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 May 10, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carlos Arzabal, (Town of Mesilla)
Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Councillor Jack Eakman (CLC)
Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC)
Commissioner Benjamin Rawson (DAC)
Commissioner Isabella Solis (DAC)
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner John Vasquez (DAC)

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

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

1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (1:30 PM)

Murphy: And the computer clock here says 1:30.

Sorg: Okay. Very good. We'll call the meeting to order again and in order to have a meeting since our Chairman and Vice-Chair are absent today, is there a motion to appoint a temporary Chair for today's meeting?

Arzabal: Mr. Chair. Sir I'd like to nominate Mr. Sorg as our temporary Chairman for today's meeting.

Eakman: I am honored to second that motion.

Sorg: Okay any further discussion? Then call the roll.

Murphy: Okay. Councillor Eakman.
Eakman: Yes.
Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.
Doolittle: Yes.
Murphy: Councillor Sorg.
Sorg: Yes.
Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.
Pedroza: Yes.
Murphy: Trustee Arzabal.
Arzabal: Yes.
Murphy: Commissioner Rawson.
Rawson: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Sorg: Okay. The first order of business on the agenda is to call to order and the Pledge of Allegiance. Where's the flag?

COUNCILLOR SORG LED THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Sorg: The next order is conflict of interest. Is there any Member of the Commission or staff that has a conflict with any item on the agenda?

Pedroza: None.
Eakman: None.
Arzabal: None.

Sorg: Hearing none, we'll assume. Oh, good. Mayor Nora Barraza has just entered the room.

Barraza: Thank you.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT
Sorg: Any public comment? Seeing no public.

4. CONSENT AGENDA *

Sorg: We'll move on. Let's have a motion on the consent agenda.

Solis: Mr. Chair. I make a motion we approve the consent agenda.

Eakman: Second.

Sorg: Okay. Any discussion? Then let's take a vote.

Murphy: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Arzabal.

Arzabal: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Baraza.

Baraza: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Rawson.

Rawson: Yes.

Murphy: And Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

MOTION Passes UNANIMOUSLY.
5. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 * April 12 2017

- VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 17-05: A Resolution Amending the FFY 2017- FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Sorg: Next item on the agenda is the action item 6.1: Resolution 17-05: A Resolution Amending the FY 2017 - 2018 Unified Planning Work Program.

Eakman: I would move approval.

Barraza: I would second.

Sorg: Who was that? Oh, Councillor Eakman moves approval and ...

Barraza: Mayor Barraza.

Sorg: Mayor Barraza seconded. Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Members of the Board. This action item is to amend our two-year Unified Planning Work Program which covers Federal Fiscal Years 2017 and Federal Fiscal Year 2018. We received an e-mail communication from the planning group New Mexico DOT in Santa Fe notifying us that there was an adjustment in what is termed the "obligation limits" and thereby reducing the amount of planning, or PL funds that are available statewide. This affects every MPO in the state of New Mexico. We were reduced proportionally and this is going to have an impact of $17,516.00 on our Fiscal Year ’18 program. What we’ve done is we’ve reduced the amounts proportional in that budget by that amount and it should not affect a lot of program delivery. We may have delays on replacing equipment and stuff like that but we will not have to lose any staff or postpone or eliminate any program. With that I'll stand for any questions.


Pedroza: Thank you. Mr. Murphy. Can you tell us what that was motivated by? Was there a cut, was there an ask for return of monies, or what happened?
Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councillor Pedroza. I'm not sure the exact motivation of it. This is something that was decided at the Federal Highway level and it affects the obligation limit that is applied towards the Federal Transportation funds in the state of New Mexico and I might ask for Mr. Doolittle's assistance on this. I imagine this affects all of the federal-funded programs in the state.

Pedroza: Mr. Doolittle? Thank you.

Doolittle: Tom. I think Jolene has more information than I would.

Herrera: Thank you. Jolene Herrera, NMDOT. This actually was done at the federal level, so through Congress. Every year they allocate a certain amount of money but then they tell us that we can only spend a certain portion of that money. Last year it was 94.6%. This year it's gone down to 90% and so that's really, it's trickled down to the states now and it will impact District 1 and all the other districts' programs also.

Pedroza: Thank you.

Herrera: You're welcome.

Sorg: Any other comments or questions? Seeing none, let's have a vote Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: Okay. Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Trustee Arzabal.

Arzabal: Yes.

Murphy: Mayor Barraza.
Barraza: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Rawson.

Rawson: Yes.

Murphy: And Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

6.2 Resolution 17-06: A Resolution Amending the 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Sorg: Next item on the agenda is 6.2: Resolution 17-06: A Resolution Amending the 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. Good afternoon Members of this Committee.

Sorg: Is there a motion to approval?

Eakman: I would move approval.

Arzabal: Second.

Wray: I'd like to direct the attention of the Committee to page 25 of the packet. There are three amendments that have been requested by RoadRUNNER Transit and by New Mexico Department of Transportation. The first one is TL00010. This is a RoadRUNNER Transit amendment. Mr. Bartholomew of RoadRUNNER Transit has requested that the FTA portion of that project be increased, actually both the FTA and the local fund portions be increased by $1,655,184 for a total increase of $3,310,368.

The next project is TL00013. Mr. Bartholomew has requested to reduce the 2017 portion for that project down to $322,000.

The last amendment that's been requested for this cycle is LC00230. That's a New Mexico Department of Transportation project. It deals with signal upgrades at railroad crossings and the request is to move the project from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2022 which moves it out of the current 2016-2021 TIP. I'll stand now for any questions.

Sorg: Any questions by the Committee? Councillor Pedroza.
Pedroza: Thank you. Andrew does that mean that if it's moved from 2020 to 2022 it will still be available come 2022, or it will re-resurrect?

Wray: It's been moved out of the current TIP. I'll say that it has been requested to be included in the next TIP that's going to be coming up. I'm going to be talking about that a little bit more in just a moment. But 2022 is within that, the next, the 2018 TIP's time frame and that project has been requested to be in that TIP so.

Pedroza: Thank you very much.

Sorg: Any others? I'm just a little curious, Andrew. Did Mr. Bartholomew explain what RoadRUNNER Transit operations they were going to increase?

Wray: He was not specific about that level of detail, no. I do not know.

Sorg: I would like that in the future so we know what we're putting this money into. He's increasing it by $1.6-something million. Do you know where that money is coming from?

Wray: I do not sir.

Sorg: Okay. There again, that would be good to know. If there's no other questions or comments, I'll call for the roll.

Wray: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Arzabal.

Arzabal: Yes.

Wray: Mayor Barraza.
Baraza: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Rawson.

Rawson: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Committee Training

Sorg: So let’s proceed onto the discussion item 7.1: Committee Training.

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Loya is currently passing out a copy of the draft of the 2018 to 2023 TIP. The open call for projects for this TIP, or excuse me not the open call, the public comment period for this TIP began at the TIP meeting last week. Our Public Participation Plan requires that there be a 30-day public comment period for this TIP. As part of the public comment period we always give an overview of the TIP and the TIP process to this Committee and to the members of the public in attendance at this meeting. So just as a brief overview the TIP or Transportation Improvement Program is a short-range fiscally-constrained list of federally funded and/or regionally significant projects in the MPO planning area as determined by the MPO Policy Committee. The list of projects is created in cooperation with residents, local governments, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Federal law requires that the TIP cover a period of four years but the State of New Mexico requires that there be an additional two so-called "out years" included in the TIP. So in this instance the required years are 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 and then the out years are 2022 and 2023. The TIP goes directly into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program or STIP. It's required to go in without alteration. The STIP is maintained by the New Mexico Department of Transportation and is approved by the New Mexico Transportation Commission. Development of the STIP as required by law is also to include input of public transportation providers. All regionally significant transportation projects requiring action by the Federal Highway Administration or the Federal Transit Administration are required to go on the TIP. For the purposes of the TIP "regionally significant" is defined as any transportation project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs, connects to areas outside the region, connects to a
major activity center, or connects to a major transportation terminal, for example a major airport or an airport, something of that nature. According to the New Mexico STIP Policies and Procedures Manual it's required at minimum to include all principal arterial highways and fixed guideway transit facilities and also all capital and non-capital transportation projects other than FTA-funded planning projects.

Again as I mentioned at the beginning the MPO's required to publish an open call for projects every two years, although the TIP can be amended at any time during that period. The Mesilla Valley MPO, we initiated our call for projects for this TIP in October of 2016. We then extended the deadline of that TIP in January of this year to the end of February of 2017. Citizen stakeholders and local governments are all invited to make project recommendations. After the application deadline MPO staff works with New Mexico Department of Transportation to identify potential sources of funding. Matching funds have to be identified in any TIP application and it's important to understand that just because there is an application for a TIP project that does not mean that a project is ultimately going to go on the TIP.

When it comes to amending the TIP there is a set process laid down in the Statewide Policies and Procedures Manual. The process has to follow a set schedule. There also has to be an opportunity for public participation provided in each TIP amendment. A recent update to this I'll add as an aside, but now going forward MPO staff will be required to include an announcement of an impending TIP amendment on the MPO website. And there is one such announcement for today's amendment that this Committee has just approved. Common causes for an amendment are an addition or deletion of a project that would require an amendment, substantial changes to the scope of the project, well I'm not going to read through all of them. Another very important potential cause for an amendment is a change in the project's total programmed amount greater than 20% or any amount greater than $2 million.

As I said the TIP amendment operates on a cycle. It's a quarterly cycle. The dates that are on the screen in front of you are just an example of the first quarter dates that would need to be followed in order for an amendment to be processed by New Mexico Department of Transportation in order for it to go before the Transportation Commission. The cycle does repeat itself on a quarterly basis throughout the year so there are four opportunities in any given calendar year for the TIP to be amended.

There is a process for out-of-cycle amendments but it is emphasized in the Policies and Procedures that this process is to be used sparingly. In this current 2016 TIP that we're currently operating under there's been one time where an out-of-cycle amendment was requested. The process is that the lead agency on the project has to address a letter to the MPO Policy Committee Chair. The letter has to address why the amendment is necessary and why the amendment cannot wait for the
regular cycle. If the amendment is approved by the Policy Committee
then it is forwarded to the Transportation Secretary who can then approve
it to include it in the TIP.

There is another process to make changes in the TIP. It's the
Administrative Modification process. It's minor changes in the scope of
the project, deletions of project phases that do not change the scope of
the project, and minor one-time changes in the total amount of the federal
funds, the project has to be less than 20% of the project total or up to $2
million. If that is done then it cannot be done again without a full
amendment to the project.

And the page that you see on your screen in front of you, it is
actually the first page of the 2018 TIP. I just wanted to briefly illustrate the
portions of the sheets for everybody's benefit. But up here in the upper
left corner is the control number. That's the control number that is
associated with this project all the way from the MPO up to the State and
up to the, ultimately when FHWA looks at it, up to the Federal level. It has
the NMDOT district and the county recorded on the sheet. It also has the
municipality recorded. In this instance this is the railroad crossing project
that Councillor Pedroza was asking about earlier. You'll note that it is
within the out years of the impending 2018 TIP. So while it has been
moved out of the 2016 TIP it's now been requested to be included by
NMDOT on the 2018 TIP. You'll see the project description here and then
the meat of the sheet is the funding information there on the table.

Again the public comment period for the 2018 TIP commenced on
May 4th at that day's Technical Advisory Committee. MPO staff intends to
bring the 2018 TIP to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory
Committee next Tuesday at their May 16th meeting for their
recommendation to this Committee and then MPO staff will bring this TIP
to the Technical Advisory Committee on June 1st, and then our intention is
to bring this TIP back before this Committee on June 14th for their
approval. And I'll stand now for any questions.

Eakman: Mr. Chairman.

Sorg: Yes.

Eakman: I do have a question.

Sorg: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Is this the total programs that are included in this TIP like ...

Wray: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Eakman. Yes. These are all the projects that
we were requested by all of our jurisdictions to include in the 2018 TIP.
Eakman: I wanted to clarify that. I'm going to attend my first meeting as a member of the South Central Regional Transit District later this month and so there's absolutely nothing in the TIP for the SCRTD. Is that correct?

Wray: Councillor. Yes, that is correct. The SCRTD did not request any projects to go onto our TIP.

Eakman: Thank you.

Pedroza: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Anybody else?

Pedroza: I have a question.

Sorg: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you very much. Did I understand you correctly, Andrew that you said that individuals not on any committee can also suggest or make recommendations for projects to be included in the TIP?

Wray: Mr. Chair, Councillor Pedroza. Yes. That's correct. They would need to ultimately if, let's just lay out a scenario. If an individual came to MPO staff with a project that they wanted to do we would take the information, but then we would take them to meet with the staff of the relevant government jurisdiction. So if it was a project that was out in the county we would take them to meet with Dona Ana County staff. If it was within the city we would take them to meet with City of Las Cruces staff, etc. So while an individual can make suggestions and recommendations, it ultimately does have to be sponsored through a government entity. But we do want to put that in there because the possibility for individuals to come and make recommendations is most definitely out there and available, and we want to make sure that people are aware of that.

Pedroza: Do you know how many, and I don't ask you to give me exact numbers, but approximately how many of the projects that have been approved have come from individuals in the community?

Wray: In my four years of being in this position that has never happened. I would have to defer to Mr. Murphy for ...

Pedroza: I kind of suspected that.

Wray: For any further, his experience of this ...

Pedroza: Sure.
Wray: Goes much further back than mine.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councillor Pedroza. As for a direct citizen suggestion right onto the TIP, I'd have to say probably not, but ...

Pedroza: I see.

Murphy: I do believe that a lot of the projects that kind of start out, that get into the MTP, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are suggested during our public input process.

Pedroza: I see.

Murphy: The City or the State or the County or Town staff see those projects in the Long-Range Plan and they begin working on them, and it ultimately gets funded. So you know it's never as direct as it's laid out. I think it gets laid out in the Federal Regulations to allow it to be that direct but from a practical standpoint, you know public involvement takes a little bit longer.

Pedroza: Okay. All right. Thank you very much. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Any other questions on this discussion item? Thank you Andrew.

7.2 NMDOT Update

Sorg: Next is the NMDOT update. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Thank you Mr. Chair. Just real briefly I've got three projects that I wanted to give updates on.

The US-70 pavement preservation from Aguirre Springs to the county line is completed with the exception of our final application of stripe.

We do have the one over the pass for the bicycle, the continuation of the bicycle route that I mentioned last month. We're still in the preliminary stages of contract awards. I don't have any further information on that one other than we do have a tentative contractor I guess for that project.

The next one I wanted to briefly talk about was the Spitz/Three Crosses. Those of you that have driven through there know that we're moving dirt and tearing up the roadway. In all reality I know that we've had some congestion there but it seems like a lot of people are finding ways around it or they're being very patient getting through that project. It's actually flowing much better than I think any of us could've expected, at least this early on in the project. So I'm glad to see people are respecting the traffic control and the speed through there and finding other
ways through it. But we are continuing to have our monthly public
meetings. Our next one will be on May 18th at our Solano project office
and we're trying to do those on every third Thursday of the month but I'll
continue to update this Board each month on when those meetings are in
case we have to move them. Again that project is slated for a one-year
contract time. But I'll continue to provide updates on timeline as we move
into the project. We're just real early on and it's just a lot of utility
coordination beginning to prepare for storm drain and utility work that the
City is participating in. So we're real early stages of that project but at
least we're real happy with the way it's starting off.

The next one is just an early notice for a project that we have
coming. We're putting in the signal at 17th and Picacho. The contractor is
scheduled to be on site starting on Monday but they're going to be doing
their sub-service utility work. So basically they are doing potholing to
make sure that we're not going to impact utilities or have conflicts with the
signals that are coming in. They won't actually start any kind of work until
probably within the next three weeks. We have our pre-con next week so
we'll have a better idea of their schedule. But again the intent of that one
is not to start until school is out. That way we're not impacting the school
buses. And those are the only three projects I have at this point that's
taking place in the area. And I'll stand for any questions.

Sorg: Mr. Doolittle. The public meeting on the 18th of May, what time and day
would that be?

Doolittle: I'll have to find out. I think they're at 6:00.

Sorg: Sounds about right.

Doolittle: I thought I had one in my calendar that I could look back at the date, but I
do not. Yes I do, 6:00.

Sorg: Very good. Thank you. Any questions for the DOT? Yes Mr. Eakman.

Eakman: Mr. Chair. I wonder if there's some program we could put together to
assist the NMDOT and our own local economy by educating our local
contractors on how they can better receive contracts with NMDOT rather
than big projects go out of the area and that thing. I wonder if there's
some way we could power up on an education program for our local
contractors so they're more able to win competitive projects. Yes, a level
playing field but is there a way we could educate them to step up on some
of these?

Sorg: Thank you.
Doolittle: If I may Mr. Chair. We have had some of our local contractors be prime. Smith and Aguirre's one that comes to mind. It frequently bids on a lot of our urban projects. For the majority of the work that we're doing, they are New Mexico contractors but I will tell you that a lot of our local contractors are subs to the bigger primes who tend to manage. La Calerita is actually out of Las Cruces and they do a lot of our bridge projects. Toby Villalobos is the owner and he actually lives just east of town. So we have seen a lot of our contractors, maybe not necessarily being prime but several of our local, Sandoval Construction that bid the North Main project is local to the community. So if they're not prime they are doing a lot of work as subs. The thing that I tend to notice is a lot of the bigger projects like this are very difficult to manage when it comes to your subcontractors, the media and the public interactions and sometimes our local contractors aren't equipped or don't have the knowledge and expertise to necessarily do those things. It just kind of depends on the project and the scope. But I would say in general on every project we see our local contractors working in some capacity on those projects themselves.

Eakman: I appreciate that answer. I wonder if we could discuss this you know at a future meeting, maybe at the next meeting because all of us might come up with some ideas on how we can improve and have more of our people down here working. Thank you.

Pedroza: Mr. Chairman.

Sorg: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you. On that very question, yesterday I attended a Small Business Association presentation at Arrowhead Park and it was very very informative. And I think that they teach local people who are interested in becoming, they pretty much they hold their hand and take them through the whole process of where do they go, what is a business plan, what tax documents are required, etc., etc., etc. So in the future if we wanted to have them come and do some sort of a presentation, that might be very very good. Thank you.

Sorg: Any others?

Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Thank you Mr. Chair. I just want to thank NMDOT for the TAP award. We did receive our letter for design and construction for the multi-use path from La Llorona to Calle del Norte and we're sincerely grateful for that. It's over $600,000 and the Town within the two years come up a match. But
it's a project that we had been discussing and had been prioritized and I just want to say thank you so much for that award. And just one other small comment to DOT. If it was possible that on the exit from the interstate coming from Deming, I always get 25 and 10 confused, I think it's 10, I think it's 10. I have to think of terms of miles. The clearing of the weeds on the exit as you're coming to the stop sign, once you exit to La Mesilla or Motel Boulevard, if there was any way we could clean that up and present a nice clean landscaping I guess when tourists come into our community. So again thank you so much.

Sorg: Thank you Mayor. Any other questions or comments? If not.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Sorg: We'll move on to other comments. Staff or Committee?

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. In addition to the Town of Mesilla's award, the Las Cruces Public Schools was also awarded TAP funds with this cycle for the continuation of the Safe Routes to School program, so we're very pleased about that. Additionally, MPO staff is pleased to announce that the 2016 Traffic Flow Map is ready. It's been published. It's available on the MPO website. Hard copies will be ready to go out to the jurisdictions very very shortly. We're printing them right now.

Also lastly, I did want to note with relation to the amendment requested by Mr. Bartholomew, on page 31 in your packet, and I apologize, I don't know why the page number printed out so tiny on that page. I don't understand it. But Mr. Bartholomew does note that the increased operations is coming out of the Capital Transfer. So that's why capital is being reduced. Mr. Murphy also informed me that the nature of the operational changes are going to be discussed at impending Transit Advisory Board meetings. So that'll be the source for further information on that.

Sorg: Thank you. I'll be there. Appreciate that. Any other comments by the Committee?

Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Thank you Mr. Chair. I just want to thank, an extra thanks to the staff from the MPO. They coordinate, they are organized, and they do everything they can to assist the different agencies and my hat off to the staff at the MPO. Thank you all so much. Very informative.
Sorg: Very good. Thank you too. If there's no further comments by the Committee or staff.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sorg: We'll go to the large public that is presented here today. Seeing no hands in the air.

10. ADJOURNMENT (2:03 PM)

Sorg: We'll move on to adjournment. Is there a motion to adjourn?

Barraza: Mr. Chair. I make a motion we adjourn.

Eakman: Second.

Sorg: Okay. It's been moved and seconded to adjourn. All in favor say "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Sorg: Opposed? Then we are adjourned.

Chairperson