

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Minutes

March 16, 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 in person.

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	Juan Pena
City of Edinburg	Tom Reyna
City of Harlingen	Craig Cook
City of McAllen	Rene Gonzalez
City of Pharr	Daniel Chavez
City of San Benito	Johanna Maldonado
Hidalgo County	Armando Garza, Jr.
Starr County	Absent
TxDot Pharr District	Dora Roble\\
Valley Metro	Nancy Sanchez
Cameron County RMA	Eric Davila
Hidalgo County RMA	Ramon Navarro
Brownsville Metro	Joel Garza
McAllen Metro	Jon Ray Bocanegra
Port of Brownville	Absent
Port of Harlingen	Absent
Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District	Absent
Cameron County Spaceport Dev Corp.	Absent
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:

- February 9, 2023

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any more corrections to the TAC minutes of February 9, 2023. No corrections or comments were noted to the minutes of February 9, 2023, Hidalgo County RMA Eric Davila made a motion to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2023. The motion was seconded by Nancy Sanchez with Valley Metro. Motion carried.

Approved April 13, 2023

2. Discussion on Draft 2024 UTP Allocation for Category 7 Funding

Andrew Canon gave an update on the Draft 2024 UTP Allocation for Category 7 Funding. He highlighted that upon receiving draft UTP it was somewhat disappointing with CAT 7 with the new UTP 654,715 above what was programmed with the previous UTP adoption. As discussed at the Policy meeting, we had a 0.2% increase in CAT 7, which unfortunately is not enough to do anything there. Mr Canon added that this information would be presented in policy and seek approval to apply amount to the negative balance that we have on record. Mr. Canon went ahead and reviewed the Table of numbers provided by Rudy Zamora, restating:

2023 UTP Allocation for Category 7 is \$328,810,387

2024 Draft UTP Allocation for Category 7: \$329,465,102

An increase of \$654,715 over 10 years (FY 2024-2033)

Armando Garza, Hidalgo County, asked to confirm the amount of extra funds that would be received, and Mr. Canon confirmed the estimated amount of **\$654,000**.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked; How the funds would be distributed, and Mr. Canon informed that his recommendation is for the funds not to be distributed but to be allocated to the negative balance of 32.5 million dollars.

Chairman JP Terrazas commented that he would like to see the presented table for 2023 for elected officials to have a say-so on the proposed priority projects. Mr. Canon informed that there is no problem but the knowing that there are resolutions in place with CAT 7 projects. If projects have been funded under CAT 7, there are no additional CAT 7 funds to go to those projects, which would leave funds available only for new projects. Mr. Canon reiterated his recommendation of getting rid of the negative number on Category 7.

Armando Garza Jr, Hidalgo County asked to see the exact breakdown with current year's number with the green area blank to let each entity decide what they want to do. He added that regarding the negative balance, that does not need to be addressed this year and it might be that the policy board would want to go a different route. Mr. Garza commented regarding new projects, he understood that for new funds it does not have to be new projects, that the Policy board decides on that. There are some projects that would be let and could potentially be underfunded due to cost increase and cost escalation therefore the Policy board would decide to place the additional funds to cover that cost increase.

Mr. Canon confirmed that it's up to the Policy board to decide what to do with the funds. Mr. Canon added that the table requested can be recreated but it would only have the number showing the funds but nothing else because there's nothing else to include. Mr. Garza agreed and confirmed that it would still be something good to have and share with the members for a better understanding. He added that the suballocations can be included in the table. Mr. Canon confirmed that a table can be provided to include the amounts for each subregion, and it would be ready by the Policy meeting date.

Mr. Canon continued with the presentation to review Category 10, Carbon Reduction funds. He highlighted that is a new category and it is a first for the RGVMPPO therefore clarification is being requested as to what the 13-million-dollar allocation of funding can be used for. He added that the funds cannot be used for added capacity projects. Mr. Canon rectify that a list of questions was sent over to TPMP for further guidance of Carbon Reduction funds.

Mr. Canon continued to review the draft table for Category 10 funds, highlighting that the greatest contributions to the funding went to the energy sector, the carbon reduction, safety, and discretionary funding.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked what the allocation is for Hidalgo County for Category 7. Mr. Canon advised that the funds have not been classified by region, but it should be about 60% roughly about 392 thousand dollars for Hidalgo County. Chairman added that he would like to see an agenda item for Category 2, Mr. Canon advised that it would be mentioned to TxDOT because it would be up to them.

Armando Garza Jr. asked if the MPO has any say on Category 2 funds because he was under the impression that that was the case. Chairman JP Terrazas added that he thought the MPO elected officials had the authority to select the projects for CAT 2 and not TxDOT.

Mr. Canon informed that Category 2 projects are selected by TxDOT with concurrence by the policy board and Category 7 projects are selected by the MPO with concurrence by TxDOT. He added that TxDOT comes to the policy board every year to come to an agreement and that he believes that TxDOT has moved forward with projects for Category 2 without the approval of the Policy board.

Armando Garza Jr. added that the way he understood it is that projects for Category 2 should be selected by the MPO and that he would bring it up to representatives and the Policy board so they can look at that rule for transparency purposes only. He added spending on off-system-roads receives significantly less money than on system roads even though TxDOT has been receiving a lot of money for on system roads. Mr. Garza

added that we end up putting money from Category 7 into on-system roads when TxDOT has all that extra money, and they should be able to address those shortcomings without the MPO's funds. He added that the numbers need to be looked at closely because he sees an extra 32 million dollars. Mr. Canon went ahead and reviewed the table providing an explanation of the fund allocation and math behind it. Armando Garza asked about the note on the bottom page for Category 2 page stating, "These amounts do not include carryover balances or other adjustments....", if that number can move too? Mr. Canon advised him that it's correct and to keep in mind that all the tables are only drafts from UTP table.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked about the first note on the bottom for Category 2, "*Funding allocations and project selection in Categories 2, 4 and 12 are subject to approval by the Texas Transportation Commission to ensure that the Texas Department of Transportation and designated Planning Organizations (TxDOT Districts and Metropolitan Planning have complied with the performance-based planning requirements.*" Mr. Canon, Armando Garza Jr. and Mr. Canon reviewed and discussed the statement to clarify UTP restrictions and rules.

Mr. Canon reviewed his understanding of the statement out of the UTP statement, the MPO selects Category 2 projects in consultation with TxDOT and they are approved by the commission. The MPO approves the projects as a recommendation to the commission to do the final approval.

Norma Garza with TxDOT chimed in clarifying that Category 2 is only for on-system projects and TxDOT has never used Category 7 funds to fund on-system projects. Furthermore, she added that a list was provided to TAC and Policy board for approval back in December or January. Mrs. Garza went ahead and gave an overview of the process before allocation of funds.

Mrs. Garza requested the board to respect the process that TxDOT has in place for on-system projects because there are many factors that go into it that not everyone is aware of.

Mr. Canon advised the board that the MPO would present the table presented by TxDOT that was approved, so it could be presented at the Policy meeting.

Armando Garza Jr. clarify if there are on-system projects that local governments are developing with CAT 7 funds. Mrs. Garza and Mr. Canon clarified to Mr. Garza that those projects are being funded with local funds only.

Armando Garza Jr. asked for consideration on prioritizing projects. Mrs. Garza gave an overview of the process and gave an update on the latest projects. She highlighted that there are issues with utilities and in the meantime the projects cannot be let, and the funds seemed available.

Mr. Canon advised the board that the information should be presented to the Policy board so we can move forward. He added that the Category 2 project listing was provided to and approved by the Policy Board on December 14, 2022. He added that he would work with TxDOT to determine what projects for Category 2 to move forward. As of now the biggest concern is Category 7 and now Category 10 on the best way to allocate those funds for the region.

(Information item only, no action required.)

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any questions. After no questions or comments were presented Chairman JP Terrazas confirmed that the item was for information only and proceeded to move to item 3.

3. Local Transportation Planning Project

Fernando Cantu provided and updated the local transportation Planning Project for the RGVMPPO FY 24-25 Unified Planning Work Program. Mr. Cantu went ahead and reviewed the process and application for the program highlighting that the deadline is April 1st, 2023.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any questions. After no questions or comments were presented Chairman JP Terrazas confirmed that the item was for information only and proceeded to move to Item 4.

4. Discussion of IJIA Infrastructure BIL and grants submitted by the RGVMPPO

Javier Dominguez provided a presentation on the four grants that were submitted by the RGVMPPO during the funding period. Mr. Dominguez reviewed the grants awarded, not awarded and the ones pending.

Awarded

Texas Federal Land Access Program (TX FLAP)

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Reconnecting Communities- Not Awarded

Approved April 13, 2023

Pending

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation
Areas of Persistent Poverty

Javier Dominguez thanked everyone that assisted and supported him and the MPO.

Armando Garza Jr. thanked him for the effort being made and asked about the usage for the SMART grant. Mr. Dominguez informed the board that we are looking into investing in incorporating new strategies and technologies to help with flooding in the region. Furthermore, some other things can be a automatic vehicles and technology at the ports.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any more questions. After no more questions or comments were presented Chairman JP Terrazas confirmed that the item was for information only and proceeded to move to Item 5.

5. Border Master Plan – Mr. Canon informed the board that the item would not be presented, given that the presenter Juan Flores was called away with some legislative work.

V) RGVMPPO Executive Director’s Report and Updates

Andrew Canon provided and updated the report on the RGVMPPO TASA Program Call. He reviewed the timeline of activities and future schedule and deadlines. May 31st is the deadline and inviting everyone to reach out to the MPO staff to assist anyone with the application for the funds available.

Mr. Canon provided a budget update highlighting the mark at 46% and it should be at 66%, but those would come up from expenditures coming in from McAllen Metro and B-Metro on some transit plan.

Chairman JP Terrazas asked if there were any questions. After no questions or comments were presented Chairman JP Terrazas proceeded to move to Status reports.

VI) Status Reports

A. TxDOT Project Status Report

Dora Robles presented status report, starting with the monthly letting update. Mr. Robles went ahead and reviewed the projects getting ready to let and upcoming schedules to be let.

Mrs. Robles thanked everyone that submitted the updated estimates and reminded everyone to continue working closely with projects managers.

No questions were posed after the presentation.

B. Cameron County RMA

Eric Davila (Cameron County RMA) provided an updated presentation on projects that are currently within the Cameron County RMA.

No questions were posed after the presentation.

C. Hidalgo County RMA

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

No questions were posed after the presentation.

(Report only, no action taken at this time.)

VII) NEW OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

VIII) ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the RGVMTAC Members, Vice Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Hidalgo County RMA, Ramon Navarro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:22am. The motion was seconded by Cameron County RMA Eric Davila; and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Approved April 13, 2023