

## ***Brazos County Regional Mobility Authority***

### ***Workshop Minutes***

February 7, 2021

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- **Call to Order**

A workshop of the Brazos County Regional Mobility Authority (BCRMA) was held in the Brazos County Commissioner's Courtroom, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, Texas, beginning at 1:34 p.m. on Monday, February 7, 2022, with the following Board members present:

Barry Moore, Chair, Presiding  
Dennis Christiansen, Vice Chair  
Veronica Morgan, Member (via Zoom)  
Jason Bienski, Member  
Lisa Lyon, BCRMA Administrative Assistant

The attached sheet contains the names of other citizens/officials that were in attendance.

- **Discussion of RMA Proposed Projects for November Referendum and Follow-up with Partners**

Over the last several months, some combination of Mr. Moore and other board members have met with partners at the City of Bryan, City of College Station, Brazos County, and Texas A&M University System to discuss projects of importance that perhaps the RMA could either take a lead or participate in a significant way in the development of those projects. The intent was to get together in this workshop and then go back to those groups with a plan with what will be taken to the voters in a referendum for the November ballot. In general, Mr. Moore felt as if there was a sense of regional cooperation in conversations with partners. Each entity has projects important to them, but support projects that are most beneficial to the region. A draft document highlighting the philosophy, roles, and action plan, and plan going forward was shown for discussion. Through the process of meeting with partners, the board came back with somewhat of a consensus of support for three projects that makes sense with a potential budget and potential purview of the RMA to address. These projects are:

- RELLIS Campus Access which is an item of significant importance to the Texas A&M System. There is not a good way to get in and out of RELLIS.
- Initiate planning of an innereast loop which is on the MPO's 2050 master. To date, no work has been done on that route which would connect William D. Fitch and Highway 30 and loops around the East side of the county and reconnects at FM 2818 and Highway 6 on the north side. This would be preliminary work on the route only to get things kick started.
- SH 40/William D. Fitch and Arrington Road intersection, looking at how that intersection might work.

Dr. Christiansen pointed out that everyone she spoke with was enthusiastic, had good ideas, were prepared, and see the benefit of what an RMA can do. The RMA took information from TxDOT, the two cities, the county, and the A&M system, and put it together into a coherent plan for discussion. The intent is to go back to each entity, but want the RMA board to have an opportunity to give input and make corrections/additions. The plan lists the extent of what the RMA can do with the budget and resources it will have if the referendum passes. One of the examples given was RELLIS Campus. Although most everybody acknowledges that at some point something different needs to happen there, at the moment nothing is being done to make a change. Feedback received indicated that if someone put together a schematic plan to show how it all works, could show the traffic numbers to justify, and took the plan to TxDOT with all of the local entities supporting it, the next step would be to take the plan to Austin and begin securing funding for the final planning, design, and construction. Without making the step to get something started, nothing will happen. It is the same thing with the innermost loop that has been a line on the MPO map for over five years with no advancement of the project to the next step while meanwhile right-of-way costs are increasing 10-15% a year. Again, the RMA can step in and begin the process. The third project mentioned is a priority of both TxDOT and the City of College Station and it is a safety and congestion issue. Again, the RMA can be the vehicle to get this project started and take it to the next step in the process. These projects came out of a discussion with all entities involved and the RMA can make a difference with their funding of \$1.5 million per year. If other projects are added, then others will need to be removed from the list, but this is a starting point for discussion.

Mr. Bienski reported that Bryan city officials were on board with this list of projects. He feels it is important that if the RMA is only considering one project, it should be of mutual benefit to Bryan and College Station such as the east Brazos County loop that connects the two cities to get tax payers to pass the \$10 fee in November. Most voters are not going to understand that there is only a little bit of money.

Dr. Christiansen added that the projects mentioned all cost between \$200-\$500 million and the RMA only has \$1.5 million. The federal government just passed the infrastructure bill which could help fund these projects, but you can't get the funding if you haven't gone through the primary steps first, some of which can be accomplished with the RMA budget. The goal would be to have several projects ready to go when the opportunity presented itself for funding.

Ms. Morgan feels as though the three projects selected as the top three or good projects. She agrees that the projects need to bridge both cities.

There are other secondary projects (potentially less expensive) where the RMA could provide leadership and direction. The potential of Union Pacific developing double track rail through Brazos County has been discussed for a while and possibly moved up the list of potential developments from UP. The RMA can provide leadership and understanding of what that does to transportation back and forth across the railroad tracks and how to manage and stay ahead of that. The RMA, in cooperation with the MPO, could provide coordination between

Brazos Transit District and Texas A&M Transit to assist with making transit a more effective option in the community. The Northgate Midtown area is the most densely populated area in Bryan/College Station and will continue to grow as entertainment and businesses develop in the area. Figuring out the best way to move people in, through, and out of that area is something that is important to both cities as well as the university. Autonomous vehicle routes was a topic that came up in the RMA's conversations with officials of Texas A&M and College Station and to some extent Bryan. The RMA could assist with brainstorming ways to develop autonomous routes and where those might be. These are not necessarily development or design projects, but projects where the RMA could potentially provide leadership.

A public outreach plan is a way to assist citizens who aren't a part of these meetings to understand what the RMA is doing and how we can positively impact transit and congestion in the area. The RMA can potentially tap into new sources of funding to advance projects. The new transportation bill puts funding in categories that weren't available before and they are categories where cities, counties, and RMAs can write grant applications, try to earmark funds, and go directly to the federal government to obtain those funds. Part of securing these funds is having an entity that is aware of what is available and this would be a perfect role for the RMA which is involved in leveraging and advocating funds to take the lead. The Washington Post had an article last week that reported dozens and dozens of cities and counties across the country had hired DC lobbyists to help them with grant applications and earmarking and finding money. This is a way for our community to get involved.

- **Discussion of Plans to Discuss the RMA with People and Groups in Brazos County**

At the Economic Outlook Conference, Mr. Moore asked groups to invite the RMA to speak and have received a good response and he has began making presentation. Mr. Moore invited anyone who is looking for a speaker or know of groups that need a speaker to let the RMA know and someone from the RMA Board will be happy to come and give a presentation about the RMA.

In closing, the possibility of a written statement of support from the cities, county, and university was discussed. Over the next several months and before the upcoming election, a formal statement of support from these entities will be helpful to move the RMA forward.

- **Adjourn**

The BCRMA workshop was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.



Brazos County Regional Mobility Authority

Meeting: Brazos County RMA Workshop

Date: Mon 2/7/2022

Name	Agency
Doug Brammell	Jones   Carter
Paul Kaspor	City of Bryan
Tashima Khandaker	BTD
Jo Marlow	BTD
Bart Bonhul	BCSMPO
Troy Rother	COCS
Samantha Surface	BUDG.
JASON SCHUBERT	COCS
STEVE ACQUILLI	BRAZOS COUNTY
NANCY BERRY	BRAZOS COUNTY
Russ Ford	Brazos County

ATTEST:



RMA Board Chair or Vice-Chair  
Brazos County Regional Mobility Authority



RMA Board Secretary

5/12/22

Date