

RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RGVMPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, March 14, 2024 – 10:00 AM

*The RGVMPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting will be held **IN-PERSON** at the LRGVDC Main Campus,
301 W. Railroad Street, Building B, Ken Jones Executive Board Room in Weslaco, TX*

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Public Comments – May be submitted online or may be submitted on a paper form specifying the matter you wish to address.

IV. Action & Discussion Items

A. Approval of Minute(s) for February 8, 2024

Action **Possible Action** **Information**

Presenter: **Benjamin Worsham, TAC Chairman**

Summary: Approval of the February 8, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes

B. Discussion and Action on the May 2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revision Cycle.

Action **Possible Action** **Information**

Presenter: **Rudy Zamora, RGVMPO Transportation Planner II**

Summary: RGVMPO staff are amending our short-range and long-range planning & programming tables: TIP & MTP. A 30-day Public Involvement period will be held during the month of March. All revisions/modifications require TAC & TPB members' approval.

Background: The Statewide TIP is updated quarterly and RGVMPO staff is revising the short-range Transportation Improvement Program, and long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (TIP & MTP). Public Involvement, both virtual and in-person, is scheduled from March 1 – March 31, 2024. All revisions and modifications require approval by our TAC & TPB members during the scheduled March meetings. Modifications have been identified on both TIP & MTP tables, and a summary sheet has been provided.

C. Discussion and Possible Action of Hidalgo County funding distribution request of future Unified Transportation Program (UTP) allocation for Hidalgo County.

Action **Possible Action** **Information**

Presenter: **Armando Garza, Hidalgo County PCT 2 Chief of Staff**

Summary: For transportation projects that have proven to be of the highest priority to this RGVMPO and an Advanced Funding Agreement (AFA) with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) committing Local, State and Federal funds is in place; therefore Hidalgo County is requesting that in the future, any additional CAT 7 fund allocations to Hidalgo County and the four (4) major cities be equally distributed into eight (8) equal allocations. The equal allocations would be distributed to the Cities of McAllen, Edinburg, Mission, Pharr, and each Hidalgo County Precinct. This will allow each city and precinct to allocate its distribution of its CAT 7 allocation to cover funding shortfalls on the projects with the highest priorities that need the funds in order to advance the letting. This distribution of funds will reduce further financial burden on the taxpayers within these areas.

Background: The UTP authorizes the distribution of construction dollars in various funding categories, including CAT 7 funds, which is expected to be available over the next 10 years. The current 2024 UTP (2024-2033) (See attached CAT 7: Metropolitan, Mobility and Rehabilitation) will be replaced by TxDOT with the 2025 UTP in August 2024, adding the estimated available CAT 7 funding for the year 2034 for the RGVMPPO (Cameron and Hidalgo Counties). Hidalgo and Cameron Counties will have separate sub-allocation of available CAT 7 funds, based on the population set by the latest census. The four (4) Hidalgo County Precincts have executed AFAs with TxDOT on several CAT 7 off-system projects (2024-2033) and are coordinating with cities to continue project development activities at local cost, with no cost to TxDOT or RGVMPPO. Coordinating cities are as follows:

- Pct 1 (Weslaco, Mercedes, La Villa & Elsa)
- Pct 2 (San Juan, Pharr, Alamo, McAllen, Mission & Edinburg)
- Pct 3 (Penitas, Palmview, Palmhurst, Alton, Mission & McAllen)
- Pct 4 (Edinburg & McAllen)

Hidalgo County is willing and able to honor its participation matching funds as stipulated in the current executed AF A's; however, several, if not all, of these active projects have funding shortfalls for Construction and Right of Way (ROW) related costs and are in need of additional CAT 7 funds. The Cities of Mission, McAllen, Pharr, and Edinburg are also developing transportation expansion projects in need of additional CAT 7 funds.

D. Presentation and Action regarding Carbon Reduction Program Projects

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Eva Garcia, RGVMPPO Planner III

Summary: RGVMPPO Staff will provide an update on the FY2024-FY2027 Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Projects. Additionally, RGVMPPO Staff is working closely with TxDOT Pharr District Staff to determine a short-list of projects for future fiscal years of funding. This short list will be presented for transparency and discussion purposes at this time. Recommendation and Action will likely be requested in May pending FHWA concurrence on eligibility of the proposed short list.

Background: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) authorized a new Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) codified as 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 175 in November 2021. The purpose of the CRP is to reduce transportation emissions through the development of State carbon reduction strategies and by funding projects designed to reduce transportation emissions. In addition to State apportionments, CRP funds are allocated for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and are available for obligation for a period of 3 years after the last day of the fiscal year for which the funds are authorized (23 U.S.C. 118(b)). Any amounts apportioned or allocated that remain unobligated at the end of that period shall lapse.

E. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 16 Revisions

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Eva Garcia, RGVMPPO Planner III

Summary: RGVMPPO Staff will present a synopsis of the TAC Chapter 16 revisions and its potential impacts. Project details will not be part of the meeting's presentation but will be discussed during the Project Readiness Workshop which is immediately following this meeting.

Background: The Texas Transportation Commission approved Minute Order (MO) 116630 on January 17, 2024, officially amending the TAC. This MO impacts Transportation Allocation Funding Formulas for the Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

F. Discussion and Possible Action regarding THE Potential Re-programming of FY2021-2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA; Category 9) Funds

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Eva Garcia, RGVMPPO Planner III

Summary: RGVMPPO Staff continues to review and monitor TASA projects to ensure regional funds are successfully obligated and, ultimately, reimbursed in a timely manner. This presentation will focus on projects that may potentially require Advanced Funding Agreement (AFA) amendments.

Background: The FY2021-2022 TASA Program Schedule of Activities was developed by RGVMPPO Staff to clearly communicate milestones expected to be met by Local Governments (LGs) that have been awarded funds. March 2024 is the final deadline for RGVMPPO's decision-makers to consider funding/project changes. Recommendations from Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members will be presented to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) for official action.

V. Presentations & Reports

A. Presentation and Discussion regarding the RGVMPPO's Bike/Ped Program (Annual Update)

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Eva Garcia, RGVMPPO Planner III

Summary: RGVMPPO Staff will present a synopsis of the various Bike/Ped programs and 2023 activities. This annual update will include information regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; regional Complete Streets Policy; and planned 2024 activities such as the development of the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan.

Background: The RGVMPPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transportation Policy Board (TPB) adopted the RGVMPPO Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in December 2020. Several initiatives recommended for implementation within the ATP have been progressing and there is interest to kick off new initiatives.

B. Presentation on RGVMPPO Attainment Status

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Klarissa Gonzalez, RGVMPPO Transportation Planner I

Summary: The Lower Rio Grande Valley continues to be designated as an attainment zone by the Environmental Protection Agency. According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), sensors in Mission and Harlingen are reporting a three-year current average of 53ppb and 54ppb respectively for Ozone (O3) pollutant. Other MPOs that are in nonattainment areas, such as Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB), Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Beaumont-Port Arthur (BPA), El Paso (ELP), and San Antonio (SAT) are reporting three-year averages in the 60ppb-70ppb range.

Background: Clean Air Act set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the specific pollutants of Ozone, Particulate Matter, Carbon Dioxide, Sulfur Dioxide, and Lead. MPOs designated as being in a nonattainment area have strict rules to abide by regarding federal funds for transportation. Discussion at the February Policy Board Meeting during the GHG Measure presentation led to an expressed interest in the status of Air Quality in the Rio Grande Valley.

C. Federal Functional Classification Status Update

Presenter: Luis Diaz, RGVMPPO Interim Executive Director

Summary: The RGVMPPO is providing a status update of recent Federal Functional Classification submittals and upcoming submittals.

Background: Federal legislation continues to use functional classification in determining eligibility for funding under the Federal-aid program. Transportation agencies describe roadway system performance, benchmarks, and targets by functional classification. As agencies continue to move towards a more performance-based management approach, functional classification will be an increasingly important consideration in setting expectations and measuring outcomes for preservation, mobility, and safety.

D. GIS Data Request Follow Up.

Presenter: Luis Diaz, RGVMPPO Interim Executive Director

Summary: The RGVMPPO is requesting GIS data updates from all Local Governments.

Background: The RGVMPPO requests updates from local governments on a yearly basis for updates to City Limit and ETJ boundary data. We want to take this opportunity to request all planning partners; please provide the most up-to-date data, preferably in GIS Format; if not available, please provide it in PDF format. These vital data sets will allow the MPO to plan for the RGV’s future transportation needs. Please take a moment to visit our online interactive mapping tool, RGVMPPO UMAP. Please remember that if discrepancies are Identified to any data set, please notify our office to allow us to work on amending data to reflect most accurately.

E. RGVMPPO Executive Director’s Report and Updates

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: Luis Diaz, RGVMPPO Interim Executive Director

Summary: 1. Budget Update
2. Future TAC meetings in person or virtual?

F. TxDOT Project Status Report

Action Possible Action Information

Presenter: TxDOT Pharr Area Office Staff

VI. Other Business (Old or New): This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.

A. The next RGVMPPO Technical Advisory Committee is “VIRTUAL” at 10:00am on April 11, 2024.