

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

Wednesday, May 29, 2024 – 1:30 PM

MINUTES

Presiding: Chairman Commissioner David L. Fuentes (Hidalgo County)

I) Call to Order

Chairman Commissioner David L. Fuentes called the Transportation Policy Board meeting to order at 1:30 P.M., and a quorum was established. The Meeting was held in person with members present.

II) Roll Call

RGVMPO Transportation Policy Board Representatives in attendance were as follows:

Members Present:	
Entity	Individual
Hidalgo County	Comm. David L. Fuentes (Chairman) – PRESENT Comm. Everardo Villarreal (Proxy) -
City of Brownsville	Mayor John Cowen (Vice-Chairman) – PRESENT Helen Ramirez (Proxy)
Cameron County	Judge Eddie Treviño, Jr. Com. Sofia C. Benavides - PRESENT
City of McAllen	Mayor Javier Villalobos (Designee) City Manager 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) Asst. City Manager Juan Pablo “JP” Terrazas (Alternate) - PRESENT
City of Harlingen	Mayor Norma Sepulveda (Designee) - PRESENT Gabriel Gonzalez (Alternate)
City of Pharr	Mayor Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez (Designee) - ABSENT Ruben Alfaro (Proxy)
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) Ramon Navarro, V. (Proxy) - PRESENT
Valley Metro	Tom Logan (Designee) - PRESENT Nancy Sanchez (Alternate)
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro “Pete” Alvarez (Designee) Rex A. Costley (Alternate) - PRESENT
EX-OFFICIO	
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz
Others Present:	
RGVMPO	Luis Diaz
RGVMPO	Staff

III) PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

IV) ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Approval of Minute(s).

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of April 24, 2024.

Adriana Estrada with the RGVMPPO noted that item IV.D was updated to reflect the corrections submitted by Dora Robles from TxDOT via email.

No other corrections were noted to the minutes of April 24, 2024. Motion to approve by Mayor Ramiro Garza from the City of Edinburg and it was seconded by Reyna Guerra from Starr County. The item was unanimously approved.

B. Discussion and Possible Action to select a Professional Consulting Firm to assist with the recruitment and hiring process for the RGVMPPO Executive Director position.

LRGVDC's Executive Director Manuel Cruz and Cameron County's Judge Eddie Trevino reported on the committee's efforts to select a consulting firm.

Judge Eddie Trevino reported that after seeking approval to use federal funds and receiving applicant's information; the committee narrowed down the selection to four firms. Manuel Cruz added that two firms were identified for interviews after reviewing cost analysis.

Judge Eddie Trevino stated that virtual interviews were conducted with Genius Road and HJ Staffing and that Genius Road was selected due to their experience with TxDOT-MPO credentials. He added that Genius Road seemed confident in their ability to secure a qualified candidate by October 1st. Manuel Cruz confirmed that the contract with Genius Road would fall under BuyBoard contract 674-22. Chairman David Fuentes asked if everything falls inline with the budget and Manuel Cruz confirmed that yes everything falls accordingly to budget.

Judge Eddie Trevino motioned to move forward with Genius Road and Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. seconded the motion. Chairman David Fuentes thanked the committee for their efforts. Manuel Cruz confirmed that the HR director would contact previous applicants and redirect them to Genius Road.

C. Discussion and Possible Action on the FY 2025-2028 Comprehensive Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Document & Programming Tables.

Rodolfo Zamora presented the FY 2025-2028 Comprehensive TIP for review and approval underlining the following points:

- The TIP underwent a 30-day public involvement period from May 1st to the end of May.
- The comprehensive document includes the summary sheet, financial summary, TIP tables, MTP, and other required documentation.
- All documents are included within the agenda packet for review.

Chairman asked if TAC had approved item without changes and Rodolfo Zamora confirmed that yes it was approved as presented.

No more questions or concerns were presented. Ramon Navaro motioned to approve and Roy Rodriguez from the city of McAllen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion and Action regarding the Transit Asset Management (TAM) & the Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Targets.

Rodolfo Zamora explained that the TAM and PTASP targets are performance measures required by the MPO and transit providers for the next four years (FY2025-2028) pointing out the following points:

- The targets are set to measure the progress of transit projects and are reported through the comprehensive TIP document.
- The information has been shared with transit providers, and their feedback will be included in the final comprehensive document.

Chairman asked if TAC had approved item without changes and Rodolfo Zamora confirmed that yes it was approved as presented.

No more questions or concerns were presented, and Reyna Guerra from Starr County motioned to approve, and Mayor John Cowen from the City of Brownsville seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Discussion and Action regarding grouping of Category 10 – Carbon Reduction Program funded projects.

Rudy Zamora presented a proposal to group Category 10 (Carbon Reduction Program) projects with Category 9 (Transportation Alternative Set-Aside) projects highlighting the following points:

- This grouping would streamline project approval, reduce the amount shown on the financial summary, and allow for administrative modifications as needed.
- The grouping is recommended by TxDOT and TPMP.
- The resolution included all projects chosen for grouping, as summarized in the document presented.

No questions were presented. Mayor Ricardo Guerra from the City of San Benito motioned to approve the grouping of Category 10 projects. Reyna Guerra from Starr County seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Discussion and Action to program FY28 Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Funds to the Hidalgo County & City of Weslaco Hike & Bike Trail Phase I.

Eva Garcia provided a CRP Funding Update highlighting:

- FY2022-2024: City of Pharr received \$9 million in CRP funds.
- FY2025-2026: \$6.7 million programmed, with some AFAs executed and projects set to let in FY2025 and FY2026.
- FY2027-2028: \$3.9 million programmed and grouped with other projects. AFAs to be developed in the coming months, with projects set to let in FY2027.
- Total CRP funds programmed: \$21.2 million.

Eva Garcia requested approval to program \$1,179,724 of FY2028 CRP funds for the Hidalgo County and City of Weslaco Hike & Bike Trail Phase I.

Chairman David Fuentes noted that this project connects Weslaco City Park on Mile 11 to Mile 10 and will provide greater access once Mile 10 is expanded.

Eva Garcia confirmed that the project was determined eligible and received concurrence from FHWA.

No questions were presented. Ramon Navarro from Hidalgo County RMA motioned to approve the programming of funds. Mayor Ricardo Guerra from the City of San Benito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Transportation Alternative Set-Aside (TASA)

Eva Garcia provided an update on TASA which centered on fiscal year 2021-2022 TASA projects highlighting current project status and potential risks of losing funds if project changes occur too late. Eva Garcia also highlighted the importance of setting deadlines for project changes to avoid losing funds.

Chairman David Fuentes inquired about the risk of losing funds for fiscal year 2021-2022 TASA projects. Eva Garcia clarified that there is no immediate risk of losing funds, but project changes made later or any later than the current time could put them in an uncomfortable situation. She made clear that so far, there is no risk.

Chairman David Fuentes emphasized the need to set deadlines for redirecting funds to avoid losing them and inquired about the appropriate date for such actions. Eva Garcia mentioned March 2024 as a critical time, noting that by May 2024, if projects still require changes or may not obligate as presented, the RGVMPPO will need to work closely with TxDOT and members to find solutions for approximately \$700,000 in projects.

Chairman also stressed the importance of monitoring and timely action to avoid losing funds and requested regular updates. Eva Garcia agreed to keep the board updated, particularly at the next meeting in June, and through email communications.

Judge Eddie Trevino highlighted the need for up-to-date information to address concerns promptly, noting no meeting in July but one in June. Eva Garcia confirmed agreement and commitment to provide necessary updates and options if changes are needed.

Chairman David Fuentes inquired if any action was needed, and Eva Garcia stated that no action was required at this time.

V) PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Utilization & Carryover Updates

Eva Garcia provided an overview of the status of carryover limits and utilization. Eva also provided updates on the fiscal year 2024 and future estimates for fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

Key Points:

- Eva Garcia explained the current carryover percentage at 374%, significantly over the 200% threshold.
- Reviewed past years' funding carryover and recent adjustments made with FIN division and Pharr District partners.
- Revised estimates for carryover and utilization, showing improvement from 174% over the threshold to 67% over.
- Acknowledged the efforts of Precinct 2, Precinct 3, and TxDOT in increasing utilization.
- Discussed the strategy for fiscal year 2025 to stay under the 200% threshold, with a hopeful meeting with TxDOT-FIN division in June for confirmation.
- Highlighted the expectation of no transfer of funds with the new strategy and the positive outlook for 2026.
- Mentioned the upcoming project readiness workshop on June 4th and emphasized the focus on project prioritization and performance measures.

Rex A. Costley referred to TASA projects and the requirement for an AFA within one year of award and praised local governments for progress on the AFA process. Mr. Costley also highlighted the efforts of Ms. Robles in streamlining the AFA process statewide. He also highlighted the premise of increasing utilization and decreasing carryover across various categories, emphasizing teamwork and maximization of resources.

Chairman David Fuentes confirmed this was an informational item and moved on to the next agenda item.

B. RGVMPPO Executive Director's Report and Updates

Luis Diaz reported that the MPO is well within budget, with \$808,873 spent against a budget of \$1,062,260.

Luis Diaz announced that an RFQ for legal services is being prepared and will be advertised in the Monitor newspaper highlighting the following:

- The legal services are needed for contract review and for the upcoming expiration of the planning agreement in September.
- A subcommittee will be formed to review submittals and bring a recommendation to the board.

Judge Eddie Treviño inquired about the need for legal services, as this was the first time he had heard about it. Luis Diaz explained that legal representation is needed for contract review, citing the passenger rail study contract as an example, and for the expiring planning contract.

Chairman David Fuentes suggested exploring other advertising options besides the Monitor newspaper, specifically mentioning TRB and other MPOs resources. Luis Diaz agreed to investigate these options.

None taken at this time.

C. TxDOT Project Status Report

TxDOT Pharr Area Staff provided updates on the following projects. Detailed information within the agenda packet.

Hidalgo County projects

- FM1425 Project
- FM1925 Project

Cameron County projects

- IH-69E ramp reversal project
- SH 4 project

TxDOT Design Projects

- SH107 Project
- BUS 77 and SL 499

Chairman David Fuentes inquired about the update of the interchange Expressway 83 and 281. Rex A Costley stated that the project is still on schedule for substantial completion this summer.

VI) OTHER BUSINESS (OLD OR NEW)

Manuel Cruz provided information regarding the Regional Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting:

- The first meeting held on May 22nd, well attended.
- Goal: Identify or create a bill to implement the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) within the five-county areas.
- Current bill S71 allows for RTA creation, but funding is insufficient (currently receiving \$14-15 million for transportation, not enough for five counties, 100 buses, and 40+ routes).
- Informational purpose: Future meetings and a feasibility study are planned to explore options.

Luis Diaz announced the Safe Streets for Texas open house event on June 5th, from 2-5 pm in this room.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the RGVMPPO TPB Members, Chairman Commissioner David L. Fuentes called the meeting adjourned at 2:21pm.

ATTEST: _____


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