



**SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)
MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST 11, 2021**

APPROVED

MEETING LOCATION:

City of Sierra Vista: Public Works Bld.
TRAINING CONFERENCE ROOM
401 Giulio Cesare Ave.
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

MEETING DATE AND TIME:

August 11, 2021
10:00 AM

**CDC PROTOCOLS WILL BE FOLLOWED
FOR PRE-SANITATION AND DISTANCING**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST
ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Website: www.svmppo.org

Email: SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov

Administrator Phone: 520-515-8525

SVMPO TAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair: Linda Jones, Public Works Operations Manager for Vista Transit

Vice-Chair: Brad Simmons, P.E., Cochise County Civil Engineer

Member: Sharon Flissar, P.E., Director Public Works, City of Sierra Vista (*virtual*)

Member: Matt McLachlan, Dir. Community Development, City Sierra Vista (*virtual*)

Member: Irene Zuniga, Capital Improvements and Development Manager

Member: Jim Halterman, Town of Huachuca City, Public Works Supervisor

Member: Mark Hoffman, Arizona Department of Transportation/Multimodal Division

[*virtual/joined at 10:25 am*]

Alternate Member: Jim Johnson, Ph.D, CBO,CCI; Building Official

Alternative Member: Valerie Fuller, Engineering Tech I; Cochise County (*virtual*)

SVMPO TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member: Jackie Watkins, P.E., Cochise County Engineer

STAFF:

SVMPO Administrator: Karen L. Lamberton, AICP

SVMPO Regional Civil Engineer: Dennis Donovan, P.E.

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Pregler, Senior Planner, Sierra Vista Community Development (*virtual*)

Chris Joannes, Kimley-Horn LRTP Consultant Team (*virtual*)

Brent Crowther, Kimley-Horn LRTP Consultant Team (*virtual*)

Taylor Dunkle, Kimley-Horn LRTP Consultant Team (*virtual*)

Brian Snider, Michael-Baker SRTP Consultant Team (*virtual*)

Ed Latimer, Wilson and Company (*virtual for partial meeting*)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Jones called the TAC meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was in place.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

It was noted that previously the TAC had consensus that the agenda acceptance did not need a formal motion and Chair Jones asked if any TAC members had any questions or changes to the August 11th meeting agenda. Hearing none, the Agenda was accepted as presented.

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

This is the time set aside for the public to comment. Members of the Board may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01 (H) action taken as a result of public comment is limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date.

No attendees of the public were presented to address the TAC at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (June 9, 2021)

Chair Jones asked members if they had any comments or corrections on the June 9, 2021 meeting minutes. With a noted correction to spelling on one name, Member Flissar moved to accept the meeting minutes for the TAC Regular Meeting of June 9, 2021, Member Simmons seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

MOTION: Member Flissar

SECOND: Member Simmons

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 7/0

CONTINUING BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

5. SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN STATUS UPDATE

Michael-Baker, the Transit Plan consultant team, presented the Final Draft Short-Range Transit Report to the TAC members. The requirements, findings, funding strategies and recommendations for the next five years for the Sierra Vista Transit system were presented. A total of six recommendations were developed and discussed with the TAC members (presentation slides 5-11 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 variety of farebox options was briefly discussed and the need to have options that allowed those that only use cash to be able to access transit cards but also to recognize different fares e.g. discounted fares and to easily provide change or allow the use of debit or credit cards. Using updated fareboxes, combined with easily accessible kiosks that would take cash, could reduce the conflict between drivers and riders, especially since the current system doesn't allow for change to be given so riders are paying higher than the stated rates because they do not have exact change. These new systems should allow for better data collecting and reduce significantly staff time in dealing with counting coins.

Paratransit routing was also briefly discussed. The City Paratransit service currently serves all of the City limits, but FTA requirements are a zone within 1/4 a mile of fixed routes. These rides are reserved for those with documented medical mobility disabilities and must be approved for access to paratransit services with an application made through Vista Transit that includes a doctor's sign-off for the service.

TAC members, in particular those from the City of Sierra Vista, questioned the fare increase recommendations, noting that the last time such a request came forward the City Council felt fare increases were too high and would not implement them. The reduction of ridership also makes it unlikely that a fare increase would succeed right now. It was acknowledged that right now there are special challenges with reduction of riders and that only those that absolutely had no other choices were riding at that this time. Administrator Lamberton advised the TAC that when this specific recommendation was brought to the SVMPO Board in draft form there was unanimous agreement that at some point, although not necessarily immediately, a fare increase for transit would need to be considered by City Council, and the Board supported this recommendation to be included in the SRTP. It was also noted that this plan is a five-year plan with phased recommendations and fare increase requests do not have to go forward until ridership levels and funding needs make bringing a fare increase forward a reasonable request.

The SVMPO Administrator noted that the need for the Safety Transit plan update was already being addressed and a consultant would be selected by the end of the month to undertake this mandated effort to address the existing deficiencies and the need for a 2021 update, per FTA requirements for the Sierra Vista Transit Agency. She also noted that this is a partnership with the City's Transit Dept. as this is a 5307-transit agency requirement, not a MPO mandated document to undertake. The intent of this effort is to create an editable document with all the required forms and checklists so that the City can more easily complete these annual updates without consultant assistance.

Chair Jones, who is also the Sierra Vista Transit Administrator, commented that she agrees with all the recommendations presented in the SRTP and has already begun to move forward with seeking to implement some of them, such as the improved fareboxes. The Transit Agency has been awarded some zero match FTA funds to help accomplish some of these recommendations. She complimented the consultant team, saying they had done an amazing job and fully engaged the transit drivers in this effort resulting in great participation, over 79 percent of all riders, in responding to on-line surveys.

The SVMPO Administrator reminded the TAC that the Final Draft Report, along with back-up drafted earlier documents, was available on the SVMPO website for their review:

<https://www.svmmpo.org/transportation-planning/short-range-transit-plan-update/>

The 2021-2027 Short-Range Transit Plan is scheduled to be presented for adoption to the SVMPO Board in August 2021. The SVMPO Administrator noted that this plan may also be presented as an informational or action item to the City of Sierra Vista Council, if desired by the City. This SRTP is not a mandate for the City to implement, nor does it require the City's adoption, but it is usually desired to be presented as it does provide well researched and technically vetted recommendations for one of the City's departments.

This was a discussion and possible action item. The TAC declined to take formal action on this plan but directed the SVMPO Administrator to move it forward to the SVMPO Board for formal consideration.

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

The SVMPO Administrator provided a very short briefing on the introduction to the Long-Range Transportation Plan process, schedule and accomplishments to date shown on presentation slides 2-6 (included in the posted Agenda Packet). TAC members were reminded that the posted Final Draft Report was available to the public and the TAC 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.

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

The SVMPO Administrator briefed the TAC on the overall summary of public outreach efforts, explained the challenges of doing public outreach effectively during the timeframe of this plan, and highlighted the findings from the public feedback received. Hard-copy surveys from Vista Transit riders, virtual interactive maps and surveys, posted informational boards and Press Releases were all strategies used to notify the public of this effort and to solicit feedback.

This was an information item and covered presentation slides 7-12 (included in the posted Agenda Packet)

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

Chris Johannes, from the Kimley-Horn consultant team, then took over the presentation and shared with TAC members the Final Report summary of the technical work undertaken, the findings that were made and the information presented in chapters 1 through 6. This information had been before the TAC before and discussed during the June 10th Joint Work Session.

Concern was expressed about the modeling results given the very different travel patterns experienced over the last few years and so there is some question if input data was providing a realistic result for the future. Unfortunately, every plan like this is the result of a single snapshot in time and the SVMPO Administrator acknowledges that this modeling effort was taken at the weakest point in time for developing strong projection datasets as Census 2020 data was not released as expected and data used was, in some cases, over ten years old, and traffic counts were reflecting the pandemic influenced travel disruptions. Nevertheless, the model is only one tool to help define where future congestion issues might occur and given the volume of traffic on our state highway system, combined with the tendency of major economic generators taking access from the state highway the results showing future issues on those routes is a challenge the State will need to address at some point.

This was an information and discussion item and presented information on slides 13-17 (included in posted Agenda Packet).

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

The TAC members were provided the preliminary project lists by mode: Roadway, Preservation, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Recreational Trails, Transit and Aviation (*previously also sent to all TAC member electronically and included within the Final Draft LRTP*). Of these the first two: Roadway and Preservation projects, TAC member concurrence with top ranked projects and/or feedback on selection of the top projects, by phase and member jurisdiction was requested.

The TAC indicated they support their earlier recommendation to separate out the State Highway projects from the prioritized lists for regional funding. The SVMPO Administrator advised the TAC that the SVMPO Board, when presented with options on this topic, choose to keep the State Highway projects in the plan, but directed the consultant team to separate them from the combined jurisdiction lists, to show regional support for state highway investments and to keep the option for partnerships, when it makes sense from a funding and regional perspective to do so. The SVMPO member jurisdiction, the Town of Huachuca City, feels most strongly on this issue as their major transportation circulation and safety issues are on their Highway 90 corridor.

The other transportation mode project lists were derived from a balance of technical analysis, public and stakeholder input and weighing regional priorities and benefits.

- Transit projects were derived primarily from the Short-Range Transit Plan;
- Aviation projects developed out of the last adopted Master Aviation plan;

- Bicycle/Pedestrian and Recreational Trail projects were developed in coordination with member jurisdiction plans and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

The consultant team then discussed with the TAC proposed methods of fiscally constraining the SVMPO LRTP. Member Hoffman indicated that the Investment Strategy method is what ADOT uses with their Long-Range Transportation plan, as do several other smaller MPO's. He added that this is a perfectly acceptable way to proceed on this LRTP. After some discussion on options and the pro's and con's of addressing fiscal contract within the federal regulations, the TAC supported the Investment Strategy approach. Several member jurisdictions were not ready to state a preferred breakdown of a percentage for modal types and this information was requested to be transmitted within the next couple of days to the SVMPO.

Chair Jones asked if the TAC had other concerns or questions to raise on the project list and cost elements of this plan. TAC members had a number of questions and concerns to raise with the consultant team. Among them were:

- Assurance that previous changes had been made, examples of changes they thought had been requested seemed to still be in drafts they had available to them;
- Cost estimates were questioned strongly – unit costs seemed to low in some categories to some TAC members, but projects costs seemed to high for some projects to other TAC members;
- It was noted that the City of Sierra Vista has adopted a Complete Streets program;
- The County requested that the very long-range San Pedro River Corridor project proposal be removed, although Member Zuniga pointed out several longer-range concerns that may warrant that corridor in future, including evacuation routes, alternative highway routes, tourism components in that corridor. The SVMPO Administrator pointed out that that potential Long-Range project is still in the County's adopted plan for future consideration and advised that proactive advance Right-of-Way acquisition would be prudent to plan for in terms of future regional circulation needs;
- Jurisdiction designations were not accurate in some projects, many were joint jurisdiction projects and crossed boundaries, this appeared to be an issue in particular for projects where a County enclaves existed.

This was a discussion item referencing presentation slides 18-27. Direction was given to the SVMPO Administrator and Consultant Team of requested project changes, additional research and confirmation of unit and project costs was recommended, double checking project jurisdiction designated requested. TAC members agreed to send in any final changes and their recommendations for a modal split for funding strategies by the end of the week.

10. SVMPO 2050 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: NEXT ACTION ITEMS

The SVMPO Administrator and the consultant team briefly summarized the next action steps that might be undertaken after the 2050 LRTP is adopted including the potential of several amendments that might be desired after a federal reauthorization bill is passed and Census 2020 data is fully released.

This was a discussion and possible action item. Chair Jones asked if there were any additional questions or comments on this item. Hearing none, **Chair Jones asked if the TAC desired to take formal action with a motion on this item.** The TAC declined to take formal action on

this plan but directed the SVMPO Administrator to move it forward to the SVMPO Board after addressing concerns noted in the meeting today with the consultant team.

11. THEATER DRIVE POTENTIAL SCOPE OF WORK: FY22 WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Vice-Chair Simmons noted that Jackie Watkins, the County Engineer, was unable to attend today but had sent a statement that if the SVMPO was fully covering the cost of this planning effort she was not opposed to the City's desire to see a 15% design included. The SVMPO Administrator confirmed that this was an approved Work Program funded project with no additional match requirements beyond the staff In-Kind already committed to the SVMPO. The City TAC members concurred and re-stated their desire to see the 15% design for this project included.

Direction was then given to the SVMPO Administrator to proceed with the proposed Scope of Work with the full 15% design component included. The SVMPO Administrator stated that she would do so and the MPO would look for an early Fall release, contract tentatively by the end of calendar year, and a kick-off planned for the beginning of 2022 for this project.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/DIRECTION TO SVMPO ADMINISTRATOR MAY BE GIVEN

12. SOUTHCENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT

Member Hoffman noted that there were both federal and state transportation bills addressing electric and alternate fuel vehicles that might be considered and passed in some form. At the federal level there is a push to move more into alternate fuels which has funding and infrastructure impacts for rural Arizona.

This was an information item.

13. JURISDICTION PROJECT UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Member Fuller noted that the County was dealing with a lot of roadway fissures, and they were a maintenance problem for them right now. No other TAC Members had any specific additions to add at this time on regional and local agency projects or had any additional current events/announcements.

This was an information item.

14. UPCOMING SCHEDULED MEETINGS and ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

AzPlanning Conference/Western States Planning Conference: August 22-25, 2021

SVMPO Board Meeting: August 25, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. SV City Managers Conference Room

AZ Roads and Streets Conference: October 6-8, 2021, Tucson, AZ

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 Council on Sept. 9th, with follow-up Work sessions on potential Action Items for a Sept. 23rd Council meeting.

This was an information item (*this item was only briefly noted as being available in the Agenda*).

15. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for **October 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.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. This TAC meeting is tentatively to be scheduled as a joint BPAC/TAC meeting.

This was an informational item. No action was taken.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further questions or comments, by general consensus, Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.