

**SUMMARY MINUTES
CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGULARLY SCHEDULED CAPITAL AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CARTPO) MEETING**

**CAPCOG BOARD ROOM
2520 IH 35 SOUTH, SUITE 100
AUSTIN, TX 78704**

October 20, 2006 – 9:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Hamilton, City of Rollingwood, **Chairman, Planning & Project Development Subcommittee**

Ronny Hibler, Burnet County, **Chairman, Alternative Transportation Subcommittee**

Ed Collins, TxDOT

Joe Holland, TxDOT

Elizabeth Ascott, TxDOT

James Oakley, Commissioner, Burnet County

Howard Falkenberg, AARO

Bruce Byran, CATC

Stacy Snell, City of Bastrop

Paul Hamilton, TxState University

Bruce Barton, City of Jarrell

Stevie Greathouse, CAMPO

Jeff Coffey, City of Elgin

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean Moran, CAPCOG

Georgette Nugent, CAPCOG

Betty Voights, CAPCOG

1. Call to Order – Chairman Mr. Hamilton

Mr. Hamilton asked for introductions from those present.

2. Legislative Update – Ed Collins, TxDOT

Mr. Collins addressed handouts on the Transportation Commission's State legislative priorities and proposed issues for the 80th legislature. He also explained that there are letters going out to all counties interested in the TxDOT legislative agenda. TxDOT has asked the public and elected officials to think about TxDOT's legislative agenda and to provide comments about the topic. Most of the changes are administrative items that try to make sure that the department functions well and improve the interactions between governments. Mr. Collins said that an argument has come up that the statutes do not expressly give the Governor the authority to designate MPOs. This is an item if not addressed, could halt the urban transportation planning. Another legislative issue that is a priority for TxDOT addresses the financial burden that TxDOT sometimes has to bear for right of way acquisition when the billboard cannot be located

somewhere else due to stricter standards. Committee members briefly discussed the distraction that electronic billboards or marquees have on drivers. Mr. Collins did not know of any standards that TxDOT is proposing in the session about this issue. Three items will reduce administrative costs in order to bring more money back to the State Highway Fund. These items generally address ways that the gas tax money are collected and deposited. Mr. Sean Moran asked about the indexing of the gas tax. Mr. Collins did not think TxDOT would advocate for indexing of the gas tax. The committee discussed the overweight carrier fee, specifically whether the fee could go back to the local level. CARTPO members also discussed the technology behind toll tags and the various system operations. Several legislative items concern dealer tags and applying for new tags. Another legislative item that TxDOT will propose would give new residents of Texas and the military protection under the lemon laws. One important item that TxDOT will advocate for is the advanced purchase of rights of way. Mr. Collins explained that TxDOT is not able to purchase right of way from a willing seller until an environmental study is completed. This limitation sometimes drives up the cost of purchasing the land. Mr. Collins also said that TxDOT might propose extending the authority for all counties to set aside rights of way for corridor planning. Another item would allow TxDOT to select contracts for engineering and construction based on cost efficiency rather than most qualified, which is the way they currently operate. Other items on the legislative agenda include how the Rail Relocation Improvement Fund will be capitalized whether it is taxing or other funds. The committee briefly discussed the Rail Relocation issue. TxDOT would also seek clarification on the ability to use automatic enforcement to capture red light violations on the State owned roadways. Mr. Collins also talked about the legislation that would review TxDOT under the Sunset process. He also talked about legislation that might be proposed clarifying the process for creating/dissolving regional mobility authorities. The last item on TxDOT's legislative agenda pertains to toll collection and enforcement. Mr. Collins said that the Texas Transportation Commission has not adopted the legislative agenda, so there would still be opportunity to provide comments on these items.

Mr. Hamilton asked about items that the CAPCOG legislative committee has talked about regarding county land use. Betty Voights commented that the approach has been somewhat timid, given the unpopularity of County land use authority. One legislative item that has been talked about was to amend Chapter 232 to give Counties the authority to decide the location of the roads within a subdivision that empty onto the existing road network. Mr. Oakley talked about some legislators have been interested in linking county land use and transportation. Mr. Hamilton suggested CARTPO consider drafting a letter to TxDOT with comments on the legislative agenda and then at a future meeting have another presentation from TxDOT's legislative office.

3. CAMPO Regional Growth Concept – Stevie Greathouse, CAMPO

Stevie Greathouse gave a presentation on the regional growth concept that CAMPO has been developing. Ms. Greathouse said the reason behind developing the growth concept was to deal with the massive amounts of growth the region is experiencing. The population of Hays, Williamson and Travis has expanded from about 750,000 in 1990 to 1.1 million in 2000, with the CAMPO forecasts projecting a population of 2.75 million in 2030. She said CAMPO expects that most of the population will occur in single-family residential subdivisions in the outlying areas and along the existing transportation corridors. The long-range 2030 plan adopted in 2005

expects as much as 23 billion spent on new highway projects, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and maintenance and operations. The CAMPO models show that congestion will be worse in 2030 than today even after all of the 23 billion in projects are spent. Currently, the model showed a trip takes about 22% longer in rush hour than during optimal free flow conditions. The model showed that in 2030 the rush hour trip would take 39% longer than a trip at non-peak conditions even after all projects in the plan were built. The Transportation Policy Board adopted the plan despite these projections mainly to fulfill the federal requirements, but the Board directed staff to explore different growth patterns for future plan amendments.

To follow the Board directive, CAMPO staff decided that the changes were so fundamental to the plan that the issue needed could only be addressed in the next plan cycle. CAMPO staff initially worked with Envision Central Texas to incorporate their visioning work by focusing growth in existing town centers by growing more dense with mixed use. CAMPO incorporated the ECT vision into the model. The results showed a decrease in vehicle miles traveled and vehicle delay. Staff also realized the ECT vision might be a difficult goal because of the lack of county zoning authority, and the large influence the market has on where growth occurs. CAMPO held workshops in the five county region to get feedback from the jurisdictions on the ECT vision and to determine the location of the activity centers in each community. The CAMPO staff developed a draft map with the location of the activity centers based on this feedback as well as knowledge of the transportation network, and existing employment/housing information. CAMPO is asking for comments on the map. Ms. Greathouse explained the map would be revised before taking it to the Policy Board for review early next year.

Ms. Greathouse explained that the activity centers on the map represent roughly the location within the city. She also said that there were three types of activity centers: small, medium, and large. The centers were classified based on what kind of regional draw they would have in the future and were scored using factors such as transit, vacant land, the existing employment and population, and walkability. Each activity center may look different, but they should function as a higher density development with a mix of uses, and have walkability. Ms. Greathouse explained that the Growth Concept also consisted of a table to go along with the map. The table contained a target for increasing the percentage of regional jobs and housing within the activity center for 2035. Currently, Ms. Greathouse said that 29% of the jobs and 7.9% of the population live in the activity centers, while the target would be to have 32% of the jobs and 15% of the population within the center by 2035. The concept does not attempt to capture all new growth.

Ms. Greathouse also talked about strategies that CAMPO would seek to implement the concept. The main strategy would be to have the local jurisdictions agree to a memorandum of understanding that states that both CAMPO and the jurisdiction would use their tools to encourage implementing the concept. She said CAMPO's tools to implement the plan include funding a new arterial that would serve the activity center or a new transit stop. Strategies that a city could use include allowing mixed use zoning in areas or locating public investment in the centers. The next steps are to evaluate the 1,900 comments on the draft concept, and to work with the growth subcommittee to revise the draft.

CARTPO members made comments about the Growth Concept. Mr. Hamilton said one of the limitations of the concept is that it does not include the growth happening in the western portions

of the region. Ms. Greathouse said the MPO is not able to do planning in Burnet and Blanco Counties because they are not in the MSA. Bruce Byron commented on the meritorious efforts that CAMPO has put into meeting with the local jurisdictions; however, he warned that this concept might be a slippery slope of regional land use dictated to the local level. He also questioned whether higher density would reduce congestion just because the vehicle miles travel is reduced. He also said that it is valuable that regulatory entities look at what the market will entertain, but not demand stuff not supported by the market. Betty Voights talked about how cities should consider the housing options and types of jobs available in a community. The committee exchanged dialog about the engineering and planning problems that the region faces with the expected growth.

4. CARTPO's Call for Projects Update – Ed Collins, TxDOT

Sean Moran talked about the history of the Call for Projects and explained the problem about how the process fits into the current funding model whether it is shadow tolling or tolling. The process is still a valuable way to identify the regional transportation priorities regardless of the method of financing. Mr. Hamilton talked about the Call for Projects that occurred three years ago and how CARTPO was able to leverage funding from the Transportation Commission. Now that the funding is no longer there, the issue should focus on what the top priorities are for the region for when funding is found. Ed Collins talked about the funding problem TxDOT faces with increasing maintenance/rehabilitation costs. He said the money the District has available for mobility projects can only build about 4 miles of a 4-lane highway per year. This figure does not include funding CAMPO receives. Mr. Collins provided a handout of the projects under construction this year. Most of the projects were safety, maintenance or rehabilitation of bridges. He said that most of the added capacity projects on the list would be funded through pass through financing. Mr. Collins said that the Call for Project process would still play an important role in identifying projects. Mr. Moran said the main goal is to institutionalize the process by becoming a part of the TxDOT Austin District process instead of operating separately. He explained that the local entities would work with the Area Engineers to come up with a list of projects. The regional projects would be flagged and submitted to CARTPO for prioritization. The final list would go to the District Engineer. Mr. Hamilton asked if the Area Engineers already consider the regional needs. Mr. Collins said that they consider it some; however, the Engineers generally consider the immediate needs first. Mr. Hibbler said that the Burnet County elected officials meet with the Area Engineer about once a month. Mr. Collins suggested a presentation on pass through financing.

5. RTCC Update – Sean Moran, CAPCOG

Mr. Moran explained that the Regional Transit Coordination Committee was a response to HB 3588, which tasked the regions to coordinate public transportation dollars. The committee has worked with the stakeholders in the region to develop a draft coordination plan. The RTCC will submit the plan to TxDOT in December. Georgette Nugent handed out a slick that explained the process and the matrix of the goals for regional transportation. Mr. Moran explained that action items or projects were identified based on client surveys, system inventory, and public comment that would help coordinate the regional transportation. An example of an action item would be to implement a single-point consumer access to allow the client easier interaction with the transportation providers. Mr. Moran explained that the RTCC has been working on assigning a

lead agency to each action item that will serve as the primary contact. Mr. Hamilton talked about how there is need to engage the human service agencies to participate in this process because they are often a big stakeholder in public transit.

6. Other Business

Mr. Hamilton had a couple of items of business to discuss. He has heard several issues about the western part of Travis County and the region and CARTPO may want to consider putting it in our scope of work or work schedule before the next Call for Projects. The other item he suggested was to have a presentation from Kirk Watson who may be the next Senator for some of the Austin area. He has made several comments on the necessity for regional planning and transportation.

Mr. Moran suggested the next CARTPO meeting on December 8 or January 5 prior to the start of the legislative session.

Bruce Barton talked about some of the comments made by Kirk Watson at a breakfast at the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Barton said that Mr. Watson would likely be in favor of a peer review process of CAMPO and suggest revisions to the structure of the Board. He also may have some recommendations on SH 130, the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and the tolling/fee structure and use of tolling funds for projects. Mr. Watson encourages policy decisions rather than political decisions.

Mr. Hamilton suggested a December meeting for a presentation from Kirk Watson. He also suggested future presentations from Bob Daigh and Ross Milloy on Rail Relocation.

7. Adjourn