

**WICHITA FALLS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**  
**Technical Advisory Committee**  
Minutes

Wednesday, April 4, 2007

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***Voting Members Present:***

Lin Barnett – Wichita Falls MPO, MPO Director, TAC Chairperson  
Danny Brown – TxDOT, Director of Trans. Planning and Development  
Dave Clark – City of Wichita Falls, Dir. of Community Development  
James Kelley – TxDOT, Area Engineer  
Mark Beauchamp – City of Wichita Falls, Traffic Superintendent

***MPO Staff:***

Donnie Arbeau – Wichita Falls MPO, Transportation Planner II  
John Burrus – City of Wichita Falls, Director of Aviation, Traffic, & Transportation  
Carolyn Askins – TxDOT, Transportation Planner II

***Highway Needs Committee Members:***

***Visitors:***

None

***Absent:***

Joe Anderson – TxDOT, Director of Construction  
Karen Montgomery-Gagné – City of Wichita Falls, Comm. Development Planner III  
Tim Hertel – TxDOT, Director of Operations  
Davis L. Powell – City of Wichita Falls, City Engineer

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**I. Welcome & Introduction**

Mr. Barnett called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone present.

**II. Review and Approval of the January 10<sup>th</sup> Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the January 10<sup>th</sup> TAC minutes. None were received. Mr. Kelley motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**III. Review and Comment Regarding the Transportation Policy Committee's (TPC's) January 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes - *No Action Required***

Mr. Barnett asked for comments on the January 24<sup>th</sup> TPC minutes. None were received. The board moved on to the next item of business.

#### **IV. Review, Comment and Recommendation on SAFETEA-LU Compliance Issues Concerning the 2005-2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The MPO Director outlined the update process for SAFETEA-LU compliance and the necessary changes to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to bring the document into compliance with the new SAFETEA-LU legislation. The first change, in Chapter 1 of the MTP, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) moved from an updating cycle of 3 yrs. to 4 yrs. Additionally, information was added to the same chapter concerning SAFETEA-LU continuing the 5 yr. schedule for air quality attainment areas, such as Wichita Falls.

Chapter 4 added a lengthy SAFETEA-LU Addendum. The focus of this new addendum is on new planning factors, a transportation security strategy, environmental mitigation, and consultation/coordination elements derived from within the new Public Participation Plan. No additional changes were made to the document.

Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the recommendation to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the April 25, 2007 TPC Meeting. Mr. Clark made the motion to approve. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **V. Review, Comment and Recommendation Concerning the SAFETEA-LU Required Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

Discussion began with Mr. Clark asking a question about the differences between the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and the Public Involvement Policy (PIP). Mr. Barnett began by highlighting the *Goals and Objectives* of the new PPP document. These are absent from the current Public Involvement Policy and will now serve as a framework for all public outreach. As well, the section on *Methods and Strategies* highlights new “public notice” and “public access” guidelines for the MPO. A new strategy to reach the Spanish speaking community via *Fronteras*, a Spanish language newspaper, was adopted. Mr. Barnett expressed his hope for improving public awareness in key sections of the MPO, particularly those in environmental justice target areas. Mr. Barnett then expounded on the fact that “public input was the basis for all good decisions” concerning transportation projects, planning efforts, and the MPO, in general. He added that coordination with local stakeholders and Tribal governments would also continue to be actively encouraged and supported.

Another departure from the PIP was new evaluation criteria for the PPP. A regular schedule will be set-up to measure the level of performance for the MPO as it pertains to public outreach using PPP guidelines. The MPO Director indicated that accessibility, reach, diversity, impact, and participant satisfaction indicators in the PPP will be used to help verify the success of public outreach. Furthermore, the MPO will also utilize surveys to gain feedback.

Concerning the future of the PIP, Mr. Barnett stated that the document would “not go away” with the adoption of the new Public Participation Plan. He stressed the two documents would “work hand-in-hand” and serve to canvas a wider audience. Discrepancies between the two documents concerning public hearings and comment periods would be handled using the higher number of days (30 or 45) from either document. Mr. Barnett mentioned the *Summary Participation Policy Table* outlining the times required for various meetings and procedures that

were added.

An open meeting on April 17, 2007, at the Public Library will present the plan for public comment. Mr. Barnett asked for comments or feedback. None were received.

Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the recommendation to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the April 25, 2007 TPC Meeting. Mr. Clark made the motion to approve. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **VI. Review, Comment and Recommendation Concerning the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Barnett informed the TAC committee that SAFETEA-LU Goals and Objectives had been added to the TIP document. He stated the TIP selection process would remain the same and the Public Participation Plan is now referenced in the document. Mr. Barnett went over additional changes to the document, which now includes a new glossary, TxDOT funding categories, and a map showing federally funded highway projects. Four projects, 1 in 2008 and 3 in 2009 were listed. There were no projects listed for 2010 and 2011.

Mr. Barnett then discussed the Federally Funded Transit projects (4 yr. program), Transit Financial Summary, State Funded Highway projects (none listed), Locally Funded / Regional Significant projects (none listed), and a financial plan that itemized the following: \$48 million in Category 3 - Urban Corridor projects, and the \$2.5 million in Category 11 - District Discretionary projects, for a 4 yr. total of \$50, 998, 249.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Barnett asked Mr. Brown to discuss the Statewide Grouped CSJ Highway projects and to provide clarification for the committee. Mr. Brown explained projects that add capacity or improve mobility to a road network must be listed individually, while rehabilitation, preventative maintenance, safety, and routine projects can be lumped into group CSJ categories. This system, he added, provides TxDOT with needed flexibility in managing projects for the District Office.

Mr. Barnett asked for additional comments. The committee agreed that the Glossary for Project Listings should contain a Grouped Project CSJ definitions table to provide the reader with a better understanding of the Grouped CSJ process.

Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the recommendation to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the April 25, 2007 TPC Meeting. Mr. Brown made the motion to approve. Mr. Kelley seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **VII. Discussion and Recommendation Concerning a Passenger Demand Analysis of Air Travelers with the Local Air Service Market of the MPO Area**

Mr. Burrus stated that this study was the first step in acquiring an additional commercial airline provider for the Wichita Falls market. In discussions with industry representatives, Mr. Burrus was informed that most major airlines will not consider entering a market unless a Passenger Demand Analysis was done by a qualified consulting group. He then stated that the first step in

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<sup>1</sup> Due to TxDOT budget constraints, this was later revised to \$30,191,483 in Category 3 – Urban Corridor projects and \$6,831,871 in Category 11 – District Discretionary projects for a total of \$37,023, 354. The revised TIP will be included in the April 25, 2007 TPC meeting packet.

the process was to identify the local market and service area to serve as the origin basis (zip codes, city, counties, MPO, and so forth) for the study. Overall, the study would help determine travel patterns for passengers in the local area. Mr. Barnett added that, additionally, the study would aid the MPO in further planning efforts for non-surface transportation and future 5-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates.

Mr. Barnett asked for comments. Mr. Clark expressed his strong support for the study. Mr. Brown expressed concern over the financial portion of the study for the MPO and felt it should be tied directly to the size of the predefined service area and population. Mr. Kelley stressed the importance of using the proper RFP process for bidding the project. The committee was in agreement on these issues.

Mr. Barnett asked for additional comments. None were received. Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the report to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the April 25, 2007 TPC Meeting. Mr. Clark made the motion to approve. Mr. Kelley seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **VIII. Discussion and Recommendation Concerning Shared Aerial Pictometry with the Wichita Falls Appraisal District**

The Wichita Falls Appraisal District approached local agencies seeking a financial commitment to assist with a pictometry initiative for the county. Mr. Arbeau began by providing a brief explanation of pictometry by comparing it to standard aerial photography. He mentioned that due to requirements of SAFETEA-LU for improved visualization technique for all MPOs, pictometry would further the capabilities of the WFMPO to share information for meetings and sessions with the public. In addition, Mr. Burrus added that the WAD was on a regular update cycle for their imagery and pictometry for Wichita County, including rural areas.

Mr. Barnett asked for additional comments. Mr. Burrus stressed his recommendation based on the cycle for regular updates. Mr. Brown asked about the availability of the data for external agencies such as TxDOT. Although exact details were not available, Mr. Burrus and Mr. Arbeau were positive the data could be shared with other agencies. MPO staff indicated that they would contact the WAD and gain a better understanding of how the data could be disseminated from a financial and contractual basis.

The committee shared a positive sentiment about the project and the MPO's involvement. Mr. Clark used the Avenue H / Kemp Street project as an example of where the data could be utilized with the MPO.

Mr. Barnett asked for additional changes or comments. None were received. Mr. Barnett asked for a motion to send the revised document to the Transportation Policy Committee for their review and approval at the April 25, 2007 TPC Meeting. Mr. Clark made the motion to approve. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **IX. Discussion of Kell West Main Lanes and Category 3 Funding**

Mr. Brown shared with the committee recent events concerning this agenda item. He mentioned that Category 3 funding was set-up for non-TMA MPOs under 200,000 in total population. The focus of this category is on mobility and added capacity. The two most crucial projects, the Falls Flyover and Kell West Main Lanes, fall into this category. Due to the importance of these projects, the Falls Flyover was accelerated to 2005 using innovative financing tools derived from

HB 3588. The hope was to also move Kell West up to an earlier let date sometime in 2009, if not sooner. However, the local TxDOT District office was notified by Austin and the Transportation Commission for the State of Texas that debt payments for the Flyover show a negative balance of \$31 million in FY 2018. The local office was instructed to rework the letting scheduling for jobs to reduce the balance to zero by that time. Mr. Brown indicated this was impossible to accomplish even with moving Kell West out past 2018 in the STIP.

Mr. Brown then discussed how Mr. Tegtmeyer, Mr. Barnett, and he traveled to Austin in March 2007 to make a proposal to remedy the situation and have projects scheduled to let prior to 2010 remain untouched. Unfortunately, there were additional problems facing TxDOT and Category 3 funding. The U.S. Department of Transportation is experiencing lower than expected funding in SAFETEA-LU and this is having a profound affect on every state. Subsequently, Congress has issued a rescission order to all state DOT's. In short, Mr. Brown stated that the project is in serious jeopardy. The state of Texas alone is required to repay \$300 million to the USDOT. The decision to take the money out of Category 3 or Enhancement is leaning towards Category 3 funding.

Mr. Brown finished by telling the committee that Mr. Tegtmeyer is doing everything possible to fight for the Kell West project despite the current circumstances. There was no further discussion.

#### **X. Other Business:**

##### **A. Discussion & Overview of Progress on Local Transportation Projects – City and TxDOT staff (Quarterly Review)**

**TxDOT Report:** Mr. Kelley reported on TxDOT projects. The Falls Flyover should be nearing completion in the fall; US 82 along Kell Fwy. a project in underway to address slope and erosion problems; FM 1740 (safety bond project) is about complete; IH-44 exit ramp (Arby's intersection) is complete except for some stripping; BUS 287J / FM 367 is complete; FM 367 straightening out curves is complete; IH-44 northbound lane between the river and interchange is about to begin reconstruction of the entire facility including new medians and drainage control; Lakeside City entrance has been improved, realigned, and re-stripped; and, a 4-way stop is being installed at Rathgeber Road and Jacksboro Highway.

**City Report:** Mr. Powell was not in attendance to report on City projects.

##### **B. MPO Quarterly Financial Report (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY 2007 – Oct., Nov., Dec.)**

Mr. Barnett presented the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report on MPO expenditures. He stated that 12.5% of the UPWP allocation for FY 2007 had been spent. He expects this to increase significantly due to the upcoming Socio-Economic Study in 2008. He asked for comments. There were none.

##### **C. Transit Study Progress Report**

Mr. Barnett made mention of ongoing issues with the consultant and the project being delayed. Basically, the quality of the deliverables was not acceptable. Mr. Burris pointed to 30 minute headways proposed by the consultant that are not feasible. He continued that basic planning of the routes was seriously flawed in areas and not acceptable.

Those issues are being resolved. Mr. Burrus touched on the need for ADA paratransit and his expected proposal to City Council.

The final document will be presented to the Steering Committee, TAC, TPC, and the public prior to submitting it to City Council for their approval.

**D. Other**

Mr. Barnett informed the committee that Mr. Jeff Watts would continue to represent Pleasant Valley on the TPC. As well, Mayor Stephen Holloway will now represent Lakeside City on the same committee. Both will be at the next TPC meeting.

Mr. Clark mentioned the new Comprehensive Plan for the City of Wichita Falls that will be multi-tiered. One aspect is economic diversity, which will look at building a local economy that is less dependent on SAFB. Another tier involves local updates which involves land use elements that City Council is interested in. Third tier is for a Downtown Plan. The overall plan will be inclusive and reference many different plans developed by the City and MPO, such as the Thoroughfare Plan, MTP Update, and so forth.

**XI. Public Comment on Anything Not on the Agenda**

No comments were received.

**XII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

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Lin Barnett  
MPO Transportation Planning Director  
Wichita Falls MPO