

# Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CARTPO)

CAPCO Board Room  
2520 South IH 35, Suite 100  
Austin, Texas  
Friday, August 13, 2004

## Summary Minutes

### Participants

<b>Karl Ansbach</b>	Councilmember, City of Lakeway
<b>Michael Aulick</b>	Executive Director, CAMPO
<b>Tom Beeman</b>	Director of Field Section, TxDOT Design Division
<b>Will Bozeman</b>	Engineering Technician, TxDOT – Austin District
<b>Eric Carlson</b>	Mayor, City of Elgin
<b>LeRoy Click</b>	Senior Planner, Travis County
<b>Ed Collins</b>	Advanced Transportation Planning Director, TxDOT-Austin District
<b>Bob Daigh</b>	District Engineer, TxDOT – Austin District
<b>James Fisher</b>	Village Administrator, Village of Bee Cave
<b>Bill Hamilton</b>	Alderman, City of Rollingwood
<b>Ronny Hibler</b>	Commissioner, Burnet County
<b>Joe Holland</b>	Public Transit Coordinator, TxDOT-Austin District
<b>Cynthia Landez</b>	Transportation Engineer, TxDOT Design Division
<b>Don Loucks</b>	Commissioner, Bastrop County
<b>Mark Marek</b>	Division Director, TxDOT Design Division
<b>Rory Meza</b>	Director of Roadway Design Section, TxDOT Design Division
<b>Maurice Pitts, Jr.</b>	Commissioner, Lee County
<b>George Russell</b>	City Manager, City of Marble Falls
<b>Ray Sanders</b>	Mayor, City of Lockhart
<b>Herb Schulze</b>	Commissioner, Caldwell County
<b>Beth Ann Sprengel</b>	Business Development Coordinator, Turner, Collie and Braden, Inc.
<b>Betty Voights</b>	Executive Director, CAPCO
<b>Lucy Buck</b>	Director of Regional Planning, CAPCO
<b>Ross Frie</b>	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.

### **III. TxDOT Update**

Bob Daigh announced that Terry McCoy, Area Engineer, is running both the North Travis and Burnet TxDOT offices until a new Area Engineer is hired for the Burnet office.

Joe Holland distributed a status report on the RR 2147, US 281 and FM 1431 CARTPO projects.

### **IV. Progress Report on Toll Viability of State Highway 71 Project in Bastrop County**

Mayor Sanders announced a meeting with TxDOT and Bastrop Officials is scheduled for August 23<sup>rd</sup> in Bastrop. Bob Daigh suggested that the CARTPO delegation to the Texas Transportation

Commission (TTC) be prepared to answer questions concerning tolling this project at the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Loucks stated there has been no research completed on the economic impacts of tolling SH 71 to date. Commissioner Loucks stated that the Bastrop Commissioners' Court does not at this time favor the proposed tolling of SH 71. However, they are not opposed to tolling long distances of new highways, such as SH 130. Commissioner Loucks noted that there is a lack of progress on legislation to raise the gas tax. Commissioner Loucks stated that more information on the project is needed to be able to make an informed decision.

Mayor Sanders questioned what section of SH 71 was being discussed as a toll road. Mr. Daigh responded that TxDOT is following the TTC directive that any added capacity to a limited-access roadway is to be evaluated for toll viability.

Michael Aulick stated the majority of respondents in CAMPO's recent public opinion survey preferred an increase in the gas tax rather than paying tolls as a means of funding transportation improvements. The gas tax has not increased since 1993. Currently, the state gas tax is \$.20/gallon and the federal gas tax is \$.18/gallon.

Mayor Carlson stated Elgin is opposed to toll roads and questioned how much the gas tax would have to be increased to fund all of TxDOT's projects. Mr. Daigh responded TxDOT only has enough funds to construct one-third of the needed projects, therefore, the gas tax would need to be tripled to fund all the projects. Mr. Daigh noted that there are several other funding issues that should be addressed:

- Congress is unlikely to raise the federal gas tax so the state gas tax would have to be raised enough to cover the federal portion as well;
- Population will continue to grow in the region;
- Popularity of hybrid cars will increase in the future; and
- The gas tax would have to continue to increase to keep up with inflation.

Mr. Aulick stated the Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan (TMMP) study concluded that it would cost \$27B by the year 2030 for the Austin metropolitan area to build enough roads to meet acceptable congestion limits. The draft CAMPO 2030 Mobility Plan will cost roughly \$9B to complete all the roads in the plan. Mr. Aulick stated that a local option gas tax may be discussed during the next legislative session. Mayor Sanders suggested the Legislative and Policy Initiatives (L&PI) Committee should address the gas tax and toll road funding issues at their next meeting.

Commissioner Loucks asked whether if toll collection would discontinue after the construction costs of the highway are recovered. Mr. Daigh responded that toll revenues would be collected indefinitely on toll road projects because improvements and maintenance are an ongoing expense.

Mayor Carlson asked about the amount of funding for farm-to-market roads. Mr. Daigh responded that the funds for metropolitan and rural areas should be balanced for increased safety and mobility. Mr. Daigh suggested working with Area Engineers if there are county roads that have safety issues.

Commissioner Hibler questioned if toll revenues could be used to pay the local (10%) match for transportation projects for utility relocation and right-of-way acquisition. Mr. Daigh responded that toll bonds could pay the 10%, depending on the specific project.

## **II. Access Management -**

Mayor Sanders introduced Rora Meza, Director of Roadway Design Section, TxDOT Design Division. Ms. Meza presented the TxDOT access management policies and guidelines. Good access management is important for improving safety, increasing mobility, providing reasonable access to developments and promoting local government partnerships. Conflict points must be reduced to decrease crash potential to improve safety. To increase mobility, access must allow through traffic to move more efficiently, separate speed differentials and reduce vehicles braking and hard acceleration.

Under recently enacted state legislation, TxDOT allows cities with access management plans to control permitting of driveways on the state highway system. To be eligible, a city must present its access management plan to TxDOT for approval. Another possible approach is for cities to work in cooperation with TxDOT on the issuance of driveway permits. Cities may apply one set of standards to off-system streets and another set of standards to on-system roads.

Betty Voights asked whether a county could also control access management on state highways. Ms. Meza responded that Texas counties do not have the authority to regulate access management at the present time.

Ed Collins distributed a handout on access management in the TxDOT – Austin District area, showing which cities have expressed interest in access management authority. Currently, TxDOT is meeting individually with cities throughout the region.

**V. Update on September 30<sup>th</sup> CARTPO Presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission**

Ross Frie stated that draft speeches, a PowerPoint presentation and a CARTPO brochure have been completed. CAPCO staff is currently scheduling meeting times with the individual TTC members prior to the September 30<sup>th</sup> TTC meeting. CAPCO staff is getting resolutions/letters of support from counties, cities and civic organizations. The CARTPO delegation is tentatively scheduled first on the agenda, the meeting starts at 9:00 a.m. However, Mr. Daigh explained that the TTC can change the order of the agenda, so the delegation should be prepared to be there all day. The final presentation should be completed by the September 10<sup>th</sup> CARTPO meeting. Alderman Hamilton requested CAPCO staff contact Howard Falkenberg regarding the presentation.

Alderman Hamilton questioned whether priority projects should be supported based on their need and whether the toll viability ought to be considered. Mr. Daigh responded projects should be presented based on their needs and the question of funding should be determined after the projects are selected.

Mayor Sanders questioned if support was being received from all legislators in the region. Mr. Frie stated support has been received from Senator Armbrister, Senator Ogden and Representative Cook. All legislators within the CAPCO region will be contacted to request their support.

**VI. Discussion of CARTPO Strategic Plan**

Mayor Sanders discussed the draft CARTPO Strategic Plan which includes meeting dates and possible topics through the spring of 2005. The status of the three CARTPO committees was discussed – Alternative Transportation (AT), Legislative and Policy Initiatives (L&PI) and Planning and Project Development (P&PD). It was decided that the committees would continue to meet on an “as needed” basis. It was decided that AT Committee should also be the Education Committee to discuss specific issues and best practices in depth. The L&PI Committee will consider questions of increasing the gas tax, local option gas tax and possible changes in county transportation planning authority. The P&PD Committee will consider the formation of a regional mobility authority for the non metropolitan counties, and other planning issues as needed.

**VII. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**VIII. Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.