Laredo Urban Transportation Study

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

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 20 , 2017 MEETING

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII (joined the meeting at 1:50 p.m.)
Honorable Roberto Balli, City Councilmember, District VIII
Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT District Administrator

Regular members not present:

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Honorable Charlie San Miguel, City Councilmember, District VI
David M. Salazar, Jr., District Engineer

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
	Robert Murillo, City Traffic Safety Department
	Eduardo Bernal, Transit, El Metro
	Claudia San Miguel, Transit, El Metro
	Garbriel Martinez, City Engineering
	Horacio De Leon, City Manager
State:	Sara Garza, TxDOT
	Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
	Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT
	Ana Duncan, TxDOT
	Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT
	Mike Graham, TxDOT
	Juan Ramirez, TxDOT

County:	Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering
Others:	Ruben Soto, Regional Mobility Authority, (RMA) Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. Brad Peel, HNTB, Inc. Enrique Valdez, LNV Julia Wallace, Laredo Morning Times Edward Ochoa, Civil Engineering Consultants Jeff Puig, Civil Engineering Consultants Luis De la Garza

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

III. CITIZEN COMMENT

Speakers are required to fill out witness cards, which must be submitted to MPO Staff no later than 15 minutes after the start 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 comment in the interest of order or time. Speakers may not transfer their minutes to any other speaker. Comments should be relevant to City business and delivered in a professional manner. No derogatory remarks shall be permitted.

Luis De La Garza stated that as a former transportation owner, he believed the Committee should consider construction of a 3rd lane on IH 35.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on October 16, 2017.

C.M. Balli made a motion to approve the **minutes** of October 16, 2017.

Second:	Judge Tijerina
For:	5
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

Motion carried unanimously

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **move up** item IV-D.

Second: C.M. Galo
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. Motion on City's request for $10 million in CBI funding for the World Trade Bridge FASTLANE project as follows (and any matters incident thereto):

– Move from CSJ 0086-14-058 PS&E of Airport and Jacaman *($4,641,030 CBI funds previously approved MPO action*	$4,641,030.00
– Move from CSJ 0086-14-920 ROW on Loop 20 from US 59 to Airport Overpass *($4,806,663 CBI funds previously approved MPO action 10/16/16)*	$2,271,609.00
– Move remaining surplus CBI funds from Loop 20/IH 35 main lanes CSJ 0086-14-065 which let in July 2017	$3,087,361.75
Total CBI Funds to	**$10,000,000.75**

– Supplement US 59 Loop PS&E development with TxDOT Strategy 111 funds	$4,641,030.00
– Supplement US 59 Loop ROW from US 59 to Airport with TxDOT ROW funds	$2,271,609.00
– Propose use of TxDOT Strategy 111 funds for additional US 59 Loop PS&E development to offset surplus	$3,087,361.75
Total:	**$10,000,000.75**

– Additional CBI funds which remain in CSJ 0086-14-920	$2,535,054.00
Original	**$12,535,054.75**

C.M. Altgelt joined the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Horacio De Leon, City Manager, spoke in favor of the item. He stated the funding relocation request was intended to fund the construction of the World Trade Bridge FASTLANE project.

Alberto Ramirez, TxDOT, stated TxDOT would assume full responsibility of the engineering and design of the Loop 20 projects formerly being developed by the County.

TxDOT would work through their procurement office and ultimately use a consultant that was already under contract with TxDOT.

Judge Tijerina expressed his disappointment with the lack of communication during the development of the City's fund reallocation proposal. He further stressed the importance of continued cooperation and communication among all MPO partners.

In response to Judge Tijerina's query, Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT assured the committee that the 10 million dollars in Strategy 111 funds were guaranteed for use on the Loop 20 projects.

Mr. De Leon stated the City would include the County at any future brainstorming meetings.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, reminded the Committee that the item was discussed at the Technical Committee meeting 6 days in advance of the Policy meeting.

C.M. Balli made a motion to **approve** the reallocation of $10 million in CBI funding per the proposal as presented for the World Trade Bridge FASTLANE project.

Second: C.M. Altgelt
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

B. Receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) to the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

1. ***Removal*** of project CSJ 0086-14-082 intended to provide for the development of plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) for the Jacaman and Airport overpasses. Proposed work has an estimated cost of 4.6 million dollars. ***Rationale***: All 4.6 million in project funds are being transferred to (grouped) project identified as CSJ 0086-14-058 intended to provide for the development of PS&E, schematic, environmental, and right of way (ROW) surveying/mapping on Loop 20, from International Boulevard to Saunders Avenue.

C.M. Galo made a motion to **open** a public hearing and **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period.

Second: C.M. Bali
For: 5

Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C.M. Altgelt made a motion to **move up** item #V-A.

Second: C.M. Bali
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

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

A. Riverbank Road:

1. **Presentation by Joe Medina on the Riverbank Road project.**
2. **Report by TxDOT on possible funding sources available to the Riverbank Road project.**

Joe Medina gave a brief presentation on the item. The proposed 3.7 mile, 2 lane road built to current city standards is estimated to cost 9.3 million dollars. The road would provide an alternate route to Mines Road Traffic.

C.M. Altgelt inquired if any TxDOT dollars would be available for this project as the proposed road would alleviate on-system congestion.

Ms. Montemayor stated that funding availability would be dependent on the road's classification and whether the road would be on or off system.

The mayor requested that Mr. Medina bring back a firm commitment for the required property owner to donate the necessary land. Said commitment would allow the committee to prioritize the project.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, suggested further discussion should be had regarding the proposed development of the project.

C.M. Altgelt requested the item be placed on the next agenda to report on the status of discussions with the Muller family.

C. Motion supporting Webb County's request to re-allocate all surplus funds, in the approximate amount of $3,087,361.75 from CSJ0086-14-065 (Main lanes over I35), and approving TxDOT's re-allocation of said surplus funds to CSJ 0086-14-058, a grouped project, for Schematic, PS&E, Environmental, and right-of-way mapping and surveying and which generally includes, as its project limits, From: International To: US 59 Business (Saunders Ave.).

E. Discussion with possible action on TxDOT's proposed development of a Right of Way (ROW), conceptual schematic and constraints analysis for the mid to long range improvements recommended by the TTI study for Mines Road.

C.M. Galo made a motion to **table** items IV-C and IV-E.

Motion failed due to lack of second.

Ms. Montemayor, stated that no action was necessary on item IV-C and IV-E.

No action was taken.

F. Discussion with possible action on the Regional Mobility Authority's funding and its proposed system infrastructure project approach alternatives.

Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB, Inc. stated that the RMA workshop held on October 26, 2017 was a success. He stressed the RMA's commitment to proceed according to the Policy Committee's wishes.

C.M. Altgelt expressed his interest in the RMA's development of mass transit planning and innovation.

The Mayor echoed C.M. Altgelt's comments, but also stressed the importance of the mobility in North West Laredo.

C.M. Balli made a motion to **move up** item #V-B.

Second:		C.M. Galo
For:	5	
Against:	0	
Abstained:	0	

Motion carried unanimously

B. RMA:

1. **Presentation on the proposed scope of services for the Mines Road Regional Study.**
2. **Presentation by the RMA on its mass transit recommendations.**
3. **Status of the RMA.**

Brad Peel, HNTB, Inc. stated the RMA had the authority to design, own, acquire, finance, build, operate, and maintain transit systems. He stated locally, El Metro, a discussion of the City provided fixed route bus and paratransit services. He stated the RMA could provide services which were complimentary to the mission of El Metro in order to promote and provide high quality, cost-effective public transportation services that address the needs and demands of the citizens of Laredo.

He stated the RMA could provide the following services: planning, or working with the City of Laredo, Webb County, and the MPO, to develop a long-range transit, funding, implementation, wherein the RMA oversee implementation of large infrastructure projects, regional coordination. Finally, the RMA could serve solely or jointly with El Metro, as the implementation vehicle to plan, design, build, and operate identified high capacity transit projects such as express bus routes, bus rapid transit, or rail-based transit.

Brad Peel, HNTB, Inc. stated the proposed idea was to develop a project programming plan. He stated the services that would be needed included: traffic demand modeling and analysis, public involvement, environmental and development analysis, development of transportation solutions, and an implementation plan. The estimated cost for the development of said plan would be $636,000 and take approximately 7 months.

Ruben Soto, RMA reported that the RMA was initiating a Transportation Reinvestment Zone (TRZ) feasibility study from Hwy 59 to Hwy 83, as approved by City Council.

Mayor requested for the RMA to report back on the financing on the Vallecillo Road Project.

(None of the remaining items were discussed, due to time constraints, and would be placed on the next Policy Committee agenda.)

G. Discussion with possible action on the letting date for Calton Railroad Grade Separation project (0922-33-093) which is proposed to move from November 2017 (FY 2018) to August (FY 2018).

H. Discussion with possible action on Hachar Road.

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

C. Flecha/Las Cruces Realignment Project:

1. **Report by the City of Laredo Real Estate Division on the status of Flecha/Las Cruces Realignment project's Right of Way (ROW) acquisition.**
2. **Report by CEC representative on the status of the Flecha/Las Cruces Realignment project's: plans and specification updates, Army Corp of Engineers permitting and request for additional funding.**

D. Presentation by TxDOT on the proposed Outer Loop alignment.

E. Report by MPO Director on the relative competiveness of the City of Laredo's Infra Grant application.

F. Report by the TxDOT on the meeting had by the City and TxDOT to discuss the "wish list"/recommendations resulting from the Texas Transportation Institute's

(TTI) Mines Road study, pertaining to proposed City of Laredo facility improvements intended to improve the function of Mines Road.

G. Letting date for the Zacate Creek Hike & Bike Trail (CSJ 0922-33-170) has been moved from November 2017 (FY 2018) to January 2018 (FY 2018).

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Nathan R. Bratton,
MPO Director

Pete Saenz, Mayor and
LUTS Chairperson