

Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 18, 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 Nancy Berry, Lauren Blackman, Kristie Chin, Madeline Dillard, Andrea Gold, and Katie Mack.

Welcome and Open Meeting

Paul Kaspar called to order the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at 9:02 a.m. on May 18, 2023. The meeting was held in-person at the Brazos Transit District Marvin Tate Administration Building Conference Room, 2117 Nuches Lane, Bryan, Texas.

Presentation from the Texas Innovation Alliance

Kristie Chin and Andrea Gold, with the Texas Innovation Alliance, gave an update on the Alliance and what is coming next in an effort to reformulate teams. The spoke to the TAC about who the Alliance is and what they do, grant readiness, developing an innovation zone, and upcoming workshops.

The Alliance was started in 2016 and is a peer-to-peer network of Texas cities, transportation agencies, and research institutions committed to developing shared solutions to the state's most pressing challenges – safety, congestion, and accessibility. The Alliance conducts deep-dives on advanced technologies, provides technical and grant writing assistance, and organizes the annual Texas Mobility Summit. There are now ten different Smart City teams across the state that include Arlington, Austin, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Frisco, Houston and San Antonio. The Alliance focuses on emerging technologies, grant readiness, and knowledge sharing.

It is important to form partnerships, build relationships and have shovel ready ideas before funding opportunities hit the street. There are several grant opportunities that will be upcoming including the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program, Safe Streets and Roads for All, Intersection Safety Challenge, Reconnecting Communities, Neighborhoods Grant Program, and the Low or No Emission Grant Program.

The Alliance is asking each of the teams to develop an idea for an innovation zone. An Innovation Zone is a district where stakeholders collaborate to test, deploy, and scale creative transportation solutions. An innovation zone is a focal point to get each team to rally around an idea and begin to pull in and layer different concepts related to challenges, technologies, and partners. The emphasis is on a real-world setting. The innovation zone is an area where the agencies can come together to test, deploy, and to

scale different mobility solutions. The Texas population is booming and new technologies are available to make roads safer, reduce congestion, increase accessibility, and optimize limited resources. An Innovation Zone will allow your region to apply for federal funding in order to deploy advanced technologies that address local challenges. Team members can be TxDOT District, city, county, transit agency, MPO, COG, RMA, university, port/intermodal facilities, and community partners such as medical centers, economic development corporations, and local nonprofits. The geographic characteristics of an innovation zone can be a district, a corridor, a corridor that connects hubs, or even a wider district area. The Alliance has been working with teams for a number of years and has a sense of different technologies that teams are most interested in. They have also reviewed federal grants to understand what technologies USDOT are interesting in funding and deploying.

The Alliance is currently meeting with each of the teams to brainstorm potential projects, locations, and partners that will be good partners for future grant applications. July 17-19, the Alliance is inviting teams from across Texas to the Innovation Invitational workshop. At the workshop, teams will have an opportunity to hear from different technology experts, provide a five-minute presentation on the concept of the innovation zone, get feedback from a panel of experts with the idea that then you can debrief, come back, meet locally and then come September, you'll be ready to go for these different fall grant opportunities.

TAC members spent several minutes brainstorming potential zones, projects, and team members. Mr. Rudge will follow up with team B/CS for further development.

Approval of Minutes from the April 20, 2023 TAC Meeting

Minutes from the April 20, 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 Debbie Albert. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

Annual Listing of Projects (ALOP) for FY 2022

Mr. Rudge disseminated the third iteration of the ALOP with changes based on comments from TxDOT. There will also need to be a few additional tweaks. The initial run of the Annual Listing of Projects was the information received from TxDOT Transportation Planning & Programming couldn't be checked in either TxDOT Connect or the TIP. Later, it was discovered there was a backdoor so to speak to find projects in TxDOT Connect. Ms. Blackman used this method and suggested the edits that are in the version presented today.

Originally, the problem was whoever put the list together at TxDOT TP&P did not understand there are two different types of grouped projects. One type of project has a single CSJ number, but because of the agreement that TxDOT has with Federal Highway Administration, they would be considered grouped. Another type of project are grouped projects where there are several different projects with different CSJs and are combined into one and bid. This can be confusing as for example you may see a project that's in Limestone County that has nothing to do with Bryan/College Station MPO, but because one of the projects is within the MPO and it was part of that group, we have to show the Limestone

project because that's how it's listed in the Federal Highway Administrations reporting system on how federal dollars are being used.

Ms. Blackman also recommended putting a note at the beginning of the grouped section projects stating if you see a project in another county, it is part of a grouped set and there may be multiple CSJs that were applied, one of which is within Brazos County and therefore it is shown in the document. This note is not included in the current version, but will be added to the final version.

The Business 6 (Texas Avenue) medians project that is currently listed under the highway projects, there were two CJSs for the overall project but only one listing in the ALOP (15th Street to William Joel Bryan). Ms. Blackman stated the project would need to be edited to add the second individually listed CSJ.

Mr. Schubert made the motion to add one additional project to the highway projects for the Business Route 6 medians, add the note to the grouped projects about what are grouped projects and why they're seeing projects from other counties, and open the ALOP for the public comment period. The motion was seconded by Doug Marino. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Agency Reports

Brazos County by Prarthana Banerji – The rain has affected construction the entire week. There are two culvert failures. One culvert failure is on Blue Ridge Road and the road is closed. They are currently doing the geotechnical survey on Jones Road. This is one of the design projects for this coming year so there are some traffic control measurers over there. Wingfall and Dilly Shaw Tap are both under construction. Old Jones Road from Tyree to Stuart's Meadow is also under construction. Peach Creek Cutoff will be finished in about a week, but there are still lane closures here and there. They are doing bridge scour work on the Ferrill Creek bridge so the road is closed at the bridge. White Switch is a complete rehab project and they are currently doing clearing and construction over there. They will start work on Old Reliance the first week of June. Other projects coming up for this fiscal year are a phase of Macey Road and Harpers Ferry and Cricket Pass in Precinct One.

Brazos Transit District by Jo Marlow – No new updates.

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

Texas A&M/TTI by Debbie Albert – There were eight A&M graduations that happened over three days last week. It went reasonably well and they made some adjustments along the way. There are a couple of upcoming events this weekend. The Troubadour Festival is Saturday at Aggie Park from noon until midday. There are also a couple of graduations that are at Rudder Tower at the same time. They have traffic control plans and are working with the City of College Station on signal timing. The following weekend, the 26th and 27th, is high school graduations at Reed Arena. There are eight graduations over two days. There will be a lot of traffic particularly in the south College Station area coming in because there are groups from Tomball and Magnolia that are coming in plus College Station ISD. They are currently planning for July 4th celebration that will be happening again out at RELLIS Campus. They are meeting with TxDOT about traffic control plans. They have also begun meeting with the City of College Station about football planning. There will be some changes coming on campus that they will need to address plus whatever is happening on FM 2818 and how the configuration will lay out for FM 2818.

Several of us were in a meeting or conversation about the Hensel Park area and South College, and A&M was doing their design studio. They've finished that and Ms. Albert was able to sit in on the final presentations that the students gave and she has detailed maps and is happy to share with all that are interested. Mr. Kaspar will schedule a Zoom meeting to discuss after they've had a chance to look over the information.

TxDOT by Doug Marino – On the FM 1179 widening project, they are finalizing refinements to the schematic and anticipating holding the first public meeting sometime in mid-July or August. Before the meeting, they will be contacting some significantly affected property owners and give them the option of having a face-to face meeting with staff. This includes Allen Academy and their drainage issue and traffic flow for example so they are not surprised at the public meeting and are aware it is still early enough in the process where changes of design can still happen.

On the FM 2154 widening, they are wrapping up the final tweaks to that schematic. They will be following up on traffic analysis and some other things that was needed to take back to the Wellborn community residents. Mr. Marino received a link to a WTAW interview with Mayor Nichols about taking a look at that section. He suggested some things that the city is going to do so Mr. Marino will get with Mr. Schubert to talk strategy and figure out next steps. The goal is to get it wrapped up so they can begin purchasing right-of-way.

On the I-14 corridor study, they have been actively working with their consultant. Mr. Quiroz has been involved in meeting with various elected officials along the corridor in an effort to get them up to speed on what their efforts have been. They will be putting a working group together sometime this summer with public meetings in the fall.

The 2818 Super Street project work is still primarily on southbound roadbed and the Jones Butler overpass bridge area. The entire project should be complete in August of 2024.

City of Bryan by Paul Kaspar –Texas Avenue and William Joel Bryan TxDOT projects are still under construction. There has been a lot of progress made on Texas Avenue medians and are heading down the final stretch. On William Joel Bryan, there has been a fair bit of progress between the park and Texas Avenue on sidewalks.

There is an immediate crisis for parking in downtown Bryan. The tallest building in downtown, the Varisco Building, is being remodeled. At least two floors that will be offices for the Texas A&M System. It is estimated there will be 150 people officing there, so that's 150 new cars that need to go somewhere at the end of this month.

South College will be going under construction very soon, maybe as early as next week, and the early phase will be focused on putting in the box culverts crossing from Midtown Lake to the creek downstream. As a result, South College from Villa Maria to Edge Street will be closed to through traffic. There will be a detour route heavily using Cavitt Avenue. That particular closure will last through the end of this year and then there will be another closure working their way towards the projects end point at Carson Street. For buses, Mr. Kaspar wanted to make sure they new what was coming. He will send information to TAMU and BTD for their information.

Staff Report/Upcoming Events

There is a Policy Board meeting on June 7th. If it is the TAC's pleasure, Mr. Rudge can make the presentation on what is being done with the Innovation Alliance.

Brazos County has set up an account for the Safe Streets for All grant funding. Brazos County has already deposited their match funds of \$20,000. Once the federal funding agreement is received, the Auditor's Office will send out invoices to the two cities for their \$20,000 match.

Ms. Albert has given Mr. Rudge her final recommendations for the congestion management process. Once the MPO is designated as a transportation management area, it will be sent to the TAC for review. The reason it has been drafted but not shared, is that once adopted by the Policy Board, it must be followed. Until we are required as a TMA to follow it, it should be avoided as it will jam up construction projects because any analysis would be required to see if there are other ways a project could be done without capacity expansion. Mr. Schubert asked if the draft could be sent out for review to ensure that efforts the City of College Station are in-line with the process and if the city wants to do anything beyond what is covered.

There is one final piece of the Public Participation Procedures to do which is how do we amend the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. We typically have never done that before, but now that FHWA is requesting this, it seems like the MTP updates every time we submit something new for the TIP.

The mock certification review is on June 14-15. Since the 15th is a regular TAC meeting date, there will not be a TAC meeting in June. The mock certification review is held to make sure that there are not any glaring inconsistencies before the full certification in November.

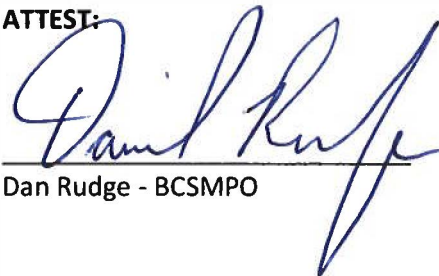
Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.



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

ATTEST:



Dan Rudge - BCSMPO



Date