MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee meeting which was held April 8, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 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 Olgia Pedroza (CLC)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)
Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)
Councillor Nathan Small (CLC)
Trustee Sam Bernal (Town of Mesilla)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)
Andrew Bencomo
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER (1:53 p.m.)

Flores: I'm going to go ahead and call this meeting to order, and should we have a roll call?

Murphy: Certainly. Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Here.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Here.

Murphy: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Here.
Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Here.

Murphy: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Here.

2. 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: All right, so first of all we'll have a conflict of interest inquiry. Does any member have any known or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda and 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 for a vote by the rest of the Committee. Anyone? Okay. Seeing none.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Flores: We're opening it up for public comment. Anyone from the public that would like to comment? No?

4. CONSENT AGENDA *

Flores: Okay. Seeing none, we'll move to the Consent, oh and I've just noted that Councillor Sorg is walking in as well as Councillor Small. Okay. So next up we have the Consent Agenda. Does anybody have a motion?

Barraza: Madam Chair, I make a motion we approve the Agenda.
Flores: Do I hear a second?

Garrett: Second. That's with the Consent Agenda.

Flores: Okay. And so Commissioner Garrett and Mayor Barraza was the motion and Commissioner Garrett was the second. Okay. Shall we take a vote? All in favor?

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Flores: Anyone opposed? Okay. Seeing none we've passed the Consent Agenda.

5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 *February 11, 2015

Flores: And next we have the Approval of the Minutes. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes?

Murphy: Madam Chair?

Flores: Yes?

Murphy: The approval of minutes were, was on the Consent ...

Flores: Were, were with the Consent Agenda, okay.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 15-03: A Resolution Authorizing the Chair to sign a Cooperative Agreement between the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Flores: So we'll move on to Action Items, 6.1, Resolution 15-03: A Resolution Authorizing the Chair to Sign a Cooperative Agreement between the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Barraza: Madam Chair, I make a motion we approve Resolution 15-03.

Hancock: Second.
Flores: Seconded by Commissioner Hancock and the motion was made by Mayor Barraza. Should we open up for discussion? Anyone want to, want to make a comment on that? Okay. Seeing none, shall we call it for a vote?

Pedroza: Is there a presentation, Madam Chair?

Flores: Go ahead.

Murphy: I, I can, I can, I don’t have a, a formal presentation on it but I can walk through what it is. This is a Memorandum of Agreement between the, between the MPO and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. What it does, it serves as the, as the vehicle for reimbursement for work done by MPO staff per the Unified Planning Work Program which you, which this Board approves every other year. We’ve, I mean, it, this, this is the MOA that’s also referenced in the Joint Powers Agreement that is, that all of your governments are party to that created the MPO. Previously the MOA had, had always been adopted by the, the fiscal agent for the MPO who is, which is in our case the City of Las Cruces. However, for this go-round with the development of the NMDOT’s Policies and Procedures Manual they decided that they wanted the MPO Boards to be the, the approving body for the MOA. Since your packet was assembled, we did receive back from the City Attorney who also serves as MPO Counsel that they do, they do not see any issues with the MOA. It’s basically in line with the previous MOAs that the, that the MPO has operated under through the City. And I think with that I will, will stand for any questions.

Flores: Any questions? Okay. Seeing none, we’ll just take it for a vote.

Murphy: Okay. Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.
Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Sorg, Small. Sorry.

Small: Yes. Smorg.

Murphy: Sorry.

Small: Smorg.

Murphy: Too much talking. And, and Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6.2 Appointment to Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee

Flores: Okay. All right so we'll move along to 6.2: Appointment of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee. So do you want to give us some background on that?

Murphy: Okay. We have, we have, we had a vacancy on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee. We advertised in, in a few sources which escape me right now but we, you know we made, made it public through all the, all the PIOs. I think we, you know also had the Town Clerk or put out some notice and we received one application for that vacancy and this is a, the Pedestrian Community Representative. The, the applicant is Mr. Andrew Bencmo and, trust you all had a opportunity to, to read his letter of interest and he's in the audience if you have any, any questions of him and I think what we want to do is have a, a motion and a second and then a vote to, a vote to appoint him to the Committee.
Hancock: Motion to approve.

Small: Second.

Flores: Okay. Okay, so the motion was by Commissioner Hancock and the second, was that, was Councillor Small. All right. Would Mr. Bencomo like to come up and say anything?

Bencomo: Good afternoon Madam Chair, Members. I saw notice of this. I had heard of this Committee before, I used to work for the City of Las Cruces so I would see the notices come through every so often. It's something I've kind of always been interested in. I'm, I'm a runner and so I'm always out on trails, out running different, on the roadways, things like that so I, I know the running community really and I know the needs of the running community; things like where we run. We run on the irrigation ditches a lot. I know the City has work on it, working on an MOU with EBID on that, something to, to push through with the County. I've been working with a group called Place Matters and they're a health equity group and one of the things we talk about and, and we're really focusing on right now is access to parks and trail systems, things like that not only for, in the City of Las Cruces but even more so in the rural areas where that's not necessarily available. So in the time I've been doing all these things, things have just kind of been tying together and happening and so this just seemed like a really good opportunity for me to, to kind of put my voice in in some other areas also that might make a difference so that was kind of my impetus for this so thank you.

Flores: Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Bencomo?

Hancock: Madam Chair.

Flores: Yes, Commissioner.

Hancock: Are you a bicyclist also? Are you a cyclist?

Bencomo: I'm a, I, I, I'm a, I'm a very novice bicyclist. I mostly mountain bike. I, I ride on the, on the trails once in a while but not, not like a road biker, no.

Hancock: Okay.

Bencomo: Those guys that ride like 20, 25 miles an hour for 30 miles. I can't do that.

Hancock: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Sorg: Madam Chair.
Flores: Actually, Councillor Small first.

Small: Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you Mr. Bencomo. Knowing you from the City I think we're very fortunate to have you apply for this Committee. I appreciate you mentioning your work with Place Matters and finding equity for folks, all different kind of people who are using public spaces so I think, I think this is great and really appreciate you wanting to come onto this. Thank you.

Bencomo: Thank you.

Flores: Is that, Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: I'll echo what Councillor Small has said. You'll be a great asset to this community and thank you for applying and you've got some good things going on. So very good, thank you for, for being here.

Bencomo: Thank you, sir.

Garrett: Madam Chair.

Flores: Sir? Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Thank you. I'm always a little disheartened when we only have one applicant but I will say that just from what I've known of you and the interactions that we've had, which has mostly been about, around Place Matters it's hard for me to imagine that we would get anybody more qualified and, and I really appreciate your stepping up and your interest in this. Thank you.

Bencomo: Thank you.

Flores: Okay. So I'm not seeing any more questions so I guess we'll take this for a vote.

Murphy: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.
Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Councilor Small.

Small: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes. And I'd like to thank Mr. Bencomo for putting in his application and I echo Mr. Garrett, Commissioner Garrett's comments as well. Thank you.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 NMDOT update

Flores: So the next point is Discussion Items and the New Mexico Department of Transportation update.

Doolittle: Thank you Madam Chair. I just want to give you a real brief update on a couple of projects that we have here in town. Our Vado-Mesquite project is about 99% finished. We're putting in the last few signs but all the striping and asphalt and bridge work is finished and planning a final inspection hopefully next week to do a few cleanup items but for the most part we are finished. I know we got off on a little bit of a slow start due to
some design issues and some grade issues but I drove through the
project last week and it is a very nice project, a lot of compliments from the
community and business owners. I know we had some hiccups with the
truck stops but we received several compliments so I’m pleased with, with
the final outcome of that project.

North Main project, we continue to progress through that. The
expected completion date on that one is September. We continue to have
some utility issues that we run into that are pretty shallow, that are causing
problems with the work but we continue to work with the City to, to get
through those without impacting utilities. We’re installing our storm drain
around those types of things which slows progress down substantially but
we’re expecting a completion date of September for that project.

Those of you that have driven through the Missouri project will see
a lot of work going on, on Missouri. We’re actually planning on finishing
that project by the end of the calendar year which is approximately three
months ahead of schedule. That was a, a weather working day project
where they were only supposed to work five days a week. They are
actually working seven days a week. They’re bringing in a third structure
crew next week. They told us that they want to get this one finished so
they can move along to a big project so I don’t know what that consists of
but, for us that’s a big one. But we have been very happy with, with FNF
and the work that they’re doing at Missouri. We actually had a, a citizen
that has voiced several concerns at our public meetings show up and
provide a compliment to the contractor when they demolished the bridge
on the southbound side, appreciated them working with the pedestrian
traffic and the, the vehicles in getting that torn down and cleaned up, so it
was nice to get a positive comment.

Flores: I have a question from Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Only when Mr. Doolittle is finished.

Doolittle: I have one, actually two more quick ones. Is that okay?

Flores: Yeah.

Doolittle: The other one I wanted to provide a quick update on is we’re getting ready
to start construction on the, on the Union bridges at I-10. That’s the, the
two bridges there at the Whataburger there at University-Valley-I-10
interchange. We got two bridges there that we’re going to tear down and
replace. The expected start date on that one is sometime June or July.
We do not have a notice to proceed at this point so we’re still in the
contract negotiation and award process. There’ll be some, some impacts
to traffic both on Union and I-10 once we get started there. But I’ll give
you more updates as we progress through the contract negotiation and
then once we get a schedule from the contractor I’ll have very specific
dates of when we're going to start work. And then the last one that I just briefly wanted to mention is we have a TAPP award going to the Las Cruces Public Schools for their Safe Routes to School program coordinator both for Fiscal Years '16 and '17 in the amount of, the total award is right at $36,000 so I know that that was a topic of discussion over several meetings a while back but we did fund them for both '16 and '17. And with that I will stand for any questions.

Flores: Okay. Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is not a question, it is a comment on the Missouri bridge project, actually may lead to a question after all now that I think of it. I first of all compliment on the speed. That is, I was shocked to see how fast they're going myself but somebody commented on why don't they work 24 hours a day and I, to get these kind of projects that are going to be traffic problems you know done, and I assume that would raise the cost of the project significantly. Is, do you have some handle on, on the amount it would increase, Mr. Doolittle? Thank you.

Doolittle: Madam Secretary, Madam Chairman, Madam Secretary. Madam Chairman, Councillor Sorg I, I don't have any kind of analysis on, on what it would cost to do that. If you'll recall when we bid the I-10/I-25 interchange that was, that was on a, a bidding process that allowed for an incentive to finish early. Those contractors chose to work 20-hour shifts seven days a week but of course there was a substantial incentive to finishing early and that's typically when we see those types of activities. I will tell you that I sat in that, the weekly coordination meeting this morning with FNF. Starting Monday they are going to start working 24 hours a day only because they are going to be bringing in bar material for the approaches to the bridge and by, because they'll have trucks entering and exiting on a frequent basis they were afraid of the safety hazards tied to the traffic through there so they're going to do that type of work that, that would impact traffic at night where we have reduced traffic volume but right now that's the only activity that I've heard of in their, in their near schedule that will work 24 hours a day.

Sorg: Well even the appearance of that is going to make me look real good because they asked me why they didn't do it 24 hours a day. Thank you Mr. Doolittle and thank you Madam Chair.

Doolittle: Councillor Sorg if I, if I may expand just a little bit. The problem with working 24 hours a day especially when you're in a downtown area, especially like Las Cruces is we'll start to get complaints about the noise. Any of those trucks are required to have a backup alarm and the last thing I think any of us want to hear at 2:00 in the morning is something that sounds like our alarm waking us up for work. So that's, that's something
that we certainly do consider is the impacts to the, the neighboring communities. We'll, we'll see what happens when we start running these trucks and how, and how the public reacts to that.

Flores:  Thank you. Commissioner Garrett?

Garrett:  Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you Mr. Doolittle for the report. I've heard good things too about the Mesquite-Vado project. One thing that was raised at the last meeting that I attended on that project had to do with something that wasn't directly involved in the project itself but that was highlighted because of the project, and that is that as one exits the Mesquite interchange going west to Stern, there's a curve in Stern at that point and it's very hard to see the traffic coming in on both sides because it, it's more than 180 degrees. It actually wraps back around. It was complicated by the fact that there was some construction material that was on the, on the north side but even with that not being there, in particular there are times of the day when you've got the sun setting in the west and you're trying to, to look all the way around hard to your right or hard to your left and people go fast on Stern. I don't know what the solution to that is and I don't know what the accident records are but there were people who said that they had very close misses a number of times so it's just one of those areas that if you could have your safety people take a look at, the configuration, it's, it's also that, that the, the roads drop off on both sides. It's not even level, you know they curve down and, and away so it's hard to see.

Doolittle:  Madam Chair, Commissioner Garrett. I will certainly, once we get the contractor out of that yard and get it back where it'll be permanently I will certainly have our, our Safety Section and Traffic Section go take a look at those sight distances.

Garrett:  Thank you. If I could just, and have they removed the material from that construction yard?

Doolittle:  The last time I went through there, 1, I don't know which material specifically you're talking about but they are still using it as a storage yard until we finish with the project. I know our internal forces use it as a storage yard for like the concrete wall barrier. I will be sure that when they're finished that at least our materials are back against the, would be the east fence.

Garrett:  Yeah.

Doolittle:  And make sure that we can clean up that sight distance as best we can until we can come up with a long-term solution.
Garrett: Right. And I, I think i, if you see that there's, there continues to be some visual impediments, anything that can be done to warn people who are going south on Stern that there's a potential problem to slow them down a little bit, just a warning light, anything would be helpful.

Flores: Anyone else? Okay.

7.2 Transport 2040 Update

Flores: Then we'll move to 7.2: Transport 2040 update.

Murphy: Thank you, Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. We are, we are on the, the final leg of our Metropolitan Transportation Plan adoption. We have, at last week's TAC meeting we released the draft Transportation Plan. Again it's going to be known as Transport 2040 for public, public review. We're opening a, we, we opened up a 45-day public comment period I believe ends May 18th. We'll be presenting to various groups around the region. We're also going to be, with a little advice from this group, from this Committee we have a couple more public meetings. But I wanted to go, kind of go, go through some of the, some of the, I guess the content of the Plan update so get started.

So this'll be the, this'll be the update to Transport 2040 which we adopted in July of 2010 so we have a, a due date of July of 2015 to have this, have this adopted. Some of the highlights that, transportation highlights that came out of Transport 2040 was the MPO's development of management, access management guidelines. We developed a transportation asset safety management plan which we hope to, hope to really use as a framework for decision-making moving forward, the outfall channel trail got built, the I-10/I-25 interchange got reconstructed and, and we constructed and began operations out of Mesilla Valley intermodal transit terminal and those are just some of the, some of the highlights for, for transportation over the last five years in this region. This is the new look of Transport 2040, has the, the same chapter framework as the original Transport 2040 had with the, with an addition in chapter 4. It used to be just our strategy toolboxes but with the federal level authorization map 21, moving ahead for progress in the 21st century, we are going to be required to develop performance measures. This chapter deals with some, some methods and some ideas for developing performance measures for our region.

Okay. Back up one bit. So the, the organization's chapter, chapter 1 is the background and basis for planning, what an MPO is. Chapter 2 is the existing data and future scenarios. We went out in our, our public involvements and presented data, listened to the public, seen what their transportation concerns were. Mostly I'm going to deal with the last four chapters in this presentation so the planning process and vision. So our planning process and vision kind of really started with the livability
principles that were developed by Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the USDOT. Those principles are also seen in the County, County effort Viva Dona Ana which the MPO’s been involved with and we’ve, you know we’ve utilized a lot of the public comment that they’ve received in formulating some of, some of our basis or some of our ideas. Also the, and as an example the City’s sustainability action plan also speaks a lot to those livability principles about providing more transportation choices. And I won’t bother going through each of the six livability principles, I think everybody on this Board has at least heard, heard of them before and has gone through them. So we’ve, starting from, using that as a starting point we’ve, we’ve developed Transport 2040 principles and we’ll start with number one: Main, maintain and improve the existing transportation system first and foremost. We need the transportation to connect people to jobs, goods, services, recreational opportunities, preserve natural, cultural, historical, and agricultural resources, promote and design healthy and livable communities, promote and improve multimodal and intermodal options for all users, and last and most importantly is the increased safety for all users starting with the most vulnerable modes. So, and this is in chapter 4 and we’d started, you know it’s where we start the discussion with the performance measures. We’re still waiting on the Federal Highway Administration to come out with their final direction on their vote. We do anticipate that to be relatively soon and we do know, we do know the areas in which we need to develop performance measures and, and we’re trying to, we’re trying to anticipate what’s coming out of that by including that in this chapter. Can we use the, you know the Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan as a beginning point to, to, to collect the data that we need to actually do the measures? So I think we’re going to be well positioned once we find out those, once we find out those requirements.

Okay. Chapter 5 is really the maps portion of the, of the Transportation Plan. We’ve got several maps all of which we’ve, we have displayed around here. Welcome you and encourage you to look at them after the meeting. Come by to our offices or download them. I’m going to go kind of, next, next several slides is just going to give you a, a quick overview about what we use each of those maps for. The first one is the, what we call the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, an Illustrated List. This, this is actually the, the main map for the MTP. This identifies what, what we’ve listed as priority projects. These are the projects that will be able to be included on the TIP in future years without Transportation Plan Amendment. We worked, worked carefully with our Technical Advisory Committee and Bicycle Committee to develop the projects included. You know it, some of this also, also brings about some, some of the comments we’ve received from the public and I don’t expect you to be able to read anything on the slide here but the, the map is here and I just wanted to have, give you the general look of it. On the side, on the sidebar we’ll have general discussions of policies that are applicable to the, to the map.
And I apologize. I thought I had included, I, I must not have hit "save" at the right time. So we have the not, the next, the next map is the Pedestrian Systems Priority Plan and what, we use that one that basically identify focus areas for pedestrian activity, you know hope to use that to advance a, advance a ... yeah sorry, advance projects to be included on the next one, the next, to the MTP plan.

The Bicycle Systems Plan, Priorities Plan is, is similar in that it identifies policies for including bikes, bicycle lanes on new, new facilities. It also establishes a tier system of which is, which are the most important bicycle connections for the region. Trail System Plan similar, it has, also has a Trail Priorities System. It's when we developed the Outfall Channel Project out of it. This one, the highlight on the trail plan is going to be the, the Rio Grande Trail which was recently signed by the Governor so I think in, in our region we have that plan identified as, as something that can move forward with the, you know as soon as, as soon as we have the availability.

The Public Transportation Priority Plan is, has evolved from the Long Range Transit Plan that we worked with the City. It identifies priority corridors for public transit investment, the idea being that we're going to focus our transit investment along specific corridors where there are density and, and job advantages to have it rather than running, running heavy transit where it's little utilized. I think it also, it also serves as a policy document for you know allowing increased density in those corridors so you, we're not asking that people are required to live in dense areas but we're, we're asking that we do provide an area if somebody wishes to utilize public transportation that they're, that we do have areas in which they can, they can live, work, and, and play.

Functional Classification Map, it shows the current state of the major roadways in the MPO area. I think we, we been working with the NMDOT on, on submitting this classification. I believe couple three weeks ago they submitted it to FHWA for final approval and then I, I think we're, we will, we will also approve this as adopting our MTP plan and then they're, developing an amendment process for that to follow.

Next map is a truck route map. We've all, the MPO has always had RGIS shape files where, where we had an original truck route map that the City had developed way back in the early '90s, really doesn't get, get updated. It wasn't updated regularly. What we're going to be doing is we're pulling it into the MPO process so that it can be updated at, at least every five years with the adoption of this plan. We've gotten some feedback about where, where are appropriate roadways to, for, for trucks to operate, particularly in and out of industrial areas, the US Highway system and state highways. There are also a couple of places that we got through feedback about prohibiting trucks and the City currently has prohibited trucks on an area of Mesquite and on Alameda and through this I think we're also proposing a, a truck prohibition on Baylor Canyon due to the upcoming pavement and we've expressively heard that people do not
wish that to become some sort of truck bypass so what we’re doing, what
we hope to do is provide a mechanism that would give the County some
standing to sign that roadway if they desire.

And then the last map listed is the Future Roadway Map. It was
formerly known as the Major Thoroughfare Plan. That map is going to
serve as a guide for right-of-way preservation in the instance of public, or
in the instance of private development. One, the major, I think the major
focus out of this MTP is that we do not want to spend public dollars on
expanding the roadway system. We want a “fix it first” attitude and I’ve got
more on the next slide but we cannot, we cannot stop private development
nor, you know nor should we but we should, we should have a full
evaluation of what those costs are.

Okay. And Chapter 6 is a, will be a discussion on our, what we’re
faced with from a money standpoint so nationwide VMT has, has, has
gone down and the gas tax hasn’t increased in 20 years on a national
level, I think it’s the same in the state and, and costs for, costs for
construction have increased so we certainly have less buying power so we
need to strategically target what we spend our transportation money on.
Interstate highway system, you know the, I think that, you know Missouri
and Union bridges all point this out. We have a big task ahead of us that
there are a lot of, lot of components of the existing system that’ll, that need
replacing in the next few years so we need to focus that. And then also
Map 21 and language out of Congress call for an increased focus on
operations and maintenance.

So the big policies we want to have come out of this plan is we’re
going to support ITS systems, that’s intelligent transportation systems,
things like adaptive signal timing, message signs to, you know to, to
educate motorists and other users of, of where to avoid when they need to
avoid it, to utilize the existing capacity that we do have in a better manner.
We’re going to continue to develop our Transportation Asset and Safety
Management Plan. What we want to do is develop a database of all the
assets that we have, the crashes that are occurring on it, and then be able
to use that as a, as a guide to help inform our, our, our spending choices.

We want to have an investment in public transportation. Public
transportation can move a greater number of people on the same
infrastructure. We want to invest in walking and biking facilities. These
are low-cost improvements and they can make, they can make an
individual area better. I think the, some of the work that Mr. Bencomo and
Place Makers speak to that, that it’s very important to have these types of
facilities in the areas. They, they create value for our communities and
also that stabilizes the basis of which we, we pay to maintain our system.

And then we also want to recommend that we do reduce the
roadway risks where it’s appropriate so that our system’s safer, shorter to
cross for pedestrians, of reduced speeds for motorists, and then also that
follows that it’s less expensive to, to do the upkeep. And so with that, like
I said we, we’re out currently for public comment. We’re going to be going
around many of the places that we went before and invite public back and
get their feedback and we get handed out the copies to you. Please,
please take your time, dive into it and let staff know, know your reactions
on this and the meeting two months from now hopefully we’ll be coming
back asking for an approval. Thank you.

Flores: Anybody have, Councillor Pedroza,

Pedroza: Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom did I understand you to say that the maps
that you talked about that I couldn’t find, are they going to be produced?

Murphy: They, they exist. I thought I’d put them in the PowerPoint slide but I think I
pulled, I pulled the jump drive and hit “save” in wrong, in the wrong order.

Pedroza: Okay. But you will be getting ...

Murphy: I, I ...

Pedroza: Those to ...

Murphy: And we’ll, yeah we’ll ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: Go get those and we’ll also put it on the, on the website for everybody to
view. I also included our past public involvement schedule on there and ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: And I don’t know what I did. I ...

Pedroza: Okay. The other question was I, I remember hearing about the, the
walking trail, biking trail around the city. Is that almost close to
completion? Not the, not the Rio Grande one but the, isn’t there a, a
proposed loop, not for driving but for, yeah?

Murphy: In the, in the last, or the currently adopted Transport 2040 we do have the
Tier 1 Trail System, with that we, we did construct the Outfall Channel, or
actually ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: The City constructed the Outfall Channel on there. The City’s also
working on improvements to the La Llorona Path. This was going to,
going to happen later on in Staff Comments but we’re working with Mayor
Barraza. We’re under, we’re beginning, undertaking our University
Avenue Corridor Study which will deal with, with some of, closing of some of that last leg around the city, getting some non-motorized facilities in, along University.

Pedroza: About how many mile total would, will that go?

Murphy: I, I bike that, I, I, I biked that once and, or brag I biked it a couple of times and, and my bike computer told me it was 30 miles.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you very much. What is the process for say for instance some of the residents in the city who say, "You know this street may be a collector but it really shouldn’t? We don’t think it should have trucks on it." How do they bring that to the attention of us or, or, and, and if they do what’s the process for, for determining whether or not that’s going to happen?

Murphy: What an individual would like to do would be to either come to this meeting, speak to you at, at Public Comment period or they can send, they can send you know MPO staff a, an e-mail. We have a general, this is on our website mpo@las-cruces.org. That’s an e-mail that goes to everybody, every member of staff and then we, then we can bring it forward to you at a subsequent meeting or they could, or they could write us a letter or, or you know something.

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: I, I don’t think I’d want to depend upon a phone call for it.

Pedroza: Right.

Murphy: I’d want some, something in writing.

Pedroza: And are there guidelines that would say, "Well if you’re, if the street that you’re interested in is a state highway we can’t but if it’s some," and you know and go on down the classifications so that people can understand that maybe some streets are simply not, not going to be prohibited to, to trucks.

Murphy: That, that’s correct. You know US 70 ...

Pedroza: Right.

Murphy: We cannot, we cannot do that. Solano, Lohman ...

Pedroza: What about Espina?
Murphy: Espina, Espina would be one of those ones on the, on the edge there but you know there are certain ones that are either under City or County or Town ownership that no, you, you don’t want to prohibit trucks from them and then there are others, you know if they go through residential and there’s no, no commercial or industrial uses along there, you know that probably would be a good candidate. If you, if...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: Your zoning is set up such that these are, these are where you have trucks originating that would not be a, that would not be a wise thing to prohibit.

Pedroza: But you could study to see if any of those factors exist.

Murphy: Yeah, we could, we ...

Pedroza: And then be able to ...

Murphy: Could study it. The FHWA’s published guidelines which we, we go down through. We consult with, we’ll you know consult with our Technical Committee, we’ll consult with this Committee, we’ll consult with the DOT staff on whether that makes sense and then ultimately it would be a decision by the, by you the Policy Committee whether for us to ask the, you know ask the FHWA to approve that change in classification.

Pedroza: Even if it’s not a federal highway?

Murphy: Even if it’s not a federal highway. Cause the, the functional classification you know ultimately decides what the, what is the federal aid system regardless of what entity owns it.

Pedroza: Oh, I see.

Murphy: The roadways on the functional classification are eligible for federal aid.

Pedroza: Okay. And my last question is you were talking about reducing the width of certain streets. Is that in line with the, the Complete Streets ideas or do, are they in conflict cause I remember, or I think I remember that Complete Streets has paths for hot cars, paths for bicycles, paths for pedestrians, etc. and now it seemed to me as if that was widening the, the, the width of the street instead of reducing it. How do you, how do you reconcile that?
Murphy: I don’t think there’s a need to, to reconcile. This is, this is something that comes out of that and I probably should’ve spoke more specifically. Reducing the, the, the roadway width part of a street, that’s the ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Murphy: The travel lanes. You know you, the, it could mean wider sidewalks ...

Pedroza: I see.

Murphy: It could mean implementation of bike, bicycle lanes or trails along the roadway but the, the actual through traffic lanes would be, you know the, the expensive part that we have to, have to ...

Pedroza: Right.

Murphy: Build substantial upgrades, that we have to, we have to, we resurface every couple of years ...

Pedroza: Or almost.

Murphy: Yeah. So make that, make that more to spend, but you know ...

Pedroza: I see. Okay. Okay.

Murphy: But side, sidewalks I, I think you know we, we certainly would want those to be ...

Pedroza: Right. Yeah.

Murphy: Wider and not take away.

Pedroza: All right. Thank you very much. That’s all my questions.

Flores: Councillor Small.

Small: Thank you very much Chair Flores. Thank you very much, Mr. Murphy. Really quick, one of the points that was raised by Mr. Bencomo was, were the internal trails along the lateral systems mainly owned by EBID? There is the ability to use those as recreational trails. Is there, as part of this draft is there highlighted priority corridors for trails in, in the interior of the City or within kind of the interior of the, the urban area, whether it’s City or County or Town of Mesilla?

Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Small. Yes on the Trail System Priority, well Priority Plan we’ve identified the Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 Trail System. We’re
working, worked with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility, you know the
BPAC on, on, assigning those various priorities and then as projects are
developed by, by any of the, the you know the three entities or the desire
creation of a trail we do have it so that it is supported by the Metropolitan
Transportation Plan.

Small: Awesome. Thank you very much. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Thank you Madam Chair and thank you Mr. Murphy for the, the
presentation. Just two comments and I'll put these into my, my formal
comments that I send to you. One is that on the very last page under the
Financial Plan and the, the Priorities and it was the earlier slide that you
had where you had policies. I wanted to suggest that the bullet that says
"invest in walking and biking facilities, low-cost improvements that can,"
that we add "promote health and increase an area's value." I think we talk
about efficiency and safety and other kinds of things but we know that this
is something that's important and given health concerns in the community
as a whole I think spelling that out particularly would be a good idea.

The, the other is on pages 65 and 66 and it has to do with the loop
roads. We had a really good presentation here about loop roads and as a
result of that discussion a paragraph was added that had to do with talking
about not recommending that any loop roadwork be done at least until
2020. I'm going to suggest that that be moved up because it's kind of
buried, it's the last thing. I think if that went in right after the, the first
paragraph under loop roads that that would be more consistent with the
discussion that the Policy Committee has had about that issue. And I'd
also ask that, that you talk with the planning staff that have been working
on the Comp Plan for Viva Dona Ana about the language that they're
using regarding the High Mesa Road. I continue to be very concerned
with that and, and it seems to me it's inherently antithetical to
transportation, what is it transportation oriented development or ...

Murphy: Transit oriented development.

Garrett: Transit oriented development and some of the other kinds of things that
we're, we're trying to do that are actually part of this plan. Spreading out
the, the, the flow of traffic is simply not going to help this overall area in my
opinion. I think it's, it's an idea that has limited value and I think there are
other, I, I think it needs to be mentioned that there are some significant
questions about that particular southwest loop and, and one way to deal
with that is simply to, you're only going to do a paragraph so tie back in it
and, and use similar language as we have with the Viva Dona Ana. Again
we're part of that consortium effort so I think that that might be a way to
address that. Thank you.
Flores: Anyone else? Okay. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would it be appropriate to, by, by the end of May, by May 26th I believe our, the South Central Regional Transportation District Plan will be completed and approved by, by NMDOT. Since there is this time frame between May and the time you put this out, would it be more appropriate to include greater depth about the, the efforts that we made for the rural transportation or in the other parts? I think you referred to it in one place as bus rural, bus rapid transit and that, that is tying rural with regional systems. And, and in Section 6 you talk about some of the finances that are involved and in light of the County’s commitment of $760,000 a year for the beginning plan of the RTD it seems logical that, that there be some of that included as well. Would that be something that you’d like to see from RTD?

Murphy: Madam Chair, Commissioner Hancock. Yes and, and you did provide me the, the draft plan I, I believe two days, Tuesday.

Hancock: Yeah. That’s version three so far.

Murphy: And, yeah, and, and absolutely we do need to beef up the South Central portion of that.

Hancock: Okay.

Murphy: I think that’s becoming much closer to a reality than when we first penned this, this chapter ...

Hancock: Okay.

Murphy: Closer to November but ...

Hancock: Okay.

Murphy: Absolutely yes. We do need to do that.

Hancock: I’ll, I’ll be sure that that entity provides that information. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: Any other questions or comments? Okay, so all right, thank you.

Flores: So we’ll move along to Committee and Staff Comments. I’m assuming you want to welcome somebody to the staff.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Flores: So we’ll move along to Committee and Staff Comments. I’m assuming you want to welcome somebody to the staff.
Murphy: Certainly. Our new Planning Technician recently joined us in the, just a little over a month ago, name is Sharon Nebbia. She has a degree in Environmental Science and she has shown to be a whiz with the putting the, making the document look very professional and, and the colors work together, certainly it's nothing that Andrew, Michael, or I could've accomplished and she'll be running our traffic count program, also our main, main keeper of statistics and data.

Flores: Any other Committee comments?

Hancock: Madam Chair.

Flores: Yes.

Hancock: Madam Chair. Just one, the, the graphics are great. The chapter covers are, are super. As a matter of curiosity, it'd be great to just have a little thing at the bottom of where that is.

Murphy: Okay.

Hancock: That way we could, you know people could go explore our community a little bit more and know where they're going so thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.

Murphy: And, and I, I have, do have to jump in. I, I, I think these are mainly Michael's idea of getting the chapter covers so he, he had the idea. I didn't mean to diss his computer art skills but he's got some vision.

McAdams: The ideas of covers were mine but the ideas of Tom's, the graphics came, that's his idea and all of those are (inaudible) bridges in the area so those are all artwork that ties back to the transportation so the only exception is the one with the roadrunner, that's the rest stop so all of those the graphics are transportation oriented and I have to give credit for Tom for this because that's what, my ideas were just the, the covers but the idea of the, the graphics was his and I think it's a fantastic idea so...

Hancock: Madam Chair. I, I think my point is that many, once you put these things on the internet, they're going to go worldwide and the pictures end up in a separate pile somewhere and it'd be nice to have a, a little thing about where it is so that somebody that sees something and, and they're, it draws them back to us just as a, thank you, Madam Chair.

Flores: Any other comments? Okay. I would like to ask people to, when you're sending e-mails and I did this same thing because Councillor Pedroza was very nice to let us know that there would be a conflict and we might have
an issue with making quorum and that's great, but I just think we ought to
be disciplined and just send an e-mail to Mr. Murphy and that way we can
avoid any problems with the open meeting sect just as a matter of
discipline so that we don't start talking about things that we're going to be
discussing here. I just think it's a good policy and just kind of a way to
keep your communications clear so that you don't get a whole bunch of
ideas going on and, and getting people confused. I would just like to ask
everybody if there's an issue, just let Mr. Murphy know and don't do a
"reply all" so that we don't get confused and so that we're very careful not
to discuss any issues that we will be discussing at these meetings, so ...

Pedroza: I think that makes perfect sense, Madam Chair. I do.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Flores: Okay. So, so we'll have Public Comment again. Anybody from the public
that would like to make a comment?

10. ADJOURNMENT (2:46 p.m.)

Flores: Okay. Then we're adjourned. Thank you.

Chairperson

[Signature]