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SANTA FE MPO
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB)

AUGUST 13, 2009

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MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE MPO
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Santa Fe MPO Transportation Policy Board was called to order by Commissioner Virginia Vigil, Chair on this date at approximately 3:00 pm in the Santa Fe City Councilors Chambers at City Hall, 200 Lincoln, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present:

Commissioner Harry Montoya (Commissioner Mike Anaya)
Councilor Miguel Chavez
Councilor Rosemary Romero (alternate for Mayor David Coss)
Commissioner Liz Stefanics
Commissioner Virginia Vigil
Mr. Max Valerio, DOT

Members Absent:

Commissioner Mike Anaya
Councilor Matthew Ortiz
Governor Robert Mora

Staff Present:

Mark Tibbetts, MPO Officer
Keith Wilson, MPO Senior Planner

Others Present:

Claude Morelli, NMDOT
Eric Wrage, Bohannon Huston
Albert M. Thomas, Bohannon Huston
Jeanette Walther, Bohannon Huston
Mary Helen Follingsted, Regional Planning Authority
David Pease, Candlelight Neighborhood
Barbara Fixe, Baca Neighborhood
Mary Dykto, citizen
Diane Dumas, citizen
David Quintana, NMDOT
Charmaine Clair, Stenographer

APPROVAL of AGENDA

Commissioner Stefanics moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilor Romero seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

APPROVAL of MINUTES: June 11, 2009

Commissioner Stefanics moved to approve the minutes of June 11, 2009 as presented. Commissioner Montoya seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

A. ACTION ITEMS:

1. Election of a Transportation Policy Board Chair

Chair Vigil confirmed that Commissioner Anaya was chairperson until the end of the year (two more meetings.)

Mr. Tibbets said the vice chair would move into the chair position and wouldn't require another election.

Councilor Chavez noted for the record the standard practice for the city and county was to alternate the chair and vice chair position and the vice chair would move to chairperson.

Commissioner Stefanics nominated Robert Mora as chairperson for the remainder of the year.

Councilor Chavez nominated Councilor Rosemary Romero as vice chair.

Commissioner Montoya moved to approve the nominations for Robert Mora as chairperson and Rosemary Romero as vice chair for the remainder of the year. Commissioner Stefanics seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. Approval of FY2009-2010 Amended Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Wilson provided specifics for the board on the UPWP information. He said the document was renewed annually and was approved in April for the current fiscal year and additional funding of \$123,756.00 had been received from planning funds from previous years. Since the meeting with the TCC (Technical Coordinating Committee) the last year's accounts had been closed and the balance of the previous year's Section 112 & 5303 funds would be carried over.

He reviewed the summary table on page 24 of 24 and said with each of the section 112 funds there was a local match of 15%. He said the amendment changes to the UPWP was to beef up tasks already planned to spend the \$123,756.00 additional money and hire consultants and use money for assistance with the 5 year update and planning and data collection tasks. He said the combined total of Section 112 and 5303, if not spent in this year would be carried over to the following year.

Commissioner Montoya moved to approve the amended UPWP. Councilor Chavez seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Approval of FY2010-2013 Amended Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Mr. Wilson said the TIP was approved in April and amended in July and the latest amendment clarified discrepancies with the STIP. The discrepancies were as follows:

Page 1 of 8 of the plan, rounded up the Museum Hill Project to \$323,000.

Page 3 of 8, St. Francis Drive interchange rounded up to \$5 million.

Page 4 of 8, South Meadows Road Project -was listed in fiscal year 2012 for \$2.5 million and was requested by the state to be moved to FY 2015 and was shown on page 5 of 8.

Page 5 of 8, Enhancement Project for Santa Fe Rail Trail had previously been given a budget of \$600,000 that had been reduced to \$301,000.

Commissioner Montoya asked why the South Meadow Road construction had been moved from 2012 to 2013, the time the project would have been completed.

Mr. Tibbets said a new transportation funding bill was in process and would finish at the end of the year and an estimate was made and the adjustment was included and was more an accounting adjustment. The funding amount wouldn't be known until the spring and could be moved back at that time to 2012 and the concerns of the county had been passed on.

Commissioner Montoya asked what had happened on the Santa Fe Rail Trail.

Mr. Tibbets said that was also a correction for an over estimate and was a moving number. He said that had been the first time the MPO received a negotiated budget amount and normally had to argue each project.

Chair Vigil asked if the documents could be amended and asked Mr. Tibbetts to keep the authority advised on updates and project status.

Mr. Tibbets agreed and said the TIP was frequently amended and the uncertainty of the amount of funding had a lot to do with the change.

Councilor Chavez asked about the excluded details on the St. Francis Interchange.

Mr. Tibbets said it had been in the STIP for 4-5 years and was pending the completion of the 1-25 Corridor Study and was a high priority for the NMDOT.

Councilor Chavez moved to approve the 2010-2013 Amended Transportation Improvement Plan. Councilor Romero seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. Approval of FY2008-2011 Amended Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Mr. Wilson said a request from MRCOG from the Rail Runner was received and \$1 million was earmarked for the Rail Runner Station Construction at 599. The money had to be in the STIP and was an after the fact amendment to the TIP. He pointed out that page 1 of 7 showed the \$500,000 of federal funds for Phase B in 2008 and page 3 of 7 contained the additional \$500,000.

Commissioner Stefanics moved to approve the amendment to the 2008-2011 TIP to reflect the one million dollars. Councilor Romero seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Stefanics said she attended the ribbon-cutting of 599 and thanked the tax payers in Santa Fe County and the City of Santa Fe for their contribution to the GRT. She said the public was glad to have the Rail Runner.

5. Approval of Amended Joint Powers Agreement and MPO Bylaws

Mr. Tibbets said the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) had been voted on in April and a change was necessitated when the county pointed out their preference for a unanimous agreement of all the signatories rather than a majority vote, when new members were added to the TPB.

He said Santa Fe County also felt uncomfortable with the language regarding the pueblo. In April language had been approved that stated the Pueblo wasn't tied to any liability and would be treated as a sovereign entity. He checked with Tesuque Pueblo, the governor and private council and they were fine with the approved language.

Another JPA change was deletion of the redundant language that referred to the bylaws. General agreement language hadn't been changed and by-law language had been put into the Bylaws. He said that the documents were listed under Action Items as one but technically was two separate documents.

He said the previous year amendment of the by-laws was discussed because representation of a state DOT was needed. He said at that time language was tentatively passed pending legal review by the board. The adjustment from the Secretary had designated Max Valerio as the representative of the DOT and that was included.

He said staff made a recommendation to the TCC for a voting member of the Bicycle, Pedestrian Study Group to be a representative. The TCC voted approval without a representative and said there was sufficient representation from the engineering staff and others who dealt with the facilities and a representative could open a door to other advocacy groups.

He said MPO staff was fine with the recommendation as long as there was opportunity for the Bicycle Pedestrian Study Group to review projects for safety issues and that was left as it was and the TCC recommendation would be a 12 member TCC membership.

Mr. Tibbets said in 2006 the TPB approved a Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force under the MPO that included representatives from BTAC and Open Space and Trails. He said Dave McQuarie from the Mayor's Committee on Disability (MCD) attended the study group meetings and they had decided pedestrian and ADA issues could be combined with the bicycle issues.

Councilor Romero concurred and said the neighborhood associations also had a vested interest and asked how they could be invited to the groups.

Mr. Tibbets said criteria would be developed by staff that ensured issues would be reviewed from other perspectives. He said the agenda was subject specific with the intent the meeting be subject oriented and inclusive and could be about trail connections, safe sidewalks or roundabouts, etc. There were 60-80 people on the mailing list that were contacted.

Chair Vigil clarified staff had recommended *not* to have a representative from the bicycle/pedestrian organization on the team but would have them review the projects. She asked if the board took action on the item on page 5 of 8, would a bicycle/pedestrian representative be included.

Mr. Wilson said the TCC had recommended the bylaws *without* the bicycle/pedestrian member. If the board approved the bylaws the same as the TCC they should move to approve the bylaws *minus* the member from the bicycle/ pedestrian group.

Councilor Chavez moved to approve the JPA and MPO bylaws. Commissioner Stefanics seconded the motion. Councilor Chavez said his motion would include the staff recommendation for a bicycle pedestrian representative with voting power.

Mr. Wilson said staff had concurred with the TCC *not to* have a voting member from a bicycle/pedestrian group.

Councilor Chavez confirmed that staff would strike page 5 and redline the representative of the study group.

Chair Vigil had Councilor Chavez confirm his intent of his motion was to strike the representative and he said it was. Commissioner Stefanics said that was not her intent in her second.

Chair Vigil seconded Councilor Chavez's motion to approve and to remove the bicycle/pedestrian member as long as the organization had the opportunity to review projects.

Commissioner Stefanics expressed her concern about the deletion and said the nonvoting advisory agencies wouldn't be a part of the final decision-making and she thought that was important.

The motion passed by majority voice vote. Commissioner Stefanics opposed the motion.

B. INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

1. Santa Fe Corridor Studies:

- a. NM 599 Interchange Priority Study: Presentation of Phase A Alternatives identified for Further Study – *NMDOT & Bohannon Huston, Inc.*

Jeanette Walther with Bohannon Huston, Inc. was introduced and began with a study from NM 14 to US to 84-285. She said the Phase A study was complete and had evaluated the existing conditions, determined the need for the project and public involvement and identified alternatives.

She said Phase B would be more detailed in the evaluation of alternatives and the final project would be a priority plan for public funding. NM 599 had 13 access points identified and said there were no plans for improvements on NM 14.

The purpose of the project was to develop a prioritization plan to address access issues and support the economic development, regional transportation and long range planning goals. All of the alternatives in the board's packet were identified under Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives on pages 2 & 3 of the NM 599 Interchange Corridor Study.

Ms. Walther explained Table 1, Matrix for the Alternative Evaluation, provided a summary of the alternatives and included a no build, where no improvements would be made and right-of-way requirements and estimates of the right-of-way costs. She said \$150,000 per acre was used uniformly and the summary included construction costs, whether relocation was required and if safety would be improved at existing intersections. Safety at intersections was rated from 1-5; with 5 the highest risk and three intersections were given a 5: the I-25 frontage road, the Airport Road intersection and the County Road 62 intersection.

She said the next step was to finalize the Phase A report and the priority plan was scheduled for completion by January 2010. A public meeting would be held on September 15 from 4-6 p.m. at the Nancy Rodriguez Community Center on County Road 62, south of NM 599.

Commissioner Stefanics asked if response to the meeting was overwhelming would other meetings be provided. She said she had been informed there would be a large number of people who would attend and when there wasn't enough time for public concerns and questions people thought attention wasn't being paid to the issues.

Ms. Walther said in past meetings they had a large number of staff available and that worked and there would be a hand out and a form that could be filled out and email comments could be made on the Bohannon Huston website until the completion of the study.

Councilor Romero said there wouldn't be representation from the Regional Planning Authority (RPA) because of meeting conflicts and she encouraged Bohannon Huston to hold the meeting from 4-7 in a different location. She suggested longer hours and a more convenient, central location like Genoveva Chavez Community Center.

Mr. Valerio asked why there were 12 locations and not 15-20 locations.

Ms. Walther said the original study established the locations and some had been discarded through public hearing comments or studies. She said the idea was to maintain an access control facility to provide a high level of traffic and the more access points, the slower the traffic operated. All of the interchanges were less than 2 miles apart and access at more than 1 mile wasn't allowed by policy.

b. St. Francis Drive Corridor Study: Presentation of Phase A Alternatives identified for Further Study – NMDOT & Bohannon Huston, Inc).

Mr. Quintana said there would be other opportunities for the public to attend meetings and every effort would be made to contact the original task force.

Chair Vigil asked how stake holders could have input and if the residents had been engaged in the process and to what extent.

Mr. Quintana said he had a contact list and had made efforts to contact everyone including the original task force, through mail and email.

Commissioner Stefanics asked the measure used for cost effectiveness and efficiency for the number of exchanges or interchanges and asked if a possibility was what had been identified rather than feasible interchanges.

Mr. Quintana said everything had been identified for future build out and two that hadn't been built were Jaguar Road and Caja del Río. He said there were standards that existed and the guidelines depended on the facility and said the state access manual focused on efficiency and had to be followed.

Commissioner Stefanics asked if the number of users and number of miles was considered to determine use between exchanges.

Mr. Quintana said the volume and speed of traffic was considered and many different criteria were taken into consideration but there wasn't a measure that based access points on the number of users. He said 13 interchanges had been approved and 11 had been built.

Commissioner Stefanics said there would be 13 exchanges or interchanges for 14 miles of highway.

Mr. Valerio said the study was based in the 90s on the locations as future primary accesses into Santa Fe and was decided in the environmental and planning process with the concept to buy enough right-of-way and evolve from a stop sign to a traffic signal and eventually to an interchange.

Mr. Eric Wrage of Bohannon Houston was introduced. He said he had worked with HDR, Southwest Planning and Marketing, Design Workshop and other groups to study the corridor. He said the objective was to present the alternatives evaluated and solicit feedback and direction for alternatives to be further evaluated in Phase B.

He said the study project went from Rabbit Road or Agua Fria through town through town and evaluated existing conditions and constraints. A summary of future conditions found travel demand traffic would increase 15% up to 50% with the worst intersections at Zia Road and Sawmill and that would require substantial improvement. Cerrillos Road would also require improvement and 10 of the 12 required minor improvements.

Mr. Wrage went through the alternatives from no build, adding and converting lanes, expressways with frontage roads, through commuters, reduced lane widths, intersection improvements, access control, higher mobility, opportunities to close medians, incomplete streets, trail connectivity and enhanced transit and transportation management.

He explained each alternative and how they were evaluated and defined the three segments along the corridor:

Segment 1-south end Agua Fria to San Mateo, access control and 200 feet of right of way.

Segment 2- urban areas San Mateo to Alamo were fully developed and constrained and not much could be done.

Segment 3- Alamo to 599 expressway freeway.

He said initial screening criteria was established and each alternative for each segment was evaluated in regard to the screening criteria: would it satisfy need, handle travel demand, accommodate future travel demands, feasibility, support of the goal to shift to alternate modes and the city's goal of roadway barriers being removed, general environmental impacts, would it incorporate urban design features such as sidewalks, street furniture etc. and were costs relative to annual funding.

He explained the alternatives that made the initial screening results such as: no build, reduction of lanes, lane additions, conversion to bus lanes, reduced lane widths, intersection improvements, trail connectivity and transportation systems management. He provided an example of intersection improvements using figure 64 (Sawmill and Zia).

He said the initial screening was reviewed a second time and considered specific concerns of major stakeholders, financial reasonableness, minimization of local resource needs and of environmental impact and consistency with local government plans and policies.

Mr. Wrage went through the recommendations for the three segments and explained the red dots in figure 19 were to be further studied or taken into consideration.

Bohannon Huston had recommended transit be studied further and a group that was initiated with DOT, Santa Fe Trails, NCRD and RPA met and another meeting was scheduled for the end of the month and MRCOG had been invited.

Councilor Romero said the City of Santa Fe had undertaken a study that called for the streets to be narrowed and asked Mr. Wrage if he had coordinated with that effort.

Mr. Wrage said part of the team had been to the meetings. He said that Bohannon Huston was required to use the adoptive plan implemented in the MPO section and everything was based on the current model that included the Northwest Quadrant but not new development at St. Michaels Drive. There would be access from St. Francis to St. Michaels and auxiliary lanes would be added and the loop ramp removed.

Commissioner Stefanics said the City and County of Santa Fe encouraged bicycle transportation and plans should accommodate bicycles.

Mr. Wrage said the need for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle trails was recognized and construction of multi-use trails and connection to the existing trails was an alternative.

c. Interstate 25 Corridor Study: Update on upcoming activities – *NMDOT*

The Phase A final report had been completed and presented to the board with recommendations for Phase B. The New Mexican ran an article about the corridor. A public meeting was scheduled at GCCC (Genoveva Chavez Community Center) and there would be a couple of additional meetings for that portion of the study with completion scheduled for January.

2. Update on NM Rail Runner Express Services

Mr. Wilson said the NM 599 Station was running since August 1 and the MPO participated in a brochure update to identify connections from each of the stations.

He said the MPO had received a lot of public correspondence on the status of Zia Station currently without service and staff was in the process to determine how to get the station open as it was up to the city when. He said staff recognized a need for discussion with city councilors and the public process for feedback from the neighborhood and were in the preliminary stage to determine what had to happen to open the station.

Mr. Wilson said the feasibility to utilize the two trains locally was looked at and MRCOG provided a cost estimate of \$1.5 million annually to run three to five additional routes. He said a larger process was required because the permit for the number of trips might be exceeded.

A study was being developed to expand on the RPA study that would look at St. Francis Drive to enhance regional transit and take a broader look at what was needed for rail transit to be a better service.

Councilor Romero said at a recent meeting at the Department of Transportation in July she sent a summary out that included a good discussion about the Zia Station and information about the developer and studies and delays. She offered to send a copy to anyone who hadn't received the summary that had attended the meeting.

3. Update on the Santa Fe Regional Planning Authority (RPA) Transit Service Plan

Ms. Follingsted said the Regional Planning Authority hired Charlier Associates to develop a transit service plan for allocation of the 86% of transit GRT approved in 2008. The purpose was to study transit services to connect urban and rural communities to the Rail Runner.

She said to date, the consultant evaluated both existing and new services and data on demographics and land had been gathered and meetings had been held with stakeholders that included the Santa Fe County pueblos. She said criteria for evaluation was conducted at the July meeting and a report was due the end of August to the RPA and a presentation would be done at the September 15 meeting. A matrix of how the plan was being evaluated was being presented to the RPA on Tuesday.

C. MATTERS FROM SFMPO BOARD

There were none.

D. MATTERS FROM MPO STAFF

Mr. Tibbets invited everyone to visit the MPO website at santafempo.org and said the site had upcoming events and information and included the studies and maps and was linked to the DOT websites.

Commissioner Vigil suggested a link from the MPO website to the city and county website be added.

E. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE NMDOT AND FWHA

There were none.

F. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

Thomas Copeland, retired, Transportation Department employee lived near the Zia Station. He said the reason for the St. Francis study was the incompetence of the Transportation Department and the City of Santa Fe because St. Francis and 1-25 had been improperly built. He said the Richards Avenue interchange would have a significant adverse effect on St. Francis Drive because the improvement made the problem worse. He said people could get to the community college faster and more would use St. Francis Drive. He said the separate studies should be merged to show the overall impact on the city.

David Pease lived near the Zia intersection. His concern was the construction of the railroad and planning of Zia Road. He said many public meetings were held where people had questioned the Zia Station and the neighborhood had been assured the station would be a Kiss & Ride and not a major parking area. He understood the commission had proposed the station as a major transportation hub and said that wasn't wanted by the neighborhood and there should be public meetings if anything was done to draw people to Zia. He thought the station at 599 was ludicrous and said downtown had no parking near the railway station and if he lived in El Dorado or Los Alamos he would take Zia too, and that wasn't what the neighborhood wanted.

Commissioner Vigil asked Mr. Pease to visit with staff after the meeting as she noticed many who nodded in agreement to his testimony.

Barbara Fixe said she lived in the Baca Street neighborhood near St. Francis and Cerrillos. She understood DOT planned a crossing of St. Francis for a bike/hike trail and said the process had been botched. She said last fall the city announced a bridge would be built over St. Francis and signed a \$15 million contract to later learn St. Francis was a federal highway and would need federal funds. She said the city had now engaged in a sham of pretending the decision hadn't been made and had left out the neighbors who lived off of Sierra Vista that had to live with what was constructed. She said they weren't considered stake holders or important.

She said of the two public meetings the first was botched and incompetently done and the second meeting had graphics but the decision-makers in the Public Works Department were tainted. She said under the NEPA (the National Environmental Protection Act) there couldn't be a done deal such as a bridge and she questioned if the engineering firm knew how to do a pedestrian crossing or a tunnel.

She said a corridor study was being done and a decision of what would be done was promised by September. She said the corridor study spent people's money to consider alternatives that could be denied or impossible and money was being spent on studies that might be irrelevant if the city went on with its botched process. She said more coordination was needed.

Diane Dumas, a tax payer said she was concerned the Zia Station had been fenced off and appeared it wouldn't open. She said it had been agreed the station wouldn't be a Park & Ride and she hoped that was still the process.

Mary Dykto and said she was concerned about the pumice plant and initially started to do something about the plant in 1997. Nine schools were downwind of St. Francis and at the public hearing of the pumice plant it was said that 5,500 residents were seriously affected by the air. She requested an air quality study for her neighborhood, the Royal Chamisa and the Candlelight area.

The Public Hearing portion ended at this time.

Chair Vigil suggested that staff provide a signup sheet at the beginning of the MPO meeting so members of the public that wanted to speak could be accommodated and the board could manage the time. She apologized more time hadn't been available that night and said the public should feel free to contact the MPO board and staff at any time.

Commissioner Stefanics asked why Matters from the Public wasn't at the beginning of the meeting and said that would prevent the public from staying through matters they hadn't come for.

Mr. Tibbets said if the public topics were germane to the Action Items, Public Comments could be at the beginning. He said a sign in sheet with topics would help and people could speak first that addressed issues connected to the action items and he noted the Action Items were time sensitive and had to be completed.

Commissioner Stefanics said the meeting was public and to have public comment only on action items and everyone else wait until the end of the meeting wasn't acceptable. She said the public should feel free to discuss public matters.

Mr. Tibbets said since they only met every other month that was fine within a set amount of time as long as Action Items was covered.

Commissioner Stefanics asked the chair and vice chair to look at the issue and said the meeting had started 20 minutes late and that could have been time for public comment.

ADJOURN: ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to conduct the chair adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting - *Thursday, October 8, 2009*

Approved by:

Commissioner Virginia Vigil, Chair

Submitted by:

Charmaine Clair, Stenographer