



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

August 16, 2023

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

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Judge, Tano E. Tijerina, called meeting to order at 1:32 P.M.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Graciela Briones, MPO Staff, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

Regular members present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge and LWCAMPO Chairperson
Honorable Dr. Victor D. Treviño, Mayor and LWCAMPO Vice-Chairperson
Honorable Vanessa Perez, Mayor Pro Tempore, CM. District VII
Honorable Melissa R. Cigarroa, City Councilmember, District III
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Mr. Epigmenio "Epi" Gonzalez, P.E., TxDOT District Engineer
Mr. Jed A. Brown, Member-at-Large

Regular members not present:

Honorable Ruben Gutierrez Jr., City Councilmember, District V
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3

Ex-Officio members not present:

Honorable Judith Zaffirini, State Senator, District 21
Honorable Richard Raymond, State Representative, District 42
Honorable Tracy O. King, State Representative, District 80

LWCAMPO Staff present:

Juan S. Mendive, LWCAMPO Director
Graciela Briones, LWCAMPO Planner III
Julio Niño, LWCAMPO Planner III
Eduardo Bernal, LWCAMPO Planner III
Adriana A. Vigil, LWCAMPO Administrative Assistant

Others:

Orlando Navarro, COL Planning
Gloria Perez-Saavedra, COL Engineering
Roberto J. Garza, COL Transit
Eloisa Mascorro, COL Transit
Jeffery Gonzalez, COL Traffic
Juan Carlos Villarreal, COL Traffic
Miriam Castillo, COL Economic Development
Arnold Lozano, COL Economic Development
Adelaido “Lalo” Uribe, Webb County Judge’s Office
Anthony Garza, Webb County Consultant
Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Victoria Villarreal, Webb County Planning
Cary Karnsadt, TxDOT
Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Fernando Martinez, TxDOT
Luis Villarreal, TxDOT
Pablo Briones, TxDOT
Melissa Montemayor, LJA/WC-CL RMA
Baltazar Avila, LJA/WC-CL RMA
Blasita Lopez, LJA/WC-CL RMA

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Speakers are required to fill out witness cards, which must be submitted to MPO Staff no later than 1:45 P.M. the day 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 MPO 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 19, 2023.

CM. Perez, made a motion to approve the minutes of July 19, 2023.

Second: Mr. Brown

For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-11, adopting the FY2022 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (APL).

Mr. Mendive, stated the item was brought at the previous meeting to open the public comment period and no public comments were received. He further stated that it was brought now to receive any further public testimony and approve the FY2022 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (APL).

Judge Tijerina, asked the public if anyone was For or Against the approval of this item. He further stated there were none to behave.

CM. Perez, made a motion to close the public review and comment period for this item.

Second: Mayor Dr. Treviño
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

CM. Perez, made a motion to approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-11, adopting the FY2022 Annual List of Obligated Projects (APL).

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Discussion with possible action on programming of projects with Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds.

Mr. Mendive, gave a quick overview of the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) for the Laredo Webb County MPO Area. He stated this was a new federal program that MPOs

were able to select projects for. He also stated that there was already a funding request through this program from Webb County.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) was created through the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the BIL authorized a new Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and was codified as 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 175 to reduce transportation emissions. The State of Texas was expected to receive approximately \$641 million for FY22-26 in federal apportionment. MPOs had the authority to allocate corresponding apportionments and to select projects eligible for the Carbon Reduction Program funds (CRP) funds.

Mr. Mendive, further stated that the purpose was to reduce transportation emissions through the development of State carbon reduction strategies and by funding projects designed to reduce transportation emissions. He also stated that the projects were going into the eligible projects but they could not be for new added capacity or new roadway type projects.

Mr. Mendive, provided the following list of the eligible activities that could make use of the funds:

- Alternative fuel vehicle deployment (e.g. an electric vehicle infrastructure).
- Reduce emissions at Port facilities (e.g. supporting docked ships).
- Transportation alternatives (e.g. bicycle and pedestrian facilities).
- Diesel engine retrofit projects
- Public transportation projects
- Projects that reduce environmental and community impacts of freight movement, (e.g. truck parking including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)).
- Projects that support congestion pricing and traffic congestion management technologies.
- Programs that help shift transportation demand
- Programs that Enhance Vehicle to Infrastructure connecting technology
- Programs that Reduce demand for roads
- Development of a Carbon Reduction Strategy

Mr. Mendive, stated that the state is mandated to do this carbon reduction strategy and that is why they were working with the MPOs to create one at state level. He further stated that with these funds the MPO could also decide to do their own for our region.

Judge Tijerina, asked what was the amount allocated to Webb County and the City of Laredo from the \$641 million that the state of Texas is expected to receive.

Mr. Mendive, stated that from FY2024 through FY2026 it is estimated at \$4,884,536. He further provided an example as shared by Mr. Garza, from El Metro Transit during Technical Committee meeting. It was mentioned that one electric bus has a cost of

approximately \$1 million dollars, and they would still need the technology and infrastructure to support it.

Mr. Mendive, further stated that funding a project of this type would wipe out 1-year worth of funding.

CM. Cigarroa, asked if the funds represent a 20% match of additional Federal dollars, so that the funding can be leveraged for bigger projects.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the funding targets listed in the TxDOT UTP include the 80% Federal portion plus a 20% local portion that is expected to be provided by the local government sponsoring the project. He further stated that when projects are selected for funding, these are programmed to include the total project development cost or construction cost which consist of 80% Federal monies and 20% local match.

CM. Cigarroa, asked if the 65% of the statewide allocation was granted to each individual MPO and 35% granted to the State of Texas. She also asked if TxDOT had some discretion to allocate the additional 35% so that the budget could be increased if needed.

Mr. Mendive, confirmed that the 65% is for urban areas, and MPOs have that discretion to select projects with the allocated funding and the other 35% is maintained by TxDOT. He also stated that TxDOT is able to select projects across the state and are able to use that 35% in rural areas as well.

Judge Tijerina, asked how the MPO would like to proceed with the programming of projects.

Mr. Mendive, stated that there was a timeline of how this was being done and further mentioned that there was already a project request from Webb County. He also stated that TxDOT had held a coordination meeting with the MPOs back in February 17th, 2023 where this program was discussed and it was finally been programmed in the UTP. He further stated that TxDOT asked the MPOs to look at projects that were already eligible and just swap the funding, due to the time limitation of when the funds needed to be spent.

Mr. Mendive, also stated that most of the existing projects, did not qualify for these funds, and the MPO had reached out to the Technical Committee back in March and April 2023 asking for a recommendation of some projects. He also stated that the MPO received a request from Webb County that would be presented to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Brown, asked if they have to come up with the 20% match of the \$11 million of the funding available.

Mr. Mendive, stated that they have to come up with the 20% of the total cost of each project that would be funded by the program.

Mayor Trevino, asked about the electric buses that were mentioned by Mr. Mendive. He asked if the cost of the electric buses can increase by the project programming ends.

Mr. Mendive, stated that he used that as an example of how a large amount of the money could go towards just one project instead of several. He also stated that it was not something that they were exploring at the moment.

Mr. Brown, asked if they would have to spend their money first and then get the 80% back.

Mr. Mendive, responded that the program was under TxDOT Category 10 Carbon Reduction Program, very similar to others like Category 7 or Category 9 where there were targets for the different years and the projects would have to be programmed. He also stated that project sponsors requesting funds would need to up front the cost and they would be reimbursed as the project advances.

Roberto J. Garza, El Metro Transit, mentioned that if El Metro would consider to program a project like the electric vehicles, they would have to come up with the 20% of the total cost.

Judge Tijerina, asked Mr. Mendive how they can proceed in suggesting projects for this program.

Mr. Mendive, stated that at that time there was a funding request from the Webb County to construct an approximately 3.9 mile 10-foot wide shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists building an existing right-of-way on the Mangana Hein Rd., with a total project cost of \$3.12 million. Mr. Mendive, stated that the project has two segments, he continued by stating that segment 1 would be 2.5 miles East from State Highway 20 and the estimated construction cost for that shared use path would be \$2 million dollars. Segment 2 would be from US 82 to State Highway 20 and that would require an interlocal agreement because it was within the city limits, he stated the estimated construction cost for that would be \$1.12 million. Mr. Mendive, further mentioned that the project had been discussed with the Technical Committee and both the staff and the Technical Committee recommended programming the \$3.12 million in total project cost, which would consist of \$2,496,000 which would be the 80% Federal share and \$624,000 which would be the 20% local match. He stated that it would leave a remaining balance of \$1,764,536 through FY 2026 and \$8,602,885 through FY 2033 if the funding was authorized in the future.

CM. Perez, stated that one of the issues she had identified was that El Metro services was not being offered to all the residents that live on the Mines Road area. She further stated

that she would like to work with either El Aguila or El Metro to service that area and the people that work in that area.

Judge Tijerina, asked if there were other project requests in addition to the one from Webb County.

Mr. Mendive, stated that at the moment that was the only project request received. He also mentioned that there had been talks to TxDOT about truck parking. He stated that at that time staff recommended to work with projects that had an existing right-of-way and were ready to move forward. He also stated that they did want to identify other projects and to work with the Committee and their Planning partners, the City of Laredo, the Webb County and the RMA to make sure that they were funding projects that were going to help reduce carbon emissions.

CM. Perez, made a motion to program Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds for a \$3.12 million-dollar project to construct an approximately 3.9 mile 10-foot shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists building an existing right-of-way on the Mangana Hein Rd.

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

CM. Cigarroa, stated that the 359 Highway area was similar to the Mines Road area in needed more public transportation due to the area growing. She also stated that the idea of truck parking and electrification in City or County land would fit perfect into this Carbon Reduction Program.

Judge Tijerina, suggested the Committee members send their input to Mr. Mendive, to start working on a list of projects requests.

Judge Tijerina, made a motion to program a list of projects to be funded by the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds.

Second: CM. Perez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Discussion with possible action on the Hachar-Reuthinger Road project.

Gloria Perez Saavedra, COL Engineering, gave an update on the Hachar-Reuthinger Road, state highway 84. Mrs. Saavedra stated, that in reference to the right-of-way acquisition, they had already received the 8 parcels for review and it was completed. She further stated that they were coordinating with TxDOT to confirm the information of any existing utilities within any of the parcels so they could be compensated.

Mrs. Saavedra also stated that they were coordinating with Premier Civil Engineering on the utility adjustments. She stated that they had a utility matrix identifying the conflicts and 10 utility adjustments were found including an AEP existing utility pole, an abandoned 8" gas line, and another gas line that had to be lowered, some AEP transmission lines with potential vertical clearance, and AT&T underground line that had to be adjusted.

Mrs. Saavedra stated that they had requested a schedule from all the Utility companies of when these adjustments will be completed as well as an estimated cost. She continued by stating that they had a meeting on August, 3rd with Premier Engineering and TxDOT to discuss the potential horizontal vertical clearance conflicts. She stated that Premier Civil Engineering submitted the Transmission Port data that was requested on August, 9th. She also stated that the AEP Transmission team would review the information and prepare a model to confirm if there were any adjustments needed to the vertical and horizontal. She further stated that if there were any conflicts with the Transmission line they had to develop a Construction Management Plan, and the plan had to certify that all the utilities were cleared. She also stated that if there were any conflicts with AEP they know they would take time to resolve and it would impact the construction schedule.

Judge Tijerina asked Mrs. Saavedra to define what she meant by saying "it may take time".

Mrs. Saavedra, stated that in the meeting they had with AEP they mentioned that if in case there were adjustments needed to any possible conflicts, they may need around a year to complete them. She further stated that, that was why they may need to develop a Construction Management Plan to see if they could continue with a letting date of May 2024. If they need to develop a Construction Management Plan they would need to submit it to TxDOT and TxDOT would submit it to the Administration office for review and approval.

Judge Tijerina, asked what the cost would be for the relocation.

Mrs. Saavedra, stated that they had not been provided with a firm amount, and there was just an estimate amount of \$1 million provided which was subject to change.

CM. Perez, stated that if there were any conflicts and the poles had to be moved, construction and probably start at the beginning of where the road started, since there were no poles in that area. CM. Perez asked if the other utility conflicts like the moving of the gas line and the water well line would hold the project up.

Mrs. Saavedra, stated that the other utility conflicts were easier to relocate. She also stated that that were asking the property owners to contact the utility companies to get an estimate of how much it would cost to do the relocations, she also stated that the City of Laredo was responsible for those expenses.

CM. Perez asked, when did the City of Laredo acquire the land so that they could make the phone calls to anything related to the properties.

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, stated that they had already gotten the Environmental Assessment document reviewed and approved, they just need to make a public announcement with the Laredo Morning times to provide a 30-day public comment period. He further stated that after the 30 days the submitted back to Austin for final approval. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they are looking at the end of September to have it approved.

Judge Tijerina, asked if the \$1 million was from the County's portion or the City's portion.

Mrs. Saavedra, stated that the \$1 million was the City of Laredo's portion.

Judge Tijerina asked if the \$1 million had already been allocated.

CM. Perez, replied that there should be money allocated in the project already. CM. Perez requested if she could be part of the meetings the Engineering Department had with AEP.

Mr. Gonzalez, TxDOT stated that he had a conversation with Representative Raymond, and he volunteered to have a meeting to bring everyone together to make sure everyone understood the sense of urgency and to have a plan. He further stated that if a Construction Management plan was needed TxDOT would have to review it and submit to Administration for approval. He stated that the Construction Management plan was ultimately a plan to come up with the sequence of construction so they can proceed with the work and have enough work for the constructor to do while the utility work was being done without having any impact. CM. Gonzalez stated that depending on the information they receive from AEP, it would help them determine if a Construct Management plan was needed.

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

A. Presentation by TxDOT to discuss the Ports-to-Plains (P2P) Project.

Cary Karnstadt, TxDOT, presented the Ports-to-Plain (P2P) Project. Mr. Karnstadt gave a brief overview of their implementation strategy and efforts that were taken over the next several months. Mr. Karntsadt, stated they completed feasibility study in 2020 and the next steps were the implementation strategy efforts. He stated what were some of the

benefits of an Interstate Highway. He described the safety design standards of an Interstate Highway. Mr. Karntsadt, explained the Enabling Legislation for Development as an Interstate Highway. He continued by presenting the characteristics of the region in Texas, he also presented the number of non-interstate miles being 808 miles and 155 of Interstate miles that currently meet the criteria. Mr. Karntsadt, stated they are looking at 90 active projects along with almost 1.5 billion dollars, he furthered described the projects.

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

Mr. Brown, presented the RMA status report as follows:

1. **FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes** – The commencement of work at Killam Industrial Blvd. at FM 1472 occurred in early May 2022. The traffic signal is fully operational, and traffic is now utilizing the new turn lanes on FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Project is pending final walk-through, TDLR inspection and final Close-out Construction Change Order. Project is 99+% complete.
2. **Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Brownwood)** – Project is complete.
3. **Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos) Acceleration/Deceleration Lane Project** – Project is complete.
4. **Springfield Phase III** – Project is complete. Ribbon cutting held on August 8, 2023
5. **Webb County Fair Grounds TIA** – The TIA report is complete. The WC-CL RMA stands ready to provide a presentation to the County at their request.
6. **River Road Corridor Study** – The study is complete. The study's findings were presented to the MPO Policy Committee at the June meeting and to City of Laredo City Council on August 7, 2023.
7. **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant** – In partnership with the MPO and the City of Laredo, the RMA developed a \$2M grant application to develop an action to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. On the 30th of January, the RMA was informed by US Congressman Cuellar's Office that the grant was approved for \$2.0 M. A formal announcement by Congressman Cuellar was conducted at City Hall on 2/21/23. The agreement between FHWA and WC-CL RMA is executed. The WC-CL RMA will work with the City of Laredo for the execution of an Inter Local Agreement for the sharing of the local funding match for the grant. The Study effort to commence in September 2023.
8. **Vallecillo Road** – Survey field operations commenting in 2 weeks, pending right-of-entry approvals from the land owner.
9. **Concord Hills (Wormser Road/ Lomas Del Sur to Los Presidentes)** - Similar to the Los Presidentes project, the WC-CL RMA will sponsor and lead the design and construction of a new location 1.3 mile, 2-lane minor arterial roadway extension from Los Presidentes to Wormser Road/ Lomas Del Sur within a nominal ROW width of 90' in partnership with

the City of Laredo. The WC-CL RMA has committed \$1 million to the development of the project. The project will provide a parallel route to Cuatro Vientos and provide additional access to the new Laredo Sports Complex and the Municipal Water Park. The sponsorship and implementation are subject to the negotiation of an Inter Local Agreement between the City of Laredo and the WC-CL RMA. The WC-CL RMA is working with the City of Laredo to finalize the construction cost estimate for the project and complete the InterLocal Agreement for the project.

10. **Springfield Phase I, II, and IV** – Similar to Springfield Phase III, the WC-CL RMA has committed up to \$1 million to the City of Laredo to assist with the funding of the construction of the next Phase of the project. The sponsorship and implementation are subject to the negotiation of an Inter Local Agreement between the City of Laredo and the WC-CL RMA. The WC-CL RMA is working with the City of Laredo to finalize the construction cost estimate for the project and complete the Inter Local Agreement for the project.
11. **The WCCL RMA hosted a TRZ workshop on July 19, 2023.** A review of the TRZ study and implantation process was presented. A second workshop to City of Laredo City Council is tentatively scheduled for the end of August 2023.

Other Items:

12. WC-CL RMA will have their next board meeting in September 2023. Exact day to be announced.

VI. DIRECTOR's COMMENTS

Mr. Mendive, MPO Director provided the following comments/report:

1. The next TxDOT Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) meeting will be held in McAllen on August 22, 2023. BTAC provides a forum for the exchange of communications between the Texas Transportation Commission, TxDOT, the governor, and committee members representing border trade interests.
2. A letter of support was provided to the City of Laredo for its application to the U.S. Department of Transportation Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities (RTEPF) Grant program. The grant would support the City's Signal Management and Automated Reliable Transit (SMAART) Trade & Mobility Corridor Project to reduce port-related emissions from idling trucks through advance traffic preemption as well as control and prioritization of traffic signalization.
3. A Fort-Worth to Laredo High-Speed Transportation Study was completed in 2020 through an initiative of the six MPOs along the I-35 corridor, including LWCAMPO. Recently, the North Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has reached out to the MPOs included in the study as well as TxDOT to reinitiate the discussions regarding the study findings and potential next steps. Additional details will be provided as they become available.

4. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:

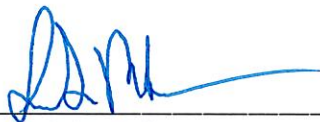
- Active Transportation Committee – August 30, 2023
- Technical Committee – September 12, 2023
- Policy Committee – September 20, 2023

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

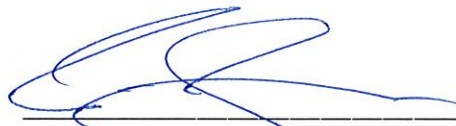
Judge Tijerina, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 P.M.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.



Juan S. Mendive, AICP
LWCAMPO Director



Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge and
LWCAMPO Chairperson