MESILLA VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are minutes for the meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which was held April 19, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers at Dona Ana County Government Building, 845 Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Pearson, Chair (City of Las Cruces Citizen Rep)
Ashleigh Curry (Town of Mesilla Citizen Rep)
Andrew Bencomo (Ped. Community Rep)
Maggie Billings (Bicycle Community Rep.)
Jamie Lakey (NMSU proxy for Mark Leisher)
James Nunez (City of Las Cruces Rep)
Gabriel Rochelle (Bicycle Community Rep)
Samuel Paz (Dona Ana County)
David Shearer (NMSU - Environmental Safety)
Lance Shepan (Mesilla Marshall's Department)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jolene Herrera (NMDOT)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Len Paulozzi
SooGyu Lee (CLC)
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

1. CALL TO ORDER (5:02 p.m.)

Pearson: I guess we're close enough. So it looks like it's 5:02 so I'll call this meeting of the Mesilla Valley Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee to order.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pearson: Do we have a motion to approve the agenda as presented?

Rochelle: So moved.

Pearson: Gabriel moved.

Curry: Second.

Pearson: All in favor accepting the agenda as presented, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: Any opposed?

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 February 16, 2015

Pearson: Next is Approval of Minutes. Is there any discussion or comments on the minutes as presented? Hearing none, I'll accept a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Rochelle: So moved.

Curry: Second.

Pearson: We have a motion and a second so all in favor, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: Any opposed? Hearing none, that passes.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Pearson: Now we're on Public Comment. Any members of the public wish to address us? Seeing none.

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Amendments to the 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program

Pearson: Move on to Action Items. But now we have a couple of members that are coming in so we'll pause for a moment.

MEETING PAUSED TO GET ORGANIZED.

Pearson: Okay. Now that we've got a couple of additional members have come in and we rushed through some of the business already but why don't we go through and introduce everybody, everybody give their name and who they represent and as we go through, we have a new, one new member to present. Why don't we start down here on this end.

Paz: Samuel Paz, Dona Ana County Planning Department.

Billings: Maggie Billings, Bicycle Community Representative.

Lakey: Jamie Lakey, I'm proxying for Mark Leisher.

Shepan: Lance Shepan, Town of Mesilla.

Curry: Ashleigh Curry, Mesilla Community Representative.

Nunez: James Nunez, City of Las Cruces Representative.

Shearer: David Shearer, NMSU Representative.

Rochelle: Gabriel Rochelle, Bicycle Community Rep.

Pearson: Did that pick up?

Baum: No.

Rochelle: No, so it, sorry. Gabriel Rochelle, Bicycle Community Representative.

Bencomo: Andrew Bencomo, Pedestrian Community Representative.

Pearson: And I'm George Pearson, City of Las Cruces Citizen Representative and Chair of the Committee. We went through some of the quick usual business. We'll just check, doesn't look like we have any other members of the public so we'll go on to our Action Items now. We have a, a TIP amendment.

ANDREW WRAY GAVE HIS PRESENTATION.

Wray: Ms. Herrera is unable to be with us tonight but she e-mailed me a statement regarding this that she would like read into the record: This particular amendment is a three, a $3 million amendment being added to accommodate elements of the Amador Proximo. NMDOT is still working out the details of the scope and road transfer agreement with the City and should have more information in the upcoming months.

ANDREW WRAY CONTINUED HIS PRESENTATION.

Wray: Again Ms. Herrera e-mailed me a statement she would like read into the record: These additional funds are being added to cover the cost of the new retaining wall that will be built to hold up the existing retaining wall. This project is now scheduled to let in October 2016 with construction likely starting in, or excuse me, in January of 2017. I will stand now for any questions.

Pearson: Any Committee Members have any questions? So the Amador Proximo elements, that's, they're going to put in the, the side access roads and the protected bike lanes?

Wray: I don't know the extent that they're going to be accommodating. I know that they have been negotiating with the City regarding that but DOT's position has been that they can't afford the full build-out that the, the Proximo called for.

Pearson: Right.

Wray: So I, I don't have that information.

Pearson: Yeah. I think this Committee would be interested in that when that becomes available. I do remember $3 million as being the, the amount that would be needed for that so maybe that is enough to do that full build-out. Any, go ahead.

Nunez: Mr. Chair. I'm, I'm just getting a little more involved in learning some of the processes for requesting funds. Just went to the Cradle to Grave Training and we're going to have the NMDOT Conference here at the Las Cruces Convention Center this week but I did, one thing did catch my attention and that was to be sure when we are asking for funds to, that we include the cost for designs and for taxes, New Mexico gross receipts tax. So as I learn more about how we fill in our forms and our requests I'll, I'll make sure that I flag that for myself to look toward but I just making a, so everybody here kind of knows that too.

Pearson: Okay. So no further comments. I hear a, a motion to accept the TIP as presented?

Nunez: I'll make the motion.

Curry: Second.

Pearson: Having a motion, all in favor, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: Any opposed? So that item passes.

5.2 Multi-Use Loop Trail Alternative Selection

Pearson: So we're on to 5.2, actually I have a question for staff. In the packet that I downloaded last, the agenda has a 5.3 for the UPWP but the paper that I picked up, the agenda does not have that so what agenda?

Wray: The, the one that we have is the 5.3. We must've printed the wrong agenda today in error. We apologize.

Pearson: Okay so the …

Wray: Yeah, there is a 5.3.

Pearson: The 5.3 is included? Okay. So we're at 5.2 now.

ANDREW WRAY GAVE HIS PRESENTATION.

Bencomo: Yes, Chair. I have questions. So I'm just curious and I, I wasn't able to attend the meeting, the Policy Committee meeting. What exactly are the issues with using the laterals and why are they not going to be used in the foreseeable future? What, is it just lack of movement, lack of the will to move on that, to try to work with EBID? Or is it EBID themselves?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Mr. Bencomo. The, the heart of the issue is that the, we've spoke with both Town of Mesilla staff and with Dona Ana County staff and they advised us that they've become, that they've come to an impasse with EBID as far as getting a MOA, MOU in place that would allow the, the trail agreements to be put in place. I think probably it's, it's a, you know it's, it's a combined sticking point of indemnity and, and commitment to maintenance on those facilities but since neither, neither the Town nor the County is willing to move forward with making a request to, to do trail development on those laterals MPO staff believes that we need to downgrade it in our plans from, from our top priorities to a lower tier priority since the solution does not seem that it's, it's imminent.

Pearson: So the City has already taken that extra step and done, done whatever the roadblocks that EBID might have.

Murphy: Mr. Chair. Yes, the City has in the past had an MOU. It, it's currently lapsed but it's something that the, the City's Risk Management section has advised us that they don't view it as a, as a deal-killer, you know the maintenance and indemnity issues. So we expected that MOU to be renewed at some point. Further when we, we spoke to the, the Policy Committee and the elected officials in particular they, they just advised us to move forward on the, on the roadway sections.

Pearson: Okay.

Bencomo: So it, yeah I have more questions, sorry. So when you say "elected officials" the, was that the Board of Commissioners said that, the, the Trustees of

Mesilla said that, when you say "elected officials" what do you mean by that?

Murphy: By "elected officials" I mean the, the elected officials that serve on the MPO's Policy Committee, the three trust, three Town Trustees on there, there are three County Commissioners, three City Councilors.

Bencomo: Okay.

Murphy: And the NMDOT District Engineer.

Bencomo: Okay so it's just the representatives, not, not "just" but the representatives on those Committees which are not speaking for the Trustee Board or the Board of Commissioners so, I mean I, I understand at this point I think that Policy Committee has spoken and, and it's going to happen. I don't think we even have a, a, a, a way to change that at this point. But I, I feel very strongly that this needs to be resolved. The City is doing it and I understand the maintenance portion of it is probably, obviously there's the indemnity portion of it but I think the maintenance portion's probably the, the, one of the bigger pieces, who's going to maintain that and how. I think there is the ability to do that with these governmental agencies. I just think the will to do that may not be there. So I personally would hope that this Committee, if we feel that using the laterals is, is a viable option which, and we're looking at, at the Union process here, if we go down Union we have to deal with a lateral anyway or jump to the other side of the road. If we go down 28 and, and be, even be without a choice of University and Union, if we go down 28 and then turn left at Calle Norte, I just don't think that's possible. There's no right-of-way available from 28 on Calle Norte for about a quarter of a mile past that first section of houses there. The houses are right up against the road on both sides. I, I just am not sure that there's even the ability to do that there as far as road widths and things so I'm not sure how, how that's going to occur. But I, I, I would hope that, maybe I'm the only one on this Committee that feels that those laterals are, are very valuable and could be a huge benefit to our community and City, County, Mesilla, everywhere. I just, I, I hate this discussion that it's not, or going to be downgraded but I understand the process at this point. It's, it's just the way it's going to be for now. Maybe it can be changed later. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Curry: Mr. Chair. May I add in. I would like to second Mr. Bencomo's thoughts on that and, and, and I wonder has EBID said that they won't do it, I mean has there been any discussion beyond ... coming from EBID saying, "We won't do it unless we have this or that." You know I, I'm just wondering if it's just a personality thing right now, that there are personalities that don't want it versus it really is an impracticality. Because I do look at how well it works through the rest of the City, the City Loop works beautifully on the EBID

trails. And again to kind of discount that right now, I realize that there may be six, six people who saying it isn't but is it really ruled out?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Ms. Curry. We believe EBID has consistently maintained that, that they're willing to enter into, you know into these MOUs provided you know that the entity that requests it take over the maintenance and, and do the indemnification. We, the MPO staff's perspective is that the sticking point is on the count, count side and the, and the County side is they have not, they have not come to the, to the same conclusion that the, that the City Legal and the City Risk has come to that it's a negligible increase in, in exposure and, and yes we'll take on that indemnity. We did you know and you know we you know obviously have no control over County, County staff or Town staff. We did raise, raise it at the Policy Committee where the elected officials from those jurisdictions are aware of the issue and if they feel strongly enough about it they, then they can enter into those discussions within their own government. That being said the Policy Committee thought it'd be more expedient at this point to push forward with a roadway solution. We're not, you know we're not proposing taking the EBID facilities off at all. We're just downgrading their, their priorities from you know a couple of them were Tier 1 and this is, this is a way that we communicate to the public that there's an issue with that so these are not going to be on the short list for becoming trails right-of-way so, or you know really you know ...

Curry: Right.

Murphy: Really soon. So I, I think, I think you know we agree that those, you know some of those EBI facilities would be terrific additions to the trail system but there, there's a lot of issues to work out so while those are getting out, being worked out we lower the expectations of the general public.

Curry: Thank, thank you very much Mr. Murphy. That was a, a good explanation of things and as the Town Representative for the Town of Mesilla I'm going to go and talk to you know the powers that be at the Town and just see if, if maybe they'd listen to the consideration of revisiting this, this topic because I'm looking at the, at the long-range picture. The long-range picture, it's a really usable facility and in 20 years' time that would be an amazing place that would really add to our community. As, as a cyclist both recreationally and commuting I think it's so much nicer to be out of traffic whereas these other two options you're still in traffic. As the Safe Routes to School Coordinator I would feel much safer putting kids on a multiuse trail rather than on a roadway facility as well. So I'm thinking you know the big picture is this sort of resolvable issue so I'll take it upon myself to go at least to the Town of Mesilla and talk to, talk to them about maybe you know a little bit further into the details.

But if I may I had a couple other comments and thoughts that I wanted to ask and make. So first off the Strava data counts, again I think that you're seeing much greater cycle, cycling usage on University Avenue because it's a safer place to ride your bike. University's a horrible street to ride your bike as I know from you know near misses with school buses but so I think that as far as using that as strong data I think the data only shows where cyclists feel safest, not necessarily where if it were safe they would use one over the other. So I don't think there's necessarily more cycling traffic coming down Union. It's just that that's a safer road to, to bike on because there's less vehicular traffic. So I just wanted to make that point. I also wanted to see if any of these things could be, could TAP funding, could the Rails to Trails funding be accessible if, if the Town of Mesilla, the County, the City wanted to apply to be able to get design funding or is there other foreseen funding that would fund the design and implementation of this?

Wray: Mr. Chair, Ms. Curry. Yes, that is the reason why we've been pushing this so hard so fast is to get it in time for the TAP funding. It is possible that other sources of funding may become available. Mr. Doolittle, the District 1 Engineer last week on the record said that NMDOT has looked at pursuing funding for additional phases of study and then potential implementation on University but they have nothing secured yet. They've just examined the possibility intellectually. So other sources of funding may come available but yes, we've been pushing this hard this year because the TAP cycle that has now arrived.

Curry: Thank you very much.

Nunez: Yes I, I agree with a lot of what's been said. I appreciate your comments. That's a good idea, kudos to you Mr. Bencomo for the, even trying to attempt to get to, close to those laterals. You persuaded me in the last conversation we had of, hanging over the plans there. But what I wanted to ask was, is if you could go back to the map a little bit and maybe kind of walk me through a little bit …

Wray: Which map?

Nunez: The map there, that'll work, kind of, if you can, cause I notice that you had quite a bit more traffic I think you said to the east on the one versus the other plan …

Wray: Let me …

Nunez: Like 10,000 versus …

Wray: Let me go back to …

Nunez: Five thousand.

Wray: I think this would be more, I think this would be more ...

Nunez: Oh, that'll work. Yeah.

Wray: Illustrative. Yes. The, this portion of Union had 10,000 over 10,000 AADT. This portion of Union had just slightly over 2,000 AADT.

Nunez: And compared to the other option also.

Wray: University was pretty consistent, six, five to six thousand both sides, let me just go back to that slide, yeah.

Nunez: Right. Yeah I notice the 10,000 versus 6,000 is what I was kind of wanting to see the difference there, and the section of road, the distance. So if you can go back to the map please and also show me, walk me through a little bit through the Town of Mesilla versus County Road property or sections.

Wray: The roadway itself is actually an NMDOT facility but it is in Town of Mesilla. This portion here it crosses into County, well actually I'm not sure where the ownership lies because we have this portion of the city that's down here but then we have this bit of the county so I, this portion here would be County. I'm not sure who the ownership is along here and then it would be City from this portion here and Soo might actually be able to, to speak, to speak to that. This portion is City here. We, we do have the Traffic Engineer from City here so he can answer some questions as well, put him on the spot.

Nunez: No this helps a lot. With the light blue I can see the City now, I can see the County, I can see this, the Town of Mesilla. And then I guess, I know you worked through this but I know, since this looks like the, the, the route that we'll have to take based on the obstacles we're facing, what ought to mitigate some of that, the concerns on, they talk about properties being close. I mean you got some path there, right. Is that not right, that section of pedestrian path, is that correct?

Wray: Yes. There's a multiuse facility that exists along about that stretch.

Nunez: Right. Okay.

Wray: Right there.

Nunez: That helps me. All right. Thanks for going over that.

Curry: Mr. Chair, Mr. Wray. I have one more question. Is this, are, are you considering doing this as in-road facility, like sort of bike facility or was it a separate standing multiuse path like that section on Union?

Wray: The, the expressed goal at the beginning is really to have as much separate facility as possible there. Even if we were utilizing laterals there would've had to have been points of compromise. On NM-28 at this moment in time for both of these options staff is envisioning just an in-road facility potentially designated as, "Hey this is the point that connects from here to here." So at this point we are, it, it's our understanding that there will have to be some in-road facilities incorporated into it but the goal at the beginning was to have as many separated facilities as possible, a separate, a separate path.

Curry: Thank you. Cause I, I'm thinking in keeping with the rest of the multiuse trail the, the loop trail that goes around, it's almost exclusively, I'm trying to think, almost exclusively multi, off-trail, I mean at the ...

Wray: Yes.

Curry: A multiuse trail as opposed to in-road. So again I mean it's back to that thought of the use of the laterals. I hate to give up this idea that the laterals are a possibility cause it doesn't really complete the loop. I mean if you're a family out for a bike ride you're not going to be wanting to bike your family down NM-28 in-road facility with your you know five-year-old in tow. So I, I, I still just have that vision if if we're going to do it let, you know do it right or do this with the thought in mind that later down the road we could add the laterals if something were to change.

Wray: Mr. Chair, Ms. Curry. That is an excellent point. In, in doing this we're in no way excluding any sort of future work that could be done on any sort of facility. This, this process has been driven by wanting to, the timeliness because we have the portion of Triviz that's now going to go down south of University, the completion of La Llorona Trail and this, the two-year funding cycle where if we miss this one it's not going to come up again for a while, kind of a perfect storm of, a, a window of opportunity here to, to accomplish, to accomplish something is really why this has been driven. It, it has moved very quickly. It has moved very quickly.

Curry: Thank you.

Pearson: But even if we designate this route we might only find funding to do the University portion and then might be another two years and by then maybe we can get some, maybe the Rio Grande Valley Trail will come up and we can connect further south on that perhaps or something like that.

Wray: That, that is an excellent point Mr. Chair. If, if we amend it once we can, if circumstances change we can do it again.

Billings: I have a question. Since I'm new to this Committee could someone briefly explain "the laterals" and what that means?

Wray: Yes Mr. Chair, Ms. Billings. The laterals are EBID drainage facilities that they use for moving irrigation water to the farmers in the community. That's basically in a nutshell what they are used for.

Billings: The only problem I can see with those is road bikes but I mean that's a really minor group that can't go on those trails so I think those would be ...

Curry: But the trails are paved.

Pearson: It would be ...

Billings: Oh.

Curry: It's a paved trail.

Billings: Those ones are paved? Okay.

Curry: Yeah.

Billings: I've only been on ...

Curry: That's what we're talking about, doing paved trails.

Billings: Oh. Okay then I think that sounds like a great option. Okay. Thank you.

Bencomo: Mr. Chair.

Pearson: Yes Andrew.

Bencomo: Sorry. I know I talk a lot but, so a couple more items, as far as the Strava data I would be very careful with that. I mean that, Strava is, is, is very popular with bicyclists but it's popular with bicyclists that are like hardcore bicyclists like Ashleigh.

Curry: I don't use it.

Bencomo: But, so, as long as we, and a lot of runners use it too. As long as we always try to keep in mind as the, as the, this Committee and then I hope that the Policy Committee and the TAC would do the same thing, when we talk about these facilities if we could always keep in mind that we're not just

talking about hardcore bicyclists, hardcore runners, we're talking about families. We're trying to get families out there with little kids and I would never, as Ashleigh said, I would never take my little ones when they were small on any of these roadways, any in-road facilities. It's, it's, you don't know what they're going to do as far as little ones. So those separate facilities are very important and that's one of the main reasons I am such an advocate for trying to use these laterals. It separates them from the traffic. There'll always be the bicyclists that are going to zip down the main roads and their, they have no fear of doing that and they ride all over the place but we need to look at families that are going to be the future bicyclists and runners and people that are using these facilities. So if we can always keep that in mind and maybe push for the other committees to keep that in mind also as we're doing this, but Strava is, is, is more, used I think more by kind of the more hardcore users. And then the other comment I wanted to make was if, if we're looking at these two options I would go probably myself and maybe I, I'm, I'm thinking greedily here trying to grab as much as possible. Option B would be Union if there were funds available for that because we know that Option A, University from Main to 28's already going to get done, correct that they're …

Wray: I …

Bencomo: NMDOT's already going to, there's a project in place to widen that road, correct?

Wray: Mr. Chair, Mr. Bencomo. That is not correct.

Bencomo: No.

Wray: There's no, no guarantee that that is going to get done.

Bencomo: Okay.

Wray: They're just investigating the possibility but there's no guarantee.

Bencomo: Okay. But …

Pearson: The planning to allow it as, made a step with the University Corridor study but funding for it I think is still …

Wray: Nonexistent.

Pearson: I think the Governor's veto got out last session.

Bencomo: Okay. So let me, let me restate that then, I was incorrect. I think there's more opportunity for that one to get done anyway. They're already do,

they've already done planning on it. We, that's, that was the presentation we got from Bohannan Huston was it not? We got a presentation on, and we went through the process of looking at options there and selecting what we felt was going to be best for that section from Main to 28 so it appears that there's already traction and movement there and I would, I would still support Union also because there's just less traffic on that road than there is University, less automobile traffic. So ...

Pearson: You're right. I think ...

Bencomo: That'd be my comment. Thank you.

Pearson: That wanted to be, right along what I wanted to talk about. The University Corridor identified only a portion of it would be able to support a multiuse path and a portion of it would require in-road facilities and the loop trail in my mind isn't complete unless it's 100% multiuse path. The Union side hasn't had that level of planning but is there room to put the multiuse path for the entire length down to NM-28?

Wray: Mr. Chair. There are places where the right-of-way does pinch kind of tight. I'm, it, in my non-engineering opinion so please don't hold me to this, my non-engineering opinion something could be fit in but I don't know where the property lines lie exactly.

Pearson: Right. We haven't had ...

Wray: So we have not ...

Pearson: The planning study or ...

Wray: We have, this is all very preliminary. We're just trying to draw the line on the map to justify future, future planning.

Pearson: But we know that we can't get 100% multiuse on University and we think we may not be able to but we think we may, there's still a chance that we could on Union so with that in mind I would support the Union side. Any other Committee Members?

Shepan: Yes.

Pearson: Lance.

Shepan: On your data for vehicle traffic west of Main Street, is that what was shown for the month?

Wray: It's a ...

Shepan: Or is that a day?

Wray: It, it's an AADT which is Averaged Annual Daily Trips so it's, what we do is we go out and we put the boxes out for 48 hours. The, the data is then taken in by staff and sent up to Santa Fe to NMDOT up there. They apply what they call Seasonal Adjusted Factors to that data to, to normalize it for the rest of the year and then that's what's sent back to us as an AADT. So that's, it, it's, it's more of a yearly count rather than, it's supposed to represent a yearly.

Pearson: It's a yearly average on ...

Wray: Yeah.

Pearson: One, one magic day.

Wray: One, one, yeah, one magic day. There may never have been that many cars appear on the road at that particular time due to they're applying the formula to it in Santa Fe but that's, that's the basis of the data.

Pearson: And since you use that same formula across the entire system that gives consistency as to where there are cars and where there are not cars.

Shepan: It's just, I know with Zia Middle School parents picking up and it's predominantly during the pick-up times, we can have anywhere from 100 to 200 vehicles on University and if weather's bad like the hailstorm we had in October, I'm willing to bet there was 500 vehicles out there in an hour time span. So the University Corridor needs, really needs to get done just for the safety of the kids, just because of that traffic flow there. And then on Calle del Norte I don't know what, cause like you said the right-of-ways are either nonexistent, I know there's a couple of spots that there's barely enough room to park a car. Cause we sit out there and run radar and you couldn't open up the other door.

Wray: On, on this portion of Calle del Norte nothing else is possible but putting up a sign. Nothing else is possible but putting up a sign. Nothing else is possible. I'll ...

Shepan: Right.

Wray: Flatly state that to everyone. Nothing else is possible right there. That is a point that, where we will have to compromise. There's nothing else that can be done if we're going to use that spot.

Shepan: And I don't think, until you get down to Calle de Oeste before something could really start to be done and then it would be primarily on the north side, wouldn't it Ashleigh?

Curry: The one before Calle de Oeste, I think just on the other side of the irrigation ...

Baum: You're not on the microphone.

Curry: Sorry about that. I think just on the other side of the EBID lateral, we, that would be a place that you'd be able to start going west.

Shepan: Cause there's a lateral ...

Rochelle: Right, we could, which is to say a couple blocks down Norte, that's all.

Curry: Right.

Rochelle: Where the lateral is.

Curry: Right.

Rochelle: Oeste, I live on Oeste ...

Curry: Right.

Rochelle: And that's, yeah, the, you could do something before that but, but Andrew's right. There's really nothing that can be done just by the traffic light.

Shepan: That's all.

Rochelle: But could I continue with that? I, I, I mean given the fact that we have to, I guess there's no alternative but to use Norte to connect ultimately with the La Llorona Trail but I'm also wondering, I get, does Mesilla own that section?

Wray: That is an NMDOT facility.

Rochelle: It is, okay.

Wray: It's NM2, it's NM2-something-or-other.

Rochelle: Okay. Yeah, just, cause, I mean they just rebuilt the levee the last year which has made it even more difficult if you're riding an off-road bike to get down to the trail. It's practically a quarter of a mile from Norte to the trail so that's all got to be, the paving there has to be figured in for ultimately completing a multiuse trail.

Murphy: And I, I think I would add to that. I, you know the, the TAP funding that we're envisioning ultimately is, isn't going to, isn't going to pay for the entire thing to be done at one point. I think we're, what we're trying to do is we want to designate a preferred option at this point and then start looking at strategically what would be the best initial projects to do. And what you suggest there, you know that might, that might be a nicely-sized project for this application is extend La Llorona Trail from its end up to Calle, Calle del Norte and then maybe even go up Calle del Norte till you know you hit Calle de Oeste or one of the laterals because really you're not going to build a lot more than something, you know something of that size in any one funding cycle.

Rochelle: Thank you.

Pearson: Any Committee Members? Well this is an Action Item so we're being asked to take an action on this. And I've heard a couple of suggestions for Option B so I will listen to somebody to make a motion.

Bencomo: Mr. Chair. I'd like to make a motion that we accept Option B for this process, not exactly what I'd hoped for but we'll move forward with what we have.

Shearer: I'll second the motion.

Pearson: Okay. We have a, had a motion and a second to move forward with Option B. All in favor, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: Any opposed? Hearing none, we've completed that item.

5.3 Recommendation of approval of FFY 2017 and FFY 2018 UPWP

Pearson: So now we're at 5.3. Go ahead.

TOM MURPHY GAVE HIS PRESENTATION.

Pearson: Any, any Committee Members have any comments they'd wish to ask? I think there isn't anything new, that this is a continuation and ...

Murphy: Yeah. The general, I mean ...

Pearson: No surprises.

Murphy: Bulk of is, is supporting our committee structures, hold, holding meetings, you know, you know doing traffic counts.

Pearson: It has some important things that this Committee's interested in like the Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

Murphy: Yes sir.

Curry: Yes. I appreciate that being in there. Thank you.

Pearson: So I'll hear a motion to forward, what is this, approve this to the ...

Murphy: Recommend approval.

Pearson: Recommend approval to the Policy Committee.

Curry: I'll recommend approval.

Rochelle: Second.

Pearson: We have a motion and a second. All in favor, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: Any opposed? Hearing none, that passes.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1 Missouri/Roadrunner Study Corridor Presentation

Pearson: So we're on to Discussion Items, 6.1.

Murphy: Mr. Chair. And I apologize, we'll have to ask to scratch this one from the agenda. We had some miscommunications with the, our, our consultant and they were not ready to have the presentation but we will have it for you next meeting.

Pearson: Okay.

7. COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS

7.1 MPO Staff Update

Pearson: Okay. So we're on to 7.1, MPO staff update.

Murphy: Okay Mr. Chair. And I don't remember if Andrew has shared this one previously but he did allude to it. We are now live with our new website.

The address, the address is mesillavalleympo.org and can we, he'll type it in here real fast.

Rochelle: He scared me, I saw Donald Trump for a second and I thought he was on this Committee.

Murphy: Make sure I'm spelling, and probably I think most of you have, have seen it. We do have a greater deal of functionality with our calendar which is not coming up. For example you can download, download the meeting packet from the meeting date and you all know, you have that in your hand so I would go, go back to other things. We have a, we have a resource page where we have our, you know our core documents such as the Transportation Plan including all the maps which, which we produce, Trail System which we referred to this evening, our TIP which we amended, our, our UPWP and so on so I invite you to, to look it over, give us some, you know give us your feedback on that. It's something that I think we're going to, we have a little more control over now that we have a, a independent site and we can make more changes if deemed necessary but we feel that we've come up with a pretty functional layout.

Pearson: Okay. I did look at it briefly.

Murphy: Oh. And, and then also well be reminded from, from, from people who have more memory than I do, we have a new section and we have the TAP guide and the, and the Recreational Trails guide on our site so you download that and, and review it. I guess we're going to be asking for, for your jurisdictions to get any proposals to us by September 23rd so we can run it through the, the committee process and we are required to for, forward it to NMDOT for, for ranking and an award by November 30th. So this'll give us enough time to run it through this Committee, the Technical Committee, and the Policy Committee.

Pearson: Okay. I did look at it earlier and you had all the previous meetings, the 2015, what seemed to be missing are some of the earlier 2016 meetings and that's what confused me. I was looking for 2016 for the earlier meetings and I think you had told me that you had, that was going to be on the calendar where you could find those things so ...

Murphy: That, it, that is on Andrew's work schedule. I, I'm, I'm soaking the noodle now it, you know if he's going to get it, get it here in next few days.

Pearson: Okay. And I had also asked about populating out the already-scheduled meetings on the calendar even if there's nothing there so we already, the, the, those dates have already been approved by the Policy Committee so we know they're going to happen so.

Murphy: Right. And, and that's just one of, one of those things. It's been on Andrew's schedule but it, the, it, he's, he's getting, it's, he's getting to it.

Pearson: Okay.

Murphy: I keep him too busy with other things.

Pearson: Anything else from MPO staff?

Murphy: No. That's it.

7.2 Local Projects update

Pearson: So we have Local Project Updates. We'll start with City.

Nunez: Yes. I was looking over our last, list of letting, letting schedule projects and the bulk of all these are really maintenance and reconstruction of roads. I know we have the microsurfacing on Peachtree, Mesa Grande. We do have, Elks Road is under reconstruction and a lot of you have noticed the Cutler with the mill and overlay on one section of Union and another on Amador and we're about to do a little more work on North Del Rey. There's also a lot of reconstruction of small roads throughout the city that, none of these are really effecting any new shared lanes or, or, I, I did, I wish Mr. Lee, he left from the Traffic Department, I was going to talk to him a little bit about, or refer to him if there was any restriping or, or redesignation of any lanes or anything but I'm not familiar with any. But I can get with him before the next meeting.

Pearson: He did mention to me that they're doing a restriping, you might've seen it, of most of the major roadways so they're just re-freshening up what's there.

Curry: He, he did address it at, at a meeting that we had earlier this morning. They, they did look at, every street that's getting restriped they're looking at whether bike facilities can go in or not, just depending on the engineering of it. So for example Union Avenue was restriped today but they weren't able to put in bicycle facilities but it is being addressed and looked at for every restriping.

Nunez: Well good. I'm glad we have some answers on that. Also the La Llorona construction for the scope that, that's completed. And then they're, I'm not sure but in a few days they're going to start on the dam trails here within a few days even, I guess on that construction on the dam trails.

Pearson: Okay. Dona Ana County, do you have anything to report?

Paz: County projects along Baylor, Baylor Road and Dripping Springs will be complete by June. Roadway construction should be complete by May. So those are the updates. I think the, the June deadline came from some vegetation requirements that they had.

Pearson: So they got pushed back a little bit.

Paz: Yeah. But the roadway portion should be complete by May.

Pearson: Town of Mesilla.

Shepan: Nothing Mr. Chair.

Pearson: NMSU.

Shearer: NMSU, we, we basically just news. We had a, a Youth Family Bicycle Education class or a training we did on Saturday, April 2nd. One of the things I did want to bring up was a concern on the, the crosswalk at Hagerty on University. We had a recent bicycle injury there and I was just trying to find out something since it doesn't belong to the university. The crosswalk lights seem to be out there and I just wondered a little if there's anything planned to improve that crosswalk so I proposed that to the City so if there's any permission I'd be happy to issue it. I've got several concerns on that. Thank you.

Pearson: Okay what exactly, where exactly was that again?

Shearer: That's on University, the only crosswalk on University that's not controlled. It's at Hagerty, I think it's called is the one street and they had a ...

Curry: It's the one that's not at an intersection.

Pearson: It's where the, the midblock.

Shearer: Yes. Yes.

Pearson: What?

Shearer: There was a, there was a bicycle-related injury and one of the students got hit by a car. I'm not saying that she was in the right when she crossed there but the, basically was injured and this was I think the latter part of March.

Curry: Was there not, I thought that Bill McCamley, our state representative had somehow secured some funding to put in a signal, to put in a traffic, pedestrian crossing signal.

Shearer: It's been brought up by ASNMSU but I haven't heard for certain that anything's going on and since it …

Pearson: I thought that was one of the things that came out of the session is that there's $100,000

Shearer: Oh.

Pearson: Capital outlay for a pedestrian, we're talking about a HAWK signal there.

Shearer: Oh, that came up? Okay. So I hadn't heard that. So all right.

Curry: Yeah. Talk to, talk, talk to Bill McCamley.

Shearer: Okay. Thank you.

Pearson: Okay.

7.3 NMDOT Projects update

Pearson: We don't have NMDOT. I had a couple of questions for NMDOT so we can throw it out there anyways. On the Missouri project, the Triviz bike facility that comes along there once you get to the, the intersection area there that drops off of course to go through but it seems, especially the, on the north side of Missouri on Triviz, that travel lane seems to be very narrow and I'm wondering you know it seems like it's maybe 11-foot travel lane. I wonder if a "Bicycle May Use Full Lane" sign shouldn't be appropriately placed there or perhaps sharrows right down the middle of the lane until the bike lane picks up again later.

Murphy: Mr. Chair. In matters to Triviz that would ultimately be the, the City of Las Cruces so we'll

Pearson: Right. It's …

Murphy: We'll pass that on.

Pearson: Right now it's in limbo-land, is it NM …

Murphy: It's in limbo-land, exactly. It's under DOT control right now for the construction but it'll be, soon to be returned to the City.

Pearson: Right.

Murphy: But …

Pearson: So that's the ...

Murphy: I think we can, we can pass that concern, concern along to Mr. lee.

Pearson: That was a particular direction that I went and noticed that as there just isn't room for anybody to pass in that very narrow corridor so that's a concern. I was going to ask about the TAP funding. I think we've talked about that fairly well but one area that I was going to ask Jolene's input on was NGOs, Non-Governmental Organizations are allowed to apply now ...

Curry: No.

Pearson: Aren't they?

Curry: No.

Murphy: Mr. Chair. According to the federal legislation NGOs and nonprofits are eligible recipients. However they do leave discretion to the state and NMDOT in the decision up in the Santa Fe at the, the Santa Fe level decided that they do not want to open it up to NGOs.

Pearson: Okay.

Murphy: But it, however an NGO may partner with a, a governmental entity on an application.

Pearson: Okay so that's, I was, having gone to the National Bike Summit I'd hear more, heard more about that from the national side so thank you for that information. I guess that's all I had on NMDOT projects that I had questions about.

Curry: Mr. Chair. Is it time, when it's available can I make a comment?

Pearson: Sure. Not, we're at that point. Go ahead.

Curry: We are? We are at that point? Wonderful. I would like to just announce a couple upcoming bicycle-related activities that we've got going on around in the area. Las Cruces Public Schools together with Safe Routes to School is, is presenting the Family Bike Fiesta which is April 30th and it's open to really all the kids in our community and we're going to have a number of bicycle-related activities: Education, some bike repair, flat, fix-a-flat repair, some kind of fun activities with, we're teaming up with KidFit which is put on by the Junior League. It's April 30th 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Young Park. I've also got some posters here if anybody wants to take those and put them in their place of work.

Also that, that leads us into National Bike, Bike to School Week will be celebrated in the area from May the 2nd through May the 6th and we have a website, walkbiketoschool.org, it's a national website that lists all the schools that are participating and I think so far we have about 18 or 19 schools signed up for, for that National Bike to School week so just a, you know an awareness that people are out there and also if anybody would like to sign up and volunteer to bike with the, with the school we certainly could use some extra bikers out there that, those mornings. Thank you.

Pearson: Any other committee members?

Bencomo: Mr. Chair, I received an e-mail from Kari Bachman who I work with at Communities United and I forwarded that e-mail to you Mr. Chair, to Ashleigh, Andrew Wray, I didn't have everybody's e-mail so I was trying to get my computer to pull up the names. I think Michael got the e-mail also, I forwarded it and it's from the National Park Service and it's, they're accepting applications for 2017 projects, its Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program and it's National Park Service but they're also doing like urban trails. Albuquerque is working with that. They don't do, from what I've read they don't do projects per se. they help you to like do planning for your trail systems and so I'm wondering if that's something that we might be interested in to, to do a more comprehensive plan of, cause right now the, the, the trail system that we have now and I don't know that we want to marry the two or have some kind of separate things or whatever but there are other groups like the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance who're working on trails too. They're not the, the typical trails that you would find like we're talking multiuse trails, things like that. Theirs are more like out in the desert, things like that but I, I think they all eventually are going to serve these same purposes and I think there's a lot of synergy they could have in with these groups. So I don't know that, that we even want to do that or go there. I think it's a good idea but that's just me. But the, they're, Albuquerque's using it, Santa Fe's using it through the National Park Service and so it's just an opportunity I think for maybe, to get some, some assistance from an entity like that, that has a lot of expertise in that area. So thank you.

Pearson: Any other Members? Go ahead.

Billings: I have a comment. I was looking at the, the minutes for the last meeting and I noticed you guys were talking about cleaning up dirt in bike lanes and if the City could do anything about that, and I bike down Espina about four miles each way and there are huge dirt like islands that you have to bike into the road to get around and I was just wondering if any progress had been done on finding out if there's like someone we call in the City or some City Committee I could go talk to about cleaning up bike lanes like that.

Pearson: Staff actually asked the question about street sweeping after that meeting and got a response that was shared, but you weren't on the Committee so maybe they can forward that to you also and remind us what that is if you do have it. Part of the response was, off the top of my head the City wants to sweep every street once every three months.

Murphy: Mr. ...

Pearson: But they are, have only one out of five pieces of equipment or something running, something like that.

Murphy: Yes Mr. Chair. I don't remember the exact response either but there's, there's something with an equipment shortage and they trying to, trying do some skeleton schedule. I think the, the best they, the, the City does have a, a website where you can get, log on and, and you know I think it's similar to the Report A Pothole. I think this, you can report a, a street sweeping necessity through that as well.

Billings: Thank you. And then I have one more thing since I am new to this Committee and I brought stuff. On Alameda and Picacho there is a bike lane like right before that intersection on Alameda. There is a bike lane and it connects to Alameda Elementary School so I think it's kind of important. It just disappears into a turn lane and there is no sign on Alameda at all that says that the bike lane ends so I was wondering if we could get a sign or like a bike lane painted on somewhere on that intersection so that it's not a death trap cause it is now.

Murphy: We can look into that.

Billings: Okay. Thank you. That's it for me.

Bencomo: Mr. Chair. And, and related to that and talking about the street sweeping so that, that was one of the reasons why when I brought that up previously I, I asked if we could, if there was somebody we could meet with because I understand that equipment breaks down, you only have so many, having dealt in city government, we dealt with that in the Fire Department. Sometimes we were way down on our fire apparatus and we had to do what we did with our reserves but at the same time then we also had to reprioritize and it's great to, that they want to sweep all the streets every three months but when you're down on the equipment like that then let's focus on the, on this, the ones that need it the most which would include the ones maybe with the bike lanes, maybe prioritize it that way. I don't know if they, if they do that, I don't know if they have a, a, anyway and also when they, when they, I brought that up then I noticed about couple weeks later when I rode down Elks they had swept but then they swept up to like I think it was like close to Jasmine and then from there that way they, there was nothing. And

so I, I'm, I'm thinking maybe, I don't know if there's a place on the website to do that like the Pothole Posse they used to have, maybe we can do that but I think somebody needs to approach somebody and ask them, "What is your system and what are we doing with this?" because I think the bike lanes, if you can't do anything else do the streets with the bike lanes at least. Otherwise we're just defeating the purpose of having those so. Thank you.

Curry: I would second that. I, I don't know, maybe it exists already but like someone's taken the idea of a place for public input, I'm hearing that both from Ms. Billings and Mr. Bencomo that a place where public can comment. "There's a pothole cover missing, I was biking this weekend and there's a pothole cover missing and a big hole in the road," that kind of thing that the public could call that in whether it's by, it's sweeping or repairs or the crosswalk button is out, or you know whatever is going on. So does such a thing exist?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Ms. Curry. I, I think you know the Pothole Posse I believe does exist and I think that's just kind of their catchy name for it. I think the, I believe their intention is to be all-inclusive of citizen-reported street deficiencies.

Pearson: Right. The Ask the City website, I guess I'll address the particular thing, I was at the end of the La Llorona trail, the Outfall Channel Trail and there was a sign there that was falling down. It's one of the signs that talked about the owls I think if you've been there but I, I went to the website and typed that in and in a day or two I got a call, "Now where is that sign?" So they are responsive and try to follow up on some of those things. I think if you put things in there, if you don't hear a response and if the system, if the problem continues past a week or something after respond, reporting that then you'd follow up maybe with this Committee or with a City Councilor or something like that.

Bencomo: Mr. Chair. I'm sorry, I'll shut up eventually. Something just popped into my head and I meant to bring it up earlier and then I forgot and it just came back. So we're talking about completing the loop around the city and then we're talking about the obstacles and those type of things so one of the obstacles that I am familiar with because of my brother lives close to there, he is disabled, he's, he rides a power chair everywhere and he takes the dog out walking and he can't get any farther than the railroad tracks down off of Dona Ana Road. Is there any plan in the future, I know there's, now we're talking about in agreements with the Southern, with the Santa Fe Railway or whoever, I don't know who, BNSF is the one I guess that runs through there. Really it's inaccessible. It's, it's not a complete loop so if you have anybody that accessibility issues as my brother does then the, the loop at that point is just really inaccessible. Even some bicyclists like when you have once again families that have little ones you know you can't even go

that way. So are there any plans to create those crossings there and I know there's probably liabilities cause it says, there's a sign that says, "Trail Ends," or something like that but it doesn't really end there. You can see it on the other side so what, what is the idea behind that?

Murphy: Mr. Chair, Mr. Bencomo. I know the, in development of the Outfall Channel Trail the City tried to get an agreement with BNSF to, to cross that. That was one of those days where BN, you know, I, I hate to cast aspersions but you know I think the railroads has been historically shy about cooperating with local governments so it, it, I think there, the effort's been there on the local level but it's one of those things that we have no control over but ...

Pearson: And we have no leverage.

Murphy: Everybody, everybody wants to keep trying.

Pearson: And we have no leverage either so we can't, don't have an opportunity to tell the railroad, "You must do this." It's the railroad, "Well we've been here for 100 years before everybody else," so that's where that problem lies. Okay. Well I've got a couple other things I'm going to ask about. We had a pedestrian facility on Telshor and I wonder if, in the newspaper reports it was kind of halfway victim-blaming, halfway fatality-blaming. Do we have an attractive nuisance there, do we a, a living facility with a shopping facility on the other sides, are we doing enough to make a safe crossing there? Do we need a pedestrian, that HAWK system set up in there or something? Is, is there anything that we can do to follow-up on those kinds of things, prevent future problems of that type? It's probably, it's a systemic problem. The Governor's Highway Safety Association: Pedestrian Fatalities by State lists New Mexico's number-one by population per hundred thousand in fatalities. So we've got the problem in New Mexico in general so anything in particular that we can do to avoid these kinds of problems is something that we need to investigate.

Bencomo: Mr. Chair, related to that, another thing popped into my head. The City Manager's newsletter last week, it did mention something about Telshor and they talked about removing the bike lanes from Telshor, Lohman, and Lohman North and then creating a multiuse trail I guess up against the dam behind there so do we, is there any information on that? I, I, I spoke with Ashleigh about it by e-mail and she brought up a very good point, the concern of removing those bike lanes prior to building the, an, an alternate to that is very concerning. So it, do you have any information on that? I, I felt that it was related to what you just said so I didn't mean to cut in.

Pearson: I think it's different but related, certainly related.

Murphy: Yes Mr. Chair. I, I'll, we, I address that. I saw that in the City Manager's newsletter as well. We have not been asked by the City to do any, any form of analysis but I did advise staff that that may be forthcoming. We recent, as you've seen in Andrew's presentation we recently got the 2014 crash data so I'm having them put, put together you know the crashes along that section. I think from you know, you know and then to address your, your question Mr. or your comment Mr. Chair, from an MPO perspective what we're trying to do is, is develop a systematic analysis of, of data like the crash analysis so that we find you know trouble spots, we find troublesome occurrences and then we, we're able to either pick a, you know pick an area that we need to particularly focus on or is there a particular classification of crash that we, that we need to pay particular attention to and so from an MPO perspective what we're doing is we're trying to make, we're making that part of our, our Safety Management Plan where we identify the most dangerous locations and then we you know we make, you know we make that known so that the, you know the, the agencies that do operate facilities are, are able to be more aware of the problem spots and direct funding accordingly.

Pearson: Right. Right. The idea of putting North Telshor into four lanes, that, I was listening to City Council and that was Councilor Levatino bringing that up. Complaints about traffic backing up at the intersection at Spruce is probably what drove that comment. That is very worrying to me to convert that street. It's a bicycle facility, it meets, it serves destinations so even if they turn, made it a four-lane road bicycles will still be on there. We're gonna end up with any number of, can't remember his name, Mr. Lemus, Lemus, traffic fatal, bicycle fatalities. He was using that in, in an area where it was four lanes or close to four lanes with a very narrow shoulder to meet, and it was his only choice in order to go to his place of work. So taking out the bicycle facility on North Telshor would be a problem and making a much less safe facility because bicycles will use it, trying to divert to, bicycles to another facility at the base of the dam is not going to be, work because it's not going to serve the destinations for bicyclists and it also goes against Complete Street policies that the City has so the City, if the City needs to increase capacity which is a bad idea anyways, the increased capacity you're just going to increase congestion but if they decide they need to do that they do need to have bicycle facilities as part of that design.

Murphy: Mr. Chair, I do believe that the data is on your, agrees with the, agrees with you. And, and it, just to, just to add on to that I think our experience with doing road diets at various locations shown that going from four lanes to three lanes and bike lanes increases safety. It does not reduce capacity which is, is the chief complaint. So I, I think part of it is we need to, we need to educate members of the public and, and maybe some of our, our leaders on you know how efficient four lanes is versus three lanes and, and things of that nature. So ...

Pearson: Right. During the discussion on El Paseo, turning that into a road diet would not be a problem because it's built way over capacity the way it is now. So the similar kind of ideas I think fit throughout the rest of the city. We need to talk about lowering traffic speed rates and that makes a more, for a more livable municipality. And right along that line of, there was a, the City had a presentation on the conversion to two-way of Church and Water. I'm kind of disappointed that that discussion hasn't come to this Committee too. This is, one of our primary goals is public input and for the City to bring those projects here allows Committee Members and members of the public should they choose to attend. It helps and the reason this Committee's here is we have certain level of expertise and can offer some suggestions as to what kind of projects, what kind of bicycle facilities might work. They were presenting some ideas of bike lanes on the, on, in the conversion and maybe having to drop them in certain areas, different ideas and those would be things that would be worthwhile to bring the, to this Committee.

Nunez: Mr. Chair.

Pearson: Yes.

Nunez: On that last comment that you had about the downtown area. I do know that that's still in design.

Pearson: Right.

Nunez: And …

Pearson: So now's a good time to bring it to us.

Nunez: Right. I can only invite, I'll talk to my supervisor.

Pearson: Right.

Nunez: And he's working with the consulting engineering firm on that.

Pearson: And the last thing that I have is that this weekend, on Saturday at the WIA Building is the New Mexico Bike Summit. So we're, have a program having some national importance and some local importance. Everybody's invited. I think some of you have already signed up to attend and spread the word and come and join us on Saturday. On Friday night before we're having a free to, open to the public presentation on bike packing so that's also available. Any last comments from Committee Members?

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

9. ADJOURNMENT (6:26 p.m.)

Pearson: Hearing none, I'll hear a motion to adjourn then.

Bencomo: So moved.

Curry: Second.

Pearson: All in favor, "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Pearson: And we're adjourned. Thank you.

Chairperson