Joe Shehan and what was already planned. Kit showed a Build out plan for the current plan and in today's dollars, was a \$15.7 million construction cost. Jared asked if that was \$15 million more than what was already planned. Kit explained that no, that is the full cost for the current plan. To add in an overpass as Joe Shehan is requesting would give it a \$30.8 million total, so the delta was a \$15.1 million to add in the overpass. Kyle asked if the \$15 million intersection was comparable to the traffic counts for the other intersections of the same traffic rate. Kit stated that yes it was and showed a map where these overpasses and main lane construction have been deferred to a later time. Jared Miller asked if there was any reason why we wouldn't move up these overpasses to a sooner construction if the outside party were to bring the resources necessary to make it happen. Kit answered no, if outside funding became available it would be a motivator to complete these sooner. Kyle Ingham stated that he believed what the intention with this new West Loop was to keep from what happened with the old West Loop with direct access everywhere and slowing it down to an urban street. All the intersections were in play, the intention was to keep traffic flowing. Jared asked if there were traffic counts for all these intersections. Kit explained they did not list all of them, but Kyle Schniderjan explained that they weren't all there because not all of those intersections existed yet. Kyle also stated that further in the presentation, it would explain how everything ties together.

Kit explained that the TAC took a look at the project again last month as well as the information recently presented for the West half of the loop. The recommendation of the TAC was to take individual intersections and break them out as individual projects, and to prioritize them on the priority list of projects. Jared asked if the service roads were being built first. Kit explained yes it was. Jared surmised that there would be better performance information once those overpasses were ready to be built and that there would be a better understanding how to prioritize these

intersections then. Kit agreed and explained that priorities will shift as they are looked at every year with new information. Kyle Ingham asked if there was any further funding coming out of the American Rescue Plan, that there was a lot of money being spent on infrastructure. He asked if there was any way to accelerate construction. Kit said he did not have much information on that proposal yet. He asked if Blair had any information or ideas. Blair Johnson stated that it was too early to begin planning anything with that just yet that it went back to looking at the priority list and making sure all of that was in line if and when those funds became available. Kyle stated that he felt we should be more ready than others as we have spent the past five years really planning our priority list. Kyle stated that he felt the MPO was ahead of the competition for whatever the extra funding is for. Blair said that yes that's a good point, as there is already full builds and environmental clearance, so that should put the MPO in good standing for those funding opportunities.

Jared stated he believed he was incorrect when he said there was a full timeline, as not everything was in the ten year plan just yet. Kit explained that the full build out is not in the ten year plan, but there is a firm timeline on getting a four lane divided facility on the West side of the loop. Jared stated that for Coulter, we have the design that shows a \$15 million project within the ten year program. Kit explained the initial phase is part of the last link in the four lane divided project, and that construction starts in 2023, it's just the main lanes that don't exist. Kyle asked if it was a good idea to put those in the ten year plan to be shovel ready on parts of the main lanes and overpasses in the latter half of the ten year plan. Kit explained that the ten year plan was fiscally constrained, and it was full. However the priority list was not fiscally constrained, and that was where these projects without funding should be so that they could be gotten ready in the prioritized order, just awaiting funding. Kyle said that everyone had done a good job on that as the area will soon be competing with Dallas, 380 and San Antonio for funding. The more ready we are the better off we will be. Jared asked for any other questions.

Kit explained the other section that Joe Shehan had brought up was just East of what the map showed, from Hester to Western. Jared stated that there are no service roads from Hester to Western. Kit explained that the frontage road concept ended at the railroad, as it was not feasible to put more at grade crossings over the railroad, so the frontage road lanes would end just before the railroad crossing. Kit explained that the \$82 million for this project led from Western, and ran out at Coulter street. Where the project ends near Hester, is where the existing four lane divided loop starts and goes East. So the roads tied back in with the existing main lanes to make the full loop of four lane divided roads. Ideally with more funding, they would be able to build out the frontage roads from Hester to Western. To add those frontage roads would be a \$20 million add on to the current project.

Jared stated that it would be difficult to reprioritize based on the traffic counts, but with the cost deltas, and with better understanding on the full data once those roads were being used, it would be better to prioritize then. Kit stated that new road should be opened up in about 18 months. Jared stated that there would be better comparative data then to make informed decisions for the future, but he didn't think they had enough information to make changes to funding right now. Kyle Ingham wanted it put on record that for the MPO staff and TxDOT staff to have an educated discussion on things five and ten years out, financially constrained and beyond, that a lot of legwork has been done and he appreciated it so that the body could have an educated discussion. Jared stated that the work from both the requestor and TxDOT. Kit

explained from the planning perspective, that those overpasses that have been differed, they are ready to go, they are as close to shovel ready as they can get without construction funds.

Jared asked for any further questions, and stated that he didn't think that the MPO was in a position to make any decisions about funding for overpasses at this time. Kyle asked if they were laying any conduit as they were developing this area. Kit stated that no, they are not laying empty conduits. Blair explained that that was a discussion going on in the state, and that's why they are not hopping into that just yet.

With no further questions Jared moved on to the next item.

Item 6. Update on Construction Projects

Corky Neukam presented the update on current construction projects.

On the Whittaker, Lakeside, and Pullman bridges, the project is about 75% finished. The cost was \$50 million at letting, and the goal was to rebuild 6 bridges and approaches. The major successes they had on this project, was that traffic was switched from the East bound Side to the West Bound side, and that they have poured the deck for the Whittaker East bound Bridge, they are also going to pour the Lakeside deck next month, and working on the center median concrete barrier. Once the barrier is done, they will be able to open up all six lanes from the Airport exit to the 287 split, and they will be striping lanes next week. All that is left is the approaches to Whittaker, turnouts at Whittaker and Lakeside, and the overlay on frontage roads.

The next project was B1 Phase 1, the SL 335 Interchange, Coulter Bridge, and Frontage roads. Still about 75% completed. They are building the turnarounds at I-27 to connect. They are going to have to move traffic to build, but should be operational by Spring/Summer of 2021. The Coulter bridge is planned to be poured in June, and it gives the opportunity to connect to the main lanes.

B1 Phase 2 – Coulter to West of FM 2590, the connector project was started back in March and is about 7% complete. They are working on the playa lake, and have the drill shafts done, and waiting on contractor.

B2 Phase 1 – SL 335 Frontage Roads (FM 2590 to IH -40) is a \$42 million project and is about 65% complete. They have footprints in, but roads not quite completed, and whole project should be completed by August 2022.

B2 Phase 2 – SL 335 Frontage Roads (IH40 to SW 9th Ave tie in.)- They are putting in two bridges over Helium road. \$50 million project, and about 41% complete. They will be pouring West Bound deck in May. Once that is poured, the traffic switch will be in summer of 2021.

Corky gave a few other projects of interest. The first was on I-27 working on the center concrete barrier and overlay. The US 60 project, they are working on medians and left turn lanes. There is the I-27 Operational Improvements from Washington to interchange. Flipping some ramps,

and working on center median, and will be letting in May. There are some bridge rehab projects on I-40 on Coulter, Western, Paramount and Georgia, completed on Western, now on Paramount and Georgia. The final project is the SL 335 and FM 1541 hot mix and overlay project being finished mid-summer.

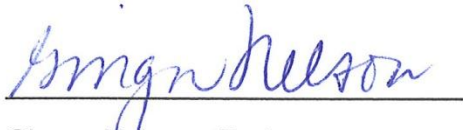
Item 7. Discuss Future Agenda Items.

Travis stated that in July the Multi Modal plan will be going to the Policy Board to adopt. Also in July will be the adoption of the UPWP and the field trip to see the construction sites. At the September workshop, they will be talking about the new updated Priority Project list.

Jared thanked David Lebas and Joe Shehan for being in the meeting, and hoped that he did not go too fast through their item and stated that if they had any further questions to feel free to contact him directly.

Item 8. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned with no further business to discuss.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ginger Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ginger Nelson, Chairman

Amarillo MPO