The following is the Agenda for a meeting of the Policy Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to be held February 11, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. in the Doña Ana County Commission Chambers, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico. Meeting packets are available on the Mesilla Valley MPO website.

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1. **CALL TO ORDER** ________________________________ Chair

2. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY** ___________________________ Chair
   
   Does any Committee Member have any known or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda? If so, that Committee member may recuse themselves from voting on a specific matter, or if they feel that they can be impartial, we will put their participation up to a vote by the rest of the Committee.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** ________________________________ Chair

4. **CONSENT AGENDA** ________________________________ Chair

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** ______________________________
   
   5.1. *January 14, 2015______________________________ Chair

6. **ACTION ITEMS** ________________________________
   
   6.1. Resolution 15-02: A Resolution Amending the 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program __________________________ MPO Staff

7. **DISCUSSION ITEMS** ________________________________
   
   7.1. Human Services Coordinated Plan Update __________________________ NMDOT Staff
   
   7.2. Transport 2040 Update __________________________ MPO Staff

8. **COMMITTEE and STAFF COMMENTS** __________________________ Chair

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT** ________________________________ Chair

10. **ADJOURNMENT** ________________________________ Chair

Publish February 1, 2015
The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee which was held January 14, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Billy Garrett (DAC)
Commissioner Leticia Benavidez (DAC)
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC)
Trustee Sam Bernal (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)
Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councillor Nathan Small (CLC)
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Murphy (MPO staff)
Andrew Wray (MPO staff)
Michael McAdams (MPO staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Harold Love (NMDOT)
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER
Meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m.

Garrett: Do you have anything?

Murphy: Yes Mr. Chair. Staff would like to strike Item 8.1. The individual coming from Santa Fe was unable to make it today.

Garrett: Very good and if I understand correctly Item 8.3, the El Paso MPO Coordination, Councillor Pedroza did you have anything on that, you had wanted for that to be retained on, on the agenda?

Pedroza: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, I was distracted but there is one thing that I did want to have.

Garrett: So we'll leave that on for discussion purposes.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you.
Garrett: Very good, and I just want to let the Committee know that I have an eye exam that I need to get to. It’s been very hard to get this particular appointment and so I need to leave about 2:15, so we’re going to have election of officers but I just want you to understand when I leave it’s no disrespect, it’s just time for me to go get my eyes checked.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Garrett: All right, so the first item then on our agenda is election of officers. Do you have any background information you want to present to us Mr. Murphy on this? We normally rotate this in some way.

Murphy: Yes Mr. Chair. The Policy Committee has traditionally rotated the, the Chairmanship and the Vice Chairmanship among the, the three governmental jurisdictions. Right now the, during for the past year the County’s had the, the Chair and the Town’s had the Vice Chair position. So if that tradition were to hold up, the Town would have the Chair and the City would have the Vice Chair. Just to, also to point out, that’s just been the way this Committee’s always wanted it to be. It is not written into the bylaws, so if this Committee decides it wants to change business that’s completely up to you but that’s the way, that’s the way you and your predecessors have chosen to operate it in the past.

Garrett: Very good. Thank you very much. That being the case our, let me just ask if we have someone from the Town of Mesilla interested and willing to serve as Chair if we were to maintain this, this tradition.

Pedroza: I, I think Linda Flores, Trustee Linda Flores would be the person.

Garrett: Well we need to arrange for you to at least share one. Trustee Flores do you have any comments on, about that?

Flores: I’ll just say I don’t have any objections.

Garrett: All right. In that case, well let me ask then in terms of the City, do we have someone from the City who would be willing to sit in as our, or serve as Vice Chair?

Pedroza: Mr. Chairman, I think that Gill Sorg would not have a problem with it. However he’s not here yet and if he does have a problem I would certainly be willing to be Vice Chair.

Garrett: How about if we go ahead and entertain a motion to elect him and then, then if he refuses then we would open that up as another item of business.
Pedroza: So moved.

Garrett: Does that make sense? Okay, in that case let me entertain a motion for, to, to select Trustee Flores from the Town of Mesilla to serve as Chair of the Policy Committee and, and Councillor Sorg from the City of Las Cruces to serve as ...

Barraza: Mister.

Garrett: Vice Chair for ...

Barraza: Mr. Chair, I’d like to make that motion as Trustee Linda Flores for the Town of Mesilla for the Chairperson position and Gill Sorg from the City of Las Cruces for the position of Vice Chair.

Garrett: And that would be for calendar year 2015.

Barraza: That is correct.

Garrett: Thank you very much. Could I have a second?

Pedroza: Second.

Garrett: So the motion has been made by Mayor Barraza and seconded by Councillor Pedroza. Any further discussion about this? Any public input? In that case, would you poll the Committee?

Murphy: Okay.

Garrett: Those in favor say “yes,” those opposed “no.”

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.
Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Garrett: Very good. Trustee Flores would you like to assume the role at this point?

3. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY** - Does any Committee Member have any known or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda? If so, that Committee Member may recuse themselves from voting on a specific matter, or if they feel that they can be impartial, we will put their participation up to a vote by the rest of the Committee.

Flores: So next I guess I'll ask if there's a conflict of interest? So anybody have any comments to make now. Okay. Seeing none.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Flores: We'll move on to public comment. Is there anybody out there from the public that would like to speak? Mr. Love is shaking his head “no.”

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Flores: So next we'll go to the Consent Agenda. We have the minutes from December 10th.

Garrett: And a resolution.

Barraza: And a resolution.

Flores: And a resolution, yeah.
6. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.1 * December 10, 2014

Barraza: Madam Chair.
Flores: Yes.

Barraza: I would like to make a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the approval of minutes December 10, 2014 and Resolution 15-01.

Flores: Okay. Do I have a second?
Pedroza: Second.

Flores: Seconded by Councillor Olga Pedroza. There's somebody in the back mister ... okay. So should I have a roll call vote?

Murphy: Okay. Councillor Pedroza.
Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Bernal.
Bernal: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.
Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.
Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.
Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.
Garrett: Yes.
Murphy: And the Chair.

Flores: Yes. Okay. So that passes.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1 Resolution 15-01: A Resolution Certifying Compliance with the Open Meetings Act for the 2015 Calendar Year by the Mesilla Valley MPO

Approved with Minutes.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Human Services Coordinated Plan Update - THIS WAS CANCELLED.

8.2 Transport 2040 Update

Flores: Next, Item eight on Discussion Items: 8.1 has been removed so we'll move to 8.2: Transport 2040 Update by MPO staff.

Murphy: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. We're going to have a presentation by Michael McAdams. Last time we, at last meeting we spoke a little bit about what the loop roads and bypasses showing on the, on the MTP maps and Mr. McAdams is going to go over some of the, some of the issues and theories behind, behind loop roads to help you make a decision later on as we, as we go through the Transport 2040 Update process, and with that I'll go ahead and turn it over to Mr. McAdams.

MICHAEL MCADAMS PRESENTATION.

Hancock: Madam Chair.

Flores: Would you go over the roads? Yes.

Hancock: Could, do we have a copy of this that, that's legible?

Flores: Yeah.

Hancock: So that we can see the names?

McAdams: I can give you the PowerPoint. I can give you the PowerPoint. Yeah, that's the unfortunate thing that when you have these, these very detailed maps you do suffer with some of this too but I can provide you with a, a very detailed PowerPoint for this in, in .jpg and .gis files if you like, yeah.
Hancock: That, that eastern boundary line, that blue line, what is that? Oh there’s the big map.

McAdams: Yeah there’s the big map.

Hancock: Oh okay. Thank you.

Flores: Do, yeah kind of lay out the roads that go along the bypass and maybe that would be helpful.

Hancock: Yeah, that would be.

Flores: Yeah. Cause I can’t ...

McAdams: Yeah, it’s, this is, this is, thing is, this is just for general purposes for, but not really specifics.

Barraza: Madam Chair, I think I agree if we could just get the names of the roads on the north, south, east, and west.

Murphy: Okay.

Flores: Yeah.

Murphy: If you, we’ll start up in the northeast corner and head west. So this is the US-70 right here and right at Weisner Road. If you go north on Weisner until it connects into Arroyo, Arroyo’s proposed crossing the East Mesa and, and eventually down to I-25 where it cross I-25 at the Dona Ana interchange. Then essentially what would be required to be in that completely new facility skirting to the southwest to the, basically to the southwest of the National Monument area, and actually this one, and this is based on Transport 2040 when we had the, the pathways here we used the border. I think that this segment here north of Picacho Peak might, might be in the Monument area so that makes, that, that would be a, that’s something we have to address or, or, or some, we have to address it somehow. It would then come south around the west part of Picacho Hills, east of the airport down to the Jackrabbit interchange. South of I-10 it’s the High Mesa Road which would go down to the Santa Teresa area and then, and then this new facility, it is represented on the Transport 2040 maps as an, as a new road but it would go across the southern part of the urban area, crossing I-10 in the vicinity of what the GRIP documentation had called out for a future Brazitos interchange which is midway between I-10/I-25, and the Mesquite interchange and it would then continue eastward until it hit that Weisner alignment and then they can back up, back north to 70. I hope that, does that work to orient everyone?
Flores: Thank you. Okay.

MICHAEL MCADAMS CONTINUES THE PRESENTATION.

Flores: Anybody have any … Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you Madam Chair. I think at the, some place in there you said that either staff or somebody who has studied this particular proposed bypass or, or the, the loop road thought that it was not really advisable. Am I correct?

McAdams: These are preliminary and maybe Tom can address it because he’s the one that did the modeling.

Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Pedroza, when we did Transport 2040 in the public process we also had a lot of, lot of public comment saying that we needed to, to build the bypass roads so what I, what I did at that point, I constructed essentially what, what was shown to, to you on the map in the MPO’s Travel Demand model and I, and I used the current-day demographics the, the population and the jobs and then the, the 2040 estimated population and jobs. And what I saw when I ran the model, those loop roads were very lightly used facilities. They, they didn’t, they didn’t draw traffic away from our congested corridors of North Main and Lohman. Sometime later the, in the next hopefully weeks but before, before we complete the update for Transport 2040 this summer we’ll, we’ll do the modeling again but I, I you know my professional opinion is I don’t expect to see any different results on that.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you. One other question. Is any of this in, in response to the expected greater use of the roads because of Santa Teresa and the distribution hub?

Murphy: Some of, some of the public comment may be driven by that and I think that when we’re going to update the, the new numbers for 2040 we’ll see some more you know we’ll, we’ll have some more, generate more traffic from the south but again I, I don’t see that really, really changing the, the use cause the use was so minimal five years ago, or the projected use was minimal.

Pedroza: All right. Thank you.

Flores: Anyone else? Commissioner Garrett?

Garrett: Thank you and, and thank you for the presentation Mr. McAdams. Will you post this or is this posted already?
McAdams: I could. I could post it on the web (inaudible - not at the microphone)

Garrett: Or send us a .pdf or something?

Murphy: We, we can send the .pdf.

Garrett: That’d be great. Just a, a couple of, of thoughts. I, I’m, I’m pretty sure I
know the answer to this but there’s no real operational definition for how
far away from a “congested area” you have to be to consider a road a
bypass. Is that correct?

McAdams: If you look at, obviously the closer land use modeling and otherwise that a
bypass is the (inaudible) effect. The more far away it is the less effect on
the immediate traffic right. These are right you know way outside of our
present development so it really wouldn’t effect, if it would, if they built
today it wouldn’t affect things right. If the land use came out to there yes it
would. So, and again it could, it could encourage sprawl to a certain
degree where its interaction is, is, it functions and you know all roads
function as, to move traffic. We know that it creates access and then the
land use follows. So we call them (inaudible) a vicious cycle which is
basically you build roads, (inaudible) congestion, and you build another
one. So yes and no, because yes if you, yes. Absolutely. If you have a
bypass and your congested area it will handle peripheral traffic but it also
it will draw, draw land use to that area too. So it, I don’t know if you’ve
been around Atlanta. Atlanta Perimeter was originally built to bypass I-85
in a horrible condition, but now the perimeter road is a, is a destination in
itself. It’s, it’s absolutely horrible if you’ve been, six lanes on the, on four,
six lanes on either side and congestion. So even beltways, you can see
like the Washington’s a horrible example of this too. So it’s, it’s not just
bypassing traffic. It is, will, it will first, it will first divert traffic and it’ll be a
real good thing, people “Oh, yeah,” but then there’ll be other land use we
like Wal-Marts, big boxes in particular they would locate somewhere else
and what they would say, “This is better facility,” too. There are for
example industrial facilities, I mean you can see, on certain (inaudible) like
in Albuquerque where the bypass may be good for an arterial not
necessarily a bypass will be good for industrial use. But we have, I think
the thing is, I think that this Committee would agree too, we don’t have a
spread (inaudible) because spread (inaudible) means more investing in, in
water, sewer, fire, police, etc. and we have some really good facilities right
(inaudible). And it’s, there, there’s no good, there’s, there’s no, you can’t
say that the need for the bypass is absolutely out of the question in a lot of
communities but I think again you can see there’s pros and cons on either
side.

Garrett: Sure.
McAdams: And it's very complex too, as you can see.

Garrett: Well I, reflecting back on, on sort of the history of the development around Las Cruces, the interstates here were, were built in the early '60s. Is that correct, approximately?

Doolittle: Yes. They're about 50, about 50 years old now, that is correct.

Garrett: And, and when they were built there wasn't a lot east of 25 and you know bringing 10 around between Mesilla and, and Las Cruces there were cotton fields. And, and part of what I guess I would observe is that in, in some ways what, what I-10 and I-25 did was to allow for increased traffic through the area without running it through downtown Las Cruces with the exception of the 70 connection. And to my way of thinking the, the current structure of the interstates in some ways helps define parts of the city and of, of, of the relationship between the city and the town. I don't personally feel like the interstate is a source of congestion in our, in our case. As a matter of fact I think it's important as we talk about this that you know where would we put money if, if the estimate for the, the entire bypass system was $110 to $330 or more million, if we look at the county as a whole where would we put money and would we put it in that ring road or would we look at for example, I'd really be interested in what is going on with truck traffic sort of in a, on an east-west basis or connecting in with I-10 going west. So really what I'm asking about is the 70 connection. How much truck traffic do we have going into the city on 70 that, and how much of a problem is that, because that seems to me to be potentially a operationally-defined source of congestion. And I think if we look at that kind of thing and then we say well we're also, we've been talking about how to improve the connections between I-10 and Santa Teresa and Sunland Park in New Mexico, would we rather have that loop around Las Cruces or would rather be working at a part of a larger system in terms of the county as a whole? The same applies to, I mean this is all really good stuff because thinking about the Upham interchange and how that would be evaluated and what the process would be and how much that would cost. I think it's really important for this Policy Committee even though we are limited in some ways, I think we need to be looking county-wide and region-wide because there aren't too many others that are going to be doing that, so.

Flores: Yes, Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: I, I actually have one of the, one of the answers, the answers to one of your questions very readily available. The percent truck traffic we're seeing on Main is about 10%. On Picacho we're seeing about 6% truck
traffic so that means out of the, out of all the vehicles that travel down it, 10% and 6% are the number of large trucks that we’ve counted.

Garrett: Does that mean that the trucks that need to go to Albuquerque that are coming in from Tucson go on the interstate and then swing around at, at the interchange and get onto 25 to go north as opposed to going through town?

Murphy: We don’t, we don’t know exactly what they, they do. We prefer that they would swing around the interstate (inaudible) we spent a lot of money on the reconstruction of that interchange. The map that Michael had shown on one of the slides if, if we think somebody’s coming from Tucson and their ultimate destination is, is Albuquerque or Albuquerque to Tucson they’re cutting from Deming to Hatch along NM-26

Garrett: Twenty-six.

Murphy: And cutting a lot of mileage off of their journey so you know we think the really long trips are, you know have ways if, if they’re, if they’re, instead of turning you know left or right in Las Cruces they’re, they have other options to make that movement far, long before they get here.

Garrett: Very good. I, I think that is all really important information for us to have as we look at, as, as we approach some policy decisions that have to do with modifications to the, the Transport 2040 update. I, I also wonder if we could get some additional sort of reading information that would help distinguish mobility from access or, I understand they’re related but I’m really interested in, these are clearly technical terms and I think they’re important for us to understand as it relates to the larger parts of the transportation system.

Murphy: I, I think that the, the access management guidelines that this Committee adopted I think going on two years now has a, has a, a pretty in-depth discussion about access versus mobility so it’s a similar adopted comment, or, or a document but staff will go ahead and e-mail, re-e-mail that out to all the Committee members again.

Garrett: I, I think, I mean I remember that because I think Mr. Wray made that presentation and what I’m, what I’m struggling with is the connection between those concepts and land use development which really the, I just have one more comment and, and that is that it, it would seem to me that another part of the discussion in terms of options for this kind of, of system has to do with its relationship to transport-related development. We’re moving toward that as part of Viva Dona Ana and I believe that the ring road concept, the by-passes are to some degree antithetical to the kinds of things we’re talking about with transport-related development. I think we
need to understand that and we also need to understand how the current planning as it’s being developed for Viva Dona Ana and that initiative relates to this discussion so it might be that we actually have a presentation at a future meeting that looks at, the, the road system implications and land use that’s been developed through the scenario planning on the Comp Plan. Thank you.

Flores: Thank you. Anyone else on this? Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you. That, that bypass plan was laid out prior to Metro Verde, wasn’t it? Metro Verde on the east side of town there, looked like it would butt up, right up to Weisner and be a problem.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock, yes. That was laid out prior to the Metro Verde. Their, they did dedicate 120 of right-of-way for the arroyo through, through the development and we did have some access restrictions from some of the properties on that development onto that facility. It wouldn’t be a, you know probably would not be a freeway through that area but it would be, it would be you know kind of a, a low-access principal arterial going through that area.

Hancock: Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Last question. I, I think you mentioned that many times the, a road can become a bypass just because it, it’s now paved.

Murphy: Right.

Hancock: Or it’s a better road and so now it becomes a bypass. How do we prevent the creation of a bypass by accident? It, what comes to mind is Baylor Canyon Road.

Murphy: Right.

Hancock: That, that’s, that’s a, it’s problematic there and there’s a lot of concern about it being a, a bypass.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock, we had that discussion at the, at the TAC meeting last week, the concerns there. County Engineering did specify that, that they’re constructing that facility as a local roadway, meaning that it’ll be built with the designed speed, speed limit of 25 miles an hour. It’s also, also narrow and a lot of grade, lot of grade changing so it would not, you would not be able to drive through it quickly. It wouldn’t save you any time going, rather versus going the freeway route. Another option that we’re, that was put out there that needs further, actually would need some, probably some legislative actions on the County part would be to, to sign that, that roadway as prohibiting through trucks. The City has, has
some of their facilities that are prohibited to through trucks. I’m not aware that the County does but I believe that’s an option that’s open to you. Part of the reason I have all these big white boards for you to look at later after the meeting some of the maps we’re working on. We have a truck route map. I think we’re going to also in addition to show what we have as recommended truck routes, also have prohibited facilities for truck routes and in the case of Baylor Canyon that would probably be a prime one to add to the prohibited list.

Hancock: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Flores: I’m sorry, I didn’t quite, you said you can basically create a special speed limit, narrow the road, and what was the third thing that you said?

Murphy: They didn’t, they didn’t flatten it so where there are hills you’re ...

Flores: Okay.

Murphy: Going up, up and down and if you’re driving a, I’ve never driven a semi but I imagine that you’d rather not do that.

Flores: Okay. All right, thank you.

Benavidez: Madam Chair.

Flores: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes. I have a question regarding that picture you showed us about that bypass in Denmark, are there any bike paths in the United States.

McAdams: That, that, this interchange, this is like a, there’s several like this, the interchange, this one’s in the Netherlands and as you know the Netherlands are like big bike users and, yeah they’re kind of like in a, in a different dimension in this situation. This is because basically this, you see the interchange. It’s like very busy and, and this was kind of a way to convert, it’s actually a very unique design it’s suspended on a cable so the middle and the other cables kind of hold it together, so it’s very unique. But you know in the Netherlands they constructed bike expressways, they often restricted bikes in the center of town. In Groningen, Netherlands which is bike central to a certain degree, they’ve done that. So more people are riding bikes in that place; I think like 40 or 50% of people are riding bikes to work. But that’s really a, it’s a culture. It really is. The mayors and the leaders of the council decided, “This is where we’re going to go and we’re going to emphasize bikes and public transportation.” And then, then after, the culture everything seems to, to, to devolve, or evolve. So this is probably, this interchange is probably not expensive as a, as a,
as a transportation interchange but it’s definitely expensive. But it shows what people can do, either you can spend your money for bicycles or you can spend it with roads and I think this is in many instances this where we are in America is how you want to spend our transportation money you know as always.

Flores: All right. Thank you.

McAdams: You’re welcome.

Pedroza: Madam Chair.

Flores: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you. Tom, is there any time constraints in terms of if you’re going to be updating Transport 2040? We’re not under some sort of pressure to, to make a decision on whether or not we want to recommend a, either a bypass or circular roads or, or interchanges or anything like that are we?

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza, we’re on the clock.

Pedroza: Oh.

Murphy: We’re just, we’re hoping to have a draft document to the Technical Advisory Committee for their February meeting. We have a lot of the draft maps here that they’ve, they’ve been vetting. Staff is currently editing the, the next iteration of Transport 2040 which we hope to you know have, have the TAC look at in February. Maybe, maybe this Committee as well or, or we might not get that to you until April. I, at that point we need to do a public comment period which we’ll hold out meetings. We need to have an updated, updated Metropolitan Transportation Plan in place by July so if, if we don’t get it done by your June meeting we’re going to have to have you have a special July meeting. That being said, we can, we will update it again in five years so.

Pedroza: But I guess you know I don’t have any problem with the responsibilities being on you.

Murphy: Thank you.

Pedroza: In other words, is it absolutely necessary that the, the recommendation of the, of the Policy Committee, excuse me, include a decision yes or no on these particular topics?

Murphy: I, I think staff, we’re going to try you know, I mean it, it’s, it’s a hard decision you need to, need to make so, but I think we’re going to try and
make it easy. This is what I think the staff recommendation is going to be based on our, our public involvement process, based on what we're, what we're learning coming out of Viva Dona Ana, what we're learning talking, talking with our member agencies and their transportation departments, is. In the five, in the five-year immediate future for the Transportation Plan we're not proposing any new facilities so and since ...

Pedroza: Okay. I would agree with that then. Thank you.

Murphy: And since (inaudible) and probably in the 20-year financially constrained aspect for the Transportation Plan we're going to say we do not have the resources to construct any kind of bypass system. As for a right-of-way preservation measure we'll probably keep it on that map so if, if the spaceport all of a sudden becomes super popular or we grow up, we grow up 20% you know over the next several years we have plans in place that, that help guide, guide development but, but it's not financially constrained at this point.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you very much, Tom.

Flores: So.

Garrett: Madam Chair.

Flores: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Would it be possible for us to have a, a joint work session with the TAC on, on the, on what you're thinking about or, I, what I'm wondering, I, I'm inclined to support a more aggressive position by the, by the Policy Committee. I don't think that waiting and letting things drift for another five years is, is a particularly good thing to do. I think that we have been working on a lot of planning and it seems to me to be contradictory to some of the other kinds of things that we're doing to say, “Well we'll just continue with leaving the, the bypass system on the map so we continue to accumulate right-of-way.” I, I'm, I'm not convinced that that's good policy. I, so one thing is I do think that this Committee is going to have a choice to make.

Flores: Can we stop for a moment? Whose ever cell phone is going off, can ...

McAdams: I, I forgot to turn it off. I'm sorry.

Flores: Thank you. Could you turn it off? I appreciate it.

McAdams: I'm sorry.
Flores: Please continue.

Garrett: Thank you. So I, I’m, I, I would encourage the Committee to, to look at making as robust a statement as we can and in part because I believe that statements from this Committee as a matter of reinforcing certain planning ideas and the relationship between transportation and land use and all those other sorts of things carries weight and that by making some policy decisions which is what the Committee is about, that we in fact can help advance some of those things that I believe we want to see happen. Because we could argue just as well that if all of a sudden the economy changes significantly that we, we could say, “Well maybe we need to reverse this.” But we’re going through similar processes with water and, and, and a number of other kinds of things and I, I do believe that this is about shaping the future of development for the entire area. So I, I would encourage us to keep that in mind as we look at the schedule, think about how early we might want to make sure we’re clear about what the options are and how they’re being represented. I believe that what staff is outlining is very reasonable and, and rational. Not sure that it goes quite as far as I would hope that we would be able to consider.

Flores: But if he’s bringing this in February, are you asking for a joint meeting in February cause that’s next month.

Garrett: Actually if, if, if we’re getting an update in February that shows us what the major choice points are then I’m okay with that. I wasn’t sure that what I was hearing was that we were going to get that until later into the spring and then I was worried about jamming up the work of staff to meet the deadline if in fact we had some other direction we wanted to provide.

Flores: Okay.

Murphy: I’m sure, Commissioner Garrett, I’m not sure if we, if, if we can have a joint meeting with the TAC. You know ...

Flores: The bylaws.

Murphy: The mixing of the, of the staff versus the elected officials, I’m not sure what, we could do that. You are always completely welcome to come to the TAC meetings and, and speak at them as they’re welcome to come to, to these meetings and speak at, at those. I can look into that further. That being, that being said yes we will provide an update in, you know in February. We don’t have a March meeting. But yeah we want, we want to you know keep you involved in every, every decision you know because you know essentially if, if somebody starts yelling at me too much in a grocery store I, I say you guys made the decision so I need to be fair to you and actually let you see all the information. So we’ll give you an up,
update. What I’m hearing in the, and if the rest of the Committee can, can chime in is you might be comfortable with us even, even backing away from that right-of-way preservation beyond the, the 20-year fiscally constrained time point. We did have public comment that would support such a position but again we had public comment that says you know, “Why didn’t you build the loop road yesterday?” and, and other things of that nature so if we want to, if we wanted to make an aggressive policy statement along those lines that’s certainly, you know it’s basically up, up to you know the majority of this Committee to, to come down on that decision but you know that’s something that my, you know, I, I, I think staff sees the, the rationale behind that and you know that’s something we could make happen.

Flores: All right.

8.3 El Paso MPO Coordination

Flores: So shall we move along to 8.3: El Paso MPO Coordination discussion? I believe Councillor Pedroza had wanted to ...

Pedroza: And this was it wasn’t it? Okay. I’m trying to remember were we going to see if we could reconstruct a little bit of, of the discussion that we had in that quasi-meeting that wasn’t a meeting or were we, uh-oh.

Murphy: I, I honestly don’t remember. I thought that we did, the following that those, those that are present filled in the rest, rest of the members on what everyone discussed at that meeting and I thought you wanted to keep, keep the discussion alive as far as what our next steps could be. We’re you know staff, staff is continuing to have contact, Mr. Medina and I ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: Are, are, are pledging ourselves to, to stay in consistent contact with each other as far as what each of us are working on and then providing reports back to our committees.

Pedroza: As I recall it may have been you or maybe it was Mr. Wray who said that because it was not a formal meeting no notes were taken.

Flores: Right, right.

Murphy: That, that’s correct.

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: We did not have quorum.
Pedroza: Right.

Flores: We didn’t have a ...

Murphy: So we ...

Pedroza: We just kind of talked informally.

Murphy: Right, and no, no ...

Flores: No decision.

Murphy: No public policy decisions were made.

Pedroza: No, no.

Murphy: So we wouldn’t violate the Open Meetings Act.

Pedroza: Right, okay. But how do we continue on from here if we wanted to you know reinitiate the, the communication? In other words not just let it all drop.

Murphy: Right.

Pedroza: It didn’t work that time so ...

Murphy: I, I think we need to you know I guess come, come along a, a decision whether we want to invite the New Mexico delegation back, make it a regular thing, or do we, or do we endeavor to have a, a, a formal joint meeting of, of both bodies you know in its entirety which will just for the record due to, due the law, some laws that the El Paso MPO will operate on, the meeting would have to take place in Texas.

Pedroza: I see. Okay. My off the top of my head response to that would be that we not have a formal meeting between the two bodies but invite them once again to one or two items on the agenda perhaps, we catch up with each other where what each body is doing and how we can see working together at some point and maybe some of the problems that they’re, that we have perceived that maybe are not problems. But Commissioner Garrett has left as he told us he would and Councillor Sorg is not here you know I, we can, I would suggest that we reschedule something but that’s just my suggestion. It’s not even a motion.

Flores: Mr. Doolittle, did you have a comment you wanted to make?
Doolittle: Yes, Madam Chair. As a representative on both MPOs I, I think the, myself and Dona Ana County is, are the two consistencies between the two committees so Dr. Garcia I hope is sharing what’s taking place through the El Paso MPO with, with Commissioner Garrett. The other thing is we as a department truly believe that the interactions between the MPOs is ultimately the responsibility of the Directors. I, I do think it’s important to have those informal discussions but at this point I think the commitment from Tom and from Michael is that they would continue to meet on a monthly basis, at least on a monthly basis and share that information and then if anything comes of that that needs to be shared with the respective Boards, ultimately it would be the responsibility of the Directors to present to their respective Boards. I have talked to the Mayor of Sunland Park, I just drew a blank.

Hancock: Javier Perea.

Doolittle: Perea, Mayor Perea and I’ve talked to Dr. Garcia and I think they’re both willing to come back and, and, and have discussions with us. I, I personally don’t know what we would gain from visiting with those two. I think it’s extremely important for Tom to continue to have those, those coordination meetings with, with Mr. Medina. Again I think they’re willing to come. I just don’t know what would come of that discussion other than what we shared at that informal meeting there at the City Office. So in my, my opinion or, or thoughts are as long as Tom and Michael continue with their commitment to have those discussions between the two and then Tom share with us as a Board you know anything that comes of that especially the planning stuff, I know that’s Commissioner Garrett’s concern is that the El Paso MPO isn’t truly aware of what the needs or the goals are of this MPO. I think it’s important for Tom to share that with Michael and then Commissioner Garrett share that with Dr. Garcia. And then the DOT certainly will play a role in that, that communication between the two. I would just wonder what the goal would be bringing specifically Mayor Perea and Dr. Garcia back as opposed to maybe Michael.

Pedroza: No that’s fine, except that you have several, I can’t remember the names, I’m sorry but they are sharing information with Commissioner Garrett. I don’t know whose sharing information with me.

Doolittle: I ...

Flores: I think that could be Commissioner Garrett or, or we have our member Mr. Doolittle if they, and we have Tom Murphy. Everybody’s open to giving updates and what I don’t want to do is waste people’s time.

Pedroza: Oh, of course.
Flores: Invite them over and then not have an agenda so at this point I don't see anything ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Flores: That I feel like we need to have them come over and discuss it. If that comes up, if anybody here has something specific that they want to invite them for and we have an agenda item then I don't mind inviting them for that but I want content ahead of time. I don't want to invite people over and not have specific things to discuss you know.

Pedroza: I believe we did have specific things to discuss that day it, the meeting didn’t happen for different reasons.

Flores: Yeah.

Pedroza: But sure. That would be fine. You know I don’t mean to waste people’s time either. Tom, if you could and I’m sure you already do inform us of you know when, when things are, are happening in the El Paso MPO that we need to, to be aware of and it’s Mayor Perea and Dr. Garcia and who else is on, from, from New Mexico is on the El Paso MPO?

Doolittle: We had two elected officials but at this point I can’t remember who they were, but I will tell you that they have not attended a single meeting that I’ve ...

Pedroza: Oh boy.

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Pedroza, the other currently appointed members are the Mayor Pro-tem of the, I can’t remember whether it’s the Village or the Town of Anthony whichever, whichever one is on the New Mexico side and then the State Legislator for the District down there but as Mr. Doolittle says, well the, the Mayor Pro-tem has been there but the State Legislator has never attended one of the El Paso MPO meetings to my knowledge.

Pedroza: Okay.

Wray: I believe that’s the entirety of the delegation.

Hancock: Would that, would that be the, the House or the Senate?

Doolittle: Senate.

Wray: Senate, Mr. Doolittle says.
Hancock: So that would be Cervantes.

Pedroza: Yes, yeah.

Hancock: I believe.

Pedroza: It would. I believe you’re right.

Doolittle: Prior to it was Garcia.

Wray: Garcia.

Hancock: Right. Garcia would be House.

Wray: Or maybe both of them are, are on there. I will get, I’ll get the list of the, the New Mexico delegation e-mailed out to the, the Committee either today or tomorrow.

Pedroza: Thank you. I’d appreciate that.

Wray: Just, just for clarity.

Pedroza: Okay.

Hancock: I, I would, I would appreciate that. I’ll be in Santa Fe next week so maybe I can stop in and see if we can get them to show up. Thank you.

Pedroza: Thank you.

Doolittle: Madam Chair.

Flores: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Councillor Pedroza, I do also have one comment, I, I think Tom it would help if, if this Committee had the list of the TAC representatives so that they knew who to contact. Your, your TAC representative is a good point of contact for a lot of the technical discussion that takes place. I mean Harold’s here with me today and he does a great job as a representative of the DOT on that committee sharing with me the, the very technical aspects of what’s taking place and each, each entity that’s represented on this Board has a representative, at least one representative on that committee. So if we had that list of names that would also give the Councillor a good, a good point of contact.

Murphy: We can, we can send it out but just real quickly ...
Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: Representatives from the City is Louis Grijalva, Willie Roman, and Mike Bartholomew, Town of Mesilla; Debbie Lujan and John Knopp, and then the County's; John Gwynne, Luis Marmolejo, and Rene Molina.

Pedroza: I’m sorry, Louis Grijalva, Willie Roman, and who else?

Murphy: Mike Bartholomew from Roadrunner.

Pedroza: Okay, okay.

9. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Flores: Okay. So we'll move on to Committee and Staff Comments.

Doolittle: Madam Chair.

Flores: Yes.

Doolittle: Sorry, my computer went to sleep on me. I, I, I'll give you just a quick update on our construction projects. I know that some people have some time constraints. I'll just touch on some big ones.

The Vado-Mesquite project, we have actually completed all of the work at the Mesquite bridge with the exception of some seeding, some bridge rail, and some lighting. Ultimately it is open completely at the Mesquite interchange. We do have some friction course that will have to wait until March just because of temperature requirements but all of the interstate main lanes are open. We will, they will be open completely by the end of the week. We're still working on cable median barrier, that safety device in the median. That should be completed by the end of the week. We have moved to the Vado interchange. Last month I incorrectly relayed information to this Board that we would not have any long-term closures of that interchange. Ultimately that, that interchange will closed as of today until approximately the end of March while we rebuild the roundabouts. The reason that that, that change took place is ultimately it was going to be a long-term interruption to traffic with multiple short-term closures. The contractor proposed a valued engineering solution to the Department that closes it for six to eight weeks all at once to provide for more production and a, and a better product in our opinion that shortens the overall project time so we've accepted that engineering proposal and so we'll move to Vado today and should be finished sometime towards the end of March and that will complete a majority of that project.

The other one I wanted to touch on is our North Main project with Sandoval Construction here in town. We're currently working on storm drains and electrical conduit. We are doing some paving. That project is
tentatively scheduled to be completed in August. Hopefully the weather will cooperate with us but it took us a little while to get started but Sandoval’s doing a good job for us making up some time. We did have some delays on some design and we’re working through adding some contract time to it but we’re looking at completing that project sometime in August.

The last one I wanted to touch on we had our, our preconstruction conference today for the Missouri bridge project. We have a ramp-up time for that one scheduled and you won’t actually see any construction at Missouri until the very end of February or the first of March and that, that will be the first impact to traffic and I’ll provide a more detailed estimate on construction time at the February meeting. We will be having the monthly public meetings just as we did with Avenida de Mesilla and Motel and, and, and all of our local projects here in town.

The other projects are real small, not impacting traffic a whole lot and so I, I won’t touch on those but does anybody have any questions about current construction DOT projects? Thank you.

Flores: Anyone else from the staff?

Murphy: Just, just one announcement. Our Planning Technician Orlando Fierro has left the MPO. He took a position with Dona Ana Mutual and we’ll be refilling that position but I just wanted to make you aware of turnover in MPO staff.

Flores: Okay. Thank you.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Flores: Okay. Moving on to Public Comment again. Anyone in the public?

11. ADJOURNMENT

Flores: Seeing none, I’ll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Doolittle: So moved.

Flores: Okay.

Barraza: I second.

Flores: Moved by Mr. Doolittle, seconded by Mayor Barraza. Everybody in favor? All right, thank you.

Motion passes unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Chairperson
AGENDA ITEM:
6.1 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

ACTION REQUESTED:
Approval by the MPO Policy Committee

SUPPORT INFORMATION:
TIP Spreadsheet
Email from Jolene Herrera, NMDOT

DISCUSSION:
On May 8, 2013, the MPO Policy Committee approved the 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The following amendment(s) to the TIP have been requested:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CN</th>
<th>Current FY</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Project &amp; Termini</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC00150</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NMDOT</td>
<td>I-10 MP 133-146</td>
<td>Pavement Preservation</td>
<td>Add $1.1M for a new project total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100620</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>NMDOT</td>
<td>I-10 MP 146-164</td>
<td>Pavement Preservation</td>
<td>Changed EOP to MP 164.3 to match TX state line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC00130</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>City of Las Cruces</td>
<td>El Paseo MP 0-1.72 (University to Main)</td>
<td>Signs, Markings, Raised Curb Medians, Crosswalks, “No Turn on Red” signs and upgrade pedestrian signals</td>
<td>Decrease design by $22K and increase construction by $71,300</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This amendment will not affect any other projects currently listed in the TIP.
RESOLUTION NO. 15-02

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE FY 2014-2019 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

The Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee is informed that:

WHEREAS, preparation of a financially constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a requirement of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) (U.S.C. 23 § 450.324); and

WHEREAS, the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for the planning and financial reporting of all federally funded and regionally significant transportation-related projects within the MPO Area for the specified fiscal years; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee adopted the FY 2014-2019 TIP on May 8, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee has determined that it is in the best interest of the MPO for the Resolution amending the FY 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program to be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Policy Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization:
THAT the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Fiscal Year 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program is amended as shown in Exhibit “A”, attached hereto and made part of this resolution.

(II)

THAT the Mesilla Valley MPO’s Self-Certification, as contained in Exhibit “B”, attached hereto and made part of this resolution is hereby approved.

(III)

THAT staff is directed to take appropriate and legal actions to implement this Resolution.

DONE and APPROVED this 11th day of February, 2015.

APPROVED:

__________________________

Chair

Motion By: 
Second By: 

VOTE: 
Chair Flores 
Vice Chair Sorg 
Councillor Pedroza 
Councillor Small 
Commissioner Garrett 
Commissioner Hancock 
Commissioner Duarte-Benavidez 
Mayor Barraza 
Trustee Bernal 
Mr. Doolittle

ATTEST: 

APPROVED AS TO FORM: 

30
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<th>FY</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Termini</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Funds listed on TIP</th>
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<tr>
<td>LC00130</td>
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<td>El Paseo</td>
<td>MP 0-1.72 (University to Main)</td>
<td>Signs, Markings, Raised Curb Medians, Crosswalks, &quot;No Turn on Red&quot; signs and upgrade pedestrian signals</td>
<td>$335,000</td>
<td>$401,300</td>
<td>Decrease design by $22K and increase construction by $71,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit "A" FY2015 February TIP Amendment
Resolution 15-02 Exhibit “B”
MESILLA VALLEY MPO SELF-CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 450.334, the New Mexico Department of Transportation, and the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Las Cruces urbanized area hereby certify that the transportation planning process is addressing the major issues in the metropolitan planning area and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of:


(2) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794;

(3) Section 1101(b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (Pub. L. 105-178) regarding the involvement of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in FHWA and FTA funded planning projects (Sec. 105(f), Pub. L. 97-424, 96 Stat. 2100; 49 CFR, Subtitle A, Part 26);


(5) The provision of 49 U.S.C. Part 20 regarding restrictions on influencing certain activities; and

(6) Sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506(c) and (d).

POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIR

__________________________________________  ______________________

NMDOT

__________________________________________  ______________________
Perfect! Thanks.

Please see the updated TIP Amendment sheet with the additional project.

Please include this in the TAC and PC packet and let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Jolene Herrera
Urban & Regional Planner D1 & D2
NMDOT South Region Design
750 N Solano Dr
Las Cruces, NM 88001
O: (575) 525-7358
C: (575) 202-4698

From: Tom Murphy [mailto:tmurphy@las-cruces.org]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 8:48 AM
To: Herrera, Jolene M, NMDOT
Cc: Andrew Wray
Subject: RE: LC00130 HSIP El Paseo Safety Project

We can. We just need to inform the PC that the BPAC didn’t see it and why.

From: Herrera, Jolene M, NMDOT [mailto:JoleneM.Herrera@state.nm.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 8:26 AM
To: Tom Murphy
Cc: Andrew Wray
Subject: FW: LC00130 HSIP El Paseo Safety Project

Good morning Tom,
We’ve been waiting for an answer from upper management on this project for a couple weeks now, and obviously missed the deadline to include adding funds to this project before the BPAC met. Would it be possible to take it straight to TAC and PC at the February meetings? I’m afraid if we wait for the next cycle the City won’t have time to get the TIP/STIP amended and an amended agreement before the June obligation deadline.

Please let me know what you think.

Thanks,

Jolene Herrera
Urban & Regional Planner D1 & D2
NMDOT South Region Design
750 N Solano Dr
Las Cruces, NM 88001
O: (575) 525-7358
C: (575) 202-4698

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From: Fetherlin, Kimberley, NMDOT
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 8:08 AM
To: Herrera, Jolene M, NMDOT
Cc: Sandoval, Jesus, NMDOT
Subject: FW: LC00130 HSIP El Paseo Safety Project

Here is the e-mail chain below.

Thanks,

Kim

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From: Haas, Tamara P, NMDOT
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 7:32 AM
To: Sandoval, Jesus, NMDOT
Cc: Fetherlin, Kimberley, NMDOT; Griffin, Jessica, NMDOT
Subject: RE: LC00130 HSIP El Paseo Safety Project

Jesus,

I am approving your request to move the design money to construction and to increase the funding amount. You will need to have the Coop Agreement for the project modified and this project will need to be ready to authorize no later than June 15, 2015.

Tammy
Good afternoon Tammy,

Have you had a chance to review the email request below?

Thank you,

Jesus S.
575-525-7336

Hi—I forwarded the request to Tammy Haas to review and provide guidance.

Thanks!

Jessica Griffin, AICP
Government to Government Unit Supervisor
NM Department of Transportation
PO Box 1149
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Office: (505) 476-2155
Cell: (505) 231-7769
Email: Jessica.Griffin@state.nm.us
Hi Jesus,

The HSIP program has moved to planning and Jessica Griffin is in charge of it. I have included her in this e-mail. I concur with your request as an advisor. But Jessica needs to approve this request.

Thank you

Afshin Jian P.E.
State Traffic Engineer
New Mexico Department of
TRANSPORTATION
Phone: (505) 827-5490
Cell: (505) 795-5993

Good morning Afshin,

The City of Las Cruces decided to do the design “in-house” for this project and will not be seeking reimbursement through the Cooperative Project Agreement. The reason is because the amount needed for construction was going to be more than originally anticipated. They already started the design phase and are planning to turn in the PS&E certification package by June of this year.

We need your concurrence to move the funds from design to construction by next STIP amendment but would like to keep $5,000.00 in design for a traffic analysis needed for the project. The City of Las Cruces is also requesting to increase the construction amount by $71,300.00 (see email below) to complete this safety project.

Construction
$304,500.00 initial estimate in the STIP
$25,500.00 to be moved from design to construction
$71,300.00 additional funds requested
$401,300.00 Grand total for Construction
Hi Jesus,

I have updated the cost estimate for the project (see the attached excel spreadsheet). The updated construction cost estimate is different than the one used for the grant application due to the fact that it is based on the topo survey recently done for the project. The scope of work as identified in the grant application has not changed and the updated quantities reflect what is required to accomplish the proposed improvements based on actual field conditions. The City of Las Cruces is requesting that the grant amount for construction be increased from $304,500.00 to $401,300.00.

As we discussed over the phone, the City of Las Cruces will be performing a Traffic analysis to determine the left turn stack lengths for proposed medians using our "Engineering On-Call" services contracts. The cost for this work is estimated to be $5,000.00. It is also anticipated based on discussions with the NMDOT Environmental Section, that there will not be the need to hire a consultant to complete the environmental document for the project and the "Final Design" for the project will be done "In-House" with our staff in which we will not be seeking reimbursement for, therefore, we are requesting that the amount for the existing Cooperative Project Agreement for design work be amended from $30,500.00 to $5,000.00 and to carry over the remaining balance to the construction agreement. The city will not be requesting to be reimbursed for the small amount of right-of-way anticipated for the project therefore precluding the need for an agreement for right-of-way reimbursement.

Further down the road, I am anticipating that the city will be ready to turn in the PS&E certification package for the project in June of this year.

Let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

Thanks.

Jerry P. Cordova, PE

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**From:** Jerry Cordova [mailto:jcordova@las-cruces.org]
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2015 1:17 PM
**To:** Sandoval, Jesus, NMDOT
**Cc:** Louis Grijalva; Hector Terrazas
**Subject:** RE: El Paseo Safety Project CN:LC00130
Good morning Jerry,

I’m checking on the status for the LC000130 project estimate. Just a friendly reminder that all information for STIP Amendment 8 needs to be to me by January 16, 2015. FHWA approval will be in March.

Please let me know if you have any questions and please email me any changes you need.

Jesus S.
575-525-7336
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MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE
DISCUSSION FORM FOR THE MEETING OF February 11, 2015

AGENDA ITEM:
7.1 Human Services Coordinated Plan Update

ACTION REQUESTED:
None

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:
None

DISCUSSION:
New Mexico Department of Transportation Staff will give a presentation regarding the Human Services Coordinated Plan Update.
AGENDA ITEM:
6.2 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

SUPPORT INFORMATION:
Text draft of the update to Transport 2040

DISCUSSION:
The Mesilla Valley MPO is currently in the process of updating its Metropolitan Transportation Plan, known as Transport 2040. MPO Staff will present to the committee regarding the text draft of the update to Transport 2040.
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Introduction

Brief History of MPOs and Transportation Legislation

Although MPO-like organizations have existed since the 1950’s in some large cities like Chicago and New York, the history of MPOs begins in 1962 with the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act. This legislation stated that metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) with populations larger than 50,000 must form organizations to review transportation needs at the regional level, rather than narrowly focusing on local issues. Initially, 224 MPOs were created by the mid-1960s. In 1973, MPOs began receiving funds to carry out the planning activities outlined in the federal highway legislation. Due to the trend of increasing urbanization, there are now at least 385 MPOs in the United States.

The next leap forward for MPOs came with the introduction of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, or ISTEA. ISTEA created a structure under which funding for MPOs was increased, the metropolitan planning process was strengthened, the public and stakeholder participation process was required, and multi-modal solutions were recommended.

The next step in the progression of transportation legislation occurred with the adoption of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21. This bill continued guaranteeing levels of federal funding for highway and transit programs, built up safety programs, and invested in technology research and applications.

The current transportation measure is called the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141) and known as MAP-21. It was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. Funding surface transportation programs at over $105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014, MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005.

MAP-21 is a milestone for the U.S. economy and the Nation’s surface transportation program. By transforming the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the system’s growth and development, MAP-21 creates a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program and builds on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991.


Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Framework

The Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally-required, multi-jurisdictional planning agency responsible for transportation planning in the City of Las Cruces, the Town of Mesilla,
and central Doña Ana County. While the majority of funding for MPOs is provided by the federal government, the local entities are required to contribute through a monetary match. The Mesilla Valley MPO was created in 1982 by the Governor after the metropolitan area exceeded a population of 50,000 in 1980. In general, the MPO was established to:

• direct multi-modal transportation planning,
• establish regional project priorities, and
• maintain eligibility to receive federal funds for the area transportation systems.

**Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Boundary**
The Mesilla Valley MPO is created under a joint powers agreement (JPA) between the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), City of Las Cruces, Town of Mesilla, and Doña Ana County. The current JPA was adopted in July of 2013 and notable changes in it are: adding the NMDOT as a voting member of the Policy Committee, changing the name from Las Cruces MPO, and cost sharing among the member jurisdictions for local matching funds.

The boundary of the Mesilla Valley MPO encompasses central Doña Ana County, extending from Radium Springs in the northwest to Chamberino and Berino in the south, and includes the City of Las Cruces, the Town of Mesilla, and villages in Doña Ana County such as Organ, Mesquite, and Vado. The Mesilla Valley MPO is located in the southeast corner of New Mexico Department of Transportation District One. The State of New Mexico is divided into six NMDOT districts. Each district is represented by one Transportation Commissioner. District One consists of Doña Ana, Sierra, Socorro, Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo counties. Figure 1-1 shows the current MPO boundary.

Figure 1-1
Mesilla Valley MPO Boundary and Vicinity
Mesilla Valley MPO Structure
The Mesilla Valley MPO consists of a Policy Committee comprised of NMDOT District One Engineer and nine elected officials: three City of Las Cruces Councilors, three Doña Ana County Commissioners, and three Town of Mesilla Trustees. The chairs of each entity (Mayor of Las Cruces, Mayor of Mesilla, and County Commission Chair) appoint members from their respective boards to serve on the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee makes decisions regarding regional transportation planning and project priorities.

The Policy Committee is supported by two advisory committees: the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee (BPAC). Technical Advisory Committee members are staff members from various agencies listed in the chart below. Staff members are appointed by the directors of their departments. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
Advisory Committee is made up of two groups: citizen representatives and staff members. Citizen representatives apply for and receive appointment through the Policy Committee. Staff members are appointed by the directors of their departments. Figure 1-2 illustrates the MPO Committee Structure.

Figure 1-2
Mesilla Valley MPO Committee Structure

The MPO is supported by a permanent full-time staff of a senior planner, two planners, a planning technician, and two part-time co-ops.

Core MPO Functions
There are five core functions of an MPO (The framework to carry out these core functions is detailed in the federal transportation regulations):

- Establish a setting: Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.
- Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options: Use data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives. Planning studies and evaluations are included in the Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP.
• Prepare and maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): Develop and update a long-range transportation plan for the metropolitan area covering a planning horizon of at least twenty years that fosters (1) mobility and access for people and goods, (2) efficient system performance and preservation, and (3) good quality of life.

• Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Develop a short-range (four-year) program of transportation improvements based on the long-range transportation plan; the TIP should be designed to achieve the area’s goals, using regulating, operating, management, and financial tools.

Involve the public: Actively engage the general public and other affected stakeholders in the four essential functions listed above. Figure 1-3 shows members of the public actively involved in the transportation planning process.

**Required MPO Documents**

Federal transportation regulations outline four documents that MPOs are required to create, implement, and maintain in order to carry out the five core MPO functions. Figure 1-4 illustrates the relationships that exist between each of the documents. These are as follows:

**Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) guides public involvement activities conducted by the MPO. The PPP contains the goals for public involvement, as well as specific public involvement techniques and procedures. The MPO uses the public involvement processes to develop all of the other documents listed below and carry out many of the tasks listed in the Unified Planning Work Program.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is the long range transportation plan that guides planning, construction, operation and maintenance of an integrated, multi-modal transportation network. The MTP sets the regional transportation vision and priorities through a variety of principles and strategies providing a foundation for all of the tasks and projects delineated in the UPWP and TIP. MPOs that are not designated as transportation management areas, like Mesilla Valley MPO, update their MTPs every five years. This document, entitled TRANSPORT 2040, is the Mesilla Valley MPO’s 2015 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and is an update of the original Transport 2040 adopted in 2010.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a biannual document that outlines transportation planning activities to be conducted by MPO staff as well as processes that MPO staff will participate in, but not oversee. The UPWP also includes a budget, allocating staff time and money toward accomplishing the tasks. The UPWP must be in compliance with the MTP.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range, financially constrained list of federally funded and/or regionally significant transportation projects determined by the Policy Committee. The list of projects is created in cooperation with residents, local governments, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). The TIP must be in compliance with the MTP. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) includes, without alteration, all of the TIPs from the MPOs.
and the transportation projects from the rural planning organizations throughout the State. The STIP is
maintained by the NMDOT.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan Purpose and Process**

One of the core MPO functions is the preparation and maintenance of a metropolitan transportation
plan (MTP). The MPO is required by federal regulations to update its MTP every five years. (U.S.C. 23 §450.322.c) The need for regular updates becomes clear when analyzing the evolving conditions in our
region.

As our metro area continues to grow and accommodate a diverse population, it is necessary that we
plan accordingly. Because of the warm, dry climate in our area and our unique local community, many
people are choosing to relocate and/or retire to this area. Las Cruces has been ranked by Forbes
magazine as one of the best small metro areas for business and careers. In addition, Las Cruces has a
university and community college that enroll over 25,000 students per year, further adding to the
population growth. As the population grows, the demands placed on the transportation system and the
transportation modes people choose will significantly change.

The planning and public input processes conducted by the MPO are also required to comply with Title
VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S.C. 23 §450.334.a.3) and the Environmental Justice Orders. The
goal of Title VI/Environmental Justice is to ensure that people have access to meaningful participation
and equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of transportation services. Our region must
support transportation options for all users. The diverse list of users includes low and moderate income
populations, students, seniors, and the disabled, as well as the influx of new residents. Because the
MPO area covers multiple jurisdictions the transportation system requires examination on a regional
scale, both in light of the significant growth that has occurred over the last 10 to 20 years and the
expected future growth.
2 Existing Conditions and Future Scenarios

Introduction
The government’s role, according to the New Mexico State Constitution, is to enact laws protecting public peace, health, and safety. Transportation, land use policies, codes, and practices have a major impact on the creation of healthy, livable and safe communities and contribute to these stated State mandates. Apart from these lofty goals, transportation related issues such as: air quality; traffic safety; mobility to jobs, services and shopping; economic development and other related issues have a direct impact on people’s lives on a daily basis.

One of the first steps to consider when developing a transportation plan is gathering information on existing conditions. It is imperative to understand the existing socio-economic, land use, environmental, and transportation conditions of a region before forecasting potential future conditions and deriving implementation strategies. In this chapter, current characteristics and future scenarios in the Mesilla Valley are covered as they relate to the following topics:

- Population Growth, Employment, and Location Efficiency
- Health and Safety
- Multimodal Transportation
- Regional Movement, Freight Corridors, and Security
- Natural and Cultural Resources

The discussion of the above topics will include a brief examination of national and state-wide studies and trends, and a more detailed discussion of the potential impacts of existing local and regional conditions. The identification of existing conditions and particularly future scenarios were developed jointly with Vision 2040 (a joint comprehensive planning process approved by the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County).

Characteristics of the MPO Region
The MPO region is located in south-central New Mexico. The Mesilla Valley metropolitan area is among the fastest growing areas in the State of New Mexico. The quality of life appears to be a major factor in this growth as many people are choosing to relocate and/or retire to the Las Cruces region because of the sunny (average of 330 days of sunshine) and dry climate, and the unique local community. The Las Cruces metropolitan area has been ranked by several national organizations as one of the top places to retire and one of the top places for small metro areas for business. These rankings have been awarded by organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Milken Institute, Forbes, and Money Magazine.

The Las Cruces Public School District is the second largest in the state, enrolling around 24,000 students. The Gadsden School District has 26 schools, located in the southern portion of Doña Ana County, serving more than 14,000 students. Doña Ana County is home to New Mexico State University, NASA, White Sands Missile Range, and something else. Together, New Mexico State University (NMSU)
and Doña Ana Community College (DACC) enroll over 25,000 students a year.

The City of Las Cruces is the second largest city in the state of New Mexico in terms of size and population. Many growth-related opportunities and challenges exist that require coordination among a variety of agencies and jurisdictions.

**Population**

Because the MPO area covers the Town of Mesilla, the City of Las Cruces, and central Doña Ana County, the transportation system must be examined on a regional level.

Las Cruces experienced a 36.4% increase in population between 2000 (74,267) and 2013 (101,324). In Doña Ana County, there was a 22.2% increase in population between 2000 (174,682) and 2010 (201,603). The Mesilla Valley MPO boundary area had a population of approximately 157,000 in 2010. The rate of population increase has slowed in recent years and projections have been revised downward. Doña Ana County lost population from 2012 (213,952) to 2013 (213,460) according to Census Bureau estimates.

Figure X-xx shows the projected population growth from 2010 to 2040 for Doña Ana County. Figure 2-4 shows the associated growth rate. While the Doña Ana County growth rate remains above the state average, there is a constant decline in the rate of growth. SOURCE: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Univ. of New Mexico.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doña Ana</td>
<td>210,536</td>
<td>226,855</td>
<td>243,164</td>
<td>258,887</td>
<td>273,513</td>
<td>286,818</td>
<td>299,088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure X-xx 1

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**Senior Population Growth**

In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau released projections about which states will grow the fastest through the year 2030. A particularly striking aspect of these projections is the increasing population of people over the age of 65. In fact, beginning in 2011 this age cohort will grow at a faster rate than the total
population growth rate in every single state, with the greatest increases being in southwestern states.

The same U.S. Census Bureau projections showed that, in New Mexico, the population of people over 65 years of age is expected to increase by 141% from 1995 to 2025. As a result, New Mexico ranks as having the 10th fastest growing senior population in the United States. Figure 2-5 shows projected growth rates of each age cohort as a percent of total population in Doña Ana County. The graph indicates that growth rates for most of the age cohorts remain steady, but the age cohort of 65+ significantly increases to make up about 17% of the total population by 2025.

**Households**
Nationally, household trends include more single households and households without children; this is in part due to the increase in the senior population. Figure 2-6 shows these past trends and future projections. While most national researchers agree that single-family detached housing will remain the preference for most home buyers, a dramatic change in housing demand is expected between large lot and small lot developments where smaller lots will be preferred. These trends will be accompanied with an increased desire for services and public transportation located near housing.

An analysis completed through the Vision 2040 planning process has shown a similar trend toward smaller lots in Doña Ana County (See Figure 2-7, page 12).

**Income and Disability**
Several key statistics regarding income and disability from 2000 census data are noted in Figure 2-8, Socio-demographics Quick Facts 1. This table compares United States statistics to Doña Ana County data as they pertain to percent of persons with disabilities (ages 21-64), households below poverty, and households without an automobile. The most prominent difference between the national and local demographic data is the percentage of households below poverty in Doña Ana County (25.39%) compared to the United States (12.38%). This type of data is important because the MPO is responsible for planning a transportation system that offers mobility choices for all users.

For example, when conducting transportation studies and plans, the MPO identifies and maps the location of low to moderate income areas and evaluates the potential impacts from proposed transportation projects. Figure 2-9 shows the low to moderate income areas, slum and blight areas, and special survey areas for Las Cruces. Low to moderate areas are primarily residential in character where at least 51% of the residents in a census tract, census tract block group, or other officially recognized boundary, are low and moderate-income persons. Slum and blight areas are designated by the local government as meeting the State of New Mexico definition of slum and/or blight. Special survey areas are documented through accepted survey techniques (generally door-to-door surveys), and are primarily residential in character, where at least 51% of the residents are low and moderate income persons.

**Employment**

**Employment Sectors**
Different employment sectors result in different transportation needs. For example, retail and hospital
jobs have more dispersed and non-traditional hours than traditional 8-to-5 jobs. Therefore, identifying the distribution of jobs across employment sectors can be useful for understanding and predicting traffic congestion as well as planning service hours for public transportation. In addition, the location of employment centers, the types of employment, and the size of the work force also help to understand current transportation conditions and plan for future needs. These factors are important aspects of developing a Transportation Demand Model (TDM), discussed further in Chapter 4. A more detailed description of future transportation needs, as projected by the Mesilla Valley MPO travel demand model, is available in the section on Multimodal Transportation. As shown in Figure XX-XX, the sector that employs the greatest number of employees in Doña Ana County is Government (626%), followed by Education and Health services (818% followed by Leisure and Hospitality (111%), and Professional Business Services (9%).

**Government**

Government sector jobs employ the greatest number of people (double that of the second highest percentage for Education and Health Services). Government jobs also tend to have a high number of people in one location. For example, there are a large number of employees working in the Doña Ana County Government Center, the Las Cruces City Hall, the Federal Court House, and White Sands Missile Range. In addition, because these jobs (not including the police and fire services) are generally day jobs they contribute significantly to AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes.

**Education and Health Services**

Education and Health Services employs the second highest percentage of people. The location of hospitals, clinics, and educational institutions are significant destinations that must be easily accessible. In addition to the two main community hospitals (Memorial Medical Center and Mountain View Regional Medical Center), there are a variety of retirement and assisted living centers, nursing agencies, and specialty hospitals in the region. The location of health services is important because hospitals, in particular, have a large number of employees who work different shifts throughout a 24 hour period. Finally, emergency services need uncongested and well-connected routes to hospitals.

Large educational employment centers consist of Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS), Gadsden Independent Schools, New Mexico State University (NMSU), and Doña Ana Community College (DACC). NMSU is a hub of activity throughout the week and on weekends because of daytime and nighttime classes and special events held at the campus.

**Other Large Employment Centers**

Walmart and Sitel are noteworthy employment centers because of the number of people that they employ. Walmart also attracts many shoppers each day to its three 24-hour shopping stores. Finally, there are several industrial centers and other activity areas that have been master planned and/or are in the process of developing into important destinations. The following provides more information on industrial parks and activity areas.

**West Mesa Industrial Park**

The West Mesa Industrial Park is located south of the Las Cruces International Airport and I-10. The park area consists of 1,820 acres of land. The main goal for this research park includes light industry, general manufacturing, and aviation-related technology-based industries. Eighteen companies
currently exist in the park and seventeen others are in the design and marketing phase. Future development includes an aerospace business park immediately south to support businesses and suppliers for Spaceport America.

Downtown Area

Since 2004, City of Las Cruces staff has proceeded with the implementation of the strategies outlined in the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Currently, in 2014, City staff is working on an update of that plan titled The Main Street Downtown Plan. Main Street Downtown is envisioned to be the cultural corridor of the Las Cruces city center, boasting museums, art galleries, theaters, unique shops, local restaurants, and the popular Farmer’s and Crafts Market. In November of 2012, Main Street was reopened to automobile traffic. Planning for the Downtown Plaza has continued and the Plaza is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2016.

University Area and the Arrowhead Research Park

New Mexico State University (NMSU) is located at the intersection of Interstate 10 and Interstate 25. NMSU is therefore strategically located to impact both the state and region as it strives to expand its academic and research programs to become one of the top tier research institutions in the United States. By the year 2020, NMSU expects to be in the top quartile of its defined peer institution group and expects its student population at the Las Cruces campus to grow to 25,000 within 20 years. The Arrowhead Research Park is located on the NMSU campus on a 257 acre parcel of land. The main goal for this research park is to enhance technology transfer and to provide private enterprises with access to academic and technical resources, including a state of the art space and high tech communication networks.

Telshor-Lohman Area

The geographic center of Las Cruces is roughly at the intersection of Lohman Avenue and Telshor Boulevard. This intersection is flanked by a variety of commercial services including the largest mall in the area, the Mesilla Valley Mall. Along with the typical stores available at a mall, the Mesilla Valley Mall includes a movie theater and a food court. In the area of the mall are other commercial services including restaurants, a grocery store, various retail outlets, office buildings, and a hotel. Lohman Avenue serves as one of the main crossings of I-25 to the east mesa, in addition to US 70 and University Avenue. As a result, the intersection of Lohman and Telshor has the second highest volume of traffic in the metropolitan area. This area is the major destination and activity center in the MPO region.

Santa Teresa Industrial Parks

Although the Santa Teresa Industrial Park is not located in the MPO Area, staff felt that its inclusion was important because this border crossing has the potential for significant impact on the MPO region. Also, this activity center would be connected to the West Mesa Industrial Park by the proposed High Mesa roadway. The Santa Teresa Logistics Park is located adjacent to the border of Mexico and consists of 225 acres of industrial zoned land. The Bi-national Industrial Park at the Doña Ana County International Airport will be the site of international rail yards that will be relocated from downtown El Paso.

For 2008, the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) compiled data on the major
employers in the region and classified them by number of employees. An employer had to have at least 500 employees to be a part of this list, Figure 2-11, page 15. Figure 2-12 shows the location of some of these major employers and their number of employees, including several of the locations listed above in Government and Health and Education Services.

**Location Efficiency**

Housing location and transportation options can have a significant impact on a household budget. Housing costs are the largest household expense, yet transportation costs can also dramatically impact the household budget. Transportation costs can include purchase of a vehicle or bicycle, fuel, short and long-term maintenance, registration, insurance, and other fees. The largest indicator of current and future transportation costs are urban form (particularly proximity to employment centers and regional destinations) and access to public transportation. These costs can vary considerably across a metro area depending upon development patterns and transportation system connectivity. For example, widely dispersed retail shops, employment centers, and service providers can increase the impact of transportation costs on a household budget.

**Housing and Transportation Costs**

Housing and transportation costs, as a part of household expenses, are steadily increasing as the nation continues to grow horizontally. Figure XX-XX illustrates the result of a national study completed in 2013 for the year 2012 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to the study, the percent of housing and transportation costs for the average American family is: 3333% for housing and 1818% for transportation. Since 2011, transportation expenditures have seen some of the largest percentage increases of all major expenditure items. Gasoline expenditures increased 29.6% from 2010 to 2012, mostly due to a 24.7% increase in 2011. Gasoline expenditures remained relatively stable in 2012, but transportation expenditures continued to increase. The Bureau of Labor attributes this to an increase in vehicle purchases from 2011 to 2012.

**Housing and Transportation Index**

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) has developed a Housing and Transportation Affordability Index based on detailed, peer-reviewed studies that correlate odometer readings and federal household transportation surveys with local factors and data such as neighborhood density, street grid complexity, availability of transit, and housing costs as a percent of the area median income. Housing costs alone are traditionally considered affordable when they make up no more than 30% of a household income. However, when including transportation costs based on the location of the home, the true cost of housing decisions emerges.

Figure XX-XX is a map of Housing and Transportation Affordability Index in the Las Cruces area. The map on the left only displays housing prices as a percent of total income. The areas in yellow are ones where housing prices are less than 30% of income and areas in blue are 30% and greater. The map on the right displays housing prices plus transportation costs as a percent of total income. The areas in yellow are ones where the housing plus transportation costs are less than 45% of income and areas in blue are 45% or greater.
**Affordable Housing**

In 2009 a Las Cruces Affordable Housing Strategies report was completed by the City of Las Cruces Affordable Housing Ad Hoc Committee. Among the recommendations of this report was for the City to spread affordable housing throughout the City, proactively encourage multi-family development along transit corridors and to create minimum density requirements to implement higher density. The Mesilla Valley MPO supports affordable housing strategies, particularly appropriate density and dispersion of affordable housing along with the location of mixed-use centers that can support transit oriented development (TOD).

Additionally, since 2013, the City of Las Cruces has been working on updating its Community Profile: Comprehensive Plan 2040. As part of this update, the profile identifies needs for context sensitivity as well as improved mixed use land use within the City.

**Health and Safety**

Vital to the future of the Mesilla Valley region are the health and safety implications of a poorly vs. well planned region. Some of the issues affected by transportation planning include changes in air quality (respiratory health), a built environment that encourages or discourages physical activity (obesity and weight related disease), crash incidents (injuries and fatalities), and mobility and accessibility for children, the elderly, and the disabled (direct routes to school and access to services).

Figure 2-15
Health Quick Facts 1
In the United States:

- About 17% of nation’s young people aged 2 to 19 years is obese, whereas more than one-third of our adults are obese
- Heart disease continue to remain the number one cause of death for all Americans (about 598,000 in 2010)
- Less than half (48%) of all adults meet the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines (adults need at least 2.5 hours a week of physical activity)
- Americans living in the South are more likely to be less physically active than Americans living in the West, Northeast and Midwest regions of the country

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Health**

The transportation system is part of the built environment. A poorly connected system combined with widely dispersed and segregated land uses contribute to poor health and a decrease in physical activity. Over the past 20 years the built environment has contributed to a decrease in health levels of U.S. citizens. The built environment can promote a sedentary lifestyle that contributes to heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, and arthritis, as well as an overall diminished quality of life and increasing health care costs. In the United States, obesity among adults and children is at epidemic levels and is the fastest growing public health problem. This public health problem is costly to individuals as well as to the nation as a whole.
Figure 2-16
Health Quick Facts 3
In New Mexico:
- Nearly 63% of New Mexico’s adults are overweight or obese
- In 2012, 22% of New Mexico’s adults reported that during the past month, they had not participated in any physical activity
- About 27% of high school students were obese or overweight in 2011

Sources: New Mexico Indicator Based Information System (NMIBIS), 2012 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey results for overweight and obesity, and physical inactivity in adults, and 2011 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey results for overweight and obesity in high school students.

Figure 2-17
Health Quick Facts 3
- Oja and colleagues (1998) reported that daily walking and bicycling to work improves the cardio-respiratory and metabolic fitness of previously inactive adults
- In New Mexico, 2.8% of workers bike or walk to work (Census Bureau, 2014)
- Sesso and colleagues (1999) found that walking more than 10 blocks everyday resulted in a 33% reduced cardiovascular disease risk
- Walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week can cut risk of diabetes and heart disease in half, as well as reduce blood pressure, stress, and cholesterol (visual.ly, 2011, everybodywalk.org)

Many experts now believe there is a connection between decreased physical activity and the design of our towns and cities. *Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl: A National Analysis of Physical Activity, Obesity, and Chronic Disease* was written in September of 2003 by Barbara A. McCann and Reid Ewing, with help from Rutgers University, the Surface Transportation Policy Project, and Smart Growth America (SGA). In this publication the authors review the many studies that have been done in the United States showing a “clear association between the type of place people live and their activity levels, weight, and health.” This report also follows up on the study titled *Relationship between Urban Sprawl and Physical Activity, Obesity, and Morbidity*, which found a direct association between community form and people’s health. The study concluded that “people living in counties marked by sprawling development are likely to walk less and weigh more than people who live in less sprawling counties.” The study looked at 448 counties across the United States.

These studies signal that there is indeed a connection between land use patterns, active transportation opportunities, and growing obesity rates in the U.S. Additional studies have shown that people living in areas with increased opportunities for active transportation can experience improvements in overall health (see Figure 2-17). Ultimately, appropriate changes to our transportation and land use policies may be necessary.

**Safety**
Planning, designing, and constructing safe transportation facilities and corridors is the top priority for every governmental agency responsible for public transport. This guiding priority does not guarantee that crashes, injuries, and fatalities are eliminated, but provides the impetus to identify and mitigate
dangerous routes and intersections and to reduce property damage and loss of life. Improving safety throughout the transportation system also reduces the economic impacts to the region by reducing the number of costly crash incidents and the associated congestion. Direct and indirect costs of traffic crashes include property damage, emergency services, medical bills, loss of time at work, and loss of life.

Figure 2-19
Safety Quick Facts 1
In 2011 in New Mexico:
- 353 people were killed in traffic crashes. Crash related fatalities decreased by 14.5% between 2007 and 2011.
- Alcohol/drug involvement was the contributing factor in 42% of NM fatalities in 2011.
- In an average day in New Mexico, there were 118 crashes that involved 309 people, 51 people injured and 1 person killed
- 16.9 per 100,000 people died in crashes compared to a national rate of 10.9 per 100,000 people
Source: New Mexico Department of Transportation, 2011 New Mexico Traffic Crash Annual Report

Figure 2-20
Safety Quick Facts 2
In 2011 in Las Cruces area:
- There were 34 crashes per 1000 city residents
- Alcohol-involved crash rate was 1.52 per 1000 city residents (151 alcohol-involved crashes)
- There were two fatal crashes resulting in three fatalities.

Motor Vehicle Crashes
Nationally, motor vehicle crashes are by far the leading cause of accidental death. (See Figure 2-18) Fortunately, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), since 2005 crash incidents have decreased from 43,510 to 32,367 in 2011. In 2012 the numbers went up by 4.35% (34,080 crashes). Nevertheless, motor vehicle safety is a serious issue that needs to be addressed as a high priority in transportation planning.

NMDOT Safety Planning
On a state level, safety issues are incorporated into the NMDOT Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan 2030 and the NMDOT Comprehensive Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP).

The Statewide Multimodal Plan addresses issues such as safety in construction zones, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, public awareness, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) solutions. The plan also supports Livable Communities and Complete Streets concepts that promote designing communities to facilitate walking, biking, and using public transit as alternatives to dependence on private vehicle usage.

The 2010 edition of the CTSP is designed to address the new goal and fine tune some of the emphasis areas and strategies based on more recent events. The revised and updated goals and strategies are
presented in this edition of the CTSP, initiating the next phase of the CTSP program to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on New Mexico’s roadways.

In conjunction with the CTSP, NMDOT’s transportation safety planning program has been retooled to orient the planning process to more effectively integrate safety. To organize NMDOT in a safety conscious manner, a Traffic Safety Management Team (TSMT) was created. It includes the Secretary of Transportation and senior leadership from NMDOT’s planning, traffic safety, engineering (design, construction, operations, and maintenance), transit, rail, research, and public information divisions. The TSMT meets monthly to track implementation progress, create effective initiatives and countermeasures, and address barriers to safety program implementation.

[Insert existing Figure 2-18]

Figure 2-19
Safety Quick Facts 1
In 2011 in New Mexico:

- 351 people were killed in 2011. Crash related fatalities have decreased 22% since 2002
- Alcohol/drug involvement was the top contributing factor to fatalities (42%)
- In an average day in New Mexico, there were 118 crashes that involved 309 people, 51 people injured and 1 person killed
- 16.9 per 100,000 people died in crashes compared to a national rate of 10.9 per 100,000 people

Source: New Mexico Department of Transportation, 2011 New Mexico Traffic Crash Annual Report

Finally, the NMDOT Multimodal Freight Study (Phase One Final Report) specifically highlights the safety needs of trade corridors and intermodal access routes that traverse disadvantaged neighborhoods. The study also identifies the need to address health and environmental concerns. More detailed information on freight is covered in the section on Regional Movement, Freight Corridors, and Security.

**MPO Region Crash Data**

MPO staff tracks crash statistics in the region. The crash statistics are provided by the University of New Mexico Division of Government Research (UNM-DGR). DGR receives crash data from the NMDOT Traffic and Safety Bureau that were collected from local police and sheriff departments. Several maps have been produced by MPO staff from data collected between 2009 and 2011. These include:

- a map of the crash rates for thoroughfare intersections in the City of Las Cruces
- a map of crash densities in the City of Las Cruces for motorcycle, pedestrian, and bicycle crashes

This data, along with the information available from the NMDOT District 1 Community Reports, provide a comprehensive look at potential safety issues in the MPO area.

Safety Quick Fact 2
In 2011 in Las Cruces area:

- There were 33.7 crashes per 1000 city residents
- Alcohol-involved crash rate was 1.52 per 1000 city residents (151 alcohol-involved crashes)
There were two fatal crashes. 

Source: New Mexico Traffic Crash Annual Report 2011, NMDOT, Planning and Traffic Safety Division

Top Ten Intersection Crash Rates in Las Cruces

The highest crash densities for pedestrian-involved crashes are around the areas of NMSU, the El Paseo/Idaho intersection, and the Madrid/Solano intersection. The highest crash densities for bicycle-involved crashes are around the area of NMSU, the Solano/Idaho intersection, and the Missouri/Don Roser intersection. The highest crash densities for motorcycle-involved crashes are around the area of NMSU and along the Lohman-Amador corridor, specifically at the intersections with Telshor, Main, and Alameda. The highest crash densities for motor vehicle-involved crashes are along the Lohman-Amador corridor, specifically between Solano and Alameda and the intersection with Telshor, and at the area near El Paseo and Idaho.

Safety Quick Fact 3

- In a medium sized metropolitan area, the average cost of crashes per person is $1682, while the cost of congestion is $349 (The AAA’s Crashes vs. Congestion Report)
- NHTSA Study shows motor vehicle crashes have $871 billion economic and societal impact on U.S. citizens- economic costs alone are nearly $900 for each person living in the U.S.

These maps indicate that there are key locations where crash rates are high and further crash analyses
are needed to determine cause and potential countermeasures. These locations are mostly at intersections of thoroughfares, but sometimes entire corridors need to be evaluated.

**Motor Vehicle Crash Rate Map**

In the City of Las Cruces, the calculated crash rate average among all thoroughfare intersections is 11.34 per million vehicles for the years 2009 through 2011. Figure 2-21, page XX shows the top ten intersections with the highest crash rates. Appendix D lists all thoroughfare intersections with available data, and the associated crash rates. The Motor Vehicle Crash Rate Map for the City of Las Cruces, Figure 2-23, identifies the crash rates for all thoroughfare intersections.

Thoroughfare Intersection Crash Rate Map for the City of Las Cruces
These intersections should be a top priority for future studies and funding to identify and implement safety countermeasures. Further studies should also include a more thorough examination of crash types, time of day, and other behavioral and physical crash factors.

**Multimodal Transportation**

A built environment that integrates all transportation modes is essential for a well-functioning system. Transportation decision makers must consider the impacts of infrastructure investments and land development on mobility for all modes and safe connections to a variety of destinations. In addition,
the smooth transition from one mode to another (intermodal transportation), such as connections between bicycle lanes and transit stops, create a complete and healthy transportation network that is safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

For community cohesiveness and safety for children, neighborhoods should be people-oriented by providing safe streets for both motorized and non-motorized transportation. Streets are public spaces in which all users should feel safe and comfortable using. This section provides a discussion of transportation conditions for all modes in the MPO region.

- Connectivity: Accessibility and Mobility
- Non-motorized Conditions: Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Trail
- Transit Conditions
- Automobile Traffic Conditions
- Travel Demand Modeling and Vehicle Miles Traveled

**Connectivity**
Connectivity is a necessary component of a well-functioning transportation system in order to provide accessibility and mobility for all users. This requires all transportation modes be integrated throughout the system by appropriate design and connected networks.

**Accessibility**
Accessibility, defined as the ability to reach a desired destination, can be improved by diverse land use development in addition to increased transportation options. Land use planning is important because land uses that are in closer proximity to residential areas can decrease the length of trips and provide more opportunity for modal choice.

**Mobility**
Mobility is the physical movement from one place to another and relates to the different modes or options that are available to move from point A to point B. Shifting trips to a wider variety of modes can help alleviate congestion; however, the transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems need to be convenient and well-connected in order to reduce congestion on roadways. In some areas, particularly rural areas of Doña Ana County, the most vital mobility issues are that public transportation is not available and street system connectivity is lacking. As of 2014, the South Central Regional Transit District has begun addressing some of these needs. These issues significantly impact many people’s ability to get from home to work or school.

**Non-motorized Conditions**
Non-motorized facilities include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, and multi-use paths. Due to the geographic nature of the MPO area there are many opportunities for non-traditional transportation networks, including irrigation ditches and arroyos.

**Pedestrian Conditions**
Developers are required to build sidewalks in all new developments within the City of Las Cruces. In Doña Ana County, in most cases the developer is required to build shoulders but not sidewalks; however, sidewalks are required in areas that have urban-type zoning. Unfortunately, there are places where the sidewalks are discontinuous and/or are not ADA compliant and this has contributed to a
reduction of non-motorized transportation opportunities.

In order to improve pedestrian infrastructure, it is the responsibility of local jurisdictions and the NMDOT ensure that pedestrian facilities are constructed or upgraded as part of transportation projects. Potential improvements are contingent upon the local jurisdictions developing a comprehensive infrastructure inventory, a function served by the MPO Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan. Further compilation of this inventory could be assisted through initiating neighborhood assessments of the pedestrian environment. This type of data collection will help prioritize the future improvement of pedestrian facilities. Finally, another important component of improving the pedestrian environment is to establish areas or activity centers throughout the county that are of high priority for improving the walking environment.

Bicycle Conditions

Because the Mesilla Valley MPO area has an outstanding climate, bicycles can be ridden almost year-round. Building a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities is one of the most important needs facing a developing multimodal transportation system in the MPO region. Without a complete system of bicycle facilities, bicycle riders are either forced to take a less direct and more time consuming route to get to their destination or choose another form of transportation. Some bicyclists prefer using in-road bicycle facilities that provide movement with the flow of automobile traffic and direct access to destinations. These facilities include bicycle lanes and wide curb lanes. Bicyclists are to be treated as vehicles in the road and are expected to follow the same traffic rules as per New Mexico state law.

Since 2005, the City of Las Cruces has endeavored to become a Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) through the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). In September 2005, the City of Las Cruces received an honorable mention from LAB. However, in 2008 when the city reapplied, no award or mention was given. In an effort to progress more rapidly toward a BFC designation, the city initiated the BFC Task Force. The City of Las Cruces applied for a designation in 2010 and was given bronze level status. The certification is due for renewal in 2015.

Since 2002 the RoadRUNNER Transit has installed bicycle racks on all buses. As buses are replaced, bicycle racks were included as standard equipment. All fixed route buses now have bike racks.

Historic and Current Miles of Bicycle Facilities

In 2000 10.7 miles of in-road bicycle facilities existed. Most of those facilities were in the jurisdiction of the City of Las Cruces. The City developed them in the late 1970s after the creation of the “Guidelines for Bridle Paths and Bicycle Lanes.” By 2004 the City developed 32.2 miles of new in-road bicycle facilities for a total of almost 50 miles. In 2010, at the time of the original adoption of Transport 2040 there were 99 miles of bikeways. In 2012 that number had been increased to 140 miles of in-road bicycle facilities

Trail Conditions

A variety of paths are available in the MPO area. These paths include both paved and unpaved surfaces. Fifteen miles of paved multi use paths include Triviz, La Llorona, Sonoma Ranch, Union, and University (see the Trail System Priorities Plan for a map of these facilities).

Multi-use paths on independent rights-of-way can provide expansion of existing non-motorized facilities and unique connections to many destinations such as schools, parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces. However, it must be noted that the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials

64
(AASHTO) recommends multi-use paths should be used in locations where intersecting conflicts can be minimized.

In September of 2009, the City of Las Cruces completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EBID in order to begin developing a regional trail network along EBID laterals and drains. The MOU addresses liability issues, special use permits, and maintenance and operations. The MPO encourages Doña Ana County and the Town of Mesilla to enter into similar MOUs with EBID to create a complete regional trail network.

Since 2012, the Mesilla Valley MPO has utilized counters on the multiuse paths in the MPO area. The counts are included in Figure X-XX.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Avg/week</th>
<th>Avg/day</th>
<th>Most/hr</th>
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<td>Outfall Channel</td>
<td>Beginning to Valley</td>
<td>1274</td>
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<td>45.5</td>
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<td>Valley to Doña Ana (RR Tracks)</td>
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<td>El Camino Real to Triviz</td>
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<td>Triviz</td>
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<td>15149.25</td>
<td>2164.179</td>
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<td>Union</td>
<td>Conlee to Harrleson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>Main to University</td>
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<td>Calle del Norte to Interstate 10 Overpass</td>
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<td>Picacho to End</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>313.75</td>
<td>44.82</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Transit Conditions
RoadRUNNER Fixed Route Service

RoadRUNNER fixed route service began operating in 1986 under the City of Las Cruces Public Services Department. Since then the system has grown from 4 routes to 8. Additional routes funded by NMSU and DACC have also been added including 3 routes on the NMSU campus, and one route that travels from the Mesilla Valley Mall transfer point to the DACC east side campus for a total of 12 routes. A 2006 transit network study recommended a new bi-directional route network, a set of additional routes along key corridors, and a site location and design for the new intermodal center. The southwest corner of Lohman and Alameda is the location selected for the new intermodal center and a design Request for Proposal is in process to develop the site. RoadRUNNER Transit is also considering an express route along Lohman and Amador.

The bi-directional (two way) route network was developed and implemented in 2008. Further information on the plans for the transit system can be found in the 5-year Transit Strategic Plan. For most routes, the bi-directional network completes one direction of a route within 30 minutes, with headways currently at one hour. The system is intended to be easily scalable by adding additional vehicles. The current system connects the route at timed transfer points - Downtown, Mesilla Valley Mall, and at Venus and Northrise called the Venus Transfer Point. Figure 2-29 shows the current RoadRUNNER route system.

Annual Unlinked Trips for Fixed Route and Paratransit Service

![Modal Characteristics: Annual Unlinked Trips](image-url)
The number of trips made by the passengers (unlinked trips) has been steadily increasing since 2010 for bus route system. However, in the past years, trip numbers in paratransit services were steady.

Operating Expenses and Annual Vehicle Revenue Mile for Fixed Route and Paratransit Service

![Modal Characteristics: Operating Expenses](image)

Figure X depicts the historical trend of operating expenses and annual vehicle revenue mile for bus route system and paratransit services in the Las Cruces area.

**Paratransit Service**

Curb-to-curb demand-response paratransit service (also known as Dial-a-Ride) was established in 1986 along with the fixed route service. It originally operated within a ¼ mile radius of the fixed route service and was available to citizens who meet the qualifications of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This service is required by ADA in any area that offers fixed-route service. In 1994, Dial-a-Ride was expanded to include the entire City of Las Cruces. In 1997, the service was merged with senior transportation, and all seniors who registered with Senior Programs became eligible to ride. Its fares continue to be paid for by a City of Las Cruces subsidy, and as a result, this service is popular with seniors. Handling the increasing percentage of senior trips that are supplied by Dial-a-Ride service is a challenge. Dial-a-Ride service tends to be more convenient than fixed route service, because it is
curb-to-curb and eliminates the need to walk to a bus stop. In 2005, the cost of providing one trip on fixed route service was $2.93, while the cost of providing one trip on Dial-a-Ride was $12.71. While this cost is a significant barrier to adding more vans and drivers, demand continues to rise, and seniors are often denied rides. Dial-a-Ride fares increased from $1.00 to $2.00 in 2008.

South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD)
The SCRTD recently implemented four routes providing service into Las Cruces from Anthony/Sunland Park, and Chaparral. SCRTD also contracts with Rio Grande Transit and Z-Trans to provide transit service from Sierra County (Elephant Butte/TorC) and Alamogordo respectively.

NMDOT Transit Services
Other fixed route services in the MPO area that connect to the urban transit system include the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Gold Route and the NMDOT Silver Route. The Silver Route provides service from New Mexico State University (NMSU) and the City of Las Cruces to White Sands Missile Range. The Gold Route provides service from Downtown City of Las Cruces, NMSU, Anthony, and El Paso, Texas.

These routes provide an economical option for commuters. According to the NMDOT Transit and Rail Bureau, riders receive a cost savings of $0.46 to $0.75 per mile compared to the cost of driving. Riders who have a Park and Ride monthly pass save about $992 per month compared to the cost of driving. The service also demonstrates the potential ridership for possible future passenger rail service in this corridor. A conservative estimate of 302 passenger trips per day will result in 75,500 passenger trips per year in this corridor. Figure 2-32 provides the ridership for the Gold Route since its recent inception in September of 2009. For a statewide picture of the transit ridership over time, Figure 2-33 shows the statewide Average Daily Passenger Trips and Average Daily Ridership from 2004 to 2009.

Greyhound and El Paso-Los Angeles Limousine also provide a local stop in the City of Las Cruces as a part of their networks. These services will relocate to the Intermodal Center upon completion of the project.

Rail
Commuter rail is a viable possibility in the future of the region, but would require considerable updates to the rail infrastructure and investment in passenger facilities. The South Central Regional Transit District completed a general feasibility study for developing a commuter line between El Paso and Las Cruces. A more detailed feasibility analysis of commuter rail in Southern New Mexico must be completed to examine the potential benefits and drawbacks. For comparison, the current ridership on the rail line between Albuquerque and Santa Fe is about 112,000 per month since the line was completed to Santa Fe in December 2009.

Statewide and Regional Public Transportation Planning Efforts
New Mexico Statewide Public Transportation Plan
The New Mexico Statewide Transportation Plan (SPTP) evaluates the demand and needs of rural public transportation, intercity passenger bus, and commuter rail systems throughout the State of New Mexico. The plan intends to provide clear and concise performance measures and prioritized projects
to efficiently allocate limited funding resources. A draft is available at [http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Transit_Rail/NMStatewidePublicTransPlanFINAL.pdf](http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Transit_Rail/NMStatewidePublicTransPlanFINAL.pdf).

**South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD)**
The Regional Transit District (RTD) Enabling Act allowed for the creation of a transit district between two or more jurisdictions. In the MPO area, the SCRTD is one of three RTD’s to receive $250,000 from the State to develop a regional plan. The SCRTD is comprised of the Counties of Doña Ana, Sierra, and Otero (and all incorporated Municipalities within). The SCRTD is intended to become a separate governmental entity with authority to finance, plan, construct, operate, maintain, and promote a regional public transit system. More information about the SCRTD is available at [scrtd.org](http://scrtd.org).

**Coordinating Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP)**
In 2008 the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) developed a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP) provided broad recommendations for coordination efforts for the entire State, including Sierra, Socorro, and Doña Ana Counties. The Coordinated Mobility Action Plan (CMAP) developed by RoadRUNNER and the MPO expands upon the recommendations provided in the CHSTP. The CMAP document contains specific action items to increase transportation coordination in Doña Ana County. The action items were developed by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from human service agencies and transportation providers. More information about CMAP is available at [http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Transit_Rail.html](http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Transit_Rail.html).

**Aviation Conditions**
Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are served by three airports. Cargo, charter, and general aviation services are available via the Las Cruces International Airport and the Doña Ana County Airport at Santa Teresa. In addition, Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ) are located at both the Las Cruces and Santa Teresa airports. Commercial passenger air service for the region is provided by the El Paso International Airport.

The main airport in the MPO area is the Las Cruces International Airport, which was opened in 1942 as a military training facility. The airport is in the design process for a new traffic control tower, but does not have funding for construction yet. The current airport facilities consist of:

- Two lighted asphalt runways and one concrete runway with associated taxiways, blast pads, approach slope, end and edge lighting capable of supporting a Boeing 737
- An FAA-owned Instrument Landing System (ILS), an Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS), a Supplemental Aviation Weather Reporting Station, and a rotating beacon
- Light aircraft paved parking aprons, 150,000 square feet of hangar space, and 24,000 square feet of covered aircraft parking
- A bulk-storage fuel farm for aviation fuels
- A public commuter airline terminal suitable for 20,000 enplanements per year; however there is currently no scheduled airline service
- Three sets of Visual Approach Slope Indicators (VASIs) for Runway 12
- A Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System (MALS) for Runway 30
- Two fixed base operators
Spaceport
The site for the Spaceport America is north of Upham, in Sierra County. This site will have a significant impact on the Las Cruces MPO area because Las Cruces is the closest urbanized area. For example, a large number of Spaceport employees will probably live in the region, and aerospace engineering and construction firms may locate in and around Las Cruces to support the Spaceport activities. Completion of the Spaceport is expected in 2011. More information about Spaceport America is available at www.spaceportamerica.com.

Automobile Traffic Conditions
This section includes information on Traffic Counts, Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C), Level of Service (LOS), and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Many of these conditions are measured using the MPO travel demand model VISUM/VISSIM.

Traffic Counts
The MPO operates a traffic count program that provides data utilized by the public and a variety of stakeholders. MPO staff conducts counts for thoroughfare roadways throughout the region in 3-year cycles and does special counts for specific concerns that arise. Every year at least 1/3 of all thoroughfare segments, which are grouped by functional classification of collector or greater, will be counted. Every year the MPO provides a traffic flow map that shows counts for the previous 3 years. Figure XX-XX shows the 2013 traffic Flow Map produced by MPO Staff. The entire history of the traffic flow maps is available on the MPO website.
Travel Lanes and AADT

The following comparison provides insight into how motor vehicle traffic volumes are being handled by roadways with a certain number of travel lanes, and also offers a perspective on how many lanes might be needed, or might not be needed, to handle said traffic volumes. Figure XX-XX shows the number of automobile traffic lanes compared to the average AADT of a street corridor. To provide a conservative analysis, in all cases the segment of the corridor with the highest AADT was used. These roadways comprise most of the main thoroughfares in the central city. For example, Solano and N. Telshor seem to adequately handle 14,000 to 17,000 AADT with 3 lanes. One caveat to consider is that vehicle turning movements have a great impact on how well the roadway functions. Redistributing four travel lanes into 3 provides a better opportunity for safely executing left turns.
Corridor AADT Compared to Number of Roadway Lanes

Speed data collected indicates vehicles traveling over the speed limit by 5 or 10 mph. Figure 2-37 shows some of the major roadways and indicates different patterns of speeding based on either surrounding land uses or

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>From Point</th>
<th>To Point</th>
<th>MPH</th>
<th>Over Speed Limit</th>
<th>5 or more over</th>
<th>10 or more over</th>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Bataan Memorial East</td>
<td>Dunn</td>
<td>Weisner</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Melendres Dunn</td>
<td>404</td>
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<td>Espina</td>
<td>Sonoma Ranch</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.6392.3%</td>
<td>3.0968.1%</td>
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<td>35.2717.4%</td>
<td>9.032.79%</td>
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**Regional Movement, Freight Corridors, and Security**

Doña Ana County is located on a vital cross country route that facilitates the movement of goods from major US seaports and international manufacturing and distribution regions. Major roadways and rail lines connect the Mesilla Valley MPO area to national and international facilities, such as the Santa Teresa Port of Entry, Foreign Trade Zones located at the Las Cruces and Santa Teresa Airport, White Sands Missile Range, NASA, the future Spaceport, El Paso, and Ciudad Juárez. Because of this location the Mesilla Valley MPO region has several transportation facilities that are important to regional, national, and international security. These include:

- Interstate Highway 10
- Interstate Highway 25
- U.S. Highway 70
- Las Cruces International Airport
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line, and
- Santa Teresa Port of Entry

**Interstate 10**

Interstate 10 passes through the southern third of the MPO region connecting the area to the southern tier of US states - from Florida to California. I-10 traffic volume ranges from ~18,000 AADT west of Las Cruces to ~40,000 AADT south of the interchange with I-25. In addition, I-10 is the only cross continental freight corridor located in a frost free area. I-10 also has international connections to the Santa Teresa Port of Entry and Mexican Highway 2.
**Interstate 25**
Interstate 25 begins at the interchange with I-10 in southern Las Cruces and terminates in Montana. The average daily traffic on this facility ranges from ~16,000 AADT in the metro area to ~6,000 AADT north of Las Cruces. I-25 creates a transportation spine through the State of New Mexico connecting Las Cruces with Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

**US Highway 70**
Within the MPO area, US Highway 70 diverges from I-10 at the Jackrabbit Interchange west of Las Cruces. US 70 is the only roadway that traverses the MPO area from east to west. In Las Cruces, Picacho Avenue and North Main Street make up US 70 through the city. East of I-25, the roadway becomes a controlled access highway with frontage roads. US 70 continues east to White Sands and Alamogordo. The average daily traffic on this facility ranges from ~11,000 AADT west of Las Cruces to ~37,000 AADT in the metro area, to ~24,000 east of Las Cruces.

**Volume by Classification (VBC) Counts**
MPO staff, through the traffic count program, has conducted Volume by Classification (VBC) counts in the region. The Vehicle Classification Chart in Figure XX-XX lists all of the vehicle classifications designated by FHWA. The Trucks category represents Class Groups 8 through 13 and Combo Trucks are multi-trailer trucks representing Class Groups 11 through 13. The VBC counts show classification counts for the following roadways:

![Truck Traffic 2014](image)

**NMDOT Freight Study**
NMDOT completed a study in 2009 that examined freight movement in the State of New Mexico. The key findings are related to both rail and truck intrastate, interstate, and through movement, international shipments, freight weight and value, and key trading partners for New Mexico.
**Security**
Continuity of the transportation network is a critical element to any response. The NMDOT coordinates with the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) system that identifies the system of public highways that provides access, continuity and emergency transportation of personnel and equipment in times of peace and war. NMDOT is also tasked with maintaining and updating the inventory of critical infrastructure, facilities, and transportation services. The NMDOT Planning Division is a member of the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC) that coordinates activities, develops policy, and implements strategic plans to combat terrorism. The Transit and Rail Division assisted in developing the terms and conditions under which buses used for Park and Ride services may be redeployed in response to natural and human-caused disasters.

The Mesilla Valley MPO is a coordinating member with the Doña Ana County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The LEPC is a formal organization of agencies responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the residents of Doña Ana County.

**Natural and Cultural Resources**
The MPO region is in the Chihuahuan Desert and contains a unique agricultural community adjacent to the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande bisects the Mesilla Valley and currently traverses just west of the incorporated City of Las Cruces. The region has its roots dating back to civilizations from the early 1000’s. El Camino Real which runs parallel to the Rio Grande through the area has been utilized as key transportation corridor for over 400 years.

Desert grasslands extend from the edges of the city to the lower slopes of the nearby Organ and Robledo Mountains. The desert grasslands are often separated by arroyos that carry water following rainy weather. These arroyos also serve as wildlife corridors. Preserving the cultural heritage and aspects of the unique desert environment are integral parts of maintaining the community’s natural and cultural resources. In the desert environment, water can be a scarce resource; therefore, water conservation is a high priority for the region. There is also considerable concern for the protection of the natural environment and views of the mountains in both the valley and the grassland mesas. Other issues related to the natural environment include the need for shade due to the number of sunny days, and the wind’s impact on health and air quality, particularly with respect to unimproved roadways. Finally, air quality mitigation and climate change issues, although not currently required to be evaluated by the MPO, will likely become part of future scenarios that the region will need to contend with.

The Mesilla Valley MPO supports the NMDOT Commitment to Environmental and Energy Action (2003): Promote innovative planning and design that avoids adverse impacts to the natural and human environment, including effects to neighborhoods, low income and minority populations, farmlands, endangered species, wildlife habitat, wetlands, water and air quality, visual resources, cultural landscapes, and archaeological and historic sites, and implement creative mitigation program to replace, restore, and enhance these resources.

This section includes:
Identification of areas of Cultural and Environmental Importance.
Identification of areas of Cultural and Environmental Importance
The MPO accesses or acquires national, state, and local geographic data to analyze impacts of proposed transportation improvements to areas of cultural and environmental importance. Figures 2-45 and 2-46 identify areas of cultural and environmental importance in the MPO area.

Development of Thoroughfare Plan and Transportation Studies

Thoroughfare Plan
The development of the Thoroughfare Plan is an example of a process where cultural and natural conditions need to be addressed. MPO staff and Technical Advisory Committee members considered the location of arroyo crossings and wilderness areas when establishing thoroughfare alignments. In addition, some roadway alignments pass through fairly steep topography and near recreational areas maintained by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For example, the federal government recently designated the Prehistoric Trackways Park located west of the Rio Grande and north of Picacho Peak. Previously, a roadway alignment existed in that area that, if it remained, would pass through this park. As a result, the MPO, through agency and public coordination, identified a new potential alignment.

Transportation Studies: Study Areas and Corridors
When conducting transportation studies it is important to include the link between Planning level analysis and Project level analyses as they concern National Environment Protection Act (NEPA). A variety of tasks and information gathering steps are needed, including a robust public input process. A good discussion of how Madrid-Sonora Springs handled these issues can be found on the MPO website.

NMDOT’s Project Identification Form/Scoping Report also provides insight into what types of information may be needed to prepare for future project level analyses. These include gathering information regarding the following:

- public support
- functional classification of the roadway
- project description and justification
- statement of purpose and need
- technical information, such as number of lanes
- pavement conditions
- traffic and accident information
- environmental information such as location or occurrence of active streams, archaeological sites, wetlands, air quality issues, noise increases, underground storage tanks and other hazardous waste sites, and drainage information
- existing right-of-way and right-of-way needed for the project
- relationship to other projects
- preliminary cost estimates

Addressing all of these issues is integral to ensuring that the natural environment and potential environmental impacts of land use development and transportation system expansion are assessed prior to construction of a project.
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

Transportation is a major contributor to local air pollution and smog. These outcomes in turn have a significant impact on health conditions such as asthma and cancer. The six criteria air pollutants monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are: nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, PM10 and PM2.5, sulfur dioxide, and ammonia. National statistics regarding air quality show an overall decrease (from 1990 to 2006) of criteria air pollutants, but an increase of carbon dioxide, especially from transportation sources.

Currently, carbon dioxide, a common emission from motor vehicles and the burning of fossil fuels, is not considered one of the criteria pollutants. Transportation systems account for between 20 and 25 percent of the energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions in the United States. In fact, Greenhouse gases (GHG) from transportation systems are increasing at a faster rate than any other energy using sector (See Figure 2-47). Eighty-four percent of the United States’ GHG emissions are composed of carbon dioxide (CO2). In addition, the United States produces more than one-third (36%) of the world's CO2 emissions (more than any other country in the world).

Doña Ana County and Air Quality

Of the six criteria pollutants monitored by the EPA, Doña Ana County faces two primary concerns: particulate matter and ozone. Particulate matter (PM) is high in our region due to the arid climate, seasonal winds, and agricultural activities throughout the valley. However, PM is also high in Doña Ana County due to a large number of unpaved roadways. Dust, particularly fine dust (PM 2.5), lifted into the air by motor vehicle traffic can remain in the atmosphere for hours at a time, especially during windy conditions. This dust is then inhaled causing health problems such as asthma.

In March 2008, the EPA revised the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for the 8 hour measurement from 0.08 parts per million (PPM) to 0.075 PPM. Due to the adjusted standard, the New Mexico Environment Department recommended that the Sunland Park (0.078 PPM) area be classified as non-attainment. The decision in a subsequent lawsuit ruled that the EPA did not lower the standard enough based on its own scientific review. In January 2010 the EPA released a new rule for comment. The standard will be between 0.060 PPM and 0.070 PPM. Depending on the final value selected, the Las Cruces area (0.063 PPM) may be designated as non-attainment also. The MPO may be required to develop a congestion management plan that addresses air quality issues through performance measures if the Las Cruces area is designated non-attainment.

State Emission Reduction Goal

The State of New Mexico has set forth a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 75% below 2000 levels by 2050 (See Figure 2-49, page 58). In anticipation of this region’s growth and contribution to these types of emissions, the Mesilla Valley MPO is addressing potential air quality issues by evaluating the affect that land use strategies has on the vehicle miles traveled in Doña Ana County (See Traffic Modeling and VMT). In addition, by the 2015 update the MPO will begin using Mobile10 software to calculate emissions based on Vehicle Miles Traveled as calculated by the VISUM travel demand model.

Natural and Cultural Resources Conclusion
The MPO transportation planning process includes the identification of natural and cultural resources, a robust public involvement process to determine potential impacts to these resources, and an evaluation of ways to eliminate or mitigate potential negative impacts. This process both protects these resources and provides for enhanced urban and rural environments.

Appropriate land use densities and planned developments that encourage the use of all modes should be given high priority. While land use decisions are not made by the MPO, the MPO can consider land use development when making transportation decisions. In addition, the MPO should continue to facilitate better coordination among local entities and regional and state agencies to ensure wise investments are made. Finally, considerable input is needed from environmental and cultural resource agencies and economic development organizations to ensure the integration of these issues into the transportation planning process.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)**

Nationally, VMT has decreased after 60 years of constant growth. While the precise reason for this decrease is not knowable (aging Baby Boomers, Millennials not driving, or recession) it does compel us to reevaluate how we plan our transportation system.

*Figure 1. Total and Per-Capita Vehicle-Miles Traveled, U.S.*

![Figure 1. Total and Per-Capita Vehicle-Miles Traveled, U.S.](image)


Figure 2-41 provides a comparison of projected VMT based on the results of the 2015 Build and No Build...
scenarios as well as the 2040 Scenarios. These analyses compare the daily and per capita VMT changes.

**Travel Demand Modeling**

A travel demand model is useful to evaluate a variety of existing conditions and future scenarios for the transportation system and identify potential infrastructure needs. For example, land use and roadway network parameters can be changed to simulate the impact of different transportation improvements and land use assumptions on the system.

The travel demand model, called VISUM, also provides V/C ratio and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analyses for roadways in the MPO region. The parameters for the software were developed in coordination with the NMDOT, other MPOs in New Mexico, and the El Paso MPO. The travel behavior parameters in the model are based on the 2001 Las Cruces Household Travel Survey. VISSIM is an extension of VISUM that provides traffic simulations for a particular area, corridor, or intersection.

The VISUM model uses a schematic of major roadways and land uses to predict travel. The network also contains some generalized local roadways to offer a few access points into the system. The land uses are also generalized and located in Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). Each TAZ in VISUM is populated with housing and jobs. The model is calibrated to historic traffic counts conducted by the MPO.

**MPO Regional Scenarios**

MPO staff will analyze several future scenarios for the transportation system based on different roadway build outs (based on TIP projects) and different land use patterns (developed as a part of the Vision 2040 process). These scenarios included:

- No-Build scenario for 2020
- Build scenario for 2020
- Land Use 1 (Current Trend) for 2040
- Land Use 2 (Activity Centers) for 2040

At this time we are seeking public input as to what those scenarios should hold. Read some of the discussion

**2020 No Build Scenario:**

The No-Build scenario utilizes projected land use growth with the existing roadway network and includes improvements that are funded in the 2014-2019 MPO TIP. New facilities for the No-Build condition are the Mesquite and Vado Interchanges. Paving of Dripping Springs/ Baylor Canyon Road. Missouri Bridge; Main/ Solano/ Three Crosses. Total travel is estimated to be 6,873,783 Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT) for an average weekday.

**2020 Build Scenarios:**

The 2020 Build scenario contains the improvements funded in the No-Build plus additional projects such as the construction of Engler Road from Del Rey to Sonoma Ranch, and the construction of Mesa Grande from Onate High School to Lohman Avenue. An assumption was made that these improvements will be paid for by private funds as development occurs. Total travel is estimated to be 6,620,508 VMT for an average weekday.
For the 2040 scenarios, the Land Use 1 scenario analyzed a trend outcome. Existing land consumption and distribution patterns were projected into the growth areas of the region. The second scenario, Land Use 2, used compact activity centers surrounded by lower urban density development. Both scenarios were analyzed with a full build out of the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reality</th>
<th>Resumption of pre 2010 growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>construction of Mesa Grande from Onate High School to Lohman Avenue</td>
<td>Build thoroughfare plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engler Road from Del Rey to Sonoma Ranch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Roadrunner extension</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arroyo Road</td>
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TRANSPORT 2040 Planning Process and Vision

Transportation Planning Initiatives

Federal Initiatives

TRANSPORT 2040 must comply with national transportation goals and address the federal planning factors in order to be eligible to receive federal funding for prioritized projects. For this MTP update, staff researched and considered issues being proposed for the next transportation bill, and included these in the vision and goals for this plan.

The most recent federal transportation bill is the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) which was signed into law by President Barak Obama on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 includes a broad range of issues such as climate change, enhancement of rail transportation, and land use and transportation coordination. The bill also includes recommendations to simplify funding and planning categories that need to be addressed by State departments and MPOs. One of the most important changes made by MAP-21 was the creation of the Transportation Alternatives Program which consolidated bicycle and pedestrian funding into a single broader program. Another significant change made by MAP-21 is emphasis the bill placed on performance measures as a means of accountability for spending. There will be multiple levels of performance measures. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) will produce national level performance measures, state departments of transportation will produce state level performance measures, and metropolitan planning organization will produce performance measures that reflect regional concerns. This emphasis on performance measures will be reflected in this transportation plan.

Sustainable Communities Partnership

In June 2009, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities was formed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the USDOT, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The six livability principles associated with Sustainable Communities are as follows:

Provide more transportation choices. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing. Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Enhance economic competitiveness. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

Locally, the result of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has been the Viva Doña Ana! planning partnership. Viva Doña Ana! has done extensive research and planning work over the past several years and as a result of their work has published several draft plans. Of particular interest to this metropolitan transportation plan are:

Viva Doña Ana! Comprehensive Plan Growth Scenarios. These growth scenarios emphasize investment in existing communities and focused growth in proximity to existing facilities. This emphasis by Viva Doña Ana! places further importance on prioritizing investing in and improving the existing infrastructure in the transportation network.

Viva Doña Ana! Border Economic Development Plan. Over the past decade there has been extensive growth and financial investment on the Chihuahua side of the border as well as major infrastructure projects on the U.S. side. Viva Doña Ana! has taken a proactive approach to dealing with the challenges and opportunities presented by the situation. Among the strategies recommended by this plan are Doña Ana County implementing an asset management program which incorporates life cycle costs, implementing a freight monitoring program, coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Transportation Border Master Plan, and investigate future regional transit infrastructure and connections.

Viva Doña Ana! El Camino Real Corridor Enhancement Plan. This plan focuses on enhancing the El Camino Real Corridor through wayfinding and signage improvements, bicycle infrastructure improvements to take advantage of the flat topography and climate, promotion of agritourism, and investment in commercial revitalization. The desired result is to promote economic opportunities in the region.

Balancing Public Interest and Funding

The 2003 Surface Transportation Policy Project Poll conducted by the United States Department of Transportation asked Americans about their access to transportation and where and how to focus limited funding. The results of the poll are listed below:

- 55% of Americans want to walk more
- 84% of Americans want streets designed for slower traffic
- 74% want their children to be able to walk to school safely
- 59% of Americans support investing in transit
- 66% of Americans support innovative solutions to congestion

National polls like these indicate that Americans want to have more mobility choices. I wasn’t able to find updated info like this. Tom referenced having some more up to date info he wanted to see put in
place of the above.

Funding has traditionally been available primarily to design freeways and has therefore created a well-functioning interstate system. It is time to focus more attention on community priorities and remember that roads are public space meant both for vehicle travel and community interaction. The future of our economy, our environment, and our social opportunities depend upon finding a balance between traffic flow, providing modal choice, and creating attractive, economically-thriving destinations.

Pursuing strategies that include safety first for the most vulnerable modes, increased connectivity of the street system, improved walking and bicycling conditions, enhanced employment of Intelligent Transportation Systems, and preservation of arroyos and trails can be steps towards reducing dependence on automobile travel and providing healthier more sustainable options for the community as a whole.

**State Initiatives**

A 2005 Executive Order from Governor Richardson formed a task force to make recommendations regarding ways to invest in the type of communities New Mexican’s value. This task force travelled around New Mexico gathering input from local citizens, living in cities of all sizes (including Las Cruces), about the strengths of their communities. Recommendations found in the report entitled Our Communities Our Future: Create More Walkable Communities and More Mobility Choice from the Governor’s Task Force New Mexico Toolkit for Community Growth and Sustainability (July 2007) included five main themes related to the future of our communities in New Mexico. They are based on querencia, or “a place where one feels safe, a place from which one's strength of character is drawn, a place where one feels at home.” The five themes that came out of the task force were:

- create more walkable communities and more mobility choices,
- provide greater housing opportunities for all New Mexicans,
- enhance the environment and natural resources,
- preserve critical lands, and
- provide leadership in the livable economy of the future.

Although the State task force concluded its finding 2 years before the federal sustainable communities initiative, the links between statewide and national principles are evident. These links include diverse housing and transportation choices and meaningful economic development. In order to help local governments pursue some of these principles, the task force recommended forming a statewide planning office.

**Local and Regional Initiatives and Projects**

A variety of collaborative planning and engineering projects are being conducted throughout the MPO region. These initiatives exemplify the continued need and desire for a variety of transportation options, well-connected neighborhoods, and economic vitality. Listed below are some of the local projects and regional programs:

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program continues to be active in the Mesilla Valley MPO area. Las Cruces Public Schools is currently overseeing the program with coordination from the SRTS
Coalition, which is composed of various interested stakeholders. The Mesilla Valley MPO maintains the SRTS Action Plan and will be updating it in the future. As of October 2014, fifteen area schools had some level of participation in the SRTS program.

Doña Ana County recently finished an update of its roadway design standards that incorporated shoulders on all rural roadways—an application that increases safety for all modes—and takes into consideration land use activity when determining the best roadway design. We have not been able to make connections with the County.

Healthy Kids Las Cruces, an initiative through the NM Department of Health, is a program that recognizes the interrelationships between individuals and the environment and focuses on Educational System, Food Systems, Healthcare System, Families and Community, and Community and Regional Planning. The NMDOH recognizes that improving the walkability of the built environment can have an impact on the health of its residents and improve opportunities for physical activity for all ages.

The Prescription Trails program is a collaborative effort led by the NM Department of Health that focuses on providing a guide and prescription tablet for medical professionals to provide to their patients. This program relies upon having a good trail system in the region.

NMSU is currently working on a parking management plan. NMSU also recently finished its Master Plan which includes recommended improvements to University Avenue and expanded public transit on and off campus. I have not heard back from Greg regarding NMSU projects.

The City of Las Cruces is working on developing a Pavement Management Plan which will help streamline maintenance priorities for the City. Mesilla Valley MPO staff will assist with this process as needed as it is in line with the recently adopted Mesilla Valley MPO Asset Management Plan. Additionally, the City of Las Cruces is working on the creation of a Traffic Management Center.

The City of Las Cruces is also working on the Realizing El Paseo project as an attempt to revitalize the El Paseo corridor and make the corridor friendly to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes. Following the path outlined by the Downtown Master Plan, the renovations to downtown Main Street to re-open it to vehicular traffic were completed in November 2012. Additionally a roundabout was constructed on Main Street in 2011. Going forward the City is working on the realignment of Water and Church to restore those to two way thoroughfares in order to make them more bicycle and pedestrian friendly as well as more inviting for business. Additionally, the City is working on the development of a Downtown Plaza, which the City hopes to have completed in 2016.

The City of Las Cruces achieved a Bicycle Friendly Community certification of Bronze from the League of American Bicyclists in 2010. That certification expires in 2015. The City has a Bicycle Friendly Community Task Force that is working on the application for renewing the certification.

Las Cruces is one of only four US cities selected to participate in the 2010 Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program. This means that Las Cruces is receiving technical assistance from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Departments of Transportation (US DOT) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop a vision for El Paseo that reflects community needs and desires.
MPO staff will provide technical support and assistance with public participation to continue to support these and other projects and programs.

**Public Participation Plan and Process**

The MPO’s four-step public participation process, as shown in Figure 3-1, helps guide the public involvement phases used for the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The graphic below illustrates our public input process as described in our Public Participation Plan (PPP). Each step builds on the previous steps and identifies a variety of options for developing regionally significant projects. The public input process for TRANSPORT 2040 included three phases of open house style meetings and continuous work with stakeholder groups and the MPO committees. This planning process enables transportation system alternatives to be described and evaluated prior to adoption of the MTP and development of projects.

**Public Input Phases**

MPO staff used a phased approach to implement the public participation process outlined above. Through these phases, staff compiled input from multiple individuals and organizations to guide TRANSPORT 2040 and incorporated these ideas into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The first phase gathered general ideas and issues from the public and stakeholders. During the second phase, staff presented the refined transportation vision and goals as well as continuing to solicit public input. The third phase involved the release and evaluation of the draft document, maps, and implementation strategies.

Input was gathered through informational meetings, charrettes, open houses, questionnaires, emails, and continuous opportunities to provide input via the MPO website and MPO staff. The MPO invited all those who are on our master mailing list and receive our monthly e-Newsletter, all registered neighborhood organizations, and all members of our advisory committees to set up stakeholder meetings with MPO staff. In addition, the MPO welcomed invitations to speak with individuals and groups throughout the entire process. The PPP provides more detailed information on specific types of public participation techniques.

**Open House Meetings**

In Phase 1, the MPO facilitated 5 to 7-hour long open houses at alternate times in order to provide people with ample opportunity throughout the day to attend them. Five meetings were held in places geographically dispersed throughout the MPO planning area. Staff created storyboards with maps, information about key transportation topics, photos and other visual aids, and asked for feedback.

The storyboard topics included:

- Vision Statement and Goals
- Thoroughfares
- Bicycle Facilities
- Pedestrian Priorities
- Trail Plan
- Bypass Priorities
- Crash Statistics
- MAP-21 Performance Measures
- State Long Range Plan
- Emphasis Areas
Vision, Core Policy, Goals, and Principles

**Coordinated Land Use and Transportation**

Chapter 2 discussed the current transportation and land use conditions in the MPO region and outlined future scenarios based on proposed changes in land use patterns, the transportation network, and population growth. That discussion was followed, in this chapter, by details recounting planning processes and projects underway at the federal, state, local levels. Finally, the diverse public input processes were analyzed to determine response patterns and understand the key issues, concerns, and desires of area residents.

These conditions, future scenarios, planning processes, and public comments lead to the development of a concise vision for the future of our transportation system. The associated core policy, goals, and principles provide the basis for implementing this vision as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. It is clear that the federal, state, and local initiatives have arisen as a result of the growing desire for safer, healthier, and well connected multimodal transportation. In addition, it is necessary to plan our land use and transportation systems together so that the region grows in a smart and efficient manner that takes into account the three pillars of sustainability—people, economy, and the environment.

The three pillars of sustainability within the context of Transport 2040 are:
- **People**—the transportation users within the region and those who pass through the area.
- **Economy**—the land use activities and the transportation of people, goods, and services within and through the region.
- **Environment**—the natural and human-made forms within the region.

The three pillars of sustainability are not simply conceptual elements existing in a planning document. Creating a smart and efficient transportation system requires a balanced approach utilizing the three pillars of sustainability. Land use location and type and the transportation network and modes are the working parts of these elements. As a result, well-coordinated changes in land use patterns and/or the transportation network should result in positive impacts on these elements and their relationships to each other.

**FIGURE 3-3**
Transport 2040 Vision

**Transport 2040 Vision:**
*Serve all transportation users by planning, implementing, and maintaining a transportation system that coordinates land use and transportation planning.*
By following this Vision we are able to promote a sustainable natural and built environment, robust economy, and equitable mobility opportunities.

Core Policy
In order to keep the plan simple and active, one core policy sets the framework for the three main goals. The core policy is a statement emphasizing the necessity of coordinating land use and transportation in order to achieve sustainable communities. It provides a direct connection between the MPO and the efforts of the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County’s Vision 2040 and associated comprehensive plans. One Objective and one Action item go along with the core policy to emphasize the connection between the transportation system and the land use patterns developing in our region.

Beyond the Core Policy, three main goals will be used to achieve an appropriate balance in developing our transportation system. These main goals have accompanying principles and strategies.

Core Policy:
Achieve sustainability through coordinated Land Use-Transportation Planning

Objective:
Coordinate the expansion of the transportation system with regional land use planning

Action:
Utilize the Mobility Zones concept for short term project prioritization, analysis and improvements of system operations, and long range planning efforts

Transportation Goals
Sustainability, in the context of this plan, is the equitable convergence of environmental, economic, and community elements through coordinated land use-transportation planning and implementation. Therefore, the vision has three overlapping goals: to support a robust economy, preserve our unique environment and cultural character, and enhance our mobility opportunities through community efforts. In order to provide very clear direction and understanding of the basis on which decision making occurs, the goals for the MPO are defined below:

Sustainable Robust Economy is the convergence of Environment and Economy elements. This goal is focused on integrating land uses with well-connected transportation systems to develop an economic environment that provides timely access to a wide-range of jobs, services, education, and recreational opportunities. This supports a strong economic base that breeds innovation, self-sufficiency for local
businesses, expanded regional trade opportunities, and conservation of natural resources.

Sustainable Natural and Built Environment is the convergence of Environment and People elements. This goal entails a balance between built and natural environments that promote physical activity, social interaction, and the sustainable use of resources. The goal can be achieved through land use and transportation integration and design that enhance the unique characteristics of communities, and by investing in safe, healthy, and walkable neighborhoods. Application of this goal can minimize negative impacts to natural resources and help improve quality of life.

Equitable Mobility Opportunities for People is the convergence of People and Economy elements. This goal is focused on providing a variety of transportation choices that serve all users through developing safe, reliable, and convenient transportation modes. Different areas of the region will be served with a variety of transportation options based on their range of needs while endeavoring to maintain system efficiency.
**Transportation Principles**

The transportation principles are listed below. Following the list is a definition for each principle. These principles are intended to be fulfilled through implementation strategies in Chapter 4. Because the implementation strategies may relate to one or more principles, in order to fulfill them appropriately the principles are first defined and demonstrated.

- Maintain and improve the existing transportation system first and foremost
  - Connect people to jobs, goods, services, education, and recreational opportunities
  - Preserve natural, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources
  - Promote and design healthy and livable communities
  - Provide and improve multi-modal options and accessibility for all users
  - Increase safety for all users starting with the most vulnerable modes

**Maintain and improve the existing transportation system first and foremost:**

Preserving the existing transportation system may consist of traditional maintenance activities such as resurfacing and reconstructing roadways, improving pedestrian access with repaired sidewalks, or rebuilding bridges. Additionally, preservation of the existing system also requires applying transportation systems management and operations to improve safety, decrease travel delays, and provide traveler information. Systems management and operations may include upgrading traffic signal systems for better coordination, applying Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology for improved transit and emergency services, and using dynamic message signs for special event and traffic incident management.

Growth in the region should be targeted where there is already existing infrastructure. However, even the new links of a growing network will not function well without maintaining the existing transportation system. The expansion of the regional transportation network must be accomplished in a cost effective manner so as to not strain needed resources from the existing system.

**Connect people to jobs, goods, services, education, and recreational opportunities:**

Connecting people to destinations requires complete networks. These networks include corridors connecting activity centers, well connected neighborhoods, including fewer cul-de-sacs and private streets in gated communities, and well-distributed land use patterns throughout the region.

People throughout the region benefit through improved access to the opportunities they desire. Goods and services are more accessible which can aid in acquiring nutritious food, health care, and other necessities of life. Better access to educational services can lead to opportunities for upward mobility in the job market. Better connections throughout the community provide people with improved opportunities for increasing their quality of life and supporting local programs.

Improved access to destinations increases business sustainability. Access to a well-connected network allows businesses to reduce transportation costs and expand their target audiences, thereby becoming more competitive within the region. Tourism also benefits from improved accessibility by encouraging more residents and visitors to the area to visit local and regional attractions.
**Preserve natural, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources:**

Transportation investments impact the environment and the course of development patterns. New roadways encourage development and increased automobile use that effect air and water quality, noise, and safety. Sometimes new roadways can segment natural assets, including important ecosystems and potential open space. Cultural and historical resources, such as structures, local events, and archeological sites, can also be adversely affected by an ever-expanding network.

Exploring new methods for addressing environmental and cultural impacts are essential. This includes consulting with state and federal land use agencies and stakeholder organizations before projects are designed and implemented. For example, well designed projects can sustainably integrate aspects of the existing natural environment with the built environment while lessening the disruption of natural habitats or existing water flows. Encouraging more sustainable and energy efficient designs and applications are important parts of preserving natural, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources.

**Promote and design healthy and livable communities:**

Transportation infrastructure can be an integral part of supporting physical activity and social interaction and therefore improving the overall health of our communities. A livable community means the creation of sustainable urban and rural environments that foster walking, biking, and transit, while reducing dependency on the private automobile. Developing quiet but active neighborhoods and lively activity centers with streets that are designed for pedestrians as well as automobiles, helps decrease the use of the automobile for short trips and daily commutes. This can be achieved by balancing the need for smooth automobile traffic flow with street design that fits the context of our neighborhoods and supports safety and convenience for other modes of travel.

Context sensitive design features include pedestrian-scale building placement and height, mixed land uses, and sustainable patterns of development (appropriate distribution, density, and diversity of land uses). Overcoming barriers to safer neighborhoods, such as fast vehicle traffic and wide intersections that are difficult for pedestrians to cross, allows people to walk and bike to their everyday needs, to school, and to neighborhood parks. Business areas that are more conducive to non-motorized travel can also entice visitors to stop, stroll, and shop. By providing streets that are designed for all users and that shift more trips to non-motorized modes, the overall safety of the roadway for drivers increases as well.

**Provide and improve multi-modal and intermodal options and mobility for all users:**

Multi-modal transportation refers to integrating multiple transportation modes through the process of planning, implementing, and maintaining transportation systems. Intermodal means a smooth transition of people and goods from one mode to another during a single trip. This approach to providing transportation addresses the mobility of all system users, including the disabled, elderly, children, students, and commuters. Promoting multimodal options also provides a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the costs of congestion, accidents, parking, and vehicle ownership.

For many people, being able to comfortably walk to your car from a business, bike to the nearest transit station, or have access to car-sharing are critical transportation assets. Providing more options
for reliable, safe, and economical travel can provide a variety of benefits such as lower household transportation costs, congestion mitigation, and a decrease in negative impacts to the environment. Ultimately, multi-modal options can offer households a better quality of life and improved personal mobility.

**Increase safety for all users starting with the most vulnerable modes:**
Safety, in this context, is focused on reducing crashes and saving lives across all modes of transportation. Well-designed facilities are a major factor in improving safety. For example, the design of the roadway may encourage higher speeds even though the intent is to build in room for non-typical vehicles and account for driver error. Also, the fatalities and injuries from crashes along with the associated economic costs, including time lost on the job and healthcare, can quickly overburden households.

Safety is a prominent feature in transportation funding. For example, transportation investments that are funded through the MPO process are required to have a safety evaluation as a factor in their rating system. In addition, the NMDOT annually awards funding for safety projects to local jurisdictions throughout New Mexico.

Improving the safety of the system with a focus on the more vulnerable users can lead to a reduction in crashes, injuries, and fatalities for all modes. Improving transportation facilities at the more vulnerable places, such as intersections, should also be a priority and can lead to an overall decrease in traveler delay and associated economic costs. Finally, safety is not just about creating better facilities, but also includes a variety of education and outreach components that are essential to the success of creating safer transportation systems.

**Achieving a Balance**
Coordinated transportation and land use policies and practices can have a major impact on the creation of healthy and livable communities, traffic noise and air pollution, affordability of housing and access to services and recreational opportunities. These issues affect people’s daily lives and their mobility opportunities. Identifying natural, environmental, and cultural resources can help preserve important aspects of our environment and at the same time provide increased economic opportunities. A balance between built and natural environments that promote physical activity and the sustainable use of resources are essential to the region’s overall well-being.

**Coordinated Planning**
Because of this symbiotic relationship between land use and transportation it is essential that, first and foremost, when planning for transportation there is a high level of coordination with the land use plans for the area. This coordination is being realized through Vision 2040 efforts. Vision 2040 is a regional visioning and comprehensive planning project between the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. The Las Cruces MPO, as the regional transportation planning body for central Doña Ana County and City of Las Cruces is actively coordinating land use and growth management concepts in Vision 2040 with the existing and proposed regional transportation networks. Coordinating the planning processes for Vision 2040 and Transport 2040 provide an opportunity for the development of a compatible vision and goals.
In April 2010, Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces agreed upon the vision for the region as a part of Vision 2040. The vision is as follows:

- We envision a future that supports growth and quality of life. This future respects and balances the natural environment with new economic and agricultural opportunities, while addressing our unique historical and cultural connections.

The Vision Statement is guided by proactive planning that embraces the following shared and interrelated principles derived from public input:

- We respect our mountains, desert environment, and river
- We believe in a future in which we live within the capacity of our land and natural resources to support and sustain us
- We embrace our community character and respect our local culture
- We value bringing the unique design characteristics of our historic communities into the development of new places
- We need a multimodal network that connects people with each other as well as economic, recreational, and educational opportunities

The Transport 2040 Vision, Core Policy, Goals and Principles are compatible with the vision and direction being pursued through the Vision 2040 planning process, particularly the need for a multimodal network that connects people and opportunities. What should be re-written in this section?

Add Viva Doña Ana!

**Sustainable Land Use and Transportation**

A well-coordinated land use and transportation plan is necessary for an efficient transportation system. For example, the success or failure of public transportation depends upon diverse and compact land use patterns in key locations, with efficient spacing between those locations. This type of development does not mean all areas must become more dense and diversified. Areas with lower density, or rural areas, are able to maintain their character because they are supported by land use patterns that are more compact and diversified. This type of smart growth supports development that includes the preservation of agriculture, biking and walking opportunities, and open space and trail networks.
Introduction

In order to implement the aforementioned Vision, Core Policy, Goals, and Principles, as well as implement the performance measures required by MAP 21, various strategies have been developed for this Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The strategy toolboxes outline approaches to linking land use and transportation planning through a variety of methods that provide the means for evaluating performance and set the stage for developing future projects. Tracking performance can be a difficult challenge. Many of the activities undertaken by the MPO are qualitative in nature rather than quantifiable. Additionally, as a small MPO, Mesilla Valley is limited in its ability to impact outcomes on the ground. In order to develop accessible, connected regional networks and to maximize the impact of MPO efforts the implementation strategies and performance measures herein focus on partnerships, policies, community design, education, and outreach.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the MPO’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan provides the direction for the rest of the MPO documents. The Strategy Toolboxes that follow will form the basis of the work items in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as well as providing Performance Outcomes that will measure the results of the work items. The UPWP has sections related to the daily work that the MPO does that includes short range and long range planning, administrative duties, corridor studies, and other specific tasks.

As part of the performance measures required by MAP 21, local jurisdictions are encouraged to adopt a variety of tools to compliment or replace Level of Service (LOS) as a performance measure. Below are some of the tools that cities are already using to assess conditions on their streets:

Pedestrian
Safety: Crash Records
Pedestrian LOS
Public Life Surveys
Walkability Rating
Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI)
Minimal delay at crossings
Foot traffic volume

Bicycle
Safety: Crash Records
Bicycle LOS
Travel time and delay
Bicycle Environmental Quality Index (BEQI)
The strategies have been grouped into five Strategy Toolboxes. Each section within this chapter describes a strategy toolbox and is organized as follows: definition, example, potential benefits, and associated policies and tasks. Because the elements of the Vision being addressed are overlapping, each toolbox may address several Principles at once.

Land Use and Design Elements
Management Plans
Resource and Outreach Center
Process Development
Mobility Zones
Land Use and Design Elements

Promoting appropriate land use patterns and design is an integral part of supporting an efficient and sustainable transportation system. Transportation patterns are highly effected by land use diversity, density, and distribution (3 D’s). Therefore, this plan examines the 3 D’s of land uses in urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout the Mesilla Valley. Design elements include items such as utilizing a variety of traffic calming techniques, encouraging transit oriented development, and supporting area planning. Planned Unit Developments, if properly utilized according to the purposes stated in the Comprehensive Plans, provide a flexible approach to applying the land use and design elements discussed in this section and achieving the transportation vision and goals.

The MPO does not have land use authority and does not enforce land use and transportation coordination. However, one of the main functions of the MPO is to provide a forum to better coordinate land use and transportation efforts, particularly long range and comprehensive planning. Therefore, the MPO worked with the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County in the development of One Valley, One Vision and supports the conceptual idea of growth areas along with simultaneous preservation of natural and rural environments. In comparison to continuing with existing growth patterns, these growth areas, if implemented, have shown through MPO modeling efforts to reduce the vehicle miles travelled by about 11% (see Existing Conditions and Future Scenarios). The following are land use and design elements that support the growth area model, the 3 D’s of land use, and a well-designed transportation system:

- Land Use Diversity, Density, and Distribution
- Transit Oriented Development
- Sector Planning
- Form Based Code
- Context Sensitive Design Solutions
- Complete Streets
- Designing Thoroughfares

Land Use Diversity, Density, and Distribution

Land Use diversity is a measure of the variety of land uses within a given area. Diversity is exemplified by a pattern of interspersed land uses, including a full range of activity types such as commercial, residential, and office. Diversity promotes shorter trips for daily services and results in more transportation options by making non-motorized trips more viable. Diversity promotes a better mix of employment, housing, and service activities in a given area resulting in potentially less time and money being spent on transportation needs.

Density is the measure of the average amount of units of a given land use type within a geographic area. Residential units are usually stated in dwelling units per acre and commercial and office units are described in gross floor area relative to land parcel area (commonly referred to as Floor to Area Ratio or FAR). A FAR can also be used to measure density of mixed use developments. Density should be applied at appropriate locations across a given area in order to provide a variety of housing choices, support urban and rural environments, and sustain an efficient public transportation system. Height limitations should be considered adjacent to low density residential areas, but otherwise used sensibly.
Land use distribution measures clustering and dispersion of land use patterns across a given area. Clustering is providing a mix of land uses that work well together, for example, a commercial cluster could include a bank, dry cleaners, and apartments. A neighborhood cluster could include a school, a library, and single-family units. Dispersion, on the other hand, means that these clustered land uses are interspersed throughout a neighborhood or community providing residents with access to multiple destinations by using shorter and fewer trips. The appropriate combination of clustering and dispersion provides the best mix for mitigating congestion, providing opportunities for physical activity, and addressing air quality issues.

Applying the 3 D’s of land use is a critical component of achieving better places to live. By putting uses in close proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, once again become viable. Mixed land uses also provide a more diverse and sizable population and commercial base for supporting viable public transit. The 3 D’s enhance the vitality, safety, and security of an area by attracting pedestrians back onto the street and helping to revitalize community life. Public spaces and pedestrian-oriented retail again become dynamic and attractive destinations for people to gather.

**Associated Policies:**
through the use of the One Valley, One Vision Growth Principles, encourage local communities to adopt active-friendly land uses and to plan for active transportation choices in their general plans support appropriately dispersed, compact mixed-use developments, such as low-impact development (moved from the Green Infrastructure section)

**Performance Outcome:**
continue coordination with One Valley, One Vision implementation processes

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**
Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a compact mixed-use development, which contains a mix of uses such as housing, jobs, shops, restaurants and entertainment, designed to maximize access to public transportation. TOD brings many of the aforementioned land use and design elements together to create a pedestrian-friendly built environment that efficiently supports transit, and provides mobility and accessibility for all users. The center of a TOD is surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center. TODs generally are located within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile (0.4 to 0.8 km) from a transit stop with an integrated sidewalk network, as this is considered to be an appropriate scale for pedestrians. TOD neighborhoods increase economic value for the public and private sectors, provide for a lifestyle that’s convenient, affordable, and active, and create a sense of community and place for both new and existing residents. TODs may be developed in anticipation of future transit.

**Associated Policies:**
support TOD in appropriate corridors through land use and zoning decisions such as:
- efficient location of land uses (3 D’s) so people can walk, bike and take transit
- a rich mix of housing, jobs, shopping and recreational choices
economic value for the public and private sectors, and for both new and existing residents a sense of community and of place

**Performance Outcome:**
assist City of Las Cruces with developing a long range transit plan

**Sector Planning**
A Sector Plan is a fine-grained planning document for a relatively small geographic area that addresses, among other things, specific land use and transportation needs. Aspects of the area that the community wants to see protected or improved are determined through extensive public and stakeholder input processes and a thorough evaluation of existing conditions. The plan also includes a list of prioritized policy and project recommendations. A Sector Plan may include a distinct zoning code as part of the policy recommendations.

While plans range in scope and detail from large-scale Comprehensive plans to Sector Plans and Overlays, all plans are intended to work together to support a desired direction for economic, environmental, and social aspects of development. This approach recognizes that planning and development issues in a growing region are numerous and complex, requiring a flexible approach designed to respond both to area-wide and neighborhood scale issues.

**Associated Policies:**
support establishment of planning areas as discussed in the city’s Comprehensive Plan
courage local jurisdictions to develop a sector planning process

**Performance Outcome:**
coordinate transportation planning with sector planning processes

**Form Based Code**
Form based codes apply rules to development according to criteria that are typically dependent on lot size, location, proximity, and other various site- and use-specific characteristics. Form-based codes differ from Euclidean zoning codes (like the ones currently used in Las Cruces and the ETZ) in that they focus more on the appearance of a building and its relationship to its surroundings, and less on what goes on inside the building. Therefore, form-based codes are often viewed as more flexible. This type of zoning can help relieve congestion by combining the appropriate placement of land uses with a well-connected transportation network. Ultimately, form based codes emphasize creating and restoring walkable, diverse, compact development that offers a variety of living choices (including townhomes, apartments, live-work spaces, and lofts). Form based codes also support development that include a full range of services, including entertainment and cultural activities, within a 5-10 minute walk of every residence.

**Associated Policies:**
courage local jurisdictions to develop a form based code and offer it as an option to developers encourage special districts to utilize a form based code
**Performance Outcome:**
coordinate transportation planning with form based code zoning processes

**Context Sensitive Design Solutions (CSS)**
Context Sensitive Design Solutions (CSS) seeks transportation solutions that improve mobility and safety while complementing and enhancing community values and objectives. CSS is considered in two scales: 1) the broad context created by the surrounding neighborhood, district, or corridor, and 2) the immediate physical context created by buildings and activities. An examination of these contexts through a robust, collaborative public input process will result in design parameters for the context, roadside, traveled way, and intersections (See Figure 4-2). The examination should include maintaining safety and mobility, as well as aesthetic, social, economic, and environmental values and opportunities.

While the elements of context can combine in almost infinite varieties, the Institute of Transportation Engineers report Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities uses four context zones to define and categorize urban areas: suburban, general urban, urban center, and urban core. Much like the “rural” and “urban” classifications used in selecting design criteria in AASHTO’s A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, context zones are an important determinant of basic design criteria.

**Complete Streets**
Complete Streets are defined as streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including children, seniors, and those with disabilities. Complete Streets address both policies and design standards requiring consideration of all users in planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the traveled way and roadside. The Town of Mesilla, the City of Las Cruces, and Doña Ana County have all adopted Complete Streets resolutions.

Complete Streets includes design elements such as bicycle lanes, pedestrian buffers, curb extensions, narrow residential roadways, and improved signal timing. Design standards offer flexibility and enhanced safety for all users while providing minimum standards, a range of options, and an efficient development process. Figure 4-3, page 96, shows a street prior to implementing Complete Streets concepts, and then the same street after a simulated Complete Streets application. The figure illustrates how the Complete Streets concept is combined with CSS through improvements to the traveled way, roadside environment, and corridor context (building setbacks and heights).

A formerly incomplete street could be “completed” by implementing a road diet. A road diet is a reduction in the number of auto lanes for a given section of roadway, where the remaining width is then reallocated to provide multi-modal transportation that did not previously exist. An example is shown in Figure 4-4, where four lanes of through auto traffic are converted into two through auto lanes, a continuous center turn lane, and two bicycle lanes.

**Designing Thoroughfares**
A recent report completed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Congress for New
Urbanism (sponsored by FHWA and EPA) called *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach* gives specific guidance on street cross sections, intersection design, and design control flexibility that is practical and comprehensive. These recommended practices provide a way to balance the issues encompassing user mobility, land use diversity, community interests, and environmental concerns. This approach reduces or eliminates the need for exceptions and variances through its inherent flexibility.

The ITE report recommends addressing safety concerns by designing thoroughfares for speeds that are the same as or 5 miles over the target speed, instead of 10 to 15 miles over the target speed. The report also recommends special emphasis on intersection design, particularly addressing pedestrian safety. Other safety measures include traffic calming techniques such as narrowing vehicle travel lanes, widening sidewalks, and adding curb extensions and medians.

**Associated Policies:**
- utilize complete street designs - provide for all modes of transportation - when building or reconstructing streets
- incorporate proper signage requirements
- require adequate links to new transit as well as improved access for existing transit, including safe, convenient bicycle lanes, and pedestrian routes
- incorporate bicycle parking and storage in key transit-oriented locations
- new or improved roadways shall provide minimum 4-foot (1.2 meters) paved shoulder or bicycle lane, where feasible
- sidewalks shall provide a minimum 5-foot paved, unobstructed walking surface
- parkways shall provide a minimum 3-foot (1 meter) buffer between the roadway and the sidewalk in all urban areas
- support the use of narrow residential roadways
- require a non-motorized path at the head of all cul-de-sacs
- support pilot projects that explore innovative transportation facility design
- support Viva Doña Ana!

**Performance Outcomes:**
- assist City of Las Cruces in updating Design Standards
- support the utilization of Context Sensitive Design Solutions
- set modal priorities for thoroughfare corridors through CSS design practices
- develop a traffic calming toolbox
- identify appropriate locations to incorporate shared-use paths along rivers, canals, utility right-of-ways, railroad or freeway corridors, within college campuses, within or between parks and cul-de-sacs, and anywhere else natural barriers exist
Management Plans

Management plans provide a coarse-grained tool (i.e. system-wide or corridor perspective) to analyze the transportation network and its relationship with the surrounding land uses. These plans can address a wide range of policies, programs, services and products that influence how, why, when and where people travel. The intended result is that travel behaviors become more sustainable. For example, after evaluating system-wide information, such as traffic volumes, crash data, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), measures may be applied to improve traffic management.

In the Volume to Capacity map in Chapter 3 it is evident that two corridors handle more traffic than any others, North Main and Lohman. These corridors may benefit from countermeasures such as improving the land use diversity, additional public transportation investment, and the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to better utilize existing capacity.

Also noted in Chapter 3, there are transportation security issues in the MPO area. The MPO is an active participant with the Doña Ana County-City of Las Cruces Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), particularly with the Natural Hazards Committee. The LEPC maintains the All Hazards Mitigation Plan that discusses emergency evacuations, contingency measures, and communications interoperability. The MPO will continue to participate with the LEPC and provide assistance with developing an emergency evacuation route plan. Additionally, the MPO will, through these established coordination efforts, assist with developing and implementing transportation projects, strategies, and services.

In order to minimize congestion and plan for future traffic impacts, the MPO is developing work items to assist the local jurisdictions with analyzing their traffic demand and help identify mitigation opportunities and funding. Some of the work items that need to be addressed are as follows:

- Planning and Environmental Linkages
- Parking Management Plan
- Transportation Demand Management Plan
- Safe Routes to School
**Planning and Environmental Linkages**
Planning and Environmental Linkages offer a coordinated approach between system level planning, project level decisions, community needs, and sensitivity to historical, cultural, and environmental concerns. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan provides system level planning for the region which may include conceptual design, identifying project locations, and analyzing land use patterns and other cultural and natural resources. Project level decisions are made through the study corridor process where community needs and historical, cultural, and environmental concerns are gathered through the MPO’s public participation process.

**Associated Policies:**
- support the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) process through well-coordinated land use and transportation planning and the five core MPO functions

**Performance Outcomes:**
- develop a map that illustrates historical, cultural, and environmental areas of importance and their relationship to the transportation system
- cooperate with One Valley, One Vision efforts on a view shed analysis

**Access Management Plan**
According to the Transportation Research Board (TRB), access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections. It also encompasses roadway design treatments such as medians and auxiliary lanes, and the appropriate spacing of traffic signals. By managing roadway access, local governments can improve public safety, reduce traffic congestion, support multimodal transportation, and improve the appearance and quality of the built environment. In addition, access management can reduce the need and cost of widening roadways and reduce the number of conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians. In November 2012, the Mesilla Valley MPO adopted a set of Access Management Guidelines. Since that time MPO Staff has been supporting access management improvements throughout the MPO area.

**Associated Policies:**
- encourage local entities to promote shared access for commercial development

**Performance Outcomes:**
- focus on implementation of the adopted Mesilla Valley MPO Access Management Guidelines
- assist local jurisdictions in developing Access Management plans
- begin inventory of traffic signal spacing

**Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan (TASM Plan)**
The Mesilla Valley MPO adopted a TASM Plan in August 2014. The purpose of the TASM Plan is to prioritize allocation of resources to support cost-effective decision-making within a framework of needed safety improvements throughout the regional network. The TASM Plan calls for an inventory of the assets relating to all modes of travel together with an assessment of the value, function, and ways to ensure maximum useful life. The TASM Plan also calls for the evaluation of safety issues and the
development of countermeasures to address those issues.

**Associated Policies:**
- support the development of a transportation asset monitoring program
- all transportation planning and projects should improve safety for all users, with particular focus on the most vulnerable users

**Performance Outcomes:**
- implementation of the TASM Plan
- begin inventory of transportation assets throughout MPO area

**Parking Management**
A parking management plan can improve the efficiency of parking facilities and their relationship to a well-functioning transportation system. A plan begins with an inventory of a geographic area’s parking facilities and a projection of parking needs. Then, a plan outlines policies, programs, and strategies to more efficiently use existing facilities and determine appropriate facility expansion. Some principles to address in a parking management plan are consumer choice, circulation patterns, shared parking opportunities, and peak management. Applying parking management plans can provide benefits such as reducing development costs and impervious surfaces and utilizing flexible design. Ultimately, a parking management plan should support a balance between parking needs and creating inviting business environments.

**Associated Policies:**
- support the development of shared parking policies

**Performance Outcome:**
- develop a parking management plan with local jurisdictions

**Transportation Demand Management**
Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a comprehensive approach to handle travel demand issues for all modes using a set of technical tools and evaluations based on a set of locally determined performance measures. These issues are examined through various means related to the Why, When, and Where people travel for each mode, shown in Figure 4-6, page 104. The Why addresses a person’s purpose for travel; the When addresses the time of travel (particularly comparing peak and off-peak hours); and the Where addresses whether the travel destination is local or regional. Finally, considering the recent population growth in the region and the continuation of this trend despite difficult economic times, TDM offers a diverse set of solutions to manage expected growth and the resulting transportation demands.

Some solutions might include construction projects that add vehicle capacity (e.g. toll roads), adding modal or temporal variety to travel options, and diversifying land use patterns. Adding vehicular or public transportation capacity may require roadway widening, improving connectivity, or applying Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology. Innovative ITS solutions can assist agencies with responding to and clearing crashes, improving traffic signal timing, and offering traveler information. Improving connectivity by adding a short section of roadway or trail is a simple, low-cost project that
can be rapidly constructed and may have broad public support.

Time management solutions could include employers offering flexible work hours or telecommuting opportunities to help decrease peak hour traffic. In smaller urban areas, like Las Cruces, key activity centers will experience a reasonable level of congestion; but congestion does not occur throughout the day. It is not possible, nor an efficient use of resources, to eliminate all congestion in all locations. Prioritizing projects through citizen and stakeholder input is vital to applying limited funds to projects that meet regional goals. In all cases, the solutions need to work together to provide an interconnected network of transportation services.

**Associated Policies:**
- provide a balanced and diversified approach to manage transportation
- provide solutions to change the travel time usage patterns
- provide a variety mode choices
- support diversifying and well-distributed development patterns
- utilize technology to improve the efficiency of maintenance and operations for existing infrastructure and transportation systems
- support the improvement of existing traffic flow by applying demand management solutions before adding lane capacity
- strategically add auto and transit capacity in congested corridors

**Performance Outcome:**
- develop a transportation demand management plan with local jurisdictions

**Safe Routes to School Program**
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs examine conditions around schools using the “6 E’s” of engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, and equity. The program pursues projects and activities that improve safety and reduce traffic in the vicinity of schools. As a result, these programs make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. Physical improvements that make it safer for kids to walk and bike benefit the community as a whole, providing opportunities for people of all ages to become more active. Safe Routes to School efforts are sustained by parents, schools, community leaders and local, state, tribal, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school.

**Associated Policies:**
- Continue to support the Safe Routes to School program

**Performance Outcome:**
- update the district-wide SRTS action plan

**Resource and Outreach Center**
In order to implement the policies and accomplish the performance outcomes outlined in this plan the
MPO needs to create a Resource and Outreach Center. The MPO intends to emphasize our role as a resource for data and information related to metropolitan transportation planning and public involvement techniques. This means keeping up with the latest technology and providing a physical and electronic library for the community and local jurisdictions.

In general, the MPO will emphasize our role as a Resource and Outreach Center by providing:
- data and information on current and future transportation conditions
- clarification of the Transportation Demand Model developed for the MPO
- technical assistance with public participation planning and visualization techniques
- educational seminars and classes on land use and transportation planning
- webinars on a variety of planning and engineering related subjects
- a library of best practices in planning and engineering fields

Some of the more specific tasks that may come out of the aforementioned responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Data Collection**
- safety-related data, including crashes
- neighborhood pedestrian network assessments using a walking audit
- continue traffic counts program
- use traffic counts to calibrate the travel demand model within every 5 year update
- begin including pedestrian and bicycle traffic counts
- collaborate with El Paso metropolitan area on a Travel Behavior Study
- compile population data as an affiliate of State Data Center/Business and Industry Data Center

**Local Assistance**
- assist RoadRUNNER transit with planning for ADA facility improvements
- assist City of Las Cruces with development of a public participation plan

**Education and Outreach**
- support education on traffic laws
- increase access and distribution of MPO 101 documents
- education about Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- provide modal-focused website pages

The Resource and Outreach Center would benefit from being physically housed together with long range planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff from Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces. A transportation engineer would also be an important addition to the team. With this organizational structure the MPO and local jurisdictions would then be able to provide more comprehensive support and assistance with implementation and updates of all types of long range plans for the region, and better coordinate on land use and transportation issues that arise.

In order to assist the local jurisdictions with making informed decisions and provide continuous and effective outreach it is important to provide access to materials and planning best practices. Implementation of any plan needs to be supported by up-to-date data and a comprehensive education
and outreach program. Some of the concepts introduced above require additional explanation. The following items provide more detail on documents and concepts that the MPO is exploring through our efforts in creating a more visible Resource and Outreach Center.

**Visualization Techniques**
Visualization techniques help facilitate the public, stakeholders, and decision makers understanding of transportation and land use planning issues. MPO staff incorporates visualization techniques into all tasks to better explain technical terms and transportation planning concepts. For example, many different types of graphics, such as tables and charts to display data, and aerial photography and maps to illustrate planning activities, are integrated throughout MPO documents and presentations.

MPO staff uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and aerial photography to create maps of study corridors, trail systems, bicycle routes, and roadway classifications. All of these visualization techniques are applied liberally throughout MPO documents and the MPO website. MPO staff will expand its visualization techniques through the use of VISUM traffic demand modeling software and VISSIM simulation presentations. VISUM software assesses how well the transportation network functions based on changes in population growth and land use decisions. These assessments are visually depicted by different line widths, colors, and numerical values. VISSIM is a micro-simulation software that demonstrates how changes in transportation network can impact the travel demands on a neighborhood, community, and/or Safe Routes to School.

**MPO 101 Documents**
The MPO 101 publications are all available in a binder, on a CD, or through the website. MPO 101 publications include documents vital to understanding MPO organization, functions, and processes. Documents include maps, Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), federal regulations and other guidelines. The MPO 101 book is a constantly updated as work products are amended, new projects are brought forward for inclusion in the TIP, and new federal regulations are passed.

**Traffic Count Program**
Regional traffic counts are collected and analyzed through a program operated by the MPO. The traffic counts are collected for thoroughfares and randomly selected local roads on a three-year cycle. All of the automobile counts are vehicle classification counts which show how many vehicles of various types are traveling on a particular street. At the end of each calendar year the MPO office produces a traffic count map for the previous three count cycles. Additionally, the MPO has begun a trail count program and will produce a map of those counts as well.
Process Development

Process Development includes general and step by step written procedures that provide guidance on issues such as right-of-way (ROW) preservation and Development Review. Processes can be fluid and may require amendments as they are applied and evaluated. The processes covered in this section include those that the MPO develops and maintains, and those in which the MPO participates. Most MPO processes are discussed in the MPO’s Public Participation Plan and the MPO Bylaws. What should be re-written in this section?

Associated Policies:
- support local jurisdictions’ development review processes

MPO Processes:
- ROW Preservation
- Thoroughfare Alignments
- Study Corridors
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Application

Local Assistance:
- Development Review
- Multimodal Level of Service

MPO Processes
Right-of-way (ROW) Preservation
The MPO, through the development of the Future Roadways Map, identifies the functional classification and alignments of arterials and collectors in the region particularly of potential future alignments. This process provides regional functionality and preserves ROW for future development. These widths pertain only to the amount of ROW preserved. Build-out of the roadway should be determined based on criteria explained in the land use and design elements section.

In most cases, right-of-way preservation will be determined by the MPO based on the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County Design Standards documents, and the ROW requested is measured from the centerline of the roadway. The location of the centerline of the roadway can vary and it is up to the surveyor to show the location of the centerline. In other cases, ROW may have already been acquired when the design standards called for a different width, and therefore may be narrower or wider than the current request.

There are some exceptions to the cases above. For example, the ROW request may vary based on an MPO or local jurisdiction’s Study Corridor report, or a determination of constrained ROW (explained below). Also, if a parcel of land is adjacent to a water conveyance facility rather than a roadway, additional ROW is not requested. A case where this does not apply is when a proposed roadway is located on a water conveyance facility (e.g. Outfall Channel). On NMDOT roadways the MPO may request ROW, but ultimately defers to NMDOT. City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County may ask for additional ROW at intersections to ensure better traffic flow management for all modes.
Constrained Right-of-ways (ROWs)

Constrained right-of-ways (ROWs) are roads that are restricted from adding through lanes to meet current or future capacity due to physical, environmental or policy constraints. A roadway may be physically constrained by immediately adjacent development, topographic constraints, or when a facility has reached the maximum motor vehicle lane per design standards. Also, a roadway may be policy constrained by impacts of roadway expansion on the environment, neighborhoods, and/or local communities. For example, MPO staff has conducted study corridor reports of which the outcome consists of a recommendation to constrain the ROW for the area based on existing conditions and community input.

Usually, constrained ROWs exist in built out areas of the City of Las Cruces and in historical centers of unincorporated communities. However, rural areas may also have constrained ROWs due to environmental and topographic concerns. MPO will not ask for additional ROW in these cases. For constrained right-of-ways, the MPO recommends priority be given to strategies such as traffic signal optimization, access management, parking and loading restrictions, and parallel facilities improvements.

During the development review process, the following process should be used to determine if a ROW is constrained and to what extent:

- analyze entire right-of-way segment between two thoroughfare intersections to average existing ROW
- analyze entire right-of-way segment between two thoroughfare intersections to determine percentage of build out
- analyze entire right-of-way segment between two thoroughfare intersections to determine potential for future subdivision
- determine if MPO staff is conducting or has completed a study corridor report
- if 80% of the segment is built out then the average existing ROW is used to determine the amount ROW acquired
- additional ROW at the intersection could be requested regardless of the percentage of build out
- all determinations of constrained ROW should consider current and future land use context and associated traffic impacts as determined by staff

Thoroughfare Alignments

The process of identifying the location of existing thoroughfares and locating new alignments for proposed thoroughfares includes studying land uses and topography, as well as providing a well-connected roadway system. In addition, the thoroughfare alignments have certain spacing requirements as outlined in the Federal Functional Classification Guidelines. Finally, thoroughfares are placed, whenever possible, on a shared property or section line in order to evenly distribute property acquisition for public right-of-way.

Occasionally land use changes and other issues are identified that require revisions to the alignments. Therefore, the MPO has a process to evaluate thoroughfare alignments depending on the degree of change proposed and, most importantly, the impact a change would have on affected property owners.

When an applicant is seeking to realign an MPO thoroughfare the following criteria must be
included and addressed:
description of the proposed change(s), including extent of right-of-way realignment, map of
proposed realignment, and identification of applicable topographic, drainage, cultural,
historical, or environmental issues
explanation of the reasons for the proposed change(s)
indication of whether the request does or does not shift the responsibility of right-of-way
preservation on any current or new property owners
if a shift in the responsibility of right-of-way preservation occurs, the applicant must obtain a
signed, written agreement regarding the new alignment by all parties
if the realignment is not significant (less than ~300 feet) and all parties agree on the shift of
responsibility of right-of-way preservation the request will be processed administratively by
MPO staff
if the realignment is significant (~300 feet or more) and all parties do not agree on the shift of
responsibility of right-of-way preservation the request will be taken through the full
amendment process which is outlined in the MPO’s Public Participation Plan
if the realignments is not significant (less than ~300 feet) and all parties do not agree on the
shift of responsibility of right-of-way preservation the request will be taken through the full
amendment process which is outlined in the MPO’s Public Participation Plan
MPO staff determines the intended location of the original alignment centerline

Area Plans and Study Corridors

Area plans and study corridors are undertaken in corridors or areas that are in need of intensive study
to determine potential transportation needs. These are conducted on an “as-needed” basis. Studies
can be initiated by a written request if a member jurisdiction identifies a transportation issue not
previously discussed in the MTP, when a proposed TIP project is not in compliance with the MTP, or if
the MPO Policy Committee requests a specific study.

The process for these types of studies is outlined in the Public Participation Plan. Some of the items in
this process include determining the target audience (Study area size), identifying alternative options
through public input, and determining preliminary cost estimates, benefits, and potential issues to
address through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Performance Outcomes:
MPO staff will conduct study corridors as requested and approved by the Policy Committee

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Application

All Metropolitan Planning Organizations shall, in conjunction with State and affected Transit operators,
develop a Transportation Improvement Program. This is a financially constrained list that includes
projects for which construction and operation funds can be reasonably expected. The project
application process allows local entities to request that projects be considered for addition to the TIP.
All projects, funded or unfunded, must be consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The
TIP includes all regionally significant transportation projects, regardless of federal, state, or local
funding. Full details about this process can be found in the Public Participation Plan and the TIP
application document.
Performance Outcome:
review and make minor amendments to TIP application to ensure its consistency with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Local Assistance
Development, Construction, and Zoning Review
City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and the shared Extraterritorial Zone (a five mile buffer around the City of Las Cruces boundaries) each have review processes for new development and redevelopment. Development reviews may include new subdivisions, infill development, and lot line adjustments. The MPO participates in the development review processes as a reviewer for all agencies listed above, and a voting member of the Design Review Committee (City of Las Cruces) and Extraterritorial Design Review Committee (Extraterritorial Zone). The City of Las Cruces and the Extraterritorial Zone each have review processes for new construction. Construction review may include new subdivisions, commercial buildings, and new roadways. City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and the shared Extraterritorial Zone each have zoning review processes for new and existing land parcels. Zoning review may include zoning changes, special use permits, and planned unit developments.

Development Review
During the development review process MPO staff may provide comments based on the following rationale:
- creating a multi-modal and well connected roadway network
- accounting for land use and transportation impacts on traffic generation and accessibility for all users
- encouraging traffic calming techniques, where applicable
- encouraging access management
- support transit oriented development

Pedestrian system
The MPO may comment on pedestrian connectivity within and between subdivisions. MPO staff may ask for pedestrian access along drainage tracts or utility easements where technically feasible. General street connectivity is encouraged.

Trail system
The MPO may comment on trail systems that provide alternate transportation routes and connect with in-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities. MPO staff may ask for these to be indicated as part of the proposed trail system. As per the direction provided by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, trails along ROWs independent from arterial roadways (i.e. arroyos) are preferable.

Public Transportation system
The MPO may comment on public transportation facilities such as pull-outs, bus shelters, facilities that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and lighting to serve pedestrians using the
transit system. The MPO encourages direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit facilities.

Aviation
Las Cruces International Airport represents a significant investment of public money (local, state, and federal) to a facility that is an economic engine to the region. The MPO may comment on preservation of airport reserve areas for new passenger terminal facilities and future air cargo and/or regional airline maintenance facilities. Airports also can be impacted by incompatible surrounding land uses; tall buildings in flight paths and residential development that can limit the hours of operation for the airport. The MPO does not support zone changes that increase the opportunity for incompatible land uses in the designated Airport Overlay Zone.

Construction Review
During the construction review process MPO staff may provide comments concerning context sensitive design solutions, roadway cross sections, parking, lighting, and signage as they relate to MPO goals and principles. The MPO also recommends designs that minimize conflict between modes and provide for all users as well as appropriate speeds. The MPO’s policy calls for bicycle lanes on construction of all new thoroughfares. In constrained ROWs, the MPO recommends providing for all modes as best possible using Complete Streets principles. The MPO does not support cross sections that do not include bicycle lanes or shoulders.

Zoning Review
During the zoning review process MPO staff may provide comments concerning the effect of proposed land uses on the transportation system due to traffic generation. During this process, the MPO also provides information to the local jurisdiction about traffic counts, roadway function, and location of public transportation facilities.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are reviewed through the zoning review process. PUDs provide public benefits in exchange for the consideration of multiple variances from the zoning code. The MPO comments on land use and transportation issues for PUDs because of the flexible nature and intent of the PUD process. The MPO may recommend public benefits. Sometimes the MPO will ask for anticipated traffic generation and connectivity measures.

Multimodal Level of Service
Level of Service (LOS) is a traffic engineering term that describes traffic quality. Traffic quality is a measure of traffic density (or a measure of congestion) and is closely linked to transportation time (delays and interruptions). While LOS is traditionally applied to motor vehicle traffic, it can be applied to bicycling, walking, and other transportation modes (See Figure 4-9, page 116). To distinguish its use with motor vehicle traffic, it can also be referred to as ‘level of stress,’ ‘level of quality,’ and ‘bicycle or walking suitability.’

Level of Service is different for pedestrians than it is for drivers or bicyclists. For pedestrians, Level of Service provides a measure of a roadway segment’s performance with respect to pedestrians’ primary perception of comfort, convenience, and safety. This metric helps with designing a roadway for factors such as sidewalk width as well as separation and buffering from traffic.
Bicycling Level of Service also differs from motor vehicle LOS. For bicyclists, LOS also provides a measure of a roadway segment’s performance with respect to their primary perception of comfort, convenience, and safety. The presence of a bicycle lane or signed, shared use facility may increase the quality of service, even on a heavily traveled motor vehicle route. The MPO maintains the Mesilla Valley Bicycling Suitability Map which indicates routes that may be more or less suitable for riding based on measured, weighted criteria.

**Associated Tasks:**
- maintain Mesilla Valley Bicycling Suitability Map
- develop a mobility zone assessment for multimodal level of service

**Performance Outcome:**
- encourage local jurisdictions to include multimodal level of service performances measures in their development review processes
Prioritized Plans and Projects

Through an extensive public input process the MPO has developed priority plans to support the implementation of complete networks and a safer transportation system. The Prioritized Plans and Projects should also align with the Transportation Principles laid out in Chapter 3. Restated those are:

- Maintain and improve the existing transportation system first and foremost.
- Connect people to jobs, goods, services, education, and recreational opportunities.
- Preserve natural, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources.
- Promote and design health and livable communities.
- Provide and improve multi-modal and intermodal options for all users.
- Increase safety for all users starting with the most vulnerable modes.

Pedestrian safety is emphasized because all modes have a pedestrian component. For example, when driving to a shopping center a part of the trip includes a safe and convenient walk from the parking lot. In addition, disabled persons and seniors rely on having quality pedestrian facilities connecting to public transportation in order to access goods and services on a daily basis.

The following system priority plan maps provide guidance on identifying, developing, and implementing projects, as well as a system for evaluating projects for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For example, a project will get more points if it is identified on multiple priority plans. Also, in an effort to support preserving and maintaining the existing transportation infrastructure, the MPO supports new and innovative funding mechanisms for implementing these priorities, and expanding the current unfunded illustrative project list.

Finally, each plan consists of a map identifying important components of the priorities plan and informational text on the sidebar. These maps are readily available on the web, and will be emailed or printed by request. Small copies of the maps are included at the end of this section.

Pedestrian System Priorities Plan

The Pedestrian System Priorities Plan is a map that identifies crucial pedestrian corridors, intersections, and regional area destinations that need infrastructure. The numbered corridors, intersections, and areas were identified not only through this MTP update but were also identified with the development of the MPO Pedestrian Plan and incorporated into this document.

Associated Tasks:
- develop pedestrian projects task force with local jurisdictions
- continue to support the Safe Routes to School program
- provide a crash and proximity analysis for County areas

Public Transportation System Priorities Plan

The Public Transportation System Priorities Plan is a description of the future transit system. It is
envisioned that the future transit system will be better coordinated with activity centers in order to support transit-oriented development opportunities. The future transit system should be based on establishing bi-directional express service corridors to encourage regional trips, and provide neighborhood circulator systems that feed into the stations along those express corridors. Examples of corridors that would benefit from express service are Lohman/Amador and Main Street. The Mobility Zone areas should provide the framework within which the circulator systems operate.

Expansion of public transportation should also include introducing new types of systems such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Connecting the urban system to rural and regional systems, such as the New Mexico Department of Transportation Gold (connecting Las Cruces-Anthony-El Paso) and Silver (connecting Las Cruces-White Sands) bus routes are vital to the success of public transportation in the region. A proposed commuter rail link between Las Cruces and El Paso is being discussed by the South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD), the City of Las Cruces, and the City of El Paso. For a more detailed analysis of regional public transportation and rail needs, please see the SCRTD Service and Financial plan at http://www.scrtd.org

Associated Tasks:
- continue to assist with implementation of the RoadRUNNER 5-Year Strategic Plan
- continue to support SCRTD
- assist the SCRTD with rail feasibility study for the Las Cruces-El Paso Corridor

On the Map:
The Public Transportation System Priorities Plan map contains the tiered priorities as well as explanations of transit oriented development and different types of public transportation systems that could be implemented in the future.

Bicycle System Priorities Plan
The Bicycle System Priorities Plan is a map that identifies current and future in-road bicycle facilities throughout the MPO area. The facilities outlined in this plan are intended to create a well-connected bicycle transportation system using the roadway network. The plan prioritizes in-road facilities into three levels, or tiers that will create a bicycle network across the region. Tier 1 bicycle routes will be the bicycle arterial network that will connect major destinations and provide continuous routes across the region. Tier 2 bicycle routes will act as minor bicycle arterials to complete the network of intra-regional travel. Tier 3 bicycle routes will round out the network as collectors between neighborhoods and the bicycle arterial network. These tiered routes combined with a well-connected local street network will offer all transportation users a convenient, safe routes to travel.

On the Map:
The Bicycle System Priorities Plan map contains the tiered priorities as well as explanations of different types of bicycle facilities, recommended lane widths, and bicycle policies for the region.

Major Thoroughfare Plan
This map combines important features of the thoroughfare system development: Current roadway functional classification, future functional classifications for purpose of right-of-way preservation, and
preliminary roadway alignments. This map is not intended to determine right-of-way widths; final right-of-way widths will be based on local jurisdictions’ design standards and the application of adopted complete streets policies. This map was developed using the Federal Highway Administration Functional Classification Guidelines.

Collectors serve specific functions within the hierarchical road system, distributing traffic between neighborhoods and arterials and providing increased access across shorter distances and at slower speeds. In order to achieve these functions, as well as preserve the context of the neighborhoods they serve, the MPO has set parameters and templates for the build out of collectors rather than indicate their exact alignment on the map. These parameters will provide enhanced alignment flexibility. For example, the connectivity component is more important than the roadway alignment which may need to be altered to account for topographic and storm water velocity.

**Associated Policies:**
- Collectors within any 1 square mile (approx.) of planned arterials shall maintain a connection to arterials in every cardinal direction and to each other.
- A collector shall not directly continue for more than 1.5 miles in any given direction.
- A collector should contain 2 or 3 vehicle lanes, bicycle lanes in each direction, and pedestrian facilities on both sides appropriate to the roadway context.
- Recommend maintaining existing routes and connections where feasible.
- See the MPO Access Management Plan for details on property access to major thoroughfares.

**On the Map:**
The Major Thoroughfare Plan map contains the desired functional classification for existing and proposed roadways, a summary of the functional classification guidelines, roadway type percentages, and parameters for aligning collectors.

**Functional Classification Map**
Current roadway functional classification. This map is not intended to determine right-of-way widths; final right-of-way widths will be based on local jurisdictions’ design standards and the application of adopted complete streets policies. This map was developed using the Federal Highway Administration Functional Classification Guidelines.

**Associated Policies:**
- This map provides the basis for determining federal aid eligibility within the MPO region.
- The current functional classification may not match the classification identified on the Major Thoroughfare Plan. Developing projects should consult the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

**On the Map:**
The Functional Classification map contains the functional classification for existing roadways, a summary of the functional classification guidelines, roadway type percentages, and parameters for
aligning collectors.

**Trail System Priorities Plan**

The Trail System Priorities Plan is a map that identifies current and potential future trail locations within the MPO area. The plan prioritizes trail facilities into three levels, or tiers that will create a trail network across the region. Tier 1 trail routes will be the trail arterial network that will connect major destinations and provide continuous routes across the region. Tier 2 trail routes will act as minor trail arterials to complete the network of intra-regional travel. Tier 3 trail routes will round out the network as collectors between neighborhoods and the trail arterial network. The trails outlined in this plan are intended to augment the roadway transportation system by providing additional networks for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The governing boards of each member jurisdiction have passed resolutions in support of a loop trail system around central Las Cruces and extending into Mesilla and Doña Ana County. The proposed loop trail includes the following routes: Triviz Multi-use Path, the Outfall Channel, La Llorona Trail, Calle del Norte, New Mexico Highway 28, and University Avenue. Improvements needed to create this loop include paving, trail amenities, and shoulders along well-traveled roadways.

Many of these trails are located along arroyos and Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) facilities. Use of EBID facilities require a Special Use permit by the local jurisdiction and a willingness to provide for liability insurance. The plan prioritizes trails that the residents and stakeholders would prefer to be improved or left unimproved. The MPO encourages the local jurisdictions to utilize these existing networks for a comprehensive regional trail system that connects important destinations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrian use.

**Associated Tasks:**

- increase access to regional recreational activities
- protect the natural environment of Arroyos and enhance them with trail development
- support Loop Trail resolution

**On the Map:**

The Trail System Priorities Plan map contains text on the identified tiered network (the loop and spoke system), examples of improved and unimproved trail facilities, and a discussion of potential pavement types.

**Transportation Projects Priorities Plan**

The Transportation Projects Priorities Plan is a map that brings together projects for all modes that are on a list to be funded, or are on the TIP and already funded. The map illustrates the following types of projects:

- projects funded in the 2015-2019 TIP
- prioritized illustrative unfunded projects
- corridors that would benefit from Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) applications
- transit projects that can not be illustrated on the map
Transportation Projects Input

The following section is a list of projects and their associated status (measure or explanation of progress). This list of projects was derived from comments received during the first and second rounds of the public participation process for Transport 2040. The comments are from MPO committee meetings, general public open houses, and stakeholder meetings. The comments are provided as they were written or expressed. Staff addressed all these comments as best possible in this section and throughout the plan. For example, each item is listed by the location of the project, the issue or improvement that was suggested, and the status column provides information on how the comment was addressed.

Truck Traffic and Loop Roads

Truck Traffic

The discussion of freight corridors in Chapter 2 revealed that many roadways within the MPO area carry significant commercial vehicle volumes. A concern that came up often from the general public was truck traffic near existing neighborhoods near the downtown area. The perception was that through truck traffic is too great and that if possible it should be re-routed. One route that the public commented upon most was US 70 (Picacho and Main Street), and the high volume of truck traffic and its associated environmental impacts. Based on public input, MPO staff is also proposing a re-designation of US 70 on Main/Picacho to a local roadway (non-highway) and to not permit Hazardous Cargo (HC).

Redesign of the I-10/ I-25 interchange was completed in 2013. Previously, truck drivers chose not to use the I-10/I-25 interchange because the geometry led to turnovers. However with improvements to this interchange, it is worth considering that US 70 be designated along this route.

Loop Roads

MPO staff also received input on loop roads around the metropolitan area. This subject matter came up early in the planning process so staff focused specifically on evaluating loop roads in our public participation process. There are four quarters of the area that are being looked at and an additional southern loop road suggested by staff and the Technical Advisory Committee (not in order of priority or importance):

In the northeast, the northern-most Principal Arterial for east-west travel was reassigned from Dragonfly Avenue to Arroyo Road between Weisner and I-25. The new alignment was created to avoid negatively impacting the recreational opportunities and areas of environmental concern within the BLM land in the Doña Ana Mountains. Most of Arroyo Road will most likely be built out as development occurs. However, about two miles of the roadway are within the BLM area and other funding sources will have to be identified for construction.

The previous route for the northwest loop road was reassigned to a new route that forms an extension of Engler Road. The new route provides an additional river crossing, intersects Shalem Colony, and skirts around the south side of Picacho Hill. The new route was identified because of the new legislation designating the area north of Picacho Hill as the Prehistoric Trackways National Park.

The southwest loop road is High Mesa Road. This roadway connects the West Mesa Industrial Park and
with the Santa Teresa area, and is intended to be a limited access roadway. Projects in the Santa Teresa area such as an existing border crossing, a master planned community development, and a transportation/industrial complex will support an additional southern route. Most of the truck traffic around the City of Las Cruces travels along I-10. Therefore, High Mesa Road is most likely to have the greatest impact on relieving any future congestion on I-10 as the freight system expands and growth occurs. High Mesa can also serve as a secondary route in case of a closure on I-10. This roadway would be a prime candidate for a toll road, but tolling requires enabling state legislation.

The southeast loop road is Weisner Road. This roadway connects to Mesquite Interchange on I-10, and is the eastern-most roadway on the Thoroughfare Plan. This roadway ultimately connects with US 70 at the Weisner Interchange, and is intended to be a limited access roadway. Weisner Road provides a more direct connection from El Paso to White Sands. Baylor Canyon Road was suggested as an alternative; however, staff doesn’t feel this is the best choice. In the last MTP, Baylor Canyon was downgraded to a local road in order to be sensitive to the natural environment at the edge of the BLM recreational management area.

A southern loop road option traversing south of the City of Las Cruces across the valley was recommended during the public input process. This road would connect the southern end of Weisner Road near I-10 with High Mesa Road through the proposed Brazito Interchange. The loop road, shown on the Major Thoroughfare Plan, would provide an additional river crossing and include a portion of Snow Road.

Past modeling by the MPO has not shown any appreciable reduction in congested corridors. Loop roads contribute to inefficient land use patterns and tend to shift growth in a region rather than generate it. Additionally, construction of these would increase maintenance obligations to the public. It is not recommended that any public funds would be used to construct any portion of the loop system in the prior to 2020 (the next update of this plan).

**Interchanges and Grade Separation**

These items are grouped together because of the significant justification required to develop a project on Interstate ROW, and because they require a high level of coordination with the NMDOT and FHWA. New access or modification to existing interchanges on the Interstate Highway system require that an eight part Interchange Justification Report (IJR) is reviewed and approved by the FHWA. Several interchange and grade separation projects were mentioned throughout the public input process.

Project list organized by Status:
Engler Interchange at I-25- Requires IJR. Engler grade separation project allotted for future interchange geometry.
Arrowhead Interchange at I-10. Requires IJR. I-10/ I-25 IJR considered possible future interchange at Arrowhead. A new IJR will be required for further study of Arrowhead.
Brazitos Interchange at I-10. Requires IJR. Potential location identified during I-10 widening (2010).

**Intersections**

During public input various improvements to thoroughfare intersections were recommended. MPO staff will prioritize other intersections based on crash rate analyses of thoroughfare intersections.
Project list organized by Status:

Safety Improvements at El Paseo and Idaho
Adapt intersection striping for bicycle use per NACTO guidelines
Triviz grade separation at University. Preliminary design developed as part of I-25/ University Ave. interchange redesign.

Existing Thoroughfare Improvements
In many cases, the public mentioned that existing roadways needed improvements. For example, funding for ITS enhancements was mentioned as an important part of improving overall traffic flow. The projects below are in line with the MPO goals to preserve and enhance the existing system.

Project list:
ITS Signal Coordination Plan for City of Las Cruces
Idaho Road Diet (El Paseo to Solano)

New Thoroughfare Connections
The Major Thoroughfare Plan shows the roadway connections needed to maintain a well operating transportation system. The MPO does not endorse any expansion projects until the region’s maintenance status is improved, many thoroughfares are constructed by private funds and the Major Thoroughfare Plan provides a framework for their alignments.

Project list:
Missouri/ Roadrunner extension to Sonoma Ranch
Triviz underpass at University

Pedestrian Improvements
A variety of pedestrian safety and connectivity concerns and proposed improvements were brought up during the public input process. These were organized into Intersections, Signage and Striping Corridors, and Districts/Areas.

Project list:
El Paseo Complete Street implementation
Sidewalk assessment in outlying Mesilla areas
Sidewalk assessments for Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan (TASM)
Sidewalk improvements leading to ZTrans bus stops on East Mesa
Sidewalk improvements leading to RoadRUNNER bus stops
Pedestrian crossings along University Avenue

Bicycle Improvements
A variety of bicycle safety and connectivity concerns were brought up during the public input process.
These were organized into Corridors and Intersections.

Project list:
Hadley Bicycle Boulevard
Locate potential areas for protected bike lanes
Boutz bike lanes (El Paseo to Valley)
Reroute State Bicycle Route 7 off US 70 from

Trail Improvements
The trail system priorities consist of first a central loop system and then an extended loop and spoke system. These loop systems connect some important destinations and neighborhoods to provide a complete network around the City of Las Cruces and into Doña Ana County and Mesilla. A trail connection may include a roadway or multi-use path. The following are comments from the public and MPO committees on critical connections and area attractions.

Project list:
Rio Grande Trail (Sunland Park to Albuquerque)

Public Transportation Service
A variety of public transportation planning efforts have been completed or are underway, including a 5 year Transit Strategic Plan for the City of Las Cruces, a Coordinated Mobility Action Plan for Human Services transportation (CMAP) for Doña Ana County, the Service and Financial plan for the South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD), and the development of a long range Transit Plan for the City of Las Cruces.

A variety of public transportation projects are either underway or in the initial planning phases. A regional bus route (the Gold line) overseen by the NMDOT connects Las Cruces to Anthony and El Paso along I-10. The new Intermodal Center is on the corner of Alameda and Lohman. In the future, there may be the opportunity for Heavy Commuter Rail, Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, and Express Bus routes. The feasibility of rail between El Paso and Las Cruces has gained attention recently with the SCRTD receiving a state grant to update the 2007 Rail Feasibility Study.

The public input listed below is organized by Item and Status. The Status column includes mostly planning related activities because transit funding, at this time, is provided by federal formula funding with a match by the local entities. New Mexico is one of three states that do not have dedicated State public transportation funding.

Project lists organized by Status:
Relocate Mesilla Valley Mall transfer point
Implement findings of Short Range Transit Plan

Other concerns with explanation
The following projects suggested during public input were separated from the main lists. An explanation is provided.
Removal of loop roads and other proposed future thoroughfares.

**Summary and Conclusion**

In most cases, projects recommended were included in the priority plans. In some cases, planning studies or further analyses are needed, and in other cases planning studies are underway that will be addressing many of the recommendations. Some of the projects recommended will also be addressed via one of the toolbox strategies. Finally, in Chapter 6, the financial plan is presented along with associated needs in the MPO area, of which these projects were incorporated.