

Laredo Urban Transportation Study

**Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee
City of Laredo Council Chambers
1110 Houston St. -Laredo, Texas**



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2020 MEETING

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Norma “Nelly” Vielma, City Councilmember, District V (joined meeting at 1:45 p.m.)
Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
David M. Salazar, Jr., TxDOT District Engineer

Regular members not present:

Honorable Dr. Marte Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI
(TxDOT District Administrator member is vacant)

Ex-Officio Members Not Present:

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

Staff (Of Participating LUTS Agencies) Present:

City: J. Kirby Snideman, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Vanessa Guerra, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Jason Hinojosa, City Planning
Eduardo Bernal, Transit/El Metro
Ramon Chavez, City Engineering
Claudia San Miguel, Transit, El Metro

State: Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Raul Leal, TxDOT

Others: Robert Eads, Co-Interim City Manager
Charlie Sullivan, CDM Smith, Inc.
Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Saenz called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Vanessa Guerra, MPO Coordinator, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to excuse members not present.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

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's comments.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held January 21, 2020.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to approve the minutes of December 16th, 2019.

Second: CM. Galo
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **move up** agenda item #IV-C.

C. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2020-02, adopting the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) (CDM Smith, Inc. representative shall give a presentation.)

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **open** a public hearing.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Charlie Sullivan, CDM Smith, Inc. gave a brief presentation on the proposed item.

CM. Altgelt asked what was the status of the relationship between El Aguila and El Metro.

Claudia San Miguel, Transit, El Metro, stated Transit is in the process of seeking funds in order to build said hub.

CM. Altgelt made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2020-02 adopting the 2020-2045 MTP.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Discussion with possible action on the MPO Policy committee member vacancy (proposed By-Laws).

The Policy Committee discussed the item and clarified TxDOT's vacancy would be determined at a later date.

At last month's meeting it was determined that By-Laws would be amended to needing 4 members to make quorum, to have 3 City of Laredo members, 1 Mass Transit member, 3 County members, 1 TxDOT representative and 1 to be determined at a later date.

Mayor Saenz made a motion to **table** the item and bring back to the next meeting.

Second: CM. Judge Tijerina
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. Discussion with possible action on Hachar-Reuthinger.

1. Status report by Verde Corp. representative on the right of way ownership.

CM. Galo asked if the land issue had already been resolved.

Nicholas Vansteenbergh, representing Verde Corp. and the Hachar Trust, stated the land has not been transferred and has not been funded.

He also stated the right to purchase land was done in 2013 under an option and was purchased under that option in 2015.

He stated that recently there has been a division of part of the ownership of the property within the family and has been ongoing for the last six months. He stated the land was now solely with the ownership of one person named Irma Montemayor. Mr. Vansteenbergh stated Ms. Montemayor was now in a position to move forward with the agreement with Verde Corp. He stated Verde Corp had an agreement to swap the land underneath the proposed highway route.

Mayor requested the item to be placed on the next MPO agenda.

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

A. "Road hand award nominee. (TxDOT)"

David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer, announced this year's "Road Hand" award would go to Mayor Pete Saenz. Mr. Salazar together with the members present congratulated Mayor Saenz for all his hard work.

B. Update by Transit El Metro on ridership and other performance measures.

Claudia San Miguel gave a brief presentation on the item.

She advised the members that the ridership would go back to normal Laredo College and TAMU would resume classes after the break.

C. Update by TxDOT on the re-designation of IH-35 south of Victoria Street (also known as the "Four Block area") including the State's position on said redesignation. (Dr. Marte Martinez).

1. Update on a discussion with TxDOT and the developer as to how a re-designation would be tangible and if TxDOT would be willing to assist with the project. (Cm. Altgelt).

David Salazar, TxDOT, stated that TxDOT wanted to know the goal of the proposed re-designation.

He stated he believed it should be discussed outside the MPO committee meeting.

CM. Altgelt explained that the Mexican consulate and private investors want to bridge the two neighborhoods by going over the traffic to provide a food court and easy access to consulate. Re-designation would further the project.

Mr. Salazar stated at this point re-designation is not appropriate and expressed his concerns that re-designation would hinder future funding of the corridor.

CM. Altgelt made a motion to **table** the item, time certain.

Second: CM. Salazar
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. Presentation on the MPO management. (Mayor).

Kirby Snideman, MPO Director, invited the MPO committee to an upcoming Active Transportation Conference scheduled for March 25th-27th. He asked if anyone was interested in going, to inform MPO Staff in order to make travel arrangements.

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at approximately 2:57 p.m.

CM. Vielma left the meeting at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Snideman made a brief presentation on the item within which he described the number of new employees he wanted to hire for the MPO and further recommended that the MPO Director be hired by the Policy Committee.

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

Ms. Guerra advised the members that the RMA submitted a status report via-email and a copy was handed out to the committee.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

CM. Galo made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

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

Motion carried unanimously

J. Kirby Snideman,
MPO Director

Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS
Chairperson