

TSAC Minutes
February 5, 2020

Members Present:

Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Joe Dillard
Mr. Andy Deuel
Mr. Purna Doddapaneni
Dr. Eleanor Green (Ms. Misty Skaggs)
Dr. Julie Harlin
Ms. Erin Jones (Mr. Steve Miller)
Dr. Andrew Klein
Mr. Peter Lange
Ms. Regan McGuill (Ms. Julia Garcia)
Ms. Lisa Pierce

Mr. Robert Pottberg
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Mr. Tom Reber
Ms. Flora Reeves
Dr. John Stallone

Absent:

Mr. Thomas Barrow
Mr. Mikey Jaillet
Mr. Jim Kovar

1. Mr. Peter Lange opened the meeting at 11:44 a.m.
2. Mr. Lange asked everyone to review the minutes from the December meeting. Mr. Bill Cox motioned to approve the minutes; Dr. Angie Hill Price seconded; minutes approved.
3. Mr. Ron Steedly gave an update on our shared mobility program. Please see presentation: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx>.
 - His message was that despite the challenges we have faced, shared mobility works. We currently have 6,000 active users in our VeoRide bike share program, who are sharing 2,000 bikes.
 - We met the challenges of non-compliant use with some effective measures. By implementing our lock-to bike rack solution and limiting the geofence to the campus only, infractions have markedly decreased. We now have “hitching posts” at several Zachry sites and the new Student Services Building.
 - We deployed 150 pedal-assist, electric bikes, which are also restricted to campus use. We have already seen 2,000 bike rides, with about 350 rides per day. We are currently collecting data on route origin and completion. The cost for these is \$1 to unlock, and 50 cents per minute to use. These are helping students who have a longer commute on campus. They are creating about a 20-cent-per-ride revenue stream.
- 3.1. Dr. Hill Price asked about the fine structure for VeoRide offenses.

3.1.1. Mr. Steedly said for the first offense of not using a “lock to” to end a ride, results in a warning. The second offense is a \$25 fine, the third a \$50 fine, the fourth a \$75 fine, and any violations after that, the user is locked out of the program.

3.2. Dr. Julie Harlin asked if pedal-assist bikes have to be charged.

3.2.1. Mr. Steedly said we do a “hot swap,” and remove and replace the battery on site. We take the discharged battery in for recharging.

3.3. Ms. Regan McGill asked where the revenues from the bike programs go.

3.3.1. Mr. Steedly replied that it goes toward the bike program overhead.

4. Mr. Kenny Kimball presented “Transportation by the Numbers,” this time showing bus maintenance costs. See presentation at:

<https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx>.

5. Dr. Tim Lomax, TTI, provided a presentation entitled “Bryan-College Station Large Projects 2020-2024.” He gave a brief overview:

- Several significant projects are in the works.
- They will attempt to reduce daytime and rush-hour effects.
- They will employ early and continuous communication through various media outlets.
- Travelers should keep informed about the possible disruption of traffic flow, and keep current with project schedules.

His presentation can be found here: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx>.

The Texas Department of Transportation Project Tracker can be found here:

http://apps.dot.state.tx.us/apps-cq/project_tracker/ (Key word in search: Bryan-College Station MPO).

6. Dr. Harlin and Mr. Lange briefly updated the committee that the UBIT portion of the tax code has been repealed completely.

7. Mr. Lange gave a brief update about our BUILD Grant bus order and current construction projects.

- We won the BUILD Grant in November 2018, but it has taken a year to work through the required processes to order the buses. We ordered 24 diesel buses through the BUILD Grant, and had enough money remaining to order an additional 11 buses, for a total of 35 Gillig buses to be delivered in fall 2020. Additionally, we ordered 3 Proterra electric buses, which will be delivered in spring 2021. Then in fall 2021, we will receive 4 more Gillig buses, and 5 more in fall 2022, for a total of 47 new buses in the next 3 years. All of them will be 40-foot buses, and will allow us to replace all of our 2001 and 2002 35-foot models. We will sell or dispose of old buses in phases as the new buses are

delivered. Our total number of buses will remain at 96, but our capacity will be greater.

- Mr. Lange mentioned that per the provisions of the BUILD Grant, the initial 24 diesel buses and 3 electric buses will be titled to Brazos Transit District.

7.1. Ms. McGill asked if we have to retrain our drivers to drive 40-foot buses.

7.1.1. Mr. Lange replied that we already have 40-foot buses, but we have revised our testing to focus solely on 40-foot buses. Also, we have recently changed our testing track to accommodate 40-foot buses.

8. Mr. Lange gave an update on the Polo Road Garage construction. The last major concrete pour to top out the garage was about 10 days ago. We will be able to park cars there by August 2020. With project savings, we will also be able to improve and realign Polo Road.

8.1. Dr. Andrew Klein asked if we had any plans to manage pedestrian crossing conflicts in that area.

8.1.1. Mr. Lange responded that it wasn't part of this project, but later we could look at using landscape and hardscape to channelize and control pedestrian traffic, in keeping with the Campus Master Plan.

9. Mr. Lange presented information about establishing a Quiet Zone corridor. (Instead of summarizing his presentation, we are providing an overview of the Quiet Zone concept as formally presented to stakeholders in the process).

Texas A&M University and the cities of Bryan and College Station have experienced tremendous growth over the last several decades. With this growth, quality of life issues such as traffic and noise have become more prominent community issues. Texas A&M University now has many large buildings, to include residence halls, in proximity to the railroad, with several new buildings under construction or in design. The 21st Century Classroom building, one of the largest classroom buildings in the country, and soon to be the largest classroom building on campus, is adjacent to the Greg Pitcock '49 Texas A&M University Hotel and Conference Center & Hotel and the Cain parking garage. These three buildings are across Wellborn Road from the railroad tracks. Similarly, a new undergraduate chemistry building is being designed and is planned for the corner of Olsen and Old Main, adjacent to the tracks. Because these facilities and others near the railroad corridor are so integral to academia and quality of campus life, and train horn noise affects that quality of life, university officials have been exploring options to establish a quiet zone in order to address noise concerns along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor.

Additionally, Brazos County, the City of College Station, and the City of Bryan are pursuing quiet zones in their jurisdictions. Texas A&M's efforts will allow for a contiguous quiet zone throughout the community. Texas A&M University Transportation Services personnel met with local stakeholders to gather information and concerns, and led the effort to pursue actions necessary to establish a quiet zone along the UPRR corridor.

Establishing a railroad quiet zone is critical to Texas A&M University in the realms of public safety, academic excellence and quality of life. Safety of faculty, staff, students and general public is a high level concern. As there is always a risk of a crash occurring at an at-grade railroad crossing, any efforts that reduce the risk of crashes occurring should be considered. Train horn sound is adversely impacting educational and research activities on campus. It is also adversely impacting the work environment of staff providing support operations to campus and the Texas A&M University System. Finally, train horn sound is adversely impacting the quality of stay for guests at the Texas A&M University Hotel and Conference Center. These concerns will only intensify with time as train traffic along the Navasota Sub is anticipated to increase from an average of 24 trains per day to nearly 50 trains per day with the next five (5) years.

The intent of the project is to establish a railroad quiet zone inclusive of the following four crossings for 24 hours a day, all days of the week:

- F&B Road (DOT No. 743209X) (At-Grade)
- Old Main Drive (DOT No. 743211Y) (At-Grade)
- John Kimbrough Drive (DOT No. 745037Y) (At-Grade)
- W. George Bush Drive/FM 2347 (DOT No. 743215B) (At-Grade)

Additional work to enhance the Wellborn Road passageway openings, channelizing pedestrians, wayfinding, landscaping, sidewalk improvements and any other safety measures will be accomplished by traditional University procurement methods. Railroad quiet zones are established based on specific measurable criteria established by the Federal Railroad Administration in coordination with TxDOT and UPRR.

- Mr. Lange said that after the anticipated Board of Regents' approval to fund the Quiet Zone, we will select an engineering firm, and go through two phases of design work and approval. The entire process will take about a year.
- Mr. Lange mentioned that we were holding a Wayside Horn Demonstration later in the afternoon at the George Bush and Wellborn Railroad crossing.

- After answering some general questions about the different treatments of the Quiet Zone areas, Mr. Lange closed the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

*The next meeting will be March 4, 2020, Rudder 301
Please visit our website: transport.tamu.edu*