Transcript of the Testimony of
Quarterly Meeting

Date:
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Case:
TxDOT BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TxDOT BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(BAC)
QUARTERLY MEETING
Friday, January 25, 2019
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
125 East 11th Street - Greer Building
Ric Williamson Hearing Room
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701
9:00 AM
APPEARANCES

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BILLY HIBBS, CHAIRMAN

ROBERT GONZALES, VICE CHAIRMAN

DAWNELLA RUST

MARGARET O'BRIEN-NELSON

DAVID HAMM

JEFF POLLACK

KARLA WEAVER

SHAWN D. TWING (VIA PHONE)

FRANK ROTNOFSKY

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioner Jeff Austin, III

Bonnie Sherman

Noah Heath

Teri Kaplan

Donna Roberts

Carl Seifert

Casey Dusza

Rebecca Van Dyke

Robin Stallings

Kenneth Mora (VIA PHONE)
MR. HIBBS: Welcome everyone. So glad that everybody traveled far and large all across the great state of ours to have our Bicycle Advisory Meeting for the month of January. I'm Billy Hibbs.

We have a new stenographer today, and we're glad that you're with us.

And so I want to remind you to try and repeat your name for her when you're speaking.

And at this time I'd like for Bonnie to give us our safety briefing, please.

MS. SHERMAN: All right. Welcome to TxDOT Headquarters in the Greer Building.

For medical emergencies, we will contact 911. There is an automated external defibrillator up by the guard desk, and first-aid kits are marked as located on the floor.

In case of a fire, evacuate. Fire alarm locations are in the lobby of every floor. The primary exit is the front door that you all probably came in.

And then we have secondary exits at Brazos, west towards Congress Avenue. The Greer gathering area is across the street on the Capitol lawn in case we have to evacuate.

And we have fire extinguishers marked on every floor.

In case of a tornado or inclement
weather, we'll shelter in place. The stairwells and the basement are the most protected from windows.

In case of an active shooter or a bomb threat, follow instructions from the PA system; and let's have a safe and productive meeting.

Quickly, the restrooms are out this door in this hallway, on the other side of this wall.

And with that...

MR. HIBBS: Thank you, Bonnie. We appreciate that.

At this time I'd like to approve the minutes from last time. They were forwarded to you in advance. If anyone has any changes to the minutes or provisions, we'll entertain those at this time.

If not, we'll entertain a motion to adopt the minutes.

MS. WEAVER: So moved.

MR. HIBBS: So moved by Karla.

MR. ROTNOFSKY: Second.

MR. HIBBS: Second by Frank.

All in favor, "Aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. HIBBS: The motion carries. All right. Thank you very much.

The next item on the agenda is remarks.
from Commissioner Austin. We are thrilled to have
Commissioner Austin with us today. I believe this is
his fourth meeting with our committee, which I think is
probably unprecedented for a TxDOT Commissioner to go to
the Bicycle Advisory meetings.

And for those of you that don't know a
whole lot about the other related oversights of
commissioners, they include all of our ports, all of our
airports, all of our roads and bridges. And to many,
cycling is probably not as important as some of those;
but it's important to Commissioner Austin. He's been
certainly a big proponent of the work of this committee.

And it is my great pleasure to turn this
over to him as he gets ready to conclude his term on the
TxDOT Commission.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be here.

How many of y'all this is your first
or -- first or second meeting? It's your second?
Anybody? Okay. You're new. Oh, that's good. Well,
welcome.

And I know we still have a vacancy as
well that we will be filling hopefully sometime here
very shortly on the committee.

Thank y'all, first of all, for your
service. And let me just say: The importance of advisory committees to the state and us is extremely important. You give a lot of input. TxDOT has several advisory committees, one, the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The Aviation Advisory Committee, they help work with the general contract airports around the state, facilitating the FAA discretionary grants that come back in to help, whether it's safety around the airport, lane pavement, or building the facilities.

Also, we work with the Port Advisory Committee. We work with the Border Trade Advisory Committee. We also have Public Transit that Eric works with quite a bit. You know, many of those appointees are named by, I guess, the lieutenant governor and the speaker and the governor by the members on that committee.

We also have a Freight Advisory Committee, a very important committee. What's interesting, the way that started, years ago we had a charge -- TxDOT had a charge from the Legislature to look at the impact of the Panama Canal on the state and the state's transportation system. I remember attending that hearing right after I came on the Commission. That hearing was in '12.
And what was fascinating, we were looking -- Judge Emmett chaired that committee; and I'll never forget his words when he opened this as we're looking at freight: It's great to look at what's happening with all these big ships bringing cargo containers and things coming back in; but before we worry about what's coming in, let's focus also on protecting what we already have.

And I think as we look at the state, looking at the infrastructure condition, we want to protect what we have to keep those businesses here and our citizens happy. With this advisory that's what we need to do in the permanent Freight Advisory Committee that we publish the freight plan. And the advisory committee's work -- a lot of our work is on the webpage, as is mentioned of the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

So with that, I want to say thank y'all for serving in your time.

And just a couple of comments: We are going to be discussing in our meeting next week the beginning of our UTP, Unified Transportation Plan. That's our budget, our construction budget, where we go out and we select projects statewide. And there's a lot of discussion as to who gets what, who's left out, why funding increased or it decreased.
And it comes back to a lot of -- many of you're all from areas where there's an MPO, Metropolitan Planning Organization; and they receive a lot of the funding through formula. Some receive more based on the input. If population goes up, that MPO may receive more than if somebody's didn't go up as much. So a lot of it comes back to MPOs. MPOs are a very important partner with TxDOT. They make recommendations and solve transportation issues locally to figure out how to distribute those monies. And on projects where there's not enough sometimes, we will match that or make up, fill in a gap from another category, through Commission discretion.

And -- I don't know -- some of you'all have probably experienced our state parking lot out here today, I-35. I'm sorry for that. Hopefully there will be a solution down the road; but just to give you a perspective and a laugh at 35, regardless of what the solution is, that is between a 5- to 7-billion-dollar fix. So 5 to 7 billion.

Now, I want to put that into perspective. Our UTP is about 75 billion over a 10-year period. So think about that. If we were to just fix this road out here, that would take away from maintenance. That would take away from improvements to the U.S. highway system,
maybe the interstate system or a lot of others around
the state. This shows you the complexity of the funding
and the challenges that we face when we come back in to
look at that.

And I hear concerns. I've heard from
members of the committee and from those outside; and
Robin, wherever you are, I've heard from Robin before as
well, is that: Hey, what about us?

And sometimes it does get overlooked; but
it's because of competing priorities, one to maintain a
safe system. That is job one. That's what these orange
ribbons represent, safety. And by the way, I do believe
that last year bicycle/pedestrian fatalities did go down
just a little; but if there's one, that's still too
many.

Under Senate House Bill 20, we put in
goals each year for what we want to maintain. Some of
them are really quantifiable that are good numbers; for
example, pavement condition, you know, road miles at
different criteria. One that we struggle with as a
Commission, fatalities. We like to put in zero because
one is too many, but it's not a reality. It's going to
be a long-term journey. You've probably seen us and
heard us talking about ending the streak. Texas --
something we're not proud of -- since November of 2001,
there has not -- how many of y'all have teenagers or
know teenagers? Do you know anybody that's 18 years old
or younger? And you think about that. In their
lifetime there has not been a single day where there's
been a death-free day on a Texas highway. And that
comes from a multitude of sources, and rural areas are
some of the worst. Think about that.

So we have a shared responsibility in
what we do. Safety's Number 1. And a lot of things
that we've put in place, sometimes people may not agree;
but we have a lot of great engineers with a lot great
input from within TxDOT to try to make these safety
improvements. These all factor into the funding
allocations, and it's tough. I know there's tough
decisions.

But I want to really compliment Billy
with your term as chairman. What y'all have done is
really create a focus on creating things statewide and
using -- beginning to come back, I look forward to some
of your discussion items of using what we have and how
to maximize the system, what we have, with a long-range
vision.

Eric's going to get into this a little
bit later; but very shortly we're going to have another
call for TAP grants, TAP funding. And Eric will get
into more details. But, from what I understand, there's been some really good discussion as to what's the best use for that.

Everybody always says, "Well, in my area." But how do we look at it as a state and begin to complete the system? And let me give you an example:

Over the last couple of UTPs -- some of y'all have seen this -- we want to complete projects; and we've tried to end where we had a gap in, I call them lane miles, roads from a four lane down to two lane back to a four lane. Well, that bottleneck will create some problems; and we want to complete that.

And what we've been able to do, there were two big systems in the last UTP update last summer. One was 175 from Dallas to Jacksonville, Texas. It's now going to be funded for four lanes. Stop the bottle necks through the rolling hills.

Another one is U.S. 75 north of Dallas going into Collin County, up into Denton and Sherman. Stop the two lanes. We're going to add capacity.

Our presentation, if y'all have a chance to watch, next Wednesday we're going to have a commission workshop. We're going to talk about the interstates outside the MPO boundaries. And there's one I love to talk about. It's Interstate 10 between
Houston and San Antonio. You come outside the Katy Expressway going towards San Antonio, you've got, like, 22 lanes from access road to access load -- maybe 24 -- 22, I believe; and then it comes back down to 2 when you get out past Sealy and Brookshire.

Well, coming from San Antonio you've got wide and then it comes back down outside of where I'm talking, outside the MPO boundaries. That's a choke point for business, commerce, trucking, and safety. So we're going to talk about that.

And Commissioner New is wanting to -- oh, if some of y'all have not met our newest commissioner, Alvin New from San Angelo, he was the former mayor there in San Angelo. So he really gets and understands a lot of the things we're talking about. He's going to talk about the truck systems and filling in some of the gaps with our truck systems, like the Texas interstates, using U.S. highways. They're alternative routes to the use of the interstate. So there's going to be a lot of good discussion as we come into the UTP and talk about that.

Now, how this relates here, sometimes there's a right-of-way. If it's an overlay or a right-of-way that could potentially be used for some of your projects, that's always going to come back down --
and I want to encourage y'all to help frame something as we look at these funding sources outside the TAP grants. There's a lot of other sources of matching funds to help do this, like potentially other agencies. There's the Parks & Wildlife that could do something.

I want to use another example. I was visiting with Congressman Brian Babin from Woodville. He's on the Federal Transportation Committee. One of these U.S. highway systems that we're looking at completing with four lanes is from Beaumont, coming out of the port, coming north on U.S. 69. That is a relief route for those that want to miss Houston and Dallas, going up through Greenville. As we come through there, there's consideration of wanting to make it like a parkway. And I think of the Neches Nacogdoches Parkway.

I think of the Appalachian Trail Parkway.

Well, we're not going to fund all that at TxDOT; we can't. So what other sources could there be? Well, you're going through a national forest. And I'm sure there are some people who think outside the box. If you're going through a national forest, maybe there's federal funds from the Department of the Interior that could manage all that -- not during a shutdown, by the way. But you can start thinking outside the box. What about industry? What about land donations? There's a
lot of ways to get funding other than just from state funds. And state funds or TAP funds can fill in a gap. So these segments, as you begin, Mr. Chairman, to look at the statewide corridor, think of other ways to fund these routes; and also look at the low-hanging fruit. And I say that, "the low-hanging fruit," what section -- I'm really proud of what y'all have done from the work that I've seen; you've come together with a statewide plan. Ultimately, you're going to get to all of it. And the more you can complete what I call the bookends or in the middle, it makes it easier to fill in the gaps. Pick that low-hanging fruit where it will score well on the system to get it done.

And one of the biggest challenges -- I'm going to make two comments. One of the biggest challenges that we face is that when we give money, whether it's TAP grants -- and they've tightened the rules in the last couple of years -- is that it goes to a community and they don't use it, for whatever reason. It may be a good project, but they don't have the talent, the execution, or they don't come up with their match; and they don't use that. That's not fair to the rest of the state because our direction from the governor, wherever we get the money, is to execute and
get it spent. We don't want to hear: Hey, TxDOT has
this money that's sitting on a balance sheet that we
can't use. Well, sometimes when we allocate this money
to a community and they can't use it, that's part of the
criticism we may receive.

I just came back from Washington, DC; and
I heard rumblings from both sides of the aisle that -- I
can't believe I'm saying this -- but from both sides of
the aisle that they're considering bringing back
earmarks. They're going to use that name for designated
funds. And when asked about it, my response -- I had
two responses. When I first joined this Commission back
in 2011, we had about almost 800 million -- well over
700 million in unused earmarks.

Now, what does that mean?

MS. WEAVER: A problem.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: It's a problem.

It's sitting in a balance -- in a fund balance that we
could not spend. For example, if you had a hundred-
billion-dollar project, $2 million may have been granted
and earmarked that we couldn't use; and that project was
not even on our UTP. It wasn't even ready to go. But
some of the Congressional leaders said: Hey, I want to
put it on this project, show this community X, Y, Z.

We spent a lot of time working with the
sponsors, saying: Hey, can we unwind that and use it on something else where we can use that money in the state? If it ever comes back, we want to make sure that, for better or worse -- we're not asking for them; we can't lobby. But if asked, we want to make sure that a particular grant, demonstration fund, whatever it is -- looks like it's TAP grants -- is there. It may fill in a gap in funding; and it's a project that is supported locally by TxDOT, by the leadership of a city or county -- wherever it is -- or a COG, and the Congressional leaders and all the way up, where it's defined it can be used right away, pretty quick, in one or two years, where it's not just out there. We want to stop that. So our Federal team is also trying to protect funding.

And the last comment I want to make -- and I'm sorry I'm going a little bit longer -- we have asked our Federal delegation where we use these Federal grants that come back to Texas -- Texas is a donor state. And gas tax, every time we pump a gallon of gas, we pay 38.4 cents. Twenty cents is the state gas tax; and when that comes to the state, 5 cents automatically goes to education. That leaves 15 cents left for TxDOT.

At the Federal level of the 18 cents that we send back up to DC, we get just barely over 80% of
that back for highway funding. If you add in transit
and some of the other things, it goes a little higher,
you know, the percentage. That's what we're faced with,
with a deficit.

So there's only eight donor states in the
country, which means we're paying for everything else in
California, Montana, Alaska, Louisiana, everyplace else.
We're a donor state, and that's not fair to us. So
we're competing for Federal highway funds, and we just
don't have the funding. We're talking hundreds of
millions of dollars when we're trying to fix maintenance
first with the population growth. And we want to try to
get our fair share back; and hopefully with the next
transportation bill, we'll be able to improve that.

I know I kind of went on a little bit,
and I'm trying to hopefully set the stage and share some
of the challenges that we're faced with.

I have two people I want to introduce.
Where's Noah? Oh, there he is, right back there, Noah
Oaks. Noah is a policy analyst who works with us in the
Commission office, sitting before the Commissioners,
working with staff. Noah, welcome.

And Allegra Hill is here. She's with the
Governor's office. She is the liaison between TxDOT and
the Governor's office relating to policy and everything
that we do. So I'd like to welcome them.

And, Mr. Chairman, for your term, thank you; and thank each of you for volunteering your time to give a lot of input. I'll be happy -- I'll probably be here until about 11:00 or so. I'll be happy to answer any questions or comments. I hope I've given you an overview of some of the things we're faced with.

MR. HIBBS: Again, thank you very much, Commissioner Austin, for taking your time to come here today.

Does anyone have any questions for the Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Don't hold back.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: Did we have a little something special that needed to be on the agenda here? I believe that we're going to add it last minute. And so what I'd like to do is ask Robin Stallings from Bike Texas to come forward, please, and make a little presentation for us.

MR. STALLINGS: Thanks. I'm going to sit down here so I can be on the mic for recording and stuff.

At Bike Texas we have the luxury of concentrating on one transportation issue. So we seem a
little bit focused on that; and that's a good thing
because that's really what our job is, both bikes and
pedestrians. So we recognize the pressure that the
Commission has because you're dealing with ports and
planes and roads and public transit, and there are so
many issues in addition to ours. And through all that,
you're all trying to think about safety, just like we
are.

And so I just want to take a moment to
thank you for the time that you have been there because
your attention to this issue and your attending these
meetings as often as you have has made it clear to the
people on this commission -- or this committee that the
Commission is watching and paying attention. And it's
given a gravitas to the work here that's enabled the
staff and these members to get more done in the last few
years than in the previous long history of this whole
committee. Many of those years I served and so I have
to say that they have clobbered any previous work and so
much of that has to do with your leadership. And so we
really appreciate it.

We just want to give you a token of
appreciation from Bike Texas. There are about 4 million
Texans that ride bikes at least once a year. We'd like
to think we support them, but at least 20,000 of them
pay some attention to us. So I think we can say that they're our supporters. And so with that, on their behalf, thank you.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Thank you so much.

It's not pizza, is it?

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: I don't even think it's a gag gift.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Oh, that's wonderful. Thank you, Robin.

(Applause.)

MR. STALLINGS: And it's functional.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: A chopping block.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: We've had some difficult conversations in the past because of difficult topics; but with that, I think that better outcomes have come through. And a lot of it started with this committee bringing a different level of understanding. There's not always an easy solution; but you bring a level of understanding and focus to what can be done instead of all the things that can't be done. And that's how I would hope that y'all continue on, those of you that will continue to serve in going on.

And whoever succeeds Billy, look at what can be done instead of all the reasons we can't because
when we're sitting up on the dais, instead of being out here with you, Robin, the communities that bring consensus make it a lot easier for us and our staff to recommend to take action than those that don't. And it's easy to say; it's hard to execute in different communities. Those working on the local MPOs or local leaders on any project, "how can we" versus all the reasons we can't goes a long way, even with our kids.

Robin, I want to say thank you. I really appreciate this. This means a lot.

MR. STALLINGS: Oh, and one other thing, to go with your orange ribbon, an orange bicycle.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I will use that.

Thank you, sir.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you, Robin.

(Appplause.)

MR. HIBBS: Moving right along, it's time for a report from the Chair. As we have been discussing Commissioner Austin's term on the Commission, we have Teri Kaplan, who is retiring after 33 years of service to TxDOT. For those of you who aren't counting, that's a third of a century.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: That can seem like a long time to some. I've actually been married for 33 years;
and when people ask me what it's like, I tell them
sometimes it seems longer.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: So, hopefully, it hasn't
seemed longer than 33 years; and it's all been good.

Thank you, Teri. You've been a huge blessing to me.
You're behind the scenes getting me ready and getting
the meetings ready and making sure that all the trains
run on time and all that. I mean, I just don't even
know how someone could step into this role without
having you; and we just so appreciate all that you've
done for us. I don't even know all the other things you
do for TxDOT, but I'm just saying it from the standpoint
of, you know, the selfish interests of those of us on
this committee that get to interact with you.

(Applause.)

MR. HIBBS: Thank you very much.

Everyone's invited to stay for lunch for Teri
afterwards. We'll enjoy beer -- I mean, pizza.

So I want to talk about the committee
here for just a moment because we've got a couple of
things that I need to make y'all aware of. Right now
there are two vacancies on this committee. Cristian had
some other things come up, so he's no longer on it. So
there's two vacancies. There are three of us that are
going to roll off in June and -- August. I'm sorry. Yeah, June is our last meeting. So that is five vacancies on this committee. That's a lot of vacancies. In fact, right now we're short enough that I was really sweating whether we were even going to have a quorum today until about five minutes before we started.

One of the things that I talked to Eric about -- and this is important -- these positions, you know, are recommended by the Commissioners, presumably approved by the Governor's office and these different kinds of things. If you know someone that you feel like has got the ability to step in and help lead us forward, by all means, talk to that person about serving on this committee. Share the name with Eric. You don't have to go, you know, and do all the legwork on it. They can do it and reach out to them and talk to them about it, but we've got to get effective leadership to keep things going on the committee; or else, a lot of the work that we've done is going to be just idling along. And I don't think that's a good thing. I don't think it's anything anybody wants. We need to keep pushing the ball down the field.

And so be thinking about some folks that you can help identify. I know that all of you have great connections inside the community and can come up
with some names if you need to. So I want to encourage
you to do that.

The second thing is at the last quarterly
meeting, apparently I scared everyone to death about
being the chairman; and as a result, today we're not
even having an election because no one put their hand up
and said, "I'd like to do that."

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: So now I want to put my sales
hat on and tell you why you need to think about running
for chairman, because, Number 1, I believe that
probably -- and I can thank Robin publicly for him
talking about what a great job this committee has done;
but I fully believe in the next few years, as all these
things that we've been working on become real, the
actual best years for the committee are ahead. And the
most significant things that will happen maybe in the
next 50 years will probably happen in the next 5 years,
and it is going to be a very exciting time to be a part
of this committee.

And so if you want to commit the time to
it -- and I don't want to take away from the fact that
you've got to be committed to this and even to the point
that at the beginning of the year when you start talking
about dates and all that stuff, you just get them on
your calendar; and they supersede family vacations that may pop up or other things. I mean, this is what you do and you take care of that for a term or two so it doesn't become all-encompassing and your entire life's work, but be committed to it.

Approach it from the standpoint of you want to see the kind of things that you've been a part of put into action. So instead of them being plans, instead of them being surveys, instead of them being discussion topics, we want to see where we go with this stuff because in business one of the toughest things is there's lots and lots of good ideas; but getting them implemented and the follow-up -- follow-up usually is where there's a lot of breakdown. Any of you that have been there, you know exactly what I'm talking about. So it does take the necessary oversight, which this committee is charged with doing, to make sure that we're actually following through and doing the kinds of things that are put in place.

So there is going to be an election next quarter and somebody's got to step up because I'm running out of meetings and I'm not being reappointed. So somebody else has got to come along. Think about it seriously. I know all of you pretty well at this point and know you would do a great job, whoever wants to take
this on; but I do think, again, make sure you've got
your own personal house in order so that you can
dedicate the time to these things.

So with that, I'd like to turn it over to
Eric.

MR. GLEASON: Thank you. I appreciate
that.

I was misinformed on the number of August
roll-offs; it's four. Four plus two is actually the
quorum we need for the Committee to function. So it's
even more important that we get some names in
circulation and start making some movement that way.

I want to take a moment in my comments to
also recognize and thank Teri for 33 years and 3 months
of serve; and now she's down to next Friday. Correct?

MS. KAPLAN: (Nodding head.)

MR. GLEASON: She'll actually still be on
the payroll through February; but in terms of Teri's
presence in the office, we're really coming down to the
final days; and it's difficult to know where to start
with Teri. I actually have only had the privilege of
working with her, I think, for probably five --

MS. KAPLAN: Five and a half.

MR. GLEASON: -- five and a half years.

But I can't even begin to imagine Houston and the impact
you have had on --

MS. KAPLAN: These bike lanes are all over.

MR. GLEASON: Right, and I'd name at least one of them after you.

But Terri is one of these people that -- I've been in a professional capacity for too long -- but I've been in a position of leading people for about 25 years in one capacity or another; and you run into a lot of really good, kind people when you're in that role. And then, every once in a while, you run into people that are just outstanding; and Teri is one of those that goes on to that hand when it counts to five of outstanding individuals that I've encountered in my career.

And, really, it's a combination of unbelievable knowledge; and it's just a question of being able to get it out. Commitment and then just this sheer energy level that she brings to the job that has the ability to transform. When I took over the responsibility of the program, the program was mired in mediocrity. I think really these committee meetings are so different than the ones we first had when I came on board, and really it's not me. It's Teri. And now Bonnie and Noah will be stepping in, and I have all the
confidence in the world they will carry it forward. But
Teri has transformed it, and there really is no other
explanation for it.

And we joke about it in the office. We
talk about how slow we are in our office because she
moves faster than anybody on the floor, and you really
have to look two ways before you exit your office
because she might be coming down the hall.

(Laughter.)

MR. GLEASON: But she's just been a true
force of nature in terms of moving this program forward.
And we really appreciate everything
you've done, and we're going to miss you tremendously.

We're also, not going to miss a beat.
Bonnie has stepped in as the Statewide Program Manager.
Noah Heath, who I will now introduce, started working
for us on Tuesday. So he's fresh energy and is on the
uptake here. Noah comes to us from the City of
Fort Worth, and Karla has had the opportunity to work
with him before.

We actually talked to Karla before we
hired you, so we know a little bit about you.

But he was in both urban planning and the
police departments in Fort Worth. He's got a master's
from UT Arlington.
And I guess your family is in the process of relocating to Austin?

MR. HEATH: Yes, they'll be down the end of February.

MR. GLEASON: Good. Excellent.

So we are glad to have him on board. We're looking for a little more overlap before Teri leaves in the last couple of days.

So, Teri, thank you.

And, everyone, please, please join us for the luncheon.

I'll give her a chance to say just a few words. She said so she can use the microphone.

Everyone has to at least once while they're at TxDOT.

(Laughter.)

MS. KAPLAN: I'll be nice. I want to check and make sure I don't talk too loud. Is it good right there?

Okay. First of all, I just want to let y'all know that I wrote this because I want to make sure and convey my message clearly and concisely. So I am so excited to be here to thank my colleagues. I want to start off with Billy Hibbs, our Bike Chair, for the passion and guidance that you've brought us. To Commissioner Austin for his support and voice on the
Commission. To Donna Roberts, the Public Transportation Division Section Director, who had the confidence in me and hired me.

Okay. I'm going to need a tissue, I think. Does anyone have one? I'll take a deep breath. I am rather emotional.

To Eric Gleason, our Public Transportation Division Director, who's had the forward thinking and encouragement throughout all of our initiatives. To Mark Williams, who's not here today. He had the confidence in the Public Transportation Division to move the Transportation Alternatives Program to our division, the Public Transportation Division. That was awesome. That gave us the foundation to fund the bike and ped projects through our division. To the members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, who have played a vital role in advancing bicycle and pedestrian initiatives across the state, I want to thank each and every one of you.

To Stephanie Lynn -- stand up. Y'all haven't met Stephanie because she's been away from us for a couple of years, but Stephanie was the first person to join me and work side by side. She comes from a consulting firm called Jacobs; and she was the one that wrote the Strategic Directional Report with the
help of the members here, Eric, Donna, and myself, the
four of us together. And we all produced that document,
and we are using that document to move our program
forward.

To Carl Seifert -- Carl, I want you to
stand up and be recognized -- also a planner with
Jacobs, who moved his family all the way from
New Orleans to join the team two and a half years ago.
In addition to leading the Bicycle Tourism Trails Study,
he is now spearheading the Bicycle Design Initiative and
supports all of our bike programs, along with Bonnie.

Sorry I'm so emotional, guys.

To Bonnie, our new Statewide
Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, who, by joining the
Public Transportation Division, has brought over a
wealth of experience and has become the lead on all
current bike/ped initiatives and is advancing our
research projects, most notably the Bicycle/Pedestrian
Count Program. I want to thank Bonnie. She's doing a
wonderful job and has helped in all transitions with
every aspect of the activities we've got going on,
consultants out there included.

Also, to Bike Texas, to Robin Stallings
and to Mark Stein, who have been supportive since the
day I came to this. And my very first day on the job
was a Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting with y'all. It
was the first time that we all worked together. Eric
decided that he should soon join this committee.

(Laughter.)

MS. KAPLAN: So I just want to say that
I've had the pleasure of working across a number of
TxDOT divisions who have provided valuable insight and
leadership to help build our program, which includes
Transportation, Planning and Programming, the Design
Division, Traffic Safety, Environmental, Right-of-Way,
Railroad and Bridge divisions.

The work we do in Austin would not be
possible without the 25 districts, and it has been a
pleasure to work with most of our champions -- I was
supposed to strike that --

(Laughter.)

MS. KAPLAN: -- with all of our champions
at the district level across the state. I want to thank
all of you individually for your participation and
support to grow TxDOT's Bicycle/Pedestrian Program. I
know the seeds we have helped plant are well rooted; and
I am excited to see the bike program continuing to grow,
making Texas a better place to walk and bike.

Thank you.

(Applause.)
MS. KAPLAN: And I lost 20 pounds this past year.

(Laughter.)

MR. GLEASON: That's on the record.

MR. HIBBS: Nice job, Teri. Thank you.

MS. KAPLAN: Thank you.

MR. GLEASON: So just to advise this committee with an update on our construction efforts with the bicycle/pedestrian projects, so back in the fall and early winter of 2015, the Commission awarded funds to 43 projects in areas of the state of under 200,000. Nineteen of those have been completed. Another 18 of them are under construction, and the final 6 are moving forward, letting here very shortly. So we're making tracks. We're building things. Communities are using those funds and getting them built.

And then we have another similarly-sized group of projects coming from the award that was made in the fall of 2017 in areas of the state of under 200,000 that are moving forward on schedule, getting under contract housing districts in local areas; and those projects will be under construction for the next several years as well.

Now, to rest on those and moving ahead
with identifying the next package of projects, on February 8th we will be announcing another call for projects. This one is a little different than the one we've had in the past. We have three different -- well, not three different sources of funding, but three buckets of funding, if you will, associated with this call.

The first bucket is actually a statewide bucket, which is the state school program call for projects, about $8.7 million for those projects. That is a statewide call. And so we'll be looking for project applications in the vicinity of schools and communities in K-through-8 schools looking to group safety and access for biking and walking to school.

There is another pot of money, which is some remaining funding that we have from previous calls for projects in the areas of the state of under 5,000, what we call rural in the Transportation Alternatives Program; and I believe that amount of money is about 10 million.

MS. SHERMAN: Yeah, 10 million.

MR. GLEASON: About $10 million. So we will be looking for projects that are ready to go to construction in those areas.

And then we're also going to be asking
for project proposals anticipating the next bunch of federal funding coming from a new authorization bill for fiscal year '21 and '22. So that will be a call for projects in areas of the state between 200,000 and 5,000 and then lower than 5,000; and two years' worth of funding will be about $13 million for each of those two areas of the state for a total of about 26 million.

The way this is going to work is up front -- we're going to approach this call differently than we have in the past. We're asking people to provide us with what is called a preliminary application, just a brief description, so that we can make sure we get it in the right bucket of money because, depending on the source of the funding and the timing of those funds, we may ask you to fill out a more detailed application that's more specific to that.

And so we're hoping to be in a position to go to the Commission for their consideration with the Safe Routes to School Program of projects and projects in areas of under 5,000 by December of this year. And for those projects look for '21 and '22 federal funding, it will be sometime, I think, late winter, early spring of 2020 that we'll be looking to have the Commission take action on those. I'm pretty excited about that.

And with that, that concludes my report.
MR. HIBBS: Thank you very much, Eric.

At this point in time, out of respect to Commissioner Austin's time -- he may need to leave a little early -- I want to go to Agenda Item Number 10 and discuss the discussion and possible recommendation to the Commission for use of a portion of the TA funds to develop the Bicycle Tourism Trails. This is an action item. When the agenda was sent out, there was a copy of a letter that was included in there.

I want to give you a little background on this. First of all, I would love to claim authorship on all of this because I think it is some great work. Unfortunately, the reality is I'm just not that smart. There are some really, really bright people working behind the scenes who understood my concern that we need to now advance the Bicycle Tourism Trails study to the planning stage; and once we do that, what is the best way of being able to tie a bow on this project and get it going so that it's not like this legislation that we discussed where it was passed in '04 and it took 15 years to getting around to doing anything about it.

In your packet you will find a letter with the TxDOT logo on top of it. This is a letter that I respectfully would like for each committee member to sign and put your name on as part of the authorship of
this plan; and, hopefully, all of you had a chance to read it. So I won't go through and read it to you, but I will tell you that there's basically three things in this letter that I think you need to be very well aware of; and that is: Number 1, moving this from a study to a plan. And in the first paragraph it talks about the reasons why we think it's time to do that.

The second thing has to do with: How do we begin to start getting some money rolling towards this project in an organized way? And part of it comes from being from the city of Tyler where we had kind of an ad hoc bicycle plan and we had striping on one road that was 5 miles away from another road that was 2 miles away from another road, nothing connected; and it was just an unorganized mess. So there was no bike lane striping unless you wanted to ride a hundred yards on a striped path and then it ended because there was not any comprehensive plan that linked all of them together.

So I want to, again, congratulate Carl on the great work that he did, his team, on putting this together; but we've got routes now that I think can and should be funded in segments. And this is a project that we knew when we first started that you can't eat the whole elephant in one sitting; you're going to have to eat it in bites. And so by segment we've reached the
conclusion that there needs to be an organized way of knowing what segment to recommend.

And in talking to a lot of different people, the obvious way to do that is to use the assets that TxDOT has to identify segments that look like they're pretty far along, bringing those to the bicycle committee, and let the bicycle committee then make a recommendation to the Commissioners that we think that Segment X or Segment Y or Segment Z should be funded with up to 50% of the TA funding. And that's very important because we know that that funding is there. We don't have to go to the Governor's Office and get more funding. And we can at least begin an organized way of getting this project started.

Now, here's the part for me where I've seen things like this kind of take on a life of their own. Once this gets out and once the information is widely reported to the general public, then if you can imagine funding that first segment, whoever is adjoining that on either side is probably going to look at that first segment and say: You know, if we get our act together, maybe we'll get funding for our segment.

So they'll go to their private developers to see if they can get some land donated; I'm sure they'll do that. And if you can get organized locally
with additional in-kind contributions and all, it will give them a chance to get organized. And then they can make their case to TxDOT. TxDOT can then recommend whatever different parts of this trail need to be developed yet. We can discuss it and debate and then make a recommendation to the Commission.

And I believe one of the goals of doing it that way is it can potentially take some of the political pressure off the Commissioners from saying: Okay. Well, I'm going to recommend this segment. It may be in my district. And, rather, it puts the responsibility on the committee to say who's far enough along, who's got enough build-out that it makes sense to fund this without you having to start from scratch in a particular segment. And I think that there will be a race of money and efforts to try to get these things far enough long that they'll be seriously considered.

So at the end of the day, I look at this letter as kind of tying the bow on the work that Carl did and that this committee did and all of those years of voice -- or conference calls that we had and actual meetings and drawing on the maps with markers and everything else, I just feel like as the outgoing chairman we need to have something that can keep the momentum going on this. And I believe that, based on
the people that I've talked to, this is probably the
best way of doing it.

So at this point I'll entertain any
questions or suggestions or comments, but I'd like to
have a vote on this with approval of the committee
today. I would like to have everybody's signature on
the letter before you leave today, and I would like to
get this in the Commissioners' hands just as soon as
possible.

There is a draft resolution in here,
which is a very important part of what you would be
voting on. It's a short thing on a single piece of
paper that, "The TxDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee
recommends adoption of the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails
Study by the Texas Transportation Commission. The
Bicycle Advisory Committee also requests that the
Commission allocate up to 50% of Federal Transportation
Alternatives Program money to fund trail segments as
recommended by the BAC."

Jeff?

MR. POLLACK: Do we need a motion before
we have a discussion?

MR. HIBBS: I'm sorry?

MR. POLLACK: Do we need a motion before
we have a discussion?
MR. HIBBS: I think we ought to have the discussion first.

MR. GLEASON: According to Robert's Rules of Order, you can entertain a motion --

MR. HIBBS: Okay.

MR. GLEASON: -- then you have a discussion. Then you have a vote.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you.

All right. So we have a motion. Do we have a second?

MS. WEAVER: Second.

MR. HIBBS: Second by Karla.

MS. WEAVER: I have a question.

MR. HIBBS: Okay.

MS. WEAVER: So I think that this is a great idea. I think this is a wonderful way to make sure this plan doesn't sit on the shelf. That's Number 1. I fully support this.

I want to make sure I understand the language as it's recommended; and if it's prescribed a certain way. "50% of federal Transportation Alternatives Program money," so with the State's hundred percent, 50% of that goes to areas under 200,000 by a competitive process; 50% goes with any area funded within the state. Is it 50% of the 50% or is it the fee
50% of any area funds? How is that intended to be interpreted?

MR. POLLACK: Likewise, that's exactly my question, and at what point it's extracted from that total federal allocation.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: The way I read this and the way I interpreted it -- let's go to the map here because when you look at this map -- let me just start with what I call the Texas Triangle, going from Dallas/Fort Worth to Houston to Austin and San Antonio. First of all, when you look at the large areas, this connects -- you have elements of micro-connecting each of these large metropolitan areas. So do you have inclusion? Yes. But look at what's outside those boundaries. And you're going to have a lot of rural area, and there's going to probably be more lane miles or trail miles outside.

So when you look at getting there, the way I took this, not the way it's written, but the way I perceived this is that when you look at all of it and they use both categories, it's going to take both categories to fill it in. And my only encouragement would be: Regardless of what this committee votes and how it comes up, when you look at this to adopt the plan, you know, that's up to the fellow Commissioners
and staff to recommend it -- also to the committee.

This is a very important letter. An adoption versus receiving and recognizing the plan, adoption would be the way to go. I think it's a great recommendation.

It's going to be key -- one thing I would look at when we receive a recommendation like this for funding other projects, the committee supports it, Number 1. So what support does this committee have? And I'm just going to use some examples here. Do the advocacy groups of bicycles statewide, wherever it is, i.e., Robin, does their organization support this recommendation? Do you have the MPOs, who are the recipients of a lot of these funds, supporting this recommendation? And maybe that's the next step because when you look at adopting this, that's going to make Eric's job a lot easier to do because you have the right support and tentacles to take that future step if this is adopted.

Is that a fair statement?

MR. GLEASON: Yes. Let me provide a little more detail to the committee about the funding as it comes down to the state. So we actually get -- the Transportation Alternatives funding comes in in four buckets, if you will. There is a bucket that is for the areas of the state of under 5,000; we get a specific
number for that. We get a bucket for the areas of the state between 5,000 and 200,000. There's a bucket for the areas of the state that go to MPOs below 200,000. Those three buckets add up to half of the total that comes to the state.

The other half under the TAP Program is for statewide project purposes. Under federal guidance, that half can also be flexed out of the Transportation Alternatives Program over into the Public Transportation Program for purposes. So it's up to the committee to identify what the intent of that is, but that's the way the program is thought of. We often refer to -- that half of the total that is flexed over and out of it, we have come to refer to that as TAP Flex. So if it is the intent of the committee to say, "Those are the funds we're talking about," then my recommendation would be you might want to call it TAP Flex in the letter. If it's something different than that or if you deliberately want to leave it open for interpretation, you can choose to do that as well.

Does that help?

MS. WEAVER: Yes.

MR. GLEASON: So leaving it up to the committee to decide what that means, that's how it gets talked about.
MR. POLLACK: So to completely clarify -- for the record, Jeff Pollack -- as a recovering MPO Director, I feel like I --

(Laughter.)

MR. POLLACK: -- I have to advocate for the protection of those funds in the urban area; and when I look at the routes we're discussing, the majority of it falls in rural areas. And we know, historically, rural communities have had a tough time utilizing -- applying for, let alone utilizing TAP funds that are in the pot for rural communities either under 5,000 or between 5,000 and 20,000.

So if I understand this correctly, this would -- the flexibility to utilize up to the full allocation of flex funds would be completely independent of the pots that go to the MPOs or to the rural communities in and of themselves.

Is that an accurate interpretation?

MR. GLEASON: Yes.

MR. POLLACK: I think we may want to modify the language on the table to make it apparent to anyone who's not privy to this discussion that in no way are we suggesting pinching off the top of what is already a very scarce allocation to other pots.

MS. WEAVER: I would second that.
MR. HIBBS: So, Jeffrey, what language would you change in there in order to be more comfortable with that?

MR. POLLACK: I was afraid you were going to ask me that.

(Laughter.)

MS. WEAVER: I think you could add "flex" after the word "program." "...up to 50% of federal Transportation Alternatives Program flex money..." because the 50 that's already in the bucket for the three categories that Eric described, they have a process to go out the door; and any areas that have those projects ready can go through that path.

And then this provides those dollars for other -- now, is the 50 right? Are we cutting ourselves short already, or are we asking for too much if we don't have 50?

MR. POLLACK: Again, that's up to interpretation. Are we saying up to 50% of the 50 -- and sorry if you just literally raised that question -- or is the intent to say up to a hundred percent of the 50%? Because if we add the word "flex," then we may have just shorted ourselves 50%.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Well, maybe; maybe not. Let me ask Eric: Hypothetically -- and, again,
looking at this map, if a part of this trail is within
the MPO boundaries that receive the allocation formula,
part of that project could come up under the other
formula as well. So in the definition you're not really
cutting it off. It's just going to come back to: Who
is the sponsor, and are they going to sponsor the trail
within that?

      MR. POLLACK: Sure. The unintended
consequence there being that if an MPO in an urbanized
area applies for funding -- you see where I'm going with
this -- through a different pot and we've already
allocated all of the flex funds then, theoretically,
we're over the 50% of the total pie that we said we
would allocate. So we may be creating a situation of
complicated accounting unnecessarily there.

      MR. GLEASON: Let me try and clarify it a
little. If the committee's interest is in trying to
focus on funding that the Commission is responsible for
making a decision on, then the Commission awards funds
for areas under 5,000. The Commission awards funds for
areas between 5,000 and 200,000. And then the
Commission will also be making a decision on that part
of the program or half the State's total, which is
flexed each year. So the only portion of the overall
program that the Commission does not make a decision on
is in the areas of over 200,000.

MR. POLLACK: Again, I mean, I just am, you know, thinking through the math here. In theory, the Commission could be getting over 50% of the total, right, because of the various pots, because three of four pots do come through the Commission. So I think we just want to be really careful with the way we say "up to 50%," less our good friends have to do a lot of math to make sure that we have...

MR. GLEASON: One more thing: The portion of the program that's under 200,000, those projects need to be competitively split. So we would have to be more direct in our guidance during that part of the project proposal to achieve the results through that. If the part that can be flexed is flexed where there is the opportunity I think to say: Over and above whatever else might be going on with these processes, we're recommending that this investment be made, that's the intent of how this ends up, then my advice to the committee would be to be clear about identifying that you would want the funding consideration to be from the element of the overall program which is flexed.

MS. WEAVER: I would suggest that we add the word "flex" and we take out the 50% because "up to" is a cap -- it could be more; it could be less -- and
then the flex is the category that has open options, depending on where it goes.

MR. POLLACK: Yeah, I agree. That does preclude any of the competitive funds being allocated to a segment in the plan if one of the sponsoring entities chooses to spin it; but the onus, that would be on those competing for those funds rather than on the State with respect to the allocation plan. So I agree totally that "flex" makes sense in the resolution.

MS. WEAVER: We still need good projects, but the ones that have to go out on a timeline, because the federal bill is tracking those. So we still need really good projects because this calls for projects.

MR. HIBBS: All right. So based on the recommendations made by Karla and Jeffrey, I want to re-read the draft resolution as my understanding is now. "The TxDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee recommends adoption of the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails study by the Texas Transportation Commission. The BAC also requests that the Commission allocate 50% of federal Transportation Alternative Program flex money to fund trail segments as recommended by the BAC."

MS. WEAVER: The only modification was, "...the BAC also requests the Commission allocate federal Transportation Alternative..." And we're
suggesting to take out a specific amount.

MR. POLLACK: Which, in theory, allows up to a hundred percent of those flex funds if there are no other --

MS. WEAVER: Projects --

MR. POLLACK: Yeah.

MS. WEAVER: -- amazing one year --

MR. POLLACK: So it actually allows for flexibility to include the 50%.

MS. WEAVER: In the years that there aren't that many.

MR. HIBBS: So, Karla, if you would, please repeat that again.

MS. WEAVER. "The TxDOT Bike Advisory Committee (BAC) recommends adoption of the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Study by the Texas Transportation Commission. The BAC also requests that the Commission allocate federal Transportation Alternative (TA) Program flex money to fund trail segments as recommended by the BAC."

MR. HIBBS: Okay. So you want all the language of the "up to 50%" stricken?

MR. POLLACK: If I may just offer one suggestion for the matter of carrying this in front of the Commission, you know, I spent years working on the
TAP program; and I didn't understand that there was a 50% pot elsewhere. That was entirely lost to me. So I assume that's the case for many of those who are going to be tracking this.

So I think communicating explicitly in front of everyone who's paying attention that these funds are independent and are not at the expense of the other three pots for rural communities and for TMAs, I think that making sure that's on record for anyone who is going to look back at this is trying to anticipate what their allocation, their MPO, is going to be is really important.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: What I'm thinking is I kind of heard you say this, but I think this is implied: You're not going at the expense of what the MPOs or the other cities were doing --

MR. POLLACK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: -- but it could be within this committee's recommendation to consider an additional waiting with preference for that, for those other projects. Does that make sense?

MR. POLLACK: And to that end, it would be a great compliment and help --

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: In essence, you could go over that 50%.
MR. POLLACK: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: So if this committee were to hypothetically -- let's say you've got under 5,000 rural and you've the 200,000 plus, if there was in the scoring for this next round that comes up -- and, Eric, help me here -- still, maybe if you added an additional or changed the scoring to include 10%, for example, of additional points if it meets -- if that trail, whatever it is, is on the statewide plan. Does that make sense?

MR. GLEASON: Absolutely. It's already called out in the guide --

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Right.

MR. GLEASON: -- and would be recognized by us.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: So say you've got two plans -- take Fort Worth as an example. Fort Worth has two plans they're going to submit. Now, this one could get an additional 10% because it's on that court, if that makes sense.

MS. WEAVER: You're prioritizing this. Prioritizing, as you said, is important.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Well, it's just kind of a recommendation of what I'm hearing from the committee: We want 10% or whatever it is. That's got
to come back to: Will the MPOs support something like that to back up this resolution?

MS. WEAVER: I can speak for the Dallas/Fort Worth MPOs I took straight in to my board. So Dallas/Fort Worth is a hundred percent on board on how it's going to affect the MPOs. And so I think Houston did something similar.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: Yes.

MR. POLLACK: And I would expect the MPOs would be on the positive side of neutral because I think in a lot of cases the routes we're talking about in the tourism study really -- I mean, such a small portion of those fall in the urban areas, I think what -- if an MPO is paying attention and see the action taken by the Commission, they should be encouraging and will inform those routes that if they put forth as priorities in the budget pots because they will be trying to create connectivity with the state routes. So prioritizing those is a natural thing to do. I just think it's a really different animal when you're prioritizing routes in urban areas; and the connectivity to the statewide tourism trails, it's relatively a minor relative to the full extent of that network.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: I have just one
question. Would it be valid or work in any way to have a footnote to this because I think that that's important, what you were saying, that many of the people who serve don't realize this is 50%, I mean, if there is that other 50% aside. And I'm just wondering if that would be valid because a lot of times if you're seeing something, that's going to be the first thing in your head. If you don't have somebody around to discuss it with and find out more, it might be your inclination to just form a negative opinion of it.

MR. POLLACK: You're asking if the definition of the flex --

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: Yes.

MR. POLLACK: -- for example, if that wouldn't help.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: And that's all.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I really appreciate what you're saying. I have the benefit of sitting here listening to this discussion. There are times when I'm sitting up there where I don't have the benefit of sitting in discussions and something comes forward and the staff, a lot of people who haven't been in a lot of the discussions -- and we ask questions: Who, what, where, when.

Kind of coming back to your comment, a
footnote or an explanation, "This is not intended to take away from that. Here's what that formula is," as you said, Eric, the 50% and kind of the criteria that goes into the flex funding, but it really kind of comes from three ways, Commission preferences; consultation with MPOs, their recommendation; and really one big thing is scoring. How does it score in its ability to execute and move forward? It's a fluid deal.

Is that fair, Eric?

MR. GLEASON: It is fluid, yes.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Okay. So that would help clarify when somebody looks at this: Here's 50% of that flex fund that we're talking about and it is not intended to take away, but we want a preference. It's just real simple.

MR. HIBBS: So in terms of --

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: We're not taking for granted that somebody understands.

MR. GLEASON: Yes. So I want to make sure I'm hearing within the element of the overall program that at the MPO level that we administer in areas of under 200,000. We call that a competitive part of the program. And we're going to find ways to express a preference for projects that contribute to this.

Okay. Now, what about the other half, the part we call
TAP Flex? Is that how --

MR. POLLACK: You can spend up to all of it.

MR. GLEASON: And in addition to what's going on on the competitive side, then there's also this, which is where -- okay. Got it. So both are part of the consideration.

MR. POLLACK: But I think the message from those of us on the MPO side is: The more clearly you can communicate that flex funds are and will remain independent of those competitive pots and that the allocation of those flex funds at the discretion of the Commission has nothing -- is not at the cost of availability of those competitive funds, the more you communicate that verbally and perhaps with a footnote explaining the allocation of the aggregate four pots, the less you're likely to see MPO directors' blood pressure go up.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Well put.

MR. HIBBS: So to Margaret's point, if we have a footnote that details what this flex fund means, would that satisfy your concerns?

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: Yes because, to me, it's just a footnote for those people who don't automatically understand that.
MR. HIBBS: Eric, your team is coming up with all this Star Wars stuff. Can you come up with a definition of flex funds as a footnote?

MR. GLEASON: I think the way they're referred to in the program are statewide. What's the formal name for it?

MS. SHERMAN: TA funds available anywhere in the state.

MR. GLEASON: So we could say Transportation Alternatives Program funds, statewide Transportation Alternatives Program comma -- or parentheses -- flex. And then I don't think there's any question from anyone reading it what the intent is.

So, Carl, if it says federal Commission allocate --

MS. ROBERTS: (Inaudible.)

MR. GLEASON: Okay. Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program parentheses flex.

TA flex, yeah. Does that work?

MR. SEIFERT: (Nods head.)

MR. POLLACK: The decision that the allocation to those four pots is at 50% of the federal TA funds going into flex, is that fairly prescribed or is that at Commission discretion?

MR. GLEASON: So the 50% statewide is
prescribed; the option of flex is at the DOT level.

    MR. POLLACK: Sure. But the allocation
in that flex pot is a federal prescription?

    MR. GLEASON: The allocation of the
statewide pot comes from federal funding. That's all
four buckets, my understanding, come to us from the
federal level; and we can't go from one to the other.

    MR. POLLACK: And I wonder if that's
worth having it on a future agenda. For me, just
thinking through what possible candidates other than
this there are for those funds, I mean, given that the
rural community and the urban areas have their own
separate allocation makes me wonder, you know, how, what...

    MR. GLEASON: Right. And just to be
clear, once funds are flexed into this, bike/ped
projects are completely eligible for those funds.
There's a broader --

    MR. POLLACK: Sure.

    MR. GLEASON: -- scope of eligible
projects when they are flexed into that.

    MS. ROBERTS: We've had previous
presentations on that to this committee in the past that
we have available that we could resend.

    MR. POLLACK: Forgive me for not...
MS. ROBERTS: Yeah, a big discussion some years past when the program first came out of the FAST Act. So we can bring those presentations to distribute to the group to refamiliarize that information. Will that be --

MR. POLLACK: That would be great. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: See what I'm saying?

MR. GLEASON: I do.

I'm hoping we can -- the minutes from this and the new wording in the motion will capture the intent and that we can put together some sort of a one-page clarifying piece for the committee that will maybe --

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: For the benefit of the group, let me show you what I was showing to Eric. I just pulled out a spreadsheet here. TAP Funding is the title. The top portion shows competitive funding in three spots: Number 1, population less than 5,000; Number 2, population 5,000 to 200,000; Number 3, MPO population greater than 200,000. That equals 50%.

And what this motion is talking about is the next 50%, which is Category 4 -- or the fourth funding category, which is statewide TAP Flex. Together
it equals a hundred percent of what we call -- whatever the amount is. And that's what I want to footnote and then add the language that y'all are suggesting: At no cost will Category 1, 2, 3, 4 TA be compromised, or however you said that.

MR. POLLACK: Nor are we prescribing said percentage of that flex.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Right.

MR. POLLACK: It's at the discretion of the Commission. It could be 10%; it could be a hundred percent of that. The thing I think is anyone who's paying attention here should be aware that we've built in a lot of layers of clarity.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Clarity's always good.

MR. HIBBS: All right. Are there any other questions or concerns?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: So at this point...

MS. SHERMAN: So this is the revised resolution language here. It mentions "The BAC also requests that the Commission allocate federal Transportation Alternative Program flex money to fund trail segments as recommended by the BAC and BTTS statewide Transportation Alternatives Program funds and
tourism (TA) flex."

MR. HIBBS: Now, I think the footnote sign ought to be by the word "flex" up there.

MR. POLLACK: I totally agree.

MR. HIBBS: The little star thing, whatever that's called. Okay. Thank you.

MS. SHERMAN: And then do we want to pull up the letter? The one change in the letter would be that highlighted sentence, "We request TA flex funding be allocated to development of the BTTS."

MR. HIBBS: All right. Are there any further comments or questions? Is everyone okay with that?

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: It might be best to put that asterisk and that note in the letter itself. It just seems to me, wouldn't it be the same recommendation? I mean, I don't know. Maybe that's overkill.


MS. WEAVER: A quick question: Is the right word highlighted there "allocated" or "allowed" or "available" or something like that? Allocation, to me, is, like, you've got a number amount; and it's being set aside. "We would like to request TA flex funding to be
eligible" or --

MR. HIBBS: "Use."

MS. WEAVER: -- "available" to develop...

MS. SHERMAN. "...be allocated to use..."

MR. HIBBS: That's a nice catch there, Karla. You're right. That changes the way it reads.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: "...used to develop" or "for development," maybe?

(Simultaneous, indistinguishable speakers.)

MR. POLLACK: Computer man, what's the verdict?

MR. HIBBS: You've got this, Carl. No pressure, right, Carl?

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, just one other thought: What is the timeframe? Is this for current UTPs or future UTPs?

MR. HIBBS: That's a good question, Commissioner. I would say that the timeframe is ASAP.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I think the intent, the way I would see it, is for future, correct?

MR. HIBBS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I was just asking for those that may later express a desire.
MR. HIBBS: I'm not sure.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Well, not only that express a desire. Is this just general for all future calls, putting the one coming up; or is this just...

MR. HIBBS: So the Commissioner is raising an important timing question about this; and I think it's valid, given the fact that we do need to -- there's a certain amount of, you know, homework and legwork that's going to need to be done to get these projects ready for consideration.

And, Carl, if you don't mind, can I call on you for just a moment for you to explain to everyone the discussion we were having prior to the meeting about how you guys have already begun to put some things in place that identify possible segments?

MR. SEIFERT: Commissioner, if you don't mind, I'll defer to Bonnie.

MS. SHERMAN: We understand your need for the committee to advance this study and so we have gone into discussions with a consultant to look at a prioritization of the BTTS network segment, but that hasn't kicked off yet. We were excited to see your letter because it would tie into that effort. So we want to be responsive.

MR. HIBBS: So back to the Commissioner's
point in terms of timing, I think that it's going to be probably very helpful for the committee to receive a recommendation from a consultant or at least a presentation from a consulting firm that these are the ones that we feel like are ready to be considered. And how long -- what do you expect the timeframe to be on that?

MS. SHERMAN: About a year.

MR. HIBBS: About a year?

MS. SHERMAN: It will be less than a year, maybe mid year, so maybe in July.

MS. WEAVER: If there are communities with facilities on the network, maybe there are wonderful partnerships already in place that would leverage the State's money and get us out ahead of the game. Would it be necessary to wait a year for those to come to this board?

MR. POLLACK: Competitive pots already.

MS. WEAVER: If competitive pots are not available at the time.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Some of the projects that I've seen in this scope of work didn't quite make the list; some that did. And I'm not trying to pick or choose; I'm just going from memory. I believe in the metroplexes of Houston and then in the
Austin area, I believe there were some available that
didn't quite make it. And I'm not sure that they are on
this trail; but I think in looking at the map, the
northeast Texas trail comes into the north part of the
metroplex in Collin County, up in that area, that was
already in there but didn't quite make the funding. So
that leaves us with some corridors that were already on
there as part of this plan where applications have been
made that didn't score last time.

To your point, if they're there, use
what's there for those that can participate if that's
your objective, to advance this project sooner than
later. I think it's important for this committee to
say: Hey, let's work with the low-hanging fruit where
it exists; somebody may get something sooner than later.

What's the long-range plan? When you
have MPOs coming back in saying, "What about me?
Where's my money? We deserve some of this," that's
always going to be a challenge. Because it's part of
the long-term plan, every step we complete gets us down
that road. Where the facts may be kind of haphazard,
this is a real plan or main focus that y'all are to be
commended; and you need to start bringing it together.

MS. WEAVER: I think that's great. My
point for saying this is we may have a project where
environmental is being cleared and design is underway; and if we waited a year to get the funds, we'd miss an opportunity to partner with construction, perhaps. And so we're building it five years later and prices have doubled.

So the State's development of statewide priorities for implementation in urban areas will have to have quite a bit of discussion because it's all about partnership and who's already got money and who's got tons of developers, who's got leverage. And sometimes something jumps ahead because of the ten things that are ready to go and the money's there and 5,000 jobs are coming or something like that.

So I wouldn't want to preclude us to the top 20, only the first top 20 if they're ready to go because Number 21 is just as important; but these things are all falling in place at the right time due to elected officials or due to communities and things of that nature.

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: You sound like our chairman, Chairman Bugg. In looking at Clear Lanes, we rated the priorities looking at the top 100 most congested roadways. Well, something may jump ahead. Number 36 may jump ahead of Number 12 because of the different variables. So that's a really good point.
MR. HIBBS: All right. Well, Director Gleason has recommended some language that I think will enable us to wrap this up. If you'll notice up under the yellow line where it says "up to 50%" and there's a line that's drawn through that, he has recommended "your ongoing consideration" as language to replace that which I believe will enable us to get around the concerns about timing and when and everything else.

And thank you for saving me there.

MS. SHERMAN: Where do you want that language?

MR. HIBBS: Where it says "up to 50%," it's going to need to say "your ongoing consideration."

MS. ROBERTS: "For the use of"?

MR. GLEASON: Yes. "We would like to request your ongoing consideration..."

MS. ROBERTS: "That TA flex funding be" -- "that TA flex funding be used to develop..."

MS. RUST: It needs to be reflected in the resolution, also.

MR. HIBBS: And we need to put it on the draft resolution as well on the second sentence where it says, "The BAC" --

MS. SHERMAN: "Ongoing"?

MR. HIBBS: "Ongoing."
All right. Any other final thoughts on this?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: All right. So at this point we've got a motion and a second. We've made our revisions. I guess I can call for a vote on this.

All in favor say, "Aye."

(Chorus of "Ayes.")

MR. HIBBS: Are there any opposed?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: All right. Thank you-all very much.

I want to remind everyone that because we've taken the time to do this in real time here today, it is with the intent that everybody's signature gets on the letter today. So make sure you sign the letter before you leave; and this will be, I think, a great way to provide some clear direction after Carl's work and all the work that's been done by the committee on the Texas Tourism Trails, which if I believe my memory correctly, we can give a big shout out to Mark Stein, who was the one who gave us the program about the Ontario Grill.

Is that correct? Are you the one that did that? I'll bet when we were back there and you did
that program, you didn't think it would eventually wind up to this. Thank you. Appreciate your work on that.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to have to exit. But I want to say: Thank y'all for that. What a great discussion that was. It showed the breadth and expertise on this committee to offer suggestions, clarify, and bring forth really good consensus. I really encourage you to go back and whether it's MPOs or other bodies -- Robin, y'all's organization -- and add support and value to this resolution. The way it's come back up, that will bring a lot of clarity. I hope Eric's team, when they start analyze this, will bring a lot of clarity to make recommendations to complete a plan. And y'all have taken a concept to a plan; and I really applaud y'all for doing this. So thank you.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. You're welcome anytime. We appreciate all that you do for us.

The next item on the agenda is Carl Seifert. So, Carl, you, or Bonnie or someone's going to be tending to this.

MR. GLEASON: There's a possibility of a very, very -- like, a three-minute version of this one.
Then they can go home.

MR. HIBBS: Oh, yeah.

MR. GLEASON: So why don't we go with 9?

MR. HIBBS: So, excuse me. We are going to go to Agenda Item Number 9, which is a presentation on the Texas Transportation Plan 2050, a very short version of it. So we'll have a brief program on that.

MS. DUSZA: Good morning. My name is Casey Dusza, and I'm with the TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Division. We are currently updating our Texas Transportation Plan 2040 to Texas Transportation Plan 2050.

In order to keep things rolling, I'm just going to give you a two-minute update. We're not going to go through the presentation that's in your packet. What we're really here just to say is that we're updating the plan.

We are starting our outreach efforts shortly and we will be going out throughout the state for the next month and a half and we would like y'all to be a part of our outreach efforts. We would like to get your opinions on our draft goals and objectives to make sure that you, as the stakeholders, feel that we are incorporating your needs into the plan. And we would love to have your comments, questions, concerns included.
in our plan going forward.

    We are more than happy to come back to your next meeting in April to discuss what we've done to prepare for all this outreach and that we will be working very closely with the PTN to get you any information, the exact location of our meetings.

    We have web access information available. So if you're not able to attend in person but you are able to join in and attend one of our 14 meetings via Webex, we will provide any information that is pertinent along the way with you-all.

    And we would like also your help in spreading the word about our outreach efforts if you have stakeholder groups or the general public that you know that you think would be interested in participating in our long-range plan. So thank you. And I'll work closely with PTN to make sure you get all of the information.

    Thank you.

    MR. GONZALES: Thank you.

    Any questions?

    (No response.)

    MR. GONZALES: Thank you-all very much.

    We're going to move up to Item Number 7 for the Bikeway Design Effort.
Carl, are you here?
(No response.)

MS. SHERMAN: Let's do Safe Routes to Schools.
(Laughter.)

MR. GONZALES: We're going to move to Number 8 then.

MS. SHERMAN: All right.

MR. GONZALES: On to Number 8, TxDOT's Safe Routes to Schools evaluation criteria.

Bonnie, is that you?

MS. SHERMAN: Yes, it's me.

All right. So, as many of you recall, the Bicycle Advisory Committee has an important community outreach role in the selection of Safe Routes to Schools funding here for TxDOT. When the Federal Government wrote the guidance for the Safe Routes to Schools programs back in the early Two Thousands, they wanted an outreach component.

And so when TxDOT wrote their rules, they identified the BAC as a committee that would review and evaluate proposals. And so to start that effort, we took the evaluation criteria that -- well, as a quick reminder, we have $8.7 million of Safe Routes to Schools funds that will be available in this upcoming call for
projects that Eric mentioned earlier that opens on February 8th, along with a couple of pots of existing and future TA funding.

So we presented the evaluation criteria that were documented in TxDOT's Administrative Code in a survey to our BAC members, and we asked y'all to rank them one to ten. There were ten criteria identified in the Texas Administrative Code. They were in a different order than you see here on the handout in your packet, but this is all ten of them. And based on the results of the survey, this is the order that y'all put them in. And you can see there's a clear break between the first four criteria and the next three, and then it kind of tapers off from there.

So the way that we will use this ranking is in weighting the evaluation criteria. So we will have explicit questions that speak to the measures that were provided in the survey handout or survey document you use, and we will use those questions to determine whether a project is meeting the specific evaluation criteria. And then we will weight those based on the results from the BAC's prioritization.

So as you can see, safety is first. Number 1 and Number 2 are safety issues and safety countermeasures. The next two are the encouragement,
the support of other Safe Routes to Schools programs
within the community that will help the success of the
project to promote children walking and biking to
school. And Number 3 is economic need. So those will
definitely be the highest ranked or highest weighted.

So, again, this handout puts them in the
new order; and we'll apply the weights accordingly. You
might notice in our program guide that instead of ten
evaluation criteria, we have eight because we're
combining TA criteria and Safe Routes to Schools
criteria for purposes of the application. And so we'll
kind of put some of these under an umbrella, like safety
will include three different categories in it; but we
will use the metrics that we provided to you, with some
input that Karla provided us, to help our scoring.

So, with that, I think I can go ahead and
turn it back over to Billy for the next number on the
agenda unless anyone has any questions.

MR. HIBBS: Does anyone have any
questions of Bonnie?

MS. WEAVER: When is the due date for the
project that opens on February 8th?

MS. SHERMAN: The preliminarily
application will be due April 12th; and at the back of
your handout -- or packet, you will find an invitation
to our workshops that will run from February 12th, I believe, to March 13th around the state. There are 14 of them. We encourage y'all to participate or encourage your local entities to participate in the workshops.

And let's see. I think that's all.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you very much.

At this time we will go to Agenda Item Number 7. Carl Seifert is going to be giving us a presentation on Bikeway Design Effort.

MS. SHERMAN: One more thing, back to Safe Routes to Schools, we did present this as an action item. So if y'all want to take action on the prioritization that is provided in the handout, it's...

MR. HIBBS: So you're asking us to adopt this prioritization as shown based on the surveys?

MS. SHERMAN: If you wish.

MR. HIBBS: All right. Do we have a motion?

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: Yes.

MR. HIBBS: By Margaret.

Do we have a second?

MR. HAMM: Second.

Second by David.

Any further discussion?

(No response.)
MR. HIBBS: All in favor, "Aye."

(Chorus of "Ayes.")

MR. HIBBS: Any opposed?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: Motion carries.

MS. SHERMAN: All right. Thank y'all.

MR. HIBBS: Carl, take it away.

MR. SEIFERT: Good morning. Thank you, guys. What a meeting so far. Ya'll are handling it well. Thank you for your input.

I'm here charged with kind of giving everyone an update on our progress so far, on y'all's latest big effort, the Bikeway Design Effort, which attempts to make recommendations to TxDOT on how to better incorporate bikeways into the development process. So just to give you -- which, of course, you have all this in your packets -- I will try and make this brief -- originally I was trying to make it really quick; but we've done such a good job of abbreviating other presentations that I think I can kind of go at the right speed.

We're going to distribute really quick for those of you who aren't in the working group what the intent is, why we're doing this, our goal and scope of work. We've had two working group meetings since
October when we kicked this off. So I'll go over the content of those in summary fashion and talk about some of the discussion that we had during those meetings and then I'll give a few status updates in the world of bikeway design at the national level that are kind of neat and cool vaguely related to the AASHTO bikeway design guide update and then I'll talk about where we're going to go next.

Our goal in this effort is to effectively institutionalize a collusion of safe, reliable, and integrated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure through the traditional TxDOT planning and project development processes. That really summarizes the effort we have and where we're going. As far as the scope goes, we have only started tackling Item 1 and that is understanding what TxDOT does and also included in there is what other states do and how we can learn those lessons.

This is a slide similar that helps to kind of break out that scope item in a little more detail, and I'll just briefly skip over that.

So in meeting one, we actually had Casey, who you guys just met, give us a good understanding of TxDOT's planning and programming efforts. You'll notice there are two words, "planning" and "programming." And
on the slide here we've done a good job of kind of focusing in on, as the boxes get smaller, the focus and the level of detail also gets more precise.

The big box is the 30-year level, the effort that Casey was talking about, the Texas Transportation Plan. There are no projects listed. It is a TxDOT vision document. And then we get smaller and smaller; and you'll notice I have three numbers here, which we'll talk about on the next one.

Commissioner Austin mentioned the UTP earlier today; and that's a budget document, I think, is a good way to describe it, because projects are definitely listed. The caveat is it is a larger project. It is specific categories in projects, in TxDOT's projects, that are the largest. Bike/ped projects don't tend to be the largest. You won't find too many UTP projects listing bike/ped. We'll talk about some details of that.

Casey didn't get an opportunity to talk about the Texas Transportation Plan in a lot of detail. I believe she'll probably have another opportunity later this year to talk about their efforts. They're going out for community engagements around the state and this is one of their stops along the way and they're going to come back and do it again. But they're still in the
goal-setting exercise of that 30-year document, which is a big task to take on just to set the goals, as it is.

But how does it relate to us, the Bicycle Advisory Committee? As I mentioned, there's no projects listed in the TTP; but that doesn't mean that bike and ped can't be considered. Bonnie actually sits on a technical working group that's helping to advise the TTP of those goals in working to kind of craft opportunities for bikes and measures related to bike infrastructure and how those can get incorporated into that long-range document.

Additionally, that UTP document, you know, as these things move, you'll notice those have the word "plan" in them; and the third one has "programming." So there's the effort of thinking and planning and then you start talking about particular projects and it becomes more of a programming document.

This presents our first good opportunity for input at the project level. The UTP has a community engagement effort that goes out to all the MPOs throughout and across the state for the actual projects to get listed.

Lastly, on this slide, the opportunity for engaging with bike/ped accommodations, this is the best opportunity. This is a complicated process and I'm
trying to summarize all these really big documents in
one slide and that's really hard to do. So I'm not
going to pretend like this is all the answers. If
anyone wants more detail, we'll happily send y'all the
working group presentations and contact information for
more information. But I won't pretend that this is
comprehensive.

But, again, there's a community
engagement process that before projects are added to
this step, there is opportunity for the community to
actually stand up, raise your hand, and ask: Why is
there not a bike project on your list?

One really interesting thing that we
learned in this working group exercise was we talked to
the district staff, which this presents another
opportunity for how bikeways can be considered at the
state level. There's 25 districts in the state.
There's three of them that actually have developed bike
plans.

So that means they've gone through the
effort of analyzing, doing the talking to communities,
trying to understand a little better about what the
community needs. And, for one example, San Antonio uses
this to prioritize their resources, to eliminate system
gaps, to understand design considerations in a
particular context, how this could be an appropriate bikeway for one and not be appropriate for another. Additionally, to determine locations for future funding that becomes available. If you don't have that plan, then you don't have a way to use it.

But I wanted to point out the two items in the box at the bottom there, which this may be a really key opportunity because some of the folks on the Bicycle Advisory Committee work in the regional level government level. They work with these projects, and I understand these kinds of plans may represent a good recommendation for the BAC to move forward to recommend that these districts have opportunities and are pushed to produce these plans so that bikeways can be incorporated in the future.

Actually, this afternoon we're going to hear a presentation from TxDOT's design division staff; and it's going to be about the nitty-gritty of the actual project development process. We will see a lot of fun engineering terms up there, and we're going to talk about that in a lot more detail this afternoon.

One other neat thing we did is we started to look at how other states are incorporating bikeways into their design. This table just provides kind of a big overview analysis of who does what and what they do,
but I'll just go ahead and skip to the next slide.

This talks a little bit about the summary of what we found because some states do specific guidance. Some states do tracking well. Some states understand context a little better than others; but as far as takeaways go, most states expect engineers to consider bikeways. How well that's done is shotgun; who knows. This way, that way. It doesn't always get consistently implemented.

Additionally, state-level policies don't necessarily translate into this. You can make a policy that says all bikeways must be considered in every project, but that doesn't necessarily mean that that inclusion is going to occur.

There's a variety of tools that bring attention at key points in the project development process. Some bikeway design guidelines are more descriptive and tells you exactly where and how the bikeways should be built; others rely on engineering judgment and are less descriptive.

In general there's not a state that's doing it the best. Tracking of bikeways appears to be cumbersome for a lot of states. Not everyone is doing it well. None of these things probably surprise anyone who's been involved in this for a while.
And the general concluding observation might be that instead of mandating the consideration of bikeways, many state DOTs are instead giving guidance documents to engineers and tools to them to make educated and informed decisions, which I think may be a good example for us to follow.

Other discussion items that came out of BAC working groups -- and I'll just kind of go through these, and we can talk about it in more detail this afternoon. I know there are some working group members who have some comments to bring to bear this afternoon which would be related to these things, but appropriate bikeway design guidance should be contact sensitive. There should be an understanding of the urban-versus-rural context and how that might impact the bikeway in how it may be designed.

Implementation tracking tools and performance measures, we need to investigate those a little more. Project development tools that other states are using, that's a topic we're actually going to cover in next month's work group.

A chapter in TxDOT's roadway design manual, I'll talk about an update related to that in a moment -- and here's that moment.

(Laughter.)
MR. SEIFERT: Actually, the Design Division is in the process of updating their roadway design manual; and they have an intention to add a specific chapter that is related to bikeway design.

(Applause.)

MR. SEIFERT: So the schedule identifies that they are, I believe, still going out in the selection process to run the update; but we will hear from the Design Division staff this afternoon in the working group meeting. And y'all can quiz them on anything they know, but I do think it is a very exciting opportunity because that roadway design manual provides a lot of direction on how roads are built here in Texas. So that's exciting.

From a national perspective, another update on the active guide for the development of bicycles, from some of our working group members and those in this room had the opportunity to be part of training in December on the 12th in which the AASHTO consultants who are updating the AASHTO Guide, which it's not only a roadway design manual important to Texas; but it's important to the nation. And this is the guidance for building bikeways everywhere. Anyhow, there were a lot of interesting opinions. I'll let y'all read those.
It does appear that we're getting closer
to building things and recommending things for that
group of cyclists that are interested but concerned.
The guidance is moving away from bikeways that are just
for the fearless and more for how we get people who are
less likely to be on the roads to feel safer, for all
general abilities, low stress bicycle network, 72% of
the public. It's progress in the right direction. We
will see what that guidance has for us in the future.

This kind of gives you a little idea of
where they're at. They've produced two drafts so far.
It is currently out for review in several AASHTO
committees. There will be a revised draft after that
and then, of course, has a balloting process throughout
the state. So we aren't looking until the fall -- I
suspect it will probably be after that -- but this year
we'll have a new bikeway design guide.

So there are a lot of things kind of
coalescing here. We have the roadway design manual
chapter, which will not be done by the time this process
is over with the BAC; but maybe recommendations from the
BAC can help that process. Also, the AASHTO design is
happening. So there's some exciting things occurring.

Next month we are -- excuse me, not next
month -- in April we anticipate coming back and having a
discussion with the BAC to help start facilitating recommendations from y'all based on the efforts we've had in the first few months. So we'll work with the working group to get some good ideas down on the table for when we see y'all in April. And today's working group meeting about the project development process is after our pizza lunch.

And the other things I did want to mention is, as Cristian has left us, Frank has been generous to volunteer to be a part of the working group and replace him.

Also, some changes -- the Traffic Operations Division project team member has gone to a different division, and so Mr. Dustin Wiggins will be joining us. So we'll have a new kind of design expert on the project team there.

For project schedule we still have a ways to go. But as you see, we've been focusing on that first scope item; and we anticipate still having a good opportunity for recommendations in the next BAC meeting.

So do I have any questions?

Thank you so much.

MR. HIBBS: Carl, referencing back to our discussion on the Tourism Trails Study, one of the things that we have kind of informally discussed has to
do with this concept of having like a gold standard type
of a facility through your community and being able to
advertise that because you want more people to stop
there at the bed and breakfasts or you want more people
to go there to lunch. They want it to be known that
they have the very best pavement and the very best
facilities and the very best cycling infrastructure with
the most accommodations for cyclists.

So as this working group is beginning to
start to coalesce around some of these different things,
I would encourage y'all to be thinking about how you can
take the information which you're getting from the
committee and maybe stratify it in such a way because
not everybody's going to be able to build the best,
right? We'll probably have different levels. But we
want to encourage everybody to build the best that they
possibly can.

And so it seems to me that we probably
need to start thinking in terms of A, B, and C; and they
need to have probably catchy names like a gold standard
or a platinum standard or, you know, our poor community
can only afford the silver route, something like that,
putting them in the context that we want to encourage
everyone to build the very best; but there may be some
limitations on that. I thinks that's roughly what y'all
are doing here. So that potentially could be an added benefit that we could then overlay with the study.

And when communities get ready to start vying for these projects, be able to give them some direction by saying, all right, the cost per mile for the gold standard is triple of what it is for silver. And I don't know enough about this to go any further with that discussion; but with those of you that are actively involved in looking at this, that would be a really, really important consideration right now at this particular point.

MR. SEIFERT: I know as part of the AASHTO bike guide, there's a facility selection. I know Jeff has talked about this in the past, a context-sensitive metrics of sorts that prescribes a certain facility based on the existing condition or perhaps future conditions. So that's something that I think would be -- as we understand more within that guidance document, maybe that's something that we can then build upon with recommendations of the BAC.

Additionally, something that happened this week after we sent the presentation out, we actually learned that FHWA was publishing a bikeway facility selection guide; and that's happening apparently at the end of February. So I think that's
also going to influence this work, work of the working
group; and so that's something else exciting to look
forward to.

MR. HIBBS: Good.

MS. RUST: Carl, can you clarify for me:
I haven't heard you mention the manual for the use of
control devices. Is that obsolete?

MR. SEIFERT: Oh, no. There's a national
version, and then there's a Texas MUTCD -- I'll shorten
it -- and that helps guide the engineers in identifying
where pavement markings, differences between signage,
what signage looks like, what dimensions they should
have. The traffic operation staff through here, they
could tell you more. I'd say they probably have
memorized it.

There is a specific chapter in there that
is related to bicycle accommodations. And one of the
tricky things is there's experimental bikeways that are
always coming up, opportunities. Like, I'm not sure
that green paint is observed in the MUTCD. So there's
things that -- you know, that document is going to get
updated probably after AASHTO is updated; and we'll have
competing updates that will have to try to match each
other at some point. But, yes, it is a different set of
guidance from AASHTO.
MS. RUST: Thank you.

MR. HIBBS: Any other questions of Carl?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: Thank you very much, Carl.

Appreciate your hard work.

MS. KAPLAN: I would like to add one clarification: The definition for bikeway placed in the AASHTO guide and in the MUTCD up to recently was aligned so that they're the same. We would expect that moving forward.

MR. HIBBS: So it's time for Agenda Number 11, which is an update from the committee members on local and statewide issues.

Frank, since you're relatively new on the committee, I won't start with you. I will start with Jeffrey to give you a chance to get organized.

So, Jeff, tell us what's going on.

MR. POLLACK: I don't have a whole lot to report. Relative to jurisdictions in the Corpus Christi area for the MPO, it's very short of staff; but they're trying to rally around that new CAP funding for Safe Routes to Schools, in our case continuing implementation of the plan adopted in 2016 that I shared with y'all eight months ago. Not a whole lot new to report.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you.
Bobby.

MR. GONZALES: El Paso is currently working on a mountain to river trail project, the first of its kind in El Paso, which is kind of cool.

MR. HIBBS: For those of us who don't have mountains...

MR. GONZALES: There are a series -- and it's a state park. So there are series of trail systems in the state park. They want to connect that trail system to the river, the Rio Grande. So it will include a series of off-road systems, i.e., trails, paths, et cetera, coupled with the bike lanes that will eventually connect. And we might be going underneath TxDOT's culverts and bridges to get to the river; but that's the intent and, you know, that's --

MR. HIBBS: Don't call it a tunnel. Don't refer to it as a tunnel.

Okay. Please strike that from the minutes.

MR. GONZALES: "Culvert" is what I said. But we are very fortunate to get the planning and design of that project. So that will be my next project for the next several months. So it's all good.

MR. HIBBS: Would you entertain making a presentation on that before your term expires?
MR. GONZALES: I certainly will. We just had our first public meeting a couple of weeks ago -- actually, last week; I'm sorry -- and I'll know more moving forward.

MR. HIBBS: Good. Thank you.

Margaret, tell us what's going on in Houston.

MS. O'BRIEN-NELSON: It's coming along very well with the 50/50 program with the 50 additional miles. And so far they've got 32 miles, and they're already at 50%. So that's really good.

Again, I know there's some comments that have come in from biking related to TxDOT about regulations related to biking. That would have been in this past week or so; but HGAC, the way that's structured, has proved to be a really good influence on that area. Now we're seeing a lot more interaction between some of the areas, say, like to the south, to the north so that everybody can get together and really look at the trails and how everything is coming together. So right now I know there's concern about funding, how that's going to work exactly.

Also, one thing that I've asked for independently is some more guidance about what's happening with Highway 146. That's a highway to the
south of Houston but works in that NASA/Clear Lake area. It's very, very well traveled; and it's going to be under construction for a period of time. So I've been contacted by somebody, but I also bike that area and have some concerns about that to be looking at. But, again, it seems like we're moving along very quickly.

And it's come out that in District 1 that one of the county commissioners has come up with a nice block of money that would bring some grants to this area.

And, again, I thank, also, Bike Texas for constantly staying in touch with the cycling groups. That's very, very important.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you.

DawnElla.

MS. RUST: In East Texas we've currently got two groups that are working. Parks Forward embraces bicycles and pedestrians. They're kind of a rouge committee of people that really get things done in Nacogdoches in working together on trails. One of the groups has applied to the Texas Parks & Wildlife to be an extension group.

Probably on a sad note the one bike shop in Nacogdoches went out of business, and it's just sad we don't have anybody to service bikes. So we're trying
to address that somehow. We don't know how quite yet.

MR. HIBBS: Karla.

MS. WEAVER: Things of interest: We are hosting next week a Transit Street Bike Design Guide Workshop. So NACTO's coming in for two days and our plan's about context sensitive, how do bikes and buses and cars and everybody fit within this urban shared space. So there will be designs from the TxDOT districts and our city cabs coming to that. So that should be exciting.

We are about to publish our annual bike/ped count report for 2018. So we're looking forward to that and just kind of seeing if our numbers went up. It was a wet season, so we don't know if that affected anything or not; but we'll see.

We had finalized funding for the Fort Worth/Dallas Regional Trails. So our elected officials took final action on the last remaining piece of construction. So we are now working, I believe, coming up next month with the Visitors and Convention Bureaus of Fort Worth, Dallas, Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Irving. We say, Okay. We've got this huge regional trail. How do we make it the showcase for the state and country and how do we have events and bike rides and marathons and all of those things? So the visitors
bureaus are first, and then we're giving a presentation to the five mayors at our Board meeting in April. So we're kind of like, Okay. Now, we've done it. Let's go brand it and market it and get our name on the map. So that's exciting.

We're moving forward with our Regional Safety Plan, which is under data collection right now. We have a cool engineering project that just started. We call it the Denton to Dallas Trail, if you're familiar with Dallas/Fort Worth. So DTPA is the transit authority in Lewisville; and they've got a really significant, impressive trail. It's a cool place to ride if you're ever up in the area.

So this brings to the gap piece, which is three cities, two counties, and two transit -- a partridge in a pear tree. So we've got an agreement with those three cities, two counties, two transit agencies to study all of that jurisdiction block. And if you can figure out that part, you can connect from Denton to Dallas. It's something like 56 miles. So when that gets forward for engineering, it will really figure out what we need and get that part moving.

And then the final thing that's exciting for us, we are partners with the City of Fort Worth for what they call their Active Transportation Plan and it's
going to their Council for adoption next month. So this takes their thoroughfare plan, which is developing a trails plan for the City of Fort Worth, which didn't have one; their sidewalk plan; their transit plan; and all of these layers. And in their bond programs in the CIP when they do a project, how many boxes does it check.

So this will be sort of revolutionary for our region. We don't have anybody sort of looking at capital projects that way; and coming out of that, a level of stress for pedestrians and cyclists was developed. So they took every road and were almost coding it like ski resorts, the green, the blue, and the black; and what does someone feel in the experience of riding or biking or walking within those corridors. So then they're going to try to replicate that in other cities around our region as well. So we're very excited to get that wrapped up.

MR. HIBBS: David.

MR. HAMM: All right. In Midland recently we passed a 3-foot safe passing bill.

(Applause.)

MR. HAMM: So we've got that in place. We've got to start publicizing a little bit.

We are about to finish our planning stage
for a bike corridor between Midland and Odessa. So probably by next month we should have that plan in place. We've got to start finding funding for all of it. A lot of it will be private, I'm sure.

MS. WEAVER: What's that distance?

MR. HAMM: It's 25 miles, depending on how it squeezes through there.

And then we've started with the City of Midland, also, of their revision of their 20-year parks plan, which will include -- the first meeting, at least, there's a lot of emphasis on bike and pedestrian stuff. Hopefully that will include a lot of our parks department working with us on different ways to connect the park access. So we have a few things going on.

MR. HIBBS: Great. Okay.

Frank.

MR. ROTNOFSKY: Okay. So I mentioned in my first meeting I'm a part of Bike Laredo, which is our advocacy group. We're relatively young. We started a year ago last May. We've been making really, I think, incredible strides in our community since it is a relatively new idea to the border of Laredo.

We've been getting a lot of help, actually, from Bonnie on some surveying and we have just launched our first survey online; and we actually have
members in the streets talking to cyclists, their only means of transportation. So it's getting a lot of play. We're getting a lot of information coming up in February on that.

I'm also happy to report that at our last City Council meeting we adopted Vision Zero in our Council as well as we were able to get our City Council to fund 15 staff members of the city to become League Certified Instructors primarily in our Parks Department to educate our community on cycling. So they funded that.

Thanks to our newly appointed City of Laredo Bicycle District Coordinator, we have our first painted bike lane, which is a first. Now, we're moving towards: If all is well at our next district MPO meeting, we will be launching an RfQ for a district bikeway fund.

And we're also working with Council members themselves. One of our Council members kind of came up with the great idea of looking at high-wire easements that went through our community, which usually are grassy areas. We're working with him on converting them into bike and hike trails. So now we're working with other Council members to actually come up with a network based on that idea and making that connectivity.
So I'm pretty happy with our progress.

MS. SHERMAN: Excellent. Awesome.

MR. HIBBS: Well, no one brought up electric scooters today; and so since Cristian is not here, I felt compelled to tell you that the City of San Antonio is apparently going to have to get real serious about electric scooters. And they've been apparently reproducing like they did in Dallas for a period of time. And so the news is reporting that they're about to launch pretty strict regs applying to usage. I can tell you the insurance industry has really just gotten keen on this because there's so many serious accidents happening right now with people in regards to electric scooters.

And I want to thank Robin for showing me a folding bicycle helmet, which my daughter got for a Christmas present, thanks to you directing me in the right place. But the reality is that, you know, as we have these different modes of transportation -- we're going to get a demo here. These things are cool. You can stick them in a backpack. That way you can jump on a scooter and still have your helmet. Those are really cool.

And, anyway, I think that we're going to have a lot of and see a lot of evolving, probably, local
ordinances regarding electric scooters because of the fact that they are becoming very congested in some areas because there are so many of them.

So thank you—all for the reports. It's always the most fun for me to get to hear and see what's going on around the state.

It's time for our public comment part of the agenda, Item 12. We have one speaker, Robin Stallings, who has requested some time to comment on Number 8, Safe Routes to Schools, and Number 10, the TA funding of the BTTS.

Take it away, Robin.

MR. STALLINGS: Thank you very much, Committee Members, for the chance to speak and for sharing your fantastic progress in your communities. It's really exciting for us at Bike Texas to hear of all of this work.

And I want to thank Teri Kaplan. We gave her an award for her amazing work at TxDOT and as TxDOT's Bicycle Advisory Statewide Bicycle Coordinator in May; and that included this bicycle trails plan, the data collection, the work that was done on identifying all the shoulders, the work on the Transportation Alternatives Program. Really, I was going to say transportation enhancements. I go back a ways.
MS. KAPLAN: The old name.

MR. STALLINGS: But basically fantastic work. As everybody's been saying, you are tireless. We're all a little bit fatigued, in a really good way, with your work. You've worked circles around all of us. Thank you. Everybody's brought their best game because of you. Thank you. Really appreciate it.

MS. KAPLAN: And thank y'all, too.

MR. STALLINGS: And I wanted to say the Safe Routes to Schools money, we're so excited to see this used. It's the 8.7 million infrastructure money, but that is so little to spread so thinly for so many different important categories.

And so we have a friendly suggestion to offer. And I don't know if it's too late, but we hope that it's not. And that is that that money be used for either -- maybe both, but maybe either -- a Safe Routes to Schools plan so that a lot of communities could do plans, you know, 10,000 there, 50,000 there, a hundred thousand there. Almost every community that wanted to could do a Safe Routes to Schools plan. And some of those become city bike plans because when you connect all the schools, you've connected your city; but planning, it would go a very long way.

And the other thing that could go a long
way is for bicycle racks because there's a lot of cities out there and we hear people and we get calls from schools that, We have a nice community. Our kids can bike to school, but there's nowhere to lock their bikes. And our city and our ISDs don't have that kind of a budget line item except for brand-new schools. So it's very hard for them to get bike racks, even though it's not that much money; but with $8.7 million -- I did a little bit of bar napkin estimating -- probably every school in Texas that wanted a bike rack could get that; and maybe fewer than all of them get a lot of racks if they had a lot of need.

But either one of those, that's enough money to make a big difference everywhere; otherwise, how do you limit it to just a few communities because once you start building sidewalks and these other important things, it's just not going to go very far. So that's our recommendation on how that construction money could be used.

I noticed, just to clarify, these community workshops don't include the non-infrastructure; is that right? That's separate?

MS. SHERMAN: Correct,

MR. STALLINGS: That's what I thought.
Okay. In commenting on the excellent letter and the resolution that you-all are forwarding to the Commission, we so much appreciate that. We think it's a really good idea. One thing that we would suggest is that, typically, when consultants or communities see anything to do with bicycle funding, they're going to look at this flex money that might be 30 or $40 million in a given year -- a couple of years' worth might be twice that -- and they're going to imagine that this is a bunch of 2-million-dollar projects because that's usually what's happened with, you know, with transits in the past or Transportation Alternative Programs.

And if there was some way that you-all could emphasize, you know, fewer, bigger projects so that it's a 40-million-dollar project or an 80-million-dollar project so that you could begin to tackle significant projects in this really ambitious plan or soon to be a plan, the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trail Study. But if that was done in 40-million or in 80-million-dollar chunks, we'd begin to get people's attention; and it's appropriate use of the money.

There's no other concern that we have about match that didn't seem to be addressed. And in a lot of small communities, they don't have their match;
and if that's something that -- like, now, TxDOT is able to find the match when the money is used on sidewalks near state roads, on system roads, if that same money could be used to match or provide most of the match for these TAP Flex projects so that of the 20% required match, maybe 15% of it came from the state. And that would basically make it very competitive, possible for, say, in the 19 rural communities along the northeast Texas trail or the 10 communities in Cameron County that are really an ambitious connection project.

You know, over and over across the state that match is going to be a problem, especially when you include multiple jurisdictions, which another thing we could encourage, is that that money be prioritized when there are multiple jurisdictions involved like that fantastic project which includes Dallas/Fort Worth, Arlington, Irving, and Grand Prairie. Now, when you get that many cities together, all of them having a 20% match lined up is really unlikely. Especially in small communities, they're going to have more or less commitment to the project. Coming up with a lot of that match could really be a game changer. So hopefully that gets worked in.

And that's the only small modification that we would have to your fantastic recommendation.
Thank you.

MR. HIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Stallings.

I'm not exactly sure how we incorporate all that. Let's start with the Safe Routes to Schools. I think what you've done is recommend some evaluating criteria. Is that the best way to put it?

MR. STALLINGS: Well, no. Bike racks would fall under Encouragement. And plans might fall under Safety or Network or Planning. And so I think that your criteria is very solid, but it's just how do these things fit into that. And I do believe that those are all high priorities, especially for the safety and encouragement.

MR. HIBBS: What's the best way of executing what you want done?

MR. STALLINGS: Well, I would have to defer to the pros; and I'm not suggesting any changes to the TAP portion. But one way to do that would be to make one big winner. It's a huge amount of work, but if there was a way to do a single call for bike racks and then somebody would coordinate every school that wanted to order a bike rack could order it from whoever won the project so you're not having to deal with 300 projects. So there could be a third body that -- it could possibly be TxDOT itself. It could be the Parks Department. It
could be the Texas Education Agency. It could even be a nonprofit organization, like Bike Texas. They'd basically bid, get that, and then just deliver bike racks with pretty much a phone call.

The schools might, for example, commit to providing the space and the installation so that they're providing an in-kind match; and that money doesn't require an actual 20% match based on federal rules. So that would be an in-kind match, and they could all get the bike racks that they needed. And bike racks could be bought in massive quantities so that they would really go a long way. That's the advantage with that one.

The planning is a little different but this has happened before where there was a lot of plans done through the Safe Routes to Schools program. This committee was able to evaluate who would get the planning money; and I think that before you do the call, you put it out there that this is what's going to happen with this money because if this committee had a tendency to go one way or the other, whether plans or the bike racks or somehow a combination -- I'm not sure -- that could be reinforced at meetings around the state; and I think it could work.

MR. HIBBS: That's kind of more of a
communication, almost PR kind of thing, where you are promoting: This is the way we're going to get it done, and this is what you're going to have to do in order to participate.

MR. STALLINGS: We've got some planning money coming. That's really hard money for a lot of communities to come by; and if some communities already have plans, they might need an update. So it's more people that are going to be eligible for that money, and lots and lots of communities are going to be eligible for the bike racks.

MR. HIBBS: Back to the Tourism Trails Study thing for just a moment, the reality is it's a complex network; and it's a multiyear build-out with a lot of information that has to be disseminated. One of the things we haven't focused on as a committee is what's the best way of letting these communities know about it, helping them get organized, helping them understand what their responsibilities were in terms of in-kind donations, getting offers to go, and things like that. And I know that the time is short today, but I'd like to recommend that that's an agenda item for our next meeting because I believe that the way that we promote this across the State of Texas is going to be very, very important.
And your concerns, I think, need to be first and foremost when we're talking to these communities and saying, Look, if you want to have your segment considered, then you need to understand these are the rules; and these are the things you're expected to bring to the table. And these are the things that TxDOT can bring to the table, and this is how we'll go about it. And because of the complexities of it, I think it's essential to come up with a plan to deal with that.

MR. STALLINGS: I'm going to give a shout out to TxDOT staff. That's exactly what they do on these calls, and they communicate what the criteria is for different given stuff. So that's right in their wheelhouse -- I don't know if I can jump in and say that -- and when there is money like, We're going to give out a 40-million-dollar project or we're going to give out an 80-million-dollar project, one or the other, that it's going to get focused a lot because when you're sending it out through those MPOs and through those planning bodies, the word's going to get around pretty quickly. And then after that first round and somebody actually wins the project and after it becomes newsworthy and that gets built, that's going to give you future projects. So I think that will take care of
itself.

         MR. HIBBS: Okay.

         MS. WEAVER: If I may add a comment to Robin's statement, I also see the value of letting the Safe Routes to Schools. The ship may have sailed due to the timing of this program. But we had a city within our metroplex that invested in 20 Safe Routes to Schools plans. They had one consultant to do 20; and in their next bond program, they got several million set aside to implement those plans. So then they had a guide or a roadmap for their elected officials via lots of community feedback -- lots of ISDs participated -- and now, this is how we need to move forward. And it was fairly successful, just a comment.

         MR. STALLINGS: It's not always the money; it's the plan because once they know that they need the sidewalks and becomes aware of what the impact's going to be, suddenly they're finding a lot of that money here and there.

         MR. HIBBS: Thank you.

         All right. So any other agenda items that anyone would like to put forth for our next meeting?

         (No response.)

         MR. HIBBS: All right. So we have a date
for the next meeting; is that correct?

MS. SHERMAN: April 15th.

MR. HIBBS: April 15th, tax day. All right. Wonderful.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: All right. So do we have any other items or information that needs to come before the committee before we adjourn and celebrate Teri?

(No response.)

MR. HIBBS: I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Was that by David?

MR. HAMM: Sure.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIBBS: All right. Do we have a second?

MS. WEAVER: Yes.

MR. HIBBS: Second. Thank you. All in favor say, "Aye."

(Chorus of "Ayes.")

MR. HIBBS: We're adjourned. Thank you-all very much.

(Proceedings concluded at 12:04 p.m.)

--ooOoo--
CERTIFICATE

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF TRAVIS

I, Debbie D. Cunningham, Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true, and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 15th day of February, 2019.

Debbie D. Cunningham
Certified Shorthand Reporter
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