

**Meeting of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**RGVMPO POLICY BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, August 30, 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., and 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) – ABSENT Comm. Everardo Villarreal (Proxy) -
City of Brownsville	Mayor John Cowen (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) Gabriel Gonzalez (Alternate) – PRESENT
City of Pharr	Mayor Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez (Designee) – ABSENT Comm. Daniel Chavez (Alternate)
Starr County	Judge Eloy Vera (Designee) Reyna Guerra Proxy – PRESENT
City of San Benito	Mayor Ricardo “Rick” Guerra (Designee) – ABSENT 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) Ramon Navarro, V. (Proxy) – PRESENT
Valley Metro	Tom Logan (Designee) - PRESENT Nancy Sanchez (Alternate)
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro “Pete” Alvarez (Designee) - PRESENT Rex A. Costley (Alternate)
<b>EX-OFFICIO</b>	
RGV Partnership	
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz
<b>GUEST</b>	
<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 July 21, 2023

Chairman Judge Trevino (Cameron County) asked if there were any corrections to the Policy minutes of July 21, 2023.

**No corrections were noted to the minutes of July 21, 2023. Motion to approve by Pedro "Pete" Alvarez from TxDOT Pharr District and it was seconded by Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA. The item was unanimously approved.**

##### 2. Discussion and Action on FY 22-23 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Fernando Cantu provided a summary of the 22-23 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) highlighting that the McAllen Metro staff will conduct a comprehensive study to assess current service levels and explore the viability of implementing high-capacity transit to restore and surpass pre-COVID-19 service standards. The project will be funded through 5307-5307 Urbanized Area Formula Discr. Planning (ARPA).

**After no questions were presented, Chairman Judge Trevino asked for a motion to approve the item. Motion to approve was made by Reyna Guerra from Starr County and it was seconded by the city manager from McAllen Roy Rodriguez. The item was unanimously approved.**

##### 3. Discussion and action on RGVMPPO Bylaws

Fernando Cantu provided an overview of the undergoing update to the RGVMPPO Bylaws to reflect the latest 2020 Census population data. The city of Edinburg will be granted an additional cote for surpassing a population of 100,000. The revision will also include the necessary adjustments to properly incorporate Starr County into the bylaws.

**After no questions were presented, Chairman Judge Trevino asked for a motion to approve the item. Motion to approve was made by the Mayor of Edinburg, Ramiro Garza and it was seconded by Reyna Guerra from Starr County. The item was unanimously approved.**

##### 4. Request for Proposal (RFP)

Fernando Cantu provided a review of the three Requests for Proposals (RFP) that would be going out at the beginning of January. The studies are as follows:

- Planning study for the proposed Southwest Loop around the City of Weslaco
- Updating the Hidalgo County Commuter Rail Feasibility Study for the Rio Grande Valley MPO Area
- Developing a 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the RGVMPPO. We seek a collaborative partnership with a skilled and experienced vendor to ensure the successful execution of this project.

Chairman Judge Trevino pointed out that going forward, vendors need to be informed of the project rules and provided notice.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he confirmed that the item was for information only, and no action was required. He requested a motion to acknowledge the update. The motion to acknowledge the report was made by TxDOT Pharr District and it was seconded by the mayor of the city of Mission, Norie Gonzalez-Garza.**

##### 5. Presentation of the Project Videos

Fernando Cantu showcased two videos, offering a visual representation of RGVMPPO's latest roadway and trail projects. The informative videos provided valuable insights into the proposed projects but also served to introduce a powerful tool obtained by the MPO for effective communication and stakeholder engagement.

He added that this new software was purchased as part of the RGVMPPO's commitment to supporting local government and is offered upon request at no cost.

The mayor of the city of Harlingen Gabriel Gonzalez asked, "How long did it take you to make the video and is this free of charge? Fernando Cantu responded that it took like a week and a half and Andrew Canon responded to the second question, yes, the software is free of charge.

Helen Ramirez from the City of Brownsville added that the software is a great tool and that she will probably be reaching out to the MPO to make use of it.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he confirmed that the item was for information only, and no action was required.**

**6. Presentation on the New 2022 Crash Dashboard**

Alma Provencio introduced a new tool for the visualizing of crash data in the RGV, available on the RGVMPPO website under "Maps. Members were encouraged to follow along by clicking on the "Twenty-Two CHRIS dashboard" link. The dashboard displayed a map and statistics, including total crashes, number of deaths, and a bar chart for different types of counties. It utilized yearly crash data from TxDOT's CHRIS system for three counties, ensuring data accuracy. The dashboard was interactive, allowing users to query data by location. Specific city data could be accessed via the "View by City" option. For example, in Brownsville in 2022, there were 4,081 crashes and 12 deaths. Users could explore crash types, such as auto crashes, school bus incidents, motorcycles, and more. The dashboard offered address-based searches and zoom-in functionality. Updates included overlaying city limits on the map and the ability to download source data. Raw data came from TxDOT, though some attributes might be missing. The dashboard would be updated annually, with the next update in February 2023.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired about the update frequency, which Alma Provencio confirmed as yearly based on TxDOT data clearance. The source of the data, TxDOT CHIRS data submitted by municipalities and counties, discussed, and verified.

Helen Ramirez suggested adding the study date and inquired about accessing historical data. Alma Provencio confirmed the availability of historical data and noted the plan to incorporate Ramirez's recommendations.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he confirmed that the item was for information only, and no action was required.**

**7. Discussion on IJJA Infrastructure BIL, specifically on the Safe Streets for All Grant Program**

Javier Dominguez Jr. provided an update on the status of the Action Plan Grant that was awarded to develop the MPO'S first regional comprehensive safety action plan. Javier Dominguez, a transportation planner at RGVMPPO, provided an update on the Safe Streets for All Grant Program. A \$250,000 grant was approved, with \$2,000,000 federal and \$50,000 local funding. Two of four MOUs from local match contributors had been received, with the remaining two expected by September 5th and 6th. The RFP release was scheduled for October 1st, with a December 8th submission deadline. A subcommittee will be formed in December to score applications. Announcement of selected projects was set for February 1st, 2023. The project's expected completion date was January 20th, 2025. Feedback for the Stage One Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant was discussed. Unfortunately, the areas of persistent poverty grant were not awarded.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired about the reasons for not receiving the grant. Javier Dominguez mentioned that feedback was not provided for this grant. Chairman Judge Trevino asked for information on the recipients of the areas of persistent poverty grants, and Javier Dominguez agreed to find out. No further questions were raised, and the report concluded.

**Chairman Judge Trevino asked if there were any questions, after no questions were presented, he confirmed that the item was for information only, and no action was required.**

**8. Discussion and Action of Revision of Federal Functional Classification (FC) request of IBTC CSJ #921-02-142 HCRMA.**

Luis Diaz Luis Diaz presented a resolution as an action item related to the IBTC (Interstate Business Transportation Corridor) request. The request required revision due to a portion that was currently functionally classified. The project's full limits extended from State Highway 365 Tollway at FM493 to I2. The currently functionally classified section runs from FM 372 (Dicker Road) to the junction of FM 907 at Alamo Road. To accommodate this, the project was split into two legs: the northwest leg and the southwest leg. The resolution sought approval to submit the request to the Pharr District, Austin TPMP TxDOT, and Federal Highways for final approval. Upon approval, it would return through the same channels for notification. The project had three different junctions, necessitating the revision of the federal functional classification request.

City of Edinburg's Mayor inquired if the project had received environmental approval, to which Luis Diaz believed it had. Ramon Navarro confirmed the project was 99.9% complete, very close to completion.

Chairman Judge Trevino asked for any additional questions and, as it was an action item, sought a motion for approval. The Mayor of Edinburg motioned to approve, and Starr County seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

**9. Discussion and Action of Revision of Federal Functional Classification (FC) request FOR Morrison Road CSJ #0921-06-291 CCRMA.**

Luis Diaz introduced a revision to an existing federal functional classification request for Morrison Road. The initial request extended from FM1847 to FM 511, but it lacked a construction phase within the STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program). To qualify, the request was revised to cover the portion from FM 1847 to Dana Road. The remaining section from Dana Road to FM 511 would be submitted as an amendment to be added to the STIP. The amendment would allow the entire Morrison Road project to be functionally classified.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired about the portion that couldn't be approved immediately, and Luis Diaz explained that it required an amendment to be added to the STIP before moving forward. Helen Ramirez emphasized the importance of the amendment for the communities along Morrison Road. Luis Diaz recommended approval.

The City of Brownsville made a motion to approve, and CCRMA seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

**10. Discussion and Action on RGVMPPO Staff attending the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Clean Cities Coalition Stakeholder Summit**

Javier Dominguez informed the board of an invitation from the Dallas Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition Director to attend the 30th Annual Clean Cities Stakeholder Summit in McLean, Virginia. This invitation was extended specifically to the RGVMPPO staff. Approval was sought from the board due to out-of-state travel requirements.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired if "RGVMPPO staff" meant only Javier Dominguez, to which he confirmed yes. Javier Dominguez provided background on the initiative by the Department of Energy to expand clean cities coalitions to improve air quality and mobility alternatives. The Dallas Fort Worth and Houston Galveston areas were the focus, with Dallas inviting representatives from other MPOs. Javier Dominguez recommended approval and welcomed any questions.

**A motion to approve was made by TxDOT's Pete Alvarez, seconded by the City of Harlingen. All were in favor, and the motion carried.**

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

RGVMPPO Executive Director Andrew Canon presented the Executive Director's Report, covering various topics. He reported on the budget status, indicating that the RGVMPPO was at 76% expenditure for the two-year cycle.

He mentioned that quarterly updates from RMAs were requested to streamline information sharing. Andrew Canon also informed the board about the Better Border Conference hosted by TTI in El Paso and promised to share more details.

Luis Diaz provided an update on the Annual Thoroughfare Plan process. He highlighted the significance of this plan as a tool for reserving the right-of-way for future development and planning. A kickoff meeting was held on September 28th, and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for October 9th. The deadline for submittals and amendments related to the thoroughfare plan is December 21st. Luis also mentioned that a survey has been sent to local governments to inquire about potential amendments and the need for further discussions. TxDOT's Pete Alvarez stressed the importance of following the thoroughfare plan, especially in terms of right-of-way acquisition and utility adjustments. He urged local planning departments to adhere to the plan and emphasized the need for regular updates.

Chairman Judge Trevino invited questions or comments from attendees regarding the annual thoroughfare plan.

Andrew Canon informed the attendees about the Safe Streets for Texas Training scheduled for Friday, September 15th, from 9 am to 3 pm. The training would focus on better understanding Vision Zero and Safe Systems Approaches outlined by the USDOT and FHWA regarding the application for Safe Streets for all

planning and implementation grants.

Chairman Judge Trevino acknowledged the announcement and encouraged attendees to participate if interested.

Andrew Canon provided updates on various projects discussed during a recent project readiness workgroup meeting. He highlighted the importance of project advancement and noted that advancement could encompass various project stages beyond just letting.

He reported on the following advancements:

- Preliminary Engineering (PE): Two projects advanced in PE.
- Design: Five projects were progressing in the design phase.
- Right of Way and Utility Adjustments: Eleven projects reported advancements in this area.
- Environmental: Four projects made progress in environmental considerations.
- Letting Dates: Five projects advanced in their letting dates.

Andrew also shared additional project details:

- 35 phases funded in the CATs.
- CAT 7 within the TIP years 23 through 26.
- 19 phases outside of the TIP year, spanning years 27 to 32.
- Five projects requested project acceleration into the TIP years, contingent on funding availability.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired about the breakdown of project advancements and suggested that it would be beneficial for all attendees to have detailed information about the five projects that have advanced. Andrew Canon confirmed that the data was currently summarized by numbers and agreed to provide a breakdown for the entire board. The Chairman emphasized the importance of having a running scorecard for projects, both for individual attendees' projects and for others.

Andrew Canon also noted that nine projects reported a lack of funding due to inflation and bid process changes. However, he expressed optimism about the progress of other projects.

**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 (Action Taken as Required)

TxDOT Area Office Staff provided an updated presentation on current projects and activities within Hidalgo and Cameron Counties.

Ricardo Bravo and Rene Davila from TxDOT presented the construction update for August 2023. They provided information on various ongoing projects, including the completion status of US 83 relief route phase two, FM 907 Alamo Road, SH100, FM 3248, and FM 1426. They also mentioned the estimated completion dates and progress of these projects. The presentation concluded with a request for questions from the board, to which there were none.

Isac Garza from the Advanced Project Delivery Section provided updates on several projects, including FM 3248 and FM 1426. He discussed the progress of schematic designs, stakeholder meetings, and public involvement timelines.

Chairman Judge Trevino inquired about the expected duration of these projects, and Isac Garza provided estimated construction timelines.

***(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)***

There were no further questions or comments from the board.

### B. Cameron County RMA

Eric Davila Eric Davila from the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) presented the status report for various projects under their purview.

**Veterans Private Occupancy Vehicle Expansion Project:** This project is currently under construction. Eric showed pictures of the headhouse, secondary inspection area, and primary inspection toll booth. Construction is progressing well.

**Gap Two Project of 550:** This project is shovel-ready, with a site visit scheduled with Union Pacific. The project is undergoing finalization of plans, and it is considered a candidate for acceleration upon agreement finalization.

**East Loop:** This project is approaching 95% completion. Negotiations for a land swap with US Fish and Wildlife are ongoing, along with coordination with the US International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC).

**Flor the Mayo:** A procurement process is underway for this project, which involves preliminary engineering and environmental work. It aims to update and finalize the environmental process for project advancement.

**Free Trade Bridge:** This project is nearing the letting phase, with the agreement signed and construction imminent.

**Morrison Road:** The project is pending a Financial Commitment (FC) request. Alternative studies for the entire corridor have been conducted.

**Old Alice:** This shovel-ready project with 95% completed plans is also the subject of a TASA application, shortlisted for a possible award. The project is ready for acceleration once the award process concludes.

**FM509:** Environmental work is underway, with right-of-entry processes in progress. Alternative solutions within the corridor are being explored.

**Dana Road:** The project has reached 75% schematic completion, with environmental documents submitted to TxDOT. Cost estimates have been prepared to facilitate design progress.

**FM1846 Williams Rd:** Funded with local resources, this project is approximately 65% complete in terms of preliminary engineering.

**SPI 2nd Access:** Meetings and follow-ups are scheduled with US Fish and Wildlife to address comments on revised alternatives analysis.

Eric Davila responded to questions from City of McAllen Manager Roy Rodriguez regarding project alignment and explained the process, including coordination with Union Pacific.

**Harlingen Rail:** The agreement is underway, with plans to initiate the project in the fall.

City of Harlingen City Manager Gabriel Gonzalez inquired about the rail improvement and right-of-way processes, to which Eric Davila provided insights into the environmental clearance steps and stakeholder coordination.

**SPC Phase 2:** This project is progressing into TxDOT's construction report phase, with consultant selection for design in progress.

**US 21 Connector Project:** Environmental and preliminary engineering phases will commence soon, with consultant selection in progress.

**West Boulevard Project:** Plans are 95% complete, with pending funding requests and Category 12 fund allocation efforts to expedite the project.

**Whipple Road Project:** Environmental work is nearing 98%, and technical reports and schematics are under development.

**FM 1847 Sidewalk Project:** Sidewalk construction is imminent, with bid openings scheduled.

**Los Fresnos Hike and Bike Trail Project:** Consultant selection is ongoing for this project.

**Outer Parkway Project:** Preliminary engineering is being revived, awaiting TxDOT's response on the environmental assessment to determine the scope of preliminary engineering.

Eric Davila concluded his presentation and opened the floor for questions, to which there were none.

*(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*

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

### **C. Hidalgo County RMA**

Ramon Navarro, representing the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority (HCRMA), provided an update on various projects and developments.

**365Toll Project:** The 365-toll project is ongoing. The toll system integration project is currently in construction. Wetland mitigation is progressing, with expectations of finalizing the project for letting on September 15th. Change Order Five, amounting to approximately \$77.4 million, was approved by the board, resulting in a 1.44% increase in the overall project cost. This change order included unrealized savings of approximately \$2.4 million, making the net impact \$5 million. Production has doubled with the approval of Change Order Five. Crews are working to address a 13% deficit between production and time, with plans to implement 7/12 shifts and 7/24 shifts when paving commences in October. Progress on retaining walls, substructures for bridges, and beam placements was highlighted.

**IBTC (International Bridge Trade Corridor):** The IBTC project has been fully funded and taken on system. Formalities are being addressed through partnerships with TxDOT and FHWA. Details regarding project segments, mileage, and destinations are available in the report.

**Future Projects:** HCRMA has \$2.1 billion worth of loop construction and advancement ahead. This includes the west-south segment and a section going up to I-2, referred to as section A. HCRMA is considering these segments as proposed tollways to finance the projects. Collaboration with local municipalities, McAllen EDC, and landowners is underway for the 30-mile section of section C. Oversized crossings permitting and collections are ongoing. *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*

Ramon Navarro opened the floor for questions or concerns from the attendees.

**Chairman Judge Trevino:** Asked if anyone had questions and received no responses.

Ramon Navarro added information about a Winterization Program is in progress in Houston, with follow-up planned for October. Despite the hot weather, preparations for possible winter weather conditions are being made.

Chairman Judge Trevino thanked Ramon Navarro for the informative presentation. He then moved on to Agenda Item 7, Other Business, Old or New.

**VII) New or Unfinished Business**

**Mayor Ramiro Garza:** Mayor Garza requested the display of the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority's (HCRMA) proposed county loop system map (Page 255) to seek clarification on changes to the connection passing through the City of Edinburg.

**Ramon Navarro:** Mr. Navarro mentioned that there have been discussions about changes, but the HCRMA had not been officially notified of any alterations to the existing alignment.

**City of Edinburg Mayor:** Mayor Garza expressed concerns as he was informed by a constituent about approved changes that would affect the corridor's route, specifically noting that the corridor might not pass by the airport as depicted on the map shown.

**Chairman Judge Trevino:** Chairman Judge Trevino sought clarification on the situation, emphasizing that the displayed map represented the current alignment, but there seemed to be a new alignment that Mayor Garza became aware of in a recent meeting. He inquired whether the Hidalgo County RMA had been provided with information regarding these changes.

**Ramon Navarro:** Mr. Navarro confirmed that the Hidalgo County RMA was not aware of the new alignment and acknowledged that there had been discussions about changes, but specifics were lacking.

**City of Edinburg Mayor:** Mayor Garza stated that he was aware of the changes and expressed his opposition to them.

**VIII) ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business to come before the RGVMPD TPB Members, Chairman Judge Trevino called the meeting adjourned at 2:46pm.*

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

  
RGVMPD POLICY COMMITTEE  
(TPB) VICE CHAIRMAN