

Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization

CAPCO Board Room
2520 South IH 35 South
Austin, Texas
Thursday, March 25, 2004

Summary Minutes

Participants

Karl Ansbach	Councilmember, City of Lakeway
Michael Aulick	Executive Director, CAMPO
Walt Bailey	City Planner, City of Marble Falls
Ed Collins	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
Howard Falkenberg	Austin Area Research Organization
James Fisher	Village Administrator, Village of Bee Cave
Bill Hamilton	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
Ronny Hibler	Commissioner, Burnet County
Joe Holland	Public Transportation Coordinator, TxDOT-Austin District
Jim Lee	Citizen, Village of Wimberley
Don Loucks	Commissioner, Bastrop County
Dave Marsh	Executive Director, CARTS
Brad McAllister	Texas State University
Bob Miller	City Manager, City of Lago Vista
James Oakley	Commissioner, Burnet County
Cecil Pennington	Planning Director, City of Bastrop
Maurice Pitts	Commissioner, Lee County
Mark Roden	Citizen, Village of Wimberley
Ray Sanders	Mayor, City of Lockhart
Betty Voights	Executive Director, CAPCO
Lucy Buck	Director of Regional Planning, CAPCO
Ross Frie	Regional Planner, CAPCO

I. Call to Order—Mayor Ray Sanders, CARTPO Chairman

Meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m. Mayor Sanders welcomed everyone and led introductions. Lucy Buck introduced new CAPCO staff member Ross Frie, Regional Planner.

II. TxDOT Update—Ed Collins, TxDOT

Ed Collins presented information on transportation in the Austin area. Mr. Collins stated that Austin is the #1 most congested medium-sized city in the U.S. Currently, TxDOT has only enough money to complete about 1/3 of the transportation projects needed in the region. For example, it would cost approximately \$4B to complete improvements on IH-35, Loop 1, Loop 360 and US 183. Texas is a donor state on gasoline taxes because the state only receives \$.85 for every \$1.00 of federal gasoline tax collected. Toll road operations and maintenance would be paid by the users of the toll system, not all taxpayers.

Mr. Collins stated people pay for convenience and toll roads are just another convenience. Since Texas has been a “pay-as-you-go” state, projects have had to wait until funds became available. For example, US 183 from IH-35 to RM 620 took 14 years to complete using traditional funding methods, whereas, SH 130 will only take five years to complete using toll road funding for part of the cost of construction.

Commissioner Oakley stated people already pay gas taxes, license renewal fees and vehicle registration fees to help fund transportation improvements so why should they have to pay more? Mr. Collins responded that unfortunately that’s not enough money so the legislature passed HB3588 authorizing Regional Mobility Authorities to construct and operate toll roads.

Commissioner Loucks explained that the toll tag is a transponder-based technology. So, initially people will get billed for where they drive, but eventually, all roads could be tolled using toll tags.

Mr. Collins distributed the Texas Mobility Fund Press Release and said there will be opportunities for rural and small urban projects of the \$3B in bonds. Mr. Falkenberg stated he heard that \$1B of the \$3B issue in bonds for highway construction projects has been set aside for rural projects. Mr. Collins responded that he hasn't heard that figure, but it is expected that there will be money designated for rural projects.

Mr. Collins stated the idea of tolling highways is being handed down from legislature because they are not interested in increasing the gas tax to fund highway improvement projects. Mr. Collins stated the Texas Transportation Commission is considering tolling existing highways to fund expanded capacity and maintenance costs.

IV. Review of Project Selection Process - Alderman Bill Hamilton, City of Rollingwood

Alderman Hamilton distributed a handout on the Guide for Submitting a Project to CARTPO. There are seven criteria used for evaluating projects that includes local support and/or participation, economic development impacts, ease of implementation, regional impact, cost effectiveness, traffic volumes and safety impacts.

Commissioner Oakley questioned why economic development impacts are one of the criteria. Mayor Sanders inquired about environmental impacts in the project selection process. Commissioner Pitts wanted to know where local right-of-way dedication factored in. There was discussion on the toll viability of projects in rural areas.

Alderman Hamilton asked CAPCO staff to send the call for projects packets to all county judges and city mayors after revising the application to include a section on toll viability projects.

Commissioner Pitts informed the committee that bids for US 290 W east of Giddings project is scheduled to be opened in April with construction beginning in the summer.

III. Rural Transit Funding Allocation - Dave Marsh, CARTS

Commissioner Hibler, CARTS Board Member introduced Mr. Marsh. Mr. Marsh distributed a handout on proposed changes to the rural transit funding allocation. Mr. Marsh presented CARTS concerns on the proposed funding allocation and distributed a handout regarding the testimony he presented to the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) in March. The Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) will meet on April 7th to consider the proposed changes to the rural transit funding allocation. The TTC is scheduled to take action on the recommendations of the PTAC on April 29th. Following that vote will be a 30-day public comment period.

VI. Committee Reports

- Planning & Project Development Subcommittee – Alderman Bill Hamilton stated he had no report at this time.
- Alternative Transportation Subcommittee – Commissioner Loucks stated he had no report at this time.
- Legislature & Policy Subcommittee – Commissioner Pitts stated he had no report at this time.

VII. Other Business

Alderman Hamilton suggested that Representative Krusee be invited to address CARTPO at the April meeting regarding the future of regional transportation in Central Texas. Mayor Sanders informed the committee about the legislative seminar in New Braunfels on March 26th. Mr. Aulick stated the draft CAMPO Mobility 2030 Plan will be completed by May 4th and a public hearing is scheduled on June 7th.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. by Mayor Sanders.