

Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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



MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21, 2016, MEETING

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Vanessa Guerra, MPO Coordinator, called roll to verify that a quorum did exist.

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable Roque Vela, Jr., City Councilmember, District V
Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI (joined the meeting at 12:04 p.m.)
Pete Alvarez, TxDOT
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT

Regular members not present:

Honorable Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable Jaime Canales, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 4

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: Nathan R. Bratton, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Vanessa Guerra, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Angie Quijano, City Planning/LUTS Staff

State: Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Albert Ramirez, TxDOT

Sara Garza, TxDOT

Others: Anthony Garza, Dannenbaum Engineering
Richard Ridings, Howard, Needles, Tammen, & Bergendoff (HNTB, Inc.)
Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc.
Brad Guilmino, HNTB, Inc.
Carlos Lopez, HNTB, Inc.
Ruben Soto, Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)
Mike Graham, TxDOT
Ivan Santoyo, Environmental Services Department
John Porter, Environmental Services Department
Will Holik, Texas Transportation Institute, (TTI)
Enrique Valdez, Leyendecker, Naiser & Viera (LNV, Inc.)

III. COMMITTEE AND DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Discussion and possible action on possible Category 2 formula funding changes.

Mr. Bratton stated that he attended a meeting in Austin a month ago and that a number of the large MPO's, also known as Transportation Management Area's (TMA), have been considering the possibility of changing the Category 2 formula. The funds are currently allocated such that MPO's get 87 percent and the small urban MPO's get 13 percent of total funds allocated to the State. Furthermore, each area's allocation is based on vehicles miles traveled (on and off system), population, lane miles, congestion, and fatal/incapacitating crashes. Mr. Bratton further stated that as different possible formula scenarios are evaluated, Staff will bring that information to the Policy Committee as soon as it becomes available. He stated a future meeting to continue the discussion would be scheduled at a later time.

IV. APPOINTMENTS TO MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor's appointment of Hon. George Altgelt to replace Hon. Roque Vela, Jr. effective April 7, 2016.

No action was taken on the item. The Mayor stated his intention was to appoint Councilman George Altgelt to the Policy Committee in place of Councilman Roque Vela.

Councilman Vela remarked that Council confirmation may be required of the new appointment, but preferred to discuss the matter further during the City Council meeting scheduled for later that day.

V. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Approval of the minutes for the meetings held February 16, 2016.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **approve** the minutes of February 16, 2016.

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0
Motion carried unanimously.

B. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2016-01, adopting the proposed Limited English Proficiency Plan.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to open a public hearing.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton stated the MPO's proposed Limited English Proficiency Plan was intended to address the responsibilities of the Laredo Metropolitan Planning Organization as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency skills. The plan was prepared in accordance to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He further stated the twenty-day public review and comment period had elapsed and Staff recommended approval of the LEP Plan.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to close the public hearing and approve Resolution No. MPO 2016-01, adopting the Limited English Proficiency Plan.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2016-02, adopting the proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

1. ***Addition*** of project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, with an estimated total project cost of 4.482 million dollars. Projected letting date is August of 2016.

2. **Addition of project CSJ 0922-33-166 intended to provide the development of the schematic, environmental document and preliminary engineering for a 5 lane rural roadway, from 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway to IH 35 West Frontage Road. Estimated cost for said phases of the project is \$300,000.**

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

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments of the 2015-2018 TIP.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2016-02, adopting the proposed amendments of the 2015-2018 TIP.

Second: Cm. Alvarez
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2016-03, adopting the proposed revision(s) of the 2015-2040 Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

1. **Amending Table 12-10, entitled Roadway and Bicycle/Pedestrian Project Summary and Table 12-11, entitled Roadway projects, and Figure 12-1, entitled Federally funded Roadway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, by:**

- a. ***Adding* project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, with an estimated total project cost of 4.482 million dollars. Projected letting date is August of 2016.**
- b. ***Adding* of project CSJ 0922-33-166 intended to provide the development of the schematic, environmental document and preliminary engineering for a 5 lane rural roadway, from 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway to IH 35 West Frontage Road. Estimated cost for said phases of the project is \$300,000.**

2. **Amending Figure 13-1, entitled Natural Resources and Federally Funded Projects; Figure 13-2, entitled Cultural Resources and Federally Funded**

Projects; Figure 13-3, entitled Low Income Areas and Federally Funded Projects; Table 13-1, entitled Federally Funded Projects Environmental Assessment Results; and Table 13-3, entitled Federally Funded Projects and Environmental Justice Populations in order to reflect all currently approved 2015-2018 TIP projects.

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

Second: Cm. Alvarez
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments of the 2015-2040 MTP.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2016-03, adopting the proposed amendments of the 2015-2040 MTP.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

E. Receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- 1. Revision of project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, in order to:**
 - a. Change the scope of work to add language providing for the design and partial reconstruction of the existing outside lane.**
 - b. Increase project funding from 4.482 million to 5.782 million dollars. The additional project cost is proposed for funding thru Category 7 funds.**

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

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 6
Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments of the 2015-2018 TIP.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **close** public hearing and **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendments of the 2015-2018 TIP.

Second: Cm. Vela

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

F. Receive public testimony and initiate a 10 day public review and comment period for the proposed revision(s) of the 2015-2040 Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

1. Amending Table 12-10, entitled Roadway and Bicycle/Pedestrian Project Summary and Table 12-11, entitled Roadway Projects by:

- a. Revision of project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, in order to:**
 - i. Change the scope of work to add language providing for the design and partial reconstruction of the existing outside lane.**
 - ii. Increase project funding from 4.482 million to 5.782 million dollars. The additional project cost is proposed for funding thru Category 7 funds.**

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

Second: Cm. Vela

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments of the 2015-2040 MTP.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendments of the 2015-2040 MTP.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

G. Discussion with possible action on Hachar Road.

The County Judge reported that the County is moving forward with the project. He stated the County is working with TxDOT and are in the process of receiving the \$300,000 for the development of the environmental document for the project.

H. Discussion with possible action on Mines Road.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT reported that TTI would be presenting on the Mines Road Study-Long Term Strategy, recommendations a bit later in the meeting.

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

A. Presentation by TxDOT, Laredo District, on the funding (current and future projected) available to TxDOT, Laredo District and the Laredo MPO and the application of said funding to projects in the Laredo District.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the 2016 Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) Programming. He presented the UTP funding categories and funding amounts in the current UTP. He also presented projected funding figures thru 2035 using extrapolation of said current UTP figures.

Cm. San Miguel left the meeting at 1:13 p.m.

B. Status on Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on railroad issues (U.S. Border Communities Ongoing DOT Efforts Could Help Address Impacts of International Freight Rail).

A copy of the report was included in the Policy Committee's binder for review.

Mr. Bratton remarked that the study presented an analysis of freight movement in Laredo and is intended as a best practices manual. The document listed solutions other communities have explored in solving the problem of freight moving thru their communities.

The Mayor stated that he had been meeting with various rail representatives and anticipated a possible presentation to the Committee in May.

C. Presentation by Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) on the Mines Road Study-Long Term Strategy.

Will Holik, TTI, gave a brief presentation on the Mines Road Study-Long Term Strategy, recommendations were as follows:

New/Expanded Roadways

- Sara Road
 - Extend north as new developments are built
 - Realign southern end to tie into Loop 20/IH 69W frontage road
 - Upgrade traffic control

- River Bank Drive
 - Extend south of Loop 20/IH 69W
 - Extend FM 3464
 - Add lanes south of Mescalero Drive

- A F Muller Boulevard
 - Extend Aquero Boulevard
 - Increase commuter vehicle connectivity to La Bota Ranch and maintain access control
 - Remove possibility for alternate truck route

- United Avenue
 - Could connect to existing overpass on IH-35
 - Allow for expansion of existing Business Park in the area

- FM 1472
 - Increase number of through lanes
 - Convert to expressway by adding overpasses and reducing access
 - Convert to standard freeway with frontage roads and interchanges
 - Improvements require additional right-of-way
 - Limits of expansion may vary over time

- IH-35
 - Expand to 3 lanes north of Uniroyal to planned Hachar interchange

New/Expanded Interchanges

- Killam Industrial Boulevard
 - Realign east end to connect with IH 35 overpass Verde, Carriers, and Uniroyal Drives
 - Align Verde with Carriers
 - Reconfigure interchanges to reduce congestion from weaving
 - Grade separation at Uniroyal and Union Pacific railyard

- Verde, Carriers, and Uniroyal Drives
–Shift focus from isolated interchanges to clustered interchange
- Verde, Carriers, and Uniroyal Drives
–Focus on mobility and operations of entire area as growth occurs

Traffic Management Strategies

- Intelligent Transportation System Technologies
–Network-wide congestion and incident monitoring and dissemination
–Railroad crossing blockage notification
- Connected Vehicle Technologies
–Monitor vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to vehicle
Infrastructure technologies to improve incident and congestion response

At the conclusion of Mr. Holick’s presentation, Mayor Saenz asked for a status of the Traffic Signal Synchronization Project.

Robert Murillo, City of Laredo Traffic Safety Department, stated the City is in the process of finalizing the Advance Funding Agreement (AFA) with TxDOT.

Albert Ramirez, TxDOT, stated adjustments were made to the locations to meet the availability of funding and TxDOT is in the process of reviewing the AFA. A status report will be made at the next Policy Committee meeting.

D. Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)-Presentation on transportation/highway funding plan.

Carlos Lopez and Richard Ridings, HNTB, and Ruben Soto, RMA, gave a brief presentation on the benefits of a design/build project model for the proposed Loop 20 project. (See attached presentation).

Mr. Soto stated the RMA passed a resolution authorizing HNTB, Inc. to apply for a Fast Lane Grant for the Loop 20 overpass project on International and US 59. He also stated that TxDOT had hired HNTB, Inc. to prepare an application for the Loop 20/IH-35 overpass. Discussion was had on the benefits of design/build project and possible funding/administration financing tools.

Addendum Agenda

I. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

- A. Discussion with possible action to award or reject the Zacate Creek Multi-use Hike and Bike trail for funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The requested amount is \$1,000,000.00. The project is**

**intended to construct a multi-use pedestrian and bicycle trail along upper
Zacate Creek.**

Mr. Bratton stated the TAP program offers opportunities to expand transportation choices for non-motorized travel. The TAP program focuses on non-traditional transportation projects. TAP projects must relate to surface transportation and be eligible under one or more of the qualifying categories.

The MPO issued a Call for Projects on February 11, 2016. Project proposals were due on March 14, 2016. Only one submittal, the Zacate Creek Multi-Use Hike and Bike Trail, was received. The proposal requests \$1,000,000 in TAP funds.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **award** funding through the TAP program in the amount of \$1,000,000 for the Zacate Creek Multi-Use Hike and Bike Trail.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Second: Cm. Montemayor
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Prepared by:  Reviewed by: _____
Angie Quijano, MPO Staff Vanessa Guerra, MPO Coordinator

Reviewed by: _____
Nathan R. Bratton, MPO Director Melisa Montemayor, District Administrator

Pete Saenz,
Mayor and LUTS Chairperson