

Second Meeting of the CPTF Transportation Work Group
June 26, 2008
City Manager's Conference Room
Lawrence City Hall

Present: Carey Maynard-Moody (chair), Marc Epard, Charles Gruber, Kyle Schneweis, Marian Hukle, Lisa Pool, Todd Girdler

Absent: Bridget Chapin

Carey, chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

1. Introductions:

Todd Girdler will be the city staff representative in the group. Todd is the Senior Transportation Planner for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. He is a fairly new resident of Lawrence. Carey asked that Todd research what, if anything has been done at the city and county level that may have led to the reduction of GHG emissions in the last 3 years to prevent duplication of efforts. Charles requested information on how many vehicles were owned and operated by the city.

Lisa Pool is a Transportation Planner for the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) and is sharing work group duties with Karen Clawson.

2. Minutes: Marian Hukle recorded the minutes. Minutes for the meeting on June 5, 2008 were approved.

3. Carey reported on the June 24, 2008 meeting of the full Climate Protection Task Force (CPTF), where she presented the report from the June 6, 2008 meeting of the Transportation Work Group (TWG). Of special interest to CPTF were the following five points:

a. Travel patterns of school busses:

Carey had some question about the request for information on the travel patterns of school busses. She will take this request back to the full committee for clarification.

b. Public transportation: We agreed that public transportation will be a big part of TWG report.

c. Alternative fuel sources: As city operations are looking into alternative fuels for city vehicles, consulting the city would be a good place to start for information on these. Steve Stewart may be helpful city staff to access and collect this information.

d. Diesel Idling: There is some question as to why only diesel idling was singled out for the list by members of the CPTF. Lisa described an anti-idling at schools program started

by Girl Scouts at Overland Trail Elementary School. Police patrol cars were again questioned. Technology seems to be present that reduces the need to keep police cars idling. City manager and officers have been suggesting that it is not possible to reduce idling in patrol cars due to the need to keep battery charging equipment on board. Other cities seem to have reduced patrol car use as well as patrol car idling. More research needs to be done here.

e. Additional representation: The TWG decided that representation from the USD 497 would be unnecessary at this time. However, Carey will invite a representative of the district to the July 10th meeting to discuss school bus transportation. Carey will request that the representative bring data on busses, routes, miles traveled etc. Lisa inquired about a representative from the city public transportation office but was reassured that any information needed from the transportation administrator is readily available. In addition, Marc is currently a member of the Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) and Marian is a former chair of PTAC.

For the present time Carey suggested the TWG move forward with the task of submitting the chapter on transportation as part of the final CPTF master GHG reduction plan due March 2009.

4. Discussion of Interim work done: Kyle brought several items for perusal and discussion by TWG.

a. Traffic Count Map of annual average 24-hour traffic for the year 2007 on Lawrence, data compiled by KDOT staff. Kyle explained how to read the map and stated that older data is available for comparison. Kyle pointed out that local roads only make up 13% of the VMT despite comprising 2/3 of the total physical road miles. The fact that 37% of VMT are on the main arteries in town speaks to the limited options to get around town, as there are few cross-town thoroughfares and few neighborhoods with grid street patterns.

b. Chart of VMT (vehicle miles traveled) within Lawrence urban area boundary for 2007: This chart shows both the number of miles of physical roadway that exist within the urban area boundary (the city limits + urbanized area extending just beyond the city limits) broken down by classification of road type and the number of VMT on each type of roadway, as well as the percentage of VMT on each type of roadway. Charles observed that the total VMT for 2003 and 2007 are close. Kyle noted that because the boundary is getting bigger it is hard to compare the years.

Marc read from Lawrence's 2030 long range transportation plan. (there should be another word here)—VMT for the urban area boundary in 2005 was 1,568,000. He noted that the VMT are projected to reach 4 million in the year 2030 if the proposed road projects are completed. Kyle described the process he uses to build the transportation models for the city based on population and employment as well as projections of new

roads and development. He noted that building new roads doesn't necessarily increase VMT but might instead decrease travel time on the road.

Todd also suggested that congestion on certain roads predicted higher VMT on local roads.

Charles asked what figure should be used for the baseline of VMT if we are trying to reduce VMT by a certain percentage. Kyle suggested using the 1.5 million figures from 2005 as the baseline.

Marc asked about the target date for the reduction in GHG emissions. Carey replied that 2012 was the target date, based on the original Kyoto Protocol. She explained that some cities with very ambitious plans (such as GHG reductions of 50%) are setting 2020 as the target date. Other cities are more cautious at 20% reduction by 2012. The specific target date and target GHG emissions reduction percentage for the Lawrence CPTF is on the agenda for its next meeting, July 22 at 4:30 in the City Commission chambers.

Marc suggested that the TWG possibly look at alternative scenarios so that we can make different projections. For example, if no changes are made, then 2030 projections are 4 million VMT, whereas we would like to see 3 million VMT.

The goal for our plan is a 10% reduction overall for transportation as mandated by CPTF. Some members felt this was too low, and proposed that we should shoot for a greater reduction.

Charles then asked what percentage of GHG emissions is attributable to transportation. It is listed on the CPTF's draft GHG emissions baseline study as 19% as of 2005. These percentages are attained by using a standard ICLEI model. Kyle stated that the new data shows that the total tonnage due to transportation has grown. However, the percentage grew at a faster rate than total tonnage of GHG emissions for the community which seemed to shrink between the years 1990 and 2005. This reduction was due to the shut down of Farmland Industries nitrogen production plant east of the city on K-10.

On the city government operations side, the tonnage of CO₂ produced is a relatively small proportion at 3%. The growth in tonnage due to diesel in the government sector raised the question of whether this is due to the start up of the T. Carey emphasized that it is important to recognize that laws and policy are needed for community changes but not for government changes, as government can implement climate control procedures based on the need to operate on a greatly reduced budget. The cost of diesel fuel has sharply risen and the tax base for government operations has not.

c. Commuting in Douglas County

The number of people who live and work in Douglas County decreased from 90% in 1980 to 75% in 2000-- an indicator that commuters are moving to Lawrence.

In response to "How do you get to work?" - The percentage of people using alternative transportation (carpooling, walking, biking) has remained the same, but the percentage of

carpoolers has decreased dramatically. These numbers could be quite different for 2008 due to the increase in gas prices. Kyle noted that this indicates that people are willing to carpool, but because gas was cheap, they got used to driving alone in single occupancy vehicles (SOV). Of the commuters out of Douglas County, 2/3 travel to Kansas City metro and 1/3 to Topeka. Kyle also noted that the average commute time was still less than 45 minutes.

Carey asked Kyle: “As you collected and organized this data, what jumped out at you? What should our work group target and where would we have success?”

Kyle stated that until more convenient regional public transportation options are available, carpooling may be most promising. He said that more were willing to carpool 20 years ago than in 2000, but that might be changing. He thought that people are willing to carpool under the right circumstances such as high cost of driving SOVs (single occupancy vehicle). As 25-30% of the people in Lawrence don't work here, people have a greater incentive to commute via carpool.

Carey noted that we need to address behavioral styles and how people are moving about to determine how to target changes, and to identify what will bring about the biggest results

Carey asked for more up to date carpooling data. Lisa agreed to gather more data on carpooling to include data from Car Pool Connection. She was also asked to find out what type of public outreach Car Pool Connection does and how we can help with that. Kyle suggested that our group actively endorse carpooling. He also suggested as part of regional planning that we want to make sure there is plenty of parking where carpoolers can park their cars, such as at the intersection of K-10 and I-70.

5. Todd reminded the group that Lawrence, Douglas County is its own MPO (metropolitan planning organization) and for good reason: autonomy. While there may be advantages to becoming a MARC member, giving up the autonomy has not been deemed worth the gains of being part of a regional planning entity. Todd said that while coordination of programs with MARC are challenging due to this arrangement, they seem to be manageable. This discussion grew out of the work group's awareness that some of our programs (such as carpooling commutes) will be based on regional transportation arrangements.

Carey requested that since we have targeted carpooling as one aspect, we would need projections and trends (such as from number of inquiries to Carpool Connection). Kyle offered to try to refine the numbers. Marian asked if there were any data on the commuting patterns of people within the county but Kyle did not have that breakdown.

d. Possible recommendations: Kyle found 7 categories of recommendations then gleaned proposals from several city plans that fit into each category. Marc asked if the plans give any indication which recommendations would result in most reduction in GHG emissions. Kyle noted that there needed to be more research into that. Marc proposed

what he called a “heretical” suggestion that by making travel more efficient, projected congestion improvements might decrease fuel consumption and, consequently, decrease GHG emissions without decreasing VMT. Todd noted that since the city won’t have the funds necessary to increase roads, increase in VMT will not be caused by road building. He explained, however, that traffic is instead generated by new land use. However, Kyle did point out that, for example, if the South Lawrence Trafficway were to be built, then more people would want to come to the city because of travel efficiency. He suggested that when roads are less efficient, people opt to stay home.

Charles suggested that the group not just focus on reducing VMT but also consider how to get the most bangs for bucks, such as by considering fuel efficiency, travel efficiency and flow measures such as roundabouts, etc.

The group began to prioritize and identify the “low hanging fruit”, the areas where proposals are easy to implement and result in large reductions. These were categorized as the following:

1. Carpooling
2. Public Transit
3. Fuel efficiency
4. Walking and biking

Todd suggested that we distinguish between quick victories and long term goals. Charles proposed that TWG split up Kyle’s seven categories one per member, with each member to research both short and long term proposals, then report on that category at upcoming meetings. Marc suggested that members also include data in their reports.

The categories were selected as follows: Lisa—Land use, Charles—fuel efficiency, Kyle—carpooling, Marian—public transportation, Marc—Walking/biking, Todd—change in fuel type and technology, Carey—Other VMT. The TWG agreed that each member would report on short term programs and goals (for example: things that could be implemented in the next year) at the next meeting on July 10, ²⁰⁰⁸.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Carey thanked Kyle for his extensive research, and Marc suggested that approval of minutes be virtual. Carey asked if the TWG should encourage Mayor Dever to send a letter to the NHTSA on fuel efficiency, but the group decided that this should be left to be done on a personal level.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marian Hukle

