

**CITY OF LAREDO  
RECOGNITION AND COMMUNICATION NOTICE  
M2019-R-05  
CITY COUNCIL  
CHAMBERS 1110  
HOUSTON STREET  
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040  
April 1, 2019  
5:00 P.M.**

**The Mayor will be presenting the following:**

1. Recognizing Miss Teen Laredo Latina, Alma Gonzalez De La Cruz for using her platform to make a difference in our community, focusing on helping the youth, and the animals of the Laredo Animal Protective Society (LAPS).

Alma Gonzalez De La Cruz, Alexander High School Senior, noted her pride to bring the crown of Miss Teen Texas Latina home to Laredo for the first time. She reported that she was selected for the Clorox What Comes Next project with four other individuals nationwide, bringing a \$15,000 grant to Laredo for the Laredo Animal Protective Society. The grant will go to office renovation for the improvement of animal care. She noted that she will compete for Miss Teen Latina in July 2019, stating her excitement to represent Laredo on the national stage. Miss Gonzalez received a standing ovation.

Mayor Pete Saenz presented Miss Gonzalez with a certificate of recognition for her achievement.

2. Recognizing the Laredo's Heat Volleyball Academy Girls 12 and under team for all their hard work, dedication and accomplishments.

Miguel Chavez, club owner and Director of Heat Volleyball Academy, noted that the 12 and under teams play at a highly competitive level. Only elite teams are able to continue in the Texas tournament, and the Heat placed third in the recent tournament in Houston which is an amazing accomplishment. He applauded the coaches and parents for the unwavering support.

Mayor Saenz presented the team members present a certificate of recognition for their hard work and achievement.

**CITY OF LAREDO CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**M2019-R-05**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**CHAMBERS 1110**  
**HOUSTON STREET**  
**LAREDO, TEXAS 78040**  
**April 1, 2019**  
**5:30 P.M.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pete Saenz called the meeting to order.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Pete Saenz led in the pledge of allegiance.

**III. MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Mayor Pete Saenz led in a moment of silence. Cm. Vielma asked for prayers for the recent passing of Raquel Gutierrez Ramirez.

**IV. ROLL CALL**

In attendance:

Pete Saenz	Mayor
Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.	District I
Vidal Rodriguez	District II
Mercurio "Merc" Martinez, III	District III
Alberto Torres, Jr.	District IV
Norma "Nelly" Vielma	District V
Dr. Marte Martinez	District VI
George Altgelt	District VII
Roberto Balli	District VIII
Jose A. Valdez, Jr.	City Secretary
Rosario Cabello	Interim Co-City Manager
Robert Eads	Interim Co-City Manager
Kristina L. Hale	City Attorney

**V. MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes of March 18, 2019

Motion to approve the March 18, 2019 minutes.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Torres

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

## **Citizen comments**

Armando Cisneros noted that the Charter Revision Commission will soon begin meeting again and reminded Council that the Charter is essentially the City's Constitution. It is a very important document as it details Council's and staff's duties and oaths of office, which Council is tasked with upholding. However, he noted that the Charter is often overlooked and has lost much of its meaning because it is not properly enforced. In Laredo, when the Charter is violated, it is not reported by the media and must be noted by watchdog groups that are labeled as "negative." Mr. Cisneros asked Council to take the Charter more seriously.

Gerry Schwebel noted the importance of the potential shutdown of the southern border ports of entry and their critical impact on a city like Laredo. He voiced his support of the City and the County in delivering the message that the community must unite as one voice in opposition of the port of entry shutdowns. He reported that the business community has committed to work with the public sector and encouraged Council to join in a meeting immediately to address this issue. Multiple members of the private sector along the southern Texas border held a conference call earlier today to gather their statements and talking points for not accepting a border shutdown. He asked Council to help in spreading factual information about conditions on the border as this issue has no political party and is being misrepresented. He offered his availability for guidance as this matter progresses.

Mayor Saenz asked management to include an agenda item for a possible resolution on the matter brought up by Mr. Schwebel. Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, confirmed that such a resolution is already included on the posted agenda for Thursday's special called Council meeting.

Regina Portillo, City Makers Director, noted that she helps citizens advocate for quality-of-life programs in their city. She promoted Cultivarte, a local public art advocacy group hoping to advance the artistic and cultural community of Laredo. Cultivarte was formed to integrate the art community and better network with one another as artists as well as helping to implement the City's Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan regarding arts and culture. She informed Council that the Fine Arts & Culture Commission, together with Cultivarte, will address Council in a couple of weeks to advance the Comprehensive Plan.

## **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Presentation by the 2019 Inner City Housing Summit Committee. Inviting the Laredo City Council and public to attend the 1st Annual Inner City Housing Summit that will be held on April 24, 2019.

Jose Ceballos invited Council and the public to attend the first annual Inner City Housing Summit, noting that the inner city represents about 17% of the tax levy for Laredo with the potential to provide more. There are about 600 lots in the inner city as defined by the Comprehensive Plan that can be activated and added to the tax rolls. Mr. Ceballos stated that the private sector should be encouraged to develop in the Downtown and inner city area. A steering committee has been

assembled to help drive this first summit; the steering committee includes City staff, County staff, and local organizations like NeighborWorks, Habitat for Humanity, and Laredo Main Street, among others. Some architects in the private sector have also participated in developing this summit. The focus of the summit will center on the development and happenings of some of the City's oldest neighborhoods for purposes of multi-family and commercial redevelopment. The summit will be the initial discussion of what should be happening in the inner city. Mr. Ceballos reported that Joe Minicozzi will serve as the luncheon speaker, noting that Mr. Minicozzi addressed the City during the Comprehensive Planning process in September 2017. Participants can register for the summit for a fee of \$69; the summit will be at the La Posada Hotel on April 24, 2019, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. and include tours of local sites.

Cm. Altgelt noted Mr. Minicozzi's expertise in this field and encouraged all members of Council to attend the summit. He noted that market housing, not solely affordable housing, drives a Downtown economy. He asked staff to register him for the summit and added that Cm. Balli is planning to attend.

Cm. Vielma asked management to pay the registration fees for Council's appointees on the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Advisory Committee so that those members can attend and make informed decisions on their boards.

**VII. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMISSIONS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

1. Appointment by Council Member Dr. Marte A. Martinez of Stan Greene to the Historic District/Landmark Board.

Motion to approve the nomination of Stan Greene to the Historic District/Landmark Board.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2. Appointment by Council Member Dr. Marte Martinez of Tony Martinez to the Max Mandel Golf Course Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Tony Martinez to the Max Mandel Golf Course Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

3. Re-appointment by Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr. of Ana Saenz to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Motion to approve the nomination of Ana Saenz to the Municipal Civil Service

Commission.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

4. Appointment by Mayor Pete Saenz of Magali Rodriguez to the Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Magali Rodriguez to the Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

5. Re-appointment by Mayor Pete Saenz of Efrain Sanchez to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Motion to approve the nomination of Efrain Sanchez to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

6. Re-appointment by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr. of Patty San Miguel to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Motion to approve the nomination of Patty San Miguel to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

7. Appointment by Council Member Mercurio Martinez of Daniel Rigal to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Motion to approve the nomination of Daniel Rigal to the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

8. Appointment by Council Member Nelly Vielma of Alma Acevedo to the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Alma Acevedo to the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

9. Appointment by Council Member Nelly Vielma of Julian Tijerina to the Max Mandel Golf Course Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Julian Tijerina to the Max Mandel Golf Course Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

## VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Motion to open public hearing #1.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Cm. Balli

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning Lot 1, Block 1, Fiesta Subdivision, located at 101 Alta Mar Dr., from B-3 (Community Business District) to B-4 (Highway Commercial District); providing for publication and effective date.

Planning and Zoning recommends **approval** of the proposed Zone Change and **staff does not support** the proposed application, but would consider a CUP for the proposed use. ZC-14-2019 District II

Vanessa Guerra, Acting Planning Director, reported that staff sent 35 letters to surrounding residents; one letter was received in favor, and none were received in opposition.

Motion to close public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Rodriguez

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

2. Motion to open public hearing #2.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt  
Second: Cm. Vielma  
For: 6                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by repealing Ordinance 2015-O-136 and authorizing the issuance of a Special Use Permit for a restaurant serving alcohol on Lot 1, Block 5, Del Mar Village Subdivision, located at 120 West Village Blvd., Suites 101-102 (one unit); providing for publication and effective date.

Planning & Zoning recommended **approval** of the Special Use Permit, and **staff supports** the application. ZC-26-2019 District V

There was no public input.

Motion to close public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Vielma  
Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez  
For: 6                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

3. Motion to open public hearing #3.

Moved: Cm. Balli  
Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez  
For: 6                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance authorizing Co-Interim City Managers to amend the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Laredo Public Facility Corporation budget by increasing revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$24,367.00 in order to appropriate the Laredo Public Facility Corporation (LPFC) funds available from cash flow from La Terraza Apartments.

There was no public input.

Motion to close public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Balli  
Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez  
For: 6                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

## IX. INTRODUCTORY ORDINANCES

4. An Ordinance of the City of Laredo, Texas, amending sections 8.03, 8.05, and 9.02 of the Laredo Ethics Code, requiring the ethics compliance officer to oversee or provide training to city officials and employees on their responsibilities under the Laredo Ethics Code at least once a year; requiring current city officials and employees to complete yearly ethics training; providing for a cumulative clause; providing a severability clause; and establishing an effective date.

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

5. An Ordinance amending Chapter 19, Article VIII, Section 19-355, of the Laredo Code of Ordinances by adding subsection (b)(1), to establish an amnesty program for fines, fees and penalties on parking violations under certain terms and conditions; providing for a cumulative clause; providing a repealing clause; providing for severability; and declaring an effective date.

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

6. Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to execute a revocable license agreement for non-federal use of real property (GS-07B-99283) between the City of Laredo and the United States General Services Administration (GSA) for the purpose of allowing the City of Laredo Bridge Department to install, maintain, and operate a High-Speed Weigh-in-Motion (HS-WIM) scale/sensor system to facilitate the issuance of permits by the City for oversize and overweight commercial vehicles departing the Port at World Trade Bridge, prior to exiting and gaining access to state and local roadways. The term of the license agreement is for five (5) years beginning on May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2024.

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

7. An Ordinance repealing Ordinance 2019-O-004, which authorized the acceptance of a donation from Riverhills Investment LLC, of a 18.785 acre tract of land, more or less, situated in Porcion 35, Abstract 546, Jose M. Diaz, Original Grantee and Survey 2149, Abstract 594, R.H. Raines, Original Grantee, within the City Limits of the Laredo and Webb County, Texas, out and part of the New Santa Fe, LTD. (71.986 Acre) Tract I, recorded in Volume 4394, Pages 566-572 of the Webb County deed records in exchange for a Two Hundred Thousand Dollar (\$200,000.00) credit toward future development fees applicable exclusively to the balance of the 71.989 acre tract referred to in plat records as the Riverhill South Subdivision, the City's agreement to take water run off from the balance of the 71.989 acre tract, and an agreement that the value of the 18.785 acres in excess of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) shall be considered a donation to the City; and declaring an effective date. Based on new appraisal information, Riverhills Investment LLC has decided to rescind the donation agreement.



Dr. Marte Martinez recused himself from this ordinance.

Victor Gomez asked for clarification on the donation by River Hills Investment and why it is being rescinded. He asked when the notice was given to the City regarding the cancellation of the donation and what reason was given. He asked what new appraisal information is referenced in the agenda item.

Kristina L. Hale, City Attorney, clarified that the River Hills Investments owner requested a cancellation of the donation. The letter that he issued to the City is attached in the full packet agenda stating that he no longer wanted to proceed with the transaction.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, reported that the initial appraisal valued the land at \$237,000; Alex Villarreal performed that appraisal. Staff asked for a second, third party appraisal, which valued the land at \$400,000. Frank Leal performed the second appraisal.

Mr. Gomez asked if the owner provided a reason for his decision to rescind the donation. Mrs. Hale explained that the owner's letter is attached to the item in the full packet agenda, and the reason for rescinding the donation was simply due to the higher second appraisal.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez noted that, as a realtor, he knows both appraisers to be reputable appraisers in their field. Two differing appraisals of the same tract of land is very common in the industry and is factored by the "comparables" used during the evaluation.

Mr. Eads reiterated that the request for the second appraiser was not in response to Mr. Villarreal's evaluation; the request was to include City management in the process since the first appraisal was performed before the offer of a donation was made.

Ordinance Introduction: City Council (Recusal from Dr. Marte Martinez)

## **X. FINAL READING OF ORDINANCES**

Motion to waive the final readings of Ordinances 2019-O-041, 2019-O-042, 2019-O-044, 2019-O-045, 2019-O-046, 2019-O-047, 2019-O-048, 2019-O-049, 2019-O-050, 2019-O-051, 2019-O-052, 2019-O-053, 2019-O-054, 2019-O-055, 2019-O-056, 2019-O-057, and 2019-O-058.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

8. 2019-O-041 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximately 8.8547 acres, as further described by

Metes & Bounds on Exhibit A, located South of Soria Dr., and West of Ejido Avenue, from R-3 (Mixed Residential District) to R-1MH (Single Family Manufactured Housing District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-21-2019 District I

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-041.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

9. 2019-O-042 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximately 4.24 acres, as further described by Metes & Bounds on Exhibit A, located East of US Hwy. 83 and South of Sierra Vista Blvd., from AG (Agricultural District) to B-3 (Community Business District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-22-2019 District I

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-042.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

10. 2019-O-044 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximate 1.27 acres, as further described by Metes and Bounds on Exhibit A, located at, Southeast corner of Ejido Ave., and Wormser Rd., from R-1A (Single Family Reduced Area District) to B-1 (Limited Business District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-25-2019 District I

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-044.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

11. 2019-O-045 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning Lot 5, Block 2025, Eastern Division, located at 3220 Ross St., from R-2 (Multi-Family Residential District) to B-3 (Community Business District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-24-2019 District II

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-045.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

12. 2019-O-046 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximate 77.71 acres out of Lot 1, Block 1, San Isidro Southwest Subdivision, Phase II, located at 9819 San Dario Ave., from B-4 (Highway Commercial District) to R-1A (Single family Reduced Area District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-23-2019 District VI

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-046.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

13. 2019-O-047 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximately 40.6420 acres, as further described by Metes and Bounds in Exhibit A, located South of FM 1472 Rd., and North of Vidal Cantu Rd., from AG (Agricultural District) to B-4 (Highway Commercial District) (as amended); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-82-2018 District VII

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-047.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

14. 2019-O-048 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning approximately 1.6484 acres, as further described by Metes and Bounds Exhibit A, located South of FM 1472 Rd.,(Mines Road) and West of Silver Mine Rd., from AG (Agricultural District) to M-1(Light Manufacturing District); providing for publication and effective date. ZC-80-2018 District VII

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-048.

Moved: Cm. Balli



For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

18. 2019-O-052 An Ordinance of the City of Laredo, Texas, amending Chapter 23, Parks and Leisure Services Department, providing for the renaming of Parks and Leisure Services to Parks and Recreation Department; allowing free membership to recreational facilities for persons ages sixty-two and older; allowing free membership to recreational facilities for veterans; providing for the renumbering of certain sections of Chapter 23; providing for rental fees for flag football, rugby, Freddy Benavides Sisters of Mercy Lazy River Pool and Water Slide Complex, and related use fees; providing that this ordinance shall be cumulative; containing a savings clause; containing a severability clause; and providing an effective date. (AS AMENDED)

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-052.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

19. 2019-O-053 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to convey an Easement and Right of Way to AEP TEXAS INC., a six (6) foot wide Easement lying wholly within a portion of 34.94 acres, more or less, within the boundaries of the former Laredo Air Force Base, partly in Survey 1020m Rafael Vidaurri, Original Grantee, Webb County, Texas; Said tract of land conveyed to Grantor on deed Recorded in Document Number 58786, Volume 457, Page 73, Official Public Records of Webb County, Texas; More specifically, the strip of land covered by this Easement and Right of Way shall be six (6) feet in width, three (3) feet on each side of a centerline as described by on Exhibit "A", attached hereto, and providing for an effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-053.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

20. 2019-O-054 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to execute all necessary documents for the sale of a 2,276 square foot tract of land "Surface Only" for the appraised market value of

\$23,100.00. The adjacent land owner requested to purchase the subject tract to complete a residential development. The subject property is inaccessible; therefore, making it eligible to be sold to the only abutting land owner, Monaco Development, LLC. The subject tract of land is owned by the City of Laredo within the Manadas Creek area, as recorded in Volume 2262, Page 24 Official Records of Webb County, Texas, being generally described in attached Exhibit "A" and Exhibit "B". Funds will be deposited in the Environmental Services land sales proceeds account.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-054.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

21. 2019-O-055 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to grant a License Agreement by and between The City of Laredo, Texas, a municipal corporation and VTX Communications, LLC, a Texas Limited Liability Company, dated February 4, 2019 for the use of one (1) innerduct in the Juarez Lincoln Bridge and 640 linear feet of right-of-way.

1. Term of the agreement shall be for five (5) years commencing at 12:00 am, February 4, 2019 and terminating at 12:00 pm February 3, 2024.
2. Annual duct fee shall be \$32,577.89 and will increase by five percent (5%) every year the license is in place. In addition to the duct fee, Licensee shall pay a nine dollar and 78/100 (\$9.78) linear foot right-of-way fee, and will increase by five percent (5%) every year.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-055.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

22. 2019-O-056 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to execute a First Amendment to Lease Agreement ("Lease") by an between the City of Laredo, a municipal corporation ("Landlord"), and T-Mobile West LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("Tenant"), as successor in interest to Cook Inlet/Voicestream

PCS, LLC., (“T-Mobile”), dated May 1, 2000 and attached hereto; to allow Landlord to modify Tenant’s ground space at the Del Mar Elevated Water Storage Tank (“Water Tower”), as more fully depicted on the attached Exhibit A-1, for the installation of a generator and to increase Tenant’s rent by \$300.00 per month commencing on April 15, 2019 and shall thereafter increase in accordance with paragraph 3 (Rent) of the Lease; all other terms and conditions remain in full force and effect.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-056.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

23. 2019-O-057 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Manager's to grant a License Agreement by and between The City of Laredo, Texas, a municipal corporation and Bestel USA, Inc., a Nevada Corporation, dated February 4, 2019 for the use of one (1) innerduct in the Juarez Lincoln Bridge and 566 linear feet of right-of-way.

1. Term of the agreement shall be for five (5) years commencing at 12:00 am, February 4, 2019 and terminating at 12:00 pm February 3, 2024.
2. Annual duct fee shall be \$32,577.89 and will increase by five percent (5%) every year the license is in place. In addition to the duct fee, Licensee shall pay a nine dollar and 78/100 (\$9.78) linear foot right-of-way fee, and will increase by five percent (5%) every year.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-057.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

24. 2019-O-058 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to grant a License Agreement by and between The City of Laredo, Texas, a municipal corporation and Axtel, S.A.B de C.V., formerly known as Alestra S. de R.L. de C.V., a Mexican Corporation dated April 8, 2019 for the use of one (1) fiber/cable tray affixed beneath the Juarez Lincoln Bridge and 519 linear feet of right-of-way.

1. Term of the agreement shall be for five (5) years commencing at 12:00 am, April 8, 2019 and terminating at 12:00 pm April 7, 2024.
2. Annual fee shall be \$27,691.21 and will increase by five percent (5%) every year the license is in place. In addition to the fee, Licensee shall pay a nine dollar and 76/100 (\$9.76) linear foot right-of-way fee, and will increase by five percent (5%) every year.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-O-058.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

## **XI. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **XI (a) RESOLUTIONS**

25. 2019-R-34 Authorizing and approving a fee waiver and a Tax Abatement Agreement between the City of Laredo and O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC for a proposed project located at 4001 San Bernardo Ave, lot 1-8; block 1017; western division that consists of new construction, in accordance with authorized guidelines and criteria established for the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ). This agreement will be for a ten (10) year period and will abate taxes on new improvements for the purpose of economic development. The project has an estimated capital investment total of \$750,000.00, estimated annual tax abatement total of \$4,755.00 and estimated total fee waivers of \$10,115.00. Guidelines and criteria for the agreement are set forth in the attached agreement and information.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2019-R-034.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

26. 2019-R-35 Authorizing and approving a fee waiver between the City of Laredo and USD for a proposed project located at 5208 Santa Claudia, lot 1; block 1; 4.195 acre tract A & B that consists of new construction, in accordance with authorized guidelines and



criteria established for the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ). The project has an estimated capital investment total of \$17,225,520.00, and estimated total fee waivers of \$30,209.50. Guidelines and criteria for the agreement are set forth in the attached agreement and information.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2019-R-035.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

27. 2018-R-41 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to submit a grant application in the amount of \$500,000.00 to the Office of the Governor's Homeland Security Grants Division (HSGD) for the purpose of funding the 2020 Local Border Security Program (LBSP). This grant does not require matching funds. Funding will be used to pay for overtime to increase patrol security along the Texas-Mexico border.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2019-R-041.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

28. 2019-R-42 Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to accept a grant from K9s4COPs to receive a police service dog to be trained and used by the Laredo Police Department for law enforcement purposes. The police service dog is grant funded and will be at no cost to the City of Laredo Police Department.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2019-R-042.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

## XI (b) MOTIONS

29. Authorizing the City Manager to execute Amendment #3 in the amount of \$54,400.00 with LNV, Inc. of Laredo, Texas, to design sludge Drying Bed at Unitec Wastewater Treatment Plant acting as baffle/holding capacity for dry

sludge in cases of wet weathers when local landfills not able to receive the dry sludge. The total contract sum including this amendment is at \$727,030.00. Funding is available in the 2011 Sewer Revenue Bonds.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

30. Consideration to award contract FY19-047 Manadas Creek Maintenance to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, Nick Benavides, Oilton, Texas, in the annual amount of \$125,888.00. This is a service contract to provide mowing and maintenance to the Manadas Creek and quarterly Manadas West excavation. The term of this contract shall be for a one (1) year with the option to extend this contract for three (3) additional one (1) year periods, upon mutual agreement and performance approval by the City. Funding is available in the Environmental Services Department budget.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

31. Consideration to end contract negotiations with LNV Inc., Laredo, TX for contract FY18-048 and authorizing the re-solicitation (rebid) of this project with a revised scope. After a thorough negotiation process, City and LNV staff could not reach a mutually acceptable fee for this project. Funding is available in the Bridge Construction Fund.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

32. Consideration to award contract FY19-043 to the sole respondent, STX Venue Management LLC., Laredo, TX for the Sports Management Services at UniTrade Stadium and authorizing Co-Interim City Managers to negotiate the terms of the professional services contract, including contract amount, contract period, and possible extensions. Funding is available in the Sports & Community Venue Uni-Trade Operations Fund.

Miguel Pescador, Purchasing Director, reported that the City requested formal RFPs for the Sports Management Services at Uni-Trade Stadium; one complete response was received from STX Venue Management, LLC; staff recommends awarding the contract to the vendor so that staff may begin negotiations. He confirmed that if no agreement can be reached during negotiations, the contract will not progress and staff will bring a report and recommendation back to Council.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Management, explained that the City currently has a five-year contract with the Tecolotes and will continue to honor that commitment. This is the second year of the five-year agreement, and there are some conditions which the City must meet in time for the new baseball season. This contract is for the management of the stadium during the Tecolotes' off-season periods. Staff will work with STX Venue to fine-tune the terms of the agreement. He noted that typically a venue gets a management team in place first and then secures an anchor, like the Tecos. The City is moving retroactively, but he assured Council that staff is able to work with the factors at hand.

Danny Lopez of STX Venue Management, LLC, reported that the organization's goal is to streamline the management of the stadium; currently there are three entities maneuvering about the stadium and the team, and he intends to provide a return of investment to the City. He conceded that this first year with the Tecolotes has functioned on a trial-and-error basis, but the management team is ready to improve upon the situation. He reported that STX Venue Management held a Border Fest event that paid the City \$54,000.

Mr. Eads noted that when staff brings the contract terms to Council, they can provide the financial information on the return of investment for the Lemurs and the Tecolotes.

Cm. Torres reminded staff that the Uni-Trade Stadium is a City-owned facility, so if any member of Council wanted to use the City for a public benefit, they should be able to access it. He asked staff to include that in the agreement with the vendor. He suggested that the FTEs assigned to Uni-Trade from the Parks & Leisure Services Department should be reallocated to Parks so as not to leave these employees without a job.

Anita Stanley, Assistant Parks & Leisure Services Director, confirmed that they would continue as City employees. She stated that those employees working at Uni-Trade Stadium are paid directly out of the stadium's funding.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

33. Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to amend the City of Laredo's 2018

One Year Action Plan for the purpose of reprogramming Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds totaling \$156,847.00. It is proposed that the reprogrammed funds be utilized for the following projects: supplemental funding for the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (\$136,847.00) and the creation of a new project “K. Tarver Recreation Center Improvements” (\$20,000.00). It is further proposed that the projects be provided funding through the use of an activity balance and two canceled activities listed below:

<b>44th Action Year (Canceled Activity)</b>	
Eastwoods Neighborhood Park Improvements	\$20,000.00
<b>42nd Action Year (Fund Balance)</b>	
Demolition of Substandard Structures	\$111,847.00
<b>37th Action Year (Canceled Activity)</b>	
Downtown Façade Restoration Program	\$25,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$156,847.00</b>

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

34. Consideration to renew contract FY17-028 to Hector Cabello Wrecker Services, Laredo, TX in the annual amount of \$70,000.00 for Non-Police City owned Vehicles Towing Services. The term of this contract shall be for a period of one (1) year and contract can be extended three (3) additional one year periods, upon mutual agreement of the parties. This is the second of three extension period. All services will be secured on an as needed basis. Funding for this contract is available in the Fleet Department's budget.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

35. Consideration to award contract FY19-036 to lowest bidder RCC Roofing and Construction, Laredo, Texas in the amount of \$101,401.00 for the complete renovation to 3005 E. Montgomery St., Laredo, TX. 78043. The project consists of remodeling and construction to include all insurance, payment bond, labor, materials, and related appurtenances as per bid specifications. The estimated time for completion of this project is 120 working days. Funding is available in the Noise Abatement Fund.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

36. Consideration to renew supply Contract FY18-045 to the low bidder, Century Asphalt, Houston, Texas in an amount up to \$100,000.00 for the purchase of tack coat emulsified asphalt oil used for street paving projects. All materials are purchased on an as needed basis utilizing the construction project budgets. There was no price increase during the last extension period. This is the first of two extension periods. Funding is available in the Public Works Department construction project budget.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

37. Requesting authorization to waive and refund \$41.88 in penalties and interest on the property tax account listed below in accordance with Section 33.011(a) of the Property Tax Code. An act or omission on behalf of the Webb County Appraisal District resulted in the taxpayer's failure to pay the tax before delinquency. The account is as follows: C & B Holdings, LLC, Tax Account #932-11001-020.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

38. Authorizing the Co-Interim City Managers to approve Change Order No. 1 to Summit Building & Design, Laredo, Texas in the amount of \$79,765.24 with an additional 30 calendar days to the contract for the Utilities Department Administration Building Expansion Project. The additional work is to install new HVAC equipment in the Utilities Warehouse building. The new total contract amount will be \$1,139,765.24 including the change order, and the new total contract completion period is 210 calendar days. Funding is available in the 2017 Sewer Revenue Bond. The original contract amount was \$1,060,000.00.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli  
Second: Cm. Gonzalez  
For: 7                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

39. Consideration to approve a second amendment to a professional services contract with Willdan Financial Services. The second amendment will increase the contract amount by \$24,500.00. As part of this amendment, Willdan Financial Services will update its previously developed water and wastewater cost of service forecast model for the period of Fiscal Year 2019 through Fiscal Year 2028. Including this second amendment, the total contract amount with Willdan will total \$95,200.00. Funding is available in the 2013 Water Revenue Bond.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Balli  
Second: Cm. Gonzalez  
For: 7                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

Dr. Marte Martinez was not present.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

**XII. STAFF REPORTS**

40. Discussion with possible action on ongoing audits and/or irregularities identified by the Internal Auditor including the potential assignment of other and/or additional auditing duties; and any other matters incident thereto.

Motion to approve the Auditor's report.

Moved: Cm. Torres  
Second: Cm. Altgelt  
For: 8                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0

41. Status update on the relocation plan of the Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau Facility with possible action; and any other matters incident thereto.

Aileen Ramos, Convention & Visitors Bureau Director, reminded Council of her address in August 2018 to move the CVB office to El Portal Center as staff has outgrown the current location. El Portal, located at 1600 Water Street, has more space as well as more retail potential for CVB's souvenirs and trade items. The move will make the CVB Department more visible to Laredo's Mexican visitors as it is a high pedestrian area. She reported that staff should be able to move in six months.

Yvette Limon, Bridge Director, confirmed that Laredo receives 9,000 pedestrians one-way daily through the Bridge System; therefore, the Bridge System

facilitates 18,000 pedestrians crossing in both directions every day.

42. Presentation regarding Springfield Ave. extension including property acquisition, engineering design, estimated construction cost, project funding and any other matters incident thereto with possible action.

Ramon Chavez, Engineering Director, reported that the total projected cost for this extension is \$16,621,000. This extension was divided into three phases; Phase 1 covers Springfield from Del Mar Boulevard to International Boulevard with 2,448 linear feet of road and an estimated cost of \$3,140,237. Two-thirds of this extension has already been designed.

Cm. Altgelt noted that the City can always put in place different speed control measures to slow traffic and keep the roadway safe. He recalled a criticism that because the design of the extension included sharp S-curves, the City is deviating from its own subdivision ordinance. Mr. Chavez confirmed that he would look into that comment and clarified that the construction design is not final.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez cautioned staff against putting an entrance/exit to a subdivision directly outside of any parts of the S-curve as it is going to be too dangerous. Cm. Altgelt advocated for a roundabout because they are highly effective in slowing traffic and increasing safety near an intersection. Mr. Chavez confirmed that staff keeps those suggestions in mind during their evaluation of the project.

Cm. Balli agreed that the wide lanes of Springfield contribute to the traffic coming into the curves at 50-60 miles per hour. He encouraged staff to narrow the lanes or implement other traffic-calming devices. Dr. Marte Martinez emphasized the importance of maintaining safe speeds in this area while also progressing with the project, as the extension is greatly needed.

Mr. Chavez explained that Phase 2 includes Springfield Avenue from International Boulevard to Shiloh Drive totaling 2,580 linear feet of roadway at an estimated cost of \$4,305,161. This phase has not been designed to-date.

Cm. Altgelt reminded staff that urban density benefits the bottom line of a city and noted that this extension falls back on suburban sprawl methods, which is counterintuitive. Mr. Chavez stated that he has ideas to discuss with management that address Cm. Altgelt's concerns, and staff intends to implement those changes to urban planning moving forward.

Dr. Marte Martinez reiterated that the Comprehensive Plan encourages urban density and avoiding suburban sprawl. He noted that in order to comply with the Comprehensive Plan, the City must consider ways to incentive developers to also comply.

Mr. Chavez continued that the third phase of the Springfield Avenue extension covers the area between Shiloh Drive to San Isidro Parkway with 3,132 linear

feet of roadways at an estimated cost of \$5,678,008. These plans are 95% complete at this time. Dr. Marte Martinez noted that this plan crosses the creek three times, to which he voiced his opposition. He noted that the City has an opportunity to beautify this part of North Central Park. Cm. Altgelt agreed, noting that this area is one of very few green spaces left in the City which should be protected.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, reminded Council that staff has not identified the funding for this design. Dr. Martinez countered that Council intends to do that during the budget cycle.

Dr. Martinez noted that while he supports protecting the creek, he also is mindful of protecting taxpayers' dollars; the City has already gone down this road pretty far. He voiced his opinion that the planning has been very short-sighted so far, and if staff could redesign this phase with more forethought, it would save money in the long-term from the creek not having to redirect and find its path again, saving on the wear and tear of the road.

Riazul Mia, Utilities Director, clarified that this phase of the extension was designed in 2009 as part of a large drainage project. The bridges were designed to incorporate the bike trail and this current design was one of the only ones that met the industry standard. The entire land is owned by the City, and the design was done in-house.

Cm. Altgelt reminded Mr. Mia that Utilities approved a design plan that unearthed 45 feet of raw land to place an eight-inch pipe.

Motion to direct staff to redesign Phase 3 of this project in such as a way that the extension stays as far to the west of the Shiloh mountain bike trail as possible and report back to Council.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

### **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

### **XIV. RECESS AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL AND CONVENE AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD**

None

### **XV. ADJOURN AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD AND RECONVENE AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL**

None



### 43. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

#### A. Request by Mayor Pete Saenz

1. Status Report on the Boulevard of the Americas Master Plan and Design; and any matters incident thereto. **(Co-Sponsored by Mayor Pro-Tempore Roberto Balli)**

Cm. Balli requested to meet with the designers so that they could receive more input from the City, which he felt has been lacking so far.

Motion to table and bring back to Council at a later date.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

#### B. Request by Council Member George Altgelt

1. Discussion and possible action to have entities and individuals warned and cited regarding the over watering; and any matters incident thereto.

Cm. Altgelt noted that this conversation started with observations that many streets were failing before their expected end of life. The Solid Waste Director explained to Council that overwatering on the sides of the street causes the street to act like a sponge and absorb the excess water. It then makes the streets plastic, and they fail earlier than expected. Overwatering also attracts mosquitoes. He noted that the City must take the issue of water as a finite resource seriously and start preventing overwatering problems rather than repairing them in a reactionary manner. He asked for staff to bring the irrigation ordinance, which has passed through the Technical Review Board, to Council as a staff report. He recommended an educational outreach or warning to correct bad behavior with regards to overwatering, specifically reaching out to entities like school districts and citizens with sprinkler systems.

Dr. Marte Martinez agreed, noting that while punitive measures will work, incentives may work better. A xeriscaping ordinance would likely result in less water usage as developers and homeowners embrace plants that utilize less water. He noticed that many residents are not properly educated on how to install their sprinkler systems or which ones will work for them. Aside from obtaining a sprinkler system permit, the systems should be set far enough back that the water does not leach out into the street; similarly, the water pressure should be adjusted to ensure that the number of gallons per minute is not too high, especially at the sprinkler heads closer to the roads.

Riazul Mia, Utilities Director, reported that last year, the City received 158 complaints regarding overwatering; all complaints received a response, and 72 written warnings were issued. He stated that earlier drafts of the xeriscaping ordinance were tied into water conservation and drought contingency plans. Citations cannot be issued because Laredo is not in a mandatory water

conservation state. He advised that staff will separate the ordinance from the drought and conservation plans to address overwatering itself and bring it back to Council. A sprinkler system ordinance will soon be ready for Council review, but he reminded Council that the right-of-way of many subdivisions belongs to the homeowner.

Cm. Altgelt recalled that the Comprehensive Plan suggests that wasted space like right-of-ways without any meaningful tax value will no longer be subject to irrigation or mowing. If the City retools its Land Development Code, it can incentivize homeowners and developers to eliminate wasteful practices. He recalled tasking the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee and the Technical Review Board with a xeriscape ordinance that has yet to come back to Council.

Mr. Mia countered that the Technical Review Board did indeed make a presentation to City Council on the xeriscaping ordinance, but Council did not take any action at that time. Dr. Martinez asked staff to bring that item back before Council along with the irrigation ordinance.

Cm. Vielma added that the City speaks so highly of its Comprehensive Plan but does not incentivize developers to comply with it.

Mr. Mia clarified to Council that the five feet of right-of-way is not “wasted space,” there are utilities and phone cables and pipes in that right-of-way because the City does not want to place those inside the street. Cm. Altgelt conceded to Mr. Mia’s point.

Cm. Rodriguez asked Council and staff to consider including incentives to get residents’ cars off of the sidewalks and onto their own driveways to clear the roads and sidewalks for public use.

Cm. Altgelt noted that the educational campaign should not be geared toward television, as nobody watches basic cable anymore. The City’s Youtube channel also has very few subscribers. He asked staff to come up with a viable and creative messaging plan that will spread the message in a collaborative way.

Motion to direct staff to pursue an educational campaign to reduce the occurrences of over-irrigation and street failures and to bring back to Council the xeriscaping ordinance, the irrigation ordinance, and the ordinance regarding lots in a way that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and to, if necessary, forward this information to the entities assisting with the Land Development Code so that it is comprehensive, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Mercurio Martinez and Cm. Balli were not present.

2. Discussion and possible action to require all city departments to implement an asset management program to track time, labor, parts and equipment; and any matters incident thereto.

Cm. Altgelt announced that El Metro incorporated their bus schedules and routes onto Google so that users could see them online. He reported that Laredo is the only mass transit city that does not utilize bus passes for their transportation. Unless the City incorporates new technology, Laredo will never “grow up” and function on the same level as other cities.

Riazul Mia, Utilities Director, reported that it took staff two years to implement their pilot program due to training and organization. The Department has been in a pilot program for close to two months, and it has been working. Staff still needs a little more data to identify cost-savings.

Homero Vazquez, IST Director, explained that a consultant was brought in and worked with standardizing the data. Staff worked with the consultant on the software that was purchased; in addition to purchasing the platform, the City would need to purchase modules to use on that platform that would be specific to each Department. Staff needs to conduct a study to assess its current standing and steps necessary to achieve its objectives. The process is not simply digitizing the data but also creating the workflow through the technology. He noted that to implement this process City-wide, staff would recommend bringing in a consultant to work with the Departments. This software program is being used by the City of Sugar Land. Mr. Mia added that since Sugar Land applied this program to the entire City, it took them almost five years to get the program online.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, reported that two weeks ago management introduced the Solid Works, Parks & Leisure Services, and Traffic Departments to review the software. All three Departments were favorable to the software, but she reminded Council that it will take time to get the program online and establish the workflows. Cost is also a factor; funding is not available to implement this program City-wide at this time.

Mr. Vazquez clarified that the City purchased the license agreement for the platform; modules are what would need to be purchased from this point on. Each module is going to address \$15,000-\$20,000, and it will be specific to the Department.

Cm. Rodriguez suggested that the City start small before going big, such as installing GPS on every City vehicle for accountability and guidance on the most efficient routes.

Cm. Altgelt agreed that Fleet asset management systems would be a very good start.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, reminded Council that someone must map out all of the processes in each Department. The pilot program would then be a program for that department. To create a pilot program for a small department

would require resources to map out the department's processes and operation. He suggested that Council identify funding, and going down the Enterprise Funds is an advisable start. He reminded Council that staff has brought the City-wide fleet GPS proposal before Council multiple times in the past, but funding was never identified. With funding established, staff would be quite willing to move forward with the initiative.

Motion to direct staff to create a pilot program with the Parks & Leisure Services Department, the Public Works Department, and the Solid Waste Department, and implement a City-wide fleet GPS system and bring a cost estimate for implementing these pilot programs along with their challenges at the next Council meeting.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Mercurio Martinez, Cm. Vielma, and Cm. Balli were not present.

3. Discussion and possible action to direct staff to assess how the City of Laredo progress and the implementation of the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan; and any matters incident thereto.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, informed Council that staff needs a date from Council in order to plan a strategic planning workshop. Cm. Altgelt noted that the workshop is critical at this point to address some significant issues and measure the City's progress.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, noted that staff has reached out to Departments and are preparing a report for Council. Departments have a deadline of Tuesday, April 2, to submit their accomplishments for the report. Management has also reached out to a potential facilitator and are providing information for a successful strategic planning workshop. A date has not been secured at this time, but with direction from Council, staff will coordinate it.

Cm. Altgelt requested that during the strategic planning workshop, as it relates to mobility, there be a special session just for El Metro. He noted that while it is human nature to point out the deficiencies that exist, the City should remind the public of the Departments that are succeeding and the progress being made to embody the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Cabello noted that staff can complete the report in two weeks and provide it to Council as well as making it publically available on the City's website.

Cm. Altgelt noted that an invaluable measure of the City's compliance to the Comprehensive Plan would be citizen input. Mrs. Cabello countered that collecting public feedback would take much more time. She advised Council that other cities' reports do not include citizen feedback, just statistics.

Cm. Altgelt added that City Makery and Bike Laredo conducted a survey to see if residents wanted bike and pedestrian lanes. Since getting people to take a survey can be difficult, they raffled a mountain bike among the survey participants, resulting in over 1,000 completed surveys.

Motion to direct staff to assess the City of Laredo's progression in the implementation of the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan through staff and citizen input and raffle a mountain bike in order to incentivize participation, using District VII promotional funds if necessary.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Balli were not present.

### **C. Request by Mayor Pro-Tempore Roberto Balli**

1. Discussion with possible action to repurpose the current Convention & Visitors Bureau office for a downtown police substation to improve night patrol on weekends; and any matters incident thereto.

Cm. Balli reminded Council that the current CVB office is on San Agustin a block north of Iturbide Street, where many bars and restaurants are popping up. With the CVB offices moving to another location, the opportunity is present to bring police present to this up-and-coming location Downtown.

Claudio Treviño, Laredo Police Chief, thanked Cm. Balli for giving the Police Department the opportunity to take advantage of the building. Opening a substation on San Agustin will allow the Police Department to expand its operation, increase visibility Downtown, and better serve the area.

Cm. Balli asked if it would be more beneficial to open a small booking area at this location due to the increased activity around bars and restaurants on more active nights like Thursdays through Saturdays. Chief Treviño stated that it is a possibility and confirmed that he would research the feasibility of such an accommodation. Cm. Balli asked Chief Treviño to also research the feasibility of more bike patrol or foot patrol on more active nights in the area.

Cm. Altgelt noted that a Municipal Management District, represented by most of the Downtown business owners, is still stagnant. If the MMD were reactivated, they could author a service plan to include the costs of the police substation as described by Cm. Balli. He added that most of the business owners on Iturbide Street were the biggest champions of a MMD as they wanted the increased police presence, increased garbage pick-ups, street cleanings, and lighting. All of these services can be assessed in the service plan for the MMD and enhance the downtown urban environment.

Motion to direct staff to repurpose the current Convention & Visitors Bureau office

for a Downtown police substation with booking amenities as discussed for the next budgeting cycle.

Moved: Cm. Balli

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Torres were not present.

**D. Request by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.**

1. Discussion with possible action to instruct Co-Interim City Managers to authorize staff to evaluate outdoor exercise equipment in District I and provide proposals for possible replacements as needed. City Council District I Priority Funds will be used for this project.

Cm. Gonzalez noted his intention to upgrade swing sets and exercise equipment for all District I parks.

Graciela Briones, Assistant Parks & Leisure Services Director, clarified that the Geraldine Valdez Agredano Memorial Park (Century City) is the only one with exercise equipment.

Motion to direct staff to bring a plan and cost estimate to Council to upgrade equipment or add equipment to the District I parks.

Moved: Cm. Gonzalez

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Torres, Cm. Vielma, Cm. Altgelt, and Cm. Balli were not present.

2. Discussion with possible action to instruct Co-Interim City Managers to authorize staff to provide a proposal for a soft surface rubber track around the Geraldine Agredano Memorial Park.

Graciela Briones, Assistant Parks & Leisure Services Director, confirmed that the average cost of the soft surface rubber track is about \$102, 270, or about \$9 per square foot. The City has to put the project out for bid for quotes.

Cm. Gonzalez reported that he would review his account balances left over for this year.

Cm. Rodriguez noted his intention to resurface some walking areas in his parks; he asked if using recycled materials is an option to save money. Cm. Gonzalez noted that he had been told by people in the community that resurfacing should cost about \$40,000-\$50,000; he asked staff to reach out to local vendors for more information.

Dr. Marte Martinez suggested looking at a more comprehensive view of the City's soft surface tracks rather than only bidding out one project at a time.

Motion to approve and direct staff to look at a City-wide soft surface track project, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Gonzalez

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Torres, Cm. Altgelt, and Cm. Balli were not present.

3. Discussion with possible action to instruct Co-Interim City Managers to authorize staff to determine the possibility of creating a position under the Parks & Leisure Department to assist and coordinate special needs programs.

Cm. Gonzalez noted his intention to appoint one individual to work on special needs programs and events.

Anita Stanley, Assistant Parks & Leisure Services Director, clarified that the person to serve this function would be a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist or Coordinator, and this person would need to identify the needs in the community through the schools and colleges. She reported that the community members with special needs have programs during the school year but need summer programs. She reminded Council that they need more than one individual as an entire staff is needed to implement the program on a one-to-one or one-to-two ratio. She reported that Parks hired five certified specialists last summer, which was successful but reached a very small target.

Cm. Gonzalez agreed that staff would need to support the programs or events, but he clarified his intention of dedicating one person to lead and coordinate the programs. He noted that the programs need to be year-round, not just in summer; after-school programs would be very valuable.

Cm. Rodriguez asked why the special needs programs couldn't have a classroom dynamic, such as one teacher or leader with the group of children. Mrs. Stanley explained that the severity of a child's disability dictates whether they need an individualized teacher or can participate in a group setting. Those leaders also need to be properly trained to help calm or accommodate children with special needs.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, confirmed that the Sports Marketing position through the Convention & Visitors Bureau had its funding removed, so it is not available. He agreed that the City must better assist the special needs communities, but resources need to be made available for those programs. The position was unfunded years ago when many positions were realigned in the CVB Department.

Dr. Hector Gonzalez, Health Director, reported that the Mayor's Blue Ribbon

Committee for People with Disabilities has been meeting for six years to improve access, education, and workforce development for people with disabilities. They meet on the third Wednesday of every month; he confirmed that staff can bring this issue to them to partner with Laredo College and the school districts to increase activities and training with the Parks & Leisure Services Department. He assured Council that while more can be done, the Parks staff has been working diligently to provide more services for more members of the community.

Cm. Vielma thanked Cm. Gonzalez and Cm. Rodriguez for their support of this issue. As a homeschooler, she added that offering recreational activities for homeschooled children helps them in terms of inclusion. She asked that, either through the Blue Ribbon Committee or the Special Needs Program Coordinator, after-school programs be made available and activities that focus on ADA compliance and safety features of the City's park equipment.

Dr. Marte Martinez suggested looking to the private sector to find any organizations that pursue this objective for partnership, locally and nationally. Dr. Gonzalez noted that the Parks Department has been working with Dr. Treviño in its tennis program for residents with impairment; that program has been successful and has wonderful instructors. Mrs. Stanley added that the City has partnered with the Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center for special needs activities that went well but ran its course. She confirmed that staff can try to renew that partnership and offered to reach out to TAMIU for graduate students for extracurricular experience.

Motion to direct staff to add the position of a Special Needs Program Coordinator to the budget agenda for consideration and to include MOUs with Laredo College and Texas A&M International University, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Gonzalez

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Torres, Cm. Altgelt, and Cm. Balli were not present.

#### **E. Request by Council Member Vidal Rodriguez**

1. Discussion with possible action to instruct the Co-Interim City Managers to authorize staff to install (1) speed hump on the 3100 block of Mier St., between N. India Ave and N. Smith Ave., under the Special Provision of the Speed Hump Installation Policy, and to authorize the use of asphalt type speed humps, instead of a speed cushion, which is currently required under the current policy, and any other matters incident thereto. City Council District II Priority Funds will be used for this project. Total cost is \$2,500.00.

Motion to approve and add a speed hump on Tarpon Lane between Ocean Drive and Pin Oak Street.

Moved: Cm. Rodriguez



Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Torres, Cm. Altgelt, and Cm. Balli were not present.

Cm. Rodriguez asked about the current policy on speed cushions, as they are not used much.

Robert Peña of the Traffic Department explained that the Department's policy on speed cushions is to replace them as they deteriorate. There is not an operating fund to replace speed cushions, so staff brings them to the attention of the appropriate Council Member for action. He confirmed that the current ordinance is to install speed cushions rather than speed humps.

Steve Landing, Fire Chief, reminded Council that he has shared his opposition to speed humps with Council on many prior occasions as they slow down Fire and emergency response services. Speed humps can also cause further head and spinal injuries when an ambulance passenger who is already injured goes over a speed hump. While he understood that Council is trying to slow down the traffic and increase safety among drivers, he reminded them that this solution creates another problem.

Cm. Rodriguez agreed but countered that District II has very few sidewalks, so pedestrians walk on the street. Slowing down traffic is key, and the speed humps have helped control traffic speed. Chief Landin noted that there are other speed-calming devices besides speed humps to consider, such as stop signs. However, he conceded that if drivers want to speed, they will do so regardless of the traffic-calming device in place. He noted that the call for speed humps is reactionary to any traffic incident, but the solution starts in the home with education on the impacts of speeding and disregard for traffic laws.

Mr. Peña noted that when a new subdivision is being developed, roads of a certain length trigger the Traffic Department to implement a traffic-calming device, specifically a concrete raised platform. The asphalt speed hump is the other measure for existing roadways, which has a curved apex rather than an no-ramp, a plateau, and an off-ramp.

Cm. Rodriguez directed staff to bring back the speed cushions ordinance to Council for review.

#### **F. Request by Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III**

1. Discussion with possible action to propose and evaluate a beautification plan to include grass and trees maintained by the City of Laredo at the City's Cemetery; and any other matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr.)

Cm. Mercurio Martinez noted that as he drives down Meadow Street, the City Cemetery is in deplorable shape with regards to grass and tree-trimming. The

tombstones in the veterans' section are in various shapes and conditions. He noted that the Arlington National Cemetery tombstones are uniform, clean, perfectly aligned, and like soldiers standing at attention. He wanted to see the City Cemetery treated as one of the City's parks and commented on how the veterans' section's location in the corner makes it the showcase to the public.

Graciela Briones, Assistant Parks & Leisure Services Director, reported that staff has plans to add to the cemetery. Staff ordered the grass seed and parts for repairing the irrigation system. She confirmed that staff could consider Cm. Martinez's comments on leveling the slats and making the tombstones more uniform. She proposed an improvement to the entrance gates, such as adding lights to the columns, planting Italian cypress trees by the three access points, and implementing a monument with the seven flags of Laredo along the gate. This proposal was reviewed by Council in the past, but either due to lack of funding or other priorities, no action was taken. She reported that these suggested improvements would cost an estimated total of \$192,450.

Cm. Rodriguez asked if staff could reach out to the private sector for any donations of trees or something similar. He added that he would be willing to contribute his District Priority Funding as well, but there are many people or organizations who would be happy to contribute to the veterans' cemetery. Dr. Marte Martinez voiced his agreement.

Cm. Torres noted that this cemetery is located in District IV on a main corridor and has become an eyesore. Saunders is highly-trafficked, and that area should have the greenest grass and best-maintained City facility as the final resting place of residents and veterans of Laredo. He encouraged staff to concentrate more on the beautification of the Cemetery, not simply its maintenance. The costs of maintenance and beautification should already be worked into the Department's budget rather than District Priority Funds. While the City is good at planting trees and beautifying a ribbon-cutting event, it lacks in maintaining the upkeep of a facility or park, and within a few years the park or facility needs a major effort to restore to its prior appearance.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, did not have recommendations for funding sources at this time and added that the revenues of selling cemetery plots are not enough to cover the Cemetery's operation costs. The City would potentially have to increase prices, which she did not think would be considered favorably. Receiving donations would likely be the best alternative. Keeping Laredo Beautiful may be able to assist, and local Boys and Girls Clubs may offer volunteer service hours.

Cm. Torres noted that some residents pay lawn care professionals to go cut or water the grass around their loved ones' burial plots. He expressed his disappointment that the burden is put on family members to keep their loved ones' plots properly maintained, especially when they've already paid the City for the burial plot and maintenance. He asked staff to explore funding sources for the \$192,000 price tag of implementing the beautification features as presented by Mrs. Briones. Council can review these sources and features during the budget

cycle.

Mrs. Briones clarified that the cost estimate includes new staff, particularly one Building Maintenance Worker and a Groundskeeper.

Gilberto Sanchez, Budget Director, reported that the City Cemetery reported that the recurring cost moving forward would just be personnel. Fertilizer, irrigation, and other expenses is already factored into the Cemetery's budget.

Mrs. Cabello asked for time to explore donations from the community and local organizations. Cm. Torres clarified that the City needs to make the investment of the gates, signs, maintenance, and equipment. The personnel can wait until the budget cycle, but the City should find the money for the \$150,000 of improvements (which does not include the added personnel), and community donations could help the City maintain the investment being made right now. He suggested defraying the cost of planting trees by allowing the community to donate a tree in memory of a loved one with a small plaque.

Cm. Altgelt voiced his opinion that the City should be taking its limited resources and spending it on facilities and parks for the living, such as children. While he applauded the efforts to honor the memories of deceased Laredoans, he noted that many of the departed would want the City's funds to go to other facilities where children and families can enjoy them.

Cm. Vielma asked if the City's effluent water could be utilized for cemetery irrigation to reduce the costs. Dr. Marte Martinez agreed and noted that to maintain grass requires continuous watering and seeding. He encouraged Council and staff to consider low-cost options first as proper lawn maintenance will go a long way to beautifying the cemetery.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez agreed that watering and seeding is a fast and easy fix for cemetery beautification as well as aligning the tombstones.

Motion to direct staff to bring recommendations back to Council as to how the City can fund the beautification project with the exception of personnel as well as additional funding options other than District Priority Funds and explore the possibility of defraying tree costs through possible donations as memorials to loved ones and include \$25,000 each from District I, II, III, IV, and VI Priority Funds for this project, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 5

Against: 2

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez

Cm. Vielma

Cm. Rodriguez

Cm. Altgelt

Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Cm. Torres

Dr. Marte Martinez

Cm. Balli was not present.

**G. Request by Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr.**

1. Discussion with possible action to establish and define the City of Laredo's Annual Commission for Women Hall of Fame event through ordinance and to further create an outline and timeline for the event, further establishing a public purpose; and any other matters incident thereto.

Cm. Torres noted that he has worked with the City Attorney's Office to establish the public benefit of the Laredo Commission for Women and their events so that Council can continue funding. The City Attorney's Office has been outspoken as to how the Commission needs to operate, but it continues to fall through the cracks. He emphasized the need to establish protocol to adequately continue with the Commission and their events that highlight their purpose. He clarified that this procedure will provide structure to the Commission for consistency moving forward through the years.

Kristina L. Hale, City Attorney, confirmed that this ordinance is needed to establish controls and maintain authority over the Commission's activities, especially if they are to represent the City and use City funding.

Jose A. Valdez, Jr., City Secretary and liaison to the Laredo Commission for Women, agreed that this structure will prove valuable for the Commission, particularly their Hall of Fame event. He reminded Council that while the Commission typically holds their Hall of Fame event in March, it has been held during different months for various reasons in the past.

Cm. Torres noted that staff will draft the language of the ordinance before it is brought back to Council for review and input before approval. The ordinance will be based on a similar ordinance in San Antonio with their Womens' Hall of Fame event.

Cm. Altgelt recalled attending a couple of these events in the past. On one year, his own mother was recognized in a very quaint event; he attended another Hall of Fame on another year and saw that there was a grander gesture made. He noted that the target audience of this event needs to be other young ladies who see strong female examples in their lives.

Cm. Torres agreed, noting that to-date, the Commission members serve as *madrinas* to present the honorees; he suggested instead that the Commission incorporate the youth to be a part of this event so that they can see role models in the honorees and establish a public purpose. The ordinance his proposed would also address the discrepancies that Cm. Altgelt observed over multiple events. This will help eliminate any questions or bickering over what is to be done. Part of the ordinance will include criteria for what merits an applicant's selection for the Hall of Fame event. He reminded Council that the Commission for Women members serve in an advisory capacity and are a reflection of Council.

Cm. Altgelt asked how many nominees are selected as honorees. Sandra Rocha Taylor, Laredo Commission for Women Chair, explained that it depends upon the number of applications that are received. Cm. Altgelt noted that this strategy is nebulous and agreed with Cm. Torres's idea to formalize the selection criteria. Once that criteria is established, he voiced his opinion that the selection committee should have more autonomy.

Cm. Torres countered that the City Attorney's Office has informed Council that they cannot give that authority to an advisory committee. Mrs. Hale noted that Council can confirm or ratify the Commission's selections after they do the work.

Mrs. Taylor noted that the Commission was not told that this item was on the Council agenda. Mr. Valdez countered that at the last Council Meeting, at which Mrs. Taylor and other Commission members were present, Cm. Torres stated that he was going to add this item to the next Council agenda for April 1. Cm. Altgelt agreed that this occurred and that Council was expecting this item to come before them today.

Mr. Valdez clarified that any action taken today does not affect the Commission yet; they would be involved moving forward. Mrs. Taylor noted that at the last Commission meeting, she appointed a selection committee to establish the selection criteria in-house. She also noted that the Commission used to have a Young Women's Commission of high school juniors and seniors, but the Commission was told that they could not have their own commission. She reminded Council that the Commission has an ordinance that provides guidance and objectives for their operation, which they try to work within. While they welcome more parameters, she asked Council to give them the ability to be part of the process, since Council took the time to appoint 18 women to represent this female-centric Commission. She voiced her concerns that Council will turn the Commission into a rubber stamp to fulfill Council's own wishes without allowing them to provide any input or recommendations.

Cm. Vielma agreed that Council should listen to the Commission and discouraged Council from "reinventing the wheel" since there are many women-centric commissions with established criteria and procedures to model. She emphasized that the Commission needs to focus on what the community needs are and what can be done to address the poverty rate, teenage pregnancy, mentoring the youth, bringing in professionals for addresses and conferences, and more public services. She noted that those services are important to accomplish instead of spending all of the Commission's resources on selecting a small group of well-deserving women for a recognition event.

Mrs. Taylor reminded Council that the large commission has had minor struggles to reach a quorum, though it has improved lately. She noted that the 2019 action plan includes a Young Women's Conference in September, and the Commission hosted one previously at TAMU that was successful. The Hall of Fame event changes slightly because of issues with the venue or funding.

Cm. Torres explained that his motion to direct staff to draft an ordinance does not

exclude the Commission from the process as the ordinance will need to come back before Council in future meetings.

Cm. Altgelt noted that every third Thursday of the month, a small community group called Chicas Chingonas meets at Cultura Beer Garden to focus on the issues faced by Laredo women. He asked that this group be contacted by the Commission and staff for input on the drafting of this ordinance. Cm. Vielma noted another group of professional women who meet with a similar purpose.

Motion to further instruct the City Attorney's Office to continue researching and to develop an ordinance and to meet with Las Chicas Chingones, as amended.

Moved Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Balli was not present.

2. Discussion with possible action to cap and regulate the incentives and benefits (i.e. cellphone allowance, vehicle allowance, deferred compensation plan, severance pay, and healthcare insurance) of the position of the City Manager; and any other matters incident thereto.

Cm. Torres reported that no matter where he goes, he is asked why Laredo's City Managers are paid out hundreds of thousands of dollars, and there is no way to answer such questions without violating any terms of the agreement. He encouraged Council to untie the City's hands with severance packages as they are very wasteful ways to spend the City's money. It is difficult for the public to understand how severance pays an important role in hiring someone competent to handle the City as a multi-million-dollar organization. He first considered capping the City Manager salary, but then he received feedback that capping the salary might further tie the City's hands by not attracting the right candidates for the position. He explained that the former City Manager's cellphone and vehicle allowances were equivalent to the Mayor's. As the Mayor travels extensively the vehicle allowance is justified, but Cm. Torres shared his opinion that the City Manager does not need an equivalent allowance as they do not travel so much.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, confirmed that the former City Manager's vehicle allowance, equivalent to the Mayor's, was \$1,200 per month; the cellphone allowance was \$150 per month.

Dr. Marte Martinez agreed with Cm. Torres's concerns about "golden parachutes" in which City Managers work for a few years and then retire or resign with huge severance payouts. However, he voiced his opposition to implements caps at the beginning of the process as it is not the most responsible way of attracting competitive candidates to Laredo. Capping should occur at the negotiation phase of this process.

Cm. Altgelt countered that in order to attract the best of the best, which is what

Laredo should be striving to secure, is money. For nationally-recognized public officials and professionals that did not grow up in Laredo, the City needs to provide the right incentive to convince them to relocate here. He commended Cm. Torres for his fiscal conservancy but noted that if there were ever a place to splurge, it would be on hiring a “rock star” City Manager, the high-caliber talent to bring Laredo to its full potential. If the City Manager performs, then Council can decide to increase its benefits based on merit and performance.

Mayor Saenz noted that each Manager brings his or her own style. Cm. Mercurio Martinez noted that the Interim Co-City Managers are at every meeting that he has attended as a new Council Member, which has been many. Therefore, he noted that the cellphone and vehicle allowance are important to the City Manager position. He agreed that the “golden parachute” is something that the City should be very leery of, even though the City must remain attractive to a competent candidate.

Cm. Rodriguez voiced his agreement with Cm. Torres, adding that if Council thinks that lowering a car allowance is going to make a City Manager candidate lose interest in the position, then maybe that candidate is not the right person for the job. He added that cellphone allowances don’t need to be too high since everything on a cellphone is unlimited after a certain price.

Cm. Vielma stated that if the City wants to attract the best, then they need to pay the best. She encouraged staff to look at the employment contract of other City Managers in other cities to see what to expect in terms of additional clauses and allowances those candidates negotiated.

Cm. Gonzalez voiced his opinion that Council should be tackling this issue when there is actually a candidate that is being offered the position.

Cm. Torres stated that the City has negotiated really bad contracts during the past two administrations because Council gets very comfortable in the honeymoon stage with the City Managers that were on board. That makes it all too easy to say yes to the negotiations of the person that Council hired. Council has created a norm of giving the new hire the same contract as the previous City Manager, which must stop now. Council has never measured the caliber of the newly-hired City Manager.

Dr. Martinez noted that with a firm hired to help recruit a City Manager, the firm will guide the City on the proper severance to be competitive and will bring a contract and go through the negotiations on behalf of the City as an intermediary.

Motion to cap the cellphone allowance and vehicle allowance of the City Manager to that amount equivalent to Council Members rather than the Mayor.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 4

Against: 4

Abstain: 0

Cm. Rodriguez

Mayor Saenz

Cm. Torres  
Dr. Marte Martinz  
Cm. Altgelt

Cm. Gonzalez  
Cm. Mercurio Martinez  
Cm. Vielma

Cm. Balli was not present.  
Motion fails.

Cm. Torres learned that the past three City Managers, aside from their retirement accounts, had additional retirement plans to which the City was contributing. Mrs. Cabello confirmed that the City Managers had an additional deferred compensation plan to which the City contributed up to \$19,000 annually towards the City Managers' retirement. Cm. Torres stated that the City Manager is no different than the custodian who comes to work every day and asked why the City Manager should get a deferred compensation plan of \$19,000 per year on top of their base salary to which the City pays 100%. He clarified that the City Manager does not pay any of his or her own money to this deferred compensation plan; the City pays it completely. He initiated a motion to cap the deferred compensation plan rate to 50% of what it previously was.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez noted that this motion is akin to the City negotiating against itself. Cm. Vielma agreed. Cm. Martinez continued that the City needs to leave its options open depending on who comes into the position. If the City wants to recruit "rock stars," then it needs to be left open. Cm. Vielma reiterated Cm. Martinez's comments, adding that cutting those options will cost the City in competitive candidates.

Cm. Torres countered that the City is providing a compensation plan to the City Manager in which the other City employees cannot participate. If every other City employee wants to build his or her retirement plan, they have to sacrifice out of their own paycheck the money to do so. However, the City Manager contributes nothing because the City contributes \$20,000 annually just because the City Manager is the "CEO" of the organization in deferred compensation. The City Manager already receives the highest match possible with the City for their primary retirement plan. The deferred compensation plan rate also increases every year, so the disparity will grow every year as well.

Motion to cap the City Manager's deferred compensation plan to 50% of the annual rate as allowed by federal law.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 2

Against: 4

Abstain: 0

Cm. Rodriguez

Cm. Torres

Mayor Saenz

Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Cm. Vielma

Cm. Altgelt

Cm. Torres noted that providing lifetime health insurance to parting City Managers is ridiculous and is not offered anywhere else aside from the President of the



United States. The past three City Managers have left the City of Laredo with lifetime health insurance irrespective of whether they get another job where health insurance is provided. If they enter Medicare/Medicaid age, they still have private health insurance paid for fully by the City of Laredo.

Mayor Saenz countered that some other employees receive lifetime health insurance upon severance from the City. Cm. Torres clarified that those employees have to pay a premium of \$1,200-\$1,500 per month. The City Managers with lifetime health insurance pay \$0.

Mrs. Cabello clarified that when the City employee reaches Medicare age, then the lifetime health insurance ends. However, the City Manager keeps it forever with a \$0 contribution.

Cm. Torres proposed doing away with the lifetime insurance; if the City Manager serves the City 1-2 years, they receive health insurance for one year after leaving the City. If they serve 3-4 years, they receive three years of insurance after leaving. If they serve five years or more, then they will receive five years of health insurance from the City. For all of these options, the City Manager would contribute to their own premium the same way that any other City employee would. If they get another job during that time that provides health insurance or reach Medicare/Medicaid age, the City would remove them from its insurance plan. He voiced his opinion that this arrangement is fair. Mayor Saenz voiced his agreement. Cm. Torres initiated a motion to this effect.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez agreed that a lifetime of free health insurance is outrageous. He noted that he agreed with Cm. Torres until he broke down the negotiations of health insurance offered based on years of service. That should be left to the negotiations after recruitment. He agreed that providing free healthcare for life to the past three City Managers is uncalled-for but encouraged Council to wait until negotiations before determining what changes to implement.

Kristina L. Hale, City Attorney, reported that she has not seen lifetime health insurance being offered by any Texas city other than Laredo. She has not seen any other Texas city offering their City Managers health insurance after they leave the organization.

Dr. Marte Martinez agreed to removing lifetime health insurance as that is not offered by any other municipality in Texas. Cm. Torres noted that the issue with simply removing "lifetime" health insurance is that a City Manager could still negotiate 20 years of health insurance, which is still ridiculous and not done elsewhere.

Motion to remove the lifetime health insurance allowance, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Balli was not present.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez commended Mrs. Cabello and Mr. Eads for their hard work and achieving “rock star” status as Interim Co-City Managers.

Motion to cap severance pay not to exceed one year’s salary.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 4	Against: 3	Abstain: 1
Cm. Gonzalez	Cm. Mercurio Martinez	Mayor Saenz
Cm. Rodriguez	Cm. Vielma	
Cm. Torres	Cm. Altgelt	
Dr. Marte Martinez		

Cm. Balli was not present.

Motion fails.

3. Discussion with possible action to cap and regulate the vehicle allowance and cellphone allowance available to the position of the deputy city manager; and any other matters incident thereto.

Cm. Torres informed Council that the Deputy City Manager currently receives a salary of \$1 less than the maximum amount allotted for the Assistant City Manager. He voiced his opinion that the Deputy should be paid 25% more than the maximum allotment for the Assistant position(s).

Cm. Vielma asked where the 25% rate comes from; when Cm. Torres noted that it was simply his recommendation based on his opinion, she noted that she needs more data before supporting any action to that effect.

Motion to direct staff to review the pay wage scale for the Deputy City Manager position to make it competitive and ensure that it does not conflict with the Assistant City Manager positions.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 7	Against: 0	Abstain: 0
--------	------------	------------

Cm. Balli was not present.

#### H. Request by Council Member Nelly Vielma

1. Discussion with possible action to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LISD, UISD, TAMIU, LC, Webb County and other entities to create a local Grants Office to improve inter-local resources and expertise; and any other matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Mayor Pete Saenz and Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III)

Cm. Vielma reported that on the last legislative trip, she observed the need for the City to pool its resources and expertise for grant applications so that the City does not have to compete for grants but rather apply with other entities and experts as alliances.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Vielma

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.

2. Discussion with possible action to commission TAMIU to start a historical compilation of video testimonials and evidence documentation of local veterans biographies; and any other items incident thereto.

Motion to table.

Moved: Cm. Vielma

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.

3. Discussion with possible action to authorize the Co-Interim City Managers to direct the engineering department to design walkable sidewalks with shade buffers on Springfield Ave. between Village Park and JSJ subdivision to be paid from District V priority funds; and any other items incident thereto.

Motion to approve, not to exceed \$150,000.

Moved: Cm. Vielma

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.

#### **I. Request by Council Member Dr. Marte A. Martinez**

1. Discussion with possible action regarding consistent appropriation of funds in the City Budget towards road repairs and resurfacing of municipal streets; and any other matters incident thereto.

Dr. Martinez noted that there is significant road wear and tear throughout the City, and not enough money is made available for these repairs.

John Orfila, Public Works Director, reported that the Public Works Department began its aggressive paving program in 2008 with a budget of \$10.9 million, \$5.6

million of which the Department spent. The budget is all bond money, and the Department paved 825 blocks that year. The money rolled over in 2009 with an additional \$1.1 million, and the Department paved 593 blocks that year. Public Works is not an Enterprise Fund and does make its own revenue.

Dr. Martinez noted that in 2008 and 2014, the City made a significant investment in its roads. The City is now living off of an investment that was made in 2014 and wonders why the roads are in such poor condition. There is not sufficient investment in the roads, which are a reflection of the City's health as a community. He emphasized that good roads are better for commerce and investments.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, explained that, by ordinance, the City splits revenues with the Bridge; however, the City already takes more than 50% from the Bridge's revenues as it stands. He cautioned Council that the City is already extending itself on what it takes from the Bridge.

Mayor Saenz noted that the City should reprioritize its roads. Dr. Martinez agreed that the City needs to reallocate some of its resources to road repairs and reevaluate it every budget cycle.

Mr. Orfila reminded Council of the adage, "We pay now or we pay later." Every year that passes increases the costs of goods and services as well as the costs of living. He noted that the Department's paving services are funded by bonds that the City will be paying back for the next 20 years.

Mr. Eads stated that when the budget comes before Council, it essentially is a list of the City's priorities. At that point, Council can establish and realign what the City's priorities are to direct resources. He noted that staff believes that infrastructure is important because that leads to economic development and growth in a self-feeding cycle. While staff intends to cut the budget as much as possible to meet the City's objectives, he reminded Council that the Public Works Department has some moneys reserved to pave right now. The Department has kept those monies in reserve because they have not had any reinjection of dollars in any sustainable, systematic way year-to-year.

Cm. Altgelt agreed that paving and repairing streets needs to be an essential part of the services offered by the City. He suggested committing that \$2 million per year come from the Bridge revenues for this purpose. Mr. Orfila stated that some neighborhoods need French drains installed, but the funding is not available to do that.

Mr. Eads reminded Council that at this rate, the City will never be able to catch up on repairs as the roads are deteriorating at a faster rate than the City can address. Council must make roads a bigger priority or the problem will never be corrected. Mr. Orfila stated that \$4 million per year will be a good start for Public Works.

Cm. Vielma recalled that Council was waiting on a study to see the need in the City for prioritization and planning. She noted that Council has not heard back regarding this study. Mr. Eads noted that staff did not want to take action without

having learned from the study. Dr. Marte Martinez countered that the lack of funding is the limiting factor, not the study. If the study is finished and the City does not have funding allocated to this problem, then the study is moot and unhelpful. The study will end up on the shelf collecting dust. He stated that staff knows which roads are in the worst condition and most in need of repair.

Mr. Eads stated that the City's financial advisors are leery of the City's overreliance on the Bridge Fund for what should be a maintenance issue. Potential bond holders are going to be nervous about the City's ability to repay their debt.

Gilberto Sanchez, Budget Director, warned Council that separating \$4 million from the Bridge Department for street paving and maintenance may be more difficult because those monies might be needed in the General Fund due to the 5% gap in property taxes. Amusement redemption establishment revenues are also down \$1 million from last year. Dr. Marte Martinez countered that improved streets will improve commerce.

Cm. Rodriguez noted that his district is an older part of the City, which has different needs and priorities than those of District VI.

Motion to allocate \$4 million plus 5% for street paving and maintenance with the 5% going towards shaded pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to be finalized during the next budget cycle and make the paving and maintenance of City streets a priority in every budget following the priorities noted in the forthcoming study, as amended.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

For: 5

Against: 1

Abstain: 0

Mayor Saenz

Cm. Rodriguez

Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Cm. Vielma

Dr. Marte Martinez

Cm. Altgelt

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.

2. Discussion with possible action to authorize Co-Interim City Managers to instruct Transit staff to develop and to implement an Urban Circulator Pilot Program, that meets the needs of the Transit Development Plan; and any other matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member George Altgelt)

Dr. Marte Martinez noted that while the El Metro system is a good system, it takes about an hour and a half to make a roundtrip around the City, making it an inefficient system for people to get from home to work to home or to go to restaurants and bars in the evenings. Most metropolitan areas have an express system in which the public can use mass transit to get to different points of their town efficiently. Achieving this objective in one fell swoop is a very expensive

endeavor that gives everyone on Council “sticker shock.” He noted his intention to incorporate an Urban Circulator Pilot Program through recently-retired Paratransit vans that are still operational. These vans will help provide an express system while saving on some of the operational costs of new buses or vehicles. If it works, then the City can continue to incorporate additional routes annually.

Mayor Saenz agreed that there is a need for such a service in Laredo, but he observed big buses with only two or three passengers before. He asked how Council can justify adding more routes or services when the public does not seem to utilize the services already in place.

Claudia San Miguel, Transit Director, reminded Council that this proposal has been brought before Council and the ParaTransit Advisory Committee in years past; studies are not needed, and she advised Council that action is needed on this issue. An urban circulator system provides a transportation option that connects urban destinations with Transit routes and fosters the redevelopment of urban spaces into walkable mixed use, high density environments. Typically, an urban circulator operates regular services within a close loop-usually three miles or shorter in length. She informed staff that the area of Laredo most in need of a circulator is the Mines Road area, as backed up with study and survey data; South Laredo is the second-highest priority for a circulator system. A route was also established for North Laredo to service students and North Laredo residents with mobility issues. She recommended that Council approve the following:

- Follow El Metro’s five-year Transit Development Plan, which identified the need for neighborhood/industrial park circulators
- Identify funding for operational cost of three-month pilot program
- Schedule, communicate and complete a public meeting process for 30 days
- Repurpose two Paratransit vans with an estimated investment of \$10,000 for 30-45 days
- Finalize and approve circulator service routes for 30-45 days
- Procure a 20-25 passenger van with an estimated investment of \$103,000 for 60-90 days
- Upload the circulator service and new bus stops to Google Transit for 61-90 days
- Communicate and market the circulator service
- Start the circulator Service pilot 1, during which staff will gather data and evaluate ridership statistics to determine needed adjustments on service hours and frequency
  - Repeat for pilot 2 and 3

Cm. Altgelt noted his enthusiasm when Dr. Martinez proposed a circulator to shuttle between District VII, TAMIU, and District VI. He emphasized the benefit of direct access of those residents to TAMIU and back again to their homes and stated his willingness to allocate District VII priority funds for the acquisition for the circulator with the condition that it is program along the proposed route. Dr. Martinez noted his willingness to allocate District VI priority funds to repurposing the vans as long as management would assist with the personnel costs.

Mrs. San Miguel estimated personnel costs to be about \$40,000 per route, as she had estimated about \$120,000 for the year. She noted that there will be some added labor costs to the repairs or maintenance and operation of the vans.

Cm. Rodriguez reminded Council that they already directed staff to bring the City's priorities to Council at the budget cycle for funding. Cm. Altgelt agreed, but countered that the three-day budget workshop is such a runaround that it is hard to remember what was even done by the end of it. The upcoming strategic planning workshop is so involved, he voiced his opinion that Council will be lucky to get done with the Utilities portion of it. A separate strategic planning workshop is needed for El Metro's needs as well; while Transit has a five-year strategic plan, it has not been adopted and committed.

Cm. Rodriguez asked if Transit has their own funding for the operations. Cm. Altgelt explained that they have money for the acquisition of capital, but not for operations. He reminded Council that mobility is the key to getting out of poverty. By providing those resident below the poverty line with accessible mass transit options, particularly an efficient circular system, they will far better-equipped.

Cm. Vielma asked about El Lift, noting that the last time she called for a family member, there was a seven-day waiting period to schedule a pick-up. She asked if more vans were needed to help residents with emergencies or short-term appointments. Mrs. San Miguel confirmed that all of El Lift's schedules need 48 hours' prior notice, unless someone is setting up a permanent schedule.

Dr. Martinez noted that by the time Council gets to the budget cycle, they need to have done research to calculate the City's needs and prioritize what is most pressing. He asked Council for the opportunity to conduct a pilot program to see if it works. If it works, then Council can make decisions sat the budget cycle as to whether to give more funding.

Mrs. San Miguel reported that most other municipalities use urban circulator systems. Currently, Transit is bringing every passenger Downtown, even if they do not need to come Downtown. This system is going to cut the rout times for every rider. The needs have been heavily iterated by riders and students.

Mr. Eads reminded Council that all of the City's dollars are accounted for in the budget, so if the \$40,000 is approved by Council, it needs to be taken away from someone else, and staff has not gone through that exercise.

Motion to direct staff to identify the funding source for \$40,000 and bring it back to Council.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm.

3. Discussion with possible action to instruct staff to initiate process for the purchase and installation of shade structures over existing playground modules at the following parks Amazonia, Chimayo at North Central Park, Divine Mercy and Shiloh Crossing; and any other matters incident thereto. Funding is available in the District VI Priority Funds.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Dr. Marte Martinez

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.

## **XVI. ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Rodriguez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, and Cm. Balli were not present.