

MINUTES

Meeting of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGV MPO) Policy Committee

Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 12:00 pm
LRGVDC Main Campus
301 W. Railroad Street
Building B, Ken Jones Executive Board Room
Weslaco, TX 78596

Presiding: Chairman Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez

I. Call to Order

Chairman Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez called the meeting to order at 12:00PM. The Rio Grande Valley MPO Policy Committee Meeting was held at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Board Room, 301 W. Railroad, Weslaco, Hidalgo County, Texas.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and present were representatives from each respective entity and a quorum was declared.

Members Present:	
Entity	Individual
City of Pharr	Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez (Chairman)
Cameron County	Judge Eddie Treviño, Jr. (Vice Chairman)
Hidalgo County	Com. Eddie Cantu
City of Brownsville	Mayor Trey Mendez
City of McAllen	Mayor Jim Darling
City of Edinburg	Juan Guerra, City Mgr (Proxy)
City of Mission	Mayor Armando O'Caña
City of Harlingen	Mayor Chris Boswell
City of San Benito	Mayor Ben Gomez
Cameron County RMA	Frank Parker, Jr.
Hidalgo County RMA	David Deanda
Valley Metro	Tom Logan
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro "Pete" Alvarez
Others Present:	
LRGVDC	Ron Garza
Brownsville MPO	Mark Lund
Harlingen/San Benito MPO	J. Joel Garza
Hidalgo County MPO	Andrew Canon

III. Public Comment

Mayor Armando O'Caña introduced Mrs. Macarena Pena with Texas Workforce Solution and noted that the City of Mission and Mrs. Pena are working on a joint activity for the blind and visually impaired. Mrs. Macarena Pena with Texas Workforce Solution noted that last year, a White Cane Walk & Resources Fiesta for the blind and visually impaired was held for the first time in the City of Mission. The event drew crowds from all over the Rio Grande Valley and included the participation of about 20 vendors. We want to reach out to the families so that they understand that a blind person can be independent and productive." The main purpose of Mrs. Pena presentation was to request "Transportation" from Metro/Valley Metro agencies for the upcoming "Resources Fiesta" event that is scheduled for October 5, 2019 from 12:00 (noon) to 3PM, in Mission. The request is for the local Transportations agencies to adjust their schedule and pickup these individuals at their various locations. Mayor Armando O'Caña is asking Metro / Valley Metro to assist Ms. Pena with transportation for the blind and visually impaired so that individuals can attend the upcoming event.

IV. Presentation, Discussion and Action Items:

A. Adoption of Minutes From:

June 26, 2019

Chairman Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of June 26, 2019. One correction was noted to the Minutes of June 26, 2019, as follows: Under Members Present ... **Frank Parker was in attendance...** *No other correction was noted to the minutes*; Mayor Chris Boswell (*City of Harlingen*) *made a motion to approve the minutes of June 25, 2019; with correction.* Mayor Armando O’Caña (*City of Mission*) *seconded the motion; and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.*

B. Consideration and Action to Approve RGV TAC Recommendation of Advisory Committee Chairperson & Vice Chairperson

Mr. Ron Garza informed RGVTPB present that nominations for the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson took place amongst the RGV TAC Committee at their last meeting on July 25, 2019. Pete Sepulveda with Cameron County RMA was selected as Chairman and JP Terrazas, with the City of Mission for Vice Chairman. These nominations are coming before the RGVTPB for consideration and approval. *No discussion took place on these nominations as presented by staff; Commissioner Eddie Cantu (Hidalgo County) made a motion to approve RGV TAC’s recommendations for Chairman and Vice Chairman as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Jim Darling, (City of McAllen); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.*

C. Consideration and Action to Approve RGV TAC Recommendation for RGV TAC Meetings Schedule

Mr. Ron Garza noted that all three MPO Directors have agreed to a consistent schedule for the RGV TAC meetings and agreed to hold the RGV TAC Meeting two (2) weeks prior to the RGVTPB Meetings, which means the first RGV TAC Meetings will take place on the second Wednesday of each month, with the first RGV TAC meeting to be held September 11, 2019 at 10:00 AM at the Ken Jones Boardroom.

Pedro Alvarez (TxDOT) recommendation was for consistency purposes, RGV TAC Meeting should remain every second week of the month regardless the number of weeks in a month.

Andrew Canon noted that staff is suggesting having the RGV TAC Meetings held the second Tuesday of the month, regardless the numbers of weeks in a month.

After some discussion on this item, Pedro “Pete” Álvarez (TxDOT) made a motion to hold the RGV TAC Meetings every second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM at the Ken Jones Boardroom, regardless the number of weeks in a month. The motion was seconded by Mayor Armando O’Caña (City of Mission); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously

D. Consideration and Action on the MPO Planning Agreement between TxDOT, RGV MPO & LRGVDC

Mr. Ron Garza presented a draft of the required three (3) Party Planning Agreement between TxDOT, RGV MPO and LRGVDC as the Fiscal Agent, to RGVTPB for review and approval. Mr. Garza noted couple of points of notations: 1) Planning Agreement expires September 30, 2024; 2) Standard and templated by TxDOT; and 3) Page 4 – Article 4 and 5:

Article 4. Responsibilities of the MPO Policy Committee

(D) Exercise sole responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate the MPO Transportation Planning Director.

Article 5. Responsibilities of the Fiscal Agent

(F) Exercise sole responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate the MPO Transportation Planning Director.

Mr. Garza noted that as per TxDOT Guidance RGVTPB is to recommend who should take responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate the MPO Transportation Planning Director. Under the current Planning Agreement, the LRGVDC Fiscal Agent’s Responsibility; however, it is a blended responsibility between both the LRGVDC and the Policy Committee.

After some discussion on the MPO Planning Agreement; Mayor Jim Darling (City of McAllen) made a motion to split the MPO Transportation Planning Director Responsibilities as follows: RGVTPB would hire and terminate the MPO Transportation Planning Director and LRGVDC Fiscal Agent would supervise and evaluate with applicable policy and law. If the language cannot be split once TxDOT has reviewed the recommended change. Mayor Jim Darling (City of McAllen) motion is to go with Article 4 Responsibilities of the MPO Policy Committee - (D) **Exercise sole responsibility to hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate the MPO Transportation Planning Director.** The motion was seconded by Judge Eddie Treviño, Jr. (Cameron County); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration and Action of Letter to FHWA for Postponement of Certification Review

Andrew Canon informed the RGVTPB members present that a Letter on behalf of RGVTPB Chairman was prepared to Federal Highway Administration, respectfully requesting a one-year postponement of the Federal Certification review that each MPO must undertake every four (4) years. This postponement would allow the newly formed RGVMPPO to adequately address the transportation planning process and prepare for a favorable Certification Review in December 2020. This extension would not have any impact with future financial aspect on moving forward projects, advancing the projects or how they are placed on the UTP, TIP or the 25-Year MTP Plans.

After some discussion on this item, Mayor Jim Darling (City of McAllen) made a motion to authorize Staff to prepare a letter on behalf of the RGVTPB Chairman to FHWA for Postponement of Certification Review as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Deanda (HCRMA); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

F. Consideration and Action on the RGVMPPO 2045 MTP Scope

Mr. Andrew Canon noted that the 2045 MTP Scope was reviewed by RGVTPAC members at their last month meeting and staff have not received any negative feedback. Staff spoke with Federal Highway and they have agreed to have staff move forward with the Long-Range Plan (RFP) accordingly as per the schedule submitted. Staff would like to start working on a contract and submit it for approval at the October 30, 2019 RGVTPB Meeting.

Pedro "Pete" Alvarez (TxDOT) noted that Staff can proceed with the 2045 MTP Scope, with the understanding that the (PPP) is approved by (September 25, 2019), prior to proceeding with the 2045 MTP.

No further discussion took place on this item, Mr. Juan Guerra (City of Edinburg) made a motion to approve the RGVMPPO 2045 MTP Scope as presented by staff, with the understanding that the PPP be approved by September 25, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Deanda (HCRMA); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

G. Consideration and Action on the 2020-2021 UPWP

Mr. J. Joel Garza noted that the Budget Summary for FY2020 (\$2,721,763) is a little heavier the first year, compared to the second year FY2021 (\$1,863,895.00) Budget. Staff will be seeking approval to hire a consultant to assist with staffing, once all three MPO merge the first year. Still waiting for clarification from both FWHA and Federal Transit Administration on some other issues to be presented. Staff is asking to table this item and presented again at the next RGVTPB meeting. so

No discussion took place on this item, Mayor Jim Darling (City of McAllen) made a motion to table the 2020-2021 UPWP and be presented at the next RGVTPB Meeting. Mayor Armando O'Caña (City of Mission) seconded the motion; and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

H. Consideration and Action to provide Support Letter for Safe Routes to School Grant Program

Mr. Ron Garza noted that staff had received two (2) requests so far from the cities of Mission, Elsa and (1) one from La Joya ISD, that are applying for the Federal Safe Routes to School Grant Program. A template letter was supposed to be provided, which has not been received. One of the requirements of the application is that there be a support letter from the planning area's MPO. The deadline is (August 15, 2019). The Safe Routes to School Grant Program is Federal funding for local cities to construct sidewalks and safe routes to schools. The School District will be sole applicants, and this grant will not affect MPO Funds.

No discussion took place on this item, Mr. David Deanda (HCRMA) made a motion to provide Support Letters for Safe Routes to School Grant Program as presented by staff. Mayor Jim Darling (City of McAllen) seconded the motion; and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

V. RGVMPPO Staff Report and Updates

A. Discussion and Presentation on the Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Mr. Andrew Canon noted that the Public Participation Plan is part of the packet, which includes the process of how to advertise for PPP, MTP and UPWP. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the MPO. The PPP includes descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and other agencies in the public involvement process. The PPP also lists public involvement techniques that could be used by the MPO to encourage the public to engage in the planning process. As a part of the 45-day public involvement process, the RGVMPPO is giving notice of the new RGVMPPO Public Participation Plan. Also listed in the PPP are how /where Public Meetings will be held in each respective region (Hidalgo, Harlingen and Brownsville). This information will be available for public review and comment from July 26th - Sept 8, 2019. This will be for the September 30, 2019 adoption, which means the (PPP) document would need to be adopted before the MTP or UPWP can be adopted/approved by RGVTPB. *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet).*

B. Discussion and Presentation on the RGV MPO Draft Bicycle Plan

Mr. Joel Garza noted that this document (Bicycle Plan) will also be part of the PPP, MTP and UPWP documents. A Bicycle (BPAC) Planning Committee will also be selected at later date, that will also include representatives from all three regions (Hidalgo, Brownsville and Harlingen). Staff noted this was for information purposes. Chairman Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez recommended to staff to reach out the Universities as well. *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*.

C. Discussion and Presentation on Planning Documents Timeline

Andrew Canon noted that staff has been working collectively with Harlingen and Brownsville to update the Long-Range Plan and provided a brief update on **the Brownsville, Harlingen and Hidalgo Long Range Plan and RGV MPO Long Range Plan MTP** as follows:

Brownsville, Harlingen & Hidalgo MPO Long Range Plan

- Staff has developed an update for independent plans
- 3 MPO Plans will be merged into a singular document
- RGV MPO TPB will adopt at the October 30th Meeting
- Merged document will allow for continued TIP/MTP Amendments, except for November 2019 Amendment
- Public Involvement and adoption will NOT allow for November revisions, however; Staff will coordinate with TAC and TPB approval for a regionwide Congestion Study to address delay in the RGV.

RGV MPO Long Range Plan MTP

- Staff will work with LRGVDC Procurement Department for RFP Process
- Staff has developed a scope for MTP, Bike Ped and Long-Range Transit Plan
- Staff has developed a Timeline for RFP Process and hopes to bring executable contract to TPB by October 30, 2019.

RGV MPO Development Timeline

- 2025 MTP Model – Merging has begun, will be presented to RGV TAC for consideration and final approval by TPB at the October 2019 meeting.
- 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program - staff has merged all three (3) TIP's after the portal upload on July 23, 2019, will merge (3) three TIPs into one document for TPB adoption on October 30, 2019.
- Public Participation Plan begins 45 days of Public Involvement July 27, 2019, staff will complete Federally Mandated 45 days public involvement for PPP and bring to TPB for adoption at the September 25, 2019 Meeting.
- UPWP, (2) Years staff budget – adoption no later than September 25th TPB meeting.
- 2045 MTP Model, Bike/Ped Plan and Long-Range Transit Plan, staff has produced a horizon timeline and scope for contract and TPB Committee will adopt no later than December 2020.

Documents to Approve for Advancement by TPB Committee

- 2020 – 2021 UPWP – 2 years Operational Budget
- Planning Agreement
- 2045 MTP Scope
- Public Participation Plan *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*.

VI. Status Report

A. TxDOT Project Status Report

Mr. Pedro "Pete" Alvarez (TxDOT) was recognized and noted that TxDOT report would be deferred, until the next RGVTPB meeting, due to the transition of providing one report on all the projects for the RGV. One project in question was 281 Exchange, TxDOT noted that this project is on-line with full approval by TxDOT Commission on August 29, 2019.

B. Cameron County RMA

Pete Sepulveda was recognized and updated the Board on Cameron County RMA's current activities. *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*.

C. Hidalgo County RMA

Pilar Rodriguez was recognized and updated the Board on Hidalgo County RMA current activities. *(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)*.

D. Regional Transit (Metro)

Tom Logan was recognized and updated the Board on the Regional Transit (Metro) current activities. *(Reports filed with RGVTPB Packet)*.

Norma Zamora, Brownsville Metro Director was recognized and updated the Board on the Brownsville (Metro) current activities *(Verbal Report)*.

VII. New or Unfinished Business

Chairman Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez advice RGVTPB members that the next RGVTPB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at 1:30 PM at the Ken Jones Boardroom.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Hernandez called for a motion to adjourn. *Mr. David Deanda (HCRMA) made a motion to adjourn. Pedro Alvarez (TxDOT) seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:59 pm.*

ATTEST: 
RGVMPO POLICY COMMITTEE
(TPB) VICE CHAIRMAN