



**Association of Texas MPOs
Fall Meeting – Summary Minutes**

Central Texas RMA Board Room
3300 North IH-35 Frontage Road, Suite 300
Austin, TX 78705

Thursday, August 20th – 10:00am

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Ashby Johnson, CAMPO Executive Director and TEMPO Executive Director**
- II. Review of Meeting Notes from April 1st, 2015**
Meeting notes were reviewed and accepted unanimously.
- III. Election of TEMPO Executive Committee members / (TMA Place 1, Non-TMA Place 1, Non-TMA Place 3)**
Mr. Johnson opened the floor to the members gathered for nominees. Once nominations were complete, members were introduced to the full slate of nominees for the open Executive Committee positions: Mr. David Jones, Director the Lubbock MPO for TMA Place 1; Mr. Lin Barnett Wichita Falls MPO Director, Non-TMA Place 1; and Mr. Doray Hill, San Angelo MPO Director Non-TMA Place 3. As only 1 nomination was made for each open position, all elections were completed by acclamation and the terms all expire in August 2018.
- IV. Proposition 1, Proposition 7, and Future Funding Status Updates**
Mr. James Koch, Director of Transportation Planning and Programming, gave an update to those in attendance regarding Propositions 1 and 7 and a status update of future funding opportunities. He stated that Prop 1, passed by voters in November 2014, now has a website with project lists, statuses, and running subtotals of certified funds released. Currently, there are 199 projects statewide to spend down 1.74 billion in the 2015 fiscal year. TxDOT experienced significant under-runs in contract bidding in FY 2015, and have let have recycled some of FY 2015's money to be used in FY 2016. The Prop 1 project count is up to 211 and the total amount leverage up to this point is \$2.264 billion. Originally, TxDOT wanted to let those 199 projects all by December but it is a three-month process and things that do not start before October will have to wait until 2016. But all of FY 2015's money should be spent by summer 2016. Mr. Koch also reported that the money earmarked for use in high energy exploration and development areas is on target for spending, with at least another year's worth of projects ready to go as well. In response to a question from TEMPO members about Propositions 1 and 7's prohibition on tolled roads, Mr. Koch responded that the determination of a facility's status should be based on the relevant environmental document—if there is a separate environmental finding for the frontage roads or there are currently no tolls on the facility

then these funds can be used. Notably, this is not a legal finding but the opinion of TxDOT administration.

The opportunity to vote for or against Proposition 7 will begin in fall 2015 voting. Regarding the amount potentially available, TxDOT has no official position on that or how the funding will be allocated. Additionally, the Legislature ended diversion from the State Highway Fund, amounting to about \$660 million a year. These amounts will not be in the UTP until Nov 2015, and can be used for pretty much anything that fits with Fund 006, the State Highway Fund. Given this incoming funding, it should raise concern among the transportation community that the contractors may not have adequate capacity to build the projects the State is preparing to fund. Mr. Koch detailed that the Association of General Contractors has been contacted and this matter discussed. They know what is in the pipeline but it is not clear if contractors are up to the challenge or not. One way to begin adjusting to the situation is to bring projects through the development process in stages. As money becomes available, identify segments to move forward into the letting process; so that Districts and TxDOT don't need to show a \$1 billion project all at once. Meanwhile, potential funding available over the UTP time-length will dictate the local discussion at MPOs and help develop a robust statewide 10-year plan. Furthermore, TxDOT has realized that the projects also at least need to be in MPO long-range plans. The Districts and MPOs need to make sure everything under development is synched up with the long-range plans. TxDOT's goal is to be able to turn dirt on a lot of big projects before the next legislative session. At issue before then, though, will be the exact nature of the predictions going in to funding estimates from the UTP, local MPOs, and TxDOT via TRENDS software. In the past the UTP has been too conservative regarding the federal funding portion, while TRENDS has been seen as too "bullish" on MPG changes and alternatively fueled vehicles' market penetration.

Mr. Koch made some closing announcements: the 2016 UTP will be adopted in August 2015. It will include FY 2016 and 2017 funds and not be modified until November. In the November update the UTP will add the FY 2016 2017 Prop 1 projects. And so, sponsors and MPO programmers need to submit any new projects for inclusion in the UTP between by September 2015 in order to maintain sufficient time for the necessary discussions. Amounts in the UTP are an estimate and need to be certified by the Comptroller. Administration wants all of FY 2016 projects let by August 2016, and will not extend the opportunity to let projects through 2017 like was done with FY 2015 funds. There is projected to be about \$1.2 billion available for investment in FY 2016, roughly the same estimated for FY 2017. Finally, the TxDOT tool Project Tracker is getting a new web-based look and feel, which has been a monumental effort.

V. Legislative Update (HB 20, SB 1237, etc.)

Mr. Johnson introduced this item by stating that Representative Joe Pickett (D) – El Paso had noticed in the past instances where projects seemed to be materializing for funding without completing a procedural development or adequate public outreach. Mr. Johnsons stated that the implementation of the bills passed in the last session over the next year is already underway, with TxTO already having formed the necessary stakeholder committees (with invited MPO representatives) to carry it out.

Cindy Mueller, TxDOT Statewide MPO Coordinator for the Transportation Planning and Programming Division, updated those gathered regarding the implementation of [House Bill 20](#), passed by the 84th regular session of the Texas Legislature. She explained the two reports due according to the bill’s language, and “initial report” due September 1 2015 and a second, the “preliminary report”, due March 31, 2016. The initial report will present three main points regarding revenue, formula funding, and performance-based planning and programming. Firstly, the initial report will explain in a detailed way the department's projection regarding revenue needed to maintain congestion and connectivity conditions. Then, as a second point, it will develop how TxDOT calculates categories and allocation amounts—including project selection. The third point in the initial report is a presentation of the State’s current practice of performance-based planning and programming—both through its scoring and decision making.

In the second report, the “preliminary report”, TxDOT will talk about the use of alternative methods of financing and performance metrics and tools. Mr. Johnson stated he would send out the HB 20 slides TxDOT used in presentation to the Transportation Commission recently. TEMPO members present raised the concern that the work put into these matters previously, namely through the 2030 Committee, would be lost in reporting the findings for HB 20; especially regarding performance measures.

Regarding SB 1237, and the web-based “livestreaming” of MPO policy board meetings, Ms. Mueller and TEMPO members commented the bill language is not as clear as it could be regarding those agencies responsible for its implementation. In many instances, though, MPOs in Texas had already been considering adding this service. As such, the TEMPO Executive Committee recommends that those non-TMAs—who do not currently come under the bill’s requirements—if the capability exists to begin livestreaming easily, should go ahead and start. It may very well be that in the next legislative session all MPOs will have to do this. The San Antonio and Hidalgo County MPOs are considering a Florida firm called Granicus, which is the same firm employed by TxDOT for Commission meetings. Another national-level option is Swagit. In response, FHWA-Texas Division Administration Michael Leary, PE, asked why federal funds are being used to pay for a state legislative requirement. Is it legally tenable to require implementation of this rule? And, if so, could it legally be defined as an “exorbitant expense” of federal funds? FHWA representatives in attendance recommended reaching out to them during the legislative process, as livestreaming is not considered a requirement of the federal public involvement process.

VI. Performance Measures (Lunch presentation)

This presentation has been posted on the TEMPO website, <http://www.texasmpo.org/presentations>

VII. Presentation on Cost of Doing Nothing (Dr. Ellis, TTI,)

This presentation has been posted on the TEMPO website,
<http://www.texasmpo.org/presentations>

After the presentation, TEMPO members engaged in a lively discussion regarding the scalability of increased travel capacity single-vehicle automotive in Texas metropolitan areas, with many members opining roadway expansion as the main tool to address travel congestion should be phased out in favor of an inherently mode-less approach to congestion mitigation.

VIII. Statewide Training (MPO Directors and TxDOT Employees)

TEMPO has committed to hosting training at its next quarterly meeting and solicited those gathered for possible topics. The following were ranked in order of importance:

1. ESTIP/TIP preparation
2. Modeling
3. UPWP format and fairness
4. Performance measurement (final rule in September - impact in May 2016)
5. General overview of the planning process

The background for this training is that in early 2015 John Barton mentioned a concern many TxDOT administrators were ready to retire and there would be a leadership gap. He worked with the TEMPO Executive Committee to develop a training program similar to the FHWA training program, which Mr. Johnsons mentioned to TxDOT Executive Director Gen. Weber recently, securing the Director's approval.

IX. Supplemental Funding (TxDOT)

At the April general meeting there had been discussed the new TxDOT supplemental funding program—made possible through a TTI study. Applications for the first round of funding are due by the end of September, with awards going out the early 2016. These are one-year grants of SPR funds that need monthly billings for management, as TxDOT TP&P has to report to FHWA quarterly. The funds' expenditure also needs to be reflected in your APER at the end of the year.

X. Discussion of NHTS (TxDOT)

The National Household Travel Survey is a federal program with some add-on states that is funded through government funds and pooled fees. The program has been going on since 1969 and it usually runs 5-7 years, with the latest one conducted in 2009. TxDOT is going to buy an add-on for north central Texas, and is willing to buy drilled-down data for other TMAs as well, given the TMAs ability to reimburse. The normal survey conducted here in Texas was going to be only 19,000 surveys but TxDOT is adding 20,000 more. This presentation has been posted on the TEMPO website,
<http://www.texasmpo.org/presentations>

XI. Presentation of ARNOLD (TxDOT)

Mr. Michael Chamberlain, TxDOT Data Management Section, presented the digital linear reference system for US roads, ARNOLD ("All roads network of linear reference data"). Maintenance of this database is a requirement of HPMS compliance, as it is the official tool for geolocation nationwide. In the past local roadways did not have a spatial component, but Texas is the largest state to report this information. An updated version

has been prepared and sent out to local partners. This presentation has been posted on the TEMPO website, <http://texasmpo.org/tempo/presentations>

XII. Conformity Update

The EPA is still working under a court-ordered deadline of Oct 1, 2015 to submit a new air quality set of standards. Ms. Barbara Maley, FHWA, suspects that before things are published FHWA should not comment. The review will be published in the federal register, after which the NAAQS standard kicks off sixty days later. Then the EPA begins enforcing the standards one year after that, assuming there are no lawsuits challenging the rules.

XIII. Announcements / Next TEMPO meeting

The next TEMPO meeting and educational training is tentatively being scheduled for November or December 2015, with no current location in consideration.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following the announcements.