

**MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee which was held August 9, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in the City of Las Cruces Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla) (arrived 1:08)
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Councillor Jack Eakman (CLC)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Councillor Olga Pedroza (CLC)
Commissioner Benjamin Rawson (DAC)
Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Isabella Solis (DAC)
Commissioner John Vasquez (DAC)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Dave Nelson
David Armijo
Rick Little
Jolene Herrera
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

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

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

ALL STAND FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Flores: All right Moving to two. 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. Okay. Seeing none.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

1
2 Flores: We'll move to public comment. Is there anybody from the public that would
3 like to make a comment? Okay, I see people but nobody wanting to make
4 a comment.
5

6 **4. CONSENT AGENDA ***
7

8 Flores: We'll move to the consent agenda. Do I have a motion to approve?
9

10 Pedroza: So moved.
11

12 Flores: That's Pedroza. And seconded ...
13

14 Eakman: Seconded.
15

16 Flores: Councillor Eakman. Okay. All in favor.
17

18 MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
19

20 Flores: Okay. Anyone against? Okay.
21

22 **5. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
23

24 **5.1 * June 14, 2017**
25

26 - VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA
27

28 **6. ACTION ITEMS**
29

30 **6.1 Resolution 17-08: A Resolution Amending the 2018-2023**
31 **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
32

33 Flores: So we'll move on to action items. This is 6.1, Resolution 17-08: A
34 Resolution Amending the 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program
35 (TIP). Can I get a motion?
36

37 Sorg: Move to approve.
38

39 Eakman: Second.
40

41 Flores: All right. From now on can we state our names when we're making motions
42 just to make it easier for the recorder? So that motion was ...
43

44 Sorg: Move to approve.
45

46 Eakman: Second.

1
2 Flores: Okay thank you. We'll start with discussion on this.
3
4 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. I'd like to direct the attention of the Committee to
5 page 34 of the packet. There are three amendments to the 2018 TIP that
6 have been requested. A pause to clarify, this is not the current TIP under
7 which we're currently operating. This is the impending TIP that goes into
8 effect on October 1st of this year. This is the 2018 TIP.
9 The first amendment is LC00250. This is the University Avenue
10 Interchange Project. The DOT has requested to move \$775,000 from
11 construction to preliminary design in Fiscal Year 2018.
12 The second project's been request, has a minor typo in the control
13 number. The control number is G100400. There should be a second zero
14 after that zero. This is a joint project by Central Federal Lands and Dona
15 Ana County on Soledad Canyon. The scope of the project is from Dripping
16 Springs to the end of Soledad Canyon. This includes preliminary
17 engineering, construction engineering, and construction. The project is for
18 \$10,166,500 and it is a new project.
19 The last amendment to the '18 TIP that's been requested is
20 LC00300. This is the US-70 Elks to Del Rey Bridge and Pavement
21 Preservation Project. This is a change in project termini and scope. The
22 termini will now be milepost 149.8 through milepost 151. And I'll stand now
23 for any questions.
24
25 Pedroza: I have a question.
26
27 Flores: Councillor Olga Pedroza.
28
29 Pedroza: Thank you very much. I'm not sure exactly who will address this, but the
30 first amendment at University Avenue and Triviz strikes me as possibly
31 similar to the Missouri Avenue at Triviz. And I don't know if that is a fact, if
32 they are similar. But I wonder whether we can learn what, how much of the,
33 will University be put medians just as Missouri Avenue was put medians?
34
35 Doolittle: Madam Chair, Councillor Pedroza. Right now we're in the very early stages
36 of that project design and project development. Ultimately we have been
37 working with Federal Highway and Interchange Justification. At this point I
38 can't answer that question. I will say that University is a little bit different
39 than Missouri only because it is within the access control limits of the
40 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 lot
42 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 through
25 their Project Development Engineer. But there will be ample opportunity for
26 public input. And as we get into that I'll also present to this Board when we
27 have those public meetings and progress on how we're doing on the design.
28
29 Pedroza: Thank you very much. Thank you Madam Chair.
30
31 Flores: Anyone else? Mr. Doolittle.
32
33 Doolittle: Madam Chair, if I may. I also have a floor amendment that I would like to
34 request of this current TIP. Originally we had \$1.6 million in Fiscal Year '17
35 for preliminary engineering for the same control number that is showing up
36 on this list, LC00250. The General Office cut our design budget by \$10
37 million statewide in Fiscal Year '17. We've now been given \$1.35 million in
38 Fiscal Year '18 for preliminary engineering on that project to supplement
39 what we did not get in Fiscal Year '17. So ultimately total preliminary
40 engineering combined with the one that was presented to you by Andrew
41 will be a total of \$2.05 million of preliminary engineering. So at this point
42 Madam Chair I would request that the Board, I'll request that we have a floor
43 amendment to item 6.1, Resolution 17-08 to move \$1.35 million from Fiscal
44 Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2018 for preliminary engineering.
45

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

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

1
2 Wray: Mr. Doolittle.
3
4 Doolittle: Yes.
5
6 Wray: Councillor Pedroza.
7
8 Pedroza: Yes.
9
10 Wray: Councillor Sorg.
11
12 Sorg: Yes.
13
14 Wray: Councillor Eakman.
15
16 Eakman: Yes.
17
18 Wray: Madam Chair.
19
20 Flores: Yes. All right.
21
22 MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.
23
24 **7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
25
26 **7.1 NMDOT Rail Plan**
27
28 Flores: So moving on to discussion items, 7.1 New Mexico DOT Rail Plan.
29
30 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. MPO staff is pleased at this time to welcome Mr.
31 Dave Nelson from NMDOT here who's going to give this presentation about
32 the impending State Rail Plan.
33
34 Nelson: I'd like to thank Mesilla Valley MPO and the City of Las Cruces for letting
35 me speak today. Thank you. So I'm here to introduce the 2018 New Mexico
36 State Rail Plan and I guess I should find out where the "advance" is on this.
37 Just these, okay. All right. So we have a map of our rail system. This is
38 an intermediate map. It'll be improved a little bit ...
39
40 Pedroza: Sir. Excuse me. If you would speak right into the mic ...
41
42 Nelson: Sure.
43
44 Pedroza: Everybody'll hear you better. Thank you.
45

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

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

30 So the purpose of the Rail Plan is to describe the state rail resources,
31 set forth State policy regarding both passenger and freight transportation,
32 present priorities and strategies to enhance the rail service that benefits the
33 public. That last part is important, it should be shown that there is a benefit
34 to the public. And it serves as the basis for federal and state rail
35 investments. The contents generally fit under "Vision," "Goals," and
36 "Objectives" which include the "Actions," "Programs," and "Prioritizations"
37 so in other words, how is it that we decide what's important and what will
38 get worked on, which projects go forward. And as we mentioned before it
39 links to the other State Transportation Plans. "Rail Systems," "Inventory,"
40 and "Assessment," basically what's in our state: Which railroads operate
41 here? What sort of business do they do? What industries do they affect?
42 What are their connections to other modes of transportation? Do they
43 perform well and what issues and opportunities exist? So that might be
44 what are the problems and if it's not a problem per se but you think there is
45 an opportunity in the future do something to improve a situation or avoid
46 another problem, this is where we take note of that. And that ties into the

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

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

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

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

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

43 So as far as public involvement we have a Transit and Rail page at
44 the NMDOT site. Andrew from the MPO here has that URL so you can get
45 the link from him. It's also mentioned in the packet that you have, you'll see
46 it there. And at that site, on that webpage you'll have the 2014 Rail Plan

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

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

35 So we move on to the main goals that were in the 2014 Rail Plan and
36 I'll just look at each one of these separately. Support Economic Growth and
37 Development: This is one that we hear subject-wise from regions all over
38 the state. It's always one of the main concerns. "How can we create jobs?"
39 "How can we develop our economy?" and sometimes it has to do with
40 exports because if you can take your product and move them out then you
41 get money into your area that didn't exist before and that leads to some form
42 of economic stimulus. As you know, railroads when they just pass through
43 the state, it's not that there's no benefit to the state but it's a lot less if they're
44 not stopping here or starting here. So we're looking to increase the capacity
45 of long-distance freight corridors, develop and promote local freight
46 connections, that's sort of like the "first and last mile" situation. How do you

1 get your product to the railroad? Do you have a spur you work on where
2 your business is located, do you truck it in? Where are the yards and is it
3 convenient for you? Promote rail-related tourism, that could be the
4 Cumbres and Toltec, a little bit on the Rail Runner, but it's also the Amtrak.
5 Amtrak people think of as a vacation railroad or possibly a commuter
6 railroad for long trips for certain business people. But it's also a scenic
7 railroad in that people just go out there and travel and have fun. So anything
8 that we can acknowledge, if it's working for us in that way it's a good thing
9 as far as tourism goes. Also, link rail investments and strategies that
10 support economic development. We do have an Economic Development
11 Department in the State. There's a federal department and there's also
12 Councils of Government and so on that deal with economic districts. We
13 don't always know the best way to interlink the economic development with
14 things like transportation, railroads in particular but there's definitely
15 opportunities as you've seen in your area with the Santa Teresa Logistics
16 Facility and the Transload and so on. So I'd like to say that in the last
17 several years there's been a fair amount of development and a lot of it's
18 been down this way, and there's definitely more on the horizon. So
19 something to keep in mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 Major developments since 2014: Santa Teresa again, the
19 Intermodal Facility, BNSF has double-tracked everything that they planned
20 to do in 2016 they finished that up. New Transload facilities are coming into
21 being in the Albuquerque South Valley area. TIGER Grant funds were used
22 to replace railroad ties on NMDOT track. That's the NMRX used by Amtrak.
23 That section, the Rail Runner doesn't get over there hardly at all unless it's
24 making a maneuver to get out of the way. But what happened is we along
25 with the State of New Mexico, State of Colorado and Kansas, and a bunch
26 of communities and some other organizations all chipped in together, got a
27 TIGER Grant and was able to replace ties and some ballast along the track.
28 What's significant is that the Amtrak will run faster, more reliably, will have
29 less "train meets" as they call it where trains threaten to meet head-on so
30 they have to move aside for one another and that delays things and causes
31 expenses including sometimes with freight, and you don't want the freight
32 expenses to go up. So we actually did get some money through a
33 cooperative effort and it's improving that, and the work's almost done.
34 They're just waiting for the track to settle so they can raise the speeds up to
35 the final top speed. I say that not because it's as important down here that
36 this particular project, but it's an example of something that sometimes can
37 be done in other areas. We also have intermodal facilities underway, being
38 developed along the BNSF Transcon near Gallup and Los Lunas. There's
39 no clients for those facilities yet. And there's new rail-served facilities being
40 developed in the southeast.

41 So to sum up, we want your comments on the Vision Statement, it's
42 in the packet and it's available online as well, rail projects and priorities from
43 your point of view, funding mechanisms for rail, if you have conversations
44 with tourism or economic development or a local regional organization and
45 you have an idea about some funds we might know about it, we might not.
46 If you talk to us, or sometimes it's more appropriate to talk to NMDOT

1 Planning because they're sort of a nexus for some of these grant projects
2 and say, "Hey, how about this? We want to do this, we're starting to get our
3 material together. We're aware of this grant. Are you aware of it? How
4 does it work with other money?" and so on. And then if you have thoughts
5 about rail policy in general and you think there's something should be done,
6 let us know.

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

16
17 Flores: Councillor Eakman.

18
19 Eakman: Yes, thank you. Trent and I and I think Michael attended the event you had
20 here with your consultant and I just wanted to mention to my fellow Board
21 Members some takeaways I had. I was impressed that there were seven
22 or eight people from Mexico at this presentation, almost all from Chihuahua,
23 all very interested in how transit can be improved between our countries.
24 One of the main things mentioned is autos would move from the south to
25 the north but auto parts from the United States would move from the north
26 to the south, and there are of course all kinds of other things that could
27 happen too. Secondly it was stated that we have places in the state that
28 only get three-day-a-week service and there's almost no reason to have
29 three-day-a-week service. If it's not seven-day it's not going to be used. So
30 I think that'll be an emphasis coming up. And then I learned that there was
31 a balloon payment coming up on the Rail Runner system in 2026 that is
32 unfunded, and I don't know the size of that balloon payment but it sounds
33 huge. So I just wanted to bring that forward. I think our Legislature needs
34 to work on a plan. Thank you.

35
36 Nelson: Additional questions, comments?

37
38 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.

39
40 Pedroza: Thank you and I won't be very, I'll be brief. I have heard for several years
41 the need for transportation from Las Cruces to the more developing areas
42 of Santa Teresa and even El Paso, but even though it's been several years
43 that I've heard of these things moving I haven't seen any evidence of actual
44 putting in the rail lines and starting the, so can you tell me what's holding it
45 up?
46

1 Nelson: Well I think I'll partially defer to the next speaker because I believe they're
2 going to talk about the rail study from El Paso to Las Cruces and while I did
3 quickly read their study, I wasn't able to, I didn't have the time to fully
4 internalize all of it. But I know it's been an ongoing interest and it's been
5 mentioned in federal documents and there's a whole Southwest Rail Plan
6 study that was done, although I don't think New Mexico really participated
7 in that, and so there's some thoughts about what it would take to be a
8 connected part of the country. I'd like to give the other person a chance to
9 speak because I think they'll speak more accurately.

10

11 Pedroza: Thank you very much.

12

13 Flores: I actually had a question. On the cooperative effort that you had when you
14 replaced the railroad ties, I was wondering if by chance those were x-rayed
15 to see specifically which ties were needed or if it was just a blanket
16 replacement.

17

18 Nelson: You know, I don't know what method they used. Certainly to some degree
19 you can see visually if something's become bad. You can see if the rail is
20 not properly supported or if the ballast is slipping away or whether plates
21 are coming out. So that's the obvious stuff but they also have some
22 machines that they use to test things. Forgive me, I don't know about the
23 x-ray part but they didn't do it at random. In some of the grant applications
24 and other documents you might see, "We'll be replacing approximately one
25 out of three or whatever ties," and that sounds kind of random but what
26 they're saying is that, to give it a context, like what percentage we're doing.
27 But they actually pull out the worst ties and replace those and it's definitely
28 not a random process so.

29

30 Flores: And then on improving highway rail grade crossing safety, I'm just
31 wondering, we've had a discussion about this and last time we had an MPO
32 meeting, how are things picked for improvement? How do you target or
33 prioritize what places or areas get picked first for improvements?

34

35 Nelson: Are you talking in terms of the safety project specifically or all projects?

36

37 Flores: The safety projects.

38

39 Nelson: The safety projects. Well usually what happens is there's a certain amount
40 of inspections that happen through the bureau that I'm part of. So people
41 go out across the state and they look first of all at the things that are
42 considered the worst, so if they're notified there's something say in Las
43 Cruces that is a particular bad crossing, well I know for example up in I
44 believe it was Hatch there was three crossings that were pretty bad. They
45 got repaired recently and I think they got moved up, some of them got
46 moved up in the schedule. And so we try to look at the worst ones first that

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

26 Flores: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Rawson ...

27
28 Rawson: Madam Chair. Thank you.

29
30 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.

31
32 Rawson: Madam Chair. And I apologize, I did not catch your name.

33
34 Nelson: David Nelson.

35
36 Rawson: Mr. Nelson. Thank you. Mr. Nelson, I wanted to ask some questions about
37 the survey that you had. You had that on one of your slides. What kind of
38 a response have you received to that survey, or do you know yet?
39

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

1
2 Rawson: Thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Nelson. Do you know what those questions
3 are? Could you give us a flavor of what those look like?
4

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

17 Rawson: Thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Nelson. I'm asking some of those questions
18 because I'm one of the ones who did respond to that survey and took that,
19 but I was very disappointed with the way the survey goes through the
20 process. For example the first question is how, well the first question is your
21 zip code. After that, the next question you get is, "How important is the
22 passenger rail service in New Mexico to you?" I answered that question but
23 Mr. Nelson what is the correct answer to that question?
24

25 Nelson: I don't think there's a correct answer to that. It's fairly general.
26

27 Rawson: That's good to hear because when I answered it I found out that I'd entered
28 the incorrect answer. So I went on to the next question which was, "How
29 interested are you in the improvement or expansion of passenger rail
30 service in New Mexico?" and again you have the option of "Very interested,"
31 "Somewhat interested," "Slightly interested," "Not interested." Again I put
32 in the wrong answer and it told me that I put in the wrong answer. I went all
33 the way through the entire survey and found out I got 0% of your questions
34 correct.
35

36 Nelson: That's strange because I didn't think they were grading. And maybe there's
37 a problem with the survey and it needs to be fixed or was glitching at the
38 time. Is that what you're referring to?
39

40 Rawson: No. There was no problems with it. I went all the way through. The bar
41 goes across the top. I'm fairly comfortable with Survey Monkey. I've used
42 it in my business as well. But you can have it set up to have a test or you
43 can have it as a survey and what you have set up is not a survey and I hope
44 that when those answers come out you won't pertain those to be a survey
45 when it's obviously a very biased, where the "correct answer" on these
46 questions has already been chosen and if you put in the wrong answer then

1 it notifies you immediately and then would discourage you from going
2 through the rest of the survey because you've already gotten that question
3 wrong. It makes it very clear that you're not really interested in what
4 someone's opinion is but rather, "Here's what the correct answer is," and I
5 got 0% on my test.
6

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

31 Rawson: Thank you. And Madam Chair, just one follow-up on that. Mr. Nelson, I did
32 post that on my Facebook page and I believe there are eight other people
33 who took the test and also received less-than-glowing grades on your test.
34 So it isn't just me and my ability to run Survey Monkey but the way it is set
35 up. Thank you Madam Chair.
36

37 Flores: Thank you Commissioner. Anyone else? Mayor Barraza.

38
39 Barraza: Madam Chair. Thank you. First I just want to compliment you and the team
40 for continuing looking into rail service in the State of New Mexico, and
41 looking at your map we don't have a lot of rail accessibility in smaller
42 communities and I would like to see that. In traveling quite a bit this year,
43 my husband and I, either work or pleasure we are seeing an increase of
44 semi trucks on the road, I mean numerous semi trucks. And I think of the
45 wear and tear on our roads that is occurring when you see so many of those
46 large vehicles. In the State of New Mexico, as you know we are in dire need

1 of funding for our highways. And seeing some of these semis are probably
2 wanting to use affordably the rail service to transport some of their goods I
3 think would be a benefit to our community. But in terms of passenger also,
4 I can see in the future where more people would want to get onto rail service
5 and utilize that service in traveling either to the northern part of the state or
6 the east or the west side of the state, and also out of our state into Arizona
7 or the surrounding. I know that as my husband and I are getting older, we
8 definitely talk about trying to possibly use rail service in going to our
9 destinations that we would like to. The only thing is there are not a lot of
10 stations at the places that we would like to stop at and the travel time is
11 probably double in traveling versus going by vehicle. But I think you
12 definitely are in the right direction. I love the Vision Statement that you have
13 on this study and on the handouts that we have. And definitely it's
14 something for you all to pursue, and actually I got onto that Survey Monkey
15 right now and I'm taking that survey. It hasn't told me yet that I've hit a
16 wrong answer so I'm being able to proceed with it so hopefully before the
17 meeting's over I'll be able to complete that survey. So thank you.

18

19 Nelson: Thank you.

20

21 Flores: Anyone else? Then I'd like to thank you Mr. Nelson for coming and giving
22 us a presentation and I hope you have a safe ride back.

23

24 Nelson: Thank you. I appreciate it.

25

26 Flores: And some people from the audience, are they a part of the presentation?

27

28 Little: Madam Chair. It looks like you have public comments at the last. I am State
29 Representative Rick Little and I can fill in some of the gaps as far as the
30 Rail Runner that we have going from, it now goes from Belen to Santa Fe.
31 If I may, I ...

32

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

37

38 Little: Madam Chair. No, I have another meeting so I have to make that but thank
39 you.

40

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

42

43 Little: I will try to.

44

45 Flores: We have a long agenda.

46

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

22 There are quite a few other things. Economic development, you
23 know when we first brought that in under Governor Richardson we thought
24 that you know it would be a tourism advantage and there's been a little bit
25 of tourism. We thought that it would be some kind of economic advantage
26 to the state and it ended up as being quite a negative impact. And then we
27 can't, right at this point we had a survey done to try to, or the Highway
28 Department put together, the DOT put together a plan on if we wanted to
29 get rid of it and at this particular point it costs us more to get rid of it than it
30 does to keep it. And I believe it's a burden to taxpayers, that it's just way
31 beyond what, we would've been better off put three-laning the 25 up there.
32 People are still, there's just as many cars on the road as there were before
33 and they're not using the Rail Runner. Now there would be one thing, if
34 you're going to do a rail train and I'm not for gambling myself, but if you're
35 going to do it, if you put alcohol on it and gambling on it, it may at least get
36 somewhere close to making something happen and we have issues with
37 the pacts we have with our Indian Nations and whatnot. But anyway, just
38 quickly, these kind of things that we put in cost the taxpayer, I don't think
39 the advantages weigh out on what we could do on other things, and
40 especially taking care of our roads first. So thank you very much.

41
42 Flores: Thank you.

43
44 Little: Any questions?

45
46 Flores: Did you have a question?

1
2 Sorg: No question.
3
4 Flores: Okay. No, thank you.
5
6 Little: Thank you Madam Chair.
7
8 Sorg: I got a comment.
9
10 Flores: Did you have a comment?
11
12 Barraza: Madam Chair.
13
14 Flores: Mayor Barraza.
15
16 Barraza: I do have one more comment. I finished that survey.
17
18 Flores: Okay.
19
20 Barraza: And I understand where Commissioner Rawson is coming from because at
21 the very end of my survey, I was able to proceed with the whole survey but
22 at the very end it does show a score, and if it's a survey why is it doing a
23 score, and it says like "5/6 points." When you take a survey I didn't think
24 we were going to be graded on a survey and I truly understand where
25 Commissioner Rawson is coming from on that and that definitely is a
26 concern.
27
28 Flores: Thank you. Councillor Sorg.
29
30 Sorg: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair and thank you Representative Little and
31 Andrew and Mr. Nelson, yes for all that you've presented here today. I just
32 wanted to make a comment that yes, all modes of public transportation
33 including highways are heavily subsidized. And just looking at our agenda
34 for today, we've approved over \$42 million worth of construction on our
35 highways alone. It's a big expense for all modes of transportation and so to
36 single out rail as being not worthy of public transportation subsidies is not
37 fair. And so I just wanted to keep that, we need to do it all. We need to
38 have the highways, we need to have the rail, we need to have the buses,
39 and we need to have walking and bike trails too. So that's what I'm saying
40 and also the fact that the Rail Runner is a little out of our jurisdiction here
41 down in Mesilla Valley MPO. So that doesn't pertain to us so much here
42 anyway. Thank you Madam Chair.
43
44 Flores: Thank you. I would like to say I just went to Spain and they had a horrible
45 rail system when I went the first time and I can tell you they're light-years
46 ahead of us. It was so nice to be able to travel through there and to see

1 people getting to and from work so I can agree it's a public good and it's the
2 job of the government to fund things like schools and rail and transportation.
3 I mean it's an idea of whether we're willing to pay for that or not but anyway,
4 I see it as a public good as well.
5
6 Pedroza: I have a comment.
7
8 Flores: Okay.
9
10 Pedroza: I'm sorry.
11
12 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.
13
14 Pedroza: I'm sorry that I interrupted you. I just want to remind people that in fact, I
15 don't know if anybody agrees with me but in fact it's becoming clearer every
16 day that there is really some man-induced climate change and that possibly
17 providing transportation by rail for people who would otherwise, well first of
18 all we should acknowledge that there are a lot of people who do not have
19 transportation, either to get to grocery stores, to get to the doctor, to get to
20 work, any of those things. And I think that providing rail transportation for
21 those people, dependable, daily-basis rail transportation would be a definite
22 boon for them and I believe that that is the, I really admire the vision etc. of
23 the Rail Plan. I would just love to see it happen a little tiny bit faster. Thank
24 you.
25
26 Flores: Would Mr. Nelson like to respond to any of the comments? I just want to
27 give you that opportunity because I went ahead and let people make a
28 public comment. So I don't know if you want to make any response or
29 comment to anything that's been said here.
30
31 Nelson: I don't believe so. For the most part I believe that people would like to say
32 what their opinion is and I'm here to listen to their comments. Basically I'm
33 happy to hear what people have to say and take notes and educate myself.
34 I'm not from the Southern New Mexico area so I certainly will have
35 something to learn about the perspective and I want to, I'm sorry. I forgot
36 your name.
37
38 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.
39
40 Nelson: I'm going to look into what you mentioned and one of the people sitting next
41 to me did see that some of the first choice in each one was highlighted and
42 I think that's a formatting issue, and then I'll look into the score thing that I
43 heard about to. I think that's just a case of maybe when it was put together
44 that someone didn't anticipate what a perception would be and so we'll look
45 at that and try to amend it so that just isn't a factor at all.
46

1 Flores: Thank you. Okay.

2 3 7.2 SCRTD Rail Study 4

5 Wray: Thank you Madam Chair. At this time staff would like to invite Mr. David
6 Armijo from the South Central Regional Transit District to give the next
7 presentation.
8

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

17 So we start the presentation, what we're trying to do here is talk a
18 little bit about what we call the Las Cruces to El Paso Commuter Rail and
19 it was a feasibility study. I'm going to move to the second slide. I don't think
20 you can see that quite as well but hopefully you can see that on your
21 monitors. So if we go back a couple of years, back to 2015 working with
22 the Legislature, and my understanding this actually goes back many more
23 years. We've actually had some feasibility analysis before and when we,
24 I've seen the nodding, what we want to do is try to nail this down a little bit
25 so our goal was to try to look at the feasibility a little more from a cost
26 perspective, a little more from a ridership perspective and give a little more
27 of a sense of where this would go. Again, so we contracted with CNT. They
28 began the study January 2016. We contracted with them in late 2015. Their
29 contract expired in June. We had two series of public meetings and
30 Commissioner Rawson we did do a survey. But I googled to find out, I know
31 we did it online and I know we did cards. But I think ours was a low-tech
32 survey so I don't think we had Survey Monkey or anything like that but I'll
33 find out for you, and I know we had about 1,000 people involved but I've got
34 that later in a slide. So we had a couple of series of public meetings. We
35 did it back in April to get started and get an idea of what people are looking
36 for so we can incorporate that into the evaluation. And then in June of 2017
37 we brought CNT back at the end of their contract and we did a little bit of
38 the findings and that presentation is what I'm going to go through with you
39 today.

40 This is the corridor. When we first talked about doing this study we
41 were actually looking at going even north of Las Cruces, as far away as the
42 I guess Sun Port or whatever the rail study is way out there, but we could
43 pretty well combine it to Las Cruces-El Paso and what you'll see in the
44 highlighted area, in orange you see the metropolitan part of Las Cruces and
45 then the purple you see the metropolitan area of El Paso, and then the green
46 dots are some of the rail studies along the way. In fact we worked with the

1 New Mexico State University's Architecture Department. And I don't have
2 those yet, I have to get those slides from them but they actually did some
3 work on what stations could look like in the future. So maybe another time
4 I can bring those back. So this gives you a little idea of where the corridor
5 would be, so you would have Las Cruces to the far north and you would
6 have Union Station where Sun Metro is headquartered just outside
7 Downtown El Paso on the southern end.

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

23 If we look at the survey of the corridor residents, we find in the survey
24 that we did, and we ask the simple question here, "For what purpose would
25 you travel by train?" and we got 1,000 responses; 90% of the people rate
26 for individual questions, 87% said they would use the proposed rail service,
27 61% commute to work, 35% college education or school, and so on. And
28 that trend's pretty close to the national average. I was just looking a moment
29 ago because we were talking about surveys, I was looking at Metrolink in
30 Los Angeles which I'm very familiar with. I actually managed the Orange
31 County Line which ran service from northern San Diego/Oceanside area all
32 the way up, or Carlsbad actually, last stop was Carlsbad, all the way up to
33 Downtown LA. That service provided quite extensive ridership. It was
34 actually a number-one line in the system. I think they carry about a million
35 passengers a month, 12 million passengers a year but that's a whole
36 different dynamic. But we may talk about that later. But their numbers are
37 about the same, about 65% or more for work and then about 35%, 40%.
38 Now one of the reasons I think they have a different experience than the
39 Rail Runner is that their fares are much higher and they also had a lot more
40 support from the business community. In fact as much, more than half of
41 the people riding those trains are getting tokens or financial support from
42 their companies. And from a tax basis which everybody gets in the U.S. for
43 when you take the bus or the train, I think it's \$110, \$115 a month that you
44 can now do tax-free, something like that. It's gone up and down a little bit
45 over the years.

1 Housing and transportation costs: So the residents of Dona Ana and
2 El Paso Counties' average pay is more than 60%. It's ironic that housing is
3 number one and transportation is number two. So people do spend a lot of
4 money on their transportation costs, whether it's buying a car, the insurance
5 for their car, getting the car fixed. You know my son just hit a pothole earlier
6 this this week that cost a few bucks to replace that tire and the rim. So be
7 wary of that. Residents along the line pay, we have the numbers on that:
8 90% of El Paso commuters and 71% of Las Cruces commuters live within
9 a quarter mile of transit. It's actually interesting, again we've done these
10 surveys before and things have changed as Las Cruces has grown a little
11 bit with RoadRUNNER and certainly El Paso, and now El Paso County and
12 as well as SCRTD. Those numbers change with that commutation within
13 the transit district or transit effort.

14 Specific markets: So what would we be doing? What does the
15 survey tell us? What do we see from the demographics? What do we see
16 from best practices in this survey? So the findings basically say that if you're
17 looking at specific markets that you need vibrant university populations. We
18 have good universities both here in El Paso and in New Mexico and Dona
19 Ana County Community College is all along the way. You've got those in
20 Chaparral, you've got those in Anthony and so on. So you certainly have
21 access to that. The Las Cruces, New Mexico complex, I read the other day
22 that El Paso and Juarez would actually be the third largest city in Texas if
23 they were all one. I don't think we're ready to take Juarez into that into that
24 (*inaudible*) but you do have that commutation because you have all those
25 people come across the bridge. So it's certainly the largest metropolitan
26 area along the southern border and we have a very large and increasingly
27 elderly population which of course gives a high demand for service.

28 BNSF El Paso Subdivision Rail Line: Now what's interesting there
29 and I guess one of the things that's evolved through the various studies is
30 that with all the growth of BNSF and the investment that's been made, I
31 understand it's over half a billion dollars at Santa Teresa and going west
32 through Deming, much of the traffic now is bypassing Las Cruces. We're
33 actually only seeing a very low volume of traffic coming into Las Cruces and
34 into this area, so this rail alignment over the next decade or so could in fact
35 be virtually abandoned with the exception of those trips and depending
36 where the rail goes they might decide to put those on trucks instead
37 because maintaining the rail is costly. We were talking earlier about the rail.
38 I purposely took, when we started doing this study I took the train to Los
39 Angeles, so it's actually possible to take buses, connect to Amtrak and then
40 take the train overnight. It's about 15, 14 hours. What was interesting to
41 me was having taken that same trip years before, many years ago, was
42 watching the train pull out of Union Station in El Paso and go all the way the
43 back way, going in through Anapra and then on up to Santa Teresa and
44 then going straight across. I also saw that they've made tremendous
45 investment in the rail alignment Downtown El Paso. They're not using wood
46 ties. Those are mostly concrete ties so they've increased the base which

1 tells me that they're either looking at more weight for the trains as they're
2 coming through Santa Teresa and more speed. So they have definitely
3 improved the rail alignment. The rail alignment that we're talking about that
4 you can see on this line here is parallel mostly to the I-10 coming in and one
5 of the things that we did not look at, we'll get that through the
6 recommendations of the study, is that we actually have, and I did encourage
7 the consultant to look at this but we're very similar to Minneapolis-Saint
8 Paul. Minneapolis-Saint Paul had a highway project which they made a
9 highway expansion, it's about 15 years ago, with rail. And so they actually
10 had rail being built at the same time they're widening the roads and so on.
11 That allowed the ISTEA funding to be paid for to cover most of the costs.
12 And that would be an opportunity to be looked at in future studies as to
13 whether we would qualify and whether or not in working with both the State
14 of New Mexico and Texas as the rail lines, or the highway lines get built
15 over the next 15, 20 years whether or not that opportunity would be there
16 and/or the fact that the rail is so close to the road we would still maintain
17 that corridor. And so that's something to be looked at as we go through the
18 study and into the future.

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

26 Projected ridership: I found this study part to be very interesting. In
27 talking and working with CNT they looked at best practices and they looked
28 at some other agencies, and I'll go through that in a minute. So they looked
29 at it from a standpoint of what the fare could be and what the ridership could
30 be on a certain amount of time, and I'm going to show you the schedule
31 here in a minute. So we actually built a schedule around this. So if
32 RoadRUNNER and its Downtown Transit Center which is not downtown and
33 it's not by the rail station at Santa Fe and if Sun Metro which used to be right
34 in their Downtown but it's not downtown there either. They moved over to
35 Paisano. So those are now connections. They're not direct transit centers
36 and because of that the ridership numbers you see are lower. So that's why
37 the number's adjusted. So the question would be if you actually advocated
38 and had full-scale commuter rail which normally comes in these stations
39 that has people, like we see when we travel the world, could we do that in
40 a way by transferring and adjusting to those locations, because the train
41 would not be there, because the train's going to be at Union Station. It's not
42 going to be at Paisano which means you got to have a lot of shuttles, a lot
43 of connections. You tend to lose ridership that way because it takes more
44 time. So that's got to be part of it. The only way to offset that would be
45 frequency of service and that's something you get when you have a more
46 mature system. So what you see on the low-end 4,452 rides a day to the

1 high end of 7,400 rides a day and this is all based on, well now it's actually
2 based on 2040. So you got numbers and to give you a little bit of a stand
3 on this, when we get to the recommendations I'll go through how these
4 numbers came about and what might make most sense.

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

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

30 Now based on the estimates and where we are and we also looked
31 at our 2009 study and we looked at Northstar, Minnesota which is a similar
32 system and where we would be in El Paso. So as we look at those numbers
33 we get a wide range of these numbers. My problem with this part of the
34 study is that these numbers are based on what we know today from other
35 locations. It doesn't necessarily look at if we were to contract this out or
36 privatize it. So this is really, it's a range of numbers. I don't think that they're
37 too high, I don't think they're too low. I don't know that they're consistently
38 to this. I think that we'd have to have an engineering study which would be
39 the next step to be able to come up with these numbers. At this point in
40 time it's more of an idea of what could happen. Now based on those
41 numbers though, and using the low and the high we do get some cost
42 estimates. So as you can see in the box below, average ridership was at
43 4,452, the midpoint 5,056, and the 7,405. And so if you look at the operating
44 costs and the ridership, you can see that the cost per ride can average
45 anywhere from the low of \$11 to a high of \$14.53 but this is also based on
46 fares of about \$3.50 a trip. I think that's very very low. It's somewhat similar

1 to the problem the Rail Runner has because that's what they're charging if
2 I'm correct, somewhere in that range. I think you look at other systems it's
3 going to be much higher and it's also going to be based on distance. So a
4 trip to Las Cruces from El Paso in 2030, 2040, I got to think that's
5 somewhere between \$7.50 to \$10 a trip. I don't think these numbers make
6 the most sense and again you got to have a much more definitive level
7 study. This is a much higher level to look at. Fare box recovery and again
8 the ridership, these numbers run from 28% to 43%. I actually think these
9 numbers are a little high. I don't think the numbers based on the fares would
10 get you this. I think you would have to have much lower cost going into this
11 to have those numbers. But those are actually somewhat respectful. I was
12 actually looking at Metrolink in Los Angeles when I was working there 20
13 years ago. We were running 70% fare box recovery. They're down to 47%.
14 So it does make sense before you build it, you have to think through what
15 is, you're trying to price in to do it or you're going to have problems with your
16 numbers.

17 Collateral development benefits: This one's an interesting one. I
18 refer this over to all the highway planners that might still be in the room.
19 They use the model for public transit. These are the ancillary costs and
20 savings that you get by building this. You're talking earlier about the
21 difference between people being on the road with their cars or people being
22 on that train, well the associated costs that's, or your collateral benefit's
23 going to be significant. So you're going to get money saved on road and
24 construction maintenance, this is on an annual basis by the way. You're
25 going to get savings on congestion reduction costs and so on and so forth.
26 So there's almost \$15 million that are built into this that could be avoided.
27 But again you need a more definitive engineering study to really be able to
28 quantify these numbers. These are based on a back-of-the-envelope
29 number that's somewhat acceptable in there, I think it would require more
30 analysis to do this. From a house hold benefit, this is the one that you see
31 all the time. So this is basically if you could get by without one less car,
32 these are the ancillary benefits you would get. On an annualized basis
33 you'd probably save about \$9,000 by utilizing these trips all the time. But
34 again what you're missing from this is the first and last mile. So it assumes
35 that you're going to be able to get to the train station without some form of
36 transportation or somebody getting you there.

37 So let me go through the recommendations. There's five
38 recommendations. I like number three. Give you that lead-in. So the first
39 one here is the Las Cruces-El Paso Partnership. So if we look at it from a
40 population basis obviously the El Paso numbers are much higher, same is
41 true of jobs. So there's a big ancillary benefit for a partnership between the
42 two cities and certainly El Paso would have a strong play into this element.
43 Recommendation two talks about having transit-oriented development,
44 TOD as an integral part of the passenger development. So if you look at a
45 one-mile-diameter development in the two large cities and the six towns
46 along the way, you could look at hundreds of millions of dollars, potentially

1 thousands of housing units, and jobs that could be built along the way based
2 on where these stations would be located. This has certainly happened in
3 larger urbanized areas. How well it would happen in a southern district like
4 this, my sense is it would happen but it would take time to have those
5 villages and those concepts to play themselves in. I know that Santa
6 Teresa's working on that plan right now so I think something like this could
7 work certainly in Anthony and maybe other areas around Sunland Park.
8 Number three, if you consider doing this, consider engaging a short-line
9 railroad as a neighbor negotiating and operating partner. Obviously the one
10 that falls into place here would be BNSF. They have the railroad and freight
11 experience. They have access to the line and they could possibly be a
12 financial partner. They might want to play into the TOD themselves and
13 make this part of their investment, especially since the rail line is getting
14 less and less use, more and more costly for them to operate. To have us
15 as a partner paying some of that cost of the right-of-way would be a good
16 way to go and it opens the door to other federal financing opportunities that
17 they could not qualify as a private operator. Next recommendation, number
18 four is position the rail service to the broadest range of public funding
19 opportunities. All these funding opportunities listed here are certainly in use
20 today. The only one on the list that's somewhat being challenged is TIGER
21 Grants and a lot depends on where the Senate and this Congress goes with
22 this President as to whether or not that's going to get funding going forward
23 but as I said before, I think there's some opportunities that we would qualify
24 for within that corridor. And then last is creatively pursue a niche market.
25 Clearly we have a lot of connectivity with the universities that could be good
26 shuttles, we make connections to there to get to those stations. The
27 economy as it's growing and certainly in the southern part of the county with
28 Santa Teresa could be a perfect place to grow into that area, especially with
29 their village concept, maybe have some form of a shuttle that would get
30 them to the station, and of course finding out how we would utilize that for
31 elderly population. I think one of the things that Dave Chandler was thinking
32 about this was really on the healthcare because we have healthcare and in
33 this southern area it seems like people are going between the two states in
34 some cases. So this might be a focal point for that or a portal to do that as
35 well. And with that, that ends my presentation. Go back to the beginning.

36
37 Flores: Thank you for that.

38
39 Armijo: Happy to take any questions.

40
41 Flores: Gill Sorg. Did you have questions?

42
43 Sorg: Oh, thank you Madam Chair. Thank you Mr. Armijo. I just wanted to point
44 out that rail, a commuter rail from here to El Paso is actually part of the City's
45 newest Strategic Plan ...
46

1 Armijo: Great.

2

3 Sorg: For 2017 to 2022. So this is good information to have so we can work

4 towards that ...

5

6 Armijo: Great. Thank you.

7

8 Sorg: At some point in time.

9

10 Armijo: Should also mention this presentation and the information on the report

11 which is I think 73 pages long is on our website. So you go to scrted.org,

12 click on the little rail figure and that'll take you right to it. You can print that

13 up.

14

15 Flores: Councillor Eakman.

16

17 Eakman: Yes Madam Chair, thank you. And thank you for the presentation Mr.

18 Armijo. I don't know, in the business I used to be in which was healthcare,

19 when we did a feasibility study we came back with an answer of whether it

20 was feasible or not. And I find in this study we don't, we're not near an

21 answer on whether it's feasible or not and I would be willing to invest the

22 time to understand the financing options that are available and all the

23 intricacies of this. I know it would, but right now this seems like a "mystery

24 meal" to me and it makes me very very uncomfortable when we're talking

25 about \$450 million dollars of a capital investment because I can't see us

26 buying used equipment ...

27

28 Armijo: Correct.

29

30 Eakman: And being able to keep it repaired. When I look at all these capital costs

31 and things like this and knowing that we have a wish list of people who

32 would like to use it but there's no demand for it. We can tell that by the

33 current bus services between the two communities. So I would, if you can

34 direct me to anything where I can get some education on how financing for

35 these types of things work I'd be very interested.

36

37 Armijo: Good. Well let me answer the question and I'll put you 25 years back in the

38 past. So I had the same comments that you're giving when I was

39 approached by Senator Pete Domenici, Gary Johnson as Governor, and a

40 few others, Bill Richardson. What led to the Rail Runner was this same

41 discussion. We had done a couple of these feasibility studies before. They

42 wanted to do another feasibility study. This one was done for about \$50,000

43 and even 20 years ago my answer to the question was exactly what you

44 said. You're not going to get, and I laid that out in the presentation, you're

45 not going to get the answers to the question whether it's feasible or not.

46 This is not a McCain's thumbs-up/thumbs-down. We haven't done the

1 analysis. The analysis here is very high-level based on population
2 numbers, based on best practices. As I spoke to the folks at that time that
3 approached me to do the study, I indicated that we needed to do an
4 engineering study. This is before New Starts even existed. We were doing
5 major investment studies. We identified over \$100,000 locally and
6 regionally up north. I approached and I was put in the room with the new
7 Governor Gary Johnson and said exactly what you'd probably say next,
8 which was, "\$100,000 Mr. Armijo? Do you think you can do a study up here
9 for that?" I said, "No. I'd need about a quarter million." He said, "Okay. I'll
10 give you the \$100,000. You come up with the other 50 and you have to get
11 to Albuquerque to kick it in," which we did. This was 20, 25 years ago to do
12 that kind of study. Now we already talked about earlier today the problems
13 and the concerns and the perceptions of the Rail Runner. Well much of the
14 problems and concerns of the Rail Runner has to do with elevation, a couple
15 thousand feet I believe. We don't have that problem here. We're flat. This
16 is not a project similar to that. But as I said before the next step in this
17 process, and whether or not we have enough information to gather support
18 is going to be a discussion between the electeds and educating everybody
19 through perhaps a workshop to see whether or not there's an interest to do
20 this, and whether or not there's an interest to do this tomorrow or ten years
21 from now or something like that. That's where we'll need to go. There's just
22 not going to be enough information other than data that's already available
23 which is what our consultant did. They took available data through the
24 Census and other pieces and put together an analysis. And they worked
25 with BNSF to come up with pricing for some of the cost that's in there. So
26 it has done some analysis but I would say that it's still very low-level.

27
28 Eakman: May I follow up? How could we work backwards then on a feasibility study?

29
30 Armijo: This is, I'm going to leave it to semantics as to whether this is feasibility.
31 This is what we went with. This predates my being on board when we did
32 this contract. I think it's a good idea to see whether or not there's interest,
33 and there's certainly a lot of opinions I'm sure as to whether or not this is
34 something we should do. But to get to where you have a very clear objective
35 and knowledgeable data, you need to have an engineering study done with
36 engineers and planners who've built these things in that room. Not CNT
37 which is a good company on a planning entity but I don't think that's the way
38 you would want to go, and that's not how we approached it when we did the
39 Rail Runner.

40
41 Eakman: Thank you.

42
43 Armijo: Okay.

44
45 Flores: Councillor Pedroza.

1 Pedroza: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Armijo. My comment, and I worked for 24 years
2 up and down, well up from Hatch through all the way to El Paso and
3 including Deming and so on. My suggestion would be that there is a corridor
4 already lined with towns that would benefit very greatly from this, from all
5 the people that I used to work with where they lived in mobile homes, the
6 father would work somewhere but the mother had absolutely no
7 transportation once the father left for work. And those towns are Vado,
8 Berino, San Miguel, etc. etc. etc. And I think that as you think about the
9 benefit and costs and so on we need to keep in mind the benefits to those
10 very people who are stuck because they're stuck in their homes, unable to
11 get to things like education, doctors, jobs, good food, etc. etc. etc. And
12 perhaps encouraging or increasing the surveys to them in a language that
13 is familiar to them with a lot of publication of that so that they are aware that
14 they are being asked for their opinion would go a long way to getting some
15 of the more, and yes, certainly if you find what was causing the problems
16 that the Rail Runner up in the north has is the unrealistic fares, well increase
17 them a little bit. I think that if people can combine one trip from Berino to
18 Las Cruces and then back and use that trip for going to the doctor, going to
19 the grocery store, going to all the other places that they have to go, they'd
20 be willing to pay \$7 for that trip. So that's just my suggestion. Thank you.
21
22 Armijo: Thank you. Thank you.
23
24 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.
25
26 Rawson: Madam Chair, thank you. Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. Could I get a copy of
27 this presentation?
28
29 Armijo: Sure. Absolutely.
30
31 Rawson: Appreciate that, thank you.
32
33 Armijo: I'll e-mail it to you.
34
35 Rawson: That'd be great. Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. You mentioned the draft study,
36 or I'm sorry, you mentioned the study. I went onto your website to download
37 that and it's listed there as a draft study. Do you have a final one that will
38 be coming out?
39
40 Armijo: It's probably in the gallery, maybe it hasn't been posted. I'll get it for you
41 today. But it should, thank you for that. Yeah we had the draft study before
42 the last meeting. I thought that had been put up so ...
43
44 Rawson: Oh, okay.
45
46 Armijo: I'll check with, my webmaster may not have done it.

1
2 Rawson: And Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. I just went to the link that you had there and
3 it's got the watermark behind it, "DRAFT." So maybe this is the final
4 document with just, with that, I don't know. But it'd be good to know which
5 one was the final.
6
7 Armijo: We'll be sure we get the final up there. Thank you.
8
9 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. You mentioned projected ridership. You had a
10 slide up on that that talked about some of the ridership numbers going up
11 to 7,400 a day, projected ridership a day. How long would it take to obtain
12 those type of numbers?
13
14 Armijo: Yeah, I think it's in the box. It says 2040 so that's, and that would also be
15 with more service and trips, I would believe. I'll go back ...
16
17 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. Could you go back to that slide?
18
19 Armijo: Yeah. It's here. I think, I'm pretty sure it says 2040.
20
21 Flores: It says 2040. It does.
22
23 Armijo: Yeah.
24
25 Rawson: Oh, no, I was thinking you had one that showed ridership for 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B
26 ...
27
28 Armijo: Let me get to that.
29
30 Rawson: 3A and 3B. there we go.
31
32 Armijo: Yeah.
33
34 Rawson: So this is the ridership in 2040 but I would assume that would depend on
35 when we started the project and when it was actually running because if we
36 waited ten years then this probably wouldn't be realistic.
37
38 Armijo: It may not be. Again it would come down to the population and again this
39 is all based on, from a feasibility point of view based on the rider projection
40 and so on and so forth. So you're absolutely correct. It would depend on
41 when it went into place, how long it was running before we reach that point.
42
43 Rawson: Madam Chair, Mr. Armijo. I guess I'm trying to find out what the ramp-up
44 time would be. Are you saying that if this started in 2040 that's what we
45 would see, or if this started in 2020 this is what we could expect to see in
46 2040? What are the numbers telling us?

1
2 Armijo: I think the numbers are telling us that all things being equal, whenever we
3 ramped up and the population, the numbers were at this point and the
4 number of pieces of equipment were where it's supposed to be, this is where
5 the number would be. So that's a projection but it's not tied to when we
6 would start.

7
8 Rawson: Okay.

9
10 Armijo: But it's obvious from a rational point of view you're correct. You'd have to
11 have some, you couldn't start that on day one.

12
13 Rawson: Right. You and I have had that conversation on the bus system so that I
14 know there's some sort of ramp-up time, I'm just trying to figure out what
15 that would be. But it sounds like we don't really know that at this point.

16
17 Armijo: We don't, no. No.

18
19 Rawson: Okay. Madam Chair. To Councillor Eakman's point about the investment,
20 the \$450 million that we'd be putting in, we look at the ridership numbers
21 and even if I take the highest ridership number, that's \$24,000 per round-
22 trip ride. Of course that would be for one year. So if you said these numbers
23 are realistic for 20 years and we annualize that out, or amortized it out for
24 20 years, that would still be a cost of just under \$1,200 per round-trip ride
25 and if we're charging \$7 and paying out \$1,200 it, I understand it will never
26 be a profit center for the South Central Regional Transit District but that's a
27 pretty expensive bill every time someone gets on the train. Madam Chair.
28 I suppose to close my comments, Mr. Armijo you asked about if there was
29 interest to move forward and I would just say from my perspective there's
30 not interest to move forward. Thank you.

31
32 Armijo: Thank you.

33
34 Flores: Any other comments? Okay. Thank you very much Mr. Armijo.

35
36 Armijo: Thank you.

37
38 Flores: I think I'm going to take a five-minute break and then we'll start with the next
39 item on the agenda. Thank you.

40
41 FIVE-MINUTE RECESS

42
43 **7.3 BPAC Recommendation on Design Standards**

44
45 Flores: All right. Let's go ahead and get started. All right. So we'll move along to
46 7.3, the BPAC recommendation on design standards. Mr. Murphy.

1
2 Murphy: Thank you Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. We're bringing this
3 item forward to you to make you aware of. This is something that came
4 about through our Bicycle and Pedestrians Advisory Committee. They had
5 heard that the City of Las Cruces is currently looking at updating their
6 Design Standards and they wanted to make some recommendations. We
7 had several meetings with the BPAC. We also met with the TAC on this
8 and the BPAC is requesting that this Policy Committee do a resolution to
9 encourage our member jurisdictions to adopt NACTO Standards as
10 supplemental guidance to their design engineers. I do have a longer
11 presentation that I think we're going to save till next month but I'll also have
12 Mr. Wray post it on our website so that you can look at it at your
13 convenience. But we wanted to make you aware of this, allow you some
14 time to study this before we brought it forward as an action item.
15
16 Flores: Okay.
17
18 Murphy: And just trying to, since we do have another presentation to give I wanted
19 to just do the quick one on this one.
20
21 Flores: Okay.
22
23 Murphy: And here's the example of the longer one that will be put on the website for
24 you to look at in detail and we'll bring it back next month. So I'm just, let
25 you know what that looked like. Oh, sorry. Do I need to go back to that last
26 one? Do you want to move on to 7.4 now?
27
28 Flores: Oh. Okay. I thought there was going to be a little more of a short
29 presentation.
30
31 Murphy: Oh. No, no. That was the short presentation but I'll go back to it if you
32 would like.
33
34 Flores: Yeah.
35
36 Murphy: Okay.
37
38 Flores: Let's go ahead and do that then.
39
40 Murphy: I was trying to super-quick it. So here's the slide on the short presentation.
41 And just to kind of speak to that, your Advisory Committees have reviewed
42 these guidelines done by the National Association of City Transportation
43 Officials and they feel strongly about recommending them for inclusion in
44 the toolbox that staff engineers look at when designing roadways.
45
46 Flores: Is everybody done? Okay. All right. We can move on to 7.4.

1
2 Doolittle: Real quick, Madam Chair.

3
4 Flores: Sure.

5
6 Doolittle: Tom. This information that you have here in the link, is it somewhere for us
7 to access so that we can look at it later? It wasn't part of the packet, there's
8 no link anywhere. All that's in here is the resolution.

9
10 Murphy: Madam Chair, Mr. Doolittle. I'll go ahead and, that other longer presentation
11 which also includes this link, I'll have MPO staff put it onto our website so
12 that you can click on it from there.

13
14 Doolittle: Okay. That would be helpful. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.

15
16 Flores: Okay. Thank you. So ...

17
18 Rawson: Madam Chair.

19
20 Flores: Commissioner Rawson.

21
22 Rawson: Madam Chair. The second-to-last bullet says there's a draft resolution in
23 our packet. Am I missing that?

24
25 Flores: Isn't that page, let me see, Page 67. And it's missing the end on Resolution
26 number 17-xx and then it's missing the date that the TAC approved.

27
28 Rawson: Okay. Thank you.

29
30 Flores: Got that? Okay.

31
32 **7.4 Public Transportation in MVMPO**

33
34 Flores: All right. So now we can move to 7.4, Public Transportation in the Mesilla
35 Valley MPO.

36
37 Murphy: Okay. Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Last meeting staff had
38 given the Committee an overview of public transportation services available
39 in the Mesilla Valley and this month we have based on your request we'll
40 have a presentation that's more geared towards "What is the MPO's active
41 role in the entire process?"

42 So to kind of start off, as with all things MPO we are created by
43 federal legislation. Everything that we do has its basis in the Code of
44 Federal Regulations or legislation passed by Congress. And this is the
45 Code of Federal Regulations Section 450 subparagraph three which deals
46 with the establishment of the MPOs. It establishes our national policies for,

1 and particularly in this subject matter I took a couple of phrases out of the
2 regulations that are particular to this situation. We are required to do a
3 continuing cooperative comprehensive multimodal planning process and
4 we've had demonstration of that here this afternoon as far as the continuing
5 in the cooperative State Rail Plan. They're doing one this year or next year.
6 They had one in 2014. The RTD is working on a draft rail feasibility. That's
7 a continuation or updating of one that was done in 2009 and those of you
8 that have been on this Committee remember that we do our Metropolitan
9 Transportation Plan, we update that every five years. We adjust it to things
10 that we learn each, basically each and every year as we roll that out.
11 Further, the Federal Regulations require that there are three distinct work
12 products that we produce: The aforementioned Metropolitan Transportation
13 Plan or MTP as I'll refer to it shorthand; the Transportation Improvement
14 Program or TIP which you voted on an amendment to earlier this meeting;
15 and then our Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP which we frequently
16 have forward for either amendments or adoptions on a biannual basis.

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

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

1 Also stemming or evolving out of the MTP throughout the years, we
2 also do some subsidiary plans. In 2011 we worked with RoadRUNNER
3 Transit. We developed a Long-Range Transit Plan. One of the key
4 advances or results out of that was we developed the concept that in the
5 region we would identify certain corridors as transit priorities, meaning that
6 these are the corridors where we would focus our transit investments,
7 realizing that we do not have the resources to provide heavy transit on every
8 roadway and rather than have a weaker system spread out, we would start
9 efforts to start focusing that investment so that when people make their
10 decisions of where to live, where to locate a business if they choose, they
11 could choose to do it along corridors that the transit system is going to be
12 devoting its resources to.

13 The Long-Range Plan also looked into technologies to recommend
14 RoadRUNNER to look into. It recommended a recommendation of start
15 looking towards alternative fuel in the fleet system. I believe that's
16 something that Transit is now actively looking at purchasing. So again
17 another one that speaks to the common objectives that we've come out with.
18 After we did the Long-Range Plan more recently we did a Short-Range
19 Transit Plan. Essentially this serves as a Strategic Plan to help implement
20 that vision not only shown in the Long-Range Plan and our MTP, and just
21 to kind of highlight that the routes were reconfigured. Currently, you know
22 it was done within the framework of resources that are currently available
23 but University Avenue for example has 30-minute service on that. So that
24 represents the commitment to putting additional resources in the corridors
25 where transit is most effective. But again that did not start with the Short-
26 Range Transit Plan. It's a result of the continuous coordinated planning that
27 we've been doing with RoadRUNNER, the transit provider.

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

38 And then our other required document, our Unified Planning Work
39 Program, that identifies specific projects that staff is working on either as
40 lead or with one of the other government agencies in the region. Past
41 UPWP products included, specified the Long-Range Transit Plan. It also
42 included the Short-Range. Those were work items called out in the UPWP.
43 We worked on them. They're accomplished. I think that the high points in
44 this current Work Program that we're doing is we're helping to develop
45 transit performance measures. This is kind of similar to safety targets that
46 we've talked a little bit coming out from the State, how best to evaluate how

1 our transit system's operating so that we can look and see what's being
2 effective and what's not. And then the other specific staff project, we're
3 ramping up our ability to do data collection on the public transit system.
4 We've purchased automated passenger counters. We've installed a couple
5 of them on RoadRUNNER buses. We're working on getting some new
6 software that automates the downloading and analysis of that data so that
7 we can report back to not only this Board but since RoadRUNNER's a City
8 operation we also want to report back to the City Council a lot on the data
9 collection because as the operator of RoadRUNNER, the City is the one
10 that's largely responsible for the really specific operational decisions that
11 RoadRUNNER makes.

12 All of the MPO documents are located on our website. I do invite you
13 to review them at your leisure and contact myself or anyone on staff if you
14 have any questions. And that concludes my presentation. Thank you.

15
16 Flores: Thank you. We have a question from Councillor Sorg, or comment.

17
18 Sorg: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair. Mr. Murphy. Do you have or any member
19 of the staff have any new information on the purchase of an electric bus for
20 the RoadRUNNER bus service? Some update on that?

21
22 Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Sorg. I'm not sure what the latest that you know.

23
24 Sorg: I don't know anything.

25
26 Murphy: I know that the Quality of Life Department had applied for a grant in the
27 assistance of funding an electric bus purchase. It was a rather rapid
28 turnaround I believe. So on the MPO's behalf, based on policies in the
29 Long-Range Transit Plan and our MTP encouraging alternative fuels, I
30 wrote a letter of support for that grant application.

31
32 Sorg: Good. Good. I wasn't quite clear. It seemed to me that we'd got a grant
33 from the federal government here a year or two ago and when I was talking
34 to Mr. Bartholomew he did mention that that money would be used for an
35 electric bus. But I could be mistaken too. I just recall it being the ...

36
37 Murphy: If I could address that. I think that's one of the things that RoadRUNNER
38 Transit as the operator and you being on the City Council is essentially their
39 Board of Directors, you have some say-so. The way that we approve the
40 money into the TIP is "This is for support equipment and rolling stock." It
41 does not specify if it's diesel buses, natural gas buses or electric buses or
42 ...

43
44 Sorg: Okay.

1 Murphy: Any of that technology. I think that from the MPO's standpoint we want to
2 allow that flexibility for RoadRUNNER so that they can make a decision
3 more rapidly if something comes up that's advantageous to choose one way
4 or the other. So we're looking at you making sure that there's equipment to
5 operate the service and ...
6

7 Sorg: Service equipment then.
8

9 Murphy: Right. And then we step away from the more day-to-day decisions which I
10 think ...
11

12 Sorg: Yeah.
13

14 Murphy: Is more appropriate done at that level.
15

16 Sorg: You bet. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.
17

18 Flores: Thank you. Anyone else?
19

20 Eakman: Madam Chair.
21

22 Flores: Councillor Eakman.
23

24 Eakman: Yes. Thank you Madam Chair. Tom, have we ever received ridership
25 information on the various transit services within the MPO? I don't
26 remember seeing anything lately.
27

28 Murphy: Madam Chair, Councillor Eakman. We do get a report of the RoadRUNNER
29 Transit as soon as Mr. Bartholomew releases it to the Transit Advisory
30 Board. We can make that available to you either by e-mail or we could
31 figure out a way to additionally post that as well on our website to make it
32 more disseminated to the public. But we do get it. We haven't published it
33 because I believe it's officially published at the Transit Advisory Board which
34 is ...
35

36 Eakman: I would look forward to reviewing that information. I think whatever we can
37 do to encourage public transportation is in the best interest of all citizens.
38 We've got some costs out there already that we could maximize and I'm not
39 sure what role we could play but I think the information and some of the
40 other things we're doing is integrated with all that. I'd like to see that in the
41 future. Thank you.
42

43 Flores: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Murphy.
44

45 Murphy: Madam Chair. If I may further elaborate, actually. I did mention that staff is
46 looking through development of performance measures and we'll be

1 working on a report doing that and that'll certainly come about but I think we
2 can also make that information available sooner.

3
4 Flores: Thank you. Anyone else? Okay.

5
6 **7.5 NMDOT Update**

7
8 Flores: Let's move on to 7.5, New Mexico DOT update. Mr. Doolittle.

9
10 Doolittle: Thank you Madam Chair. I will make this brief. I have five projects that I
11 want to provide updates on here in the area.

12 Our 17th Street signal project, our goal if you'll recall from last month
13 was to have those signals operational by the time school started. We had
14 a little bit of issue with the manufacture of the mast arms. Those mast arms
15 I think are being stood today. There'll be some connection issues and then
16 we have to basically set them to flash for seven days I believe per our
17 standards to make sure that they function correctly. But the plan is to have
18 those signals fully functional in the next two weeks. We also had a little
19 setback because of the rain so the contractor's continuing to work on the
20 medians in that area. But ultimately we're hoping to have that intersection
21 fully functional within the next few weeks.

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

34
35 Sorg: Same day, time, and place?

36
37 Doolittle: Councillor Sorg. I don't know that for sure. I know that they were trying to
38 do it on like the third Thursday of every month at the same time and same
39 place. We did have a few conflicts. I'll work on trying to get you a schedule
40 but in front of me I don't have that handy.

41 The other project in the area, we're doing the continuation of the
42 bicycle route basically over the pass at Organ on US-70 and we're widening
43 those shoulders. If you'll recall we had concrete wall barrier at the top of
44 the pass and it narrowed down substantially. We had the fatality westbound
45 climbing up the hill several years ago. So we acquired safety funding and
46 we're widening those shoulders to allow full bicycle route over the top.

1 Mountain States is the contractor on that one. They're working on the
2 concrete wall barrier and guard rail right now in Phase I, which is the section
3 just east of Organ. But that contractor's working real fast so I expect that
4 one to be completed in a timely manner.

5 The other two I wanted to touch on, about two years ago we had
6 some capital outlay awarded to us. Senator Papen worked on getting some
7 capital outlay for the Tortugas Road just south of town. It's actually in the
8 County believe it or not. But we're doing some sidewalk installations on
9 Tortugas. And then the other one, Senator Cotter acquired some funding
10 for some sidewalks on Thorpe Road out at Dona Ana. So basically from
11 the Dona Ana interchange at I-25 Thorpe Road runs west. So we're doing
12 some sidewalk there in front of the gas stations. We're extending that
13 sidewalk at the gas stations for a little bit. It wasn't a whole lot of money but
14 any improvements that we can do to encourage pedestrian facilities is nice.
15 We're actually improving the drainage in that area a little bit too, both at
16 Tortugas and Thorpe. So we have those two capital outlay projects.
17 They're short projects, 60 working days. So we'll have those finished in a
18 few months.

19 Those are the five projects that we have in the area and I'll stand for
20 any questions.

21
22 Flores: Okay. Not seeing anyone, thank you.

23
24 Doolittle: Thank you.

25
26 **8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS**

27
28 Flores: All right. So we'll move on to Committee and staff comments. Anyone from
29 the Committee want to make a comment? Okay. Seeing none, we'll move
30 on to any staff comments.

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

1 item by this Committee come February but wanted to get that into your
2 review. And that's all I have. Thank you.

3
4 Flores: Okay. Thank you very much.

5
6 **9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

7
8 Flores: So we'll move to number nine, public comments. Is there anyone from the
9 public that would like to make any comments now? Okay seeing none.

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

12
13 Flores: We'll move to adjournment. We're adjourned. Thank you.

14
15
16
17
18
19 _____
20 Chairperson
21

