



# LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

## AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### POLICY COMMITTEE

#### MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 2023

LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>

PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300

#### I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Dr. Victor D. Treviño, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

#### II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

##### Regular members present:

Honorable Dr. Victor D. Treviño, Mayor and LWCAMPO Vice-Chairperson  
Honorable Melissa R. Cigarroa, City Councilmember, District III  
Honorable Ruben Gutierrez Jr., City Councilmember, District V  
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1 (joined at 1:43 PM)  
Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII  
Mr. Epigmenio "Epi" Gonzalez, P.E., TxDOT District Engineer

##### Regular members not present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge and LWCAMPO Chairperson  
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3  
Mr. Jed A. Brown, Member-At-Large

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

Second: CM. Gutierrez  
For: 5  
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  
Orlando Navarro, COL Planning  
Roberto Garza, COL Transit  
Eloisa Mascorro, COL Transit  
Sara Garza, TxDOT  
Ana Duncan, TxDOT  
Fernando 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  
Edward Garza, Crane Engineering/Unitec POA

**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.

***Mr. Edward D. Garza, Crane Engineering /Unitec POA/ Port Grande Development.***

Mr. Garza, spoke about Item IV.F. Discussion with possible action on the traffic congestion issues at Unitec Industrial Park, and other matters incident thereto. Mr. Garza, shared some factual information on the traffic congestion occurring at mile marker 13. He stated that TxDOT is currently under final design where they would be letting their portion of the project next October. Mr. Garza, stated that Unitec had been around for over 34 years and the Property Owners Association comprised of over 83 property owners within 9 phases of the park. He also shared that Unitec was comprised of 750 acres, and Port Grande is currently comprised of 270 acres. Some of the most notable users of those facilities for their businesses were, Warner Enterprises, Daniel B. Hastings, Swift Transportation, and a Pilot Travel Center, to name a few. Mr. Garza also stated that the primary development was warehousing and primary access to Unitec was from Carrier Drive and Uniroyal Drive, which both were primary arterials. He continued by stating that

the existing street system was 34 years old and required updating. He stated that the companies there experience very heavy traffic congestion problems. These companies employ local families which contribute to the local economy. He continued by sharing that in 2018 the total tax revenue was about \$5.2 million and it was projected up to \$7.5 million in property taxes for 2023 which represents a 43% increase from 2018.

Mr. Garza, stated that over the last 5 years the POA had been working with the County, the City and TxDOT in trying to improve the traffic circulation with striping/re-striping and signage. He also stated that there had been reports from many employees and owners in the area that they've experienced a 60 minutes time delay just to get out of the park and get home. This could be a potential disaster if there was a first responder call for fire or an emergency.

Mr. Garza, also shared some perspective on traffic count data at the Carrier's Intersection the average daily traffic was 19,400 ADT, within Uniroyal there had been a traffic count of 8,000 ADT, south of the Uniroyal intersection along IH35 the traffic count was 44,000 ADT, and north of the Uniroyal intersection along IH35 the traffic count was 29,365 ADT. These figures show an abundance of traffic that the location had been experiencing and how it had been growing over the years. He further stated that there was additional development in the west side of IH35 of over 1,000 acres of platting area in the last seven years and TxDOT is in final design for a new interchange at Reuthinger, north of Uniroyal. These improvements would help alleviate some of the traffic.

Mr. Garza, also mentioned that the Kansas City Southern Railroad was under construction which blocked the Uniroyal interchange and any other street crossing that interacts at grade level with the railroad. The bridge under construction is planned to be finished by March of 2025.

Mr. Garza, stated that their request was to extend and industrial arterial to the east and to the north and tie in on the east side of the Reuthinger interchange, so that a full interchange can be developed and support the Hachar-Reuthinger Road to the West which would help alleviate the traffic congestion at Unitec Industrial Park.

Mr. Garza, stated that they had recently presented a request to City Council and had gotten approval to update the thoroughfare plan for the City to incorporate the Unitec relief route, to authorize a feasibility study, to confirm road alignment and the budgets, to coordinate between the MPO Policy Committee, RMA, TxDOT, the Webb County, and the City of Laredo to prioritize that project and locate some funding sources, and to add the project to the North Laredo TRZ Study.

Mr. Garza, asked-the MPO Policy Committee to consider and approve their request as well.

Mr. Garza, closed by stating that the benefits of the relief route would include, improving the traffic circulation and the level of service for trucks and park employees, it would improve first responder time within the Unitec Park, it would improve safety around the

TxDOT construction zones, it would reduce air pollution and, it would also improve hauling cost for companies that work within Unitec.

**IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on October 18, 2023.**

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2023.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

CM. Gutierrez made a motion to bring up Item IV.F.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**F. Discussion with possible action on the traffic congestion issues at Unitec Industrial Park, and other matters incident thereto. (Requested by City of Laredo).**

Mr. Mendive, stated that the item was requested by the City of Laredo to discuss what it could be done to support through the MPO. He stated that it could be through the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update and shared the thoroughfare plan map that showed the work the City's Planning Department had done.

CM. Perez, asked if there was homeowners association for that development Park, which maybe some of the assessment collected could be used for some of the improvements needed. She also stated that the TRZ for north Laredo would extend east of IH 35 to include the Mines Rd. area and the RMA was helping with the study.

Mr. Mendive, presented the thoroughfare plan map approved by City Council showing a route on Unitec Drive connected to an out and to Hachar-Reuthinger, in place with the Majestic Development in the east side, which would bring a lot of growth.

Mr. Mendive stated that there had been conversations with the Planning Department in looking at how to create connectivity to the future roadways and future outer loop but it would require development to happen for the roads to be put in. He continued stating that through the MPO there was a Congestion Management Plan and strategies that could be done beyond building roadways, like shifting working hours, shuttle programs and other different options that could be explored. He also stated these would definitely be

added to the MTP so it would be looked at with the stakeholders to make sure the correct roads are identified as well as others that might be needed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan in order to allocate future funding. He added that the MPO could initiate some task force that could help coordinate the way that TxDOT and the private sector was doing with Mines Road and that the MPO Staff was willing to take on that effort if that was feasible.

CM. Gutierrez, asked what could be done in the meanwhile, for the short term. He asked if there was a way to expand the access road on IH35 heading Northbound, since that was what had been causing all the congestion trying to turn into Unitec itself, and blocking Carriers Drive which served as one of the exits for the Park.

Mr. Gonzalez, TxDOT District Engineer replied that the access road was part of the project where they would be reconstructing the overpass. He mentioned that they would be converting the frontage roads from a two-way operation to a one-way operation, to help with the traffic in that area.

CM. Gutierrez, asked if there was a way to expand that access road for the short term to help the people heading southbound.

Mr. Mendive, mentioned the idea of having a shuttle for the employees would help reduce the number of vehicles out there.

CM. Gutierrez, mentioned if it was possible to reduce the lanes to 1 lane going into the park and make 3 lanes going out in the afternoon while employees are trying to get home after work, as a short-term solution.

CM. Cigarroa, asked what departments in the city may need to be involved in order to implement a shuttle for the employees in that area. She also asked Mr. Gonzalez, if there would be a way to coordinate with TxDOT to have an emergency designation for the shuttles to move safely.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that TxDOT is willing to work with the City of Laredo, MPO and others to find a short-term solution. Mr. Gonzalez, continued by mentioning having staggered hours where not everyone is trying to go in and leave at the same time.

CM. Perez, asked if there was a way of adding a turning lane for the people that were turning right on existing overpass over the train.

Mr. Gonzalez, responded that there was an existing bridge structure and wasn't sure if adding capacity was an option.

Mr. Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT shared that in the past there had been plans to build a direct connector but the issue was the ROW restrictions within Carriers Dr. He further shared the COL Traffic Dept. had worked in the past on options for a solution.

Mayor Treviño, asked for the next meeting to be provided with a recommendation on next steps to take.

CM. Cigarroa, stated that during the RMA workshop it was mentioned having TRZ/TIRZ expanding to focus not only on one industrial park but also on land that was directly related to city services. She further asked CM. Gonzalez to assist in talking with the County with the process to be able to accept the first proposal to expand the footprint that would alleviate the concerns of only some businesses were benefited and by approving it there would be opportunities for obtaining funding.

CM. Perez, mentioned she was looking at the map and asked if Copper Dr. was an improved official road.

Mr. Edward D. Garza, approached the podium and responded this was a dirt road commonly known as Doctors Rd. and was not an official city or county road but was used to access the property further to the east and by the City as an access to the wastewater treatment plant.

CM. Perez, asked if it would be possible to explore the possibility of incentivizing the connection of Mercury Dr. with Copper Dr. (identified in the map as a purple line) to accommodate the thoroughfare plan.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated there was also an opportunity to connect Copper Dr. to Hachar-Reuthinger to provide additional connectivity instead as the other proposal would require another other overpass.

CM. Cigarroa, asked if the railroad Union Pacific or Kansas City Southern could be contacted to see if Copper Dr. could be repaved and get the access open.

Mr. Gonzalez, responded this was a private road.

Mr. Ramon Chavez, COL Engineering responded Doctors Rd. was a private road and the request in the past for using that road had been denied by Union Pacific for safety reasons.

Mr. Navarro, Planning Director shared that under the Killam's development, off of Port Dr. there was a road that would provide an alternative for fastest solution.

CM. Perez, made a motion for MPO to work together with the association at Unitec, TxDOT and Union Pacific to revisit the idea of making this access into an official road and discuss with the County what could be done and, to bring back some options for the next meeting.

CM. Gutierrez, seconded and added to also include El Metro.

Motion was amended.

For: 6  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-13, adopting the proposed revision(s) to the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).**

Mr. Mendive, stated that the item was added to the MTP at the last Policy Committee meeting. The item was related to the Mangana-Hein project and the additional funding for the Vallecillo Rd. project.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the 10-day public comment period was open and no public comments had been received, but they could still take testimony there.

Mayor Treviño, asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak For or Against the proposed revisions to the 2020-2045 MTP.

No comments for or against were made.

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to close the public testimony and approve the Resolution No. MPO 2023-13, adopting the proposed revisions to the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Receive public testimony and initiate a (10) ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Mr. Mendive, made a brief presentation and stated that this was a new set of revisions for the TIP and the MTP and these would be brought back at the next meeting in January to finalize them but at the moment the item was to open the public comment period. He further asked if there was anyone that would like to speak For or Against.

No comments for or against were made.

Mr. Mendive, continued by presenting the items to the committee. He stated that the 2023-2026 TIP was a federally required document that MPOs develop in cooperation with their Planning Partners to program mobility and Transit projects for a 4-year period.

Mr. Mendive, mentioned that the MPO TIP documents are subsequently combined to form the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and TxDOT amends the STIP on a quarterly basis. He stated that the revisions to the STIP involving major changes required a public review and comment period and formal action by the MPO Policy Committee prior to being added to the STIP. He further stated that the MPO Public Participation Plan also required that 10-day public review and comment period for an amendment to the TIP in coordination with TxDOT. He added that these changes had been requested by TxDOT with no funding changes requested but project descriptions and limits were being revised for projects already listed in the TIP.

Mr. Mendive continued presenting each of the proposed project revisions as follows:

Project CSJ 0018-05-089, Replacement of bridge structure on Uniroyal Dr., being revised to IH35 overpass (reconstructed/new) at Uniroyal Dr. and State Highway 84., The project limits were changing from 0.5 miles south of Uniroyal interchange to 2.68 miles north of Uniroyal interchange, being updated from 0.47 miles south of Uniroyal Interchange to 3.22 miles north of Uniroyal Interchange.

Project CSJ 0086-16-008, Lomas Del Sur Boulevard overpass, being revised to construct a new Interchange Improvement at Lomas Del Sur Boulevard. Project limits would be updated to, from 0.58 miles south of Lomas Del Sur Boulevard to 0.721 miles north of Lomas Del Sur Boulevard.

Project CSJ 0086-14-086, US59 Loop 20 reconstruction, to revise the project description to converting a 6-lane non-freeway facility to a 6-lane freeway facility with auxiliary lanes and Frontage Roads and the project limits to, from business 59 to 0.28 miles south of Jacaman Rd.

CM. Perez, made a motion to accept the amendments as proposed.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Receive public testimony and initiate a (10) ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed revision(s) to the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):**

1. **Revision** of Appendix A – Short range Projects Identified in the MTP and Listed in the TIP as necessary to incorporate and reflect the proposed revisions to the 2023-2026 TIP.

Mr. Mendive explained that these changes were the same presented for revisions to the TIP that needed to be amended to the MTP as well.



Mayor Treviño, asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak For or Against the proposed revisions to the 2020-2045 MTP.

No comments for or against were made.

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to close and introduce a 10-day public review and comment period.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Discussion with possible action to approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-14 supporting the functional classification (FC) of Vallecillo Road, a new location roadway, as “Other Principal Arterial”.**

Mr. Mendive, stated that this classification was required in order to be eligible for the Federal funding, and since it was a new construction Roadway it didn't have a functional classification. He further stated that the RMA approved a Resolution at their last Board meeting to make this Road a Principal Arterial, he also stated that the City's thoroughfare Plan also showed it as a Principal Arterial, and the MPO Staff recommended that it be classified as other Principal Arterial as well. Mr. Mendive, also stated that the MPO would be working with TxDOT District staff to submit that to the TxDOT Planning Division and to FHWA to get the functional classification changed.

CM. Perez, made a motion to approve Resolution No. MPO 2023-14 supporting the functional classification (FC) of Vallecillo Road, a new location roadway, as “Other Principal Arterial”.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Mr. Ramon Chavez, City Engineer presented an update of the Hachar-Reuthinger Road project and stated that they were working with 8 parcels for the Right-of-way of approximately 479 acres. He further stated that a 9<sup>th</sup> one had been identified as part of parcel 6 and on which they would start working with. He also stated that in regards to the

utility conflicts, all the estimates for the utility relocations and schedules were received and the information had already been shared with TxDOT.

Mr. Chavez, stated that there was a City Council agenda item proposed for the following Monday to authorize the City Manager to execute and advance funding agreement with TxDOT. He further stated that the State participation would cover 100% of the environmental Right-of-Way mapping, PS&E and construction cost. The City of Laredo shall acquire the necessary Right-of-Way and obtain the utility clearances with local funds. Mr. Chavez, shared that their next internal meeting would be December the 1<sup>st</sup>. He also thanked CM. Vanessa Perez for being part of the meetings, and also thanked the rest of the MPO Committee members.

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

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

Ms. Melissa Montemayor, LJA Engineering, presented the following report as part of the packet:

#### **WC-CL RMA November 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. **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.
3. **Vision Zero Webb Laredo Action Plan** – Development of the Action Plan began in September 2023. Activities performed in October included assembling action team and advisory committee and preparing project website. Note that the WC-CL RMA will provide a representative for the advisory committee from our Board of Directors. Analysis and initial committee meetings will begin through the end of the year, with the first public engagement occurring in February 2024. Completion of the study is anticipated for December 2024.
4. **Vallecillo Road** – Data collection operations are ongoing. Existing utilities data collection is ongoing. ROW survey collection is ongoing. The utility coordination will commence with the City Utility Coordination Committee this month. Preliminary survey data is now in hand and the design engineers have commenced the geometric development of the project. A draft schematic is anticipated for submittal to the Laredo District in January/ February 2024. 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.
5. **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.

6. **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.
7. The WC-CL 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.
8. Other Items:
  - RMA had a Board meeting on October 24, 2023. The RMA approved their FYE 2024 Budget.
  - RMA will have their next Board meeting on December on December 11, 2023.

## **VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Mendive, presented the following Director's report that was part of the packet:

### **Director's Report November 15, 2023**

1. As part of the 2025 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) development, TxDOT Laredo District has requested the Technical Committee's participation to prioritize evaluation criteria as well as rate projects that will be considered for Category 2, 4, and 12 funding. The activity is being administered by TxDOT using the Decision Lens program. Results will be presented at the January Policy Committee with an opportunity for additional input from the committee.
2. Our FHWA representative, Kirk Fauver, will be visiting with MPO staff and our TxDOT field representative, Sara Garza, on November 21st to discuss updates on planning activities and upcoming studies.
3. The Association of Texas Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO) Directors Fall Meeting will be held in Austin, Texas on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. We will not hold a Policy Committee meeting in December unless a special meeting is needed.
5. Upcoming regularly scheduled meetings:

- Active Transportation Committee – November 29, 2023
- Technical Committee – January 9, 2024
- Policy Committee – January 17, 2024

CM. Perez, stated that it would be helpful to be more present at the State Texas Transportation Commission meetings, and she would like to have updates and information about the TxDOT Commissioner meetings so they could have representation from Laredo present in Austin.

CM. Perez, made a motion for Mr. Mendive to include updates of future TxDOT meetings in his Directors Report.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

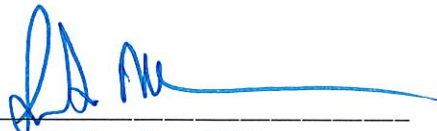
CM. Gonzalez, provided comments thanking the City of Laredo, Webb County, TxDOT, the RMA and the MPO for working together and sharing the same vision. He also stated that he hoped they all could continue working together.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:33 PM.

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

Motion carried unanimously.



Juan S. Mendive, AICP  
LWCAMPO Director



Webb County Judge Tano E. Tijerina  
LWCAMPO Chairperson