

Webb County - City of Laredo  
Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Monday, September 19, 2016  
9:00 AM

**Minutes**

The Webb County - City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority Board of Directors convened in a meeting at 9:06 a.m. on Monday, September 19, 2016 at the TxDOT Laredo District Office, 1817 Bob Bullock Loop, Laredo, TX.

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Minutes are as follows:

**Present:** Ruben Soto, Jr., Chairman and Presiding Officer, Alfonso Mendiola, Arturo Dominguez, Oscar Lopez, Albert Muller, Sr. and Jose Murillo.

**Absent:** Steve LaMantia, and Board Member for Precinct 1 (Unassigned)

**Others:** Pete Alvarez, TxDOT Laredo District Engineer  
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT Area Engineer  
Mike Graham, TxDOT Environmental Specialist  
Marissa Montoya, Office Technician, TxDOT Laredo District (note taker)  
Araceli Rangel, Staff Assistant, CPA Office of Ruben Soto, Jr. (note taker)  
Antonio Rodriguez, HNTB  
Juan Cruz, J. Cruz & Associates LLC

**1. Open Meeting and Establish Quorum**

After establishing a quorum, Presiding Officer, Ruben Soto, Jr., called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. He then announced the following Board Members present: Alfonso Mendiola, Arturo Dominguez, Oscar Lopez, Albert Muller, Sr., Jose Murillo and himself, Ruben Soto, Jr.. He also stated that Steve LaMantia was absent. He notified everyone present that the meeting was in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, and then asked everyone to stand for the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Welcome and Introduction of Board Members -Ruben Soto, Jr. (WC-CL RMA Presiding Officer)**

Chairman Soto informed all present that the meeting was being recorded and thanked Mrs. Melisa Montemayor and Mr. Pete Alvarez for hosting the meeting. He also thanked TxDOT's Mike Graham for recording, and Marissa Montoya and Araceli Rangel for assisting with the minutes and preparation for the meeting.

**3. Action Item: Discussion, Consideration, and Approval of July 18, 2016 WC-CL RMA Regular Board Meeting Minutes.**

Chairman Soto stated that the Board Members had been provided a copy of the July 18, 2016 meeting minutes for review. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Webb County-City of Laredo RMA meeting that took place on July 18, 2016, as presented.

Albert Muller made a motion, seconded by Alfonso Mendiola to approve the meeting minutes. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Chairman's Report**

**A. Financial Report**

**B. Update on Surety Bond Applications**

**C. Update on New Board Appointee**

**D. Update on RFQ for Financial Auditing Services**

**E. Update on Industry Review**

A. Chairman Soto reported the RMA received VRF funds from Webb County on 7/26/16 in the amount of \$1,097,110. He thanked Mr. Juan Cruz for expediting this transfer. He also requested that Mr. Cruz to follow up with the County to abide with the ILA and continue to make VRF transfers on a monthly basis.

Currently the RMA has a bank balance of \$4,367,520.18. As of September 19, 2016, funds dispersed since the last meeting were to HNTB Corp. for \$32,610.96 for work performed under Work Authorizations 1, 4 and 6 and to Locke Lord LLP for \$3,266.92

B. Mr. Soto stated there are still pending quotes for Surety Bond from Steve, Oscar, Albert & Arturo. Quotes so far have been \$87.50 for each board member and may be higher for Secretary and Treasurer. Mr. Soto suggested to board members, if interested, that they pay for the premium and have the RMA reimburse them once funds were available for that purpose.

C. Mr. Soto stated that the city has prepared a letter requesting an exception for the new board member appointment and after speaking with the city manager, Jesus Olivares, Mr. Olivares said he had no problems with the exception letter and stated he would run it by his legal department before mailing it to TxDOT and the Transportation Commission.

D. Mr. Soto stated that at our last meeting, we had requested RFQs for Auditing services with a Response deadline by 8/31. We received 3 responses from:

1. Long Chilton, LLP - McAllen, TX
2. PMB Helin Donovan, LLP - Austin, TX
3. Prothro, Wilhelmi & Company, PLLC - Tyler, TX

A committee consisting of at least two local auditors, Treasurer Steve La Mantia and Mr. Soto will review the responding firms' RFQs. Due to the 9/15 deadline, it was difficult for local auditors to commit to serve on the committee before that time. Mr. Soto will schedule for a meeting as soon as he can align everyone's schedule.

E. Mr. Soto reported that at our June meeting, we passed a resolution, subject to Executive Committee's approval, to initiate an Industry review on the Loop 20 project. The executive committee had a conference call on 7/22/16 with Oscar Lopez, Arturo Dominguez, Melisa Montemayor, Richard Ridings, Antonio Rodriguez, Katie Neese, Carlos Lopez and Mr. Soto on the call. After discussing the merits of this it was voted unanimously to proceed with industry review. Mr. Soto then invited Antonio Rodriguez, Assistant Project Manager at HNTB to elaborate on this.

Mr. Rodriguez stated the following prep work has been done:

- Schematics on Loop 20 from Webb County are 90% complete
- TxDOT has supplied Loop 20 construction documents on the overpasses and I35
- GEC has secured current documents on Environmental assessment
- GEC has secured a list of developers to invite
- GEC has developed a draft PowerPoint of the presentation which has been delivered to Executive Committee for review
- GEC will develop list of potential questions to be asked from Developers

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the next step to is to secure a date and location with a lead time of at least 30 days for developers. Possible dates selected were October 26 or 27. It will be a one day meeting with possible one on one meetings after or the next date. Date, location and information on Industry Review will be posted on RMA's website. Local elected officials and TxDOT will be invited to attend.

**5. Action Item (Resolution 16-24): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Supplemental Work Authorization No. 6.1 with HNTB for Continued Work on the Preparation of an Industry Review Meeting for the Loop 20 Project.**

Mr. Rodriguez explained that is was merely a request to extend the deadline of WA 6.1 until the end of the year. Oscar Lopez made a motion, seconded by Jose Murill, to approve the Supplemental Work Authorization No. 6.1. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-24 for additional information.

## 6. General Engineering Consultant Report.

Mr. Rodriguez reported on the status of the various Work Authorizations completed or in progress:

- WA 1.2 for the TRZ feasibility study on Vallecillo: Mr. Rodriguez reported that this study has been completed and accepted and has yet to be presented to the MPO after many attempts due to MPO meetings running long.
- WA 1.3 for the environmental assessment for Vallecillo: The schematic is 90% complete and was presented to the board for review. Mr. Albert Ramirez from TxDOT commented on how the tie-in from Vallecillo to both Mines Road and IH 35 access road may need to take into consideration future growth as well as TxDOT's long range plan. He will coordinate with HNTB and RMA as well as the Killams in arriving at the best solution for the tie-ins. Mr. Oscar Lopez questioned if the existing structures on Killam's property bordering Mines Road will affect this project. Mr. Rolando Ortiz from Killam responded by saying that most of the existing tenants held ground leases and there weren't many structures. Mr. Pedro Alvarez stated it was important to recognize that this is the environmental process. As they go through the process, they have an obligation to this community to look at any and all master plans associated with it. He reiterated Mr. Ortiz's statement, that we have an opportunity to provide some relief for the Loop 20 - I35 interchange. We have an obligation to be coordinating with everyone to ensure what's going to be best for the system. They all need to agree on the highest priorities and have a buy-in from the MPO, the city, the county, RMA and TxDOT. From a public perspective, you are changing access points and that could cause issues. They are in the initial stages and they will look at what options are available. TxDOT will continue to coordinate with HNTB and others to make sure they are doing the right thing for the long run. Mr. Alfonso Mendiola asked if the environmental would be finished next summer. Mr. Antonio Rodriguez stated that part of the environmental review process and this is in direct coordination with TxDOT.
- WA 4.0 is the GEC work authorization, utilized for any ad hoc request by the board: At the request of Chairman Soto, HNTB provided a Memo to the WC-CL RMA regarding Bridge No. 5 summarizing key points vital to the development of that project. Mr. Rodriguez then stated that for Work Authorization No. 4, HNTB provided a memorandum to the RMA regarding the possible bridge no. 5, strictly for future planning purposes. The actual location that they are discussing is to the south, this is a location that is currently shown on the MPO plan. It is south of Rio Bravo and north of El Cenizo. Mr. Dominguez asked if this was a commercial traffic bridge. He then stated that the Laredo Brokers Association does not want that bridge in the south. He stated that it was too far away from the warehousing area of Laredo. They are also talking about expanding the amendment to the presidential permit on the World Trade Bridge so it can have more lanes. They feel that if they build something else, that they will lose inspectors to that bridge and they will not get the full service that they really need. They have an alternative bridge, which is the Colombia Bridge and it is underutilized as well. Mr. Soto stated that

the purpose of the discussion was to look forward. That's part of their main task as the RMA; to preliminary plan and study, if need be, for the future. When they are looking at the 5, 10, 15, 20 year projections of the population and the truck traffic in the city, then there will be a need for another point of entry. Even if they expand the World Trade Bridge and double the size, they still have to address the infrastructure leading into the city such as the approaches on I69, Mines Road, etc. Mr. Soto stated that he thought a fifth point of entry was ideal in the near future, it would complement the World Trade bridge, and it's going to secure Laredo as the number one inland port. With the growth that they are projecting as far as trade with Mexico, the World Trade Bridge is always going to have long lines even if you expand it. We need to plan ahead. It will satisfy the transportation industry to have another avenue to go in and out through Laredo or stay. Right now might not be a good time to do it, but that's why you plan ahead, because it takes a while to come to fruition. Mr. Dominguez stated that they had no problem with a passenger bridge, but a commercial bridge is another matter. Mr. Soto stated that the passenger traffic will benefit from the bridge, they could either decide to wait in line or not. Mr. Mike Graham stated that the city had their presidential permit, the county had theirs and TxDOT had reviewed that because they needed to look at the approaching roadways, whichever location was going to be chosen. The county's is where the current bridge 5 is shown, the city's was a little north of Rio Bravo, so there was two competing sides on that. They went through all of the TxDOT reviews and both of those proposals for the presidential permit went to the State Department, and they replied back that they are not going to approve either one until the city and the county agreed on one site. That is where it was left back in the mid 2000's. Nothing has been done since that time. If the RMA is going to weigh in on bridge 5, to be a partner with the city and the county, then that's up to the RMA. Mr. Soto stated that it was just brought up as general discussion and to be progressive as far as planning for these transportation projects.

## **7. Report: Update from TxDOT on the Status of Projects in the TxDOT Laredo District.**

Mr. Carlos Rodriguez from TxDOT stated that the SER project is 35% complete (Spur 400/Clark). He thanked everyone for their support on the last traffic change that was done on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The staff had worked day and night, different shifts to move items around. Traffic is flowing a lot smoother. The biggest question right now is "why can you not work on one side then the other side?" Well what they did was work on the east frontage road first, currently, they are working on the south bound frontage road, but in addition to that, they would try to speed up the whole construction. To do that, they closed some of the loop, and several of the department store exits. All that will be done concurrently and completed by February 2017. While that is going on, the retaining walls are going up, but that will help them will build the bridge continuously. This will speed up the whole process and the project should be done by March 2018. Adjacent to that is the Oscar Renda project, where the KCS railroad is. The overall project is 15% complete. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, they will be closing the turn around and from there they will move forward with placing the beams. North at International, the Anderson Colombia project, is where UISD is at. The turnaround on the north side is going to be closed for about three weeks. Mr. Pedro Alvarez

stated that the city continues to grow, they need to look at what they are doing at Loop 20 expressway. They cannot build it all at once, but they should take advantage of the frontage roads and then when the traffic problems justify building another bridge, like Vallecillo one day, they need to look forward at the long run. They need to start thinking of the outer loop today, the sooner they start thinking bigger picture today. Mr. Muller asked about the Loop 20 overpass over 35. Mr. Alvarez stated that they were going to let it this past August, and they applied for a federal grant, but did not get approved for it. Their intention, along with the MPO, is that they will be letting that project in January. They will probably start construction in the spring. Mr. Muller asked if the MPO had promised them money. Mr. Soto stated that the money exists for that project. He stated that as Mr. Alvarez mentioned, the letting was in August 2016, and they were hoping to receive some grant money from a fast lane grant and receive that to tie up that project and use for other projects on Loop 20. They were hoping to leverage that money and get more money from TxDOT. They did not get the grant, so they will be letting the project in January 2017.

**8. Open Public Forum/Comment Period.**

None.

**9. Report: Date/Time/Location of the Next Regular Board Meeting.**

Chairman Soto stated that the next meeting will be held on Monday, October 17 or October 24, 2016, 9 a.m. Location TBD.

**10. Adjournment.**

Alfonso Mendiola made a motion, seconded by Albert Muller to adjourn the Webb County - City of Laredo RMA meeting at 10:11 a.m. Motion passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned.

**MINUTES FOR THE WEBB COUNTY - CITY OF LAREDO REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2016 WERE APPROVED ON THIS THE 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2016.**

Submitted by:  
Marissa J. Montoya  
Office Technician  
TxDOT Laredo Dist.