

Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Special Work Session Summary

CAPCO Conference Room
Friday, September 28, 2001

Participants:

Dave Benson; City Manager, City of Lakeway
Eric W. Carlson; Mayor, City of Elgin
Ed Collins; Urban Transportation Administrator, TXDOT – Austin District
Jim Dunaway; City Manager, City of Elgin
Howard Falkenberg; Austin Area Research Organization
James Fisher; Village Administrator, Village of Bee Cave
William Garbade; District Engineer, TXDOT – Austin District
Joe Holland, TXDOT – Austin District
Ross Milloy; President, Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council
Lowell Moore; Council member, City of Cedar Park
James Oakley; Commissioner, Burnet County
Maurice Pitts Jr.; Commissioner, Lee County
Don Reynolds; Director of Community Development, City of Burnet
Ray Sanders; Mayor, City of Lockhart
Herb Schulze; Commissioner, Caldwell County
Robert Stuard; TXDOT
Victor Tellez; Commissioner, Blanco County
Jason Townes; VISTA, Williamson County & Cities Health District
Joe Vela; Travis County
H.T. Wright; Judge, Caldwell County
Betty Voights; Executive Director, CAPCO
Sara Wilson; Director of Economic and Community Development, CAPCO
Richard Kelly; Director of Regional Planning and Information, CAPCO
Erin Toedtman; Comprehensive Planner, CAPCO

I. Call to Order – Chairman Ray Sanders, Mayor of Lockhart

II. Introduction – Betty Voights, CAPCO Executive Director

All participants introduced themselves, and Ms. Voights gave a brief introduction about CARTPO and the workshop objectives. She then opened the meeting up for discussion, and participants were given the opportunity to voice their local and regional transportation concerns.

Bill Garbade, District Engineer for the TXDOT Austin District, first commented on remarks made by Ric Williamson, Texas Transportation Commissioner, at a recent Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council meeting. Mr. Williamson discussed TXDOT's new emphasis on statewide connectivity, as well as Proposition 15, which will allow regions to organize into Regional Mobility Authorities. These authorities will have the ability to construct, maintain, and operate a toll road and use surplus toll revenues for other projects.

Mr. Garbade then answered questions relating to TXDOT's involvement in helping communities address their transportation concerns, including possibly giving local governments more authority over the placement of stop signs, traffic lights, and road alignments if the community pays for it. The ability to help communities get better pricing on bulk road supplies, such as asphalt and signals, is also being considered. He additionally discussed the need to streamline the right-of-way acquisition process to make it easier and less expensive for communities to acquire the land necessary to make transportation improvements.

Participants pointed out that TXDOT needs to re-examine its project prioritization process, such as the requirements for installing a traffic signal, and that it needs to work more closely with elected officials so that communities are better informed, can plan more effectively, and can afford to complete all necessary steps to make transportation improvements.

Other important issues that were brought up included the need to build new and improve existing Farm-to-Market roads in the region and increase local government planning authority (especially at the county level). CARTPO might also consider working with organizations such as the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council to seek funding for projects that will increase regional mobility and connectivity. Additionally, there is a need to examine alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, such as rural transit services, because demand for these alternatives is increasing while funding is decreasing.

III. Identify Local and Regional Transportation Goals and Needs (e.g., legislation, funding long-range planning, relationships with other state and local agencies)

After all parties had an opportunity to speak, Sara Wilson, Director of Community and Economic Development for CAPCO, began facilitating the goal-setting process. Participants were given four sheets of paper, and were asked to write down the four most important transportation issues in their communities and/or the region. These sheets were collected and displayed on the wall so that everyone could see them, and each issue was read aloud to ensure that everyone understood their meanings. Each participant was then given one minute to speak about any or all of the issues he or she identified as most important.

IV. Develop Organizational Goals and Objectives

Similar or related issues were grouped together on the wall to eliminate duplication and to streamline the next step of the goal-setting process: prioritizing. Participants were asked to place four red stickers (given to them at the beginning of the meeting) next to four issues that they felt should be addressed by CARTPO. Those issues receiving the most stickers were considered to be top priorities for the organization.

V. Lunch

VI. Review CARTPO Membership and Organizational Structure

Participants discussed how the identified priorities could best be addressed, and agreed that subcommittees should be created to allow members to work on those issues most important to them. Based on the identified priorities, it was decided that CARTPO could logically be broken down into four subcommittees: Planning and Technical Assistance;

Legislation and Policy Initiatives; Project Development; and Alternative/Supplemental Transportation.

Some of the main priorities listed under each subcommittee included the following:

Planning and Technical Assistance

- Develop a long range plan for region-wide mobility
- Facilitate coordinated regional transportation planning and projects (Coordinating agencies and organizations should include, but not be limited to, county and city governments, the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT), the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority (Cap Metro), the Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS), and the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council, and the Austin Area Research Organization (AARO))
- Assist in State Rail Plan Development
- Refine CARTPO's organizational structure and bylaws

Legislation and Policy Initiatives

- Seek additional funding for new and improved Farm-to-Market roads
- Gain more local control on State Highway projects
- Seek additional funding and streamline the process for local government acquisition of right-of-way
- Increase county land use control and planning authority
- Create a Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)
- Encourage changes in TXDOT's traffic signal warrant requirements to improve traffic safety
- Support Proposition 15

Project Development

- Work with TXDoT, counties, and cities to complete important toll road projects (such as SH 183A, SH 130, and SH 45) as quickly and efficiently as possible
- Improve commuter roads into Austin

Supplemental / Alternative Transportation

- Develop and improve upon transportation modes other than single-occupancy vehicles (including bicycle, rail, carpooling, HOV lanes, etc.)
- Expand the rural public transportation system and services

Participants suggested that a questionnaire be sent out to local leaders and elected officials regarding their interest in participating on one of these subcommittees.

VI. Revise CARTPO Bylaws

It was agreed that the Planning and Technical Assistance Subcommittee would continue to discuss and refine the CARTPO organizational structure and bylaws.

VII. Adjourn