Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2016, MEETING

LAREDO, TEXAS
1755

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Nathan R. Bratton, called roll and verified that a quorum did exist.

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable Roque Vela, Jr., City Councilmember, District V
Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI
Honorable Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable Jaime Canales, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 4 (joined the meeting at 12:03 p.m.)
Pete Alvarez, TxDOT
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT

Ex-Officio Members Not Present:

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

Staff (Of Participating LUTS Agencies) Present:

City: Nathan R. Bratton, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Vanessa Guerra, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Angie Quijano, City Planning/LUTS Staff

State: Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Albert Ramirez, TxDOT
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT

Others: Anthony Garza, Dannenbaum Engineering
Richard Ridings, Howard, Needles, Tammen, & Bergendoff (HNTB, Inc.)
Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc.
Ruben Soto, Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)
Mike Graham, TxDOT
Gerry Shweber IBC Bank/I-69 Alliance

III. COMMITTEE AND DIRECTOR'S REPORTS (No action required)

Neither the Chairman nor the Director had any new business to report.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Approval of the minutes for the meetings held on December 21, 2015 and January 19, 2016.

Cm. Galo made a motion to approve the minutes of December 21, 2015 and January 19, 2016.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Receive public testimony and initiate a 20-day public review and comment period for the proposed Limited English Proficiency Plan.

Mr. Bratton stated the purpose of the Limited English Proficiency Plan is to address the responsibilities of the Laredo Metropolitan Planning Organization as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency skills.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **open** a public hearing.

Second: Cm. Balli
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

There was no input from the public.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a 20-day public review and comment period for the proposed Limited English Proficiency Plan.

Second: Cm. Galo
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C. Receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

1. ***Addition* of project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, with an estimated total project cost of 4.482 million dollars. Projected letting date is August of 2016.**

Cm. Vela made a motion to **open** a public hearing for item C-1.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Vela made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for item C-1.

Second: Cm. Galo
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

2. ***Addition* of project CSJ 0922-33-166 intended to provide the development of the schematic, environmental document and preliminary engineering for a 5 lane rural roadway, from 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway to IH 35 West Frontage Road. Estimated cost for said phases of the project is $300,000.**

Cm. Vela made a motion to **open** a public hearing for item C-2.

Second: Cm. Galo
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Vela made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for item C-2.

Second: Cm. Galo
For: 9
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Galo asked at what point can the county let project CSJ-0922-33-166.

Pete Alvarez, TxDOT, stated once the project has been approved, after the 20 day comment period, TxDOT's recommendation would be to let the project.

Cm. Galo asked if the County could let the project first, then select an engineering firm.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, stated the project must be in the TIP first. After a letter of authority is given, and the Advance Funding Agreement (AFA) is executed, the County could then move forward with the initiation of the project.

Cm. Galo asked if the County could advertise immediately for the selection of the firm and not delay the selection till after said process is completed.

Albert Ramirez, TxDOT, stated the AFA must be executed in advance of any reimbursable project related activity.

D. Receive public testimony and initiate a 10 day public review and comment period for the following proposed revision(s) of the 2015-2040 Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

1. Amending Table 12-10, entitled Roadway and Bicycle/Pedestrian Project Summary and Table 12-11, entitled Roadway projects, and Figure 12-1, entitled Federally funded Roadway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, by:

a. *Adding* project CSJ 2150-04-067 intended to provide the design and construction of one additional travel lane (northbound) on FM 1472, from

Killam Industrial Boulevard to 0.3 miles north of Mueller Boulevard, with an estimated total project cost of 4.482 million dollars. Projected letting date is August of 2016.

b. ***Adding*** **of project CSJ 0922-33-166 intended to provide the development of the schematic, environmental document and preliminary engineering for a 5 lane rural roadway, from 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway to IH 35 West Frontage Road. Estimated cost for said phases of the project is $300,000.**

Cm. Galo made a motion to **open** a public hearing.

Second:	Judge Tijerina
For:	9
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Galo made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a 10 day public review and comment period for the following proposed revision(s) of the 2015-2040 Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

Second:	Balli
For:	9
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

Motion carried unanimously

E. Discussion and possible action on TxDOT's Strategic Projects Office findings on Loop 20 funding.

No presentation was given.

Cm. Alvarez stated TxDOT felt uncomfortable coming forward and giving options without knowing how the City or the County wanted to move forward with the project. He also stated that TxDOT is making themselves available to meet with the RMA to discuss other financial opportunities to support the study that has already been authorized with the RMA.

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at approximately 1:31 p.m.

F. Discussion with possible action to receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for a proposed amendment of the Highway MTP/TIP to program Loop 20/U.S. 59 from International Blvd. to Business U.S. 59 for engineering, Right-of-Way acquisition, and construction:

Cm. Vela stated his concerns on how important it is to have shoveled ready projects and how important it is to have projects constructed.

a. Plan formulated by MPO staff and Dannenbaum Engineering

Louie Jones and Anthony Garza, Dannenbaum Engineering, gave a brief presentation on the item.

Anthony Garza, of Danenbaum Engineering stated that his team in collaboration with MPO staff developed a draft project programming and funding plan for various network improvement including: all Loop 20 projects identified in the 2015-2040 MTP, as well as, the more recently identified projects of Hachar and Mines Road. The proposed plan developed revenue estimates for each year thru 2040 for all MPO allocated funds. Said estimates were derived using the funding figures stipulated in the 2016-2025 Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) and extrapolating those numbers to 2040. The projects were then programmed thru 2029 taking into consideration: project readiness, project phasing, and funding availability.

No action was taken on the item.

b. Plan formulated by Regional Mobility Authority

Ruben Soto and Richard Ridings gave a brief presentation on the item. Mr. Soto stated the RMA developed an alternative method of building all five overpasses on Loop 20 while saving the MPO $148,000,000.

Richard Ridings, HNTB, Inc. stated that the cost of inflation is the most significant hindrance to project construction. Every year project construction is delayed, construction costs increase due to inflation. Design/build type project development allows for the swiftest project development and construction, and thereby avoids inflation related project costs.

Mr. Soto stated the RMA does not yet have a completed plan for funding the projects, but stated a Transportation Reinvestment Zone (TRIZ) and/or bonding are being considered.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **approve** Dannenbaum's plan.

Second:	Cm. Balli
For:	3 (Cm. Vela, Cm. Balli, Cm. Canales)
Against:	4 (Cm. Montemayor, Cm. Galo, Mayor Saenz, Cm. San Miguel)
Abstained:	1 (Cm. Alvarez)

Motion failed.

Cm. Galo left the meeting at approximately 1:43 p.m.

Cm. Vela left the meeting at approximately 1:47 p.m.

Cm. Balli left the meeting at approximately 1:49 p.m.

G. Discussion and possible action on railroad issues affecting the City of Laredo including but not limited to, Quiet Zones, Secure Corridors and traffic congestion.

Mayor Saenz stated said item stems from a November 2015 meeting coordinated thru Congressman Cuellar's office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss rail blockage concerns in the inner city. Representatives from Union Pacific, Kansas City Southern and Customs Border Protection were in attendance. Mayor Saenz stated that two objectives were discussed. A short term plan was suggested to improve freight mobility on the bridge, and a long term plan for enhancing rail mobility. The short term strategy may include a pre-clearance system to allow trains to move through the downtown area without stopping. High tech scanning devices would be required to facilitate improvement. The Mayor stated the government could purchase said devices while the railroad companies would be responsible for their maintenance. A long term plan was also suggested by Kansas City Southern whereby a bridge could be constructed in south Laredo. The Mayor stated Congressman Cuellar asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to perform a study on said railroad issues, whose results may be brought to the Policy Committee in May.

No action was taken on the item.

H. Discussion with possible action on Hachar Road.

Neither discussion nor action was taken on the item.

I. Discussion with possible action on Mines Road.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, stated that the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) had completed the short and mid-range analysis, and had begun developing their final recommendation for the Mines Road Study. TxDOT received a draft of the long range term study and will follow up at the next meeting. He also stated the Traffic Signal Synchronization Project funded thru the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) funds had not been initiated yet, as TxDOT and the City are still working on developing the Advance Funding Agreement (AFA).

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

A. Presentation by TxDOT, Laredo District, on the funding (current and future projected) available to TxDOT, Laredo District and the Laredo MPO and the application of said funding to projects in the Laredo District.

Cm. Canales made a motion to **table** the item to the next meeting.

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Status on Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on railroad issues (U.S. Border Communities Ongoing DOT Efforts Could Help Address Impacts of International Freight Rail).

Cm. Canales made a motion to **table** the item to the next meeting.

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C. Status report on the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).

The report was given earlier in the meeting, while discussing agenda item #F-b.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Cm. Canales made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:54 p.m.

Second: Cm. San Miguel
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Prepared by: _____
Angie Quijano
MPO Staff

Reviewed by: _____
Vanessa Guerra,
MPO Coordinator

Reviewed by: _____
Nathan R. Bratton,
MPO Director

_____
Melisa Montemayor,
District Administrator

_____
Pete Saenz,
Mayor and LUTS Chairperson