

# Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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



## **MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2018 MEETING**

### **Regular members present:**

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson  
Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI  
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3  
Honorable Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII (joined the meeting at 1:36 p.m.)  
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1  
David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer

### **Regular members not present:**

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge  
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT District Administrator  
Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII

### **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  
Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro  
Joe Jackson, Transit, El Metro  
Gabriel Martinez, City Engineering  
Robert Peña, City of Laredo Traffic Safety  
Yvette Limon, City of Laredo Bridge

State: Sara Garza, TxDOT  
Mike Graham, TxDOT  
Ana Duncan, TxDOT  
Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT  
Danny Magee, TxDOT

County: Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering

Others: Julia Wallace, Laredo Morning Times  
Antonio Rodriguez, Howard, Needles, Tammen, & Bergendoff  
(HNTB, Inc.)  
Victoria Dominguez, City of Laredo Real Estate  
Ricardo Ramos, Arcadis  
Ruben Soto, Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)  
Santiago Araque, Kimley-Horn and Associates

**I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting order at 1:32 p.m.

**II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL**

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

CM. Galo made a motion to **excuse** members not present.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**III. CITIZEN COMMENT**

**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 comment in 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.**

**IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION**

**A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on July 16, 2018.**

CM. San Miguel made a motion to **approve** the minutes of July 16, 2018.

Second: CM. Galo

For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Balli joined the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

**B. Discussion with possible action to award or reject the El Metro ADA Bus Stops and Bicycles Plazas Enhancement Project for funding through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TA). The project provides for the construction and/or improvement of 17 bus stops located throughout the fixed route network. The requested amount is \$200,000, which will require a \$50,000 local match. The estimated total project cost is \$250,000.**

Joe Jackson, Transit, El Metro, gave a brief presentation on the item.

CM. San Miguel made a motion to award El Metro the TA funding for the El Metro ADA Bus Stops and Bicycles Plazas Enhancement Project.

Second: CM. Galo  
For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

**C. A motion to authorize the execution of the proposed Planning Agreement between the Texas Department of Transportation, the Laredo Urban Transportation Study, which has been designated the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO) for the Laredo urbanized area, and the City of Laredo, which serves as the MPO's fiscal agent. The Planning Agreement identifies the roles and responsibilities of the parties carrying out the transportation planning process.**

CM. Galo made a motion to authorize the execution of the proposed Planning Agreement between the Texas Department of Transportation, the Laredo Urban Transportation Study, which has been designated the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO) for the Laredo urbanized area, and the City of Laredo, which serves as the MPO's fiscal agent.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**D. Discussion with possible action on the transfer of \$ 96.93 Million from the construction of US 59 Interchanges at Del Mar Blvd, Shiloh Dr., International Airport, Jacaman Rd, and University Blvd ( CSJs: 0086-14-075,076,077,078,and 079) to the construction of US 59 Frontage Roads between US 59 and International Blvd (CSJs: 0086-14-086,087,088,and 089). This change will allow better access to business and residences located along the US 59 corridor. In addition, it will allow for easier future construction of the interchanges by avoiding duplicated traffic closures/detours.**

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, stated TxDOT was proposing to reallocate the funds from the programmed interchanges to the construction of the frontage roads. The change in construction phasing was intended to reduce the need to disrupt traffic first while building the overpasses, then again during the construction of the frontage roads.

CM. Galo expressed his concerns with moving the funds, and repeated how important it was to construct the overpasses.

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT stated the frontage roads would be constructed by 2021 and additional funding would be needed for the overpasses.

David Salazar, District Engineer, stated TxDOT, had assumed the design of the project and believed the reallocation of the funds was for the best.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mayor Saenz stated that the Committee was not comfortable with the proposed funding reallocation at this time, but would be open to reconsidering the matter after the development of the schematic.

Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. stated he agreed with the benefits to the community and the project resulting from the proposed funding shift.

No action was taken on the item.

CM. Galo made a motion to **bring up** item IV-G.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**G. Discussion with possible action on Hachar-Reuthinger Road.**

Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering, stated the County had received concurrence from TxDOT regarding the prepared contract. He stated the County was preparing the notice to proceed and would have an updated report and timeline at the next meeting.

CM. Galo made a motion to **bring up** item V-E.

Second: CM. Balli  
For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

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

**E. Status report on the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).**

Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. stated the RMA was very thankful for the funding that was approved for the projects on Vallecillo Road, Killam Industrial Boulevard proposed turning lanes, and the new arterial on Los Presidentes from Cuatro Vientos to Concord Hills.

He stated the RMA would be giving a presentation and discussion on the Transportation Reinvestment Study for US 59/US 83 to City Council.

He stated the Advance Funding Agreement (AFA) for the North Laredo/Webb County Transportation Planning Study was currently being reviewed by Federal Highway Administration and the RMA was waiting on the execution of the AFA in order to move forward.

The committee returned to the regular agenda order.

**IV. E. Presentation, discussion and possible action on the Kansas City Southern Railroad Quiet Zone Study.**

Santiago Araque, Kimley-Horn and Associates, gave a brief presentation on the item.

CM. Galo made a motion to **accept** the report and **move forward** to City Council.

Second: CM. Balli  
For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

**E. Discussion with possible action on the River Road Project.**

Mayor Saenz stated he had contacted Mr. Robert Muller and anticipated a meeting with Mr. Muller, himself, and the City Manager in early September. Mayor Saenz would have an update at the next MPO meeting.

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

**A. Status report by TxDOT on the Laredo Mobility Study.**

Mr. Bratton stated he contacted Mr. Wilson from TxDOT's Rail Division and stated TxDOT was in the final phase of rewriting sections of the report. The final report would be finished by the end of August.

**B. Status report by TxDOT on the Outer Loop Alignment Study.**

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, stated TxDOT had received a draft scope of work for the project from the consultant. He stated TxDOT was in the process of rewording the scope, adding additional tasks, and confirming that the previous study's information was incorporated in the scope. He stated TxDOT should have a finalized scope by the next MPO meeting.

**C. Status report by City Engineering on the Calton Grade Separation Project.**

Gabriel Martinez, City Engineering Department, stated a number of railroad related matters remained to be resolved; nonetheless the project was still on schedule for the August 2019 letting date. He stated construction was anticipated to be complete in approximately 2 ½ years after letting date.

Ricardo Ramos, Arcadis, stated the project included three phases, with the first phase to be the construction of Santa Maria westbound lanes.

**D. Presentation by Transit, El Metro on revenue sources available for financing currently unfunded transit needs, especially buses.**

Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro, gave a brief presentation on the item. He stated Transit system was self-sufficient, but struggled to replace obsolete fleet vehicles, which each cost approximately \$500,000 to replace. He stated by 2021, the system would need to replace approximately 8 buses.

Mr. Bernal stated said the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TA) funds that were authorized would be utilized for improvements of 17 bus stops.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

CM. Galo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

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

Motion carried unanimously

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MPO Director (Vacant)  
Vanessa Guerra  
MPO Coordinator (For)

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Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS  
Chairperson