

**Association of Texas MPOs 2019 July 30 Meeting Notes**  
Lubbock Memorial Civic Center, Room 107, Lubbock, TX

**Tuesday, July 30, 2019, 8:30 a.m.**

**Welcome and Introductions – Chris Evilia, TEMPO Executive Director**

**Discussion and Update regarding National Highway System Review - Susan Chavez, TxDOT**

- NHS Update presentation
  - No comprehensive review since 1996
  - Appreciation for MPO input
  - 19 of 25 districts had no concerns
  - Web tool comments being addressed in coordination w/ FHWA

*Questions/Comments:*

- *When will it be appropriate to take suggestions to our boards? We will let you know, this fall at the earliest.*
- *Is anyone working on new routes? When HQ approves these changes, they will be reflected on the map*
- *Has there been discussion with MPOs who had concerns (H-GAC)? We did meet with them, and they seemed happy with the format we walked them through. We expect to have meeting, especially with the larger MPOs like H-GAC. We've had good feedback from FHWA but do expect some disagreement.*
- *There are segments where action may be deferred by MPOs-principle arterials they don't want to downgrade or put on the NHS. Possibly, but guidance says more exception than the rule unless there is good justification.*
- *Kudos for the map system which helped the process. We intend to keep the webtool active.*

**Discussion regarding post Census Review of Highway Functional Classification and Smoothed Urban Area Boundaries – Bill Frawley, TTI / Genevieve Bales, FHWA**

- Bill Frawley - Principle Arterials (PAs) vs. NHS; smooth boundaries and 10-year census results
  - FAQ – legislation on FHWA website
  - PAs after 2012 not added to NHS; before were added
  - *Can we make an exception, and have it added back?*
  - At this time recommend leaving it, but some need to be downgraded.
  - PAs classed as NHS; can be left as PA if the exception is justified; ex: Dallas toll road operates as a PA but does not need to be on NHS – not the rule! Typically, would be downgraded from PA if not added to NHS. When not added to NHS, there must be an explanation of function as PA. Sometimes this “function” doesn't coincide w/ NHS definition of PA.
- Census begins April 2020; 2021 boundary changes; 2022 boundary smoothing and reclassification.
- Requires 2-3 day effort per area

- *Eduardo Calvo - How often can we make changes to NHS? Can new facilities be added?*
- You don't have to wait if they meet all criteria (see website) and have support documentation for your statement. Make recommendation to NHS and we make recommendation to (TxDOT) head office. NHS and Functional Classification (FC) changes. TxDOT can send criteria out (Susan may have done that).
- *Sid Martinez - Pre-analysis by TxDOT to know ahead of time where boundaries will change?*
- Bill deferred to Brigida Gonzalez or Peggy Thurin (TxDOT-TPP)
- *Chris commended Susan; this tool is great and helpful. Areas most likely heading to status changes are Waco to new TMA, Eagle Pass to new MPO, and the Merger in Rio Grande Valley (RGV).*
- *Clay Barnett has heard Huntsville may count prisoners in census and may move up in status.*
- Bill concurred, adding that students may also be counted and affect changes.

#### **Discussion regarding distribution of PL carryover funds – Peggy Thurin, TxDOT TPP**

- Peggy - For the last 5-7 years, MPOs have consistently carried over PL funding.
- *Dan Kessler – Could be worry about no new funds next year. We've made commitments; we can advance construct PL funds b/c feds may be slow.*
- May not happen with this PWP, but you need to be planning to spend down PL funds.
- *Bill – Smaller MPOs may be saving funds for studies. Takes a whole year's worth plus (1.5 yrs). Can that be justified?*
- Yes, we can have that discussion and accommodate.
- *Clay – How can we initiate the discussion?*
- Send me an email.
- *Chris – Peggy's concern is directed more toward larger MPOs.*
- *Karen owen – H-GAC looked ahead to 2020; trying to spend down expiring CMAQ funds. Do you have comments about what we need to be doing to prepare for rescission?*
- I don't deal with that, and I'd have to ask someone in Finance. (Genevieve noted that Dan Kessler, NCTCOG has ideas for dealing w/ this issue) Peggy will reach out to Dan.
- *Ashby Johnson noted that Brian Barth told him he would look into this.*
- *Sid – One of biggest issues is nonprofits have funding leftover. We want to hold back funds for emergencies or big projects.*
- *I don't think we're seeing running balances on our billing statements. Its hard to see on a monthly basis how much we're carrying over. How can you help us stay more aware?*
- We keep a spreadsheet that should be going out every month.
- *Sid – It does; shows how much is in the work program and we can estimate. Don't know dollar amount until we close out the year. Doesn't show previous year's balance not spent. That used to go into "bucket;" it used to show us funds we were in danger of losing, i.e., "old money."*
- *We should probably get better at tracking on our own, but the old reports used to be more helpful.*
- The last work order only shows previous year's carryover and only comes out at the end of the year.

- *We can't say if its more than one year old, or we would spend the "old money" first. When we don't get the report until late in the year, it's hard to handle on our own.*
- If you have ideas to make the spreadsheets more helpful/usable, let me know.
- *Ashby – We need to put it in writing – send an email?*
- Yes, send emails to me (Peggy) and Brian Barth with subject "PL Funds."
- *Ashby/Dan – What about amending the planning contract? Maybe add verbiage that TxDOT will cover funds?*
- *CAMPO has about a year of reserves, but the board may ask for a study. How do we address that?*
- I'm open to conversations. Chris suggested the Executive Committee meet with Peggy and TPP staff.

**Discussion regarding incorporating Freight Rail into the transportation planning process  
Tyson Moeller – Union Pacific Corp.**

- Presentation references Class 1 railroads and short lines too.
- We're looking at corridors, Missouri to New Mexico, and integrating MPOs and TxDOT info. Our team covering these projects may contact you. Public/Private teams looking at crossing, ports, etc.
- A lot of cars are moving down into Mexico. Rail facilities are growing there (Austin, Corpus, Eagle Pass, Permian Basin).
- UP has reduced staff.
- MPOs think of rail as part of solution: take trucks off the roadways; capacity; maintenance? (drones for inspections and automated railcars)
- Slides #9-11 Industry and Public Projects; Don Woods is the lead for this team in the Southeast U.S.
- City projects; UP consultant investigates; looking for MPOs to help communicate and coordinate with. If agency has a project, enter info online and call center will contact you.
- If projects are in/around rail facilities contact us. We may be able to help or do preliminary engineering.
- "Design Build" gets rail portion at 100% before project construct begins. Should reduce cost. We try to be flexible but can be a roadblock if not brought onboard early.
- Private dollars may help meet private matches.
- *Slide #16 – Ashby noted he would add "Safety" to Public Benefits.*
- Slide 18 – Tyson's team reviewed existing collaborative projects in Texas
- *Eduardo – Kudos on projects reaching out to local entities; increases coming in N/S rail w/ Mexico.*
- Yes, longer trains w/grade separations; average length is under 100 cars/7-8K ft., some areas may be 12-13K ft. Now 16-17K ft. when possible, for efficiency. Extension vs. rerouting or grade separations.
- With decreased workforce, utilizing outside contractors; inhouse vs. outsourcing (more flexible).
- *Bill – Who do we contact in emergencies; interactions or problems at rail crossings, etc.?*
- Doug Woods in general. Tyson for MPOs and TxDOT.
- *Ashby – Corridor studies that impact RRs; can we get impact studies?*
- We'd like to look at completed projects, those still out there and any possibilities.

## **Review and Discussion regarding the TTI Congestion Management Process Assessment Tool (COMPAT) - Matt Miller, TTI; Chris Evilia – Example from Waco MPO**

- Congestion analysis from data sets, performance results, webtool format, export material, ongoing monitoring and updates
- Geared toward technical committees more than policy
- Quick comparisons and exports
- Project selection and system performance measurements
- Uses 100 most congested roadways methodology (link)
- MPOs asked about urbanized area layers, etc, and that is being investigated
- Metropolitan boundaries are the selected limits.
- To initiate process of updates to FC – contact Dave Schrank or Matt Miller
- Options for multiple metrics
  - Will develop glossary of terms to help
  - Export data to CSV file and possibly develop for policy boards
  - You can add and customize corridors
- Comparison of roads to build a “congestion network” to monitor and manage; follow roads you’re interested in.
- Integrate comps into COMPAT tool
- *Sharing shape files with MPOs for congestion management?*
- *How are roads selected? Using rhino volume data*

### **Chris – Waco is using COMPAT to identify problems – Presentation**

- Chunk of I-35; removed from UTP due to funding limitations
- Identify if there are smaller, break-out projects
- Compared to most congested, rank 1310
- Doesn’t appear bad in program, but we know there’s something going on
  - Crash data
  - Rear-end collisions
  - Complaints, etc
- SB traffic, heavy weave, trucks, on- and off-ramps busy, slopes, high-volume
- Projects w/more manageable cost; build an auxiliary lane, switch ramp configuration, etc.
- Need empirical data and tool was helpful

### **Discussion regarding the FHWA / FTA Workshop on Transportation Performance Management and Performance Based Planning and Programming – Chris Evilia**

- Feedback to DOT about challenges/issues in process, ideas to make it easier and more streamlined
  - Data quality controls and availability (Texas is better than many states)
  - Off-system data, pavement, etc.; not a lot out there
  - NHS system; might prioritize b/c they will move the needle
  - Transit, etc., schedules that don’t line up w/ MTP process, etc.
  - Takes legislative action to change
  - State targets on safety; still increase, but less than could be
  - Is there an acceptable %? – No.
  - Need conversation about engineering and design
  - Driver behavior is more difficult

- Transit safety targets – transit agencies
- Melissa Foreman, FTA, Region 6
  - Community Planner
  - Public Transportation, PTAP
  - 5307 recipients
  - 5310-5311 not subject
  - Final rule – 2 weeks ago effective
  - Transit
- New info – links on website; reach out to area FTA community planner
- MPO initiate discussion w/ transit agency
- TAM plans- transit agencies must submit them; they may lose funding, etc.
- *Cameron Walker – If agency did submit, does it need approval?*
- No. They just need to have filed and informed MPO.

**Discussion regarding HB 2840 impacting public testimony and use of non-English translators at open meetings.**

- Limited to 3 minutes each unless translation needed, then twice the time.
- Every person is allowed to speak
- One more piece of legislation; Prop 1 rainy day expires 2025 – now indefinite
- Prop 7 out of general fund; motor vehicle fuel taxes
- *Clay – “hearing of Visitors” at the end*
- *E’Lisa Smetana – Comment at top that people may comment as needed*
- *Rea Donna Jones – A large forum can be given in five minutes*

**Presentations regarding innovative practices from West Texas MPOs**

**Lubbock MPO – Decision Lens, David Jones, MPO Director and Kylan Francis, TxDOT**

- Decision Lens (DL) brought policy and advisory committees together regarding 10-year plan
- March-April, TAC tried to refine list of what they could fund
- Previously Lubbock County had not participated; Lubbock City Bond
- Three sponsors, each with their own priorities (like a parent negotiating w/ 3 children)
- April - DL used to prioritize list of 15 projects
- May - showed what DL produced to Policy Committee (TPC)
- Good feedback; positives of prioritizing list using DL for quantitative not qualitative
- June - Asked TPC for weighting criteria, priorities (by percentages) and definitions; used WebEx to explain process
- TPC enjoyed the process, asked questions, made adjustments and refinements
- Workshop for TAC to get guidance from TPC, achieved consensus
- *Eduardo – Your Tech Committee and Policy Committee, both had relative weights; how did you come to consensus?*
- Depends on the willingness of all parties to compromise
- *Cameron – We whittled down 35 to 30 over 20 years. How do we prioritize?*
- *Can’t do much when opinions are political.*
- *To reorder, requires justification using tools like DL*
- *Does DL use State weights?*

- *Off system projects have very little data except at the local level*
- *Statewide (SW) weights are not required; create your own, local weights and criteria*
- *But is data from SW planning map?*
- *Chris – Apply the process through a public level DL based off emails so, if you go public, you have to register each person.*
- *I would do more of a metro quest – highlight roadways and ask for their comments.*

### **San Angelo MPO – Major Hofheins, MPO Director and Pete Madrid, MPO Planner/GIS Technician**

- Put map on webpage and make it interactive. The public can go to it and learn about projects. We got a lot of public input on projects already in progress.
- Major asked to put local projects on the website that citizens can go to and see details. Getting a lot of public interest and opinion, and improved relations w/ public through communication; increased interest and participation.
- MPO is a stand-alone entity. Gives us an “in” w/ local population (fax-payers).
- Pete – GIS shape file and annual added to website.
- Make sure 100% already presented for public input. Alleviates questions w/ points of contact.
- Major considered drone videos for before and after.
- *Chris – Have you come up with any other information?*
- Pete – Yes, its dynamic and we can add as much as we need.
- Major – This can balloon out of control easily. We have to sit down and weigh out pros and cons before adding, making sure it’s the right fit. Be selective about the purpose, timeline, how long we keep items posted, etc. Maps get crowded really quickly, and I can see where Bike-ped projects could be a problem.
- *Matt Miller – Anything on cost-sharing?*
- Major – We’ve just identified funding and included. This process hasn’t had much cost associated.

### **Discussion regarding the September / October TEMPO Meeting**

Topics: Election of TEMPO Officers  
 Policy and TDM implications from Connected and Automated Vehicles  
 TxMUG Meeting (Texas Model Users Group)  
 Likely end of September, possibly in Georgetown

### **Discussion regarding conceptual TIP/STIP/UTP training for MPOs, TxDOT District and other staff in 2020**

- Chris – There is a lot of turnover in folks working w/ these documents in MPOs and district staff. Maybe have this around the first of the year
- *Eduardo – January seems a little late, could we accelerate?*
- We may not have many options, but I’ll talk to Bill Frawley
- *Karen – Rescissions committee – ask TxDOT to create that again and involve MPOs.*
- Chris will make that request
- *Ashby – Cat 9 Safety money – Need to have conversation soon. A lot of projects still need funding. We often don’t know if there are projects that have been identified.*

## **Announcements from Federal and State Partners**

- FTA/Genevieve –
  - STIP Friday; if you did not have one before;
  - intro to Performance Measures
  - Identify targets in your document for your STIP
- *Conformity / SAT?*
- Kirk, Mike and José (FTA) available for questions, including NHS
- *Maggie Bergeron – Performance Based Planning; 14 projects already in our report. Do we need this much or less?*
- We can take less detail.
- Melissa Foreman, FTA – A meeting in Chicago; still working through standardizing requirements for identifying targets in documents
- Genevieve – Follow up with your rep and copy José. I will go back and see what the standard is and pass that along.
- *Karen – On the transit side, include improvements quantity, even if you say “unknown.”*
- *Andrew Canon – In the next few weeks we’ll be complete with RGVMPO. Category 2 has to be revisited.*
- Kirk Fauver, FTA – PBPP and Webinar on July 18 had 50 participants; Documents for amendments vs updates
- Texas State Transportation Innovation Council (TxSTIC) meeting Aug. 8 at the OMNI Southpark Hotel, Austin
  - Texas Connectivity Task Force
  - Mobility Update – CTR, etc.
- U.S. DOT’s Volpe Center is planning to host a EDC-5 Value Capture workshop in Austin, Texas on December 4-5th at TxDOT Riverside Building #200

## **Adjournment**