

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

August 17, 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; Juan Quiroz, TxDOT-Bryan District; Prarthana Banerji, Brazos County; and Wendy Weedon, Brazos Transit District. The following MPO staff participated: Dan Rudge, Bart Benthul, and Lisa Lyon who took the minutes. Additional meeting participants included Joe Allen, Madeline Dillard, and Terry Paholek.

Welcome and Open Meeting

Paul Kaspar called to order the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at 9:05 a.m. on August 17, 2023. The meeting was held in-person at the Brazos Transit District Marvin Tate Administration Building Conference Room, 2117 Nuches Lane, Bryan, Texas.

Approval of Minutes from the July 11, 2023 TAC Meeting

Minutes from the July 11, 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.**

FY 2024 – FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is developed by staff every two years to specify how federal transportation planning funds will be spent in the subsequent two federal fiscal years. Highlights of the UPWP include the five-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan development, to be adopted in December of 2024, Complete Streets planning activities, support for the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant and safety measurement processes, and review and update of the resiliency plan, the draft Congestion Management Process, and the Leveraging Local Resources document. Included in the UPWP this cycle is funding to hire a consultant to complete most sections of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (excluding project call, project prioritization, and fiscal constraint).

The project call, prioritization and fiscal constraint will remain in-house since the TAC liked the way the process worked last time using Decision Lens to score the projects. There is potential for BTD to also utilize the same consultant to do a transit plan for them that can also be included in the MTP. Their current transit plan is very old and a lot has changed and is changing.

The Leveraging Local Resources document is five years old now. There were five projects in the document that were either unfunded or underfunded and were also considered priority projects. All five of these projects have been funded so it is time to look for the next set of projects to focus on in an updated document.

There was lengthy discussion regarding timing of documents and changes that are part of the TMA transition. There was also lengthy discussion regarding possible corridor studies versus using the additional funds for a consultant to prepare the MTP. No specific studies were identified during the discussion. It was the consensus of the TAC that it would be most beneficial to use funds for a consultant to prepare the MTP. There was some concern that there may be additional items from the TMA transition that require amending the UPWP which can be amended if the need arises.

SPR funds are not available to the MPO since the TMA designation. Last year, TxDOT gave each MPO \$50,000 for safety planning work. This has been extended and each MPO will receive at least \$50,000 for the next two years. These funds can be used to either be a part of the huge statewide contract that's going to Texas A&M Transportation Institute, or you can keep the funds in-house but certain things are required. In the past, the MPO has always opted to give the funds to TTI and let them do the safety planning work for us. The first year has been completed but not finalized and Mr. Rudge will send the information to the TAC.

Debbie Albert made the motion to recommend the draft UPWP for Policy Board adoption and to direct staff to open a 15-day public comment period. The motion was seconded by Paul Kaspar. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Public Participation Procedures

MPO staff regularly reviews the public participation procedures to determine if minor changes are needed. Every other year, staff completes a more rigorous review to determine if any major changes are needed, along with a review for minor changes. In completing the rigorous review in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, it was suggested that the public participation procedures be revised to include more opportunities for virtual public involvement. In addition, the procedures were modified to remove the requirement that Policy Board meetings be advertised in the Eagle since the newspaper no longer meets the definition of a widely read daily newspaper.

There was some discussion regarding the process that each city uses to prepare their CIP and how it is written in the MPO's Public Participation Procedures. This can be amended at any time as an administrative update. Also, there were just a few formatting suggestions.

Jason Schubert made the motion to recommend the revised Public Participation Procedures to the Policy Board for adoption and to direct staff to open the 45-day public comment period. The motion was seconded by Prarthana Banerji. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Agency Reports

TxDOT by Juan Quiroz – FM 2154 Widening Project: TxDOT is working with the City of College Station to evaluate raised median options for the Wellborn Community. TxDOT and the City will be meeting to further discuss the raised median options and work through next steps for project development. The let date is currently scheduled for December 2026 but that could change depending on potential revisions to the design.

FM 1179 Widening Project: There was a public meeting for the *FM 1179 Widening Project* on July 27th and approx. 300 people attended the meeting. The comment period for the public meeting ended August 11th. Topics of interest in the meeting included the roundabouts, roadway widening (adding and additional lane in each direction), raised medians and sidewalks for bikes and pedestrians. Many comments were received regarding sidewalks in a rural setting. There was a good feedback on the proposed improvements. Moving forward, based on public input at specific locations and areas along the corridor, TxDOT will reevaluate some intersections and segments to see if any design modifications can be made. TxDOT continues to meet with property owners and developers along FM 1179 within the project limits, and anticipates more development along the corridor resulting in increased traffic. More public involvement is expected in summer of next year.

I-14 Central Texas Corridor Study: TxDOT has reached a major milestone for the *I-14 Corridor Study*. Working Group kick-off meetings were held last week on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Working Groups of 10-12 members were established for each subarea consisting of elected officials and major stakeholders. The Bryan/College Station Subarea Working Group is particularly interesting because it also includes the I-214 Loop around Bryan/College Station. The turnout for the Working Group meetings was good, the attendees were well informed and had a lot of good input. The Study area essentially encompasses the entire Bryan District, which has been divided into three subareas: Western, Central, and Eastern. Subarea development considered demographics and quality of traffic which varies across the Study area. Leading up to the Working Group meetings, TxDOT also met with elected officials to introduce the I-14 project and Study timeline. The Working Group meetings are a precursor to the public meetings that are proposed in October of this year. TxDOT has planned six meetings within the study area (approx. two in each subarea). Each meeting will essentially be the same but in different locations to provide good coverage across the Study area. The meetings will present existing conditions as well as the I-14 corridor and route Study process which is a multi-year process—no corridors will be drawn on the map in this first public meeting. TxDOT wants to ensure the public understands the time frame involved to complete the Study, approx. seven years, as well as the next steps beyond the Study which would take project development easily into the end of next decade.

Texas A&M/TTI by Debbie Albert – Student move in officially starts today for students coming back for the fall semester. Classes start on Monday.

Brazos Transit District by Wendy Weedon – BTD applied for the RAISE grant to build a parking garage in Downtown Bryan. Even though the grant was denied (which is what BTD was expecting), they were selected to move to the next round. The main reason for applying on such a short notice was to receive feedback. Feedback was given on each of the eight merits, one of which they scored high, the others medium. The project is the exact type of project the grant was intended for.

BTD participated in TxDOT's electric vehicle pilot program for the rural area. The consultant team that headed the applications informed BTD they are not a viable fit for electric vehicles because of the number of miles and area in both rural and urban. BTD scored very low. The details will be forthcoming and Ms. Weedon will share them with the TAC.

BTD currently has an RFP out to place cameras in every revenue vehicle that BTD owns. There will be one system that can be logged into remotely. Currently, they have to download their camera data which is quite cumbersome.

BTD is applying for an emergency relief grant from the 2021 Ice-pocalypse. They are trying to replace their bus wash system that was destroyed in the winter storm. They have been hand washing all of their vehicles.

The shelters and stops project is fully funded. BTD has a RFP waiting to go out; however, they are going to hire a consultant first to have them handle the project. The rights-of-way and all of the details are just more than they have staff to handle. The actual installing of the shelters and signs/poles is the easy part. The difficult part is all of the work that comes before the installation.

BTD has received a variance to apply for a permit to have a rear exit at their transfer point onto Holick. They have also been saving money to rehab the transfer point across from Shammy car wash. They are going to try and do both projects together to be as minimally invasive to residents and businesses in the surrounding area as possible. They also have grant money that has been set aside to rehab the outside of the parking garage. There was a lot of shifting and the sidewalks have some lips that are high which present a trip hazard. They are going to have the safety and shifting concerns addressed as soon as possible. Mr. Kaspar asked to be included in the planning to address the crossing from the library to the parking garage.

City of College Station by Jason Schubert – There will be a couple of contracts awarded at next week's council meeting regarding Rock Prairie. The first will be the actual construction of the widening from Highway 6 out to Town Lake Drive at the Midtown development. The second one is a design contract continuing that same cross section from Town Lake all the way out to William D Fitch. This was part of the bond election that was approved last fall for the widening of that section.

The city received 90% design plans for the George Bush separated bike lane project that is part of the TxDOT TASA grant received. The plans are being reviewed and they are still on target to finish up in the next month or so and get them ready for a January letting for construction next year.

Before the city knew the MPO was going to become a TMA and the congestion management process was assured, the city put aside funds to do a traffic congestion and mobility analysis that is a finer grain effort than that is in the draft MPO document. They are also looking at more alternatives to roadway improvements as far as the travel demand lanes and other alternative modes types. They are planning to send out that RFP shortly to begin the process and have that underway over this next budget year. The city has also installed a dynamic message sign (DMS) on Wellborn Road northbound as you approach FM 2818. This is new and different so they are working out some of the kinks.

Brazos County by Prarthana Banerji – Old Reliance Phase One is under construction from city limits to Messina Hof. Wallis Road is also part of that same project and is also under construction right now. On Jones Road, they are getting samples for geotechnical so the road has had off and on lane closures.

Wingfall Street, White Switch and Old Jones Road are all under construction. Macey Road phases one and two are letting this week. Phase one is from FM 974 to Old Bundick and phase two is from Old Bundick to Little Cedar Creek bridge. Next week IG&N is going out for construction bid. Four separate consultants started with their scope and fee this past week for the bond projects. Within a month, they are going to meet with TxDOT to go through their scope and fee again to detail out any questions for the four projects which are the inner-loop, Highway 47, Highway 30, and Leonard Road. This is the first time the county has put up funds and then TxDOT takes the projects into planning.

City of Bryan by Paul Kaspar – Some of the projects causing the greatest concern for the public are William Joel Bryan, medians on Villa Maria, and South College. South College is closed and that work is still progressing with the current closure through the end of the year. After that, they will be closing down another section but opening up Villa Maria by the end of the year. That will continue through December of next year before that phase is finished all the way to Carson. The Old Hearne Road project is starting to come to a conclusion. There is a little bit left there to be paved close to Texas Avenue and getting the signal turned on will be the next step there. In the Oaks subdivision, there is a challenge with access to and from properties. There are storm sewer improvements and road reconstruction to help alleviate some flooding problems. Hillside is probably the street that you want to avoid over there.

Staff Report/Upcoming Events

Juan Quiroz will give a presentation regarding FM 1179 for the September Policy Board meeting.

All RFQ submittals for the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant were due Monday and the MPO received four submittals. Mr. Rudge will hand these out to the review committee at the end of the meeting for scoring by each committee member.

Team Bryan/College Station gave a presentation on what they are calling “Transportation Armageddon” for the Texas Innovation Alliance. They termed it Armageddon because State Highway 6 and Bush/Wellborn will be under construction at the same time. They pitched doing some type of construction management but also public information at the same time so that folks know where to go to find information before they take a trip. Part of this is also to work with some of the east/west corridors to see if they can handle some of the traffic that would normally go through Bush/Wellborn or would be using State Highway 6. There were eight presentations, and four or five were invited back on September 19th. We were one of the teams invited back. The three teams that win will receive grant writing services from TxDOT in Austin.

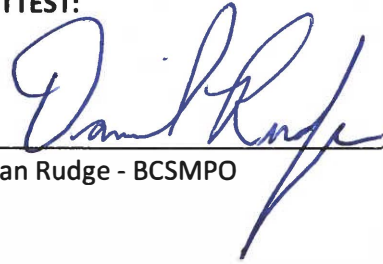
Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.



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

ATTEST:



Dan Rudge - BCSMPO

9/21/2023

Date