

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

Wednesday, August 25, 2021, At 1:30 pm

MINUTES

Presiding: Chairman Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez (Mayor City of Pharr)

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Treviño notified Policy Members present that Chairman Hernandez would not be in attendance due to a prior commitment. Vice Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM, a quorum was established. The Rio Grande Valley MPO Policy Board Meeting was held at the Ken Boardroom located at 301 West Railroad, Weslaco, Texas with members present.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and present were representatives from each respective entity:

Members Present:	
Entity	Individual
City of Pharr	Chairman Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez (ABSENT)
Cameron County	Judge Eddie Treviño, Jr. (Vice Chairman) Comm. David A. Garza (Alternate)
Hidalgo County	Comm. David Fuentes
City of Brownsville	Mayor Trey Mendez
City of McAllen	Mayor Javier Villalobos
City of Edinburg	Mayor Richard Molina
City of Mission	Mayor Armando O’Caña
City of Harlingen	Mayor Chris Boswell
City of San Benito	Mayor Ricardo “Rick” Guerra
Cameron County RMA	Frank Parker, Jr.
Hidalgo County RMA	Ramon Navarro, V. (Proxy)
Valley Metro	Tom Logan
TxDOT Pharr District	Pedro “Pete” Alvarez
GUEST	
EX-OFFICIO	
RGV Partnership	Sergio Contreras
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz
Others Present:	
RGVMPO	Andrew Canon
RGVMPO	Staff

III. Public Comment

NONE

1. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes From: July 14, 2021

Vice Chairman Treviño asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of July 14, 2021. Mayor Boswell (City of Harlingen) had one correction, Minutes being consider for approval should be for the minutes of May 26, 2021. No other correction was noted to the minutes of July 14, 2021. Mayor Boswell (City of Harlingen) made a motion to approve the minutes of July 14, 2021, with correction. The motion was seconded by Mayor O’Caña (City of Mission); and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Discussion on ROW Funding Update

Norma Garza, TxDOT provided an update on the ROW Funding as follows (Attachment Provided):

ROW Update

- On May 3, 2021, the District was directed to cease work on ROW acquisition for projects not in FY 20 or FY 21 lettings due to statewide ROW budget issues (expenditures were projected to extend beyond allocation).
- ROW directive was later expanded to also include Local Government (LG) projects ROW acquisitions with reimbursement from Federal Funds (Category 7).
- In late June/early July 2021, ROW Division began having discussions on how to move forward and prevent the same budget issues from occurring in the future.
- The result...Effective September 1, 2021 (FY 2022), each TxDOT district will be given it's own ROW budget allocation to manage for their respective ROW/Utility needs.
- In PHR's case, the district will also need to cover the LG projects with MPO Cat 7 for ROW/Utilities using state funds allocated to the district.
- This means that the previous process of the ROW Division covering all expenditures under their umbrella is no longer feasible, and now the district will be managing and allocating ROW funds to the respective LG projects as available.
- TxDOT and LGs will need to prioritize the projects to be worked on by FY and adhere to the selected projects list.
- The expectation is that all ROW funds allocated to the district need to be expended in FY 22 (i.e. 9/1/21 to 8/31/22). Same expectations will hold for the LG for any funds allotted to their projects.
- Our 1st priority should be on projects in the STIP/Construct years (2022-2025).

ROW Process beginning FY202

Local Government

- Provide the District with a project status of all active ROW/Utility projects, including the anticipated eligible expenditures in FY 22. (Please include an updated project schedule.)
- Provide monthly updates on project progress to the District/ROW section
- Submit reimbursement requests for selected project(s) as soon as possible for review and processing.

TxDOT-PHR

- Will use the updated project status reports provided by LG to determine/select what projects and how much funding can be allocated for FY 22.
- ROW section will monitor/track the projects monthly and provide monthly reports to District.
- **District and ROW section will evaluate projects not progressing and determine if that funding will need to be re-allocated to another project at District's discretion.**

ROW Division

- ROW Division will be monitoring the District's expenditures and budget
It is imperative that the District and Local Government prioritize our projects based on project health, ranking, and letting date to make sure we do not lose any ROW funds.

Estimate Needs in FY22 and FY23 (On-System and Off System)

- We have not received our ROW allocation to date
- Based on information we have available from LGs for current LG projects our needs are:

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL	OFF-SYSTEM ROW	ON-SYSTEM ROW	OFF-SYSTEM UTILITIES	ON-SYSTEM UTILITIES	ON-SYSTEM SURVEY
FY 2022	\$48,907,806	\$9,713,000	\$18,872,000	\$3,369,303	\$14,689,003	\$2,264,500
FY 2023	\$155,235,808	\$4,967,000	\$29,450,000	\$4,460,588	\$113,993,220	\$2,365,000

Current Off-System Projects

▪ Current LG Projects

Let Date	CSJ	LG	RCSJ	HWY
Feb-16	0921-02-301	Mission	0921-02-306	US 83
Aug-19	0921-02-312	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-370	Dicker Rd.
Nov-20	0921-02-321	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-344	Mile 3 N
Oct-21	0921-06-311	Primera		STUART PLACE/PED/RR
Oct-21	0921-06-312	Harlingen		CS/RR/PED
Dec-21	0921-06-252	Cameron Cnty	0921-06-307	S. Parallel Corridor
Jan-22	0921-02-168	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-356	CS/Mile 6 W
Jan-22	0921-02-286	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-355	CR 623/Mile 6 W
Aug-22	0921-02-328	Mission	0921-02-377	Taylor Road PH II
Sep-22	0921-02-375	Pharr	0921-02-413	HI LINE RD W
Sep-22	0921-02-376	Pharr	0921-02-418	HI LINE RD W
Dec-22	0921-02-194	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-372	Liberty Blvd. PH I
Feb-24	0921-02-327	Mission	0921-02-378	Taylor Road PH I
Jan-25	0921-02-332	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-422	Mile 3 Road
Jan-26	0921-02-361	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-421	Nolana Loop
Jan-28	0921-02-403	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-404	El Dora Road
Jan-28	0921-02-322	Hidalgo Cnty	0921-02-364	Liberty Blvd. PH II

After much discussion on this item, TxDOT reminded Policy members that there is a deadline to submit Monthly Prioritized Projects, which is “the end of the month”.

2.2. Discussion on the FY2019 TASA Projects Updates and Potential AFA Amendments

Eva noted that staff continues to review and monitor projects that have been awarded TASA funds. To ensure regional FY 2019 funds are obligated by September 2022, staff has been working with local government agencies to collect project updates. Staff provided a presentation which highlighted project challenges and potential changes that may be considered to amend AFAs, or otherwise provide clarification on how to proceed.

FY2019 TASA Funds - Two years have passed since FY 2019 TASA funds were programmed to awarded/selected projects. Through the project development process, some challenges and changes have been discussed. RGVMPO Staff, and our TxDOT partners, intend to continue to ensure transparency with the RGVMPO’s policymakers and transportation professionals.

RGV Bikeshare, Inter-Local Agreements - the respective cities have been obtained as of last month. However due to the prices increase with the current vendor (over \$20,000) for each of the cities, which include environmental / engineering plans that was not factor into the current amounts, this project will mostly like will not be moving forward as plan.

Donna Sidewalk Improvements - finalizing Bid documents, FPAA request to be sent first week of September. This project is moving forward, Staff has a meeting scheduled with TxDOT September 17, 2021, regarding funding.

No other discussion took place on this item (FY2019 TASA Projects and Potential AFA Amendments) Vice Chairman Trevino moved on to the next item on the agenda, being this item was for discussion only.

2.3 Discussion and Possible Action of Projects for FY2021-2022 TASA Funds

Eva presented information regarding the evaluated and scored projects that have been reviewed and recommended by the RGVMPPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The RGVMPPO opened the FY 2021-2022 TASA Program Call for Projects on June 1, 2021. The Call closed on Friday, July 30, 2021. The RGVMPPO BPAC reviewed, evaluated, and scored project submittals on Wednesday, August 4, 2021. The official programming of funds, through consideration and action, is tentatively set to take place during the September 2021 by BPAC, TAC and RGVMPPO Transportation Policy Board meeting.

The following Construction Project Proposal received were:

- ❖ Pharr I Road/ Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
- ❖ Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
- ❖ West Rail Trail
- ❖ Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
- ❖ Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension

Planning Projects Proposals Received were:

- ❖ Elsa-Getting Connected
- ❖ Arroyo Colorado Trails Phase III Planning and Design
- ❖ Bridge Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Development

PROJECT CATEGORY	%	AVAILABLE	REQUEST
Construction	90%	\$2,070,000	\$4,076,604
Planning	10%	\$230,000	\$258,488
TOTAL CAT. 9	100%	\$2,300,000	

EVALUATOR	TOTAL POINTS	PROJECT UNDER EVALUATION
G	98	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
E	107	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
A	77	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
F	112	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
B	71	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
D	114	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
H	94	CONSTRUCTION: West Rail Trail
TOTAL SCORE		612
AVERAGED SCORE		90 West Rail Trail
G	104	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
B	84	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
E	87	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
D	101	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
A	107	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
F	89	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
H	95	CONSTRUCTION: Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
TOTAL SCORE		614
AVERAGED SCORE		89 Freddy Gonzalez Hike-and-Bike Trail
G	61	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
E	56	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
F	107	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
C	109	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
D	103	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
B	73	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
A	91	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
H	92	CONSTRUCTION: Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
TOTAL SCORE		612
AVERAGED SCORE		87 Bejarano-McFarland-Galvan Trail Extension
A	76	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
B	77	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
C	78	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
D	116	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
E	52	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
F	77	CONSTRUCTION: Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
TOTAL SCORE		476
AVERAGED SCORE		79 Pharr I Road/Santa Ana Refuge Phase I Connector
C	96	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
B	92	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
G	37	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
D	46	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
E	71	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
F	90	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
A	86	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
H	76	CONSTRUCTION: Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project
TOTAL SCORE		514
AVERAGED SCORE		74 Lamar Elementary School and Victor Park Connectivity Project

Corrected August 6, 2021.

At the next Meetings this item will be presented for Action from the BPAC/TAC and Policy as follows:

- ❖ RGVMPPO BPAC Meeting – Wednesday September 1, 2021 – 11AM
- ❖ Return to TAC September 9, 2021 – 10AM
- ❖ Official Award of FY2021-2022 TASA Funds, Via Resolutions at RGVMPPO TPB -September 29, 2021
- ❖ RGVMPPO Staff to send Notice of Award Letters to Project Sponsors

After some discussion on this time, Staff did let the Policy Board know that BPAC and TAC did not vote on this item, therefore no recommendation for approval is being requested at this time.

2.4. Discussion on the Emergency Management Funds

Missy Lowe, TxDOT Maintenance Division provided a summary / presentation regarding Federal Reimbursement Programs for Emergency Situations (Floods, Hurricanes, etc.). The presentation was regarding the federal reimbursement programs, determining which agency will reimburse for damages during disasters, what types of expenditures are reimbursable, and meeting federal reimbursement requirements.

Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide – Provides policy, rules and regulations for PA and IA Programs.

- ❖ Presidentially Declared events only
- ❖ Statewide Cost Threshold – Approximately \$38M

Covers Emergency and Permanent Work

- ❖ \$3,200 minimum per location
- ❖ \$3,200 - \$128,899 (small projects)
- ❖ \$128,900 and up (large projects)

FHWA ER Local Public Assistance

- ❖ TxDOT administers the FHWA ER Program for local governments
- ❖ Districts Offices play a key role in insuring cities and counties receiving ER Funding by:
 - Notifying the city, county of the event and declaration
 - Assist with identifying eligible roadways and damages
 - Requesting ER Funds
 - Coordinating locally administered projects
 - Providing technical support
 - Reviewing projects and documentation
 - Providing oversight and inspection of projects

No discussion took place amongst the Policy Board members, Vice Chairman Trevino thanked Ms. Lowe for taking time to provide this updated information on the Emergency Management Funds as presented.

2.5. Discussion on the RGV Thoroughfare Plan Amendment

Luis Diaz, noted that as part of the Yearly RGV Thoroughfare Plan Amendment Process, the RGV MPO performs a yearly Thoroughfare Plan Amendment Process, where planning partners throughout the region are asked to compare their jurisdiction's Right of Way (ROW) data with the RGV MPOs UMAP Interactive Map Thoroughfare Plan Data and provide any amendments to the data reflected. The 2020 RGV Amendments Thoroughfare Plan was presented and approved on April 13, 2021, by Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court. Thoroughfare Plan received were solely from Hidalgo County Commissioner Precincts 1 and 4. All Thoroughfare Plan Amendments must be accompanied by a Thoroughfare Plan Amendment Form and Approved Resolution or Ordinance from the Jurisdictions Governing Body. Staff will be accepting amendments to the RGV Thoroughfare Plan until December 17, 2021.

Staff concluded by inviting Policy Board Members to participate in a Thoroughfare "Virtual" Meeting scheduled with the TAC member on August 26, 2021, at 10AM to discuss any current and future updates.

2.6 Discussion on the City of Mission Ongoing Projects

Mayor O'Caña (City of Mission) provided a Power Point Presentation to Policy Board Members present on the Mission Madero Multi Modal International Bridge.

- *An Update on the Mission Madero Multi-Modal International Bridge*
- *Introduction High Speed Train to Mission. High Speed Rail to connect from Houston to Mission.*
- *Introduction Multi-Counties Loop Video Presentation. Four County Loop Corridor for 18-Wheeler, Rail, and Freight Traffic.*

Mayor O'Caña (City of Mission) stated that a year ago, there was a lot of skepticism, and we did not even know if we could hold on to our presidential permit. But, with that hurdle negotiated following my visit to the White House and the environmental studies well underway, it is full steam ahead. U.S. Department of State issued Presidential Permit to the City of Mission for the construction and operation of a Vehicular and Rail Bridge in 1978. As the only railroad bridge to Mexico between Brownsville and Laredo, this bridge will improve the international trade between Mexico and the United States.

Finally, Mayor O'Caña's concluded his presentation by emphasizing to Policy Board members present that the plan is for the Madero International Bridge to compliment Anzaldua's International Bridge, with Anzaldua's focusing on trucks, and Madero handling passenger vehicles, pedestrians, and freight and passenger rail. I am pleased to say this rail line will now go through Mission and connect to all the key parts of the United States and Canada.

Policy Board members present praised Mayor O'Caña for his endurance in securing this ongoing Project, no further discussion took place on this item.

IV. **RGVMPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORT AND UPDATES**

New Offices Location – Follow-up – Staff have settled in both locations, Edinburg and in Brownsville. Hoping to have an Open House in December for the Edinburg location. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

The new office addresses are as follows:

RGVMPO Edinburg Office
617 West University Drive
Edinburg, Tx 78539

RGVMPO Brownsville Office
City – Plaza – Mezzanine Floor
1034 E. Levee Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520

TRB Conference – Washington, DC – January 9-13, 2022 – Staff is seeking approval for staff to attend the Annual TRB Conference to be held in Washington, DC – January 9-13, 2022. This conference is part of the 2022-2023 UPWP under Task 1.0. This Annual Conference allows staff an opportunity to coordinate with other Planners and GIS Specialists across the globe on best practices, and innovative initiatives on the horizon. Staff concluded by letting Policy Members know that this conference is open to Policy Board members as well, contact Staff so accommodations can be plan accordingly.

No discussion took place on this item, Mayor Mendez (City of Brownsville) made a motion to approve the TRB Conference scheduled in Washington, DC – January 9-13-2022 as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by Mayor O’Caña (City of Mission); and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Financial Update - Staff provided the Financial Summary to members present; staff noted budget continues to be under budget as projected for the month of August 2021. (Report filed with RGVTPB Packet).

Resiliency Update – Javier Dominguez Jr.-Transportation Planner I, gave an update on the Resiliency Project, he currently oversees and explained why this is important to our Region, and what this could mean for our MPO.

Resiliency is the ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change. It is more than sustainability or combating climate change. Resiliency is public health, safety, transportation, mobility, and economic opportunity. Our hope is to build on the foundations of collaboration and regionalization that have become possible with our growth.

The plan is to collaborate with asset and non-asset managers to bring concepts of resiliency into ongoing projects within our MTP

With guidance from the Texas Transportation Institute or TTI, we have started working with the City of El Paso, Corpus Christi MPO as well as HGAC or the Houston-Galveston Area Council in a workgroup setting discussing Resiliency in preparation for the Texas statewide resiliency plan. This means we are already working on ways resiliency can be implemented into our transportation planning ahead of the statewide obligation. We have started gathering the names of key stakeholders as well as members of the Technical Advisory Committee we would like to invite to our kickoff meeting where we will be conducting a resiliency workshop.

Our workshop will go over:

- Membership
 - The formation of a sub-committee
- Meeting schedule
 - how often we will meet to build a plan and discussing the opportunity to have hybrid meets such this meeting today.
- Regional Problems & Needs
 - Identify hazardous hot spots around our region.
- Regional Goals & Objectives
 - Integrate our goals & objectives with current or ongoing projects under our scope
- Recommended Actions with a quick return on investment
 - This could include adding resiliency as a factor with project scoring.

The sub-committee's goal will be to build a plan for our region that we will update every two years. This plan will be a conglomeration of various projects ongoing and in the works that will help administer communication and cooperation across our region.

Staff concluded by inviting Policy members to attend upcoming Resiliency Meetings scheduled or if any information is required on the planning of this Resiliency Project, please contact staff and we will be more than happy to extend that invitation and share that data.

MAB Expansions – Staff has been informed by TxDOT that the Governor has sign off the MAB Expansion which will include the urbanize area of Starr County. Staff will be reaching out to Starr County Judge and their staff and providing them with the proper documentation needed on appointing their Policy/TAC Member Representatives.

TxDOT Traffic Safety Grant – Received \$41,480 in funding that will be utilized as follows: \$27,000 towards bike helmets; \$5,000 for bike safety lights; Administer 2-Hybrid Training for up to (100) Law Enforcement Officers and 2-Hybrid Training for 50 Project Managers on Safety Strategy and Project Development, this will be done throughout the Region.

Policy/TAC Election for Vice Chairman Position – As per the RGVMPPO Bylaws, elections are to be held at the next Policy / TAC meetings (October 2021) respectfully, to vote for Vice Chairman (Hidalgo County) for both Policy and TAC Committees.

2010 Census – Staff informed Policy Board that at the next Policy Meeting the RGVMPPO Bylaws would have to be amended: “As per the RGVMPPO Bylaws, Cities with a population over fifty thousand (50,000) are allocated one or more VOTES on the Transportation Policy Board. The City of Edinburg has reached that threshold, which will allow them for one (1) additional vote, total vote of three (3).

City of Weslaco Population - Staff informed Policy Board that possible Weslaco could possible be added to the Policy Board, their population was 40,000, but possibly an error on the Census numbers. Staff to investigate Weslaco's population to verify new census for their city.

V. STATUS REPORT

A. TxDOT Project Status Report (Action Taken as Required)

Representative from Hidalgo / Cameron Counties with (TxDOT) provided an updated presentation on current projects and activities within the Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. All projects are continuing to move forward as scheduled. **(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)**

B. Cameron County RMA

Mr. Sepulveda (Cameron County RMA) provided an updated presentation on projects that are currently within the Cameron County RMA. All projects continue to move forward as expected. **(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)**

C. Hidalgo County RMA

Mr. Navarro provided an updated presentation on projects that are currently within the Hidalgo County RMA. All projects are continuing to move forward. **(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)**

D. Regional Transit (Metro)

Frank Jaramillo provided an updated report for all (3) Three Transit Providers that are currently within the Hidalgo/Cameron Regions. Details values on ridership could be found within the RGVTPB Packet. **(Report filed with RGVTPB Packet)**

VI. OTHER BUSINESS (OLD OR NEW) - NONE

VII. Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the RGVMPPO Transportation Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2021, at 1:30 pm at the Ken Jones Boardroom.

No further discussion took place Vice Chairman Trevino ask for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Alvarez (TxDOT) made a motion to adjourn the Policy Meeting at 2:49 PM. The motion was seconded by Mayor O'Caña (City of Mission); and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:



RGVMPO POLICY COMMITTEE
(TPB) VICE CHAIRMAN