2 DEVELOPING VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter describes the process used in developing the guiding vision, goals, and objectives of the planning process established for the RGVMPO 2045 MTP.

The Chapter further summarizes how this process uses performance measures to gauge how well proposed strategies support the established vision and goals.

Together the vision, goals, objectives, and performance measures comprise the RGVMPO 2045 MTP's guiding principles.

FEDERAL GUIDELINES

In 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act became the fifth intermodal surface transportation bill passed by Congress since 1991, the previous four laws being the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The FAST Act and its predecessors have served as a means to provide funding to states and local governments for surface transportation planning and investment. The FAST Act authorized $305 billion nationally for projects related to highways, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs over five fiscal years (2016 – 2020). Though this initial time period is concluding, Congress is reviewing continuing legislation to extend FAST Act authorization on a yearly basis untill a new bill is formed.

Planning Factors

The FAST Act retains the eight federal planning factors established under ISTEA and expanded under SAFETEA-LU, while adding two additional factors for consideration in the planning process. This MTP describes how the RGVMPO provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that address these FAST Act planning factors, which include investments that:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
7. Promote efficient system management and operation
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
9. Improve resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation*, and
10. Enhance travel and tourism*.

*New factors introduced by the FAST Act

Though these planning factors are discussed throughout the entirety of the MTP, Chapter 5 describes, in detail, how each of these factors is given consideration during the planning process.

National Performance Goals

The FAST Act also maintains the requirement for a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive long-range transportation planning process for making transportation decisions in metropolitan areas,

while continuing and further defining requirements set forward in MAP-21 for state DOTs and MPOs to set performance measures and goals.

The application of performance measures to evaluate whether policies and transportation investments addresses goals in transportation planning creates the framework for a performance-based decision-making process. This decision-making process uses objective, data-driven analysis to identify issues and assess proposed improvements against existing and expected future performance in these goal areas. The process also inspires reasonable expectations that this data driven approach inherently increases transparency in decision making, and in turn yields investments that better align with the long-term mobility needs and goals of the community.

As major stakeholders in the multimodal transportation system, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have set forward National Performance Goals in order to encourage efficient investment of Federal transportation funds, increase the accountability and transparency of funding decisions, and to improve project decision-making through performance-based planning and programming. The FHWA defined national performance goals[1] are as follows:

1. **Safety** — To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads
2. **Infrastructure condition** — To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
3. **Congestion reduction** — To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System (NHS)
4. **System reliability** — To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
5. **Freight movement and economic vitality** — To improve the National Highway Freight Network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development
6. **Environmental sustainability** — To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment
7. **Reduced project delivery delays** — To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices

The FTA has set additional performance goals focusing on Safety and Asset Management that provide guidance on the implementation of scalable systems-level thinking processes for FTA funding recipients nationwide. Both FHWA and FTA performance goal areas and associated performance measures are presented in Table 2-1.

The application of these goals and the performance measures used in identifying existing needs and reporting transportation system performance to inform the decision-making process are discussed in

[1] https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:23%20section:150%20edition:prelim)

greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5. A system performance report is also provided in the final chapter of the MTP.

Table 2-1: Performance Goal Areas and Associated Performance Measures

Performance Goal Area	Performance Measure
FHWA PM1 Safety	Number of Fatalities
	Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
	Number of serious injuries
	Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT
	Number of non-motorized fatalities
	Number of non-motorized serious injuries
FHWA PM2 Infrastructure Condition	Percentage of pavements of the Interstate System in Good condition
	Percentage of pavements of the Interstate System in Poor condition
	Percentage of pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in Good condition
	Percentage of pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in Poor condition
	Percentage of NHS bridges classified as in Good condition
	Percentage of NHS bridges classified as in Poor condition
FHWA PM3 System Performance/Freight/ Congestion Management and Air Quality	Percentage of person-miles traveled on the Interstate that are reliable
	Percentage of person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are reliable
	Percentage of Interstate system mileage providing for reliable truck travel time (TTTRI)
	* Annual Total Tailpipe CO2 Emission on NHS
	* Annual Hours of Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) per capita
	* Percent of Non-SOV Travel on network
FTA State of Good Repair	Percentage of revenue vehicles (by type) that exceed useful life benchmark (ULB)
	Percentage of non-revenue service vehicles (by type) that exceed ULB
	Percentage of facilities (by group) rated less than 3.0 on Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) scale
FTA Safety	Total number of reportable fatalities
	Rate of reportable fatalities per total vehicle revenue miles by mode
	Total number of reportable injuries
	Rate of reportable injuries per total vehicle revenue miles by mode
	Total number of reportable events
	Rate of reportable events per total vehicle revenue miles by mode
	Mean distance between major mechanical failures by mode

**Applies to areas designated as nonattainment or maintenance for ozone, carbon monoxide or particulate matter.*

PLAN REVIEW

The metropolitan transportation planning process also considers directly or by reference how the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets beyond those set by federal guidance. The additional input is derived from state, regional, and local transportation plans and transportation processes, as well as other locally developed plans by providers of public transportation, all of which are integrated in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The integration of the goals, objectives, and performance measures in these plans helps both ensure that the stakeholder input is maximized, and that the planning process is comprehensive.

The following sections review and summarizes planning documents at the state, regional, and local level as part of this process to ensure consistency with regional planning efforts and ongoing state and local planning activities.

Multimodal Transportation Planning Efforts

Documents produced by the three former MPOs in the Rio Grande Valley (Brownsville MPO, Harlingen San Benito MPO, and Hidalgo County MPO, represent considerable effort and coordination in establishing and working towards regional goals. These three MPOs and their regional planning partners, have been the primary authors of the following documents.

Hidalgo County MPO 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

In 2014, the HCMPO adopted the 2015-2040 MTP, a long-range transportation planning document which identifies priorities for development programs and transportation projects within the Hidalgo County Urbanized Planning Area. The document identified existing and future land use trends and transportation needs and developed coordinated strategies to deliver transportation projects essential for the continued mobility and economic vitality of the Hidalgo County Urbanized Planning Area.

The Hidalgo County MTP sought to balance investments in various transportation modes against anticipated funding from federal, state, and local sources, while maintaining flexibility to address the dynamic changes in both the needs and resources of the community. Levels of acceptable system performance may vary among local communities, so performance measures were tailored to the specific needs of the area and established cooperatively by the state, the MPO, and local officials in consultation with the operators of major modes of transportation in the coverage area.

2040 Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Transportation Plan

In 2014, the HSBMPO adopted the 2040 Harlingen-San Benito MTP. The plan assessed the existing conditions of the region related to demographics, socioeconomics, and the transportation system, set a vision for the future of the transportation system to be implemented by stated goals and objectives, explored potential areas of system improvements, defined a program of transportation projects, set forth a financial plan to fund the projects, and discussed concerns about environmental/community impacts and how the MPO planned to address such impacts. In addition, the plan provided a summary of public engagement efforts conducted, the questions asked, and feedback provided by citizens who participated in the process.

The most recent update of the list of 2040 MTP projects were adopted in October of 2018 and identified 31 projects falling into the following categories:

- Mobility (contains primarily roadway projects along with a handful of sidewalk projects)
- Safety
- On/Off System Bridges
- Transportation Enhancements
- Operational Improvements
- Comprehensive Development Agreement
- Preliminary Engineering
- Transit

2020-2045 Brownsville Metropolitan Transportation Plan

In 2019, the Brownsville MPO adopted the 2020-2045 MTP, which identified policies, programs, and improvement projects to address the evolving needs of the Brownsville Urbanized Planning Area over the long-range planning horizon of 25 years. This plan also prioritized transportation projects based on a variety of values (such as indicating environmental impacts, adding roadway capacity, contributing towards economic vitality, improving transit, etc.), which guide the development of the overall transportation system. The overarching goals for this MTP were to:

- Support economic vitality
- Increase safety and security
- Increase accessibility and mobility
- Protect and enhance the environment
- Promote efficient management and operation of the transportation system

One Vision, One Harlingen

One Vision, One Harlingen is the City of Harlingen's 2016 Comprehensive Plan and was adopted in 2016. The plan's transportation-focused goal is that "Harlingen will continue to maintain and create excellent regional and local transportation options that enhance the character of the city and provide for all modes of travel." Objectives to meet this goal include planning for connectivity, improving the appearance and aesthetics of key roadways in gateway areas, diversifying mode choice by providing more options for pedestrian and bicyclists, and strengthening the networks that provide for freight movement (airport, rail, ports) and border crossings. The plan lists a set of key strengths that already exist within the region and that should be expanded or utilized to their full potential to help achieve the plan's vision. Two of these strengths include the existing transportation network with its potential to increase connections to the international network, and the Valley International Airport with its potential to expand and act as an engine for economic growth. In addition, one of the major themes in the plan's vision and goals is economic development, which is directly affected by the quality and extent of the region's transportation system. The plan's transportation section recommends a multimodal approach to address transportation issues as well as context sensitive solutions and complete streets as guides for decisions about the future transportation system.

City of Hidalgo Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035

Adopted in August 2015, the *City of Hidalgo Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035* focuses on issues of growth and development including community facilities/infrastructure, economic development, transportation, housing, social vulnerability, parks, and environment. Issues and threats are addressed with proposed solutions and supported with maps and other analytical tools. Through a brief description of grants and other funding opportunities in the areas of transportation, community facilities, historic preservation, economic development, parks and environment, and housing, the comprehensive plan provides an implementation table which matches funding programs to action items.

City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan 2025 & Ongoing Edinburg Gateway Plan

The Edinburg Comprehensive Plan provides goals, objectives, and related policies as ways to determine planning and development strategies through the year 2025. Currently, the City is developing an updated comprehensive plan entitled Edinburg Gateway Plan. The current plan integrates the areas of land use and community character, growth and development, transportation, economic development, and utilities while offering short- and long-term program and development activities.

Harlingen Long-Range Thoroughfare Plan

Adopted in May 2013, the City of Harlingen's Long-Range Thoroughfare Plan consists of a map that shows the locations of existing and proposed roadways, from local roadways up to freeways/expressways. The plan is meant to act as "a tool for guiding right-of-way dedications, land subdivisions, and other development actions." The map shows that the north and south sides of the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) contain the most proposed new roadways, particularly major and minor arterials.

San Benito Comprehensive Plan

In 2016, the City of San Benito adopted its most recent Comprehensive Plan. Some of the plan's guiding principles most directly related to transportation include a diversified economy, maintenance of infrastructure, a revitalized downtown, recreational amenities, trails, and connectivity. The Transportation and Circulation chapter identifies several focus areas as part of a policy framework to guide the future development of the San Benito multimodal transportation network. These focus areas include:

- Improving International and Regional Mobility
- Ensuring a Well-Connected and High-Quality Street Network
- Improving Corridor Design and Appearance
- Providing Enhanced Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility
- Establishing a New Thoroughfare Plan

In addition, a set of strategies, initiatives, and actions is provided to aid in accomplishing or implementing the goal of each focus area. The plan's implementation section also identifies a list of transportation programs and projects, the time frame in which each should be accomplished, and entities that should be involved.

La Feria Comprehensive Plan

The *La Feria Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2007 with a plan horizon of 2025. The plan's stated purpose is to act as "a guide for the physical development of the community by identifying characteristics and features, which influence community growth patterns." The plan includes sections on implementation, history of the area, economy, population, housing, land use, parks and recreation, thoroughfares, the central business district, subdivision regulations, zoning, and capital improvements. The thoroughfare section identifies two goals with several objectives each. These goals relate to implementing the City's street standards and possibly updating them as well as developing "major" and "collector" streets with adequate right-of-way and pavement width. Key recommendations identified in the plan involve developing some specified roadways into "major" streets. Several transportation-related objectives are also reiterated in other sections of the plan, such as the economic section, the housing section, the land use section, and the parks and recreation section.

Imagine Brownsville, Comprehensive Plan, 2014

In 2009, the City of Brownsville adopted the *Imagine Brownsville Comprehensive Plan*, which strives to take a holistic approach at connecting the community vision and goals, which were based on public feedback, to future growth and development patterns. The plan consists of four sections: Planning Process, Vision and Challenges, Comprehensive Plan Elements, and the Implementation Plan. Facilitation of this plan was done by forming a planning task force, which was made up of representatives from all core elements of the plan. Comprehensive Plan Elements consist of ten elements, which include four core elements supported by six smart growth/sustainability elements. Core elements include Land Use, Downtown, Economic Development, and Mobility/Infrastructure, which are supported by Smart Growth/Sustainability Elements (Civic, Education, Equity, Healthcare, Emergency Management, and Environment).

Comprehensive Plan, South Padre Island, 2014

In 2014, the City of South Padre Island adopted their latest Comprehensive Plan. This mission of the plan is as follows:

"South Padre Island is a unique, friendly seaside resort community that values its residents and tourists, preserves and protects the natural environment, and provides for quality sustainable growth and development that is highly diverse and responsive to changing economic conditions."

This mission statement is the basis of the comprehensive plan, which can be seen through the goals and objectives set throughout. The plan focuses on increasing the quality of life for current residents by continuing to provide attractive amenities to the tourist culture they have cultivated. This includes enhancing physical aesthetics, while minimizing health risks and environmental hazards and degradations, which includes enhancing parks and recreational opportunities. Another aspect of the plan focuses on providing more efficient, reliable multimodal transportation to support local travel and help move tourists throughout the city.

With these two goals in mind, the plan would also like to ensure that future growth is both smart and met with the proper amount of public service by facilitating growth using infill development, building with sustainable resources, and preventing future development from becoming a source of pollution

or degradation. As growth occurs, the City would also like to ensure that the proper precautions are taken to ensure the economy and the residents are safe from any type of emergency or unexpected event.

South Padre Island, Transportation Plan Report, 2011

The Transportation Plan Report, which was drafted in 2011, expands on Comprehensive Plan goal of providing an efficient and reliable multimodal transportation system, while creating a corridor master plan focused on the Entertainment District and Padre Boulevard. This plan includes a market analysis of future market demand and short- and long-term forecasts. The plan report also contains, a summary of design workshops and meetings used to establish a vision for Padre Boulevard and the Entertainment District, a form-based code, and an integrated multimodal plan. A stated purpose in this report is to establish a framework to address transportation needs of the future as the population grows and tourism increases.

Cameron County Non-Radioactive Hazardous Material Route Plan

This plan, adopted in May 2010, was created to designate routes where commercial vehicles carrying non-radioactive hazardous materials can travel through Cameron County. The objective of the study was to select "routes that minimize both the potential for hazardous materials incidents and the consequences for the residents of Cameron County should an incident occur." The recommended routes that resulted from the study include segments of US 77, SL 499, FM 106, US 83, FM 509, and SH 550.

Traffic Light Synchronization Study

The HSBMPO's Traffic Light Synchronization Study was adopted in 2012. Its purpose was to "improve overall traffic flow at signalized intersections by optimizing traffic signal timings and reducing overall delays." The study collected data such as turning movement counts, intersection lane configurations, speed limits, storage lengths and pedestrian volumes to conduct its analysis and make recommendations for signal timing optimization. The result of the study was optimized signal timing plans for 41 signalized intersections throughout Harlingen, San Benito, and La Feria. Operations are expected to improve with the implementation of the timing recommendations, however the study also found that some of the intersections in the region did not have adequate configurations to handle the traffic volumes experienced regardless of signal timing optimization. The study provided a set of intersection improvement recommendations for those intersections.

Congestion Management Plan – Currently Being Drafted

The scope of Congestion Management Process (CMP) is to gather data on congestion levels in the urbanized areas of Rio Grande Valley. This CMP network consists of roadways within the RGVMPO area that are either FHWA functionally classified or identified as a transit route. The information to be gathered, includes but is not limited to, the travel times and delays for each identified road segment in the network. This process resulting plan likewise informs cost balanced strategies for reducing delay and congestion. Data gathering and traffic counts for the current CMP are being carefully reviewed and balanced in light of atypical traffic due to COVID-19.

Public Transportation Planning Efforts

Public Transportation Operational Analysis and Implementation Plan

Adopted in February 2013, this plan's purpose was "to evaluate existing transit services within the former HSBMPO's service area and to determine how service can be improved over the next decade." The plan inspects the existing system, which is served by Valley Metro, including the current routes, ridership information, and markets served. The plan also provides design guidelines, service improvement scenarios, and a funding analysis. The service improvement scenarios include recommendations for new routes, bus stops and passenger amenities, and proposed adjustments to existing routes and services.

LRGVDC Valley Metro Transit Asset Management Plan

On October 17th, 2018, HSBMPO passed a resolution in support of *Valley Metro's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan*. TAM Plans are required by the FTA for transit agencies receiving federal funding. The purpose of TAM plan is to help ensure that transit agencies maintain a state of good repair for all their assets so that their operations will continue to be safe and cost effective. The Valley Metro TAM Plan sets forth a series of performance targets and measures that will help the agency plan ahead for asset replacement and cap amount of allowable assets past their ULB or in an unacceptable condition at any given time for each year of the plan.

Move McAllen: A Short-Range Transit Plan for Metro McAllen

Move McAllen, a Short-Range Transit Plan for Metro McAllen, which was adopted in 2019, is a three-phased, five-year study. The plan aims to improve ridership, productivity, and on-time performance of the transit service by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, identifying opportunities to improve service for exiting riders, attracting new riders, and ensuring the best use of public funds.

Brownsville Transit Plan

Adopted in 2017, the Brownsville Public Transit Plan was comprised of an assessment of existing conditions in the Brownsville area, a transit market analysis, the identification of service issues and opportunities, the development of service scenarios, and final service recommendations. The final recommendations included a mixture of elements from the service scenarios developed, which incorporated immediate, short, and long-term implementation strategies. The proposed service changes resulted in a 0.14% increase in annual revenue service, which ultimately resulted in a cost-neutral upgrade to the past services. Detailed route alignments and service schedules were produced as a result of this plan for all routes and ADA paratransit services.

LRGV Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

The *Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan* was adopted in January 2017 with the purpose of meeting the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) requirements for the FTA's Section 5310 Program. The Section 5310 Program's purpose is to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities. The overarching goal of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is to "help provide for more trips for more people while providing cost effective high quality and safe transportation for our community."

The plan provides an identification and analysis of existing transportation resources, an analysis of needs, a gap analysis, and a set of transportation strategies and pilot programs to meet goals and implement the plan. These strategies include coordination strategies, service strategies, and financial strategies focusing on coordination between FTA funded service and health and human services transportation (medical transport, etc.).

RGVMPO Transit Development Plan - Currently Being Drafted

As a major component of the RGVMPO 2045 MTP, the newly formed RGVMPO is working collaboratively with regional transit providers to develop a Transit Development Plan (TDP). This plan, being developed concurrently with the 2045 MTP, will help tell the regional transit story of the Rio Grande Valley community. The development and delivery of tools and strategies will empower the MPO and the regional transit providers to evaluate, coordinate, and deliver transit on behalf of the community. The TDP will provide the following key components:

- Operational Analysis
- Market Analysis
- Origins and Destinations/Ridership Analysis
- Regional Service Standards
- Route and Service Recommendations
- Implementation Plan

Active Transportation Planning Efforts

The following represent a sampling of active transportation planning efforts at the regional and local level in the Rio Grande Valley.

The Active Plan

The *Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Tourism Plan* was adopted in September of 2016. The goal of the plan is to help create "one of the finest and most extensive region-wide non-motorized transportation networks anywhere in the United States" by providing facilities and infrastructure for active transportation, and active tourism more specifically, which will create benefits for transportation, health, and the economy. The plan proposes a network of various active transportation and recreational facilities, some of which include multi-use trails and bike facilities and provides design considerations and potential facility costs. The plan also proposes a set of catalyst projects, two of which fall within the HSBMPO planning area (Arroyo-Resaca Multi-Use Trail segment and Arroyo Colorado Paddling Trail segment). The Active Tourism portion of the plan explores the possibility of bicycle tourism and trail tourism as potential programs and economic markets, which would have a significant impact on the use of and need for active transportation facilities in the HSBMPO region.

Hidalgo County MPO Bicycle Plan

Adopted in 2017 by the HCMPO, the Bicycle Plan 2018 serves as a complement to the existing HCMPO Pedestrian Plan and as a core component in the overall multimodal plan for Hidalgo County. Additionally, the Bicycle Plan provides solutions to issues such as gaps within the sidewalk network, identifies safer approaches to street crossings and paths, provides environmental and health benefits, and encourages a bicycle-friendly environment.

Recommendations were developed based on analysis of existing facilities, policies, and plans as well as suggestions from the HCMPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and through a series of public meetings and workshops.

The plan uses the 5 E's approach: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation of outcomes. The plan also includes an approach to document and monitor trends through data collection to recognize progress and to identify achievement of plan goals and objectives. Localized data gathered in this process allows planners to better recommend courses of action designed to increase bicycling compared to more general data available at the national level. Surveys are used on a recurring basis to assess presumed preferences for driving over cycling and provide insight for ways to encourage a shift in behavior.

Hidalgo County MPO 2016 Pedestrian Plan

The 2016 Pedestrian Plan, adopted by the former HCMPO, was updated from the 2014 plan and was intended to serve as a comprehensive planning tool for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the HCMPO, and the local jurisdictions within the former MPO's boundaries to develop a safe and comfortable pedestrian network and an increased standard for walkable communities. Coordination and collaboration with the other neighboring former MPO's like HSBMPO and Brownsville MPO was designed to improve regional connectivity on cooperative projects. Planning directly for a pedestrian network has previously been left to the cities within the HCMPO's old planning boundaries resulting in a lack of connectivity in sidewalk infrastructure between cities. The Pedestrian Plan promoted a continuous and safe pedestrian network required as part of a federally mandated comprehensive multimodal transportation plan. This cross MPO coordination has been adopted and merged into the newly formed RGVMPO's vision and efforts.

2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Finalized in 2016, the HSBMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan provided a set of recommended projects, policies, and practices meant to improve and expand the active transportation network in the old HSBMPO study area. The plan's recommendations resulted from a combination of public engagement, best practices, and an assessment of community conditions and needs. In addition, the plan includes an implementation program that defines roles and responsibilities, identifies funding options, and provides detailed information about the recommended projects.

Harlingen Trails Master Plan

Adopted in March of 2010, the Harlingen Trails Master Plan's purpose is to aid in the creation of a trails system that provides safety, accessibility, and connects people to existing destinations; represents the identity and character of the city and enhances its physical appearance; and provides opportunities to learn about the city and form public/private partnerships. The plan aims to create a trails system that provides recreational/functional mobility opportunities for active transportation modes, promotes a sense of place, and provides a safe environment; develop tools and mechanisms to implement the plan and facilitate trail development; develop and identify funding sources; and incorporate public participation into the planning and design process for new trails. The plan's recommendations identify four types of opportunities for trail development, including arroyo trails, irrigation trails, rail trails, and street trails.

Harlingen Parks and Recreation Master Plan

In conjunction with the City of Harlingen's One Vision and One Harlingen Comprehensive Plan, the city also developed a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which was adopted in early 2016. One of the major findings to come out of this plan is the need for trails. Citizen input resulting from a needs assessment ranked "Add more trails or places to ride a bicycle" as the community's second highest concern under the parks and recreation umbrella. Therefore, the plan includes trails under the list of "very high" needs, noting that there are still key gaps and that the western part of the city currently has no trails.

The plan includes trail development as one of the improvement categories in its final recommendations, with an aim of "developing a citywide connected trails system based on the recommendations of the city's adopted 2010 Trails Master Plan."

San Benito Parks and Recreation Master Plan

With its most recent draft in 2015, the San Benito Parks and Recreation Master Plan acts as a supplemental piece of the San Benito Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan's purpose is to "provide thoughtful guidance and sound direction to the city in its commitment to acquire, develop, and manage an adequate and easily accessible system of parks and recreation facilities and programs to serve the residents of San Benito." One of the specific goals of the plan involves building an active transportation network to improve connectivity throughout the community. Under this goal, the plan provides a set of actionable objectives as recommendations for achieving the goal. These actionable objectives include items such as taking steps to create more focused and detailed plans/designs, identifying and obtaining funding, coordinating with relevant entities, and obtaining the necessary rights-of-way or easements to use in the creation of the network.

San Benito Downtown Revitalization Plan

Adopted in August of 2016, the *San Benito Downtown Revitalization Plan* is a supplement to the San Benito Comprehensive Plan. Though transportation is not the primary focus of this plan, there are concerns, opportunities, and recommendations discussed that are related to transportation. Traffic is listed as both a major opportunity and concern for the downtown area. Some of the recommendations in the plan include steps such as enhancing connectivity to downtown, in particular for active transportation modes and the trail network, improving the traffic environment through traffic calming strategies, reconfiguring certain roadway sections, and implementing Complete Streets.

Brownsville Parks & Recreation Open Space Master Plan, 2008

This plan takes an inventory of the existing parks and open space in Brownsville, while creating an implementation plan to connect the existing infrastructure to the current and anticipated needs of community by improving the quality of the resources available with a planning horizon of 2008-2022. Procedures within this plan follow guidelines set forth by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to ensure the city continues to maintain eligibility for funding future parks projects.

Priorities identified through community engagement included:

- Provide more efficient maintenance and security
- Provide more recreational amenities and facilities
- Include educational/interactive opportunities with natural areas
- Expand the existing park system through acquisition of more open space/natural areas

The plan's goals also focus on improving existing parks and open space, while identifying potential areas for acquisition that would play a major role in improving connectivity between open spaces and enhance the quality of life of Brownsville residents.

Connecting Brownsville, The 2013 Bicycle and Trail Master Plan

The City of Brownsville took a progressive approach in 2013 to meet the evolving transportation needs of their fast-growing population. To increase resident's quality of life and number of transportation choices, the City created *Connecting Brownsville* which builds on the previous efforts set forth in the *Parks & Recreation Open Space Master Plan*. This plan emphasizes five major goals to accomplish its overarching mission:

- Create an interconnected network
- Form partnerships throughout the community that will help facilitate this mission
- Invest, when feasible, in comfortable infrastructure that separates non-vehicular and vehicular traffic
- Ensure ease of accessibility to infrastructure
- Encourage short trips to connect longer trips (i.e. bike to a bus stop)
- Provide a variety of facility types

Recommendations were developed based on analysis of existing facilities, policies, and plans as well as suggestions from the public participation process. The public participation process was conducted through a series of public meetings, workshops, surveys, and conversations at local events. Recommendations were also separated into four different phases based on timeline of implementation (rapid implementation, near-term, mid-term, and long-term).

South Padre Island, Parks & Open Space Master Plan, 2013

The *Parks & Open Space Master Plan*, adopted in 2013, takes an inventory of existing parks, open space, and recreational facilities, while identifying opportunities to improve those existing spaces or acquire new lands to be converted to parks, open spaces, or recreational facilities. Public participation was used to highlight and support the existing facilities analysis, giving the community a voice to help identify and set priorities within the scope of the plan. Additionally, this plan holds strong connections to the tourism sector of South Padre Island's economy, ensuring that all parks and open spaces will continue or build upon the support of tourist activities. Through the planning process, the Parks & Open Space Master Plan identified three major goals:

- Protect and improve the existing system of parks and open space.
- Enhance tourism by networking local resources and system of parks and open space.
- Provide healthy environments to residents.

RGVMPO Active Transportation Plan - Currently Being Drafted

In coordination with the RGVMPO 2045 MTP update, the RGVMPO Active Transportation Plan includes a holistic examination of the MAB to assess where current facilities for walking and biking exist, while also conducting an analysis to examine where demand for walking and biking is most prominent. Gap areas where demand is not adequately served by either walking or biking facilities are identified, and projects are recommended to serve those high demand areas. In addition, an important component of this plan is creating a unified approach to improvements to the active transportation network. To help support the design of new infrastructure for walking and biking, guidelines were developed based on national best practice to support MPO staff and partners. A policy review at the state, MPO, county, and municipal level shows where policies and programs supporting active transportation do, and do not occur, along with an action plan of approaches to build support and implement such policies and programs. The collection of these analyses and recommendations provide a unified path forward to benefit those who use or will use the active transportation network throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Economic and Cultural Development Planning Efforts

Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority Annual Report 2017

The Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) releases this report annually to identify progress made towards objectives and key transportation projects in the county. This report also lists out the financial information related to these projects, such as the traffic counts and toll revenue. The latest annual report summarized efforts in 2017, some of the highlighted transportation projects include:

- State Highway (SH) 550
    - A stretch already signed as Interstate 169 (I-169)
- The first toll road opened in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) and South Texas
- The West Railroad Relocation Project
    - The first International Railroad crossing into Mexico in over 100 years

Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority Strategic Plan 2017-2021

The CCRMA Strategic Plan outlines eight different goals for CCRMA to tackle over the five-year period of 2017 to 2021, which directly focus on meeting the transportation needs of Cameron County as the population continues to grow. The plan then identifies strategies and transportation projects that correspond with the eight goals, as well as key partnerships that will make these goals feasible. "The ultimate goal of the CCRMA is to make significant contributions to a high quality of life by providing our residents and visitors with effective, accelerated mobility to encourage economic growth in South Texas from borders to beaches, at a minimal cost to the taxpayers."

Downtown in Action, Main Street Brownsville, 2017

In 2017, the Main Street Brownsville Program published *Downtown in Action*, a plan to revitalize and preserve downtown Brownsville while utilizing a four-point approach. Through revitalization, the program aims to make downtown Brownsville a "vibrant, prosperous business district offering premier leisure, retail, cultural, and entertainment experiences."

The four-point approach focuses on the following areas: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality. Ten (10) goals were then identified, and strategies were detailed and separated into the four focus areas.

Mitte Cultural District Master Plan, 2015

The Brownsville Historical Association, along with several other local partners, came together to create the *Mitte Cultural District Master Plan*, which was adopted in April of 2015. This plan incorporates five different sections, which are composed of a peer comparison of other cultural districts, the stakeholder engagement process, identification of design and development opportunities immediate, mid- and long-range), and additional information consisting of community engagement results and further analysis. Immediate actions include developments that create a structure to facilitate more long-term developments, such as creating revenue streams through priced parking and the creation of a City Pass (allowing residents to buy a single pass to gain entrance to all facilities), while also hiring a district director to maintain oversight of the program. The more long-term developments include actions that would require more effort such as building a large performance plaza, museum, and unified sidewalk branding and system.

Revitalizing Downtown Brownsville, 2013

Revitalizing Downtown Brownsville is a culmination of policies and programs that seek to reinvent the way downtown Brownsville will look and operate. The program was released in November of 2013, forming an action plan for reactivating downtown Brownsville. These policies include: Place-Based Planning, Complete Streets, Traffic-Calming, Improving Parking Efficiency, "Town-Gown" Connection, Re-Envision the Alleys, and Envision It. Together these policies will create a more active lifestyle for the city of Brownsville, while improving connectivity and making downtown Brownsville a focal point of the city.

RGV2020

RGV2020 is a regional economic plan being developed by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) using the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) method, which launched in 2017 and is expected to be implemented in 2020. This effort includes a comprehensive assessment of the region's current needs using a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) combined with community engagement to help determine the region's priorities. Based on the determined priorities, the plan sets the framework to prioritize investments in the following areas of concern:

- Education & Workforce
- RGV Destinations, Geographic Assets & Quality of Life Factors
- Urban & Rural Entrepreneurship
- Industry, Growth, Diversity & Resilience
- Transportation, Technology & Infrastructure
- Foreign Trade & International Competitiveness
- Operations and Management Planning Efforts

Texas Statewide Documents

The following documents were authored by state agencies and contain statewide applications for the state of Texas, which in turn applies to the entire Rio Grande Valley Region.

Freight Mobility Plan

The 2018 Texas Freight Mobility Plan gives a blueprint for increasing economic growth in Texas through a plan for addressing freight and transportation needs in all parts of the state. The plan took a comprehensive approach building on the 2017 Mobility plan and used an outreach process with the Texas Freight Advisory Committee along with stakeholder workshops and webinars with MPOs. The plan concludes with an implementation strategy for meeting TxDOT freight transportation needs, along with a list of projects and considerations regarding funding and performance measures.

The Texas Rural Transportation Plan

Adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission in 2012, the *Texas Rural Transportation Plan* is the rural component of the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP) 2035. This plan brings forth the priorities of the rural transportation stakeholders within the state, which adds their concerns to the overall priority list for transportation projects and improvements. This expands on the effort to create coordination between transportation stakeholders within the state to create one unified mission of improving Texas' multimodal transportation system by giving weight to rural interests.

Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan 2050

The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the Texas Transportation Plan (TTP) 2050 in 2020 to serve as TxDOT's performance-based long-range transportation plan (LRTP). This plan is the culmination of coordination between planning partners and transportation agencies throughout Texas to guide and improve the development, management, and operation of the multimodal transportation system on a statewide basis over the next 25 years. This plan also sets performance goals, measures, and targets for the following items:

- Promote Safety
    - Utilize the 5 "E's" of Evaluation, Engineering, Encouragement, Education, and Enforcement to support a safety culture that decreases the number of crashes and fatalities.
        - 2030: 2,280 Fatalities & 0.70 Fatality Rate
        - 2050: 0 Fatalities & 0 Fatality Rate
- Preserve Assets
    - Keep Texas' infrastructure in good repair by providing cost efficient preventative maintenance.
        - 90% Good or Better Pavement Lane-miles by 2030, maintain through 2050
        - Statewide Bridge Condition Score of 90 by 2030, maintain through 2050
- Optimize System Performance
    - Manage an integrated transportation system that offers reliable travel, accessible mobility, and encourages economic growth.
        - Decrease Urban Congestion Index to 1.2 by 2030, to 1.15 by 2050

    - Decrease Rural Reliability Index to 1.12 by 2030, maintain through 2050
- Deliver the Right Projects
    - Effectively use state resources to help deliver the right projects on time and within budget

- Foster Stewardship
    - Environmental considerations should be included in all TxDOT activities to ensure future generations of Texans can benefits from the state's natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- Focus on the Customer
    - TxDOT's decision should be transparent to the public and stakeholders, while feedback from the public is being actively heard.

2020 Unified Transportation Program (UTP)

The 2020 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) identifies planned investments totaling $77 billion in infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years that address TxDOT's strategic goals in the areas of safety, preservation, congestion relief, and connectivity.

The UTP is a mid-range transportation plan that links statewide LRTPs, regional MTPs, and rural transportation plans to the STIP and other short-term investment programs. Specifically, the UTP lists projects and programs planned for construction and/or development within the first 10 years of the 24-year SLRTP. Project development includes activities such as preliminary engineering work, environmental analysis, and right-of-way acquisition and design. It is a critical tool in guiding transportation project development within the long-term planning context. In addition, it serves as a communication tool for stakeholders and the public in understanding the project development commitments TxDOT is making.

2019-2022 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the programming document for prioritizing and scheduling projects. The STIP contains programmed dollars for all projects for all programs including roadway, transit, and active transportation and is based on a set of needs set out in the Statewide LRTP. The STIP is revised as needed on a quarterly basis to maintain communication and transparency on the programmed components involved in delivering State and Federally funded projects. The STIP is accompanied by a System Performance report that details the performance measures and targets in support of the goals set in the TTP 2050.

Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2017-2022

The 2020 update to the Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) acknowledged a steady improvement in roadway safety performance since the implementation of the 2017 SHSP. The SHSP maintains a vision of moving to zero deaths on roadways, and represents a multidiscipline collaboration aspiring to make Texas travel safer by reducing crashes, fatalities, and injuries by focusing on seven key emphasis areas, being distracted driving, impaired driving, intersection safety, older road users, pedestrian safety, roadway and lane departures, and speeding.

This targeted, data driven approach to addressing roadway safety exemplifies TxDOT and partner agencies dedicated implementation of the directives set in the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

Additionally, statewide efforts are reviewed to create a uniform effort that connects and aligns goals from different planning partners throughout the state.

Texas Transportation Asset Management Plan, 2019

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires all states to develop a *Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP)*. The TAMP is a statewide document that sets forth standards and performance targets for managing and maintaining both the state's bridge and pavement systems. The state of Texas is required to meet the following requirements in accordance with the MAP-21 Act and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act):

- Description of National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge assets inventory
- Statement of the asset management objectives and performance measures
- Performance gap identification
- Life cycle planning (LCP)
- Risk management analysis
- Financial plan for a minimum of 10 years
- Investment strategies

TxDOT Transit Asset Management Group Sponsored Plan

Transit Asset Management (TAM) planning follows a similar principle of asset management as the TAMP process detailed above but deals with assets used in the provision of public transportation rather than with pavement and bridge conditions. TxDOT sponsored a group Transit Asset Management Plan building on the standards and performance measures set forth by FTA, which then fall upon the local transit agencies throughout Texas to use during the adoption of their agency specific TAM Plans. The latest Texas TAM Plan was adopted in 2019, its planning process resulted in the following seven (7) priorities: 1) Deliver the right projects, 2) Focus on the customer, 3) Foster Stewardship, 4) Optimize system performance, 5) Preserve our assets, 6) Promote safety, and 7) Value our employees.

International Trade Corridor Plan, 2018

The International Trade Corridor Plan is a biannual report conducted by TxDOT as required by the Texas Transportation Code which aims to:

- Include strategies and projects to aid the exchange of international trade using the Texas multimodal transportation system;
- Assign priorities based on amount of international trade; and
- Address implementation of the recommendations of the Border Trade Advisory Committee.

The plan highlights information on global trade in Texas (i.e. major commodities and trading partners), the state's infrastructure facilitating trade, planned investments in relevant infrastructure, and non-highway investments that affect trade. The plan also details infrastructure improvement activity at various locations such as the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge.

Border District Trade Transportation Report, 2019

This report describes border trade activity for TxDOT's three border districts – El Paso, Laredo, and Pharr and uses that information to identify transportation needs and develop strategies and investments that support safe and efficient movement of United States (US) and Texas trade with Mexico. The report provides figures for under construction or completed project cost and type, highlighting areas of need for future analysis.

Truck Parking Study: Overview and Draft Recommendations

This study provides an overview of the findings from the Statewide Truck Parking Study for all TxDOT Districts. The study highlights the results of inventory and utilization analysis and discusses the draft findings for preliminary recommendations.

PRELIMINARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The tenets, goals, objectives, and related performance measures from the aforementioned plans were compiled and reviewed alongside the federally proscribed goals, objectives, and performance measures in order to develop the preliminary goals for this MTP update. These goals and objectives were then used as a starting point for the regional visioning process carried out during public involvement.

The preliminary RGVMPO 2045 MTP Goal Areas (Values) and objectives represented in Table 2-2 are a synthesis of previous planning efforts, current scoring criteria, and national performance goals. These proposed goals were crafted to help create a unified regional perspective on long-range transportation planning and inform the project scoring and public involvement processes.

Table 2-2: RGVMPO 2045 MTP Preliminary Visioning Goals

RGVMPO 2045 MTP Goal Areas	RGVMPO 2045 MTP Goal objectives	National Goal/ Process
Regional Planning	Conduct a planning process that builds a sense of regional identity and community by being inclusive of all geographic areas and sensitive to needs of communities across the region while promoting the theme of regional collaboration	3C Metropolitan Planning Process
Safety	Develop and invest in projects that promote and improve system safety	Safety
Security	Develop and invest in projects that promote and improve system security	
Asset Management	Maintain transportation asset systems in states of good repair (all modes – roadway, bridge, sidewalk, bicycle facilities, transit facilities, vehicles and equipment) to support system safety, resilience, and reliability	Infrastructure Condition & Transit Asset Management
Efficient System	Reduce congestion and improve travel time reliability.	Congestion Reduction
	Investment in improved/innovative technology	
Sustainable System	Design and implement a system that is resilient in the face of natural disasters and weather events (able to survive or recover from extreme events)	

RGVMPO 2045 MTP Goal Areas	RGVMPO 2045 MTP Goal objectives	National Goal/ Process
Connectivity (people & freight)	Improve connectivity of transportation system	System Resilience and Reliability
	Fill in gaps in current roadway network and improve first mile/last mile connectivity (people & freight)	
Mobility and Accessibility (all modes – people & freight)	Provide access to and invest in transit	
	Provide adequate and accessible truck safety rest areas with enough parking and amenities	
	Provide access to and invest in bicycle facilities	
	Provide access to and invest in recreational trails	
	Provide access to an invest in sidewalks and ADA accessibility	
	Implement and combine multimodal context sensitive solutions where appropriate (Complete Streets)	
Economic growth	Provide multimodal access to medical facilities, employment, shopping, and recreation	Freight Movement and Economic Vitality
	Improve freight movement	
Environment	Improve or preserve the environment to ensure community resilience and sustainability	Environmental Sustainability
	Design and implement a context sensitive system that minimizes impact to neighborhoods, cultural resources, and historic sites.	
	Design and implement a transportation system that benefits all members of the community in a fair and equitable manner and conduct a planning process that is transparent and considers the needs and input of all segments of the community	Environmental Justice / Social Equity
Fiscal Responsibility in Improvements	Invest in feasible and regionally significant projects	Reduced Project Delivery Delays
Goals that Align with the Public Values	Leverage public outreach to refine goals and inform project prioritization process	Public Involvement

REGIONAL VISIONING PROCESS

Though the planning process used for the creation of the RGVMPO 2045 MTP is prescribed by state and federal regulations, the vision is developed locally. This plan focuses on forging a new regional vision by combining the knowledge and wisdom of the previous MPOs and local community, while following the state and federal guidelines that direct the general planning process.

The vision is achieved not only through a review of locally generated plans and information described in the previous section, but extensive public input and collaboration of regional stakeholders including local, state, and federal agencies and governing bodies, public and private transportation providers, and the business community.

Input from the public and from these stakeholders is integrated into the metropolitan planning process so that the community's visions and goals coalesce into defined principles that help guide transportation policy and investment decisions within the RGVMAB. The resulting recommendations and proposed improvements impact all users of the transportation system.

The specific ways in which the research and planning review conducted in this chapter were used in the public involvement and regional visioning process and the community vision developed from that effort is described in Chapter 3 Public Involvement.