

Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO)

Minutes of the SERTPO Committee Meeting

October 20, 2022 – 10:00 am

Hybrid Meeting (Virtual/In Person)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Member (or Alternate) listed in Alphabetical Order

Baker, Shelia	City of Hobbs (Alternate)
Brito, Candy	City of Eunice
Bunch, Clint	City of Clovis
Burns, Jason	Eddy County
Cavazos, Al	Village of Capitan
Chavez, Steven	City of Portales
Garcia, Roman (Mayor)	Town of Vaughn
Gutierrez, Bernardo	City of Lovington
Jennings, Dan (Councilor)	Town of Hagerman
Jones, Walon	Curry County
Little, Christopher	Mescalero Apache Tribe
Lovato, Ricky	Roosevelt County
Lucero, Amanda	De Baca County
Myrick, Van	City of Jal
Najar, Louis	City of Roswell
Reid, Bruce	Lea County
Patterson, Jeff	City of Carlsbad
Sena, Ron	Village of Ruidoso
Valverde, Summer	City of Artesia
West, Joe	Chaves County
Willard, Lynn (Dr.)	Lincoln County

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bradley, Jerry (Mayor)	City of Texico
Burkett, Mickey (Mayor)	Village of Dora
Dean, Ray (Mayor)	Town of Carrizozo
Estrada, Pete (Mayor)	Village of Loving
Green, Barry (Mayor)	Village of Melrose
Gutierrez, Amy (Mayor)	Town of Tatum
Hall, Jubal	Village of Cloudcroft
Ingram, Justin	Village of Fort Sumner
Jarvis, Joey	City of Ruidoso Downs
King, Kris (Mayor)	Village of Causey
Porter, Tom	Otero County
Powell, Justin	Town of Dexter
Powell, Leona	Village of Grady
Rael, Stella	City of Alamogordo
Sainz, Robert (Trustee)	Village of Tularosa
Salazar, Ysidro (Mayor)	Town of Lake Arthur
Sales, Rudy	Village of Hope
Seely, Sam (Mayor)	Village of Corona
Summers, Kim	Town of Elida
Whitecotton, Toni	Village of Floyd

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COG/NMDOT STAFF PRESENT:

Arnett, Manon	NMDOT - Roswell
Briley, Alan	NMDOT - Roswell
Burr, Mary Ann	Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD)
Coslin, Libby	NMDOT – Roswell
Forman, Beth	NMDOT – Santa Fe
Krueger, Neala	NMDOT – Santa Fe
Matta, Louis	NMDOT – Roswell
Rodriguez III, Raul	Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG)

GUESTS PRESENT*:

Allen, Glenda	City of Roswell
Avitia, Jesus	Souder Miller & Associates
Ball, Crystal	City of Lovington
Baysinger, Susan	City of Portales
Contreras-Apodaca, Gabby	Stantec
Dominguez, Alvin	Bohannan Huston, Inc. (Albuquerque)
Garcia, Yolanda	Town of Vaughn
Gurule, Angelo	Chaves County (Alternate Member)
Henry, Anthony	City of Hobbs
Hicks, Becky	Roswell Transit
Honeycutt, Jeff	Lincoln County (Alternate Member)
Hooper, Wes	Eddy County
Palomino, Alex	Souder Miller & Associates (Roswell)
Romero, Roberta	Town of Vaughn
Ruvalcaba, Imelda	City of Eunice (Alternate Member)
Serna, Samantha	Village of Ruidoso
Shields, David	Bohannan Huston (Las Cruces)

**Unidentified Callers*

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM (8)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Chair Jason Burns presided over the hybrid meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Members and guests participated with the Pledge of Allegiance. With twenty-one members present, a quorum was established. Introductions were held, with online audience signing in virtually. Jeff Honeycutt, Lincoln County, gave recognition to Lynn Willard (present), who is a Lincoln County commissioner. Dr. Willard is terming out as Commissioner and has been an active member of SERTPO for eight years. Additionally, Mr. Honeycutt recognized his replacement, Samantha Serna, also in attendance. Ms. Serna begins her term starting in January 2023.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ron Sena made a motion to approve the agenda, as presented. Louis Najjar seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with there being no objections, motion passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Louis Najjar made a motion to approve the June 29, 2022 minutes as presented. Ricky Lovato seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with there being no discussion or objections, motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution No. 22-007 Approving the SERTPO Public Participation Plan

Mary Ann Burr explained to members that the current Public Participation Plan (PPP) is dated September 2018, and the reason for the update is to fulfill a requirement whereas if there is an update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the PPP must also be updated. A copy of the posted Public Participation Plan was displayed. The PPP was posted online for the required 45 days, and that period lapsed October 6, 2022. Additional change to the posted document includes changing the date of “October/November” to “October” [Cover page] and updating the date on the signature page to read for the date of the meeting. Changes within the document included any text referencing the Committee to read as one; an update to a link; and an update to the EPCOG Planner name. Louis Najjar noted that the Title VI Plan had also been posted and inquired if the same changes were reflected. Ms. Burr responded that any references to the Policy and Technical Committees were changed for the Committee to read as one.

Louis Najjar made a motion to approve Resolution No. 22-007 Approving the SERTPO Public Participation Plan. Joe West seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with there being no additional discussion or objections, motion passed unanimously.

B. Resolution No. 22-008 Approving the SERTPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Ms. Burr displayed a copy of the current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), dated January 2017. An update is required every five (5) years. Ms. Burr reminded members that a subcommittee had been formed in an earlier SERTPO meeting, to review the Plan and make recommendations. The subcommittee held virtual meetings with the last meeting/workshop held in Ruidoso in hybrid format (virtual/in-person). Members were provided a link to the posted plans by email in September and in the meeting packet. A few comments were received. One comment was that the Plan was reviewed and there were no changes recommended and a second comment from the NMDOT Liaison which was more of a concurrence on a proposed change regarding the title of the Plan.

The meeting packet contained a Summary of changes (displayed) made to the Plan. Ms. Burr explained that initially the document contained tracking but with the maps, diagrams, etc. not being deleted during tracking, it became confusing to follow. Changes and updates have been itemized in the summary. She noted that the Transportation System Overview was greatly expanded. The proposed Regional Transportation Plan was displayed. The RTP was posted for public comment and that time period has lapsed. Ms. Burr continued with an explanation of additional changes—one being the title of the Plan. The previous RTP was part of the Statewide Transportation Plan. The NMDOT Liaison concurred with the change of removing the reference to the NM Transportation Plan and a sentence that refers to the relationship between the two Plans on Page 3. The Southeast Regional Transportation Plan is now independent of the state plan. A photo credits box was added (displayed) on the Table of Contents (TOC) Page. She added that the TOC was much longer than the current plan (comparing both TOCs), and a reader now has the ability to jump to desired sections within the new Plan. Ms. Burr added that while attending the MainStreet Fall Institute in Ruidoso, she acquired an updated MainStreet map which was updated on Page 39. Subheadings within the document will read October 2022. Ms. Burr spoke further of changes to Page 105, where photos were added, and a subheading

will be added to the section in addition to being clearer that the RTP was approved this date (pending approval).

Regarding the subcommittee workshop, members reviewed the plan in depth. Members deleted strategies, reworded a goal, and added a strategy where members need to be informed about ADA compliance. She commented that a trail network section is planned for the future. Staff felt it best not to hold up the current RTP update and reflect the additional section with the next update.

Louis Najjar inquired on the population forecasts, where southeastern New Mexico is expected to grow by 20,000 in five years. Ms. Burr responded that the forecasting charting was prepared by High Street Consulting, and staff information included populations, comparing 2010 decennial data to 2020 decennial data. Mr. Najjar commented that there was a population curve that he found interesting as he believes there is more population with the [oil and gas] booms, highs and lows, and if the forecasts were based on census, it would explain the smooth curve. Louis Najjar requested that it be noted, for the future RTP update, that the dairy industry has experienced a decline. He commented that for the past couple of years, the dairy industry has been declining. There are fewer dairies in Chaves County, which is also reflective on the transportation side with less truck traffic, making it harder for the delivery of the raw product. Data is always a few years behind. Raul Rodriguez commented that the dairy industry in Curry County and Portales has boomed and concurred that census data is a few years behind for that point in time.

Chairman Burns expressed appreciation for the time and effort spent on the Plan, which really reflects southeastern New Mexico and what is occurring here, the lifeblood of the State. Louis Najjar made a motion to approve Resolution No. 22-008 Approving the SERTPO Regional Transportation Plan. Jeffrey Honeycutt seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with there being no objections or further discussion, motion passed by unanimous vote.

C. Resolution No. 22-009 Approving the SERTPO Title VI Plan

Ms. Burr displayed the resolution and Title VI Plan, which was posted online with the 45-day period lapsing on October 17th. The date on the cover page will be changed to read for “October”. The current plan is dated March 2014. An update was previously submitted to the Construction and Civil Rights Bureau (CCRB) in 2018. The Bureau has been having staffing changes, and the ADA/Title VI Coordinator position is currently vacant. Bureau staff advised SERTPO to proceed with getting the Plan approved and then submit to CCRB for review. Ms. Burr added that a template from the NMDOT was used; the Executive Director will need to sign the document; and the approved Public Participation Plan will need to be incorporated into the appendices. The organizational charting was improved; the Title VI Coordinator was updated to reflect the current Executive Director; procedures for notification of meetings were outlined; and any references to Policy and Technical Committees were updated.

Louis Najjar made a motion to approve Resolution No. 22-009 Approving the SERTPO Title VI Plan. Joe West seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with there being no objections, motion passed unanimously.

D. Review and Discuss Transportation Project Fund (TPF) Project Submittal Prioritization for FY 24

The Chairman explained that the time is appropriate, for the TPF evaluations coming up next year, to have any discussion regarding the process that was put in place and if there is any part that needs to be improved. There may not necessarily be an action item unless it is felt that some action is needed, such as convening a subcommittee. The Chair commented that this year, in conjunction with NMDOT, SERTPO needs to make sure that all criteria are evaluated, which involves current projects, current TPF funding, previous awards, previous applications, phased projects, etc. The newly appointed

NMDOT Secretary has commented that he would like to see more of an accountability for projects that are current projects, making sure monies are being expended effectively and timely. Projects that are coming up for the Call-for-Projects in February need to be planned or ready now. The criteria help with the checks and balances system, making sure the monies are expended and projects are completed.

A second comment from the Chair addressed the use of the Project Feasibility Form (PFF). There have been discussions with District 2 regarding elimination or revision of the PFF to be more in line with the criteria, making sure the appropriate questions are asked. He added that there is a purpose for the PFF with a pre-check, but it needs to be more in line with the process that is being implemented for the evaluation process. Louis Najar inquired on any comment from District 2 on the process used last year. Louis Matta, NMDOT District 2, addressed members and stated that he had did not have any problems with the process last year. The only issue that came up was the letter of support (for NMDOT Right-of-Way) in that the support letters need to be on District 2 letterhead. The format previously used with concurrence on the entity's letter was convenient, but it was rejected. After additional discussion, it was determined that the entity would submit a request for each individual project, and District 2 will use a form letter format, responding to the requests. There were several requests in the past application cycle.

Regarding the number of project applications, the Chair commented that utilizing a project cap should be considered. SERTPO accomplished getting more participation in the last application cycle (i.e., forty-four applications received) and encouraged minimizing the virtual aspect, bringing members together in person. The Chair added that he felt SERTPO did a good job with the design, maintenance, and capital evaluations, which created a multi-year process for the TPF program. Regarding shore-up funding, the Chair stated he attended the State Transportation Commission meeting in Farmington and spoke in opposition to the shore-up funding. He expressed his concerns whereby the shore-up funding diminishes the RTPO's checks and balances system with the District Engineer, which is a good check to make sure projects are not coming in over budget and are not underperforming. A few capital projects were not funded on account of the shoring up. He commented that District 2 has done a good job with the evaluation process and with their support of the recommendations that SERTPO provided last year. He concurred with a statement made that "today's projects cannot be paid with tomorrow's money" and stated that the Regional Transportation Plan shows that there is a lot of activity in this area, with several different entities and industries that need to be supported.

Louis Najar commented that he believes there should be a cap, so SERTPO can be responsible with the amount being asked for projects. He reminded members that previously there was only a million dollars available annually and with forty-two members, all entities were competing for the same million-dollar funding. He thanked NMDOT for the new process/funding and stated that all need to be responsible and not request for too many big projects because they are hard to fund. He explained that Roswell's projects were basically pavement preservation, keeping in line with the RTP's vision/goal of preserving current infrastructure. It is difficult to preserve current infrastructure and having the maintenance projects or mill-and-fill projects that qualify as a capital project help to preserve current infrastructure. He indicated that he has no problem with putting in a cap and has heard that there is a possibility of NMDOT putting in a cap on projects. He suggested that there be enough notice for planning purposes; described recent funding awards; and spoke to unchanged priorities with unfunded projects. Roswell's unfunded project applications remain a priority and will be resubmitted for future funding.

Wes Hooper informed members that he visited with NMDOT executives last week and stated that he feels like SERTPO needs to get more formal because it may be more formal with the TPF process on the NMDOT side. There is discussion of presentation being made directly to the State Transportation Commission, which Secretary Serna favored. Mr. Hooper expressed concern with the large number of applications, such as the forty-four applications from this district alone. Originally, the process was

for capital, shovel-ready projects. With 24 million for the size of District 2, much can be accomplished with such funding. Mr. Hooper commented that when planning/design and maintenance projects are added, the applications greatly increase because all entities have those projects. He discussed the previous cycle where top projects were ranked but did not get funded. He encouraged SERTPO reviewing the process and recommended a subcommittee of five or six members to score and then bringing it to SERTPO for presentation. Louis Najjar commented that it had been structured to be more informal to help the smaller entities. The smaller communities do not have engineers, and their projects are primarily pavement maintenance. He reminded all that the process is consistent with the RTP goal of preserving current infrastructure. Mr. Hooper commented that he believes there needs to be a cut-off at a certain point (for maintenance); the definition of maintenance needs to be revisited; and a draft needs to be presented to SERTPO. Overall, the process needs to be more formal and outlined.

Ricky Lovato spoke and commented that the smaller entities do not have engineers. Roosevelt County did receive a significant amount (maintenance) which was very impactful. At present, the County is about to complete twenty miles of micro-sealing, which they would never be able to accomplish otherwise within the next 15 to 20 years. LGRF funding is limited (750k – 900k annually), and this funding is used for extra maintenance and fixing roads. The County could never accomplish what they have been able to do without the TPF funding. They are a large county with 1,200 miles. Pavement preservation is exactly what they are accomplishing. It is hoped that their work will be completed by the Thanksgiving holiday, and the roads that do not get completed (due to escalating costs), will be resubmitted in a future application cycle. Mr. Lovato favors the process.

Ron Sena commented that he favors the process as they have been doing pavement rehabilitation. Ruidoso has a small window for construction, and they have been hit hard with the monsoons. They are doing heater scarification with the mill-and-fill, which has worked well with them with the number of roadways they are able to get done. With no or minimal road closures, residents can drive right on the roadway once it is completed, which is beneficial to the Village. Mr. Sena favors continuing on with this type of pavement rehabilitation and pavement maintenance and their use of a contractor.

The Chair commented that SERTPO is encouraging participation and has attempted to limit virtual so more members will come and participate. There have been issues with COVID and individuals not wanting to travel. The future possibility of rotating meeting locations would encourage participation. The invitation for reviewing the TPF process was put out to all members and approximately twelve members participated for that process. The Chair agreed that the definitions could be improved; the processes could be more detailed, for better understanding; and subcommittee scoring is a good idea. The previous process was an initial process, and it is now known where there can be improvement. Being more formal and working out the logistics of PFF review, presentation, subcommittee, and confirmation need to be discussed further. The Chair commented that SERTPO's responsibility is not to cut projects, but to prioritize projects. SERTPO makes recommendations and submits them to NMDOT. There are big projects in the area that need to be advanced, but maintenance and preservation are important. Mr. Hooper restated that he believes the planning/design portion is not needed and provided an explanation whereby if an entity has such a project, they will get the plan and design in place, proving they have buy-in. The TPF funding is not enough money to get significant projects done quickly when there is a planning/design component included.

Christopher Little addressed members and stated that he felt the process should be reviewed; needs to be fair so every entity is able to get a fair chance; the process should go to a subcommittee who reviews and makes a recommendation to the Board; presentations should be made; and have percentages used for the categories so it is known how much to invest in planning and construction. He added that he felt each entity should submit one application to be reviewed. Mescalero had submitted six applications previously, and he stated he would be willing to submit one application in the future. Mr. Little commented that he would be willing to be part of the subcommittee.

Louis Najjar recommended that SERTPO go forward with a subcommittee. He added that before the subcommittee meets, a questionnaire should be set up that the RTPO staff would send to members. The questionnaire would have questions such as should there be a cap on dollars, a cap on projects, etc. The responses from the questionnaires will give the subcommittee member input, and the subcommittee can respond to the needs of the entities. The Chair provided that a questionnaire survey can be put together and submitted to members; and an invitation for the subcommittee can be distributed. Wes Hooper concurred with the survey approach. Discussion continued on the survey results. Louis Najjar recommended that the survey results be shared with the entities and discussed during a meeting before the subcommittee comes together, for transparency and to ensure the subcommittee is working with the consensus of SERTPO. Wes Hooper added that the draft should be put together and presented to SERTPO for the input.

Ron Sena inquired if it is known what the other districts/RTPOs are doing with their application processes. Ms. Burr responded that Raul could speak to NERTPO's processes, and she can inquire from the other RTPOs. The Chair offered, based on his familiarity with their processes, that SERTPO has more requirements. He believed the northern RTPO does have a minimal rating and submits to the District Engineer. Mr. Sena added that SERTPO is competing against every entity, county and municipality, within the state. Regarding NERTPO, Raul Rodriguez provided that they have a very basic rating and ranking review process, using a scale from 1 to 5 for different categories. All applications are submitted, with himself and his co-planner ensuring all is reviewed and correct, and the applications are then submitted to NMDOT Liaison(s) who present to NMDOT POD and STC. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he believes the other districts/RTPOs have not really changed their processes from the last couple of years and offered to inquire at the upcoming RTPO quarterly meeting on the matter. The Chair concluded that the questionnaire survey will be submitted, will pursue a meeting and then convene the subcommittee, with all completed by February [anticipated Call-for-Projects].

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

SERTPO Program Managers Update

Mary Ann Burr, SNMEDD/COG, informed members that the plans approved during the meeting will be posted to each COG's websites. Ms. Burr has been continuing with the distribution of traffic safety materials and has provided materials to Capitan, Ruidoso, Eunice, Jal, Loving, Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, and Tularosa. As more supplies are acquired, additional communities will be visited. Ms. Burr also attended portions of the New Mexico MainStreet Fall Institute in Ruidoso and provided SERTPO promotional items. To continue supporting meetings, gatherings, and mini conferences in the region, Ms. Burr asked for members to let her know of any such events in their areas.

Ms. Burr has been continuing to work with planning grants, and the Village of Hope was recently awarded a CDBG Comprehensive planning grant. An award was also received for an asset management planning grant [Hagerman]. Transportation is included in the scope of work. An asset management grant application has been submitted for Ruidoso Downs, and an application is being prepared for the Town of Lake Arthur.

Handouts for the Matching Grant funding were provided on the sign-in table, and members have been provided the information by email. The funding is \$1 million, statewide. DFA expects to receive several applications. A short video of the presentation is available online (and the link can be provided by email), with the presenter being Dr. Shanna Sasser, who spoke to SERTPO in an earlier meeting. There are only eight more days remaining for application to the program. Both RTPO staff are planning to attend the New Mexico Infrastructure Conference and the Data Users Conference in November. Upcoming activity includes, as has been discussed, the TPF Call-for-Projects (previous Call was dated January 26, 2022) and the

upcoming TAP/RTP/CMAQ application cycle in May. Public transit prioritization is coming up for the next meeting.

Raul Rodriguez III, EPCOG, commented that in addition to the NM Infrastructure and Data Users Conference, there is also an RTPO Roundtable being held next week (Tuesday). Additionally, the quarterly report will be submitted to NMDOT, and once all revisions from the liaisons are approved, the report will be posted on <https://www.rtponm.org/>. The resolutions and plans, regular trainings and upcoming conferences are also posted onto the website.

EPCOG sends out a weekly/bi-weekly grant advisory to their region, trying to get the word out regarding state and federal grants. EPCOG has recently applied and has been approved for a \$2 million HRSA grant, which is a Human Resources and Services Administration Grant. The grant will be used to form a plan and committee to battle opioid abuse resistance. Transportation, in time, can be tied into the program. Coverage for the funding will include eastern New Mexico: Curry, Roosevelt, De Baca and Clay Counties. EPCOG does receive several NM DFA webinar trainings, and they are sent out to their respective regions for participation.

Mr. Rodriguez has a meeting with USDOT, Mr. Alex Clegg, who is heading up the ROUTES Initiative with the USDOT and HUD Departments. They will be reviewing the presentation set up for November 10th. He asked members to mark the day and expect to attend in-person or online. The training will be for the new grants (and existing grants) that have been rolling out as a result of the Bipartisan Infrastructure law, which has provided a historic amount of funding within the last year. A flyer will be prepared and distributed (and posted).

Local Project Updates / NMDOT Updates

Neala Krueger, NMDOT Planning, spoke and thanked the RTPO staff and Committee for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)—the Plan is very detailed and well done.

Alan Briley, District 2, commented that he liked the discussion held on the TPF rating and how all must proceed to determine how to take care of all entities. There are 40 plus entities [SERTPO] and the District has 140, which includes schools and other parties. He added that their money is stable, and they are doing a lot more pavement preservation in their Maintenance Division. In Eddy County, the District has \$150 million worth of work going on with US 285, and the District is getting ready to do more on NM 31 and NM 128. The oilfield industry is driving that funding. Regarding US 380 out toward the Texas line from Roswell, the project is in the design phase (and studies). Currently, the price tag is \$150 million to \$160 million. Several of the District's priorities are getting phased out and hopefully, they can do a couple of \$2 to \$3-million-dollar projects at a time for such big projects.

Louis Matta, District 2, announced that the District's email addresses are changing to ".dot.nm.gov". More specifically, *first name, last name at dot.nm.gov*. He provided an example of an email address for any individual with state government. They will be transitioning to the new email addresses for a year. Regarding LGRF and TPF, all contracts have been sent out. Capital outlay should be going out. Mr. Matta provided that if an entity needs extensions, those requests need to be sent in as soon as possible. Mr. Matta commented that the TPF is a big program, while LGRF funding is limited (approximately \$2 million). County arterial funding is approximately \$1 million. Regarding extensions, Ricky Lovato inquired if an entity needs extensions and if that is included in the criteria. The Chair explained that the current TPF criteria addresses that and will be revisited. The current TPF is two years from the time of award. The criterion's purpose was not to limit an entity but to ensure the entity spends their current monies before acquiring new funding.

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NEXT MEETING DATE

The next SERTPO meeting date was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 29, 2022, where public transit prioritization will take place. Ms. Burr will send out a confirmation email once confirmed with the Convention Center. The timing of the meeting should fall in line with the planned TPF discussion of survey results as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Louis Najjar made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Honeycutt seconded the motion. A call for votes was taken and with no objections, motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

APPROVED BY:



SERTPO Committee Chair/Vice Chair

11-29-22

Date

ATTESTED BY:



SERTPO Program Manager

11-29-22

Date