



# AGENDA

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE TYLER AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

>> Thursday, July 30, 2020 <<  
2:00 P.M.

**Tyler City Hall, City Council Chambers, 212 N. Bonner Avenue, Tyler, Texas**

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(There is no need to download Microsoft Teams, simply choose “watch on the web” option.)

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICE**

Due to the current Coronavirus COVID-19 public health emergency, the Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is taking extraordinary steps to protect the public health, safety and welfare. A teleconference meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is being conducted. Those who wish to participate by teleconference may call (903) 363-0651. In addition, the Policy Committee is also providing physical access for up to 22 members of the public, who may attend on a first-come, first seated basis. The public meeting will be arranged for social distancing, and those in attendance are urged to follow recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by adhering to all social distancing and hygiene requirements. Capacity limits will be observed and all participants present at the meeting are encouraged to wear a face mask if possible.

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### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NOTICE**

The Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization wants to ensure that all Transportation Policy Committee meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. If any individual needs special assistance or accommodations in order to participate in a Transportation Policy Committee meeting, please contact the Metropolitan Planning Organization at 903-531-1175 in advance so that accommodations can be made.

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- I) **Call to Order**
  
- II) **Roll Call**
  
- III) **Consideration of Minutes**
  - 1. **Consider approving the minutes from the January 23, 2020 Transportation Policy Committee meeting**
  
- IV) **Presentation Items**
  - 1. **Receive a presentation from Tyler Transit on the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)**
  
- V) **Action Items**
  - 1. **Consider approving adoption of a Resolution to support modifications to the National Highway System (NHS) within the MPO boundary**

2. Consider adoption of a Resolution approving an amendment to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
3. Consider adoption of a Resolution either approving the continuance of the FY 2021-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) until such time as a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is ready to be adopted, or approving the adoption of the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

**VI) Staff Updates**

1. MPO Executive Director's Report

**VII) Adjourn**

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**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

This is to certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, at \_\_\_\_\_ M., the above notice of meeting was posted on the bulletin boards of City Hall.

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This is to certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, at \_\_\_\_\_ M., the above notice of meeting was posted on the bulletin board of the Tyler Development Center.

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This is to certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, at \_\_\_\_\_ M., the above notice of meeting was posted on the bulletin board of the Smith County Courthouse.

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**TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2020  
REGULAR MEETING, TDC LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM  
423 W. FERGUSON, TYLER, TEXAS**



**Members Present:**

Martin Heines, Chair; Ed Broussard; Nathaniel Moran; Gary Halbrooks; Vernon Webb; Riley Harris; Frank Davis; and Carolyn Caldwell

**Members Absent:**

Lisa Crossman; Jeff Warr; and Leslie Black.

**Staff Present:**

Heather Nick; Michael Howell; Ryan Clark; Sam Brady; and Zach Clark.

**Others Present:**

Jeffrey Harmon, TxDOT; Robert Gil, Tyler Transit; and James Torres, Tyler Transit.

**Martin Heines called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ed Broussard moved, seconded by Gary Halbrooks, to approve the minutes from November 21, 2019. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

**Presentation Items:**

**1. Updates on work performed to support the 2020 Census**

Mr. Howell gave a brief overview of how the MPO uses census data and notified the Committee of what steps the staff had performed to support an accurate count. He discussed the various outreach resources that were available and encouraged all attendees to share the resources to support the Census effort.

**2. Report on 2018 Safety Performance**

Mr. Howell presented the item discussing the current transportation bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, requires states and MPOs to adopt targets to benchmark and examine success. Mr. Howell noted 2018 was the first year performance targets had been set and they were just receiving that data. Mr. Howell stated that the Tyler MPO area ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in population in MPOs, and second in fatalities per 1,000 persons. Mr. Howell showed heat maps which highlighted crash "hotspots" and noted that multiple upcoming projects were located in those hotspots.

Mr. Heines asked if this ranking looked at the population commuting in Tyler. Mr. Howell clarified the data that was analyzed at the time did not take that into consideration, however staff would be able to look more into that.

Mr. Halbrooks asked if the weather was reported at these fatalities. Mr. Howell noted that the DPS officer may have recorded the weather but that it is not always recorded.

## Action Items:

### 1. Consider recommending the Policy Committee adopt 2020 Safety Targets established by TxDOT

Mr. Howell presented the item stating that the FAST Act requires states and MPOs to adopt targets to benchmark and examine success. He stated that TxDOT had adopted statewide targets and recommended that the MPO adopt the state targets.

Mr. Howell stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed this item during their meeting on January 9, 2020, no comments were made about the proposal, and the TAC unanimously recommended approval of the 2020 Safety Targets established by TxDOT.

Gary Halbrooks moved, seconded by Nathaniel Moran, to adopt 2020 Safety Targets established by TxDOT as recommended. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

### 2. Consider recommending the Policy Committee adopt 2020 Transit Asset Management Performance Targets established by Tyler Transit

Mr. Howell presented the item stating the MPO has to adopt targets in order to benchmark and examine success. Robert Gil discussed the techniques used to establish these goals. Mr. Gil noted they looked at outdated vehicles and are trying to replace them so they can meet their vehicle life expectancy.

Mr. Howell stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed this item during their meeting on January 9, 2020, no comments were made about the proposal, and the TAC unanimously recommended approval of the 2020 Transit Asset Management Performance Targets established by Tyler Transit.

Riley Harris moved, seconded by Ed Broussard, to adopt 2020 Transit Asset Management Performance Targets established by Tyler Transit. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

### 3. Consider recommending the Policy Committee adopt amendments to the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Mr. Howell presented the item stating that performance targets had to be included in the TIP, and the amendment was to update the document to reflect the 2020 safety and transit asset management targets. No other amendments were being recommended.

Frank Davis moved, seconded by Ed Broussard to adopt amendments to the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

## Staff Updates:

### 1. MPO Executive Director's Report

Ms. Nick noted that the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association had selected Tyler as their recipient for a pilot program "Plan4Health" which aims to create a cross-disciplinary task

forces to implement land-use interventions that support physical activity through active-friendly routes.

Ms. Nick stated that a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) and a Request For Proposal (RFP had been posted online for the Master Street Plan update as well as for the Transit Route Study which would be open through February 7, 2020.

**2. Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Ms. Nick provided notice of the upcoming Technical Advisory Committee meeting on March 5, 2020 and the next Transportation Policy Committee meeting scheduled on March 26, 2020.

**The meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.**

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE  
STAFF COMMENTS**

**Date:** July 30, 2020

**Subject:** MODIFICATIONS TO THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS)  
WITHIN THE TYLER AREA MPO BOUNDARY

The National Highway System (NHS) is a network of strategic highways within the United States whose purpose is to provide an interconnected system that connects major population centers to intermodal transportation facilities, other major travel destinations and international border crossings. The NHS designations are also used to identify thoroughfares that serve national defense requirements and facilitate interstate and interregional travel.

The NHS designated thoroughfares within the MPO's boundary have a significant impact on the MPO's obligations to satisfy federal funding requirements. Federal law requires States and MPOs to adopt and monitor performance targets for pavement condition, bridge condition and travel time reliability. The requirement to set targets and report performance for these categories only applies to facilities that are part of the NHS. Effectively, this means that federal funding received by the MPO must be prioritized to meet performance targets on NHS facilities first before improvements can be made to non-NHS facilities.

The NHS was originally designated in 1995 through cooperation between local transportation officials and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The federal funding bill MAP-21 added around 4,000 miles to the NHS in Texas. This update is the first attempt to comprehensively evaluate the NHS in Texas since it was created.

The MPO staff was contacted by the Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) Division of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the FHWA – Texas Division in March of 2019 to kick off the process to update the NHS designations. TPP and FHWA provided a list of facilities to consider removing from the NHS. These recommendations were presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on April 4, 2019. The TAC provided input on the recommendations and made requests to have new facilities added to the NHS. In June of 2020, the MPO staff received a packet from TPP containing the final recommended modifications to the NHS. The packet recommends the following modifications:

Thoroughfares to be added to the NHS

- State Highway 31 beginning at SSE Loop 323 and continuing east to State Highway 135
- State Highway 64 beginning at FM 724 and continuing west to Toll 49
- US Highway 271 beginning at I-20 and continuing north to the Gregg County Line
- FM 2493 beginning at West Grande Blvd and continuing south to Toll 49

Thoroughfares to be removed from the NHS

- North Broadway Ave beginning at Spur 147 and continuing south to State Highway 31
- Loop 235 beginning at State Highway 31 and continuing South to State Highway 64

Requested modifications being deferred

- Adding State Highway 64 west of Toll 49

- Adding FM 2493 from Toll 49 south to US Highway 69

The proposed modifications are shown graphically in Exhibit “A”. TPP has ask that the MPO adopt a resolution of support for the modifications and to forward a copy of that resolution to the project study team. The team will send the final modification requests to the FHWA-Texas Division who will forward the requests to FHWA Headquarters for final approval.

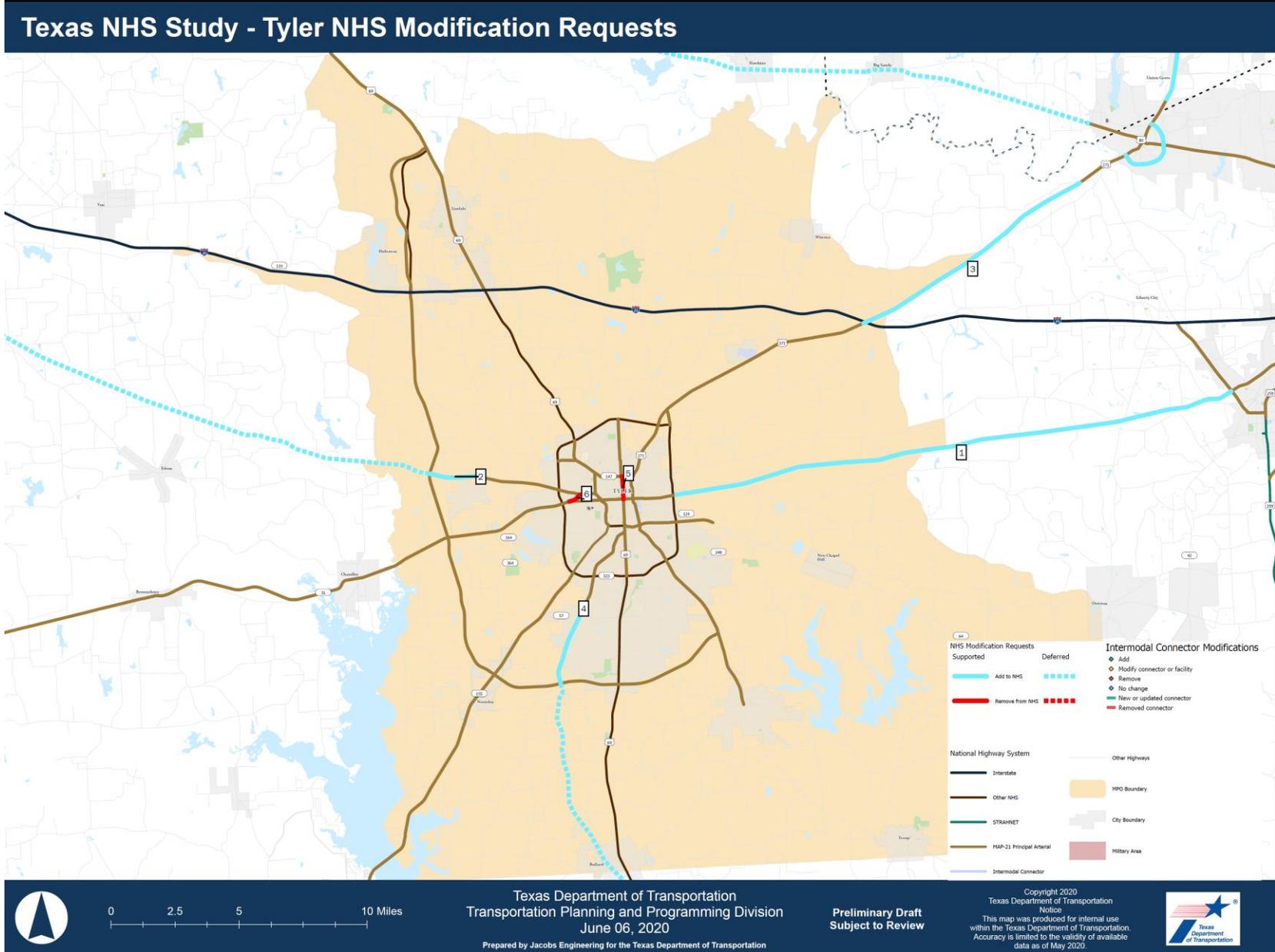
**RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff recommends the Policy Committee adopt a resolution supporting the NHS modifications as provided by TPP.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Exhibit “A”: NHS Modifications

# EXHIBIT "A" – NHS MODIFICATIONS



**TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE  
STAFF COMMENTS**

**Date:** July 30, 2020

**Subject:** 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN FIRST AMENDMENT

Federal law requires that all MPOs adopt a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The MTP is a 25-year, long-range transportation plan which serves as a guide to plan for future transportation needs and to program the expenditure of federal, state, and local funds that are forecasted to become available over the life of the plan. Federal law also mandates that MTPs be reviewed and updated at least every five years. The current MTP was approved on November 21, 2019 and took effect on December 4, 2019.

In February of 2020, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) announced that the City of Lindale had been awarded a Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) grant to construct 1.25 miles of sidewalk connecting Velma Penny Elementary School to EJ Moss Intermediate School. Although Lindale has been approved for the grant, the project must also be listed in the MPO's long and short-range plans before Lindale can receive the funding. The project is scheduled to be let for construction in 2022. This amendment is to add the TASA sidewalk project to the MTP's list of projects to be constructed with no other amendments.

In accordance with the adopted Public Participation Plan, a draft of the MTP was made available to the public for 30 days that began with an open house held on May 26, 2020. The Technical Advisory Committee was emailed a link to the open house and asked to provide comments by email. No comments were made about the draft amendments.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff recommends approval of the amendments to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE  
STAFF COMMENTS**

**Date:** July 30, 2020

**Subject:** FY 2021 – 2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
ADOPTION

The purpose of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is to list the transportation projects that are scheduled to be implemented within the next four fiscal years. The TIP is updated every two years and contains a listing of highway projects, transit projects and various maintenance projects scheduled to be let for construction within the Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary. The TIP also identifies major projects that are in the engineering or right-of-way purchasing phases of development.

Federal regulations require States and MPOs to adopt performance targets for safety, transit asset management, pavement conditions, bridge conditions and travel time reliability. MPOs are required to list the adopted targets and report performance in the TIP. The latest available performance data for each measure has been included as required.

The projects in the TIP align with the priorities listed in the long-range plan called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Projects in the MTP are ranked by the Technical Advisory Committee by scoring the benefits of seventeen quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project. The score for each aspect is then weighted to reflect the public's priorities for addressing each aspect. The final ranking is based on the total points each project received from the technical scores multiplied by the weight assigned. This process for selecting projects is consistent with the best practices for utilizing federal funding.

The following list outlines the projects intended to improve safety and reduce congestion. Appendix A of the TIP also lists miscellaneous maintenance projects including street overlays, bridge maintenance and safety improvements which are not individually being called out.

Highway Projects

- 2021
  - Widen FM 16 from US 69 to CR 481E
  - Widen FM 2493 from Flint to Cherokee County line
- 2022
  - Widen FM 756 from Jeff Davis Drive to FM 346
  - Lindale sidewalk project
- 2024
  - Widen FM 2493 from Loop 323 to FM 2813

Transit Projects

- Capital expenses on new buses
- Preventative maintenance expenses for current buses
- Operating expenses such as personnel salaries, fuel, utilities, etc.
- Equipment and software upgrades
- Planning and administrative costs

## Grouped Projects for Engineering and Right-of-Way

- 2021
  - Widen FM 16 from US 69 to CR 481E
  - Widen FM 2493 from Flint to Cherokee County line
- 2022
  - Widen FM 756 from Jeff Davis Drive to FM 346
  - Overpass at FM 756 and FM 346 intersection
  - I20 ramp reversal and one-way frontage roads
- 2024
  - Widen FM 2493 from Loop 323 to FM 2813
  - Overpass at FM 2493 and Loop 323 intersection

During the public comment portion of the TIP development process, the staff was contacted by a coalition of business owners opposed to the proposed overpass at the intersection of FM 2493 (Old Jacksonville Highway) and Loop 323. This group, calling itself “Stop the Overpass Folly”, shared their concerns about the project which involves operation and access issues related to the design. The full letter submitted by Stop the Overpass Folly is attached as Exhibit “A”.

The draft FY2021-2024 TIP lists the overpass at FM 2493 and Loop 323 in Appendix A as having funding allocated for engineering and right-of-way work. The TIP is not proposing to allocate funds for construction at this time. Further development and refinement of the engineering design for the proposed facility may address the concerns from the Stop the Overpass Folly coalition.

Tyler District staff members of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have stated that they are currently in the environmental assessment phase of the project. This is a preliminary analysis phase required before projects can be eligible for construction funding. When submitting for environmental review, the policy is to group all proposed projects which are adjacent to each other into one proposal so that the ultimate scope is reviewed. In this case, the overpass at FM 2493 and Loop 323 was grouped with the upcoming project to widen FM 2493 to six lanes from Loop 323 south to FM 2813 in Gresham. The steps in the environmental review are shown in blue in Exhibit “B”: Process Flowchart.

The widening of FM 2493 to six lanes has been a high priority project that was advocated by the City of Tyler and Jeff Austin during his tenure on the Texas Transportation Commission. This advocacy secured State funding for half of the cost to construct the widening project. The State funding allowed the project to be expedited to begin in 2024. The engineering funding allocated to the overpass project in the draft TIP is to support to continuance of the environmental review. Should the overpass project be removed from the TIP at this time, it will stop the progress of the environmental review and jeopardize the State funding currently allocated to the widening project. Once the environmental review process has been completed, the two projects will be separated and considered independently for allocating construction funds.

The current project description for the overpass in the draft TIP is “Construct New Interchange”. While the MPO believes the intersection of FM 2493 and Loop 323 should continue to be studied to find improvements, it is important to recognize that an overpass is not the only solution that could be implemented to upgrade efficiency at an intersection. Therefore the staff is recommending that the project description be amended to accommodate other intersection improvement options to be studied and vetted.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Given the risks to the six-lane widening project for FM 2493 and recognizing the concerns regarding the overpass at FM 2493 and Loop 323, the staff recommends approval of the draft FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program with an amendment to the language for the overpass project (CSJ: 2075-02-066) to strike the project description “Construct New Interchange” and replace it with “Construct Intersection Improvements”.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Exhibit “A”: Stop the Overpass Folly Letter

Exhibit “B”: Process Flowchart

**EXHIBIT “A”**  
**STOP THE OVERPASS FOLLY LETTER**

Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization  
*Via email to TAMPO Members (see attached list)*  
423 W. Ferguson Street  
Tyler, Texas 75702

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for your service. The Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (“TAMPO”) is important to the advancement of our community. It expresses the will of our community when it comes to highway infrastructure. In the words of Mohammad Alhweii, PE of TXDoT who narrates State project overviews, “... TXDoT will not deliver a project if we don’t have community support ...” He goes further and states that “we ...must deliver the right project, at the right time, at the right place...” As you are aware, the TAMPO plan currently provides for the construction of an overpass at the intersection of Loop 323 and Old Jacksonville Highway. We believe that the overpass does not represent the will of the community but is a wrong being inflicted upon it for the reasons expressed below.

As if the pandemic and civil unrest in our Country are not enough to contend with, we want to share with you that the planned overpass is a significant threat to our businesses. TXDoT is in the early project planning stages. Classic Toyota and Brookshire Grocery Company have spent time and money over the last few months investigating the project and talking with TXDoT. With shifting design plans, lack of transparency and a failure by TXDoT to address fundamental operation and access issues, we have been painted into a corner to fight for our property rights, businesses and livelihoods. We ask for your help to do that.

The proposed overpass also has a detrimental impact on residential neighborhoods. For instance, going north on Old Jacksonville, do you really want to funnel six lanes of traffic to two through the Azalea District and past two schools on street surfaces that are not meant to handle the resulting weight and traffic of such a poorly planned design? Our conclusion is that it is at the wrong location at the wrong time. A coalition has been formed to oppose the construction of the overpass, now deemed the Stop the Overpass Folly, and on behalf of the Coalition, we ask that it be removed from the TAMPO plan.

The project, if constructed, will unnecessarily disrupt vital operations and have a devastating economic impact on our businesses. It would be built under the pretense of

improving traffic mobility when, in fact, it would actually create a bigger problem by forcing even more traffic congestion in the direction of Loop 323 and South Broadway which is already identified as one of the top 100 most congested intersections in the State of Texas. With the traffic signal remaining at the Loop and Kinsey Lane, the overpass becomes increasingly nonsensical in the context of mobility. All of this occurs at a time when our State is grappling with a ballooning budget shortfall and a precipitous decline in revenue which is something we all can relate to.

Our businesses and community are in a fight for survival, and this project is nothing more than an unnecessary distraction to what we must do to serve that end. Brookshire Grocery Company, Classic Toyota and the coalition members listed below are committed to putting a halt to an ill-advised State project that does nothing to advance our community's interests. On the contrary, this project is harmful and is disrespectful to our coalition members. We ask that a special meeting be called and you vote for us and our coalition members by removing the overpass from the TAMPO plans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,



Brad Brookshire



Michael Allare



Mercedes-Benz  
of Tyler

cc: Coalition Members  
Tyler City Council Members  
Tom Mullins  
Henry Bell  
Lee Gibson  
Bob Garrett

# EXHIBIT "B" PROCESS FLOWCHART

