



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 18TH, 2021

LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>
PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Judge Tijerina, LWCAMPO Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Juan Mendive, LWCAMPO Staff, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to excuse members not able to participate in the meeting.

Second: Cm. Gonzalez
For: 4
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Regular members present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII (joined virtually)
Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, P.E., Private Sector

Regular members not present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO Chairperson
Honorable Ruben Gutierrez, Jr., City Councilmember, District V

Honorable Dr. Marte A. Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
David M. Salazar, Jr., P.E., TxDOT District Engineer

Ex-Officio members not present:

Honorable Judith Zaffirini, State Senator, District 21
Honorable Richard Raymond, State Representative, District 42
Honorable Tracy O. King, State Representative, District 80

Staff present:

Juan Mendive, LWCAMPO
Julio Niño, LWCAMPO
Angie Quijano, LWCAMPO

Guests:

Ramon Chavez, City Engineering Department
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Jesus Saavedra, TxDOT
Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro
Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, Inc. (joined virtually)
Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. (joined virtually)
Bill Frawley, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (joined virtually)

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Speakers are required to fill out witness cards, which must be submitted to MPO Staff no later than 15 minutes after the start of the meeting. Speakers shall identify themselves at the microphone. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. No more than three (3) persons will be allowed to speak on any side of an issue. Should there be more than three (3) people who wish to speak on a specific issue, they should select not more than three (3) representatives to speak on their behalf. The presiding officer may further limit public on the interest of order or time. Speakers may not transfer their minutes to any other speaker. Comments should be relevant to City business and delivered in a professional manner. No derogatory remarks shall be permitted.

There were no citizen comments.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:

A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on July 19th, 2021.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **approve** the minutes for the meeting held on July 19th, 2021.

Second: Cm. J. Gonzalez
For: 4
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Receive public testimony and initiate a 10-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the MPO Bylaws:

1. Article II, Section 2.3(a), entitled Administration, shall be amended as follows:

Remove - "The City of Laredo Planning Director shall act as the Transportation Planning Director for the MPO."

Add - "The MPO shall be led by a full-time MPO Transportation Planning Director."

Cm. J. Gonzalez made motion to **open** a public hearing and **initiate** a 10-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) of the MPO Bylaws.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 4
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C. Discussion with possible action on the Hachar-Reuthinger road project.

Humberto Gonzalez, TxDOT, stated that TxDOT had received the last pending right of entry agreement that was needed. He also stated that the environmental process was in progress and TxDOT was already working on some archeological pending reviews. He further mentioned that in about six months there would be a public hearing for the project to present the schematic and the plans to the public and to receive public comment at that time. He reported the project was moving forward on time for an August 2023 letting date.

V. REPORT(S) AND PRESENTATIONS (No action required).

A. Status report by the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).

Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc., representing the RMA, gave a brief status report on the RMA which was as follows:

- **FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes** – Notice to proceed (NTP) for the contractor was provided by TxDOT at the end June. This project is being constructed as part of the TxDOT Project, FM 1472 from Big Bend Blvd. to Killam Industrial Blvd. The Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes section will be constructed as part of Phase 2 of the project. Tentatively, the Killam Industrial Blvd. turn lanes section is scheduled to commence in September 2021. It should be noted that this change in phasing was needed to accommodate the extremely long lag time for the signal poles to arrive to the project. Anderson Columbia ordered the poles in February and construction projects across the state are seeing up to months in lag time for the arrival of steel signal poles.
- **Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Brownwood)** – Construction is ongoing. Our 3rd construction progress meeting is scheduled for later this month. Regarding the Cuatro Vientos Acceleration/ Deceleration Lane project, all TxDOT Laredo District Comments have been addressed. The project is scheduled for letting in October of this year.
- **Vallecillo Road** – We are monitoring the progress of federal funding for this project.

Cm. Perez commented that it was her understanding that all member requested projects were denied and as a result the Vallecillo Road project was no longer being considered for funding. She further asked if her understanding was correct.

Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, Inc., representing the RMA, stated that was correct. She stated all of the member designated projects were currently removed from the draft bill. She stated that the latest information available was that when they reconvened on the week of the 23rd, the Congressman's office was still hopeful that perhaps those projects would find a way to be placed again for funding. She stated one of the things the Speaker of the House was wanting a budget reconciliation bill to pass first which would require two resolutions at both, the House and the Senate. After that, the reconciliation bill would then be available to pass at both the House and the Senate level. She stated that from the Speaker's side, she believed that was one of the items being requested to get support from the House in order to put the earmarks back in. She stated there were several steps pending for any chance for those member designated projects to be placed back into consideration and there is still a chance for this project to be approved.

Cm. Perez asked if there was anything that the MPO or the RMA could do to help push for this project to be funded.

Ms. Montemayor stated she would be contacting the Congressman's office to see if there was anything that could be done as a community to help demonstrate support for the Vallecillo Road project.

Humberto Gonzalez, TxDOT, recommended that perhaps RMA or the City of Laredo could help champion additional studies that would show how Vallecillo Road would improve mobility along FM1472. He further stated this road had recently ranked one of the 100 most congested roadways in the State of Texas as number 86. He added that one of the top priorities for the State was moving traffic safely.

Other items reported by Antonio Rodriguez, RMA were as follows:

- At Board meeting on the 22nd of July, the WCCL RMA approved an Inter Local Agreement with the City of Laredo to provide financial support for the Springfield Phase III project.
- At Board meeting on the 22nd of July, the WCCL RMA passed a resolution of support for the El Metro RAISE Grant Application for the El Metro North Mobility Center.

VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

A. Update by MPO Staff on the ongoing MPO Process Review.

Mr. Mendive stated there was a written report on the last page of the packet and gave a brief update on the ongoing MPO Process Review. He also stated Mr. Bill Frawley from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute had joined the meeting via zoom in case anyone had any questions.

1. The MPO Process Review kick-off session was held on July 21st. Bill Frawley of Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) met with MPO staff to discuss the approved process review work plan. On July 22nd, Mr. Frawley met individually with Chairperson Mayor Pete Saenz, Vice-Chair Judge Tijerina, and City Management. On July 23rd, Mr. Frawley met with TxDOT Staff. During Mr. Frawley's 3-day visit, a series of next steps and action items were identified. The action items that will be addressed during the process review include the following:

- Bylaws amendment to reflect separate MPO Director
- Position descriptions and organization
- Fiscal Agent roles and responsibilities
- Financial analysis
- Staff-Task Matrix
- Carry-over expenditure strategy
- Mission and Vision statements review

- Planning agreement changes and other amendments to Bylaws
- Census Impacts
- Identify training needs (i.e. performance-based planning)
- Policy Committee structure
- Technical Committee role

Next Steps:

- MPO staff will continue maintaining frequent communication with Bill Frawley and provide any requested information or documents.
 - Bill Frawley will be present at the next Technical Committee meeting on September 7, 2021. During his visit there will be a work-session with MPO staff.
 - Mr. Frawley will attend the October 20, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting and provide an update.
2. MPO staff was invited to present to the City of Laredo Planning & Zoning Commission on August 5, 2021. The presentation provided an overview of the Laredo Webb County Area MPO and its ongoing activities.
 3. The next Active Transportation Committee (ATC) meeting is scheduled for August 25, 2021. ATC meetings continue to be held virtually.
 4. The audit of the MPO by TxDOT is tentatively scheduled to begin late August or early September of 2021. Updates will be provided as they become available.

VII. ADJOURNMENT


Judge Tijerina made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Second: Cm. Gonzalez
 For: 4
 Against: 0
 Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously



 Juan S. Mendive
 Interim MPO Director



 Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO
 Chairperson