



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

August 17th, 2022

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 1:32 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 Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO Chairperson

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge

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

Honorable Dr. Marte A. Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI (joined the meeting at 1:34)

Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII (joined the meeting at 1:36 p.m.)

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1 (joined the meeting at 1:35 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 John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3

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:

Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Ramon Chavez, COL Engineering Department
Orlando Navarro, COL Planning Department
Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Luis Villarreal, TxDOT
Jason Hinojosa, TxDOT
Jose Vargas, TxDOT
Kirk Fauver,
Jed Brown, RMA
Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, Inc.
Victor Linares, ARIVA Surveying Engineering Construction
Jonathan Vazquez, ARIVA Surveying Engineering Construction

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:

CM. Dr. Martinez joined the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

A. Approval of the minutes for the meetings held on July 20th, 2022

CM. Dr. Martinez made a motion to approve the minutes of July 20th, 2022.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Ruben Gutierrez joined the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

CM. Vanessa Perez joined the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

B. Discussion with possible action on gap funding for the Vallecillo Road Project, and any other matters incident thereto. (Requested by Mayor Pete Saenz).

Juan Mendive, Interim MPO Director, stated that the item was placed on the agenda to discuss the funding gap for Vallecillo Road. He also stated the idea was to look at Category 7 monies to see what could be funded. He further mentioned that the action that the MPO committee would take would be to decide what years of funding the committee would want to program towards Vallecillo Road and how much. After that, MPO Staff would need to come back with TIP amendments to be able to add the funding to the TIP.

Mayor Saenz stated that he had conversations with Mr. Williams, Executive Director of TxDOT. Mayor Saenz stated that Mr. Williams stated TxDOT was willing to help with the overpass for Vallecillo.

Jed Brown, RMA, stated, the ask that the RMA had before the committee was that they receive two years of MPO's Category 7 dollars after Hachar is fully funded.

David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer, stated the Hachar-Reuthinger would include the overpass on IH 35 and the roadway itself. He mentioned that the grade crossing on Mines Road was not funded yet. He further said TxDOT was currently working on planning for design and plan work but no funds were available at this time.

Humberto Gonzalez, TxDOT, stated that the funds available right now were to construct an overpass on Hachar-Reuthinger within TxDOT Right-of-Way. The funds allocated were approximately \$53 million of Category 7 for a divided highway that in the future could be

interstate highways and would connect at FM 1472 and IH35. He stated that there is a consultant on board already working on a design of the elevated connection for Hachar-Reuthinger to the overpass and such part is not funded yet.

Judge Tijerina requested to put an item on the next agenda regarding the \$7 million needed for the Lomas del Sur project.

Mr. Salazar, TxDOT, stated that the Vallecillo letter that came through, TxDOT usually abstains from voting on Category 7 MPO funds. On the allocation of the \$13 million for Vallecillo to the RMA, TxDOT would be voting in support of that item based on the fact that the Executive Director and the Transportation Commission Chairman have so elected to support the project. He also stated that the letter from Mr. Bruce stated that TxDOT was willing to immediately begin planning and design efforts for the project which is the overpass of IH35 and would work to pursue future funding opportunities for its delivery. He stated it meant that TxDOT would have to find funding for the \$45 million.

CM. Perez stated her concerns regarding starting a project before starting another one. She stated the area by the trade bridges was dying to relief and believed Vallecillo was the opportunity to get something going.

Mr. Salazar stated that for the Hachar-Reuthinger project, TxDOT was waiting on the last fiscal year 2023 in MPO funds so there could be a letting date of August of 2023. He also asked how soon Vallecillo would take to let.

Mr. Brown, RMA, stated the letting date would be January 2026.

Mr. Salazar, TxDOT, stated Vallecillo would let in 2026 and then could allocate \$13 million of the MPO dollars to that letting date, then take the 7 million and allocate it now and proceed with the Lomas del Sur project with the assumption that design and work are still missing.

Melisa Montemayor, HNTB, stated the project could be let in fiscal year 2026. With that in mind, funds of cat 7 fiscal year 2025 and 2026 fit perfectly with the letting schedule without requesting any acceleration of category 7 funds.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to fund the gap for \$16.5 million for Vallecillo Road project with Category 7 funds FY 2026-2027.

Second:	CM. Dr. Martinez
For:	8
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Gutierrez left the meeting at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at approximately 1:05 p.m.

C. Discussion with possible action on connecting International Blvd. north of US 59/Loop 20 to IH-35 and other necessary mobility improvements in Northeast Laredo, and any other matters incident thereto. (Requested by Dr. Marte A. Martinez).

Dr. Martinez stated that when Loop 20 was designed, there was no off-ramp to McPherson road, only an on-ramp. He stated the traffic counts are equal to the Loop and IH35. Right now, as it stands, people have to exit through international which already had a lot of traffic. He further stated he has had conversations with TxDOT about the off-ramp and stated he was advised that there is not enough distance to create an off-ramp. He stated there is a possibility to add an off-ramp, if the on-ramp was removed but in order to do that, there would need to be another exit. He stated what he was looking for was a secondary exit to alleviate traffic and congestions on the northeast part of town. He further stated the goal was to extend McPherson north and extend International Blvd north all the way up to mile marker 13.

Mr. Salazar, TxDOT, stated when the McPherson overpass was constructed, there was only enough funds for McPherson, so the overpass was constructed and the on-ramp was constructed. Then, funding for International Blvd was available and an on-ramp and off-ramp was constructed. He stated the proximity of McPherson and International Blvd was so close to each other that with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations, an off and on-ramp cannot be placed. He stated at that time, the best solution on that area right now was an on-ramp on McPherson. He stated the concern was if there was an alternate route for all the subdivisions, the schools back towards IH35 where they have another exit and alleviate that traffic that is coming out of McPherson, then at that point TxDOT would certainly look at it and would be able to remove the on-ramp and place an off-ramp that would be associated with a study that would be conducted at that point.

Mr. Mendive stated the project would need to be added to the MTP and make sure the project is fiscally constrained project list so there's funds for the future. Cost estimates and more project information would be needed in order to be able to program in the long-range transportation plan.

Orlando Navarro, Planning Director, stated there was an annexation for an elementary school done right behind the United 9th grade campus. He stated there was a need for an

exit to come to McPherson and also to take East Point Rd and bring it north to connect in hopes that the road can be done sooner than later from the developer.

Cm. Dr. Martinez made a motion to **add** the project to the MTP on the physically constrained project list.

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

Motion carried unanimously

D. 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 stated that was the only update they had.

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

A. Presentation on Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) representative, Kirk D. Fauver.

Kirk Fauver, FHWA, gave a brief presentation on Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL). He presented the overview of the PEL benefits, flexibility in PEL approaches, the PEL best practices, and the FHWA PEL resources.

B. Presentation by TxDOT on the status of ongoing projects.

Jose Vargas, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation and status of ongoing projects.

C. 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 had been ongoing. The contractor has had struggles with resources due to COVID issues with staff. This resulted in delays for progressing on the Killam Industrial Blvd. section of the project during the latter month of July. On Friday the 12th of August, the contractor placed low profile concrete barrier along Killam Industrial Blvd. for the construction of the dedicated right turn lane to commence. **As of the week of the 8th of August, the project is 25% complete.** Based

- on discussions with the contractor, we estimate that project will advance significantly over the next 2 weeks and be 50% complete by the end of August. Substantial completion of the project is anticipated for October 2022.
2. Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Brownwood) – Construction is ongoing. Our 12th construction progress meeting was held on 8/02/22. Paving of the street is 100% complete. Construction of the sidewalk and curb is ongoing. Street is largely complete from Cuatro Vientos to Isla Mujeres. The placement of the irrigation system is ongoing. 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. Based on the current status of items on the project, substantial completion is projected for late September/ early October completion. The project has been delayed due to lack of water for 2 to 3 weeks and the need for a revised water main design. **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 to 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 September 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. On 8/09/2022, the team met with Ms. Vanessa Guerra of the City Planning Department to discuss upcoming developments from local stake holders. The team will be conducting one-on-one stake holder meetings over the next 6 weeks. 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 continuing to progress on the project. As in other projects, the supply of materials is continuing to be constrained. Substantial completion is scheduled for October 2022. **Overall, 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 8/10/22, the RMA Team met internally for a status of progress of the project. Currently, the study is addressing the trip distribution for 2025 and 2035 traffic projections. The 2025 traffic projections will account for the 1st phase of the fair grounds to be constructed. The 2035 traffic projections will account for the US 59 immediate improvements of a 6-lane rural divided highway configuration and the full build out of the fair ground improvements. 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. Currently, the team has begun identifying the environmental constraints of the

area (archaeological, water, biological, etc.). The Team will begin developing possible alignments over the next 2 to 4 weeks. The Team will commence reaching out to stakeholders to obtain input for possible alignments in the area in October 2022.

8. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant – In partnership with the MPO and the City of Laredo, the RMA is developing the grant application to develop an action to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. Currently, the team is developing the scope of the action plan that will be included as part of the grant application narrative. The team has developed a list of local and state level elected officials to obtain letters of support for the grant application. The grant application for this study will be requesting \$2M from the FHWA. The application is due on September 15, 2022. The team anticipates submitting the application one week prior to the due date.
9. Vallecillo Road – As stated previously, on July 7th from US Congressman Henry Cuellar, he notified the RMA that Congress will provide a \$3 million earmark towards Vallecillo. This reduced the project funding gap from \$17.5 million to \$14.5 million. In our continued effort for funding to reduce the remaining gap, the project partners (WCCL RMA, City of Laredo, Killam Company) met with TxDOT Officials along with State and Federal elected officials for an in-person meeting with some individuals attending virtually on the 3rd of August. The meeting was very productive and a lot of good information was shared among the parties. The project funding was discussed in detail. The RMA will present the key takeaways from this meeting to the MPO Policy Committee members at the 8/17 MPO Policy Committee meeting. Attendees at the meeting included the following:

A. Attendees in support of the project:

- Mr. Jed A. Brown – WC-CL RMA Chair
- United States Congressman Henry Cuellar
- Texas Secretary of State John Scott
- State Senator Judith Zaffirini
- State Representative Richard Raymond
- State Representative Tracy King
- Mayor Pete Saenz
- Council Member Vanessa Perez
- Mr. Cliffe Killam, Killam Development
- Ms. Melisa Montemayor – WC-CL RMA GEC (HNTB)

B. Attendees from TxDOT:

- Mr. Marc William - TxDOT Executive Director
- Mr. Lance Williams – TxDOT Chief Engineer
- Mr. David Salazar – TxDOT Laredo District Engineer

10. Other Items:

- The WC-CL RMA Board of Directors is tentatively scheduled to meet in September

VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Mendive provided the following report:

A. Administrative modification to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to incorporate an updated MPO/TxDOT Self-Certification Statement.

1. As per TxDOT's request to MPOs, an administrative modification to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be required to incorporate a revised Self-Certification Statement, which reflects updated language in accordance with the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

B. MPO 2022 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Call for Projects update.

2. The draft guidelines for the MPO 2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Call for Projects have been reviewed by the Active Transportation Committee and Technical Committee. Both committees recommended approval pending FHWA's review. The guidelines will be submitted to FHWA for their review. We plan to bring an action item to the Policy Committee meeting in September to consider approving the guidelines and authorizing the Call for Projects.

C. Schedule of upcoming meetings.

3. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:
 - Active Transportation Committee – August 31, 2022
 - Technical Committee – September 13, 2022
 - Policy Committee – September 21, 2022

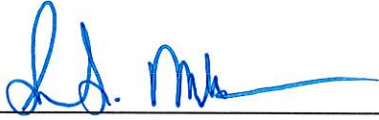
VII. ADJOURNMENT

CM. Dr. Martinez made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 3:03 p.m.


Second: CM. J. Gonzalez

For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously



Juan S. Mendive
Interim LWCAMPO Director



Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCAMPO
Chairperson