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 June 14, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Carlos Arzabal (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner John Vasquez (DAC)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary
David Armijo, SCRTD

1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (1:00 PM)

Flores: Okay so it's 1:00 and it looks like we have a quorum so I'm going to call the meeting to order and we'll start with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Flores: Okay so we'll start off with the conflict of interest inquiry. Does any Member have any known or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda? If so that Committee Member may recuse themselves from voting on a specific matter or if they feel that they can be impartial we will put their participation up to a vote by the rest of the Committee.

Pedroza: No conflict.

Flores: Okay. Seeing none.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Flores: We'll move on to public comment. Is there anyone in the public that would like to make a comment at this time? No? Okay.

4. CONSENT AGENDA *

Flores: So then we'll move on to the consent agenda. Do I hear a motion to pass the consent agenda?

Eakman: I would move approval.

Flores: Move to approve.

Sorg: Second.

Flores: Wait, who seconded? Who moved then? I'm sorry.

Sorg: Second.

Flores: I'm, then, was that, okay. So that was Councillor Eakman and was the, moved and the second was Councillor Sorg. Okay shall we vote on this?

Wray: Commissioner Rawson.

Rawson: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Eakman.
Eakman: Yes.

Wray: Madam Chair.

Flores: I'm going to abstain since I wasn't here.

MOTION PASSES.

Flores: So it looks like that was approved.

5. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 * May 10, 2017

- VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 17-07: A Resolution Amending the 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Flores: And then we'll move on to action items, 6.1: Resolution 17-07: A Resolution Adopting the 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. I would like to direct the attention of the Committee to page 22 of the packet where Exhibit A for this resolution begins. That's where the actual TIP information is contained. I'll allow the Committee to continue to review that.

Just a brief background, again the Transportation Improvement Program is the short-range fiscally-constrained list of projects within the MPO area. Federal law requires that the TIP cover four years of future funding. The State of New Mexico requires an additional two out-years, which is why that you'll see on your TIP document a total of six years listed in the TIP. The MPO is required to publicize a call for projects every two years although projects can be suggested by individuals or jurisdictions throughout, anytime during the course of the TIP. For the Federal Fiscal Year 2018-2023 TIP, which is the TIP that is before you today, MPO staff began the call for projects on October 14th of last year. The deadline for that call was December 16, 2016. Subsequently the MPO did an additional call for projects commencing on January 12th and then concluding on February 24th. After the deadline the MPO staff worked in coordination with NMDOT to identify funding sources. I do want to mention at this time that subsequent to the second closing of the open call for projects, the New Mexico Department of Transportation awarded the Town of Mesilla and Las Cruces Public Schools transportation
alternatives program funding. These projects have been added to the draft that is before you today. Those projects are the Safe Routes to School Coordinator position and the trail along Calle del Norte in Town of Mesilla.

Public comment for this TIP commenced at the May 4th meeting of the TAC which gave us the full 30 days, actually a little bit over at this point required by the Public Participation Plan. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee recommended approval of this TIP to the Policy Committee at their May 16th meeting and the Technical Advisory Committee recommended approval to the Policy Committee at their June 1st meeting. And so MPO staff requests that the Policy Committee approve this TIP at this meeting.

Flores: Okay.

Eakman: Madam Chair.

Flores: So do we have a ...

Eakman: I have a question.

Flores: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Referring to record number 9 on page 26, the one you just commented on, Andrew.

Wray: Yes sir.

Eakman: Is this 100% salary for a position or positions?

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Eakman. It is not 100% salary. It is salary for the Coordinator position and also additional funding to support various programmatic activities carried out by the position. I don't have to hand a particular breakdown. I would have to direct anyone who's interested in the direction of speaking to the actual Coordinator herself, her name is Ms. Ashleigh Curry, for the specific breakdown of how the funding is utilized.

Eakman: I appreciate that answer. We've had reports from that individual at City Council. I was not aware that this was a salaried position. Thank you.

Wray: And there is one other thing that I should've mentioned in my previous comment. The full $92,000 that was done in one year as one lump sum by NMDOT for their own record-keeping purposes. The intent of this is that it's going to be broken in half and half of it spent in 2018 and then the other half spent in 2019 so that the program will be covered for the first
two fiscal years of this TIP, at which point because of the way the TAP
funding works it’s only a two-year grant so in order for the program to
continue to be funded from TAP funding in Fiscal Year ’19 Las Cruces
Public Schools will need to reapply for the money.

Eakman: Thank you.

Flores: Okay. Do we have any other questions?

Sorg: Yes.

Flores: Just before Mr. Sorg goes, I would like to just say that Mayor Barraza has
entered the room. Welcome. And go ahead Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you Madam Chair. I have multiple questions on these TIPs. Let's
begin at the beginning. Number uno, one: Various City of Las Cruces
streets. Explain.

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. I do not have a list. In fact I have never
seen a list of the specific railroad crossings. I presume that the intention is
to do safety upgrades to all of them that are within the City of Las Cruces
but I have never actually seen a list. This is just the funding request that
was given to me by the New Mexico Department of Transportation. I don't
know whether Mr. Doolittle might have a further insight as to that but I do
not know which specific streets are being examined for this project.

Sorg: Okay. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. This is a program that's managed out of the General
Office, out of the Transit Bureau, or the Transit and Rail Bureau. I don't
have that information but I'll certainly get that and then I'll forward it over to
Andrew for distribution to the Board.

Sorg: Yeah. I don't think you can answer my real question here, is "How do you
choose?" Unless you know what the requirements or things that you need
to have to replace a railroad crossing, do you know that off the top of your
head?

Doolittle: My experience has been that either the entities have requested
improvements, so for instance Hatch recently requested some
improvements to a railroad crossing within their limits. We've also had
locations where the railroad themselves have noticed necessary
improvements and they've applied for the funding through the Transit and
Rail Bureau.

Sorg: Okay.
Doolittle: Other than that those are my only two experiences.

Sorg: Well I'm wondering if we could have some kind of relief for a bike and walking trail that crosses the railroad tracks, if that could be added to the list of various City of Las Cruces streets, have the bike trail that is the outfall channel added to that. If it hasn't been done before, a study to determine what kind if any possible bridges across there, or crossings I should say of the railroad tracks on that trail. Secondly, is the US-70 Elks to Del Rey, number three I think it is, it says "bridge and pavement preservation and ADA improvement." I don't understand this. This is a brand-new street, it's a brand-new bridge. What are we doing there?

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. I believe this is not the bridge itself. I believe this is the stretch of roadway between Elks and the beginning point of the bridge, but again Mr. Doolittle would be able to provide further information. He's nodding his head "yes."

Sorg: Okay. Thank you.

Doolittle: Yes, Councillor Sorg. Andrew's right. This is a pavement preservation between Elks and the interchange itself. We also do routine maintenance on those structures so we'll do an epoxy overlay to reseal the bridges to keep moisture from getting into the bridge decking themselves. So the bridge preservation that you're seeing on here is just our routine maintenance program. We're doing it at the same time as we're doing the repaving of the ramps they will be closed so that will allow the bridge repairs to take place at the same time that those ramps are being worked on.

Sorg: What ramps?

Doolittle: All of the ramps at the I-25/US-70 interchange.

Sorg: Oh, okay. All the way in the MPO area. All right.

Doolittle: This project is basically going to the Del Rey intersection but it won't include, those limits are incorporated so that we could do the repair work on the ramps themselves.

Sorg: Well I don't know if anybody in this room has traveled on that underpass from Elks to Del Rey. I've done it many times. I couldn't help but notice that something happened to the pavement shortly after it was done, it's a very new street, that made it extremely rough. And yet under the bridge there was no damage to the roadway there. Could I have an explanation
of what happened to that part of that street that made it rough? Do you know?

Doolittle: The frontage road system or Del Rey itself?

Sorg: Engler. Engler, as it goes from Elks to Del Rey, as you approach the underpass it's really rough and under the underpass it's like new, and then you get on the other side of the underpass it's rough again. It's as if the weather or sun or something made the pavement deteriorate, I don't know how to describe it but it's just extremely rough. It's not like the rest of the street underneath the underpass. Do you know that? Have you seen that, experienced it? And if that can't be answered that's okay. I also wanted to mention the fact that I just heard from our Public Works Department that the Public Works Department is going to repave that, or not repave it but put a new surface on that street. So are we doing this twice or is this the same project?

Doolittle: Engler is separate from this one. This one is US-70 basically from Elks to the Del Rey intersection. Engler …

Sorg: Okay. Engler is separate.

Doolittle: Is further north and that's a, that is a City roadway.

Sorg: Yeah, okay. Thank you. But you don't know what happened because I know the DOT did put down the street in the first place. You don't know.

Doolittle: That's correct. We did the initial construction but honestly I haven't been out there …

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: To monitor the condition.

Sorg: All right. That's fine. So it's going to have pavement replacement. The reason I saw Elks to Del Rey, it doesn't seem to describe it right there, because Elks is on the west side of I-25, Del Rey's on the east side.

Doolittle: And that's correct. It's just that, basically that small section of pavement from the intersection at Elks to the off-ramp at Del Rey, to include all of the pavement and bridges at the I-25 …

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: US-70 …
Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: Interchange.

Sorg: I understand. Thank you. That makes sense. Now on the Roadrunner, there's several pieces here, several ones here and I understand No. 4 is transit operations, that's clear. But the next two, 5 and 6 show capital equipment and rolling stock. Could you describe that capital equipment? What is that?

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. Capital equipment is things like buildings, structures that are going to have a longer-standing duration. The revenue rolling stock is the buses themselves.

Sorg: Buses, yeah. Okay.

Wray: So that's the difference.

Sorg: You know what the project is for the capital equipment?

Wray: I do not know what Mr. Bartholomew's intentions are.

Sorg: Okay. Do you know what buses are going to be bought with these two, rolling stock and number eight, two different rolling stock?

Wray: The difference between the two different rolling stocks is that in the most recent federal transportation bill the funding category of, let's see here, 5339 and what is the other funding category, actually don't have it listed here unfortunately it does not, oh, there it is, 5307. The match amounts were changed by the federal government and the reason why it's now split out within our database is due to the quirks of the database itself. I'm unable to successfully export files out of Access and up to the New Mexico Department of Transportation STIP office in Santa Fe if within one project there are multiple match amounts. The export does not work properly. It creates errors and can't be accepted, so that's the reason why we now have two revenue rolling stock, because one of them is 5339 and the other one is 5307 and they have different match amounts and they can't be together anymore.

Sorg: I see. They're to buy two different buses maybe, or ...

Wray: Well, presumably. I don't know what specific equipment Mr. Bartholomew's thinking of replacing but ...

Sorg: Okay. I ...
Wray: That's the reason why they're split now.

Sorg: I requested with him a long time ago, or not so long ago maybe that our next purchase of a bus would be the electric bus. And I was just wondering if one of these is that. You don't know though.

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. Mr. Murphy before he left on vacation signed a letter of support to the Federal Transit Administration regarding securing funding to purchase an electric bus. So my saying that does not in any means ...

Sorg: Yeah.

Wray: Imply that it's a done deal but I know for a fact that Mr. Bartholomew is working in that direction.

Sorg: Okay. I got in this too late for this TIP but I would like to put in a request for TIP's in the next TIP, and that is that we explore the possibilities of extending Engler Drive down to Valley Drive. That's part of our MPO Master Plan or long-range plan.

Wray: The MTP, yes.

Sorg: Yes. I think that's going to be important when it comes to the future. I know it's going to take a lot, many years to get that completed because there's a lot of right-of-way to be obtained. And so it's going to be, I just think we need to start looking at that as a project that needs to be done in the future when we can do it. Thank you Madam Chair.

Wray: Councillor Sorg. The MTP public involvement process is going to begin next year so I'll make a note of that and we will make sure that that project becomes a part of the MTP process discussion when it begins.

Sorg: Thank you very much Andrew. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: Anyone else? Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Thank you Madam Chair. I just would like to ask Andrew if on the TIP, the projects that are listed in this TIP for the resolution for our approval, normally do you, I mean are requests sent to your office and then you all prioritize and then bring it to the MPO? How exactly does that work?

Wray: Madam Chair, Mayor Barraza. There isn't really a prioritization process that takes place any longer. I know historically, and this is going back a ways, we did used to do one but the fact of the matter is that there really is not nearly as much federal money available, up for grabs as it were as
there used to be. So effectively what has happened is that the projects that get in the TIP are the ones that guaranteed the funding. There's not really so much of a prioritization process that goes on. If a project has the funding behind it, then it goes onto the TIP. Now if a jurisdiction or an individual happens to come to us with a project then we will obviously work with them to determine if funding is secured and available etc. etc. before we would bring such a project through the advisory committees and ultimately to the Policy Committee for approval. So there is definitely a vetting process that happens but at this stage of how federal dollars work I wouldn't describe it as a prioritization process any longer.

Barraza: Okay. Thank you. So to follow up on that question, Madam Chair if I may ask Mr. Armijo who is the Director of the SCRTD if the RTD applied for any of this TIP funding?

Armijo: Actually the answer's no. This TIP funding within the urbanized area would not qualify us for it. We're in the rural area so we're kind of outside of that, so we're utilizing 5311 which is rural funds. These are urbanized funds that we're talking about here today.

I also want to make comment on the issue of funding. One of the reasons funding is so tight for bus capital is about three years ago the Congress withdrew all bus capital funding for most of these categories and so that's limited the number of dollars. So now what's happening is the funds that normally you would get for the urbanized area which is the 5307, that's based on your population, just real simple numbers and your ridership, and that's what you have for the service area. So the 5307 is identified for the urbanized area, and so now what's happening without those bus capital funds it's making the localized area have less funds available. And just so you'll know the reason for that was for the New Starts, which is the big urban projects that New York and Chicago and Denver and so on are getting are now sucking away all the money out of the states that depend more on 5307 or now 5311. So that's a political game that someday we might want to talk to our Congressman Pearce and see if he wants to take that project on. But I've been on a number of committees nationally, we've been trying to get that money back, so.

Barraza: Okay.

Armijo: Unfortunately you're limited to your 5339 and some years there's no money in that so this year I think there is some.

Barraza: Okay. Very good.

Armijo: Thank you.
Barraza: Thank you Mr. Armijo. And one more question Madam Chair to Andrew is were all the requests that were submitted, are they on this TIP or are there some projects that are not?

Wray: Madam Chair, Mayor Barraza. All of the projects that were finally submitted are on this TIP. Now I say finally submitted for a reason. There were two projects that were in the development stage that ultimately, and I in this capacity here I can't speculate as to why, but were withdrawn by the applying jurisdiction. There were two projects specifically. So all the ones that were submitted to the MPO in the end, by the deadline were included.

Barraza: Okay. Very good. And my last comment Madam Chair is I thank you for putting our multi-bike/pedestrian trail on this resolution for TIP and I just would like to ask all the Members of the Board for their support also on that project. So thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: Anyone else? No? Seeing none, are we ready to put this for a vote then?

Eakman: Madam Chair. I would move approval of this TIP.

Flores: Okay.

Barraza: Madam Chair. I second.

Flores: Okay. All right. We can have the vote.

Wray: Commissioner Rawson.

Rawson: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.
Wray: Councillor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Wray: Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Yes.

Wray: Madam Chair.

Flores: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Flores: Okay. So it looks like that was unanimous.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Committee Training: Public Transportation in MVMPO

Flores: And now we'll move to discussion items, 7.1: Committee Training: Public Transportation in the Mesilla Valley MPO.

Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. At this time I would like to introduce Mr. Michael McAdams who will be giving this training.

McAdams: Good afternoon Members of the Policy Committee and Madam Chairman. It is my pleasure to be talking about public transportation. Many of you already know me at various meetings and I liaison between the MPO and various groups like Ocotillo and the Transit Advisory Board and the RTD meetings too. So those who don't, one of my primary purposes to liaison public transportation coordination and information. If you have any questions about public transit I'd be glad to answer them. If I don't know the answer I'll find them from various sources. Just consider me a one-stop, like information, I'd be glad to act like that. I could also contact exactly the transit managers. We do have one, David Armijo's already here. And he's from SCRTD. I invited others but they're busy right now so you have any further questions about RTD he can answer them too.

So let's just go ahead and briefly, some of you know about all this stuff already but I think it's a good way to sort of introduce him and for some that are not as aware of public transportation I bring some details and those that are, that's sort of review. And I think this is the first time we've ever had a presentation like this. We can talk about all the transit systems together. And so if you have any questions while I go along please don't hesitate to interrupt me.
Benefits of public transportation: Enables those who have limited mobility to acquire and keep jobs. It gives greater access to shopping areas, medical facilities, and educational institutions for those with mobility limitations. Communities with high-quality public transportation tend to drive significantly less and rely on alternative modes. It saves energy and decreases vehicular pollution, and directly in economic benefits are the transit employees and systems buy local goods and services.

The funding which you see in transit can be very complicated and confusing, but not only people, for the Policy Committee but also for the staff so join the club. But basically you have two types of expenses; one is capital which is basically, it could also be equipment etc. and buildings, but basically buses, parks, rail lines, and facilities. Operating is like drivers, maintenance, administration salaries, etc., fuel. Funding sources: The main funding source are from the Federal Transit Administration. Now within there's two types of funding source; one is operating which is 50/50; 50 for the federal, 50 local. The other's capital funds which is 83 and it can vary for kinds of locality but ours is 83 federal and 70% local. Any entity can also have more local support if they want to but it's not restricted to just match. You can also have state funding thereby grabbing advertising, local match, and also paying for the services, social service agencies, educational institutions, and private companies. So for example, DACC helps support Route 2 and they actually have their own separate routes before the new routes, and also, trying to think of some other things. Some directly operate through nonprofit agencies and a variety of things like that. Also NMSU, the RoadRUNNER provide for free transportation to NMSU students. Some RTDs actually contract for Medicaid, providing social service as well.

Public transportation can be a public good similar to education, roads, utilities, fire, and police.

Public transportation is an integral part of the transportation system of the county, providing mobility for a diverse group of its population. And here's some of the logos, but we also we know this so to identify as well, and a little bit of color in the demonstration too. South Central Regional Transit District, Ztrans which is also connected to SCRTD, RoadRUNNER Transit, and also the New Mexico DOT Park and Ride.

And here is the network. You can see it's quite complex and with all the routes. When you see like routes and spheres that means there are two routes on the same route. So you see we have, we'll explain some of these later but it's kind of an overview of the entire system serving the area.

RoadRUNNER Transit, and we're all familiar with that hopefully, serves the City of Las Cruces, Town of Mesilla, and the Las Cruces urbanized area. In fact really the goal is for the RoadRUNNER to serve the urbanized area. It is a division of the City of Las Cruces in the Quality of Life Department. It's funded by FTA and local monies. The governing body is the City of Las Cruces City Council and for your information you
just contact, if you need this slide you'll be glad to get, these are readily
available if you need further questions.

Barraza: Madam Chair can I just clarify something?

McAdams: Sure.

Barraza: Mr. McAdams. I just want to point out that the Town of Mesilla, it does
service the Town of Mesilla but we have an MOU with the City of Las
Cruces where we pay a fee for the service to come into our community.

McAdams: That's correct.

Barraza: Okay.

McAdams: And of course I knew, but I'm glad you mentioned that. Thank you. And
so the system, you probably, most of you are familiar with this system and
you see it covers almost all of the City of Las Cruces with some gaps. We
do a buffering but that's so simplistic, if you need further information of
course you can get routes, we can actually supply and you can have GIS
still available or .pdf or any type of actual physical maps if you need that.

The other component of our transportation, another is the DOT
Park and Ride. The DOT Park and Ride serves communities in the Las
Cruces area and El Paso. It has two routes, one serving Las Cruces and
El Paso called the Gold Route and the other serving Las Cruces and
White Sands Missile Range, the Silver Route. They are contracted by the
DOT and public charter company and the governing board is actually the
DOT. So there's their telephone and their web address if you need further
information too as well. And there's their route, you can see that it
connects with the El Paso system downtown and one other stop near
Anthony, and then goes up to Las Cruces, goes to the Move It Center and
also some other points where you can get off too as well including NMSU.
And then the other route, of course the Silver Route going up to White
Missile Range, primarily servicing that and not anything else.

Ztrans is a coordinator with South Central Regional Transit, I had a,
one back, SCRTD serves residents in Dona Ana County. Ztrans and the
other partner in this area is autonomous public transportation provider that
serves the Alamogordo area and has a route serving Las Cruces.

SCRTD has four fixed routes: The Red Route, the Blue Route, the
Purple Route, and the Turquoise Route. And it's funded by FTA,
membership dues from members of the RTD, and local jurisdictions. The
governing body is the SCRTD Board composed of representatives from
local jurisdictions. And there's their phone and the web address too.

Ztrans is a coordinating, in fact they come to all the RTD meetings
too but they're separated from RTD. It's actually Ztrans (Zia Therapy) is a
public transportation provider that serves the Alamogordo area and is a
fixed route serving Las Cruces with stops at the Move It Center and Dona Ana Community College East Mesa Campus, and NMSU. It is a paratransit service in the Alamogordo area but not in our service area. Ztrans is funded by multiple funding sources. It’s funded by the FTA and local funding. SCRTD supplies the match for operating funds for the route going from Alamogordo to Las Cruces. Ztrans operates under the authority of Zia Therapy which is a nonprofit social service agency. This is one of the services they provide. There’s the contact information and Joe Hardin, I hoped he would be here but he’s not here, would be your contact information with Zia Transit.

And here is the routes for both South Central RTD and Ztrans. I thought it would be good to combine them because they are coordinated routes and you can see that the various routes and where they go. What the real success and to David’s credit is that they have now connected to El Paso at three different locations, Anthony, the north side and the west side and those are very valuable I think.

The integration of the transit systems is not just accidental. It’s happening on purpose. Each of the systems in the counties are integrated and mutually coordinated in this service area. The primary transfer point for all systems is the Move It Center where passengers are able to transfer from one system to another. SCRTD and NMDOT Park and Ride have transfer points in the lower part of the County and El Paso County that allow passengers going to and from the El Paso area to transfer between the systems. Each system serves different areas with varying needs. For example if you’re in the lower part of Dona Ana County, your needs are to get to jobs and educational institutions, perhaps in El Paso or to avail yourself to medical institutions which is very important. They didn’t have that before. If you’re in the City of Las Cruces of course your needs will be different: Local jobs, medical facilities in the area. And of course Ztrans is bringing a lot of people down from their area to DACC, NMSU, so different needs for different areas.

There’s a lot of stuff going on right now in transit, whether it’s the Active Transportation Plan which was recently approved by City Council. There’s a transit component there too. RoadRUNNER Stop Study with focus on ADA compliance is ongoing. We did the app, I think we talked about that before, we created app so we can do inventory and now RoadRUNNER Transit is extending that to actually look at more ADA compliance components. Monitoring RoadRUNNER stops and boarding and lighting for daily operations. We’re in the process of acquiring software, we can better analyze ridership by stop and hopefully the goal is to create a different level of higher data collection. Develop performance standards for public transportation providers. We’ve already started that, to certainly look at passengers per hour and it will become more so as the FHWA and FTA ask for performance standards. Smart Fare System. I had just talked a couple of days ago about this with DOT reps up in Santa Fe. This’ll be like a chip or something that people can transfer easily or to
buy fares more easily. Purchase of electric buses by RoadRUNNER Transit. We know that's ongoing and I think that would be a great thing but again there's complications in that funding too as well about how we're going to do it. We're also looking at revision of two routes by RoadRUNNER Transit which would be 8 which is basically doing very well serving a lot of people, to divide that into two routes and 8 will be varied. The updated five-year service plan for SCRTD which is now ongoing. The commuter rail study, the El Paso/Las Cruces which is also going. These are through SCRTD. And next year we'll be looking at the RoadRUNNER Long-Range Transit Plan. So we're very busy. I'm very busy too. Madam Chair and Committee Members, do you have any questions? I'd be glad to answer them.

Flores: Let's see, oh, is that Councillor, okay.

Solis: Madam Chair. I just have a question. Is there any way we can get a copy of those slides? I think you mentioned that earlier, right?

McAdams: Madam Chair. I'll be glad to do that.

Flores: Okay.

Solis: Thank you.

Flores: What about Councillor Eakman now? Did you have a question? Okay.

Eakman: Thank you Mr. McAdams. I requested this update so that I could better understand the role and responsibility of this Board as it deals with these transit things, and specifically I'm wondering what our authority and responsibility is when it comes to transit. What say do we have, what responsibility do we have? All of these things came up, it looks like staff is actively working on it, but we seem to have no involvement here in policy. So I'm just, I asked for this very much to know what our responsibilities are so I can feel more at ease in what I'm doing up here. Thank you.

McAdams: Madam Chair, Councillor Eakman. We do, one of, there's two different divisions. We're right abutting to the El Paso MPO. We don't have any jurisdiction in planning. We can coordinate but we don't have any authority. And that goes both ways. They can't have any authority over us as well. But then transit for the Las Cruces urbanized area we can just possibly identify funding like we did right now and ask questions where the money's coming from. But there's a variety of ways you can do this, through the TAB or directly with the City Council for RoadRUNNER. As far as SCRTD, that's sort of under our jurisdiction but not really because we don't control the funds. But in addition, and before you with the Short-Range Transit Plan, under the authority of the Policy Committee going to
direct us to do plans with the amount of money, you know we've been cut recently so we, but a lot of stuff we can do under the authority of your authority and so if you have any plans you'd like to do we'd be more than happy to do this for. So the real power of the Policy Committee is to funding approval and questioning where that funding's coming from and (inaudible) to direct staff with studies. Some of the studies we have are not exclusive to the RoadRUNNER in the urbanized area but also involve coordination as well because we also cover the Town of Mesilla. So any kind of study we do will always be regionally-oriented. Did that answer your question Madam Chair?

Eakman: It leads to more questions because it seems like we're approving funding for these things without knowing what the projects are. And so that leaves me at a loss, and perhaps everybody else feels very comfortable with it but I'm wondering, myself.

McAdams: Madam Chair, Councillor Eakman. I can understand your confusion. The situation with buses when they're bought and where they're replaced is a really complicated situation. I wish Mike Bartholomew was here to explain them. Yes, you can do them, a lot of what's on there's perfunctory. We are not expanding as a rule, maybe one or two. Most of them are replacements. Those are based on 12 years replacement value and then you have replacement. But the transit funding as we know can be extremely complicated and extremely bureaucratic which I don't think we have any time to discuss that. Mike would be glad to discuss how that's done. But yes, you do have a right to understand why buses are replaced in the operating funds but Mike Bartholomew would be glad to address this for the Policy Committee if you'd like to know. We can also address it during the TAB Committee as well. But a lot of it's like any kind of money for operating funds is like we're at the max. Actually, we don't have any additional funds. It's capital funds, is basically replacement of buses based on federal conditions. What the Federal Government is doing is requiring that all systems have an Asset Management Report which Mike Bartholomew's developing, and I think that would be a clearer picture about how many buses we have, what the age of the bus is and when it should be replaced, and also look at expansion too. That's being mandated with the Federal Government and I also would like to see that. I have a list of buses and their ages but I think probably the best as far as really detailed analysis if you'd like that, Mike Bartholomew would be glad to discuss and also RTD and Ztrans would be glad to discuss these. But it is, it actually is confusing for staff. It's confusing sometimes for people who are directly involved in funding. I'm sure those who are, that's not their primary job are also confused. But just be aware it is a very detailed, but it doesn't excuse any kind of, that shouldn't excuse from not saying anything, all right. But I'm glad, if you'd like to discuss at a future meeting Mike would be very glad to explain how that funding's derived for your
purposes. And I agree with you. It’s not right for the Policy Committee to vote on things that they have really no knowledge, and that’s your role as politicians and we respect that role.

Eakman: And if I might I would like to move a little further up the food chain and when buses should be replaced or things of that nature, I see all the routes, systems ...

McAdams: Yes sir.

Eakman: And the people movement and the needs of people to move and things like that, and where is that centralized, coordinated in the decision-making take place?

McAdams: It’s kind of decentralized because as far as the plan for the RoadRUNNER, every five years we’re required to do a Transit Plan. We can do sub-studies, that’s a major plan to look at the bus system. We also can do system revision. We’re already involved right now in looking at the bus system too. And under the TAB and also the City Council you can direct Mike Bartholomew to do that as well. So it’s very, we can do it as a study for the general region but you can also request it through the City Council as well as far as more specification, maybe a different planning study, anything you’d like I think. It’s your purview to do that.

Eakman: Thank you.

McAdams: But I understand your confusion. It is something that’s always plagued Transit. It was worse, actually. They had three tiers when I first started doing transit stuff and nobody understood it. It was really a bureaucratic mess. The only people that really understood it were the transit planners who worked all the time in capital funding. So your confusion is well-regarded and understandable if that helps you some. But it can be explained. I would be glad to bring Mike up to explain those processes too.

Eakman: I really appreciate this and my confusion is not so much my confusion, it’s a system confusion. It seems to me like we don’t have a system in place and instead we have quite a few different actions and intentions going on at the same time. So I don’t know if the MPO has the authority over this or where it lies. But we are all elected officials up here trying to do our best to serve our different areas and things like that. So I don’t know, Madam Chair, I’ll leave it up to the rest of the group here but I’m wondering if we should have a discussion sometime about what our role and responsibility is on this very important topic for our population. I’ll leave it there. Thank you.
Flores: Do I have any other comments?

Pedroza: Madam Chair.

Flores: Olga Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you Madam Chair. I'm going to say I totally agree with Councillor Eakman. I think that it's a very important topic because of all the benefits that it brings to the residents and to the environment and all of that. So I will probably urge my colleagues on the Council to ask Mr. Bartholomew to come, unless we want to have him come just exclusively to this group, to the MPO or to come to the Council and present some of the information that Councillor Eakman has been asking for. That's all very very, so thank you.

Flores: All right. Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Madam Chair. I just want to maybe suggest also that when Mr. Murphy returns or maybe for our next meeting, I don't think we're having a meeting in July, correct?

Flores: No.

Barraza: We'll go into August?

Wray: Madam Chair, Mayor Barraza. There is no Policy Committee in July.

Barraza: July, okay. So possibly in August that Mr. Murphy put together a presentation to address Councillor Eakman's concern about what the role of the Board is in relation to the questions that he was asking.

Flores: Okay.

McAdams: Madam Chair. We would be glad to do that.

Flores: Okay. So we'll ask that be put on the August agenda then. And do I have any other comments or questions?

7.2 NMDOT update

Flores: I think we can move along to New Mexico DOT updates. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Thank you Madam Chair. I only have two projects to give updates on this month. The Spitz/Three Crosses project, for those of you that haven't driven through there yet you're lucky and I would stay out of there. In all reality you know we're, I drove through there this afternoon on my way to
this meeting and there is a lot of traffic at that intersection. But for the
most part I think it's moving very well. I sat through the southbound or
westbound direction on North Main through two signal phases and it really
only took me two or three minutes. So for as much traffic as we have
there it's really working much better than even I expected. If you haven't
driven through there we're working on the big retaining wall there on the
northwest section of the project. It actually looks really nice, kind of
cleaning up that intersection a little bit, doing a lot of utility work that the
City of Las Cruces is funding to improve the City's water and gas portions
of that project, and then we're working on our storm drains. So right now
you're not seeing a whole lot of work up top because everything is down
underneath, but it's working real well. We do continue to have our monthly
public meetings and I'll be sure that those notices continue to be sent out,
and we are coordinating with our contractor on a weekly basis just to
make sure that things are working well at that level. We have had some
City staff participate in our weekly meetings just to make sure that that
coordination between businesses' access and that kind of information is
being shared. So in all reality it's a very complicated, very busy project,
but for just getting started I think it's working out very well.

The other one that we have ongoing that some of you may have
driven through on your way here is the 17th Street signal. RT Electric,
who actually has an office just right down the street from that intersection
is our contractor, currently working on the conduit, sidewalk, and the
turning lanes. The expectation is they'll have that project completed by
the time school starts so there shouldn't be any impacts to the bus system
itself, which is good. It'll improve safety for those buses coming in and out
at that intersection.

And right now those are the only two projects we have ongoing.
We do have a tentative low-bid contractor for the Organ Pass Safety
project which will widen shoulders to allow for continuation of the bicycle
route over the pass at Organ. But right now again that's preliminary, as
soon as we have notice of award and get a contract onboard and a
schedule I'll be able to provide more details. With that Madam Chair I'll
stand for any questions.

Flores: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you Madam Chair. Just a couple of things on this intersection. I
take it almost daily. The first one is as you are traveling from Spitz,
crossing Main Street onto Solano I notice there is no right turn lane there.
It just shows two lanes, one going straight and one going to the left. I
need an explanation for that because it doesn't seem to me that a person
who wants to turn right onto Main Street, it's a problem. Do you know
what that means there? People do it anyway. I see people turning there
to the right even though the arrow on the sign says straight ahead and
then the other lane for left turn.
Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. I'll have to check on that. A lot of times we'll restrict movements only because the turning templates don't allow, it's too sharp of a turn. So for instance if a truck was coming out of Albertson's, they couldn't make that turn. Do you recall, does it specifically say "No Right Turn" lane or is it ...

Sorg: Doesn't say "No Right Turn."

Doolittle: There's just not a designated ...

Sorg: It just doesn't, it has two lanes, one with the sign that says one is straight ahead and the other's left turn.

Doolittle: Okay. I'll check on that but a lot of times the restriction has to do with they don't meet the radiuses for a ...

Sorg: Yeah.

Doolittle: Turning template which you know they take those too short and start clipping devices and people and, but I'll certainly check on that one.

Sorg: Yeah. The cars that I see go through there make that turn real easily. That's why they do it I guess. But the other question I had was on the medians on Main Street, I noticed on the east side of the intersection there you took the medians out and paved them over. What's the plan for those medians there?

Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. Those medians will be used for crossing traffic. So when they get ready to do the utility work, for instance on the westbound side they'll move all of the traffic to two-way traffic on the eastbound lanes. So they ripped out the raised medians to allow for a detour crossover to be paved.

Sorg: I see. Ultimately what will they be?

Doolittle: They'll be ...

Sorg: At the finish?

Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. They'll revert back to what they were before. They'll ...

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: Be raised medians to divide for access control.
Sorg: Okay. And landscaped, I trust?

Doolittle: There is landscaping on this project. I don't recall specifically what is taking place in those medians.


Flores: Anyone else? Okay.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Flores: And we'll move on to Committee and staff comments. So do we have any more comments from staff?

Wray: Yes Madam Chair. I regret to say, it is my painful duty to inform the Policy Committee that we are having significant and sustained attendance problems on the part of the Technical Advisory Committee over the course of this year. Staff did a review of attendance by TAC numbers over the course of the last three years and there is in the MPO Bylaws a 75% mandatory committee attendance requirement. Nine seats, over half of the TAC is in violation of that requirement as of, over the course of the past three years. At the last meeting on June 1st staff gave a presentation to the TAC discussing this very issue, letting them know what the standard is as laid out in the Bylaws. We are hopeful that this will serve to mitigate and resolve this issue. I will say that at that particular meeting most of the TAC was in attendance. So they should have gotten the message. But Mr. Murphy did direct me to inform this Committee at this meeting that we are having this issue and that the current situation is not sustainable. We are going to have to either have improvement on the part of the jurisdictions representing on the TAC or we are going to have to do some rather substantial Bylaw amendments to sort of change kind of the way things work with regards to the Advisory Committee. As I said we are hopeful that this step will not be needed. We're going to be looking at, we're going to be very carefully watching TAC attendance over the course of the remainder of this year. If things improve then hopefully this'll be the last you'll ever have to hear us say about it. If things do not improve then probably by the end of this year MPO staff will be coming to this Committee with some recommended Bylaw changes, requesting you to intervene in this situation, so.

Moving on to a hopefully more positive topic, but I do want to announce to the Committee that specifically regarding the Calle del Norte Trail project for the Town of Mesilla, things are moving forward with that very quickly. We've got the orientation meetings scheduled for the 19th and 20th of July. I am working right now, coordinating with Town of Mesilla staff to determine, we do not have to attend both meetings but we have to attend one of them. It is mandatory. So I'm working with Town of
Mesilla staff so things are moving along very quickly. Hopefully, the start of the next fiscal year's October 1st and that's when the design portion of the money becomes available so hopefully in government terms, in a relatively brief amount of time we'll actually see some progress and some work going on out there.

And then lastly, this is the sort of bit of housekeeping that happens every June meeting, but this is the last meeting that we're having here at Dona Ana County for the Policy Committee. This body does not meet in July as was mentioned earlier in the meeting. The next meeting is in August and that will be held at the City Hall in the City Council Chambers. So those are the staff announcements. I'll stand now for any questions.

Flores: I just want to know what jurisdictions you're having problems with on the TAC so we can ...

Doolittle: Madam Chair. Mr. Murphy did specifically ask me at this meeting to not single people out at this time. He would prefer to kind of do more, follow more of a chain-of-command type of process of announcing it to the Committee as a whole and then if things continue to be a problem over the next couple of months to speak specifically to the individuals, and then to the jurisdiction that the Member represents, and then if there doesn't seem to be any improvement as a result of those two actions, at that point that would be when we would start serious work on a Bylaws change. That's why we're going to be taking our time, that's why we wouldn't be bringing anything back to this Committee until the end of this year or the first of next year, because we really do want to take some time and work with people and try to remedy this with as little pain for everyone involved as possible.

Flores: Okay. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Thank you Madam Chair. And Andrew, I know that serving on the El Paso MPO we had some similar issues with some of their Committees. And I don't recall, what are the repercussion for the TAC if they don't fulfill a 75%?

Wray: Currently the repercussion is eligibility for expulsion. That is a bit problematic. It's, I don't like putting it this way but I can't really think of a better way, it is easier to do to the BPAC for Citizen Representatives because they are just themselves and there is in theory a whole universe of eligible citizens who would be ready and willing to take the place on the BPAC. Whereas the Technical Advisory Committee is a wholly-staff endeavor. All of the positions, it's not necessarily, the seats are not occupied by individuals, they're occupied, the seats are given to jurisdictions. So it's a conundrum that we face of if we just theoretically had to expel a TAC Member, what would be stopping the jurisdiction from
just reappointing that Member back again? You’ve mentioned the El Paso situation. We have been looking very carefully at the El Paso MPO Bylaws as far as how they handle it. That was kind of our number-one stop as far as when we realized that we’re going to have to address this problem, that was the first place that we have looked. But I’ve also looked at the Bylaws of other MPOs around the state. So like I said, hopefully this’ll be the last that this Committee will have to hear about this but we have already started doing our research, so.

Doolittle: Madam Chair. If I may, I also hope that staff working with the TAC addresses that issue but just for the Board Members’ information one of the things that the El Paso MPO did was they basically take away the voting right from that position for that entire calendar year. And so that maybe not influenced the person or the position that was selected for that Committee, but the different entities understood the importance of that voting privilege and the authority that came with that vote. And so the upper management in those jurisdictions basically put more pressure on the people that were assigned to those voting positions to encourage participation. So again I hope, understanding my involvement with all of you and your different entities I think that it’ll be taken care of at that level. But my experience working with El Paso MPO is there are ways to encourage participation if it gets to that point, so thank you.

Flores: Thank you for that. Do we have any, Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: No, I just want to, Madam Chair. I want to reiterate what Mr. Doolittle just said and I think as Members of the Policy it’s going to be our responsibility to go back to our entities and ensure that our Members are participating. I know that is probably what I’m going to do when I leave the meeting today is to go and speak to our representative to the TAC and I know we have an alternate, and make sure that we are following through and we are committed to the Mesilla Valley MPO so we need to make sure that we have representation. And I just feel it’s our responsibility to go back to our entities and reassure the MPO that we all follow up on that.

And then my second comment is regarding the Trail. I guess as soon as you all find dates, if you can let us know because with the Town of Mesilla our match is like $82-83,000 so we are going to be putting that on our ICIP for this coming year and lobbying our legislators to assist us with some of the funding for that. So the sooner you all get the information to us the faster we can start acting on that. So thank you.

Wray: Yes Madam Chair, Madam Mayor. Yes, I’m presuming that that information will be exactly part of what’s going to be discussed at the meeting in July, that sort of really technical level of detail is going to be what’s going to be discussed.
Flores: So any other comments from the Committee?

Sorg: Yes.

Flores: Councillor Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you Madam Chair. I just have a comment and a quick question. I don’t know if the, well I’ll put it this way, if the Members of the Committee have been watching the national news and believe me I don’t watch much of it anymore, but there was one thing that the Federal Government has been talking about doing, threatening to do maybe, is to add more money into infrastructure in the United States. And so my question is, is this MPO and is DOT, and I’ll ask the City this too, is it ready in case monies from the Federal Government would come all of a sudden to use those monies in infrastructure improvement? I just want to be ready because as I recall it was, I’m counting the years now, I think it was nine years ago, could’ve been eight, but I think it was nine years ago that the ARRA was it, the American Recovery and, Act provided infrastructure money to all kinds of jurisdictions in the country and because the City had a couple three projects that were ready to go, shovel-ready as we call it, we got that money and it was a good thing. So I’m asking if our jurisdictions here are ready with a project or two that could go if the money comes.

Wray: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. I’m not speaking on behalf of any of the jurisdictions it needs to be understood, but speaking on behalf of the MPO is we have actually made pretty good progress for the most part through the near term projects that were spelled out in the 2015 MTP. The one thing that does leap to mind is something that was in that MTP that ultimately, at least as of right now has not happened was the A Mountain Study Area project. That funding was removed from us. As far as on-the-ground projects, we made very good progress through the project list that was in the MTP. I couldn’t speak any further on behalf of any jurisdiction as far as any project list for on their own behalf.

Sorg: Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: Were you with us when we went to El Paso? We were invited to, then we talked about their transit system and one of their shovel-ready projects. Did you attend that?

Sorg: I was there for a tour using the Sun Metro some time ago. Was that the same one you’re talking about?

Flores: I think so.

Sorg: I don’t think, is it?
Flores: Yeah.

Sorg: Okay.

Flores: Okay. Well, Mr. Doolittle you …

Doolittle: I'd just like to share, Madam Chair with the Board and with Councillor Sorg. You know I've come before this Board on a couple of occasions where we've had projects on the shelf and through redistribution where other districts weren't spending their money we're able to acquire some of that. Our district has been working with the South Central, Southern Region Design Center out of our Las Cruces office and we frequently have three or four projects on the shelf ready to go. I would tell you that we're working on pavement preservation projects for all of I-10. Those of you that have been on I-10, it's basically falling apart. So it's not necessarily for us focusing on the MPO area specifically but we typically have three or four projects ready to go, mostly because other districts aren't spending their money. But we could certainly spend, I think our preliminary estimates for the I-10 corridor are about $160 million so if you all don't have projects we'll certainly spend that money. Thank you Madam Chair.

Flores: All right. So anyone else?

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Flores: Then we'll move on to public comment. Anyone from the public would like to speak? And okay seeing none.

10. ADJOURNMENT (2:10 PM)

Flores: We'll move to adjournment. Thank you.