



1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLANNING PROCESSES

This chapter provides an introduction to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process and the purpose of this document.

The chapter also provides a review of Federal and State enabling legislation for Metropolitan Planning Organization; background on the formation of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization; and a description of the committees and staff that help ensure the process is conducted efficiently and in compliance with Federal and State requirements.

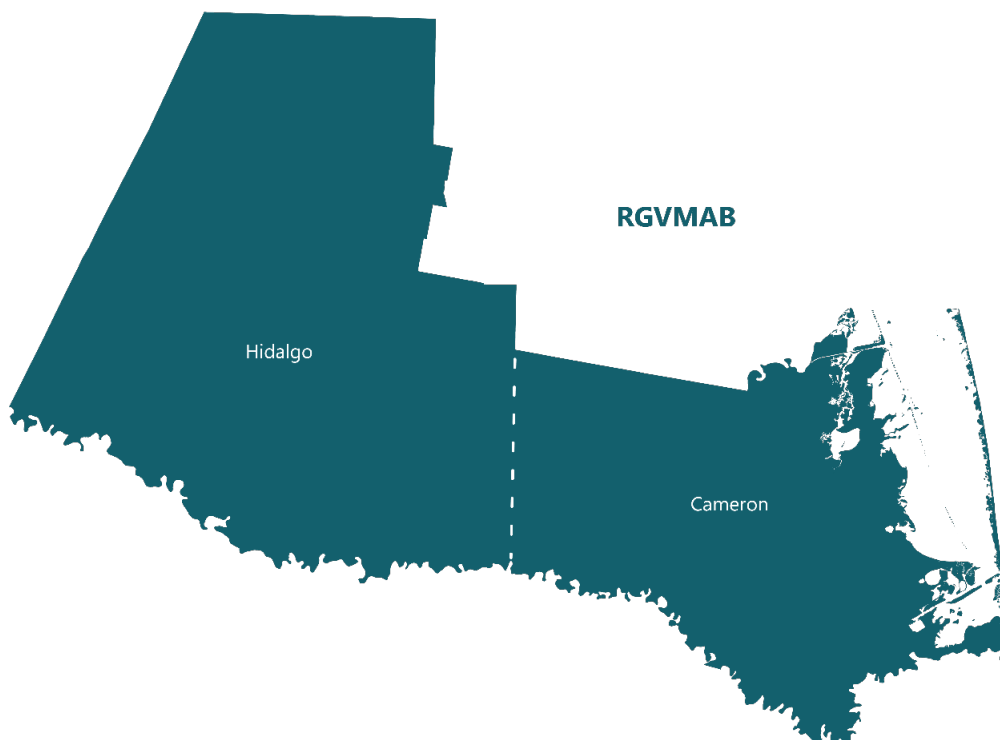
INTRODUCTION TO THE MTP PROCESS

Since the establishment of the Federal Highway Act of 1962, all major cities within the United States are required to adopt a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to guide the long-term development of each region's multimodal transportation system. The Act established specific rules and regulations for carrying out the long-range transportation planning process and required the formation of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000.

The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process is a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous (3-C) effort conducted by an MPO. Although the process is federally mandated, the process must be executed in coordination with the state's Department of Transportation, local transit operators, regional stakeholders, and the public to create a vision for the community and future multimodal transportation system.

The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) is the newly designated MPO for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Area Boundary (RGVMAB). The RGVMPO 2045 MTP update is the first MTP using comprehensive methods and data for the newly aggregated RGV Metropolitan Area Boundary (RGVMAB) which consists of Cameron and Hidalgo counties (Figure 1-1). This plan is driven by previous state, regional, and local plans; robust technical analysis on all aspects of the RGVMAB transportation system; as well as inclusive stakeholder and public outreach. The plan is developed in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Figure 1-1: RGV Metropolitan Area Boundary





Plan Purpose

The MTP is critical for creating and maintaining an efficient multimodal transportation system. The MTP achieves this outcome through the facilitation of regional coordination and the prioritization of multimodal transportation projects. This prioritization is accomplished through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning.

MTP updates are conducted every four to five years to ensure that the MPO is basing its decisions on the latest planning assumptions and that changing local conditions and trends are being taken into consideration in the long-range transportation planning process. The initial planning is also followed by a performance management process that collects data on the performance of the regional transportation system to track progress over time and ensure that the MTP results in the continuous enhancement of the region's transportation system.

Federal regulations require specific content to be included in the plan document which ties into project prioritization. The RGVMPPO is responsible for carrying out provisions of 23 USC §134, 59 USC §5303 (Metropolitan Transportation Planning) and 23 CFR 450.300 et seq. (Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming). Under these regulations, the planning process and final MTP are required to include:

- A vision that aligns with community goals;
- A multimodal approach that includes projects spanning all aspects of the transportation system;
- A minimum 20-year planning horizon (the RGVMPPO 2045 MTP update planning horizon is approximately 25 years);
- A financial outline proving the plan is financially responsible and fiscally constrained;
- An air quality analysis to show forecasted emissions will not exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); and
- A comprehensive and inclusive public participation process that engages all interested parties with particular sensitivity to traditionally disenfranchised communities.

This process allows for the creation of an MTP that promotes an understanding of existing regional conditions of the transportation system, supports intergovernmental coordination, and develops a fiscally constrained and prioritized list of transportation projects and strategies to achieve regional mobility goals.

A Comprehensive Approach

The RGVMPPO 2045 MTP update is being created concurrently with the RGVMPPO Active Transportation and Transit Development Plans. While the MTP process has been designed to create a framework for multimodal transportation planning within the RGVMPPO, it also works in tandem with these other two plans to create a deeper understanding of the conditions and needs of the multimodal network.

Public engagement efforts for all three plans were carefully coordinated to ensure that the community vision, goals and objectives were aligned across the plans. This comprehensive approach allows for more informed multimodal transportation investments and implementation moving forward.

ROLE OF THE MPO

The development of the RGVMPPO 2045 MTP is governed by the requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and its accompanying metropolitan planning regulations. Under these federal regulations, the RGVMPPO is responsible for carrying out the 3-C planning process in cooperation with all levels of government to develop the MTP. Doing so allows the RGVMPPO and its planning partners to determine how best to invest federal transportation funding in the region. The RGVMPPO also serves as the designated forum for transportation program related decision making by principal elected officials of general-purpose local governments in the metropolitan planning area.

Formation of the RGVMPPO

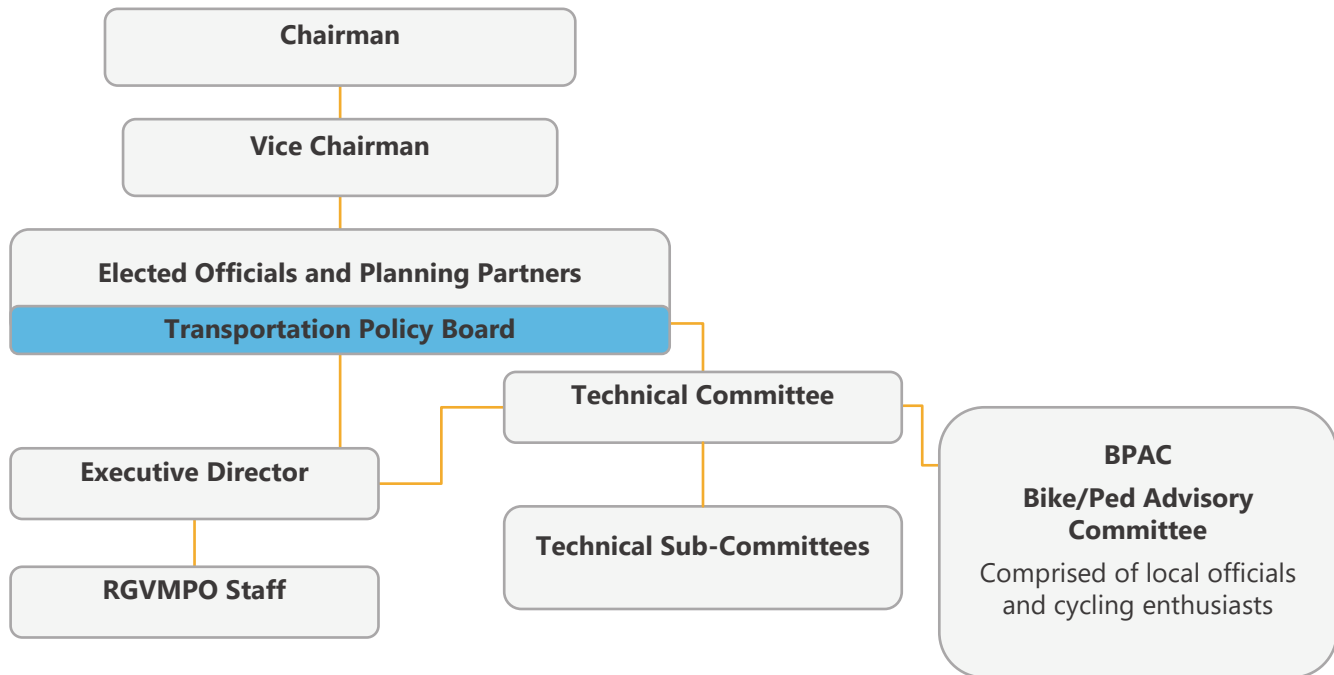
On April 24, 2019 elected officials from units of general-purpose local governments that together represented at least 75% of the existing metropolitan planning area population (previously Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, and Hidalgo County MPOs - as well as the largest city in each of these MPOs), executed an agreement to re-designate into one consolidated MPO. This agreement established a proposed boundary area for the RGVMPPO to include all the territory in the existing metropolitan planning areas for the three MPOs (i.e., Hidalgo and Cameron counties). After a period of review, Governor Abbott accepted and signed the proposed re-designation agreement. On October 1, 2019, the RGVMPPO was officially formed.

Since its formation, the RGVMPPO has sought to improve the area's quality of life through its vision/mission "to provide clear, concise transportation planning to positively impact the daily lives of RGV residents by planning for a safe and efficient multimodal system." The RGVMPPO strives to accomplish this by incorporating four core values: trust, communication, innovation, and collaboration.

The following sections detail the personnel behind the MTP planning process, which consists of the Transportation Policy Board, Technical Advisory Committee, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and MPO staff. Figure 1-2 represents the RGVMPPO Organizational Chart.



Figure 1-2: RGVMPPO Organizational Chart



Transportation Policy Board

Elected and appointed officials comprise the Transportation Policy Board (TPB), which is responsible for approving and adopting all transportation planning activities and programs of the RGVMP. The TPB was established in 2019 with the re-designation of the RGVMP to meet federal requirements and serves as a spokesperson for citizens of the RGVMA. Membership of the TPB is governed by an agreement between the affected local governments and the Governor of Texas and is reviewed periodically to ensure adequate representation of all parties. The current TPB consists of 14 voting members, with representatives from member agencies as presented in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: RGVMP Transportation Policy Board

Title/Representation	Current Representation
City of Pharr - Mayor	Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez (Chairperson)
Cameron County - Judge	Eddie Treviño, Jr. (Vice-Chairman)
Cameron County – Regional Mobility Authority	Frank Parker, Jr.
City of Brownsville - Mayor	Trey Mendez
City of Edinburg - Mayor	Richard Molina
City of Harlingen - Mayor	Chris Boswell
City of McAllen - Mayor	Jim Darling
City of Mission - Mayor	Armando O'Caña
City of San Benito - Mayor	Benjamin Gomez
Hidalgo County - Commissioner Precinct 2	Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Hidalgo County - RMA	S. David Deanda, Jr.
TxDOT Pharr District - Engineer	Pedro "Pete" Alvarez, P.E.
Valley Metro - Director	Tom Logan
LRGVDC* - Executive Director	Manuel Cruz

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council*



Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) makes planning recommendations to the TPB regarding subject matter issues such as MPO generated documents and analysis; project selection criteria; special transportation planning studies; and other issues for immediate action. The TAC totals 19 voting members, and includes planners, engineers, and representatives from ports and transit providers as listed in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2: RGVMPO Technical Advisory Committee

Representation	Current Representation
Cameron County - Regional Mobility Authority	Pete Sepulveda, Jr. (Chairman)
City of Mission	JP Terrazas, P.E.
Cameron County	Benjamin L. Worsham, P.E.
City of Brownsville	Joel Garza
City of Edinburg	Tomas D. Reyna
City of Harlingen	Carlos Sanchez
City of McAllen	Yvette Barrera
City of Pharr	Eleazar Guajardo
City of San Benito	Bernard Rodriguez
Hidalgo County	Armando Garza
Hidalgo County - Regional Mobility Authority	Eric Davila
TxDOT - Pharr District	Melba Schaus, P.E.
Valley Metro	Frank Jaramillo
Brownsville Metro	Norma Zamora
McAllen Metro	Jon Ray Bocanegra
Port of Harlingen	Alan Johnson
Cameron County Spaceport Development Corp	Mark Yates
Port of Brownsville	N/A
Port Isabel - San Benito Nav. District	N/A

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is a subcommittee of the TAC. The BPAC addresses subject matter concerning bicycle and pedestrian mobility and presents its recommendations to the TAC. Members include appointed TAC members, bicycle advocates, pedestrian advocates, and organizations with a stake in bicycle and pedestrian mobility (Table 1-3).

Table 1-3: RGVMPD Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Title/Representation	Current Representation
Citizen at Large	Rose Gowen (Chair)
Citizen at Large	Michael McNew (Vice Chair)
Bicycle Advocate at Large	William "Bill" Barr
City of Brownsville	Cody Baczewski
City of Brownsville	Antonio Zubieta
Citizen at Large	Eudy Carrillo
City of Pharr	Cynthia Garza Reyes
City of Pharr	Maria Rangel
Citizen at Large	Michael Padgett
City of McAllen	Marlen Garza
City of McAllen	Martina Mejia
Citizen at Large	Richard Cavin
Rio Grande Valley B-Cycle	Juan Macias
Valley Metro	Frank Jaramillo
Estero Llano Grande State Park	Javier De Leon
City of Harlingen	Andy Vigstol
City of Harlingen	Javier Mendez
City of Edinburg	Larry Ayala
Bicycle World Rio Grande Valley	Ana Adame
TxDOT	Craig Wuensche
TxDOT	Joseph E. Leal
TxDOT	Evan Roberts



RGVMPO Staff

The MPO Board and Committees are supported by a staff of professional planners and administrators who conduct and oversee the Metropolitan Planning Process and carry out the day to day administration of the metropolitan planning program in accordance with federal, state and local guidelines. Table 1-4 lists existing MPO staff and Figure 1-3 shows the organizational structure for the staff.

Table 1-4: RGVMPO Staff

Title	Current Representative
Executive Director	Andrew Canon
Administrative Assistant	Gloria Gonzales
Assistant Director	Luis Diaz
Planner III & Bike/Ped Specialist	Eva Garcia
Planner I	Crystal Gonzales
Planner I	Natalia Manzanares
Planner I	Rudy Zamora
GIS Specialist	Miguel Arispe
GIS Specialist	Fernando Cantu

Figure 1-3: RGVMPO Staff Organizational Chart

