

Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization

CAPCO Board Room
2520 South IH 35, Suite 100
Austin, Texas
Friday, June 25, 2004

Summary Minutes

Participants

Karl Ansbach	Councilmember, City of Lakeway
Michael Aulick	Executive Director, CAMPO
Walt Bailey	City Planner, City of Marble Falls
Wayne Brascom	Commissioner, Llano County
Tina Collier	Councilmember, City of Cedar Park
Ed Collins	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
Bob Daigh	Austin District Engineer, TxDOT
Gerald Daugherty	Commissioner, Travis County
Howard Falkenberg	Staats Falkenberg & Partners
Bill Hamilton	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
Paul Hamilton	Grant Specialist, Texas State University
Ronny Hibler	Commissioner, Burnet County
Joe Holland	Public Transit Coordinator, TxDOT
Brad McAllister	Assistant Director Auxiliary Services, Texas State University
James Oakley	Commissioner, Burnet County
Maurice Pitts, Jr.	Commissioner, Lee County
Herb Schulze	Commissioner, Caldwell County
Michael Sexton	Transportation Planner, Carter and Burgess
Betty Voights	Executive Director, CAPCO
Lucy Buck	Director of Regional Planning, CAPCO
Ross Frie	Regional Planner, CAPCO

I. Call to Order—Alderman Bill Hamilton, CARTPO Planning and Project Development Subcommittee Chairman

Meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. Alderman Hamilton chaired the meeting for Mayor Sanders who was out of town. Alderman Hamilton welcomed everyone, explained the agenda items for the meeting and led introductions.

II. Texas Transportation Commission Strategic Plan

Alderman Hamilton explained how the TxDOT Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2005-09 represents the commitment by TxDOT to provide safe and productive movement of people and goods. The committee viewed a videotape of the May 27, 2004 Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) meeting containing a presentation on the strategic plan. The proposed strategic plan included 5 objectives: reliable mobility to reduce congestion, improve safety, responsible system preservation (meaning maintenance), accelerated project delivery (how much faster can projects be delivered) and economic vitality (how TxDOT can contribute to the economic health of Texas). The plan also included 6 challenges: escalating costs have just recently been captured, simplification of the Unified Transportation Plan, the Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan, NAFTA, new funding methods and the declining purchasing power of the gas tax.

III. Subcommittee Recommendation of Regional Priority Projects

Ms. Buck explained the CARTPO 2004 Call for Projects Summary Scores handout. The top five projects, by weighted score, in descending order are: #11 – RR 2147 (Llano County), #4 – US 281 (Burnet County), #1 - SH 71 (Bastrop County), #2 – US 290 (Bastrop County) and #8 – US 290 (Lee County). Mr. Collins distributed a handout with TxDOT's recommendations on all of the CARTPO projects. TxDOT Austin District funding has been allocated to the following projects: #11 – RR 2147 (Llano County), #4 – US 281 (Burnet County), #5 – FM 1431 (Burnet County), #6 US 183 Railroad overpass (Caldwell County) and #14 – SH 71 (Travis County). The following projects have been submitted in whole or in part for consideration under TxDOT's safety program and are awaiting a funding decision: #7 – US 183 (Caldwell County), #12 – SH71 (Llano County) and #9 – FM 696 (Lee County).

TxDOT recommended CARTPO combine #1 – SH 71 (Bastrop County) and #3 – SH 71 (Bastrop County) to be submitted to the Texas Transportation Commission as a turnpike (toll) project. In addition, TxDOT recommended CARTPO combine #2 – US 290 (Bastrop County) and #8 – US 290 (Lee County) to be submitted to the TTC as a non-toll project. Mr. Daigh stated the toll issue should have local support before going to the TTC for possible funding. Mr. Daigh stated he takes CARTPO recommendations very seriously, that CARTPO is a sound voice of the rural areas and that he desires a strong relationship between TxDOT and CARTPO.

Commissioner Oakley asked Mr. Daigh what CARTPO could do to improve the Call for Projects process. Mr. Daigh commended CARTPO for its process and stated that TxDOT and CARTPO staff would work together to improve the process. Alderman Hamilton inquired as to the next steps for the CARTPO projects. Mr. Daigh recommended completing the TTC Delegation Petition with the SH 71 and US 290 projects. Mr. Daigh stated that TxDOT will contact the counties concerning the projects that now have funding allocated to them. On the projects that were submitted to TxDOT's safety program, Mr. Daigh will contact the counties when there is a decision on funding.

Councilmember Ansbach inquired as to why the Travis County SH 71 study only considers SH 71 from US 290 in Oak Hill to Briarcliff Road. Mr. Daigh responded that TxDOT will consider extending the study to US 281 in Burnet County.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution Concerning the CTRMA/TxDOT Preliminary Implementation Plan

Alderman Hamilton reminded the committee that at the previous CARTPO meeting, the members agreed to hold a discussion on toll roads at the June meeting. Two resolutions were distributed to the committee. One general resolution stated that CARTPO endorsed consideration of tolling as a strategy for funding of needed transportation infrastructure improvements in the Central Texas region. A more specific resolution stated that CARTPO endorsed the implementation strategy adopted by the CTRMA and urged the CAMPO Policy Advisory Board to amend its 2025 Transportation Plan to authorize the development of roadways identified by the CTRMA as tolled facilities.

Councilmember Ansbach asked whether the proposed resolutions concerned tolling existing roads or were restricted to tolling of roadways with added capacity. Mr. Falkenberg responded that the resolutions only covered supporting tolling of added capacity.

Commissioner Daugherty stated he is highly supportive of toll facilities in general and that CARTPO should endorse the general resolution. Commissioner Daugherty further stated he is opposed to the CTRMA/TxDOT Preliminary Implementation Plan and that CARTPO should not adopt the specific resolution.

Mr. Daigh suggested that supporting the general resolution would do no harm but that supporting the specific resolution would be a difficult choice for CARTPO members to make. Commissioner Pitts agreed that CARTPO should take a position on the toll issue, but that he felt that he should discuss the

toll issue with the whole Commissioner's Court first. Commissioner Brascom stated he intends to brief the Llano Commissioners Court on CARTPO issues, including the tolling issue.

Alderman Hamilton stated Judge McDonald would call an emergency meeting to discuss the proposed tolling of the SH 71 project. Mr. Daigh reiterated that he would be reluctant to take the proposed project to the TTC for possible funding if it is not submitted as a toll project with the support of the local community.

Mr. Aulick distributed the results from a CAMPO Opinion Survey that contained some questions concerning toll roads. Mr. Aulick stated that 51% of the respondents would pay a toll on a new highway to have it ready in five years rather than wait 10 to 20 years and not pay a toll. Mr. Aulick also stated that 54% of the respondents would disapprove of a 5 cent increase in State gas tax to pay for new roads. Commissioner Daugherty responded that the community would support a toll on a new highway but they are opposed to the CTRMA/TxDOT plan since it would toll existing highways. Mr. Daigh responded that TxDOT has a funding shortfall and tolls facilities are one method to improve the deficit. Mr. Daigh stated TxDOT must make some tough choices, such as tolling, to improve and complete the road network.

Alderman Hamilton suggested that the CARTPO consensus was to table the toll resolution until the next meeting so that committee members could ascertain their local community sentiment on the whole tolling issue. Alderman Hamilton reminded the committee that it would be advisable to have a position on tolling before appearing before the TTC in September.

Commissioner Pitts moved that CARTPO 1) select the SH 71 project and the US 290 project as priority projects for the Capital region, and, 2) in light of the tolling issue concerning SH 71, leave the final decision on what to include in the petition to the Texas Transportation Commission to be made by Alderman Hamilton and Commissioner Pitts after consultation with Bastrop County elected officials. Commissioner Oakley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Discussion of CARTPO Meeting Dates

The committee decided to change the CARTPO meeting dates from the 4th Friday of the month to the 2nd Friday of the month beginning in August. The meeting dates for the remainder of 2004 are: July 23, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12 and December 12.

VI. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.