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## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW





# 1. INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan transportation planning is a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous (“3-C”) process. This process is conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in coordination with Texas and New Mexico Departments of Transportation (DOTs), transit operators, numerous stakeholders from throughout the region, and the public to create a vision for the future of the community.

This 3-C process, which is prescribed by federal regulations, is designed to assist the MPO in prioritizing short- and long-term investments in the regional transportation system over the next 26 years through a proactive public participation process that involves all users of the transportation system.

This document is an update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – also known as Destino 2045 - for the years 2019 -2045. The El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (EPMPO) initiated this update in February 2017.

Destino 2045 was developed over a 14-month period, during which time several rounds of public and stakeholder meetings were conducted, technical data was analyzed, existing plans and studies were compiled and reviewed, and potential projects were evaluated according to community goals and performance-based criteria. The resulting product is a comprehensive blueprint for the future of the transportation system that considers all modes and the needs of all users.

The planning area for the Destino 2045 encompasses the entirety of El Paso County, Texas, as well as portions of Doña Ana and Otero Counties in New Mexico. **Figure 1-1** shows the boundary of the MPO study area, as well as the location of population centers, major transportation facilities, and major environmental features within the MPO study area.

## METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

With the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1962, all major cities within the United States were required to adopt an MTP to guide the long-term development of the transportation system. The Act established specific rules and regulations for carrying out the long-range transportation planning process and required the formation of MPOs for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000. Under federal regulations, MPOs are responsible for carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process, in cooperation with the state and local governments, to develop the MTP and determine how best to invest federal transportation funding in the region.

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR THE MTP

Following passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1962, Congress has passed a series of surface transportation bills that have continued to require MPOs to develop a metropolitan transportation plan to be eligible for federal funding. The most recent surface transportation legislation was the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), which was passed in 2015. The Destino 2045 MTP was developed in compliance with this legislation.

## EL PASO MPO

The El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization is the organization designated by the Governor of Texas on August 30, 1988 as being responsible, together with the State, for carrying out the provisions of 23 USC §134, 59 USC §5303 (Metropolitan Transportation Planning) and 23 CFR 450.300 et seq. (Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming) and is established pursuant to those same US Codes. The MPO is the forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected officials of general-purpose local governments, in the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

Elected and appointed officials comprise the Transportation Policy Board (TPB), which is responsible for approving and adopting all the transportation planning activities and programs of the MPO. The TPB was established in 1973 to meet

federal requirements. Membership of the TPB is governed by agreement between the affected local governments and the governor of Texas and New Mexico and is reviewed periodically to ensure adequate representation of all parties. Membership consists of 30 voting members, with representatives from the following member agencies as detailed below:

| TITLE/REPRESENTATION  | CURRENT REPRESENTATION BY |
|---|---------------------------|
| Texas   |                           |
| Town of Anthony- Mayor  | Martin Lerma              |
| City of El Paso, TX- Mayor                                      | Dee Margo                 |
| City of El Paso, TX- Dept. of Transportation Director           | Ted Marquez               |
| City of El Paso, TX- City Manager                               | Tommy Gonzalez            |
| City of El Paso, TX- District #1 Representative                 | Peter Svarzbien           |
| City of El Paso, TX- District #3 Representative                 | Cassandra Brown           |
| City of El Paso, TX- District #5 Representative                 | Michiel Noe               |
| City of El Paso, TX- Mass Transit Department Director           | Jay Banasiak              |
| Town of Clint, TX- Commission Member                            | Addam Hernandez           |
| County Commissioner Precinct #3 (El Paso County)                | Vincent Perez             |
| County of El Paso-Assistant Public Works Director               | Norma Palacios            |
| Horizon City, Texas- Alderman 1                                 | Walter Miller             |
| City of San Elizario, TX- Mayor                                 | Maya Sanchez              |
| City of Socorro, TX Councilman at Large                         | Rene Rodriguez            |
| Village of Vinton, TX- Mayor                                    | Manuel Leos               |
| Texas State Senator 29th District                               | Jose Rodriguez            |
| Texas State Representative 75th District                        | Mary Gonzalez             |
| Texas State Representative 76th District                        | Cesar Blanco              |
| Texas State Representative 77th District                        | Lina Ortega               |
| Texas State Representative 78th District                        | Joe Moody                 |
| Texas State Representative 79th District                        | Joe Pickett               |
| El Paso International Airport- Director of Aviation Development | Monica Lombraña           |
| TxDOT-El Paso District 24- District Engineer                    | Robert Bielek             |
| New Mexico  |                           |
| City of Anthony, NM- Mayor                                      | Diana Trujillo            |
| Doña Ana County, NM- Assistant County Manager of Operations     | Chuck McMahon             |
| City of Sunland Park- Mayor                                     | Javier Perea              |
| New Mexico State Representative 34th District                   | Bealquin Gomez            |
| New Mexico State Senator 31st District                          | Joseph Cervantes          |
| New Mexico DOT District 1- District Engineer                    | Trent Doolittle           |

## TRANSPORTATION PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Transportation Project Advisory Committee (TPAC) serves in an advisory role to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) and is responsible for professional

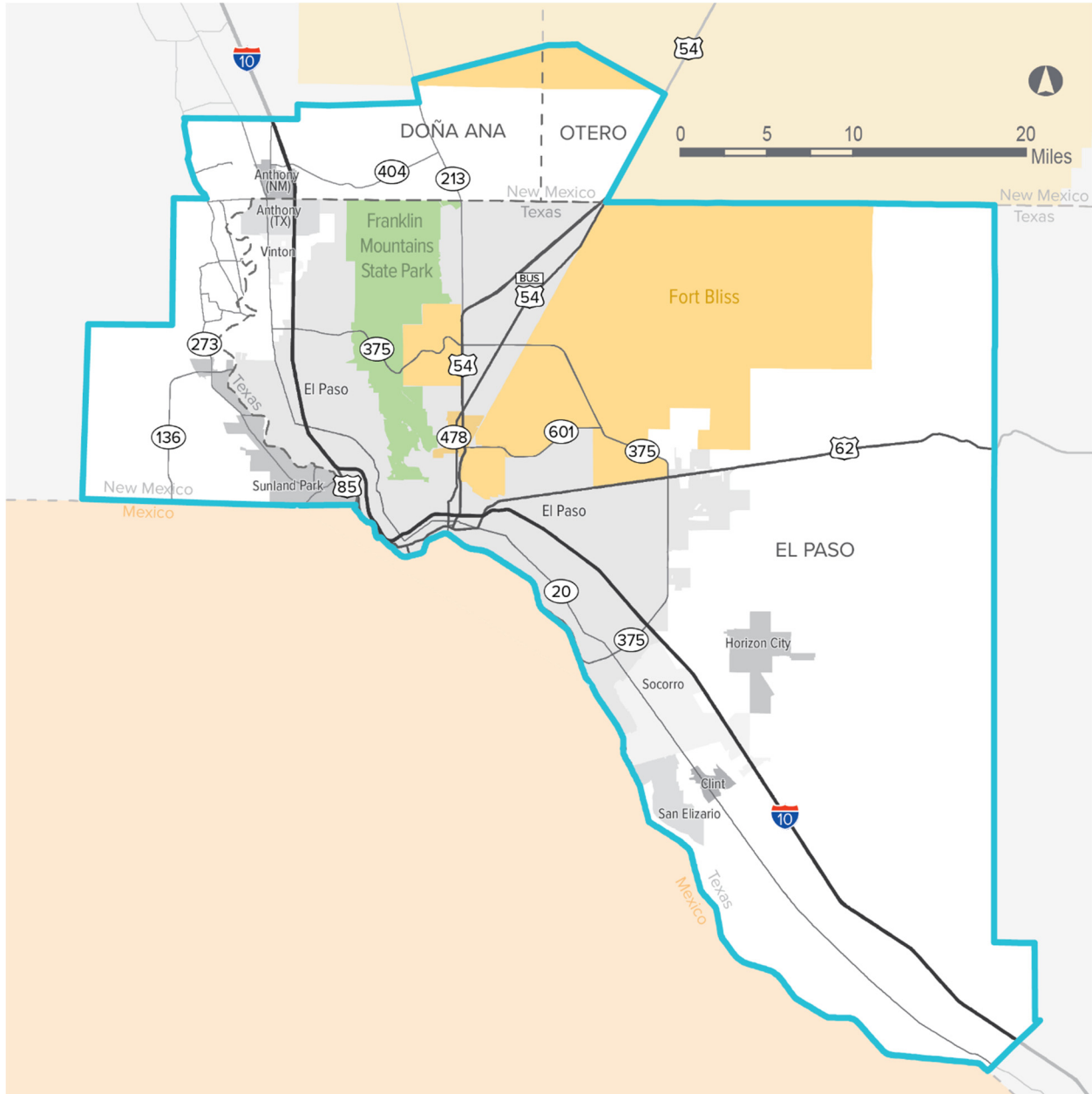
and technical review of work programs, policy recommendations, and transportation planning activities. Membership consists of 16 voting members who are local and state technical and professional personnel knowledgeable in the transportation field.

| TITLE/REPRESENTATION                            | CURRENT REPRESENTATION BY |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Texas</b>                                    |                           |
| Town of Anthony                                 | Martin Lerma              |
| City of El Paso                                 | Omar Moreno               |
| Mass Transit Board                              | Raul Escobedo             |
| Town of Clint                                   | Addam Hernandez           |
| Horizon City                                    | Michelle Padilla          |
| City of Socorro                                 | Rene Rodriguez            |
| Village of Vinton                               | Santos Lucero             |
| City of San Elizario                            | Lorena Carreon            |
| El Paso County                                  | Jose M. Landeros          |
| Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)      | Marty Boyd                |
| Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo                           | Evaristo Cruz             |
| University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)           | Greg McNicol              |
| <b>New Mexico</b>                               |                           |
| City of Anthony                                 | Esther Motongo            |
| City of Sunland Park                            | Hector Rangel             |
| Doña Ana County                                 | Robert Duran              |
| New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) | Harold Love               |

## EPMPO STAFF

| TITLE/POSTION                                 | NAME                    |
|---|-------------------------|
| Executive Director                            | Michael Medina          |
| Assistant Director                            | Roger Williams          |
| Regional Transportation Manager               | Christina Stokes        |
| Transportation Research & Development Manager | Salvador Gonzalez-Ayala |
| Transportation Financial Analyst              | Bryan Miskimen          |
| Transportation Planner                        | Raquel Lopez            |
| Transportation Planner                        | Sonia Perez             |
| Transportation Planner                        | Claudia Valles          |
| Transportation Planner                        | Marketa Vavrova         |
| Regional Transportation Analyst               | Gabriela Lopez          |
| Program Administrator                         | Isela Hooper            |
| Administrative Secretary                      | Mayela Granados         |
| Administrative Assistant                      | Marisol Enriquez        |

FIGURE 1-1: EPMPO PLANNING AREA



## MTP PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process used for the creation of the Destino 2045 MTP is prescribed by state and federal regulations, but the vision that drives the process is developed locally. This MTP visioning process, therefore, focused on gathering locally generated plans and information, as well as the knowledge and wisdom of the local community, while following the state and federal guidelines that direct the general planning process. The El Paso MPO is responsible for programming regional transportation projects for implementation using federal transportation funding. The MTP provides a framework for analyzing the current and future regional travel demand and creating a blueprint for addressing the future transportation needs within the El Paso Urbanized Area.



## VISIONING PROCESS

The purpose of the MTP is to identify the transportation needs of the community over the next 26 years, establish priorities for funding those improvements, and chart a course for meeting the community's identified transportation needs. Establishing a community vision for the future of the transportation system and related goals to assist in the prioritization of transportation improvements is key to ensuring the plan reflects community values. Input from key stakeholders and members of the public was solicited early and continuously throughout the development of the plan.

The process for updating the El Paso Urbanized Area MTP was initiated by a series of meetings with the public, professional planners and engineers from the MPO and its member agencies, as well as State and local agencies, and other community stakeholders. The purpose of these meetings was to gather data and input on community needs and values, to establish a framework for MTP development. Using this information, the MPO drafted a recommended vision, set of goals, and a list of evaluation criteria to assist in prioritizing transportation improvements for inclusion in the MTP.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To develop feasible and beneficial transportation solutions, it is imperative to assess the current state of the transportation system, as well as community growth trends. For the update to the El Paso Urbanized Area MTP, the needs assessment included an inventory of the existing transportation system; a review of local plans; a demographic analysis to determine existing transportation demand based on current population levels; and projections of future population and employment and the associated future travel demand.

## TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The next step in the planning process was to identify potential strategies to consider for addressing regional transportation needs.



## NO BUILD STRATEGIES

Building new facilities will not address all identified transportation needs. Not only is building new roadways expensive and funding limited, but some identified needs are best addressed by strategies that reduce demand and improve the operational efficiency of the existing transportation system. Therefore, the MTP planning process included consideration of preservation of the existing system through preventative and rehabilitative maintenance; the inclusion of access management strategies; and the incorporation of Travel Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies. These strategies are often referred to as "no-build" strategies because they do not require the construction of new roadways or the widening of existing roadways.

## PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Once the no-build strategies were considered, potential projects to expand or build new facilities were examined. The following were combined to develop a list of candidate projects for further analysis:

- results of technical reviews,
- available planning studies,
- highway and corridor studies,
- consultation with local traffic engineers, planners, and other stakeholders,
- a call for transportation projects,
- the results of the travel demand model\* analysis.

Proposed projects were then coded into the travel demand model and tested to determine what impact they might have on addressing identified congestion and transportation system needs. Non-highway projects were also analyzed to determine what impact they would have on addressing deficiencies, using a combination of existing data, forecasts, and professional judgment.

*\*A travel demand model is a statistical analysis tool that uses elements such as roadway and transit networks, population, and employment data to calculate the expected demand for transportation facilities.*

Traffic volume, volume-to-capacity, and travel delay information provided by the travel demand model were used in conjunction with the weighted qualitative measures developed through the public visioning process to inform a series of project selection workshops conducted by the TPAC.

The project team presented the ranked evaluation criteria and community goals developed through the visioning process to the TPAC during their project selection process to ensure that community priorities were included in the final list of recommended projects. The Policy Board had the opportunity to observe the project scoring, and either accept or reject the final list of prioritized projects developed by the TPAC.



## SYSTEMS LEVEL ANALYSIS

System level analyses examined how the candidate projects impact community issues that are of system and region-wide concern. The study team incorporated this planning approach into the development of the MTP, which allowed for prioritization of transportation investments based on broader community issues in accordance with the community's vision.

## AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (as of Jan 31, 2018), a portion of El Paso County is designated as a National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) non-attainment area for particulate matter (PM-10) and limited maintenance area for Carbon Monoxide (CO). This designation requires the MPO to conduct a more thorough air-quality conformity analysis of the proposed projects included in the MTP. This analysis uses outputs from the travel demand model to populate an air quality model that estimates levels of different pollutants at discrete future year benchmarks over the planning horizon of the MTP.

The MTP is a long-range planning document and is reviewed and updated every four years for areas designated as non-attainment. Each iteration provides a chance to reassess conditions and ensure that the plan remains consistent with the desires and needs of the region as it changes over time.

## COORDINATION WITH LOCAL PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Ensuring that proposed improvements are consistent with local programs, plans, and their goals and objectives, as well as supporting local values and preserving existing community resources is of vital importance to the MTP development. A review of local programs and plans was therefore conducted to ensure consistency between the metropolitan transportation planning effort and local community initiatives.



Source: El Paso CVB via [visitelpaso.org](http://visitelpaso.org)

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND CONSTRAINT

Fiscal feasibility is a significant priority in determining the final list of improvements. Not only does Federal Legislation mandate that the MTP be fiscally constrained and only include projects that can reasonably be expected to have adequate funding, but certain projects also require that area communities contribute local matching funds to receive federal funding. The process for establishing both estimated costs and revenues is critical for the creation of a viable MTP.

## REVENUE PROJECTION

A revenue projection was developed that identified the anticipated revenue stream for local, State and Federal funds. This revenue stream was factored to account for inflation at the anticipated year-of receipt.

## PROJECT COSTS

Cost is defined as the total project cost, which includes: planning elements (e.g. environmental studies and functional studies); engineering costs (e.g. preliminary engineering and design); preconstruction activities (e.g. line and grade studies, right-of-way acquisition and corridor preservation); construction activities; and contingencies. Project costs were calculated based on historical expenditures for similar improvements. The resulting cost estimates also included an inflation factor to account for the anticipated year-of-expenditure.

## FISCAL CONSTRAINT ANALYSIS

A fiscal constraint analysis was performed that compared the anticipated year-of-expenditure costs to the anticipated year-of-receipt revenues to determine if sufficient and timely financial resources were likely to exist to fund the proposed program of projects.



## SELECTION OF A PROPOSED PACKAGE OF PROJECTS

Based on the cost and revenue projections, the package of fiscally constrained projects anticipated to best accomplish community-defined goals and objectives, was selected by the TPAC and then submitted to the Policy Board for review and approval. The TPB was then able to review these recommendations and make measured and fiscally constrained choices.

## ADOPTION PROCESS

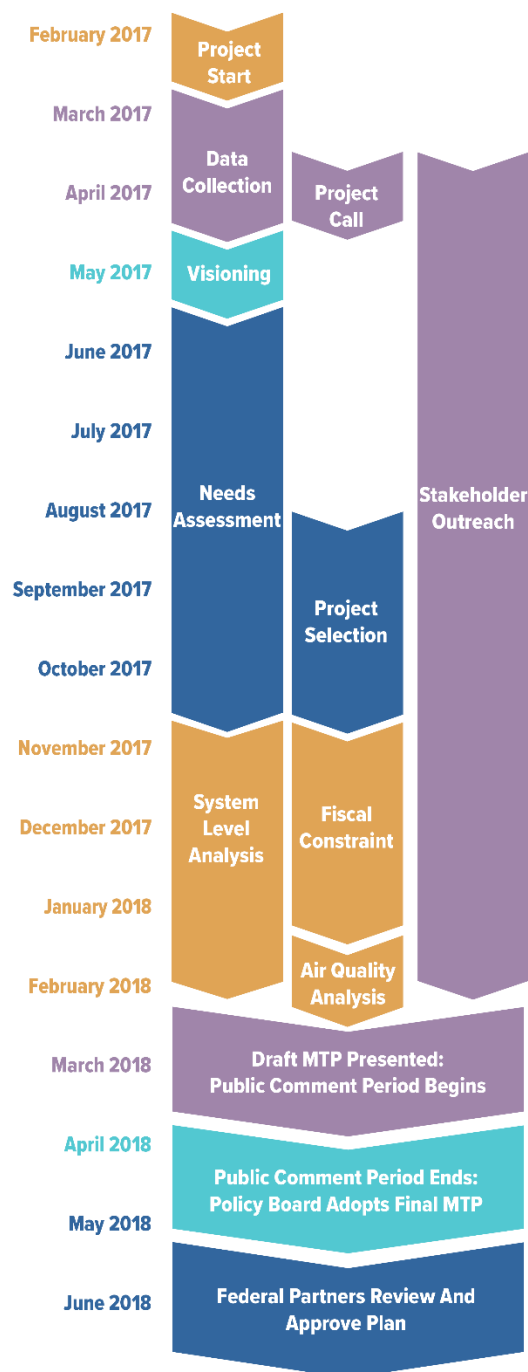
The preliminary program of projects was approved by the Policy Board on December 15, 2017. The preliminary transportation recommendations and associated list of proposed projects resulting from the project selection and fiscal constraint analysis, along with the results of the technical analysis and public input, were included in the draft Destino 2045 document.

## PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT DESTINO 2045

On March 9, 2018, the draft plan was presented to the public and their feedback was solicited throughout the 30-day public review period as outlined in the MPO's adopted Public Participation Plan (PPP).

## ADOPTION OF THE FINAL DESTINO 2045

The final MTP, which incorporated comments received during the 30-day public comment period, was presented to the Policy Board for adoption on May 18, 2018. The policy board's approval of the MTP kicked off a 90-day conformity review by FHWA that was completed on June XX, 2018. The approved MTP has an effective date of [Month Date], 2018.





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