

Laredo-Webb County Area (LWCA)

Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Virtual Meeting

LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>
PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300



MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MAY 18TH, 2020 MEETING

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LWCA Chairperson
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Honorable Dr. Marte Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI (joined meeting at 1:34 p.m.)
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3 (joined meeting at 1:34 p.m.)
Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII (joined meeting at 1:45 p.m.)
David M. Salazar, Jr., TxDOT District Engineer

Regular members not present:

Honorable Norma "Nelly" Vielma, City Councilmember, District V
(Member At Large- Currently 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 LWCA Agencies) Present:

City: J. Kirby Snideman, City Planning/MPO Staff
Vanessa Guerra, City Planning/MPO Staff
Jason Hinojosa, City Planning MPO Staff
Angie Quijano, City Planning, MPO Staff
Ramon Chavez, City Engineer
Claudia San Miguel, Transit, El Metro

State: Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, TxDOT
Caroline Mays, TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming
Akila Thamizharasan, TxDOT

Others: Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Travis Norton, Jacobs Engineering
Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Saenz called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

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 on April 20, 2020.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to approve the minutes for the meetings held on April 20, 2020.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 4
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Dr. Martinez and CM. Galo joined the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

B. Receive public testimony and approve a motion to initiate a 10-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

1. Amending Table 10-2, entitled List of TxDOT UTP 2020-2030 Programmed Projects, & Figure 10-1, entitled Map of TxDOT UTP Programmed Projects, as necessary to incorporate the following revisions:

- a. Addition* of project CSJ 0086-02-023 intended to provide for the widening of SH 359 from 2 to 4 lanes, from 8.935 miles east of SL 20 to 9.830 miles east of SL 20, with an estimated total project cost of \$7,367,400. The proposed letting date is FY 2023.

Ms. Guerra gave a brief presentation on the item.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **open** the public hearing and **initiate** 10-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

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

Motion carried unanimously

C. Discussion with possible action on the presentation by TxDOT on the National Highway System.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT TPP, gave a brief presentation on the item.

She presented the potential modifications of the NHS.

CM. Galo asked if the NHS also included the removal of the frontage roads.

Travis Norton, Jacobs Engineering, stated that the northbound frontage road on IH 35 was designated as a connector between the National Highway System and the port, however subsequent to the proposed revisions if approved, Uniroyal, Carriers, and Port Road would be designated as NHS intermodal connectors in place of the previously designated frontage roads. The frontage road would be continued to be maintained by the State.

Mayor Saenz asked what were the potential consequences of removing a road from the NHS?

Akila Thamizharasan, TxDOT, stated that in 2012 based on the Moving Ahead in Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP 21) legislation, all the primary arterial roads were automatically added to the NHS although they did not completely fit the goal of the NHS which is regional connectivity.

CM. Altgelt joined the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Kirby Snideman, MPO Director, stated that with Texas, the MPO's are having to review what was placed on the NHS. He stated that one of the advantages of removing from the NHS was not being held to the same construction standards if expanding or modifying any said roads.

Dr. Martinez stated he was hesitant to remove the 8.7 miles connector from Delmar to Uniroyal. He stated that it would be difficult to forecast development in the area in the future.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT TPP, stated that the frontage road was considered an intermodal connector which is a road that provided last mile connectivity to major rail/airport or intermodal freight facility. She stated that removing it from the NHS does not impede the ability to improve it because it remains part of the interstate.

CM. Algelt asked what was the benefit of removing said I-35 connector from the NHS.

Ms. Mays stated there was no benefit. It does not meet the requirements of an NHS and does have any planning implications.

David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer, stated the NHS was something that can always be modified. The consultant and TxDOT have to follow a series of guidelines based on the data gathered by the consulting firms and engineers. The north bound frontage road is not serving the definition of intermodal connectors. When it comes to planning or funding, there is no doubt that development is coming and would affect any planning and funding.

Dr. Marte asked if there were any traffic counts that could be used.

Travis Norton, Jacobs Engineering stated that part of the criteria for linking a roadway and facility to the NHS is traffic generation, however they did not have traffic numbers at hand.

CM. Altgelt asked if the recommendations were made without traffic counts.

Ms. Mays stated the recommendations were not based on traffic counts but rather the functional and roadway geometrics criteria typically found on NHS roadway.

Mr. Snideman stated Staff would draft a resolution and bring back to the next Policy meeting for adoption of the resolution.

Mayor Saenz stated for the resolution to indicate that there would not be any financial impact.

CM. Galo made a motion to **approve** the item as presented.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 5
Against: 2 (Dr. Martinez, Cm. Altgelt)

Motion carried

D. Discussion with possible action on Hachar-Reuthinger.

Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering, stated Staff was in the process of completing the schematics at 100% by the end of this month. The environmental document should also be completed by the end of the month.

Mayor Saenz inquired if the title issue on the Hachar Trust was resolved.

Ramon Chavez, City Engineering, stated he got a response from Mr. VanSteenberg stated a drafted document has been completed and discussions on some of the language had begun. The document has not been signed yet but will be signed in the near future. He stated he would continue following up with Mr. VanSteenberg.

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

A. Status report on the ongoing Active Transportation Plan. (Cm. Altgelt)

Jason Hinojosa, MPO Staff, gave a brief presentation on the Active Transportation Plan.

- Purpose of Active Transportation Plan
- Team & Approach
- Building on Past Work
- Plan Outline
- Public Outreach
- Timeline
- How to Get Involved

CM. Altgelt stated that the Comprehensive Plan showed that there need to be more mobility options. He stated that constituents wanted more ways to get around the city. He stated that was the direction that the City need to heading in.

Mr. Snideman stated they want to provide people with more options to travel.

What is Active Transportation?

- Why do we want more of it?
- Governor Abbott's Speech
- Examine Existing Conditions
- Engage the Public
- Create Plan to be regularly updated
- Appendix of Comp Plan
- Complete Streets Policy

GOVERNOR ABBOTT

- “The bottom line is this: The way people get around; the way people live is going to change... As a result, this generation of roads... is probably the last major buildout of roads we'll have in the state of Texas, even considering the fact that Texas is the fastest-growing state in America. **The future of transportation lies in alternatives to traditional motor vehicle travel.**”

Team & Approach

- MPO Staff
- Nelson Nygaard (Consultants)
- WalkBikeRide Laredo
- Other community organizations
- Data Driven
- Practical
- Engage the Public

TIMELINE

- Project Initiation & Data Collection – Winter 2019
- Existing Conditions Analysis – Winter 2019, Spring 2020
- Public Outreach – Spring & Summer 2020
- Plan Development & Stakeholder Engagement – Spring & Summer 2020
- Plan Completion and Presentation to Planning Commission and City Council – Summer 2020

Mr. Snideman stated the item was just a presentation and did not require any action.,

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

Mr. Snideman advised the members that the RMA submitted a status report via-email and a copy was included in the packet.


Tony Rodriguez, HNTB Inc., gave a brief report on the RMA.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

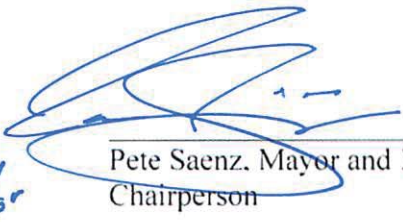
Dr. Martinez made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

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

Motion carried unanimously



J. Kirby Snideman,
MPO Director



Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS
Chairperson

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