

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
Minutes  
November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**I) CALL TO ORDER**

Benjamin Worsham - Chairman (Cameron County) 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:**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	
<b>ENTITY</b>	<b>VOTING MEMBERS</b>
Cameron County	Benjamin Worsham, Chairman
Hidalgo County RMA	Ramon Navarro, Vice Chairman
Hidalgo County	Armando Garza, Jr.
City of Brownsville	Juan Peña Jr.
City of McAllen	Rene Gonzalez
City of Edinburg	Mardoqueo Hinojosa
City of Harlingen	Ana Hernandez
City of Mission	JP Terrazas
City of Pharr	Absent
City of San Benito	Absent
Starr County	Absent
TxDot Pharr District	Dora E. Robles
Valley Metro	Absent
Cameron County RMA	Eric Davila
Brownsville Metro	Absent
McAllen Metro	Absent
Port of Brownville	Absent
Port of Harlingen	Amy Lynch
Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District	Absent
Cameron County Spaceport Dev Corp.	Absent
<b>Guest</b>	
RGVMPO Interim- Executive Director	Luis Diaz
LRGDVC	Javier Dominguez
RGVMPO Staff	
Alliance Transportation Group Representatives	
TEDSI Representatives	

**III) PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments

**IV) CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of October 12, 2023

Chairman Ben Worsham asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Ana Hernandez with the City of Harlingen commented that she had requested corrections via email for item 9. Chairman Worsham asked her to confirm on the agenda packet if those corrections had been done. Ana Hernandez, Luis Diaz, and Adriana Estrada confirmed that the requested revisions had been done.

**No more corrections or comments were noted to the minutes. Armando Garza Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes of October 12, 2023. The motion was seconded by Eric Davila with Cameron County RMA. Motion carried.**

*Approved: Thursday January 11, 2024*

## **B. 2025 UTP – CAT Project List**

Luis Diaz confirmed that TxDOT would be presenting the project list.

Dora Robles, TxDOT's District Advanced Project Development Director, provided an overview of the draft project list. She mentioned that it was subject to change pending the planning target amounts expected in early February. She added that the draft list was like the previous year's 24 UTP with some minor changes highlighted in red. She emphasized that the list had to be fiscally constrained within the 10-year window of the UTP.

**Chairman Benjamin Worsham opened the floor for questions or comments. There were no specific questions or comments from the committee. Then he called for a motion to approve the draft Category 2 project list. Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA made a motion to approve the list. Juan Peña from the City of Brownsville seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

## **C. Metropolitan Transportation Plan – RFP Subcommittee Score and consultant selection.**

Fernando Cantu provided an overview of the RFP scoring process conducted by the subcommittee on November 2nd. He noted that only one submission was received from Alliance Transportation Group, which scored 8.35 out of 10. Fernando stated that staff recommended approval to present this selection to the policy board.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham opened the floor for questions or comments.

Armando Garza expressed concern about receiving only one response to the RFP and suggested exploring ways to increase participation in future RFPs.

Luis Diaz acknowledged the challenge of receiving limited responses and mentioned that the initial RFP came in at a higher cost, but negotiations were successful in bringing it within budget.

Eric Davila mentioned that other RFPs had received multiple responses, and he noted that this RFP might not have been attractive to some firms for various reasons.

Ramon Navarro inquired about the history of Alliance Transportation Group's involvement in similar projects.

Luis Diaz explained that Alliance Transportation Group had previously worked on the initial MTP when the MPOs merged and was now tasked with updating it.

Ramon Navarro asked if there had been outreach to other firms that submitted proposals during the initial merging process.

Luis Diaz mentioned that he would gather the information regarding the number of respondents for the initial merging process.

JP Terrazas suggested reaching out to other consultants if only one response was received, in line with City of Mission's practice.

Luis Diaz explained that the work needed to start by January to meet federal requirements and deadlines.

Eric Davila asked about the deadline for the updated MTP and its alignment with federal certification requirements.

Luis Diaz stated that the MTP needed to be ready by 2024, coinciding with federal certification requirements and the transportation demand model.

**Chairman Benjamin Worsham called for a motion to approve the consultant selection.**

**Eric Davila made a motion to approve the consultant selection as presented by staff.**

**Ana Hernandez from the City of Harlingen seconded the motion and the motion passed.**

## **D. Passenger Rail Feasibility Study – RFP Subcommittee Score and consultant selection.**

Fernando Cantu informed the committee that two consultants had submitted proposals for the passenger rail study, one local and one from the Dallas area.

Fernando presented the scores, with the first consultant scoring 8.53 and the Triangle Railroad scoring 3.73.

He noted that staff recommended proceeding with AECOM and seeking approval from the Policy Board for their selection.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham opened the floor for questions or comments. There were no questions or comments from the committee. Chairman Benjamin Worsham confirmed that staff's recommendation was to award the contract to AECOM.

**Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA made a motion to approve staff's recommendation to award the contract to AECOM.**

**Eric Davila from Cameron County RMA seconded the motion.**

**Chairman Benjamin Worsham conducted a vote, and the motion passed.**

*Approved: Thursday January 11, 2024*

**E. Weslaco, TX Southwest Loop Planning Corridor/Alignment Study – RFP Subcommittee Score and Consultant Selection.**

Fernando Cantu informed the committee that only one consultant, TEDSI, had submitted a proposal for the study. TEDSI was already working on a corridor study for the City of Harlingen. Fernando presented the score for TEDSI, which was 8.19. He mentioned that staff recommended proceeding with TEDSI as the selected consultant for the project.

Armando Garza asked if there was a deadline for the corridor study.

Fernando Cantu was not aware of any specific deadline but stated that he would reach out to the City of Weslaco for more information.

Eric Davila asked if TEDSI had provided the requested additional information about sub-consultant commitments and distribution of hours among staff.

Fernando Cantu mentioned that TEDSI had not yet if information but assured that he would obtain it before the Policy Board meeting. Eric Davila pointed out that the opportunity to respond to the RFP had been shared with the Technical Support teams in advance.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham inquired about the duration of the RFP advertisement. Fernando Cantu explained that the RFP had been open for 90 days.

**Armando Garza proposed a motion to extend the RFP by 60 days to allow for more vendor participation.**

**JP Terrazas seconded the motion.**

**Chairman Benjamin Worsham conducted a vote, with the majority in favor of extending the RFP by 60 days.**

**Eric Davila from Cameron Couty RMA and Ana Hernandez from the City of Harlingen voted against.**

**Dora Robles from TxDOT abstained from the vote.**

**The motion to extend the RFP by 60 days passed.**

**V) Presentation & Reports**

**A. Presentation of the RGVMPD Resilience and Sustainability Analysis produced by ATG.**

Javier Dominguez, Executive Analyst with LRGVDC, introduced Ben Magallon, Project Manager with Alliance Transportation Group (ATG), who presented the Resilience and Sustainability Analysis.

Ben provided an overview of the study's purpose, which aimed to determine how planning and policy mechanisms affect the region's resiliency and sustainability.

He highlighted the vision statement and guiding principles developed for the analysis.

Public engagement was a crucial component of the study, involving pop-up tabling events, workshops, and surveys to gather feedback from the community.

Ben discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified during the analysis, emphasizing the need for education about sustainability and resilience.

The analysis covered various aspects, including network assessment, risk profiles, and a cost-benefit analysis to identify mitigation strategies.

Equity analysis was conducted to assess the impact of stressors on vulnerable populations.

Ben presented the main findings, including risks from flooding, hurricanes, and extreme heat, with social vulnerability as a significant concern.

Recommendations were provided, focusing on strategies like green infrastructure, communication, education, and outreach. The establishment of a resilience task force was recommended to implement these strategies.

Eric from CCRMA suggested including flood control levees in the adaptive development discussion and mentioned ongoing coordination efforts with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Ben acknowledged the coordination efforts beyond the plan and noted that considerations like flood control levees were being carried forward.

No further comments were received.

*Approved: Thursday January 11, 2024*

## **B. Discussion and update on Performance Management Framework Project with Alliance Transportation Group**

Ben Magallon began the discussion by acknowledging the hard work of the MPO staff in guiding the performance management framework project.

He highlighted the importance of performance management as a business strategy for assessing processes, decisions, and analysis related to investment strategies.

Ben discussed the six main components of the framework: assessing strategic direction, setting targets, performance-based planning, performance-based programming, incorporating known strategies, and reporting and communication.

He provided insights into the document's layout and mentioned the online federal guidelines that served as the basis for the framework.

Ben shared a link and resources for continuing the effort and ensuring the framework's adaptability to evolving performance measures.

He emphasized the role of organization and culture within the framework and commended the MPO staff for their dedication to staff training.

Ben touched on various recommendations related to strategic direction, target setting, performance-based planning, and project readiness.

He discussed the importance of reporting and communication, especially in sharing information with the public.

Ben elaborated on monitoring and adjustment, highlighting the framework's role in the MTP update process. He concluded by praising the organization's strong culture and suggested planning workshops to discuss best practices.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham invited questions and comments from the attendees.

Ramon Navarro (Hidalgo County RMA) inquired about measuring successes, aligning goals with funding, and tracking measures. He also asked about schedules and alignment with funding.

Luis Diaz responded that the MPO compiles a list of projects that address performance measures, ensuring alignment with state goals. The MPO is on track to achieve its set goals.

Miguel Arispe (RGVMPO) highlighted that the project's intention is to work closely with local governments to promote better projects based on performance measures and improve future projects.

No further comments were received.

## **C. Discussion and update on FM 509 Corridor Study with TEDSI**

Eric Dietrich and his team, representing TEDSI, presented the update on the FM 509 Corridor Study currently under contract with RGVMPO.

They outlined the scope of the study, which includes planning services such as data collection analysis, preliminary drainage analysis, and traffic projections.

The study focuses on the FM 509 corridor, spanning from US 281 to I-69E in Harlingen, Texas, with the objective of enhancing planning and infrastructure considerations.

Eric and his team provided background information, noting that the city of Harlingen initiated the study to seek assistance in making informed decisions regarding alignment choices.

The team emphasized the significance of the study in evaluating and determining the most effective route, which will contribute valuable insights to improve planning and infrastructure development in the region.

#### **D. 5310 Call for Projects**

Eva Garcia provided an update on the 5310 Call for Projects, which is currently open. The call for projects opened on November 1st, and a workshop for interested applicants took place on November 15th, which was recorded and posted on the RGVMPPO website. The application deadline is December 20th, providing 20 working calendar days for interested parties to submit their applications.

Eva clarified that the call for projects is for the McAllen Urbanized area, with approximately 1.6 million dollars available in funding. Applicants must set aside either 20% or 50% of the project cost. Eva mentioned that 10% of the funding is reserved for program administration. Eligible entities for this program include government agencies, transit providers, and contracted transportation services. Projects may be traditional, involving capital investments such as buses, vans, wheelchairs, and lifts, with at least 55% of program funds available for this purpose. Nontraditional projects may cover operational costs, staff time for travel training, accessible path improvements to bus stops, signage enhancements, and more.

Eva explained the criteria used to evaluate applications, including planning and coordination, service, sustainability benefit, demonstration of need, budget, and bonus points for added information or innovation. All necessary information and resources, including the program guide, criteria, application, and workshop recording, are available on the RGVMPPO website.

Eva encouraged attendees to reach out to her via email or work cell if they had any questions or needed assistance with the application process.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham thanked Eva for the update and asked if there were any questions or comments from the attendees and nothing was presented.

#### **E. Federal Functional Classification (FC Post TxDOT Training Update)**

Luis Diaz shared that there was a training session held in October at the TxDOT Far District, which provided a thorough presentation on FC.

Luis highlighted that the training revealed several valuable takeaways. One key takeaway is that there are more resources available for use before the final submittal of FC packets. This allows for better communication with Federal Highways to address issues and questions in advance, which can expedite the submission process. The training also facilitated discussions on how to handle FC-related matters after submission, enhancing collaboration and communication.

Luis mentioned that he inquired about the possibility of conducting training sessions for all local governments within the region, and there is openness to doing so. He will continue to communicate with TPMP and Federal Highways to potentially schedule such training for the upcoming year.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham thanked Luis for the update and opened the floor for questions or comments. No comments or questions were presented.

#### **F. RGVMPPO Executive Director's Report and Updates**

Luis Diaz provided an update on the budget. He mentioned that the new fiscal year started in October, and as of the current date, the organization has expended \$63,144 out of a projected budget of \$177,043. Luis noted that they are well within the budget allocation at this point.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham thanked Luis for the update and asked if there were any questions or comments.

No comments or questions were received.

#### **G. TxDOT Project Status Report**

Dora Robles provided an update on TxDOT projects. She mentioned that many of the 2019-2020 TxDOT projects have been let in recent months. She reported that there was a bid opening yesterday for the UTRGV project, and they received 5 bids. She added that they are waiting for the bid analysis to be submitted. Dora mentioned that one project with the City of Brownsville was pushed into December, but they are working closely with them to move it forward. She stated that this was likely the last of the TxDOT projects for that program call. Looking ahead, she mentioned several projects in the spring for the City of Pharr.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham asked if there were any questions or comments for Dora.

Eric Davila asked about the path forward with FHWA to address projects that are currently in process and when the FHWA workshop with local governments on functional classification might take place.

Dora Robles responded that they are working on setting up a follow-up meeting to address specific projects in the queue. She mentioned that they are also working on a more streamlined process for future FC requests to avoid back-and-forth revisions. Dora added that they plan to have more early conversations with local governments before requesting a resolution through the MPO. She also mentioned that they had a productive workshop with TPP and FHWA and that they were receptive to the idea of additional training for local governments.

Luis Diaz added that he will be coordinating with TPMP to schedule a larger training for local governments on this topic.

Chairman Benjamin Worsham thanked Luis and Dora for the update and asked if there were further questions or comments.

No comments or questions were received.

**VI) NEW OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**VII) ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business to come before the RGV TAC Members, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Dora Robles with TxDOT made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:49am. The motion was seconded by Eric Davila from Cameron County RMA, meeting was adjourned.**