

Regional Planning Advisory Council

Minutes of Wednesday, May 18, 2016

RPAC Members Attending:

Name	Representing
Sam Adams	Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB)
Kay Kelley Arnold	City of Little Rock
Marcia Cook	City of Sherwood
Charles Cummings (Chair)	Freight/Goods Movement
Alex DePriest	City of Little Rock
Lawrence Finn	Pulaski County
Coreen Frasier	Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (BACA)
Leesa Freasier	Arkansas Dept. of Health (ADH)
Becca Green	Rock Region Metro
Sybil Hampton	City of Little Rock
Paul Hastings	City of Little Rock
Antonio Johnson (Alt.)	Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department (AHTD)
Todd Larson	City of North Little Rock
Bob Lyford	City of Little Rock
Esperanza Massana	Arkansas Economic (AEDC)
Shanta Nunn-Baro	North Little Rock Housing Authority (NLRHA)
Buckley O'Mell (Alt.)	Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRRCC)
Dan Roda	City of Little Rock
Carolyn Shearman (Alt.)	Sierra Club
Paul Simms	AHTD
Patrick Stair	Sierra Club
Jack Stowe	City of Maumelle
Tom Sutton	Clinton National Airport
Regina Taylor	Youth Outreach
Brad Walker	City of Little Rock
Dan Weathersby	Pulaski County
Amy Whitehead	City of Conway

Guests:

Donald Bock	Citizen (Little Rock)
John Hedrick	Citizen
Jessie Jones	AHTD
Earl Mott	Garver
Noel Oman	Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Cory Parks	City of Conway
Leslie Newell Peacock	Arkansas Times
Jarod Varner	Rock Region Metro Transit Authority
Robert Walker	Citizen
Kathy Wells	Coalition of Little Rock Neighborhoods (CLRN)
Keli Wylie	AHTD

Metroplan Staff:

Lynn Bell	Graphics Specialist
Casey Covington	CARTS Planning Director
Susan Dollar	Transportation Planner/Title VI Coordinator
Daniel Holland	Planner
Jonathan Lupton	Research Planner
Richard Magee	Deputy Director
Jim McKenzie	Executive Director

1. Call to Order and Announcements

Chairman Charles Cummings called the meeting to order at 11:35 AM. The Council met at 501 W. Markham Street, Little Rock.

A draft roster of RPAC members and Metroplan staff was included in the meeting packets. The roster includes brief biographical sketches of each member, along with contact information. Members were asked to review the document on their own time and to give staff any edits they may have.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of April 20, 2016, were not available for this meeting. A draft will be sent to Council members no later than May 27th.

3. Public Comments Received on *Imagine Central Arkansas Plan Amendment*

A. Presentation by staff.

Mr. Casey Covington briefly reviewed the proposed amendment ("Amendment 1") to the *Imagine Central Arkansas Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (LRMTP)*, and summarized the public comments received during the period.

The plan amendment consists of two parts: (1) financial resources (2016-2020) and (2) a project list, contained in the FFY 2016-2020 CARTS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). As CARTS Study Director, Mr. Covington must certify financial constraint of the LRMTP. Projects must be part of the LRMTP before they can be listed on the TIP. Mr. Covington reported that together with the AHTD's revised fund marks, and the additional funds forthcoming from the FAST Act, the revised revenue forecast indicates financial constraint. The draft TIP includes many projects in addition to the proposed I-30 Crossing. This draft includes updated project cost estimates. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure financial constraint.

Regarding the I-30 Crossing project, the current ("ICA Original") and proposed ("Amendment 1") funding is as follows:

	ICA Original	Amendment 1
Connect Arkansas Program (CAP)	\$300 Million	\$404.3 Million
NHPP (Interstate Rehabilitation)	\$22.7 Million	\$22.7 Million
Earmark	\$1.1 Million	\$1.1 Million
NHPP (Bridge)	\$0	\$93.6 Million
NHPP (Operations)	\$0	\$10.0 Million
Gap Financing	\$0	\$100 Million

Mr. Covington emphasized that the I-30 Crossing project will require the approval of the Environmental Assessment (EA), which is issued through a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI).

Mr. Covington then summarized the public comments received.

A total of 196 comments were received within the advertised period, with 117 opposed to the I-30 project and/or to the proposed amendment because of the inclusion of the I-30 project. Seventy-three comments were explicitly in favor of both the amendment/TIP and the I-30 project. Five comments expressed a general concern with regard to the proposed I-30 project. One comment was from the AHTD and consisted of technical remarks regarding the TIP.

Many of the respondents took the time to write thoughtful, detailed letters explaining their position. The most common reasons cited for opposing the amendment and/or the proposed I-30 project were:

- the impact the project would have on city revitalization efforts and downtown livability;
- the high cost of the project, especially when factoring in additional widenings;
- insufficient PEL analysis;
- the prioritization of suburban commute over the viability of Little Rock and North Little Rock downtowns; and
- the premature approval of the project.

In spite of the objections to the project, many people did express support for interchange modifications and a re-built bridge.

As an example of the comments that were against the I-30 project, Mr. Covington read this:

I oppose the TIP amendment and expansion of I-30 downtown. It is a huge expenditure, will sacrifice or degrade some of the special features of Little Rock, which currently draw visitors from all over the world, and will NOT significantly impact commute times.

Traffic in Little Rock is a laughable problem if you have ever seen rush hour in a larger city. It is the price one must pay for living far from work. Why should people of Little Rock worsen one of the most popular areas of the city to decrease commutes for non-residents by a few seconds?

Other cities are moving AWAY from these types of projects and arrangements. Think public transportation, HOV lanes, the rapidly developing technology of self driving cars - the traffic projection of 20-30 years from now are not accurate.

The future is walkability, bike lanes, green space and visually appealing thru-ways that are not impassable barriers of concrete. Little Rock wants to retain and attract a young, talented, and educated population, correct? This construction does not illustrate that desire . . .

The 73 people who commented in favor of the amendment/TIP argued that the approval would permit many important projects in the region to move forward. These people also expressed support for the I-30 project with full funding shown. Most of their comments contained the following language:

. . . Metroplan's draft TIP for 2016-2020 includes numerous important transportation improvement projects in the region, including CA0602 (30 Crossing). I am pleased to see that the full funding for this project is included in Metroplan's draft TIP and Long Range Plan. I wholeheartedly support this project and its inclusion into the draft TIP. Please approve the draft TIP as currently presented.

Five comments expressed general concern about the proposed I-30 project, but did not state whether they were opposed to or in support of the amendment. Typical of these comments:

I would very much like to position our area for smart growth regarding freeway expansion. Recent history has shown us very clearly that mindless freeway expansion results in tearing communities apart - both physically and psychologically. Please, let us actually learn from the previous generation of mistakes made in highway construction and approach this in a thoughtful, research based manner. The funding for this construction comes from our mutual taxes - let us arrive at the decisions in an environment of mutual respect, with an eye to known lessons on how to expand with minimal repercussions.

Mr. Covington concluded his presentation with three take-aways from the public comments:

- (1) Significant public disagreement remains regarding the I-30 Crossing project, especially with regard to its design and the stated purpose and need.
- (2) The LRMTTP and TIP include a number of important projects for central Arkansas, including a number of transit projects.
- (3) Public confusion remains regarding Metroplan's continued role for approval of the project before it can move to construction. This last was anticipated by staff, because the transportation planning process can be confusing, and this project in particular is complicated.

B. Council discussion pertaining to the proposed plan amendment.

Chairman Cummings asked for questions and comments from the Council. The following summary is not a verbatim transcription, but does closely adhere to the ensuing discussion.

Mr. Roda: Thank you for reading through and summarizing all of public comments, and I echo Casey's thanks to the public for its input. Our charge as RPAC is to certify the long-range plan is financially constrained. Last night I attended a presentation by the independent consultant hired by the citizens' group 30 Crossing, and while I had reservation before the presentation, those reservations are now quite a bit stronger. Since our charge is to determine financial constraint, I will limit most of my concerns to the financial implications of the I-30 project. The consultant's modeling shows that the current proposal fails to consider spillover effect, causing traffic back-up on arterials as far west as University due to the induced demand bringing traffic through downtown. By its own description, the project assumes that additional roadway widening will be required. You just showed an estimated funding gap of \$100 million, but it sounds like it would be much larger - more like hundreds of millions, if these widenings are taken into consideration. Therefore, if the Board is going to vote on whether or not to make this amendment, I would propose that we as the RPAC, recommend approval of all the other projects listed in the TIP; however, I don't see how we, in good conscience, can recommend approval of this amendment with the inclusion of the I-30 project as presented. As presented, we've been given three options: the eight-lane, the 12-lane (collector-distributor version), or the no-build. The only option we can certify as financially constrained, in my opinion is the no-build.

Mr. Covington: Thank you, Dan. I want to emphasize that the responsibility of the Council is to look at the project in terms of its impact on the long-range plan and make recommendations to the Metroplan Board. It is the responsibility of the CARTS Study Director to determine financial constraint of the plan. At this point in the

process, I feel comfortable in stating that the plan is financially constrained, based on the information we have. I agree with you that if the information changes before the project goes to construction we would have to reconsider the financial constraint issue.

Mr. Roda: I disagree with you on that point. I don't think we can wait. The Board is getting ready to vote on the amendment in one week. I do think that there may be some misunderstanding in the public as to what our role is and is not as the RPAC, but there's got to be some opportunity for us to recognize the complete departure from our Imagine Central Arkansas plan, that this 30 Crossing project represents. I don't see how we can endorse it any further; so, if we are going to make a recommendation to the Board, I would move that any recommendation that we make explicitly exclude 30 Crossing.

Mr. Cummings: Let me speak to that. I am going to bring a Motion to the Council that will address your concerns. We can all agree that the plan needs to be amended for the sake of the other projects and revised or additional funding - for the validity of the plan itself, we need to do that. I think we can also agree that the I-30 Crossing project will come about in form - not in this currently presented form. But the bridge needs to be replaced, and there are also ramps that need to be improved. And this amendment get the money in there for it. My concern is that, knowing the plan needs to be amended, I did not want my vote to amend the plan to imply that I was voting for the I-30 project in its current form - because I am not in favor of it, and I want to give each of you time to speak directly to this before the meeting is over. I have drawn up a Motion asked staff to give me technical rationale. [Mr. Cummings then distributed the following draft Motion and rationale for the Council's consideration as a formal recommendation to the Metroplan Board.](#)

While the Council took a few minutes to read the proposed Motion and rationale in detail, **Mr. Roda** asked if Metroplan staff has met with or seen any of the material produced by the Smart Mobility consultants. **Mr. Covington** replied that he met with Norman Marshall of Smart Mobility yesterday [Tuesday, May 17] and provided all of his data resources, and staff is now in the process of reviewing that and confirming those results. Mr. Covington stated that he hoped to be able to report to the RPAC at its next meeting. He added that Mr. Marshall and his group bring up some valid concerns regarding the project, but at this point, without having delved into the material, Mr. Covington did not feel comfortable expressing his professional opinion.

Ms. Frasier stated that she had attended the same meeting as Mr. Roda and heard the presentation from Smart Mobility, and something that disturbed her a great deal is the financial implications of the project.

Mr. Cummings asked for a second on the Motion that was on the floor.

MOTION by Mr. Cummings, second by Ms. Green

"The RPAC recommends approval of the proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* (ICA) as presented to the public for comments, with the clear understanding, confirmed by AHTD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval before it can move to construction."

Rationale: This recommendation is made with the understanding that the sole purpose of Plan Amendment 1 is to change to forecasted revenue available for ICA by: (1) increasing the anticipated federal revenue forecast for the years covered by the recently passed FAST Act based on the annual percentage increases in statewide apportionment for Arkansas contained within the Act, and (2) increasing the anticipated state revenue for the same time period based on the allocation state funds to specific projects as reflected in the draft CARTS FY 2016-2020 TIP. We understand that these changes in forecasted revenue for the plan have identified sufficient revenue to cover the cost of projects moved from the vision plan to the financially constrained plan and cost updates to other projects reflected in the draft TIP. Actual apportionments of federal transportation funds and project costs will be reviewed and refined annually to determine if financial constraint is still maintained.

There was considerable public comment both pro and con on Plan Amendment 1, focused almost exclusively on the 30 Crossing project, and the RPAC commends those comments to the Board for your consideration. The RPAC has outstanding concerns about the project and its consistency with *Imagine Central Arkansas*, the policy on freeway design (often cited as the six-lane cap) and the system-wide impacts and financial consequences thereof to the metropolitan transportation plan. We understand that most attention to date has been focused on design considerations and the impact of the project on the urban fabric in Little Rock and North Little Rock, but look forward to having a robust discussion of these regional issues upon the completion of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA), the indication of a preferred alternative and staff's final analysis of the system-wide impacts of that alternative. It is also clear that provisions should be made for additional public comment on the project before final clearance by the MPO.

Discussion on the Motion was extensive. The following summary is not verbatim, but does closely follow the ensuing discussion.

Ms. Frasier: I've heard so many cost estimates given for this project. What is current project cost?

Mr. Covington: The budget for this project is \$631 million.

Mr. Cummings: You've got to understand that that figure is a moving target.

Ms. Frasier: I understand that, and that is why I am concerned. In the public meeting I attended, the presenter said the three (3) percent of that figure per year would be for maintenance. That is after construction. I don't think we can afford the I-30 Crossing. We've got to replace the bridge.

Mr. Cummings: That is not the issue before us now. We will talk about the I-30 project shortly. Right now we are talking about amending the plan. There is a Motion on the floor.

Mr. Walker: We were all shocked this spring when the Board met and made its tentative approval of this plan. Several of us attended, or watched from public access TV, the public meeting. There was a discussion of an arbitrarily narrowed PEL process, and we also heard a discussion among the Little Rock Directors about financing this project. This reminds me of someone going to med school because their uncle said he'd pay for med school. And they didn't mean to be a doctor, they wanted to be an artist, but they went to med school because their uncle paid for it. Right now my concern in this is, can our amendment read that we want to fund a solution for congestion in the core and we're happy to allocate \$600-plus million for that purpose, but we are not constraining those funds to the project that has been presented and has yet to be approved? I think anything short of that puts us in the same box - whether or not we approve this number, or whatever conditions we put on it, the money is being used as a wedge to deny alternatives. Can we say that we're happy to have \$600 million to spend in central Arkansas, but we don't know where we want to spend it yet?

Mr. Covington: There are two things that go to your question. First, I don't consider that the \$631 million is specific to any one project, or to any proposal that the State currently has before us. We are reserving the money for improvements within the corridor.

Mr. Simms: At this point, the wording in the MTP calls for "reconstruction and operational improvements". That's all it says.

Mr. Walker: So we could not build a Chester Street bridge with that definition.

Mr. Covington: That is correct.

Mr. Lyford: If the amendment did not include the money for the I-30 project, would that delay the ultimate construction of the project? What are the consequences of not including the I-30 money in this amendment?

Mr. Covington: Before any project in the TIP can move forward, it must also be included in the STIP. I cannot say how the State would respond to a TIP that does not include the I-30 project. If the State were willing to accept it, then other central Arkansas projects could move forward. If the State were not willing to accept it, then all projects within our area would come to a stop.

Mr. Lyford: From your answer, then it is possible that there would be no consequence and other projects could move forward?

Mr. Covington: It is possible, but not probable. [Turning to the representatives from AHTD, he asked for their input.] The question is, if the amendment were approved with the project at its current funding, without the additional funds, would the State be willing to accept that?

Ms. Jones: If this project is not included in the TIP at the same funding level as what is in the STIP, then there is an inconsistency. If the TIP and STIP are inconsistent, then the STIP can move forward without including any of the projects for the CARTS area. To Casey's point, this is a financial amendment to the plan, setting aside the money for this particular project, but there are more projects on the TIP, which you are amending, as well.

Mr. Lyford: What would be the effect if two months from now, or four months from now, the Board acted to amend the TIP to allow those funds? What would be the harm of that?

Mr. Cummings: You are talking about voting down this Motion and revisiting it another few months.

Mr. Lyford: I'm talking about amending the Motion to take out the additional dollars for the I-30 project and amending the money back in at some future point.

Mr. McKenzie: Let me remind everybody that the I-30 project is in the current plan, for operational improvements at \$300 million. There are two big projects in *Imagine Central Arkansas* that were in process when the plan was being developed. One was this project, and the \$300 million is a place-holder for that. The other project was *Move Central Arkansas*, the transit strategic plan, and we put a place-holder in the plan for that project, assuming that we would have to amend the plan when we got more information.

The law reads that the TIP and STIP have to be the same, because once the MPO adopts the TIP, and it is approved by the Governor, then it must be incorporated without change into the State Transportation Improvement Program. Projects have got to be in the STIP before you can spend any federal money on them. Now, there is an interesting wrinkle to this. The federal law and regulations say that the

Governor has to approve the TIP, the AHTD legal department under the Mack-Blackwell amendment define the Directors of Highways as the Governor for all transportation purposes. Therefore, Mr. Bennett would have to approve the TIP, or not approve the TIP. We went through this process the last time adopted a TIP, with some misunderstanding. The State can adopt a STIP, but it cannot adopt a TIP that is different from the STIP. I think what Mr. Bennett made clear to the Board is that the language that is in the plan amendment is acceptable to him, as the Governor, for this purpose and that anything different from that would result in the State adopting the STIP without any projects in it for central Arkansas. Now, that doesn't become critical until the first of October, which is the end of the current federal fiscal year. Theoretically, there is time between now and then, but this amendment will be on the Metroplan Board agenda next week. The Board will act on it, or not act on it, and your recommendation will be considered, whatever it may be. That is where things lie right now.

Ms. Whitehead asked Mr. Covington to put the slide showing the project budget numbers back on the screen.

Ms. Green: You've made it clear that we are not voting today on whether to change the six-lane policy in the long-range plan. But it sounds like you are anticipating another amendment proposal to be made soon regarding the project itself. Do you have a better understanding of what the timeline for that might be? If it's just a couple of months from now, and nothing is going to get approved until the end of the fiscal year anyway, then does it matter if we delay this, or is it definitely before the Metroplan Board this week?

Mr. McKenzie: The plan amendment, as Casey has said, is mainly a financial amendment to account for additional resources and minor adjustments. The TIP language is the same. The language in the plan update stipulates that this project is for operational improvements and reconstruction only and that it has to come back to the MPO for approval before the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from the feds, and before the project goes to construction. We do anticipate, based on promises by AHTD and Federal Highway Administration officials, that they will honor that footnote, and it will come back through this process, and we can then focus all this attention on the 30 Crossing project, without worrying whether it will impact everything else.

There are two major sets of issues to this project:

(1) It's the biggest project this State has ever done in one of the most complex corridors. It's going to have some issues. One set of issues is the ingress-egress, the design of the project, the impact on the urban fabric in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock, and the Highway Department has been working with the public, with stakeholders, and with the elected officials on both sides of the river to try to address those comments.

(2) The other set of issues, and one that has not yet been seriously addressed, only peripherally, is that of the impact of this project on the regional transportation system, the goals and objectives of *Imagine Central Arkansas*, and the required financial constraint of the plan. It is difficult for us to do that if we don't know what is going to be recommended in the draft Environmental Assessment. We expect that draft EA or a substantial part of it by mid-to-late summer. We will then perform a system-wide impact analysis, a financial constraint analysis. We'll take what Mr. Marshall's model has shown and see if it can inform any of that information. We will then bring that information back to you. I would suspect, that given the level of public comment that we've had just on this amendment, that the RPAC would want to conduct some formal outreach and get more public comment on the analysis, and then after that you would get to make another recommendation to the Metroplan Board. The Board may want to have its own public hearing on the project - or not, we'll just have to see - and then the Board will vote. Once the Board votes an another plan amendment, changing the project from operational improvements and reconstruction to major widening and reconstruction, and dealing with all of the other financial implications on the system over the next 20 years we will have to deal with in that analysis. Once there is an affirmative vote on those issues, then, and only then, can the 30 Crossing project proceed to construction.

So that is the timeline. Ideally, and all things being equal, the Dept would like to get to the point of asking for a Finding of No Significant Impact by the end of this calendar year. We are looking at our analysis and consideration probably in a four month window toward late summer or fall.

Mr. Covington: The reason for this timeframe is that the State has indicated it wants to adopt the STIP next month. The State has asked our Board to adopt this amendment this month, so that the TIP can be adopted this month, and then the State can adopt the STIP next month. There is some desire on the part of the Board to do so, and delaying it at this point while it may not be impossible, would create a significant challenge. I don't believe we will get a request for the second plan amendment until late this fall and by that time it would be too late. If we do not act on the amendment and TIP this month, then I assume the State will proceed to adopt their STIP without the central Arkansas TIP.

Ms. Green: Quick follow-up, regarding the Environmental Assessment and waiting for that information to come out. Is it possible that based on the public comments received, the AHTD will have to do a full environmental impact study? And would that stretch this timeline even further?

Mr. McKenzie: The environmental process is a federal process and the last time the Federal Highway administrator commented on that was that it [FHWA] had not made the decision on whether to require a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS). If

FHWA does require an EIS, it would stretch the timeframe out, by how much I do not know.

Ms. Green: And it would stretch the time frame for the second amendment to come back to this Council, correct?

Mr. McKenzie: Correct.

Mr. Sutton: I have serious concern that my endorsement of this amendment with the additional \$300 million for the I-30 project will be perceived as a de facto endorsement of the current I-30 design.

Mr. Cummings: I had the same concerns, which is why the Motion is written the way it is.

Mr. Sutton: Given the fact that the plan currently has allocated about \$327 million and we are proposing by this amendment to bump it up to \$631 million - and that figure is based on the current design - I really don't want to give the impression that I endorse the current design. I wonder if we can modify the Motion that's on the floor to say that we approve the amendment, with the exclusion of additional funding for the I-30 Crossing.

Mr. Roda: I agree with Tom and that was my original proposal. I appreciate you Motion, Charles, and I appreciate your rationale. I just don't think it goes far enough, and it's clear that we haven't yet reached a consensus, so I see no reason why we couldn't have a second amendment to the TIP to deal with whether or not we want to give the Highway Department another \$300 million and change. I don't understand why we couldn't do that and deal with the additional funding in two or three months when the design amendment is requested. They've already got \$300 million; they're not going to burn through that by October.

[Mr. Roda then offered an amended version of the Motion on the floor.](#)

Amended MOTION by Mr. Roda, second by Ms. Freasier

"The RPAC recommends approval of proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* (ICA) as presented to the public for comments, with the exception of the 30 Crossing project, on which we have not reached a consensus approval, and with the clear understanding, confirmed by AHTD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval before it can move to construction."

The amended Motion generated much discussion. Following is a summary that closely follows that discussion.

Mr. Stair pointed out that the amended Motion as worded seems to say that we are striking all of the I-30 project, including that which is already in the plan and funded. The language should be modified to say that we are striking the *increase* in funding on the 30 Crossing project. With the consent of both Mr. Roda and Ms Freasier, the Amended Motion was amended to insert the words, "with the exception of the increased proposed funds for the 30 Crossing project."

Amended MOTION by Mr. Roda, second by Ms. Freasier

"The RPAC recommends approval of proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* (ICA) as presented to the public for comments, with the exception of the **increased funds proposed for** the 30 Crossing project, on which we have not reached a consensus approval, and with the clear understanding, confirmed by AHTD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval before it can move to construction."

Dr. Hampton: I think that we have not given enough consideration to what Brad Walker was proposing. Your amendment is not enough for me; we need a fuller picture of the issues that Brad was talking about; if were to do that we would be on firmer ground. We are going to have to vote on this amendment, but I think there was something in the original comments that we have not considered as fully as we should.

Mr. Simms: Speaking against the amendment, if this version passes, then the STIP would be adopted without including any of the projects for central Arkansas.

Mr. Roda: My amendment presumes calling the Highway Department's bluff on that threat.

Mr. Walker: Maybe there's a compromise here. We like all the money coming to Little Rock. I don't think anybody is opposed to \$600 million being spent on transportation in our area. We have a plan, and I'm perplexed as to how the Highway Department designed something beyond the constraints of \$300 million, but that is another discussion. Instead of rejecting the additional money, can we accept the funds but reserve them for use on alternative transportation enhancement on the corridor and surrounding area? If the Highway Department can convince us in the next four months that the additional lane widening designs are the best use of that money, we can embrace it and the funds will be there. On the other hand, if building a bridge at Chester Street looks like a better alternative, then we still have the money reserved for that option.

Mr. McKenzie: The issue of funding flexibility has been raised in several public forums. We need to understand the limitations of federal law and the MPO's role in that. The only authority that the MPO has over these moneys is to say, "No, you can't spend that money on this." We can't specify that money must be spent on a

project. There's not \$631 million sitting in the bank. Most of the money is from the CAP program and that is prohibited by constitutional amendment from being used on other types of projects. Another \$90 million in bridge funds was put together from all over the state because this project is so huge, so if that money is not used on I-30, it will be go back throughout the State to fund needed, smaller bridge projects - and of course, there's no guarantee that the funds would stay in central Arkansas. Without those funds, there's no need to borrow \$100 million, so in terms of discretionary money that can be used on other things, it evaporates pretty quickly.

Mr. Walker: But hasn't that been done before - Haven't we seen flexibility in funding throughout the State?

Mr. McKenzie: CAP funding is restricted by Arkansas constitutional amendment. Federal funding is generally flexible, even between national highway system (NHS) funds and non-NHS systems, if the improvements would benefit the national highway system corridor. There are some other restrictions, too. But again, that is a small portion of the total amount of additional funds for the 30 Crossing project.

Mr. Covington: The State is also restricted in how it can use the funding it receives. Federal funding is allocated to the State, and the State has its own laws that restrict how the funding may be used.

Ms. Jones: As you know, the Highway Department has the responsibility for highways and for other modes. Two things I want to point out: One is that the \$600 million is the budget amount, and as you know from other presentations this project will use the design-build method to work within the budget so it will be set amount. It will not be a moving target, as I heard someone say earlier. Second, to address Mr. Roda, as Jim has pointed out, the law requires consistency between the TIP and the STIP. If there are inconsistencies, then we cannot approve the STIP with the inconsistent TIP. The adopted TIP would exclude all CARTS projects. That is mandated by federal regulations. It is not a bluff.

The TIP includes a host of projects, throughout the central Arkansas region. I know all the focus is on the I-30 project, but the only thing that is changing on that is the dollar amount. The description is the same - reconstruction and operational improvements. As the footnote on the plan amendment indicates, should the description change from reconstruction and operational improvements to something else - capacity, widening - then the project would have to come back to you for review and approval.

Mr. Cummings: Thank you for that information.

Mr. McKenzie: There 's very little difference between the language staff had recommended for this amendment and that which Mr. Bennett recommended.

Staff's recommendation was to show the additional money in a footnote as reserved for a future I-30 amended project, once it finishes the environmental process; Mr. Bennett wanted all of those moneys shown in the document, in full, with the guaranteeing footnote. I understand that puts the RPAC in a morally ambiguous position, if you are uncertain about your support of this project. We raised that concern to the Board and they didn't think it was something that couldn't be overcome.

Ms. Whitehead: You are asking us to approve money for something we don't have a plan for.

Mr. Roda: I want to clarify that my proposed amendment does not remove the entire project, only the proposed increase in funding. We may need to revisit the wording on that.

Ms. Freasier: Originally, in the long-range plan, the I-30 project was funded at \$300 million. Because of certain amendments and funding opportunities that have presented themselves, there has been an increase in funding available for this project. If the additional funding had not been acquired, would the AHTD adhere to the six-lane policy and not ask for a waiver, based on what was available in the original line item?

Mr. McKenzie: My thought is, probably not. I think Jessie is right, in that the budget for the project is the budget. The moving target in this is, how much of the project will the budget buy? We don't know yet, because of the whole design-build-finance aspect to this project. Mr. Bennett has made very clear that his job is to spend federal dollars to reduce congestion, and he believes that the current six lanes won't do that.

Mr. Larson: By voting for this amendment, are we leaving \$300 million on the table, or even worse, endorsing the equivalent of a no-build option.

Mr. McKenzie: I don't think anything is final until October 1st. I would expect hell to rain down on our heads by leaving that uncertainty and by putting all the other projects in central Arkansas potentially in jeopardy during that time.

Ms. Freasier: Why can't we go back to the middle ground of approving the amendment with staff's recommended language?

Mr. McKenzie: These funds have been reserved for this project. Staff recommendation is not the language that the public has commented on, and if the Board concurred with your recommendation, I do not know if that would be acceptable to Mr. Bennett.

Mr. Roda: Jim's comments reminded me of a couple of points. One is that there is no assurance that the Board will act on our recommendation. If it does act to adopt our recommendation, I am pretty confident that our Highway Department will find a way to adapt and make sure that money is able to be spent. I don't think we are saying good-bye to all that money - but I will tell you this, as well: Out of all of the options and data that I have seen, the only one that seems responsible is the no-build. I'd like to propose an additional amendment to the already amended proposal.

After a brief procedural discussion, **Mr. Roda**, with a second from **Ms. Freasier**, pulled his amended Motion. He then offered the following Motion:

MOTION by Mr. Roda, second by Ms. Freasier

"The RPAC recommends approval of proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* as presented to the public for comment, with the exception of any amendment to the amount of funding allocated to the 30 Crossing project, on which we have not reached a consensus approval, and with the clear understanding, confirmed by ATHD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval and the possible allocation of additional funds."

Discussion is summarized below, closely following the discussion.

Ms. Freasier: Does that leave the additional funds off the table?

Mr. Covington: If you don't specifically list the entire amount in the amendment, I think you are jeopardizing the money.

Mr. Cummings: Currently, the funded amount is for \$300 million. The amendment would raise that amount to \$631 million. By the Motion, you will be taking off the table the additional \$331 million. That is my understanding.

Mr. O'Mell: Yes, but you are also risking the entire amount of money for the whole region. It's putting everything at risk, in addition to the \$300 increase for I-30. To be clear, that amount is only for reconstruction and operational improvements, not for expansion. Any changes in the project description would have to come back to the Council. We're not saying we are approving additional money for anything other than maintenance and replacement.

Mr. Cummings: Even with the additional funding, bumping the project to \$631 million, the project will still have to come back before the Council and Board.

Ms. Freasier: If we wrote it according to staff's earlier recommendation, would the funds be listed as additional resources that are available?

Mr. McKenzie: Staff language listed the money as reserved for this project. There should be no misunderstanding that this money can be used for other stuff. By putting the information in a footnote, staff's recommendation did not formally amend the amount.

Mr. Johnson: There are two different conversations going on in this meeting. One is the "scope" and there is the "money" conversation. What Metroplan staff has prepared identifies the money; it does not change the scope. As far as the law is concerned 23 CFR 450.324, if that scope changes, then by default we have to come back to the metropolitan planning organization, which is Metroplan and go through the process of asking for an amendment to the plan for a scope change. We are not asking for a scope change today. We asking for the money that we have identified for the improvement - reconstruction and operational improvements, as worded in the Transportation Improvement Program - so that we can include it in our State Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Sutton: Thank you for that clarification. That is very good information. The \$631 million cost estimate that's based on current expanded lane design, is that correct?

Mr. Johnson: It's a budget for improvement of the corridor. It is not a design. Under the design-build method, when this goes out to bid and we tell the firms, "This is our scope and our budget. What can you do using these constraints?"

Mr. Sutton: I've done this enough to know that you do a cost estimate of what you plan to build to establish a budget. Your budget is established based on your current 12-15 lane design.

Ms. Wylie: No. The budget is based on the available funding for the project.

Mr. McKenzie: This project is unique. Normally, you'd design the project, estimate the cost and find somebody to bid on it. We have a corridor that needs to be improved. We've defined the improvements, the Department has scraped together every penny it can find, including borrowing \$100 million. The Department will then say, "We've got this much. Mr. Contractor, how much of our project can you build for this amount of money?" Cost efficiencies are encouraged. This is different from any project ever done in this State.

Mr. Sutton: There has to be a mechanism by which you determine that you need \$631 million.

Mr. McKenzie: The money represents every penny the Department could find to improve this corridor. It took money from the rest of the State - for example, from bridge allocations, half-cent sales tax, borrowing \$100 million. Right now, we don't have a design, so we can't have a cross-section, which means we can't do a cost estimate. The environmental process is underway. What we have is a budget; we have yet to determine. As I said, this is a unique project in a number of ways.

Ms. Freasier: If that's the case, then why have we been seeing designs for eight lanes, 15 lanes. If that is really the concept we are going with, then why are these plans and designs being presented to us? Hogwash. You can't tell me that the Highway Department hasn't done cost projection based on one or more of these designs that have been presented.

Ms. Wylie: We do have cost estimates for all of the improvements that have been shown, and which we are constantly refining, for example, as designs for Little Rock interchanges are refined. But the budget is still \$631.7 million.

Ms. Freasier: So therefore, you are still basing the budget off of the eight, ten, or 12-lane designs.

Ms. Wylie: No. As Jim said, the budget is made up of different pots of funds that we have pulled together to put on this project.

Dr. Hampton: Isn't it true, though - obviously - the Department has a vision of what it would like to see built? There is a vision of what that amount of money will create?

Ms. Wylie: Well, I may have a different vision of an alternate that I like, but that may be different from what someone else likes.

Dr. Hampton: No, no. You know, the doublespeak makes me nervous, because I can't imagine that we're going out to the public with drawings, with a vision. You have a public that is alarmed about what may happen - and the bottom line is, "It may not happen, because we may not get a bid that permits us to do this". The public is left with having to go back to what a person who gets the bid decides what can be done. I find that untenable; I find that frightening. It makes no sense. If you know that within this timeframe you have this amount of money to spend, how do we then support a safe bridge, maintain the integrity of a downtown Little Rock that is about to thrive. Why can't we work toward that, instead of this thing that has been said today - the first time in my hearing - we have no idea what this project will look like, because we have no idea what the person who wins the bid will propose. It's absolutely frightening for me to be sitting in this room at this point and be placed in this position, as a tax-paying citizen, that the Highway Department has no idea of what it's going to be able to get for the money.

Ms. Wylie: It is important to that we haven't even cleared the environmental process. All of these designs that we've developed and been showing to the public, and are continuing to refine, must go through the environmental process before an alternative is selected. We don't know today if the alternative will be eight or ten, or six-plus-four.

Mr. McKenzie: I understand having a fear of the unknown. We don't know, as we would in a normal project, what an approved design will cost. Typically, a project is

designed, approved, and we go out to bid to see how much it will cost. In the design-build, we start with a budget. All over the country the design-build method is being used, with the idea that it allows for more innovation and cost efficiencies on the part of the builder-contractor. The hope is that you get more product for the money. The flip side of that is that you've got to be very careful in what you allow the builder to change in that process, versus the public expectation regarding the project. That is an unknown. The Department has never done that before. It is a process that we will all have to work through together to put safeguards in place, so that the public expectation of whatever is approved will be constructed, and the flexibility that the contractor has is constrained by those expected elements. There are a lot of unknowns. The Department has made efforts to ensure the public will get the most project for the dollar. The public needs to decide if they want that kind of project or not. And that is what the public process is about.

Mr. Cummings: Let me bring the discussion back to the Motion on the floor. We know that there will be construction on this corridor. We will have plenty of time to discuss the merits of that construction, pro and con, at a later date. We are identifying funding resources to be spent, and like others have expressed, I would prefer that money stay in central Arkansas.

[The Motion was read again.](#)

Mr. Johnson: Understand what that means. Per federal law - not Arkansas law, not AHTD rules - that the STIP and TIP must be consistent. If they are not consistent, regardless of what anybody says, we have no choice but to start the process of excluding the CARTS metropolitan planning area. Again, we are talking about money, not scope. The money has already been made available for reconstruction and operational improvements, and nothing more.

Mr. Varner: Could the STIP be amended to conform to the TIP? Does it have to be the TIP that conforms to the STIP? Does the State have the opportunity to accept the TIP?

Mr. Roda: Absolutely. They just don't want to.

Mr. McKenzie: The process would work like this: The Highway Commission would probably adopt a STIP that excluded Metroplan's planning area. That doesn't mean anything until the first of October. Between now and then, if the Metroplan Board adopts a TIP that the Governor finds acceptable, then it automatically goes into the State TIP without any further action from the Highway Commission.

Mr. Stair: Just to clarify, if we went forward with this amendment, and did not add \$300 million, Mr. Bennett may decide not to modify your STIP to match our TIP, and thereby exclude all the other projects, because we did not add \$300 million to this one project.

Ms. Jones: Your amendment is to show financial constraint for your long-range plan. As the State, we also have an obligation to show financial constraint for the State long-range transportation plan. If you keep only the CAP and NHPP funds, we still have the NHPP Statewide Bridge funds. Those funds had to be shown in the STIP, if not in central Arkansas, then somewhere else in the State.

Mr. Stair: Regardless of whether the \$300 million is allocated here or somewhere else in the State, it sounds like if we don't add this \$300 million, then we could lose everything, because the State Highway Department refuses to modify its STIP by \$300 million. Is that the case or not?

Ms. Jones: The rest of the State program would have to be revised.

Mr. Stair: So, we are modifying to match the State TIP.

Mr. McKenzie: We are moving to the same language.

Ms. Jones: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Stair: So then the STIP could still be modified to match the TIP. Is that correct. Is it possible?

Mr. McKenzie: It's possible, but now you are getting into the realm of politics.

Ms. Jones: It comes to the schedule. In order to make modifications like you describe, even if the Commission approved the STIP, it would have to go to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for approval - and if there are changes, then the whole TIP-STIP would have to go back through public comment.

Mr. Larson: We are confusing budget and plans. This is a budget request. All this amendment does is reserve the funds. We are not endorsing any plan. This Council hasn't endorsed any design concept.

MOTION (as put forth by Mr. Roda and seconded by Mr. Sutton)

"The RPAC recommends approval of proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* as presented to the public for comment, with the exception of any amendment to the amount of funding allocated to the 30 Crossing project, on which we have not reached a consensus approval, and with the clear understanding, confirmed by ATHD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval and the possible allocation of additional funds."

FAILED with seven (7) in favor and 14 opposed

MOTION (as put forth by Mr. Cummings and seconded by Ms. Green)

"The RPAC recommends approval of the proposed Amendment 1 to *Imagine Central Arkansas* (ICA) as presented to the public for comments, with the clear understanding, confirmed by AHTD and FHWA staff, that the 30 Crossing project will come back before the MPO for approval before it can move to construction."

PASSED with 21 in favor, and four (4) opposed

Mr. Covington: We will take this vote to the Board next week, and note that it was not unanimous.

Ms. Whitehead: This process is very opaque to the public. It would benefit process transparency if the RPAC Chairman would make a statement to the Metroplan Board of Directors, clarifying what this amendment actually means. When I get on my Facebook page tomorrow, there are going to be a lot of happy Facebook friends. We need to make every effort to communicate with the public.

The Chairman and several other members voiced their agreement with Ms. Whitehead, and requested the Chairman to attend next week's Metroplan Board meeting.

Ms. Freasier When this is presented to the Board, will Metroplan staff please make it explicitly explain that this vote in no way indicates endorsement of the I-30 project? That we are not endorsing anything - plan, design, concept - that has been brought to the public or this Council.

Mr. Finn: I think that Mr. Cummings should make that presentation to the Board.

Ms. Freasier: I agree. I just want it clearly understood.

Ms. Dollar: Let me add that Daniel, Casey and I are going to work very hard on getting the draft Minutes of this meeting out to you all as quickly as possible for your review.

C. Council discussion pertaining to the I-30 Crossing project as it is proposed.

The Chairman then went around the table, and asked each person to address two questions: (1) Where do you stand on the I-30 project in its current form? and (2) What other information would you like to see in the days and months ahead to help inform your decision on the project?

Mr. McKenzie clarified that there are currently four options: (1) eight-lanes with single point interchange

The following summary is not a verbatim transcription, but does closely adhere to the ensuing remarks.

Mr. Stair: I represent the Sierra Club. Carolyn Shearman is my alternate. We are for the bridge replacement and for safety features. Those are good objectives. We are opposed to the current suite of options, particularly we are opposed to anything that would increase the current cap of six lanes. We like the *Imagine Central Arkansas* long-range plan and its strategy of increasing the regional arterial network, increasing pedestrian and other alternate methods of transportation, in addition to freeways. One of the problems we see is that the elimination of the 2nd Street option for cars pushes traffic down to 4th and 6th Streets. I have a personal dislike of the "Texas loop" on the North Little Rock side and believe it is included because other means of access have been eliminated.

What I'd like to see in order to make a decision: I've always thought that the Highway Department could come up with some really nice designs if they were held to a tightly constrained six-lane option.

Mr. Cummings: I want to clarify that we are not talking about what the AHTD can do. I want to know what information you need from Metroplan staff.

Ms. Frasier: I am currently a member of BACA, and am on the Board as an education consultant. I've talked with the Board about this issue and we are definitely opposed to any option that is expanded to the current plan requirement of six lanes. We are for the bridge replacement - we understand that it needs to be replaced. We are concerned about the costs in our city, because we think that bottlenecks are going to occur in other places and AHTD has not addressed that. We think that a lot of the people in the City of Little Rock who have decided to move out want the transportation back into the city to be faster, and we are not sure that will happen. We do not see the necessity of this project as it is now, and as tax payers we fear that we will have to bear the burden. Therefore, BACA is opposed to this project as it is proposed.

We would like to see more urban development. We'd like to hear from the other consultants that have been brought in and would like see more participation of this sort.

Mr. Stowe: I represent the City of Maumelle. I support the "Six-Plus-Four" plan, and am open to the others. I can't tell you what other information I need, but I can tell you that I am tired of the endless debate that has gone on for what seems like a year now.

Ms. Baro: I represent the North Little Rock Housing Authority. I am new to the Council, but I can speak as a mom who uses I-30 every day from roughly Saline County to Little Rock. It becomes a quality of life issue - dropping off kids, getting to work. From that point of view, whatever it takes to make it easier - more lanes or as wide as necessary - I am in favor.

Ms. Taylor: I represent youth outreach. I would first like to recommend a parliamentarian for this Council to help keep meetings on track. As far as the proposed I-30 Crossing project, I am opposed to that plan. I do represent youth outreach, and since there are not a lot of youth on this Council, I'd like the proposed project to go directly to youth for their consent, as it will be the youth who will be impacted in the long term.

Mr. O'Mell: I'm with the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, and we formally endorsed the "Six-Plus-CD Lanes" option, split diamond version, specifically because of the aspects of removing the cloverleaf; removing the four-block viaduct exit ramps that force traffic into downtown, turning that into 17 acres of green space, and increasing the connectivity between the east and west side, as well as the north and south side. Not to mention, that we spend a lot of time talking about the number of lanes, arguing over what counts as a lane and what doesn't, but the Chamber has highlighted and what is important to me personally is that the expansion as it passes over Clinton Boulevard would only be 30 feet on each side, and it opens it up so that you no longer have berms and barriers. It's not longer a tunnel but is open completely underneath. Those are the aspects of the design that are the Chamber's reasons for endorsing the project as proposed.

Mr. Finn: I represent Pulaski County. I am also a Board member of Rock Region Metro. I am for the bridge replacement, although I am also for the long-range goals expressed in *Imagine Central Arkansas*. I think that at this point those goals have not been properly included in the I-30 Crossing - one that preserves and enhanced the quality of the urban fabric. I would like to see additional consultant brought to the table. I don't think there has been enough conversation that has to do with alternative means of travel. I don't think we've talked enough about other transportation solutions, and I'd like to see others brought in to help the Highway Department plan an appropriate design.

Dan Roda: The only current option that I would be in favor of is the no-build. I support bridge replacement and interchange improvements. Information I would like is a study or analysis of the ancillary effects of this project - how it would impact our arterial network, on other transportation modes, and the entire interstate system.

Leesa Freasier: I work for the Department of Health on the Healthy Community Development. I am concerned about this project as presented, and would like some alternative projects because they can be done effectively and in keeping with the moral fabric of downtowns and their continuing revitalization. I would like to see some creative designs.

Tom Sutton: I am manager of design and construction at the Clinton National Airport. I have not yet seen a plan for the I-30 Crossing that I can endorse. I agree that the bridge needs to be replaced; I agree that the weave on I-40 that takes place

between Hwy 167 and I-30 is dangerous and needs to be corrected. I do not believe that the section of highway between I-40 and I-630 needs to be a high-speed interstate highway. I think that the quality of life in that corridor would be greatly improved in that corridor if it were not a high-speed highway. I can't imagine how anyone could effectively use a park under 15 lanes of highway. The thing that bothers me the most about this is the commitment toward the expenditure of \$630 million to a billion dollars on the I-30 corridor will require \$3.5 billion or more additional dollars to be spent on associated roadway widenings in order to achieve greater than a four-tenths of a mile per hour increase in the speed within the corridor. That troubles me a great deal. I agree that quality of life is a primary concern, and I believe that this proposed expansion of the highway will degrade the quality of life tremendously. I support wholeheartedly the *Imagine Central Arkansas* vision. It's a vision that has been developed over the past 20 years or more by a broad cross-section of the community. We are now faced with the difficult task of stepping forward and making it happen. I believe the community can do that if there is the will. Building the freeway system to six lanes, and meeting additional demand with a robust arterial network and public transit is the right approach for central Arkansas.

I would like to see a regional study on the impacts of the proposed I-30 Crossing project and associated widenings. I believe it will take a broad cross-section of professionals to examine not just the transportation impacts throughout the region, but also the land use, economic and quality of life impacts.

Ms. Whitehead: I am a professional economic and community developer and I represent the City of Conway. I am for interchange improvements and bridge replacement. I am for the vision set out in the *Imagine Central Arkansas* plan. I am opposed to the current alternatives that have been put forth, because of the cost and return on investment for improved drive time, because it does not support alternative transportation modes, and it doesn't align currently with *Imagine Central Arkansas* strategy. What I need great depth of discussion into these alternatives when they are brought to us for a formal recommendation.

Mr. Weathersby: I represent Pulaski County. I agree with and would like to see improvement on the highways for ease of traffic movement, which I think would add to the quality of life. I would like to see more creative planning for those improvements.

Mr. Green: I am Director of Public Engagement at Rock Region Metro. We support the bridge replacement. We have been told it needs to be done eventually, and we definitely support that. We also support improvements in interchange connections for safety purposes. We do not support the an expansion over the current six-lanes that we have. I've heard that if the Highway Department's current design comes to fruition, that would make this the third widest highway in the country, right behind one in New York City and one that connects San Francisco to Oakland. We have

submitted a formal letter detailing our concerns to AHTD as part of the NEPA process. We represent, and we want and strive for, a balance of transportation modes as part of the *Imagine Central Arkansas* plan and the current options that are on the table are in direct conflict with that plan. The key tenets of that plan that are of particular to us are: funding and adequately maintaining the roads that we have, strengthening our arterials, and making investments in alternant forms of transportation, including public transit.

I'd like to see modeling of the impacts of the proposed project on Little Rock's arterial roads, with the inclusion of some of the scenarios we've been discussing. I'd like to see Metroplan make as many presentation to as many stakeholders as possible, so that more people will understand what you do and how you serve the public. It also behooves this Council to remember that Metroplan's Board is comprised of elected officials, who answer to constituents, and our recommendations should try to find as much common ground as possible to help them with their task of serving the public.

Dr. Hampton: I represent the City of Little Rock. I do not support any of the proposed designs, and I am very interested in the design-build-finance process and what is happening around the country with that.

Mr. Adams: I represent the Little Rock Air Force Base. I can say that we love to see investments made in safety and we definitely like the fact that we are looking at bring down traffic congestion. I can't speak to the designs, because I haven't seen them all.

I would like more information on the funding of this project. For example, I would like to understand more about the TIP/STIP process.

Ms. Massana: I represent the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. Like many of you, I am for the vision of *Imagine Central Arkansas*, the bridge replacement, and improvements on the interchange. From an economic development standpoint, our goal is to bring jobs and retain jobs. I think we are looking at a younger work force, and with that we need to be looking at alternatives that can hold future growth and the kind of growth that we are looking for. Given the information that we have, I don't approve of any of the designs that have been proposed.

I would like to see an economic impact study on proposed designs and on whichever design we go with.

Mr. Walker: I represent the City of Little Rock. I am a true believer in the boulevard. I think it is a moment and an opportunity, in which Little Rock can re-conceive itself. I hope we won't let it slip by. I think the four-six plan define the through traffic. I am more concerned with getting traffic to Little Rock, nor through Little Rock. I lift up

the challenge, and I hope the Board will find the will, and I hope this Council can give the encouragement, and I hope the constituents can rally to the cause.

What more can we do? We need to show the traffic information, the modeling, that is already out there. We need origin-destination information produced quantitatively, so that we know what is going through and can base alternatives on that information. I hope for a new vision for Little Rock.

Mr. Lyford: I represent the City of Little Rock. I don't favor expanding beyond the current six lanes. I am in favor of the bridge reconstruction, and I'd like a focus on the entrances and exits in the downtown area from the interstate in order to improve safety - particularly on 2nd Street. We need to have the consultant for the City, the consultant for the citizen group, Studio Main, and the Highway Department collaborate and come back with a new alternative.

Ms. Cook: I represent the City of Sherwood. In the interest of brevity, I ditto what Sybil and Lawrence have said.

Mr. Simms: I represent the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. I'd like everybody to know that I am 100 percent in favor of operational improvements and bridge reconstruction in this corridor.

There were questions asked by this RPAC, and answered, last fall. It's imperative that you get all your questions out there, now, so that we can provide answers, and so that when this group comes together in the fall it will be ready to make a final decision.

Mr. Hastings: I represent the City of Little Rock. As a business owner, I think the Highway Department is on the right track with its planning and with its discussions with the public, and listening to the public comment. I think we need to move on with this big corridor project.

Mr. Cummings [representing trucking and freight]: I am strongly opposed to a major freeway expansion, with service roads going right down the heart of our city. I think it will continue to divide our city in a lot of different ways. I do know that our bridge needs to be replaced, and I do like that split diamond design, and I know that our interchanges need to be improved. But to put a freeway of this size right down through the middle of our capital city will, I think, do a great deal of harm to our city in a lot of different ways.

Mr. DePriest: I represent the City of Little Rock. As someone who does not use a car as a primary means of transportation, I have a slightly different way of looking at this issue. I am in favor of the no-build. I am also in favor of putting funding into something other than highways.

Mr. Larson: I represent the City of North Little Rock. I've been on TAC and now RPAC for years, and have been through many of these plans. I was one of the original advocates for the six-lane freeway build-out and arterial network. I was impressed at the public hearing in North Little Rock, with Studio Main's presentation. Although there is not much money in place to implement Studio Main's plans, I think it would be informative to have Eric (who is with Cromwell and is invested in East Village) come to one of our meetings and present his ideas. I am still gathering information and analyzing plans.

Chairman Cummings asked if anyone from the audience wished to contribute his or her remarks to meeting.

4. Other Business and Next Meeting

Audience member Mr. John Hedrick (CLRN) announced that Little Rock consultant Nelson Nygaard will report to city officials on its professional analysis of the proposed expansion of I-30 at 4:00 PM, on Monday, May 23rd, at the Center for University Park (the old Adult Leisure Center) on W. 12th, which is just west of University Ave.

No other business was brought forward.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15th, at which time the Council will be presented with the results of the public comment and discuss the amendment. Confirmation and additional information will be sent a week prior to the date.

5. Adjourn

With no further business brought forward, the Chairman asked for motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Ms. Freasier, second by Mr. Stowe
"To adjourn."

Council adjourned at 1:40 PM.