

CREATION OF THE WEBB COUNTY – CITY OF LAREDO REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY

Description

This minute order authorizes Webb County and the City of Laredo to create a Regional Mobility Authority.

Background

Pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Transportation Code, and 43 TAC Chapter 26 (RMA rules), Webb County (county) and the city of Laredo (city) petitioned the Texas Transportation Commission (commission) for authorization to form a Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) in Webb County and the city of Laredo. The petition was filed on January 27, 2014.

By e-mail dated January 28, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation (department) notified the City of Laredo and Webb County that the petition met the requirements of §26.11 of the RMA rules.

On February 4, 2014, the department conducted a public hearing in Webb County to receive public comment on the proposed formation of the RMA. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Texas Register and in a newspaper of general circulation in the county.

At the public hearing, one elected official, the Laredo City Manager and three individuals spoke in favor of the creation of the RMA. One individual was concerned with the heavy truck traffic resulting from the Loop 20/US 59 project and also commented on concerns about tolling Loop 20/US 59 in the future. Two individuals submitted written comments, both in favor of creation of the RMA and requested more outreach in development of the project and funding mechanisms.

Criteria

The petition met the requirements of §26.11 of the RMA rules. The commission finds that the creation of the RMA has sufficient public support. The commission bases this finding on: (1) the resolution of support from the Commissioners Court of Webb County; and (2) the support indicated at the public hearing and in the written comments.

Problem/Condition

The initial board of directors shall be composed of nine members, with four directors appointed by the Webb County Commissioners Court, and four directors appointed by the City Council of the city of Laredo, and the presiding officer appointed by the Governor.

Other Comments

None

Alternate Solutions/Actions

This minute order does not authorize development of potential candidate projects, but only the authorization of the RMA. Projects will need final authorization by the commission prior to development.

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Pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Transportation Code, and 43 TAC Chapter 26 (RMA rules), Webb County (county) and the city of Laredo (city) jointly petitioned the Texas Transportation Commission (commission) for authorization to form a regional mobility authority (RMA) in Webb County and the city of Laredo (Webb County - City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority). The petition was filed on January 27, 2014.

By e-mail dated January 28, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation (department) notified the City of Laredo and Webb County that the petition met the requirements of §26.11 of the RMA rules.

The petition identifies the upgrade of an approximately 10.9 mile section of State Highway Loop 20, from US 59 to World Trade International Bridge IV, as the initial project for development by the RMA (Loop 20/US 59 Project). The Loop 20/US 59 Project will upgrade Loop 20 to interstate standards and provide an important reliever route for some of the commercial traffic from the World Trade International Bridge IV, and will provide for improved traffic circulation within the county. This designation of this section of Loop 20 is planned to be changed to US 59, the start of the process to designate US 59 as part of the Interstate 69 system in Laredo.

The board of directors of the RMA, as set forth in the petition, will be composed of nine members, with four directors appointed by the Webb County Commissioners Court and four directors appointed by the City Council of the City of Laredo, with the ninth member, the presiding officer, appointed by the Governor. The Webb County Commissioners shall appoint one (1) member from precinct one, one (1) member from precinct 2, one (1) member from precinct 3, and one (1) member from precinct 4. The City of Laredo shall appoint one (1) member from City Council Districts 1 & 2, one (1) member from City Council Districts 3 & 4, one (1) member from City Council Districts 5 & 6, and one (1) member from City Council Districts 7 & 8.

On February 4, 2014, the department conducted a public hearing in Webb County, pursuant to §26.12 of the RMA rules, to receive public comment on the proposed formation of the RMA. Notice of the public hearing was published in the *Texas Register* and in a newspaper of general circulation in the county.

At the public hearing, one elected official, the Laredo City Manager and three individuals spoke in favor of the creation of the RMA. One individual was concerned with the heavy truck traffic resulting from the Loop 20/US 59 project and also commented on concerns about tolling Loop 20/US 59 in the future. Two individuals submitted written comments, both in favor of creation of the RMA and requested more outreach in development of the project and funding mechanisms.

The commission finds that the creation of the RMA has sufficient public support. The commission bases this finding on: (1) the resolution of support from the Commissioners Court of Webb County; and (2) the support indicated at the public hearing and in the written comments.

The commission finds that creation of the RMA will result in direct benefits to the state, local governments, and the traveling public, and will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems. The RMA will benefit the state by constructing needed roadway projects, such as the projects identified in the county's petition, as the county's initial project and other potential candidate projects. The RMA will benefit local governments by increasing local control over transportation planning and through additional transportation projects that may be funded through surplus revenue

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earned by the RMA. The traveling public will also benefit through improved mobility and traffic safety throughout the region encompassed by the RMA. The RMA will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems through the construction of the initial project and other potential candidate projects, which will enhance mobility and safety within these segments of the state highway system, and through the development and financing of additional projects in the future.

The commission finds that the RMA's potential candidate projects are consistent with the approved Texas Transportation Plan; included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program; and included in the approved plan of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Subject to commission approval of the project under §26.31 of the RMA rules, the commission also finds that the projects will benefit the traveling public.

The commission finds that the composition of the board of directors of the RMA as described in the petition will adequately represent affected political subdivisions.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the commission authorizes the creation of the Webb County - City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the initial project that may be developed, maintained, and operated by the RMA shall be the Loop 20/US 59 Project identified above. This order does not constitute final commission approval of the initial project or other potential candidate projects, which must be obtained pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Transportation Code and the applicable provisions of the RMA rules.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the initial board of directors shall be composed of nine members, with four directors appointed by the Webb County Commissioners Court, and four directors appointed by the City Council of the city of Laredo, and the presiding officer appointed by the Governor.

Submitted and reviewed by:

Recommended by:

Director of Planning

Interim Executive Director

Minute Number Date Passed