

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

September 7, 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; Bill Stockton, Member, Texas A&M Transportation Institute; and Chad Bohne, Member, TxDOT Bryan District. MPO staff present were Dan Rudge, Bart Benthul, and Lisa Lyon who took the minutes. 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 9:17 a.m. on September 7, 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.

Executive Session – Pursuant to Chapter 551, Subchapter D, Texas Government Code

The Policy Board convened into executive session at 9:19 a.m. The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:33 a.m. There was no action taken from the executive session.

Approval of Minutes from the August 3, 2022, Policy Board Meeting

Minutes from the August 3, 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 – The application for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant Program has been entered on the federal website. Upon approval by the Policy Board, the resolution will be added as well as a few other documents and the application will be finalized. Special thanks to Katie Conner, Megan Mason, and Amy Bates of the Brazos County Auditor's Office for their assistance. Mr. Rudge also thanked all of the local governments who passed resolutions in support of the Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant program.

Multiple Use Agreements on Public Rights-of-Way – Mr. Rudge and staff of the Brazos Transit District developed multi-use agreements on public-rights-of-way to allow for bus stops and bus shelters. To date, comments have been received from the City of Bryan and work is continuing with local jurisdictions to fine tune the agreements. The agreement provides both BTD and local governments the ability to make changes to locations and shelters and enforce local ordinances.

MPO Requirements after Texas Transportation Committee Action – Last week, potentially up to \$100 million was received for the Bush/Wellborn project. The project is not currently in the Transportation Improvement Program. Over the next couple of months, Mr. Rudge will be working with TxDOT Bryan District staff to update both the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program to reflect the new program that was announced by the Governor in the Unified Transportation Program.

Incorporating Resiliency Considerations in the MPO Planning Process – Mr. Benthul has completed the Resiliency Plan. After looking at what other MPOs across the State are doing and other recommendations, it is more about how resiliency considerations are incorporated into the MPO planning process than it is developing a separate resiliency plan. The plan will go to the Technical Advisory Committee at their next meeting and then be sent to the Policy Board for their adoption as work complete.

FY 2022 – FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment One

The Unified Planning Work Program is prepared every two years. The second year typically requires an amendment due to changes in salaries, benefits, and other potential changes from Federal Highway Administration or the Texas Department of Transportation. This year there are some changes to salaries and benefits. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, there is also a new requirement for MPO's to set aside at least 2.5% of their budget to work on complete streets. Complete streets is a fancy way to say roads in your community are accessible for people with disabilities or people that take public transit, bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobiles as part of the entire landscape. It has been included as a separate task under 4.2 in the Unified Planning Work Program and approximately 3% of the MPO budget was set aside for that particular task. The funding tables have been updated to reflect the changes in salaries and benefits.

A motion was made by Andrew Nelson to adopt the FY 2022 – FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment One. The motion was seconded by Karl Mooney. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Application Resolution

The two cities and the county have adopted resolutions in support of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program. The cities and county wanted to be co-applicants with the other local jurisdictions and the MPO with the MPO serving as the lead. As a result, the MPO as the lead

agency, needs to adopt a Safe Streets and Roads for All resolution that can be included in the application. The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the document at their last meeting and recommended approval.

A motion was made by Karl Mooney to adopt the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Application resolution. The motion was seconded by Bill Stockton. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Cost Sharing Agreement between the MPO and the Regional Mobility Authority

Every year there is a cost sharing agreement between the MPO and the Regional Mobility Authority. Since the MPO and RMA share office space and an administrative assistant, there are similar things in the RMA and the MPO budgets. The Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT has asked that we enter into an agreement every year to specify how much the MPO will be paying for these services and how much the RMA will be paying for these services. There is no change in the agreement from last year.

A motion was made by Andrew Nelson to enter into the cost sharing agreement with the Brazos County Regional Mobility Authority. The motion was seconded by Karl Mooney. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Presentation on How Big Data is Impacting Mobility Decision-Making

Debbie Albert with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute gave a presentation on how big data is impacting mobility decision-making. Ms. Albert's presentation was a compilation of a variety of information from different professionals.

Big data is taking off in transportation. It's probably something that you guys have been hearing about for quite some time. There are sensors everywhere: infrastructure such as roads, signals bridges, signs, etc.; vehicles such as cars, trucks, trains, buses, bikes, scooters, etc.; people with smartphones, wearables, biometrics, etc.; goods such as container and pallet RFID, package delivery, etc. Some of this information is privately collected and some of the information is collected by public agencies. This has led to a large and lengthy discussion and difference of opinions on whether the information should be privately held or whether it should be publicly held or even a combination of both.

Big data offers traffic engineers and planners the opportunity to do more for less. Thinking back on how many decisions were made, a few days of data would be collected (or a week or two if you were lucky), and then engineers/planners would use that data to time traffic signals for example. If you have a lot more robust information available, better-informed decisions can be made which will provide a better service to the public. The public is actually beginning to expect the use of this data.

Information is collected in many ways. One is smarter traffic signals which need a base level of infrastructure and detection to make the intersections go red, yellow, green. Localities are increasingly putting more and more sensors in the ground and that allows traffic engineers to collect and retrieve information on automated traffic signal performance measures. These are things like how many times do you have split failures (which means you have to stop at a red light twice), percentage of vehicles that are arriving on green, number of people that can get through an intersection without stopping, delay, etc. In addition, information can be collected such as turning movement counts, how many people are going left, straight, or through an intersection, and even pedestrian information.

Another data collection method is mobile device location data. This is the passive collection of your location by your smart phone apps. Currently there is a push to make sure that people are opting in for sharing this information as opposed to just automatically collecting it without the users knowing. Anytime you turn your location services on in your mapping or other apps, your smart phone is tracking where you are going. That information gets anonymously processed and coded to show where major traffic or trip patterns are. It gives information about delay and/or speeds. This data is aggregated from multiple sources to give information like origins-destinations, travel times and speeds, and route lengths. This is all great information for planners who are trying to determine where best to spend the limited resources that we have for transportation improvements.

Another source of information is shared mobility devices such as bikes, e-scooters, carshare, and ride hailing. There is a plethora of information relative to where people are going, where they pick up the bikes, where do they drop them off, lengths of their trips, and how long are they using them. There's been an effort in this area to come to some sort of standardization for the communication protocols so the systems work together and can provide information for planners to be able to decide the best way to build out or operate their systems.

Another source of information is connected vehicle data which is becoming a lot more prevalent and is a large amount of data. Approximately four terabytes of data per day are being collected from the sensors in vehicles. This is a passive way of collecting data and the information is transferred back to the manufacturer. The types of information being collected are trip characteristics such as location, fuel use, safety belt use, and windshield wiper use. Additional information being collected on safety subsystems information such as anti-lock brakes or your electronic stability control, lane-keeping, and collision warning.

The last category presented today is high-definition dynamic maps. Many times the mapping companies and connected vehicles know more about our transportation systems than the public agencies do. They have better records on what speed limits are in the roads and know where the construction sites are. If you see a stream of vehicles traveling down a road and then all of a sudden it goes away, these companies look into it because they know there is a construction project, the road is closed, or there is an incident. Information from vehicles as well as users

providing information to the mapping company has created a really robust information database about how the transportation system looks and is operating.

Some TxDOT public data sources include an open data portal through arcgis.com, event and construction data through drivetexas.org, and historical data and a statewide planning map through txdot.gov.

TxDOT has a statewide data contract where they are procuring third party data such as INRIX, Wejo, GRIS, and StreetLight to name a few. The primary focus has been vehicle trajectory data, origins/destinations, speeds, and travel times. The contract does not include connected vehicle information such as seat belt usage, near misses or hard braking, those sorts of things. Currently available through TxDOT are real-time traffic data, historical profile data, roadway analytics, trip analytics, and StreetLight Insight Platform. A new contract is currently being negotiated and should begin in the next 60 days. Although the details are not available currently, TxDOT is trying to make the contract more robust to provide some of the connected vehicle information. The data is used for travel demand modeling, freight studies, origin-destination analysis, determining reroutes, freight hub connections, construction mitigation effectiveness, turning movement counts, EV infrastructure planning and more.

INRIX data is being used here locally to be able to assess how the operations are for football events. Several slides were shown on how data is plugged into different charts and graphs that can be used to improve efficiencies.

Adjourn

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

Tracy Berry

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

11.2.22

Date

ATTEST:

Dan Rudge

Dan Rudge - BCSMPO