



**SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 31, 2021**

APPROVED

MEETING LOCATION:

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

To attend the meeting by telephone:

Call 1-415-655-0001. Meeting 287 957 271 #
Enter # for Attendee ID. For Arizona Relay
Service use 1-800-367-8939, or dial 7-1-1.

MEETING DATE AND TIME:

March 31, 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	Rick Mueller, Mayor, City of Sierra Vista
Vice-Chair	Johann Wallace, Mayor, Town of Huachuca City (<i>telephonically</i>)
Member	Rachel Gray, Vice-Mayor, 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:

Member	Sarah Pacheco, Councilmember, City of Sierra Vista
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STAFF:

SVMPO Administrator: Karen L. Lamberton, AICP

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeremy Moore, Arizona Department of Transportation (*telephonically for Rod Lane*)
Mark Hoffman, ADOT Multimodal Planning Division (*telephonically*)
Cynthia Butterworth, Councilmember, Town of Huachuca City, (*alternate member/telephonically*)
Kevin Adam, RTAC Liaison (*telephonically*)
Ed Stillings, FHWA (*telephonically*)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Mueller called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m. Members Searle, Gray were present. Vice-Chair Wallace, and Member Judd were present telephonically. A quorum was present. City Councilmember Carolyn Umphrey was present (non-voting). Town Councilmember Cynthia Butterworth, who is the designated alternate to Vice-Chair Wallace, was also present by telephone.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Mueller asked if the Board had any changes to the Agenda. Hearing none, the Chair asked for a motion to accept the agenda, as presented. Member Gray made the motion, Vice-Chair Wallace seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Member Gray

SECOND: Vice-Chair Wallace

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chair Mueller 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.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (January 28, 2021)

Chair Mueller asked if any Board member has any comments or corrections to the Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2021. It was noted that Carolyn Umphrey was present telephonically and should be added to the attendee list. A few minor spelling corrections were noted. With those identified changes, Chair Mueller called for the question. Vice-Chair Wallace made the motion to accept the meeting minutes, with noted corrections, Member Gray seconded, and the motion to approve the January 28, 2021, meeting minutes was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Wallace

SECOND: Member Gray

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

CONTINUING BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

5. FY22 TITLE VI PLAN (Final Draft)

The SVMPO Administrator advised Board members that this final draft plan had been conditionally approved by ADOT's Civil Rights Office. She noted that this is a mandated regional plan that informs the public outreach requirements for regional plans, programs and activities. The Administrator also handed out updated demographic profile graphics that showed the 2015-2019 American Community Survey data that was detailed in the Final Draft Plan, presented to the Board in draft form in January (*Board members had been provided with internet links to the profile graphics in their meeting packets*).

Chair Mueller asked if any members of the Board had any questions on the Final Draft Plan or materials presented on the Title IV data. Member Gray noted that she finds this information very informative and appreciates getting this information. Hearing no further comments, Chair Mueller called for a motion to approve the FY22 Title VI Plan. Member Searle made the motion, Vice-Chair Wallace seconded, and the motion to adopt the FY22 Title VI Plan was unanimously approved.

MOTION: Member Searle

SECOND: Vice-Chair Wallace

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

NEW BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

6. POTENTIAL CHANGES TO METROPOLITAN AREA STANDARDS AND MPO THRESHOLDS

The SVMPO Administrator explained that both the Office of Management and Budget and the Bureau of the Census had posted potential changes on how urbanized areas might be defined, and how that might impact MPO thresholds for any new MPO formations. There has been no written guidance on the impact on existing MPO's but the Administrator stated that federal agencies have noted verbally that it is not expected to make any changes to MPO's already formed. Both the City of Sierra Vista and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (of which the SVMPO is a member) have written letters of concern about proposed changes. The SVMPO, did respond to a survey on this issue to AMPO, which informed their letter to the Office of Management and Budget on this issue.

Board members discussed these proposed changes and concern was noted that to date nothing in writing has been provided about what might happen to existing MPO's if these changes were implemented. In Arizona, it is known that these changes might impact three existing Metropolitan Planning Areas. Senators from the southern Arizona have also written letters of concern. Chair Mueller noted that remaining a MPO, even a small one, has advantages in terms of grants for housing and transportation, and allows for more direct decision making for the region on how those funds are used without competition with the much larger Council of Governments (SEAGO), who has to balance 19 jurisdictions for the limited funding. Vice-Chair Wallace weighed in that without explicit written guidance on the effect on existing MPO's it was worth making a regional statement on the pending proposals.

The SVMPO Administrator was then directed to draft a letter for the Chair signature following the bullet points raised by the City and AMPO letters, using today's date. The Administrator stated that she could do that and would forward that directly to the Mayor for his signature.

No formal action was deemed necessary beyond the direction to the SVMPO Administrator to draft a letter in behalf of the SVMPO region.

7. ELECTION OF SVMPO BOARD CHAIR to PENDING VACANT POSITION

The current SVMPO Chair, Mayor Mueller, City of Sierra Vista, stated that his position on the SVMPO Board would be taken over at the next meeting by a new appointee, Carolyn Umphrey. He noted the current standard in the SVMPO By-Laws that the Chair serve for two-years, and the Chair was seeking a nomination to fill his remaining term as Chair of the SVMPO Board.

Vice-Chair Wallace then nominated Member Rachel Gray to fill the SVMPO Chair position, an immediate second was made by Member Judd. Member Gray indicated willingness to take the position. The question moved and seconded, the Chair asked if there were any other discussion on this item. The motion to appoint Member Gray as the incoming SVMPO Chair was then unanimously approved, to formally begin on or before the May SVMPO Board meeting.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Wallace

SECOND: Member Judd

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

8. SVMPO BY-LAW AMENDMENT AND REVISED WORK PROGRAM STAFFING SECTION

Chair Mueller asked if the Administrator would explain this item to the Board. The SVMPO Administrator noted that this item was developed to improve clarity between the roles and responsibilities for SVMPO staff hiring and management between the SVMPO and the Hosting Agency of the City of Sierra Vista. The City's attorney, who acts on behalf of the SVMPO when there is no conflict, had suggested language to amend both the SVMPO By-Laws and the SVMPO Work Program.

The SVMPO Administrator explained that the language in blue in the memo was the proposed changes and shows up as red-lines in the background documentation shown within the existing pages of the approved By-Laws and Work Program.

Board members agreed these items should be addressed as two separate items. Member Searle made a motion to approve the proposed revisions to the SVMPO By-Laws as presented. Member Gray seconded the motion. The motion then passed unanimously.

MOTION: Member Searle

SECOND: Member Gray

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

The Board then discussed the Work Program proposed language. The SVMPO Administrator noted there were two options presented: a simple addition of potential positions within the Work Program narrative or as an Appendix that mirrored more closely what the City of Sierra Vista/the MPO's Hosting Agency's Annual Budget shows for staffing. The Administrator also noted that it would be rare that there would be more than 2.5 staff members in a MPO of this size, and that the half-time positions most often a temporary 4–6-month position for a targeted MPO activity or an intern. Member Searle stated he felt the Appendix was more detail than was needed, and other Board members concurred, noting that this was a two-year program revisited throughout the year, and if any unexpected staffing changes occurred it could be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Member Searle then moved to amend the Work Program language as noted in the Board memo on page 35 and to not use the language drafted in Appendix B. Member Gray seconded the motion. Chair Mueller asked if there was any further discussion. Board members indicated concurrence with the approach and the Chair called for the question. The motion as stated then was approved unanimously.

MOTION: Member Searle

SECOND: Member Gray

ACTION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

9. SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN UPDATE

Board members were briefed on the status of the preliminary draft of the Short-Range Transit Plan. The SVMPO Administrator gave credit to the Vista Transit drivers for proactively bringing in 75 Transit specific surveys have been received, along with another 17 on-line comments related to public transit input received at this time. FHWA and ADOT were credited with assisting by allowing the use of MPO funds to purchase bus passes as an incentive for returning surveys. It was noted that it does say something about the needs of our riders that a 60-cent bus pass would be so valuable as to encourage their submittal of surveys. The SVMPO Administrator noted that most filled out not only comments sections, but also the voluntary demographic section, required

to be asked under Title VI requirements. These surveys were just collected last Friday and by the next Board meeting these survey comments will be summarized for Board review.

The Short-Range Transit Plan covers a five-year timeframe and proposed projects will also inform the regional five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that the Board will see this upcoming June. The Short-Range Transit Plan is tentatively scheduled to be considered for adoption in June of this year.

Member Searle asked what percentage of riders the survey return represented. The SVMPO Administrator stated she would find out. A brief discussion was held about how the impacts of the COVID restrictions had changed previous transit ridership and that there have been significant dips across the nation in transit ridership.

SVMPO Administrator stated that regional connections are also being considered, including the reactivation of the Huachuca City shuttles and the Cochise Commuter routes that come into the Vista Center. These plans are updated every five years and the SVMPO is on target, with their consultant team, to complete this plan in a timely manner for ADOT Transit Dept. and the FTA.

Draft chapters will be dropped into the SVMPO website for public review and comment. When they are ready, currently under final quality control checks for the first three chapters, the link will be sent out the SVMPO Board for those interested in this topic.

Chair Mueller asked if there were any further discussion on this item. Hearing none, there being no action needed at this time, the Board was advised to expect a draft at their May meeting with potential adoption in June of this year.

This was an information and discussion item.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/DIRECTION TO SVMPO ADMINISTRATOR MAY BE GIVEN

10. STATE TRANSPORTATION BOARD/SOUTHCENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT

Jeremy Moore, ADOT SouthCentral District, stated that there was no major work underway at this time in the SVMPO region. There has been some clean-up and weeding work underway, and he noted that a new maintenance supervisor had been hired for this district. Chair Mueller noted an area along Highway 90, eastbound, that has a gully that is currently about 3 feet deep in trash. Mr. Moore noted he had received a list of areas in need of clean-up within ADOT's Right-of-Way and has prioritized that for spare time that his maintenance crew has. The Board acknowledged the limitations that ADOT had but reiterated with the recent winds we have had that a lot of trash had been blown about. City Board members noted that they were also picking up lots of wind-blown trash and trying to clean up the roadways they maintained.

Member Searle notes that the draft ADOT five-year plan was out, and he is reviewing it for the State Transportation Board. There are no major capacity projects for the SVMPO region in that plan but there is several bridge repairs and the reconstruction of the overpass on State Route 191. There are also plans to add a passing lane westbound on I-10 in the Benson area. State Transportation Board meetings are still being held virtually and may be for some time to come as federal agency staff are still limited in traveling options and would be calling in anyway.

This was an information item.

11. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The RTAC Liaison, Kevin Adam, discussed with Board members National and State legislative updates regarding transportation activities and funding. A detailed review of the just passed President's transportation bill was presented, with Mr. Adam's stating that a 34-page fact sheet would be distributed. It is a significant, one-time infrastructure bill totaling about \$620 Billion dollars with amounts dedicated to each state and specific infrastructure items, including highways, bridges, safety, electric vehicles, airports and transit.

At the State level, discussions have just recently begun on the budget. It appears that there may be an unexpected \$2 Billion dollar surplus that may have some traction for addressing long-standing infrastructure needs. However, it appears that the legislation is currently leaning towards earmarked transportation projects, not to using the existing HURF revenue formulas to distribute funds. Having specific transportation projects ready to go is recommended to take advantage of these funds, which are intended for being spent quickly, by FFY2024.

This was an information and discussion item.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS & JURISDICTION UPDATES

Chair Mueller asked if any of the SVMPO Board members had any jurisdiction information to share with the group.

Member Judd noted that she was just in a County Work Session yesterday and none of the legislative items on potential transportation funding was even mentioned. She plans to immediately contact her County Administrator with this information.

Vice-Chair Wallace noted the re-initiation of the shuttle bus system mentioned earlier and that the results of the traffic study were much appreciated and the first reports from that study were under review by Town staff.

Member Gray noted that she had just recently discussed the transit routes that had been temporarily suspended from the Fort and it looks like a limited route may be re-initiated connecting to Vista Transit in the near future. Discussions will be held with Linda Jones, the Vista Transit Administrator.

The City of Sierra Vista Council noted that they had appointed City Councilmember Carolyn Umphrey to fill the third City MPO Board position.

This was an information and discussion item.

13. UPCOMING SCHEDULED MEETINGS and ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (Written Report)

FHWA/FTA/ADOT review of draft SVMPO FY22/FY23 Work Program: March 30, 2021
BPAC Mtg: May 4, 2021 at 10 a.m. Public Works Training Room or Virtually/Telephonic
TAC Mtg: May 12, 2021 at 10 a.m. Public Works Training Room or Virtually/Telephonic
Potential Future Board Work Sessions: June 10, 2021 and August 12, 2021

The SVMPO Administrator very briefly presented the following items, directing Board members to the full written report for additional details.

❖ The 2020 Census population numbers have not yet been released: more recent information

indicated these numbers may be even later than April, possible as late as August of this year. This clearly effects projecting transportation funding as most funding formulas are driven by population as a major factor.

- ❖ The SVMPO 2021-2025 TIP was approved by FHWA as part of the State TIP on February 2, 2021. The SVMPO Amendment Three to the Work Program and Annual Budget was also approved by FHWA and ADOT Multimodal Division on March 2, 2021.
- ❖ 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan Update is well underway and public outreach will continue through April. Board members were provided with links to share with interested people on their own social networks or friends for inputting their points of view about future transportation issues. The final draft is expected to be presented to the Board in August 2021 for adoption. The slide of this adoption date is to allow this longer-range plan to fully incorporate the adoption of the Short-Range Transit Plan recommendations as well as the Town Roadway Inventory.
- ❖ Town of Huachuca City Roadway Inventory & Assessment Study is providing critical data layers needed for the Long-Range Transportation plan, like traffic counts. The Emergency Pre-Emption Signal is fully completed and the SVMPO Administrator shared that the vender, Mountain Power, complemented our SVMPO Civil Engineer, Dennis Donovan for helping “make everything go smoothly” and stating that it had been “a pleasure to work with you”.

This was an information and possible discussion item.

14. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next SVMPO Board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 27th at 2:30 p.m.** Items under consideration may include discussion and/or Work Session on the Long -Range Transportation Plan, preliminary draft of the Short-Range Transit Plan and approval of the FY22/FY23 Work Program and Annual Budget. A draft version of the Work Program, reviewed by FHWA and FTA on March 30th, will be sent about a month in advance to all Board members. The SVMPO Administrator stated she would individually get with each Board member on any questions or changes they might want to the SVMPO Work Program.

This was an information item. No new topics were suggested for discussion.

15. ADJOURNMENT of REGULAR SESSION

Chair Mueller asked the SVMPO Administrator if the Executive Session had been separately posted. The SVMPO Administrator stated that it had been a separate notice and posting, set to be held at or about 3:30 immediately after the conclusion of the regular session. Given this information, the Chair asked for adjournment of the Regular SVMPO Meeting and Member Gray moved for adjournment, Vice-Chair Wallace seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. The SVMPO Board regular meeting was then adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The SVMPO Board then voted to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. §38.431.03 for purposes of evaluating the performance of the SVMPO Administrator. Member Gray moved to open the Executive Session at 3:40 p.m., Member Searle seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Muller requested that those on the phone not part of the Board itself then exit

the closed Executive Session. The SVMPO Administrator was also asked to stand-by while the Board members discussed personnel issues and her contract.

After conclusion of the Executive Session discussion, the Executive Session was formally closed at about 3:48 p.m.