



# LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

## AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### POLICY COMMITTEE

#### MEETING MINUTES

October 16, 2024

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, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM.

#### II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Juan Mendive, MPO Director, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

#### Regular members present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge and LWCAMPO Chairperson  
Honorable Ruben Gutierrez Jr., Mayor Pro-Tempore, District V  
Honorable Melissa R. Cigarroa, City Councilmember, District III  
Mr. Epigmenio "Epi" Gonzalez, P.E., TxDOT District Engineer  
Mr. Jed A. Brown, Member-At-Large

#### Regular members not present:

Honorable Dr. Victor D. Treviño, Mayor and LWCAMPO Vice-Chairperson  
Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII  
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1  
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3

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

Second: Mr. Brown  
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

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**LWCAMPO Staff present:**

Juan S. Mendive, LWCAMPO Director  
Julio A. Niño, LWCAMPO Planner III  
Adriana A. Vigil, LWCAMPO Administrative Assistant

**Others:**

Kirk D. Fauver, FHWA Texas  
Sara Garza, TxDOT  
Ana Duncan, TxDOT  
RJ Garza, El Metro Transit  
Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering  
Anthony Garza, Webb County Consultant  
Melissa Montemayor, WC-CL RMA/LJA Engineering  
Blasita J. Lopez, WC-CL RMA/LJA Engineering

**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.

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

**A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on July 17, 2024.**

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to **approve** the minutes of July 17, 2024.

Second: CM. Cigarroa  
For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Presentation on the 2024 Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) representative, Kirk D. Fauver, with possible action.**

Kirk D. Fauver, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), thanked everyone for their participation back in June on the TMA Certification Review of the MPO's transportation planning process. He stated the MPO was found in excellent status, and doing a great job developing performance measures and developing plans and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP). He stated that he wanted to commend the MPO, they had about 19 commendations in their final report. He continued by stating that there was an extensive review of the Metropolitan Planning process and it was found in good order. Mr. Fauver, stated that there were about 20 recommendations for improvement but no corrective actions were found in the review.

Mr. Mendive, stated that there was a draft of the commendations and recommendations made in the Policy packet, and that the MPO had already started working on some of the recommendations.

Mr. Fauver, stated one of the things found was the website wasn't really up to par, since they had a hard time getting into the website as an external user, he asked the MPO staff to work with the City of Laredo's Information Service and Telecommunications (IST) Department to help resolve that issue.

Judge Tijerina, asked if the report had been emailed and shared to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Fauver, stated that the final report was in draft stage and getting final comments from the Director of Planning and Programming Development for FHWA and FTA. He stated that final comments will be integrated into the report, but nothing that would change the outcome of the recommendations and commendations. Mr. Fauver, stated that the final product might be ready to share the following week. Mr. Fauver, stated that the MPO was performing well as there were many outstanding commendations for the MPO in the final certification report. He stated, that they were looking forward to continuing the partnership with the Laredo Webb County area MPO. He also stated that public awareness of Transportation needs and more public engagement was necessary, to make sure those needs were understood by the citizens. He continued by stating that they were looking forward to putting more effort in that area, including the areas that are disadvantage and low income as they move forward with the planning process. He reiterated that there were no corrective actions. He stated that a corrective action would be findings not meeting or conforming with the regulations of the laws under Title 23, and the corrective action process would require a response within six months to a year to fix it. He also stated that the Congestion Management Plan (CMP) and all the planning documents were found in good order. He finally stated that everyone was doing a great job overall.

CM. Cigarroa, mentioned that she was glad Mr. Fauver was explaining the difference between commendations, recommendations, and corrective actions

CM. Cigarroa, stated that it was great to hear that there were no corrective actions. She stated that it was thanks to the leadership of Mr. Mendive and she wanted to congratulate him on that.

Mr. Fauver, stated that Mr. Mendive's leadership had been outstanding in their site. He stated that he had been doing an outstanding job.

CM. Cigarroa, stated that one of the commendations was the fact the LWCAMPO had undertaken the Vision Zero plan, which really speaks about the partnership with the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) in leading that safety study. CM. Cigarroa, thanked the RMA as well for participating and being a key component of that. She also stated that Vision Zero was not something that all communities were undertaking.

Mr. Fauver, stated that some of the bigger cities have adopted Vision Zero plans and policies but not the smaller Transportation Management Association (TMA) or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) have so it was good to know that the LWCAMPO has. He also stated that there were presentations from their safety engineer on that topic and the national policies and programs that were being implemented to take Vision Zero to the next level. He mentioned that if the Committee liked to invite the FHWA back they would be willing to give that presentation to explain it better.

CM. Cigarroa, stated it would be good for the Policy Committee to hear those presentations. She asked Judge Tijerina, if there would be a time when he thought it would be convenient to have that presentation.

Mr. Fauver, stated that they could be added to the agenda on a future meeting to give that presentation.

Judge Tijerina, thanked Mr. Fauver for the presentation and he also thanked Mr. Mendive and everyone on the MPO for doing a great job.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the MPO had a good team and a good leadership with the Committee as well. He also stated there would be a report summary of the interviews with the elected officials as well.

Mr. Fauver, stated there would be a one-page summary of all the conversations with the elected officials. Mr. Fauver, thanked the Committee for the time.

**C. Discussion with possible action to provide a Letter in Support of the City of Laredo Colombia Solidarity International Bridge Expansion Project.**

Mr. Mendive, stated that the Colombia Solidarity International Bridge Expansion was indeed a City of Laredo project, but there was a request for a Letter of Support received

by a consultant that was working on the project. Mr. Mendive, stated that the Letter of Support would be from the MPO for their project for the Presidential Permit application.

Mr. Mendive mentioned there was a letter in the packet about the roll as an MPO. He stated, that the Colombia Bridge was inside the MPO boundary, if in the future there was any federal money attached to the Colombia Bridge, the MPO would need to program it into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Judge Tijerina, asked what the Bridge Expansion Project consists of. He further asked what exactly was the MPO in support of.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the consultants were present and they could give more information on the Expansion project.

Ms. Melissa Montemayor, LJA Engineering, stated the proposed expansion would be two new structures that will be parallel to existing structures. She further stated that the proposal was to have four lanes on the two new structures, so that there will be an additional eight lanes total being added at Colombia Solidarity International Bridge. Ms. Montemayor, continued by stating that this would be to be able to take on the additional traffic that was being proposed over the next 20, 30, 40 years at Colombia Solidarity Bridge. She also stated that the application was being submitted before the Thanksgiving Holidays, and the Bridge follows under the National Defense Authorization Act, so it would be within that window of 120 days that the State Department and the White House would have to review and approve a permit.

Judge Tijerina, asked if the annexation would still part of the City of Laredo or would it be part of Webb County.

Ms. Montemayor, stated that the expansion would be all within the City of Laredo annexed portion, she further stated that the Webb County had passed a Resolution to sign the application because the property that was annexed was very close to the original area where the original Colombia Solidarity Bridge permit was issued.

Judge Tijerina, stated that the City of Laredo noticed the Webb County was listed in the original permit and asked the Webb County to sign a waiver stating that the City of Laredo could take over that area.

Ms. Montemayor, stated that after the original permit was issued the property was annexed.

Judge Tijerina, stated that the 4/5 Bridge will grow 5% to 7% a year with the new trucks. He also stated that he agrees with the expansion.

Mr. Brown, stated that the City of Laredo approached the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) for a similar Letter of Support as well. He further stated that the Consultants are just trying to submit the most complete application. Mr. Brown stated that since the RMA was a transportation organization, any transportation project like that would be supported by them. He further stated that the community needed all similar projects.

Judge Tijerina, made a motion to provide a Letter in Support of the City of Laredo Colombia Solidarity International Bridge Expansion Project.

Second: CM. Gutierrez  
For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

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

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

Mr. Jed Brown, LJA Engineering, presented the following report part of the packet: Mr. Brown, stated that they had split out the Vallecillo status report and the Safe Streets status report to give a more detailed report to the Policy Committee members.

**WC-CL RMA October 2024 Status Report to LWCAMPO**

1. **Vallecillo Overpass** – The WC-CL RMA will not be managing the development of the Overpass design. TxDOT Laredo District has recently informed us that they will be developing the design of this project. The WC-CL RMA stands ready to provide information from the Vallecillo Road Project to TxDOT so that the two projects' connections are well coordinated. The WC-CL RMA received the \*.dgn files and traffic data from TxDOT to incorporate into the Vallecillo Road traffic studies, and the WC-CL RMA has prepared a construction estimate for the proposed Overpass. \$16 million has been provided by the MPO via Category 2 funds towards the cost of the overpass. The overpass has an estimated construction cost of \$47,350,390, assuming the project lets in 2027. The goal is to have the Overpass project included in the UTP adopted in August 2025.
2. **Springfield Phase 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 Phase IV of the project from Hospitality Drive to Bob Bullock Loop. The sponsorship and implementation are subject to the negotiation of an Inter Local Agreement (ILA) between the City and the RMA. The RMA submitted a draft ILA to the City on 4/9/2024. The RMA originally intended to utilize the Category 12 Strategic Partnership dollars for the funding of the project. The RMA has decided to proceed for the construction of this project utilizing the RMA Vehicle Registration Fees. The ILA between the City and the RMA was executed on 9/9/2024.
3. **Concord Hills (Wormser Road/ Lomas Del Sur to Los Presidentes)** – The RMA has committed \$1 million to the development 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 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 and the property owners for the donation of the ROW and the finalization of the construction cost estimate for the project. The RMA recommitted its support in funding on the project February 14, 2024, at the February Board Meeting.

4. **North Laredo and Cuatro Vientos Transportation Reinvestment Zones (TRZ) - The RMA is awaiting execution of the ILA with the City to commence the North Laredo TRZ Study.** The City notified the WC-CL RMA on 2/13/24 that the City will move forward with drafting and distributing the ILA to the WC-CL RMA and commence the project. Regarding the Cuatro Vientos TRZ, the City would like to commence the process of implementing the TRZ with support from the WC-CL RMA. The RMA and the City will commence negotiation of the ILA to codify the agency roles for the implementation.
5. **FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes** – The RMA conducted a TDLR inspection of the project. The final change order was completed with concurrence from the RMA to TxDOT on 7/24/2024. Project is 100% complete.
6. **The Vallecillo Road Project** – (See supplemental memorandum)
7. **Vision Zero Webb Laredo Safety Action Plan (Safe Streets for All)** - (See supplemental memorandum)
8. **Other Items** - The next RMA Board meeting in late October or early November.

Mr. Brown, gave the update on the Safe Streets for All which is Vision Zero, he stated that project was moving along and that it should be finalized by the end of the year. He also stated that there was still money left in the budget to move towards implementation. Mr. Brown continued by stating that a group of different representatives from the community will work together to identify the 10 areas of biggest need. They will try and choose different parts of the city that could actually use improvements that will cause less wrecks and help save lives. He also stated that it will go back to the MPO for presentation probably around January 2025.

Mr. Brown, also gave an update on the Vallecillo Overpass, he stated that there was a stakeholders meeting in September in the Mines Rd. area that was very well attended. He stated that the overpass was not specifically an RMA project, but the RMA was working on it because it needed to happen in conjunction with the Vallecillo Rd. project. Mr. Brown also stated that in TxDOT's review of the design was found that additional right-of-way might be needed for the slope of the overpass back to the West into the Killam's property. The boundaries needed to be redefined. He

continued by stating that LJA and the other team of consultants were already looking into that, and will work with TxDOT on it. Mr. Brown also stated that there might be a change in the design of the overpass that had been discussed in that meeting. He stated that TxDOT had a different idea of a better overpass design to carry additional traffic that's also tied what is planned by the Killam's on the East side of IH 35. He stated that if additional right-of-way needed on the West side of Vallecillo they would need to know soon so that it can be planned with the needed environmental clearances, the surveying process and everything else that it pertains. He stated that Vallecillo was moving along well and they were trying to stay on schedule but any changes to the design of the overpass could impact the process on the West side. Mr. Brown also stated that they would really like to see the project funded in next year's Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

Mr. Epi Gonzalez, stated that TxDOT had a good idea of what was being proposed on the West side, and that they only to make sure they were building a bridge that won't become obsolete in 10 years. He also stated that the overpass could be built in phases just making sure that whatever was build would be able to be expanded and have the space to build the additional lanes in the future.

**B. Update and presentation on the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).**

Mr. Gonzalez, asked if an item could be added to next month's agenda for a status update on the Hachar-Ruthinger Rd. project.

Judge Tijerina, stated that it would be talked about in the Communications item in this meeting.

Mr. Mendive, stated that they had mentioned adding an item for TxDOT updates more frequently to the agenda.

Mr. Mendive, gave an update Presentation on the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He stated that he had been providing updates in his Director's Comments. He continued by giving a background of the MTP, he stated what the MPO functions were, the LWCAMPO which is the MPO for the urbanized area comprised of the City of Laredo, City of Rio Bravo and portions of the Webb County. He stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan was developed for a planning horizon of 25 years, that was updated every 5 years with the purpose to establish the long-term transportation policy agenda of the region. Mr. Mendive, shared the MTP Goals and Objectives, which consist of Safety, Asset Preservation, Economic Vitality and Competitiveness, System Reliability, Innovation and Technology, Connectivity, Equity, Environmental Sustainability, Climate Resilience, and Sustainable Financing. He continued by sharing the next steps of the MTP, which consisted of finalizing the MTP



project list, completing the draft MTP document, presenting the draft MTP to the Policy Committee, releasing the draft MTP for 45-day public comment period, holding a Public Meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup>, and adopting the final MTP.

## **VI. DIRECTOR's COMMENTS**

Juan Mendive, MPO Director presented the following report part of the packet:

### **Director's Report October 16, 2024**

#### **1. Microtransit Feasibility Study Update:**

- The MPO is working with El Metro on a Microtransit Feasibility Study. The study is authorized in the FY24 and FY25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and is being funded with the MPO's Transportation Planning Funds.
- A kick-off meeting with the consultants along with MPO and El Metro staff was held on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. We continue to meet every other week to discuss the project's progress. The study is scheduled to last approximately 9 months.

#### **2. Potential State Designations for the 2024 PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS):**

- MPO staff is closely monitoring the proposed designation of Webb County as a non-attainment area for PM2.5.
- Non-attainment status will result in additional federal metropolitan transportation planning process requirements to help mitigate air quality. This includes additional analysis and requirements when programming/using federal funds for transportation projects within the MPO boundary.
- Our partners at TxDOT and FHWA are aware of this potential designation, especially considering many other counties in Texas are in a similar situation. From my discussions with these partners at meetings, it is understood that guidance will be provided to any of the MPOs that will be impacted by the non-attainment designations.

#### **3. Recent Conferences/Travel Attended by MPO Staff:**

- I attended the I-27 Advisory Committee meeting in Del Rio, Texas on September 19, 2024. I provided a brief presentation/update on the Laredo Webb County Area MPO's ongoing activities.

- Two MPO planners are attending the American Planning Association (APA) Texas Chapter Conference in Allen, Texas from October 16<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4. Texas Transportation Commission Meetings:

- October 31, 2024
- November 14, 2024
- December 17, 2024

Upcoming Texas Transportation Commission meetings and agendas can be found on the following link: <https://www.txdot.gov/about/leadership/texas-transportation-commission/meeting-dates-agendas.html>

#### 5. Upcoming regularly scheduled MPO meetings:

- Active Transportation Committee – October 30, 2024
- Technical Committee – November 12, 2024
- Policy Committee – November 20, 2024

CM. Cigarroa, asked Mr. Mendive if he was planning to attend any of the upcoming Texas Transportation Commission meetings and if there were any opportunity to comment.

Mr. Mendive, answered that there were not any items that they could go and speak on, but they would be open to it. He stated that there is usually no MPO Policy meeting in December, so they could be open to travel to one of the Texas Transportation Commission meetings. He further stated that once they had the UTP item on the agenda, the meeting will be attended.

CM. Cigarroa, stated that the time they attended on of the Texas Transportation Commission meetings the idea was to mention Vallecillo, but it didn't quite work that way, since the focus was on the UTP. She also stated that her thoughts were that the Commissioners were receptive and understanding of the current conditions in Laredo and the challenging that we were facing with the growth. She further stated that everything ties in very well with the needs for Vallecillo and other similar projects. She continued by stating that she would like to attended to continue to remind them what is going on in Laredo and our particular needs. CM. Cigarroa, stated that she would be willing to attend any of the meetings with Mr. Mendive.

Mr. Mendive, stated that it would just depended on what else is going on at the moment of the meetings. He stated that the next few weeks and month would be pretty busy with

the MTP being approved and the Public meetings. He continued by stating that the meeting would be on December 17<sup>th</sup> usually starting at 10:30 am.

Mr. Brown, stated that he would appreciate they mentioned Vallecillo in specifically the overpass and to know what to ask for. He also stated that the August UTP that will be adopted next August of 2025, there were some category 12 funds that need to be programed and asked for by January to make sure they make it into the UTP. He continued by stating that they need to get the message out there and that he actually speaks to the Commissioners any time they come into town.

CM. Cigarroa, stated that in the Border Connectivity seminar there were a lot of presentations about projects and a lot of focus was on the needs to increase trade and make it more efficient.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that the UTP for Laredo was at \$200-\$300 million a few years ago, and now it was at \$2.1 billion.

Judge Tijerina, stated that in order to the City of Laredo and the Webb County to come evenly with the infrastructure were \$10 billion that were lacking.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

Judge Tijerina, asked Mr. Gonzalez on the status of the Hachar-Reuthinger Rd. Project.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that construction had already started. He stated that they had been running into some challenges with some utilities, that they haven't impacted the contractor but they were getting to that point, and it is causing them to fall behind schedule. He also stated that conversation they have had with the contractor is that their goal is to finish 1 year in advance. He continued by stating that there was a construction management plan that they had worked on before letting, that protects the city from possible delays or inefficiency claims. He stated that there were also dates set for when the utilities were support to be cleared and now they are getting to that point where they have not been clear and the contractors could claim inefficiency or delays. Mr. Gonzalez, stated that Ramon Chavez COL Engineer and his staff could give more information on that.

Judge Tijerina, stated that the item would be added to next month's meeting agenda.

CM. Cigarroa, asked if there was something in particular that they City of Laredo could do to help push forward through the utilities issue.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that they had been having bi-weekly meetings and there had been some progress but the only thing needed would be more effort in reviewing the submittals of the designs for the utilities



CM. Cigarroa, asked who was responsible for the AEP transmissions lines plans.

Mr. Gonzalez, replied that as per the agreement the City of Laredo was responsible for the right-of-way acquisition and the utility adjustments.

Judge Tijerina, congratulated Webb County for the 4/5 Bridge. He stated that it was not just for Webb County it was also for the City of Laredo and the region. He also stated that they had been in negotiations and finalizing their contract with South West Bridge and IKA which were partners. He continued by stating that once they have that finalized would be presented to the City of Laredo.

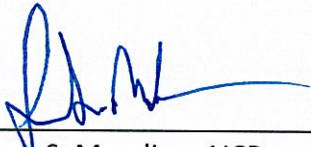
Mr. Brown, congratulated Judge Tijerina on the 4/5 Bridge.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Judge Tijerina, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 PM.

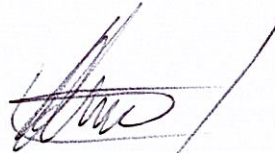
Second: CM. Gutierrez  
For: 5  
Against: 0  
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.



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Juan S. Mendive, AICP  
LWCAMPO Director



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Webb County Judge Tano E. Tijerina  
LWCAMPO Chairperson