

# Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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



## MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 21, 2019 MEETING

### **Regular members present:**

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson  
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge  
Honorable Norma “Nelly” Vielma, City Councilmember, District V  
Honorable Dr. Marte Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI  
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1 (joined meeting at 2:02 p.m.)  
David M. Salazar, Jr., TxDOT District Engineer

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

Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII  
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3

### **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  
Eduardo Bernal, Transit/El Metro  
Claudia San Miguel, Transit/El Metro  
Ramon Chavez, City Engineering  
Danny Magee, City Traffic Safety

State: Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT  
Humberto “Tito” Gonzalez  
Sara Garza, TxDOT  
Jesus Saavedra, TxDOT  
Deborah Fleming, TxDOT

Others: Julia Wallace, Laredo Morning Times  
Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineer

Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)  
Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc.  
Jason Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc.  
Douglas Howland

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

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

**II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL**

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

**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 August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

CM. Martinez made a motion to approve the minutes of August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**B. Receive public testimony and approving Resolution No. MPO 2019-06 adopting the proposed amendment(s) of the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):**

1. **Addition** of project CSJ 0018-06-184 for the construction of interchange direct connector 8, on IH 35, from 0.50 miles south of US 59 to 0.50 miles east of IH 35, with estimated total project cost of 25,755,400, intended to let in FY 2020.
2. **Revision** of project CSJ 0018-06-183 for the construction of interchange direct connector 5, located from 0.50 miles south of US 59 to 0.50 miles east of IH 35. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.
3. **Revision** of project CSJ 0018-06-136 for the widening of main lanes and the construction of a railroad grade separation, from Shiloh Drive to 0.25 miles north of US 59/IH 69W. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2021 to FY 2020.

Vanessa Guerra, MPO Staff, stated as per TxDOT, there was a slight revision on the limits for project CSJ 0018-06-13. The correct limits should now read: from Shiloh Drive to 0.38 miles south of US 59/IH 35.

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

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

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Jesse Gonzalez joined the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

CM. Martinez made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2019-06 adopting the proposed amendment(s) of the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as amended.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**C. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2019-07 adopting the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):**

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

Table 12-11, entitled Roadway Projects,  
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,  
Table 13-3, entitled Federally Funded Projects and Environmental Justice  
Populations; and,  
Figure 13-4 entitled Colonias and Federally Funded Projects as necessary to  
incorporate the following revision(s):

- a) **Addition** of project CSJ 0018-06-184 for the construction of interchange direct connector 8, on IH 35 located from 0.50 miles south of US 59 to 0.50 miles east of IH 35, with estimated total project cost of 25,755,400, intended to let in FY 2020.
  - b) **Revision** of project CSJ 0018-06-183 for the construction of interchange direct connector 5, located from 0.50 miles south of US 59 to 0.50 miles east of IH 35. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.
  - c) **Revision** of project CSJ 0018-06-136 for the widening of main lanes and the construction of a railroad grade separation, from Shiloh Drive to 0.25 miles north of US 59/IH 69W. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2021 to FY 2020.
2. **Revision** of Chapter 1, per FAST Act requirements to include additional planning factors; and, (Ref: 23 CFR 450.206(a)(9&10) and 306(b)(9&10)) and include Safety, Bridge, Pavement/ Roadway and Transit System Performance targets; and, (Ref: 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3)).
  3. **Revision** of Chapter 12 to update the project evaluation criteria to support the selection of projects in accordance with the adopted performance measures and targets.
  4. **Addition** of Appendix 1, entitled Documentation Adoption of Federally Required Performance Measures/Targets and System Evaluation Report.

CM. Martinez made a motion to **open** the public hearing.

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

Motion carried unanimously



Vanessa Guerra, MPO Staff, stated as per TxDOT, there was a slight revision on the limits for project CSJ 0018-06-13. The correct limits should read: from Shiloh Drive to 0.38 miles south of US 59/IH 35.

CM. Martinez made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2019-07 adopting the proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

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

Motion carried unanimously

**D. Receive public testimony and initiate a twenty-day public review and comment period for draft 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).**

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

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

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Tijerina made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a twenty-day public review and comment period for the draft 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

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

Motion carried unanimously

Vanessa Guerra, MPO Staff, reminded all present of the upcoming public meetings for the 2020-2045 MTP. She stated the public meetings were scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Public Library on Calton Road, and November 6<sup>th</sup> at the City of Laredo Council Chambers from 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

**E. Appointment of Councilmember George Altgelt as the Laredo Mass Transit Board representative for the MPO.**

No action was taken on the item.

Ms. Guerra advised the committee that the item had already gone to City Council for approval.

**F. Discussion with possible action on Springfield Rd.**

Ramon Chavez, City Engineer, gave a brief presentation on the item. He stated the purpose of the Springfield Road extension was to construct the gap portions of the roadway.

The estimated cost of the project would be \$14.7 million (land acquisition not included). The project would consist of four phases.

CM. Marte Martinez stated he wanted to place said item on the MPO agenda to discuss how the MPO could assist in the funding of said project.

David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer, stated the project would be a viable solution to alleviate traffic off IH 35, but funding would need to be identified. He stated a solution for the funding could may be Category 7 (MPO off-system dollars).

CM. Martinez made a motion to direct Staff to meet with TxDOT to discuss the viability of Springfield Road project as well as finding a funding including Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) funds.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**G. Discussion with possible action on Cuatro Vientos Rd.**

CM. Martinez stated his concerns regarding said item. He stated a viable solution for Cuatro Vientos was to possibly have extra lanes or maybe a road that connects to Cuatro Vientos all the way to US 83.

CM. Gonzalez made a motion to have Staff meet with TxDOT to discuss possible funding mechanism, for connection of Cuatro Vientos to Espejo Molina.

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

Motion carried unanimously

**H. Discussion with possible action on future reconfiguration of IH-35 serving the Mall del Norte.**

CM. Vielma asked if a viable solution would be to possibly have an exit from IH 35 directly to Mall del Norte.

Danny Magee, Traffic Safety Director, stated that moving the ramp was not a viable solution. He stated a study would have to be done in order to reconfigure the ramps.

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

Neither discussion nor action was taken on the item.

**J. Discussion with possible action on Hachar-Reuthinger.**

Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineer, stated the project was proceeding according to schedule. He stated the County requested comments from TxDOT on the 60 percent completion submittal. After receiving said comments, comments would be sent to the consultant. Once the consultant incorporated the valid comments into the plans, the 90 percent submittal would be submitted. He stated the project was still in the design phase of the environmental document. He stated the current phase of the project is expected to be complete by December. Construction may commence in 2022 and 2021 at the earliest.

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

**A. Presentation on Debt and Strategic Contracts Division on State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) Transport Loan Program.**

Deborah Fleming, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the item.

State Infrastructure Banks (SIB) were authorized in 1995 as a part of the National Highway Designation Act (NHS) to help accelerate needed mobility improvements through a variety of financial assistance options made to local entities through state transportation departments.

Since Texas was chosen as one of the ten states to test the pilot program, the state legislature authorized the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to administer the SIB program in 1997.

She stated the overall goal of the SIB program is to provide innovative financing methods to communities to assist them in meeting their infrastructure needs.

The SIB program allows borrowers to access capital funds at or below market interest rates.

The advantages of borrowing from the SIB are as followed:

- Some flexibility for debt service

- No fees for loan application
- No loan handling charges
- Prepayments can be made at anytime
- At or Below Market Interest Rates

**B. Status report by TxDOT on ongoing projects.**

Jesus Saavedra, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the item. He stated the status update on the ongoing projects were as follows:

- SL 20 over KCS Railroad Grade Separation  
99% work completed/anticipated completion date-November 2019
- US 59 over IH 35 Overpass  
90% work completed/anticipated completion date-December 2019
- SH 359 from City of Laredo do Duval County  
90% work completed/anticipated work completion date-winter 2020
- US 83 from Dimmit County line to 3.4 miles of SH 44  
8 % work completed/anticipated completion date-2022
- BI 59 (Saunders) from Buena Vista to Ejido and IH 35 FR/Uniroyal Blvd.  
76% work completed/anticipated completion date-December 2020
- FM 3338 from FM 1472 to SH 255  
16% completed/anticipated termination date-Sept 2022

**C. Status report by Vanessa Guerra, MPO Staff, on fiscal year 2019 carryover funds.**

Vanessa Guerra, MPO Coordinator, gave a brief presentation on the item.

**D. Status report by the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).**

Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. gave a brief status report on what currently the RMA was working on.

He stated that the design phase for Los Presidentes Extension project was ongoing and the letting date for the project was for August 2020.

He also stated that the design phase for the Killam Industrial Turning Lanes project was also ongoing and the RMA would be teaming up with TxDOT Laredo District to do a



joint letting compiling with their project. He stated the RMA was looking into complying with TxDOT's schedule which was for August 2020 letting.

Douglas Howland, Vice-Chairman of the RMA, stated the Vallecillo Road project was currently ongoing in efforts for funding.

He stated the City had already committed to five million dollars for the project. Killam Company had committed to five million and the RMA had committed to four million.

He stated the RMA was preparing to go before the Texas Transportation Commission in an effort to partner with them for assistance to acquire the other half of the funding for the project. He also stated the RMA was working on planning studies and cost estimates to present to the Texas Transportation Commission.

Jason Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. gave a brief presentation on the North Laredo-Webb County Transportation Planning Study.

## **VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **A. Review purpose and process of MPO Technical Committee and MPO Policy Committee.**

Kirby Snideman, MPO Director, informed the committee of the possible name change from the Laredo Urban Transportation Study (LUTS) to Laredo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (LAMPO).

He also stated that the MPO Staff would be meeting with Federal Highway Administration and the Texas Transportation Institute to discuss on how to better improve the process for the MPO.

The committee had discussion on the empty seat currently on the MPO committee that was previously occupied by the TxDOT Administrator.

Judge Tijerina suggested to maybe possibly adding someone else from the County.

David Salazar, TxDOT, stated TxDOT had no problem giving up the seat if those were the wishes of the MPO.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

CM. Martinez made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

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

Motion carried unanimously

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J. Kirby Snideman,  
MPO Director

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Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS  
Chairperson