

Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee Meeting #6 Summary

WebEx Oct.15, 2020 | 8 – 10:00 a.m.

Attendees

Advisory Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Mayor George Arispe	City of Eldorado	Present
Mayor John Baker	City of Tahoka	Present
Judge Mike Braddock	Lynn County	Present
Judge Charlie Bradley	Schleicher County	Present
Mayor Bob Brinkmann	City of Dumas	Not Present
Judge Terri Beth Carter	Sherman County	Present
Judge Bryan Cox	Martin County	Not Present
Judge Steve Floyd	Tom Green County	Present
Judge Ronnie Gordon	Hartley County	Present
Mayor Brenda Gunter	City of San Angelo	Present
Mayor Phillip Hass Designee: City Manager James Stroud	City of Dalhart	Present
Judge Kim Halfmann	Glasscock County	Not Present
Judge Deborah Horwood	Sterling County	Not Present
Mayor Lane Horwood	City of Sterling City	Not Present
Judge Ernie Houdashell	Randall County	Not Present
Judge Terry Johnson	Midland County	Not Present
Judge Harold Keeter	Swisher County	Present
Mayor Bruno Lozano	City of Del Rio	Present
Mayor Shannon Thomason Designee: Asst. City Manager John Medina	City of Big Spring	Present
Mayor Ginger Nelson Designee: City Manager Jared Miller	City of Amarillo	Present
Judge David B. Mull	Hale County	Present
Judge Foy O'Brien Designee: County Treasurer Terri Stahl	Dawson County	Present
Judge Lewis G. Owens, Jr.	Val Verde County	Not Present

Advisory Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Judge Curtis Parrish	Lubbock County	Present
Patrick Payton, Mayor	City of Midland	Not Present
Judge Francisco G. Ponce	Dimmit County	Not Present
Mayor Dan Pope (<i>Chairman</i>)	City of Lubbock	Present
Mayor Ricky Reed Designee: City Administrator Tommy Bogart	City of Stratford	Present
Judge Johnny "Rowdy" Rhoades Designee: Commissioner Dee Vaughan	Moore County	Not Present
Judge Wesley Ritchey	Dallam County	Present
Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	Present
Judge David R. Saucedo	Maverick County	Not Present
Mayor Wayne Seiple Designee: City Manager Ronnie Guest	City of Carrizo Springs	Present
Judge James Tullis Shahan	Kinney County	Present
Judge Souli Asa Shanklin	Edwards County	Not Present
Mayor Wanda Shurley Designee: City Manager Arturo Fuentes	City of Sonora	Present
Mayor Luis Sifuentes	City of Eagle Pass	Present
Judge Steve Smith (<i>Vice-Chairman</i>)	Sutton County	Present
Judge Hal Spain	Coke County	Not Present
Mayor Josh Stevens Designee: City Manager Sean Overeynder	City of Lamesa	Present
Judge Nancy Tanner	Potter County	Present
Judge Tano E. Tijerina	Webb County	Present
Mayor David Turner Designee: Asst. City Manager Phillip Urrutia	City of Odessa	Not Present
Judge Johnny "Rowdy" Rhoades Designee: Commissioner Dee Vaughan	Moore County	Not Present
Judge Kathryn Wiseman	Howard County	Present
Texas Transportation Commission		
Commissioner Alvin New	Texas Transportation Commission	Present

Elected Officials

Shannon Harmon Representing Texas State Senator Charles Perry
Hal Talton Representing Texas State Representative Four Price
Rick Bacon Tom Green County Commission

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Caroline Mays	Cliff Hallford
Brian Barth	Cory Henrickson
Roger Beall	Steve Linhart
Loretta Brown	Terry Martinez
Jessica Butler	Sherry Pifer
Blake Calvert	Roberto Rodriguez, III
Emily Clisby	David Salazar
Gabriel De Ochoa	Jarred Shaffer
John DeWitt	Randee Shields
Katelyn Dwyer	John R. Speed
Kylan Francis	Akila Thamizharasan
Lauren Garduno	Trent Thomas
Mary Anne Griss	Steve Warren
Jerry Haddican	Casey Wells
Michael Haithcock	
Bill Hale	

Consultant Team

Wendy Travis	Garver	Robert Ryan	Blanton Associates
Tracy Michel	Garver	Kari Anne Sutton	PCI
Sean Wray	Garver	Casey Carlton	WSP

Other Attendees

Duffy Hinkle	Ports-to-Plains Alliance
Cheri Huddleston	Hance Scarborough, LLP
Joe Kiely	Ports-to-Plains Alliance
John Osborne	Lubbock Economic Development Alliance and Chairman Ports-to-Plains Alliance
Guy Andrews	City of San Angelo Economic Development Corporation
Donnie Reavis	Potter County Road and Bridge
Kevin Carter	Amarillo Economic Development Corporation
Matt Wojnowski	City of Del Rio
Nick Gallegos	Mid Rio Grande Valley Economic Development Corporation
Gerry Schwebel	IBC Bank

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Advisory Committee Chair and City of Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope opened the meeting at 8:06 am. Mayor Pope welcomed the attendees and asked Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Freight, Trade, and

Connectivity, for the roll call to be conducted prior to opening comments and the agenda review. Ms. Mays asked Steve Linhart, TxDOT Project Development Manager, to call roll. Mayor Dan Pope declared a quorum with a total of 29 Advisory Committee Members present.

Mayor Dan Pope asked Ms. Mays to review the agenda.

Agenda Review

Ms. Mays reviewed and summarized the agenda: welcome and opening remarks; final review of the Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary including a motion to adopt and submit the report and Executive Summary to TxDOT by October 31; the process by which these are submitted to TxDOT; and closing remarks. Ms. Mays welcomed attendees and solicited comments from TxDOT representatives.

Commissioner Alvin New, Texas Transportation Commission, welcomed the Committee members, and said he was happy to be present and expressed gratitude to the committee members for their participation.

Brian Barth, TxDOT Director of Project Planning and Development expressed gratitude to the Committee members for their hard work, noted it was good to be at this point in the process, and expressed appreciation for the effort of Committee members to ensure a quorum and said he was looking forward to the discussion.

Ms. Mays introduced Jessica Butler, TxDOT's Director of the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. Ms. Butler expressed gratitude and echoed the words of Commissioner New and Mr. Barth and said she was looking forward to the meeting.

Ms. Mays expressed gratitude, recognizing TxDOT District Engineers as well as leaders from Amarillo to Laredo and those on the call.

Steve Warren, TxDOT Lubbock District, District Engineer, noted three new District Engineers on the phone. He expressed gratitude to the Committee and team, acknowledging this process has been difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances.

John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District Engineer, echoed Mr. Warren's remarks and said he was happy to be present.

David Salazar, Jr., TxDOT Laredo District Engineer, expressed gratitude and said he had enjoyed working with everyone and meeting people from around the state. He commended the work accomplished by everyone, including the elected officials, Mayor Pope, Ms. Mays, and the staff. He said this is a very important project for Texas.

Ms. Mays expressed gratitude to Blake Calvert with TxDOT Legislative Affairs. Mr. Calvert expressed enthusiasm to deliver the report and Executive Summary to the legislature.

Ms. Mays expressed gratitude to Wendy Travis for her work in leading the consulting team and gratitude to her TxDOT staff, Steve Linhart, Akila Thamizharasan, and Loretta Brown.

Mayor Pope reiterated gratitude to Ms. Mays and the consulting team. He expressed appreciation for Mr. Warren, the other District Engineers, and to Commissioner New, acknowledging his work and dedication to rural Texas.

Final Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary

Mayor Pope asked Ms. Mays to begin the review of the Advisory Committee Report. Ms. Mays asked Wendy Travis of the consulting team to begin the review the report explaining this would be a review of the changes to the final report as a result of the comments made on the draft report at last month's Advisory Committee meeting.

Ms. Travis noted most revisions were editorial, some substantive, and additional editorial revisions from Joe Kiely were received and addressed as well.

Ms. Travis showed each page of the following chapters on screen.

Chapter 1 was shown on the screen, with time provided for comments, and none were offered.

Chapter 2 was shown on the screen, with time provided for comments, and none were offered.

Chapter 3 was shown on the screen, with time provided for comments. Mayor Pete Saenz, City of Laredo, greeted the Committee and expressed gratitude. Mayor Saenz wanted to ensure Border ports were recognized, requested information regarding the research of an alternative route along FM 1472 between Laredo and Eagle Pass and asked where the information on that alternative route was contained in the chapter and whether the alternative route was anticipated.

Mayor Pope welcomed Mayor Saenz and thanked him for being present. Mayor Pope asked Ms. Mays to address the question. Ms. Mays responded to Mayor Saenz's question by explaining the information was contained in the "recommendations" section. Receiving confirmation from Ms. Travis, she further specified that the information was in the relief route description. Mayor Pope explained House Bill (HB) 1079 set the route for the study so an alternative route was not evaluated by the Committee at this stage. He said they would discuss that more when they got to Chapter 5. Mayor Pope asked if there were any other comments on Chapter 3, and no additional comments were offered, so he moved to Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 was shown on the screen, with time provided for comments, and none were offered.

Chapter 5 was shown on the screen, with time provided for comments. Ms. Mays asked Ms. Travis to review page 68 based on the request made by Mayor Saenz. Mr. Joe Kiely indicated that the bullet on the left at the bottom of page 68 provides a general recommendation that a future study be completed for additional connections because the current study was limited to the Ports-to-Plains corridor as outlined by HB 1079. Ms. Mays concurred with Mr. Kiely and said based on the HB 1079 exact requirements, this was a challenge when trying to balance the language. Mayor Saenz said he understands and had no objection to the main route; he recognizes that FM 1472 can serve as a more efficient and convenient route with improvements, similar to I-69 in the lower Rio Grande Valley such as I-69E and I-69W.

Gerry Schwebel (IBC Bank) said times are changing quickl and adaptation is difficult. Mr. Schwebel indicated security and safety is very important up and down the border near Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Brownsville. He also noted accidents have the potential to shut down an entire highway such as I-35.

Commissioner New said this study was directed by HB 1079 in that it restricted the route the Committees would evaluate. He explained there is a designation process underway in Washington D.C. by US Representative Henry Cuellar for the designation of I-27. This is the first step, is very important at the national level and the process thereafter will take decades. Therefore, ample

opportunity exists to get these other improvements accomplished. He reiterated this is a great start, good for everyone on the call and may not include everything for each person but is a great start.

Mayor Saenz expressed appreciation for the reassurance there would be an opportunity for planning alternative routes. He wanted to ensure the project record reflected the desire for an alternative route in South Texas. Mayor Saenz recognized there would be opportunities to revisit this topic and, hopefully, implement a relief route in the future.

Mr. David Salazar expressed gratitude to Commissioner New, Mayor Saenz, and Mayor Lozano for their work. He wanted to ensure Mayor Saenz TxDOT continues to work with elected officials and others along the Rio Grande River. He understood the expansion of the northern portion is on the radar as well as the ports. He acknowledged this is a feasibility study for the route, but the main key is that many projects would flourish from this effort. This is a first step and alternate routes, alternate connections, loops, and other long-range plans are not forgotten but remain very important. Mr. Salazar noted all parties must work on this route and are aware of the safety and security issues and the future of connecting Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Laredo.

Mayor Saenz expressed gratitude to Mr. Salazar and reassured the Committee they are team players and are available to help and provide assistance.

Ms. Mays reviewed the recommendations and the implementation plan and continued with the report review.

Tommy Bogart, City of Stratford, asked if there was a list of relief routes in the WebEx Chat box. Ms. Mays responded affirmatively, indicating that there were 26 relief route projects identified and they are listed in the table in Chapter 5. No other questions were asked.

Mayor Pope asked for final questions on Chapter 5 and none were offered.

Mayor Pope asked if the Appendices should be reviewed to act on the report and Executive Summary at one time. Ms. Mays agreed with the suggestion.

Next, Ms. Travis navigated through the appendices and asked for any more questions. No questions were offered.

Mayor Pope expressed great pleasure with the way the report turned out and said he believes the report reflects the Committee's input. He noted the readability ease of the document and said the report makes a compelling case. He expressed gratitude for the work and imagined other Committee members on the phone would share those same comments.

Ms. Mays moved on to the Executive Summary for review and stated it succinctly provides the information from the report.

Ms. Mays provided a high-level overview of each page and stated it should be easily read.

Mayor Pope opened the floor for comments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Pope asked the Committee to consider adoption of the report. He asked if Ms. Mays had any comments to make on behalf of TxDOT or the consultants. Ms. Mays had no comments.

Mayor Pope opened the floor for a motion to adopt the Final Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary.

Judge Steve Smith provided the first motion to adopt the Final Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary.

Mayor John Baker seconded the motion to adopt the Final Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary.

Ms. Mays expressed gratitude to the Segment Committee members and the Advisory Committee members acknowledging that they did most of the work.

Mayor Pope asked for any other comments, and none were offered.

Mayor Pope asked the Committee members to conduct a verbal vote and many “Ayes” were heard.

Mayor Pope expressed gratitude and asked if any were opposed. No opposition was offered.

Mayor Pope asked the minutes show the Final Advisory Committee Report and Executive Summary passed unanimously on Oct. 15, 2020 at 8:58 a.m.

Mayor Pope asked Ms. Mays to go back to the agenda to discuss next steps.

Ms. Mays said that Mayor Pope could go through the process of submitting the report by October 31, 2020.

Mayor Pope said they would submit the report prior to Oct. 31. He believed the study would be on the November Transportation Commission agenda or in the comment section noting that, as required by the bill, the report had been submitted.

Mayor Pope opened the floor for any comments or questions about the process, and none were offered.

Steve Warren recognized the efforts of Mayor Brenda Gunter, City of San Angelo, and City Manager Jared Miller, City of Amarillo, during the Segments 1 and 2 Committee meetings. He acknowledged that the Segment Committee meetings were challenging, and an excellent job was performed. He also recognized Mayor John Baker in Tahoka County who had attended every meeting.

Mayor Lozano expressed gratitude to Mayor Dan Pope for all three Segment Committee meetings, Judge Tijerina for being a vice chair with him, to Mayor Saenz and Mayor Sifuentes, to Matt Wojnowski, and to the Laredo Port Director, Liliana Flores, for her expertise and vision as well as the coordination between all ports of entry. He continued that she was instrumental in educating the Committee on traffic flows for trade relief. Mayor Lozano expressed enthusiasm for the paradigm shift and positive outlook to connect South Texas with the Permian Basin and the agricultural centers of West Texas, and the excitement to be part of a new vision for the region of West Texas.

Mayor Pope expressed gratitude to Mayor Lozano for his leadership as the Segment 3 Committee Chair.

Mayor Pope expressed gratitude for all of the leadership of Segment 1: City Manager Jared Miller and Milton Pax; the leadership of Segment 2: Mayor Gunter and Judge Parrish; the leadership of Segment 3: Mayor Lozano and Judge Tijerina; and Judge Smith for serving as vice chair of the Advisory Committee. He emphasized this process is a “team sport.” He stated that from Dalhart to Laredo, there has been great effort. He reminded the Committee that a lot of work remains, and that Texas needs another north/south interstate connecting West Texas to middle America to the

Midwest and to the great American West. He called this need critical as Texas grows from 20-50 million residents over the next 30 years. Mayor Pope summarized that this is the Committee's work: "Keep telling the story." He ended with the reminder that trading with Mexico and Canada remains a critical part of this project and connecting them with all the United States is what the Committee members are endeavoring to accomplish. He said to keep telling the story and expressed gratitude to the Committee.

Mayor Pope noted Mr. Schwebel's expression of gratitude to Commissioner New and the support of the Commission. Mayor Pope agreed and expressed gratitude to Commissioner New for his leadership.

Mayor Pope adjourned the meeting at 9:07a.m. on Oct. 15, 2020.