

**Meeting of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization  
RGVMPO POLICY BOARD MEETING**

**Wednesday, October 25, 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) – PRESENT Helen Ramirez (Proxy)
City of McAllen	Mayor Javier Villalobos (Designee) – ABSENT Roel “Roy” Rodriguez (Alternate)
City of Edinburg	Mayor Ramiro Garza (Designee) - PRESENT Comm. Daniel “Dan” Diaz (Alternate)
City of Mission	Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza (Designee) – PRESENT City Manager - Randy Perez (Alternate) -PRESENT
City of Harlingen	Mayor Norma Sepulveda (Designee) Gabriel Gonzalez (Alternate) – PRESENT
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) - ABSENT Ramon Navarro, V. (Proxy)
Valley Metro	Tom Logan (Designee) - PRESENT Nancy Sanchez (Alternate)
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro “Pete” Alvarez (Designee) - PRESENT Rex A. Costley (Alternate) – PRESENT
<b>EX-OFFICIO</b>	
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz
LRGVDC	Eddie Reyes
<b>GUEST</b>	
CoPlan	Steve Taylor
<b>Others Present:</b>	
RGVMPO	Andrew Canon
RGVMPO	Staff

### III)

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Boardley

Chairman Judge Trevino welcomed attendees to the meeting and invited Mr. Brian Boardley to the podium for a public comment session. Mr. Boardley introduced himself and expressed his interest in transit development in the area, highlighting the growth and potential opportunities for transit solutions. He mentioned upcoming developments, including the Texas A&M campus at Tres Lagos and the need for efficient transit options for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Mr. Boardley also mentioned a major conference planned for the upcoming year, during which they intend to explore transit efficiency and use McAllen or a surrounding city as a case study.

City of Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez added a comment regarding the potential for high-speed rail connections between Rio Grande City to South Padre Island or San Antonio, emphasizing the need for funding to make such projects a reality.

Chairman Judge Trevino thanked Mr. Boardley and Mayor Hernandez for their comments.

### IV)

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of September 27, 2023, Regular Minutes

**No corrections were noted to the minutes of September 27, 2023. Motion to approve by Pedro "Pete" Alvarez from TxDOT Pharr District and it was seconded by Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez from the City of Pharr. The item was unanimously approved.**

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of October 11, 2023, Special Board Meeting Minutes

A correction was requested by TxDOT's Pete Alvarez to reflect Norma Y. Garza attendance instead of Dora E. Robles representing TxDOT Pharr District.

**No other corrections were noted to the minutes of October 11, 2023. Motion to approve with correction was made by Pedro "Pete" Alvarez from TxDOT Pharr District and it was seconded by Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez from the City of Pharr. The item was unanimously approved.**

##### **2. Discussion and Action on Election of Vice Chairman**

Chairman Judge Trevino read a section of the RGVMPPO Bylaws outlining the process for electing the Vice Chairman. Then he announced that this would be his last meeting as Chairman and that Vice Chair Commissioner David L. Fuentes would take over as Chairman upon the completion of this item. He explained the understanding that each region would advocate on behalf of its preferred Chairman or Vice Chairman during the merger of the MPOs.

Chairman Judge Trevino moved to nominate Mayor John Cowen of Brownsville as the new Vice Chairman for the RGVMPPO. City Manager Gabriel Gonzalez from Harlingen nominated their mayor for the position as well.

Chairman Judge Trevino entertained discussion and proceeded with a vote. The motion to nominate Mayor John Cowen passed, with one opposing vote by Gabriel Gonzalez from the City of Harlingen.

**The motion was made by Judge Trevino and seconded by Frank Parker, Jr. from Cameron County RMA.**

##### **3. Recognition and Presentation to outgoing Chairman Judge Eddie Trevino Jr.**

A recognition and appreciation award were presented to Judge Treviño by Andrew Canon. Judge Trevino thank Andrew Canon for his years of service and the board for all the support. He proceeded to step aside to give the seat to the new Chairman of the RGVMPPO Commissioner David L Fuentes.

Commissioner Fuentes stepped in as the new Chairman and continued the RGVMPPO Transportation Policy Board meeting with item 4.

**4. Recognition and Presentation to outgoing Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chairman JP Terrazas**

A recognition and appreciation award were presented to JP Terrazas from the City of Mission by Chairman David L Fuentes.

Mr. Terrazas thank Andrew Canon and the board for their support and work together.

Chairman Fuentes also introduced a recognition to Andrew Canon on behalf of his staff and the board for his 19 years of service.

Luis Diaz presented Mr. Canon with a recognition award and some words of appreciation. City of Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez also said a few words of appreciation to Mr. Canon as well as Harlingen's City Manager, Gabriel Gonzalez

**5. Approval of Job Description for Executive Director**

Chairman Commissioner David Fuentes Commissioner David L. Fuentes, serving as Chairman, invited Manuel Cruz to explain any changes made to the job description since the last evaluation.

Manuel Cruz explained that the job description had been distributed to all attendees, along with an additional paper outlining the goals and objectives for the Executive Director position. He mentioned that the job description depicted the job duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director.

Commissioner Fuentes asked if the job description referenced the goals and objectives included in the additional sheet. Manuel Cruz clarified that the goals and objectives were not explicitly referenced but could be added as bullet points.

Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez expressed the need for specific language to ensure timely reporting on projects' progress and the Executive Director's duty to inform the board if any entity was unable to fulfill its project requirements.

Commissioner Fuentes suggested including language about timely reporting and allocations of unspent funds in the job description.

Frank Parker also recommended including a timely annual review of performance and a timetable for completion.

Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. suggested integrating the goals and objectives discussed earlier into the job description. He emphasized the importance of providing quarterly reports.

Chairman Fuentes agreed and proposed that the board incorporate all the discussed points into the job description to clarify expectations for the incoming Executive Director.

Commissioner Fuentes added that the board had documented these expectations during the evaluation and should include them in the job description.

Manuel Cruz agreed to incorporate all the discussed points into the job description and stated that he would make the necessary changes.

Commissioner Fuentes suggested adding specific qualifications related to TxDOT or MPO experience in the education, training, and experience section.

Manuel Cruz mentioned that Commissioner Ellie Torres had provided feedback after an email was sent out to all board members. And that feedback has been incorporated into the draft job description.

Commissioner Fuentes opened the floor for further discussion and received confirmation from the board members that they were satisfied with the proposed changes.

Frank Parker clarified that the changes would be added as a supplement to the existing job description.

**Commissioner Fuentes made a motion to incorporate all the discussed changes and recommendations into the job description. Mayor Ambrosio from the City of Pharr seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**6. Approval of open and closing dates for the advertisement of the Executive Director position for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO)**

Commissioner David L. Fuentes introduced item number six and Manuel Cruz invited HR Director Eddie Reyes to provide guidance on the advertisement process.

Eddie Reyes explained that for executive-type positions, they typically open the position and close it once they received enough qualified applicants. Leaving the position open for too long might result in candidates accepting other offers. He also mentioned that executive search firms were an option but came at an additional cost.

Judge Eddie Trevino inquired about specific industry trade organizations where the position could be advertised.

Andrew Canon recommended posting the position with organizations such as ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officials), the American Planning Association (APA), and AMPO (Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations) to reach potential candidates on a national level.

Andrew Canon also mentioned TEMPO (Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations) as a relevant organization, which David Jones, the Executive Director of TEMPO, could assist with.

Eddie Reyes further explained that all job postings needed to be closed by December 31st due to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations. The closure was necessary for demographic reporting purposes since the organization received federal funding.

Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez suggested posting an end date for the position to help manage the application process, with the option to reopen it if necessary.

Judge Eddie Trevino mentioned that closing the posting before the end of the year would be acceptable, and if needed, they could repost the position after January 1st.

Chairman Fuentes asked when they could start posting the position, and Eddie Reyes confirmed they could start immediately. Chairman Fuentes proposed setting the closing date for November 30th, allowing them time to review applications in December.

**Judge Eddie Trevino made a motion to approve the opening and closing dates for the Executive Director position as of now and closing on November 30th. Reyna Guerra from Starr County seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**7. Approval of Salary Paygrade for the Executive Director position for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO)**

Commissioner David L. Fuentes invited Manuel Cruz to share information regarding the pay grade.

Manuel Cruz explained that they typically use the Texas State Auditor's Office State Classification Compensation as a reference for setting salary pay grades. The job title for the Executive Director was classified as Director 5 with a salary group of B30, which had a range from \$106,712 to \$180,475, with the midpoint being \$143,594. He presented the option of either setting a fixed starting salary or creating a salary range within that pay grade.

Eddie Reyes, the HR Director, suggested starting at a midpoint salary to give potential candidates a better understanding of the position's salary range. He also mentioned the need to adjust the pay grade if this approach was chosen.

Pete Alvarez shared that in the Pharr district, they had successfully used a strategy of starting the salary around the midpoint of the pay grade to attract qualified candidates.

Chairman Fuentes inquired about the midpoint salary, which Manuel Cruz confirmed to be \$143,594.

Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. asked why the approval of the salary pay grade was necessary if the position was already structured within a pay grade.

Eddie Reyes explained that if they chose to start at a midpoint salary, it would require adjusting the pay grade to reflect the change.

Pete Alvarez supported the strategy of starting at a midpoint salary to attract candidates and suggested setting the new pay grade as B32 with a starting salary of \$130,140.

Chairman Fuentes asked if there was a motion to approve the change in the classification to B32 with the starting salary of \$130,140. Frank Parker motioned to approve, and Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Frank Parker also raised the question of a car allowance, which Andrew Canon addressed. He mentioned that federal regulations already established a set rate for vehicle reimbursement (65.5 cents per mile), and any other allowances would need approval from federal highways.

Chairman Fuentes concluded by stating that they should wait to see the response to the job posting before considering any relocation or additional allowances.

City of Brownsville Mayor John Cowen inquired about vacation, benefits, and relocation. Manuel Cruz confirmed that the benefits, annual leave, and sick leave would be standard under the COG policies.

Regarding relocation, Andrew Canon advised that it needs to be negotiated in advance with TxDOT and federal highways for potential reimbursement.

**Chairman Fuentes confirmed the motion to change in the classification to B32 with the starting salary of \$130,140 and no consideration to car allowance or travel reimbursement. Frank Parker motioned to approve, and Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**8. Selection of the committee for the interview process for the Executive Director position for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO)**

Chairman Fuentes opened the discussion by seeking recommendations and insights from the board members regarding the selection process.

Manuel Cruz, Executive Director of the RGVMPO, provided some historical context, referring to the previous hiring process in 2019 when the merger took place. During that process, the Executive Committee was responsible for conducting interviews. The Executive Committee consisted of the chair, vice chair, and a TxDOT representative.

Chairman Fuentes inquired about the composition of the Executive Committee during that process, to which Manuel Cruz confirmed that it comprised the chair, vice chair, and TxDOT representative.

Mayor Ambrosio expressed his satisfaction with the process from the previous hiring and emphasized the importance of streamlining the decision-making to expedite the selection process.

Chairman Fuentes proposed that the Executive Committee selects the top five candidates and then presents them to the full Policy Board for interviews, ensuring that the entire board has a role in the final decision.

Eddie Reyes, HR Director, explained the process of prescreening candidates, stating that HR and the Interim Executive Director would initially narrow down the pool of applicants. Then, they would independently rank the top five candidates before coming together to reach a consensus. These top five candidates would then be presented to the Policy Board for interviews.

Mayor Ambrosio suggested that the Executive Committee's role is to select the top five candidates, conduct interviews, and present the finalists to the full Policy Board.

Pete Alvarez recommended that HR initially screens the applicants, and the Executive Committee conducts the interviews. He pointed out the challenges of coordinating schedules for a large board and emphasized the efficiency of the Executive Committee handling the interviews.

Chairman Fuentes confirmed that the Executive Committee selects the top five candidates, conducts interviews, and proposes the finalists to the full Policy Board for approval.

Frank Parker raised the question of budget constraints for bringing candidates for interviews. Manuel Cruz clarified that there was no budget for candidate travel but suggested that interviews could be conducted remotely through platforms like Zoom.

Eddie Trevino Jr. recommended conducting initial remote interviews, and if the candidates are shortlisted, they could be asked to attend in-person interviews.

Mayor Norie Gonzalez-Garza suggested adding former Chairman Judge Trevino Jr. to the Executive Committee to maintain a balanced representation.

Judge Eddie Trevino Jr. agreed to join the Executive Committee.

Pete Alvarez recommended Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. from Edinburg as the fifth member to ensure balanced representation. Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. accepted the nomination.

**Chairman Fuentes confirmed that the Executive Committee for the interview process would be composed of himself, Vice Chairman Mayor John Cowen, former Chairman Judge Trevino, TxDOT Representative Pete Alvarez, and Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. of Edinburg.**

**Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez motioned to approve the composition of the Executive Committee, and Frank Parker seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

V) **Executive Session**

Chairman Fuentes announced that the meeting would enter executive session to discuss Personnel Matters Pursuant to Section 551-074 (1) as specified in the agenda. The purpose of the executive session was to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee. The time was noted as 2:20 PM.

**Reconvene into Open Session**

Chairman Fuentes reconvened the meeting in open session at 2:30 PM to consider actions related to the matters discussed during the executive session. He requested a motion and a second.

**City of Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza motioned to approve the item as discussed during the executive session, and Mayor of Pharr Ambrosio Hernandez seconded the motion. Chairman Fuentes thanked the members, and the motion carried.**

**Cont. of CONSENT AGENDA VI**

**9. Discussion and Action on FY 24-25 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #1**

Fernando Cantu presented Amendment #1 to the FY24-25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He explained that the amendment involved transferring unused funds from the McAllen Metro project to the next UPWP and requesting an additional \$26,000 for ATG Alliance Transportation Group to implement study findings.

**City of Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez made a motion to approve the amendment, which was seconded by City of Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza. The motion carried.**

**10. Request For Proposal (RFP)**

Fernando Cantu presented information about the upcoming RFP for "Safe-Streets-for-all." He mentioned that the RFP release date was set for October 29th, with a submission deadline of December 28th. The selected consultants would be brought before the Policy Board for approval in January. This was an informational item, and no action was required.

**11. Discussion and Action on the November 2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revision Cycle.**

Rudy Zamora presented the November 2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) revision cycle. He reported that the cycle had concluded, and the draft documents had gone through required public involvement processes and approvals. He provided details on the investments in both highway and transit TIPs, which totaled almost \$1.8 billion and over \$173 million, respectively, for fiscal years 2023 to 2026.

Rudy Zamora explained that there were several revisions on both the highway and transit sides, mostly administrative changes due to the new fiscal year. He mentioned that federal approval for these changes would be sought, with the earliest possible date being December 5th.

Chairman Fuentes asked if there were any questions, and there were none. He then entertained a motion.

**Frank Parker from Cameron County RMA made a motion to approve the November 2023 STIP revision cycle. City of Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**12. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 2023-19 Programing FY2023-2024 Transportation Alternative Set-Aside (TASA) Funds**

Eva Garcia presented the item, reminding the Policy Board that this was federal funding for fiscal year 2023-2024, with approximately \$9 million available. She explained that a minimum of 10% must go to planning projects, and this allocation did not meet the minimum requirement. She gave an overview of the process, meetings held, and the scoring criteria used for project selection.

Eva Garcia noted that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee had both recommended the approval of ten projects, including four planning projects. She provided a detailed summary of the recommended projects and funding allocations, stressing that these projects would advance the region's walkability and connectivity.

Judge Eddie Trevino inquired about the remaining amount for the old Alice project, which was approximately \$1.2 million. Eva Garcia explained that the project would be eligible for the next call for projects, likely in a year and a half, but the schedule might be accelerated in coordination with TxDOT.

Chairman Fuentes emphasized the need to ensure that projects are executed and urged Eva Garcia to revisit any projects where funds became available due to other projects not following through.

**Judge Eddie Trevino made a motion to approve the resolution. City of Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

**13. Discussion and presentation on SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis from RGVMPPO Staff**

Javier Dominguez presented the results of the SWOT analysis conducted with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Board. He highlighted the similarities and differences between the two groups' assessments.

For Strengths, both groups acknowledged the strong leadership and opportunities for leadership within the RGVMPPO. They also noted the inclusive approach in involving stakeholders, the variety of studies and initiatives undertaken, and the overall sense of unity within the region. Weaknesses identified by the Technical Advisory Committee included challenges related to utilities, websites, and outreach.

On the Policy Board side, some members viewed communication as a weakness. However, it was noted that communication was seen as both a strength and a weakness depending on the perspective.

Opportunities discussed included funding opportunities, improved stakeholder engagement, policy enhancements, and increasing MPO staff to enhance efficiency.

Threats outlined encompassed project delivery, public participation processes, drainage, flooding, and alignment of priorities.

Chairman Fuentes thanked Javier Dominguez for the presentation and requested a copy of the SWOT analysis to be shared separately.

**14. Presentation and Discussion regarding Federal Fund Utilization: Category 7**

Andrew Canon provided an update regarding discussions with TxDOT TPMP about revising the Texas Administrative Code related to Category 7 federal funding utilization. He mentioned that TxDOT expressed concerns about the slow utilization of Category 7 funds across all MPOs in the state.

Andrew highlighted that TxDOT proposed moving Category 2 funds to Category 11S when an MPO reaches 200% of its normal allocation. This reallocation aims to motivate the expenditure of Category 7 funds.

Pete Alvarez emphasized that safety is a priority for TxDOT and urged the local governments to expedite project readiness and construction to utilize Category 7 funding effectively. He mentioned that Category 7 funding historically amounts to approximately \$32-35 million per year.

Chairman Fuentes inquired about the potential effective date of this change, to which Pete Alvarez stated that TxDOT is looking to vote on it at the beginning of the calendar year.



Judge Trevino sought clarification that this change is administrative and could impact Category 2 funding if the MPO doesn't utilize Category 7 funds effectively. He emphasized the importance of the MPO ensuring that this change doesn't negatively impact them.

Andrew Canon noted that the Policy Board has approved the expenditure of Category 7 funds for the years 2026 and 2027, which could help avoid any potential fund reallocation discussions.

Chairman Fuentes thanked the presenters for the information and confirmed that item is informational only, an action is not required.

#### **15. Presentation on Congestion and Delay Study Tier 2 Operations**

Steve Taylor presented the findings of the Congestion and Delay Study Tier 2 Operations. He began by expressing his excitement to be at the meeting and acknowledged the evolution of the project over the past 22 years, highlighting the improvements made through the CNP (Congestion Management Process).

The Tier 2 project evaluated regional operations of primary arterials and aimed to make recommendations and implementations based on the findings. The project scope included evaluating 164 intersections, with 100 selected for implementation.

Mr. Taylor emphasized that the improvements were made over the last six months, leading to a return-on-investment ratio of 40 to 1.

The assessment of 164 intersections revealed that 40% to 97% of intersections within cities with populations greater than 50,000 had equipment that wasn't functioning, contributing to delays. Cabinets were also found to have aged over time.

Mr. Taylor noted that the Carbon Reduction Program provided funds to make immediate improvements based on data collected during the project.

The Tier 2 project focused on 100 intersections in Hidalgo County and Cameron County, using various data points to assess operational performance. Implementing coordinated signal timing resulted in significant travel time reductions without the need for road widening.

Mr. Taylor presented examples of corridor time-space diagrams, showcasing reductions in travel time ranging from 35% to 76%.

He emphasized that coordinated timing provides recurring benefits and allows travelers to anticipate travel times better.

The study also revealed that maintenance efforts had resulted in a 10% failure rate for a well-maintained system, while some intersections saw failure rates of up to 100%, indicating the need for funding for traffic maintenance and staffing.

Mr. Taylor highlighted improvements made since 2016, following the recommendations of the CMP (Congestion Management Process).

He concluded by emphasizing the return on investment of approximately 40% and the broader benefits, including safety improvements and reduced emissions.

Frank Parker asked about battery backups for signals during storms, and Mr. Taylor suggested considering adding them as a part of specifications for new equipment.

**Chairman Fuentes thanked Mr. Taylor for the presentation and noted its importance for reporting requirements.**

#### **16. Discussion on FC**

Luis Diaz discussed the recent update from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding the review process for Federal Function Classification (FC). He mentioned that FHWA has set guidelines for FC submittals, considering the distance between federally function classified roadways. A meeting was scheduled for the following day with TPMP, TxDOT Austin, and FHWA at the Pharr district to discuss the implications of these guidelines for future FC requests.

Luis Diaz also informed the board that determinations from FHWA have been proposed for new constructions. This means that if there is no progress on a project as reported by TxDOT Pharr District on an annual basis, the FC determinations may be removed. Several projects have been assigned to the proposed FC, and further guidance will be provided to local governments with such projects.

Judge Eddie Trevino inquired about the list of potential projects and suggested to Luis Diaz to share the list separately and Luis Diaz agreed.

Luis Diaz also mentioned that the process for requesting FC may change. Local governments planning to request FC should be cautious about moving the construction phase to the TIP's latter years after acquiring FC, as they may risk losing their FC determination.

Chairman Fuentes thanked Luis Diaz for the update and asked if there were any questions.



## VI) **RGVMPO Executive Director's Reports and Updates**

RGVMPO Executive Director Andrew Canon began the report by providing a brief update on the year-end budget. He mentioned that the budget had not yet closed out, and they were awaiting the final figures from the LRGVDC Finance division. However, he assured the board that they had expended 95.8% of their budget. Currently, they were at 81%, but he anticipated reaching the 95% threshold as they closed out the year. He also mentioned that they were keeping their budget under control and were above the required 25% threshold.

Chairman Fuentes invited questions from the board members, but there were none.

Luis Diaz added to the report by informing the board about a recent meeting in coordination with Valley Metro. He mentioned that they were bringing forward the program call for 5310, which included all transit-related projects focusing on ADA compliance and related aspects. The program call was scheduled to open on November 1st. He assured the board that more information, including timelines, would be shared with the committees.

Chairman Fuentes asked if there were any further questions or comments from the board, to which there were none. He thanked Andrew Canon and Luis Diaz for their updates and closed Section 6 of the meeting.

## VII) **Status Reports**

### **A. TxDOT Project Status Report**

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

Arlene Garcia, representing TxDOT's Pharr area office, provided updates on two Hidalgo County construction projects:

- FM676 from SH364 to SH107: This project involves full reconstruction and widening of the existing Broadway. The contractor is Texas Cordi Construction. The project was at 7% completion, and it was estimated to be completed by February 2025.
- FM1425 from Business 83 to I2: The contractor for this project is SASAGO Construction. It was at 2% completion, with an estimated completion date of December 2025. The project focused on online-treated subgrade construction.

Richard Varria, representing the Texas-San Benito area office, provided an update on the I-69 ramp reversal project in Harlingen, Texas. The project's scope includes northbound and southbound ramp reversals from Industrial Boulevard to Loop 499. The contractor is Foremost Paving, and the project was at 7% completion. It was estimated to be completed by March 2024.

Mariel Torres, representing the Pharr District Bridge section, presented updates on current federal-funded bridge projects in the lower Rio Grande Valley. She provided details on the following projects:

- Mile 1 West Road in Hidalgo County Precinct 1: The AFA (Advance Funding Agreement) has been executed for this project.
- Mile 17 ½ in Hidalgo County Precinct 1: The AFA has been executed for this project as well.
- Loma Blanca Rd in Starr County Precinct 2: There are two bridges along this corridor, and all projects will be state led.
- Minnesota Ave with the City of Brownsville: The AFA was amended and executed recently. Negotiations with a consultant were ongoing but TxDOT moved on to look for another consultant due to time constraints.
- Browne Ave with Cameron County Precinct 1.
- Stenger Rd with the City of San Benito: Coordination with the city for the bridge project was in progress and aligned with a local sidewalk project.
- Tower Rd in Hidalgo County Precinct 2.
- Valley View Rd in Hidalgo County Precinct 2.

Judge Eddie Trevino Jr. inquired about the consultant for the Minnesota Ave project, and Mariel Torres stated that she did not recall, but Agustin Ramirez chimed in with more information. He explained that the initial consultant Majeski and Masters had declined the project due to time constraints, therefore TxDOT was in the process of reassigning a new consultant.

Frank Parker asked about the Pharr interchange project, and Rex A. Costley from TxDOT Pharr District provided information, stating that the direct connectors would be completed by winter 2023, with substantial completion a year after, which included Frontage roads.

Chairman Fuentes thanked the TxDOT representatives for their reports.

**VIII) New or Unfinished Business**

Andrew Canon raised the issue of a special meeting to approve category 2 projects for the next UTP (Unified Transportation Program) development. Due to the late notice, they discussed scheduling a virtual meeting around November 15th to meet the December 1st deadline for project submissions. Luis Diaz confirmed the plan for the virtual meeting and stated that further coordination would be done to finalize the details.

Chairman Fuentes requested that they keep the board informed about the special meeting.

**IX) ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business to come before the RGVMPPO TPB Members, Chairman Judge Trevino called the meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.*

ATTEST:  \_\_\_\_\_  
RGVMPO POLICY COMMITTEE  
(TPB) VICE CHAIRMAN