



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

October 18, 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 the meeting to order at 1:37 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 (joined meeting at 1:39 PM)
Honorable Vanessa Perez, Mayor Pro Tempore, City Councilmember, District VII
Honorable Melissa R. Cigarroa, City Councilmember, District III
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
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 Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1 (Listened-in and participated via Zoom)

CM. Perez, made a motion to excuse members not present.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Others:

Ramon Chavez, COL Engineering
Chief Miguel Rodriguez, COL LPD
Gerardo Gonzalez, COL LPD
Rene R. Alvarado, COL LPD
Eloisa Mascorro, El Metro Transit
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Luis M. Villarreal, TxDOT
Fernando Martinez, TxDOT
Angel Martinez, TxDOT
Adelaido Uribe, Webb County Judge's Office
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Anthony Garza, Webb County Consultant
Melissa Montemayor, WC-CL RMA/LJA
Blasita Lopez, WC-CL RMA/LJA
Jason Rodriguez, WC-CL RMA/LJA
Ignacio Hinojosa, Ardurra
Jose L. Ceballos, Fasken Development
Edward Ruiz

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.

No citizen comments were received.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:

A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on September 20, 2023.

CM. Galo, made a motion to approve the minutes of September 20, 2023.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Motion to award and execute a professional services contract with WSP USA, Inc. in the amount of \$376,504.25 for the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update.

Juan Mendive, MPO Director, stated that an RFQ had been opened on July 19th 2023 for the MTP Update which is a Federal required document. He further stated that the Policy Committee allowed them to enter into negotiations with WSP USA, Inc. and a contract was negotiated in the amount of \$376,504.25. Mr. Mendive, also stated that the funding was available in their Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and that the project will take approximately 15 months.

Judge Tijerina, asked how often the MTP Update is required.

Mr. Mendive, stated that MTP Update is required every 5 years.

CM. Galo, made a motion to approve the awarding and execution of a professional service contract with WSP USA, Inc. for the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Discussion with possible action on transportation planning activities and initiatives to improve the safety of the regional transportation network.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the item had been briefly discussed on the last Policy Committee meeting as per Commissioner Gonzalez and Mayor Pro Temp Council Member, Vanessa Perez request, because of the numerous incidents of fatalities that had recently occurred on the local roadways. Mr. Mendive, stated that the RMA had started working on their Safety Action Plan, and they were invited to provide an overview of the plan to see what work would be related to planning in collaboration with the RMA.

Mr. Brown, RMA, stated that Jason Rodriguez would be the keynote speaker on the RMA's Safety Action Plan. He also stated that a \$2 million grant was awarded to the community and the RMA to study and create a Safety Action Plan for all of Laredo and Webb County. Mr. Brown further stated that between February and September they were being trained on how to administer the grant and with an 18-month period to finish. He continued by stating that the goal of the grant was implementation of dollars through the study and, to be able to attract more monies to the community in order to implement aspects of what comes out of the study.

Mr. Jason Rodriguez, LJA Engineering, representing the RMA, briefly presented how the grant was obtained and described the Vision Zero Webb Laredo Action Plan process. He also explained what the Safety Action Plan was about with three major goals of the study are to make a public commitment to zero fatalities on roadways by certain year, and presented three different examples of public statements. He further showed the eight (8) Key Milestones for the Safety Action Plan, and explained that a couple of advisory committees will be in place. One could be a working group that will consist of City staff that will be responsible for implementing the plan. He further stated the discussions would begin in November or December, 2023 and to have the public commitment by February 2024. Mr. Rodriguez continued presenting the rest of the milestones for the Safety Action Plan with proposed dates for these milestones to be completed by.

Mr. Brown, asked Mr. Rodriguez if the public commitment would be provided through the MPO, the City, the County, or all three separate entities.

Mr. Rodriguez, answered that even though the RMA and the City were being funding partners, they would be the governing bodies that would provide a commitment but, the invite would be for all the governing bodies in the community to make the commitment or pledge.

Mr. Brown, also asked how the members for the advisory committee would be selected.

Mr. Rodriguez, stated that for being a partner, the City would definitely have some representation in the advisory committee. He also stated that the invite would also be for TxDOT, Webb County and others from the community to provide input. He further stated that the City would be taking the lead on the working side and on the advocacy side of the advisory committee.

Mr. Brown, asked Mayor Treviño and Judge Tijerina if they had certain people in mind that they would like them to be participants, to provide their names to add them to the committee.

CM. Galo, asked if the pledge was something mandatory part of the grant.

Mr. Rodriguez, answered that a date of by when to reduce fatalities to zero is needed in order to develop the plan. This would help to establish the steps to follow to reach the goal.

CM. Cigarroa, commented that the idea of having a written down goal is to create the steps to see how you get to your goal.

CM. Galo, asked if the \$2 million were to implement the steps.

Mr. Brown, answered that they were to study all the problem areas in the City and Webb County to address them and fix them. He further stated that it is to engage everyone in the community that has data that is measurable to figure out where the problem areas are.

Mr. Mendive, stated that a safety report had been included in their packet that TxDOT and TTI had helped put together.

Mr. Brown, mentioned that it was a very competitive grant and they were very excited to have gotten it, he also mentioned that they were in the top 4 in Texas.

Judge Tijerina, asked if everyone received the same equal amount of \$1.6 million.

Mr. Brown, answered that the number varied depending on how much they had applied for. He stated that they had originally applied for the \$2 million as they felt that was a reasonable figure to generate a good study that will help make the streets safer. He explained that if they had applied for more they would have had to come up with a larger amount for the 20% match.

CM. Perez, asked if it had costed them any money to initiate the study.

Mr. Brown, explained that it will cost the City and the RMA each \$200,000.00 and they had already started spending the money. He also stated that it is a pay as you go, each month they will be billed and in order to get their money back they have to apply to the federal government. He also stated that there was a \$25,000.00 application fee for the grant which was split by the City of Laredo and the RMA, approximately \$12,500.00 each.

Mr. Mendive presented the safety report to the committee. He presented a chart that showed the fatalities from 2018 to 2022. He stated that most of the accidents were speed and intersection related. Mr. Mendive, stated that the report was put together based on that CRIS data but there are a lot more details behind the safety report.

Mr. Epigmenio "Epi" Gonzalez, TxDOT stated that they have a highway safety improvement program where they are identifying locations on their on-system roads. He also stated that they have monies available for off-system roads in order to identify some of the projects.

Mr. Mike Rodriguez, COL Police Chief explained that the report provides where the gaps are at. He stated that the more data they collect the better they understand where the gaps are. He stated that the category of Young Driver involved is very important because it helps them provide visibility to the community as far as the dangers that Young Drivers go through. Chief Rodriguez, explained the three major contributing factors on Young Drivers. He stated that the lack of scanning, speeding, and distractions were the top three

factors they have identified. He also stated that a lot of the recent accidents occurred have involved young drivers.

CM. Perez, asked if they can offer high school students a little crash course similar to driver's ed.

Chief Rodriguez, stated that LPD is working with LISD to create a curriculum for one day where the officers can go and talk about different dangers and they want to incorporate the number one reason why teenagers get hurt, which is driving a motor vehicle. He also stated that they will be bring back the program Shattered Dreams which is a concept that simulates what happens when an accident occurs. Chief Rodriguez, shared some new data they collected of where they have given the most traffic citations. That data helped decreased from 710 accidents a month in average to 554 accidents a month, he stated it is about 20% decrease. Chief Rodriguez, stated that they are enforcing the Cuatro Vientos area, he also stated that in the next weeks they will be doing a big operation involving LPD and DPS in several parts of the city. He also stated that they need more signage to constantly remind people that texting and driving is an offense.

Mr. Mendive, stated that there are monies available for implementation, but a requirement for that implementation grant is to have a Safety Action Plan in order to be eligible for additional safety funding.

D. Discussion with possible action to program Category 7 funds for the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project and the Vallecillo Road Project, and receive public testimony to initiate a 10-day comment period to include the proposed programming revisions to the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

CM. Galo, made a motion to initiate a 10-day public comment period.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Judge Tijerina, asked if there was anyone in the audience that would like to speak For or Against the following 5 revisions.

1. **Addition** of the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project Segment 1 ROW/ preliminary engineering phase in FY 2025 with an estimated project cost of \$926,980. Category 7 funds in the amount of \$100,000 are proposed for this project phase. The project sponsor is Webb County.
2. **Addition** of the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project Segment 2 ROW/ preliminary engineering phase in FY 2025 with an estimated project cost of

\$1,012,816. Category 7 funds in the amount of \$100,000 are proposed for this project phase. The project sponsor is Webb County.

3. **Addition** of the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project Segment 1 Construction Phase in FY 2033 with an estimated project cost of \$13,562,500. Category 7 funds in the amount of \$13,562,500 are proposed for this project phase. The project sponsor is Webb County.
4. **Addition** of the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project Segment 2 Construction Phase in FY 2034 with an estimated project cost of \$7,160,000. Category 7 funds in the amount of \$7,160,000 are proposed for this project phase. The project sponsor is Webb County.
5. **Programming** of an additional \$1,312,592 in Category 7 funds for the Vallecillo Road Project intended to provide for the construction of a new 4 lane [off-system] highway with a continuous turn lane. The project sponsor is the Webb County-City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority and the proposed letting date is FY 2026.

CM. Galo, made a motion to approve the programming of Category 7 funds for the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion and the Vallecillo Road Project.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

CM. Perez, asked if the programming of Category 7 funds for these projects will cause a depletion in their Category 7 dollars. CM. Perez, also asked about the proposed letting dates, if some of the projects were ready to go sooner than the proposed letting dates.

Anthony Garza, Webb County Consultant, explained that the Category 7 funds get refilled every year, he further stated that the Category 7 funds need to be used because TxDOT can take back if you have unallocated or unspent funds. He further stated that it is very important to tie up money on paper so it won't be taken away from them and so they can do project development. Mr. Garza, also stated that they are anticipating to deliver the project in about 24 months, because there is no right-of-way acquisition and no major issues to encounter.

CM. Perez, commented that they need to start allocating the Category 7 dollars as quickly as possible.

Judge Tijerina, commented that it is important for them to use the monies, in order to ask for more. He further commented that these are the types of projects TxDOT like to see that are shovel ready.

Mr. Mendive, stated that they request came in through Webb County and the RMA, he also stated that in order to make it work they added the estimate of 2034, know that they would get at least another \$8.1 million to make the funding work. He further stated that the UTP was about to start being developed for the next 10 years which would be FY 2024 through FY 2034 so it works with the monies they have and it doesn't affect the other projects for Category 7 like Hachar-Reuthinger. Mr. Mendive also stated that he liked to incorporate the River Road through the MTP since they have also awarded the contract to start that MTP their long-range plan and start looking at the funding that will be available through 2050 to start programing that.

CM. Galo, asked why is there one that has the construction phase date of FY 2033.

Mr. Garza, stated that they have 10 years to program projects and be given an AFA by TxDOT. He also stated that all the years are committed so they had to go to FY 2033, but they are looking to complete it before that time.

Judge Tijerina, stated that CM. Gonzalez is in support of programing of Category 7 funds for the Mangana-Hein Roadway Expansion Project and the Vallecillo Road Project.

E. Discussion with possible action to approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-12 supporting the functional classification of Hachar-Reuthinger Road (SH 84), a new roadway location, as "Other Principal Arterial".

CM. Galo, made a motion to approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-12 supporting the functional classification of Hachar-Reuthinger Road (SH 84), a new roadway location, as "Other Principal Arterial".

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mendive, stated that this Resolution is a requirement since it is a new construction of a roadway that needs to be functionally classified before the letting date in order to get the Federal approval. He commented that the Mangana-Hein project was already Functionally Classified as an Arterial for Federal purposes. He also mentioned that since Hachar-Reuthinger is a new roadway it needs to have that Functional Classification prior to letting. He stated, that part of the process was getting a Resolution from the Policy Committee and that they are working with TxDOT District to forward it to the State Planning team to forward it to FHWA.

CM. Perez, asked to confirm with the City of Laredo Planning Director if the Roadway was already classified as a Principal Arterial.

Mr. Orlando Navarro, COL Planning Director, stated that the City's classification is different from the Federal Classification.

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

CM. Perez, stated that they have been meeting with Representative Raymond every two weeks for the last six weeks.

Ramon Chavez, COL Engineer, stated that he had the latest update on the Hachar-Reuthinger Road project, he stated they had been working with TxDOT, and they were waiting on TxDOT to receive the final approval for the draft offer letters in order for them to send them out.

CM. Perez, asked if there was a reappraisal need on parcel 2.

Mr. Chavez, stated that it hadn't happened yet, that they were waiting on the utility company to send them the estimate so they could amend the appraisal. He further stated that they have 6 of the 8 parcels offer letters ready to be send out.

CM. Perez, commented that the problem with parcel 2 was that it's a huge portion of the total roadway so in order to move forward they need to acquire parcel 2.

CM. Galo, asked who the owner of parcel 2 was.

Mr. Chavez, answered that it was in the Hachar trust. He stated that it is an abandoned gas line that had to be removed, he further stated that they were just waiting for the estimate in order to amend the appraisal.

CM. Galo, asked what kind of gas line it was.

Mr. Chavez, stated that it was a 10-inch enterprise gas line that is abandoned and it is not within easement. Mr. Chavez, continued by stating that the next one was parcel 6 which there was an issue with the language. He further stated that 7 of the 8 parcels will be sent out the following day.

Ms. Ana Duncan, TxDOT, stated that the letters have to be reviewed and approved by TxDOT, so they were just pending that information. She further stated that the information for 6 of the 8 parcels had already been received. She also stated that the City had been waiting on title commitments and until they received all that information they had not submitted anything to TxDOT. She further stated they there were some issues in respect to language that the City wanted to include in the offer letters.

CM. Perez, stated that in order to get into details on that matter it would be best to go into Executive Session to discuss it. She further stated that they were trying to get everything done by December in order to keep the same letting date of May 2024.

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

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

Mr. Jed Brown, RMA presented the following report:

WC-CL RMA October 2023 Status Report to LWCAMPO

- 1. FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes** – Project is pending final walk-through, and TDLR inspection and final Close-out Construction Change Order. Project is 99+% complete.
- 2. Springfield Phase III** – Project is complete. Ribbon cutting held on August 8, 2023. Final Invoice received.
- 3. Webb County Fair Grounds TIA** – The TIA report is complete. The WC-CL RMA (RMA) stands ready to provide a presentation to the County at their request.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Vision Zero Webb Laredo Action Plan** – Development of the Action Plan began in September 2023. Activities performed in September include mobilizing the team, data collection, and some preliminary analysis. Activities anticipated for October include assembling action team and advisory committee and preparing project website. Analysis and initial committee meetings will begin through the end of the year, with the first public engagement occurring in February 2024.
- 6. Vallecillo Road** – Data collection operations are ongoing. Currently, survey flight operations have completed, and field survey crews will be returning in November for final data collection. Existing utilities data collection is ongoing. ROW survey collection will commence in October. Field utility data collection will commence in November. The utility coordination will commence with the City Utility Coordination Committee in November. The RMA is projecting a Fall 2025 Letting of the project. As the project sponsor, the executed Advanced Funding Agreement (AFA) is solely between the TxDOT Laredo District and the RMA. Per the details of the AFA, the RMA is financially responsible for items beyond the RMA's committed \$5,363,964 (Category 12 Strategic Partnership monies). It should also be noted that the RMA invested \$335,990.08 in VRF monies for financial planning and preliminary engineering on Vallecillo Road for the purpose of obtaining funding for the implementation of the project.
- 7. Concord Hills (Wormser Road/ Lomas Del Sur to Los Presidentes)** – The 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. The 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 (ILA) between the City and

the RMA. The RMA is working with the City to finalize the construction cost estimate for the project and complete the ILA for the project.

8. **Springfield Phase I, II, and IV** – Similar to Springfield Phase III, the RMA has committed up to \$1 million to the City 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 and the RMA. The RMA is working with the City to finalize the construction cost estimate for the project and complete the Inter Local Agreement for the project.
9. The WCCL RMA hosted a TRZ workshop on July 19, 2023, to review the TRZ study and implementation process with the City. A second workshop was conducted on 8/28/23. The RMA is awaiting execution of the ILA with the City to commence the North Laredo TRZ Study. Concurrently, the City is considering implementing the Cuatro Vientos TRZ.
10. Other Items:
 - RMA will have their next board meeting on October 24, 2023.

B. Update by TxDOT on the US 59 Feasibility Study

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT, gave a presentation on the US59 Feasibility Study. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they had a Stakeholder meeting on September 21st, and that they were going to have a public meeting the following day. He stated that during that Stakeholders meeting they had several members from the City of Laredo, the MPO, the Webb County and property owners. He continued by giving a brief summary of what it was covered and the purpose of the workshop. He stated that it was to provide information on the study, to engage stakeholders and gather their input on the proposed concepts and analysis, and to discuss strategies to engage those most potentially impacted. He stated that the purpose of the study was to enhance regional mobility connectivity and safety, also to accommodate the future growth and to support economic development to facilitate the freight movement in Laredo.

Mr. Rodriguez showed a segment of US 59 that had a 6-lane road with main lanes and then it went to 2 lanes one in each direction. He stated what was proposed with that project was the Eastbound and Westbound frontage roads, making it 4-lane divided and mentioned that in the future the state would build the middle lanes or what they call the main lanes of a freeway. Mr. Rodriguez, also stated that in Fall 2022 there were initially 46 freeway concepts developed, and by Spring 2023 of the 46 only 13 were chosen for detail evaluation. He continued stating that by Summer 2023 they had the concept that included the substantial residential or business displacement, the routing of freight traffic too far away from the existing US 59, in Fall 2023 they narrowed it down to 4 concepts and the No-Build concept for future evaluation. He also stated that the consultant was still compiling some of the comments they got from the Stakeholders meeting. He presented a time line of the steps they were taking. He also presented the public notice that was published about the meeting they were having the following day.

CM. Perez, asked if Mr. Rodriguez could provide a link for the meeting.

Mr. Rodriguez, stated that they can find the link at TxDOT.gov and search US 59 feasibility study virtual public meeting, they would find the videos and the comment forms by the following day after 5:00 PM.

VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Mendive, presented the following Director's comments:

1. MPO planners will be attending two upcoming conferences: Esri Gulf Coast User Conference to learn more about best practices in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the American Planning Association (APA) State Conference.
2. MPO staff continues to collaborate and coordinate with TxDOT Laredo District and sponsors of Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA – Category 9) funded projects to support project delivery. We anticipate issuing another TASA Call for Projects in 2024.
3. MPO staff is in the process of updating the Congestion Management Process (CMP) as per 23 CFR 450.322. We will be working with our Technical Committee and engaging stakeholders to update our CMP network and identify congestion management strategies.
4. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:
 - Active Transportation Committee – October 25, 2023
 - Technical Committee – November 7, 2023
 - Policy Committee – November 15, 2023
5. We will likely not have a Policy Committee meeting in December unless necessary.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Judge Tijerina, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:54 PM.

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

Motion carried unanimously.



Juan S. Mendive, AICP
LWCAMPO Director



Webb County Judge Tano E. Tijerina
LWCAMPO Chairperson