



**FLAGSTAFF METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
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Approved Minutes **Executive Board**

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Flagstaff City Hall Staff Conference Room,
211 W. Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Chair Overton called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Roll Call.

Present: Chair Scott Overton, Councilmember City of Flagstaff; Vice Chair Hank Rogers, Arizona Department of Transportation (telephonically); Matt Ryan, Supervisor Coconino County; Carl Taylor, Supervisor Coconino County; Art Babbott, Councilmember City of Flagstaff

Excused Absent:

Coral Evans, Councilmember City of Flagstaff

Others Present:

David Wessel, FMPO Manager; Meg Roederer, FMPO Administrative Specialist; Jim Cronk, City of Flagstaff Planning Director; Chris Bridges, CYMPO

I. PRELIMINARY GENERAL BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

C. APPROVAL of MINUTES.

Mr. Taylor noted Ms. Evans was listed twice under excused absent. Mr. Ryan made a motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2011 with the correction to the attendance and Mr. Babbott seconded, which passed unanimously.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Overton adjourned the meeting for Executive Session at 8:03 a.m. for the FMPO Manager Personnel review. Chair Overton reconvened the regular Executive Board meeting to order at 9:04 am. Chair Overton made a motion to accept Mr. Wessel's evaluation as submitted with minor revisions and Board review for submittal to the City Human Resources Department with a supporting signature from Chair Overton and Mr. Babbott seconded, which passed unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS (Continued, postponed, and tabled items.)

1. Legislative and Regulatory Update and Review

Mr. Wessel provided a legislative and regulatory update to the Board and introduced Mr. Chris Bridges of CYMPO. Mr. Wessel stated the issue at hand is reauthorization and how it relates to the

MPO population threshold. Mr. Wessel stated Mr. Adam, RTAC, provided him an update that the House and Senate will have a Reauthorization Bill out in early July. Mr. Wessel stated the actions taken thus far are the following.

- The FMPO Chair sent letters to our delegation, Chair and members of committees on the MPO designation issue.
- The letters were shared with national organizations such as AMPO and NARC.
- The FMPO has also been working with other small mpos in the state.
- The FMPO (Mr. Wessel) and CYMPO (Mr. Bridges) signed national letter coming from small mpos across the country to members of Congress on the issue.

Mr. Wessel stated important points on the threshold issue that are valid concerns.

- Mr. Wessel explained from a sound planning perspective if you wait until a City is 200,000 many problems are embedded and difficult to overcome.
- The information packets submitted highlight the MPO value in terms of expertise, leveraging staff time, writing grants, and providing solid representation in state processes.

Mr. Wessel stated the funding issue continues to be a concern as the highway trust fund revenues contract and setting authorization levels relative to those income levels. He believes it represents about a 30% drop with implications across the board with the state program and potentially the FMPO program and will continue to monitor the situation.

Mr. Bridges commented on the activities at CYMPO as well as provided legislative input. Mr. Bridges added CYMPO has been working with NARC and AMPO and provided them the small MPO profile of successes document. Mr. Bridges stated the document lays out the projects that were leveraged and delivered using STP funds, transportation enhancement grants and safety projects. Mr. Bridges stated it has all the things that we help facilitate in order to help make Congress aware that we perform a valuable function - although small and using small amounts of funding - but do play an important role. Mr. Bridges explained NARC had a meeting with Chairman Mica and believes they provided him the profile of successes document because his office called him looking for his contact information and he has not heard from him yet but is anticipating some contact and will pass along the information as it becomes available. Mr. Bridges stated three of his board members either did not run for re-election or lost election and is therefore lacking a quorum and waiting for appointments. He is supporting the other mpos as best he can but does not have an official Board action. The FMPO Board expressed that Mr. Bridges is in a difficult situation with his current Board situation. Mr. Wessel stated ADOT is in a difficult position as well and it comes down to funding and is getting a strong consensus that the small mpos are doing their share by supporting state processes and are valuable partners. Mr. Wessel explained the challenge is two-fold.

- 1) If a core program takes a cut place with mpo funding being a percentage of the core program that may lead to a drop in funding. The question becomes how ADOT will continue to support the existing small mpos.
- 2) If the current law stands there is a potential of adding two or three more mpos in the state - Sierra Vista and Lake Havasu. Bull Head City is a possible addition because they may combine with Kingman.

Mr. Wessel explained ADOT is in a challenging position because they do not know what the funding will look like with the many variations. The FMPO will continue to work with ADOT and document the workloads. Mr. Wessel stated it is ADOT mandated work such as the Long Range Plan and supporting enhancements programs such as the 16 and 17 programs in helping the state with the outreach and coordination. The FMPO will document it and illustrate to ADOT and others that much is gained from our participation. Mr. Ryan stated the conversation with ADOT should focus on the benefits and the need to continue to fund what the small mpos do and stress the broader scale on the importance of transportation planning. There was discussion only.

IV. NEW BUSINESS (Continued, postponed, and tabled items.)

1. FMPO FY 2011-2015 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Chair Overton adjusted the agenda to discuss action items next after Old Business: Legislative and Regulatory update and review.

Mr. Wessel explained the TIP amendments. Mr. Wessel stated federal funds are allocated for transit and come with a time clock and if not used it will lapse. Mr. Wessel explained CYMPO has funds that are lapsing because the region has yet to institute a transit program, therefore, the funds have come to NAIPTA and all federal funds need to be programmed in the TIP. Mr. Wessel stated the TIP Amendment is to use the CYMPO funds for NAIPTA in two sources, one is 5307 operating funds, and the other is STP flex funds. Mr. Wessel referred the Board to the table that explains the funds will be used to help with operations as well as expand the Kaspar facility to build a parking lot to store Mountain Link buses. Mr. Babbott commented on an observation that southside businesses are happy with Mountain Links coming but upset about the South Beaver Street lot improvement and the clear cutting that went on regarding the landscaped trees. Mr. Babbott stated the people (contractor) came in at 5:45 a.m. and within twenty minutes cut all the trees down and felt it was a "stealth" operation. Mr. Babbott stated he spoke with Karl Eberhard and he mentioned he was surprised it had occurred and the City had spent time maturing the landscaping and it was an investment the City had made. Mr. Babbott reiterated they were happy it is coming but unhappy with the way the lot improvement started out. Mr. Taylor added that the businesses were not only upset about the mature trees being cut but that new trees were planted. Mr. Babbott stated that the new plantings were in very similar locations. Mr. Babbott stressed this as a communication issue and to follow through with the contractor or design because when they see the project it is generic in nature and not lot by lot. Chair Overton stated he believed the NAIPTA Board weighed in on the project and suggested the comments should be forwarded to NAIPTA. Mr. Wessel stated he thought it went through DRB. Mr. Ryan stated he is the Chair of the NAIPTA Board and there was not a conversation on the parking lot and it may have been because it took a long time to receive the funding. Chair Overton stated the PR campaign should have been ramped up on the impact.

Mr. Ryan stated the Kaspar parking lot would be paved and expanded over time. Mr. Wessel stated the cost for the parking lot component is approximately \$190,000.

Chair Overton inquired about the discussion status on hybrid buses vs diesel buses. Mr. Ryan stated the conversation is still open and there is the initiative with the bond to purchase hybrid buses. Mr. Wessel stated the federal funds that were approved by the Executive Board some time ago is moving forward and will be diesel busses. Chair Overton stressed the importance to keep the discussion and conversation on hybrid vs diesel busses open especially with replacement busses coming in. Mr. Taylor stated the City sustainability group has done some carbon footprint analysis. Mr. Ryan suggested Mr. Wessel talk to Mr. Meilbeck and bring the conversation back to the Board.

Mr. Babbott made a motion to approve the TIP Amendments for the NAIPTA transit table to include new section 5307 and surface transportation program flex funds and Mr. Taylor seconded, which passed unanimously.

2. FMPO FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Wessel provided an overview of the draft FY2012 – 2016 TIP as recommended by the TAC. Mr. Wessel mentioned the FY11 TIP has recently been approved by the Feds and now it is time to approve the FY12 TIP. Mr. Wessel stated the TIP is a mandate program with \$500,000 in STP, \$600,000 in highway safety money with occasional grants for enhancements and Safe Routes to School. Mr. Wessel stated the TIP should go to ADOT this month. The TIP went out for public comment on the website, there was an ad in the paper and it was available at the library with no comments received. The principle projects in the TIP are the Beulah Blvd extension design and construction and Lone Tree Traffic Interchange design. Mr. Wessel mentioned with the Lone Tree T-I design done it will make pursuing funds easier and phasing the project would be possible. Mr. Wessel stated additional projects as safety projects, signal synchronization efforts and transit. Mr. Wessel stated a strategic change in the TIP is the use of STP funds for more routine planning functions such as traffic counts and regional studies. Mr. Wessel stated there will be a TIP table

correction of changing the Baderville references to the term Ft. Valley and to insert additional narrative to tie the tables back to the Regional Transportation Plan. Chair Overton stated on the Beulah Blvd Extension if CIP has it completely funded for construction. Mr. Wessel stated "yes" with design in 2012 and construction in 2014. Chair Overton inquired if property acquisition was still necessary. Mr. Wessel believes there is still some question on property near the Montessori School until actual design because it may be possible to change the alignment to avoid property acquisition. Chair Overton inquired if there are ADOT implications. Mr. Wessel stated "no." Mr. Wessel stated there has been coordination with Stu Seubert at CIP with city cash flow and mpo funds. Chair Overton stated the university piece of that intersection is future programming and remains unfunded at this time. Mr. Wessel commented on the ADOT public-private-partnership program or P3 with a relocation of the district office and that it is part of the evaluation process, so this may come back as a TIP amendment. Chair Overton expressed that there is a conversation happening regarding ADOT's valuable piece of property, their needs for co-housing facilities, and the opportunity of the south Milton gateway area being redeveloped. Chair Overton stated it strengthens the overall proposal and helps align agencies. Mr. Taylor stated it is an example of both economical and strategic thinking. Mr. Babbott commented on the Lone Tree Interchange I-40 DCR for the Board to revisit and review the implications. Mr. Taylor inquired on the FY12 TIP approval time frame. Mr. Wessel explained the FY11 federal approval complications and delay was due to the continuing resolutions on the authorization. Mr. Wessel stated we may find ourselves in a similar situation because of the differences in the Administration and the House. Mr. Wessel stated the Lone Tree T-I design money is in the illustrative year of 2016 and provides flexibility and there are alternatives such as value engineering. The Board agreed in revisiting the design portion of the Lone Tree T-I in the I-40 DCR regarding cost-benefit, safety and implications for development. Mr. Ryan suggested having ADOT staff in the discussion and there is time to step in and amend it. Mr. Babbott stated the potential benefit of commenting would provide the feds and ADOT information because there has been weigh-in received from a local jurisdiction. Mr. Wessel stated he will start the process regarding the ADOT DCR and how ADOT arrived at the decision and is moving it forward, have City staff report on implications for local development and include a discussion for MPO comment on overpass implications.

Mr. Ryan made a motion to approve the FMPO FY2012-2016 TIP with the condition of changing the Baderville references to the term Ft. Valley and to insert additional narrative to tie tables back to the Regional Transportation Plan. Mr. Babbott seconded, which passed unanimously.

3. Steves/Fanning Railroad Crossing Closure Study

Mr. Wessel explained the findings from this study and received Board comment and discussion. Mr. Wessel stated when the City did the Fourth Street railroad crossing it reviewed Steves and Fanning to see if one or both should be closed. The findings were there was no overall safety advantage to closing either one, increased pedestrian safety issues (trespassing), and business access issues. The option of Fanning closed and Industrial road improved to Nestle Purina and Country Club would provide an offset but creates a significant out of the way connection for employees and shipment. Mr. Wessel mentioned the delay was for ADOT to have time to review study and has since supported the findings. Mr. Wessel stated there are challenges to pursuing cost effective safety improvements because medians would not work due to their short sections. The other option is the use of four quadrant gates and that cost would come largely from the City at about one million per intersection. Mr. Wessel stated other opportunities are increased enforcement, increased education and/or a legislative change for a gate light camera. Mr. Wessel stated the City requested the traffic commission and FMPO review the Study. Mr. Taylor stated the Report mentioned there were resident concerns at the Fanning crossing regarding noise and if there is anything we can do to mitigate the noise for an improved quality of life. Mr. Taylor suggested a follow up questionnaire. Chair Overton stated through the process the concerned parties have been satisfied. Mr. Taylor stated if the sound issue has been mitigated he is fine. Mr. Ryan commented on the relationship with BNSF. Chair Overton stated the commitment was to study the closure and to look at the results in order to keep a positive working relationship with BNSF.

Mr. Taylor made a motion to validate and support the staff and TAC findings of the study and Mr. Ryan seconded, which passed unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

2. NAIPTA/FMPO Merger Assessment

Chair Overton adjusted the agenda to discuss Old Business: Item 2 NAIPTA/FMPO Merger and Old Business: Item 3 Corridor Coalitions: Action Plan following New Business Item 3: Steves/Fanning Railroad Closure Study.

Mr. Wessel explained the NAIPTA/FMPO Merger is not advised at this time but there are efficiencies that can occur such as a heightened strategic focus, shared staff, FMPO move to NAIPTA building or merge administratively. Mr. Taylor stated Supervisor Fowler has allocated \$10,000 of community initiative money to transit service in Page to pursue moving people from the reservation to Flagstaff and recommended formal conversations on a regional approach to bus service. There was discussion only.

3. Corridor Coalitions: Action Plan

Mr. Wessel briefly recapped the Item with the Board. Mr. Wessel stated there will be a more formal paper on existing coalitions, work together to organize a freight roundtable, revisit the past freight study and use the FMPO retreat as a means to look at the strategic alliances. There was discussion only.

VI. NEW BUSINESS (Continued, postponed, and tabled items.)

4. FMPO Calendar

Chair Overton requested an agenda item on moving Executive Board meetings to a new day and time to better accommodate Board member schedules. Mr. Rogers suggested the third Thursday of each month. Mr. Wessel stated the July 27, 2011 meeting will probably be canceled. Chair Overton stated he is unavailable in July. Mr. Taylor stated he will be unavailable for the August meeting. Ms. Roederer stated rotation of officers as an upcoming agenda item and will be sending out a save the date email for the FMPO retreat currently scheduled for Wednesday, September 28, 2011. Mr. Taylor mentioned there may be conflict for the County Board members on the September 28 retreat date. There was discussion only.

VII. CONCLUDING GENERAL BUSINESS

D. REPORTS

There was no discussion.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Overton adjourned the meeting at 10:03 a.m.