

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

August 3, 2022

Certification of Quorum

The following voting members were present: Nancy Berry, Chair, Brazos County; Karl Mooney, Vice Chair, City of College Station; Andrew Nelson, Member, City of Bryan; and Chad Bohne, TxDOT Bryan District, Member. MPO staff present were Dan Rudge and Lisa Lyon who took the minutes. The sign-in sheets for the meeting are attached listing other attendees.

Welcome and Open Meeting

Nancy Berry, Board Chair, called to order the Policy Board meeting at 9:31 a.m. on August 3, 2022, at the Brazos County Commissioner's Courtroom, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, TX. The meeting opened with pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags and was followed with an invocation by Dan Rudge.

Approval of Minutes from the June 1, 2022 Policy Board Meeting

Minutes from the June 1, 2022, Policy Board Meeting were considered for adoption. **A motion to approve the minutes was made by Karl Mooney. The motion was seconded by Andrew Nelson. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.**

MPO Staff Report by Dan Rudge

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Progress Report – Mr. Rudge has meetings scheduled with the City of Bryan, City of College Station, and Brazos County. At these meetings he is giving information about the grant and what the local entities would need to do in order to move forward with the grant and receive the federal funds. The Texas A&M Center for Transportation Safety offered to write the grant and then it would need to be reviewed and submitted.

Congestion Management Process – The designations for Traffic Management Area will be coming up early next year. If the MPO is redesignated as a Transportation Management area a Congestion Management Process will be required. The Congestion Management Process could potentially be a good guide for the MPO as decisions are made on what kind of projects are chosen and how to cost effectively manage congestion issues. A committee has been reformed to continue the work of developing the Congestion Management Process.

Multiple Use Agreements on Public Rights-of-Way – These agreements allow Brazos Transit to have bus stops and shelters on TxDOT and local community streets. The agreement was drafted by MPO staff and then shared with appropriate staff from each jurisdiction. One of the things highlighted from the process was that all of the entities want to see a map of the locations. Brazos Transit District has provided the map of locations and are awaiting feedback from the local jurisdictions. The agreement provides flexibility for both Brazos Transit District and the local jurisdictions. The primary reason for the agreement is to provide jurisdictions the written authority to say yay or nay to bus stop and shelter locations. It also allows the jurisdiction to decide that a bus stop or shelter needs to be moved in order to accommodate a new development for example, but at that jurisdiction’s expense and discretion.

Bryan District Traffic Saturation Counts – Every five years, TxDOT comes to the Bryan District and requests to conduct saturation counts. Typically, there are a handful of sites around the county in which data is collected annually; however, TxDOT does multiple counts in the thousands when they conduct saturation counts. TxDOT allows the MPO to request between 75-100 new locations whenever saturation counts are conducted. The Technical Advisory Committee is determining where the traffic saturation counts need to be in order to best serve the City of Bryan, City of College Station, Brazos County, and TxDOT. Currently, the requests for new count locations are being submitted to TxDOT.

Unified Transportation Program and Impacts on MPO Documents – The Texas Transportation Commission is currently considering the Unified Transportation Program (UTP), and if approved as submitted will trigger revisions in MPO documents. The Bush/Wellborn project is in the UTP; however, it has not been included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). If the Bush/Wellborn project makes the final cut, the MTP will need to be amended to include that project. Some of the other project descriptions in the UTP are slightly different from what is in the MTP and potentially could be slightly different than what is in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Once the Texas Transportation Commission transmits their final decision, staff will begin the process of amending the MTP and TIP. If approved, this will also bring a significant amount of additional funding.

Draft FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Every two years, the MPO is required to create and adopt a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The draft TIP presented is for FY 2023 – FY 2026. The TIP specifies which of the MPO projects using MPO directed funding will be put out for bid between 2023 and 2026. For example, State Highway 6 is one of the big projects included. In the back there is a considerable amount of information regarding how the MPO will integrate the performance measures such as safety, pavement condition, bridge condition, and others that have been adopted by the Policy Board. There is also a section on what specific projects are being included in the TIP to address specific issues. In this draft there is a typo that will be corrected in the final TIP which is the word lighting was left off of a description for a safety project.

During discussion, the question was posed whether the Bush/Wellborn project should be added to this TIP. Mr. Rudge explained the project would be beyond the years that are included in the current TIP.

A motion was made by Andrew Nelson to adopt the FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The motion was seconded by Karl Mooney. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Process for Amending the 2050 Major Thoroughfare Concept

Since the adoption of the 2050 Major Thoroughfare Concept, some of the proposed roadways, including the I-14 Loop and the eastern inner-loop, are now in the path of development. The development community has asked about the process for amending the Concept. MPO staff was charged with developing a process to allow local governments to request amendments. The Technical Advisory Committee requested the following as part of the process:

- an application form that is no longer than one page;
- the application must originate from the local government and not from a developer;
- the local government would provide information on whether they are recommending approval or disapproval of the request;
- supporting documentation including a map would need to be included.

These requests will be handled as they are received. Meetings would be scheduled with the Technical Advisory Committee in such a way to ensure their recommendation is made available to the Planning and Zoning Committees for the two cities prior to their consideration of the project. The MPO recognizes that the county has adopted the Major Thoroughfare Concept as its own Thoroughfare Concept. To streamline the process, the MPO will collect all requests for changes over the year and present it to the Commissioner's Court once a year (instead of going before Commissioner's Court several times a year) in October or November so the county can adopt the new map.

The cities have their own particular process for notifying property owners when there is an amendment to the thoroughfare Plan. For example, in the City of Bryan, if there is a request to move an alignment completely off their property, then the property owners where the line would be moved all get letters to inform them of what is being proposed. So, with any proposed amendment, it is important that the local jurisdiction's process be followed.

A motion was made by Karl Mooney to adopt the Major Thoroughfare Concept Amendment Process as well as the Amendment Application Form. The motion was seconded by Andrew Nelson. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Presentation on Texas A&M Football Game Traffic Operations

Debbie Albert with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute presented the 2022 Kyle Field Transportation Plan.

It is approaching a decade of the new and improved Kyle Field Transportation Plan and eight seasons of experience with the expanded Kyle Field. They are handling 25% more or larger crowds than pre-2013. They are currently able to clear congestion at about two hours or less with the overall philosophy being let the “leavers” leave and get people out of town quickly in order to return the transportation system back to the local community as soon as possible. This is done through a combination of monitoring and quickly adjusting the traffic signals and personnel to be able to address any issues or concerns that come up. Quite a bit of time is spent updating the Destination Aggieland telephone app which is now housed on the Texas A&M mobile website where you can get a whole host of information as well as buying parking, tickets, etc. There has also been a large focus on creating safer and more enjoyable spaces for pedestrians as pedestrian safety is one of their number one goals. Bus service has also been improved as well as pedestrian paths to and from Kyle Field to the tailgate areas. With any kind of special event, there are sometimes competing interests happening. One of the main focus areas is really getting people to and from an event as safely and efficiently as possible; however, there are other interests. With the current plan, they have been able to help increase the awareness of other activities that are available in the community such as dining, hotels, shopping and entertainment options to really showcase the community.

To manage any event as large as the A&M Kyle Field football games is not something you can do as an individual or even a small group of individuals. It takes a village to deliver the Kyle Field transportation plan. Texas A&M University works closely with the City of Bryan, the City of College Station, and TxDOT, as well as a lot of the local community organizations. These partnerships have been leveraged to create better traffic not only for game day, but Monday through Friday as well as some of the other smaller events that are held on campus.

Monday through Friday, the campus area generally has about 75,000 students, faculty and staff that are descending on a fairly small area. When you look at that relative to some of the major downtown metro areas in Texas, it is the fourth largest Texas downtown which gives a perspective on some of the challenges when serving all of these guests as well as the local community. All of this has to be carried out with no freeway access in the vicinity of the campus area.

Ms. Albert showed two different graphs. In 2013, there was generally about an hour of persistent congestion post-game. The traffic started to ramp up 25-30 minutes after the game ended and then would last for about an hour and then it would taper off. For very large crowds such as the Alabama game, that persistent congestion lasted over two hours and with 4-5% congested roadways even four hours after the game. With the current traffic plan, traffic moves off campus about 30 minutes more quickly. There is a higher peak of congestion which means traffic is loaded onto the available capacity of the roads much more quickly and then those peaks taper sharply suggesting that people are actually getting out of the community more quickly.

Some of the key components of the transportation plan include safer pedestrian paths, separate routes for cars, buses, and pedestrians; better signalization, monitoring devices, and contraflow

lanes; faster reaction to problems; pre-pay parking with more efficient entry; and more fan engagement.

Texas A&M is encouraging the use of the Destination Aggieland app. It has been moved and you can find it inside of the Texas A&M app. They are encouraging fans and the local community to seek out information at this location. There is a wealth of information from parking, traffic, shuttles, and paying for parking passes. Ticket purchase is available as well and you can go into ticket swaps from the Destination Aggieland app. In the app, you can sign up for push notifications or social media for football games or other events that are hosted throughout the year.

Accomplishments in 2021 included: handling the 2nd and 3rd largest crowds ever; less congested time and opened more exit routes sooner; reduced staffing needs and better communication; and traffic control removed within two hours for six of seven games. Ms. Albert showed a graph of typical gameday status which included 22,100 shuttle riders in 2021, and 20,000-22,000 parked cars 2014-2021.

How is this all happening?

- Encouraging fans to be part of the solution by checking entry and exit routes and choose your parking based on that information.
- Leveraging communications and the traffic control centers for Kyle Field and the City of College Station. There are upgraded traffic cameras, software, controllers, and message channels.
- Coordinate officers, buses, and routes.
- More green signal time on exit routes.
- Buses dynamically assigned based on demand with better routes.
- Wellborn Road and Discovery Drive contraflow lanes.

Ms. Albert showed slides of the different parking lot options and surrounding areas. If you are not able to park in your most ideal place, there are many shuttle routes that serve all of the parking areas. There is a total of seven on-campus and four off-campus shuttle routes, and the Downtown Bryan shuttle. The Downtown Bryan shuttle has been a success story. Over the 2021 season, a record was set for Downtown Bryan shuttle ridership of 2,300 during the first game of the season. By the end of the season, that record was broken three more times and ended up with about 2,800 riders as the new record. Because of this, they have decided to add two more buses. They were running seven A&M buses to serve that route and will now be running nine. About half of those riders are coming from out of the Bryan/College Station area.

In addition to telling people how they should get to the parking lots and how they should get to campus, they also tell people where they should not go. One of the big ones is Wellborn Road. A lot of people don't have a need to be on Wellborn Road, but for some reason feel the draw to come to Wellborn Road. They are suggesting to people to stay away from that Wellborn Road area.

Ms. Albert highlighted the safety improvements on maps that showed “no wheel” zones as well as the recommended routes for bicyclists to get from the parking lots over to campus. The maps also showed recommended routes for pedestrians.

Ms. Albert showed a map of postgame vehicle exit routes. When selecting parking, this map shows the fastest way to get off campus and go towards your destination. This map also shows some of the restrictions for campus and the expected duration post-game. People are discouraged from traveling on Holleman. Once you have exited campus, do not come back in.

Some of the lessons learned over the years is that experience and training are vital. They can efficiently handle 100,000-110,000 people in the stadium as well as the few thousand tailgaters outside of the stadium. They do this through a series of moving people first away from Kyle Field and then toward the destination that they want to go. If you decide to come back into the traffic plan, you will not necessarily get priority. They spend a lot of time working the plan making sure that it’s implemented the way it was envisioned, and rapidly respond to any events or issues that come up with cameras, controllers, communication, signal timing, guide officers, first responders, alert fans, and pre-positioning two trucks near the Wellborn contraflow lanes. They have taken a lot of the information learned from developing the Kyle Field Transportation Plan and using the approaches for many other events.

What is new for 2022? The FM 2818 superstreet project is under construction. There should be a shift in traffic onto the new main lanes prior to the first football game. They have been working closely with the City of College Station in updating their traffic control plans to make sure to route traffic appropriately with the newly configured intersections. There will not be any communications with traffic signals or cameras so they will work with College Station to add officers at some of the key intersections. Wellborn Road is being raised up to provide a better experience and more efficiencies at Holleman. The Wellborn Road portion of that project has been completed, but the west leg of the intersection is not anticipated to be completed until the second half of the football season. Other areas they have been closely monitoring include the front of campus area. Last year, there was a lot of traffic cutting through from George Bush up to University Drive trying to avoid the Wellborn Road closure. They will possibly restrict some of the movements on both Bush onto Bizzell and possibly Throckmorton or Coke. Texas A&M will be pushing more traffic out of the Polo Road area where there are a couple of large surface parking lots and the parking garage, pushing that into New Main and more heavily utilizing that roadway capacity. They’ve also made some pedestrian and turn lane improvements to the Polo and Bizzell intersections at University Drive. They will also get people out of northside garage on Spence Street to get out to University Drive. Also new-ish for 2022, Aggie Park is reopening and will be available for tailgating. The same four-hour pedestrian safety closures will still go into effect, so Houston Street will be closed starting four hours before the game. If you haven’t been in that area in a while, there’s a lot of activity that’s going on and to make things more fun, they’ve decided to host a free Robert Earl Keen concert on the Friday night before the first football game.

Here are some important reminders to know before you go:

- Permit holders can park in any valid permit lots, but need to show their barcode – BE PREPARED.
- Downtown Bryan shuttle is the park and ride location and is an excellent option.
- Visit Destination Aggieland on the TAMU Mobil app for the latest parking and traffic information.
- Pedestrian safety closures go into effect four hours pregame.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization
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 Phone: 979.260.5298 Fax: 979.260.5225 Website: www.bcsmpo.org

Meeting: Policy Board Meeting

Date: 8/3/2022

Name	Agency
STEVE ALDRICK	BRAZOS COUNTY
Irma Cauley	BRAZOS COUNTY
Rick D. Fowler	FHWA TEXAS
Dennis Christensen	TTI
Paul Kruger	COB
Taslim Khandaker	BTD
Mike Knapik	CP&U
Prarthana Banerji	BRAZOS COUNTY
Wanda J. Watson	CITIZEN



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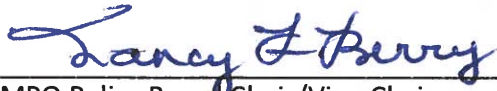
Phone: 979.260.5298 Fax: 979.260.5225 Website: www.bcsmpo.org

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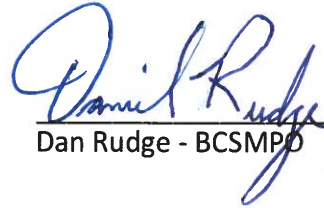
Date: 8/3/2022

Name	Agency
Debbie Albert	TTI
John Nichols	Chamber of Commerce
Juan Quiroz	TXDOT
Doug Marino	TXDOT
Chad Bohne	TXDOT
JASON SCHUBERT	COCS

ATTEST:



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



Dan Rudge - BCSMPO

9-7-22

Date