

Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization

CAPCO Board Room
2520 South IH 35, Suite 100
Austin, Texas
Friday, July 23, 2004

Summary Minutes

Participants

Karl Ansbach	Councilmember, City of Lakeway
Michael Aulick	Executive Director, CAMPO
Bruce Byron	Executive Director, Capital Area Transportation Coalition
Eric Carlson	Mayor, City of Elgin
LeRoy Click	Senior Planner, Travis County
Tina Collier	Councilmember, City of Cedar Park
Ed Collins	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
Gerald Daugherty	Commissioner, Travis County
Lee Dildy	Commissioner, Bastrop County
James Fisher	Village Administrator, Village of Bee Cave
Ginger Goodin	Area Office Director, Texas Transportation Institute
Bill Hamilton	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
Paul Hamilton	Grant Specialist, Texas State University
Jeff Holberg	City Manager, City of Bastrop
Joe Holland	Public Transit Coordinator, TxDOT-Austin District
James Oakley	Commissioner, Burnet County
Javier Pena	State Infrastructure Bank Special Project Accountant, TxDOT
Maurice Pitts, Jr.	Commissioner, Lee County
Herb Schulze	Commissioner, Caldwell County
Tom Scott	Mayor, City of Bastrop
Dorn Smith	State Infrastructure Bank Manager, TxDOT
Diana Vargas	Transportation Analyst Manager, Texas Turnpike Authority Division, TxDOT
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 9:35 a.m. Alderman Hamilton chaired the meeting for Mayor Sanders who was not present. Alderman Hamilton welcomed everyone and led introductions.

II. State Infrastructure Bank

Dorn Smith explained the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) program. The SIB is a revolving low interest loan fund for roadway projects. Currently, there is \$33M available for loans. It was created by the 75th Legislature in 1997 to enhance the transportation system throughout the state. The benefits of the SIB include acceleration of projects, flexibility in financing projects, providing capital at lower than market rates and fostering public/private partnerships. Eligible activities include planning/feasibility studies, economic studies, design/environmental studies, ROW/utility relocations, engineering and construction. A project must be eligible for federal funds and be on the STIP prior to loan application. A loan may be used to pay the 10% city/county portion of the right-of-way

acquisition and/or utility relocation costs for a project that TxDOT usually requires. The loan approval process takes approximately three months and requires TTC approval. If a submitted loan exceeds \$250,000, it requires two TTC meetings for approval. The loans have no fees associated with them and the interest rate is determined by several local factors, not market rates. In the CAPCO region, the cities of Round Rock and Kyle have received loans and the cities of Georgetown and Leander have loans pending approval.

There is also a public transit account that can be used for capital expenses (buses, buildings, etc.) but there are currently no funds in the account for loans. The Public Transportation Advisory Committee for TxDOT is currently considering options for funding the account.

III. Roundtable Discussion on Toll Road Concepts

Tina Collier facilitated the roundtable discussion on toll road concepts. Ginger Goodin made a presentation on tolling options and described the case study for Loop 49 around Tyler. Ms. Goodin explained the several types of toll projects including new toll roads on new ROW, toll lanes within non-toll lanes, tolling new capacity on existing highway ROW and/or bridges and tunnels. Examples of new toll roads on new ROW include the Houston and Dallas toll roads, SH 130, Loop 1, SH 45, the Trans-Texas Corridor and Loop 49 in Tyler. Examples of toll lanes within non-toll lanes include Loop 1604 in San Antonio, the I-10 expansion in Houston and the I-635 expansion in Dallas. Tolling new capacity on existing highway ROW includes the Austin toll plan and US 281 in San Antonio. The case study of Loop 49 in Tyler is the first toll operating strategy in a rural setting. It is a pilot project to assess public acceptance of tolling in a rural setting. It is an opportunity to evaluate marketing strategies for toll implementation. The public acceptance process has included stakeholder interviews, trucker interviews, focus groups and a public opinion survey. Results from the survey concluded that 49% of the respondents support tolling as a good way to pay for the road; 59% would prefer cash transactions; and 66% felt violation cameras were acceptable for enforcement.

Ed Collins made a presentation on assessing projects for toll feasibility and distributed a toll feasibility analysis guide. There are four levels of toll studies, each with an increasing level of detail, and they include traffic and revenue (T&R) studies. A conceptual analysis considers available data, broad assumptions and a TxDOT sketch level T&R. A level 1 analysis develops data, has broad assumptions, and a sketch level T&R. A level 2 analysis has thoroughly developed data, specific assumptions, traffic modeling and an intermediate T&R. A level 3 analysis is an intense study with certified data, a certified T&R and professional financial planning. The studies range from 1 week to complete a conceptual analysis to 12 – 18 months to complete a level 3 analysis. A T&R study considers traffic volumes, growth factors, toll collection plan, economic projections, market acceptance and elasticity (how much motorists are willing to pay).

Commissioner Gerald Daugherty supports a comprehensive road system but thinks Austin needed more than 90 days to evaluate the toll road proposal that was adopted by the CAMPO Transportation Policy Board on July 12th. Commissioner Daugherty desired more time to gather community input on whether there was support among his constituents. Loop 1 South will begin collecting tolls in March 2005. Commissioner Daugherty stated he received over 10,200 emails in one week regarding the toll road proposal.

Mayor Tom Scott stated the Bastrop community has numerous questions regarding the tolling of SH 71 and looks forward to meeting with TxDOT on August 9th to discuss the SH 71 project. The Bastrop community is concerned with how they would get to work, shopping, church, etc if SH 71 was a toll road. There are also questions related to equity issues, “big picture” planning issues and the overall impact on the Bastrop community.

IV. TxDOT Update

Ed Collins distributed a press release on the Texas Mobility Fund. The fund will accelerate needed transportation improvements statewide to reduce congestion, improve safety and expand economic development. Mr. Collins stated bond proceeds from the fund will be distributed roughly 2/3 to the largest eight metropolitan areas and 1/3 to the remainder of the state. In August 2003, the TTC

approved the fund which allows local officials to set priorities on how limited dollars are spent to reduce congestion in their areas. The TTC also stressed the importance of developing toll roads as a way to deliver transportation improvements faster. Traditional funds are not sufficient for meeting the state's growing transportation demands. The TTC approved a policy instructing TxDOT to evaluate all controlled limited-access projects as possible candidates for tolling.

Ed Collins distributed a handout listing the steps for completing the CARTPO priority projects which are being funded by the Austin District. The projects on the list included FM 2147, US 281 and FM 1431 in Burnet County and FM 2147 in Llano County. Mr. Collins stated a decision for the projects submitted to the TxDOT safety program should be released this fall.

V. Discussion of Delegation to the Texas Transportation Commission on September 30th

Ross Frie distributed a draft CARTPO brochure, an outline of speakers which make up the CARTPO Delegation Team (Mayor Ray Sanders, Alderman Bill Hamilton, Mayor Eric Carlson, Commissioner Maurice Pitts, Jr. and Mayor Tom Scott) and sample resolutions/letters of support. Mr. Frie stated CAPCO is in the process of obtaining resolutions/letters of support from the counties and the majority of cities in the region and would appreciate cooperation in this endeavor to support CARTPO and the regional priority projects.

VI. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.