MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE (PC) Meeting

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee (PC) meeting which was held August 13, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. at City of Las Cruces Council Chambers, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Billy Garrett (DAC)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)
Commissioner Leticia Benavidez (DAC)
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC)
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Sam Bernal (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Nathan Small (CLC)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Wray (MPO staff)
Orlando Fierro (MPO staff)
Tom Murphy (MPO staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Denise Weston, Bohannan-Huston
Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Garrett called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY-- No conflicts of interest

Garrett: Do you want to call, do you want to call roll?

Murphy: Yes sir. Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Here.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Here.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Here.
Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Here.

Murphy: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Here.

Murphy: And Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Here. Thank you very much Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: We have a quorum.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment

Garrett: Do we have any members of the public who would like to speak to the Committee?

4. CONSENT AGENDA*

Garrett: In that case we will move forward to the consent agenda, which consists of the minutes of the meeting of June 11, 2014. Could I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

Hancock: So moved.

Baraza: Second. Mayor Baraza second.

Garrett: It's been moved by Commissioner Hancock, seconded by Mayor Baraza, any discussion, any from the public. In that case would you please poll the Board, or the Committee? Those in favor say "yes", those opposed "no".

Murphy: Mayor Baraza.

Baraza: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.
Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.
Pedroza: Yes.
Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.
Benavidez: Yes.
Murphy: Councillor Sorg.
Sorg: Yes.
Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Yes.
Murphy: And Commissioner Garrett.
Garrett: Yes. Thank you very much. We will now move to action items.

Motion passes, vote 7 – 0 (three Committee members absent).

5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 *June 11, 2014 – minutes approved under the Consent Agenda vote.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 14-11: A Resolution Adopting the Mesilla Valley MPO Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan.

Garrett: We have two action items. The first is Resolution 14-11 a Resolution Adopting the Mesilla Valley MPO Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan. We left it up for, to get some feedback and make last minute or last suggested changes. The requested changes were minimal. I believe just of a, just of a copy/edit nature. So we’re bringing it back here for final approval by this Board. Ms. Weston from Bohannan Huston is here in case there are any questions of the Committee, but we’re asking for a yes vote on approving this.
Garrett: Very good. Could I have a motion to approve the Resolution adopting the Mesilla Valley MPO Transportation Asset and Safety Management Plan?

Sorg: Move to approve.

Baraza: And second.

Garrett: Okay. The motion has been made by Councillor Sorg and seconded by Mayor Baraza, is that correct? Okay. Is there any discussion by the Committee about the Asset and Safety Management Plan? Okay, any comments by the public? In that case would you please poll the Board? Those in favor say "yes", those opposed "no".

Murphy: Mayor Baraza.

Baraza: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes. Thank you. So that measure passes unanimously.

Motion passes, vote 7 - 0 (three Committee members absent).
6.2 Resolution 14-09: A Resolution Approving a Memorandum of Agreement with the El Paso MPO on planning responsibilities in certain areas of Dona Ana County.

Garrett: The next item is Resolution 14-09, A Resolution Approving a Memorandum of Agreement with the El Paso MPO on planning responsibilities in certain areas of Dona Ana County. Postponed from the June 2014 meeting.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, members of the Committee and staff will be once again asking for a postponement of this. Given ... unsure of the exact reasons, we’ve been unable to really have meaningful conversations with El Paso MPO staff; either due to their unavailability, our unavailability, everybody else’s work load or not, but we do plan to continue working on this. We did add, at least I hope I added in the suggested language from last meeting. Giving you all the opportunity to review it and I guess we can you know keep the dialog going. I think this is you know something that will always, you know our relationship with El Paso, something that will always be continuing, so we don’t need, we need to make sure that the documents, the formal documents, that we take due diligence in preparing. But I apologize that we weren’t able to get this completed for you today.

Garrett: Thank you. I don’t know do we need a motion to postpone action, since it was posted for action?

Murphy: Yes. I think we would need a motion to postpone.

Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes.

Barraza: I make a motion that we postpone this item indefinitely.

Hancock: Second.

Garrett: Motion to postpone action on Resolution 14-09 was made by Mayor Barraza and seconded by Commissioner Hancock. Any comment, discussion by the Committee? I would just like to comment that I commend staff for the inclusion of the comments that we had asked for, for the language we asked for. I continue to be concerned with how well this will work and I think that the right thing is to get this agreement in place and then to move fairly quickly to have some discussions about specific projects; in particular those that are in probably the transportation connections in with Santa Teresa and potentially the 404 interchange, and the idea of a spur to Santa Teresa and then hooking in with, with the Northeast Parkway. I think we need to move those discussions forward.
The traffic's not getting any less in Santa Teresa and the roads are not getting any better. So I do think that quite honestly, I think if this Policy Committee doesn't take an active position, I don't know that things will change very much and I don't know that we will understand fully what the implications are of trying to make this relationship work as a partnership until we actually take some specific cases to them. This is no way about being disrespectful or of questioning motives of the El Paso MPO, it's simply a matter of priorities and time and energy and focus and money. So with that said I, while we've got this vote before us to postpone indefinitely, I do think it's going to be important to aggressively pursue getting that to the El Paso MPO and then of following up with a meeting with their staff and this Committee or something. We need to move this thing forward so that we can actually have some discussion about real transportation projects, in my opinion. Yes, Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. Have they, has the El Paso MPO received this document?

Murphy: Yes I believe, I believe they have. Sorry, I took a couple nights of sleep in July. They received it from what I understand and again Mr. Chairman, your remarks kind of, kind of touched upon it. I think there is some, some feel of intruding upon their territory with, with the language on there. And I think we just need to have continued discussions with them. Kind of get them comfortable with what our motivations are for, for the included language, and you know continue to have, you know and develop our cooperative relationship with them.

Hancock: Would it be helpful if we made an attempt, or some member or members from this Committee made an attempt to attend their meetings and, and try to ease their concern about a takeover of Texas?

Murphy: I really couldn't advise either way on that one. I'm not ... I don't know the feeling of the Transportation Planning Board. I'm not sure what awareness there is at that level. Perhaps Mr. Doolittle could shed some light, serving on both boards.

Doolittle: At this point, I ... I just participated in the latest transportation ... just a few weeks ago I was at the Policy Board and as far as I know, I don't, I'm not so sure this has even been discussed at the Policy Board level at all. So my guess is it's still at staff with Michael. I have Executive Committee on Thursday, tomorrow, but again at this point it's not even on the agenda. So I'm, I'm assuming it's still at the staff level for discussion between Tom and his staff and Michael and his.

Hancock: No, perhaps you need to take them a gift. Some chap stick.
Garrett: Some chile.

Hancock: Chiles or something.

Garrett: Yes, Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Might it be advisable to have ... the staff is very important, and we would like to communicate through staff but possibly something formal from the Committee stating what we would like or an invitation to discuss our concerns? That sort of thing. Is that something that might move us along a little bit faster?

Garrett: That's actually right along the lines that I was thinking about. That it might be a good idea if maybe I and one other representative from the Committee met with their Chair and somebody else just to sort of break ground. And I don't know Trent if you'd be willing to be kind of an emissary to encourage. I think it's important for people to understand what we're, we're concerned with and why. You want to comment on that?

Doolittle: I would certainly be willing to help facilitate. One comment I do have, is right now they're in a transition. They have a new Chair of the Policy Board. Actually last month was his first meeting. We actually have the executive committee meeting tomorrow, has two new staff members, or two new board members on it as well, so they are truly in a transition period. Honestly it may be a little overwhelming at this point. I think my recommendation would be probably to have Tom continue to work with Michael and then if we don't have something before us at the next Policy Board, then maybe we can push them a little bit but I know that the Chairman has his hands full right now just during that transition phase.

Garrett: Okay. That makes sense. I would encourage you to make sure that this gets on the radar so that other things that are, that are coming front and center don't squeeze us out of the picture. Yes?

Doolittle: One other comment I have, since I'll be in El Paso tomorrow for Executive Committee, I may pull Michael aside just to kind of get his feel or see you know where it is or what priority it is for him at this point and I'll try to relay that back to Tom. But I'll have a sidebar discussion with Michael tomorrow.

Garrett: I appreciate that. The reason that I'm concerned, in particular with timing, and I don't actually have all the dates, is that the State Transportation Plan is in the process of being formulated; I want to make sure that high priority projects in Dona Ana County in general get recognition and the second is that I know that transportation committees for the legislature are looking at
things. And so we have narrow windows to catch people's attention, and
the difficulty is always getting that foot in the door and of getting the
acknowledgement that this is an issue that needs to be discussed. Once
we can get on a list or in the plan then we can start moving. But if we're
not even showing up at all on those kinds of planning and funding
strategies, we're in ... we're in trouble. It continually puts us a year
behind. So it's not simply that I'm by nature impatient. All right that said is
there any further discussion? Yes Commissioner, or Councillor.

Pedroza: Thank you. I'm not sure whether this is the right time but if I can wait, if ...
last time, and the minutes reflect this, I had made a motion that we extend
an invitation to all of the New Mexico residents who actually are members
of the El Paso MPO to come and talk to us. And as I recall, and the
minutes reflect (inaudible) hey, that's not on the agenda, so that's not
really proper to be discussing right now. When would that be proper to
discuss?

Garrett: Let's simply say that you reminded us of an action item that was in the
minutes.

Pedroza: Okay.

Garrett: And that that's something that ... the ... Tom, Mr. Murphy and I will work
on for the next meeting.

Pedroza: Okay, thank you very much.

Garrett: Okay, so we don't lose track of that. We do have a motion before us. Any
further discussion? Any comments from the public? Okay in that case,
would you please poll. This is for a motion to postpone indefinitely
Resolution 14 -09. Would you indicate by "yes" or "no"?

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Benavidez.
Benavidez: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes. So that motion has been approved unanimously as well.

Motion passes, vote 7 – 0 (three Committee members absent).

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Transit Performance Measures, Committee Briefing - CANCELLED REPLACED WITH PRESENTATION ON TRANSPORT 2040

Garrett: We now have three items on the discussion portion of the agenda, and I understand that the first, 7.1 will not be presented today. Is that correct?

Murphy: That, that's correct Mr. Chair, and I do have a substitution prepared. Our Transit Planner, Chowdhury Siddiqui, as many I imagine are not aware, he left us at the beginning of July; took a job with the Albuquerque MPO. We wish him luck but he's left, left a hole in our organization which we're working to fill. As a consequence, I didn't have the transit performance measures as advanced as I would have liked to. What I do have is a presentation that we've prepared to present to ... we want to prepare it, send it to your elected boards. I'm scheduled to present this to City Council next week. I want to ... you know I've talked with the Mayor and Commissioner about having it before those boards as well. What it is, is what we want to put out for our next round of public outreach. So I wanted to kind of vet the presentation with this Committee first. Get any changes and have you view what we're putting out there.

Tom Murphy made a presentation on Transport 2040.

Garrett: Very good, thank you. Let us start at the end. Any comments or questions at this point? Yes, Councillor Sorg?

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you for this. This is a good presentation. I'm glad you're going to be able to, going to be doing it.
Murphy: You get to see it again Monday.

Sorg: Yeah, well that’s fine. You talked about mobility zones. If I recall correctly back when Carrie Thomas was here, she talked about, was it, was there something called a connectivity index and if so, is there, what’s the difference or similarity?

Murphy: The similarity is, they’re, they’re both used.

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: Mobility zones define a geographic region, one of the things that Carrie was working quite intently on and it basically establishes geographies of about three square miles, which is a bikeable area. Within those bikeable, within those geographies or that bikeable area, we would want to measure say the connectivity index to see how well connected that particular area is. I think other measures we’d like to do within a mobility zone is what’s our jobs housing balance in there? What’s, you know, I’m not sure that we can get census, we can get census bureau as far as mode to work, or mode, yeah mode to work within mobility zones, but I think we could also look at, you know, what kind of how many schools we have in there, how many parks we have in there; opportunities for destinations within each mobility zone. I think we could also, kind of, I think some of my presentation’s heavily skewed, we can see how our financial indicators are, you know is there a particular type of development you know that’s more prevalent, that gives us a greater tax return via mobility zone? You know, stuff where our investments, you know our transportation investments have more payback as far as you know providing the government coffer so that we can continue in business. Those natures, but connectivity index would be just one measure that we would apply within a...

Sorg: Mobility zone, okay. I’m just curious whether or not explaining what a connectivity index is to the, if you could add that to the presentation, I think that would be quite valuable.

Murphy: Okay. Alright and just, if you want me to hit on that. Connectivity index is essentially the ratio of links to nodes that are, that are created by the transportation system. You know each time, each time there’s an intersection, that’s a node, and the ... from intersection to intersection the bit between that are links and the numerical proportion between, between those two numbers tells us something about how easy it is for none mode ... well any travel through there. The ... and I forget which way the math works, but I think the higher the number, particularly above, above one, is the more opportunity you have for choices in your travel. So if you’re walking you can choose the shortest route or the most aesthetically
pleasing route. If you're, if you're driving and there are accidents or crashes, you have opportunities to go different routes...

Sorg: Right.

Murphy: So that there's less incident congestion along there, and you know feel that it's, that it has a better, makes the transportation system better overall.

Sorg: Yeah, have you, has MPO staff worked on this and done more connectivity indexes for more places, or is there some places in the County or the MPO area that don't have indexes yet?

Murphy: I'd have to go back and look.

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: We tend to do the work on there when we have some of our student interns are particularly skilled at GIS.

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: I'm certainly less skilled at GIS than Carrie was, so I can't turn out the work as quickly as she did, so I'm dependent when I get students smarter, or smart students to work on that.

Sorg: Okay, that's fine. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Garrett: That you Councillor. Commissioner.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. You had mentioned affordable housing stats. Do you collaborate with the Mesilla Valley Housing Authority? I mean, do they receive those, or do you receive them from them?

Murphy: We receive them from them. We've, we've been meeting with the City staff that interacts with those programs, to update the statistics within the report.

Hancock: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Thank you. I've got a couple of suggestions and some of these are really small, kind of nitpicky things and some of them are, maybe larger, philosophical. I really have trouble with presentations where I can't very well see the print and maybe it's old eyes, but if we're going to say "Serving Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, and Mesilla", it might be better if
that was in brown or something other than sort of 1960s disco pop, you
know, or 80s pop, whatever it is.

If you could go to the slide that, that was at the beginning, where
you had the, the definition of the MPO. Yeah, you just went past it. Okay.
My observation from public meetings is that in general people do not like
to have something on the screen that they cannot see because they think
that something is being kept from them. If we want to show a slide that
has Transport 2040, it needs to be blown up big enough so that people
can actually see what that map is or maybe you need to have, if this is
about the MPO, you need to have an illustration that actually simply shows
the boundary for the MPO but that is graphic in the sense of, of you can
look at it, and you know what it is and you don’t have to study it and you
certainly don’t say, “I wonder what I couldn’t see.”

If you could go, then, to the slide that has the vision statement.
Okay. Here’s, let me just ask, is part of this process, are we in a position
to revisit things like the vision statement?

Murphy: Yes, yes. We’re always, I think any time we do an update, we’re in a, we
can revisit it. One of the reasons for me stating it like I did is staff doesn’t
feel that it needs to be revisited, but what is everybody else’s opinion?

Garrett: I would put out there for consideration, and it might be something that’s
more appropriate perhaps for this Policy Committee. As we look at the
connection between 2040 and the other regional planning work that’s
going on, as I look at the 2040 vision, it seems weak. And its seems weak
in the sense of saying we’re planning, implementing, and maintaining a
transportation system that coordinates land use and transportation
planning for what purpose? To serve all transportation users. And it sort
of, it’s a little bit self-serving in that sense. And in a way, doesn’t really
connect in, at the vision level, with the idea that we’re doing this to make
stronger communities or to make this to create opportunity for all
residents, or there’s, to expand, I mean some of those things get down
into principles, but I’m, I’m simply asking the question of the Committee
and of staff. Is this a strong enough vision statement in terms of what
we’re really trying to do? And then I think it’s important to look at the
principles and look in here, is it strong enough? Does it pop enough in
terms of having to do with like efficiency and effectiveness? I think that
more and more we’re dealing with the fact that there are real constraints
on our ability to take care of the system. I don’t, this somehow kind of
gets lost in the lingo as that, one of the, and then maybe it’s because it’s a
principle rather than a goal, but I think that we really want to be paying
attention to, and calling attention to the fact that this is an important tool in
how we can focus our resources and get both better efficiency in the
system and more economy, and then all these other kind of benefits. So
although we tend to I think look at something like this and then move on, I
think this is important in terms of making sure, particularly as we talk with
the public, that this is for you. This is an important point.

Which really ... I want to go to the slide that talks about
performance measures. Yeah, getting there. Okay. Now first of all with
this one, again, nobody's going to read all the fine print, so I think you can
take all the fine print off and just pop “Safety” “Infrastructure” “Condition”
and those major kinds of things, so if anybody wants to get into more
detail, you can do that. But I think in terms of this being a presentation for
the public, I'd make it more graphic in that sense. And then if you'd move
to the next slide. Not that one. Well yeah, it is actually that one. And, is
there another one on performance measures? I think, okay, go back to
this one. The way this way presented in a sense had to do with, we can
make up our own measures relative to what's within the framework that
we have with federal highways, right?

Murphy: Yes.

Garrett: Okay, what I want to say is that that is an administrative and bureaucratic
way of presenting what can be something very powerful. And that is, that
we want to talk ... we want to think about how we can flip this around so
instead of this being about meeting performance measures that are from
Washington, that we can say we know that there are people in our
community who are concerned with the amount of money that they have
to put out for transportation in order to get to work, to get to school, to do
the things they need to do and the reality is that we can see that right now
what's happening is the majority of people are having to drive alone to get
where they want to go. That what we know is that there are not other
options that create opportunity for those that want to move in that
direction. And what that does is to put this diagram in the context of
aspirations of a certain percentage of those that are in the 82%. And it's
not about us trying to impose, “Well, we want you to get on more buses,”
it's that we believe that there are more people who want to get on buses,
and we want to help try to make that happen. Okay? Does that make
sense to everybody? I think there's, there's a way of talking about this
that has to do with ... this whole framework is intended to help people, but
if we don't, if we always put it in terms of somebody else has made the
decision for you, then there's not much room for people to actually say
“Yeah, I own that.” And it also sets up a situation for those who don't want
to drive with somebody else to say “I'm going to fight this.” So I think
there's way of talking about performance measures that anchor in the
aspirations and values of the community and that that's maybe an
important way of approaching this.

Financial Conditions slide, which was a little earlier. I was really
taking notes fast. Go back one more. It's the one you said, “I've got all
these ... I want to make sure everything was on there.” You don't really
need everything on there Tom. Again this is one of those things, I can't
see that, and I've got, I can get pretty close to the screen. But your main
point is an important one and I think what I would suggest is that you
develop a box that simply makes the point of "This is what's happening in
New Mexico," "This is what the national averages are," you can take what
the extremes are. You only need a couple of reference points, so people
aren't trying to figure out what's going on in Louisiana and how does that
relate to us. Just, again, I think this needs to be as user friendly as
possible since it's targeted to both policy makers and the public.

And I guess the last thing that I had a note on is whether this is the
process by which there will be opportunities through all of these
discussions to actually get down to talking about things that people care
about in some ways that we know about and that would just be for
example, extension of Sonoma Ranch and what level of road that's
planned to be, and those kinds of things. This is part of the process, this
is the part of ... this is a process that in part can address those kinds of
concerns, right?

Murphy: This, this is the process you know, and I think you know if history can be
my guide ... I'm trying to get one of these unidentifiable maps here but I
really appreciate that, that feedback. I mean this, this is where we would
kind of develop that. I think what we do at this point of the process, is we
are projecting you know this is what our ... we see as the, as the larger
issues and we need to make sure that our transportation system
addresses these. I think, just like every time we go, you know, we go out
to a meeting, we will hear that my street needs the pot hole fixed, or...

Garrett: Yeah, I'm not talking at that scale.

Murphy: Right, but, but I'm you know, I know we're not talking at that scale, but we
do get that feedback whenever we go out there. So I think what we want
to do is present, you know, these, these are the, these are the big global
issues that, that we need you to be aware of and you know we will get the,
we will get the Sonoma Ranch comment as far as, "well we need that",
and then say "well do we need to build, do we really need to build Sonoma
Ranch given our financial constraints?" Even if we do, do we need to
build it as wide as we've historically built roadways in this area? And I
think we, you know, we will have that discussion because I know the
Sonoma Ranch or the Loop Road person, or you know just any, any
proposed future roadway out there will come into the discussion through
our public involvement.

Garrett: Well we even have, I mean Councillor Sorg has a number of times brought
up a road in his district that he's concerned with in terms of its
classification. And I don't think this is insignificant to the process. If we
want the public to feel like this is something that matters, they need to be
able to take something that matters to them and say, "Okay, is this the
time when we can have a conversation about X road?" Because otherwise it tends to get lost and you don’t know when you’re ever going to have a chance to talk about it. So I would suggest that one of things that you might want to consider putting in is a slide that specifically says “if you have questions about road classifications and the alignments of these roads, this is the time to bring that up.” This is a legitimate issue that we will be folding into the process. Because if we did, for example find that we didn’t want to extend Sonoma Ranch, then there would be implications for the system and you’d want to say, “Well how do we still address the traffic flow that we project through that area?” So I think in that sense it’s really legitimate to have, to recognize that that’s one of the things that is likely to be of concern to people and that this is a good place for that to come up.

Murphy: Well I, I agree absolutely. I do think that this is, this is the slide and I probably need to come up with a better way of prompting people that they are welcome to bring us their, their major area of concern, because within this.

Garrett: Yeah. I didn’t get this. I didn’t say, “Oh, yeah, that’s what, that’s what we’re talking about here.”

Murphy: Right.

Garrett: And I actually, I’ve done a lot of PowerPoints, I would consider doing a slide that just says “This is where you, if you have these concerns, this is part of the process. This is THE process where we want these things to be brought forward.” Because it has to do with connectivity. It has to do with mobility. It has to do with our financials and all that other kind of stuff. So those are some suggestions for some changes. Thank you. Yes, Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Just a something you might want to look at, and it’s a different kind of presentation software. It’s called Prezi, P R E Z I. And it is really slick. You can find it online and it adds little extra pop to your presentation. Don’t know if you have the time to get into it. It is not terribly hard to use, but it might add a little pizzazz. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Garrett: As long as it’s legible, okay? Other comments? Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes, thank you. You stated that there was a decline in population from 3% to maybe 2%, or less than 2%.

Murphy: A decline in the rate of growth.
Benavidez: Right, in the decline, yeah, sorry, the decline in the rate of growth. Does it say why this is happening?

Murphy: No, none, none of the, none of the projections I saw from, from that group really went into the why. It was essentially their analysis of it. The more urban areas of the State continue to see growth. The more rural areas continue to decline. I think, you know, just if I would have to, you know have to make a guess, I would have to say that, you know that aging of the population nationwide is leading to, leading to lower growth levels overall.

Benavidez: So this is a national situation? It's just not New Mexico?

Murphy: This, it is a national situation that this is occurring. And these are the numbers that the, basically the authority on projections in the state, this is what, what they have published.

Benavidez: And they did the study overall? They didn't break it down into races, or ethnicities, or anything like that?

Murphy: They may have. I didn't, I didn't look into it to that degree. My primary concern for developing our plan are what are the overall numbers.

Benavidez: Okay. Alright, thank you. And regarding the, the topics for the meetings and, do you, are you looking for, for example if I wanted to hold a meeting up north in, in Dona Ana County, in my district. What, I'm looking at ... can you go back to the performance measures? Okay. So the topics, if I can read it, it's, so these are the topics that we will be, you will be discussing with the public or?

Murphy: These would be among the topics suggested. These are the, our plan is, is going to have to address these seven areas in some shape or form. The State's plan, the State and Mr. Morelli was here recently, or before you recently presenting on this, so we're going to have to be coordinated with that. But yes I do want to discuss this with your constituents. Also you know, I do want to discuss with them what their concerns are.

Benavidez: Okay.

Murphy: I want to educate them that these are out there, they're existing and that we need to address them.

Benavidez: Okay.

Murphy: But we need to address them in a way that addresses your concerns for your constituents.
Benavidez: Right. Because if we could pick two topics, so we could get people in to
the meeting, say for example, say the infrastructure conditions, that would
get the people in. Because they, we need to bring them into the meeting
and we can discuss the other items too, but if we say “System Reliability”,
they’re not going to, they’re going to ... “What the heck is that?” But if we
could pick two main topics, I think that would greatly bring a lot of the
people in. That’s just an idea. That’s all. Thank you.

Murphy: Thank you.

Hancock: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Commissioner Benavidez, the, the location that I had recommended at the
northern part is in your district, and I, I apologize for speaking about an
opportunity within your district, but he knows where it is now and so it’s
that community center there on Fort Selden Road and that’s at the very
edge of the MPO so however that works out. If you want to take care of
that, by all means, I just, we were ahead, ahead of everybody else, just
talking so.

Garrett: Commissioner?

Benavidez: So the, the top of the MPO stops at the, Radium Springs, I mean at the
Fort Selden?

Hancock: Just a little north, I think it is.

Murphy: Just north of Radium Springs and Commissioner Hancock had suggested
the V. Dale Antreasian Memorial Park? So we’re going to try and get in
contact with those folks and hold one of the meetings there.

Benavidez: Great. Okay. Thank you.

Garrett: Alright, Councillor.

Pedroza: Thank you. Tom, I was hesitating about even bringing this because it’s
not well formed in my mind but you should know and I guess Monday
you’re going to be, okay. I got the sense of there were some
contradictions in the presentation as far as for instance ... there was
almost a feel to me, and I might be mistaken, interpretation of what you
presented, that we know that money is drying up in different ways, but
then it seemed as if we were saying we want more people to traverse, and
the fact that the vehicle miles traveled are slowing down. So maybe you
need to somehow or other address that because otherwise it sounds like
that’s not a good thing. We want the vehicle miles travel to increase not
decrease. So those types of kind of like internal contradictions. And I
really haven’t thought about it but there were a couple of others as well
that I’ll probably bring to your attention on Monday once I’ve thought them
out better. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Any other comments by the Committee? Just, I had one
thought that was spurred by a comment by Commissioner Benavidez that
... and the point with the slide about population has to do with making
people aware of change and I’m thinking that there are some other things
that we’re aware of that have to do with transportation that in addition to
the simple sort of general number about Dona Ana Country growing that
might be important, and that would be a slide for example that would show
the projected increase in semi-truck traffic in the county and in particular in
the southern part of the county. That would be a kind of statistic that
might be worth representing and there could probably be a couple of
others so that rather than simply saying we’re growing and; therefore, we
have to keep expanding the system and that’s going to be part of the
interpretation, is that there might be some other statistics that put context
around the issues that people have to deal with. So I would just suggest
that you think about some other things that might help frame that.

Murphy: I do and I think, I think I did mention I may, I probably need to dwell on it,
we are working on the existing conditions report. We have 55 pages or so
of statistics. We have locally measured truck traffic. We have housing
affordability. The presentation just kind of selected some just that had a
little more but not enough visual pop for them. And though I do, and I
think I do need to find a way to get around this idea better I think. When I
was showing that we, we, our rate of growth is decreasing and I probably,
yeah, and what I was trying to do is, is contrast that to where we were ten
years ago and we were growing like mad; we had three percent growth
and we were expected to be way up here. And the MPO plans were pretty
much about where’s the growth going to go? And in my professional
opinion I don’t think we can do that any longer. Not only, not only is it, you
know not only are we not seeing the runaway growth, I think the
maintenance of that ... of those growth areas are catching up to us. We
need to think about our investments more wisely. We probably need to
do, do some targeted smaller infill. You know projects like that. And that
... that’s the point I was trying to get across. I think that we need to, we
need to change the way the MPO plans from being a centered around
grow, grow, grow, to where we’re not growing as quick as we thought we
were. We need to be a lot smarter about how we do that and I welcome
any suggestions of how to better, better frame that so that I can do that,
you know, in this context that I don’t need to explain myself later on.
Garrett: I agree with the point that you’re making, and I think that’s a discrete point. I think there’s an additional point that is maybe being teased out with this and that is that when we talk about planning for the MPO, we need to be looking at the larger context and that’s what I was talking about truck traffic. It’s not truck traffic necessarily that’s all generated within the MPO, it’s truck traffic coming from other places through the MPO area. And in order to do that you need to know what’s happening in Santa Teresa and we need to know what’s happening in White Sands, and you know so ... some of the statistics that have been put together for, for justification of the public transit program for example that have to do with the Colonia, that in some way some of them are inside the boundary and some of them are outside the boundary but they all call for more public transit. That’s a kind of statistic that helps inform the discussion, not just the population growth number. So that, you know, maybe one of them is there’s ... we’re not growing as fast as we were, and we have other things outside of the MPO or tangential to the center urban area that are important for us to be aware of. So just some additional thoughts. Okay. We all done? I’m done.

7.2 NMDOT Updates

Garrett: With that, let’s move on them to the next thing which NMDOT updates.

Doolittle: All right Mr. Chair I’ll provide our monthly construction project update. Our Vado-Mesquite project, there on I-10, they’re continuing to work on the roundabouts at Vado, but that one is not impacting traffic at all. Traffic patterns there are exactly the same. Part of the agreement was we would not impact traffic at both Vado and Mesquite at the same time, so we won’t do anything with the traffic there until we finish in Mesquite.

Mesquite Interchange, of course we are continuing to rebuild the bridge. We finally got all the piles driven for the abutments. We’re working on abutments as we speak. Once we get that done, we’ll start setting girders. We continue to work pretty diligently out there. It’s actually being working pretty well. Traffic tends to get backed up on I-10, but when you have three lanes down to one, and it happens, but we’re doing okay out there.

Avenida de Mesilla, we’re putting the final touches on that project. We’re working on the seal coat. Working on painting of the artwork and standing some light poles. Expected completion date of that project is September 13th. We’ve already started some preliminary punch list work, so hopefully by the time we get to that point we won’t have any, any small repair work that would continue to hold that project up. We should be finished the 13th of next month.

Our concrete wall barrier project on US 70, we continue to form the light bases and the center concrete wall barrier in the median. That’s really the only scope of work out there. Smith and Aguirre’s doing a really
good job for us. They actually came to us and proposed some changes to
close that center lane down, moving traffic to the two outside lanes, and
actually traffic out there is moving very well. We haven't had any
accidents so far. I'm actually pleased with that proposal that they made
with the traffic.

Sorg: Trent?

Doolittle: Yes.

Sorg: Could you explain that concrete layer is so low in the ground there? What
does that do?

Doolittle: You're talking the way that the concrete wall barrier is imbedded into the
pavement?

Sorg: Well, the layer of concrete they're laying down in, in the middle of the
street there, where they ... it's ... you know it's several feet below the level
of the street.

Doolittle: Oh, that's on the North Main project.

Sorg: Yeah, that's what I mean.

Doolittle: That, they're putting a small concrete pad in the middle?

Sorg: It's not so small. It fills up pretty much the whole middle.

Doolittle: Okay. I'll have to go look.

Sorg: Okay, never mind.

Doolittle: I don't know that I'm familiar...

Murphy: If, if I may interject, I think I, I had the same question when I drove by. It
looked like the work that they're doing, you know they've put a,
I'm not going to even estimate the thickness of the concrete, but they got a
concrete slab and it was looking like they were placing aggregate above
that concrete slab for the work. So it was compacted earth, concrete and
then aggregate was the order that that was coming in.

Doolittle: I'll have to check on that. My guess is we had several city utilities, we
actually broke two water lines because they were so shallow. That may
be a pad to protect the utilities, but I'll find out and I'll send you an email or
I'll give you a call on that. As a follow-up update to that one, we do
continue to work in the median out there. We will continue to have the
monthly public meetings. We're getting less participation which a lot of
times is a good thing, but we'll continue to have those as long as people
continue to participate.

We did finish one project that I gave you an update in June. We
finished the chip seal on NM 28. That was a contract maintenance
internal project. The only thing that's left on that one is we do have some
pavement markers that we need to complete through the Town of Mesilla;
crosswalks and turn arrows, but our contractor came in and finished that
project very quickly. So all of NM 28 from milepost zero through the Town
of Mesilla is now a fully paved preservation project. Initially there was
some concerns about the bicycling community, and what type of
pavement we were putting out there. Believe it or not, our, our new
maintenance technical support engineer went out and chased some
bicyclists down and did kind of an impromptu survey and all of them
except one were very pleased with the project and are happy with the, the
surface that we put out there. So that was really good news. It's kind of
an innovative way to get the public input, but, it worked for us.

Some projects that we have upcoming. NM 185, this is the old
highway to Hatch. We're going to replace an old timber structure out there
with a box culvert. That was bid in July. It's my guess that project will
start sometime in November. It's scheduled for 60 weather working days.
We did one of these projects in the past just south of Hatch, it's the same
contractor that did that work, so it ought to go pretty well. He's very
familiar with that, with that scope. Another project that was bid ...

Garrett: Trent, before you go any further.

Doolittle: Yes sir.

Garrett: Will that require closure of the road?

Doolittle: Yes.

Garrett: And for how long?

Doolittle: That, that one's scheduled for 60 working days.

Garrett: For the whole road to be closed off?

Doolittle: I doubt that it's closed for that entire period of time. I can try to find out
what the detour is and for how long. That one we, don't even have a
contract yet, it was just bid in July, so I have not seen a schedule. We'll
do the same thing with all of our Dona Ana County projects, because it will
directly impact traffic through to Hatch. We will have a public meeting
before we ever start construction.
Garrett: Okay.

Doolittle: Bridgette, our PIO, will submit through the media, closures. But I'll get ...

Garrett: Okay.

Doolittle: More specific information once we start a contract.

Garrett: Thank you.

Doolittle: Another project that was bid in July, we're going to do some drainage work on NM 460. This is through the Town of Anthony. I know it's a little bit out of, out of the MPOs area, but this is going to start at milepost zero at the Texas state line, and run through the new roundabout that we built down there. Again we're just trying to address some drainage issues. We've got, you know the storage unit tends to get flooded every time it rains out there. That ... this project has been a long time coming, but we finally got that one. That one again is scheduled to probably start sometime construction in November. It's a 320 calendar day project. So it's a fairly substantial drainage project for us, but it will do a lot of good for that community. They have a multi-use path down there that's used quite a bit and we've lost it a few times, so this will repair all of that and ultimately take care of some, some serious drainage issues out there.

The last project that we bid, it was actually bid in June, so we plan on starting in October. We've got some bridge preservation projects. One in Anthony, one in Dona Ana County, and on in Hatch. That's scheduled for 60 weather working days, again starting in October, so we should be finished sometime in late winter, but that's just purely bridge preservation. Shouldn't see a whole lot of impacts to the traffic, full detours. But again, once we get the contracts, I can provide you more specific details tied to that one. With that Chairman, if you'll allow, I'd like to have Jolene come up. She's going to talk a little bit about our HSIP, our safety funding projects that we just recently submitted, and a few other things.

Garrett: Very good.

Herrera: Good after Mr. Chair, Jolene Herrera, NMDOT. As Trent mentioned, District 1 did submit some safety applications to the traffic safety bureau, up in Santa Fe. They go through a statewide selection process every quarter now. And so, District 1 was successful in getting two of those funded, which is really good news. Both are a little bit outside the, this MPO area, but because they do directly impact the traffic that travels from here we want to keep them on the radar.

The first one that I'll mention is US 70, over the Pass. We did get 4.3 million dollars to widen the shoulders all through that area to make it safer for cyclists. There was that fatality a few years ago and so we did
secure the funding to do that, so we're really excited. Both of these projects, if I didn’t already mention it, are in 2016 and we’re planning to try to get them out as soon as we can because we know that they’re needed projects.

The other one that we received funding for is on NM 273. That’s McNutt Road and it’s through the City of Sunland Park. It's going to be continuing the center turn lane. So there’s a section that tapers down and goes back to two lanes from the, or four lanes from the five lanes section, and there’s been quite a few rear end accidents in that section, so we got the funding to go ahead and widen that road to add the center turn lane. So hopefully we’ll cut back on some of those accidents. Additionally with that project, we’re also going to use some of the other funding that the district has specifically for that area, to continue the multi-use path along the side of the road. As Trent mentioned, that is an area where we see heavy usage of those kinds of facilities, so we did, the district did commit 1.4 million dollars of their money to do that.

And then one other project that I wanted to mention, it’s not part of the safety funding, but it is something that I know this Policy Committee is concerned with, it’s the West Mesa or the High Mesa Road. So if you remember I think last year we completed the Phase 1A report, which is basically just the alignment study. The DOT has put in additional 305,000 into that project to do the next phase of that, and so I imagine we’ll be doing kind of the same process, public meetings and things like this. I’m not exactly sure what it entails yet because we just barely heard about the funding this week. So I think some of the details will probably be worked out a little later.

Doolittle: And that’s being managed by the south region design, correct?

Herrera: Yes. And so those were the only updates that I had. Were there any questions?

Doolittle: Chairman if I may. I have one that I’d like to add. We also submitted a safety application for the, for a signal at 17th and Picacho, basically where all the school buses enter and exit their parking lots to the north. The Committee had some questions and requested some additional data from the district, so we’re going to compile that data and resubmit an application. One thing that may hold up, at least the design and construction of that project is it’s expected we’ll need right-of-way to install signals if we move forward. But ultimately the district is pursuing a safety application to install a signal at that intersection.

Garrett: Thank you. Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. On the Pass work that's being done there, how far down the hill do you come into, well that's all Dona Ana County, but, back to the west here?

Herrera: So our limit is at the Town of Organ. So we'll start at the edge of that and go all the way over to the White Sands Interchange.

Hancock: Oh, how fortuitous. Right there at that first road when you come out of the Pass just past the, the historic marker on the north side of the road. There is a road that goes off to the north, toward the quarry. Right there on the east side is a drain that is overgrown and clogged up and it kind of goes off and ... in from of the old general store that's there and then it's blocked off. So there's some work that needs to be done there. And what's happening is, the water's rushing down the hill and since that drain doesn't work, it's running down the road and then back through the ... tipping through the trailer park and flooding out some folks in there and I know we don't get a lot of rain, but when we do, they really feel it. So if somebody could take a look at that and that's, that's a really hot spot. And it's right in that area that you're talking about.

Doolittle: That may, Commissioner that may be as simple as just cleaning out those culverts. I will have the maintenance section go look at it this week.

Hancock: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Herrera: And additionally if I could just add to that, extending and improving the drainage structures out there is part of shoulder widening. So if it's not something that maintenance can easily take care of, that's definitely something that will be looked at as part of this project.

Hancock: That's wonderful. I know that Organ is trying to improve their, everything there. And that will really, really help them. Thank you so much. I'll ... I'll relay that information to them. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Other comments or questions? Yes Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Thank you. I guess I could direct this question to Trent. Do you know what's going on in Elks Road? I've been getting calls from some constituents that, what project are you all working out on Elks?

Doolittle: Specifically at the intersection of US 70 or on Elks itself?

Benavidez: You know they didn't tell me specifically, but they just said Elks Road. So I'm, I'm thinking it's right before you get to Columbia School. Is there anything going on there?
Doolittle: All of Elks is going to be City. It's not going to belong to the DOT.

Benavidez: Okay. So I'll get more information from people cause they kept asking me. And then on Valley Drive, I understand they're doing some construction. Is that part of the project you're talking about redoing that road all the way to Hatch?

Doolittle: The only thing we're doing in the Hatch area is just some bridge preservation.

Herrera: Mr. Chair.

Benavidez: But they're doing a ... some work on, right north of Mayfield High School.

Doolittle: Oh.

Herrera: Right, that's that shoulder.

Doolittle: What we did there, is last year we did a pavement preservation and because of funding we were only able to do partial width on the shoulders. We had some concerns from the bicycling community on this partial paving issue, because it ultimately created a, a drop off or a taper right in the middle of the shoulder.

Benavidez: Oh, okay.

Doolittle: So what we're doing, that, that's a work being completed by our maintenance forces. All we're doing is eliminating that drop off to make it a little bit safer for the bicyclists.

Benavidez: Okay. That's all the questions I have, thank you.

Garrett: Any other questions? Just two. One is with respect to the West Mesa Study, the next phase, do you know if that includes the spur to connect over to 404 at I-10?

Herrera: I do not know, but I will find out and get that information to you.

Garrett: Appreciate that. Because the more that we can have that looked at as sort of an option in terms of a Phase 1, and then continuing north as Phase 2, I think that gives us some strength in terms of negotiations on that, because this is a project that's continuing right now, in terms of planning. So that would be appreciated. The second question I have, the safety project at McNutt, just in terms of the relationship between the El Paso MPO and and Mesilla Valley MPO, that's an area that's within their
planning area, so is that the kind of thing that you bring up to them as well or because this is in New Mexico and it's a district application, do you simply, you don't have to worry about the MPO input on that and simply move forward?

Doolittle: That specific project, or that request came from Mayor Perea, and ultimately he sits next to me at MPO and we've had discussions for quite some time, probably two years now. Actually that was one of the first issues he brought up as Mayor. We will have to go through the MPO, through their policy and process. But ultimately that was just a discussion between the Mayor and I.

Herrera: And Mr. Chair if I could maybe answer that more thoroughly.

Garrett: Certainly.

Herrera: The federal law does require us to go through the MPO Board. They also have a TAC Committee that we have to go through first, and then through the Board for approval.

Garrett: This, since this is now in the works, in a sense, because you've submitted an application, I think this is a good thing to kind of keep track of in terms of how that project is handled by the El Paso MPO and their various components. Again we're concerned with trying to make sure that everything that's going on in Dona Ana County is working well. And this is really in that sense outside of our control. So if it works, then that's good but if it doesn't work, then we have to have some serious conversations about it. So just, my antenna went up just in terms of how the process actually was going to work. But thank you for paying attention to that kind of thing.

Herrera: Mr. Chair, and the process works very similar to how it does at this MPO, so they do look at the projects. But ultimately this project is being designed by NMDOT, so although they have approval and it will be in their TIP and part of their fiscal constraint and those kinds of things, it's being designed by the NMDOT.

Garrett: Thank you. We're very happy to have you as part of this group. Very good. Okay, anything else?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair I do have a few other just quick announcements I'd like to share with you. We are currently expediting a design of a pavement preservation from Aguirre Springs to the Dona Ana County line just east of White Sands. Ultimately we're going to submit that project for project close out. So if at the end of the fiscal year, if there's some extra funding, we're hoping that we can get the money to complete that pavement
preservation of US 70. We actually had a PS&E or a final plan review yesterday and I believe that plans have to be submitted by Friday and then ultimately if it’s not funded it will sit on the shelf up there for any future project close out funding.

The last thing I did want to share with you, we talked earlier about the agreement with the El Paso MPO. Mayor Perea was actually voted into the Executive Committee, so we’ll actually have two representatives from New Mexico on the Executive Committee, so that’s, that’s good news for us. This will be the first time that I’ve had some assistance on that committee. So one more, one more voice for New Mexico in the El Paso MPO will be truly appreciated.

Garrett: Very good. Thank you. Any other questions of Mr. Doolittle? We appreciate that update.

7.3 Advisory Committee Updates

Garrett: Advisory Committee updates.

Tom Murphy gave his Advisory Committee Update presentation.

Garrett: Very good. Any questions? Yes, Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. Is that the, will that have anything to do with establishing the ATC routes? The hazardous material routes?

Murphy: I think ultimately, if, if we decide that we want, want to do hazardous cargo routes through this area and we have the buy in of everybody, that could be an initial step, yes.

Hancock: Good, thank you.

Garrett: Other questions? Thank you. Does that conclude the ...

Murphy: That concludes committee updates, yes.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS – None

Garrett: Okay, thank you. Committee and Staff comments. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mayor Barraza and myself sit on the, on the South Central Regional Transportation District and as everybody is aware this Committee has a lot to do with transportation and transportation planning. And it strikes me that it may be a wise thing if appropriate, that this body do a resolution in support of the South Central Regional Transportation
District's efforts to broaden the transportation systems within our MPO. Because the new plans will take in all of this MPO and two others. So, just to throw that out as a possible alignment, I'm not sure if that is an appropriate thing but I'd be happy to hear some discussion on it. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Thank you. Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I agree with Commissioner Hancock. I think we should have a resolution in support of what the South Central Regional Transit System is trying to do.

Garrett: I suggest that you, someone, sits down and works on something and bring it forward.

Barraza: Mr. Chair, if I may.

Garrett: Yes, Mayor.

Barraza: I can ask Jack Valencia to put together resolution to bring forth to the Mesilla Valley MPO at our next regularly scheduled meeting.

Garrett: Very good. Thank you.

Hancock: Would it be possible then to make that an action item circulated ahead of time? I know you wanted to speak, do you have something to add to the subject?

Murphy: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Hancock, we certainly can add that to the September agenda. I wanted to kind of expound upon some of the details in case the rest of the Committee weren't familiar with what's going on with the South Central Regional Transportation District. I know those of you on County government are aware because you had to vote to put it on the ballot, but the others may not be aware that the RTD is pursuing a quarter cent GRT or gross receipts tax question in Sierra and Dona Ana counties for the purpose of funding public transportation in the, in the two county region. They, you know I guess they're anticipating raising 10.3 million dollars per year from such a tax, and, and some of those, some of those funds would be used, or those funds would be used to one; provide regional services and then also to augment existing transit services in the City of Las Cruces, I think you know and provide Sunland Park some money that they can use to pay for Sun Metro services. So I wanted to just kind of expand upon that a little bit.

Garrett: Thank you.
Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes, Mayor.

Barraza: If I may add also to Mr. Murphy, is Shari Thomas, who is the Chairperson of the committee that's going around to the communities, she and her committee have done a fantastic job in promoting the referendum that will be appearing in the ballot in November, and they are going out to the different municipalities, speaking to the different commissions, boards, regarding the referendum. And I'm not sure, I guess she has not come forth to the City of Las Cruces. I know at our next board of trustee meetings in the Town of Mesilla, she will do a presentation to our trustees. But this committee is making every effort to, and actually they're working in collaboration with another committee from Sierra County of citizens, residents that have expressed a desire and an interest in promoting the referendum. So they are just working diligently speaking to different groups, organizations, spreading the word out there and I do know that we do have that pilot program that is taking off the ground. And I was looking through my notes to see, Jack did provide us with a chart showing the increase in ridership and it ... the percentages are going up significantly. At this time they are providing transportation at no charge, and that word is getting out there, the ridership is definitely going up and we are getting our information also from the ... is it Roadrunner Transit here in the City of Las Cruces, so it's a project I know that is well worth the investment in. So thank you.

Garrett: Thank you Mayor. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you. The particular plan, the opponents of the plan seem to be stressing lack of statistics and information in support of such an action, and that seems to be their primary focus and it strikes me that this MPO has significant information and statistics to prove the need and prove that it is a part of the health, safety and wellbeing of all residents of Dona Ana County. As a matter of clarity, the pilot program that is going on right now, the majority of the program is free. The one portion coming in from Alamogordo does have a charge. They were charging customers before and so they do charge customers that they pick up out on the East Mesa. But that is the only portion of it that does have a charge at the moment. The entire plan, this is a pilot, and the entire plan will spread out into the communities in the future. That's the entire purpose of the having such a large amount of money, having just a, a Greyhound kind of a route doesn't really serve the needs of the community. It needs to be out in to the, in to the rural areas and bring people in. We're focusing strongly on the needs of veterans, be able to get in to medical, medical care and this is going to be a huge asset for the entire community and we would seek everyone's
support on this. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Other comments. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, the Department is certainly a supporter of alternate modes of transportation, but one thing I just want to remind the Board is they still haven't submitted their Financial and Service Plan. That's, that continues to be a concern of our transit bureau and the Department ultimately won't provide any funding until those documents are submitted. So I just want to keep that in the backs of you all's mind. We support this but ultimately there needs to be some, some steps taken before we can help provide financial assistance.

Hancock: I don't mean to speak out of school on this, but my understanding, I'm Vice-Chair on that committee and Mayor Barraza is the Chair. But my understanding is that all of those documents have been completed. That they are being moved to the appropriate authorities within NMDOT as we speak. And, and all the, all the "T's" will be crossed and all the "I's" will be dotted and it will have full approval from NMDOT before it ever goes to the public. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Very good. Other comments by the Committee? Very good. Any other comments by staff?

Murphy: No.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Garrett: That being the case, we've completed our agenda, and without objection we are adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Chair