

## ***Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization***

### ***MPO Policy Board Meeting Minutes***

March 1, 2017

#### **Certification of Quorum:**

Voting members present were Commissioner Nancy Berry, Brazos County; Councilmember Greg Owens, City of Bryan; Mayor Karl Mooney, City of College Station; Dr. Bill Stockton, Texas A&M Transportation Institute; and Mr. Lance Simmons, TxDOT Bryan District. A list of persons who attended is attached.

#### **1. Welcome and Call to Order**

Commissioner Berry called to order the regular meeting of the MPO Policy Board at 9:00 a.m. on March 1, 2017, at the Brazos County Commissioner's Courtroom, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, TX. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags, and an invocation was given by Mr. Dan Rudge.

#### **2. Public Comments regarding items not on the Agenda**

No public comments were received.

#### **3. Review and approval of February 1, 2017, Policy Board Minutes**

Minutes from the February 1, 2017, Policy Committee Meeting were considered for adoption. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilmember Owens and seconded by Mr. Lance Simmons. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

#### **4. Staff Report**

Website Update – Dan showed the first draft of the website provided by the consultant. The top menu bar includes “About Us”, “Plans and Programs”, “Get Involved”, and “How Do I” which have drop-down menus. There is a search bar in the top right corner which will allow users to search using keywords which will return a list of all pages that include those keywords. These keywords will be created as the MPO develops plans, programs, maps, etc. The home page will include a section that will rotate a view of five pictures of the Brazos County area. Below the scrolling pictures are a series of buttons which you can click on to take you to the agenda/minutes from meetings, “notify me” where you can sign up for email updates, maps, latest news, “contact us” and “get involved”. There is a fairly robust way for people to get involved now with the new public participation plan. The home page also includes a calendar with a listing of all MPO meetings. You can either select

the meeting from the list, click on it, and it will give you the agenda, time, location, etc. If you click on the calendar date that you are interested in, it will take you to the exact same area. There are two boxes underneath the buttons that includes news about the MPO which can scroll through 5-6 stories. On the left side there are “quick links” which are links to all of our member organizations as well as a variety of other links including “Destination Aggieland”. At the bottom, is our contact information as well as any disclaimers. This website is greatly improved over what we currently have. The MPO is working with the website designer to change the background from gray to another color. The website designer is the same service provide as Brazos County which is Civic Plus, so we anticipate having a very robust support system. There are four training spots available, three of which will be used by MPO staff, and one which was offered Alan Munger to have someone from his staff attend the training since the Brazos County website works the same.

FM 60 Bicycle and Pedestrian Access and Safety Concepts – There were a series of four stakeholder meetings last week. It was unanimous in the stakeholder meetings that whatever we do, we need to solve not only a problem for today, but for 20 years from today, and whatever is done needs to be done correctly the first time. The thought was to think big to do whatever is necessary. The pedestrian grade separations on Texas A&M Campus, especially at Old Main, came up time and time again of how things are done correctly in our area. A variety of issues were reviewed including whether the grade separation involves taking pedestrians below ground level or a portion of FM 60 should go underground and the pedestrians over top of it in a park-type setting. The consultants will share some initial concepts to get TAC feedback at their next meeting which is March 27<sup>th</sup>.

FM 2818 Corridor Study – There will be a meeting with the consultants next week to discuss their initial alternatives analysis. The consultant will provide preliminary recommendations for each one of the segments along the corridor to the TAC. They will offer general concepts available for use that may apply to several different segments and they will be seeking feedback from the TAC on which concepts they like and do not like so they can move forward with a report that meets the needs of everybody along the corridor.

Brazos Transit District Demographics and Operations Study – The study is 99.9% complete. There is still an issue with the timing of one route and a few locations where they are suggesting the first round of bus stops. The study should be presented to the TAC at their March meeting.

Major Thoroughfare Concept Meetings – There were 115-120 people at Monday’s meeting primarily from the Southwest side of Brazos County. There were also some people from the East side of Brazos County where there are some significant ranching operations. The TAC will meet today following the Policy Board meeting to finalize the revised map for the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Brazos Center from 5-7pm. Commissioner Berry asked what would happen after the public meetings were finished, the Technical Advisory Committee revises the map, and the plan returns to the Policy Board. Mr. Rudge stated that staff

would present a new map on March 6<sup>th</sup> for the public to comment on. The adjustments shown on the March 6<sup>th</sup> map would be based on public comments received. It is hoped that the public would be pleased with the adjustments made to the map. If there are only one or two issues, staff would probably meet with the individuals and discuss what could potentially be done. If there are more than a few issues, then the TAC would make adjustments at their March 27 meeting, hold another public meeting in mid-April and bring it to the Policy Board in May. The hope is that it can go before the Technical Advisory Committee at their March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting and then on to the Policy Board in April. After it is adopted by the Policy Board, some type of interlocal agreement could be developed that all member communities could sign off on showing their agreement with the plan. The adoption of the plan will allow Brazos County to begin to request right of way from developers as requests come in. Under Texas law, a county does not have the authority to do that unless the MPO has a thoroughfare plan in place. This would give Brazos County some authority in the development process.

#### **5. Category Two Funding Formula Minority Report**

At the last meeting, it was reported that the MPOs funding would be reduced to \$108 million over the ten year period under the Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's newly proposed funding formula. The Policy Board voted for the MPO staff and TAC to prepare a Minority Report. In the report, it is not stated that we dislike the factors chosen. The approach was to look at the factors selected and focus on the purpose of Category Two funding which is congestion management. The report suggests that the criteria be reduced to three and assign weights to each criteria according to the priorities that are associated with the Category Two funding formula. This would be done one time and the MPO would not try to make future adjustments to better improve funding for the MPO. Using the categories and weights suggested, the MPO Category Two funding would increase to \$121 million over the ten-year period. The report states our case without sounding whiny. After the Policy Board approves the report, it would be submitted to TxDOT and the Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations for inclusion in their report. The commission stated they will not look at changing the funding formula until 2019, but are allowing agencies to weigh in now before they begin their review. It is unknown at this point if the funding categories might change and/or the way that they handle it. Since they were asking for input from individuals and organizations as to what they would like to do, this is our strongest response to that. There will be a total of four minority reports submitted from other agencies who feel as though population should be a bigger driver than what it is in the current formula. Surprisingly, even though Category Two is intended for congestion, they prefer a lower number on congestion. Dr. Stockton made the motion to approve the Minority Report to be submitted to TxDOT and TEMPO for inclusion in their report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simmons. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

## **6. Public Engagement Plan**

The MPO has not updated its Public Engagement Plan since 2005. Typically, the plans are supposed to be reviewed and updated on a five-year cycle. The attempt with the document wasn't to change the way that we do public participation since it is fairly clear-cut regarding what you can and can't do. One of the drivers for this document was to make it something that the average citizen could pick up and look at, and understand what the public involvement process is for the Bryan/College Station MPO. Graphics have been added, as well as a lot of text to ensure that the public understands exactly what we were talking about. Appendix A shows a myriad of ways we are trying to get the public to engage with us. This ties in with the "Get Involved" button on the updated website. We've also added an evaluation process to the public engagement plan so that it can be checked on an annual basis to make sure feedback is still being received. Given the results of the public outreach meetings for the Major Thoroughfare Concept, the MPO is on the way to improving public engagement. The MPO has received about 1,500 comments which indicates movement in the right direction. The MPO would like the Policy Board to direct staff to open up a 45-day public comment period. At the end of the public comment period, it will be brought back to the Policy Board for adoption at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Mayor Mooney made the motion to approve the Public Engagement Plan with a 45-day public comment period so the document is available for review to be brought back to the Policy Board for adoption at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting. Councilmember Owens seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.

## **7. Ten-Year Category Two Project List and Programming**

The Texas Department of Transportation, given the results of the Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 voting, has received a major influx of new funding. As a result of this increase in funding, they've asked for the MPO's to report what they are planning on doing. Since the only funding that is truly controlled by the MPO is the Category Two funding and the MPO is receiving a major increase in that funding, the thought was that it would be helpful if a plan was put together to show how Category Two funding would be used between FY 2018 and FY 2026. The projects on the list were selected by the Technical Advisory Committee for inclusion. The project for FY 2021, which is widening SH 6 through Bryan/College Station from four to six lanes, has a total cost of approximately \$220 million. This would include widening of the highway, making interchange improvements and frontage road expansions, and all the other ancillary requirements. The staff of TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming staff explained that if the Bryan/College Station MPO wanted to come to the Texas Transportation Commission and ask for money, some of our own funds needed to be leveraged. Since SH 6 is the highest priority project in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and is one of the projects the Policy Board adopted as

one of the six unfunded projects, it was added in FY 2021 to show that we were willing to leverage our own funding to facilitate that development. The MPO has also learned that there is a possibility for Category 4 (Statewide Connectivity) funding for SH 6. There was also a significant increase in Category 12 funding as a result of Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 which is at the discretion of the Texas Transportation Commission. Again the MPO wanted to convey their belief in the State Highway 6 project and are not just asking them for funding, but that we are willing to provide funding of our own. The projects you see in FY 2026 are all pedestrian projects. Bicycle and pedestrian projects are important in the area. Also, because of the size of a lot of those projects, if it is found that enough funding isn't spent, bicycle and pedestrian projects could be quickly advanced to fill in the gaps in those years there is additional Category Two funding. A motion to approve the Ten-Year Category Two Project List and Programming was made by Councilmember Owens. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berry. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

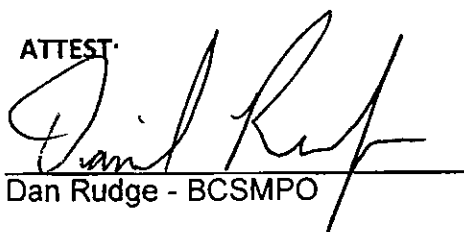
**8. Future Transportation Project Update**

The update was tabled until a future meeting.

**9. Adjourn**

The Policy Board Meeting was adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

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

ATTEST  
  
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Dan Rudge - BCSMPO

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Date

