

Southeast Regional Planning Organization (SERPO)

Minutes of the Meeting held on
Wednesday, February 24, 2010 – 10:00 a.m.

Bondurant Room, Roswell Public Library
Roswell, New Mexico

Members Present:
(in alphabetical order)

Allensworth, Terry	Chaves County
Armstrong, Tom (Mayor)	City of Ruidoso Downs
Baumann, J.R.	Village of Ruidoso
Carlson, Tom	City of Carlsbad
Ferguson, Joe	City of Alamogordo
Howalt, Justin	City of Clovis
LaMay, Jonathan	Village of Capitan
Leighton, Michael	City of Lovington
Marinovich, Nick	Lea County
Mason, Cassius	Town of Hagerman
Morris, Bill	Village of Ruidoso
Pacheco, Chris	Curry County
Randall, Todd	City of Hobbs
Schrader, Curtis	City of Eunice
Shumsky, Stephanie	City of Carlsbad
Storey, David	City of Roswell
Threadgill, Mark	City of Alamogordo
Torres, Tina	City of Artesia
Voss, Dusty	Town of Carrizozo
Williams, Don	Lincoln County

Staff Present:
(in alphabetical order)

Arnett, Manon	NMDOT District 2
Burr, Mary Ann	SNMEDD/COG
Culin, Jeffrey	NMDOT District 2
Johnson, Libby	NMDOT District 2
Kurtz, Robert	NMDOT District 2
Rogers, Celeste	NMDOT District 2
Shubert, Gary	NMDOT District 2 Engineer
Shutiva, Ron	NMDOT General Office (Santa Fe)
Stover, Dan	NMDOT District 2

Guests Present:
(in alphabetical order)

Ditto, Lynn	US Senator Jeff Bingaman
McFarland, Bill	Smith Engineering Company (Las Cruces)
Nelson, Cecilia	Lea County
Raftery, Sonia	US Senator Jeff Bingaman
Sena, Robert	HDR, Inc.

Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance - Introductions

The regular meeting of the Southeast Regional Planning Organization (SERPO) Policy and Technical Committees was called to order by Policy Chairman Curtis Schrader at 10:04 a.m. Minute taker was confirmed. Of the 42 entities in SERPO, 17 governments were present. The meeting started with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by introductions.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was considered. Members were given copies of an additional Safety application, submitted by the Village of Ft. Sumner. Motion was made by Bill Morris to approve the agenda with an amendment to include the Ft. Sumner application. Motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes

Minutes of the November 17, 2009 regular meeting were considered. Motion was made by Mark Threadgill to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Action Items

Functional Reclassification Request – Chaves County

Terry Allensworth, Chaves County Road Operations Director, explained that the proposal for classification to Major Collector is for 5.6 miles of roadway. David Storey inquired on the benefit of having the road reclassified. Dan Stover with District 2 explained that it would allow for the receipt of federal dollars (potentially). Mr. Allensworth explained that since 2000, the road has been used temporarily as a truck route and has been used as such unofficially since that time. Michael Leighton made a motion to approve the functional reclassification request submitted by Chaves County. Motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

New Mexico Highway Safety Applications

Chairman Schrader explained that two safety applications were received *after* the initial deadline. Applications will be considered individually on the agenda.

Curry County – US 60/84 Safety Project. Chris Pacheco, Road Superintendent, explained that the US 60/84 safety project, from Cannon Air Base to Clovis at MP 385.5 approximately, is intended for deceleration lanes near the grain elevator to alleviate congestion from truck traffic. Mr. Pacheco commented on seven accidents in the last five years, traffic counts and the preliminary cost estimate (\$100,000).

Inquiry was made on whether the application was the same from last year. Mr. Pacheco explained it was not. District 2 added that their office did have discussion on this project with the County this past December. The Chairman explained that there is no rating or ranking of the safety applications. Applications are being considered for approval for submission to Santa Fe. Stephanie Shumsky made a motion to approve Curry County's safety improvement application. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

City of Hobbs – NM 18 (Bender Blvd)/N. Grimes Intersection. Todd Randall, City Engineer, displayed a map to the Membership as he described the project. Mr. Randall explained that the NMDOT conducted a corridor study of the Lovington highway, and this project addresses one component of the study: dual left turning lanes off of North Grimes onto NM 18. Median improvements would be included, and the cost is \$900,000. The City engineer clarified that the funding would be used for design, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations. He spoke of the costly right-of-way acquisitions from retail and commercial businesses and the trend for additional accidents as the congestion increases in the area.

Robert Kurtz, from District 2, discussed the corridor study funded by NMDOT. Todd Randall added that this project reflects the minimum build for the intersection; provided additional background; and spoke of the traffic activity that occurs near and at the intersection, some of which is not captured by police reports. The City is trying to eliminate some of the weaving action that occurs, if there is enough funding. Inquiry was made as to the eligibility of the right-of-way acquisition with safety funding. District 2 responded that it is eligible and gave an example of a SERPO local government being funded 3 or 4 years previously. It was noted that the City of Hobbs had a letter of support for the project. Michael Leighton made a motion to approve the safety application for the City of Hobbs. Motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Lea County – County Rd. 21 (Delaware Basin). Cecilia Nelson, Lea County, addressed the group and used mapping during her description of the project. Ms. Nelson explained that the stand-alone project, Delaware

Basin Road, is located in the southern half of Lea County. The New Mexico State Police have provided accident reports whereby there have been a total of 44 accidents. Two-thirds of the accidents have caused property damage, and there have been two fatalities. Ms. Nelson commented that 40% of these accidents involved animal collisions. The strategy being followed as part of the County's program is to provide fencing along both sides of the highway. Ms. Nelson described the 23 mile roadway segment as being open range and very rural, with heavy commercial traffic. The funding request is for fencing with cattle guards and gates for a cost of \$647,400.

An inquiry was made as to whether the application was the initial request for safety funding. Ms. Nelson explained that it is the County's first request for safety funding. In group discussion, it was commented on how New Mexico is open range, with the County having potential liability. Michael Leighton made a motion to approve Lea County's safety application. Motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

City of Roswell – Local Streets/Bridges Safety Project. David Storey, City Engineer, explained to the Membership that their application is a safety bridge railing project. Mr. Storey explained that the City of Roswell had received safety funding for a similar project around 2006. He provided photos of a deficient railing near the Boys & Girls Club and a completed guardrail project, which included other protections. The City Engineer illustrated, with mapping, the previous locations of bridges/intersections in Phase I; the proposed bridge/intersection locations in Phase II; and additional locations which include historic preservation in Phase III. The cost of this phase of the project is approximately \$430,000.

Bob Kurtz commented that several of the bridges in the application are those noted by their office needing new railing/repair during annual bridge inspections. Additionally, the District commented that several of the bridges were so old and unique that the City had to make specific design for each location. Bill Morris made a motion to approve the City of Roswell's safety application. Motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

Mescalero Apache Tribe – NM 532 Curve Reconstruction Project, Ruidoso New Mexico. At this time, the Chairman explained that Mescalero's safety application was received after the deadline but submitted in time to be included in the packets. This application did receive an equal amount of review time as it was included in the meeting packet along with all other applications. A determination needs to be made by committee members as to whether or not the application should be accepted for review.

Group discussion included explanation as to why the application was not received timely; aspects of safety funding; the danger of the roadway and the need for improvements; the need for adhering to timelines/deadlines; availability of other funding; and lead time before the deadline this year as compared to last year. Motion was made by Don Williams to accept the safety application. Motion was seconded. Motion failed for approval and confirmed by hand count. The application will go no further due to the lack of motion to accept.

Village of Ft. Sumner – US 60/US 84/17th St./BNSF Railroad Crossing Safety Project. The safety application from Ft. Sumner was received at the time of the SERPO meeting. Mark Threadgill made a motion not to accept the safety application. Motion was seconded. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Presentation: Robert Kurtz, District 2 Engineering Support Manager
New 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

Handouts of the PowerPoint presentation were distributed to everyone for review. Bob Kurtz explained that the MUTCD is the manual that provides guidance for striping, signing, school zone signing, traffic control for work zone/construction, etc. A new version of the manual was released last year, and the purpose of the presentation is touch on highlights of the changes. He explained that the manual is over 800 pages long and is available, by sections, on a website. Presentations for each chapter are also available on the web.

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Mr. Kurtz's presentation included discussion on the Sign Retroreflectivity Rule; a classification format of what may be done/should be done/shall be done; removal of metric values; new sections; new symbol signing; sign colors to include new requirements for school signage; LED signage guidance; options for sign enhancement; larger sizes for STOP signs; deletion of some word signs; chevron and new shoulder signs; signs and plaques specifically for motorcyclists; alternatives for street sign colors; speed hump marking requirements; new high-visibility safety apparel requirements; flagger requirements; and signage requirements for railroad crossings. Contact information was provided, and members were given costs for the full and shorter versions of the manual.

Informational Items

RPO Planners Update. Mary Ann Burr explained that Steve Henthorn with EPCOG was unable to attend as he is in attendance at a NERPO meeting being held this same date. He plans to attend the next meeting.

Ms. Burr mentioned that the next meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2010. Agenda items tentatively planned for the next meeting include Roadway and Enhancement application rating and prioritization, a visit from State Parks on the RTP Program; election of officers and the possibility of Scenic Byways applications. Ms. Burr spoke of the application timeline established this year for Scenic Byways. Ms. Burr informed members that SERPO participated at a booth recently at the Legislature on Transportation Day. Also, Ms. Burr reported on recent activity with regard to the Safe Routes to School Program in the City of Hobbs. A kick-off meeting was recently held in Hobbs, and the program includes four schools. Ongoing activity includes walking assessments of the schools with the program moving along smoothly.

District 2 Update. Bob Kurtz introduced District staff, Jeff Culin, Robert Sena, Libby Johnson and Celeste Rogers, who were available for any questions from members. Permitting handouts were provided. Mr. Kurtz briefed members on projects let the previous week and the status of specific federal legislation. Handouts of the New Mexico statutory authority regarding advertising and signing on the Department's right-of-way were made available to members.

The Engineering conference will be held in Las Cruces on April 29-30, 2010. Regarding Local Government Road Fund, funding levels for future applications are unknown. Dan Stover advised members that the level of scrutiny that they have seen with the ARRA projects will become the norm for all federally funded projects. Along these lines, Robert Sena explained that they would like to be involved from the beginning of projects and would like to be invited to the pre-cons. Additional handbooks were made available. Inquiry was made on the Highway authorization bill and light discussion followed.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting Date

The Chairman advised members that a recent event has caused a conflict with the next scheduled SERPO meeting. Alternative dates were considered. Ms. Burr explained items for consideration were completion of the RTIPR and review of Scenic Byway applications. Bob Kurtz also spoke of the District's programming of projects in the STIP and approvals for the State Transportation Commission April and May meetings. Mark Threadgill made a motion to move the meeting date from Wednesday, March 24, 2010 to the next day, Thursday, March 25, 2010. Motion was approved and passed by unanimous vote. Light discussion was held on the matter of having late applications listed on the next meeting agenda as an action item.

David Storey made inquiry if members needed to assist with the Safety applications submission. Ms. Burr explained that correspondence will accompany the safety applications, verifying the meeting date and approval. Correspondence and applications will be submitted electronically to Steve Eagan/NMDOT following the SERPO meeting. Regarding the Safety program, Bob Kurtz announced that the District has submitted three projects to NMDOT: 1) Third rockfall project on US 82 between Cloudcroft and Alamogordo; 2) Guardrail project on US 54/70, between Alamogordo and Tularosa; and 3)

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Reconstruction of NM 48 west of the intersection in Ruidoso. Gary Shubert, District Engineer commented on the state budget, future of transportation-related bills and the Special Session.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mark Threadgill to adjourn. Motion was seconded, passed unanimously and adjourned at 11:15 am.


Approved:



Curtis Schrader, Policy Committee Chairman

3-25-10
Date

Attest:



RPO Planner

3-25-10
Date