

Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization Special Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2023

Certification of Quorum

The following voting TAC Members participated: Paul Kaspar, Chair, City of Bryan; Jason Schubert, Vice Chair, City of College Station; Debbie Albert, Texas A&M Transportation Institute; Doug Marino, TxDOT-Bryan District; Prarthana Banerji, Brazos County; and Jo Marlow, Brazos Transit District. The following MPO staff participated: Dan Rudge, Bart Benthul, and Lisa Lyon who took the minutes. Additional meeting participants included Jayson Barfknecht, Carol Cotter, Zachary Kennard, Tim Lomax, Juan Quiroz, and Phillip Tindall.

Welcome and Open Meeting

Paul Kaspar called to order the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at 9:00 a.m. on February 16, 2023. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes from the February 16, 2023 TAC Meeting

Minutes from the February 16, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee Meeting were considered for adoption. **A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jason Schubert. The motion was seconded by Doug Marino. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.**

Limited English Proficiency Plan

Mr. Rudge presented and the updated Limited English Proficiency Plan to the TAC. The plan gives direction on how the MPO will work with those members of the public with limited English proficiency. It was suggested by the TAC that a short Spanish summary of the document be available and that the plan be placed on our website. Also, that there be a notice on the end of agendas that suggests they contact us ahead of time for any accommodation for meetings. **Debbie Albert made a motion to approve the Limited English Proficiency Plan with discussed changes and move it forward to the Policy Board for their approval. The motion was seconded by Paul Kaspar. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.**

TMA Transition White Paper

Once it is placed on the Federal Register, the MPO will officially be designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). Mr. Rudge presented the TMA Transition White Paper which explains the transition to a Transportation Management Area. This document is intended for the Policy Board to distribute to their jurisdictions at their discretion. The document discusses the difference between the metropolitan statistical area and an urbanized area, how the MPO became a TMA, and what the new

requirements are. The document also discusses some of the procedural changes that will happen with the MPO which includes adding a public transit provider representative to the Policy Board. The MPO is also required to develop a Congestion Management Process which has already been drafted. Mr. Rudge and Ms. Albert have been tweaking the CMP to bring back to the TAC and then ultimately the Policy Board for approval. With the transition to a TMA, there will be more oversight from Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. FHWA and FTA staff will perform a mock certification review in June to discover any potential items that need to be addressed before the formal review on November 15-16. The mock certification review will involve staff; however, the full certification review involves TxDOT staff, the Policy Board, and TAC members.

There was discussion regarding funding impacts from the TMA designation such as gaining access to Category 7 and Category 9 funds. Any new funds would most likely not be available until FY 24 or FY 25. However, the biggest impact on all jurisdictions will be what happens with BTDF funding once they are considered a large urban transit system upon the TMA redesignation. BTDF will still be able to use a portion of their 5307 funds for operating costs; however, because of the change from small to large, the TxDOT funding assistance formula will change. The amount of money BTDF will receive will be reduced, but it is unknown at this time by how much. And finally, is there a need for us to have a discussion on transit services about a need for a separate Brazos County Board if local governments are providing funding assistance. There is also the question on how to calculate the amount each local entity would provide in assistance.

October 1st is an important date because TxDOT will be working on revising the PL distribution formula to accommodate the fact that Bryan/College Station and Amarillo are becoming TMAs which affects the amount of funding received. There is also a new MPO at Eagle Pass. Those three things are main factors which will affect the PL distribution formula. There will be a presentation regarding this information at the summer TEMPO meeting.

There is typically a three-year transition window once the TMA designation is placed on the Federal Register; however, since the posting of the 2020 Census was late, it is unknown if the window will be shortened or if it will remain three years as in the past.

Because of some of the questions being asked, Mr. Rudge will include some type of statement that says the information relates only to Brazos Transit District operations in Brazos County and it doesn't affect the other counties that they serve.

Category 10CR funds were briefly discussed. More information is needed at this time to determine how much and what these funds can be used for.

Category 7, 9, and 10CR funds would be eligible for off system projects. Since there are possibly more local projects, it was suggested to have a conversation to see if there is a need to get local government funding certified so local entities do the local letting. That can potentially be a big headache with federal audits, but TxDOT is willing to have the conversation.

There was a request made to change the wording on page 3, number 2, regarding the Congestion Management Process. The wording will be changed to say MPO has already developed a draft Congestion Management Process that can be implemented after TAC review and Policy Board adoption.

There was a suggestion to add a column to the funding table on page five and showing costs and revenues in separate columns in order to better see what the costs are and what the revenues are and what your balance is.

Paul Kaspar made the motion to approve the TMA White Paper with the edits discussed today. Jason Schubert seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Agency Reports

City of College Station by Jason Schubert – no new updates.

Brazos Transit District by Jo Marlow – no new updates. If anyone has questions or needs more information regarding the white paper, please feel free to contact her.

Texas A&M University/TTI by Debbie Albert – The Big Event is coming up March 25th which will generate a lot of traffic in the west campus area as well as a lot of students in the community. She sent traffic control plans to both College Station and TxDOT for them to look at. Family weekend is April 15th which includes many different activities, but most notably the maroon and white game is that day on the 15th at 3 p.m. They have been working with the City of College Station on signal timing and working with getting officers for the event. Ms. Albert will be following up with traffic control plans for those two events. On April 25th they are going to be bringing in the Wall that Heals which is a scaled replica of the Vietnam Memorial wall. It will end up at Veteran's Park in College Station but they're going to meet up at the RELLIS Campus on the 25th in the afternoon and it will get a police escort as well as an escort from 17-500 motorcycles that will be bringing it in and come down State Highway 47 to Stotzer Parkway to FM 2818 to Highway 6 to get into the park. They are really encouraging people from the community to watch the escort happen.

Brazos County by Prarthana Banerji – They are still wrapping up a few projects. Old Reliance Road will have bid openings next week.

TxDOT by Doug Marino and Juan Quiroz – Phase 2A Raised medians are on-going on Texas Avenue. Phase 2B will come in a couple of years later letting in 2025 which will construct the loons, sidewalks, etc. Phase 2B is still under design and TxDOT is working toward getting right-of-way acquisition started. They have met with city officials to discuss the history of the project and hear thoughts on some changes and making changes they suggested. TxDOT is continuing to field phone calls from citizens and have received some suggested changes, some of which are good and TxDOT will make some changes to the medians themselves in the current project.

The FM 1179 raised median project will start soon. There is a safety project where TxDOT is doing a lot of signal improvements, flashing beacons, and that kind of thing. It looks as if this week at one of the locations which is FM 2818, Beck Street to Leonard Road, they are starting on that location to put new ped signals at Leonard Road and a multi-use or shared use path.

For design projects, there was a stake holder meeting with the City of Bryan and MPO regarding the FM 1179 from 158 to Easterling roadway widening. They received great input and will continue to develop the schematic design and initiate environmental studies. Looking ahead, they are targeting a public meeting in the summer time frame.

The second project is FM 2154 near Wellborn. They are finalizing the schematic with the city's consultant. Some of the final things are confirming the footprint for environmental documentation and railroad coordination. In April, they are meeting with the City of College Station and the Wellborn Community to discuss aspects of the 2154 widening project. After that, based on the meeting outcome, they will come back and make any modifications and provide an opportunity to comment. After that, they will move into PS&E.

City of Bryan by Paul Kaspar – Old Hearne Road is still under construction and construction will continue for most of the rest of this year. They are doing paving work now so there is progress. The city has received bids for South College Avenue and they are currently considering those. They may either rebid or do some small changes to it. The quickest it would be under construction is probably within the next month and a half to two months, but could be closer to the summertime. They had a preconstruction meeting today for a related project to dig out two detention sediment pond areas to both South College and Midtown Park Lake. That combined project will be getting started this week and there may be extra traffic in the South College area and Carson area of South College where they'll be hauling out and moving around a lot of dirt.

There have been a number of media pictures and postings regarding curiosity about poles with solar panels and gauges at creek crossings around town. These are part of the Bryan Early Flood Warning System (B-FEWS). The city has chosen 19 of their 20 locations throughout Bryan to place a gauge network at crossings where creeks have historically come out of the banks and over the roadways. Roadway overtopping of the flood waters is the reason why they are placing these with flashing beacon alerts at the locations. The city received Texas Water Development Board funding for the project a few years ago and they are in the final stages of the construction of the units. They look like a school zone flasher on either side of the creek crossing for the roadway alerting you when flashing that water is across the roadway. Mr. Kaspar offered to give a presentation regarding B-FEWS to the Policy Board in April.

Staff Report/Upcoming Events

Staff has been attending webinars regarding SS4A grant funding. It is still unknown when the contract will be sent and the timeline for executing the contract. Once the contract is executed, there is one year to finish it. Mr. Rudge has been working on recruiting people for the Advisory Panel, and once he hears back from those he has contacted, will send out a list to the TAC. So far there is a bicycle advocate, Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living, someone from the Chamber, and next week he will get a name from the Brazos Valley Economic Development Corporation. Once this is presented to the Policy Board, it is assumed that they will request assistance from their TAC representative who would be appropriate for the Panel.

Ms. Albert has been reviewing the Draft Congestion Management Process and our Public Participation procedures. We wanted to address in the Congestion Management Process that the correct data sets are being used and how the congestion management process feeds into project selection and putting projects in the TIP.


The Public Participation Procedures didn't really have much in the way of virtual public meetings and Ms. Albert has been working to add that. Once these two documents are ready, they will come back to the TAC for review and approval.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.




Technical Advisory Committee Chair/Vice-Chair
Bryan-College Station
Metropolitan Planning Organization



Date

ATTEST:



Dan Rudge - BCSMPO