

# Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization

CAPCO Board Room  
2520 IH 35 S; Austin, Texas  
Friday, June 27, 2003

## Summary Minutes

### Participants

<b>Karl Ansbach</b>	Councilmember, City of Lakeway
Michael Aulick	Executive Director, CAMPO
<b>Sam Biscoe</b>	County Judge, Travis County
<b>Tina Collier</b>	Councilmember, City of Cedar Park
Ed Collins	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
Howard Falkenberg	Austin Area Research Organization
James Fisher	Village Administrator, Village of Bee Cave
William Garbade	District Engineer, TxDOT Austin District
<b>Bill Hamilton</b>	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
Paul Hamilton	Director of Service Development, CARTS
<b>Ronny Hibler</b>	Commissioner, Burnet County
Joe Holland	Planner, TxDOT, Austin District
<b>Charles Laws</b>	Mayor Pro Tem, City of Mustang Ridge
Judy Miller	Assistant City Manager, City of Marble Falls
<b>James Oakley</b>	Commissioner, Burnet County
Javier Pena	State Infrastructure Bank, TxDOT
Ed Pensock	Planner/Engineer, TxDOT TTA Division
<b>Maurice Pitts, Jr.</b>	Commissioner, Lee County
<b>Ray Sanders</b>	Mayor, City of Lockhart
<b>Herb Schulze</b>	Commissioner, Caldwell County
Dorn Smith	State Infrastructure Bank Manager, TxDOT
<b>Duane Stueven</b>	Commissioner, Llano County
Victor Tellez	Citizen, Blanco County
Rickey Wright	Public Works/Code Enforcement, Village of Wimberley
Diana Vargas	Planner, TxDOT TTA Division
Betty Voights	Executive Director, CAPCO
Richard Kelly	Regional Services Director, CAPCO
Erin Toedman	Comprehensive Planner, CAPCO

### I. Call to Order – Mayor Ray Sanders, CARTPO Chairman

Mayor Sanders welcomed everyone and led introductions. He then gave a special introduction to Mr. Bill Garbade, District Engineer for the TxDOT Austin District, who will soon be retiring. He added that Mr. Garbade's retirement will be a great loss for our region. Mr. Garbade pledged that as soon as he finds out who his replacement will be, he will try to bring that person up to speed and get him involved in CARTPO as quickly as possible.

### II. Presentation on Toll Roads and Toll Opportunities in the CARTPO Region – Texas Turnpike Division, TxDOT

Mayor Sanders introduced Ed Pensock, with the TxDOT Texas Turnpike Authority Division, to discuss toll roads and toll potential in the CARTPO region. Mr. Pensock thanked CARTPO for inviting him to speak, and introduced Diana Vargas, who also works for the TxDOT TTA Division. He added that he had an opportunity to see the videotape from the April 24, 2003 Texas Transportation Commission meeting, and said that he was very impressed with how everyone from CARTPO came together for the presentation.

Mr. Pensock then began a PowerPoint presentation, "Toll Roads 101," which covered topics such as benefits of toll roads, characteristics of viable toll road candidates, feasibility determination process, financing options, and TTA Division responsibilities. *Copies of the PowerPoint presentation are available at the CAPCO offices.*

Questions/issues arising out of the presentation were as follows: Michael Aulick, Executive Director for CAMPO, said that he attended the May 2003 Texas Transportation Commission meeting, where TTA presented a preliminary feasibility study for 600 potential toll road projects in Texas. The presentation indicated that the rule of thumb for feasibility is whether or not the project would generate 50% of its cost. Mr. Pensock said that feasibility is really open to interpretation – some people believe that 50% is a good rule of thumb, while others think that a road should pay for itself entirely to be feasible. He added that the 50% figure presented to the Commission was simply a threshold that TTA used to prioritize the 600 potential toll projects.

Ed Collins pointed out that communities will experience economic benefits more quickly with toll roads than with other roads because of their accelerated timelines. Mr. Pensock agreed that the economics and other indirect impacts resulting from toll roads are huge. Alderman Hamilton, from Rollingwood, then requested that TxDOT provide a list or a more detailed explanation of the long term impacts of toll roads at some point in the future.

Mr. Aulick then asked what the general cost per mile is for standard toll road charges. Mr. Pensock said that an industry average starts off between \$.10 and \$.15 per mile. This may increase with a toll bridge, toll tunnels, or a very specific corridor with a very specific problem. Cost is usually based on supply and demand - if there are a lot of alternative roads available, those roads must be pretty congested to encourage people to use the toll roads.

Commissioner Pitts asked if TTA would study any project CARTPO proposes as a potential toll road. Mr. Pensock said that TTA would like to provide support to everyone that it can, though it does not have infinite resources. It will certainly consider any projects proposed by Mr. Garbade, Mr. Williamson, and Mr. Behrens, and any other good projects that have local support and commitment. The Austin District has already requested that TTA conduct preliminary studies of some of the roads in the CARTPO region.

Mr. Tellez then asked how excess revenues can be used within a toll project area. Mr. Pensock said that TTA specifically takes into account operations, maintenance, debt service, and construction. Any revenue generated above the amount needed to pay for these costs can go towards other projects – elected leaders will determine how to use this money. Mr. Aulick asked which projects in the CARTPO region were included in the list of 600 that TTA studied. Mr. Pensock replied that TTA looked at projects that TxDOT had committed through the UTP, such as SH 71W, US 183, SH 71E, and US 290E. The TxDOT San Antonio District is currently considering the possibility of tolling a section of US 281, but TTA has not started looking at this yet in Burnet or Blanco Counties. However, TTA listens to the will of its leaders at the TxDOT Commission – anything that can have a user fee that helps pay for itself will be considered.

### **III. Presentation on the State Infrastructure Bank – Dorn Smith, TxDOT State Infrastructure Bank Office**

Mr. Smith introduced himself, and began an overview PowerPoint presentation of the TxDOT State Infrastructure Bank. *Copies of the PowerPoint presentation are available at the CAPCO Offices.*

Questions/points arising out of the presentation were as follows: Mr. Collins pointed out that TxDOT will soon be updating its Functional Classification maps – those projects shown at a certain classification are eligible for federal funding. He encouraged local city and county officials to work with TxDOT to ensure that the roadways that they feel might need some improvement are included on the updated maps. Commissioner Pitts asked how one would know if a project is eligible for federal money. Mr. Smith said that the District would be able to tell him. Previous SIB loans have ranged between \$33,000 for a small project to \$135 million for a turnpike project.

### **IV. Presentation on TxDOT's proposed Unified Transportation Program (UTP) changes and introduction to and solicitation of comments on TxDOT's Statewide Preservation Program – Ed Collins, TxDOT Austin District**

Mr. Collins provided handouts to the group (currently available at the CAPCO offices), which are summaries of the documents that members previously received via email. The handouts are related to the changes in the process by which TxDOT selects projects and allocates funding. A year ago, Mr. Collins

made a presentation to CARTPO about the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). Some changes have occurred to this program, and the handouts and related documents reflect those changes.

The Unified Transportation Program has been broken out into two separate parts. The first is the Statewide Preservation Program, which deals with projects and funding that would preserve the state system. There are two major components of this program: (1) Category 1, which deals with District allocation for preventive maintenance and rehabilitation projects - these projects are selected at the District level; and (2) Category 2, which deals with structures replacement and rehabilitation. The Statewide Preservation Program document also includes the specific bridges (on and off-system) in the CARTPO area that have been recommended for replacement by 2007. The Commission is looking for comments on the process and the projects included in the document - the comment period ends July 1, 2003.

TxDOT is also accepting comments on the recommendations made by special committees composed of community groups, mayors, MPOs, etc. tasked with developing project selection criteria for five of TxDOT's twelve funding categories (1, 2, 3, 4, and 11). Mr. Falkenberg voiced concerns about a proposed Category 4 recommendation: "Due to shortage of funds, the SCWG recommends four-lane undivided corridors remain as undivided corridors and not be improved to four-lane divided." He wondered if this would have any implications for CARTPO's priority 1 and priority 3 projects, which were presented to the Commission in April. Mr. Collins said that this criterion would apply to US 290 projects if CARTPO were trying to get Category 4 funding. However, the group asked the Commission for Category 12 funding, which does not use this criteria. He further explained that funding is currently available only for some Phase I projects on the Texas Trunk System. The US 290 projects are part of Phase II. The ultimate goal is to divide the entire facility under Statewide Connectivity.

Mr. Collins then began going through the second document in more detail: Category 1, Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation, was discussed earlier in the meeting. The second category up for public comment is Category 2, Metropolitan Area Corridor Projects. He said that Michael Aulick participated in the group that made recommendations for this category, which covers areas with a population above 200,000. The group could not agree upon a way to allocate all of the funding for specific projects, so it suggested giving the money to each area to decide how the funding would be allocated. Mr. Aulick added that the committee looked at a number of different factors for determining how to allocate the funding (population, vehicle miles traveled, employment, etc.). All of the eight major metropolitan areas were concerned about different things, so they finally decided to determine the allocation based on population. Baseline funding is guaranteed now, whereas before, some local money might have gone elsewhere - this now encourages each area to come up with non-TxDOT funds. The financial picture is changing and evolving, and we are trying to figure out what money will be guaranteed and what additional funds will have to be raised locally. His conclusion is that we will have a lot of toll roads.

Category 3, Urban Area (Non-TMA) Corridor Projects, is a companion to Category 2, but applies to smaller areas between 50,000 and 200,000 population. San Marcos may eventually qualify for this funding. The criteria for this category are total vehicle miles traveled, truck vehicle miles traveled, population, lane miles, and other standard criteria.

Category 4, Statewide Connectivity Corridors, was discussed earlier in the meeting. The last category currently being considered is Category 11, District Discretionary funding. Based on the committee's recommendations for this category, the Districts will be allocated funding based on the following criteria: 70% On-system vehicle miles traveled; 20% On-system lane miles; and 10% Annual truck VMT. There is not a lot of money available, but the District uses this funding to do some capacity improvements. TxDOT tries to be as creative as possible with the projects presented, based on recommendations from the District Engineer.

The Commission will accept public comments on these criteria until August 11, 2003. The draft Statewide Mobility Program document, the second part of the UTP, will be available soon. This document will include recommendations for Category 12, Strategic Priority projects. CARTPO will probably be interested in this since it asked for Strategic Priority funding earlier this year.

**V. Discussion of New CARTPO Projects/Issues**

Alderman Hamilton mentioned that there have been several suggestions to re-establish the CARTPO Alternative Transportation Subcommittee. Some of the issues suggested for this committee include possible expansion of CARTS' and Capital Metro's bus service; rail (including assistance with Envision Central Texas implementation); bicycle and pedestrian issues; and air quality issues related to vehicle miles traveled. He then opened up the discussion to these or other subjects related to alternative transportation.

Mr. Collins pointed out that Ric Williamson and Lee Walker recently had a conversation that resulted in a directive for TxDOT to work with local communities to develop a strategic plan for commuter rail in the Austin area. They are looking at a time frame of six weeks to develop a framework for this. Joe Holland, from TxDOT, might be able to provide a brief outline of this and report back to the group. Local representatives are welcome to participate in the process.

Tommy Eden, an interested citizen, then voiced his concerns about CAMPO diverting the funding that it currently uses for bicycle and pedestrian projects to roadway projects. He said that a new CAMPO proposal would change the current policy of setting aside 15% of the Metropolitan Mobility funds for bike/ped projects (which is only about 1.5 % of the total CAMPO funds). He added that many traffic fatalities in our area involve bicyclists and pedestrians, and that the money currently used for bicycle and pedestrian projects would buy very little roadway miles, while it would buy a tremendous amount of sidewalk. Mr. Aulick clarified that Mr. Eden's statement about CAMPO opening up its bicycle and pedestrian funds to roadway projects is not accurate. Rather, CAMPO is considering changing the current bike/ped policy to accommodate projects that have air quality benefits – air quality will be a huge issue for our region over the next five to ten years, so during this time period CAMPO may concentrate more on projects that improve air quality rather than bicycle/pedestrian projects specifically. Bicycle/pedestrian projects do help air quality, but some other projects may help improve it even more.

Alderman Hamilton thanked everyone for their comments, and passed around a sign-up sheet for the Alternative Transportation Subcommittee. He then asked Erin Toedtman, with CAPCO, to address Item B under Agenda Item II, regarding the CARTPO/TxDOT Consultation process. Ms. Toedtman referred to an email addressed to Betty from ASHTO, NAC, and NADO, which was included in the agenda packet. She reminded the group that CARTPO was first organized as a response to TEA-21 legislation, which asked state DOT's to work more closely with rural elected officials on transportation issues. The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Authority have recently issued final rules that address the roles of rural local officials in the statewide transportation planning process. CARTPO and TxDOT are certainly already doing a good job of informally meeting these rules, but TxDOT must have an official "separate and discreet" rural consultation process by February 24, 2004. Ms. Toedtman asked for participants' thoughts on how CARTPO could help TxDOT develop official guidelines and possibly serve as a model for other similar organizations in the state. Other participants agreed that this is something that CARTPO would like to get involved in, and Mr. Collins volunteered to find some more information on the process and the time frame for this to take place.

**VI. Other Business**

Mr. Garbade mentioned that TxDOT and the Texas Transportation Institute have been working on studies for the rural counties in the CARTPO region for the past couple of years. Ms. Toedtman added that TTI will most likely finish the last of these studies, those for Blanco, Burnet, and Llano Counties, by August. Perhaps TTI could provide a report on these studies at the August meeting. Ms. Toedtman also mentioned that members had recently agreed upon the fourth Friday of each month as a regular meeting day. The next meeting was set for Friday, July 25, 2003.

**VII. Meeting Adjourned**