

**MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee which was held October 12, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. in the City of Las Cruces Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner Leticia Benavidez (DAC) (arrived 1:12)
Councilor Jack Eakman (CLC)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner Billy Garrett (DAC) (arrived 1:19)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)
Councilor Gill Sorg (CLC)
Councilor Olga Pedroza (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trent Doolittle

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Murphy (MPO staff)
Andrew Wray (MPO staff)
Michael McAdams (MPO staff)
Dominic Loya (MPO staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Aaron Sussman, Bohannon Houston
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER (1:10 PM)

Sorg: We are now having a quorum so I'll call the meeting to order. You know, did we used to call roll?

Murphy: Yes.

Sorg: Should we do that again just for the, just to do it?

Murphy: Okay, all right. Member Barraza.

Barraza: Here.

Murphy: Member Flores.

Flores: Here.

Murphy: Member Pedroza.

1 Pedroza: Here.

2
3 Murphy: Member Eakman.

4
5 Eakman: Present.

6
7 Murphy: Member Hancock.

8
9 Hancock: Here.

10
11 Murphy: Chair Sorg.

12
13 Sorg: Here. Thank you.

14
15 **2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY**

16
17 Sorg: Next item on the agenda is the Conflict of Interest. Is there any member
18 of the Committee or staff that has a known conflict of interest on any item
19 on the agenda?

20
21 Hancock: None.

22
23 Eakman: None.

24
25 Sorg: Okay. Very good.

26
27 **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

28
29 Sorg: We have Public Comment now. Is there any member of the public that
30 wants to make a comment to the Metropolitan Planning Committee?
31 Seeing none.

32
33 **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

34
35 **4.1 September 14, 2016**

36
37 Sorg: Let's go on to the Approval of the Minutes.

38
39 Eakman: So moved.

40
41 Hancock: Second.

42
43 Sorg: Moved by Councilor Eakman and second by Commissioner Hancock. Any
44 corrections or additions to the minutes? Seeing none, a vote, let's call a
45 roll call vote on the minute, approval of the minutes.

1 Murphy: Member Barraza.

2
3 Barraza: I will recuse myself. I was not at the meeting.

4
5 Murphy: Member Flores.

6
7 Flores: Yes.

8
9 Murphy: Member Pedroza.

10
11 Pedroza: I will also abstain because I was not at the meeting.

12
13 Murphy: Member Eakman.

14
15 Eakman: Yes.

16
17 Murphy: Member Hancock.

18
19 Hancock: Yes.

20
21 Murphy: And Chair Sorg.

22
23 Sorg: Yes. And Commissioner, oh, excuse me, yes. Commissioner Leticia
24 Benavidez has just arrived.

25
26 **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

27
28 **5.1 Missouri Study Corridor**

29
30 Sorg: Going on to the next item on the agenda is the Discussion Item Missouri
31 Study Corridor. Mr. Murphy.

32
33 Murphy: Thank you Mr. Chair. We have Aaron Sussman from Bohannon Huston to
34 give you an update on the, on the latest that, with our study. We had a
35 public meeting the end of September at the Farm and Ranch Museum.
36 Bohannon Huston is going to be putting, finishing up this month the Phase
37 A report. We wanted to get this in front of you for some questions prior to
38 that and we're hoping to have, have this back to you in November for a, for
39 a vote. And with that I'll turn it over to Mr. Sussman.

40
41 Sussman: Okay. Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee. Again, my
42 name is Aaron Sussman. I'm a planner with Bohannon Huston. It's been
43 several months since I provided an update to this Board so at this point we
44 wanted to follow up with some additional analysis that we've conducted.
45 We're also at the point where we have largely concluded our outreach
46 process. We've presented to the BPAC Committee, to the Technical

1 Advisory Committee, we've convened several meetings of our technical
2 advisory committee of MPO staff and other technical staff from
3 jurisdictions around the metro area. At this point we have a series of what
4 we're calling "final draft recommendations." These are still of course
5 subject to input and discussion. Your input in particular is, is what we're
6 looking for at this point. Obviously this is a fairly small group today so we
7 can keep this informal and if there's a question along the way please feel
8 free to interrupt. I think that may, that's fine with me and that would be
9 effective.

10
11 Sorg: Thank you Aaron. That sounds great.

12
13 Sussman: All right. So let me first begin by explaining and, or at least clarifying what
14 this study is and, and what it is not. So the Missouri Avenue Corridor
15 Study is what's called a Phase A Location Study. It's funded by the
16 Federal Highway Administration through the Mesilla Valley MPO. There
17 are multiple phases that take place in these kinds of studies that receive
18 federal funding.

19 In a Phase A study we're looking at an initial set of alternatives and
20 what that means is that we're screening for fatal flaws. We're not doing
21 full design at this point. We're doing some limited engineering analysis,
22 mostly in the feasibility at a general level of the potential alternatives. This
23 results in a recommendation of a no-build scenario but then also a small
24 number of, of potential alternatives for further analysis. A Phase A study
25 does not produce exact costs. We look at the magnitude of costs to get
26 an understanding of whether certain alternatives might be more costly or
27 cost-efficient than others. Again we're not in, at the point where we're
28 doing full engineering analysis or environmental analysis or design, and
29 then obviously construction would take place at later phases as well.

30 This study is really in response to the, sorry, the lack of, of roadway
31 infrastructure in the study area. Let me go back a couple slides to the,
32 sorry my screen is blank now on me up here. To, so the study area
33 shown on this map, the outlined area in blue which is bounded by City
34 boundaries to the north and to the west, and then Sonoma Ranch
35 Boulevard to the east is mostly BLM land. Obviously Centennial High
36 School forms the southeast portion of the study area. This is, can I turn
37 the, it's like blinking at me, it's, let me just turn it off. Okay. All right. My
38 apologies. So we were, we've been considering a, a couple of roadways
39 that are in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Missouri Avenue is
40 included in the 2021 to 2030 period of the current Metropolitan
41 Transportation Plan. Roadrunner Parkway is on the MPO Long-Range
42 Thoroughfare Network which means that it's considered for analysis,
43 potentially long-term implementation but it's not considered for
44 construction implementation during the 2040 time frame, between now
45 and 2040 as part of the MTP. So we're looking at some kind of long-range
46 options here and part of this analysis is to understand: Given the lack of

1 network, do these options that are on the MTP Project List or on the Long-
2 Range Thoroughfare Network, do they make sense to consider for further
3 analysis at this point? We're also responding to the lack of bicycle and
4 pedestrian connections to the high school. So there's a lack of roadway
5 connectivity through the study area and there's also somewhat limited
6 bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and we'll come back to those two points in
7 particular. So I mentioned where these projects fall in terms of their
8 presence in the MTP. Again, part of this study is to validate their current
9 place, whether they belong in terms of funded projects and then also in
10 the Long-Range Thoroughfare Network.

11 It's been important for us as we've presented this to the public in
12 particular to clarify our land use assumption, so as I mentioned this land in
13 the study area is owned and maintained by the Bureau of Land
14 Management. Our operating assumptions are that there will be no
15 changes in the status of the land in the study area in the near future, that
16 it's currently BLM land, that it either remains as Bureau of Land
17 Management land or that it becomes some form of park or open space
18 and so any change in activity would be of similar low-intensity usage into
19 the near future. So we're maintaining that current land use status as an
20 underlying assumption for this study.

21 We have considered three types of alternatives. One is what we
22 call a roadway typical which consists of not just the travel lanes but also
23 bicycle facilities and a multi-use trail if that makes sense in a particular
24 location. A non-motorized trail in which we look at no general-purpose
25 lanes at the moment but we look at a facility that would accommodate
26 pedestrians and bicyclists exclusively. And then of course there's the no-
27 build alternative which is to maintain these projects where they are, or the
28 roadways where they are in terms of the long-range network and in the
29 MTP Project List but we don't recommend further analysis or steps
30 towards construction at this time.

31 So let me go through the, the six alternatives briefly and then we'll
32 talk about how we narrow down to our set of, of again final draft
33 recommendations. So again the first alternative is the no-build scenario in
34 which again the roads remain on the long-range networks, the long-range
35 planning documents but we don't recommend any further activity at this
36 time. The second alternative is an extension of Missouri Avenue. This
37 would take the form of something like a two-lane collector facility so what
38 this road looks like currently between Telshor and city limits, an, an
39 extension of something that looks similar to that type of roadway in terms
40 of the footprints, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and this would extend from
41 again city boundaries to Sonoma Ranch to the west, skirting the north side
42 of Centennial High School. The third alternative is an extension of
43 Roadrunner Parkway from its existing terminal point to the south of
44 Lohman Avenue proceeding southeast through the study area and then
45 along the northern edge of Centennial High School and again terminating
46 at Sonoma Ranch Boulevard. Roadrunner Parkway to the north of

1 Lohman is a four-lane minor arterial. This alternative, can see as either a
2 two- or a four-lane minor arterial. That is something that could be decided
3 at a later stage of analysis. But this is just to give you an idea of the, the
4 scale or scope of the roadway that's called for in the long-range planning
5 documents. The fourth alternative is an extension of both facilities,
6 Missouri as the two-lane collector and Roadrunner as the minor arterial,
7 so again a larger footprint roadway along the collector. These would
8 intersect and then again follow that path along the north side of Centennial
9 High School and terminate at Sonoma Ranch Boulevard. A fifth
10 alternative that we examined is essentially each of those prior alternatives
11 but following a northern alignment. The idea with this particular alternative
12 was to avoid some of the topographical challenges that we face in this
13 study area, but it does not provide immediate access to the high school so
14 we'll come back to the implications of that. But this is a, a similar set of
15 alternatives but following a slightly different path. And then finally the sixth
16 alternative is a bicycle/pedestrian connection from again the existing
17 Missouri Avenue where the bicycle facilities currently terminate again at
18 city limits. This would include a multi-use trail not unlike some of the trails
19 currently in the Las Cruces area. The exact alignment's not necessarily
20 that blue line but it's more of a concept, but that would provide direct
21 access to Centennial High School and ultimately connect to Sonoma
22 Ranch Boulevard.

23 There were a large number of criteria that we considered as part of
24 this evaluation and so one thing that I want to mention up front is that it's
25 our job to make sure that we didn't weight any of these criteria more
26 heavily than others. This, the evaluation in terms of the, the, the
27 recommendations really comes out of the composite of whether a project
28 meets this set of criteria and set of needs or not. So we considered things
29 like: Do the alternatives meet the initial purpose and need of the project?
30 Are they providing access to Centennial High School? Are they improving
31 network connectivity? How feasible is the project from an engineering
32 perspective or from a drainage perspective? What are the impacts to
33 traffic both from a regional perspective but also to the existing
34 communities? Again this is Bureau of Land Management land and it's
35 used as open space currently so environmental impacts is an important
36 consideration along with the impacts to the surrounding communities. As I
37 mentioned, all of these alternatives are consistent with the long-range
38 planning documents but some of them are prose for different phases or
39 different time frame for implement, or for, for potential implementation, and
40 then magnitude of costs. These are all of the sets of considerations that
41 were, that were brought forward as part of this study.

42 There are a couple of updates and, and highlights that I want to
43 speak to today before we get into the draft recommendations. The first is
44 a bicycle level of service analysis and so I mentioned that a particular
45 component of this study, the purpose and need is the lack of bicycle and
46 pedestrian connections to the high school. And it's not just that there's a

1 lack of connections, it's actually, there are connect, there are facilities
2 along Sonoma Ranch Boulevard, along Dripping Springs, although east of
3 the Farm and Ranch Museum there are no bicycle lanes, and then there
4 are lanes on Sonoma Ranch Boulevard but we were able to evaluate the
5 quality of those connections and how safely and, and comfortably students
6 could access Centennial High School in particular. So this analysis looked
7 at things like vehicle traffic, the speeds, the width of the travel lanes, the
8 width of the bicycle lanes, pavement conditions, and it produces a level of
9 service analysis and in short the, the darker the green color the higher the
10 quality of the infrastructure. So what we see as we dug into this analysis
11 is there are a few areas that we want to highlight. So this area shows as a
12 Level of Service B, pretty high quality on Lohman but we have really high
13 speeds and high traffic volumes. There's, there's no buffer and there's a
14 five-foot bike lane so far, for most cyclists this is not the most comfortable
15 ride that you might experience. Along Sonoma Ranch Boulevard there,
16 again very high speed limit, 45 miles per hour and only four-foot bicycle
17 lanes. That's pretty narrow so it's good that we have the facilities there
18 but again not the most comfortable ride, not the kind of ride that's going to
19 appeal to a lot of cyclists. And as I mentioned directly south of Centennial
20 High School the bicycle lanes terminate at the city/county boundary so if
21 you're approaching the high school from the southern side of the school
22 the facilities are, are pretty, pretty modest for sure. So these are things
23 that we could highlight through this particular analysis.

24 We also in the last several months were able to bring in results of
25 an, a series of travel model scenarios. So we looked at four types of
26 scenarios: Again the no-build so we have growth into the future but we
27 have no additional roadways; what happens if we extend Missouri Avenue
28 alone; a third scenario where we look at extending Roadrunner Parkway
29 alone; and then a fourth scenario where we extend both facilities, and in
30 each of these cases we compare the base year statistics for 2015 to 2040,
31 the horizon year for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. So the most
32 noteworthy scenarios in particular is the Missouri Avenue extension where
33 we do see by extending that facility a, a large number, almost 5,000
34 additional trips along Missouri Avenue and then proceeding through the
35 study area. That corresponds with an increase in trips along Sonoma
36 Ranch Boulevard, so what seems to happen is that there's a lot of vehicle,
37 lot of vehicles and drivers that would utilize Missouri as an alternative to
38 go east-west and then go north-south along Sonoma Ranch Boulevard.
39 I'm not showing a map here for Roadrunner Parkway because it frankly
40 doesn't show all that much. The predominant movement is east-west in
41 order to go north-south so Roadrunner Parkway kind of provides an east-
42 west alternative to Lohman. It doesn't generate all that many additional
43 trips beyond what we see today so it's not showing much of a change in
44 travel patterns with the extension of Roadrunner Parkway by itself. We
45 also again looked at what happens if we extend both facilities. In this, in
46 this scenario in particular we see a, an even larger increase in trips on the

1 existing Missouri Avenue, an increase of about 6,500 trips and then we
2 seen an increase in north-south travel along both Sonoma Ranch and
3 Roadrunner Parkway. So again we have this sort of predominant
4 movement where vehicles are looking for an east-west alternative to go
5 north-south.

6 So to make a few summary points, and if there are questions
7 please, please feel free to, to raise your hand or chime in, but what we're
8 observing in terms of this set of model analyses is that there are clearly
9 some regional transportation challenges in, in Las Cruces that extending
10 either of these facilities alone doesn't really solve in a vacuum. So there's
11 a displacement of trips onto Missouri Avenue because that's an attractive
12 alternative to the existing north-south facilities as a way to sort of skirt
13 around some existing areas of congestion. So our take-away from this is
14 that again extending either of these roadways in isolation doesn't really
15 address the underlying regional transportation challenges in Las Cruces
16 and that these alternatives really need to be considered as part of a
17 regional set of potential investments rather than just looking at these two
18 roadways in isolation. So again roadways through the study area are not
19 going to address some of the underlying transportation challenges in the
20 southeast Las Cruces area. Yeah.

21
22 Sorg: Before you go any further, that clear displacement of trips onto Missouri
23 Avenue does that, are you counting both the existing Missouri Avenue and
24 the new Missouri Avenue, both of them together?

25
26 Sussman: Right. So there aren't, because the existing Missouri Avenue terminates
27 there are, of course there's, there's a limited number of trips the farther
28 east you go along that corridor. When we talked about the 5,000 or 6,500
29 additional trips, those are trips that are observed to the east of the
30 city/county boundary if a roadway is extended. So we can make the
31 assertion that that's, those are purely additional trips that would not have
32 been there otherwise. And because we're not assuming any growth in the
33 study area and most of the growth in Las Cruces in the projections that
34 we've been utilizing that were developed through the MTP process is to
35 the north of our study area, it's really, again it's sort of utilizing the same,
36 the same types of trips utilizing different paths because different paths are
37 available. So I do, I want to reiterate that ...

38
39 Sorg: Could, Councilor Pedroza has a question.

40
41 Sussman: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

42
43 Pedroza: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair. In the little residential section just, I
44 guess it's to the west of Centennial High School, do we know whether a lot
45 of the students now are, are either delivered to, or you know driven to

1 school by their parents or they drive their own vehicles, how much traffic is
2 there going to be from the school on, I guess it would be Missouri?
3

4 Sussman: Sure. So one way that we can infer that information cause it, it's a little
5 challenging to say ...
6

7 Pedroza: Right.
8

9 Sussman: Explicitly "This, these are the number of trips generated to Centennial
10 High School along either Missouri or Roadrunner" is to look at the number
11 of trips along Roadrunner and along Sonoma Ranch to the north of our
12 new facilities as a result of those extensions. And so what we see is that
13 there's a far greater increase in trips to the north of those roadways along
14 Sonoma Ranch and Roadrunner Parkway than to the south. So we're not
15 seeing a lot of vehicles utilizing those two roadways to get to Centennial
16 High School. It's, again it's, it's a small displacement. You've got pretty
17 much a similar number of total trips but some trips would take different
18 paths. But what we see is a far larger number of, of trips that have
19 nothing to do with the study area that then would utilize the roads inside
20 the study area.
21

22 Pedroza: Okay. One of the things that you know is kind of apparent is that right
23 along Lohman you have the new Wal-Mart and then you have residences
24 all up and down Sonoma going north and I don't know that there's any
25 plan to develop any other area either east or south. Does, maybe Tom,
26 do you know if there's any?
27

28 Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councilor Pedroza. If memory serves there is a, quite a few
29 approved master plans in the city that, that are not fully built out as you
30 extend north on Sonoma Ranch, north of, north of Lohman.
31

32 Pedroza: Okay. But what about south?
33

34 Murphy: South, I believe that most of that land is still owned BLM. It's not been, it's
35 not been disposed of and so there are no master plans nor, nor
36 subdivisions in that area.
37

38 Pedroza: That's exactly what I wanted to know because there is a lot of newcomers
39 north on Sonoma and Rinconada I guess it is. Is it Rinconada? Yeah.
40 Yeah. And, but if there's not going to be, and the little mesh area where it
41 says "BLM Land," what does that mean? Is it designated it, for no, no
42 development?
43

44 Sussman: Again our operating assumption is that that land is not disposed of for new
45 developments.
46

1 Pedroza: Okay.

3 Sussman: That's the information that we've been provided by BLM, that they have no
4 intention of doing that in the near term.

6 Pedroza: Okay. Thank you very much.

8 Sussman: Okay, thank you. I do want to reiterate that while the travel model
9 analysis, we always have sort of a, a recency bias, the most recent
10 information that we receive takes on kind of heightened importance and so
11 the travel model information is, is recent data that we're bringing forward
12 now. But I want to reiterate that that's not the only set of considerations
13 for this study. So as part of the development of our recommendations we
14 very much are looking to balance the improvements to regional travel flow
15 with the environmental impacts, with the impacts to the residential
16 communities, so I just wanted to take a moment to reiterate that point and
17 we'll come back to that when we get into the, the draft recommendations.
18 And then another set of analysis that I think provides less stimulating
19 visuals are when we looked at the drainage considerations. And what's
20 important to note here is that for those of you familiar with the study area,
21 as we go farther south it, we move downhill, water of course flows down
22 generally, and so there are potential drainage advantages to building
23 facilities to the, farther to the north but we lose the access to the high
24 school. So looking, sort of balancing those kind of considerations and
25 ultimately our technical committee determined that the access to the high
26 school was more critical than this, the modest cost savings that might
27 have resulted from building an alignment that's farther north up the,
28 upstream in terms of the arroyos.

29 So at this point let me walk through our draft recommendations. So
30 as I mentioned at the beginning, a no-build is always carried forward. We
31 also have two alternatives that we are recommending be carried forward
32 for further analysis. The first is the non-motorized path connection and the
33 second is an extension of Missouri Avenue but there's a number of
34 caveats with that particular one so I'll come back to that one. I'll come
35 back to both of those but I'll, I'll walk through the caveats in particular on
36 Missouri Avenue. And at this point we've also concluded that three of the
37 alternatives could be removed from further consideration: Roadrunner,
38 the northern alignments, and the MTP scenario in which both facilities are
39 constructed. So again this doesn't mean that these facilities are, cannot
40 be pursued in the future but what we're saying by recommending that
41 these be removed is that they're, that no further analysis is necessary at
42 this particular moment in terms of moving, moving forward towards more
43 near-term evaluation and, and steps towards implementation.

44 So in terms of the recommended alternatives, the non-motorized
45 path, bicycle/pedestrian connection between Missouri Avenue and
46 Sonoma Ranch with connections to Centennial High School was

1 something that received a lot of support along the way. The impacts to
2 the existing residential communities are pretty minimal. The impacts to
3 the, the local environments is also pretty minimal because we're following
4 the edge of the study area, the, the open space as opposed to cutting
5 through the middle of it. It's important to note that this is an alternative
6 that could be implemented either as a standalone project or as the first
7 phase of a larger project which looked at the non-motorized path near-
8 term and then a roadway extension long-term. So there's some flexibility
9 built into this one. Because of the, the minimal impacts we believe that
10 this alternative is ready to proceed with environmental analysis with
11 design and with construction if that's the desire of the local jurisdictions.

12 In terms of what this looks like I think there's some, some good
13 local examples but also some opportunities for further pavement markings
14 and, and, and further sort of design embellishments. One particular
15 design that we really like for this kind of non-motorized path is something
16 that could serve both recreational users, the gravel path on the side could
17 be used by pedestrians, the paved trail to the left could be used by cyclists
18 moving at higher speeds, a little more flexibility in this kind of design. So
19 we've just been throwing this out there cause we particularly like this one.

20 The Missouri Avenue extension I mentioned is a recommendation
21 with a number of caveats. So again this is recommended for further
22 analysis. That could be conducted through a Phase B study either
23 through funding from DOT or other local agencies pursuing that. But a
24 really important consideration here is that we recommend that there be
25 further analysis in terms of regional traffic flow as part of the Missouri
26 extension if it's to be pursued, and that's because again extending
27 Missouri Avenue highlights some of the regional traffic challenges in Las
28 Cruces and extending that roadway in isolation doesn't fundamentally
29 solve those challenges. So we would recommend that, that any further
30 consideration of Missouri be conducted alongside further study into other
31 facilities outside of the study area that were outside of the purview of this
32 particular study. So it's, it's something of a cautious recommendation that
33 we see benefits but it should be looked at as part of a, a broader scope
34 than the roadways extend, or the roadway extensions that were
35 considered through this particular study.

36 So our, our bottom-line recommendation: We feel that there's
37 enough benefit in terms of regional traffic flow and access to the high
38 school to warrant further study but not enough information to justify
39 investing in a roadway at this particular time.

40 In terms of the facilities, or the alternatives that we are not
41 recommending for further analysis, Roadrunner Parkway as a standalone
42 alternative we believe is not something that warrants additional study at
43 this time. It doesn't really meet the purpose and need in terms of the
44 network connectivity benefits, the direct access to the high school. We do
45 assert though in our draft recommendations that this roadway should
46 remain on the Future Thoroughfare Map which is again a really long-range

1 network, not roads that are currently funded through the MTP but roads
2 that would be considered for funding in the long-term.

3 The northern alignment is also an alternative that we recommend
4 be removed from further consideration at this point. I talked about
5 drainage briefly. This is an alternative that makes sense from a drainage
6 perspective because the infrastructure, the drainage infrastructure
7 requirements might be somewhat less expensive but you're losing not only
8 the direct access to the high school but you're also cutting through the
9 middle of what is currently utilized as open space and what our
10 assumptions again call for continuation as open space, and so a roadway
11 that cuts through the middle of that undermines some of the benefits of
12 that open space usage.

13 And then lastly the MTP scenario in which both roadways are
14 extended is after a lot of deliberation something that we are, that we can,
15 believe does not warrant further consideration at this time. Again that
16 does not mean that the roadways would be removed from the MTP or
17 from the Future Thoroughfare Map but what we're identifying again is that
18 when we develop both roadways we have a lot of trips displaced onto
19 Missouri to make a north-south movement and whether they go north-
20 south on Roadrunner or go north-south on Sonoma Ranch we're still
21 seeing that same sort of general activity so to build both facilities is
22 somewhat redundant and incurs additional costs and doesn't really
23 alleviate the regional traffic challenges. Yet again we can diagnose but
24 we can't solve with these particular alternatives in question. So not only
25 are there costs in terms of building the roadway relative to the traffic
26 benefits but there's also costs in terms of impacts to residential
27 communities from both sides for relatively minimal benefit at this time. So
28 again we're not saying that this, that both of these facilities not be
29 considered in the future but if the purpose of this study is to validate where
30 these roadways stand in the MTP and consider, "Are there roads that
31 should be looked at further for near-term implementation?" Our opinion is
32 that both facilities, this particular alternative in which both facilities are
33 implemented does not warrant consideration at this time.

34 One important point, and this is something that came up quite a bit
35 in our public meeting and I'll come back to this in just a moment, the, I, I've
36 talked a lot about how there are considerations that fall outside of the
37 purview of this particular study. This study at its heart is, is somewhat
38 narrow in terms of looking at these finite set of alternatives. It's the MTP
39 process where we can really look at the larger regional impacts of facilities
40 and so it's, it's our hope and, and as we're structuring our report we're,
41 we're trying to provide as much meaningful input to the MPO staff as
42 possible in terms of further analysis that could be conducted as part of the
43 next Metropolitan Transportation Plan where the, whose mission really is
44 to look at those regional travel patterns and whether individual roadways,
45 investments would address those regional travel patterns.

1 To summarize a few points from our public meeting a few weeks
2 ago, we've had continued concern from residents along Missouri Avenue
3 about the impacts of additional traffic. That's not surprising but there's
4 also the reality that that roadway has been on the long-range planning
5 network, the long-range transportation network for at least 20 years. And
6 so there are some residents who acknowledge that. Commissioner
7 Rawson was at the meeting and spoke to that effect, that that roadway
8 has always been intended to be extended, and folks who tend to live
9 outside of the Missouri Avenue corridor itself tend to see more regional
10 benefits in terms of having additional transportation options. So there's no
11 question whatsoever that there would be additional traffic on Missouri if
12 that roadway's extended but we also try to put that in context as much as
13 possible. So one recommendation could be that if the extension of
14 Missouri Avenue is to be pursued that additional traffic-calming measures
15 on the existing Missouri corridor be pursued to again discourage through
16 traffic as much as possible. Again you're providing an option but that
17 doesn't mean it needs to be a high-speed option. Again the recognition
18 that there are regional traffic challenges, we had a number of questions
19 about potential improvements on Sonoma Ranch, the choke-point or
20 congestion around Centennial High School which was again not the initial
21 objective of this study. We were looking at additional access from the
22 west and from the north to Centennial High School but not necessarily the
23 congestion around the school itself, around Dripping Springs and Sonoma
24 Ranch Boulevard. A number of attendees brought up that point. There's
25 also concern no matter how much we state our, again our assumptions
26 that BLM land is not intended to be developed, there's some skepticism
27 about that. So I feel compelled to mention that just as, as a concern that
28 any, that adding access would incentivize or catalyze development in the
29 study area even if that's not the intent from the Bureau of Land
30 Management perspective.

31 So, and just in terms of the next steps, as I mentioned we're
32 finalizing our recommendations. We'll discuss some funding options as
33 part of our final document. This will go before not just the TAC but BPAC
34 for a recommendation for approval before you hear about this study again
35 and we are, have been asked to produce a final, or a, a draft copy of the
36 final report in advance of the BPAC meeting next week, excuse me, and
37 then we'll finalize the report before the end of this year. So with that I'm
38 happy to answer any additional questions that you have.

39
40 Sorg: Thank you Aaron. Very good. That was a good presentation. I'd like to
41 note that Commissioner and Vice-Chair Garrett arrived here at 1:19 today.
42 So with that I'll have the rest of the Committee ask questions. Councilor
43 Eakman.

44
45 Eakman: Yes. Thank you Mr. Chair. I would like to ask the staff of the MPO if they
46 could schedule a meeting with me on this topic. I don't want to take up the

1 time of the other Members of the Committee but it, in talking about the
2 constraints that are impending on some of these different alternatives, the
3 other Members of the Committee seem to know what those are and I
4 don't, and so if they could meet with me to particularly talk about the
5 theory involved in the extension of Missouri and what those constraints
6 are and things like that so I could better understand, I'd certainly
7 appreciate it prior to the next meeting, if that's possible.
8

9 Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councilor Eakman. We'd, we'd be happy to. And if, I don't
10 know if you'd like to start off e-mail me some of your available times and
11 we'll, we'll make that happen.
12

13 Eakman: Thank you Tom. I will.
14

15 Sorg: Trustee Flores.
16

17 Flores: I like the idea of the bicycle/pedestrian path alone and then possibly being
18 able to extend it but you said you wouldn't recommend the northern
19 alignment because that would basically cut through the BLM land and it
20 seems like the bicycle and pedestrian path alone would cut through, you, it
21 was more of a you know cutting through the center of it and so if we
22 eventually extend that, then you're putting a lot of heavier traffic in ...
23

24 Sorg: I was going to recommend we go back to the map, yeah.
25

26 Flores: So ...
27

28 Sorg: It's a little hard to follow.
29

30 Flores: I'm, I mean maybe I'm wrong but that was the, the feeling that I got.
31

32 Sorg: Aaron that doesn't have the northern alliance, alignment, I, rather?
33

34 Flores: Separated.
35

36 Sorg: Oh, you separated them. Okay.
37

38 Sussman: We have them separated out, correct.
39

40 Flores: Okay.
41

42 Sussman: Be, because of, so, it, it looks as if that entire stretch in the study area to
43 the west of Centennial High School and north of Centennial High School is
44 all undeveloped open-space land. Keep in mind of course that the Farm
45 and Ranch Museum is due west of the high school and then to the north of

1 the high school is the proposed AdobeHenge development so there are
2 already some plans or proposals ...
3
4 Flores: Okay.
5
6 Sussman: To introduce some limited impacts, uses and development in that area.
7 Again that would be purely for recreational purposes so the alignment
8 Number 6, the path that we're showing here would follow the northern side
9 of the AdobeHenge development, could even provide access to that site,
10 but that open-space area to the north of that alignment could remain
11 essentially undisturbed by following the alignment along the northern side
12 of the high school.
13
14 Flores: Okay. Thank you.
15
16 Sorg: Okay. Could you clear one thing up for me though, I and I think the rest of
17 the Committee would like to know too, you have the tan/yellow color for
18 the BLM land on the map yet there's, there's this hash, red hash marked
19 land. What's the difference between the two?
20
21 Sussman: That is land that has been identified by the Bureau of Land Management
22 for disposal.
23
24 Sorg: Okay.
25
26 Sussman: So potentially for some form of, of residential or commercial development.
27
28 Sorg: Okay.
29
30 Sussman: So we see that to the north of the study area.
31
32 Sorg: Okay.
33
34 Sussman: But all through the study area and then to the east of Sonoma Ranch
35 Boulevard where we do not have that hatched area, those are BLM lands
36 where there are no discussions for disposal at this time as far as we know
37 in terms of the assumptions for the study.
38
39 Sorg: Okay. Well let me point out something that I, at least I know, I don't know
40 if anybody else in the room knows this but with the designation of the
41 Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument there is a significant
42 amount of state land in that monument that at some point will be needed
43 to be traded out for BLM land or federal land outside of the monument,
44 and we don't know where that BLM land is but it's, it's, it's a possibility that
45 this might be traded to the state.
46

1 Sussman: Okay.

2

3 Sorg: Some land might be traded to the state. Okay. Just might put that out

4 there. Trustee Flores. Councilor Pedroza.

5

6 Pedroza: Thank you. I just want to comment. I, I very much like the proposals that

7 you have made because I think that there is a sizeable population that has

8 moved here to Las Cruces and enjoy the outdoor, exactly. And keeping

9 them in mind and, and increasing you know some of the facilities for bikes

10 and pedestrians is very good. I think that it is, it, it improves the health of,

11 of the community as well as the leisure time activities. I, I had the

12 occasion to go, to travel down Interstate 28 last weekend and it's beautiful

13 and it does, there were any number of bikes on there but the interstate is a

14 pretty high speed, well you know in terms of bicycles it's high-speed. It's

15 not you know like 80 or 90 miles an hour or anything like that but it does

16 go to 45 some, some towns it, it goes down to 35 but that's still I think kind

17 of hazardous for, for bikes and for families to be drive, or to be riding. And

18 as long as we've got that land I applaud the, the plan to, to keep it

19 available. Thank you.

20

21 Sussman: Thank you. If I could add one more comment to that, we had an

22 interesting question and maybe a point of frustration from an attendee at

23 the public meeting a few weeks ago about the pervasiveness of parents

24 dropping their kids off at Centennial High School and the congestion and

25 backups that that create. One of the real benefits of Alternative 6 is of

26 course the safe non-motorized access and, and other means of accessing

27 Centennial High School, that in and of itself won't eliminate the congestion

28 challenges but, but to speak to your point about sort of the safe bicycle

29 facilities we recognize that as a real benefit from this particular alternative.

30

31 Sorg: Commissioner Garrett.

32

33 Garrett: Thank you Mr. Chair and thank you for the presentation. My apologies for

34 being late. I would concur with the, the two, I, alternatives that have been

35 identified as, as good alternatives to move forward with. I just want to

36 underscore the need to look at the Missouri extension within a larger

37 framework. When I think about the plans that I've seen that, that have to

38 do with projected development in the City of Las Cruces and if you sort of

39 look at the northern boundary of the, the what, the East Mesa in, in, in a

40 certain sense as 70 going down to Dripping Springs, just talking about that

41 segment between Dripping Springs and 70 there's a lot of projected

42 development that has been assumed or projected or whatever, planned.

43 We don't have all the details of that and there's BLM and state land and all

44 those, private land. But it's really hard for me to imagine that there won't

45 be increased pressure on having at least one more major east-west

46 corridor beyond Dripping Springs/University, Lohman/Amador, and then

1 70, because you can't get through the, the big detention area that's to the,
2 that's, that's between 70 and Lohman, right, I mean Spruce could go
3 through except is, it can't go through and so you, you really have a very
4 limited number of east-west corridors and I'm, I'm not sure about dumping
5 a whole lot more onto Dripping Springs or onto Lohman. I think that those
6 both would be, would be tough. It would definitely change the character of
7 Missouri over time and, and I think that that's important. I went to Carl
8 Conlee school when there was hardly anybody alive but I think I went
9 there first year it was open, Conlee, yeah. So there has been change in
10 the area and there's more change to come and I think that keeping that
11 option open in terms of Missouri is really important starting with the
12 pedestrian but, bicycle paths is a great idea but I just think that over time
13 we're going to have a real need for another east-west corridor through into
14 that area.

15
16 Sorg: Commissioner Hancock.

17
18 Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. Have we discussed this, this particular
19 bicycle/pedestrian connection, Alternative 6 with the school system or with
20 Centennial, or is that later?

21
22 Sussman: The Las Cruces Public Schools did participate in our technical committee
23 and did provide input, or rather, rather than participating necessarily in our
24 technical committee we did reach out to them as a stakeholder early on in
25 the, in the study. They were in favor of additional bicycle and pedestrian
26 access to the high school. They were somewhat indifferent I think about
27 additional roadway access, extending Missouri and providing access to
28 the north because that would require additional connections within the
29 campus and there were sort of circulation challenges that they identified
30 there. But they've, my recollection is that they were pretty positive and
31 pretty supportive of additional bicycle and pedestrian connection and
32 pretty low-impact in terms of the school.

33
34 Hancock: Thank you.

35
36 Sorg: I, on that same note, so they did not provide any indication that they would
37 provide a, an, a connection on the north side of their property directly into
38 the school, school grounds instead of having bicyclists and, and
39 pedestrians go all the way to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard and then down,
40 enter in those places that I, they enter in now? Can you understand that?
41 It's a little bit ...

42
43 Sussman: Sure.

44
45 Sorg: Awkward.

1 Sussman: Yeah. I'm, I, I'm going to be cautious not to put words in their mouths.
2 I'm, honestly I started working on this project following those meetings so I
3 can't speak from firsthand experience. Perhaps MPO staff can recall ...
4

5 Wray: Mr. Chair.
6

7 Sussman: But ...
8

9 Wray: I was at the, the meeting that we had with the public schools. That level of
10 design detail did not come up. I would presume though that if they're
11 welcoming of the, the non-motorized facilities that they would, they would
12 make some kind of accommodations. Mr. Sussman's characterization of
13 their reaction to the, the motorized access as indifferent is, is, is right on.
14 However, they could see the potential need in the future so they, they did
15 want to keep that option on the table and again they would make
16 accommodations within their own facilities for that should that need arise.
17

18 Sorg: Okay. Can we assume that the school will be a part of the next phase?
19

20 Wray: Absolutely.
21

22 Sorg: And that will be part of the plan?
23

24 Wray: Absolutely.
25

26 Sorg: Yeah. I, I don't want to make kids walk and bike any further than they
27 have to. Okay. Can we, Councilor Pedroza you had something more?
28

29 Pedroza: Thank, thank you very much. I think my, my questions have been
30 answered. I would just like to make one more comment and from my
31 perspective from you know just driving around there, it seems as if the
32 residential areas that already exist from between 70 and, and Dripping
33 Springs, okay, are already there. There's a golf course, there's apartment
34 buildings, there's houses, there's a store, there's a gas station, there's,
35 there's already there. And I don't see that there's very much room for
36 more residences or more commerce. I may be wrong but I, I just cannot
37 picture that in my mind. There's never very much vacant land anymore.
38 Thank you.
39

40 Sorg: Any other comments or questions? I just have one last, put my two-cents
41 worth in. As you know, everybody here should know that I am a strong
42 advocate for bicycle and pedestrian pathways all over the city and I think
43 Alternative 6 fits that, that plan and that idea very well. My dream is to
44 have everybody between Lohman and Dripping Springs and east of
45 Telshor bike and walk to school, that go to Centennial High School and
46 having a, a, a super-highway like the one photo you showed where the

1 bicycle lanes were there and the sidewalk was separate and so forth with
2 nice little trees along the way would be perfect for that. But yet I do agree
3 that the motorized road will have to be done eventually, either Roadrunner
4 or Missouri. I don't know which is best. I, I couldn't see why you had
5 picked Missouri over roadway, Roadrunner but some one of the two at
6 least will have to be done eventually. But let's get the bicycle and
7 pedestrian connection done first. And how soon could that be done, staff?
8 What, what's a realistic timeframe?
9

10 Murphy: Mr. Chair. We would, we would have to one, first find a, a jurisdiction that,
11 that would do it. It would, right now that land is unincorporated though if
12 anything were to happen I could see where it would get annexed so the
13 City or the County could be players on it, the state DOT could be a, a
14 player on it and then one of those entities would have to go and find
15 construction funding so I think regardless of which, which path we're
16 advancing it's not going to, not going to be anything that we see on the, or
17 we're not going to see it anytime soon.
18

19 Sorg: I see. Well, since NMDOT we, isn't here today let's ask them first. Thank,
20 okay thank you. Thank you Aaron.
21

22 Sussman: Thank you. Can I, I'm just ...
23

24 Sorg: Sure.
25

26 Sussman: Your, your question about Missouri versus Roadrunner, I think the
27 Commissioner spoke to that eloquently that it's the east-west connectivity
28 from a roadway perspective that we gain from extending Missouri that we
29 do not gain from extending Roadrunner in isolation. That's really the key
30 difference between the two.
31

32 Sorg: Yeah, yeah but as you can see from this map on Alternative 6, you have
33 Missouri connecting with Roadrunner and then they both go together over
34 to Sonoma Ranch. Is that not true?
35

36 Sussman: So those are, that's essentially the MTP scenario ...
37

38 Sorg: I see.
39

40 Sussman: That you're describing in which both those facilities are extended.
41 Because the predominant movement is east-west in order to go north-
42 south, that's why we felt that the Missouri extension was a more logical
43 alternative to carry forward into the future rather than Roadrunner and why
44 we feel that extending both at this time is probably redundant.
45

46 Sorg: Okay.

1
2 Sussman: But in terms of addressing those really long-term needs that all of you
3 have, have spoken to and identified, it makes sense to keep both of those
4 facilities on the long-range network maps.
5

6 Sorg: Sure. I understand. Good. One, one more question now that you had,
7 the, there's some dotted lines to the east of Sonoma Ranch Boulevard at
8 the end of Roadrunner there on this particular map. Are those projected
9 roads for the future?
10

11 Murphy: Mr. Chair. Yes, those are projected future collectors.
12

13 Sorg: Okay. Okay. Thank you.
14

15 Sussman: All right. Thank you.
16

17 Sorg: That concludes the Missouri Study Corridor.
18

19 **5.2 NMDOT update**
20

21 **6. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS**
22

23 Sorg: Staff comments or Committee comments? Anyone? Seeing none.
24

25 **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**
26

27 Sorg: Last call for public comment. Seeing none.
28

29 **8. ADJOURNMENT (2:03 PM)**
30

31 Sorg: I'll call for an adjournment.
32

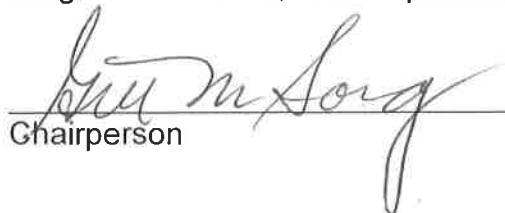
33 Hancock: So moved.
34

35 Sorg: Moved by Commissioner ...
36

37 Eakman: Second.
38

39 Sorg: Hancock, second by Councilor Eakman. All in favor say "aye." MOTION
40 PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
41

42 Sorg: None, and it's passed.
43

44
45 
46 Chairperson