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Santa Fe MPO  
Transportation Policy Board  
February 14, 2008**

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**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SANTA FE MPO**  
**TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

**Thursday, February 14, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Santa Fe MPO Transportation Policy Board was called to order by Chair Miguel Chávez at approximately 2:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Santa Fe City Hall, 200 Lincoln Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

**Members Present:**

Councilor Miguel Chávez, Chairman  
Commissioner Michael Anaya  
Councilor Matthew Ortíz  
Commissioner Jack Sullivan

**Members Absent:**

Mayor David Coss  
Commissioner Virginia Vigil

**Staff Present:**

Mark Tibbetts, MPO Officer  
Lucas Cruse, MPO Senior Planner

**Councilor Ortíz moved to come out of executive session and return to open session. Commissioner Anaya seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

Councilor Chávez said only things discussed in executive session were personnel matters.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Commissioner Sullivan moved to approve the agenda as published. Councilor Ortíz seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**November 8th & December 13th 2007**

**Councilor Ortiz moved to approve the minutes of November 8, 2007. Commissioner Anaya seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

Commissioner Sullivan referred to page 10 of the December minutes and asked that the motion be corrected by deleting the words "and one in between (Richards Avenue)."

Councilor Ortiz agreed with the friendly amendment.

**Councilor Ortiz moved to approve the minutes of December 13, 2007 as amended. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

## **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **1. Rail Runner station location update from NMDOT** **a. Zia Road and NM-599 station design progress & schedule**

Chris Blewett provided a packet on the Rail Runner stations with the first 3 pages showing potential layouts for the NM 599 station. The first was SE quadrant of interchange and would leave ramps as they were except the northbound would be two-way to enter parking.

The second layout would eliminate two ramps and place them up from the current off ramp and make it more like a diamond interchange. An advantage was creating land around the station.

Councilor Chávez asked if that would it make the at grade intersection safer and how it would fit in.

Mr. Blewett explained that it would use property in between the frontage road and 599 and the walk to station would be long. He said the fourth page had a rendering. The comments have been few. People were more interested in how it would work and connect to other things. He said they would appreciate the Board's comments on how they wanted it laid out.

He said they also discussed these ideas with FHWA and they thought MR COG could do a simple environmental assessment (EA). He said they had a couple of months to finalize the layout and do environmental documentation and bring forth a concept they could actually construct before the trains start running.

Commissioner Sullivan said there was a preference for the station on the NE because a county bike trail, Arroyo Hondo, went along there. He added that the Land Use Dept had not been contacted about any of these layouts. This was in the College District, a special use district in the county so they should be involved in that discussion.

He asked if they had thought about having the train over next to the parking lot and then go back to the median. He was sure about the cost and they seemed to be busy already building bridges at 599 now but that might be a way to address safety.

Commissioner Anaya liked scenario #2 and felt it made more sense and people would not have to walk so far.

Councilor Ortíz asked if they had got a new EA from FHWA.

Mr. Blewett said FHWA told them they didn't need to for the work in the median but any work outside the median was not previously covered. It would be simple because this was already on land previously disturbed. The most important part would be a traffic analysis. He didn't believe there were endangered species or cultural artifacts located there.

Councilor Ortíz asked if they were going to build from the Railyard out or from 599 into the City.

Mr. Blewett said they we planned to do all of them concurrently starting in a couple of months. He explained they had to go through the environmental and get a comfortable layout.

Mr. Blewett said the Zia/St. Francis Station was more challenging. They didn't want the City in a position of having to get it all done concurrently. If the City wanted it open on opening day that was fine. He said they would work with the developer on location of the platform and the City's site approval was the green light for stopping the train there but it wouldn't stop there until the City approved. He said they were concerned about just building a station because it could change into other undesirable uses.

Councilor Ortíz asked which of #9 and #2, was more expensive.

Mr. Blewett said they hadn't finished yet. He said the least expensive would be Scenario #10. The pedestrian overpass would be lengthy. #9 and #2 would be relatively close and cost more because of the ramps being changed. He said #2 would probably cost \$5-6 million.

Councilor Ortíz asked if there was only enough for 3 or maybe 4 stations.

Mr. Blewett agreed. He noted there were things at the Railyard they had not

anticipated but they were closer in knowing the major costs. He said they should be able soon to state what was remaining.

Councilor Chávez asked if they would have a public session for the final decision.

Mr. Blewett said they would be happy to do that and added that they had not gotten a lot of comments. Most preferred #2 but most comments related to other issues.

Councilor Chávez noted they asked for a safety study on the 599 corridor. Grade separated crossings would be preferred and he asked how that would fit in.

Mr. Blewett said that was something that would need to be evaluated but it could be done.

Councilor Chávez asked if they wanted a vote at this meeting.

Mr. Blewett said they were collecting comments and if there were other things to consider, fine. He said they were leaning to #2 now.

Commissioner Sullivan said he would like to see some layout design on the east side of I-25 to see if feasible. It seemed to be a good alternative and by eliminating that long access road, it would open up the land there in the college district. There were amenities that could be developed there. There was already land out there so options do exist. So they would be dealing with the Master Plan of the College District. He encouraged working with the County on it.

Mr. Blewett asked for clarification that he would like to move the train out of the median.

Commissioner Sullivan agreed and explained it further.

Mr. Blewett went back to the Zia Station and said it would require some discussions with the City. They would identify a place for the platform. He noted there was not a lot of room there but once set, they could go ahead and get it built and the rest could be done by the City and the City could state when they could stop the train there.

Councilor Ortiz asked what steps were there to interface Rail Runner with Santa Fe Trails so that people getting off there would have public transportation accessible.

Mr. Blewett said they had been meeting monthly with Santa Fe Trails and lately every two weeks. He hoped they would have some draft ideas in a couple of months.

Councilor Ortiz asked if they were in the loop on the sharettes with the developer. Mr. Blewett agreed.

Councilor Chávez noted that Josette Lucero was present and asked her to share regarding the NCRTD interface.

Mr. Blewett said he gave a presentation to NCRTD a couple of weeks ago.

Ms. Lucero said it was a timely question. She said the RTD had been in touch and intended that Santa Fe Trails and the RTD get together.

#### **b. Process to refine station location in Cerrillos-to-Richards corridor**

Mr. Blewett said they had not done a lot on this location. He related having a meeting with Las Soleras and dealt with the issues there. They were also pulling together some information on the grade issues. He said there were other issues and would appreciate feedback such as should they look at access from both sides there. He added that there were two pretty good locations in that stretch and there might be others. It was a moving target and they had a ways to go.

Commissioner Sullivan reminded that the location there would be expected to be developed after the train was running. It also would depend on how much money was left so they had some time before that.

## **2. Corridor studies update from NMDOT**

Mr. Dave Quintana (NMDOT) provided the report. He said the traffic model would be ready by end of March. So they should be able to provide a report six months after that in November. He explained that there were three separate studies going concurrently to provide plans for future growth.

Commissioner Sullivan asked if Rail Runner projections were included in the model. Mr. Quintana agreed.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Response to the consultant-led SFMPO Membership/Structure study recommendations**

Ms. Pat Oliver-Wright reported on this study. She said she would introduce the subject and then turn it over to Emily Braswell and Bruce Poster. She explained how a study a year before led to the issue on membership and structure of the MPO and an audit by the FWHA pointed out what changes needed to be considered to comply.

Ms. Braswell reminded them of her visit in December. She went through the power

point report and said there was substantial agreement on the recommendations. She went through the study methodology and then went to the recommendations. She said the location should have a regional character, not city or county. She recommended the boundary be a 20 year plan and staff opted for 25 year.

She commended the TCC for excellent additions and amendments to her recommendations. She called attention to the economic struggles to make the Board strengthen its resolve in this regard.

Councilor Ortíz thanked her for all the work she did. He said he was skeptical at first but after participating, found that it was productive. He asked if they were looking for the TPB to implement them or do things differently.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said DOT did expect substantial implementation but in the details, there was room for flexibility.

Councilor Ortíz said he didn't disagree and asked if the DOT had the right to tell the TPB what it had to do.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said they had to make sure the federal standards were followed so they did have the authority to tell the TPB the changes that must be made.

Councilor Ortíz asked if they were out of compliance now on the membership.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said they were out of compliance for not having all local governments in this area be on the board. Here was it Tesuque Pueblo.

Councilor Ortíz asked about Pojoaque and Nambe too, because they were all contiguous with each other.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said they were not contiguous with the City.

Councilor Ortíz thought they offered this position on the Board and were just awaiting a response. He asked if the TPB would be held accountable if the Pueblo chose not to appoint a member.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said no but noted they had expressed an interest in participating. She said there was also a recommendation for NCRTD to be represented on the TCC.

Councilor Ortíz said he felt a little uncomfortable with two Board members absent.

Commissioner Sullivan asked Ms. Braswell if it was her recommendation to add another councilor to the Board.

Ms. Braswell said that came from the TCC.

Commissioner Sullivan asked Ms. Follingstad to respond and said he was concerned to have 4 councilors and 3 commissioners.

Ms. Follingstad said it had to do with the level of population within the City.

Ms. Judy McGowan said the County did not vote on the TCC. TCC members were not voting personal opinions but the interest of the County in their professional judgment

Mr. Tibbetts said three of the five Commissioners or 60% sit on the TPB. But they were under pressure by the Feds to represent 75% of the urban area which was the MPO. He said they were concerned with was that they now had two councilors and three commissioners. So the city has three of the 8 on the council. The mayor was ex officio with vote. Most of them represented their constituency. The comments to them and requests to them would likely be from their district.

Commissioner Sullivan thought that was nonsense. He said he couldn't tell how many phone calls he got about Richards Avenue. He felt having four districts was irrelevant.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said she thought she had not understood this federal regulation. The way I read it, the entity within the area must be represented on the Board. Other MPOs may interpret it differently.

Jack said the City was represented and this was a recommendation of the TCC with only a 24-hour notice.

Mr. Tibbetts said the County was adequately notified and represented at the special meeting by Shabih Rizvi. He agreed the notice should be as much in advance as possible. He apologized that they did not have anyone from FHWA but it was their regulation.

Commissioner Sullivan said it was not the notice but when they got the materials that mattered. That was the part they were missing because important materials were just passed out and that just blindsided the members.

Commissioner Sullivan also commented that the recommendation from Ms. Oliver-Wright differed from the consultant. This was for a deputy secretary. He asked how many deputy secretaries there were.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said there were three. Pego Guerrerortiz, Robert Ortiz and Larry Duran.

Commissioner Sullivan asked if they were appointed by the Governor.



Ms. Oliver-Wright agreed.

Commissioner Sullivan felt the District 5 Engineer, though not appointed was a good one. He said they usually get the secretary's designees but the Engineer's response was very quick and he has been there a long time. He felt Mr. Guerrerortiz was a good engineer and had worked for the City and a good guy but after Richardson left, who knew who would be appointed.

Ms. Oliver-Wright said she would defer to District 5.

Mr. Phil Gallegos (District 5) said he talked with John McElroy who said he would serve if asked by the Board.

## **2. Revised SFMPO Bylaws – including additions/changes to TPB & TCC membership**

Councilor Ortiz asked if there was a separate action they needed to take. He agreed that staff needed to know to whom they were to report in this new structure. He said he was more than willing to help with what needed to be done on the City side. He thought they would need at least until the Spring of 2008 to complete those. There were administrative and personnel matters that needed to be worked out and they needed to have clear lines of communication and authority worked out. It would take longer than what was being proposed.

He said that with two members not here he would request that items E1 and #2 be back on the agenda next time.

Councilor Chávez asked if he would expect a presentation.

Councilor Ortiz said no, just more time to work out the logistics on how staff would report directly to the TPB. He noted they had been city employees and responsive to city oversight. It needed to be fundamentally addressed and part of the work plan and would take some time.

Councilor Chávez asked if it would be appropriate to have some study sessions.

Councilor Ortiz agreed and perhaps an executive session like today. He said he and Commissioner Sullivan needed to meet with the City Manager and staff to break them out of the city structure.

Mr. Tibbetts said they appeared to be embedded in the City because of the financial arrangement but they didn't comply with other City tasks. He added that the City overmatched by about \$100,000 to the MPO and it was beneficial for everyone.

Councilor Ortiz said he was aware of the overmatch and complained about it three

years ago but what he heard from the State was they wanted the MPO to be a more independent body. So they needed to establish clear lines of communication so staff didn't just respond to the state but to the Board and the Board could track the work plan.

He said the TPB was supposed to be the entity dictating what the priorities were and, according to the federal and state requirements to tell staff what needed to get done and if those expectations were being met.

Commissioner Sullivan said he would be glad to help.

Councilor Ortíz said that next month, they would have together what needed to get done.

Mr. Tibbetts said the MPO was federally created and DOT was the watchdog to make sure they were in compliance. He felt the Board could take a more directing and independent role as it developed.

Councilor Ortíz was grateful for that perspective and have the Board move to a place more consistent with the directive given. He understood the state would have a role in the money that passed through. He agreed to set up the meeting with the City Manager and Commissioner Sullivan.

Councilor Ortíz asked to have someone mail to members to suggest a study session just on E1 and #2 within the next 2-3 weeks. He added that he understood they would have a new County member and assumed that was okay with DOT.

Ms. Oliver-Wright agreed.

Mr. Tibbetts said they could do that.

## **MATTERS FROM THE SFMPO TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

Commissioner Sullivan provided comments on HB 400 that would create a District and impose a tax. And reported that it did not get out of the Finance Committee. He felt that was a wonderful event because that would have allowed Bernalillo County to dictate the taxes of Santa Fe County.

He commented that when they had been asked to make decisions on station locations, they were told that operation and maintenance would be handled by the State but the bill in the legislature would have done the opposite and he thought it was unfair but might come up again. He asked that on the agenda next time they would have a resolution that he would put together regarding the Board's position on operation and maintenance of the Rail Runner so the DOT and FHWA would understand the promises that were made. He felt these should be joint decisions, not unilaterally by the State.

Councilor Chávez said his feeling was the opposite but felt they could have had that debate.

**MATTERS FROM THE SFMPO STAFF**

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM NMDOT AND FHWA**

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**ADJOURNMENT - Next scheduled meeting was 2:00 p.m. - April 10th, 2008**

Having completed the agenda and with no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Miguel Chávez, Chair

Submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carl Boaz, Stenographer

