

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

**CAPCOG BOARDROOM
6800 BURLESON RD, SUITE 310
AUSTIN, TX 78744**

Friday, July 20, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Doug Mann, HNTB
Comm. David Goertz, Bastrop County
Comm. Debbie Ingalsbe, Hays County
Comm. Maurice Pitts, Jr., Lee County
Comm. Douglas Hartfield, Lee County
Ed Collins, TxDOT
Wes Burford, TxDOT
Steve Zoromsky, LCRA
Mayor Gladys Markert, City of Elgin
Councilmember Brian Shirley, City of Marble Falls
Joe Holland, TxDOT
Tony Gale, Greenride
Elizabeth Ascott, TxDOT
Councilmember Victor Gonzales, City of Pflugerville

Scott Lambert, Travis County
Leroy Click, Travis County
Comm. Joe Roland, Caldwell County
Comm. Ron Morrison, Williamson County
Judge Donna Klaeger, Burnet County
Comm. Ronny Hibler, Burnet County
Councilmember Pat Berryman, City of Georgetown
Howard Falkenberg, AARO
Judge Wayne Brascom, Llano County
Comm. Tom Muras, Fayette County
Comm. Cynthia Long, Williamson County
Comm. Will Conley, Hays County
Mayor Caroline Murphy, City of Bee Cave

STAFF PRESENT:

Betty Voights, CAPCOG
Sean Moran, CAPCOG

Chris Ramser, CAPCOG

1. Call to Order –Chairman Conley

Mr. Conley opened the meeting and asked for introductions.

2. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

3. Update on the future Call for Project Process – CAPCOG

Mr. Chris Ramser provided some background information about the past Call for Projects that took place in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The process allowed for each County to submit three projects to CARTPO to prioritize them. In 2003 and 2004, CARTPO sent a delegation to the Texas Transportation Commission and was able to assist in getting two of those projects funded through discretionary funding. In 2005, CARTPO decided not to appear before the Commission because of the financial constraints on funding new transportation projects. Because there may

not be discretionary funding available, CAPCOG is working with TxDOT to formalize the CARTPO Call for Projects to occur in conjunction with the TxDOT Area Engineer's informal request for projects that had been occurring about every two years. Mr. Ramser said that staff had worked on a rough timeline on when the next Call for Projects would occur and said that the Austin District would initiate the Call by asking the Area Engineers to work with the local officials to identify projects. Once a list of projects is generated, those projects with a regional significance would be placed in a second list for prioritization by CARTPO. Commissioner Pitts also provided some background information on how the process begins at the local level. He also added that the Bastrop grade separation was a CARTPO project that just recently opened two weeks ago and he said that several other safety projects have been built.

Ed Collins talked a little bit about the rescissions that have occurred to fund the Hurricane Katrina recovery and the war in Iraq. In the past 18 months, Texas' share of the rescissions (or loss of authority to spend that money) has totaled \$666 million, with the latest rescissions totaling \$72 million. In addition, the balance in the Highway Trust Fund has been spent down to almost zero and at this point there has not been much progress in the legislature to increase the gas tax or fund mobility through another way. Mr. Wes Burford also talked about the allocation for mobility projects was around \$50 million per year several years ago for the Austin District, while the new mobility allocation is around \$16 million. He said that future mobility dollars could be allocated to maintenance. Mr. Burford also said that the fact that there is less money means that the work that CARTPO and others do to prioritize the regional projects is even more important.

4. Presentation on Context Sensitive Solutions -- Doug Mann, HNTB Corporation

Mr. Conley talked about the importance of educating the public on the issue of transportation funding. He also mentioned a failed bond package for transportation projects in Hays County that would have used pass through financing. Mr. Conley introduced the speaker on Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) as Doug Mann who has led the dialogue on Context Sensitive Design across the nation. Mr. Mann worked with Hays County on the issue of developing context sensitive design in sensitive areas.

Mr. Mann thanked TxDOT for working on Context Sensitive Design and also talked about the ways that TxDOT has proactively worked on new ways to fund roadways. Mr. Mann talked about several projects in Phoenix that were some of the first examples of Context Sensitive Design. He talked about the portion of I-10 that could not be expanded because of the public opinion on how the project should be built.

He mentioned that Context Sensitive Design is a partnership for success. He said the process is more than mitigation and enhancement because it brings the community and political support behind a transportation project as they look at the impacts of a potential project. Context Sensitive Design is a new process that started in 1998 at a working session in Washington that setup a pilot program under the Federal Highway Administration. FHWA has required the state DOT to develop policies on the subject. Context Sensitive Design is collaborative, interdisciplinary, and physical setting and does not sacrifice safety and mobility. He said that his team likes to look at Context Sensitive Design as a solution because it is a process that should

engage stakeholders. Mr. Mann also talked about some of the principles of a Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) process. He said one of the key components of the CSS process is that instead of designing the roadway and then waiting several years for funding and then going out and asking the public for input and redesigning the project, CSS allows for the listening to come first and then have the engineers design the roadway.

Mr. Mann also showed several drawings of how various sections of urban and rural roads could look through the CSS process. He said that it is harder to draw into existing construction documents other features that might be requested by the community. Mr. Conley talked about an example in his County on Ranch Road 12, which already had construction designs and public hearings on the road. Mr. Conley said this example shows the reason it is important to start working early in the process without coming to the table with construction documents.

Mr. Mann concluded by saying that partnering is the key to success with first impressions having the biggest weight with the public. The partnership typically ensures a project that is financially feasible and balances environmental concerns and functionality.

5. Presentation on the Green Rides Program – CAMPO

This item was skipped to allow setup.

6. Update on Status of County Transportation Plan and Confirm the County Prioritization– CAPCOG

Mr. Ramser talked about the Ad Hoc Committee that served to make recommendations on the prioritization and asked if the Chair, Judge Klaeger wanted to make any comments. Judge Klaeger said that the committee had good participation and discussion about the criteria. The committee decided to take a simple approach. Mr. Ramser added that the county transportation planning process would occur in all counties and take about 2 years to complete. Since not every county could begin at the same time, the ad hoc committee's charge was to look at the order of priority. Mr. Ramser referred to a Memo which outlined the data and the ad hoc committee recommendations. The committee considered the following data: population and growth, and whether the County had an existing transportation plan. Based on population and growth projections through the year 2035, the counties were placed into two tiers. The counties that have an existing transportation plan were placed into the third tier. The table below shows the data that was considered and the recommended prioritization:

	Population Rank	Population Growth Rank	Transportation Plan
Tier One			
Bastrop	4	3	No
Burnet	5	5	No
Caldwell	6	4	No
Tier Two			
Blanco	10	6	No
Fayette	7	9	No
Lee	9	8	No
Llano	8	10	No
Tier Three			
Hays	3	2	Yes
Travis	1	7	Yes
Williamson	2	1	Yes

Notes:

Population Rank- 2000 U.S. Decennial Census population ranking compared to the other 10 counties.

Population Growth Rank- Ranking of the projected population growth rates compared with the other 10 counties from Census 2000 to the State Data Center's 2035 population projection using scenario 0.5.

Transportation Plan- Does the County have an existing Transportation Plan?

The other recommendation that the Ad Hoc committee made was that an annotated outline of the final plan be created prior to the start of the planning process, in order to make sure the elected officials and public understood what would be covered in the plan. Mr. Ramser asked if there were any questions about the recommendations and said the recommendations were on the agenda to confirm them. Judge Klaeger added that several plans would be ongoing and that the order within the tier system was not determined. Mr. Collins said that the first plan could begin within the next couple months. He said that there would be a lot of flexibility for the counties to decide how the process will work for their county. Mr. Burford also said that if there was an item that a county wanted that was not in the Scope of Work, then the county could add it, but it may be a cost that the county would have to cover. Mr. Moran said that CAPCOG would be available to assist the counties. Councilmember Shirley recommended that counties begin to form transportation groups to talk about the issues before the notice to proceed is received that way the county will be ready to go.

Councilmember Shirley made a motion to adopt the recommendations for the County Prioritizations, seconded by Councilmember Berryman. The motion was adopted. Mr. Conley thanked the committee for their work.

5. Presentation on the Green Rides Program – CAMPO

Maria Caminos of CAMPO said the Green Rides program was a new ride sharing program that was developed by Ecology & Environment, Inc under an interlocal agreement between Alamo Area COG and CAMPO. She introduced Tony Gale and David Donohue to give the presentation.

David Donohue said the goal of the program was to take vehicle miles traveled off the road because it is a cheaper alternative than building additional capacity. The mode of transportation offered through this program include, carpooling, vanpooling, bike buddies, or other alternative transportation. The program began as an internal tool for Ecology & Environment, Inc. and the program was commercialized when gas prices increased. Mr. Donohue said that Green Ride is a regional program to manage rides using a web based and user driven. The service is also scalable for cities or individual companies. The tool also tracks the number of trips and generates a savings of gas and emissions.

Tony Gale, the project manager for the River Cities Ride Share program, the name of the Green Ride program in Austin, talked about how the program will be launched during Commute Solutions month in September. The program allows the user to enter information about their trips and allows users to search for close matches for car pooling or bus riding. The matches are calculated on user preferences and shown on a map, but the system does not provide personal info unless the person decides exchange information through emailing. Some members had questions about the privacy protections. Mr. Gale said that the results are displayed by a username and do not show the exact location of where the person lives on a map. Users can email back and forth before revealing any personal information and he suggested they might meet in a Starbuck's beforehand. The system also allows users in the rural counties who have trips in the region to use the program, so it is not limited to just the metro areas.

A question was asked about the difference between Green Ride and the Capital Metro rideshare program. Mr. Gale said that Green Ride is user initiated and accessed through the internet, so it is less expensive to administer. Mr. Goertz asked about how the word was getting out to the people because everyday in Bastrop there are streams of cars heading to Austin. Ms. Caminos said that there would be a media blitz on the launching of the site, the web address is <http://www.rivercitiesrideshare.com/>, and presentations could also be requested for local groups.

6. Other Business

Mr. Conley said that he welcomes suggestions on ideas for future meetings, just give him a call. Commissioner Hibler thanked the counties that assisted Burnet County after the County received 19 inches of rain. He thanked TxDOT for working to get the low water crossings rebuilt that were washed out.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 p.m.