



Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Zoom Meeting

Attending: Dennis Pyle (Barry), Todd Wiesehan (Christian), Kim Kinder (Dade), Roger Bradley (Dallas), Hollie Elliott (Dallas), J. Howard Fisk (Greene), Joel Keller (Greene), Jeff Scott (Greene Alternate), Max Springer (Lawrence), Tim Selvey (Lawrence Alternate), Sydney Allen (Polk), Hank Smythe (Stone), Jerry Harman (Stone), Rick Ziegenfuss (Taney), Randy Owens (Webster), Sam Rost (Webster), Stan Whitehurst (Webster Alternate)

Andy Thomason (OTO), Zeke Hall (MoDOT), Frank Miller (MoDOT), Beth Schaller (MoDOT), Jason Ray (SMCOG), Jack Weindel (SMCOG), Aishwarya Shrestha (SMCOG), Joelle Cannon (Senator Blunt's Office)

The meeting was called to order by Jason Ray.

1. Introductions by County & Guests

Self-introductions were skipped.

2. Approval of the agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda made by Hank, motion seconded by Howard. All ayes. Motion carried.

3. Election of 2020-2021 TAC Chair and Vice-Chair

Jason asked for nominations for Chair. Rick was nominated as the Chair. Dennis seconded Rick as the Chair. Rick accepted the nomination. All ayes.

Rick asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Dennis was nominated as the Vice-Chair. The nomination was seconded. Dennis accepted the nomination. All ayes.

4. Approval of minutes:

Motion to approve the May 13, 2020 meeting minutes made, a motion was seconded. All ayes. Motion carried.

5. Introduce New SMCOG Transportation Planner

Jason introduced SMCOG's new Transportation Planner, Aishwarya Shrestha.

6. SMCOG Staff Update:

a. MCRS Southwest Applications – Round 1:

Jason noted that application for the Southwest district's Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. It is a blueprint for roadway safety funding that will help support projects or equipment needs that are directly related to helping reduce the number of fatal and serious injuries and crashes and roadways. The blueprint can be referenced for safer roadways that MoDOT updates annually to help target projects and accomplish goals. The application is due Wednesday, September 16, 2020. Jason also noted that the meeting packet included frequently asked questions sections for the application.

b. Updated Planning Framework

Jason noted that on the agenda there is the link to MoDOT's updated Planning Framework. Over the past year, MoDOT has sought feedback on our planning framework, which is what the TAC supports, it is the prioritization process. The updated framework can be viewed on the MoDOT Engineering Policy Guide, which is linked to the agenda. He encouraged everyone to look at the updated framework.

c. Other Items of Interest:

Jason noted that for Polk and Dallas Counties, SEMA is accepting Notice of Interest for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Those NOIs are due September 1st that is the result of storms and local flooding in May. We had received a federal disaster declaration. HMGP is great for low water crossing replacements, culvert replacements, or installations. The program covers up to 75% of the project. There is an opportunity to pair with CDBG funds through the state to cover the remaining 25% of the project.

Jason noted for all the counties, SEMA is accepting NOI's till September 14th for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program (BRIC) and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. These programs have priorities in addressing mitigating flood impacts. So, low water crossing, flood buyout opportunities, or floodproofing opportunities for infrastructure might be eligible. Since they are nationwide programs, they are highly competitive.

Jason also noted that MoDOT has announced that there will be no Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding for 2020.

Jason noted that Missouri Highway Safety & Traffic Conference will be held virtually from September 28 – 30.

7. MoDOT Update

Frank noted that their planning framework update was completed recently. He also noted that the website for the Engineering Policy Guide is a good resource to know how MoDOT does certain things like how speed limits are set or how roads are designed. It is the guide that MoDOT uses internally as their instruction manual.

Frank also noted that there will be no TAP funding this year. He mentioned that this is tied to the fact that the current FAST Act, which is expiring September 30th, is expected to be extended by the Congress, there are many uncertainties due to the election, what programs are going to be extended are uncertain, and there are issues with the Highway Trust Fund in the national level. Therefore, given all these uncertainties, they do not know what will happen with federal funding.

Frank noted that there likely will be no prioritization process this year. There was no STIP update this year. As there are several staff turnover with MoDOT's planning partners, they think it will be good to sit out on the prioritization process and to train the new people and look at some process improvements.

Frank asked for some feedback on the format of the annual workshop. They anticipated the event to be virtual this year. This may open the door to bring all TAC members in the SW district with all the MPO members for some discussion. Frank asked all the participants if there is an interest in doing the annual workshop at that level. It was decided that any comments will be forwarded to Frank or Jason.

Frank mentioned the MoDOT staff who can work from home, are working from home. They will most likely continue like this till the end of 2020. MoDOT workers out in the field are practicing social distancing and are being asked to not travel in the same vehicle if they cannot space out.

Frank noted that they are being impacted economically. The car sales tax has compensated a little bit for the decrease in gas tax revenues. At the state level, they are looking at a decrease of 10-15% in funding. As people are not traveling, it has impacted the gas tax revenue. This was compensated by delaying purchases and projects. MoDOT has also delayed hiring people and have started that again, especially for new staff for the snow season.

Frank also mentioned their Shared Work program, a voluntary program that most MoDOT employees participated in. In this program, employees that were laid off were compensated with employment benefits. As a result of that, they are limited to 32 hours a week, therefore they will be behind on maintenance plan, and customer service response. This will continue through the first week of September. MoDOT is in an emergency response mode and is still activated as if they are in a big natural disaster right now.

Frank mentioned that MoDOT tracks the pandemic situation in their Southwest district. There are currently 7,775 cases in the SW district (21 counties). They noticed some hot spots that emerged. Recently saw the shift to the Springfield-Branson corridor.

Frank highlighted some construction updates. A roundabout in Marshfield at Rt CC, which was a cost-share with the City of Marshfield and is tied with the interchange project and is also a SMCOG priority. This project is expected to continue through June 2021 but should be open to traffic by the end of the year. Another roundabout is at Rt. 160 in Willard, which is part of the widening of Rt. 160 and should be done by December. MoDOT is also currently resurfacing and doing intersection improvements on Rt. 60 in Webster County. These improvements were added to their resurfacing project as this was a SMCOG priority and it was identified as a priority corridor. The I-44 bridge rebuild project that looks at poor condition bridges on I-44. Currently, there are in Phase 1. Therefore, there will be some traffic impacts. Phase 2 of this project is planned for FY2022.

Beth mentioned Rt. 160 in Dade County is now closed as MoDOT is working on 2 bridge decks and will be going on through the next 3-4 months.

8. MPO Update

Andy Thomason mentioned OTO is not doing a new TIP this year, but projects are still happening. They have a big amendment to their TIP where they are adding 45 new projects. Due to COVID-19, many of their business expos has been canceled. OTO is doing some outreach for its long-range transportation plan. OTO is continuing to watch funding both at the federal, state, and local levels.

9. Legislative Reports

Joelle mentioned all talks for the next stimulus package has stopped. She requested everyone to send suggestions or concerns that they would like to include in the next package.

10. Other Member Updates & Guest Reports

No updates.

11. Adjourn by Chair

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Rick.
The next meeting will be November 18, 2020, at TBA.