



# LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

## AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### POLICY COMMITTEE

#### MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 15TH, 2021

LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>

PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300

#### I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pete Saenz, called the meeting to order at 1:45 P.M.

#### II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Graciela Briones, LWCAMPO Staff, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

##### **Regular members present:**

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO Chairperson

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1

Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3 (joined the meeting at 1:46 P.M.)

Honorable Dr. Marte A. Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI

Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII

David M. Salazar, Jr., P.E., TxDOT District Engineer

##### **Regular members not present:**

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge

Honorable Ruben Gutierrez, Jr., City Councilmember, District V

Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr., P.E., Private Sector

##### **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

##### **LWCAMPO Staff present:**

Juan Mendive, LWCAMPO Interim Director

Graciela Briones, LWCAMPO Planner

Jason Hinojosa, LWCAMPO Planner

Julio Niño, LWCAMPO Planner  
Angie Quijano, LWCAMPO Administrative Assistant

**Others:**

Ramon Chavez, City Engineering Department  
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering  
Sara Garza, TxDOT  
Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT  
Jed Brown, RMA  
Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, Inc.  
Sandy Esparza, Transit, El Metro  
Leslie Aboumrad, Able City  
Sasha Pejic, Stantec (via web-ex)

**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.

Dr. Martinez stepped out of the meeting at 1:46 P.M.

**IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on November 17th, 2021.**

CM. Galo made a motion to approve the minutes of November 17th, 2021.

Second: CM. Perez  
For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

**B. Discussion with possible action regarding the extension of Cuatro Vientos Blvd./Loop 20 to Rio Bravo, and any other matters incident thereto. (Dr. Marte A. Martinez)**

CM. J. Gonzalez made a motion to defer and come back the item to later on during the meeting once Dr. Martinez joined the meeting.

Second: Mayor Saenz  
For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Discussion with possible action on the River Road project.**

Juan Mendive, Interim MPO Director, stated that at the last MPO meeting the RMA came forward with the proposal to do a study for the alignment of the River Road project from Aquero Boulevard to Las Tiendas Road. He stated the project was eligible for the study and had reached out to the legal department to check on the procurement process. The RMA would be using their procure general engineering consultant so the MPO needs to make sure they can participate in said study. He stated the MPO is waiting to get an answer from legal and discuss it with the Technical committee and come back to the MPO committee with recommendations.

**D. Discussion with possible action on the Hachar-Reuthinger Road project.**

David Salazar, TxDOT, stated Mr. Roberto Rodriguez from TxDOT staff would be providing the report and requested to provide updates on a quarterly basis instead of monthly.

CM. Perez was not in agreement on quarterly reports. She recommended to continue with monthly reports even if the status was the same as the one in previous months.

It was agreed on providing the reports monthly.

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, gave a brief update on the item. He stated that the work authorization with the consultant to perform the engineering services had been the week before. The first two items the consultant would be working on will be the right-of-way mapping and reviewing TxDOT's construction estimate. For the environmental, the archaeologists completed their assignments and prepared their report. The report was being reviewed in Austin and hopefully would have a response by February and have everything compiled together to present the final environmental document.

**A. REPORT(S) AND PRESENTATIONS (No action required).**

Dr. Martinez stepped back into the meeting at 1:54 P.M.

Dr. Martinez made a motion to **bring back** item IV-B.

Second: CM. Gonzalez  
For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**B. Discussion with possible action regarding the extension of Cuatro Vientos Blvd./Loop 20 to Rio Bravo, and any other matters incident thereto. (Dr. Marte A. Martinez)**

Dr. Martinez stated his concerns about the progress on the Loop continuing to the south. He further stated this was one of the gateways that connects the County to the City and that can really improve regional mobility for Webb County constituents, especially the people traveling from Rio Bravo, El Cenizo, Zapata, San Ignacio into the city. He further stated they had talked about the continuity of the Loop all the way south to connect where Cuatro Vientos ends all the way to Rio Bravo. Therefore, he wanted to be able to support the use of some monies to connect these cities to ours and make this project a priority as increasing mobility, increases prosperity for the region.

CM. J. Gonzalez stated he concurred with Dr. Martinez' comments as this project was very much needed that would bring a lot of economic development. He mentioned there were approximately 15,000-16,000 people that travel every day to work. He further mentioned there were at least 12 property owners in that area.

CM. Galo asked if staff had a map to show the area and asked if any frontage roads would be included as these are critical for commercial development.

Jason Hinojosa, LWCAMPO staff, assisted with the map images.

David Salazar, TxDOT, stated TxDOT has long range plans for the future growth of Laredo. He stated that because of all the traffic and all the development, that is why the extension of Cuatro Vientos is so important. He also stated that for any project that TxDOT develops, the top priority is safety.

Jed Brown, RMA, informed the committee that the RMA had scheduled a workshop on Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. to discuss transportation re-investments.

Dr. Martinez made a motion to look at 2024's category funds to be utilized to connect Cuatro Vientos Road all the way to US 83 and use those monies for the overpasses and lanes, and look at all funding sources for 2024.

Second: Mayor Saenz  
For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Presentation by TxDOT on the FY2023 Unified Transportation Program project selection.**

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the item. He stated for the MPO, the selection of the projects that TxDOT would be working on and ranking them would be the category 4, 2, and 12. He stated that the funding distribution started in October. Texas would go through the program, which is the decision lens program. The rankings are based on safety, preservation, performance measures. The deadline for Laredo is January. The district would need to submit all the projects for the ranking.

The committee went back to item V-A.

**A. Presentation by Stantec and Able City on the Comprehensive Operational Analysis of El Metro.**

Leslie Aboumrad, Able City and Sasha Pejcic, Stantec (via web-ex) gave a presentation on the item. Items that were discussed were as follows:

- Project Scope
- Outreach and Engagement Summary
- Background and Existing Performance Review
- Short-term Network Recommendations
- Long-term Recommendations
- Supporting Recommendations and KPI's
- Next Steps

CM. Perez and CM. J. Gonzalez left the meeting at approximately 3:05 P.M.

The Committee asked if it was possible to be provided with the information and data gathered by the consultant.

Mr. Mendive stated he would be glad to provide the Committee with a digital copy of the complete study.

**C. Update by MPO staff on the request to compile a list of previous plans and studies conducted by or in collaboration with the MPO.**

There was no discussion of this item.

**D. Status report by the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).**

Jed Brown, RMA, gave a brief presentation on the RMA which was as follows:

1. FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes – NTP for the contractor was provided by TxDOT at the end June. Currently, Anderson Columbia is working from Big Bend to South of Killam Industrial Blvd. The Killam Turn Lanes portion of the project and the northern portion of the project began on the week of the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. The first Construction Progress Meeting is on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December.
2. Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Brownwood) – Construction is ongoing. Our 5<sup>th</sup> construction progress meeting was held on 11/23/21. Currently, the project is scheduled for completion in June 2022. **The project is 55% to 57% complete.** Regarding the Cuatro Vientos Acceleration/ Deceleration Lane project, the project was awarded to Anderson Columbia in October 2021. We anticipate construction to commence in early 2022.
3. Vallecillo Road – We are continuing to communicate with officials from the Texas Transportation Commission and higher regarding the importance of the project to the Laredo Greater Area and the State.
4. Other Items:
  - The WCCL RMA conducted their November Board Meeting on 11/16/21.
  - The WCCL RMA will conduct a Transportation Reinvestment Zone Workshop for the full WCCL RMA Board, members of City Council, members of Commissioners Court and members of the MPO staff on 12/17/21.
  - The WCCL RMA is anticipating a Board meeting for the month of January.

**V. DIRECTOR's COMMENTS**

Juan Mendive, Interim MPO Director, gave a brief presentation and the following report:

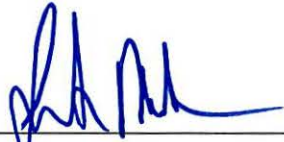
1. The MPO is coordinating with TxDOT to add the World Trade Bridge Expansion project to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Inclusion of the project in the TIP, STIP, and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) would allow participation and oversight of the environmental clearance process by FHWA and TxDOT.
2. As requested by the Policy Committee, quarterly reports by City of Laredo staff on the Flecha Lane (CSJ 0922-33-076) and Calton and Santa Maria Interchange (CSJ 0922-33-093) projects will begin in January 2022.
3. MPO staff continues to coordinate with Bill Frawley of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) on the ongoing MPO process review as well as with all appropriate parties.
4. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was passed by Congress and signed by the President on November 15, 2021. MPO staff will continue to review guidance related to the new law with specific attention to new requirements relevant to MPOs as well as new funding opportunities.
5. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:
  - Technical Committee – January 11, 2022
  - Policy Committee – January 19, 2022
  - Active Transportation Committee – January 26, 2022

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Martinez made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 3:33 P.M.

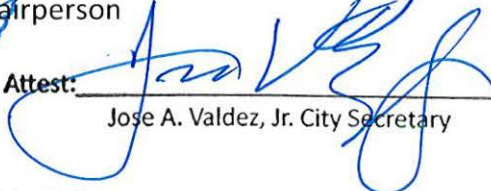
Second: Mayor Saenz  
 For: 4  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

  
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 Juan S. Mendive  
 Interim LWCAMPO Director



  
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 Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO  
 Chairperson

Attest:   
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 Jose A. Valdez, Jr. City Secretary