

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

March 18, 2021

I) CALL TO ORDER

Pete Sepulveda, (Cameron County RMA) Chairman called the TAC Microsoft Teams Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The RGV TAC Microsoft Teams Meeting was held remotely with the following TAC Members.

II) ROLL CALL

RGVTAC Representatives in attendance were as follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT	
ENTITY	VOTING MEMBERS
Cameron County RMA	Pete Sepulveda, Chairman
City of Mission	JP Terrazas, Vice Chairman
City of Brownsville	Joel Garza
City of Edinburg	Tom Reyna
City of Harlingen	Ana Hernandez
City of McAllen	Yvette Barrera
City of Pharr	Omar Anzaldua
City of San Benito	Rick Guerra
Cameron County	Benjamin Worsham
Hidalgo County	Armando Garza, Jr.
TxDOT Pharr District	Melba Schaus
Valley Metro	Frank Jaramillo
Hidalgo County RMA	Eric Davila
Brownsville Metro	Antonio Zubieta
McAllen Metro	Robert De Leon
Port of Brownsville	Ariel Chavez, III
Port of Harlingen	Neil Haman / Alan Johnson
Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District	ABSENT
Cameron County Spaceport Dev. Corp.	Mark Yates / Crystal Gonzalez
GUEST	
STAFF	
RGVMPO	Andrew A. Canon
RGVMPO	Luis Diaz
RGVMPO	Staff

III) PUBLIC COMMENTS

NONE

IV) PRESENTATION, ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of January 14, 2021 (Tabled)

Pete Sepulveda (Cameron County RMA) Chairman said that the minutes of January 14, 2021 were tabled due to some corrections and asked for a motion to un-table the minutes for discussion and approval.

Hidalgo County made a motion to un-table the minutes of January 14, 2021, so that TAC Members can discuss and approve. The motion was seconded by the City of Pharr, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

No discussion or further corrections were noted to the minutes of January 14, 2021, the TxDOT made a motion to approve the minutes of January 14, 2021 as presented with the revised corrections. The motion was seconded by Hidalgo County; and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of February 11, 2021

Pete Sepulveda (Cameron County RMA) Chairman asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of **February 11, 2021**.

No corrections were noted to the minutes of February 11, 2021, City of Harlingen made a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2021, as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by Hidalgo County; and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration and Action on the FY2020 - 2021 UPWP Amendment

Fernando Cantu, GIS II provided a brief explanation on the FY2020 – 2021 UPWP Amendment to TAC Members as follows: The RGVMPPO staff will be seeking to establish offices in the Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, due to space limitations of staff growth at the current Valley Metro Weslaco location. RGVMPPO will need to purchase laptops, monitors, keyboards, and peripherals as needed as well as GIS Devices and and/or GIS Desktop computers, to accommodate RGVMPPO Staff or replace existing units as they become outdated. This seamless Regional Planning process will provide ease in connectivity to RGVMPPO staff and the public, as well as members of local governments using the Satellite Office.

Staff will be acquiring “Moving Services” following all procurement requirements, for the possible relocation of Hidalgo County Staff to the Brownsville Transit Terminal and the Valley Metro Station in Edinburg. In doing so staff will be utilizing the following Cary Over Funds from FY2020-2021. Staff concluded by letting TAC Members know that the FY2020-2021 UPWP Amendment has been revised in “RED” to reflect the planning changes and is included in the packet.

No discussion took place on this item, the City of McAllen made a motion to recommend approval of the FY2020-2021 UPWP Amendment to the Policy Board as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by Port of Brownsville and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Consideration and Action on the 2020 Thoroughfare Plan Amendments - Resolution 2021-05

Luis noted that staff is continually working with local governments to assure Right-Of-Way information is recorded accurately on the RGVMPPO Thoroughfare Plan and displayed on our interactive map UMAP. Therefore, the RGVMPPO performs a yearly thorough amendment process where staff request from all local governments to submit any updates toward Right-Of-Way designations. For this update cycle staff have received amendments from the County of Hidalgo - Pct. 4. The Amendments included on Resolution 2021-05 serve as an addendum to the 2020 Thoroughfare Plan Amendments previously approved via Resolution 2021-02 at the previous TAC meeting (See Below Table).

2020 Thoroughfare Plan Amendments Addendum				
Entity	Road Name	From	To	Requested Thoroughfare Classification
Hidalgo County PCT4	De la Rosa Street	Alamo Road	Brushline Road	Removal from Thoroughfare Plan
Hidalgo County PCT4	Terry Road	FM 88	FM 491	Removal from Thoroughfare Plan

No discussion took place on this item, City of McAllen made a motion to recommend approval of the 2020 Thoroughfare Plan Amendment – Resolution 2021-05 to the Policy Board as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by City of San Benito; and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

D. Consideration and Action on the 2022-2023 UPWP Program Call

Andrew informed TAC Members that an email was sent out on Wednesday, March 1, 2021 to both the Policy and TAC Committees, letting everyone know that the RGVMPPO is preparing its' FY2022-2023 UPWP, the Fiscal Budget by which the office operates and performs studies for the Regions. The RGVMPPO will be doing a Project Call to promote Plans and Studies for the Region that our Planning Partners may wish to undertake but may not have all the funding to address. IF there is a study or plan that Planning Partners would like the RGVMPPO to consider assisting in, staff will be taking request until **Friday, April 30, 2021 by 5PM.**

Andrew noted that the Studies need to include the following:

- ❖ Type of Study/Plan
- ❖ Geographical Area Study/Plan is to take place in
- ❖ Expected Timeline for the Plan;
- ❖ Funding Your Organization Is Providing for such Plan/Study and amount of Funding being requested of the RGVMPPO.

No discussion took place on this item, TAC members present acknowledged the 2022-2023 UPWP Program Call as presented by staff.

E. Discussion Regarding Category 9 Funding

Eva Garcia, Bike/Ped Program Coordinator gave a brief background on Category 9 Funding as follows: FY2021-2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Program Call for Projects was postponed due to the Texas Transportation Commission adopting amendments relating to TASA, codified under Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Part 1. Since the postponement, RGVMPPO staff has been working with TxDOT for guidance on the amendments and a consensus on funding availability for previously awarded projects and the upcoming Call for Projects.

RGVMPPO Staff, in collaboration with TxDOT Staff, are prepared now to move forward with the FY2021-2022 TASA Call for Projects. Approximately \$2.3M will be available for projects, with \$2.07M (90%) for construction and \$230,000 (10%) for planning. Staff will be presenting a draft project call announcement flyer, timeline, and revisions to the funding program guide at the April 7, 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting.

Staff provided an attachment for TAC members' convenience and as a reminder, a list of previously awarded projects currently in development, the Sept. 2020 TASA amendments, and a TASA Budget Page Sample which highlights the Category 9 federal (80%) and local government (20%) participation split, the Direct and Indirect State Costs.

No discussion took place on this item, TAC members present acknowledged the Category 9 Funding as presented by staff.

F. Discussion on the APL FY2020 Update

Andrew provided a brief update on the APL FY2020 Annual Listing of Projects to TAC Member as follows: As required by FAST ACT, MPOs are to publish an annual listing of project for which funds have been obligated in the preceding year, including a listing of pedestrian and bicycle projects. This provision is intended to increase the transparency of government spending on transportation projects and strategies in metropolitan areas to state and local officials, and to the public at large. A copy of Highway, Bicycle & Pedestrian, and Grouped projects has been included in the TAC Packet for review. **(Attachment Part of the TAC Packet).**

Discussion on Functional Classification

Luis provided a brief update on the Functional Classification to TAC members as follows: Staff continue working with local governments to assure Federal Functional Classification of Roadways needed continue with the MPO Plans. Therefore, after coordination with Local Governments, FHWA and TxDOT; FHWA recommendations have been resubmitted for 365 Tollway Phase II and South Parallel Corridor Phases I and II, all as Major Collectors for Federal Functional Classification pending final approval. FM 1599 and the FM509 Extension have been moved forward by TxDOT Pharr District to TxDOT TPP for their review before being submitted to FHWA for final review.

Staff concluded by letting TAC Member know that the complete Functional Classification status details have been included on the Functional Classification Table as part of the TAC packet.

No further discussion took place on these items, TAC members present acknowledged both the APL FY2020 and the Functional Classification Updated Reports as presented by staff.

V) **RGVMPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORTS AND UPDATES**

A. **Director Update**

2021-2024 STIP Timeline Update

Andrew provided the 2021-2024 STIP Timetable that was updated March 2021 as follows:

- TPP Post 21-24 STIP, begins Public Comment PeriodFebruary 26, 2021
 - Public Hearing Held.....March 18, 2021
 - STIP PUBLIC Comment Period Ends.....March 29, 2021
 - 2021-2024 STIP goes to the Commission for Approval.....April 29, 2021
 - First Day FHWA / FTA can approve the 2021 – 2024 STIP.....*April 30, 2021
Or, once FHWA / FTA receives TxDOT letter of approval.
 - STIP Public Comments period ends.....March 29, 2021
 - Next Potential Revision.....*August 2021
- *This will only be if the initial 21-21 gets approved and amicable time is allotted.

New Offices - Location – Staff noted that at the request of the Policy Board, staff has visited with Hidalgo and Cameron County City Officials regarding the new office locations, and City Officials from both of the Counties had no issues with having two offices in Edinburg and Brownsville. No final date is confirmed, still waiting on TxDOT and FHWA for final approval.

City of McAllen Policy Meeting – April 29, 2021 Update – Staff noted that due to the “McAllen State of the City Address and Mayor Darling been recognized, staff will be recommending that the Policy Meeting be moved to April 29, 2021.

B. **Financial Update**

Mr. Canon provided the financial update and noted that the current budget continues with a positive trend. **Report filed with the March 18, 2021 RGVTAC Packet.**

VI) **STATUS REPORTS**

A. **TxDOT Project Status Report**

Melba (TxDOT) provided an updated TxDOT Project Status Report within the RGVMPO area, Via Microsoft Teams. The following report included some of many TxDOT Monthly Letting Projects that has been extended from (November 2020 - December 2021).

Melba concluded by reminding local governments in attendance, to please continue coordinating with their respective TxDOT Project Managers on a regular basis towards letting their local projects. **TxDOT Project Status Report is filed with the March 18, 2021 RGVTAC Packet. (Report only, no action taken at this time).**

B. **Cameron County RMA**

Ariel Chavez, with Port of Brownsville provided a brief update on the South Port Connector, Environmental, Row & Utilities and Funding are check-off, and construction is underway. More information will be provided to TAC members as the project get closer to actual start date of construction. **(Report part of the RGVTAC Packet).**

Pete Sepulveda (Cameron County RMA) provided an updated presentation Via Microsoft Teams on projects that are currently within the Cameron County RMA. All projects are moving forward as scheduled. **Cameron County RMA report is filed with the March 18, 2021-RGVTAC Packet. (Report only, no action taken at this time).**

C. **Hidalgo County RMA**

Eric Davila, PE, (Hidalgo County RMA) provided an updated presentation Via Microsoft Teams on projects that are currently within the Hidalgo County RMA; he discussed the major milestones of each project. **The Hidalgo County RMA monthly report is filed with the March 18, 2021-RGVTAC Packet. (Report only, no action taken at this time).**

D. **McAllen Metro**

The McAllen Metro report was provided and is filed with the March 18, 2021-RGVTAC Packet. (Report only, no action taken at this time).

E. **Brownsville / Island Metros**

Antonio Zubieta provided an updated report Via Microsoft Teams which included the Brownsville Metro and Island Metro. These reports include on-going connecting community projects and combined ridership. Mr. Zubieta also reminded TAC Members that March 18 (today) is “Transit Driver Appreciation Day” Transit Driver Appreciation Day is an Annual event to celebrate the Public Service of transit vehicle operators. The date of March 18 was selected to commemorate the first bus line. **The reports are filed with March 18, 2021 RGVTAC Packet. (Report only, no action taken at this time).**

F. **Valley Metro**

Frank Jaramillo provided an update report Via Microsoft Team, for both the Rural and Urban areas for the Year-To-Date Report and the Fast Ride Micro-Transit Ribbon Cutting was scheduled for February 26, 2021. **The Valley Metro Report was provided and is filed with the March 18, 2021 RGVTAC Packet. Report on, no action taken at this time.**

VII) NEW OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Senate Bill Hearing 14 – Rural Broadband Capacity for Low Income Areas by Senator Nichols – Andrew noted that at his MEDC Meeting, conversations were held regarding Broadband accessibility by Senator Nichols. Broadband accessibility is one of the biggest obstacles East Texans face and have faced for years, as per Senator Nichols. “Now, during the coronavirus pandemic, it has become even more essential that the state takes proactive steps toward developing this critical infrastructure.” “The idea with SB 14 was to lower barriers to providing broadband in rural areas where cooperatives already have easements for electric service and where they can already place the necessary fiber,” Senator Nichols said. “I believe it's time for the Legislature to take action to bridge the gap and figure out a way deliver on the broadband access that all Texans deserve.” Senator Nichols’ video is online for TAC members to view.

VIII) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the RGVTAC Members, Pete Sepulveda, (Cameron County RMA) Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Port of Brownsville made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 AM. The motion was seconded by City of McAllen; and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.