

MINUTES
FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
SPECIAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
February 16, 2017

Technical Members Present: Jason Thomas, City of Bloomfield
Cindy Lopez, City of Farmington
David Sypher, City of Farmington
Paul Brasher, NMDOT District 5
Andrew Montoya, Red Apple Transit
Nick Porell (Alternate), San Juan County

Technical Members Absent: Fran Fillerup, San Juan County

Staff Present: Mary Holton, MPO Officer
Duane Wakan, MPO Planner
June Markle, MPO Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent: Derrick Garcia, MPO Associate Planner

Others Present: Nica Westerling, City of Farmington
Brad Fisher, NMDOT North Design Center (via telephone)
Brian Degani, NMDOT Planning Liaison (via telephone)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. REVIEW AND CONSIDER RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF DRAFT PC RESOLUTION 2017-1

Subject:	Policy Committee Resolution 2017-1
Prepared by:	Duane Wakan, MPO Planner
Date:	February 10, 2017, 2017

BACKGROUND

- At the December 8, 2016 joint meeting, the Policy Committee directed staff to draft a resolution highlighting the following:
 - Redirect NHPP funds away from US 64 Phases V and VI;
 - Focus attention on funding projects of regional significance in the FMPO;
 - Encourage greater partnership with NMDOT and the local entities;
 - Address different levels of accountability, transparency, and public comment opportunity from NMDOT;
 - Emphasize that the FMPO's TIP is to be incorporated into the STIP without change per the state's own procedures.

- The TC decided to hold a special meeting on February 16, 2017 to review draft updates to Resolution 2017-1

CURRENT WORK

- Develop redlined revisions for Technical Committee review.
- Seek Technical Committee input and approval of the draft resolution.

ACTION ITEM

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee review and approve Policy Committee Resolution 2017-1 to the Policy Committee.

Final drafts of each section of the Resolution follow at the conclusion of the discussion. A full version of the draft Resolution follows at the conclusion of the minutes.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Wakan stated that this meeting was to continue the Technical Committee discussion from 2/8/17 on PC Resolution 2017-1. He noted that comments received from Mr. Sypher were included in the red-lined version of the resolution that was part of the agenda sent out last week.

Opening paragraph

REAFFIRMS THE NEED FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NMDOT) AND LOCAL ENTITIES, FUTURE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PHASES I AND II OF THE PINON HILLS BOULEVARD EXTENSION OVER THE ANIMAS RIVER WHILE POINTING OUT THE UNWARRANTED WIDENING OF US 64 PHASES V AND VI GIVEN THE CURRENT FISCAL DEFICIENCIES AT THE STATE LEVEL, AND THE MINIMAL IMPACTS TO CONGESTION RELIEF.

Suggestions/Comments

- Opposed to “unwarranted widening”.

Final draft of the opening paragraph

Reaffirms the need for improved communication, cooperation, collaboration and support between the New Mexico department of Transportation (NMDOT) and local agencies of the Farmington MPO.

Paragraph 1

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO (FMPO) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the cities of Farmington, Aztec, Bloomfield, and the urbanized area of San Juan County; and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes were recommended for Paragraph 1.

Final draft of Paragraph 1

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO (FMPO) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the cities of Farmington, Aztec, Bloomfield, and the urbanized area of San Juan County; and

Paragraph 2

WHEREAS, metropolitan planning organizations are designated in urbanized areas to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process coordinating decisions based on regional perspectives per 23 U.S.C. 134; and

Suggestions/comments:

- Additional “WHEREAS” to include size, stats and responsibilities of District 5 (square miles encompassed, counties/agencies included, lane miles, aging infrastructure, limited resources, and reference to a letter of 9/23/13 where the FMPO approved Amendment #2 to the FFY2014-2019 TIP)
 - Provide reader with understanding of broader scope of District 5
- NMDOT does not have the sole responsibility for planning; it is to be collaborative and an open, transparent process with the MPOs;
- Give equal weight/value to the fact that the majority of state’s population lives within MPO boundaries and utilizes roads in those areas the most, and to the vast network of roadways/lane miles in District 5;
 - Balance the two needs
 - The reason for creating MPOs
- Part of NMDOT planning includes cooperating and collaborating with the MPOs;
- NMDOT reaffirms their commitment to cooperating with FMPO;
- Not only cooperation, but also the support of NMDOT to get projects through the various processes;
 - Need communication, inquiry, cooperation, work together to develop solutions
 - Support provided to extent possible by state
 - Unilateral pulling of project funding
 - If funds need to be diverted, NMDOT needs to look to its own projects/funding before pulling money from the local entities’ projects (delay of US 64);
 - Funds have been taken away from NM 371, NM 285, NM 170 and US 160 to be used elsewhere in the state;
 - Local entities have made significant investments in projects like the East Arterial and Pinon Hills Boulevard and loss of that funding is devastating to a small community;
 - Stringent policies that hamper projects in the final stages (right-of-way and environmental) which cause delays in meeting construction deadlines;
 - Not all policies originate with NMDOT;
 - Will expedite where we can; no shortcuts with environmental and right-of-way certifications;
 - Eliminate roadblocks; ensure procedures are followed.
- FMPO told the US 64 project had to be included on the TIP; did not endorse the project, but we cooperated because NMDOT stated that it had to be included;

- FMPO priorities not considered by NMDOT;
- Discuss options and change course when/if needed and move funding accordingly;
- What can be done to make things happen; not only hear what cannot be done; need empowered, proactive local program division; encourage communication between these individuals and the entities.
- NMDOT's Statewide Long Range Plan speaks to the need for coordination, trust, and partnerships between all to implement programs;
 - Use language from Partnership & Coordination section of State Long Range Plan in Resolution;
 - Hold everyone accountable; operate with transparency; coordinate early, often and successfully;
 - Recent communications have not followed this Plan;
 - Guidelines are necessary for any program;
 - City of Farmington frustration on receiving no response for two years on how to move forward on an early right-of-way purchase;
 - Directed to write letter to FHWA to get a waiver; NMDOT promised to assist by endorsing the letter so project could be shelf-ready when funding again became available;
 - City of Farmington then told to redo and put the project in the TIP and STIP; now project is not constrained and the city is being required to demonstrate the financial viability for local match money.

Final Draft of Paragraph 2

WHEREAS, metropolitan planning organizations are designated in urbanized area to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process coordinating decisions based on regional perspectives per 23 U.S.C. 134; and

Paragraph 3 - NEW

WHEREAS, the preponderance of the state population resides within the MPOs within state boundaries; and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes were recommended for Paragraph 3.

Final Draft of Paragraph 3

WHEREAS, the preponderance of state-wide population reside within MPOs; and

Paragraph 4 - NEW

WHEREAS, NMDOT and local agencies will "work together to build trust and leverage external support for transportation initiatives by coordinating early, often, and successfully with federal, state, regional, Tribal, local, and other agencies to plan, fund, and implement projects and programs" as adopted by NMDOT in its New Mexico 2040 Plan; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Use the word “we” in this paragraph?
 - Want NMDOT response;
 - It can say NMDOT and FMPO;
- Do not “water down” statement with facts/figures about NMDOT
 - Provide understanding/even-handedness that NMDOT (and specifically District 5) has other responsibilities/priorities;
 - NMDOTs priorities do not outweigh those of the MPO;
 - Recognize each other’s responsibilities
 - Those responsibilities are inherent in any state transportation department;
 - This is a MPO resolution to express frustration and demand corrective action from NMDOT;
- Take wording (quote it) directly from the 2040 Statewide Plan
 - Use NMDOT own words
 - Reaffirms the state’s commitment to cooperation.

Final Draft of Paragraph 4

WHEREAS, NMDOT and local agencies will “work together to build trust and leverage external support for transportation initiatives by coordinating early, often, and successfully with federal, state, regional, Tribal, local, and other agencies to plan, fund, and implement projects and programs” as adopted by NMDOT in its New Mexico 2040 Plan; and

Paragraph 5

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO Policy Committee is the decision-making body for the MPO and addresses the major transportation issues in the metropolitan planning area; and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes recommended for Paragraph 5.

Final draft of Paragraph 5

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO Policy Committee is the decision-making body for the MPO and addresses the major transportation issues in the metropolitan planning area; and

Paragraph 6

WHEREAS, recent communication breakdowns between NMDOT and the local entities within the FMPO highlighted the need to improve transparency, ensuring that future communications are continuous, cooperative and comprehensive according to 23 CFR 134 including “that the selection of federally funded projects in metropolitan areas shall be carried out, from the approved TIP”; and

Suggestion/Comments

- Delete the word “recent”;
 - “Recent” referred to the recent TIP changes made by NMDOT without corresponding beforehand with entities.

Final Draft of Paragraph 6

WHEREAS, communication breakdowns between NMDOT and the local entities within the FMPO highlighted the need to improve transparency, ensuring the future communications are continuous, cooperative and comprehensive according to 23 CFR 134 including “that the selection of federally funded projects in metropolitan areas shall be carried out, from the approved TIP”; and

Paragraph 7

WHEREAS, the Pinon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and the East Arterial Relief Route in Aztec are the number one and two regional priority as identified in the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP); and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes recommended for Paragraph 7.

Final Draft of Paragraph 7

WHEREAS, the Piñon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and the East Arterial Relief Route in Aztec are respectively the number one and two regional priorities as identified in the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP); and

Paragraph 8

WHEREAS, future TIP developments will require an extensive joint cooperative vetting processes to identify funding gaps and shortfalls, as well as clear regional priorities for NMDOT and the local agencies; and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes recommended for Paragraph 8.

Final draft of Paragraph 8

WHEREAS, future TIP developments require an extensive joint cooperative vetting processes to identify funding gaps and shortfalls, as well as clear regional priorities for NMDOT and the local agencies; and

Paragraph 9

WHEREAS, a more collaborative supportive process can eliminate the appearance of indifference by providing empowered proactive local programming assistance for project completion; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Struggle with the words “appearance of indifference” - there is no indifference;
 - Originally written as “eliminate” the indifference; changed to “appearance” to soften; this is a factual statement from the entities;
 - This “appearance of indifference” suggests that from where the entities sit, this is how it appears from time to time;
- Capitalize “local” and “programming” to designate the actual NMDOT division;
 - Want that division to be empowered to allow them to get things done;
 - Local programming is the assistance given to local entities;
- Add the word “supportive” after collaborative;
- Add the word “successful” before project completion;
- Why include this in the Resolution?
 - This has been the experience; \$4 M taken away with no discussion, communication and the appearance of indifference;
- Change “indifference” to “non-responsiveness”;
- Consider a more positive approach; purpose is to improve relationship with NMDOT; want NMDOT to look at Resolution seriously and take position actions;

Final draft of Paragraph 9

WHEREAS, a more collaborative and supportive process can eliminate the appearance of non-responsiveness by providing empowered proactive Local Programming assistance for successful project completion; and

Paragraph 10

WHEREAS, travel demand modeling by the MPO has shown that the construction of the two phases of the Pinon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and Oxbow do more to alleviate congestion on two major highways than does the widening of the two remaining phases (V and VI) of US 64; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Not sure of the accuracy of the modeling data;

Final draft of Paragraph 10

WHEREAS, travel demand modeling by the MPO has shown that the construction of the two phases of the Pinon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and Oxbow do more to alleviate congestion on two major highways than does the widening of the two remaining phases (V and VI) of US 64; and

Paragraph 11

WHEREAS, the cost/benefits of constructing the Pinon Hills Bridge with its various phases equates to \$26M exceeds that of completing the final two phases of US 64 which equates to over \$30.5M; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Model was last run in December 2016;
 - Model run at PTV America, so was validated by model experts;
- Each model update provided to NMDOT;
- Add the word “apparent” since the information has been published;

Final draft of Paragraph 11

WHEREAS, the cost and apparent benefit of constructing the Piñon Hills Bridge with its various phases equates to \$26M exceeds that of completing the final two phases of US 64 which equates to over \$30.5M; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE FARMINGTON MPO, NEW MEXICO:

Support 1

Support 1. Improvement in communication and transparency from NMDOT to its regional bodies which include Aztec, Bloomfield, Farmington and San Juan County; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Frustration by entities at lack of communication from NMDOT;
- Tried having joint quarterly meetings to resolve issues and improve communications; have not been successful.

Final draft of Support 1

Support 1. Improvement in communication and transparency from NMDOT to its regional bodies which include Aztec, Bloomfield, Farmington and San Juan County; and

Support 2

Support 2. The removal or delay of construction of Phase V and VI of US 64 until average daily traffic merit such widening; and

Suggestion/Comments

- NMDOT opposed to removing or delaying construction on US 64;
- What goal does this accomplish?
 - Final phases of the project are in process
 - Any funding saved by delaying this project could likely go anywhere in the state and would not necessarily stay in the FMPO area;
- Traffic demand modeling showed benefits of putting funds elsewhere in the region;
 - Do not know that the widening is not merited at this time;
 - US 64 widening may be merited to some degree; not warranted in light of other higher priority local projects;
 - Do not understand/know the accuracy of the model.
- Explore the feasibility of reallocating the funds to another project in the FMPO area;

- Phases V and VI of US 64 are primarily being funded with NHPP funds; these funds can be used on any National Highway System (NHS) road for maintenance;
- District 5 funds have all been directed to the widening of US 64; future funds will need to be used to maintain the widened roadway, although not in the near term (maintenance costs are three times the cost of construction);
- The Resolution centers on this Support;
 - Too much money being spent on projects the region does not think are needed (state projects) and not getting funding on the projects the local entities believe are important and of more value (regional priorities);
- Travel demand modeling is critical as a tool to inform decision-makers;
 - Need to consider cost/benefit measures;
 - Need to validate and justify the benefits to a community (congestion, safety, connectivity, and other performance measures);
 - Model shows that Pinon Hills Boulevard can alleviate congestion;
 - US 64 is a national route and serves a much larger region than Pinon Hills Boulevard;
 - Since the US 64 project is ending at Browning Parkway, is it more of a “regional significant” than “nationally significant” project?
 - May eventually be widened to the Arizona border;
 - MPOs established to prioritize local projects;
- Cannot support or delay construction on US 64;
 - Local entities do not agree with spending funds on NMDOT projects and not having funds for the FMPO priorities;
 - If other funds become available, consider all possibilities for FMPO area;
- Does Support 3 say the same thing as Support 2?

Final Draft of Support 2

Support 2. That the NMDOT evaluate and collaborate with the Farmington MPO regarding the feasibility of a diversion or exchange of construction funds for Phase V and VI of US 64, to the Farmington MPO planning area to prioritize projects identified in the 2040 MTP; and

Support 3

Support 3. Future Federal funding be directed to the completion of Phases I and II of the Pinon Hills Bridge over the Animas River as well as other regionally significant transportation projects; and

Suggestions/Comments

No changes recommended for Support 3.

Final draft of Support 3

Support 3. Future Federal funding be directed to the completion of Phases I and II of the Piñon Hills Bridge over the Animas River as well as other regionally significant transportation projects; and

Proposed New Support

That the NMDOT endorse and forward to FHWA the City of Farmington 9/14/16 early acquisition response letter for Pinon Hills Boulevard extension answering the requirements associated with the 23 Code of Federal Regulations 1.9 on Federal participation.

Suggestions/Comments

- Recommend NMDOT develop policy to make a path forward to address early right-of-way acquisition;
 - No communication from NMDOT on City of Farmington question regarding early right-of-way acquisition because there was no procedure in place and no one could answer the question?
 - City of Aztec also had an early right-of-way issue that had been approved by NMDOT previously; now NMDOT is requiring they get it approved again through the current process;
- What is being requested in this new “Support”?
 - Two meetings last August with FHWA and entire NMDOT team, but Mr. Brasher not included in any of these meetings or communications;
 - Waiver letter requested by FHWA; Armando Armendariz offered to support the letter so the project could be made shelf ready;
 - This still has not been done
- Do we want to include details about a specific project in this Resolution or can this be handled separately?
 - General statements are already in the Resolution;
 - Suggest inclusion of specific NMDOT actions desired;
 - This one action is of great concern for the City of Farmington; show good faith on part of NMDOT;
 - This and other paragraphs also speak to the East Arterial project.
- Not the intent of the Resolution to make this request;
- Make generalized statement about right-of-way and environmental issues and recommend new policies, more staff, and/or empower those individuals to make decisions;
 - Consider parallel paths for right-of-way and environmental;
 - Currently do not know who is “first”
 - Path forward was not known for Pinon Hills Boulevard project until the funding was removed;
 - San Juan County able to get a categorical exclusion for the environmental certification on Phase III of Pinon Hills (CR 3900) to allow them to move forward with the Army Corps of Engineers 404 certification; once that is completed will come back to the environmental certification;
 - Bond encumbered for an additional 16 months;
 - Four month process;
 - Back door solutions can become solution/policy.
 - There are solutions, just have to find the right people
- Is there a negative impact to including this new “Support”?
 - Gives appearance that this is the only thing being requested of NMDOT;
 - Seek creative solutions all around.
- What is consensus on including this new “Support”?
 - Need simple generalize request for support and for seeking solutions.

- Delete this proposed new “Support”.
-

Support 4

Support 4. That the development of the regional TIP follow 23 CFR 134 namely in cooperation with the State and any affected public transportation operator, the metropolitan planning organization designated for a metropolitan area shall develop a TIP for the area for which the organization is designated; and

Suggestions/Comments

- Why is this Support needed?
 - Need transparent process from the entities and NMDOT
 - Good/better/best discussions - have had good discussion, but need better and best discussions and dialogs;
 - Important to identify the regional nature of priorities.

Final Draft of Support 4

Support 4. That the development of the FMPO regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) follow 23 CFR 134 namely in cooperation with the State and any affected public transportation operator, the metropolitan planning organization designated for a metropolitan area shall develop a TIP for the area for which the organization is designated; and

Support 5

Section 5. That the NMDOT work to expedite the completion of regionally significant projects that alleviate cost burdens on small departments and agencies.

Suggestions/Comments

- Add “explore available and alternative avenues to expediting”...;
- Consider being more specific and identify right-of-way and environmental;
- Add ...”and time constraints” on local agencies;
- Does it need to say ...“alleviate the cost burdens...”?
 - Small, local communities do not have the resources that larger cities (Albuquerque) have;
 - Emphasizes the concerns of the local communities;
 - Explains purpose for seeking expedited processes.

Final Draft of Support 5

Support 5. That the NMDOT resolve to explore available and alternate processes to expedite the completion and approval of project submittals, specifically but not limited to Right of Way (ROW) and environmental certifications on projects to alleviate cost burdens and time constraints on local agencies.

ACTION: Mr. Watson moved to recommend approval of PC Resolution 2017-1. Mr. Brasher seconded the motion. The motion to recommend approval of PC Resolution 2017-1 was unanimous.

3. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND STAFF

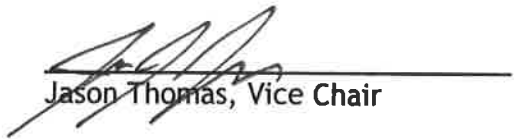
There was no business from the Chairman, Members and Staff.

4. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no business from the Floor.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 1:12 pm


Jason Thomas, Vice Chair


June Markle, Administrative Assistant

FINAL DRAFT RESOLUTION

POLICY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION NO. 2017-1

REAFFIRMS THE NEED FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT BETWEEN New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NMDOT) AND LOCAL AGENCIES OF THE FARMINGTON MPO.

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO (FMPO) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the cities of Farmington, Aztec, Bloomfield, and the urbanized area of San Juan County; and

WHEREAS, metropolitan planning organizations are designated in urbanized areas to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process coordinating decisions based on regional perspectives per 23 U.S.C. 134; and

WHEREAS, the preponderance of state-wide populations reside within MPOs; and,

WHEREAS, NMDOT and local agencies will "work together to build trust and leverage external support for transportation initiatives by coordinating early, often, and successfully with federal, state, regional, Tribal, local, and other agencies to plan, fund, and implement projects and programs" as adopted by NMDOT in its New Mexico 2040 Plan.

WHEREAS, the Farmington MPO Policy Committee is the decision-making body for the MPO and addresses the major transportation issues in the metropolitan planning area; and

WHEREAS, communication breakdowns between NMDOT and the local entities within the FMPO highlighted the need to improve transparency, ensuring the future communications are continuous, cooperative and comprehensive according to 23 CFR 134 including "that the selection of federally funded projects in metropolitan areas shall be carried out, from the approved TIP"; and

WHEREAS, the Piñon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and the East Arterial Relief Route in Aztec are respectively the number one and two regional priorities as identified in the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP); and

WHEREAS, future TIP developments require an extensive joint cooperative vetting processes to identify funding gaps and shortfalls, as well as clear regional priorities for NMDOT and the local agencies; and

WHEREAS, a more collaborative and supportive process can eliminate the appearance of non-responsiveness by providing empowered proactive Local Programming assistance for successful project completion; and

WHEREAS, travel demand modeling by the MPO has shown that the construction of the two phases of the Piñon Hills Bridge over the Animas River and Oxbow do more to alleviate congestion on two major highways than does the widening of the two remaining phases (V and VI) of US 64; and

WHEREAS, the cost and apparent benefit of constructing the Piñon Hills Bridge with its various phases equates to \$26M exceeds that of completing the final two phases of US 64 which equates to over \$30.5M; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE FARMINGTON MPO, NEW MEXICO:

Support 1. Improvement in communication and transparency from NMDOT to its regional bodies which include Aztec, Bloomfield, Farmington and San Juan County; and

Support 2. That the NMDOT evaluate and collaborate with the Farmington MPO regarding the feasibility of a diversion or exchange of construction funds for Phase V and VI of US 64, to the Farmington MPO planning area to prioritized projects identified in the 2040 MTP; and

Support 3. Future Federal funding be directed to the completion of Phases I and II of the Piñon Hills Bridge over the Animas River as well as other regionally significant transportation projects; and

Support 4. That the development of the FMPO regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) follow 23 CFR 134 namely in cooperation with the State and any affected public transportation operator, the metropolitan planning organization designated for a metropolitan area shall develop a TIP for the area for which the organization is designated; and

Support 5. That the NMDOT resolve to explore available and alternate processes to expedite the completion and approval of project submittals, specifically but not limited to Right of Way (ROW) and environmental certifications on projects to alleviate cost burdens and time constraints on local agencies.

PASSED, SIGNED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Nate Docket
FMPO Policy Committee Chair

June Markle
MPO Administrative Assistant