Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 MEETING

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order at 12:06 P.M.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Roque Vela, Jr., City Councilmember, District V (joined meeting at 12:08 p.m.)
Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable Jaime Canales, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 4 (joined meeting at 12:07 p.m.)
Pete Alvarez, TxDOT
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT

Regular members not present:

Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI

Cm. Galo made a motion to **excuse** members not present.

Second:	Judge Tijerina
For:	6
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

Motion carried unanimously

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
Roberto Murillo, Traffic Safety Department
Robert Peña, Traffic Safety Department

State: Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Raymond Sanchez, TxDOT

Others: Anthony Garza, Dannenbaum Engineering
Enrique Valdez, LNV, Inc.

Cm. Canales joined the meeting at this point during the proceedings (12:07 p.m.)

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

Mr. Bratton informed the Policy Board that ninety percent of the schematic of the Loop 20 expansion east of International to 59 had been submitted to TxDOT by Dannenbaum Engineering. He stated the City/MPO is requesting a copy of the ninety percent schematic with the understanding that it is subject to change. He stated the County is requesting a formal request for said copies, be submitted by the City/MPO.

Cm. Vela joined the meeting at this point during the proceedings. (12:08 p.m.)

Cm. Galo made a motion to **authorize** the MPO Director to request said copies from the County.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

1. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on August 17, 2015.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **approve** the minutes of August 17, 2015

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

2. Receive public testimony and approve Resolution No. MPO 2015-09 adopting the proposed revision to the MPO By-Laws.

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

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Bratton presented the changes to the Policy Board. He stated the proposed revisions were as followed:

State of Texas: ~~The person designated as the Director of the Laredo District by the Executive Director of the Texas Department of Transportation i.e. the District Engineer or the District Administrator~~
~~TxDOT Laredo District Director of Transportation Planning and Development~~

TxDOT District Engineer
TxDOT District Administrator

Cm. Galo made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **approve** Resolution No. MPO 2015-09, adopting the proposed revision of the MPO By-Laws.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Vela made a motion to **combine** items #3 and 4 together.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Vela made a motion to **open** a public hearing for items #3 and 4.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8

Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

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

   A. ***Addition* of a project intended to provide the preliminary engineering for the construction of a 5 lane rural roadway, from FM 1472 to 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway, estimated cost of schematic and environmental document is $1,016,063; and,**

   B. ***Addition* of a project intended to provide for the construction of a 5 lane rural roadway from FM 1472 to 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway, estimated cost of construction is $20,890,841.**

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

   A. ***Adding* a funded project intended to provide for the preliminary engineering of a 5 lane rural roadway, from FM 1472 to 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway, with an estimated cost for schematic and environmental document of $1,016,063; and,**

   B. ***Adding* a funded project intended to provide for the construction of a 5 lane rural roadway, from FM 1472 to 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway, with an estimated cost of construction of $20,890,841; and,**

   C. ***Adding* a project intended to provide the construction of 5 lane rural roadway, from 0.1 miles east of Beltway Parkway to IH-35 with an estimated total project cost of $24,544,444; with an estimated 2025 year of expenditure cost of $28,193,851.**

   D. ***Revising* illustrative (unfunded) project No. 7 described as Green Ranch Parkway, intended to provide for the engineering and construction of a 2 lane roadway, from FM 1472 to IH35, with an estimated total project cost of $34,100,000 such that the project will now provide for the engineering and construction of a 10 lane freeway (mainlanes and ramps), from FM 1472 to IH-35, with an estimated 2036 year of expenditure cost of $90,673,786.**

Cm. Vela requested a status report on the Right of Way acquisition activities.

Andy Garza, Dannenbaum Engineering, stated the alignment is very close to being finalized. He stated that both the Reuthanger and Hachar property owners have committed to donating

100 % of that section of the property. He stated the Environmental document preparation has commenced and may be ready in approximately 12-14 months.

Cm. Canales stated the County wants the City to take the lead on the project.

The Committee discussed the possibility of having the County take the lead on the Environmental of the Reuthanger portion of the Hachar Road project.

Mr. Bratton stated if the County took the lead on the Environmental document for the Reuthanger portion of the Hachar project. The County would eventually have to execute an inter-local agreement with the City. Once that inter-local agreement was in place, then the project would be added to the TIP.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, stated that if an entity does not follow TxDOT's procurement process on one phase of the project, then only that phase is not eligible for federal or state funding. However, all other phases would be eligible, if procurement for those phases did follow TxDOT's procurement procedures.

Mr. Bratton stated the decision whether or not to go through a Request for Qualification (RFQ) or to go directly to the current Engineer was the decision of the City Council. He stated if the City does not go through the RFQ process, the County may not ask for reimbursement for those project activities.

Cm. Vela made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a 10-day comment period for both items #3 and 4.

Second: Cm. Balli
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Galo made a motion to **move up** item #6.

Second: Cm. Vela
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Canales left the meeting chambers at 1:05 p.m.

6. Discussion with possible action on Hachar Road.

Cm. Galo made a motion to **re-allocate** no more than $300,000 of Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) funds to the Reuthanger portion of Hachar Road for schematic and environmental.

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

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Canales returned to the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

5. Receive public testimony and initiate a 20-day public review and comment period for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Selection Procedures.

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

Second: Cm. Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Cm. Galo made a motion to **close** the public hearing and **initiate** a 20-day comment period for the TAP Project Selection Procedures.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

7. Discussion with possible action on Mines Road.

A. Report from TxDOT on total project cost estimates for the construction of a 3rd lane on Mines Road, and possible funding sources.

Albert Ramirez, TxDOT, stated that TxDOT was still waiting for Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to finish their study and would hopefully have their final mid-term and long term recommendations very soon

Robert Murillo, Traffic Safety Department, stated the Traffic Department was waiting for the mid-term analysis of the Mines Road Study to be done in order to start the synchronization of the signal lights project.

Mayor Saenz requested a status report from the Traffic Safety Department at the next Policy Board meeting on the $600,000 signal improvement project.

V. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT(S) (No action required)

1. Presentation by Brian Van De Walle of Kimley-Horn & Associates on the Kansas City Southern Railroad Quiet Zone Study.

Brian Van De Walle of Kimley-Horn & Associates gave a brief presentation on the Kansas City Southern Railroad Quiet Zone Study. He stated a quiet zone is a section of a rail line at least one-half mile in length that contains one or more consecutive public highway rail grade crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded when trains are approaching the crossings.

Laredo has 32 at grade crossings with 16 trains' crossings per day; 8 day drains and 8 night trains. Mr. Van De Walle stated under Federal Law, train operators must sound train horns in advance of all public grade crossings and must be done in a pattern.

The minimum requirements for quiet zones are to have gates, flashing lights, railroad cabin with white light on all public crossings. Eight out of thirty-two existing crossings in Laredo do not have gates. Gate installation costs are approximately $285,000 per crossing.

Mr. Van De Walle presented the Policy Board with two alternatives which included crossing closures and installation of raised medians. The alternatives were also studied and based on a previous public meeting that was held on May 28, 2015 at Height Elementary School.

No action was taken on the item.

2. Discussion and status report on the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).

Ruben Soto, RMA, stated the website for the RMA was now in service and the address is webbrma.com. He also stated the RFQ for a bank depository service has been issued. He stated the RMA is also in the process of evaluating the financial advisor agreement.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Cm. Galo made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 1:44 p.m.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Prepared by: _____ Reviewed by: _____
Angie Quijano,
MPO Staff

Vanessa Guerra,
MPO Coordinator

Reviewed by: _____

Nathan R. Bratton,
MPO Director

_____

Melisa Montemayor,
District Administrator

_____

Pete Saenz,
Mayor and LUTS Chairperson