TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021

9:30 A.M.

VIA VIRTUAL WEBEX

TRANSCRIBED BY: Angelica Mathews

TRANSCRIPTION DATE: January 28, 2021
AGENDA

1. Call to Order.

4. Remarks from the Texas Transportation Commissioner Robert C. Vaughn.

5. Report from TxDOT’s Public Transportation Division (PTN) Director regarding statewide bicycle and pedestrian matters.

7. Update on Bikeway Design Effort and discussion on next BAC effort.

2. Safety briefing.

3. Approval of minutes from October 9, 2020 BAC meeting. (Action)

6. Discussion on TxDOT’s 2021 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) Call for Projects. (Action)

8. Presentation on Rio Grande Valley active transportation efforts.

9. Updates from committee members on local and statewide issues.

10. Public comment – Due to virtual format of the meeting, public comments may be submitted by email to BikePed@txdot.gov by January 25, 2021, to be included as part of the meeting record.

11. Discussion of agenda items for future BAC
meetings. (Action)

12. Adjourn. (Action)
PRESENT:

Committee Chair: Karla Weaver, Dallas/Fort Worth

Committee Members:

Bobby Gonzales, Vice Chair, El Paso
Chelsea Phlegar, Waco
Clint McManus, Houston
Eddie Church, Cedar Park
Eva Garcia, Brownsville
Frank Rotnofsky, Laredo
Jeff Pollack, Corpus Christi
Mike Schofield, Austin
Rick Ogan, San Angelo
Trent Brookshire, Tyler

TX-DOT PRESENT AND PARTICIPATING:

Eric Gleason, Director, Public Transportation Division – PTN
Donna Roberts, Program Services Director – PTN
Bonnie Sherman, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager – PTN
Noah Heath, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planner – PTN
Carl Seifert, Transportation Planner (Contractor) – Jacobs
(BEGINNING OF AUDIO FILE.)

BONNIE SHERMAN: Alright, everyone, it’s 9:30 so we’re gonna go ahead and get started. I am going to hit the record button and record this meeting. So, Karla.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks Bonnie. Good morning, everyone and welcome to the first meeting of 2021 of the TxDOT Bike Advisory Committee. I’m gonna do a brief Call to Order and then we’re gonna modify a couple of things on our Agenda but I’ll go over that after we do a quick roll call. I’m Karla Weaver, the Chair. Bobby Gonzales, are you here?

BOBBY GONZALES: I am present. Thank you, Karla.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Bobby. Good to hear your voice.

BOBBY GONZALES: Likewise.

KARLA WEAVER: Chelsea Phlegar?

CHELSEA PHLEGAR: Yes, here. Good morning.

KARLA WEAVER: Morning. Clint McManus?

CLINT MCMANUS: Here.

KARLA WEAVER: Great. Eddie Church?

EDDIE CHurch: Here.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Ms. Eva Garcia?

EVA GARCIA: Present.
KARLA WEAVER: Mr. Frank Rotnofksy?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Good morning, present.

KARLA WEAVER: Morning, Frank. Sorry. Every -- every time I think I say that incorrectly. I apologize.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: No, you got it.

KARLA WEAVER: Good. Jeff Pollack? Jeff, are you with us? Alright. We’ll come back to Jeff --

BONNIE SHERMAN: Jeff is here. Jeff is here but I -- we just can’t hear him.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. Jeff may be having some audio issues. Alright, Jeff we’ll record you as here.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Yep, I’m here. Thanks.

KARLA WEAVER: Great. Rick Ogan?

RICK OGAN: Present.

KARLA WEAVER: Great. And finally, last but not least, Mr. Trent Brookshire?

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Good morning, Karla. Good morning, everybody. Happy New Year.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Great, Trent. Happy New Year to you.

Alright, so we’re very excited to have Commissioner Vaughn with us here today, one of our TxDOT Commissioner’s. He actually is from the
Dallas/Fort Worth Region so it’s particularly exciting for me. He can only be with us for about 30 minutes this morning so we’re gonna rearrange a little bit the Agenda. We’re actually going to move to Item 4 and let Commissioner Vaughn kick us off with some opening remarks. Commissioner Vaughn, I’ll turn it over to you.

COMMISSIONER VAUGHN: Okay. Thank you, Chair. Can you hear me loud and clear?

KARLA WEAVER: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER VAUGHN: Okay, great. I apologize for no video. I was unable to get -- get on -- on the program here with my iPad so I’m on my computer which does not have a -- a camera. So, I apologize for that, but good morning all and thank you for inviting me to participate in your important work. In particular, I would like to not only express TxDOT’s appreciation for all Committee Members for their participation and important work on the BAC, but also to Chair Karla Weaver for her steadfast and meaningful contributions over the years. I would also like to thank staff members Eric and Donna and Bonnie and Noah and Carl for all of the important things to keep the BAC organized behind the scenes.

Since most of us have not met before, I
thought I would just give you a -- just a real brief background on myself. I was born and raised in Dallas. I attended schools here. Finished high school up in Indiana. Went to UT Austin. I’ve been in the Energy and Real Estate businesses for over 40 year. Which is amazing because I’m only 39 years old, but anyway, just joking there. I was asked by Governor Abbot to Chair TEXNET from 2016 to 2019. That was a program managed by UT Austin’s Bureau of Economic Geology to manufacture, deploy and measure, in real time, seismicity across the State. That was a fun --- fun project because it was a start-up -- start-up program and Texas was the first State to implement such a system. And then in 2019 I was appointed to the TxDOT Commission.

I assume all of you enjoy walking or cycling, I should say and/or cycling and being in the outdoors. I also enjoy being outdoors and currently enjoy jogging, not running but jogging, cycling, spin, snow skiing and golf. In another life I participated in many 5 and 10k’s, marathons and triathlons as well as some mountain climbing. Which I was fortunate, obviously to survive but definitely would not recommend it.

A few things I have noticed during the first
year and a half on the Commission; safety, obviously is number one. The following numbers are a bit outdated but you’ll -- I think you’ll appreciate the trend regarding our road to zero initiative. Since November 2007 we’ve had over 67,000 fatalities on Texas Roadways, which include cyclists and pedestrians. In 2019, the national pedestrian fatalities were 6,590 and in Texas -- Texas had 659 or exactly 10% of national fatalities. Now, between pedestrians and cyclists, 20% of the fatalities on our roadways in Texas were -- were from pedestrians and cyclists. So, you know, obviously that’s a pretty shocking number to me and -- and I’m not sure I understand it. But I would, you know, y’all maybe doing some work on that but I’d really like to get a little more insight in that. I’m sure part of it has to do with awareness and people focusing on their cell phones, et cetera, et cetera. But anyway, I would encourage you to consider these sobering numbers as we plan for safe networks and to get the message out about this as well. In light of this, what the BAC is doing is literally saving lives by making walking and cycling more safe and enjoyable.

As far as opportunities and attributes of pedestrian and cycling networks go, again it supports safety -- or they support safety as number one. It
supports TxDOT’s mission of connecting you with Texas. It supports decongesting densely populated and vehicular traffic and bottle necks. It supports business and economic development. For example, here in Dallas we have the Katy Trail, which they have documented as having the investment in the Katy trail has returned itself in excess of 50 to 1 return on investment and that’s still growing today. This can be done and is being done in other areas as y’all know. It also supports public health and optionality. Environmental factors support pedestrian and cycling networks. Do you remember the Amazon RFP questions regarding their corporate relocation questionnaires? They wanted to know all about the trail networks, and I think we’ll see more and more of that in the future. Particularly as -- as corporations continue to move to Texas.

There is --- also there is substantial public support. For example, as you know, the SRTS and the Transportation Alternatives were oversubscribed 10 to 1 for the $20 million in available funds last year. I know I’m preaching to the choir but let’s keep encouraging more focus on further developing these alternative transportation networks because it’s a win-win-win for our communities, metro areas and the State.
With the demographic projections for Texas growing from its current population of roughly 30 million to 50 million by 2050, which is only 28 years from now, and probably growing faster and larger than the estimations due to Covid, corporate and individual relocations. We need to be paddling faster. We need to step up our efforts and encourage separating pedestrian and cyclist from vehicles and further connecting our communities. The bottom line is Texas needs all transportation options. It’s not all about roadways and highways. It’s not all about pedestrians and cycling networks. It’s not all about mass transit or high-speed trains. Texas needs it all. I consider all of us one big team focused on these important projects. So, I am very supportive of your efforts and look forward to being of any help I can. So, it’s nice to meet you in this format and I’ll turn it -- and again, I appreciate y’all letting me join you today.

And back to you, Chair.

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Commissioner. We appreciate those remarks. The next Item that we’re going to on our Agenda is Number 5 and it’s gonna be our report from TxDOT’s Public Transportation Division Director regarding statewide bicycle and pedestrian matters. Eric Gleason, I will turn it over to you.
ERIC GLEASON: Thanks, Karla. And thank you Commissioner for your comments. I think that the -- the Committee, is certainly music to their ears to hear a Commissioner be so supportive of their efforts. And I think a little later on today we’ll be talking about key initiatives for the Committee to undertake in the near future, in the coming year and I think we can incorporate your thoughts into that discussion, particularly around the safety topic.

So real quickly, an update on a number of items for the Committee. The rule changes that y’all recommended to expand the scope of the Committee to include pedestrian interests are making their way through the process. The Commission did adopt them as proposed rules in December. They are now out for public comment. That public comment period ends January 25th and that this point in time we are anticipating recommending that the Commission consider final rules at their February Commission meeting. We’ve not gotten any comment yet to date and so I’m anticipating this to be a relatively smooth effort.

Next, as I mentioned you will later on today be talking about a next major effort and I think it -- it in conjunction with the expanded scope of the Committee, I would encourage committee members to begin
thinking about and talk about this under -- under Item
7, whether or not you think we just need to go back and
-- and update our current Strategic Direction Report.
It -- it’s probably going on five years now since it
was created it initially and we’ve used it as a
reference point to -- to pick off what we want to work
on next, but I think it may also make sense to take a
step back and spend some time just updating it.

Transportation Alternatives, we -- so, to
date we’ve had three Calls for Projects under the
Transportation Alternatives Program, 2015, 2017 and
2019. And as you’ll talk a little -- talk on a little
bit more later today, we are preparing a 2021 Call.
So, we try and do these Calls every other year and just
to give you a quick overview of where we stand with
projects built and in use. So out of the 2015 Call,
all projects from that Call have been let to
construction and I’m thinking -- I’m trying to remember
what the total was for 2015 was but it’s a fairly
significant number of projects. So, they’ve all been
let for construction and over half of them are
complete. 2017, almost 95% of the projects have been
authorized for construction. Four of those projects
are complete. And then of the 2019, which is our most
recent group, 60% of those Projects have an agreement
between ourselves and the Project Sponsor, and the other 40% are nearing execution of those agreements. So, we’re making progress.

The 2021 Call opens today and we’re looking at having about -- with a combination of funds we’re currently carrying as not attached to a Project, adding then in anticipated FY’23 and ’24 funding, we’re looking at about 13 -- about $23 and a half million for non-urban area projects. Those are projects in communities of less than 5,000 in population. And in anticipating another 13 million for projects to small urban area efforts, those communities being from 5,000 to 200,000. Recognizing that historically we’ve had more project applications from that area at 13 million I just reference is actually an anticipated Fiscal Year ’23 and ’24 funding. So that group is a little further out in terms of the funding streams we have available but also part of this Call which opens today. And we’ll later on today, the Committee will get into discussions to help us understand how we should weigh some of the evaluation criteria.

And then finally, so we have been conducting these virtual meetings via WebEx and for our April meeting we are anticipating changing our format from WebEx to Zoom. Zoom generally has some additional
accessibility options that we don’t have with WebEx and we are hoping to include in the April meeting an American Sign Language Interpreter and closed captions. So, we’re trying to make continuous progress toward opening these meetings up to any and all who might wish to participate. And that Madam Chair, concludes my report. I’d be happy to answer any questions on anything I’ve said.

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Eric. Are there any questions for Eric about the items he presented or other items? Alright, not hearing any, the next Item – we want to kind of shift around a little bit is going to be Item Number 7. So, this is an update on our Bikeway Design Effort and discussions on the next BAC efforts and Carl and Bonnie are going to present on this Item. Carl and Bonnie?

CARL SEIFERT: Thank you so much, Karla. Bonnie, if you could hand me the ball? I will go ahead and present our presentation. Alrighty. Okay. Good morning. Good morning BAC members and the other audience members. As mentioned, I will be providing a brief update on the ongoing Bikeway Design Effort. I’d like to briefly cover our Project schedule and discuss the content of the remaining meetings. Additionally, I will provide a brief
overview of some of the content of the Working Group has been reviewing over the last several months. Afterwards, I will hand the presentation over to Bonnie, who will facilitate discussion on what we -- on what may await the Bicycle Advisory Committee after we complete this Effort.

Phase 2 of the Bikeway Design Effort is divided into four topic categories. The Working Group meets monthly to cover a portion of each topic category, develops and refines interim guiding principles and then brings these interim guiding principles to the BAC for approval. In this way, the BAC and Working Group together work through a large amount of detail and refine it into a set of Bikeway Design Guiding Principles which may influence TxDOT’s projects, processes, procedures and guidance. As you can see here, we plan to bring interim guiding principles from the intersections and conflict points topic category to the BAC in April. And we plan to wrap up in the -- with the maintenance section in July.

This slide provides a little more detail on our monthly activities. Next week’s Working Group meeting will feature a discussion on green and other pavement markings. While meetings from February to April will feature our maintenance topics and the
refinement of interim guiding principles. In May and
June, the Working Group and TxDOT Staff will be working
to refine the Maintenance Guiding Principles and
compile previously approved guiding principles.

In the last several months, the Working Group
has been discussing bikeway design elements and
countermeasures for bicycle conflict points. As you
can see here, we began by discussing the elements of a
protected intersection. These range from bend outs,
pedestrian safety islands, corner aprons and so on.
These intersection design elements are generally
recommended when separated or protected bike lanes
reach an intersection.

Next, we discussed the design considerations
when bikeways interact with transit. Bikeway
investments can leverage public investment in transit
networks, but buses can also be a major stressor for
bicyclist. We discussed design options, bus stop
positioning and other multi-modal considerations where
bikeways meet transit.

We also spent time discussing bike signals
and signs. This meeting featured slide -- slides on
bike signal applications, operations and placement,
mid-block crossings -- crossing signals characteristics
and applications along with bicycle detection. And at
the end of last year, we discussed design elements of railroad and driveway conflict points. And as just discussed, next week’s meeting we’ll discuss the applications and the various material technologies of green pavement markings and other pavement materials. And as we overview the variety of design countermeasures that we’ve discussed it seemed relevant to add this toolbox. It highlights the three main design tasks that promote bicycle safety, defining modal space, slowing traffic and making bicycling conspicuous or more easily seen. Additionally, this slide provides specific design elements that may be considered. I won’t read them all, but some countermeasures include green pavement or green lanes. Striping through intersections. Grade separation. Curve extensions. Bike signals and mid-block crossings. While not an exhaustive list, this is just an overview of the topics that the Working Group has been mulling over. And with that, I will turn it over to Bonnie.

BONNIE SHERMAN: Thank you, Carl. Good morning, everyone. We thought it would be a good time since we didn’t have action on this Bikeway Design Effort today to get everyone thinking about the next major effort that the BAC will undertake.
Next slide, please. As you may recall, in 2015 the BAC worked with TxDOT to develop a Strategic Direction Report for the TxDOT Bicycle Program. The document identified actions to undertake in seven focus areas to advance bicyclists and to a certain degree, pedestrian infrastructure in TxDOT’s programs and policies. We would encourage you all to review the SDR between now and the April meeting to get you prepared for further discussion on this topic.

Next slide. The BAC and TxDOT have accomplished a number of efforts that support the seven focus areas. The two major ones are listed here. The BAC completed the Bicycle Tourism Trail Study in 2018 which laid the foundations for a Statewide Bicycle Network and we continue to make efforts to advance that Study. The current Bikeway Design Effort is focused on building safer and better bicycle and pedestrian accommodations through developing recommendations from the BAC on TxDOT’s design guidelines and Project Development Processes. This Effort, the Bikeway Design Effort is also leading to the development of bikeway design expertise through the Department by informing guidance and policies and through the establishment of knowledge sharing resources among staff.

Next slide. Additionally, TxDOT has been
working behind the scenes to advance a number of other efforts in the other four focus areas. By developing data resources such as the Bike/ped count program and a facility inventory, internal back-to-work day efforts to encourage staff to get on their bikes, educational pieces and advancing projects that are funded through the regular Calls for Projects for Transportation Alternative funds.

Next slide. So, we wanted to begin a conversation with you guys today about what the BAC should take on next. In light of the expansion of the Bicycle Advisory Committee as Eric mentioned earlier to include pedestrians and related micro mobility issues, we see a key opportunity to update the SDR. So today we wanted to start with an initial brainstorm and get your ideas started and then follow-up by e-mail to gather more thoughtful feedback. In April, we’re gonna come back to you and summarize the input and organize that input for further discussion and prioritization with the BAC members. And in July we would like the BAC to take action on identifying the next effort to undertake and then we will be ready to kick it off in October after the Bikeway Design Effort is complete.

So, today let’s just start with getting your thoughts on how well we, the BAC and TxDOT, are at
accomplishing what we set out to do and what areas do
we need -- do you feel need attention. So, if we start
with the first discussion question, I’m gonna mute
myself so you guys can talk, and we just want to get
your initial thoughts on how -- how well are we at
accomplishing what we set out to do.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks, Bonnie and
Carl. So, who would like to kick it off? How -- how --
what are people’s perceptions of everything that the
plan laid out and the tools and products that have been
developed to date? Have we hit the goal for all of
them? Are there areas that are still needed? Or --
what are people’s general thoughts? And we may want to
go back to Slide 10 that talks a little bit about the
activities that have been completed. There we go.

EVA GARCIA: I actually had a question about
the facility inventory that was mentioned. And so,
what -- what project name does that fall under?

CARL SEIFERT: I can jump in and answer that.
I’m not muted. Am I good? That is -- I don’t know if
it’s necessarily captured under one of these Efforts
listed here but it is an effort actually that’s going
on through the Design Division as they are preparing to
update their ADA Transit Plans. So, they’re not only
documenting all the bikeways on TxDOT maintained
roadways but also all of the pedestrian facilities.

Does that answer your question?

EVA GARCIA: Yeah, that was helpful to know.

I think regionally we’re looking to do facility inventory as well and kind of quality check our geospatial database but on a Statewide level that was very interesting to see that’s being developed because I wasn’t as aware of it. But yeah, I feel like I usually do a lot of talking so I’d be interested to hear from other people before I get started.

CARL SEIFERT: And we can follow-up -- make the connection between the Design Staff working on that and they can tell you about their consultant contract and how they’re accomplishing that. We’ll follow-up with you.

EVA GARCIA: Thank you so much.

KARLA WEAVER: Carl, would you even mind going up to Slide 8? I think that will remind people of the six focus areas that are currently in the Plan. So, expanding the Bikeway Network, building safer and better bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, providing training, education to the public, encouraging to people to walk and bike more, developing a Statewide management assistance of information and then funding more projects. So, are any of those areas that people
think need a little bit more attention? More product? More information? Or no, did we reach the goal line on all of these and we can say we’re done? What do you guys think?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: This Frank. I’m not saying we haven’t done this because I think we have, but I think in terms of educating the public, not only on safe driving and bicycling and walking but, you know, facing the inevitable. I think all of us that are involved in this world understand that, you know, traditional ways of getting around mobility is not -- no longer just a car.

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Cities are, you know, their resources are being strained. It’s just, you know, like more education specifically on that. I mean, I even recently saw an article by Governor Abbott that, you know, totally understood that we can no longer plan our City and our State the way we’ve been doing it. It needs to change, and he was quoting his daughter telling him the reasons why. And I think if we have an opportunity to kind of reinforce and get that message out to the general population to the State, you know, the more that we can get that message out. You know, little by little it will filter in to the --- in to the
collective.

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: That’s my comment.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Frank. Other --

CARL SEIFERT: And Frank -- Frank, just to be concise, the message specifically is safety education for drivers and bicyclists alike?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Alike, but also just that we can no longer design ourselves out of congestion solely, you know, solely working with streets and roads and cars.

CARL SEIFERT: Thank you.

KARLA WEAVER: Other ideas?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: We need to offer more mobility options and get people to understand that. I think like I said everyone here understands that, but I don’t think a lot of the general population that message still isn’t out.

CLINT MCMANUS: This is Clint. I think Frank makes a good point that I agree with. I -- just looking at the document and all of the goals under each of the focus areas, it’s ambitious. I mean, and I think that’s, you know, it’s good to be ambitious, but a lot of the stuff is -- I think there’s just not enough cap -- enough staff power or, you know, even BAC
time to be able to accomplish all of this. I don’t
know if that’s something that we can really change but
-- but a lot of the -- the goals here seem to be, you
know, things that I would love to be working on, but I
don’t that we have the time. I don’t know how to
address that.

I think one that sticks out to me that kind
of gets to what Frank was discussing is funding more
bicycle and pedestrian projects and that’s definitely
not something that I --- I feel like we as the BAC have
a lot of power over. I think those decisions may be
made above us, but I do think I’m piggy backing on what
Frank was saying that in Houston at least I feel like
there’s a big disconnect between what community members
are saying they want and then what is coming down from
the funding levels. And to be quite frank, it’s
resulted in some -- a little bit of love lost between
TxDOT and local folks, particularly around one big
project. But -- but yeah, I -- I just wonder if
there’s some way for us to go about thinking about how
to increase funding. Even if it’s not for more bicycle
and pedestrian projects for more -- for projects that
are -- that are just in general for safer streets,
safer street design. But I don’t -- I don’t know.

KARLA WEAVER: Great. Other thoughts to add
CHELSEA PHLEGAR: Hi, this is Chelsea. One thing that I’ve been thinking about a lot lately and it ties into some of the earlier conversation about increasing like competency and skill set with safe design and safe bike riding, is I know a lot of folks fall into that, you know, interested but concerned cyclist. I wonder if there’s an opportunity to -- for this Committee to help sponsor workshops or trainings to host like smart cycling classes in different geographic areas around the State or to maybe get some folks trained as like cycling instructors to build that competency and competence in different geographic areas.

BOBBY GONZALES: This is -- this is Bobby. I agree with Chelsea. I have, you know, we’ve -- we’ve had some issues of, you know, cyclists not obeying the laws and then the motorist get upset at the cyclist and, you know, it’s just a combina -- like here in El Paso, it’s -- it’s -- it’s really bad as far as the motorist not respecting the cyclists. So, it’s a challenge. I just don’t know, you know, on the educating the public on safe driving.

I also think that it’s not just the motorist, it’s also the cyclist and how they should respect, you
know, the rules of the road and -- so that’s where I --
I would want to focus on. Well at least, you know, I’m
sure others have the same issues in their respective
community’s but that’s really a major problem out here
in El Paso.

     KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Bobby. Other
     comments? Edward or Jeff or Rick or Trent?
     RICK OGAN: Hi, this is Rick. I’d like to
     make a few comments. And I’d like to reiterate what
     Bobby said and what Chelsea said about bicycle
     education. I think, you know, one of the things that
     we can do is maybe start with kids in elementary
     schools, in middle high and high school and as they
     develop in grades that they get trained on more
     technical aspects of bicycle riding, maintaining their
     bikes and learn how to fall so they don’t get injured.
     Just a whole spectrum of safe bike riding and how to
     operate on the roadways.

     Another deal Bobby was talking about was
     cyclists are the worst -- are their own worst enemies
     where they (indiscernible) the law quite a bit and I
     think the BAC or some entity such as it should take
     steps to start having these bike clubs and racing
     groups start (indiscernible) the traffic laws, so we
     get more respect on the roads. Right now, we don’t get
respect because we (indiscernible) the law and then the
other drivers basically tell us get off the road
because we’re not obeying the laws. I know when I was
commuting (indiscernible), I’m retired now but when I
was commuting to and from work, I obeyed the laws, and
I would not have any issues with the other motor
vehicles around me. But other folks would blow the
stop light/stop signs, they got honked at and
basically, they were mistreated on the road. I have
been mistreated on the roads, had things thrown at me
and yelled to get off the road before but that’s far
and few compared to others.

So, that’s just my take on it. Just more
education and start it at a very young age so it’s
engrained in people’s minds as they get older instead
of having a car centric way of thinking and trying to
be retrained riding a bike because it just doesn’t work
well that way.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: This is Frank. I guess I
have a question because I know that obviously we’re
looking at bicycle issues but based on what we were
told earlier today, we -- as a Committee are seeming to
move into a Bike/Pedestrian Committee. How much of
that should we be thinking about (indiscernible)?

KARLA WEAVER: That’s correct.
FRANK ROTNOFSKY: I’m sorry.

KARLA WEAVER: I said, yes, that’s correct.

So, you’re suggesting maybe need to add more of those elements to the Plan?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Well yeah. I know there’s a lot on our plate anyway but if we are gonna become Bike/Pedestrian Committee, I mean, just thinking about that. You know more instead of bike active transportation, I guess, you know incorporating all of those issues.

KARLA WEAVER: I agree. I think that’s a great point, Frank. I think we need to look at ADA regulations, Americans with Disabilities. Most of my cities in DFW do not have ADA transition plans, which are required by Federal Law. So, I’m sure it’s in all of your Regions as well. So, we’ve had our trainings reviews by the Feds, and they’ve asked if there’s anything we can do to help enforce these Federal requirements. There’s no repercussion right now. So, they asked us if we would withhold Federal funding to make cities do ADA transition plans for pedestrians and folks with disabilities and it’s just — at no level is it being really monitored. So, I think whether enough cities don’t know the importance of it or the requirements of it or how to do it, they’re very
expensive. I have a very small city that just did one for about $800,000. They’re not cheap. But we have a lot of cities and so thinking about more training in that area I think is really important, especially for new construction and projects that are coming online, think about how to maybe retrofit what you got. I think that would be a good topic to maybe think about the infrastructure piece for pedestrians. Other comments or questions?

EDDIE CHURCH: I have a few comments.

KARLA WEAVER: Who’s that?

EDDIE CHURCH: Hello. This is Eddie. Can y’all hear me?

KARLA WEAVER: Yeah. Go right ahead.

EDDIE CHURCH: I had a great conversation by myself about five minutes ago and then I realized I was on mute. So, I have two things. So, education, that is near and dear to my heart. That piques my interest. So, I spent, I don’t know, I’ve been riding over 35 years, so I’ve been about five to 10 years here working with the Austin Parks and Rec Department in doing just that, educating kids. And I still run into some of these kids which are grown adults now that are all still big advocates of safe bike riding. And being a member of multiple bike groups here, you know, I see
the same things that y’all were talking about, unsafe
practices and it starts with the kids. And there are
lots of groups out there to -- to join. I’m currently
working with an old friend from Austin Parks and Recs
to try to get a group going here in the Round
Rock/Cedar Park area to try to do some of that.
Because at Williamson County we do try to add shared-
use pads and ADA compliant projects, many of them.
We’ve added on the shared-use pads in the past two
years on projects in Round Rock, Leander, right on the
derge of the City of Austin. So, there are stuff ---
there is things out there and it starts with the kids
and with us. We have to make the right decisions and
ride like we know how to ride. I mean, it starts with
us. And I think if you want to get out there and
educate, there are many ways and groups to do that.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Eddie. That’s great.
You know --

CLINT MCMANUS: This is Clint --

KARLA WEAVER: -- right now you have to get a
-- take a test to get a driver’s license for a car but
no one requires that for a bicycle. And we just assume
that everyone’s gonna know all the rules and the laws
and anybody can go buy a bike at Wal-Mart and off they
go. I do think, maybe we -- you know, I’ve always
thought we needed some sort of -- even if it was an
honorary test that people across the State could take
and maybe you tie that in to like a passport system.
The National Park service has had huge results with
this and maybe there are trails all over Texas that we
would encourage people to try out if your visiting San
Antonio or Dallas or El Paso or wherever you’re at in
the State, people may not be flying as much as they are
nowadays, the amount of road trips has really increased
for family vacations. You know, maybe there’s some
sort of TxDOT supported pass but to even qualify for it
you have to take a road safety test. Or, you know,
something that, you know, asks -- educates about
roadway safety or things like that for bicyclists. And
on the flipside, we take drivers ed test when we’re 16
and I don’t remember anything about bikes being on that
test. So how to interact with motorist or cyclists or
even pedestrians, other than don’t hit them if they’re
in a crosswalk. So, for years we’ve been trying to
figure out how to pierce into DPS and so at my level or
smaller levels, I think it’s really hard to have that
conversation but if one State agency would work with
another State agency to have those conversations to
(indiscernible) prepared and (indiscernible) modules.
If there’s a way to get into DPS drivers ed training or
classes or even a question on the test, maybe that
could start -- have people thinking about the
conversation. Just some ideas.

CLINT MCMANUS: This is Clint.

KARLA WEAVER: Go ahead.

CLINT MCMANUS: I -- I -- I don’t want to be
the naysayer, but I will.

KARLA WEAVER: Go ahead.

CLINT MCMANUS: I don’t personally think that
education, at least what I’m reading in the Strategic
Direction Report, kind of -- it has some good ideas,
but I feel like our power as the BAC is really in like
in liaising with TxDOT and not so much with the local
folks who are already doing a great job in education.
I think we could maybe support in some ways but if we
do move in the direction of education, I would -- I
would personally prefer if we kind of take stock of
what’s happening at the State level and maybe support
rather than reinvent the wheel. I -- I think it’s
really easy to get into some victim blaming with --
which I know I’m preaching to the choir; I know that
for sure with education. But, yeah, I think we have a
lot of power as the BAC in other areas that I would
rather focus on. That’s my opinion.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: This is Frank. And also, I
mean, I guess following what Clint’s saying, you know, we have at the State level, we have Bike Texas and at the national level we have the League of American Bicyclists that certify -- have certified instructors. Maybe there’s a way we can either join or co-sponsor something to just get that information out there. The League has probably hundreds of certified instructors here in Texas, around the State. So maybe joining forces or having some kind of relationship, I know we already do but kind of --

CHELSEA PHLEGAR: Frank --
FRANK ROTNOFSKY: -- reinforcing it.
CHELSEA PHLEGAR: -- Frank, this is Chelsea.

I agree and I think a way that the BAC and TxDOT could be really helpful is focusing on like the smaller areas that may not have those resources currently to get the geographic distribution and kind of like an equitable distribution of those resources.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Absolutely.
KARLA WEAVER: You know, I -- I’m gonna push back just a little bit, Clint and that’s the point of the conversation. So, I think what’s missing though in that conversation is the organization of it, right? So, programs come and go, and they run out of funding and then people don’t do them anymore. And if you did
a search right now -- like I can’t tell you the top five most popular bike training programs in DFW and if I don’t know, no offense, I’m not sure who does. Like, they just -- they lose their -- their volunteers. They lose their websites. They lose their funding and there’s no home that keeps them maintaining. And I know that some parts of the State do this better than Austin, like I feel like -- or that -- I think Austin does it well. I think there are other parts that don’t really have this on the radar. Or I may have one of my 200 cities that really gets it but then I got 100 cities with nothing. So, I paid for trainers because they’re like well great we’d love to do it, but we need the resources to do it. So, if TxDOT put resources in that area or designated a program that everyone knew Statewide and we keep it for perpetuity and so we’re not paying people to recreate programs, which I think happens a lot. I think we go out and do procurements for new education and we’re restarting again and there’s already 4,000 education programs that are out there. I don’t know that we need all of that, but I think we’ve got to find one that really works, and everybody likes and agrees on. And this is a great panel of experts to think through that.

And then I think, you know, we, you know, the
State of course has to procure those things and decide how to develop the materials or do it in house themselves. But then I do think there’s got to be a role for that, but it’s got to be something that maintains. Because our own program, you know, I had $800,000 to do education but that was eight years ago and then that money ran out. So, it’s gonna be a continuous problem but, you know, unless somebody has got their own stuff and then I have different people setting different stuff. So, it’s complicated, I get it and I know that there is education out there, but I still think there’s just more people coming up that aren’t connected to the new stuff as people come into Texas and don’t know who to ask or where to go, maybe it’s, you know, a different level but I think there’s some role there.

CLINT MCMANUS: I think those are great points, Karla. And I totally agree with some -- some level of, you know, maintaining -- having a place where people can go for information and looking at the document. You know, one of the goals or one of the recommended actions under the focus area is identifying the new information (inaudible) and then being able to think like you’re gonna ride it what, I guess this group created this (inaudible) for a while though, so I
feel like I do -- I do see value in that. I just really don’t want it to ring hollow and especially with, you know, I think it’s important for us as the BAC to push that we practice what we preach and that TxDOT practice what -- practices what it preaches and I -- that’s really it.

I mean, I can point -- there’s something that happened a couple of months ago with an education campaign in Houston where TxDOT put up a billboard on one of their facilities that has no sidewalks and no pedestrian accommodations at their intersections and the billboard basically -- it was very pedestrian victim blaming. And it said, you as a pedestrian need to make sure that you follow the rules, and there’s literally no pedestrian facilities on this roadway and so I worry about things like that.

KARLA WEAVER: Sure.

CLINT MCMANUS: I don’t want -- I just want to make sure that we’re doing this in the right way and not the way that is --

EVA GARCIA: I know -- I want to just agree with Clint on that because I know recently, I was reviewing some CRIS Data and looking at how the reports are written and it’s usually this kind of, you know, the pedestrian’s at fault, the bicyclist is at not
fault but not any mention about whether or not there were safe facilities. Whether or not, you know, I just always feel -- on the law enforcement side is there something that we could be doing more. And maybe the education isn’t with the people but using, you know, officers not to regulate and to cite individuals, but to, say okay if someone’s biking the wrong direction, hey let me pull you over. There’re these classes, check this out and use that -- that, you know, that army of individuals to help with the education promotion in a way that the officers can see, okay there’s no sidewalk or there’s no (indiscernible) and maybe they’re handing out maps or maybe they’re making other kind of recommendations for safety on the individuals.

Just to chime in, I feel like when reviewing reports -- and that’s another thing, is like are all officer’s aware of the reports. Of the regulations. Of the laws. Because I know when I was kind of not hit but like driven off the of road, they were gonna cite the motorist because I was going straight and I didn’t use my hand signals and they turned right, but they told me you need to be careful. And I was like I’m wearing a white shirt. I have my red reflector, my white reflector. I’m in -- driving in a designated
bike lane, in the middle of the day and the person you need to tell to be more careful is the motorist, not me. And I felt very defensive in that moment and I’m, you know, well aware of the safe -- you know, the Texas Transportation Code. So, it was interesting to have that conversation with an officer where I felt like I was more informed than him on that. So anyway, that’s just a thought.

JEFF POLLACK: Hey, Karla.

KARLA WEAVER: Who -- who do we -- say again?

JEFF POLLACK: Sorry. This is Jeff and I’ve been -- I’ve had -- I’ve had (indiscernible) technical problems. Sorry. Can y’all hear me now?

KARLA WEAVER: Yeah, Jeff. Go ahead.

JEFF POLLACK: Yeah, and I -- and I -- I actually I missed a little bit after Clint’s initial comment. I think -- I have to say I also need to be probably a voice -- voice of dissent here. I mean, I -- while I absolutely agree with the fundamental importance of -- of education and encouragement campaigns, I’m struggling to see how we at the State level can be -- other than -- than -- than sharing resources and -- and connecting local need, you know, directing local need, providing some best practice guidance or connection to those who are -- who
represent best practice in the realm of education, for
our potency comes in -- in standardizing design and
policy at the State level. And I just -- I feel like I
need to be on record just saying that even when it
comes to education encouraging programs for me the --
our focus really should -- should be at, you know, how
that is translated in policy at the State level because
I think that’s where -- where we have the most impact.
I think if we start talking about, you know, trying to
transmit resources to programs at the local level, I
feel like that there’s just -- there’s just, you know,
to me I don’t see how we -- we move the needle,
honestly. So, I guess I was a little hung up and
Clint’s comment -- I think it was Clint who was
speaking previously about sort of a dissenting voice,
that -- that resonated with me. Thanks.

RICK OGAN: I’d like to -- I’d like to make a
comment on --

MIKE SCHOFIELD: (Inaudible) --

KARLA WEAVER: Okay, Rick. Go ahead.

RICK OGAN: Hi, this is Rick. I agree with
y’all that it’s not BAC’s area to implement education,
but I think it’s our job to give guidance. There needs
to be education and we need to put that out. And what
I would like to propose, or think is basically
education is needed for the masses in general about bike operation/bike safety and how to deal with bicycles when -- when they’re on the road. I think we ought to transfer that responsibility to something like the school system and teach these kids at a young age on how to ride a bike properly and how to walk properly in their formative years, and keep that training going throughout the different grades so it’s instilled in their minds instead of this being trained one time and it’s gone. They revert back to (inaudible) friends do. And I have it reinforce maybe like in a physical education class or something like that. But I think that BAC does have obligation of putting the best safety practices out there and I think education should be one of the highest objectives.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Rick. Somebody else was about to speak.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Yeah, this is Mike in Austin.

KARLA WEAVER: Go ahead.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Yeah, I just wanted to back up what I guess Trent and Eva and Jeff have been saying. You know, we do have educational programs here in Austin and have for years for pedestrians and cyclists. And while they are important, I will say
that we have no, and this is in our Vision Zero, you know, Policy Report, I think there’s no evidence that they’ve moved the needle on Vision Zero or fatalities, even a little bit. Like anecdotally, some projects that we’ve worked on, you know, there’s I’m thinking of one one-way bicycle lane where there was -- there’s just been this history of cyclists riding the wrong way in that bike lane and there was a big push, like we need to educate this is causing safety issues at intersections. None of that was effective in any way, you know, until we came in and we said, well there’s a reason people are doing this. We need a West bound bike lane, you know, they need a safe option. That’s what solved the problem, you know.

And I’ve seen similar things working with our TxDOT District here in Austin. You know, there’s a very serious fatality issue at I-35 at Capital Plaza here in Austin. Almost every year there’s a fatality there in that stretch of I-35 and TxDOT has been pushing educational efforts for pedes -- you know, essentially victim blaming pedestrians there and saying like here take these, you know, high visibility jackets. Or, you know, don’t walk into traffic, which is definitely good advice to preserve your life. But the -- the real issue is infrastructure, you know.
There's -- there's a reason people want to cross there, and they shouldn't be given a safe way to cross there?

So, I -- all that is to say I just generally agree with what a few of the folks here have said that we should be getting in a, you know, what is the root cause why people are doing this and is it just that their lacking the infrastructure they need to make safe decisions?

KARLA WEAVER: So, the -- the team that's been working over the past year on the Design Guidelines I think is hitting at what a lot of you are saying and I'm hoping we'll be a great (indiscernible) resource. This Committee does not control money and resources. So, what do you think we can do to help move that needle? And what would be the product or the deliverable or the -- what is it that we're gonna try to say and what does that look like? Do you guys have any suggestions?

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Karla, this is Trent.

KARLA WEAVER: Yeah, go ahead.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: And yeah, so, you know, kind of in the same vein as what Mike just said and certainly what Jeff and Clint were saying, I think of it like education is candles on the birthday cake and really infrastructure and really safety, the safety
facilitated through infrastructure would be really what the cake and icing is really about for me. Now that being said, I think a deliverable that we struggle with in the rural part of where I live if you talk about towns with less than 5,000 people, the ability that, you know, most of these people would never be able to maybe dedicate their resource or their not even thinking about how do I create a wonderful pedestrian and bike -- bike safe environment in our small community that’s poised for growth potential, like we are here in East Texas. And what I would -- what I would say is if we had -- I think the -- the -- the resource document that -- the Strategic Resource Document that’s being developed, I think that’s a good step in that direction. But if we had a way to equip these communities that are in need with a turnkey solution, I think to just make their lives easier so they’re not having to think of a plug and play system that all they have to do is then source the funding and the support becomes -- it’s not just effort and support, it’s just support. I find that to be very valuable as something this Committee could do. While not controlling resources, we could -- we could offer solution. Instead of saying, hey you get this much money, or you get this much, it’s a solution-oriented
endeavor that helps, you know, equip -- equip communities like where we live that have, you know, limited resources and really frankly limited, you know, limited DOT leadership in terms of how this is gonna draw value in the community. I mean, if we made it easier for them, lowered the hurdle rate, I think it would be a win-win in a big way.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. Other ideas of what are mission will be? I’ve heard things that were not as -- some of us are not as excited about us pursuing, but what do you want to see come out of the Committee for the next two years?

CLINT MCMANUS: This is Clint, again.

EVA GARCIA: Karla, (indiscernible) -- I’m just -- sorry.

KARLA WEAVER: Eva, I have not been keeping up with the chat. Do you want to recap some of it?

EVA GARCIA: Oh, no. I just wanted to make sure that you were aware of it.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

EVA GARCIA: There’s quite a bit but I’ll let Clint speak. He was about to say something.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

CLINT MCMANUS: All I was gonna -- all I was gonna say is I would love to spend a little bit more
time with the Strategic Direction Document and I think there are several of the recommended actions that are worthwhile and like I said some of them are education as well. But I think I would need a little bit more -- I want to spend some more time with that, yeah.

KARLA WEAVER: Are there any focus areas that to be added? There are six right now. Are those the right focus areas? Or do some need to fall off and others be added? And you may not be able to answer that right now, guys, but maybe got something to think about as well.

BONNIE SHERMAN: Karla, I think that that would be excellent homework.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

BONNIE SHERMAN: And we will roll that into our e-mail follow-up for further discussion. We certainly don’t want to hinder any discussion. This has been amazing, great input. But I just wanted to go ahead and -- and wrap this up. If you -- if there’s anything further that you want to ask the group now, that’s your choice.

KARLA WEAVER: Yeah.

BONNIE SHERMAN: But -- but as far as -- as we’re concerned, we have gotten a wealth of information and we’ll definitely follow-up by e-mail and we will
have plenty to provide in a more deeper dive in April.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay, good. Do you want to mention really quick here Carl the mentee link that you sent out? I believe it was for this exercise.

BONNIE SHERMAN: I think we got so much good discussion that -- that -- that is not necessary.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. So, tell people they don’t necessarily need to fill that out?

BONNIE SHERMAN: Yeah.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. Alright. Sounds good. Well thanks everybody for your thoughts and feedback. Bizarrely we’re gonna move back up to what was Item Number 2, the Safety briefing. So, the Safety briefing is coming from Bonnie today, but she’s got some interesting information to share with us. So Bonnie, go ahead.

BONNIE SHERMAN: Alright. Let me put the Agenda back up on the screen. Alright, so for today’s Safety briefing we wanted to do something a little bit different. We wanted to update you on the continued crash trends involving bicyclists and pedestrians Statewide.

As you all recall in October, we presented some data from the early months of the pandemic comparing several different available date sources, but
we wanted to focus in and talk a little bit about the continued crash trend through November 2020, which was the last complete month available when we pulled the statistics. And we are finding that Texas has continued to see an increase in bicyclists’ fatalities of 20% in Austin -- I’m sorry, in 2020 as of November compared with January through November 2019, with a total of 73 bicyclists killed this year on our roadways compared with 61 last year.

Overall, through November bicyclists’ injuries did continue to see a decline of 12% for suspected serious injuries and 18% for other injuries. For crashes that involve pedestrians, as of November we were seeing a 6% increase in pedestrian fatalities through November 2020 compared with the same last time year. Again, there’s a slight decline, 8% decline in suspected serious injuries for pedestrians and 26% decline in other injury types.

So, these numbers overall represent documented pedestrian and bicyclists’ crashes with motor vehicles through much of last year. A fuller picture would involve an understanding of total numbers of bicyclists or pedestrians on the road, where crashes were occurring, whether infrastructure was available and we don’t have that level of analysis available so
we’re just providing this data but while we are seeing an increase -- a continued increase in bike and ped activity and fewer crashes overall for bicyclists and pedestrians, the trend in fatalities was incredibly concerning. And this is why the work that y’all are doing in the BAC is critical.

So, we plan to continue to update the BAC in future meetings on safety information like this in the future as part of our Safety briefing. And with that I’ll turn it back over to Karla. Thank you.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thank you, Bonnie. Does anyone have any questions for Bonnie? Alright. Well then to get a little bit back on track we’re going to move to Item Number 3, the approval of minutes from the October 9th meeting. This is an Action Item so I will be looking for a motion to approve the minutes. Or are there any suggested changes or modifications needed to the minutes? Let me actually ask that question first. Alright, hearing none, I am asking for a motion to approve.

BOBBY GONZALES: Motion to approve, Karla.

This is Bobby.

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Bobby. And can I get a second?

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: I’ll second. This is
KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Trent. All those in favor say ay.

(Ay stated in unison).

KARLA WEAVER: Any opposed need -- any opposed say likewise. Alright, motion passed. The minutes are approved. Alright, now we’re gonna go to Item 6 and Noah is going to talk to us about the discussion of TxDOT’s 2021 Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Call for Projects. This is a possible action item to endorse this information that will be presented. Noah?

NOAH HEATH: Thank you. I’ll go ahead and pull this up. If I can -- I think you have to pass the ball, Bonnie.

BONNIE SHERMAN: I am trying to do that.

Okay.

NOAH HEATH: Alright. Hello, everybody. I will be giving a presentation on the 2021 Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects which opened today. I’ll start off with an overview of the Program Call and then we’ll talk about the evaluation criteria and we’ll talk about an opportunity of surveys that we’ll be sending to BAC members to get your feedback on how those evaluation criteria should be
weighted. And then we’ll also discuss potential action and discuss the BAC’s feedback on the Call for Projects process.

Like I said the Call for Projects opened today. The materials were posted onto our website this morning so Project Sponsors can -- can access those, the Program Guide and the preliminary application.

The funding sources, we have about $10.5 million available -- currently available for non-urban. Those are for projects and communities of 5,000 or less. But we’re also opening the Call up for anticipated future funding and Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024. We’re anticipating either from extension of the FAST Act or a new transportation bill, we’re anticipating about $13 million to be available from that for non-urban and another 13 for small urban, which is 5,001 to 50,000.

A Conditional Project List is to prioritize fiscally constrained list of the highest going projects that will be recommended to Commission for funding once funding becomes available. So, we’ll publish these Lists at the conclusion of the Call for Projects and then when funding becomes available to TxDOT, as appropriated to TxDOT, will move those projects forward with a recommendation to Commission to take action for
award on those projects. And we also had a Conditional Project List with our last Call for Projects and those probably -- we have funding to award a number of those projects and we’ll be moving forward with that in the Spring of this year.

So, who will the Program -- or who’s eligible? Local governments, school districts, transit agencies and other entities which are responsible for the Transportation Network in that community. 95, 98% of the applications are from local governments, either cities or counties. And we do get some from school districts or other entities as well.

What type of projects? The projects are for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, principally for transportation rather than recreation. Have a direct relationship to the service transportation system and benefit general public. And these projects will be located outside of the Transportation Management Areas. They receive TA funding through the MPO’s. And the funding is broken up into non-urban and small urban, non-urban less 5,000 -- 5,000 or less in population and small urban is 5,001 to 200,000.

So, we do have some differences from the TA Program Call in 2021 to our prior Calls. Some of them are related to the TAC Roll Revisions which were
adopted and approved by Commission in December. And then some of them were adjustments we made to improve the Call for Projects.

The first one, program project sponsors are limited to three applications per sponsoring an entity. We wanted the local communities to think about the priorities in their community and submit applications for the highest priorities in their community. And then also to, you know, limit the number that one community could submit so that there’s a diversity of types of communities in the pool of applications.

In-kind contributions are no longer allowed as a local match option. But for projects in communities of 50,000 or less in population, they can request reimbursement of preliminary engineering activities, including costs for design and environmental documentation. So that’s a big difference with this Call then previous Calls.

Also, communities of 50,000 or less in population may be eligible to use State Transportation Development Credits that allow for 100% Federal TA funds to be applied to the project in lieu of a local match. So, if a community of 50,000 of less can qualify based on economic criteria then they would be eligible for these Transportation Development Credits.
There were also changes to the evaluation criteria. And we’ll get into this in more detail in further -- further on in the presentation.

The timeline for the Call for Projects is open today. Project sponsors, the deadline for the preliminary application, which is a -- it’s basically a two-page application with a map of the project and also a budget, that would be due March 1st. TxDOT will review the project applications for eligibility and Project Sponsors will attend district meetings to discuss the project and get feedback from District Staff and then on April 12th will be notified if they qualify to move on for the next round.

The second round or second -- step 2 is the detailed application, which this is a much more extensive application that provide a lot more detail about the project and allow TxDOT to score the project. And then over the summer TxDOT will review those applications that -- the deadline for that -- those detailed applications are June 14th. Over the summer TxDOT will review those and then and in October we are targeting Commission award for the available funding and also publishing the Conditional Projects List for the anticipated funding in FY’23 and ’24.

The two-step process, I mentioned it’s a
preliminary application. TxDOT reviews these applications for eligibility. The Project Sponsors meet with Districts to go over the project and determine if it’s a constructable and feasible project. Are there any major issues that the district sees with a project and to review the budget and the district can make suggestions on how to improve the budget estimate or make suggestions about the project if there are some major issues with the project. And then the applicant will fill out a detailed application and submit by June 14th and TxDOT will review the applications, evaluate them and score them and move a recommended list forward for award in October and that’s the target. And then also at the same time publish the Conditional Project List. The anticipated, or the available funding is for non-urban TA. The Conditional Project List would be for non-urban and small urban funding categories.

We scheduled and will be hosting some virtual meetings to go over the Calls for Projects in detail and provide information about the program but then also how to complete and submit a successful application. The dates are January 21st, 25th and 27th and they’ll be virtual meetings.

Available now on the Bike/Ped webpage are the 2021 Program Guide, preliminary application,
preliminary application instructions and then an
interactive map showing the TMA boundaries,
Transportation Management Areas so that potential
project sponsors can determine if they’re eligible. If
they’re in a TMA they would not be eligible. And then
also it’ll show us if a community is eligible for the
Transportation Development Credits. We’ll hope that
that’s a useful document.

Also, in the back of the Program Guide
there’s a list of projects -- there’s a list of
counties that are eligible for EDCP Program but then
also a list of communities that are eligible for the
Transportation Development Credits.

And then later we will be providing the
workshop presentations, the detailed application and
detailed application instructions and then a frequently
asked questions document. And those will all be
available on the Bike/Ped funding webpage.

So, the evaluation criteria, we held a
Stakeholder workshop in May of 2019 with mid-size MPO’s
and TxDOT PTN and District TA Coordinators. We
reviewed the evaluation criteria and measures. And the
criteria and measures were identified based on TxDOT’s
mission goal and strategic plan passed TxDOT Program TA
Calls. That was sort of the base that we worked with.
But we also reviewed other -- or MPO and other State DOT TA program materials, this (indiscernible) of criteria are being used in other areas. And then we discussed those criteria and modified them and went through an exercise to establish weights for those criteria. The criteria weights will be based on the BAC input that we receive from a survey that we’ll send out to you. It’ll be a combination of BAC input; the workshop survey results and then TxDOT’s TA Program needs. TxDOT TA Program, because there’s a three-year time limit on the federal fund from when TxDOT receives it to when it needs to be obligated, TxDOT tends to put additional weight on project readiness. That’s kind of one of the key criteria that we -- we -- we want projects that are ready, and we feel can successfully meet that three-year obligation window.

So, this a brief description of each of the categories and we’ll send a survey to BAC members. After this meeting we’ll provide a more detailed criteria description but for the purposes of the presentation we have six overall categories. One of the categories demands is for larger communities to small urban category. The other five are for both non-urban and small urban. Safety -- demonstrate need for safety improvements, project improves safety for non-
motorized users, connectivity and accessibility, connecting to destinations of interest, supporting mode to modal connections, eliminating barriers and supporting long distance bicycle infrastructure.

Community supports in planning. We want projects to demonstrate community support that are linked to transportation plans. And then we consider a small community with limited planning resources as well. Project readiness, detailed construction cost estimates, past project performance and meeting the established design criteria, those are all items that we look at. And then geographic equity, improving mode choice in underserved communities and then demand for small urban improve access to higher density residential and employment centers.

So, with that, I wanted to open it up for discussion. Like I said, we’ll be sending out a survey, either later today or beginning of next week. We may revise a due date if we send it out at the beginning of next week. But it’s a survey to review the criteria and provide feedback on how the criteria should be weighted. And this Item was listed an Action Item and it’s -- and that was to provide the opportunity for the BAC if they wanted to take action to support the process that’s been laid in the
presentation. That would be something that they can do
with the action being added to the Agenda Item. So,
with that I will open it up. I’ve been talking for a
good solid 20 minutes and welcome any questions or
comments.

CLINT MCMANUS: This is Clint. I just --

KARLA WEAVER: I just needed to know -- oh,
sorry. I was about ask are there any comments or
questions for Noah?

CLINT MCMANUS: So sorry. I just wanted to
say I just really quickly looked at the eligibility map
that y’all made, the interactive one and it’s so easy
to use. I remember the last Call for Projects, it was
harder for me to understand who was eligible and not,
so great job on that. It is really straight forward.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Any other questions
for Noah? Or comments?

EVA GARCIA: Should we take action on this
before the workshops? I saw that the survey right here
says January 22nd, but the first workshop is January
21st.

KARLA WEAVER: So, the action is to support
the -- if we want to take action, it’s to support the
information that was laid out here today. The survey
is just to get people’s feedback on the criteria and
that will not come back to the Committee is my understanding.

EVA GARCIA: Thank you for that clarification.

KARLA WEAVER: Sure.

EVA GARCIA: I’ll make a motion to support.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. I’ve got a motion from Eva. Do I have a second?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Frank, seconds.

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Frank. All in favor say ay.

(Ay stated in unison.)

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you. And the more important one is if any opposed, please indicate likewise. Alright. Thanks, everybody. So, good luck on the Call for Projects, Bonnie and Noah and Carl. I know that’s fun times ahead. And then everybody has the link in the PowerPoint presentation to take the survey, I believe? Or we’re gonna be sending the survey? Say that one more time.

NOAH HEATH: We’ll send the survey in a e-mail.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

NOAH HEATH: The (indiscernible) link, so we’ll send everyone an e-mail shortly. Either later
today or at the beginning of next week.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. And you’re asking for that by next Friday but I’m sure earlier wouldn’t hurt your feelings.

NOAH HEATH: Yeah. And like I said if we end up sending that out at the beginning of next week, we’ll -- we can push out that January 22nd date.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright.

NOAH HEATH: We’ll provide the information in the e-mail.


With no further discussion our next item is Item 8. Our very own Ms. Eva Garcia is going to present to us on the Rio Grande Valley active transportation efforts and everything that they’ve got going on in her neck of the woods. Ms. Eva, take it away.

EVA GARCIA: Awesome, thank you. I don’t see a share content -- it’s greyed out for me. I don’t know if we can --

BONNIE SHERMAN: Okay, let me -- let me transfer the ball to you.

EVA GARCIA: Thank you. There we go. Can everyone see my screen?

KARLA WEAVER: Yes, ma’am.

EVA GARCIA: Awesome. Thank you. Alright.
So, especially for our new members, sorry I wasn’t here
to introduce you -- oh, actually I think -- did I pick
up -- oh, I’m sorry. I have the wrong PowerPoint up.
I will use the -- this file here. Sorry about that.

So, my name is Eva Garcia, and I am the newly
hired Bike/Ped Planner for the RGVMPO and so I will --
I wanted to talk about especially for our new members,
a little bit about the Rio Grande Valley and South
Texas and some of the health disparities that we’re
facing here.

And so, I guess for this -- basically the Rio
Grande Valley is on the border. It consists of four
networks, I’m sorry, I wanted to get -- there we go.
So, based on our population data we have, you know,
significantly different demographics and challenges
that others in Texas don’t usually face. We have the
highest poverty rates in the State. And in addition to
that, we have severe health issues, 80% are either
overweight or obese. 1 in 3 people are diabetic and
that’s significant because it’s higher than the rest of
Texas and higher than the rest of the Nation and
actually the Nation is projected to be 1 in 3 people
diabetic with the year 2050 and so we were already
there about 10 years ago.

In addition to that, we have other health
challenges. We have the highest rates of amputation due to diabetes in the State. 60% or our adult population is uninsured. We have high rates of cardiovascular disease, cancer, liver, kidney and other infectious diseases. And so that kind of keeps us in poverty and we have, you know, digital -- we have a digital divide. We are the -- the city -- well Brownsville, where I’m from, is one of like the least connected cities to -- in the Nation. And I know I struggle with keeping up with e-mails and -- and just -- 'cause I don’t always have access and sometimes it’s just challenging to download or get information. And really the pandemic has spotlighted those challenges and really been a struggle and with our health disparities we’ve really lost a lot of lives through the pandemic. And so that has been a significant impact for us.

And so -- oh, I just realized that -- okay. Cool. So, in addition to that back in 2016 Cameron County, 1 of 4 counties in the Valley adopted the Active Transportation Plan and that Plan proposes 428 miles of infrastructure. 2017 we did an Economic Impact Study that looked at building 291 miles of trails in the Region and we found that that could potentially put in, you know, more jobs in our area.
About $70 million in annual spending by out of county visitors. And then by looking at in the city of Brownsville, people who live near trails exercise 22% more, we projected that this -- developing this infrastructure could provide a $6 to $12 million savings from healthcare cost to our community and so that was really significant and something that we wanted to do.

Shortly after our Economic Impact Study, we became one of Rails to Trails Conservancy’s nine trail projects. And so, when this happened, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, a national non-profit if you’re not familiar with them, they got funding to hire a Project Manager -- a Program Manager. And so, I was hired. Left the City of Brownsville to become the Project Manager for Cameron County and through my time with RTC, sorry, through my time with RTC we developed different working groups to implement the Active Transportation Plan and this included a marketing group with a development of an interactive web map. A research group with the intention to kick-off a regional bike/ped count data program, that is still underway. We have changed locations. We’re still executing MOU’s. I think the last two MOU’s with the municipalities get executed this month or next month.
And then for research, with our health partners they’re looking at access to trails through the Brownsville Housing Authority and how putting public and affordable housing along trail networks can improve the quality of life and how that impacts the health of the individuals living in that area.

And then for the United States Bicycle Rail, our plan did propose two routes. One is the USBR 55 Route and then a spur of that would the USBR 255, and this would be a giant on-street loop around Cameron County.

And so, we-- we, you know, we got --- we did some presentations. I haven’t solidified letters of support and I really need to work on working with our Pharr District Office and our State TxDOT to get -- to understand and better understand how we get the approval process. What data is required for a submittal to AASHTO, along that. And then we even have Texas Paddling Trails that came out of the Active Plan and that’s with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

But I am now with the RGVMPO, the Rio Grande Valley. This is -- was just formed October 1st of 2019. What happened while I was with the Rails to Trails Conservancy is that 3 MPO’s, Brownsville MPO, it’s a TMA. (indiscernible) in San Benito MPO was a
smaller MPO. And then Hidalgo MPO, another TMA merged
to create this MPO. And so, they spent the first year,
you know, really doing a staff study and eventually
contracted to develop three plans together. And so, we
took a comprehensive approach. We -- we started
developing the metropolitan -- the MTP, the
Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transit
Development Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.
So, I was hired about four months ago, leaving the
Rails to Trails Conservancy. The position is still
available for Project Manager for the CARACARA Trails,
if you know anyone. But now I’m working with Hidalgo
County and Cameron County to implement the Active
Transportation Plan. And similar to the Active Plan
that I talked about earlier, our goals are to increase
connectivity and mobility. Make sure that it is
accessible for users of all ages and abilities across
the region and to really improve health and support our
local economy’s here. And so, we do have a work plan,
short, medium, long term, depending on the area,
planning and design, policies and program, education
centration, safety and other active tourism
initiatives.

And so, this is the update that I really
wanted to talk about. It’s less of an update and more
of what we’re going -- a work plan. What I’d like to
be working on and implementing is this United States
Bicycle Route. If you’re unfamiliar with -- with our
Bicycle Tourism Trail Study, this is -- it’s part of
that Study to implement this on a State level. And so
hopefully through this Committee we can figure out how
best to do that.

Project wise, I really wanted to showcase a
lot of the investment that’s happening here in our
region. The Brownsville to Los Fresnos Connect Project
would be an extension of a 9-mile historic battlefield
trail in Brownsville. Using -- we’ve just completed
and did a virtual ribbon cutting for this extension
right here. This was privately funded with health
organization Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation and the
same organization; Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation
funded this portion in the City of Lost Fresnos. This
green area here will be funded in the next couple of
years. Actually, I think they’re executing the AFA for
-- for this connection here in Transportation
Alternative Program funding.

Utilizing our drainage infrastructure, we’re
hoping to transform our area to be more accessible and
provide more opportunities for recreation and exercise
and transportation of course.
In addition to that, we were awarded some federal land access program funding for the Bahia Grande Trail. It is a proposed 21-and-a-half-mile trail that would connect pub -- national park service land to U.S. Fish and Wildlife service land. This Bahia Grande unit is part of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge but is currently not open to the public. Just because it hasn’t gone through the federal approval for activities yet. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife is working on that and the -- the FHWA is leading this feasibility study to figure out how we can best connect the cities of Laguna Vista, Port Isabel and Los Fresnos and Brownsville through that other project I just mentioned.

Again, this is the Bahia Grande Unit that’s currently inaccessible. These roads are solely for maintenance purposes for the Rangers that work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife but we’re hoping to provide more amenities. Oh, and then one addition is the County is working on a South Texas Ecotourism Center and so this would have a direct access to the unit as well.

Here, we have another proposal to connect the City of San Benito to the City of Harlingen using the Arroyo-Colorado here. The blue line would be a paddling trail that connects all the way to South Padre
Island. And we will -- so this is an existing trail and an existing trail. Already funded is the extension tour Dixieland Park, these baseball fields and this kind of golf course area. But hopefully, I think the Cities are interested in applying for either the Statewide Call or the local -- our MPO Call for TA funding to further this connection. And here using these waterways we’re hoping to transform the area again.

In Hidalgo County, which is an area I’m still becoming more familiar with, we do have this Precinct 2 Hike and Bike Trail. It’s partially constructed already and connects the City of San Juan, Pharr and then a major metro area of the City of McAllen. This one does include some tunnels and my understanding, you know, we’re very connected to our drainage infrastructure being a river/delta and so we’re utilizing all that right-of-way in those easements to further our bike/ped connectivity.

And so, I just wanted to keep it short and sweet for now and ask if there were any questions for me regarding this Project.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Eva. That was great. Y’all are doing a lot of really cool stuff. Any questions for Eva about what she presented? I have
one, if I can. First of all, welcome to the MPO Bike/Ped Planning world. It’s fun times all around. Feel free to call anytime. I wanted to ask about the paddling trails that you guys mentioned. So those are actually identified in your Transportation Plan. So how did those interact with your bike trails? Or -- we’ve had some people come to us recently requesting more involvement with paddling trails and we’re not really sure how to bring them into the mix. So how has that been handled for you guys?

EVA GARCIA: Yeah, let me go back and share my screen again. Let me see, did I do that right? Here we go. So, the way that we did it was through not the MPO’s active transportation plan but through this initial one county plan. And again, at the time Cameron County had to MPO’s, so this did get the support of the Region. But here is the map of that proposed network and so in blue is that on-street U.S. Bicycle Route.

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

EVA GARCIA: That we’re hoping to implement. Red is the off-street network and here is -- is the paddling trails that you see along our Laguna Madre. This, again, it’s -- it’s really -- the way that AASHTO designates the United States Bicycle Route is done
through Texas Parks and Wildlife and so there are some accessible requirements. You -- there has to be paddling access or entry parking, that kind of stuff, every four to 10 miles, I believe.

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

EVA GARCIA: And then they have recommendations, “they” being Texas Parks for, you know, kayak launch sites and different kind of amenities, kiosks. And they do help with that if you look further into the program. But I don’t have it on me, there are these kind of trail heads that would link the routes better together. I’m so sorry if I’m going back and forth. But you kind of see here our on-street paddling and off-street/on-street and paddling systems come together here. They connect again over here and over here. And so being a river/delta, you can kind of see we have a lot of waterways. A lot of the cities are interested in developing their own but for the Region itself, this would-be kind of the highlight, the big fish, if you want to call it that, connecting a World Birding Center in South Padre Island to the one in Harlingen.

So again, the way that we set it up was like if we had an advisory committee, we have a working group that specifically meets with those that are
impacted long this area. So, if you’re from (indiscernible) you’re likely not in that working group. But those groups are doing -- just kind of what you do with basic planning like geospatial database, collecting information about width, depth, public access, private access points. Other issues, like sensitive sea grasses is what we have, you know, those environmental concerns --

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

EVA GARCIA: -- that you would assess but it kind of just goes along with it. And it is considered active transportation for our Region sake. But this hasn’t merged into the Hidalgo County side. Although they are interested and there’s been some talk about opening the Rio Grande River for kayak access but that’s a little above my pay grade right now.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay, cool. Thank you. Any other --

MIKE SCHOFIELD: I have a question, Eva.

KARLA WEAVER: Go ahead.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Specially about, yeah, I guess the slide you’re on right now, the U.S. Bicycle Route, is the -- in the past in Austin we’ve been curious about this. Adventure Cycling will occasionally come to us and ask us about singing the --
the (indiscernible) bicycle route through Austin and
we’re interested in that, but our understanding is it’s
kind of like a State or AASHTO decision to make it
official. Have -- have y’all looked into that? Or
that might be a Staff question as well. Has there ever
been any Statewide discussion about adopting these the
way that, you know, Florida and Arizona and others
have?

EVA GARCIA: I’ll just say on a regional
level we have gotten support from our municipalities,
here. And so, we’re -- just because of the pandemic
things had kind of been on pause plus my transition to
the new -- to this new position, but regionally we’re
trying to get Pharr District’s support, but I know that
there would have to be some kind of process in place.
And I did, I think bring that up in the chat for a
potential activity. Is how can we implement this? So,
I’ll let anyone at the State level speak to that.

BONNIE SHERMAN: This is Bonnie, and we did
have discussions with Eva on USBRS 55, I believe it was
and we would -- we do have the process outlined in the
Bicycle Tourism Trails Study. So, you can refer back
to that. We do not have any designated routes here in
Texas. But, you know, we are open to working with
local communities if they wish to lead an effort to
designate a route. We are definitely open to working with y’all. It does require sign-off by the highest levels of TxDOT so we would just need to have -- receive a proposal from the local entity and work -- work through the paperwork with you. So, you know, no commitments today but -- but we are willing to work with y’all.

EVA GARCIA: For future reference it’s on Page 53 of the Bicycle Tourism Trails Study. Because know at this level, I think -- at the MPO level we’re looking back at it and trying to pick that back off of the shelf.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Thanks Bonnie and Eva.

EVA GARCIA: So, Page 53 if you want to learn about the process.

KARLA WEAVER: Any other questions or comments? Alright. Well thank you so much. We appreciate learning more about that part of Texas. Okay, one our last Items is going to be Item Number 9. We’re going to get -- I’m gonna go around and ask for updates from committee members of local happenings or other issues that you’d like to bring up that are occurring within your part of Texas that you want to make others aware of. Let me start with Bobby and Bobby anything going on in El Paso that you wanted
to share with the group related to bicycle and pedestrian activities?

               BOBBY GONZALES: Well, nothing much has changed since the last quarter but -- cause most of the CID regarding the Capital Improvement projects have been temporarily placed on hold. So hopefully in 2021 we’ll see those projects get moved up. On a positive note, we’ve seen obviously a significant increase in outdoor activity, which includes walking, biking, running. Which I’m sure most of you have seen in your respective communities as well. It may be going back to something Bonnie mentioned earlier about fatalities, you know, it could be -- I don’t know. I mean I’d like to see the stats on this but, you know, maybe impatient drivers, possibly inexperience of new cyclists. It’s kind of hard to tell but I’d like to -- I’d like to see data behind that to see what exactly is happening. But all -- again, all is well considering Covid but other than that, you know, it’s all good in here in El Paso.

               KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks, Bobby.

               Chelsea, anything to share with what’s happening in Waco?

               CHELSEA PHLEGAR: Hi. Well, we have two projects that are either starting construction or will be starting soon. One is the Elm Avenue Streetscape
project, which was a TA where a couple of years ago in the City of Waco that was recently let, and the project will be about 24 months. And it’s a really big deal for our Region because east Waco has a history of under investment and ever since word got out that the streetscape project was funded and it was happening and then the City of Waco did a model block about a year and a half ago, there’s been a lot of new development and investment in the area. One of which is a new bank branch, CFMB opened in east Waco on Elm Avenue and it’s a big deal because the last known bank in east Waco closed in 1915 or 196. So, it’s been about 100 years since that community has had a bank branch so that’s a really big deal.

Another project worth highlighting is Washington Avenue. Again, in the City of Waco it’s a conversation of one-way street to a two-way street and it’s gonna include separate bike lanes. That was really important to the some of the businesses along that corridor and downtown. And the community voiced a lot of support so we’re happy to see that the City is kicking that off soon. So that’s all I got. Thanks.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks for sharing about those projects. Clint? What about the Houston area?
CLINT MCMANUS: Yeah. Lots of stuff going on. I think at the City of Houston level one of the biggest things in recent -- the recent months has been the adoption of the Vision Zero Action Plan, which is awesome. Moving forward on that. And then City of Houston is continuing to complete and finalize a lot of our new high comfort bikeways that they’ve been working on for the past couple of years and it’s really coming to a nice network in the city’s core. And then following the success of those bikeways, we’ve seen a lot more -- the lot of entities from our (indiscernible) to county officials. I wouldn’t say jumping on the bandwagon, but I would say maybe more like realizing the importance and success of those bikeways and it’s been incredible to see.

We’ve got multiple planning study’s underway for new -- for bikeways in new parts of town that really haven’t seen much investment for the last few years -- I mean, investment ever in high comfort bikeways. So, it’s really awesome to see the momentum of those original investments go on to spur even more things.

And one of the one’s that I’m really excited to see in our Montrose neighborhood, which is our historic -- one of our historic neighborhoods, it’s got
a tighter street grid. We’ve got -- the (indiscernible) is funding two bikeways there right now as the beginning of their bikeway investments. And they are not your standard high comfort type bikeways with a protected bike lane. They’re more -- they’re neighborhood streets that are relatively high traffic but don’t have a lot of room for any specific, our know, protected bikeway or standard bikeway treatments, so the designs are gonna be more neighborhood bikeway with hopefully some -- some specific kind of new to Houston intersection treatments that are -- that are -- will be cool to see. I think it will be the first of its kind, kind of safe street neighborhood bikeway concept in Houston and I’m really hoping that it turns out well and that the neighborhood likes it because it could be a good path for a lot of our other smaller streets in the city.

And then we’ve also got -- the other -- the last I would mention is just we’ve got a lot of new, fresh leadership in Houston. It’s really exciting. We’ve got a new leader at Bike Houston our advocacy organization, Joe Potrusso that came from Transportation Firm America. And then also, Veronica Davis is new to Public Works and she’s coming -- she has a ped/bike background towards -- specific to
equity. And I’m so excited to see what they do. Brand new fresh ideas, so yep. That’s it.

KARLA WEAVER: Awesome. Alright, thanks.

Eddie, what about you?

EDDIE CHURCH: So, most of my focus has been in Williamson County over the last, you know, through the pandemic. So, a lot -- a lot of stuff going on there. We passed the new bond and with that there was also a, I don’t know, $100 million or whatever, bond for the Parks Group and so with that there’s been more design projects with the bike and ped facilities. In the past nine months we’ve completed two projects with a shared-used path to increase the connectivity in Round Rock and between some major developments in the more rural area of Leander. That’s a bonus. That’s positive for us. So, we’ve been working with the County and also about maybe getting some increased funding through (indiscernible) what not for more of these similar facilities. So, anyways, some of this information today will be good about that Call for Projects. I can communicate that with the County. So, been busy with mainly County projects. Oh, and I got a new bike. That was awesome. So, great for me.

EVA GARCIA: I think I highlighted more --
KARLA WEAVER: Sure.
EVA GARCIA: -- some of my projects during my presentation. But that’s basically it. Hopefully kicking off the bike/ped count program data is my priority right now and -- and then really hoping to gather everything for the USBR application. So, thank you.

KARLA WEAVER: Awesome. Thanks. Frank, what about you in the Laredo area?
FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Sure. Well first all, Eva, thank you for the presentation and congratulations. That’s a great position to be in for setting time for you in the Valley.

And so here on the border, nearby, neighboring border, we’re really excited to be able to report that our Laredo Webb County MPO executed our Active Transportation Plan. And I think I reported like in earlier meetings that started out as a bike plan that was then of course extended out to a pedestrian plan, so we’ve now incorporated not only for cycles but our pedestrians, personal mobility devices and bringing in our mass transit system here. It’s called El Metro. And so that plan is going to our MPO and our City Council this coming February for adoption.
And once it is adopted it will be added as an amendment to our Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan that we worked on a few years back. So, we’re really excited to be at this point and get working toward implementation.

That’s what I got.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks so much.

Jeff, anything to share from the Corpus Christi region?

JEFF POLLACK: Hi. Yeah. We -- we’re making a little bit of slow progress in our urban core. Have some one-way to two-way street conversions that are happening that should enhance mobility overall and allow us to implement some of the bike boulevards that have been on the books for a while. You know, the other piece of data, of course the signage and striping or -- or pavement markings. You know, it’s yet to determine when those pieces will be on the ground but at least we’ll have sort of the -- the grid bones in place.

Also have some planning for a couple of different but connected destinations downtown in terms of place making and some multi-modal connectivity between them. So, you know, a little bit tangential to the bike planning that we’ve done over the last several years but trying to reconfigure at least our urban core in a way that generally supports non-vehicular
mobility. That’s about it for now. Thanks.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thanks a lot. Mike, what about you?

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Hi, all. In Austin we are — lots of stuff going on. We’re in the middle of rewriting and adopting a revision of the -- our Transportation Criteria Manual. It seems like at all — all levels of government are kind of rewriting their guidance right now. From AASHTO to like TxDOT Roadway Design Guide and at the local level, yeah, we’re rewriting our manual that is less of an update and more of a starting from scratch really. And it will have a lot of good things for pedestrians and cyclists including -- kind of including protected bikeways on, you know, collector and up type of streets by default for new or redesigned streets. So that will be great.

I was excited and interested to hear from Clint that they are kicking off neighborhood bikeways in Houston because we’re doing the same here in Austin. It’s typology of project that we have kind of been slow or slow on, I would say, in the past compared to other things like protected bike lanes. So that’s gonna be exciting in this next year or two to see how those land and -- they feel like kind of a win-win for us because these neighborhood streets, you know, the neighbors are
wanting slow speeds anyway so getting a connected bikeway without really impacting those residences should be a great thing.

And finally, we had a couple of big propositions on the ballot in November, Prop. A passed. That was transit two rail lines, a bunch of rapid bus lines and a tunnel downtown, that was $7 billion, that -- that was huge. And Prop. B more directly impacts our work. That’s more -- the $460 million for more local mobility like sidewalks, urban trails and bikeways. Which we are working to staff up and make sure we can meet our seven-year deadline to get all of that work on the ground now.

KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Well thank you. You guys can do it. Seven years, you got this. Rick, what about San Angelo area? Anything you want to share with the group?

RICK OGAN: Oh, just finished up some sidewalk projects on some of our (indiscernible) roads that are retro fitting them in so that’s a good deal there. And they’re working on another road up on the north side, completely rebuilding it. So hopefully we’ll have better accessibility up there. And that’s about it.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. Trent, anything from
the Tyler or East Texas area?

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Yeah, thanks Karla. So unfortunately for us, it’s a bit slow going as well. And the city governments just -- the MPO’s just kicking off their first meetings. We haven’t had meetings; I think in quite some time. So MPO is gonna be back engaged and I’ll be involved in that. And if you remember, I think it was in the Spring we had an awareness campaign, almost a year ago we had an awareness campaign that we kind of (indiscernible) sourced and developed (indiscernible) back off (indiscernible) -- May at the start of (indiscernible) -- we’ll kick off that awareness campaign in May but I like to -- as city government gets backs involved we have a whole new (inaudible) -- our new Mayor is actually a cyclists for, you know, for fun. He’s not competitive by any stretch but I think we’ll have a very interested audience in trying to push an Agenda for the East Texas constituents, so I look forward to the next update.

KARLA WEAVER: Very cool. Thanks, Trent. Trent, I was gonna mention, in our region we have a couple mayors that are avid cyclist and they do once a month Cycling with the Mayor events. And they’re organized by City Staff and people are invited just to
come out and ride on different or on street with the Mayors of those cities and it’s been really great to see the elected officials interacting with the public and then getting out and using the infrastructure and it’s a great way for people to communicate needs and projects and that type of stuff. Just an idea. Not sure if you’re Mayor is there yet but wanted to pass that along.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: That’s a great idea

(indiscernible) --

KARLA WEAVER: Trent, you’ve cut out. Say that again.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: -- (indiscernible) -- and in fact the last public event that Tyler had was March 20th and it was our big local bike race and the Mayor (inaudible) -- and I and some city council were -- we were -- we were (inaudible) -- out of -- (indiscernible) --

KARLA WEAVER: Trent, I’m sorry we didn’t get all of that.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Anyway, that’s a great idea --

KARLA WEAVER: I’ll see --

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: -- idea.

KARLA WEAVER: I’ll send you some information
on it just as an FYI if you’re interested. Alright.

So, I think I’m the last one to go. In the Dallas/Fort Worth region we’ve been trucking -- trucking along. We just completed three --

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Karla, I was saying that it was --

KARLA WEAVER: Trent, I got part of that and we lost you again. Is it just me or other’s having difficulty hearing Trent?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Yeah, we’re having trouble.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: I’m certain it’s me.

KARLA WEAVER: Sorry about that.

TRENT BROOKSHIRE: Yeah, apologies. I was just --- Karla, I was just said it was a great idea. Thank you.

KARLA WEAVER: Oh, cool. Thanks, Trent. We had a series of three two-day workshops by our Federal Highway Administration on designing for pedestrian safety and we did those all virtual. And I will say that we were a little skeptical of how those workshops would turn out, but they were very well attended. All three sessions had about 60 to 80 attendees and there was a lot of interaction in the chat and in the conversation and kind of how it was broken up. So, the modules were very well received by I think the
engineering and planning communities. So, we’re excited to see that that online learning can still work because the exercises were always the most popular parts of that training, so I think everybody sort of bobbed and weaved pretty well and it turned out good.

We also just finished -- we had -- we’ve had a grant for the past couple of years from the Federal Trans Administration to look at a couple of different things around our rail stations. We have about 74 rail stations in DFW and so we took a grouping of those, 28, and we did a couple of different things. But one of them was routes to rail analysis of where we were missing sidewalks and bike infrastructure and where there were safety concerns. And then as part of that study, we advanced 15% designed engineer for about five of the stations in various locations. So, we wrapped up that study and then we were successful in going to our policy board and getting some money allocated to two of the 28 stations. And those were two of the five that had had some of the preliminary engineering so -- which has led us to some really interesting work on a propensity to bike and walk map that we’re looking at in our Region. I know some others have done this but as we start prioritizing these infrastructure investments whether it’s safety or EJ or ridership or a
whole host of things that we’re looking at sort of the analytics of what makes sense as we sort of put a program of packages together and sort of just try to take bites of this over time and partner with our various cities and counties and transit agencies to implement this. So that’s been pretty -- pretty exciting to get an early win there.

We recently wrapped up -- we had several interjurisdictional study’s going on between cities. So, we had one in the south between two cities (indiscernible) to Waxahachie, (indiscernible) for those. Another one, we have a regional trail that will get you from Denton, Texas down to Dallas. And there’s one critical gap in the middle that is adjacent to rails. So, we hired a consultant. There were five cities, two counties and transit agencies in the mix in this kind of no man’s land. So brought all those folks together to look at alternatives in the routes and -- and that’s been a pretty successful study that’s concluded.

And then we have a third project in the City of Fort Worth, it’s called Bomber Spur where it creates a continual loop within the City of Fort Worth around our Trinity Trail System, which is exciting to see. So, all of those are done and now the next part of
course is the partnerships and the implementation and
sort of how you start taking bites away from those
projects to get them built over time.

We had been tracking TxDOT’s work on looking
at pedestrian safety and high priority crash corridors
and TxDOT had looked at some work in the Dallas/Fort
Worth area -- or some areas in the Dallas/Fort Worth
that we had requested as part of a research project.
Which is concluded with pretty cool results. And so,
we took that and tied into a regional pedestrian safety
plan that we’ve developed for DFW and used their
methodology, tweaked it a little bit and have come up
with our highest crash corridors for pedestrians within
our Region, our 50 top corridors if you will. And so,
we’re gonna be launching procurements this summer to go
out and do roadway safety audits for several of those
locations. So that work is really going to provide a
guide map for us of where we want to prioritize some
pedestrian improvements as part of that regional plan.
Which is exciting because pedestrian issues are a
struggle from a regional -- the big -- the broader the
geography, the harder regional impacts -- or pedestrian
impacts are hard to see because sometimes they’re so
localized, they don’t seem -- there --- seems to be any
pattern. But, you know, this work was pretty
interesting. That research product that the State
developed working with UTEP actually looks at sort of a
grid network through GIS of your entire roadway network
and starts drawing correlations. And if you guys
haven’t seen a copy of that maybe Bonnie and Noah can
send it out. It is really instrumental for us and gave
us a road map.

And then finally, looking at our pedestrian
safety issues we learned a lot of stuff about who were
our people that were buying, and they tended to be
male. They tended to be over 50. They tended to
almost all --- I would say 70% of them were happening
at night, which we thought but we couldn’t prove. And
so, we have a lot of data that came out of that cause
every crash record for the last five years, which was a
lot in our region, was reviewed and so we -- our
elected officials decided to re-engage one of our
safety campaigns, Look Out Texans and so we’re gonna be
launching that again in the Spring, which is cool.

So, lot of stuff going on. You know, we
talked about before with Covid, bike/ped numbers have
been crazy. We show our elected officials every month.
Freights are down, airports are down, toll roads are
down but bike and ped has been steady at 30-40%
increase from what it was in previous years. So, it’s
getting a lot of attention and they are, you know, thankfully trying to get us tools and resources to keep people safe out there.

Alright. So, the Item Number 10 -- or that wraps it up for Item Number 9. For Item Number 10 I want to mention that for public comments, those are due -- due to the virtual format of the meeting, public comments may be submitted by e-mail to bikeped@txdot.gov by January 25th and those will be included as part of the meeting record. Any questions about that?

Alright. So, our final Item is discussion of Agenda items for future BAC meetings. So, this is our first meeting of the year and we have a couple more of these will come up in 2021. Are there any specific topics or things that BAC members want to see brought back for more discussion or education or information throughout the rest of the year? And then this is gonna help Bonnie and Noah and Carl sort of start of thinking about Agendas and programs and special speakers and all that kind of stuff. Any ideas that you guys want to throw out there?

EDDIE CHURCH: Hello, this is Eddie.

KARLA WEAVER: Eddie, go ahead.

EDDIE CHURCH: So, I see how we easily could
get wrapped around the actions on like education issues
and I could talk for hours on the details of how to
build stuff. But those are very important topics and
maybe not, you know, it isn’t the best venue to have
all of us on there going back and forth on them. So,
are those both things that could be like special
committees that, you know, meet once a month, you know,
if not the whole group and talk about just those things
and come up with ideas? Or is that beyond the scope of
this group? The ‘cause I had some kind of action
items on reviewing some TxDOT standards and I did that
but I’m not for sure other than just forwarding it to
Noah or somebody how we communicate that information.

KARLA WEAVER: Eddie, if -- let me repeat
what I think I heard and make sure I got it right. So,
you’re thinking that if folks are interested in
education and there sort of seems to be a spread of
what that looks like, that maybe there needs to be a
subcommittee to talk about more specifics about
education or to inventory education or look at the
different things and bring those back to the Committee.
Is that kind of what you’re saying?

EDDIE CHURCH: Right. And when reviewing the
Committee, everybody talked about what’s going on in
their area, everybody is -- loves their area and knows
what’s going on. That’s the perfect form right there. Each area represents all of Texas could say here in our area this group is doing this for education. And just get the ideas out there and then take that information and say oh, we could do this also in Laredo or whatever. It seems like, you know, we could talk for hours for here which we shouldn’t be doing but maybe we could meet separately and just dedicate an hour to talking about education issues. And everybody do their homework prior to that and come up with it. And the same thing about TxDOT standards and building, those are both things I could talk a lot on but yeah, that’s what I was saying.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

EDDIE CHURCH: Having a separate group for the --

KARLA WEAVER: Cool. Yeah, I will leave it to the -- the mechanics of it to the TxDOT Staff but I actually really like the idea if we did sort of a round robin of everybody gives five, 10 minutes on what are the education programs within your part of Texas or what resources are people using or, you know, I would love the State to present on that. I think everybody knows different things about different cool, you know, campaigns or programs or things like that. But then
that’s a lot of information and knowledge sharing we could do. And whether that’s a special session or a subcommittee or a presentation at just one of the BAC meetings. The how, I’ll turn it over to TxDOT and see if they have any suggestions.

EDDIE CHURCH: Okay. Thank you.

KARLA WEAVER: Other ideas? Or topics that people would like to see come back?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: This is Frank. I guess -- well I guess I have a question first. Based on what we were told again earlier today about transitioning into a bicycle/pedestrian committee?

KARLA WEAVER: Uh-huh.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: And I know that it was -- it’s up for public comment. So, what is the timeline on that in terms of it actually, I guess becoming official? Or --

KARLA WEAVER: Yeah. So, Eric had said the Commission will approve it in February. So, when we come back in April, we will be the -- that will have changed our mission statement if you will.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: So -- so then based on that, I think some future agenda items are for us obviously to how we transition to that?

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.
FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Like things that might be helpful for us, you know, educationally.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay.

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: I think we’re familiar with bicycle and pedestrian issues but more specifically for our Committee. Like what does that -- what does that mean for us and just relating to that idea of the transition.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. I think that’s great. You know, I would -- I would tag on to that. I think we need to look at our name. Does that need to be updated as part of that conversation as we’ve expanded our role? I think that would be a great topic, Frank. Thank you.

ERIC GLEASON: So, Karla, this Eric.


ERIC GLEASON: The rules that are out for comment changed the name of the committee to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

KARLA WEAVER: Oh, well there you go. So new title for April.

ERIC GLEASON: So, there.

KARLA WEAVER: It’s perfect.

ERIC GLEASON: Yes. So, if you want to comment on the name, you have until January 25th.
KARLA WEAVER: Thank you for letting us know that Eric. I forgot that part.

ERIC GLEASON: And just in case anyone is wondering as well about committee composition. There has been some questions asked by Commissioners on when and how pedestrian interests would be accommodated in Committee membership. So, the -- the rules keep the size of the Committee at 11 members. Well, let me put it this way, the rules do not specifically (indiscernible) the size of the Committee.

The next sort of regularly scheduled series of appointments comes up in August of 2021. And so, barring any interest before that, that would be the first opportunity for the Commission to look at the composition of the Committee and decide to make some appointments then that would bring a pedestrian element into the Committee. At a minimum, the rules require the Committee to have at least one individual representing the interests of the community of folks with disabilities.

So, and the only thing I add to that is that -- is that the Commission can through a (indiscernible) action they can decide to add members to the Committee. There’s a ceiling on how large Advisory Committees can get and I think it’s, I want to say it’s 25. And a
couple of Commissioners have asked about the timing of new appointments to the Committee to bring that pedestrian focus. And what we have told them is that they can introduce any time and then order additional appointments that would increase the size of the Committee. So, I’ve not seen any or have not been given any direction to do that. But it’s possible in conjunction with adoption of final rules of that topic will come up again and we’ll certainly update the Committee on that in April. Sorry for the long explanation but that’s where that stands.

KARLA WEAVER: Thanks, Eric. Other ideas or topics that folks are interested in that they’d like to see over the next year?

CLINT MCMANUS: Hello, this is Clint. I wanted to second kind of what you had said earlier about the ADA transition plans. That’s something that I know what you were saying about the Dallas area, Houston has a lot of municipalities that still haven’t done that, and I don’t know enough about it to be able to speak on it intelligently. So, I would love to learn if we can in this form.

KARLA WEAVER: Okay. I would like a presentation on the neighborhood bikeways that you guys talked about that are coming up online in Houston and
Austin. And just how those are working and being incorporated. I think that would be a really cool topic for folks.

JEFF POLLACK: This is Jeff. I totally agree.

EVA GARCIA: Yeah, I like both of those topics.

MIKE SCHOFIELD: Yeah, I would be happy to do that. Maybe it could be joint with Clint and I?

KARLA WEAVER: A tag team? That’d be awesome. I would like -- there was a TxDOT project with a consultant that had been hired to look at priorities for the Regional Tourism Routes, I would like an update on that. I think it’s been some time since we’ve heard the status of that or the final outcomes. So maybe that can come back to the Committee this year. Any other topics?

BONNIE SHERMAN: We can do that.

KARLA WEAVER: Any other topics or ideas guys? Thank you, Ms. Bonnie.

EVA GARCIA: I mentioned in the chat information about the facility inventory efforts and/or CRIS data and reporting but it seems like we got a lot of ideas already so, you know, just throwing out a few more.
KARLA WEAVER: Okay. No, that’s great. Anything else? And of course, if you think of anything once you’re off the call and you have a great idea in the shower tonight, you can always e-mail Bonnie and Noah and they’ll get them in the roster of possible ideas.

Alright, well hearing no other discussion. Thank you, everybody for your time and the conversation and the presentations today. I think we learned a lot and it’s always great to hear everyone’s ideas and learn what’s going on in your parts of Texas. I’m excited about the 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and kind of, you know, it’s a great time in this discipline and there’s so many cool tools and resources out there now, more than there’s ever been. I think working together we’re gonna do some really cool stuff across the State of Texas. So, with that, we will move to adjourn the meeting. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

FRANK ROTNOFSKY: I motion, Frank.

KARLA WEAVER: Thank you, Frank. Will someone second?

EDDIE CHURCH: I’m Eddie, second the motion.

KARLA WEAVER: Who was that?

EDDIE CHURCH: This is Eddie. Second the
motion.

    KARLA WEAVER: Alright. Thank you, Eddie. I will assume that all are in favor. If you are not in favor of adjourning say ay. Alright, otherwise -- alright, thanks everybody. Have a great rest of your day.

    FRANK ROTNOFSKY: Thank you.

    EVA GARCIA: Thank you.

    KARLA WEAVER: Bye guys.

    BONNIE SHERMAN: Thanks, everyone.

    (END OF AUDIO FILE.)
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Before me, Katherine Martinez, on this day personally appeared Angelica Mathews, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that they executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

Given under my hand and seal of office this 2nd day of February 2021.

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