

# Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization MPO Policy Board Meeting Minutes

*June 28, 2023*

## ***Certification of Quorum***

The following voting members were present: Nancy Berry, Chair, Brazos County; John Nichols, Vice Chair, City of College Station; James Edge, Member, City of Bryan; Peter Lange, Member, Texas A&M University; and Chad Bohne, Member, TxDOT Bryan District. MPO staff present were Dan Rudge, Bart Benthul, and Lisa Lyon. The sign-in sheet for the meeting is attached listing other attendees.

## ***Welcome and Open Meeting***

Nancy Berry, Board Chair, called to order the Policy Board meeting at 9:00 a.m. on June 28, 2023, at the Brazos County Commissioner's Courtroom, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, TX. The meeting opened with an invocation by Dan Rudge and pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags.

## ***Approval of Minutes from the April 5, 2023, Policy Board Meeting***

The minutes of the April 5, 2023, Policy Board meeting were reviewed. Peter Lange made the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by James Edge. The minutes were adopted by a unanimous vote.

## ***MPO Staff Report by Dan Rudge***

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program – The MPO has received the signed agreement from Federal Highway Administration for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant. The next step is to procure help to complete the grant. It is anticipated that an RFQ will be sent out soon and work will begin in October. This study will take one year to complete. Mr. Rudge has made presentations to both the cities and the county. Invoices have been sent out to the two cities from the county for their \$20,000 match. Although the committee is not needed until work begins, the process of forming the committee has started and input is being sought from both cities and the county to identify potential committee members.

The Mock Transportation Management Area Certification Review – Two weeks ago, the MPO underwent a mock transportation management area certification review. A mock certification review results in advice in three particular categories. The first category is corrective action

where the MPO is not meeting the federal requirements and a corrective action must be taken. The second category is recommendations which are things the MPO may already be doing but a tweak is suggested to do it better. And lastly, commendations which are things the MPO is doing above and beyond what is typical of an MPO. An example of a recommendation that was given is there is not a designated place on the MPO website for someone to file a Title VI concern or complaint. It was suggested that there be a place on the website for a citizen to click, fill out a form, and that be sent to a staff member. At the conclusion of our certification review, the MPO had zero corrective actions, thirteen recommendations, and 30 commendations. Mr. Rudge thanked Ms. Weedon, Ms. Marlow, and the Brazos Transit District for hosting the review.

Texas Innovation Alliance Innovation Invitational – The Texas Innovation Alliance 2023 Innovation Invitational will be held in July 17-19 in Austin. Team Bryan/College Station has representatives from both cities, TTI, Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living, and TxDOT.

### ***Pavement Conditions Performance Target***

The Texas Department of Transportation adopts new targets every couple of years for a variety of different topics. Once TxDOT adopts the target, the MPO has 180 days to either come up with their own targets or support the state targets.

In the past, the MPO has typically chosen to support the state target for pavement conditions and the Technical Advisory Committee has recommended the same. The MPO is required to show percentage of pavements that we anticipate to be in poor condition as well as those we expect to be in good condition. Throughout the B/CS MPO area, which is Brazos County, it is expected to have 1.5% to be in poor condition and 46% in good condition by 2024.

Currently, there is no mechanism that awards an MPO for developing their own targets. Typically, only MPOs with a population of one million or greater adopt their own targets. Given what happened with the pandemic and what is seen in terms of travel patterns and freight movement, it doesn't make sense to spend a lot of time coming up with our own, so it is recommended to adopt the state targets.

**John Nichols made the motion to adopt the state's Pavement Conditions Performance Target. The motion was seconded by Peter Lange. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.**

### ***Bridge Deck Performance Targets***

Similar to pavement conditions performance targets, the Technical Advisory Committee realized that Brazos County was probably doing better than the state; however, the Technical Advisory Committee suggested that the MPO support the state targets because they did not want to suggest that we provide cover for Austin and Dallas that have worse conditions.

**James Edge made the motion to adopt the state's Bridge Deck Performance Targets. The motion was seconded by John Nichols. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.**

## ***Non-Interstate National Highway System Travel Time Reliability Performance Target***

The MPO is supposed to adopt a travel time reliability target for non-interstate national highway system roadways which would be State Highway 6, State Highway 30, State Highway 47, FM 2818, FM 60/ University Drive. What was discovered when reviewing the data is that the Texas Department of Transportation has changed their data sets that are used to come up with these travel time reliability estimates. There hasn't been a long enough period of time to determine whether or not the change to the new data sets actually matches what may happen on the ground.

In addition, much of the data was collected during the pandemic when there wasn't a lot of travel, so it made it really difficult for TxDOT to come up with what they felt were really good travel time reliability targets. Given that, the TAC decided that since the data sets are new and the state's not really sure if this is good target, it would be best to support the state targets.

**Peter Lange made the motion to adopt the state's Non-Interstate NHS Travel Time Reliability Performance Target. The motion was seconded by James Edge. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.**

## ***FY 2022 Annual Listing of Projects (ALOP)***

The Annual Listing of Projects is a document that the MPO must produce as a requirement of federal funding. It is a listing of projects that were let by the Texas Department of Transportation or local government during the last fiscal year. Of the projects listed in the document, there was one highway project, four transit projects, a bicycle and pedestrian project, and then the remainder are called grouped projects. Grouped projects can be confusing for the first-time user of the ALOP. There are references in the grouped projects such as project in Limestone County, but Limestone County is not in the MPO. Federal Highway Administration has allowed the Texas Department of Transportation to group things like pavement resurfacing projects into one big project in order to let them. There might be fifteen projects that are let with one contract, but it's the lead contract that has to be shown in our MPOs ALOP. Even though there is a project in Brazos County, the Brazos County project is not listed, but instead the Limestone County project is listed because that was the lead project that was let for the group of projects. Because projects can be grouped, there is a fairly significant cost savings.

**James Edge made the motion to adopt the FY 2022 Annual Listing of Projects. The motion was seconded by Nancy Berry. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.**

## ***Texas Innovation Alliance Update***

The Texas Innovation Alliance (TIA) is trying to get back on track after the pandemic. There is a TIA Innovation Invitational July 17-19 in Austin, Texas. The Invitational is where teams come to talk about how they've reset themselves and what they are going to do.

Founded in 2016, the Texas Innovation Alliance is a peer-to-peer network of Texas cities, transportation agencies, and research institutions that are looking at developing shared solutions using emerging technologies to try to improve the transportation network in the State of Texas. Of the Texas groups, Team Bryan/College Station is the smallest (in population) of the teams. The B/CS MPO has been a part of the Alliance since its inception and our focus has been on trying to look at small community and rural issues and innovation that may not be so dependent on technology. There is a bi-weekly meeting and anyone on the team can listen in. Teams talk about their different projects and industry experts come and talk to the teams about different technologies out there. It is a way to learn about what others are doing since possibly a piece of that may be applicable in their particular community. When you are part of the Alliance you create a team. Team Bryan/College Station is made up of Mr. Rudge and Mr. Benthul as co-chairs, and representatives from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Brazos Transit District, TxDOT Bryan District, the two cities, and the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living.

An example of a past project is getting people home from the hospital that do not have their own transportation. The team sat down with the medical community and discovered that people are usually released later in the evening when most traditional services are not available. One of the ideas that came out of the team meetings was to suggest releasing patients in the morning instead of the late evening. After speaking with the doctors, it became apparent they would not change the release timing. As a result, one of the changes that came about was Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living changed their hours-of-service delivery so that they could handle some of those discharged patients to get them from the hospital back to their home. The alternative is putting discharged patients in an ambulance and sending them back, which is very expensive and can be an unexpected bill for some.

A new focus of the Alliance is to get everyone ready for the new federal grants that are out there. One of the grants for local focus is the Intersection Safety Challenge. Applications for this grant are due by September 29, 2023. There is also a Reconnecting Communities grant which should come out sometime this summer. There is also a SMART grant focusing on advanced technologies in the fall. Also, there are Low-Emission No-Emission (LONO) grants which allow transit agencies to acquire zero and low emission vehicles for buses and supporting facilities. We have had great success locally in applying for this grant.

The charge given each team when we met with the Innovation Alliance back in May was to identify three local projects to support the Alliance focus areas. Some of the things they are focusing on are connected and autonomous vehicles, electrification, unmanned aerial systems, sensors, traffic signals, freight and logistics systems integrations (and may more). There are also all types of data sets and teams are determining how they might be able to apply the data to

things like work zone safety, signal priorities, real time traffic alerts, EV charging siting, and even things like bridge impact detection, and pavement condition monitoring. There is a smorgasbord of things that all of the different teams are looking at.

Team Bryan/College Station is focusing on Smart Intersection concepts at six intersections. TTI was awarded \$1.6 million to look at five Smart Intersections in and around the Texas A&M University Campus. One location was added at the request of the City of Bryan which is FM 2818 and Mumford Road. This location has a lot of heavy truck traffic from the local industrial parks that are traveling on FM 2818. There are a lot of “near miss” scenarios so the team is looking at developing some innovative ideas for that particular intersection.

Another project selected by the team was vehicle electrification. There is a large inventory of charging stations available in Brazos County, but the average citizen does not know where they are located. Putting together an inventory of where those are and making it available to the public will help citizens know where in Brazos County they might be able to charge their vehicles. Additionally, staff at TTI are taking a look at electric versus diesel energy consumption and what those look like so recommendations can be made to those that operate fleets. Deciding whether it makes more sense to have an electric or diesel fleet is all based on the amount of energy consumed. The team would also like to continue to pursue LONO grants for transit vehicles. Even though we have had some success, we want to continue to improve our chances for getting those in the future.

The last project is to develop a better way to get information out to the public as they plan their local trips. Determining how information is collected and disseminated to the general public is the focus. In a couple of years, State Highway 6, and the Bush/Wellborn project will be under construction at the exact same time which the team refers to as Transportation Armageddon navigation. Locally, there is not a need for a fancy traffic operations center like in Houston; however, there is a need to have something that works better for folks in Bryan/College Station. Some of the ideas is to host a page where people can login and see during a certain time period you can expect this kind of construction traffic to occur and where. That information would also be made available to Texas A&M so they could use their push notification network to get it out to people on campus.

The other big focus this year is looking at an innovation zone. An innovation zone is where you test, deploy, and scale advanced mobility solutions. It's also intended to help local agencies get better strategically positioned for funding opportunities by establishing partnerships, identifying solutions, and receiving feedback. The team building part occurred in April and May. TAC hosted the staff from Texas Innovation Alliance at their May meeting to talk about how we might look at some of those. The next step is attending the Innovation Invitational to fine tune what the team's focus will be for those innovation zones. The innovation zone has been identified as was shown on a map. It extends from the FM 2818/Mumford Road intersection at the north all the way to the State Highway 6/William Fitch interchange. Since State Highway 6 which will be under construction during the time that we're working on these projects, that is how the team honed in on the innovation zone.

The next steps prior to the July Innovation Invitational is to look at what the team is going to try to do based on the three projects that we've selected. The team will look at community benefits and if these projects are addressing community needs. At the Innovation Invitational, Mr. Rudge will make a pitch to industry experts who will respond with problems, suggestions, and recommendations. The Innovation Invitational is focused on connected and autonomous vehicles, data and traffic operations, electrification, and mobility as a service. The team will present ideas for our innovation zone and receive feedback. Federal grant opportunities will also be discussed to see what is appropriate for Brazos County and if they should be pursued. After the Innovation Invitational, teams will take the feedback and resubmit. In September, TxDOT is giving awards for those that they think are particularly innovative and match up with the goals and objectives that the Texas Department of Transportation has for the entire state.

### ***Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

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Meeting: Policy Board Meeting

Date: 6/28/2023

Name	Agency
John Nichols	City of C.S.
Lara Spears	Newtown Capital
Crista Bourne	TXDOT
Dennis Christensen	RMA
Duane Peters	Blanco Co.
James Edge	CITY OF BRYAN
JASON SCHUBERT	CITY OF C.S.
JO MANDOW	BROADSTRAITS District
JOHN CONQUEST	HALFF ASSOCIATES
Wanda J. Watson	Blanco County
Karl Kasper	City of Bryan



BRYAN / COLLEGE STATION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Name	Agency
Juan Quiroz	TxDOT - Bryan District
Wendy Weedon	BTD
Katie Mock	BTD
Debbie Albert	TTI



ATTEST:



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MPO Policy Board Chair/Vice-Chair  
Bryan-College Station  
Metropolitan Planning Organization



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Dan Rudge - BC/MPO

8.16.23

Date