MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which was held September 3, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Bartholomew (CLC Transit)
Harold Love (NMDOT)
Rene Molina (DAC Engineering)
Todd Gregory (LC Public Schools)
Willie Roman (CLC Transportation)
Aaron Chavarria (NMDOT)
Greg Walke (NMSU)
Jennifer Montoya (BLM) (arrived 4:09)
John Gwynne (DA Flood Commission)
Scott Farnham (CLC Public Works - Proxy for Louis Grijalva)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Louis Grijalva (CLC Public Works)
Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)
Luis Marmolejo (DAC)
Debbi Lujan (Town of Mesilla)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER (4:05 p.m.)

Bartholomew: It appears we have quorum so I’d like to call to order the, the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee for September 3, 2015. I’d like to, everybody, I’m gonna start on my far right down here, if everybody could introduce themselves and what agency they’re from. Also remember whenever you speak during the meeting if you could state your name for the record so the, the clerk can take that information as well. Thank you.

Molina: Rene Molina, Dona Ana County Engineering.

Gregory: Todd Gregory, Las Cruces Public Schools.

Roman: Willie Roman, Street and Traffic Operations, City of Las Cruces.
Chavarria: Aaron Chavarria, New Mexico DOT.
Love: Harold Love, New Mexico DOT.
Gwynne: John Gwynne, Dona Ana County Flood Commission.
Farnham: Scott Farnham, City of Las Cruces Public Works, proxy for Louis Grijalva.
Walke: Greg Walke, New Mexico State University.
Murphy: Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee. If you're not speaking please turn off the mic cause I think only three of them are allowed to be on at any one point in time.
Bartholomew: And finally Mike Bartholomew, City of Las Cruces RoadRUNNER Transit.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Bartholomew: The first item is approval of the agenda. Are there any corrections to the agenda Mr. Murphy?

Murphy: No.

Bartholomew: Can I have a motion to approve the agenda?

Love: So moved.

Walke: Second.

Bartholomew: It's been moved and seconded. All those in favor please say "aye."

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bartholomew: Opposed. The motion passes.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 August 6, 2015

Bartholomew: Next is the approval of the minutes from August 6th, 2015. Has everybody had a moment to look at the minutes? Are there any corrections to it? I'd like to thank Mr. Love for covering for me last, last month.

Walke: I move approval of the minutes.

Bartholomew: Is there a second?
Love: Second.

Bartholomew: It's been moved and seconded, all those in favor of approving the, the minutes of August 6th, 2015 please say "aye."

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bartholomew: Next is public comment. Any, I guess no public comment at this point in time.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 University Ave. Study Corridor Update

Bartholomew: So I'll move on to the discussion, the first and only Discussion Item is 5.1 University Avenue Study Corridor Update.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, as you know we've been under, undergoing a study corridor for University Boulevard. With us tonight is Denise Weston from Bohannan Huston who is running the study for the MPO and I'm gonna yield the floor to her. She has a presentation for the Committee.

Bartholomew: Thank you, and welcome Denise.

PRESENTATION BY DENISE WESTON.

Walke: Can I ask a question?

Weston: Sure. Of course.

Walke: You, you mentioned that the bicycle facilities in the road is, is one of the comments and I see it in the section, but in the, in the pictures of the alternatives you showed us all of the green dots were on the other alternative with, with bicycle paths off the road.

Weston: Exactly. And that's why we have this alternative as well for that very reason because ...

Walke: So you have, you'll have, you have two alternatives.

Weston: We have two alternatives. CONTINUATION OF PRESENTATION.
Bartholomew: For the record I, I don't think you stated your name Greg when you were...

Walke: No I didn't.

Bartholomew: It was Greg Walke.

CONTINUATION OF PRESENTATION.

Bartholomew: I have a question on the right-of-way. Like we currently have a, bus stops along, along that stretch right now and in fact with the proposed route revisions that was presented to the TAC last month we would have two bi-directional service along there as well.

Weston: Okay.

Bartholomew: And I'm, you, you're talking about the tight right-of-ways and obviously we've got one that you know Zia Middle School looks like it's green there so maybe that's a, a, is, is good. We've got one up, there's a little green space there at the west end where those houses are that we have a bus stop in one direction right now and, and we may want to be putting one near, is it Bowman that goes down towards the Mesilla Park Center? Because there's a rec center down there.

Weston: Okay. So let's make sure we coordinate and I'll touch base with you directly and we'll, we'll make sure that we identify those locations so we're considering that in, in what we're proposing to go forward.

Bartholomew: Okay. Thank you.

Weston: Yeah, I think that will be helpful and I think you're right, it's helpful for you to see just even high level where there is enough right-of-way and it won't feel like you're squeezing that in so.

Bartholomew: Thank you.

Gwynne: Chairman. Denise I have one question, you said that you didn't do any survey for the right-of-way. So you are looking at it just based on the aerial photography?

Weston: We're looking at parcel data, aerial photography, we got some information from the DOT on a previous project that they worked on, EBID's information that they have. We're piecing it all together but honestly it's not piecing together quite as well as, we don't feel as comfortable as we wish that we did so, yeah.
Gwynne: Okay. That, that answers my question. Thank you.

Bartholomew: Willie, comment?

Roman: Yeah I have a couple of questions. Where is the bike lane coming from or going to?

Weston: What is it going to connect to?

Roman: Yeah.

Weston: I think Avenida de Mesilla already has bicycle facilities, is that not true Harold? Thinking, yeah. Right, correct. And then what about on the Main Street side, does Main Street have facilities yet? You know what under any scenario getting under the interstate is complicated, so we're not pretending that we're bringing bikes in in a beautiful lovely little route and then they're gonna end up on that, that particular road, but they must come through on the loop. I'd have to look to give you an exact answer, but I know on the, on the west end they're gonna connect Avenida. And part of the bike use is the kids getting to school so they live in that area.

Roman: From that localized neighbor, those neighborhoods? I asked that because I don't remember there being any bike lanes right now official bike lanes on, on, on University going under the bridge.

Weston: Yeah it's ... 

Roman: I don't recall any on Valley or I guess that would be Main Street in that area although there is a pretty wide shoulder, it's not designated as a, as a bike lane and I don't remember any on Avenida de Mesilla because it's just two channelized lanes, but I could be wrong. I don't, it's, it's just ...

Montoya: Chairman if I can speak to that. I'm Jennifer Montoya with, I'm sitting in for Bill Childress with the BLM and I bike-commute on University, Main to Valley and after the bike lane on University on the south side ends there's nothing. So then you're just on the street on Main and Valley.

Bartholomew: For the record the last speaker was representing the BLM and you came in late, could you introduce yourself so the clerk will know who is speaking.

Montoya: Hi, I'm Jennifer Montoya and I'm sitting in for Bill Childress with the BLM.

Bartholomew: Thank you.

Weston: And then Tom just said the Highway 28 is a designated State Bike Route, so, but I think that that's a valid point to look at, certainly to, to identify in the
plan like Jennifer said where are they connecting, what are the
opportunities. That doesn't mean at all we couldn't, I actually think that that
would just strengthen the recommendation of, to make sure that
connectivity is healthy you know on both ends so.

Roman: Yeah I had a couple of other questions. So that would lead, that, that first
question leads to this one, is how do you plan, one thing that you'd want to
consider actually cause I know this is a planning effort here is how you
transition at those intersections.

Weston: Right.

Roman: Particularly because they don't have bike lanes, designated bike lanes.
That's been a challenge for the City. Although we have found, we've, we've
come up with some pretty creative solutions so you know if you look at
NACTO they have a lot, I would just ...

Weston: Absolutely.

Roman: You know put that suggestion out there. Also to consider a buffer if there's
enough room because we've, we've found that buffers are actually quite
preferred even if you have a smaller bike lane, if they get that buffer it's
almost like they have a six, six or seven foot bike lane because they have
that buffer now.

Weston: For the in, for the in-lane facilities.

Roman: Yeah if it's in-lane. Yeah. And then I, I was curious if you were going to
stripe them on all of the, on, are the bike lanes actually gonna be striped or
are they shared facilities?

Weston: Our expectation at this time is that they would be striped. They would be
designated and striped bicycle facilities.

Roman: Okay.

Weston: But certainly this input in working with you directly on this is, is gonna be
part of that process to make that final decision.

Roman: Okay.

Weston: I think going back to the buffer issue again I think it's a right-of-way scenario
and if you don't have enough buffer then the, the buffer doesn't do it's job,
it makes it worse, so we would, that would be a challenge.
Roman: Yeah. And I know this is a, the state's facility so what we've, what we've found is that we've gone down below three foot on, on some of our buffers so that we don't have to put that diagonal stripe, cause that's a maintenance issue.

Weston: Okay.

Roman: Having to go in and constantly do diagonal striping. We also start, have started using six-inch striping because it really gives more of an emphasis on ...

Weston: Like a visual buffer?

Roman: Yeah.

Weston: Okay.

Roman: A six-inch and then we've got two six-inch because we've have a, maybe a two-and-a-half, two-foot buffer and then you've got two really thick lines and it really differentiates for, for bike users, so we have, we have noticed all these applications are, are, are, you know they're helpful for bicyclists and to you know to kind of give them that, that space that they're wanting on, on, on the roads. I did notice that you have an 11 to 12 foot lane and I'm not sure what, do you have a lot of trucks do you know on that particular road? Because we, I, I ask that because in order for us to accomplish buffers we've, we've gone down pretty low on our lanes and it's actually reduced speeds if speeds are, not that we've, I'm sorry I should say we've, we've read literature that says that that, that reduction in lane width has helped in other cases to reduce ...

Weston: The speed. Absolutely.

Roman: The speeds. And then in turn it helps the bicyclists because they feel that you know the speeds are a little bit lower of the other users on the facility, so that's how we've been able to achieve some of the buffers in our, on our lanes is by squeezing down that lane a little bit more closer maybe to ten feet.

Weston: Right. It's like a traffic-calming device that doesn't cost any money.

Roman: But it really depends on what you're highest ... (inaudible).

Weston: So we do have truck traffic numbers here.

Roman: And you might have tractor use and stuff like that that you want to take into account so.
Weston: So from 2013 to 2014 we do have truck numbers so you know there, there are some trucks on there, we’re not gonna say there aren’t any trucks on there. But that doesn’t seem to, no one, that is not a concern of anybody’s at all so it must not feel like there’s trucks rumbling up and down there. Doesn’t take very many trucks for people to complain, so yeah, Harold you’d have to think about if, you know if you would feel comfortable with an 11-foot lane with that truck volume so. But those are great comments and I’m happy to, we may not get to that level of detail in this plan but I think actually putting your current information, the City’s current perspective on bike lanes in the planning document is really helpful, so I’ll work closely with you as we finalize it to make sure we get that input in there. I know, you know there’s, there’s other opportunities out there too, the green bike lane con, con, concept, there’s some other things, so. I just thought I’d throw that out there. Okay. Other questions? Do you want to look at it longer?

So next steps for us is to get your input. We will go back to the BPAC, were we thinking in October or, I can’t remember (inaudible), and then we’ll continue to coordinate with the EBID because actually the potential to get to be able to use their right-of-way is critical to building a successful corridor. So, and we’ll have our public meeting which you all will be invited to and then we’ll spend some time trying to put together some funding options because I think that’s important too and we’ll work closely with the DOT and the MPO on that. And then our goal is to finish the study up in the fall, I mean at the end of, by the end of this year, so I suspect that we’ll come back to this committee one more time for your approval on that final, final planning document, so.

Bartholomew: Thank you Denise. I see a comment from the far right down here. Please state your name.

Molina: The question that I have or, based on the pictures that you’ve provided and, and I see the typical sections but what provisions are you providing or considering to alleviate the issues associated with the pictures with the congestion at the, I’m assuming the pick-up and drop-off zones associated with the school? I mean you have typical sections but those typical sections aside from the bicycle facilities mirror what’s actually out there. Are there axiliary lane improvements or other considerations associated with the school that are gonna provide that, alleviate that concern or the, the condition that currently exists out there?

Weston: Well I’ll start with that question. We’re hoping that if there’s better bicycle and pedestrian facilities some of these kids will actually walk or bike to school. That of course is our ultimate goal, but we know the reality of that. I think that we are also working with the school and if I understand correctly the school is looking at under separate issue opportunities to improve their drop-off and pick-up lanes on school property. So just to validate what
you're saying, yes the congestion, the immediate congestion will be hard to eliminate but I think we feel like anything we can do to the roadway and provide other opportunities is a win and the school can work on their piece complimentary to this in hopes of getting some of those cars off. I actually think a big piece of it will be an education component within the school once the facilities are in; how do you use them? Why do you use them? You know we have, we're gonna have to work clearly with the school on defining where the cars should park because that's part of the problem, right I mean you know so, so we are trying to look at some creative options or even external drop-off zones for the cars, if there's good bike, or particularly if there's good pedestrian facilities can we locate external parking lots maybe down on that eastern end, you know down over in that area where you know coordinate with some other development and find a way to mediate, mitigate that problem. Absolutely. But we could all take pictures in 10 years and it could look exactly the same with a beautiful facility so. Any other questions?

Bartholomew: Any other questions for Ms. Weston? Looks like none at this time so thank you very much.

Weston: Thank you.

6. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

6.1 City of Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, Town of Mesilla, Las Cruces Public Schools, RoadRUNNER Transit, and SCRTD Project Updates

Bartholomew: The next item on the agenda are the Committee and Staff comments. First one is the general updates from the representatives on the Board. Let's see, are, are, you have, on the action, on the item, discussion item here it says you're requesting an action, am I reading that right?

Murphy: We're not requesting an action, we're just requesting, if, if any of the Committee Members have updates from projects that their agencies are working on to, you know to share them with the rest of the Committee.

Bartholomew: Okay. I'll start on my far right. Is there any, any updates from agencies that they'd like to share at this time?

Molina: What I just wanted to share was Dripping Springs and Baylor Canyon we're moving along, we're moving forward. It'll be out to bid within the next month or so and then soon after we'll go into construction. With respect to Camino Real and Dona Ana School Road intersection, we're still acquiring right-of-way. That's all I had. Thank you.

Bartholomew: Thank you. Anyone else?
Gregory: I, we're still gearing up for the International Walk to School Day in October. I know currently we have about 24 elementary schools signed up and we're hoping to get the, the last one, Dona Ana to at least do something on campus, some kind of walking event. So we'd actually have 25 schools participating and probably the most within the state. I mean we usually lead the state anyways in our participation with our Safe Routes to School activities. We have started to outreach to the middle schools to, and working with the school resource officers and the champions, some of the grant champions and actually gonna be looking at some of these issues with jaywalking, how to bike, how to walk to school, even at the middle school level because that becomes an issue with us, especially on state highways and roadways, kids actually jaywalking in front of big trucks and buses so, so we're actually looking at that education and encouragement piece which is kind of a new, a new task for us as Safe Routes to School participants. We did make some changes to our school district policy that encourages schools to participate. It's kind of part of our, our healthy, health and wellness policies to at least outreach to all school levels whether it's high school, middle school, or elementary school. But our big day coming up is October, it's October 7th, so that'll ...

Bartholomew: October 7th.

Gregory: So if you like to bike and walk with your kids to school that will be a big day.

Bartholomew: Thank you. Anyone else have ... yes.

Chavarria: We have the Missouri project on I-25 going on right now. On September 18th we're gonna be switching traffic over to the new bridges. We're looking at contractors a little bit ahead of time. We're looking at hopefully they can finish before the end of the year and that'll be way ahead, a few months ahead of schedule. We also have I-10/Union bridge and Ramp E, that one started on, in August. They've demolished two westbound bridges and they have about a year to complete that one so August of 2016 will be the completion date for that one.

Our Main Street project, we're probably looking sometime October of this year for it to wrap up. They're doing the medians right now. We have an upcoming project at I-10 and US 70, it's just a lighting project, we're upgrading all the lighting at that interchange. We have that one, it hasn't started yet, there's a preconstruction meeting scheduled for September 24th. And finally we have a pavement preservation project, that one goes from Airport interchange all the way to the I-10/I-25 interchange. That one has a completion date of November of 2016. Hopefully the way we, we awarded that project so it doesn't interfere with our other I-10 project, the bridges. So we'll have construction on I-10 for a little over a year.
Bartholomew: Thank you very much. You know in transit we notice all that construction going on around town quite a bit so. Anyone else have some updates?

Farnham: Two project updates; first one El Paseo Road safety project addressing pedestrian crossings and median improvements at South Main, Wyatt Drive, Idaho Avenue, Boutz Road, Farney Lane, and at University. At Boutz Road there's a, a, improvement on the, on the signal where the ped. crossing will activate a no-turn on red flashing light at that intersection, so it's right next to the school there. That is going out to bid tomorrow, September 4th with bid opening on October 6th. Project is federally funded, state match, 906, about $396,000.

The second project is the Las Cruces Dam Trail System. That is also going out to bid tomorrow with an October 8th bid opening. It is covering three miles of, of trail improvements, of a, I believe it's a six-foot wide paved trail system behind the dam area there. It has a base bid that with an engineer's estimate of around $465,000 and it has two alternative trail additions that bring it up to about $540,000 in estimate, in the engineer's bid. This is TAP money. The grant's about $384,480 with a CLC match of $65,523 or about $450,000. The base bid includes trails that go from East Lohman Avenue up to Veteran's Park and a small loop just south of Veteran's Park, and another cross connection that will connect up to Sagecrest Park and then there's two alternative trails depending on where the bids come in, they may also be included.

Bartholomew: Thank you. Any thing from BLM to, want to share?

Montoya: I don't have it in my notes but it does occur to me you might be interested in knowing that we have made some improvements on the entrance to the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument. We've acquired an easement for legal access and we've, we will be installing a portal sign soon and we've improved the road. There had been some flooding in that area a couple months ago.

Bartholomew: Thank you. NMSU? No. And for Road, for RoadRUNNER Transit there is, at our Transit Advisory Board Meeting next Thursday at three in the afternoon that'll be in one of the 2007 rooms up stairs, 2007-B, we're, the MPO will be doing a, a, one more presentation of the proposed changes to the transit routes. There's been just a few little minor improvements since it was probably presented to this group, but I would invite anybody who'd want to learn more about that to attend the Transit Advisory Board meeting next Thursday.

6.2 Missouri Ave. Study Corridor
6.3 NMDOT Projects update
Bartholomew: And I guess we really got the NMDOT updates already kind of going up. That was item 6.2 and 6.3

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bartholomew: Any other, and there’s no public here for public comment.

8. ADJOURNMENT (4:40 p.m.)

Bartholomew: I would just ask was there a sign-up sheet that went down for the Board Members, I haven’t seen it yet?

Wray: Mr. Chair there should be one up there somewhere.

Bartholomew: It’s right beside me now. Never mind. And, and I was informed by Mr. Walke that it’s his last meeting and I would want to, I just hope the Board would thank him for all of his service on the, on the, on the Committee. I understand he’s retiring. Go head.

Walke: Thank you.

Bartholomew: If there’s nothing else I guess I’d take a motion for adjournment.

Gwynne: So moved.

Gregory: Second.

Bartholomew: It’s been moved and seconded. All in favor please say "aye."

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bartholomew: Opposed? We are adjourned.

Chairperson