

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023
REGULAR MEETING, TDC LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
423 W. FERGUSON, TYLER, TEXAS**



Members Present:

Michael Howell, Stephanie Franklin, Cameron Williams, Kyle Kingma, Jimmy Toler, Burren Reed, Doug Nicholson Adrienne Leach and Shane Cunningham.

Others Present:

None

Michael Howell called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Kyle Kingma moved, seconded by Cameron Williams, to approve the minutes from November 3, 2022. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Presentation Items:

1. Receive a presentation on the draft 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) detailing the MPO's proposed budget for the next two fiscal years

Mr. Howell presented the item providing a summary of the forecasted revenue and expenditures for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. He noted an increase in the budget for staffing costs which was attributed to two additional staff members, a part time Planning Technician and a full time Transportation Analyst. He stated that one major planning item was attributed to hiring a consultant to perform the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update in 2024. He mentioned that there was funding available for a special study in 2025 but that a potential project had not been identified at this time. He closed the presentation noting that the final draft of the UPWP would be brought for consideration in May.

2. Receive a presentation on statewide and local safety performance in 2021

Mr. Howell presented the item displaying charts showing the change in the number of crashes over various years. The data showed a marked increase fatal and serious injury crashes in 2021. Mr. Howell said that the sudden increase in crashes indicated that the primary cause for the increase was driver behavior rather than the design of the roadways. Mr. Howell also shared an infographic prepared by the TxDOT district highlighting the causes of crashes in the Tyler District. The infographic listed an increase in districted driving, drunk driving, and people driving without a seatbelt in reported crashes in 2021. Mr. Howell said that, according to the data, the best way to address crash rates would be to have City and County partners help get the word out about the statistics and reaffirm the importance of driver safety to the community.

Cameron Williams mentioned that safety grant options were available through TxDOT and that the Tyler District Traffic Safety Specialist, Heather Singleton, monitors those resources.

Jimmy Toler said that the data was inline with what his staff has experienced.

Action Items:

1. Consider supporting the 2023 statewide performance targets adopted by TxDOT

Mr. Howell presented the item showing the adopted statewide targets for safety (PM1), bridge and pavement conditions (PM2) and travel time reliability (PM3). Mr. Howell reminded the Committee that the targets are not a mechanism by which the MPO will be graded or penalized by the State or Federal Highway Administration if a target is not met. The staff recommended the TAC support the statewide targets.

Kyle Kingma asked how the TxDOT methodology for establishing targets worked. Mr. Howell said that a trendline was created based on crash data for five years, and the target was to decrease the trendline by two percent. Mr. Kingma asked if the two percent reduction target would likely achieve the Vision Zero goal of no deaths by 2050. Mr. Howell said, 'no' and clarified that the Vision Zero goal was more aspirational while the two percent reduction was a more realistic target.

Mr. Kingma asked if there was a reason why the targets should not reflect progress in line with Vision Zero. Mr. Howell said that if the statewide safety targets are not met, then TxDOT would be required to program more funding into the Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP). Having more funds moved to HSIP could reduce the amount of funding the MPO had available to put towards other projects. Mr. Howell also pointed out that, based on the 2021 crash data, the statewide target for the two percent reduction in crash trends was not being met and suggested that setting a more stringent target was not prudent.

Mr. Kingma asked if TxDOT had been required to put more funds into the HSIP. Adrienne Leach replied, 'yes'. Mr. Kingma asked if that was bad. Cameron Williams said, 'yes and no' and went on to say that Vision Zero puts an inherent responsibility for crashes on the engineering staff and takes the responsibility away from the driver.

Cameron Williams moved, seconded by Kyle Kingma, to approve the amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Williams noted with his motion the need to take a harder look at the data to identify the root causes impacting poor performance. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Staff Updates:

1. MPO Director's Report

Mr. Howell provided status updates on the Travel Demand Model, Downtown Tyler Traffic Study and Railroad Inventory and Analysis. He notified the TAC of the Census Bureau having released their list of qualified urban areas based on the 2020 census which indicated that Eagle Pass was eligible to be designated an MPO. He gave notice of a training opportunity called Safe Streets for Texas (SS4T) and that Mr. Howell had been elected to the Texas Association of MPOs (TEMPO) executive committee.

2. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Mr. Howell provided notice of the upcoming Policy Committee Meeting on March 23, 2022 and the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting scheduled on May 11, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.