

**Meeting of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**RGVMPO POLICY BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, May 31, 2023 – 1:30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Presiding: Chairman Eddie Trevino, Jr. (Cameron County)**

**I) Call to Order**

Chairman Eddie Treviño, Jr. called the Transportation Policy Board meeting to order at 1:30 P.M, a quorum was established. The TPB Meeting was held in person at the Ken Jones Board Room located at 301 West Railroad Weslaco, Texas with members present.

**II) Roll Call**

**RGVMPO TPB Representatives in attendance were as follows:**

<b>Members Present:</b>	
<b>Entity</b>	<b>Individual</b>
Cameron County	Judge Eddie Treviño, Jr. (Chairman) - PRESENT Com. David Garza (Alternate)
Hidalgo County	Comm. David L. Fuentes (Vice-Chairman) Comm. Ellie Torres (Alternate) - PRESENT
City of Brownsville	Mayor Trey Mendez (Designee) Helen Ramirez (Proxy) - PRESENT
City of McAllen	Mayor Javier Villalobos (Designee) Roel "Roy" Rodriguez (Alternate) – PRESENT
City of Edinburg	Mayor Ramiro Garza (Designee) - PRESENT Comm. Daniel "Dan" Diaz (Alternate)
City of Mission	Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza (Designee) – PRESENT Comm. Jessica Ortega- Ochoa (Alternate)
City of Harlingen	Mayor Norma Sepulveda (Designee) – PRESENT Gabriel Gonzalez (Alternate)
City of Pharr	Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez (Designee) – PRESENT Comm. Daniel Chavez (Alternate)
Starr County	Judge Eloy Vera (Designee) Reyna Guerra Proxy – PRESENT
City of San Benito	Mayor Ricardo "Rick" Guerra (Designee) – PRESENT Manuel De La Rosa (Alternate)
Cameron County RMA	Frank Parker, Jr. (Designee) – PRESENT Arturo A. Nelson (Alternate)
Hidalgo County RMA	S. David Deanda Jr. (Designee) – PRESENT Ramon Navarro, V. (Proxy)
Valley Metro	Tom Logan (Designee) Nancy Sanchez (Alternate) - PRESENT
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro "Pete" Alvarez (Designee) - PRESENT Rex A. Costley (Alternate)
<b>EX-OFFICIO</b>	
RGV Partnership	Daniel Silva
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz
<b>GUEST</b>	
Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)	Luke Albert
<b>Others Present:</b>	
RGVMPO	Andrew Canon
RGVMPO	Staff

**III) PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### IV) **CONSENT AGENDA**

##### 1. **Approval of Minutes**

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of April 26, 2023

Chairman Judge Trevino (Cameron County) asked if there were any corrections to the Policy minutes of April 26, 2023. Andrew Canon informed that there was a correction of word "caring" to "carrying" under discussion of Item two.

**No other corrections were noted to the minutes of April 26, 2023. Motion to approve by Mayor Ambrosio from the City of Pharr and it was seconded by Starr County Reyna Guerra. The item was unanimously approved.**

##### 2. **Item 2. Moved to be the last item to give time to the presenter to get to the meeting location.**

##### 3. **Discussion and Possible Action on the RGVMPPO Complete Streets Policy**

Klarissa Gonzalez presented a draft of the RGVMPPO Complete Streets Policy, highlighting the background of the policy and the definition. A Complete Streets Policy is a policy that plans for equitable transportation networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destination for people of all ages and abilities. The planning activity described in the BIL (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) is the development of a Complete Streets policy, which is what we've provided today. In February of 2022, the Policy Board agreed for the RGVMPPO to work on a Complete Streets policy. In May of 2022, the Policy Board adopted the UPWP Amendment #2 which allocated around \$120,000 for its complete Streets planning activities over a two-year budget period.

Over the past year, the RGVMPPO staff has been in coordination with planning partners regarding existing and future Complete Streets policies to determine strengths and weaknesses. Staff made an inventory list of existing Complete Streets policies adopted by local governments. Now the staff has produced a regionwide Complete Streets policy, and we're looking to the Technical Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Board for feedback this May. We are in the middle of public involvement phase and plan to incorporate feedback for approval by policy board in June. The goal of this regionwide policy is to formulate best practices that can be adopted by each local government.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed the five subsections of the policy; A background mentions how it is federally mandated, a definition as worded in the BIL, a policy Statement with regional vision of safety of safe, multimodal transportation, and a description of requirements, recommendations, design, guidance, and exceptions. The policy states that it can use bike PED counter data as a method of performance measurement. As for implementation, the policy states that the RGVMPPO staff will ensure the directives of this policy are reflected in ongoing and programming work by reviewing project applications and monitoring current projects for compliance with the policy.

Ms. Gonzalez continued by reviewing the milestones of the policy. On May 11 the policy was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee and received positive feedback. As of that day the 30-day public involvement started and on May 17<sup>th</sup> the policy was presented at the Veterans Clinic in Weslaco. One public comment recommended that a phrase from the list of exceptions on page four be excluded. An exception to this policy states that scores will not be reduced if the project is unable to include BikePed accommodations because the cost of providing that infrastructure is excessively disproportionate to the need or likely use. This public comment was responded to within 24-hour time frame as regulated in the RGVMPPO public participation plan. RGVMPPO staff will bring this policy as an action item to the Transportation Policy Board in June, followed by implementation. Following that the RGVMPPO staff will establish several subcommittee meetings which will be helpful with the development of the complete streets policies.

Ms. Gonzalez ended by providing her contact information and opened the floor for discussion.

Chairman Judge Trevino thanked Ms. Gonzales and asked if there were any questions, City of Brownsville Mayor Helen Ramirez commented that this is a great initiative and informed that the City of Brownsville does have a complete streets policy. The mayor also asked if such policy was taken into consideration. Ms. Gonzales confirmed that yes, the existing policy was taken into consideration.

**After no more questions were presented, Chairman Judge Trevino asked for a motion to acknowledge the report. The motion was made by Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA and second by Starr County Reyna Guerra.**

#### **4. Discussion on FY 2022 Annual Project Listing (APL)**

Rodolfo Zamora started the presentation by providing an update on the FY 2022 Annual project Listing. Public involvement began May 11<sup>th</sup> and will run through June 11<sup>th</sup>. Documents will be available on the RGVMPPO'S website and staff will be available to address any comments or concerns with projects.

Mr. Zamora reviewed the information included within the agenda packet. An example of three types of projects submitted, not including the transit. He highlighted that the highway projects listed have arrows pointing to the amount of federal funding programmed in the MPO TIP, which is verified in the actual STIP portal. Also listed is the amount of federal funding obligated per fiscal year and for this instance it's fiscal year 2022 and that's verified thru federal transactions reports and any remaining amount of funding can still be assigned to that project thru obligation. Another example listed is a bicycle and pedestrian project, which we can see that we have category funding of nine TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program). Another example listed is group projects, for instance safety which is a group funded category.

Mr. Zamora reiterated that more detailed information can be found inside these documents available on the website. Those interested can also visit the RGVMPPO news page or participate in the virtual public involvement meetings that are set up for the APL. The three documents would be: the flyer, the APL as received and a version with staff comments.

Once Mr. Zamora concluded his presentation, chairman asked him to confirm the date of the ending of public involvement, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he asked for a motion to acknowledge the report. The motion was made by Hidalgo County and second by city of Pharr's Mayor Ambrocio Hernandez.**

#### **5. Discussion and Action to approve the Federal Functional Classification Los Ebanos Drive in the City of Mission CSJ #0921-02-521**

Luis Diaz began his presentation by advising the board that a resolution for Los Ebanos Rd is included in the packet. Mr. Diaz continued by providing an overview of the project and the resolution. The limits for the project are I2 all the way to Military Parkway. The request is a little different than what we usually do. We do the entire span of the roadway, but a portion of it is already functioning classified. So, from I2 down to mile one, is already functionally classified. The full length of the project is 2.2 miles and all that's needing to be functioning classified is from mile one all the way down to Military Parkway, which is a total length of 1.7 miles. They are requesting a major collector, regarding the northern section, that's already a major collector. Mr. Diaz continued by restating that the resolution ins included in the packet for review and then the item will to for processing through TxDOT Pharr district on the TPMP and then on to federal highways for final approval.

The city of Pharr's Mayor asked, "What is the reason we are doing this?", Mr. Diaz responded that is to function and declassify the project to get federal functional classification which what allows the project to be eligible for federal funding.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked for a motion to approve the item. The motion was made by city of Edinburg's Mayor Ramiro Garza and second by Cameron County RMA, Frank Parker Jr.**

#### **6. Update on Federal Functional Classification Pending Submittals**

Luis Diaz presented an update of all pending Federal Functional, highlighting the projects for which resolutions have been made. The ones highlighted in blue are being reviewed by FHWA which are West Blvd. and South Parallel Corridor Phase III. Those in green are the ones that are under review with TPMP, which are one step away from going FHWA. The one in yellow is the one mentioned before, Los Ebanos Rd. The one in orange is what the MPO is currently reviewing.

Mr. Diaz reiterated that the list is of projects that are currently under review for federal functional classification. Mr. Diaz ended his presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments at this that could be addressed now.

Pedro Alvarez from TxDOT made a comment about working with TPMP, the Pharr District and the MPO in trying to push this project process forward and avoid delays.

Mr. Diaz confirmed that it has been good with TPMP as responses from them are received as the FC projects are progressing allowing the MPO to coordinate a lot more in throughout the process for anything that may need revision. Mr. Diaz added that International Drive, which is the Starr County project and Russell Road are projects expected to go on the FHWA this week.

Chairman Judge Trevino commented that the any delays in obtaining these classifications, submittals, and approvals is delaying the projects, which is going to obviously coast the local entities more money. He asked the board to keep in mind that construction delays are costing everyone more money.

**After no questions or comments were presented, he asked for a motion to approve the report. The motion was made by TxDOT Pedro "Pete" Alvarez and second by the city of San Benito.**

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA; also known as Category 9**

Eva Garcia introduced her presentation by advising the board that the presentation includes some key terms and what the transportation planning means related to those terms. Mostly to help new members and for reference to current members. Acronyms are also included.

Ms. Garcia continued her presentation with details about obligating funds relating to category 9 or TASA. She went ahead and reviewed the list of inherited programs from the Brownsville/Hidalgo County MPO from FY 2019 & 2020. She presented the schedule of activities highlighting that the MPO is monitoring the projects to determine important dates to work towards obligating funds. As per the schedule of activities we are currently in May 2023 and most of the projects should already be working towards getting let with 100% plans, bid documents and final certification. That summarizes June goal to submit federal participation authorization agreements and state letter of authority request to TxDOT and FHWA by July. Ms. Garcia went ahead and reviewed the status of each project. Ms. Garcia summarized that all the projects are on track for obligating funds.

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Hidalgo County Mobility Plan        | 6. North High School Park Connection |
| 2. Jackson Rd. Hike & Bike Trail       | 7. Olmito Sidewalks                  |
| 3. PSJA Tri-City Ped. Safety, Phase II | 8. Las Palmas Sidewalks              |
| 4. Brownsville to Los Fresnos Connect  | 9. Hike & Bike Trail + Bike Racks    |
| 5. Brownsville to LF Connect, Phase II |                                      |

Ms. Garcia continued with FY2021-2022 TASA projects highlighting that the projects were awarded funds in September 2021 and most of them have already received their AFA advance funding agreement with the city of Brownsville still pending. May-July 2023 there is a potential to re-program funds for projects without executed AFAs but that is not anticipated. Ms. Garcia continued with a schedule of TASA program activities aiming to obligate funds by September 2024 and up to September 2025 but anything after would not make the deadline.

Ms. Garcia closed by opening the floor to any questions regarding the FY 2021 & 2022 TASA projects.

Chairman Judge Trevino commented that part of the issue that Ms. Garcia alluded was that we are waiting on TxDOT on some of these to approve that way those projects can be let and Ms. Garcia confirmed that definitely there is some waiting on both sides.

Chairman Judge Trevino asked Pedro Alvarez for assistance on getting these projects ready to let.

**After no questions or comments were presented, he asked for a motion to approve the report. The motion was made by Hidalgo County and second by the City of Pharr.**

**8. Discussion and Possible action on proposed projects to meet TxDOT deadline for Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)**

Andrew Canon introduced the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) with an overview of the timeline within the MPO, highlighting that the total amount available is 26.5 million dollars and can be used for non-added capacity projects. Mr. Canon went ahead and reviewed the list of proposed Carbon Reduction Program projects. (List included within the Agenda Packet)

After reviewing the list, Mr. Canon reiterated to the board that MPO staff is recommending approval for the 26.5 million dollars in proposed carbon reduction projects that are listed before the board.

Mr. Canon noted that the list was not presented to TAC because MPO staff was made aware of the deadline after the last TAC meeting, but it is included on the agenda to be discussed next month.

Chairman Judge Trevino asked if in essence we would be dipping into this fund and allowing the use of the other CAT 7 funds for other means. Mr. Canon stated that in some instances, local governments have let the MPO know that they would like to reallocate their CAT 7 and in some they have just surrendered it so the MPO can use it towards making up the negative balance currently in place.

And the MPO is flexible either way since the funding was already allocated to a present project that if the local government has another one, they want to move to, the MPO certainly wants to work with them to move those funds over to another project.

Chairman Judge Trevino asked to confirm if the recommendation was to approve with a deadline of today if we want to take advantage of this program. Mr. Canon confirmed that yes, that is the case and there would be revision cycles would be done as MPO staff regularly does.

**After no questions or comments were presented, he asked for a motion to approve. The motion was made by Cameron County RMA, Frank Parker and second by TxDOT Pedro Alvarez.**

**V) RGVMPPO Executive Director's Reports and Updates**

- A. RGVMPPO Executive Director Andrew Canon reminded everyone about the meeting scheduled to meet newly appointed Texas Transportation Commissioner Alex Meade, Thursday 1, 2023.
- B. Mr. Canon reviewed the RGVMPPO FY 2022-2023 UPWP Budget
- C. Mr. Canon presented a video promoting TxDOT's safety campaign, End the Streak Campaign, and suggested it would be a good model to consider in promoting safety on the roadways, maybe including some of the local sports teams.
- D. Survey within the board to determine a date for MPO101 workshop. The survey was done using Mentimeter and it was determined that the workshop would take place on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, from 1:30pm – 4:00pm.

**Chairman Judge Trevino Chairman asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he went ahead and proceeded to go back to Item 2, presenter arrived.**

**Item 2. Moved to be the last item to give time to the presenter to get to the meeting location.**

**Presentation on TxDOT Freight Planning Rio Grande Valley Traffic Management Strategies to Support Surface Freight**

Luke Albert provided an update and requested stakeholder feedback on freight traffic management assessment in the Rio Grande Valley for the TxDOT Freight Systems Branch.

Mr. Albert highlighted the project goals, the RGV Freight Mobility Dashboard, Locations of interests, and the emerging opportunities in the RGV,

He closed by presenting a QR code with a survey and opened the floor for discussion or questions.

Frank Parker from Cameron County RMA asked, "Who would be funding the project?" Luke Albert responded that TxDOT Freight/Planning branch is doing a needs assessment and after that it would go through the potential funding process. At this point is only determining strategies and needs and the benefit of the traffic Management Center. Mr. Albert added that these administration costs would be funded out of TxDOT Administration Austin.

City of Brownsville, Helen Ramirez asked about the best way to convey industrial developments or trade zone areas, if there is a plan given that the City of Brownsville is drafting a mobility plan. Mr. Luke stated that they would happily take a plan and look at the recommendations and the needs of a specific area identified within that plan.

Andrew Canon asked if the Border Master Plan from the Border Trade Advisory Committee is being taken in consideration thru this process.

Albert Luke informed that the Border Master Plan was in the list of documents and everything in there would be considered.

The item was for information only, no action required.

**Chairman Judge Trevino Chairman asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he went ahead and proceeded to Status Reports.**

VI) **Status Reports**

**A. TxDOT Project Status Report**

Clemente Mena provided an updated presentation on current projects and activities for the Pharr area office.

- Nittler Road
- FM 492
- FM492/Location 1

Yajaira Marroquin provided an updated presentation on current projects and activities for the San Benito area.

- SH100
- S. Parallel Corridor

**B. Cameron County RMA**

Cameron County RMA representative not available. Report included in the agenda packet for review.

**C. Hidalgo County RMA**

Ramon Navarro, (Hidalgo County RMA) provided an updated presentation on projects that are currently within the Hidalgo County RMA.

- 365 Tollway
- Wetland Mitigation Site
- Construction 365
- McColl Rd

Mr. Navarro also included a report on the following.

- IBTC
- Overweight/Oversize Corridor Segments
- Construction Economics

Mr. Navarro closed by opening the floor for any questions or comments.

No questions were presented.

Chairman Judge Trevino asked the board for a moment of silence in recognizing former City of Mission Mayor/Commissioner.

VII) **New or Unfinished Business**

Andrew Canon informed the board about the next Border Trade Advisory committee would be taking place at the Brownsville Event Center on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

VIII) **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business to come before the RGVMPPO TPB Members, Chairman Judge Trevino called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by TxDOT Pedro "Pete" Alvarez and second by City of Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza.*

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

**RGVMPO POLICY COMMITTEE  
(TPB) VICE CHAIRMAN**