

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2024
TYLER DEVELOPMENT CENTER, LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
423 WEST FERGUSON, TYLER, TEXAS**



Members Present:

Don Warren, Chair; Ed Broussard; Darin Jennings; Pam Frederick; Neal Franklin; Frank Davis; and Vernon Webb.

Members Absent:

Carolyn Caldwell; Leslie Black; Laney Barnes; and Gary Halbrooks.

Staff Present:

Michael Howell; Heather Nick; and Ethan Sukiennik.

Others Present:

Gaylord Hughey, Attorney; Amanda Stahlnecker, HDR; Jacob Walker, HDR; Patrick Halstead, HDR (Virtual); and Bob Westbrook, citizen.

Don Warren called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

Approval of Minutes:

Neal Franklin moved, seconded by Darin Jennings, to approve the minutes from November 16, 2023. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Action Items:

1. Consider adopting the Railroad Inventory and Analysis prepared by HDR Engineering

Mr. Howell gave an overview of the project scope and introduced the consultant team from HDR Engineering. Amanda Stahlnecker and Patrick Halsted from HDR gave a presentation on the findings from the inventory and analysis.

HDR presented a GIS layer showing the location of existing and historic rail lines. The corresponding GIS dataset accompanying the layer identifies various attributes about the section including the owner, right-of-way, and level of activity. This layer will be shared with the GIS consortium so that the data can be uploaded on Smith County Mapsite.

The consultant team performed site inspections at each crossing in the county and assigned an overall rating to the crossings. Ratings were based on various items such as the condition of the pavement leading up to the crossing, the condition of the rail lines, priority factors such as the amount of traffic going through the crossing, and whether the crossing is along a school bus route. HDR then developed a prioritized list of which crossings should have priority for maintenance.

The final section of the report provides standard operating procedures to guide local staff on how to contact the railroad regarding various requests such as requesting maintenance at a location, petitioning for a quiet zone on a section of track, or asking for a section of track to be abandoned. Having these standard operating procedures available will help local governments eliminate the reliance on institutional knowledge for these processes.

Don Warren asked what the purpose of the railroad inventory and analysis was. Michael Howell explained that it would be used to identify which crossings were most needing repairs so discussions with the railroad could begin.

Don Warren asked if the analysis provides a ranking on which crossings were most in need of repairs, Michael Howell stated that it does.

Darin Jennings stated that there are funds dedicated to railroad crossing improvements, and the inventory and analysis will be used to determine how to prioritize those repairs.

Pam Frederick moved, seconded by Frank Davis, to approve the adoption of the railroad inventory and analysis. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

2. Receive a presentation on 2022 safety performance and consider supporting the 2024 statewide safety performance targets

Mr. Howell explained that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) mandates States and MPOs to monitor statewide safety performance for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) which includes:

- Number of fatalities
- Rate of fatalities
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries

Safety performance is required to be reviewed annually and new targets be adopted based on the latest performance data. Should a state fail to meet its safety targets, the state must obligate HSIP funds in the amount apportioned for the prior year only for HSIP projects and submit an HSIP Implementation Plan to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review. The implementation plan must describe the actions the State will undertake to achieve or make significant progress towards achieving the State's safety performance targets in subsequent years. This requirement could affect available funding for projects listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The most recent complete data set for safety performance is for 2022. The data for this year shows a decrease in the number of all performance categories that are monitored. Unfortunately, in 2021 we saw a significant spike in the number of crashes from previous years, so while there was a reduction in crashes in 2022, the numbers are still a notable increase from the years before 2020. Driver behavior appears to still be the leading cause of crashes in our area. While the

number of crashes has decreased, the percentage of crashes associated with Driving Under the Influence and distracted driving increased from 2021. The data point and trendlines for the performance measures are attached hereto as Exhibit “A”.

The provision of the IIJA regulation requires that each State set its own performance targets. The MPOs are then required to either support the Statewide targets or set their own local targets. Regardless of whether the MPO adopts its own targets, FHWA only reviews the statewide targets when directing changes to the HSIP. Therefore the staff recommends that the MPO support the statewide targets.

Ed Broussard moved, seconded by Darin Jennings, to approve the adoption of the 2024 statewide safety performance targets. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Staff Updates:

1. Director’s Report

Mr. Howell gave an update regarding the MTP. Furthermore, Mr. Howell provided information on the new requirements related to measuring the reduction of greenhouse gases in the MPO area. Lastly, Mr. Howell provided information about potential funding changes.

2. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Mr. Howell provided notice of the upcoming Technical Advisory Committee meeting on March 7, 2024 and the next Transportation Policy Committee meeting scheduled on March 28, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 P.M.