



Full Spring Meeting Notes March 5, 2019, 10 a.m. -

Williamson County Jester Annex
Anderson & Harrell Conference Rooms
1801 East Old Settler Blvd.
Round Rock, TX 78664

Legislative Update - Chris Evilia, TEMPO Executive Director

Rebekah Hernandez, Communications Supervisor, NCTCOG Trans. Dept., and chair of the Legislative Updates TEMPO subcommittee provides TEMPO with timely information. Her updates can be accessed at: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/involve/legislate>.

SB962, Props 1 and 7, will continue to December 2024. HJR82, the Grow Texas Act, combined with Prop 1, only for the energy sector. Both draw from the Rainy Day Fund.

Cameron Walker - Commented on Junior Representative Land Grant Bill.

Other items mentioned: Property tax, max currently at 8%, only for cities with budgets over \$15M.

Fast Act expires 9/30/20. Long term replacement likely. Short term continues resolutions, keeping flat with no increase. Reauthorization bill under scrutiny. MPOs may want to consult policy boards.

No specifics from Trump Administration. Rescission funds need to be obligated for Category 1 maintenance.

Core funding formula distribution same as 2009, based on 2000 census. Hurts high growth states. Not on Texas' delegation's radar. Policy boards should contact them about PL dollars.

Discussion regarding new development process and timeline for the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) - Brian Barth, Director of Project Planning & Development, TxDOT

Brian Barth - Can front load projects if ready and funding available, if Commission permits. What are your District's priorities? You can work with TPP (and TTI) to track them. Referenced a table regarding the UTP Process. Commission wants projects earlier and earlier, to have them fully vetted by August.

Barbara Maley - Are MPOs going to change conformity? It's a long process. TxDOT is working with MPOs, are there any problems?

Dan Kessler - There are problems, but not UTP related.

Barbara - The acceleration could cause problems.

Brian - It has exhausted what's on the shelf (projects that are ready to go).

Cameron – TIP or Amendment--How do we know how it scored on Decision Lens?

Peggy Thurin - We don't, if those are being shared.

Brian – No, all have projects we're interested in, some weren't on the list. That's why we're getting projects to the Commission earlier. Commissioners all look at list from their own unique perspectives. I suggest being agile to respond to whatever comes up. How can we strategize to best use funds and minimize rescissions? Swap apportionment code; handle with **FTTA**. Don't change UTP categories. We want to have conversations with MPOs.

Barbara – What about CMAQ?

Brian – STP and Flex

José Campos – STP complications?

Brian – We'll have to do those checks. Try to hold UTP harmless in the process, to maximize what we can do in Texas.

Cameron – When will we know the effects of apportionment?

Brian – In the next few weeks

Peggy – Only Category 7 and Category 5.

Chris Evilia – Will adding federal funds slow down the process?

José – Getting approval too.

Ashby Johnson – I thought we had a rescission committee?

Brian – We should work together to get that committee back up and running. TxDOT can take the lead to get the group back up.

Dan – We used to have meetings with TxDOT Administration and MPO leadership. Any heads up about TxDOT Admin focus?

Brian – Keep head down, try not to be a target, and keep what we have. Procurement gets delayed and passed over. Need six projects per biennium so we always have something and maintain flexibility.

Odd capital budget, combining campuses. Bought land, designed and site work started. Asking funding for loan program through facilities. New IT contract outsourced. Contract expired and asking to budget. **TxDOT Connect, DCIS' replacement**, asked additional budget to finish in both bills that have passed.

The first release in Waco already started. Next week it will be in Fort Worth. In the next two weeks, by the end of March, waves 2 and 3 will have all districts out of DCIS and using this program for all but a

few things. The engineer's estimate is that by August no one will need to be in DCIS. Next biennium funds to add features and shut down old systems in the background.

E'Lisa Smetana – Will MPO's still be able to make comments, and will they look at those comments?

Brian – Absolutely! There were hiccups with a few vendors. We had project management and controls in place and got out of those contracts with very little trouble or expense.

Ashby – In general, what is the length of time it takes to get an AFP? It's hard to get projects to the shelf without this.

Brian – Yes, I recognize this. For special approvals, fixed rate is standard. The workgroup developed a number of standard agreements for different types of work that should hopefully streamline the process. If proposed in March and approved in May.

Dan – In TxDOT audit, language in agreements with TxDOT, MMA, CMAQ and other funding say, "all key project personnel must take training class." It's primarily directed to constructing projects and it's a 12-hour course. We only do a short section of that on TIP_/STIP. We got dinged by auditors for not all attending the whole class. Could we get help to modify the class into something that's more useful?

Ashby – Several years ago we were in on the development and tried to get more MPO involvement but were unsuccessful.

Brian – I will work on this and talk to others.

Analysis is based on 2020 UTP. A good balance is left on Category 2. May be able to fund more in some districts.

E'Lisa – Still no talk of using off-system? Have local entities who want things, but on TxDOT roads.

? - Lauren asked for focus on this...

Bill Frawley – Are there cases where off-system gives relief to on-system?

Brian – It might be worth trying if you have really strong justification.

Cameron – We're hosting a meeting on March 26 reviewing the NHS at all MPOs and districts. Could this be something for all of us to bring up and justify? Where could we start showing these roads could become on-system?

Brian – Have a Travel Demand Model.t

Peggy – Is there a study of true need, and feasibility?

Cameron – Yes, we did two.

Brian – Adding them into the State System and funding off-system are two different discussions.

Chris – What is NHS and what makes a corridor part of it? We have a lot of facilities that don't qualify but are important to our area. When a gap has been created, how do we define it? How is the NHS meant to function?

Ashby – We did with TxDOT and FHWA and it went well. Spoke to our advisory committee, and the presentation they gave helped clear up confusion tied to arterials, etc., and identified facilities that needed to come out or be added.

Dan – It was great help for us too. We weren't wanting to add into the system, we were trying to take things out.

E'Lisa – What is the date for the UTP training?

Chris – I will work with executive committee to come up with dates this summer or fall.

TxDOT's new DBE requirements for MPO private sector contracts

Third party private services must be run by TxDOT to approve DBE funds.

E'Lisa – Tried to fit planning contract into construction "diagram." Hard to discern, four-week process. Decision \$0.00 b/c planning and construction discrepancy. Fiscal agent thought engineering contract.

Linda De La Fuente – Submitted and took 2-3 weeks instead of 3 days. Already submitted contingency plan.

Chris – Some have had discussion with State about engineering. Policy Board wants to include cost as part of review.

Dan – Has anyone gotten response that doesn't meet DBE requirements? Challenge – availability of DBE contractors in our market. Conversation with TxDOT about what is the potential market?

Peggy – My goals were usually 13%.

Chris – The first question is do you have a goal?

Dan – Balance hard at the end of the year.

Cameron – Trying to get RPI for public involvement and put budget in proposal. Is that a good idea?

Dan – OK

Release of Carryover PL Funds

Peggy – Carryover in progress, still issues closing out 2018. Ready to release funds for FY 2019. Probably won't obligate all funds. [Only] what is in UPWP, so we don't lose all in construction, leave some for PL b/c that may be cut next year.

MPO boundary changes – work with data management folks. Need shape files to be more accurate. Boundaries aren't aligning where they're supposed to. Really critical to get as accurate as possible. Our folks are happy to work with you and will reach out to you as needed. Please work with them.

Barbara – State Planning Research (SPR) requests, how do they get this funding?

Peggy – If they're in area – SPR funds carryover less than 50% and fall in lower tier of MPO-eligible to apply for SPR funds to help.

Dan – Why don't we just align with county boundaries?

Darcie Schipull– It’s political. Seems like we just complicate things when we change our boundaries. Does it really matter?

Break for lunch

Typing performance targets to decision making within MTPs & TIPs

TIP project selection process Presentation– Ryan Collins and David Paine, CAMPO, approved Oct. 2017. Transportation Planning Handbook 2016 highlights cost/benefit or cost effectiveness analysis. Also includes safety effectiveness and crash effectiveness rating for crash reduction potential. This can be provided to applicants ahead of time.

Ashby – Before this process our board had never ... contextual, but there is “wobble room.” Not working in a vacuum, working closely with the District. Asked Board to pass policy. We can have board reallocate funds, so we don’t have projects sit on the shelf without moving forward. Public involvement is an important part, documentation has to be within the last 3 years (?)

Cameron – First time TAC recommendation passed through the board.

Major Hofheins – Monitoring process – public?

?? - No, not unless going through environmental.

Major - We’re seeing a lot of public input as projects progress.

Cameron – There is a comment period...

Darcie – Keep a project history that the public can see.

Chris – Criteria – state of good repair?

Ashby – Once we reach a certain point in the life cycle, it’s the District’s ...

E’Lisa – How did you “even the playing field?”

?? – Cost effectiveness is harder – looked at Categories.

E’Lisa –We only have Category 2 funds.

Chris – The December meeting was a disappointment due to lack of progress on performance targets. How do we communicate with TxDOT on how they get a number and whether we (MPOs) can help with it?

?? - Texas’ process is better than a lot of States.

Chris – We each know our area better than anyone else, even TxDOT. Can’t meet everyone’s needs?

Major – For instance, safety targets. Still have questions about what it means to support State targets.

?? – Couldn’t come up with local data – too hard to discern, needs refinement and software issues too. Safety targets are the hardest.

Ashby – We had a hard time and had to bring TTI in. There were some holdouts, and some more applicable at the regional level, but not the state.

?? – Big costs mean big benefits? Not always so in terms of crashes.

Dan – A lot of bridges (3) can't be placed (replaced?). Is it in TPP bounds to make enough connections – institutional – between TxDOT and MPOs for each performance measure?

Darcie – MPOs hadn't experienced a lot of their relationship before this came in (bridges, etc. PMs)

Dan – Requires discipline to come together about that *one topic*.

Darcie – Bridges and pavement can get data form districts.

Peggy – I provided a lot of bridge data, but if you need specific information we can have a meeting to come up with it.

Darcie – Partnership with the district is good, but raw data is just numbers.

Macie Wyers – We had a good experience with the district input and explanation.

Chris – Maybe we can think about a late summer meeting.

Clay Barnett – Should focus on bridge and road pavement.

E'Lisa – We struggle with tying projects back to performance measures.

Peggy – For STIP last summer we had to deal with a lot of data. Use Decision Lens in STIP report.

Rea Donna Jones – Atlanta used Decision Lens and it did very well.

Clay – Had same experience.

Peggy – With FHWA, we're looking statewide.

Clay – We're more concerned about reports and what needs to be concluded.

Bill – Can we do data gathering after, and get results to compare and qualify? Could be a few to several years to have results-based.

Kirk Fauver – FHWA looked across the country for examples and sent to TxDOT.

Bill – In National Transit Institute (NTI) classes we hear the same concerns.

José – There is no "one size fits all."

Chris – We'll try to open this up to TEMPO and show separate process for the summer meeting.

Peggy – We will send out a template with the 2018 carryover, and have it in by the end of July, with maybe a draft by June. Any emphasis areas?

Clay – 2020 census – What do the MPOs do?

?? – PSAP. Participant area

Chris – TMA 101 course for TEMPO

Cameron – CSJs 101

Chris – This summer’s July TEMPO meeting could be held in Lubbock. 2 days, Workshop day 1 then a meeting on day 2.

?? – PM 2 & 3 Requirements must be in May 2020 STIP revision.

?? – MTPs end of year will have to address 1, 2 & 3.

Kirk – UT Thompson Center 2 CFR 200 grant workshop on Admin planning grants – May 14-15

?? - TxDOT auditors report to Commission. Dedicated to audit organization 2-3 months, very thorough. Questions about risk – agency wide assessment.

Meeting adjourned.