



SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST 25, 2021

DRAFT

MEETING LOCATION:

City of Sierra Vista, City Hall
City Manager's Conference Room
1011 North Coronado Drive
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

MICROSOFT TEAMS VIRTUAL MTG

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MEETING DATE AND TIME:

August 25, 2021
2:30 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS:

Website: www.svmppo.org
Email: SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov
Administrator Phone: 520-515-8525

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair	Rachel Gray, Mayor, City of Sierra Vista
Vice-Chair	Cynthia Butterworth, alternative member for Johann Wallace
Member	Carolyn Umphrey, Councilmember City of Sierra Vista (<i>Joined at 2:37 pm</i>)
Member:	Gregory Johnson, Councilmember City of Sierra Vista
Member	Peggy Judd, County Supervisor, Cochise County(<i>telephonically</i>)
Member	Richard Searle, STB District 3

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

STAFF:

SVMPO Director: Karen L. Lamberton, AICP

OTHERS PRESENT:

Keith Settlmeyer, Town of Huachuca City, (*alternate member incoming*)
Ed Stillings, FHWA (*telephonically*)
Kevin Adam, RTAC (*telephonically*)
Brent Crowther, Kimley-Horn Consultant Team (*telephonically*)
Chris Johannes, Kimley-Horn Consultant Team (*telephonically*)
Taylor Dunkle, Kimley-Horn Consultant Team (*telephonically*)
Brian Snider, Michael-Baker Consultant Team (*telephonically*)

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gray called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m. Members Johnson, Butterworth, Searle were

present. Member Judd was present telephonically. A quorum was present. Chair Gray advised that Member Umphrey was on her way and would arrive shortly to join the meeting.

Director Lamberton noted that the MPO had been advised that Cynthia Butterworth had been selected to replace Johann Wallace at their last regular Town Meeting, due to work and personal conflicts of the SVMPO Vice-Mayor. Ms. Butterworth was welcomed to her new position on the MPO, and it was noted that her alternate, Keith Settlemyer was present at this meeting. The position of Vice-Chair would be addressed at the next October meeting.

Chair Gray also noted that she would need to step out for a brief, unexpected ZOOM meeting call at 3:30 but would return to the SVMPO meeting as soon as was possible, and if there were no objections, Member Umphrey could carry forward the meeting in her absence, if needed. Hearing none, the Board moved to Item 1.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Gray asked if there were any adjustments requested to the presented agenda. Hearing none, the Chair asked for a motion to accept the agenda. Member Johnson made the motion, Member seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Member Johnson

SECOND: Member Searle

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chair Gray noted that no members of the public were present at the meeting and asked if anyone was present on the phone that wanted to speak. Hearing none, the Call to the Public was closed.

Note: Member Umphrey arrived during this item at about 2:37 pm)

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (June 24, 2021)

Chair Gray asked any Board member has any comments or corrections to the Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2021. After a moment for Board members to take a look at the presented minutes, no corrections were noted. Hearing none, she called for the question.

Member Johnson made the motion to accept the meeting minutes as presented, Member Umphrey seconded, and the motion to approve the June 24, 2021, meeting minutes was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Member Johnson

SECOND: Member Umphrey

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0

4. ACCEPTANCE OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (July 28, 2021)

Chair Gray asked any Board member has any comments or corrections to the summary of July 28, 2021 Executive Session. As these are legally closed sessions these are not detailed formal meeting minutes and are presented for any corrections that might be needed for documentation.

Member Butterworth made the motion to accept the meeting summary as presented, Member

Johnson seconded, and the motion to approve the July 28, 2021, Executive Summary was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Member Butterworth

SECOND: Member Johnson

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0

CONTINUING BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

5. SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

Director Lamberton stated that this Board meeting was bringing before the Board members the mandated Short-Range Transit Plan for consideration for adoption. This is a FTA requirement for small urban (5307) transit system plans and is usually updated every five years. Kevin Kugler and Brian Snider, with Michael-Baker, the Short-Range Transit Plan consultant team, were present virtually to present the Final Report requirements for this plan, the major findings and recommendations.

The requirements of the Short-Range Transit plan were presented: this is a high-level transit plan looking five years into the future based on projected funding levels and the transit system existing and potential future needs and requirements for the City of Sierra Vista: Sierra Vista Transit small urban 5307 transit system. The initial components were briefly touched on as they had been previously presented to the Board (slides 1-3 included in the posted Agenda Packet).

Six potential recommendations were formed for implementation within the next five years. **The decision of what to implement, and the timing of implementation, is a decision of the City of Sierra Vista, not the SVMPO.** It was noted that concurrence of the SVMPO Board with these recommendations was not a mandate being placed on the City.

The six potential recommended strategies presented were detailed in slides 4-10 (included in the posted Agenda Packet):

- 1. Purchasing New Fareboxes that Accept Additional Fare Media:** enhances the ability to use technology like apps, reloadable cards, vouchers and other electronic payment methods.
- 2. Increase Online Engagement & Advertise a Bus-Tracking App:** shown to increase new riders and improve rider satisfaction.
- 3. Deploy Paratransit Scheduling Software:** shown to increase efficiencies in services and improve performance tracking.
- 4. Fare Adjustments:** adjustments consistent with ADA and FTA standards help to increase revenues while minimizing impacts to ridership.
- 5. Expand & Optimize Bus Network:** longer-range recommendations for extensions of service hours on key routes, additional weekend service, high volume routes migrated to bi-directional to avoid longer circulator routes.
- 6. Complete a 2021 Public Transportation (Transit) Agency Safety Plan Update:** a new FTA requirement for 2020 was that each 5307 transit agency had a safety plan in place that included

four major components and multiple specific elements. ADOT undertook the first 2020 planning effort with six other smaller transit agencies. Nine deficiencies for the Vista Transit system were identified and completing these elements, along with a 2021 update, is needed this calendar year.

The consultant team noted that the difficulty with dealing with outdated fare box collection was the number one complaint among both riders and staff. A great deal of effort and costs goes into collecting and counting cash, especially with a fare that is not in increments of quarters. Many riders, because the current fare boxes do not provide change, discount rate riders (students, seniors, disabled) appear to end up paying 0.75 cents for their rides so a fare increase to this amount would not have a significant impact on most of these riders.

A proposal for potential fare increases was presented and this recommendation generated a great deal of discussion among Board members. The balance of farebox recovery, 8.7 percent, is far below the average best practices for transit fleets of 15 to 20 percent farebox recovery. In addition, the Transit fares for paratransit are also far below that which is allowed under federal ADA requirements (up to two times the regular fare). Door to door service is being provided for \$2.00 a ride. However, more than one Board member noted that the actual cost per passenger ride ranged from over \$5 dollars in 2015 to \$5.52 in 2019 and for paratransit rides ranged over \$19 dollars in 2015 to \$31.83 in 2019. It was also acknowledged that the last few years were not a good measure for riders or costs, as it was clear that during the pandemic only those who had no other options were riding transit reducing ridership, additional costs to provide social distancing and sanitization increased costs, but to some degree some of these impacts were offset by zero match FTA funds to transit services. The Vista Transit Administrator, Linda Jones, noted that few riders understood how little their fare amount was towards the total cost of their ride. There was agreement that this recommendation for fare increases would likely need discussed with City of Sierra Vista Council; however, it may not be the best time to do so until there was a return to more normal travel and ridership patterns. The concept of working directly with larger employers, schools and the Fort for purchase and distribution of transit passes was strongly supported as a marketing strategy.

Member Johnson asked about the total costs of adding GPS units. These types of applications typically run from \$5,000 to \$25,000 depending on features and how large the paratransit system is as a factor of staff resource time savings by use of these real-time applications.

Linda Jones, the Sierra Vista Transit Administrator, concluded the presentation by expressing her gratitude to the consultant team and the SVMPO staff for taking this project on and for proactively including her drivers in the planning effort. She stated that they learned a lot during this process and have already begun to move some of these recommendations forward, in particular the re-initiation of the Brown Route into the Fort (now running about 150 riders per day/30 per hour on a Saturday only run) and going out for bids to install new 21st century farebox collection boxes. Member Johnson asked if the updated boxes might be able to take debit cards, and the response was that this is the type that they are looking at, along with those types that also are paired with kiosks to generate transit cards that can be refilled as many of their riders pay in cash or do not use banks.

Administrator Jones ended by stating that this was an excellent transit plan that will be very helpful to her and her staff in the next few years. She also added that the selection for a consultant team to complete the mandated Safety Transit plan was set for the following day and that effort would be undertaken immediately following the adoption of this Transit Plan, in partnership with the SVMPO.

Board members were reminded that the Final Draft of the Short-Range Transit Plan, along with a Best Practices for Fleet and Facility Sanitization practices, has been available for public and Board review on the SVMPO website: <https://www.svmmpo.org/transportation-planning/short-range-transit-plan-update/>

Chair Gray thanked the consultant team for their presentation and asked if there were any further questions for either the Consultant Team or Vista Transit Administrator on this plan. Hearing none, she called for the question.

Member Umphrey made the motion to adopt the 2021-2027 Short-Range Transit Plan as presented, Member Butterworth seconded, and the motion to approve the 2021-2027 Short-Range Transit Plan was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Member Umphrey

SECOND: Member Butterworth

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0

6. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: BACKGROUND

The SVMPO Director noted that items 7-11 are actually one single item but were broken up in the Agenda to provide clarity as to the specific elements of this Long-Range Transportation Plan effort. Brent Crowther and Chris Johannes, with Kimley-Horn were present virtually to present the Final Draft 2050 LRTP Findings and Recommendations. As Board members have been hearing presentation throughout the process, as well as at the recent June 10th Joint Work Session, the first portions of this item were presented very quickly. Director Lamberton then provided a very short briefing of the requirements of for the MPO to develop every five years a Long-Range Transportation plan, and added that this Plan does have a FHWA extension requiring completion by the end of this calendar year.

SVMPO Board members have been encouraged to review the posted Final Draft Report available on the SVMPO website for review: <https://www.svmmpo.org/transportation-planning/2050-long-range-transportation-plan-update-2050-lrtp/>

This was an information item and followed presentation slides 1-3 on this item (included in posted Agenda Packet).

7. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: PUBLIC OUTREACH

The SVMPO Director also quickly led the Board through the year-long outreach efforts undertaken stating that public outreach was limited by the COVID-19 conditions that were in place and were ongoing throughout this effort. Virtual efforts were not as robust as desired, but overall multiple opportunities were available to the public to provide input to this effort.

Extensive work was done with the SVMPO advisory committee members and member jurisdiction staff to finalize recommendations. It was noted that the public comments received did indicate high support for the Board selected regional priorities for projects that improve safety and regional connectivity.

This was an information item and followed presentation slides 4-6 on this item (included in posted Agenda Packet).

8. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: DOCUMENT TOUR

The Consultant Study Team then took over the presentation and Chris Johannes, with Michael-Baker, shared with the SVMPO Board the Final Plan chapter sections in two parts: chapters 1-6 and then chapters 7 and 8 which noted the major findings, projects lists and funding constraints. There were not any specific Board questions on the first six chapters, these sections having been presented to the Board on multiple occasions.

The consultant team then discussed how the project priorities were developed and the funding strategy chosen. The Investment Strategy is used by many MPO's, as well as the State, in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and allows the MPO to include prioritized projects without fiscally constraining them down to a specific potential costs and revenues out throughout the full planning period.

This was an information item and followed presentation slides 7-11 on this item (included in the posted Agenda Packet).

9. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: PROJECT LISTS

The Consultant Study Team shared with the SVMPO Board the preliminary project lists by mode: Roadway, Preservation, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Recreational Trails, Transit and Aviation. These lists were developed with interaction with member jurisdictions, advisory committees and influenced by the technical analysis and modeling efforts undertaken. Hard copies of the priority lists noted in the posted Final Draft Plan, were provided to the Board members (*also sent earlier electronically to the full Board*). Projects within the jurisdiction of the State/ADOT were considered important to include as these routes serve the highest volume of traffic, are the locations of the highest crash rates and also serve the region's economic generators, but they are shown in this SVMPO Plan as a separate unfunded list. Although partnerships with the State to see projects move forward are one possible strategy that could be considered in the future, funding has not been dedicated to any state highway projects at this time. Inclusion of these projects within this MPO Plan does give the State an idea of what this region's highest priorities are for the State projects within this area for their own longer-range planning and funding priorities.

Board members briefly discussed with the Consultant Team the criteria used to select prioritization and phasing of projects, shown on slides 13 and 14, and concurred that it appeared that projects seemed to have been selected to match with regional priorities, matched with

jurisdiction high priorities (as brought forward from existing jurisdiction plans) and included technical analysis results.

Regional project lists have been prioritized into near-term (highest priority), med-term, long-term and beyond projects lists. Projects outside of projected SVMPO revenues are included as unfunded regional projects but may be considered in the future should additional funding opportunities arise during the planning period. Projects list costs were described in this plan with a recommended Funding Investment Strategy. It was noted that it would be at the project selection phase during the short-range transportation plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), where costs would be narrowed down to specifically what additional cost elements needed to be included e.g. right-of-way or design and the specific funding and match amounts to be applied. Director Lamberton also noted that on slide 16 the amount indicated for the first near-term phase does not include the approximately \$2 million of revenues programmed in the current SVMPO TIP, which is why the near-term ten-year amount appears lower than the other two phases.

This was a discussion item. Board member concurred with the breakdown of projects, the separate listing of State highway projects and using a Funding Investment Strategy for this SVMPO Plan. No changes in projects or phasing placement were requested.

10. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION AND NEXT ACTION ITEMS

The SVMPO Board then was asked to consider the presented 2050 Long-Range Transportation plan for adoption. Director Lamberton asked the Board to keep in mind the key considerations for this adoption noted in their August 25th memo on this topic that this Long-Range Transportation Planning effort:

1. Has a mandated deadline for completion;
2. Is a tool to obtain funding but is not a mandate for the region or any specific jurisdiction to fund or complete any specific project within any specific timeline;
3. Each jurisdiction controls which projects they bring forward in the near-term and how it is funded;
4. Several challenges impacted this planning effort (Pandemic, Contentious Election Cycle dominating headlines, lack of a reauthorization transportation bill; lack of released 2020 Census data; and
5. This Long-Range Transportation Plan is **a snapshot in time**. It can be amended, and as a new reauthorization bill is approved and full Census data is released, this region may wish to undertake minor amendments to set the stage for the next update, required to be undertaken in the 2025/2026 timeframe.

Member Searle noted that the region had to have a plan, and in spite of any weaknesses in this plan caused by events outside our control, it would serve to meet the needs of the region at this time and recommended approving it. The FHWA's liaison, Ed Stillings, added that from FHWA

perspective this planning effort does meet the requirements under the federal statutes, provides the performance measures required under the federal statutes, and gives the region information to make decisions for transportation funding available to them. He also noted that every plan like this is a collective effort that uses the best information available to them at the time and stated that he had looked over the Final Draft and felt that the SVMPO and the consultant team had done a good job in preparing this plan.

Chair Gray asked if there were any other questions on the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan at this time. She added that she wanted to thank the consultant team staff that had worked directly with TAC members on their additional data questions and appreciated the consultant team member responsiveness to the jurisdiction member concerns. Several Board members noted that the Joint Work session had been valuable to their understanding of this planning effort. Hearing no further questions or comments from Board members, Chair Gray called for the question.

Member Butterworth made the motion to accept the 2050 SVMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan, Member Johnson seconded, and the motion to approve the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Member Butterworth

SECOND: Member Johnson

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/DIRECTION TO SVMPO ADMINISTRATOR MAY BE GIVEN

11. STATE TRANSPORTATION BOARD/SOUTHCENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT

No ADOT representative was present to speak to this item. State Transportation Board member Richard Searle noted that as soon as one plan is completed the next one begins: ADOT is already undertaking their next five-year planning effort to prioritize state highway projects. He also noted that although it is outside the SVMPO region, Member Judd from the County would be interested in knowing that the traffic Interchange on the Interstate in Willcox is pouring concrete here very soon for completing a needed improvement on those ramps.

No action was taken.

12. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC) Liaison, Kevin Adam, shared with Board members National and State legislative updates regarding transportation activities and funding. A great deal of energy is ongoing at the time at the congressional level with a bipartisan effort to bring a re-authorization bill forward that does include substantive increases for transportation for both State DOT's and regional governments. The most recent bill on this issue is at the House after being passed by the Senate and returned to the House for concurrence with changes that had been made. The current transportation bill extension expires at the end of this September, 2021.

Of strong interest to RTAC and SVMPO Board members is a potential \$65 billion dollar of assistance for improved broadband services within rural areas. Director Lamberton noted that

there are areas within the SVMPO region that have 20 percent or more of the households without any reliable internet services: creating long-term issues with virtual educational or work opportunities that may continue to be needed to serve rural areas. This need has been documented in the just adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan so if this funding does come available, this MPO is set to apply for potential funds. Member Umphrey stated that improved broadband services is a serious need in our area here in Sierra Vista and surrounding areas.

Chair Gray noted that she and other members of City and County elected officials met with U.S. Senator Sinema just the day before and the Senator was optimistic about the passage of this transportation bill. Chair Gray also thought it was a positive sign that it appeared the increases in the transportation bill appeared to have been budgeted without reliance on increasing any taxes.

The dates for the Rural Summit are October 13th-15th. RTAC members are invited to the Wednesday events, MPO and COG Board members to the Thursday events with State legislators. The SVMPO had budgeted to provide registration and one-night lodging for SVMPO members that are able to attend. The Director asked SVMPO members interested and able to let her know so she could register them. Chair Gray indicated she would be there to represent RTAC as well as both the City and the SVMPO at this event.

Information related to the potential of additional dedicated transportation funding to the State of Arizona were discussed. It appears that the most recent proposal for sharing additional one-time funds with the Greater AZ area *might* result in an estimated \$1,990,533 for programming for regional projects.

Director Lamberton stated that she was also seeking concurrence from the Board to bring forward two high priority Long-Range Transportation Plan as a pitch for the potential rural funds: the Joint City/County Theater Drive project and the Huachuca City Skyline Rd. overlay project serving the landfill. Both of these projects meet the multiple hoops for the projects desired for this legislative "ask", serve regional priorities including economic generators, are outside known existing funding in the near-term and provide desired improvements to all three of our member jurisdictions. The two projects together reach the potential funding level of a *possible one-time* earmark of \$1.9 million. The SVMPO has been asked to provide project details, including Fact Sheets and an informational booth, at the Rural Summit event.

This was a discussion item. No formal action was taken but Board members unanimously indicated concurrence with the two recommended projects to bring forward as part of the combined RTAC rural transportation project list proposal.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS & JURISDICTION UPDATES

This was the time set aside for the SVMPO Board of Director members to share information and current events. Chair Gray queried each Board member, and no member jurisdiction had anything to add at this time.

AZ Roads and Streets Conference: October 6-8, 2021, Tucson, AZ/Director *Lamberton noted that interested TAC Members have been registered.*

American MPO National Conference: October 5-9, 2021, Scottsdale, AZ

AZ Rural Summit: October 13-15, 2021, City of Maricopa

- ❖ The Town of Huachuca City Roadway Inventory & Assessment project is approximately 85% completed and is currently on schedule and within contracted budget. It is scheduled to be presented to Town of Huachuca City Council on Sept. 9th, with a follow-up Work Session on potential Action Items for a Sept. 23rd Town Council meeting.
- ❖ Census 2020 initial data is beginning to be released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Additional data will continue to be released but state-wide redistricting and basic demographic data for larger jurisdictions is now available: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-main.html> *The Director noted that data for Huachuca City is not yet among the data released as of the date of this Board meeting.*
- ❖ The SVMPO has completed end of FY21 reimbursement requests and formally requested that carry-forward funds, unused in FY21, in the amount of \$157,211.36 be applied to our FY22/FY23 Work Program activities. In addition, the annual request for the application of a 10% de-minimis indirect cost rate was submitted to ADOT for FY22.
- ❖ The SVMPO FY22 Title VI Plan and FY21 Title VI Annual Report were approved by ADOT Civil Rights Dept. on August 9, 2021.

This was an information item (*Given the time this item was only briefly referenced by Director Lamberton as information within the packet for Board member review*).

This was a discussion item. No action was taken.

14. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next SVMPO Board meeting is scheduled for **October 27, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.**

Items expected to be presented include the Findings and Recommendations of the Huachuca City Roadway Inventory and Assessment; the initial kick-off of the City of Sierra Vista: Vista Transit Safety Plan Update; the end of Fiscal Year Financial Report and setting a tentative 2022 Board meeting schedule. The Director asked Board members to begin considering their 2022 schedules and what day and time might work best for the next calendar year.

This was an information item. No action was taken.

15. ADJOURNMENT of REGULAR SESSION

By general consent, the SVMPO Board regular meeting was then adjourned at 4:13 p.m.