

OSCAR LEESER  
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ  
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL  
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1  
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2  
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3  
JOE MOLINAR, DISTRICT 4  
ISABEL SALCIDO, DISTRICT 5  
CLAUDIA L. RODRIGUEZ, DISTRICT 6  
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7  
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**March 14, 2022**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL AND VIRTUALLY**  
**9:05 AM**

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The City Council of the City of El Paso met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m. Mayor Oscar Leeser was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Henry Rivera, and Cissy Lizarraga. Alexandra Annello participated via videoconference. Late arrival: Claudia Rodriguez at 11:04 a.m. Peter Svarzbein and Casandra Hernandez requested to be excused.  
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**AGENDA**

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**1. Presentation and discussion by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Cross-Functional Team providing information on key activities, efforts and processes.**

1. Overview (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Robert Cortinas, Deputy City Manager, began the presentation by pointing out the decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases with the current positivity rate at 5% and a 40% decrease in the number of COVID related hospitalizations. He explained that the City's ranking according to the CDC was downgraded from high to medium and labeled as Stage 4 which is the best stage for the community. Mr. Cortinas stated that the City continued to lead the State and the Nation in vaccination rates adding that 80% of the El Paso population was fully vaccinated with 40% receiving a booster and concluded the overview by encouraging the eligible members of the community to seek a vaccinations and boosters available at City sites.

2. City Attorney Overview (Karla Nieman)

- a) Greg Abbott, in his official capacity as Governor of Texas, v. City of El Paso & Statewide Mask Mandate Litigation
- b) Additional Updates

Ms. Josette Flores, City Attorney, continued the presentation by providing a brief update on a few cases related to mask mandates in Texas and noted that there had not been a ruling in any of the cases and ended her update by stating that Municipal Courts would resume in person hearings in April and in person jury trials on June 23, 2022.

3. Team Lead Report:

- a) Health Focus (Hector Ocaranza, M.D.)
- b) Data Analysis (David Coronado)

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, continued the presentation by reiterating that the City of El Paso was currently in Stage 4 of the pandemic status and noted that the number of hospitalizations had improved with less than 100 COVID related hospitalizations. He continued to recommend booster shots and explained that scientists were still researching the benefits of additional booster shots and encouraged the community to continue practicing safety protocols such as face masks, hand washing, and vaccinations in addition to healthy habits.

Mr. David Coronado, Managing Director of Economic Development and International Bridges, provided statistical information related to bridge crossings and international trade. He explained that 2021 totals indicated that trade had surpassed previous records with \$84.8 billion in trade, of that 57% was attributed to imports and 43% to exports. Mr. Coronado explained that while trade had fully recovered, personal vehicle and pedestrian crossings were still recovering and hotel occupancy rates remained strong with a weekly average of 77%.

4. City Manager Wrap-up (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Robert Cortinas, Deputy City Manager, closed the presentation by saying the City would continue to plan for seasonal surges and economic recovery amid the decline in cases.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Molinar, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

2.

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO**

That the El Paso City Council approved the list of projects on Exhibit "A" attached hereto\*, totaling approximately \$177,966,294.00 which updates the document known as the "El Paso International Airport Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Plan," as the established list of Airport Capital Improvement Program projects for FY2022 through FY2026 and the use of the identified funding sources and that the City Manager be authorized to make all necessary budget transfers prior to the execution of the projects.

\*Exhibit available in the City Clerk's Office.

Mr. Sam Rodriguez, Airport Director introduced the item and Ms. Shane Brooks, Capital Improvements Program Administrator for Aviation, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office) and responded to questions from Members of the City Council.

Representatives Anello, Molinar, Salcido, and Rivera commented.

Motion made by Representative Molinar, seconded by Representative Salcido and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Annelo, Molinar, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga  
NAYS: None  
NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Rodriguez  
ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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3. **Discussion and action requesting City Council support for submission of the application entitled “Reclaiming Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Dominance through Frontier Technologies” to Phase II of the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Build Back Better Regional Challenge by the West Texas Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Coalition, led by the University of Texas at El Paso’s Aerospace Center and of which the City of El Paso is a part.**

Ms. Elizabeth Triggs, Director of Economic and International Development, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk’s Office).

Motion made by Representative Salcido, seconded by Representative Rivera and unanimously carried to **SUPPORT** the application.

AYES: Representatives Annelo, Molinar, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga  
NAYS: None  
NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Rodriguez  
ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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4. **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the City of El Paso (City) and the El Paso Chamber (EPC) are seeking to advance their clean energy initiatives, ensure equity and inclusion in the region’s energy transition, and modernize and achieve increased resiliency of energy infrastructure located within the El Paso region; and

**WHEREAS**, the City and the EPC recognize that the improved availability of regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure, development of carbon tracking mechanisms, and deployment of microgrids assist the region with advancing those initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, the El Paso Electric Company (EPE) and General Motors LLC (GM) have expertise in a variety of areas vital to the success of these projects; and

**WHEREAS**, UTEP’s department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering program has faculty advisors and students that would like to participate in educational activities and learnings relative to a potential microgrid project at the El Paso International Airport; and

**WHEREAS**, the City, EPC, EPE, UTEP, and GM intend to collaborate and work together on three key projects that will advance the region’s clean energy initiatives, ensure equitability in the energy transition, and achieve increased resiliency in the El Paso region’s energy infrastructure;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

**THAT** the City Manager be authorized to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between

the City, El Paso Chamber, El Paso Electric Company, the University of Texas at El Paso, and General Motors LLC to collaborate and work together on (i) Electric Vehicle DC Fast Charging deployment for the intra-city region of El Paso; (ii) developing short-interval carbon tracking for approximately thirty local businesses in the El Paso region that would provide insight into carbon reduction strategies; and (iii) deploying one or more microgrid demonstration projects, including but not limited to a proposed project at the El Paso International Airport, that leverage renewable energy and energy storage assets.

Ms. Elizabeth Triggs, Director of Economic and International Development, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Lizarraga and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Annello, Molinar, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Rodriguez

ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion made by Representative Salcido, seconded by Representative Molinar, and unanimously carried that the City Council **RETIRE** into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 10:23 a.m. pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 - 551.089 to discuss the executive session items:

Section 551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY

Section 551.072 DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY

Section 551.087 DELIBERATION REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS

AYES: Representatives Annello, Molinar, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Rodriguez

ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Molinar, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the Executive Session at 11:28 a.m. and **RECONVENE** the meeting of the City Council at which time a motion was made.

AYES: Representatives Annello, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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**EX1. Application of El Paso Electric Company to Change Rates, Public Utility Commission of Texas Docket No. 52195. Matter No. 21-1008-174 (551.071)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**EX2. Economic Incentives for a Mixed-Use Development located in the City of El Paso. Matter No. 21-1007-2803 (551.087)**

Motion made by Alternate Mayor Pro Tempore Lizarraga, seconded by Representative Rivera, and carried that the City Manager is authorized to negotiate and execute, on behalf of the **City of El Paso** for Economic Incentives to **Mills Plaza Properties V LP** and **Kress Tunnel LP**, Texas limited liability partnerships, for redevelopment, rehabilitation and improvement of a downtown building commonly known as the Kress Building located at the real property known and numbered as 211 N. Mesa Street, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas; in accordance with the "Term Sheet for the Kress Building Redevelopment" attached to this Motion as **Exhibit A\*** and in a form and substance approved by the City Attorney to accomplish the intent of this Motion.

\*Exhibit available in the City Clerk's Office.

AYES: Representatives Anello, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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**EX3. Discussion on potential economic development opportunities in NE El Paso. Matter No. 22-1007-2864 (551.072) (551.087)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**ADJOURN**

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Molinar and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

AYES: Representatives Anello, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

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Laura D. Prine, City Clerk