

**WEBB COUNTY – CITY OF LAREDO
REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY BOARD**

WC-CL RMA Board of Directors Meeting
International Bank of Commerce
1200 San Bernardo Ave
3rd Floor – Community Suite
November 6, 2024

BOARD MINUTES

The Webb County-City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority (WC-CL RMA) Board met at the above place and date. The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. WC-CL RMA Board Vice-Chair Doug Howland present and presiding. The following board members were present:

Jed A. Brown
Douglas B. Howland
Oscar O. Lopez
Arturo Dominguez
Antonio Arce
David Garcia
Jose Murillo
Alfonso Mendiola
Diana Palacios

AGENDA

1. Open Meeting and Establish Quorum

After establishing a quorum, Presiding Officer Jed Brown, called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. He then notified everyone present that a notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, and then asked everyone to stand for the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Welcome of Board Members – Jed Brown (WC-CL RMA Presiding Office)

Chairman Brown informed all present that the meeting was being recorded and thanked International Bank of Commerce for hosting the meeting.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Open Public Forum/Comment Period.

It was noted that no individual signed up to offer public comments during the meeting.

5. Action Item: Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action concerning the Approval of the July 23, 2024 WC-CL RMA Regular Board Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Motion to approve July 23, 2024, WC-CL RMA Board Meeting Minutes.

Moved by: Arturo Dominguez

Second by: Jose Murillo

Discussion: No discussion was held

In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

6. Chair's Report

A. Vallecio Road future over pass at IH 35 update

Chair Brown reported that he attended a meeting at TxDOT, along with Melissa Montemayor, TxDOT's District Engineer and staff to discuss the overpass design changes. TxDOT indicated they would be making design changes to the conceptual plan to improve traffic flow. Chair Brown noted that Lance Simmons, Chief Engineer with TxDOT, has expressed the need to work on the overpass project, and TxDOT is expected to present updated designs on November 20th. The plan is to seek a commitment from TxDOT Austin to fund the overpass, which is estimated to cost \$16.5 million, with \$1 million in Category 12 funds from the RMA.

B. Category 12 Strategic Partnership Funds Update

Chair Brown discussed the allocation of Category 12 funds, which the RMA has been asked to spend by TxDOT (Texas Department of Transportation). The Chairman explained that when using these federal funds, it can slow down smaller city projects but is beneficial for larger projects like the International Bridge. Chair Brown noted that the RMA has \$8.89 million in Category 12 funds and that upcoming agenda items will address the allocation of these funds.

C. North Laredo Transportation Reinvestment Zone Update

Chair Brown provided an update on the North Laredo TRZ study, stating that the City

of Laredo has requested the RMA's participation, similar to previous study conducted for Cuatro Vientos in South Laredo. The RMA had previously approved a report estimating costs at approximately \$88,000, with the City and the RMA each covering 50% of the expenses, as previously approved by the RMA Board.

D. Compliance Calendar Update

Chair Brown informed the Board of the RMA's compliance requirements, including the budget and surplus revenue due on December 29, a project report due on December 31, and a strategic plan due every two years. He is working with staff to determine if Board approval is required for these items and may schedule a December meeting if necessary.

7. Presentations

A. Financial Report

Oscar Lopez, Treasurer, presented the financial report as of August 31, 2024. The total cash on hand in the checking account, money market balance and CD is \$5,633,211.95, with a fixed income investment and accrued interest that totals \$6,387,177.39. Receivables total is \$895,347.71. Total assets as of August 31, 2024, are \$12,915,737.05, and total liabilities were \$448,155.76. Deposits made to account total \$1,095,203.79 between May 1 through August 30, 2024. Checks written during this period are \$864,118.04.

Motion: Motion to accept Financial Statements
Moved by: Douglas Howland
Second by: Alfonso Mendiola
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

B. Status Report on Vehicle Registration Fees (VRF's)

The amount of VRF funds that were received and have been paid to the RMA are \$630,350.00. The total amount collected to date is \$21,679,116.90, which is vital for funding projects and paying bills. There was also discussion about the need to clarify the payment schedule and enforce timeliness, possibly involving a formal reminder to Webb County.

C. Financial Investment Planning Report

The Investment Committee met on October 16, 2024, and reviewed a maturing \$2,138,000 Commerce Bank CD, voting to renew it at 4% with a maturity date of April

7, 2025. The committee also decided to leave \$3,118,000 from recent maturities in the money market account, which had a yield of 4.43%, for liquidity during the budgeting process. By October 31, the balance in the money market had grown to \$4,166,604. The committee holds \$5,460,000 in US government securities with maturities in the next 10 months, yielding over 4%. A RMA future meeting will discuss investment options for these monies.

D. Presentation by City of Laredo Bridge System staff regarding the Colombia Solidarity International Bridge Expansion Project.

Kent Richard, the Interim Director of the Laredo Bridge System, presented an overview of the Columbia Solidarity International Bridge expansion project. He highlighted the Columbia Bridge's significance as the number one port in the Western Hemisphere, with over 320 billion crossings in 2023 and 85% of all trucks are utilizing Laredo as their port of choice making 10,000 daily commercial vehicle crossings. The City of Laredo is seeking a presidential permit and requesting \$1 million dollars in RMA funding for the project development phase.

The Board moved to Agenda Item 12

12. Action Item (Resolution 24-19): Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action on the allocation of funding for the City of Laredo Colombia Solidarity Bridge Expansion Project.

Kent Richard, Interim Director for the Laredo Bridge System, presented on the growing demand at Laredo's ports, which handle over 320 billion in trade annually, making Laredo the number one port in the Western Hemisphere. The city sees 10,000 daily crossings, with numbers occasionally reaching up to 13,000. Commercial vehicle crossings are increasing, with over 3 million northbound crossings in 2023, reflecting the need for a federal project to expand the bridge. Laredo accounts for 68% of the region's commercial crossings and handles 7% of all U.S. trade.

The State of Nuevo Leon has invested in infrastructure improvements to support Laredo's bridges, particularly the Laredo-Columbia Solidarity Bridge. Laredo's strategic location also plays a key role in its popularity as a trade hub. The expansion project is currently in the planning phase, with a presidential permit expected in the coming weeks. Construction is slated to be completed by September 2029, with hopes for an earlier completion. The project is moving forward with federal support, and the City of Laredo is seeking \$1 million in federal funding for the expansion.

The Board considered a motion to allocate \$1 million in Category 12 funds for the Columbia Solidarity Bridge expansion project's development phase.

Motion: Motion to Approve Resolution 24-19

Moved by: Arturo Dominguez

Second by: Antonio Arce
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously.

The Board proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

8. Action Item (Resolution 24-15): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the WC-CL RMA FY 2024-2025 Annual Operating and Capital Budget.

Chair Brown presented the RMA's one-year and five-year budget plans. The RMA Board discussed and considered the approval of the Webb County, City of Laredo, Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Operating and Capital Budget. The budget was divided into two components: the "one-year plan," which focuses on operating revenue and expenses, and the "five-year plan," which outlines capital project expenses. The plan was reviewed by the Finance Committee and is considered realistic, meeting the RMA's commitments, including those for specific projects like the TRZ and Safe Streets for All. There was emphasis on the importance of timely reimbursements, especially from federal and local sources, for the success of the RMA projects.

Motion: Motion to Approve Resolution 24-15
Moved by: Alfonso Mendiola
Second by: Jose Murillo
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

9. Action Item (Resolution 24-16): Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action to authorize WC-CL RMA Chair to negotiate and execute an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement with the City of Laredo for the Vallecillo Road Project.

Tony Rodriguez from HNTB explained the need to amend the existing interlocal agreement with the City of Laredo to clarify the RMA's responsibilities for the Vallecillo Road project, including construction, advertising, and oversight. The proposed amendment aims to clarify and expand the agreement to include responsibilities for the project's implementation, particularly the construction phase. The City will soon receive the right of way for the project, at which point the RMA will need permission from the City of Laredo to begin construction, advertise the project, and oversee its completion by 2029. The current ILA does not address these aspects, so the amendment is necessary to ensure clarity on the roles and responsibilities for the project's execution.

Motion: Motion to approve Resolution 24-16
Moved by: Oscar Lopez
Second by: Jose Murillo

Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

10. Action Item (Resolution 24-17): Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action to authorize WC-CL RMA Chair to negotiate and execute an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Laredo for the Concord Hills Project.

Chair Brown provided an update on the Concord Hills project, noting that the numbers have come together. The Concord Hills project in South Laredo, a north-south arterial road east of Cuatro Vientos, has made significant progress. After multiple meetings between the RMA, City of Laredo, developers, and relevant departments, the project now has an engineer's cost estimate of approximately \$4.9 million. Funding is secured with the City pledging \$3.9 million, the RMA contributing \$1 million, and the Webb County Drainage District offering \$325,000. The developer has also contributed \$450,000 to cover civil engineering costs, reducing the financial burden on other parties. With the necessary funds in place, the project is moving forward, and groundbreaking may occur within the next six to nine months.

Motion: Motion to Approve Resolution 24-17
Moved by: Oscar Lopez
Second by: Antonio Arce
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

11. Action Item (Resolution 24-18): Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action to provide a Letter in Support of the City of Laredo for the Colombia Solidarity International Bridge Expansion Project to include with the Presidential Permit Application.

The Board discussed the ongoing finalization of the presidential permit application, with letters of support being gathered from various entities across Laredo, Texas, Nuevo Laredo, and Nuevo Leon. A request for a letter of support from the organization was made. It was noted that the same item had been presented to the MPO Policy Committee, where unanimous support was given by City of Laredo, Webb County, TxDOT, and RMA officials. The letter of support will be signed after the meeting. The group expressed appreciation for the collaboration and willingness to assist with any future updates or support as needed.

Motion: Motion to Approve Resolution 24-18
Moved by: Oscar Lopez
Second by: Arturo Dominguez
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

13. Action Item (Resolution 24-20): Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action to approve an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Laredo for creation of a Transportation Reinvestment Zone (TRZ) along the Cuatro Vientos corridor with the City of Laredo.

The Board discussed the progress of the TRZ implementation in South Laredo, following a study and numerous meetings with the city over the last nine months. The City has requested the RMA to contribute to the cost of implementation, which totals \$100,000. The breakdown includes \$48,000 for TXP, \$30,000 for Locke Lord's attorney fees, and \$22,000 for project coordination by LJ. The City has proposed splitting the cost 50/50, with the RMA and City of Laredo each contributing \$50,000. The finance committee has approved the request, considering it a worthwhile investment to finalize the TRZ adoption. The Board was asked to approve the RMA's \$50,000 contribution, and the Chairman expressed confidence in the project.

Motion: Motion to Approve
Moved by: Arturo Dominguez
Second by: Jose Murillo
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

14. Action Item (Resolution 24-21): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Supporting the Commitment of TxDOT Category 12-Strategic Partnership (RMA) Funds for the Development of the Colombia Solidarity Bridge Expansion Project.

The Board reviewed the draft resolution outlining several financial commitments. The breakdown of the amounts included:

- \$6,589,999 for the Vallecillo Road Project
- \$300,000 for Webb County Fairgrounds driveways
- \$1 million for the Columbia Solidarity Bridge expansion
- \$1 million for the Vallecillo Overpass

These commitments, totaling 100% of the Category 12 funds, are being consolidated into one resolution to formalize the RMA's financial support and to meet the TxDOT requirements. Action is necessary to ensure these projects are included in the UTP for the following year. The resolution must be approved by January 1. The Board was asked to approve these four specific items and amounts as part of the Category 12 funds allocation.

Motion: Motion to Approve
Moved by: Jose Murillo

Second by: Arturo Dominguez
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

15. Action Item (Resolution 24-22): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Supplemental Work Authorization No. 4.2 with LJA Engineering for an extension of time for the development of the Vision Zero Webb Laredo Safety Action Plan under the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program.

The Board was presented with a request for an extension of time for a grant that was awarded with a two-year time period, now extended through August 2025. The extension does not involve additional funding, only additional time to complete the project.

Motion: Motion to Approve
Moved by: Oscar Lopez
Second by: Jose Murillo
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

16. General Engineering Consultant Update on the following projects:

A. Presentation on the Status of the Vallecillo Road Project

The Vallecillo Road project is progressing well, with a focus on improving safety, mobility, and supporting future growth in the area. A schematic design for a five-lane section with a raised median has been submitted to TxDOT, with revisions and comments addressed. The estimated construction cost is around \$33.6 million, though inflation may increase costs by approximately \$3 million over time. The project's design is still being refined, with valuable engineering efforts in place to stay within budget.

Key project milestones include submitting a 60% design by the end of 2025, with final plans expected by mid-2025. Environmental clearance is anticipated in early 2025. Right-of-way acquisition is progressing, with TxDOT and the City of Laredo coordinating the necessary processes, including appraisals and utility relocation. The project team has been meeting bi-weekly with utility providers to ensure proper coordination.

The main delay appears to be related to utility relocations and right-of-way acquisition, with a planned construction start date in early 2027. There are concerns about the potential for delays in moving utilities, especially regarding power poles and

a gas line, which may require significant time. The project team is focused on getting utilities moved as soon as right-of-way acquisition is completed.

Coordination with the City of Laredo and developers is ongoing, with attention to ensuring that planned turn lanes align with future development. There is also a potential impact from changes to an overpass design that could affect the right-of-way, with further meetings planned to address these impacts.

Overall, the project is moving forward but faces challenges related to utility coordination, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental approvals. The team is working hard to meet deadlines and minimize delays.

B. Presentation on the progress of the Vision Zero Webb Laredo Safety Action Plan under the U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program

The report discusses the ongoing coordination of the Vision Zero plan, with active involvement from the MPO director and the City of Laredo. The community is encouraged to provide feedback through a form on the project website. The plan's remaining funds from the first work authorization have not yet been fully allocated, and a detailed breakdown will be presented to ensure proper use of the money. Initially, there were discussions about using some of the funds for implementation, including small projects or pilot programs. However, it has been clarified that the funds cannot be used for implementation, as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has placed restrictions on this.

Instead, the remaining funds can be used for applying for future grants to support the implementation phase. Additionally, a risk assessment has already been conducted as part of the plan to assess the safety of transportation modes for children, such as walking or biking to school. This includes evaluating risks and determining how to improve safety. However, any solutions, such as providing seat belts, would fall under the implementation phase, not the planning phase.

C. Killam Industrial Turn Lane Addition project at FM 1472 and Killam Industrial Blvd.

The construction for the project is complete, and all items for TxDOT have been finished. The final closeout change order has been confirmed and accepted, and once the refund request for the funds provided to TxDOT is processed, it will no longer appear on the list.

D. Projects submitted to the Laredo-Webb County MPO for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan update.

The Laredo-Webb County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is updating its

25-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for 2025-2050. The RMA submitted a set of projects for consideration, including:

Solidarity Bridge Expansion: Adding two new bridge structures with four lanes in each direction, with a complementary enhancement project at the port of entry to improve operations.

River Road Project: A parallel project along FM 1472 providing an alternate route, with a four-lane divided facility.

Bus Stop Safety Enhancements: Projects to improve safety at bus stops for UISD, particularly in colonia areas.

Vallecio Road Overpass: At I-35, to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

Vision Zero Projects: Focused on high-visibility pedestrian crossings, raised medians, and other safety measures across priority corridors.

Public Input Projects: Projects suggested by the public, including a relief route in the UniTech area and the Los Presidentes extension east of Brownwood Street.

These projects are part of the MTP, which includes both funded and illustrative (future) projects. Although funding for some is not yet secured, they are critical to ensuring long-term transportation planning. The MTP update has been a year in the making and is expected to be approved in January 2025. There's a focus on ensuring that all relevant projects are included in the final MTP, especially those that have not been funded yet. Future meetings will present updates, including a final report on Vision Zero and Safe Streets.

17. Report: Date/Time/Location of Next Regular Board Meeting

Chairman Brown informed the Board that there may be a meeting before the end of December, if not early January.

18. Adjournment.

On a motion made by Alfonso Mendiola and second by Jose Murillo. With no discussion, motion passed unanimously, and meeting was adjourned.