MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE

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 a, 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?

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.

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."

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 the, 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 bypasses 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, 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, 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: Councilor 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 Councilor 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