MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
Advisory Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
which was held May 15, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana
County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Pearson, Chair (City of Las Cruces Citizen Rep)
Dona Devine (Bicycle Community Citizen Rep)
Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)Jack Kirby (NMSU Staff Rep)
Jack Kirby (NMSU)
James Nunez (City of Las Cruces Staff Rep)
Samuel Paz (Dona Ana County Rep)
Lance Shepan (Town of Mesilla Staff Rep)
Jess Waller (Bicycle Com. Rep.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ashleigh Curry (Town of Mesilla Citizen Rep)
Andrew Bencomo (Pedestrian Community Rep)
Mark Leisher (DAC Citizen Rep)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Wade Patterson, NMDOT
Shannon Glendenning, NMDOT
Aaron Sussman, Bohannan Huston
Melanie Bishop, Bohannan Huston
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

1. CALL TO ORDER (5:02)

Pearson: I’ll go ahead and call the meeting to order. This is the Mesilla Valley
Metropolitan Planning Organization, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
Advisory Committee. Let’s have some introductions first. We’ll start down
on the end with Jess.

Waller: Jess Waller, I'm Las Cruces' City Representative for the BPAC.

Herrera: Jolene Herrera, NMDOT.


Devine: Dona Devine, first time here.
Nunez:       James Nunez, City of Las Cruces.

Paz:         Samuel Paz, Dona Ana County.

Kirby:       Jack Kirby, New Mexico State University.

Pearson:     George Pearson, City of Las Cruces Citizen Rep. And Donna is a
             Bicycling Community Rep.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pearson:     So after call to order it's approval of the agenda. Do we have any
             changes to the agenda? Not hearing anything. I'll hear a motion to
             approve the agenda as presented.

Nunez:       I'll make the motion.

Herrera:     Second.

Pearson:     We have a motion and a second to approve the agenda as presented. All
             in favor "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson:     Any opposed? The agenda's approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 April 17, 2018

Pearson:     Next order of business is approval of the minutes from the April 17th
             meeting. Do we have any discussion on the minutes? Not hearing any
             discussion. I'll hear a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Kirby:       I'll make a motion to approve.

Shepan:      Seconded.

Pearson:     Last call for comments on the minutes. We have a motion and a second
             to approve the minutes as presented. All in favor "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson:     Any opposed? Minutes are approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 Prioritized Statewide Bicycle Network Plan (NM Bike Plan)

Pearson: We’ll go ahead to discussion items. Our discussion item for tonight is the Prioritized Statewide Bicycle Network Plan.

McAdams: Yes I would like to introduce New Mexico DOT staff and also to inform the Committee and the public that after the meeting, following there will be a public hearing on the Statewide Bicycle Plan as well. So now I’d like to turn it over to New Mexico DOT staff for presentation.

WADE PATTERSON GAVE HIS PRESENTATION.

Pearson: Any members have questions?

Waller: Is it Wade?

Patterson: Yes.

Waller: Hey Wade, I'm Jess Waller, Las Cruces representative for BPAC. I have a couple questions. Looks like we're pretty clear on the path north from Las Cruces being North Valley Drive, Highway 185, is that correct?

Patterson: Let me go back to the, is it illustrated on this map?

Waller: Yes.

Patterson: Okay, so you're speaking ...

Waller: What we have north of Route 70, just west of I-25, and you have the light blue corridor which looks to be North Valley Drive. So that looks all clear. My question has to do with, thank you for acknowledging 28 as being, where the cyclists like to go.

Patterson: Sure, yes, that's beautiful.

Waller: That's always on our wish list but we realize the practical limitations of what you can do. Now I see you have the bike path or the Tier 1 coming
down 485 which runs into Doniphan Road in El Paso. That's a high traffic road. Has there been any consideration made for an alternate route or do you want to stay close to where population is? A lot of the cyclists for example use the frontage roads that parallel I-10.

Patterson: Yes. No that's a good question and I might ask Aaron to help me out a little on the answer for some of these frontage roads. So in general for frontage roads we have not included them on the network. However, there are a few places where the frontage road is the only way to connect between some key areas. And there is a connection, there is an issue out by your airport where if someone were coming in say on I-10 which they can be on but then at some point they have to get off, right. And there's a little gap there and it's near the airport. There's a little gap there between getting them from there further in to where they can be on some other regular roads, non-surface or frontage roads. And so we've identified that frontage road as a section that needs to be included on the network because otherwise we're leaving a gap for people.

Waller: That's great you got Tier 1 on I guess Route 70, US-70 west.

Patterson: Correct.

Waller: Yes, it's got a little spur there connecting with that. So there's no, let me ask this question, so the Tier 2 basic, that is 28, what are the minimum features for a Tier 2 Basic?

Patterson: We're not actually doing anything to the road other than sort of signage informational type enhancements.

Waller: There's a little bit of limited signage that says "This is NM Bicycle Route #1." That's the only signage that I'm aware of. Is there going to be any additional signage?

Patterson: Yes, the kind of signage we would be calling for and maybe you could talk a little bit about the specifics Aaron, but yes, would be signs that are basically alerting drivers that bicycles present. There are some standards, MUTCD signage that relates to that. In other places where you might have like a hairpin turn where you can't see around the corner, and that wouldn't apply to this roadway, but those are some other examples of like an advanced warning signal that would flash when a cyclist goes around so that the driver coming up around them knows to pay attention as they go around that bend.

Waller: Yes. I just wanted to point out that most of the road cyclists that travel between El Paso and Las Cruces, one will go Tier 2 Basic, Highway 28 or the frontage road. I'm kind of curious about this route, NM 478.
Patterson: Now 478 is the one that's running between 28 and I-10.

Waller: Where the cyclists currently go. Can you comment on that?

Patterson: Are you speaking about, this is the roadway between I-25 and 28?

Waller: It's the road between Las Cruces and El Paso that's just west of I-10, that's the light blue.

Patterson: Yes, so that is a roadway that has a really wide right-of-way.

Waller: Yes.

Patterson: And so this is an example where I'd say we want to provide a parallel facility to 28 for people who don't want to take the scenic route, maybe their trip is actually more of a functional.

Waller: See that's an emergency bailout right, if you're out there riding and you hit a summer storm and you've got to ...

Patterson: That's right.

Waller: Hightail it back to where you came from.

Patterson: That's right. That's right. Because we just felt that if we only provided 28, and again we're trying not to just service the recreational riders, but also people who are really just using the bikes to get around and meet their daily needs that we didn't feel that that was going to be adequate enough in terms of safety. I think 28 appeals to a more confident rider. And as I was mentioning before in our urban areas we're trying to accommodate a widest range of ability, but we're not ruling out 28 if people want to do that, it's great.

Waller: I'm glad to see that you have Anthony Gap which is the very bottom road, Route 440. It connects Anthony to Chaparral and that's a high use for cyclists as well.

Patterson: Good.

Waller: That has pretty good shoulder.

Patterson: Good.

Waller: What was the difference between Tier 2 and Tier 2 Basic?
Patterson: Tier 2 is actually calling for in the rural area we're talking about a minimum 
four-foot shoulder. Tier 2 Basic says we recognize people ride on this but 
we can't do any widening of it but we will provide some informational 
enhancements to make it safer.

Waller: I see. Thank you Chair.

Nunez: Mr. Chair. A couple comments.

Pearson: Okay.

Nunez: Or questions maybe too. I realize your job is probably a little rough. I'm 
just thinking just maybe some of the newer members, we went through 
something similar for just the City and parts of the county and we dug a lot 
deeper.

Patterson: Sure.

Nunez: And so the exercise I kind of probably gone through something like that on 
our own, maybe some of the designers, but anyway, that's all right. I'm 
curious to see what you have or what you're going to put up for us to do 
but other than that, I mean you did get into some of the details over there 
on some of these roads and why they've been selected and all, but I 
guess my bigger question is, is have you identified these to be funded and 
created and built and improved upon, and there's maybe even how deep 
did you go? Like I mentioned we delved in and we've had, I don't 
remember, almost 20 and we prioritized them and then we were going to 
seek to build those routes and make better paths for our bicycle 
community.

Patterson: Sure. So this plan is not a plan that creates a project list. It's actually 
more about our strategy in identifying which roadways we're going to 
invest in and which one's we're not. And so at this point what the plan 
calls for is if you were say working in a district office and a particular 
stretch of roadway is up for reconstruction, you have to consult this plan, 
you have to see if it's on the map and if it is, then you need to incorporate 
the bicycle facility in that reconstruction.

Nunez: Right. Okay. Thanks. I remember you saying that actually. Thanks for 
repeating it.

Patterson: No that's fine. That's good.

Paz: Quick question. So I had a question, it seems like some of your routes go 
from let's say Tier 1 and emerge to a Tier 2 and then a Tier 3. There are
also a few routes that kind of, there's a gap between some of those routes. So particularly if you look at the area next to the Texas/Anthony area.

Patterson: Yes.

Paz: You go from a Tier 2 Basic to a Tier 2 and then I guess you kind of follow Tier 3 to and again a Tier 2, and it's kind of that weird little area next to like below Anthony, Texas and below the gap. So I was just kind of interested how do those kind of transitions take place because it seems like you're going from a Tier 2 to kind of I guess either unidentified road or a Tier 3.

Patterson: Yes, the map can be a little deceiving because, so all of the roadways are divided into these little segments and we have some roadways for which we own a portion of it, but then at some point it becomes a local ownership. And so what's reflected here is only roadways that the New Mexico Department of Transportation owns or maintains. And some cases where that looks like it drops off, it's just because that section of roadway is now transitioning to local ownership and we can't tell the locals what to do on their road.

I will also say that we looked at all the bicycle planning that had been done around the state in different areas and tried to make sure that our roadways, where they enter and exit the City dovetail with what locals have either planned or built. And I don't know if I could answer the question on that specific roadway right now without kind of delving back into some of the data, but I have a feeling that's what we're looking at in those sections, or that's a segment that is locally owned.

Paz: Thank you.

Patterson: Sure.

Pearson: Anyone else? Before the meeting I went to the website and you had one of the documents was Visions and Goals, but you haven't talked about Visions and Goals yet in the presentation. Is that coming, or is that a separate?

Patterson: Well I didn't rally delve into that except to the extent that has informed our vision statement which was sort of at the beginning of the presentation. I can put it up there. Here it is. So the vision and goals led to this statement which is our guiding vision for the plan, which again we kind of called out the elements that are sustainable and that we don't want to build things that we can't maintain over time, and that we're interested in serving local residents as much as accommodating tourism and the economic development that that can bring, and all these other things of being safe and connected.
Pearson: Okay, there are seven sections in the visions and goals.

Patterson: Yes so some of the plan is under development and so there are some sections that have not been drafted or should say our consultant has drafted them and we have not reviewed and provided comments for them yet and so as those get developed they will be uploaded to the website. So it is a dynamic project.

Pearson: We probably won't have a future opportunity to see that so I guess I'll make my comments about the seven items because I did look though it and had a comment about each of them. So in the vision and goals, one is prioritize statewide bicycle network. That's obviously what you're trying to put together here but there's no reference to the United States Bike Route System and so that seems very important since other states are doing, and we need to have connectivity between what we're doing and what those things are there.

Patterson: Sure. So I can speak to the US Bike Routes. When I mentioned that we sort of collected a bunch of data and then created this scoring criteria that we ran it through, US Bike Routes was one of those. We have a map, and I don't know if we have it digitally where we overlaid where the US Bike Routes are in relation to the roadways that we have identified for investment and they do overlap. One of the issues for the state is ensuring that if we move forward with the US Bike Route designation that we are paying adequate attention to those roadways because we're going to have a hard time getting the Secretary to sign off on that if they don't feel that that roadway is safe. And so by including it on this plan we ensure that over time, and I can't speak to what that timeline looks like on individual route, but that we're actually focusing those investments on those roadways. So on that map the US Bike Routes are, and we did not include the, I think it's 75 that runs north/south, but the Route 66 and is it 90 or across the southern part.

Pearson: 90.

Patterson: Yes. You can see there in sort of a highlight yellow color, and you can see that the blue and red roadways are included on that. And that was a part of our scoring process so we loaded that data and where those routes go into that matrix when we did all the scoring for it so that was one of the factors that informed which roadways should be invested in.

Pearson: Yes. Most of the plans that I've seen there are goals and strategies to achieve the goals, so shouldn't US Bike Route be a goal for the plan?

Patterson: Well so the US Bike Routes thing is a little complex and our concern was that if we said that a goal of the plan is to, what do they call it, designate
the US Bike Routes, because there’s a lot of legal concerns in previous
discussions at NMDOT, you know we have an administration that’s just
about to leave and we need to get this plan approved before the Secretary
leaves office, we didn’t want anything to gum up that discussion. We
should be investing in these routes whether or not they’re a US Bike Route
or not. We should be investing in these because they’re the right routes
based on feedback from the community including people who ride the US
Bike Routes and not necessarily because of the US Bike Routes. The fact
that they are is great and now if we have a plan for that it is in the
recommendation section of the plan that this supports that and should we
pursue that …

Pearson: Okay, the point that I wanted to make sure is that in the recommendations
supporting US Bike Route is something that this plan should (inaudible).

Patterson: Yes, we do and I think, one of the things I also want to point out, you know
we had discussions about it here also when I went to Silver City to speak
with folks there. I know that where 90 is entering the State of New Mexico
is not where we would have preferred.

Pearson: Right.

Patterson: From Arizona. And there were concerns to make sure that the route came
up through Silver City and so that’s the way we’ve depicted it here and we
are investing in those particular corridors in order to support selecting or
preferring that alignment when and if that designation is pursued.

Pearson: Okay.

Patterson: We tried to take those comments in and accommodate them into the
planning process.

Pearson: Okay. In the Safety and Comfort section it talks about some different
things, it might actually end up in the design goals here but part of the
discussion that has happened previously is partial paving.

Patterson: Yes.

Pearson: I’m sure you’re aware of that. Is there an explicit statement about partial
paving?

Patterson: We don’t use that terminology but yes we talk about during resurfacing
programs and we also address the issue of, can’t remember what it’s
called, Jolene, there’s like the sort of skid proofing surfacing that is put on
the roadway.
Herrera: Hot seal or chip seal. Those kinds of maintenance projects.

Patterson: Yes, there's also like a ...

Herrera: On grade friction course.

Patterson: Yes, that. And making sure that that goes all the way out to and covers the shoulder as well for the safety of the cyclist.

Pearson: Right. Yes I think asphalt quality is something I put down here for Safety and Comfort the size of the chip seal is a big impact.

Patterson: Yes.

Pearson: That section also talks about programs like the Look For Me Program. It didn't say anything specifically about distracted driving and that seems to be more important now so I wonder if that should be mentioned or ...

Patterson: Yes, I mean it is part of the regular NMDOT activities, we use the four E's which includes enforcement, education, emergency, like how fast emergency service can get there, and engineering. So that is always part of all of our activities.

Pearson: Okay.

Patterson: So that enforcement part would include that. And that's a tricky one because the actual implementation of that falls outside of NMDOT. It's more of our ability to work with law enforcement in order to enforce those.

Pearson: Right. And the Public Health Section has some statements that I think it talked about connectivity and statewide. But anyways, what I wanted to ask about is if there should be a recommendation in the plan for a No Turn Away Policy for bikes and hikers at state parks so if they're camping. I think this section was talking about some long distance bike riding, so if you're on a bike long distance and you come to a park, it turns out that it's full, well if you're a biker or a hiker you don't really need that much space. Other states have a No Turn Away Policy and that's something I know it's a state parks responsibility but recommending that in this plan might have an impact on getting that policy changed or updated.

Patterson: Okay, I'm not familiar with that. We can look into that. I will just point out that this is an NMDOT document and so we would have to talk to ...

Pearson: We'll talk about that in a minute.

Patterson: NM or DE about that. That's not within our jurisdiction.
Pearson: And Connectivity and Access section, just would make a comment to encourage bike racks on the regional transit and commuter trains that might be existing. I think those entities already are doing that kind of thing but to actually put in the plan that says to encourage that might just make sure that it is properly addressed. The economic development tourism section has a quote that says "Work with organizers of bike races" and I think that's probably too narrow of a determination. You probably want to work with any of the bicycle advocacy groups or even this committee, committees like ours that exist in different parts of the state so that might just be an editing thing.

Patterson: Well that came out of some specific discussions about organized rides and races and the need to coordinate more closely with this. Some of the rides have been very successful at establishing good relationships with their districts and they contact them ahead of time, then if their able to they can go sweep the route and so it was some of the feedback that we received about those kinds of ride. That's how's that got into the plan.

Pearson: Well maybe the context of what that was actually directed at might not have been felt in that current statement. You have an Equity section. I was very happy to see that. I don't have any, I mean that's something that we need so that was very good. And then you have an Inter- and Intr-Agency Coordination and I was thinking though you should call out more explicitly the importance that NMDOT, Department of Health, Department of Economics, Parks, and Tourism Departments interact and coordinate with things and work together and that goes to needing that issue with the races. And recently there was an Economic Outdoor Conference here in Las Cruces and one of the recommendations that came out of that is an Office of Outdoor Economics should be established. And so that could be a coordination point where you have a one stop shop for things, you know if a tour operator wants to come in and run a bike tour through New Mexico they might be coming across the whole state but they shouldn't have to stop in each county and they might be crossing three state highway districts, they should have a one stop shop and I think an outdoor economic office could help with that. And we've got, you know Economic Development, the Tourism Department might have numbers but the Economics Department might be the one better skilled that creates impacts of things so being able to coordinate between those agencies I think is very important.

Patterson: Sure, that's cool. I had not heard about that. I like that idea.

Pearson: Okay. Anybody else have any comments? So you wanted to go through a …
Patterson: Yes, I'm going to turn it over to Aaron Sussman and let's maybe assess the kind of time we have, we've actually got about 13 minutes.

AARON SUSSMAN GAVE HIS PRESENTATION

Pearson: Any Committee members? Doesn't look like it.

Sussman: Okay, well thank you. I think we pretty much need to excuse ourselves at least. I know we have a public meeting that we have invited members of the public to attend stating at 6:00.

Pearson: We still have a couple of quick things to finish up. It'll take us a couple of minutes.

Sussman: Thank you.

6. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

6.1 MPO Staff Update

Pearson: We'll move on to MPO update from staff.

McAdams: We just have one thing to report. Dominic Loya who has been with us almost a year will now be going to Community Development, Long Range Planning and we wish him luck and God speed.

Wray: Mr. Chair I also just realized we have one other thing. This is the week where MPO staff is moving our offices from our current location to upstairs, so this week and next week access to us may be a little bit spotty, so please bear with us during this transition.

Pearson: Okay I knew where to find you downstairs. So where are you moving upstairs?

Wray: We'll be moving up into the Finance Department. We're not exactly sure what the level of access to us is going to be because the Finance Department is a closed department within the City, it's behind locked doors so we're not completely sure what the access situation is going to be. But we will keep everyone posted regarding that.

Pearson: Okay.

McAdams: And one more note. We received the bike repair station and we'll be installing it soon at the MVITT.

Pearson: Okay good.
McAdams: That's it for the MPO.

6.2 Local Projects update

Pearson: Any local project updates?

Nunez: No. I do have one item just so you know on the, I was looking at the meeting minutes on page 19 and 20, I'll answer you that at the next meeting.

Pearson: Okay.

6.3 NMDOT Projects update

Pearson: NMDOT. You're going to tell us the project's done.

Herrera: The project's done. It is. We have the final inspection yesterday and as far as I'm aware everything went well. We should have construction on Valley Drive starting the end of June.

Pearson: We should clarify the project though.

Herrera: The Spitz/Solano/Three Crosses project on US 70 is done. And we should have construction on Valley Drive late June/early July.

Pearson: Okay.

6.4 Committee Members Update

Pearson: Any comments from any Committee Members?

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Pearson: I'll hear a motion to adjourn, oh we have public comment. I'm sorry. This is our second opportunity for public comment. Is there anybody from the public that wishes to address this Board? We have one. Just give us your name and give us your comment.

Howie: Jeff Howie. I live in the county not the City, on the north side of town. Rode around the City this morning in fact. Enjoyed my ride before daylight. And since all of you guys are with City and county and DOT it's really helpful if you guys will keep those shoulders clean. Bike lanes and shoulders, I mean I have to ride that white line because there's so much debris and it only gets worse as we get into monsoon season and it's just
something to be aware of that we all depend on those shoulders. So thank you.

Pearson: Okay. Thank you.

Nunez: If I could comment on that. Can you please always call the City? Call the City offices and tell them. Your call is effective. I mean they do some maintenance but please call. You know it's like 528-3333 and there are some other numbers that are available.


8. ADJOURNMENT (6:00)

Pearson: I'll hear a motion to adjourn.

Shepan: Motion.

Herrera: Second.

Pearson: We have a motion and a second we adjourn. All in favor "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: So we're adjourned.

Chairperson