

Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization

CAPCO Board Room
2520 South IH 35
Austin, Texas
Thursday, May 27, 2004

Summary Minutes

Participants

John Almond	Project Director, Capital Metro
Michael Aulick	Executive Director, CAMPO
Wayne Brascom	Commissioner, Llano County
Eric Carlson	Mayor, City of Elgin
LeRoy Click	Senior Planner, Travis County
Ed Collins	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
Howard Falkenberg	Staats Falkenberg & Partners
Stevie Greathouse	Senior Planner, CAMPO
Bill Hamilton	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
Kris Heckmann	Transportation Advisor, Office of the Governor
Rick L'Amie	Vice President of Communications, Capital Metro
Don Loucks	Commissioner, Bastrop County
James Oakley	Commissioner, Burnet County
Maurice Pitts	Commissioner, Lee County
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 9:40 a.m. Mayor Sanders welcomed everyone and led introductions.

II. Capital Metro Long-Range Transit System Vision —Rick L'Amie, Capital Metro

Mr. L'Amie presented the Cap Metro All System Go! Vision. Mr. L'Amie stated the process included assessing needs, identifying potential solutions in a draft vision, gaining public support, evaluating solutions and considering input, and preparing a final long-range transit vision. The All Systems Go! includes new bus routes, extensions to existing bus routes, increased service, better connections to activity centers, new supporting systems and commuter rail routes. The bottom line is no new taxes, no long term borrowing for existing bus services, implementation will be based on population and employment, plan elements will be implemented in phases and evaluates opportunities to recover capital costs. The Capital Metro Board is expected to adopt a final plan in summer 2004. The Board may call for a referendum if there are rail components in the plan as required by state law.

Mr. Aulick stated that in a growing area, congestion can only be managed, not reduced. Mayor Sanders asked if rural areas around Austin were considered during the vision preparation since they have many commuters. Mr. L'Amie responded that the Cap Metro service area doesn't include the rural areas. Mayor Carlson suggested that park-n-rides could be located in the smaller cities. Commissioner Loucks commented that rural cities can't compete with urban areas in offering incentives such as tax abatements. Mr. L'Amie responded that transit can spur development around the station area.

III. CAMPO Mobility 2030 Plan – Michael Aulick, CAMPO

Mr. Aulick presented the CAMPO Mobility 2030 Plan. Mr. Aulick stated a draft plan has been completed. CAMPO is now going to develop several alternative scenarios for analysis and then a revised draft plan is scheduled to be completed by November. The plan is scheduled to be adopted in April 2005. Mr. Aulick stated the Austin area will gain 1.6 million new residents by 2030, which will add 6 million more daily trips to the transportation system. Mr. Aulick stated that the 2030 plan addresses current and future needs, is safe and convenient, appropriately balances mobility and preservation of neighborhoods and natural features, supports the use of many modes, allows for enhanced freight mobility, supports air and water quality and is affordable and can be maintained over time. The plan would add 2,232 additional lane miles of arterial streets to the system. The transportation improvements in the plan will address the highest priority future needs, allow the transportation system to perform considerably better than it would if no improvements were made and strike an appropriate balance between mobility and other quality of life factors. Prior to publishing the revised draft plan, CAMPO will consider public and private input, analyze alternate transportation improvements, incorporate a revised transit network, ensure the plan is consistent with the near-term toll road program, prioritize transportation projects, and refine the plan to be financially constrained.

Mayor Sanders asked when Bastrop and Caldwell counties will be included in CAMPO. Mr. Collins responded that a joint TxDOT/CAMPO travel survey that will include Bastrop and Caldwell counties is scheduled to begin in 2005. Mayor Sanders inquired about the possibility of freight rail within the SH 130 corridor. Mr. Aulick stated there are several studies looking at the relocation of the Union Pacific railroad. Alderman Hamilton asked why the plan wouldn't be adopted until 2005. Mr. Aulick explained there is currently an adopted CAMPO 2025 Plan and to complete all the steps necessary in the CAMPO Mobility 2030 Plan process will take until 2005. Alderman Hamilton questioned whether we are building roads where they are needed or where the funding is. Mr. Aulick responded that we are building roads where the traffic problems are occurring.

IV. Trans-Texas Corridor Plan – Kris Heckmann, Office of the Governor

Mr. Heckmann gave an overview of the plan. The Trans-Texas Corridor concept was unveiled by Governor Perry in January 2002. At the Governor's direction, the Texas Department of Transportation completed the Crossroads of the Americas: Trans-Texas Corridor Plan. The plan includes a design concept, financing options to develop the system, and identified four priority elements. The plan will build limited access corridors that will be tolled and be designed for faster travel. Since the corridors will be financed by tolling, they would be built when needed and financially feasible. Fluor Enterprises submitted an unsolicited proposal to build a corridor parallel to IH-35 from Oklahoma to Mexico. TxDOT solicited other proposals for the corridor. They are currently evaluating the three submitted proposals.

Mayor Sanders asked who will pay for the 1,000' – 1,500' ROW and about the loss of agricultural land. Mr. Heckmann responded the state, not counties, will buy ROW upfront with cash because it is less expensive than buying it incrementally. The land could be leased as agricultural land until construction of the corridor. Mr. Heckmann stated a landowner could sell the land to the state or partner with the state and receive a percentage royalty of the toll corridor. Commissioner Oakley endorsed the plan for having a vision for the future. Mr. Heckmann stated the roadway corridors would have limited access in counties and would be designed for 80 – 85 MPH speeds. Commissioner Oakley stated that the states savings in funding could be used for local projects. Mr. Heckmann responded that the gas tax is declining because drivers are making longer trips and vehicles are becoming more fuel efficient. Commissioner Brascom inquired about the length of time for implementing the plan. Mr. Heckmann responded that toll roads are built much faster than tax roads because of the financial profit incentive. Commissioner Oakley discussed a local option gas tax to finance county transportation improvements. Mr. Heckmann stated the Comptroller's office can't determine where gas is purchased in cities so the local option gas tax is currently not feasible. Another idea could be an additional tax on car purchases to increase transportation funding.

VII. Status Report on CARTPO's 2004 Call for Projects – Alderman Hamilton, City of Rollingwood

Alderman Hamilton distributed a timeline for the project selection process, including meeting dates for the Project Evaluation Subcommittee. Commissioner Oakley inquired if Area Engineers should be at the project presentation meeting on June 4, 2004. Mr. Collins responded it wasn't necessary since the Area Engineers are aware of the projects. Mr. Collins stated TxDOT was still compiling the traffic data for the projects. Alderman Hamilton requested CAPCO staff to continue efforts to contact county judges to get appointments to the subcommittee. Commissioner Oakley stated the Llano County RR 2147 project was in both Llano and Burnet counties and needs to be considered as one project when evaluated. Alderman Hamilton questioned whether a county that didn't submit projects could still serve on the subcommittee. The Committee members agreed the subcommittee should have members from all counties. Mr. Collins stated that CARTPO should support the toll road proposal because it would allow more funding for non-urban projects. Alderman Hamilton suggested that possible support of the toll road proposal should be added to the June 25th CARTPO meeting to discuss. Mr. Falkenburg offered to draft a letter supporting the toll road proposal on behalf of CARTPO. Mayor Sanders accepted the offer.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. by Mayor Sanders.