MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee (PC) meeting which was held September 10, 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 Leticia Benavidez (DAC) arrived 1:11
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Nathan Small (CLC)
Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC) arrived 1:08
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC) departed 2:25
Trustee Sam Bernal (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)

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

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

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.

NO MEMBER HAD A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Garrett: Thank you.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment
4. CONSENT AGENDA*

Garrett: We will proceed with the consent agenda which consists of approval of the minutes of August 13, 2014. Could I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

Sorg: Move to approve.

Hancock: Second.

Garrett: Who indicated second?

Hancock: Second, Hancock.

Garrett: Okay, sorry. I didn’t recognize your voice. Motion was made by Member Sorg, seconded by Member Hancock, any corrections to the minutes? In that case, would you please poll the Committee?

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Small.

Small: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hancock. Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes. The minutes are unanimously approved. That’s the extent of our consent agenda.

Motion passes – Vote 6-0 (4 members absent for this vote).
5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1.1 *August 13, 2014 – minutes approved under the Consent Agenda vote.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 14-12: A Resolution Amending the 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program

Garrett: We'll now move onto action items. Item number 6.1 is a Resolution amending the 2012-2019 transportation improvement program.

Andrew Wray gave a presentation.

Garrett: I think what I'd like to do is go ahead and get a motion on the floor and then we can go into questions and discussion. So could I have a motion to approve the Resolution Amending the 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program?

Hancock: So moved.

Small: Second.

Garrett: Motion was made by Commissioner Hancock and seconded by Councillor Small, any questions or comments? Yes?

Flores: I just want, look at Exhibit A on the second to the last one, LC00210, you added $60,000 because it was $10,000 for construction and $10,000 for design, so shouldn't that be on the project total, $310,000 rather than the $280,000?

Wray: I will have to defer to Ms. Herrera from NMDOT. I believe that this is correct, but this was a DOT requested project.

Flores: Okay.

Herrera: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Trustee Flores. That amount actually is correct because we didn't add the $30,000 in FY14, that was previously or already in the TIP I guess.

Flores: Okay.

Herrera: I just put it there as a note to let everyone know that there is $30,000 in design, so the only change is adding the $30,000 to construction.

Flores: Okay.
Herrera: So, the amount here shown is for the construction portion.
Flores: Okay.
Herrera: And it's the same comment for the … the very last one LC00220.
Garrett: Does that answer your question?
Flores: Yes, thank you.
Garrett: Okay, other comments or questions?
Sorg: Yes.
Garrett: Yes, Member Sorg.
Sorg: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a … just … an inform … information, curiosity questions first. On the two highway presentation projects on Interstate 10, can you tell us approximately where those places are? The mileposts I don't recognize.
Wray: Are you referring to, let me see …
Sorg: One-fifty and 620.
Wray: One-fifty, the 133-143, that one I believe that's the Union Avenue project. Is that …
Doolittle: Mr. Chair, actually I can clarify that if you want.
Wray: Mr. Doolittle.
Doolittle: Mile post 133 is about the Corralitos exit and milepost 146 is about the I-10/I-25 interchange and then 140 … and then 164 is the state line, so it's a pavement preservation, two separate projects that will basically go from Corralitos to I-10, I-10 and I-25, and then from that interchange to the state line.
Sorg: The Texas state line, right?
Doolittle: Yes.
Sorg: Yes and where was the beginning, 133, again? I didn't hear it.
Doolittle: It's about the Corralitos exit, airport.
Sorg: Oh, yeah, okay. That's quite a bit. I have a rhetorical question then.

Doolittle: Sure.

Sorg: What happens if we vote "no" on this?

Wray: Then the funding isn't approved and the money gets to go someplace else.

Sorg: I see. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Garrett: Thank you, other questions? Member Small, did you have a question or comment?

Small: Yes, sir. The ... and usually I think after speaking to turn off the mic, not that ... yeah, oh, there we go, yeah, yeah, good, no, no. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Briefly, with regard to the West Mesa Road, I guess engineering phase addition, it doesn't come with additional funds you outlined, what is driving its inclusion here?

Wray: I would have to defer to NMDOT on that.

Small: Understood. Thank you.

Herrera: Mr. Chair, Councillor Small, inclusion in this MPO's TIP, you mean, because part of it goes through this, the MPO boundary, so we can't ...

Small: Oh, no, oh, and, and Mr. Chair, I apologize for the lack of clarity. Is there any change of conditions, or I know there, there's different ideas both about siting and different routes in addition to timing and, and necessity. I guess from a, from a DOT policy context what is driving this inclusion, not, not the jurisdiction? Sorry.

Herrera: Right, got you, okay. So, we're trying to be prepared for the future, I guess. Right now, the ... the need and purpose is still kind of under review by NMDOT, but this phase of the project is is kind of nail down a specific alignment, the preferred alignment. So, Phase 1A looked at all the different alternatives and now we're looking at a more specific alignment for that. And, Mr. Chair, to answer a question that you asked at last month's meeting, the first part of it did not include the 404/I-10 interchange.

Garrett: Thank you. Are you done with your question?

Small: For right now, Mr. Chair, but ...
Garrett: Thank you.

Small: Thank you very much.

Garrett: Let the record reflect that Members Pedroza and Benavidez have joined us. Thank you. And I also had had an e-mail from Mayor Barraza that she had other business and might be late. It also is possible that it could preclude her ability to join us at all. Other questions about the ... the list? Well, I'd like to follow up on Member Small's question. I have significant problems with doing anything else on the, the West Mesa Road, I don't think it's in the interest of the County. I think at some point in the far distant future we might need a ... a relief road, but think that there are other configurations that are much more in the interest of, of New Mexico in general that need to be explored and I ... I ... I would prefer that we send a clear message that just continuing this process doesn't help at all in terms of looking at other alternatives. So, I would like to entertain, well I'd like to ... I know, I guess I'm the Chair, I'm going to entertain a motion to amend the ... the Transportation Improvement Program Amendments to delete the West Mesa Road, if anyone would like to support that.

Small: Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair and for some of the reasons that were outlined in addition to the fact that there isn't a funding component attached here; I would make that motion to remove and just to get it right here apologize, the Number 110820, thank you Trustee Flores ... to remove that from the Amendments for, for the planning.

Pedroza: Second.

Garrett: Is there a second? Okay. Member Small made the motion to amend and it was ... the second was by Member Pedroza. Do we have any discussion on this particular amendment? Yes?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, I just have the comment, again, this is, this is purely a study phase. I understand the concern about having other needs in the district is; of course, pursuing other options for studies even within Dona Ana County and the City of Las Cruces. I ... you know there is a rift that this might either eliminate or delay this study which could lead towards further repercussions. You know, I know that the 404 interchange is something that you've been concerned about. I don't know how we can include that in this Phase 1B study, but I ... I again caution about removing this from the TIP and what ultimately will happen with that entire West Mesa Road, knowing that it does include all of Dona Ana County, two MPOs, and several other entities as well.

Garrett: Alright, then Member Small.
Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I, I, I take the, the warning and the consideration, certainly very seriously. It, it does seem, in, in my last recollection is where some of the different alternatives had been introduced for different alignments. At that point, there was both significant support, but I think also significant concern about again both different alignments and their effects on the communities, and on the ... going back to the more fundamental question of needing another opportunity to specifically address some of the need that obviously is driving that project. The fact that this wouldn't, you know, take us a very big next step towards alignment, I understand why it could cause concern for, for the project, but it, it is taking a very, it seems taking a very significant step, and because of the lack, well we haven't yet seen other opportunities for things like the 404 interchange to my knowledge and this may be incorrect, but further follow-up on some of the concerns that had been generated about different alignments. It seems like this is a, a reasonable and balanced step to say that ... we're to put the question forward and ask and obviously it's up to a vote; whether there's comfort with dialing us in so to speak on a, on a route that chooses the West Mesa and furthermore on a specific route up there when we still have a lot of other basic questions that haven't been answered and it doesn't seem like as part of the study necessarily a way to answer those questions. So, understanding the concern and taking it very seriously but to also show that, that there's a to need to answer some of the other more basic questions and understand the next phase in the study, if it likely selects that route. It's a very significant step, would push me towards still supporting the amendment to remove it right now. Thank you.

Garrett: Yes, Member Flores.

Flores: I'd like to hear some more about the concerns, because I ...

Garrett: Okay.

Flores: Do take it seriously, taking something off.

Garrett: As I understand it this ... the proposals for this go back as far as 20 years ago. There was no Union Pacific, there was no large-scale influx in terms of really understanding what all the truck traffic could be. We had, even if you go back ten years in terms of, of regional planning for the County and how we would interface with the whole border industrial area and the continued development of traffic from Mexico and to Mexico. I don't think there was very much of a sense that there was an, a real stake for New Mexico in this, and yet we're ... you know as ... as a Commissioner I find myself in a position of having to approve billions of, of dollars of improvements and investments and underwriting. And what the West
Road, West Mesa Road does is to bypass the, the entire Valley. It's a
connection between, if you will an industrial park in the south and
industrial park on the north. It does not help in terms of providing other
opportunities for economic development along a transportation corridor,
because the whole idea of, of running a, a road along the West Mesa and
then sprawling out additional development along that corridor would be
disastrous in terms of trying to build infrastructure, trying to provide
services along those areas, whereas if we, we look at now we have six-
lane divided highway from El Paso to Las Cruces, if there's a, a
connection that's made in the vicinity of 404, probably north of that so you,
you miss the majority of existing development, you're in a position to have
a new center for development in the south that's in New Mexico, not in
Texas. And almost all of the major interchanges that are being developed
are in Texas coming out of Santa Teresa. So they're benefiting. We don't
actually have a good way now to connect in with Chaparral, so we've got
25,000 people that are there; some of whom could use jobs in Santa
Teresa. If, if the connection at 404 was extended as part of the proposed
loop that would go around El Paso with the Northeast Parkway, this would
be a compliment to that entire development. So you'd have a way to both
connect in with potential workforces, you have a way of strengthening the
basic corridor that runs through the valley. Trucks that want to come from
Albuquerque and points north and go directly in, they would not have to go
on surface roads, or go into Texas in order to get to Santa Teresa. It also
pulls, could pull the development away from Sunland Park in terms of
congestion and away from Anthony in terms of congestion. And then if we
get to the point where there's enough traffic and we say "Enough," then
you can always have, if you will, an additional spur that comes off at a
certain point for the trucks that want to go west or that are coming from the
west, and that could be a relief connection from the 404 spur to I-10 West
at, at, the Las Cruces industrial park/the airport area. So, I, I think part
of this is there's been so much that's happened since the original idea and
I, I was encouraged initially because we had had some discussions with
the people doing the study on the West Mesa road. I understood they
were going to try to get a consideration of what the option would be and
how to connect in with West Mesa to I, to I-10 at 440. That hasn't
happened. I'm very disappointed that that did not happen. I think that the
issue before us is that we have a project that has some momentum and
I'm not sure that that's the best way for us to go. So what would be much
better as far as I'm concerned would be an evaluation of an alternative to
the West Mesa Road which would be a spur from 404 at I-10 to Santa
Teresa. So we would be able to know how it actually plays out in today's
metrics in terms of today's truck traffic, pedestrian, you know other kinds
of traffic and so forth. We're, you know we, we get going on these, these
projects and we're trying to figure out how to make positive changes with
Viva Dona Ana and looking at border economic development strategies,
and then we have something like this that looks like it could be a real
viable very powerful idea and it takes so long to move things along, we're basically dealing with something that we've got to ... if it's, if it's a really good choice, we better move fast to get it into the line in terms of consideration. So, I, I appreciate the fact that there's long history on this. I'm very concerned that that might be a very bad decision for us and I'd love to have the information that would help us be able to do an, a good evaluation of the alternatives. So that would be, I, it's not so much that I'm saying I want that particular option is I, I mean, it makes a lot of intuitive sense to me. I'd love to have good analysis of what that alternative would look like so we could all fairly say, "Well, you know, do these work?" And I ... again I think that the West Mesa road might be great as a long-term relief route after we get everything else in place. Yes, Member Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am remiss because I had not read the packet. I, I thought it ... the meeting was tomorrow so I apologize for that. But what I have not seen and I think would be very, very helpful is a graphic of exactly what was proposed and the alternatives because I've been to Chaparral lots of times and I've been to El Paso, etc. etc. etc., but, it's hard for me to, to ... right now your explanation was the first time I'm finally beginning to kind of visualize in my mind exactly where the proposed road is going and so, yeah, I, I would love to see a graphic description of what is proposed, where, and, and then it would not feel so much as a rubber stamp to, to be asked to approve it. And so that's why I feel that, yeah deleting that particular part at this point would be a good thing to do. Thank you.

Garrett: If, if I could, it would seem to me that one of the, the options that we have is if we pull this off at this point, we could have at the next meeting or whenever staff is ready, we could have a briefing and we could have lots of information brought in for us to look at. If we do that, I would really appreciate having the information about the alternative as well as what's being proposed for the West Mesa so that we, you know, might be ... we need some assistance here in terms of how to strategically ... if, if we're looking at things at a policy level, I mean this to me is at a policy level in terms of, "Okay, where do you want a major truck route to go?" That's a huge decision. I, you know and, and so, I think that, that having this question is a, is a legitimate issue for this Policy Committee to be concerned with. But I would agree with you that, that for those who haven't been looking at the, the issue, it makes sense to have some additional briefing and discussion. Yes, I'll look back over this way in just a minute. Yes, Member Doolittle.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, I do have a question either for Andrew or Jolene. What happens to this $305,000? I mean, you say it's lost, but how long before it can be re-encumbered, or moved, or ...
Herrera: It really depends on what other plans are sitting on the shelf. I haven't looked at the Consultant Management Unit's priority list but I know that there are a lot of other studies that need to be done right now, so chances are high that this money will be moved immediately.

Doolittle: If I may, Mr. Chair, to expand a little bit on, on that, we are currently pursuing of course, the Border Master Plan. We submitted a TIGER application to do a study specifically on NM136 and NM273. We are pursuing some funding ...

Garrett: Which are those roads by other names?

Doolittle: I'm sorry. That is Artcraft and McNutt.

Garrett: Yeah.

Doolittle: We are currently pursuing options to fund a study on NM404 to see if we need a four-lane section over the pass to include an interchange realignment, and again that's all study ... We, there is no funding set aside for any of that so the ... again the intent of these studies is to try to figure out what is truly indeed, going on with the border. The Phase 1A provided opportunity for public comment either from the entities or, or public citizens. I don't know why 404 itself wasn't included in the Phase 1A, but there certainly was an opportunity to, to voice those concerns, and again the Phase 1B is just to move forward with the study. It's the second step in many, of many studies taking place in the border area. So I ... the reason I ask is we as a, as a department are pursuing some other options for some studies. Another example that we're going to look at is US70 from Three Crosses to Elks. Right now, we don't have anything that says that warrants a six-lane. So we are moving forward with some of those things, the problem is without these studies if it does get to that point we need it, we cannot move forward.

Garrett: Let me just to follow up on that. How do projects get into the queue?

Doolittle: Ultimately it becomes a, a noticed need from either the department, the MPO, citizen complaints, those types of issues. Really, it, it gets into the queue based on, just, discussions internally and what the DOT feels it's, it needs based on discussions like this or, or the public.

Garrett: So in other words, even if this money went away and ... for a while and we asked for a project to evaluate ... to have a study done for a connection from Santa Teresa to an area up north of Anthony in the approximate vicinity of 404, that would be a project that then potentially could get into line and if there's a lot of interest in that because there's a lot of pressure on the infrastructure in the south, that potentially could come up to at least
get it to the level of the first, or, of what's been done for the West Mesa road.

Doolittle: Sure.

Garrett: Okay, so, I mean I think the pressures are all there and, and as a matter of fact the ... one of the things that'd be very interesting to know is if, if we were able to actually develop a spur that went around some of that development what kind ... how that would affect and potentially scale down some of the other work that you're being asked to study you know in terms of Arctraft and so forth. I don't know that people are even thinking about the larger system, because part of the problem is to get from Santa Teresa to I-10 whether you're going north or south, or if you're coming in from the north how do you, how do you go? And, that's part of the demand is that it's putting real stress on those roads.

Doolittle: Correct.

Garrett: Well if that's not the only way to get through the area, there might be some alternatives that have other, other benefits. So ...

Herrera: Mr. Chair, one thing that we can do is go ahead and provide the Phase 1A report, it was done by Molzen Corbin, so that report is written. We can provide that to this Policy Committee.

Garrett: That'd be great.

Herrera: It is public information.

Garrett: And, and for what it's worth I had a number of meetings and spoke up and sent in written stuff and all that and was led to believe, you know that they were going to try to do as much as they could in terms of considering some of that, but I ...

Herrera: And Mr. Chair I think that they, they probably did. I don't want to say lack of funding was an issue, but they can only do as much as the funding will facilitate.

Garrett: Oh, I understand. I think the other, the other issue is that if this ... if the issue was the alignments of the West Mesa road, then it, then it's sort of out of the scope of that particular study as I understood it, its intent, and I'm, I'm not, I wasn't expecting somebody that suddenly, you know go change the intent of the study. But, the problem is, I hope that there's a record in there that there's concern about all this as the way to get things done and that there needs to be evaluation of others and that might give us a hook to another study that looks at the 404 Santa Teresa connection.
Herrera: Right, and Mr. Chair if I could just add one more tidbit of information to that, the South Region Design Center works very closely with District 1 and they are pursuing funding right now for NM404 to connect up to the Northeast Parkway to include the interchange, so, we haven’t identified the study funding yet, but we are pursuing that.

Garrett: That’s great. Because that’s just, I mean that reinforces to me the fact that we’re talking about a system in, in and around El Paso Metro that connects then with Southern New Mexico, and that, and that’s, you know simple words that’s to me the issue, is, is, sort of we’re missing an opportunity to, to connect in and support that so. Well, we have a motion on the floor. Any further discussion about that?

Sorg: Yes, Matt, Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Alright, Member Sorg.

Sorg: I, too, would like more information. That 1A, I do think I sent a short comment in on that myself. Just looking at this superficially and, and, and, and at, and at a higher level, the Santa Teresa industrial area is going to need infrastructure and needs it soon, and I just wonder if, if things that we do here will delay the infrastructure that is needed, but I think we need to know what the implications of all the different types of infrastructure that might be built, that’s what we have to do before we can make a decision. And so, therefore just superficially looking at it, a, a connection between Interstate 10 at Anthony or 404 to Santa Teresa which seems to me there would be a lot of private land that would have to have a right-of-way to get through it. I don’t, just my limited experience down there, and that would be a significant problem I would think. But anyway, be as it may, I’m all for studying all the different options and getting all this out as much as ... including maps by the way. You talk about places here that I ... different names that I don’t know what they are, and so I would be in favor of that, and if this helps spur that along, I’m in favor of the amendment, too. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Thank you. Other, yes sorry, Member Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could we hear the, the amendment again so we have clarity?

Small: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you Commissioner Hancock. And then the amendment is simply to remove Item 1100820 for the West Mesa Road currently from the, the amendment to the Transportation Improvement Plan, the, the main amendment that’s on the, on the table.
Hancock: Thank you. Do we have ... would it ... since there is a, a level of concern about more information on this, is it possible to, and do we have the time to simply table this particular item for the moment until we have further information? Will that ... could that be possible, is it, are we at a, a, a point of live or die, is it ...

Wray: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Hancock since there is now a live motion on the, the table, on a ... up or down on that amendment I think we have to ...

Hancock: Well, it is possible to do ...

Wray: Yep.

Hancock: A friendly amendment or have that amendment withdrawn and change the amendment. I think the question is, in light of the, of the concerns of additional information ... it ... if it's possible to not kill it but to have more time to evaluate it, is it even a possibility?

Herrera: It could be. If this is not approved here it won't go into the STIP, the State Transportation Improvement Program, which means that it won't be approved by FHWA. The money probably won't be moved in the next month or so, just depending on priorities, I can't guarantee that though. So we would have to wait for the next amendment cycle which will be in October, late October, coming to you all in November or December.

Hancock: That being said, it strikes me that that is less invasive than simply removing it in its entirety and then would satisfy the, the need for further information, and I'd like to hear other thoughts on that. Thank you.

Garrett: Member Small, could I ask a question just to clarify before we do this? Can the ...

Wray: Mr. Chair, if I, if ...

Garrett: I, I guess there are two questions I want to ask just to get clear on this. Do we have to act on this today?

Wray: Mr. Chair it's my understanding from Ms. Herrera just now, yes.

Garrett: Okay. Second thing is, if we send this in with the, the West Mesa road as part of it, can we pull that later?

Wray: I'm not sure. That, since this is an NMDOT requested amendment they would need to make the request to ... I believe they would need to make the request to modify it. And just to follow up from what Commissioner
Hancock was saying, if the, if effectively this project is tabled, that is effectively voting it down for this, that there's no just tabling it, it's ...

Garrett: Finish the, this, though. It's, it's for this particular submission of an amendment.

Wray: Yes.

Garrett: It does not mean that this ... could this be considered the next round?

Wray: It could be considered the next round, but as Ms. Herrera said that wouldn't be until November or December.

Garrett: A few months down the road.

Wray: A few months down the road.

Garrett: Which would give us time to understand everything, but there's still the question of how to get it under the list for consideration.

Herrera: Right and that was what I was going to say Mr. Chair, is we can't guarantee that the funding will sit in this project.

Garrett: I understand.

Herrera: So.

Wray: Mr. Chair?

Garrett: Yes, okay. I just want to get clear, I, I think there was a good attempt to make sure that we ... if we had an option to defer this, get further information and make a decision, that we would do that, but it doesn't sound like we have much flexibility. We need to make a decision today. Okay. Yes, Member, Member Small?

Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to Commissioner Hancock I think for a great question. The, the answers suggest to me the ... is the conclusion that we have to move forward with the larger amendment today. Striking the West Mesa road for today knowing and really expecting for that to be brought back at the very next funding cycle with potential changes or expansions or for sure more information, gives me a level of comfort and gives a middle ground between kind of abandoning this project for an indeterminate amount of time. Think it's, it's right to ... my perception is that there's, there's significant interest and in fact support from a lot of different areas around the concept. I have confidence that a vote to strike it today with the idea of, of looking, reopening potentially in the next couple
of months will not as a ... remove funding from this for an indeterminate amount of time, and in fact will give us some very good time to be able to more widely consider it. So I think it, it should be clear from the meeting and the, the, hopefully the comments that this is not necessarily a, an amendment to remove this item from consideration for the foreseeable future, but it is a very clear statement that it if it in fact is supported, that the next couple of months there needs to be consideration of, of, of expansion of scope or clarity on other alternatives that do very much tie into this project in different ways. So I think it's great questioning. I'm actually given more comfort that this will be able to come back up again in this calendar year, and again thanks to Commissioner Hancock for helping start that. Thank you.

Wray:      Mr. Chair may I interject?

Garrett:  Sure.

Wray:      I don't want to throw too much cold water on what Councillor Small just said, but this is an NMDOT requested amendment and there's nothing compelling them to bring this back if the money is not there, and so I mean ... the thinking seems to be that if this amendment passes and the TIP is passed without it, then this will just come back the next time around, there's ... I just want to make sure that it's understood there's no guarantee of that.

Garrett:  I, I would just say that I, I think that is understood. It ... we're not talking about holding that money at all. I think that, that the sense is that there is an urgency that has to do with getting the infrastructure in the south county right, and that getting these studies done in order to fairly evaluate how they all work together is really important, and I think that the NMDOT understands that and is supportive of that. I don't see this particular project adding to our overall understanding of how the system down there could work in an effective way, because there's a major thing that's missing that actually would be precluded in many ways by this if we continue down the road with this particular thing. I ... just to respond to the point that was made by Member Sorg, I've gone down, I've driven the area, that's one of the reasons I say slightly north of the current alignment of 404, there's development along 404 when you go to the west. I don't think that that's the right place to, to probably look at the interchange, but there's lots of agricultural land that's just north of that that's sort of in a transition zone, and if, if you look at the total cost of the connections that are being proposed and are under study or going to be studied that go from Santa Teresa over to I-10 in El Paso, the, the ones you were referring to, there are a number of interchanges, there's, there's widening of the roads, there's a whole lot of, of cost that's involved in that. If you look at the cost of, of actually building the ... a four-lane divided highway
all the way up to the, the industrial park off of I-10, that’s a long distance. And so we’re talking about something that’s, that’s shorter, that does have other kinds of costs, but that when you put it together with everything else in terms of a system, it might be the most cost-effective alternative. That’s what we don’t have is the information now to fairly evaluate that, and I just think it’s not prudent to continue down the road with one idea when we’re looking at the system and saying, “Wait a minute. There seems to be something else here,” and if we can get that on the list for consideration in ... at the next round, that would be great, because I think that would compliment all the other work that’s being done. So, and quite honestly I don’t know any other way to convey to a lot of people who are taking for granted that we’re going to build a West Mesa road that that is necessarily the best way to do it because I don’t know that everybody’s thinking about this. They’re tending to just kind of ... they’re on autopilot.

Sorg: Question.

Garrett: Yes, Member Sorg.

Sorg: Yeah, if this is dropped from this TIP, this project, I’ll ask DOT what does DOT think then, are they more prone to look at alternative routes, other routes that do what we’re talking about here, or are they more inclined just to say, “Okay, we’ll use the money somewhere else” and not think about an alternative route, the route we’re thinking about here? I mean what effect will this have on DOT and, and the planning process?

Garrett: Yes, Member Doolittle.

Doolittle: Councillor Sorg, Mr. Chair, I think it’s important for us to understand the entire border. I, I, I agree with that statement and I think everybody agrees with that statement. My fear is we’ve already spent a substantial amount of money and time on Phase 1A. That is not the only study that will take place. My guess is even if we drop this, this West Mesa study, we, we seriously need to look at the 404 interchange at I-10 regardless of what we do west of there. I don’t think that the study will go away. I, I think there’s been a, a substantial amount of time and effort put into it, and to just drop it and let it go away is problematic. But regardless of what we do is it, it is currently an unfunded project. If, if an alignment does prove to be warranted, the study goes through and says it needs to be built, the Chair is right, it, it’s a substantial costly effort that we currently don’t have the money to build. But, I, I don’t see it going away, I truly don’t. Will the 404 interchange study move in priority as opposed to this one? I, I can’t answer that question.

Sorg: Okay.
Doolittle: We haven't even begun seeking that Phase 1A on any other option except this one.

Sorg: Okay. Well, I, I would encourage us to look at all these options and, and proceed on post haste on that, post haste.

Garrett: Yes, Member Hancock.

Hancock: Two ... thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair. Two questions: One, when the original study was made was there any consideration to the UAS area, the unmanned aerial systems area? That road if I'm not mistaken goes right through the middle of it.

Garrett: That, that's on BLM land?

Hancock: Right.

Garrett: Yep.

Hancock: So, the, the, the point is we could get into a second phase here, and it's going to go nowhere because you're in the middle of a, of a, experimental test area. Now, I, I, I understand that there is a need for both studies, and I understand that there's been a considerate amount of money and effort put into this particular one. If, if the UAS has nothing to do with it and, and it's still something that should be studied and there is a commitment for the other study as well, I can see doing both. But the question remains UAS. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Commissioner Hancock, Mr. Chair, I don't know that I can answer that question right now. I, it's been quite some time since I looked at that Phase 1A study. I was not part of the initial progression of that study because I was in a different position so at this point really all I've been involved in is the review of the Phase 1A. I, I can't answer that question. We'll have to ... maybe that can be part of the presentation ... I mean regardless of what happens with this vote today, I think it's important for us to have an update on, on the West Mesa regardless of what happens. So, maybe we can get that from, from the MPO staff in the near future.

Garrett: Very good. Any other discussion? Any public comment or staff comment? Then let's proceed with the vote on the motion to remove the, the West Mesa Road Phase 1B engineering services from the overall package of amendments for the TIP. Those in favor of removal say "yes," those opposed say "no." Would you please poll the committee?
Wray: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: No.

Wray: Commissioner, excuse me, Councillor Small.

Small: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: No.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: No.

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes.

Wray: According to my tally the amendment passes.

Garrett: And it passes by six/three?

Wray: Yes, that's correct.

Garrett: Okay. So, we have an amended resolution. Do we need any further discussion about the resolution as a whole? In that case would you poll the board? And, those in favor of the amended resolution say "yes," those opposed say "no."
Wray: Commissioner Benavidez.
Benavidez: Yes.
Wray: Councillor Pedroza.
Pedroza: Yes.
Wray: Mr. Doolittle.
Doolittle: I apologize, Mr. Chair.
Garrett: We're, we're ...
Doolittle: As this is the first time I've dealt with this type of situation with an amendment.
Garrett: Yes, so you're voting on the amended resolution and ...
Doolittle: But ultimately if I vote "no," that's "no" for everything, I guess?
Garrett: Yeah, it's for the entire thing.
Doolittle: Yes.
Wray: Councillor Small.
Small: Yes.
Wray: Trustee Flores.
Flores: Yes.
Wray: Trustee Bernal.
Bernal: Yes.
Wray: Councillor Sorg.
Sorg: Yes.
Wray: Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Yes.
Motion passes 8 - 0, (1 member absent).

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes. So that ... the amended, the amended resolution passes nine to zero and I just want to say Mr. Doolittle, I'm really glad you're on the board with us. It's been good to include you as part of this. Thank you. So, just in terms of follow-up on that, we do need to have a briefing on the, on the West Road Study, and I think it would also be helpful to have some kind of presentation about what's necessary to request that a study be framed, put together, a study request for a connection between Santa Teresa and the area north of Anthony at approximately the 404 interchange, so that we just don't miss what we might need to do in order to help get something going along those lines, okay.

Wray: Is ... 

Sorg: Mr. Chair?

Garrett: Who said something?

Sorg: Me.

Garrett: Okay.

Sorg: If there is information in the Master Plan for the Border that pertains to this I'd like to ask that be included in the brief, in the presentation.

Wray: Mr. Chair just for clarity, this is a request for the October meeting, for a discussion item for the October meeting?

Garrett: Yes. Anyone else have any follow-up comments on, on this item? Yes, Mr. Doolittle?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair I think Jolene has something else she'd like to share.

Garrett: Thank you.

Herrera: Mr. Chair, just to get to what you brought up just now Councillor Sorg, the Border Master Plan is in the very beginning stages. A consultant has I believe just been selected, and I think we're in the negotiation section of that, so the Plan hasn't been started yet so unfortunately, we won't be able to provide really any information at this point.
Garrett: And the work on Viva Dona Ana is really just at the beginning of starting to look at some of the alternatives that would affect transportation systems as well so best we can do is go back and look at old plans. So okay.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair?

Garrett: Yes.

Doolittle: The ... one of the very first steps once we get the consultant on board will be a stakeholders' meeting, so once we have that information and move forward we'll be sure to keep the board involved so that certainly at that initial steps we can be participating in that Border Master Plan.

Garrett: Right. And I would just let ... I think a number of you know that I've, I've been encouraging consideration of this. I do want you to know that I've talked to business interests in the south, I've talked to political leaders in the south, and at least to my face, they're saying, "You know what? That's worth exploring." Nobody has said, "That's a really, really bad idea." So, the problem is that some, some of these things take so long to get to this point and then it takes so long to move from here into actual money you sort of hate to, hate to lose the opportunity but you also hate to make a bad mistake because conditions have changed, so that's sort of where we are and I appreciate the, all the discussion. It was good. Thank you.

6.2 Resolution 14-13: A Resolution of Support for the South Central Regional Transit District's proposed GRT election

Garrett: The next item is 6.2. It's a Resolution of Support for the South Central Regional Transit District Proposed GRT Election.

Andrew Wray gave a presentation.

Sorg: Move to approve.

Hancock: Second.

Garrett: We, we have a motion from Member Sorg and a second from Member Hancock. Would, would you read the ... this is a relative ... it's not terribly long but would you go ahead and read the resolution so that we ... everybody gets it on, on record?

Wray: Yes, Mr. Chair. A Resolution of support for the South Central Regional Transit District quarter cent gross receipts tax ballot initiative to develop a sustainable regional public transit system for the citizens of South Central New Mexico: Whereas the Legislature of the State of New Mexico passed legislation and the Governor of the State signed into law Senate Bill 34 as
the Regional Transit District Act, and whereas the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is committed to supporting and encouraging all modes of transportation and, whereas public transportation both intracity and intercity is a critical component of a multimodal transportation system and, whereas statewide multimodal transportation systems improve access to education and jobs and are critical to economic development and, whereas expanded public transportation services help rural and urban New Mexico optimize available regional services and, whereas regional public transit would enable increased Federal investment in New Mexico and, whereas multijurisdictional transportation systems would protect our environment and enhance energy efficiency, decrease automobile accidents, reduce noise and air pollution, improve public health, and reduce congestion particularly along the I-10 corridor in connection to El Paso and Juarez and, whereas regional transit districts function to coordinate public transit services and connect all forms of existing and proposed transportation services among different levels of government and jurisdiction and, whereas coordinated regional public transportation would help sustain New Mexico’s cultural diversity and, whereas improved public transportation service in New Mexico would extend the life of existing roads and highways and protect current and future investment in regional transportation infrastructure, now therefore be it resolved by the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization that it supports the passage of the South Central Regional Transit District’s Quarter Cent Gross Receipts Tax Initiative that will develop, plan, and promote, and operate a sustainable long-term regional public transportation system for its member jurisdictions.

Garrett: Thank you very much. Discussion? Yes, Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair I just feel it important to, to share with you. I'm, I'm going to abstain from this vote just based on the fact that it's a tax ballot, not that I don't support a lot of the language that's in this resolution, but I will be abstaining from this vote.

Garrett: Because of your position?

Doolittle: Yes.

Garrett: Right. Thank you. Understood. Comments or questions? Any discussion? Yes, Member Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a matter of disclosure, I am the Vice-Chair of the South Central Regional Transportation District. However from this perspective as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and in
order to meet the goals of the organization, if the rest of the board would permit I can use judgment that would enhance both positions. Thank you.

Garrett: There any issues with having Member Hancock participate? Okay. Anything else? Any other comments, discussion. Any comments from the public or staff? Sorry I missed the light down there. Yes, Member Pedroza.

Pedroza: No, no, no, it, I just turned it on just now. Just a comment. I think that the end product of the South Central Regional Transit District will be an improvement in the lives of an awful lot of people and therefore I, I fully support the resolution. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Anything else? Would you please poll the committee? Those in favor of the resolution indicate by saying “yes,” those opposed “no”?

Wray: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Abstain.

Wray: Councillor Small.

Small: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes. And so, the motion is passed eight to zero with one abstention. Thank you.

Motion passes 8 – 0 (1 abstention and 1 member absent).

6.3 Resolution 14-14: A Resolution to Authorize the MPO Chair to send an invitation to New Mexico members of the El Paso Transportation Policy Board to discuss coordination with the Mesilla Valley MPO

Garrett: Now, we move to Resolution 14-14: A Resolution to Authorize the MPO Chair to send an invitation to New Mexico members of the El Paso Transportation Policy Board to discuss coordination with the Mesilla Valley MPO.

Andrew Wray gave his presentation.

Garrett: Comments, questions? Yes, Member Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you very much. I believe that I have been the one to say we should invite them, and I still think that there is a very ... that it'll move us much farther along if we talk, and it's important in my estimation to have all of the people in, in New Mexico who have anything to do with an MPO to, to talk to each other so that some of the questions that we've ... some of the problems that have arisen will, will not arise, we will be able to talk about them. I understand that the ... well we can talk about on the composition of the El Paso MPO and so forth, I understand that they're quite numerous, and we may not actually, we may not actually be able to have an agenda item on there if at some point we want to, because of the length and the number of, of members that it has. Nevertheless, talking to our own representatives who, who are members, I think is a step in the right direction. Thank you.

Garrett: Other comments? One way that I think we could approach this would be to invite them to a meeting at which one of the topics, if not a primary topic, would be actually how do we all work together better and how often do we need to have meetings, how often ... or how do we make sure that, that our respective interests and information are shared and, and then we can go from there in terms of what the follow-up would be, but I think if we can get agreement on, on the principle that there needs to be an, an integration between El Paso MPO and the Mesilla Valley MPO, and that ... a part of that starts with the New Mexico members, that that would be a good place to, to have a discussion. Make sense to everybody?
Pedroza: Thank you, yes.

Garrett: Okay. Any other comments? Let's see. I need a motion.

Hancock: So moved.

Garrett: Could I have a second?

Small: Second.

Garrett: I have a motion from Member Hancock and second from Member Small to ... for a resolution to authorize the MPO Chair to send an invitation to New Mexico members of the El Paso Transportation Policy Board to discuss coordination with the Mesilla Valley MPO. Any further discussion by the committee? Any comments by the public or by staff? Would you please poll the board? Those in favor say "yes," those opposed "no."

Wray: Commissioner Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Small.

Small: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.
Wray: Commissioner Hancock.
Hancock: Yes.
Wray: Mr. Chair.
Garrett: Yes. Thank you. The item passes nine/zero. One member absent.

6.4 Resolution 14-11: Appointing a Mesilla Citizen representative to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee

Garrett: And no, we have a, a, an action that involves appointing a Mesilla Citizen Representative to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee.

Wray: Yes, Mr. Chair. This particular position has been vacant for nearly two years at this point. We’ve had some difficulty in obtaining a citizen of the town of Mesilla which is the requirement for this position, to fill this spot. As mentioned in the Action Form, the open position is jurisdictional as opposed to modal. Mayor Barraza nominated Ms. Ashleigh Curry for this position. She’s currently serving as the staff position. To give a little bit of background, historically the town of Mesilla has not necessarily appointed employees of the Town of Mesilla to fulfill their roles on advisory committees, as an example Mr. John Knopp who serves on the TAC, is not an employee of the Town of Mesilla, but he is knowledgeable in engineering and the technical aspects of transportation, and the Town of Mesilla felt confident in appointing him to that staff position. Similarly, for the past several ... I believe six months Ms. Curry has been serving in a similar capacity on the BPAC, but it’s my understanding that the Town of Mesilla has designated another individual, Mr. Lance Shepan as the new staff contact and allowing Ms. Curry to be able to be designated as the citizen representative. However, according to the bylaws the Policy Committee has to make that appointment.

Garrett: Thank you. I think this is pretty straightforward. I, I would entertain a ... it’s straightforward in terms of getting a motion on the floor. Some of these things are never straightforward. I would entertain a motion to concur with Mayor Barraza’s nomination of Ashleigh Curry to fill the citizen representative from the Town of Mesilla for the BPAC.

Sorg: Move to approve.
Flores: Seconded.
Garrett: Thank you. I have a, a motion from Member Sorg and a second from Member Flores. Just, well, I'm going, I'm trying to do "Member" with everybody. It's, gets confusing enough as it is. Okay.

Wray: Given the trouble I've had today with "Councillor" and "Commissioner," I may adopt that practice myself.

Garrett: Practice, okay. Thank you. Thank you members for your support with this. All right, any comments or discussion about this particular action? Yes, Member Flores?

Flores: I, I'll just say that Ashleigh Curry has been very active in our community and I'm very happy that she's serving.

Garrett: Thank you. You have anything to add to that? No?

Hancock: Mr. Chair?

Garrett: Yes?

Hancock: Does Ms. Curry ... 

Garrett: Member, Member Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you. Does ... thank you, Mr. Chair. Does Ms. Curry ride a bicycle?

Flores: Actually she invited me to a midnight ride that she hosts every year and I know she is very good at organizing the kids to ride bikes to school, so.

Hancock: That's great. That's great.

Flores: And she rides with her children all the time.

Hancock: Good choice, our compliments, thank you.

Garrett: Yes, Member Pedroza?

Pedroza: Can you repeat again Andrew what you said about the fact that Ms. Curry is on the staff or is not on the staff, and how that affects her membership as a citizen representative?

Wray: Mr. Chair, Councillor Pedroza, she is current ... she is employed by the Las Cruces Public School Systems, but she has an extensive background with working with the Safe Routes to School Program, as Trustee Flores said she's a strong member of the cycling community, and again I, I point to the example of Mr. Knopp on the TAC as being a resident of Mesilla
who's not on staff, but the town of Mesilla felt confident in appointing him to fulfill that role and it's a similar thing with Ms. Curry currently is that the Town of Mesilla felt confident in appointing her to fill that staff role for them but they've now identified a Town of Mesilla Marshal, I believe he is ...

Flores: He's in the Marshal's Department, somewhere.

Wray: Yes, in the Marshal's Department, to be the, the bikes representative from the Town of Mesilla for the staff, and now Ms. Curry is the, the nominee for the citizens.

Pedroza: So, she's not on the staff of the, of the city of Mesilla.

Wray: No.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you.

Garrett: Thank you. Any further questions, clarifications, or comments? Any comments by the public? By staff? Would you please poll the committee?

Wray: Member Benavidez.

Benavidez: Yes.

Wray: Member Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Member Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Member Small.

Small: Yes.

Wray: Member Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Member Bernal.

Bernal: Yes.

Wray: Member Sorg.
Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Member Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Yes. And that motion to appoint Ms. Curry is approved nine/zero. One member absent.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 NMDOT updates

Garrett: Discussion items. NMDOT updates.

Doolittle: I have four projects that I'll be giving some updates on. Our North Main project basically from Chestnut just south of the three crosses; we're working on finishing the paving, putting in some tapers along some more detours and we're looking at switching traffic to the inside lanes in the next couple of weeks. So we are starting to make a little bit of progress. One of the things I just wanted to bring up at the last meeting, there was a question about a concrete slab that we're placing in the median. What that was, is we had some really unsuitable materials underneath and we also did have the shallow City utilities that we were having problems with breaking, so ultimately that's to stabilize the asphalt but also to protect the utilities that are underneath. So, it, it looked like a big sidewalk but it really was a protective measure so that we didn't have to excavate City utilities to do some paving work.

The US 70 concrete wall barrier project, we're working on finishing up that concrete wall barrier at the, at the far west end, getting ready to paint it. We should be finished, at least have the roadway open in the next couple of weeks, in the next week or so, as long as weather will continue to cooperate. We'll, we'll have some punch list work and some minor repair that we may have to get in there periodically but we should see that roadway open up substantially in the next week or so.

Pedroza: Mr. Chair, may I speak?

Garrett: Yeah.

Pedroza: I noticed that there's a, a space where there is not the barrier and, and, but it has been paved, and I'm wondering what, what's going to go there, that, because there seems to be no, no barrier between the westbound and the eastbound lanes. And I saw the lights and they're gorgeous.
Doolittle: Do you have ... can you give me a more specific location?

Pedroza: It's before the lights begin I believe, and it's kind of reddish in color. I'm sorry. I, I don't remember the exact place, but there's, there's nothing except what appears to be a reddish strip of, of land between the, the, the traffic lanes.

Doolittle: I'll have to find out. That's ...

Hancock: Mr. Chair. That, that was the bridge area, and they're, and they're breaking that up and taking it out, and, and they're putting in asphalt and then now today they've put forms there to start the forming for completing that wall in, in that space.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you.

Hancock: On my way here I saw that.

Pedroza: Yeah. Okay.

Hancock: Thank you.

Doolittle: I know they were having issues with that section, removing that thin lift of concrete from the bridge deck itself. Believe it or not we did nice quality work by attaching that concrete to the bridge deck and now we're having problems getting it off, so that's the last section that they're working on now. Plus that area's the slower-speeded, the slower speed area, so they wanted to concentrate further out of town where the speeds are a little bit higher before they moved into that, that slower speed area. Sorry, my phone turned off on me.

Avenida de Mesilla, we are working on just a few small closeout items on that project. We're putting back the post and cable, the cable barrier in the median, working on seeding. We've got some, some small repair work that we need to finish up. We should see the final application of the stripe here pretty quickly and then we're working on chain link to, to reestablish our access control along the frontage roads and everything underneath. But the plan is still to be substantially complete with that project by the middle of September, and then I would expect that you'll probably see another week or so of, of repair and punch list work as we get that project closed out. For the most part, with a few small items, we are finished with Avenida de Mesilla.

Vado and ...

Garrett: Yes. One moment.
Bernal: I’d just like to comment, I mean, there’s a, believe it or not, there’s a lot of traffic goes through there. It’s tremendous, a lot of traffic. But that company that’s doing that, that project is outstanding. It’s, it’s really, really great. I mean, it’s, it’s awesome. I mean it’s just an eye-opener coming in, eye-opener going out. Whoever that company is they’re consistent. The material they use, the quality, just everything that they do in there is just amazing. It’s something to keep in mind, I mean, that company’s ... cause I mean, look at the one up ... that they’re doing the bridge up in Vado. That project’s taking a while and it holds a lot of traffic and that’s the freeway. But, down here, for what they’re doing, it’s a lot, and it’s really ... it’s looking nice overall. It’s really looking nice.

Doolittle: Trustee Bernal, I, I appreciate the comments. You know, the mayor’s been very supportive and certain, certainly, the Trustees have been, been sharing and, and participating and playing mediators with business owners. Just for your information the contractor is La Calerita and the owner, Tony Villalobos is actually a, a citizen of Las Cruces. He lives over on the Las Alturas area, so they are a ... for the most part a local, local contractor and owner.

A good segue is the Vado-Mesquite project, that one is running a little bit behind. We did have some issues driving the piles for the abutments and the wing walls on the bridge itself. We had some, some issues with geotechnical where we had to, to make some adjustments so we are running a little bit behind on that schedule, but we have already set the girders or the beams. We’ve begun ... we had our first bridge deck placement just last week. That’s another project we’re having some, some weather issues. It does seem like it’s moving rather slowly, but now that we’ve gotten through the geotechnical issues we’re picking up quite a bit of steam working through that project. So I’ll continue to keep you updated monthly as we move forward on that one. Those are really the only four projects that we have ongoing within the Dona Ana area right now. Does anybody have any questions for me?

Garrett: Bridget’s pretty good about letting me know when the meetings are going to be held on the Vado-Mesquite, if it’s at all possible for me to get some earlier notification about when she’s thinking that those meetings would happen, I would appreciate that, because my ... I’ve had, I had a conflict this last time, just didn’t know for sure and I had something else that I, I’d already booked, so ...

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, we can do that, certainly.

Garrett: And, and are there going to be celebrations or what’s going to happen with ... when some of these things are finished? We going to have mariachis at the Avenida de Mesilla, what are we going to do for the concrete wall barrier? These are big deals to people.
Doolittle: Honestly ...

Garrett: I don’t think we want to get out in the middle of the road, but, you know ...

Doolittle: I’ll visit with Bridget on that. Honestly we haven’t had much discussion about any kind of ribbon-cutting celebrations. The last one that I can think of that we had was actually the I-10/I-25 interchange, but you’re probably right, it is, what ... you know a cable barrier, a concrete wall barrier project to us may seem like a small, small project because in reality it’s a small dollar amount, but you’re right, it is a, it is a big improvement to the community for both safety. We try to do our best to improve the aesthetics when we’re building these projects and clean up the area so I’ll have a discussion with staff but I think that’s an excellent idea and, and we’ll sew what we can do. There’s not a whole lot of cost to it; we have the tents, we have the, the PA system. Any donations for you know snacks and those types of things are appreciated, but for the most part it is a low-cost option to, to really recognize the work that our contractors, local or not, and our, our inspectors and, and whatnot are doing. So I’ll, I’ll have a discussion with staff and see what we can do. That’s an excellent idea. Mr. Chair, I, I, I did fail to mention one thing at Vado and Mesquite. We did close the west, I’m sorry, the eastbound off-ramp at Mesquite this past Monday. I was afraid that it would cause a stir with the citizens and specifically with the Landmark Mercantile. We did have some discussions with that property owner before we did it. I actually spoke to him myself on Monday. He was very complimentary, not happy with the closure, but we’re working with the contractor to expedite it. We’re looking at about four weeks, but the contractor talked like he may be able to expedite to three, so we continue to work through those types of issues. It’s never good when you’re shutting down ramps.

Garrett: Right.

Doolittle: You were at the, I believe you were at the first meeting where the citizens of that area basically told us to travel ten miles out of their way each way is a financial burden to them. That’s stuck with me from, from the day we did it, so we’re doing, we’re doing everything we can to expedite, at least getting access to that area without having to detour. So, I, I was pleased with, with the level of support that we got from the community because when you close a ramp that’s typically not the case.

Garrett: Great. Well, I think that just the fact that the meetings are continuing, I don’t know what the attendance was this last time, but there weren’t too many people the time before that, but it shows a continued ... you’re there in case people want to come and, and find out what’s going on or talk to you, so that’s important. And we just never want to lose an opportunity to
explain what, what's being done with taxpayer dollars and, and, I think to
give recognition to the various people that are involved. And I think that's
a good thing to do. It also kind of closes you know it marks a transition
that, that we all need on, on these kinds of things, so very good. Any
other questions or comments?

7.2 Advisory Committee updates – None

Garrett: What about Advisory Committee updates?

Wray: Mr. Chair, there are none.

7. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Garrett: Committee and Staff comments. Yes. Member Flores.

Flores: Mesilla is having its Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebrations this weekend,
so I'd like to invite everybody to come, and then note I'm on the Corridor
Plan for Viva Dona Ana and there's going to be some people out at the ... 
supposed to be at The Bean but they're going to be going up and down
the parade route basically asking people for feedback on our Corridor
Plan. And in addition there's ... so that's Saturday and then in addition
there's other meetings coming up in Mesilla's Community Center and now
the time has ... it's from five to six, the actual meeting starts at six on I
believe Tuesday evening, but I could be incorrect.

Garrett: Is this for Viva Dona Ana?

Flores: For Viva Dona Ana.

Garrett: It's ...

Flores: It's on the, on the ...

Garrett: I, I think it's Wednesday and Thursday.

Flores: Oh, you're right.

Garrett: Because Monday and Tuesday are in Anthony.

Flores: Wednesday and Thursday, it's two days, and ...

Garrett: Yeah. That's the 24th and 25th.

Flores: Right. And when they'll be talking about the comprehensive plan so, and
which could have some implications with the development code, so.
Garrett:  Sure. Very good. I'll be there. Both times. All right. You know, these, these, this is not the system I'm used to, so Member Sorg.

Sorg:  Very quickly, I just had a couple of things that ... one of them came to mind concerning the infrastructure to Santa Teresa. In both major routes, are we going to have to coordinate with the MPO in El Paso? Okay. It, it, it, it involves both MPOs then in, in both cases. Okay, that's what I wanted to know. I didn't know if that would be a problem. That's just one more little thing we have to do. Was it a year ago, let's see Councillor Pedroza that we had a statewide MPO/RPO conference up in Albuquerque? A year ago? I think so, yeah.

Pedroza:  I believe so.

Sorg:  And Hancock was there too. I just thought maybe we ought to throw that out just to keep in the back of our mind to have another one next year, have it some kind of like a biannual thing. Just if it doesn't fly, if okay, but if there's some interest in it then maybe we should start thinking about oh planning or being very in infant stage. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Garrett:  Thank you. And I would just encourage you that if you're interested in that, to get together with one or two other people on the committee and come up with some ideas and some suggestions. That keeps things moving.

Sorg:  Sure.

Garrett:  Yep, okay. Yes, Member Hancock.

Hancock:  Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure who this should be directed to so I'll just kind of throw it out there and see who it sticks on. I'd like to find out how we go about trading roads with the state. I understand there is a process, the state does not take roads anymore, but I would like to trade the, the Spaceport Road to the state for some other road in the county. How do we do that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Doolittle:  Mr. Chair ...

Garrett:  You don't need to answer that today but soon.

Doolittle:  I was going to tell him that's not possible and leave. I won't answer that question directly but I, I will tell you I'm in the process of, of learning how to do that with the, with Elephant Butte. We're, we're, we're not exchanging, we're basically abandoning and transferring two roads to them. Commission hasn't, hasn't approved or supported this type of
activity in quite some time. They are supporting it now so I will, I will learn as I go with them, I'll use them as a guinea pig but ultimately you and I discuss that kind of offline and, and I'll continue to pursue those types of options and we'll see. We'll see where it goes.

Hancock: Good. Thank you very much. Appreciate that.

Garrett: That is appreciated. Thank you. Other comments or thoughts? Well, I would just say thank you for some robust discussion along the way. I think we're ... as a Policy Committee, there's, there's real challenges to stay on top of everything and being able to keep things moving, and I thought that was good and I, I think we've got a, a way of, of continuing to explore the issues that were raised, and that's what's important. So thank you for that discussion and without objection we're at the end of our meeting.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Garrett: We've already had public comment, so without objection, we're adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Chair