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 April 6, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT:  David Armijo (SCRTD)
                    Mike Bartholomew (CLC Transit)
                    Dave Wallace proxy for Bill Childress (BLM)
                    John Gwynne (DAC Flood Commission)
                    Soo Gyu Lee (CLC)
                    Harold Love (NMDOT)
                    Luis Marmolejo (DAC Planning)
                    Rene Molina (DAC Eng.)
                    Lily Sensiba (EBID)
                    Larry Shannon (Town of Mesilla)
                    Tony Trevino (CLC Public Works)

MEMBERS ABSENT:    Todd Gregory (LCPS)
                    Dale Harrell (NMSU)
                    Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)
                    Stephen Howie (EBID)
                    Debbi Lujan (Town of Mesilla)

STAFF PRESENT:     Andrew Wray (MPO Staff)
                    Michael McAdams (MPO Staff)
                    Dominic Loya (MPO)

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

1.  CALL TO ORDER (4:00 PM)

Trevino:  Okay let's call to order the April 6, 2017 meeting of the Mesilla Valley MPO Technical Advisory Committee.

2.  APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trevino:  The first thing on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Are there any comments or changes to the agenda? If not, do I hear a motion to approve the agenda?

Shannon:  Make a motion to approve the agenda.

Gwynne:  Second.
Trevino: All those in favor.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Trevino: Any opposed? None. Motion passes.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Trevino: Next thing on the agenda is the election of officers.

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. Give a little bit of background. The Committee elected Ms. Jolene Herrera from NMDOT as the Chair for the 2017 calendar year at their February meeting. Unfortunately NMDOT upper management determined after that, that Jolene isn't eligible to serve as the Chair of this Committee or indeed any other MPO Committee. For that reason she has turned in her resignation. It is a little awkward that she is not able to be here with us today because it looks like we're shoving her out when she's not here, but that's why we wanted her to submit the letter so that everyone knows that this is something that she understands and is doing on her own initiative. Our bylaws say that Mr. Trevino cannot be promoted to Chair from his position as Vice-Chair. We need to have another election to elect a new Chair from the Membership of the Committee so we will be doing that at this time.

Marmolejo: Chair, if Mr. Trevino would ... no. I retract what I was going to say.

Gwynne: So we're looking for nominations now is ...

Wray: If the Chair has opened the floor for nominations yes.

Gwynne: Okay.

Trevino: Yeah so I'll open the floor for nominations for Chair for replacement of Ms. Jolene Herrera. Any nominations?

Gwynne: I'll nominate Luis Marmolejo.

Trevino: Any second?

Molina: I'll second.

Trevino: Are there any other nominations? None. All in favor.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
Trevino: Any opposed? None said, we have a new Chair, Mr. Marmolejo. And at this point I will pass the baton.

Marmolejo: Good afternoon. Thank you Mr. Gwynne and Rene. Good afternoon everybody. We don’t need to go on to the other election of officers as everybody’s fine.

Wray: Unless Mr. Trevino intends to resign his position as Vice Chair, there’s no call for any further election.

Trevino: No, I’ll stay.

Marmolejo: Okay. And then real quick before we get going to far into this, so just a reminder about your cell phones, if you want to mute them so there won’t be no bells or rings or whatever.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 February 2, 2016

Marmolejo: So I guess we can go ahead and move onto item number four, approval of minutes of February 2, 2017. Do I hear a motion to approve, or are there any changes to them?

Gwynne: I move to approve the minutes from the last meeting from February 2, 2017.

Shannon: I second the motion.

Marmolejo: Do I hear any other ... ayes, all in favor.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Marmolejo: Okay minutes have been approved.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Marmolejo: Item number five, public comments. Any comments from the public? Seeing none.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1 Presentation on Transit Performance Measures

Marmolejo: We move on to item number six. Discussion items, 6.1 presentation of transit performance measures. MPO staff please.
MICHAEL MCADAMS GAVE PRESENTATION.

Marmolejo: Yes sir, just a couple of questions out of curiosity. You know you talked about the national state and local transportation goals. They're submitted from the top obviously and if that's the case then how do they know what really our/your local needs are as it relates to what their goals are.

McAdams: I think that's a real, we're responsible for these goals are at the MPO level, at the agencies level. I think the goal, I could be wrong, but I think the goals would not be specific but would be general goals like reducing pedestrian and bicycle collisions. That would be, I would it would be possible in the national level to say, we're going to have a 20% reduction in vehicle accidents or vehicle fatalities. Not at this point and I think probably never because each state is different. New Mexico has one of the largest, has the highest rate of pedestrian accidents right, and collisions with fatalities, including fatalities. So we're on the top of the list of trying to make, reduce pedestrian accidents or collisions, right. That kind of thing, as far as specific I think would be, I would have a big problem with that, I'm sure you would about very blanket targets that are not really met or being able to be met. So I don't think they're going, in sort of knowing what I know about transportation planning, I don't think they'll actually set a specific target, but in general, a general thing, we look at how states are achieving their own goals are MPOs. So I think really though (inaudible), states providing their targets and their goals and the FTA, the FSJ reviewing their targets. Yeah. So but the state will be the major mover in this action.

Marmolejo: So how would we know if we're achieving those goals?

McAdams: Those will be in, the state will, the DOT, FTA, the public transportation division of the DOT and the Highway Division of the DOT would be consulting with MPOs in looking at their target. With the way it would look and the way that the video at this, it would be, we would decide by number, I really like percentages better. Say our collisions rates are this many vehicles, right. And then our target would be another, perhaps a 5% reduction. Then you would have to explain how you're going to do it and then the next year you would say, did you meet the target and they would actually check off, you did, or you went below the average, all right, so either ... really the best thing is meeting your target, but perhaps you reduce the, below the average which would be kind of a plus. So they would say well you went below the average which is good, right, but you still didn't meet your target. So they come back, I think next year, it's going to be a couple years project, maybe five year to really get this in line, and maybe come back, well how are you going, did you set it unrealistically I would think or are there other measures that you didn't
really do. I think this, so really we hope that this will be an impetus to get people to think about how we can actually achieve these goals. You know because how can we reduce pedestrian vehicular accidents and I think it's a real challenge you know.

Marmolejo: If we can go back to that slide that had the numerous graphs if would mind. My monitor turned off for some reason.

McAdams: That one.

Marmolejo: Go back the other way.

McAdams: This.

Marmolejo: One more time.

McAdams: Okay.

Marmolejo: Okay there you go.

McAdams: Those are, these are graphs that are related to different things where we are monitoring, or information we are giving to the FTA. Well (inaudible) is the national transit database is a FTA sponsored program which you’re required to do if you receive federal funds right. And depending on the type of transit agency you are, depends on the amount of information you have to do. We're small urban, so we don't have to as much, but other have to do much more. And this is a way to, with a very broad manner look at comparability with other transit system and we look at appearances, but there's many variables that will that makes them incomparable too. So you have to look at all this data with a big grain of salt, with you know with an analytical eye. So these are the type of thing we can do already and we are doing them. This is the first year we've done passengers per revenue hour and this is a way of, we can review on a route-by-route basis how one route is doing well with another. If you look at that, one of our routes is doing very well and others are not. So in this aspect of looking transit plan where we say why are these routes not doing well, right. Maybe it's because the bus stop alignment, maybe we should've of put in different areas, right. Or it could be timing or frequency, I'm just using examples. We know that maybe increasing frequency or putting on additional buses. So and you can actually drill down with the automatic passenger count, we two on each, one on two buses. Two buses we have the automatic passenger counter, we can count how many people are getting on and off the bus. And so by route, exact time, exact GPS. So we can see what stops are being used more and really look at a very detailed level about how these routes are functioning right. And then we can do surveys and may want to talk about
surveys about, one thing Mike and I discussed about if, we know the large
amount of people are using the bus for work. If you look at that, a lot of
people think it's just low-income people, elderly, but it's really not. The
majority of people are students and people that are called the working
poor which is very important, or they had one car, or maybe no car. So
one thing we could ask them is your you know survey, is the bus your
primary vehicle, your primary mode of transportation right. And we can
come back another year and say we increase or decrease. Do we serve
that market? That's the kind of stuff we're talking about. Very detailed,
some times very hard to measure and we're going to talk to FTA, you
know the people (*inaudible*) that too said we're doing the best we can
given the, I guess the licence of the data and I guess another term is
fuzziness of the data too and how to apply that to whether you're doing
well or not.

Marmolejo: That was where I was going with this about, obviously these performance
measures, so you can tell which route is not working.

McAdams: Exactly.

Marmolejo: You don't know what or you may have some idea of what variables are
causing that. And I'm just curious, at what point in time you're saying this
has got to change. We've got to change something up on this route
because it's really under performing.

McAdams: I think we've already had that exercise to a certain degree. We looked at
route 8 which is a route that now goes to the mall, to Picacho area and we
found we're performing very well and so we approached it, a relief bus and
then we're proposing another route change, more a loop basis instead of a
linear. And we went through two public hearings to find out, and we're
also in the process. So this was, it's a very organic process to a certain
degree with organic and data qualitative. And when you come to the, so
the right moment you say this is the time we should look at you know
changing the route in this situation we've already initiated the process but
we're waiting on City Council approval. So it is, it's not like we get a
certain point like ridership, we say oh we have to change it. We look at
the indicator and then we say, we look at demographics, we look at
timings, we look at a lot of different things. We ask the bus drivers you
know what do you think about this route. How do you see people
perceiving it, in that situation. Some is very quantitative but a lot of it's
qualitative as well. So it's kind of like, it's an interesting process but it's not
like, but it's something that does occur because of course you have one
under performing route, you say what's going on here, and you look at the
details.

Marmolejo: Thank you. It was very informative. Thank you. Anybody else?
Trevino: Not necessarily a question but a comment. Just from experience dealing with the City of Las Cruces Strategic Plan before these goals are made and created, think of how it's actually going to be physically measured because now we're in some instances where some of the goals have been applied and there's no way to physically measure them. So just have that kind of thought frame ahead of time before you (inaudible) these goals because we're running into some issues on there.

McAdams: Mr. Chair. This is something that we have to look at very seriously because again we won't be the one implementing, it'll be the City in your situation will be implementing. And I think how do you measure if you can improve pavement, percentage of pavement, streets that are badly paved, you're going to say I'm going to improve 5%. You need to, what are the goals you do in that, how do you measure the pavement quality, etc. Our very I guess appropriate, they have to be realistic and appropriate for the City or any kind of County or Town of Mesilla.

Trevino: Unfortunately that pavement management is actually one that's easy for us to measure because we did hire a consultant to go and survey all our streets in the City. So they're all graded from a poor to very good condition, so we have our goal set for 8%, 20, whatever to get ...

McAdams: Right.

Trevino: To get improved every year, so that is an easily measurable goal, but some of the other ones that I was given they're not so ...

McAdams: Not so easy. Congestion, this is going to be a how do you measure congestion and if you look at a broad situation here, how do you do it for a whole urban area. You could probably do it by looking at quarters or say we're going to do this congestion, certain quarter and we could look at you know a variety of different means to do that like ITS or you know access control etc. So I think this is something that can be developed and something we'll have to really negotiate, the state particularly if they do fine. But congestion's not really a problem in our area, fortunately. Our peaks are very small, but in areas like Albuquerque and part of the MPO for El Paso which are under congestion management, these are issues so how you reduce. The other thing that may be an issue is how do you erase pollution right. If you know (inaudible) particularly in that under non-attainment for air quality. I'm sure these'll be something. And of course there are no real measures to do that. There's way to measure it, well we're not in that. The other aspects I think are related to bridge and (inaudible) interstate will be a state responsibility and freight is pretty much the state responsibility as well so a lot of these will be state obligations and we'll fill in the gaps I think. But you're exactly right, these are
extremely, when you go at measurements, there'll be multiple measurements and you use one or more. I think one to measure it. So I think it would be a negotiation process and one we'll have to work through.

Trevino: Right, especially since you said that staff will be implementing the strategic plan and filling it out and completing it. You guys will complete it and we'll the one implementing it, so will staff have a chance to review it and give comments based on (inaudible) ...

McAdams: Of course. Of course.

Trevino: Also with this.

McAdams: I think a lot of times we'll be the messenger. I think a certain way we'll get the stuff from DOT and we'll transmit, but of course it's really the implementing agencies are the one that are really responsible. And so (inaudible) messenger to a certain degree but we'll assist as much as possible. We would like to be a database, resource for everybody. So we would like to, we're collecting volumes right now for transit. And we're providing volumes for vehicles. We're also looking at providing, we hope in the next maybe month or two be able to do bicycle countings and get a good idea of bicycle volumes and pedestrian. Pedestrian's not so much, but bicycle particularly. So we'd like to be considered I think and Tom Murphy would say the same thing, a database depository for all the agencies you know so we can help from that aspect but as far as enforcing we have absolutely no enforcement power to do that. We encourage you and the state will be the really one to I guess to say where you meet targets. It's still a process, these things are still in development. We have pain, we're not to ... let me backpack, some of the stuff like the (inaudible) stuff is going to come up in the next two years. You'll have to establish targets. The other parts in the performance management planning process will come much later. The transit stuff may be a year or two in development and of course this may change with the new administration a well, we have no idea. So what we're doing is giving a heads up to start thinking about. We already have, we try to do database management. We've got some stuff for bicycle stuff. We're looking at more detailed volume counts too as well. And we've got to update models. We're already thinking ahead. But again we're looking, we'll be the drivers, MPOs and really and the state will rely on us. So it really depends on what we want to do and question you know what goals we want to set and the measurements.

Trevino: Okay.

McAdams: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

7. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

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

Marmolejo: Okay moving onto item number seven, committee and staff comments. Anybody from City of Las Cruces

Trevino: There's two projects we have going on still trying to finish up is the LC00190 and LC00130 that we finally met with DOT and hopefully getting some change orders approved so fingers crossed we would get back on those. We've been (inaudible) for a couple of months now so hopefully by the middle of summer those'll be completed. That's it from the City.

Marmolejo: County staff, flood commission.

Gwynne: We don't have any updates.

Marmolejo: Engineering.

Molina: We also don't have any updates.

Marmolejo: And planning department also for Dona Ana County no updates. Town of Mesilla.

Shannon: No updates.

Marmolejo: Las Cruces Public Schools.

Wray: They're not here today.

Marmolejo: RoadRUNNER Transit.

Bartholomew: I don't have the specific project numbers but there is one of our projects in the TIP is to set up the grant for the buses that we got the state of good repair money for, for three buses, and we also have some section 5339 that we're getting that's basically assigned to the state that they're assigning to us to order buses, so we hope to be set up in the STIP now and we're hoping to move forward in getting that grant set up to order buses.

As far as our service goes, we were hoping to implement another phase of the service plan that we have where we would add another route, that was put in our budget request for this year, however as the budget process has evolved the City has determined that they want to hold off
and wait and see how the fiscal year '17 ends before they would commit to
adding more money for another route to be put out there. It's not out of
the question right now, well we'll see how fiscal year '17 ends and we may
be going back to the City Council in August or September to add that
additional route that in our service plan. That's it.

Marmolejo: Pardon my ignorance. So are you guys in the MPO, how do you guys line
up if you will. I know you're separate entity, but how's your coordination
as far as when it comes to routes with the MPO?

Bartholomew: Well the MPO, the City is the agent I guess for the MPO and so in a way
they're in the Community Development Department of the City, we're in a
different department of the City. We're in what's called Quality of Life now,
but that's our department as of right now. But really we don't have our
own internal planning function in our transit section so the Mesilla Valley
MPO and Mike's position is pretty much funded by I believe the FDA
funding that they get to help us with transit planning.

Marmolejo: And they propose a route so you guys coordinate for the routes.

Bartholomew: Well the service plan that we have right now was done through, they had
some funding at the MPO to do a small study for looking at our service
plan and they went out to a third party that did the study, devised a plan,
and they helped us with the public meetings and everything, but it was a
very much cooperative development of the plan between us, but it was led
as a planning process by the MPO.

Marmolejo: Interesting. Thank you. Any project updates? Seeing none from you
guys.

Armijo: Excuse me, for SCRTD.

Marmolejo: SCRTD yes sir,

Armijo: So yes a couple of project updates. I know you didn't have a meeting
recently and I probably missed the one before that. We've had a pretty
busy time the beginning of this year, our ridership has been growing. So
as far as project updates, we began our grant funding apparatus, very
similar to what you're seeing up there. I'm actually in the process of
submitting our performance measures to the New Mexico Department of
Transportation and they're pretty extensive under the 5311, they're looking
at everything from passengers per mile, passengers per hour and so on. I
think those statistics are actually a good thing to have and I look forward
to bringing those to this body in the future. One of the reasons is that
because we are still very much a startup agency, we're just beginning our
second year, in the first half of the year we had pretty meager revenues
for service. We had the five buses we rolled out with. So where we are
today in projects is we've now started our grants, 5311 began in October
and then we have a 5310 grant out of El Paso MPO that allows us to have
an additional bus and expansion of service on our purple line and as I
mentioned many months ago when that was coming in, that features a flex
service and so we've now established a dispatch center and we're kind of
staffing ourselves up at the move-it center, so we have a dispatcher and
an additional operative as a result of that. So that's allowed us to go from
the initial five buses to six buses. It's also allowed us to begin to expand
the number of stops and the amount of service we had. We initially
started with simply 24 trips on four routes operating every day and then a
contract service which was our orange rout that goes into Alamogordo.
We now have those five routes working together but we're actually running
about 30 trips a day, so Monday through Friday.

The additional trips have augmented our ridership and our ridership
with additional stops have allowed us now to expand I think we're up about
83% in the first year, so ridership is growing pretty dynamically, in fact in
the first three months of this year we've seen growth on an average
monthly basis above 16 to 20%. So we're doing very very well. We've
also been able to extend our services into El Paso in both our turquoise
line and Chaparral and our purple line which is the flex service under the
5310 grant. So with that grant we were able to get our bus in December.
We started service in January, and we expanded and made the
connections into El Paso.

One of the discussion points that Michael and I had earlier today is
we're also taking on a performance from our Board that allowed us to
provide reciprocity on our fares and something that I'm hoping that the
MPOs both in El Paso and here in Mesilla going to have discussions on,
since our ridership base tends to overlap and as we make connections
both in El Paso through Sun Metro, El Paso County Transit, the gold line,
the silver line soon when we get our green service running later this year,
and of course RoadRUNNER in Cruces, meaning more specifically that
we give opportunities for people to transfer between our services. We
accept all script from these other agencies for no fare on our bus services.
So if somebody from RoadRUNNER or El Paso Sun Metro has a monthly
pass or a day pass or even a transfer we'll accept that on our buses. That
certainly has helped us a little bit with ridership, but I don't think most
people even know we have that service, it's more of a word of mouth and
that's certainly something for us to grow on. We've also begun working on
a beta test, so by next week we'll actually launch a new website and that
will help us connect to our Facebook and social media pages and Twitter.
But probably most importantly is we're doing it on a Google map base and
our next step in the process will be to actually launch Goggle app that'll be
available on phones and for better coordination and it's really going to do
great, I've been looking at the site and it's pretty good once we can link all
of our difference services together I think that's going to be great. So a lot
going on with the service. We're looking forward to see where we are with our next grants and funding time is available so we'll see where we are with the County and hopefully this chamber we'll be seeing more money coming forward to us so.

And then last our approved last month picking up a couple more buses, we're actually picking up two vehicles that are slightly used, a few miles on them but, about 50,000, 60,000 miles from Rio Metro and one of the reasons that Rio Metro's giving us the buses out of the graces of their good heart is that the State of New Mexico's getting really tough on fleets and so they're spare ratio was above the average and so we're actually helping Rio Metro out by taking a couple buses off their hands, putting them into our service, but that'll also help us because we've been getting by with just one spare and that's pretty tight even with a new service, so this will help augment that and allow us to maybe run some more trips in the afternoon soon. So again one of the advantages that transit can do, back to the presentation that Michael was making earlier, performance measures help us get some insight into what's happening, but I think in the end it's working together cooperatively. Much of our ridership growth in recent months is coming from people who are using our service from RoadRUNNER and people who are using our service from Sun Metro and I think at the end of the day we just want to keep more people riding the buses and I think if we can all work together to do that I think that's a great advantage.

And last I'll say on the performance measures, I think one of the things that is great on ours is that while our ridership even though it's growing is still very low because it's only, we're just starting our second year, but what's interesting is when you start looking at cost effectiveness. Our cost effectiveness is actually very very good and those numbers are actually good numbers to look at, especially when you see the trend line because as ridership is going up and were not adding any costs, guess what, performance is improving. So there's a lot of things that goes into the service and I think these are very good measures to have as we go forward and I think there'll be obviously more dialogue on that and we'll be sharing our information with the MPO and hopefully we'll learn from each other as we go forward. So that's the end of my report though. Thank you for listening.

Marmolejo: Thank you.

7.2 NMDOT Projects Update

Marmolejo: DOT.

Love: We have a couple of projects. Spitz, Main and Solano, that intersection project just got underway. The scope of that project is to completely redo that intersection, concrete paving, new traffic signals, lighting, rerouting,
changing the geometry of some of the connecting streets. And like I said
the project just started, probably going to take a year of construction so be
careful driving through there.
Next project that's been ongoing is US-70 from about the White
 Sands Missile Range turnoff all the way to the Otero County line, we're
doing a pavement preservation project out there and if you're heading
toward Alamogordo you're probably see orange barrels and new
pavement out there.
A project that's coming up real soon is traffic signal that's going to
be put at 17th Street and Picacho. That project just got awarded and so
we're looking forward to contractor start working probably a couple of
months. Any questions?

Gwynne: Yes. Isn't there a project coming up very soon for University and I-25?
Love: Yes. That project is still under design.
Gwynne: Okay.
Love: So the actual project probably won't be looking at construction until late
next year.
Gwynne: Okay.
Wray: It's in the TIP for '18.
Gwynne: Okay. Thank you.
Bartholomew: I had a question of Harold. With the light at Picacho and 17th Street
what's the anticipated completion time for that one?
Love: I could not find that information. Sorry. You know a signal project with
some minor roadway improvements, I'm thinking it's probably four months
at the most project.
Bartholomew: This calendar year?
Love: Yes.
Bartholomew: Thank you.
Marmolejo: Any other questions? Seeing none.

7.3 MPO Staff Projects Update

8. PUBLIC COMMENT
Montoya: So we can go ahead and move onto item eight, any public input. Seeing none.

9. **ADJOURNMENT (4:55 PM)**

Marmolejo: Item nine. Anybody want to make a motion for adjournment.

Love: So moved.

Bartholomew: Second.

Marmolejo: Okay. Thank you everybody. By the way tell Jolene that we appreciate her coming on board and then what she had to do ... I'll look forward to seeing her next time. Thank you.