



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

November 20, 2024

LIVE WEB LINK: <http://laredotx.swagit.com/live>
PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL: Spectrum TV channel 1300

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

CM. Ruben Gutierrez, called the meeting to order at 1:37 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

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

Regular members present:

Honorable Dr. Victor D. Treviño, Mayor and LWCAMPO Vice-Chairperson – Arrived at 1:40 PM
Honorable Ruben Gutierrez Jr., Mayor Pro-Tempore, District V
Honorable Vanessa Perez, City Councilmember, District VII
Honorable Ricardo “Richie” Rangel, City Councilmember, District II
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3 - Arrived at 1:49 PM
Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Mr. Epigmenio “Epi” Gonzalez, P.E., TxDOT District Engineer
Mr. Jed A. Brown, Member-At-Large

Regular members not present:

Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge and LWCAMPO Chairperson

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

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

Motion carried unanimously.

CM. Rangel, made a motion to select CM. Ruben Gutierrez as presiding officer to preside the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 6
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:

Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Fernando Martinez, TxDOT
Jose Vargas, TxDOT
Luis Villarreal, TxDOT
Jeffrey Gonzalez, COL Traffic
Juan C. Villarreal, COL Traffic
RJ Garza, El Metro Transit
Anthony Garza, Webb County Consultant
Melissa Montemayor, WC-CL RMA/LJA Engineering
Blasita J. Lopez, WC-CL RMA/LJA Engineering
Baltazar Avila, LJA Engineering
Robert Guthart, WSP
Emily Tedford, WSP
Tim Juarez, Stanley Consultants

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 October 16, 2024.

CM. Rangel, made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2024.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Receive public testimony and initiate a 20-day public review and comment period for the draft 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). A presentation on the draft 2025-2050 MTP will be provided by a representative of WSP.

Mr. Mendive, MPO Director, welcomed Council Member Rangel to the Policy Committee. He also thanked Council Member Cigarroa for her contributions.

Mr. Mendive stated that the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was one of the core documents for the MPO. He further stated the MTP is a document that has to be updated every 5 years. Mr. Mendive, mentioned there would be a presentation by a WSP Consultant and after the committee would ask if there were any public testimony.

Mr. Mendive, introduced Mr. Robert Guthart, WSP who would give an update presentation of the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Mr. Guthart, WSP, Transportation Planner, introduced himself to the Policy Committee, he stated that WSP has been supporting the MPO in preparing the update to the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Mr. Guthart, spoke about what the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was, he stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) established a long-term transportation agenda for the Laredo Region and it outlines Regional Transportation priorities, also identifies transportation projects to meet the needs identified over the course of the planning process and meet the goals for a 20-year horizon. He also stated that the plan was updated every 5-years. Mr. Guthart, presented the MTP schedule that has been followed in the process to

update the plan. He went through every event and milestone that lead to the final draft of the Metropolitan transportation Plan (MTP). Mr. Guthart, gave a recap of what the Goals and Objectives for Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) were. Mr. Guthart, stated that the Goals and Objectives were prepared based off of previous MTPs so that they could carry over consistency and they also followed the guidelines, planning factors and emphasis areas that had to be covered. He further stated that the goals were used to develop the Project Evaluation and Prioritization project. He mentioned there was a Call for Projects Nominations and there were several nominations received and were then evaluated to understand which were the priorities for the region. He stated that was why the Project Evaluation Criteria was developed for each goal. He also stated the Project Evaluation Criteria was developed to be data driven which mostly was Geographic Information System (GIS) based, in order to evaluate each project's ability to fulfill one of the 10 goals of the MTP. He further stated they also had subjective criteria which was also taken to consideration to understand the priorities that were wanted to get the scores, and understanding the community priorities and needs to fulfill that quality of life in Laredo. Mr. Guthart, then went over the Fiscally Constrained Project list that was developed with the evaluation process. He stated the projects 1-15 were projects that were either programmed in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the past Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and or in TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program (UTP), he further stated that those projects were included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) because they were within that Planning Horizon. He also stated that the projects 1-15 are expected to be let for construction between 2025-2050. He also shared the projects that were selected thought the evaluation and prioritization process. He shared with the committee a map showing all the projects on the Fiscally Constrained Project List. Mr. Guthart, stated that since the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was a Fiscally Constrained document and they had received more project nominations then there were expected revenues to fulfill all the needs. He shared the Illustrative Project List or Projects Needs List that were also received, and he stated that those projects would be listed on the MTP as project needs that do not have project funding at the time. He also stated that as funding became available those projects would be listed in the MTP for consideration. Mr. Guthart, stated that there would be a Public Meeting the following day (November 21st) at the Laredo Public Library from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. He stated there would be a small presentation about the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Mr. Guthart, mentioned that the objective of the item being presented was to request the Policy Committee to open a 20-day public comment period for the Draft 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), for that comment period to be from November 20th to December 9th. He also stated that there was a webpage for the public to provide any general comments.

CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to initiate a 20-day public review and comment period for the draft 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Second: CM. Gonzalez
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Guthart, thanked the committee and stated that once the comments if any were received they would be processed and any necessary revisions would be made. He further stated that once that is done, the MPO staff and WSP Consultants would be returning to the Policy Committee for the adoption of the Final 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

CM. Perez, asked if the purpose of the public meeting would be, to have the public comment on priorities of the project list or just to update the public on the plan.

Mr. Guthart, stated that any comments on priorities of the project list would be welcome.

CM. Perez, asked if there was any flexibility for future funding.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the revenues for projects they have through 2050 are for projects already listed on the Fiscally Constrained List. He further stated that as funding could change other projects could be added.

CM. Gonzalez, stated that the public meeting was to inform the community what would happen in the next decade, and also to prepare or accelerate projects that are needed for the community. CM. Gonzalez, stated that this will help to prepare for big projects like the 4/5 Bridge.

Mr. Mendive, stated that indeed the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was a guide for the next 25 years. He also stated that as some projects would be in the Fiscally Constrained List they also made sure to include other projects that may not have funding at the time but are still in the 25-year plan. He further stated that as funding became available they can be moved into the Fiscally Constrained List. Mr. Mendive, also stated that as priorities shift the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) can always be amended along with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

CM. Perez, stated that the Public meeting would be beneficial for people in the community to attend and inform themselves, especially those who have comments on infrastructure and or concerns.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the federal process requires them to provide a summary of any comments received for the final adoption of the document.

Mayor Treviño, congratulated CM. Rangel on being appointed as MPO Policy Committee member. He stated that CM. Rangel had been appointed because more representation from South Laredo was needed and having someone that lives in South Laredo. He further stated that CM. Rangel would be an appropriate appointment to the MPO Policy Committee.

CM. Rangel, thanked Mayor Treviño for the opportunity of his appointment to the MPO Policy Committee.

CM. Perez, thanked CM. Rangel for his time and service.

Mayor Treviño, asked if there was anyone in the audience For or Against the item. There were no speakers For or Against.

C. Discussion with possible action on canceling the December 18th, 2024 Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Mendive, stated that the next meeting was scheduled for December 18th, and as done in previous years it is usually canceled.

CM. John Galo, made a motion to approve canceling of the December 18th, 2024 Policy Committee meeting.

Second: CM. Gutierrez
For: 8
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. Brown, stated that there will be a full report given to the MPO Policy Committee, City Council and Commissioner's Court on Safe Streets for all Vision Zero in the early months of 2025. He also stated that they would start giving quarterly updates on the Vallecillo and where they stand in the timeline. Mr. Brown stated that they had a meeting that morning at the TxDOT District office, where there were people from the City of Laredo, Webb County, the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and TxDOT.

CM. Gonzalez, stated that in 2017-2018 there was a vision of having Wormser Rd. realignment project and now that the road is there, this will help improve traffic mobility and help connect from 83 South traveling Eastbound on Lomas Del Sur and all the way to Concord Hills to 359. He stated that having that would be a very good connection and will alleviate traffic in South Laredo and East Laredo as well.

Mr. Brown, stated that there was a draft presented to the City of Laredo and the team members involved where the RMA was contributing \$1 million dollars the City of Laredo had taken the lead and the Webb County Drainage District 1 was contributing \$352,000.00. He stated that the funding to complete the project is available, and all the Developers there have offered to donate the Right-of-Way. He further stated that one Developing company had offered to contribute to Civil Engineering design which was about \$400,000.00 that they are not having to pay for.

Mr. Jed Brown, WC-CL RMA, presented the following report as part of the packet:

WC-CL RMA November 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. On November 4, 2024, the WC-CL RMA, State Representative Richard Raymond Pena, Roland Ortiz (Killam Company) met with the TxDOT Laredo District (District Engineer Epi Gonzalez, TP&D Director Roberto Rodriguez, and PM Ana Duncan) convened to receive an update on the progress of the schematic design for the project.
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. On November 6, 2024, the WC-CL RMA Board of Directors passed a resolution to sign the ILA between the City and the WC-CL RMA for this project.

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. On November 6, 2024, the WC-CL RMA Board of Directors passed a resolution to sign the ILA for the creation of the Cuatro Vientos TRZ between the City and the WC-CL RMA.

5. **The Vallecillo Road Project** – (See supplemental memorandum).
6. **Vision Zero Webb Laredo Safety Action Plan (Safe Streets for All)** - (See supplemental memorandum)
7. **Other Items** – The next RMA Board meeting in late October or early November.

B. TxDOT Project Updates

Mr. Mendive, stated that it would be a standing item with updates on TxDOT Projects.

Jose Vargas, TxDOT Engineer, gave a brief update on TxDOT Construction Projects. He stated that there were currently 20 active projects running a total of about \$797 million. Mr. Vargas, stated that he would prepare a presentation for upcoming meetings.

CM. Gonzalez, asked if all the Right-of-Way acquisitions on SH 84 – Hachar Reuthinger Road Project had been resolved.

Mr. Vargas, stated that the City of Laredo was still working on the last parcel but that did not pose a problem. He also stated that there was just one more parcel pending to be acquired.

CM. Gonzalez, asked about the overpass on Lomas Del Sur, he asked if there would also be a concrete barrier included as an addition towards the end.

Mr. Vargas, stated that there would be a concrete barrier at the bridge and continue North to tie into the existing barrier on the 359 overpasses.

CM. Gutierrez, asked if TxDOT was working on the expansion of I-35 after the Checkpoint.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that TxDOT had been having meetings with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and some property owners at Encinal, TX. He also stated that CBP had requested for TxDOT to convert the West frontage Rd. to a one-way South Bound direction to defer travelers from using the frontage Rd. as a means to bypass the check point. He also stated the meeting held last month had been very well attended and there were good points brought up by the property owners. He further stated that there was a project to add capacity to I-35, to expand to 6 lanes, 3 lanes in each direction and separate the truck traffic similar to the Falfurrias Checkpoint. Mr. Gonzalez, stated that CBP was working on shifting some resources so that they could have more checking booths open to inspect vehicles and help move the traffic faster.

CM. Gutierrez, stated that when they visited Washington DC. last year he had spoken to the chief of Border Patrol and he had mentioned that they did have the manpower to open more inspection booths but the traffic can't move fast enough because of there was no room. CM. Gutierrez, asked if there was something short term that could be done. For Example, adding 1 or 2 miles of acceleration lanes to get the tractors back on I-35 and not hold up all the traffic. He stated that there was usually 1 or 2 miles of backup traffic to get to the checkpoint on both lanes, since the tractors don't respect the specification of staying on the right lane. He asked if they could look into something like that and help fund some acceleration lanes.

Mr. Gonzalez, stated that it was one of their top priority projects for the District to add additional lanes South and North of the Checkpoint for about 2-3 miles. He stated there wasn't a time frame yet, but it had been submitted last year for funding but unfortunately it wasn't selected for funding, but it would be submitted again for funding.

CM. Galo, stated that the issue was to actually get to the checkpoint with the traffic of the trucks on the 2 lanes on I-35 heading to the checkpoint.

C. Update by MPO staff on an administrative modification to three projects listed on the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Mendive, gave a quick update on the administrative modifications. He stated the update was for informational purposes only since they do not require a formal action or formal revision required. He stated that projects CSJ: 0922-33-093 - Calton and San

Maria Interchange and CSJ: 0018-05-089 - Replace Bridge at Uniroyal Dr. had been requested by TxDOT to change the letting date from FY 2025 to FY 2026. He also stated that the project CJS: 0922-33-236 - SPRINGFIELD extension PH 4 had been administrative amended as per sponsor request, to reflect the removal of federal funding and utilizing local funding sources.

VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Mendive, MPO Director went over the report that was part of the packet as follows:

Director's Report November 20, 2024

1. Policy Committee Membership Update:

- We would like to thank Melissa R. Cigarroa, City of Laredo Council Member for District III, for her leadership, service, and dedication while serving on the MPO Policy Committee.
- We would like to welcome Ricardo Rangel Jr., City of Laredo Council Member for District II, to the MPO Policy Committee. Council Member Ricardo Rangel Jr., was appointed by Mayor Dr. Victor D. Treviño at the City of Laredo Council meeting on October 28, 2024.

2. Microtransit Feasibility Study Update:

- A public survey to gather feedback from El Metro riders is currently open. The consulting team visited Laredo the week of November 11th to conduct field work and engage with our Technical Committee members.

3. Texas Transportation Commission Meetings:

- December 17, 2024
- 2025 schedule not yet available

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>

4. Upcoming regularly scheduled MPO meetings:

- Active Transportation Committee – December 4, 2024
- Technical Committee – December 10, 2024 (may be canceled)
- Policy Committee – December 18, 2024 (may be canceled)

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

CM. Gonzalez, congratulated CM. Gutierrez and CM. Perez, on their recent reelection. He also congratulated Mayor Treviño on having the all propositions passed.

CM. Galo, thanked the staff and the Policy Committee members on a good year and the progress they have accomplished. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT


CM. Gutierrez, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:22 PM.

Second: CM. Galo
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.



Juan S. Mendive, AICP
LWCAMPO Director



Mayor, Dr. Victor D. Treviño
LWCAMPO Chairperson