



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

July 20th, 2022

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

PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Judge Tijerina, called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **excuse** members not present.

Second: CM. Dr. Martinez
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Regular members present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge

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

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

Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII (joined the meeting at 1:32 p.m.)

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1 (joined the meeting at 1:32 p.m.)

Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3 (joined the meeting at 1:41 p.m.)

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

Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr., P.E., Member at Large

Regular members not present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO Chairperson

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
Julio Niño, LWCAMPO Planner
Angie Quijano, LWCAMPO Administrative Assistant

Others:

Ramon Chavez, COL Engineering Department
Gloria Saavedra, COL Engineering Department
Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Orlando Navarro, COL Planning Department
Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Luis Villarreal, TxDOT
Jason Hinojosa, TxDOT
Jed Brown, RMA
Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, Inc.
Tim Juarez, Stanley Consultants

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Speakers are required to fill out witness cards, which must be submitted to MPO Staff no later than 1:45 p.m. the day 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 MPO business and delivered in a professional manner. No derogatory remarks shall be permitted.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:

A. Approval of the minutes for the meetings held on June 15th, 2022

CM. Dr. Martinez made a motion to approve the minutes of June 15th, 2022.

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

Motion carried unanimously

B. Receive public testimony and approve resolution No. MPO 2022-06, adopting the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

CM. Dr. Martinez made a motion to close the public hearing and approve resolution No. MPO 2022-06, adopting the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

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

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Perez and CM. J. Gonzalez joined the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

C. Receive public testimony and initiate a 45-day public review and comment period for the draft Public Participation Plan.

Julio Niño, MPO staff gave a presentation on the item detailing what the proposed plan consists of. He mentioned the proposed update to the plan would replace the previously adopted in May 15, 2017.

CM. Galo joined the meeting at 1:41 p.m.

CM. Dr. Martinez expressed the importance of the engagement of the public on the different proposed projects that will impact the community.

Mr. Mendive stated that it was very meaningful for the MPO to do this update and, staff did research on other MPOs current best practices to make sure all federal guidelines and regulations are being followed. This plan was developed totally in-house. It is lengthier than the previous but, it outlines newer strategies and it incorporates additional information that will be use as a tool for staff on how to engage the public as part of the planning process. He also mentioned that one or two workshops are proposed for the public input before the plan is adopted.

CM. Dr. Martinez made a motion to open and initiate a 45-day public review and comment period for the draft Public Participation Plan.

Second: CM. Perez

CM. Perez asked about a component that allows for virtual public participation.

Mr. Mendive stated that general comments in writing are currently being allowed through a google form on the MPO website.

Judge Tijerina suggested public comments would have to be strictly pertaining to the MPO items.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. Discussion with possible action on submitting a joint application with the Webb County City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority and the City of Laredo for the U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program, and any other matters incident thereto.

Mr. Mendive gave a brief presentation on the item. He stated that at the last meeting, the committee had requested to bring back an item and to act on it. He also stated that the MPO would partner with the City of Laredo and the RMA and would submit a joint application. If the City of Laredo or the RMA would apply by themselves, the maximum amount they could apply for was \$1 Million dollars; but if partnering up with the MPO they could apply for up to \$5 Million. He further stated the City of Laredo had already acted at the previous City Council meeting to collaborate in said grant and, they are paying for half of the cost to prepare the grant. The RMA has also authorized the participation and are paying for the other half to prepare the grant application. He stated that since the source of funds was federal, the MPO would not be participating at this time financially. He stated the MPO would help with staff time to help put the application together.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to approve the item.

Second: Dr. Martinez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

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

CM. H. Gonzalez stated the project was still on schedule with letting date of August 2023. He also stated TxDOT had met with the City of Laredo getting the Right-of-Way footprint finalized. TxDOT would be submitting it to the City within the next month that way the City could proceed with their Right-of-Way acquisition for the project.

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

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

Jed Brown, RMA, provided a status report which included the following:

1. FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes – The commencement of work at Killam Industrial Blvd. at FM 1472 occurred in early May 2022. In May and June, the acceleration lane construction of FM 1472 has been ongoing. In the next 2 weeks, the placement of low-profile concrete barrier along Killam Industrial Blvd. for the construction of the dedicated right turn lane to commence. **Currently the project is estimated at 25% complete.** Substantial completion of the project is anticipated for October 2022.
2. Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Brownwood) – Construction is ongoing. Our 11th construction progress meeting was held on 6/23/22. Paving of the street is 100% complete. Construction of the sidewalk and curb is ongoing. The placement of the irrigation system is set to commence. A major critical path item that is pending is the revised design and construction for the 18-inch water main. The City of Laredo is working to develop the updated plans and issue to the Contractor. Currently, the project is scheduled for completion in 7/29/2022. The project was delayed due to lack of water for 2 to 3 weeks. **Overall the project is 90% complete.**
3. Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos) Acceleration/ Deceleration Lane Project - The project was awarded to Anderson Columbia in October 2021. Construction commenced on the week of the 14th of March. The paving is largely complete. Major critical path item that is still pending is the installation of the proposed illumination on the Northbound and Southbound Lanes of Cuatro Vientos. The project is scheduled for completion in August 2022. **Overall, the project is approximately 90% complete.**
4. Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos) TRZ Study Update – Study commenced in May with the execution of the City of Laredo and WCCL RMA ILA. To date the team has met with representatives of the Laredo Economic Development Corporation and representatives of property owners in the study area. The team is working to meet with the City of Laredo Planning Director, Orlando Navarro, to discuss other possible stakeholders that would

provide beneficial information to the study. The study is scheduled for completion in **October 2022**.

5. Springfield Phase III – NTP was provided by the City of Laredo to AZAR Services, LLC on 12/15/21. Currently, the contractor is working on the concrete paving of the project. Substantial completion is scheduled for October 2022. **The project is approximately 65% complete.**
6. Webb County Fair Grounds TIA – The RMA team has completed the existing conditions analysis for the study. On 6/10/22, the RMA Team met with the TxDOT Laredo District to discuss the existing conditions analysis and review any possible concerns with the proposed driveway spacing on the project. The main points of the discussion is that the 2025 projection of the study will account for the improvements of the first phase of the fair ground improvements. The 2035 projection will account for the US 59 immediate improvements of a 6-lane rural divided highway configuration. The timeframe for completion of the study is **December of 2022**.
7. River Road Corridor Study – The MPO Policy Committee approved moving forward with the Study. The WCCL RMA and the MPO have executed the Inter Local Agreement. The study has officially commenced. Duration of the study is estimated for 12 months.
8. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant – The RMA has committed, subject to Board approval, to work with the MPO and possibly the City of Laredo for the development of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant from FHWA. The grant has the following aspects:
 - It funds Local Governments, MPOs, and other jurisdictions to develop an action plan to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. If an action plan is already in place by a local government or MPO, it can fund the planning, design and development activities in support of the action plan or carry out strategies identified in the adopted action plan.
 - Total funding for FY 2022 is \$1 Billion. The minimum award is \$200K. The most that can be awarded to a recipient (joint venture with 2 or more Local Governments and/or political subdivisions) is \$5 Million.
 - Application due date is 9/15/22 at 5 pm.
9. Vallecillo Road –
 - The RMA continues to investigate options to close the \$17.5 million-dollar funding gap. We received good news on July 7th from Congressman Henry Cuellar that Congress will provide a \$3 million earmark towards Vallecillo. That leaves the funding gap at \$14.5 million.
 - On July 12th, the RMA reviewed the draft UTP and it was noted that Vallecillo did not make the draft project list for Category 12 funding. As the local TxDOT District office explained to Chairman Brown, the District office submitted Vallecillo for Category 12 Texas Transportation Commission discretionary funding, but the TPP division of TxDOT did not score Vallecillo high enough to place it on the final recommendation list. We have

until August 8th to get Vallecillo added to the draft UTP list, and that will take some effort by local, state and federal officials. The RMA is committed to that effort.

- The RMA also believes an easier option to close the funding gap would be to have the MPO Policy Committee to allocate two years of its Category 7 funding to Vallecillo, and then the gap would be closed and the project could move forward as fully funded. We ask the MPO Policy Committee to consider this option should Vallecillo not make the final UTP. The RMA requests two years of MPO Category 7 funds after Hachar receives its funds through 2024.

10. Other Items:

- The WC-CL RMA Board of Directors met this morning on July 20, 2022.

B. Update on the timeline for the Laredo Webb County Area MPO 2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Program Call for Projects.

Mr. Mendive gave an overview of the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program. He stated that in urbanized areas with populations over 200,000, TASA funds are distributed to MPOs and these MPOs are required to develop a competitive process for selecting projects. He further stated that these funds can be used for projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school, streetscaping, and traffic calming techniques.

Mr. Mendive further stated that the eligible entities for the TA Set-Aside program are local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local education agencies, or schools, tribal governments and, now nonprofit entities are eligible to apply directly as well.

MPOs have to developed a competitive process (Call for Projects). The last Call for Projects done by the Laredo MPO was in 2016. However, there is new guidance from FHWA, therefore, the Laredo MPO is currently working on updating the previous local guidelines for the application process. He further mentioned that the potential funding to award is \$2.1 Million. TASA is not a grant, these funds are provided on a cost reimbursement basis; a 20% local match is required. This match used to be in cash only but, now in-kind will be permitted. Eligible entities may submit applicants for more than one project. MPO will create a subcommittee formed with MPO staff, ATC and Technical members to evaluate the submittals and present final selection(s) to Policy Committee for approval.

C. Update by City of Laredo Engineering staff on the FM 1472/Flecha Ln. Realignment (CSG 0922-33-076) and Calton Road Grade Separation (CSJ 0922-33-093) projects.

Gloria Saavedra, Engineering Department, gave an update on these projects which was as follows:

Flecha Lane/Las Cruces drive along FM 1472 (Mines Road)

Environmental. The consultant, KCI (formerly CEC) confirmed that the environmental policies are reversed by the Biden’s administration. A meeting with the consultant is scheduled for next week to discuss the option to submit a pre-construction notification (PCN) and the mitigation plan with a request for preliminary jurisdictional determination (PJD) to the Corps of Engineers. Mr. John Porter was in communication back in June of 2020 with the Valley Land Fund, out of McAllen, for the Conservation Easement Opportunity. They showed interest in being the 3rd party holder of a conservation easement of the mitigation pan. A join agreement needs to get approved by City Council between the City and The Valley Land Fund.

Also, during the meeting, there will be discussion on the construction plans, specifications and cost estimate to make sure they follow the updated TxDOT requirements.

Real Estate. Pending to acquire the last parcel 8111 Las Cruces from J&R Gon Investments, LTD. The condemnation of this property is in process. The city had already acquired Mr. Resendez’s property.

Calton Road Grade Separation and Roadway Widening

PS&E. While the consultant was working on addressing TxDOT and Union Pacific Road comments from 90% plan submittal, a recommendation was received from TxDOT regarding potential savings between steel vs prestressed concrete beams. The City asked the consultant to provide an amendment for redesign, additional time for the redesign and review by UPRR, overall delay to letting.

Amendment Number 12 was received and reviewed by City Staff. Engineering department provided comments to the consultants. If the savings are substantial, Engineering would recommend to TxDOT and City Council the redesign approval.

Activity. 90% Plans (addressing TxDOT changes since Nov 2017)

Completion Date. On hold depending Amending 12 approval

Environmental Re-Evaluation	May 2022
Project Letting	August 2023
Construction Phase Services complete	August 2023

Real Estate. Mediation with Crown Enterprises is scheduled for Tuesday, July 26, 2022.

VI. DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

Mr. Mendive provided the following report:

1. Update on MPO Process Review – The proposed amendment to the Planning Agreement as approved by the Policy Committee has been reviewed and accepted by TxDOT. Additionally, the MOU detailing the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and the City of Laredo (fiscal agent) has been drafted and provided to the City of Laredo for their review.
2. On June 30th, MPO staff met with the consultants working on TxDOT’s US83 Corridor Study. The consultants were interested in learning more about how the MPO prioritizes and scores projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The meeting was also an opportunity for MPO staff to share information on the needs and future recommendations along the US83 Corridor within the Laredo region.
3. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:
 - Active Transportation Committee – July 27, 2022
 - Technical Committee – August 9, 2022
 - Policy Committee – August 17, 2022

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Martinez made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 2:22 p.m.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously



Juan S. Mendive
Interim LWCAMPO Director



Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO
Chairperson