

Webb County - City of Laredo  
Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, February 16, 2016  
9:00 AM

**Minutes**

The Webb County - City of Laredo, Regional Mobility Authority Board of Directors convened in a meeting at 9:01 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at the Webb County Appraisal District Office, 3302 Clark Blvd., Laredo, TX.

---

Minutes are as follows:

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

Absent: Alfonso Mendiola, Paul Saenz and Board Member for Precinct 1 (Unassigned)

Others: Melisa D. Montemayor TxDOT Laredo District Administrator  
Raul Leal, TxDOT Public Information Officer  
Mike Graham, TxDOT Environmental Specialist  
Carlos Rodriguez, TxDOT Laredo Area Engineer  
Marissa Montoya, Office Technician, TxDOT Laredo District (note taker)  
Araceli Rangel, Staff Assistant, CPA Office of Ruben Soto, Jr. (note taker)  
Richard Ridings, HNTB  
Brian O'Reilly, Locke Lord, LLP (Legal Counsel)  
Juan Cruz, J. Cruz & Associates LLC (Legal Counsel)

**1. Open Meeting and Establish Quorum**

After establishing a quorum, Presiding Officer, Ruben Soto, Jr., called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. He then announced the following Board Members present: Steve LaMantia, Arturo Dominguez, Albert Muller, Sr., Jose Murillo, Oscar Lopez and himself, Ruben Soto, Jr.. He also stated that Alfonso Mendiola and Paul Saenz were absent. He notified everyone present that the meeting was posted 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 Mr. Martin Villarreal, Chief Appraiser with Webb-CAD, for hosting the meeting and his assistant Alex Chapa for facilitating the Board Room. 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 January 19, 2016 WC-CL RMA Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Soto stated that the Board Members had been provided a copy of the January 19, 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 January 19, 2016, as presented.

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

**4. Chairman's Report**

- A. Update on WC-CL RMA Bank Account**
- B. Update on Annual Audit Waiver Request**
- C. Update on Development of the WC-CL RMA Strategic Plan**

A. Chairman Soto stated that he was going to wait to set up a money market account until the new officers are in place so they can sign the signature card. Currently the fund balance is \$3,464,165.51. Funds dispersed since the last meeting were \$692.20 for reimbursement for travel costs for the evaluation committee chairperson, Everett Owen and to HNTB, \$25,459.19 for work authorization no.1.

B. The County Commissioner's Court had approved the RMA's request for an audit waiver at their December 14, 2015 Commissioners Court meeting. On January 19, 2016, the City voted for approval to wave the audit report on the condition the RMA submit to them copies of all executed contracts, which the RMA did on January 22, 2016.

C. Mr. Soto stated RMAs are required to have a strategic plan and update it every even number year. Mike Graham from TxDOT has graciously assisted them with a preliminary draft. The RMA needs to revisit that plan because they have to get it finalized. Hopefully with the assistance of their attorney, Brian O'Reilly, more recent draft will be prepared for the board to review. Mr. Soto suggested the board take time to look at it and make their comments known so they can finalize it soon. Mr. Soto and Steve Lamantia were invited to a meeting that Henry Cuellar put together inviting stakeholders, county and city leaders, to inform them of the various programs that are out there at the federal level. It was decided

that another meeting would be called to decide which entity will apply for certain grants and which entity would take the lead on certain projects.

**5. Action Item (Resolution 16-04): Discussion, Consideration And Possible Action On Election of Officers (Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer).**

Chairman Soto thanked all the officers who served this past year: Vice Chairman, Oscar Lopez, Treasurer, Steve LaMantia and Secretary, Jose Murillo. He thanked them for their involvement with the RMA. Every year the RMA shall elect new officers. The term ends February 1. The first position up for nomination is for Vice Chair. Mr. Jose Murillo nominated Mr. Oscar Lopez, seconded by Albert Muller, Sr. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Soto requested nominations for the treasurer position. Mr. Oscar Lopez nominated Steve LaMantia, seconded by Albert Muller, Sr. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Soto then requested nominations for secretary. Steve LaMantia nominated Arturo Dominguez, seconded by Albert Muller, Sr. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Soto asked for a motion regarding resolution 16-04 to elect Oscar Lopez for vice chair, Steve LaMantia for treasurer and Arturo Dominguez for secretary. Oscar Lopez made a motion, seconded by Jose Murillo. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-04 for additional information.

**6. Action Item (Resolution 16-05): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action on Approval of the Submission of a Request for Contributions from the City of Laredo and Webb County for Non-Project Operating Expenses.**

Chairman Soto stated that with the assistance of Steve and Oscar, and if any of the other board members would like to assist, they will formulate a budget to present to both city council and commissioners court to request reimbursement of past expenses as well as funding for expenses for the rest of this fiscal year and the next fiscal year. Mr. Soto asked for a motion regarding resolution 16-05 for the approval of requesting the contribution of funds from the city and county.

Arutro Dominguez made a motion, seconded by Oscar Lopez to approve requesting contribution of funds from the city and county. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-05 for additional information.

**7. Action Item (Resolution 16-06): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Issuance of a Request for Qualification for Financial Auditing Services.**

Mr. Soto stated that they did receive revenues this fiscal year, via the vehicle registration fees, and thus will undergo an audit of this fiscal year. The RMA will need to employ an auditing firm to conduct the audit. Mr. Soto asked for a motion to proceed with the RFQs for an audit firm. Due dates for submission will be determined at a later time.

Mr. Soto asked for a motion approving resolution 16-06 for requesting RFQs for auditing services. Albert Muller, Sr. made a motion, seconded by Jose Murillo to approve resolution 16-06.

Mr. LaMantia asked if they had to get an audit every year or every year they receive funds. Mr. Soto stated that it would be every year because they are going to receive funds every year. The purpose is to provide the city and the county a report of where the RMA stands financially. Mr. Lopez asked how much it would cost. Mr. Soto stated that the minimum would be around \$3,000. No further discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-06 for additional information.

**8. Action Item (Resolution 16-07): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Work Authorization No. 4 With HNTB for Project Development Services.**

Mr. Soto stated that there has been several occasions where immediate assistance is needed from their GEC regarding a topic or research of a future road project where an existing work authorization does not apply. Since they haven't followed through with the work authorization method for getting their services provided from their GEC for approval, the board would have to wait and meet and approve any requests for any new services to be provided. In order to avoid that, they need to address things urgently and get their GECs involved with decisions that need to be made or advice that they need to give the RMA. Mr. Soto requested that the board authorize them to provide a general work authorization with a maximum limit of \$30,000. For example, if they do some work this next month before the next board meeting, the additional work not having to do with an existing work authorization is around \$2,000, then they can authorize them to do that work before next month's meeting. Once they reach the \$30,000 cap then they have to submit another work authorization. That keeps the ball rolling; the projects, the research, the conversations. It expedites the GEC services to the RMA. Mr. Dominguez asked until they finish the \$30,000, can they, every month, go with the \$30,000, and always have it for any emergency? Mr. Richard Ridings stated that they have open work authorizations with other RMAs and other agencies. For example, they have run into situations where they need to call their financial advisor to get some calculations for them and he doesn't have any authorization to do that. They need him to go over some of their numbers and \$2,500 cost then they have to wait for a month under the current process for him to be able to do that. Yes, they would give them a report and a justification on where the money is being spent on a monthly basis and submit it to the board. The amount would have to be reevaluated again once they go through it. Generally with some of the RMAs they have

a very large open work authorization because there is so much design work going on. They do monthly reports and accounting and auditing the expenditures.

Mr. Soto stated that currently they are working on the financial plan for Loop 20 as well as the feasibility study of the TRZ for the county, so they need to get their financial advisor involved and they are promising to get it out in a month and present it to the MPO and the RMA. They are in a timeframe and would like to get their financial advisors involved and work in conjunction with their GEC to finalize those plans.

Mr. Soto asked for a motion to approve resolution 16-07 to establish an open work order with HNTB for project development services.

Oscar Lopez made a motion, seconded by Arturo Dominguez to approve resolution 16-07. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-07 for additional information.

## **9. Report: Update from HNTB on Progress Under Previously Issued Work Authorizations.**

Mr. Soto stated that the GEC would start with work authorization 2, which is the Loop 20 development of the financial plan and I69 project. Mr. Richard Ridings stated they had their first draft on the funding strategies for Loop 20. It's not the whole program, but it gives the idea of what they are looking at and as discussions come up over the next 30 days on Loop 20 and how to fund it, these would be some of the alternatives they will discuss. There is a draft for their review, questions and changes. Secondly, they have further developed the financial plan for loop 20 and going into more detail because there is a discussion on what will be done with the second half of loop 20. What they have right now is the first 6.22 miles, but there is another 12 and a half miles, so that's twice as much to do to get back around to bridge no. 5. They are suggesting to look ahead in terms of a long range financial plan and identify funding sources to pay for that. Out of all the projects that they are looking at, they have come up with funding alternatives that are either available or could be implemented such as the TRZ. Certain types of funding options with Mexico for example and with the city and the county about bridge 5. There are some potential sources out there and they are identifying that and they are going to try to get that information to them and be able to answer their questions.

For work authorization no. 3, they are currently developing financial options and the feasibility study for county wide TRZ. They hope to have that in their report next month and be able to go over the issues and the questions that the board has.

They have completed the Vallecillo Road cost estimates and there is a work authorization following to clean up that issue but they did complete all the cost estimates and financial analysis for work authorization no. 1. They have been trying to further the funding and financial options for

loop 20. That's a big project with a lot of issues to address on the current 6 miles and the other 12 miles.

Mr. Dominguez asked if they should take advantage of the border infrastructure program. Mr. Ridings stated that TxDOT was already doing CBI funding and they are going to take advantage of that.

**10. Action Item (Resolution 16-08): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Supplemental Work Authorization No. 1 With HNTB for Continued Work on the Vallecillo Road Preliminary Planning Study, Phase 1.**

Mr. Soto stated that this committee has continued to have discussions with city and county leaders as well as Killam development to coordinate funding for Vallecillo. At this point they are waiting for information from their financial advisors and HNTB that would help promote financing this project. Mr. Ridings stated that work authorization 1 was to provide cost estimates to the RMA for Vallecillo Road to look at two different construction costs. Primary desire is to do concrete, however a lot of the roadways in this area are done asphalt. There is about 20% cost difference.. It would be around \$24 million to do concrete and \$20 million to do asphalt and that is a rough estimate. Mr. Soto asked how much additional cost it would be to make that overweight corridor ready. Mr. Ridings said that it wasn't substantial. They are doing that right now on state highway 32 in Cameron County. The cost of asphalt has gone up and he's not sure what it would be in the next year. It used to be significantly lower than concrete. The larger the weight the more it would tear into the asphalt. Another 5% - 10% could be expected based on the final design. Calculations are what are most important. Having good projections on what traffic loading is going to be and how much it would be with the overweight trucks. Not every truck that travels through the corridor is overweight. Mr. Soto stated that the Hachar Road is pegged as being an overweight corridor. It would be nice to have another avenue for the trucks. Mr. Ridings stated that Vallecillo is much closer to the preferred truck bridge. It depends on the funding. They are both needed and are high demand projects.

Mr. Soto asked for a motion to approve resolution 16-08 for approval on supplemental work authorization no. 1 to HNTB for the development of the Vallecillo Road project. Albert Muller, Sr. made a motion, seconded by Arturo Dominguez to approve resolution 16-08. No discussion was held. Motion passed unanimously.

Please view attached Resolution 16-08 for additional information.

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

Mrs. Montemayor stated that as far as their projects in Laredo, several projects are still ongoing as they know on 1472 from Sombrerito Creek to Columbia where they've had an overlay that has been going on and that was complete this month. On Mines road there is construction on a

concrete section from Trade Center to Interamerica. The only thing that is pending is some construction on some driveways and that should be done within the next month. The Spur 400 - Loop 20 project that SER Construction has right now involves dirt work on the east side, that's construction on the east frontage roads that's going on right now. They anticipate that it is going to take about 6 to 8 months to complete the construction of that east frontage road. When that's done in about 6 to 8 months from now, they are going to have another public meeting at the SAC on Highway 359 to tell everyone that they are going to be moving traffic over to that east frontage road and then they are going to start construction on the west frontage road following that. Still today they anticipate that the project will be complete in March 2018. Just south of that they have the reconstruction of the KCS railroad grade separation and the construction of the new at grade frontage road. That project, which Oscar Renda Construction has, is to start on March 7<sup>th</sup>. That project is still anticipated to be completed in August 2018, so right after Spur 400 is complete. The north side of Loop 20 at the International overpass was awarded to Anderson Colombia Construction. All the contract documents have been signed. They are just waiting for a start date. That should be executed soon. They have about 15 months' worth of barricades in their contract so that should be about a 15 to 18 month project until that project is complete. That project would not only construct the International overpass but it's also going to complete the gap from the McPherson overpass on Loop 20.

On Mines Road they had a bridge replacement at San Ambrosia Creek and that was completed earlier this month.

Mr. Soto asked regarding Mines Road, since the Hachar Road is going to be an overweight corridor, does the road on Mines Road leading to it also have to be concrete or not necessarily. Mrs. Montemayor stated that it was an asphalt road right now. Mines road, according to the TTI study, has a lot of improvements that are needed and adding capacity to Mines Road is something that is needed for all the congestion. Whether they propose that project as an asphalt project or concrete project, they would have to look at bid prices. Mr. Soto asked if the Mines Road overweight corridor have to be overweight ready before the Hachar Road is ready. Mrs. Montemayor stated that in regards to the House bill that was passed, Mines Road leading to Hachar is part of that House Bill route as it is today. As a community, as a DOT, the RMA, County and City, those proposals for priority projects can be identified to upgrade Mines Road.

Mrs. Montemayor stated that CBI dollars are 80% federal and 20% state dollars, when on the existing state system or 20% local if it's a new location roadway if its RMA, city or county sponsored. The 20 million dollars were allocated to TxDOT Laredo District just recently. 60 million dollars were allocated to the boarder, so 20 million went to Pharr district, 20 million went Laredo district and 20 million went to El Paso district. Of the 20 million that was allocated for the Laredo District, the projects that were submitted were two projects in Eagle Pass to upgrade a two lane section as you enter into the city limits. Upgrade that from a two lane section to a five lane urban section and the other project starts in Eagle Pass and goes to Del Rio and that is a super 2 project, so basically adding passing lanes. That totaled 20 million dollars. Those are the projects that were submitted. Mr. Soto stated that Laredo - Webb County did not get any of that funding even though Rep. Henry Cuellar and Rep. Bill Shuster pushed for that. There are efforts being

made to change that. He said he would like to communicate to someone at the state level in order to express the RMA's opinion to hopefully reallocate those moneys if possible.

Mr. Lopez asked how often CBI money gets dispersed. Mrs. Montemayor said that the first round of CBI money that they received was in 2006, roughly 74-75 million dollars. The next round the district received was in 2010 and that was 65 million dollars and now 2016, 20 million dollars. In 2006, she allocated 74 million of that to Laredo, and this is based on need, and in 2010 they allocated all the 65 to Laredo. Mr. Lopez asked if the moneys from the previous CBI funding have already been spent.

Mrs. Montemayor stated that of the previous funds, the only money that is in Laredo that is yet to be spent from the CBI funds is the 40 million that is currently allocated to the Loop 20 - I35 east and west bound main lanes. That's the only money that is left from the previous CBI money. Once those payments are made to the contractor that will be the end of the 2010 round of money. Mr. Lopez asked if there was a risk of that 2010 CBI money being lost if they don't use it. Mrs. Montemayor said that it is allocated to a project so there is no risk of it being lost. Of the 40 million they diverted 600,000 to the traffic signalization project that TTI suggested and 300,000 went to the Reuthinger Study, the extension of Hachar Road to I35, so what is left is 39.1 million at this point. Mr. Lopez asked if that allocation is done by TxDOT or does the MPO decide that. Mrs. Montemayor stated that that would be the decision of the MPO, city, county and the RMA. Mr. Soto asked where they were on the traffic synchronization program. Mrs. Montemayor stated that the City of Laredo was handling that contract. She believes Mr. Murillo, the traffic director, is securing the contract to do that work. She said she would find out. Mr. Carlos Rodriguez, Area Engineer for TxDOT, stated that they haven't started work on that. He stated that the advanced funding agreement is still pending. Mrs. Montemayor stated that the AFA is a document that TxDOT has with any local entity to allow that entity to execute a project. Mr. Dominguez stated that in the last meeting Mr. Pete Alvarez informed the RMA board that northbound for the concrete was authorized all the way from ITC all the way to Pan American, do they have a date on that. Mrs. Montemayor stated that is on today's MPO meeting agenda item. That would be with proposition 1 funds that the MPO receives. Should it pass at today's MPO agenda, they would let that project in August 2016. Mr. LaMantia stated that currently the state of Texas collects tolls on toll road 255, do you know how much that is and where the money goes. Mrs. Montemayor stated that the money goes back to a general fund for the State, but out of those funds they get some back to maintain the road. Those come back in the form of maintenance funds. Mr. LaMantia asked, what percentage do they get back and what it generates and how the funds flow. Mrs. Montemayor said she would find out and report back at the next meeting.

## **12. Open Public Forum/Comment Period**

Mr. Arturo Dominguez stated that a recent report released was an eye opener on the history of the RMA and it was very interesting. It says it's regarding Eagle Pass and railroad traffic. Based on the



projects that the other RMAs have, he thinks they should talk to the rail roads and should be proactive and help them. He said they should also get involved in overweight, freight and downtown parking lots. Mr. Murillo stated that Houston has an underground walkable system.

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

Chairman Soto stated that the next meeting will be held on Monday, March 21, 2016, 9 a.m. Location TBD.

**14. Adjournment**

Arturo Dominguez made a motion, seconded by Albert Muller, Sr. to adjourn the Webb County - City of Laredo RMA meeting at 9:57 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 FEBRUARY 16, 2016 WERE APPROVED ON THIS THE 21st DAY OF MARCH 2016.**

Submitted by:

Marissa J. Montoya  
Office Technician  
TxDOT Laredo Dist.