

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING
Minutes
September 14, 2023**

I) CALL TO ORDER

JP Terrazas - Chairman (City of Mission) called the TAC Meeting to order at 10:00 AM. The TAC Meeting was held virtually.

II) ROLL CALL

RGVTAC Representatives in attendance were as follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT	
ENTITY	VOTING MEMBERS
City of Mission	JP Terrazas, Chairman
Cameron County	Benjamin Worsham, Vice Chairman
City of Brownsville	Joel Garza
City of Edinburg	Tomas D. Reyna
City of Harlingen	Ana Hernandez
City of McAllen	Rene Gonzalez
City of Pharr	Absent
City of San Benito	Mayor Ricardo Guerra
Hidalgo County	Armando Garza, Jr.
Starr County	Absent
TxDot Pharr District	Dora E. Robles
Valley Metro	Nancy Sanchez
Cameron County RMA	Eric Davila
Hidalgo County RMA	Ramon Navarro
Brownsville Metro	Octavio Salazar
McAllen Metro	Jon Ray Bocanegra
Port of Brownville	Ariel Chavez
Port of Harlingen	Amy Lynch
Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District	Absent
Cameron County Spaceport Dev Corp.	Absent
Guest	
RGVMPO Executive Director	Andrew A. Canon
RGVMPO Assistant Director	Luis Diaz
RGVMPO Staff	

III) PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments

IV) CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of August 10, 2023

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. No corrections or comments were noted to the minutes. Dora Robles from the TxDOT Pharr District made a motion to approve the minutes of August 10, 2023. The motion was seconded by Ramon Navarro with HCRMA. Motion carried.

2. Discussion on the Upcoming November 2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revision Cycle.

Rodolfo Zamora opened the discussion by providing an update on the upcoming November 2023 STIP revision cycle. He mentioned that in-person locations for public involvement would be set up for at least 30 days from September 11th to October 11th. A new section on the website would be used to upload draft documents for member review, and additional in-person locations were being considered. Currently, there was one set up for Monday from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the Metro McAllen Transit Station. He encouraged members to reach out with any questions or concerns regarding project updates, potential revisions, or administrative changes.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any questions or comments, but there were none, so he proceeded to the next agenda item.

3. Discussion on the Performance Management Framework project with Alliance Transportation Group

Miguel Arispe provided an update on the Performance Management Framework project being developed by RGVMPD staff in collaboration with Alliance Transportation Group. They were working on project prioritization criteria and a performance-based scoring system for projects. He mentioned that a survey had been sent out to T.A.C. members for feedback on the proposed criteria and that the survey would close on September 15th. Mr. Arispe emphasized the importance of participation in the survey, as it would impact how projects were scored in terms of performance measures. He also announced a virtual workshop scheduled for September 25th at 1:30 PM to continue the discussion based on the survey responses.

Luis Diaz stressed the significance of the survey, as it would define the criteria for scoring performance measures. He acknowledged that the survey was lengthy but essential.

Ana Hernandez: Asked if it was possible to extend the survey deadline to Monday, and Mr. Arispe confirmed that it could be extended.

Eva Garcia: Sought clarification on the date of the virtual workshop, which Mr. Arispe confirmed to be on Monday, September 25th, at 1:30 PM. She also mentioned a discrepancy in the meeting location, which had been updated to a completely virtual format.

Chairman JP Terrazas encouraged members to fill out the survey and asked if there were any more questions.

Eduardo Mendoza: Inquired whether the criteria had been tested on certain projects and suggested that feedback might be more valuable after seeing how the criteria applied to real projects.

Miguel Arispe explained that they were in the process of mock scoring and intended to present this at the workshop, where members could provide feedback. He clarified whether feedback was desired before or after the workshop.

Eduardo Mendoza expresses concerns about certain criteria not aligning with local road projects, specifically citing asset management criteria.

Miguel Arispe acknowledged these concerns and highlighted that this was precisely the kind of feedback they were seeking to address and refine the criteria.

Chairman JP Terrazas thanked Mr. Arispe and emphasized the importance of filling out the survey to help the community and the region. He encouraged members to participate.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any questions or comments, but there were none, so he proceeded to the next agenda item.

4. Presentation and Discussion regarding Transit Planning Updates

Eva Garcia opened the presentation by providing an update on the transit planning efforts of the RGB MPO. She highlighted the four public transit agency providers in the region and the various Federal Transit Administration grants they oversee.

Eva mentioned the inclusion of transit projects in the TIP and MTP revisions and acknowledged the work of Rodolfo Zamora and Klarissa Gonzalez in this regard. She emphasized the importance of understanding federal transit funds and their utilization in the region.

Eva then discussed the tasks related to transit planning in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), primarily under Task 3, which includes participation in the regional transit advisory panel, program calls for FTA funds, data sharing, and providing transportation planning expertise. She also mentioned the focus on transit asset management and public transportation agency safety plans.

Eva highlighted the Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) and its role in coordinating regional transit efforts. She mentioned the upcoming meeting on October 26th and the RTAP subcommittee meetings dedicated to the five-year regional public transportation coordination plan. Eva then discussed the development of a regional map identifying sidewalks, hike and bike trails, bike lanes, bus routes, bus stops, and bus shelters. She mentioned the ongoing data collection efforts, including a regional transit coordination survey. Eva emphasized the importance of collecting accurate and quality transit data.

Javier Dominguez discussed the upcoming passenger rail study, which will begin at the beginning of the next calendar year. He mentioned the update to the Hidalgo County commuter rail feasibility study and the expansion of the study area to include Starr County and parts of Cameron County. Javier provided an overview of the 2011 study, including proposed station locations and rail crossings. He highlighted the need for a new study to consider current conditions, needs assessments, ridership, benefit-cost analysis, and potential grant opportunities. Javier also mentioned the legislative bills related to commuter rail and the need to understand the legal framework for such a project. He referred to the long-range priority of developing a regional transit authority.

Eva Garcia reiterated the importance of providing transportation options for various groups of people and highlighted the role of complete streets initiatives and public transportation safety in transit planning.

Eva also mentioned upcoming training on Vision Zero and the safe systems approach provided by Farms&City.

Dora Robles asked about the formation of a subcommittee for the passenger rail study, and Javier confirmed that volunteers from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and other MPO committees would be sought.

Chairman JP Terrazas thanked Eva and Javier for their presentation and encouraged members to reach out if they had any further questions or discussions.

5. Discussion and Possible Action regarding FY2019-2020 and FY2021-2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Projects

Eva Garcia provided an overview of the funding for two fiscal years, 2019-2020 and 2021-2022, emphasizing the importance of obligating funds through the FPA & SLOA documents. She noted that most projects have successfully received their Federal Participation Authorization Agreements (FPAs) and obligated their funds.

Dora Robles from TxDOT provided an update on the LRGVDC project, stating they had received the FPA and expected the same for the remaining two projects soon.

Chairman JP Terrazas acknowledged the efforts of Eva and her team in facilitating project funding and thanked Dora for the update.

Eva Garcia emphasized the importance of obligating funds for the 2021-2022 projects by fiscal year 2024 and mentioned the potential expiration of funds by September 2025. She presented a list of projects and their FPA statuses.

Andrew Canon informed the chairman of his online presence.

Chairman JP Terrazas opened the floor for questions and discussions. There were no questions or concerns raised.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked for a motion to approve Item 5.

Mayor Ricardo Guerra from the City of San Benito made the motion. The motion was seconded by the City of Edinburg. The motion carried.

6. Discussion and Possible Action to Recommend Planning and Construction Projects for FY2023-2024 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Funds.

Eva Garcia provided an overview of the available funding for fiscal years 2023-2024, totaling \$9 million, with a requirement that 10% (\$900,000) must be allocated for planning projects, leaving approximately \$8 million for construction projects. She highlighted the feedback and public engagement opportunities that were incorporated into the competitive process.

Eva detailed the timeline of events, from seeking feedback to the final recommendations. She explained the scoring criteria used, emphasizing the minimum allocation for planning projects. Eva presented the recommendations for funding, including planning and construction projects, and displayed maps for visual reference.

The Recommended planning projects are:

- Dixieland Reservoir Park Corridor Preliminary Engineering by the City of Harlingen.
- Mission Comprehensive Transportation Alternative Assessment by the City of Mission.
- West Rail Trail to Brownsville Sports Park, planning and Engineering by PS&E.
- Morrison Rd. To Montebella Park, planning project.

The Recommended construction projects are:

- I Rd. Hiking Bike Phase One for the City of Pharr
- Cano St. and Veterans Blvd. Trail.
- Arroyo Colorado Hike and Bike Trail Safety Improvements.
- City of McAllen- FM 2220 Underground Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Crossing at Houston and Ware Rd.
- Downtown Port Isabel Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety.
- Old Alice Rd. by CCRMA.

No questions or concerns were raised.

Chairman JP Terrazas called for a motion to approve Item 6. Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA made the motion to approve. Eric Davila from Cameron County RMA seconded the motion. The motion carried.

7. Discussion on Annual RGV Thoroughfare/ROW Plan Amendment Process

Luis Diaz provided an overview of the annual thoroughfare plan amendment process. He mentioned the kickoff meeting held on August 28 and the survey conducted to gather input.

Luis mentioned the team working on the right of way plan. He explained the significance of the thoroughfare plan, emphasizing its role in right of way preservation and its relevance to local governments, realtors, and developers.

Luis presented the UMAP interactive map, highlighting the different designations for existing, expansion, and new rights of way. He discussed the online amendment form and the importance of ordinances, resolutions, and commissioner letters for submissions.

Luis also mentioned the survey used to gauge interest and collect information on expected amendments. He shared the timeline for the amendment process, including deadlines and meetings.

No questions or concerns were raised. Chairman JP Terrazas thanked Mr. Diaz for the informative presentation and noted that this item was informational, and no action was required.

8. Discussion and interactive SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis from RGVMPPO Staff

Javier Dominguez explained the purpose of the SWOT analysis exercise. He asked attendees to provide feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the RGVMPPO. Participants responded to questions via an online platform. Javier provided a brief overview of the responses received for each category. He expressed gratitude for the valuable feedback received. Mentioned that the survey and results would be shared with the Policy Board as well.

No questions or concerns were raised. Chairman JP Terrazas thanked Mr. Dominguez for the presentation and noted that this item was informational, and no action was required.

V) RGVMPPO Executive Director's Report and Updates

Luis Diaz reported on the RGVMPPO's budget status, indicating that they were currently at 76.3% of their budget utilization, better than expected.

Mentioned that there were no additional updates to provide at this time.

Noted the presence of Mr. Cannon, but he did not provide any additional information.

No questions or concerns were raised.

VI) Status Reports

Chairman JP Terrazas explained the decision to move Mr. Ramon Navarro up the agenda due to his prior commitment after the meeting. Hidalgo County RMA report below presented before TxDOT's and HCRMA's reports.

A. TxDOT Project Status Report

Dora Robles presented a status report. She mentioned the completion of the 24-month letting commitment exercise, and the report reflects projects that have been moved. Dora emphasized the successful obligation of funds for TASA projects and provided details on letting dates and bid openings. She requested local governments to continue providing updated project development schedules to facilitate decision-making based on project readiness.

No questions were posed after the presentation.

B. Cameron County RMA

Eric Davila provided a comprehensive status report on various ongoing projects under the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA). He began with an update on the Veterans Bridge POV expansion project. He noted that construction was underway, and they had conducted Change Order #5 to extend the contract by up to 466 days, adding 171 additional days. Progress was reported as approximately 50% in terms of time and 60% in invoicing. Eric discussed the various components of the project, including the head house, secondary inspection, primary inspection, and the private occupancy vehicle lane expansion. He highlighted that Change Order #5 added approximately \$1.1 million to the project, primarily due to specification changes and additional equipment for fire safety and security. Eric emphasized that projects like these bring in additional federal investment, with the example of the CBP contribution providing substantial funding on top of federal allocations.

Eric provided updates on other CCRMA projects, such as SH 550 Gap 2, East Loop, Flor the Mayo Bridge, Free Trade Bridge, Morrison Road, Old Alice, FM 519 extension, Dana Rd, 1846 Williams Road, SPI second access, Harlingen Rail improvements, SPC phases, US 21 Connector, West Blvd roadway, Whipple Rd, FM 1847 sidewalk project, Los Fresnos hiking bike project, Stenger Road Sidewalk Improvements, and Primera Road sidewalk improvements.

Eric mentioned that many projects were progressing well, with some awaiting final guidance on regulatory matters. He concluded the report by highlighting the positive return on investment achieved by these projects, including substantial federal contributions.

No questions or concerns were raised.

C. Hidalgo County RMA

Chairman JP Terrazas explained the decision to move Mr. Ramon Navarro up the agenda due to his prior commitment after the meeting. Hidalgo County RMA report below presented before TxDOT's and HCRMA's reports.

Ramon Navarro provided a status report on the Hidalgo County Loop project, detailing its progress. Noted that the project was 30% into construction, with \$258 million paid out and 43% of the time utilized. Expressed confidence in making up for lost time in the upcoming quarter. Mentioned work on the IBTC project and collaboration with local agencies on thoroughfare plans for the West half of the loops. Shared statistics on overweight permits issued and revenue generated.

Opened the floor for questions, but none were raised.

VII) NEW OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VIII) ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the RGVTAC Members, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Dora E. Robles with TxDOT Pharr District made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15am. The motion was seconded by Eric Davila with Cameron County RMA, meeting was adjourned.