

Laredo Urban Transportation Study

Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee
City of Laredo Council Chambers
1110 Houston St. -Laredo, Texas



MINUTES OF THE MARCH 18, 2019 MEETING

Regular members present:

Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS Chairperson
Honorable Tano E. Tijerina, Webb County Judge
Honorable George Altgelt, City Councilmember, District VII (joined the meeting at 2:47 p.m.)
Honorable Melisa Montemayor, District Administrator
Honorable David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer
Honorable John Galo, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 3
Honorable Norma "Nelly" Vielma, City Councilmember, District V (joined the meeting at 1:52 p.m.)
Honorable Dr. Marte Martinez, City Councilmember, District VI (joined the meeting at 1:48 p.m.)

Regular members not present:

Honorable Jesse Gonzalez, Webb County Commissioner, Pct. 1

Ex-Officio Members Not Present:

Honorable Richard Raymond, State Representative, District 42
Honorable Judith Zaffirini, State Senator, District 21
Honorable Tracy O. King, State Representative, District 80

Staff (Of Participating LUTS Agencies) Present:

City: Vanessa Guerra, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Angie Quijano, City Planning/LUTS Staff
Ramon Chavez, City of Laredo Engineer
Robert Peña, City of Laredo Traffic Safety
Claudia San Miguel, Transit, El Metro

State: Roberto Rodriguez, TxDOT
Ana Duncan, TxDOT
Sara Garza, TxDOT
Danny Magee, TxDOT
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT
Mike Graham, TxDOT

County: Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineering

Guillermo Cuellar, Webb County Engineering
Nathan R. Bratton, Webb County Civil Division

Others: Julia Wallace, Laredo Morning Times
Linda Teniente, City of Laredo Real Estate Division
Victoria Dominguez, City of Laredo Real Estate Division
Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration
Bob Austin, Lockwood, Andrews & Newman, Inc.
Edward Ochoa, Civil Engineering Consultants

I. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Honorable Mayor Saenz called the meeting to order at 1:43 p.m.

II. CHAIRPERSON TO CALL ROLL

Vanessa Guerra, Acting MPO Director, called roll and verified a quorum existed.

III. CITIZEN COMMENT

Speakers are required to fill out witness cards, which must be submitted to MPO Staff no later than 15 minutes after the start of the meeting. Speakers shall identify themselves at the microphone. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. No more than three (3) persons will be allowed to speak on any side of an issue. Should there be more than three (3) people who wish to speak on a specific issue, they should select not more than three (3) representatives to speak on their behalf. The presiding officer may further limit public comment in the interest of order or time. Speakers may not transfer their minutes to any other speaker. Comments should be relevant to City business and delivered in a professional manner. No derogatory remarks shall be permitted.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Approval of the minutes for the meeting held on January 22, 2019, and February 19, 2019.

CM. Galo made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2019 and February 19, 2019.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 5
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

1. **Addition** of project CSJ 0018-06-198 intended to provide for the widening of IH 35, by constructing a third lane to the inside and adding a concrete barrier to the inside of IH 35 north/south bound, from 0.38 miles south of US59/IH 35 INT. to 0.80 miles north of US59/IH 35 INT., with an estimated total project cost of \$5,911,775. The proposed project letting date is FY 2019.
2. **Addition** of project CSJ 0086-14-084 intended to widen I-69W by providing for the construction of a third lane to the inside and adding a concrete barrier to I-69W east/west bound, from World Trade Bridge GSA facilities to IH 35, with an estimated total project cost of \$18,207,550. The proposed letting date is FY 2020.
3. **Addition** of project CSJ 2150-04-076 intended to widen FM 1472 by providing for the construction of a right turn lane on I-69W/FM 1472 intersection, from Big Bend Boulevard northbound to Killam Industrial Boulevard northbound, with an estimated total project cost of \$4,167,927. The proposed letting date is FY 2019.
4. **Addition** of project CSJ 0922-33-181 intended to construct and improve seventeen (17) bus stops located throughout the transit fixed route network, with an estimated total project cost of \$250,000. The proposed project letting date is FY 2021.
5. **Revision** of project CSJ 0922-33-149 for the construction of a pedestrian trail at Chacon Creek. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.
6. **Revision** of project CSJ 0922-33-076 for the construction of the re-alignment at the intersection of FM 1472 and Flecha Lane/Las Cruces Drive. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.
7. **Revision** of project CSJ 0922-33-093 for the construction of an overpass on Calton Road. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.
8. **Revision** of project CSJ 0922-33-177 for the construction of a hike and bike trail from Anna Park to LC Campus. **Purpose** of amendment is to revise the estimated letting date from fiscal year (FY) 2019 to FY 2020.

CM. Galo made a motion to **open** a public hearing.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 5

Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

Ms. Vanessa Guerra, Acting MPO Director, gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments to the 2019-2022 TIP.

CM. George Altgelt joined the meeting at 1:47 p.m.

CM. Dr. Marte Martinez joined the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

CM. Galo asked for a status update on the Calton Road overpass.

Ramon Chavez, City Engineer, stated Staff had met with the consultant last week. He stated the acquisition had been made except for one of the properties. He stated plans have been updated to TxDOT specifications and ready to be submitted to TxDOT for final letting review. He stated Staff would be working on a Union Pacific Railroad agreement that is pending as well as the relocation of fences.

CM. Galo asked why one property was pending acquisition.

Mr. Chavez stated there was litigation pending completion.

CM. Nelly Vielma joined the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

CM. Galo made a motion to **initiate** a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment(s) of the 2019-2022 TIP.

Second: Judge Tijerina
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

C. Receive public testimony and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the following proposed amendment(s) of the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):

1. Amending Table 12-10, entitled Roadway and Bicycle/Pedestrian Project Summary,
Figure 12-1, entitled Roadway and Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects,
Table 12-11, entitled roadway Projects,
Figure 13-1, entitled Natural Resources and Federally Funded Projects,
Figure 13-2, entitled Cultural Resources and Federally Funded Projects,

Figure 13-3, entitled Low Income Areas and Federally Funded Projects, Table 13-1, entitled Federally Funded Projects Environmental Assessment Results, Table 13-3, entitled Federally Funded Projects and Environmental Justice Populations; and, Figure 13-4 entitled Colonias and Federally Funded Projects as necessary to incorporate the following revisions:

- a) **Addition** of project CSJ 0018-06-198 intended to provide for the widening of IH 35, by constructing a third lane to the inside and adding a concrete barrier to the inside of IH 35 north/south bound, from 0.38 miles south of US59/IH 35 INT. to 0.80 miles south of US59/IH 35 INT., with an estimated total project cost of \$5,911,775. The proposed project letting date is FY 2019.
- b) **Addition** of project CSJ 0086-14-084 intended to widen I-69W by providing for the construction of a third lane to the inside and adding a concrete barrier to I-69W east/west bound, from World Trade Bridge GSA facilities to IH 35, with an estimated total project cost of \$18,207,550. The proposed letting date is FY 2020.
- c) **Addition** of project CSJ 2150-04-076 intended to widen FM 1472 by providing for the construction of a right turn lane on I-69W/FM 1472 intersection, from Big Bend Boulevard northbound to Killam Industrial Boulevard northbound, with an estimated total project cost of \$4,167,927. The proposed letting date is FY 2019.
- d) **Addition** of project CSJ 0922-33-181 intended to construct and improve seventeen (17) bus stops located throughout the transit fixed route network, with an estimated total project cost of \$250,000. The proposed project letting date is FY 2020.

CM. Galo made a motion to **open** a public hearing.

Second: Judge Tijerina

CM. Galo made a motion to **amend** his motion and open a public hearing and initiate a ten-day public review and comment period for the proposed amendment (s) of the 2015-2040 MTP.

Second: Dr. Martinez
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

D. A motion to consider approval of the amendment of the Laredo El Metro ADA Bus Stops and Bicycles Plazas Enhancement Project, funded by the MPO's 2018 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program funding, in order to:

CM. Galo made a motion to **approve** the amendment of the Laredo El Metro ADA Bus Stops and Bicycles Plazas Enhancement Project, funded by the MPO's 2018 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program funding.

1. substitute ten (10) of the original bus stop locations submitted in the original funding request with (10) other newly identified locations; and,
2. upgrade the proposed bus shelter design to a Slimline Arched shelter for a sophisticated appearance that includes solar lighting, wall mounted benches and map cases.

The proposed amendments will not increase the \$250,000 total project cost, and the \$200,000 in TA- Set Aside funds allocated to the project will remain unchanged.

Second: CM. Altgelt
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

E. A motion to authorize a 2019 Call For Projects for the Laredo MPO Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program, in order to allocate \$1,176,000 in TA federal funds, requiring a 20% match of \$294,000, totaling \$1,470,000 in total project costs.

Ms. Guerra gave a brief presentation on the item.

CM. Altgelt made a motion to **approve** the authorization of a 2019 Call For Projects for the Laredo MPO Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program, in order to allocate \$1,176,000 in TA federal funds, requiring a 20% match of \$294,000, totaling \$1,470,000 in total project costs.

Second: CM. Galo
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

F. A motion to allocate \$43 million dollars from the 2020 Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) to the frontage road projects on highway US 59-Future IH 69. CSJ's 0086-14-086, 087, and 089. This allocation will fund a portion of the frontage roads needed along US 59.

CM. Galo made a motion to **approve** the allocation of the \$43 million dollars from the 2020 Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) to the frontage road projects on highway US 59-Future IH 69 for CSJ's 0086-14-086, 087, and 089.

Second: Dr. Martinez

Ms. Guerra stated TxDOT requested to also include project 0086-14-088.

CM. Galo amended his motion to include project 0086-14-088.

Second: Dr. Martinez
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Galo asked when the Committee would find out the outcome of the INFRA Grant application.

Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration, stated it would most likely be around October 2019.

CM. Galo inquired whether the Airport Overpass would be let in 2022.

Ana Duncan, TxDOT, stated utility adjustments could not be made without prior Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition. She stated TxDOT was in the process of negotiating the contract to begin the sub-surface utility investigations, in order to identify all utilities within the corridor. She also stated approximately half the properties to date given right of entry permission.

Judge Tijerina inquired on the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for

Mike Graham, TxDOT, stated TxDOT was in the last phase of the environmental document development which required approval by another entity. He stated TxDOT was moving forward with the parkland impacts and getting the necessary appraisal required to get clearance. He stated TxDOT expects to have the FONSI by the end of this year.

CM. Galo amended his motion and clarified to include that if the INFRA Grant is approved; use 43 million dollars for CSJ's 0086-14-086, 087, 088, and 089.

Second: Dr. Martinez
For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

CM. Galo asked approximately when the construction of the Airport project would be completed.

CM. Salazar stated TxDOT it would approximately take around 24-36 months.

G. Discussion with possible action on that section of IH 35, between the Milo Interchange and Shiloh Drive, regarding issues pertaining to access by adjoining land owners and frontage roads.

Luis Villarreal, TxDOT, gave a brief presentation on the item.

He stated that TxDOT was working on improving IH 35 to increase capacity from mile marker 6 to mile marker 30. He stated the area they were working on was segment 1 which consisted of Shiloh Drive to the Milo Interchange. He stated the main objective was to grade separate IH 35 at the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge.

H. Discussion with possible action on lighting on Cuatro Vientos Road.

Robert Peña, Traffic Safety Department, stated the lighting that exists on Cuatro Vientos Road is safety lighting and in order to pursue continuous lighting, there is a process to follow.

Danny Magee, TxDOT, stated there is a mechanism on lighting than can be installed on Cuatro Vientos Road. However, a study would be required to show any lighting would substantially help the road.

He also stated that the accidents that have happened on Cuatro Vientos Road have been during daylight hours.

Mayor Saenz requested to have proposed lighting alternatives for said road for the next Policy Committee meeting.

CM. Galo left the meeting at approximately 2:47 p.m.

CM. Algelt requested for Traffic Safety Department to bring back accident data for said road for the next MPO meeting.

I. Discussion with possible action on the proposed Mines Road Bike Tract.

CM. Algelt stated there is a wide section of ROW from the overpass that goes over IH-35 to the western end of I-69/Loop 20 over Mines Road that TxDOT has not indicated to be used for anything.

He stated that section would be appropriate for a transit type facility.

He asked if TxDOT would be able to make it available for use.

Judge Tijerina made a motion to **combine** items #J & K with said item.

Second: Dr. Martinez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

J. Discussion with possible action regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities in order to safely cross Loop 20 at the intersection of Del Mar.

K. Discussion with possible action regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities in order to safely cross Del Mar under IH 35 and allocation of funding regarding same.

CM. Algelt stated his concerns regarding kids crossing Loop 20 by foot. Said children are trying to cross from the Alexander 9th Grade Campus to the Alexander Main Campus. He inquired if there could be a crossing system to make it safe.

Judge Tijerina echoed his concerns and suggested a possible a reduction of speed northbound on Loop 20.

CM. Algelt stated a large number of pedestrians and cyclists cross under IH 35 to access the road east and west of IH 35 to get to Del Mar Blvd. He stated said access roads do not have any cross walk infrastructure.

CM. Algelt made a motion directing TxDOT prepare proposed solutions, cost estimates, and funding sources related to items #I, J, and K and present them at the next MPO meeting.

Second: Dr. Martinez

CM. Vielma inquired if it was possible to have an accelerated lane to turn into the Casa Misericordia Church coming southbound.

David Salazar, TxDOT District Engineer, stated it is something TxDOT could look into. He stated regarding agenda items #I and K, the pedestrian and bicycle related items improvements were not a project priority for TxDOT and would not entertain the suggested improvements. He also stated TxDOT had the data and information for the bike routes.

Danny Magee, TxDOT, stated TxDOT, if requested could work with the City to install cameras to count pedestrians and bicycles, and return to the committee with that information.

For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously

L. Discussion with possible action on the River Road Project.

The Mayor informed the committee there were no updates on this item at this time.

M. Discussion with possible action on Hachar-Reuthinger Road.

Luis Perez Garcia, Webb County Engineer, stated the engineering firm selected to develop the project plans has been working diligently. The County had received a large volume of work product on Friday, March 15th and would be reviewing it. The work submitted pertained to the drainage areas and hydrology of the Reuthinger and Hachar road sections.

He stated the County was working with TxDOT and the consultant to tentatively be able to give a presentation on the project at the next MPO meeting. He further stated the County was working on the environmental document. He could foresee construction initiating in 2023.

V. REPORT(S) AND PRESENTATIONS (No action required).

A. Update on the status of the Bike Master Plan.

Vanessa Guerra, Acting MPO Director, stated the MPO together with the Traffic Department published a Request for Qualifications. Submittals are due April 1st, 2019. A selection committee will be formed and the ranked proposals will then be brought back to the MPO Policy Committee for selection of the firm.

Judge Tijerina left the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

B. Status report by Traffic Safety Department on the Citywide Synchronization Project.

Robert Peña, Traffic Safety Department and Bob Austin with Lockwood, Andrews & Newman, Inc. gave a brief presentation on said item.

Mr. Austin stated the project consisted of signal synchronization on a variety of road including: Mines Road, IH 35, Loop 20, Guadalupe, Chihuahua, McPherson and Business 35.

He stated traffic counts have been collected, and a total of 80 signals were being synchronized. The signal optimized timings would then be submitted to the City for review and implementation.

Mr. Austin stated an extension of the project completion date was being proposed to November 2019.

C. Status report by TxDOT on the Outer Loop Alignment Study.

Melisa Montemayor, TxDOT, stated the Jacobs firm was hired to reassess the previous alignment. The re-assessment of the alignment will determine if there are any new physical obstructions since the previous alignment was developed in 2006-2007.

She stated public meetings would be held in the future to inform the public of the project.

D. Status report by TxDOT on ongoing projects.

Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT, gave an update on TxDOT ongoing projects which included the following:

- SL 20 over KCS Railroad Grade Separation
95% work completed/anticipated completion date-early summer 2019
- US 59 over IH 35 Overpass
68% work completed/anticipated completion date-winter 2019
- SH 359 from City of Laredo do Duval County
5% work completed/anticipated work completion date-winter 2020
- US 83 from Dimmit County line to 3.4 miles of SH 44
work to start in Spring 2019/anticipated completion date-summer 2022

E. Status report on the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA).

The following update was sent via-email by the RMA.

1. INFRA Grant Application –Supported the City of Laredo and assisted in submitting the Final Application to grants.gov on 3/4/19.
2. Vallecillo Road (FM 1472 to IH 35) – Awaiting final consent from TxDOT Debt Finance Department on Financial Plan. Upon consent, release draft agreements to the City of Laredo and Killam Company.
3. Los Presidentes (Cuatro Vientos to Concord Hills) – Met with the Interim City Planner, City Engineer and City Legal Staff to review City Comments. Anticipate a final draft complete by the end of March.
4. Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes - Met with the Interim City Planner, City Engineer and City Legal Staff to review City Comments. Anticipate a final draft complete by the end of March.


5. North Laredo Webb County Transportation Planning Study – The Advanced Funding Agreement is executed. We are awaiting the FHWA Funding Authorization Letter to execute the Work Authorization. Anticipate receipt at the end of March.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

CM. Altgelt made a motion to **adjourn** the meeting at 3:36 p.m.

Second: Dr. Martinez
For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously



Vanessa Guerra,
Acting MPO Director



Pete Saenz, Mayor and LUTS
Chairperson