

Summary Notes from the Association of Texas MPOs 2017 Full Summer Meeting

Residence Inn by Marriott Harlingen
109 Bass Pro Dr., Harlingen, TX 78552

Tuesday, July 18

WebEx Dial-in Number: 1-855-282-6330

Meeting number (access code): 924 477 469

All presentations and handouts posted on the [TEMPO Website](#)

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Chris Evilia, TEMPO Executive Director
- II. Approval of February 7, 2017 Meeting Summary Notes
- III. Review and discussion of [consensus revisions to TxDOT Category 2 distribution formula](#) and next steps – Chris Evilia
 - The Category 2 formula was updated to at least meet current populations (from previous status based on 2000 Census). The group agreed to split into two groups: largest 6 MPOs and the smaller 19.
 - The draft report is out for review (including the minority reports from Brownsville and Bryan-College Station) and, once approved, the complete document with minority reports will be sent to TPP. It will then go to the Commission and the TAC amended, with final in spring 2018. The 2019 UTP will be the first time the new calculations will be incorporated.
 - Dan Kessler thanked Peggy Thurin for running all the formulas for the group as they worked through many scenarios, and thanked TTI staff for their assistance too.
 - Drew Cannon asked if there would be another vote. Chris Evilia said that would be up to the members. Drew said it's in the MPO directors' best interest to vote, so they can go back to their boards and explain why they stand where they do on the formula, and Clay Barnett agreed.
 - Dan suggested maybe we could have the document ready to review at the September meeting. Chris is heading up the Mega Regions meeting in Houston September 14-15. TEMPO can meet on the afternoon of the 13th at the H-GAC offices. Drew asked that the group see the minority reports before this meeting to help with consensus. Bill Frawley noted they are included as part of the report.
 - Chris shared the [Senate Bill 312 Planning and Programming Requirements](#) (posted to the [TEMPO website](#)) He noted that the Department looks for TEMPO's help to meet requirements and this needs to be discussed. We will send out the list and would like feedback on how we can help. Dan noted this is a long laundry list of issues. It may be helpful to get a suggested plan of attack from TxDOT on how we can work with them based on their list of priorities. Peggy Thurin agreed that

discussion is necessary. Chris asked that Peggy work with the TEMPO Executive Committee so they can report to the membership in September.

IV. Review and Discussion regarding [TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study](#) – Carl Seifert, CH2M on behalf of TxDOT PTN

- Bonnie Sherman, TxDOT, introduced Carl Seifert, and distributed a [handout on how Texas is investing in Bike/Ped](#) programs.
- Carl's introduced the [TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study](#), a pilot study for building a bicycle-use count database. He expressed the need for everyone to contribute their local data across the state. Questions can be directed to Carl (carl.seifert@ch2m.com) or to Bonnie (bonnie.sherman@txdot.gov).
- TxDOT has contracted with [Strava](#), to acquire their data for the next two years, as a supplement the data counts gathered from around the state. They can provide memberships to MPOs free under a sub-license during that time. Jeff Pollack said they had been using Strava data and highly recommends it and will also share what they have. Drew also uses the data and recommends taking advantage of this opportunity. NCTCOG has an ongoing bike/ped case study as well and will share count data as well as partner on this study.
- There is a self-use app that individuals can download. The study looks at how it relates to the data. There may be some barriers such as determining if the factors reflect reality, but some of the many benefits are: lots of uses for the data, a global dataset, planning value, and the most expansive set of bike/ped data available.
- There will be opportunities later this summer to get feedback from MPOs, and input for routes through the state, working with the [TxDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee](#). MPO feedback is critical but voluntary. We need to know what routes you want us to include, as well as any you don't want included and why. Please send preferred (GIS) data is at all possible. Jeff noted having this data as validation would help MPOs to promote bike/ped projects. Dan said this is a study, not a plan. It conceptually connects 25 metro areas and mirrors the Texas Trunk System. To pass a plan with full support, it would have to include all areas.
- Dan also pointed out we need to bring Texas Parks back to the metro areas. They're valuable resources that aren't being used enough. Mark Lund shared that Cameron County has an active Parks & Rec plan with MPO staff on the committee.
- Chris said MPOs deal with fiscal constraint and that hasn't been explored. Not sure how this will look since the ideas are conceptual, but it will most likely involve local funds for the near future.
- What facilities should be included? Any, you need to look to the future but we also need routes that are usable right now. We want to share routes people can take today so this can be immediately effective. We want to eventually build something like the East Coast Greenway, but are decades away. Cameron Walker noted the Bankhead Highway runs east-west, and Weatherford has lead with that (U.S. 80?). There are lots of historic corridors that should be tied into this. Carl agreed, Heritage Trails has been considered an example

V. Update regarding the [2018 Unified Transportation Program](#) – Jessica Butler and Colt Amberg, TxDOT TP&P

Comments & questions:

- We did not have to delay a project due to funding. If anything, we are short on projects for the 4 year term.
- There is a push to return to the 2-year cycle, but at least we only have to do annual updates (not quarterly), and only to Categories 2, 4 and 12 since they're all we have to list.
- The annual cycle is no less work or communication. There will be a calendar of annual cycle updates once the Department approves it.
- It ties into having enough time to discuss and analyze projects; it is not a reflection on the projects.
- We're going back to the Commission in the fall to discuss and understand projects before funding them.
- For the time-being, but then we're in develop authority. We want to brief before moving on to funding.
- David Wurdlow noted we all worked a long time for this 10-year plan.
- What is shown and what is not shown? Be clear.
- If voted on in March, still authorized with few exceptions.
- We understand MPOs spent time on this, but we did not. Some are still included but not funded. No new Clear Lanes, Cat 4, etc.
- Clay asked where they can find a draft online. Jessica said it is coming soon. They're working on the formatting, maybe by tomorrow or at the meeting on Thursday.
- You're not listing as many projects, so the document is a lot smaller and maybe you could print it out. We could give feedback or ask questions on the new format.
- David noted it seems like being in limbo, with no decisions until 2019 from the Commission. Jessica said no decision yet, but discussion will occur in the fall, with workshops and forecasts in September. The goal is to have the draft 2019 UTP by early January or February. We need a calendar and a communication strategy, so we can share as soon as it's verified, to be able to let you know what the needs are.
- Category 7 is not listed in the UTP. It's in allocation, so not required to include it. We're not voting on Cat 7 because you select them. Drew noted he does not disagree, but it is helpful to show in the UTP b/c the local partners use this as a tool. It doesn't look like the document we voted on. Jessica said if it is an issue, let them know. They can't change it in this UTP (2019), but maybe the next one.
- They're also trying to update Project Tracker, which shows Cat 7. We can also look at TAC rules. We keep flexibility with less listing though. E'Lisa asked when there will be meetings around the state on Project Tracker changes. They're looking at that now. Taking into consideration they're replacing legacy systems, it may get pushed back until January or February. E'Lisa agreed with Drew that Project Tracker is not useful, so having all projects listed in the UTP is important.
- Chris noted there is a Public Meeting on Thursday (7/20), and the Draft UTP will be posted tomorrow.

- VI. Review and Discussion regarding the identification of [Texas Critical Freight Corridors](#) – TxDOT Freight & Int'l Trade Section
- Tim Juarez, introduced Kale Driemeier, both with TxDOT Freight & Int'l Trade.
 - As part of the presentation (slide 10) Kale introduced an interactive web map, [TxDOT Identified Urban Freight Corridors](#). The link to the map had been previously distributed.
 - He discussed the next steps for Critical Urban Freight Corridors and impacts to and involvement of MPOs.
 - Certification letters from large area MPOs are due by July 28 (slide 11).
 - He shared other definite dates for TxFAC meetings and expected dates for plan adoption by TCC and submission to FHWA (slide 12).
 - There is opportunity to update and continue outreach to build, especially for large area MPOs. There will be a public comment period in September. There will also be opportunities for stakeholder involvement by WebEx, with more as needed.
 - Chris noted that, as an ex-officio Freight Advisory Committee member, he cannot vote, but he can comment.

11:30 a.m. Lunch Break (Working lunch)

- VII. Presentations from Rio Grande Valley MPOs
[Harlingen / San Benito MPO](#)
[Hidalgo County MPO](#)
[Brownsville MPO](#)
- VIII. Discussion regarding [State Safety Targets](#) proposed for the Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- TTI can help with CRIS data and current baselines for districts.
 - What do the MPOs want from TxDOT? Drew wants Cat 2 funding strategies; Chris suggested safety targets; E'Lisa asked for help for small MPOs, data availability, and formatting; Clay agreed with formatting for the freight update.
- IX. Review and Discussion regarding changes to TP&P staff assignments and MPO Billing procedures – Peggy Thurin, TxDOT TP&P
- There are continuing changes to TPP staff and billing needs. Three MPO Coordinators are gone, and Bill Frawley with TTI has stepped in to help in their places. They have hired one additional Coordinator and will be interviewing in September or as soon as able.
 - Contracting professional services opened availability to take on a billing review. Begins with business operations, then MPO coordination for review at the end of the process.
 - All receipts must be submitted with billing.
- X. Updates / Announcements:
- From Federal Partners - none
 - On upcoming training / workshops – MegaRegion Workshop with focus on freight issues September 14-15 in Houston
 - On future TEMPO meetings – Fall meeting afternoon of September 13 in Houston

Winter meeting possibly scheduled in association with the TxDOT Forum – no schedule yet.

XI. Final Questions/Discussion:

- Dan asked Peggy about an MPO SPR supplemental funding program. Peggy had received a couple of applications (due by August 1st) in response to an email that went out a month or more ago regarding who is eligible. Funding could help with staffing. More this year due to carryover.
- Karen noted discussion is needed regarding FHWA new planning requirements per [the FAST Act checklist](#). This needs to be addressed at the next meeting, particularly performance measures.
- This could be made available on the TEMPO website. Dan agreed, on the website or on a list-serve--performance measures development in several disciplines, safety for example. We can look into making the web access interactive and/or uploadable (as an App?). It could also include to-do lists organized by document or by federal/state requirements (TIP, LRP, etc.). Bill Frawley noted that TTI has communications staff who could help with these efforts.

1:30 p.m. Adjournment