

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 states, that after July 1, 1965, the Secretary of Commerce shall not approve any program for highway projects in any urban area of more than fifty thousand population unless he finds that such projects are based on a continuing, comprehensive transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by the states and local communities. This directive, resulted in the creation of the Laredo Urban Transportation Study (LUTS), to provide for a continuing, comprehensive transportation planning process for the Laredo Urbanized area as mandated by the Act.

In 1973, the Federal Aid Highway Act, created the Metropolitan Planning Organization MPO to be the recipient of special planning funds ("PL" funds) and responsible for section 112 transportation planning.

In 1979, the Governor of Texas designated the LUTS Steering Committee as the MPO for the Laredo Urbanized Area. A contract between the then State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT), the LUTS Steering Committee, and City of Laredo identifies the cooperative responsibilities of the State, the MPO and the City. These responsibilities must now conform to 23 U. S. C. 134 (ISTEA), as well as to requirements established by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

The Laredo Metropolitan Area boundary has a population of less than 200,000 and is therefore not designated as a Transportation Management Area, nor has it been designated as a non-attainment area for purposes of compliance with the Clean Air Act. The MPO, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and transit operators, has proposed simplified planning procedures authorized by 23 C. F. R. Part 450 Subpart C.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is designed to conform to the requirements of 23 C. F. R. 450.316(a) including the systematic consideration of the seven factors of TEA-21. The Public Involvement Process adopted by the Laredo Urban Transportation Study on June 9, 1994, and amended on November 22, 1996, as required under 23 C. F. R. 450.316(b), was implemented as part of the planning process and is incorporated into the TIP, as is the official record of hearings held in connection with its adoption.

PURPOSE

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) in cooperation with the State and affected transit operators, develop Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for their planning areas. These Transportation Programs then become part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The Transportation Improvement Program for a state

shall include projects within the boundaries of the state which are proposed for funding under TEA-21 and the Federal Transit Act.

These projects are consistent with the long-range plan of the state. Project selection for projects involving Federal participation is carried out by the State in cooperation with the MPO. The program will include a project, or an identified phase of a project, only if full funding can reasonably be anticipated to be available within the time period that is contemplated for completion of the project.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Laredo Urban Transportation Study has, developed the 2000-2002 TIP in accordance with the requirements of ISTEA and TEA-21, and is financially constrained.

DEFINITION OF AREA

The boundaries of the Metropolitan Planning Area and the Urbanized area were approved by the MPO on April 27, 1993, (see map, Attachment 1).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The Laredo Urban Transportation Study acting in the capacity of the Metropolitan Planning Organization developed in cooperation with the State and FHWA, in conformance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316 (b) has an adopted Public Involvement Process. The Public Involvement Process was introduced at a meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee on January 13, 1994; and a public comment period of forty-five days was provided prior to any action of the MPO Policy Committee. A public review and comment period of not less than thirty (30) days shall be required prior to the initial adoption of any policy or plan by the MPO Policy Committee, and for any substantive change in any policy or plan including but not limited to the Transportation Improvement Program, the Laredo Urban Metropolitan Plan or any portion thereof. The Public Involvement Process was adopted on June 9, 1994, and amended on November 22, 1996 for the purpose of providing free and open access to all.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The Laredo Urban Study (LUTS), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Laredo Urbanized Area, adopted Project Selection Procedures at a public meeting held on February 22, 1994, which was noticed and whose agenda was posted pursuant to the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

The Laredo Urban Transportation Study Policy Committee found that the proposed project selection procedures are appropriate and are consistent with the long-range transportation planning area of the Laredo Urban Transportation Study.

PROGRESS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

The FY 1998-2000 TIP was amended on April 23, 1998, May 27, 1998, July 24, 1998 and October 30, 1998 to reflect approved changes in project scope and the availability of funding delayed by the congressional appropriations process. Enclosed is the FY 2000-2002 TIP (see Attachments).

AIR QUALITY ISSUES

The city of Laredo is an air quality attainment area. The city transit department is currently in the process of converting all city busses to compressed natural gas to maintain air quality. Over 50% of all City buses now operate on compressed natural gas.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The City of Laredo is reconstructing all downtown sidewalks to comply with ADA requirements.

The City Transit Department has created the EI Lift Program to address ADA considerations. The EI Lift Program has consistently complied with the joint planning regulations and has actively involved the Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Study in the formulation and amendment process of its Americans with Disabilities Plan and Plan Update.

**BYLAWS
LAREDO URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

**ARTICLE I
DEFINITIONS, PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY**

Section 1.1 Definitions

- ◆ *Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)* - Shall mean the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making for the metropolitan planning area. The MPO is responsible, in conjunction with the State of Texas, for carrying out a "Continuing, Comprehensive, and Cooperative" transportation planning process in compliance with the provisions of Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134, and Section 9 of the Federal Transit Act.

- ◆ *The Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee (Policy Committee)* - Shall mean the body of the MPO with decision-making authority over issues such as the UPWP, TIP and the Transportation Plan.

- ◆ *The Metropolitan Transportation Organization Technical Review Committee (Technical Committee)* - Shall mean the body of the MPO that will review issues for accuracy and advise the Policy Committee on recommended actions.

- ◆ *The Laredo Urban Transportation Study (LUTS)* - Shall mean the Transportation Planning Committee designated by the Governor of the State of Texas as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Laredo Urbanized Area.

- ◆ *Metropolitan Planning Area* - Shall mean the geographic area for which the MPO is responsible and in which the metropolitan transportation planning process must be carried out pursuant to Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act.

- ◆ *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* - Shall mean a staged, multiyear, intermodal program, of transportation projects which is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan and which is also financially constrained.

- ◆ *The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)* - Shall mean the transportation planning activities to be undertaken by the LUTS, including but not limited to those activities to be performed with funds provided under Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Section 8 of Federal Transit Act.

- ◆ *Urbanized Area* - Shall mean an area with a population of 50,000 or more designated by the Bureau of the Census, within boundaries to be fixed by the state, subject to approval by the Secretary of Transportation.

- ◆ *The Laredo Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Plan)* - Shall mean the official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area. The plan shall address at least twenty year planning horizon. The plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.

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Section 1.2 Purpose

The Laredo Urban Transportation Study (LUTS) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for identifying local transportation needs in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The LUTS is also the entity responsible for proposing and recommending projects for all modes of urban transportation to those governmental units that are responsible for program development and project implementation.

Section 1.3 Authority

The MPO shall have the following authority pursuant to 23 CFR Part 450:

- (a) To develop and establish policies, and procedures, plans and programs for the metropolitan area. These include but are not limited to the following; the Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- (b) To establish one or more advisory committees to assist in the transportation planning process and/or assist in promoting the implementation of approved plans.
- (c) To certify such actions as may be necessary to comply with state and federal regulations.
- (d) To establish such rules of procedure and approve such actions as it deems necessary to fulfill its purposes.

**ARTICLE II
MEMBERSHIP, TERMS AND ADMINISTRATION**

Section 2.1 Membership and Qualifications

(a) The Laredo Urban Transportation Study shall be comprised of a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. The Policy Committee shall include the following elected officials and the Laredo District Engineer, and Director of Transportation Planning and Development.

City of Laredo:	Mayor (Chairperson) Three City Councilpersons
County of Webb:	County Judge Two County Commissioners
State of Texas:	Laredo District Engineer Director of Transportation Planning and Development

*** EX-OFFICIO ***

State of Texas:	State Senator(s) State Representative(s)
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(b) Members shall serve until a replacement is qualified pursuant to section 2.1 subsection (c).

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(c) The Mayor of the City of Laredo shall appoint the three City Councilpersons that represent the City of Laredo for two (2) year terms commencing upon the election of the Mayor. The City Council of the City of Laredo shall ratify the Mayor's appointments. The Policy Committee will elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson both who shall serve for a two (2) year term.

Section 2.2 Meetings, Quorum and Voting

(a) The Policy Committee shall meet at least twice per year or as often as necessary to fulfill its purposes.

(b) Fifty percent of the voting membership plus one member shall constitute a quorum.

(c) The use of proxies by the voting members of the Policy Committee is prohibited.

(d) The official actions of the Policy Committee shall be by affirmative action of the majority of the voting membership present and voting at public meetings, such meetings to be noticed in a newspaper of local circulation, in conformance with the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

(e) All official actions of the Policy Committee shall be duly recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.3 Administration

(a) The City of Laredo Planning Director shall act as the Transportation Planning Director for the MPO. The responsibilities of the Director shall include, but are not limited to the following:

(i) All staff support for the Policy Committee, oversight and coordination of MPO administration and transportation planning activities, grant administration, liaison with the Planning Coordinator, maintaining records and provide notice of meetings as required by the Public Involvement Process.

(ii) Shall act as Chairperson of the Technical Committee with responsibility for drafting findings and recommendations of the Technical Committee for review by the Policy Committee.

(iii) Shall be responsible for all plans and reports prepared by and for the review and consideration of the Policy Committee and for submitting the recommended policies, procedures and programs of the Technical Committee to the Policy Committee.

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(b) The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will appoint the Planning Coordinator who shall act as Vice-Chairperson of the Technical Committee and will coordinate the administration and transportation planning activities of the MPO with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and TxDOT.

(c) The Technical Committee shall include the following:

- a. City Representatives:
 - Laredo City Planner
 - The General Manger of the City Transit System
 - Laredo Traffic and Bridge Director
 - Laredo Airport Manager
 - Laredo City Engineer

- b. County and Regional Representatives:
 - A staff representative of the County Judge
 - South Texas Development Council Regional Planning Director
 - The General Manager of the Rural Transit System

- c. State Representatives:
 - Director of Transportation Planning and Development
 - Planning Coordinator (Vice-Chairperson)
 - Transportation Funding Administrator
 - FHWA Planning Representative (Austin)
 - TxDOT Area Engineer
 - TxDOT Area Planning Representative (Austin)

- d. Private Sector Representatives
 - Tex-Mex Railroad Coordinator
 - Union Pacific Railroad Coordinator
 - Chairperson of the Laredo Transportation Association
 - A Transportation Provider Representative who shall also serve on the Laredo Transportation Advisory Committee

The responsibilities of the Technical Committee shall include technical review of work programs, policy recommendations and the transportation planning activities.

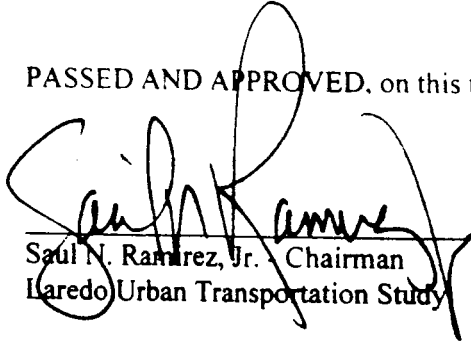
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**ARTICLE III
AMENDMENTS**

Section 3.1 Bylaw Revisions

Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be submitted to the MPO Chairperson in writing not less than ten days prior to the meeting at which such amendments shall be considered. All proposed amendments shall be subject to a thirty day comment period pursuant to the adopted Public Involvement Process of the MPO.

PASSED AND APPROVED, on this the 23 day of July, 1997.



Saul N. Ramirez, Jr. Chairman
Laredo Urban Transportation Study

ATTEST