

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

August 16, 2023

Certification of Quorum

The following voting members were present: Nancy Berry, Chair, Brazos County; John Nichols, Vice Chair, City of College Station; James Edge, Member, City of Bryan; Peter Lange, Member, Texas A&M University; and Chad Bohne, Member, TxDOT Bryan District. MPO staff present were Dan Rudge, Bart Benthul, and Lisa Lyon. 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 9:31 a.m. on August 16, 2023, at the Brazos County Commissioner's Courtroom, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, TX. The meeting opened with an invocation by Dan Rudge and pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags.

Approval of Minutes from the June 28, 2023, Policy Board Meeting

The minutes of the June 28, 2023, Policy Board meeting were reviewed. Peter Lange made the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by John Nichols. The minutes were adopted by a unanimous vote.

MPO Staff Report by Dan Rudge

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program – The RFQ's were due on Monday of this week and four bids were received. At the Technical Advisory Committee tomorrow, a review committee will be formed to score the proposals. If there is a clear cut winner, negotiations will begin; however, if there is not a clear cut winner, interviews will be conducted with those that rose to the top.

The Mock Transportation Management Area Certification Review – Because the review went so well, the November session will be a bit more abbreviated. Typically, there is a public meeting on the evening of the first day; however, in lieu of a public meeting, they will interview three local elected officials. Mr. Rudge asked that Commissioner Berry, Mayor Nichols, and

Councilman Edge be available to meet with the certification team in November. Mr. Rudge will provide the date and time as soon as it is finalized with the Federal Highway Administration.

Texas Innovation Alliance Innovation Invitational – In July, staff from the MPO and the Texas Transportation Institute attended the Texas Innovation Alliance Innovation Invitational in Austin. Team Bryan/College Station gave a presentation on what they are terming “Transportation Armageddon” which is the time period when State Highway 6 and the Bush/Wellborn interchange are under construction at the same time. As was mentioned during the presentation given at the Innovation Invitational, many are saying it will not be a problem to have both of these projects underway at the same time because they know the “secret back roads” to get to campus; however, it seems as if most people will be planning on using the exact same “secret back roads” so it is anticipated that Welsh will be very backed up during construction. There were a total of eight teams that presented at the Invitational. Of those eight teams, Team Bryan/College Station and three other teams have been asked to return in September. If Team Bryan/College Station is one of the finalists, TxDOT Transportation Planning & Programming will provide us grant writing assistance to apply for grant funding for our proposal. Team Bryan/College Station is looking at ways to be innovative and low cost to manage traffic during construction and get information out to the public. The team is also looking at ways to use east/west corridors to make the north/south corridors function a little better since two of them might be having an issue at the same time.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment Five

Mr. Rudge gave a big thank you to TxDOT Bryan District for convincing the Texas Transportation Commission that much more funding was needed for the State Highway 6 project. An additional \$234 million was added to the project bringing the project total to \$473,508,897. The Texas Transportation Commission will be taking action today on the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). Once the UTP is approved, the Federal Highway Administration will be checking to make sure the Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs for MPO’s across the state match exactly with what is in the UTP. Making sure the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the UTP match will allow FHWA to give their approval and help assure there are no project letting delays because the documents do not match. A 30 day public comment period has been completed and no comments were received.

John Nichols made the motion to adopt the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment Five. The motion was seconded by James Edge. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.

FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Two

The TIP Amendment Two is basically doing the same thing as with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment to add additional funding to the State Highway 6 project.

Once this Transportation Improvement Program Amendment is adopted, the UTP, the MTP, and the TIP will all match which will expedite approval by Federal Highway Administration. A 15-day public comment period was held and the only comment received asked that a landscaping budget be included to add trees to State Highway 6.

Peter Lange made the motion to adopt the FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Two. The motion was seconded by James Edge. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.

Game-Day Traffic Operations for Upcoming Texas A&M Football Season

This is the tenth year of the New and improved Kyle Field Transportation Plan. Some of the accomplishments from last year included:

- Handled the third largest crowd ever for the Miami football game (approximately 107,250 people).
- They were able to handle large crowds while navigating several impactful transportation construction projects including FM 2818, Holleman/Wellborn Road intersection, as well as other sections of Wellborn Road.
- Record ridership of the Downtown Bryan shuttle with the season high being a little over 2,700 riders and an average of 2,630 riders. The shuttle is a successful collaboration between A&M, City of Bryan, and Downtown Bryan businesses.
- Adjusted traffic patterns to address severe weather conditions.
- Six of the seven games traffic control was removed within two hours. The Miami game was two hours and five minutes, so it was very close.

They are hitting on all of the markers that were set with the decision makers in the community as well as the community members in trying to deliver this transportation plan.

Ms. Albert showed a congestion graph that gave information on percentages of roadways congested. The graph also showed specific information regarding the Sam Houston game which does not follow the normal curve because of the three-hour weather delay during the game. Looking back at the games on the congestion graph, it has been noticed that evening games tend to have less peak congestion because they are letting out between 10-11 p.m. when there isn't much other traffic. The earlier games have higher levels of congestion because there is more background traffic. Also, for the UMass game, the temperature was cold

and it was rainy so congestion levels began to creep up before the game had ended due to attendees leaving early.

Other statistics tracked for football games include the number of parked cars. It is currently hovering around 20,000-22,000. In 2013, it was just under 20,000. Shuttle ridership took a huge jump in 2013 and there were about 12,000 people. Since then, the number of shuttle riders has stayed in the 20,000-25,000 range. The Downtown Bryan shuttle is starting to become very successful as more people are finding out about it.

In 2023, these are all components that are part of the Transportation Plan:

- Safer pedestrian paths.
- Separate routes for cars, buses, and pedestrians.
- Better signalization, monitoring devices, and contraflow lanes.
- Faster reaction to problems.
- Pre-pay parking and more efficient parking entry.
- More fan engagement.

Ms. Albert pointed out how critical partners are to the Plan's success.

Looking forward to 2023, there will be some expected challenges. FM 2818 is still under construction. They will take what was learned from last year's construction challenges and use signal operations and work with the City of College Station police officers to make sure that traffic flows as smoothly as possible. Ms. Albert showed a map with some of the key elements: construction under FM 60/Stotzer bridge, intersection improvements at George Bush, Luther, and Holleman, and the new overpass at Jones Butler.

Under the Stotzer bridge, they are expecting and planning for one lane of traffic in each direction which will cause congestion back into the George Bush/FM 2818 intersection. Some of the changes they are considering on campus are a direct result of trying to alleviate the congestion from this one lane under the bridge. There is also a traffic shift that happened at the end of June at the Jones Butler bridge. Southbound FM 2818 to southbound Wellborn flyover, the ramp is closed and is planned to be closed through sometime in October. College Station is also closing the northbound ramp as well to address potential cut-through traffic and contraflow operation on Wellborn Road. Ms. Albert showed a map to give a visual.

One of the bigger changes to parking on campus is that Lot 61, with approximately 850 parking spaces in the west campus area, is going off-line. Lot 61 will be the site of the new Alpin Center. The cars in that parking lot have been reassigned to other parking lots by the Rec Center or in front of Reed Arena. This will change a little bit of the dynamics of traffic flow and maybe open up some opportunity for using Olsen Boulevard to get people to the Wellborn Road contraflow.

They are actively seeking ways to have more traffic use the contraflow lane given that there will be about 850 less vehicles on Olsen Boulevard. One thing they are looking at doing is shifting those leaving from the West Campus Garage to Kimbrough and going west to Olsen and entering the traffic stream. Another opportunity would be that once the pedestrian traffic subsides, have traffic come from the back side of the West Campus Garage to Olsen and then go north instead of south to George Bush. And yet another option is allowing traffic from the back side of Reed Arena, 100E and 100C, to right turn on Kimbrough to Olsen to the Wellborn Road contraflow. They are trying to balance the demands of FM 2818 while there are construction constraints.

The Holleman/Wellborn intersection which was under construction last year has opened. In the past, right turns off of Holleman to Wellborn Road were allowed and they will continue to allow that to happen. They will periodically cycle the traffic signal there (as opposed to flashing as in the past) to allow pedestrians an opportunity to cross there. A new McDonald's is opening up on the corner and they are beginning to see more pedestrian traffic. The intersection operates much more efficiently since the large hump on the railroad track is gone.

In the past for parking and traffic information, they have been directing the public to the Destination Aggieland or TAMU mobile apps. Now the information will be housed on the TRANSPORT.TAMU.EDU website which is very user-friendly on a PC or mobile phone. There are tabs for parking, shuttles, and bikes & more. Within those different lists, you can generally find any information that you're looking for within those categories. While encouraging people to be active and plan ahead, this is the place they will be directing people to.

The other thing they are looking forward to leveraging is a Waze partnership. Last year, Ms. Albert was able to work with Waze to have them upload road closures and pedestrian safety closures into their maps. In that effort, she had an individual who does their map editing reach out to her and was interested in not only the events, but also construction projects that are happening. He is also working with some of the engineers here in the Bryan District trying to get updated information on any changes to the traffic patterns. They are planning to work with Waze to make sure that all of the road closures are in place and they show up on the maps. This will help the public when trying to navigate for football games. Because of the partnership between Waze and Google, all of the closures show up on the Google mapping system as well. Ms. Albert will also continue to provide information to Apple so they can update their maps.

Last year, they implemented a northbound street closure of Bizzell at George Bush Drive. That worked very well in helping unload the front of campus (Texas Avenue side of campus). The Polo Road area is starting to be more heavily used by people parking for the games, so in an effort to help get that traffic off campus and be able to open up the street networks to the

community quicker, they found that this closure was really impactful in being able to provide that opportunity for people to get the streets open.

There are some new tools they will implement for 2023. RITIS is a collaboration with the University of Maryland. In the past, there was a coalition called the I-95 Corridor Coalition where a lot of the states along the eastern seaboard were working together to try and figure out how to address issues related to I-95. They worked with the University of Maryland looking at congestion information and developed a bunch of different tools which they now have access to through TxDOT's data partnership. RITIS has a congestion monitoring tool. One of the things that can be done with this tool is to go back in time and look at the road network for which they have always measured congestion. They can see what streets are congested and can now go back and see over time how the network is changing and how it is operating with that congestion. Ms. Albert gave an example of the LSU post-game traffic at 30 minutes, an hour, and an hour and a half where you could see the specific roads that were contributing to congestion. This information is helpful to see if historically there is a specific area causing concern. Then they can work with the different communities on how to best address those concerns as opposed to just knowing holistically there are 20-25% of roads congested. It gives much more detailed information on where and how long congestion is happening so they can better plan for the future.

Lastly, these are some 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 transport.tamu.edu for the latest parking and traffic information.
- Pedestrian safety closures go into effect four hours pre-game.

Executive Session

The Policy Board convened into executive session pursuant to government code 551.0725 to deliberate issues related to a contract being negotiated at 10:07 a.m. The open meeting reconvened at 11:01 a.m. There was no action from the executive session.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Meeting: Policy Board Meeting

Date: 8/16/2023

Name	Agency
Debbie Albert	TTI
John Nichols	City of College Station
Terry Boholek	HNTB
CARR BOHME	TXDOT
JAMES EDGE	CITY OF BRYAN
JASON SCHUBERT	CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
Juan Quiroz	TXDOT
Paul Kazpore	City of Bryan
Joe Altam	BUCOG
Wendy Weedon	BTD
Prarthana Banerji	Brazos County

Fancy Harvey

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

9-6-23

Date

ATTEST:

Dan Rudge

Dan Rudge - BCSMPO