

City of San Antonio



Minutes Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

John Courage, Dist. 9, Chair

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

1:30 PM

City Hall Complex

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:06 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: John Courage, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the September 26, 2023 Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda moved to Approve the minutes of the September 26, 2023 Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Courage, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito

Public Comment

Leticia Sanchez spoke in opposition to Item 2 due to the lack of basic services provided by VIA.

Blanca Rivera stated that she did not see any benefits from the proposed plan.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing by VIA Metropolitan Transit on the status and schedule of current VIA transit projects. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Catherine Hernandez, Interim Director, Transportation Department]

Kammy Horne, Senior Vice President of Development with VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA), provided a project update on the proposed rapid transit routes. She noted that all proposed routes were fixed routes and took into consideration of transit user needs. She introduced VIA staff Manjiri Akalkotkar and Sandip Sen who outlined the proposed Green and Silver Line Project details.

Akalkotkar stated that the route had 26 new stations and traveled from US 281 to Steves Avenue with service connections to Stone Oak Park and Ride. She noted that the project had traffic and safety improvements to include addition of new sidewalks, traffic signals, intersection improvements and landscaping improvements at transit stops. She stated that the total VIA Rapid Green Line project cost was \$46.3million and was funded by local and Federal sources.

Akalkotkar noted that VIA had conducted engagement activities to include meetings with residents, business owners and City officials. She added that VIA had received environmental approvals and Federal grant submission approvals for possible funding.

Akalkotkar provided an update on the VIA Rapid Silver Line progress which was delayed by two years and was at 50% at the architectural design level. She stated that the line would service the westside of the city with 18 stations and was seven miles in length. She noted that the project had currently received \$8.1 million from a Project Development Federal Grant with a total cost of \$289.2 million. Akalkotkar stated that VIA was currently engaged with the community in outreach meetings to gain insight of resident needs and to discuss risk assessments. She reviewed the Silver Line Project schedule which was proposed to be completed in late 2029.

Sen provided an overview of VIA's Better Bus Plan which focused on improving the Bus transit network and evaluating current and needed services. He stated that the plan established goals and metrics for the transit system and proposed community outreach.

Sen reviewed the current activity of the VIA Link Zones which covered over 18 miles of service. He noted the addition of the Randolph Zone which was scheduled to be launched on October 23, 2023. Singh reviewed the next steps of Green Line Community engagement.

DISCUSSION

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how events such as Fiesta would impact the rapid transit lines. Akalkotkar stated that detours would be planned with the engagement of residents and business owners.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that he supported the East-West routes development. He asked of any possible impacts to homeowners and properties in the construction of the Green

and Silver lines. Akalkotkar stated that community surveys were being conducted to address any possible impact to homeowners and businesses to their property lines and homes and would work with those individuals to be possibly impacted. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that the concerns of residents should be addressed.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a future presentation to discuss the basic needs of VIA riders to include covered stops and other amenities. Singh stated that VIA was currently engaged in an 18 month study and engagement to learn more of riders needs and concerns. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez offered to assist in community outreach.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that improvements of for East-West route and needed community engagement. Jon Gary Herrera, Senior Vice President of Public Engagement with VIA, stated that the community engagement process was in the early stages and would increase in November 2023 to gain community input. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested that outreach not only be conducted on line and include meetings. Herrera stated that meetings would mirror what was done in the North-South routes to include meeting with community groups, neighborhood associations and would be conducted in both Spanish and English. Councilmember Cabello Havrda emphasized the need for quality community outreach.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if the proposed routes would include advanced landscaping. Akalkotkar stated that landscaping was being proposed and there would be future briefings as finalized.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if there was data on VIA link ridership. Sen stated that a large majority of riders were students and VIA would look into gathering the demographic profile of riders. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she was interested to know if senior residents were using the VIA Link. Herrera stated that VIA was expanding education communications to senior residents of Link and other services.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked for clarification of funding of the Green and Silver Line Projects. Akalkotkar stated that Federal grants and other funding had been identified for the Silver Line and that funding gaps were still being researched for funding sources to include local and Federal funding sources or agreements.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how many bus stops were shaded. Akalkotkar stated that data would be provided to the Committee. Herrera stated that 80% of active bus stops had some level of shading but that a study was being conducted to identify all stops. Akalkotkar clarified that 40% of stops had a shade structure.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked for examples of community input received which impacted changes to the Green or Silver Line routes. Akalkotkar stated that community meetings had provided data that supported the consolidation of bus stops, traffic signaling and identification of sidewalk gaps. Councilmember Alderete Gavito acknowledged the community engagement process conducted by VIA.

Councilmember Kaur stressed the importance of community engagement and closing the feedback loop of changes identified within the engagement process.

Councilmember Kaur spoke to concerns of route transitions within the Green Line and asked VIA to continue engagement to address concerns. She asked that VIA provide virtual display or information to residents of route experience and addressing of transit route concerns. She stressed the importance of transit oriented development of the Green Line.

Councilmember Kaur asked for clarification on the development of community engagement that was conducted for the Silver Line. Akalkotkar provided details of the engagement process and input of the Silver Line development.

Councilmember Kaur asked how funding gaps were being addressed. Akalkotkar stated that the Green Line was still requiring funding and that VIA was soliciting partnership funding sources in order to match Federal funding matching requirements. Herrera stated that VIA was actively following the process used during the Silver Line project and was confident of efforts to obtain funding.

Councilmember Kaur asked if any road closures were proposed during the development and construction of the Green and Silver Line and stressed that a public communication plan was needed to keep the public informed of detours and other transportation challenges. Herrera stated that a communication campaign would be developed during the span of the project to address those issues.

Chair Courage asked how input from the community engagement process was taken into consideration and if input did impact route changes. He stressed the importance of identifying community involvement impact to route and communications. Chair Courage asked if a committee or group was being developed asking for community input. Herrera spoke of the establishment a citizen and stakeholder body to assist with community input with applications being taken until November 2023.

Chair Courage asked if ridership models and metrics were developed to address distance traveled for riders to get to bus route stops and requested a future presentation on the data. Herrera stated that the data would be collected and presented at a future meeting.

The Item was for briefing purposes and no action was taken.

3. Briefing on the Stinson Municipal Airport Layout Plan. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Jesus Saenz, Director, Aviation]

Tom Bartlett, Deputy Director of the Aviation Department, provided an overview of the Stinson Municipal Airport Layout Plan (Plan). He reviewed public and stakeholder engagement conducted which included two open houses and various community meetings to gather facility needs, requirements and possible alternatives. Bartlett stated that findings would be provided to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and VIA was currently in final stages of report completion. Bartlett reviewed the community input to the Plan and Capital Improvement Plan phasing which included air strip and hanger facility improvements. He added that the phasing included possible land purchasing to expand runway and approach surfaces adjacent to the flight line. Bartlett stated that the next steps of the Plan included obtaining formal approval by the State Transportation Office and approval by the City Council.

Chair Courage asked if funding would include Federal funding. Bartlett stated that the majority of funding could include Federal funding but would primarily be channeled through the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT).

The Item was for briefing only and no action was taken.

4. Briefing by the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) on the organization's mission, transportation planning process, and partnership with the City of San Antonio. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Catherine Hernandez, Interim Director, Transportation Department]

Catherine Hernandez, Interim Director of Transportation, introduced the Item and Sid Martinez with the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO). Martinez provided an overview of the AAMPO which was a Federally mandated agency that guided regional transportation planning including allocating Federal funds for transportation projects. He noted that the AAMPO covered Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe and part of Kendall Counties which covered 116 million miles traveled daily by a population of over 4.2 million.

Martinez stated that the AAMPO was responsible for a 3-C Planning Process which included components of cooperation, comprehension and continuous input. Martinez reviewed the board and committee make-up of the AAMPO and the composition of the Policy Board which included governmental representation of local and county officials.

Martinez reviewed the transportation funding sources of the AAMPO which included Federal, state and local funding and sources of funding in each category. He added that funding was utilized on local, State and Federal transportation roads. He stated that project funding categories were all issued at the State level.

Martinez provided an overview of the documents required of the AAMPO which included the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Transportation Conformity Determination (TCD). He noted that the TCD was a crucial program for the San Antonio area due to emission levels within Bexar County. Martinez provided specifics for each document requirements and impact to transportation goals.

Martinez provided an overview of the FY 2025-2028 timeline for transportation project submissions for possible funding by the AAMPO. He also spoke to the TCD ozone levels conformity and compliance. He noted the stringent requirements of emissions studies and transportation plan development to address reduction of ozone emissions. Martinez provided an overview of AAMPO programs to include Alamo Commutes, Bike Safety Programs, and the Alternative Transit/Commuting Education Program.

Chair Courage requested information on funding and programs to address ozone emissions compliance and possible consequences at a future meeting. Martinez stated that he would provide data at a future meeting and noted that it would include the challenges faced in trying to obtain compliance.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if Bandera Road could be funded under CMAC. Martinez stated that funding could possibly be sourced by CMAC but he noted that other TXDoT funding sources could be identified by the City of San Antonio and the City of Leon Valley. Councilmember Alderete Gavito noted that the Bandera Road project previously briefed by TXDoT was not currently funded but she supported funding for the project.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that the relationship between the City and the AAMPO was a crucial one to address all transportation issues in the AAMPO oversight area. She stressed the importance of the role of an MPO to obtain funding for transportation projects and meeting all transportation access needs of the community.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted transportation needs of roads within the Eastside community to include Eisenhower and Rittiman Roads. Martinez stressed the importance of communication of need and submission of projects to the AAMPO for funding consideration. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted the challenges of a train railroad crossing and impact to traffic due to train stoppages on highly traveled roads.

Councilmember Kaur asked for clarification on the process of funding for City projects. Martinez stated that the governmental entities worked with the AAMPO to first identify projects for funding and would not recommend any project brought forward by the organizations. Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez spoke to the project identification process and identification of funding for those projects.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested a presentation to discuss the challenges of railroad crossings.

The Item was for briefing only and no action was taken.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Approved

John Courage, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk