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 September 5, 2018 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)  
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)  
Councilor Jack Eakman (CLC)  
Commissioner Kim Hakes (DAC)  
Commissioner Isabella Solis (DAC)  
Trustee Stephanie Johnson-Burick (Town of Mesilla)  
Councilor Gabriel Vasquez (CLC)  
Councilor Gill Sorg (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT:  
Commissioner Benjamin Rawson (DAC)  
Trustee Carlos Arzabal (Town of Mesilla)

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

OTHERS PRESENT:  
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER (1:04 PM)

Eakman:  Ladies and gentlemen of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. We do have a quorum today. Thank you all for being here and thank you especially for allowing this meeting to take place one week early. I truly appreciate that. Those of us who enrolled at the Domenici Conference can better enjoy it now.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Eakman:  At this time would you join me in the Pledge of Allegiance?

ALL STAND FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Eakman:  I'm to ask everyone if there is a conflict of interest with anything on the agenda.

Sorg:  No.
Solis: None.

Vasquez: None.

Eakman: Please declare.

J-Burick: None.

Barraza: None.

Eakman: None. Thank you.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT


5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 August 8, 2018

Eakman: The minutes of the August 8th meeting were distributed. Are there any additions or corrections to those minutes and if not, would anybody feel comfortable making a motion to approve?

Barraza: Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to make a motion to approve the minutes of August 8, 2018.

Solis: Second.

Eakman: Very good. We have a motion by Mayor Barraza and a second by Commissioner Solis. Mr. Wray, would you poll the board?

Wray: Yes, Mr. Chair. Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hakes.
Hakes:    Yes.

Wray:    Trustee Johnson-Burick.

J-Burick:    Yes.

Wray:    Councilor Sorg.

Sorg:    Yes.

Wray:    Councilor Vasquez.

Vasquez:    I'll abstain.

Wray:    Mr. Chair.

Eakman:    Yes. The minutes are approved as distributed.

MOTION APPROVED.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 18-06: A Resolution Amending the 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Eakman:    We have one action item. Who will be discussing that from staff?

Wray:    That would be me, Mr. Chair. Andrew Wray, for the record.

Eakman:    Please go forward.

Wray:    I would like to direct the attention of the Committee to page 17 in the packet. There are four TIP amendments requested by the New Mexico Department of Transportation for your consideration this afternoon.

First one is LC00110. It's in Federal Fiscal Year 2017. Currently it is the Doña Ana County Project of El Camino Real at the intersection of Doña Ana School Road. It is a safety improvement project. The proposed amendment is to move it into Federal Fiscal Year 2019. I'd also like to note for the Committee that we now have a new column in the table for performance measure justification. This is going to be a permanent fixture for all TIP information going forward. I'll go ahead and read the statement by DOT into the record: "The project has been identified as a safety issue by Doña Ana County and this project is to address the safety concerns."

The second amendment requested by NMDOT is LC00271. This is a bridge replacement at the outfall channel just to the east of the recently
concluded Solano and Main Street project. This is a brand-new project. To read the statement from NMDOT, "This project will address multimodal safety in the corridor by widening the bridge over the outfall channel and upgrading the ADA ramps at the intersection."

The third amendment requested by NMDOT is LC00360. This is for Fiscal Year 2019. This is at the intersection of I-25 and Lohman. This is a pure landscaping project. Most of the funding you will note is being provided by the City of Las Cruces for this project and there is no safety impact expected from this project.

The final amendment requested is LC00270. This is to take place in Fiscal Year 2019. This is the design phase for a potential future expansion of North Main. This would be Phase 2 design, $800,000. And I will stand now for any questions.

Sorg: Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Commissioner Hakes. Were you first or Councilor, yes. Commissioner Hakes.

Sorg: You can go.

Hakes: So on the new bridge and the planning of the Highway 70 intersection there with the outfall channel. Is that going to go to three lanes in each direction from two lanes?

Wray: I would have to defer to NMDOT staff for that.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. So what we’re planning on doing, that bridge replacement will be constructed to accommodate three lanes of traffic both directions. Right now we’re in discussions with our consultant to actually figure out what we’re going to do, but our initial plan is from Spitz/Three Crosses past the bridge to actually go ahead and widen all of that to three lanes only because right now the acceleration lane coming off of Solano onto US-70 basically chokes down at the new Country Club subdivision. We’re just going to continue that all the way through to provide some consistency. We have asked our consultant to look at basically from the bridge to Elks to see if we can accommodate three lanes of traffic in each direction but if we do through there it will only be through a pavement pres. and some additional restriping, not through reconstruction. But the intent is up to the bridge itself it will accommodate the six lanes of traffic, and if it won’t the bridge will be designed for certainly future expansion to allow that.

Hakes: Thank you. One more question. The $2 million for landscaping, that’s a lot of money for nursery materials so it must be concrete and steel going in there too.
Doolittle: Mr. Chair. I think what we're doing there as Andrew mentioned, there is a lot of money being provided by the City of Las Cruces. We're also addressing some of the drainage issues, erosion, and aesthetic issues with some riprap. If you've been through the Spruce intersection at Spruce and Triviz, the City along with the Department have done some landscaping through there, riprap, basically just cleaning up. So it's not just plants. It's a lot of riprap for erosion control. At Lohman for instance we've got the concrete curb that kind of creates rundowns where all the water concentrates and then it creates a lot of real bad erosion. So they're going to remove that and try to do some water control to slow the water down. So it's more than just plants it's really kind of cleaning that up and then addressing the erosion problems we've got at that interchange.

Hakes: Thank you.

Eakman: Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg.

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Mr. Wray for presenting all this to us. I have a simple question. The fiscal years that are presented in these changes and in the TIP here, are they the Federal fiscal year or the State fiscal year?

Wray: Mr. Chair. Councilor Sorg. The MPO speaks in the terms of the Federal fiscal year.

Sorg: Federal. So in other words if I get this straight, Fiscal Year '19 will begin in October of this year?

Wray: That is correct. October 1st.

Sorg: Okay. Very good. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Eakman: Councilor Vasquez.

Vasquez: Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you Mr. Wray for the presentation. A question regarding the bridge for the amendment LC00271 on Main Street. You mentioned three lanes of traffic. Does that also include room for a bike lane and pedestrian walkway, a sidewalk or something similar? Because I know there are some serious safety issues with that current bridge. Pedestrians crossing it currently, oftentimes against traffic I think presents a big, big safety hazard.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Councilor Vasquez. The statement in the performance measure justification by DOT does use the word "multimodal" but I will defer to Mr. Doolittle for further explanation.
Vasquez: Thank you.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. That is correct. So we are looking, so again the reconstruction, "reconstruction's" kind of a misleading term, so our intent is to provide for that three lanes of traffic to include bicycle and ADA improvements. If we do any pavement work at all federal requirements are we have to address ADA at the ramps themselves. So we're going to do as much as we possibly can with the funding but our intent and our plan is, and what we again have the consultant doing is "What can we fit in the existing roadway typical section from curb to curb with very minimal reconstruction up to or past the bridge." But our plan is to try to address both bicycle and ADA compliant.

I will tell you that my biggest concern and part of the reason that I moved this up is the pedestrian traffic crossing the bridge itself, and bicyclists for that matter. But if you recall we did a study that basically went all the way from Spitz/Three Crosses through the interchange at I-25 to the Del Rey intersection. That was the full study. At our last public meeting ultimately the Department and the consultant had decided that because of the size of the project we're breaking it up into three phases. So the first phase is the bridge, the second phase will ultimately be full reconstruction, new sidewalks, new lighting, basically all new utilities from Spitz/Three Crosses up to Elks. And then the Phase 3 project which is the costly one that we'll need to partner with the City will be the reconstruction of the Elks and US-70 intersection itself. But part of the reason that we moved this one up is it has very clear safety deficiencies, specifically with the multimodal and ADA. So that's why we did this project, very specifically for that reason.

Vasquez: Absolutely. So was that, did you rearrange the phases then or was it simply just bumped up a year and it was still the priority project out of the three phases that you just mentioned?

Doolittle: So ultimately our plan was to look at the entire corridor. We really didn't know what was going to come of the study but when we got to looking at the costs those just seem like the reasonable termiri for each phase. So Phase 1 is just past the bridge to include the bridge replacement. Phase 2 would be just east of the bridge to the Elks/US-70 intersection and then Phase 3 would be the intersection itself. And that's purely based on logistical termini and costs of the project itself.

Vasquez: Okay. And one last question on that project. Is there consideration to also the pedestrian traffic that's coming from the trail in the outfall channel? Because I know currently unofficially pedestrians use the parking lot of the Jiffy Lube to hop off the trail and then onto Main Street. I don't think that's such a huge safety consideration but in terms of
connectivity to be able to get off the trail back onto Main Street, is that something that at least leaves some room for a path down to the trail or some type of pedestrian connectivity there?

Doolittle: That's correct. We actually did challenge our consultant to look at the grades because right now it's a pretty steep grade from the top to the bottom.

Vasquez: Yes.

Doolittle: But we did ask them to see if there was a way that they connect the trail to the bike path or sidewalk, whatever we can fit in up top. So the intent is to connect US-70 to the trail underneath itself with a designated connection.

Vasquez: That would be great. I'm sure that especially those businesses there would appreciate having the opportunity to have walk-in customers. Hopefully they're coming off the trail in addition to the vehicular traffic, so I think that'd be great. Thank you Mr. Doolittle. Thank you Chair.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. Real quick if I may just for clarification, so we just had the kickoff meeting with our consultant about three weeks ago or so to start the 30% design review so we are in the very preliminary stages. But basically all of the comments that you all have made today are believe it or not the same comments that we presented to the consultant to try to pursue as part of that design.

Eakman: Excellent.

Sorg: Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg.

Sorg: Councilor Vasquez brought a very good idea of connecting that outflow channel trail. As you know you can take that trail all the way underneath I-25 over to Telshor and that might be a connection from west to east to east to west there and then connecting that outflow channel trail to the North Main/Highway 70 area would be a good connection. We're all looking for good connections here, as many as possible. So let us add that to your list of ideas of making that long connection there. One way to get across I-25 on a bike, or foot for that matter. Thank you.

Eakman: Thank you Mayor Pro-Tem. Mayor Barraza.

Barraza: Mr. Chair. Thank you. I just want to say I agree with Commissioner Hakes regarding that project regarding landscaping, and I just need clarification I guess. Mr. Doolittle you mentioned about also including the
drainage, some runoff drainage on that. But as I'm looking through the
packet on page 25, a letter from Jolene to Andrew on the third bullet it
says, "this project will not directly be impacting the safety targets as it is
for landscaping at the interchange only." So do we need to add the
language "/drainage?" I agree over $1 million for landscaping is crazy. I
think if constituents saw that they'd probably come and riot here at City
Hall. But I think if you add additional language in there to kind of justify
what else you're doing to the project I think it just would be a better sell;
$1.95 million for landscaping is outrageous. And of course that's my
opinion. Thank you sir.

Eakman: If I might respond.

Barraza: Yes sir.

Eakman: The City has authorized $1.2 million to go toward this project and that is
for plants and materials on like half of the intersection, two quadrants of
the four quadrants and that narrowly passed City Council for approval.

Barraza: Mr. Chair. I can truly understand and I understand the City is putting in
the majority of it but even $750,000 going towards landscaping when we
can pave another road or add some sidewalks, bike trails, something like
that I can see us using the money...

Eakman: The amount...

Barraza: More wisely in that direction. But if it's addressing what Mr. Doolittle
mentioned earlier I can understand the cost because cement is very
expensive. Thank you sir.

Eakman: I believe all the money coming from NMDOT is drainage and that sort of
thing since the City is supplying all the plantings.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. If I may just clarify a little bit, I think with my wording of
"drainage" it may be a little bit again misconceiving. So we're using
landscaping materials such as landscaping gravel. Riprap is considered
very frequently a landscaping product. So again if you go to the Spruce
interchange you'll see four-, six-inch rock that basically cleans it up, it
prevents weeds from coming through, it is considered in that application a
landscaping product. But because of the size of the rock: 1) it prevents
the weeds from coming through; but 2) it slows the rain as it comes down
the slope, ultimately reducing and frequently eliminating erosion. So when
I say "drainage" that's what I'm talking about, is it eliminates those fingers
of lost sediment. But it is a landscaping project. We're just using
engineering decisions on which type of material to place where to address
some of the problems that we have, not just putting plants to make it look
pretty. So "drainage," I think the language that Jolene presented is the
accurate language, but it is substantially more than just putting in plants.
The concrete curb that's there that collects and consolidates the water,
removal of that is part of this work. It's removing some things, that
landscaping didn't work before that we're having to do now. The other
thing that I would mention is any time you start putting in watering
systems, those tend to become very costly as well. So we're including
part of that under this project. The pond that's on the northbound offramp
on your right-hand side that ultimately we haven't done anything with since
we built the interchange, it's very unsightly, has significant erosion
problems. We're going to do some work in there to make it aesthetically
pleasing but it's also going to take care of the runoff that comes into that
pond itself. So I understand that much money when it comes to
landscaping looks pricey but there's a lot more to it than that than just
putting in some plants and some watering systems. So again Mayor I
think the language is correct. Maybe we need to do a better job of
explaining what we're doing but it's really not a drainage project per se.

Barraza: Thank you.

Eakman: Mayor Pro-Tem.

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Let me add to the rest of the Committee here.
Make no mistake, this by some in the City thought this was an important
beautification project too, to make it look better. And I will add that we're
looking at all four quadrants in this particular intersection, are we not?

Doolittle: That's correct.

Sorg: As opposed to the ...

Doolittle: University.

Sorg: University crossing where the City's only going to do two of the four
triangles shall we call them. And yes, this is something that some in the
City thought it was very important that we put some good-looking things
there, vegetation, plantings like you say, and the rock. And I would
suggest to Mr. Doolittle that we, and I have suggested that to the City
planners too that we consider terracing that slope like having the levels
like that with rock that would hold up the terraces. That's not going to be
cheap either, I know. And so that would help with the erosion and adding
plantings in each terracing would help with that. I've also told our staff too
that we have to keep, when we can do it, keep in mind of stormwater
harvesting there too, that the plantings are watered by our own rainwater
and the extra rainwater that you get when run off of highways and so forth.
So I just wanted to add that. That's the thinking of the City here in this project. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Would anyone feel comfortable making a motion to move these changes forward?

Hakes: So moved.

Eakman: Commissioner Hakes would move. Is there a second?

Solis: I second.

Barraza: Second.

Eakman: Okay. Is there further discussion? Hearing none would you poll the board?

Wray: Madam Mayor.

Barraza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hakes.

Hakes: Yes.

Wray: Trustee Johnson-Burick.

J-Burick: Yes.

Wray: Councilor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Councilor Vasquez.

Vasquez: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Chair.
Eakman: Yes. Thank you so much.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Eakman: And to be very clear I interchanged this with the University/I-25 intersection. I was not taking into consideration Lohman and I'm going to have to look at our record to see if we've actually approved that as a City Council. I don't remember that.

Sorg: Yes. We did.

Eakman: Well if you can show me when, okay. Thank you. Very good. We'll air it here in public for you.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Truck Route Map (proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) amendment)

Eakman: We have some discussion items now. Very good Mr. Murphy. Would you take over?

Murphy: Thank you Mr. Chair. The MPO is currently in the middle of an amendment request to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The last time we did an MTP update we included the truck route map as part of that MTP adoption. We have received a request from the City of Las Cruces to amend the truck route map so we are going through the formal MTP amendment process. We had a public meeting at the beginning of August with the Technical Advisory Committee. We are currently in the midst of a public comment period for that and then ultimately hope to wrap that up with a vote at this Committee in October for the revisions. But in the meantime I wanted to present to you the information that we presented at the TAC meeting and we presented to the BPAC and we have out for public comment.

So the City came to us, formally requested that we remove Main from Picacho to Lucero, Main from Amador to Church/Water, Water from Lucero to Main, and Church from Lucero to Main from being published on our truck route map. When we sent out the initial notification for that amendment process we did receive an email from the Chairman of the BPAC who informed us that there were truck prohibition signs on Melendres itself and suggested that we add that to the amendment. It was early in the process so we added that change to the amendment request.

So here's the truck route map that we have published as part of the MTP and this is available on the website. Please don't strain too hard to
look at it, I'm going to zoom into the appropriate place here shortly. But as you can see in the general map area, the general darker lines are roads that the MPO have identified as more appropriate for truck traffic. I don't think the color shows up real well but there are three facilities on the map that are signed as prohibited for trucks: Alameda north of Picacho, Mesquite Street from Spruce to Amador are prohibited by the City for truck traffic. Additionally the County has prohibited truck traffic on Dripping Springs Road up through Baylor Canyon Road. They adopted that prohibition by resolution and that's indicated on our map.

So what the City has requested is these highlighted areas formerly known as "the racetrack" or still known as "the racetrack," the Church/Water/Main Street in there is just, in support of their downtown redevelopment efforts they wanted us to cease advertisement or encouragement of use of those roadways for trucks. They're not asking for us to identify them as prohibited to truck traffic. They just wanted them kind of grayed out similar to you would see like McFie or Armijo Street on the map, not prohibited but not encouraged. And then additionally through our initial outreach we came to add Melendres Street to that. As of note we are aware that the EBID headquarters or maintenance yard is on Melendres south of Amador and there's some concern about would that affect their operation. Discussion through the TAC is that without the prohibition it doesn't do it but when there would be a truck prohibition that normally looks at your 18-wheelers, things with four axles or more which were deemed inappropriate with their deeper residential, lower volume areas.

We consulted back into our traffic count database where we have historical classification and we count how many trucks have been using each of those facilities, and we gathered that from the last several times we have conducted counts. And as you can, contrasting last two rows on this page the total trucks with the ADT you would note that none of them seem to have really significant truck traffic on them. They're all in the, with the exception I guess Main from the roundabout to Picacho, they would all come in under 10% of truck traffic. But again without a prohibition on trucks, just a discouragement this does not seem to present an issue either. So here again this is the zoomed-in map again with the truck counts superimposed on those roadways.

So this constitutes an amendment to our MTP. It requires at least one public meeting which we satisfied through having it as a discussion item at the TAC meeting. We opened it up, I think we're at day 30 but we're going to exceed that so that we get recommendations from the TAC to you before your October meeting. With that I'll stand for any questions.

Eakman: Are there questions of Mr. Murphy? Yes, Councilor Vasquez.

Vasquez: Thank you. Thank you Chair. Mr. Murphy, so this proposed amendment is for prohibition or discouragement?
Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councilor Vasquez. This proposed amendment is to not encourage but not prohibit. So they would be grayed out. Someone looking at it would not view it as "Okay, this is where I need to take my truck." They would just see that it was not a suggested recommendation to them but if they were ...

Vasquez: So you wouldn't have the signage then that said no trucks allowed?

Murphy: There would not be signage, no.

Vasquez: And how would somebody planning a truck route, a company or an individual, have access to that information that says that would be discouraged? Where do they look at that to encourage the discouragement?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councilor Vasquez. We publish this map on our website with everything else. We merely, I guess our intention in publishing it was to present information to the public. To be honest with you I never had any expectation that truck companies were saying, "Let's get on the Mesilla Valley MPO website and see how we need to drive our trucks." But the City Public Works Department came to us and asked us to amend our maps to show that.

Vasquez: Okay. So it's more of a technical document for staff and transportation planning use rather than dissemination or education amongst people who are actually using that road currently?

Murphy: That is correct. It is more of a staff resource for when a staff member needs to design a street and says, "Okay, how many trucks do I expect on this?" "How thick do I need to make that pavement?" That's its main thing. But in the interest of having transparency we do make all of these documents available to the public on the website.

Vasquez: Okay. And for clarity regarding the Dripping Springs and Baylor Canyon Road resolution or ordinance passed by the County is that, that's a prohibition. Is that correct?

Murphy: Yes sir.

Vasquez: Okay. And when did that go into effect?

Murphy: That went into effect I believe 2013 or 2014 around the time that they had received money from Federal Central Lands to rebuild that.

Vasquez: Yes.
Murphy: The concern was that with the new pavement that it would be viewed as a truck bypass and the County did not want that to happen. So they passed the resolution to do the prohibition.

Vasquez: And the County if I'm not mistaken also just passed a similar resolution this year for paving of what was kind of the caliche substrate for the remainder of Baylor Canyon Road up to Dripping Springs. Is that correct? So I see trucks on that road all the time, some construction but also a lot of commercial traffic using it as a bypass. Are you saying it's illegal then, they could be cited for doing that currently under County, under Sheriff's jurisdiction?

Murphy: I believe they can. I'm not familiar with the exact wording of the resolution but if it's what I think it would be, it would be up to the Sheriff's Department to enforce that.

Vasquez: Okay. Thank you. Thank you Chair.

Eakman: Thank you. Is there more discussion? Yes.

J-Burick: Thank you Chair. Tom you mentioned that the public meeting was held. How many members of the public were in attendance and what was the feedback that you all received?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Trustee Johnson-Burick. We did not have any members of the public that showed up specifically for that. We've also had this on the website for about a month yet we've received no comment on that nor did I really kind of expect this as it was mentioned before as this is more of a technical document.

J-Burick: All right. Thank you. Thank you Chair.

Eakman: Well this is a discussion item today just for our information only, is that correct?

Murphy: That is correct.

Eakman: Very good.

7.2 **Committee training: NMDOT Policy and Procedures Manual**

Eakman: Would you move on to the next item then?

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. This afternoon staff is going to give a presentation to this Committee about the New Mexico Department of Transportation
Planning Procedures Manual. This document is currently in the process of being revised by the DOT. We're giving this presentation to this Committee today because the MPO section of this document was very recently completed. But this document is being updated in phases so the entire document is as of yet not completely revised.

With that caveat out of the way the Planning Procedures Manual or PPM as I will probably be referring to it in the presentation is a document that is the compilation of federal law and regulations as regards to the transportation planning process not just in the state of New Mexico but all the states around the nation will have an equivalent document to this to clarify the roles of the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the MPOs throughout the state, and also in the case of New Mexico the RTPOs which is the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, which are sort of equivalent to an MPO in the rural areas. New Mexico is a little bit special in having those in this state. The NMDOT does develop the PPM in consultation with the MPOs. This is something that we have spoken frequently with them this year at both the March MPO quarterly and the June MPO quarterly. This was a topic of conversation and the bedrock of the PPM is in 23 United States Code Section 134 and 23 Code of Federal Regulations Section 450 Subpart C.

Now Metropolitan Planning Organizations are federally-mandated and state-designated planning agencies in metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000. The Las Cruces area went over the 50,000 mark in 1980 and what was at that time the Las Cruces MPO came into existence in 1984. There are five MPOs within the state of New Mexico: Our neighbor to the south, El Paso; then the Farmington MPO; ourselves, Mesilla Valley MPO; the Mid-Region MPO, also known as Mid-Region COG or Council of Governments; and then the Santa Fe MPO. Now El Paso MPO and Mid-Region MPO are transportation management areas. It's slightly different than the situation for the Mesilla Valley MPO. El Paso and Albuquerque are TMAs by virtue of having over 200,000 population.

Small MPOs such as the Mesilla Valley are usually created via a document known as a Joint Powers Agreement. This is an agreement between the member jurisdictions of the MPO which creates the financial framework and organizational framework for the operation of the MPO. In the case of TMAs, federal law gives more specific detail about the operation and structure of a TMA since TMAs directly receive federal funding whereas small MPOs like ourselves do not. So the federal law is much more specific about the organization and structure of TMAs.

MPOs are required by the Planning Procedures Manual to have bylaws that govern their internal operations and procedures. We have most recently updated the Mesilla Valley MPO bylaws I believe it was in 2015 was the last time that the bylaws were revised. As far as how the funding comes down to us: In current practice NMDOT establishes three-year cooperative agreements with each MPO within the state. We actually just within the past two months signed our most recent cooperative
agreement with NMDOT. And as far as interaction with DOT, staff interaction usually is pointed to the liaison, in this case Ms. Jolene Herrera who we are very glad to be able to work with. She's very good to work with. I will praise her on the record and am not ashamed to do so.

The MPO planning process is required by Federal law to address ten planning factors and I want to especially highlight the final two here because these two are new as of the FAST Act which went into law in 2015. The two new ones are improved system resiliency and reliability and Number 10 is to enhance travel and tourism. And if you go up and read Number 8 you can obviously see the very close correlation between Planning Factor 8 and Planning Factor 9. Please keep this in mind because we will be coming back to that particular topic in just a moment.

There are a number of work products that are required by MPOs. In your packet after the discussion sheet for this particular agenda item there is a table that is within the PPM for your review. That is the comprehensive list of all of the documents and actions that are required by the MPO. The list that we have here is more of kind of the key outputs that MPO staff is expected to produce. Just going through the list here: The Public Participation Plan, we are required to update that every five years in conjunction with the MTP; Title VI Plan which I'll go into more detail in just a moment is required updated every three years; Unified Planning Work Program every two years; Transportation Improvement Program which is updated quarterly. This Committee just updated that document and I will note here at this time that the MPO is required to do an open call for projects for the TIP every two years and we are at that time now. We will be publishing an open call for projects sometime within the next couple of months in the final quarter, final calendar quarter of 2018. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan which is required to be updated every five years and then the annual listing of Obligated Projects which we produce every year, and then also the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report or APER which is also produced every year.

Moving into more detail about the Public Participation Plan, this document defines how an MPO will conduct its public involvement activities. As the committee is no doubt aware we are currently in the process of updating the PPP. We have been in the process since April of this year of doing that. It is currently proceeding through the advisory committees for their recommendation to this body and we anticipate that the final draft of the PPP will be before this body at your next meeting in October.

Title VI Plan formerly existed as part of the Public Participation Plan. Within the past year New Mexico Department of Transportation and FHWA have come with a new ruling that the Title VI Plan must be updated every three years rather than every five years so from now and going forward the Title VI Plan will have to exist as its own separate stand-alone document. The Title VI Plan basically ensures the MPO's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and also has a complaint procedure
in case of any violations on the part of the MPO where aggrieved individuals may seek restitution. Again similarly to the PPP the public process for the adoption or update however you want to look at it for the Title VI Plan began in April of this year, is currently proceeding through the advisory committee process, and we anticipate having it before this Committee at the October meeting.

The UPWP which I'm sure is going to be familiar to everyone here is the biannual work document that outlines all of staff's work tasks over a two-year period. The current UPWP was adopted on June 8, 2016 and was most recently amended on December 13, 2017. Now we did just recently adopt on June 13th of this year the next UPWP which will go into effect at the start of the next Federal fiscal year on October 1st of this year.

The Transportation Improvement Program which again this Committee just amended earlier in this meeting: In general it is a list of projects that are federally funded or of regional significance within an MPO area. The TIP is required by federal law to cover four program years. The State of New Mexico also requires two informational years to be included at the end of that. The four program years must be fiscally constrained which means that the funding to carry out those projects must be demonstrated to be reasonably expected to be available in order for the project to go onto the TIP. That constraint does not apply to the two informational years. Two informational years are intended to serve as sort of a planning phase as it were for jurisdictions to notify the State, "This is what we're thinking of doing in the future but it does not bear the burden of fiscal constraint." The most recent TIP, the TIP that we are currently operating under was adopted on June 14, 2017. Again MPO staff will be publishing an open call for projects before the end of this calendar year and we anticipate that the next TIP will be acted upon by this body in June of 2019.

Lastly the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or MTP. This is the flagship document of all MPOs. It is the long-range transportation plan that is required to cover a 20-year planning horizon, a 20-year minimum planning horizon. Federal law requires that MTPs must be updated every five years and the new requirement from NMDOT is that Public Participation Plan must be adopted before the commencement of the MTP public process. They want those two to be tied together going forward. Now MTPs are required by federal law to be consistent with federal transportation law and to cite applicable sections of the law to identify the facilities within the region that function as an integrated transportation network, especially facilities that serve regional and national purposes; to consider the ten planning factors as they relate to the 20-year planning horizon, those are the ones that were on the earlier slide; and also especially since MAP-21 and the FAST Act to describe how performance measures and performance targets are being assessed in the development of the transportation network for the MPO area.
As part of the performance management requirements the MTPs going forward will include a system performance report evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system. We're still working with NMDOT to develop exactly what that is going to look like but I can assure you that has definitely been a topic of conversation between the MPOs and the State and NMDOT over the past year and we are working towards what that is going to look like. Obviously there is some degree of urgency because not only the Mesilla Valley MPO but the other MPOs around the state are going to be updating their MTPs in the very near future as well. Additionally MTPs are required to incorporate strategies to improve the performance of the existing transportation facilities and also to include strategies to enhance transportation and transit. Also and this ties into Planning Factors 8 and 9 as I mentioned earlier, maintenance has to be considered. Sustainable maintenance of the facilities has to be considered in the MTP going forward. This is in the grand scheme of things a relatively new factor that the Federal Government is expecting us to do but it is a very important one, one that they are looking at very closely as can be seen from the updated transportation planning factors. Also the MTP is to consider implementation of environmental mitigation activities and scenario planning while not required by the Federal Highway Administration is strongly encouraged by the Federal Highway Administration and NMDOT. And also FHWA and NMDOT hope that MPOs will address emergent issues as they come about.

Now the currently adopted MTP for the Mesilla Valley MPO is Transport 2040 and Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. This document was adopted by the Policy Committee on June 10, 2015. That means that the countdown for adoption of the next MTP is June of 2020. MPO staff is currently in the early phases of gathering information to prepare for the first round of public input meetings that we are anticipating to have. We expect to start those, the first round before the end of 2018 and we anticipate that that will continue on into 2019. And I will stand now for any questions.

Eakman: Great presentation. Thank you Mr. Wray. Councilor Vasquez.

Vasquez: Thank you Chair. Thank you Mr. Wray. So many acronyms. I don't know how you keep it all together in your head.

Wray: And it's the only language I speak anymore, Councilcr.

Vasquez: I could imagine. You'd be probably great at Scrabble or Boggle or one of those word games. Anyhow, the process you mentioned to open the call for projects for the TIP, development of the next TIP. Can you explain how that process works from maybe beginning to end?
Wray: Certainly. Mr. Chair. Councilor Vasquez. Sometime in October or November, not sure exactly what the timeline is going to be there will be a letter sent out by MPO staff to all of our jurisdictions and will be made publicly available on the MPO website as our outreach to the public. I will make a little caveat here because historically we have encouraged members of the public to bring forward project suggestions to the MPO. Going forward we're going to have to make a bit of a modification of that to direct people more directly to their local jurisdictions. Because of the way that the funding works now and the sort of increased fiscal constraints that exist it definitely behooves any member of the public who has a project idea to work directly with their local jurisdiction rather than to come to us because all we could do is redirect them. So that language is going to be included in the letter that will be sent out. So we're really looking at the jurisdictions will work with the public etc. as far as that goes. Once the letter has been distributed there will be several months before the due date. We actually were speaking about that this very morning and thinking preliminarily and please don't hold me to this but we were thinking of having a due date for the TIP applications to be around the end of January of 2019. Again that is just preliminary conversation. Once that deadline has passed, and the reason why we have several months is because we have to work through the projects ourselves on the staff level and then we have to take the projects through our advisory committee process in order to bring them to the Policy Committee for final adoption. That process will take the time from February until the June deadline when the next TIP needs to be adopted by this Committee.

Vasquez: Very good. Thank you for giving me a better idea of the timeline. In terms of the actual call for projects historically members of the public that have participated in this process, do they submit an idea or do they fill out a formal application and what's contained within that application? Is that something that a regular person can do or is it a technical document that requires the expertise of staff or an engineer? How does that work?

Wray: Councilor Vasquez. We have never had a member of the public per se as an individual approach us. We have had organizations within the community approach us historically. That was several years ago though when the TIP was managed in a different manner than is allowable under the current guidelines and regulations. But theoretically it is an application document, I mean it is a document that is filled out. There are a number of requirements that are going to have to be filled out. The ten planning factors that I mentioned in the presentation, those have to be addressed in every application. The performance targets that have also been adopted also have to be addressed as part of the TIP applications going forward. Staff actually is discussing what we are going to have to do to modify the TIP application because the one that we have used historically is now no longer going to be adequate to the needs and requirements of the TIP
program going forward. But as far as filling out the application we would
expect ultimately that the jurisdictions are going to be the entities filling out
the application if, and I'll just throw it out there because they're the one
that immediately percolated to mind the Chamber of Commerce in the
past has brought TIP projects forward. But under the current guidelines
we would direct the Chamber of Commerce to, in the case of the Chamber
it would be the City of Las Cruces to work with the City to fill out the
application and the City of Las Cruces would then be the sponsoring
agency for the project.

Vasquez: Very good. So that kind of clears up who the "public" is in this application
process. So I'm thinking as a way to represent my constituents and do my
job as an elected official through this process it might look something like
citizens have a need, we bring it to the City, the City fills out an
application, and then we submit that through the TIP process. Does that
sound kind of correct?

Wray: Yes, absolutely. And I do want to clarify, just because we have never had
an individual citizen bring forward a project, it has been civic organizations
in the past, that by no means precludes if an individual has a project
approaching their local jurisdiction whether it be the City of Las Cruces,
Doña Ana County, or the Town of Mesilla. It's just that now that approach
has to be made through the jurisdiction.

Vasquez: Very good. Thank you Mr. Wray. Thank you Chair.

Eakman: Thank you. Is there any other discussion on this? Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Thank you Mr. Chair. So Andrew I've been involved with the El Paso
MPO and the Mesilla Valley MPO for the past five years and it's frequently
confusing especially to an engineer. I will tell you that this is probably the
most concise consolidated presentation I've gotten. I would ask that you
send it to me, maybe even to the whole Board, because I'd like to stick it
on my tablet so that I've got it with me. I just want to compliment you on a
presentation that I found very beneficial. I've got a huge binder from El
Paso, I've got one from you guys, and when stuff comes up I've got to go
flipping through pages. This is a summary that I think I will use frequently
so I just wanted to compliment you and ask if you would distribute it so
that I can have it handy.

Wray: We'll certainly do that and thank you.

Eakman: That's a very nice compliment. Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg.
Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I just have a quick question about one project that I'm wondering if it's on the TIP now, and that is the multimodal path on Highway 359 from Calle del Norte to Highway 70. Is that on the TIP now?

Wray: I apologize. It seemed like the microphone cut out there for a second.

Sorg: It does.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Councilor Sorg. Are you speaking of the Town of Mesilla project on Calle del Norte? Because that one is on the TIP but it doesn't go all the way to US-70. That project terminates at the Mesilla...

Sorg: No, no, no, no. Did I say 70?

Wray: Yes.

Sorg: No, Highway 28 I meant.

Wray: Okay.

Sorg: Twenty-eight I meant.

Wray: Okay. Yes. That project is on the TIP. It terminates though at the Mesilla Lateral. It does not proceed all the way to NM 28 because of the right-of-way constraints there because Andele's Dog House is on...

Sorg: That's right.

Wray: The south side and then Andele's proper...

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: And then there's just no way to fit...

Sorg: Yes.

Wray: Anything.

Sorg: That's right.

Wray: But yes, that project is on the TIP.

Sorg: Okay. Do you off the top of your head know when it's scheduled?
Wray: It was a TAP grant so we’re currently in the design portion. Specifically at the moment we’re in the phase where the town of Mesilla is soliciting, bringing on board their engineer ...

Sorg: Okay.

Wray: Engineering consultants to perform the work. Their next deadline where something has to be reported to NMDOT is in May of next year. I don’t know if Madam Mayor wishes to add anything else to that. But that’s the information that I have as of right now.

Sorg: Okay. That’s fine. Thank you.

Baraza: Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Yes Mayor.

Baraza: Yes. We are in the process of transitioning in our offices right now as Debbie Lujan, our Public Works Director who was overseeing the project has resigned. But we have someone on board that is very knowledgeable and capable so I have tasked him to follow up on that. I know Phase 1, we’re calling it Phase 1 of the project, we’re going to be on schedule with that and on Phase 2 where the Town of Mesilla has to come up with a match of $82,000 we have put on our ICIP task legislators for help on the funding for that. So definitely our goal is to stay on track with it, continue our work with DOT and get the project going.

Sorg: If I may, are you saying there is no NMDOT funding for this project?

Baraza: It’s all through the TAP.

Sorg: The TAP money then.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Madam Mayor, Councilor Sorg. The TAP funding is ultimately federal funding but it goes through the State. What Madam Mayor is referring to is the required Town of Mesilla match.

Sorg: Match.

Wray: The match. Mr. Murphy kindly provided me with the site on the New Mexico eSTIP information. The funding is all built into Federal Fiscal Year 2019 so the federal fiscal year that we are about to enter into. But the process has been underway since Ms. Lujan and I attended an orientation meeting back in July 2017. This process has been going on since the award of the TAP grant and the total funding of the project is $850,000.
Sorg: Thank you Chairman.

Eakman: Thank you Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg. Well thank you Mr. Wray for that presentation. I really appreciate it. If there's no further comment on that.

7.2 NMDOT update

Eakman: I'll ask for Mr. Doolittle and the NMDOT update.

Doolittle: Thank you Mr. Chair. I really don't have much this month. We haven't had any significant changes to our projects.

   Valley Drive for instance all the traffic control's pretty much the same. We're still working a lot underground so it may not look like we're doing anything but we're slowly getting to the surface.

   We continue to work on our two guard rail safety projects, the one on Organ over the pass and then the one on I-10 between Las Cruces and El Paso. But other than that Mr. Chair I really don't have anything specific unless somebody has any questions for me.

Eakman: Are there any questions of Mr. Doolittle? Mayor?

Barraza: Mr. Chair.

Eakman: Yes.

Barraza: Yes. I understand you all went for bid on the University project for Phases B, C, and D? Am I correct?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, Madam Mayor. I'll have to check on that. Those RFPs are handled out of the design region not the district so I'll have to check on that for you.

Barraza: Okay. I didn't realize either until we were up in Roswell last week for the New Mexico Municipal League Conference and a couple of the engineering firms, one being Bohannan Huston are the ones that mentioned that to me. That's how I was aware of that. So okay. Thank you.

Eakman: Any other questions? Hearing none, thank you so much Mr. Doolittle for your report.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Eakman: Are there Committee comments today? Mr. Murphy from your staff, I should say. From your staff.
Murphy: For staff comments. Speaking of open call for projects and everything, we’re currently in the process of accepting project solicitations for TAP or the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Recreational Trails Program which has a September 28th deadline for your jurisdictions to turn in to MPO staff. We have met with City staff and with County staff. They have various projects that they intend to submit. Also there is an open call for projects with an MPO deadline of November 30th for Congestion Management and Air Quality funding. Recently, or this past fiscal year Albuquerque changed its air quality status through the EPA from “Maintenance” to “In Compliance” thereby freeing up $10 million statewide with which DOT decided to turn around and accept solicitations statewide for air quality projects regardless of the air quality designation conferred by the EPA. So we’ve talked briefly with some City staff starting those submittals but that is another pot of money that’s opened up and you may want to talk with your administrative staffs, make sure that they have plans to try and bring money to this region. And then I guess I’ll pause here. I got one more announcement but I’ll pause here if there are any questions on the open call for projects.

Eakman: Any questions? Then move right ahead Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: Okay. My next announcement: This is going to be my last MPO Policy Committee meeting. I have reached my eligibility for retirement through the state system and decided that I’m going to see what else is out there. And I would like to express my appreciation for being able to work with all of you through the past many years and you've made it enjoyable at times. And I want to say I do appreciate all of your dedication to transportation planning, something that I’ve devoted my life to. So thank you.

Eakman: Well Mr. Murphy on behalf of our Committee thank you so much for your many years of loyal service and excellent service to this MPO Board. You’ve taught us quite a bit in this process. Too bad as elected officials we’ll turn over, a new board constantly is going to need education. We’ll look forward to staff to present that to us. Are there any comments to Mr. Murphy? Mayor.

Hakes: We also enjoyed it at times.

Barraza: Mr. Chair. Yes. I just want to thank Tom for all the knowledge that you have brought forth and the guidance and everything that you have done. I know for the Town of Mesilla I think we've been together through your whole term through the MPO so those are quite a few years. But I wish you nothing but the very best. I don't know if Lisa has retired yet or retiring so I wish you both the very best and thank you for all your service.

Murphy: Thank you Mayor.
Eakman: Commissioner Solis.

Solis: Yes. Tom I also want to say thank you. I remember when I first started as a Commissioner you reached out to me and you gave me an education that just kind of blew my mind. So I just want to thank you for your hard work and your service. Thank you.

Murphy: Thank you.

Eakman: Councilor Vasquez and then Mayor Pro-Tem Sorg.

Vasquez: Yes. Thank you and good luck Mr. Murphy in whatever you choose to do. I share Commissioner Solis' thoughts about introducing us into this work. Transportation Planning is not easy, it's not for everybody. And I know it takes a lot of technical skill in addition to communication skills to be able to convey this information so that we can get the best outcomes for transportation and for people. So I think you've done a tremendous job of doing that and thank you and sad to see you go.

Murphy: Thank you.

Eakman: Mayor Pro-Tem.

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And Tom thank you too and congratulations and I wish you the best in your future. And just want to comment on the fact that you've always been there for me whenever I've had a question and very helpful. So good job. Thank you.

Murphy: Thanks.

Eakman: Trustee Johnson-Burick.

J-Burick: Thank you and I just want to echo what everybody has already said so thank you so much Tom. And I'm looking forward to running into you in the future. Thank you for everything.

Murphy: Thank you.

Eakman: Yes indeed. Now we'd like to hear from the rest of your staff on how good a boss you've been.

Murphy: I think they have to …

Wray: He's been very good.
Eakman: Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Are there any comments from the Committee Members today? Hearing none.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public.

10. ADJOURNMENT (2:07 PM)

Eakman: We are adjourned.

Chairperson