

Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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



MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 2015 MEETING

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Nathan R. Bratton, MPO Director called roll and verified that a quorum did exist.

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI
Honorable Roque Vela, Jr., City Councilmember, District V (joined meeting at 12:15 p.m.)
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT (joined the meeting at 1:46 p.m.)

Regular members not present:

Jaime Canales, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 4
Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII

Judge Tijerina made a motion to excuse members not present.

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

Motion carried unanimously

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
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT
Sara Garza, TxDOT

Others: Tim Juarez, TxDOT
Arturo Dominguez, Kansas City Southern
Steve Simmons, Kansas City Southern
Olivia Varela, Laredo Development Foundation

III. COMMITTEE AND DIRECTOR'S REPORTS (No action required)

Nathan Bratton, MPO Director, informed the members present a draft copy of the 2016 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) funding summary and a draft copy of Proposition 1 Funding was included in their packet for review.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

1. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on July 20, 2015.

Cm. Galo made a motion to **approve** the minutes for the meeting held on July 20, 2015.

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

Motion carried unanimously

Mayor Saenz welcomed TxDOT's new District Engineer for Laredo, Mr. Pete Alvarez.

Cm. Roque Vela, Jr., joined the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

2. Receive public testimony and initiate a 10 day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) to the MPO By-Laws.

Mr. Bratton gave a brief presentation on the proposed MPO By-Laws.

The proposed MPO By-Laws revisions were as follows:

State of Texas: ~~The person designated as the Director of the Laredo District by the Executive Director of the Texas Department of Transportation i.e. the District Engineer or the District Administrator
TxDOT Laredo District Director of Transportation Planning and Development~~

TxDOT District Engineer
TxDOT District Administrator

Cm. Charlie San Miguel stepped out of the meeting at 12:16 p.m.

Cm. Galo made a motion to **open** the public hearing.

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

Motion carried unanimously

There was no public input.

Cm. Charlie San Miguel stepped back into the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

Cm. Galo made a motion to **close** the public hearing and initiate a 10 day public review and comment period for the proposed MPO By-Laws.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

3. Motion to approve and accept the MPO Primer.

Mr. Bratton stated the draft MPO Primer was distributed at the last Policy Board meeting. She stated the document is intended to provide the reader with a short, easy to read source of information on the MPO and its activities.

Cm. Galo made a motion to **approve** and **accept** the MPO Primer.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

4. Discussion with possible action on Mines Road.

Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT, stated the median concrete project from Pellegrino Court to Killam Industrial Boulevard on Mines Road would be finished by the end of the week. He stated the project intended to repave a portion of Mines Road with concrete would take longer to complete. He also stated the City Traffic Department was assisting with the retiming of the traffic lights.

Cm. Galo asked if there were any plans for a third lane on Mines Road.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that a third lane could be considered, given available funding.

Cm. George Altgelt, District VII, stated his concerns regarding the Mines Road area. He stated a third lane would alleviate the congestion in the Mines Road area.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, stated the Texas Transportation Institute was still working on the Mines Road study and would give an update after the study was complete.

5. Discussion with possible action on Hachar Road.

Judge Tijerina stated the County would be considering a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the extension of the Reuthanger section of Hachar Road.

Cm. Galo made a motion to place the Reuthanger portion of Hachar Road on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) subject to TxDOT identifying funding not exceeds 300,000 dollars.

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

Motion carried unanimously

V. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT(S) (No action required)

- 1. Presentation by Kansas City Southern (KCS) to introduce the concept of a “Secure Border Railroad Corridor” which will provide an overview of the railroads efforts to eliminate blocked crossings, improve the efficiency of train traffic through the Laredo/Nuevo Laredo Gateway, and support the objectives of customs’ authorities on both sides of the border.**

Arturo Dominguez and Steve Simmons, of KCS gave a brief presentation on the item.

Mr. Simmons presented information on rail network, history, revenue growth, and traffic mix. He stated railroad capital spending exceeded most industries. KCS was also investing for future growth, asset utilization, safety and service. He stated Laredo Texas is the leading border crossing and that it leads the Mexico-U.S. rail import and export traffic.

Operations at the International Bridge operated on a 24 hours a day/7 days a week basis. He stated local operations for KCS, KCSM, and UP are staffed 24/7. Customs and Border Protection inspectors are on the U.S. side 24/7. Mexican customs operators have an office located about 460 m just south of the International Bridge and are also present 24/7. Train traffic is closely coordinated by constant communication between all 3 railroads as well as with Mexican and U.S. Customs.

He stated the bridge has camera surveillance by the railroads 24/7.

He stated KCS's goal is to streamline the customs clearance process, reducing costs, and decreasing processing time.

He also stated the secure corridor concept is intended to eliminate the need to stop trains on the International Bridge in either direction.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, joined the meeting at 1:46 p.m.

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at approximately 1:50 p.m.

2. Presentation by TxDOT on statewide funding categories.

Ana Duncan, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the item. She stated the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) is a 10 year program and authorizes funding for 12 funding categories. The 12 categories are distributed for highway-related projects outlined in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

Robert Murillo, Traffic Safety, informed the members present that Traffic submitted safety projects under the Hazard Elimination program. The approved projects proposed the placement of medians on three intersections along McPherson Road.

Cm. Vela requested a copy of the three median projects on McPherson Road.

Cm. Galo asked if there were any plans to direct connect from IH 35 to Loop 20 heading east.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, stated the project is needed and is on the long range plan but is currently unfunded.

3. Status report by TxDOT on the eligibility of the \$600,000 in CBI funds for signal timing improvements.

Ana Duncan stated the funds have been approved as of August 13th 2015, and would be moving forward to place the signal timing improvements in the TIP.

4. Status report by TxDOT on drainage issues on IH 59 along the Fiesta Loop area.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, stated TxDOT cleaned all the outfalls in that area. TxDOT gathered information from the 2004 plans in that area. He stated the results yielded approximately the same flow discharge as the 2004 plans.

5. Status report on the RMA.

No report was given on the item.

Ms. Montemayor stated that the RMA's meeting was still in progress therefore no RMA representative could be present to give said report.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Cm. Vela made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Prepared by: 
Angie Quijano,
MPO Staff

Reviewed by: 
Vanessa Guerra,
MPO Coordinator

Reviewed by: _____
Nathan R. Bratton,
MPO Director

Melisa Montemayor,
District Administrator

Pete Saenz,
Mayor and LUTS Chairperson