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Contact:

Elijah Natividad, 915-319-0133

e.natividad@epcounty.com

Laura E. Gallegos, Ed.D. 915-283-9645

l.gallegos@epcounty.com

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Commissioner's Court Raises Concerns about Pellicano Widening Project

EL PASO, TX— During the Dec. 4th session of the Commissioner's Court, significant concerns were raised about the delayed Pellicano Widening Project, a major infrastructure undertaking extending from Loop 375 to Darrington Rd. Originally set for completion in July 2022, this 3-mile project, encompassing enhancements like six divided lanes, raised medians, and bike lanes, has faced considerable setbacks. The construction project, costing over \$22.1 million and managed by the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority (CRRMA) who contracted J.A.R. Construction, Inc., is now mired in complications due to the contractor's default and subsequent bankruptcy.

Raymond Telles, Executive Director of the CRRMA, assured the court that despite the delay, the project would incur no additional costs. He explained that the performance bond is designed to cover any expenses exceeding the budget. However, the project's progress has faced further challenges since March 14th, 2023, when direct communication with the Surety was hindered due to the Court Judge's review of the case. The complexity increased after the shift to Chapter 7 on September 12th, 2023, necessitating coordination with the U.S. Trustee. Despite these obstacles, the CRRMA has been permitted to continue negotiations with the Surety in an effort to reach a mutual agreement to advance the project.

Carlos Leon, Commissioner of Precinct 1, expressed his frustration, echoing the sentiments of his constituents. "I think the constituents, and this court, have been very patient. I think too patient. And now I've gotten to the point that we need to do something. We just can't let that surety call all the shots," he remarked. This statement underscores the growing impatience and dissatisfaction among local residents, many of whom have complained about the lack of visible progress on-site.

Further into the meeting, Iliana Holguin, Commissioner of Precinct 3, voiced her disappointment as well, suggesting that the surety might have a vested interest in delaying the project. "I think it is in the surety's interest to delay, delay, and delay. They know they're going to have to pay more. They're not in any hurry. That's because they don't live in these neighborhoods. They don't have to sit in traffic for an hour every day, twice a day" she stated. Holguin advocated for potential litigation if progress remains stagnant.

For more information, follow the proceedings of the El Paso County Commissioner's Court and updates from the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority.

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6900 DELTA, EL PASO, TEXAS 79905, PHONE: (915) 771-2380