



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA

The following is the Agenda for a meeting of the Policy Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO) to be held **September 13, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.** in the in the **City of Las Cruces Council Chambers**, 700 North Main, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Meeting packets are available on the [Mesilla Valley MPO website](http://MesillaValleyMPO.org).

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1. **CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** _____ **Chair**
2. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY** _____ **Chair**
Does any Committee 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.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** _____ **Chair**
4. **CONSENT AGENDA*** _____ **Chair**
5. *** APPROVAL OF MINUTES** _____
5.1. *August 9, 2017 _____ **Chair**
6. **DISCUSSION ITEMS** _____
 - 6.1. NMDOT Safety Targets _____ **MPO Staff**
 - 6.2. Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles _____ **MPO Staff**
 - 6.3. BPAC recommendation on design standards _____ **MPO Staff**
 - 6.4. NMDOT update _____ **NMDOT Staff**
7. **COMMITTEE and STAFF COMMENTS** _____ **Chair**
8. **PUBLIC COMMENT** _____ **Chair**
9. **ADJOURNMENT** _____ **Chair**

1 **MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
2 **POLICY COMMITTEE**

3
4 The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning
5 Organization (MPO) Policy Committee which was held June 14, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in the
6 City of Las Cruces Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, New Mexico.
7

8
9 **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla) (arrived 1:08)
10 Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
11 Councillor Jack Eakman (CLC)
12 Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
13 Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC)
14 Commissioner Benjamin Rawson (DAC)
15 Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)
16

17 **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Isabella Solis (DAC)
18 Commissioner John Vasquez (DAC)
19

20 **STAFF PRESENT:** Tom Murphy (MPO staff)
21 Andrew Wray (MPO staff)
22 Michael McAdams (MPO staff)
23 Dominic Loya (MPO Staff)
24

25 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Dave Nelson
26 David Armijo
27 Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary
28

29 **1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (1:02 PM)**
30

31 Flores: All right. Just remind you to sign the sign-in sheet and we'll start with the
32 Pledge of Allegiance.
33

34 ALL STAND FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.
35

36 **2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY**
37

38 Flores: All right Moving to two. Does any Committee Member have any known or
39 perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda? If so, that
40 Committee Member may recuse themselves from voting on a specific
41 matter or if they feel that they can be impartial we will put their
42 participation up to a vote by the rest of the Committee. Okay. Seeing
43 none.
44

45 **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
46

1 Flores: We'll move to public comment. Is there anybody from the public that
2 would like to make a comment? Okay, I see people but nobody wanting to
3 make a comment.
4

5 **4. CONSENT AGENDA ***

6
7 Flores: We'll move to the consent agenda. Do I have a motion to approve?
8

9 Pedroza: So moved.
10

11 Flores: That's Pedroza. And seconded ...
12

13 Eakman: Seconded.
14

15 Flores: Councillor Eakman. Okay. All in favor.
16

17 MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
18

19 Flores: Okay. Anyone against? Okay.
20

21 **5. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22 **5.1 * June 14, 2017**

23
24
25 - VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA
26

27 **6. ACTION ITEMS**

28 29 **6.1 Resolution 17-08: A Resolution Amending the 2018-2023** 30 **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** 31

32 Flores: So we'll move on to action items. This is 6.1, Resolution 17-08: A
33 Resolution Amending the 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement
34 Program (TIP). Can I get a motion?
35

36 Sorg: Move to approve.
37

38 Eakman: Second.
39

40 Flores: All right. From now on can we state our names when we're making
41 motions just to make it easier for the recorder? So that motion was ...
42

43 Sorg: Move to approve.
44

45 Eakman: Second.
46

1 Flores: Okay thank you. We'll start with discussion on this.
2
3 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. I'd like to direct the attention of the Committee
4 to page 34 of the packet. There are three amendments to the 2018 TIP
5 that have been requested. A pause to clarify, this is not the current TIP
6 under which we're currently operating. This is the impending TIP that
7 goes into effect on October 1st of this year. This is the 2018 TIP.
8 The first amendment is LC00250. This is the University Avenue
9 Interchange Project. The DOT has requested to move \$775,000 from
10 construction to preliminary design in Fiscal Year 2018.
11 The second project's been request, has a minor typo in the control
12 number. The control number is G100400. There should be a second zero
13 after that zero. This is a joint project by Central Federal Lands and Dona
14 Ana County on Soledad Canyon. The scope of the project is from
15 Dripping Springs to the end of Soledad Canyon. This includes preliminary
16 engineering, construction engineering, and construction. The project is for
17 \$10,166,500 and it is a new project.
18 The last amendment to the '18 TIP that's been requested is
19 LC00300. This is the US-70 Elks to Del Rey Bridge and Pavement
20 Preservation Project. This is a change in project termini and scope. The
21 termini will now be milepost 149.8 through milepost 151. And I'll stand
22 now for any questions.
23
24 Pedroza: I have a question.
25
26 Flores: Councillor Olga Pedroza.
27
28 Pedroza: Thank you very much. I'm not sure exactly who will address this, but the
29 first amendment at University Avenue and Triviz strikes me as possibly
30 similar to the Missouri Avenue at Triviz. And I don't know if that is a fact, if
31 they are similar. But I wonder whether we can learn what, how much of
32 the, will University be put medians just as Missouri Avenue was put
33 medians?
34
35 Doolittle: Madam Chair, Councillor Pedroza. Right now we're in the very early
36 stages of that project design and project development. Ultimately we have
37 been working with Federal Highway and Interchange Justification. At this
38 point I can't answer that question. I will say that University is a little bit
39 different than Missouri only because it is within the access control limits of
40 the interstate itself. We are also planning tentatively to punch Triviz under
41 University to tie in from the north side directly into the University parking
42 lot itself.
43
44 Pedroza: Like Spruce does.
45
46 Doolittle: No, more appropriately like Lohman.

1
2 Pedroza: I see.
3
4 Doolittle: So Triviz will carry ...
5
6 Pedroza: Okay.
7
8 Doolittle: Underneath ...
9
10 Pedroza: Okay.
11
12 Doolittle: University.
13
14 Pedroza: Right.
15
16 Doolittle: But at this point it's really too difficult to say one way or the other. Access
17 ...
18
19 Pedroza: Can you tell, thank you very much Trent. Can you tell me what the
20 procedure is in terms of informing the public and taking their input?
21
22 Doolittle: Madam Chair, Councillor Pedroza. Specifically I'm not aware. I do know
23 that as part of the project development they will be required to have public
24 meetings. That will be taken care of out of the South Region Design
25 through their Project Development Engineer. But there will be ample
26 opportunity for public input. And as we get into that I'll also present to this
27 Board when we have those public meetings and progress on how we're
28 doing on the design.
29
30 Pedroza: Thank you very much. Thank you Madam Chair.
31
32 Flores: Anyone else? Mr. Doolittle.
33
34 Doolittle: Madam Chair, if I may. I also have a floor amendment that I would like to
35 request of this current TIP. Originally we had \$1.6 million in Fiscal Year
36 '17 for preliminary engineering for the same control number that is
37 showing up on this list, LC00250. The General Office cut our design
38 budget by \$10 million statewide in Fiscal Year '17. We've now been given
39 \$1.35 million in Fiscal Year '18 for preliminary engineering on that project
40 to supplement what we did not get in Fiscal Year '17. So ultimately total
41 preliminary engineering combined with the one that was presented to you
42 by Andrew will be a total of \$2.05 million of preliminary engineering. So at
43 this point Madam Chair I would request that the Board, I'll request that we
44 have a floor amendment to item 6.1, Resolution 17-08 to move \$1.35
45 million from Fiscal Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2018 for preliminary
46 engineering.

1
2 Flores: Okay. Actually I thought we were falling short on paper of \$5,000 and I
3 made myself a note asking about that or something. Because on that it
4 says change of \$775,000 from construction, for if you're looking at page
5 29.
6
7 Wray: Oh. That's actually a typo Madam Chair.
8
9 Flores: Okay.
10
11 Wray: The total funding amount prior to Mr. Doolittle's amendment was not
12 supposed to change. That was an error on my part in typing the form.
13
14 Flores: Okay. All right. Then so you want to make a floor amendment to this.
15 Does anybody have any comments about that? And ...
16
17 Pedroza: Madam Chair.
18
19 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.
20
21 Pedroza: If we look on page 34 of the packet.
22
23 Flores: Yes.
24
25 Pedroza: What would the amounts be with the amendment on there?
26
27 Flores: Mr. Doolittle.
28
29 Doolittle: Madam Chair if I may, maybe Jolene if she can come up she will
30 understand the funding a little bit better than I could explain.
31
32 Flores: In the meantime I just want to note that Mayor Barraza has entered.
33 Okay. Go ahead Jolene.
34
35 Herrera: Good afternoon. Jolene Herrera, NMDOT. Thank you Trent. Actually,
36 ironically enough, the total on page 34 will not change because we had
37 already accounted for the \$1.6 million in 2017. So we're just rolling it over
38 to the new fiscal year. There's no change in the funding amount.
39
40 Flores: Okay. But we still need the ...
41
42 Pedroza: Thank you.
43
44 Flores: Floor amendment.
45
46 Herrera: Yes ma'am.

1
2 Flores: Okay. Councillor Sorg.
3
4 Sorg: Second that amendment.
5
6 Flores: Okay. So now we're voting on, are we done with instruction? Are we
7 done with comments? So we're going to be voting on the amendment?
8 All right. So shall we take a vote of the amendment?
9
10 Wray: Mayor Barraza.
11
12 Barraza: Yes.
13
14 Wray: Commissioner Rawson.
15
16 Rawson: Yes.
17
18 Wray: Mr. Doolittle.
19
20 Doolittle: Yes.
21
22 Wray: Councillor Pedroza.
23
24 Pedroza: Yes.
25
26 Wray: Councillor Sorg.
27
28 Sorg: Yes.
29
30 Wray: Councillor Eakman.
31
32 Eakman: Yes.
33
34 Wray: Madam Chair.
35
36 Flores: Yes.
37
38 AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
39
40 Flores: So any more discussion? Shall we then move to the resolution in total?
41
42 Wray: Madam Mayor.
43
44 Barraza: Yes.
45
46 Wray: Commissioner Rawson.

1
2 Rawson: Yes.
3
4 Wray: Mr. Doolittle.
5
6 Doolittle: Yes.
7
8 Wray: Councillor Pedroza.
9
10 Pedroza: Yes.
11
12 Wray: Councillor Sorg.
13
14 Sorg: Yes.
15
16 Wray: Councillor Eakman.
17
18 Eakman: Yes.
19
20 Wray: Madam Chair.
21
22 Flores: Yes. All right.
23
24 MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
25

26 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

27 7.1 NMDOT Rail Plan

28
29
30 Flores: So moving on to discussion items, 7.1 New Mexico DOT Rail Plan.
31
32 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. MPO staff is pleased at this time to welcome
33 Mr. Dave Nelson from NMDOT here who's going to give this presentation
34 about the impending State Rail Plan.
35
36 Nelson: I'd like to thank Mesilla Valley MPO and the City of Las Cruces for letting
37 me speak today. Thank you. So I'm here to introduce the 2018 New
38 Mexico State Rail Plan and I guess I should find out where the "advance"
39 is on this. Just these, okay. All right. So we have a map of our rail
40 system. This is an intermediate map. It'll be improved a little bit ...
41
42 Pedroza: Sir. Excuse me. If you would speak right into the mic ...
43
44 Nelson: Sure.
45
46 Pedroza: Everybody'll hear you better. Thank you.

1
2 Nelson: Yeah, I'm a little soft-spoken as it is, so thank you. So we have the New
3 Mexico Railroad Map. This will be updated to be a little more clear in the
4 future. You'll probably be familiar with the major green lines which are
5 BNSF, then the yellow line which is UP, Amtrak that comes down for the
6 Southwest Chief from the north and exits on the west, and also down in
7 the southwest corner another Amtrak line, the Sunset Limited. In addition
8 to that we have on the southeast Texas-New Mexico Railroad. We have
9 Southwest Railroad which is the blue line over in the southwest, and also
10 connected with the dots representing the cities and the stations there. We
11 have a mining railroad as well which most of us here I think are familiar
12 with that business. And up above, in the north we have the Cumbres and
13 Toltec Scenic Railroad, and another mining railroad, the Navajo Mine.
14 That's near Farmington. And then the red area there is the Rail Runner.
15 So that's the extent of what we have in our state and I think what you'll
16 notice is that there's a fair amount of railroad in the state and there's also
17 a diversity of types of railroad, both passenger and freight that's
18 represented on the map.

19 So why develop a rail plan? It's required by the Passenger Rail
20 Investment Improvement Act of 2008. That's about the time that the
21 Federal Government got more serious about coordinating planning
22 documents and making sure that various modes of transportation had
23 plans put out on a regular basis. It's also required to receive future
24 funding from the FRA. So some of the project work that gets done is
25 funded through the FRA such as the Section 130 Program which improves
26 rail crossing safety. It coordinates with New Mexico's Long-Range
27 Transportation and Freight Plans. So as you know, the NMDOT puts
28 together quite a few different plans whether it's highway or freight in
29 general, or railroad and so on, and each of those plans should mention the
30 others insofar as they coordinate or affect one another so that at any point
31 in time when you're looking at one you don't have to guess about how it
32 might interact.

33 So the purpose of the Rail Plan is to describe the state rail
34 resources, set forth State policy regarding both passenger and freight
35 transportation, present priorities and strategies to enhance the rail service
36 that benefits the public. That last part is important, it should be shown that
37 there is a benefit to the public. And it serves as the basis for federal and
38 state rail investments. The contents generally fit under "Vision," "Goals,"
39 and "Objectives" which include the "Actions," "Programs," and
40 "Prioritizations" so in other words, how is it that we decide what's
41 important and what will get worked on, which projects go forward. And as
42 we mentioned before it links to the other State Transportation Plans. "Rail
43 Systems," "Inventory," and "Assessment," basically what's in our state:
44 Which railroads operate here? What sort of business do they do? What
45 industries do they affect? What are their connections to other modes of
46 transportation? Do they perform well and what issues and opportunities

1 exist? So that might be what are the problems and if it's not a problem per
2 se but you think there is an opportunity in the future do something to
3 improve a situation or avoid another problem, this is where we take note of
4 that. And that ties into the "Current and Future Needs" which are things
5 that stakeholders throughout the state have said, "Hey, we need this," or
6 "This affects us so let's get something done." So that moves to "Planning
7 for the Future" where we actually prioritize the investments. We're
8 working with a contractor, AECOM and what they're doing is collecting the
9 data, getting resources of information from us and from other places.
10 They're helping to perform in stakeholder outreach and they're going to
11 put together all of the information we get and the feedback we get and
12 produce a draft plan. So that is affected by economic, environmental, and
13 community factors. These are pretty broad statements. It's not much of a
14 mystery that we always look at these things when we're planning but it's
15 important to make sure that each time we do address these items and
16 then we move on to the implementation of the plan.

17 So the Rail Plan process itself begins with a stakeholder outreach
18 to determine the needs, issues, and priorities. So what we've already
19 done so far is we've made some of the presentations to MPOs and
20 RTPOs. We had a series of three stakeholder meetings that happened
21 last month including one in Las Cruces and stakeholders might be like
22 railroads, shippers, railroad advocates, municipalities, regents, whoever
23 wants to show up and hear the presentation which is very similar to this
24 one or to contribute some input as well. So that ties in also with public
25 involvement which extends to meetings that we'll have that are very
26 specifically put out there to draw in people who may not normally think of
27 themselves as a stakeholder.

28 All of this together with the data that's collected and the input that
29 we get forms the draft Rail Plan and then we go back out and actually
30 conduct the public meetings and get stakeholder review and comment,
31 and we do a second round of MPO and RTPO meetings so that once the
32 draft plan is out and you've had a chance to read it, you can say, "Well
33 here, this is what I agree with," or "I don't agree with," "This is what I
34 think's missing," "I like this section." So that's very important to us to get
35 some input on that draft Rail Plan.

36 So from there we go to a final Rail Plan. We work with our
37 contractor, we do some editing, we make sure that we haven't missed any
38 of the required elements and then we put it in to the FRA to get it
39 approved. And if it's approved, which it should be, we do it again in four
40 years. That's the basic process.

41 This is just a quick graphic for the Rail Plan schedule, importantly
42 the initial outreach happens this summer. The draft Rail Plan should be
43 available in spring of 2018. Shortly after that we'll have public meetings so
44 that people can comment and a second round of presentations to the
45 MPOs and RTPOs. All of that towards the end there is roughly the
46 summer of 2018.

1 So as far as public involvement we have a Transit and Rail page at
2 the NMDOT site. Andrew from the MPO here has that URL so you can
3 get the link from him. It's also mentioned in the packet that you have,
4 you'll see it there. And at that site, on that webpage you'll have the 2014
5 Rail Plan which was the previous Rail Plan. You'll have the public
6 presentation schedule if you care to appear at any of the others and
7 contribute, additional information as it comes up, and a link to the online
8 rail survey which is the next line. So what this is, is that anyone who's
9 interested can go online, answer some questions. There's room for a little
10 bit of feedback there too, but not much because they're trying to get some
11 very coherent information directed to specific questions. However, we
12 don't want to leave people's comments out so I'm the person who'll be
13 administering the rail.plan@state.nm.us which is our e-mail specifically for
14 the rail plan. I promise I'll read every single e-mail. We don't respond to
15 every one but we do collate that, give it to our contractor. They
16 summarize what people have said and if a lot of people say the same
17 thing, although hopefully it's not a coordinated effort, then it'll come up that
18 way. It'll be like, "Hey, a lot of people find this to be a very important
19 subject." So we take it seriously, the whole public and stakeholder
20 outreach. So all of those methods are ways to become informed and to
21 put in input. Excuse my voice. I tend to have a little bit of allergy.

22 Okay. So this is the cover of the 2014 New Mexico State Rail Plan.
23 You may have seen this before, came out about four years ago and this is
24 probably the first modern Rail Plan that New Mexico has had. Most states
25 in the last ten years-plus have put out their first modern rail plan that deals
26 with the more modern set of requirements from the Federal Government
27 and has some of the best practices that we've come to know in this area,
28 so that's what we're building on. The 2014 Rail Plan Vision Statement is
29 something that we think still fits pretty well. I'll read this one out loud and
30 one of the questions we have is, "Does it seem to make sense? Does it
31 cover what it needs to?" "The State of New Mexico's vision for its rail
32 network is a fully-integrated and safe multimodal rail system that provides
33 sufficient passenger services to, from, and within the State, provides a
34 competitive option for New Mexico shippers, is a vital component of the
35 National Transportation Network, and supports sustainable, inclusive
36 economic development statewide." It's pretty broad, pretty general. I
37 think it's fairly inoffensive, generally speaking. It covers everything, but it
38 is a generalist statement. Hopefully it's a good one.

39 So we move on to the main goals that were in the 2014 Rail Plan
40 and I'll just look at each one of these separately. Support Economic
41 Growth and Development: This is one that we hear subject-wise from
42 regions all over the state. It's always one of the main concerns. "How can
43 we create jobs?" "How can we develop our economy?" and sometimes it
44 has to do with exports because if you can take your product and move
45 them out then you get money into your area that didn't exist before and
46 that leads to some form of economic stimulus. As you know, railroads

1 when they just pass through the state, it's not that there's no benefit to the
2 state but it's a lot less if they're not stopping here or starting here. So
3 we're looking to increase the capacity of long-distance freight corridors,
4 develop and promote local freight connections, that's sort of like the "first
5 and last mile" situation. How do you get your product to the railroad? Do
6 you have a spur you work on where your business is located, do you truck
7 it in? Where are the yards and is it convenient for you? Promote rail-
8 related tourism, that could be the Cumbres and Toltec, a little bit on the
9 Rail Runner, but it's also the Amtrak. Amtrak people think of as a vacation
10 railroad or possibly a commuter railroad for long trips for certain business
11 people. But it's also a scenic railroad in that people just go out there and
12 travel and have fun. So anything that we can acknowledge, if it's working
13 for us in that way it's a good thing as far as tourism goes. Also, link rail
14 investments and strategies that support economic development. We do
15 have an Economic Development Department in the State. There's a
16 federal department and there's also Councils of Government and so on
17 that deal with economic districts. We don't always know the best way to
18 interlink the economic development with things like transportation,
19 railroads in particular but there's definitely opportunities as you've seen in
20 your area with the Santa Teresa Logistics Facility and the Transload and
21 so on. So I'd like to say that in the last several years there's been a fair
22 amount of development and a lot of it's been down this way, and there's
23 definitely more on the horizon. So something to keep in mind.

24 You might argue that this should be the first of the goals: Improve
25 railroad safety and security. Well I thought I'd go with economic
26 development first because that seems to be what people are really
27 burning to hear. But this is very important as well. So positive train
28 control you may have heard of is a federally-mandated safety measure.
29 Basically it helps to prevent derailments and collisions between railroad
30 trains and also trains with maintenance vehicles or cars or what have you.
31 This is something that has been a mandate and it's been very hard for a
32 lot of places to actually pay for it other than the large railroads. So I know
33 that the Rail Runner got a 5% roughly grant to help with that, but that's not
34 nearly enough to make it affordable to them. They're still working on how
35 to comply with that. Some of the other small freight railroads, the Class
36 Threes as we call them are also having trouble trying to meet this
37 mandate but once it's done, regardless of the difficulty and the cost
38 involved it seems certain to improve safety in the end. There's also some
39 other mandatory safety-related measures that largely come out of federal
40 programs so we have to keep that in mind. And we're always looking to
41 improve highway-rail grade crossing safety. As I mentioned there's a
42 Section 130 program which doesn't have enough money to address every
43 crossing every year that we'd like to, but every year some crossings are
44 offered signage or better surfaces or gates or lights, or something to
45 improve safety and perhaps to improve the flow of traffic sometimes too.
46 And lastly, improved rail security, that may have to do with simple

1 trespassing or people who are not feeling that life's so great so they head
2 out to the railroad. You've heard about those situations, so it's trying to
3 prevent those situations. And it's also in terms of homeland security
4 issues, we don't want anybody to mess with the railroads and cause a
5 problem that we don't already have.

6 Next goal: Maintain the railroad assets in a state of good repair.
7 "State of good repair" is not just a concept which is important but it's also a
8 federal phrase, so that when you get some federal funds that might go for
9 a highway project and sometimes for a rail project, what you'll see is that
10 maintaining what you already have in a state of good repair is considered
11 one of the most important things. So yes, we may have ideas for
12 expansion or new routes or new infrastructure of some sort, but we have
13 to maintain what we have. So that's important to the feds, it's important to
14 us, and what it also means is if we pay attention to that and put that
15 language into our planning documents and our grant applications it
16 oftentimes increases the opportunity to get some money in that way. So
17 we're looking at improving the conditions of the state's Class Three rail
18 lines, that's the small freight railroads, and we're also looking to maintain
19 and improve the conditions of the NMRX which is the rail system that the
20 Rail Runner runs on.

21 The next goal: Promote efficient passenger rail service. So that
22 has to do with the multimodal transportation system, the connections
23 between the modes. The Rail Runner operations make that more
24 efficient. There's been some safety and some maintenance work that's
25 been done recently on Rail Runner so that actually is moving in the right
26 direction as far as that issue goes. Identify stable and predictable funding
27 for Rail Runner and NMRX. Well that's a trick. There's not quite as much
28 money as you'd hope to maintain things as soon as you want, at the
29 speed you want, and at the reliability you want but they're doing a pretty
30 good job overall.

31 Looking back to the 2014 Rail Plan again, stakeholder statewide
32 issues: Passenger rail service improvements, Rail Runner alignment,
33 that's the track and the infrastructure. New commuter regional passenger
34 rail was raised as a concern or interest, and high-speed intercity
35 passenger rail's also an interest. Some of that high-speed aspect we're
36 not hearing much about. I don't think there's a lot of funds available for
37 something like that. But we have heard about the study which I think
38 SCRTD is going to speak about shortly, about a connection from El Paso
39 to Las Cruces and they can tell you more about the options and the
40 feasibility of that. This also, what was mentioned in the previous Rail Plan
41 would support local economic development as we said, create crossing
42 safety, PTC, and Santa Teresa border crossing. So we know that the
43 border crossing's a real thing. We know that there's an international study
44 that's waiting for a Presidential Permit to determine a final route and so on.
45 So that may be years off from being a reality but it's definitely, work has
46 happened and I expect more work will continue to happen on that.

1 Some of the Rail Plan projects that were around the time of the last
2 Rail Plan: the Union Pacific-Santa Teresa expansion which I think you're
3 familiar with and the port of entry, and the proposed El Paso-Las Cruces
4 commuter rail. So there's a lot of real work that's been concentrated in
5 your area and a little bit to the west and also a fair amount to the east as
6 well. So the southern part of the state has a lot of freight potential, as we
7 see right now. Funding is the primary concern.

8 So factors affecting prioritization of project funding, we need to
9 maintain the state's existing rail infrastructure in a state of good repair as
10 we said, comply with those mandates. There's limited overall public
11 funding from federal, state, and local. This is not new to you. Restrictions
12 on use of available federal funding, sometimes you have to have a local
13 match as we do with highway projects. Sometimes certain types of funds
14 are available for one or two or three types of projects but not others.
15 Sometimes those funds can be used for a project if you're also using this
16 other kind of fund. And then finally the Anti-Donation Clause which as you
17 know was put in place to protect against inappropriate use of funds. It
18 basically says that public funds cannot be used for private benefit. The
19 only major exception to that that I'm aware of is if you can prove that it's
20 going to increase the amount of jobs significantly, that might well loosen
21 that up. So I know you want jobs anyways and if you do come across
22 something that's rail-related or in some other sense the Anti-Donation
23 Clause would affect, if you know you're going to get some jobs out of it
24 maybe you can get some State money, but at this point in time generally
25 you can't.

26 Major developments since 2014: Santa Teresa again, the
27 Intermodal Facility, BNSF has double-tracked everything that they planned
28 to do in 2016 they finished that up. New Transload facilities are coming
29 into being in the Albuquerque South Valley area. TIGER Grant funds
30 were used to replace railroad ties on NMDOT track. That's the NMRX
31 used by Amtrak. That section, the Rail Runner doesn't get over there
32 hardly at all unless it's making a maneuver to get out of the way. But what
33 happened is we along with the State of New Mexico, State of Colorado
34 and Kansas, and a bunch of communities and some other organizations
35 all chipped in together, got a TIGER Grant and was able to replace ties
36 and some ballast along the track. What's significant is that the Amtrak will
37 run faster, more reliably, will have less "train meets" as they call it where
38 trains threaten to meet head-on so they have to move aside for one
39 another and that delays things and causes expenses including sometimes
40 with freight, and you don't want the freight expenses to go up. So we
41 actually did get some money through a cooperative effort and it's
42 improving that, and the work's almost done. They're just waiting for the
43 track to settle so they can raise the speeds up to the final top speed. I say
44 that not because it's as important down here that this particular project, but
45 it's an example of something that sometimes can be done in other areas.
46 We also have intermodal facilities underway, being developed along the

1 BNSF Transcon near Gallup and Los Lunas. There's no clients for those
2 facilities yet. And there's new rail-served facilities being developed in the
3 southeast.

4 So to sum up, we want your comments on the Vision Statement, it's
5 in the packet and it's available online as well, rail projects and priorities
6 from your point of view, funding mechanisms for rail, if you have
7 conversations with tourism or economic development or a local regional
8 organization and you have an idea about some funds we might know
9 about it, we might not. If you talk to us, or sometimes it's more appropriate
10 to talk to NMDOT Planning because they're sort of a nexus for some of
11 these grant projects and say, "Hey, how about this? We want to do this,
12 we're starting to get our material together. We're aware of this grant. Are
13 you aware of it? How does it work with other money?" and so on. And
14 then if you have thoughts about rail policy in general and you think there's
15 something should be done, let us know.

16 And thank you for letting me be here. Once again that's our e-mail,
17 rail.plan@state.nm.us. Anything that's not a super time-sensitive thing
18 could go there. We'll review it. We'll include comments either directly or
19 summarize what several people have said if it's very similar in the Rail
20 Plan and I'll be reading all of those like I said. And once again, go to the
21 Transit and Rail page on the NMDOT site, click on the survey if you're
22 motivated, fill it out, send me e-mail and let me know what you think, and
23 I'm extending that to the public here too. Anyone that's here should feel
24 free to do the same. And I'm able to take some questions.

25
26 Flores: Councillor Eakman.

27
28 Eakman: Yes, thank you. Trent and I and I think Michael attended the event you
29 had here with your consultant and I just wanted to mention to my fellow
30 Board Members some takeaways I had. I was impressed that there were
31 seven or eight people from Mexico at this presentation, almost all from
32 Chihuahua, all very interested in how transit can be improved between our
33 countries. One of the main things mentioned is autos would move from
34 the south to the north but auto parts from the United States would move
35 from the north to the south, and there are of course all kinds of other
36 things that could happen too. Secondly it was stated that we have places
37 in the state that only get three-day-a-week service and there's almost no
38 reason to have three-day-a-week service. If it's not seven-day it's not
39 going to be used. So I think that'll be an emphasis coming up. And then I
40 learned that there was a balloon payment coming up on the Rail Runner
41 system in 2026 that is unfunded, and I don't know the size of that balloon
42 payment but it sounds huge. So I just wanted to bring that forward. I think
43 our Legislature needs to work on a plan. Thank you.

44
45 Nelson: Additional questions, comments?
46

1 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.
2
3 Pedroza: Thank you and I won't be very, I'll be brief. I have heard for several years
4 the need for transportation from Las Cruces to the more developing areas
5 of Santa Teresa and even El Paso, but even though it's been several
6 years that I've heard of these things moving I haven't seen any evidence
7 of actual putting in the rail lines and starting the, so can you tell me what's
8 holding it up?
9
10 Nelson: Well I think I'll partially defer to the next speaker because I believe they're
11 going to talk about the rail study from El Paso to Las Cruces and while I
12 did quickly read their study, I wasn't able to, I didn't have the time to fully
13 internalize all of it. But I know it's been an ongoing interest and it's been
14 mentioned in federal documents and there's a whole Southwest Rail Plan
15 study that was done, although I don't think New Mexico really participated
16 in that, and so there's some thoughts about what it would take to be a
17 connected part of the country. I'd like to give the other person a chance to
18 speak because I think they'll speak more accurately.
19
20 Pedroza: Thank you very much.
21
22 Flores: I actually had a question. On the cooperative effort that you had when you
23 replaced the railroad ties, I was wondering if by chance those were x-
24 rayed to see specifically which ties were needed or if it was just a blanket
25 replacement.
26
27 Nelson: You know, I don't know what method they used. Certainly to some degree
28 you can see visually if something's become bad. You can see if the rail is
29 not properly supported or if the ballast is slipping away or whether plates
30 are coming out. So that's the obvious stuff but they also have some
31 machines that they use to test things. Forgive me, I don't know about the
32 x-ray part but they didn't do it at random. In some of the grant applications
33 and other documents you might see, "We'll be replacing approximately
34 one out of three or whatever ties," and that sounds kind of random but
35 what they're saying is that, to give it a context, like what percentage we're
36 doing. But they actually pull out the worst ties and replace those and it's
37 definitely not a random process so.
38
39 Flores: And then on improving highway rail grade crossing safety, I'm just
40 wondering, we've had a discussion about this and last time we had an
41 MPO meeting, how are things picked for improvement? How do you
42 target or prioritize what places or areas get picked first for improvements?
43
44 Nelson: Are you talking in terms of the safety project specifically or all projects?
45
46 Flores: The safety projects.

1
2 Nelson: The safety projects. Well usually what happens is there's a certain
3 amount of inspections that happen through the bureau that I'm part of. So
4 people go out across the state and they look first of all at the things that
5 are considered the worst, so if they're notified there's something say in
6 Las Cruces that is a particular bad crossing, well I know for example up in
7 I believe it was Hatch there was three crossings that were pretty bad.
8 They got repaired recently and I think they got moved up, some of them
9 got moved up in the schedule. And so we try to look at the worst ones first
10 that we're made aware of, but we also have a regular schedule of
11 examining every crossing every one to three years. It depends on the
12 type of crossing. I think that's the right number of years but I'm not one of
13 the people who usually goes out and does that. And so when it comes to
14 deciding where the money goes, we have a STIP process like you do, or a
15 Section 130 process. HSIP is another one of those things where if it's
16 coordinated with highway work it might have something to do with the
17 safety repairs. And so the two supervisors in my area coordinate with
18 other people in DOT and municipalities and railroads and say, "Hey, this
19 one looks really bad. We got to do something about this sooner." And
20 then what you do is you run out of money and all the ones you think are
21 very important actually don't all get done during that year and once in a
22 while you'll see one that appears to be not as important that got done, but
23 what might've happened is it was much less expensive or someone else
24 chipped in money, like some municipality says, "Well I know you don't
25 have this on your next year but we'll put in \$50,000 towards it." And we go
26 "Oh, okay. That makes it easier." So it's how implementable it is and how
27 feasible it is in terms of funds, and if it's like a disaster waiting to happen
28 from our point of view we need to get out there and make that a priority.
29 So that's generally how we look at it. And there's always going to be times
30 when, at least every few years or so there's a fatality or bad accident and
31 that crossing might not have been considered one of the more dangerous
32 ones, although it needed work. But once that happens for a number of
33 reasons it has to become a priority so that's why you see things like that
34 move up in the schedule.

35
36 Flores: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Rawson ...

37
38 Rawson: Madam Chair. Thank you.

39
40 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.

41
42 Rawson: Madam Chair. And I apologize, I did not catch your name.

43
44 Nelson: David Nelson.
45

1 Rawson: Mr. Nelson. Thank you. Mr. Nelson, I wanted to ask some questions
2 about the survey that you had. You had that on one of your slides. What
3 kind of a response have you received to that survey, or do you know yet?
4

5 Nelson: The last time I saw numbers it was fairly modest, but that was probably
6 about a month ago. And so what we did is the contractor suggested that
7 we send out a tweet. I don't know how many people look for tweets from
8 the NMDOT. I suspect that's also pretty modest. But I have not asked
9 him for the numbers since then and to be honest I think that the amount of
10 people taking the survey is not going to be as much as I had hoped and I
11 wouldn't mind us doing a little more outreach in that area.
12

13 Rawson: Thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Nelson. Do you know what those
14 questions are? Could you give us a flavor of what those look like?
15

16 Nelson: Well I don't know all of them verbatim but I know that it asked how much
17 do you use the railroad, why do you do it, it ties in some options such as
18 the price of gas or commuting, enjoyment and so on. It says what do you
19 think our priorities, should we put money into this, are you okay with tax
20 money being used for projects, and to be honest I forget some of the
21 others. But it kind of covers some of the same things that I've talked about
22 here, a smaller subset of issues, a little less technical, and gives people a
23 little bit of write-in space. But we hope that primarily the other subjects are
24 something that come in through the Rail Plan e-mail or even if someone
25 sends me directly an e-mail I'm going to look at it and make sure it gets
26 addressed as far as being assessed for the Rail Plan and summarized in
27 our comments.
28

29 Rawson: Thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Nelson. I'm asking some of those
30 questions because I'm one of the ones who did respond to that survey and
31 took that, but I was very disappointed with the way the survey goes
32 through the process. For example the first question is how, well the first
33 question is your zip code. After that, the next question you get is, "How
34 important is the passenger rail service in New Mexico to you?" I answered
35 that question but Mr. Nelson what is the correct answer to that question?
36

37 Nelson: I don't think there's a correct answer to that. It's fairly general.
38

39 Rawson: That's good to hear because when I answered it I found out that I'd
40 entered the incorrect answer. So I went on to the next question which
41 was, "How interested are you in the improvement or expansion of
42 passenger rail service in New Mexico?" and again you have the option of
43 "Very interested," "Somewhat interested," "Slightly interested," "Not
44 interested." Again I put in the wrong answer and it told me that I put in the
45 wrong answer. I went all the way through the entire survey and found out
46 I got 0% of your questions correct.

1
2 Nelson: That's strange because I didn't think they were grading. And maybe
3 there's a problem with the survey and it needs to be fixed or was glitching
4 at the time. Is that what you're referring to?

5
6 Rawson: No. There was no problems with it. I went all the way through. The bar
7 goes across the top. I'm fairly comfortable with Survey Monkey. I've used
8 it in my business as well. But you can have it set up to have a test or you
9 can have it as a survey and what you have set up is not a survey and I
10 hope that when those answers come out you won't pertain those to be a
11 survey when it's obviously a very biased, where the "correct answer" on
12 these questions has already been chosen and if you put in the wrong
13 answer then it notifies you immediately and then would discourage you
14 from going through the rest of the survey because you've already gotten
15 that question wrong. It makes it very clear that you're not really interested
16 in what someone's opinion is but rather, "Here's what the correct answer
17 is," and I got 0% on my test.

18
19 Nelson: Well I'm glad you said something about this because the only time I've
20 taken it, I took it three times but that's not let double voting. What it was is
21 I did the test thing and I didn't have an issue with it but that doesn't mean it
22 won't have an issue for other people in other locations. So one of the first
23 things I'll do when I get back is ask them, tell them what your experience
24 was, ask them why it happened, whether they can confirm maybe from a
25 few different IP addresses that it's actually working properly now and if it's
26 not, fix it. I don't think there's any correct answers. None of us when
27 we're discussing this envisioned a correct answer. We just envisioned
28 answers so that we could say, "63% of people said this," you know. And
29 that's really the only approach we had. I think also in terms of what I
30 thought I heard you say earlier, "What is it that we're going to get out of
31 this?" Some of it seems pretty general. Some of it might seem like there's
32 a lack of finesse in some aspects of the questions. But one thing that we
33 found is, well I should go back from before I worked for the State, when I
34 was a college student. Surveys are deceptively hard to write and if you
35 make them as precise and accurate of statements or questions as you
36 wish you could, you leave out a whole lot of participation. So it's kind of a
37 tension between making them really good questions and making a usable
38 survey. This survey, while I don't glow with pride I think is okay and I want
39 to make sure that it works right. So I'll look into that and I would
40 encourage you to send me an e-mail, and I'll hand out some cards, directly
41 with that concern and also anything else that you hadn't already said and
42 I'll directly respond to you.

43
44 Rawson: Thank you. And Madam Chair, just one follow-up on that. Mr. Nelson, I
45 did post that on my Facebook page and I believe there are eight other
46 people who took the test and also received less-than-glowing grades on

1 your test. So it isn't just me and my ability to run Survey Monkey but the
2 way it is set up. Thank you Madam Chair.
3
4 Flores: Thank you Commissioner. Anyone else? Mayor Barraza.
5
6 Barraza: Madam Chair. Thank you. First I just want to compliment you and the
7 team for continuing looking into rail service in the State of New Mexico,
8 and looking at your map we don't have a lot of rail accessibility in smaller
9 communities and I would like to see that. In traveling quite a bit this year,
10 my husband and I, either work or pleasure we are seeing an increase of
11 semi trucks on the road, I mean numerous semi trucks. And I think of the
12 wear and tear on our roads that is occurring when you see so many of
13 those large vehicles. In the State of New Mexico, as you know we are in
14 dire need of funding for our highways. And seeing some of these semis
15 are probably wanting to use affordably the rail service to transport some of
16 their goods I think would be a benefit to our community. But in terms of
17 passenger also, I can see in the future where more people would want to
18 get onto rail service and utilize that service in traveling either to the
19 northern part of the state or the east or the west side of the state, and also
20 out of our state into Arizona or the surrounding. I know that as my
21 husband and I are getting older, we definitely talk about trying to possibly
22 use rail service in going to our destinations that we would like to. The only
23 thing is there are not a lot of stations at the places that we would like to
24 stop at and the travel time is probably double in traveling versus going by
25 vehicle. But I think you definitely are in the right direction. I love the
26 Vision Statement that you have on this study and on the handouts that we
27 have. And definitely it's something for you all to pursue, and actually I got
28 onto that Survey Monkey right now and I'm taking that survey. It hasn't
29 told me yet that I've hit a wrong answer so I'm being able to proceed with it
30 so hopefully before the meeting's over I'll be able to complete that survey.
31 So thank you.
32
33 Nelson: Thank you.
34
35 Flores: Anyone else? Then I'd like to thank you Mr. Nelson for coming and giving
36 us a presentation and I hope you have a safe ride back.
37
38 Nelson: Thank you. I appreciate it.
39
40 Flores: And some people from the audience, are they a part of the presentation?
41
42 Little: Madam Chair. It looks like you have public comments at the last. I am
43 State Representative Rick Little and I can fill in some of the gaps as far as
44 the Rail Runner that we have going from, it now goes from Belen to Santa
45 Fe. If I may, I ...
46

1 Flores: Yeah. I mean we had comments at the beginning and we've had
2 comments at the end. I'm just kind of uncomfortable. Had you come at
3 the beginning I'd have been fine listening to you. You're not part of the
4 presentation. Can you wait till the ...

5
6 Little: Madam Chair. No, I have another meeting so I have to make that but
7 thank you.
8

9 Flores: But, you know what I'll, if you can make it quick then that's fine.

10
11 Little: I will try to.
12

13 Flores: We have a long agenda.
14

15 Little: Yes ma'am. One of the things that I'll just tell you about the Rail Runner
16 that we have going on. We have had legislation as a matter of fact this
17 year and the last two-year session to try to get rid of the Rail Runner and
18 mainly it was because of the cost. Costs are \$26 million a year and the
19 way that breaks out is the five counties that are close to, that the Rail
20 Runner runs into are paying, out of that \$26 million they're paying \$12
21 million right out of just taxpayers from those particular counties. The
22 Federal Government gives you \$5 million. The rail that is used by different
23 railroads for transportation of products and whatnot is \$2 million and then
24 we have our ridership is only at, it's less than \$2 million. We are giving
25 discounts for people to ride it because they're not getting enough ridership
26 on it and it's quite a burden. When you're looking at the balloon payment
27 that's due, I believe we have two balloon payments. The first one I think is
28 in '24 and that's \$240 million which falls under our Transportation
29 Department. I am on the Transportation Interim Committee, the
30 Subcommittee, and I have been on Transportation when we've discussed
31 the Rail Runner and we have, the transportation for the state is
32 approximately \$886 million, 17% of that is debt and a lot of that's brought
33 on by things like TIGER Grants and different things that we have had. So
34 that's over a million-seven just for transportation. That's just to keep our
35 roads up and whatnot but that does fall under our Transportation
36 Department.

37 There are quite a few other things. Economic development, you
38 know when we first brought that in under Governor Richardson we thought
39 that you know it would be a tourism advantage and there's been a little bit
40 of tourism. We thought that it would be some kind of economic advantage
41 to the state and it ended up as being quite a negative impact. And then
42 we can't, right at this point we had a survey done to try to, or the Highway
43 Department put together, the DOT put together a plan on if we wanted to
44 get rid of it and at this particular point it costs us more to get rid of it than it
45 does to keep it. And I believe it's a burden to taxpayers, that it's just way
46 beyond what, we would've been better off put three-laning the 25 up there.

1 People are still, there's just as many cars on the road as there were before
2 and they're not using the Rail Runner. Now there would be one thing, if
3 you're going to do a rail train and I'm not for gambling myself, but if you're
4 going to do it, if you put alcohol on it and gambling on it, it may at least get
5 somewhere close to making something happen and we have issues with
6 the pacts we have with our Indian Nations and whatnot. But anyway, just
7 quickly, these kind of things that we put in cost the taxpayer, I don't think
8 the advantages weigh out on what we could do on other things, and
9 especially taking care of our roads first. So thank you very much.

10

11 Flores: Thank you.

12

13 Little: Any questions?

14

15 Flores: Did you have a question?

16

17 Sorg: No question.

18

19 Flores: Okay. No, thank you.

20

21 Little: Thank you Madam Chair.

22

23 Sorg: I got a comment.

24

25 Flores: Did you have a comment?

26

27 Barraza: Madam Chair.

28

29 Flores: Mayor Barraza.

30

31 Barraza: I do have one more comment. I finished that survey.

32

33 Flores: Okay.

34

35 Barraza: And I understand where Commissioner Rawson is coming from because
36 at the very end of my survey, I was able to proceed with the whole survey
37 but at the very end it does show a score, and if it's a survey why is it doing
38 a score, and it says like "5/6 points." When you take a survey I didn't think
39 we were going to be graded on a survey and I truly understand where
40 Commissioner Rawson is coming from on that and that definitely is a
41 concern.

42

43 Flores: Thank you. Councillor Sorg.

44

45 Sorg: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair and thank you Representative Little and
46 Andrew and Mr. Nelson, yes for all that you've presented here today. I

1 just wanted to make a comment that yes, all modes of public
2 transportation including highways are heavily subsidized. And just looking
3 at our agenda for today, we've proved over \$42 million worth of
4 construction on our highways alone. It's a big expense for all modes of
5 transportation and so to single out rail as being not worthy of public
6 transportation subsidies is not fair. And so I just wanted to keep that, we
7 need to do it all. We need to have the highways, we need to have the rail,
8 we need to have the buses, and we need to have walking and bike trails
9 too. So that's what I'm saying and also the fact that the Rail Runner is a
10 little out of our jurisdiction here down in Mesilla Valley MPO. So that
11 doesn't pertain to us so much here anyway. Thank you Madam Chair.
12

13 Flores: Thank you. I would like to say I just went to Spain and they had a horrible
14 rail system when I went the first time and I can tell you they're light-years
15 ahead of us. It was so nice to be able to travel through there and to see
16 people getting to and from work so I can agree it's a public good and it's
17 the job of the government to fund things like schools and rail and
18 transportation. I mean it's an idea of whether we're willing to pay for that
19 or not but anyway, I see it as a public good as well.
20

21 Pedroza: I have a comment.
22

23 Flores: Okay.
24

25 Pedroza: I'm sorry.
26

27 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.
28

29 Pedroza: I'm sorry that I interrupted you. I just want to remind people that in fact, I
30 don't know if anybody agrees with me but in fact it's becoming clearer
31 every day that there is really some man-induced climate change and that
32 possibly providing transportation by rail for people who would otherwise,
33 well first of all we should acknowledge that there are a lot of people who
34 do not have transportation, either to get to grocery stores, to get to the
35 doctor, to get to work, any of those things. And I think that providing rail
36 transportation for those people, dependable, daily-basis rail transportation
37 would be a definite boon for them and I believe that that is the, I really
38 admire the vision etc. of the Rail Plan. I would just love to see it happen a
39 little tiny bit faster. Thank you.
40

41 Flores: Would Mr. Nelson like to respond to any of the comments? I just want to
42 give you that opportunity because I went ahead and let people make a
43 public comment. So I don't know if you want to make any response or
44 comment to anything that's been said here.
45

1 Nelson: I don't believe so. For the most part I believe that people would like to say
2 what their opinion is and I'm here to listen to their comments. Basically I'm
3 happy to hear what people have to say and take notes and educate
4 myself. I'm not from the Southern New Mexico area so I certainly will have
5 something to learn about the perspective and I want to, I'm sorry. I forgot
6 your name.

7
8 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.

9
10 Nelson: I'm going to look into what you mentioned and one of the people sitting
11 next to me did see that some of the first choice in each one was
12 highlighted and I think that's a formatting issue, and then I'll look into the
13 score thing that I heard about to. I think that's just a case of maybe when
14 it was put together that someone didn't anticipate what a perception would
15 be and so we'll look at that and try to amend it so that just isn't a factor at
16 all.

17
18 Flores: Thank you. Okay.

19 20 **7.2 SCRTD Rail Study**

21
22 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. At this time staff would like to invite Mr. David
23 Armijo from the South Central Regional Transit District to give the next
24 presentation.

25
26 Armijo: Good afternoon. David Armijo, Executive Director for South Central
27 Regional Transit District. I'm going to go through a presentation today that
28 we did back in June to our Board and at the request of the MPO we
29 decided to do it today. Our contractor, the Center for Neighborhood
30 Technology I believe their name is from Chicago, Dave Chandler made
31 that presentation. They're no longer under contract so we're trying to save
32 money so I'm doing the presentation. So be nice to me. I'll do my best.
33 The slightly-modified presentation, which way do I hit the clicks, oh that
34 way, okay. Got it.

35 So we start the presentation, what we're trying to do here is talk a
36 little bit about what we call the Las Cruces to El Paso Commuter Rail and
37 it was a feasibility study. I'm going to move to the second slide. I don't
38 think you can see that quite as well but hopefully you can see that on your
39 monitors. So if we go back a couple of years, back to 2015 working with
40 the Legislature, and my understanding this actually goes back many more
41 years. We've actually had some feasibility analysis before and when we,
42 I've seen the nodding, what we want to do is try to nail this down a little bit
43 so our goal was to try to look at the feasibility a little more from a cost
44 perspective, a little more from a ridership perspective and give a little more
45 of a sense of where this would go. Again, so we contracted with CNT.
46 They began the study January 2016. We contracted with them in late

1 2015. Their contract expired in June. We had two series of public
2 meetings and Commissioner Rawson we did do a survey. But I googled
3 to find out, I know we did it online and I know we did cards. But I think
4 ours was a low-tech survey so I don't think we had Survey Monkey or
5 anything like that but I'll find out for you, and I know we had about 1,000
6 people involved but I've got that later in a slide. So we had a couple of
7 series of public meetings. We did it back in April to get started and get an
8 idea of what people are looking for so we can incorporate that into the
9 evaluation. And then in June of 2017 we brought CNT back at the end of
10 their contract and we did a little bit of the findings and that presentation is
11 what I'm going to go through with you today.

12 This is the corridor. When we first talked about doing this study we
13 were actually looking at going even north of Las Cruces, as far away as
14 the I guess Sun Port or whatever the rail study is way out there, but we
15 could pretty well combine it to Las Cruces-El Paso and what you'll see in
16 the highlighted area, in orange you see the metropolitan part of Las
17 Cruces and then the purple you see the metropolitan area of El Paso, and
18 then the green dots are some of the rail studies along the way. In fact we
19 worked with the New Mexico State University's Architecture Department.
20 And I don't have those yet, I have to get those slides from them but they
21 actually did some work on what stations could look like in the future. So
22 maybe another time I can bring those back. So this gives you a little idea
23 of where the corridor would be, so you would have Las Cruces to the far
24 north and you would have Union Station where Sun Metro is
25 headquartered just outside Downtown El Paso on the southern end.

26 As with any planning study we would look at it from a standpoint of
27 "What's the socioeconomics?" and so we use some of the Census data for
28 that. We looked at the growth of population going back on the basis of
29 2000 through 2015 which is really the start of the study and we looked at
30 the projections going forward. As you can see in the bottom of the graph,
31 you see the fiscal year in the box 2010 with population of 210,536 and
32 then going all the way out to 2040. So this is Dona Ana County's numbers
33 and you also see the projection of jobs. While population growth in the 15
34 years that this study's baseline shows was at 22.5%, I know that
35 population has slowed a little bit at this point in Dona Ana. El Paso
36 County of course is expected to continue to grow and it's had a much
37 more dynamic growth, with as much as a 47% growth in their job base and
38 another, their residents have gone from 832,826, they expect to add more
39 to that and they're going to go beyond a million in 2030. We're supposed
40 to go to about 300,000 in this time period as well.

41 If we look at the survey of the corridor residents, we find in the
42 survey that we did, and we ask the simple question here, "For what
43 purpose would you travel by train?" and we got 1,000 responses; 90% of
44 the people rate for individual questions, 87% said they would use the
45 proposed rail service, 61% commute to work, 35% college education or
46 school, and so on. And that trend's pretty close to the national average. I

1 was just looking a moment ago because we were talking about surveys, I
2 was looking at Metrolink in Los Angeles which I'm very familiar with. I
3 actually managed the Orange County Line which ran service from
4 northern San Diego/Oceanside area all the way up, or Carlsbad actually,
5 last stop was Carlsbad, all the way up to Downtown LA. That service
6 provided quite extensive ridership. It was actually a number-one line in
7 the system. I think they carry about a million passengers a month, 12
8 million passengers a year but that's a whole different dynamic. But we
9 may talk about that later. But their numbers are about the same, about
10 65% or more for work and then about 35%, 40%. Now one of the reasons
11 I think they have a different experience than the Rail Runner is that their
12 fares are much higher and they also had a lot more support from the
13 business community. In fact as much, more than half of the people riding
14 those trains are getting tokens or financial support from their companies.
15 And from a tax basis which everybody gets in the U.S. for when you take
16 the bus or the train, I think it's \$110, \$115 a month that you can now do
17 tax-free, something like that. It's gone up and down a little bit over the
18 years.

19 Housing and transportation costs: So the residents of Dona Ana
20 and El Paso Counties' average pay is more than 60%. It's ironic that
21 housing is number one and transportation is number two. So people do
22 spend a lot of money on their transportation costs, whether it's buying a
23 car, the insurance for their car, getting the car fixed. You know my son
24 just hit a pothole earlier this this week that cost a few bucks to replace that
25 tire and the rim. So be wary of that. Residents along the line pay, we
26 have the numbers on that: 90% of El Paso commuters and 71% of Las
27 Cruces commuters live within a quarter mile of transit. It's actually
28 interesting, again we've done these surveys before and things have
29 changed as Las Cruces has grown a little bit with RoadRUNNER and
30 certainly El Paso, and now El Paso County and as well as SCRTD. Those
31 numbers change with that commutation within the transit district or transit
32 effort.

33 Specific markets: So what would we be doing? What does the
34 survey tell us? What do we see from the demographics? What do we see
35 from best practices in this survey? So the findings basically say that if
36 you're looking at specific markets that you need vibrant university
37 populations. We have good universities both here in El Paso and in New
38 Mexico and Dona Ana County Community College is all along the way.
39 You've got those in Chaparral, you've got those in Anthony and so on. So
40 you certainly have access to that. The Las Cruces, New Mexico complex,
41 I read the other day that El Paso and Juarez would actually be the third
42 largest city in Texas if they were all one. I don't think we're ready to take
43 Juarez into that into that (*inaudible*) but you do have that commutation
44 because you have all those people come across the bridge. So it's
45 certainly the largest metropolitan area along the southern border and we

1 have a very large and increasingly elderly population which of course
2 gives a high demand for service.

3 BNSF El Paso Subdivision Rail Line: Now what's interesting there
4 and I guess one of the things that's evolved through the various studies is
5 that with all the growth of BNSF and the investment that's been made, I
6 understand it's over half a billion dollars at Santa Teresa and going west
7 through Deming, much of the traffic now is bypassing Las Cruces. We're
8 actually only seeing a very low volume of traffic coming into Las Cruces
9 and into this area, so this rail alignment over the next decade or so could
10 in fact be virtually abandoned with the exception of those trips and
11 depending where the rail goes they might decide to put those on trucks
12 instead because maintaining the rail is costly. We were talking earlier
13 about the rail. I purposely took, when we started doing this study I took
14 the train to Los Angeles, so it's actually possible to take buses, connect to
15 Amtrak and then take the train overnight. It's about 15, 14 hours. What
16 was interesting to me was having taken that same trip years before, many
17 years ago, was watching the train pull out of Union Station in El Paso and
18 go all the way the back way, going in through Anapra and then on up to
19 Santa Teresa and then going straight across. I also saw that they've
20 made tremendous investment in the rail alignment Downtown El Paso.
21 They're not using wood ties. Those are mostly concrete ties so they've
22 increased the base which tells me that they're either looking at more
23 weight for the trains as they're coming through Santa Teresa and more
24 speed. So they have definitely improved the rail alignment. The rail
25 alignment that we're talking about that you can see on this line here is
26 parallel mostly to the I-10 coming in and one of the things that we did not
27 look at, we'll get that through the recommendations of the study, is that we
28 actually have, and I did encourage the consultant to look at this but we're
29 very similar to Minneapolis-Saint Paul. Minneapolis-Saint Paul had a
30 highway project which they made a highway expansion, it's about 15 years
31 ago, with rail. And so they actually had rail being built at the same time
32 they're widening the roads and so on. That allowed the ISTEAF funding to
33 be paid for to cover most of the costs. And that would be an opportunity to
34 be looked at in future studies as to whether we would qualify and whether
35 or not in working with both the State of New Mexico and Texas as the rail
36 lines, or the highway lines get built over the next 15, 20 years whether or
37 not that opportunity would be there and/or the fact that the rail is so close
38 to the road we would still maintain that corridor. And so that's something
39 to be looked at as we go through the study and into the future.

40 So this slide tries to talk a little bit about the population growth. I
41 won't go through too much of that. I kind of covered that a little bit. If
42 you're looking at 2000 to 2014 in this, the numbers are pretty dynamic.
43 We're still seeing a lot of growth in the area. We may be a little bit stymied
44 in the last couple years on population and work studies, but that happens
45 all the time and that may not be something that stays. There's certainly a
46 lot of interest in coming to this area of the country.

1 Projected ridership: I found this study part to be very interesting. In
2 talking and working with CNT they looked at best practices and they
3 looked at some other agencies, and I'll go through that in a minute. So
4 they looked at it from a standpoint of what the fare could be and what the
5 ridership could be on a certain amount of time, and I'm going to show you
6 the schedule here in a minute. So we actually built a schedule around
7 this. So if RoadRUNNER and its Downtown Transit Center which is not
8 downtown and it's not by the rail station at Santa Fe and if Sun Metro
9 which used to be right in their Downtown but it's not downtown there
10 either. They moved over to Paisano. So those are now connections.
11 They're not direct transit centers and because of that the ridership
12 numbers you see are lower. So that's why the number's adjusted. So the
13 question would be if you actually advocated and had full-scale commuter
14 rail which normally comes in these stations that has people, like we see
15 when we travel the world, could we do that in a way by transferring and
16 adjusting to those locations, because the train would not be there,
17 because the train's going to be at Union Station. It's not going to be at
18 Paisano which means you got to have a lot of shuttles, a lot of
19 connections. You tend to lose ridership that way because it takes more
20 time. So that's got to be part of it. The only way to offset that would be
21 frequency of service and that's something you get when you have a more
22 mature system. So what you see on the low-end 4,452 rides a day to the
23 high end of 7,400 rides a day and this is all based on, well now it's actually
24 based on 2040. So you got numbers and to give you a little bit of a stand
25 on this, when we get to the recommendations I'll go through how these
26 numbers came about and what might make most sense.

27 Now this is a service plan and from here you can see times of day
28 where we would leave service from the El Paso Union Depot and Las
29 Cruces and it would take, I think in the plan it's about four train sets to do
30 this because the time it takes to go down, come back, and so on and so
31 forth. So that could also be morphed as time goes by and you have
32 greater growth. This is the four trains. On this set here, passenger trains,
33 three per train set so you'd take 12 trains. We get estimated cost from
34 \$14-plus million to \$19-plus on the equipment. If you use used equipment
35 the number is significantly less if you do estimated cost and so on. Now
36 I've mentioned before Metrolink in Los Angeles. The reason I mentioned
37 Metrolink is that Metrolink started in Los Angeles County with five
38 separate counties working together, five counties working on the cost and
39 the contractor was Amtrak. So you use an existing contractor, you use
40 existing rail lines, you didn't build the rail lines, you didn't go, you contract
41 with the contractor. Money also came from the state for some of the
42 trains. Those were down the road as they got a little bit bigger but what
43 you're able to do is maintain the cost. And generally speaking they use
44 Union Station in downtown San Diego and they use Union Station in LA
45 and those already existed so you didn't have to spend money on those
46 things.

1 So one of the advantages of the Metrolink model which we did not
2 look at because my contractor wasn't familiar with it was that you could
3 actually do it with a private contractor and you could do it much cheaper
4 than the systems you have here. Because if you do brand-new equipment
5 and you do everything that way then you'd be much more like the Rail
6 Runner which is why that cost is so much higher.

7 Now based on the estimates and where we are and we also looked
8 at our 2009 study and we looked at Northstar, Minnesota which is a similar
9 system and where we would be in El Paso. So as we look at those
10 numbers we get a wide range of these numbers. My problem with this
11 part of the study is that these numbers are based on what we know today
12 from other locations. It doesn't necessarily look at if we were to contract
13 this out or privatize it. So this is really, it's a range of numbers. I don't
14 think that they're too high, I don't think they're too low. I don't know that
15 they're consistently to this. I think that we'd have to have an engineering
16 study which would be the next step to be able to come up with these
17 numbers. At this point in time it's more of an idea of what could happen.
18 Now based on those numbers though, and using the low and the high we
19 do get some cost estimates. So as you can see in the box below, average
20 ridership was at 4,452, the midpoint 5,056, and the 7,405. And so if you
21 look at the operating costs and the ridership, you can see that the cost per
22 ride can average anywhere from the low of \$11 to a high of \$14.53 but this
23 is also based on fares of about \$3.50 a trip. I think that's very very low.
24 It's somewhat similar to the problem the Rail Runner has because that's
25 what they're charging if I'm correct, somewhere in that range. I think you
26 look at other systems it's going to be much higher and it's also going to be
27 based on distance. So a trip to Las Cruces from El Paso in 2030, 2040, I
28 got to think that's somewhere between \$7.50 to \$10 a trip. I don't think
29 these numbers make the most sense and again you got to have a much
30 more definitive level study. This is a much higher level to look at. Fare
31 box recovery and again the ridership, these numbers run from 28% to
32 43%. I actually think these numbers are a little high. I don't think the
33 numbers based on the fares would get you this. I think you would have to
34 have much lower cost going into this to have those numbers. But those
35 are actually somewhat respectful. I was actually looking at Metrolink in
36 Los Angeles when I was working there 20 years ago. We were running
37 70% fare box recovery. They're down to 47%. So it does make sense
38 before you build it, you have to think through what is, you're trying to price
39 in to do it or you're going to have problems with your numbers.

40 Collateral development benefits: This one's an interesting one. I
41 refer this over to all the highway planners that might still be in the room.
42 They use the model for public transit. These are the ancillary costs and
43 savings that you get by building this. You're talking earlier about the
44 difference between people being on the road with their cars or people
45 being on that train, well the associated costs that's, or your collateral
46 benefit's going to be significant. So you're going to get money saved on

1 road and construction maintenance, this is on an annual basis by the way.
2 You're going to get savings on congestion reduction costs and so on and
3 so forth. So there's almost \$15 million that are built into this that could be
4 avoided. But again you need a more definitive engineering study to really
5 be able to quantify these numbers. These are based on a back-of-the-
6 envelope number that's somewhat acceptable in there, I think it would
7 require more analysis to do this. From a house hold benefit, this is the
8 one that you see all the time. So this is basically if you could get by
9 without one less car, these are the ancillary benefits you would get. On an
10 annualized basis you'd probably save about \$9,000 by utilizing these trips
11 all the time. But again what you're missing from this is the first and last
12 mile. So it assumes that you're going to be able to get to the train station
13 without some form of transportation or somebody getting you there.

14 So let me go through the recommendations. There's five
15 recommendations. I like number three. Give you that lead-in. So the first
16 one here is the Las Cruces-El Paso Partnership. So if we look at it from a
17 population basis obviously the El Paso numbers are much higher, same is
18 true of jobs. So there's a big ancillary benefit for a partnership between
19 the two cities and certainly El Paso would have a strong play into this
20 element. Recommendation two talks about having transit-oriented
21 development, TOD as an integral part of the passenger development. So
22 if you look at a one-mile-diameter development in the two large cities and
23 the six towns along the way, you could look at hundreds of millions of
24 dollars, potentially thousands of housing units, and jobs that could be built
25 along the way based on where these stations would be located. This has
26 certainly happened in larger urbanized areas. How well it would happen in
27 a southern district like this, my sense is it would happen but it would take
28 time to have those villages and those concepts to play themselves in. I
29 know that Santa Teresa's working on that plan right now so I think
30 something like this could work certainly in Anthony and maybe other areas
31 around Sunland Park. Number three, if you consider doing this, consider
32 engaging a short-line railroad as a neighbor negotiating and operating
33 partner. Obviously the one that falls into place here would be BNSF.
34 They have the railroad and freight experience. They have access to the
35 line and they could possibly be a financial partner. They might want to
36 play into the TOD themselves and make this part of their investment,
37 especially since the rail line is getting less and less use, more and more
38 costly for them to operate. To have us as a partner paying some of that
39 cost of the right-of-way would be a good way to go and it opens the door
40 to other federal financing opportunities that they could not qualify as a
41 private operator. Next recommendation, number four is position the rail
42 service to the broadest range of public funding opportunities. All these
43 funding opportunities listed here are certainly in use today. The only one
44 on the list that's somewhat being challenged is TIGER Grants and a lot
45 depends on where the Senate and this Congress goes with this President
46 as to whether or not that's going to get funding going forward but as I said

1 before, I think there's some opportunities that we would qualify for within
2 that corridor. And then last is creatively pursue a niche market. Clearly
3 we have a lot of connectivity with the universities that could be good
4 shuttles, we make connections to there to get to those stations. The
5 economy as it's growing and certainly in the southern part of the county
6 with Santa Teresa could be a perfect place to grow into that area,
7 especially with their village concept, maybe have some form of a shuttle
8 that would get them to the station, and of course finding out how we would
9 utilize that for elderly population. I think one of the things that Dave
10 Chandler was thinking about this was really on the healthcare because we
11 have healthcare and in this southern area it seems like people are going
12 between the two states in some cases. So this might be a focal point for
13 that or a portal to do that as well. And with that, that ends my
14 presentation. Go back to the beginning.

15

16 Flores: Thank you for that.

17

18 Armijo: Happy to take any questions.

19

20 Flores: Gill Sorg. Did you have questions?

21

22 Sorg: Oh, thank you Madam Chair. Thank you Mr. Armijo. I just wanted to point
23 out that rail, a commuter rail from here to El Paso is actually part of the
24 City's newest Strategic Plan ...

25

26 Armijo: Great.

27

28 Sorg: For 2017 to 2022. So this is good information to have so we can work
29 towards that ...

30

31 Armijo: Great. Thank you.

32

33 Sorg: At some point in time.

34

35 Armijo: Should also mention this presentation and the information on the report
36 which is I think 73 pages long is on our website. So you go to scrtd.org,
37 click on the little rail figure and that'll take you right to it. You can print that
38 up.

39

40 Flores: Councillor Eakman.

41

42 Eakman: Yes Madam Chair, thank you. And thank you for the presentation Mr.
43 Armijo. I don't know, in the business I used to be in which was healthcare,
44 when we did a feasibility study we came back with an answer of whether it
45 was feasible or not. And I find in this study we don't, we're not near an
46 answer on whether it's feasible or not and I would be willing to invest the

1 time to understand the financing options that are available and all the
2 intricacies of this. I know it would, but right now this seems like a "mystery
3 meal" to me and it makes me very very uncomfortable when we're talking
4 about \$450 million dollars of a capital investment because I can't see us
5 buying used equipment ...

6
7 Armijo: Correct.

8
9 Eakman: And being able to keep it repaired. When I look at all these capital costs
10 and things like this and knowing that we have a wish list of people who
11 would like to use it but there's no demand for it. We can tell that by the
12 current bus services between the two communities. So I would, if you can
13 direct me to anything where I can get some education on how financing for
14 these types of things work I'd be very interested.

15
16 Armijo: Good. Well let me answer the question and I'll put you 25 years back in
17 the past. So I had the same comments that you're giving when I was
18 approached by Senator Pete Domenici, Gary Johnson as Governor, and a
19 few others, Bill Richardson. What led to the Rail Runner was this same
20 discussion. We had done a couple of these feasibility studies before.
21 They wanted to do another feasibility study. This one was done for about
22 \$50,000 and even 20 years ago my answer to the question was exactly
23 what you said. You're not going to get, and I laid that out in the
24 presentation, you're not going to get the answers to the question whether
25 it's feasible or not. This is not a McCain's thumbs-up/thumbs-down. We
26 haven't done the analysis. The analysis here is very high-level based on
27 population numbers, based on best practices. As I spoke to the folks at
28 that time that approached me to do the study, I indicated that we needed
29 to do an engineering study. This is before New Starts even existed. We
30 were doing major investment studies. We identified over \$100,000 locally
31 and regionally up north. I approached and I was put in the room with the
32 new Governor Gary Johnson and said exactly what you'd probably say
33 next, which was, "\$100,000 Mr. Armijo? Do you think you can do a study
34 up here for that?" I said, "No. I'd need about a quarter million." He said,
35 "Okay. I'll give you the \$100,000. You come up with the other 50 and you
36 have to get to Albuquerque to kick it in," which we did. This was 20, 25
37 years ago to do that kind of study. Now we already talked about earlier
38 today the problems and the concerns and the perceptions of the Rail
39 Runner. Well much of the problems and concerns of the Rail Runner has
40 to do with elevation, a couple thousand feet I believe. We don't have that
41 problem here. We're flat. This is not a project similar to that. But as I said
42 before the next step in this process, and whether or not we have enough
43 information to gather support is going to be a discussion between the
44 electeds and educating everybody through perhaps a workshop to see
45 whether or not there's an interest to do this, and whether or not there's an
46 interest to do this tomorrow or ten years from now or something like that.

1 That's where we'll need to go. There's just not going to be enough
2 information other than data that's already available which is what our
3 consultant did. They took available data through the Census and other
4 pieces and put together an analysis. And they worked with BNSF to come
5 up with pricing for some of the cost that's in there. So it has done some
6 analysis but I would say that it's still very low-level.
7

8 Eakman: May I follow up? How could we work backwards then on a feasibility
9 study?
10

11 Armijo: This is, I'm going to leave it to semantics as to whether this is feasibility.
12 This is what we went with. This predates my being on board when we did
13 this contract. I think it's a good idea to see whether or not there's interest,
14 and there's certainly a lot of opinions I'm sure as to whether or not this is
15 something we should do. But to get to where you have a very clear
16 objective and knowledgeable data, you need to have an engineering study
17 done with engineers and planners who've built these things in that room.
18 Not CNT which is a good company on a planning entity but I don't think
19 that's the way you would want to go, and that's not how we approached it
20 when we did the Rail Runner.
21

22 Eakman: Thank you.
23

24 Armijo: Okay.
25

26 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.
27

28 Pedroza: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Armijo. My comment, and I worked for 24
29 years up and down, well up from Hatch through all the way to El Paso and
30 including Deming and so on. My suggestion would be that there is a
31 corridor already lined with towns that would benefit very greatly from this,
32 from all the people that I used to work with where they lived in mobile
33 homes, the father would work somewhere but the mother had absolutely
34 no transportation once the father left for work. And those towns are Vado,
35 Berino, San Miguel, etc. etc. etc. And I think that as you think about the
36 benefit and costs and so on we need to keep in mind the benefits to those
37 very people who are stuck because they're stuck in their homes, unable to
38 get to things like education, doctors, jobs, good food, etc. etc. etc. And
39 perhaps encouraging or increasing the surveys to them in a language that
40 is familiar to them with a lot of publication of that so that they are aware
41 that they are being asked for their opinion would go a long way to getting
42 some of the more, and yes, certainly if you find what was causing the
43 problems that the Rail Runner up in the north has is the unrealistic fares,
44 well increase them a little bit. I think that if people can combine one trip
45 from Berino to Las Cruces and then back and use that trip for going to the
46 doctor, going to the grocery store, going to all the other places that they

1 have to go, they'd be willing to pay \$7 for that trip. So that's just my
2 suggestion. Thank you.
3
4 Armijo: Thank you. Thank you.
5
6 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.
7
8 Rawson: Madam Chair, thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. Could I get a copy of
9 this presentation?
10
11 Armijo: Sure. Absolutely.
12
13 Rawson: Appreciate that, thank you.
14
15 Armijo: I'll e-mail it to you.
16
17 Rawson: That'd be great. Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. You mentioned the draft
18 study, or I'm sorry, you mentioned the study. I went onto your website to
19 download that and it's listed there as a draft study. Do you have a final
20 one that will be coming out?
21
22 Armijo: It's probably in the gallery, maybe it hasn't been posted. I'll get it for you
23 today. But it should, thank you for that. Yeah we had the draft study
24 before the last meeting. I thought that had been put up so ...
25
26 Rawson: Oh, okay.
27
28 Armijo: I'll check with, my webmaster may not have done it.
29
30 Rawson: And Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. I just went to the link that you had there
31 and it's got the watermark behind it, "DRAFT." So maybe this is the final
32 document with just, with that, I don't know. But it'd be good to know which
33 one was the final.
34
35 Armijo: We'll be sure we get the final up there. Thank you.
36
37 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. You mentioned projected ridership. You had a
38 slide up on that that talked about some of the ridership numbers going up
39 to 7,400 a day, projected ridership a day. How long would it take to obtain
40 those type of numbers?
41
42 Armijo: Yeah, I think it's in the box. It says 2040 so that's, and that would also be
43 with more service and trips, I would believe. I'll go back ...
44
45 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. Could you go back to that slide?
46

1 Armijo: Yeah. It's here. I think, I'm pretty sure it says 2040.
2
3 Flores: It says 2040. It does.
4
5 Armijo: Yeah.
6
7 Rawson: Oh, no, I was thinking you had one that showed ridership for 1A, 1B, 2A,
8 2B ...
9
10 Armijo: Let me get to that.
11
12 Rawson: 3A and 3B. there we go.
13
14 Armijo: Yeah.
15
16 Rawson: So this is the ridership in 2040 but I would assume that would depend on
17 when we started the project and when it was actually running because if
18 we waited ten years then this probably wouldn't be realistic.
19
20 Armijo: It may not be. Again it would come down to the population and again this
21 is all based on, from a feasibility point of view based on the rider projection
22 and so on and so forth. So you're absolutely correct. It would depend on
23 when it went into place, how long it was running before we reach that
24 point.
25
26 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. I guess I'm trying to find out what the ramp-up
27 time would be. Are you saying that if this started in 2040 that's what we
28 would see, or if this started in 2020 this is what we could expect to see in
29 2040? What are the numbers telling us?
30
31 Armijo: I think the numbers are telling us that all things being equal, whenever we
32 ramped up and the population, the numbers were at this point and the
33 number of pieces of equipment were where it's supposed to be, this is
34 where the number would be. So that's a projection but it's not tied to when
35 we would start.
36
37 Rawson: Okay.
38
39 Armijo: But it's obvious from a rational point of view you're correct. You'd have to
40 have some, you couldn't start that on day one.
41
42 Rawson: Right. You and I have had that conversation on the bus system so that I
43 know there's some sort of ramp-up time, I'm just trying to figure out what
44 that would be. But it sounds like we don't really know that at this point.
45
46 Armijo: We don't, no. No.

1
2 Rawson: Okay. Madam Chair. To Councillor Eakman's point about the investment,
3 the \$450 million that we'd be putting in, we look at the ridership numbers
4 and even if I take the highest ridership number, that's \$24,000 per round-
5 trip ride. Of course that would be for one year. So if you said these
6 numbers are realistic for 20 years and we annualize that out, or amortized
7 it out for 20 years, that would still be a cost of just under \$1,200 per round-
8 trip ride and if we're charging \$7 and paying out \$1,200 it, I understand it
9 will never be a profit center for the South Central Regional Transit District
10 but that's a pretty expensive bill every time someone gets on the train.
11 Madam Chair. I suppose to close my comments, Mr. Armijo you asked
12 about if there was interest to move forward and I would just say from my
13 perspective there's not interest to move forward. Thank you.

14
15 Armijo: Thank you.

16
17 Flores: Any other comments? Okay. Thank you very much Mr. Armijo.

18
19 Armijo: Thank you.

20
21 Flores: I think I'm going to take a five-minute break and then we'll start with the
22 next item on the agenda. Thank you.

23
24 FIVE-MINUTE RECESS

25
26 **7.3 BPAC Recommendation on Design Standards**

27
28 Flores: All right. Let's go ahead and get started. All right. So we'll move along to
29 7.3, the BPAC recommendation on design standards. Mr. Murphy.

30
31 Murphy: Thank you Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. We're bringing this
32 item forward to you to make you aware of. This is something that came
33 about through our Bicycle and Pedestrians Advisory Committee. They
34 had heard that the City of Las Cruces is currently looking at updating their
35 Design Standards and they wanted to make some recommendations. We
36 had several meetings with the BPAC. We also met with the TAC on this
37 and the BPAC is requesting that this Policy Committee do a resolution to
38 encourage our member jurisdictions to adopt NACTO Standards as
39 supplemental guidance to their design engineers. I do have a longer
40 presentation that I think we're going to save till next month but I'll also
41 have Mr. Wray post it on our website so that you can look at it at your
42 convenience. But we wanted to make you aware of this, allow you some
43 time to study this before we brought it forward as an action item.

44
45 Flores: Okay.

1 Murphy: And just trying to, since we do have another presentation to give I wanted
2 to just do the quick one on this one.
3
4 Flores: Okay.
5
6 Murphy: And here's the example of the longer one that will be put on the website
7 for you to look at in detail and we'll bring it back next month. So I'm just,
8 let you know what that looked like. Oh, sorry. Do I need to go back to that
9 last one? Do you want to move on to 7.4 now?
10
11 Flores: Oh. Okay. I thought there was going to be a little more of a short
12 presentation.
13
14 Murphy: Oh. No, no. That was the short presentation but I'll go back to it if you
15 would like.
16
17 Flores: Yeah.
18
19 Murphy: Okay.
20
21 Flores: Let's go ahead and do that then.
22
23 Murphy: I was trying to super-quick it. So here's the slide on the short
24 presentation. And just to kind of speak to that, your Advisory Committees
25 have reviewed these guidelines done by the National Association of City
26 Transportation Officials and they feel strongly about recommending them
27 for inclusion in the toolbox that staff engineers look at when designing
28 roadways.
29
30 Flores: Is everybody done? Okay. All right. We can move on to 7.4.
31
32 Doolittle: Real quick, Madam Chair.
33
34 Flores: Sure.
35
36 Doolittle: Tom. This information that you have here in the link, is it somewhere for
37 us to access so that we can look at it later? It wasn't part of the packet,
38 there's no link anywhere. All that's in here is the resolution.
39
40 Murphy: Madam Chair, Mr. Doolittle. I'll go ahead and, that other longer
41 presentation which also includes this link, I'll have MPO staff put it onto
42 our website so that you can click on it from there.
43
44 Doolittle: Okay. That would be helpful. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.
45
46 Flores: Okay. Thank you. So ...

1
2 Rawson: Madam Chair.

3
4 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.

5
6 Rawson: Madam Chair. The second-to-last bullet says there's a draft resolution in
7 our packet. Am I missing that?

8
9 Flores: Isn't that page, let me see, Page 67. And it's missing the end on
10 Resolution number 17-xx and then it's missing the date that the TAC
11 approved.

12
13 Rawson: Okay. Thank you.

14
15 Flores: Got that? Okay.

16
17 **7.4 Public Transportation in MVMPO**

18
19 Flores: All right. So now we can move to 7.4, Public Transportation in the Mesilla
20 Valley MPO.

21
22 Murphy: Okay. Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Last meeting staff had
23 given the Committee an overview of public transportation services
24 available in the Mesilla Valley and this month we have based on your
25 request we'll have a presentation that's more geared towards "What is the
26 MPO's active role in the entire process?"

27 So to kind of start off, as with all things MPO we are created by
28 federal legislation. Everything that we do has its basis in the Code of
29 Federal Regulations or legislation passed by Congress. And this is the
30 Code of Federal Regulations Section 450 subparagraph three which deals
31 with the establishment of the MPOs. It establishes our national policies
32 for, and particularly in this subject matter I took a couple of phrases out of
33 the regulations that are particular to this situation. We are required to do a
34 continuing cooperative comprehensive multimodal planning process and
35 we've had demonstration of that here this afternoon as far as the
36 continuing in the cooperative State Rail Plan. They're doing one this year
37 or next year. They had one in 2014. The RTD is working on a draft rail
38 feasibility. That's a continuation or updating of one that was done in 2009
39 and those of you that have been on this Committee remember that we do
40 our Metropolitan Transportation Plan, we update that every five years. We
41 adjust it to things that we learn each, basically each and every year as we
42 roll that out. Further, the Federal Regulations require that there are three
43 distinct work products that we produce: The aforementioned Metropolitan
44 Transportation Plan or MTP as I'll refer to it shorthand; the Transportation
45 Improvement Program or TIP which you voted on an amendment to earlier
46 this meeting; and then our Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP

1 which we frequently have forward for either amendments or adoptions on
2 a biannual basis.

3 Okay to kind of explain the Three-C process is: It's Continuing,
4 ongoing, one plan leads to the next plan and we update it; Cooperative,
5 this is one of the three words that is actually defined within the Code of
6 Regulations where MPOs gets its direction and it means that our parties
7 involved carrying out the planning program and management system work
8 together to achieve a common goal or objective and you can see that
9 working with our Committees, our TAC and our BPAC. We have staff
10 from agencies all through the region. We have members of the public so
11 that all of our different governments are speaking together as we develop
12 plans so that we can come to agreed-upon goals and move towards the
13 same objectives. And then Comprehensive, meaning that our plans are
14 looking at a wide variety of issues. Okay and to get back to the
15 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, this is our Long-Range Plan. We
16 update it every five years. We work with not only the State Department of
17 Transportation in developing it, we work with RoadRUNNER Transit, we
18 work with the RTD to develop this plan. And one of the requirements of
19 this plan is that we develop strategies and actions to develop an
20 integrated multimodal transportation system.

21 This map is a part of that MTP. This is, we have six or eight of
22 these maps associated with dealing with different subject matter. This is
23 the particular one where we look at public transportation priorities. This is
24 all on our website. I encourage you if you have questions to look at it in
25 more detail but I know that it prints out too small on the screen. One thing
26 of note, and this came up in the State Rail Plan to look at transit-oriented
27 development as an economic development model. That is something that
28 I think if you can see in the lower left-hand side, we've identified that as an
29 issue in the Mesilla Valley Plan. So that shows that we are developing
30 through our cooperation common goals and strategies. So through all the
31 work with the other agencies we are moving towards our common goals.

32 Also stemming or evolving out of the MTP throughout the years, we
33 also do some subsidiary plans. In 2011 we worked with RoadRUNNER
34 Transit. We developed a Long-Range Transit Plan. One of the key
35 advances or results out of that was we developed the concept that in the
36 region we would identify certain corridors as transit priorities, meaning that
37 these are the corridors where we would focus our transit investments,
38 realizing that we do not have the resources to provide heavy transit on
39 every roadway and rather than have a weaker system spread out, we
40 would start efforts to start focusing that investment so that when people
41 make their decisions of where to live, where to locate a business if they
42 choose, they could choose to do it along corridors that the transit system
43 is going to be devoting its resources to.

44 The Long-Range Plan also looked into technologies to recommend
45 RoadRUNNER to look into. It recommended a recommendation of start
46 looking towards alternative fuel in the fleet system. I believe that's

1 something that Transit is now actively looking at purchasing. So again
2 another one that speaks to the common objectives that we've come out
3 with. After we did the Long-Range Plan more recently we did a Short-
4 Range Transit Plan. Essentially this serves as a Strategic Plan to help
5 implement that vision not only shown in the Long-Range Plan and our
6 MTP, and just to kind of highlight that the routes were reconfigured.
7 Currently, you know it was done within the framework of resources that
8 are currently available but University Avenue for example has 30-minute
9 service on that. So that represents the commitment to putting additional
10 resources in the corridors where transit is most effective. But again that
11 did not start with the Short-Range Transit Plan. It's a result of the
12 continuous coordinated planning that we've been doing with
13 RoadRUNNER, the transit provider.

14 Second required document for the MPO. You recognize these
15 forms from your packets. This is just an example of one of them but it's
16 one of the RoadRUNNER projects and the important aspect of this is that
17 this is where the agencies get their federal funding. So this is at the point
18 where I guess if the MPO has any veto over the process, this is the point
19 where that happens. One of the terms of the Transportation Improvement
20 Program per Federal Regulations is that it must conform to the MTP,
21 meaning it helps advance all the strategies that we have developed in our
22 long-range plans and it's at this point where you are the arbitrators of
23 whether proposed funding actually accomplishes that.

24 And then our other required document, our Unified Planning Work
25 Program, that identifies specific projects that staff is working on either as
26 lead or with one of the other government agencies in the region. Past
27 UPWP products included, specified the Long-Range Transit Plan. It also
28 included the Short-Range. Those were work items called out in the
29 UPWP. We worked on them. They're accomplished. I think that the high
30 points in this current Work Program that we're doing is we're helping to
31 develop transit performance measures. This is kind of similar to safety
32 targets that we've talked a little bit coming out from the State, how best to
33 evaluate how our transit system's operating so that we can look and see
34 what's being effective and what's not. And then the other specific staff
35 project, we're ramping up our ability to do data collection on the public
36 transit system. We've purchased automated passenger counters. We've
37 installed a couple of them on RoadRUNNER buses. We're working on
38 getting some new software that automates the downloading and analysis
39 of that data so that we can report back to not only this Board but since
40 RoadRUNNER's a City operation we also want to report back to the City
41 Council a lot on the data collection because as the operator of
42 RoadRUNNER, the City is the one that's largely responsible for the really
43 specific operational decisions that RoadRUNNER makes.

44 All of the MPO documents are located on our website. I do invite
45 you to review them at your leisure and contact myself or anyone on staff if

1 you have any questions. And that concludes my presentation. Thank
2 you.
3
4 Flores: Thank you. We have a question from Councillor Sorg, or comment.
5
6 Sorg: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair. Mr. Murphy. Do you have or any member
7 of the staff have any new information on the purchase of an electric bus
8 for the RoadRUNNER bus service? Some update on that?
9
10 Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. I'm not sure what the latest that you know.
11
12 Sorg: I don't know anything.
13
14 Murphy: I know that the Quality of Life Department had applied for a grant in the
15 assistance of funding an electric bus purchase. It was a rather rapid
16 turnaround I believe. So on the MPO's behalf, based on policies in the
17 Long-Range Transit Plan and our MTP encouraging alternative fuels, I
18 wrote a letter of support for that grant application.
19
20 Sorg: Good. Good. I wasn't quite clear. It seemed to me that we'd got a grant
21 from the federal government here a year or two ago and when I was
22 talking to Mr. Bartholomew he did mention that that money would be used
23 for an electric bus. But I could be mistaken too. I just recall it being the ...
24
25 Murphy: If I could address that. I think that's one of the things that RoadRUNNER
26 Transit as the operator and you being on the City Council is essentially
27 their Board of Directors, you have some say-so. The way that we approve
28 the money into the TIP is "This is for support equipment and rolling stock."
29 It does not specify if it's diesel buses, natural gas buses or electric buses
30 or ...
31
32 Sorg: Okay.
33
34 Murphy: Any of that technology. I think that from the MPO's standpoint we want to
35 allow that flexibility for RoadRUNNER so that they can make a decision
36 more rapidly if something comes up that's advantageous to choose one
37 way or the other. So we're looking at you making sure that there's
38 equipment to operate the service and ...
39
40 Sorg: Service equipment then.
41
42 Murphy: Right. And then we step away from the more day-to-day decisions which I
43 think ...
44
45 Sorg: Yeah.
46

1 Murphy: Is more appropriate done at that level.
2
3 Sorg: You bet. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.
4
5 Flores: Thank you. Anyone else?
6
7 Eakman: Madam Chair.
8
9 Flores: Councillor Eakman.
10
11 Eakman: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair. Tom, have we ever received ridership
12 information on the various transit services within the MPO? I don't
13 remember seeing anything lately.
14
15 Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Eakman. We do get a report of the
16 RoadRUNNER Transit as soon as Mr. Bartholomew releases it to the
17 Transit Advisory Board. We can make that available to you either by e-
18 mail or we could figure out a way to additionally post that as well on our
19 website to make it more disseminated to the public. But we do get it. We
20 haven't published it because I believe it's officially published at the Transit
21 Advisory Board which is ...
22
23 Eakman: I would look forward to reviewing that information. I think whatever we can
24 do to encourage public transportation is in the best interest of all citizens.
25 We've got some costs out there already that we could maximize and I'm
26 not sure what role we could play but I think the information and some of
27 the other things we're doing is integrated with all that. I'd like to see that in
28 the future. Thank you.
29
30 Flores: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Murphy.
31
32 Murphy: Madam Chair. If I may further elaborate, actually. I did mention that staff
33 is looking through development of performance measures and we'll be
34 working on a report doing that and that'll certainly come about but I think
35 we can also make that information available sooner.
36
37 Flores: Thank you. Anyone else? Okay.
38
39 **7.5 NMDOT Update**
40
41 Flores: Let's move on to 7.5, New Mexico DOT update. Mr. Doolittle.
42
43 Doolittle: Thank you Madam Chair. I will make this brief. I have five projects that I
44 want to provide updates on here in the area.
45 Our 17th Street signal project, our goal if you'll recall from last
46 month was to have those signals operational by the time school started.

1 We had a little bit of issue with the manufacture of the mast arms. Those
2 mast arms I think are being stood today. There'll be some connection
3 issues and then we have to basically set them to flash for seven days I
4 believe per our standards to make sure that they function correctly. But
5 the plan is to have those signals fully functional in the next two weeks.
6 We also had a little setback because of the rain so the contractor's
7 continuing to work on the medians in that area. But ultimately we're
8 hoping to have that intersection fully functional within the next few weeks.

9 North Main-Three Crosses project, the contractor continues to work
10 on the Spitz retaining walls and they're working on the eastbound lanes.
11 That'll basically be the same general scope of the project for a while as
12 we're working on that project, working one side at a time. If you have any
13 specific questions tied to that project I can certainly relay that to my project
14 manager and try to get you the answers. We continue to have our
15 monthly public meetings. We've actually had some pretty good input and
16 participation in those meetings at this point. A lot of times our first one or
17 two meetings are heavily attended and then they drop off frequently to no
18 participation at all, but we continue to have a few people show up. So
19 that's good and we'll continue to have those regardless of whether
20 anybody shows up. We want to make sure that they have the opportunity
21 to attend.

22
23 Sorg: Same day, time, and place?

24
25 Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. I don't know that for sure. I know that they were trying to
26 do it on like the third Thursday of every month at the same time and same
27 place. We did have a few conflicts. I'll work on trying to get you a
28 schedule but in front of me I don't have that handy.

29 The other project in the area, we're doing the continuation of the
30 bicycle route basically over the pass at Organ on US-70 and we're
31 widening those shoulders. If you'll recall we had concrete wall barrier at
32 the top of the pass and it narrowed down substantially. We had the fatality
33 westbound climbing up the hill several years ago. So we acquired safety
34 funding and we're widening those shoulders to allow full bicycle route over
35 the top. Mountain States is the contractor on that one. They're working
36 on the concrete wall barrier and guard rail right now in Phase I, which is
37 the section just east of Organ. But that contractor's working real fast so I
38 expect that one to be completed in a timely manner.

39 The other two I wanted to touch on, about two years ago we had
40 some capital outlay awarded to us. Senator Papen worked on getting
41 some capital outlay for the Tortugas Road just south of town. It's actually
42 in the County believe it or not. But we're doing some sidewalk installations
43 on Tortugas. And then the other one, Senator Cotter acquired some
44 funding for some sidewalks on Thorpe Road out at Dona Ana. So
45 basically from the Dona Ana interchange at I-25 Thorpe Road runs west.
46 So we're doing some sidewalk there in front of the gas stations. We're

1 extending that sidewalk at the gas stations for a little bit. It wasn't a whole
2 lot of money but any improvements that we can do to encourage
3 pedestrian facilities is nice. We're actually improving the drainage in that
4 area a little bit too, both at Tortugas and Thorpe. So we have those two
5 capital outlay projects. They're short projects, 60 working days. So we'll
6 have those finished in a few months.

7 Those are the five projects that we have in the area and I'll stand
8 for any questions.
9

10 Flores: Okay. Not seeing anyone, thank you.

11
12 Doolittle: Thank you.
13

14 **8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS**

15
16 Flores: All right. So we'll move on to Committee and staff comments. Anyone
17 from the Committee want to make a comment? Okay. Seeing none, we'll
18 move on to any staff comments.
19

20 Murphy: Thank you Madam Chair. Mr. Loya's passing out a memo from the New
21 Mexico Department of Transportation, the recently-released Safety
22 Targets Memo. Per the Federal Regulations guiding the latest
23 Transportation Bill, the State and MPO are required to adopt safety
24 targets. The State has done so. I believe the effective date on this is
25 going to be August 15th, so from August 15th we'll have six months in
26 which to decide to support the State targets or to develop the MPO's own
27 ones. So we're providing this information to you now to see if the State
28 targets are supportable. From a staff review, and this is from meeting with
29 the NMDOT planning staff and other MPOs around the state, we believe
30 our recommendation's going to come out that we do support the State
31 targets. When we get down to MPO-sized areas particularly, not a large
32 one as such, that would be Los Angeles or New York, we have such a
33 small sample size, so I think our targets should well be adjusted to the
34 statewide ones. We'll have more presentations on this over the next six
35 months but we will be anticipating having an action item by this Committee
36 come February but wanted to get that into your review. And that's all I
37 have. Thank you.
38

39 Flores: Okay. Thank you very much.
40

41 **9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

42
43 Flores: So we'll move to number nine, public comments. Is there anyone from the
44 public that would like to make any comments now? Okay seeing none.
45

46 **10. ADJOURNMENT (3:08 PM)**

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

Chairperson

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MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION FORM FOR THE MEETING OF September 13, 2017

AGENDA ITEM:

6.1 NMDOT Safety Targets Presentation

DISCUSSION:

23 CFR 490, Final Rule on the Highway Safety Improvement Program, published March 15, 2016 and effective April 14, 2017 requires each state to set annual targets for five performance measures:

1. Number of Fatalities
2. Rate of Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles travelled (VMT)
3. Number of Serious Injuries
4. Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT
5. Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries

To comply with this rule, the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) undertook a coordination process with stakeholders from around the state to develop the New Mexico safety targets.

MPO Staff will present on the New Mexico safety targets.

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**MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE
DISCUSSION FORM FOR THE MEETING OF September 13, 2017**

AGENDA ITEM:

6.2 Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

Executive Summary of the National Transportation Safety Board Report

DISCUSSION: On July 15, 2017, the National Transportation Safety Board released a Safety Study entitled: **Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles**. MPO Staff will present findings from that study and show how local crash statistics compare with the national statistics. MPO Staff will then lead a discussion with the Policy Committee on using this information to assist the MPO in supporting the NMDOT Safety Targets presented in Item 6.1.

Safety Study

Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

490 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

Executive Summary

Speeding—exceeding a speed limit or driving too fast for conditions—is one of the most common factors in motor vehicle crashes in the United States. In this safety study, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) examines causes of and trends in speeding-related passenger vehicle crashes and countermeasures to prevent these crashes.

Why the NTSB Did This Study

From 2005 through 2014, crashes in which a law enforcement officer indicated a vehicle's speed was a factor resulted in 112,580 fatalities, representing 31% of all traffic fatalities. Speeding or speed has been cited as a safety issue, or a causal or contributing factor in 49 major NTSB highway accident investigations since 1967. Although recent speeding-related NTSB investigations have primarily involved large trucks and buses, most speeding-related crashes involve speeding passenger vehicles. In 2014, passenger vehicles constituted 77% of speeding vehicles involved in fatal crashes, and 78% of all speeding-related fatalities involved a speeding passenger vehicle. This study leverages prior NTSB investigations, together with other research, to address the national safety issue of speeding among passenger vehicle drivers.

In this study, the NTSB used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to summarize the risks of speeding, describe the scope of the problem, and promote the use of proven and emerging speeding countermeasures. This included a literature survey; analyses of speeding-related crash data; and interviews with national, state, and local traffic safety stakeholders. The stakeholders were representatives from transportation and highway safety agencies, law enforcement agencies, automobile manufacturers, research institutions, advocacy groups, equipment vendors, personal auto insurance providers, and professional associations.

This study assessed speeding among passenger vehicle drivers in a broad sense, as a factor that contributes to crashes and injury severity. Several, of many, potential solutions to the issue of speeding-related crashes are discussed. The solutions do not address every cause of speeding or type of speeding-related crash, but they are intended to be widely applicable to a significant portion of these crashes.

What the NTSB Found

Speed—and therefore speeding—increases crash risk in two ways: (1) it increases the likelihood of being involved in a crash, and (2) it increases the severity of injuries sustained by all road users in a crash.

The relationship between speed and crash involvement is complex, and it is affected by factors such as road type, driver age, alcohol impairment, and roadway characteristics like curvature, grade, width, and adjacent land use. In contrast, the relationship between speed and injury severity is consistent and direct. Higher vehicle speeds lead to larger changes in velocity in a crash, and these velocity changes are closely linked to injury severity. This relationship is especially critical for pedestrians involved in a motor vehicle crash, due to their lack of protection.

Typically, speed limits are set by statute, but adjustments to statutory speed limits are generally based on the observed operating speeds for each road segment—specifically, the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic. Raising speed limits to match the 85th percentile speed can result in unintended consequences. It may lead to higher operating speeds, and thus a higher 85th percentile speed. In general, there is not strong evidence that the 85th percentile speed within a given traffic flow equates to the speed with the lowest crash involvement rate for all road types. Alternative approaches and expert systems for setting speed limits are available, which incorporate factors such as crash history and the presence of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians.

Speed limits must be enforced to be effective, and data-driven, high-visibility enforcement is an efficient way to use law enforcement resources. The success of data-driven speed enforcement programs depends on the ability to measure and communicate their effectiveness. However, law enforcement reporting of speeding-related crashes is inconsistent, which leads to underreporting of speeding-related crashes. This underreporting leads stakeholders and the public to underestimate the overall scope of speeding as a traffic safety issue nationally and hinders the effective implementation of data-driven speed enforcement programs locally.

Automated speed enforcement (ASE) is also widely acknowledged as an effective countermeasure to reduce speeding-related crashes, fatalities, and injuries. However, only 14 states and the District of Columbia use it. Many states have laws that prohibit or place operational restrictions on ASE, and federal guidelines for ASE are outdated and not well known among ASE program administrators. Point-to-point enforcement, which is based on the average speed of a vehicle between two points, can be used on roadway segments many miles long. This type of ASE has had recent success in other countries, but it is not currently used in the United States.

Vehicle technologies can also be effective at reducing speeding. Intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) uses an onboard global positioning system or road sign-detecting camera to determine the speed limit; it then warns drivers when they exceed the speed limit, or prevents drivers from exceeding the speed limit by electronically limiting the speed of the vehicle. Although passenger vehicle manufacturers are increasingly equipping their vehicles with technologies relevant to speeding, these technologies often are not standard features and require the purchase of certain option packages. New car safety rating systems are one effective way to incentivize the manufacture and purchase of passenger vehicles with advanced safety systems such as ISA.

Finally, the current level of emphasis on speeding as a national traffic safety issue is lower than warranted. Current federal-aid programs do not ensure that states fund speed management activities at a level commensurate with the national impact of speeding on fatalities and injuries. Also, unlike other traffic safety issues with a similar impact (such as alcohol-impaired driving) there are no nationwide programs to increase public awareness of the risks of speeding. Although the US Department of Transportation (DOT) has established a multi-agency team to coordinate speeding-related work throughout the DOT, this team's work plan does not include means to ensure that the planned actions are completed in a timely manner.

Recommendations

As a result of this safety study, the NTSB makes recommendations to the US Department of Transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, 50 states, the Governors Highway Safety Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National Sheriffs' Association.

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MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION FORM FOR THE MEETING OF September 13, 2017

AGENDA ITEM:

6.3. BPAC recommendation on design standards

DISCUSSION:

The BPAC has recommended the adoption of NACTO Urban Design Standards.

At the last Policy Committee Meeting (August 8, 2017), a brief overview of the National Association of Community Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Design Guidelines was given. A PDF of the full presentation was also posted on the MPO website: <http://mesillavalleympo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/NACTO-Bicycle-Design-Guide-for-August-9-2017-Policy-Committee-Meeting.pdf>.

The MPO staff will discuss in more detail the NATCO Urban Design Guidelines and their potential adoption by the Policy Committee.

Considering the NMDOT Safety Targets, the NACTO Urban Design Guidelines if adopted and implemented have the potential to make streets safer by: reducing speeds; the separation of bicycles from traffic lanes, and the implementation of other proven tactics. The adoption of the Guidelines have the potential to significantly reduce bicycle collisions and encourage more to ride bicycles.