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 April 13, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Leticia Benavidez (DAC)
Trent Doolittle (NMDOT)
Councilor Jack Eakman (CLC)
Trustee Linda Flores (Town of Mesilla)
Commissioner Billy Garrett (DAC) (departed 1:57)
Commissioner Wayne Hancock (DAC)
Councilor Gill Sorg (CLC)
Councilor Olga Pedroza (CLC)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Nora Barraza (Town of Mesilla)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Harold Love
George Pearson
Sharon Thomas
Charles Clements
Maggie Billings
Armando Morales
Hilary Brinegar
Jack (NO LAST NAME LISTED)
Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER (1:06 p.m.)

Sorg: Okay it seems like we have a quorum so we'll get started, the MPO meeting, Committee now. Could the, could, Tom could you take a roll to see if we have a quorum?

Murphy: Yes sir. Trustee Flores.

Flores: Here.

Murphy: Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: Here.

Murphy: District Engineer Doolittle.

Doolittle: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Here.

Murphy: Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Here.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Here.

Murphy: And Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Here. Is that a quorum then Tom?

Murphy: Yes it is.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Sorg: All right then … let me get my glasses on. First of all is the Statement of Conflict of Interest. Does any Member of the Committee have a known or perceived conflict in interest, of interest with any item on the agenda?

ALL: No.

Sorg: Hearing none.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sorg: We'll move on. The first item on the agenda is Public Comment. Is there any member of the public that has comment? Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Thomas.

Thomas: Thank you Chair Sorg. So I'm here on behalf of the South Central Regional Transit District and some, some of you know this already but we're applying again for a TIGER Grant from the US Department of Transportation. We applied last year. We didn't get it but we got highly recommended and we had a long conference call with them afterwards and they strongly suggested that we apply again and so I think we're even ahead of schedule. We have a pretty good rough draft put together and it's not due until the 29th. So we're collecting letters of support and the funding would be to put up bus shelters, schedules at bus shelters, we need a maintenance yard, we're going to build a, a kind of a transfer point

in Anthony so that the buses that come from Sunland Park and Chaparral and Las Cruces all have a place to meet, and um I did see, it'll, it's probably between $2 and $3 million that we're asking for and so we're asking that you provide a letter again. You provided a letter last year so it's just kind of updating it and I think Tom has a couple things to add.

Sorg: Yes Tom.

Murphy: Yes Mr., Mr. Chair. We don't, I don't believe we needed to do a resolution in order to submit this letter. The, the purposes of the grant are, will help achieve missions and goals of the MPO of expanding transportation options for the citizens of the region so I think depending on how the Board feels either the, the Chair or myself could write that letter and then submit it for their application packet.

Sorg: Thank you Tom and thank you Sharon Thomas. And I would like to hear from the Committee to see if there's interest in doing another letter or not, starting with Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes. I certainly do. I think that that's a good funding source and that it's a good project as well so I would certainly agree.

Sorg: Okay. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: I don't ... yes of course I would. Thank you.

Sorg: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: I support the, this letter and, and our support for this. I, I have a couple of edits to the draft that we've got.

Sorg: That, that's last year's letter, yeah. There's going to be some changes in it.

Garrett: Good.

Thomas: Yeah.

Sorg: Yeah, just a sample what it's ...

Garrett: Okay.

Thomas: That's fine.

Sorg: Just ...

Garrett: "Doña" has an "ñ" for one thing.

Sorg: Right. Mr. Doolittle, Doolittle.

Doolittle: I also would agree. I think as a group who's applied for TIGER Grants in the past it's nice to have those support letters from the different groups within the community so I support that letter.

Sorg: Good. It's good to hear. Mr., Commission, Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: Absolutely support.

Sorg: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Absolutely support as well.

Sorg: And the Chair makes it unanimous. So let's do it.

Thomas: Okay. Thank you very much.

4. CONSENT AGENDA *

Sorg: Okay. Next item on the agenda is the Consent Agenda. Is there a motion? Oh, is there more public comments? Thank you, Vice-Chair. None. Yeah. Good call. The Consent Agenda, is there a motion?

Garrett: Mr. Chair. Move approval of the Consent Agenda.

Eakman: Second.

Sorg: Okay. Moved by Commissioner Garrett and second by Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Councilor Eakman.

Sorg: Oh, Councilor Eakman, sorry. Take a, a vote Tom.

Murphy: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Murphy: Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Murphy: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes.

Murphy: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Murphy: Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Murphy: Councilor Sorg.

Sorg: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

5. * APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 * February 10, 2016

- VOTED ON VIA THE CONSENT AGENDA

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Resolution 16-04: A Resolution to Amend the MPO By-laws

Sorg: Okay. So the next item on, on the agenda is an Action Item, Resolution 16-04: The Resolution to Amend the MPO By-Laws.

Wray: Thank …

Sorg: Go, go ahead.

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. I'd like to direct the attention of the Committee to page 26 in your packet. Back in January of this year the BPAC had a discussion about amending their quorum regulations in the bylaws, had some further conversations at the February meeting where the BPAC made a recommendation of amended language. The language is in the bottom paragraph on page 26. I'll go ahead and read it into the record: A quorum of the Committee referring to the BPAC shall consist of five Members. At least one of those Members must be a Citizen Representative. No action shall be taken without a quorum of the Committee in attendance at any meeting. I'll stand now for any questions.

Sorg: Is there a motion to approve?

Hancock: So moved.

Garrett: Second.

Sorg: Moved by Commissioner Hancock, second by Commissioner Garrett.

Sorg: First of all I'd like to ask what's the total membership of the BPAC?

Flores: Eleven.

Wray: The total membership is 11 positions.

Sorg: Okay. Any questions or comments by the Committee?

Pedroza: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes Commissioner Pedroza.

Pedroza: I, I apologize ahead of time because this is just really nitpicking but on the last sentence, "No action shall be taken without a quorum of the Committee in attendance at any meeting," it's a little bit ambiguous. Something like "No action shall take, be taken unless there is a quorum of the Committee in attendance at a meeting," would be a little more clear, that's all. And I admit it is very picky.

Sorg: Councilor Pedroza, where are you on the …

Flores: Yeah, I don't see where you're talking about.

Sorg: On the Resolution?

Pedroza: On the agenda item, the third paragraph.

Wray: It's the last sentence, right there. It's this, the last sentence.

Sorg: Ah, okay.

Wray: We need to amend it, yeah.

Pedroza: "Unless a quorum is present" instead of "without a quorum of the Committee." No biggie.

Sorg: I, the language would be in the resolution or in the bylaws right, that we're taking?

Wray: The, the item that is going to be attached with the resolution is page 29.

Sorg: Yeah.

Wray: But we can, however the Committee sees fit to amend the language we'll just, at this point we'll now need a motion to amend the original motion.

Sorg: Okay. Is there a motion to amend?

Hancock: Mr. Chair. I would take it as a friendly amendment which is purely administrative in nature.

Sorg: Very good. In that case, any other discussion?

Garrett: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Two things, just to be, be clear Councilor, what you want to strike is "in attendance at any meeting."

Pedroza: No, I'm sorry. I would want to strike "without a quorum" and instead noise, "No action shall be taken unless there is a quorum of the Committee in attendance at a, at any meeting."

Garrett: Okay, so "No action shall be taken unless there is a quorum of the Committee in attendance at any meeting."

Pedroza: Yes.

Garrett: Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to make sure we were clear on what the, this was that we were approving and it makes sense to me. The, the only caveat I would have is that how many Citizen Representatives do we have on the, on the BPAC?

Wray: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Garrett. There are six. There are six Citizen ...

Garrett: Six is, okay.

Wray: And five staff.

Garrett: All right. Okay. So that makes sense to me. What I was worried about was the possibility of if we had too few Citizen Representatives and they weren't able to get there then there'd be no way to do any kind of business and if that got to be a habit then you'd have a problem. But with that number of people it makes sure that, I guess the question I would have is why, how many Citizen Representatives are there?

Wray: Six.

Garrett: You said six, so all six Citizen Representatives could meet without staff.

Wray: That is correct.

Garrett: Okay.

Wray: But they could outvote staff at, if all the members were in attendance anyway so.

Garrett: Okay. Just curious why we don't say at least one member has to be, there has to be at least a staff member and a Citizen Representative at the meetings, just to, you know.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Garrett. The reason for that is, is way back in the history of the BPAC. It was specifically designed by intent to be a citizen-dominated committee.

Garrett: Yeah.

Wray: And so the, the feeling was, and at the time the bylaws were originally written and we, we kept this language in there that it would be in the interest of the MPO to make sure that there was not a perception that staff could just …

Flores: Run the show.

Wray: Meet as a quorum and then rush things through on a day when, when a citizen member could not attend so that's the reason why the citizen membership is specifically called out in the language.

Garrett: Yeah. I, I understand that and, and you know I'm, I'm inclined to sort of support this as written and see how it works and see if there, if there aren't any problems then that's, that's fine. But I just wanted clarification about that. Thanks.

Sorg: Okay. Any other comments or questions on this resolution? Then I'll call for a vote.

Wray: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes.

Wray: Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Yes.

Wray: Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Yes.

Wray: Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Yes.

Wray: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Sorg: I have to apologize for not asking for public comment on this. We'll try to make that a, a general rule of thumb here. In other commissions and committees I'm on it's sometimes allowed and sometimes it isn't. For example as Councilor Pedroza knows in the, in the Utilities Commission we have public comment but it, not on every resolution that I recall. Maybe we did. Anyway, we'll do it from now on.

6.2 Appointment to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Sorg: Next item on the agenda is the resolution, no, it is not a resolution, excuse me; an Appointment to the Bicycle and Pedestrians Advisory Committee. Would you take care of that, Tom?

Murphy: Yes sir Mr. Chair. This is an appointment to, this is an appointment for the vacant Bicycle Community position on the BPAC. We did receive six applications, were included in your packet. We did have one withdrawal and that was Chambo Chambers who withdrew their application and we had invited them to, to speak with you if they, if they so desired. I think we have a few in attendance here. We did have one applicant that was planning on coming but at, at the last minute was unable to and she asked that I read her statement into the, into the record. Before I do that I'll go ahead and, what we'll do is we'll allow the, the applicants to, to come up here, make a statement, maybe take some questions from you, and then we'll pass out a ballot and what we're ask, we'll ask you to do is on your ballot rank your preferences from, from first to fifth as far as who should be it and then we'll, and then we'll tally the votes and whoever gets the best score will be the, will be the appointment. And I'll go ...

Flores: Lowest score.

Murphy: Ahead and, I'll go ahead and read the statement now and this is from Carol Flinchbaugh. And she just wanted to give a brief in, I'll just read verbatim now: Here is a brief overview of my qualifications for the position. Have been a lifelong cyclist, routinely bike commute to my job at NMSU. As such I am aware of concerns that arise from a bike commuter perspective. Have been an avid bike racer for the past nine years and have raced for the local Zia Velo club for the last two years. From this perspective I am more aware of the general conditions, e.g. road conditions, dangers, poor drivers, etc. that arise from a training capacity. This takes me on, by roads in the city and within the county as well. I have volunteered in community bike/pedestrian counts in Lawrence, Kansas in 2012-2013, served as a leader for a women-specific racing team in Lawrence, Kansas 2011-2013. Duties included hosting women-specific rides out of a local bike shop, organizing race events, and organizing overall health/wellness events including yoga for cyclists and nutrition and fitness. Have volunteered as a Bike Marshall in bicycle awareness rides and Iron Man races: Lawrence, Kansas 2012; Louisville, Kentucky 2007 and 2008. If I'm not selected for the Committee this go-round, please feel free to contact me if open positions arise in the future. I'm very interested in working with the bicycle community in this capacity. Thanks much, Carol.

Sorg: Thank you Tom. Would the, so the others are here, so I think I'll call them up one by one. How's that sound? Let me get the list here.

Flores: I, I have a question.

Sorg: Maggie Billings. Oh, question? Okay.

Flores: Could I really quick, I just want to be clear. So we're ranking one to five, one being our preferred person so then you're going to take the lowest score.

Murphy: Yes.

Flores: Is that right? Okay. Thanks.

Sorg: Thank you Trustee for that help. Yes, Maggie Billings.

Billings: Oh boy. Hi. I'm, is this okay?

Sorg: Yes. It's good.

Billings: I'm Maggie Billings. I am a bicyclist in this town. I bike upwards of eight miles a day and try to go everywhere I can. I frequently bike to and from NMSU where I am a student studying Political Science and I don't have nearly as many qualifications as far as history goes as the previous applicant but I do have a lot of enthusiasm and I really love Las Cruces

and I really would love to work to make it more bike-friendly. And as a student at NMSU I'm in contact with students there and I understand that there are a lot of bicyclists and pedestrians around campus and I understand their needs. So I think I could do a good job focusing on making the city better as a bicyclist. So …

Sorg: Very nice Ms. Billings. Is there any questions by the Committee?

Flores: Yes.

Hancock: Mr. Chair.

Flores: Oh.

Hancock: Oh. I'm sorry. Ladies first.

Flores: I, yeah.

Sorg: Yes.

Flores: You had that you are a Poli-Sci major in your letter as well. I was wondering if you've taken any planning classes in Poli-Sci.

Billings: I haven't yet. I'm only a sophomore …

Flores: Okay.

Billings: In NMSU but I hope to.

Flores: Okay. Thank you.

Billings: Okay.

Sorg: Commissioner Hancock?

Hancock: May I, since this isn't a job interview, how old are you?

Billings: I'm 20.

Hancock: Okay. Thank you.

Billings: Yeah. So it's …

Sorg: Any other questions by the Committee? Yes, Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you. The other day I was invited to a, a park that I didn't even realize was there. It's the BMX park. It's behind the skateboarding park. Do you ever participate in any of the activities there?

Billings: I don't participate at the BMX park but I do go to, I participate in the roller derby community here so I'm like right over …

Pedroza: Right.

Billings: From the BMX park.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you. And I was very impressed a couple of years ago when some group and I don't know what bicycle group it was specifically went to the Community of Hope and outfitted some of the bikes there with lights etc. for nighttime use. Have you participated, do you consider that kind of activity important or …

Billings: I consider it very important. I haven't participated in that yet but I would really like to. I just learned about that.

Pedroza: Okay.

Billings: I think that that kind of thing can go a long way in making our city safer and more accessible to everybody.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you very much.

Billings: Thanks.

Pedroza: That's all I had.

Sorg: Okay. Thank you.

Billings: Thank you.

Sorg: Councilor. The next one on the list is Charles Clements.

Clements: Well I guess you can just ask questions, you, I got asked to get on here because of my, I'm with the Transit Advisory Board, I'm on the Complete Streets Committee, and I walk a whole bunch and wander around the city and pretty familiar with it from the ground, ground-up view I suppose. And very interested in having all kinds of good transportation options.

Sorg: Very good.

Clements: And that's, that's it so.

Sorg: Any questions for Mr. Clements? Seeing none.

Pedroza: Well, okay, right over here.

Sorg: Oh. Didn't raise your hand high enough.

Pedroza: I'm sorry.

Sorg: Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: I, Mr. Clements I'll just ask you the same kinds of questions that I asked Ms. Billings. Were you aware of the, are you or do you, have you participated in any of the BMX park activities?

Clements: No.

Pedroza: I wouldn't either.

Clements: No. I, I've got that point where I don't bounce, I break so.

Pedroza: Me too. I saw that ...

Clements: But I think it's a good idea to have it available and that's one of the things I think is important is having all this stuff for our youngsters and the safe passage for everybody.

Pedroza: Right. Okay. Thank you. And what about the participation or including farm workers and other adults in kind of like programs to, to outfit and improve their bikes for them?

Clements: Well I think anything you can do to make bicycles safer, because I used to ride a bicycle and then I decided that I didn't have that big of a death wish so I stopped. Because if you don't go back on the, wander on the back roads it appears to me to be kind of hazardous on a lot of roads here. But I think, and that's one of the reasons why I've got into the Complete Streets program was the whole idea is to, is to every time we modify a street we modify it so bicycling and pedestrian considerations are taken into account.

Pedroza: Okay. Thank you very much.

Sorg: Thank you Councilor. Any other questions? Yes, Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. I do have one. Mr. Clements, how long have you been a resident of Dona Ana County or, or Las Cruces?

Clements: Fifteen years.

Doolittle: Very good. Thank you.

Sorg: Any others? Okay. Thank you Mr. Clements. And Carol is the one that is not here. I have, the next on my list is John Gallagher. Is John here?

Apparently not. And finally a Frank, oh help me pronounce your last name. Is Frank here? Apparently Frank is not here either. Sholedice, Sholedice, something like that? Am I pronouncing it right? Okay, so. I have, I have one more question in general. Can you give us the names of the four person, other persons that are on the, that are the citizens on the Committee?

Murphy: George Pearson.

Sorg: George.

Murphy: Is, he's the Chair. Gosh, I'm …

Sorg: I'm sorry to put you on the spot. Get some help from your …

Murphy: Yeah, I'll, Andrew …

Wray: George …

Murphy: Cause he's a more regular …

Wray: George, George Pearson, Mark Leisher, Ashleigh Curry, Andrew Bencomo, thank you, Gabriel Rochelle.

Sorg: Oh. That's five, right?

Murphy: Right. This is for the sixth …

Sorg: I thought there's only five citizens altogether.

Wray: This one is vacant.

Murphy: No, there's six.

Wray: There's six.

Sorg: Six, oh I'm sorry.

Wray: You're about to appoint the next, the last one.

Sorg: Yeah. Okay. Got you.

Garrett: Could I follow up?

Sorg: Yes.

Garrett: What, what was, well first of all it was George, Mark, what's Mark's last name?

Wray: Leisher.

Garrett: Leisher, Ashleigh Curry, and is it Andrew Bencomo?

Wray: Andrew Bencomo.

Garrett: And then the last person?

Murphy: Gabriel Rochelle.

Wray: Gabriel Rochelle.

Garrett: This is representing both cyclists and pedestrians, right?

Sorg: Yes.

Garrett: That's the intent.

Murphy: The, the Committee as a whole, yes.

Garrett: Okay. And one of the things I noticed in, in some of the applications is there's strong interest in racing and I don't have anything about, you know, I'm concerned about bicycle racing but it's not the only thing and I'm wondering just in terms of the current makeup of the, the citizen portion of this I, I guess, are there any members here who are Citizen Representatives who are not cyclists, number one? That are primarily pedestrians.

Murphy: Mr. Bencomo was appointed as a pedestrian representative.

Garrett: Okay.

Murphy: And is, he's been active in place, Placemakers and he's, he's frequently advocating for pedestrian issues that I've seen around the area.

Garrett: Okay. And in terms of the others, are, are the, is there at this point a, a strong emphasis on the racing part or is there a strong emphasis on the commuter part in terms of the experience and interests of these, of the, the current makeup?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Garrett. As an MPO we're interested in, in transportation and so the items that we bring before them, you know mainly, mainly deal with commuter aspects of cycling. We have done in, some recreational as far as recreational trail applications come through us. We have a trail plan developed. I can't recall us specifically mentioning, you know discussing racing at that. It just happens that the,

the applicants have mentioned that I, in the, in my estimation to bolster their, their resume for cycling issues.

Garrett: Okay. And just in terms of, of sort of demographics I know we have some more mature, older folks. Do we have some people currently on as representatives who are from, part of the younger generation?

Murphy: We don't specifically. I don't believe any of, any of the Citizen Representatives are, are students or anything.

Garrett: Are young. Okay. Thank you.

Sorg: Thank you Commissioner. Any other questions? Yes Trustee Flores.

Flores: I, I just want to clarify the, we're seeking to fill the Bicycle Citizen Representative position according to the, the item that you gave us for, that's ...

Murphy: Yes.

Flores: Is that correct?

Murphy: That is ...

Flores: Okay.

Murphy: That is correct. The bylaws outline this, just to give a quick, quick go-through of what, who the Citizen Representatives, we have one each from each of the jurisdictions: City of Las Cruces, Town of Mesilla, Dona Ana County. We then have two that represent the Bicycle Community and then we have the one from the Pedestrian Community.

Wray: And it is probably worth mentioning that the Dona Ana County position is specific to unincorporated Dona Ana County.

Sorg: This position we're talking about today?

Hancock: No.

Wray: No.

Sorg: Oh. Okay. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you. Speaking of demographics, what's the average age of the Board Members, roughly? Are they old, old white guys?

Murphy: I don't know any of their ages.

Sorg: But Ashleigh isn't.

Hancock: Okay. I, I see, I see a hand back there but what is ...

Sorg: I know. I'm going to call on George in a minute.

Hancock: Okay. No I, I, I find it, it kind of interesting we don't have a representative from the university and that's the area we really want bicycling to be utilized from, as well as a young person. So I, I, I get Commissioner Garrett's direction.

Murphy: We, we do have a university staff representative. That's the, I imagine that's something that we can consider. If we want to do another bylaw amendment we can take, take that to the BPAC to discuss to see if that's something it is that they would desire.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Okay. We have a comment from ...

Baum: Your, your microphone.

Sorg: Just a minute.

Baum: Thank you.

Sorg: I caught it the same time. I have a member of the public that'd like to speak. George would you like come forward?

Pearson: Afternoon. I'm George Pearson. I'm the Chair of the BPAC. However today I'm speaking on my own behalf. First Councilor Pedroza asked about the Ride Right Ride Bright, the event that happens at the Community of Hope. That's something that now Velo Cruces, the advocacy group has been putting together and we've been doing that right around the time change every year, so twice a year. So I wasn't there at this last one because I was at the National Bike Summit but we get, I think it's 20 lights fixed on the bicyclists and do some minor repairs so ...

Pedroza: Thank you for that.

Pearson: As far as the appointment to the Board, in all of the years that I've been associated over the gap that I was with the, the, the original BPAC when it was first formed and then I had a gap of a few years and then came back four years ago or something, we've never had any representative from the ZiaVelo group and that's a community that seems to use the roads quite a bit for their training efforts, not for racing specifically but for their training and so I'm excited to see that interest from that community so my recommendation would be for Carol Flinchbaugh. That's all I have.

Sorg: Okay. Thank you George.

Eakman: Mr. Chairman.

Sorg: Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: I want to be absolutely sure and follow up on Trustee Flores' excellent question. By giving someone a one, that is a weighted score of a five and by giving somebody a score of a five, that is a weighted average of one?

Murphy: Yes.

Eakman: Thank you.

Sorg: Okay. Commissioner, Trustee Flores.

Flores: I just kind of wanted to make a comment because I'm seeing some people saying, "Well we need somebody from the university," or "We need this." I, I really appreciate that we have so many people applying. I really don't want to limit who can come into the BPAC. I think that's a decision that we can all make individually, you know look at it and see what, what your values are and what you would like to see but let's be honest, a lot of times there's just one applicant and so I would caution other Members not to be so picky and, and just to be glad and I appreciate everybody that came out and applied. So that's what I want to say.

Sorg: Thank you Trustee Flores. Well spoken.

Pedroza: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Is there, Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: I have another question. I'm really amazed and very very happy that there are so many applicants. Is there some way that we could make sure that everybody, whether they are chosen for the position or not is aware that they are welcome at, because that is true isn't it, that they would be welcome at the meetings of ...

Flores: Yes, yeah.

Pedroza: The, of the BPAC.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Councilor Pedroza. We can certainly convey that to them.

Pedroza: Thanks.

Sorg: Yeah and I would second that, that idea that, that all is welcome. George you have one more word to say, or two?

Pearson: Another comment that I did want to follow up on that is yes, I was very enthused by the number of applicants and much like this Committee, our Committee has two places for public comment so members of the public are welcome and desired. Often like this meeting there are no members of the public present so ...

Sorg: Yeah.

Pearson: We're, we really want that voice also with our meetings so any applicants are certainly invited. They can participate, except for the votes they can participate ...

Sorg: Yeah.

Pearson: As much as Members during the, during the Committee. Thank you.

Sorg: Thank you George. That's well said. All right.

Garrett: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: If no more questions, Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Well just a, just a statement in, in, in response to Trustee Flores. I, I appreciate the importance of our making our own decisions and what I find in making these selections is often we don't have enough context about the makeup of the existing body and so that's, that's, I think it's important for us to understand what's expected of the person who's going to be filling the position but it's also important to look at the diversity, the mix of, of the body and, and so, just so it's not misunderstood. All I was trying to do was make sure I understood what we currently have in terms of the qualifications of people and their backgrounds and then how this new person might bring additional perspective that would be valuable to the, to the effort. So that's, that was the intent.

Sorg: Thank you Commissioner. Are we ready to vote? All right. Vote and hand over your ballots to Tom as he comes by. Don't get in a big hurry. I haven't finished yet.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Missouri Avenue Study Corridor

Sorg: Okay. While the ballots are tallied up can we start on the Discussion Items, the Missouri Avenue Study Corridor and then we'll announce the winner or not of the vote.

Murphy: Yeah the, excellent suggestion Mr. Chair. So I will introduce Aaron Sussman from Bohannan Huston and he's going to give a presentation to, on the work to date of our Missouri Corridor Study.

Sussman: Everybody hear me okay? All right. Well thank you. Good afternoon Members of the Board. Again my name is Aaron Sussman. I'm a planner with Bohannan Huston. Mesilla Valley MPO has contracted with the, the consulting firm Bohannan Huston and we've been asked to come here today to provide an update on the Missouri Avenue Corridor Study. So for those of you who are not particularly familiar with the project I wanted to start by providing a little bit of background. We'll also get a chance to talk about the feedback that we've received to date. Working with the project team which is comprised of staff from all the jurisdictions and member agencies of the Mesilla Valley MPO we've developed a series of alternatives. We'll get a chance to present those today and we're very much looking for your feedback on those items. So here's a, a little bit of an outline of things that I mentioned.

So let me go ahead and jump into an overview of the project. The particular study area that we're looking at for the Missouri Avenue Corridor Study involves a parcel of Bureau of Land Management land to the west of the City of Las Cruces. It's bounded by city limits to the north and to the west, by Sonoma Ranch Boulevard to the east, by the high school, Centennial High School to the southeast, and Dripping Springs Road to the south. This is an area as I mentioned that's currently owned and maintained and operated by the Bureau of Land Management. There are no formal plans at this time to change the existing land uses. Right now it serves as very much an open space function. The process that we're following for the study adheres to procedures that are outlined by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the location study procedures. We're following this process because this project is funded through federal transportation dollars allocated through the MPO, so for that reason we're following this formal process. I'll talk about this a little bit more in a second but let me first make sure that we're clear that this is a very early stage in, in this study. We're gathering as much public input and feedback as possible. The idea is ultimately to develop a series of recommendations with which we can pursue a funding application and ultimately further on down the road look for implementation opportunities. Again what that means is that we're not looking to fully design a roadway or a corridor at this point but we're looking for an initial set of ideas about what we may want to examine in more detail.

So again let me explain a little bit, there's a, there's a very formal process that we need to follow, this location study procedure process. Again this is a Phase A study which means that we're looking at an initial evaluation of alternatives and in this phase we establish a purpose and need, we research the existing conditions, we identify an initial set of alternatives, roadway or infrastructure that could be implemented over time, and then we conduct an initial evaluation or screening. Again we're

not doing a full engineering analysis at this point. What we are hoping to do is to identify if there are particular, particular fatal flaws with any of these alternatives, if there are any alternatives that are particularly desirable from an agency standpoint, from a public perspective, and, and perhaps narrow the alternatives that we've developed so far down to a smaller list, and with all of these alternatives keep in mind that a no-build scenario in which we maintained conditions as they are today is always an alternative.

The Phase A study does not include an evaluation of the exact costs. Again we're not doing a full engineering or project design as part of this study but we can consider the magnitude of costs associated with different alternatives. That will be an important consideration in our evaluation. In terms of the purpose and need of this particular project, the study's addressing a real lack of infrastructure and transportation connections in the study area. This is not just from a vehicle standpoint but also from a bicycle and pedestrian standpoint. This is, that in particular, bicycle and pedestrian connections are an area of further study for us over the coming months but one thing I do want to reiterate again is that we are not evaluating potential changes in land use in the study area. We are, are bound by the assumptions that we have in hand in terms of the, the land being owned and maintained by the Bureau of Land Management and we have to assume that that stays consistent over time, or at least in terms of the considerations and recommendations that come out of the study.

This is an important and interesting study for a, a number of reasons. I, I think first and foremost it's an opportunity to shape what this area looks like into the future. Because of the absence of, of infrastructure within the study area there is an opportunity to enhance the multimodal facilities, to create additional connections, create additional network to help address long-term transportation challenges. And fortunately I mentioned the Bureau of Land Management a couple of times, they've been an active participant in our study to date. We've also spoken with the Farm and Ranch Museum, the folks behind AdobeHenge. I'll get into their feedback in a minute, but there are a lot of stakeholders in this process who have been very engaged so far and, and so this is a really nice opportunity to build off of that, that enthusiasm. But of course when we are talking about land that is maintained by the Bureau of Land Management there are challenges: To construct a roadway in this study area would revolve, would involve an application process and environmental review process. The Bureau of Land Management follows their own decision-making about how their resources are utilized and what they feel is the best public interest and there's a lot of existing sort of de facto uses in the study area. There's a lot of folks who, who go for hikes or, or walk their dogs through the particular study area. Sometimes these come into conflict with individuals on ATVs so there are some, some existing uses that we very much are taking into account.

As I mentioned before this, the funding that is available at this point is for study purposes. Implementation funding has not yet been identified

so that's both a challenge and an opportunity in the sense that we can use this project to very much consider what it is that actually would be of the greatest benefit in terms of transportation investments in the study area.

And then another major challenge is the topography and drainage issues in the study area and so for that, on that point I'll draw your attention to the map on the screen. All of the hash marks in black in the map on the upper left are arroyo crossings along potential roadway alternatives. You can see that there are a number of, of hashes. Essentially there's a number of arroyos that may need to be crossed depending on the particular alignment that is identified. And as you can see in the image in the lower right-hand portion it's a, it's a fairly rugged terrain. There's a number of, of unimproved arroyos that would need to be addressed as part of any engineering at a later point in the study.

We do have the involvement of a very comprehensive project team. This involves not just staff from the MPO but also from the DOT, the City of Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, again the Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces Public Schools, as well as the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum. We've had three meetings so far of the project team. We've had two public meetings. Those will continue over the course of 2016. And in terms of the feedback that we've heard so far again is we've gotten a lot of very good, very meaningful feedback. The Farm and Ranch Museum which is an important stakeholder within the study area support improved access to the museum, particularly from a bicycle and pedestrian standpoint. They appreciate the benefits that that may provide not just in terms of access to the museum but also supporting their position in terms of the least intensive development in and near the museum. The folks behind AdobeHenge have also expressed interest in, in access to the site but from a not intensive perspective I suppose in terms of bicycle/pedestrian access. There's a lot of trails that are proposed as part of that site so there are opportunities to link in potential formal infrastructure with the trails that are proposed as part of that site. We've also spoken with folks from the public school system and Centennial High School. The feedback that we've heard so far has been that they do not feel that there is a, a need for additional roadway access to the school. In part that's because that would require additional traffic management, additional connections to and from the high school to the, whatever infrastructure might be built so that's not a particularly high priority for them but there is a lot of interest as well from the school's perspective, the school system in terms of bicycle and pedestrian access for students.

From a public standpoint we've held meetings in December and a couple of weeks ago. There's I think four main points that I want to emphasize in terms of the feedback that we've heard so far. The first is that there are a number of concerns about what additional through traffic through existing neighborhoods might mean in terms of property values. That's something that's come up repeatedly especially among residents immediately in and near the study area. There are also a lot of concerns about the potential for development on Bureau of Land Management land

and the potential loss of open space. Again I want to emphasize that at this point there's no indication that BLM has, has any plans to make that land available for development and we're going to assume that that land remains open space as part of this study. We have heard a, there's a few individuals who've questioned sort of the benefits of, of building out more of a bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure network when there, or it's perceived to be not a, a large number of bicyclists to date. I know that part of encouraging bicycle and pedestrian activity of course is providing opportunities for that. So we've heard a, a much larger, louder contingent of individuals who, who do support that idea of additional connections through the study area to, to locations east of the City of Las Cruces. And there's also been a lot of acknowledgement that the City of Las Cruces and the surrounding metro area is growing and that there are growth challenges that need to be confronted. There is a lack of infrastructure in the study area so there's both concerns about the impacts of additional infrastructure but also the realization that there are limited options from an east-west connectivity perspective and in the study area itself.

In terms of what is proposed in the long-range transportation plan, the Transport 2040 MTP there are a couple of roads that are proposed through the study area. The first is an extension of Roadrunner Parkway as a minor arterial that would connect from the existing intersection at Roadrunner Parkway and Lohman south and then a southeast and then east trajectory through the study area to connect to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard, and then also an extension of the existing Missouri Avenue Corridor. Missouri Avenue dead-ends at city limits to the east where this BLM parcel begins. The other road included in the 2040 MTP is an extension of Missouri Avenue as a collector facility.

So before I get into the alternatives that we've developed as a project team, let me again emphasize that there are three types of alternatives that are to be considered. The first and the third in the, of those points but the first in all of these is a no-build, again in which we do no, we do, we don't advance any particular alternative forward at this time. We keep the roads on the MTP network but we maintain conditions as they are today and perhaps examine this again in the future. Another alternative, or set of alternatives looks at what we call roadway typicals where essentially we look at what might be an appropriate number of travel lanes or would there be bicycle lanes or multiuse trails incorporated as part of these alternatives. And then a third option is a non-motorized facility only, something that would, a trail perhaps that would accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians but would not constitute any roadway construction at this point. This can all be done in combination of course. So let me with that I, go through the alternatives and I'm sure that we'll have questions and I'll be happy to answer those at the end.

So again the first alternative is the no-build scenario in which the MTP network as it's proposed is maintained. There is no construction proposed at this time but the roads remain in the MTP into the future. And again the MTP is updated every five years so there's always an

opportunity to reevaluate the, the long-term network but this alternative would maintain the MTP network as it stands today.

The second alternative is an extension of Missouri Avenue only and so this would be as a collector facility. You can see this in purple on the screen. The idea is that it would extend from the existing Missouri Avenue Corridor east to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard, skirting the north side of the high school. When we talk about a collector we're talking about a facility that has a fairly modest footprint, something that looks, resembles the existing Missouri Avenue today between the interstate and Telshor Avenue and city limits in which there are two travel lanes, bicycle facilities, either sidewalks or paths on the outside to give you a sense of the scale that we're talking about with a collector facility.

Alternative three is an extension of Roadrunner and an extension of Roadrunner only. The thing, oh the other point that I should mention with the Missouri Avenue alternative, alternative number two is that Roadrunner, although it would not be recommended for construction at this time, it would remain on the long-range roadway system so it's not something that we would eliminate, it would just say we're not recommending advancing construction of that at this time.

The third alternative is the extension of Roadrunner from Lohman through the study area to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard without extending Missouri Avenue as well. The Roadrunner Parkway facility as it exists today to the north of Lohman is a minor arterial. It resembles Option B in which there are two travel lanes in each direction and a fairly wide median. If we we were to pursue this option it would likely include bicycle lanes, obviously pedestrian facilities as well. It's not in any way written in stone though, there's no requirement that it be a four-lane facility with a median. We could also look at an alternative that contains a slightly smaller footprint in which there's only one travel lane in each direction that is part of a minor arterial.

Alternative four is what we're calling the MTP Build Scenario and effectively this includes the extension and the construction of both facilities, Missouri Avenue as a collector, Roadrunner Parkway as a minor arterial.

We've also developed a series of alternatives. We're calling these the Northern Alignment so these alternatives as part of alternative five are, are kind of a series. The first is an extension of Missouri Avenue only along a northern alignment. The intention of this is to examine an alternative route that might avoid some of the topographical challenges in the study area but as you'll see there is less direct access to the high school. Alternative 5B is an extension of Roadrunner Parkway only along this northern alignment and alternative 5C is an extension of both facilities along this northern alignment but again something that resembles the MTP Scenario but following a slightly different alignment, not skirting the north part of the high school but a more northerly path.

And then finally the last alternative is a bicycle/pedestrian connection only, a non-motorized facility through the study area. And so I want to call your attention to the thick light-blue line. What we intend to

show with this alternative is that in a specific alignment has not been identified at this time and while it doesn't extend all the way to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard that would be the idea, that we would construct or we would, we could recommend a, a bicycle/pedestrian trail through the study area providing connections to the high school and east to Sonoma Ranch Boulevard with, without a, a roadway component at this time. And so this is an alternative that in a lot of ways is very flexible. It could be a stand-alone alternative, it could be part of a phased approach in which we look at an extension of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the shorter term and then whether it makes sense to build an, an adjacent roadway facility longer-term. So this is again something that could be part of a phased approach and could be combined with any of the previously-mentioned alternatives.

And, and again just a little bit of perspective, at this point what we're conceptualizing is, is very much a multiuse path, a trail that perhaps would have landscaping buffer on both sides but would not be available for use for motorized vehicles. We are going through an evaluation process that incorporates a number of criteria: How effectively these alternatives address the purpose and need of the study, are they improving access across and within the study area, are they truly improving the transportation network, do they serve a function that goes above and beyond the infrastructure that exists today. We'll look at the environmental impact particularly from a topographical perspective, the presence of arroyos and what sort of challenges that might create from a drainage perspective. We'll also look at the community impacts: What would the impacts be to the surrounding neighborhoods? There, because there are existing plans, not just the MTP but other documents, we can look at whether the alternatives that have been proposed are consistent with existing planning documents. And then we'll also look at, not just necessarily the right-of-way since every alternative that we're considering at this point is within BLM land but when we talk about right-of-way needs we're also talking to some extent about the magnitude of roadway that would be required, what are the costs associated with that and what are the magnitude of costs, not just in terms of the length of the facility but also in terms of the topographical challenges as I mentioned that would need to be navigated as part of any construction.

And so where the project goes from here, we're still in a phase where we're collecting feedback on the alternatives that have been proposed that we'd very much like to hear your feedback today. If you have written comments or you would like to follow up with us later I'll make sure that all of you have my contact info and the project manager for this as well and of course if you feel like bombarding the Mesilla Valley MPO staff as well. They'll probably pass it on to us but that's just fine. There will be some further analysis that takes place in particular from a bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure perspective, but also from a drainage perspective. We will refine the alternatives that we've developed over time with the project team. We'll return to all of you with feedback and, and, and further ideas in the near future. Part of the recommendations and

products of this projects are to look at potential funding opportunities and ultimately we'll finalize this study by late 2016. So with that I'm more than happy to answer any questions and hopefully this has been at least somewhat informative.

Sorg: Thank you Aaron, thank you Aaron. They're very good. That was very interesting. I happen to understand your topographical challenges there. I did a survey right through that piece of land for a water pipeline years ago in an environmental assessment. Yeah. It's, was a lot up and down.

Sussman: Sure.

Sorg: So what I'm going to do is start with the Committee, has any questions or comments they have on this and then I'll go to the public after that. Commissioner Hancock.

Hancock: Thank you Mr. Chair. Just quickly, I need to be leaving to get to another meeting. Very interesting. Thank you for the presentation. How many more public meetings are scheduled?

Sussman: At this point we only have one public meeting scheduled. That's, the date has not been set. That would be sometime in the summer ...

Hancock: Okay.

Sussman: Or fall this year.

Hancock: Okay. I think that would be very informative to, to enlighten the Board on and this particular Member on, on the direction that the public seems to think. I'm particularly interested in, in the recreational aspects of that area and bike trails, walking trails. I think that would add to the property values of all those homes in that particular area. Thank you Mr. Chair. And please excuse me, I have to leave. Thank you.

Sorg: Thank you Commissioner Hancock. It's well said. Any other comments from the Committee? I'll start at this end.

Garrett: Are you referring to me?

Sorg: Councilor Eakman, no. Okay.

Garrett: All right.

Sorg: Go ahead Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: All right, thank you Mr. Chair. You started at the beginning of the presentation by identifying two needs, one having to do with network connectivity and the other pedestrian and bicycle facilities. And I

understand the study area in the smaller sense that we're looking at, but what I'm not seeing is a larger frame of reference for talking about network connectivity which in a certain sense would also refer back to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. I think it would be very helpful to lay out that larger framework and, and I think that that's important partly because we don't know what we're trying to connect to across the study area and to what extent that's long-term planning, to what extent that's current needs, and I think that that's very important. And, and actually that was partly what gave rise to my thinking about one option you didn't talk about was a connection from Missouri to Roadrunner that just zipped right around and, and in effect created an opportunity for traffic to relieve all the pressure at Telshor and Lohman. There's no way to go around. It, it, you know unless you're all the way over on Dripping Springs and come up that way, so I think the, the, it's, I'm not suggesting that's a, a great idea but I think that that's an important question because it, the question is: What are you connecting to?

Sussman: Right.

Garrett: And what are the critical issues in terms of connectivity? It's also important in terms of land use. What are the other land uses within the study area and then to the east and northeast? I was struck by the fact that NMSU was not involved and yet the traffic connection to Sonoma Ranch, Sonoma Ranch yeah down, there has been continued discussion and interest in terms of how whatever happens to the north of Dripping Springs affects development options for NMSU and I don't know if you have extended an invitation to them to be part of this. I realize it's a very controversial kind of, we haven't resolved how all that's gonna happen but they are landowners and so if it's possible I would think it would be a good thing to, to look at.

I'm also in, sort of intrigued with this idea of what happens within the study area. I don't know of any particular plans that say that this entire area would basically be open space and, and sort of, what would happen, because open space is a, there's a difference between BLM land that's simply not currently under some kind of use and actually designating it as an open space area for public use. That's got some very interesting planning ramifications and then the question is: Well who maintains that? Because you can't just have it where everybody can go do whatever they want to do, particularly that close in to the city. So if we wanted to make this in to a kind of regional park in a desert setting that, that's a, an interesting idea and that ties in with different funding sources, there's a whole bunch of things that could come out of that as opposed to simply this being made available for, by BLM for development and it ends up being office buildings and residences and all that other kind of stuff, very different future and, and by extension a very different purpose for any transportation going through the site.

Sorg: Commissioner, can I ask?

Garrett: Yeah.

Sorg: Are you implying that it's important that we know what the zoning is going to be on this piece of land before we start building infrastructure?

Garrett: We might want to look at what's happening in terms of the …

Sorg: Yeah.

Garrett: The, the County's planning efforts but, and, and, but what I'm, what I'm saying is really that there might be an, an opportunity here that hasn't been teased out and talked about very much. I don't know what the feasibility of this as a regional park is, for example. And that just sorta leads me to a last thought and that is that once you actually know where you need to go across and through the site it'd be very interesting to know how you would lay out a way to get across the site that would minimize conflicts with natural watercourses, you know as opposed to sort of saying, "Well there's all these conflicts." Well what if we just said that what we want to do is to minimize any conflict as much as possible? I mean I know the area too, I, I grew up sort of to the, to the west of there. But it's an interesting idea of a totally different approach that might fit in better with a, a, a very naturalistic, very park-oriented experience going through there. So just a couple of thoughts. Thank you.

Sorg: Okay. Anyone else on the Committee? Commissioner, or Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you Mr. Chair. I, and thank you Commissioner Garrett. I think in a sense we were kind of thinking along the same lines. One of the things that I would really appreciate would be to know when you go to the public meetings, exactly what comes up? How are people thinking? What are their desires? As far as I can tell the only thing that's really out there that can be connected to is the clean landfill. The City has a clean landfill dump and it has also a, and admittedly things are, are, interest is growing and so forth but I've also been present at some very contentious meetings where people have said, "Stay away from here. Get out of here. Do not." And when I see two lanes going, two lanes coming, plus bicycle on both sides and, and pedestrian walkways on both sides I think that flies in the face of what I've heard from the community. But again you have not presented and I would ask that you do present some sort of a, a resume, summary of how do the people who attend the public meetings feel about this.

My own inclination, but of course I'm not a neighbor, is you know the non-motorized only seems to me to be much more amenable to, to what we have there and, and I think that the other things that Commissioner Garrett brought up: How do you, how do you protect the natural watercourses? What are the, what are the, what's the possibility of

making it a regional park or, or designated as open space? That goes, excuse me, that goes much more in line with what I've heard at, at several of the, of the meetings and I'm sure you know which. I, I happened to go to the Farm and Ranch Museum, was it last week or ...

Sussman: Two weeks ago, yes.

Pedroza: A couple of weeks ago, two weeks ago and there was a, a good number of people there. So if you could tell us, yeah I don't know exactly how you take the pulse of the people there, do you have them submit written comments or do you just summarize what you hear but I would like to have something very very concrete as to what did those folks who took time out of their busy evenings, or not so busy evenings but who took time out to go and express their opinions, I want to know what their opinions are okay. Thank you.

Sussman: Sure and, and thank you and, and let me speak to that by saying we're still receiving comments ...

Pedroza: Okay.

Sussman: Electronically following that meeting.

Pedroza: Okay.

Sussman: We're compiling all the comments that we have received into a summary matrix. We can make that available through MPO staff to, to the Committee once we feel like the stream has maybe slowed down ...

Pedroza: Sure.

Sussman: In terms of the comments that we're receiving. It can be, it can be a challenge to, your question about the pulse of the meeting ...

Pedroza: Yeah.

Sussman: Is a, is a very good one. It, it sometimes can be a little bit challenging to disentangle the, the sentiments of individuals who live, who are speaking on behalf of their individual ...

Pedroza: Sure.

Sussman: Residential concerns versus the long-term perspective of the City. There's no question that the attendance at public meetings to date has been disproportionately among those who reside immediately around the project area and so those concerns that we hear about the impacts of additional through traffic are, are, are very common as, as part of the feedback that we're getting.

Pedroza: One of the things, let, I'm sorry for interrupting you but it's going to be natural that the people who take time out to attend the meeting and are told, "You may submit your comments," are going to do that whereas the public outside of that group may never hear, "We want to hear your comments." So they will be silent and I think that that would be a, a, a, a weakness of the, of the, the study.

Sussman: That, yeah.

Pedroza: So, and I don't know exactly how to tell you, how do you make everybody know ...

Sussman: Right.

Pedroza: That they are, that they are welcome to submit comments, etc. etc. I don't know how you do that. Okay. Thank you.

Sussman: Thank you. That's, that's a great question. It's a, it's a challenge that we always face as planners as part of the public process such as this one. We do have a, a, a lovely new website that the Mesilla Valley MPO has developed and there is a project page on that website. There was an article that was in the Las Cruces Sun News a week and a half ago describing the projects and I think you get a very neutral explanation of the project purpose and, and potential benefits and then also some perspectives both for and against. So I, we feel like the both through the, the level of attendance at the meetings has been very high relative to other corridor studies like these in terms of the typical level of interest. We can definitely look for ways to make sure that these meetings are as well-publicized and the, and the, the findings and the feedback that we receive are as well-disseminated as possible.

Pedroza: So that you include not only the neighbors who are just naturally going to be interested ...

Sussman: Right.

Pedroza: But also the non-neighbors who have opinions as well. Thank you.

Sussman: Thank you.

Sorg: Thank you Councilor. Oh, Aaron by the way, you say there is a website that deals with this corridor study, right?

Sussman: There is a page on ...

Sorg: Or a page.

Sussman: A link on the Mesilla Valley MPO website.

Sorg: On the MPO, okay.

Sussman: Yes.

Sorg: I just wanted to get clear, that, I'll, I'll go ahead and look at that and I'll spread the word myself.

Sussman: That would be great.

Sorg: Yeah. Is there any other comments or questions by the Committee? Go ahead Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: If I could just ask two follow-up questions. Have you or are you planning on quantifying what the traffic flow would be if you get the extensions in place?

Sussman: The, the short answer to that is yes. That is a, something that we're hoping to do as part of the study is to look at the traffic impacts or perhaps the changes in routes that might be taken as a, as a result of new infrastructure. That's not something that we can promise immediately but it's something that we're, are, are looking to, to produce as part of the study, yes.

Garrett: Great. I, I think that that's important in terms of the, the comments that are being raised by Councilor Pedroza because the more that you can quantify the actual change in traffic pattern, that might help in terms of, "My goodness, that's going to be four times as many cars," as opposed to, "It's only going to be one car per hour more," or something. The, the other, the other thing is part of that, can you model at this larger sort of system level what happens if those extensions don't happen?

Sussman: Sure. Well, the short answer is if those, if those extensions don't happen that's part of the no-build scenario which is produced as part of the, the 2040 MTP. So we can document that as part of the report and pull from the resources, the existing resources of the MPO to try and answer that question. It's a ...

Garrett: So you'd be able to get a comparison between if you put this through it will relieve traffic at these points, or change the patterns and I think that that's part of the issue too in terms of helping the larger community see the benefits or not of this particular kind of project.

Sussman: Do you want to add anything?

Garrett: Thank you.

Sussman: Thank you.

Sorg: Sounds like a good NEPA project. Yeah, the in, impacts of, of each alternative are important. Is there a member of the public would like to speak about this study? Seeing none, I have a list. I want to start from the beginning here. Why are we doing this study now? Was the Committee, did the Committee approve it at some point in time?

Murphy: Mr., Mr. Chair. The short answer on that is yes. This is, this is something that while it does not seem timely now but at the time that we had set it into motion, got funding to, to pay for the study, put it into the Unified Planning Work Program ...

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: It was around the time that, that Centennial was under construction so it, this has been a slower-moving, a slow-moving project in developing. At the time that, that we set this, this in motion this Committee and the, you know there has been a little bit of turnover on it but this Committee identified this as, along with University Avenue as their number-one priority as far as ...

Sorg: Yeah, I remember that.

Murphy: Needs to look at and I think that was primarily driven by the fear of what would happen when Centennial opened.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: That, you know those, those fears have not materialized so ...

Sorg: Sounds like this goes back about four or more years.

Murphy: It, it does about that.

Sorg: Okay. So when you're ...

Murphy: We've been seeking funding, developing contracts ...

Sorg: That's good.

Murphy: And all of that.

Sorg: Yeah. Thank you very much. That, that helps me get this in perspective. I have a question about the BLM. What does the BLM say about this study project? It's their land.

Sussman: Right. That's a, that's a good question. I, I would characterize their participation so far as, as very active and open-minded. They, they follow a, obviously they follow a evaluation process that's, that's unique to BLM in terms of how their land is, is ultimately utilized and they take the perspective of, "Is this land in, in the best, being utilized in the best public interest," whatever that may be at the, or based on the criteria that they're evaluating whether it's in terms of the resources that exist within the land, the economic development potential, the public interest potential in terms of the, in terms of movement of people and goods, or even residential development or commercial development if that's the case. So they've been, they've been quick to assert that there are no near-term plans to dispose of this land for any type of development into the future. They've expressed a willingness to entertain roads through this parcel and obviously it would need to go through their application and environmental review process. But they're, they've been very open-minded about that potential.

Sorg: Yeah. I, I would have to agree with Commissioner Garrett here that what this land ultimately ends up being I think would affect what we're doing here and so I, I would like to get a little more information as to what their idea is. Are they willing to keep it open space or do they want to develop it, so on and so forth, whatever other ideas they have. I, I can see the lack of our east-west corridors in this area here is, particularly in Las Cruces is a problem and I can see how Missouri would obviously relieve some of that. But I want to put a plug in here just for something else and I only want to say it once and I don't care if anybody comments on it at all. There are other east-west corridors that I think we need to keep in mind as we go into the future, and that is the eastward corridor, the Engler underpass under I-25 goes all the way to Valley Drive. I just, saying this, this should be moved up in our priority as, in our transportation plan. Enough said on that. So for me, I, looks like to me from what the public says and I can agree, a pike, a bike and pedestrian pathway would be a good way to start this, that Alternative 6 that looked good to me as long as you pick out the beginning and end of it okay. And, and what I'm kind of curious, and can you engineer it so that a roadway ultimately, eventually would parallel it and so you wouldn't have to rebuild the bike and pedestrian walkway, bikeway?

Sussman: If, keeping in mind that the engineering is not part of this ...

Sorg: Yeah.

Sussman: Phase of the study, if, if Alternative 6 with a potential phased approach emerges as the preferred alternative then that's very much something that we would keep in mind.

Sorg: Okay.

Sussman: That the future efforts look at engineering in such a way that it could be phased to begin with a multiuse facility and would not require a, a, reinventing the process ...

Sorg: Sure.

Sussman: *(inaudible)* process all over again.

Sorg: Okay. That's what I was kind of concerned, or interested in, in knowing. I have one last question, it's for staff. Can you give me a rough idea when Missouri was designated as a collector, what decade, decade or year?

Murphy: Mr. Chair. The first time that the, the MPO established a, a long-range thoroughfare plan was in 1994 and Missouri was on that.

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: And just to complete the thing, Roadrunner was also on that as well.

Sorg: Right. I think that, that'd be an important part of our public outreach is that people understand that Missouri was always going to be a collector and those people that brought prop, bought, bought property along the collector, Missouri you know should've known it. It, you know and a lot of realtors don't say that. I know I've heard many stories about that but that's something that needs to be, needs to be known. With that I, I don't have anything more. Is there one last word here anywhere? Okay. Let's, thank you very much Aaron.

Sussman: Thank you.

Sorg: And we'll look forward to seeing you again someday.

Sussman: All right. Thank you.

7.2 Committee Training (Trail loop issues)

Sorg: Tom, next item on the agenda is the Committee Training.

Murphy: Okay Mr. Chair. If you, you would allow before we get into that I notice a couple of people in the audience have been waiting breathlessly on the ...

Sorg: The results.

Murphy: On the results.

Sorg: I almost forgot, yes.

Murphy: So Ms. Billings was the, was the choice of the Committee so.

Sorg: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

Murphy: So with that we'll make appointment and then we'll, we'll, we'll notify those that were not present as to the results and extend our appreciation for their applying.

Sorg: Congratulations to Maggie Billings. Next, then, continue.

Wray: Thank you Mr. Chair. Please bear with me for a second while the software refuses to work. There we go. All right. Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee. Today staff is going to bring before you something that we have been working on since the, the first of this year. The, the item in question is the work that we have been doing on the multiuse loop trail. The, the loop trail has been in proposal for a very long time. Right now, currently three out of the four legs of the trail are in existence: The La Llorona Trail, the Outfall Trail, and the Triviz Trail. The southern leg of the trail has always been very difficult to establish from a conceptual standpoint. There are some facilities that are in existence in, but do not provide a connection all the way through from the, the end of the La Llorona to the end of Triviz. Construction on La Llorona is substantially, pretty much complete, not substantially complete but complete. There is also going to be the upcoming work on the University interchange that NMDOT is going to be doing. It's, that, that portion is already in the, the TIP. It's my understanding that the Triviz multiuse path is intended to be extended down to Wells on the campus and let me go ahead and show that on, on the map would be down approximately in here. On this slide you can see the portions of the loop trail that are in existence. We have a, a small portion down here on Union and then broken segments along University here.

The objective that staff wants to accomplish through this process is we would like to identify a single priority route between the end of La Llorona and the end of Triviz to complete the multiuse loop trail. I want to emphasize at this time that this in no way excludes any other future east-west, north-south, whatever direction trails that might be going through this area but for, for this specific moment in time we want to identify one route to go between those two points. We also want to take advantage of the transportation alternative funding cycle that was just announced by NMDOT last week. We knew that this was going to be coming up and it became a priority of the BPAC that we at least make some effort to be able to get in some applications to maybe make some progress along this particular corridor.

The loop trail has existed in the, the MPO plan for years. The BPAC held a work session on this particular topic on February 16th. Subsequent to that MPO staff has met with NMSU staff, with EBID staff, Town of Mesilla, and Dona Ana County. We've received a lot of very valuable input, some paradigm shift, pretty much paradigm-shifting input every single time we've met with a different jurisdiction. It's been very

good conversations that we have had, very good participation from all of the, all of the stakeholders. Through that we have come up with a couple of points that are, are pretty much consensus points of emphasis among both the BPAC and all of the stakeholders. The first is that a, the route should connect activity centers. The next is that we, we need to prioritize making the best use of the available right-of-way. Obviously and I'll, I'll get to this a little bit later in the presentation, there will be compromises involved no matter what route we select. There, that's just the nature of doing work in the built environment but we would like to, to make the best possible use of right-of-way and minimize any potential right-of-way acquisitions that might be needed, and one of the big hurdles is we need to safely and effectively cross I-10 and the railroad tracks.

This is three of the potential alternatives that we have considered thus far. These alternatives all make use of EBID facilities. This does present a challenge in the fact that Dona Ana County and Town of Mesilla, neither one have a MOU with EBID to be able to utilize these facilities. In order for us to be able to designate any one of these particular routes we would need, staff feels that it would be needed to have a pretty firm commitment that Dona Ana County and Town of Mesilla would be making progress towards reaching agreement with EBID to designate those facilities. Also I will highlight here that we do have extending from the end of Calle, or excuse me extending from the end of the La Llorona Trail we have a connecting point of Calle del Norte through this portion of Town of Mesilla. This, the Mesilla lateral is one of the available options to connect it down here to Union. The other available option is to connect it down, straight through the heart of Mesilla utilizing the Mesilla Drain.

The third option available connects to La Llorona above the trailhead and goes up and then down past and connects down to Union here. This portion, there, this portion of the Union Trail as we saw in the other map is in existence right now. There, there is a multiuse path there. It does not extend all the way out to this end so there would be some work that would need to be done.

Additionally the other alternative is to utilize University. We did have the, the study corridor earlier, early this year. Fact, I believe January of this year that it was approved by this body where one of the available alternatives was to have a multiuse path along this particular facility.

Now worst case, well I don't want to say worst case but a potential scenario, I'll say that, a potential scenario where we're unable to use the laterals to make connection points, the only available, viable alternative that we would have would be to use NM-28 through Mesilla and connect it down to Union or to University along this path. Now what infrastructure improvements we might or might not make we're, we're nowhere near that stage of planning to determine that. We're, we're merely trying to get a route designated on, on the map so that we can pursue that as a target. Now going forward, a route is designated, things may happen. We may have to change things. That is always a possibility but we are trying to get this specific objective accomplished here.

I guess I also, and I neglected to mention this and I apologize but we do have Triviz Trail going down to Wells. We spoke with NMSU staff and they were very supportive of the idea of using this particular alignment that I'm highlighting with the mouse. They're very supportive of this alignment. Fact they, they, they explicitly said that this was their preference to, to do something along that particular alignment.

Now challenges, again as I alluded to, there are going to be right-of-way issues. Staff has gone out and done some examination of the various routes and there will be right-of-way issues regardless of the route chosen. Some places the right-of-way is just going to pinch down. Other places there may have to be acquisition. We, we're not making any sort of extensive study of those aspects of it at this time. We just want the, the awareness of that factor to be in everyone's mind as we go forward.

Again as I mentioned earlier in the presentation crossing I-10 and the railroad tracks is potentially very tricky. We have basically two options for that which is to utilize University or to utilize Union. We've heard varying responses from the stakeholders as to which would be preferable so staff is not going to state a preference on that at this time.

As I mentioned earlier Town of Mesilla and Dona Ana County do need to obtain an MOU and then special permits in order to use EBID facilities on their, in their jurisdictions. That is a make-or-break item. Those, those have to be done in order to utilize EBID facilities, period, full stop. Without those agreements the, it, it cannot go forward.

The funding, obviously once we have a line on a map that doesn't mean anything out on the ground so obtaining funding in order to actually get something, get some infrastructure out on the ground, that's one of the reasons why we are moving at a pretty fast pace with this right now. The, the DOT did announce the, the opening, the call for projects for TAP funding. That deadline is going to be in November which is thankfully a little bit later in the year than we had initially been told but still it's not a whole lot of time to, to get applications put together. And then once we are able to determine, then coordination with the jurisdictions to find out what would be the best, best section to do a TAP application for because it's extremely unlikely that we would be able to do an application for the entirety of the corridor.

Just to illustrate the sort of challenges that we will be facing going forward, these two shots are of the intersection of Main Street and Union, this is Union Avenue right here and Main Street going north and south here. This picture is taken essentially right on top of the railroad tracks which you see right here. The trail does not exist at this point and does not exist at this point on the far side of the Main Street intersection. It picks up several feet on the other side of this particular property here. This, this picture is taken further down, down Union from the railroad tracks at the point where the multiuse facility on Union picks up again. So you can see that there's a very tightly pinched right-of-way along this particular stretch. We did not take any picture, pictures of the intersection with University but University, it does have an existing bike facility. Unfortunately it is right against the pylons and those pylons are not going

to move so the amount of space that is under the, the overpass right now is, is the amount of space that we have to work with. Both of these obviously have challenge but, challenges but we feel that things can be done to improve the situation whichever, well hopefully in the future both will be improved but whichever one in the near term if the Policy Committee does make a, make a decision in the near term things can be done to improve both intersections. I do want to ...

Sorg: Andrew, could I ask?

Wray: Yes sir.

Sorg: Does University Avenue have the same challenges in the same ...

Wray: University Avenue's challenges are, are a bit different. It, it is a much longer distance because the way that the road is angled, in fact let me, let me go back to a previous slide in the presentation. University, the amount of distance to be covered through the sort of challenging area is much greater than crossing Union. Union you, you cross here and you're done. University, you have to cross Main Street, the railroad tracks, then under I-10, then all the way across over here, and then across, then across Valley. So there are, there are challenges regardless of, of the selection made.

As I said NMDOT has announced the call for projects for TAP funding. They are also, have combined that with the Recreational Trails Program funding for Federal Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. Jolene specifically asked me to highlight that there are distinct criteria for the TAP funding and for the Rec Trail funding. They are not the same. TAP funding to kind of just as a general rule of thumb is much more geared towards commuter type uses. Recreational Trails is specific towards recreational type uses. Now there obviously can be some gray area but I, just from the tone that DOT Planning staff has taken, I think they're going to take a very, look at things very very closely so when applications are submitted jurisdictions want to make sure that they are applying for the type of funding for the type of project that they believe that they are applying for. As I said the deadline for submission of projects is Wednesday, November 30th at close of business.

And, shameless plug but we do have more information regarding the potential for I guess I, I did not and I apologize, staff feels that if Dona Ana County and Town of Mesilla don't believe that the jurisdictions will be able to go forward with, with obtaining an agreement with EBID that staff feels that if planning for those facilities isn't possible that we need to remove those facilities from our trail plan. We don't want to be giving a false impression to the public that we're going to be planning for facilities that have no chance of actually happening. So if you want to go and examine our current trail plan I have the link there. I will e-mail this, this presentation to the Committee at the close of this meeting so everyone will have that link available but it is on our brand-new website, shameless

plug, mesillavalleympo.org. And that concludes my presentation and I will stand now for any questions.

Sorg: Thank you Andrew. Any questions from the Committee? Councilor Eakman.

Eakman: This has always piqued my interest but today even more. As you go to these options, are there any landmark significant distances involved in the total trail length? And I ask this for a specific reason.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Councilor Eakman. We did initially in the early stages of this examine this for length. I don't, I believe we only looked at it from total trail length as opposed to this particular leg but we can, we can certainly, we can calculate that through the, through the GIS and distribute that information to the Committee.

Eakman: Because I've been on the Coeur d'Alenes Trail up in Idaho, the Mickelson Trail in South Dakota, and they've become huge business opportunities for entrepreneurs. When you go along the Coeur d'Alenes Trail and it's only 70 miles long and it crosses the entire upper part of the state of Idaho, there are ice cream shops along the way, there are luncheon spots along the way, there are places for adult beverages along the way, and they've made a complete business out of the bicyclists who use that and are tourists from other areas. And it becomes quite an opportunity and quite a tourist draw. Now in my own way, any way we could make this appealing not only for our own citizens but also for the opportunity to get more heads in beds in this area makes a lot of sense to me. And I think a milestone amount of miles involved in this would make a significant difference when we tell the people who love to travel and who love to try new, new trails that this is available. I see the economy in Moab, Utah and it is significantly bicyclists who, that's a destination for them. And it would be interesting here with 350 days of sunshine a year and probably the only spot in the country where you can bicycle in the wintertime on a trail like this to take a, a vacation here for something like this. So I'm not speaking about which route would be the best or anything of that nature. It's just the concept that we have for this trail. If we could move our thinking beyond just satisfying our local community to not only satisfying our local bicycling community but also bringing in tourists who will gently share that. When I was on the Mickelson Trail and I could see the national monuments along the way, it's probably more appealing to tourists of what they see along the way than which path they take. And so if there are significant landmarks, if there are some significant things people can see along the way, I think we should take that into our consideration also and then I'll leave it up to the idea people to come up with that. But those are my comments. Thank you.

Sorg: Trustee Flores.

Flores: Yes. I don't know if everybody got Ben, Andrew Bencomo's letter but he sent a letter out and I know I received it. I'm assuming that everybody in the MPO got a copy of that ...

Sorg: From who?

Flores: Where he was advocating the ...

Sorg: From who?

Wray: We, MPO staff did not ...

Flores: He's ...

Wray: Forward that e-mail ...

Flores: To everybody ...

Wray: On, I, I was not aware that that was his intention. We thought that that was supposed to be for the staff review of the, the options.

Flores: Okay. All right. He's on the BPAC and, and he wrote a letter and one of the things that he looked at, three things: Access, trails should be accessible as possible to neighborhoods and community gathering spaces, places when performed. And so I'm thinking access, I'm, I'm still advocating for University. I'll just be blunt. Union is part of Mesilla and so is University. My main concern is really safety. In one of our previous meetings that we had, one of the ladies that attended told me she was you know really interested in having a trail on University because you know she didn't want to see another, or a, a bike, a, a, a, a children, a child being hurt. And I misunderstood her. She's actually seen two accidents involving bikes in which the bikes were very mangled and there were ambulances there. I asked her what the outcome was, did somebody die, was somebody severely injured and she said she knew that they were severely injured from the condition of the bike but she didn't you know stay around and look. So that increases my concern. It's always been my fear, I didn't realize that there was actually an accident.

Within the last two weeks I saw six young people, I would say junior high age riding their bike, basically crossing that area with the pylons where Main Street crosses with University and they were riding on the wrong side of the road. They did at least stop at the stoplight and they continued to, to go. So my concern is there are people that are using these, University anyway. I think there would be more people if it were safer but there are people that are using it anyway and a lot of them are very young people and teenagers, although they're smart enough to know better often take more risks and so my, I, I really prefer University because Union, yes does have a part of the trail, their multiuse trail. I think that satisfies my concern as far as the, the Mesilla Park Elementary that's

there but we don't have anything for Zia and so I would prefer that it be there for that reason. There's a neighborhood there that could use that access. There's children going to school that could use that access that I would, I'm concerned about.

Additionally, on his letter he talks about, and, and I think he, he proposes, he prefers Union. I don't want to misstate his, that "trails should link community centers, local businesses, gathering spaces." University really links up nicely with The Spotted Dog. It goes right into The Spotted Dog and I know people that ride their bikes and at the end of their ride end with The Spotted Dog. I know a lot of cyclists go to The Bean, it's a popular spot in Las Cruces, and there's just some businesses along Avenida de Mesilla which is one of the options. you don't have the map up now but I think that would really help our community out. We have the Convention Center along University. I, I think it would be nice to be able to extend that road there from University down. So that's just my, my preference. Do I, see if I have any other ideas about that. And that's all I'm going to say.

Sorg: Okay. Thank you Trustee Flores. It is my understanding we are going to go ahead with the University Corridor redo, rebuild. Are, are we not? In, in spite of this loop trail.

Murphy: Mr. Chairman. That, that's correct. We, we adopted the Phase A study and we will be looking for funding opportunities associated with that and this remain, this, the loop trail effort may or may not coincide with that but it's not going to preclude either one from going forward.

Sorg: Yeah. Yeah. Cause that's the way I understood it that we're going to, that the University Corridor has to be done and that should be high in the priority list and whether we have the loop trail going down there or go down any other street it doesn't matter. It's, I understand it's, it will be done. That's on the list to be done. Am I correct?

Doolittle: Tom. If I may, Mr. Chair.

Murphy: Funding ...

Doolittle: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes.

Doolittle: If I may.

Sorg: Sure. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: The Department is certainly supportive of continuing the study. Right now we've got the Phase A completed. The Department is working on finding funding for Phase B. Once we get that completed then of course then we

have to start looking at designated construction funding so we can move forward with the Phase C and D. But the Department for the University Corridor is supportive now that we've got the Phase A completed.

Sorg: Sure.

Doolittle: So I just want to be clear right now we're in the, we're in the ...

Sorg: Understand.

Doolittle: Phase portion. There is no designated construction funding at this point.

Sorg: Right. Name another project that is just like that in our MPO.

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. In what aspects?

Sorg: This, Phase A is done, you're looking for money for B and construction money.

Doolittle: Right now actually the District within the MPO, even within Dona Ana, or the Mesilla Valley MPO and El Paso we're pursuing several different studies for, for a corridor. The six-laning from Three Crosses to I-25 along the *(inaudible)* ultimately the Department is pursuing several of these options for studies because we know that frequently construction funds come available and those that are ahead of the game get first dibs at those, so I, I think that we as a District are taking that approach on several of our projects. We have a few within Mesilla Valley MPO boundaries specifically ...

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: But University is one that we discuss quite frequently a submittal for ...

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: The study funding.

Sorg: Okay. Understand. Thank you very much. Any other comments from the Committee? Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Thank you. Could you remind me of the primary purpose of the loop trail?

Wray: Well the primary purpose of the loop trail is in many ways, as Councilor Eakman elucidated we are desiring to have the facility both for the use of the residents and as a tourist draw.

Garrett: So it's both for recreation and commuter.

Wray: Yes.

Garrett: Okay. And I think that that's important. I ...

Wray: Do you have a ...

Garrett: There's a, there, I, I live just to the, to the west of the area that's on the map so I, I drive down and through this area all the time and I think an important part of what I would think about is sort of where are bicyclists going right now? Even though Calle del Norte is not very, it's, it doesn't have bike lanes there are a lot of cyclists that use that because you have a huge number of people that come from Picacho Hills and come down and go to The Bean. So that's, that's an area, a lot of the races that go along Calle del Norte. The corridor plan that's been developed as part of Viva Dona Ana uses New Mexico 28 as the spine for activity along that corridor and the idea and, and a major part of that is catering to the cycling community. You know I, I'm, this 35 miles an hour through from Calle del Norte at least to Union, I don't recall if there are bicycle lanes through there or not but it's not uncommon to see cyclists on that stretch of, of 28. And it's actually close to, you can you know go off if you want to go into the plaza and, and other kinds of things like that. You've got Andele's, The Bean, The Spotted Dog, you've got a bunch of stuff that's going on along there as well as some other restaurants. So I, I think that, that the idea of tying in and reinforcing the connection with 28 as it extends further down to the south and for that matter to the north, it's important to sort of underscore that linkage. I'm, I'm more convinced that that's important than the issues with EBID about the drain. EBID, I, I, I see some of the, the opportunities with the drains as, as being ways to get some of the recreational riding in as opposed to some of the longer-distance riding. So it's not that, that these are bad ideas to work out something with EBID, I just think that in terms of the, the big loop that going Calle del Norte to, to 28 and I would probably be in, inclined to support University all the way through and, and part of that is the planning that we've already been engaged with. I mean we've already looked at 28, or between 28 and, and Main Street. We've looked at that, we've had a study done on that. It's a preliminary but there's room there for bicycle lanes. I think we need to underscore, when we do this kind of work we need to say, "Well that, there's reasons why we picked these alignments and it's feasible to do this."

The other part that and, and so the University Corridor being developed you know we're still going through studies but I think this underscores the idea that cycling around the university is likely to be something that if anything increases rather than decreases. And when you've got a major problem like getting across that interchange, intersection, and you've got pressure from cycling on both sides it just makes sense to have that a priority that we take care of rather than saying, "It's easier to go, get across at Union." I understand that but I think we're going to have more people trying to get across there and that

that is something we need to pay attention to. I just would point out that if you do the University Corridor there's nothing that stops a loop around the NMSU campus from going around as we have on the map and then coming up El Paseo and connecting in and continuing as part of that loop. And for that matter there's nothing that stops the extension of the loop down to Union. I just think our priority in terms of the primary loop alignment should be where we know that we have cyclists and we know that there are issues with cycling that we need to solve.

Sorg: Some of our choices.

Garrett: Yeah. So that's what I would be inclined to, to support. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Sorg: You're welcome. Councilor Pedroza.

Pedroza: Thank you. Just very briefly, I was thinking also about the corridor study that has already been, begun on the Viva Dona Ana and, and I certainly agree with Councilor Eakman about the amount of tourists and, and enjoyment that these kinds of trails provide. One of the things I would like everybody to remember is that at this point I think the university has firmed up its plans for the hotel. The hotel right on University with a south entrance and probably a north entrance as well.

Sorg: If you believe the Sun News, yes.

Pedroza: Well, I don't know. Maybe they're not credible. But they certainly have been advertising it so that whole area there bears a lot of looking into and a lot of planning for. Thank you.

Sorg: Yeah. Thank you Councilor Pedroza. And then to carry this one step further, those that ride bicycles, I would like to ask them a question quickly. I don't race bicycles but in a bicycle race could this loop road be used for a race someday, when it's all complete?

Billings: I have no idea. I've never raced bicycles. I just *(inaudible)* ...

Sorg: Okay. That, okay. I was just thinking of ...

Murphy: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Having our own Tour de Las Cruces someday.

Billings: *(Inaudible)*

Garrett: We need to get that ...

Murphy: Mr. Chair.

Garrett: Comment on the record.

Baum: Yes.

Murphy: We, we had, actually had discussed this at ...

Sorg: Ms. Billings come forward.

Billings: Okay.

Sorg: Repeat what you said.

Billings: What did I say? Okay. I don't know. I don't race bicycles but I imagine it could be.

Sorg: Okay. Thank you.

Billings: Okay.

Sorg: All right.

Murphy: Mr. Chair.

Sorg: Yes.

Murphy: This question came, did come up when we were discussing at the BPAC and apparently there's some issue about having a, a sanctioned race that, that crosses railroad tracks.

Sorg: Oh yeah.

Murphy: I think officially the Outfall Channel does, trail does not exist across the railroad tracks there.

Sorg: I know.

Murphy: So I think that's something that's prohibited from having, having a race.

Sorg: We'll find some other trail, yes. Okay. Thank you. Any other words about this item on the agenda? Seeing none.

8. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

Sorg: I'll go to Committee and Staff Comments. Mr. Doolittle do you have any comments on projects DOT has?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair. If you allow I actually do have a quick update. I know ...

Sorg: Please.

Doolittle: This one's been kind of a long meeting but I'll run through very quickly.

Our Union Bridge project we are currently paving and working on the bridge rail. All the major bridge components are complete. That project has actually been moving along very well and we expect to be finished with that project completely by early summer.

Our Missouri Bridge project we're finishing up a few of our concrete median wall barriers in the middle, the final seal coat, striping, we expect to be finished with that project completely by early summer but those of you that have been out there have noticed they're starting to shift traffic around between the auxiliary lanes and get that six-lane section opened up. So you'll start to see that one tying up real quickly.

We actually have two paving projects in the area on I-10. Coincidentally they're by the same contractor but they are two separate projects. So we have the one from the Corralitos exit out by the Love's Truck Stop that runs about to the I-10/I-25 interchange. All of the paving on that project is completed except for the small section in the vicinity of the Union Bridge. That project is on suspension until Union finishes and then the contractor will come tie in those last few spots and then put the seal coat on that one. The other project that we have is the six-lane section between the I-10/I-25 interchange and the Texas state line. That project, I think I spoke of this a little bit previously but that project is to mill and inlay the old four-lane roadway. When we widened it to six lanes all we did is reconstructed the new lanes so this is fixing the old four-lane section. Due to traffic those guys are working at night. We tried it the first two days during the day and had a seven-mile backup so we are doing all of our work at night. They're currently westbound making a circle. It's the same contractor, Mountain States. They do real, real good work for us but we expect both of those projects to be completely finished by November. That's their deadline. It, it, it won't take them that long. Right now we're just waiting on the Union projects to finish up.

So that's really our four ongoing projects. I just want to talk real briefly about some projects that we have coming up. We've got the Spitz/Three Crosses/Solano intersection. That project is currently scheduled to be bid in October of this year. I expect we'll have a contract in early 2017, so about this time next year we will be in the middle of construction at the Three Crosses intersection. So I'll keep you in the loop as we move forward with project development on that one.

The other one that we've been pursuing a long time and finally are getting to the point we're going to see some construction is we're putting in a signal at the corner of 17th Street and Picacho. That's at the north end where all the school buses are coming in and out. We're, we're addressing some right-of-way issues now and purchasing that but the actual construction project is scheduled to be bid in January of 2017. You'll probably see a contract sometime in the spring. Should see

construction sometime in the summer but the way we coordinate we'll probably start the first day of school just so we mess up the school buses.

Sorg: Okay.

Doolittle: I think we do that on purpose but ultimately that project, I say that jokingly but that project won't have very big impacts to the, to the people on 17th or Picacho other than when we're standing some mast arms. I don't expect any big impacts there.

The last thing I wanted to bring the Policy Board up to speed is the Department is currently pursuing two fast-lane applications so rather than pursuing TIGER applications the Department felt this was a better candidate for funding for us. We're putting in an application for NM-136. That's the Pete Domenici Highway from the port of entry to the Texas state line. It's a nine-mile section of roadway and we're requesting $40 million. That one we think we have a really good shot because it's an urban port of entry, not rural so our, our competition has been limited just because of that alone. The other one that we're putting in for is really outside of this, the boundary of this MPO but I just wanted you to know is we're putting for I-10 mile marker 45 to 59 so this is a section of I-10 between Lordsburg and Deming. Over the past year that roadway is falling apart. We've tried patching it, just in the past month we've spent about $44,000 just in pothole patching material. That's kind of a long shot but luckily it's an urban freight corridor application so again we hope that the applicants are minimal but on that one we're seeking $70 million for that corridor. Luckily you know if they only give us 40 we can piecemeal it, hit the worst sections first, but I wanted to just let everybody know that we are pursuing two applications in case you start hearing about it.

Sorg: Right.

Doolittle: And then the last thing, just a real quick update. I know that we had promised to provide a, an update on the, the High Mesa study. We are currently still waiting on a notice to proceed for that RFP. I still commit to the Board that as soon as we get that consultant on board I'll have Molzen come in and give us an update on the, on the previous phase so we're all caught up on that one.

Sorg: Thank you Mr. Doolittle. Any other comments from Committee or staff?

Wray: Yes Mr. Chair. I would like to do some more shameless plugging if you don't mind. But I've brought up on your screen the new MPO website. As you can see it's very beautiful and wonderful in every way. We are, as the Committee may remember two years ago we were directed by the City who hosts our IT that we were no longer able to distribute the NMDOT press releases regarding traffic changes and construction, etc. in the MPO area. We're now able to do so through the MPO website so if you want to know what, what things may be going on regarding construction in the

area, we get all those e-mails from the press office of NMDOT and those will be hosted on our website. We do utilize Google Calendar now for our meeting calendar as you can see. We'll just highlight today's meeting but we have the agenda and packet are easily accessible and once the, the minutes are signed and available for this meeting after they're approved at next month's meeting those will be going up on here as well. Additionally, I haven't had time to get to this but I will be creating appointments in the calendar for the entirety of the 2016 calendar year so that you can go forward and look and see when all of the meetings are going to be just by going to this, to this page on the site. I encourage everyone to take a look at the site, see what's here. Just one last thing but I want to highlight that we do have our core documents and all of our other resources now consolidated into one place on the page. But I encourage everyone to review the website, use it, and give us your feedback. If I can do one more shameless plug but we have heard nothing but good things from, from members of the public who have looked at this and, and have used it. We've not heard a single piece of criticism yet so.

Sorg: Thank you Andrew. Commissioner, or Councilor Eakman was first and then Mr. Doolittle.

Eakman: Thank you. Might sound off-topic but it's not. One of our local companies, ARCA has been invited to Monaco to introduce the ARCABoard to the, one of the largest auto shows in the world and it'll be demonstrated there. My thesis is if somebody can afford a $600,000 car they can afford a $20,000 hovercraft. I think in the future the prices are going to come down, way down and we're going to be faced with, "How do those commute through our city?" Do they share a bicycle/pedestrian path? They're probably not going to be allowed on our sidewalks and what are we going to do? And so if anybody has a little bit of room in their schedule I predict, I predict, count me in, we'll be seeing hovercraft in our city probably within three years. Now, then what do we do? Thank you.

Sorg: So futuristically thinking. Very good Councilor. Mr. Doolittle you had your hand?

Doolittle: Mr. Chair, Andrew. I just wanted to say, I just wanted to publicly acknowledge the, the website. I was talking to Councilor Eakman before the meeting and we have these fancy little tablets and I've got to where I'm pretty much paper-free, the agenda, the packet, the minutes, I'm able to download and find very quickly. I think it's a nice change to the website so I just wanted to compliment the staff on, on that website. I think it's easy to use and very handy for me personally.

Sorg: Very good thank you. And Trustee Linda.

Flores: I'm ...

Sorg: Doris, Flores.

Flores: I, that's okay. I had a, just, I changed my mind. I need to get going so.

Sorg: Okay. Is there any other business?

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sorg: I see there's no public. Oh, Tom.

Murphy: Just a, one, one quick announcement. I, I participated in a conference call earlier this week on the SCRTD's Rail Study and I, they don't, they haven't finalized anything but they're anticipating having some public meetings April 26th and 27th, one in Anthony, one in Las Cruces. And, and I guess keep, keep it tuned to the website.

Sorg: Sure.

Murphy: As soon as I get the final details on that we'll have that posted and we'll send out an e-mail buzz but ...

Sorg: Okay.

Murphy: Our Commuter Rail Study public meeting upcoming.

Sorg: You'll put it on the calendar, right? Okay.

10. ADJOURNMENT (3:03 p.m.)

Sorg: If there's no further business I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.

Garrett: So moved.

Eakman: Second.

Sorg: Okay. All in favor say "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Sorg: Meeting is adjourned.

Gil M. Sorg

Chairperson

MPO Policy Committee Session Sign-In May 11, 2016

Member	Proxy	Signature
Gill Sorg, Chair		Gill M Sorg
Billy Garrett, Vice Chair		
Nora Barraza		Nora Barraza
Carlos Arzabal		
Leticia Benavidez		
Trent Doolittle		Trent Doolittle
Jack Eakman		Jack Eakman
Linda Flores		
Wayne Hancock		
Olga Pedroza		Olga Pedroza

MPO Policy Committee Public Sign In

5/11/2016

Name	Organization	Email Address	*Add to Master Mailing List? (Y or N)
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*Master Mailing list includes receiving a monthly e-newsletter and periodic updates on Transport 2040. We do not give your email out to other organizations or for other projects.