

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

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4   The following are minutes for the meeting of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning  
5   Organization (MPO) Policy Committee which was held April 11, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. in  
6   Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las  
7   Cruces, New Mexico.

8  
9   **MEMBERS PRESENT:**   Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)  
10                           Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)  
11                           Councillor Jack Eakman (CLC)  
12                           Commissioner Kim Hakes (DAC)  
13                           Trustee Stephanie Johnson-Burick (Town of Mesilla)  
14                           Councillor Gabriel Vasquez (CLC)  
15                           Councillor Gill Sorg (CLC)  
16                           Trustee Carlos Arzabal (Town of Mesilla)

17  
18   **MEMBERS ABSENT:**   Commissioner Benjamin Rawson (DAC)  
19                           Commissioner Isabella Solis (DAC)

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

25  
26   **OTHERS PRESENT:**   Jolene Herrera, NMDOT  
27                           Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

28  
29   **1.     CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (1:03 PM)**

30  
31   Eakman:     I'd like to call our meeting to order today, the prerogative of the Chair. If I  
32                   could please, would you all join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

33  
34   ALL STAND FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

35  
36   Eakman:     Thank you so much.

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

39  
40   Eakman:     I do need to read this one statement on conflict of interest. Does any  
41                   Committee Member have any known or perceived conflict of interest with  
42                   any item on the agenda? If so that Committee Member may recuse  
43                   themselves from voting on a specific matter or if they feel that they can be  
44                   impartial we will put their participation up to a vote by the rest of the  
45                   Committee. Would you please each declare?  
46

1 THERE WERE NONE.

2  
3 Eakman: Thank you so much.

4  
5 **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

6  
7 Eakman: We're now open to public comment. Is there anybody here for crowd  
8 control? Jolene. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. One at a  
9 time please. Seeing no one here, at this time, Ms. Baum did you have  
10 anything you wanted to say? Okay. Thank you.

11  
12 **4. CONSENT AGENDA \***

13  
14 Eakman: What are your wishes on the consent agenda? I would be open to a  
15 motion to approve or whatever.

16  
17 Vasquez: So moved.

18  
19 Sorg: Second.

20  
21 Eakman: It is moved and seconded that we approve the consent agenda. Mr. Wray  
22 would you poll the board.

23  
24 Wray: Yes Mr. Chair. Councillor Sorg.

25  
26 Sorg: Yes.

27  
28 Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

29  
30 Doolittle: Yes.

31  
32 Wray: Trustee Arzabal.

33  
34 Arzabal: Yes.

35  
36 Wray: Councillor Vasquez.

37  
38 Vasquez: Yes.

39  
40 Wray: Commissioner Hakes.

41  
42 Hakes: Yes.

43  
44 Wray: Trustee Johnson-Burick.

45  
46 J-Burick: Yes.

1  
2 Wray: Madam Mayor.

3  
4 Barraza: Yes.

5  
6 Wray: Mr. Chair.

7  
8 Eakman: Yes.

9  
10 MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

11  
12 **5. \* APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

13  
14 **6.1 \* February 7, 2018**

15  
16 - VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA

17  
18 **6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

19  
20 **6.1 Committee training: MPO 101**

21  
22 Eakman: Moving on, we have discussion items. The staff is going to be helping us  
23 with those. Would you please move forward, Mr. Wray.

24  
25 Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. First of all I want to say this is going to be a little bit  
26 more of a little free-flowing presentation today. The presentation I'm going  
27 to be giving is going to be on the MPO 101 book which Commissioner  
28 Hakes and Trustee Johnson-Burick, since they're brand-new with us, just  
29 received theirs just a few moments ago. If anybody else brought theirs  
30 with them today, we have got some refills, updated materials, we're happy  
31 to have those distributed out to everyone today. These are brand-new  
32 materials. We know that none of you have this particular piece of  
33 information. And I also want to say that if there's anything as I go through  
34 this presentation that you find that you are missing out of your MPO 101  
35 book, let staff know. We don't have it with us today but we will get that to  
36 you very shortly.

37 So getting started here, the overall purpose of the MPO 101 book is  
38 to provide a quick reference manual on MPO-related documents and  
39 materials for all members of the MPO committees and the MPO staff.  
40 Members of the Policy Committee all received one when they join. The  
41 members of the TAC and the BPAC all receive one, and we as a staff  
42 each have our own copies of the MPO 101 book. Just kind of the  
43 introductory materials that you'll find when we go in there: We've got the  
44 committee and staff rosters. We don't really make a habit of updating  
45 those as changes happen because, as everyone can imagine, changes  
46 happen with committee rosters fairly frequently and it's just not a good use

1 of paper for us to be continually handing out new copies to everyone. So  
2 we have an updated copy in there for when someone receives their book,  
3 but if anybody does want to have an updated copy of the roster provided  
4 to them, let us know and we will get that to you.

5 Getting on into kind of the meat of the document, and this is one of  
6 the two that we have here available for everyone, is the Transportation  
7 Planning Process Briefing Book. This is a very useful document that is put  
8 out by the Federal Highway Administration. It is a very good overview of  
9 the transportation planning process from kind of the federal perspective,  
10 federal viewpoint of their expectations for metropolitan and statewide  
11 planning. The most recent edition that they have published was actually  
12 2017 edition but it was put out very early this year, and we have copies of  
13 that available if everyone will please take that with them when they leave  
14 today and replace the old copy out of their MPO 101 book. The next item  
15 that follows in the 101 book is the MTP. This is also a very important  
16 document that is the long-range plan document for the Mesilla Valley  
17 MPO. It basically is a document that sets the foundation for all of the  
18 projects and the processes that go on in the MPO, the TIP, and the UPWP  
19 etc. I do want to note here for the Committee Members who have been  
20 with us for several years, will probably remember in the past when they  
21 received their MPO 101 book, we did include a copy of the TIP, the  
22 Transportation Improvement Program in the MPO 101 book. We no  
23 longer do that because the TIP changes on basically a quarterly basis.  
24 Again, it's not really a good use of paper for us to continually be handing  
25 out paper copies of that as the changes happen. However, I will hasten to  
26 add that an updated version of the Mesilla Valley MPO TIP is always  
27 available on the Mesilla Valley MPO website and now the State of New  
28 Mexico eSTIP is also online, so Mesilla Valley MPO TIP information is  
29 available from the eSTIP as well. And also, just a little shameless plug,  
30 MPO staff is going to be starting the Metropolitan Transportation Plan  
31 process for the next update in the coming months, towards the tail-end of  
32 this year. So be watching for that process to get off the ground.

33 The next item is an NMDOT item. It is the Planning Procedures  
34 Manual. This is the document produced by NMDOT that guides the MPO  
35 process within the state of New Mexico, and very useful in that it has a lot  
36 of timelines about the work products and when they are expected, and it's  
37 just a very good explanation in the Planning Procedures Manual about  
38 what MPOs are expected to do, what the requirements are, etc.

39 And then the next item in the 101 book is the Unified Planning Work  
40 Program, the UPWP. This is the biannual document that lays out staff  
41 activities for those two years. The Committee probably remembers that  
42 we're in the process of updating to pass the 2019-2020 UPWP. That'll be  
43 coming before this Committee next month. The copy that is in the MPO  
44 101 books that you all have now is out-of-date, though, because we did an  
45 amendment back in December of last year. So we have up-to-date copies  
46 of those for everyone. I guess I should say that Trustee Johnson-Burick

1 and Commissioner Hakes, you guys have all the latest and greatest in  
2 yours so these would be for the other Committee Members that we have  
3 the updates for.

4 The next document is another document that we are going to be  
5 updating very soon. It's the Public Participation Plan. We currently have  
6 an ongoing public comment period going on for the Public Participation  
7 Plan. You'll be hearing more about that at your next meeting, I presume.  
8 The Public Participation Plan is the document that guides the public  
9 involvement activities of the MPO, mainly relating to MPO staff's activities  
10 that we take as part of our, basically it lays out public comment period  
11 requirements, various public outreach tools, things of that nature. The  
12 Mesilla Valley MPO, and I can't describe this as unique to us but we do  
13 handle it slightly differently from a number of other places. We incorporate  
14 our Title VI compliance document within our Public Participation Plan. I  
15 believe the El Paso MPO does a similar thing of incorporating the two, but  
16 I think the other MPOs kind of keep those separate, but that's the way that  
17 we've handled it here at Mesilla Valley.

18 Then the next section is the MPO Governing Documents. This  
19 includes the Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Las Cruces,  
20 Dona Ana County, Town of Mesilla, and New Mexico Department of  
21 Transportation. That is the document that creates the Mesilla Valley  
22 MPO. That section also contains the MPO Bylaws which we have had  
23 some conversations recently about those. So those are the two. We have  
24 in the past had a couple of different MOAs that were included in there but  
25 most of those are now expired or lapsed and so those are the two  
26 documents that we have within the Governing Documents section at this  
27 time.

28 And then we have the boring part: The federal regs. Those are  
29 very important, obviously. However, I want to cast everyone's mind back  
30 to the Transportation Planning Manual put out by FHWA that is the first  
31 meaty document in the MPO 101 book. That is the document that makes  
32 the federal regs easily digestible to the layperson. And when it comes to  
33 federal regulations I don't know of anybody who's not a layperson. By all  
34 means, go in and read the regs. I have read them myself. They are not  
35 scintillating reading though, and the transportation outline book put out by  
36 FHWA is a very good guide and explanation of what the federal regs say.  
37 So that's kind of the tie there.

38 And then the last section is kind of just various bits of information  
39 that we find relevant to the MPO processes to related transportation  
40 planning issues. That is going to vary from MPO 101 book to MPO 101  
41 book depending on what we had to go in that section at the time when the  
42 books were distributed. I mean historically, we've had things like access  
43 management materials, just things of that nature. Actually, right of the top  
44 of my head I don't remember what all we have in that particular section  
45 right now, but it's kind of a, "This is where you, if you find something that  
46 you find of interest to you relating to the MPO, stick it in that section."

1 That's what I do, that's what MPO staff does, and that's the purpose of that  
2 particular section. And I will stand now for any comments or questions.  
3

4 Eakman: Yes. Member Hakes.  
5

6 Hakes: Andrew. Where did you say the explanation for the federal regs was? Is  
7 that in the notebook? I didn't follow you there.  
8

9 Wray: It's the first section immediately after the committee rosters. I can't  
10 remember off the top of my head what it's called, but it's the FHWA  
11 Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book. That's the explanation of  
12 the regs.  
13

14 Eakman: Yes.  
15

16 Vasquez: Thank you.  
17

18 Eakman: Councillor Vasquez.  
19

20 Vasquez: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Wray, thank you for that overview and thank  
21 you for the book. The great work that you do to put that together for us. Is  
22 this available online or as a .pdf for us to maybe read digitally?  
23

24 Wray: We do not have all of the pieces of it online and it certainly has no kind of  
25 coherent existence online. We could certainly look at putting a number of  
26 the things together in kind of one spot as a section in our website and  
27 handle it that way. That's excellent suggestion.  
28

29 Vasquez: Sure. And mostly I was asking, often if it comes up and I want to  
30 reference the .pdf version on a tablet or something during a meeting, it'd  
31 be useful to have that and not carry around the big Bible/encyclopedia.  
32 Thank you.  
33

34 Wray: We will look into getting some version of the MPO 101 book up online very  
35 soon.  
36

37 Eakman: That'd be great. Thank you Councillor Vasquez. Any other questions?  
38 Hearing none.  
39

40 **6.2 Comments on El Paso MPO Destino 2045**  
41

42 Eakman: Let's move to the next item. Let's hear what we did on the comments for  
43 El Paso MPO.  
44

45 Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. The El Paso MPO is currently in the process of  
46 adopting their MTP, which they have named Destino 2045. We would



1 have liked to have had the opportunity to present as comment to this  
2 Board for vetting. Unfortunately, the public comment period for Destino  
3 2045 began after the most recent Policy Committee meeting and closed  
4 this prior Monday. We read through the document and felt that it was  
5 important for Mesilla Valley MPO to provide a comment. If you want to  
6 turn to page 31 in your packet, the comment that we provided to El Paso  
7 is there. We did vet this comment through the Technical Advisory  
8 Committee to get some feeling from the jurisdictions as to their responses  
9 to Destino 2045. Specifically, we were looking at Dona Ana County since  
10 Dona Ana County is a member of the El Paso MPO, and also consulted  
11 with Jolene and Harold as representatives of District 1 who are also  
12 represented on the El Paso MPO. I did get a couple of suggestions for the  
13 comment and then the comment that you read in your packet is the one  
14 that I guess had consensus from the TAC for us to pass on, and we did  
15 pass this comment on to El Paso MPO staff this past Monday.

16  
17 Eakman: Any questions of Mr. Wray on this report? Hearing none.

18  
19 **6.3 NMDOT update**

20  
21 Eakman: We're moving on pretty well. I'll call on Mr. Trent Doolittle at this time for  
22 the NMDOT report.

23  
24 Doolittle: Thank you Mr. Chair. Just a quick update on two ongoing projects. On  
25 North Main we are about finished. We have about a month of final  
26 additional work, punch-list work, general cleanup, striping, landscaping,  
27 those kinds of things. But we are about finished. We certainly appreciate  
28 the patience of the community. We actually have received several  
29 positive comments from people who gave very negative comments during  
30 construction. So it's really opened it up and it seems to be flowing very  
31 well. I think one of those people that calls anonymously is Jolene just  
32 because she drove through it every day. But if you haven't had an  
33 opportunity to go through it, I encourage you to. It really cleaned up the  
34 flow through that intersection. Aesthetically it's a much more pleasing  
35 intersection, so I'm real happy that it turned out as well as it did.

36 The contractor for that project, AUI, also got the Valley Drive project  
37 which we're currently under our ramp-up time. That project is looking to  
38 start sometime in mid- to late June. That'll last about a year. For those of  
39 you who aren't aware, that project will go all the way from Avenida de  
40 Mesilla to Picacho, to include that real small stretch of Avenida de Mesilla  
41 to the McDonald's intersection, which is a City part but we're really trying  
42 to tie in the bike path, pedestrian access, those kinds of things to the  
43 Valley Drive corridor. So that project is expected to start sometime in  
44 June.

45 Those are the only two ongoing projects that we have. The last  
46 one I want to discuss real briefly is one that's upcoming that I'm sure will

1 affect everybody. We're reconstructing the University/I-25 interchange to  
2 include some tie-ins of Triviz under University directly into the Pan Am  
3 parking lot, those kinds of things. That project is scheduled to let in  
4 October of this year so we can expect to see construction probably in late  
5 winter/early spring of 2019, so about this time next year we'll be under  
6 construction. Right now we have \$40 million set aside for that project. So  
7 it's a lot of money considering that our normal annual STIP is \$30 million,  
8 but we're dual-year funding it so that we can split it up and it doesn't  
9 impact us too terribly. But we have some severe safety issues with the  
10 students getting off of I-25 at University southbound that we're going to  
11 address.

12 Those are the three major projects that we have in the area and I'll  
13 stand for any questions or comments anybody may have.  
14

15 Eakman: Any questions of Mr. Doolittle on this report? Down this way, Mayor Pro-  
16 Tem Sorg.

17  
18 Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you Mr. Doolittle. I recall not too long  
19 ago at our MPO meeting, there was a project on North Main at Elks and I-  
20 25, just a resurface. How's that project coming along?  
21

22 Doolittle: Yes Mr. Chair, Councillor Sorg. We are currently working on the design  
23 on that project. That's one that we're ahead of schedule so we're going to  
24 put it on the shelf. We originally had it scheduled in 2019, I believe, and  
25 we bumped it out to 2021? Jolene's shaking her head. I'll let her come up  
26 and explain what we're doing on that one.  
27

28 Sorg: No, I'm not talking about the intersection. I'm just talking about the  
29 surface.  
30

31 Doolittle: Correct.  
32

33 Sorg: From Elks/Triviz to Del Rey exit, maybe, I don't know.  
34

35 Herrera: Right. Good afternoon. Jolene Herrera, NMDOT. Yes. It's the pavement  
36 preservation project from Elks to Del Rey with a little bit of bridge work and  
37 then the ramps that go to I-25.  
38

39 Sorg: And when is it scheduled?  
40

41 Herrera: So it's scheduled right now for August of 2019, but it is going to be  
42 designed early. We are going to send it to Santa Fe and hopefully get  
43 funding in this August for it. So that's what the plan is, but if we don't get  
44 that funding then it'll be next year.  
45

46 Sorg: A year from then.



1  
2 Herrera: Yes.  
3  
4 Sorg: Yes.  
5  
6 Herrera: I know that ...  
7  
8 Sorg: So if you do get the funding, give me a ballpark date of construction start.  
9  
10 Herrera: So we would know in August if we got it funded or not, so probably next  
11 spring is what we'd be looking at.  
12  
13 Sorg: Okay. April-ish, this time next year?  
14  
15 Herrera: Yes. About this time next year.  
16  
17 Sorg: Okay. Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chairman and Mr. Trent.  
18  
19 Doolittle: Thank you Jolene.  
20  
21 Eakman: Thank you. Any other questions?  
22  
23 Vasquez: Mr. Chair.  
24  
25 Eakman: Yes Councillor Vasquez.  
26  
27 Vasquez: Thank you Chair. Mr. Doolittle, at our prior City Council meeting as we  
28 were discussing some of gateway entry signs for the City of Las Cruces  
29 being placed on NMDOT property, we had a discussion about the process  
30 of being able to conduct that in a timely manner with the permission of  
31 NMDOT if that was the location that we chose to essentially put up  
32 signage, and we also talked about the lack of I guess information  
33 regarding the guidelines that NMDOT is developing that would allow us to  
34 move forward with that process. So this is maybe part of a two-part  
35 question, because the other issue that came up is also within some of the  
36 artwork that was placed on some prior NMDOT bridges in the City of Las  
37 Cruces. There seemed to be some concern about using the City's logo or  
38 the three crosses iconography that was perceived to be I guess religious  
39 and discouraged by NMDOT. Could you provide some clarification on  
40 those two things?  
41  
42 Doolittle: Mr. Chair, Councillor. I'll certainly try. This is a project development issue  
43 that I may need to get some clarification later, but I'll do my best to explain  
44 my understanding of the situation. So the signage is directly related to the  
45 district. Any signage that is placed on interstate or U.S. routes requires  
46 approval from Federal Highway. Federal Highway and the DOT are

1 currently undergoing their regulations tied to incorporation of those things  
2 into DOT right-of-way, only because there's very inconsistent application  
3 between the six districts statewide. Right now, or in the past that approval  
4 fell directly on the district and the traffic engineer for that specific district.  
5 The General Office in Federal Highway recognizing the inconsistent  
6 implementation has begun a review process that would incorporate a  
7 statewide committee so it would no longer be allowed to fall on the DOT.  
8 That policy is currently under review internally to the Department. It's  
9 completely out of the control of the district and I don't have a timeline for it,  
10 but the direction we have at this point is we are not to approve any  
11 additional signing at all within DOT right-of-way until that policy is  
12 approved. I will tell you that I saw the draft policy probably six months  
13 ago, eight months ago, and I have not heard anything since then. What I'll  
14 do is I have a biweekly district engineers conference call with executive  
15 staff. I'll put that on the next agenda item to see if I can get you an update  
16 on where we sit with that. But my traffic engineer has been in contact with  
17 City staff specifically on the two signs, one on I-25 at the US-70 area and  
18 one on I-10/I-25, to try to give them some guidance on what we're doing.  
19 But at this point I don't have any real solid direction for you. My traffic  
20 engineer did recommend to City staff that if they can find a piece of  
21 property adjacent to where the property owner would let them, very similar  
22 to what they did on I-25 out by the US-70 interchange, that's actually  
23 sitting on private property, and it may be City property, but that would  
24 certainly expedite as opposed to waiting on us or Federal Highway.  
25

26 Vasquez: Sure. And thank you Mr. Doolittle and I appreciate you bringing it up on  
27 your next call. I think it is an issue of great importance to the City and  
28 probably the County as well, because we see it as an economic  
29 development opportunity that really brands our community. And while it  
30 would be fine and I think we are exploring, our staff is exploring the option  
31 to look at private parcels where a sign might be appropriate, from looking  
32 at the maps it looks like some of the highly-desirable locations as entry  
33 points to the City are located on NMDOT property and I think we would  
34 want to see that as an option, at least. So thank you for bringing that up  
35 and I think the consensus of the Council was that we would like at least a  
36 timeline of when those guidelines or regulations might be improved. So  
37 that'd be great.

38 And then the reason I asked the second question Mr. Doolittle  
39 about the iconography is because I'm not sure what the design process is  
40 for the University bridge project but I know that's going to incorporate  
41 some type of kind of mural or concrete work art similar to what's been  
42 done in the other overpasses in the City. And obviously we would always  
43 like the opportunity to brand the City with the three crosses that signifies  
44 our community, and so just wanted to see if there was anything that really  
45 prohibited us in regulations through NMDOT from doing that, because

1 there was also some conversation about NMDOT discouraging those  
2 types of designs.

3  
4 Doolittle: So on that one Councillor, the Department is in the process of selecting  
5 the artist for that interchange. I will tell you that Federal Highway, at least  
6 the New Mexico division, has been hesitant about approving any kind of  
7 logo at all. NMSU originally approached us as well, specifically for the  
8 bridge that crosses, that Triviz will cross under University. They  
9 specifically were asking about that one. I think Federal Highway and even  
10 internally are more open to discussions with that one specifically as  
11 opposed to the one over I-25, only because there is concern about  
12 specific logos on routes that are on federal property. The one that's come  
13 up before, and I've discussed this with this Board prior to, is if you travel to  
14 Albuquerque, the Los Lunas interchange, they have Los Lunas written all  
15 over it. To this day I'm not so sure how that happened because we've  
16 been told that won't happen in this area. The UTEP pickaxe as you travel  
17 on I-10 through El Paso, you know that's in interstate right-of-way.  
18 Oklahoma, I guess Oklahoma State has a university that has their logo.  
19 Again, I haven't received any real clear direction on how they handle those  
20 types of things but all artwork specifically on an interstate system goes  
21 through Federal Highway for final approval before we're able to do it. As  
22 we go through this process specifically on I-25 and University I'll share this  
23 with the design team of the City's request. But again, NMSU has made  
24 the same request and our early discussions with Federal Highway, it  
25 doesn't appear that we'll do any of that because all those bridges on that  
26 project fall within DOT right-of-way. Originally there was some right-of-  
27 way maps that showed the Triviz side falling within either University right-  
28 of-way or the City. That's been clarified it is not. It is DOT property and  
29 we will be the owners.

30  
31 Vasquez: Mr. Doolittle. The on-ramp from I guess it would be Bataan Memorial on  
32 Highway 70 going up to when it turns into North Main Street and you have  
33 the concrete block with the City of Las Cruces logo. Is that NMDOT  
34 property?

35  
36 Doolittle: It is. And Councillor, under the previous direction that we had even before  
37 this rewrite of this policy, those types of things were allowed and we were  
38 actually working with the City to implement some sort of sign where the  
39 roadrunner is on I-10, that was a previous direction. Under our current  
40 direction I would tell you that that monument that sits at US-70 would not  
41 be allowed.

42  
43 Vasquez: Thank you Mr. Doolittle, and for me personally it seems like we're kind of  
44 drawing the short end of the stick there because it's an opportunity for us  
45 to really brand ourselves using existing infrastructure projects that are  
46 already funded, that are being planned as we speak, and I know UTEP's

1 giant pickaxes are just, they make an impression as you come in, and it  
2 shows also the pride in the university. So if there's any way that we can  
3 get some more information about how to influence that process, it would  
4 be appreciated. Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair.  
5

6 Doolittle: Councillor, Mr. Chair. If I may just expand just real briefly, so City staff is  
7 involved in the design of University and I-25. I will tell you, as an NMSU  
8 alumni, I'm pushing to try to get that thing painted ...  
9

10 Vasquez: Crimson.  
11

12 Doolittle: Crimson or whatever we need to do, but I will certainly share that. I  
13 encourage you to have discussions with your City staff. Again, I think the  
14 problem is this drawing-up of this new policy. The timing is not good for  
15 University because of our strict timelines with the design. We actually  
16 have a meeting on Friday to discuss some other things with that project,  
17 but again I'll bring it up with design staff at that point.  
18

19 Eakman: Are there any other questions?  
20

21 Sorg: Yes Mr. Chairman.  
22

23 Eakman: If I might though, Mr. Sorg, one comment.  
24

25 Sorg: Sure.  
26

27 Eakman: It sounds like we're limited to branding our own cattle. Mr. Sorg.  
28

29 Sorg: Excellent point Mr. Chairman. I would like to compliment Councillor  
30 Vasquez for remembering to bring up the signage that we discussed in the  
31 Council meeting. It slipped my mind, and I add my avocation for this same  
32 thing that Councillor Vasquez did. But I would like to add one more thing,  
33 and that is I would like to see a signage that includes all of our major  
34 roads, not only I-10, I-25, but also Highway 70 near the City limits, and so  
35 out on Highway 70 there's an entrance to the City that is used by a lot of  
36 traffic, and so signage there too. We don't know exactly what it's going to  
37 look like. It might be very simple, not a monument, just to say, "You are  
38 entering Las Cruces," or something similar to that, and, "with mountains of  
39 opportunity." So I just wanted to add that to it. Thank you Mr. Chairman.  
40

41 Eakman: Thank you Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg. We are into marketing today. Good for  
42 us. Is there anything else, Mr. Wray? Mr. Doolittle?  
43

44 Wray: Not for that item, at least as far as I'm aware of. Mr. Doolittle has  
45 completed.  
46

#### 6.4 Committee Attendance

Eakman: Then if I might, I will cover an item that we can find on page 33 of our handout. Last year we had problems with attendance of our members, and it was quite a challenge, and so we discussed it at a previous meeting and now it looks like we're not going to have attendance problems. I only want to emphasize the mission of this group. I congratulate us all for being here today and cooperating on the important work to be done of this policy-making group. I wanted to remind everybody that if they cannot make a meeting, we do need each entity represented at every meeting. Proxies are available and are very much welcome here. It would have to be an official of your district or your city, and so it could be a County Manager or Assistant County Manager in your place, or someone that represents the Town of Mesilla. For the City it would be our City Manager or one of our two Assistant City Managers. And so I'd very much like to see that. I would like to make a commitment to you of, I would like to meet with Mr. Wray and Mr. Murphy prior to every meeting to go over the agenda and to see that we can live within a one-hour time frame with our meetings. I want these to be very productive and the only thing that would sway that would be public comment, which I don't want to control. I very much would like to see that free-flow and people have what's on their mind, but as far as this business of the committee, I would like this to be able to live within a one-hour, highly productive time frame so that you can with confidence keep your schedule what it needs to be. Does that sound like something we can work with?

Arzabal: Absolutely.

Eakman: Excellent. Excellent. Let's do that.

#### 7. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Eakman: And then we'll move on to Committee and staff comments. I'll start with our Committee. Does anyone on the Committee have a comment about anything?

Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Yes Mayor.

Barraza: Mr. Chair, thank you. Just a couple things I want to comment on, one being that I'm sorry I did miss the last meeting. I saw that Former Mayor Bill was on the agenda and a very interesting meeting, and I'm sorry I missed that. I would've liked to really participate and what he had to say regarding the New Mexico Border Authority, and maybe in the future we

1 can bring him back and maybe he can give us an update as to what's  
2 going on out there on the border.

3 Second is the Destino 2045, regarding the potential passenger rail  
4 connection between El Paso and Las Cruces, I don't know what, and I  
5 think Mr. Doolittle participates in the El Paso MPO. If any discussion has  
6 been made, are there any future plans for this type of rail connection  
7 between Las Cruces and El Paso? Because it is something I think that we  
8 would be very interested in, and also sitting on the RTD Board and we did  
9 the feasibility study, I'd like more information and maybe we can get it on  
10 the agenda for future reference. I don't know what the rest of the Board,  
11 on the MPO Board feels about it but something I am very interested in  
12 also.

13 And just lastly is that I'd like to welcome Trustee Johnson-Burick  
14 from the Town of Mesilla to the MPO. I think some of our trustees wonder  
15 why I ask them to be on different boards, but I think it's a wealth of  
16 information that they can all gain as to what is going on throughout our  
17 community and how we can collaborate our services all together, and how  
18 we can work together with the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County  
19 for the future of our communities. So thank you. And I know Trustee  
20 Arzabal has been on our committee before. He is a teacher so sometimes  
21 it is difficult for him to get away, but I sincerely appreciate him being here  
22 today.

23  
24 Arzabal: No problem, Mayor.

25  
26 Eakman: And he has advised me that he has one hour for these meetings when he  
27 can get away, so we'll make that very productive for him.

28  
29 Barraza: Very good. Thank you.

30  
31 Eakman: I appreciate your comments. If I might, we might want to invite the City  
32 Manager of Las Cruces to this meeting. He has a vast experience in rail  
33 and transport and has a vision in mind so that this would not cost us  
34 directly that much money to initiate. He thinks there's sizeable funding  
35 available from outside our community, brand-new money for our  
36 communities. And so I think if we could work on that, that would be a very  
37 interesting presentation for both this group and the SCRTD. Are there any  
38 other Committee comments? Yes Mayor Pro-Tem.

39  
40 Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chair. It's as a follow-up to Mayor Barraza's comment. I'd  
41 like to have the Committee to be understood that in the past we've had a  
42 study for rail from El Paso to Las Cruces as well as a study by Burlington  
43 Northern on what it would take to add rail to the two cities. So we don't  
44 want to redo things that have been done in the past. They no doubt need  
45 to be updated somewhat, but these works have been done in the past and



1 I want to make sure we are aware of that and we use them to whatever  
2 extent we can. Thank you Mr. Chairman.  
3  
4 Eakman: Thank you. I think we would all agree with that. I think Mayor Barraza  
5 that study with SCRTD was probably less than 18 months ago.  
6  
7 Barraza: I think maybe, yes, two years. I know we had received the funding  
8 through our legislators for that study. So it could've been two, two and a  
9 half years ago. Councillor Sorg, do you recall?  
10  
11 Sorg: I think it's even further back than that.  
12  
13 Barraza: Further back, yes.  
14  
15 Sorg: Maybe even four years.  
16  
17 Barraza: Wow.  
18  
19 Eakman: No, I wasn't on the Council then.  
20  
21 Sorg: I know.  
22  
23 Eakman: It was done within my time frame.  
24  
25 Sorg: Oh, well this is another one then.  
26  
27 Eakman: Yes. You're talking about the Burlington. I'm talking about the SCRTD.  
28  
29 Sorg: I'm talking about a third one, third one that was financed by the State  
30 Legislature, at the time Representative Jeff Steinborn had a capital outlay  
31 of around \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 to do a study on rail.  
32  
33 Barraza: Mr. Chair. I think that wasn't the RTD. The SCRTD did that, initiated that  
34 study, so yes.  
35  
36 Eakman: That's correct.  
37  
38 Barraza: And Councillor Sorg is probably correct, three or four years. Time flies  
39 when we're having fun.  
40  
41 Eakman: Thank you. Yes.  
42  
43 J-Burick: I just wanted to thank everyone for their warm welcome. I know Linda was  
44 on this Committee for several years and I'm very honored to have been  
45 chosen and selected to take her place, and I look forward to working with  
46 everyone. So thank you.

1  
2 Eakman: Thank you. We welcome you and Commissioner Hakes to our group and  
3 look forward to your productive input. Are there staff comments?  
4

5 Wray: I do not believe so Mr. Chair.  
6

7 **8. PUBLIC COMMENT**  
8

9 Eakman: And we once again have time for the public. How much time should I give  
10 them?  
11

12 Wray: However long you want, Mr. Chair.  
13

14 **9. ADJOURNMENT (1:41 PM)**  
15

16 Eakman: If there's no other business, we're adjourned. Thank you.  
17  
18  
19

20   
21 \_\_\_\_\_  
22 Chairperson